

Twilight Mirage 12: The Promise of Presence

Transcribed by: ketraia [00:00 - 10:00], Iris(@sacredwhim) [10:00 - 97:12]

[MUSIC - "The Twilight Mirage" Starts]

AUSTIN (as Satellite): Report 125.

It's funny, Primary. It's been a month since we lost connection. And when I finally heard your voice again, my heart (well, the closest thing I have to one, anyway)... it didn't *swell*, so much as it found a stable rhythm it had forgotten.

Don't take this the wrong way, but now that the connection is back, it feels like I just don't have a lot to say. That doesn't mean I'm not happier with you there, though; I am. It's so good to know that when I speak, you'll hear me.

And that group down there, they're kinda the same. They're all so different, and I haven't seen any of them get close to each other yet, not really. But I look at them and think, maybe connection isn't always about words or even about actions. It's about... presence. The promise of presence. It's knowing that after you leave home, there will be someone there for you when you come back, someone with their own stories, their own life worth telling you about.

This mirage is an assignment for us, Primary, and we're not supposed to get too attached, I know. But more and more, I'm starting to think of this place as home.

[MUSIC ends]

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

KEITH: Hi, my name's Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on Twitter at @KeithJCarberry and you can find the letsplays that I do at [youtube.com/RunButton](https://www.youtube.com/RunButton).

AUSTIN: Art Martinez-Tebble.

ART: Hey I'm Art Martinez-Tebble, and you can find me on Twitter @atebble.

AUSTIN: Sylvia¹ Clare.

SYLVIA: Hi, I'm Sylvia. You can find me on Twitter @captaintrash and I do various things over at videogamechoochoo.com.

AUSTIN: Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hey! You can find me on Twitter @Swandre3000.

AUSTIN: You can find me at @austin_walker on Twitter and you can find us, as a group, at @Friends_Table. You can also support us, if you like the show, at friendsatthetable.cash. There are a bunch of levels that you can support us at; I don't want to do the whole big spiel every episode now, but if you go to friendsatthetable.cash you will have a text version of the spiel in front of you, so go do that.

ART: And a spiel video, right?

AUSTIN: There is a spiel video!

ART: That's still at the top.

AUSTIN: There is also a spiel video.

KEITH: Art, did you decide on Art Martinez-Tebble because Art Tebble-Martinez would shorten to ATM?

ART: No, I just think the L into the M is a bad sound.

KEITH: Okay. Now, do you think that maybe you want to be ATM?

ART: N...no?

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: What's your middle name?

ART: Thomases.

AUSTIN: So you're currently ATMT.

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

KEITH: ATMT!

AUSTIN: That's my favorite Star Wars mech.

ART: Yeah.

KEITH: [laughs]

ART: Is that—

KEITH: Of all the different all-terrain mechs—

ART: Is that one of them?

KEITH: No, it's not. It's close, though.

AUSTIN: Are you sure?

KEITH: I'm not—No, I'm not sure.

AUSTIN: I'm checking.

KEITH: AT-MT.

ART: No.

AUSTIN: Mountain—There's MT—

KEITH: No...

ART: There's an MT-AT, but that's—

AUSTIN: There is. So if you wrote your name last name first, you could do it.

ART: Yeah, Martinez Tebble comma Arthur Thomases is this *horrible* spider robot—

AUSTIN: [laughing] It's this big spider robot—

KEITH: Mountain Terrain Armored Transport, yeah, this is, clearly not a—

AUSTIN: I don't like this. I don't like that they reused MT—I don't like that it's MT-AT, when AT is already supposed to be the first two letters of a thing.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I don't like it.

ART: Yeah, it should be Armored Transport Mountain Terrain, it's the sub—

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Whose—whose idea was it to be like, "You know what we need to traverse this mountain? A giant mecha-spider."

DRE: Uhh...

AUSTIN: I don't know.

DRE: Kevin J. Anderson and the Champions of the Force trilogy.

AUSTIN: Oh, thank you. [laughs]

KEITH: Yeah, thanks. Okay, great. This has been a very Star Wars centric—

ART: I thought you were gonna go with Carita Engines, the manufacturer, the—

DRE: [laughs]

SYLVIA: I am fucking *lost*.

KEITH: Some of it's gone cuz we weren't recording, but this has been a very Star Wars centric past 20 minutes of talking.

AUSTIN: Well what's really funny is, you opened by saying, or someone opened by saying, "Oh, the nerdier version of our podcast would have way more Star Wars talk." And here we are. Uh, let's pivot off of that and talk about what my agenda is today. It is to talk about Star Wars—no. It is to make the world feel real, to make it high tech and make it personal, to make the protagonists' lives interesting and interconnected, and to play to find out what happens. Does anyone want to give me like a summary of what happened last time, just so we're all on the same page?

[5:23]

DRE: Umm, let's see, we've... landed, and—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

DRE: We... let's see. So we had to decide whether or not to go over a mountain or through an underground cave—

AUSTIN: Yep!

DRE: And we decided to go over, but also we saw an abandoned city under and then Grand Magnificent saw... Shadow people, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm!

KEITH: Mhm.

DRE: That we didn't see by going over, and we met Surge, who's like a big otter man, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm!

KEITH: Yes, he is a *big* otter man.

DRE: Uh, he's a—

AUSTIN: He's a big otter man.

DRE: He's a big otter mechanic man. Agh, I forgot the other two friends that we met at Surge's house.

KEITH: Uh, Surge's girlfriend and girlfriend's mom.

AUSTIN: Yep! And that was uh, Jane, Brilliant Jane Errania, and her mom, Bernadette.

DRE: Okay. And then... so, we learned some stuff about the planet from Surge, a little bit, just in term of some of the bigger like, cities and political players. Um...

AUSTIN: Yeah. So I'll go over those really quick again so that we're all on the same page. Uh, there is the Crown of Glass, which you would later meet the Doyenne of, who is... I guess like I kind of gestured at her being the kind of eponymous Crown of Glass, the leader of that society. There is also a group called the Rogue Wave, there is a group called the Scane, and there is a group called the Mandati, who are also called the Savage Mandate by some, including Bernadette, the older woman, Janey's mom. You believe... you also learned that there were—

KEITH: Janey does not like that.

AUSTIN: No, Janey's not a fan of that. There is also, to the west, one of the Crown of Glass's cities, called The Sculpture or Sculpture City, and you also heard them refer to the Garden off to the east, because that's where there was a convoy going, from the Garden to the Sculpture.

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: So what else?

DRE: That convoy was being attacked by the Mandati, right?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Or by a group of the Mandati.

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: Which I think Janey was like, quick to point out that like yeah, they're from the Mandate, that doesn't mean that it's like a *Mandati attack*, like as a group of—it's not like there was a vote to go to war, or something—

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: It's like a group of people from the Mandate are attacking.

DRE: These ten decided to do this and they happen to be from this group.

AUSTIN: Right. It was a bit bigger... I think the attack, I think all said, was probably larger than ten people—

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Between the big Glinthawks, which are... Not Glinthawks... Is that what I called them? Forget what I called them.

DRE: I don't know. I think Glinthawk is from Horizon Zero Dawn. [laughing]

AUSTIN: I'm pretty sure it is. I'm 90% it is. So, it couldn't've been—

DRE: I don't think that's what you called them.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It might've been. Listen, it's a good fucking name—

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I may have fucked up and called them a thing that was already a thing.

DRE: [laughing]

AUSTIN: Um, anyway. Those, and then they also had like, a big truck that could drive straight down a cliff without falling, which was cool.

DRE: Oh, yeah. That big truck. Did we blow that truck up?

AUSTIN: It was that big truck. Y'all blew that truck up, yes.

DRE: Okay, I thought so.

AUSTIN: Um, what else...

DRE: Um...

ART: Take that, truck!

DRE: I know Grand Magnificent met the Doyenne, and they basically like, compared mech design skills.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: They really hit it off.

AUSTIN: Basically. Um, the Doyenne also had some words for Janey, it was kind of just like, '*Brilliant as always*', or something like that. Uh, and... I think either.. I think at *least* Grand got faith on the Doyenne. But I can't quite remember if it was just Grand or if it was everybody for helping or what.

DRE: I think it was Grand, specifically, because of the roll when the Amprunner showed up—

AUSTIN: Yes, yes yes yes.

DRE: And the Doyenne was like, 'Oh, yeah, that's some good shit. You did a good job building that thing.'

KEITH: Yeah, nice shit.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Hey, nice shit.

ART: Nice shit.

AUSTIN: Hey, sick shit.

KEITH: Hey buddy, I run this—I run this here part of town, sick shit you got there!

DRE: [laughing]

AUSTIN: Oh, god. Um, and that's kind of... oh, and then, *Glintwings* is what I called them. Not Glinthawks. Pff. Different thing.

ART: [laughing]

DRE: There you go.

AUSTIN: Ugh. Ugh. I need to—They're just never gonna show up again. Cool. Um...

ART: They all died in between episodes. It was really tragic.

AUSTIN: That was the last— it was the only three! It's weird! Uh, I think...

KEITH: To be fair, you're not the first person to reuse 'Glinthawk'. Let's see—'Glint hawk', two words, is from Magic the Gathering, but 'Glinthawk', one word, is from Horizon Zero Dawn.

AUSTIN: A-ha. I gotcha.

KEITH: So we're just gonna have to make it three words.

AUSTIN: [laughing] That's weird! After you make it three words... don't ask.

ART: It's G-L space I-N-T. Space.

AUSTIN: [emphasizing second syllable] Gl-*int* Hawk.

[KEITH laughs]

[10:03]

ART: Gull-int Hawk. You gotta say it fast.

AUSTIN: Right. Can we just put some apostrophes in there like it's D&D? Like, it's like a...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like a Dark Elf name. Uh, what else is happening? Anything else? I guess at the end we kind of left on this montage of—oh, there was another big thing, which was Saint Glass, one of the four mechs, was assassinated by someone named Cascabel.

DRE: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Who Grand Magnificent would also meet. And it looked like it was maybe a set-up or something? One of the other Saints did not do a good job of taking care of the Glintwings and was kind of just missing on purpose and waited for Saint Glass to get killed before being effective at all. And nothing seemed to happen to whoever was in that mech. So, you know. That's—I think those are the big things. Then we kind of ended on a montage, we ended on Gig closing off his first broadcast, we ended on Cascabel and Grand meeting. Echo, you were removing a bullet from your arm. And—

SYLVIA: Yep. And Surge helped out, I think.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that's true. And then we—and then also we ended with Even Gardner beginning to kind of pick through the scraps of what was left of the destroyed Saint, the knocked-down Glintwings, and the—kind of the trucks and stuff like that. And—

DRE: Did we get the node officially set up?

AUSTIN: Yes, and you did.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You actually turned on the node, that's why at G-35 here on the map this is green, like a bluish-teal now, it was like "Oh yeah, you turned that thing on. Nice work." Before we jump back in, I think we should jump back in with Even Gardner scavenging again because I think what I said at the end of the last session was like "Oh yeah, we'll take care of you looking for junkware and stuff at the beginning of the next session." So I do want to come in on that, but I wanna briefly just restate that—what goals are for the mission, so to speak, because they're really broad goals, and I also wanna talk a little bit about how you pursue them—or not how you

pursue them, but how the mechanics work around putting down more nodes and spreading the Mesh further, if that's a thing you continue to pursue.

So, really briefly. You have three goals, as a group, here. The first one is to bring into the fold the cultures that left the Fleet. The four cultures I mentioned all used to be part of the Divine Fleet, hundreds of years ago. One of your goals is to make contact with them and bring them back into the fold. The second is to spread the Mesh across the continent, or across the planet, and the third thing is to investigate rumors of a living, hiding Divine. Which I know we have some beliefs about. Or like, one of the half-beliefs about, I'd say.

Now, to spread the Mesh—and this is the bit that I wanna just like, make formal—you need to have a couple of things. One, you—when you turn a node on like you did last time, what happens is it kind of activates, it reveals a bunch of the map around you, it reveals kind of four tiles in every direction of the hex, it spreads the Mesh to those places which now means the Mesh is all the way over to the west to where Sculpture City is, where the Sculpture is, and it kind of, you know, allows you to access the ship library, which is like a downloaded version of all the knowledge from the Fleet. It also allows you to send messages back to the Fleet. Not always, except Gig, your special thing lets you communicate whenever you have a story and turn on and flip the switch, right? But normally it's one of those things, just like everything else in the Divine Fleet, where you have regular monthly uploads that goes out into the rest of the Fleet. Like every ship on the Fleet kind of updates once a month with information from the other ships on the Fleet, according to a very, like, highly encrypted and protected message. Except for, again, Gig, your stories, you have the special thing that lets you do it whenever you have a complete story and can flip the switch.

So to turn on a node, or to place one of these nodes and activate it, one, you need the material for the node itself. I don't have like a—there's no roll for you to just like get that material. Like, I don't know where you get that material, you tell me where you get that material to build it. Two, you need energy, you need what I'm just calling like, one energy unit. And again, like, that can be stuff that we figure out as we play. Like, I don't—you could go buy whatever an energy unit is from a city somewhere. You can figure out how to produce energy some other way. Like, I don't know, we'll figure it out. You need a tile that's clear of the sky, so like you can't be in an area that's all mountains or that's like deep in the jungle or something like that. It has to be a regular—a tile that doesn't have anything above it, basically. And I think—and you need, and this is a thing that's kind of not as big of a deal because Even should pretty much always be there, but you need a little bit of the Mirage as, like, to juice the engine, so to speak. And Even can produce that using his... Omni-tool? Is that what it's called?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, those are the four things that you need. And I'll post those in chat really quick just so that you have it here. What was your—you have a question, Dre?

[15:35]

DRE: Yeah, so, in that like infodump where the ships are updating each other and basically like updating the—I guess the knowledge of the Fleet, are we then also adding like what we learn about this planet to that update?

AUSTIN: Totally.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: As long as you're actually feeding that back, and that is part of your mission, so you should be, you know?

DRE: Right. And so I guess in addition to whatever storywise stuff that has, I guess that also potentially adds—'cause lifting the Veil, one of the ways of doing Lift the Veil, that move, is basically like "I know this from being able to find it." Like, on the internet or, you know, on the Veil, and so then I guess that would also open up potentially stuff planet-side to be also within that Veil-lifting? Assuming we're connected to the node.

AUSTIN: As long as you're connected to that other Mesh, right?

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So like, anything in the Mesh that's on the planet, totally. And then Janey mentioned that there are other things like the Mesh here.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which Gig kind of tapped into briefly by mistake. Or not even by mistake, I think he did like an Analyze or something and managed to connect to a more local version of the Mesh. That is different, it is not exactly the same thing, so you'll have to investigate that more as you continue, but... that's, yeah, you would be able to Lift the Veil for those things. As long as you're in the zone.

I haven't like—I haven't done anything with like borders or anything on this map, for a couple of reasons. I don't think that the cultures here are like... Like during

COUNTER/Weight, when we played, all of the different main factions had their little zones kind of blocked out. I don't think things are as formal as that on Quire? Like, there's a lot of area that the Crown of Glass would say is theirs, but like, they don't have troops there, right? We haven't visited yet, but Sculpture is their capital city, and it doesn't have that many people in it. So it's not like millions of people, it's not like there's huge walls that protect whole huge swaths of land or something like that.

And that said, the one thing I will say is, right now you can imagine that the Mesh that you've brought is spread anywhere that's visible on the map. It's the kind of four tiles around the node that's activated, and then every tile that's around HQ. So, that's the—which is where your ship is, by the way. Unless you've moved it, in which case that's totally fine, at this point. Once you have the first node up you can move the ship. Alright, any other questions about like, the basics here or like, stuff like that?

ART: Can you just run through what the symbols we're looking at represent?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: I think, you know, the trees are pretty obvious. But then there's—

AUSTIN: The trees are jungle. There's like, big plateaus that you passed through, do you remember that?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Then some desert to the north.

ART: What about like—A desert. Desert, sure, that's the sun.

AUSTIN: Like the sun poking down.

ART: Got it.

AUSTIN: I haven't done that to the entire map, I just wanted to do it around the—there's like icons on the map, for people listening. There's a cave, that's this thing here, and then you can't—I mean, I can actually just delete this one thing, now that you see it, but like there's a flag there to represent like "Oh hey, yeah, there's a city there." There's like a capital there. So, that's the thing there. Alright. So, let's briefly go over beliefs and then we'll actually jump in. I know this has been a long intro, but I wanted to get everybody's—you know, I wanted to get everybody on the same page. So, Gig, can you go over your beliefs?

KEITH: My beliefs are "Echo values the life on this planet as it already is, and I will back up their instincts", "I can change any situation with my knack for positive thinking", and "Everything I've ever seen or felt could be useful to me again". Which is the one that is like, not good.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's the one that I would love to—you know, I said this off-mic earlier, but like the way this game works is you benefit whenever your beliefs come up.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Whenever they are tested, you get one EXP, or if they get you into trouble, it's two EXP, and whenever they're resolved dramatically it's three EXP. So, more than like, they can't just be passive background things, you should be using them as fuel to get yourself into sticky situations, because that's how you level up pretty quickly in this game if you're really engaging with your beliefs. And so you want them to be really forceful and really like, the sorts of things that would get you into trouble.

KEITH: Yeah. I feel pretty confident that as we go on and Gig does stuff as a person in a world that's—better beliefs will jump into that, maybe.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

[20:09]

AUSTIN: Echo, your first one is really good for this, actually.

SYLVIA: Yep.

AUSTIN: For getting you into trouble. So, let's go over those.

SYLVIA: So my beliefs are "If someone doubts you, prove them wrong..."

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

SYLVIA: The second is "Don't let Gig use you for entertainment", and the third is "Make sure that the Mirage isn't being forced on Quire".

AUSTIN: Okay. Grand Magnificent?

ART: My beliefs are "I will lend my genius to these quaint colonialists and through that will find new authenticity", "Echo has little life worth living; I will find a way to distill that essence into my work", and "I will find the hidden Divine; it will validate my work by letting me build it a new body".

KEITH: Every time Art reads Grand Mag's first belief I wanna fuckin' hit him.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Every one of those is bad. They're all terrible.

KEITH: They're all bad! The first one is the worst, easily, though.

AUSTIN: [sighs] They're all—yeah, I—mm.

KEITH: [laughs] It's so bad. Like, Art—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It depends, like—yeah.

KEITH: Art, read it one more time. Read that first one one more time, please.

ART: Oh, now I'm trying to think if there's a way, like, with my voice that I can sell this better.

AUSTIN: No, it's sold, it's sold.

ART: "I will lend my genius to these quaint colonialists, and through that will find new authenticity." I think I did it that time.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Even Gardner.

DRE: [laughs] "Orders from the Fleet all have good reasons behind them, so I should follow them", "The unique oddities we discover on the surface of Quire deserve to be protected and preserved", and "Grand Magnificent has made a great contribution to our mission, so I should help him find what he seeks".

AUSTIN: Okay. So, I think we should open up with like—I'm in a weird situation because I know where we're at from the last mission on the space side, where it's been—at the very end of the last mission on the space side, we jump forward a month in time. And I think I'd like to match that here so that the intros stay locked, and so I think the—instead of doing a thing of just like, "Hey, like, everyone has been in stasis for a month", or whatever, I kind of wanna open up with scenes of everybody that kind of fill in the gap of what the month is? Even, you ended by

starting to do some scavenging. And I think it would be a cool idea to pick up with like, you and Surge coming in with, like, a wheelbarrow full of stuff, maybe back to the church, or something. And you can do your move that lets you do the scavenging there, and we can talk about what you found. Not just from that place, but from like, nearby ruins and stuff like that, too. Does that sound good?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So what is that move?

DRE: It is called Scrounge. "When you first go someone new and search for useful tech you can use to turn into cybernetics, tell the MC what you're looking for. If tech like that could be around, roll plus Omni-tool..." And then, let's see... "On a ten plus, you get some primo junkware, take plus one forward on the junkware move. On a seven to nine, it's barely adequate, and you take minus one forward for the next junkware move."

AUSTIN: Okay. So, what are you looking for?

DRE: So I think, like, in-character-wise, I don't think Even even knows, 'cause I think this is the first time he's done this? And I think the way it is—and I think this also helps like kind of mechanically explain why sometime stuff doesn't work—I think it's that the kind of organism that he's bonded with to become this new hybrid, like it's driving that, so like Even the soldier would be like okay, I wanna look for useful tech that would—you know, maybe like weapons, or armor, or whatever. But the creature that he's now bonded with that's kind of more driving these decisions is more interested in things that are just different or interesting or new, rather than things that are useful. And so I think sometimes it's like, this is something that Even does by feel, and so at times the feeling will lead him to like a piece of junk that isn't really good for anything.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: But yeah, so I think it is more of like—I think it is like a lot of touching and feeling. It's a very physical process of like, going through the waste and probably like, cutting yourself on sharp edges or touching something that's like way too hot that you shouldn't fuckin' touch, but...

AUSTIN: Totally.

DRE: That's the only way to figure this shit out.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me a Scrounge roll.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So it's, you roll Omni-tool. And, remember, you still should tell me how you feel, and you should still mark an emotional state.

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: Even though you're not necessarily rolling that specific thing.

DRE: Yeah, um...

[25:00]

DRE: I guess the closest one is Scared? Like it's not like "I'm terrified to do this," but it's like—it's a mix of "I'm excited to do this, but I also have no idea what's going to happen next."

AUSTIN: Right, sure.

DRE: And I guess Scared is the closest thing I can think of for that.

AUSTIN: Cool.

DRE: Oh, ten. Alright.

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a ten. Nice. So when you get a ten, you get plus one forward to your next junkware move.

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: And because it's been a month of you doing this, I'm gonna actually give you a plus one twice. So take a plus one forward for the next two times you use junkware. It's like, you know, you've been doing this for a little bit. So what type of stuff did you find?

DRE: Um...

AUSTIN: Is it just—in terms of like raw material, right?

DRE: I think it is... So I think one of the first things that Gardner kind of started going through was, he shot down the three hawks.

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: And I think—

AUSTIN: Wings. Glintwings.

DRE: Thank you. No, thank you, Austin.

ART: There were all sorts of birds.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: There was a sparrow, there was an eagle, there was an ostrich...

[DRE laughs]

KEITH: And of course the GI-INT Wing.

DRE: And so I think the thing that he did first that took him the longest was he actually pieced together like a complete set of wings. Like, he had to salvage it from like all three or four of the things that were shot down, but... And it doesn't look pretty, but it's there.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: I think he probably also maybe found like a piece of the targeting computer from that big gun that was in the truck. That—was it Grand Magnificent who cut the wires on that targeting computer?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. It sure was.

ART: [facetious] I don't think anyone remembers who did that. It's hard to say, honestly.

DRE: [laughs] There's been a lot going on.

ART: Who even remembers who cut the wires on that truck?

DRE: So I think maybe a piece from the targeting computer of that, and then also maybe like an energy cell from the—didn't you say the big mechs are called Saints, is that what you called them?

AUSTIN: Yes, they are called Saints, yeah.

DRE: Maybe an energy cell from like, one of the Saints. And probably not like a big one—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You actually—I can just give you something interesting about the world when you're looking through the one that got killed. That got destroyed.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: So like, here's one note. The Doyenne just leaves that one behind. Like, they pull the dead body of the pilot out, and wrap him in cloth, and give him a place of prominence inside their convoy when they leave, but they just leave behind the machine. And I think talking briefly with Janey and Surge about it, there's this notion that like—you could read that as being payment for helping, in a weird way? Without it being an official gift.

DRE: Huh.

AUSTIN: And the—you look for an energy cell and you don't see one. There's nothing in it that looks like it produces energy. And you can't figure out how it works at all. And then while you're scanning it to bring it in or whatever, to turn it into junkware, basically, you realize that the glass heart that had been shot through with Cascabel's special rifle, the glass that covers that part of the torso, one, is actually harder and firmer than any other part of the machine, even though it's made of glass. It's like incredibly dense material and you realize that this is not actually regular glass. And two, it holds an energy store. Like, the glass itself is what is holding on—is what is powering these Saints. So it is both like bulletproof cockpit—not so bulletproof, apparently, but bulletproof from every other type of weapon—and then also like the energy source at the same time.

So that's what you learn about that. And, you know, if you ask them, they would explain to you that like, this is part of what made the Crown of Glass so powerful is their... their access to this material. Which they just call glass, but is actually—I think the official name is something... what do they call it? I have it written down. I think it's Silica-Vitrus or something like that? I wrote it in the last episode description. I should check it really quick. Yeah, Silica-Vitrus. Which is a special thing that seems to only be on Quire. So—

ART: Isn't that the name of the chip in the Xbox One X?

[DRE Laughs]

AUSTIN: Yes, that's what it's called. I've witnessed the most powerful console ever.

[KEITH laughs]

DRE: And it's only available on Quire.

AUSTIN: Yep, you got it.

[30:00]

DRE: So since the glass is busted, like, does this thing not run anymore, then?

AUSTIN: You could spend some time fixing it if that's a thing you wanted to do.

DRE: I mean... who wants a robot?

KEITH: [overlapping] Could you take a smaller piece of the glass and power something smaller?

AUSTIN: Totally. You could do a lot with this glass. You would just have to tell me what you're interested in doing with it.

DRE: I do think Even probably takes a piece of that glass.

AUSTIN: Okay. You could take all—again, it is yours to do with what you want.

DRE: I guess—do we wanna have a bigger group conversation on if like, somebody wants to try and take this Saint?

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's come back to that—like let's say that that's just like... You've been doing that for the past month, let's find out what other people have been up to—

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: And then we'll loop back in on what the—like maybe, again, that's like part of what we see is you come back with a wheelbarrow full of stuff and then Surge walks in with the leg of the Saint in his arms, like, *huge* leg, right? I mean, they're not—these aren't like Gundam-sized Saints, or mechs, these are probably only like—"only like" one or two stories tall, versus mechs that are like three or four stories tall. But it's still big, and he's just like carrying this leg in from the shin down

or something, just like “Hu-wah!”, and we get that. And then we cut to somebody else. Who else knows what they did over the course of this last month?

ART: I know what move I wanna use. I’m not sure what I did.

AUSTIN: What’s the move you wanna use?

ART: I wanna use Pulse of the City again. I wanna do the thing.

AUSTIN: Well, what did you—where did you go to do it? I mean, I can tell you a little bit about the area around you now. So, previously this place had kind of just been an old church to the south, which is like near where the convoy, the road was, right? And then to the north of the city—or to the north of the old church was a town that had been bombed out, that was filled with buildings from a culture that does not speak your language, or that does not have the same characters, the same alphabet that you do. And that was all bombed out and destroyed, and maybe there were a couple of people there. In the month since you arrived, there has been more activity, and Old Church, which has come to be the name of this town, has started to grow a little bit. You know. Maybe there’s a hundred and fifty people here. But that’s kind of a lot when two months ago there were maybe twelve.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: So that is this growing place and it isn’t just people from the Crown of Glass. You’ve seen people from the Mandati pass through, you’ve seen all sorts of people pass through who are not necessarily subjects to the crown.

ART: Okay. Well, I guess it’s like... So for this move, I need to go somewhere away from society’s norm.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: That I haven’t gone before or to find something or someone deliberately hidden.

AUSTIN: Hm. What sort of thing... hm. I’m trying to think if there’s like a...

KEITH: There’s that cave town.

AUSTIN: There is that cave town, that’s true. There are also these—

ART: [overlapping] Sure, that’s about where I used it last, right? That’s...

AUSTIN: There are also these other points on the map that are within—I'd say like anywhere that's inside of your zone that's clear already in the Mesh is a place that you could've gone to visit in the last month.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: Including these, for people who cannot see this, which is anybody listening, there are these question marks that are on the map which are things that Curiosity marked without any notes because that's how Curiosity the Divine works is they just left a dot basically that's like "Oh yeah, there's a thing here. Huh. Interesting." And moved on.

ART: Well, 'cause the thing is like—I guess as a player I'm looking for something that's a nice hook, as a character what Grand Magnificent wants to find is just like a slice of what this culture is.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: Like, what he wants is to just like, get something cool.

KEITH: You're lookin' for the quaint colonialists.

ART: Yeah. I'm looking for a really instagrammable breakfast.

AUSTIN: Oh, god. This fucking guy.

KEITH: Or like a family living out their life, and you're like "Oh, that's cute."

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: "It's cute that they're here and doing that."

AUSTIN: I guess the thing that we figure out is what "society's norm" means at this point for you here. Because I think like Old Church is not part of society's norm here in that we are nearest to the sculpture and that this little town is not what society's norm is. And I think any of the—I would kind of let you roll this move anywhere at any of these points of interest and I would say that if you ever got to one of the major settlements here, you could find part of those settlements that then have a way from society's norm. Frankly, I think just like the wilderness is also not part of society's norm inside of the world of the Sculpture. There are other places here where maybe that's not the case, but like—or inside of the Crown of Glass. Like, the Crown of Glass is a group that is very much about civilization and about cities and about like, settlements. And so, for that larger culture, anything

that doesn't fit into that specific boundary is what I would say is an area away from society's norms.

[35:34]

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: So, it's up to you, because the way the move is written is, "Describe what it is that you follow that others could not or would not see, hear, or smell." So you just have to give me what that is and I'll say if it works or not.

KEITH: I like the idea of you following something that other people can't smell.

ART: I mean, I'm a very good sniffer. It's...

AUSTIN: Great.

ART: It's a talent.

AUSTIN: Good. Good. Good and great.

KEITH: Grand Mag is part bloodhound.

AUSTIN: I see.

ART: Yeah. On my father's side.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: Yeah. He's paternally half-bloodhound.

AUSTIN: Mm. Of course.

ART: He's got normal ears.

KEITH: But what a snout.

ART: But like, what this is, like what this move is, is this idea that somehow artists have this secret window into human behavior, this like universalize-able idea of humans? That's like, honestly a little weird if you think about it too hard.

AUSTIN: Well, I wouldn't say that that's a thing artists have. I would say that's a thing The Aesthetic has. Right?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Not every artist in this world is The Aesthetic.

ART: Right. I'm the ranger.

[SYLVIA laughs]

AUSTIN: Like, this game is not dungeon world where there is one of the thing, but it is still the case that there are... these things are heroic character traits, or heroic characters. It's not The Sprawl, either, which explicitly says "No, no, no. There are a million soldiers, you're just one of—you're just a body." It's somewhere in the middle between those two.

ART: Sure. So something that others could not see, hear, or smell. I think I am gonna take smell.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I think like, you know, Grand Magnificent's like kind of off on a hike, maybe to the northish-eastish?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: And I think he like—he smells something metallic.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: You know, he's worked in a lot of metal shops, he knows what metal smells like.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: "In the immortal words of Toucan Sam, follow your nose." Thank you.

AUSTIN: Thank you Sylvia.

ART: Thank you Sylvia.

AUSTIN: Thank you so much. Wherever it goes, also.

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: Please add. Please don't forget.

ART: And I think that that's like, let me get up my feeling map. I think that that's like an exciting thing. He, you know, was gettin' a little bored out there.

AUSTIN: Fair. Fair.

ART: So that's—

AUSTIN: Yeah, give me a—what is exciting? I guess—hm. Joyful? Joyful or Powerful probably, right?

ART: Yeah, let's do Joyful. Is Joyful the—Joyful's the opposite of Sad?

AUSTIN: Yep. Correct.

ART: Alright. And I am rolling below... I unclick my Sad. There we go.

AUSTIN: Gotta unclick your Sad.

ART: I got a seven.

AUSTIN: Alright. So, what happens on a seven. On a seven to nine, I choose two of the following that you need to do in order to make your way there first. Let's see. So, it's "you must prove you belong here; there is a code or procedure you must figure out first; there is danger along the way," or "someone you wouldn't want to know where you are now does." Let me decide where you're at first. 'Cause there's these two zones and I bet one of them fits this pretty well. Give me a second.
[pause]

God. Yeah, so... I think you are here at E-37. Right? You kind of walk past these huge—you kind of hike through these kind of northern plateaus, they're lower than—they're more like a low step, right? There's like, some hills and stuff like that. And you come to the top of one of the hills at F-36, right? And looking down into E-37, what you see is that there is this like—you see this huge silo with like a pointed conical top that's huge around. Like it's, you know, a couple of city blocks wide. And you can see it from really far away. And there is like smoke coming from something out there, too. And you begin to make your way there and you can see that there is—as you get closer and closer, you can see that like the sun is catching the ground itself in strange ways. Like the sun is bouncing off and it's actually blinding you a little bit. So if you need to progress, you need to figure out a way to progress without looking where you're progressing. Where you're walking towards.

So that is—there is procedure you need to figure out first? And we'll get to what the second bit here is before you get there. If you figure this first one out.

[40:32]

ART: Okay, I think I'm gonna like—I'm gonna go with, uh... I'm gonna try this at least. I have cybernetic eyes with really sophisticated sense of dimension?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: They're for like designing shit that fits in—you know, it's the "measure twice, cut once" of eye implants?

AUSTIN: Right. Of course. Uh-huh.

ART: So I think that even like with limited visibility, it should give me like "okay, that's twenty meters" or whatever.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: And then like, that should... you know, walk twenty meters.

AUSTIN: Right. And with your eyes closed, basically?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay, give me a Risk. How do you feel while doing this?

ART: Um... scared?

AUSTIN: Fair.

ART: Yeah, I can't see.

AUSTIN: Yeah. What are you wearing? Do you have different hiking gear on? Oh, that's a ten. Nice work.

ART: I think I—oh, as an aside, I found like a Grand Magnificent shirt the other week and I'm like really excited to wear it in the world.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: But yeah, I think Grand Magnificent—

KEITH: [overlapping] Wait, are you saying you found unlicensed merch?

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

AUSTIN: What is it?

ART: It's just like... It's not like linen, it's not—it is linen. It's not flannel, it's like this beach linen shirt but it's like really bright bold of that plaid pattern?

AUSTIN: Great. Good.

ART: It's amazing.

AUSTIN: Ugh.

ART: I bought it and I'm not even sure I wanna wear it but it's so on-brand for this character that's gonna be a part of my life for the next year.

AUSTIN: Fair. So you basically take snapshots of where you're going and you know the distances 'cause your eye tells you like, twenty feet, whatever, and you close your eyes and you walk that way. I like that image quite a bit. What do you—yeah, I asked you a question which is what is he wearing for this? Is it the same old same stuff?

ART: I think he has like a pretty reasonable array, but it's his basic gear, yeah. I think he's in like—basically like cargo shorts and an honestly ridiculous shirt.

AUSTIN: Great. Good. I'm glad it's just cargo shorts with your legs exposed as you walk toward this thing that's smoking and you smell metal on the air. Great.

ART: [facetious] No, you don't understand, they have pockets.

AUSTIN: Ah. I see. That's useful.

ART: But they're also cool, 'cause you don't wanna get hot.

AUSTIN: God. So, as you get closer to the big conical—or like, cylindrical metal structure that has the cone on the top, you see just like, there is a big billboard attached to it? That just has like a smiling person with their thumb up, it's like a smiling family, and it has stuff written on it that you can't read 'cause it's in this other language. And it just like—if you guessed, it would be like some sort of insurance ad or something? But I don't even know if Grand Magnificent knows what

insurance is? Like, I think if it appeared on TV, we would get the under—we would get the subtitle at home that just says like, you know, “Don’t leave your loved ones without a safety net!” And then a smile, and then underneath it says, you know, “Quire Insurance Services” or whatever. And that—it is unrelated to what this is, it’s just a billboard using this as a way to advertise to people presumably who could see it.

And it takes you a second to understand who those people might be, and I think we get the shot of you like looking down towards, again, where you smell this in the air, and you see these just like broken-up wooden—not panels, but like wooden boards that have been—clearly look like someone was trying to cover up a hole in the ground. But they’ve been broken. They’ve been like busted open. And you can smell that that is where the metal is coming from. Or the metallic smell is coming from. What do you do?

ART: Wait. Wh—

AUSTIN: There’s this hole in the ground that has broken boards covering it, or partially covering it. And that is where that smell is coming from.

ART: Just like... just down there?

AUSTIN: Just down in that hole, man. And this is like at the base of this tower. Out in the distance you can still see that there is like weird sunlight bouncing off of the ground out there? And a little bit further away you can see that the ground dips, but you can’t see what is below it.

ART: Well I take out my—I reach into the cargo pockets of my cargo shorts, and take out a flashlight...

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: And I shine it down this... this dark... ground hole.

[45:26]

AUSTIN: You see a hammer, and then like your light moves over to the right a little bit, and you see a skeletal hand. That like, is reaching—or that it was holding the hammer, and then the hammer fell out of their hand. And then you see that there is a body there. It’s a person in overalls that is now reduced to bone. And very like, weak-looking bone. It’s not a lot of vitamin D in those bones.

ART: Hm. Okay. That’s awful. I’m not going down there.

AUSTIN: That's fair. You can still look at the big cylinder, you can do other stuff.

ART: Yeah, tell me about the cylinder.

AUSTIN: So it is a big metal structure that has like, big bolted plates on the sides at various points? Where it looks like maybe something could open those doors, but you don't see what the, like—maybe there was a crane that could open one of these huge doors. But you don't really see a crane nearby. And then there was a front door—or there is a door on the side of it that is human-sized that is locked as far as you can tell.

ART: Let's go over to the locked one.

AUSTIN: Okay. You're at the locked one, which again is human-sized. I'd say that there's probably like a window there, like a window on the door. And if you like peek in and look around, you can see that it's like some sort of... like, factory facility type thing? Like, it's some sort of industrial facility, is what I really mean.

ART: Hm. What kind of things does it look like they're making in there?

AUSTIN: Can't see from outside.

ART: Alright, um... Does the door open? It appears locked.

AUSTIN: It appears locked, it is locked.

ART: Alright. I'll knock.

AUSTIN: No one answers. I just want this—I want to get a wide shot of Grand Magnificent standing in the desert, sun beating down, bouncing off of the weird sand, and then knocking at this gigantic structure. Just a wide shot of you just knocking.

ART: I mean, I guess there wasn't like a bell or anything, right?

AUSTIN: No, there was not a bell. Well, you know—yeah, there's a buzzer. But you hit the buzzer too, and nothing happens—eh... I guess actually if you hit the buzzer there's just like, "Brzzt!" and then like the glass becomes a view screen? And a face shows up and is like—there's a fantasy language here that I don't know what it sounds like yet. But it just like... you know. "Ikala bada!" Like it's just Simlish.

[KEITH laughs]

ART (as GRAND MAGNIFICENT): Hi!

AUSTIN (as VIEW SCREEN): Ikala bada!

ART (as GRAND): Um... Can I come in?

AUSTIN (as VIEW SCREEN): Suzana manana.

AUSTIN: That's minion. I talked minion just now.

[KEITH and DRE laugh]

ART: Well, I take out a banana, and...

SYLVIA: Oh, I hate this.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: I guess the—it's a face, right? It is... a face of a human-looking creature, or human-looking person, except they have—I guess you're not seeing their whole body, so yeah, it looks like a person to you.

ART: Well, that's ominous.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: It's a... It's like a dude's face without any hair, but it's like, big bright eyes, and a big smile. Like no—there's no—you don't know.

ART: I like, pantomime opening a door?

AUSTIN: And then it says "suzana manana" again.

ART: That's probably no. Uh—Ooh! Hm, no... That doesn't work... Okay, I guess I just like wave goodbye and walk off what I think is camera but like I don't go very far.

AUSTIN: And then the screen goes back to being a window.

ART: Hm. I mean like, I want the next thing to be like a cut of Grand Magnificent just like running at the door.

AUSTIN: Right. This is, I'll say from Pulse of the City, this is "you must prove you belong here first."

ART: Yeah. I mean I'm not shaving off all my head, my hair—

AUSTIN: That's a leap. That's like an adventure game leap.

ART: Yeah, that is an adventure game leap. I don't know how to spoof this language, you know?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: How do I prove I belong here... Oh. Do you think I could reach that hammer?

[50:23]

AUSTIN: No, you would have to go down there. You could go down there, and get back out, and, you know.

ART: I don't know. I don't know, Austin.

AUSTIN: You could go down there and come back out.

ART: [sighs] Okay...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Into that hole where that dead guy is.

ART: Yeah, what could possibly...

KEITH: [overlapping] You could go down there and maybe come back out.

DRE: Probably.

KEITH: Yeah, you'll probably be fine.

ART: Does everyone's character sheet say "you're here because there's something wrong" on the top of it?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's just part of this...

KEITH: That's like The Veil's thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

ART: Hm. I didn't notice it before and it was suddenly very unsettling.

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

AUSTIN: God, if only I could have just added that. That would have been the best.

ART: Alright, I'm gonna try to get that hammer and see if I can like, pass myself as a... worker? They clearly worked that person to death, I don't know that I want to be that, but... I don't know. I gotta do something.

AUSTIN: So you hop down in that hole?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There's like a ladder off to the side that you can set up so that you can come back out. Do you have a flashlight or anything? Do your eyes do light?

ART: No, my eyes do not do light, we've established previously in this sequence that I have a flashlight there in my cargo pants.

AUSTIN: Right, of course.

KEITH: A great place for flashlights, by the way. What color are the pants?

ART: Oh, I imagine that the shirt is like a largely—it's a very bold pink.

KEITH: Mhm.

ART: Primarily, with other colors on it. And I think the shorts are like, kind of like a steely gray.

KEITH: Ooh, okay.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: That's probably my favourite Steely Dan cover album.

AUSTIN: Oh my god. You come down into this little hole in the ground and you see that this person's, this like skeleton—first of all, that's not a human skeleton. They

have like vestigial—it's like they used to have four arms and they don't anymore, but they still have weird little vestigial nubbins where the other arms would be.

[ART groans]

AUSTIN: And you know that that's not a thing that's just this one person, 'cause there's like a bunch of skeletons down here. There's a bunch of 'em. And there's also like a big vault door where you can hear strange sounds coming from behind there and that is like—the smell is coming from back there, the metallic smell. But you do find on this guard—or not guard, on this worker, you find, not only the hammer but also like, an ID card, and, you know, some other stuff that would let you fit in as being a worker. A hard hat.

ART: Sure. God, this is... Yeah, Dre in the chat says "Why are all of Grand Mag's solo adventures the spookiest shit?" I really do think in some level this is—there's a little bit of *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* in this, that I'm gonna keep going off on my own finding really scary shit and then as a group we're gonna do kinda more mundane stuff.

AUSTIN: Yep. Uh-huh. It's good.

ART: Okay, I'm gonna take the stuff. I don't think I wanna fuck with that vault.

AUSTIN: Okay.

RT: 'Cause there's a lot of dead people around it.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. They're very old dead, is what I'll say.

ART: But I mean, if there's someone in there, it's someone who doesn't feel the need to clean up the dead people outside his door.

AUSTIN: That's fair. You come back out with the ID card and some other stuff, and you go up to the door?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it goes like, "Alala!"

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

AUSTIN: And then opens the door.

ART: Great. I go in.

AUSTIN: And then you go in, and it's like the front office of like a big industrial facility, and you explore it a little bit, and what you put together is—I wanna get to other characters here—it is a facility that is turning this sand stuff into a more fund—not fundamental, not primitive, but a like... earlier version of the sort of glass stuff that the Doyenne had. That was like in the Saints, stuff like that. Right, like?

ART: Hm.

AUSTIN: But the facility has been shut down for some amount of time, or not shut down, but there's no people here to work it. And it's not an automated facility.

ART: But their door person thinks people are still working here.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, that—whatever that AI system is is not enough to run it by itself but is like, "Hey, welcome back!" And this is a facility that you could theoretically continue to produce a lower-grade version of that glass. You find like big sheets of it, and it's opaque. That's like the clearest difference is like it has all the hardness of the same glass stuff that Even Gardner had kind of figured out, but it isn't—it's not conductive, it isn't a battery, it doesn't store any energy, but it is hard like a really hard metal would be.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: And so you're able to take some of that stuff if you want it.

[55:32]

ART: Yeah, I'll take some of that if I can carry it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I don't know like—I guess the other thing is like, it's pretty light. Like that's the—not only is it strong, it's also fairly light, so you're able to take like a big pack of it or something in these kind of sheets and carry it back to the...

ART: Wait'll you guys peep my glass collection.

AUSTIN: Oh my fucking god.

ART: My spring collection, it's gonna be glass. It's gonna be great. People are gonna love it.

AUSTIN: I thought you were using “glass” to mean “good” just now. “It’s gonna be so glass, you guys.”

ART: Oh, I’m doing that too.

AUSTIN: Mmkay. Good.

ART: That’s part of the rollout.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Good. Alright. So that’s what you—you come back with this big pile of glass. Okay. So, what else are people doing? Other than exploring in the wilderness and getting into weird spooky adventures?

KEITH: I had planned on going to the Sculpture.

AUSTIN: Okay. We could totally do like an intro of that. I don’t wanna get too deep there, ‘cause there’s a lot there, and I’d rather the group go, but you can totally check that out.

KEITH: Okay, I can go somewhere else.

AUSTIN: Totally up to you. Or you and Even could go, or, I don’t know what—or, sorry, you and Echo can go, or.. Like, Echo, do you know what you wanna be doing during this downtime?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I kinda do. And my whole thing with Echo is that Echo actually kinda just wants to get some time alone.

AUSTIN: Okay. Let’s do that and then we’ll come back to going to the Sculpture. What’s your alone time situation?

SYLVIA: Well, I think Echo kind of just like wants to get to know this place a little bit? Kinda like, get the lay of the land a little bit, and explore ‘cause they haven’t really had a chance to, they’ve been in the mountains.

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: Which sucked. But I think what they wanna do is head to this forested region down there in the south. Specifically the question mark here.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. That’s K-39.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think there's also a moment there where you can check in if you'd like with HQ, like that's on your way. In fact, maybe you're asked to bring them something. Because I'd like to get them back on-screen briefly. Because it's been a while since we've—I don't think in our actual recordings you've really met those characters who are back at HQ, back in Myriad? Because they were in the original recording of the first episode, which was replaced.

So... maybe you have to—you know what I think maybe it is? It's like, you basically need to bring back a thing—like run some—not run a cable back, not a whole thing, but like, do one more check on all of the nodes—not the nodes, but like the kind of, um, the things that you are dropping on the way to where the node is? Like, make sure that they're secure, and then once you go back to the Myriad you can set it up so that like, okay, the ship itself doesn't need to stay here anymore, the ship itself can leave. And go anywhere, and maintain the signal that it kind of set up in that place. So you're gonna need to do the check-in at Myriad either before or after you go to this...

SYLVIA: I'll do after.

AUSTIN: Alright, so, you move through the jungle and there's a point at which you see that there is a clearing up ahead and just like—I think you maybe just see a strange—or not strange at all, just like a silver structure. Like painted silver. Maybe made out of concrete or something, but it's painted silver. Silver with like some yellows and reds. And you can't make it out 'cause it's a little bit further ahead. And then you eventually pass out through the end of the jungle and there's like sun rays coming down through the canopy, and you open up into this big open area and there's just like a statue in the middle of this open field. That has, again, this old world text on it that you can't read. And it's a statue of a person, of a woman holding up a globe. It's the same type of globe that was on the church. And she has on like a dress, that has this kind of yellow and red fringe on it, down the—like at the very bottom and along the sides of it. It's all just made out of like building material. And you can't quite make out her face, at first, because it's far away, but as you get closer you realize you can't make out her face because it's changing.

SYLVIA: Oh.

AUSTIN: She's—like, at first it's just expressions changing, but then it's like... her face takes on different characteristics. And you're just like kind of sitting—or like standing under it, looking. What do you do?

[60:11]

SYLVIA: I think the first thing I'm gonna do is I wanna like write down the language that I see on it.

AUSTIN: Cool, cool.

SYLVIA: So I can like ask somebody about that later.

AUSTIN: Yep. Totally. You're able to copy down like, the shapes.

SYLVIA: Yeah. So the statue's the only structure here, right?

AUSTIN: As far as you can tell, yeah.

SYLVIA: How tall was that?

AUSTIN: It's about five stories tall.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like, it's sizeable.

SYLVIA: And there's nothing like connected to it that's making it...?

AUSTIN: No, not as far as you can see, right? Like, there's a base to it—there's a base that's a little bit taller than you, there's like a plaque on the base, but—you can write that text down too, but you don't know what it means. Yeah, there's not really anything else that you can see with your eyes here, anyway.

SYLVIA: Can I just like sort of like explore this clearing a little bit and like...

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: ...maybe even climb on the statue if I'm led to that conclusion?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Basically this is me angling towards Analyze.

AUSTIN: Yeah, go for it.

SYLVIA: Alright, and let me see really quick which emotion this would fall under... I guess Peaceful 'cause like, curious doesn't really strike me as a thing other than that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Maybe Joyful, but...

AUSTIN: That sounds good. Peaceful sounds right.

SYLVIA: Alright.

AUSTIN: Oof. That's a six.

SYLVIA: That's a six.

AUSTIN: That's interesting. Okay, so... two things happen. You climb up onto it, right? And the—how far up on it are you climbing? And tell me how you're climbing. What's it look like as you climb?

SYLVIA: I think it's mostly just like using... like, very cautiously feeling around to see if there's any footholds I can use.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Like if there's like, just the way it's sculpted... And like I think Echo probably climbs up like, not the whole way, just like halfway.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: To sort of get like, a closer look at the face.

AUSTIN: Okay, well, so you're looking at the face, and then there's a point at which the face looks very familiar to you. Because it's your face looking back. What do you do?

SYLVIA: I jump out of—I climb the fuck down and back away from this thing.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. As you're climbing away, you can feel it start to shake a little bit. And one of the arms breaks off. And falls next to you. And then the globe it was holding breaks also. Or like, comes out of—it's not being held up anymore, and so it falls after you, or like falls as you're coming down, and it's going to hit you if you don't do something.

SYLVIA: Okay. I guess I just wanna try and dodge it, huh?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Probably. You don't wanna get hit by a big globe, that sounds bad.

SYLVIA: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Give me a Risk. How you feelin'?

SYLVIA: Probably Scared now. Like this is—less frightened but like surprised, so I think Scared would be what would fit here.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's a ten. God damn. So what's it look like as you dodge this giant orb?

SYLVIA: I think it's like actually pretty simple. It's not like some big extravagant thing. It's just like, right when it's about to come down, like at the last second, Echo does like a roll out of the way and it just like, collides onto the ground basically.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. As it hits the ground, it breaks apart into little pieces. And inside of it there is a long, like, metal rod, that's as long as the globe is. Like, it runs through the diameter of the globe. Through the center, through the core of it. It's very big, because the globe was very big—it's probably, like, the size of a tire around, or something. And then it is as long as—I almost wanna say "it's as long as my apartment", but you don't know how big my apartment is. It's—and I don't know how big my apartment is, I don't know how feet work, I'm very bad at that. But I would say it's like twenty yards? That's a number that I know? It's like twenty meters long.

SYLVIA: Okay.

KEITH: Why do you know twenty yards?

AUSTIN: Because I used to play football.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So that—like, I just get that in my head, 'cause I know how—what that distance feels like.

ART: Do you know that it's sixty feet?

AUSTIN: Yeah, but I don't know—but I can't just do—it's weird, I can't then break that math down. In my—I'm not a very visual person in that way, it sucks. I need to like designate a month of my life at some point to getting better at spaces.

ART: I like broke my mic stand to say that, that was not worth it.

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

AUSTIN: So as that rod sits there, you start to see the dirt and grass around it vibrate. You'll note as you look up that the statue has stopped. Its face has stopped animating, its one arm up. But the grass and the dirt have like started to move around the rod.

[65:20]

SYLVIA: Is it still my face or is it a different face now?

AUSTIN: It froze at your face.

SYLVIA: Oh, great.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. You got a statue now, Echo.

SYLVIA: [sarcastically] Awesome, I love being the center of attention. I think I wanna like... Can I like pick this thing up?

AUSTIN: It's—you can try, it's—yeah, you can touch it, certainly.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You like go to pick it up—it's very heavy. But you can lift it off the ground a little bit. And as you do—god. Okay. Weird stuff is about to happen. You have access momentarily to knowledge you don't normally have. So I think while you're holding this thing, you can read the statue's base. You can read what it says.

SYLVIA: Oh, shit. Alright.

AUSTIN: And what it says is... "To Pretense, who..." um... "To Pretense, who led us in the war on independence."

SYLVIA: Okay. I'm torn on what to do here. 'Cause if we can read this language now because of this thing, we should probably try and keep it in some way. But also it's very heavy.

AUSTIN: It's very heavy. Also the grass and dirt are still like vibrating around it, and are starting to grow around the far end. The end that you're not lifting up.

SYLVIA: Okay. And I don't have a way to contact HQ because I don't think Echo has...

AUSTIN: You don't have like a communicator or anything?

SYLVIA: I could—I might have like a radio or something.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think you're allowed to have a radio.

SYLVIA: Yeah. And they're not able to move yet, are they? The ship?

AUSTIN: They cannot move the ship yet because you said you wanted to go there after. So it goes.

SYLVIA: Alright. I guess I have to like kind of take a chance here and like, book it back to the ship.

AUSTIN: As you let go, you stop being able to read what it said.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it's not—

SYLVIA: But I remember what it said, right?

AUSTIN: You remember what it said, but it's not a one-to-one... It's not a one-to-one, character-to... it's not like a thing you could just decode, do you know what I mean? Like, it's a... it is a... what's it called again when it's a—like, what kanji are in Japanese? Or in Chinese? There's like a word for that style of alphabet—not alphabet, of writing. A system of—logographic. It's a logographic system.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: You know, I think—as you start to—so you're starting to leave?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I guess so.

AUSTIN: The rod starts to worm towards you.

SYLVIA: Oh, great.

AUSTIN: And the back end of it is now covered in grass and dirt, and like bends upwards, like a head facing you. What do you do?

SYLVIA: I think I'm gonna just let it follow me? Like, I'm gonna go at a pace where it can kinda keep up.

AUSTIN: Okay. You're being followed by this weird thing that is slowly becoming covered in more and more dirt and grass, and you're just like walking back through the jungle to HQ, and I think at some point—

SYLVIA: Yeah, it hasn't shown to be malicious at all, so that's why I'm like, whatever, it's fine. It lets me read.

AUSTIN: There's a brief moment where you lose sight of it and you see it again and it's a big snake. It's a big like grass snake that is now following you and like licking at you, but its tongue is also made of grass and dirt.

SYLVIA: Hm.

KEITH: Team pet!

SYLVIA: Yeah, I like pet it on its head when it starts doing that, if I'm being honest.

AUSTIN: Okay. When you touch it this time, you get like... you get a vision of Old Church, where you've been, except it has people in it, and they're like running around, and are like, prepping for something. And then when you stop patting it, that image goes away. Also, you can see that they are the same types of people—or the people at home can see that they're the same types of people who have, like, the vestigial—where they used to have four arms. The like, the little extra nubbins on their sides. And also you can see, 'cause they're actually people now, you can see that they have like spines on their heads growing out of their flesh. And that their skin is kind of like this greyish color. They're real proper aliens, we're really in it.

[70:10]

SYLVIA: Finally.

AUSTIN: And then you get back to HQ with a big weird snake. And I think Alekhine who is like the overseer of this set, Alekhine Dendaro, who is this big bulky dude with a military cut and like a big bulbous head, he comes out with a rifle and he's pointing it at you and the big...

AUSTIN (as ALEKHINE DENDARO): Reverie, you seem to have been followed by a creature.

SYLVIA (as ECHO REVERIE): Oh, yeah, no, don't—don't worry, it's fine.

AUSTIN (as ALEKHINE): Hmm.

SYLVIA (as ECHO): No, seriously, it let me read the language here when I touched it, and then it also gave me some weird vision, so I think it could be worth like... I don't know, you guys do research and stuff, right?

AUSTIN: The ship lights up as it speaks to you, and this is Myriad, who says like "We must first secure an adequate research location before undergoing such a..." And she's like, looking for the words. "...dangerous experiment."

AUSTIN (as MYRIAD): What is that?

AUSTIN: And this is like the ship, but also there is a robot on the ship who is a pilot.

SYLVIA: I think I just kind of recount the explanation of "I found a statue, and then this fell off of it, and it let this happen, and here's what it said, and..."

AUSTIN: "Get away from it," says Alekhine.

SYLVIA (as ECHO): Okay, okay, fine.

AUSTIN (as ALEKHINE): It is not safe.

SYLVIA (as ECHO): Don't shoot it, okay? It's not dangerous, either.

AUSTIN (as ALEKHINE): I have my doubts.

AUSTIN: It like, pulls back at the sight of the gun. And like, kind of begins to circle around the—very slowly at first, circle around the ship.

AUSTIN (as MYRIAD): Echo, what did you see?

SYLVIA: So at this point I'm gonna assume that we told them what happened at the church?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Definitely.

SYLVIA (as ECHO): So I saw the church that we went to. But there were people there. But they didn't really look like anybody I'd ever seen before. They had, like... I don't know if horns is the right word, but they had like

these things on their head, and they were like grey, and they looked really panicked. And it definitely seemed like it was a while back, 'cause that church looked way different.

AUSTIN (as MYRIAD): And where did you find this thing?

SYLVIA (as ECHO): Do you have a map on you, of what we can...

AUSTIN: And like, pulls up what you've seen so far.

SYLVIA: Yeah, and then I just point it out to them.

AUSTIN (as MYRIAD): Okay. And it was just there like this?

SYLVIA (as ECHO): Yeah. Well, no—it was in an orb on a statue, and then that fell, because the statue fell apart. Also, the statue has my face now. Forgot that part.

AUSTIN (as MYRIAD): Oh, Echo.

SYLVIA (as ECHO): Listen, I didn't—it just happened. These things happen. But yeah, no, it just fell out of this orb that the statue was holding up. And just vibrated.

AUSTIN: It's getting closer, and Alekhine brings the gun back up. And like turns it from one setting to another.

AUSTIN (as ALEKHINE): I don't like things that were in orbs.

[KEITH laughs]

SYLVIA (as ECHO): Okay, hold on, hold on. Can I just—

SYLVIA: And then Echo kinda like, keeps their hands up and walks over to it. And like, sorta like bends at the knees a little bit, so they're at like what would be eye level but I'm assuming this thing doesn't have eyes.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. It does not have eyes.

SYLVIA: And is just like "I just need you to stay still and stay calm for a bit, okay?"

AUSTIN: Give me a Risk. Or Sway? Hm. I think this is a Sway, in retrospect.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Unless you have some sort of other special thing for convincing people to do things.

SYLVIA: No, I don't... So I'm gonna go with... I guess Peaceful? Like, they're trying to the situation calm, so yeah...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you seem peaceful right now. That's in line with how you're playing Echo currently.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Make sure to mark it, and then...

SYLVIA: Eight.

AUSTIN: Okay, so... when you get a seven to nine, you have to—on a seven to nine, they do it and you have to choose two.

SYLVIA: Oh, man.

AUSTIN: Either you owe this snake creature some serious cred, it can't be that one.

SYLVIA: Oh, man.

AUSTIN: Your own faith is in question—this thing will have faith on you, that it can call in. Which it totally could do. You're going to need to give them something now instead of later, you're gonna need to do them a favor first, or you need to give a piece of yourself to them, body or heart.

SYLVIA: So that last one for sure.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: And I think I'm gonna give them faith on me as well.

AUSTIN: Okay. So how do you give them body or heart?

SYLVIA: I think what happens is I make contact with them again and then they take something that way, somehow?

AUSTIN: Okay. I actually think that what it's—what you've given to them is the opportunity to trans—to show you another vision that's a lot harder to take.

SYLVIA: Okay.

[75:48]

AUSTIN: And it's that same vision of the church except now the bombs are falling and there are explosions and people are running and children are screaming, and you can't let go and you have to see it out. You have to see this terrible thing which is a fight with humans, with people who look like humans, who do not have antlers, who do not have extra arm nubbins, who are clearly wearing the sorts of—you know, who have the same sorts of weapons that you do. They're not from the Fleet as far as you can tell. But they're like the same technological history. Do you know what I mean? And they just like stomp through. And you can see—like, we just get shots of bits of the earth rolling away and forming this rod. And kind of trying to get away. And I'm gonna ask you to take minus one forward on your next roll. Because it's a fuckin'—it's not a pretty sight. Like I'm not getting into details, but it ain't great to see war.

SYLVIA: Okay. I think Echo's gonna keep that one to themselves actually, they're not gonna tell, but...

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: But they are gonna be like "It's not gonna do anything, it's just gonna stay here, okay?"

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: "It's... Don't worry."

AUSTIN: And it does back away at that point and listen to you. And kind of move back towards the tree line. What do you do after that? Is that kind of it, or...?

SYLVIA: I think that's it for that scene, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Myriad, who is this—when you're inside of the—when you're inside of Myriad, and meet Myriad the robot part, they're* like—they* have like basically this really—they* have a humanoid body except they* have four spider legs that they* can switch between their* four spider legs or two regular legs, and they* also just have like—or, she also just has like a bunch of other manipulators that she can pull out. She has lots of like extra... parts that can kind of fold out from her back

and her side as she needs them. And she's just like constantly moving around the ship doing stuff with her manipulators while also other things are—she's also running other sorts of like, tests and scans, just in the ship body itself. It's a lot to talk to her because it's hard to know where her attention is at any given point, but they offer to fly you back, Alekhine and Myriad. Because they are going to move up to where the church is. Do you take the ride?

SYLVIA: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Or do you wanna walk the rest of the way? It's pretty far, to be fair.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'll take the ride.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: It's been a long day.

AUSTIN: It has. Alright, cool. You see this rod thing, this rod snake kind of poke its head up and look at you and watch as you fly away. Alright. Do y'all wanna go to Sculpture together as a big thing, do you wanna have the talk about what to do with that Mech, do you wanna go there yourself as like a scouting thing, Gig?

KEITH: I think... Yeah, if we're gonna go there as a group there's no reason for me to go by myself right now.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: So I'm going to do, either pick another spot or talk about the Mech...

AUSTIN: Totally up to you.

KEITH: Let's see...

AUSTIN: Kinda just like, what's the thing that—what's the little image we get of you during this month before things—you know, before you have to do the second part of—and I think like maybe even canonically part of it is that you need a month to make sure this node is functioning correctly, you know, you can't just jump right back into doing the second one, it's "Alright, we're gonna test this and make sure it works fine..."

KEITH: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: "And make sure we don't get beat up."

KEITH: What's this other question mark that we've got in the grid here? In the visible grid?

AUSTIN: This one right here?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You don't know, you haven't been there.

KEITH: Okay.

[80:00]

AUSTIN: And Curiosity is like that. Curiosity is just like "Oh yeah, there's a thing there."

KEITH: Oh, there's no like note on it?

AUSTIN: No, there's never any notes on any of the things Curiosity—that's like a Jack de Quidt original. Jack was clear there's never any, like, unfortunately there isn't any info.

KEITH: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll go there, I might as well go there.

AUSTIN: Alright, cool. So, it's just north off the road a little bit, like—more than a little bit, there's like other dirt roads that connect out to it, and you end up finding a... again, it's in this other old language that you don't know. But it—your first blush is it's like a horse corral or something? It's like that sort of big white fence? And it has like that sort of signage, do you know what I mean? Like, it has like an archway that has words on top of it.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And also there's a picture of a horse on it. Like, an alien horse. It has—I don't know, tell me about—what's this alien horse look like, Keith? What's the silhouette of an alien horse?

KEITH: Okay, so, it looks like a horse from the shoulders and up, but then it starts getting smaller and smaller so it's sort of like a... and then it's angled in the way that like a kid's tricycle would be, where like the big wheel up front is tall but then the rest of it's short?

AUSTIN: Eugh. Okay.

KEITH: So it's angled downward and gets smaller and thinner.

AUSTIN: Okay, I've seen this creature in No Man's Sky.

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: So then you like—from the gate, so the gate is really big, but off in the distance—

KEITH: Oh, wait, sorry, and then the mane is also—what is it called? Oh, it's got... Oh, I'm blanking on the word for this. It's got... What's the word for like when you can use—opposable, it's got an opposable mane.

AUSTIN: [aghast] Mm?

ART: What?

AUSTIN: What's that—

KEITH: You know. Like you can—

AUSTIN: [firmly] No, I don't know.

KEITH: Opposable is like when you can grab stuff with—like, opposable thumbs, like we have, humans have. Like thumbs that can grab—

AUSTIN: Oh.

DRE: It's like a monkey's tail.

ART: Well, opposable means—doesn't it mean that it can touch all the other fingers? I mean, every bit of the mane can touch every other bit of the mane?

AUSTIN: No. Well, yeah—no—

KEITH: Right, I mean—

AUSTIN: No, 'cause the length there would be weird.

KEITH: The length would be—it would be a long—I mean, if that happened it would be a long mane.

AUSTIN: You just mean that it can grab things. That's what you mean.

KEITH: It can grab stuff with its mane, yeah.

ART: Like a prehensile mane.

DRE: There it is.

KEITH: Prehensile. Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: A prehensile mane. Is that... the worst phrase we've said? Maybe. So then beyond that gate with that—I don't know how you know the mane is prehensile based on the silhouette, maybe it's holding something in the silhouette.

KEITH: Yeah, it's grabbing something. Sure, you did specifically ask for the silhouette.

AUSTIN: I did, but that's fine.

KEITH: Or I can tell that there's separate—again, grabbing something.

AUSTIN: Yeah. There are a group of twenty, maybe thirty little buildings. Little cube structures that have domes on top of them, smaller domes on top of the cubes, made out of like red and white brick. And you don't know what they are from this distance. And I just think the sun is setting in this image, also, like—'cause there is a sun here, Quire does revolve around a sun. And I guess in this part of the area, too, the Mirage is now connected here, too, so you're getting the Mirage plus the natural sunset mixing in a really cool way. And there's just these buildings off in the distance and as you get closer you see that they're like, they all have a different word on them, on each of them, and you're not really sure what they are. They have big concrete doors that you could—that like have a, they're like on-track or something. But, you tell me. I don't know if you're going in, I don't know what you're doing.

KEITH: Oh, I'm gonna go in.

AUSTIN: Okay. You go into one and there is just like, behind glass, one of these horses.

KEITH (as GIG KEPHART): Oh, it's you!

AUSTIN: It's not moving, it's—sorry, it's behind glass the way butterflies get put behind glass.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

KEITH (as GIG): Oh, it's one of those!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH (as GIG): It's one of those from outside!

AUSTIN: And then you go into another one, and there's another one. And this is like a weird horse cemetery.

KEITH: Are they—oh, it's a cemetery. So it's not like a display—it's not like a museum.

AUSTIN: Well, I don't know—maybe it's a museum. Like, I don't know... I think it has some elements of being a museum, also.

KEITH: It's a muse-oleum.

AUSTIN: Oh my fucking god.

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: God damn it. Unbelievable.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: [softly] I'm so angry.

KEITH: Honestly, you should be thankful that I coined this new thing that happens on this planet.

AUSTIN: God. In any case, you end up finding one of these buildings and you kind of go into a bunch of them and then one of them—it's behind glass and there's like a weird computer screen there. Like a touch screen. And again, it's all in this other language, but like there's enough pictography there that's like "Oh, this one is just in stasis. This one is not dead." But I don't know that you know how to use that computer screen at this point to use it.

KEITH: I definitely bet I think I know how to use that computer screen.

AUSTIN: [groaning] Oh my god. How— [sighs] How do you know how to use that computer screen? Talk me through—

KEITH: I don't know, I've seen computers before, I use plenty of wires and buttons. They all basically work the same way.

AUSTIN: That's true, you do use a bunch of wires and buttons. What do you do? I ask trepidatiously.

[85:50]

KEITH: Well, I'm sure there's a picture—

AUSTIN: Also, are you like recording this stuff? Are you like...?

KEITH: Yeah, I'm constantly recording.

AUSTIN: Are you talking about what you're seeing?

KEITH: No, but I'm thinking, and that stuff all gets added in.

AUSTIN: I gotcha.

KEITH: You know what I mean? Like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I think it specifically says that all my thoughts and emotions are like imprinted on—like whatever I want to convey is just conveyed.

AUSTIN: You're able to imagine like an overlay, basically.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. And so I think that I've got—I think that especially when I'm alone, I'm always trying to get two angles on stuff, so my eye's out.

AUSTIN: God damn it.

KEITH: And so I think I've got a close-up on the horse, while I'm working on the computer, and I bet there's like—if I see a button that looks like a horse, I'm gonna click the horse button.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: And that'll probably bring me to the horse section of the controls.

AUSTIN: And that's where there's just like a bunch of words.

KEITH: Yeah, okay. Are there any physical components to it?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, if you like—in my mind this is a red metal computer screen, or not screen, but like a console that has like a CRT-style monitor. And then like, there are like some switches and stuff and then presumably there's a hard drive somewhere underneath here, or there's like some sort of computing solution somewhere.

KEITH: Okay. I'm gonna find the biggest switch and just shut it off.

AUSTIN: The biggest switch just in this...?

KEITH: Yeah, just on the console.

AUSTIN: The console shuts off.

KEITH: Okay. I'm gonna turn the console back on, that didn't work, clearly.

AUSTIN: And it boots back up, and it goes like [imitates buffering] and it opens up.

KEITH: Okay, I'm gonna get back to where I was, and then I'm going to flip a couple more—if there's a dial, I wanna turn a dial. That's what I wanna do. I bet a dial is what—like, everything that's frozen, anything in stasis comes back with a dial. And we all know it.

AUSTIN: [hesitantly] Okay. Give me a Risk.

KEITH: Risk...

AUSTIN: I should have just done what I made Grand do and say "There's a dial, there's a button, and there's a whatever."

KEITH: [laughs] Yep. I'm gonna roll for Joyful, I think that I'm excited about this. Are we still spiked at the level that we were spiked before? Like from last session?

AUSTIN: We are like—I am so torn on that stuff right now because it can go either way depending on what the thing is. Really what it comes down to is like, do you think your character would still be carrying that emotion with them?

KEITH: I think, in this specific case, I think yes, because the thing that I have the most spiked is Joyful, and I think that I'm still excited to be on the planet.

AUSTIN: So you're just kind of in that mode. Okay.

KEITH: I think I'm in that mode, yeah. And then the button is below, right? Not above?

AUSTIN: It's—no, it's above.

KEITH: It's above?

AUSTIN: I think so.

KEITH: So I just roll...

AUSTIN: No, that's Joyful, you got it. Nine. Alright, so here I can tell you exactly what happens. Which is like, you turn that dial, and some weird mist pours into the glass area, and then it stops, and then it's fine. And there's nothing. And it doesn't move. And then you hear a strange neighing outside.

KEITH: Outside?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: Well, that's not what I thought I was controlling. I got my angles set up all wrong. And I think I send my eye out to go check it out first, I think I'm staying by the console.

AUSTIN: There is one of these weird prehensile-maned horses.

KEITH: Oh, dope.

AUSTIN: Eating some grass out in the plains, like, between you and the front gate.

KEITH: Alright, I'm comin' out there.

AUSTIN: It sees you and freezes. And like, makes eye contact.

KEITH: I also make eye contact.

AUSTIN: It's clearly scared. It's very scared.

KEITH: I'm excited, and also, I'm like...

KEITH (as GIG): [gently] Hey, buddy.

AUSTIN (as HORSE): [neighs softly]

KEITH (as GIG): Hey, buddy. It's okay.

AUSTIN: It's like swatting up at your eye with its mane. It can't reach.

[90:04]

KEITH (as GIG): It's okay, buddy. C'mere.

AUSTIN (as HORSE): [neighs]

KEITH (as GIG): Yeah.

KEITH: I take out a snack.

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me a Sway.

KEITH: I'm going to try to tempt it with a snack.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay. Give me...

KEITH: This is a horse and a snack. I think I should get a plus one on this roll.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: Okay. Sway is...

AUSTIN: How you feelin'? It depends on how you feel. Sounds like you're Joyful, still, though, to me.

KEITH: It does sound like I'm still Joyful. But I'm—oh, you know what? I'm not Joyful, because I'm trying to stay very calm to not scare the horse.

AUSTIN: I see. That's fair. So, Peaceful. Mark Peaceful and give me that roll.

KEITH: Peaceful, marked Peaceful. Eight.

AUSTIN: Hey, that's an eight. So again, as before, you will need to—

KEITH: It's an oat bar by the way.

AUSTIN: Okay, well—

KEITH: It's like one of the Nature's Valley oat bars.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: I love those, and so do horses.

AUSTIN: It does not just want your oat bar, it wants like—

KEITH: My hand.

AUSTIN: —all of the food you have? No, it's like, sniffing at your backpack and like trying to eat that. So that's—

KEITH: Is it trying to open the flap with its nose and then trying to—

AUSTIN: Totally.

KEITH: —undo the buckles with its mane?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're gonna be—you will be at disadvantage on your next roll if you feed it, because you'll just not—it wants to eat all of your food. So that's one thing that it definitely wants. You can tell me what the other one is. Of this list.

KEITH: Okay, so it—let me look at the list real quick.

AUSTIN: It's—you owe them serious cred, which, no—

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: Your own faith is in question; you're gonna need to give them something now instead of later, which is all of your food.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You need to do them a favor first, and you need to give a piece of yourself to them, body or heart.

KEITH: Well, obviously this horse has my heart already.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. How do you like—how do we show that?

KEITH: I slip—so, here's the first thing.

AUSTIN: I thought you were going to say I slip it a twenty, I swear to fucking christ.

KEITH: [laughing] No, yeah, I palm a twenty into the horse's mane. No, I slip him the—first of all, I slip him the oat bar. And then while he's chomping on the oat bar I grab—gently, place my hands on the side of his head. And I look into his eyes. And I go...

KEITH (as GIG): [gently] Horse.

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

KEITH (as GIG): Okay. I get it now.

AUSTIN (as HORSE): [neighs softly]

[GROUP LAUGHTER CONTINUES]

KEITH (as GIG): What a beautiful creature. Will you be my friend?

AUSTIN (as HORSE): [whinnies]

AUSTIN: And then it like, it puts its mane hand on your hand and like holds you there for a second.

[GROUP LAUGHTER CONTINUES]

AUSTIN: Please like, comment, and subscribe.

ART: What's the name of that author who does those books?

KEITH: R. L. Stine.

ART: No, not that one. It's like the—the Amazon guy?

AUSTIN, SYLVIA: Chuck Tingle.

[KEITH laughs]

SYLVIA: Oh, Jesus.

AUSTIN: We're not naming the horse Chuck Tingle. We're not.

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: What is the horse's name? What are you naming the horse?

KEITH: Duck Pringle. No, that's bad.

AUSTIN: That's terrible.

ART: That's Gig, he named his horse Duck.

[AUSTIN laughs]

KEITH: I do kinda like Duck, though.

AUSTIN: I kind of like Duck.

KEITH: Yeah, I kinda like Duck.

AUSTIN: Would you say Doug? Or Duck?

KEITH: Duck.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH (as GIG): Hey, Duck.

AUSTIN (as DUCK): [softly] Ruck.

KEITH (as GIG): Hey, buddy. Oh, he can talk!

ART: Oh my god.

KEITH (as GIG): This horse just said duck! What else can you say?

AUSTIN (as DUCK): Raa.. duck.

KEITH (as GIG): You can say "duck" and "raa".

ART: It's a very rare Pokémon horse, it can only say its own name.

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

AUSTIN: And it like dances around you.

KEITH (as GIG): Oh, that's fun. You're fun!

AUSTIN (as DUCK): [whinnies]

KEITH (as GIG): You wanna come with me?

AUSTIN: And then it like nods its head. And then like scoops you up onto its back.

KEITH (as GIG): Oh, this is where I was heading with this anyway. Let's do it!

AUSTIN: And it rides off into the sunset back to Old Church.

[94:55]

[MUSIC - "The Twilight Mirage" by Jack de Quidt begins]

KEITH (as GIG): [shouting] I got a horse and I'm riding!

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

KEITH (as GIG): [shouting] This is great, I like this place!

ART: What a fucked up thing to yell.

AUSTIN: Oh my god. Okay.

KEITH (as GIG): There's wind in my hair, I've never had wind in my hair!

AUSTIN: [strained] Does everyone get back to HQ okay? Everyone's back in Old Church, Myriad is parked nearby now, Gig rolls in on a horse in the middle of the night.

KEITH: Wait, rolls in? This is a way weirder horse than I thought it was.

AUSTIN: [laughs] I mean it's also that weird shape you mentioned, right?

KEITH: It is, yes. But it is definitely somewhere between a trot and a canter.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Which we have gone over the difference—

AUSTIN: We've gone over this, yes.

KEITH: In this podcast before.

AUSTIN: It's true.

[MUSIC OUTRO - "The Twilight Mirage" by Jack de Quidt]