

The Road to PALISADE 14: Orbital Pt. 4

Transcriber: anachilles#0191 (Live at the Table version); thedreadbiter (recap and edits)

Austin: The Road to PALISADE is a show about war, politics, religion, revolutionary violence, and the many consequences thereof. For a full list of content warnings, please check the episode description.

Keith (as Sly): Do you want to be paying someone who's not afraid of this stuff to move it around?

Austin (as Decario): I — I want to be paying someone who wants to move it around. Ideally, it's true believers. I get that you might not be a true believer. Maybe you work for some true believers, and that's why they put us in contact.

Keith (as Sly): I truly believe that I'm going to move this thing, and not die moving it.

Austin (as Decario): Well then I don't know what the problem is. Take two.

[["Permanent Peace"](#) by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Ali (as Mustard): [sighs] Well, Mister Wroaster, let me put it like this, then. What if I told you that I was feeling unwell?

Ali: And I take your hands.

Austin: Ali — or, Mustard?

Ali: Yeah, hello?

Austin: You feel your pulse.

Ali: [wheezes]

Austin: And you feel Toaster Wroaster's pulse. And you feel a third pulse. And it brings yours and Toaster's into sync.

[cut]

Austin (as 3T): This song is called Morning Mirage.

Austin: And feeds open up, outside of the Brink, and out into the dark. And you can see the purple light of Palisade, uh, off in the distance. And, all at once, there are these explosions of light in the dark, uh, as the Mirage bombs I've been planting across the sector go off. And it's expanding closer and closer to Palisade, closer and closer to Principality space.

[cut]

Keith (as Pushy): If anyone is going to Brink Proxy for anything, it would be to erase camera footage of any of us being around here at this time.

Austin: [laughing]

Sylvi (as Lament): Thank you, Pushy.

[cut]

Austin (as 3T): When I was little, they told me about the Twilight Mirage. And, all the good things that we had, and the ways that we suffered to get it. How we came together, to push people out who were hurting us, and who would use what we had to hurt others, and what was left out from that story is that, when we pushed those people out, they kept moving. We made a mockery of ourselves by doing nothing. And it didn't even take much.

Jack (as Mourning): All right.

Austin (as 3T): I set off some fireworks. Those people got on a ship *that night!*

["Permanent Peace" by Jack de Quidt concludes]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. Joining me today, Ali Acampora.

Ali: Uh, hi. You can find me over at [@Ali_west](#) on Twitter, and you can find the show over at [@friends_table](#).

Austin: Sylvi Clare.

Sylvi: Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me, uh, on my other show, Emojidrome 2.0, if you search that in any podcatcher that you have. I've got to work on this, it's a lot less, [chuckling], it's less reflex, now that I don't have the Twitter.

Austin: Oh, that's true. You just need to come up with something that's not Twitter, that goes in the same spot.

Sylvi: [chuckling]

Jack: Say how you're feeling today.

Sylvi: This is how we get me, uh, linking my PayPal.

Austin: I was just going to say, what's your Venmo?

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Like, I was.

Sylvi: [Paypal.me/Sylvibullet](https://paypal.me/Sylvibullet), if you want to give me money.

Jack: [laughing]

Austin: It'll happen. I, I, I would bet you money.

Sylvi: Good!

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Ali: [giggling]

Austin: Uh... hey Sylvi. Keith Carberry.

Ali: Austin will match all — sorry. [laughing]

Austin: I will, I will not!

Ali: [giggling]

Keith: [laughing]

Austin: I know how much people would pay Sylvi, I, my pockets ain't that deep.

Ali: [snorts] [laughing]

Keith: Uh, my name is Keith Carberry, you can find me on Twitter at [@KeithJCarberry](https://twitter.com/KeithJCarberry). And you can find the Let's Plays that I do at [YouTube.com/runbutton](https://www.youtube.com/runbutton). Uh, instead of telling you which video you should watch, just go and subscribe to it. I don't care if you ever watch a video, this time. Uh...

Austin: Wow!

Ali: Wow.

Austin: You don't care —

Keith: I mean, I —

Austin: Is this reverse psychology?

Jack: You don't care?!

Keith: Yeah, I don't even care. Just subscribe to it, whatever. We've been stuck at 13,000 forever, and we're at just a hair under 14,000, so.

Austin: Mmm.

Jack: Ugh.

Keith: I'm sick of, sick of seeing that 13 point whatever. Uh, so everyone go subscribe.

Austin: I just realized that people listening to this now, will not have the context of us talking about a hundred-dollar tier where people get to hear Sylvi talk for one second.

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: And so they'll just think that I'm lying. Or like —

Sylvi: They'd pay for it.

Austin: They'll pay — I think they'll pay for it.

Sylvi: We could put it higher than 100, I think. But maybe I'm

Austin: What's the highest Patreon, what's the highest Patreon goes?

Sylvi: 10,000.

Ali: Oh, Patreon goes pretty high.

Sylvi: I know because we —

Austin: Jesus. You do this —

Sylvi: Have it for Emojidrome, that if you pay us the highest amount, you can be on the show.

Ali: [gasps]

Austin: Has anyone done it yet? Someone should do it.

Sylvi: No, no one has given us 10,000 dollars to be on an emoji podcast.

Jack: I think —

Austin: Someone should do that.

Jack: At one point, Vince Staples —

Sylvi: I mean, sure.

Jack: Uh, ran a Gofundme, to give him 1 million dollars to stop talking, which I thought was really good.

Keith: [chuckling]

Austin: That's fantastic.

Keith: Did it, did it hit?

Jack: [sighs] No.

Austin: No, we all, we all, yeah, we all prefer him talking. Jack de Quidt, also here.

Jack: Yeah. Hi, I'm Jack. You can find me on Twitter at [@notquitereal](https://twitter.com/notquitereal), and buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

Austin: Uh, and as always you can support the show by going to friendsatthetable.cash. And you can follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/friends_table](https://twitter.com/friends_table). The Twitter.com part's, that's, you're following on Twitter, so I didn't need to say that part.

Jack: You have to put that in —

Austin: You have to put it in —

Jack: Every time you follow someone.

Austin: Yeah, www... w, dot.

Jack: It's how you get to the website. Http —

Austin: Colon backslash, backslash —

Ali: S...

Austin: Oh yeah, S.

Ali: You guys aren't going to have the security up? Come on!

Austin: No, I'm open, open, open for business out here.

Ali: [cackling]

Jack: [chuckles] Austin —

Keith: No other, no other, no other Venmos going on the show? Once, once it hits, once Sylvi gets the first payment —

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Putting them in next week's going to be gauche.

Jack: You, uh...

Sylvi: Oh, this is my thing from now on.

Jack: I am, I am legally prohibited by USCIS from gaining money in any way other than is reflected on my immigrant itinerary form.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Mmm.

Jack: So, not only can I not get extra money, please don't send me money.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Sylvi: [laughing]

Austin: Wow. Send it to Sylvi.

Jack: [laughing] It's a rough life.

Sylvi: Wait, couldn't they just buy the music from you if they want to do that, though?

Jack: Yeah, that's the way — but that's in my itinerary, though.

Sylvi: Exactly, so do that.

Austin: Right, right, right, right.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, I can't, I can't drop my Venmo.

Austin: Right, but you can drop your Bandcamp.

Sylvi: Pay 100 dollars for all, for like one album.

Austin: Yeah!

Jack: Oh, that'd be great!

Austin: That sounds great. All right —

Sylvi: We're selling out to you, the fans. Sorry.

Ali: [sputters]

Austin: Directly. We're cutting out the middle man —

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And we're going to sell out directly to you, our fans.

Sylvi: Mm-hm.

Austin: Uh, today, we are continuing our game of Orbital. Uh, I was going to say who made Orbital, and then my PDF viewer crashed.

Jack: It is Jack Harrison.

Austin: Thank you, Jack.

Jack: At Mousehole games, or?

Austin: Mousehole games is right —

Jack: Or Mousehole press?

Sylvi: Yes, I believe.

Austin: Yeah, mousehole dot Orbital — or, sorry, [Mousehole.itch.io](https://mousehole.itch.io), to find it. Where were we? Let me bring us back up on the screen for people, here. [chuckles] Where were we?

Jack: Ugh... it's not good right now, on the station.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvi: I believe, uh, war has begun? Kind of?

Austin: I've detonated some bombs...

Ali: True.

Keith: Yeah, we were in the middle of, of, of 3T being pulled every which way.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. Uh, the Mirage spread, uh, Mustard went to a Friends of Devotion potluck, and then decided to join a weeklong retreat. False Fruit, uh, went to Paris to get help searching for their missing kid, Qualitative —

Jack: Oh god —

Austin: You promised to, to help False Fruit with that, uh, despite, uh, not being able to, and Devotion offered you some extra strength in this. Deutsch erased footage of killing the first, uh, uh, killing, uh, their first target, and 3T and Pushy helped to cover it up, uh, uh, and then 3T and General Mourning met and discussed the war situation. A lot going on. Uh, something else?

Sylvi: Did we mention that there was like going to be a retreat? I feel like for —

Austin: For Devotion, the —

Sylvi: Friends of Devotion, yeah, did we bring that up?

Austin: Yes, the week long retreat, yeah, Mustard, Mustard agreed to —

Sylvi: Okay, yeah, yeah, okay.

Austin: Uh, I think that that's — Cheal, did, did I miss a Cheal scene? No.

Keith: Uh, we did my scene last.

Austin: What was it? It's on the list.

Keith: Okay. We did...

Austin: What was it? It wasn't the —

Keith: I think, we did my ghost —

Austin: Oh!Ghost, yeah.

Keith: Deleted evidence of me being —

Austin: Oh, of you — right, uh-huh.

Keith: In the cover.

Austin: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Sylvi: Someone has already sent me money, by the way.

Jack: [laughing]

Keith: Uh, Keith J Carberry, also.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Uh...

Keith: \$ Keith J Carberry.

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Keith: PayPal.me/keithjcarberry.

Jack: http... [chuckles] s.

Sylvi: [laughing]

Austin: Uh-huh?

Keith: [laughing] Contentburger.biz.

Austin: Oh, dot biz! Uh... of his help covering up —

Sylvi: Right, I forget that Cheal walked in on that.

Austin: Deutsch's murder... okay. Added. So, we have a whole new round going. Also, let's go over our, uh, threats. Hundreds of military starships using a nearby moon as a staging area. That is resolved, as General Mourning has arrived with a number of, uh, starships of her own, uh, from the Twilight Mirage. Uh, we're resolving it not because conflict isn't approaching, but because, uh, it seems as if the state of things is effectively set. Uh, Jack, do you want to say, you want to explain what that state is, broadly?

Jack: Yeah, uh, uh, 3T, uh, uh, uh, kind of like, in addition to their, their mate Decario, put a bunch of Mirage bombs on ships and detonated them, spreading the Mirage out closer towards Palisade, right?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: It's sort of heading out in that direction.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: And, following that, a group of people armed themselves with improvised weapons, commandeered a few ships, and left, uh, to go and like, sort of nebulously fight, right? To just like, fight on Palisade. In response, General Mourning, who is a, a, Qui Err Coalition member, has arrived with a bunch of sort of golden Mirage starships, uh, and has started putting in place a sort of assembly to think through with the community about what it means when the Twilight Mirage goes to war, uh, and has sort of extremely warily roped 3T into that, with the knowledge that if she doesn't, he's going to, uh, [chuckling], continue doing it anyway, uh, outside of her purview.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: Does that about cover it?

Austin: I think that that about covers it. The other two active threats. Residents have been disappearing, emerging days later as new members of a strange cult. We know that cult now to be called the Friends of Devotion, and that they have both, uh, a number of different fronts. The Friends of Devotion is like the cult itself, but there is also the Orchard Syndicate, uh, and they have been doing rituals around spaceships, and on space trucks —

Jack: They stole a magnet, turned gravity off.

Austin: Doing big magnet stuff — yeah, exactly. Uh, and they are doing stuff with a sense of people's pulses synchronizing. Uh, and there's also just this sense of, uh, the Mirage is further extending — I mean I just said this with the 3T thing also, in a way. But, the... the density of the Mirage, here at what was the fringe, was supposed to be small enough that certain, certain things shouldn't be working as well as they are, certain Mirage-y, like, augmented reality things. And we believe that it is, or I mean, I guess this, is just the case, because this is what our Lambent Strand entry is — the Fervor or Devotion is what people are pulling on here, when they're using Mirage-y style weirdness, or when they're relying on the super-tech of the Twilight Mirage. The, the Fervor, or, or Devotion is like, supplementing the Mirage's natural, uh, abilities. Uh, and then, finally, a huge shipment of blue oranges has pushed the Brink to the brink. There are too many people to safely house to keep well-fed, et cetera. Uh, that has continued to be a problem, as, as we just have so many people onboard, even as the oranges continue to ship out. Uh, we also still have the big Cycle End Day, uh, coming up. So, a lot happening.

Jack: Something I, something I realized as well is like, exacerbating that third one is that the Qui Err troops coming in, uh, will also put a strain on the ship.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Jack: I imagine that they have brought rations, so it's not like they're taking the, the station's food.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hm.

Jack: But it is just like, a bunch more people have showed up. Uh...

Austin: Yeah, I will remind you that —

Keith: It is possible —

Austin: I added them to, to the four, to the, the to the list of military people we can pull into scenes and stuff, so...

Keith: Is it possible that a group like that coming in would proactively bring extra supplies, despite taking up some space?

Austin: Maybe. But if so, we should —

Jack: Uh, yeah, maybe.

Keith: Knowing that that was an issue —

Austin: We should, we should see that in a scene. We should just decide that we should actually make it visible, right? Speaking of scenes, we should jump into them. Who wants to kick things off with a major or minor scene, or a read the station? It's been a little while, so obviously got to shake some, some rust off here.

Keith: Yeah, can I get a reminder of like, what exactly you can do during a read the station? I know like, what it, how it, the form of a read the station —

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: But not the function.

Austin: Uh, if you click the little arrows in the top right of it, Keith, here, it'll expand it, and you'll be able to see the whole thing. You choose a topic, uh, decide on the topic under discussion. You might talk about a previous scene events, a particular station issue, or a wider cultural or philosophical point. You can frame your topic as a question, as in, should we accept the deserters as refugees, or a statement, as in, the deserters will bring war upon us. Then, starting on your left, each player takes turns weighing in on the topic. You speak as a class of residents, like the Smugglers, or as an established group, like Red Sun Galactic. Give a sentence describing how that group feels about the issue. The views shared are always opinions and beliefs, not facts. And then, in conclusion, once everyone's weighed in, including you, the discussion is over. You don't need to settle upon a unified position. Communities are messy, and contain multitudes. So, just a way to kind of — pardon the pun, or the reference, but to get the pulse of the station and see how people are feeling about something. Which is useful, because it can always, those answers can be prompts for future scenes, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: In a way.

Keith: And then we've resolved our hundreds of military warships.

Austin: Yes. So really, we have Devotion — I mean, that doesn't mean we're done having scenes about —

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That stuff, necessarily. But it does mean that we should probably start to lean into these second two sets. And a good way to bridge that would be to talk about how the new soldiers have led to connections to threat number three. So maybe that's a place to start. Does anyone have strong feelings... is there like a minor scene with General Mourning here, Jack? Is there a scene with, uh, the Brink Proxy interfacing with these arrivals? Uh... for either Ali or Jack, because I know both of y'all have Brink Proxy connections. [pause] Do we want to start off with a bang and see if Deutsch is going after another target? That could be a fun way to start, a —

Sylvi: Oh, boy.

Austin: An episode off.

Sylvi: We could. I know who one of them is.

Austin: Oh, word?

Keith: Yeah, I mean, one of them is arriving.

Sylvi: Yeah, I think I said this last time.

Keith: You did. You revealed —

Austin: Oh, you did. You did.

Keith: Towards the end, who your other two targets were.

Sylvi: Yeah, I think I said it was General Mourning.

Austin: Right.

Sylvi: So like, if we want to [chuckling] kill her right now now.

Ali and Keith: [laughing]

Austin: God...

Sylvi: But I figured we'd want a bit longer.

Austin: I mean, maybe it's the, showing the barrel of the gun a little bit, you know —

Sylvi: I could fuck it up.

Austin: Maybe it's the like —

Sylvi: Oh yeah, true.

Austin: We could do it that way, as a way of kicking it off.

Keith: Yeah. Well, there is something really satisfying, I think — I mean, I think it works both ways. Like, I, I do want to see General Mourning, and like, what, uh, having a new presence like that, on the station, is going to lead to. But on the other hand, like, have — teasing a big threat and then they show up and they get killed immediately is kind of fun and funny.

Austin: It's funny that you think of General Mourning as a big threat. [chuckles] because I actually think it's the other way.

Keith: Or, uh, uh, uh, uh, not a —

Austin: I think of like General Mourning as the person who is —

Keith: A stabilizing force?

Austin: Yeah, is a stabilizing force to —

Keith: I guess, I guess I meant a, a, uh, not a threat, but, a potential agent of —

Austin: Yes.

Keith: Change to the plot.

Austin: Yes, totally. Uh...

Jack: We could also —

Keith: Uh, Mourning is she/her, is that — am I right?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Okay. Yeah. She's a, she's a, she's a threat to the stability of things getting worse, which is what's been happening.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: [chuckling] The stability of things getting worse.

Keith: Yeah, we've been, we've been on a very stable things getting worse course.

Ali: [laughing]

Keith: And she is a massive threat to that.

Sylvi: Yeah. I would like things to continue that way, or at least Lament would, you know?

Austin: Uh-huh. I bet, I bet. Yeah, uh-huh.

Sylvi: My employers would.

Austin: Yes. Jack, you were going to say something else, too, I want to make sure we don't miss that, in the excitement.

Jack: Is there, is there a way that... hm. Uh... we could have General Mourning talking to people about uh, her, her conviction that there are spies on the station. [chuckling]

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And that if people haven't prepped for that, they're making a mistake. Uh, and then —

Austin: General Mourning —

Jack: Active measures need to be —

Austin: Is General Mourning like, talking to Brink Proxy about this?

Jack: I think it is, yeah. I think so. I mean, it might be Mustard. I, I don't know how involved Mustard is right now in the, uh... going and falling into a cult. [chuckling]

Austin: Right, right, sure.

Sylvi: [chuckling]

Jack: Type beat.

Sylvi: [cackles]

Ali: Cult type beat, yep.

Jack: Oh, god, cult type beat.

Ali: That's my new private Twitter name.

Jack: That's sang — Sangfielle.

Sylvi: I love that [unintelligible]

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: I just like already know — that, that is that lil peep's witchblades. Like I'm pretty sure that's just exactly what —

Ali, Sylvi and Jack: [laughing]

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: What it is already.

Jack: Mm-hm. Yeah! Between, yeah, I mean, I think it, I think we, I think we get General Mourning sitting at a desk in Brink Proxy, uh, looking through reports from the station, over the last, you know, week? I guess — I don't know the time scale, this has all been happening quite quickly, right? Uh, and, and becoming increasingly focused on this shootout, that shut down one of those areas, when Gimme Gimme fought, uh, Deutsch, after she had killed Knighton. Uh, and, uh, just having the, like, something is, something is wrong about this. This does not look like just tensions rising on the ship. Uh, and so I think she puts it outright to Brink Proxy. You know.

Jack (as Mourning): There are, uh, Principality spies onboard the station. And if you don't have measures in place to deal with them already, then this is something we need to start addressing right now.

Austin: Uh, does — does Mourning notice that on the day of 3T's bombs, Coracin Seventine had been completely... like, locked out of noticing any of that stuff? [chuckling]

Jack: Oh god, I mean, if she's looking through the files, yes, right? Like — [chuckles] this is, this is someone trying to be like, god, there's that really creepy job, uh, also might kind of be Mustard's deal, they call them like, forensic accountants?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Jack: Uh, who are like, accountants who pick, who just look through, look at, what the, the numbers are telling, uh, them that isn't being said. They're a, they're a unique, special type of cop, in that they're awful in a different way.

Keith: [chuckles]

Jack: And I don't think that Mourning is a forensic accountant, but I think she's definitely been trained to look at, look at information like this and go — wait a second. What, what's going on — and, you know, why was Severtine locked out, and who came in, and who did they speak to? And I think probably gets Mustard's name.

Ali: [giggling]

Jack: Uh, if it, if it was in there. Uh, and is like, all right, okay, uh, we're going to need everybody to be on alert in terms of who is talking to who, where and when, and what information is moving around. And straight up work with the assumption that anything you say might reach the ears of the Principality.

Austin: Mm-hm..

Ali (as Mustard): Uh, yeah, I mean, are there any specific, uh, targets that you're... looking to keep track of?

Jack (as Mourning): Well, obviously I've been talking with Tanager, following, uh, their actions, uh, the detonation of the Mirage bombs.

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, true, yes. What a scene.

Jack (as Mourning): It was, it was a mess, honestly. Uh, but as I look further into it, I can see here that, uh, Severtine? Uh, is this your head of security? He was, uh, uh, especially barred from attending the show, the, the show, uh, during which Tanager launched the Mirage bombs. Would you know anything about that?

Ali (as Mustard): I would indeed. Yeah, we had received — we had received, uh, uh, multiple complaints from Tanager and their associates that, uh, uh, our head of security was, was harassing him, so...

Jack (as Mourning): Okay.

Ali (as Mustard): We, we, we, uh, we made a, uh, you know, an employee change there.

Jack (as Mourning): Did you think that that, uh, uh, necessitated the complete removal of a security team from the venue?

Ali (as Mustard): Uh, well, I mean, uh, Cheal has a bodyguard on the scene, and, uh, I was present at the concert. And —

Jack (as Mourning): So there, there were two of you.

Ali (as Mustard): Well, it's a kind of a small place.

Austin: [chuckling]

Jack (as Mourning): I understand that it was very full on the night of the event, and, you know, maybe if there had been, uh, more of a presence there, the events wouldn't have transpired as they were. I'm, I'm grateful that you pulled the security chief off, but I don't understand why this needed the full removal of security. We have to deal with the fact that there is very likely Principality saboteurs acting within our midst, and that —

Ali (as Mustard): Oh yeah, we are prepared to deal with that.

Jack (as Mourning): How?

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Ugh.

Ali (as Mustard): Well, I've, I'm... I'm not the head of security, you understand. I'm a volunteer. But I'm here to help you, uh, you're the, the, the military leader here. And I'm here to assist you, in whatever assistance you might need.

Keith: Can I... make a move?

Ali: Please.

Keith: I know it's, it's been very quick, and so I hesitate to say things are too quiet. But that is the only thing that really would fit with right now. But I do really want to offer Mustard something rare or illicit at a ruinously high price.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Austin: Oh, okay. Yeah.

Ali: You don't say.

Keith: Uh, but, I also, I don't know if — oh, uh... I changed my mind. I want to make a move as the markets.

Austin: There we go.

Keith: Because I can do the same thing.

Austin: You can absolutely do this, yeah.

Keith: Because someone needs a job —

Jack: Oh, you mean the Divine, comma, Arbitrage?

Austin: Someone needs a job done — yep.

Keith: This is much better.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Keith: And I can almost do the exact same move, which is, uh... introduce an opportunist or hustler with a predatory offer. This is the app, the, uh, Arbitrage is sending you a notification that, like, hey, you know, you have all those cameras, which is great, that you monitor all these cameras. But, uh, I have some software that can like, detect crime.

Austin: Jesus. I hate it. I hate it.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi: [chuckling]

Keith: So, if you give us access to the cameras, we can start alerting people as soon as something is happening, so —

Austin: Keith, can I add to this? Can I just add a little part of the sale?

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah.

Austin: Arbitrage has data from the Principality — Arbitrage can, the algorithms that, that all of our, all of our app is based on is from the Principality, so we're not using any Twilight Mirage propriety data. We're, we're specifically tuned to outsiders, to people who aren't from here, because all of the, the, you know, the stuff that we learned, or that we, that we fed into the machine learning algorithm, is from Partizan, right? It's from other parts of the Principality, and not from —

Keith: Right.

Austin: So it's, it's not even like we're feeding it data from your culture, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It's perfect. You know, you can easily identify someone from a different culture, by just letting a computer see how they walk.

Keith: Right.

Sylvi: Ugh.

Keith: And then, we'll let you know, so you don't have to be monitoring these cameras 24/7, making sure that you just happen to be on the one where the crime's happening. Because we have eyes on all the cameras.

Austin: Also, it's perfect. Because wasn't the problems with Severtine, that he let his bias get in the way. He didn't like 3T, right? And so that, that obscured that there might be a real security threat. Because you couldn't let his bias get in the way. So you're removing the human bias from the job.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: The computer's just a computer.

Keith: Right. Computers don't hate pop stars.

Ali (as Mustard): [laughing] Well, I've been maintaining a system of, uh, servers and cameras and information on the, uh, denzians [sic] [wheezes laughing] of our fair spaceport. And, to be honest, I mean, I, I get that there's been some, some trouble. Uh,

I, we're stretched pretty thin here, in the Brink Proxy. Uh... but, I think that there might be an opportunity to use the system that I've set up, along with a [laughing] uh, along with some algorithms and an external source, that might be able to better, uh... analyze —

Austin: Mmm.

Ali (as Mustard): The, uh, the data that we already have. Does this sound like —

Jack (as Mourning): I must say, I'm a little —

Ali: [laughing]

Jack (as Mourning): I'm a little concerned, uh, by what you're telling me, Mustard. Uh... as I understand it, Brink Proxy was set up specifically to, uh, hand these things to people, capable of talking to other people, or, or making decisions, or people within the community themselves. I'm, uh, any time we get a computer involved in making these decisions, put it down to an algorithm, things can start getting pretty nasty pretty fast. I'd be very interested to see the system that you have established —

Austin: [laughing]

Jack (as Mourning): Before we put it into practice.

Ali (as Mustard): By all means! Uh...

Ali: [wheezes laughing]

Austin: Whew!

Ali: I think she sets up her little, her little, her little, uh... tablet or whatever it's been. It's been like a little PC, personal computer.

Austin: Oh yeah, a PC, yeah.

Ali: [laughing]

Keith: Cool tech microlaptop.

Ali: Going through — yeah, yeah, going through her little like, DOS screen, uh, to do the funny little log in before it's just like, just like a screen of different video screens of the [laughing] surveillance areas in the ship. Uh... and like turning the screen towards Mourning to be like —

Ali (as Mustard): Well, so this is what it is. Uh, it's pretty preliminary, but, I would say that you have a pretty good view of most places of the station. Uh —

Austin: I think it like, does highlights of people who are like, oh, this is an Orion — we've talked about there being Orion, uh, you know, merchants and executives and stuff, visiting. Uh, because they're not part of either of the, you know, there are parts of Stel Orion who happen to be neutral, right? And it, you know, it probably puts squares around those. And it says like, “high probability: outsider.” And it probably puts circles and squares around other people, but it says like, “medium probability.” And you're just like, okay, well — it always comes down to a person in the end. A person has to make the call as to whether or not it's accurate.

Jack (as Mourning): How was this built?

Keith: [laughing]

Jack (as Mourning): What is the source of the these algorithms? You're just showing me people from Orion.

Ali (as Mustard): Well, I, uh, through the infrastructure that Brink Proxy already had developed, I added some additional security measures, and, uh, some cameras. And then, uh, recently, uh, I would say that the, the, uh, I have... [laughing] come in contact with a, with a, uh, merchant, a newcomer to the station, uh, who seems really passionate in terms of helping...

Austin: [chuckles]

Keith: [laughing]

Ali: [chuckling]

Ali (as Mustard): Functionality here.

Jack (as Mourning): And you've vetted them, presumably?

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, of course.

Austin: [laughing]

Jack (as Mourning): You know, taking on these algorithms without vetting these people... how did you vet them? Because I'm looking for spies, Red. I mean, here's someone who has arrived to the station, passionate to help, and offered you a series of algorithms, who, correct me if I'm wrong, their code is not visible to you.

Ali (as Mourning): Oh, no, no, no, no.

Austin: [laughing]

Jack (as Mourning): So you can't see their —

Keith: [laughing]

Austin: No, it's very safe, it's invisible, it's very —

Keith: [laughing]

Ali: [cackling]

Ali (as Mustard): Well, it's more of a, like a collaboration, you know? I work on what I have, and this, this source sort of improves it. Uh, I vetted them through, you know, sort of a personal commission, and I was happy with their work.

Austin: [cackling] I vetted them by asking them to get me a magazine that kills people!

Everyone: [laughing]

Austin: And they did it, so I thought...

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Good enough!

Keith: Mmm.

Sylvi: Because they got the good shit!

Austin: Mm-hm!

Ali (as Mustard): These are very... uh, trying times for our station. And I didn't want to leave any stone unturned.

Jack (as Mourning): No, I can tell that. What is the name of this, merchant? Red?

Ali: [chuckling]

Ali (as Mustard): It's...

Ali: [can't stop laughing]

Everyone: [cracking up]

Jack (as Mourning): Are you okay? Would you like some water?

Ali (as Mustard): Please, yes.

Ali: Gulp gulp!

Keith: Hey, real quick, before you answer this, can you take a look at this magazine?

Everyone: [laughing]

Ali (as Mustard): It's such a funny name! Uh, very historical. It's the Divine, comma, Arbitrage?

Jack (as Mourning): Okay, so, I'm going to need to confiscate your laptop... uh...

Ali and Keith: [laughing]

Jack (as Mourning): I intend to, uh...

Jack: And she just like, looks over at the corner of the room, where like, a woman has been sitting, uh, working on her own laptop, and she comes over and picks it up and puts it in a bag.

Jack (as Mourning): My goal is to make a mirror of this and get it back to you within, uh, 48 hours. Uh, if I'm not able to do that, I'll get it back to you within 72. Uh, that's something I can guarantee. Uh, this is, uh, uh, a Divine, Red. Uh... and very potentially a

way for bad actors to begin to make moves within the station, if they haven't been making moves already. I'm sorry that I have to take your computer away. Uh, but, uh, I think that it is the right call, here and now. Do you have any, is there any other way that this merchant has been contacting you?

Ali (as Mustard): Mostly via text.

Austin: [chuckling]

Jack (as Mourning): Have you met — no of course you — okay...

Ali: [wheezes]

Jack (as Mourning): Do you know — oh, okay...

Austin: Ugh...

Jack (as Mourning): All right. Before I go — uh, I've also noticed that there was, uh, an event recently where shots were fired in, uh, the 13th quadrant. I believe a body was found. You closed everything down quickly and put people in to, uh, sweep the area, which I think was really quick thinking. Did you ever get to the bottom of what that was about?

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, the shooting, uh... I didn't deal with that personally, but I might be able to get you in touch with the, the Brink Proxy associate who was. I was, uh, [sucks teeth][wheezes] I was in a meeting.

Austin: Oh, fuck.

Ali (as Mustard): I was in an assembl — no, I was in a, I was in an assemblage.

Keith: [laughing]

Jack: [chuckling] No, it's okay.

Sylvi: Somewhere on the station, a guy untenses.

Everyone: [laughing]

Jack: Yeah, I feel like, uh, General Mourning has realized pretty quickly that they don't say meeting here. I'm sure that she would be fine with —

Ali: [chuckling]

Jack: Calling all this stuff meetings, but she's like, mmm, right. These weirdos have decided to call it assemblages.

Austin: [sighs] Ugh... I actually really love Mourning also being, I hadn't thought about this, but of course of Qui Err are not, they don't have a history of being pro-divine. So just like, even hearing the word Divine is like ah, okay. They now live with Divines. There are Divines still inside of the Twilight Mirage, in the parts of the Divine Fleet that stayed behind and didn't become the Divine Free States, and then —

Jack: They're not the Fleet — critical.

Austin: But they're critically — none of the various fleets, right? Twilight Mirage ends with three different fleets, with different relationships with Divines, depending on whether you're the Cadent, the Cadent Under — not the Cadent under — what's the, what was the — the Waking Cadent.

Jack: The Waking Cadent?

Austin: The Waking Cadent, the NEH fleet, or the, uh, the Divine, what would become the Divine Principality. All different relationships with Divines, but also just the people who, who remained and eventually, you know, formed into the Qui Err or were brought into the Qui Err Coalition. Some of them continue to make, and, and have good relations with Divines, like Arbit, right? But it's interesting to see Mourning not just be like, “oh, well a Divine is a good thing.” What it seems like Mourning understands is, a Divine is a powerful thing, you know?

Jack: Well, and something that Mourning absolutely will know, and you can correct me if I'm wrong here, Austin, uh, uh, combat Divines have presumably been deployed on Palisade by now.

Austin: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely. Yes.

Jack: Like, they just use them as weapons, and —

Austin: Also, just as like a deep, deep go-back to the history of the Qui Err, Quire came under the influence of Independence, the Divine Independence, which made them tear each other apart right?

Jack: Yep.

Austin: Uh, and so like, has a particular, specific, historical relationship with Divines that is, you know, maybe not as a category, they can't be trusted, but look at the harm they can do, you know? So, anyway... uh... oof! That felt like a scene.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Who's up? Do we want to see this... uh, this retreat? Or, I guess maybe we should not do two Mustard scenes back and — back to back.

Ali: [chuckling]

Keith: Although I will say that it really feels like Mustard could use a retreat right about now.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Aha. True.

Ali: Minor scene of Mustard packing her magazine, her beachwear...

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Austin: Oh my god.

Sylvi: Nobody's going to read that while they're away.

Ali: [chuckling] Let's fucking go.

Austin: Can I —

Jack: I do want to know — go on.

Austin: Go ahead, no, you go ahead.

Jack: Oh, I want to know real quick. Like, so Mustard got this magazine, uh, because it featured information about someone from Brink in it, right?

Austin: Yeah, and remember, it ended up being... I don't remember if this is true or not, but an interview between Grand Mag and Morning's Observation.

Ali: Uh-huh.

Jack: Uh, what has Mustard's experience of reading the magazine been? Is she like, very careful to read the interview, and then like, close it? What does it look like when Mustard reads the magazine?

Ali: Uh, I think it's mostly staying in the like, polyphane...

Jack: [chuckling] Right.

Ali: Do you have polyphane in the Twilight Mirage? [giggling]

Austin: Yeah. Probably some sort of protective... package.

Ali: Yeah. Uh... yeah, it's mostly just like a gun that's onscreen, right? Like — [laughing]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: We're not being subtle about this.

Jack: Be very careful, keep it there...

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: Pack it in my suitcase as I head to the retreat.

Ali: Uh-huh.

Austin: Could I get a scene between 3T and CTH Pasodoble? And here's the framing. I think it is... in one of these big assemblages that Mourning has put into, into place. That is a, uh, one of these like, talking through, what is the position of everybody, what is, like, what is the right way to go about trying to resist and help others resist against the Principality? Uh... et cetera, et

cetera, et cetera. And 3T is like, you know, 3T doesn't like meetings or assemblages. 3T likes concerts, and performances, and rituals...

Jack: And action.

Austin: And action.

Sylvi: I really thought you were going to say conventions —

Austin: Likes conventions...

Sylvi: And I was like fuck, adding a third version...

Austin: Got to go to cons. Yeah, uh-huh. Uh... the, and I think a thing that I want is like, the meeting, which has just been long and boring, and 3T's like, doing his best to like, help be a symbol of unity in this moment, and like, yeah, it's very important that we talk things through, and that we listen to the da-da-da. But is like, on script and is doing his best, but is not having a good time. And I want this to be like, all right everybody, we're going to take a 15 minute recess or a 20 minute break, to go get some punch, you know. If you need to take a break to go outside and stretch your legs, go do that. I don't know if Pasodoble was in the meeting, or if Pasodoble just happens to be outside, you tell me. But I would love for Pasodoble to see 3T in a moment of like, boredom and weakness.

Sylvi: I think he was, he's at, uh, the assemblage.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: Uh, making a plan to be seen, like, just like, taking little notes on a notepad and stuff, on things, just trying to, looking as, looking very interested in everything.

Austin: Sure.

Sylvi: Uh...

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Oh, Tanager. How's today finding you?

Austin (as 3T): Ah, CTH. You know...

Austin: Looking over my shoulder. I'm wearing a suit today, you know, still with the nails in my, in my hair, but just like a gray business suit, with a thin, thin silver tie. Uh...

Austin (as 3T): Uh... it's, uh... you know, it's a process. I thought... I thought after the concert, everything would be go, go, go. And instead it's like, stop and share, you know? And I like stopping and sharing, but... right now it felt like we needed a go, go, go. So... how you been?

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): You know, things are always a bit go, go, go for me, but I guess that's with all the people around here, you know, keeping me busy. I'm sure you could find something to make you feel like you're doing something around here.

Austin (as 3T): If you have any opportunities, let me know. Right now, uh, General Mourning is... I wouldn't say keeping me under lock and key, but it does feel like my movement is... there's so many meetings, I don't have a lot of free time to be other places, you know.

Sylvi: Uh, when Mourning gets brought up, this is like the first time we've sees CTH frown a bit.

Austin: Ugh.

Sylvi: He's like —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Ah, yes, the General. Quite an imposing figure.

Austin (as 3T): Oh, do you know her?

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Yes, we've been acquainted. Very casually, just when she arrived. Uh... a very wary one, that General Mourning.

Austin (as 3T): You would think I'd be the first person to be like, yeah, we need generals, but... I think we were doing fine with just people getting out there and doing it themselves, so...

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Mm. A lot less bureaucracy when it's like that, am I right?

Austin (as 3T): That is what I'm saying, so... I mean, could you, if you know her like that, could you talk to her? And like —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): [laughs] I don't think she'd listen to me. However... I think we could probably work something out. A lot of my friends are also similarly antsy about the situation.

Austin (as 3T): Okay.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Maybe you could come meet some of them? See if anybody is eager to join up with you? Find... I'm not sure where you're wanting to point yourself right now, but...

Austin (as 3T): I just.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): I know that, you know... that ferocity you're showing right now now is, needs to be used for something good.

Austin (as 3T): When is it? I mean, I don't know if I can get away, if it's just another meeting, you know? Or, assemblage, sorry.

Sylvi: Am I going to — are we going to slowly invite everyone to the retreat? Is that's what happening?

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: It may be happening.

Sylvi: This is kind of where I was going.

Austin: Also, is it like a cycle-end retreat? Is it like, timed to the clock turning over to the new year?

Sylvi: Probably? I, the timing of it wasn't an idea I had. I just had an idea for the location.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: I think that makes sense, though.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I think so, too, I think that's fun. So yeah, you — go ahead.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): We're having a bit — I guess, I guess neither the word that you don't like using for an assemblage, or the word assemblage itself would be accurate for it. Uh, we're going on a bit of a retreat. A weeklong gathering, uh, and, apologies, I'm still pretty new around here. You guys have some interesting slang.

Austin (as 3T): Well, we just like to make sure people don't feel like they're stuck in meetings, which, the irony of it is not lost on me. A retreat though, sounds good. A retreat, I feel like I could sell to Mourning. Could you make it look like I was already signed up for the retreat, from like a month ago, before all this? That way I can be like —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Of course I can!

Austin (as 3T): Oh, I have other obligations! I already agreed. I'm going to go —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Tanager, we're friends. Don't you worry about it. I can take care of this no problem.

Austin (as 3T): Thank you so much. That's... I'm looking forward to it. When is it?

Sylvi: [laughing] Out of character, do we have, do we know —

Austin: No, we don't have — no, just, days, a couple of days from now.

Sylvi: A couple, yeah, a couple days from now. 3 days from now... there's a number.

Austin: That's a number

Sylvi: Two days? Two days. Let's go two. I don't know what pace we're moving on. It feels like, sometimes we do like a recording session is one day.

Austin: I know.

Sylvi: And so I'm like, I don't, I feel like we want to get to this today.

Austin: I think we should, we should get to this today.

Keith: It feels like, this is our fourth session, and it feels like it's been almost a week.

Austin: I, yeah, uh-huh. I, well, yeah, I don't know. I definitely, been a week. Because I feel like we were teasing the weekend last time, and we got to the weekend, right?

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So, yeah, I think... we don't need to, we don't need to belabor this. Tanager's excited about this. Sends you details. Is excited to go.

Sylvi: Mm-hm.

Austin: Who is up? We need a Lament, a Mustard, or a Cheal scene. Or I guess we need a Sylvi, Keith, or Ali scene.

Sylvi: I did think of a way to keep, uh, keep Mourning on the board, while also showing me trying to do my job, while also possibly putting myself in a compromising position or unauthorized location?

Austin: I love that.

Sylvi: So, we're going to have to flashback to the, the meeting between, uh, Mustard and Mourning. Uh...

Jack: Oh, about spies.

Sylvi: About spies. Uh, where there was a spy outside who couldn't figure out why the detonator in Mustard's office wasn't working —

Ali: [giggling]

Sylvi: That's connected to the bomb in Mustard's office wasn't working. Uh... and, she is just like, it's hard to hide, like, bunny ears under a hat, but she's trying to do it.

Austin: God.

Sylvi: There's, I'm really trying to hit like, 90s anime aesthetics with this character. Uh, like, backwards baseball cap with rabbit ears pointing down, is what I'm thinking of right now.

Ali: [giggling]

Jack: [chuckles] Yeah.

Sylvi: And, eventually, when she sees, sees Mourning leave, she just, like, spikes the det- the broken detonator into a garbage nearby, and has to figure out how she can — she has to get into Mustard's office, where she's not supposed to be, to retrieve a bomb that she put there, uh, when no one was there, except now there's people who are there who could find it.

Jack: Mmm.

Sylvi: Uh...

Austin: That's very good.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Do you... what does the bit where you specifically are getting, what was the phrasing on it? Or, I guess this is a compromise — or, I guess this is a necessarily compromising position.

Sylvi: That is what I was trying — I think unauthorized location was more what I was leaning into, uh...

Austin: So do they find you doing this? Do you have to like, try to get away, and —

Sylvi: I think I try to talk myself out of it, is more what happens. [chuckling]

Austin: Oh. So, is it just regular Brink Proxy folks? Is it... who finds you there? Is it new members of this new military?

Sylvi: I think it's either that or it's other Brink Proxy members. I'd be happy to have it be Mustard, but also I know, Ali's got to have a scene coming up, and we recently were like, don't want to do two in a row for her, so like —

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: Oh, I can —

Sylvi: I mean, that's fair, that's —

Ali: Yeah.

Sylvi: Uh... but, yeah. So, regardless, I think when people walk in, she's just like, I — like, gets up from being underneath Mustard's desk, and is like —

Sylvi (as Lament): I have been waiting for my meeting for... 20 minutes now!

Sylvi: Hiding an undetonated bomb behind her back.

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, I'm, I'm sorry, were you on the, on the, the schedule? I didn't have you in my...

Sylvi (as Lament): Uh-huh, yeah. If you look closely, you'll see, what's —

Sylvi: I'm going to look up a random, like, one of the names on one of these sheets here. Uh...

Sylvi (as Lament): Yeah, if you see, uh, Latent Peach, that's me.

Ali (as Mustard): Latent Peach, oh my goodness, I'm so sorry, Peach.

Sylvi (as Lament): No worries — you know, just, I have half a mind just to... storm on right out of here.

Ali (as Mustard): Oh my goodness, no, no, no, no. Please sit down. Can I get you a water? Or anything? I'd like to apologize. Uh... it's been a very stressful week here, as you probably know, which is why you're here. It doesn't excuse my behavior, but I'd like to start out on the right foot.

Sylvi (as Lament): I'm... good. No... water. Thank you.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi: Still... sitting down, but not sure why she's doing it.

Austin: [chuckles]

Ali (as Mustard): This is clearly very urgent to you, and your priorities are my priorities. How may I help you?

Sylvi (as Lament): Uh... it's... uh... those dang birds again!

Ali: [gasps]

Austin: [laughing]

Sylvi (as Lament): I can't get through a single night's sleep without hearing all manners of pecks and peeps and squawks and squeaks from those birds.

Ali: [wheezes laughing]

Sylvi (as Lament): We need to do something about it, right now.

Ali (as Mustard): Sure, sure, sure. Which, uh, which section of the station do you, do you reside in, have you been hearing these disturbances?

Sylvi (as Lament): Uh... six?

Ali (as Mustard): Six!

Austin: Mm.

Sylvi (as Lament): Yeah.

Ali (as Mustard): Are there residential areas in station 6?

Sylvi (as Lament): Recently added! Wouldn't you know.

Ali: [laughing]

Ali (as Mustard): Well, I've, I've, you know, I suppose I've been... that was rude to ask, I apologize.

Sylvi (as Lament): You're on thin ice.

Ali: [laughing]

Ali (as Mustard): Because the birds are a common occurrence, we do have some earplugs here available in the office. But, uh, is there like a certain time of day that this is an issue for you, or...

Sylvi (as Lament): Uh, it's kind of an all the time thing.

Ali (as Mustard): All the time. Okay, writing this down.

Ali: [wheezes laughing]

Sylvi (as Lament): They're like right, they're like right outside. They live — there's a nest. There's like three nests right outside my door.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali (as Mustard): So, unfortunately, it isn't Brink Proxy policy to remove nests. Uh, if they were —

Sylvi (as Lament): Ugh, of course it isn't.

Ali: [cackling]

Ali (as Mustard): If they were independent birds, just hanging out —

Ali: [laughing] Sorry.

Sylvi: [laughing]

Jack: Independent birds? Just hanging out?

Austin: Just hanging out, independent...

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: Free spirited.

Keith: Flying solo.

Ali (as Mustard): If it was just, perhaps, a resting area for them, perhaps we could, we could do some, uh, oppositional noise, uh, uh, [laughing]

Jack: I'd like to make a move —

Keith: We can teach them scream therapy.

Austin: Good, yes, good.

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: Uh, I have a move called trigger an ominous countdown.

Ali and Sylvi: [cackling]

Jack: Uh...

Ali: Sure.

Jack: A voice, uh, from behind, uh, uh, uh, Deutsch, says — “46. 45.”

Sylvi (as Lament): If you'll excuse me, I realized — I left all of my ovens on. Uh...

Austin: Oh!

Ali (as Mustard): Uh, oh. But I, I, I, I need you to —

Sylvi (as Lament): It's, you know what, it's fine, I —

Ali (as Mustard): Fill out this form, uh, —

Sylvi (as Lament): You know, it's fine, I got this video at home about how to kill and butcher every type of bird, I'll be okay —

Austin: [chuckling]

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: Uh, I'm going to make a move. Are you starting to leave here, is that —

Sylvi: Yeah, I'm getting up and trying to like back away from —

Austin: Okay. As you're backing away.

Jack: Without turning. [chuckling]

Austin: Without turning, I'm using the unaffiliated move, bring someone's past to reckoning. And Joe de Vivre enters the scene, the charming rogue Mustard can't stop, can't help loving. And Joe is like, uh,

Austin (as Joe): Hey, Mustard, where's your PC? I was going to borrow it to play some checkers. Oh, what are you doing here, Deutsch?

Austin: And of course, Joe de Vivre knows your name, because of your relationship with Joie de Vivre, the beautiful spacer you told everything to. And you might recall, Mustard, that this person just told you their name was Latent.

Ali: I sure do, yeah.

Jack: Peach.

Austin: Peach, Latent Peach. Not Deutsch.

Sylvi (as Lament): Did I say Peach? I meant Deutsch.

Sylvi: [laughing]

Ali (as Mustard): Hm...

Austin (as Joe): Do you — I just need the computer really quick, I got just a crazy checkers craving. I gotta play some checkers.

Sylvi (as Lament): You should let — Joe, that sounds great. Hey, you!

Sylvi: Doesn't know Mustard's name, so just points with one of her hands.

Sylvi (as Lament): You should let him do that, that seems like really pressing business.

Ali (as Mustard): I, I'm sorry. Did you, did you speak to me under false pretenses?

Jack: 41! 40.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi (as Lament): I'm really sorry. Uh, I — the bird thing was —

Ali (as Mustard): Come back here!

Sylvi (as Lament): Uh, uh... bye!

Ali: [laughing]

Austin (as Joe): That's a weird one.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi: Sprinting to find an airlock.

Austin: To throw the bomb, not to jump —

Sylvi: Throw the bomb out of, yeah.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Austin (as Joe): Everything all right with Deutsch?

Ali (as Mustard): Well, well something with lies, and something about birds. I can't even tell anymore.

Austin: All right, real, real question. How much did Joie tell Joe?

Sylvi: Oh...

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Because I bet it's not everything.

Jack: No, but is it as much would be suggested by the fact that they have similar names?

Keith: [laughing]

Jack: This is Joe and Joie de Vivre.

Sylvi: I feel like, I feel like it would be something, like, seemingly innocuous that would be damning, right? Like, oh, she's from —

Keith: We're mind twins.

Austin: That's exactly it.

Sylvi: This place, right? Like that type of thing?

Austin: Exactly. That's —

Austin (as Joe): Yeah, well, they do it weird, back on Kesh planet, you know?

Austin: Or whatever.

Sylvi: I don't know, I was going to say, back on Kesh — but, but I believe the planet called Kesh is also fucked-up right now, isn't it, it's at war?

Austin: It's currently, Kesh itself is currently occupied by the Branched. Uh, so. I believe.

Sylvi: Yeah, good for them.

Austin: Yeah. Uh... but, you know... one of the other ones. Let me, map of Part — excuse me. Map of Partizan, who even knows where it is, or if the, the Principality, uh, uh, was it Leraphon IV? Is it, that sounds like a place I would have said. Yeah, Lenaphon IV. There we go.

Austin (as Joe): Yeah, Lenaphon IV, I hear, is just... uh, they do things differently there, you know? That's probably why Joie likes them so much.

Ali (as Mustard): Hm... I don't understand why someone would lie to the Brink Proxy.

Austin (as Joe): Oh, because it's fun.

Ali (as Mustard): What?

Austin (as Joe): It's fun to lie to you sometimes. I'm playing chess, I'm not playing checkers. I shouldn't have lied to you, I know. But it was kind of fun to do that.

Ali (as Mustard): You're lying to —

Austin (as Joe): I just, I got this image in mind of you going, thinking about me going home with your computer and playing checkers on it and thinking, what a weirdo he is, playing checkers. I realize I'm playing chess, but I like the —

Keith: [laughing]

Austin (as Joe): Image of you thinking about me playing chess, uh, check, uh, checkers, there we go. Instead.

Austin: I think that's probably the scene. I don't think we need much more.

Ali: [laughing] Are you sure? You don't want to do 5 minutes of that?

Keith: That's in character.

Austin: I mean, I can do, I can do 5 minutes on —

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: Himbo is trying harder to seem himboish, but...

Ali: Sure. I... I wish I could share the facial expression that I was making while you were saying that to me.

Austin: Please describe it.

Ali: That's roleplaying, baby.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: Just, just mouth open, just offended, confused... doesn't understand why chess is more... worth obscuring?

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: Anyway, yeah. [giggling] Is it me or Keith now?

Austin: It is.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Ali: Uh... [laughing] I will never discover that a situation is worse than I expected. Somebody will run away with me from a bomb before I can get a token. [laughs]

Austin: Wait, what is the... oh, discover a situation is worse than predicted. Yeah, uh-huh.

Ali: It's all good. I'm kidding.

Sylvi: Oh, I'm so sorry. I should have pointed with the bomb.

Ali: No, it's so fine. [cackling]

Austin: I mean, you could always just narrate something with that, you know? That's always up to you, if you would like it.

Ali: Sure, sure, sure, yeah. No, I'm good. Uh...

Sylvi: Sector 6 doesn't even have any birds.

Keith: Uh, I have a minor scene.

Austin: Yeah?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Let's do it.

Keith: Yeah, I'm going to, uh, I'm going to get Cheal into this retreat.

Austin: We're all going to be there. Anybody who's anybody's going to be there.

Keith: Anybody who's anybody is going to be there. Well, I think that I've been following these, uh... cult people, because from our last assemblage, earlier in the week, I didn't really get the sense that Mustard was that motivated to stopping them.

Austin: Mmm.

Keith: And that's when I, uh, saw her go into a meeting with them, with a bunch of other cult members.

Austin: Right.

Keith: And I hear about the retreat, and I... probably could have just walked in and put my name up on the thing. But, instead, I surreptitiously sneak in and put my name up on the thing, without even reading. Maybe even a false name.

Austin: Ooh.

Keith: Oooh. They don't know.

Jack: Like Peach.

Austin: [chuckles] The same false name.

Keith: [laughing]

Ali: [giggling]

Austin: From a book of good false names. Uh..., so, what is the event itself that you're, that you're attending? Just one of these retreats.

Keith: The retreat.

Austin: Oh, you're actually, you're actually going to the retreat. You actually just added your name to the retreat list.

Keith: Right, yes.

Austin: Okay. Is that, is no one there to see you doing this?

Keith: This is after the assemblage.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: Also, I don't know if, like, the Devotion people would mind, regardless.

Austin: Right, sure. Well, that's actually more fun. Is like, to me it's more fun if they let Cheal do it, than if they're like, so easily distracted as to not notice someone doing this, you know?

Keith: Yeah. It was a big party.

Austin: It was, but also like, I'm... is it, is it just a, just a piece of paper in a room, that has all the information on it, in the Twilight Mirage? Or is it something a little more.

Keith: Uh, my memory is that a described it as like a corkboard, basically.

Austin: Okay. All right. Uh, cool. So then, you're there. You're going to be there. That leaves us with a Mustard Red scene. Which...

Ali: Yeah, do we want to just start this retreat?

Austin: Do we just want to do it?

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: Yeah, maybe. Let's kick it off. Let's, let's do the beginning of the retreat. Mustard Red, what is, what is... it's giving me, this feels extremely, maybe it's because we're, we're talking about a cult, but it feels very Severance to me, it feels very like, you're about to walk, we're about to walk into some true, upsetting... maybe not upsetting, but strange shit. Uh... so I guess, really, it's on you and on, I guess Sylvi, if Sylvi, you're still holding the Lambent Strand Devotion stuff, and then Keith, if you're still holding the, Orchard Syndicate stuff. What, what does, uh, what's Mustard's scene when she walks in? What are we, where is it? Where is this?

Sylvi: Uh...

Austin: Do we have to add something new to the map?

Sylvi: Yeah, I think we might. But also, it like, my... my idea for this is a little, is a little wacky, guys, so...

Austin: Oh!

Ali: Please, let's go.

Sylvi: So I think it starts, like, in their usual meeting place, and it's like, it's got like field trip vibes, when CTH is like, okay, let's go! And everybody walks behind him.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Sylvi: And then they turn down a hallway that like, isn't on the map.

Austin: Oh.

Sylvi: Uh, and you guys can stop me if this is too much, but I think the more they walk, they're, they start walking down a ship's hallway that just comes into like, a little forest.

Austin: Love it.

Ali: Nice.

Austin: Twilight Mirage.

Sylvi: And they, like, you, there's a, like, you can see the sky, like it's not a room that looks like this. Uh, this is just a place that they've been able to go to.

Austin: So we're all —

Jack: This isn't dangerous at all.

Austin: Everyone, everyone is here? I guess — Paris isn't here, right?

Jack: Not yet, but might find his way here.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: All right, let me — Jack, no one is holding their own things right now, so please feel free to... you know, uh, uh, it's not that no one's holding them, but like, we're all going to be in character, so —

Jack: We have access to all the —

Austin: Please feel free to, to look at all of these, yeah, these faction things.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Uh... all right, so we're in a forest.

Austin (as 3T): Damn!

Austin: Says 3T.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Welcome, welcome. Everyone, if you'll just come over here, we've designated a few people to bring the camping equipment. And if you want to help set up, you're more than welcome to. It'll all go faster if we help each other.

Sylvi: And there's like people with like, bags of like, tents and shit. Except it's futuristic.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: I'm struggling so hard to describe camping gear because I'm such a fucking —

Austin: No, no, it's tents. Futuristic tents, I got it.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Well, like, is part of it actually that it's not particularly futuristic, that it's like —

Sylvi: A little bit, actually. Now that you mention that, I was like, wait. It should not be like, these spring up. It should be, to fit with these people they are like, peg — they're like, setting these up themselves, they're like —

Austin: Mm-hm.

Sylvi: Manually putting up hammocks, instead of having some sort of magical beam hammock, which is what I imagine here, for some reason. [chuckling]

Ali: Mmm.

Austin (as 3T): Oh yeah, a beam, a beam hammock, yeah. I left my beam hammock at home. I was going to bring it, but y'all said y'all had hammocks, so...

Austin: Uh... so, yeah. Is this Mustard and, and Pushy, are we three kind of like, together in the way that that happens, where it's like, we're not friends but we've all met each other? So, I guess, Pushy and I are friends. We hid a body once, so that makes me feel like we're friends.

Sylvi: [sputters]

Austin: But, like, you know, like, oh, you're at the party. It's like, I don't anybody else, but I was at your office once, now we're going to talk. Because that's just the default. Is it the three of us, at this point?

Keith: Yeah, I feel like Pushy's sort of the bridge, knows Mustard, also knows 3T going back from like, old shows.

Austin (as 3T): Do either of y'all know how to make a tent?

Keith (as Pushy): I know how to make a tent.

Ali (as Mustard): No, I've lived on a spaceship my whole life!

Austin (as 3T): I'm nervous, what if, what if people —

Ali (as Mustard): Don't be nervous!

Austin (as 3T): But what if I'm making a tent and it looks stupid? What if I make it wrong?

Ali (as Mustard): Well, well, this is a, this is, this is an opportunity for new experiences, and... uh, you know, let loose a little bit!

Keith (as Pushy): It's not stupid to make a tent wrong. Almost everybody here is going to make their tent wrong.

Ali (as Mustard): Yeah.

Austin (as 3T): That's a little judgy, preemptively.

Keith (as Pushy): It's true.

Austin (as 3T): But we'll see.

Keith (as Pushy): Just, keep your eye out. Look at —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Nice tent, Wroaster!

Austin: [snorts]

Keith: Wait, what?

Sylvi: Isn't that what the guy's name? Wroaster?

Austin: Toast, Toaster Roast, Toaster Wroaster.

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: Toaster Wroaster, and —

Sylvi: That guy did a perfect tent, and someone shouted it out. That was what I was doing.

Ali: Sure. Nice.

Austin: Uh, Kengine Engine, the cousin, right. Uh-huh.

Ali: Kengine Engine.

Ali (as Mustard): This isn't going to be all about appearances this week, 3T. You can, you can, you know, really relax.

Keith (as Pushy): What do you — wait, what do you mean?

Ali (as Mustard): Well, 3T is, is, is an icon, is a role model.

Austin (as 3T): Thank you. Yeah, it's —

Keith (as Pushy): None of us should be relaxing here. What are you — these is — this is the cult.

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, well sure.

Keith (as Pushy): They've been turning people — you're supposed — I thought you were here investigating. You shouldn't be encouraging people. 3T, I don't know what you're doing here.

Austin (as 3T): Cult...?

Austin: [laughing]

Austin (as 3T): What do you mean it's occult? We're on a retreat.

Keith (as Pushy): This is a cult.

Austin (as 3T): It's occult?

Keith (as Pushy): Yeah. They've been like, kidnapping people and brainwashing them.

Austin (as 3T): No one has any weird... candles.

Ali (as Mustard): Well, they've, they've been... people —

Austin (as 3T): Nothing, there's nothing occult about this.

Ali (as Mustard): People have been wandering in on their own accord, and seeming to find some peace. I don't like it, I'm just here to, you know, receive more information.

Keith (as Pushy): We are in a secret forest. On a —

Ali (as Mustard): Well, yeah.

Keith (as Pushy): On a, on a space station that we've lived on our whole lives, or close to it.

Ali (as Mustard): Well...

Keith (as Pushy): Isn't that... there's a sky here. Does this not feel like occult stuff?

Austin (as 3T): No! It's not even rainy. It's not occult at all.

Ali (as Mustard): You don't know that, that a forest ship didn't dock here once, and —

Austin (as 3T): Occult is like, I used to do like, occult music with Knife, my ex, and it was like, you know, black wax, and blood, and you had candles, and —

Ali (as Mustard): [gasps] You did music about blood?

Austin (as 3T): Yeah, we used to do — but I'm trying to be more —

Keith: [laughing]

Jack: [laughing]

Austin (as 3T): I'm trying to be more, I'm trying to be more positive now, you know?

Keith: The camera pans to the right, and we see, like —

Ali: [snorts laughing]

Keith: 35 people in absolute lockstep, checking their pulse.

Austin: [laughing] Uh-huh!

Keith: Out of no — like, completely out of nowhere.

Sylvi: They just stop what they're doing.

Austin (as 3T): Everybody here just — everybody here is just into health and stuff, that's not occult.

Keith (as Pushy): Synchronized — they're doing it... like a hivemind!

Austin (as 3T): I mean, what's my pulse like right now?

Austin: I start checking my pulse, I'm curious.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin (as 3T): That's pretty good.

Keith (as Pushy): This is an extremely upsetting and —

Keith: I look at Mustard.

Keith (as Pushy): And really embarrassing.

Ali (as Mustard): Embarrassing?

Keith (as Pushy): You are supposed to be helping the people on the station, from these people. I thought that you were doing a good job investigating it.

Ali (as Mustard): Well, what do you think I'm doing here? [whispers] I'm undercover.

Keith (as Pushy): It looks like you're getting ready for a retreat.

Ali (as Mustard): [still whispering] I'm undercover!

Ali: [laughing]

Keith (as Pushy): Oh, are you are?

Austin (as 3T): My pulse is — what are your pulses? What are your pulses at?

Keith (as Pushy): I feel normal, I feel fine.

Austin (as 3T): Did you check the pulse? Check it. Check it.

Ali (as Mustard): Well, check your pulse.

Keith (as Pushy): I don't need to check it, because I feel fine.

Austin (as 3T): Check it!

Ali (as Mustard): Well, because —

Keith (as Pushy): [shouting] I've gone my whole life without checking my pulse and I'm fine! And I won't check my pulse now, just because a bunch of weirdos are checking their pulse!

Ali (as Mustard): Keep your voice down!

Austin (as 3T): Stop yelling. It's a retreat.

Sylvi (as Cultist): Does that man not know how to check his pulse? Oh my god, that guy doesn't know how to check his pulse.

Austin (as 3T): Hey, we need help with a pulse over here.

Keith: [laughing]

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): I'll be right over!

Sylvi: And it's, it's Pasodoble.

Keith (as Pushy): My pulse is fine.

Sylvi: Who obviously volunteers.

Austin: Wait, who was it?

Sylvi: Pasodoble, obviously, is the one who comes over.

Austin: Of course.

Austin (as 3T): Oh, CTH! Let me introduce you real quick. Uh, now, I'm sorry —

Keith (as Pushy): No, no, I'm fine, I'm going to put up my tent, it's very important.

Austin (as 3T): No, no, no, no, no. CTH, CTH, real quick, this is, this is, I'm — maybe you've been to Pushy's, I don't know how much, I don't know if you made it to the show, or whatever.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): I did. I was at the show.

Austin (as 3T): But — okay, well, this is Pushy from Pushy's —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Nice tent, by the way.

Austin (as 3T): Thank you.

Austin: Uh, and then —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Pleasure to meet you, Pushy.

Keith (as Pushy): Ah, yeah...

Austin (as 3T): Okay...

Sylvi: He's holding his hand out to shake it.

Keith: I nod, like, in a sort of friendly way, but I don't touch —

Ali (as Mustard): Pushy!

Keith: I don't shake his hand.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Right, okay. Well, I'm glad to see you could make it. And, you too, Mustard. Welcome.

Austin (as 3T): Oh, you know Mustard already! Mustard helped me with that thing, with the, Seventine. The security guy who's on — who was being really rude.

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, I apologize again for his rudeness.

Austin (as 3T): I really appreciate it. It turned out okay, obviously. We got the concert. And, you know, you saw, like, there were no fights at the concert. No one got

hurt at the *concert*. No one got hurt at the concert, let me say that the right way, without the emphasis I put there, on the strange bit.

Sylvi (as **Pasodoble**): I, I don't understand how pronunciation would really change the message of that sentence, but sure —

Austin (as **3T**): You're right.

Sylvi (as **Pasodoble**): But sure, do whatever makes you feel comfortable.

Austin (as **3T**): Mm-hm. Anyway, this is CTH Pasodoble. Wait, you said you already knew Mustard's name. How do you know Mustard?

Sylvi (as **Pasodoble**): Yeah, Mustard and I have, Mustard and I have met.

Sylvi: I didn't, uh, out of character, does anybody — Pasodoble was at a meeting with Mustard, right? Or am I misremembering that? Because it felt like they talked before, and maybe I'm misremembering that.

Ali: Uh...

Sylvi: And he just knows who you are.

Austin: Yeah I don't remember who, who actually recruited... was it just —

Sylvi: Was it Joe? [chuckles]

Keith: Sorry, wait, what is, what is the question?

Austin: Who brought Mustard in? Was it just Toaster Wroaster and them?

Keith: No, it was, uh, yes, it was Toaster Wroaster told —

Ali: Oh, it's, I think it —

Keith: Mustard about the thing on a business — or gave information on a business card, and like a —

Austin: But who was there at the event? Who was the one who talked Mustard into being here, now?

Sylvi: I think it was the cousin who was worried about...

Ali: Did we move it down...

Austin: Uh... so it was Kengine Engine —

Keith: I think it was self motivating.

Sylvi: It was Kengine, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: I don't think it was anybody.

Austin: Yeah, let's just, let's just say, then, that I am introducing you to Mustard, then, CTH.
Uh...

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin (as 3T): And this is Mustard, who helped me with the thing —

Austin: That was what I just said before.

Austin (as 3T): Mustard's at Brink Proxy.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Ah, yes!

Austin (as 3T): You know, like a professional people person.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Yeah, the Brink Proxy. Their reputation precedes you.

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, thank you. Yeah, we try to do our best to help. How long have you been in cult — I, uh, —

Ali: In cult —

Everyone: [cracking up]

Austin: Friends at the Table, baby!

Keith: [laughing uproariously]

Jack: Just a, just a simple question for you today, my friend. How long have you been in a cult?

Austin: How long have you been in cults?

Ali: [wheezes laughing]

Sylvi: This one, or all of them?

Austin: Ugh...

Ali: [still laughing]

Sylvi: Fucking... ugh. Love it.

Keith: [sputtering laughing] [coughs]

Jack: Absolutely rancid small talk. It might be the worst small talk...

Keith: I haven't had a sip — can I have been drinking something, so that Cheal can —

Austin: Yes.

Keith: Can spit it out into the cup?

Ali: [laughing] I didn't say that... in real life.

Ali (as Mustard): How long have you been Involved with the Friends?

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Oh, gosh. I think I joined up about 3 years ago now.

Ali (as Mustard): Oh, do you know anything about the origins of the, the, the organization?

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Of course!

Ali (as Mustard): Fascinating. I'd love to pick your brain about it.

Sylvi: [laughing] Okay, what was that?

Jack: CTH.

Sylvi: Yeah?

Jack: Uh, uh... you just hear a voice, uh, in your blood. Like, in the blood moving in your ears.

Austin: Oh!

Ali: Oh, sure.

Jack: Uh, and the voice says, "tell them how much you love."

Sylvi: Oh my god. Uh, how would he say this. Uh... I'm trying to do this while also not being like... we at Friends at the Table reinvent Catholicism and Christianity very frequently.

Austin: We do.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: True.

Jack: Every season, right?

Austin: Right —

Sylvi: There's definitely —

Keith: Sometimes multiple times.

Austin: Often.

Sylvi: Like, I'm definitely going TV preacher here with this guy a little bit, but I'm also like, how can I do this without just talking, basically talking about Jesus Christ? Uh... Nope, that's too... uh...

Austin: Go with your, go with, follow, follow your gut. Like, don't worry about getting caught up in stuff.

Sylvi: Yeah, okay, so —

Austin: We'll, we'll, we'll shake out in the long run. Give us, give us... follow your, your, your instinct, and then we can always tune, you know?

Sylvi: Uh, yeah. I think he, he, he goes like, —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Yeah, I, I joined, uh, I became a Friend of the, uh,

Sylvi: What's — now I'm like, what's the adjective word for fervor? Because I was going to put that —

Keith: Fervent.

Austin: Fervent! Right?

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): I was a, I became a Fervent Friend about 3 years ago.

Austin: Yeah...

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): When the, uh, I finally felt the hand reaching out that connected us, and it brought me here, among all of these people who are also looking for that, uh, community, and that love that only we can provide, through these acts of Devotion that we show each other. It is a power stronger than —

Sylvi: I think he straight up says —

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): It is a power stronger than any Divine that binds us, and a love even greater than that.

Ali (as Mustard): May I shake your hand, Mister Pasodoble?

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): Absolutely!

Ali (as Mustard): It's a pleasure to meet you.

Sylvi (as Pasodoble): It's a pleasure to have you here. I hope that you all can, uh, find — I hope you all find yourselves feeling some of that love, too, while you're here.

Ali: Is there any weird blood stuff while we shake hands? [laughing]

Jack: Yep! Yep. They sync. Your pulses sync.

Sylvi: I was gonna say that too!

Jack: I don't think it's any more complex than that.

Sylvi: I have one little thing. Which is, I think that every, it is hard to notice for most people, I think, but everyone's heart rate, since they came in here, increased just a tiny bit.

Austin: Ooh, fun.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin (as 3T): Well, I'm trying to put together this tent, and that's difficult, so I just think it's that, probably.

Sylvi: Yeah, absolutely.

Austin: I think that's a scene, though. We can just, we're, we're, the next full set of scenes from the people who are there can be there. You know? We don't need to —

Sylvi: Uh-huh.

Austin: And I think it's pretty quick to say, neither of those threats have resolved, right?

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Uh... do we want to jump to someone like Paris to see what's going on not at this place, before we get more here?

Jack: Hmm. Yes.

Austin: Because we've not had any Paris France yet.

Jack: Yes. Yes. Okay. I would like to... uh, with False Fruit in tow, both of us getting increasingly — I mean, False Fruit is obviously, like, distraught, and that distress has tempered from the sharp anxiety that we saw him displaying in Brink Proxy, down to just this kind of like gnawing, you know, like, the initial shock of it has worn off, but it hasn't drained from his body yet?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Uh, he's still, he's still just as afraid. And it's making — and they don't like each other very much either, but it's making both of them sort of tetchy, and uncomfortable, and, even though they're sort of pointing themselves in the right direction, uh... I would like to, with False Fruit, I have an idea. Which is that, if we can — Paris has an idea. I tell you what, I'll just put it to False Fruit, and we can go from there.

Jack (as Paris): Okay. I know that we couldn't track the ship, and we don't know where it is. But, given all of this —

Jack: You know, gestures out of the window at the thickness of the Mirage.

Jack (as Paris): I figure that, maybe if we can get up to the radio station —

Jack: Uh, which is called Blue... god, what is a, what is a good Twilight Mirage radio station name?

Austin: Blue is definitely the right way to start it.

Jack: It's got to be like, Blue Monday. But that's sad. That's a sad name for a radio station. This is like, Twilight — the Brink's Delilah is on this radio station.

Austin: Right, right, right.

Jack: It's like, 69.7BRNK or something.

Ali: Delilah has a Blue Monday vibe, though.

Jack: Oh, that's true.

Austin: It does, it totally does. Especially if you go back to that era of, you know, Demani and Morning's Observation and, uh...

Jack: Oh, right.

Austin: You know, that whole, that whole moment in time. Uh... Gloaming, why am I blanking —

Jack (as Paris): If we get up there —

Austin: One second, I have to get... what's her name?

Jack: Uh, Gray?

Austin: Gray Gloaming, yes, thank you. Whew.

Jack: And her, and her dad Keen.

Austin: I had Keen Forester ready to go. Because that's a voice I did a lot of at the end of that season.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Austin: So, yeah, Blue Monday.

Jack: God, Keen Forester Gloaming was great. Uh, and Blue Monday is at the very top of the sort of, the, we talked about this being like a, almost like a spinning top.

Austin: Yeah, I've literally done this here, I've put it above the diner.

Jack: It's right at the very top.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: Uh, and it is a beloved radio station.

Jack (as Paris): If we get up there, we might be able to, like, I don't know, boost a, boost a signal somehow? Uh, maybe turn some receivers in the right way, see if we could get a message out to the ship.

Austin (as False): Yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's just go.

Jack (as Paris): I got its, I got its call sign. Okay. Okay, okay —

Austin (as False): You don't need to give me an essay.

Jack (as Paris): No, I know. Okay.

Jack: Uh, through the, through the ship, climbing up the ladders and stairs and things, up to the top, where there is a radio DJ who is like, live on air.

Austin: Can we get a radio DJ from somebody, please?

Ali (as DJ): Hello, hello, hello. Welcome to the Blue Monday. Here for your [wheezes laughing], your evening vibe.

Ali: I don't know if they say vibe in Twilight Mirage.

Austin: They say something like it.

Ali (as DJ): We're taking your requests, and, stay safe out there, folks.

Jack: What's coming up — I have to know what's coming up next.

Ali: [snorts laughing]

Ali (as DJ): Coming up next, we have... Cleo's Clue, by Warehouse.

Austin: Oh yeah. Big fan. Cleo's Clue.

Jack: I love that. That's a song that has a mystery built into it, that you can solve.

Ali: [laughing]

Keith: [laughing]

Austin: Ugh...

Jack: Uh, and like, she leans back and takes her headphones off.

Austin: I'm knocking, I'm knocking on the door, like, to the booth.

Jack: Yeah, like, Paris like, waves and like points at the door —

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: To be like, open the door.

Ali (as DJ): [whispers] I'm live!

Jack: Shrugging. Open the door! Oh, wait. I'm going to full-on make a move here. I'm going to make a move —

Austin: Ah, there we go.

Jack: And the move that I am making is, uh, it is a strong move called, call in a timely favor from a prominent client. Because I have got you the —

Austin: Ah, I love it.

Jack: Psychedelic rock from the planet Moonlock on the past, several times, a banned — Mirage wouldn't ban psych rock.

Austin: No.

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: [chuckling] A beloved psych rock from —

Keith: [laughing]

Ali: Very obscure...

Austin: It's hard to get, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, collectors don't want to part with it.

Jack: Yeah, it's, uh, Moonlock is constantly in an eclipse or something, right, Austin? Or it's like dark all the time there?

Austin: There was, there was the, the umbra on Moonlock, uh, that turned out to be Schism, if you recall. Uh, uh...

Jack: Oh, right, yes.

Austin: But, you suspect that there is now, permanent — that moon has, or that planet has been permanently changed in strange ways because of that. And I think maybe half of it was always — like, maybe it was tidally locked, and that's why it was called Moonlock. It's been a long time since I thought about Moonlock.

Jack: Anyway, it's a psychedelic record made in like, really weird Mirage conditions, where like the bassist and the drummer were in shadow —

Austin: Oh, it's music.

Jack: And the lead guitarist and the synth were —

Austin: Jack, I thought you meant a rock with psychedelic properties.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Jack: It is also a rock with psychedelic properties. Rather than a vinyl, it's just a rock that you put crocodile clips in on either end.

Austin: Okay, yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Oh, crocodile rock, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Oh! Crocodile rock!

Keith: [laughing]

Austin: Crocodile rock! I see.

Jack: Oh! Uh, but yeah, so, uh, what's this character's name? I'm picturing Minnie Driver from Grosse Pointe Blank.

Austin: I mean, that's the — I'm just doing — I'm just doing that scene —

Jack: The legendary, all-time —

Austin: Banging on the door, I truly am just doing that —

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: Totally, me being like, approaching someone while — god, that's such a good movie.

Austin: Grosse Pointe Blank is an all-timer, put that on the Bluff City watch list.

Ali: Uh... radio host Strikeout, gets up to get to the door.

Austin: Wow...

Jack: Oh... strike —

Austin: Oh, I love it.

Ali (as Strikeout): You have four minutes and 35 seconds, what do you need?

Jack (as Paris): We don't need longer than that. Uh... this is False Fruit. Uh, his kid was on the ship that left. The Joy in the Water? Went out to Palisade. You recall it?

Ali (as Strikeout): Uh, yeah, right, at the... right.

Jack (as Paris): And, uh, how old is he? False Fruit?

Austin (as False): Seven.

Jack (as Paris): He's seven.

Ali (as Strikeout): Seven!

Jack (as Paris): We think he's on the — he's, he's going into a war zone, and I really need, we need to —

Austin (as False): Which button do I hit to send a message?

Ali (as Strikeout): [chuckling] Wait, wait, wait, don't touch any —

Austin (as False): Which button, what button is it? Is it the red one? The blue one?

Ali (as Strikeout): No, no, no, no, no, it's not — no buttons, no buttons, no buttons, I said no buttons —

Austin: My hands are hovering, I'm hovering.

Ali (as Strikeout): I —

Jack (as Paris): Strikeout, we need to boost the signal, I don't know if you can get some dishes in, uh, move some dishes on the radar tower around —

Ali (as Strikeout): Dishes?!

Jack (as Paris): Yeah, dishes! I don't fucking know! How does the radio work?

Ali (as Strikeout): I — I hit play, is how the radio works!

Jack (as Paris): Yeah, but it makes a signal. We need the signal to be stronger, and we need to hit that ship. I have its call sign here. Is that something you can do?

Ali (as Strikeout): Yeah, give me the frigging — all right!

Jack (as Paris): Please.

Keith: [laughing]

Jack: Is there like —

Ali: [snorts laughing] I think it's like a rotary phone situation, where it's like —

Austin: Ooh, I love it.

Ali: Where it's like, recalibrating the, like, radio signal to like, a different degree of... of whatever. Uh...

Jack: Oh, is it, are there dishes sort of slowly turning on the roof of — or the spire?

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think so, yeah. Like, [screech noise] as they're like, creaking over to the right angle [laughing]

Austin: Uh-huh. Great sound. I love that.

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: I love to hear it.

Ali (as Strikeout): All right, what's the message? [referring to the remaining time left] 2:48.

Jack: Glances at False Fruit.

Austin (as False): What's the same of the ship again?

Jack (as Paris): The Joy in the Water.

Austin (as False): The Joy in the Water, please check immediately to see if Qualitative Fruit is there. You need to turn around. You have a child onboard. Bring my kid back, you pieces of shit.

Ali (as Strikeout): I don't... I don't think that's going to make them want to help you.

Austin (as False): I don't care. They need to come back. You need to, you need to come back now. Please turn around. Is this gonna — is this working? Is it send — did it send?

Ali (as Strikeout): I, uh... yeah, the signal is saying it's connected.

Austin (as False): Can we get a message back? Can they send a message back?

Ali (as Strikeout): Yeah, yeah, yeah. Give it a minute. Give it a minute. Uh...

Sylvi (as Comms): Uh... we don't have any fruit onboard, other than the blue oranges.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin (as False): I'm going to choke you to death. I'm going to find you —

Ali (as Strikeout): Hey, can, can I —

Austin (as False): And kill you. I'm going to remove your —

Ali (as Strikeout): Can I —

Austin (as False): Eyes from your brain. I'm going to put them in there first.

Ali (as Strikeout): Hello, hi, hi. Uh...

Sylvi (as Comms): [unintelligible] Hello there.

Ali (as Strikeout): Uh... can you search for a child? Can you, can you search for a child on your ship? [laughing] I'm sorry for —

Sylvi (as Comms): We've got a lot of children on the ship —

Ali: I have to get out of the Mustard voice.

Jack: Oh my god, there are — did —

Austin: Please. You're Strikeout now.

Jack: Did they say there are a lot of children on the ship?

Austin: They did say that.

Jack: That's fucking grotesque.

Sylvi: [laughing] They have more than one — I was going to say they — I meant it like, there were kids —

Jack: Bunch of teen soldiers!

Sylvi: Oh, right, it's a military ship. I forgot.

Austin: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Ali (as Strikeout): I believe this child would be younger than a teenager. A seven-year-old boy...

Sylvi (as Comms): Uh, hold on. This kid cry a lot?

Ali (as Strikeout): Probably.

Austin (as False): [exhales through nose]

Ali (as Strikeout): [whispering] Just calm down.

Sylvi (as Comms): Kid, what's your name?

Austin (as Qualitative): [comically high pitch] Qualitative.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi (as Comms): Uh...

Austin (as Qualitative): Qualitative Fruit.

Sylvi (as Comms): Okay, uh...

Jack: Paris is just like, yes!

Austin: Yes.

Austin (as False): Quali! Quali, it's me, it's dad. Hey, uh, they're going to, they're going to turn the ship around, uh, and they're going to bring you back home to me. Everything is going to be okay, okay, Quali?

Austin: I shouldn't have played Qualitative, I shouldn't —

Sylvi (as Qualitative): [comically high pitch] Yes, dad!

Austin: Thanks, thank you. Appreciate it.

Everyone: [laughing]

Jack: Well, I mean, Sylvi is the —

Austin: Anybody can pick up the Qualitative Fruit, uh, sheet.

Jack: Is the pilot of this ship, which is presumably like, on its way to Palisade, or has docked in Palisade.

Sylvi: Yeah?

Jack: Prepared to turn the ship round?

Sylvi: Uh, not really. I think that they're like. Fuck, do we have to, we have to use one of our escape pods for this?

Austin: God.

Sylvi (as Pilot): Okay. We'll send you some coordinates where you can pick up his pod.

Austin (as False): You're going to —

Jack: Uh, the mixing desk starts beeping. It starts counting up to be like, on air in...

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi (as Pilot): We can't turn around. This is a big ship! We're already pretty far away from you.

Austin (as False): Big ships can turn around — [frustrated noises]

Ali (as Strikeout): What, what are the coordinates?

Sylvi (as Pilot): Uh...

Sylvi: And then a bunch of numbers come up on the screen, so I don't have to think of numbers.

Austin: Yeah, good.

Ali: Thank you.

Sylvi: No problem.

Keith: [chuckling]

Sylvi (as Pilot): He should, he should be right off of you guys. This thing has a lot of juice in it. It's just, we go back there, we're going to miss our deployment date by weeks.

Sylvi: Oh, we've got a spammer in the chat, a bot.

Austin: We got a spammer in the chat!

Jack: Oh, hell yeah. What are, what are we being sold?

Ali: Wow...

Jack: Oh, best double dating site.

Ali: Best double dating site.

Austin: Best double dating site, uh-huh.

Keith: And then no link to that.

Austin: No, there's no actual, like, link there.

Ali: [chuckling]

Jack: Oh, Sylvi! You, you banned them.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: I wanted to see if they could improve their game.

Sylvi: I'm sorry.

Austin: Their messages were all just emoji, which is so funny to me.

Sylvi: Well, there's one that just says NF.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Jack: Come on, you can do better than that, lovechat1.xyz [unintelligible]

Sylvi: That's the URL.

Austin: That's free, that's free advertising for them.

Jack: Oh, I forgot xyz is a cool... All right.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Well, we gotta DDOS lovechat1 [laughing]

Keith: Hey, if any Friends at the Table listeners out there want a virus on their computer —

Austin: [laughing]

Ali: [cackling]

Keith: You can go to love-chat1 —

Austin: And, figure out the rest. All right.

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Austin: Ellis G says, I think that was Arbitrage. Yeah, that was definitely, introduce an opportunist or hustler with a predatory offer!

Sylvi: [laughing]

Jack: And, you know, and then, out of the, out of the wash, the song ends, you know, with the usual lyrics about, you know, finding the box at the bottom of the lake, and what its contents contain.

Keith: I'm glad that we got a Home Movies classmate in the mix.

Austin: Uh-huh, we totally did.

Jack: [laughing]

Austin: Qualitative Fruit, definitely a Home Movies character.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin (as Qualitative): Hey dad, hi...

Sylvi: Whenever, whenever we voice a child, they are in squiggle vision, like —

Austin: Yeah, 100 percent. 100 percent.

Jack: [chuckling] They truly are. Uh, yeah. Paris turns to False Fruit and is like —

Jack (as Paris): Okay. They got him, we know where he is, they're on their way back. Or, you know, they're not on their way back. We —

Austin (as False): We're going to go get a ship, we're going to go get a ship.

Jack (as Paris): So now we get a ship.

Austin (as False): That's right.

Sylvi: I think they also just send you like, the equivalent of what a, of tracking number, so you can see —

Austin: Oh my god —

Sylvi: [laughing] where he is. Which I think is a very funny thing to do with a child.

Jack: These fucking idiots fired a child in an escape pod on the edge of an active warzone.

Sylvi: They gave him snacks.

Jack: Oh my god. Uh...

Sylvi: Like, gummies.

Austin: Fruit snacks.

Sylvi: Yeah. Comic book of how great the military is.

Jack: I think False Fruit is just, you know, beside themselves with gratitude for Strikeout, who has already put her headphones back on —

Ali: Mm-hm.

Jack: And is just like, you know, nodding, holding her hand up, like, get out of here. Speaking into the, you know.

Ali (as Strikeout): Coming up next, Make Every Day Count.

Austin: All right.

Jack: Okay. I think that's a scene.

Austin: That's a scene.

Jack: Uh, with our next goal presumably being, find a ship and rescue [chuckling], rescue a child.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvi: It's coming right at you, it's not going to be that far away, like...

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: [laughing]

Sylvi: It's like having to like, drive down the street to pick up your kid, relax.

Austin: Mmm.

Sylvi: Also, if they stepped outside of a car at any point they would like be ripped apart by the vacuum of space, but that's like, whatever. Splitting hairs.

Keith: Yeah, no one on that ship let their seven-year-old go unaccompanied to... somewhere on the Brink.

Jack: The Brink is a safe place! Until people decided that it was time to start... uh, war.

Sylvi: I cannot believe that I forgot it was a military ship and said, "there's tons of kids on here!"

Austin: So funny.

Ali: [snorts]

Sylvi: Ugh.

Jack: We're just a normal ship. It's the children's crusade!

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: [laughing]

Keith: [laughing]

Sylvi: Ugh.

Austin: All right. I believe that we're going to be be back, most of us are going to be back here at the retreat.

Jack: Oh, oh. I want to do just like a tiny cutaway onboard a Principality ship, someone with a wireless picks up the —

Austin: Of course.

Jack: Radio station, and is just like... this slaps. It's kind of like the —

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Ugh...

Jack: God, there's a whole bit in the Kingdom game in COUNTER/Weight about people on ships picking up each other's radio signals.

Austin: Oh yeah.

Jack: And this is now the inverse of that, of someone far away on like a gray Principality ship, hearing, uh, like experimental music coming from somewhere inside this big colorful cloud that they can see.

Austin: Yeah, for sure. Recording it, to like, make a literal mixtape of it.

Sylvi: This warship now just is listening to this radio station, too.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Sylvi: They've got the frequency.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Yeah, why not?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: All right. Uh... who has a strong idea from the remaining characters?

Sylvi: I have one, if we are no longer attached to General Mourning.

Austin: Up in the air! Not my character.

Sylvi: I figured, I did figure out what Lament was going to do. But if we want to string that along 'til the end of the retreat, I can do that. But it does require the cult being in a different place. Sorry, the, the Friends.

Austin: Oh, I see. The Friends being in a different place.

Jack: The, the Friends. Yeah, let me, uh...

Austin: We, we can, uh, I think there's a direct discussion here, which is that, like, I know, Jack, you wanted to make sure that Mourning could voice some stuff regarding the Twilight Mirage and war and stuff. Uh... maybe before she was offscreen? But I don't know if that's something we necessarily need. I don't know if you feel like we got enough of that last episode, or if, having thought about it some more, you want to do more, or if there's another character you feel like you could do that through, or what?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: And there's also the larger thing, too, which is like... it feels a little bit like Mourning is a character you might be interested in seeing in the season, in some capacity.

Sylvi: Yeah, I'm happy to kill her.

Jack: I would, yeah, I think would be lying if I said that I would be sad to see Mourning go. Uh, less because of an attachment to that character, but, I think it would say something very interesting, if there was a complete vacuum of her way of thinking about this in the game.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: *But*, I think we would be doing a disservice to the way we talk about the Twilight Mirage, not to have a character like that in the game, and those sorts of things — because, you know... player characters, or characters, or active characters, are always the ones who are most able to drive a story.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: In terms of the verbs that are available to them. And while it's very — I think it would be very easy for us to say, yeah, the utopianists in the Mirage have done thinking about how war works and, and how that all happens, but, that character's offscreen. I think, what that would kind of mean, necessarily, is that the views that would get primacy would be from the other character — would be from the hawks.

Austin: Yes, that is, in fact is literally what would happen —

Jack: Uh, or would be from the hawks on the Brink.

Austin: Would be, with... I'm going to sneeze. [sneezes] Yes I am, okay.

Jack: Bless you.

Austin: Thank you. It's easy to imagine, with Mourning out of the picture... I mean, who knows. It could go any direction. But, with Mourning out of the picture, chaos follows, right? And a different tack is probably taken. Uh... I, I'm mostly interested in... I mean, there's two things. One is, other characters in the Mirage can have Mourning's perspective, right? Part of what we know about the Mirage is that it understand that you don't just like, make one person —

Jack: You don't make a guy? [chuckling]

Austin: You're right. You don't make a guy, that's not how you solve a problem. Problems aren't solved by individual people. They're solved by processes, and culture, and, you know, building a society that functions and checks itself and improves, and et cetera. So we could always have —

Keith: I actually solve problems by myself.

Ali: Ohh.

Austin: Oh, right, uh-huh. Gig Kephart, big single — believes only Gig Kephart can solve problems.

Jack: [laughing]

Austin: Uh, uh, but you get what I'm saying. So I do think that we could lose Mourning, but keep a character in the long run, in Palisade, who has that perspective. I think the question ends up being, do we want to tell the story that is like — and then the Twilight Mirage maybe jumped into things quickly, because Mourning's absence? Or do we want to tell the story, that is, and Twilight Mirage, to the degree that they got involved in the war, did so with certain... precautions in place, right away, you know?

Sylvi: Uh... I did have an idea, that would keep Mourning from like, out-and-out dying, while trying to still achieve Lament's goal.

Austin: Mmm.

Sylvi: It wouldn't be like, attacking Mourning and leaving them alive. It would be killing someone else.

Austin: Gotcha.

Sylvi: But it would, it, as a way of still trying to antagonize sort of like, different forces that are on the Brink, and Palisade as a whole. Uh... I can just lay out, like, what my idea was, if we want?

Austin: Yeah, let's talk through it.

Jack: Yeah, let's — yeah.

Austin: You know me. I am not someone who is like, and we all have to always be fully in character, we have to —

Jack: Have to hold the card.

Austin: Right, exactly.

Sylvi: Yeah, okay, cool.

Austin: Let's just be out — yeah.

Sylvi: Okay. So, uh... someone's going to die in the Friends meeting area, the Friends of Devotion meeting area, while they're away. I was going to just do Mourning, and be like, “oh, the cult has killed Mourning, oh my gosh.” But I can do it with her assistant that has the PC, and —

Austin: Right...

Sylvi: Lament can steal that shit, too.

Austin: That's very fun.

Sylvi: Yeah. Like, the mission doesn't necessarily have to be — like, that could, that could be the bait and switch, right? Where people think, it's like, oh yeah, of course, you'd kill the General. It's like, no, you kill their assistant, so the General thinks these other people are to blame for your activities.

Austin: Right, which then leads to some, some, a different sort of chaos.

Sylvi: Yeah. You're also trying to prod, like, the Qui Err forces into acting, uh, when they've been sort of reserved so far, and getting them more involved in things that could lead them into fighting, like, Curtain enemies and stuff for them.

Austin: Mm-hm. So at that point, what you're suggesting is that, Lament's mission has changed, and it's not, I'm here to kill Mourning. It's, I'm here to —

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I mean specifically going to call — I'm killing Mourning's assistant, is one of the three.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And then also, sowing chaos here, and recovering this thing that has the connection to the Divine, Arbitrage.

Sylvi: Yeah. I think that like, part, I think like a big thing that I've been trying to, uh, uh, and needing to get onscreen more with Lament is that their employers want like, more control over Divine stuff going on here. Uh, and so, like, getting this connection to Arbitrage off the table and in one of their operatives' hands is probably something that they'd want, if they found out about. And I imagine they're monitoring that sort of situation pretty carefully.

Austin: This seems fun to me. I'm, I'm on board with this.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm on —

Austin: So is this, let's, let's have what this scene is. What's going on at the retreat today? What's the day, what's happening when — or, is this not happening at the retreat?

Sylvi: This isn't happening at the retreat.

Austin: Okay, I see.

Sylvi: This is like their community center, like — maybe a community center base that they've had while they're away.

Austin: Gotcha. Uh, where the assembly was the other day.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, I see.

Sylvi: While they're away on the retreat, and like...

Austin: So, how do you do it. And how do you get Mourning's assistant there?

Sylvi: I think... uh... I think... I think that what Lament does is, uh... I'm going to use my token here to get, like, take someone out, silently or otherwise.

Austin: Oh yeah, that's, that's the strong move. That makes sense.

Sylvi: So it works. But, the, the way she does this is she fakes a message from Mourning, to this assistant, being like, I need to take care of — the, the baby's giving me some trouble, I need to, uh, take care of them a little longer. Why don't you go on ahead without me. And I'll meet you at this place — where they were supposed to be looking around today. Because, I imagine, that the, the cult is an area of interest for them, especially after the meeting with Mustard and stuff. Because like, they got brought up there, right?

Austin: Yeah, I think so.

Sylvi: Anyway. They did now. So, I think it's just like, one of those things, where, she comes in, just like, expecting to do her job. She's like, trying not to disturb things, taking notes, and then... someone just shoots her. I don't think it needs to be a major scene. I think it is very much just like, you barely see Lament while she's there. It's just like... there's this, like, woman doing her job, writing down some notes about some of the, like, iconography that's around, and like, she's up on like, where Pasodoble talks, like, gives his talks. And then, that's when... like, three shots, and she is down. And, you just see —

Austin: Simple. Easy.

Sylvi: You just see her silhouette leaving. Like, I don't even think she's left the doorway. I think it's just like, from the doorway, she just takes her out, and then, gone.

Austin: Gone.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. Easy.

Sylvi: I'm going to... move this token. I guess we can just delete it.

Austin: Yeah, we have a bunch up here.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: Uh... Mustard, Cheal, me? Uh... I want to do... I want to do me. I'm going to do a major scene. Uh, and I want it to be, I think it's, it's... the first full night. So like, the forest is night-time now. Uh... and, I think that there's some sort of... uh... there's some sort of... I don't know enough about this group to, to be certain about the way it takes shape. But, some sort of, group talking exercise, you know? I don't know if it's like, we're passing the conch shell around, or if it's like, there's a, there's a podium everybody comes up and stands at, or if there's like a lecture, but then the lecture has a Q&A component? Like, I don't know quite what that looks like, I don't know if y'all have strong feelings about that, but I suspect there's some place where 3T could give a little — like, really what this is going to be is, 3T has been holding it down, right, or holding, holding it inside, this feeling that something has to change, something has to get done, et cetera.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And, and I want, I want that scene of 3T, both — I want that scene of 3T slipping here, you know, or potentially slipping here, depending on what other people are saying, or what's happening there. But I don't quite know what the actual format of that style of event is. Also, I don't know how many people are at the retreat. Is this hundreds of people? Is this dozens of people? Is it... 30 people?

Keith: It's a lot, but it's less than 100.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's kind of how I've been thinking of it. Like, maybe more than 50?

Keith: What was, uh... is 3T slipping into?

Austin: Oh, being, being loud and militant in, in a way that's not very thoughtful, right?

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Being like, we have to do something now, I've been biting my tongue. Mourning keeps making me do all this stuff.

Keith: Which is not true.

Austin: It is true.

Keith: Yeah?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Remember, I, I've said that.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I've been doing, it's been, for the last week, has been doing this stuff of like —

Keith: Oh, for the last — okay.

Austin: Since the concert, I've been in meetings being like, “and we should all listen to General Mourning, and da-da-da-da-da.”

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Instead of —

Keith: Not for the whole time.

Jack: It's worth saying, it's worth saying that these meetings haven't been General Mourning say, “let's, let's, let's, now, what we all really need to do is hold hands and think about peace.”

Austin: No, correct.

Jack: This is General Mourning saying, you know, like, “we need to make very clear goals about what our involvement is, and we need to make sure that we don't — once we have achieved those goals, what are we going to do? What are we seeking to accomplish, and how will we know when we've achieved the goals?”

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Uh, uh, “what happens... let's set caps on how much we are committing, what should that cap be? What happens if we reach that cap and discover that we need more? What

contingencies are in place for us to bring additional resources onboard without there being like, uh, creep, in terms of soldiers and machines?"

Austin: Right.

Keith: Strategies are for cowards.

Austin: What's, what's the place for medical aid, and, and, support for civilians who get caught up in this? Uh...

Jack: How do we balance being transparent to the populace, while not leaving ourselves open to spycraft? Uh... the meetings are long, and they are tiring. But I want to make sure that, uh, that, that, that they're contrasted against this meeting in the woods, not because Mourning and co are going, "wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to do war?"

Austin: Right. They're instead saying, like, "whenever we're involved, we should defer to local leadership," right? And talking through processes of doing that. Local leadership meaning, people on Palisade, people who are actually leading the charge —

Jack: We need to make contact —

Austin: Right.

Jack: With Millennium Break immediately, and here is how we're doing that so far.

Austin: Right, right.

Jack: Uh, does anybody have expertise that we can use there? Or whatever.

Austin: Right, right. Uh, that seems way less boring, or way more boring, than like, let's all get on spaceships and go punch the Principality.

Jack: Or shoot people!

Austin: Yeah, let's go shoot people. Let's go shoot people! Mm-hm. Uh... so, yeah, whatever, whatever this, this —

Jack: Oh, it's something that, uh, uh, it's like a combo — it's like a weird speaking thing. I think it's more than just passing a conch. I think it is, like... everybody sitting in a sort of pattern on the

floor like this. There's, there's a physical space, or something to do with the pulse associated with it. And someone says a statement, and then —

Austin: Ah.

Jack: And then someone who agrees with that statement says the statement again. Like, echoing it.

Austin: That's fun.

Jack: And then adds their own thing to it. And then someone who agrees, or also feels strongly that thing, says that again. So it's like, this rippling, echoing effect of like, uh... ideas getting repeated and solidified.

Austin: Yeah, then, but then, I don't think that we need to be super zoomed-in here, and actually, maybe this can, this can provide background for if Pushy and Mustard want to do some snooping around, or be weirded out. But, a thing that I like happening here is like, that happens, and there's an organic back and forth. Because someone, you say the thing, it's a call and response, right? I say the thing and then someone else responds and adds to it, right? There's also kind of a, uh, uh, what do you call it? Uh, not Magnificent Corpse, what's the actual name of that game?

Jack: Uh, Exquisite Corpse?

Austin: Exquisite, Exquisite Corpse. Uh, uh, thing happening, right? Where it's like, you're adding on, you're adding on. And I think, over time, 3T just naturally starts to take over the, the — like, is responding more often than other people are. Or more people are responding back with words and phrases that 3T has introduced earlier, right? So like, if, if 26 things get said, and it's A through Z, and then after the 26th one, the, the cycle would normally be like — okay, well, 26 new, different things would be said. This time, it's just like, A through J. And, and then the next time through, it's just A through F. And 3T has said A through F. Those are 3T's words, right? We're now talking in circles.

Jack: Yeah, I love this.

Austin: And, and, I'm going to do the weak move, use scapegoats and corrosive arguments as a shortcut to get a crowd on side. And I'm explicitly giving in to that feeling of like — [sighs] the

thing that I pick up on is what Pasodoble was saying before, about love. In the sense that like, the people who, the people that want to sit in boardrooms, and sit in meeting rooms all day — and I use meeting rooms. Ugh. Meeting rooms.

Sylvi: Everyone in the crowd goes, ugh.

Austin: Exactly.

Austin (as 3T): And talk about, and grind things to a halt with strategy. Grind things to a halt with process. They just don't, they're not moved by love. They don't feel it in their blood, right?

Austin: That's the way I'm, I'm doing it. And, and, so I'm being very vague. I don't ever say Mourning specifically, but I'm, I'm basically saying that like, if we had gone into this the way it seemed like we were going to go into this, if everybody had the, the, the love that the, the, the Fervent — Friends of Devotion had, then we would all be on the same pace, so we'd all be doing this. And so this is scapegoats and corrosive arguments —

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: As a shortcut to get a crowd on side.

Jack: She brought all these golden ships and they're doing nothing.

Austin: And they're doing nothing! You know, “look up, look up in the sky! There they are! I can point them out. Why are they here? Why aren't they at Palisade?” I'm going to take a token.

Jack: God.

Keith: I used to play this game, to add to this flavor, at a camp, at a day camp. We used to go to a nature day camp. And every day, at the end of the day, we would all sit in a circle, and play this game called the pulse.

Austin: Oh yeah?

Keith: Yeah. I don't know if this is a game that anyone else has ever played at a camp, because I've never been at any other kind of camp. But, the goal was to squeeze the person next to you, squeeze their hand, and have it go, like, the wave at a baseball game?

Austin: Oh, yes, I've done this, yeah.

Keith: But around, as fast as possible. Uh... it's, now that I'm saying it, it seems very church camp of a thing to do.

Austin: Well, here we — here we are.

Keith: Uh... so...

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: In my head, I was sort of imagining, between every statement, you've got this like, increasing speed pulse going around —

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Keith: The — whatever shape they're in.

Austin: Yeah, I imagine it's not a circle. I think it's some other shape.

Keith: No.

Austin: I think an oval or —

Keith: It's like an EKG. [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, [laughing] uh-huh.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: Oh god.

Austin: Cool. Good, so that's happening in the background, if Cheal or Mustard want to get up to something else. Or if they want to be part of it. I'm happy to have them, you know, share in the, the love.

Jack: "I think this is a cult!" And then someone — and it's Mustard saying, "I think this is a cult!"

Keith: [laughing]

Austin: [laughing]

Keith: Uh... I wonder what the split would be, if there's — if this isn't a thing that you have to do, like, how — what percentage of people are taking part versus not? I think Cheal would not? Unless —

Austin: Oh, I spent a token. I spent a token. It's happening. So, you don't have to do it as a character. But people are doing it.

Keith: No, no, that's what I'm saying.

Austin: Sorry, I got a token, rather. I didn't spend a token, that's wrong.

Keith: I'm saying, what, what percentage of people — that are here, would participate?

Austin: I think the bulk.

Keith: The bulk.

Austin: Yeah, they're here to do the retreat.

Keith: Unless this is not something, unless this is something that like, people are being pressured to do, instead of all being a cult and wanting to take part, then Cheal wouldn't do it.

Austin: Yeah, I imagine Cheal isn't doing it.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I, my, my suspicion is that most people are doing it just because they're true believers.

Keith: Yeah, like...

Jack: This, ugh can I add a creepy detail?

Austin: Please.

Jack: What if people have been woken up to do it? Uh, and they're like — they're like, it's not like they've been forced into it. But it's like, people have gone from —

Austin: Hey, we're doing the, we're doing the pulse talk.

Jack: Wake up, it's time.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Uh, a lot of my thinking, uh, of like how I picture this cult, comes from, uh, the movies of... I wish I could remember their exact names. It's Justin Benson and Aaron Moorhead, who are an American horror directing team, who most recently did a couple of episodes of Moon Knight, which is like, yeah, everybody does. Everybody does Marvel eventually.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: But, uh, they made a really great pair of movies about a cult. The first one was Resolution, in 2012, and the second one was 2017's The Endless, uh, which is exactly this kind of vibe.

Keith: Uh, Mustard, are you, are you doing the talk?

Ali: Uh, no, I'm up, I'm up for doing some sleuthing, if you want to do a sleuth scene.

Keith: Okay, I'll do some sleuthing.

Ali: Uh... hm, what are we going to get up to?

Keith: Uh, so, the bulk of people are doing this. And... I'm curious if there are, like, people watching tents. If there's like, if there's like an inner circle like, guard, that maybe don't appear to be guarding anything, unless you were to think about trying get into, like... an important person's tent, and then all of a sudden you're like — oh, there's people, like — that you'd think definitely would be doing the pulse that aren't, and they sure are standing close to all the important people's tents.

Ali: So you're suggesting we would like, sneak past the guard, to...

Keith: Yeah, because I wonder, you know, what, what sort of sleuthing could we do?

Ali: [laughing]

Keith: If everyone is... if everyone that's important is busy, in a circle, holding hands. And it would have to be like, looking through stuff. Or, maybe trying to figure out where we are. Because it's weird, that this place is here.

Ali: Sure, yeah, yeah. I guess that makes sense. Yeah. Uh... uh... I guess, like... hm. Is there, like a, like a, like a leader's tent or whatever, which isn't like a, like a sleeping tent or whatever? It's one of those like, big ones, with like, open sides, and like tables underneath and stuff, that we'd have to like —

Keith: Mm-hm. Yeah.

Ali: Head over to, and sort of be like... well, we're looking for a thing.

Keith: Yeah. Wait, so it's like —

Ali: It's like a military tent.

Keith: It's almost like an eating area, from outside?

Ali: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Okay. How would we... how, using this game, do we get in there? Do we just get in there?

Austin: I don't know, do you have moves that would let you do that?

Keith: I don't have a token.

Austin: Ah, well there's your problem right there. Uh... you know, in general, the way that I think that we think about this stuff is that it's like, you can do the moves that you have, right? So you could take action, leaving yourself vulnerable, for instance.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Right? But then we'd have to play out what that vulnerability is, and how does that — so that's a thing you can always do. Alternatively, you could be like, hey, this is going to go bad. And so, one of you maybe does a weak move, to gain a token, where things go bad, you know?

Keith: Right. We could try to talk our way in, and fail.

Austin: Totally.

Keith: Because it's trying to use words, when action was required.

Austin: That's exactly — right, that's exactly it, right? That's how these, that's, that's how this style of game works.

Keith: Uh... I will, I will not do that. Instead, I'll take action, leaving myself vulnerable.

Ali: [snorts]

Austin: So, what's that look like, and how are you vulnerable?

Keith: Uh...

Austin: Does someone catch you in the act? Does someone —

Keith: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Someone catches me, but doesn't say anything. Doesn't, like, is just watching, like, and is going to find out who I am. And just has this information.

Austin: Is this just a member of the... the, of Devotion?

Keith: Yeah, this is one of the guards. This is one of the sort of surreptitious, the not-guard guards, who are trying their best to look like they're not guarding.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Keith: Uh, and I'm going to go into the tent, and look through, like... papers. Or like, uh... I guess I haven't, I haven't seen the slides, the like business card slides.

Austin: Right.

Keith: But I'm going to like, look at stuff, and try and take stuff. Uh... but I don't, I don't know what I find. Anybody have any good ideas?

Austin: Sylvi, this has been your, your Lambent Strand, but —

Sylvi: Yeah. Uh...

Austin: I'm also curious, for anybody. Oh, I have a, mmm, I do have a thing. I do have a thing.

Sylvi: Yeah, go for it.

Austin: Uh, so you're, this is like, you're looking for some piece of evidence or something, right, Keith?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Uh... this is a big one, but I'd rather pull the trigger on it, and keep us moving at a clip. Uh... so, I don't think it's just in with the regular slides and stuff. I think that it's like, this is the classic, someone left a USB key behind, or like, you didn't do a good job of putting things in the right folders, you know? And it's like, when you click on the slides folder, it's like, slides 1 through 10, and then there's also like, something is like, slide A, you know, which is like, from a different... slide A is from a different presentation, but whoever used it was using it as like, they were just copying the presentation template over that they'd customized. And that slide, like, the template slide still has, you can like, check previous versions, you can restore it to the previous version of it. And, you know, I don't even know if it's a slide, or if it's... I'm just going to tell you the information you find. And you can tell me if you have a fun way of finding it that's different than this.

Uh... one, the reason that the Twilight Mirage stuff works better out here, despite being far away, is because of the Divine Devotion, which is here somewhere. Two, the Divine Devotion can do a thing that hasn't been seen in a little over 5,000 years. Which is, it can create more Twilight Mirage. The Divine Empyrean did that, thousands of years ago, to protect the Divine Fleet. And Devotion seems to be able to do that now, too. The difference is that Empyrean just kind of like, flew around, and made the, the Twilight Mirage in its wake. And Devotion can produce bombs, that produce the Twilight Mirage. And so, when 3T was getting those bombs from the Orchard Syndicate, to put onto those ships, it was actually Devotion making them to begin with. So you have a direct connection here, tying the Friends of Devotion, or whatever we end up calling this Devotion group, to the Orchard Syndicate, and to 3T detonating those Mirage bombs.

Sylvi: Yeah, by the way, if anyone has a cooler name for the group, like just it put there.

Austin: My only thing was that, this came up in chat. My only thing with it is, we already have the Friends of Gur Sevraq, is an important Friends.

Sylvi: I forgot about that.

Austin: Yeah, it's fine. Again, this is one of those things where it's like, in the wash, three months from now, when we're getting to Palisade proper, the name of it can change, you know? So I don't worry too much about it when we're in the middle of something like this, but... anyway.

Keith: Someone from the Principality's going to hear about the Friends of...

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: And they're going to be like — There's another Friends —

Austin: We already have friends, right, we've got to —

Keith: We already have — we've got to change their name for this chapter.

Austin: We're trying to destroy the Principality, but for now Principality's copyright law says it's ours, or trademark law.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, well, you don't, you just don't want brain confusion.

Austin: Right right right. Yes.

Jack: Uh... Cheal, what are you doing when you start to experience the vision?

Austin: [chuckling]

Keith: Uh... trying to... uh... I'm trying to make a copy of the information. I have like, I have like a physical, like I have like a hardware copier, where it's like, it's almost like, pressing a key into clay, to like, make a duplicate of a key.

Jack: Oh, wow.

Keith: But you can do it with like physical, with like digital memory.

Jack: Is it like, a liquid that you dip, dip the thing into?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Uh, you dip it in, and you take it out, uh, and it's covered in blood. And you look down, and the, the, the device that you've been using, where it previously had a kind of, I guess, like, you know, uh, pale blue liquid in it or something, is now... it's not even that it looks like blood, it

clearly is blood. Uh, and, suddenly something comes out of it, and pulls you through the little aperture, down through the blood. Uh, and as you fall through the blood, you, you emerge on the other side, on a planet that is burning. Uh... and I don't think you can identify what planet it is. But you can see the, uh, sort of, the numerous shapes of the other... how many planets are in the, the big planet, Austin? In Twilight Mirage? Five?

Austin: It's eight — nope! Nah, it's 8, and then, and Volition. Or seven and Volition? Uh...

Keith: I think it's eight and Volition.

Austin: I believe it's eight and Volition. I'm pretty sure that that's accurate. I think I could name most of them.

Jack: It's Quire, Moonlock —

Austin: Uh-huh — well, it's not Quire.

Jack: Seneschal —

Austin: That's already wrong. It used to be Quire. Uh, it's — yeah. Moonlock, Seneschal, Skein, those are the big ones. Gift-3. That's four. Uh... Glass, is five. I think it's just called Glass, I believe. We're, we're close. What are we missing? Thyrsus. Thyrsus.

Jack: Crown. Thyrsus!

Austin: Uh, we're still not there.

Jack: Uh...

Austin: Brighton? Brighton. Kent, Kent Brighton.

Jack: Yeah. Is that? That might be it.

Austin: Seneschal, Skein. Moonlock.

Jack: Gift-3.

Austin: Crown, Gift-3. Brighton. Thyrsus. That's seven.

Jack: Glass.

Austin: Glass is wrong. It was Crown, because it's the Crown of Glass.

Jack: And, plus Volition.

Austin: That's eight. There's one more. There definitely is.

Jack: [chuckling]

Austin: Oh, this is going to kill me. Does chat know? Altar. Thank you you, Zucata. Sorry — Zutaca. Altar. Altar is where there are a bunch of, uh, like Divines from... you remember, like, uh, it's almost like a tomb world, of all of the Divines that were ever in the Divine Fleet?

Jack: Yeah! That place is great.

Austin: That's where Vault of Anticipation is, I believe. Anyway.

Jack: Yeah, you can see the other planets up in the sky. Uh... and they are also burning, too. You're standing just, in the middle of flame. And the rivers have evaporated around you. Uh, and there are Principality —

Keith: I wonder how rare it is to be able to see all eight at once?

Austin: Well, not —

Jack: Oh god, I don't know. It's like, when you pitched this, Austin, initially, you described it as like the Destiny map.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Uh, and I feel like it's like, like that, but burning. Uh... there's like a great scar down one of the planets. Uh... and in the same voice, uh, that, that people heard in their blood earlier, as though, like, speaking through you like you've got a high fever, a voice says, "if you reveal this, you will lose. Because you don't love me enough." Uh... and then the vision ends, and you're just standing in the tent, uh, holding the copy into the blood.

Keith: How fast did that happen? How fast... how long did it... seem, to me?

Jack: Oh, like five, like five minutes. Like, long, long to be uncomfortable, but in, in real life, it took as long as it took to dip the thing into the copier and take it out.

Keith: Okay. Uh... so, I think I have, I think that, that's my, it's such a bizarre thing that happens. I think that like, uh... you know, he's sort of stunned, and having a very mundane thought, and it is that. I wonder how often you could see all the planets.

Jack: Oh, that's such a Stephen King maneuver.

Austin: That's so good. Yeah.

Keith: Uh, and, uh, and then the voice kicks in, and it's like, no ideas, unlike, like, incapable of thinking. And then I jolt —

Jack: Because the intensity of this thing is just so horrible.

Keith: The intensity of the thing, and the like, being confused, just overwhelmed by... every, every piece of sense is confusing now, where a second ago, I knew exactly where I was, and I knew what I was doing, and now nothing makes sense, and there's a very scary and intense thing happening, and I'm just like, ugh. And it lasts for five minutes, and I think I spend the entire five minutes not really able — like, you know, five minutes. That's kind of a long time, but I don't think that there's anything happening, just mind racing, five minutes. And then you snap out of it. Uh... And I, Cheal almost runs out of the tent, with the copy.

Jack: [chuckles]

Keith: But without, without the copier goo.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Oh yeah.

Sylvi: God, you left your goo.

Jack: Ah, the copier goo.

Keith: The copier goo.

Jack: Copier goo is so expensive nowadays. You know, we've got society without money, post-money, but replacing the copier goo is still —

Austin: It's still a rare —

Jack: Fucking hassle.

Austin: Uh, could I, uh, uh, make you an offer? I have a lot of good copier goo on sale right now. It's me, the Divine, comma, Arbitrage.

Keith and Jack: [laughing]

Austin: This one's straight up, there's no —

Keith: This goo is — it copies so good, it kills whoever copies with it.

Austin: [chuckles]

Keith: [laughing]

Austin: Uh...

Sylvi: I just know a goo guy, it's fine.

Austin: Yeah, you got a goo guy. Sometimes you got a goo guy.

Jack: [laughing]

Austin: How am I summarizing this? Cheal discovers... Pushy discovers...

Keith: I wonder what my...

Austin: That the Divine Devotion has been making the Mirage bombs.

Jack: Oh, and Tanager is, you know, wrapped up in that.

Austin: Yeah, that's, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And 3T is wrapped up in it, in ways he doesn't understand. Uh... I guess, that's not clear. It's not necessarily clear that 3T. You don't know that.

Keith: Not clear to Cheal.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah. So I'm just going to leave that off.

Keith: I wonder what his reaction to... the, the threat from Devotion is.

Austin: And has a wild...

Keith: Because like, as someone who's now done three seasons of, or no, about to do, yeah, has done, has done three seasons —

Austin: Mm-hm.

Keith: In that universe. / know that just because a Divine says something doesn't make it real.

Austin: You're right, yeah.

Jack: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Keith: But, but, does Cheal know that? Is Pushy able to go, to know enough about Divines even, to be like — this is just, like, in a very reductive sense, it's just like someone said something.

Austin: Well, and also, pulled you through blood and made you see the universe.

Keith: Right, right, yeah, yeah.

Austin: For five minutes.

Jack: But it's not like it's a prediction in a Kingdom game, you know, where it's like —

Austin: Right.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: If you reveal these documents, then the Mirage will lose the war. But it is, but it's what it said —

Austin: But it, but it is a prediction the way a small-town judge or sheriff can make a prediction, which is to say —

Jack: [chuckling] Yes.

Austin: This is the Divine, and Pushy is a person.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: I do like the idea of, uh... this character just going through the like, hallucination from Beyond the Black Rainbow, and —

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Then being like, that was full of shit!

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: [laughing] Oh god, yeah. I was, I was trying to think of spooky sci-fi visions —

Austin: That was totally where my mind went.

Jack: And couldn't fast enough.

Austin: I swear I was —

Jack: Beyond the Black Rainbow is 100 percent the — god, we had a good — my favorite spooky sci-fi vision we've done recently was, uh, Clem in the bunker, uh, completely tripping balls, and seeing, like, the creation of the universe or something?

Austin: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: In the flower field?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Sylvi: I'm just going to put this clip in the Palisade chat, for people who haven't seen it.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: God, that movie fucking rules. It's scary as shit, but it's really good.

Sylvi: Yeah, it's great.

Keith: What was the movie?

Sylvi: Beyond the Black Rainbow.

Austin: Beyond the Black Rainbow.

Sylvi: By Panos Cosmatos, the guy who directed Mandy. It's his other movie.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: And it is, uh, intense in a different way.

Sylvi: It's good.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: All right. Well, that feels like it's a scene. Which brings us to Mustard. That may be the end of the game today, the end of the session, rather.

Ali: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Jack: I think we're making progress.

Austin: It's 9:45. Yeah, we're getting there.

Ali: Uh...

Sylvi: [laughing]

Ali: What do I want my final scene to be, uh...?

Austin: What were you doing — were you part of the, the circle?

Ali: It sounded like it was, and then it seemed like it was... well, it sounded like I was with Pushy, and then that scene didn't go that way.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Uh, so —

Austin: Did something pull you away from Pushy? Or like, when Pushy went in, did something happen?

Ali: I could be on like, I could be on like the distraction. This could be like, the triple scene now, in terms of [chuckling] 3T like, being at this thing, and then Pushy's over here, then Mustard is doing this other thing. Because I think that like, her... uh... like, interrogation of the cult might be more social. I think that she's really —

Austin: Sure.

Ali: Seeking out like, people who have been integrated with this for a long time, people who might, uh... who were in Kengine Engine's sort of wheelhouse, in terms of being, uh, like, uh, people who are bringing people on board.

Austin: I mean, maybe that's, maybe that's the scene we should do then. I, I, we can juxtapose this psychedelic nightmare vision with, what's it like to talk to someone who is part of this group? What do they believe? And how does that come across, in regular conversation? And I say that partly because, it feels like Devotion is going to be a larger thing, this season, and it might be interesting to see someone advocate for it, in a way. I mean, we have CTH doing his slimiest, you know, sales pitch. But I am curious, if you did get a longer-form conversation, what would you find, you know? With a regular person. With a Kengine Engine, you know? Uh... but I don't necessarily know what those answers are, at this point.

Ali: Right, yeah, and this can be a minor scene, so we can just sort of talk about it, and not have to do the like —

Austin: That's a good point. So like, yeah, what comes up? What if we all talked about, what does this group believe? The things that we know about. We know that, the pulse is important to them. Physical sensation and touching, and synchronizing stuff is important to them. These are rituals, rituals and symbols that are important to them. Love is important to them. Clearly —

Jack: Like, strength or intensity of feeling, where it's like, the stronger the feeling, the more real it is, or the stronger, the — you know, caring about something intensely. Or fearing something intensely.

Sylvi: Even beyond that. It's like, the stronger the feeling, the more it unites people —

Austin: Right.

Sylvi: And there's like, power in that unity.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvi: Is kind of like the big thing?

Austin: Fervor, Devotion, right?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Increasing the size of the Twilight Mirage is important to them.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvi: Well, they don't say that, but yeah.

Austin: No, I mean, right right right. That doesn't come out, maybe, from the conversation, but we are saying this and kind of like, if we're, if this is going to be a faction, and let me tell you, this is going to —

Keith: Oh, I didn't realize this was part of — okay, I gotcha.

Austin: Yeah, we are now speaking in the abstract a little bit — sorry, Sylvi, was that you making a noise?

Sylvi: I can just get broader than this —

Austin: Yeah, please.

Sylvi: If we're, if we're going there, like, if we want to just put cards on the table for like, what we're picturing...?

Austin: I think maybe that's interesting, because, and, and it's, my question ends up being, how much of that does Mustard get, versus how much of this is like — I know we're just like, constantly referencing things that people may not have watched, uh... uh... but there was a show called, uh, oh god, what was it actually called? There were two seasons of it. Uh... it was an Amazon show. Homecoming.

Keith: The Tick.

I was thinking of Homecoming. The Tick. I was thinking of Janelle Monae in the Tick. No, I was thinking of Janelle Monae in Homecoming, but also season one of Homecoming. There are these, like, Homecoming is interesting, is what I, I would say that it's interesting. It's a show by the, Mr. Robot — it's, it's Sam Esmail, who did Mr. Robot.

Sylvi: Oh, okay, yeah.

Austin: Who does Mr. Robot. It's more complicated than that, obviously. But you know what the deal is.

Sylvi: The Mr. Robot showrunner, exactly.

Keith: Lots of people do Mr. Robot.

Austin: Lots of people, lots of people do...

Keith: Including the one that you said.

Austin: Exactly. Uh... and I guess, actually, Sam Esmail is the director only on season one, but, uh... that show has these like, sequences of, maybe not rapid-fire interviews, but really good overlapping sequences, and like scenes that can be a little overwhelming for the people who are trying to make sense of what they're seeing, right? Whether this is like, there's just like an all-time great bureaucratic investigator, in, in that show. Like, extremely, extremely, extremely good. Uh... but, I can imagine a version of that where it's like, Mustard is interviewing lots of people, or having conversations with lots of people, over the next... not just tonight, but like, the next day, and you're kayaking. And you're just helping someone start a fire. And you're doing needlepoint. And you're doing activities. And my question ends up being, maybe we should talk a little bit about what's up with Devotion, but how much of it does Mustard get, versus how much of it is just like, you're being hit with a wall of information? I don't know what Mustard can do, you know? In terms of... I guess Mustard is the monitor, right?

Ali: Right, yeah. I think I'm the character most suited for getting this information, and like, maybe not, even if she doesn't process it all here, uh, is able to... write a blog... on the Arbitrage PC?

Austin: Right, right, right.

Ali: Or like, keep names and numbers in a really analytical way. But I think like, if, if, if, besides the conversation around the, the organization, I think like, the scene for Mustard is going to either be like, her accidentally getting more integrated into this, obviously, in terms of like...

Austin: Mmm.

Ali: I think it's a sort of like, if we're doing a sort of like, fast interview, like, we see her talking to a lot of different figures, it's either like, repetition of the same phrases or whatever —

Austin: Right.

Ali: Or like, you know... like, these, these scenes, quote/unquote, of like, her sitting down and talking to people, and then like, when she has a moment alone, seeing her check her pulse, or whatever, or like —

Austin: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Ali: Noticing that it's like, faster or whatever. Uh...

Austin: God, yeah, and it would be getting faster, right? As, as a thing that, Sylvi, you mentioned before, at the end of the last day.

Sylvi: Mm-hm.

Austin: So okay, go ahead, Sylvi. Tell me more about Devotion.

Sylvi: So, uh, I guess like... I guess a thing with — should I just like, lay out what Devotion's power is, kind of, or —

Austin: Sure, please.

Sylvi: Okay. Uh, the thing that's going on when the, the, the heart rates are increasing is, it's basically — Devotion is a Divine that runs off people's life energy. Uh... and, it is more powerful the more people put in. Hence the name, like, Devotion. Like, you are devoting yourself to it, in like, every possible way. Because it's taking, like, your life from you, as it's doing its thing. And what the people who are like, really, like, like the people who are in charge of this group, think that they can use it as a means to basically unite the entire, like, the known galaxy underneath their Divine. They think it is a powerful enough Divine, that if, like, enough people, uh, fed into it,

it would just be able to sort of spread everywhere. That's part of why they're doing the Mirage bombs, they're spreading that as part of their way to spread influence. And, yeah, I think that's kind of the, the, the, the long and short of it that we've got right now.

Austin: It's one of those things where it's like, yeah, the more you put in, the more you get out, right?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Like, the more people, and maybe like, that's one of the phrases you hear a lot of, Mustard.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: "The thing that's so great about being with, with, you know, the rest of, of Devotion here is like, the more you put in, the more you get out." Uh, and, you just get a lot of this, this, maybe snippets of that vision, right? We just think it would be great if... everybody had all the cool stuff we had here in the Mirage, right? And Devotion can... you know, can help with that. Uh...

Sylvi: Oh. That, I think that still absolutely applies. I think that like, that is the belief, is that, you just put in more effort, and you get more from it.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Sylvi: People don't know that it is killing them slowly. People don't know that it is like, taking their life, years of their life away, for this. Uh, unless they're like, very upper-echelon people. Like, Pasodoble would know. And even then, I think he's sort of like, I don't think he's the guy running this thing. At all.

Austin: Are there people who, does, is Pasodoble also losing life force?

Sylvi: Yeah, I think —

Austin: Okay. So there's no, there is no —

Sylvi: There's probably something — no, I think there is a way that can mitigate it or like minimize it for certain people. Or like, there's, there's a way to sort of control the flow. But like, you only tell that to people who need to know that, right?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: So, yeah, then, what's our final shot here, for the night, Ali? With Mustard?

Ali: Uh... yeah, that's really interesting, because I think that she's... she's sort of —

Austin: And what does she think of all of this?

Ali: Well, she's, she's kind of a person who's sort of prone to this... idea, right? Like, I think her, her initial sort of, "I have to investigate this," is like, "I need to find out if they're hurting people, and I need to find out, like, why they're disrupting..."

Austin: Right.

Ali: "Uh, like, the like, function of the ship a bunch." But the, like, the argument of like, oh, you, you get as much... by putting in as much as you can, you get a benefit out, is sort of her thing of being like, oh yeah, people should work together, like, people should dedicate themselves to surveying other people [laughing] and trying to help them, uh, and that should be a community effort. And like, more people should be involved in helping their fellow, whatever. So I do think it is a thing of like, her just becoming more, sort of integrated in the group. Uh... I don't know if there's like a...

Austin: Oh yeah, do you have a weak move here?

Ali: Oh, sure. [laughing] uh...

Austin: [chuckling] Discover that a situation is worse than predicted is very funny. But I don't think that's what's happened here. I don't think —

Ali: Uh... I think that it might be like, show the limits of your power in the real world.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Uh, because I, I think in the sort of like, montage-y way, it's sort of her, like, having to take these, like, physical notes, because she's been, she's been disconnected from the, like, the like, uh... the system that she's been using to like, track people. So it's like, her having to do all of these notes by hand, in terms of like, writing down what people have said, and, and their

names, and stuff like that. And as she goes on through the day it's like, less of her picking up the pen, and more of her picking up her pulse?

Austin: That's really good. That's a really good image.

Ali: [laughing] And the audience is like, oh, no! Or maybe they're like, sure, we want to see this person die. [laughing]

Austin: God. Ugh... but, no one's died yet, right?

Ali: Right.

Austin: No one that we've seen has died — I'm just asking, like, yeah, that's not — we haven't seen Devotion fully sap someone's life force yet.

Sylvi: Yeah, not on — no, I think, like, some people have been like, there's been like, “oh, I'm really fatigued,” like the day after they go really hard for something. But there's no, like, no one's like, passed out or anything yet.

Austin: Ugh... great.

Ali: We'll see how that goes!

Austin: We'll see how that goes.

Jack: It's bad news.

Austin: It's bad news. I'm going to go ahead and say, I don't think these threats have resolved.

Ali: [laughing]

Keith: No, surely not.

Austin: Surely not.

Keith: This is a longer game than I thought it was going to be.

Ali: Yeah... I thought we'd finish tonight, but now we really want to relish in a cult retreat, and I don't mind it. [wheezes laughing]

Sylvi: Right.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. No, I'm having fun with the game, so...

Jack: Yeah, I still got to show up at the retreat. I have a move that lets me saunter into a scene —

Austin: Oh!

Jack: So I'm not worried about the how, but, you know...

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: I'll get there.

Ali: Oh, I never got my token, for being —

Austin: Mustard.

Ali: Showing the limits of my power. I'm rather powerless.

Austin: Mm-hm. Mustard interviews... uh, people. People at the retreat. And learns about Devotion's mission.

Jack: It's really funny to me how Mustard and Pushy both got two sides of the same coin here, except —

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: In their own very particular way, where like, Mustard got it by like listening carefully to people and then gradually finding herself sucked into a malicious machine.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: And Pushy got it by literally being sucked through a, a —

Ali: [laughing]

Jack: An iPad, a blood iPad [chuckling].

Austin: [chuckling]

Ali: That machine is going to suck ya.

Austin: Incredible.

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: [wheezes]

Jack: That machine's going to suck ya!

Keith: That's why we're a good team. We were both literally and figuratively sucked.

Ali: [cackling]

Sylvi: Great job, everybody!

Austin: Have a great night, everybody. Time.is, is the address.

Ali: [still laughing]

Jack: Quick shoutout to lovechat1!

Austin: [guffawing]

Everyone: [laughing]

Austin: Mm.

[["Permanent Peace"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]