

Twilight Mirage 16: An Approximation of a Connection

Transcriber: Lu

[SONG "The Twilight Mirage" STARTS PLAYING]

AUSTIN (as Satellite): Report 141. Primary, the data looked solid on my side too, but I haven't seen anything on the charts since those four ships broke into atmo. Signatures look like Castlerose, maybe? Hired guns, for sure. Hey, um. Tell me the truth. Have you ever had to... y'know, kill someone? [sigh] I only ask because--

AUSTIN (as computer): Mission-critical activity detected. Launching synchronization protocol. Loading internal history, quantum scale. Linking with K-upside switchboard. Connection with Crystal Palace established. Ready dovetail synopsis. Quantizing data. Locked. Harmonize.

Synopsis: 40233 years ago. Initial analysis reveals native population entering early space age. Worldwide struggles against Being planet Qui err vi na-em, or "the Soil without Memory." Status green: no interference required.

26622 years ago. The first visitor. Sensor tracked unregistered Apostolosian vessel, the Holiday Gambit, passing through Quire space. Probable smuggler. Impact registered. Unknown cargo likely the cause of Quire's "Glassed Age," a period of great stability and growth. Status yellow: observation infrastructure installed, inactive.

11895 years ago. Annihilation-Class object detected on collision course from Galactic Core, en route toward nearby Benthos system. Observation infrastructure moved, status black: intervention ready.

11112 years ago. The second visitor. Unforeseen anomaly shifts Annihilation-Class object's trajectory. Intercession failed. Annihilation-Class object continues en route to--Anomaly.

Anomaly.

Anomaly.

Anomaly.

Anomaly.

Anomaly.

Anomaly.

AUSTIN (as Primary): Gray route proxy connection established. Satellite. I'm right here.

[SONG "The Twilight Mirage" CONTINUES TILL THE END]

AUSTIN: Gig. so the last thing we saw from you was that Lily Lysander had like, grabbed into something deep in the clay- down into like, the clay pits, and she's trying to pull it up.

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: What are you doing at this point?

KEITH: I think I'm fascinated by just, the clay thing.

AUSTIN: Um- that's fair.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um... I think that-

KEITH: Is it not- 'cause you cut away at sort of like a "Oh, I think I understand a thing-"

AUSTIN: Well uh- the thing that we cut away was her gr- basically hooking the line, right? Like...

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: No, when she said she had it- I mean, literally, she has a- physically has a thing under her control now. And is like, yanking up on it.

KEITH: How long- is this just right after, where we're working at?

AUSTIN: This is right after, yeah yeah yeah.

KEITH: Okay, then I'm just like "What's going-" I'm like "Woah"

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally

KEITH: This sure is something!

AUSTIN: You, uh... so she's pulling back on it, Cart-Horn is like grabbing various weird supplies from the table, like weird electrodes and stuff, and pulling them into the clay and flipping switches....

AUSTIN (as Cart-Horn): Uh- I'm trying to make it less dense for you! Uh- um- keep pulling, make sure not to break it, this is our chance! This is our chance, this is it.

KEITH (as Gig): What is it, what is the thing?

AUSTIN (as Cart-horn): I think that they're- based on my calculations I believe that there is- that the planet itself is holding something here. Something from the Glassed age, maybe a piece of high technology? Something very, uh, powerful, something that it didn't want to get into the wrong hands, but maybe it's judged us and it understands that we are the right hands!

KEITH (as Gig): Or- I mean, maybe just found it.

AUSTIN (as Lily): Yeah, I think- I was just reaching around, and I just dug, and there it was, I got it! [laughs] And it's a little heavy, I could use a little help! Do you have a thing, Gig, where you're like "Oh, I'm a journalist so I can't help people"? Like, is that...?

KEITH (as Gig): I- no, my job specifically is that I help people all the time.

AUSTIN (as Lily): Can you help me pull this fucking thing up then?

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah sure, I can't do your clay trick though.

AUSTIN (as Lily): No, just grab me and pull me further away! [laughs, KEITH overlaps] I don't know that I- um-

KEITH (as Gig): [overlapping] Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. Uh... do you just like-

KEITH: I'm doing it.

AUSTIN: Like, grab her by the waist and pull? What do you do, how do you do this?

KEITH: Yeah, sure, yeah.

AUSTIN: Give me a Risk, how are you feeling about this?

KEITH: I'm still spiked out.

AUSTIN: Oh, are you? Yeah, you totally are! So that means you have to decide whether or not to continue to bring down- was it joyful?- or switch at a huge deficit.

KEITH: Yeah- no, this is exciting! I'll do joyful- [AUSTIN overlaps] roll that down, and then....

AUSTIN: Okay, roll +1, 2d6 +1

KEITH: eleven!

AUSTIN: Nice work! And you had a +1, yeah. So yeah, you totally- you yank really hard? And this *huge* ball of clay flies up into the air and just plops down behind Dr. Cart-Horn's table, and like, rolls around to a stop. And it's just a ball of clay, and he's like-

AUSTIN (as Cart-Horn): Oh!

AUSTIN: And runs over to it, and like, grabs some tools off of the table. And then you hear a jet going overhead. And now I think we're gonna line up everybody's timetables, so have to go quickly, briefly back to Grand Magnificent.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: It is the next morning, which is the morning of this- of everything else that's happened today, we now have- or maybe it's the afternoon, you've spent the morning working on this design again. And uh... I think maybe you- you'll realize it after whatever this next little segment is. So, what do you do the next morning after that talk with her? Do you go back to the drawing board here?

ART: Yeah. I mean, I posted in the chat- mostly to remind myself- but I have a great idea if we all wanna run away from this place as fast as we can .

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Uh-huh?

ART: Because if I'm gonna be putting images in the inside...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: The person that I think the Doyenne should look at... is the King.

AUSTIN: Hm...

ART: But that's gonna- that's gonna make her mad.

AUSTIN: Probably.

ART: We're gonna have to deal with some shit there. But also? I'm not here to make a fucking political statement, I'm here to learn how to work this fucking glass!

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah, I feel like Grand hasn't dealt with any of the politics of this stuff at all. Also- as a background reminder, because I don't know how this episode is gonna be cut up- Alekhine and Myriad have been in like, discussions with the government side of- of the Crown of Glass, for the last five days or whatever, about y'know, what concessions can you make to move the Mirage here and blah blah blah, all of that.

ART: And like- I think Grand has a basic idea of like- we haven't met anyone else, why are we deciding these people get to be like, in charge of this? But I don't know that he's like.... [pause] I just don't know that he's the kind of person right now who's gonna put his foot down and be like "No, you're wrong!"

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Alright, so I think... [laughs]

ART: What?

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah, hm! When you put it that way- who knows, maybe she'll give it to you!

ART: Well, I certainly don't want to look at some fucking King I don't know all the time. [AUSTIN laughs]

AUSTIN: Alright, so- I mean, here we go, Beauty is Truth, Truth is Beauty. Again, when you take something you feel, a concept or an idea, and express yourself by way of your chosen art- whether performed or presented- and it's experienced by others, roll. On a 10+ choose three, on a 7-9, choose two. How are you feeling about this at- after that last night?

ART: I'm looking at the feelings wheel.

AUSTIN: Hell yeah feelings wheel.

ART: I think- I mean, anxious was the first pull, and that's scared?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Um... I could sort of twist myself into sad, but like- those are all strong- inadequate is so *much* stronger than anxious?

AUSTIN: Inadequate is pretty... pretty- I don't think you're all the way to inadequate, right? Like-

ART: No, it's just like- y'know, I fucked up once. Like, I fuck up all the time.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

KEITH: Grand Mag also does not seem like a very inadequate-feeling guy.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: Not yet at least! I mean, if we're gonna get there, we're gonna have to fucking... we're gonna *go* there. And honestly, I'm not super into it.

AUSTIN: Uh- yeah. Seems rough.

KEITH: Could be skeptical! Maybe you're mad, skeptical.

AUSTIN: *Or*, maybe you're responsive. Maybe this is like, "I've had that talk, I've come back-" or thoughtfull- "I have a better idea of what this is, I'm gonna give it one more try"

ART: Peaceful might be right! Yeah, that might be it, this might be... [AUSTIN overlaps] yeah, responsive, toughfull...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You've fallen off the horse. The duck, horse, and now you're saying "Okay, time to get back up on that horse, and give it a high five"

ART: Please don't talk to me about that- please don't talk to me about that horse. [AUSTIN cackles] Peaceful is a one?

AUSTIN: Peaceful is a one! What's- what is the thing you want, what is the idea? The concept or idea you want to express through your chosen art, before we roll.

ART: I think- I'm cutting down on our outside facets, because that- wanna make this possible- but on the outside I want it to be... here are the great people that you could aspire to be, here are these great thinkers, great artists, great- y'know, philosophers, that's a thinker- but y'know, here are these people.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: - and on the inside I want it to be... here are the people that you could become.

AUSTIN: *Oh*, that's interesting. [ART overlaps] it's like visions of yourself?

ART: [overlapping] And someone of them- but some of them are aspirational, and some of them are negative. I mean-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Ohhh, that's good.

ART: -it's working on reflection, so it's like- like some are very flattering, and some show you as sinister, some show you as... y'know

AUSTIN: Yep!

ART: It's kinda like tiny little fun-house mirrors.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Take advantage and roll. I didn't expect that second thing, so- so roll peaceful twice.

ART: Alright...

AUSTIN: Mark it once.

ART: Right

AUSTIN: Well, first roll was bad. Second was good! First was a six, second was a ten. And remember, on advantage you take the highest, so there you go, ten. On a 10 choose three, on 7-9 choose two- we'll come back to what those are in a second, because those are things that happened when you display it? But look at that list, Art, and figure out what those might be.

ART: On it.

AUSTIN: As you- so you're seeing it like, literally being fabricated in front of you based in your design, right?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um... and- like, it finishes, and it's perfect. It's exactly what you dreamed of. And you look at the- You go to save like, a local copy for yourself, 'cause this is- this is on the Doyenne's machines, right?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And like, you're downloading the copy into your personal [amused] portfolio basically, and you see that the previous version? Had been broadcasted out. When you failed that last roll...

ART: Oh, fuck,

AUSTIN: ...you had broadcasted out into the- that day's datapack being sent back up into the satellite above, that would then send it out to the Mirage. And... I think that moment is when we all link back up, and those jets are heard overhead. And Myriad comes on comms, and says-

AUSTIN (as Myriad): There are three- four incoming objects breaking from orbit.

AUSTIN: What do y'all do, independently, as you are all across this sector of the world?

ART: I mean, I'm thinking of how to spin that bad design?

AUSTIN: *Uh-huh* [laughs]

ART: I'm like... it's- I'm trying to like, think of the thing, think of like- well y'know, it's really more of a statement-

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh-huh?

ART: - about how... nothing is really reflecting what you want people to see?

AUSTIN: [cackles] You suck, you're the worst! You're the worst artist! [ART cackles] *God*. um...[laughs] don't go to art school- you should go to art school, art school is fun. Anyway.

ART: Don't use it for evil.

AUSTIN: Don't use it- yeah, exactly. Thank you, good. Um... yeah. So that is the note that comes in. Uh- Echo and Even, you could be back together at this point, and- if you want to you could have caught Even up on all that shit

SYLVIA: Okay. Yeah, I definitely... 'cause like-

AUSTIN: [overlapping, amused] Also, you just said it in chat, Austin, I'm technically in art school right now, don't do this to me [DRE cackles]

SYLVIA: I mean, I am!

AUSTIN: Don't do it for evil!

SYLVIA: I mean- y'know. I got my Twitter for the evil.

AUSTIN: True [DRE cackles]

ART: Do they want me to be a guest lecturer, because I will....

AUSTIN: God... [SYLVIA laughs]

SYLVIA: Um- yeah, I definitely want to catch Even up, because there's literally a fucking coup being planned.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

DRE: Uh-huh...

SYLVIA: And like- generally speaking, those usually don't go without casualties!

AUSTIN: Right, right, right. Totally. Um... and like- so the jet that you heard before- right? Before all that stuff happened- is gone, but now you guys- anybody in Sculpture City hears three more- the sound barrier being broken as three objects appear up in the sky, and it's like... remember that everything here is seen through the colored glass, right? So it's just like this amazing purple sky, that just solid color of purple, with these white lights streaking across it, coming in from orbit. And Gig, up in the weird clay swamp, you also hear one kind of like, pottering through the sky around, in kind of a long circle. You almost get the feeling that you're- not being watched, but that something is trying is trying to get close- like, trying to spot- it's like looking for something down here. Uh... the professor and Lily don't notice that, or they don't seem to care about it so much? Because they are like, brushing the clay off of this thing, and trying to like, chip away at the dirt and muck that's surrounding it.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think at this point you have the story and a lead or whatever. What- it's three things, right? It's...

KEITH: Yeah, it's facts- facts, lead and...

AUSTIN: Sources.

KEITH: - sources.

AUSTIN: I think you have sources, I think you have a lead- which is- there's some old weird thing here from the past- and you have a lot of facts, but you don't have the one big fact, which is what this thing is. Um.... and they're like, cleaning it off, and you start to see... metal underneath the clay. And like, valves, and pumps and stuff. It's some sort of weird machine part. I don't know how much Gig knows about machine parts.

KEITH: I know a lot about machine parts!

AUSTIN: Alright! So they- they lay it out on the table, and they're like-

AUSTIN (as Lily): [huff] Doc, I have no idea what that is.

KEITH (as Gig): That's a machine part. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN (as Lily): Damn- he's right! He's got it! It's definitely a machine part. Uh, yeah- hm. Uhhhh, I'm not sure what it is, though... do you- Mr. Kephart, do you know what this thing is?

KEITH: Um- what does it look like to me?

AUSTIN: So it's still a little dirty, I think they're both trying to wipe parts away- there's like- it's like black chrome, and there's just valves moving into each other, there's weird chipsets on it, it's very *sleek*? And very like... very well compartmentalized? It's very *smooth* and rounded? You'd have to give me some sort of roll to like, take a guess on what it is and what it does, you'd have to really get up there and look at it somehow.

KEITH: Hm... yeah, I guess I- I guess I kind of have... something, it's just that instincts adds that [AUSTIN overlaps] one question to when it's relevant?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, to analyze. Yeah yeah yeah, totally.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I mean- and you don't need to roll to know that this thing is relevant to the story you're telling, so.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm pretty sure. Um-

AUSTIN: In this case it might be Lift the Veil, right? Which is... when you try to pierce the constant illusion of the veil, search for information or recall something you may already be privy to- which is just like, your knowledge of machines from being from Gumption's Gambit, your interest in machinery- y'know, we can figure out what specifically this connects- y'know, what specifically this ties to at some point, maybe?

KEITH: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: But for now, you can just give me a Lift the Veil. Tell me- are you still spiked out in joyful, and still gonna use joyful?

KEITH: I'm still spiked out, I have- after this I'll have one- I need to get down to zero, right? That's what I-

AUSTIN: Yes, yes. You still have two more spikes to get through, at this point.

KEITH: Yes, so after this one, I'll have one more roll to get back there.

AUSTIN: Sounds good.

KEITH: But I think it still works for me to get carried over from the last one.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. I think you're still like, excited basically? Like "Wow! What is this thing?". Alright, cool.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. Um...

AUSTIN: So give me 2d6 +1

KEITH: Alright, here we go...

AUSTIN: Boom! Eleven, hell yeah!

KEITH: Boom, uh, man...

AUSTIN: So... here's what I think happens, is- you did a story once on Gumption, where like- 'cause you just went behind the scenes, like Dirty Jobs, right?

KEITH: Yeah, it's like Dirty Jobs without the host being the worst guy in the world?

AUSTIN: Right, right, right. Yes.

KEITH: And specifically with the goal of making sure that like, all the shit people were doing-- like they had all the tools that they needed to not die.

AUSTIN: Right. Right, right, right, totally. Um, and so- I think you actually got- you were being sent in- you went in to report on the repair and maintenance crew for Gumption. Like, yeah, Gumption can obviously- its whole thing is that it heals things, it takes parts and makes them into new parts, but sometimes you need to restore-- there are a couple of key parts on Gumption, and on Divines in general that are like- they need to be taken care of, themselves. Like, it isn't enough to just put on some metal roofing and now the heart works. And that's where you recognize the basic design. You don't know how this thing works, you don't know what weird sci-fi- y'know... future technology does the thing it does, but it's functionally the heart of a Divine. Or- or maybe a part of a heart of a Divine. It's about as big as a watermelon, and it is a key part of the circulatory system of... Divines. It moves liquid, and information, and it routes like... feelings? It routes oil? It's the vessel of what this is, of what a Divine is. And that is what is on this table in front of you, dug up from this clay lake. Um- and that's when you hear a ship setting down at the top of the hill. It's this big, brass looking... mean looking ship, it- almost like the front of it is curved and opens up. It like, slides open, and you can hear a stairwell being dropped down. And we cut back to the city! Uh... Echo and Even, where are you when these three ships land, directly in the center of this city? They land like, at the forum, which is outside the palace where Grand is staying, where the Doyenne lives.

DRE: I guess... where is the Gold Club? Is it this yellow down here?

AUSTIN: No- sorry, yeah, Gold Club is like, right across the way. It's like... here. In fact, I'm gonna move this yellow one that's actually golden there, that's the Gold Club [DRE chuckles] and then I'll add a new watchtower symbol.

DRE: Well, I wonder- I mean, I think it makes sense that that might be where we're headed.

AUSTIN: Yeah-

SYLVIA: Yeah, no, I agree.

AUSTIN: Totally. Okay. um... there, made a watchtower. It's just a blue line [laughs]. Alright, yeah, so you see those ships land, right- like, in front of the palace. They are all a unique design, and in fact- I guess only the first of them is a ship proper. In fact, maybe only the first one landed... uh- no, they all land, they land together, it's important they land together. Um... the one that is the... the one that is the most ship-like is this- it almost looks like a closed up blue flower. Like, it has- like those sorts of petals folding all over it? But the petals are like a hard luminous blue. But there's also still like a sort of- they look like if you touched them there'd be this sort of pollen that's on a flower- or- y'know when you touch a flower petal like, "Oh, my fingers are all dusty now, cause there's flower junk on them"? [DRE laughs] That's what it looks like. It's still- it's like, hard and clearly metallic, but still has this layer of dust on it. And then, behind that- or partly next to that- is this this mech, with big bulbous arms and legs? It's *bright* red, and it has these very tight lines that form geometric shapes on it. It looks like a pair of late 90's Reeboks basically [DRE cackles]. None of you... are from Gumption's Gambit, but I- you're from the culture, you're from the fleet- this is what- there is some sort of high school sport that uses mechs like this. Um.. it's just like- basically a seventeen year old's mech [laughs]. Like, someone dunked in this last week [KEITH laughs]. And then the third one is-

KEITH: Ohh, I wanna play that game...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Sounds like a fun sport.

AUSTIN: The third one is actually a drop pod, it's not a mech at- or, it's not a ship at all, it's just an orbital drop pod that is again like, fluted. So the top is wide and then it goes down into a- like a sharp point at the bottom, and that unfolds? And inside is just a person in a pair- in like, a white dress shirt and a dress jacket, and pants? And then like- he's like taking that jacket off and hanging it up inside one of the walls of the... drop pod that's still standing. And next to him, down on one knee, is a power suit that's slightly bigger than him, that is- it has this very plain robotic face? It's just like a pair of lines for eyes, and then a straight line as a mouth? Like hyphen, underscore, hyphen, that's what his face looks like? But then his body is this metallic

green and red- dark dark, maroon red, like musculature. And you see him, he takes off his shirt, and he's like *cut*. And like, takes off his dress pants, and steps into this thing that fits snugly around him? And it folds up around him, and you can just see his muscles- like, the musculature of this- it's probably like ten feet tall. He's like, six foot even, and it's bigger than him, but he steps into it in a different way that the saints work. He isn't just standing inside of a mech, this is an extension of his body. Um... and then one of the flower petals opens up, and another man in a suit steps out. He's wearing like a gray flannel suit and- he's like a black dude with black hair, slicked back hair, with a thin mustache... Kinda old- he's probably in- he appears to be in his sixties, maybe even early seventies? But probably sixties. Very nice gray flannel suit, clearly has on a pistol holster- an underarm holster- and a little fedora on, that he takes off and brushes aside, and he tosses it over to the person in the bodysuit, who hangs it up next to the other hat- or, the jacket. And he says a couple words, you can see this from across the lake where the Old Gold Club is, and begins to head towards the palace. [pause] Inside! Um... you're- are you about to show this to the Doyenne? The mech?

ART: Yeah, I think. I mean, unless- unless people are like code red here, I'm not gonna like...

AUSTIN: No, I think this is like-

ART: -barge into the situation room and be like "Hey, I'm done!"

AUSTIN: Right, right, right. Um- I think maybe you are done, and you're on your way to see her when it does go code red.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: Uh- and like, you walk past a security room? And you just look up at the screen, and the dude who's walking with a suit- the guy we saw with a suit- is just walking down a hallway and just dispatches three dudes with a revolver. He's like "Bop bop bop, they all die". He keeps walking. [pause] Um-

ART: I mean, I'm probably gonna try to get out of the way?

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay. he's not like, in front of you, to be clear. He's- you saw this on a screen.

ART: Sure, but maybe it's like- Hey, what's a room I could be in-

AUSTIN: And hide.

ART: And close the door, yeah [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh, good. Yeah, you find one of those near where you were. Basically- i- y'know, I think you've been kept up here, do you know what I mean? Like for-

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Over late nights she's been like- yeah, there's a guest room you can use and hide in, basically.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Even and Echo. Are you crossing over?

DRE: So, a person not- I guess we didn't see this, but a person not in mech form is inside, and there's someone in a mech outside?

AUSTIN: There's *two* people in mechs outside. One of them is the bodysuit mech and one of them is the teenager Reebok mech.

DRE: Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: The Reebok one is called Solo Dancer and the... [DRE overlaps] the one that's like body suit is called the Glorious Monster.

DRE: [overlapping, laughs] Fucking perfect...

SYLVIA: Oh, man...

ART: My favorite Lady Gaga album.

AUSTIN: [laughs] It is actually a Max Roach song.

ART & DRE: [thoughtful] Hm

DRE: Um... I guess as Even sees this he starts to break out in a run? And is basically reeling everything he's seen back to Myriad and... more or less asking what the hell is going on and why are people from Gumption here? Or people who look like they're from Gumption here.

AUSTIN: Uh... Right. Myriad says-

AUSTIN (as Myriad): Only one of those mechs is registered as a Gumption model. Wait- no, in fact, it went missing two years ago. None of those are on record.

DRE (as Even): Okay, so who are they...?

AUSTIN (as Myriad): [pause] I'm working!

AUSTIN: Gig, there is a- a kind of a chubby black dude, who is like, walking down the- the hill, towards you. He has on a- he has on like a black and white bodysuit? Like a jumpsuit? But it- it almost has the vibe of a tuxedo, y'know what I mean? It has like a white line down the middle? And he has like, quite a paunch, but he's also walking with a great degree of confidence. And also, he has a rifle over the back of his shoulder, he's like holding up a rifle as he walks down these hills.

AUSTIN (as man): How are y'all doing down there?

KEITH (as Gig): Uhhhhhh. Hi-

AUSTIN (as man): You got room for one more?

KEITH (as Gig): [softly] Do we have room for one more?

AUSTIN (as Lily): [softly] Who is that? Who- who- is he from the board? I don't think he's from the board!

KEITH (as Gig): I don't think he's from the board either. I was gonna ask but. [louder] Who are you?

AUSTIN (as man): Oh, don't worry about me. You just hang tight, I'll be right down.

KEITH (as Gig): But if you wanna come- if you- okay. That's fine. [quietly] It's probably fine.

AUSTIN (as Cart-Horn): [deep breath] What is this thing?

KEITH (as Gig): This is... the heart. Of a.... Very important type of robot.

AUSTIN (as Cart-Horn): [huffs] Wh- which age is- ugh. This doesn't look like it's from the Glassed Age at all.

KEITH (as Gig): No, this is not from this planet.

AUSTIN (as Cart-Horn): What do you- no. I- I needed to find something from the Glassed Age, so I could show them that my work is important, that's the whole reason why-

AUSTIN: And then there's a shot at the ground to shut him up as this guy gets down from the hill.

KEITH (as Gig): Did you- was that you?

AUSTIN (as man): Yeah! That was me.

KEITH (as Gig): Why did you do that?

AUSTIN (as man): Uh, he's pretty annoying. I'm gonna take that, I'm gonna get in my ship, and you're all gonna have a great day. Sound good?

KEITH (as Gig): Hm.... No. no, that's- we were- [AUSTIN overlaps] we found- we're using this.

AUSTIN (as man): [overlapping, long sigh] Oh my god... I'm gonna give you one chance to give me this thing or I'm gonna kill you all and take it. It's very important, I don't have time.

KEITH (as Gig): Why is it important? Who are you?

AUSTIN: He shoots you.

KEITH: Oh, this guy's for real

AUSTIN: Take two damage.

KEITH: Okay, I can do that.

AUSTIN: You should have been healed up, right?

KEITH: I was healed up...

AUSTIN: Yeah, so go-

KEITH: Does that mean I have moderate damage?

AUSTIN: You have moderate damage, you mark light yo-

KEITH: Do I have armor?

AUSTIN: No. No, just mark light and moderate. Don't mark moderate twice.

KEITH: *Oh*, okay, got it.

AUSTIN: So light is one, moderate is two and three, and then critical is four and five. So yeah, he just pulls up his rifle and shoots you in the arm. Or like, through the shoulder. It's not good

KEITH: Okay... how- how close is he?

AUSTIN: Uh- he's at like rifle distance, right? So he's probably like... 30 yards?

KEITH: Okay, I'm going to... tell him that he can come and take it.

AUSTIN: Alright! He is like-

AUSTIN as man: [KEITH overlaps] Alright, good.

KEITH: [overlapping] Hold on. I have a thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I figured, yeah, yes. So he starts walking towards you- y'know, he has his rifle still. He's walking towards you.

AUSTIN (as man): Step away from it. Give me some distance.

KEITH: Okay, I move a little closer to him, but away from the thing.

AUSTIN: Oh, *buddy*.

AUSTIN (as man): That is not what I said to do.

KEITH (as Gig): You said move away from it! I'm moving away from it!

AUSTIN (as man): Step back.

KEITH (as Gig): I've never been at gunpoint before, I don't know how to do the- do it.

AUSTIN (as man): You're at gunpoint now, step back or I'll pull the trigger again. Three, two-

KEITH (as Gig): Alright no I'm stepping!

AUSTIN: Alright, and he keeps walking forward. As long as you're walking back.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And he gets to the table eventually...? Are you like, backed up enough? Do you keep- what's your plan, what are you doing?

KEITH: I have- I have a close weapon, and I'm going to use it.

AUSTIN: Hmm, okay.

KEITH: But I'm gonna wait until he starts trying to get the thing, so that he puts the gun down.

AUSTIN: He- so he grabs the thing with one arm, he grabs the heart basically by one of it's valves, and lifts it up? And he has the gun with his other arm, which means he's not like- he's not gonna be good with this thing anymore, 'cause he can't like hold both of it.

KEITH: Okay, I have my gun out now. On him.

AUSTIN: I mean- you pull the trigger and he's gonna shoot at you, right?

KEITH: Right... [AUSTIN overlaps] but-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Or unless- are you trying to like- are you threatening him? What are you doing?

KEITH: I'm- yes, I'm threatening him.

AUSTIN: What are you saying, how are you threatening him?

KEITH (as Gig): I'm- hey, I've also got a gun.

AUSTIN: Oh Jesus... [DRE laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): Hi. Hi, it's two guys with a gun here.

AUSTIN (as man): [sigh] Put the gun down.

KEITH (as Gig): Oh- well, you didn't put *yours* down.

AUSTIN: Are you giving him an ultimatum? Are you- what are you doing, what's your plan?

KEITH: My plan is to get him to leave the heart... or one of us is going to kill the other one.

AUSTIN: Yep!

KEITH: And *he's* the one that only has one hand.

AUSTIN: Okay. He's also a professional killer, but yes, that is true.

KEITH: I- he doesn't know I'm not a professional killer!

AUSTIN: [laughs] I do! Uh, alright-

ART: [overlapping] He probably does [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah, he also probably does. Um...

KEITH: I've- I've been bluffing this whole time. I have a very dangerous looking gun!

AUSTIN: Yeah, your gun sounds dangerous, I've read about it just now [KEITH overlaps] It's fucked up.

KEITH: [overlapping] It's a short barrel slug rifle that- it has high power, loud, does two harm...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: It basically shoots hunks of metal.

AUSTIN: Yeah. When you say what you want and what you'll do if you don't get it, roll. On a 10+ they have to choose, make you carry out your threat or back down and give you what you want. On a 7-9 they also have these options- which I'll get to

KEITH: Now here's the catch, I'm scared, and so I have to roll -2.

AUSTIN: *Fuck* [laughs] Oh, spikes have finally come up in a way that's gonna fuck somebody!

KEITH: Yeah. Ohhh boooy.....

AUSTIN: Hey! That's a- on no, that's a six. That's a six, you rolled a six.

KEITH: Oh, and you got me so excited, I couldn't see it!

AUSTIN: You rolled a six, a two, and then a negative two. It highlighted in green 'cause it saw that you got a six, I think. I was like "Oh wow, that's green!" and i-

KEITH: Well here's the thing, that was just- that was just the... that was the sway- the ultimatum.

AUSTIN: That's ultimatum, yeah, that's what I mean.

KEITH: That's ultimatum, right.

AUSTIN: So that fails [laughs] Uh- which means that he... I mean, I get to make a move as hard as I want is what that means.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: But I'm gonna leave- you don't get what you want here, he's not going to back down? And also.... So on a 10+ they have the choice blah blah blah, on a 7-9 they also have these options. That's like, out the door. Like- he's gonna leave with this thing. He's just gonna leave with this thing, he doesn't buy your threat, and I think-

KEITH: Well if he doesn't buy my threat, I can still shoot at him.

AUSTIN: I think you do damage to each other at the same time then. Like, if you'd successfully done this ultimatum and then he didn't wanna do it, then you'd have carried out your threat before he could, and you would have hurt him without him hurting you back. But failing that ultimatum means you now don't get to say "I pull the trigger first". You can both do damage as established to each other at this point

KEITH: Okay. Well, he might miss.

AUSTIN: No. that- no.

KEITH: No?

AUSTIN: No, he's not gonna miss you.

KEITH: Why not?

AUSTIN: 'Cause he's a *professional hitman*, Keith!

KEITH: He's a professional hitman- you said he's now not gonna be as good at shooting this gun [AUSTIN overlaps] now that he's carrying this thing.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right, he'll do less damage! But he's still gonna hit you.

KEITH: Less damage?

AUSTIN: Yes

KEITH: That's cr- is that how this game works, you just do the damage?

AUSTIN: That's how every game works that we've ever played except for Dungeon World! [DRE cackles] That's how Powered by the Apocalypse works.

KEITH: That's not-

AUSTIN: All Powered by the Apocalypse worlds except for Dungeon World don't have damage rolls

KEITH: Yeah, that's true...

AUSTIN: You do two harm.

KEITH: I guess- we have not spent a lot of time doing this game.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean, this game is like the Sprawl [KEITH overlaps] The Sprawl is the same way.

KEITH: [overlapping] Or doing the- I mean, doing combat in this game.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The Sprawl was the same way, you did harm as established. But the key thing is- I could say he shoots you in the head right now. I'm not doing that! You failed that roll, I could do that. Instead what I'm saying is you could both do harm as established. If you try to do harm right now, he'll also harm you back. You'll do two, and he'll do one.

KEITH: Yeah, deal. Let's do it.

AUSTIN: Alright! So you are now at critical one, and he is-

KEITH: No, I'm at moderate still.

AUSTIN: Oh right. Right right, you're at moderate.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: He is at light.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because he has one armor. So you're like- you both pull the trigger, right? [laughs] And you both get fucking shot! Um... at like, range right now. So you- I think he gets a shot- there's like an image of him being impressed that you pulled the trigger? And he pulls the trigger once on you and begins to back up this hill, which is like, not an easy incline.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Still trying to carry this thing away. I mean, at this point I think he's just trying to get away, and trying to keep distance from you.

KEITH: Uh, I'm shooting- I'm doing damage again.

AUSTIN: What's that look like, as he's running up this hill? Are you like, chasing after him? Paint me that picture.

KEITH: Yeah, I think I'm following at speed, trying to get him to drop the thing- it's round, it'll roll- so I want him to drop it. And I want- [loudly] and I want some HELP GUYS. [SYLVIA laughs]

AUSTIN: No! They are not- they are academics, they're not here to help you kill a person!

KEITH: I'm a journalist filmmaker!

AUSTIN: Pulling a *gun* out!

KEITH: Yeah! Listen, we're in the- y'know. We're in it.

AUSTIN: We are in it. Um... give me a, uh... if you're just trying to kill him, give me a neutralize!

KEITH: Um... [AUSTIN overlaps] how do I use neutralize?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] When you use force to attempt to neutralize a threat, take control of a situation or maintain hold of something you have, with a chance of taking harm yourself, roll 10- uh, roll. And then on a 10+ you generate three hold, on a 7-9 you generate two hold.

KEITH: Alright

AUSTIN: Thankfully you've cleared that spike, so you're back to regular things. What are you rolling?

KEITH: Yes. I rolled scared, I'm terrified- I don't know if you remember the last time there was combat I didn't even take out my gun I don't think?

AUSTIN: That is correct, yeah. Alright, so you have two hold, so you can spend one for one to inflict harm, to take away an advantage- which he doesn't have-, to suffer little harm, to force a change of location, or to impress, dismay or frighten your opponent.

KEITH: Okay, so he's already doing only one harm to me.

AUSTIN: Yep

KEITH: So if I suffer little harm, would that reduce that to nothing, he would miss?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. He will have missed, yeah.

KEITH: Um. [pause] Okay, I'm gonna inflict harm and suffer little harm myself.

AUSTIN: Alright, so you fire again- is this- this is like a chasing battle up to the hill side, basically?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, I think we're both going slow. I think I'm intentionally trying to keep my distance and he's just not-

AUSTIN: He's just missing. Yeah.

KEITH: He's just- yeah, yeah, 'cause he's still aiming at me, so he's not running I guess.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Like, you can't take your gun off on someone while you're trying to escape when they're in range I guess.

AUSTIN: [hesitant] Right...

KEITH: Y'know what I mean?

AUSTIN: Yeah

KEITH: He can't book it so I don't have to book it either. We're definitely moving up the hill [AUSTIN overlaps] and I'm trying to get him to-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Bit by bit, yeah

KEITH: Yeah, injure him enough that he can drop it, or... I mean like-

AUSTIN: I think that's a choice.

KEITH: I started shooting this guy so if he dies, that's like, included in what I'm expecting, but I don't care.

AUSTIN: Have you killed anybody before? Has Gig ever killed anybody before?

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: Okay, just curious.

KEITH: No, Gig's never fired a gun at a human. I've fired guns [AUSTIN overlaps] at training-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] At targets and stuff, yep.

KEITH: Yeahhh- and y'know, maybe people like to fire guns in space, I don't know.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Totally.

KEITH: They use a range [DRE cackles]

AUSTIN: Who knows. Um... let's jump to Even and Echo really quick. Have y'all killed people before?

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Echo?

SYLVIA: I actually don't know...

AUSTIN: Yeah, me either. I- [SYLVIA overlaps] Even I was pretty sure of, but Echo I didn't know.

SYLVIA: [overlapping] I don't think so. No, 'cause Echo in that one fight hurt people, but didn't kill anyone.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

SYLVIA: So no, I wanna go with a no there.

AUSTIN: That sounds good. [pause] Do you all-

SYLVIA: I actually have a question-

AUSTIN: Go for it.

SYLVIA: -for what I wanna do. So what's Grand's whole situation like?

AUSTIN: It sounds like Grand is hiding inside of a bedroom.

SYLVIA: Okay, but there's like, dangerous people where he is?

AUSTIN: There's a dangerous person, there's the Duke, the Duke is walking through the halls.

SYLVIA: So, a couple of sessions back- so a few ep- a little while back, episode wise- Uh... after Grand built the Overture with me-

AUSTIN: Yes.

SYLVIA: Um... we decided that because of that we shared an intimate emotional moment, which then we both had our special move hold on each other.

AUSTIN: That's true.

SYLVIA: The move for the Honed is, "When the Honed shares a moment of intimacy with someone, be it physical or emotional, you generate one hold with that person. Either of you can spend it to have the Honed appear in a dangerous situation-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh, sick!

SYLVIA: - with or without explanation as to why they got there". So I'm thinking we do that.

AUSTIN: That sounds good as hell! What's that look like? Is it [SYLVIA overlaps] just like-

SYLVIA: [overlapping] and I think before-

AUSTIN: -and then- or then Even is like, "Alright Echo, let's-" and then Echo is just *gone*? [laughs] Like, Echo's just sprinted away?

SYLVIA: Kinda? So what I think happens is, Even's about to say a plan, and then Echo is like "Go get your mech, I'm gonna find Grand".

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Or- no, actually even better, "Go find Gig, I'll get Grand."

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Um... and just like- [pause] takes off and- like, they were running alongside Even and then all of a sudden they're like twice the speed of Even. [DRE chuckles]

AUSTIN: [laughing] Right, right, totally. 'Cause Even is this big, burly, heavy- like, military trooper step, and now Echo is like "Nah, I'm actually- I'm actually Spiderman" [DRE laughs] Like, I'm actually just gone. Nice.

SYLVIA: I'm trying to think if it'd be more interesting if Echo showed up right in the room- like, burst through the window right in the room? Or like, had to go through the hallway and theoretically confront-

AUSTIN: I mean, we- the question for me ends up being like, do you wanna do- which version of this scene do you wanna show? Do we want the version where it's like- the door opens and

Grand is scared, and then Echo walks in? Or do we want the version where the door starts to open, and it's this guy with a gun, and then Echo breaks through the window? [SYLVIA overlaps] Like, what do you- this is-

SYLVIA: [overlapping] I kinda like that last one way more.

AUSTIN: Okay, let's do that then! So Grand, what's your guest room look like here?

ART: I mean, it's probably... reasonably nice, right? It's probably like...

AUSTIN: yeah! Yeah, the Doyenne gave you this room, right?

ART: Yeah. But it's also probably gotten messy, it's probably got like, a lot of notebooks, notes, and like, papers all over the place. Y'know, there's probably a nice bookshelf and he's just like, gone through books and not replaced them properly? It's like... this probably needs some attention, but it's very nice. [pause] Sloppy, but nice.

AUSTIN: Right, sure, totally. So you then hear those steps coming through the hallway, and like, every thirty seconds or so you hear a gunshot from the hallway? And still hear those footsteps comin'. How are you prepping for whatever's coming for you? [laughs]

ART: I mean, my real hope is that they're just not- they're not here for me.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: So like... I can't decide if it's - like, is that hiding, or is that just like reading? Is that just...

AUSTIN: [laughs] *Huh*. The-

ART: And I think it's the latter, I think he's just reading some history book.

AUSTIN: Like, locked door while gunfire goes on down the hallway.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Like- yeah, maybe you're reading from like, a book about one of the figures that the Doyenne told you about, right? Like, the first person to work on the glass, or one of the early settlements that- y'know, here's what it is. There's a book that's about- it's called "The First Five Schools" and it's about the early settlers here, who sought to make these different artist colonies, and the various ideologies that each one was tied to? And how early rulers- how the rule of law fell apart, basically, and how each one of those things- it's- again, a very propagandist book in a sense, 'cause it connects the failures of each of those early attempts at colonisation- or, at society here?- to some problem in their aesthetics. Um- and like- I don't

know, I think it's a very stylish version of this story, where you turn the page and... y'know, the viewer sees a paragraph about each of the different early artist colonies- and then there's another gunshot, right? Um... you turn through two pages and it's- y'know, it's like "Oh, and this was the surrealists camp!" and we get a shot of the Duke- who is just Duke Ellington, to be clear- taking down the door to the security office and killing two people in there... the one that you were looking at the cameras for, and then walking away, and then the shot of him walking away on the security camera, closer and closer to your room. And then a knock on your door.

ART (as Grand): Yes?

AUSTIN (as the Duke): Mr. Magnificent.

[SONG "Mr. Magnificent & Elegy" STARTS PLAYING]

ART (as Grand): Not really... correct, but yeah!

AUSTIN (as the Duke): I'm gonna open the door, and I wanna see your hands up, and then you're gonna come with me.

ART (as Grand): [pause] You're here for me?

AUSTIN (as the Duke): Ohh... oh, Mr. Magnificent. [sigh]

ART (as Grand): Again, it's not a last name. [DRE cackles]

AUSTIN: The door starts to open.

ART: My hands are on the table, I'm not like- I'm not doing anything.

AUSTIN: Okay. I think this is the moment Echo- anywhere in this scene you wanna come in- you tell me when you wanna come in, that's how that move works.

SYLVIA: I think... the second Grand sees this guys face...

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: - is when the window shatters.

AUSTIN: *Perfect*. So the window shatters, and this guy fires two shots generally at your direction, but you're like, rolling or whatever. What do you do?

[Pause]

SYLVIA: I'm gonna do something that... Echo didn't even do when like, big 'ol mechs were fighting. [SONG STOPS PLAYING] I'm gonna draw my sword.

AUSTIN: Oh, *hell yeah!* What's the sword look like?

SYLVIA: So- I've described it a little bit, um... so the sword is called Elegy, it's in this like, steel sheath, and it's sort of rectangular with a slant at the end? Kinda like a mix between a typical sword sword, and then the end is kinda shaped like the point on a katana?

AUSTIN: Okay

SYLVIA: It doesn't have the triangular- like-

AUSTIN: Yeah, I gotcha, like-

SYLVIA: [amused] It's a right triangle, not a... an equilateral triangle, that's what I was looking for

AUSTIN: Right. Thanks geometry forms.

SYLVIA: And it's made of like... it's kinda made of a bunch of little- it looks like it's made of like, different steels basically? And when Echo draws it from the sheath, like, sparks come out?

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Because of this- we talked a little bit about this, there's like, a sharpening thing on the sheath?

AUSTIN: Yes, I forgot about that.

SYLVIA: So Echo is like- rolls, and then pulls this sword out while rolling, and sparks are flying, and then they come up and they... attack this guy basically.

AUSTIN: So you're just going in, there's no- you're just- okay! Neutralize time!

SYLVIA: I mean- like, if I could I'd aim to take out his gun, [AUSTIN overlaps] but I don't think I have the ability to do that yet.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right, no.

SYLVIA: But- this guy has killed multiple people, and is about to kill one of my friends, I'm gonna probably... like, take the plunge on this.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me a neutralize.

SYLVIA: Alright...

AUSTIN: What are you feeling, what's the number?

SYLVIA: Uh... I think I'm gonna roll mad for this, and get a +1.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cool.

SYLVIA: That's an eight.

AUSTIN: That *is* an eight, so... that means that you get two hold, I believe, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah, two.

AUSTIN: Two, so what do you spend it on. One for one. Inflict harm, take away an advantage- which he doesn't have right now-, suffer little harm, force a change of location- and that's either one hold, and I'll choose the location, or two hold and you do-, impress, dismay or frighten your opponent.

SYLVIA: Okay, so I think I'm gonna inflict harm, which with Elegy this style is- 'cause this is a different fighting style, [AUSTIN overlaps, unintelligible]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right! Right, right, right.

SYLVIA: Tags for this are... three harm-

AUSTIN: *Oof*...

SYLVIA: - hand range, messy, armor piercing, and loud. Loud is one of the default ones that I just didn't get rid of with my other- [AUSTIN overlaps]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Okay. How is it loud? Like, what does it sound like? [laughs]

SYLVIA: I think [AUSTIN overlaps] I think-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Is it gross?

SYLVIA: I think it's literally- like, it's the impact that the sword makes?

AUSTIN: Oh, Jesus Christ.

SYLVIA: Like, it's a heavy piece of weaponry. And- either it's like, when it's unsheathed, that scraping of the metal, or it's if it comes in contact with another weapon or armor, or anything like that, then it's gonna make a sound.

AUSTIN: Right. Um... what do you do? So one is inflict harm, what's the other one?

SYLVIA: The other one is... force a change of location.

AUSTIN: Okay, where's the- I guess I choose location.

SYLVIA: You choose location.

AUSTIN: You do get shot then. Alright so then... you take two harm, armor piercing, from his pistol.

SYLVIA: Armor piercing?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh... he- like, as you're coming up on him, he's like PA PA- he actually shoots you a bunch of times, and you're just doing the cool dodge thing? Like in anime, dodging back and forth? But he clips you twice, and it goes right through your armor. But! You get in on him and do a *ton* of damage. What's this look like?

SYLVIA: So... I've always thought of Echo's, um... fighting styles to be almost dance-like, in some ways?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh

SYLVIA: Like, the first time we saw the hand-to-hand style, they did a big spin kick, and it's all that very flowing movement. So I think with this it's- I think it's kind of similar? Like, they- 'cause they were taught by their family, and this is this like, family fighting style, and it's always been these sort of fluid movements-

AUSTIN: Right...

SYLVIA: So I think- so they were rolling and they come up, and it's like a fluid motion of pulling the sword out from their back, and they're holding it sort of like... that backwards way, basically? Where it's like- the way you'd hold it if you were stabbing someone, but they swing up with it?

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: Um- I think holding it backhand is the way you say that. And they just swing up with it, in like a sort of diagonal motion as they're coming up, and I think that because of that positioning, when they turn the bullets probably go in like their shoulder or something?

AUSTIN: Totally, totally.

SYLVIA: Yeah

AUSTIN: Uh... alright so, you cut through and- it's like a mix of metal and blood comes out. Um- this person, the Duke, is half machine, half human- but mixed in ways that are not immediately like- it's not like "Oh, and he has a robot hand", it's like "Oh, he has robot lungs". Y'know, it's like, a weird mix internally of machine parts and flesh? And, uh... the change of location I think- so it's my decision, I think you're just in that long hallway now with him. You've pushed back out into that long long hallway that goes all the way out into the front like, yard, where his companions are. And he's like- gotten a little bit of distance between you and him, and he's holding his one arm, and stopping some blood or whatever, and then just like, stares you down? And says-

AUSTIN (as the Duke): You're fast. Not faster than me.

SYLVIA (as Echo): You shouldn't be so sure of that.

AUSTIN (as the Duke): Let's find out.

SYLVIA: Alright!

AUSTIN: He's taking deep breaths and is in like, gunslinger mode.

ART: Is there an appropriate moment to like... try to burst in on this? [laughs] Like-

AUSTIN: Uh- sure. So in my mind this moment is- there's a long hallway and Echo is on the side where you are? And then- or like, it's a long left to right hallway, and my mind you and your bedroom are on the left side, Echo is just outside of the hallway, and on the far end is the Duke.

ART: Hm...

AUSTIN: On the right end

ART: so it's not super easy.

AUSTIN: I mean, what are you tryna break in on?

ART: I'm trying to help, I'm trying to stab someone!

AUSTIN: [amused] Oh, okay- no, there's distance, you'd also have to close the distance here. I mean, if both of you rushed at once, it might be harder to hit both of you. [laughs] but also, you could both be hit.

ART: Ssure, and I don't think I'm good or helpful here.

AUSTIN: [laughs] So are you not doing it then?

ART: I don't know, maybe I'll wait until it turns again? Maybe I'll see what the next-

AUSTIN: [laughs] What is- actually, what is Grand doing at this moment?

ART: I think he has moved to the door. And is trying to- he is trying to look for an advantage, he has his- his knife, and is ready to stab someone with it.

AUSTIN: Okay. So I think in that moment this guy shouts out and says-

AUSTIN (as the Duke): I'm gonna kill you and your friend, *or* you can come with me.

[pause]

SYLVIA: He talking to Grand or to me?

ART: [overlapping] He's talking to me.

AUSTIN: To Grand.

AUSTIN (as the Duke): The Marquis of Transport and Fashion wants what is his.

ART: [softly] Ugh..... Fuck.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Grand, see if you can get out the window, Even's gonna be outside, find him.

ART (as Grand): I'm not- nothing has broken the terms of our deal, this is outrageous.

AUSTIN (as the Duke): [laughs and sighs] I'm not a lawyer, I'm a killer.

ART (as Grand): Yeah, he should've sent a lawyer! [everyone cackles] Do you know a lawyer?

AUSTIN (as the Duke): We got some good ones up in the Fleet.

ART (as Grand): I'm not going to the fucking *Fleet*! [AUSTIN sighs] That's why you send a lawyer!

AUSTIN (as the duke): Alright.

AUSTIN: And he just like, cocks the gun and points it at you, and is about to shoot. What do y'all do?

SYLVIA: Oh, I go in.

AUSTIN: Alright! That's a neutralize.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Oh, I forgot to mark mad...

AUSTIN: Please mark mad.

SYLVIA: How do I take just one off?

AUSTIN: I don't think you can only take one off, I think you have to take- go down to zero [SYLVIA overlaps], and then go back up.

SYLVIA: [overlapping] Okay, I'm gonna pump peaceful down to two then... and- I guess I'm actually gonna pump it down to one, 'cause I'm rolling mad again here.

AUSTIN: Yep.

SYLVIA: Which is another+1. It's a nine.

AUSTIN: Okay, two points.

SYLVIA: So I think- here the simple choice is inflict harm and then I'm gonna suffer little harm.

AUSTIN: Yeah, no, you're-yep, okay! So you just get in under his gunfire I guess. or - what does this look like?

SYLVIA: Is there anything in the hallway?

AUSTIN: Uh- yeah, sure. You tell me, what's the thing that you wanna do?

SYLVIA: 'Cause I think what I'm gonna do is like... 'cause we've established that Echo is onto some real parkour bullshit? Is, uh... They're gonna- I think there's like a statue or something-

AUSTIN: Sure

SYLVIA: - made of that glass stuff, and they're gonna... like, jump off of it? And then come down on top of him.

AUSTIN: *Nice*, nice. Um... yeah. And this is what we get, we get the shot of the statue? You jump off the statue up into the air, and we don't get you landing on him, we just stay on the statue? And the bullet bounces off the glass- actually, the bullet *pierces* the glass, which is- Oh wow, that was a very powerful bullet, it would've killed Echo if it had hit Echo! Uh- and then we just get a splash of blood on the glass statue, on the face of the Doyenne- that is in this bust of her out in the hallway- and we just like, stay on that shot. And then we get the wide shot of- or not wide, but the shot of Echo on top of the Duke, pulling the sword out. He has been dealt with.

SYLVIA (as Echo): [breathless] Grand, are you okay?

ART (as Grand): Yeah, I'm fine.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Okay, we need to get out here, right the fuck now.

ART (as Grand): I completely agree.

AUSTIN: Even. What are you up to?

DRE: Oh.... Um, I'm actually- as I'm still running towards- I guess the hangar now, at this point- I'm actually- can I call Caliper?

AUSTIN: Totally!

DRE: Okay. Um- so I call Caliper and I fill her in on the situation. And I think this is Even trying to show- like, you've done me a solid, and I told you I'd pay you back, and he basically says-

DRE (as Even): Is this a situation that we can make work for you?

AUSTIN (as Caliper): [laughs] Yeah, I think it is. I'll be there in a moment. Get kitted up.

DRE (as Even): Already on my way.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Gig. So at this point he is like, in a run, he's not... he's just turned and is running away from you.

KEITH: Does he still have the thing, did he drop it?

AUSTIN: No, he still has the thing!

KEITH: He still has the thing?

AUSTIN: Yep.

KEITH: Uh, I think I'm gonna- I think I'm gonna book it after him and then- like, I'm like- I'm not gonna miss, you have to stop or you're done.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me an ultimatum!

KEITH: Um... alright.

AUSTIN: How do you feel?

KEITH: Y'know, I hadn't- I felt scared, and I marked- uh, sorry. Scared? I was marking sad by accident. [quietly] Alright...

AUSTIN: You're scared because it's still just like, a high pressure situation?

KEITH: Yeah- well, I'm terrified of doing this violence.

AUSTIN: Do- okay. You got a five.

KEITH: I failed it, I failed the roll.

AUSTIN: So I think there's just this moment! You could pull the trigger, he's running away, you don't pull the trigger. He gets up to the top of the hill. He's at his ship.

KEITH: Oh- wait, hold on. I think I'm misunderstanding what ultimatum is [laughs]

AUSTIN: ... Okay?

KEITH: This is allowing- so failing there-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ultimatum says "When you say what you want and what you'll do if you don't get it, roll. On a 10+ they have to choose, make you carry out your threat or back down and give you what you want."

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You failed that roll, so you don't get either of those.

KEITH: Okay, got it.

AUSTIN: So you tell me-

KEITH: I was thinking of it more like sway, which is... [AUSTIN overlaps] I guess it's very similar.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] But sway is not about a threat, sway is-

KEITH: No, no, you're right. I was- yeah. The thing I'm not factoring into my ultimatums is like- if I fail then I can't just do the thing.

AUSTIN: Right, cause if you're gonna do the thing, you should just shoot him. Right? You should just say, "I shoot him in the back." As he-- like, you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. We'll roll- we'll roll with the ultimatum.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay

KEITH: That- y'know, we already did.

AUSTIN: So he is now at the top of the hill, like- his ship starts to open, [laughs] and then there's another sound from behind you. The clay pits are like gurgling? The moss that was swaying back and forth before coalesces a little bit- it's this pink and green moss. The doctor and Lily are both like, terrified, and the doctor's like-

AUSTIN (as Cart-Horn): We gotta get out of here! [panting] where's my scooter??

KEITH: [quietly] He has a scooter...

AUSTIN: And he's like, running up the other side of the hill? Lily's like-

AUSTIN (as Lily): You should get on your horse, and you should get the hell outta here, this is *bad*.

KEITH (as Gig): What is this- what is it? [pause] I have to get the thing! I have to go and get this thing!

AUSTIN: You're like "What is it?" and then behind Lily, a face pops up out of the muck. It is a humanoid body, but with plates of rock? That is like thirty feet- not the face, the face isn't thirty feet tall, the whole body is thirty feet tall. It has this- almost like, imagine a musculature- like a standee of a human with all the musculature showing, y'know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: except that where there would be like, the bicep, that is covered with a plate of rock. And underneath there's just this mix of moss, and clay, and some roots are in there.

KEITH: So it's like someone replaced all the pictures of a physiology textbook with like, shit they made from dirt?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yes. Yes.

KEITH: [amused] Okay...

AUSTIN: It's like- what if there was a really enterprising twelve year old, who like, [laughs] made a physiology- uh, person- a physiology like, model, but with dirt and rocks and sticks. Also there's no face, the face is also just one of this solid black rock plates.

KEITH: Got it. That's-

AUSTIN: Uh, and as it moves it like, drips, but the dripping- like clay- comes back into itself as it moves around. [pause] It is not pleased. There is like-

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: There is a noise like an earthquake? But it's coming from this thing.

KEITH: I have to get to this ship.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: I'm going to do it, I'm getting to this ship. [AUSTIN overlaps] If I have to use Duck then I'm- then I'll use Duck but-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Give me- give me a Risk. Yeah, I think having Duck here would be really fun.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah

AUSTIN: You hop on the back of Duck and this thing is like, [KEITH overlaps] taking off, but at-

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah, yeah, and I'm like scooped up, I want Duck to scoop me up.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I got you. Duck scoops you up, you're taking off- like, diagonal up the side of this hill, this ship is like, slowly starting to lift off, but you're running behind it before it can actually get height.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Unless you have another move I think this is Risk, "When you're aware of an act to avoid imminent danger, say how you do it and roll".

KEITH: Um... alright. I'm getting- so wait, is there any danger coming from this thing? Like, besides that it's coming.

AUSTIN: Yeah- I mean, it's dangerous. It's not- it doesn't seem to be aiming at you or anything, but it is dangerous, 100% it is dangerous.

KEITH: Okay. So I'm staying away from that- scooped up by duck, staying away from that, and keeping an eye- making sure I'm not being aimed at by this-

AUSTIN: Nah, this dude is now getting onto his ship and is trying to- trying to leave. Yeah, totally.

KEITH: And I think I'm now- I think I'm excited now, I think I'm now liking this!

AUSTIN: Okay, you've crossed over? Are you- are you broadcasting?

KEITH: No, I can't broadcast yet.

AUSTIN: I think you have the facts. Like, now that you know what that thing is, you have the facts.

KEITH: You think that's it? You think I have the-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I think from that point- the fact you got, which is this is a Divine heart, is- is the fact of that story.

KEITH: Is the fact- okay, alright. Then fucking yeah, as soon as I put it together I'm broadcasting.

AUSTIN: Okay. What's- is there-

KEITH: I may have even been broadcasting the montage of what this is like- like, already.

AUSTIN: Right, right, right. Cool. so give me a roll for that and then we'll do risk, because that like, sets a stage for risk. Also did- are you filming yourself with your eye at this point?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah-

AUSTIN: [sigh] Okay...

KEITH: - I've got- my eye is always getting that second shot.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: A lot of it is angles, you can't just have- y'know.

AUSTIN: So is this joyful again? For curiosity of millions, when you become a telepresence and broadcast to the world in order to tell a story by way of your perceptions in the moment? Is that- is that the...

KEITH: The putting the story together is- and now not being in gun danger? Is enough- like, putting the story together for me is always like, exciting.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: And then now that I'm not facing imminent death, Even though I'm pretty hurt, I think I'm *jazzed*.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Fair.

KEITH: So...

AUSTIN: Alright, give me a roll! This is +2?

KEITH: Yes, this is +2... [quietly] oh I- marked the wrong thing, it's under- Okay. SIX! Oh, *boy!*

AUSTIN: Uh, buddy...

KEITH: That's- well, that's for curiosity of millions, so-

AUSTIN: Yeah...

KEITH: It's bad, but it's not- like, I'm not gonna die.

AUSTIN: No, no, but like- you could- you do- [pause] things go bad here.

KEITH: Yeah, you're right, you're not wrong.

AUSTIN: So I think- okay, I can actually give you- The thing that's cool about this, it can go bad in a way that still gives you something. I don't think you get to maintain creative control of your broadcast, and the thing that happens is... that this being behind you does? Um, this creature that's pulling itself up out of the clay. Which should immediately be like "Oh, this isn't just a weird nature creature". Like, this isn't- this isn't a druid, this isn't a-

KEITH: No, no. And it- it did have the heart of a Divine, so.

AUSTIN: Well- yes. So the thing that it does is- I do think that your stream thing works- like, the actual broadcast part of it totally works. And all through the Galley, all through the Mesh, all at once throughout the Feet, there is just this image of this huge monster pulling itself out of the clay, this bronze ship beginning to take off- and overlaid on all of it is this historical footage of the world, that the clay thing that you're seeing- the clay and rock creature- saw. And it looks like one of the footage Echo had access to previously, when dealing with the snake creature? You remember that stuff? Of like "Oh, there was a war here, and there was fighting, blah blah blah." And you see... I think everybody- I think you do lose control here, you do just fall passive? But Duck loves you, so Duck won't- Duck will make sure that you don't fall off to your death?

KEITH: Aw... yeah

AUSTIN: but we just see it. The thing that landed here, the thing that brought on the Blooded Age, was a Divine. It was a *massive* machine, it was a machine that was both ship and mech, and could move between the two. It has the same black chrome structure that the... the heart did? The same sort of weird curvature. I'm imagining something that's like... god, I have the deepest cut that no one's going to get. There was a series of Mac games called Escape Velocity? Back in the day?

DRE: Hell yeah! *Hell yeah!*

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay, good. I'm glad. There was a faction in Escape Velocity Nova that had like, cool silver ships. Y'know the ones I'm talking about Dre?

DRE: Ohhh, I remember the cool ships [AUSTIN overlaps] but nothing about the faction.

AUSTIN: They had- they had like telekinetic powers or something- the Vell-os! They were called the Vell-os, is what they were called.

DRE: [quietly] Ohh, yeah...

AUSTIN: They had really cool silver and blue ships that just had like a nice curvature to them, you should look them up- [spelling] VELLOs. I don't know why these pictures also include a lot of shaving information? There's lots of- there's *lots of shaving* here! I guess 'vellos' must mean something in Spanish that I don't know. Just do a search for 'vellos escape velocity'. [laughs]

KEITH: Oh, these are cool, these are very cool.

AUSTIN: Yeah, these are very- and also very like late '90 or late 2000 Mac OS spaceship game things. Uh- so very curved, very shiny, black and silver, and it could move between being a

transport ship and being a huge humanoid mech. Huge as in- like, Godzilla, skyscraper huge, not Gundam huge. And it landed here... whatever the doctor said. I have to look at my notes for a specific date. Um... 12 000 years ago? 12 000 years ago. And the- this, whatever this being is, saw it tear apart society. It used it's divine influence to tear apart the factions here on this planet, it made people bicker, it made people self-interested, it made people more concerned with what they wanted individually than what helped people by and large- um... it spread discord through a bunch of different kind of- y'know, subcultures? It convinced people to be manipulative... y'know, it decentralized what had previously been this notion that the thing that brought everyone on this planet together was this planet and its unique attributes? And it found a way to separate and neutralize the two factors inside of the planet that had come together to kinda do like... magical technology. Like, there had been- whatever that first visitor was had come here and brought memory to the planet. The planet had previously- Quire had previously not had a memory, and because of that it couldn't build bonds with the people on the planet, and couldn't like, decide to love them and cherish them, and work with them. And then, once that first visitor came, whatever that was, it gave them- it gave Quire, the planet- that feeling. That ability. And so it forged really great bonds! And then this thing that landed, this Divine, tore that apart, and separated those two things- or at least subdivided them?

AUSTIN: [SONG "Independence" STARTS PLAYING] In fact, I think that there's a very emotional feeling that everyone has. For a moment, everyone in the Fleet, everyone on the planet, anyone who is chipped in any way- so not Echo [laughs]. Actually, on this planet? Even Echo, feels... deeply separate from everyone else. There are moments in life where you can feel incredibly human, there are moments where you feel like you are part of something bigger. An incredible concert, a moment where- y'know, there is some sort of important victory for civil rights, or for people who you relate to, in moments of great highs in your family, in your friends, when you're at a friend's wedding and you see how happy they are, and you feel like, "Oh, we're all part of this thing together". This is the *core* opposite of that. There is, for a *moment*, this understanding that you will never, ever, *ever* actually connect to another person, you'll only ever get close, you'll only ever have an *approximation* of a genuine connection to another human being. And because of that, you can't trust them, and because of *that* you can probably not even trust *yourself*. And that is what that Divine taught people. And that Divine's name is Independence. And that is what brought ruin to Quire.

[SONG "Independence" STOPS PLAYING]

AUSTIN: And that history is what this creature is broadcasting through you, Gig. It's using your stream suppressor, or whatever- what's the name of that device you have again?

KEITH: It is called the stream suppressor, yes.

AUSTIN: -to blast that out into- not just the people nearby, but- your thing is the thing that can transmit throughout all of the Twilight Mirage. And so- I think there's just this moment that sweeps over the entire planet, the entire Fleet? There's a bit of irony here, right? Because Dr.

Cart-Horn was like “No one gives a fuck about history!” and now like- wow! Guess what? Everybody just got a history lesson [laughs], all at once.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Actually, I think- everyone, what's that- how does your character feel about that? And I think everyone should mark one emotion in response to this revelation that there was a Divine that crashed here once and it brought ruin to this place, specifically because it drove wedges in between people. Let's go down the list- Gig, as someone who is the closest to this- literally, physically. What is your response to that? And also your response to being part of that thing. Also, you maybe don't have to mark anything because you were- eh, no, you still should, let's have this effect actually mean something mechanically.

KEITH: Yeah, okay. Um.... hm. That's tough. The thing that I would mark I think most readily would be sad? But- which is also the thing that my stream suppressor suppresses?

AUSTIN: *Oh*, interesting.

KEITH: Yeah. So I'm trying to think of-

AUSTIN: Yes, maybe then it does- so that thing does what? Like, there's a move that you have as part of your character creation that basically says you don't get access- you have worst access to this personal co- emotion, [KEITH overlaps] part of it being your brain.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah. So I can read- so it says “The stream suppressor chip is a permanent fixture, always interface with your mind, unable to be removed. It allows me to go live and broadcast myself, and not lose myself to audiences, but it also suppresses one specific emotion, make a second state's modifier -1.” So it suppresses my ability to be sad. Which I don't think means it's *impossible* for me to feel sad, just that it's a lot harder.

AUSTIN: Then- maybe let's mark sad, but let's think about it on that way of like... give me a picture of Gig's interiority in hearing that stuff. What does a more muted sad response to that look like? Also I think your face is also part of this broadcast, right?

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Like, yours is the face that people see coming through? Or like- y'know, it cuts to you. Like, [laughs] huge image of a giant chrome black curved Divine, waging war between not only humanity and the native people of this planet, but also between civil- like a civil war on this planet between factions of people who were once allied, an utopia being pulled apart by this thing, and then it's like-

KEITH: And now back to you Gig!

AUSTIN: -hard cut to you Gig! [laughing] Yeah, exactly! And then we hear the hovering of the drone eye like, watching you, it's like "brrr" or whatever. And then cut to your face.

KEITH: Yeah, I think it's sort of a... I think it is like a muted set, but also like a, uh.... Like a surp- maybe I don't- maybe I didn't realize that I wasn't feeling... this thing.

AUSTIN: Ohhhhhh, that's good.

KEITH: And so I'm like "Ah, this is now a new- i- uhhhh. I'm now saaaad!"

AUSTIN: Right-

KEITH: And so- I'm bummed out but also really confused, and then upset- confused that I'm feeling this thing that feels new and then upset that this thing that should feel familiar is now foreign.

AUSTIN: Right, right. 'Cause there was a time of your life when you were sad all the time, because you're a human being and you didn't have this specific piece of technology in your brain that did this to you. Interesting. And also like- there hasn't been that much to be sad about on your utopian fleet!

KEITH: No-

AUSTIN: Except when a Divine gets killed, which has happened in your timeline, that probably wasn't great, but- in general, you're making things better, you're seeing people, you're taking care of people. Like, that's good. Alright, let's go down the list. Even, how bout you?

DRE: Um....

AUSTIN: Ss you're rushing to meet up with Caliper and maybe do a bad thing, this wave of- this information hits you. And it's broadcast to through this- y'know, through the mesh that you've set up, basically.

DRE: I can't figure out if it's sad, mad or scared. 'Cause I think Even is this person who has devoted his life in service of the Fleet, and like... part of that for him is holding the Divines in this very high esteem? And like- knowing that obviously Divines are capable of violence or can lead to violence and stuff like that, is not a bad thing but... this feels different?

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: So yeah, I think it's mad.

AUSTIN: Interesting. Okay yeah, mark that. That's a good- I think that's a very Even response. A very Even Gardner response, not an even keel response. [DRE chuckles] Grand, how about you? As this hits you- also where are you? Are you still in that room, are you seeing this hit you as Echo jabs the fucking blade into the Duke, killing him?

ART: Yeah, it must, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: And it's joyful.

AUSTIN: Huh. Why?

ART: 'Cause I'm- I'm so excited.

AUSTIN: By the prospect of this history, by the prospect of a Divine here?

ART: Yeah, of seeing this- this is the Divine I came to find, and we found it. Well we didn't find it but like-

AUSTIN: We didn't find it but-

ART: We're on the path.

AUSTIN: This history of it does not deter you, does not deter Grand.

ART: No- I mean, it's just- I'm not here to judge.

[KEITH and AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: [laughing] Good, great, good. Uh- and Echo, you're not connected to the mesh, but remember when you saw this thing before? Or not this thing, but you saw the Civil War when you touched-

SYLVIA: Oh yeah! True...

AUSTIN: You touched a statue at the beginning of this adventure, at the beginning of this arc, that said "To Pretense, who led us in our war on Independence". And you saw an image of this war, in the same way that happens here. And despite not being connected to the mesh- this maybe is part of a realization, which is that the Mirage is a physical thing? We've talked about it before with Even, as like, literally having some Mirage on him that he can apply to things? Like when you kickstart one of these nodes he has to physically give it some of the Mirage. And the Mirage can be this thing that's very dense, as in Even's kit or whatever, but it can also be very

loose and dispersed? But it's still physical, and this might be one of those moments when you're like- oh, right, you're standing in the Mirage, the Mirage carries this stuff in it's own body. And the way your family used to access it was through these nanites, these nanomachines, and you thought that's how it *had* to work? But in this moment you see everything that everyone else sees, carried on the Mirage into your mind. And that's never happened before, so how do you feel about that, and how do you feel about what you actually see?

SYLVIA: So, now that I actually- okay, I'm gonna start with the feeling of actually seeing the Mesh?

AUSTIN: Yeah

SYLVIA: That's scared, for sure. Because that's like... I always thought this thing couldn't touch me unless I was directly trying to engage it myself?

AUSTIN: Right. Which we've seen over the last couple of adventures again, you going through the gallery space, as being like... a different way to get into the mech that still feels grounded in the physical. And you've pushed yourself to do that twice, yknow?

SYLVIA: Yeah. But this is different, this is- instead of me entering a room, or entering a mech, its entering me? And that's terrifying. And then on top of that- it's kinda hard for me to process what I'm seeing here because of that overwriting feeling... but it's the sort of bittersweet- it's a mix of both fear and peace at the same time in a weird way?

AUSTIN: Huh

SYLVIA: because the- it's mostly Independence's like.... "Oh, you can't form real connections with people!" Echo's like "Yeah no shit, that's been my entire life."

AUSTIN: [laughs] Right. Which goes directly against the Fleet's core notion, which is like "Despite our difference we can align ourselves. Yes, we have a different view of what society should be, but these core values tie us together, that's why we're the Resonant Orbit, we're all in orbit around something cooler but we don't collide". So yeah, I actually really like that notion of Echo being like- "Yeah, uh huh? Sure." So mark whatever you think is appropriate here, I'm not-

SYLVIA: Probably scared 'cause I thing the Mesh thing is the most prevailing feeling, yeah. So I'm just marking one, I'm not spiking that?

AUSTIN: Just marking one, no spikes. Y'know what, I think that there are people on the planet who spiked out on this, y'know what I mean? Like, I think Echo and Grand, you probably see a security guard or two just drop to a knee- Even, moving through the city streets you *definitely* see people in tears, or shut their doors and go inside, or like, have this very dramatical emotional responses. Gig, same thing, I think that you see the doctor just sit down, legs bended

at the knees, and just kinda flop out and then- not slam, but flop his back onto the ground, just look up at the clouds- as this giant monster reaches up over him [laughs] Um... but you also see- two things. One, the woman who is his research assistant- Lily, Lily Lysander-

KEITH: Right

AUSTIN: She like jumps into action, begins to run towards you at this point? And you notice that the assassin who came for you and who stole this heart is like, literally unfazed. He doesn't even- like, it hits him, and then it passes him instantly, as if it's old information. What are you doing at this moment, Gig?

KEITH: Uh... I am still galloping towards the ship.

AUSTIN: Towards the guy, yeah yeah yeah- at that angle right?

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Okay. So I think he hops on it and begins- and does the take off that's at a low distance as- he's like, afraid to get too high because that will make him too close to this giant... swamp-earth thing monster that is reaching out and slamming at the ground- y'know, causing what gravel is down to leap up into the air with each smash...

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: It would make him too... for this brief window, too vulnerable. So he's like, rolling low and trying to outrun it, and you're galloping behind it. Even, I just think that you walk through all these people and you catch up to Caliper. Where do you meet up with her?

DRE: Um... I almost wanna say- I mean, where does she want me to meet up with her?

AUSTIN: You know, I kinda wanna give you the director's chair in a sense-

DRE: Sure

AUSTIN: - like, is this an assassination attempt, is this like- that is what her overall goal here has been. But do you have an image in your mind of what that looks like? And are you there with just yourself, is the Amprunner with you?

DRE: Um... no, I don't think so. I think the scene is that maybe this is happening as the same time as Echo is finishing their fight, it is- while they're still- 'cause there were still two people in mechs up front, right?

AUSTIN: Up front, yeah. Waiting.

DRE: Yeah. So maybe it's like- y'know, part of the combo that Even had with Caliper is, he tells her- y'know, there's two people out front, and Caliper gives him basically a back entrance?

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: That leads to the throne room. So maybe it's like an old- it's the emergency exit, so if there ever was-

AUSTIN: Riiight

DRE: - like, when the Doyenne would have to be evacuated from the palace, this is the tunnel or whatever they'd take. And Caliper tells him where the entrance is, and that's where they're meeting.

AUSTIN: Alright, so they meet up there- there's a third person there, who is... who if Grand was here, he'd recognize as Cascabel, the assassin who killed Glass- who killed Saint Glass during that first fight, is also here. And like, the three of you meet up at this back entrance that goes through a hallway of like...it's like, the only thing in Sculpture City you've seen that one, is untouched by this colored shade of the stained glass panes that run it throughout and over the entire city? Most interiors still catch some of that light, but this tunnel is just damp and gray- very plain also, it's not ornamented... there's no joy on displaying its function, there's no- normally a lot of the buildings here- again, there's function first, but what often happens is there will be a little flare added to draw your eye to the function, right? So like, "Oh, this building is built this way so that when it rains the- it has like a gutter system that leads all of the rainwater in the entire block into the right direction." And so there are- y'know, gargoyles or whatever set up to draw your eye to that stuff. Or "Oh, this building has been built with a curve in it that does something with the shadow so that it remains cool in the summer" and not only is the curve there, but also there's little embellishments. Y'know, there's like a mural alongside it or something, right? Here it's just unadorned. The tunnel is gray and damp, and I think we get this silhouette shot of the three of you? Caliper says-

AUSTIN (as Caliper): Gardner, meet Cascabel. He's a professional.

AUSTIN: And Cascabel offers a hand to you. Again, this is the guy who Grand saw kill Glass, back in the first fight.

DRE: Grand, did you tell me that?

ART: Certainly not contemporal to- like, contemporarily. Contemporaneously? Uh...

DRE: I think maybe it's more interesting if you didn't.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: So yeah, I shake his hand.

AUSTIN: He says like-

AUSTIN (as Cascabel): Caliper called me a professional, that's all I am. I have no stakes here, but it's a job.

DRE (as Even): Fair enough.

AUSTIN (as Cascabel): Just wanna be on the level.

DRE (as Even): Sure

AUSTIN: And then starts walking down the hallway, and as he does he like- he has a rifle, but he begins taking parts off of the rifle and putting them on various slots and pouches on his- he has like a brown- long brown duster- and on the inside there are loops and stuff? He like, puts part of the barrel in a loop, begins to unmake this gun he has to turn it into a heavy pistol instead of a long rifle, basically.

DRE: It's a cool gun.

AUSTIN: Uh... Caliper says like-

AUSTIN (as Caliper): It is. He'd never admit it though.

DRE: Oh, I know. [laughing] I was saying that out of character.

AUSTIN: Oh. Okay! [laughs]

DRE: Even probably thinks that though! Like- y'know, he appreciates specialist hardware in that way, so.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh, uh-huh, totally. Um... alright, Gig. Let's figure out what's up with the horse and the spaceship and this giant creature!

KEITH: Uh-huh

AUSTIN: So are you trying to get on board? What are you trying to do?

KEITH: Yeah, I'm trying to get on board, I wanna jump onto it. I wanna do like a car chase scene where...

AUSTIN: Yeah

KEITH: Someone jumps from one car to another but instead of a car it's a horse and instead of another car it's a spaceship.

AUSTIN: It's a spaceship that's sorta shaped like a trumpet, it has a big flared brass front?
[laughs]

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Which is interesting 'cause it means you have to get in front of it and then jump backwards? How- tell me how you do this. Like, what's- is there a move that's not just risk or is it just risk?

KEITH: So, I... I think visually- so Duck doesn't have a saddle or anything, and Gig's not a- y'know, horserider.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Right!

KEITH: So luckily I think- [laughs] luckily I think- the way that I'm picturing it in my head is... Duck using his mane as sort of handle bars for me to hold onto?

AUSTIN: [pained] Right, uh-huh...

KEITH: And so I'm using that to steady myself, and I guess I can push myself up and- when I was a kid swimming in a pool, my dad would put me on his shoulders, and I would stand on his shoulders and he'd throw me into the deep end of the pool? And that's sort of what's happening too, where he's got my feet and is sort of helping me jump off of them and into the ship.

AUSTIN: Totally.

KEITH: [overlapping] So yeah, risk.

AUSTIN: Gimme a risk with advantage, 'cause you have Duck.

KEITH: Okay!

AUSTIN: And Duck loves you. Duck and you are like, we're partners, we're in this together.

KEITH: Yeah, we're in it- um...

AUSTIN: How do you feel?

KEITH: Uh....

AUSTIN: Are you scared? Or are you still- you were spiked out... oh no, but you're not spiked out anymore!

KEITH: Not spiked out anymore.

AUSTIN: Yes, you used a non-sacred thing. Or a non- joyful thing to break it, right.

KEITH: Yeah, um... I think I'm mad.

AUSTIN: Okay

KEITH: I'm mad... I'm mad at having been made sad.

AUSTIN: Right. Like, at this point- Is this one one of those moments- if someone who had a calm mind looked at Gig they'd say like, he doesn't even know why he's the way he is right now. Like, he's just a fucking mess.

KEITH: I think so, yeah! 'Cause I spent the- the sort of like pattern that I set up for the way that for Gig- for the way that I would play Gig is like... I intended to be the most spiked out of anybody because I was just focused on joyful?

AUSTIN: Which happened.

KEITH: - which is an effective- yeah! It's an effective thing for me to roll, but it's really ineffective to keep rolling that, spike out, and then being [AUSTIN overlaps] shit at everything.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And then suddenly be in a gunfight, and be scared, right, yes. [laughs]

KEITH: Yeah. So then for someone who I designed to be like... joyful, and then spiked out, and then better, and then spiked out? To then be joyful, and then scared, and then sad and then mad is like, total whiplash.

AUSTIN: Right, totally.

[KEITH bursts out laughing]

AUSTIN: But you have advantage, which means you roll again! You roll one more time!

KEITH: Oh, oh, oh, thank god.

AUSTIN: He rolled a six, jesus. So roll one more time.

KEITH: Eight

AUSTIN: Alright, that is an eight.

KEITH: Oh, boy!

AUSTIN: Totally. Um...

KEITH: My heart almost like, exploded for a second. I was like, Oh, no....

AUSTIN: [amused] Yeah, of course. Alright, so you got an eight, so that means that you both get on, you get what you want but also there's a complication,

KEITH: I thought you were gonna say you both get on board, and I was like 'Duck also is on the ship??'

AUSTIN: Duck hops on board... [laughs] [KEITH and DRE chuckle] That would be fantastic.

KEITH: Two hooves up and he has to scramble the third foot hookup.

AUSTIN: Ow. Um... so I think as you're gettin up you grab on with one hand and the guy starts to pull up higher.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you need your other hand to get on? And you have to drop the gun to get on board.

KEITH: Done, it's gone

AUSTIN: Alright, you're on board! You like, pull yourself up- again, the picture of this is like, the top, the front of it, is fluted like a trumpet, there's a stairwell in there that has been retracted at this point but still has the good... not stairwell, but there's like a series of stairs that retract into the ship's bottom? But it still has the texture that you can grab onto? And you're steadying yourself by that, and you manage to like, get up to the door. I'm gonna say the door is something you can open from the outside, because that's how spaceship doors work- or in this spaceship, you don't wanna be stuck in the outside, if someones outside saying "let me in, let me in, let me in!" it opens.

KEITH: [chuckles] Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is probably a safety problem, now that I think about it. Uh-

KEITH: So- wait, in this ship- sorry, you might have said this and I misheard the description. In this sort of semi-trumpet ship, which part of the trumpet is the door to get on this ship? Is it the mouthpiece or-

AUSTIN: It's the center of the m- no, no, it's the...

KEITH: It's like the valves.

AUSTIN: Hmm, no. it's the front. What is the- what is the-

KEITH: The horn?

AUSTIN: The horn! It is the horn.

KEITH: The horn is the- okay.

AUSTIN: You literally go inside, like- we probably get a really great moment of all the sound ducking when you get inside of the horn? Because you're inside of a little cave basically here. It's not very aerodynamic- and the whole thing doesn't have valves-

KEITH: How musical is the ship as it flies?

AUSTIN: [pause] I'm trying to decide how funny it is. Um... [KEITH and DRE Giggle] I think it's actually just a couple of notes that get played, depending on speeds.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So you get chords, is what [KEITH overlaps] you get. Are there chords- there are chords on trumpets, right?

KEITH: [overlapping] So they're identifiable notes- no, there's not.

ART: No.

AUSTIN: Well what do you call it if you put down multiple valves? [ART overlaps] That's just a different note.

ART: That's just playing-

KEITH: That's different notes, that just changes the notes.

AUSTIN: Okay, that's different notes. So there's different notes depending on speeds and heights, and stuff like that.

KEITH: Wait- this is a spaceship, and not a trumpet, so if you wanted it to be a chord it could be a chord.

AUSTIN: True, that is true. But no, I think it's just individual notes. And maybe that's the thing you hear, it's going to a higher note as it starts to pick up speed and you move past Duck, you see Duck drift behind? And then you peek your head out maybe? [laughs] You see- from some position you see that this creature is up in all hands and legs, and it's chasing after this ship. And like... roaring? It doesn't have a mouth, it just has this huge rock plate covering its face, but it does make this roaring sound- that is physical, 100%. In fact, you hear it and you realize: It's not making it, the ground is making it? It's roaring all around you, from the trees and from the dirt and from everything here on Quire. Um... in your vicinity. And then you open the door and go inside! [laughs]

KEITH: Uh- okay, I've opened the door, I'm going inside- I have a prop.

AUSTIN: What's your prop?

KEITH: I put my eye in my hand, and I go inside.

AUSTIN: [quietly] Oh, I hate this. Okay.

KEITH: And... are we in- are we in the mesh right now?

AUSTIN: Um.. Let me look at the map real quick. I think we're actually just outside of it, still. Like, you haven't made that deal with Sculpture City yet. So no.

KEITH: That's fine. I'm just- I'm having... I think the eye blinks, but it's... what is it called? It's just cosmetic, it doesn't like, shut the video off. So I'm keeping the eye shut and I walk in.

AUSTIN: Okay

KEITH: And I'm gonna try to trick... um- what's this assassins name?

AUSTIN: His name is Armstrong.

KEITH: Armstrong, right. I'm gonna try to trick Armstrong with it.

AUSTIN: Okay, how?

KEITH: It's a bomb.

AUSTIN: *Ohhh*, I see! It's a fake thermal detonator, okay.

KEITH: It's a thermal detonator.

AUSTIN: Okay! Alright, so I think he's piloting this ship, um... you can see-

KEITH: It's filming too, that's the- [AUSTIN overlaps] so I'm also filming- yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, I understand. Uh- he's like-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): The hell did you do to your eye? Where did your eye go??

KEITH (as Gig): It's a thermal detonator. [pause] It's not just an eye. It's my last resort, it's my defense. Who are you?

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah. He says-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Alright, let's not make any ridiculous moves, let's- maybe let me get away from this weird creature, and then we can talk about whatever.

KEITH (as Gig): [muttering] Weird creat- you know what this weird creature is!

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Let me get away from it. And then we can talk about what's happening.

KEITH (as Gig): How 'bout we can get away from it *while* you talk about it?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Alright, fine, I'm just- it's a lot of stress- [laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): [AUSTIN overlaps] Yeah, it's a lot of stress!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And he sits back down- he sits back down at the ship's- I guess maybe there is like, a valve section, but it's just a single line? It doesn't have little valves, there's just a raised part at the top of the ship, basically, that has- it's where the cockpit is, where the bridge is. And he sits back down in the pilot's chair, and begins to try to escape this thing? And you can see it like- you can see tendrils and stuff reaching out in front of the view screen, from different camera angles, from it- it's not like its fingers are growing, it's like it has groots and stuff all around its arms that reach out and try to grab it. Amd- but he manages- he's trying to escape and dodge stuff. And... he's like-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): [huff] What do you wanna know?

KEITH (as Gig): Ware you?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Name's Armstrong. Why'd you have that thing?

KEITH (as Gig): What thing?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): The heart.

KEITH (as Gig): *Oh*. Um. That guy down there is a... teacher and he thought it would be cool to find a thing.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): So you're not a... a dogmatist? You're not one of the- the-

KEITH (as Gig): No, I'm a human.

AUSTIN: [groans]

[quiet laughter in the background]

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): You- we can make a deal, we're gonna get out of this thing, you don't have to blow anything up... -

AUSTIN: -actually you have to give me a sway, to see if he actually believes that that's a thing.
[laughs]

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Uhhh... 'cause that's not an ultimatum 'cause that's *not* a bomb, [laughing] it's just a-

KEITH: It is not a bomb.

AUSTIN: Okay. How do you feel about it?

KEITH: It's like- nervous? Um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, that seems right.

KEITH: So... maybe scared?

AUSTIN: Sure, that adds up.

KEITH: And I assume I no longer have advantage?

AUSTIN: You do not have advantage, that was Duck being like- [KEITH overlaps] [weird horse voice] *advantage!*

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah, that was Duck giving me advantage...

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Twelve!

AUSTIN: Yo, that's a hell of a good roll, that's a twelve. Alright, um.... On a hit they do it and you get to choose one. You either-

KEITH: Oh, wait, did I roll the wrong thing? I might have actually rolled the wrong thing.

AUSTIN: You did, you rolled joyful.

KEITH: [overlapping] I rolled joyul.

AUSTIN: But you rolled a twelve, what's your scared skill?

KEITH: It's zero, so [AUSTIN overlaps] it's a ten instead of a twelve.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It doesn't matter, it's still a ten. You have to pick one: you owe them cred, your gearie is in question- your faith is in question, you're gonna need to give them something now instead of later, you're gonna need to give them a favor first, or you're gonna need to give a piece of yourself, body or heart.

KEITH: Oh, I know what it is. I'm gonna give a piece of myself, body or heart.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH; And I'm going to- [laughs] I'm gonna give them the bomb.

AUSTIN: Okay!

KEITH: I'm gonna say "I'll let you hold it".

AUSTIN: [snorts] Alright [DRE Giggles in the background]. Do you just say like- this part's the trigger, basically?

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: Or, like- how far do you push the limits of this-

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, I'll say-

AUSTIN: I'll let it ride, you've convinced him that it is a bomb, but like-

KEITH: I've convinced him that it is a bomb, and I'm gonna say "here, this is- if it'll help, if it'll make you not so nervous, I'll give it to you, you can have it. For now."

ART: Wait, w- if he thinks it's a bomb, you're giving- it's closer to him, you're- hold the bomb?

KEITH: Yeah, but it's not a bomb.

AUSTIN: [amused] But it is a bomb. Or it's not a bomb, but he believes it's a bomb.

KEITH: *He* thinks it's a bomb!

AUSTIN: *He* thinks it's a bomb [laughs]

KEITH: He thinks I'm handing him the weapon, so that now he's not so nervous.

AUSTIN: Alright, so... he like, puts it on the counter, and says-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): If that thing blows up we're both dead. So, let me get us out of here.

AUSTIN: And- what he says is-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): I'm an Independent.

KEITH (as Gig): What is that? What is an Independent?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): a long time ago, something very important was here. Independence. And I'm with that, and we're gonna make it better.

KEITH (as Gig): What does... making it better mean? Why are you with that?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): [pause] The Divine Fleet's dying, right?

KEITH (as Gig): Yes.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): We could use another Divine, right?

KEITH (as Gig): [uncertain] Yeah...? I - well. This one seems like a jerk.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Time is long.

KEITH (as Gig): Uh-huh

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): There isn't a Divine that's innocent. Not any of the old ones anyways. Right now we need more Divines. I come from a line of people that came here with Independence a looong time ago. And when things went bad, we fled. And the fleet let us in, and a lot of us- we move around with... a lot of freedom. Emphyrean has always had a soft spot for survivors.

AUSTIN: Um... I think at that moment we actually cut to you, Even, and the rest of the assassin crew moving pa- like, there's a door that basically is a panic room? And Cascabel and Caliper set charges on it, ready to blow it open. What do you do?

DRE: I mean, I don't think I do anything yet. If they're able to set the explosives- I mean, are they asking for my help?

AUSTIN: No they're just like, getting ready, are you ready to go, basically.

DRE: Yeah, no, I take out my revolver and I make sure it's loaded and- yeah, ready to go.

AUSTIN: Alright. The door blows open, and no one is inside. There's like screens, and there is- in fact I think- is a gallery space, but you can walk through it, and you can see the other door on the other side is wide open. Um- and there is a long hallway again, and then you can see that it opens up into what looks like a larger warehouse- not warehouse, but like a hangar, basically. And the two of them move quickly through the gallery space- safe room, panic room- and then like-

AUSTIN (as Cascabel/Caliper): She's not here, she must have not made it yet.

AUSTIN: And they go down this other long tunnel through the- towards this hangar? And... when you get there, you see it. Hey Grand Mag?

ART: Yeah?

AUSTIN: What's it look like, again? The mech you built?

ART: Um...

AUSTIN: Also, what's it called?

ART: Well, I don't think we named it.

AUSTIN: No...

ART: Uh- But it was- the outside had the- it was the... the facets.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's kind of a good name

ART: Yeah, that's a fine.

AUSTIN: Or the facet, or the-

ART: The facet, the... I mean-

AUSTIN: The reflection, the-

ART: Everyone hold on 20 minutes while I look at a bunch of jewelry terms. [DRE Giggles]

AUSTIN: [amused] We'll get there, yeah.

DRE: The foresides!

AUSTIN: Nope!

ART: No... [DRE giggles] really, nothing that can be easily turned into 'foreskin' should ever be the name of your weapon of war.

DRE: Oh, good point.

AUSTIN: *Uh-huh*

ART: And also- it probably needs to be tinted, that's what we didn't mention.

AUSTIN: What color would you tint it? Actually, it's not tinted yet, this is- this is a giant mech show. Right now, it's just plain. The tinting would have come later? We didn't get to the tinting yet. [ART overlaps] But that means later we can debut it.

ART: [overlapping] Then it's probably *blinding*.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: So you probably can't see the work outside

AUSTIN: Yeah. Gimme the move, give me... the move you do here- beauty is truth, truth is beauty.

ART: Ualright. What did we decide the emotional state was there?

AUSTIN: I don't know, you're- how are you feeling while doing it

ART: It was like, a little bit stressed, but- is stressed on here...?

AUSTIN: I think you were ready to- I think we had pivoted to-

ART: We had pivoted to powerful or peaceful?

AUSTIN: To powerful. Yeah, yeah, yeah, powerful or peaceful.

ART: Alright, so I'm rolling powerful.

AUSTIN: Alright, that's seven. So, when you take something you feel, an expression or an idea, and xspress yourself by way of your chosen art, whether performed or presented, and it's experienced by others, roll: on a 10+ choose three, on a 7-9 choose two.

ART: I want people to understand what it is I intend to convey?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: And... I haven't done this one before. But I wanna inflict humanity harm to all who experience it, and I sorta wanna include the pilot in that too? I want this to be a profoundly-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: -y'know, damaging work. I want people to look at my work and despair.

AUSTIN: So-

ART: Ozymandias over here.

AUSTIN: Right, got you, Ozymandias in the game. I'm wearing a 'Veidt was right' T-shirt currently [ART laughs], that I had made like a decade ago [laughs]. The- so as the assassins, including you, Even, run into the room, here is what you see. How do you get into this mech? And also, how tall is it?

ART: I think there's like a latch, and to undo the latch you have to like, push two buttons that are very far apart and very low down? So you have to lower yourself and you have to hit them with both your arms, there's no workaround here, cause I was like- I want people to have to supplicate them somehow, but I don't want them to just kick it.

AUSTIN: Right, right. And there's only room for one person.

ART: There's only room for one person in there, but it's probably- it's probably- y'know.

AUSTIN: Is it bigger than the Saint, which was like two stories tall?

ART: No, it's probably about that, 20, 25 feet is what I had in mind

AUSTIN: Alright, so... what you see is that- the person inside has already suffered this humanity harm. It is blindingly light- bright, rather- and in its hand, in the machine's hand is the Doyenne. And at its feet is the body of Myriad, the pilot and ship you came in, in one of her human forms- she still has like three extra arms? One of them's broken off and is on the ground? And in the like- the light cuts just so that you can see the pilot, and it is Alekhine, who was giving you orders, and was the diplomat here to negotiate- y'know, the ability for the fleet to put stuff here. And he has the Doyenne on the hand of this machine. Even, what do you do? Actually, humanity harm happens. So, when an NPC suffers it the GM adds them as a threat, if applicable, then chooses any of the following- the one I'm choosing is... they aggressively pursue their immediate impulses, particularly fight or flee [laughs]. Make moves on their behalf as hard and directly as you can. And then, when a PC suffers the same harm, or a hard truth about themselves or their beliefs, the person inflicting the harm chooses any or all of the following: they lose time (minutes, hours, a day or two), must answer any question posed to them, or take disadvantage forward, roll 3d6 and take the lowest two. Um... I think Caliper sees this, and in seeing her Doyenne, who she loves, actually... physically being held? She loses time. She just like, stops and stares. There's a difference between 'I'll shoot her' and like... 'she's being gripped by this thing that I see a reflect'- actually, y'know what I think happens? She sees a reflection of herself in the thing, right? She sees a facet of herself on the outside of this thing. And that is so striking- she has this moment of deep reflection when she doesn't know if she can do the job. Uh... Cascabel begins to draw, and fires a few shots but misses? He can't get the shots lined up right. Like, shooting at her in the hand of this thing- it's still his job, he's a professional, he's here to kill her. Even, what about you?

DRE: Um... I think my initial reaction is to go check on Myriad? And to try and-

AUSTIN: Leaving- not worrying about what's happening with the Doyenne- and Alekhine? I think it's a fine thing to do, the thing you're doing is totally fine.

DRE: Yeah- well, I guess- the way I'm seeing this, the way I'm interpreting the scene, that Even is interpreting the scene is that... if we're here to take out the Doyenne, Alekhine already has her like, immobilized. [laughs] Or that's what it looks like.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Okay, so the way it's revealed to you- the thing that's happening- is, you go to check on Myriad and you see- what's this thing have as weaponry, Art? Does it like do weird crystal things?

ART: It definitely does weird crystal things, [AUSTIN overlaps] what are we even here for. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Like, it shoots- yeah okay, so you see one of Myriad's arms is pinned to the ground with like, a spear of glass. And Alekhine turns the mech towards you.

DRE: Oh, that's bad

AUSTIN: Uh-huh

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): Get out of my way.

DRE (as Even): What are you doing?

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): We all have our motivations. Call me an Independent.

AUSTIN: And a- like, a claxon starts to fire? And... the top of this room begins to open, the top of this hangar. And he like, steps onto what is basically a launchpad.

DRE: What is the cockpit of this thing made out of?

AUSTIN: It's all glass, it's all the glass stuff. The- [laughs] like, that was the whole thing, that Grand was asked to build the best possible person- the best possible mech with the best possible materials.

DRE: Um... okay. So that crystal thing that is piercing Myriad is almost like a lance or something? Like- is it something that I can pull with two hands?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That's what it sounds like. Yeah, totally.

DRE: Okay. I... pull that up out of the ground and I rush at the cockpit with it.

AUSTIN: Alright, are you- do you neutralize, are you trying to do neutralize, basically? You tryna hurt this guy? Trying to kill this guy, basically?

DRE: I think so, yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me neutralize with disadvantage because of the humanity harm. So 3d6 and take the lower two. What do you feel, how do you feel about this?

DRE: Uh... boy. Mad.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh

DRE: Yeah. And that's a negative one for me, so that's not great, but that's like, the most honest thing. Even's CEO has betrayed him, so.

AUSTIN: Yep. Go ahead and gimme that roll. So in this case you rolled a seven and you get a -1!

DRE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: No- actually, it's disadvantage so you take the lowest two, that's a three you just got...

DRE: That's a three! Oh, boy! [laughs]

AUSTIN: *Bad newwwws!* Um- yeah Keith, you would've gotten- in fact, Keith you would have done even better before, now that I'm looking at it-

KEITH: Wait, what did I do?

AUSTIN: We just did advantage wrong before- it would've worked out fine, it worked out, we'll let it roll.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Well let it ride, but whatever- so you get a three. Uh. it does not only not pierce, but it breaks in your hands? and - do you know when- what's the stuff backboards are made out of again? [DRE overlaps] Carbon fiber?

DRE: [overlapping] Ohhhhhh... yeah yeah yeah, uh-huh.

AUSTIN: That's- your hands just slip up this thing, and it's just *terrible*. I'm not gonna describe it, but it *fucking sucks*. Like, it implodes, it just shatters as it hits the side of this thing- of this mech-, but your hands keep pushing it forward, and they just get like- basically rug burns, but the sharp, tiny cuts of this glass.

SYLVIA: Ugh...

AUSTIN: And he looks down at you, and- actually, he just swipes you away, with one hand. Take... take- you're critical. Like [laughs], don't fight a mech as a person in this system?

DRE: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Um... this system's mech rules are really fucking bad against individuals? It's something I need to deal with but you have a... you take *a lot* of damage from this, so be at critical? And as you're looking at him as he's about to take off he says-

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): tell your friend-

AUSTIN: no, he says-

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): Tell Mr. Magnificent that he's designed quite a body.

ART: No, *you* tell people that, he knows! What-

[DRE cackles]

ART: *God*.... Fucking-

AUSTIN: And he takes- I mean [laughs]- I mean, maybe I'll say it more directly, he says-

AUSTIN (as alekhine): Tell your friend Magnificent that he's built Independence quite a body.

AUSTIN: And he takes off. Uh... and he like, jumps out- I mean, can this thing fly?

ART: Oh, probably.

AUSTIN: [amused] Okay. He's just like, the boosts fire- it probably looks really cool, it's probably not just jetpack, it's probably like... some sort of propulsion system, right? I want there to be like an- almost an echo of the Twilight Mirage here, of purples and blues and like 'womwomwom' as he lifts off of the ground and begins to take off. [laughs] in the chat Art has said "So should I just go home, is there like a shuttle...?" um... [laughs] so he takes off. And um... Gig. you're in this ship still, he's explained this stuff to you. He's an Independent. He manages to pull away- I think the last of the tendrils try to reach you and he like, pulls the ship out- or he has some sort of cutting device that cuts a few off- there's a laser cutter attached to the bottom of the ship, and it cuts away one of the roots that have grabbed at the ship, and pulls up high into the sky? And you can see the mech that Art designed, that Grand Mag designed, also take off, down from the Form, the center of Sculpture city. And I think this guy looks back at you, Armstrong looks back at you, and says-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Alright. Are we done here or what?

KEITH (as Gig): I- no, *no*, I don't think that's enough! I don't understand why you'd wanna fix the- you're running away from the thing that you wanna fix like you're scared of it.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): That's not it, that's Quire. That's this planet. This planet is sick, this planet is alive. It hurts people. Where I'm headed, it's uh... let's just say the weather is better, there's a nice beach. Not so dusty. But I'll drop you off here, with your friends. You doing alright? You all- you got a lot of heart, kid.

KEITH (as Gig): I don't know, I just don't know and- I feel like I haven't figured any of this out.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Here, let me- there's a m- there's a medikit in the entryway. You should get yourself parched up. Ill park you outside of Sculpture City and we'll both be on our way.

KEITH (as Gig): I feel like we should- we should talk this over more, i- what's gonna happen when- what do you wanna do with the new... with the heart? And why would there- [pause] what would one more Divine do to help?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): [sigh] One more Divine- [stutters] you're from *Gumption's Gambit*, right?

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): If you spent your whole life trying to bring Gumption back, and you finally took a step forward, would you stop to explain to someone who didn't understand that why? Or would you just wanna get on with it?

KEITH (as Gig): Uh, I feel like id have time for both.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): I- I don't know what else I have to tell you!

KEITH (as Gig): I don't really know what else to ask.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): [huffs out a laugh] We're at an impasse, friend. Go get yourself patched up, I'll drop you off, we'll go on with our lives. Well have Independence in the Fleet in no time.

KEITH: I think I go get patched up, I don't know what else I can do.

AUSTIN: Uh... tell me what the medkit looks like in this weird world.

KEITH: Um... i- [laughs] I m having- I'm having a flash of all the different videogame medkits I've ever used and- [AUSTIN laughs] just trying to figure out like, which one I would like for this.

AUSTIN: [amused] Is it a spray, is it like, a single syringe that still somehow heals you...?

KEITH: The first thing that popped to mind was the- the KOTOR- just snap something on your leg and then-

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: I've been playing Resident Evil 7, where you just dump juice on your hands...

AUSTIN: That's pretty good.

KEITH: That's pretty good... um-

AUSTIN: It's ground- it's a different sort of ground juice. [laughs]

KEITH: It's a- yeah, it's a different sort of ground juice, it's like oily-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Or, it's the same sort! That's a thing this ground juice can just do!

KEITH: Oh, yeah? [cackles]

AUSTIN: [amused] -it's not different.

KEITH: [laughing] I just pour half of it then I drink the other.

Aus.: You drink the other half, yeah! Perfect. Um... Echo and Grand? Um- are you just huddling down in this place? Are you just done?

SYLVIA: I think we're both hurt, aren't we?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm pretty- uhh. Did you get- yeah, you both got shot-

SYLVIA: I know / took damage, I just don't...

ART: I don't think I got hurt, I don't think I got shot.

AUSTIN: Okay. Well then Echo is hurt, Echo is hurt... moderately. What are you- like, what do the two of you do after you've dealt with the Duke?

ART: Um... I guess I'm gonna try to help-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] What do you say to each other, at that point?

ART: I mean I want- I'm gonna do what I can to help Echo? Like... I don't have anything that does that...?

AUSTIN: I don't think anybody does, that's just not the game this is in terms of moves. Like, I don't think there's a class that's "and then you heal!", I think that's just a thing that you do as like... [ART overlaps] risk, probably?

ART: Sure. I probably- I probably have like- y'know, 'cause I've got my backpack full of garbage I probably am like "Here's some band-aids" and they're like the size for like, the big wounds you get in your house.... [AUSTIN chuckles], so they're like- y'know the big band-aids, y'know what I'm talking about. Everyone knows when I say 'big band-aids'

AUSTIN: [overlapping, laughing] Yeah yeah, I get it...

ART: Like, you get the three packs, they got the little ones, the medium ones, the big ones- and like, it's not really right for gunshot wounds, but like- he's [AUSTIN overlaps] like trying to help.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Is he trying to clean it out?

ART: No. I mean, Grand doesn't know how the fuck to do that, but he's- he's trying to help because he feels guilty. [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing] Okay

SYLVIA: When Grand starts trying to help I think Echo just pushes him away?

AUSTIN: [upset] Hmmm :(

SYLVIA: As like, it's fine, we just need to leave, *now*.

AUSTIN: Um... so you step back outside- i- what are you expecting to see when you step back outside?

SYLVIA: I don't- Echo is kinda shell shocked right now, truth to be told.

AUSTIN: Fair.

SYLVIA: They're just kinda on autopilot, they're like "this place is dangerous, we need to go someplace less dangerous".

AUSTIN: Alright. When the two of you walk out together, the two other assassins like- one of them at this point is literally reading a newspaper, and one of them has a cigarette, and is like smoking it? And when they see you step out the one with the cigarette slaps the one reading the newspaper's belly and like, nods at the both of you, grabs the cigarette and puts it out. And then they sigh?

AUSTIN (as assassin): You kill him?

AUSTIN: -shouts one

SYLVIA: I don't even respond, I just keep walking- and keep an eye on them.

AUSTIN (as assassin): [under his breath] Goddammit [sigh]

AUSTIN: They like, raise their hands and begin to walk towards you? But like, giving you a wide berth. They're like walking past you.

SYLVIA: I keep one hand on my sword, but I don't draw it yet.

AUSTIN: Okay. One of them- whos smoking the cigarette- as he passes you, the- he's the one who's in the like, smaller body suit? Like, it swallows his face back, it remasks his face. Uh... and they walk past you into the building, to recover their friend's body, basically.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um... [ART overlaps] where do the two of you go?

ART: [quietly, overlapping] Send a fucking lawyer next time.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Do you say that?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um- I think the kind of middle one, the one who is in the Reebok looking mech? Who is... Charlie, he says- he says like-

AUSTIN (as Charlie): Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: And- I guess he's not in that mech at this point, he was standing next to the mech reading a newspaper [laughs]. But he's just like 'yeah, yeah', and walks past you and heads into the palace. Um... Gig, are you gonna get dropped off, are you gonna push the issue? What's your- where you at?

KEITH: Aw, man, I'm r- I don't know. Um... I've been trying to decide this whole time, I'm not sure. Like, I don't know what else I could do... um. I personally- [AUSTIN overlaps]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Do you- go ahead.

KEITH: -y'know, don't wanna give up the heart of a Divine.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Um... but I don't know that- I don't know that I haven't been given satisfactory reasons for what's going on. I just don't like it.

AUSTIN: Right. He's been as honest as he can be.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. Well, he thought my eye was a bomb, 'cause he's an idiot.

AUSTIN: Right- well, 'cause you rolled well. [laughs]

KEITH: I- yeah, I tricked him, that's fair.

AUSTIN: You tricked him!

KEITH: [chuckles] He didn't just assume, he didn't just see it and go "ah, that's a bomb!". Um.... yeah, I'm not sure. I'm still not sure.

AUSTIN: I- he's gonna like- he's landing to the east of the Sculpture basically, towards the entryway?

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: He's like-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): I'm gonna bring it in now. Uh- you all patched up?

KEITH (as Gig): I guess? I'm still not sure if I'm just gonna leave or not, I'm still deciding! From- y'know

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Well, I got places to go and I'm not really [KEITH overlaps] inviting you, really? so-

KEITH (as Gig): [overlapping] I- y'know, well-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): So much as offering you a courtesy, this is-

KEITH (as Gig): Is this- is this a courtesy drop-off?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Yeah.

KEITH (as Gig): I mean, I knew that you weren't inviting me, I was thinking that maybe- I wasn't thinking that maybe you were inviting me.

AUSTIN: He like, picks- slowly picks the bomb back off the dashboard, or whatever spaceship's have. [laughs] not the dashboard, the- well y'know, maybe it's a dashboard, it's a dashboard.

KEITH: Yeah, sure. Speedometer-

AUSTIN: He like- [KEITH overlaps]

KEITH: Octave change.

AUSTIN: And like- [laughs]. He has an octave change. And like, offers to hand you back this bomb.

KEITH: I have it fly back into my eye.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): It's a weird place for a bomb, man.

KEITH (as Gig): Eh, it's just a camera.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Oh. Fuck.

[KEITH cackles]

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): That's a good one!

KEITH (as Gig): Thank you.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): [KEITH overlaps] Things are about to get weird. What's your name?

KEITH (as Gig): [overlapping] Yeah, I'm- y'know. Gig

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Oh, *Gig!* You're the guy!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, I'm the guy...

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): From the- you do the like, inspection stuff!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah! That's me.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): [quietly] *Right.* I knew I recognized you. [pause] you shot me!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): On TV!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah! Well you shot *me* on TV!

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): I'm a killer!

KEITH (as Gig): I'm- didn't wanna get killed! And I didn't want you to take the thing!

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): I- fair. It's been a long time coming, we all are... I think we were both running a little hot.

KEITH (as Gig): [AUSTIN overlaps] Listen, they told-

AUSTIN: He offers you a hand.

KEITH (as Gig): Before they sent me down here they said 'if you're gonna draw this gun, you have to use it'. Is what they said.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Did they say you *have to* use it??

KEITH (as Gig): Well they said you had to be prepared to use it, then they said you have to use it.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Okay. We went to different schools, I think [chuckles] Anyway Gig, I'm glad this worked out.

KEITH (as Gig): I didn't- it doesn't feel like it worked out! I feel like I'm missing something.

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): [amused] We're all missing something, buddy.

KEITH (as Gig): Ugh, shut up.

AUSTIN: He hits a button and like, the front valve opens- the front of the horn opens . it's like a circular door that's cut down the middle and it like [ambient sound] opens up left and right, like slides- it's a sliding door. And like, you can see Sculpture City in the distance. He makes like a little gesture out.

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: He says like-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): This could've gone much worse. I think I would've won in the end, but it could have gone much worse? I owe you one.

AUSTIN: Take one faith on him if you leave.

KEITH: Um... I'm going to... I'm gonna leave, and I'm gonna take that one, but I do want to... I do wanna use Analyze before I-

AUSTIN: Totally. Good call. Go for it.

KEITH: I guess I'm gonna use- I guess I'm calm? I'm gonna roll peaceful. Twelve!

AUSTIN: Good! Nice. so go ahead and ask me those questions.

KEITH: Okay, so um... which enemy is the biggest threat?

AUSTIN: Um... to you- specifically, like, materially?

KEITH: [pause] Oh, are you asking? or-

AUSTIN: Oh- yeah, I kinda wanna know what your... like-

KEITH: I think to... I think- I don't think to me materially, I think broader... like, to the story? To my story.

AUSTIN: Right. I mean- how do you figure this out from looking around? Like, you can- you can have the director's camera a little bit, what are you seeing to help- or hearing. Or getting from him- to answer that?

KEITH: I think I'm judging- I think I'm judging him and his attitude now, versus his attitude earlier, versus thinking that... thinking that the creature that came out of the ground was part of Independence-

AUSTIN: Right

KEITH: -versus him telling me, 'no, that's Quire'.

AUSTIN: Right. I think the biggest threat, period is... I don't know, maybe it's- I don't wanna like write your character for you, but I do think there's maybe something about independence that is... extra scary for Gig? Because... Gig's whole vibe is "we're all in this together. I'm here to help other people, I have an audience that loves what I do, and I fundamentally believe that I can connect people together." And so... there is an element of Independence that is incredibly frightening? But also, the big monster just tried to smash your ship into two. It came out of

nowhere and seemed to be, also, the planet itself, the planet seems to be alive in a way that is hard to comprehend.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: And I think maybe- this is also a moment in which Myriad comes through to everybody, at this moment? And says...

AUSTIN (as Myriad): Gardner is severely injured. We need to regroup. Alekhine has revealed himself to be a traitor to the cause.

AUSTIN: Um... so also, whatever that is.

KEITH: Yeah. [AUSTIN overlaps] There's not a clear- okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I don't know that there is from here a clear like, this is the biggest enemy? The biggest enemy for me is this like- is this mix of ambitions and desires. There's not a clear 'this is the one true big bad guy' at this point. Um...

KEITH: Does anything about Armstrong or this offer to drop me off appear out of place?

AUSTIN: Um... you wonder if he would've extended the same offer to the two scientists. You suspect not. You suspect that there's a kinship in being of the Divine Fleet here? The way he like, talks to you feels- I mean, he talks to you with the dialect of being someone from the Divine Fleet.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: In fact, you recognize this ship was made in the fleet or- I mean, this is a Castlerose ship, this is the ship- this ship belongs to the assassination group- the group of fixers- that Fourteen Fifteen, who you don't know personally, is part of, right? Which is a collection of ships both from inside and outside of the Fleet, but inside there are the markings of like, the Castlerose- of Castlerose. There are- y'know, the sort of dials you recognize from being on the fleet, there are viewscreens that you know who made those- y'know, we know what company those are from. Um... and so, the thing that is out of place is fam- like, he is not a threat from this planet. This- these are outsiders coming here like you, and so that's out of place, in some way.

KEITH: Uh-huh. Uh...

AUSTIN: And obviously not officially right? This is not a group being sent from Emphyrean, this is-

KEITH: Right

AUSTIN: And also- and also... came here with Castlerose, but has not been in contact with those other three agents in any way since being here. Right? There was never any radio chat, he never checked in with the other group... everybody heard that three- no, four- objects were moving towards the ground? From orbit? And then he's never spoken with those other three people.

KEITH: Okay

AUSTIN: So that is out of place for sure.

KEITH: Okay, that's good, I like that. Um... I was having trouble thinking of a third question, so I guess I'll do the one... I guess I'm gonna do the one that I never thought that I would pick, which is 'Is this going to get worse before it gets better?'

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Of course. But not- actually, no, in the immediate sense. Which is... no, he is being honest and sincere in his drop off offer. And no for the Crown of Glass in the immediate- in the term of like, civil war isn't coming.

KEITH: Right

AUSTIN: Like, the Doyenne- you don't know that the Doyenne is kidnapped, but like- he isn't attacking- this isn't the first assault on the Crown of Glass, he isn't like, reporting back weaknesses, he has gotten what he's here for and he's leaving. And that is it. Uh... so yeah, that's it. But in the broader sense, from his own words- like, things are about to get bad. Things are about to get hectic, is what he tells you. [pause] okay! Um... I thin- is there anybody else that has a thing that they want to do?

SYLVIA: I can't think of anything.

AUSTIN: Um... I think maybe you all just get back together, somewhere...? Even, what about you? What are you- [huffs]

DRE: [overlapping] I mean, do I have a say besides just 'bleeding a lot'? [KEITH cackles]

AUSTIN: [amused] What's- where are you bleeding a lot?

DRE: Um- I mean, a fucking mech just threw me against the wall.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I know, but like- we're gonna jump ahead a little here, where are you being taken- I think Myriad pulls herself up and Cascabel and Caliper... basically drag you somewhere. But I don't know where yet. Maybe it's not even in the city, maybe it's outside the city.

DRE: Yeah, I think- it's in the city if Caliper thinks she can get away with it, [AUSTIN overlaps] and that the other saints won't know?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No...

DRE: Okay, then it's outside.

AUSTIN: No, I think it's outside- maybe we've actually retreated back to the... the place where you were with Janey and... the other-

DRE: [overlapping] Oh, the Old Church?

AUSTIN: Yeah, the old Church, Old Church is actually the name of that place.

DRE: ...Surge? Was that his name?

AUSTIN: Surge, yeah yeah yeah. Surge Erannia. Surge and Brilliant Jane and... and Bernadette. [SONG "The Twilight Mirage" STARTS PLAYING] I think maybe Myriad says like-

AUSTIN (as Myriad): We're going to regroup.

AUSTIN: And flies everyone back, we just get the image of you laid out inside of Myriad, and like, the rest of the crew getting back together there, and leaving the Crown of Glass. There's probably lots of- it's like one of those episodes of the X-Men cartoon? Where like, someone who should not have ever been on the Black Hawk was on the Black Hawk? And Wolverine goes like [Wolverine voice?] "What's Saber Tooth doing here?" or whatever [DRE chuckles] And then it's like [other voice] "We need them Logan!" Like, whatever. Um.. and so, I don't know that anybody says that when Cascabel and Caliper get on board but that's- that's the vibe, I think! And we just get everyone landing back at Old Church, and being like "What the fuck happens next?" [laughs]

[SONG STOPS PLAYING]