Twilight Mirage 44: The Pathways in the Woods

Transcriber: Alastair Codd (@alastaircodd)

[MUSIC- “The Notion” starts]

AUSTIN: At any moment inside of Kitcha Kana's lush orbital office suite, a dozen voices or more speak at once. Many of them are impossible for the human ear to perceive, while others are tuned to frequencies meant specifically to injure the hominid ears of any too-curious eavesdroppers. And then there is the skitting, percussive voice of the chief expeditionary of Advent’s technological arm in the Mirage, Kitcha Kana himself, who speaks from behind an antique reclaimed desk from, god, who can even remember which system now. He leans forward in his chair, his back locked at a straight diagonal angle, as if ready to launch.

It was a position of strength, one that the Talonite had earned, not least of all, through of his ability to do what he is doing at this very moment; untangling threads of information, and capitalising where no one else sees the possibility. It served him when he escaped the labour world he was born on. It served him as he manoeuvred his way through the underworld of crime bosses and malefactor algorithms. It served him as he learned what all good entrepreneurs do, and learned how to make his cruel business legal, and acceptable. And it served him now, as he planned his next ascent, to the very peak of Advent itself.

On this day, in addition to the normal reports from his field scouts and his undercover agents, Kana is busy politicking. His limited self-projectors, the devices he uses to send workman like copies of himself to various ambassadors and negotiators, had returned. And now, they played back the proceedings, each bit of audio tuned automatically to a different frequency. As a Talonite, Kana’s ears and brains worked in conjunction to untangle the knotted sounds and receive all of the information, all at once. It was all going according to plan.

Even if the so-called Notion failed to defeat the axiom on Gift-3; even if negotiations with one or two of the groups fell through, Kana was sure that he would make an ally today. Allies, Kana came to understand, were keys. Which was convenient, because the Excerpt Signet had made visible a door that would lead to his ascended future. All Kana needed to do was open it.

[MUSIC ends]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterisation and fun interactions between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. Joining me today; Darcy Swan.[1]

DARCY: Hey!

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[1] The name/username in the audio recording are no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancies.

AUSTIN: [Amused] Hi? Do you have a twitter account?

DARCY: Oh yes, yeah, that's how we do this huh? twitter.com/[username removed] is a URL, instead of my username.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Oh my god. Janine Hawkins.

JANINE: Hi I'm Janine Hawkins. You can find me at twitter.com/bleatinghart.

AUSTIN: [Still laughing] Sylvia[2] Clare.

SYLVIA: Hey I'm Sylvia, you can find me at https-

AUSTIN: I knew you were going to do it!

SYLVIA: - forward slash-

AUSTIN: I was going to do it!

SYLVIA: yeah you knew it!

AUSTIN: God damnit.

SYLVIA: Twitter.com/captaintrash.

AUSTIN: You don't have to say the www. [Laughter from DARCY]. Austin_walker, you already know what it is. Your GM, here to save the day. You can follow the show @friends_table, you can support the show at friendsatthetable.cash. Today we are continuing our game of Scum and Villainy by game by Stras Acimovic and John LeBoeuf-Little. It is a hack of Blades in the Dark which is a game by John Harper. My goals are to convey the fictional world honestly, to bring the Twilight Mirage to life, and to play to find out what happens.

Quick reminder of what happened last time. Also, look on the screen real quick; you can see – if you scroll down, underneath this giant weird ship, which you can ignore – you should just ignore that the words "alarm status", there's a clock that says "alarm status" that's totally filled up, just don't even worry about that. If you scroll –

JANINE: Just look at this big meatball instead.

AUSTIN: Look at this big meatball! That is a really really rough version of gift-3. I just drew this out really quick to give you a basic idea of where things are in a really abstract way. Big Garage is this big main city. Seiche is this, one of the arms of the Tides of Harmony, and the

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

green area around it is the farmlands that we talked about around it. There is the diner where Cascabel and y'all met. There's the Q-Glass fields with the big storm, and there is Polyphony, which is what I'm calling the town that you are all in right now.

Real quick catch-up; after being asked to transport refugees though this stitch that would connect them to the other side of the Tides of Harmony, which rests currently in Brighton, you made a deal with the… or, you attempted to make a deal with the group that controls it named Advent, as well as with one of their contractors, the Concrete Town – excuse me – the Concrete Town Particulars. And the idea was, if you do this thing for us, we will set up a kind of collaborative control of this stitch, that we run in certain ways, which local groups run in other ways. The thing they asked you to do was to take down an Axiom or any Axiomatic forces inside of the, the big storm, the huge electrical storm that covers this, kind of bubbling boiling area of the special glass. The glass that you are familiar with because it is what Cascabel uses to make special rounds of ammunition. And it is deep within the Crash Yards, which are these, these kind of, endless piles and piles of broken ships and piles of broken technology and piles of stuff that has popped out of the imaginations of the people who live on this planet as much as real things that have crashed here.

AUSTIN: You confronted this first axiom which- its name was barricade, and it took this form of a growing wave of coral, along with the things like old broken mechs that had been infected by it, seemingly. It launched huge kind of glass spears at you, but y'all did, some real good tag team wrestling manoeuvres to take care of it, and broke through. And on the other side you found what was a town – I'm just going to move you over to this general Gift-3 page. Also ignore the fact that y'all have way more heat than you had before, I'm sure that's not a big deal.

AUSTIN: I will say briefly that there was a real good moment last time we recorded on the other side where they were like 'alright, we're going to go back to the ship', and I was like 'oh, the ship, the ship's in low orbit because they moved it there and then jumped out of it with their, with their mechs. Sorry, y'all can't go to the ship.' It was very good.

SYLVIA: We needed it!

DARCY: That's what happens when you give us the keys.

AUSTIN: That's what happens, right! Y'all have the pilot right, so… So now you've made your way into this town called Polyphony. And I think that when we left off, y'all had been vaguely introduced to- you as the listener, definitely, and I think broadly one of the characters introduced you to who all was in the town. I don't think you met them all, necessarily, but I'll do the run down quickly, myself.

So, Polyphony is the name of the Axiom that you saw that's like made of weird flowing water, and that has like weird things inside of it. Admiral Elia Tet, E-L-I-A space Tet, T-E-T – the Admiral – is the woman who just greeted you, and who is the person who is playing chess with one of the- I believe she was playing with one of the beings made by Polyphony, if I'm remembering right? Inside of this hotel that they're staying at? Lieutenant Fenta Fane, who

is the admiral's assistant. [Slowly] I think you met her directly, I'm pretty sure. Agrapha Alive, Graph Alive, and you didn't meet him, but he is out herding cattle, out in the fields outside of, kind of at the edges of this weird little island. Lumen Lux, who- they're a member of the Volunteers of Seiche, they- they worked with your brother Echo, and they're wearing their like, odie green army jacket from Seiche, from the Volunteers of Seiche, and they play guitar, and they, you know, or – I think they are the ones who are leading you around. And the most recent arrival to the town is Tannoy Kajj, who is this purple haired kind of smuggler and explorer, he's a black dude with a big purple… Er… What's the thing I'm thinking of? Danny Zuko has one. Japanese gangsters have them in, in movies. It's a haircut.

SYLVIA: Are you looking for facial hair or-?

AUSTIN: It's a hair- haircut.

DARCY: Are you talking about a pompadour?

AUSTIN: A pompadour, yes, he has a big purple pompadour. And he is currently working on his broken-down ship, which is called the Other Hand. So that is like the cast of characters here. We kind of zoomed out on y'all getting tea with the Admiral, but we don't need to come back in there. In fact, I think, I think I'm a little more interested in like, an abstract picture of- what did you do after that? Like… You have tea with this nice lady, she plays chess with you. Are you asking questions about the place, are you… spending time here? How… Oh, also, here's a thing I meant to do and I didn't tell you; everyone clear a point of stress. When you come into this town, it's just… you know how sometimes in games, I'm like, oh, add stress or take damage because you saw something that's really creepy, that like breaks your brain a little bit? You saw Cthulhu, or whatever? This is the opposite; you come here and it's just so immediately peaceful and pleasant that you clear a stress.

AUSTIN: Other than that, what are- what do you do, abstractly, in this town?

DARCY: I want to clarify something really quick.

AUSTIN: Yes

DARCY: Because I know that you said, that like, you said something along the lines of, 'This is the way that Polyphony works-

AUSTIN: Yes

DARCY: That like, this feels like home, you are home in a way that feels like, in your bones

AUSTIN: [Noises of agreement from Austin]. Yeah.

DARCY: And I guess, without some sort of roll, that's not something – that's something that us as player knowledge, not so much as character knowledge?

AUSTIN: I think-

DARCY: To a, to an extent, I guess?

AUSTIN: To an extent, I think. So, we saw that Signet rolled a kind of, gather information roll, if I remember right. And, she could tell that things were weird here, but that didn't stop it from feeling- from feeling like home, do you know what I mean?

DARCY: Sure.

AUSTIN: If I remember right, Janine, is that right?

JANINE: Yeah, so the thing, the thing I was rolling was like, Signet's whole job is like, differentiating a lot of people, and a lot of – and this place is filled with a lot of weird fake people?

AUSTIN: Uh huh, yep.

JANINE: So I wanted to see if she liked, noticed or cared about that, in a particular way?

AUSTIN: Right like, and she… I think she noticed but didn't care much?

JANINE: Yeah, like, 'this is weird, but it's still nice.'

AUSTIN: Yeah [laugher from DARCY]. I think like, I think it's fine to have that- is that something that you would, that you think Even would ask straight up.

DARCY: So I think for even, the way he would notice it would be with Lumen? And like, from what even has encountered of people who are in the Volunteers of Seiche, they're pretty gung-ho devoted group?

AUSTIN: Yes yes.

DARCY: And so for him to meet someone like Lumen, and for them to just kind of like, not have any interested in going back and reporting back to the group, because they were like a scout, that has some potential pretty interesting information after having been here for a while, I think that like, piques Even's interest.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so let's just actually have a scene here, which I think would be like Lumen, you, or anyone else, Signet and Echo, if you want to be in this scene too. What are you doing in this town, what is a fun thing that you could be doing, as just a background activity, while having this conversation. And I've already invoked playing chess, so not that. Like, gardening?

DARCY: Some wiffleball? Some…

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's the kind of place it is. Maybe you're just going for a walk through the nearby woods? So like, on the one side, there's this open plane, but on the other there's this woods you could explore? It's more jungle-ish, because it's like, vaguely tropical here. It's like, Mediterranean, so it's kind of like a costal, forest area.

DARCY: I think even would be into that.

AUSTIN: Okay yeah, so I think.

DARCY: Some kind of Ever Forward-esque

AUSTIN: So yeah, I think Lumen is like, showing you, is walking y'all through the woods nearby, and showing you breeds of butterfly that aren't anywhere else on the planet, as far as they know? They're like,

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): So yeah, like, I think it's because of the storm nearby, this whole group of butterfly got stuck out here, and they just stay, they're just out here all the time.

AUSTIN: and you've gone on this hike now for two hours or something, and maybe you come to maybe a little something like a break in the woods. And it's- you can see the storm, you're in the eye of the storm at this point, and so you can kind of see the clouds, like filling with lightning above you and in the distance. But it's still very peaceful here? We get just the pink light of the Twilight shining through the eye of the storm. And it's high, the storm is very high up, so it's very textured, it's this big, billowing textured clouds, and this very soft pink light fills this little alcove, this little clearing. And, they take out their guitar, and they've been carrying it on their back, and they're like turning it, and they're sitting down on this rock. And they're like

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): I like to come and here and play, sometimes. Like, I love playing with Polyphony, and with, with Fenta, but like, it's different when you're alone- not that I want y'all to leave, but, you know? You get what I'm saying.
>
> DARCY (as Even): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Fuck you. [Laughter] Darcy in the chat just said 'Anyway here's Wonderwall'. God damnit.

SYLVIA: Talking about Wonderwall, the thing is, we had to deal with barricade last time, am I right, you guys?

AUSTIN: boom!

DARCY: there it is

AUSTIN: oh my god.

DARCY: Yeah, that's actually what, in this universe, that's actually what the song is about.

AUSTIN: Right… God.

DARCY: Sorry

AUSTIN: God damnit. So, I think that they, they probably broach it first. So they say like,

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): So you've been here for like a day, what do you think so far? This is the first time, as far as I know, that like a bunch of people showed up all at the same time…
>
> DARCY (as Even): I mean, it's nice, but like, we still have a job to do.
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): yeah. (melancholy)
>
> DARCY (as Even): Like, we can't stay here.
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen), wistfully: Why not? It'd be cool to have some people around, some more people.
>
> DARCY (as Even): I mean, yeah, but like, we have like, we have like a, not just this mission in particular, but like, a capital M mission. I mean, I guess it's probably similar to the reason why you joined the volunteers, right?

AUSTIN: Urm, I think that they look at Echo at that point, and they say like…

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): Yeah, I joined, I joined because I thought we were really under threat, and like, there was no one else to protect us, and, like, I'm not, I'm not trying to make a big deal, but like, I had seen what Echo did during the Week Long War, and I mean heard about you too, of course, Signet, and everything that happened on Volition. And I knew I wasn't going to be like, a big, fuck off hero, but like, I thought I could do, I thought I could like help people in a really big way.
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): But mostly, I was really angry. I was like, you know, I have cousins I haven't seen, and I thought that I was gonna become a baker, and instead, we crashed our ship, on this planet. And only half of it. And so, I was like, pissed. Urm. I wasn't even supposed to do this op, like, I- there were rumours that there were like really cool things out here in the storm - I guess it depends on your definition of cool right? But I got here, and I'm not angry any more. Whatever good I would do out there, I think is less than the good I can do myself in here. And that's selfish, I know, I get it, I'm not (sigh). You don't need to be an Excerpt to know what's happening here.
>
> DARCY (as Even): I'm not trying to guilt trip you (comforting/disgruntled)

AUSTIN (as Lumen): Yeah, I guess I just still feel a little guilty though.

DARCY (as Even): I guess I'm just more interested in, like, what is going on here.

AUSTIN: They like, play a chord really quick.

AUSTIN (as Lumen): I don't know, you tell me, what do you think is going on here? Again, I'm not an Excerpt, I'm not a- I don't have cool wings, I'm not an action hero. Y'all know more about this shit than me.

DARCY (as Even): I mean, Divines and Axioms all do weird things, and like, just because something is powerful means that it is inherently destructive and bad, but I think like, that's this, the Axiom Polyphony, their thing is like, being able to instil this feeling of peace and at home.

AUSTIN (as Lumen), shrugging: That seems right to me. That seems like a good thing. And like, I'm not a fool, like, this isn't how it works out there. Here, you show up, and like, there was room for you. And (struggles for words), and I'm pretty sure there were new paths in the woods that I hadn't seen before. Like, they'd changed because they would be there for you? There were new foods at breakfast today; those weren't there before. And I didn't want them, they weren't for me. This place changes to fit whoever's in it. At least, that's my guess. And out there, it's like the opposite. It's like everyone's fighting, just to make a little more room for themselves.

DARCY (as Even): Look, if this, if this was two years ago, Second Lieutenant Even Gardner of the Ever Forward would have read you the riot act about duty, and responsibility, and abandoning your post, and bla bla blah bla. I mean, once you were a person who wanted to make things better for people by baking, and then, you were a person who wanted to make things better by being part of something that made people feel empowered and less stepped on, and now you want to be a person who- I don't think it's selfish to want to feel fulfilled in this way either, and like, even being, like a person here who can be a guide for people who just kinda crash ships here, or stumble in here or whatever, I don't- I'm not gonna judge you, if this is what you think you want, but I just want to make sure –

AUSTIN (as Lumen): I think this is what I want…

DARCY (as Even): - that you're not selling yourself short?

AUSTIN (as Lumen): I'm not. I don't, I don't know, how do I know, how do I… I don't know. Anyway, here's Wonderwall.

[Laughter from Sylvia and Darcy]

Sylvia: God.

Darcy: (Singing) Today is gonna be the day that barricade crashes you.

AUSTIN: I hate everyone.

SYLVIA: I would like to announce my resignation.

AUSTIN: fair, that's fair.

AUSTIN: Any words of advice from, from Signet or Echo here, or any other questions?

SYLVIA: I think all Echo, is like,

> SYLVIA (as Echo): Okay, I respect that you want to stay here, that's fine, I guess, but do you have anybody that you want to like, let know that you're okay back, like, away from here?
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): Yeah, I mean if you tell-

AUSTIN: Why do I think forgetting your brother's name- this is Austin

SYLVIA: Ballad

AUSTIN: Ballad

SYLVIA: It's written down on the notable's thing.

AUSTIN: Oh it is, it's literally right in front of me, right here; Ballad. Got it.

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): If you tell Ballad that I'm here, and like, if he wants to mark me as MIA or AWOL or whatever that's fine, that's fine. But I'm not- I don't want to go back.
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): I know that, I just- you don't have family or anything you wanna make sure know that you're okay?
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): He'll pass on the word.
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): Alright.
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): You know, the Volunteers, everyone is family. And they thought I was dead, months ago. So.
>
> DARCY (as Even): Oh hey, can you, like, not- you can't like, call home from here or anything?

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): The storm blocks my communication- I mean, if you have communicators that work, we could do that.

SYLVIA: Have we tried using our communicators?

DARCY: Yeah, I don't think we- I was just thinking that.

AUSTIN: you have not tried, no. I don't think – unless one of you have a specially communication- I think you could probably still reach Belgard, Signet?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But like, regular ass communication does not work here.

DARCY: I'm assuming the, like, short wave between the three of us still works here then?

AUSTIN: Yes, 100%

DARCY: Oh good.

SYLVIA: And the comms in our mechs wouldn't be any different?

AUSTIN: I don't think so? Not unless you had like higher, nah- not unless you had a special coms thing, which I don't think any of y'all do?

SYLVIA: No.

AUSTIN: No. otherwise I'd say yeah, but. Lumen, I think- so Lumen says

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): I wanna be clear, like, I'm not a captive though. Like, if Tannoy ever finishes his ship, I could get on that and fly out of here, or if one of you wanted to give me one of your mechs I probably could go. At least, as far as I know?
>
> DARCY (as Even): Has anybody come and gone?
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): Not since I've been here. Elia says that there was a second… So, so, Fenta, Lieutenant Fenta is in this group the Rogue Wave, I guess? Old quire group, they had boats(questioning)? And somehow Elia wound up here, and then Fenta showed up, and Fenta had a partner with her, and he left. He couldn't stand it here. But, that was before I got here. So, as far as I know, people can leave?

AUSTIN: I think they are just going to play guitar at that point, if no one else has questions, for them…

DARCY: Urm, is it worth us - I guess I'm putting this to everyone else - is it worth us asking them about barricade or anything.

JANINE: It's probably worth it because it's- yeah… It's, it's a part of what is around them, so maybe they do have an insight about how they got through, or how other people gotten- you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Oh yeah, I guess that is a good point. We have no idea if Lumen had to go through Barricade the way that we did.

> SYLVIA (as Echo): Hey, did you have to, like, break through a giant coral wall when you came in here?
>
> AUSTIN: They like, laugh.
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): I didn't see a big wall. I hit a tower? There was this big- I guess coral is right? Like, I didn't- it was just kind of like, graded, I thought? But yeah, I guess it was, I guess it was the same stuff. So yeah, I hit a tower I couldn't see, and it clipped my wings. And then, I fell. And I guess I was going to fall and crash into the glass, and then, it caught me. And then it bought me here. I haven't… I guess I thought that was Polyphony? But, I haven't seen that sort of shape since then? So…

AUSTIN: Or, that's not true- they would have seen the wall from here, right? Urm, so I think they would say like.

> AUSTIN (as Lumen): And I see the wall, sometimes, and like, it does form a wall outside, but like, nothing in here ever has that shape, so…
>
> DARCY (as Even): I wonder if the wall would go back up if we're trying to leave. Or if anyone tries to leave.
>
> AUSTIN (as Lumen): Like I said, from my understanding is, the guy who came with Fenta was able to get out, no problem. But, I haven't really spoken to Elia or Fenta about that. So maybe there's more there, maybe there isn't…
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): Maybe we should go do that…
>
> JANINE (as Signet): It would also make sense that, like, if Barricade's function is in some way to protect, something… Something leaving wouldn't be a threat in the way that something coming towards it would be?
>
> DARCY (as Even): Is it… possible for an Axiom like Polyphony to interact and like use its effects on another axiom in the way it does on, like, folks like us?
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): I mean I think this is like the first time we've seen two directly interact like this, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I'm- I'll say yes, I think. For you, specifically, your group; totally.

> SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah. So I have no idea if Axioms can even affect each other- I'd assume they could, they're still physical things.
>
> DARCY (as Even): Urgh. I don't know if I'm ready to sit down and figure out axiom power rankings. [Laughter from Austin and Janine]
>
> JANINE (as Signet): I, I might have a way to, I don't know.

JANINE: Signet might have some shit that might be useful for that. Maybe? I don't know.

AUSTIN, pleased/teasing: Uh huh?

JANINE: I think we should probably talk to the others first though.

AUSTIN: Okay. Who do you want to talk to? What's the, what's the next shot? Let's think about this, let's think about this whole sequences as being a little bit open ended in the like… Kingdom or Follow style sense of that, like- tell me what scene you want here, with these characters. And I'll go over them one more time. So, so you just talked to Lumen, Lumen Lux, former Volunteer of Seiche. Tannoy Kajj is the smuggler, Admiral Elia Tet and Lieutenant Fenta Fane are ex Rogue Wave, and Agrapha Alive is a robot that is also like a cow hearder, who is like a cowboy. So, who do you want to talk to?

JANINE: Urm, I… [Laughs] I don't, I wanted to like, tag along when other people talk to them.

AUSTIN: Erm, try to be like, try to be- like, this place is, this place has you calm enough to want to do things, you know what I mean? Like-

JANINE: Yeah, but like the, the thing I want to do is talk to Polyphony.

AUSTIN: I see. You can go and talk to Polyphony, Polyphony is totally here.

JANINE: I just don't know that I want to do that unprepared.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I could also just do that, I should maybe just do that.

AUSTI: Totally up to-

JANINE: Yeah, I think that's the thing that Signet's most interested in here.

AUSTIN: Okay. So yeah, Polyphony is doing like, walking around this fountain, like the rim of this fountain, it's like a big fountain in the middle of the town entrance square, and is like, balance- it's like, this gigantic body, I can't shake the image of one of the chaos things from sonic adventure one now,

JANINE: Sorry

AUSTIN: I'm so mad about it, but like, it is, it is doing- it looks like one of those things, but it is just like walking foot over foot like down a tightrope, but like across the rim of, the outer edge of this fountain, urm, very carefully balancing itself, urm, themself. And with each step, there's like a little flute chip. What do you do, what do you come- what do you do or say? Is anyone else there with you, or is Signet doing this alone? Are y'all breaking up to talk to different people?

DARCY: I think Even wants to, go talk to other people.

AUSTIN: Okay. Echo?

SYLVIA, considering: I'll tag- hmm. Who would rather have me tag along with them? [Laughter from DARCY]

JANINE: If Signet says, 'I want to talk to the, to the juice person', would Echo be like, 'cool'?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I would be, because they might have some of that ground juice… [Laughter from AUSTIN and JANINE]

DARCY: Might be jam juice, be careful.

AUSTIN: It might be jam juice, it's different, it's not the same thing as jelly juice, it's different. Alright, urm. So yeah, how do you breach this conversation? How do y'all walk up, and, and what do you say? And how do you speak to it?

JANINE: I think Signet would probably try to be direct at first, to just- Urm, maybe the thing she does at first is that she sort of follows what they're doing, so she sort of gathers up her skirt a bit and is like, step step on the edge of the fountain, and starts trying to follow along to the sort of, chips-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: As they move? (0:30:00)

AUSTIN: It's very easy to do that, and like, the thing that becomes hard is like, are you following along, or are they following along, with you? Like, it's instant, there's no effort here, like, as soon as you're up there you're in rhythm. And it's like dancing, with a partner who can anticipate any move you make, and who can follow and lead at the same time, would can blend those two roles. Echo, are you also up there, or are you just watching?

SYLVIA: Oh, boy… I think I'll just watch for now…

AUSTIN, laughing: Okay.

SYLVIA: Because, I'm- Echo's like a little uncomfortable at this whole situation, like, this place in general, its giving them a bad vibe.

AUSTIN: Sure, sure. And, I think that's going to continue until you do something else, basically. It's a really nice scene, it's beautiful. [Janine laughs]

JANINE: I think, okay… Starting with-

AUSTIN: Or, you know what, it's not until you do something else, it's until you want something else. Like, in signet's heart of hearts, what is she looking for here?

JANINE: She's looking to like, straight up have a conversation about its will, to some degree…

AUSTIN: Right. So I think, out of the- you finish one lap, and there's music playing at this point, there's like- there's a multi-part flute, like, concerto playing through the fountain, as you do this little walk around, and then you turn the corner, and there's like, there's a woman, in like, with like a parasol, and, a blue, urm, it's colored the same as Polyphony's outfit- or not outfit, outfit, it's the water basically, this very light blue, with like white frill, and a little bow. And like, dark features, curly wavy hair, that comes down to her- it's like, it's like in the- in like, a very - what's the word I'm looking for? It's sort of in a ponytail, but still comes down to her shoulders in length - and has like, dark lipstick on, and freckles, and kind of a long, light blue dress, with lots of embellishments, and kind of, like, practical shoes on, and she says, like:

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): You have a great deal of skill.

AUSTIN: And gives you a little bow.

> JANINE (as Signet), laughing: That's very flattering.

JANINE: I think that probably surprises Signet, because that didn't feel like- that didn't feel like it was a skilful exchange?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: She maybe blushes like a tiny bit. Because also, this thing just took a form that is 100% her shit?

AUSTIN: Right, uh huh. Also, I want to be clear; Polyphony is also still up there with you, too.

JANINE: Oh, this is like a separate...

AUSTIN: Yeah, it can do both.

JANINE: Alright.

AUSTIN: You know.

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Would you and your friend like to talk, and share a drink?
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Yes, that would be lovely.
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): Do- do you guys have jam juice? Sorry, jelly juice.
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): We have both.
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): Oooh.

AUSTIN: And like, leads you- again, leads and follows, it's like natural to walk down a little alleyway, towards a little corner bar that's like one of those places that you know about and don't even like telling your friends about, because it's so nice and quiet there? There's like a tv on that's playing like, some sort of- it's golf, or some- whatever Quire, or whatever Gift-3's version of golf is? And these nice soft voices from the commentators as, as you go inside and there's like a weird grunt from the fake bartender behind the bar, and a really comfortable- there's like two booths, there's three booths, and there's somebody in the front one, and there's nobody in the back two. And she leads you to one of them, probably the back one, and the bartender brings you over three drinks. And she like, nods and smiles, and then, you're in this booth. And also there's snacks, there's also like, whatever a like a good appetiser is, is like already ready and like right there. And she immediately digs in, she like, immediately- it's like celery, it's like a plate of vegetables and meats, basically. And so she like immediately makes like a cracker sandwich of like, prosciutto and cheese on a cracker, and eats it. And, whatever drink you want is there.

SYLVIA: I don't know, a jam/jelly cocktail?

AUSTIN: Oh, it's delicious, of course, it's right there. And she says,

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): So, I hope you're finding everything, um, compatible.

JANINE: I think Signet like, nods. [Janine and Austin laugh] It's so tough to figure out how she'd react in this scene because, I feel like she's not ever comfortable when I'm playing here in stuff, so the idea of her being comfortable in this, like… You know, even imagining what she's drinking normally, I would normally think 'ah, she's probably just going to have tea'- I think she's going to have a mimosa or something.

AUSTIN: Hell yeah.

JANINE: Like-

AUSTIN: Hell yeah.

JANINE: I think that's the weird difference here, is like… yeah. It's something fizzy and golden and-

AUSTIN: I want a mimosa now, god damn.

JANINE: Yeah…

AUSTIN: Yeah, that sounds good. (beat) Yeah, you have one, and she's asked this question, they've asked this question. I'm going to keep using they/them for, for Polyphony. This is a pretty feminine form, because, it- I was very much trying to build something that would- that Signet would respond to, but Polyphony is still they/them, and this person is still Polyphony- is just a form of Polyphony.

JANINE: Um, I think Signet says like:

> JANINE (as Signet): I think it's, it's beautiful and wonderful here, and strange, given… the rest of this planet. [Laughter]
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): I haven't been to most of this planet, I've been here, and I've met people who've been to the rest of this planet, and I've met people who were here before there was this planet [confused]. And, they seem to like it here.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Do you like it here?
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Yeah, yeah, I…

AUSTIN: They smile a little, and say,

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): When I first was, no one wanted this. Everyone around me wanted… Other things. To grow endlessly, to consume, to dance, to… Flutter and fight, and growl. And, I thought I needed to be with them, because I want to be with things, but now I'm here and here is… People want to be here, and be with, and that's good.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): You remind me of someone I used to know.
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony), questioning: Oh?
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Yeah…

JANINE: I think… I don't think the Exuvia- because the Exuvia is like, attached to-

AUSTIN: The mech, right.

JANINE: Signet's mech suit, but could it like-

AUSTIN: You could have taken it off, you could have bought it with you. That's still-

JANINE: Yeah like, that's fair, I think she might have bought it. I think she maybe pulls out the Exuvia then- do I have a, I don't really have move for this, I don't even know that it's a roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah, what is it?

JANINE: I think Signet wants to show them the Exuvia though, and wants to show them, like… the like, backup of Harmony and Harmony's last Candidate.

AUSTIN: Hmm. They say:

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Oh. Yes, I see the similarity.

AUSTIN: And smiles.

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Is this why you're happy here? Because I remind you of, of them?
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Yeah. Among other, among other things. That's, that is a big part of it though. Would you… Would you ever want to be, more of this? Like, yourself, but more?

AUSTIN: They blush. [Laughter from Janine]

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): I'm not sure, I don't know what that means. I'm here, and everyone here is happy, and I'm happy with everyone here. I… [Searches for words]
>
> JANINE (as Signet): But, if more people could… be with you, or if you could be with more people?

JANINE, laughing: Echo… [Austin laughing]

SYLVIA: Like, the entire time Echo's there with like, eyes kind of wide, just the straw, they're drinking their mouth like-

AUSTIN: Just slurping this drink!

SYLVIA: Mmm hm! Just like eyes darting back and forth between Signet and, uh, Polyphony.

AUSTIN: They say:

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): [Struggling for words] Everyone who comes here stays here because they want to stay here. If I could be a home for more people I could be a home for more people, but that is… [Longer pause] I need to know that they want to be… That they want me as home.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Yeah, that makes sense. I know a lot of people who could use someone like you in their life.

AUSTIN: They blush again. [Both laugh]

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Thank you. Urm… You should tell them about me, and see if they'll come.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Well… We have an, an odd dilemma.
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): I see. What… What is it?
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Well, we're here… [Pause] I think on some level you might appreciate why we're here. (0:39:50), that we're here to… Help unite families, and help establish a sort of cooperation in a place where, there has been very little of that. But contingent on that, someone has asked us to come here. And, well, I don't know that they knew you were here. I think they knew that Barricade was here.
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Oh.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): But I think they think Barricade would either be a very good… ally,

JANINE: Signet probably says that as weird as I said it.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

> JANINE (as Signet): or an obstacle. And for us to, help other people, they wanted us to, deal with Barricade.
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Oh. I'm glad you haven't, 'dealt with' Barricade. I'm home for Barricade.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Barricade is with you the same way these people are?
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): No.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): No?

AUSTIN (as Polyphony), amused: No, Barricade just lives in town. [Laugh from Janine]

JANINE (as Signet): Do you need Barricade?

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): I need everyone here.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Does that include us?

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): I need you here, I, wouldn't keep you. Sometimes my needs go unmet, and I adjust. But so long as you're here I need you here. Like I need the clouds and, the field, and the pathways in the woods. I cannot imagine a me without them. [Pause] And yet, I believe, Tannoy Kajj will leave one day, and much of the woods will disappear. I can't imagine what they will be then but, [sigh], they will be different. He's an explorer, he needed more places to go. He found a little, a little ring of rocks and wondered who'd put them there, and I didn't put them there but they were there when he arrived, and they weren't before. And I wonder if they'll be there when he leaves- I don't know. Maybe he won't leave. I'd, like him not to. I need him. And yet…

AUSTIN: Let's jump to Tannoy Kajj. Are you, is that who you're talking to Even?

DARCY: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. You find him like, rolled under the bottom of his, uhh, or like on a, it's not rolled under, he's on like a little, like cart that has a pneumatic lift, or it's like, it's like a, it's like a robot that walks around. It has like- it's like a Boston Dynamics- like what if a Boston Dynamics, like four-legged robot was also a thing you laid on top of? Like one of those carts that goes underneath a car, to repair it. You know what I'm talking about?

DARCY: Mmm hmm.

AUSTIN: And he has it and it's like walking him around various parts of the underside of his ship. Which again, is like, what if the cut into the Millennium Falcon was like, much deeper and more angular, so like it's almost like a V-shape? And, urgh, he's like, he'll say like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Gimme the hypertorch!

AUSTIN: And the little robot goes like

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp): Dnn durn

AUSTIN: And like, tosses up like, from a little side door, a little hypertorch, which is just like a little screwdriver but there's a torch on the end of it. And he's like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): And now I need six clamps.

AUSTIN: And it tosses like

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp): Boopadoop

AUSTIN: And tosses like six up, and Kajj catches them all in great style. And then like, as he's working on this, I think he catches your eye, Even, as you walk up. And he's like, um… Are you known, Even? Do people know you? Would another pilot be like 'oh shit, it's Even Gardner'?

DARCY: I think so!

AUSTIN: Or are you like, yeah, okay.

DARCY: I think so.

AUSTIN: And he's like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): And give me, um, give me one ace pilot- holy shit that's- you're Even Gardner!

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp): Doopadoo [In sort of like a power off way?]

AUSTIN: And, it lowers down so it turns into like a stool for him to sit on- he almost hits his pompadour on the underside of the, of the ship, and he doesn't and he goes like 'phew', and pulls out a comb and combs it back into place a little bit.

DARCY (as Even): I get it, hair's important.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Hair is important! What are you doing here? [Excited]

DARCY (as Even): Uhh, well, I was going to ask you the same thing.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): I crashed here! [Darcy laughing] Is what happened! I am- phew, boy, I got in over my head. I thought this was going to be an easy ride- I got through the Umbra, I got through the Umbra, I got in my head 'there must be other things I can get through, generally speaking', and I thought this storm would be the next thing, they'd call it the Kajj Storm, the same way they call it the Kajj Umbra. Only thing is I only got halfway through [sighing slightly? (0:45:10)]. So, working on the ship now, and soon enough I'll be out of here.

DARCY (as Even): I mean hey, it happens. I been there.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): I know, I heard the stories, I know about, Quire, and I know about Volition, and I, I, I've heard the- you're working on some test stuff now, for, for, Free States, right?

DARCY (as Even): [Noise of reluctant disagreement] Nnnn, that was my last, that was my last job.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy), excited: Oh, you're working on some new experimental stuff now! Now I wanna hear, what's going on now?! What's the gig?

DARCY (as Even): [Laughing] Ah don't, don't say Gig, it's a, it's a weird, it's a weird thing.

AUSTIN: [Noise of clapping hand] And he claps his hand and points at you-

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): You're working with Gig Kep-Hart again! Ho-lee shit. My whole crew, they're big fans, of that guy. And uhh, they're going to believe when I get out of here, I'm going to tell them I met someone who knew Gig, it's gonna blow their minds.

DARCY (as Even): D'you want me to, d'you want me to get some names, see if Gig will do a shout out? He's usually into that kind of stuff.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Hell yeah, I'll give you a list. Do, do you want a drink, you want to come on board? I'll show you around the ship? I- it's not, it's no- I'm sure it's no whatever bullshit you're on these days but, it's my baby, you know- I wanna, you know, show her to another, great pilot.

DARCY (as Even): Yeah, I'd be- I would be honoured, thank you.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Hell yeah.

AUSTIN: And like, he goes to walk over and he's like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Mm, right, one second.

AUSTIN: And walks back over and takes the hypertorch out, and like pops a plate off and like sizzles something together, like solders it? And then like, the entire back half, goes like 'clunk' and falls off, and then- it doesn't fall off but the, the, walkway up into the ship opens up, and he's like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy), slightly embarrassed: That was the first thing I needed to fix. [Laughter from Darcy]

AUSTIN: And then like, leads you inside. And like, it's so plush inside, like it looks like kind of a piece of shit outside? You know, there's lots of like, not rusted but like, plating? It's just like, all right, something definitely, they took like some damage here, and put like a plate over the damage and didn't really even match the paint, and just bolted it on? But inside is pristine, there's like carpet and like, lots of like, nice lamps inside, that are, that are, you can see that

they're fitted with this like, experimental technology that like, locks- that like, gives them their own gravitational fields in space, so that you can have hanging lamps, even when you're doing like, three hundred and sixty degree crazy turns? It's just generally nice up here, like it's just generally nice on the ship. You can see that like, he, there are, there are empty, like, crew quarters and stuff, that like you could tell that there are different people, that this one has posters on the wall, this one has… He gives you the, like, and this is where my science captain is, or what, or whatever, like, these are the Mass Effect crew, like, walkthrough? And basically like 'and here's where my co-pilot like, you know, hangs out, and normally, you'll find the, the engineer over here, and this is where our hacker sleeps, or whatever'. And none of them are here, and he explains to you like, whenever he does one of these wild things, he doesn't bring his crew, because it's too risky, and he didn't want to get them stuck here. And then he like, pours you a drink, out of like- he has like a, the same robot, the same little walkie robot, like, comes inside and like stands up on two legs behind a bar, and like, begins to mix a drink with these little actuators that comes out, come out of its side. So it has like its big weird legs up on the bar, but also has little side arms, that pop out of its, the side of it, that mix drinks for you. And it goes like

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp): Burp burp doo

AUSTIN: And pours you something- what did you, what did you order?

DARCY (as Even): [Considering noises] A whiskey neat.

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp): Brurhb buornn.

AUSTIN: And pours it for you. And, you know, Tannoy Kajj gets it, and he goes like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Get me a special

AUSTIN: And it goes like

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp), upbeat: Burp bup burgh

AUSTIN: And makes you, makes, makes him a drink. And he goes like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Honestly, if all I get out of this is this cool little robot, it was worth the whole thing!

DARCY (as Even): Wait, so this isn't- you just, you met this robot?

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Yeah, I met this robot! This robot was here- I was like, I was out on a walk, and I was thinking about how badly I needed someone to help me fix this thing, and, here we go. Got this cool robot.

DARCY (as Even): Huh

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Robot what's your name?

AUSTIN: And

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp), congratulatory? Like, a fanfare?: Burpa derp

AUSTIN: And like,

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): I call him Burpaderp. [Laughter from DARCY]

DARCY (as Even): Hey, it's as good a name as any.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Burpee is a- he responds to Burpee

AUSTIN (as Burpaderp): Boo boop.

AUSTIN: And like, cool.

DARCY (as Even): Alright. So, this is, this is, a weird question, maybe, but like, you are committed to leaving here?

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): It's a funny story. I… [Collecting himself] I am now, and I think… I think that's why Burpaderp showed up. When I first crashed, I told myself everyday- I woke up and I said, "I'm going to fix this ship today god damnit," and I went for a walk instead. You know, cause I wanted to see what else was out there. But one day I walked as far as I could, and, I came to a clearing, in the forest, and it just dropped, sheer cliff, you know? And I could see out into the storm, and it was close! I could like reach out my hands and touch it. I could see all that glass, down below, rumbling away, and, it struck me- I can't be here. This, this place, is… This place is great, they just make new people if you want to hang out with new people. But… I got my crew to worry about, and they're not here, and… I want to go see them. And… I want to help them out. I came back, and Burpee was here. And… I got to work. I'm almost fixed. Another day or two, should be good to go.

DARCY (as Even): What-all have you still got to work on?

AUSTIN (as Tannoy), over Even: And I, I like it. I like- there's all sorts of projects, that's the thing. I got to be careful, I know how this works. If I get too invested in getting this thing fixed up and making it perfect, I'll be here for another three years. But, I'm going to get it back into flying order, I just got to run a couple more tests on the engines, I had to get the, the entrance way, fixed, which you saw me get fixed, I got to make sure the navigation computer is up and running. And then I'm out of here. I think I got another week or two, at the most. Honestly, if I push myself- if you told me, gotta get out of here by end of day tomorrow, I could do it. It might not be, I might not be able to break orbit, but I could get back to land.

DARCY (as Even): Do you want me to, to take a look? Just, run a second eye over? Are you…

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Hell yeah. That would- I'd be, you know what, I'd be honoured. Honestly.

DARCY (as Even): All right, I got to ask. How, how much have you heard about me about besides the flying stuff?

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): I knew about the wings and the hair.

DARCY (as Even): Okay, all right, cool, okay. Just making sure, some people

AUSTIN (as Tannoy) Cause I-

DARCY (as Even): Some people, it bothers them.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy) Man, you should see my crew. We're from all over the place. I don't know where you're from necessarily, but like, doesn't bother me none.

DARCY (as Even): Alright. Well okay, give me a minute.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy) over DARCY: It's a good look! I- listen, I haven't seen anybody else have hair like you, I'm tryna be that way.

AUSTIN: And like takes, flips out the comb again, and like, fixes up the, the, the, his hair.

DARCY: Alright, then I guess I'm going to attach my hair to his ship.

AUSTIN: Alright, go for it. What are you trying to figure out, this sounds like gather information to me, or something? Are you trying to fix it, or are you trying to-?

DARCY: I'm not trying to fix it, I guess, I'm just, like- like yeah, I'm doing like a once over, like I'm, I'm giving it like a, sec- like basically like a second opinion.

AUSTIN: Alright, what you want to learn from this, as, as a player?

DARCY: So I guess-

AUSTIN: So like biggest picture or, or most focused.

DARCY: Okay, like- there are two trains of thought here for me. There's one where its just the very simple, like, I want to help this dude identify what the stuff that he really needs to fix is, like almost like in like a triage fashion. I think like also there's a part of even that is suspicious of this robot suddenly showing up-

AUSTIN: Sure-

DARCY: And like I wanna make sure that this robot is like helping and not-

AUSTIN: Totally-

DARCY: Trying to sabotaging.

AUSTIN: Totally. Like, you have time, this isn't an action roll? I was thinking about making it a gather information roll, a fortune roll, but like, you have time, and you're good at this. What's your, what's your… rig skill?

DARCY: Well my rig is one, and I guess-

AUSTIN: Oh but you have, you have a move-

DARCY: Yeah, the study, so like-

AUSTIN: Alright.

DARCY: I have the construct speaker that I think lets me roll study?

AUSTIN: Yeah, study would totally let you do this. So right, lets, lets… lets do this just so there is a chance you could roll a crit on this, right? Let's do a gather information roll with study,

DARCY: Alright.

AUSTIN: just to see what you roll, cause while I don't think there's any, you know. Let's just see what it is. So roll study, there's no risky standard or anything, it's a gather information, it's a, it's a fortune roll

DARCY: Oh well-

AUSTIN: You rolled really bad, so you get-

DARCY: That's a one and a two.

AUSTIN: You get incomplete or partial information. As far as you can tell, like- okay, so here's what I'm going to say. You can tell for sure that everything is on the up and up. This thing, is not going around and fucking up the ship to keep him here, it wouldn't need to, like. Polyphony could just make the ship be bad. In fact, here's what you see. You see that there are days when Polyphony has fixed minor things, on this ship for him, because he hates repairing those things. The ones that are left are things he likes getting his hands dirty with. Like, you've always heard Tannoy Kajj likes having the fastest ship in any given place, and so like he likes turning his engine, and so it's- they've left the engine to be tuned. But they

like, went through and fixed the h-vac, because Tannoy Kajj does not like getting on his hands and knees and crawling through vents, you know. And like, that's what you know from limited. There's also just stuff that you don't know, like, how to help him fix his ship.

DARCY: Right.

AUSTIN: It is just like a different system, you cannot offer him any help in that regard, but almost like, in a way, that's okay? He likes doing the stuff that's left.

DARCY: Yeah

AUSTIN: You know? So that's what I'm going to give you.

> DARCY (as Even): You've got a, you've got a great ship, and I could use the name of your interior designer.
>
> AUSTIN (as Tannoy): I will hook you up. They could use the work-

AUSTIN: You know what, I know who his interior designer is, actually. He says like,

> AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Her name's Lily. She's out on Crown, have you been to Crown yet? That place is a little creepy, but Lily has a little, little shop, where she does custom work- she built me these threads, she made me these threads too. All sorts of fashion, design, experimental stuff. Lily Lysander.
>
> DARCY (as Even): Alright, I'll keep that in mind.
>
> AUSTIN (as Tannoy): You go check her out. You, you let her know, that, Tannoy Kajj sent you.

DARCY: Austin, do I know that name?

AUSTIN: Gig met her.

DARCY: Okay.

AUSTIN: She was Dr Cart-horn's, aide, she's a stratus, she was doing like, research assistant shit, but like, very clearly had special powers, she could like, lift stuff out of Quire with her hands.

DARCY, slowly, understanding: Oh yeah!

AUSTIN: And so now- so now she's like, a designer, a fashionista, and like, an engineer, basically. In fact, I think he says like,

> AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Oh, she designed the gravity things that I have on these lamps. I was sayin, “I want it to feel like you’re going into an old style family restaurant, like a pizzeria, or like a spaghetti joint,” you know, and she was like, “that doesn’t make any sense, [laughter from Darcy], the- one, that’s not a cool thing to have on your spaceship-“ which, you know, there’s not accounting for taste I guess, but really she said that the problem was that the lights would bang into places, and then she said, “never mind, I got it,” and two weeks later she had those little things you attach on the chains there, and they just hang in place now. So.
>
> DARCY (as Even): That’s, that’s pretty sweet.
>
> AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Yeah. And she built me these threads! [Laughter from both Austin and Darcy]

AUSTIN: Yeah, yes Even, Even says, “so I bought this Pizza Hut lamp on space eBay, but then the lamp came, and it was shattered into pieces,” yes, 100%

DARCY: That’s a weird deep cut on my part-

AUSTIN: It’s a weird Important If True cut. [Continued laughter from Darcy] Listen, we owe a lot to Important If True and Idle Thumbs, there’s been a lot of us turning their bullshit into real things, so [More laughter from Darcy], into, not real things, into more bullshit is what I really mean, so. Shout outs to Jake Rotkin’s poor broken pizza lamp. So yeah, I think that that’s-

DARCY: Yeah, I think that’s all I wanted to know.

AUSTIN: Y’all hang out, what’s the- yeah, okay, d’you just hang out with him that day? Like-

DARCY: I mean, yeah, Even likes ships and likes pilots.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Awesome. Yeah!

DARCY: And like, yeah, I think he’s cool handing him like, wrenches when Burpee can’t.

AUSTIN: When Burpee can’t, sure, totally-

DARCY: Like, shooting the shit, trading weird stories about weird barrel rolls and shit.

AUSTIN: I think y’all just hang out- yeah, y’all just do that all day, it’s fucking great, there’s beer. Burpee shows up and has like a case, you know, like,

SYLVIA: I gotta get-

JANINE: The real reason he’s called Burpee.

AUSTIN: Uh huh! Yes.

DARCY: Austin, before we leave, can I sit and just wish hard enough for a Burpee?

AUSTIN: Do you need a Burpee? If you need a Burpee, a Burpee will show up, that's the thing, like, Polyphony- this isn't a bit, like, I'm not- there isn't a deception here. Like that's the takeaway from all this. This place is fantastic, like it isn't bad, there's no- this isn't the Twilight Zone. Like… It's here and it's great, deal with it. It- there's no alibi here, you don't get a soft answer for like, how you can turn away from this.

DARCY: Right.

AUSTIN: Like, you can leave, there's- no one's holding you back. I think like, maybe that's like, what you learn over the next couple of hours or days or whatever, is like… And it, because if the thing that you need and want is a challenge, you get it. You don't get- it isn't, the twist here isn't, "oh, but when you have no amb- there's nothing to push you, then you don't get the-" do you know what I- No. If you want to be pushed, if you need that, that thing to be pushed, if you like, "Oh, I feel like I'm not being challenged," like, you get a- you get like, there's a research project in your head, you know, and like you go out, and you find the library, and it's filled with books, and you start figuring out how to, build the rocket booster you want to build, and go out and dig for the materials. It's like, it's the thing that it is. And-

DARCY: Now I'm wondering if like, okay, we had that axiom scanner thing, right?

AUSTIN: Yes, yeah.

DARCY: Like, part of me is now wondering if like, was Barricade just there because we came in expecting to get a fight?

AUSTIN: That's a good question.

DARCY: And that's what Polyphony gave us?

AUSTIN: I'm going to say no, because I've been very clear about this when some of the fans have asked about it, what Axioms are. Axioms- I've said before, in- I think it's a great idea, and like, if I, like, was not very clear on what an axiom is, I would say something different here I think, which is like, I love that idea. But Axioms are made by Volition. Volition does this- this is a, a thing Volition can do is break into this other realm, and make things that shouldn't be real, real. Or can produce them in some way- we don't know how Volition produces them, or what it's guided by, or how its, its ideas are colored by its experiences and the Iconoclasts who built it, but. What we do know is, unlike Divines- Divine, a thing that's a Divine is a very powerful piece of technology, it's, it's a very powerful AI or robot or synthetic being that can do something so incredible, that society collectively decides that its it is a Divine. And it's about that social, like, branding- it's about saying you're a Divine, it's about, it's about that kind of collective agreement. That is not what an Axiom is. Axioms, for like, the purpose of me as a writer are specifically this set of beings- there could be other things, there can be Axiomatic, things? And so maybe there is an answer there, like maybe

Barricade could have been one of those things, I mean, maybe Barricade is not an Axiom, and instead it is something, like, again Axiomatic, you know, weird, uncanny. So maybe there is a solution there, but like… A thing is not an Axiom if it wasn't made by Volition. So, so yeah, maybe that's a fun, maybe that is a fun way to think about Barricade, is like, did Barricade exist before y'all arrived? Or before anybody else did? Or I guess we actually have the canon answer to that already; Lumen said yes. Right, so we can't back off of that. (1:00:00)

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Lumen said yes.

JANINE: I think we also got the name of Barricade from the previous-

AUSTIN: From the scanner? Or something? Yeah sure.

JANINE: So it would be weird for, it- I would totally buy it registering a thing that Polyphony did as an Axiom, or as something Axiomatic, but the fact that we had a name for it…

AUSTIN: Yes, as like a separate bit-

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: I guess, yeah. But yes, that is the, that is the state of things, I think, and it's kind of what y'all learn over the next, however long you want to have an experience here. I guess my question is what's next? Like we can keep having these conversations, and I can keep charming you, you know, [Sylvia laughs] and yeah like, I think Even, you go back to your room and there is a cool little robot there or whatever, do you know what I mean, like, that happens. And, there isn't- [sigh] you know, it's not just like I want an ice cream sundae and now I have an ice cream sundae, but like, it's not that far off. So my question is, what next? How long do you stay, what do you do? And I can, I can, if the answer is like "indefinitely," I can introduce drama another way, but like, I want to give you the space here, to think about what, what, your real, what your character's real, real responses are to this scenario.

JANINE: Signet wants Polyphony to be Divine.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, a hundred million percent? Even if… What Polyphony does feels like, you know, she said like "hey, you remind me of Harmony," and Harmony's whole thing… was that they spread themselves too thin, and died out that way. And I think Signet is very aware of like, if Polyphony tries- or, or if Polyphony is made to operate on a large scale, then Polyphony is going to be in jeopardy, Divine or not.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: So I think like, the thing she wants is to, protect this, but also to make it more, and like to make this… Contrition's Figure isn't a great example of what [laughter from Austin]- like that's not what this place exists for-

AUSTIN: Right right.

JANINE: But in the same- there is, there is a similar function, like in Contrition's Figure, you – especially when it was running as it was supposed to, you got what you needed, to-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: to grow, or to, fulfil things that, that weren't being fulfilled in your life.

AUSTIN: So how do you bring this to more people without spreading Polyphony too thin? Or without gating who gets access?

JANINE: Yeah, that's the thing, right.

AUSTIN: I- I don't know.

JANINE: And you also can't-

AUSTIN: I don't even-

JANINE: Can't like, you can't even… [Soft laughter] The thought like briefly occurred to me that "oh, what if-" you know, and I think it was, got mentioned in chat like, "why don't we just drop Cat's Cradle in here, why don't we just drop a bunch of assholes in here-" it's not going to fix them being assholes-

AUSTIN: [laughter] right.

JANINE: An asshole still wants to be an asshole they'll do it.

AUSTIN: Right, so like I'm just gonna- we don't have a tonne of time to record, and I don't- the story that you end up getting from Elia and, and [struggling to find the name] Fenta is like, the other person who was here was kind of an asshole-

JANINE: yeah

AUSTIN: and like, didn't want to be here? And left, thankfully, because like, he- he was the sort of person who like, did say, "I want a milkshake- no, no I don't, I'll throw it out," and like, Polyphony was like, "alright, cool, like, that's fine, like, no- there's nothing, I didn't lose anything by doing that, there's no limit to how many milkshakes I can make, and I can tell that what you really want to do is be kind of an asshole, and so, here's an opportunity to be an asshole." And like, eventually, Elia and Fenta convinced him to leave, and like, the one good thing he did in his fucking life was get the fuck out.

JANINE: yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, it doesn't fix people in that way. It can… it can, give you the thing you want, and sometimes, I- the very Twilight Mirage thing here is that, for, you know, for Lumen, who grew up in a really great place, grew up in the Tides of Harmony, even the Tides of Harmony in a, in a rough moment, is fundamentally a person who wants to live a peaceful, kind life. And dropping someone who fundamentally wants to be an oppressor, or to be powerful, that would not happen, necessarily. And in fact, could be very scary.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Could be very scary. So yeah, but, yeah, is there another form? Like I don't know, what's the- we can go back to that, or like, I would love to hear you three talk about this, in character, and I'll just shut up for a little while. Like, that to me is the most interesting thing.

JANINE (over Austin): Probably a conversation worth having.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So like, let's put you all in like, the hotel lobby or restaurant or in one of the suites or something, but like- or somewhere else in the city, I don't mind [Inaudible, (1:05:59)] other part of this little city, you know this little town, wherever you want to be. Just alone, the three of you talking about what to do. Any ideas, or, or opening shots, or whatever?

JANINE: How about… It is like a sort of tea house thing.

AUSTIN: Sure, yeah.

And it's like a very traditional type of teahouse, like, indoors, very like fragrant. Very, like… you know, lots of stuff to chose from, lots of little, uhh, things to snack on, delicate little things. And I think Signet asks Echo and Even to, like, join her there. [Laughing] I want to make it clear she's kind of buying into all of this, a lot.

AUSTIN: Yeah, a hundred percent. Like, your vice is, is, like host clubs and brothels and stuff, this is like-

JANINE (over Austin): It's like, indulgence on a personal level, like on a-

AUSTIN (over Janine): Yes.

JANINE: personal level with other people, like this is…

AUSTIN: Yes, one hundred percent that.

JANINE: So I think she, she sort of like invites them there and there's probably like already, a bunch of different teas made. Like there's probably like – I'm imagining a bunch of like very

small teacups, but they all slightly different shades, and they're like arranged chromatically. So it goes from like dark brown to a really bright sort of orange-y gold. Or like some red overtones, and things like that. And I think she brings everyone there, and is like,

> JANINE (as Signet): I don't know where you are with, with this, but… I don't want to destroy Polyphony.
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): I'm on the same page with you there, I don't want to do anything too drastic here, but I worry a lot about… I don't know. This thing… Right now it's a very good thing for a very small amount of people, but it could very quickly become a very bad thing for a much bigger amount of people, if someone who shouldn't get, what they're looking for gets what they're looking for. You know what I mean?
>
> JANINE (as Signet): And if we still have to take Barricade down, then, Polyphony is just, exposed.
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): This isn't a good place, [huff], this isn't a good place for what Polyphony is.
>
> DARCY (as Even): Yeah, and then what happens when Advent shows up, [Janine makes noise of agreement], and discovers, one, that we, didn't actually uphold our end of the bargain, but then two, discovers an axiom with the capabilities of Polyphony.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Our end of the bargain was to… deal with the Axiomatic presence here, either by… Well, killing or capturing, but- they only really sent us here after Barricade, right? (1:08:55)
>
> DARCY (as Even): Yeah, but I mean, they sent us here because they want to be able to get to the Glass, so. My sense is that after we leave they will come here. Like, let me be explicit; I don't actually care if we- I don't have a problem with us screwing over Advent until the end of time, but, I'm worried that it will cause problems for, you know, the people who need access to that stitch.
>
> JANINE (as Signet, over Darcy): We wouldn't get the other half of what we want.
>
> DARCY (as Even): Yeah.
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Yeah. What if Polyphony wasn't here?
>
> SYLVIA (as Echo): Where would it go?
>
> DARCY (as Even): Yeah I mean I'm listening.

> JANINE (as Signet): [Sigh], I don't, I don't really know, how, logistically well it would work, but there are other places, if we could get them there – Polyphony and the people who want to stay with Polyphony – where, Polyphony could be a little more protected. And, would have the potential to, to do more, to reach a little wider – not so wide, that, they… You know, not, not so wide that they're weakened for it, but where they could have the kind of, pull, to, to attract people who want to be with them, or who want this experience, if only temporarily. Thyrsus, maybe?

AUSTIN: I'll make a suggestion, that you would know in character. There is a small group of researchers who work out of Altar, who work in Séance, called the Method of Apotheosis, there's an algorithm there named Weyerbach Zwei, who, is all about the study of the creation and destruction of Divines, they all want to know, what, why did the Divines start dying? And they also like to study Axioms. And their goal, long term, is to bring us more Divines, bring the Fleet more Divines, and the Divine Free States. But, they are a group of people who would be able to administer a city like this, or an Axiom like this, in a way that, like… Would not- alright, so, Weyerbach Zwei is the third, of their kind. And… There was null, and then there was, I always forget how to pronounce one, in German. Eins, eins? No, it's eins drei? Anyway-

SYLVIA: No, it's-.

AUSTIN: It's eins zwei? Alright. And, would understand the importance of not just like, killing this thing in order to turn it into a Divine without, you know, against its consent.

JANINE: Would they still allow people to access it? To access them?

AUSTIN: I think, I think so [laughter], you would have to have that conversation, Signet would have to have that conversation. I believe that Signet would be, would believe that she could have that conversation with them, and yes, that like… From an out of character position, what I would do, is like instead of having them be in Séance, they would be here, in Polyphony, they would operate out of Polyphony, as like, a, as a third settlement on that planet basically, that could grow there. And that's like- I don't know if you remember, but, but Altar is covered in like, tombs and cathedrals and mausoleums to the various Divines, as like little bits of them scattered across that planet? So there'd be lots of things to work with there. [laughing] And they would kind of like, I imagine they would build a little town around Polyphony, that Polyphony and the most polyphonic, the most like, harmonious, heart would be at the centre of, and they would build around it and try to work with it to build, like, to naturally echo what it does already, what they do already. That makes sense?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That would be my proposal for a place that Signet would know, that, they would be safe. Because the thing about taking it to Thyrsus is; you don't know when a bureaucrat would say, "we, we really need this other Divine," and like-

JANINE (over Austin): Yeah.

AUSTIN: just pull the trigger. You know what I mean? So yeah…

JANINE: I also like the idea of, the – I forget the name of, of, of, the, the people that Cat's Cradle is working- both working with and working for.

AUSTIN: Cat's Cradle is working for the Concrete Town Particulars, who would hate this.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Completely.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like their whole thing is "fuck this shit. You can't trust this-" like, and I want to be clear like, there is, again, like- the thing that's ironic is, if a Concrete Town Particular like, came here, they could abuse this power completely. If Advent had this, they would abuse this so, so completely, in a way that almost justifies the fear, of- if it doesn't justify it, it at least, at least contextualises the fear and anger that the Particulars have around something like this.

JANINE: Yeah, that's, that's like my, my thing is like, I- or Signet's thing even… I don't know if leaving Polyphony here is a good idea?

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: Especially because like, we are supposed to clear this area out.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: That is contingent, that's the, that's the, that is the thing we're doing to get what we want. And also, the proximity to those groups makes Polyphony staying here, difficult, like-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Even with, even with Altar coming in, or with that group-

AUSTIN (over Janine): Right, right.

JANINE: Coming in to sort of, sustain it, it doesn't- I don't know that it is compatible with what we want already.

AUSTIN (over Janine): Yeah- they wouldn't. They wouldn't move here, I don't think.

JANINE (over Austin): Oh.

AUSTIN: You would have to take this to Altar, is what I'm saying.

JANINE (over Austin): Okay good, that's, yeah- that's what I- I would prefer that—

AUSTIN (over Janine): Yeah yeah. You would not move the Method of Apotheosis here.

JANINE (over Austin): —but it sounded to me like you wanted them to build a thing around what Polyphony is now and…

AUSTIN (over Janine): Yeah. No no no. I'm saying they would build a thing around Polyphony, but on Altar.

JANINE (over Austin): Okay.

AUSTIN: If you could somehow get Polyphony to Altar.

JANINE (over Austin): I like that.

AUSTIN: But we're working in the realm of like, magic. Do you know what I mean?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We're working in the realm of like, real wild science fantasy shit.

JANINE (over Austin): Yeah.

AUSTIN: So like…

JANINE: That is entirely what Signet I think is pushing for though, in this.

AUSTIN: Echo and Even, how do you feel about this? You on board? And what do you do about Barricade?

SYLVIA: [Sigh] This is tough.

JANINE: If they don't know that Polyphony is here, and we-

SYLVIA (over Janine): Yeah

JANINE: Extract Polyphony and take care of Barricade,

SYLVIA: I think getting Polyphony out to somewhere safe, is a good idea, my only worry then is giving Barricade over, you know.

DARCY: Oh I-

JANINE: Just kill Barricade, right?

DARCY: Yeah, we don't have to capture, like. They said they'd-

SYLVIA (over Darcy): Wasn't there-

DARCY: prefer capture, but they'll take destroy.

SYLVIA: Wasn't there an option for us to take it elsewhere to be made into a Divine?

AUSTIN: Yeah, the Method of Apotheosis would do that, also. If you turned over a thing like, "this is super dangerous, but we think we could turn it into a Divine," they would, begin a long-term project to do that.

DARCY: 'cause, isn't our job just to clear this out-

AUSTIN (over Darcy): Yup.

JANINE (over Darcy): Yeah.

DARCY: not so much to just capture it?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DARCY: So if we take this over there, and get it made into a Divine, we could, also say that we did our job.

SYLVIA: Mmmm.

AUSTIN: I think that this gets into some really tricky stuff. Which is like, Barricade doesn't want to be turned into anything-

JANINE (over Austin): Yeah.

AUSTIN: But Barricade doesn't want in the- like, I tried to communicate this with Polyphony, like- Polyphony, was able to take that form because you wanted Polyphony to take that form. But like, Polyphony's thoughts are, valid, and the- their patterns of thinking, if it's thinking, are, are, clearly, of a sentient, of an aware being. But also are not human thoughts. Again, like, very badly needs everyone who is there right now, like, desperately, but also if someone leaves, will be fine, because that is what Polyphony is specifically. There are other Axioms who are very similar to Polyphony, but who would, thrash violently at something being taken away from them, you know? There are versions of, of- there are Axioms that, are like Barricade, except they would never pull someone to shore. They would only- they would crush, they would have crushed, urm, Lumen, in, in their hands, instead of pulling them to Polyphony. And so like, there is a weird thing here, which is like, I don't know- like do you talk to, Barricade? And say, we're going to do this, like what do you do?

DARCY: I mean, would Polyphony be able to help as sort of like, a between there at all?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think what I would love to do with this is like, make your case and then give me a roll. Like, what's the case you make to Polyphony? Who, who, is like… [sigh] You meet Polyphony, back towards the town centre, but closer to the gate, like the town gate, and there's a little well there. And, some little buildings made of stone. And, you can hear the sound of birds cawing. And they're in their, their like, the form with the, the parasol. But behind them, sitting on the ground, is their other form. And it's like, it's like, what's it do- I think it has like a flower in its hand, and its just like- I think they're just looking at the flower. And it's, it's just like a nice moment. But you need to breach the subject. So how do you make the pitch? And who does it?

DARCY: I think that might be you, Signet. [Laughter from Darcy and Austin, annoyed/unhappy noise from Janine]

AUSTIN: Yeah, weird.

DARCY: Wining and dining this Axiom. [Laughter from Darcy]

JANINE: Okay. So I think Signet, approaches the sort of parasol form, and says…

> JANINE (as Signet): We've been talking about what we should do. You know, what we came here to do, and… even if we just leave, and just leave you as you are here, there are other people who, I don't think, will want to preserve this as much as we do. [Pause] So, I know somewhere where, you could go, and you could bring anyone who wants to come with you, and there would be more people there who would want to be with you. And it would be safer for you there. And if you want to do that, [sigh]- well there's also, there's also Barricade, we don't, we don't know what Barricade wants. Or, that's, not, right. We need help with Barricade.

AUSTIN: They like, smile, and they say

> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Barricade is very stubborn. This sounds good for me, but I need Barricade, I would- I need Barricade. I… Can we bring Barricade?
>
> JANINE (as Signet): We can talk to Barricade. If Barricade needs to be here instead, then, that'll happen, but we'll talk to Barricade.
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): What would you say to Barricade? Barricade… Barricade [chuckle] does not, Barricade cannot do what I can do. You know?
>
> JANINE (as Signet): Yeah.
>
> AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Barricade just keeps things in.

DARCY (as Even): Can I, interject quickly, to clarify something?

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Of course.

DARCY (as Even): When you say you need Barricade, is that a different kind of need in the way that you, need the people who are here but that you can adapt, if they leave?

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): I… need Barricade because, their presence is right. And… For another reason. They… Without Barricade, anything could come near. Barricade keeps the bad things out.

DARCY (as Even): Okay, that makes sense.

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): And brings the good ones in. I would be very- I would be vulnerable, without Barricade.

JANINE (as Signet): What would be the best way for us to… find Barricade, to speak with them?

AUSTIN: [Laughing] They blush, and they say;

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Come closer.

JANINE: Okay Signet-

AUSTIN: Do you come closer?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. They turn and look toward the well. And like, gesture towards the well. And you see that the well has like a big wooden like, well cover on it.

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): This is Barricade.

JANINE (as Signet): They are the well or they're in the well.

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): [as if it's obvious] They *are* the well.

JANINE (as Signet), laughing: Okay, sorry.

AUSTIN: And they laugh-

JANINE (as Signet): Sorry. I want to be clear.

DARCY (as Even), awkwardly: Hi!

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): Barricade isn't like- Barricade can't- you thought I was- I didn't mean that Barricade kept a lot inside, I meant…

DARCY (as Even): I just, I don't want to be rude.

AUSTIN (as Polyphony): I understand.

AUSTIN: We should roll. Barricade heard all of this, obviously.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think this is- I mean, you tell me, what is this, what do you think you were just offering or doing, Signet? I definitely think even-

JANINE (over Austin): Attune?

AUSTIN: I could see it being attune. If it's attune, it's even- Okay, so here's what I'll say, I think it's actually great effect if it's attune. So it's, controlled great, I think. Stress?

JANINE: I want- I'll take stress, how much stress do I take to be better at this?

AUSTIN, laughing: Take two to get- to add an extra die.

DARCY: Oh, do we- you could also use a gambit, we have gambits.

(overlapping, over Darcy):

AUSTIN: You could also use a gambit, and you could also get an assist.

JANINE: I wanna, I really want this to work, so…

AUSTIN: I know, me too, I really want it to work too.

(overlapping):

AUSTIN: So here's what- you could take two stress to get an extra die-

JANINE: So, so, it's, hang on, it's controlled or risky?

AUSTIN: It's controlled, 'cause this isn't… The, the-

JANINE: And then great effect-

AUSTIN: You know what, this might not even be a controlled, this might just also be a fortune - no, I think this is controlled, this can go bad in some ways, for sure. It is controlled, it is great effect, it is…

JANINE: One bonus dice for the stress I took…

AUSTIN: Another bonus dice for the gambit.

JANINE: Yep.

AUSTIN: Even, are you going to take one stress to help here too?

DARCY: How many dice are you at right now Janine?

JANINE: I have two bonus dice.

AUSTIN: So that's three total?

JANINE: Yeah.

DARCY: Yeah, I'll take a stress to help.

AUSTIN: So that's a four. I'm trying to see if there's anything else that can help this roll. I want this roll to go well so bad.

JANINE: Three bonus dice is a good number of bonus dice.

AUSTIN: It is, it is, it is. I'm just like, looking at things and like, alright, I want to make sure we're not missing a roll- a thing here.

JANINE: Yeah.

DARCY: Just going to look at this chart that Austin linked earlier about dice probabilities in Blades in the Dark.

AUSTIN (over Darcy): So you're rolling four die- yeah, I know, I linked a, I linked a sheet.

JANINE: Technically I could, I could turn this into a doctor roll, but that feels like a stretch.

AUSTIN: That feels like a different roll, yeah. And in fact, you would lose your great effect here, that would be, different.

JANINE: Yeah, yeah, fair.

AUSTIN: Four, four die, you have like a ninety-

DARCY: Ninety four percent chance.

AUSTIN: Four percent chance of success, forty two percent of like, a lesser success, but that's still pretty high.

JANINE (over Austin): What if I think really hard about how Belgard does shield stuff too and then we have shield friendship.

AUSTIN (mocking): Then we have shield there, have shields there too.

JANINE: Or shield buds.

AUSTIN: No I think its-

DARCY (over Austin): Oh, you guys could be like Agents of Shield together or something.

AUSTIN: I hate this. [Disgusted noises from Janine] So bad.

JANINE (over Austin): I'm gonna, I'm gonna roll this now, I'm-

AUSTIN (wearily): Roll it.

JANINE: Okay well that's, four three three four.

AUSTIN (over Janine): That's a success. Yeah, okay, you got a success. On a four-five- so, there's a- I'm 'ana say there is… On- with great effect, it's- it is… [Exhale of breath] Okay, here's what it is, I know what happens here. You attune to this – what's that feel like?

JANINE: I imagine this is another thing that comes largely through the Exuvia, or like is- I don't think the Exuvia is necessary, but I think it's a- it's more comfortable, if that makes sense? Like it's a little easier when the Exuvia is there. And I imagine that's also how most of it shows through, it's sort of like, the way that that thing tends to open up and, flutter and glow and, and be weird. I imagine that's where the bulk of it is, but the thing that Signet does, I think she puts her hand on the edge of the well as if she's going to like, lean in to look down, but doesn't quite lean in? It's just sort of like contact.

AUSTIN: So, yeah, so, the- two things happen. One, you feel Barricade recede, and it becomes a little metal ball in your hands- I actually think it's not a ball, it's like a little coral, like candle holder, do you know what I mean? Like, it's like a little, you could put- not like a votive, but a little bigger than that. The well, shrinks in your hand- like, you touch it and eventually you wrap your hand around it, it's a little coral made, candle holder. And, then you look past it out through the gates and you see that the wall is gone, and it's given you its seed form. Then you see light break through the clouds, and, you see those Advent drones you saw back in the scrapyards begin to close. Your attuning, and the reduction of Barricade into this form, sends out a- not an axiomatic, but like, one of these things that they scan for,

and they immediately deploy these drones, and they're far off still, but they're coming. You have to go now.

JANINE: Luckily, we have the ship.

AUSTIN makes a sound of agreement.

DARCY: Hey, hey, hey, urgh, quick thing; do we want to take them, or should, maybe, Tannoy take them.

JANINE: Huh.

DARCY: Because they'll like, you know- Advent will like, want to look over our shit and everything, [confirming noise from Austin], they don't know anything about this Tannoy guy.

AUSTIN: This is good. This is good.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. And Tannoy is up for that. You hear, you hear like,

> AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Yahoo!

AUSTIN: and you hear like, the engines kick on, on, on The Other Hand, on his ship, as they fire up, and you hear them go "wuhwuhwuhwuh" as they begin to hover, over in the fields, and you hear like, the braying of robotic animals. [Beat] What's the pitch you make, really quick, to Tannoy on this? So like, do you begin- I think, I think you hear the sound of water, as- actually, here's the, yeah- We get water, beginning to come up around this little town, the same way that it did on the island, where, where Belgard, where Belgard, Chthonic and, Volition talked, it's that same exact effect, except now it begins running through the streets, and so like, the town begins to flood, bit by bit. And so you get people running with their stuff, towards the main square, and everyone's gets there, and everyone's feet are getting wet. What do you all do? I'm going to put a clock on screen, as- that's going to be the arrival of Advent.

DARCY: Urm. [Pause] So I guess-

JANINE (over Darcy): How big is his ship again?

DARCY: I mean, it's got crews quarters.

AUSTIN: It does have crew quarters, so it could take people, for sure.

DARCY: Yeah, so I think I want to go to Tannoy, and basically say,

> DARCY (as Even): I want to hire you for a job.

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): How much you paying?

DARCY: Oh, hey, out of character, how much can we pay? [breaking off into laughter]

AUSTIN: So you- I think they offered you a fucking fortune, right-

JANINE: They did.

AUSTIN: They offered you eight? They offered you eight, and then also six if you get the refugees through. That's all a lot of money. Eight cred, is what you were being paid again, and that was "a major score, serious loot, buy important ship parts." Two cred is like, "a minor job, enough to make it next week," four is "a small job, enough to buy a bike." So, your cut from that eight plus six is four- seven, that's- sorry, that's fourteen, what's fourteen divided by three, it's almost- it's four, is what you make from this?

DARCY: Yeah, I mean, could we offer him that basically left over two cred? Or is that like a low-ball offer?

JANINE: Two's probably low.

AUSTIN: Two is a low-ball offer, but you could make it.

JANINE: What about two now, two later?

(01:30:00)

AUSTIN: I mean you don't have that two now, do you?

JANINE and DARCY together: No…

DARCY: I mean, I don't have any cred on me.

JANINE: I don't know if… Do we really have none? That sucks.

AUSTIN (over Janine): Nobody has any cred on them, I don't think. I don't think we ever figured out what- yeah, I think y'all maybe spent a lot of that money, I don't remember actually, maybe you just didn't write it down.

(Darcy and Janine overlapping)

DARCY: I don't, yeah, I don't recall any rules for starting cred numbers.

JANINE: I don't remember that, I don't remember when I would have spent it either.

AUSTIN: Me either. I mean during like ship stuff but like, yeah, maybe you don't start with cred.

DARCY: I think that like, that makes sense to me.

AUSTIN: With this game?

AUSTIN and DARCY together: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. In any case… I think he just does it for two. He'll do it for two, he likes this place, he likes you.

DARCY: I'll say, I'll do it for two, and then he'll- I'll also owe him one.

AUSTIN: Alright, sounds good. You know what, add him to your sheet, as a, as a contact. Add him as a contact, that he'll call in a favor at some point. Make a little blue mark on that. And… Yeah, I think we just get this, I think we just, I can put this clock on screen, but I think that this plan is good. My plan was going to be like, how do you keep the, how do you distract them long enough for Polyphony to do something- I think we just get Polyphony splashing into Tannoy's pristine interior, ship, and it's all just getting wet, and he's like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): [Annoyed noises] Oh man. This- can you just [sad noise]

JANINE: But they gave him Burpee, so it's even.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly, Burpee does stay on the ship. But then also like, Polyphony steps away, and the water just kind of just dries out, the stain dries out. Polyphony's not really made of water. So yeah, I think, Tannoy like, gets everyone on board, it's a hodgepodge of people, and their stuff, and their mus- their big musical instruments, and like their chess table, it's just like, it's, it's cramped, you know, but it's also kind of the best? And is like,

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Alright, are y'all ready to do this?

AUSTIN: No one says anything, got it.

DARCY: I mean, yeah, like, is he talking to us or?

AUSTIN: Yeah, he's on comms, he's on comms with y'all, are you back in your mechs, basically?

DARCY: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Oh I definitely want to go get in my Angler again.

AUSTIN: Alright, everyone's in their Angler. And the town starts to sink, and he's like

AUSTIN (as Tannoy): Hit it.

AUSTIN: And then just launches the ship up into the sky, and immediately the Advent mechs take off after him – or not mechs, the advent drones take off after him – but they sputter in the clouds, and the rain, and the, the, you know, the thunder and the lightning, and I think he just pulls away. And you see them like, almost reach the upper atmosphere, and he goes into super burst mode, and the, the light of the rear engine, pushes them away, and he breaks through the clouds, and is gone, and is in atmo. What do y'all do, in your mechs, as the town sinks below you?

DARCY: I mean, probably leave?

AUSTIN: Yeah, do you just- where do you go? Like I actually, I, I kind of want to paint this in really broad brushes, like I, I, don't want to get caught up on negotiation, I don't want to get caught up in like, long conversation at this point, alright. So… Do you have major concerns, or anything? I just want to like, I kind of want to um… Paint the picture of what happens from this, and maybe, if you have questions, we can talk about it, but like; you head back, the axioms are gone, and I think I just want to like, we're going to do a bit of a time jump between each of these missions, I think, because we're going to have downtime and stuff, and I want that to be able to feel like real downtime, so.

The negotiations between Advent Salvage and Discovery Society, the Volunteers of Seiche, and O-Com, and the, Concrete Town Particulars all shake out just as Advent said they would. The Volunteers of Seiche are allowed to move refugees between the two different branches of the, the – what is the word I'm looking for, why am I- the Tides of Harmony. And, the Concrete Town Particulars set up shop on this side of the Stitch, but they keep it open, and let people through it, and they begin to move through the planet. Like, we definitely get them showing up in, they show up in courtyards and at bazaars and you know, you start seeing the people in that armour walk around Gift-3, and walk around Big Garage, walk around Seiche, with their, like "phew", their like kind of gas masks on.

But we also see families reuniting, we do see the stitch, which, by the way is just like- we get a shot of that family that you were supposed to get through, which is, like, the, the Façade Family, Fountain Façade, and Juniper, the mech, and their daughter, and Evangel, and Graph, who was kind of there as like a pathfinder, all get through, and they like- it's, ironically, and this is not like a bit that I really had planned out, I'm just now hearing it in my own head- the Stitch on this side is a gigantic well, and you jump into it. It's just a big well that they have inside of a warehouse, it looks like a well, it looks like a water well, but like, but the size of an Olympic swimming pool, like round and circular though. And you just dive, and swim as far down as you can, you hold your breath and you swim as hard and fast as you can, and the moment that you think you can't go any further, that's when the stitch connects you to Brighton, and you wake up on a beach, just, just near the other side of the Tides of Harmony. And, so we get those families reuniting.

But we also get Advent coming into power a little bit. I think it's like a sequence of shots where it's, where it's like the camera pans from left to right, and as it does time passes, and

you can see the integration of these groups. We get a shot of Cat's Cradle meeting with Ballad, and, getting along just fine. We get Ballad wearing your jacket, Echo, but with the, with the, armpad, the armband over it, and I think we get him and Cat's Cradle, arm-wrestling, as the two groups integrate. And like, then we see them like, we get a shot of them, in the cheesiest way possible throwing darts, or throwing knives at like the, at like, effigies of, or like, poster print outs of like, public enemy number one, and it's like, bureaucrats, it's like, the elite, it's like, you know. It's like the shit that's really creepy, its not cool to see them like, throwing darts at like, Nideo, who's come into a position of power inside of the Divine Fleet, throwing darts at Declan's- a picture of Declan's Corrective. And then it pans past that wall, and through the Scrap Yards, and to the Stitch, and we see like, armed guards, the Particulars, they're in full gear, and we see someone from the Volunteers of Seiche passing through no problem, and walking past some people from Big Garage or from somewhere else on Gift-3 who are being turned away, and the Volunteer just like, totally ignores them. Just like, not even any recognition.

And then I think it starts to pan up, because it goes up the length of the Advent Tech Main, which is that big space elevator, and it leads us to a, a room with a map in the middle, and standing around the map is Cat's Cradle without her mask on, because this place has now been, been treated or remade with the concrete, and she's with Ballad again, and Echo, by this point your jacket is just gone, and instead he's wearing his brand new Advent Group uniform, which is, like a long white cutaway frock coat, with big lapels, and he has on a burgundy vest, and a golden tie or, a cravat. He doesn't look that comfortable in it, but he's wearing it? And his rank is a little lapel pin, and has whatever his rank is, I think it's like commander or whatever, and he has cufflinks that show he's part of the Volunteers Division, which has been made this sort of military arm of Advent, that, the kind of explicit military arm, where as the Particulars kind of handle weird shit, you know? And I guess the biggest change is that, his stubble is gone, and, and, he's got a new haircut. You know, he used to have long hair, like you used to have Echo, but now he has this high tight cut with like a single long strand coming down? If you, if you Google "Zayne Malek Strand", you'll see what I'm talking about. And he has like a, this incredibly focused look on his face as he examines the map, which, his focus isn't broken as we hear a heavy clicking sound, and it is talon on floor as Kitcha Kana walks in, towering over them both, and over the representative of O-Com, that he's leading in, and both of them and Cat's Cradle, they're all wearing the new white look, all white everything is the way Advent looks. It's like all white everything, plus steampunk- if you just Google "steampunk white suit", "steampunk white frock jacket", "steampunk dress white", you'll see all sorts of hot looks to, to draw from here. Kitcha Kana can't, grin, beaks don't grin, but you can see the feathers of his head kind of raise, as he begins to speak, and we can't hear him, it's all silent or, or music by now, but he presses a button, and all of a sudden all of these other beads suddenly turn gold, representing the newly added assets from O-Com and the Particulars and the Volunteers. And you know, there's not that many of them, but suddenly, they start all moving, or a lot of them do, and the camera changes focus to go from looking at the beads and the map and, kind of the leaders of this division now, out the window, and you can see Gift-3 and you can see other planets in the distance too, and you can see Advent's fleet, here, beginning to mobilise, launching off to different worlds. And one of them you can see very clearly, begins heading for the green, New Earth Hegemony world, of Skein.

And, you know, you guys kind of brought these groups together, so… But, I think then we also get, we see Polyphony on Altar, which is this sun-soaked desert world, and that town is there again, and, we see-

[MUSIC- “The Notion” starts]

You know, the same group of people who were there before, minus, minus Tannoy Kajj, or maybe he thinks of it as his second home now, do you know, maybe he comes back there now, instead of, not really having a home. And, that whole crew is there. And, they, I think they’ve decided to make Barricade into a Divine, and Lumen is going- is chosen to be, Barricade’s Divine- or, Excerpt. I don’t have an Excerpt name for them yet, but probably something to do with light. After all, their name is Lumen Lux, like. Yeah, I think that that’s the big picture of where things are at. Any questions? Besides are you going to beat up your big brother, Echo?