

Twilight Mirage 21: One's Own Right

Transcriber: Vesta

[MUSIC - "The Twilight Mirage" starts]

AUSTIN (as Primary): Dispatch 173.

AUSTIN (as Primary): [continued] Hey. Satellite. I've been looking over the data you sent me with your latest scans from Quire. I, uh, I didn't see anything to be worried about, at first. But I ran them through the history, just on a whim, and, well. There isn't an exact match to anything we need to be worried about, but there are echoes. Or, not echoes, not even traces. Crumbs

AUSTIN (as Primary): [continued] And. I've just been thinking about the observers who did this last time. The ones in charge. Of stopping Independence? I just, what if they had all the pieces they needed, and they just missed something. Or what if something broke down? I just have all this information in front of me, and you're constantly gathering more, and I just worry, because there are so many points of failure, and all of them come back to us. And the stakes are so high, Satellite.

AUSTIN (as Primary): [continued] I. I've been thinking. Maybe you're right. And I know K-Upside can hear this, and I want them to. There's too much at risk to put this on two people. Even when one of them can do what you can, Gray. There are too many variables. Too many actors. And, well, frankly, the people here in the fleet know them better than we do. I think it's time to--

[Static]

AUSTIN (as Primary): [continued] Wait. What's this? There's a. There's a signal coming through--

[Static]

[music ends]

JANINE: So yeah I think that the thing that Signet says is- she put- yeah she puts a voice to the thing that like everyone on Thyrsus knows, and probably a lot of people on other ships know but like, that often doesn't really matter? Because it was a very- it was bad but like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: What's it gonna change by- by trying to undo the good that she does and stuff like that. But she says you know,

JANINE (as Signet): I was a- an Excerpt. I was the Excerpt of Belgard. And in the fight where Belgard was lost- she probably very specifically says was lost, and not like perished.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE (as Signet): I left Belgard. I left Belgard intact, and Belgard did not remain intact. And that's my- that's my sacrilege.

AUSTIN (as Iluna): I'm sorry. All the more reason to come with me.

AUSTIN: And she begins to walk towards the- the temple core, or the- the station, the core access, which is like another hallway that has these two giant doors that will lead into the core. Tender. Where are you headed? Are you headed towards-?

ALI: Yeah, I should head towards Mother's Story with the monks I think was the plan?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

JANINE: Or her ship, where's her ship again?

AUSTIN: Her ship is in storage. The big storage unit. Which is like, right next door. Like you're- it's very easy for you to get there, thankfully.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: The- so like as you go into storage, what you see is just like, first, a whole bunch of old, deactivated Synth units, like, dozens of them, that would have been used to process and move the ore between here and the temple, basically. Like, before it was properly finally refined, and then used to like, shine- polished and cut and all that stuff. They did the very first step. It's not clear- a lot of these Synths also are not of Divine Fleet make, like they're from a different era. Or a different- a different- they do not- they are not- you've no idea if they're sapient or not, because they're all turned off? But they are not from any popular manufacturer that you're familiar with, basically. I think that they are like really, round? Like they are really bulbous? They have like, really round shoulders and like a really, like big oval- ovaloid head, ovaloid? Ovaline?

JANINE: Oblong?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Ovaltine? Oblong. Oblong.

JACK: Not Ovaltine.

AUSTIN: It's not Ovaltine.

JANINE: Delicious Ovaltine head.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] And you see where there has been- the number of rocks, like there's actually not that much left here? There's like a bunch of the rocks have been processed and there haven't been new ones recently? And the- but there are a bunch that were covering up this like large white transport pod? That has- that have like, desaturated blue stripes on it? It's like white and blue, there are stars, it- you know, I think that the- it's, it looks like the way you might imagine like, what if the UN had spaceships? [Jack chuckles] I think it's like curved, it has plated armour in key places. And the pod-

JACK: Just like the UN?

AUSTIN: Much like the UN, exactly. And the monks follow you into- or- like follow you in there. There's no, the- Even, not Even. Different side of this game. Acre and Waltz Tango Cache had already revealed this? So you don't have to like, do a roll to find it. They'd already found it. And you're able to like, to like break into it quickly. What do you do?

ALI: She's not like, she went somewhere else. She's not like. This isn't a stand off. I'm just breaking-

AUSTIN: She is not here at this point, yeah yea. You've made it before her ship before she did, yes.

ALI: Is there like, is there anyone unaccounted for in this place? I guess besides her and Fourteen Fifteen at this point, that like,

AUSTIN: That's as far as you know I think.

ALI: Kind of like, start evacuation procedures? Or like the people I'm saving are with me at this point.

AUSTIN: People you're saving, there's eleven monks with you, or twelve monks with you, plus-plus you. And there's like- the back room, the back like- the breadth of this pod is not like, this is not like a comfortable situation? Like, the- most of her ship is designed to hold those Torches, right? So it's big, but like, you know, there are things for them to hold onto. There are not chairs. So, you know. Learn to be a good pilot, I guess.

ALI: [chuckles] Cause like- can I use my special brain power to like, make chairs, but that would be really weird.

AUSTIN: That's like a big jump from like, [Janine starts chuckling] I've never done this before, hold on, [Jack chuckles too] let me give you some armchairs. Y'all need armrests too?

JANINE: Benches, those are simpler.

ALI [overlapping with Janine]: I'm just really good at like, making accommodating places, so I-

AUSTIN: Oh. That is true.

ALI: -impulse. I don't know.

AUSTIN: That's true. That's exactly kinda good. What is interesting is like, the- this is like the first time you've seen- you go in there, and like all of her stuff- like you turn on the ship, basically? Maybe- do you have to hack into this ship? I think you have to turn on- try to hack into this ship, Ali.

ALI: Yeah, I would like to try to do that. I don't know if it's like, appropriate right now, but I'd like to do some like, snooping.

AUSTIN: Yea yea yea. Totally, that's hundred percent- like I was ready to give you something, but wait, you have to roll for something here so I can give you some snooping answers. Because I have the snooping answers in front of me,

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Oh good I would love to snoop.

AUSTIN: I just need to know. Do the- just give me an ana- an analyze? No, a Lift The Veil, if you-

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Let's focus on the snooping like. You're a pro hacker. You're able to get in there, and basically hotwire this fucking thing.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Using your- your brain. But yeah, you Lift The Veil. How do you feel while you're poking around in there?

ALI: I like stay powerful?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Because I think that it's kind of a- kind of power move to be like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Oh I'm saving all these people but you know, well I have the time.

AUSTIN: Yup. So that's a one. Damn! Two d6 plus one you got a twelve!

JACK: Woah.

AUSTIN: It's a good roll day. Good detail. It doesn't take you long to find it projected from a little like, you know how- how SUVs have the little fold down TVs for people on the back to see? There's one of those, but in this case it's just a holographic projector, that like spirits out a little gas, and then shoots light into that gas. And, the- the light first of all turns into the Earth, right? And makes like a little like *brr-brr-brr-brr! Brr*. Like, Earth [Ali whoops], that happens. And then like the you- you kind of like get the whatever the startup sound is, and then you get- basically you can just go through what her mission objectives are. Is there anything you specifically wanted to know before I give you the stuff you definitely get, but you get to- you get to basically tell me what you're looking for and I'll let you know.

ALI: It's tough cause I like, I think it's based off of what- what catch her eye? I think that like, there's like the general like "what would they even do in here?"

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: But there's also the bigger picture of like. Cause I feel like a week ago, or a month ago at this point, Tender learned that there was a like-

AUSTIN: It's been-

ALI: A war going on that's she's-

AUSTIN: It's been like six months. I wanna be clear, like. So for people who maybe haven't been following the intros very close. The intros are, each a day? Like they're a day from when Primary and Satellite set up shop originally. This- the Primary and Satellite who've been the intro voices. So it's like, report 44, that's 44 days into this story. And I think by the time we get to here, we're probably near one- at least near six months.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or there about. Near two hundred days or something. Because I think the one I recorded today or yesterday was like one forty something? So.

ALI: Well, okay okay. Cause I feel like- there's definitely the general like, what were they even doing here, but there's the bigger picture-

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: -of what other plans were they making like, what kind of

AUSTIN: Totally

ALI: preventative work can we do through having just-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Ali]: A hundred percent. So I'll give you both of those because you rolled a twelve,

ALI: Okay. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Which is a very good roll. The what she is here for is, that she is looking for info on a Divine. A Divine called Independence. Which people who've listened to this season know, is something that is not here. But she has scans that say it came this way, it passed through this system. They all have scans, and they're supposed to come find out where it landed. They don't know where it landed, so they're coming where to find out where it landed. So they're gonna use the gem-scanner and the history, like the files of this place to locate where it landed. Two, they were going to destroy any scans of Independence. Any like, basically this is like a super powerful gem scanner? That like yes, it can identify gems, but it can also perfectly perform copies of anything it scans? And so there's a chance that what it scanned was enough of Independence, that there could be a backup of Independence's mind here. And so, they were coming to find that and destroy it, because, Independence is like, public enemy number 1 on Earth.

AUSTIN [continued] Except, you ask that second question which is like, what is their bigger picture thing here? When is the invasion coming? And the answer that it isn't. Like I- I wanna know how you find this? But, this is nothing. Like, they send a couple people here every once in awhile, right? Like, this, this Sleep Detachment was six people or something. There are trillions on Earth. This isn't a war, this isn't- there is no great propaganda about this fight. This is someone signed a bill a thousand years ago, that said: oh and we'll keep a force up to get rid of Independence, and hunt down Independence on- no matter high or low, after what it did to us. And we're gonna commit to that. And over years like, the budgets got scrapped, and like, it used to be that you know, thousands of people went out on the hunt for- to find Independence. And nothing came back. And now, it's like, you know, we send out a dozen here or there. Most people on Earth like, don't care about this at all. They don't know about- they know there is a military. There have been other skirmishes with other forces in the universe, in the galaxy. But like, you're nothing to them. At all. Like, you don't- the Divine Fleet to Earth is what a province in Afghanistan to someone from middle America who is tuned out. Or from the coast of America,

who is tuned out. You're nothing. And that is- I'm curious, how do you find that out? Like what is the thing that tunes you into that?

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ALI: I think that like. So I think the thing that has upset Tender most about like encountering the Earth cult, and like getting more information about them like, especially the interaction with Declan's Corrective, is that there's no like. Like I think Declan is probably the most passionate person that she's been able-

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: To interact with? But even-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: -he was just like. Oh I killed a bunch of them and that was cool

AUSTIN: Mhm

ALI: And not like, with any sort of, you know, power or, or like,

AUSTIN: You're right there's no ideology that he's communicating to you besides "I want you to come home" and like

ALI: Right, which is like,

AUSTIN: And like-

ALI: Bullshit.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And I think- so kind of that's like, that's what she was kind of looking into,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Sort of a mantra or, like, a meaning or-

AUSTIN: The picture of Earth that you find from her stuff is like, you know, it's- it's I mean- it's a lot like looking at late nineties America. Or late nineties the w- not America, but like, late nineties. And it is actually looking a lot like late nineties America, actually. In a way that's- if y- if Tender knew about the nineties, would be really unsettling? [Ali chuckles] Like, you know, I- like,

Morning's Observation is from Seattle, and I described Seattle as looking like Seattle from the 1990s, right? Like, basically the way it looks now, today. You know, kind of Pacific Northwest climate. And it does have that. And there's no reason for it to, outside of someone made it that way. Like from what you can tell, from your like cursory scan as you're like- as the monks are like, hey can we get the fuck out of here? No, as you're like getting right to go, and you have like- you just have Earth stuff playing, basically? Like, on this holographic, like mist projector? It's just like, it is a world of like, it's caught in this moment where everyone is kind of like, everyone's kind of like- everyone's kind of struggling but like, it's been a good year? Do you know what I mean?

ALI: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Like. Oh we- "I gotta good bonus this year, honey!" Like that's where everyone is. And so no one's rocking the boat too much. And there is lots of people. And they always build more. There are lots of like, there are lots of, there's a big space project happening, currently? There's a big construction project? And everyone can't wait for it to be finished. It's in the news a lot, there are like debates over who would get the contract, and you know, all that stuff. But like it's just very every day, and it's very like, there's no hope for revolution there because, it's post- it's- it's they found the third way, right? Like, they found a way for them to just be like, "we're just- we're gonna take care of our people, everyone's gonna be happy and everyone's gonna work very hard, and everyone's gonna- you know maybe one day you'll own a bigger house! And that'll be cool, right?"

[Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: [continued] And that's about as far- maybe you'll get a promotion at work! And now you'll be the Junior VP of Marketing and Outreach! And then you'll be able to go home, and you know, to your- to your 2.5 kids, who you adopted, because you're gay and it's- we are you know, we're totally enthusiastic about queer culture. Like here in this business. Like, it's completely like, the great quote unquote promise of late capitalism of like, oh we don't care about your identity so long as you're a good worker, but it isn't- it isn't Rigour either, right? No one's being worked to the bone, it's just, there's no hope for a better future. This is as far as it's going. And that's it. And that's what Earth is. And, that's what you pick up as you like, fly out of this thing. And this giant space monster, like, flies over your ship being chased by a mech. So, Fourteen,

JACK: Mm?

AUSTIN: You are- what are you doing? Can we just cut to a different- like you're not in Castlerose's office anymore, where are you on The Sky Reflected In Mirrors at this point?

JACK: I think I'm in a- an apartment building.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I think this is an apartment building that Fourteen comes back to? When they come back to Mirrors? I don't- I mean I think- I think it's probably owned by the agency, I think it's like the ICA safehouse in Hitman or whatever?

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Maybe I was just thinking it's an AirBnB.

[people chuckle]

JACK: Well that's the thing, there are no neighbours. It's a- it's a tower block. I mean it's not like a huge tower block, but it's like, seven or eight stories tall?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And it has maybeee four families in it?

AUSTIN: Cause this is a massive city that has been- that isn't filled with a ton of people.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: This was-

JACK [overlapping with Austin]: And more specif-

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

JACK: More specifically doesn't even have the- more specifically doesn't have the power to power a city.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Like, it's a big deal in Mirrors? When they can like, and I'm putting really heavily inverted commas around this like, "bring a neighbourhood online" [Austin chuckles]

AUSTIN: Do they do it-

JACK: By like-

AUSTIN: Go ahead-

JACK: Oh, they do by like finding generators.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: Right.

JACK: And bringing generators in, and like translating the books that they worked at how to generators working. And that's a big deal.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: Do they ever just bring on a neighbourhood for a night? Where it's like- oh we found this great neighbourhood, we don't know where the local generator is, but we're going to bring in some power.

JACK [overlapping with Austin]: For sure.

AUSTIN: So you can just walk around for one night. And there's shops there, and like- or food carts, they don't- they don't go into the shops, they just wheel out food carts basically.

JACK: Yeah, well there's- two ways- there's two sorts of things that can happen there. There's the sort of vaguely tourist one, which is like, it's The Sky Reflected In Mirrors, so they're super into this stuff, so obviously that happens. And there's also the one that is like, perhaps a little close to the Dwarves in Hieron?

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: Of like, like an operation, because Mirrors is full of these like, exploration groups. Going like, alright, we found three blocks north of so and so, and we need to get power in there really fast [Austin chuckles] because we think something there is really important.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: So they wheel in a bunch of temporary generators and like, you know when there's like street fairs that run into the evening, there are those big arc lamps that get brought in?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: They bring in those. And it's like, I imagine, well A, everything is grayscale right now?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Because Mirrors is in orbit around this thing- and because of-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: Oh no no no. Here it is not actually.

JACK: Oh really?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: On this side of Benthos, no. On this side of Benthos, it is- there is in fact like, it's probably ultra saturated colour in the HBO special, just to like, really make it pop. In a weird way.

JACK: Oh yes, so like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: The blacks are really black,

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And the colours are really colourful. But it's mostly a dark city.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: It's like, and I'm definitely thinking of the film Dark City at the same time here.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: But yes, so Fourteen lives in an apartment building that has maybe, like, seven hundred rooms?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And, has about four families in them- and they're all across separate floors, and Fourteen lives on the top floor. So if you were to look at this apartment building, the buildings around it wouldn't be lit.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Maybe one or two of them would be like a bodega or something. And then like, five windows in this huge tower block-

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Are lit. And so the camera slowly zooms in, like, I'm picturing very like, Coen Brothers' Barton Fink,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Slowly zooms in on this top lit window, and we pass through the window, and The Body Politic is just like, I guess like sitting at a desk?

AUSTIN: Just looking- here's another question is, does The Body Politic remember what this city was like?

JACK: [thinking sounds]

AUSTIN: Like when they look outside the window, can they recall when there was a parade down this block?

JACK: I think the answer is no,

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: But I think that. You know sometimes when you're trying to conjure the memory of a place,

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JACK: Or conjure a memory of a- specifically a time, I get this a lot in mid-winter when I look at like, the trees, or the- the landscape around me? And I have to make a- it's like, it has to be with a force of will that I can imagine it during springtime.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Or that I can imagine it in summer time. I can imagine these trees being green. And then sometimes that's much easier than others and I think what happens to Fourteen as they look out of this window is that they can more easily imagine there being a parade here.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: It's not like a memory, but it is- if they were to remark on it, they'd be like oh, right, it's so easy to picture.

AUSTIN: Right. Hmm. The- the thing I like about that, now there's the double memory weirdness? [Jack chuckles] Of Fourteen Fifteen's own personal memories, and now this other thing of their memories, that are also memories that they didn't- there are memories now that they don't have, they didn't not have yesterday. [Jack chuckles]

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean?

JACK: Yes, they have acquired some new memories that they don't have.

AUSTIN: Yes! Exactly. Penny and Bon(?), right?

JACK: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: So I think this is, you're just like at this desk, are you looking over paper because it's just the contract by itself on this desk with like, a pen- a pen and inkwell, and like, some other coaster and a mug?

JACK: There's a contract on the desk, there's, my clothes are all like, an outfit is on a radiator.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: It's very much like, I think that the light on the desk, it- it flickers a filament in it? It- it's fading? And the way that it is powered is by- there's sort of like a, it's like a foot pedal under the desk?

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: If you crank the foot pedal a couple of time the lamp flares, and now power in the room, you've got- you've got fifteen minutes.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Of power in the room or whatever.

AUSTIN: Is there are radio- is there a radio playing or is it silent?

JACK: There's a radio playing, it came with the apartment? It's attached to the wall? [Austin chuckles] It's really hard to select the station,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Cause you have to do it from what would've been the, sort of the superintendent's office?

AUSTIN: Oh my god! So the superintendent gets to decide what the whole building listens to?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Or the different floors.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay.

JACK: Look. I don't know if it was supposed to be built like this, we just found this city.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Of course. What's- what type of music is playing?

JACK: It's a marching band- it's- it's marching band music.

AUSTIN: Okay. And then suddenly there's this other- there's like, the sound of a radio being tuned, basically? You know, you know what I mean like kind of the screechy, staticky sound?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And then, what do you do at that point? What's Fourteen do?

JACK: Where's the sound coming from?

AUSTIN: From the speakers. Well. And then like, you look to see if it's coming from the speakers, and it is? And also, it's k- it's picked up, it's as if someone is turning a volume knob in your head. And suddenly-

JACK: Oh no.

AUSTIN: You hear and see, something else. The last time you felt this was a while ago. Which was when the, the planet of Quire sent that feeling, that shock wave of sadness, throughout the Mirage? That feeling of being independent and being alone-

JACK: Oh, oh yeah.

AUSTIN: And it's the same sort of thing, it is a- it is the same sort of broadcast. It is a broadcast coming through the same sort of device that Gig Kephart has. Except this time, it's not Gig Kephart's voice, or face. There is no floating eye drone. There is another voice, and it, it's like,

AUSTIN (as ???): Is this thing on? Is this on? Hello?

AUSTIN: And a number of people come into view. I don't know how we see this. I think you see it in your head, as if it were a screen? I think that's how Keith has described how Gig's stream device works? There are six people in uniforms. They have like, their- they have like, big foldover panels on their- it's like a uniform jacket, like a military uniform? Has a big foldover like, panel, that then is unbuttoned at the top so it hangs down a little bit, do you know what I mean?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And, but- on the inside it's coloured different? I think it's like- I imagine it being like black and silver, basically? So it's almost like silver satin silk stuff on the inside. A number of them have bandanas on. One of them looks a lot like Morning's Observation? But no tattoos. And then the one who's speaking, you don't recognize, but then to everyone in the Fleet, all at once, she introduces herself.

[MUSIC - "Sui Juris" starts]

AUSTIN (as Open): My name is Open Metal. I am the Commandant of the reform group known as Sui Juris. If you work long hours to provide for your fellow citizens, you may know us. If you carefully scrutinize the stories fed to the fleet by Empyrean, then you may know us. If you are a patriot and a scholar of history, then you may know us. But if you do not know us, then fear not: because we know you.

AUSTIN (as Open): [continued] I speak on behalf of every citizen who swears allegiance to the Resonant Orbit, for every member of this so-called Divine Fleet. If you are a person and you hear this, then I speak in defense of you.

AUSTIN (as Open): [continued] What I am about to say will be hard to hear, but vital to understand: we are, whether we'd like to or not, leaving now the Age of Divines and returning to a galaxy, driven not by the whims of machine gods, but by the hard work, political action, and driving willpower of people. It is time that we admit that the Divine Fleet was a naive experiment. A long one, yes. One that produced much joy for its small population, certainly. But it, we, have only ever been a small splash in the ocean of the stars.

AUSTIN (as Open): [continued] And in the end, our faith in the Divines has, at best, led us to stray from our duty as members of a galactic community, and at worst, resulted in the deaths of millions of people, synthetic and organic both. But just as Empyrean should not be allowed to unilaterally make decisions about what comes next for all of us, neither should I. You are the people in power. Where we go from here is up to you. And so it is my job to make sure that you hold the reins of control in your hands. To that end, effective immediately, the seat of power in this fleet will be stripped from Seance and turned over to the By-and-By, a ship which contains a meaningful majority of the Fleet's total population. To that end, and to ensure a calm and orderly transfer of power, we have taken the Cadent Under Mirage into our protective custody.

AUSTIN: And then the camera, which is installed into a member of this group, it trembles and turns to reveal her, the Cadent. She's sitting on a sort of throne between two people with guns, they're in kind of a fancy looking meeting room.

AUSTIN: [continued] Then the cameraman turns away and looks out across a balcony and a sort of long forest below, and a massive window in the distance, revealing the view

from the top of the By-and-By. And then Open Metal steps back into frame, and she spreads her arms, and she says,

AUSTIN (as Open): The Age of Divines is over. Welcome to the Age of Sui Juris. The Age of One's Own Right.

[music end]

AUSTIN: And the funny thing about this is, no one over at the- at Privign hears any of that.

JACK: Hmm.

AUSTIN: So.

JACK: Can I- can I try something?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK [overlapping with Austin]: Just before- So, Fourteen is going to like sit upright in the chair.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And look at the contract?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And then, get up- I don't have a weapon yet. Or I guess Castlerose would've given me one, but I don't have my gun.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: Yeah. Yeah. Would've presented you with the same gun, right? Do you just get one of those?

JACK: No. No, no, no.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: So you've lost-

JACK: That gun has been preserved each time.

AUSTIN: Oh right. Right.

JACK: Like I gave it to Sho.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: That gun is gone for the moment.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: But yeah, no, so

AUSTIN: Oh, you know has it.

JACK: Aw, fucking shit.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Mother's Story just has your gun. [Jack chuckles and sighs in disbelief] Yeah.

JANINE: It's a nice gun.

JACK [overlapping with others]: So yeah, I'm just gonna

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Gonna, I'm gonna open the door into this darkened hallway?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And I'm just gonna shout down the stairs.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JACK (as Fourteen): Mrs Classic! Mrs Classic! Did you hear that?

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic): Is that you, Fourteen?

[people giggling]

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah I'm back-

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic): Fourteen! What was that?

JACK (as Fourteen???): Are you British?

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic???): A lil' bit of acting/everything.

[Ali shrieks with laughter]

JACK (as Fourteen???): You got that right.

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic???): I did!

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay well that's enough from me. Good to see you again!

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic): I hope everything is good!

JACK (as Fourteen): Never better!

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic) [overlapping with Jack]: With you! Would you like beef pie? We cooked beef pie!

JANINE: This is the bird from home movies that you're doing [all laugh].

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic): Shout it out!

JANINE: Say your last goodbyes.

AUSTIN (as Mrs Classic): Say your last goodbye!

JACK: And then it just snap cuts to-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Fourteen Fifteen with a backpack just walking away from-

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: From the tower block.

AUSTIN: God. And then from like, you know, from there to Signet. Who is now in the- is about to open this core, basically. So there- the- the core access room is like a digital space style waiting room? But it doesn't lead into the digital space, like it does just lead- like it's a very similar thing which is like you walk the station, and then you sit there and meditate until the door opens. You also do see that there- that three different New Earth Hegemony Torches have been destroyed here? Were clearly trying to force their way in. And these like, jewel encrusted you know, gold engraved turrets killed them.

AUSTIN: [continued] But when Iluna Vouje walks in, she kind of waves her hand, and they kind of deactivate, and let you approach. And, the- like there is no, there's actually no like, turning

keys at the same time. She rests her hand on the handle, and looks at you in the eye, as if to say like, we're doing this together. And then turns the handle, and opens it. And inside, there is just, it's a- it's a room that has mirrors all on the outside, or all along the walls basically, it's a circular room with a circular mirror all around the wall. And then the middle is a very comfortable looking plush like, chair. With a deactivated robotic body there. With like, it has, it kind of in my mind looks like, Janine what was the name of the robot in Metropolis again?

JANINE: Hadley(?).

AUSTIN: Hadley. It kind of looks like Hadley. In terms of its face, and in terms of having like that, that kind of- the kind of thing around its head, like again, a kind of a halo, kind of like a- I wanna say a tiara, but it does like, on top of having the kind of crown, it- the crown does also have a little rays that come out of it in to different directions. But I'm very much basing-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: So it's one of mine.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it actually looks like it's- it totally-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: So we both share a look.

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally. You absolutely share a look with you- with you, like. Which is weird. And, she bows her head. And she says,

AUSTIN (as Iluna): This was- the Divine that we worship, has not taken an Excerpt in many years.

AUSTIN: And she looks at you in the eye and says,

AUSTIN (as Iluna): You- you left Belgard to die. Are- [pauses] It is not a sin to be afraid in the face of the terrible.

AUSTIN: And then I think we get this from both your and Tender's perspectives at once because, in this moment we get like, we see, we see Acre 7 and Waltz Tango Cache finish their gem scanner thing? It like, *poof*, sends out a pulse that clears the radio silence? And reconnects and sends data back to the- the Beloved ship, via the proxy that you set up, so it's instant. Remember that you- at the beginning of this adventure you set up-

JANINE: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: That like proxy satellite? So you get it back to them, and then so, Tender, you get- it kind of probably flips between these two different things, it flips between Morning's Observation reading the message that, that he is deciphering, with the added scans- scanned data? From

the gem sca- the gem scanner, as you hear this voice actually read it. Which is the last report from, from this Excerpt. Who says.

AUSTIN: [continued] I've to find a voice for this person. Okay. Right, just kind of, I got it.

[MUSIC - "800 Years" starts]

AUSTIN (as Andara Aurora): Dispatch 286059.

AUSTIN (as Andara): [continued] Satellite here, Primary. I have bad news. Both Crystal Palace and Privign missed something in their predictions. The Annihilation-Class being Independence just entered our system, as expected, but an unexpected solar storm pushed it out of an impact vector with the planet Benthos.

AUSTIN (as Andara): [continued] It looks like. It looks like it's headed towards what we have down as the Quire system, now? I used to be one of these observation decks. Out near Quire. They moved me here. There's no known galactic-scale power there. There's no Fleet. There's no Principality. There's no Hegemony. There's nothing.

AUSTIN (as Andara): [continued] I think that that means that this has been a failure, Primary. I have been here for nearly 800 years. Do you understand? I sacrificed my flesh to be here, Primary. I could have- I could have stayed on cycle. I could have lived a normal life. I could have been a mechanic, or a florist, or I could have been a postman. I could have been like you. I could have just been a regular. Just been a regular agent.

AUSTIN (as Andara): [continued] I gave up everything so that I could stop this thing in its tracks, and we failed, because of an unanticipated solar flare? A solar flare that Crystal Palace says it couldn't expect? Crystal Palace, who expects everything? And now I'm wondering, hey, what if it could expect it? What if all the way back on Kesh, Crystal Palace saw this coming and sent us anyway? It saw this too, and saw us failing, and we're just one more link in the chain. In the chain fence protecting the citizens on cycle.

AUSTIN (as Andara): [continued] The monks here, the ones that call me Excerpt, they don't even. Care. They just keep on collecting rocks, they just. They just keep collecting rocks. And Privign, who is the only person here remotely like me. Privign's not dead. But they're not speaking. They've gone silent. The only one who knows what it's like to be like this. Privign won't say a thing.

AUSTIN (as Andara): [continued] And you know what? I think he has the right idea. I'm gonna go quiet too. Uh, I know that Crystal Palace is a heartless machine, Primary, but you know what? Tell it to go fuck itself. Tell everybody else that I'm sorry.

[music ends]

AUSTIN: And then it goes dead. And we get Iluna Vouje, like reaching in- like lifting the crown up off of this synthetic being's head. And inside there's like a long wire that stretches down from inside of the- the robotic core, like down through the entirety of their body and into like the floor, like their feet are like, stuck to the floor. And you could see that as she pulls the crown up, it like lifts the leg. And like, she pulls it as much as she can, and like, you feel it, or you can see that it- it doesn't snap, but like something unconnects. And then she like pulls it all the way up, and takes this long ribbon that like, glows, it again- it has colour. It has the sort of like, it's- it's luminous the same way that the Icono- Iconoclast is, but not- it doesn't- it's only a pinkish purple. It doesn't have like all the different colours. And she like, takes this thing that was literally running through the body of this Excerpt, and like spools it up and slips it into a little golden case. Which she- asks you to open your hand. She like just- she just takes your hands and opens them. And places it into your hand. And she says,

AUSTIN (as Iluna): Protect this.

JANINE (as Signet): With my life.

AUSTIN: And be- begins to leave, towards docking. And like as she turns to leave, you can see that she's like, holding back tears.

JANINE: [sighs] Oh boy.

AUSTIN: Tender.

ALI: Hi.

AUSTIN: Firstly, you hear all of that. Second of all, then there's like immediately all these radio signals that are just about the Cadent being kidnapped? [Jack chuckles] Like, not just coming in from like, I think you probably make immediate connection with Cascara and Morning's Observation. And Cascara is like,

AUSTIN (as Cascara): You need to get back here immediately. You know what, head straight for the By-and-By. [Ali chuckles] We'll meet you there.

AUSTIN: And then the- but like also just- there's just a lot of local communications, like you can hear people on the- the what do you call it? The Sky Reflected In Mirrors, locally communicating? But they can't communicate with the other Divine ships, because that is the rule that we set up at the beginning of the season. Like they- they only send out messages like, once a month. And so on every one of these ships, they all received that message because of this fucking stream suppressor. But none of them can talk to each other. And so it's just- I think it's like we get images of all these different cities floating in space, like anxious and scared, and wondering if they should break their rules too. And do what they've said they were never do,

which is start sending out signals, even during- you know, even when it's not allowed. Lots of like people demanding that they do that.

AUSTIN: [continued] Even more immediate problem which is a giant monster made of colour [Janine chuckling] that is banging on the side of this space station. What do you do?

ALI: I only get these bouncing signals, I don't get the like, full, I don't get the-

AUSTIN: I think now it hap- like you what I- you probably get the local newscaster, right? [Ali chuckles] Who is like - these statements from you know, our reporters have turned- have identified that the lead speaker was deployed on a colonization mission X years ago, you know

ALI: Right right right.

AUSTIN: Or whatever.

ALI: Yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: And you get the clips of them, you probably don't get the full statement. You know what, no, you get the full statement. We- this is, this the Divine Fleet- is not- is not part of fucking, what do you call it culture, like,

ALI: Soundbite?

AUSTIN: Soundbite culture, thank you very much. No, like, they play the whole thing, it's in context, you get the whole message. And- so what do you do? How are you feeling? [Ali makes thinking sounds] How's that powerful going? [Ali laughs nervously]

ALI: It's fine. I mean, not great. I don't know, it's a lot, I think it's a lot to process.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And it's also like, it's- she's in a spaceship [laughs].

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

ALI: With a bunch of like, you know, people that she's trying to-

AUSTIN: Monks, who are-

ALI: Save, it's not. She's not really in a situation where she can act out, cause she's in the middle of space?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Yeah, I don't know that she would like, it's weird cause I don't think that there's anyone that she would immediately reach out to? Right?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Like she's spoken to Cascara at this point, and is not- also they don't have a relationship where she would be like, oh, I feel some way about this, or like,

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ALI: -like request to do this thing in reaction to this.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: So I think that it's like, it- you know that feeling you get when you're like, you know that you're late for a thing, but you're on a subway?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And like, you know that you can't do anything to make the situation better,

AUSTIN: Yup.

ALI: But you still feel really bad about it?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Cause like, you just like- you know, the motions that you're gonna go through are gonna be what they are, and you're-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Gonna show up when you show up.

AUSTIN: And you just feel like shit the whole time.

ALI: You're just gonna be mad the whole time.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: It's that exact thing of being like, if I could- if there was a thing that I could do, I would do it, but I can't.

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah. So do you plot course for the By-and-By?

ALI: I think so, yeah, I think like, even like, even that- there's a hesitation even in that cause that's like, I don't know if I should bring these people to-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: This like, tense thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, to be fair they would probably be able to hang out on the main ship. Because Cascara did say like, meet us there?

ALI: Right, right right right, yeah yea yea.

AUSTIN: And also-

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: And also I don't know the like, I don't know that the By-and-By is completely like in a hostage situation so much as like,

AUSTIN: Who the fuck knows right? Yeah yea yea.

ALI: Like-

AUSTIN: What you don't have- here's one thing that you don't have. You don't know that Robin's Song is there.

ALI: Oh.

AUSTIN: The only person who knows that is Fourteen Fifteen,

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: Because they've seen Robin's Song there.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: As part of that group, which is I guess-

ALI: I didn't see it? I thought that I, isn't that part of the recording?

AUSTIN: No, it's just the audio recording, You don't have like,

ALI: Ohhh-

AUSTIN: A visual recording of it, do you know what I mean like,

ALI: -hhhhh.

AUSTIN: You're literally hearing recordings of it bouncing- bouncing around.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Ohh I didn't get the like string of that.

AUSTIN: This is broadcast directly into people's minds I gu- like I guess someone could have quickly hit record, and then uploaded I guess, but in my mind this was all audio-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: But they didn't send it out in projected gas format, which is what the Earth Hegemony.

AUSTIN: Right. [background noises overlapping] Thank you, exactly.

JACK: Fucking codex.

AUSTIN: You can try to load it, but it's all black-

JANINE: Dot p g f.

AUSTIN: -it's just, yeah, exactly. [Jack chuckles] There's no like- the layers are completely like flat, and it just looks terrible.

ALI: So what's on the news is like a transcription of what it was? From like,

AUSTIN: I think it was an audio recording of it, but that's it. Like- I think like- or if you got to a place you could probably find a recording and watch it, you know?

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But the- this is just like all comms, all just like comms chatter.

ALI: But- mm- the, the news reporting wouldn't mention that there's Earth's- Earth people?

AUSTIN: They don't know what that guy looks like.

ALI: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: That's just a guy. It's just a guy with blonde hair, you know, like-

ALI: Right right right, okay. Yeah. But it's not like Open Metal with assistance of the Earth Hegemony or like-

AUSTIN: No, not at all. Not at all, no. It's like this is a- this is clearly a terrorist group, you know that is- is trying to throw a coup, basically.

ALI: Does- but Cascara would know that, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I guess- I guess so. Yea yea yea. That's true. She would tell you.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah that's a good point. Yes. Yes. So yeah, she would say, I think she would totally say-

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Earth seems to be involved in some way.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Morning's Observation would probably even say at this point, like, this was a- this was his big plan. Was to like, find someone dissatisfied, and convince them to throw everything into the fire. [Jack chuckles, Janine groans] It's like Corrective times ten. You know, like,

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Why- why kill Divines like, all you have to do is say the Fleet is over. And then where are people gonna go?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Which is ironic, because like, if you're setting course for the By-and-By, you notice where they are, which is in orbit of the planet Quire. Because they've been expecting any day now, for those treaties to come through that would let them start to bring people down to Quire.

ALI: Right. Is the entire fleet, or is it just the By-and-By?

AUSTIN: Right now it's just the By-and-By.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Other- the other parts of the Fleet were supposed to also like move into position, but the By-and-By has so many people. The By-and-By is the most populous ship.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think that's part of- that's part of the state- and I think that the group also probably releases a statement which is like, you know, written in really ridiculous like, you know: hereforeto, we demand- these are our demands and, you know. As it is that, the By-and-By has the majority- you know- has the majority of civi- citizens of the Divine Fleet, and as it is that the- the rest of the Fleet has failed to protect the citizens and like, as it is etcetera down the whole line, you know what I mean? And that's part of their case, like, the By-and-By has the most people in the Fleet at this point. There's no reason it shouldn't be the most powerful ship-

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Outside of some notion that Emphyrean is supposed to be in charge? And fuck that. So the very least they're splitting the Cadent from Emphyrean, and at the most they want to end the Fleet. You don't have to go there actually, that's totally fine.

ALI: Right, no, I think I definitely am-

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: And I think I am definitely telling Cascara and Morning to like, keep me as updated as they can.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Like, in a like- if there's anything on a need to know basis I need to know?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: And-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I- it's like, I- I just like- I don't know- if you were a cat person, if like, hissing under your breath is a thing that you could do? [Austin chuckles] In reaction to things?

AUSTIN: A hundred percent.

ALI: But there's definitely that, there's like the very like, rhythmic like, slamming of her tail against the chair that she's on [Austin laughs] cause she's like pissed.

AUSTIN: Yeah that's so good!

ALI: And I don't know that like, it's as if- shit I- it's, a probably, a really weird trip for these monks, cause there's like this person who saved her, and she is furious-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: -about the thing that they like don't understand or can do anything about. But like-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Hoo. Not a good day.

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: Is it well- is there any- I guess, not the productive thing I can do is like, am I able to get any sense that like, Signet has escaped, or like, get in touch with the other Beloved, or like-

AUSTIN: Y'all can all be in contact at this point, totally.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Signet, you're probably like getting onto your ship now, right?

JANINE: Prob- I think, I wanna make sure that Acre and- and Waltz like-

AUSTIN: Their ship is gone.

JANINE: Okay, that's-

AUSTIN: Their ship is gone, and it's them, they are the ones who-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: I was gonna say that could maybe not be a good thing, but if we're sure it's that then okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay.

JANINE: Yeah then I'm letting up in the shuttle with Iluna I guess.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Iluna like, very like straight-faced, and like, as you begin to take off you see one of the gem collecting ships take like, fly over the- over Privign? And you can assume that Mother's Story took one of those out instead?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: To escape by herself. And- and you take off soon after that. But now you're out here. You're- you're- let me switch this back to the cool map of outer space. Boom.

JANINE: Aw we didn't save the- the little creature robot.

AUSTIN: You didn't. That's okay. That little creature robot, the little, surrogate chaplain was kind of, kind of just little machine, like,

JANINE: It was a little radio.

AUSTIN: It was a little radio, yeah.

JACK: Is now being vaporised by the- by Iconoclasts.

AUSTIN: By Iconoclasts, yeah. Uhhuh. Who turns as you leave- as you take off, it turns and looks at you. I think at this point like, Tender, you're still in the system, everyone is still in the system, Fourteen if you wanna be in a ship of some kind at this point, you can also been in a ship of some kind?

JACK: I think I'm like, chartering a ship.

AUSTIN: Okay. You're like, taking a- you're- yeah. Gotcha. To the By-and-By? Or towards-

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cool. I love the notion of you in front of like a big slapboard-

JACK: Yeah, yeah I tell you what it is,

AUSTIN: Terminal.

JACK [overlapping with Austin]: It's like, it's definitely like, those great images from like the Bourne Identity,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Of Jason Bourne standing underneath those like- in this big expansive European station, standing on the- these boards that are like: you can get here for really cheap-

AUSTIN: Right

JACK: And it will take you fourteen hours.

AUSTIN: I think what it is is the other way, which is like, we get all the slaps flipping over and it's like, flights cancelled, cancelled, cancelled, [Jack chuckles] prices going up. And then you have to charter an individual ship.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: You know?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because, that's-

JACK: Or with some kind of, some kind of like, fisherman or something.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. A hundred percent. Oh man. Yeah, okay, good. [Ali chuckles] We'll figure out who that is before- before. So just wanna give at least one scene of who that is. [Jack chuckles]

AUSTIN: [continued] Okay. But Signet, you are, then you and Tender are out in space when- and- and as is- the final member of the Beloved Ivy, Massalia- Massalia? Yes. Massalia D'Argent. Who is flying in their mech, and is like, you know see from the outside, occasionally shooting at this Iconoclast to no effect, obviously.

JANINE: Can I just tell them to stop.

AUSTIN: Yes, totally. They, they are- they don't respond. Their mech does? Their mech, Melodica, says like,

AUSTIN (as Melodica): There is no foe that we cannot defeat.

AUSTIN: And then does like another strafing run.

JANINE (as Signet) [overlapping with Austin]: This isn't a foe, this is a force. It's just, it's- it's not a being with, with a *will* that it's directing towards you that you simple have to overcome. It's- it's a-

AUSTIN: Something catches in your throat. It's the word will. And the- the bug, on you, the Exuvia, begins to chitter. And like, the- like at this point, Iconoclast leaps off of- like pushes itself off of the rock of Privign, which is beginning to like, cut down the middle and shatter. And you- and like, it tumbles towards you in space, like it tumbles head over head, cause it has heads on

both sides, and like, is slowly, very clumsily reaching for you and your ship. And it's sort of like pulling itself like, as if there are like ladders or handholds? On a force you can't see. Maybe on the- maybe on the Mirage itself. Like it- we maybe get it- it looks like it reaches into something that's in the background, and it's revealed that that background thing has become a la- a rung on a ladder for it to push itself off of and push towards you. You know, just like cosmic dust, or like a strange ribbon in the sky. Like it breaks 2D and 3D space as it moves towards you. What do you do?

JANINE: I mean I think, we've established that Signet's probably a decent pilot, right? Like, I think the thing to do is-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Yeah you have a mech

JANINE: Probably to outmanoeuvre it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Or to try and basically stay out of reach, and make its path more complicated.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Essentially.

AUSTIN: Sounds like a risk to me. How do you feel?

JANINE: I'm still spiked peaceful so I'm gonna roll that.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Austin]: So you stay peaceful on this? Okay.

JANINE: I wonder- I wonder if- Signet must have heard about the Cadent right? Also?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Yeah, at this point, yeah, totally.

JANINE: Or- Yeah.

AUSTIN: At this point like as you leave, totally. And I think Cascara again, sends the same message to you,

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: -that she sent to Tender and Fourteen. I guess Fourteen probably just yeah- yeah, same.

JANINE: It's- it's tempting to go- I don't think scared's right. It'd be tempting to go with a stronger thing, or to go with power- but I think peaceful is the thing because the priority is like, this is not important anymore. Like this whole situation we're in,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: It just needs to end, so we can do something about the actual important thing. Which is-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: -the Cadent.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JANINE: So it's just a kind of, we've burned out on sadness, and now we're just like okay, bye. We need to just go.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Give me that roll, Two d6 plus one. That's a six.

JANINE: Ugh. Did it do-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: It grabs you-

JANINE: Did it do plus-

AUSTIN: Yeah, two d6 plus one, it's a two, three, and a one.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: I just wanted to check.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh, that's fair. It's fair we did this. [Janine sighs] It grabs you, it like, it tumbles towards you and you know, this is not, this is not the Mariposa. This is a ship that's meant to get you from place to place,

JANINE: And I'm also used to piloting in a very different way than

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: In a chair.

AUSTIN: Yes, totally, a hundred percent. And it's, it is behind you? And then it is in front of you, and it grabs you, and it is alight. It is all around you. You feel peaceful, right now? Right? Like

you're in this spiked out peaceful? What is the most peaceful thing that Signet can imagine? W- what is the most peaceful place she can imagine? The most peaceful scene.

JANINE: Oh I know exactly what this is. That's my catchphrase. It's, I think, being in Belgard's cockpit but in very specific circumstances.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Like circumstances where Belgard is not attached to a ship. So there's no gravity.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But also circumstances where she's not active in that space? So she's not tethered in.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So it's probably a situation where there's no gravity, and she's just kind of like, floating in that kind of room without any of the- the things to hold her and place her or whatever. She's just floating in the middle, kind of like, turning, maybe with like her legs drawn up to her chest.

AUSTIN: Alright, there's like a pressure on you, that feels as if you are- your legs are pull up into your chest and are pushing into you? They're not, but there's that pressure there. And then like, bits of you start to disappear. What is the most peaceful thing she can think of that she's not involved in? Like, it's erasing- it sees, the Iconoclast sees this vision of peacefulness, and says, and effectively, is reaching in and rewriting it to be without her. She is not there anymore. What is the most peaceful thing- what is it- what does it mean- I mean, we know what peace looks like in this setting. But what does- what does Signet's vision of perfect peacefulness look like? Without her in it. Is there an image, is there a painting, is there a- is it nature, is it not nature? Is it a rock, is it a flower, is it not any of those things? [Janine exhales] Is it nothing at all?

JANINE: I think Signet's idea of peacefulness without her in it is probably a lot like- flower.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

JANINE: Not like specifically the idea of flowers and grass and this natural environment. But the idea of something caught in something else, and just kind of the pure quiet motion of it?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So like those flower petals caught in the wind. None of those things specifically being alive, or being conscious. But just kind of, something like that just happening.

AUSTIN: Okay. Now here's a third thing. It populates that space with people. But it is not you. It is only other people. What are they doing? Still peaceful, still the epitome of peacefulness.

JANINE: This might be weird. Like, I think they're just holding boxes?

AUSTIN: Huh.

JANINE: Holding like, very s- not like a cardboard box, but like. Part of the initial concept of Signet involved the idea of a reliquary,

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And reliquaries, and like gilded boxes- gold frame boxes with glass, with you know, relics or items of import inside.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I think for her it is just people holding these boxes of various sizes but I don't know if there's anything in them. They're just these-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: These empty reliquaries.

AUSTIN: Of those three images, which is the most peaceful? For Signet.

JANINE: [pauses] The one with Belgard.

AUSTIN: Okay. It like writhes and shouts and like, again, it's this like staticky, terrible sound. That's not as interesting actually, because it's- I actually like it being this kind of- I actually like it as a curved, like, almost like a saxophone or something, do you know what I mean? [Janine makes a pbtb sound] Or like a whale? It's like a whale sound?

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: But like a little more musical?

JANINE: Looks like a saxophone.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you know. It looks like a saxophone if a saxophone was a whale. And like, tears one of the engines off of the ship. It does something else too, which is it takes a component on you. Because it knows your true name. Which is fun. I think in the-

JANINE: I think it's not fun.

AUSTIN: No, it's not fun. It's not fun that it has a component on you,

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: That's bad. [sighs]

AUSTIN: That's not how this is supposed to work.

JANINE: [Ali chuckles] Oh, fuck.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. I have to make a note of this. Component on Signet. Iconoclasts [Ali laughs]. Have one-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: What a nightmare.

AUSTIN: -component on Signet. Mhm.

JACK: It's like the worst person to have a component on you.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But I also think that this- that moment of you've connected with them in a way you've never connected with them before. And I don't think it is able- like it, okay. It goes to break the engine off, and it can't pull its hand away. It's like stuck to you and the vessel. And the Exuvia is now like, lighting up. And it is bringing colour to your space again, like the colour- it flashes its wings, and colour is back in the ship. The rest of space is still not there yet, then it flashes its wings, and a bit more of it has, has shape and colour and like, and the colour is draining from the Iconoclast. And, it flashes its wings one more time, and it is just light now, and just white, regular light, and the whole sector, this whole zone gets light. Light pours in, colour pours back in, you can see Benthos now, and it is this beautiful blend of like, of ruby red and- and purple and clouds. It- it looks like a jewel. Like it looks like a deep red jewel. And it's just beautiful, it's almost blinding. But not as blinding as the light of this Iconoclast that still grips on to your ship. And I think this is where you answer the question. Are you asking at least?

JANINE: It isn't quite a question.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fine. Read the whole move from the top, from where it says, what's this good word- cybertome?

JANINE: Cybertome.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JANINE: So in that cas- for us, it's the Exuvia, we've decided.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. Yes.

JANINE: You begin with the cybertome. It is the last vestige of information you were to keep safe from the Iconoclast. They're coming from you and it, and so far you haven't been able to figure out how to open it. Choose one. And, this is the thing that you- that you get at a certain point. You get to do it at a certain point when you level.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JANINE: I've chosen to do it. So it contains the secrets of the Iconoclast. Its contents could destroy them. The remains of something ancient.

AUSTIN: Okay. So. I'm curious what the remains are, and you're gonna tell me that. But I can tell you what it knows. And- and I'm curious how it shows it to you. I'm trying to think of like a cool way. You know maybe it's a- it's a partner image to the one that we go a month ago or so now, from- from the planet Quire, which showed everyone in the Mirage the image of Independence landing on Quire and bringing war and destruction. Because eventually, they fought back and though it tore the world apart, and killed many many people, and you know, despite having great heroics and having you know, people who really sacrificed everything, the planet was basically nearly pushed to death.

AUSTIN: [continued] And, what we see is that there were in a sense, two groups of people- there are three groups who survived from that conflict. The first are those who escaped on what we know as called The Sky Reflected In Mirrors. And those were a small group of them, there were not a lot of them, they have since died, but they save the kind of genetic data of everybody who is in The Sky Reflected In Mirrors, who could be scanned and put into the machine that produces the bodies that Fourteen Fifteen comes out of. The second group are those who fled and hid, and spent some time on this planet until finally, someone found them. And that someone was Curiosity, who found them. And brought them back to the Fleet. And that, those people, became the Independents. Those who worship Independence and want to revive their- their now dead god. And some of them want to add Independence back to the Fleet, that it was never part of previously.

AUSTIN: [continued] And then there's a third group. Because, there is a group that saw Independence as flawed, because it had to deal with people. And it had to deal with what people thought independence was. And there on Quire, in its dying moments, Independence had a- a very powerful material to work with. It had Quire itself, the combination of Quire and the thing that came on the vessel, which- which in a recently recorded intro I called the Apostolesian smuggler ship, The Holiday Gambit, which crashed there, and brought something from somewhere else in the universe that mixed with Quire, and gave it this, almost magical power to kind of, do anything, and be turned into anything. And so, in its final moments, Independence built servants for itself. You know, guided by- by its worshippers that believed that it should

never deal with regular humans again, or synthetics. It should deal only with things that are more abstract than that.

AUSTIN: [continued] And so, it built the Iconoclasts from the living material of Quire and sent them out into space. And there they found the Divine Fleet, and then they found something really amazing, which is the Divine Fleet had learned to- you could have Divines that make Divines. And so, they thought, what if we could make something that made Divines, that didn't need people. What if we could break the covenant that held together the Resonant Orbit, which said, yes, Divines are so much more than people, but they are not something that should exist without people. That alongside these machines, that could do things that people, even synthetic people, could never dream of doing quickly. Things that are so much vaster than humanity. They should always still be paired with humanity, and- and the Iconoclasts, those early worshippers of Independence who became the Iconoclasts, or who helped- who helped Independence shaped the Iconoclasts into being. They said no. That so long as we are building Divines with us in mind, they will never actually be Divine. And so they began to put together whatever they needed to build a factory. A living factory, a factory of will. They call it Volition. And it is the fifth moon of Quire.

AUSTIN: [continued] I think we just get a shot of that fifth moon crumbling, turning, and we zoom in- we see that it does not have like a solid- it does not have like a solid form. It is liquid metal, it is, it is space contorting around itself. It is, from whatever angle you look at it, slightly different. It is- it is possibility turned into a sphere floating around a beautiful planet, and there behind it, is the By-and-By. And, I think ships begin to arrive.

AUSTIN: [continued] But you found out what hurts it. At least a little bit. It took something from you, right? But, what you insisted on, the thing that Exuvia responded to, was that, it is not- what is most peaceful is not some abstract notion without you in it. It's not even an abstract notion that has people sort of there. It's you. It's your subjective, personal definition of peacefulness. Anything else is less. It's not human, and it- it doesn't come through your perspective and so, you'd be deceiving yourself to insist that this kind of Platonic ideal of peacefulness is what Signet really believes is the most peaceful. She can pull herself out of it. And that offends them somehow. And it makes them vulnerable.

AUSTIN: [continued] I don't know how you capitalize on that vulnerability. And I don't know how this little beetle knows this stuff either. Maybe this was part of some- maybe this was part of the first Divine, or from the first Excerpt who interacted with the Iconoclasts? The one who first taught them that, or the one where they first learned that there were Divines that made Divines, I'm not sure. You can let me know. Now or in the future, you know. Any time. But I wanna know what Signet does in this moment, where you can tell this thing is weak and vulnerable.

JANINE: Okay, so it's. Lemme get- so it's hanging on, it's like stuck to where it broke the engine off.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: It's stuck. Yeah, the engine is broken but it can't let go off the rest of it- of the ship.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think the Exuvia is now like in full, flapping around this- this thing mode. [unintelligible] beetle.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: How's Iluna doing?

AUSTIN: Not great. A think a lot just happened very quickly, and she is like very taken aback.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And doesn't know the ship. She doesn't know are there controls she should be at? Like-

JANINE: Yeeah.

AUSTIN: I think she probably says like,

AUSTIN (as Iluna): Does this usually happen with the Beloved?

JANINE (as Signet): We're all very different. [Austin laughs] We all have our things. This is a bit new for me too. [Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: I love that earlier she said to Tender, she was like,

AUSTIN (as Iluna): So do you normally- is that nor- that was amazing! How did you?

AUSTIN: And now she's doing all this shit again.

AUSTIN (as Iluna): This is wild [Ali chuckles]. I just make gems. Like. What is happening? [Ali still shrieking with laughter]

JANINE: What- okay. I think if anything is to be done, it's here. It's to be done with Massalia.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: Like I think this is, this is the thing where I guess Signet probably would like trail off in the middle of her message,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And then, [sighs] yeah. God does she just tell Massalia to fucking shoot the hell out of her ship?

AUSTIN: Oh, maybe.

JANINE: That seems like bad? But also-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: You have a sidearm.

JANINE: But also- like, the thing is, if Massalia kills her, then Massalia can't brag. Then they can't like, brag about saving the day and about, being sort of cool.

AUSTIN: Because they killed Signet.

JANINE: Yeah because they killed Signet and the leader of this other religious order, like. And fucked up a ship, and ships are expensive. I think yeah, I think Signet would trust them to- to if she gives that order, to be like: you have a window, fucking make use of it right now. I think she would trust Massalia to actually make the most of that and not fuck up in the way that Signet has maybe been fucking up a bit lately.

AUSTIN: So you putting- what's the- god, I don't even know how to roll this. Like. *Huh*.

JANINE: Is this divert?

AUSTIN: I guess.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: Direct attention to yourself?

AUSTIN: I guess so? I think it just works, right. But like my question's going to be like, do you get hurt in this process? Does the ship blo- like. My question's whether or not Massalia's assault is able to do this without killing you, and not like, whether or not this thing is- is vulnerable. Because it is vulnerable,

JANINE: I mean-

AUSTIN: It has a flaw or a weakness.

JANINE: Yeah that's true. I mean, yeah, when you engage with someone in an attempt to distract, misdirect or otherwise direct attention to yourself or elsewhere.

AUSTIN: I guess that's the thing.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: If you're trying to get their attention.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: I'm trying to get their attention.

AUSTIN: Not- yeah yea, that's fair. Then divert. How do you feel? Peaceful still? Are you still going to do peaceful after that?

JANINE: Man, who the fuck knows. [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: You know what actually, fires is- uplift. Uplift fires. When you act or say-

JANINE: Ohhh.

AUSTIN: Something that defines your character to be morally positive, directly resulting in action or circumstance by another, which would've been considered morally reprehensible not to occur, choose one of the following and apply to each of- each of you, for each amount of essence consumed. You'd have to consume essence for this, but you could clear a spike out any of your states.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or wait, maybe you couldn't because it's only with your homeland, and peaceful is not one of your homelands, is it? No, it's not, it's sad and scared. That's good.

JANINE: Yeah. So I wouldn't be able-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: So never mind, you can't clear that way.

JANINE: No I wouldn't be able to clear that. But that's not-

AUSTIN: That's alright.

JANINE: The end of the world.

AUSTIN: Nope.

JANINE: I get to- I mean the thing is, I get to like, give Massalia advantage or something. Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. You have to spend essence to do it, I don't know if you wanna do that. I think maybe just roll divert, and then, that makes sense. But the question is whether or not you want to be peaceful or something else.

JANINE: Oh God yeah. I'm also just like, I just want this to work. [Janine whines]

AUSTIN: Me too. But this is how the dice work.

JANINE: Yeah. Oh-kay. If I die, I already have my next class picked out, so it's fine [Austin laughs]. Yay, it's an eight.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Hey, it's an eight, nice work!

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: Thank God.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. So divert you can two, you can pick two on a seven to nine. Your actions create opportunity for you or somebody else, you glean a flaw or weakness, they become confused or flustered, you are able to slip away.

JANINE: Oh- easy choice.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JANINE: I would like to create an opportunity for them,

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JANINE: And would also like to slip away.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. I think the interesting thing here is, the thing that doesn't- you end up, you don't talk to Massalia. You do talk to Melodica, but Melodica listens. And like, forms a- there's like a, zooms closer and forms a huge cutting beam? From- it has like giant shoulders, that's what I've decided? It's like a very thin body- it's like a very thin humanoid body, that has this giant jetpack shoulder thing, that like comes up over its head. Like almost like it's carrying two huge like stacks of- two huge speakers, basically? On each shoulder. That kind of come out in like a holder situation? And then like, one of them projects this giant cutting beam. And it just cuts through the- it like, goes into the Iconoclast, which is made of light, and then tilts, and you realise that the cutting beam is almost mirrored in some way? And it splits it in two, and like, the light from the Iconoclast splits and like shoots off in all these different directions like spotlights throughout space. And then it like-

[MUSIC - "The Twilight Mirage" starts]

AUSTIN: [continued] It doesn't blow up. It just- it fades away, it like, you can see the spotlights going off into the clouds, into the clouds of the Twilight Mirage. And as it goes out like, it continues to bring colour to everything else around it, and then is gone. And

you're able to slip away and like, chart a course towards the By-and-By. Towards Quire. Where the Cadent is held, where Volition rests in orbit. Where down on the ground, the crew of the Myriad prepares to go recover the missing Crown of Glass Undela Apogica, where everything seems to be turning all at once.

[music ends]