

FOLIO TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 023 | IMMANENCE 05

INTRO

SATAH: Welcome to Folio, an actual play podcast about solo and epistolary TTRPGs. I'm your host, Satah, and my goal is to showcase multiple experiences of self-paced games by inviting guests to play them alongside me so I can compile our stories together. You can support the show financially at patreon.com/foliopod, or join as a free member to get access to the bonus podcast feed.

This is the fifth and final episode of our games of *Immanence*, a game on a colony ship a thousand years in the future about "exploring our individual and collective relationships with Earth, each other, ourselves, and the greater universe" by Marcus Hose. With me again are Jam Edwards and garbageface aka gnostic front aka Karol Orzechowski. Once more, please, from all of us: support DIY music, support DIY spaces. During trying times, touch a physical object. Do what you can to look out for each other.

It's the dead of night on the last day of our journey. Let's wrap up our time on the Terran Colony Ships and disembark at our... [Chuckles] various intergalactic cultural exchanges.

GAME: DAY SEVEN (CONT'D)

DEAD OF NIGHT

JAM: Okay. Boy, it's almost over. Um...

SATAH: And in the dead of night... [Die clattering] Ten. "The fusion reactor shut down temporarily for routine maintenance. The ship's black hole drive supplies emergency power. Strange happenings occur around the ship. What unearthly things do you see and where?"

Yeah! This is where the having-seen-Solaris-last-night kicks in.

Well, I love this too because this means that I get home from the picnic and I'm already in bed and then I get a knock on the door and it's my childhood friend and she's like, "Hey. I know that you gotta be up early tomorrow, but... the reactor's going down for maintenance and I'm turning the backup generator on. Do you want to see?"

And I'm, like, already out of bed. You know? And throwing on clothes.

And she shows me, like, how it spins up. She gestures to a bunch of stuff that I barely understand and I think she's much better at explaining things, but it just is all happening so fast that there's only so much that I can pick up.

And I think there's probably a moment where I do have this incredible clarity and understanding of what's happening and I am like, "Whoa, I- I get it."

And she, like, smiles this huge, like- and her eyes are just sparkling like th- she is so thrilled. I think that this process is a little dangerous. It is not, like- there are enough safeguards in place that nothing catastrophic can happen, but it still is a little bit dangerous to spool this thing up. And she clearly loves that. This is clearly a very, very exciting part of her job to her.

And- and I'm like, "Oh wait, I- I get it. Why do I get it?"

And she grins and she's like, "You'll have to let me know if you still get it tomorrow. 'Cause sometimes it's permanent. Sometimes it's not," and just gestures at the black hole and I become aware that like I have been gifted knowledge in some way.

And I'm like, "Oh shit."

And I think that what this is like- she makes sure everything is stable and then she's like, "Pretty much everyone is asleep. I gotta go make," like, "I gotta do my rounds," you know, similar to when we were walking around measuring stuff before. But she's just making sure that the power is going where it should, when it should, as the fusion reactor is being maintained. And so she's like, "Come on my rounds with me. And keep your eyes open."

And I think I see a bunch of small things that would be scary. But I am being shown them in the company of somebody who is so obviously enthused by them that it's difficult to be scared. It's difficult to not just be excited and- and awed and- and- in- and- and find them kind of wondrous, kind of, like- like she does.

And she's- she's using that- that- you know, uh, keychain pen light a lot. Where... we start to go through a door- or I start to go through a door and she grabs my hand and pulls me back and she's like, "One sec," and shines the light on it and it glows. And she's like, "Not a real door. Let's find the real door," and starts putting her hand on the wall and finds the real door.

And I ask, like, "What would have happened if we'd gone through there?"

And she says, "Well, probably nothing. Maybe everything. But regardless, it would put me behind schedule. Do you want to go in?" And I just shake my head. And she's like, "Okay... well, I'm going to ask you again when we see the next one. 'Cause at some point you might want to go in."

And I'm just like, "O-okay. Okay."

And I think- I'm imagining, like, I see ghostly figures. The image I have is just, you know, waltz- waltzing. Ghosts waltzing. I think... I see... crystals growing in the corners of the corridors.

I see... at one point I gasp in- in- in horror and- and fear because we walk in and it looks like we've just walked into the vacuum of space and then realise like, this is, like, a vision of the past when the ship was still under construction. You can see, like, the temporary support beams and everything around it while it was being built.

And at one point there's a vision of the future that I don't totally- I can't totally comprehend and- and she says something softly to herself, like, "Ah... looks like it's really solidifying." And I look at her and she's like, "I mean, the future isn't set. But this one sure is coming up a lot now." And I don't have time to ask her what that means before we're onto the next thing.

And yeah! Just see- strange animals. Aliens. See us as kids, maybe. That's kind of cute.

It's just this surreal walking tour of oddities. And then I think that I- I stay with her the whole time that the black hole drive is up and we're just walking around, occasionally, like, stopping back in to that room, making sure that everything's still good, walking to another part of the ship.

And she looks at me at a certain point. She's like, "Okay, at this point, I don't know if what you're seeing is because of the generator or because you're hallucinating from exhaustion."

And I like, yawn, laugh guiltily. I'm like, "No, no, no, it's- it's- it's okay."

And she's like, "Okay, well, they're about to finish anyway, so how about we go back? I'll turn everything off and then I'll walk you back to your room." And I agree. And she does that.

And... why not? Just for fun? She comes to my room with me and we hook up and she stays the night. And I think she has to get up super, super early anyway. I don't know if she sleeps a lot? And I think she makes a passing comment of like, "I don't need to anymore."

And I'm like, okay, well, "You are going to need to tell me more about that at some point," and she, like, shrugs.

And then I have to, like- she gets up and heads off to do whatever her strange businesses- business is. And I head to wherever I'm supposed to go to, like, muster to to head down to Mars.

GF: Once again, "the insomniacs and the volunteer kitchen staff" are- are up and at 'em.

Since it's the last night on the ship, I think I'm going to order myself a kind of a last meal that's going to include some aquabacon, um, some chik'n eggs- chickens spelled C H I K apostrophe N... basically, I'm going to order myself a grand slam. A grand slam breakfast. That I'm going to eat in the middle of the night.

Um, aquabacon, chik'n eggs, mmm... galactic waffles, galactic home fries, galactic gravy... mmmm... galactic gravy.

JAM: What are we doing in the dead of night? That's a 17. I... have not rerolled at all in this game. It is again sleepaway night at the museum block. I am going to, I think, for the first time, reroll, um because I don't fully understand this prompt, um, and I don't think I want the last one to be just like, "I skipped this too." Though you know, I may reroll something- I mean, if I reroll, I may roll something else that is also like, "No, I'm spending time with River. I'm not doing this."

I rolled an 18, which is again sleepaway night.

I think what I'm getting from those rolls is that, like, people are still trying to, like, cheer us up and- and really press us to, like, "You know, we're doing a sleepover for the last night! You should really come!"

Um... do we go? ... No! I mean, no. No, I'm rolling again. I'm rolling again.

That is a four. "Directories show a lone occupant in the crow's nest cupola. Would you go see who they are? Who are they? What kind of emotional state might they be in?" Huh!

"Directories show a lone occupant." So, like, somebody- I assume that has to mean somebody who's living there. Like, I'm checking the directory for where people are residing and there's somebody who's living in the cupola. Um, or [Different pronunciation] cupola. Or [Different pronunciation] cupola.

GF & SATAH: [Reverb-y clips of pronouncing "cupola" in varying ways with varying levels of confidence, then text to speech voices in a number of different accents saying "Cupola: noun. A vaulted roof or ceiling."]

JAM: Um... I mean, I don't- it's- you know. Hill has been so focused on River on this day. But yeah- maybe I have lost track of- of River. Maybe we got separated at some point. Like- yeah, people who were- people and the dice were really pressuring us to do the museum sleepover, and that was really not- not it, um, but at some point in, like, those those conversations, or maybe like, one of us went- maybe we both, like, went for a walk to, like, clear our heads and- and were going to meet back up and decide whether or not we were going to do the museum thing, even though we both knew the answer was no.

Um, and so I'm- I'm maybe pulling up a directory because... it occurs to me I don't know where River's actual quarters are? Like, I know where they were- like, what, you know, pod they were in stasis at- like, what- what group of stasis chambers they were in. But, um, I don't know where their actual like sleeping and living quarters are, um, and so I'm pulling up the directory to look for them and instead seeing this lone occupant in the cupola that doesn't have a name attached.

And... "would you go see who they are?" Yeah, I mean, I think I do. It does occur to me that it could be River. If maybe, like, for the folks who woke up super late, they ran out of regular rooms.

But I don't think it is. I think they have a regular room. I think up in the cupola is somebody who, um... who also came out of stasis late. I think that is, like, part of the situation is somebody- it's somebody else who just got out of stasis today and got assigned to the crow's nest because they maybe, like me, were not planning to wake up this late. Like, there were a few, like, paperwork errors early on in the trip that meant a few people got woken up later than expected. And for this person, it means, like, the room that they thought was going to be available to them is not and so they got bumped into- into the crow's nest.

And yeah, I show up and I'm like, "Hey, I'm sorry, just like looking for my friend."

"What emotional state are they in?" I think, like- they- they are maybe someone who was supposed to wake up at, like, the same time as me, and so they've, like, missed out on a week and are not, like, afraid in the way that River is feeling- not- not, like, anxious in that way, but are feeling, like, really unhappy and, you know, like they missed out on- on so much. Not necessarily the stuff going out around- going on around the ship.

But I think maybe they were given a few options for where they could stay given that their, like, selected room was not available, um and they chose the Crow's Nest Cupola because they felt like they missed out on being in space and and want to spend as much time as they can, like, looking- looking at the stars and planets and- and, you know, trying to feel the reality of- of where they are, even though they only have, like, less than 24 hours now, when they thought they were gonna have a whole week.

So I think we- yeah. I show up looking for my friend. I chat with this person for a little while. And yeah, it's- it's maybe a little bit of melancholy, but they- they're upset about the- the journey. And- and River is upset about the- the destination.

I think- yeah. And I think having- having sat and chatted with this person for a little bit and maybe, like, spending a few minutes just looking out at the stars with them. And, um, yeah, just trying to be present in- in space and- and having spent, like, all day being- being emotional support for- for River- and I think this new person is not necessarily looking for that from me, um, but yeah. I think Hill is just looking out at- at space and- and trying to clear their head a little bit before they go back and look for River again.

And I think since this is dead of night, when I do track down River's chambers, they're already asleep. Like, they're- they were exhausted. They- you know. Their- their sleep schedule is- is wonky and- and they had, like, a really intense stressful day. So they went- they went back- I think, like, when we went for that little walk where we decided what we were going to do, they just went straight back to their chambers and, like, passed out immediately.

And I think for this last night, um... I imagine people probably have... just trying to imagine what the- the sleeping situation is like.

I think Hill chooses to sleep here rather than their own sleeping chamber. I think they either, like- I don't know that their relationship with River is close enough to, like, crawl into bed with them. But they either sleep on the floor next to them, or, um, if they do have like a roommate or, you know, somebody with the bed next door, um- I'll- I'll talk to them and ask them to swap with me so that I can be here when River wakes up.

Hoo.

And that was night of this last day. And so now...

DISEMBARKATION

GF: It's arrival day.

JAM: Part five: the arrival.

SATAH: "The game ends when every day in the trip duration has passed. The ship arrives at its destination and the disembarkation process begins."

JAM: So what's interesting is I feel like a lot of these– I haven't read the arrival bit of the game before now, and I feel like a lot of the prompts here are suited towards a game where we were evacuated from Earth or it became unlivable, and less for this sort of voluntary mission.

Um, and I wonder, like, what the duration of our stay is? Because I don't think this is like– we did– have not agreed to move permanently to space. To Saturn. Or to you know, a home– I'm imagining that it is a– a– some sort of base orbiting Saturn that we and our new friends built collaboratively. Or at least built a part of it that can, like, dock into each other, so we both have, like, an environment suited specifically to us where we can live.

SATAH: "Decide the fate of the ship. It can be decommissioned and set on display, scrapped for materials or anything in between."

GF: The TCS Lone Ranger is going to stay right where it is. We are going to be here for the next two months doing this cultural exchange, but after that, the passengers who got onto the TCS Lone Ranger are going to get right back on and head back.

JAM: I think the ship is our home base that we're going to be orbiting Saturn in. It is going to be switching from sort of travel mode to orbit mode and it's going to be docking with the extraterrestrial ship and is going to be a, like, semi-permanent home base here.

I think this massive cultural exchange... we've agreed to stay for, like, at least six months to a year. I think after six months, folks have the option to... like, there are some probably smaller ships on board with stasis chambers and like, yeah, are not the sort of massive, like, with all of these VR and– and you know different environments and a museum and things, um– a more sort of basic travel ship with a cafeteria and stasis and– and. you know, a few, like comfortable– probably a garden for, you know, food and oxygen and– and like mental well being. Um, but yeah, just– just smaller ships that will disembark six months from now. Will start disembarking and there's like a few different chances to– to leave.

SATAH: The bigger ship, Magnitude, the TCS Magnitude, keeps going on its slow orbit. Whatever it's up to. Well, it's actually a very, very fast orbit, but space is big. [Laughs] Um.

The smaller ship, the ship that we were initially sent up in? The, like, essentially, like, close to shipping container, is built purposefully to be scrapped. Like, it is the kind of thing that is built for a one way trip, so that you can arrive on a planet, land safely, and then take it apart to build homes and that kind of thing out of.

JAM: The next direction is, "Choose a name for your new home. Anything goes, but every player has to agree." So, it is just me.

SATAH: It already kind of has– it has a name, right? Like... because I'm setting up a place for humans– and I guess our little village could have a name?

JAM: Yeah, so- so the Ada is our- our home base, I think. And I don't know if we are changing the name of the Ada, or combining it– like, hyphenating it with whatever the- the extraterrestrial base that we're connecting with is. And what their language is like. There's so– there's, you know– yeah.

Well, and maybe Ada was the name of- of it in travel mode. You know, it was more the name of the mission, and now that it's, like, the base, it's- it's named after something else. Like, things are named after poets when they are in motion, and when they are in orbit, they take on something else. That's interesting.

I think especially if, yeah, the ship is like transforming significantly, so that it is like, lose- take- you know, removing pieces of it that it needed for transit, um, docking and, like, you know– I'm sure, like, the engineer team is, like, all hands on deck connecting us to this other ship and- and transforming in that way. Yeah, it is- it is going to be a very different– it's going to be very similar on the inside part where I'm living, but very different in a lot of ways.

And so what is it named after?

SATAH: So if the big ship was called Magnitude, what was our delivery ship called? 'Cause we'll probably just name it after that. And I think I said something about like the idea that ships are often named after, like, feelings that they want to be, like, evoked, of, like, vastness and awe.

So let's look at relatedwords.io. "Magnitude." Significance is actually fun. I'm also going to look up... synonyms for "awe". Knock one socks off. That's so funny. The idea that slowly we'll run out of names and start having those type of aphorisms or whatever. Very great.

This is definitely difficult with how many words meaning, like, big and amazing have mutated in the English language to be something negative.

Let's call it The Significance. Is that too ostentatious for a cultural exchange?

Ooh, if it's a feeling we want to evoke in this context, maybe it's something about, like, fellowship, uhh, or collaboration or something like that. Communion has a certain religiosity to it at this point that I don't think... [Gasps] rapprochement! I like that. I like that a lot.

So our smaller ship, the delivery ship, was called the TCS Rapprochement. And so we just name our little settlement, uh– it probably just gets called, like, Rappo, which is in part because, like, the- the part of the ship that gets turned into something that has the name on it ended up being retrofitted to whatever we're using it for in a certain way where as you're approaching our little human living area, you see R-A-P-P-O, Rappo. And that's what we call it.

JAM: Ships in motion are poets. What is a ship in orbit? Or a ship serving as, like, a station or home base? What do we name those after?

I feel like I want to go with, like, an animal home name, like the nest or the dam or um... the lodge sounds very silly to me. I was thinking about beavers.

Um... mm. Mhm!!

I think, yeah, just maybe named after an Earth environs. And since this is a fairly large one and a fairly permanent one, it's not named after, like, an animal home. It's named after, like, a forest or a mountain. But it's, like, a fairly large one, like, named after a biome rather than, like, a specific place on Earth.

Yeah, I mean, I think it's just called The Woodland. Like, you know, it is a name that maybe doesn't make logical sense from the outside, but it's just like, this is how we name places that are going to be permanent homes for humans in space. We named them after a biome like this. And this one is The Woodland.

GF: Our home with the Aquamanias is called Awkworth. ["Awkward" tone] Awkworth! Awkworth.

SATAH: Yeah! So, then, "Say your farewells or farewell for nows, say nothing, stick together or drift apart." Did that, basically, with a bunch of people on the ship. And at this point, I'm getting to know, for the first time, a lot of the people who I'm actually going to be living with.

GF: I say goodbye to some of the people that I saw on the ship. Juno Zorander, Jago Tudor, Dr. Zhao. But the last person I see before I really pack up my stuff and head towards my, uh... my cultural exchange billets, where I'm going to be staying is... I find my wordless friend. My sad, crying wordless friend who I saw in the engine room for a couple of nights.

They seem much less upset now that we're here. I think this kind of travel is hard on anybody. Travel in general is hard. You're away from home, you're away from your warm bed, you're away from all of the things that you recognize and that make life good.

JAM: So I imagine this is if, like, we've arrived on a new planet and we're settling here, which is, like, not our situation. Yeah, I think we're sticking together. I think River and Hill came into this as, like, colleagues and coworkers who had a good relationship and out of necessity become quite close quite quickly.

GF: I see my wordless friend there and I give them a big hug. And they give me a big hug back, which is really nice.

And while I'm giving them a big hug, I actually start crying a little bit. But as I start crying, they take one of my hands off of their shoulder and they just hold it gently.

JAM: The actual day that we disembark, the day that we dock and are scheduled to meet our new friends for the first time, River wakes up with Hill, like, on their floor, or on the bed next to them and is grateful, and, um. Yeah, I mean, has the calm of someone who had- who

had to go through the big freak out. And is still not happy about the next step but knows that that's what has to happen.

I feel like I've definitely experienced that, both myself and, like, in people I've supported where we just had to we had to go through the, like, the freaking out and the reflexive like, "I absolutely can't do this. Don't make me do this," and moving through that, and then putting on brave face and being like, "Okay." [Laughs] Think of like, okay, I'll go to the hospital, or you know, okay, I'll start therapy. And in this case, okay, I'll meet the aliens.

GF: Doesn't matter how far away from Earth you are, sometimes all you need is just someone to hold your hand while you cry it out a little bit.

JAM: "Decide how you'll spend your time. The settlement has all the same amenities as the ship. All of your time is free time." That makes some sense to some extent. That we- that, you know, they have not like scheduled events for for after we meet our new friends. That they've scheduled up to then and- and then we're figuring out what that will look like as it happens. Which is also, you know, super scary.

GF: This trip really hasn't felt as long as I thought it would. They really have sort of thought of everything, quote unquote. That's actually one of the slogans of the United Space Travel Associations of Earth is, "We've thought of everything!"

They've thought of everything to make these trips as tolerable as possible due to all of the- what with all of the insanity of the, uh, of the previous trips.

JAM: The way that it's been scheduled is like to not overwhelm us or overwhelm them. It is not, like, we open the doors and three hundred of them meet three hundred of us at once. That would be so wild.

I think that there's a lot of different, like, quote unquote "arts" represented on the ship. So there's like linguists who go, there's, um... folks... yeah, folks who go first to either specialise in communication cross-culturally or have specifically spent time studying extraterrestrial forms of life.

And- and yeah, then yeah, we're I'm assuming we're meeting in small groups. Um... they put us into breakout rooms. Oh god. [Laughing in horror]

Yeah, they they do that initial meeting with I have to assume a translator or- or something, then, like, slowly over that day and the next couple days, folks start meeting our new friends and- and very like slowly start talking about who- maybe doesn't speak English, but maybe like either knows sign language at this point or- or has another, like, method of nonverbal communication with us.

I think Hill and River are scheduled to be part of, like, a small group with a few other arts folks. Like maybe some theater- some other theater people have a small group meeting with- with aliens. And yeah, I mean, the only thing that I'm thinking about is that Hill takes River's hand and is, like, holding it and squeezing it the whole time.

GF: I really haven't missed home all that much. I think I'll be excited to return but I think for now I'm really excited to meet up with, uh, the- the Aquamenis from Poseidon. I'm excited to get off the TCS Lone Ranger and get my hands on some quartz painting supplies, and I'm really excited to see what this cultural exchange is going to be all about. I really want to learn more about the Aquamenis and... and I wanna tell them more about humans.

JAM: As Hill, I'm not thinking about how, you know, a few days before River woke up, I would have been, like, so energized and excited about this meeting. That you know, this was the thing that, like, really lit a spark in me when I was feeling weird about being here. And I don't think- it doesn't- it occurs to me as a player, like on a meta level, but doesn't occur to Hill to be disappointed about that being the experience. I think, you know, having had the- that- that really rough day with River and, like, still, like, checking in with them now and supporting them now, um... is maybe a better headspace for- for me to be in for this. Like, that- that- that excitement was, like, genuine and sincere but also perhaps slightly naive to be like, "Oh, this is another sentient life form and I can't wait to be so inspired by how weird and different they are." You know, I think it is a healthier spot to be in to be reminded that, like, "Oh, we're building a relationship here and it's going to be scary and complicated. And we're going to need each other to navigate it." Yeah.

And I think... I'm- I- I don't know how much I want to talk through how long we stay. I mean, I think things get better, but they stay complicated. And, you know, there's not any, like, hostility between us and our new friends, and- but there's also, like, days where we're just, you know, where it feels very frustrating. Where it feels like we're not- we spend all day communicating with them and- and don't feel like they've understood us or we've understood them. But I think, yeah. I'll close on, like, one of these first days when we're making these initial- initial connections.

And I'm trying like intentionally not to speculate about what they look like and how they behave. I guess I am like in my mind's eye seeing that, like, sort of shadow silhouette, like not quite solid type shape, like, similar to the- the illusion that- that Hill saw on that first night. That there is, like, some kind of resemblance there, but not not exactly the same.

Um... yeah, I want to close on them pulling out that notebook and initially showing it to the new friends, but then also realising that they haven't shown it to River yet and showing it to them, um, and something in that, like, clicking with- with our new- our new friends. That I have- I have- I don't know that they are able to parse what it is that I've drawn right away, but, you know, the idea that I made something to communicate an idea, not only to them, but seeing me share it with another human, I think, communicates something to them that that... that yeah, I think would otherwise be hard to articulate. That maybe there is a moment there of both them seeing us in that moment as, like, unique different individuals that don't all share the same experiences and us seeing them the same way.

Yeah, so that's where I'll close. We're all- we're all looking at my sketchbook that I've been keeping over these last several days.

SATAH: "The settlement has all the same amenities as the ship and is fully automated. All of your time is free time."

Okay. So I guess... I'm like... the way that I was talking about it, it isn't automated yet, right? Because a bunch of development needs to happen. So I think there is a lot of stuff that is automated, but there has to be something for me to do.

See, okay, so this is– this is partially a me struggle. Um. When I think of my perfect world, the world that we could create that is kindest to the most of us, I don't see a world without labour. I see a world where labour isn't exploited. Where the people who do it are doing it not under duress and with full ownership in some form or another over the things that they are creating.

And maybe I am discarding the premise slightly when– and maybe it's– it is a symptom of our current world that I can't imagine a fully automated society that is not built off of some amount of exploitation of people or of physical resources.

I think my association with automation is extraction. And so it's difficult for me to put myself in a place of imagining a world where you do what you want forever and have no responsibilities. Which– I don't know if that's strictly what this is saying... "all of your time is free time" is just, like... that isn't saying, necessarily, that you don't have responsibilities or that there isn't– it IS saying that there isn't work to be done, right? It's fully automated.

I can't imagine that world because I don't... [Laughs] I mean, I don't think it's– it's possible but that's kind of a– that's– that's– that's kind of a boring way to approach genre fiction, right? But I think– I feel as though it is fair for me to interpret that instead as, like, yes there is work– or there is labour, rather– there are things that have to get done. But for the most part, people do the things that they care about and want to do.

And there is some level of automation for some tasks, for a lot of tasks, that there's no particular reason for a human to be involved in. Absolutely those can be automated. The thing I struggle with there is just what underlies that? What resources were extracted to create that? Are we building that off of the backs of a system like we have now with the– the people in places that are exploited to create our technology or have we evolved to a place where even that, somehow, is done without exploitation? I guess that's totally possible and it was a slow long journey to get there. And maybe this is sort of a fundamental flaw of my own imagination and a certain stubbornness about what is the perfect world? What is the world that I truly think that we deserve? Positive tone on deserve there, by the way.

Yeah. So it isn't totally fully automated but we are building those systems and at some point in the past thousand years we have developed technologies and systems in a direction that means that there isn't fresh blood on the hands of every iPhone and algorithm that we use. That's always going to be in the history of those things if that– if this world is built off of our world now, then somewhere in the background of that, there is blood. But in this fiction we have created a version where there isn't– all of that blood is old and it's a– it's a history, and people don't bleed for it anymore. And... we can build something that is truly beautiful

that honours the desires and efforts of the people that build it. And we can do it on Mars, baby!! [Laughings]

And I guess at some point we're gonna meet all the aliens we're gonna talk to them, um, but that's not in the scope of this game. Haha! The aliens were just off screen the whole time. You're not even gonna get to see them. You spend the whole movie being like, "Holy shit we're gonna meet aliens at the end of this!" No, you don't. It was a story about people and my own complicated feelings to labour, which even as I explain them, I am very aware at all times I have a particular form of daddy issue capitalist brain rot that makes me define myself by the amount of work that I do and specifically the ways that I suffer for it, and so it is impossible for me to fully trust at any point in what I think are my genuine beliefs about the importance of labour and doing the work. I can think about it as much as I want and I can make it fit and- and I can truly believe that I have managed to place this in a context that is outside of that one, but I can't, really. 'Cause it's- that's- it's inside of me.

And that is what it is- like, that is what it's like to live in the world that we do and try to imagine one that is better. And all we can do, really, is hope that we create the best version of the world that we can envision and then the people who grow up in that world can have a better imagination than we do because they are closer to the actually good thing. And then if we just keep iterating on that and making it better... [Laughing with obvious shaking in their voice] then if we survive... [Laughing] sorry, I've made myself cry! Um! Then that's a way forward. That is- that is a way forward. Is it gonna happen? I don't know. But it- it could. There's a world- there's a world where it could. [Sniffing, still laughing]

JAM: Um, and- and- yeah. Okay. That's it! That's it. That's the game!

GF: [Chortles] I hope that you have enjoyed this? I hope that you've- I hope that you've enjoyed all of the, uh, weird stuff that I've gotten up to. I hope that you've enjoyed the things, uh, that I- the things that I decided to do and the things that I decided not to do.

I feel like these- I've never played a solo game before but I will say that it definitely feels like playing a solo game is like a- an exercise in extreme improv and it feels, uh, especially problematic to kind of, like, "no- no, but," myself, rather than "yes and" myself, um... but, uh, there were just times where I felt like it would be, uh, more appropriate for my character to not do the things that were presented and I guess those were options, so. Um, I'm trying not to feel weird about it. It's just those were the options and- and I took those options.

Um, I'm very very happy to have taken the options that I did, though, and, uh, this was an interesting game. I would definitely play it with more people. I'm not sure if solo games are for me, beyond perhaps doing them in- in a kind of, like, performing kind of way like this? Um, but I've really enjoyed this, Satah. And anyone else listening. I really enjoyed this.

SATAH: [Laughing & still sniffing a bit while talking] Sorry that I exist as, um, uh, a parody of a leftist in a conservative political cartoon that I literally made myself- made myself cry talking, uh, vaguely about the revolution while playing a tabletop role playing game.

I think that that is in the purview of this game. This game makes people– this game wants you to think about stuff.

GF: I hope you're all doing well out there in this reality that we're living in which is... really seems to get more and more challenging by the day. Um, and I hope wherever you are that you're safe and that you're happy.

JAM: Uh, yeah. And as we're– as- as I close on this moment of, like, this act of of sharing and this act of care and this active communication that helps illuminate our new friends to us and us to our new friends, um, I'll just read the last line of this Ada Limón poem that the- the young person that I work with shared with me, which is...

"We, too, are made of wonders, of great
and ordinary loves, of small invisible worlds,
of a need to call out through the dark."

GF: This is garbageface aka the gnostic front, signing off.

JAM: Okay, that's it! Thank you. I had a good time.

SATAH: Um... okay! Thanks!!

OUTRO

SATAH: This has been Folio, an actual play podcast about solo and epistolary TTRPGs. To find where you can find the show, check out foliopod.carrrd.co. Sign up as a paid member at patreon.com/foliopod to vote on games and participate in live streams or join for free to get access to the bonus feed with edited audio-only versions of the streams a couple of weeks after they happen and occasional other stuff.

You can find the games, sci-fi stories, and podcasts of Jam Edwards at rjmakes.com. That's RJ, like raspberry jam, makes dot com.

You can find the music and musings of garbageface aka gnostic front aka Karol Orzechowki at everyoneisdoomed.org. The music in this series was improvised live by him while he played the game.

You can find the games and music of Satah– c'est moi– at gaygothvibes.online and follow me on Bluesky at posatahchips.gaygothvibes.online.

This week, Jam and gf aka gf aka ko finished our games of *Immanence* by Marcus Hose. Everything I mentioned here is, as always, linked in the show notes. Thank you so much for listening. Take care out there.