

Twilight Mirage 02: The Last Divine

Transcriber: Terin

["The Twilight Mirage" begins]

AUSTIN WALKER (as Primary): Dispatch 57-B.

How familiar are you with the Fleet's Assemblage, Satellite? When I came onto this position, I'd read the normal allotment on their holy texts. "The Orbit's Alignment"? Yeah. The key sections of "Amalgam"? Of course. A few of the letters to the Cadent in Doubt? Maybe. A couple, at least. But in the last couple of months, I've had a looooooot of time on my hands, Satellite, and I've gone digging deep into the Assemblage.

There's this small book of songs in there. A little thing, just called "Lyrics and Accompaniment". I've read it... I've sung it front to back a dozen times now, it's... I'd never thought about it, Satellite, but there was a time before the Fleet was at its full size of 300 Divines. And each new one that joined the Orbit, it got a hymn. Three hundred hymns.

And then, when they started dying, well, it took a couple dozen, but sooner than later, each dead Divine got one too. And I've got the page open right here in front of me, Satellite. And it's still at five hundred and ninety eight. It's still at five hundred and ninety eight, and that's wrong. That's wrong because today, I sat in this box and I watched a Divine die.

["The Twilight Mirage" ends]

AUSTIN: Next to you, Fourteen, there's a person, there's like a dude with like a beer gut and a big handlebar mustache who goes:

AUSTIN (as spectator): (with a slight drawl) Never seen a Divine like that in my life. You ever seen one that looks like that?

JACK DE QUIDT (as Fourteen): I have not, no. It's a weird one, huh? Hey, uh, is it supposed to look like this?

AUSTIN (as spectator): Eh, ah, y'know, I haven't been to this one specifically, uh.

AUSTIN: And then he looks at you right in the eyes and he says.

AUSTIN (as spectator): (pointedly) About how many of these have you been to?

JACK (as Fourteen): Uh, four?

AUSTIN (as spectator): (overlapping) You- (sigh).

AUSTIN: He like, (sigh) and then he says it again. He looks around.

AUSTIN (as spectator): (enunciated) About how many of these have you been to?

AUSTIN: And then he gives a little wink.

JACK (as Fourteen): It's been a long day, I'm sorry. I've been about... (sigh) fourteen, fifteen.

AUSTIN (as spectator): (with no drawl) Alright, good.

AUSTIN: And, like, drops the accent, and takes a pair of glasses out of his coat and puts them on.

AUSTIN (as spectator): (quietly) We think they're going in through engineering.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay.

AUSTIN (as spectator): I already have us some scouts down there looking around, and we checked the manifest and, there's one more operator than there's supposed to be.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay.

AUSTIN (as spectator): But we can't find them. These Earth bastards, someone's gotta make them pay.

JACK (as Fourteen): Do you think they're in the crowd?

AUSTIN (as spectator): I think they're doing something bigger than the crowd.

AUSTIN: And he hands you a cup of, like... I think it's like a big cup of warm... kind of a warm beverage, like a thick, hot chocolate basically, and then a box with some donuts in it. And he goes.

AUSTIN (as spectator): Everything you need is in here.

AUSTIN: And then just stands up and looks back at you, and says

AUSTIN (as spectator): Never seen one that looks like a box before. First time.

AUSTIN: And then walks away.

JACK: (chuckle) Okay. Can I open the box of donuts?

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's a GUN in there.

JACK: (laughs) Oh-kay, okay.

AUSTIN: There's your gun. Your gun is in there.

JACK: I like, look up at him and, I don't think he looks back?

AUSTIN: No he's just on his way out.

JACK: He's just gone.

AUSTIN: Yeah. He like, looks down at the box again, and like shakes his head... like... "Weird."

JACK: (laughs)

AUSTIN: And you can hear something clinking around inside of the cup.

JACK: I'm going to like... yeah, take the plastic top off the cup.

AUSTIN: Yeah. There's like -

JACK: I'm like, shading it with my hand so that the person sitting in the seat behind me doesn't see me looking inside my drink.

JANINE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: There's like a thin silver key card basically, but it's tall. It's not like a, it doesn't look like a credit card, right? It looks like, one-tenth of a credit card? And then long, almost like a ruler. But it's a type of keycard you've seen used on this ship before.

JACK: Okay. I'm going to get out of my seat, and kind of, like, ducking so that the people behind me, their view of Jupiter obscuring the Mystery isn't obscured.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Uh huh. Good.

JACK: And like, I assume people are milling around and they're getting dr- the people who went to get drinks before the show started,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Some of them haven't gotten back yet, and will be pissed that the show has started.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JACK: And they're like, hasting back to their seats, and they're... it's like a sports game, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, totally.

JACK: The gangways are full of people, and people are always like "Keep your head down!".

AUSTIN: Yes, totally. There are a couple of people making bets on which Divine will win first.

JACK: Yeah, and like, people and maybe synthetics

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: in like, fluorescent jackets marshaling people...

AUSTIN: Yeah, I should note that this is also like "What if the Super Bowl was attended by high fashion models?", right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The least dressed up someone is is the guy who gave you those donuts and that hot chocolate which is like, a very nice sports jacket, you know?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: But there are people here who have, living boas on them, and heels that go to the moon, and an extra pair of arms that they don't normally have but for this event they've gotten their extra arms.

JANINE: You can't say someone has heels that go to the moon in a space game.

AUSTIN: Alright, well, listen...

JANINE: Because the assumption is that maybe you mean that literally.

JACK: (overlapping) Cause it just means they go to the moon.

AUSTIN: Well no, right, if they've put their feet up on the rails, it would poke out into the Twilight Mirage and hit the moon, exactly. Yeah.

JACK: (laughs) The moon's too big!

AUSTIN: The moon is bigger than it's supposed to be!

JANINE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: They shouldn't be hitting my heels! Yeah.

JACK: So I'm going to try and find, like, the door that will get me down to engineering?

AUSTIN: Totally. How are you doing that? Tell me, like, paint me a picture.

JACK: I am... I'm looking for somebody who looks like they're going to engineering... actually, wait, no. This is... this is a space game.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: So... I'm going to one of the maps of the stadium.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Which is a three dimensional object

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JACK: that you can move your head around to work out where you are. And I'm going to try and look for the map in such a way that where, like, engineering access is, or something.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That, to me, sounds like it is... either "Lift the Veil" or "Analyze". So, "Lift the Veil" is when you're kind of... it's "When you try to pierce the constant illusion of the Veil, search for information or recall something you may already be privy to, roll." and "Analyze" is "When you use what you have at your disposal to assess a place or situation, roll." So are you kinda digging through the internet? Or did you find a map somewhere? Those are definitely two different, like did you pull up the map from your seat where you can see it in your personal display? Or did you... get up out of your seat with your hot chocolate and donuts and go upstairs to where the map is being projected?

JACK: The latter one, absolutely.

AUSTIN: Okay. Then let's do analyze. So, when you use what you have at your disposal to assess a place or situation, on a 10+.... Roll. So how are you feeling about this?

JACK: I'm really, I'm really excited to see Tender in this show,

AUSTIN: (laughs)

JACK: So I think I'm feeling joyful?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: That sounds right. Good. So yeah, go ahead.

JACK: So I just...

AUSTIN: Go ahead and give me a joyful roll.

ALI: (overlapping) Ohhh.

(pause)

AUSTIN: Oh pal.

JACK: What'd I give? I, it's in a different tab.

AUSTIN: You got a...

JACK: Shit.

AUSTIN: You got... you got a 3.

ALI: (sigh)

AUSTIN: Right away. So the first thing I actually need you to do is take an XP.

JACK: Okay, I can do that.

AUSTIN: Which you can find at the bottom of your info page.

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: You just hit the one, I think, that's above where you notice it says "Make an improvement".

JACK: (overlapping) Yeah, it makes like a little checkmark?

AUSTIN: Yeah. So the second thing I need you to do is mark a dot under "Joyful", do you see where says 0?

JACK: Because I'm getting increasing joyful?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) You're getting joyf- right. Cause how the game works is that we mark whatever you roll. So, Janine, I also need you to go back and mark a dot in peaceful.

JANINE HAWKINS: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Yes. So this game has a system called "Emotion Spiking", basically, which is when you hit 5 on any of these stats, your emotions will "Spike", which means that you get worse at everything, kind of. You get really g- you get +1 in whatever you've spiked out on, which could be lower than what it normally is, so like, Fourteen Fifteen, you have a 2 in powerful, that would go down to a 1 if you maxed out on it.

JACK: Mmm.

AUSTIN: But if you get a +5 in peaceful, you go from a -1 to a +1, but everything else goes to a -2, I believe, which is baaad. So you kind of wanna, you can kind of game it if that's how you want to play? Or you can just kinda play it the way you want your emotion, what you think is honest to what your emotions are. And then if that happens, it happens. The other thing that happens that we can be mindful of is that when you do the opposite thing of what you just did, it unticks it from that one. So you just did a thing that was Joyful. If you, next do a thing that is Sad, it will add 1 to Sad, and take 1 away from Joyful.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So we'll see how that plays out. Just a thing to remember. So I think what happens, Jack, is you show up at the, you go up to where the engineering thing is and you totally find the way into the engineering section, you know, it's like down a couple of stairwells, and through a, kind of a technician's passage, right? You're only allowed to go between two zones because you have this technician's keycard, etc. And we see you go through all of these, and again and again we get the shot of a person follows you in behind, and you don't notice, right?

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: They're like, 20 feet behind, but they always manage to get into the door before it closes. They're all automated doors, and they just hang open just long enough for them to get through. And it is a person... they're already dressed like an engineer for this coliseum.

JACK: Hmm.

AUSTIN: But are also... it's bad. It's framed as being bad, you know what I mean?

JACK: Right, yes.

AUSTIN: Okay. Tender... actually, let's go to Signet cause we, we've got you, Signet, in the box, but we don't have anything happening there yet, so. You're there, neither of the Excerpts are there, obviously the... you actually overhear one of the guards of the Cadent say, lean in and say to her.

AUSTIN (as guard): 'Covenant' has not appeared yet for her dinner. Is everything alright?

AUSTIN: And the Cadent just kind of like, nods her head peacefully, and then looks over at you and says.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): I am so glad that you could join us, Signet.

JANINE (as Signet): (apprehensively) I'm glad that I could join you, as well.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): How have you been?

JANINE (as Signet): I've been well. How have you been?

AUSTIN: She nods... have you been well? Or is this just pleasantries?

JANINE: I think Signet has been more or less well.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I think Signet has highs and lows, and a lot of time has passed in a way that like, the highs and lows are both a little less fickle?

AUSTIN: Hmmmm.

JANINE: Than they used to be? Like, she gets higher periods of highs and stuff, but.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: I think she's, I mean, you know for the, for her emotional state, it's like, Peaceful is her highest one.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: That's sort of the state where she's most in her element, or most, you know.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I gotcha. She... does she know about you as part of the Beloved?

JANINE: I would think...

AUSTIN: Okay. I, like, she COULD know if she wanted to.

JANINE: (overlapping) I would think, like.

AUSTIN: My question is whether or not it's come up, do you know what I mean? Like...

JANINE: I don't think Signet generally, like, this is... my vision of this character is that she doesn't guard too much.

AUSTIN: Hmm.

JANINE: From like, I don't think she's inherently mistrustful of the church, I don't think she acts to undermine them. I think she very much wants to make sure that they are on the same page.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: Like, she wants to... yeah. Keep that stuff clear to them.

AUSTIN: Right, right. The... so, her guards, there's two of them. One of them is a robot who has like, yellow and green metal with like, the cheeks are compressed inwards, and this is a weird thing to say, but it's a bald robot? Like, it's a humanoid head that's bald, and then it has a patch of the darker green going down the middle almost like a mohawk? But it doesn't...

JANINE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Like, it's bald, right? It's flat. There's no hair, it doesn't raise. There's a stripe dark green as if it's a mohawk. And they're in a very nice suit. And then there is the other guard.

Looks a little... agitated? And they're the one who leaned forward and were like "Hey... uh... neither of the Excerpts are where they're supposed to be right now". But the Cadent says.

--15:00--

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Have you done much work for the Beloved lately?

JANINE (as Signet): Right now, in fact.

AUSTIN: She raises an eyebrow.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Yes? Tell me about it.

JANINE (as Signet): We're just trying to make sure that everything goes smoothly today.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): There are threats every day. Why this one?

JANINE (as Signet): Well, with you, and the intention of two Excerpts in the same place at the same time, it's a special one.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Hmm.

AUSTIN: She nods. She is very... she sways between presenting like being very noble, and it feeling very natural on her. How old were you when the thing happened? This is me asking.

JANINE: Ooh... which thing? Like, recruiting? Or...

AUSTIN: No, when you... when you betrayed Belgard or left Belgard to die or whatever. Like are you... I guess my question is like, the Cadent's 26. How much older are you? (laughs) Than that.

JANINE: I mean... I would say... I would say older? But like, I don't think she was with Belgard, I think she's lived longer without Belgard than she lived with Belgard.

AUSTIN: Okay, so, you actually have been back for a while.

JANINE: (overlapping) So I think she was, she was like, in the spectrum of people live hundreds of years and stuff, she's probably very young when that happened.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

JANINE: But it was probably a few decades,

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah.

JANINE: At least.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. So I think you can recognize a sort of like, admiration, in her eyes of you, that she keeps kind of held back, but it's definitely there.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Well I'm sure you and my guards will keep me safe.

JANINE (as Signet): Of course.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Now let's enjoy the show.

AUSTIN: And she turns back to face the auditorium. Tender, everyone's like, in...

JANINE: Hang on, there's...

AUSTIN: Oh, go ahead.

JANINE: There's actually something that I want to do.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: While we're watching, because my ear implant has "Intercepting".

AUSTIN: Ooh, okay.

JANINE: So I want to be monitoring.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: The outgoing transmissions in the area.

AUSTIN: I feel like that is also an "Analyze". It's either that or "Probe", but Probe is more about a person. So yeah, give me an Analyze roll. How do you feel.

JANINE: Is that just...

AUSTIN: While you're doing this?

JANINE: I think she's still just...

AUSTIN: Peaceful? Yep.

JANINE: I'm still just in that calm of like, so far, nothing has.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Gone badly in a way that would throw me off, and it's just like, this is just, this is what I do.

AUSTIN: Yep, so yeah, go ahead and mark Peaceful again and roll. (pause) Oh you know what? Sorry, roll that with advantage. Just reroll that. So...

JANINE: Oh.

AUSTIN: Because you're using this device, which I'm going to say gives you an advantage here. You're at peace, like, it's, it's not... oh...

JANINE: Well I got the same... (laugh)

AUSTIN: Turned out to be the exact same anyways, so that's an 8. So this game also has a system of advantage and disadvantage, which is really interesting. With advantage, you get to roll 3d6 and take the top two, with disadvantage you roll 3d6 and take the bottom two. Just so I'm clear, I'm giving you advantage here not only because you have the device, but because you're not, like, under threat, right? Like, right this second.

JANINE: Mm hmm.

AUSTIN: You're not under fire, there's no risk involved, so yeah. So with an 8, you get... what is it... you get to ask two of the following questions. "Where's my best way out/in/past?" "How is blank vulnerable to me?", but I'm going to, I guess that that's fine. "How is blank vulnerable to me?" "Which enemy is the biggest threat?" "What, if anything, appears out of place?" "What's my enemy's true position?" and "Is this going to get worse before it gets better?"... These are good fuckin questions.

JANINE: I'm trying to pick the two that make the most sense in terms of monitoring.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Something like, through your ears only.

AUSTIN: What I'll say is you can give me what those two questions are, and I'll tell you, I'll give you the answers when the answers would have appeared, cause it's not like you tapped in, and then immediately got the answers you wanted? Do you know what I mean?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, so yeah.

JANINE: Okay. I want... to know... where is my best way out/way in/way past?

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: And what, if anything, appears out of place?

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. I will tell you those things once it is appropriate. Tender, everyone is like, at the starting line, which is Earth. Which you, you're pretty sure that's not actually how this happened? But, like, for the retelling, this seems effective? And like, Earth is at the bottom, like, bottom corner of this big cube, basically, and you can see, like, the continents, and... the

continents are also probably not historically accurate for the viewer at home? But it just says the word "Earth" underneath, in like, a font, or maybe above it.

ALI ACOMPORA: (laughs)

AUSTIN: In like a futuristic font, that's like a retro-futuristic font for this setting? Do you know what I mean, like it's quaint? What do you, what are you doin? Are you going to try and win this race? What are you trying to do? Are you just going to keep your eyes open?

ALI: Yeah? I... so, I think part of the benefit of not affecting the environment on my own is so I can like, be more aware of, like, someone else trying to fuck around with it?

AUSTIN: Sure. Totally.

ALI: And I don't know if there's like, a discern... or an analyze kind of roll for that? To kinda like, keep an eye out?

AUSTIN: Yeah, so let's do another Analyze?

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: We're doing a lot of analyz- you know what I love about this game already is one of the things, if I gave us a note on previous Powered by the Apocalypse games, it's that we didn't ever use Analyze enough, which is why we always got into trouble.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: And now you've all analyzed multiple times!

ALI: Mmm? (Good word for describing Ali's sound?)

AUSTIN: So, so yeah, how are you feeling, and go ahead and give me an Analyze check.

ALI: So I think I'm feeling, like, this is kinda, like what- This is the start of a job, nothing's gone wrong yet, this is kind of what I'm supposed to be doing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay, so let me actually mix it up a little bit, which is, let's say that you're analyzing in the middle of this race.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: The race has kicked off. Are you still feeling that way?

ALI: I'd say that I'd feel confident? I've sort of set this up where like, you know what? I know what I'm doing here. This is what I do. I'm here in this race.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

ALI: Probably will crush this race.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And also like, find... yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm this fuckin cube!

ALI: Yeah! (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Go ahead and give me a confident roll.

ALI: Okay, which is Powerful.

AUSTIN: Or, uh, that's Powerful. Powerful, yeah. And that's a 9. So go ahead and mark Powerful, and then, again, you can ask me two questions here. And a reminder for you to, Signet, that you should take +1 forward on anything you act on, according to the, these things. But, Tender, what is your best way out/past/or in? How is blank vulnerable to you? What enemy's the biggest threat? What, if anything appears out of place? Where is my enemy's true position? Is this going to get worse before it gets better?

ALI: Oh! So... I would say the one that was like, if I notice...

AUSTIN: It's Analyze, is the move. So you get two, you get two of those questions.

ALI: What, if anything, appears out of place.

AUSTIN: You are able to see Jupiter has a second storm, and inside of that storm, there is a ship from the Earth forces, from the OriCon forces. And you notice this as like, as you careen past Jupiter.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So that's out of place. What's your second question?

ALI: Ah... how are they... vulnerable to me? I guess? Since I've, I kind of have a sense of where...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you kind of have a sense of them... I mean, they're vulnerable to you... in... in that if they are in this space, then they are digital, too, right? Which means that you can, they're, they are, if the environment changes, it will change for them also, and they have, they have to deal with that the same way that anyone else does, right? So, so, you know? If there's an asteroid field in front of them. If there is, however you remake the world, they also.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Have to deal with it, and that might keep them from, you know, hurting you all. The second thing is, they're vulnerable because they are not actually an OriCon ship. They are a fake OriCon ship, and the other AI ships will know that, if they can be lead into the path.

ALI: Okay, are they try- are they staying still?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) So that's two things.

ALI: Or are they trying to move into the...

AUSTIN: In this moment, in this moment you're going past Jupiter, and, it's like, I wanted to give you those things before this happened, which is like, while, there's probably like, 8 racers basically, and in the middle of the kind of long turn around Jupiter, you're like slingshotting around Jupiter and going upwards into deeper space. Also, the world, like, moves around as you do this, like it rewrites the section of space that you're in basically, right? Like you leave Earth behind, and now you see more stuff out in the distance, and it's almost like, like a... I'm trying to think of like, what the example is here, but like, you're scrolling here basically, like a video game, I guess. Or like a, not even a video game, but they used to make physical arcade things that did this, that would like, literally scroll a physical board so that it went to a different place. And as like the middle of the pack goes through, the ships come out of the second eye of Jupiter and slam into one of the Divines, and it like, digitizes and disappears. And then the fleet like, turns back. And everyone in the audience goes [GASP], and the Cadent to you, Signet, says.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): There were many losses in the Diaspora.

AUSTIN: And that's probably when you hear... what were your two questions again, Signet?

JANINE: I wanted to know the best way out/past

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: /way through, or whatever, and what is out of place?

AUSTIN: So you get a, you hear someone say.

AUSTIN (as unknown): Got em.

AUSTIN: Over a comms line, and you hear from one of the two bodyguards. The human bodyguard, inside of a second comm that they have. But it's being passed through, it's not coming directly from the crowd? Or not from the crowd, from the competitor who's in the OriCon ship? It's coming from, it's like being passed through a network that also includes the two bodyguards outside the door. And so that is how you also your best way past is through is either very quickly RIGHT now, out the door before anyone knows, like before they're acting, or forward through the glass of the box, and out into the crowd. Let's jump to Fourteen really quick.

What's the, what do the guts of this ship look like? What's the engineering section of a massive city ship of a million or two million or however many million people look like?

JACK: I think, here, around the... does this pyramid have a name?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think, I had like a really good Divine for it, before, and I've, I thought I wrote it down, but I cannot find it anywhere. Oh, it was going to be Composure's Coliseum.

JACK: Hmm. I think that like, I dunno about on the rest of the ship.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: But here, I picture it as being almost like, like one-way glass?

AUSTIN: Hmmm.

JACK: So even as I'm down in the depths, surrounded by like, oh god, like, 3d screens, and wires, and panels, and pipes, you know? The sort of things that in the depths of things?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: There's probably steam, I can also see through a kind of blue-tinted glass.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And what is happening in the arena.

AUSTIN: Ohh, okay, so you can see like, up through, that's really cool.

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: In fact that blue gas that's being, like, is literally going up into the arena, like there's a literal, like, in-out faucet of Twilight Mirage gas being blasted in there, that's like, is what is producing that effect in there.

JACK: Hmm.

AUSTIN: That's making it a digital space.

JACK: And I think it's like, spiral stairways.

AUSTIN: Hmm.

JACK: And... accessibility lifts and shafts.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JACK: In The Surge, there's like these lifts, which are just a thing you loop your hand or foot into.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And get lifted up, and I think there's definitely those people who can use them, it's very vertical, I'm doubling back on myself.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Constantly, or climbing up through a thing.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. So, you're down there, and you see a lot of people who are working, and who are just working on stuff, right? Who are, like, shouting out to each other, like, you know:

AUSTIN (as engineer): My system that there's, uh, not enough gas in sector B.

AUSTIN: And then someone's like.

AUSTIN (as other engineer): Ah, already got it. Already got it.

AUSTIN: And they're just like, doing their job. So what else, what are you doing? What are you on the lookout for, or how are you operating here? Also, do you still have the coffee and donuts, or did you just switch those off at some point.

JACK: No, I'm holding them.

AUSTIN: Okay...

JACK: I think...

AUSTIN: Good. Or you've had to take the card out of the, or the hot chocolate at some point, right?

JACK: Yeah. Yeah, I had to, but I've, I mean... there's still hot chocolate in there...

AUSTIN: Yeah, no, there is... (laughs)

(Ali and Janine laugh)

JACK: It's good hot chocolate!

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is!

JACK: You're gonna, like...

JANINE: Jack de Quidt, playing the dying bounty hunter who loves hot chocolate.

(all laugh)

JANINE: It's just so creamy and good.

JACK: I think like, god, I'm... I'm... do we have a badge?

AUSTIN: I don't know, do you? I don't, I don't know.

JACK: I guess, I guess...

AUSTIN: (overlapping) The question... are you secret police or are you secret agents? We need to decide right now.

(Jack and Austin laugh)

AUSTIN: Secret police have a badge. Secret agents do NOT.

JACK: I think...

JANINE: Are we doing the kind of work where our way forward is, like, to show a badge?

JACK: No... I don't... necessarily.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) No...

JACK: In this case, I don't think.

JANINE: I also... I don't think that...

JACK: But she, because you just went and got groceries, and like.

(Janine and Austin laugh)

ALI: Well... show your badge to cut in line at grocery store is a thing you could do...

(Austin groans)

ALI: Not just...

JANINE: Signet wouldn't do...

(Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: I said this is not a dystopia, alright? We're not...

JANINE: Adaire would do that, Signet would NOT do that.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: I have, I haven't been giving any other guidelines than the, that there might be just someone down...

AUSTIN: That's what that source gave you, yeah.

JACK: Yeah. Okay, my first roll went, went brilliantly.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

--30:00--

JACK: I'm going to... I kind of, I, at this point I actually don't want to analyze again, cause if we just all analyze...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: That's not fantastic, so I think what I'm going to do is I'm going to... I'm going to try and talk to someone?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Like a, like a, like a foreman?

AUSTIN: Yeah, so there's, there a foreman. they are... middle-aged, and have, like, curly hair that comes down to their , comes down to their shoulders... and they're wearing their, like, over, their kind of coveralls, but tied down across their waist, and just have like a tank top on underneath, and they're pretty cut, even this is like like a big , like physical labor job anymore? They just, like, like bei- they're cut and they... I think they're probably sweaty because they're running around still, you know? like they're not lifting things, they're not using wrenches on pipes but they are still like, going from place to place making sure people are doing their jobs right and it's hot down here, so, so yeah that's... that's who they are.

AUSTIN (as foreman): Hey buddy, you're not... I don't think you're supposed to be down here.

JACK (as Fourteen): I'm on business. My name's Fourteen Fifteen, I'm with the Beloved.

AUSTIN (as foreman): Uh... is that, is that uh, one of the fan groups?

JACK (as Fourteen): You could say that, yes... the thing we're a fan is, it's the Twilight Mirage. I need your help? Can you help me?

AUSTIN (as foreman): (sigh) G-there's a lot happening right now, but is... we're in the middle of... of the mysteries... (sigh) What do you need?

JACK (as Fourteen): It's really important. I need you to tell me...

JACK: I'm trying to work out how to ask...

JACK (as Fourteen): Look, has there anything weird been going on? I mean, not generally, it's a weird time, I mean like...

AUSTIN (as foreman): Yeah, someone named Fourteen Fifteen asking me if anything weird's happening, it's a little weird in of itself.

JACK (as Fourteen): Look, pal.

AUSTIN (as foreman): Look, buddy.

JACK (as Fourteen): I need you to... (laughs) Today, in last 20 minutes, in the last 20 minutes or an hour, two hours, please. I mean, at a stretch.

AUSTIN: Give me a sway. How are you feeling about this?

JACK: Okay... how am I feeling? Or how am I?

AUSTIN: How are you... how are you feeling about this. Or how are you...

JACK: I'm feeling powerful?

AUSTIN: Okay.

Because I am... used to being able to... I don't usually like, talk to people?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: I usually like, k- shoot them?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Or take them into custody? And I think that while that on some level that would mean that I would be feeling powerless, I think there's definitely an extent that Fourteen Fifteen just thinks they can kind of do this? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right, yeah of course, I kill people.

JACK: You just sort of say "Hey!"

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: "What's, what's weird happening here?".

AUSTIN: Alright.

JACK: So I'll mark powerful, and I will.

AUSTIN: And then give me a roll.

JACK: Roll...

AUSTIN: (sigh) Thats a... thats a 5...

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: That's a five.

AUSTIN + JACK: (sighs)

JACK: Okay, so...

AUSTIN (as foreman): Listen, buddy, I'm going to have to ask you to leave. The weirdest thing to happen all day is you? And we just don't have the time to deal with you. now, I'm gonna have to call security, and I dont wanna call security? it's a whole thing, you call security, you have to file paperwork, it's a whole... it's a... (sigh)

JACK (as Fourteen):dont...

AUSTIN (as foreman): I know, I know?

JACK (as Fourteen): Please?

AUSTIN (as foreman): I don't want to, so I'm just...

AUSTIN: Hand on shoulder, they say, like.

AUSTIN (as foreman): Just go upstairs. You've got all those donuts. you got your (sniff), I don't, hot chocolate? Just... get outta here.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Janine in the chat says "Throw a wrench! Expired spaghetti sauce!"

(Jack and Ali laugh)

AUSTIN: Hitman 2016 is a very good game.

JACK (as Fourteen): Um... which way is that?

AUSTIN: And they point back to... the.... like through a bunc-.

AUSTIN (as foreman): Go throug- okay. go past the first screen on your left, and then go three screens down, two stairwells...and then...listen, I can go get security. It won't be a big thing, I'll just tell them to... that, that you got lost down here and they'll just have to show you out, and they'll lead you, okay?

JACK (as Fourteen): No... I'm fine, I'm good. I'm good, I can find my way... I found my way down here, look it's like...

AUSTIN (as foreman): Somehow... its, it's a miracle. I lose people in here all the time.

JACK (as Fourteen): Hey, look. hey. cmon.

JACK: And I just walk in the direction they pointed, and then, when I see that they're not looking my way, go in the opposite direction? (laughs)

AUSTIN: (sigh) Okay, that's risk. You're definitely doing something risky here. How are... how are you feeling about that now? How are you still feeling powerful?

JACK: Noooo.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Cause that didn't go good.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it didn't.

JACK: We have the feelings wheel, don't we?

AUSTIN: We do have a feelings wheel. It's a really cool little thing that was in the book that's just, like, helps you map something. So like, if you're feeling skeptical, it kind of has a mapping for that, and it's not a hard and fast thing, like, just because you're feeling skeptical and this thing says that skeptical is like, mad, doesn't mean that you can't be skeptical and scared? but it's a, it's a starting point.

JACK: So I'm feeling foolish...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

JACK: Right now.

AUSTIN: Fair.

JACK: Because I realized what I did was not... (laughs) Was a bad idea.

AUSTIN: Laughs) Yeah.

JACK: Which the feelings wheel is scared.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah I could see that being a scared.

JACK: Or its... it doesn't say that it IS scared, it says "maps" to scared.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah.

JACK: Yeah, so... there's definitely a firtiviness.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: About this? I think that, like... yeah. I... (laughs) I clutch the donuts closer to me.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Good... give me a risk.

JACK: Scared...

AUSTIN: So yeah, mark scared, unmark joyful.

JACK: Oh yeah, cause I'm

AUSTIN: This is, this is how this works, yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then give a risk. give me, er, uh, a scared roll. hey, thats a 9!

JACK: Thats a 9!

AUSTIN: You did it. also, make sure you mark XP for that last failed roll.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: When you're aware of and act to avoid imminent danger and say how do you do it and roll, which you've done. on a 10+ you do it as you describe and the danger doesn't come to bear. on a 7-9, in the doing of it, there will be a cost, complication or choice introduced by the MC. so... you... you're kind of just like, sneaking away? so you can keep exploring down basically, right?

JACK: Mm hmm.

AUSTIN: Alright, so, you... find your way to a... you're able to like, count the people, right? and you notice that on the, the, you find a manifest, you find like a console that you can check the manifest for, and you see that, on the last Mystery there were, you know, 20 people and today there's 21, and you're able to highlight in the virtual reality, basically? which those 20 are, and are able to show, you know, in the mesh basically highlight everybody who matches up and then you... you are able to like, signal out to find that last one. and they

JACK: Mmm.

AUSTIN: are... behind like, down a side hallway, and then... behind a closed door, where you can hear some, the sound of welding. and now you're at this door. now the thing here is, that they, we also still get an image of a person following you. and you can basically have the high ground on one of these two things. either you get to go through that door before the person or

whoever's behind that door knows you're at the door, or you deal with the person whos following you.

JACK: In terms of, what presents more interesting framing, I think.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JACK: I'm going to put down the box of donuts.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And take the gun out?

AUSTIN: What's the gun look like?

JACK: It looks like... oh god, let me just google this to make sure I'm talking about the right thing? cause there's a lot of fictional guns.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Yeah, it's just the gun from Blade Runner.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm, okay.

JACK: It's just, like a snub nosed...

AUSTIN: It's a good gun.

JACK: Yeah, metal and... except instead of like, like what I guess in the Blade Runner gun is a wooden, is the bit that you hold a stock?

AUSTIN: I think...

JACK: What's the bit that you, a grip?

AUSTIN: The grip on a pistol, I think.

JACK: Yeah. instead of it being the wooden grip, its glass.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

JACK: And its, it's like, like laser-cut glass.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: With images of flowers and birds caught in the glass.

AUSTIN: That sounds really good.

JACK: And I take that out of the donut box.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JACK: And I... open the door, close the door quietly behind me, and.... point the gun at the person holding the, doing the, or the welding sound.

AUSTIN: There is a robot with a welding mask on, and it lifts up the, the mask mask to reveal a face that looks just like the welding mask?

(jack and austin laugh)

AUSTIN: And it is cutting through a line when you do that, and it goes.

AUSTIN (as Robot): You're not supposed to be here.

JACK (as Fourteen): You're not supposed to be doing that.

AUSTIN: And it keeps cutting (laughs) But like, more frantically. back in the race, how you doing, tender? are you trying to win this race, or are you just like, be on the lookout?

ALI: Okay, so there was a part of me that was trying to win it before the whole situation.

AUSTIN: Uh huh;.

ALI: And then now, I kinda, wanna like, so they came out of this thing, like, crashed into people, and I kind of want to pull back to like...

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's like a big fleet, and like, in my mind, they're very triangular ships, like almost like arrows, and a bunch of smaller ones slammed into one of the Divines and like, erased it from the digital space.

ALI: Not good....

AUSTIN: And now they're like, coming to bear. it's like a fleet, er, not a fleet, like a, it is a fleet, but it's also like a school of fish, except the fish made of sharp metal points.

ALI: Cool...

AUSTIN: It's like, almost like, you know how in a tactical digital display, a fleet will be a bunch of arrows, right? its like that, except they're, there's a little more spherical they're like, there they are fully fleshed out? and they're all chrome. but they're still these.

ALI: Okay, fair.

AUSTIN: Abstract shapes.

ALI: I was gonna say what I kind of want to do is pull back a little bit to like, make me their next target?

AUSTIN: Ooh, interesting. but not get hit by them?

ALI: So I will say the long con here, which is to hopefully, once I'm in range, or like, once they try to engage, I would hope reconfigure.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, so yeah, let's do risk to see if you get that opportunity.

ALI: God, I think there's a little bit of frustration here, because that was like such a bold move on their part, and it's also like, who do you think that you are, buddy?

AUSTIN: (laughs) But like, the people viewing it is like, "Oh yeah, that happened. I remember, I... yeah, definitely heard about that when... OriCon hid its second fleet of ships in Jupiter and smashed them into the

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Diaspora" definitely someone is telling his date right now that that totally happened, and he's talking shit.

ALI: (laughs) Yeah, but like, from Tender's perspective, like you're gonna hide in Jupiter and just come out and start doing this? like, come on. so,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I'm going to roll mad?

AUSTIN: Ooh, interesting. love it.

ALI: And that is a 9.

AUSTIN: Okay, thats a 9. you are... able to fall back, but there is another... there is a second person back here with you, one of the other, the one that looks like the statue of liberty but flying through space? is still back here with you? and the only way that you could fully get further back and like, draw their attention is to straight-up take a hit, otherwise you're both still in their sights. but the rest of the group has pushed ahead. and at this point, you've left the earth's solar system and are now like, spiraling from star to star, and there aren't even planets left, but there are still big asteroid belts, and like, occasionally a black hole, or like, it's just like kind of... obstacles on this race course.

ALI: (laughs) I like... yeah, I mean, I'm... planning on sort of pulling out of this even more so in a second? so I feel like this is a, fair risk to take.

AUSTIN: Cool. signet, the robot bodyguard leans forward and says something to the Cadent, do your ears also amplify regular sound?

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay, then you just hear it. they say, like.

AUSTIN (as synthetic guard): There's been an- there's been an incident.

AUSTIN: And everything shakes for a second, and flickers. and then it stabilizes. the Cadent looks at you, signet.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Are we safe?

JANINE (as Signet): I'm with you. for the moment, were safe.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): It's... it's the Divines.

AUSTIN: And the human, like, smirks a little, and you hear the door handle turning, or you hear the sounds of the vacuumed door, like the kind of mechanical door begin to lift at the box. what do you do?

JANINE: So... I know that the best way out is through the window.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: So... we get, I think we're gonna get this moment of signet standing up and with one hand, she reaches out and she takes the Cadent's hand.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

JANINE: And like, pulls her up. and the other hand she raises, and out of her sleeve comes her kinetic sash, which is like.

AUSTIN: Yeah, what is that?

JANINE: You know, you know, the, like a mitten keeper? it's threaded through her sleeves.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) I don't, what's a mitten keeper?

JANINE: Like that.

AUSTIN: I don't know what that is.

JANINE: It's like a cord that kids wear through their, the sleeves of their winter jacket, and there's a clip on each end.

AUSTIN: Ohhhh, okay, yeah.

JANINE: That holds their mittens in place so they don't lose them. but basically the point is that threaded through er sleeves, to keep it out of sight.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: So she raises her arm, and... throws the kinetic sash out to smash the window.

AUSTIN: What's the sash like? tell me what the sash looks like.

JANINE: So the sash is... probably, I think, like a very opalescent kind of white material with, sort of copper-y gilding?

AUSTIN: Mmm.

JANINE: To it? especially on the ends. the ends are probably very solid compared to the rest of it, because there's so much of the metallic kind of gilding.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: On them. but it's sort of, purpose- like, it hits kinetically, but its not necessarily the sash itself that's doing the harm.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: It's got like, it, because of the force, there is like a sort of buffer of the air or whatever it is.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: That is probably doing the majority of the impact.

--45:00--

AUSTIN: Right. yeah, the glass shatters, and the thing that happens is wild because the glass was revealed to be a screen, that was projecting the vision down into what the, the kind of arena is? but it was still, like, the vision of where you were standing, here, right? so it like, the world shatters, the glass shatters, revealing that its a screen, and behind it, there was also still the reality, which matches what the view would have been anyways. but the result is that we get like these great moments of the glass from the screen falling, where you could still see, like, the audience flickering on the broken shards, and then yeah, totally breaks. and now you have the Cadent by the hand, and in that moment, the kind of greenish-yellow robot bodyguard, like, realizes what's happening and goes to draw their gun and point it at the other bodyguard, and just like, shoots twice and drops that bodyguard, and then two more.

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Come into the, the other bodyguards from outside the door turn inwards with their guns drawn, and one of them catches the robot in the shoulder.

JANINE: Noooo.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. so what do you do?

JANINE: Uh... see, now I have a... slight dilemma because of my belief.

AUSTIN: Uh huh! Games!

JANINE: Uh... yeah.

AUSTIN: What belief in specif- in particular?

JANINE: That there's no excuse to leave someone in a situation that will inevitably lead to their death.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

JANINE: But like... that applies both ways, right? like theres no excuse to leave the robot in this situation that, that will lead to their death, but there's also no excuse to leave the Cadent in this situation that will lead to their death.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. that's a way to rationalize, certainly.

(Ali laughs)

JANINE: Thats fucked up. okay, um...

(Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: Right, well that's the thing about this belief that is so good for me, like... it's exactly this deeply optimistic belief which is like "No! We can save people. I can save people." and... that's a very easy belief to test.

JANINE: Yeah... um.... I have to look something up really quick (laughs) Oh god, okay. alright, well I can do a cool thing, but... it might be kind of complicated. so, the thing I wanna do, I should just sa- okay.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: So I want to take the Cadent and jump out of that window into the crowd, basically.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

JANINE: But, I also want to use my interface to call the Mariposa??

AUSTIN: What is the Mariposa?

JANINE: The Mariposa is my very light flight class suit.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: That has a remote mode.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Along with my interface, they, so they connect and I can call it in, basically.

AUSTIN: Is it just gonna like, burst through the ceiling or something? How's it get in?

JANINE: I kind of imagine it sort of coming in overhead while were going out through the window.

AUSTIN: Right, but this place is an inverted pyramid. It has a ceiling.

JANINE: Oh, right, okay.

AUSTIN: It's like a big, it's like a big arena, right? I mean, I guess coliseums are open-aired, but this one is... hmm.

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: I guess it could be open? I've kind of described this whole city as being- I'll roll a die. on an even it's open.

JANINE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: On a, like, it could go either way?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Lets roll a 1d2. On a 1, it's open air. On a 2, its t- its closed top. (roll) It's closed topped. I bet it

JANINE: Aw...

AUSTIN: I bet it could be either, depending on the event, and right now its closed.

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Its space, they don't want the bright light above you, right? you want it to be dark and cool and spacey.

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: So yeah, it can come in, but it has to burst through the ceiling.

JANINE: Uh... I mean, I'm savin the fuckin.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fine!

JANINE: Space pope, I'm not gonna do this half measures, I'm gonna break the ceiling.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm. I mean, you're gonna have to make a risk roll anyway, here so go ahead and give me a risk roll.

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: And, how are you feeling about this?

JANINE: Ah... that's a really complicated question, because she's just found out that the, the something's up with the Divines? and like that probably.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: Is a weird, thing, but also, mad that someone would, someone working close to the Cadent would turn on them.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And that in turn would make her feel kind of righteous? like.

AUSTIN: Go with the one that you think, in the very moment, like- I'm fine with any of those things, I'm not gonna like,

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Tut tut you because you said nervous instead of righteous, you know? or vice versa.

JANINE: I think that, probably the closest thing to, the strongest part of it would be a sadness of just like,

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: Oh, this is still getting worse.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: This is.

AUSTIN: Fair. so roll sad.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And mark it.

JANINE: Should I... do an advantage on that? because I have escape?

AUSTIN: No- wait, what do you mean escape? what do you.

JANINE: I have a +1 forward on the way out/way past part.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Oh yeah, yeah, absolutely. oh, related, related, related. ali, you got a 10 on that last one cause you also successfully, did the analyze before. so that was a 10 on your mad roll.

ALI: Oh, was it?

AUSTIN: Before, which means that liberty, the, the, yeah, the statue of liberty is fine. and you're totally set up the way you want, so, cause you have a +1 forward.

ALI: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: And speaking of tens, there is.

JANINE: So what do we.

AUSTIN: Another 10!

JANINE: Do for 10s?

AUSTIN: It's just, you get what you want. so what do you want?

JANINE: Okay. I wanna...

AUSTIN: (laughs) It happens so rarely that we get 10s that we don't even know what success sounds like anymore.

(Ali and Janine Laugh)

JANINE: Okay, so this, this roll's specifically for the Mariposa coming in, and.

AUSTIN: It's this whole scene, of jumping out and doing whatever you want to do here.

JANINE: Yeah. okay, so I want to, I've got the Cadent by the hand, and I'm leaping out of this window to get her out of the way of the immediate threat, and the Mariposa is... breaks through the ceiling, flies in overhead, and basically like, I want that shot of the almost, like VTOL-like.

AUSTIN: Yep. uh huh.

JANINE: Going down in front of the window as... as Signet and the Cadent vanish from sight from the window? and just shooting in at two bodyguards.

AUSTIN: Are you also getting in the mech, or are you just putting the Cadent in the Mariposa?

JANINE: Oh I wasn't putting either of them in there.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, you're just sho- okay. it's just.

JANINE: (overlapping) I was, I was specifically like, leaving that as like a distraction.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha, so.

JANINE: /attack thing.

AUSTIN: So its shooting in at these other two guys. gotcha.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it manages to do that, you're safe, the Cadent is safe. you will make, you should make a harm roll? which is, I think the thing for, for shooting?

JANINE: Yeah, I don't, this is very complicated (laughs)

AUSTIN: Well no, i, I think you just-.

JANINE: The mech thing, i... is complicated.

AUSTIN: You're just gonna make it as a regular attack in this case, I think. the harm stuff on the mech, is just like, how much damage it does. if this mech shoots these people, they are going to be dead. don't worry.

JANINE: Okay, alright.

AUSTIN: What sort of weapon does it have?

JANINE: I gave it a particle rifle with a question mark because I couldn't really think of anything cool in there?

AUSTIN: Okay...

JANINE: I just wanted it to shoot some kind of energy burst.

AUSTIN: I worry that a particle rifle at this range would also kill this robot boy.

JANINE: I guess, I don't... what kind of, like.

AUSTIN: A big mech rifle is... big.

JANINE: But this is a very small mech.

AUSTIN: How small is a small mech?

JANINE: This is, like... this is...

AUSTIN: You have to describe this mech for me.

JANINE: (nervous laugh) I imagine it as a... a very nimble, like, small... one of my sort of touch points for it is, like, the NieR Automata flight suits.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Where there's like, a sort of open front, so it doesn't offer a lot of armor protection when she's actually in it?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah I gotcha.

JANINE: It's mostly just like, a little, nimble strike unit kind of thing.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me the neutralize move, which uh, how are you feeling as your operate that?

JANINE: Probably a little powerful.

AUSTIN: Alright, go ahead and give me your powerful.

JANINE: That's like, the fuck you for betraying this poor lady.

AUSTIN: Totally.

(Janine rolls)

JANINE: Eh...

AUSTIN: Well that's a 6... so if you had that +1 forward...

JANINE: Thats a 6... yeah.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm... I got... oof, ah... so I think that the... at this point, where are you and the Cadent? you're still in the room? or did you jump out? you jumped out.

JANINE: It was sort of like, they jump out of the window.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, as the mech comes down, yeah.

JANINE: (overlapping) As the flight unit comes in from above. yeah.

AUSTIN: So, the particle rifle fires in, and it pushes the guys back out into the hallway, but you can hear the robot yell, they've been shot, not by your suit, but by one of the assassins.

AUSTIN (as Chiron) My legs.

JANINE: Ohh boy.

AUSTIN: The Cadent like, looks at you to see what you will do. and we're going to back into the race briefly. how are you reconfiguring things?

ALI: Mmm... is, is there a way for me to like, put us on a separate track?

AUSTIN: Uh, you can do a lot of things, I don't know how your moves work, shit.

ALI: Yeah, I can do anything, i, god, I can like,

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

ALI: Pull us into a completely different zone.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: I would rather just like, do that.

AUSTIN: Okay. whats that look like, and what's that, yeah. how do you d- whats that look like?

ALI: I... its something thats like, intuitive, so I don't think that there's like, a hand gesture or like, any kind of input that she has to do?

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: I think that it's like, I, I think in the, like, in my head this scene is her pulling back, and them trying to like, collide with her, and then like once they.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Get close enough to like, the entire room just changes and it's like.

AUSTIN: Yeah, its, like it stops being space and starts being something else?

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly. and then I think it's like, that its like, they're on a street?

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay, sure.

ALI: And they're not ships anymore? So it's just.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Like, yeah. so they're like, it's kind of like a, like an alleyway, I guess.

AUSTIN: Yeah. give me a reconfigure.

ALI: I would love to...

AUSTIN: Are you also still feeling powerful?

ALI: Um... yeah.

AUSTIN: Also, also Janine, make sure to also mark sad and powerful.

ALI: (laughs) What a good game.

AUSTIN: What a good game.

ALI: What a good game we're doing... yeah, I feel like this is, this, her following through the like, plan she set up, so... that is an 8, and I mark that again?

AUSTIN: Alright, so, when you remake parts of the digital environment as you see fit, describe what you take from the digital world, and what it becomes. Then, roll +Cyberbrain. Oh, sorry, you should not be rolling +Powerful, you should have rolled +Cyberbrain, which is only +1.

ALI: Oh...

AUSTIN: But that is still a 7, so you're still fine.

ALI: Okay, fair.

AUSTIN: But unmark that powerful.

ALI: Ah, yes.

AUSTIN: So you do it, but you only choose one. either you do not suffer feedback, the change is not noticed, or your subconscious stays repressed.

ALI: (laughs) I am going to try and suppress my conscious here?

AUSTIN: Okay, so that means you do suffer feedback, huh?

ALI: Sure? (laughs)

AUSTIN: And I get to do a quick search for the word "Feedback".

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: So I think you take 1 harm...? Yeah, take 1 harm, which is... if you take a look at your info page,

ALI: Yes...

AUSTIN: There should be a thing that's like, light harm? Do you see that?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Take that. and the... what's that look like in the digital space?

ALI: In terms of...

AUSTIN: Like, physically. like, do you see, d- does that feedback show itself? like youve done this very quickly, so it's like, you've, you've slammed on the brakes and in doing so, given yourself digital whiplash.

ALI: Okay, yeah. i... i, I feel like there's a physicality to it, especially when there's like, momentum to what the movement was?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you either come tumbling into this new environment? Or...

ALI: Right, yeah, I feel like its (laughs) Its, you expect there to be like, a crash there, and like, an actual, like, like a [clap],

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And then instead it's like, you're still going forward, and Court Of??

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: The momentum is pushing you into this new environment.

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. so... the... the, you're in this street, it's just like a city street. what type of city is it?

ALI: Uh... New York, basically. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah. okay.

ALI: It's just like, kind of loud, really tall buildings, it's like.

AUSTIN: Yeah... are there people? Or is it, is it.

ALI: I think...

AUSTIN: Like is like it a big... go ahead.

ALI: I think it's like, oh god, it's like the Universal Studios version of new york city, where its like, n- (laughs)

AUSTIN: (whispers) Ohh, yes.

ALI: It was like, the sky's like a little too bright, and like.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: The street is way too wide, or like way too thin, cause you expect, like, people to be walking on it, and it's like, a little cleaner than it should be?

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay. so the other thing is they totally notice this, obviously, right?

ALI: (laughs) Yeah, mm hmm, yeah.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) I mean that's kind of an obvious one in this case. But what that also means is they very quickly notice you, right? He is a young, I'd say, 19-20 year old? in a, an all-body suit? Like an all black bodysuit, that has like, little white lines running down the extremities, in like curved shapes? Almost like a surfing suit, or something? Or a wetsuit? And a, a like, a mask on, like a whole, like a helmet enclosure, that is also all black, and, begins to cough, and then like, rips that mask off, and like throws it to the ground. there's also like, a big flowing red cape. and like, pushes himself back up to like, to his feet, and like, reaches his hand out, and like a gun appears in it- no it's not a fuckin gun, this guy is, this guy's a nerd.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: And a fuckin laser sword appears in it. and like, gets his bearings and then he reaches out with his other hand and a gun appears in that one.

(Ali and Jack laugh)

AUSTIN: In his left hand.

AUSTIN (as male operative): You're not supposed to be here!

AUSTIN: And he points his gun at you. what do you do?

ALI: Oh man. (laughs) I... I guess I could just, also make weapons appear? Like, I have a very specific, like, physical weapon that she has, but like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: This guy has a LASER sword. I'm just also going to have a laser sword. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, like it's just, fuckin... that seems fair, right? that seems...

ALI: Like, come on.

AUSTIN: Good.

ALI: And then I think I'm also going to say, like.

ALI (as Tender): You got a gun, AND a sword?

AUSTIN (as male operative): (flustered) I... agh... Don't judge me!

ALI (as Tender): You are clearly new here.

AUSTIN: Ah... he shoots at you.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: What do you do? like he starts, he pulls the trigger.

ALI: I... in, I was thinking of myself like, on the ground?

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

ALI: So could I, like, try to jump up?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's a risk, for sure.

ALI: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: And like, to be in a positive situation,

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I think this is now back to using regular emotion stuff.

ALI: How do I feel about... this...

AUSTIN: Good question!

ALI: Right? (laughs) Cause there's like, a comfort here, cause she was able to drag him into a place that she is now designed.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, totally.

ALI: I think that like, playful is probably the thing? and I don't know if that, like, joyful or powerful is probably more on the nose...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah...

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AUSTIN: (exhales)

JACK: (laughs)

ALI: Wh-.

AUSTIN: That's a 4...

ALI: Oh, cool, yeah, I...

AUSTIN: You rolled a 4. mark, uh, mark powerful, and also an XP.

ALI: There's something about feeling like your at an advantage when someone literally shoots you (laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

JACK: (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Like, you motherf- BOOM, and then just shot, right?

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Take, take another damage here. and then he like, charges at you with this laser sword, and now we're gonna back into the engineering section. Hey, there's a robot that is sawing this thing. What do you do?

JACK: Um... i'm going to give them warning, like an ultimatum,

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Otherwise I'm going to shoot them.

AUSTIN: I, s- i, yeah, what do you say?

JACK (as Fourteen): I'm going to shoot at you if you don't stop doing that.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Okay, give me an ultimatum, which when you say what you want, and what you will do if you don't get it, roll.

JACK: Okay... um... what do I roll?

AUSTIN: I don't know, what are you feelin? It's always that, basically, unless it's a special move that use something like... your... you know. a special stat.

JACK: Well Art said a thing in a episode, and in, Winter in Hieron, which, was amazing, which was like, Hadrian doesn't know he rolled a 1! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right, yep.

JACK: Which is that, like, Fourteen doesn't know that they're being followed.

AUSTIN: Right, nope.

JACK: So I think they feel powerful.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: They, they're pointing a gun at this person.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

JACK: Um...

(pause)

AUSTIN: Oh buddy...

JACK: Well...

AUSTIN: Thats a 6...

JACK: You know, it could have been 6 worse...

AUSTIN: I'm trying to think if there's any way to give you a bonu-.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: No there isn't really any other... that's a 6. Um... so that means you, it, it ref- it refuses, the cable goes spiraling up into the air, and there's two other cables left in this room... and as you pull the trigger, the door slams into you from behind, and your gun drops out of your hand, and like, slides across the floor of this little engineering room... and in steps... a woman who... is dressed like you but with a longer coat? And with a shotgun instead of a pistol. And on the ground, behind her, you see the engineering uniform that she's slipped out of.

AUSTIN (as female operative): (with slight accent) You're not supposed to be in here.

AUSTIN: And then cocks the, the, the shotgun, and points it at you... and like, her eyes dart to the pistol on the ground. What do you do?

JACK: I'm going to... try and, and, and roll for the pistol?

AUSTIN: Okay. give me a risk. how are you feeling?

JACK: I'm feeling mad.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Nothing has gone well.

AUSTIN: Yeah... this fuckin sucks.

JACK: Two people have told me that I'm not supposed to be here.

AUSTIN: Uh uh.

JACK: I'm supposed to be here! They're not supposed to be here!

AUSTIN: (laughs) Oh... alright, give me a risk, give me a powerful roll.

JACK: Okay...

(pause)

AUSTIN: Ohh buddy...

JACK: (laughs)

AUSTIN: That's a 5, you're not wearin', like armor or anything, huh?

JACK: No...

AUSTIN: She shoots you... in the side... take... pfft, god, what d- take, two damage? take three damage. it's a shotgun at close range.

JACK: Okay...

AUSTIN: Like...

JACK: Where is my damage?

AUSTIN: It's on the, info page.

JACK: Oh, where it says...

AUSTIN: Harm?

JACK: Harm.

AUSTIN: Yeah, light, moderate, critical. so you're going to take light, then take two moderate. critical is like, no, you need help . right now. please go get help.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's a very simple health system. I like it a lot, actually. (sighs) She cocks the gun again, and then kicks your pistol away, and then... says...

AUSTIN (as female operative): Linklater, cut the other two.

AUSTIN: And then like, leans down on top of you, and like, slaps your, your cheeks twice, Fourteen Fifteen. (sighs)

AUSTIN (as female operative): You're an amateur. Should have never sent someone like you to deal with someone like me.

AUSTIN: She is light skinned, and has... close-cropped red hair. her eyebrows are imPECCABLE, and she has like, a very neutral lipstick color on. the... thing you notice at this range is that her hands, are like, have the , the oil and grease of actually working down here? so like, you know that she's been at least , like, blending in by doing blending in type work? Uh... and then she, like, stands back up.

AUSTIN (as female operative): When they find you, you tell them, that Mother's Story ended ya.

AUSTIN: And she goes over to, to like, watch the robot finish the cutting job. and... begins smoking she like, takes out a cigarette and starts smoking.

JACK: (laughs) Just leaving me bleeding on the floor?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Oh yeah, you're bleeding to death on th- she has your gun, like what, like... whatever.

JACK: Oh she said she picked up my gun?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah yeah yeah, she's at this point, she leans, she takes your gun.

JACK: Okay. Okay. Um... can I attempt to leave?

AUSTIN: Sure. Just like, crawling away?

JACK: Yeah?

AUSTIN: She lets you. she's gonna let you totally crawl away.

JACK: How much, how badly... can I move?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK: Okay. Can I somehow... try and...

AUSTIN: (overlapping) You're bleeding badly, but like, yeah.

JACK: Can I try and shut them in this room?

AUSTIN: Oh that's interesting. how do you do that?

JACK: The door is automatic?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: So what happens is I crawl out... and the door opens to let me out.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And then it closes.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And I break the panel with my fist?

AUSTIN: Okay, so you're just like, punching it?

JACK: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Okay...

JACK: And then I think that the door just opens again? I don't think the panel does anything like, I don't think breaking the panel will hold the door shut, it's an automatic door!

AUSTIN: (laughs) Ok- but maybe you succeeded! Wait, so you have another plan? For keeping them locked in there?

JACK: Yeah, which is that I think I'm gonna try and like, break something?

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: So that the s- that, the oil or the steam or the heat.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Is obscuring the door.

AUSTIN: Okay. so what are you breaking?

JACK: I'm breaking a pipe.

AUSTIN: Okay, that, s-

JACK: I'm not, I'm unscrewing a pipe, I think.

AUSTIN: Like, you like find a screwdriver nearby?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like in a pile of tools? or you know what, on her belt on her fake engineering belt, that she.

JACK: Oh, yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: Or like, from her disguise? That's really good. Alright, give me a, I'm gonna say this is neutralize again. Because you're using force to neutr- to take control of a situation.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And again, the thing that I like about this is like, how you're feeling is gonna be how you roll, like, it's not your neutralize score, you know?

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: I guess it, it could be distr- it could be divert... but, I think it's neutralize. like, you're trying to take control of this situation, is what you're trying to do. so go ahead and give me whatever you're feeling right now.

JACK: I'm feeling scared.

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah, give me a scared.

JACK: I've gone from foolish to scared.

AUSTIN: And unmark the powerful because scared is the opposite of powerful.

JACK: Take it down to 0.

AUSTIN: Or take it down to 1, cause you just put... yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You just flip them, basically. you flip them. (pause) Hey!

JACK: (laughs)

ALI: (gasps)

AUSTIN: That's a 10, buddy! you did it! I like this so, like you punch it, and then like, it opens back up and they look at you? and then you like,

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: (groan) And like, walk down the hall, basically? and then start unscrewing it, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You hear this second ta- the second cable collapse in there? and then you... and you hear the robot go over to start doing the... the third one, and you hear her say like.

AUSTIN (as Mother's Story): Alright Linklater, I'll see you back on the ship.

AUSTIN: And she turns to walk out, and just as she does, the steam pipe opens. and like, catches her and the whole hallway just like, fills with steam. and the... you know, it's not just steam? It's the gas. It's the Twilight Mirage, spills out into them, and like, suddenly they're in this weird mix of outer space, and, and fake New York. But also, it's hot. It's hot, it's a hot, like, physical gas,

JACK: Mmm.

AUSTIN: And she like, yells, and charg- runs backwards, I think she retreats from this. and can you hear the third, the other robot sawing away at the thi- at the third cable, and then you can hear it fall over as the hot steam, like, ends him. I think this is the exhaust of the big glass dome, that you opened up basically? so it's like this mix of, of augmented reality images that is like, burning them. she escaped with her life, but, but... you know? Did not succeed at her job.

JACK: The cut the cables I guess.

AUSTIN: They cut two of the cables, so they didn't get the third cable, which is good.

JACK: Oh I see.

AUSTIN: Stopped the third cable.

JACK: Nice.

AUSTIN: Signet? Robot needs help?

JANINE: Yeah... okay... (laughs) Are the other two dead? Or are just in the hall?

AUSTIN: The other two are in the hall, but it* can't get out by itself*. They can't get out by itself*, by themselves.

JANINE: Okay. I think what I wanna do here is... I... want, the... flight unit to... lower down so I can load the Cadent into it.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: Like, there's not enough room in there for two people.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: It's just, it's like a one person thing.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm. I should describe her dress, I realized.

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Which is... yeah, duh. She is, she does not have a crown, right? Like, she, she has a, I think she has a series of really fancy necklaces, that have a bunch of different, they're like instead of links in a chain, they're different pendants that link together to form the whole necklace? And the necklace pendants all come, or are all icons of the different Divines. And so she has like three of those necklaces that are all like, thirty different pendants, basically, linked together. and under that, she has on, like, robes... that are... what color would they be? I think they're blue, right? they're like this very optimistic, like tiffany blue, that layer in really intricate ways, so like, it isn't just, like, one big layer left to right, they layer once left, and then there's another part of it that layers right, somehow. All the way down. but like, that's it. like there isn't any crown, there isn't any sort of like, she doesn't hold a scepter right, like... the Cadent is... any jewelry, any, anything that's on her, that, that marks her as important, is about a, a loyalty she owes someone else. and, and not about her as like a queen, or something like that. so yeah, she's able to get on safely. Do you send it away?

JANINE: I think, I think I like, really quickly say like, you know, just ma- you know, (laughs) I was going to say "just make sure you don't fall out!".

(Austin and Ali laugh)

JANINE: That's not what, that's not what I (laughs) Was saying... (laughs) This isn't the... like, you know, just...

JANINE (as Signet): I'm, I can still control it.

JANINE: And stuff.

JANINE (as Signet): You don't need to do anything just...

JANINE: You know.

JANINE (as Signet): Just relax.

JANINE: I don't know if that's even right.

AUSTIN: Yeah that's fine.

JANINE: You know, just... have, have...

JANINE (as Signet): Just trust in me.

JANINE: I guess.

AUSTIN: She nods.

JANINE: And then... I'm gonna, I wanna send that away...

AUSTIN: As she starts to like, drift back, she like, locks eyes with you, and then like, looks back up at the box? and then she says like.

AUSTIN (as Cadent): Trust in yourself!

AUSTIN: And... like, not in a dismissive way, like in a, like.

JANINE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: She's compelling you to trust in yourself.

JANINE: Mmm.

AUSTIN: And then it flies away?

JANINE: I think s- it's not gonna like, fly very far away.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I don't think, but the idea is like.

AUSTIN: Keep her safe.

JANINE: At, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm not going to hurt her off screen after you, like that successful roll and all that.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I think it flies up through the hole it created above? and a funny thing happens, which is, she flies back through that hole, and then another, a huge, I guess it's actually smaller by now... a *hand* places a patch on top of that hole, and like, like soldiers it shut. and then you hear this sound of like, huge thrusters passing over the entire arena. and this point, people in the stands have realized that something is happening? (laugh) And there's some shouting. Ali, can people see y- your little corner of this? or is it in a different, can they not see it?

ALI: I, I assume that, if it is an option that they can't, they cannot.

AUSTIN: Okay. If you don't want them to, they can't.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. so you've been shot with the virtual g- oh, let's finish Signet thing, at this point. Signet? What do you do?

JANINE: Yeah... so the next I wanna do is get back into the box.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: And like, she probably does this in a... (sigh) I hate this, cause I wasn't on COUNTER/Weight? So I listened to all of COUNTER/Weight with like, very strong anime feelings?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: And now all the anime feelings are gonna happen.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

ALI: (laughs)

JANINE: So... sorry.

AUSTIN: No, good. let em happen.

JANINE: Signet was not a pilot in the sense that we might think of pilo- of like, a very tight fitting, like.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: Cockpit area, with a lot of like, I was gonna say gearshifts, ah- mmm, but like, sticks and controls and stuff in stuff in it.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: Her piloting thing, which we'll maybe end up explaining later, probably doesn't need to be explained now, but it's a lot more acrobatic and weird. so she is still kind of acrobatic and weird.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: So I see her doing a flip back up into the box, and as she's flipping, her robes... like, her own vestments, which are... nice, but, you know, probably not too complicated, but just like, very nice and kind of like a cape-y thing, and stuff, all that stuff anyways, gets sort of sucked in

to... I wish I could remember the name of this thing, but there's like a device sucks a stage curtain in? instead of opening the curtain.

AUSTIN: (amused)uh huh?

JANINE: It just, like, aspirates the curtain? and I imagine like, that with all the fabric, just kind of like, pulling away, and like, flinging up, and then, disappearing into these little nodes, in this like, silvery, pearlescent plugsuit-type thing.

AUSTIN: It's called a curtain sniffer.

(pause)

JACK: (laughs) No it isn't.

ALI: (quietly) Mmmm?

JANINE: Let's, let's say aspirate more than that.

AUSTIN: Okay...

JANINE: Let's, let's call it a curtain aspirator and not a curtain sniffer, cause it's ter-

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JACK: Curtain sniffer...

JANINE: So... (laughs) All the fabric does that, except for like, her, her sash. Her sash is not gonna do that.

AUSTIN: Okay. so that stays out. what's, what's the suit underneath look like?

JANINE: It's like a bodysuit, it's sort of a, sort of silvery, pear- mother-of-pearl.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Okay.

JANINE: Kind of like, there's probably like, it's white, but like, there's colors and light shifting on it?

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: And then there's like some, some nodes and areas that like.

AUSTIN: Your like, crown stays on, though.

JANINE: (overlapping) Kind of like, hardware? points. oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, good.

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Like, super long hair going everywhere, doing the flip,

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Landing in the box.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: And you've landed in the box.

JANINE: (overlapping) Ready to...

AUSTIN: And there is...

JANINE: Yep.

AUSTIN: There is... the robot. and there you are. And... now that the Mariposa is gone, you know that you only have a moment before they try to come back in and, and kill both of you at this point? Probably? What do you do?

JANINE: I... how big is this robot?

AUSTIN: It's a, it's a person-sized robot. this robot's name is Chiron.

JANINE: Ooh. okay. so, his legs are hurt .

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So he's probably not gonna be in a "Let's get out of here quick place", right?

AUSTIN: Correct. you can see, like his legs are sparking through the dress pants. like, from being shot through. there's oil on the ground.

JANINE: What kind of door did you say it was?

AUSTIN: It's like a v- like a steel door that opens vertically, and it's open right now. like it.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Goes up into the wall, basically, above, above.

JANINE: Is there any kind of like, control panel or something?

AUSTIN: Yeah, but it's close to the door. like it's on the door, you know? Or it's on the wall next to the door. so yes.

JANINE: Yeah, the thing, the thing I was kind of thinking was like, if I fling the kinetic sash out and fuck up the control panel so it drops the door down, but like, breaks it?

AUSTIN: Right. give it a shot? that.

JANINE: That would.

AUSTIN: That sounds like a risk to me? the risk is them coming in and shooting you before you can manage to do that.

JANINE: Yeah. i'm gonna say I'm still feeling powerful.

AUSTIN: Let's do it. sounds good.

AUSTIN: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mark that powerful.

(Janine rolls)

JANINE: 7.

AUSTIN: Okay. so that's a, an option. alright, so, they're going to get one shot off at you before the door closes. so you're gonna take... you can close the door, but you'll have to take 1 harm to do it, basically. or you can dive out of the way.

JANINE: That's fine I mean I have armor, so...

AUSTIN: Oh, do you? what's your armor?

JANINE: My armor is this jumpsuit and also my weird thing.

AUSTIN: Wait, what's your weird thing?

JANINE: One of my powers is, is armor of faith.

AUSTIN: Ohhhh, right right right right, which says... so... hmm. huh.

JANINE: So as long as I possess my Cybertome, you have the benefit of 1 armor. when this armor is deci- the deciding factor in preventing harm, instead describe inexplicable circumstance that cause the harm to not befall you.

AUSTIN: Can I get that? Can I hear that?

JANINE: What the inexplicable circumstance would be?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I don't think you have to give me in this case, cause it's not... it's not.

JANINE: Cause it's 1 harm instead of, like, I think the deciding factor would be if it was two harm.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Because then the thing...

AUSTIN: If I make it 2 harm, will you give me this inexplicable circumstance?

JANINE: (laughs) Uh huh! Uh huh, you just want the more anime fuckin' bullshit, okay. Yeah, let's see ?????

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah! You know what, they both turn and shoot at you, and that would have 2 harm, and now you gotta tell me what the inexplicable fuckin' circumstance is!

JANINE: So, inexplicable circumstance we're saying is like, just a thing that happens in the world?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you remember that bit...

JANINE: That like...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. It's just, it's the sort of thing where someone would say "That was divine intervention."

JANINE: Can it be a thing that affects their aim?

AUSTIN: Totally. 100%.

JANINE: Or something?

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: This... this might be actually too much of a stretch. I was gonna do something with the steam, but I don't think the steam pipes would be like, this far, and like... out?

AUSTIN: No, but it's kin- no, probably not. That would be really funny, but I think probably not.

JANINE: It'd be funny, but it's like a little bit of a stretch.

AUSTIN: It's a bit of a stretch, yeah.

JANINE: It's a stretch in a stretch in a stretch.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. There's divine intervention, and then there's just complete foolishness.

JANINE: I'm gonna say it's a... person, a toasted bean seller person.

AUSTIN: Oh, good.

JANINE: Who... is kind of freaking out, cause like they were maybe kind of like low on stock, so they were like in the back room.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: And then they, they came out and shit's poppin' off and they're kind of freaking out, and they're, they're running to like, try and alert the...

AUSTIN: The...

JANINE: The Cadent and their bodyguards that some shit's happening.

AUSTIN: Oh, sure.

JANINE: As if they didn't already know that?

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: (laughs) And then they just careen...

AUSTIN: This person has like, probably gotten past two layers of security at this point?

AUSTIN (as bean seller): (exasperatedly) I have to tell the Cadent! I'm the only one!

(Janine and Jack laugh)

AUSTIN: And they just like, slam into these guys? Perfect. Ali wants to know what toasted bean is.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: I also kind of want to know what toasted bean is.

JANINE: I don't, I just wanted some sort of, like.

AUSTIN: No no no no no...

JANINE: I was definitely thinking edamame?

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

JANINE: But I didn't want it to be edamame.

ALI: Ohhkay. (laughs)

JANINE: Like, I wanted it to be just some sort of like, bean, but like, it's kind of like, crunchy? And it's like, weird, and... cause we think of beans as very soft, usually, but like...

AUSTIN: Okay...

JANINE: Like a snacking bean.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Like a snacking bean. That's the name, that's what it says on, like, this guy's running and has like, the, the suspenders with the tray of snacks? And on the side, it just says "The Snacking Bean".

(all laugh)

JANINE: T M.

AUSTIN: T M, yeah. The TM stands for "Twilight Mirage". It's the Twilight Mirage...

(all laugh)

AUSTIN: Okay. And yeah, he just careens into them. And takes them down... there's a dilemma here, though... if that's it. He has get out safely... I just let him get out safely. Otherwise, this spirals and snowballs and you have to save HIM, too?

JANINE: Uh, yeah. I mean, maybe he like, maybe he like, sees them with their guns out, and they're like, facing at me?? when he like.

ALI: (laughs)

JANINE: Throws his beans, or something, saying "I'm outta here!".

AUSTIN: "I'm outta here!", right.

JANINE: "Take the beans!".

AUSTIN: (laughs) Exactly. And the doors close, and he dodges off in a side room and he's safe. Locks it.

JANINE: Yaaay.

AUSTIN: Your doors locked. You're able to get your, get the robot friend, you're able to get, Chiron out of here, safely.

JANINE: Yaaay.

AUSTIN: Back in the, in the fully digital environment.

ALI: Hello.

AUSTIN: Hi. A laser sword is runnin' at you with a laser sword.

ALI: Okay...

AUSTIN: That's not his name, his name is... Morning's Observation.

ALI: Ohhkay... (laughs)

AUSTIN: So Observation.

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: The Earth people, so... I, I'll get into this later, at, but, they're not actually called the Earth cult, your culture calls them the Earth cult, because they have a weird Earth religion? And they did some wild shit with the Earth, man. (laughs) Like, hmm. We'll get into it. But they all have, they're... surnames come first, and are possessive. So... like, this person's given name is "Observation", and their surname is "Morning's", like, belonging to the morning. I gue- so a different translation would be like, "Observation of Morning". Or the character that, that... that Fourteen Fifteen fought was "Mother's Story", or "Story of Mother" or "Story of a Mother" is another way that you're, that name could have been translated. It's, they're very, it's very important for the members of the, the New Earth Hegemony to feel like they belong to something. That, that's kind of core to their ideologies. So... Observation is now... charging at you with the laser sword. You've been shot in the digital world.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: But in a way that's created feedback, and you hurt you. So like.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That, I guess is how people do combat in this space? Is like... weird things that... cut through?

ALI: Yeaahhhh? I've been playing a lot of Persona 5, so it's hard not to think of it as like,

AUSTIN: Mmmm.

ALI: Cognitive damage? And I know this game, a separate thing for like Humanity damage? But like...

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's a different thing though.

ALI: I feel like there's.

AUSTIN: For sure, right?

ALI: The idea of like, like I was saying before, like there's still the idea of like, a movement? And like, your body, and like, what, if your mind is thinking that you've been shot, like,

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: You feel like you are...

AUSTIN: Yeah that's totally fine.

ALI: Yeah. What I'm gonna try and do, though... is like, try to make the floor ripple a little bit? So like.

AUSTIN: Oooh, good.

ALI: He'll trip? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: And that's...

AUSTIN: Yeah, give me a...

ALI: That's gonna be a cyberbrain roll.

AUSTIN: That's cyberbrain.

ALI: Yeah, I'm just gonna roll that.

AUSTIN: Give me that cyberbrain.

ALI: I'm gonna roll mad for this.

AUSTIN: Which again...

ALI: Yeah.

(Ali rolls)

AUSTIN: You got a 9!

ALI: Which is a 9!

AUSTIN: Which says... let me go back to your thing... unless you know off the top of your head what it says on a 9...

ALI: On..

AUSTIN: Oh right, you, you... either don't suffer feedback, the change is not noticed, or your subconscious stays repressed.

ALI: Hmm... I'm gonna keep my subconscious repressed, cause I don't need anymore mixups to this?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: (laughs) (unintelligible)

AUSTIN: I have a good one, but that's fine. That's fine.

ALI: I know, I know you probably do, but... (laughs)

AUSTIN: We'll get there. You'll fail one of these rolls sooner or later.

ALI: I know! I gave you all those good ideas I really wanted to happen, but, maybe not right now.

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah, fair. First episode, you want to seem competent.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right, Fourteen?

ALI: (laughs)

JACK: Look, I... I'm good at one thing, that's rolling high when I'm feeling scared.

(Ali, Austin, and Janine laugh)

AUSTIN: What a good game, okay.

JANINE: And when you have hot chocolate.

(Austin and Jack laugh)

AUSTIN: Okay, so give me that... oh you did, you got a 9.

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Yes, yes, yes.

AUSTIN: Okay. And that's just cyberbrain, so that's, you don't change your mad stat.

ALI: Mm hmm.

AUSTIN: Or anything like that. So you suffer feedback, so take another damage.

ALI: Uh? Sure...

AUSTIN: You suffer feedback. That's one of the things, that's the thing you said you didn't, you... you only choose one on a 9.

ALI: I thought it was like the dungeon world, like, "Maybe this can happen, maybe it doesn't"? (laughs)

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: Kind of rule.

AUSTIN: No, on a 10+ you do it, and you get all 3. On a 7-9, you do it, but may only choose one.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's how it works.

ALI: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: So it strains, it strains you a little bit.

ALI: Like, the next harm that I get is critical?

AUSTIN: Yes. Which means... you either have to choose... not to suffer feedback, or...

(Austin and Ali laugh)

AUSTIN: There's a cost.

ALI: Hmmmm, kay...

AUSTIN: So what's that look like? What does the actual feedback look like on doing this? Is it just strain?

ALI: Probably just strain, right? Like, yeah. I mean, there's... there's a part at which she doesn't have the cyberbrain anymore?

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

ALI: So I think that it's like,

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's a really good point, like yeah, she's doing this stuff literally without the actual cyberbrain, she's doing this with her mind.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Which should not be possible at all.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I think maybe a thing, there's a thing there which is like, you can see that he has like, he doesn't have a cyberbrain, but he's tethered to something? That is basically letting him do this, that's like, why he has the whole suit on and all that.

ALI: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: Anyway, you get the thing, the waves, like, the, the, what did you say it was? Like the, the... street?

ALI: Yeah, the ground itself is gonna kind of like, wiggle, to trip him.

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah, and it does. And like, he falls, and the laser sword cuts into the ground, and like, and like... breaks off like, a wavy tether? And his foot gets caught inside of it, and he... drops the laser sword. And he's like struggling between trying to climb out of his foot being caught in this weird, like, folded up ground, and trying to get a shot off on you, but he's like, missing left and right. And you kind of have control of this situation.

ALI: So, we're like, in a weird mental digital space zone, but I'm still like,

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: I'm still like, a cop? Who's trying to apprehend him?

AUSTIN: Right, sure.

ALI: So like, I, in my head, her immediate response, if he is lying face first, is to get on top of him and try to handcuff him? But like, I don't know what handcuffs are going to do.

AUSTIN: Has this worked before?

ALI: (laughs) I have to imagine so, that is her instinct.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

ALI: Cause I, I feel like the... again, like if the mental thing is to disarm, and like...

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

ALI: To... apprehend him, like, if she's able to do that in the digital space, that is what is happening.

AUSTIN: Right. So... what I'll say is there's a move that would perfect for this that you don't have yet.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is The Kick, right?

ALI: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: So the thing that we then have to decide is, how do you normally... we've talked about this off-mic, but like... the thing that I like about the way you go in is to show like, you're sitting in a lobby.

ALI: Mm hmm.

AUSTIN: And the lobby can be a billion different types of lobbies. We've seen one that looks kind of like a dentist office. It could be a garden. It could be a beach. Like, it's in a weird, it's just like this, this liminal space between where ever you are and where ever you want to be. And... it takes a while to slowly go in, or to go slowly come out. And so I think you could just like, pin him to the ground, and stay here for some amount of time. And then eventually you'll both be in the lobby.

ALI: Okay. Yeah, I like, there's, I wonder if the move Neutralize fits here?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: To just be like, you were disarmed, and we're going to like, we're going to have to wait this out. But like, if I do this successfully, I've done it successfully?

AUSTIN: Yeah, so I think, I think you could do this with sway

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: By telling him, like, "Hey, do this"? Or Ultimatum? Which is like, "Do this or else I'm going to keep hurting you"? Or Neutralize, which, the th- yeah, which, I guess the success from Neutralize would... allow for that. I guess we didn't actually, we did Neutralize successfully with you, right Jack?

JACK: Uh, yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess we didn't actually read out what those things were, we just kind of gave you the result you were looking for? But, looking at that now. "You can inflict harm, you can take away an advantage, you can suffer little harm yourself, you can force a change of location, you

can impress/dismay/frighten you opponent." And... so if you succeed on Neutralize, that's what you get.

ALI: Yeah, I feel like "Force a change of location" kind of fits here?

AUSTIN: Yes, totally.

ALI: Okay, fair.

AUSTIN: So go ahead and do a Neutralize. And in retrospect, Jack, what you did was inflict harm, force a change of location, and impress, dismay, or frighten your opponent in that one.

(pause)

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a 9!

ALI: Oh I didn't roll yet, that was my old ???

AUSTIN: Oh that's an old, okay.

(Ali and Jack laugh)

ALI: I'm trying to figure out how I feel, cause like... no, I'm gonna, I think I'm still Powerful.

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me that powerful roll.

(Ali rolls)

AUSTIN: Oh boy, that's an 11!

JANINE: Nice.

ALI: Yeaaaaaaaah. Yes. Baby.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) God damn. Okay. So you get three, and take no harm. So... what are the three things you do?

ALI: I... am going to look at that list again. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Well you said force a change of location

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: And that costs you, basically you get 3 points to spend, 3 hold to spend, and for 1 hold, I tell, I decide the new location? For 2 hold, you decide the new location.

--1:30:00--

ALI: Okay, and I have 3 of them?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I would love to decide.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) And you could... then you spend 2 on that, and you can do one more.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is probably either inflict harm, or impress/dismay/frighten your opponent? Because you're not gonna get hurt cause you rolled 10, and, because, I mean, he doesn't have advantage, so...

ALI: Yeah, sorry, I was just reading the Ultimatum ones, which is wrong.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

ALI: (laughs) But I think that it is... I think that impress, dismay, or frighten.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay. Like... you pin him to the ground, and he's just like, instantly like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): (panicked) Okay, okay, okay, okay.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Heyy!! Hey! Hey! That's a little tight! Don't, hey! Hey hey hey! (pause) (dejectedly) You're way stronger than I thought.

ALI (as Tender): Mm hmm. Yeah. Yeah, I am.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): You've been doing this for a long time, huh?

ALI (as Tender): Mmm, mm hmm? (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Janine says "Please, god, let him ask him her out, and she turns him down." He does NOT have that in him. He is no Aria Joie.

ALI: (laughs) He is like... he is stepping towards that line, but merely stepping.

AUSTIN: Yes. (laughs)

Austin (as Morning's Observation): Did someone, did you have like, did you go to classes, or how did you get like this?

ALI (as Tender): I- that's not what this is. Who sent you here?

Austin (as Morning's Observation): Don't, ah!

ALI (as Tender): You're going to go in for questioning anyway, you can just tell me now while we have to like, sit here for two minutes.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Two minutes...

AUSTIN: And then he's like, doing the math, and he's like, looking left and right, and he nods.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Then it's already... it's already happened.

AUSTIN: And he gets a grin on his face. And the coliseum shakes. And... the, like, shoulder, of a big mech, like, slams through it? Like, and attached to an arm? And then where it would attach to a chest, there's not a chest anymore. It's just this giant arm that has like, slammed through the top of the ceiling, like, reaching out. You just get this wide shot of this inverted pyramid, with this gigantic arm sticking up out of it, like... not like, it's, its fingers are half-closed, do you know what I mean? Not all the way to a fist yet, just kind of like on, like, open-grip. And the shoulder just like, plunges down into the coliseum, right in through the glass, and the glass shatters, and the Twilight Mirage starts spreading out into the arena basically. And everyone's fleeing.

The Cadent is safe, people are not, like, in danger in any, like there are probably some casualties, but not hundreds of thousand, right? Not, not a thousand even. You can look up, I guess, from here inside of the Twilight Mirage, and see how it mixes with the reality here, Tender? Where like, there's fake New York, and then above that, mixed in with the super way-too-blue sky is fake space, space outer space, you know, you can see... the, the Milky Way at this point, at this far distance. And then, beyond that, is real space, which has the Twilight Mirage nebula of like, purples and oranges and yellows and reds.

And you see Gumption, the second living Divine, like... have its like, you see its body without its arm, that's sticking up now out of this coliseum. And you see like, four ships careen into it, just like they did inside of the... the Mysteries. And it gets hit really bad, and then like, its, before its like, one of its legs comes off, and it grabs that leg? And like, spirals away from, from the ships that just slammed into it and exploded? And... kind of like, goes off to, like, do something with that leg, which is like, repair one of the other ships with the material from its broken legs. And it's like, slowly trying to keep the other ships that under attack right now from being destroyed, and in the process, is unbuilding itself.

You, at that point begin to fade back in, and now you are... seating with this dude on this black couch. He's knocked out, and is just like, collapsed to the left on the couch in the lobby. And you're back in the lobby. And now you get that view from inside of the coliseum looking out, into the skyline of Seance. And you can see, like, the very, there's a very obvious, kind of like, anime-line drawn in the sky, bright blue line, where ever Emphyrean goes. And you can see the,

the kind of super-clear lines of Empyrean fighting a small warforce in the, in the nebula around the city.

Everyone is able to get out okay. How does everyone get back to the ship? I guess it docks? I imagine this place has docks that go out into... space? Like, like docks. Like, as if, in fact, there might even be parts where there's like an ocean, but like, or like a pond that's, that's horizontal. Like, that floats off of the side of the ship. This, this octagonal ship that you literally have like, docks that you would pull up to, you know? And I can imagine your ship, or a ship that would take you back to your ship being there. Do people just like, regroup there? Do you stay on the planet? Or on the, sorry, not that planet, on Seance? In the city? What's the kind of like, regroup plan? And also, is anyone doing anything with regard to what's happening right now above?

ALI: (laughs)

JANINE: I think, on Signet's part, like, her first priority is... calling the Mariposa back to get the Cadent into... into like, church like, custody?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Protective, protective custody or whatever, yeah.

JANINE: With like, you know, yeah, with the people she's supposed to be with, and like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Same with the robot, with just like making sure those two individuals are with the people who can, who can take them forward from that point.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. There's basically a... there's like, one of... I kind of like this as like a few shots, where like, you're able to get to a phone booth, basically, or like... a call station? And you make the right call, you call back... what was the dude's name this morning, that you went to, to get, or yester- the morning before?

JANINE: Nideo.

AUSTIN: Nideo. And you make the call. And he gives you an address, which is nearby, which is a, a... there's just like, a sigil on the ground, like a mosaic in the ground. And they stand there, and then like, the, the mosaic, like, drops down into the center of the ship, and then new bricks unfold back up to keep it like, hidden. And they're like, going to some secret facility, deep inside of the ship, where they'll be safe. The, the robot is, Chiron, is not in good shape, eh, will be okay in the long run. Just get new robot legs, right? And the Cadent is deeply thankful for you. Fourteen Fifteen, you're able to fuckin' stumble your way out.

JACK: (laughs)

AUSTIN: I think the foreman finds you, and is like

Austin (as foreman): Oh! You're not in a great way!

Jack (as Fourteen): (laughs) No!

Austin (as foreman): We gotta get out of here!

Jack (as Fourteen): Yes please!

AUSTIN: And helps like, shoulder you, and get you out of there. And Tender, you basically like, take an elevator down to the ground floor with this fuckin' kid in handcuffs.

JANINE: Can I... do one last thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: I want to... try and intercept any outgoing communication from Covenant.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: If there is any.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, knowing that Gumption is, something is going on there obviously.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Uh huh. Yeah.

JANINE: Like, trying to find, trying to hear any, anything.

JACK: Covenant is the Excerpt of Gumption?

AUSTIN: Correct.

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: And... (sighs) Covenant... so, tell me about, tell me about when... Belgard died.

JANINE: So Belgard died in... the middle of a very large fight.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: For reasons that are very similar to why Gumption is dying now.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Which is that, there was a fight, and Belgard's job was usually to go from unit to unit, and heal them, and sort of protect them while that was being done, and like, repair them, and move on, and you know, if someone was very damaged and someone else was damaged, you mend the one up to the point where it can be okay on its own for a bit, and you go help the other one, and it's a big balance of prioritizing, and resourcing...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And resource management. But during that fight, Signet abandoned Belgard.

AUSTIN: Because...

JANINE: And...

AUSTIN: Is it clear?

JANINE: I don't know that we have that yet.

AUSTIN: Okay, that's fine.

JANINE: And... so she abandons Belgard for... for reasons. And without her, Belgard is not as good at prioritizing.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Her, or Belgard's, Belgard's instinct at the point is to just repair a thing until it's repaired, and, because it has a sort of attachment, and in so doing, it doesn't really stop to think about itself, or the greater scheme of what's going on.

AUSTIN: Mm hmm.

JANINE: So it eventually just gets completely, not completely wrecked, it's still...

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: It's still in a piece, but it's, it's, yeah.

AUSTIN: So, a very similar thing is happening right now. We get Covenant, who is a... young-ish girl, brown skin, freckles, her, her pilot suit is this like, it's a little too baggy, but it's definitely a style thing. And it's just like, patches of different colored cloth, that's like the style of the ship that she's from? And... I mean is this a thing that you can, you're just kind of hacking in with your ear, basically?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I'm basically, I'm looking cause like, I think it, I think Signet is, is mad in that way you get mad when someone makes a mistake you made.

--1:41:15--

AUSTIN: Yeah. She's making the opposite mistake. You can hear her plugging and unplugging all the different things in the cockpit. The cockpit of the Gumption, I talked to Keith about this before, the cockpit of the Gumption is like an old school...

JANINE: Switchboard?

AUSTIN: Switchboard or synthesizer, like, it's all physical things, right? It's plugs, it's switches, it's levers, and she's like hear her slamming things into different things, and the way I imagine it works, it's not just direct control, but it's like AI routines that are being put into place. And she's like.

AUSTIN (as Covenant): To anyone listening, the Gambit's been hit bad, but I think I can hold it together.

AUSTIN: And... is trying to keep the Gumption's Gambit, which is the ship dedicated to her, patched up.

AUSTIN (as Covenant): Not much in the way of raw materials. I used the ships I took out, but...

AUSTIN: And there's like, brrRRRooww. And a, one of the enemy ships like, flies right past the Gambit and you can hear it coming in. And, you can hear her continuing to do the repairs, basically. The... excerpt Blooming, the excerpt of Empyrean, also chimes in, and says like.

AUSTIN (as Blooming): This is too dangerous. You have to get out of there.

AUSTIN: And Covenant is just like.

AUSTIN (as Covenant): If I give up, all of my people... all of them!

AUSTIN: And... Blooming says like.

AUSTIN (as Blooming): I- (sighs) We can't lose another. We can't. Don't put this on me.

AUSTIN: And Covenant just kind of like, laughs.

AUSTIN (as Covenant): (laughs) You got this under control.

AUSTIN: And then there's a loud explosion. And you can see it, like, in the distance. There is... like, two things happen. First, there is, like, this loud sound, that you hear over the comms, Signet? And then there is explosion, and the explosion in the distance doesn't look like... it's not like red and explosive and orange, it's like white clouds. And they, like, puff out, all at once. Like,

like a squid's ink, through the Twilight Mirage. Like, big puffy white clouds. And they just expand. And hang there. And the sound goes dead. And you've lost connection. The enemy flees...

["The Twilight Mirage" begins]

AUSTIN: And Empyrean flies over to... the, the arm of Gumption that is... now sticking up out of, this coliseum, this inverted pyramid, and like perches on top. Empyrean as a Divine, it's dispersed in some ways throughout the ship, and often is, is in a kind of like, relegated state. It's kind of like, quiet, and, not in stasis, it's focused on keeping the Twilight Mirage operating and repairing all of that? But when it is in war mode, it is this like, humanoid bird that has huge, like, wings that are covered in gems, it looks like, this sort of, not matte gems, but like, they look like, again like, resin, like, almost like a beetle shell, like, so it's these huge wings that are covered in these little beetle shell games, and its face is this huge, blue jays face with the, with the huge crest of top. So it's this blend between person and animal. And it perches on top of the Gumption, and then just kind of like, folds its wings in and kneels. And now there is one Divine left.

["The Twilight Mirage" ends]