

# The Road to PALISADE 11: Orbital Pt. 1

*Transcriber: Akumu#7506 [00:00:00 - 01:20:00]; thedreadbiter [01:20:00-end]*

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

[Sound of tape starting. The following audio is slightly muffled]

**Austin as Declan's Corrective:** Um. All right, uh. This one doesn't have a name, yet. [clears throat, sighs]

When I was young I saw my father on Tuesday afternoons, a tray of fruit and a cup of juice and little else between us. In search of more one week, I thought I'd bring some questions to him, because I knew so little, but I knew he answered questions. My head was filled with textbook descriptions and encyclopedic depictions of places I'd hoped he'd seen in ways that go beyond curt summaries, white indices, quick glossaries, and dreamed he'd have some deeper knowledge, real knowledge, dirt under fingernails, the smells they don't write about, and people with names and ugly faces, and places not like the ones I saw on broadcast news.

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

So I put my juice down and I asked him what the world was like, the real world, the one far away from the one out my window, on my wall, in my mind, the world I didn't have words for yet, tell me what it's like. And my father said I knew all the places worth knowing, but I decided he was wrong. Tell me anyway, I said, and he said there was only here and there, and here was all I needed. Tell me about a place you loved, and he said the house he grew up in always had dried flowers. Tell me about a place I haven't been, and he said, there is a place. A terrible place where they worship gods, have no place for laws, even the law of gravity, and there are no real people there, and there are no real names, and the flowers never really dry.

And he looked me in the eye and said, the Twilight Mirage is a place of blue bread and white strawberries, blue bread and white strawberries, blue bread and white strawberries, and I didn't understand, not because I hadn't seen mold, but because I hadn't yet learned to make a meal of the world.

[Tape clicks off]

**Austin as Layer Luxurious:** That was the voice of soldier, killer, poet, leader and living controversy Declan's Corrective. A poem published only posthumously, but written while he lived at Contrition's Figure, though we do not know when he recorded it. We play it not because Corrective is in today's episode, but because his work, driven by a preoccupation with and refusal to confront his guilt, gives us a window into the eyes of those who would look out into the stars and see our home, this radiant nebula, and resent it. Which is important, because today, we're telling the story of how the Twilight Mirage got dragged into the war on Palisade.

Like so many tragedies, this is one filled with noble intentions, simple mistakes, little bits of kismet, and plenty of cruel manipulation. I am Layer Luxurious, this is Perfect Imperfect, and today, we're going to the Brink.

["Permanent Peace" concludes.]

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

**Keith:** Hi, my name is Keith Carberry. You can find me on Twitter [@keithjcarberry](https://twitter.com/keithjcarberry), and you can find the Let's Plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](https://youtube.com/runbutton), and, special other thing is that for our Patreon at [contentburger.biz](https://contentburger.biz) we started Shen Mue 3, Shen Mue 3 Let's Play, the first episode is up.

**Austin [cross]:** Ooh, finally.

**Keith:** And I'm 99% sure that we're going to publicly release our old Shen Mue 1 Let's Play onto the regular, like, public feed which has been private for, you know, like seven years.

**Austin [cross]:** Good, it's a good one. Right.

**Austin:** Forever-ever.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Also joining us: Jack de Quidt.

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

**Austin:** Sylvi Clare.

**Sylvi:** Hey, I'm Sylvia, and currently the only place on the internet you can find me is on

my other podcast Emojidrome 2.0 in your podcatchers or [@emojidrome](#) on Twitter.

**Austin** [cross]: Let's go.

**Sylvi**: Remember the number. It's important.

**Austin**: Remember 2.0, it's very important.

**Sylvi**: It's very important.

**Austin**: And Ali Acampora.

**Ali**: Um, hi, you find me over [@ali\\_west](#) on Twitter [tongue-clicking noise] and you can find the show over [@friends\\_table](#).

**Austin**: Today, we are doing what we promised we would do during our fundraiser for the National Network of Abortion Funds, which is adding a game to our Road to PALISADE, because we didn't have enough already. We are playing Orbital: A Sci-Fi RPG of Precarious Spaces Among Interstellar War by Jack... Harrison. Jack Harrison. It is a gorgeous book, you can see the cover art of it right now if you're watching the stream. It, the whole book is filled with incredible blue and gold little illustrations. I have the little physical copy of this book, and it's just, it's one of my favorite little things. I've like had it in my bag, for, like my messenger bag for like two to three years, and I've like reread it once every like three or four months, you know, sometimes you're like in a place, you're like "I don't have anything to read, my phone is dead, let me just reread this book," and it's just like such a pretty little object, I really like having it. In any case, we are, as we promised during the fundraiser, going to return to The Brink, everyone's favorite truckstop slash space station in, at the very edge of the Twilight Mirage. Orbital is a Belonging Outside Belonging slash No Dice No Masters game, using the system that Avery Alder first debuted in Dream Askew, and I think today we're gonna probably end up making the station, making our characters, and seeing if that's about what we'll get done today. My guess is it'll take us a little while. The last time that we did, the last time that we tried Dream Askew, the same thing happened. [Keith snorts, Jack laughs] Which was we started characters, we got through character creation, and that was about it. We are going to get back to that actually fairly soon, I've just mentioned that in Bluff City, a previous Bluff City episode that that is how we'll be ending our Bluff City season two, by returning to that time. But we've figured, why not, why not dust off those skills [Austin laughs, Keith snorts] and play a different no dice, no masters game in Orbital. What is no dice, no masters you'll see as we play, but the, the most important thing here is that Jack Harrison actually created a very useful online-play system using Miro. Miro is a, Miro is a thing I use [laughing] in my job every single day. It is a big shared whiteboard that, that already has a ton of great stuff in it, already premade. Lots

of little sticky notes and stuff, and a really slick presentation mode that we can use in order to introduce ourselves to the game. Are there any other-

**Keith:** Looks like a Jon Bois video.

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, that is, that is, yeah, it is, Jon Bois videos are 100% built in similar things to this sort of, um, god, what is it, it's called like-

**Keith:** I think it's Prezi.

**Austin:** I believe it, I would believe that it's built in Prezi, but both of these things are, have a name, right, it's like kinetic-

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Sylvi:** Google Earth, too.

**Austin:** Sure, yeah, lots of Google Earth stuff in there. I forget what the name of this type of board is, but it has a thing, it is has a, a name.

**Keith:** A businessy name.

**Austin:** A businessy name, yeah. Don't, it's fine, it's good that I don't know what it is. It means I haven't lost my soul yet. Um, so, I'm now showing this here. I will be facilitating the game and also playing in it. This is a GM-less game, there are some optional GM-ful rules, but I'm not doing that. We're going to all play a character and also pick up and put down aspects of the world. I think if I... okay, one sec, I'm going to do, where's the bring everybody to me button? A very funny thing is that the... Miro has been updated since Jack Harrison made this Miro board, so there are certain things here that are like "[upbeat] hit the little play button in the bottom left of the screen." That is just not true. If I hit presentation mode, does it change what y'all are seeing, or is it only me? Does it lock you into my view, or does it-

**Jack:** It hasn't locked us in yet-

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** Yeah...

**Jack:** -you might have to bring us to where you are.

**Keith:** Ope, I can see-

**Austin:** Woah.

**Keith:** Well, I thought for a second that I could see you get locked into something.

**Austin** [cross, to himself]: I need to bring...

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, I got locked in, but I need to, I need to get everybody, I need to quote-unquote bring everyone to me, and I forget how to do that, because I don't do a lot, I do a lot of design stuff...

**Sylvi:** I think you have to double-click your icon.

**Austin:** Double-click my icon. Uh, oh here it is.

**Sylvi** [cross]: I think-

**Austin:** Oh, I cannot use bring everyone to me.

**Sylvi:** Well, if we just click yours, it'll bring us to you.

**Austin** [cross]: Uh, oh wait.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Did I just bring, can everybody bring themselves to me?

**Ali:** I'm following Austin Walker.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** No, I locked you. [Ali laughs] I don't know what that means.

**Austin:** Keith, that's the opposite. Ali, do you now see the presentation screen? Like if I do this, does it jump?

**Ali:** Yeah yeah yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. Jack?

**Jack:** Yep.

**Ali:** I do this by double-pressing on Austin's face in the corner.

**Keith:** Hmm... maybe it wasn't you that I locked. I locked something, I'm sure it'll be fine. [Jack and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** Are you following me?

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** If I do this, do you see stuff moving?

**Keith:** No...

**Sylvi:** I do.

**Keith:** If I, if I click on...

**Austin:** In the top-right, Keith, there's a button, there's my face.

**Keith:** Okay. Oh, there you are. [Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** Click, yep, now it's working. Alright. Love that. Okay, so, let me do the presentation thing. Alright, this isn't a tutorial for Miro, but hopefully [Austin and Jack laugh] it's all fairly intuitive, et cetera. Buh buh buh, start the presentation, we've done that, okay, alright. So, we're in presentation mode, let's, uh, okay. Orbital. Setup. The Facilitator. "Choose your Facilitator." I'll do it. I've done this stuff, I've familiarized myself with the rules, I'll do my best to guide the table through setup, asking questions and taking notes. I'll do my best to explain the structure of play and the action you can take, I will do my best to help the table transition from setup to play, and I will step in as necessary to explain game rules and keep the game moving. "It is important to remember: the Facilitator is not solely responsible for everyone's fun and safety- that is a shared duty for the table." Thank you, Jack. I'm gonna move you, though. "Safety. Introduce the content warnings. Violence, war, refugees and displacement. Criminal enterprise, social manipulation, resource scarcity and undercover identities." At this point, we should also agree upon a film rating, as a table we agree on a common film rating as shorthand for the sort of content we wanna see. We can use sticky notes to record any banned content. I feel like, um, we probably want to stick to our PG-13ish lean, you know, maybe-

**Keith:** Well, are we counting F-words? [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** Because we're an R all day.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We're an R all day.

**Sylvi:** I'm on this episode, Austin. I swear a lot.

**Austin:** Okay. Okay, well then we're on an R. But, but I would say my guess is, we're probably not leaning into serious depictions of violence, with, like, with detailed gore and effects, right?

**Sylvi:** No, yeah, that doesn't seem like.

**Keith** [cross]: Yes, correct.

**Ali** [cross]: Yeah.

**Austin** [cross]: Yeah.

**Sylvi:** That seems like it would take a real turn.

**Austin:** It would.

**Ali:** We're...

**Sylvi:** From what this ended up being.

**Ali:** We're a director's cut PG-13.

**Sylvi:** That, uh, mm, yeah. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** There we, it was, yes, it was filmed for a PG-13 [Ali laughs], but, it was, but, the director's cut includes some extra curses, I see what you're saying.

**Ali:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, I love that.

**Ali:** Some, you know, some script changes here and there.

**Austin:** Yeah yeah yeah, yeah. Some ad-libs that, like, didn't, that got cut in the edit, but are-

**Ali:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Sylvi:** Alternatively, it would be very funny to force ourselves, to force us to be a G rating.

**Ali** [laughing]: Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Oh no. I would love to try that one day. Um, as always we have the X card available to us. You can type in the chat in Miro. I will also do my best to look out into Discord if someone wants to ping me privately where the chat cannot see. I should note, hello to the chat, this is available for everybody, not just for folks who are on Patreon because it was a, a, a fundraising thing, so I felt like that should be, that should be for everybody. Everybody came together to raise money for the NNAF, and so this should be a reward for everybody. This will also go in the main feed eventually with the rest of the Road to PALISADE games, so people will see it at some point in the future. Alright, next one; "The Station." Jack, do you want to read "Welcome to the Station?"

**Jack:** Yeah, absolutely. "Welcome to the Station. A neutral community on the brink. Imagine an all-consuming interstellar war, spread across a vast galaxy and involving trillions of willing and conscripted participants. Then, imagine a lone space station, ancient and strange, somehow set apart from this conflict. Through significant effort and fortuitous circumstance, it has remained unaffiliated and relatively peaceful, providing a sanctuary for the lovers and thinkers refusing to side with the warring powers. But, this hard-won neutrality is not even slightly secure. There's always someone offering vital resources for a little influence, plotting to displace our leaders, or smuggling military equipment into the station's forgotten corners. Misfits, rebels, and troublemakers. Holding back these myriad threats is an informal network of dependable sorts, each with a stake in the station's continuing vitality. These characters, politicians, artisans, brokers and so on, aren't necessarily officially-recognized leaders, but their influence is felt strongly across the community. They might not get along, they might even dislike each other, but they are united by their belief that the station is a cherished place that must be protected. The question is: when the pressure rises, can they put aside their differences and personal motivations for our community's greater good?"

**Austin:** Alright. Next page. Sylvi, do you wanna read "This much is true?"

**Sylvi:** Yeah. "Every community in Orbital starts with these six points as a foundation. Before you create your station, read them aloud. We are a neutral station, widely recognized as unaffiliated with either side of the ongoing war. The station is much older than our little community, and much of it is unexplored. We have sufficient resources to ensure we meet all our residents' basic needs. We celebrate and value difference in many forms, both personal and cultural. We operate open borders, accepting new arrivals with compassion and providing for them as equal residents. The world outside is hostile and treacherous, so we avoid leaving our station wherever possible."

**Austin:** "You'll find these little media players around the page, with the game's soundtrack embedded. Unfortunately, there's no way to share audio over Miro at the moment. You can share audio in your video chat or just listen to the tracks on your



own." I should note here that there is a wonderful soundtrack that comes with this game.

**Jack** [cross]: So good.

**Austin:** It's really good. We're not using it, because we already do our own soundtracking, and I don't want to step on the toes of anything Jack wants to do. I don't want to confuse people about where the music came from, but if, if the composer of those tracks is listening, which I'm, I guess I'm guessing, no, it's somebody else, it's Christopher Michael Roberts did the soundtrack, is excellent, so shout outs. It comes with the game, if you pick up the game on itch.io. I definitely recommend it. It's a bunch of like little one-minute stingers, like one minute little, little short tracks to tie to all the different classes, all the different playbooks, from both players, er, for both characters and aspects of the setting. Um, here is the station sheet. The station name goes on top, the station visuals go here, you'll use the mind map to draw the station during play, and we'll have a list of some minor characters. There's also this list of threats, and we can read about threats in a second, once we get there. Ali, do you want read "Creating your Station?"

**Ali:** Um, sure, yeah. "Take turns-" [clears throat] "Take turns choosing from each list as instructed to describe the physical environment of your Station. The lists are in stickynotes. Like this!"

**Austin:** Yeah. [Ali laughs] "Once you've used them, you should delete the notes. You won't need them again." Let's pause and talk about station visuals, and let's go to the bit where there are, there are stuff here. You all are still following me? Maybe, no?

**Jack:** Yeah! No.

**Ali:** I am, yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. So let's talk about the Brink. We haven't seen the Brink in, our lives, in [blows out breath] three and a half years?

**Sylvi** [cross]: Oh boy. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** You mean in our actual, real human lives?

**Austin** [cross]: Four years?

**Austin:** Our actual human lives.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Twilight Mirage 63. No, sixty, 67. 63 is Guaranteed Events. 67 is the finale.

August 30th, 2018.

**Sylvi:** Fuugh.

**Austin:** Four years!

**Sylvi:** Don't make me think about 2018.

**Austin:** Uh, sorry. [Austin and Sylvi laugh] We haven't seen it since then, and we haven't talked publicly about what's going on in the Twilight Mirage in terms of time and space. And there's also stuff here that we've already talked about in terms of, I mean, just thinking about the six things that are true, I'm going to jump back to the presentation mode so I can quickly go back to it, here it is. We are a neutral station, we know that that's true about The Brink, it always has been, it always, maybe not always will be, we'll see how this game goes, I guess, but it's neutral. Even inside of the Mirage, it always felt like, sort of um, it felt like its own faction but it also felt like a place other factions came to do business. "It's much older than our little community" is not, was not true at the time of the Twilight Mirage season, because the station itself was part- Pause. We are going to have to spoil parts of Twilight Mirage and all of PARTIZAN to do this. That has been the case with all the other Road to PALISADE games. But we're going to have to talk about specific fates of characters, we're going to have to talk about what happened in the Twilight Mirage in at least broad ways, so this is your warning that we're going to be doing that. I think that it's probably... fine to listen anyway, um, but I will say that like if you're someone who is like, currently listening to Twilight Mirage or who wants to, we will be talking about some, some, some things about the end of Twilight Mirage as we play, I don't know how we couldn't.

**Keith:** Yeah, I can't wait to spoil all the things I remember about Twilight Mirage! [Sylvi laughs] I have a list here of things that I remember that I'm ready to spoil. [Austin laughs]

[20:00]

**Austin:** Um, but, we know, for instance, that the Brink was not an ancient station that this community found, as it is in Orbital. Instead, it was a kind of repurposed listening station, Rapid Evening listening station, that was also housing the consciousness of, uh, of Satellite, aka Gray Gloaming, who ended up being, who's one of the, the intro speakers in the first half of Twilight Mirage, and it ended up being sort of a middle ground during the big time skip and during the back half of the season. So we know that for instance, there, again, the station is not, I mean maybe it's older than whatever the current community is there now, but we don't necessarily, it is not an ancient station that has, uh, that we've stumbled without any continuity. So that's a thing that's important for

us. [Austin makes a wordless exclamation] There's other stuff we just haven't really talked about at length like, how much time has passed inside of the Brink versus outside, because one of the big things about the second half of Twilight Mirage was, time is differently paced in there. Um, uh, there's a character who comes to the Twilight Mirage from outside of the Twilight Mirage called Our Profit and it takes her a thousand years to get there, but it, but it happens in a matter of years internally, right? There are characters, we talk a lot about major factions struggling to get things in and out of the Twilight Mirage in a timely fashion, because one of the things that the Twilight Mirage does to keep it safe and to keep its inhabitants safe is fuck with time in strange ways. We talked a little about this off mic, and it feels like what we want is, enough, enough proximity that there might still be like, photos on the walls of characters like Morning's Observation, who would have gone on, who did go on to work at the Brink, but not so close that a character like, y'know, the creator of Arbit, the divine Arbit, would still be around. Arbit will still be around, but the character who made Arbit, not around, right? Um, there might be other characters who existed, you know, I think Satellite herself, Gray Gloaming, may be still around, is a robot, right? Could definitely have lasted hundreds of years. And in my mind, I sort of like [sighs], we know it's been five thousand years outside, and I kind of feel like either saying, it's been one thousand inside, or five hundred inside, feels, like, clean in a way that I like, but I haven't like, made a firm decision. D'y'all have any super-strong, just, feelings about that? Or other perspectives on how long it has been since the events of Twilight Mirage, inside of the Twilight Mirage? Also the Brink is at the edge of Twilight Mirage, which means that we can kinda come up with any answer we want, right, like the stuff that's happening-

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** -on the various Quire planets. Could-

**Keith:** My gut reaction-

**Austin:** Uh-huh?

**Keith:** Oh, sorry.

**Austin:** I was just gonna say that, we could, we don't need to be stuck to this answer.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Because one of the things I'm gonna say is, that I think the Brink sort of, it's always been at the edge of the system, it's why it's called the Brink, and it's always been the first place you could get to on the edge of Twilight Mirage, and I think it kind of like slips between the Mirage, in and outside of the Mirage, which kind of like allows it to be

this middle ground up, you know, in the Palisade system, as well as being inside of the Quire system, kind of fluttering between the two every few years, or every few months, or, you know, whatever we end up saying. Anyway, what was your strong feeling, Keith?

**Keith:** My gut reaction was that five-to-one, when you're talking about five thousand years like-

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** -isn't that significant of a scrunch, where it's like, five thousand years, a thousand years, that's all way too many years to conceive of.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** So, I think more like a ten-to-one, five thousand to five hundred.

**Austin:** Right, like, we know that there are like, businesses that still exist, in our world, from five hundred years ago.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I don't think that's true for five thousand years ago, or for one thousand years ago. [Ali chuckles] Ah, it might be true for, oldest, I wanna say I've actually looked this up.

**Keith:** I think that the oldest business is like, a Japanese hotel-

**Austin:** I, yes, it, yes.

**Keith:** -from like a thousand years ago.

**Austin:** I believe that you are right. Yeah, fifteen hundred years ago.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Ali:** Wow, that's old.

**Austin:** That's incredible.

**Keith** [cross]: Isn't that wild.

**Austin:** That's so wild. Yeah, Kongo-gumi, opened in Japan in 578 AD.

**Keith:** But it's like, we're talking about one-

**Austin:** Oh! Sorry, that was a, it's a construction company, which is even older. That's wild to me.

**Ali:** Huh!

**Austin:** Is it still a construction company?

**Ali:** Yeah, you gotta keep up with the trends on that one, you know.

**Jack:** You always need things built.

**Keith** [cross]: But it is it like, did they just buy the rights to the names, is this like, squeaky clean? [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** No, it was, it was, so, it seems like it was pretty squeaky clean. It fell on hard times and went into liquidation in 2006, and it got purchased. But it exists as a wholly-owned subsidiary, but what are you gonna do, be the people who shut down the name of the oldest business?

**Keith:** Right. Yeah, the oldest. That is, I mean, that is like, that's like a, like a... at some level, it's sort of like, you wanna be the country that has the oldest business in the, like, in the world.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** It becomes sort of a piece of statecraft.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Anyway.

**Keith:** But on the flipside, there's one of those, on the flipside, there's like, you know, any stupid beer that you can find at a [Austin laughs], at a grocery store'll be like "This brewery's been open for 400 years."

**Austin:** Right, exactly. So, for instance, when we talked about this privately in our internal Discord, Dre was like, I would like it if that diner that Even and Cascabel wound up at was still around. And, it's like, okay, yeah, okay, five hundred years, the longest-lasting diner in the, on any of those planets, but I think it's still, I can imagine it, I can just basically imagine it.

**Jack:** And I think that-

**Keith:** Well it's silly to imagine now, but we didn't have diners five hundred years ago, on this planet.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Jack:** Yeah. I think that, also, the Twilight Mirage is kind of weird and extraordinary.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I wonder if five hundred, I imagine five hundred years still feels like a long stretch of time, but I imagine that lifespans are all over the place in the Twilight Mirage, there are probably people who live for six to eight days and have like, full lives, and then there are also people who live for like, you know, [laughingly] four hundred years.

**Austin:** Right, one of the things, I mean one of the things I discovered when I was looking into all of our time shit, which is like, this is on us, because we ended Twilight Mirage, and there was a thing that happens in the finale, which is the Axiom Aperture exists and [laughingly] drills a hole in the wall of the Twilight Mirage, briefly. And y'all cleaned it up, but we never talk about if it fucked with time or not, and so we never really answer if time changes again. Uh, but two, I thing I discovered was, Grand Magnificent, during the This Year of Ours time jump, experiences that time jump for five years, and everybody else only experiences for one.

**Jack:** Wow, that's really cool.

**Austin:** I think that says basically everything you need to know about Grand Magnificent [Austin and Jack laugh] in the second half of Twilight Mirage.

**Keith:** By the way, just before, just real quick before it becomes totally irrelevant, the hotel I was thinking of-

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** -was established in the year 705.

**Austin:** Incredible.

**Sylvi:** Jesus.

**Keith:** And it's called Nishiyama Onsen Keiunkan, and it's been family-run for 52 generations.

**Austin:** That's so long.

**Ali:** Wo~w.

**Jack:** Holy shit.

**Austin:** Um, the oldest restaurant is Ristorante Boutin in Madrid, which was founded-

**Jack:** Is it Roman?

**Austin:** Uh, no. No. It's much-

**Jack:** No, Madrid is in Spain.

**Austin:** Madrid is in Spain. [Jack laughs] Uh-huh. Seventeen-

**Keith:** Rome has been in Spain.

**Austin:** Right, that's what, at first I was like, wait, does Jack mean is it as old as the Roman empire?

**Jack:** No, no, I briefly thought Madrid was in Italy.

**Austin:** I see. [Sylvi laughs] 1725. So, that one's, that been, that's, you know.

**Keith:** God, if they- that's the oldest running restaurant, but restaurants as a concept is like so, like, shockingly new.

**Austin:** Oh but this other list is, this other list I have is saying that that's wrong, [Ali gasps] and the oldest is St. Peter's Stiftskeller, in Salsburg, Austria, which was established in 803.

**Jack** [cross]: Romans.

**Austin** [laughing]: Oh my god, Jack.

**Keith:** It's probably like, someone doesn't count that as a restaurant for some reason.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Yeah, it's like it's a beerhall or something and they're like, [stuffy voice] "a beerhall isn't a restaurant."

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah yeah yeah, totally. Totally.

**Keith:** That's how the person who wrote the first article sounds.

**Jack:** Yeah. [laughs] Yeah. Piece of shit. I mean, piece of crap. [Ali and Sylvi laugh]

**Austin:** Oh, you know what it is-

**Keith:** Crap, this is G. This is PG.

**Austin:** Thank you, Jack. Thank you. Um. The, the thing is, the one-

**Sylvi:** Just one to slide under the rating.

**Austin:** [laughs] The one in Madrid holds the Guinness world record. Who the fuck cares?

**Sylvi:** Right.

**Austin:** Get out of here. Alright, closing these tabs. So let's talk about what this ship looks like. Um, and if you look, there are a bunch of, if we come over here, you can follow these little tags, these little lines, up to where there's like, structural features, two to three things we found, two to three marks we made. You wanna just like go around, and each of us choose [hesitantly] one of these, and we'll go around twice?

**Jack:** Yeah. Before we do, can I, can I check real quick?

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** So, in my mind, I have been picturing the Brink, wrongly, as just like, almost like a little floating rock with a diner on it.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I would like to take a little moment to discuss, you know, the size of this thing, and what it contains.

**Austin:** Well-

**Jack:** At least at the time of Twilight Mirage, outside of like, a basic diner. How much room do we have to play with, how many people are on the station...?

**Austin** [cross]: Uh it was a, you have to remember that-

**Austin:** -space ships docked there, and traded cargo, and resupplied. It was big, it was always very big, because otherwise it couldn't have been a space truck stop.

**Keith:** Right, like a truck stop, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly.



**Jack:** So it's sort of like a, uh, uh, it's like a habitable space station with a diner at and as its heart.

**Austin:** A diner was the place that we spent the most time framing.

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** We also know that it carried a terrible weapon inside of it, that-

**Jack:** What diner hasn't?

**Austin:** [laughs] That's true. That Primary and Satellite had been, had considered using at one point. Um, we, I imagine... I have an answer for why it's bigger now than it was then, but I, or I have an idea for that, but I do think that it's, I do think that you're fundamentally right that like, it did not have, it did not have like a huge living quarters for thousands of people or something. It wasn't Deep Space 9, right, it wasn't one of these like, central, important space stations that you see in science fiction a lot, where there are tens of thousands of people living there, as if it's a city. Right?

**Jack:** Right, or like the big asteroid station in The Expanse, or something.

**Austin:** Right, yeah, it is not, it is not anywhere near the scale, I think, of most of, y'know, Ceres Station, or any of the Expanse places that are like, giant cities. Y'know. Maybe the one... what's the... god. What's the one that, um... no, I guess even that would have been too big. That one that the Mormons owned, and that, um.

**Jack:** Oh, the Nauvoo.

**Keith:** Excuse me?

**Austin:** The Nauvoo, the Nauvoo, yeah yeah yeah.

**Jack:** The Mormons briefly own.

**Austin** [laughingly]: Yeah, yeah. It is, it is taken from them in a way. Or, the ship that they're having built gets taken from them. Anyway.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's The Expanse. Uh, so yeah, smaller than that, Jack.

**Jack:** Okay, yeah.

**Austin:** Trying to think of other things we knew about the Brink, but... um... I don't, I

think that those are the big things. So, and I guess, I guess, again, the thing that we have to get it to, in a sense, is, let me, let me find, I think that there is a write-up in just the book that gestures at the scale of the ship, or the scale of the, the station. Um, I guess I don't necessarily see it. I guess, it's partly the six things, right?

**Jack:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Which is like, it's big enough to be important at this point, it's big enough to have a lot of people move in and out of it. And that way, it doesn't necessarily have to be gigantic. Uh, but, yeah.

**Jack:** Okay. I think I have an easy, an easy starting structural feature that I could kick off with, and we could, we could-

**Austin:** Sure! Are you taking it from one of these, or are you just, are you just use yours?

**Jack:** Yeah, I'm taking it from one of these.

**Austin:** Okay. I'm going to back it out of presentation mode,

**Jack [cross]:** It's obvious, but it's worth saying.

**Austin:** So that you can just write it directly here, if you want.

**Jack:** I am going to add... how do I do this? Oh! Here we go! Swirling. Nebula.

**Austin:** Ah! Sure.

**Jack:** The Brink is in the Twilight Mirage.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** We've gestured in the past about being on the very edge of Mirage space, and like little bits of color coming in. I think we saw... What was the great first divine and candidate, or divine and excerpt that we met this season? It's, her, she's named after a flower and it's the divine Loyalty?

**Austin:** Oh, uh, oh, it was your character, right?

**Jack:** Yuh-huh.

**Austin:** We've already-

**Jack:** Uh, it begins with a V. I doesn't, yeah, it doesn't matter, but uh-

**Austin:** We've already played, we've already done so many Road to, [Jack laughs], it's already been so long since we've started the Road to PALISADE that we have forgotten key details. People in the chat will be, will be, will remind us.

**Keith:** Ah, Key Details, that was the name of the... [Ali laughs]

**Austin** [amused]: Yeah, uh-huh. But with a V.

**Jack:** No, we've seen her cockpit be sort of suffused by color, but I think that now we are actually in a place where the Brink is hovering in the, um, what do you call it, floating in the sunset-hued safety of the Twilight Mirage.

**Austin:** Veronique. Veronique. Dakota said it the second I saw it on our Patreon.

**Jack** [cross]: Veronique.

**Austin:** Yeah, Veronique. Anchor, you remember? Anyway, sorry, I do not mean to interrupt.

**Jack:** No, no, you're good. So, there is, there is pastel and jewel tone colors pouring in through the windows. Out in the distance, we can see the sort of great, pastel almost nebulas forming and swirling and moving like dust in water around The Brink. This is full-scale, beautiful Twilight Mirage colors.

**Austin:** Love it. I'm gonna make something very, I'm gonna add something very ugly instead. Um. Why is this so big? Wait.

**Jack:** Ahh, the old story-telling game.

**Austin** [laughing]: Yes.

**Austin:** There we go. Um, this is going to be, so in my mind, the... the general shape of The Brink is, and this truly, in retrospect, is this just because I have been looking at the Orbital... art for so long? It's sort of like, um, it's sort of like, I guess like diamond-shaped in some ways in my mind. It has kind of like a flat top, that then kind of, kind of comes down- you know what kind of, it could also be me thinking about, as I'm always thinking about, is uh, the Omega Station in Mass Effect has a similar...

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

**Austin:** Kind of has a more jellyfish vibe, but you get what I'm saying, right, that's it's like wide and circular on the top, and then it kind of comes to down to a, to a, to a point.

**Jack:** Almost like a nail.

**Austin:** Almost like a nail. I think this, I've almost thought of the Brink as less, the vertical shaft is not as, isn't as long and pointy, it's much more like a natural, slow, y'know, curve inward. But actually, the nail look is also very good for this. [Austin laughs] If you double click, you can access a thing, whoever was clicking. You'll dip into it and then you can copy and paste. Um, anyway, I think that the thing I'm adding is a sort of uneven skirt of ships that have been permanently welded to the circumference-

**Jack:** Oh, sick.

**Austin:** -of the core Brink, so that over the last few hundred years, you'll just have a huge freighter that just gets, becomes part of the body of the Brink. And like, the diners, and all the middle public spaces that have been there from the beginning are in the kind of the top, right? They're at the top of the, the, the station, y'know, kind of the, whatever the highest point is, or the center of that top floor, but now there's just dozens of these other ships, large and small, circular, round and squared off, and rectangular, and triangular, all weird shapes, 'cause Twilight Mirage was filled with weird spaceships, all just sort of like jutting out in a sort of outward, downward angle from the center, y'know? So that's like, "a skirt of various ships, various large ships,"

**Sylvi** [cross]: Sounds cute.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah. "Permanently welded onto the central structure." Um, who's up? Who's got another thing? And also, for things like things we've found, I think that those could also be things that got welded on, right? So like, if someone did want a defunct, defunct corporate branding, that could be stuff that was like brought on from a defunct corporate ship that has long since been [claps] attached, you know?

**Sylvi:** So we're able to pick from all three of these categories?

**Austin** [cross]: Yep, let's just go, let's just go around, yeah.

**Sylvi:** Okay. I have like a combo idea for a things we found, marks we made thing.

**Austin** [cross]: Totally.

**Sylvi:** So I was looking at [stammers] I want to do a mashup between bioluminescence and neon lights. And do like, like, they use like native bioluminescence to light the spaceship.

**Austin** [cross]: Ooh.

**Jack** [cross, awed]: Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Hell yeah. If you, uh, if you double-click on the visuals thing you just straight up type right into it.

**Sylvi:** Okay, cool.

**Austin:** You wanna make sure you're typing in the middle and not the outside layer, 'cause otherwise it will be big. Yeah, I just learned this.

**Sylvi:** Okay, okay, I think I got it.

**Austin** [cross]: Yeah, there you go.

**Austin:** Is it particular colors, or is it just like, a lot of...

**Sylvi:** I think it, it, it's like it will shift, it's like not, it's not, it's an organic thing, it's not something you can really control the tone of. It's like-

**Austin** [cross]: Oh, interesting. Okay. Cool cool cool.

**Sylvi:** I don't know if I'm thinking, picturing more of like an algae thing, or like, or- like, I feel like bioluminescent mushrooms are a thing we've done a lot, but we did have the lichen discussion on, in Twilight Mirage, famously, one of the three things I remember from recording that.

**Austin** [cross]: We did, the lichen, yeah, we did. We did. You're not wrong.

**Sylvi:** Um, so, yeah. I'm gonna figure out how to write this out.

**Austin:** Amazing.

**Keith:** Lichen discussion?

**Austin:** The first arc of the Ground game, there was the strange glowing lichen.

**Sylvi** [cross]: You were there. [laughs]

**Keith:** Okay...

**Austin:** This is, [chuckles] some suggest that this is where you, you first got the name Lye Lychen.

**Keith:** Oh. [sputters] Deeply do not remember this. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvi:** Yeah. It was way, it was like, that might have been 2017, you know?

**Austin:** It almost certainly was. It almost certainly was. Yeah. Um, Keith or Ali, do y'all have ideas for what it looks like?

**Keith:** Hmmm...

**Austin:** You can, again, just feel free to pull right from the list.

**Ali:** My mind keeps going back to those like, arrows that IKEA puts —

[40:00]

**Ali:** — on their [laughingly] floors or whatever.

**Austin:** Oh, sure. Yeah.

**Ali:** Like thinking of this as like a place that people are visiting, right? So like, the default is probably that you're a little bit unfamiliar with it. Um, and then also just the scale of this thing.

**Austin:** Mmmm.

**Ali:** Also it being like, a place, like a place that provides service or hospitality. Of being like, yeah, if you, you gotta go walk through this big old freighter if you're coming up through the south or whatever, that there's gonna be signage.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I wonder if there's like, signs for different types of mobility saying like, "it might take you this long to get here," [Austin and Ali make sounds of agreement] or like, "if you're aiming for that place, bank twenty minutes," or whatever.

**Austin:** Definitely. I think that that's, so, so, you know, in... guidance system, but "guidance system" sounds like we're talking about moving a ship around. Um, it's just like navigational signage, like, signage, guidance and uh-

**Ali:** Mmm.

**Austin:** And it feels like also maybe with that, it is a place that, where moving through it has been thought about it a lot and has been invested in. If you're saying, Jack, like different types of mobility, and also this feels very Twilight Mirage to me, to take that into account, right? Where it's like, hey, there are passageways that have the sort of zero-g handhold hooks that like can pull you through places quickly. There are places that'll have, you know, obviously lots of ramps up and down places. There's lot of like, various, if you are a synthetic person that lives between different bodies, you can store one in

different parts of the sh- uh, in different parts of the station, and like zap your consciousness between two of them. Because, remember we're, we are Twilight Mirage tier here, you know, in terms of, um... the Mirage did protect this place from the Perennial Wave, canonically, so that means like, all of the truly wild, y'know, space-fantasy tech that Twilight Mirage had it still working here. Um, so. Maybe it gets, it gets jittery when you're, when it's closer to Palisade than to the, than deeper into the Mirage. That's kind of fun, that like, the lights go out sometimes 'cause they're running on old, you know, old tech that would get hit by the, by the, the, the Perennial Wave. But... um. Keith?

**Keith:** Alright!

**Austin:** Any of these jump up, jump out to you?

**Keith:** Yeah, I wanna add community gardens.

**Austin:** Yes! Hell yeah.

**Ali:** Yes, ba~by.

**Keith:** People are eatin' here, what are we, shipping in everything? That's, that's silly. We got community gardens; people are gardening.

**Austin:** People are gardening.

**Jack** [cross]: Sick.

**Austin:** Absolutely a Gig Kephart addition, hundreds of years ago. [Ali chuckles] Listen, you have to be self-sustaining, you have to add some community gardens, for sure. Um. Jack, do you wanna wrap back around?

**Jack:** Yeah, totally. Let's see...

[long pause]

**Jack:** I would like to go for, um... smoldering furnace. There is something that is powering this place.

**Austin:** Yeaah.

**Jack:** Or, not necessarily powering it, but let's say they have an emergency generator that they have to constantly keep prepped.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** The Brink is powered for the most part with sort of Mirage-style thing, there's big weird solar sails that catch particles in the air and filter them through into power, there's standard solar panels, but they've also got this like big, heavy, red, unblinking eye of a furnace that powers an emergency generator.

**Austin:** Love it.

**Jack:** Um, oh, and it's very warm, and so communities of synthetics or people who are sensitive to the cold or something, have almost like built like a, I don't want to say spa [Austin laughs], but almost like a lounge or like a, like a-

**Austin:** You can say spa! Twilight Mirage, baby.

**Jack:** Hell yeah, this is the Twilight Mirage, yeah, let's do it. They've built a spa around the generators, and there are catwalks that people working on the generators in, y'know, like boiler suits and things go between, and then during their lunch break they'll take a break to dip their feet in the heated pools and the steam and things coming from this generator.

**Austin:** Extremely good. Um.

**Keith:** I love the idea of a pool sitting next to a bunch of industrial fire. [Ali laughs] There's just like, "yeah, it's the hot spring!"

**Jack** [cross]: I mean, this is the Mirage as well, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** 'Cause it's like, in, for example, on, um, on the red moon of Partizan, they might have hot industrial fire and be like, "yeah, you know, this place sucks, and if you go near it the water will, y'know, give you some awful condition in your lungs or something."

**Austin** [cross]: Uh-huh.

**Jack:** But here in the Mirage it's like, "yeah, we got the generator. It's really warm here. It takes a lot of work to keep it going, but uh, we can also use it as a spa, isn't that great?"

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh. Um-

**Keith:** And the water helps heat dispersion.

**Austin:** Hmm!



**Jack:** [laughs] Yeah!

**Keith:** Two for one!

**Austin:** Uh, I am going to add, I am going to add some battle damage. I think that we have been, uh... we have been, oop, there's not- oh it's 'cause I think maybe 'cause Jack is in there. I'll wait 'til Jack is out. We have been hit recently. The last time that we, um... remember the last time. Maybe it has been, and maybe I'm look ahead a little bit here to threats [Austin laughs] in a way, but I think that the Principality, y'know, probably given that Palisade has been invaded by the Curtain, probably Curtain forces, Kesh and Nideo forces, but maybe~, maybe Pact forces looking for a place to, to, y'know build a counter-attack, the Principality in general has hit, tried to come at the Brink. And the Brink, and some allies from the Twilight Mirage helped fight it off, and that was the first time anything like that has happened in the Twilight Mirage in... five hundred years, like we said, since the last, since the finale of Twilight Mirage. I'm sure there had been, there have been other attempts, other types of skirmishes, or other types of fighting. We talk a lot about, in Twilight Mirage, utopia being a process and not being a final state. I think that, even with the unity that came at the end of Twilight Mirage, it's hard to imagine that that unity would be, y'know, almost a surfaceless, y'know, eternity. There's going to be blips of things: there's going to be disagreements, there's going to be bad actors, there's going to be people who attempt to bring the system down, and it's how a system like that can react to those challenges that changes things. So they were not unprepared, but it was the first real major thing that's happened, and I don't think that the, whoever was trying to hit us imagined that a little truck stop would be ready to defend itself, and it turned out it was. Twilight Mirage doesn't play.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's a medium truck stop!

**Austin:** That's right, we've leveled up. You know, a lot more truck stop now.

**Jack:** Also we have technology that makes theirs look like the Stone Age.

**Austin:** [laughing] Uh-huh. Um, and I think that it's like, there are, there are, it's not just battle damage in the sense that like, oh, there is burn marks on plating. The actual damage, or, the actual, the thing that signals the battle damage is: people are working to fix it, right? So there's lots of people welding on replacement armor plates on the big ship skirt, there are people replacing the, you talked about the... solar, like, nets or whatever, Jack, like, people are reweaving those and repairing them, y'know. The thing that we see that the camera shows the battle damage through is people fixing the battle damage. It's people repairing the pipes that bring the heat from that generator across the station, it's people, y'know, working on making sure that everything continues to work, y'know. So, um. So yeah, that's my next one.

[long pause]

**Keith:** I've got something.

**Austin:** What's up?

**Keith:** You want community garden benefits, you gotta have community garden problems. We've got grasping vines and sprawling roots, baby.

**Austin:** Ah, there we go, now we're talking.

**Ali** [cross]: Ohhhh, sure.

**Ali:** They grasp?

**Jack** [cross]: Oh dear.

**Austin and Keith:** They grasp!

**Austin:** Grasping vines! [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** What do they grasp? Who? Who do they grasp?

**Keith:** Um, they grasp, I'm gonna say these are nuisance vines.

**Austin:** Mmm~m!

**Keith:** So they'll grasp, I guess they'll, I guess... I guess they'll grasp anything. They'll gra- you can get grasped by a vine.

**Austin:** You can get grasped by a vine!

**Keith** [cross]: You can get moved.

**Keith:** Yeah, you can get moved. [soft laughter] You can get delayed where you're, wherever you're going by a nuisance vine. They're good eating though. [Jack and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** You just gotta, you just gotta grasp 'em back.

**Jack:** Oh, it's the fuckin' Twilight Mirage through and through.

**Austin:** Yep. We're back babeeey.

**Jack:** Yeah. Tastes good.

**Keith:** Wow, they're like ramps! [Austin laughs] It's ramps season all year round. If, look, sometimes you get moved from A wing to F wing.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Um, Sylvi or Ali?

**Sylvi:** I got one more.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** It's not necessarily like, one-to-one garbled distress messages, or, what it, yeah, is that what it- warning messages!

**Austin:** Mmmm.

**Sylvi:** I think it's like, frequencies get picked up on equipment in the base station a lot.

**Austin** [cross]: Ohh, that's fun. Yeah.

**Sylvi:** So, it'll just be something, all of a sudden, a display'll light up with some bit of just like, some signal that you didn't mean to catch that you're just getting an excerpt of.

**Jack:** That's great.

**Austin** [cross]: Oh and there's, there's an Excerpt there? [Sylvi sighs] No, okay.

**Sylvi** [sarcastically]: Ha ha. [Sylvi laughs]

**Jack:** Is that broadly, sort of, cultivated as well? Where it's like, is this something that people on the station are like, "yeah, this is actually okay," or is it just straight up a coincidence and a surprise?

**Sylvi:** I think it's, it's a, it's both a coincidence and just like, a matter of where they are in, like, space? Like being on, um, like sort of in that border space of the Mirage itself just leads to a lot weird, like, interference going on there.

**Austin:** Yeah. Also there's just like way more activity here than there's ever been before, right?

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** People found Palisade, which means there are people in all of the nearby sectors, people are sending messages non-stop, there was an invasion on Palisade, right?

**Sylvi:** Oh... yeah, and I think, we established that like, the Mirage has like more

advanced tech than places outside of it, right?

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Like, I think that part of it is that for Mirage tech, comparably, this is antiquated stuff that they're picking up.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvi:** It's like, getting like a radio signal on like, your rad- like, [stammers] I was gonna say \_your\_ radio, and I was like, "well that doesn't really make perfect- [Austin laughs] that's not like, the one-to-one thing I'm looking for."

**Austin:** I know what you mean though.

**Sylvi:** But it's like... yeah, it's like if a walkie-talkie got picked up on your radio.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. There it is. I'm a professional speaking person. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** I gotcha. Gonna add that to the, to the list?

**Sylvi:** Um, yeah, okay. Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And then Ali, one more?

**Ali:** Okay. I have my final one. We have an invasive bird species. [Austin gasps] [Sylvi laughs]

**Jack:** Yo! [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Evasive or invasive?

**Ali:** Invasive.

**Austin:** But I mean, we can't fucking catch these things so I think that they're probably pretty evasive, too.

**Keith** [cross]: In- wow. Right, yeah, if they weren't-

**Keith:** If they weren't also evasive then we'd get rid of them. [Ali and Keith laugh]

**Ali:** This is like, this is a specific thing that my mind goes through, with a lot, with transit stuff, because on Long Island there is a species of parrots called the Monk parrot, and

they're the, these like-

**Keith** [incredulously]: There's \_parrots\_ on \_Long Island\_? [Ali and Jack laugh]

**Ali**: Let me tell you. Um, they're like these, very like looking-out-of-place green birds that are very cute, and like the story, I don't know if it's like a, a, a legend or if it's real, that, like, they were being shipped through JFK [Austin gasps] and then the box got [Ali laughs] like broken or whatever.

**Austin**: This is Bluff City to me!

**Jack**: These guys.

**Keith** [cross]: Wow.

**Ali**: And they were just chilling, like, they just chill here now.

**Austin** [cross]: Holy shi~it.

**Ali**: And so the idea of like, yeah, this like shipment of a creature on the space station, that is like, "Yeah, I live here now." Or the like excitement you get when you go into like a mall or whatever and you see like a bird that flew in.

**Austin**: Yea~ah.

**Austin**: And you're like, "what are you doing here?"

**Austin**: What are you doing here?

**Keith**: This-

**Austin**: Ali, you're in Port Authority, or Penn Station, and there's just birds in there, and you're like "alright, I guess there's just birds up here now."

Ali [cross]: Yeah. [laughs]

**Ali**: Hello, everybody!

**Austin**: Apparently, these parrots are from-

**Sylvi** [cross]: Um, hello everybirdy.

**Austin**: Ha ha! Apparently these birds are from Argentina originally, and the thing about Argentina is, it's kind of chilly in lots of Argentina. There is tundra in Argentina.

**Ali:** Ahh~

**Jack:** Ohh~

**Austin:** There is cold islands in, on, in Argentina, so they're totally fine to live on Long Island. That's so funny to me.

**Jack:** Can I, while we're on us, can I tell you my favorite potentially apocryphal accidental bird-introduction story?

**Austin:** Please.

**Sylvi:** Oh yes, please.

**Ali** [cross]: Oh? [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** So the story goes that a man who is real, he's an American amateur ornithologist who belonged to the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society and the New York Zoological Society. He was born in 1827 and he died in 1906, and his name has Eugene Schieffelin, and the story goes that he was obsessed with a project to bring to the United States every bird mentioned in the works of Shakespeare.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** I know exactly, I know all about this.

**Ali:** What?

**Austin:** Bro.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Jack:** And as such, he released one hundred starlings from England into New York City's Central Park, because they were mentioned in a Shakespeare play, and starlings have become like a, a, a, you know, massive bird species all across America as a result.

**Keith:** I was wondering where this was going-

**Austin:** That's so funny.

**Jack** [cross]: What an idiot.

**Keith:** -and as soon as you, as soon as you started describing the guy, I was like, "Oh this is gonna be the Shakespeare guy."

**Austin:** That's \_so\_ funny.

**Jack:** Yeah, this Shakespeare idiot, this American being like, "forsooth, I love the Bard!"  
[All laugh]

**Sylvi:** Oh god.

**Keith:** You know what we need? We need his birds around here.

[cross talk]

**Keith:** That'll help somehow.

**Austin:** Yeah, for a long time, American literature wasn't respected worldwide, because we didn't have a Shakespeare, so he set about-

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** -inventing one. By being like-

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** -we have to recreate the perfect conditions, by being like-

**Keith:** The thing that makes a Shakespeare is the birds.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's the birds. Ahhhch. Alright, uh, check this out. So if I hit "Present," it should just go back to where we were. Okay, here we go.

**Keith:** An extremely amateur ornithologist, sounds like.

**Austin:** Next, choose three threats. "Agree on threats your community faces and record them as cards on your station." And then name your station, but we do, we actually already have a name, so that's good.

**Keith [cross]:** Oh boy.

**Austin:** Threats are, are interesting. Threats in the game are the things that we will be working to attempt to resolve. I'm gonna see if I can read from the book about how threats are gonna come up here. "When you start the turn," when we start the game we're all gonna show minor scenes that show our life before the threat starts manifesting or manifesting again if it's a threat that's already established, and then at the end of each round of play, after we all get a scene, we'll cross off any threats that happen to be resolved. And then when all three threats are resolved we will conclude

the game with an epilogue. Those threats can be a lot of different things; you'll see below that there are a bunch available there. Uh, but there are, there's another moment where we will during, I wanna say, minor scenes, maybe, we end up connecting our characters to, or parts of our characters to those threats to kind of indicate, "Hey, this is the one that I'm working on or looking at right now." So there are three of them as you can see, three spots, and there's a big list of them yet again, here. Um...

**Keith:** Some of these are really... good.

**Jack:** The number one threat here, like the first threat listed, is like, "Oh, okay. This is the game."

**Austin:** Yeah. "Hundreds of military starships are using a nearby moon as a staging area." Well that's simply true, isn't it? [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Let me just grab that one and drop it in.

**Jack:** And is contig-, you, you know, that kind of contains the broader thing of like, war is coming, potentially.

**Austin:** Yes. Yep. Yeah, I think so.

**Keith:** Now is the, is the, is the thing to think about, like, trying to get a B and a C plot out of these, or do we want them all to be big?

**Austin:** They should... they should all be big. They should, y'know, I don't think we're gonna have, we're not gonna end this by being like, "and we solved the Palisade crisis."

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** That one is going to continue. We are just going to figure out a way to resolve our safety from it. Y'know, maybe, maybe, part of the fact that we have been damaged recently, y'know, hey we won that fight, but we might not win those the next time, y'know? It was not as cut and dry, or maybe we just won't be able to pull on as many resources. But given that, we know that one won't resolve in [Austin laughs] finality, and that like, the Principality leaves Palisade and therefore stops threatening us permanently. Maybe we do want those other ones to be less severe than, or at least one of the other ones to be less severe than the might of a galaxy-wide empire [Austin laughs] is on our doorstep, y'know? Um, but! Y'know, I'm interested in other stuff.

**Keith:** Yeah.



**Austin:** And there's other stuff here that I had been thinking about. Um, but I wanna, let's, let's, let's, as a group, let's at least come up with a second one.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I don't wanna just... say.

**Keith:** I would like to bring something that I notice right away, which is, one of these has synergy potential with like 90% of this list.

**Austin:** Which is?

**Keith:** And I, I don't think that it's necessarily my favorite one as a one, as like, just in a vacuum, but the synergy potential of "residents have been disappearing and emerging days later as new members of a strange cult."

**Austin:** You just love that as a B-plot for \_anything\_ else we do.

**Keith [cross]:** I love that as-

**Sylvi [cross]:** Well, y'know...

**Keith:** So take that and also, "the scion of a powerful aristocratic family was just shot dead on our station and nobody knows why." [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Like, that's really good on its own, but then also, residents have disappeared?

**Austin [cross]:** Right. Instantly, right, right. "A weaver of the Strand-"

**Austin:** "A weaver of the Strand with incredible abilities and a long list of enemies is joining our community," \_and\_ there's a strange new cult? Yeah I get it, I see what you're saying.

**Sylvi:** We have to.

**Keith:** Right. "Something deep and ancient in the station stirs, and things are getting weird" \_and\_ [Ali laughs] "residents are disappearing and emerging days later as a strange new cult?!"

**Austin [cross]:** Yeah, okay. Adding "new cult."

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, I'll add it.

**Jack:** This is Keith's Riverdale writers' room [Austin and Keith laugh] instinct kicking in.

**Sylvi:** Oh my god. We can't. Like, I saw some shit about Riverdale recently, and I'm so confused.

**Austin** [cross]: It's so funny.

**Austin:** I gotta finish, I gotta catch up, I'm still like a season back and it's killing me.

**Keith:** I'm so far back, and I recently decided that I want to catch it back up.

**Sylvi:** I, same.

**Austin:** God, same. Big same.

**Sylvi** [laughing]: I heard that it just goes off the rails.

**Keith:** I quit when they were still flip-flopping about whether the D&D monster was real.

[1:00:00]

**Austin:** Yeah, I finished that season, I finished that season. But I feel like-

**Sylvi** [cross]: Yeah no at this point, you're way past that.

**Ali:** Yeah...

**Austin:** They've been to other realms of life at this point, is my understanding. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** This is what I, this is, that's what got, like I, I, they have just exploded the reality, and I am really interested in how they get from, y'know, we're at B, so from B to D, or whatever.

**Jack:** Just a yes or no answer please. Can Riverdale characters die, or have they transcended death by this point?

**Keith:** Both, I think.

**Sylvi:** Um, both.

**Austin:** It's both!

**Jack:** Okay! Sounds good!

**Sylvi:** I linked a spoilered thing, because I know some people might care about spoilers, but this is what I thought of, maybe.

**Austin:** So fucking funny. Oh my god.

**Jack:** Amazing.

**Austin:** It's so incredible. I, I, can I tell you I saw one just as ridiculous?

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it, and, and, different?

**Sylvi:** Yeah, no, this-

**Jack** [laughing]: From the same show.

**Austin:** So, I, yeah, uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** We're both friends with Ren, yeah. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** A weaver of the Strand with incredible abilities and a long list of enemies is joining our community, and?!

**Austin:** That's what I'm saying! [Sylvi and Keith laugh] I just wanna, okay, I'm gonna link another, another, another live show, or sorry, another Riverdale spoiler in our private chat. This doesn't have dialog, but it does just have text.

**Sylvi:** [sputters]

**Austin:** Uh-huh! Anyway.

**Sylvi:** Going all out.

**Austin:** Going all out.

**Sylvi:** And you know what, follows the trajectory of the real Archie comics, if you ask me.

**Austin:** Agreed. President Archie.

**Keith:** This is amazing.

**Austin:** Um. Does he get assassinated in the comics?

**Sylvi** [exasperated]: I don't know. I, I think, they probably...

**Austin:** I think he does. I think that that's true. Anyway.

**Sylvi:** Wait, yeah, no, Archie does die saving his one gay friend. [Ali laughs explosively]  
That, I remember that.

**Austin:** Kevin Keller.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I do, well I don't know if it is Kevin Keller, I think different name in the comics.

**Austin** [cross]: Oh, in the comics. You're not sure, that's, okay.

**Sylvi:** But yeah, I do remember when that happened.

**Austin:** Incredible. Um, alright, we need a third threat.

**Sylvi:** Well now we're talking about Riverdale, so I wanna be like, "and prom is tomorrow!" [All laugh]

**Austin:** We do have "star-crossed lovers from either side of the war are hiding out here [Sylvi laughs] while hunted by their superiors." God. Sylvi, why did yours and Dre's characters not just end up here instead of on that planet, from that Last Shooting game?

**Sylvi:** I mean, you know, they'll be back.

**Austin:** They'll be back, they'll be back.

**Sylvi:** They'll be messy.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** What if it's not like prom is tomorrow, but it's like, there's a big shipment day, so like... [Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** Ohh, I like that.

**Ali:** You know what I mean, like, it's gonna be a busy day at work, so everybody-

**Sylvi** [cross]: Oh, is there like...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** -better be on it.

**Sylvi:** There's like a big haul coming through or something. [Ali laughs]

**Austin** [cross]: Now what is it?

**Jack:** Yeah, I like this, but I would like to be specific about what it is, so we can start- what is coming?

**Austin** [cross]: Yeah, me too.

**Sylvi:** Is there like a major resupply thing that we have to do every so often, like is there, like, that maybe isn't the right direction we're going in here, but like, if we're talking about stuff that would be coming to, that's a lot of work.

**Keith:** If I could springboard that-

**Sylvi:** Yeah, go ahead.

**Keith:** -into one of the ones that's already in here, the um...

**Jack:** It's the cult again, isn't it? [Austin snorts, Keith laughs]

**Keith:** No, uh, "a rare valuable artifact was just discovered in our station's vaults and everyone wants it" except it's not in the vaults, it arrived on a truck.

**Austin:** \_And\_ there's a cult?!

**Keith:** And! [All laugh uproariously]

**Jack:** What are good things to arrive on a truck that are narratively interesting? Uh, the mail. A lot of animals...

**Austin** [cross]: A lot of one thing. Yeah, a lot of animals.

**Keith:** Mail is fun if we can really find some way to weird mail. Like whose mail, like-

**Sylvi** [cross]: Buddy, I do that every day. [Austin laughs]

**Austin:** I dunno, who's male to you?

**Sylvi** [laughing]: Damn, real gotcha question!

**Austin:** Uh-huh. [Austin laughs] Um, uh, hm-

**Jack:** Oranges!

**Austin:** Yeah, I was thinking the same thing, I almost said like one fruit, just thousands and thousands of tons of orange, y'know, oranges, or-

**Jack:** What if there has been a, like a, something has prevented, alright, okay.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Jack:** What I'm going to say is just going to sound so stupid, and we need to figure it out it together.

**Austin** [laughing]: Katie in the chat says, "a lot of watches," [Jack laughs] which is, ahhhhh, please everyone go listen to America's Playground, one of our best games ever. Anyway.

**Jack:** Okay. All the oranges in the Twilight Mirage are produced on one planet, and there has been some kind of a problem that has meant that the oranges- [Sylvi barely suppressing laughter throughout]

**Sylvi** [breathlessly]: Space Florida?

**Jack** [laughing]: Space Florida.

**Jack:** All the oranges have not been able to, but that means that there's now this convoy coming through of basically like the war rig from Mad Max, but for like every- but then why's it all coming through the Brink?

**Austin:** I don't know, this is, this is, this is, yeah, I, yes.

**Keith:** And why does everyone want it?

**Austin:** Well, what if it's, okay, can I-

**Jack** [cross]: They're oranges, Keith, bud.

**Austin:** Can a pitch a, can a pitch a way to make this... bigger, bigger than before? Um, what if it isn't-

**Keith:** They're blue.

**Austin:** They're blue oranges, one. Step one, they're blue oranges. [Sylvi laughs] Step two, they're leaving the Mirage. They're the first shipment going out into the Principality.

**Sylvi** [cross]: Ohhhhhh.

**Austin:** It's the first time in five hundred years internally, five thousand years externally, that something is leaving the Mirage. Where is it going? Is it going to help- maybe it's going to help the rebellion on Palisade.

**Keith:** Oof.

**Austin:** We're shipping oranges to Palisade. We're ship- but we have to make sure that they're decontaminated first, we have to make sure that they're camouflaged, or maybe we don't have to make sure of anything, it's just scary, y'know.

**Jack:** And the scale of the operation. Is this close enough, Ali, to that kind of-

**Austin** [cross]: Oh! What if it's not, okay, wait wait wait, sorry.

**Austin:** What if it isn't one big shipment coming. This is going in the opposite direction of one planet does it. What if blue oranges grow on every planet in the Mirage, and they're all coming, each one is sending a ship, and we have to load them all onto one ship, one bigger ship, do you know what I mean, it's like, here comes [laughing] seven planets' worth of oranges, all from a different ship, [straight] that then then have to get repacked, have to get cleaned and repacked and put on another bigger ship that's leaving the Mirage to go drop of to, to Millennium Break and the rebels at, in Palisade. Which I'm not even know that we all agree that we should be doing, maybe we shouldn't even be getting involved in this war.

**Sylvi:** So do we just have-

**Keith** [cross]: What's the part-

**Sylvi:** Oh go, go ahead.

**Keith:** What's the part that everyone wants. To leave?

**Sylvi** [confused]: The fruit?

**Austin:** Wait, everyone wants what?

**Ali** [laughing]: Wait, what?

**Keith:** Oh that's just part of the thing is that, everyone wants, and everyone wants it.

**Austin:** Wait, what are you talking about, "and everyone wants it?" Where is that coming from.

**Sylvi:** The, um, bit on the-

**Ali** [cross]: Oh, that was from the prompt.

**Sylvi:** The prompt that we...

**Austin:** Oh, what was the prompt, what did the prompt, oh, oh.

**Keith:** Well we started with a rare valuable artifact, and got to fruit.

**Sylvi** [cross]: Started off of.

**Austin:** Sorry, no.

**Keith:** But the end of that is, "a rare and valuable artifact is discovered and everyone wants it."

**Austin** [cross]: You, Keith, you started-

**Austin:** You started with a rare valuable artifact, Ali started with, what if we have a big day where we all have to work on something.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And you tied it to this.

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** I don't think that we jumped onboard the rare artifact, so much. We gave you the cults, okay? [Sylvi and Ali laugh]

**Keith:** That's fine, that's fine. Well, okay, well the thing, I guess the thing about "and everyone wants it" for me is that, like, a big shipment of oranges that is leaving doesn't feel like a threat.

**Austin:** It's not a threat, right. Sure. Um-

**Ali:** Well-

**Austin:** Go ahead, Ali.

**Ali:** My suggestion was just more something that would create traffic. Like a more than, like an above average amount of traffic.

**Austin** [cross]: So the threat is-

**Austin:** The threat is, there's too many people, there's too many people onboard and there's too much activity for- it feels like things are boiling over, it feels like there could be danger, that's great cover for spies to sneak in, that's great cover for some of those oranges to get poisoned, that's great cover for a cult to use the orange shipment to get out of here and spread among the various parts of the Mirage and also outside of the Mirage. It's just like, it's that, it's the Do The Right Thing, y'know, the week that's too hot,



y'know, the classic like, we're boiling over, there's too much activity. Everything feels like it's going to be bad.

**Jack:** Yeah. And there's all these oranges.

**Keith:** So the threat is that the guys at the pizza place are being assholes.

**Austin:** Are being real racist, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The threat is, the threat is, we normally only move X people through here, and now we're moving 5X people through here in one, in one-

**Jack:** Oh so they're people, not oranges?

**Austin:** No, but-

**Jack:** Are we done with the oranges?

**Austin:** No, no, no. They're people. Er, sorry, they're oranges. But oranges need to be moved by people, Jack.

**Ali:** Right.

**Jack:** That's true. I'm sorry, I was just, I was just tender because I had been looking up orange stats.

**Austin** [cross]: Tender's here? Tender's not here. [Keith wheezes]

**Jack:** I'd been looking up orange numbers to give us some sense of how many oranges we could be talking about, and I panicked 'cause I thought we were moving off oranges and all of my-

**Austin:** No, we're still on oranges. [Ali laughs] We're on blue oranges.

**Jack:** -research. Okay. I just want to tell you that in a year-

**Keith:** Amateur dietician released all of the oranges that William Shakespeare ate.  
[Austin laughs]

**Jack:** In one year, Florida exports about thirteen billion, eight hundred and sixty million individual oranges.

**Austin:** How many?

**Jack:** That's forty-seven-

**Keith:** I think that's plenty.

**Jack:** They export thirteen billion, eight hundred and sixty million oranges. That's seventy-seven million boxes of oranges; each box is about ninety pounds worth of oranges. So, we got more than thirteen billion oranges, 'cause if this is the Twilight Mirage's entire orange production, I assume that's bigger than Florida.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Here's how I wrote it, I have to, I have to trim it down. "A massive shipment of blue oranges has pushed the Brink to the brink. There are too many people to keep track of, to safely house, and to keep well fed." Right? It's like if you're working in the diner, it's packed, right? If you're working in security, there are too many people here, right?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There are lines, you're running out-

**Jack:** It's hot.

**Austin:** It's hot, exactly.

**Jack:** Everybody keeps getting grasped by the vines.

**Austin:** Right, right. Exactly. [pause] Huge shipment, uh... and there truly, I don't think that there is enough space for people to like, this is a multi-day operation, and it's just like, it's, it's, a lot of people have to sleep on uncomfortable surfaces, you know? Okay. That's threats! "Present." There we go. Alright.

**Jack:** And there's a strange new cult!

**Austin:** And there's a strange new cult! "Claim a board and enter your name and pronouns." So if we, if we hop down... where does this go? That does not go where I wanted it to, alright. So let me, let's just hop on down to... that's Characters. Here we go. Player Boards. Um, feel free to unfollow me while y'all do this. Let's use the first, let's use all the first five, y'know, the first five- I guess, use whichever ones you want, you can pick whatever color speaks to you.

**Jack:** Does anybody have any strong feeling about which of these characters they want to take?

**Austin:** We're not taking characters yet, we're just taking boards first.

**Jack:** Oh! Okay, sorry, our names and pronouns, I see.

**Austin:** Boards first. Our names and pronouns, yes.

**Sylvi:** Um...

**Ali:** Oh, we're choosing- oh, okay.

**Austin:** We're picking the board first. Just the, the, the-

**Ali:** I'm calling green.

**Austin:** I took purple.

**Jack:** I'm calling blue.

**Sylvi:** I'll go... I'll go yellow, 'cause I don't wanna recognize any oranges that aren't blue.

**Austin:** Good call. [someone snorts]

**Keith:** I did red. Red's my favorite color.

**Austin:** It's a good color.

**Ali:** Mmmm!

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** Oh you put, oh.

**Sylvi:** Oh wait, here.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah I don't know why it's... here twice like this. But, I'll type "Facilitator" over here. Let me know when y'all are done and I'll go back to presenting.

[long pause]

**Austin:** This is, are we, are we done?

**Jack:** I'm done.

**Keith:** I'm ready, yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvi:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Okay, uh, can you refollow?

**Keith:** Yeah, we can just click on you. That still works.

**Austin:** Oh, okay. Nice. Awesome. Alright, so if you take a look at these, there is- apparently this says we'll talk about these in a bit, so maybe I should not have typed anything in there. "Click and hold to see sheet titles and move them," okay, that's good, "sheets are color-coded for easy reference." We'll end up slotting character sheets here and aspect sheets here, you'll learn about those in a moment. And we've a notes section, and we have some token sections. Um, uh, once we start playing, it'll look like this. Like that one here that says Jack. So, uh-

**Jack:** That's my name!

**Austin:** That's your name.

**Sylvi:** Oh!

**Austin:** Aspect sheets. "Read the aspect introductions aloud. The aspects each have a thematic introduction. You should take turns reading them aloud. You can also play the musical themes while you read." We are not, we are not playing those themes, as I said, but good to know. They're good, people should go listen to them. And then, "each player will choose an aspect and then choose options for both creation prompts." The options are on sticky notes, too, and we can move it to the board. So, let's just take a peek at these. Ali, can you read this one, "The Interstellar War."

**Ali:** Um, yeah. "A conflict without end. Two powers have been at war longer than most can remember. It began with ideological differences and border disputes but quickly escalated to a galaxy-wide schism. Now we live amid an open, near inescapable galactic warfare. Almost every planet, asteroid, and construct in the galaxy has allied, willingly or otherwise, with both sides. The fact that our station remained neutral is a miracle, one that requires constant vigilance and sometimes desperate action."

**Austin:** Sounds bad to me. I don't know.

**Ali:** I... query.

**Austin:** Please.

**Ali** [laughing]: Sorry, I don't wanna, like, I don't want to stop this.

**Austin**: Uh-huh?

**Ali**: Does, does our, does our, does our oranges plan make us not neutral? Or is that sort of the tension of the game right now, right?

**Austin**: I think that's prob- I think that's the, it's not our plan.

**Ali**: Okay.

**Austin**: It's a plan that's moving through us, right?

**Ali**: Oh, sure sure sure. Okay, right, yeah.

**Austin**: This is what I mean, right, like that's part of the tension can be, "we shouldn't even be fucking doing this, this is gonna get us killed, they just attacked us. They attacked us before we even did anything, you don't think they're gonna attack us again?" Y'know? Et cetera.

**Ali**: Okay.

**Austin**: So you know, sometimes you're a truck stop, and trucks are moving stuff you don't want through ya.

**Jack**: Oranges.

**Austin**: Oranges. Uh...

**Ali**: Political oranges.

**Austin**: Political oranges, you're right.

**Jack**: Oh-h-h-h, the worst kind. [Ali laughs]

**Austin**: Keith. Keith, can you read "The Station Itself?"

**Keith**: Uh, sure. [pause] Where'd the, oh okay, sorry, I was just a little zoomed in. Um... this duct tape works anyway, anywhere it fit?

**Austin**: Yeah, it just, yeah, yep.

**Ali**: Mm-hmm.

**Keith**: Okay. "We did not build this station, we found it. As such, the life support

systems are a capricious jumble of found, built, stolen, and traded machines. Often we feel more like marriage counselors than engineers, dousing little fires, teasing apart knotted cables and arguing with our sometimes willful assistant. We keep things running, but so much of the station remains enigmatic and strange. Whenever we search for answers, we end up with more questions."

**Austin:** Uh... Jack, can you read "The Markets?"

**Jack:** "The Markets. The shape of wealth. On the station, we live and work collectively. From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs. Sometimes we argue, from squabbles over little luxuries to schisms over vital resources, but we always figure it out. However, as we grow, we've started to glint in the eyes-" "However, as we grow, we've started to glint in the eyes of the galactic financiers." Um, Austin, I'm afraid your name, hang on, I can make your nametag disappear.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Jack:** Oh, thank you.

**Austin:** I'll just move it.

**Jack:** "They see an untapped market ripe for investment and profit. Worse still, some of their early ventures have solved problems we've been struggling with for years."

**Austin:** Mm. Hate that. Hate that about a market.

**Jack:** Hate it when the financiers arrive and smooth things over.

**Austin:** Fuckers.

**Jack:** And there's never any cost. [Austin laughs]

**Austin:** Sylvi.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** This is "The Scum and Villainy."

**Sylvi:** "Like moths to a flame. This is pretty much the only populated place in the galaxy that's not an active warzone, a nightmarish police state or a desperate, destitute backwater. The problem is, this unique situation makes us a haven for unsavory characters, the sort found in every shady port, seedy bar and dingy alleyway in the galaxy. There's an implicit agreement written in sly nods and stolen glances that they live with us as equals. Let's just hope they don't decide to change the terms."

**Austin:** "The Unaffiliated. A sanctuary, a statement, a home. Like a flame to parchment, the war consumes utterly as it burns. In its wake, it leaves scorched cities, ashen fields and broken people. Our home is a refuge from the raging conflict, and for all our differences, we are united in rebuking the war. Whether you have fled a ruined world, an oppressive regime or something worse, we welcome you with open arms. As our reputation grows, though, we can't help but stress over tallies and charts as we consider the limits of our hospitality." And Ali. This is "The Lambent Strand," which we have a decision to make after you read. [Ali laughs] To make about after you read it.

**Ali:** "The ties that bind. We consider our lives ruled by complex but comprehensible processes. Our tangled biologies have, for the most part, been reduced to a large web of chemical equations. Our machines perform tasks so well that we consider them unremarkable. Our societies can be classified, segmented, and predictable. But in this world, there is still a phenomenon beyond explanation. Miracles, even. Some people believe it's even possible to weave those threads for your own ends..."

**Austin:** Mmmm.

**Ali:** Dot dot dot.

**Austin:** Dot dot dot. So... [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** Dot dot dot.

**Austin:** So, this is, this is, in this game is called the lambent strand, a glowing thread weaving every life together into a great tapestry. And like, we already talk about strati having access to the Strand in our setting, right? We just did a Lancer game literally about this. But I also think we could interpret this as being the Mirage itself. Um, uh, so if I delete this...

**Jack:** Yeah. I think that is what I am feeling more.

**Austin:** I think so too.

**Jack:** I think that we... these are, uh, for the most part, and in all sorts of complicated ways, these are Mirage people, and I think while it would be interesting to tell a story where this magic was- [aside] "Magic." -was Strand magic or was Strand power and capability, I think we might be doing ourselves a disservice by not taking advantage of the Mirage as an entity and as a setting.

**Sylvi** [cross]: Me too.

**Austin** [cross]: Agreed.

**Austin:** Um, so, some clarity on what these are, which will help us pick which ones we all start with here. As I said before, this is a game without any GMs. We all, we all take control of these aspects. We all begin with one, but also if we ever want to pick up a different one that hasn't been claimed, we can put ours down and pick up the new one. Aspects have moves the way character do, and they can help shape a scene, right?

[1:20:00]

**Austin:** So, so, I'm gonna delete these summaries really quick so we can get a closer look at these. We're all gonna start with one, like I said. So for instance, we could be having a scene of two people, you know, hanging out, talking, and then whoever has the interstellar war aspect could say, it could introduce a new character into the scene and it's a soldier in dire need of assistance, you know, a ship on fire comes into dock, right? Or the player who is in control of the station itself could trigger an ominous countdown. All those, y'know, those screens that have the weird signals that Sylvi mentioned earlier could just start counting down. And that's all up to whoever's currently controlling a given aspect. So, to go back to where we were moments ago. Each of us is going to pick one aspect and then create options for both of the creation prompts. You can see here, the creation prompts are the two sides and two differences. So for us, obviously, we actually know that there are three sides in this war. It is the Pact, the Curtain, and Millennium Break slash y'know the resistance on Palisade. But differences could be about, uh, god, what a great one is "their colonial excuses."

**Jack:** It's so good.

**Austin:** Fantastic. Love it. Uh, but their interpretation of the text, their views on tradition, et cetera. Whereas the differences, or sorry, the two directives of the station could be to protect that which grows within it, versus to prepare for the return of the makers, et cetera. So, does anyone feel strongly about an aspect?

**Ali:** Can I grab the unaffiliated?

**Austin:** You sure can.

**Ali:** Thank you.

**Austin:** Just drag it over. It should be, you should be able to drag it. Can you?

**Jack:** Can I grab the station?

**Austin:** Ope! Wait. I think if you click, Ali, if you click on the, one second, here's what I'm gonna do.



**Ali:** The border. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

**Austin** [cross]: The border. Yeah. Exactly.

**Austin:** I'm gonna, or, I'm not gonna lock them because you wanna write them, but yes! Yes, Jack, you can grab the station.

**Sylvi:** Hmm...

[long pause]

**Austin:** Uh... I'm torn between the interstellar war and the lambent strand.

**Sylvi:** Those are also the two that I'm torn between. [Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** Keith, how 'bout you?

**Keith:** I'm good, I'm torn between the Markets and Scum and Villainy.

**Austin:** Okay, so you can have whichever you want. Sylvi, I'm happy to defer. I'm happy to go whichever one you don't want.

**Sylvi:** I'm... [sighs] But see, the Lambent Strand puts me right in the cult stuff and that's when I'm like "mmmmmm..."

**Austin:** It does. This is true! Yeah, do it. Do it, do it, do it.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I'm gonna do it. Okay.

**Austin:** Given some things I know.

**Sylvi:** Woah! Okay, I don't know how to drag this very well.

**Austin:** Grab where it says "The Lambent Strand" up top.

**Sylvi:** Oh! Ooh, okay.

**Austin:** That's like the entire frame, basically.

**Sylvi** [enlightened]: Oh, okay.

**Keith:** See, that's funny, because I'm also like... I can, I'm gonna, I'm gonna pick one of these, and that's gonna become the thing-

**Austin:** Your culty thing?

**Keith:** That's gonna become part of the cult thing.

**Austin:** I mean, it can, yeah-

**Jack:** Thinking about the cult again, bud? [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** You will both get to-

**Jack** [laughing]: "Thinking about thos cult."

**Sylvi:** Yeah!

**Austin:** You will both get to play your moves from your sheets, y'know?

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah. Um...

[long pause]

[transcribers change here]

**Austin:** And then go ahead and choose your your little options from the set, if you have questions about it, you know...

**Ali:** Yeah, I do have a question.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** Um, so my, uh, one of my prompts here is to name an upcoming event.

**Austin:** Ooh. Sure.

**Ali:** And I was wondering do we want to come in like on the cusp of like the orange thing, or should like I be introducing like an even different future event that is tied with like...

**Austin:** Either/or.

**Ali:** Rivals, if you know what I mean.

**Austin:** I. Um go with your heart, truly.

**Ali:** Okay. [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh, you went with the Unaffiliated right?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Um.

**Sylvi:** When my thing refers to the "we" here, is that everyone on the ship or just my specific character?

**Austin:** Let me see. Where is the...

**Sylvi:** It says, "choose two ways we see it" in referring to the Strand stuff.

**Austin:** Um, I think that that is... I think that is everybody in the game.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** Because it is not—

**Keith:** I just —

**Austin:** Uh-huh?

**Keith:** ... Finished reading the pre-written list of the major gangs.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The last one is... The Orchard Syndicate.

**Austin:** Ugh, and we're fuckin in it babyyyy!

**Sylvi:** Oh my god.

**Jack:** Oh my god, the fuckin CHOAM Company except instead of Spice they're just interested in oranges.

**Austin:** Oh, that's so funny. I do —

**Sylvi:** Okay, I just wanted to make sure that if I picked two, like, very different things it wouldn't make my character just like super...

**Austin:** No, so, okay, so as a reminder, this has nothing to do with your character.

**Sylvi:** Cool. Cool cool cool.

**Austin:** This is 100% just about the world, the game. This is an aspect of our game that you will be the GM for, effectively, right, you will be making decisions, you will be the person who is saying, um, you know, again, when they play these moves, introducing a new set of characters. If I say "hey, we really need"— you know, if we're doing a scene

and I'm like "oh, could there be a cultist here" you could pull one of these names from the weavers here.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** Not our weavers, different set of weavers here. [laughs]

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Et cetera, right? Uh, uh, so just like things to pull from there, basically.

**Sylvi:** Okay cool. [pause]

**Jack:** I wrote down — uh so I'm I'm um picking the station assistant. Um, and the, the sort of the book is talking a lot about this as though it's an AI entity,

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Um but uh the Twilight Mirage uh has different relationships with AI —

**Austin:** Totally.

**Jack:** And with synthetics and with humans than this, than this book does! Uh, which is fine. So instead the station assistant is, uh, an organization called Brink Proxy, uh, which is a sort of live, ever-changing networked committee of members who have volunteered to take on the higher-level runnings of the station. Um. They're not necessarily the station's bosses, they're almost more like the role of the station's assistant, you know. I'm picturing people almost like, uh, people working in old switchboards moving wires around, routing calls, checking to see if things have got enough water, um, taking a break because it's their cousin's birthday that day and they have to go down to the place and see that, so their friend Sue has stepped in. She was on Brink Proxy three years ago so she knows how to do it. Um. And the first thing I wrote for the first directive was, um, what did I write, I'm, squiggles is heading out of it. Uh, "ensure the well-being of all the Brink's residents," but then I remembered that we're in Twilight Mirage so I rewrote it as "bread, water, and rest."

**Austin:** [laughing] Uh-huh!

**Jack:** Uh, and then their second directive is "maintain the upkeep and development of the station." You know, do we have enough room, is something breaking, is something falling apart. And like all, uh, community efforts, including well-meaning community efforts, it doesn't work all the time, people are stretched thin, there's bickering, there are,

uh, misallocation of resources. Um, but this is the Brink's, uh, answer to like "what if we had Siri, who knew everything and answered all our questions?"

**Austin:** [laughs] And it was a group of people. Right.

**Jack:** Who have volunteered for this, yeah.

**Austin:** Uh, presumably that includes both organic and synthetic people, right?

**Jack:** Oh yeah, totally! And you know they're, they're, they are...

**Austin:** But there are AI routines as part of Brink Proxy but they're one type of thing that's part of a group, effectively.

**Jack:** Yeah. Absolutely. And they also, you know, they're using their, their skills that they have. They might be able to crunch numbers impossibly quickly or they might be able to, you know.

**Austin:** Right. Love it.

**Jack:** I don't know...

**Austin:** Um. Okay.

**Keith:** We can delete these stickies, right?

**Austin:** Yep we totally can. Once you're done with them. Just click it and delete it. God I love the art in this just so much!

**Jack:** So good.

**Austin:** Someone, I wanna say it was Tom Whitney in the chat, mentioned uh Citizen Sleeper in relation to this game, and I think that there's lots of overlap emotionally between those, between this and that. Um.

**Jack:** Um Jack Morrison — sorry, Jack Morrison — Jack Harrison, uh, and his studio Mousehole Press, uh, their art direction is just consistently extraordinary. Um they recently Kickstarted and are working on a game called The Slow Knife, which is a game of wretched scoundrels and patient revenge. Uh, it's a card-based story game uh "inspired by stories like The Count of Monte Cristo where a simple death is too good for all those years the villains took from their victims." And it involves, like, making a conspiracy pinboard, and if you get the chance, I would check out the art for the game The Slow Knife because it's just extraordinary.

**Austin:** Sounds good! All right, um. Let's, uh, let's just keep moving and when we're done we can go over — eh, you know let's go over aspects now. Uh Keith!

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** What did you, what is, talk talk me through your choices here.

**Keith:** Okay, so, uh.

**Austin:** Oh, you have two — [laughs] okay, I see, this is interesting.

**Keith:** I picked two gangs and their reputations, the first one, of course, is the Orchard Syndicate.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Jack:** Hell yeah!

**Keith:** Uh and I've decided that they are weird.

**Austin:** Oh, they're weirdos.

**Keith:** Yeah I... I I I think weird was not an obvious choice...

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** For the Orchard Syndicate.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Um and so that's what I want to see. I I want a little bit of mystery to my orange, uh, and I want my orange gang—

**Jack:** Word.

**Keith:** To be strange fellows.

**Jack:** Now I have a question.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Traditionally uh oranges are grown in groves and apples are grown in orchards—

**Austin:** Well these are blue.

**Jack:** Is this part of why they're weird?

**Austin:** They're blue oranges, Jack.

**Jack:** Oh, they're blue oranges,

**Keith:** They're blue oranges.

**Jack:** Which are grown in orchards, right, I see.

**Austin:** Yeah yeah yeah. C'mon.

**Sylvi:** The blorchard.

**Jack:** Yeah, sorry, I should have — the blorchard. [laughs quietly]

[Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Right. And and I think, and just to cover my bases, to presume that the Orchard Syndicate would solely involve themselves with a singular fruit,

**Jack:** Right.

**Keith:** Uh, is nonsense.

**Austin:** Can I can I uh can I spoil a Realis thing that's making me laugh a lot right now?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Go for it.

**Austin:** Um one of the factions in Realis, which is a space fantasy, science fantasy epic weird game, is the Farmer's Guild, and I'll just read the description I wrote for them. "Do not be deceived by their simple name. While the syndicate does have agricultural aims, they go far beyond wanting better crop yields and to ends that can only be described as grand and druidic. They serve a singular and sapient sapling, an arboreal fiend which hopes to reach its cosmic branches through the moons. In order to meet such a goal, they have emerged as the single greatest criminal enterprise across the thousand moons."

**Jack:** Sick.

**Keith:** *And* residents have been disappearing emerging days later as new members of a strange cult?!

[Jack and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** Listen, there is something very — there's just something very nice about criminal gardeners, it turns out. I just — we just love 'em.

**Jack:** I don't want to get, I don't want to get into a sidetrack but if you have a moment you really should look up uh lemon mafias, uh, citrus mafias in Italy.

**Austin:** Will do, absolutely. Um, all right, who is next with their, who's over here, uh, Ali!

**Keith:** Oh I also have a second gang, it's the Broken Circle and they're zealous.

**Austin:** Zealous, the Broken Circle, okay. Mm. Ali, tell me about your choices for the Unaffiliated.

**Ali:** Um yeah sure. So uh my uh upcoming event is the Cycle End Feast. Um, I was trying to think of something that was like more interesting than year and I think cycle is one of those words that like...

**Austin:** Yeah, cycles are, yeah. Mm-hm.

**Ali:** Yeah. Um and I — like, if it's tied to like a mechanical thing on the the structure of like, oh well when the the the battery runs out, right, [laughs] you know what I mean, like, we have to like, recharge it but we also celebrate by, like, doing this thing.

**Austin:** Ooh, that's fun. Yeah.

**Ali:** Um, and I I wanted it to be a separate upcoming event from the, the orange thing so it could be this sort of like well, we're just gonna get through this and then there's the feast coming. Um, so, that's the vibe for that. Um and then um, choose a naming, uh, system I went with numbered sections. Um, colored sections was one of the, the suggested prompts here and I was like that's interesting but I don't know that everybody experiences color the same way. Um, so I went with numbers.

**Austin:** What, so what do they mean by a naming system there?

**Ali:** Um I think the the the the way that it's — it's like, um, the the idea of the card is like, um, people who are coming here but who are also finding community in this space, so I think it's sort of like um the way that we define like different neighborhoods and things like that. Like, um some of the other prompts were like "the same as our hometown" and I didn't want to do that because like I don't think that everyone here would have like a fondness for their hometown—

**Austin:** Right, sure.

**Ali:** To like pull that over, so, um, that's kind of the vibe, yeah.



**Austin:** So that means that we have like, um, that means that we have, this like a classic like, uh, Zone One or or whatever—

**Ali:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** Type of organization for the Brink.

**Ali:** Mm-hm.

**Austin:** For where places are and people could be like "oh yeah I'm from, I'm from Zone Six" or whatever, right?

**Ali:** Right exactly or like, oh you have to go get all of those...

**Austin:** Right.

**Ali:** Cherries or whatever they're — I'm sorry I'm just thinking of other fruit—

**Austin:** We're in fruit zone, yeah.

**Ali:** [laughs] I feel like you gotta go over to Zone Eight or whatever, yeah.

**Austin:** Amazing. Um, Jack. Do you wanna... we already talked about this, right? Yeah, we did it already — yeah, you did yours.

**Jack:** Yeah we've kind of talked about this. Brink Proxy, crew of volunteers and uh they want uh to ensure bread water and rest for all residents of the Brink and maintain the upkeep and development of the station!

**Austin:** Amazing. All right, Sylvi. Tell me about the Lambent Strand!

**Sylvi:** Yeah so I did message you something on Discord.

**Austin:** Oh, I should check, I should check. Imma check Discord.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Sorry. There we go. Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah.

**Sylvi:** Okay, cool. I'll add that as the second name then. Um. So uh I named — the two other names for this are uh "the Fervor" or "Devotion". Um it's sort of like a, this this is this a separate power than what we're used to seeing as the Strand, right? Is that —

**Austin:** Yeah, we said that it's it's —

**Sylvi:** That is how I've been interpreting it.

**Austin:** We've been interpreting this as being something a little more Mirage-leaning?

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Um, in the sense that like, we — right now I think historically in Palis — in the era of Palisade and the Divine Cycle that we are, the Strand is really closely connected to uh the Hypha and I wouldn't want to just reuse that here. We know that the Twilight Mirage has its own set of pseudo-magical, more than just, more than just, uh, material, you know, outcome, uh, thing happening here, in line with what this — in line with "a glowing thread weaving every life together into a great tapestry". But it could also be — so it could be that style of like it's the stuff of the Mirage that lets people do wild stuff. It can also be Divine-related, since Divines are also doing that. I mean, looking at your moves, your moves are things like "manifest a troubling omen in the environment" and "unleash a blast of cosmic power" [laughs]

**Sylvi:** Hell yeah.

**Austin:** Or "offer strength at a great personal cost", right? So.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Um —

**Austin:** So you — what were those two names again?

**Sylvi:** The Fervor.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** And Devotion.

**Austin:** [knowingly] Oh, okay!

**Sylvi:** And like when —

**Austin:** Uh, real quick, just wanna check something. Um, residents have been disappearing, emerging days later as members of a new strange cult. Got it, got it, got it, got it.

**Sylvi:** Yes. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Cool.

**Sylvi:** Um, mm-hm! And the two ways we see it are "a rising divine power" —

**Austin:** Ah!

**Sylvi:** And "an unsettling presence". So.

**Austin:** Okay. So then it does feel like this is then something sp — feels different. Ooh! Can I pitch a thing, maybe?

**Sylvi:** Yes! Please, please please please.

**Austin:** In terms of why it's unsettling, is, we've talked about this being like, right now, the Brink is at its furthest away from the Mirage, it's at its like the edge of the Mirage, um, where where maybe here some of that Mirageness is not normally as strong as as it is when you're deep — when we're deep in, but something has maintained a lot of that power, here. Right, like, um, maybe it could be as simple as just like, um [laughs] — this is very silly. When you're deep in the Mirage, you don't have to charge your phone ever. But we — because the Mirage just powers it. But out here, you have to make sure to plug in your phone at night so it recharges. [laughs] But right now, no one has to do that. And it's like, that's not right! Something's changing here. There is something — is it the Mirage,

**Sylvi:** Moving in the Mirage. Yeah,

**Austin:** Is it a rising divine power, is it an unsettling presence, what is the thing that's keeping my phone charged at night?

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Um and that's like a small example, but that sort of thing could be part of why there is an unsettling presence for this thing that we normally think of as being...

**Sylvi:** That is kind of what I was thinking it would do anyway, so that works out great.

**Austin:** Cool. Amazing. Um, great! Okay! And then I'm last, I'm the Interstellar War. Uh, I've named three sides: The Pact of Necessary Venture, the Curtain of Divinity, and Millennium Break. Uh the two differences between them all is "their colonial excuses" and "their vision of the future". To be clear, I think we've done a pretty good job of setting up Millennium Break as a non-colonial or an anti-colonial project. We know that their involvement on Palisade is explicitly invited and coalitional and built around a movement from people on the ground that we met back in our Wagon Wheel game.

**Keith:** It works for two of the three!

**Austin:** But but I also think that it is, it is, I think all the things I just said could also be interpreted as colonial excuses, right, that like if you are f — it is, it is a, it is very easy to go from "we're here to help you" to, um, "we're in charge here," and that will always remain a threat for Millennium Break as long as they are intervening in someone else's conflict, y'know? Um, uh, that's always slippery. I think it's a much less — I think it's, I don't think it's slippery at all to say that the Pact of Necessary Venture and the Curtain of Divinity just straight up are colonial powers. That's very clearly, that's what they are. Um they're here to do that explicitly, uh, the Pact of Necessary Venture's colonial excuse is of course something about civilization and reform and protection and lifting your — and spreading democracy and lifting your way of life. And the Curtain's, uh, uh, you know, Kesh and Nideo's excuse is is fundamentally, "oh, it was ours already. This is, this was historically our, our territory. We never ceded this. Uh, you know, check — just check the texts, this was always, this was where we founded."

**Keith:** We have the deed!

**Austin:** We have the deed. Exactly. And then the second difference is their vision of the future. To learn more about the vision of the future that separates the Pact of Necessary Venture, Curtain of Divinity and Millennium Break, you should listen to PARTIZAN! [slight laugh] A season about competing visions of the future. And also, stick around for PALISADE, which will be doing the same. Um. Okay. Presentation mode. Presentation mode. Okay, the characters. Read the character introductions aloud. The character roles also have thematic introductions. Read them aloud with the musical themes. They are also written on sticky notes. We're each going to choose a character role, uh, and then we'll we'll do the same thing we just did, filling our name and pronouns out, um, replacing blanks to complete our bio, uh, and then deleting, uh, the notes like we did last time. Um, so. Uh. I forget who was next in reading order, so Sylvi, can you read "the Source"?

**Sylvi:** Okay. Who is the Source? On a typical 24-hour cycle, spacers can expect to be reliably provided with breathable air, tolerable temperatures, potable water and some kind of dull grayish sustenance marketed as food.

**Austin:** No, we have blue oranges, thank you.

**Sylvi:** We have blue oranges. "Some kind of blue orangey sustenance marketed as food. Anything else they'll have to figure out themselves. [laughs] You have built out a wide network of suppliers both on and off the station, whether operating out of a relatively legitimate shopfront or whispered deals in back alleys and bustling bars. You can almost certainly get what they need."

[1:40:00]

**Sylvi:** "That is, so long as they can afford your prices."

**Austin:** Mm. So this is, uh, just, just like peeking ahead a little bit here, um, this character has moves about offering contraband, for instance, or, uh, turning a hostile confrontation into an opportunity, or pissing off one of your suppliers. This could be someone who works for an orange syndicate, for instance, I can imagine that very easily.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** Um. All right. Uh, Jack, do you want to read the Heart?

**Jack:** Absolutely. The Heart. Uh, "who is the Heart? We spend every day on an artificial construct far from sunshine's warmth or the chorus of birdsong. For all the freedom our efforts have earned, it's easy to feel caged, isolated or even trapped. You work hard to make station life more tolerable, even enjoyable, using your space to provide the community with valuable services and hospitality, but you also struggle with a troubled history forever haunting your thoughts and sometimes causing real issues when the past refuses to stay buried."

**Austin:** Mm. Interesting.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Keith:** Night mayor.

**Austin:** That's, yeah, uh-huh. Uh, Keith, do you wanna read the wrench?

**Keith:** You got it! "Who is the Wrench? On the station, everything from the air you breathe to the food you eat needs cold hard technology to operate. If these systems malfunction, things can break bad pretty quickly. Fortunately for us, you're here fixing, servicing, and improvising. You keep the crucial life support systems operating almost entirely on your own, but one day you won't be able — [clunking noise] sorry. But one day you won't be here anymore, so you're going to make a plan. You've taken on an apprentice, someone... new" — Jack, could you move your —

**Jack:** Oh, sorry!

**Keith:** That's okay.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** I can't see that stuff at all.

**Keith:** Oh, Ali, could you also move yours?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** [laughing] Sylvi — could you move —

[Everyone laughs loudly]

**Keith:** So, Sylvi, I don't know if you're all in the same spots,

**Austin:** We're not. I don't...

**Keith:** But Sylvi moved it to exactly where Ali and Jack moved off of.

**Ali:** [laughing] Uh-huh...

**Keith:** Uh, "you've taken on an apprentice, someone new to shoulder your burden. Training them will be your final and most challenging task."

**Austin:** There we go. All right. Uh. Dududu. Uh, Ali, do you want to read the Signal?

**Ali:** Yeah. Uh, oop— most f... [clears throat] "Most folks are content with honest good work, good company and simple pleasures. Most folks don't know they're born. You're different. Ever driven, moving forward, you want something big — you have something big you want to make happen. You may be cruising over neon lit drinks, making an impassioned speech to a station official, or protesting against injustice in the station hallways. The plan ahead might be bumpy, but through your politics, art, and activism you'll tell a story and perhaps make a little dent in the universe."

**Austin:** Mm. Mm-hm.

**Ali:** Hm.

**Austin:** Um, "the Monitor. Um. Most of the time, this place operates as an organic system, a harmonious mesh" — oh, the Mesh is what we called it, remember? Anyway.

**Keith:** I remember.

**Ali:** Oh yeah.

**Sylvi:** Sure.

**Austin:** "A harmonious mesh of people and goods flowing through the docks, hallways, bars and homes on the station. From within this tangled entity, it's impossible for any one person to see the station as a whole. But you're not within it. You operate from above, staring down with blinking cameras and whispered observations as the currents of activity below. Uh, ah — as the currents of activity below. Uh, you alone can see the big picture, the trends, the warning signs, the grave dangers." Uh and back around, Sylvi, can you read the Shadow?

**Sylvi:** "Who is the Shadow? Ooh. There's a whole galaxy outside of this little station. Corporations, criminal enterprises, power brokers and interstellar superpowers all compete for resources and advantages across the stars. You are an agent of one of these forces and you have been given an important mission to undertake. It could be something relatively innocent like intelligence gathering, or it could be as drastic as sabotage or assassination, but in this strange, hopeful place your mission and your morals are going to clash like never before."

**Austin:** Mm.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** All right, so. We, if I can back up here really quick, we are going to choose one of those roles each and then we'll choose some options to complete our profile. Uh, "your character role has a profile with a set of prompts to fill in, like things like name or look. Choose options from the corresponding list to fill in your profile. If a prompt appears multiple times, for instance, "when you first see me you'll probably notice my [look], [look] and [look]", choose multiple times from the list." Once you've completed your profile you can delete the orange notes. "If you're ever unsure about what an option means, ask the table, look it up online, or just have it mean whatever you find most interesting." And then at that point we'll add our hangouts / space to the station map, which is, uh, I want to say above us, right? It's it's — yeah, it's on, it's over here — oh we already have some stuff filling in. Good, amazing. Um do people have strong feelings at this point about —

**Sylvi:** I would like to be the Shadow.

[Austin laughs]

**Jack:** Oh! I'll fight you!

**Keith:** I'm leaning Heart.

**Jack:** [amused] No, you can— you can take the Shadow.

**Sylvi:** Thank you. [slight laugh]

**Austin:** I'm deleting these orange things — let me, let me actually just go through a, um, one of them to to give you like the br —actually, let's go, let's talk about who wants what. So yeah, so, Shadow, Sylvi, no—

**Sylvi:** Jack, if you, if you also want it, like, we can figure it out, it's just that was the one that immediately was like, oh, that would be fun! Um.

**Jack:** Do you wanna, do you wanna toss a coin? We could...

[Ali laughs]

**Sylvi:** ...Sure?

**Jack:** No, you, you play the Shadow. I'll I'll I'll figure out, I'll figure out another one.

**Sylvi:** Okay, thank you.

**Austin:** Any other strong feelings?

**Ali:** Um, I'm a little tied between the Monitor and the Source, um. But.

**Austin:** Okay. Let me, uh, let's let's take a look at, I want to show y'all like what the classes mean here, really quick, so I'm going to move these off just so we can peek. Um, so for instance, there's the — you can — the profile, it's not surprising here, my name; my species; you'll notice my look, look, look; I wear style, style; et cetera. You know that type of stuff. Every character, every play uh playbook has three types of moves. Basic moves that are shared by everybody, those are: take action, leaving yourself vulnerable; speak openly and honestly with someone; and explore the scene and ask questions. You can always do those moves. Strong moves, which require you to spend a token, so for the Monitor, which again is the prudent individual quietly observing the station populus. Definitely a member of, uh, Brink Proxy, imo. Um, I'm, I shouldn't say that, I'm not picking the character. Anyway. Uh, their strong moves are spend a token to: manipulate subsystems to assist or impede; dispatch a capable agent under your command; reveal a contingency plan at a critical moment; broadcast a message to the entire station directing the masses towards dutiful action. And their weak moves, which are weak because they put them in trouble, will gain them a token.

**Ali:** [intrigued] Ohh.

**Austin:** And those are: tell a dangerous lie instead of admitting you don't have the answer; treat someone like a data point instead of a person; discover that a situation is



worse than predicted; or show the limits of your power in the real world. On top of that, uh, every player or every playbook has a set of things that they're supposed to play to find out. So, for instance, the Monitor's are: are you a guardian, a voyeur, or a tyrant; can you convince others to heed your warnings; and which parts of the station are hidden from you? You'll end up tying, I think, one of these to one of our threats, as like a kind of a prompt to kick things off. You have, you have literal, literal scene prompts that you can pull from as just a way to be like, oh, I don't know what I want to do, so for instance the Monitor one can be like, observing from afar, debating and — debating end and means, securing part of a plan. So the types of things you might want to do as a Monitor, and finally every playbook has a lure and a lure is that you can ask a player — and it's important to note here that it, I believe the way, when they say ask a player, uh, it means both asking — it can mean in character, but it could also be, um, yeah, it says you don't necessarily have to ask or answer the lure explicitly as your characters in the scene, but if you ask someone this and they answer it, uh, truthfully they they gain a token, so the Monitor can ask "which of your character's secrets have I discovered?" and if they answer it truthfully, if they, if they tell you a secret that you know, then they get a token, so that's part of the token economy. You get tokens by doing weak moves, putting yourself in problem—problematic places, and by answering someone else's lure. Um. Feel free to move these orange things around to peek at various things if you're trying to like make a hard decision on something. On top of that, you will end up create—taking names, uh, I think most characters end up having a set of things that are like advantages and disadvantages or anxieties or interests or something like that, I think they all have, you know. Yeah, the the uh the Source, for instance, has two currencies and three wares, which is very fun. Um. But feel free to look around, I'm gonna end up being happy playing whatever, probably, but.

**Keith:** Ooh. I'm, uh, I'm leaning Heart, I have a backup if someone else was like really set on the Heart.

**Austin:** I thought Ali — Ali, did you not say Heart, am I imagining that?

**Keith:** Uh, I said it earlier, I don't know if Ali also said it earlier.

**Austin:** You said it earlier.

**Ali:** No, I said, um, I said Monitor or Source.

**Austin:** You said Monitor or Source. Okay, I was confusing Source and Heart and Monitor.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. I'm good with you taking Heart, Keith.

**Keith:** All right.

**Austin:** If everybody else is.

**Sylvi:** Mm-hm. [cross] I got mine ready, I'm good with everything.

**Austin:** [cross] Uh, and then we should fill this out, I'm gonna actually take, I'm gonna take two minutes to step away, I'll be back, uh, in two minutes! But just fill these out, et cetera.

**Ali:** Okay, smart. I'm —

**Jack:** Which are you going for, Ali?

**Ali:** Um, I I mean if you were like, oh, I'd like to do one of those, I would choose the other one, um.

**Jack:** No no, I'm I'm happy to go with whatever.

**Ali:** Um, I think I'm leaning Monitor of the two?

**Jack:** Hell yeah.

**Ali:** I think being a little weirdo instead of like a wheels and deals guy is sort of [laughing] what I'm leaning towards.

**Keith:** Yeah. What was your, what was your backup, Ali? Source?

**Ali:** Um, Source.

**Keith:** Yeah, that was my backup too.

**Ali:** Yeah. Which, they all sound really fun, but Monitor's like, ooh you're a little fucked up, aren't you?

[Keith and Sylvi laugh]

**Ali:** Oh, actually also going to step away real quick, though. BRB.

**Jack:** Okay. I will also be back. Goodbye!

**Sylvi:** Okay. Just us, Keith.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's just us.

**Sylvi:** We gotta carry the show now.

**Keith:** Yeah, we do. Hi show!

**Sylvi:** Hey... [laugh] This is how we carry the show, we're just saying hi to it!

**Keith:** Yeah. That's the... that's the Run Button...

**Sylvi:** I picked the playback where I have to come up with two names, and now I'm stuck on the second one.

**Keith:** Oh, you have two names? That's cool.

**Sylvi:** Well, I have a fake, I have a cover name, cuz I'm a spy.

**Keith:** That's pretty cool. That is good to know.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Keith:** You should make them really close, so close that it's like, someone would go, if they found out they'd be like, why would you have done that? And then, but it's really just like, it's, was hiding — it — [cross] no one would have thought —

**Sylvi:** [cross] I've done that before! That is literally like one of the first things I did in Marielda, to the point where Austin still messes up Aubrey's name sometimes because I called her Audrey.

**Keith:** [laughs] [sighs] It's like of course I can't be the spy, my name is so close to the spy's name!

**Sylvi:** Aw, the chat's saying hi back. Yeah, this is true. This is, you know what, it's like only an idiot would use that as their name.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Hmm. Thinking about it.

**Keith:** All right, let me read. I'm like, now I'm kind of like, maybe I do want to be the Source. It's tough.

**Sylvi:** Mm.

**Keith:** It's tough — that is like the hardest thing — and it's not that hard of a thing. But that's the hardest thing about, um, Bluff and live stuff is like picking a character when you don't know the game very well.

**Sylvi:** It's also like I literally just hit the end of the ones that I had — the names I had written down in my phone, so I'm like, yeah.

**Austin:** Oof.

**Keith:** [whispering] Oh, I never...

**Sylvi:** Talking about the the Shadow's Lament, which is having to think of two names.

**Austin:** Oh, the Shadow's Lament, of course.

**Sylvi:** Which, you know what, maybe I'm — I think I just came up with one of my names.

**Austin:** [laughs] Um, do we have, uh, are we are we, who's, has anyone not chosen yet?

**Keith:** Uh, I believe that Jack still hasn't chosen.

**Austin:** Jack has not chosen.

**Keith:** Yeah, they stepped away.

**Austin:** I also did.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, so uh Ali also stepped away.

**Ali:** Hi!

**Austin:** Hi Ali.

**Sylvi:** Oh! And she's back!

**Keith:** I'm debating switching to the Source, um, but.

**Austin:** Oh okay. You just not feeling, uh, the...

**Keith:** No, I am feeling it, it's just that the Source was my backup one and then uh Ali didn't pick it—

**Austin:** Oh, I see.

**Keith:** And so now I'm like, well now I have the opportunity —

**Austin:** Right, you could be... it's true.

**Keith:** To really be whatever I wanna be.

**Austin:** Keith, we all have the opportunity to be whatever we want to be, we just have to...

**Keith:** Wow. Then I'm going to be the Source even if someone else picks the Source.

**Austin:** Okay, well slow down.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] [pauses] Yeah I'm just like reading through everyone's little things.

**Austin:** Mm. Was what I want... I don't know what I want.

**Jack:** Austin, if it —

**Austin:** Hi, welcome back!

**Jack:** I was thinking of taking the Source?

**Austin:** [laughs loudly]

[someone snorts and laughs]

**Keith:** There we go! Problem solved!

**Jack:** What, what? What? Oh no!

**Austin:** You couldn't, you couldn't write it better.

**Jack:** What!? What happened?

**Keith:** Uh, I... the Source was my back up to the Heart and since no one had chosen it, I was toying with the idea of, I was reading through being like, no, I ca — I'm free to choose, I should make sure I don't want the Source.

**Jack:** We have inverse backups. The Heart, the Heart was my backup, um.

[Ali gasps]

**Keith:** Okay. Yeah, so I'm the Heart, I love the Heart, and you're the Source. Oop!

**Jack:** Perfect.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So that leaves the Wrench and the Signal, huh? Okay, let's see.

**Jack:** I had a really good idea for the Signal, but I have played baddies in all of the Road to PALISADE games.

**Austin:** Yeah, I feel the same way, yeah. Um.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I always do baddies.

**Jack:** Um. A character that I have —

[Austin laughs at Sylvi]

**Jack:** A character that I really wanna see and that we will definitely get to, um.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Jack:** Uh, is a hawk in the Mirage.

**Austin:** This is who the Signal would be for me. It would be a hawkish — that's exactly what I'm thinking. That's my — my —

**Jack:** The question is, like, is this the place to introduce the hawk—

**Keith:** Hawkish? What do you...

**Jack:** Because — someone who is rattling the sabers for war.

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah yeah yeah, you know, like a political, like a like a warhawk, like a political.

**Keith:** Oh okay so you mean a hawk in the way that we actually use the word.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** They might actually be a bird, as well, but.

**Austin:** Yeah, it might also be a bird person. We do have Talonites here in the Mirage.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm sold. All right. [slight laugh] You talked me into it. Uh, is it — is it bad if one entire species of bird person that we've depicted is warlike and terrible in the Talonites —

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Well...

**Austin:** And the other bird type of person is... dedicated and loyal and...

**Keith:** Yep!

**Austin:** Yeah, that's pretty racist.

**Jack:** Wait, Kalar's a Talonite.

**Austin:** Is Kalar — I thought Kalar was a different type of bird person.

**Jack:** No, Kalar's a Talonite, yeah.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I feel like Kalar was a Talonite.

**Jack:** [cross] Kitcha Kanna, Kitcha Kanna and Kalar Anakalar are...

**Austin:** [cross] Okay, okay, okay, Kitcha Kanna and — yeah, I remember — who are the — what's the other bird people I'm thinking — oh I'm thinking of, am I thinking of Hieron bird people?

**Jack:** We had bird people in Hieron.

**Sylvi:** There's the one that Hella killed.

**Austin:** Excuse me?

**Keith:** Uh, I was the bird person.

**Jack:** The one that Hella threw a bottle at?

**Sylvi:** Yeah!

[Austin laughs]

[Ali snorts]

**Austin:** [amused] Ugh...

**Jack:** That's one of my favorite, oh man...

**Austin:** It's so funny!

[Ali snorts]

**Jack:** Hella is just like, well, trouble's brewing, picks up a bottle from the ground and fucking no scopes a sapient bird out of the sky!

**Ali:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** They're the, the uh, the Mistral, the, what were they called? Is that what they were?

**Jack:** Yeah, the Mistral. The Mistral.

**Austin:** Yeah yeah yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Ali:** They were up to some stuff!

**Jack:** They were up to some stuff, and then, uh.

**Keith:** Yeah, that bird was a cop.

**Austin:** Not any — not anymore they weren't!

[Laughter]

**Keith:** Yes, we very briefly knew them as a cop. Or did we learn after?

**Jack:** Oh my god. No, we knew they were a cop, I think. I think we knew they were a cop.

**Austin:** Yeah, they were coming to they were coming to...

**Jack:** RIP to that fucker.

**Austin:** ...investigate some shit.

**Keith:** My, Ali, my memory is that, that your plan wasn't to kill this... person.

**Austin:** That's correct. You were just...

**Ali:** No I got a, uh, one of those critical hits that you get sometimes. Um.



**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Imagine what that was like from that bird's experience. They were just like, I'm patrolling.

**Keith:** Oh no!

**Jack:** Who's that lady down there? I have died.

**Austin:** So fucking...

**Keith:** [very dismayed] Aw fuck, I just meant to maim you!

[Laughter]

**Ali:** I mean, she was on her, she was on her, um, redemption... was the plot arc there...

**Austin:** That was the thing.

**Ali:** She, she was not really looking to kill that guy, but, you know.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** You do what you gotta.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Sometimes you... [quietly] I'm not going to spoil more of Hieron... [laughs]

**Austin:** Nope, we've said enough.

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** The prompts, I'm gonna, I think I'm gonna whole cloth this one, but the prompts for name for, uh, the Heart are really good: an old-fashioned name, a service nickname, a type of hard liquor, a furry animal, or a three-letter alias. Those are all really good prompts.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Ali:** [cross] Oh, Keith, what did you —

**Sylvi:** [cross] I've done some of the suggested ones here, I've done a bladed weapon. I feel like I've done a tree character but maybe that wasn't on Friends at the Table, that might have just been another tabletop game I've played. Y'know!

**Keith:** Uh, Ali, what were you gonna say?

**Ali:** What, what class did you end up going with?

**Keith:** Uh, I went with the Heart.

**Ali:** Ooh, okay.

[pause]

**Jack:** What even is a human in the Twilight Mirage?

**Austin:** We — remember, whatever you want it to be.

**Ali:** Just a guy.

**Austin:** It's a person, it's a type of person, of which there are just a countless variety. Um, if you're asking specifically like are there other alien species and stuff...

**Jack:** No, I mean to say, I mean to say.

**Austin:** Cuz there are.

**Jack:** Could a, could a human have, for example, an animal head and still call themselves a hu — the answer is pretty much anybody could call themselves a human.

**Austin:** It's the Twilight Mirage.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Ali:** There was a catgirl.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh-huh. This was established.

**Ali:** [laughing] Come on!

**Jack:** There's a famous catgirl! A catgirl that is the cover star!

**Austin:** What I would say, really quick, um, there's a way in which you... of course they could, is true, because we're humans and I think we like to think about humanity as being very broad. Uh, but, there are also species that, that are racialized in the Twilight Mirage?

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** You could not call yourself Qui Err. Right?

**Jack:** [cross] Oh yeah. You're absolutely right.

**Austin:** [cross] The Qui Err have a particular history, they have a particular set of, of, uh, social relations and so, uh, race is not one of those things that gets to be open in that way, uh, so long as it exists, right,

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And so long as it exists inside of systems of often oppression, but also just in terms of social categorization. Um, you might become Qui Err ethnically, I don't know how the Qui Err, what the Qui Err life looks like, do you know what I mean? Um, uh, you might end up marrying into a Qui Err family and adopting a lot of Qui Err culture or whatever, uh, but but I would be careful about saying anybody can be anything in the Twilight Mirage, because that, that can break bad.

**Jack:** Yes, you're right.

**Keith:** [laughs] One of my... something I really like about, uh, like, the way that, um, character sheets are written, stuff like this, um, like in this vein is, you get sentences like

—

[2:00:00]

**Keith:** "I'm human and when you first see me you'll probably notice my shotgun arm."

[Laughter]

**Austin:** Yeah. I would.

**Keith:** It's just like a very funny way to say "I have a shotgun arm."

**Austin:** Uh, we're being quiet sometimes because we're all filling out a bunch of character descriptions, we're just not talking.

**Keith:** Yeah, or we're thinking deeply.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes.

**Sylvi:** I can just start saying hi at random intervals.

**Austin:** Yeah that'd be great, can you —

**Sylvi:** Okay, cool. Hi~

**Austin:** Thank you. Thanks!

**Sylvi:** ... Hello!

**Austin:** Ah! Hi!

**Keith:** Hi.

[Sylvi and Ali laugh]

**Keith:** Ooh, I like this, one of the, one of the looks here is genuine warmth, but I'm interpreting that literally.

**Austin:** Literally, yeah, uh-huh.

[pause]

**Austin:** Okay, can I get a hi really quick?

**Jack:** [very distantly] Hi.

**Sylvi:** Bonjour!

**Austin:** Oh!

**Jack:** Ohhh!!!

**Keith:** Ooh.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Love it.

**Sylvi:** Six years of French classes, baby!

**Keith:** Struck me as extremely sophisticated!

[Austin laughs]

**Sylvi:** Yep.

**Jack:** Brink Proxy!

[pause]

**Sylvi:** Hey~

**Keith:** Sylvi, could you recommend to me a cheese?

**Sylvi:** ...No! What? Brie.

**Keith:** Cuz of the French.

**Sylvi:** Oh, um. No, I can't. I don't eat a lotta dairy...

[pause]

**Sylvi:** Um... howdy! There, that's another one that I haven't done yet.

**Austin:** Thank you, thank you.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, no problem.

[Ali laughs]

**Sylvi:** Now I've given myself an extra task, on top of this, so...

**Austin:** I know, this is wild of you, I appreciate it but I do think...

**Sylvi:** I fucked up.

**Austin:** You fucked up. You fucked up! [pause] Um... Where, what am I looking for here? [typing] Okay, there's... that's annoying.

**Keith:** You don't have to have luxuriant hair to be a night mayor, but it helps.

**Austin:** To be a nightmare?

**Keith:** Night mayor.

**Sylvi:** We've done...

**Austin:** Night mayor, oh, you're a night mayor, yeah yeah yeah, now I understand.

**Sylvi:** Classic occupation! On...

**Austin:** Yeah yeah yeah. Absolutely.

**Sylvi:** Friends at the Table.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Sylvi:** Sup. That was another — that's, like, sup as in like what's up,

**Austin:** Oh, sup, yeah yeah yeah.

**Sylvi:** Not sup as in like the verb to sup.

**Austin:** Not to — right. Yes, that's different.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Mm-hm.

[long pause]

**Austin:** Really struggling with with imagining a visual — I need to like find the throughline for this person, you know?

**Ali:** Mm-hm.

**Austin:** You know how that goes.

**Ali:** Yeah, lots of decisions to make.

**Austin:** It's true. I don't like—

**Keith:** Uh, Dakota in the chat recommends burrata on toast points. I love burrata.

**Austin:** We got burrata, uh, three years ago, Keith.

**Keith:** Yeah, we sure did! Yeah I uh ...

**Austin:** Like about this time of the year.

**Keith:** I made us get burrata at Gen Con.

**Austin:** On day one of Gen Con.

**Ali:** Oh, that's so f...

**Sylvi:** Oh my god, yeah, I do remember!

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Keith:** Yeah, I was like have you all had burrata? And everyone said no, and I was like we're having burrata.

**Austin:** It was good.

**Keith:** And it turned out that they had just opened like a dairy farm—

**Austin:** It was fresh, yeah, their own.

**Keith:** Like right near, uh, Indianapolis.

**Austin:** It's true.

**Keith:** And uh and so they were like trying to move all this fresh burrata!

**Austin:** It's true.

**Ali:** I almost, I almost had burrata today, what a coincidence.

**Austin:** Today!

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Wow.

**Ali:** There's a near good — nearby pizza place who does a good burrata pie that I was considering.

[Keith sighs in appreciation]

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** A burrata pie is phenomenal.

**Ali:** It's really good!

**Keith:** It's decadent.

**Austin:** Okay, I've figured out what was wrong about this, I think. Let's see. Okay.

**Ali:** Man!

**Keith:** I gotta get — now, now I'm like burrata pie, yeah.

[Ali laughs]

[pause]

**Jack:** We'll get to bonds and stuff in a bit, but otherwise I think I'm, I think I'm done.

**Austin:** Are y'all keeping your — I'm just gonna look. Are y'all keeping your styles and stuff italicized? I should do that.

**Keith:** I am doing that.

**Sylvi:** I'm trying to, yeah.

[Ali sighs]

**Sylvi:** One of these is "I always carry a copy of my orders" and like how bad of a spy do you have to be to always have that on you?

**Austin:** [laughs] Oh, that's really bad, yeah.

**Jack:** Undermine the Brink, underlined three times.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Kill Greg!

**Jack:** [laughs] Greg, Greg finds it on the floor and is like is this yours? Am I the Greg?

[both laugh]

**Sylvi:** Bang!

**Jack:** [laughs] Ohh...

**Keith:** Um I've decided that my character is going to be like um Queen Amidala from Phantom Menace in that you're always seeing her in new outfits, but the outfits are like tank tops and cargo pants?

**Austin:** Mm. Love it. Mm-hm.

[Ali snorts]

**Keith:** It's like, when did you have time to change, and also this is not an impressive outfit!

**Jack:** This is much the same outfit as you had before!

**Keith:** [laughs] You changed from a, you changed from a tank top that had just a cartoon picture of a hamburger on it to a different tank top that just says the word hamburger.

**Jack:** This is my eating a hamburger tank top, the first one was my thinking about a hamburger tank top.



**Keith:** [laughs] One inevitably leads to the next!

**Jack:** Oh, it truly does. Now I'm switching to my having eaten a hamburger... [brief pause] My laptop is running really warm today and I think it's because Miro is more intensive than Roll20 is.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Oh, sure.

**Sylvi:** Oh yeah my one's toasty, too. That's fun. Okay, wait, hold on, I've figured out my roadblock here.

**Austin:** It's always a good feeling, isn't it?

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Mm! Whew, really typo'd there for a second and — anyway, let's move on.

[pause]

**Ali:** Uh... I can tell the vibes for the Monitor are kind of all over the place because the choices for what you carry are a vape rig, a tumbler of scotch, a smoldering cigar, a portable workstation, a leather briefcase, a silenced pistol, a bulky camera, or origami paper.

**Jack:** Huh!

**Austin:** Wow.

**Ali:** Like [laughs] yeah, it's just, I mean it's all sort of in line with each other but it's starting with the vape rig that it really just goes places.

**Austin:** It really just — yeah, uh-huh.

**Ali:** Um.

**Jack:** Origami vape rig.

**Ali:** [laughs] Well, I, mmmm, who's the guy in the chair in Mass Effect 2? You know.

**Keith:** The Illusive Man.

**Ali:** The Illusive Man.

**Austin:** Yeah, the Illusive Man, E, I, the Illusive Man.

**Ali:** The Illusive man.

**Austin:** Yeah.

[Jack groans]

**Keith:** The sicklusive man.

**Ali:** [laughs] Do I wanna be a robot — mm...

**Austin:** A robot? Yeah, I know.

**Ali:** I, this is like, you know, logging into a character generator and being like am I really just gonna be like a guy, like, I'm just gonna be a human? But us humans are all right.

**Austin:** I'm a human right now. Yeah, we do okay.

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Eh.

**Ali:** [laughs] I mean! [pause] What kind of species do we — we had a catgirl.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** We had...

**Austin:** Oh, we had a bunch of stuff. We had that blob guy. We had catboys, which is a different species than catgirl.

**Ali:** [laughs] Okay.

**Jack:** We had duck people.

**Ali:** We had duck people!

**Keith:** Was it like, um, do you remember when people were obsessed with like — I I with uh, I can't remember the name of it but when, about like different species turning into crabs, that was like a meme that was going around?

**Jack:** Oh carcinization, yeah. It's carcinization.

**Keith:** Yeah, people were obsessed with — so it's sort of like two different species that, people trend towards cat.

[Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Right right right right, yes.

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Sure sure, yeah.

**Keith:** Like how given enough time a lot a lobster will become more crab-like.

**Ali:** [laughs] This game's alright.

**Austin:** [mumbling] Gonna reverse that maybe.

**Ali:** Now we have such a wide range of things in Twilight Mirage I'm like, can I just be like a demon? Can I just make something up?

**Austin:** Yeah! Yes!

**Sylvi:** Yes, do it.

**Jack:** Yeah! I have, yes, I have taken a similar swing, Ali.

**Ali:** [laughs] I don't want to over — I'm not, I'm not going with demon, everybody in chat. Just don't get —

**Austin:** Why.

**Ali:** [laughs] Man! What's a...

**Sylvi:** Listen, you saying that really made me think, oh man, I can do anything! I can do anything?!

**Austin:** You can do anything. Yeah. Yeah.

**Ali:** What's Darth Maul?

**Austin:** Zabrak.

**Ali:** A Zabrak. Are we allowed to borrow those?

**Keith:** Or—

**Austin:** Right, we, uh-huh.

**Ali:** Hey, Filoni?

**Austin:** Other people are noting, other, many other uh uh people we had: we had squid people, you may recall, like Gigas and Boole Batanca from PARTIZAN. We had, obviously, the Qui Err. We had some sort of fire-headed person like the Nova Kid from, uh, Starbound, we had, uh, Apostolosians, obviously.

**Ali:** Oh sure sure — well I can't, I can't triple dip on Apost... [laughs] I mean, I could, but.

**Austin:** Wait, why would that be triple dipping?

**Keith:** I know Zabrats as Iridonians.

**Austin:** Right, yeah, of course.

**Keith:** Three services I gotta have! I mean I guess there's a list here, I'm gonna get the list.

[Austin and Ali laugh quietly]

**Keith:** Songs to help you remember, noise to help you forget. Amateur theater, live comedy. [clicks tongue] Done.

[Ali and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** This is actually great, this is so good for me. Wait did you — I mean, you went with live comedy, that means you have some sort of bar or something, right?

**Keith:** Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

**Austin:** Great. Some sort of venue. Perfect.

**Keith:** Uh, let's say quiet spaces to talk. That sort of levels up what I had written there already a little bit. Um, and what do we got? Spiritual services, informal therapy, rumors and gossip... oh, I guess informal therapy would be even better. No, let's do — let's keep it at quiet spaces to talk.

**Austin:** That'll be useful.

**Keith:** But *do not* talk during the live comedy, *please!*

**Austin:** Right right right right. Of course.

**Keith:** Please! And rumors and gossip. Oh, what am I haunted by?

**Austin:** Hunted or haunted?

**Keith:** Pshh! Dealer's choice!

[Ali snorts]

**Keith:** Choose three traits, beloved, friendly, beautiful, empathetic, valued, relaxed, caring, charitable. Rebellious, faithful, zealous, confident, imposing.

**Austin:** I'm gonna make an executive decision about this board and move some things really quick.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I'm gonna move our unadopted aspect to the middle of our sheets, which is the Markets, so that if someone wants to pick up the Markets they can without having to scroll to the right, they can just scroll to the middle of where everything is.

**Jack:** Cool.

**Austin:** Um, make sure to, uh, add your location to the station map, um, once we've, you know — oop, don't want to do that.

**Sylvi:** Well, I slink about the station without a fixed home, so.

**Austin:** Oh, you don't have a location.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Sylvi:** I slink about.

**Austin:** Oh, you slink about.

**Keith:** Oh, you slink about?

**Sylvi:** I do, I slink about.

**Austin:** Damn.

**Keith:** Is that a trait?

**Sylvi:** That that was just written on my thing as is. I didn't get to decide that, that was a fact.

**Keith:** Oh okay, that's a fact about you.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** I cons— ooh, that's a good one to consider myself. Defamed...

**Sylvi:** Okay. Okay! Okay. I think I've got it. Oh, wait a minute. Is there more stuff? No, okay. I filled it all in. I'm good. I'm good.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Ali:** Hm?

**Keith:** Okay! I'm done!

**Austin:** Also done.

**Jack:** I am also done. Minus bonds.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, sorry, minus bonds.

**Austin:** Right, well, we'll do that, that's a step we've not gotten to, so.

**Ali:** Um, I'm approaching done, I could probably be done while people are talking.

**Austin:** Okay. I'm pretty sure, anyway, let's see, if that's true. Yeah, bonds come next.

**Keith:** What do I do with these insights? Am I, do I—

**Austin:** We'll get there, that's next. Don't don't delete those yet. Uh, do you wanna go first, Keith?

**Keith:** Yeah, sure.

**Austin:** Talk to me about your name—okay, well, you don't have a name.

**Keith:** Oh! I've I've... I forgot that I didn't have a name yet.

**Austin:** Okay, that's...

[Ali snorts]

**Keith:** That's fine.

**Austin:** We'll come back.

**Keith:** Uh, okay, yeah, sure, that's fair.

**Austin:** And you can think of a name. Jack, tell us about the Source! [amused] Oh god.

**Jack:** Okay! Uh, I am playing the Source. Uh, he is called Paris France.

[Laughter]

**Jack:** His pronouns are he/him.

[more laughter]

**Jack:** Uh, I'm a human, and when you first see me you'll probably notice that my body is collapsing into plastic plants and flowers.

**Sylvi:** Okay!

**Jack:** Um, this is not like I've got them, um, sort of mounted onto me or attached to me, or that they are growing out of me, Annihilation-style, it's more that, um, where my shoulder should be or where half my torso should be is just like a tangled growing mass of like plastic lilies —

**Austin:** It's incredible.

**Jack:** —or some ferns or a pond, like, pond, um, what are they called? Like, uh, water lilies or things.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Um, uh, I have a 'convincing' smile, in quotes, and I have thinning hair. Um, my face cast for this is someone who I feel like we must have face cast before but I'm also like has it really taken us this long not to put him in it? Which is, uh, this image of Christopher Walken in a white linen suit. Uh, I'm gonna put it in the live shows in our Discord.

[Ali snorts]

**Austin:** Oh, a wonderful image. I'm gonna...

**Sylvi:** Oh, wow.

**Jack:** So, just, about the same age, thinning hair, uh, convincing smile, except where one of his shoulders should be there's just this massive growing mass of plastic flowers.

**Sylvi:** Beautiful.

**Austin:** Am I right, this one? This one, just to be clear?

**Jack:** I wear — yes, this one. Yes, perfect, perfect. Even with the little, the little necktie too.

**Austin:** There we go.

**Jack:** I wear a shabby —

**Austin:** For future reference — this is why Miro is great, we can just look at Christopher Walken whenever we'd like to now. We can just zoom in, boom.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Jack:** Austin, you can look at Christopher Walken whenever you want!

**Austin:** That's not true, not on—

**Jack:** While I was making this character,

**Austin:** [laughs] Jack, on Roll20 I could not look at Christopher Walken whenever I want.

**Jack:** Oh, that's true, yeah, that's true. You have to have a separate tab for that.

**Austin:** You'll note: We have not complained about typing once! Uh, maybe once.

**Jack:** [laughs] I wear a shabby, pale suit, a baby blue shirt, uh, and always carry a parrot on my shoulder in among the, uh, plastic greenery.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Oh, it's a habitat!

**Jack:** [laughs] I mainly deal in fresh fruit and vegetables, recipes and spices, and I accept payment in credit, or, more preferably, introductions to more powerful brokers. If you need something, you'll usually find me in the night markets. These are just, I imagine, like, much the same as night markets are here. They open very very early in the morning. It's where people go to stock restaurants or grocer's shops or things. Um, I consider myself generous and industrious though some people think I'm ambitious, in a negative way.

**Austin:** Mm. Mm-hm.



**Jack:** Uh, we'll see if they are right. I have the three basic moves that everyone can do, which is I can take action, leaving myself vulnerable, I can speak openly and honestly with someone, and I can explore the scene and ask questions. Then I have strong moves which cost a token, and these are unique to Paris France. I can saunter into a scene with a tantalizing offer; I can reveal a rare or contraband asset that I have stashed; I can call in a timely favor from a prominent client; or I can say the right thing to turn a hostile confrontation into an opportunity. And my weak moves, which are, again, unique to Paris France are, I can commit to — these give me a token. I can commit to provide for someone I know I can't support; I can piss off one of my suppliers for temporary gain; I can make a problem worse by running away from it; or I can admit that I cannot get a hold of something.

**Austin:** Oof. Hate to admit that you can't get a hold of something.

**Jack:** Hate it!

**Austin:** Uh, let's go down over here to Sylvia, are you good?

**Sylvi:** Uh, yeah, sure. I was gonna change some appearance stuff but it's fine. I'll go with it.

**Austin:** Are you sure? We can, I can go, I'm ready, if you want some more time.

**Sylvi:** Okay, yeah, you go really quick. I'm still like, is that what I want her to wear? And it's not. Um, it's fine. Go ahead.

**Austin:** It's fine. It's good? Okay. Uh, I am Teleos Triton Tanager or 3T. Uh, I am a human and when you first see me you'll probably notice my smokey eyes, my perfect makeup, and my battle scars. I wear a vintage coat, I have augmented hair, which I'll explain in a second, and I always carry my synth kit. Um uh I am... am I, am I the only person on this call who knows Teezo Touchdown? The musician? I'm probably...

**Keith:** Yes.

**Sylvi:** I don't know him.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Okay, I'm gonna drop a picture of Teezo Touchdown into the chat. This is Teezo Touchdown.

**Jack:** Oh hell yeah!

**Austin:** The, this is, here's another good Teezo Touchdown picture. Uh, I'll just drop some Teezo Touchdown into...

**Ali:** Ooh!

**Sylvi:** Fuck yes.

**Austin:** Into the chat or into Miro also, really quick. Did I add — I added the one with the football pads, right?

[2:20:00]

**Austin:** Yes, okay.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's a good one. Teezo Touchdown, uh, uh, is an up-and-coming rapper, question mark? He does a lot of stuff with guitar too, uh, who is famous for just having nails woven into his his braids? Um, just tons of them. Uh, and so my my image of 3T, of of Tanager is, uh, the augments are these these nails but they're like glowy, um, and vibrating, uh, and shifting in place, and it's a mix of ones that are that are actually physically there and also ones that are just totally augmented reality, um.

**Jack:** Wow! Sick.

**Austin:** Yeah. Teezo's fantastic. Um, what does vintage, someone in the chat, Jack Taylor says "what's vintage mean in this context" regarding the coat. Uh he absolutely wears um the sort of coat that was worn by um members of whatever the the kind of Empyrean Divine uh military defense force was in the era when the New Earth Hegemony was still attacking the Fleet, before the, uh, you know in in the era before we started playing Twilight Mirage, right? It is like literally that style of like, you know — I think that that era has, it's probably been mythologized in a way not too dissimilar to World War II, and so I think there's a cultural similarity of like this was the last time we could all agree that like, yo, this this was bad. You know what I mean? The New Earth Hegemony was just like killing Divines left and right and so he wears that style of like — I guess maybe for years it's closer to being like wearing the jacket of a union soldier or something, you know, from the Civil War. Um, uh, so you know — again, it's only been... it's quote unquote "only been" 600 years or something since that period for uh, for, for us, because we're on the inside of the Mirage. So yeah, so vintage in that way, augmented hair, I always carry my synth kit. I strongly believe we must push the Principality out of Palisade. The refugees support me, unlike the administrators and security. I'll need to use my dazzling art and enchanting beauty to win them all over. I'm

always happy to talk. You'll usually find me working in my open studio. I consider myself visionary and confident and I think I'll be a powerful leader. What compromises will I accept to reach my goal? My base moves are the same as what Jack said, because that's what everybody has. My strong moves, I spend a token to introduce a fervent supporter ready to act; to sway an audience into impassioned action; to defuse a tense situation with humor or beauty; to put my worldview aside to help someone out at a critical moment. And my weak moves are to stoke someone's anger to sway them into acting against their best interests; to use scapegoats and corrosive arguments as a shortcut to get a crowd on side; to fight a contrary idea with rage instead of empathy; and to expose myself as a hypocrite on an issue. My lure is to ask a player, how could I get your character to join my cause? If they share an approach they gain a token. Um, uh, you didn't read the play to find outs, did you, Jack?

**Jack:** I did not, no.

**Austin:** Okay, that's fine. Um, a real — one more note is I have this synth kit and what I think it is is like the augmented reality stuff from the Mirage, I can just like summon various — it's it's fundamentally, it's just a very flexible synth kit, but what it actually does is produces a sort of hard light instrument that I need, that that — it's all working through the same basic stuff but I can be like, I really think that visually and texturally I want to be playing a harp to produce this this sound. That might, I could just as easily make it a guitar, I could just as easily make it something else, and it would — it does not always map one to one in terms of what the sound — I could make a harp that sounds like a drum kit. But I'm playing it like a harp, right, or because I think that that's like the visual on stage I need, or I could make a drum kit that sounds like —

**Keith:** Could you do Future Man's Drumitar?

**Austin:** Yeah, of course. I don't know what that is, but of course I could do it. So. That's, that's 3T. And I have a studio, I've added the studio to the map. What did you add to the map, Jack? The night markets, right, of course.

**Jack:** The night markets.

**Sylvi:** Oh, what are those...

**Austin:** Uh, we'll have to, once everything's up there we can move the map around to be like... move stuff around to be like, this is the basic layout, which is fun. All right, Sylvi, are you ready to go or are you still—

**Keith:** I'm gonna paste Future Man and his drumitar.

**Austin:** Thank you.

**Sylvi:** Um, yeah, I just — two of the things I filled in got deleted and I didn't notice until just now.

**Austin:** Oh, it's okay.

**Sylvi:** Um, trying to remember what the last trait I had was. Um.

**Austin:** Oh, do you want, do you need the page from the book that has all the lists?

**Sylvi:** No, I have them, I just, I came up with my own, so.

**Austin:** Oh, I see.

**Sylvi:** [makes fart noise with mouth] Um oh also that that [laughs] that really cut off at a funny spot! Oh, okay. Oh, when I type more — oh, okay, it's still there.

**Austin:** Yeah, you can um make it a smaller font. If you.

**Sylvi:** That's what the problem is, okay. Damn, Miro, you were doing so good. You finally did something that made me frustrated with text. Okay. Is that readable?

**Austin:** Did you get it back? What?

**Sylvi:** The, I just made it smaller, is it still good?

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, you can zoom in super tight on a Miro.

**Sylvi:** Okay, cool! Um. So my, I am the Shadow. My name is Lament. Pronouns are they/she, but you all know me as Deutsche Synchro.

**Austin:** Oh, Deutsche! Yeah!

**Jack:** Amazing.

**Sylvi:** I am a human — yeah, thank you. I am a human-like android and when you first see me you'll probably notice my flawless skin, gloved hands, and bunny ears.

**Austin:** Aw.

**Sylvi:** I wear a kind smile, a flattering — flattering blazer and always carry a concealed weapon. My touchstone for this is [how King dresses in King of Fighters from like 2003?](#)

**Austin:** Oh yeah. Okay.

**Sylvi:** Is the one I'm specifically thinking of, when they've got the like blazer and stuff — it's good I'll I'll link a picture.

**Austin:** Yeah, please.

**Sylvi:** Um.

**Austin:** I know King, obviously, but.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Um. Let me get back to this. Uh, I was sent here by my mysterious employer with a mission to assassinate three key targets aboard the station. I'm not married to three but I wanted a number there.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Um, I work undercover as a bartender. My assignment, however —

**Keith:** I thought you were gonna say you're married to all three of the targets.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I am. This is the worst divorce in history.

[Laughter]

**Sylvi:** Uh. My assignment, however, has been complicated, because my handler was killed yesterday. I slink about the station without a fixed home. I present myself as joyful but in truth I am high-strung and short-tempered. In the end I will — will I carry through with my mission? Um, and then my moves, same basic moves as everyone. Uh, strong moves are: take someone out, silently or otherwise; reveal a piece of advanced military technology; make someone an accessory to your mission; use your training to do something good for once. And weak moves are: receive conflicting information on your mission; do something terrible because you are ordered to; let someone struggle rather than break your cover; or stumble into a scene, finding yourself in a compromising position or unauthorized location. Um and then I wanna read changing my heart and lure, right?

**Austin:** Uh, oh, you know what, I didn't even notice — did — I did not — do I not have a changing my heart? I don't have a changing my heart, so yeah, read your changing your heart and then your lure.

**Sylvi:** At any time you may abandon your assignment. If you do, add a new threat to the station sheet as your employer retaliates against you and the station.

**Austin:** Ooh!

**Keith:** Ooh.

**Ali:** [gasps and sings ominous dun-dun-DUN...]

**Sylvi:** I'm still trying to decide on employer, I think she works for the Curtain.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** Um.

**Austin:** That's fine.

**Sylvi:** And then my lure is ask a player — Austin, can you move your — thank you. Um, ask a player, how could I gain your character's confidence? If they reveal a weakness, they gain a token. Um, and play to find out, in your line of work what lines won't you cross? How will you react if your cover is threatened? Why is it so difficult to betray your employer?

**Austin:** Damn. Uh, Keith, do you have a name?

**Keith:** I do, my name is Cheal Pushy. He/him.

**Austin:** [amused] Okay.

**Keith:** Uh, I'm a human, and when you first see me you'll probably notice my luxuriant hair, inappropriately casual style and genuine, literal warmth.

[laughter]

**Keith:** I wear a series of faded tank tops, sunglasses that are always worn but rarely on, and carry a knotted bagful of helping vines.

**Austin:** Hm!

**Sylvi:** [laughing] Okay!

**Keith:** You'll usually find me at my place providing quiet spaces to talk, live comedy and rumors and gossip in service of my community. My place has low lights and low lives. I run it as a kind of penitence for my troubled past. To this day I am haunted by the first community garden.

[Sylvi laughs and Ali gasps]

**Keith:** I consider myself defamed and important, though I'm no longer faithful. I wonder if I ever will be again. Um, do we read all all the moves?

**Austin:** Uh, just strong and weak.

**Keith:** Just strong and weak, okay. Uh, strong moves, spend a token. Say just the right thing to soothe someone's troubled mind and open them up to change; tear someone to pieces with intense scorn; introduce an old ally with a formidable skillset; bring adversaries together over a shared meal. Weak moves: try to use words when action was required; sell out one of your regulars to protect yourself; overindulge, revealing something about yourself that you'd rather have kept hidden; give bad advice because you were brooding instead of paying attention. Uh, and then my lure, uh, what scares your character the most? Um.

**Austin:** And that's if, if someone shares that with you, uh, they gain a token. Right? Yes. Okay.

**Keith:** Yes. Or when someone asks it, I ask it of someone else.

**Austin:** No, you ask it, they gain it if they answer it. Yeah.

**Keith:** Gotcha. Yeah. And did we do scene prompt?

**Austin:** No, we can save those, because we're gonna need a bunch of scenes.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Uh, all right. Ali!

**Ali:** Um, yeah, sure. So I'm playing Mustard Red, who is she/her—

**Austin:** Incredible.

**Ali:** Thank you.

**Keith:** I saw your name when it just said Mustard which I thought was very funny.  
[laughs]

**Ali:** [laughs] Um, I I don't know if we're playing tonight so I might not be a cyborg when we come back but right now I'm a cyborg. Um, I'm a cyborg. Um, when you first see me you'll notice my augmented frame, colorful hair clips, and freckles. Um I wear a patterned jumpsuit, lace-up boots and always carry an instant print camera. From afar, I observe and influence the station with location beacons, administrative access and gossip. Um, without my vigilance I fear our home will become a wretched slum or a prized pawn in the war. If you, if you must bother me, you'll usually find me at the refueling station. I mean that both ways, by the way, because I was like, I was like, water fountain? And then I was like this isn't like — I'm going for the office stereotype

but like that's not the thing, so I was thinking that like, I mean, there are multiple people who have to refuel, so there's probably like—

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Ali:** Like a, like a gatorade stand or whatever there too, like, it becomes like a social spot as well because like you gotta chill while you're refueling, so that's where she's at. Um, I consider myself necessary and responsible, though I'm often labeled as paranoid. Can I convince people that I'm a force for good? Um and then we went over these before but I'll say them again. Um, my strong moves are: manipulate subsystems to assist or impede; dispatch a capable agent under your command; reveal a contingency plan at a critical moment; broadcast a message to the entire station, directing the messages — directing the masses towards dutiful action. And my weak moves are: tell a dangerous lie instead of admitting you don't have the answer; treat someone like a data point instead of a person; discover that a situation is worse than predicted; or show off the limits of your, your power in the real world.

**Austin:** Okay. Love it. Um. Now, presentation mode. Uh, okay, we've gone through these, gone through that. Boop boop, beep, boop boop bop, beep, boop!

**Sylvi:** Boop bop beep!

**Austin:** There we go, okay! Choose options to complete your profile, the character role, dudududu, so we've done this. Uh, oh, did everybody add the hangout space to the station map?

**Ali:** Oh, no.

**Austin:** Uh, uh, add that. Your hangout space should go to the station map. There's this —

**Keith:** Oh gotcha.

**Austin:** Just copy one of these and rewrite —

**Sylvi:** I don't have one, so.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, um.

**Sylvi:** Making up for me doing all the his and hellos during the character sheet stuff, now I gotta sit back, relax. [laughs]

**Ali:** How do I make mine littler? Oh there we go.



**Austin:** You got it?

**Jack:** Oh, also there are birds everywhere? [laughs] I think it's worth reminding us.

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Ali:** Yeah!

**Austin:** Gonna add — kay, I got it I got it I got it.

**Ali:** Uh-huh!

[pause]

**Jack:** Yeah! Nice one, Austin.

**Ali:** [laughs] Oh, playing games is fun.

**Jack:** It's a good time! Much like how we had to determine uh how many years pass outside versus inside the Mirage, Austin, could you let us know how many birds each one of these bird tiles represents?

**Austin:** No.

**Ali:** [laughs] Play to find out what happens!

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Jack:** Ah. On the, uh, Austin, wait, can we flip these over?

**Austin:** What? No. No.

**Jack:** [laughing] On the, on the other side of each sticky note we can secretly write a number of how many birds.

[Keith laughs]

**Austin:** [laughing] We cannot do that. Uh. We could add a tag and you could be like, three, and then what you'd have to do is go in and, well, how many tags are there —

**Jack:** Well, every time we encounter one of the bird tiles we should just roll a 1d, uh, 100.

**Austin:** All right. We've hit the limit of what we can do with, unfortunately, which is, there are no dice in Miro.

**Ali:** Ohh.

**Jack:** Fuck!

**Austin:** Yeah, I know.

**Jack:** We're a fucking tabletop podcast!

**Austin:** This is a diceless system! [pause] Can I make this...

**Ali:** Does anyone just have dice on hand?

**Jack:** No, but Google, Mr. Google does.

**Ali:** I think that's the weirdest thing about this podcast is that, like, I don't own any tabletop dice. [laughs]

**Sylvi:** Yeah!

**Austin:** No, we are fake nerds according to a lot of people, I would say. Um, feel free to change the colors of your stuff to what you think matches the place. Um. And again, move it to where you think it would be, so, so, I bet those night markets — are those night markets all the way down there, I bet they're up, up higher, huh?

**Jack:** Yeah, probably, so as to be close to the, um.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Oh, yeah, I'm gonna go...

**Jack:** Oh they are — yes, they are, they've got loads of vines kind of strangling them because the uh whatever was the — the outbreak, you know, began as something was brought in.

**Austin:** Right, nearby? Oh, yeah, from the community gardens which are right there, right, so.

**Jack:** They taste good though, and, you know, some some opportunistic people have set up stalls in the night market that, just for butchering and selling the uh the vines. Who has been changing the birds to different colors because I thought about doing that?

**Austin:** That's me. That's Austin. I'm not gonna use the the 3M color. That's that's not right. Do this one. There we go.

**Jack:** What is the 3M color? Red.

**Austin:** The yellow. The post-it note yellow.

**Jack:** Oh, wait, 3M make post-it notes?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yes. I've not told the story on this podcast before, that I used to work for a trademark researcher, one of our clients was — uh oh. Someone moved something very big. Someone —

**Keith:** What...

**Austin:** Oh I got it.

**Keith:** I guess it was me?

**Austin:** I think this got moved. Yeah, it's fine.

**Keith:** I just meant to, I just dragged my sticky note.

**Austin:** I think you clicked something else on top of that, that's fine, I locked it. Um. The, uh, I worked for a trademark company, a trademark research company, this was right after college, forever ago. One of our clients was 3M. We rolled out a um, a, this is like — this is like PDFs were just hitting, you know what I mean? Like not literally, I believe the PDF had been around for longer than that, but like the PDF had not been, I I had not used the PDF in college, do you know what I mean, I was not reading PDF stuff often, you know, I I — just — you know, I had, but only because I was like an extremely nerdy kid, you know. Um uh and so we were developing our own kind of proprietary system that used PDFs and like let you do markup to get these reports for companies. So you know, 3M would be like, we want to roll out a thing called super sticky notes and they would ask us to make sure that there wasn't, that some competing company didn't have super sticky notes, right, and so one of the things that we had in our digital like uh report system was a system to mark up these reports and send notes back and forth between our research, you know, liaisons and whatever our client company was. 3M took one look at it and sent us a cease and desist because we used a yellow too close to their yellow, uh,

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** For our digital post-it notes, on the on the thing. They were like you can't do that, you should know you can't do that, you're a trademark research company, that's a trademark that we own, is that, that yellow, so.

**Ali:** Wow.

**Jack:** 3M of course have appeared in Friends at the Table before as, um, Minerva.

**Austin:** Minerva! Minerva Mining and Manufacture, 3M, yeah. Uh-huh.

**Jack:** They also make my favorite —

**Keith:** By the way, I do believe that every color should be owned by a different company.

**Ali:** [uncomfortable] Mm. [laughs]

**Austin:** [laughs] We're heading to that future. Um. Okay. Jack?

**Jack:** Oh, I was just going to say 3M make my favorite N95 masks, the N95 Aura is really good.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, that's what I use too!

**Austin:** Ah. Huh.

**Jack:** Those are good masks!

**Sylvi:** Yeah!

**Austin:** Use your profile to introduce your character. Once you all know who you all are it's time to make some connections. Once you've made your connections you should delete the sticky notes, you won't need them again. Um, uh, record anything important in your notes. Choose one bond question to ask the player to your left. Your answers might be quick and clear or you might talk through them with the player. Choose and name two minor characters from your list of resident relationships. It can be fun to combine residents with other players so your quote "beautiful spacer I told everything to" might be another player's "perfect employee that I just can't stand". Um, so, if we take a look here we should all have uh the bonds here, and we're each asking, what did I say, one to the player to your left? Let's use the, let's use the sheet order here, so Ali, your player is Keith, Keith your player is me, uh, Sylvi is mine and Jack is Sylvi's. We'll go with counterclockwise, that's sort — counterclockwise and left are sort of the same thing, right?

**Ali:** Yeah!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Kind of.

**Ali:** Where are we gonna mark these?

**Keith:** Unless you're at six o'clock.

**Austin:** Right, wow, that's that's true.

**Ali:** But we removed player orange, who would be six o'clock, so we're fine.

**Sylvi:** There you go.

**Austin:** You're right, we got rid of six o'clock, good catch. Um. So yeah, one, one bond question that you ask the player to your left. Uh, who, who's ready to ask first? This is, everyone should have two bond questions.

**Jack:** Yeah, where do these go?

**Austin:** They go...

**Sylvi:** In the notes section, there's no like specific bonds spot.

**Austin:** In, there we go. Yeah, that makes sense.

**Jack:** I can ask. Hey, Deutsche Synchro!

**Sylvi:** Yes!

**Jack:** Who I have no suspicions about.

**Austin:** Nope, you're going the wrong way, Jack.

**Jack:** Fuck!

**Austin:** Left. Left.

[2:40:00]

**Austin:** Yours is the one to your left, literally.

**Jack:** Okay, I was a little bit confused.

**Austin:** Yeah, you're asking about—

**Jack:** Deutsche, screw you! Mustard!

**Austin:** Wow.

**Sylvi:** Wow.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Sylvi:** Wow!

**Ali:** Hello!

**Jack:** Um... Mustard, what did you request that I am struggling to find?

**Ali:** Ooh, um... wow. Um. What would I need? What are things that I would need to be a little nerd? Um.

**Keith:** [laughing] I like how your whole conception of the Monitor is like, oh, just some nerd, just some little weirdo freak.

**Ali:** [laughs] You know, just like an omnipresent, extremely observant, obsessive nerd who is um...

**Keith:** [nerd voice] Yeah, I like to just manipulate sub-systems and dispatch agents.

**Ali:** [cackles] Um, yea —

**Jack:** [nerd voice] I just don't want our home to become a prized port in the war.

**Ali:** Yeah, come on! Um, it's funny because my mind automatically goes to something like outrageously ridiculous which is like, I really wish that you could import this magazine for me! [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, that's perfect!

**Jack:** I mean why not, that's really fun. Yeah. Yeah, go for it, but. But, what is the magazine, and what's it about?

**Ali:** Sure, um. Like a fashion magazine? I have to stop, I have to stop leaning this ridiculous but.

**Austin:** This is not ridiculous at all.

**Jack:** We're in the Mirage!

**Ali:** Why not, yeah, exactly, yeah, yeah. What are the —

**Jack:** A high fashion magazine.

**Ali:** Uh-huh, yeah. Where would it be from that it's hard to — well I guess it doesn't matter, this is, play to find out what happens, but.

**Austin:** Yeah! I mean, but, you know, it could be from wherever you want, it could be an old magazine that's hard to — hard to get, you know, a physical copy of, it could be a thing that's just on a planet that's kind of far away, especially for like where we are in the orbit around the Mirage, you know, all those planets could be days and days away. You know, or months and months away, because we're late in the cycle.

**Jack:** It could have featured — it could have featured fashion that's dangerous to see and so was banned.

[Keith and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** Mm. I love that. That's it. It's gotta be that. Yeah.

**Keith:** Politically dangerous or physiologically dangerous?

**Jack:** Physiologically dangerous.

**Austin:** Physiologically. Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah yeah.

**Jack:** Mustard Red asking —

**Austin:** It's like, uh, Rite of Spring but fashion.

**Jack:** Yeah or, um, UbU.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Mustard Red asked me to import a fashion magazine, a banned fashion magazine...

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Jack:** Containing clothes that are danger — fashion! Because they might be accessories.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Ali:** Yeah, yeah, please.

**Jack:** That is dangerous to look at.

**Keith:** Bracelets that kill!

**Jack:** Except the magazine was — yeah, I don't know, we'll figure out —

**Austin:** We'll figure it out!

**Jack:** — what the magazine is called but in my brain I'm just like, it was just like the equivalent of Vogue but they accidentally printed a centerfield that kills you.

[Ali cackles]

**Keith:** Mour — Mourgue.

**Austin:** Mm. All right.

**Ali:** It's like the Lavender Town theme.

**Austin:** Ooh.

**Sylvi:** Ooh.

**Ali:** So scary!

**Austin:** Um, Mustard, you ask a question to Cheal.

**Ali:** Yeah, Cheal, um. What misdeed did I catch you doing yesterday?

**Austin:** Ooh!

**Keith:** Ooh! Um. What kind of misdeeds is Cheal doing, who is, happens to currently be penitent for my troubled past.

**Jack:** Oh damn, that implies misdeeds!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I, imo.

**Austin:** Wait, what was this about being penitent?



**Keith:** Well, yeah, I'm I'm, uh, I I run my club as penitence for my troubled past.

**Austin:** Oh, I see, I see.

**Keith:** Um. Oh! Duh. You caught me gardening, which I'm banned from doing.

**Austin:** Ah!

**Ali:** Whoa!

**Jack:** Whoa!

**Austin:** Because — are you — did you set these vines up? Is this what you did?

**Keith:** ["I dunno" noise], it's...

**Austin:** Okay. Yeah, it's fine. We won't say anything.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** All right, so caught Cheal gardening. Cheal, you need to ask me some questions, or a question.

**Keith:** Um, I — oh that's where I put them. Put them down here. Uh, what rumor did I hear about you yesterday?

**Austin:** Ooh. Uh. [amused] How big should we swing? Um.

**Keith:** As big as you can.

**Austin:** All right, so... it's likely you know me, right, because like I'm a I'm a — I'm basically a pop star, right? That's the thing though, it's very, I guess I didn't say that during my character introduction, but 3T, Tanager is a pop star, right? Uh, or like a music star, right, I think probably does a bunch of cool stuff. I don't know what our, what our, I don't, I don't know what the music is like 500 years after the Twilight Mirage. Like Twilight Mirage was already breaking us on music, you know what I mean? Um, also Frank Ocean hasn't released a new project yet, so it's hard.

**Jack:** I'm trying to figure it out.

**Austin:** Um. [laughs] But. Um. I think you heard — so you know me, so I don't know how you take this. This, uh, rumor.

**Keith:** Mm-hm.

**Austin:** Um, I'm — you heard. *You heard*. This is a rumor.

**Jack:** *You* heard.

**Austin:** Yeah, what *you* heard was.

**Keith:** I am in a position to hear rumors.

**Austin:** Totally. You heard I was — I'm loading guns onto the, onto the orange shipment. I'm loading, I've been loading weapons onto the orange shipment.

**Keith:** Ooh. Damn.

**Austin:** Weapons and soldiers. It's just a rumor! But. Um. And then back or I guess over to Deutsche — uh, which is how — I know you as Deutsche, I don't know you as Lament, right? Just Deutsche.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Everyone knows me as Deuntsche. Deutsche. [silly voice] Doynch.

**Austin:** Um. Doynch?!

**Sylvi:** Doynch! [cross] I don't know —

**Jack:** [cross] Smoke a [inaudible]

[Everyone starts laughing]

**Austin:** [cross] Smokin big doynch,

**Sylvi:** [cross] It's not Doynch!

**Austin:** Smokin big doynch in Amish... um.

**Sylvi:** [cross] Okay, well now her name is Doynch Amish.

**Austin:** [cross] Shout outs. Fuckin. Shut the —

**Jack:** Doynch...

**Austin:** Ohhhh....

**Sylvi:** No, it's fine, it's fine. It's fine!

[everyone audibly recovering]

**Austin:** Oh, how tragic do I want to be? Um.

**Sylvi:** Mm.

**Austin:** Oh, both of mine are good. I'm going to read you what both of mine are. My first one is "how did I capture your attention yesterday?", and then my second one is "what are we building together to help my goal?" and they're both so tragic [laughs] to be asking the fucking assassin from the Principality!

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Yeah...

**Austin:** Augh!

**Sylvi:** Not great... Um, to be fair I thought I was going to be asking you questions and I was like these, those are also both extremely complicated for these characters, I'm glad we ended up next to each other.

**Austin:** I know. Um, I guess my question might — my meta question is, do we want to start as people who might work together on a thing, because if so, that's to me that's how did I capture your attention yesterday, and if we instead have already met it would be what are we building together.

**Sylvi:** Um.

**Austin:** I could go either way.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, that's tough. I guess I'm trying to consider like how much of this — maybe it would be better to have like some slightly ongoing things sort of like how Fiasco games work where —

**Austin:** Yeah, so let's do what are we — so what are we building together to help my goal?

**Sylvi:** Um.

**Austin:** Which, my goal, again, is is — my goal, again, is to push the Principality out of Palisade.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Um. I wanna, my gut is like a network of people.

**Austin:** Oh, interesting.

**Sylvi:** Cuz like I work as a bartender, right, that's like a hub of like social stuff.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvi:** And then also with what your character is doing with like their music and art and stuff there's like that element kind of tied in. Um so I think it's like building an um a network of like sympathetic, like people who are sympathetic to your cause that could support things, um, which is like totally cool for me to have, be helping you figure out. So it's going to be fine.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Deutsche is helping me build a network of sympathetic people, or people sympathetic to my cause.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** And then I am asking Paris France, correct?

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Sylvi:** I think the most fun one here is "how did I end up working for you?"

**Austin:** Oh that's so fun.

**Sylvi:** "Why are you keeping my true identity secret?" is also good, but how did I end up working for you for the, for the this like like imports, like weirdo, sounds great to me.

**Jack:** Mm. You're you're a bartender.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

[pause]

**Sylvi:** We could also go to the the like, why are you keeping my identity secret if you've got something that's like immediately jumped out for that.

**Jack:** Yeah, let's see.

**Sylvi:** Um.

**Jack:** Why would a... oh! I mean, why would a goods broker hide that he knows the identity of a of a Principality spy —

**Austin:** Ohhh. Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Ah. Yeah.

**Jack:** — is interesting in the sense of like, I might be able to — I've been selling fruits and vegetables, but there might be a more lucrative business opportunity coming ringing, and that's the old-fashioned war profiteering.

**Sylvi:** Okay!

**Jack:** Um. Additionally, you might be able to give me access to things from outside of the Mirage.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** Like illegal magazines. Dangerous.

**Sylvi:** So...

**Jack:** Imagine telling someone from the Principality, "I need you to get me a magazine where the fashion in it kills you if you look at it" and they're like where — what are we trying to invade? What is going on here?

**Austin:** [laughs] Oh, but that does sound like a Columnar fashion magazine to me, for what it's worth.

**Jack:** You think Columnar could make fashion that would kill you if you looked at it and then they'd print it in a magazine?

**Austin:** I don't — was that not in the last season at some point? I like, I'm shocked that wasn't one of their weird super tech, future tech things. The Pact is definitely working on an image that will kill you if you see it. Uh, 100%.

**Keith:** Yeah, it definitely sounds like them.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, but they might not be the people who would — yes, it's interesting in the way that these two settings, uh, are in conversation with each other, right, because I feel like Columnar are like "wow! Let's make a suit that kills people and let's deploy it onto the battlefield."

**Austin:** No — well — the thing is, no, so Columnar — I mean, yes, but Columnar is, I guess Columnar or Nideo, right, Nideo is is control over popular mass culture, right, they are the present. They are like top 40 radio and the church and the schools, right? Columnar is cutting edge avant-garde, um, the ways in which uh uh you can have a counter-cultural, uh, revolution that only ends up reinscribing the broader, you know, imperial uh uh desires, right. Um, uh, so like they — remember, they were the group

that had like um the interesting cons — like, band that used the Perennial Wave to make live music, right?

**Jack:** Oh yeah!

**Austin:** They are 100% into that stuff, they're into that kind of like toyetic, collector, you know style of design for their for their robots but also for for literal toys. Uh, one of the things that happened towards the end of that season was, um, there was that bit where I made, I think it was Art, Keith and Dre? Do a scene in the, um, while, uh, the Red, the Red Light was approaching the city, uh, where we did like a flashforward of them investigating new inventions, and Keith I think yours was a Columnar wave board that just couldn't flip over, right? Like no matter what you did it would keep balanced. So I fully think that they're the place that would do, would go into the cultural in order to make terrible devices that would kill you. You know?

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Um. Yeah. Yeah, Wave Fried Art is right, Dakota, but that was not Agon, Agon is, uh, Agon was, um, uh, one of the, not the Oxblood but the, um. God, I've, I have now forgotten who Agon was with. No, it was uh...

**Jack:** Ooh, the Company of the Spade?

**Austin:** Company of the Spade, correct. Um. I do — god, I did have names for the Wave Fried musicians, though. Uh, but I don't remember what they were, who they were. It's annoying. Anyway!

**Jack:** Um but yeah I've put down "I know Deutsche's true identity and see it as a valuable source of contraband."

**Austin:** Love it. Jerica Vault and Roland Tenten. That's, that's who are the Wave Fried musicians — anyway! Yes. Mm! Thomas Whitney in the chat says "did Columnar get their hands on a piece of Gucci's mech? I'm thinking about art that does humanity harm." Fuck! Uh. Just a picture of one of Grand Mag's mechs. Um. Okay, I think that's all of our questions, right, so that means we can come back up here to uh, oh yeah! So now we choose and name two minor characters from our list of resident relationships. Um, which we should all have on one of these other stickies, the same sticky.

**Ali:** Oh we choose two of them?

**Austin:** We get two of them, two of them. Yep.

**Ali:** Ooh, okay.

**Austin:** And and we have, um, everybody should copy one, uh, one of these uh stickies up here that are in the Brink map, the purple ones and that's where we're putting our minor characters. We're putting them on on those, so grab grab one of those or copy one, and then fill it out and then drop it back in.

**Sylvi:** Where are we putting them, on our character sheet or?

**Austin:** No, these go to live on, in that section of the Brink, uh, map. Cuz like minor characters are for all of us to mess with, not just us. We can all play as them or invoke them.

**Keith:** I'm gonna mess with these characters — I'm gonna FUCK these characters up!

**Austin:** Fuck these characters up!

[Ali laughs]

**Sylvi:** I mean, I might!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** I got a kill move!

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Ali:** Damn. ...Okay.

**Sylvi:** Oh yeah, no, that one's a guarantee. There's one of these, this list where it's like I'm not gonna say no to that, come on now.

**Keith:** I'm gonna take out one word out of one of these. These don't have to be, we're not doing like... this feels like one where it might be part of the rules that it has to be as written but I'm assuming that that's not true.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Sylvi:** I love the first two that we both went to for, Ali, if this was yours in the top right. Both of us very on brand.

**Ali:** Uh-huh!

**Sylvi:** Um. I don't know where to put my shit. [laughs] Uh, there. Um we're doing two each?

**Austin:** Two each.

[pause]

**Ali:** Yeah, I guess a quick shout out. While there's a lull here. In terms of like, why did Ali choose the Monitor and just make a weird funny cute girl. Um, I do want to shout out a short comic by Twitter user [ggbbggbbbb](#), um,

**Austin:** [laughs] Great name.

**Ali:** Titled [weird girl x weird girl](#), um, which the plot is basically it's a girl cuddling with her girlfriend and is like, oh, she left her phone, I can look through it—

**Sylvi:** [gasps] Yes!

**Austin:** Oh, I've seen this, it's really good!

**Ali:** Yeah! And then [laughs] finds a bunch of security photos of people dying on work and then the next day she goes to her, her job at a facility that looks pretty dangerous and looks back at the camera and thinks if I died here, would she watch?

**Austin:** Mm. Mm-hm.

**Jack:** Oh, wow!

**Ali:** So. That's the energy I'm bringing to this game!

**Sylvi:** Yeah. BB Wolfclaw on Twitter,

**Austin:** Shout outs.

**Sylvi:** If people wanna search for the display knife — display name, if it's a little easier on the —

**Austin:** Display knife!!

[Ali cackles]

**Austin:** Stealing name, Display Knife!

**Sylvi:** I can't speak today — [laughing] I really can't speak today,

**Keith:** Display Knife!

**Sylvi:** I'm just like, what is going on here?

**Austin:** God.



**Sylvi:** [laughing] Oh. I'm short circuiting. Okay, okay.

**Austin:** No, Display Knife is too good for that character.

[Ali and Sylvi laugh]

**Austin:** All right we're — heavy pivot really quick.

**Sylvi:** Oh, that's a good — oh, I can make that work, yeah. Mm. Mm? Do I want to make that work? These are the questions we ask ourselves here on Friends at the Table.

**Keith:** That's funny, that's a funny one.

[pause]

**Sylvi:** I'm gonna change... some of the stuff on this, but whatever. Oh yeah, should I mark which of these are mine? Or like which ones we—

**Jack:** That'd be probably a good idea or like color code them or.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, kay.

**Keith:** [cross] Oh, okay, I'll make mine purple, all mine will be purple.

**Austin:** [cross] Uh I mean yes and no because — oh, you're right, I guess that's the thing is. Uh, but write your character's name, if you can, on the description, so that — because we're not gonna — in a week when we sit down to play, we're not gonna remember. So for instance, Display Knife is 3T's rival and one-time lover. So.

**Sylvi:** God damn! Hell yeah!

**Austin:** Um.

**Sylvi:** Um...

**Ali:** I'm so mad that — I mean, it's an interesting game thing but I'm mad that one of my prompts is "my spouse that I love less than my job".

**Austin:** Ooh!

**Ali:** Hey, come on!

[Austin and Ali laugh]

**Sylvi:** I don't have names yet, is that cool?

**Austin:** That's totally fine, we're not playing for a week.

**Sylvi:** Cool. [laughs]

**Austin:** Snatch. [pause] Uh, are we — we're still missing one set, right? Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Can get rid of this now. Boop. Only have insights left.

**Ali:** Or no I'm the green player so I'm gonna...

**Austin:** Oh, that's a good idea, match them by that.

**Sylvi:** Didn't we say we're not doing yellow post-it notes though?

**Austin:** We're good. We're good.

**Ali:** Oh, true.

**Sylvi:** I'll make mine pink.

**Austin:** I'm just gonna change the color, I'm just gonna change the color of my... my stuff to match my...

**Keith:** I mean I think you're in more trouble just by saying post-it note.

**Ali:** True. [laughs]

**Sylvi:** Fuckin... sue me then!

[3:00:00]

[pause]

**Keith:** Someone at 3M just cracked their knuckles.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, listen!

**Austin:** Yeah, they'll do it. Trust me!

**Sylvi:** Smite me, motherfucker!

[pause]

**Sylvi:** I have multiple display knives, by the way. But peop — to people in the chat, that's, that is just a thing about me.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Um. There are these boxes that I didn't really notice, uh. The first one here says "if you like, record a brief summary of each action along here." Um.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But I misread it as "if you like to record" and I'm like, I do like to record!

**Austin:** We do it all the time!

**Keith:** We do it all the time!

**Sylvi:** Doing it right now!

[pause]

**Sylvi:** False Fruit?

[amused noises]

**Austin:** Spoilers.

**Keith:** False Fruit.

**Austin:** [cross] All right, tell — well, I mean, let's just —

**Sylvi:** [cross] Sorry, too many jokes popped into my head at once.

[Keith sneezes]

**Austin:** [laughs] Let's just do it. Bless you, was that Jack? [another sneeze] Oh, bless you twice.

**Jack:** That's Syl — uh, that's Keith.

**Austin:** It's Keith. Uh, Jack, do you want to read yours?

**Jack:** Yeah, uh, one of my minor characters is Pinball, Paris's old boss who still thinks he's calling the shots. Uh, despite the fact that that's over and done with, that's old

news, I'm doing my own thing. Uh, and False Fruit, an Orchard Guildsman and Paris's rival fruit trader.

**Austin:** Great. Mine are uh Coracin Seventine, the head of security, the pissy bureaucrat trying to shut 3T down, and Display Knife, my, uh 3T's rival and one-time lover, also a musician. Rival musician and former lover.

**Ali:** Oh, sure, yeah.

**Jack:** Don't date musicians, don't date musicians.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Wait a second.

**Keith:** Don't rival one-time lovers!

**Austin:** [sighs] Who's up? Yeah.

**Ali:** Um, mine is, I do not have names but mine is the charming rogue I can't help loving and, um, my former mentor turned biggest critic.

**Austin:** Ooh. Sure.

**Jack:** The way you've written your name after it looks like it's like a call and response in a song,

[Laughter]

**Jack:** It's like, the charming rogue I can't help loving! Mustard!

**Austin and Keith** [in unison]: Mustard!

**Jack:** My former mentor and biggest critic! Mustard!

**Austin and Keith** [scattered]: Mustard!

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Ah. Uh, who is pink, is that Sylvi?

**Sylvi:** That's me, yeah, so I've got — Keith, I need you to move your your mouse a little bit for me, if you don't mind.

**Keith:** Oh. Sorry.

**Sylvi:** Thank you so much. Um, Cratch Hatchet, the surly space hauler I play cards with.

**Jack:** Oh my god, it's such a good name.

**Austin:** It's very good.

**Sylvi:** Um. And Joy De Vivre, the beautiful spacer I told everything to.

**Austin:** Mm. Joy.

[pause]

**Jack:** Great. Great!

**Keith:** Oh, am I last?

**Austin:** Yeah, you're last.

**Keith:** Uh, Pushy's perfect employee, Craig, that he just can't stand.

[Laughter]

**Keith:** And the ghost? Question mark? That watches over Pushy.

**Austin:** Is that? That was one, that's really one of yours? That's on — it does, does it say that or did you — oh, the software ghost, I see. That's fine. Ghost! Could be a regular ghost!

**Keith:** Ghost.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah. Mm-hm.

**Keith:** Could be a software ghost! There's a question mark.

**Austin:** Totally. It's true.

**Ali:** Yeah, it could be!

**Austin:** Um, also I just wanted to say, we didn't do this, but Mustard, you haven't named any of yours yet. You could combine with anybody out there, still. So you, your biggest mentor could be...

**Ali:** Oh, sure, sure.

**Jack:** Cratch Hatchet.

**Austin:** Cratch Hatchet or or Coracin Seventine, or your charming rogue could be Joy De Vivre —

**Keith:** [cross] Oh, what a missed opportunity!

**Ali:** [cross] Could be Joy, yeah.

**Sylvi:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** It's not too late, Keith.

**Keith:** It's not too late. Uh...

[pause]

**Austin:** I could have a ghost one-time lover who's now a digital ghost...

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Pop artist but I feel like that's, I feel like you like the mystery of the ghost question mark.

**Keith:** I like the mystery of the ghost.

**Austin:** Yeah, I get you.

**Ali:** [cross] Um, I think I am —

**Keith:** [cross] Yeah, these are kinda a little incompatible. Unless Mustard had a really shitty, uh, former mentor turned biggest critic, is like also a bartender at a comedy club nightclub.

**Ali:** I mean!

**Austin:** It's totally possible.

**Keith:** Do you want your former mentor and biggest critic to be Craig?

[Laughter]

**Ali:** Sort of! Yeah, I mean if I'm like, if I'm like a a a secretary freak.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** I think I think my former mentor being a guy named Craig. [laughs]

[Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, that's very funny.

**Jack:** Look, there's a lot of negative self-talk about this character, Ali.

**Austin:** Yeah, Ali, you're allowed to love yourself, please!

[Ali cackles]

**Keith:** Sorry to all the Craigs out there for the way that we say the name Craig, by the way.

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Keith:** The disdainful tone of the name Craig.

**Sylvi:** Is it just because of the the Discord bot we tried using and didn't work out?

**Austin:** The Discord bot, Craig, yeah.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** I wanna be clear — Craig, the Discord bot, has been serving me well lately. Uh, a lot of the Realis playtesters have been using Craig to record their playtests, it's been very sweet.

**Ali:** Oh wow!

**Austin:** Craig's done a good job, so far.

**Jack:** Is Craig the one who had such great catchphrases as [deep voice] **Hello**, or like [deep voice] **Craig is here**.

**Austin:** Now! Weston —

**Jack:** What did he say?

**Austin:** Weston in the chat said, yeah, uh [Craig voice] **Now recording!** is what he would say!

[Laughter]

**Austin:** Um, uh, Craig. Weston in the chat, Weston L. Marigold says, Craig the bear? Now, here's the thing, isn't it. Craig is not a bear.

**Keith:** Who?

**Sylvi:** What?

**Jack:** What??

**Austin:** Craig is not a bear. Now, I'm gonna post — here we go. Right here. Do you see on the screen where it says "Craig is the multi-chat track voice recording channel bot for Discord."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I thought this was a bear.

**Keith:** ...Oh. [cross] Is this like how the Twitter thing is not a bird?

**Ali:** [cross] Is that some sort of mole?

**Austin:** No, it's not like that. They just have —

**Ali:** Is it a weasel?

**Austin:** It's an otter!

**Keith and Ali:** Ohhh!

**Sylvi:** Oh! That's actually very funny!

**Austin:** It's very funny.

**Sylvi:** That's actually the funniest possible thing it could be.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** [laughing] It is, it — it is. It is the funniest possible thing it could be! Uh, it is an otter.



**Keith:** Why do I remember that Craig's n — why did I remember that Craig's name was Z-raig?

**Austin:** [cross] We, that's an inside — we did that. We made it Zraig.

**Sylvi:** [cross] We changed it to Zraig.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Zraig, yeah. [laughs]

**Keith:** Okay! [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** Okay!

**Ali:** We're just doing funny little things in our chat sometimes! [laughs]

**Austin:** We have fun here! Yeah. Um.

**Keith:** In my head that was the real name. It was Z-raig.

**Austin:** It was Zraig? Yeah. And we had made it Craig, in fact, to...

**Jack:** We did start calling him Zraig, past a certain point.

**Austin:** We did! It's true.

**Keith:** Yeah, definitely. We definitely called him.

**Jack:** And he responded in his usual way, by saying now recording!

**Keith:** [Craig voice] **Now recording!**

**Austin:** God. Okay, I actually have a thing for your Craig, for your boss, former boss Craig, that might make sense, which is, if, um, are you part of the group... what is it called... uh, Brink Proxy, are you part of Brink Proxy, the group that like does maintenance and the stuff that Jack was describing before, that operates subsystems and life support systems and does all that stuff? Ali?

**Ali:** When you say you, do you mean me?

**Austin:** I mean you. Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah, probably. Um, yeah.

**Austin:** Because I was thinking, well, it could just be as simple as that like that group rotates in and out, because they're such a, remember they're a volunteer group. So it's like, maybe Craig used to do that and then like Craig's time was up and moved back to doing what Craig does when... you know, it's like, Craig's tour came up in the Proxy and was your bo — in the Brink Proxy, was your boss and then, and then went back to being a comedy bartender. By which I mean someone who works at a comedy club, not — or at a nightclub, not someone who does comedy bartending!

**Ali:** [laughs] Well, every Saturday night!

**Austin:** Oh my god!

**Ali:** It's Craig night!

**Austin:** God. Wait did —

**Keith:** I hate Craig night!

**Sylvi:** If they ever put me on shift during Craig night, I'm... ugh, miserable.

**Austin:** Ali, you wrote, you wrote Joe instead of Joy, is that —

**Ali:** [wheezing] Did I write—??!

**Austin:** Is that — you did. Are they —

**Ali:** Oh no!! I meant Joy!!

**Sylvi:** Joe De Vivre.

**Ali:** I meant Joy.

**Austin:** You meant Joy.

**Ali:** I meant Joy.

**Austin:** Okay, not siblings, not...

**Ali:** I figured that Joy would, um, be a character that we would..

**Austin:** [laughing] Joe is very funny though!

**Keith:** [laughing] Joe De Vivre is funny!

**Jack:** It's real Smack Talk and his brother David.

**Austin:** Yeah, it is Smack Talk, yeah, uh-huh.

[Ali cackles]

**Keith:** [cross] That's the funniest — that is a phenomenal...

**Sylvi:** [cross] They could be Joy's sibling, still, it's just not this specific character we're talking about.

**Austin:** Oh, that's...

**Ali:** Yeah...

**Keith:** Yeah, that is a future character for another thing.

**Austin:** For another, yeah, we'll get there.

**Sylvi:** Who happens to be a charming rogue.

**Jack:** Oh, no, it's also really funny. Because Mustard is in love with Joe and it seems like Deutsche is in love with their sister Joy?

**Austin:** Uh-huh! Joy! Yeah. It's very complex.

**Ali:** Should I change it back to Joe? Cuz that's really funny to me. [laughs]

**Austin:** It's kind of funny.

**Jack:** [inaudible], Ali.

**Austin:** The De Vivre siblings. Yeah!

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The De Vivres.

**Ali:** I originally —

**Keith:** Who could help but fall for the charming rogue Joe De Vivre?

[Laughter from everyone]

**Austin:** Joe...

**Keith:** Joe of life...

**Sylvi:** Ugh...

**Austin:** It means Joe of life!

**Jack:** Joe of life...

**Austin:** Oh...

[more cackling]

**Austin:** Someone edit that Michael Lutz, please...

[laughter slowly trailing off]

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** One second, oh...

**Sylvi:** Of course, their father, Danny De Vivre.

**Austin:** Yeah, Danny Devito, uh-huh.

**Jack:** Oh my god!

**Sylvi:** No, Danny De Vivre, not Danny Devito!

**Austin:** Oh, well. Right, yes. [laughs]

**Jack:** Okay! What else do we need to do?

**Austin:** Uh, good question. Good question.

**Ali:** Head out?

**Austin:** No, wait — wait, you said I cut out?

**Ali:** No, I said is that it?

**Austin:** No, uh, almost.

**Jack:** I think we got insights and then that might be it?

**Austin:** Put that there for later. Um. Where are we at? Because we've done that, we've done two minor characters. Um, how to play! All right, play guide! Uh, I think that there's

a starting play that we'll go through and that'll be where we stop, or we could stop now. Uh, play guide: "Unlike many role-playing games, Orbital has a structured turn system throughout play. Every round each player chooses one of the three narrative actions to move the story forward. Uh narrate a minor scene: Explore your character's life in a short narration; frame a major scene: Answer a story question through improvised play; uh, or read the station: Gather perspectives from your community on a vital issue. If you don't — you don't have to follow the same turn order each round, but every player should take an action — excuse me — an action before anyone goes again. Full descriptions, uh, uh, on the actions can be found by expanding the cards on the action board, coming next!" That's nice! Oh these these these expand! Oh that's really cool, okay. Neat, okay. Um. I love, I love when things expand. Uh [laughs].

**Austin:** Starting play. After creating your station — oh, wait. Uh, okay. That's — we'll get to that when we're actually doing this next turn, or next week. Uh, whenever we pick up, maybe not next week. "After creating your station aspects and characters, you are ready to play. Read through these next few slides to familiarize yourself with the flow of the game. In the first round, each player will narrate a minor scene. This serves two purposes. Firstly, to show your character in their everyday routine. You should remind everyone who you are, what you look like, and what normal means to you. Secondly, you'll choose an insight from your character sheet and link it to one of the threats facing your station. Use the prompt in your narration. This will entangle your character in the story, making it easier to bring — to bring you all together and get things going."

**Austin:** After that, you take turns normally. Choose an action each round, "think about what your character wants to achieve and who could help them succeed. Bringing the characters together as swiftly as possible is strongly advised. If you're struggling to come up with an idea, pause for a moment and talk with the table. Ask, what do we want to find out next? As you discuss, consider the remaining station threats, aspect questions, and your character's motivations. At the end of every round, consider the threats your station faces and decide if any were resolved. This might mean that they were averted or that they've already come to pass. Either way, cross them off your station sheet." Uh, when you, when you resolve the last threat, it's time to bring things to a close. Wrap up loose ends, play one more round, uh, etc and then you end with a minor scene. We'll get there when we get there.

**Keith:** Should, uh...

**Austin:** Uh, and then there's a debrief. So — yes?

**Keith:** Oh, every, every, I was thinking of the, uh, the cult threat and we should just be prepared to be having people who are, who are going missing and coming back as cultists.

**Austin:** I mean, yeah, that'll that'll that'll be happening, for sure. Um, but the thing that I I'm, I would love to give give us one last little thing here before we end, which is this "Narrate a Minor Scene". Um, uh, connecting — also, I just wanna delete all of the remaining orange cards. So, uh, first, we have to show our character on our everyday routine and then second, linking, uh, one of our insights to one of our threats. Which, you know, we all have that last, that last card that says what our insights are.

**Austin:** I will read the minor scenes bit, uh, rules, in a second. Here they are. Narrate a minor scene, I can now close this and — how do I, how *do* I — I expanded this earlier and it didn't — oh, there we go. There's a little expand button. "Minor scenes provide space to add depth to your character and bring the station's quieter parts into focus through solo narration. Give a short description of your character to the table. Consider where they are, what they're doing, what their surroundings are like, what just happened, and how they're feeling. You'll usually narrate in the third person, as in, "they take a long walk around the station hallways." If you want to interact with a minor character, ask someone else to play them. You can use moves as usual, though some are more suited to a major scene's dramatic interactions. Other players can also pick up aspects during your minor scene if the story requires it. Usually, though, it'll just be on your own."

**Austin:** "Scene ideas: Normal life, what's your typical routine; making preparations, how are you getting ready; visiting a contact, what do you need; talking with a friend, what will you share; a moment of rest, how will you wind down tonight?" So, everybody should think about what their, what their opening scene is, what's the first shot that we see, and it should tie one of your one, of your insights to one of our three threats, which, as a reminder, our three threats are: hundreds of military starships are using a nearby moon as a staging area; residents have been disappearing, emerging days later as new members of a strange cult; and a huge shipment of blue oranges has pushed the Brink to the brink, there are too many people to safely house, to keep well-fed, et cetera. Uh, does anyone have their, their idea for an opening scene for themselves, an opening minor scene for themselves? I think mine is fairly easy. Um. Which is — yeah, it's fairly easy and I think I'm gonna get a token from it. I I think — but I don't know if we open here. What's the *first* shot we see of the Brink?

[pause]

**Jack:** Is it the mo — do we just start in the morning? Insofar as a place like this has a morning, you know, people are awake all night, but there's going to be a shift change as, you know, families wake up to send kids to school or whatever.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** Does the Mirage do different things according to the time of day?

**Jack:** I imagine in some places it does, but.

**Keith:** Does the Mirage set?

**Austin:** We— it shifted.

**Jack:** It's perpetual sunset.

**Austin:** Yeah, but it would shift from like purple and blues to oranges and and yellows, you know, throughout the day, but I don't know that it was always... I don't know that it did that in a way that was always conducive to sleep cycles necessarily.

**Jack:** Also, real quick, can we get tokens in minor scenes or are the minor scenes more about just like —

**Austin:** You can use, you can use moves in minor scenes.

**Jack:** Okay, cool.

**Austin:** So yes. Ah, here we go, that's what our, that is what these little things are for. Okay. Well, we did skip a step here. Um, those little those little things above your character sheet... are your character, like, card, that you'll pull over into the action queue on the right. That's what that's for.

**Keith:** The role..

**Ali:** Ohhh...

**Austin:** You know like the little thing above your character sheet?

**Keith:** Where it says role, name?

**Austin:** Role, name, pronouns? Yes. That goes there, so that's where you'll write your role, which for me is the signal.

**Keith:** And it — does, is a reason why it doesn't just have our — is that so that we can change the role if we're being, if we're like...

**Austin:** No, it's just because it's your — um — your your turn is always your character, you play your aspects in other people's turns.

**Ali:** Mm. Oh, where do we... oh.

**Austin:** You see, in this like, there's this big thing here, yeah. There we go. I think I missed that. I did.

**Keith:** The f... I don't...

**Austin:** So you think, so Jack, your your suggestion is, um.

**Jack:** Brink wakes up.

**Austin:** Brink wakes up. Okay. Uh, I'm gonna, I'm gonna appear, I'm gonna do my minor scene as like actually not, not um — I'm like not in it in the, in the, uh, traditional way. I think it's a couple of young kids — uh, not young kids, this is me as a fucking grown man saying young kids. It's a bunch of young adults, a bunch of like, you know, 19 to 23 year olds, right? Um, uh, sleepily walking back from a concert, um, and playing my music, like a hologram of my music, you know, from their, in front of them in in holo, augmented reality, um uh like kind of their views of the, of the different moments, like sharing their views, creating a 3D like sync image between their two different views so they could see the hologram of me, you know, equally. Um, and it's me, you know. It's it's that thing — I don't know if you've ever done this. So, I'm really pulling out a memory of me going to see the Pixies, um, on the night before, um, the night before Thanksgiving. Um and I saw them twice in a row that night. I stayed and watched the second show. By the time it was over, it was like 4 a.m, uh, 4:30. Um, I was walking back to the subway and it was starting to get light out, and I'm in New York, and so, uh, the, people were getting ready for the new for the Thanksgiving Day parade. Full bands were there, marching bands in like all their regalia, all their you know their their uniforms, yawning, getting ready, and I just remember that walk back to my to my to the subway as being this like very joyous, tired thing. And I think with the, with the oranges coming, but more than that, cycle day, what did you end up calling it, Ali, what was the actual — the Cycle End Feast is coming. It's like, you know, these 20 year olds walking back from a concert, laughing, voices hoarse, uh decorations up for the cycle end, you know, are getting, being put up for the upcoming Cycle End Feast. Um, uh, I just remembered, we we do literally have a feast, don't we, in Twilight Mirage.

**Jack:** Oh, yes we do!

**Ali:** Oh, sure!

**Austin:** Um, this does not need to be the Feast of Patina.

**Ali:** Yeah, no...

**Austin:** But, uh, or maybe a lighter one than this, though I did invoke Thanksgiving just now, um.



**Ali:** People have dinner, you know, like.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Ali:** [laughing] It doesn't have to be a whole thing all the time!

**Austin:** [laughs] I'm just saying. Anyway. Um uh and and so it is, it is me performing, uh and is it is 3T being like.

[3:20:00]

**Austin:** Basically doing a call to action, basically saying that you know the the people in the Mirage, the leaders in the Mirage don't want us to get involved, they're cowards, they're letting people die, we have a responsibility, we're supposed to love each other, let love be your weapon, you know, raise your love up like a sword. Um, this is my next song, "my love is a sword and it's sharp"...

[Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Uh, "and it's sharper than yours"...

**Keith:** Mustard!

**Austin:** Uh, yeah [laughs]. And um the the the, that is my scene. I'm using, I'm using the the, um, my weak move "stoke someone's anger to sway them into acting against their best interests" as as one of the first scenes we see here are a bunch of young people getting increasingly, uh, interested in pushing a sort of militarism here. I — yeah, go ahead.

**Jack:** Is there a... could we get an image of that militarism making itself apparent in one way or another, rather than just these teens listening to music?

**Austin:** Yeah! I mean, I think that they start, I think that they like start ripping down the cycle, uh, the cycle day, um, decorations, and one of them, um, one of them uses that — you described their being, I think it was you. Somebody described one of our visuals as being the, um, bioluminescent algae-like organisms.

**Sylvi:** Oh, that was...

**Austin:** Those are light tubes, right? Uh, they grab one of those and break it, and use the goo inside to like, do graffiti.

**Jack:** Sick!

**Austin:** Uh, and and, you know, basically say, um, fuck the Principality, fuck peace. Um, and like underline it, and it like glows in that way. Um, and then, like, laughing, kind of tumble through the halls.

**Jack:** Mm.

**Austin:** I've acted this round.

**Jack:** Okay. Uh, I am walking through —

**Austin:** Oh, that is — sorry, I should have done the thing. That is me, my insight: "A new political movement is rising in its support," tying it to our first, our first threat, the war. The hundreds of military starships. Anyway. So, remember that you have to use that, you have to tie one of your insights to one of our threats.

**Jack:** Um, okay. I am in the corner of the bit of the warehouse that I rent, I don't have a whole warehouse, but I have like a little section of one, and I am checking through the stuff that, uh, I'm I'm, you know, basically like uh uh taking a stock audit in the morning, figuring out what I've got, what I've got to sell. Um, and I open, uh, one of the containers, uh, and there's a man inside.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Jack:** And he is wearing, um, Pact colors. Uh, he he hides back in the, uh, in the in the back of the, um, crate, uh, and he puts his hands up, uh, and he surrenders. Uh, and he is preparing to, he is prepared to defect. Uh, and he says that there are people on Palisade who uh have had enough of the war. They want the war to end. Uh, and that uh he just needs someone to take care of him here. The the Brink won't let him stay, they'll uh, you know, arrest him as a traitor and I need to keep him hidden. Uh and this is, uh, "I found a stowaway in a crate with a story," is my insight and the story is that there are, there is a faction, at least of uh the Pact, uh, on Palisade, who are seeing this as an opportunity to uh flee from the war, to desert, uh, and to join the the Twilight Mirage — whatever that means, whether they believe in it ideologically or they simply want to get out of the war. Um and uh I'm also making the weak move, um, "commit to provide for someone you know you can't support".

**Austin:** Ooh!

**Jack:** Uh, this is uh uh quite an uncomfortable decision for Paris because of their relationship with, uh, Deutsche, and they know that if they turned this guy in uh some questions might be asked that might lead people to discover that Paris is also associating with, uh, another known person from Palisade. Uh and one is a coincidence but two seems very deliberate.

**Austin:** Okay!

**Jack:** So, shaken, I readjust my my suit, my nice necktie, say, you know, I'll be, I'll be back, I'll bring you some food or whatever, I guess, uh, and go out to sell some fruit.

**Austin:** So Paris finds a stowaway and defector from the Pact and agrees to care for them. Great.

**Jack:** Uh less out of altruism and more, uh, what dangerous, dangerous stuff about myself will be revealed if I don't.

**Austin:** Yeah, fair. Uh, who has another one?

**Ali:** Um, I have a pretty straightforward one, um, which is I think that we see Mustard at the refueling station. It's early in the morning, um, she's clearly starting her day. She's going to the big, like — I don't want to say trough but like big thing that...

**Austin:** [laughing] We're not saying trough!

**Sylvi:** Sorry?

**Ali:** Of like...

**Austin:** Is that a water cooler?

**Ali:** It's not a vending machine, what's the like, what's the like, a fountain machine? Is that what it's called?

**Austin:** Yeah, like a soda fountain.

**Ali:** Like a soda fountain machine, yeah, and she's like getting one cup and putting multiple types of roast coffee in it and like.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Sylvi:** Hell yeah.

**Ali:** Filling that up halfway and then filling up the rest of the cup with like a milk, a milk substance, yeah yeah yeah.

**Austin:** Oh I love soda fountain coffee. Ugh...

**Ali:** Um and then I... I, she's a surveillance character but I kind of want to go like lower-tech um and have it be like, carrying like a like a computer device but like on the

screen it's like essentially like a Mii plaza but if it could like real time track people's locations?

**Austin:** Did you say a Mii plaza, like a Nintendo Mii plaza?

**Ali:** Yeah! Yeah, like, you know, when you log in and there would just be a bunch of guys standing around?

**Austin:** Yeah, okay, yeah. Oh, yeah, I was just... I getcha. I was just confirming.

**Ali:** [laughs] Yeah. Um. Just like little tiny little dots of of this map of the Brink of people, um, and I think, um, like she notices one of the the names appear, like appear-appear, um, and it's uh somebody who who was formerly missing, who could possibly now be in a cult!

**Austin:** Oh! Ohhh.

**Jack:** Oh, shit.

**Ali:** My insight is "I saw someone in the background of a news feed," and the news feed is my...

**Austin:** Ah, sure.

**Ali:** My own fucking spy shit. Um, to notice, you know, the comings and goings of people, because it's important, it's for their safety.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Ali:** Um. [sings] Bum-bum-bummm!

[pause]

**Austin:** That leaves —

**Jack:** Oh no, I don't know if that's, they're going — are they going missing, Ali, or are they a person who has been missing and now reappears?

**Austin:** Oh, I see, the person reappearing.

**Ali:** Yeah, them just reappearing, yeah.

**Austin:** Okay, okay. Uh-huh. Kay. Uh, who's up?

**Sylvi:** I have an idea? I think, um, Deutsche is at, um, at like, doing like — like... not actually tending bar right now but doing like pre, like they're getting ready to open, is kind of what's in my head. Um. And while, while she's like straightening some stuff out, um, the... [sighs] I'm trying to, I'm trying to, so I'm basically — my my thing here is that she's getting info from the Pact, and I'm, my, I think the the way that this actually happens —

**Austin:** Sorry, wait, from the Pact or from the Curtain?

**Sylvi:** The Curtain, I'm sorry.

**Austin:** No, you're good, I just wanted to confirm. No big.

**Sylvi:** [cross] I gotta be on top of that, gotta work for one of those and hate the other one.

**Austin:** [cross] gotta be. You work for the Curtain. Yeah, uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** The Curtain. Um. So what I think ends up happening actually is it, um, there's like something that pings um by her workstation that like is, like genuine — like I think it's like the phone lights up in a certain sequence, or whatever communication thing lights up in a certain sequence that makes her go to the bar restroom, where the mirror starts displaying text that is meant for her once it registers that she is in there.

**Austin:** Ooh.

**Jack:** Oh, great.

**Ali:** Yeah!

**Austin:** Love that.

**Sylvi:** Um. And I think it's just these big, blocky red letters, um. And the the first thing that appears is um, uh: *Unsanctioned Divinity detected on board the Brink*, um, monitor, uh, after that disappears it says: *Monitor threat level*, and um, *while awaiting further instructions*, and then the third thing is: *Kill list remains unchanged*.

**Austin:** Great.

**Sylvi:** Um. Yeah!

**Austin:** Uh.

**Jack:** It's a good time to be a spy.

**Sylvi:** Yeah! Super super normal, she's she's totally calm about this wrench being thrown into things. She's not, she's like visibly very angry about this before she leaves the bathroom.

**Austin:** And that leaves us with Cheal.

**Keith:** Um.

**Austin:** Oh, sorry, what did that connect, what was the...

**Sylvi:** Oh that was connecting to, sorry, that insight was, um.

**Austin:** You receive orders?

**Sylvi:** Yes yes yes — "you receive orders to prevent it at all costs."

**Austin:** Okay, sure.

**Sylvi:** Um, which I'm sort of leaning into the, which is connected to the the Lambent Strand, the Devotion here.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** [cross] Or the cult, I guess is the threat, right, it's the cult specifically.

**Austin:** [cross] Or I guess it's the cult, right, is the threat. The threat is the thing, right, so that's the cult.

**Sylvi:** Right.

**Austin:** Okay. Cheal!

**Keith:** Um. Okay, so. We have... how many per threat? Uh how many... Austin, you were threat one.

**Austin:** Uh, we have, I was threat one.

**Keith:** Everyone else was was cult?

**Austin:** No. No no no.

[Ali laughs]

**Jack:** No, I was threat, uh, I was threat one, I was the war.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** So we've got nothing on just, uh-oh there's lots of people right now.

**Keith:** Okay! All right. Well. Uh, then I'll I'll do, I'll have, I'll do I'll do, here's what I'll do. Uh, I've got, uh, a guy in my bar, new guy, it's late late, early early, kind of empty bar kind of, uh, vibe, and, uh, there's a —

**Austin:** Oh, was I performing at your venue?

**Keith:** Uh. I — okay, so I had imagined me alone in the bar hearing your big concert from somewhere where there's like a bigger...

**Austin:** Ahh, okay. That makes sense. Yeah, uh-huh.

**Keith:** But! Yeah. Uh, oh, I said new guy but I'm changing my mind because that's not what this says. One of my regulars, one of my, you know, I see you every, I see, you know, you're a once-a-month kind of guy.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** You know, cuz you're a tr — you're out hauling. Um, and, uh, he'd been in a fight, you know, it wasn't that bad, it's, you know, enough to where it's like, I'm gonna go get a drink and talk about that I got, I'm, you know, I I'm a little beaten up. Um, but there's a crowd at the weighing station — you get weighed and then you dock and then you get, uh, you know, whatever you need. Uh, and there's a crowd of people who are trying to lay hands on every single truck that comes in. And it's it's holding things up and people are like "don't touch my shit. Get away. Who are you?" Um, and, uh, he got out, tried to confront these people, and they like ganged up on him.

**Austin:** Oof.

**Keith:** And that is my first insight there, "one of my regulars has a black eye and a story," and I'm connecting that to threat number three, a huge shipment of blue oranges just has pushed the Brink to the brink.

**Austin:** Yeah. Did you say who the people were who were being violent?

**Keith:** I did not.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Jack:** But they were truckers, right, they were the...

**Austin:** They were truckers, that's, yeah, that's what I missed, or thought I heard but wasn't 00% sure.

**Keith:** Oh no, the people that were laying hands on the trucks were not truckers.

**Austin:** I see. Okay.

[pause]

**Keith:** But they were laying hands on the trucks.

**Austin:** You know what I'm just gonna say about, uh, big groups of people laying hands on the trucks. Yeah. Uh-uh. A black eyed regular. There we go. Um, all right. Well that's our first round and that's gonna end it for us tonight. Um, thank you all so much for hanging, uh, and we will be back, hopefully soon, as we, uh, as we come back to, to the Brink, I'm excited about these characters!

**Sylvi:** Yeah!

**Jack:** Yeah this is gonna be a lot of fun.

**Austin:** Agreed, all right.

**Sylvi:** Excited to meet the De Vivres!

[["Permanent Peace"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays out]

[3:36:27 - end]