

Twilight Mirage 47: Uncontrolled Fires

Transcribed by @robotchangeling

AUSTIN (as Keen Forester Gloaming): An excerpt from a letter by Keen Forester Gloaming, chief intercessor of the Rapid Evening, delivered by secure courier to the Brink, one week before Dark Day. You've done a good job, Grey, really. Under other circumstances, I'd be proud. [*"The Twilight Mirage" by Jack de Quidt begins playing*] You secured limited access to K-upside switchboard and the Crystal Palace distribution. You managed to set up a burrow virus to funnel resources from the Kesh perennial fund. Your agents, even if you wouldn't call them that, have been able to avoid my own through a style of micro-probabilistic manipulation only you coulda taught them to do. Your presence has corralled a loose affiliation of smugglers, fixers, and the rankest of opportunists into a force for stability instead of decay. You and Demani have managed to keep the Brink, ostensibly a stationary trade hub, one step ahead of a being that has spent the last fifty thousand years demonstrably predicting the future. You have made yourself my rival, but I do not care, because I cannot lose you. You know that right now Crystal Palace can predict everything that's happenin' in this galaxy. It knows why young lovers break up better than they do. It knows the name of every newborn baby before breath can become parental voice. It knows the fates of armies and navies and singers and oceans and atoms and omelets. And it knows, and I know, and you know what's coming. In two weeks the dovetail snaps. The lights turn off. And guaranteed events, ain't. I warned Crystal Palace, Grey. You have to listen to me. I told it that this place was different, that small moves meant more here, that physical explanations were no longer enough. But it asked me to move in the interests of our people, and I did. Come back with me. There are other postings. We could sit, far away, you, me, and Demani, and whoever else you god damn well please. You are too talented, too smart, you've given up too much to walk into the unknown. I once told Demani that we had nothing to fear from what we couldn't see. That we were the sun. But I was wrong. We are nothin' but torches in the sea.

[*song plays to the end*]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker, you can find me on twitter [@austin_walker](#). Where can people find you, Art?

ART: Hey, they can find me on twitter [@atebbel](#), and they can listen to One Song Only—

AUSTIN: [*crosstalk*] [*chuckles*] There it is.

ART: —the new podcast launched by everyone on this call except Jack— [*Austin and ALI laugh*]

JACK: Hello.

ALI: *[laughing]* Hey, Jack.

ART: —about Kanye West, and which is the best Kanye West song. Yeah. Jack, what's your favorite Kanye West song?

JACK: I feel like I should be on the podcast. *[all laugh]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, hold onto that.

JACK: No, I wanna be clear, it's a cool as hell podcast.

AUSTIN: Thank you very much. Also with me, Jack. Where can people find you, Jack?

JACK: Hi, you can find me on twitter [@notquitereal](#). You can buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#). I am in Los Angeles at the moment, so I do not have my usual microphone.

AUSTIN: You still sound pretty good.

JACK: So thank you for your patience, *[Austin and Ali laugh]* Ali.

AUSTIN: And speaking of, where can people find you on twitter, Ali?

ALI: I am [@ali_west](#) on twitter.com, if you wanted to check out the show that's over at [@friends_table](#).

AUSTIN: That's a good place to go.

ALI: And that's the two places, yep.

AUSTIN: As always, if you'd like to support the show, you can go to [friendsatthetable.cash](#) or just go to patreon and search for friends at the table, and you'll find us there. We are in the middle of doing a bunch of cool stuff for patrons only. We have an ongoing campaign called Bluff City, where we take you through a fictionalized Atlantic City and do things like murder mysteries and wrestling. Wrestling is coming up very soon.

ART: *[crosstalk]* It's wrestling this month. It's wrestling this month.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is wrestling this month. Which was the original Bluff City idea.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah!

AUSTIN: I think the first idea for Bluff City was like—

JACK: We were gonna do a whole season of wrestling.

AUSTIN: A whole season of wrestling!

ALI: And detectives?

AUSTIN: Wrestling detectives. Wrestling and detectives, separately.

ALI: Yeah. *[giggles]*

AUSTIN: Some overlap, there was gonna be overlap. And there still is, we've actually already seen some of the detective stuff. A lot of what i had for the detective stuff has bubbled back up here or there throughout the previous sessions, now we're gonna finally get the wrestling side. I'm very excited.

ART: But without the full integration I had to ditch my character idea for that season, which was Sherlock Rest Holds?

AUSTIN: Oh my god. *[laughter]*

ALI: Haate you. I'm loggin' off. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Have a good one everybody. This was great. You can find us on twitter, friends_table. Alright. *[claps] [laughter continues]* Alright. So yeah, support us over there. We also have some live games, we got a bunch of stuff. Alright, so, I think i'm gonna just jump into it. Before we started playing last week actually, I guess maybe even two weeks now, I messaged Art, and I said "hey Art", and Art said like, "hey, why do you sound so ominous". *[chuckles]* And i said, "I need to know the answer to a question". And he said, "oh, well that's gonna- okay, what is it?" And I said, "you have a move called I know a guy, which says 'when you first dock at a port after being away, pick one and ask the GM about a job. You can either pick: it's not deadly, it pays well enough, it's not a rushed job, it comes from a faction you trust, it targets an enemy you have. You may spend one cred per additional feature.'" And, correct me if I'm wrong here, Art, but you chose "it comes from a faction you trust".

ART: Yes, I believe that's correct. I...this was not a private message, so everyone got in on this.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

ART: And I forget what I was going to pick—I think I was going to pick “pays well”, and I was talked into “faction I trust”.

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: Yeah, by me and Keith, I believe.

AUSTIN: That’s fair.

ART: And Keith’s not even here, who’s Keith getting saved from? No one. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: Mmhmm. I just want to briefly say, Keith in a live game is currently playing an alien baseball player named Keith Carberry. So.

JACK: Wait, for real?

AUSTIN: Mmhmm.

ALI: I hate him. *[laughs]*

JACK: What the fuck? This is some Ocean’s Twelve Julia Roberts bullshit here. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: It almost got even more than that, it’s—ugh, god, we’re gonna move on. *[Ali laughs]*
But, if you’re a patreon supporter, you would be able to go listen to that right now. *[laughter]* Or, not right now—

ART: Or something else! Just...

AUSTIN: Yeah, or *anything else* in protest. *[laughter]*

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AUSTIN: So, the place that you receive this mission is actually not on Skein, we’re gonna actually kind of jump back just a little bit. Before you arrive on Skein, the World Without End docks at the Brink, which is the space station that we saw in the Grand Magnificent’s “This Year of Ours” vignette. And, you know, you’ve been there a little bit, and I think at some point Demani Dusk finds you, the group of you, you three. The other group I think is already preparing for this next mission, like they’re already, you know, taken so to speak, their dance card is full. And Demani leads you to a quiet corner of the Brink, which is again kind of a shipping hub and a truck stop and kind of an information brokerage, a smugglers’ den also, that she runs with her fiancée Grey Gloaming. For people who have been listening to the beginning of the season, maybe those names are like, “oh I remember them, but I can’t quite place...”, they are Primary

and Satellite. Demani is Primary, Grey Gloaming is Satellite. And they operate this base together. By the time you enter this kind of secret room, Grey is already there, and she is inside this kind of command class chassis that is hanging from the ceiling. She has like a torso that's hanging from the ceiling, it's like a metal bronze torso, and from her chest, from like a jewel on her chest, there is a projector, or there's like light projecting what looks like a hard light hologram of a map of the system. Hard light is like a common—do people know what hard light is? If I say hard light—

ART: Yeah, I read *[past tense]* a lot of comic books.

AUSTIN: Okay. It's like light that you can touch, it's like physical light, it's like light that you can—light is physical. *[Ali giggles]* It's like- it's like tactile light. Like the green lantern makes stuff out of hard light, omnitools in mass effect are hard light, it's a pretty common like trope in science fiction and fantasy stuff. And Demani says like, she's like...I have to find her voice, *[easing into Demani's voice]* she's down here, she's down here I think, if I recall, a little throaty. She says,

AUSTIN (as Demani): Rapid Evening tech. This isn't just a projection, this is the sector. As it was...

AUSTIN: She says,

AUSTIN (as Demani): As it was about three months ago. Quantum entanglement, spooky physics, spookier metaphysics, I know. But it's how we know this.

AUSTIN: And she draws a kind of branching golden bracket over a small speck, that on this like map that you can kind of walk through of the entire sector, there's a small speck that is heading away from Volition. And she says,

AUSTIN (as Demani): It's how we know that this is an axiom.

AUSTIN: And before anyone can say anything else, Grey, who again is kind of attached above this room projecting this whole map, says,

AUSTIN (as Grey): It's not the only way we know that, Demani.

AUSTIN: And she kind of smiles and says,

AUSTIN (as Grey): Do you all know about the quarantine task force?

AUSTIN: You might know about the quarantine task force? Who—I guess, Tender probably knows about it? It is like the only thing that the Divine Free States and the New Earth

Hegemony have agreed to do—like not just agreed to do, but it's the only time that they have literally pooled resources.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's one of those things that probably came out of Seneschal's Brace, it's one of those things that I can imagine the Cadent Under Mirage and Declan's Corrective working on together, is saying like, "hey, listen, Volition is real scary! Um...we should watch that!" And they kind of set up eight small stations that orbit near Volition and monitor for Iconoclasts, monitor for axioms, and it's like underfunded [*chuckles*] I think you probably heard the Cadent like complain a bunch, Tender. Where it's just like, you know, they don't have enough people, they don't have enough supplies, it's always been more of a pet project than an important—like, no one wants to give it resources, 'cause those are resources that you're not putting into stuff that is yours, you know?

ALI: Okay. Yeah.

AUSTIN: So. I think, you know, if maybe you say yes, and then?

ALI: Yeah, I think I nod.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Grey explains the rest of that for everybody else. And she says,

AUSTIN (as Grey): Normally what happens is there's something big and they send a report back home and we can track it, or at the very least they, you know, send a military force to confront it and scare it away or something. But this time, because it was so small, both the Divine Free States and the New Earth Hegemony just didn't dedicate any additional resources to it, and they lost it. That was three months ago.

AUSTIN (as Demani): Today,

AUSTIN: Says Demani,

AUSTIN (as Demani): It's popped back up. Or, well, something like it. We have a sort of a read on its signal.

AUSTIN: And she claps her hands together, and as she does that, the projection that is- that *is*, I want to be clear this is like a weird quantum entanglement, weird—this isn't just a projection of the system. This is the system from three months ago, that has been shrunk down and produced in front of you. And now the time is moving on it, and you can see the planets begin to rotate, and the light is changing on them, and you're literally in this weird projection and moving through time. And the- you can see that like that speck disappears and kind of flips away, and the bracket goes away that had it showing on this kind of 3D HUD, and then it shows back up. And I wonder if there's anyone here who even notices this, because I don't know if any of y'all

are like astronomers enough for this. *[Ali laughs]* But, it's clear that you are past the time you're at currently. This is now like- it's not just- you pass—in fact, maybe there's a date somewhere that you can see, and it goes past the current date *[laughs slightly]* it goes into the future by a couple of weeks, and as it's doing that the map is actually kind of growing bigger and bigger, it's almost like, Tender, do you remember when there were like the big planets in the very first arc, for the projection of like, Earth, there was the kind of—

ALI: Oh, yes yes yes.

AUSTIN: So it's like, Jupiter is like bigger than you, right? In this case, Skein gets bigger and bigger, and you're kind of zooming in closer and closer to Skein, and things are getting fuzzier and fuzzier. It's almost as if you're going backwards in like game console generations, you know? And Demani explains that they have a backdoor access to a thing called Crystal Palace.

AUSTIN (as Demani): It can see just about everything. Just about everything in every direction, forward and back. Everything that's happened, everything that will happen. We don't have its full predictions, but normally we can see a few months ahead. Now...

AUSTIN: And the projection stops moving. She says,

AUSTIN (as Demani): We've only got a couple of weeks until what we're calling Dark Day. The day that we don't know what happens next.

AUSTIN: And you kind of see the- you see Skein, you're kind of over Skein in this kind of low poly version of it, which is like all green and blue, jungles and oceans, almost like N64 style, *[laughs slightly]* you know. And then like there's kind of these pastel cities that are just like little pink and green and yellow blocks basically, and these big floating kind of spheres that are hovering around above the oceans and hills and mountains, that are these floating corporate kind of arcologies that kind of float all around the planet, and Grey says,

AUSTIN (as Grey): What we do know is, the day that we're calling Dark Day, the day that the Crystal Palace projections that we have access to stop, is also the day that two murders bear the faint mark of this escaped axiom. The first is a scientist and researcher named Wind's Poem, who is part of a small technological arts collective, a group called Truance. The second is the sector's...is the leader of the Church of the Self, a religious group that has been growing in popularity over the last few months in the Hegemony's holdings here. And they were both killed with the same weapon, or they both will be killed with the same weapon. This hasn't happened yet. But Crystal Palace is certain it will. And whatever that weapon is, it's derived from that axiom.

AUSTIN: I think Demani at this point kind of reaches forward into the kind of hard light projection, and around her hand an object forms. I'm really- like I tried hard to think about this in a bunch of different ways, but the image I really love the most is the Halo plasma rifle, *[Jack*

[laughs] where you kind of hold it in the middle and there's like a top horizontal part and a bottom horizontal part, do you know what I'm talking about?

ART: Yep.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna link it so that...

ALI: I have not played Halo.

AUSTIN: That's fine.

ALI: I'm googling this real quick. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, just google Halo plasma rifle. And you'll see like, the handle, the grip, is like in the middle. And there's kind of like—

ALI: Oh, that's ridiculous.

AUSTIN: That's what forms.

ALI: *[laughs]* Okay.

AUSTIN: And she says—

ART: *[feigned defensiveness]* It's not ridiculous, it's very cool, what's- what's-

AUSTIN: It's very cool. And she says like,

AUSTIN (as Demani): The projection shows it's this. It's a weapon that has never been used in the system, and that, if it's produced in mass quantities, could change everything. We can't go there, we're busy here. But we would like the three of you and someone with New Earth citizenship to go deal with this. What do you say?

JACK (as Fourteen): Just so we can be a bit clearer going into it, when you say deal with this, I'm curious about what you hope to prevent. Do you hope to prevent these murders? Can we prevent something Crystal Palace predicts? Or are we trying to stop this axiom? What goal would you like us to pursue?

AUSTIN (as Demani): We are *guessing* that the deaths and the axiom have something to do with Dark Day.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Demani): It is a guess, I can't- I'm not crystal palace, and we can't speak to Crystal Palace anymore.

AUSTIN: Grey says like,

AUSTIN (as Grey): My father has a direct line, but...let's just say i don't- we don't speak anymore, so...sadly slim on that information. But, we don't even really know why these people are killed. We do know that these guns are...there shouldn't be guns in the Twilight Mirage. And the New Earth Hegemony certainly shouldn't have them. But if it's on Skein, it's probably tied to the NEH. And if a religious leader is killed and this scientist...*[sighs]* too many titles in a row for it not to be anything.

AUSTIN: The door slides open, and a young man with like pink and black hair wearing an apron and a t-shirt, and like a pair of too-loose-fitting jeans comes in. And it's Morning's Observation.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh my god!

AUSTIN: And he's like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): It's been so busy! Uuuugh. *[Jack and Ali laugh]*
Anyway what did you guys—

AUSTIN: And he's like- his eyes open up when he sees it's you, and he's like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yo!

ALI (as Tender): Hey!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): What are you all doing here?

ALI (as Tender): Hi.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, we're working. We're- we're working. It's, you know, same as it ever was.

AUSTIN: He's like—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): *[slowly, enunciated]* Yeah. Same as it ever was. *[Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh]*

AUSTIN: You've met him at least once, Grand, because—

JACK: Okay.

ART: Just not on camera? *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Just not on camera. Just not on camera. Because, if you recall, Grey is one of your- Grey is your positive contact here.

ART: Yes, yes.

AUSTIN: You have a plus with Grey, that's why you got this mission from Grey.

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: And I can't imagine you've been here without having like food cooked by him, you know?

ART: Oh, sure, yeah. Okay, yeah. That makes sense.

AUSTIN: So you should probably have some rapport.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: But I think he is surprised to see all three of you working together, for sure. In fact he probably is like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[hushed]* Yo, Tender, don't...do you know this guy?

AUSTIN: He's like looking slyly, like very—like, he's faking being- he's like stage whispering, you know what I mean? *[Ali laughs]* With Grand Magnificent- or, with Tender about Grand Magnificent.

ART: Yeah, uh huh.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, unfortunately I do, what's up? *[Austin laughs loudly]*

ART (as Grand Magnificent): *[offended]* I'm delightful!

ALI (as Tender): *[laughing]* Have you [unclear, "been" or "met"?)

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Oh, you're good, I'm just fuckin' with you, you know that Grand. I didn't know y'all knew each other like that, though.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): No, it's new, this is- this is new work. I really just started feeling over my head forty-five seconds ago. *[Austin chuckles]*

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): So what's goin' on, why do y'all need me?

AUSTIN: And Demani says,

AUSTIN (as Demani): Well, there was that question of how they would get on Skein, which citizen would vouch for them.

AUSTIN: And Morning's Observation is like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[sighs]*

AUSTIN: Just like sighs and looks up and rolls his eyes. And is like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I don't wanna go to Skein! *[Jack laughs softly]*

ALI: *[quietly]* Mmm.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): No one wants to go to Skein. We're all very scared. *[Austin, Jack, and Ali laugh]*

AUSTIN: Fourteen, you were gonna say something?

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, you'd be coming with us. It's, you know, it'd go great!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[sighs]* Like old times.

JACK (as Fourteen): Like old times!

ALI (as Tender): *[crosstalk]* I mean, probably better than old times.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): *[crosstalk, highly enunciated]* Like old times. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*

ALI (as Tender): Grand, are you okay?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I'm fine.

ALI (as Tender): Okay.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Yeah, these are all- these are all things that we're gonna do that are completely consistent with my skills and experience, and don't just seem like giant walking existential crises waiting to happen.

AUSTIN: Satellite, Grey, she's like,

AUSTIN (as Grey): Give yourself more credit. At the end of the day, all those weird things out there, all the murders that haven't happened yet, all the religious leaders and the research scientists, and—it all moves because people do, and you get people, Grand.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): *[not super convinced]* Sure. Yeah. Mmhmm.

AUSTIN: *[amused sound]*

JACK (as Fourteen): Can I ask a question about Crystal Palace?

AUSTIN (as Grey): Sure.

JACK (as Fourteen): You've spent time working with it before, so I assume this is something that you've also worried about, but like. Can we stop these murders?

AUSTIN: Grey and Demani like exchange a look. And then like, Grey nods to Demani, and she says—Demani turns back to you and is like,

AUSTIN (as Demani): *[sighs]* That's a big question. *["Crystal Palace" by Jack de Quidt begins playing]* Has Crystal Palace ever been wrong? It's hard to know, because...there are things we do know. Back at the Principality, everything always goes the way Crystal Palace says it will. Everything. There is no one who wants for anything in the Principality. There are no uncontrolled fires. There are no natural disasters. There are no tragedies inside the Principality of Kesh. It is what the naive would call a utopia. *[catches self]* It is one. And the cost of that, is that at the edges of the Principality, the events that Crystal Palace sees must be kept in place. *[music and dialogue get more intense]* Except, even when they go a different way, it seems as if the predictions just adjust and the new prediction becomes true. There are these momentary slips, but the simulation wasn't run once years ago. It's constant. Which is to say, even when we surprise Crystal Palace, even the surprise is turned into certainty. It is a strange place to be from. And...*[sighs]* it is hard to offer perspective when so much of your life has been prescribed. *[music fades out]*

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Thank you. That's helpful.

AUSTIN: Okay. Any other questions here, before we move to Skein? I mean, whatever, there's flashbacks, we can always be back here. So that's like an important thing to note, we can always come back here. We can always like, "oh there's something i wanted to research while we were still at the place where there were information brokers", *[Ali and Jack chuckle]* so keep that in mind. But I kind of want to—

ART: Yeah, 'cause there's all sorts of stuff I want to know, but I don't know what i want to know yet, you know?

AUSTIN: Totally, totally, a hundred percent. So, I guess quickly before we continue, I'd love to—we talked briefly about beliefs before we started recording, and I'd love to get those out loud, and maybe even in your notes section of your character sheets, so if you could paste those in there that'd be great. Fourteen, do you want to talk about yours?

JACK: Yeah, okay. So...let me find my notes section so I can do this at the same time.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Sure. It's just at the bottom of your character page.

JACK: Oh, where it has my friends and rivals?

AUSTIN: Yes, totally, totally.

JACK: Fantastic. Okay, so, my- I have two beliefs. Belief number one is "In order to aid my unpredictable memory, I will always take records of people, places, and events." Fourteen has taken—

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* And this means like, always, right?

JACK: Yeah. I mean, I don't think always to...I don't think always to the detriment of...there is common sense involved, Fourteen is not in a gunfight writing notes at the same time.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Right, right, right.

JACK: And also not to the detriment necessarily of the camera. I don't want to cut away to Fourteen frantically scribbling something down when that cut is uninteresting—

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: But I think it is definitely something to keep in mind that...

AUSTIN: But like in that last scene, would you be taking notes?

JACK: Yes!

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

JACK: Yeah yeah yeah, I think they'd probably be like shorthand.

AUSTIN: Right, of course, of course.

JACK: Or like, bits and pieces, systems. I think Fourteen is increasingly aware that in their previous line of work, to forget stuff...wasn't necessarily a blessing 'cause I don't want to go that far at all, but Fourteen was not in the business of trying to make something grow.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Quite the opposite. And I think Fourteen is finding that it is increasingly important for them to hold onto things so that they can keep track of the way things can grow, the way things can develop.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: My second belief is "I will give no time to those who seek to control or exploit the Quire system." And I think that is for a similar reason.

AUSTIN: *[chuckles]* Did that develop- was that kind of retroactively in place for Fourteen, or is that something that developed after the last set of missions? Or both?

JACK: *[exhales thoughtfully]* I- that's a good question. I think...I think it's a mixture. I think Fourteen knew that they wanted to make something of themselves after they left the By-and-By, you know, before the Miracle, and began their new practice with that as a principle, but I don't think it was until the events in the Arc and the conversations that Fourteen had with Tender where they were sort of like, alright, here is a particular sort of ethos that seems to have gone alright once, and seems to be something that i would be interested in pursuing.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. That makes sense. Alright. Anybody else have any beliefs ready?

ART: Yeah, let me run this by you. *[Ali giggles]*

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: "Everyone deserves a second chance. No one deserves a third."

AUSTIN: Love it.

ALI: Oooh.

AUSTIN: Done. Fuckin', print it. Again, does that reflect a specific thing?

ART: I think—

AUSTIN: Did you want to talk us through a little bit about how you got there?

ART: Well, 'cause Grand is so into his own second chance.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: This is Grand's second chance. And so he has to believe that everyone [AUSTIN: Mmhmm] deserves one of those, right, everyone should get the opportunity that Grand has had. But failing at the second chance is not an option for Grand?

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: And so it's also not a courtesy he's willing to extend to anyone else.

AUSTIN: Love it. Alright, cool. Make sure you add that to your sheet for me. *[crosstalk]* Do you have another one, or is—

ART: *[crosstalk]* I'm using a semicolon in it.

AUSTIN: *[impressed]* Ooh.

JACK: Oh, damn, you mean business.

ALI: Oooh. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Fancy, cool.

ART: No, I mean I wrote in the chat that Grand needs a "What Would Gig Do" bracelet, but that's not real. *[Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh]*

AUSTIN: That's extremely good.

ART: Grand needs the confidence- the unearned confidence of Gig Kephart. *[Jack laughs]*

ALI: Aww.

AUSTIN: God...do you have a second one or is that it for now?

ART: I think that's it for now.

AUSTIN: Okay. If you think of a second one, let me know. Two is better than one, but yes. Alright. Do you have any, Tender?

ALI: Yeah. My first one is, "The NEH have only used unchecked power to cause harm, I'll use the Clearcut to de-escalate situations and/or violence".

AUSTIN: Cool. The Clearcut is your mech that has like the special- the ReFrame system and all of that?

ALI: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Awesome. Cool.

ALI: And then I have a second one that's like, I still haven't gotten the wording on it, but I think it was- I was gonna combine the two ideas I had to be like, "The Resonant Orbit was based on harmony, and I'm gonna start by hearing the Waking Cadent out".

AUSTIN: Oh, that's actually pretty good. I like that as like a...because- not only because, but especially because *[Ali giggles]* we've seen both Ca- not Cascara, the Cadent Under Mirage and Corrective be like, "don't do that". So this is a pretty actionable thing, is like "I'm going to work towards finding out what she's about".

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: So. I'm into it. Cool.

ALI: Okay, fair.

AUSTIN: Awesome.

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AUSTIN: So I think we cut then from the Brink to the World Without End landing. We definitely ge—you know the other team is- the other team *[laughs]* gets on a big bug and goes off into the middle of the jungle. They are off in a place called the Wound, which is a specific spot inside—actually, they're at the Vale, which is even- V-A-L-E, which is a specific valley inside of the wound, which is like this huge gash on the side of the world? They are in the jungle, it's sweaty, it's kinda gross. Y'all are in Terncage, *[laughs]* which is the most populous city...it's the most populous city on Skein, it's the most populous single city in the NEH-controlled planets, and depending on how you count the By- sorry, not the By-and-By...the...jesus christ, how have I forgot the name of this planet. Seneschal, sorry. Depending on how you count Seneschal and

the former By-and-By, which is turned into this massive city, depending on if you count that as one city or multiple cities, based on how it's all laid out, Terncage could be the most populous city in the system. I've written here in the—y'all have the system overview in front of you, is that true? Did I put you on the right—no, you're on the rough map, aren't you, you're on the map of TM right now, of the Mirage. Let me move you over to the Skein system map. Or not map, but the system overview. Terncage says, description: built across beach and green mountain, Terncage is the largest city on Skein and the most populous NEH settlement in the system. A terraced metropolis filled- filled with industry and culture. Sometimes I forget words like "with". *[laughs slightly]* The scene, so kind of the kind of vibe of it, is brightly colored, multi-level clay homes, densely packed across an endlessly tiered city. Hanging plants and vines, the smell of chicken, the sound of horns and guitars. And then above all of it—like, Rio de Janeiro is obviously a very key touchstone for me here, but instead of Christ the Redeemer there is a massive statue of Genevieve Wei, who used to be the leader of the Skein- I guess is still kind of the leader of the Skein? She's from the Skein, she is a big ape woman- half ape woman, or ape-ish person, right, like is an ape that also wears glasses and a white lab coat. There's a statue of her shaking the hand of Templeton's Fair, who people may recall from the holiday specials is the sort of like shitty NEH admiral who brought the Season's Juniper here to kind of try to fuck everybody up and then that didn't go the way he maybe thought it would. But has kind of managed to negotiate with Genevieve kind of control of the planet. She is still very important as a figure here, as like a political figure. As people know from the other half of this game, or maybe—I don't know what the release order is here, but if you've heard the other half of the game, or whether you will or will not, the Skein have joined forces with other groups, other groups of scientists from the system, to kind of build a new company called Ternion, and the thing that kind of happened is the thing that sadly happens with real scientists often, which is they, you know, there is a string of ideology that sometimes teaches scientists that science isn't political. And in this case, these specific scientists, not every scientist in the Mirage, but these specific ones, were like, "yo, the NEH is really gonna give us a lot of money to do our research here, and they're gonna like give us a lot of resources, and they're gonna let us work with other great people", and that's appealing, and so they took that. They took that offer. And kind of did so peacefully, there was no war here, there was no like conflict with the Skein. And so the population here is like a mix of people who used to be on Quire, so the Skein and specifically the people from the Garden, which was one of the Crown's groups. and presumably also some Mandati people wound up here, just because of how the split worked, where people were just like, "yo, this part of the planet is becoming a different planet!" And there were just Mandati near Skein. Probably not so much of the Rogue Wave here. And then millions and millions and millions of NEH colonists, who came here in sleep detachments, that have arrived very quickly over the last year. Even though they've been sent, you know—every fifty years a new sleep detachment is sent from Earth, but fifty years goes by in the blink of an eye inside of the Mirage, so there have been millions of people who've moved here very quickly. So you land there in Terncage, and like are probably...you know where you actually get to stay? *[laughs]* I mean, so you land- you land with Morning's Observation's like okay, they basically give you—and this isn't your engagement, so I'm not gonna make you roll for it, but the—Satellite and Primary and Morning's Observation set up a fake corporation, and you are all signed up as basically interns

to the Morning's Observation Corporation. *[Jack laughs quietly]* That allows you to like be- to land legally. You're all given like work visas, basically, *[Ali laughs]* like temporary work visas, and you all land on Terncage. There's a bunch of places you could stay. One of them is the Old Gold Graduate Club, that Grand Magnificent knows, from when you stayed in the Crown of Glass.

ART: Yep.

AUSTIN: So, I think maybe that's a good place to pick up? Is y'all have checked into this club, this kind of inn and bar. Public Person is there, Public Person who you met on Crown, in the Crown of Glass, a while ago. He had like a dope floral suit on when you first met him—

ART: Mmhmm.

AUSTIN: —and I described him as being played by like a slightly younger Terrence Howard? Checks y'all in, and you have like a base of operations here to start figuring out how to stop these murders from happening. What do y'all want to know or do? This is kind of an open-ended thing in some ways.

[pause]

ART: Alright—

AUSTIN: Do you guys need like a page to just write on and start making notes?

ART: I mean like, I feel like—this isn't real, but in like- if this was an episode of the Simpsons, this would start with Grand Magnificent like going to encyclopedia and looking up "how to stop a murder". *[Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh]*

ALI: Okay, that's a place to start.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: But I also want to do the ridiculous like, whodunnit thing of like, oh let's find out about these people and see what they're gonna do.

AUSTIN: Totally.

ART: No, that's the right answer, yeah, that's—

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: You're not wrong right now.

JACK: Oh! Maybe we c—

ALI: Have them turn left instead of right on the... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: What's...so, actually, yeah. Ali?

ALI: Hi.

JACK: There's gonna be some typing sounds on my file now.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Are you making notes?

JACK: I sure am! *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* Do you want to like share a doc?

ART: *[crosstalk]* You're not pretending to make notes? *[Jack laughs]*

AUSTIN: Do you want to do it in like a shared group doc so that I can...

JACK: Yeah, I'll share a group doc.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Oh, no. Alright, okay, I'm giving everybody editing capabilities.

ALI: Okay.

JACK: Do not- do not—just don't.

AUSTIN and ALI: *[simultaneously]* Don't edit?

JACK: *[laughing]* No, I mean don't—use this power wisely.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

ALI: *[laughing]* Okay. Do you not trust me and Art? *[Jack laughs]*

AUSTIN: Here's what I love, I love that you've just posted a document into our Twilight Mirage group chat just called "axiom murders".

ALI: *[laughing]* The whole cast is gonna see.

JACK: *[laughing]* Do we need to make another doc?

AUSTIN: We do. Art, thank you. Was that Art?

ALI: *[laughing]* That wasn't me! *[Jack and Ali losing it]*

AUSTIN: Art has just written "boobs" into this document titled "axiom murders".

JACK: I- I-

ALI: We don't know that, it was an anonymous quagga.

ART: Yeah, that could have been anyone. It was probably Ali.

JACK: I had one request! *[all continue laughing]*

ART: And I've paid a lot of improv teaching facilities a lot of money to learn that when someone says that they want something, that it is my responsibility to frustrate the want.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, I see, that sounds like a—okay.

JACK: I see. Alright, is there any way I can make it generate a new link, or do I have to make a new doc?

ALI: No, this is fine, this is fine, see, we're good to go.

AUSTIN: Oh, this is fine, yeah.

[TIMESTAMP: 0:40:36]

JACK: We're all here.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Alright. Okay. Right. So, Austin, who is going to be killed?

AUSTIN: Good que- so yeah, okay—dude, can we get this in almost like a film noir vibe of like, y'all are in a shared space, and then we kind of get like the slow fade back to the Brink when you're getting these details [ALI: Mmm] now that you've kind of set up in this like, smoky—it has like wooden shades that are half drawn [Ali giggles] and are kind of cutting through the room, do you know what I mean?

JACK: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay, good. Your drinks are being served, you know all that stuff. Alright, so, two people are killed. The first is a researcher—or, two people are killed that are tied to this axiom. I bet people get killed every day. Like even on this planet—in fact, what is the...let me take a look, what is the crime here? The crime on Terncage is two. The crime-slash-syndicate is two. So it's a two wealth, two crime, two tech space. Zero weird.

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: And that means, yeah, there's probably people who get killed, like it just, that does happen. I've always kind of said that there is- that part of why the Divine Free States worked the way they did and the Divine Fleet worked the way it did, is like...there's definitely kind of a galaxy brain, cosmic brain situation there, which is like, the people in the Divine Fleet don't think the way you or I do, in the way that Marx kind of writes about how the way that full communism comes into being, is not—we'll never live to see full communism. We don't have the kind of psychology for it. We were raised in a world of competition and private property, and it will take generations to move from socialism to communism. And like, the Divine Fleet was thirty thousand years of every generation being able to see a world more dedicated to equality and justice. That is not the case in [laughing] the New Earth Hegemony. The New Earth Hegemony, I've said this before, has like- means well the way third way democrats do, the way sort of like, "oh, well we can have capitalism and also equality, shucks" does.

JACK: The "is your bank feminist" of...

AUSTIN: "Is your bank feminist", yes, exactly, exactly. Like [laughs] yeah, exactly. What, you know... "pilots of all races can pilot drones", that's exactly what it is. And so they do not have that, and crime has not been eradicated in this place—crime wasn't eradicated in the Divine Fleet either, obviously, we dealt with Contrition's Figure, but here like, criminal organizations still absolutely exist. There is organized crime, there is like all—you know. All of those things still exist. That said, the two people that you're looking at were not just killed that day, they were killed in a way that kind of triggered this axiom alarm. And so those people are named Wind's Poem, W-I-N-D-S, apostrophe S, Wind's Poem. And that's the researcher, she's a researcher and a scientist at Truence, T-R-U-E-N-C-E, Truence, which is a kind of a small...like experimental arts and technology company? That's what you know about that, for now, without any other research. And then the other person is named Profit's Cadence, spelled the way you spelt it. [Jack chuckles]

ART: Oh.

AUSTIN: P-R-O-F-I-T apostrophe S.

JACK: *[laughing]* Oh, okay. I was just, that felt like a given. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, of course, right. NEH, right? Profit's Cadence, and he is a—he arrived a few months ago and is the leader of- or a leader inside of the Church of the Self, which, again, Grand you encountered actually, when you were in the company of the Doyenne. Some of her advisors were part of the Church of the Self. The Church of the Self was a church that was on Quire...I mean, you don't know the whole history of it. *[laughs slightly]* What you do know is, it was in the Crown of Glass. The Crown of Glass was, you know, partially all about formalism and like aesthetics and et cetera, you know. But also had this sort of like, devotion to being your best possible self. You could kind of could see some of that in the Doyenne's speeches, kind of pushing yourself as an artist to your zenith. And the church of the self was kind of picked up on by Earth culture when they arrived. Partially because they came under control of the planet Crown, but also like, in all of the movies made on Crown, in all of the cultural like—and part of this is also with the death of the Doyenne, Crown kind of went back to its roots in some ways and one of those ways was the rise in power in the church. And it turns out that a church that's literally all about personal responsibility and like pulling yourself up from your bootstraps and doing everything you can for yourself is something that appealed very widely. And that specifically the notion is not just to do that, it's that a rising tide lifts all boats. It's that if you are your best self society will be benefited from that. And so we all must be like diamonds. Like, we all have to be the most brightly shining versions of ourselves. And Profit's Cadence arrived into the church a few years ago- or, sorry, not a few years ago, a few months ago, three or four months ago, and kind of rose in power, and is now the kind of de facto leader, despite not being on Crown, he is on Skein. So those are the two people.

ALI: Okay.

JACK: Hear me out. What if we go and visit one of them? Just straight up go. And don't say "look, we..." Don't do that bit. But you saying like, oh we should find out about these people, what if one of the ways we find out about them is we just go?

ART: We're getting into a real causality loop situation. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: Mm.

ALI: I have a question. Can I...I should ask everyone else. Can we borrow the like axiom scanner stuff from one of the other group?

AUSTIN: You cannot. They have them all, they've been using them.

JACK: Fuck. Shit.

ALI: They've *all* been using them?

AUSTIN: Yeah. They all- it's been a major plot point that like... *[Ali laughs]* Absolutely.

JACK: We're hunting an axiom! *[Art laughs]*

AUSTIN: So they are dealing with the uncanny over there. They are going in—

JACK: Ah, so they...okay.

AUSTIN: It is- they are in a place— *[Jack laughs]* Okay, so you are in a city that is two wealth, two crime, two tech, zero weird. They are in a place that is one wealth, zero crime, two tech, *three weird*, so they are keeping their like axiom divine scanner.

JACK: *[sighs]* Can't they just share one...

AUSTIN: They could have! They have not.

ALI: They can't have the buddy system, like...

AUSTIN: You have to think—

ALI: No, I know, I know.

AUSTIN: Their scanner, so—let me be real clear. Their scanners are inside of the exuvia, the little golden beetle thing that Signet has, Echo's eyepatch which is also like their heads up display, and then the robot pal that Even has. Like none of them just have like a handheld scanner, you know? You might recall that Echo was working on building you all those, as their long term project which they have not yet finished.

JACK: Oh, yeah, okay, that's okay.

AUSTIN: So once they have that, everyone will have those. But no, you don't have them for now. *[Art laughs]* If only it were that simple. *[Ali laughs]*

JACK: Alright. I'm gonna write down some goals.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Okay. I love it.

JACK: Gooooals.

ALI: Goals: don't get murdered.

JACK: Goals. Oh, I mean I feel like *[laughs]* that's on our business card. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*
That's the Notion's primary...

ALI: The Notion: I *promise* you won't get murdered. *[Jack and Austin laugh]*

JACK: Okay. Goal one.

AUSTIN: Flip it over and the other side of the card just says "promise" and it's underlined.
[laughter continues]

ART: And then like a phone number?

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh.

JACK: Yeah. *[laughs]* Alright. Okay. So, we probably want to...let's start big tier first, stop Dark Day.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Great, great start.

ALI: Okay.

JACK: And then going down in the tier of difficulty. *[laughs]*

ALI: Identify axiom. Right?

JACK: Oh, you want to do that before preventing the murders?

ALI: Well...yeah, probably?

JACK: Okay. Alright, fine.

ART: The two seem joined, if we really...

JACK: *[typing]* Find and identify rogue axiom. Goal three: stop the murders.

ALI: Attached to goal one. *[laughs]*

JACK: Okay, alright, fine. Okay. Alright. Okay. I'll put that and the murders in here. Goal three, how about this. *[laughs]* This is my third proposal. *[typing]* Prevent proliferation of bad axiom gun.

ART: Sure, great. Goal four: have fun! *[Austin and Ali laugh]*

JACK: Oh, wait. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: Good, thank you for the smiley. It's like a smiley face but what has the nose, you know what I mean, it has the little... *[Jack and Ali laugh]*

JACK: So do we want to split our efforts, or do we all want to go at once?

ALI: We're a small group, so we can do things together.

ART: Yeah, we should probably not split up, because there's only three of us. That means if we split up, someone's by themselves, and that person's probably in trouble, and I think there's a reasonable chance it would be me? *[Jack laughs]*

AUSTIN: Also we should, you know what, I need to be very clear about timing on this. By the time you get there to Skein, I think y'all have like three days.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Before Dark Day. So like, it is, we don't have weeks, I wanted to be clear about that, because at the time when you're on the Brink when this mission starts, I was like "oh, in three weeks". It has been weeks. You had to travel through space, space is l- time is long, especially when you're traveling in space.

[TIMESTAMP: 0:50:45]

ALI: Okay.

JACK: We were on the By-and-By previously, right?

AUSTIN: Wait—

JACK: No, we were on...where were we?

AUSTIN: No, you were on the Brink, you were on the Brink—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —which is like the smugglers' den that Satellite and Primary run.

JACK: It's like a space station?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's like a space station built into a bunch of asteroids, basically.

JACK: So we didn't use a stitch to get to Skein.

AUSTIN: No, no no no no.

JACK: Is there a stable stitch on Skein?

AUSTIN: Not that you know of.

JACK: Okay, cool!

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Where should we start, what do we want to research?

ART: I mean, isn't the first— *[sighs]* Okay, there's two ways to think about this. One is the Minority Report way, which is like figuring out the motive and like going backwards from there. And then there's just the like, well, what if we just Back to the Future this? *[Ali laughs quietly]* Which is like, if we're there- if we just like make sure it doesn't happen by like, dumb brute force.

JACK: *[crosstalk]* What if we—

ALI: *[crosstalk]* Hmm...visiting them was a good idea, that was Jack's first idea?

JACK: Yeah, I feel like there's that, and then there's also like, we could put the feelers out to see if there's been any weird sort of axiom bullshit happening recently?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: And kind of pursue those two simultaneously?

ALI: Right. Also I feel like the gun is a lead, like it has to exist, someone has to be trying to make it.

JACK: That's true, but I—

ALI: And Wind's is already a researcher.

JACK: That is true. I suppose also...but something has to have—that axiom has to do something in order to make the gun, right, like that axiom has to connect to the gun in some way.

ALI: Mmm.

JACK: We don't even know if the gun exists yet, I guess.

ALI: Well that's the thing, yeah, we would look into if anyone's developing it.

JACK: Yeah. Yeah, I'm up for that.

AUSTIN: How do you look into that? That's a good one. That's a good thing. I'm gonna say—take a few minutes to just look at the page in front of you that has like names of characters who are here.

JACK: Mmm.

AUSTIN: That has like, stuff that's going on. Because the whole page, for people listening at home, there's like notable locations that range from like, here is Skein's largest research company to here is the Uncle on the Block which is the Sken-wide roast chicken chain that *[Ali laughs]* blends the perfect combination of local and global. Their tagline is “everybody loves uncle”. To like, Public Person who is a knowledge broker and owner and operator.

ALI: Knows everything I need to, so. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: It does say he knows whatever you need to. *[Austin and Jack laugh]* To, importantly, Beatrice Temperance, who is the officer of the EEC's Quire Regulatory Authority—the EEC is the Earthhome- not Earthhome. The Earth Economic Concern. I believe that that's right.

ART: Let's not talk to- let's not talk to Beatrice Temperance.

AUSTIN: *[feigned concern]* Oh no, why's that? Why don't you want to talk to Beatrice?

ART: Beatrice Temperance is my not-friend, my anti-friend. *[Ali gasps]*

AUSTIN: Oh, your rival, yes, turns out. So yeah, the Earthhome* Economic Concern. Beatrice works for them, and is on the hunt for smugglers, saboteurs, and any who don't work within the established rules of the market.

JACK: Shit.

AUSTIN: Armstrong is here, is a person who is here, for instance. Not here here, but is in Skein, is on Skein at the very least. Lots of people are here. So, look at the—

ART: Some of whom are *not* predisposed to dislike me.

AUSTIN: Right. *[laughs]*

JACK: Isn't Public Person—

ART: *[crosstalk]* I mean, if that's the person we need to talk to, we could talk to them, but like, I'm gonna hang out in the alley. *[Jack laughs]*

ALI: Yeah, I feel like I would talk to Public Person but he would like refer me to someone else. This is like a weird corporate town, there's probably like a black market, you know.

AUSTIN: There is, yes, absolutely.

ALI: I think it's probably that kind of thing, where it's like, "hey, if I wanted to get something done..." Like, I would love to be...this might be dumb. This might be stupid.

AUSTIN: Let's hear it.

ALI: But I would love to be the person who's like, this hasn't happened yet, and like because I know this gun is about to exist, like go to a black market person, be like I wanna find someone who's gonna make me this gun, and like... *[laughs]*

[laughter throughout next lines]

AUSTIN: Oh, interesting.

ALI: You know what I mean?

JACK: Oh my god!

AUSTIN: That's super good.

JACK: Oh, oh no.

AUSTIN: "Who would I go to?" is what you're saying.

ALI: Right.

JACK: Ali, this sounds like beginning of a plotline that ends in you shooting a researcher.

ALI: *[laughs] [someone claps]* It does. It does sound like that.

JACK: I mean, let's—that's great, I do love that. It's like very high stakes, right?

AUSTIN: God.

ART: Very high stakes.

JACK: We need to hunt a gun. What if we...make it? *[Ali laughs]*

ART: Yeah. What if we helped build the gun we're trying to prevent?

JACK: *[crosstalk]* It's too good!

ALI: *[crosstalk]* We're lying! We're lying to...*[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Oh my god.

JACK: It's too good, we have to do it.

AUSTIN: God.

ART: Counterpoint: we don't. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: Listen, let me know if y'all want to commit to this line, I'm down, I'm down either way.

ALI: If anyone has a better idea, *please* say.

JACK: I could—

ALI: But I had the first idea, so.

ART: *[crosstalk]* I don't—I've just seen this movie.

JACK: *[crosstalk]* I couldn't in a million years have a better idea. I am... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: This is like...hohh. Are you having this conversation in character? *[Jack laughs]* Does Tender bring this up?

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright, actually, Tender. Can you just- *[laughs]*

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): Can you run it past me— *[Jack and Ali laugh again]* Can you run it past me please? Just, I'm curious about whether or not—so here's my sticking point.

Art (as Grand Magnificent): I'm excited to hear this.

JACK (as Fourteen): Are we asking if they know anybody who could make the gun *[inhales]* because we think that somebody is already making it and we're gonna go take it from them, or are we asking them if they know anyone who can make the gun because we essentially *[laughs]* want to commission it?

ART (as Grand): Yeah, are you commissioning a gun or are you locating a gun?

ALI (as Tender): Oh my god, you guys.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I feel like a gun- I feel like this would be very expensive, otherwise people would have already done it, obviously, that seems like obvious.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Like, are you gonna put up the money yourself, what are you gonna do?

ALI (as Tender): So the thing is, is, we need to know—we don't know if this gun exists or not yet, right?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah.

ALI (as Tender): So we walk into a room, say this is the *[laughing slightly]* kind of gun that I want, there's two answers- there's three answers that we get. The first—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): We even know what it looks like even, we could even draw it for them and say "Can you get me this", yeah.

ALI (as Tender): Right, exactly. So the first answer is, "We already have that gun, it's right here", then we know who made it.

JACK (as Fourteen): So that's good. That's, yeah, great.

ALI (as Tender): *[laughs slightly]* Second answer is, "I know exactly who can make you that gun." Then we know who would make it.

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

AUSTIN: And Morning's Observation is like standing up, and he's like, *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I like it, I like it. But, okay, there's a third one, which is, they close the door and they say "You're not supposed to know about that gun", and then they take out that gun.

ART (as Grand): *[crosstalk]* Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[crosstalk]* And then they shoot us with that gun! I don't, I don't...

ART (as Grand): *[crosstalk]* Uh huh. That is, that's a great point. That is option three. *[laughter]*

JACK (as Fourteen): I'm worried about a sort of hypothetical option four, which is...

ALI (as Tender): They steal the idea?

JACK (as Fourteen): No, what if we are causing the gun to become into the world, now? What if- what if—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): People are workin' on guns, people have to be workin'—listen.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, but—sure, no, people are working—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I work at the Brink, I've heard seven people come through and say "Oh, I know a guy who's gonna make a gun".

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): They're wrong! Because- but everyone's workin' on it.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I had a guy who came in with a crossbow and tried to like hold the place up, because he thought this is the future of weapons, he had a crossbow, and he shot me with it.

ALI (as Tender): Oh!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): But like, my apron stops a crossbow bullet, or bolt.

ALI (as Tender): *[laughs]* I'm glad you're okay.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): There's a reason no one uses crossbows!

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, so- but- I'm just thinking about earlier, when they were like, you know, Crystal Palace gets surprised. We land on the planet and the first thing that we decide that we're gonna do, *[Ali laughs]* is go and ask if the weapon which *may or may not exist yet*, go ask weapon manufacturers if it can exi—I'm just worried that...

ALI (as Tender): I understand your fear of willing things into existence, *[laughs slightly]* I do understand that.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I mean, you do that all the time anyway, Tender.

ALI (as Tender): Right.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): It's like what you do, is will things into existence.

ALI (as Tender): You're right about that, I know that. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): You're not gonna will that gun into existence, right—

ALI (as Tender): No!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): —that's not where this is going, you're not gonna build it...

ALI (as Tender): I'm like very much just trying to find out who would make it so if the gun exists we know where it is, if it doesn't exist we know who's planning on it, and stopping them?

JACK (as Fourteen): Us, us! The answer is us! We're planning on it! *[Ali and Austin laugh]*

ART (as Grand): What if instead we went looking—if we're gonna like make something exist, what about some sort of gun countermeasure. What if we go looking for...

ALI (as Tender): *[crosstalk]* We're not gonna—we've never—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[crosstalk]* Like a better apron.

JACK (as Fourteen): *[crosstalk]* I don't think it works like that.

ART (as Grand): Like a better apron.

ALI (as Tender): We've never been actually commissioning anyone this entire time.
[laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, alright, I'm fine with this. Just so long as we're all—there is a screen somewhere on the Principality that has your face on it, Tender, and it's saying the words "let's go ask if they have the gun". *[Ali laughs]*

[TIMESTAMP: 0:59:40]

AUSTIN: Who do you go to ask about this? Is this the black market, is Public Person, is this...

ALI: Like I said, I think it starts with Public Person, but that we don't need that scene, the scene is probably with the black market people.

AUSTIN: Okay. And the scene is probably like meeting Public Person up on that balcony that we showed him on *[ALI: Yeah]* six months ago, and him like sitting down and giving you some information. Let's do—here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna do two rolls. The first is a fortune roll, which is gonna be does *he* know the person. Now he's good at his job. He's very good at his job. So I'm gonna roll 4d6, which is like very high here, to see how well...like how connected is the person that he's gonna connect you to. That's a 6. So that's as successful as it could be. He's like- he knows just the person. He knows just the person to connect you to, who like rolls in the black market stuff. God, who is it? Does anyone have ideas for an arm- or not a- for like a black market—so I think the person is someone who- with a 6, with a great effect here? I think that they're gonna connect you to someone who's in the business of moving arms already, it's just that they're old-fashioned- or, they're just like the disposable arms.

ALI: Mmhmm.

AUSTIN: Remember, like, no one has Cascabel rounds except for like a handful of people. I think this person is like the one person on Skein who does get Cascabel rounds, right? So who would that be...oh, maybe it's—you know who it is, it's Korrin Kim, who was one of the people inside of Contrition's Figure, who is like a bounty hunter and arms dealer and had a cool plane in the...what do you call it. In the holiday special. She went up against—she was with- you know her actually, Grand. She helped you in the Independence fight. Cool hair that kind of comes like- she's Black with like hair that almost looks like wings, like a pair of flapping wings almost. And where does she set up...I want to say she's—I want to put y'all on a rooftop. The sunsets here are like the best sunsets maybe in the system, because they're like beach sunsets, like you're

looking out onto the beach, you're hearing seagulls, you're smelling roast food, like roasted food and barbecued food and like, everything is like—again, there is just this constant vibe in Terncage, like everyone is hustlin'. And like that's not always a great thing, but there's like too many people. Like back on Earth, everyone is like, kind of—not taken care of, but there's—everyone's working, but not everyone's hustling. And here everyone's hustling, and there's like that vibe that's like almost a party vibe happening all the time, like behind all of these scenes inside of Terncage, I just want you to like have a sort of like latin jazz beat going in your head, you know what I mean, like that's what's happening right now. And so I think she meets you on a rooftop of a- like an industrial laundromat. So there's like, below you is just the *[imitates washing machine sound]* of all the washing machines and dryers, that are just like—like they do washing and drying for uniforms, right, so they're just washing hundreds or thousands of uniforms at any given time. But on the rooftop, she meets you. And, you know, she has like a small duffel bag over her shoulder that she like lays out, and I think she has like a hover table, she like opens it up, pulls out a little table, it's like a short card table, and unfolds it and it just hovers in place, and then she opens up her bag that reveals like all of the guns she has available. And she's like,

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Grand Mag! It's been a while, how you been?

ART (as Grand): Oh, you know.

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): So you have some work on planet?

ART (as Grand): Yeah. Yeah, we are here for...I guess this is almost altruism. We're here to help. *[Ali giggles]*

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Altruism ain't work.

ART (as Grand): Yeah, but I feel like we're gonna get paid at the end. I don't know what I'm basing that off of, *no one's* mentioned a dollar figure, but.

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): But you feel it.

ART (as Grand): I feel it, I feel like there's money at the end of this.

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): You feel the payday.

ART (as Grand): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Alright, alright alright, well. You know I got the average gear here, I know that you already have your pistol from Cascabel, but we have some longarms here with disposable clips, we have, you know, the receiver system, obviously. What are you looking for?

ART (as Grand): We're looking for something big.

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Like a- like a rocket?

ART (as Grand): No. Like a...

AUSTIN: She looks at you, Tender.

ALI (as Tender): Like a gun you hold in the middle? *[quiet laughter]*

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): A gun you hold in the middle?

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): What do you mean?

ALI (as Tender): It's like...*[laughs]* I don't know why someone would design a gun this way. *[laughter]* I don't think it looks good at all. But it's like, if you needed to hold it in the middle, and it was like big around your arm for some reason so you could carry it around.

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Can you sketch it?

ALI (as Tender): Yes, I can, I can do that.

AUSTIN: She like,

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Aight.

AUSTIN: Do you just do it with like cool magic? *[suddenly]* Do you make one?

ALI: *[laughs]* No! That would be so weird!

JACK: Oh my god. Oh my god, all my perfect nightmares are coming true. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*
Please make one.

ART: That's what's on the Friends at the Table business card, by the way. *[laughter]*

AUSTIN: Ahh, yeah.

ALI: That would take a lot of stress, and I'm not gonna make it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: It would also be a little much.

AUSTIN: Mmhmm.

ALI: Jack is so into this idea but so not as Fourteen, so... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Mmhmm, uh huh.

ALI: No, I think sketching it out is fine.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: There's probably like, we don't do touchscreens anymore, but it's probably like one of those...like those E Ink things?

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

ALI: But before there was E Ink, there was like the sketch n' whatever, and you shook it and...

AUSTIN: Like the etch a sketch, yeah—

ALI: Yes, yes yes yes.

AUSTIN: Totally, totally, totally. She's like,

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): That's a weird looking gun. But it—wait a second.

AUSTIN: I need you to do a roll. I need you to do a get information roll here.

ALI: I would love to.

AUSTIN: So get information is not a- get information is not a- there's no risk, it's just...

ALI: A fortune?

AUSTIN: A fortune roll, basically. Or this one is, there are get information rolls that are...you know what, maybe there is a risk. There's a risk. You're meeting with an arms dealer on a rooftop, so. *[Austin and Ali laugh]* One second, let me...where- wait, why is this not...

ALI: This feel like a consort to you?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that seems right. 'Cause you're like—it's about this relationship, right? Art in the chat says, "I just want everyone to know, there were many technologies between [*laughter*] etch a sketch and E Ink displays." Name three!

ALI: There's like a throughline.

AUSTIN: I'm with you!

ART: Like, *regular screens*, I think... [*laughter*]

AUSTIN: Never heard of 'em. So, yeah, this is an action roll, and I think it is—because Public Person got a 6 on the fortune roll, this is great effect. Risky- if you're doing consort, risky.

ALI: Risky great?

AUSTIN: Risky great.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Does anyone want to help?

ART: [*exhales thoughtfully*]

ALI: Help could be great.

ART: Yeah, I'll help.

ALI: Alright.

AUSTIN: So take 1 stress. Tell me how you help. Is it about like describing the gun, is it about like...

ART: Yeah, I'm a person who designs things, I think I can...

AUSTIN: Oh, true.

ALI: Aw.

AUSTIN: That's good, I like that.

ART: I think I can help at this...

AUSTIN: Even though you're like anti designing mechs right now, you're happy to like help the sketch out?

ART: To help work out a gun? I think they're different, kind of.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay. So yeah, take 1 from that.

ALI: Okay, so that...

ART: I don't feel great about it, but that's 1 stress, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. 2d6, it sounds like?

ALI: Okay, so it's still risky great.

AUSTIN: Risky great.

ALI: And then plus 1, okay.

AUSTIN: Mmhmm. Alright, well, you got a 1 and a 2, didn't you? *[Ali laughs]* You got a 1 *and* a 2.

ART: Happy to help.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. *[Jack and Ali laugh]* Things go badly. You suffer harm, a complication— okay, well, this happens immediately.

ALI: Waah. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: She says like- she says like,

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Wait a second, I recognize-

AUSTIN: She looks close at it, and she's like,

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): Oh, wait- ahh, it's like, duality? Or dualism? Something like that.

AUSTIN: And then like before she can finish, you hear the sound of sirens, and a...what do the cops drive, what kind of floaty cop cars are there here? I'm gonna ask you here, Art, because guess who showed up?

ART: Awww.

AUSTIN: Your good friend Beatrice Temperance is here.

ART: I mean, my idea for a cop vehicle, and you can tell me if this is too not serious, but you know like, you know how like fancy rich neighborhoods these days have cops on segways?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ART: What if it's just like a hover segway, like personal little like...

AUSTIN: I think it needs to be more of a car—it needs to be heavier than that. You shouldn't be able to push her out of it.

ART: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean?

ART: I mean, you just put a bubble on top, just put a Jetsons bubble on top of that segway.

AUSTIN: But there's like four of them.

ART: Yeah, there—

AUSTIN: She's not rolling up alone.

ART: Yeah, but they're like in individual—

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Tube, like a cigar tube.

AUSTIN: *[laughs slightly]* But filled with a person who's hovering.

ART: But with a person and you can see out of it. This isn't a great analogy.

AUSTIN: It's not great. But here's the thing I like, the glass itself is like the siren.

ART: Mmm.

AUSTIN: It's like the red and blue, do you know what I mean?

ART: Yeah, that's great.

AUSTIN: So they can see out easily, but it's literally like four of these giant sirens have come over the—and Beatrice Temperance says like,

AUSTIN (as Beatrice Temperance): Stop what you're doing! This is a—you're all under arrest!

AUSTIN: And the four lights begin to like spin around the entire thing. I've given you all 2 heat, here. In fact I'm gonna give you—I think this is a 3 heat, this is—yeah, nah, it's a 2 heat, it's a 2 heat. Things are not going well. *[laughs]*

ART: Yeah, I knew that, I don't... *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

ART: I don't wanna be rude, but I—

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* No, that's fine.

ART: —I knew it wasn't going well.

AUSTIN: What do you do?

[TIMESTAMP: 1:10:08]

ALI: So the best thing about etch a sketch technology... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Is that I can destroy that evidence.

AUSTIN: Oh, that is good. I'm glad you said that out loud, because otherwise she was going to find it.

ALI: Okay, thank you.

AUSTIN: Like one hundred percent, I was going to end this with a scene of her picking up the etch a sketch *[Ali laughs]* and being like, aha, this is what they're looking for.

ALI: No, I've done this before with you.

AUSTIN: Uh huh, yep. You did. So as you're doing that, what are the rest of you doing?

ART: I mean, we have to decide right now if we're gonna run or if we're gonna try and talk our way out of this.

JACK: *[breathes in and out]* Oh, man.

ALI: You're already coming into this at, you know.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh.

ALI: At a bad one.

JACK: Do we want a chase in a cool space Rio de Janeiro?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Yes.

ALI: Yes.

ART: I've seen fast five. *[Ali cackles] [laughter]*

AUSTIN: I mean, so I think, this goes easy—two things happen here in a row. One, Korrin Kim says like,

AUSTIN (as Korrin Kim): It's been great, guys.

AUSTIN: And then like, lifts- pulls a thing- pulls like a gun out of the duffel, zips it, and then aims it straight in the air and fires it, and a hook comes out. And you hear it go like *clink!* and it hooks onto her jet which was hovering above, *[Jack laughs]* and she like lifts away, and one of the- or two of the cops divert and start trying to chase her down. The second thing that happens is, you get a call through whatever your communication devices are, and it's Morning's Observation who's like downstairs in the car, who's like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yoo! Hey! Hey, hey, there's—the police are coming for you! *[Jack laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Beatrice Temperance): Throw down your weapons!

ART: We're not doing that.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): What- are you all okay?

ALI: Can we request that he like drive around back? *[laughs]* And just get out of here?

AUSTIN: I mean—that he can leave, you mean? Or that he...

ALI: No no no, that he drives like to the other side of the building, and we meet him where the cops aren't.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, tota—I mean the cops are—

ALI: No no no.

ART: They're gonna follow us, they're...

AUSTIN: Yeah. To be clear, the cops see you. The cops are here, with you. There are two cops with you now.

ALI: *[crosstalk]* Yeah, but we're super running. *[laughs lightly]*

ART: *[crosstalk]* The cops are happening.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay. So he's like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah yeah yeah, I'll meet you 'round back.

AUSTIN: And like spins around back. What do y'all do?

JACK: Uh, I put my hands up and I start backing towards the direction of where Morning's Observation is.

AUSTIN: Alright, so again, you're on the roof of a building. *[Ali giggles]*

JACK: Yep!

AUSTIN: Just want to make sure that that's *hyper clear*.

JACK: Okay, so—

AUSTIN: And not a one floor building.

JACK: How many floors would you say that it had—

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* I said it was an—

JACK: —because I- my mental pict- this is one of these situations where I missed one sentence and then my mental picture was different. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh huh. It is like an industrial laundromat?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Which means it's probably like—

JACK: Oh, I see! Okay, right.

AUSTIN: Yeah, mmhmm. Do you know what I mean? *[Jack laughs nervously]* So it's like a big building- it's like a warehouse. So it's not like- it's not ten floors.

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: But it's like, thirty feet up, thirty five feet up, somewhere in there.

JACK: Okay. Can I back to—let me check my stats, because I want to see if I can do something cool and I don't know if the numbers will let me. *[Austin chuckles]*

JACK: *[sighs]* The numbers will not let me. *[Austin laughs]*

ALI: I have suggestions if we maybe want...

JACK: Yeah, no, go ahead!

ALI: Is there like an escape route, or like a big...pole we can go down? *[laughs]* Like a big vent?

AUSTIN: There's not a big pole that you can...

ALI: Like a big vent?

AUSTIN: ...There's a vent, but it's venting out hot air *[ALI: True...]* from the industrial laundromat.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: You could roll in there, there's a chance that you would land in nice soft clothing! Or, in a dryer that's on. *[laughs]* Or get stuck in a vent. Which is honestly a nightmare. *[Ali and Jack laugh]*

JACK: Okay. Oh, we have new- oh, that's something to bear in mind. We have items- we have new items for this mission. Our items, our load is different.

AUSTIN: Yeah, in fact, your load hasn't- we haven't even set load yet.

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: Don't even worry about load yet 'cause you're not even on the mission, you're still in like legwork. I'm gonna put a clock on the-

JACK: Fuck.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I know. *[Jack laughs]* I'm gonna put a clock down, this is the escape clock, it's a six step clock.

ALI: Okay. We have all these steps, we have so many extra to take.

JACK: Is there a nearby building that we can maybe jump to?

AUSTIN: Totally.

JACK: Oh, okay!

AUSTIN: There's all the—

JACK: What is it?

AUSTIN: It's probably another warehouse, this is like clearly a warehouse district, so it's like a- or an industrial district, so it is like an auto- it is a bike repair shop, like a motorbike repair shop, that does like- not even motorbike, but like a- like delivery scooters, do you know what I mean?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I think it's a range, I think that they do everything. They do everything from like tiny delivery scooters to these huge like, Akira-style but even bigger, like hover scooters, like hover bikes, that do racing on the beaches and stuff like that.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: So that's—there's like a string of these types of buildings in a row. *[Jack exhales thoughtfully]* So this is a clock you need to fill to escape, to be clear. The six step clock.

ALI: Okay, I have an idea. A real idea. And if anybody else has an idea, they should go first 'cause I talk so much. But...

AUSTIN: You're good. You're totally fine, I promise.

ALI: *[laughs]* I have the sundering effect, so I can give us like a head start?

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* What is that?

ALI: Sundering is, "You may push yourself to attune to the Way and twist it, causing psychic harm to anyone in the area who cannot withstand your assault."

AUSTIN: Oh. Cool. *[Ali laughs]*

JACK: Right. Mmm...so, okay. So we're gonna attack these- these people.

ALI: We're gonna run from them. It specifically stuns them.

AUSTIN: Yep! Unless you spend extra stress to hurt them.

ALI: Right. Which I would not do.

JACK: *[crosstalk]* Cool! Yeah, let's—should we do that and try and make a break for the motorcycle shop?

ART: Wait, I thought we were trying to meet the car?

AUSTIN: It sounds like there's mixed messaging, *[Ali laughs]* but let's take this one step at a time. So what are you doing besides the sundering, what are you doing while you're sundering?

ALI: Well, I think the attuning to the area is the important thing, right? 'Cause it's like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Not only is it this like laundry building, but it is this place where like people go to do illegal things?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: And we haven't spoken about it a ton on the podcast but in terms of like, you know, picking up the emotional residue of this place or whatever [AUSTIN: Yeah] like, the panic there probably kind of like...

AUSTIN: Colors it?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think that this is- I think that there's actually, this specific place is like a mix. You're catching—so go ahead and give me the attune, and I'll tell you what you're catching.

ALI: Okay. *[crosstalk]* I'm just gonna roll attune?

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* And then like maybe that'll- so you're just gonna roll straight attune, it's risky standard.

ALI: Risky standard, okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. There's a 5, there you go.

ALI: *[relieved]* Okay.

AUSTIN: So here's what you catch, in terms of emotion here. You...so, first of all, tell me what it looks like when you stun this person. What's sundering look like on the screen?

ALI: It's—I keep thinking of like, I said last time when she like made a thing there was like smoke that came up—

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* Mmm! Okay.

ALI: —from the floor, I think it's kind of a similar thing where it's like, where the area gets kind of like foggy, not like full foggy but that kind of thing.

AUSTIN: Right. That's interesting, I like that a lot actually.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, you see that, and then like you see like the siren on one of the things just goes from going like *[imitating fast siren]* woo woo woo to being like *[slowing, lowering in pitch]* woوو woوو woوو. *[Ali laughs]* And it like slow- almost as if it's in slow motion, just like lands on the roof and tips over and falls. Like it doesn't crash, it doesn't explode, it just like, brrrr, almost like it's de-powered. The feelings that you grab are kind of a mix of, panic like you said, but also this like, this is where people come to get high during their work breaks, do you know what I mean?

ALI: *[laughs]* Mmm.

AUSTIN: This is where people like sneak out to take smoke breaks, this is where people come up to like—or just to clear their head, this is just like what is- this is just kind of a place where you can like kick it and not be bothered. But it is also, your boss comes up to the roof and is like, “where are you, you’re late”, you know, or like “you’re supposed to be back on the line twenty minutes ago” or whatever, you know. So it is this mix of those two things. So I’m gonna give you the one—the clock is gonna tick three times. One from sundering and then two more from this successful roll. You’ve taken out one of the two things, but you are in a desperate position, because as Fourteen and Grand are able to like get away, Beatrice is getting closer to you, and in fact she doesn’t just get closer to you, she launches like a lasso, like an energy lasso, around one of your legs. So you’re in a desperate position.

ALI: *[quietly]* Yikes!

AUSTIN: What do y’all do? The other- you two are able to like run down the fire escape though, if that was the plan, to meet up with...

ART: Yeah, I’m so happy to hear that there’s a fire escape. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah. Listen, regulations do exist.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That’s why Beatrice is here.

ART: That we’re not just like leaping off a roof.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* So what do y’all do?

JACK (as Fourteen): *[concerned]* Tender?

ALI: Hi.

JACK: Is this sort of a help Tender situation, do you think?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it’s up to you. She said—you know, it’s up to you.

ALI: Two things I was gonna say. I did do this to give you some time. Second thing, I have a fake leg, so.

JACK: Oh.

ALI: Might get out of it. *[laughs]* No promises, obviously.

AUSTIN: Mmhmm.

ALI: But. *[laughs]*

JACK: *[laughs]* Okay. Alright, I'm gonna make a run for it. *[Ali laughs hard]*

AUSTIN: Okay! I think y'all can just get into the car.

ART: Great!

AUSTIN: I think y'all get into the car, and then we get Morning's Observation being like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Alright, let's—where's Tender?

JACK (as Fourteen): Uh, she's got a fake leg. *[Ali laughs]*

ART (as Grand): She's coming.

JACK (as Fourteen): Beatrice threw a sort of an energy whip at her, I think she's coming. Can we just go around the block once?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Uh, are you sure? She got- she got lass—

AUSTIN: And his hands are like, he's like tapping the wheel, the steering wheel, like nervously. And he's like getting ready to get out of the car.

JACK (as Fourteen): She'll be fine. When we left her, she looked like she was- she looked like she had the situation mostly under control. We can wait here.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I'm gonna wait here. I'm gonna- I'm gonna wait here.

JACK (as Fourteen): If you just give her- just give her forty seconds.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I'll give her forty seconds. One...

JACK (as Fourteen): No, I'm not saying- no, I mean—

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

JACK (as Fourteen): I meant that as like an encouraging thing of Tender, not like a count, like she'll be—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Three...

JACK (as Fourteen): No, Morning's...

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AUSTIN: *[laughs slightly]* Alright, so what do you do, Tender?

ALI: Remember in Privign when my like, leg messed up and got too much power and I like jumped into the air?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah.

ALI: Can I like...*[laughs]* Can I like—I don't want to do a flashback, but I am thinking back at that moment and being like, oh I could totally do that.

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: And just like trying that again I guess?

AUSTIN: I think that's a scramble.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's a scramble, and I think it's great effect, because of your leg. Because you have—we've talked about your prosthetic legs that have—they're like cyborg legs, right?

ALI: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, that's desperate great.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: A scramble, which is a scary place to be. Desperate is not a good place to be.

ALI: No... *[sighs]* What would a—we don't have any gambits right now, right?

AUSTIN: You have two gambits, yeah!

ALI: Oh, alright.

JACK: We have two.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ALI: I'm gonna use one of those instead of the stress. Sorry everyone.

AUSTIN: Good call. That's fine, you're in a...

JACK: *[crosstalk]* No, go for it. We left you on the rooftop.

ALI: But it's still desperate...?

AUSTIN: Desperate great.

ALI: Great. Okay.

AUSTIN: Mmhm. You really want to get this 6 real bad. *[Ali laughs nervously]* What's your scramble, your scramble is 1, right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright.

ALI: But then I have the bonus dice from...

AUSTIN: From the gambit, yeah.

ALI: From the gambit. Right.

AUSTIN: Oh, also, you should mark XP for making a desperate roll in the action that you're- or in the...

ALI: Okay

AUSTIN: Which is prowess.

ALI: Uhh, should I use the other stress?

AUSTIN: Remember that like, you probably won't die here if you fail. Right?

ALI: Okay. Yeah.

AUSTIN: It might not go great, but that is the thing, right, is do you use this stress here, hope—

ALI: Or use it later.

AUSTIN: Or use it later. Like when do you want to spend the resource, if that makes sense.

ALI: *[sighs]* I'm just gonna roll these two dice. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Okay

ALI: I'm just gonna be fine.

AUSTIN: 2d6.

ALI: *[crosstalk]* And that's two 5s, and we're *[unclear]*

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* 5! Nice work.

JACK: *[crosstalk]* Yes! Oh, phew.

AUSTIN: I mean, again, you still- this is still- it's a success, but it's not the best success, because it's still desperate. So you do it, which is- it's great effect, which means I'm gonna fill this clock up, three more ticks, which fills it up, which means you're gonna get away. But, there's a consequence. You suffer severe harm or a serious complication occurs. The thing that happens that is—I'm not gonna give you a severe harm here, because I think that that's a little silly. You have these legs built for jumping. Um—you know what, I'm not gonna say it's silly, but I'm gonna say you pull off the thing you were trying to do. So you do, you like supercharge them and jump away, and Morning's Observation is like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Twenty-two, twenty-three...

AUSTIN: And then you just like land like a cat, right next to the car. *[Ali laughs]* And he's like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[relieved]* Ohh.

AUSTIN: You can just like see the stress leave his face. But, you see the remaining cop hover thing totally like, from inside, run your faces against records, and I'm increasing your heat by 3.

ALI: *[laughs]* Okay. Have we got 5 heat?

AUSTIN: You are at 5 heat. You have not even begun your mission yet, [JACK: Mmm] so that's good. It's good, it's good to be at 5 heat. Cool. And then Morning's Observation like hits it and like disappears through the alleyways, like very tight curvy turns. And lots of turns that like don't actually give you the room to do much, so. But he manages to get away without being caught by the remaining one cop. Alright. So, I want to make sure y'all didn't lose the one piece of information you got, which is that Korrin said duality or dualism or something like that is who—

JACK: Oh, is the alligator writing this?

ALI: *[laughs]* You can't...

JACK: Someone- sorry, someone in the google doc [AUSTIN: Oh, right, good] was making tabs and they are the alligator.

ALI: *[laughing]* That was me. You can write again.

JACK: Ali, you're the alligator!

ALI: I am.

JACK: Who's the aurochs?

AUSTIN: That might be me. Yeah, I'm the aurochs.

JACK: And then we have a quagga.

ALI and AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: In a really lovely sort of pale pinky purple color.

AUSTIN: Mmhmm.

JACK: And I'm Jack de Quidt, *[chuckles]* because I'm logged into google.

ALI: So that took a lot of time. *[laughs]* A lot of stress.

JACK: *[laughs]* One clue.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: But we have a name.

AUSTIN: Mmhmm.

ALI: Sort of.

AUSTIN: You have Duality. Duality—I mean, so, what I'll say is like, with that you can dig in a little bit more. Do you—I think you can dig in a little bit more. Do you just like- how do you- what's the internet like here?

ALI: Yeah, can I just do like a study roll, just like me and Morning like...

AUSTIN: Yes. This is just a regular gather information roll, we have Morning...

ALI: On some forums, like... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, Morning's gonna help. So this is just gather information with great effect and- or, actually, rather, it's not great effect, the roll will determine how great the effect is.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But take a +1 on study, because Morning is like an additional help for that.

ALI: And the positioning and stuff doesn't matter?

AUSTIN: Nah, it doesn't matter, this is a fortune roll. So yeah, go ahead and give me a...

ALI: Okay. *[pause]* That's a 4.

AUSTIN: So, 4. Okay. So that is a...you get good details, clarifying and follow up questions are possible. So you can ask me questions about what you find here. So you look up Duality, and at first nothing really adds up, they are definitely not like an arms manufacturer. They exist on one of these things that exist on Skein called the allocologies, which are kind of arcologies? And you know an arcology is like a gigantic kind of living quarter plus work area, it's like a city inside of a small space, basically, right? It often has a sort of ecological bent, and these go all the way in that direction. They are almost like floating—what I've written here is: "These floating spheroid arcologies drift through the air or sea, each one home to one of the Earthsphere Economic Concern's colonizing megacorps. Built to minimize the ecological footprint to allow for quote unquote 'guilt-free' expansion." Fucking, completely side-eying this, I promise. *[Ali laughs]* They have- you know, they're filled with abstract interactive corporate artwork, there's panelled flooring, it's kind of like—think about like a half sphere. Think about the *[laughs slightly]* Kami's Lookout in Dragon Ball Z, anyone listening who has actually watched Dragon Ball Z. Big half sphere, where like people are walking around on it. But then like the flooring of that ground can open up to reveal housing inside of the bottom half of the sphere, and then on top of the sphere are just like skysc- not skyscrapers, but like four-floor office buildings, like office parks on top basically. And sometimes these different kind of floating spheres and half-spheres kind of come into near contact with each other, and they'll build bridges from one to another. Everything- *everything* has this kind of like iridescent CD bottom coloring to it? And then I've noted here "business casual and above only". *[laughs slightly]* So like, it is- these are basically like floating megacorp cities. And Duality is—they do a bunch of stuff. They do lots of service sector technology work, so it's lots of like call centers, it's technologies to automate call center work, it's lots of like data analytics, but they don't have a production facility there. Then what you see

is...because they don't have a production- because they have- these allocologies basically are all modelled from some main design, right? And that main design does allow for production facilities, there are production facilities there. And the thing you realize is, on the Duality Incorporated allocology, which again is A-L-L-O-C-O-L-O-G-I-E-S, they have taken their production facilities, their kind of like workshops and, you know, 3D printing rooms and all of that shit, and rented it out to a bunch of different companies. Including one that you recognize the name of immediately, which is Truance. And when you do some digging, what you see is that part of the deal with that is that anything that ships- anything you can ship as a company from one of the companies that is like—if you're renting out space from Duality, Duality gets to brand whatever products you bring to market with their shit. And like, they're the ones who would send out or put people in contact or whatever. Which is probably why Korrin Kim knows about these guns, or like that's what comes to mind, is because it would have come from somebody from the Duality allocology. If in fact Truance is the people who are making it. But that is, I think, a pretty- I think that's kind of between you and Morning's Observation, you can kind of make that jump. That Truance is making these guns, they're doing it at Duality Inc.'s allocology, and Duality's kind of the ones who are gonna be able to sell them because they own a percentage of the IP because they've rented out this space. So. But that's not like- the gun thing is not—you can't just be like, "oh who makes guns, oh it's them", I want to be clear. What you got is you kind of pieced these pieces of the puzzle together, you didn't just get like...you could not have checked the forums to begin with, to get where you got. *[laughs slightly]*

ALI: Right, yeah, yeah.

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AUSTIN: So that's where the guns are.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, you know what? Do you have any other qualifying questions, or clarifying questions, rather?

ALI: *[exhales thoughtfully]*

AUSTIN: Which won't require a roll, since you rolled well before?

ALI: This is so dumb, but is there a way to link Wind's to the project from here?

AUSTIN: Wind's Poem? So, I mean, you're able to learn more about Truance, and here's what you know about Truance. There are two people who are like the directors of Truance, and only like fifteen workers total, and most of those are unpaid interns. Wind's Poem is- she is a scientist who...so, there's a couple things. So there are two—okay. So there are two main- there are two heads of Truance. You might want to write these things down, I don't know. Truance is

operated by Wind's Poem and Ocean's Roar. They are like the two head researchers there. They only arrived a few months ago, couple months ago. And they technically work for Duality Incorporated, and in their spare time operate this entire separate company. Like they work twenty hour days, basically. You don't know what Ocean's Roar is working on? You know, if you like click on his profile on their page, basically, it says...it says a bunch of stuff. It says a bunch of stuff that like, you're not—I don't know that either of you or Morning's Observation—oh, you know, I think maybe Grand probably knows enough to be able to put together stuff here, as an engineer and technician. You know, it probably does say stuff like, propulsion, and you know...micro-storage, and, you know, energy redirection. And you're—Grand? You're keyed in enough to be like, oh he's making a gun.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Like you're able to put together—it's like when you're an academic and you look at like a professor's page on a site, and you're like "I don't know what the fuck they're studying", but someone in the field would be like, "oh, I see what they're- they're a sociologist whose focus is on the difference between like racialized poverty and majority poverty", or something, you know what I mean? Like oh I get it, even though there's not- they don't just say that outright. Wind's Poem is working on something you know very well, Tender. The ReFrame system. Which is like, that's her baby project, and that is on commission to the New Earth Hegemony military, but also is very clear like, none of her application is about military usage. It's like very- it's artsy, like it has nothing to do with the military at all. It's very much like, thinking about the ReFrame technology as for entertainment and culture uses. There's lots of like, oh once the ReFrame technology's complete, you can use it for event hosting, like, you know, from small-scale events like weddings to large-scale arena shows, *[Ali laughs]* like that's basically where her head seems to be at, of course. But at the bottom of her page, it very much says like, all research paid for by- with, you know, supported by a grant from Soul's Vanguard, which is the New Earth Hegemony military in the system.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Trying to think of anything else that you would pick up on here. Any other questions from either Fourteen or Grand about this company?

JACK: Oh...what's their sort of like outreach, for want of a better word? Is this the sort of company that has days where prospective students can- students who are looking to go into the field can come and visit?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: What's the sort of...

AUSTIN: Yeah, so—

JACK: Or is this the sort of like Tony Stark thing where it's like, "No one! No one can come in."
[laughs]

AUSTIN: No, so they have- like I said, they have like unpaid interns, for sure, for hundred percent sure they do, who again are probably actually in their day jobs working for Duality. They live on this place that's run by Duality, and then they like go do their day job for eight hours, and then in their afternoons and evenings come to work for Truance. And I think that it's like, "no applications", or "no-"...I like this idea, actually, I like the idea of like, you know, "If you're interested we have open houses once a week."

JACK: Yeah, like "come visit the center!"

AUSTIN: Come visit, and—yeah, exactly, totally, I like that idea a lot. So yes, that is totally a thing they have. Grand, any questions?

ART: Mmm...

AUSTIN: Oh, it does say- I mean, it does say New Earth Hegemony citizens only, and then like "sorry!" smiley face. With like probably a link out to what is basically a social media post that's like, "We've gotten a lot of inquiries recently about members of the Divine Free States and non-Hegemony citizens on Skein who would love to work with us. We'd love to work with you! But as you know, according to the Earthsphere Economic Concern's regulations, blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah."

JACK: Jesus...cool.

AUSTIN: "But we would love to have you visit," is definitely a thing that they say.

JACK: "We've got a great break room!"

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yes, exactly.

ART: Do they have a tour?

AUSTIN: They don't have a tour separate from their open house, which is like about coming to talk about technology and see them, so yes, sort of, you know what I mean? But it's not a- it's a tour, but it's not like a touristy tour.

ALI: Open house, you say.

AUSTIN: Mmhmm. [Aligiggles]

ART (as Grand): Well, I think we're going to an open house.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I'm not going, I refuse. It says business casual only. No.

ALI (as Tender): You would look great!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): No. They won't let me in with my hair. You gonna make me dye my hair?

ALI (as Tender): That's not what they mean.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yes they do. I'm from here.

ALI (as Tender): Oh. Yeah...do I have to dye my hair? Wait, what?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah, this place is corny as shit!

ALI (as Tender): *[laughs]* Wait, we'll dress up together. It'll be great!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): They're all gonna have like polos and like khakis on.

ALI (as Tender): That's a bummer...

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[sighs]* When's the next open house?

AUSTIN: And he clicks. And the next open house is on the day that's gonna be the murder day, the Dark Day.

JACK: Ah, fuck.

ART: So that's too late to go.

JACK: Can we maybe go a bit earlier, just a bit earlier. 'Cause, look. I'm not the best planner ahead—

AUSTIN: I'm not taking that away from you, to be clear. I'm saying this is, if you want to get on that thing that is an option.

JACK: I'm not the best planner ahead, but I feel- *[laughs]* I feel like we shouldn't probably go on the day of the murder.

ART: And our last plan of like, let's just go when it's open, really went bad. We did bad at that plan.

JACK: The thing is, I could probably get...my character is tuned to be catnip to these kind of assholes. And that is—

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* Yeah, true.

JACK: And that is—I am fully aware that there is a degree of culpability in that. I have the ability to...I have fine clothes, I can carry a legitimate ID.

AUSTIN: You do.

JACK: Whether or not legitimate is in inverted commas. A legitimate ID could be, someone has given you an ID badge. *[Austin laughs]* So...*[sighs]* I don't know if I could get us all in, but I could definitely get in there. Or I could have a really good shot at getting in there before the date.

AUSTIN: *[crosstalk]* I think I—

ART: *[crosstalk]* I think I could get in there.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think- this sounds like you're putting together a social engagement plan, to me.

ALI: Ooh.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Right?

JACK: Yeah, I'm- yeah. I'm definitely up for that.

AUSTIN: What is the plan exactly? It's you're gonna try to get on before the open house.

ALI: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: Oh, here's a thing maybe worth thinking about. Other people could come to that open house. So, think about that as like other vectors [JACK: Oh, we can—] for people who come to kill people, do you know what I'm saying?

ALI: Right.

JACK: Wait, no, what?

AUSTIN: I'm just saying, if there's an open house in a couple of days, the day that people are supposed to die...hey, maybe somebody else is gonna come in for that open house.

JACK: Oh!

ALI: Yeah yeah yeah.

ART: Oh, that could be how the killer is gonna obtain the weapon.

AUSTIN: Right, that's what I'm saying. So, social plan is what it sounds like to me, right?

ALI: Mmhmm.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. So the way engagement rolls work is...that I open the page for engagement rolls.

JACK: I love Blades in the Dark.

AUSTIN: It's really—

JACK: And Scum and Villainy.

AUSTIN: Me too, it's legitimately super good. Here it is. Okay so, the key detail of the social plan is: what is the social connection you're using, how are you getting on. What is the thing that you're kind of plying here. It sounded like both Fourteen and Grand, y'all both had ideas.

JACK: Yeah.

ART: Oh, I was just thinking that like, I got nice clothes and forged documents, why, I could be your like paralegal.

AUSTIN: Okay. So are you all the legal team for Morning's Observation who is the actual citizen here? And what is the like angle of getting onto this allocology with a legal team? I think it's fine to be his legal team, I think that's hilarious.

JACK: *[thoughtfully]* Why bring a legal team onto...I mean, so—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: *[sing-songy voice]* To protect your client.

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: And his ideas.

JACK: Right, but...

AUSTIN: So what- yeah, so what are his ideas? *[Ali laughs]*

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ALI (as Tender): *[crosstalk]* Morning, what are your...

JACK (as Fourteen): *[crosstalk]* Morning, what- could we have a quick chat?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah...

ART (as Grand): What are your ideas?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I have a lot! I mean, I got- I have like a lot of ideas and also no ideas, you know what I'm saying? Like I have a lot of...

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, just give us- like we can—so, here's step one.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): This isn't real. So it doesn't actually have to—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Still has to be a good idea, they're not gonna let you on if it's a bad idea.

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean it has to- it does- right, sure. But we don't need a business plan here.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): Or, you know. So hit us with just- hit us with your first one.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Oh, you need a business plan!

JACK (as Fourteen): *[crosstalk]* No, no-

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I got you, give me a second.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay.

AUSTIN: And then he just like opens up a business plan he's been working on.

JACK: Holy shit, okay.

AUSTIN: One of the last times that we saw Morning's Observation was him like, fucking around with the Privign signal to turn it into like music.

JACK: Oh, yeah!

AUSTIN: And so he just has like, oh yeah, like here's a thing I've been like tinkering with, and it is just like a—it's like a music visualizer. It's like a version of—oh, you know what it is, here it is, he's like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Alright, so you know how Grey and Demani have that thing where they can like see the future or whatever, I don't—but like they make it into like physical light or whatever, right?

JACK (as Fourteen): Uh huh.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I can do that but with sound. Like I wanna- that's what I wanna build.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, damn.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Like I can do like a little one.

AUSTIN: And he shows you, he has like a test unit that is like—it's not big, it's like a snowglobe? It's like a snowglobe but a winamp visualizer. *[Ali laughs]*

JACK (as Fourteen): So I guess- I guess the- the thing is—

AUSTIN: He's like,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[shushing them excitedly]* Wa- wai...this, but bigger.

JACK (as Fourteen): That would be—

AUSTIN: And he hits play, and like a song starts playing, and it's like a cool laser light show,

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): But like this, but bigger.

JACK (as Fourteen): That would be cool as hell.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): And if I change- wait,

AUSTIN: And he like,

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, so, no, hang on—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Wait one second.

AUSTIN: He like goes into a bag and plugs in like a drum machine and like starts doing live stuff, and it does do live visualization to this thing.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is cool as shit, and that might be the problem.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[crosstalk]* But bigger! *[Ali laughs]*

JACK (as Fourteen): But bigger! I don't trust these people as far as we can throw 'em. And if we bring—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): But you're a lawyer, you can like prevent them from taking it from me.

JACK (as Fourteen): *[laughing]* No...

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): And also, wait, here's a thought.

JACK (as Fourteen): *[laughs]* But what if we- no, we don't need to give them a real idea, Morning. My worry is that—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): But what if they could help me make it?

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): No! We're not trying- no!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yes, yeah! Listen, I love the Brink, but like I'm tryin' to live in an apartment, instead of like...

JACK (as Fourteen): *[crosstalk]* You saw that website, you want to work with these people?

ART (as Grand): *[crosstalk]* This is a scam.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is a scam!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Why is it a scam?

JACK (as Fourteen): Because we don't—

ART (as Grand): 'Cause we're committing crimes! *[Jack laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): My dream is not a scam.

JACK (as Fourteen): No, okay, fair. That's maybe why you should save it, *[Austin laughs]* 'cause you don't want it attached to the scam.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I don't understand why we can't use a legitimate method to get in, and then y'all go do the thing.

JACK (as Fourteen): Because they might steal it.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I would s- you're a lawyer, we could sue them then, and that's a different dream of mine.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, then we would s—

JACK (as Fourteen): *[uneasy]* No, I can be...

ALI (as Tender): We could sue them, get the money for it, and then fund Morning's idea!

JACK (as Fourteen): I am not being *[sighs]* I can't be a lawyer and trying to do- solve the murder at the same time. *[crosstalk]* I'm such a new—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[crosstalk]* Oh, the legal stuff will come after we solve the murder. We solve the murder, and then next week...

JACK (as Fourteen): So you're giving me a cl—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): They're not gonna steal it in a week!

JACK (as Fourteen): Are you bringing me on retainer? *[laughs]* Is this...

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): It's like a friend- it's like the friend discount, yeah. Like I'm givin' you the friend discount, so you could be my lawyer.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is like so much more of a—I thought- Grand, sorry, help me out. I thought we were doing a scam here.

ART (as Grand): *[crosstalk]* You're giving- you're giving them the...?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah, I'm giving them the friend discount, so that they can be the lawyer, for me.

ART (as Grand): That's not how paying a lawyer works.

JACK (as Fourteen): No.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Well no, 'cause they get to be my lawyer, and then they get a cut of when we make this. *[Ali laughs]*

JACK (as Fourteen): Also, I think this might be illegal. *[laughs]* I think I'm so far from plausible deniability at this point.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[crosstalk]* What? No! The res machine is a- I've worked really hard on it, there's nothin' illegal about it.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, but we're using your idea to get into the building.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Eh, that's cool, I'm fine with it, so it's not illegal.

ART (as Grand): That's not how laws work.

ALI (as Tender): Morning.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah?

ALI (as Tender): I get that you're passionate about this. I wanna help you with this. We're gonna do this job.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Alright.

ALI (as Tender): And not give your very good idea to a bunch of- herbs. And then after this I'm gonna—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): What's—

ALI: *[laughing]* You know what that means.

AUSTIN: Okay, I do, that's true.

ALI: Stop it. *[loud laughter]*

ALI (as Tender): After this, I'm gonna introduce you to someone named Gig Kephart?

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* Ooh!

ALI (as Tender): And we're gonna figure this out.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I know who Gig Kephart is.

ART (as Grand): I thought he was our friend. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I *am* your friend!

ART (as Grand): I know, why are we gonna introduce you to Gig Kephart? *[loud laughter]*

ALI (as Tender): The plans, with the, you know.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Alright.

ART (as Grand): Yeah, Gig's launched so many products. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Alright. I got a real problem. I don't have any bad ideas.

JACK (as Fourteen): We don't need a bad idea, we just need an idea that you're not pursuing.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[exhales thoughtfully]* Like what if milk was a solid.

ALI (as Tender): See.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, this is- now we're getting somewhere. What if milk was a solid?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[crosstalk]* You could eat it, but like you could have a candy bar but it's milk, that way you get your calcium diet that you need for your bones.

JACK (as Fourteen): What if milk was a solid...

ART (as Grand): [*mildly disgusted*] Oh my god.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): And then you call them...what would you call those. Mmm...

JACK (as Fourteen): Milk...

ART (as Grand): Milk chunks.

ALI (as Tender): Milk chunks. [*Jack laughs*]

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): That's- no one wants milk chunks.

ART (as Grand): That's what I'm saying.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): That sounds bad, that sounds like...

JACK (as Fourteen): Again, it doesn't have to be good, it just has to—

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): It has to be good enough! Otherwise we're not gonna wanna talk—

ALI (as Tender): If *they* come up with a really good idea, *they'll* be in love with it.

JACK (as Fourteen): If—so it's milk that you can eat. And I'm...

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): But they're artists, aren't they gonna want it to be like an art thing? So like, milk...

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh. Yeah.

ALI (as Tender): Like cal-ci-um. [*laughs*]

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): What's- what? What's the pun there?

ART (as Grand): Calci-*yum*.

ALI (as Tender): Yum, yeah!

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, calci-yum.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Okay, but you can like build stuff out of it, and then it's like an interactive—

JACK (as Fourteen): *[crosstalk]* Oh, this is left field now.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): —edible art instillation. You know what, you walk through a forest, you- okay—

ART (as Grand): *[crosstalk]* What.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): —be with me for a second. *[Ali laughs]* It is a—

JACK (as Fourteen): *[crosstalk]* Fuck, Calci-yum is really good.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): *[Jack and Ali laughing occasionally]* It's a winter day. And you walk through the calci-yum forest, it's like candyland but healthy. And it's like a big candyland, it's like a whole candyland thing. You've already been to the gum workshop or whatever, and now you're in calci-yum forest, and it's just beautiful, and there's birds chirping, and they're also made of milk. And you can just go over to a tree branch, and like *snip*, snap it off, snap- snap into a milk bar, that's the slogan. And you *arr*, you just bite into the branch, it's delicious but it's also artistic.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Right. Can you just...

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah, I got you.

JACK (as Fourteen): *[typing sounds]* Say that exact thing...there...

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Calcium. Yum, wait...yum.

ALI (as Tender): Uh huh.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Three M's.

ALI (as Tender): Yep.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Forest. Got it. And you are my legal team.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Three lawyers is a lot. I'm gonna say one of you is a lawyer, and...

JACK (as Fourteen): That- okay.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Which one of you wants to be the lawyer?

ALI (as Tender): Fourteen.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. *[Ali giggles]*

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Okay, Fourteen's the lawyer, they're the lawyer. One of you needs to be like, my like, prophet of the future, you know what I mean? Like my visionary. Which of you is a visionary?

ART (as Grand): That's probably Tender.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Okay. And then I'm gonna need someone else who's like my technician type. You know, like I'm an idea person, but I need someone who knows how- I guess that could be me, and then Grand, what are you?

ART (as Grand): Um...I'm your driver?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Oh! That's good. Alright. Let's do it.

AUSTIN: Alright. Social plan. I really want to ask what everyone's wearing, but we do not have the time, *[Ali laughs]* I need you all to sleep on the thought. What does your "business casual or greater" look like? So. Is this operation particularly bold or daring, take +1d. Is it overly complex or contingent on many factors, take -1. I'm gonna give you +1, so that's up to 2.

JACK: 'Cause it's very bold?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes, it's definitely bold. *[Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh]* Does a detail or- sorry, does it expose a vulnerability of the target or hit them when they're weakest. Or, do they particular defense. I think it hits them where they're weakest. I think—

JACK: We are going to the arcology.

AUSTIN: But like—

JACK: Or, allocology.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But also it's just like, they love bullshit.

JACK: Oh, right. Yeah, yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: They love this bullshit. *[Ali laughs]* A hundred percent, you're totally right. So take another one. So now you're up to 3d. Can any of your friends or contacts provide aid or insight for this operation?

JACK: I have Red Equity Janus, who is—

AUSTIN: Oh, what's that look like?

JACK: So the thing...*[laughs]* Okay. Red Equity Janus is like, they are old enough and they have seen enough of the law for this plan to be very funny to them? *[Austin laughs]* In a way that I...there's definitely a version of this where Fourteen calls them, and they are like "This is terrible, and you are in violation of aspects of the golden clause". And there's probably a bit of them that wants to say that, but I think that Fourteen probably calls them and they're like, *[laughing]* "Oh my god, what, calci-yummm, they're gonna try to get- sorry, what?" *[Austin and Ali laugh]* They're just like laughing.

AUSTIN: Alright, so- and they like help you work out what the fake pitch looks like, basically?

JACK: Well I think what they do is they tell me a story of a time they did this.

AUSTIN: Mmm, okay.

JACK: And I come away from it going like, cool. Alright. Okay. If only in just the way that like, when your mentor gives you a sort of moral support—

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: —that has a similar effect to the mentor saying "here's what you need to do".

AUSTIN: Right. Love it. Alright, so that is four dice.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, oh, oh, also, is there like an engagement bonus you get from the ship here? Or anyone's other stuff? Let's double check. *[Ali giggles]* Work on long term projects, nope. Social plan, to execute a kidnapping or other sorts of snatching and grabbing. Hmm...

ALI: Mmm.

JACK: Mm mmm.

AUSTIN: Um..

ALI: Are we snatching and grabbing the murder victim? *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Well, I was actually gonna say like the stuff.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like, the gun.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right?

JACK: Sure. I mean, we'll be four assholes going into a building to steal a gun is kind of snatching and grabbing. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: That's snatch and grab, I'll give it you. Five.

[TIMESTAMP: 1:50:03]

JACK: Alright. So I just roll 5d6?

ART: Oh my god, don't fuck this up.

AUSTIN: It's pretty good. 5d6.

ART: I would take it as a personal favor if you rolled well.

JACK: What am I hoping for here, Austin?

AUSTIN: A 6.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Multiple 6s, ideally.

JACK: Alright. Good luck, everybody.

AUSTIN: That's a 5. That's a 1, 2, 2, 3, 5.

ALI: Geez.

JACK: Came through at the end, kind of.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Mixed result. You're in a risky position when the action starts. And I think- so I think it's like, it takes a day to get the approval, and the next day you're going, you're a day before Dark Day. Y'all like...we'll have to describe what you look like next episode, I'm sorry everyone for teasing this, but I want to- unless people know already, but I don't know that we have thirty minutes to describe your looks. *[Ali laughs]*

JACK: Mm mmm.

ART: No, make 'em wait. Make 'em wait for it.

ALI: Yeah, they're waiting.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: This is worth it. This is gonna be worth it.

AUSTIN: So you all arrive. And you get like- the first night that you arrive, the first day that you arrive, you get like kind of a general tour of the allocology, and are like taken to guest quarters or whatever to set up—you know, maybe it doesn't take a full day, like you can go that next night, but by the time it's the day that you're going to the facility proper is the day before Dark Day. And as soon as you go in, one of the interns who's like there is like, *["Twilight Mirage" by Jack de Quidt begins playing]*

AUSTIN (as intern): Oh, don't mind all the security. Things have been really strange around here lately.

AUSTIN: And you walk in, and it's just like, you know, the whole building is filled with torch units. *[Jack laughs]* So we're gonna start you off at a risky position. But like they're not shooting you or anything, it's just risky to do anything at this place right now. So, good luck!

JACK: And these are like legit torch units.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, these are- these are—

JACK: Not that...not that Garlic or Yam is any less legit.

AUSTIN: Not that Yam and Garlic were not. But these torch units seem to just be programmed to be torch units, these do not seem to be people.

ART: But that means it's also risky for the real murderer.

AUSTIN: True! True enough.

JACK: True!

ALI: True.

ART: I don't know why I said real murderer. We're not murderers at all.

AUSTIN: Are we sure? We'll see what happens.

JACK: Yet, yet. 'Cause I think it might be Tender. *[Jack and Austin laugh]*

ALI: No, what?

AUSTIN: Alright everybody, let's go to time.is! *[laughter]*

[song plays to the end]