

Bluff City 47: Give Way to Open Sky Pt. 3

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Recap

[music: **"Give Way to Open Sky"** by Jack de Quidt plays during recap]

Austin: It's not done.

Ali: They're doing another thing?

Austin: They're...give it a second. And finally they come to a halt. And they say now look at them from above. And they've walked in a way so that if you look just at their heads, they spell out the words "still water."

Austin (as **Providence**): It's what I keep saying, Sam. We are stagnant. This is a sign.

Austin (as **Providence**): Give me a letter.

Jack (as **Already**): Uh, D.

Austin (as **Providence**): Give me a number?

Jack (as **Already**): Uh, 12.

Austin (as **Providence**): Tell me a color.

Jack (as **Already**): Uh, gray.

Austin (as **Providence**): And, finally, which bird is it that you're thinking of?

Jack (as **Already**): Uh, a brown bird.

Austin (as **Providence**): What bird?

Jack (as **Already**): Oh, god. Like, a...what are those birds? They're white. They live out in the wetlands. They're tall, tall white birds.

Austin (as **Providence**): A heron?

Jack (as **Already**): A heron!

Austin (as **Providence**): You're thinking of a heron.

Jack (as **Already**): Yes.

Austin (as **Providence**): Brown was close, though. I'm sending you here.

Austin: And I am pointing at a thing that says, "Jeff Brown Dentistry."

(as **Providence**): Bring the phone there. If you do this, you will keep us safe.

Ali (as **Samantha**): Mm. [Ali laughs] I'm afraid I might have to ask you to leave.

Jack (as **Lorelei**): What?

Ali (as **Samantha**): You can take the drink to go, if you'd like. And if you were planning on staying, that would be a different conversation, but...

Jack (as **Lorelei**): Well, what do you mean, planning on staying? Also, wait, why do I have to leave? I thought we were having a great time. [Ali laughs]

Austin (as **Quincy**): Robyn! Robyn. Robyn. Robyn. Robyn!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah, no, I know. I know.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Robyyyn!

Dre (as **Robyn**): [impatient] Yes! God. Okay.

Austin (as **Quincy**): [whining] I'm losing signal!

Dre (as **Robyn**): No, I know!

Austin (as **Quincy**): Can I use the bathroom?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yes!

Austin (as **Quincy**): [distantly] Who's that guy you have tied up? [shouting louder]
Who's that guy you have tied up?

Dre (as **Robyn**): It's a bad person!

Austin (as **Quincy**): Why do you have a bad person tied up?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Because he was gonna hurt someone!

Jack: Grabbing Quincy's hand, out into the rain. Already running down to the...outside Snoopy's, where Sam is like, you know, locking up or something, standing there in your head scarf and outfit, and then just like, grabbing Duke, getting stuff together, heading out onto the road to the tune of pizza EDM.

Austin: And there I am, with a...

Jack: Rain-drenched.

Austin: Rain-drenched, with a parasol that's not— that is a regular sun parasol that is not working great as an umbrella, and the briefcase filled with toy soldiers. And I say:

Austin (as **Providence**): Oh, I'm surprised you're coming, Sam.

Austin: Despite not even being invited myself. [Jack and Ali laugh]

Introduction

[00:03:38]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at The table, an actual play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. And joining me today, Andrew Lee Swan?

Dre: Hey! You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000). You can also find me on our Twitch channel at twitch.tv/friendsatthetable.

Austin: Jack De Quidt?

Jack: Hi! You can find me on Twitter at [@notquitereal](https://twitter.com/notquitereal), on Cohost at [JDQ](https://cohost.org/JDQ), and buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

Austin: And Ali Acampora.

Ali: Um, hi!

[short pause]

Austin: Hi.

Dre: Hi!

Ali: Hey.

Austin: Nothin', nothin' to promo.

Jack: Hi, Ali.

Ali: No.

Austin: Just Ali's here.

Dre: Just Ali here! [cross] What else do you need?

Ali: [cross] I don't tweet. I don't Cohost.

Austin: That's not true, you tweet! You still tweet!

Ali: I don't tweet.

Austin: You still— I saw—

Jack: You tweeted a picture of Snoopy earlier today.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, come on. You're gonna hide—

Ali: I retweet, you know?

Austin: People need the content. You, you—

Ali: Okay...

Austin: "I got that dog in me, the dog in question," [Ali laughs] is a good tweet to see.

Dre: Sure.

Austin: Uh, "not beating the brnine self insert allegations now that they're a house fan, frowny face?" "Pray for nights like these?" and it's a— come on, these are bangers!

Ali: [cross] Actually, this is one of my realest tweets in the world.

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: These are all bangers!

Ali: [laughing] This is one of the hardest things ever tweeted.

Austin: That's what— yeah, it's great!

Ali: Okay, if you're still on Twitter—

Austin: [cross] Did I— I think I retweeted that on private, I should have retweeted that on main. You know?

Dre: Yeah!

Austin: So...

Ali: You can find me— if you're still on Twitter you can find me at [@ali west](#) on Twitter. But don't do that. Don't go there.

Jack: It's a bad place.

Austin: Don't— it's a bad place.

Dre: [cross] Did they— is the—

Austin: But if you're already there—

Ali: [cross] Yeah, let's stop talking about the dog.

Dre: Is the logo changed?

Austin: Oh, it is, they changed it.

Dre: [cross] They changed it.

Ali: Oh, they changed it back!

Dre: [cross] Yeah, they changed it back.

Austin: [cross] They changed it back. They did. It's fine.

Ali: Okay.

Dre: Well, he got all the pump and dump stuff he needed to do, so.

Jack and Ali: [sigh heavily]

Jack: A couple of other things—

Ali: [cross] Well, now you can find at [@ali west](#).

Austin: And where are you on Cohost? You're on Cohost—

Ali: [cross] Oh, I'm [@cartoonmeat](#) on Cohost.

Austin: [@cartoonmeat](#), there you go. Exactly.

Jack: And then we are, the show is also on Cohost [**Austin:** It's true.] [@friends-table](#).

No, maybe friends underscore table.

Austin: Not underscore.

Jack: Basically...

Austin: There's no underscores on Cohost. We've been— this is the problem.

Jack: Oh, it's friends *dash* table.

Austin: Yes.

Jack: And then we are on Tik Tok [@friends_table](#) and if you're listening to this, you're probably supporting us on Patreon [@friendsatthetable.cash](#) and we are extremely thankful for your support. If there are people in your life who you think, "now they might like to listen to not just an actual play podcast but *more* of an actual play podcast." Recommend our Patreon to them. But do it nicely.

Austin: Exactly. Alright, today we are going to continue our game of *Dream Askew* by Avery Alder, a game about queer strife amid the collapse— I almost said apocalypse but that's not what the subtitle actually says. We should kind of just jump back into it. I'd— maybe we go around the table and reintroduce our characters by name and pronouns but— and maybe, you know, playbook name, but I think we kind of remember where we were. Right? I should say where we were also, probably.

Dre: Eh! Eh!

Austin: Who wants to start?

Character Summary

[00:07:05]

Ali: I'm playing Samantha. Samantha is she/her with a game chosen gender of high femme. The class type that I've chosen is the Hawker, which is the like salesperson/business person-esque subtype in this game. Um...should I go over all my stuff?

Austin: I don't think— no, you don't have to go over all your stuff at this point. I don't think, right?

Ali: Um, well, okay, her vibe is that she owns a queer bar in our Enclave...

Austin: Called Snoopy's. Very important.

Ali: Called Snoopy's. Yes. There's— she has a neighbor, who runs magic tournaments. Kind of relationship there—

Austin: Melvin.

Ali: Melvin

Austin and Ali: Melvin Calvin.

Ali: [laughs] And most recently, I supported the idea to go north? In a storm question mark? **[Austin:** Mhm.] To go to a locksmith question mark?

Austin: It was a dentist.

Ali: A dentist, I'm sorry.

Jack: It's a locksmith for teeth.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Ali: Yeah, yeah yeah, to go to a dentist because my mysterious ex-girlfriend said to somebody else—Jack's character—that they should do that. And I thought to myself: I...yes, I'm curious about what she thinks is a good idea, but not in a way that I'm gonna tell *her* that.

Austin: Ah. Sure.

Ali: And now that's here. Here is where we are.

Austin: Here is where we are.

Ali: I pass the baton to Jack in this moment. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. Um, I'm playing Already. Pronouns they/them. Already is the Arrival, which is a character who has come from...the book says The Society Intact but in our version has fled from the Outlying Gangs, which are a series of malevolent—or I suppose, more malevolent than currently malevolent—gig economy companies that have sort of branched out into mercenary armed gangs. I have a dog called Duke. And my whole deal is defined by the fact that I have a phone that still works, and has been used to track my position by the company that I used to work for, Potato Potat.to, who are coming to recover the truck that I stole from them, and the value of the goods within, as well as presumably exact some sort of revenge on me and the community around me for having left. I brought the phone to Austin's character, Ali's character's ex, who probably did a ritual and told me to get rid of it somehow at a place to the north, that is a dentist with a bird—a heron—for its logo. So I have teamed up with Dre's character who I'm about to hand the baton to, [**Dre:** Mhm.] to help travel north and possibly get rid of this phone. Despite the fact that it is something my character does not want to do.

Dre: Sure. I am playing Robyn. He uses they/them pronouns, and I am the Stitcher, which is basically like the fixer/medic/mechanic player class. Um? Yeah, I'm here because I met the person who was coming to take out Already [**Austin:** Mhm.] at a Magic the Gathering tournament? And then took them back to my workshop, which is haunted by a ghost, and knocked that person out with a wrench and welded them shut in a car?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, you Cask of Amontillado'd them.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Dre: No, yeah, I welded it shut.

Austin: [cross] You welded it shut.

Jack: You said, you said...what's the guy called in Cask of Amontillado?

Austin: Oh, I don't know that character's name. Sure, yeah.

Ali: Can you un-weld?

Dre: Sure! Yeah!

Jack: Yeah. Yeah yeah. [Ali laughs]. The way you un-weld is by using [in dramatic voice] the only thing strong enough to defeat a welding torch: a second welding torch.

Dre: [laughs]

Austin: You just heat it back up, and yeah.

Dre: Yeah, you heat it back up.

Ali: Ooooooh.

Jack: Or you could just cut them out. But.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: A saw. Anyway. Yeah, uh, stuck it in there now.

Ali: [laughs]

Dre: You can probably—

Austin: [cross] Vincent Ketchle.

Dre: Hey. I mean, you know...he could probably kick his way out of things.

Austin: We'll see!

Dre: We'll see.

Austin: You know? Really the least of our problems though, at this point, right? [**Dre:** Yeah.] Because the gang, the— Potato Potat.to knows. [**Dre:** Yes.] Is part of what came out of this, right? They got a photo of— or a live call feed of Already.

Jack: Yeah, I accidentally joined a FaceTime call with the most malicious man in Atlantic City, [**Austin:** Uh huh.] who saw me and ended the call.

Austin: And then set a bunch of bounty hunters after you effectively.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Mhm!

Jack: Oh, but Dre. You should talk about Quincy.

Dre: Oh, right. Uhh...Quincy is the void kid that comes to me who needs my maintenance to stay alive. What do we know about Quincy?

Austin: Oh, that's part of why we're going on this trip, right? And part of why *you're* going on this trip.

Dre: Yeah. It's also that we're taking Quincy to a place where he can get fixed. Quincy also doesn't like it when we cuss, so...

Austin: I want to say Quincy is they/them. Also. I'm pretty sure Quincy was they/them.

Dre: You're right. Yes. They don't like it when we cuss so if we could all be on our best behavior.

Austin: [quietly] God.

Jack: Quincy is...I feel, a classic Friends at the Table kid character.

Dre: [emphatically] Yes. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] And they are always fun to see on screen.

Austin: And they're a void kid, which in our...you know, this moment of the greater Bluff City setting and in this part of Atlantic City are like...void people are sort of like audio visual ghosts. They're like VHS ghosts. They've been cast off from the Tricity tunnel, either not permitted to get into Bluff City or Blue City or somehow otherwise exiled as if cut from the fiction. Some of these are people who came from our planet and— or our version of the world and like, got caught up in the Tricity tunnel, but a lot of them are also like, tied up in the sort of Bluff City fictionalized...you know, it's almost as if they've been edited out of the story. You know, someone has done their fan edit of whatever show Quincy was originally from and been like, "that kid doesn't need to be here, get them out of here." And now they're here instead. And they need somewhat regular maintenance to either like some broadcasting equipment or I think in Quincy's case, we're going back to like the weird, like tape, giant tape deck that runs alongside the Tricity tunnel or it's a secret tunnel entrance up here that came up in the Tales from the Loop game. Quincy is theoretically like...needs their tracking fixed or something to keep them—

Jack: Right, needs degaussing or something.

Austin: Exactly, exactly. Yes. I'm playing the prop— the Auger Providence, not the Providence Auger, the Auger Providence. I am a fortune-telling clown robot made by someone before the sort of post-apocalyptic fall. I offer confusing guidance to people. I care about ideals in such a way that have made me emotionally unavailable and deeply hard to please. The fact that partially led to the breakup with Samantha, my ex. My pronouns are she/her, my gender is predestined. I have lots of gender anxiety around the kind of gendered role I play as a sort of classic, you know, feminine Oracle type. Doesn't mean I'm not...it doesn't mean I don't use she/her pronouns, it doesn't mean I

don't have, you know, some parts of femininity that I respond to but the predestination of it all really stings sometimes. And I have joined this journey northward uninvited. I was just sort of there as the rain began to fall and this group of weirdos left the Enclave behind to begin the trek northward. Um?

Jack: Have you brought your puppets, your little fortune telling men—

Austin: My fortune telling soldiers? My windup soldiers?

Ali: Oh, didn't you find those in a box in the forest?

Austin: I found them. Someone found them for me, I want to say? Or someone brought them back for me, one of my many acolytes. But I...I don't know if I brought— I don't remember if I said I had the suitcase with me. It's been a couple of weeks since we've been able to record, so yet again there are some details that are fuzzy.

Jack: If we find that we have a need for the suitcase...

Austin: Yeah, then I will suddenly have them. You know. I think that they've done the thing that they can do fundamentally for me, because the rituals I have are not "look at the little soldiers who walk around," it's other stuff. And so I'm happy to say I left them behind even if last time I said I brought them with me. I do remember saying I have a parasol which does not serve as a very good umbrella. But I have it with me anyway.

Broadly other important details, Society Intact, mostly the casinos and kind of wealthy residences, either back on the mainland or to the north on another different island that's further away than where we're headed. Or the casino area and the quite literal, higher tiers of the city. Higher up and closer to the coast, including the Upper Crust, the giant pizza casino. Other important stuff. Uh...again, there's this big storm that hit, there are a bunch of other gig economy gangs. I think that's the big stuff, right?

Jack: Yeah, I think so.

Austin: A thing worth saying really quick, because we've kind of talked about— we talked a lot about the way I think that a lot of this maps to our greater Bluff City

meta-narrative stuff. But a thing I wanted to underscore that I think only— I only realized I should underscore this is because the bulk of our listenership is not from Atlantic City and did not grow up around it. Most people in the world are not from the small city that I grew up near. And there is an underlying unspoken politics that's, that is a sort of geographical politics, that's true about this map that isn't true, if you don't know about Atlantic City. Which is, this kind of...the place— the Society Intact is where the casinos are, right? And the rest of Atlantic City has largely been abandoned, both in our game and in real world, by the people who are supposed to care for the people throughout Atlantic City. The attempts to make Atlantic City a more stable community are almost always tied to tourism and shopping. And so in a sort of...just outside of where we've drawn our Enclave kind of just, you know, east, southeast of where the train station is, is a place where there is for instance, a bunch of fancy shops for you know, major worldwide brands, like Nike and you know, Aeropostle and even some luxury brands, I want to say there was briefly a Louis Vuitton store there. You know, there is a sort of investment in, "hey, we have to get tourists to come and shop," but what there rarely is is investment in communities.

And we are very much playing...the people inside of our enclave are meant to be people who have lived here for many years, or who came here as immigrants or the p— or are, you know, directly related to people who did that, looking for work in the Society Intact, or who were here working when things fell apart, and we were left to rot effectively. And I want to make sure that doesn't get lost in the meta-fictional mix because I think that that's a key grounding element of this. So that like a character who came up last time, Cheddy, who is our, the kind of bad apple in the community, or, I mean, not a bad apple but someone who is— who wants to get out and who wants to get to the Society Intact. And you might recall she was trying to pull a— pull something over on...God, what was her name, the other woman who showed up from...

Jack: Oh, Lorelei. Lorelei Lake.

Austin: Lorelei. Cheddy is someone who presumably is from this place or a place like it that had been left to the gutters and the rainwater and the floodwater, right? Like, there

is something I think very important about us setting it in Atlantic City and making sure that we under— that we talk about that place as a place that is classed and raced. Because the people who are coming as tourists and who are visiting the Society Intact, are coming from parts of the world, and in our world that includes Bluff City and Blough City, where they have lots of extra money to spend or are being compelled by the casinos to spend what little money they have in them, right? But it isn't, this is not just like a blank canvas space, even things like where our Enclave is map out to certain things in the real world in ways that are worth gesturing at. Even though you might not have that same proximity to these things.

I think most people understand the idea of there being places that have been left behind by local government or local industry, and Atlantic City is unfortunately filled with those places, which doesn't mean that the people there don't try to bring joy and love into those places. But it's hard to bring joy and love into places when you have been so thoroughly abandoned by people who are seeking profit instead of seeking community and care. So. Just some words as we leave behind the Enclave, this is the world we're stepping into, is a space that has been abandoned and where people have not necessarily built their own little Enclaves, right? So just some ground setting. That's been on my mind.

Jack: Yeah. I mean, we didn't...we didn't select, you know, Atlantic City as a model for Bluff City randomly, you know?

Austin: [laughs] Yes.

Jack: We didn't, we didn't choose, we weren't like, "let's pick a US city that none of us have any," you know, [Ali laughs] that you specifically pitched Atlantic City because of this, the specificity that you are able to bring to it.

Austin: Yeah. I mean I mentioned this last time, but like the trains don't run from New York to Atlantic City anymore.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Right? And like, the idea of that is just so absurd on its face. And you have to realize it's because Atlantic City has effectively, you know, failed to count inside of the sort of capitalist metrics and you know, score taking. It isn't enough of a destination anymore. And so, you know, for a while there...

Jack: [laughing] To run trains from New York City.

Austin: Right. Exactly. Exactly. And it's, you know, there's a bunch of other shit there that you can get into around like, the state government coming in and trying to like run the city and not letting locals run their own city, all that shit happened, you know.

Leaving the Enclave

[00:23:55]

Austin: So. Anyway, all of that said, we are now walking out into— out of our Enclave. Where are we? What is, what is the scene as the rain falls? Where do we pick up? What's the— maybe we don't need to pick up right from that moment, right? I think we hit a really great closing image of us leaving last time. So like as the credits come up, and as we like, get our first establishing shot again...where are we, what are we doing? How far along in our journey might we be? [pause] And how's the weather doing? Is it still pouring?

Jack: I think it's still raining. And like, I wonder if we're picking up either getting ready to rest for the night? [**Austin:** Mm.] Or in the morning. My gut says it is good to keep the time close to where we left. So it's like we've been walking for the...did— yes, we met up at the end of the workday for Samantha, right?

Austin: [cross] No.

Ali: Yeah, it was like 4am or whatever.

Austin: Right. Yes. Yeah. For Samantha. Exactly. Yes. For— which is to say the middle of the night, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: So I wonder if like we have had to stop and rest because Quincy needs to sleep? All the rest of us who don't necessarily keep Samantha's hours are like, [Ali laughs] "okay, we've been fleeing a city at five o'clock in the morning."

Austin: I mean, even Samantha right, 'cause this is the end of Samantha's workday.

Ali: Mhm.

Jack: Oh yeah!

Austin: Presumably Samantha comes home and crashes also or crashes at the bar or whatever.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. So it's like building a shelter to sleep under...underneath like a tarpaulin, or like on a radio tower, like the base of a ra— stringing a tarpaulin under the base...

Austin: [cross] Mmm, that's a great idea.

Jack: ...of like a ruined radio tower.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And I think, you know, I wonder if the place to pick up in terms of just like the way this works in an act break, is the characters coming to terms with having decided "alright, we're actually going to make this flight and we have to do it now" to being like, "well, no—, well now we're in it."

Austin: And we're sleepy.

Jack: And we're sleepy, yeah. So like, yeah, God. Are we all just like on, you know, what have we found...just cuddling up on the floor or like, maybe we managed to find a

blanket for Quincy. And we're all, we're all really tired. And I think Already just sort of like sleepily— oh! Firstly, quick question. What is the sleeping arrangement for the Auger Providence and Sam?

Austin: Great question.

Ali: [laughs]

Jack: Are you specifically sleeping in opposite sides of the like makeshift room? Has everybody put their beds together in just sort of a line for warmth and — I say put beds. I know we don't have like mattresses or anything, I'm being like, where do we put our bodies when we sleep?

Austin: I do...I do put my body in the way that you might place something on a table. If we're like on a radio, under a radio tower with like a tarp over us just against sort of the like, the four legs of the radio tower sitting up, like legs out, almost like a mannequin being placed on the ground legs. You know what I mean? I'm like, I'm deactivating my robot body for the night is what I am doing. I'm not near anybody. I have said very straightforward...you know, I tell you, I think I probably tell everybody else to rest well because the journey in the daylight hours will be hard, and then I just go and sit down and shut off. So that's where I am. Not near Sam, presumably.

Ali: Yeah. I can cosign on that one.

All: [laughing]

Jack: Oh, god. Okay. I think I wait until it seems like everybody else is asleep. And I say:

(as **Already**): Auger. Auger. Wake up. Are you awake?

Austin (as **Providence**): [booting up noise] Vrm?

Austin: And there's like a brief— you can hear the like, whatever it is, that makes me go slowly power up. Actually, I think it actually powers up with a cough. Like, I'm not coughing, but something in me is, you know.

Jack: Mmm. Mhm.

Austin: And I say:

(as **Providence**): Already.

Jack (as **Already**): You need to tell me what we're going to face tomorrow. I need a prediction.

Austin (as **Providence**): I have not brought the texts.

Jack (as **Already**): Well, surely you can...surely you can figure it out.

Austin (as **Providence**): I am not a prophet. I do not have the texts. [firmly] Go rest.

Jack (as **Already**): [interrupting] That's not good enough. I'm not, I'm not prepared to— it was fine when it was just me. But we got a kid with us now.

Austin (as **Providence**): I didn't invite the child.

Jack (as **Already**): I didn't invite the child but we've got to figure out how to, you know, what the next right step is. And I think the next right step is, is you rustling up a prediction.

Austin: I am going to make a weak move and admit that I don't have the answer to someone's question or problem.

Jack: Well, that's great Austin because I am also making a weak move which is "demand an explanation from someone."

Austin: [laughs] Ah.

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: Uh huh?

Austin (as **Providence**): You don't understand how this works. I won't be giving you a prediction. I won't be giving you any advice. In fact, I'm merely here as a witness. Perhaps we can return with knowledge but I have none to offer you and none especially after such a demand.

Jack (as **Already**): [sarcastically] "Merely here as a witness—" what good is a witness at a time like this? We need to act! You're the one who said go north and throw your phone into the dentist's office or something and now you're just coming along to make sure I do it?

Austin: And you hear the sound of me shutting off.

Jack (as **Already**): Fuck. *Fuck.*

Jack: Just like buries my head in like Duke's side, Duke is fast asleep, Duke like looks up, you know.

Jack (as **Already**): What, what's good is a—

Jack: Ugh. I'm mad.

Ali: [laughing] Aww.

Jack: She's called an Auger! She's— [laughs] Um. Ah. You know, real friends— fake friends make a prediction that says "throw your phone into the dentist," [**Austin** laughs] *real* friends tell you what dangers are gonna be happening.

Austin: The rest of you all, does everybody else just sleep, like regular style, just actually sleep through the night and not stress or get into arguments.

Ali: I worked all night, man. I'm...

Austin: That's fair enough. That's fair enough.

Ali: I'm snoozin'.

Austin: Yeah. All right. What do we see when we wake up? What's our— what is— who's first awake is maybe a good question.

Ali: Not I. [laughs]

Dre: Dang.

Jack: Oh god, is it Quincy?

Austin: It's Quincy.

Jack: It might be Quincy.

Austin: It's Quincy.

Jack: It's Quincy, right?

Austin: Yeah, mhm.

Jack: Who then wakes up Robyn?

Austin: Yeah...probably. Right?

Jack: Or does Quincy just...or does Quincy go for a little explore...

Austin: [cross] Quincy goes out.

Jack: ...and this is potentially concerning.

Austin: Yeah, yes. Quinc— I think this is the classic maneuver we have to do here, right, is Quincy goes wandering.

Dre: Oh, no.

Austin: And...and someone has to wake up and see that Quincy is gone. Is there anyone who especially wants to be that person?

Dre: I mean, I feel— I guess it should be me.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: [groans] I'm so worried.

Austin: Uh huh?

Dre: [sighs deeply]

Jack: Okay. I'm picking up the card "the Outlying Gangs."

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Dre: [groaning] Oh...

Austin: I've been looking at it.

Dre: Don't do that! Not to Quincy!

Jack: Outside, Robyn, you hear the sound of a piece of classical orchestral music. And this piece of music is...I want to make sure I get the title right. Yeah, I'm going to link it. The piece of orchestral music that you hear is [Aquarium by Camille Saint-Saëns](#) from his orchestral piece, The Carnival of the Animals.

Austin: [cross] Oh yeah, this is a classic. Sure.

Quincy's Good for It

[00:32:07]

Jack: As you step outside, and pull tarpaulin the side you can see that at the bottom of the hill is a truck shaped like a fish [**Dre** laughs] with the words "School of Fwish" written on the side. And halfway down the truck where the fish's fin would be, a little hatch has opened and inside is a woman serving a fish stick sandwich to Quincy. What do you do?

Dre: Um. Okay. Uhhhm...fuck. Okay. I wake up Already?

Jack: Okay, yeah. Already just wakes up blearily. Already spent some time— a chunk of the night arguing and then another chunk of the night in like restful— restless resentful sleep.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: So it's just like dragging themselves up through sleep.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Hey! What do you, what do you— there's a—

Jack (as **Already**): What.

Dre (as **Robyn**): There's a, there's a fish truck.

Jack (as **Already**): What?

Dre (as **Robyn**): There's a fish truck down there and Quincy's talking to them.

Jack (as **Already**): Is it selling fish or is shaped like a fish?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Both! I think!

Jack (as **Already**): Oh fuck! It's called Fwish.

Austin and Ali: [laughing]

Jack (as **Already**): Oh nuts. [sighs] Okay, well, fine, you gotta go and talk to them. You don't need to worry about— these guys aren't— they're not chasing us. School of Fwish has a carve-out contract with Potato Potat.to. They don't interfere with each other's terms. If School of Fwish is nearby we won't be seeing Potato Potat.to trucks nearby so don't worry about that. But those guys will fucking fleece you.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay, uh, can you come with me?

Jack (as **Already**): What?

Dre (as **Robyn**): I don't know, I don't know this stuff.

Jack (as **Already**): What's to— what's to know? They're fucking, they sell fish at much too high prices. They offer food to people who need food and then run up a bill...

Dre (as **Robyn**): You think, you think— yeah, I was about to say, so like what they're doing to Quincy right now?

Dre: Camera cuts to Quincy dipping this in like extra tartar sauce that they ordered.
[laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack (as **Already**): Fine. Duke?

Jack: Duke is also up and has been sniffing around the outside of the radio tower. I am not worried about Duke, Duke is a tough dog. And you know, Duke has the demeanor of an outdoor cat sometimes, will just disappear for a period and then come back. So Duke comes bounding in and yeah, I— but the impression that you get from Already is that they are sour about this fight and I'm mostly only going to be there for muscle.

Dre: Good! Good, I don't have that!

Austin: Y'all just walk down the hill a little bit and—

Dre: [cross] Yeah, I guess so. I guess so.

Austin: Jack, I'm gonna take over this—

Jack: Yeah, this School of—

Austin: If you'd like me to, I can pick up the School of Fwish truck and it's— though actually I might need to play Quincy so actually Ali, do you want to pick up the School of Fwish—

Jack: [cross] Oh yeah!

Ali: [cross] Sure!

Austin: –person as Sam snores away?

Ali: Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: Okay. Quincy, as they dip their whatever breaded–

Dre: *Fwish* stick.

Austin: –fried Fwich sticks in the tartar sauce is also just talking at length about...I was gonna say about like Pokémon or something but then I remembered that, a thing we left out is that Quincy is sort of a Pokémon kid. [laughs]

Jack: [cross] Sort of a Pokémon child.

Ali: [cross] Oh, that's right!

Austin: Right? Is sort of a Mareep...

Ali: They're like a sheep?

Austin: They're like a sheep kid, yeah. So probably– is actually talking about why Pokémon is bad, actually?

Ali: Woooow.

Dre: Sure. I mean, we are a, we are a Digimon podcast.

Ali: [cross] This is true, we did establish this.

Austin: [cross] We are a Digimon podcast, it's established.

Jack: What is the core argument here, Austin, from Quincy as to why Pokémon is bad?

Austin: There's too many?

Jack: [laughing] Ah.

Ali: Ooooh.

Austin: There's too many!

Dre: There are too many.

Austin (as **Quincy**): There's too many of them. Why shouldn't there just be, you know, the good ones. They should get rid of the bad ones is the real problem.

Ali (as **School of Fwish dealer**): Well, you know, kid, people love a new...people love a premiere.

Austin (as **Quincy**): [interrupting] I don't really care what people like. I like good ones. And there's too many bad ones. When they make a new one, they put all the bad ones in so you care about the good ones. And that's stupid.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Well, let me put it to you this way, kid. What if there's someone out there who thinks all your good ones are bad? And thinks all the bad ones are good?

Austin (as **Quincy**): That's stupid. They're wrong.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Well...

Dre: [quietly in background] He's gotcha there...

Austin (as **Quincy**): What if somebody likes to...likes to drink saltwater? They'll die.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): They won't *die*.

Austin (as **Quincy**): They'll die! Don't drink saltwater, you die.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): No, you need salt and you need water.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Don't dr— don't...mom said don't drink saltwater. You'll die.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Well you don't...not...you gotta drink the other water too.

Austin: This is what's happening as you approach.

Ali: [laughs]

Dre: Mhm.

Dre (as **Robyn**): [sighs] Quincy, are you arguing about salt water again?

Austin (as **Quincy**): It's not an argument. It's a truth. I'm truth telling. Like our leaders are supposed to.

Austin: A thing that Quincy has heard many times.

Dre: [laughing] Yeah, I was about to say...

Ali: What sitcom was Quincy on?

Austin: [laughing] Like "Malcolm in the Mid—" No, we already know this, it's the thing that's not Pokémon. It's like "Malcolm in the Middle" meets a world where there are Pokémon people.

Jack: I'd watch it. Occasionally they say...

Ali: [laughs]

Dre: That sounds great.

Jack: Occasionally they say like veiled centrist stuff about how George Bush isn't very good.

Austin: Yeah, exactly this.

Dre: [laughs]

Austin: What's up? What happens?

Dre: Oh. [sighs]

Dre (as **Robyn**): How's it going, Quincy?

Austin (as **Quincy**): It's good!

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): [cross] Hey, buddy. You wanna, you want some breakfast? You need some fish?

Austin (as **Quincy**): I told her that we were good for it.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Do you know what that means?

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): They better.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Yeah, I said that we got it covered. I said, I said—

Dre (as **Robyn**): Do you know what that means?

Austin (as **Quincy**): I said it's not a problem.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Do you know what that means?

Austin (as **Quincy**): I said we'd get you back.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Do you know what that means?

Austin (as **Quincy**): It's all the stuff that you always say whenever anybody asks you for anything.

Dre (as **Robyn**): That's not true. Quincy, you agreed to pay this person money.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Mhm.

Austin (as **Quincy**): I don't have any money.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Well, then you're not good for it, Quincy.

Austin (as **Quincy**): But you are.

[short pause]

Austin (as **Quincy**): Right?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Why do you think I have any money?

Austin (as **Quincy**): 'Cause you have a job!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Jobs don't always work like that. How much do you pay me to take care of you? That's one of my jobs.

Austin (as **Quincy**): But I get the family discount.

Dre: [laughs]

Dre (as **Robyn**): Hey, can we, can we get the family discount?

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Sure can't.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay.

Austin and Jack: [laugh]

Dre (as **Robyn**): Had to ask though, right?

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Sure. You want a fish sandwich? It's, uh, \$7.99 plus tax. And if you want some fries and a coke that's going to be \$10.50.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Quincy, did you order fries and a coke?

Austin (as **Quincy**): Before the fish sticks, yeah. I'm hungry!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Maybe we can...we can work something out here. What's your email address?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh, I don't...I don't have a computer. Um, yeah, I fix things. You got anything that needs workin' on?

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): [skeptically] Ehhhhhhhhh...

Dre (as **Robyn**): This looks like a big, a big complicated truck. Lots of, lots of cooking stuff in there.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): [unconvinced] Neeehhhhhhhh...

Ali: I'm looking at [laughs]...I'm an NPC, this game doesn't have like moves like that, huh?

Austin: It does. You have— you, you're the Outlying Gangs, right? So you have—

Ali: Oh sure sure sure. So I can...

Austin: —these three moves there, which are...a little rough!

Ali: "Put a gun in someone's hand."

Austin: Uh huh?

Ali: "Bring gossip in from the wasteland." Or "give someone the very resources that the gang is hunting for." Okay.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: Um...hmm.

Dre: I guess I just, without thinking, did a reg— one of my regular moves, which is ask "what does your character have that needs fixing?"

Austin: Oh, yeah. So yeah, we should finish actually playing that out. What does this Fwish dealer need fixing?

Ali: All right. Um...yeah, maybe there's like a...one of those heat lamps or something?

Austin: Oh, that's a good idea. That's good. Yeah.

Dre: Sure!

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): It's tough, you know, making fish on a truck all day.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah! No!

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): And, uh, you know, they're made to order...

Dre (as **Robyn**): [cross] Sometimes you wanna take a break!

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Right. Yeah yeah yeah. You know, they don't–

Dre (as **Robyn**): You don't want that fish to go to waste.

Ali (as **Fwish vendor**): They don't really be looking at this truck that much. You know what I mean?

Dre (as **Robyn**): I bet.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): I just kind of pick it up in the morning. It's not even always the same truck. Sometimes I pick up the truck and there's some other–

Dre (as **Robyn**): Ugh, it's not even your own truck? It's somebody else's truck?

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Yeah!

Dre (as **Robyn**): So there's like, they don't clean it up the way you want.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): No!

Dre (as **Robyn**): They don't have the– ugh! Ugh!

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Yeah. It's, I mean, it's, I mean, if you– if you're looking for like a gig, 'cause you don't have an email address at all. I, um...

All: [laughing hard]

Dre (as **Robyn**): Already, do you have an email address?

Jack (as **Already**): What? No. Oh. Eh? No.

Dre (as **Robyn**): [cross] Okay. I'm just making sure, I don't want to feel left out.

Jack: Already absolutely does. It's, it's like...

Dre: Yeah, you can check it on your phone, probably.

Jack: ...falready1276@potatopotat.to.co.

Austin: No, Potato Potat.to's already a dot, isn't it? "@potatopotat.to"?

Jack: Oh yeah, it would be "potatopotat.to." But you know, Already knows that that email address is being heavily, you know, scrutinized or whatever, you know.

Jack (as **Already**): No, I don't have an email address. Are we done here? Are you gonna fix their thing?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah!

Jack (as **Already**): Hey, buddy.

Jack: And Already's talking to the Fwish person.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Mm?

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah, listen.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): You want some fish sticks?

Jack (as **Already**): No, fuck you.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Whoa!

Jack (as **Already**): I'm with Potato Potat.to.

Dre (as **Robyn**): *Jesus. Already!*

Austin (as **Quincy**): Stop—

Jack (as **Already**): Oy. I want to make sure that we're clear here.

Jack: [laughs] You know, like pointing, pointing at the truck.

Jack (as **Already**): My associate here is going to fix your heat lamp. And then we're square. No additional fees, you know? No, uh, concierge fees, nothing on the fish. Don't try and ring them up for that tartar sauce.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Well...

Jack: Takes the tater sauce away from Quincy.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Ow! Uhp!

Jack (as **Already**): Hey, I'm serious.

Austin (as **Quincy**): [quietly, sullenly] I wasn't done.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): You know, if this person...nuhhh...fixes my heat lamp...

Jack (as **Already**): Uh huh?

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): I'm going to have to register them...

Jack (as **Already**): [long exhale] Really? Really? Or do you want me to give Potato Potat.to a call?

Jack: Holds up the phone.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Whoa whoa whoa, hey, I'm just, you know, we're all following rules here.

Jack (as **Already**): Yes, but you're between 12th and 7th. And you know about the carve out rules.

Austin: Is this a move, Jack, are you, are you making a move?

Ali: [laughs]

Jack: Yeah, I'm going for a "leap forward to shield someone else from harm."

Austin: Okay, sure.

Jack (as **Already**): You want me to call my boss?

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): No, no, no, we don't have to— I mean, I just, you know, I'm gonna— I'm gonna go home with a fixed heat lamp and have nothing to say about that. We're washing each other's hands here. I gave the kid some fish sticks! I'm a nice person.

Austin (as **Quincy**): And I'm good for it.

Ali and Jack: [laugh]

Dre (as **Robyn**): [shouting distantly] Quincy, you have to stop saying that!

Austin (as **Quincy**): Put it on my tab!

Dre (as **Robyn**): [muffled] Oh god.

Jack: Oh, you know that School of Fwish would give a child a tab. [laughs]

Austin: Oh, a hundred percent!

Jack: Alright. So what's the sta— what's the exact bargain being offered here, Ali? It's that Robyn fixes the heat lamp but then is somehow like put on the School of Fwish payroll?

Ali: Not the payroll. I was thinking of like, like, you know, commerce via information, right? Like, the...Dre's character's named Robyn. Robyn would be like in the system, essentially. And I don't know, like, I don't know how to define that threat within this game, obviously but...

Jack: Right. But it's not good.

Ali: It's heinous, I think a little bit. You know. I don't think anyone wants this to happen.

Austin: Right, it means that they would be...all of the sort of like natural blockers that would prevent them from doing future work for School of Fwish would be out of the way. They would get in contact with Robin to do that work. They would make it...you know, they would make the sort of offers that are hard to refuse for future work presumably.

Jack: And they'd be on the hook [**Austin:** Yeah.] in the same way that Already is to Potato Potat.to.

Austin: Right. Right.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Which I think is why—

Austin: [cross] Well again, not *employed* but in the roster, right? In the Rolodex.

Jack: Yep. Which with these gig companies is often, you know— I don't know that Already is employed. I don't think that Potato Potat.to has employees so much as it has like, contractors, you know?

Austin: Right, right. Yes. Yes.

Jack: But if I—

Austin: Robyn would end up with a School of Fwish email address by the end of this.

Dre: Ugh.

Austin: For instance. Yeah. Uh huh.

Jack: But if I'm stepping forward to— what's the exact wording, is it shield?

Ali: Mhm.

Jack: Uh...[clicks tongue] Strong move, "leap forward to shield someone else from harm."

Austin: Oh, is that a strong move? You're spending a token for it?

Jack: Yep.

Austin: Damn.

Ali: Then yeah, I mean...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: ...by rules of game currency.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Unless we want Robyn to get on the books.

Dre: I don't.

Jack: [laughs]

Ali: Know what I mean? I think the, like, the threat is valid, right? Where it's like...this person is trying to strong arm because they're following the like, procedure of what they're taught from their weird like, manipulative business. But like once someone is able to be like, "Well, I'm gonna get you in trouble buddy!" It's like "whoa whoa whoa, hey, I'm not trying to get in trouble."

Austin: Yeah, yeah. It's—

Ali: I'm trying to sell some fish sticks and, you know...

Dre: Trying to do my job!

Ali: Sell, you know, register some loyalty cards.

Austin: It's the Games— exactly. It's the Gamestop loyalty card and signup thing or the call center person who you're talking to who's like going through their script and they need to hard sell you otherwise they get written up by their manager.

Ali: Mhm.

Jack: It's the kind of stuff that Mustard Red does for free aboard the Brink.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: From the book it's worth saying, "strong movies are the moments when your character's skill, power, astute planning or good luck come to bear and transform a situation. When you see a player make a strong move, honor the significance of that moment and play to their success."

Jack: This is wielding the latent power of the Potato Potat.to phone that has gotten us into this mess in the first place. I don't think I can call? To make a call on it would reveal my position but it's like saying a gun is loaded when it isn't.

Austin: Right, right. Or when it is and you don't want to actually fire it because it would be bad to shoot it but that doesn't mean it's not loaded. You know?

Jack: No. Yeah.

Austin: Cool. Can I pick up the— in this strange, almost heated moment I'm briefly going to pick up the Earth itself to describe the natural world. I just think that we get this shot in the middle of this argument of you holding up this phone, Already, and Robyn and Quincy, you know, bickering over what to say and not to say and this unnamed Fwish seller leaning out of the thing— we just get like a great like wide shot of it, the marsh in the background, the sun is only just rising. There's the sound of crickets and other bugs and maybe some birds, some seagulls overhead. And just, like, that, that really that like completely, almost like sun scorched morning and then in the distance the sound of rumbling truck engines.

Jack: Hm.

Austin: But yeah, I think that your strong move must work here. And so yes, the question now is can Robyn fix this thing?

Dre: Sure! Um...yeah. I mean, I can, I can fix it partially.

Austin: Ah.

Dre: I don't have a token, so...

Austin: No. So what's your actual move say?

Dre: "Fix or make something partially or shoddily."

Austin and Jack: [laugh]

Austin: [in background] Oh...

Dre: It, it– listen. When I leave, the heat lamp works great.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Now, I mean if you leave it on for too long...you know it'll, it'll overheat. And, uh, you know, the little, the little, the little, uh...little quick fix I did might melt a little bit, so you'll just– you know, don't run it for too long.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Run it for too long? It's a heat lamp!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Hey. It was a cold lamp when I got here. So...

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): [quietly] Yeah, alright.

Further Afield

[00:50:20]

Austin: Can we cut back up to the radio tower? And can we get a Providence and Sam scene since we've left them alone up there?

Jack: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah!

Dre: Oh, I didn't even think about that. That's great.

Ali: [laughing] Sure.

Austin: I have prepared hot water with some, like, herbs as a sort of a tea that's ready for whenever you wake up. It's just, it's just like, you know, we get your eyes opening and your vision being blurry. And then like a reusable tin cup steaming just in front of you with the smell of whatever herbs I've gathered and put in there for a kind of loose leaf tea. And I wait for you to wake up. I have not– I seemingly have not prepared myself anything to drink or eat or have already consumed them.

Ali: I wake up. [laughing]

Austin: There it is.

Ali: I'm drowsy. I'm looking around and rubbing my eyes. I sense warmth and floral in front of me. Reach out and take a sip.

Austin (as **Providence**): I think I angered Already.

Austin: I say.

Ali (as **Sam**): Mm. Mhm?

Austin (as **Providence**): They want something I can't provide.

Ali (as **Sam**): [sighs] [blearily] Um. Well. You know... Already is in need of... [sniffs] so, uh. I wouldn't, I wouldn't get broken up about it. Where is everybody?

Austin (as **Providence**): I'm not sure.

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh. Huh.

Austin (as **Providence**): I'm surprised to find you here.

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh yeah?

Austin (as **Providence**): To find you on this journey. What was it? What was it that compelled you to join them?

Ali (as **Sam**): Well, you know, um, you know, Already sort of needed a push and, um...saying, "Hey, let's go" is effective.

Austin (as **Providence**): I appreciate it.

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh, right. You were the— you— that, yeah, this was your idea. Mm.

Austin (as **Providence**): It was the text. I found the text. It was Already's idea. Already wanted to know what to do and the text said...I, I told Already to simply get rid of the phone. Well, the text suggested this destination.

Ali (as **Sam**): Sure. Sure sure sure sure.

Ali: And like slowly waking up and like understanding that those are two ideas.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali (as **Sam**): Well then...I don't know. Then why are you here if it's...if it's the texts?

Austin (as **Providence**): It's what I said yesterday, that something needs to change. And perhaps I have stayed in the shop for too long, offering guidance instead of...instead of exploring on my own.

Ali (as **Sam**): Well, everyone's getting what they wanted.

Jack: [laughs]

Austin (as **Providence**): Everyone's getting what they wanted.

[short pause]

I'm going to scout ahead. If I see them, I'll let them know that you're awake.

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh, sure. Yeah, I'll be up in a sec. You know, I can, we can—

Austin: Already walked away.

Ali: Damn.

Dre: Wow.

Austin: And I guess I'm heading, we're not sure— we haven't like put a point on this map, but I've been assuming we're kind of like in one of these green areas just to the north, you know? Here somewhere, you know?

Ali: Oh sure.

Austin: Not quite the wind turbines but still on the Atlantic City Island. Not yet on these kind of middle places that we're going to.

Ali: And where are we going going?

Austin: So two places. One is the secret tunnel entrance up here which is where the— I guess anywhere into the Tricity Tunnel where we can get into the tunnels and get to Quincy's VHS tape, big reel-to-reel thing to fix it. And then all the way to the mainland, across that bridge, through— over the back bay and to the dentist office that had the heron or the crane as the symbol. I think we gave a name for it, I've already forgotten what it is. But it had nothing to do with herons. So.

Jack: No.

Austin: So yeah, that's where we're going. So I imagine I actually probably walk ahead, like on up to the road and then begin heading west to see what's— whatever's up with this kind of middle island where the wind turbines are and Bluff City Studios is and the bigger marshes and stuff like that. Which maybe the group of y'all on the road see me just walk like, not past you, but beyond, you know what I mean? Like, I don't literally walk next to you without saying anything, but I think maybe I come down the hill at such an angle that I don't actually speak with y'all and just keep on moving forward. And

begin to look ahead. Also I seem to have closed the tab by mistake. Whoops. All right, I'm back. Y'all, you're finished the job? Is your shoddy job good enough for the School of Fwish person?

Ali: Yeah, I mean, at some point I think this person has to kind of wash their hands and realize that they've been, [**Austin:** Yeah] they've been taken for a ride a little bit. [laughs] We also don't have to like linger on this.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: They give sort of a disapproving nod to Robyn. Look to Quincy and say:

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Have a good breakfast. Open your heart to more Pokémon.

Austin (as **Quincy**): No!

Ali and Jack: [laugh]

Dre (as **Robyn**): I'm sorry. They're like this.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): No...

Austin (as **Quincy**): Don't apologize for me! If I were to apologize, I'll apologize for myself. And I won't.

Ali (as **Fwish dealer**): Then that's that.

Austin (as **Quincy**): I'm still hungryyyy!

Austin: Which Robyn, you suspect is more to do with the, [**Dre:** Yeah.] the sort of need, the repair need than the actual hunger.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: So.

Jack: Hm. [cross] Back at the Fwish truck—

Dre: [cross] I feel like they probably also don't act like this when things are going well.

Austin: Right. Exactly. Yeah, I think this is a— we're getting little temper tantrums because of other stressors that they're dealing with currently, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Okay, I am going to pick up the card...who do we think is better suited to the bounty hunters?

Austin: They're, they are the Outlying Gangs for sure.

Jack: They are Outlying Gangs.

Austin: I don't think that they are Society Intact. Which is...we know the Society Intact is, you know, not people who get their hands dirty.

Jack: That's true. That is true. But, eh...mmm.

Austin: They're not. Like I know you want to use Society Intact moves but we— that's for the Society Intact.

Jack: I'm actually looking at the Digital Realm. I'm thinking about a bounty hunter—

Austin: [cross] Ah. Well, we know that—

Jack: —from the Digital Realm. Uh, a—

Austin: We know that the Digital Realm are the void people specifically [**Jack:** Yes.] so that could work, sure.

Jack: A void person bounty hunter. But I'm trying to determine whether...'cause I think a void person bounty hunter can be either.

Austin: Mhm. We still need a second desire for the Digital Realm too. Right now the only one is expanded networks.

Jack: Mmmmm.

Austin: What's key here is you would need to pick this up when someone interacts with a digital device or you have an idea about how digitization shaped this environment.

Jack: Right, yes.

Austin: Right? So that's the key here is, what are you picking up? You're picking up something when blank?

Jack: Yeah. No, then I'm happy to, actually, I'm happy to pause and wait for a better moment and let someone else take a turn.

Austin: I mean, what's the group do? Does the group head back up to the radio tower to reconnect? Does Sam end up coming down and meeting up with the group?

Jack: [cross] Is it like awkward waiting by the side of the road for Sam to come down? You know, like, like waving to the Auger and sort of reconvening by the side of the road and the Auger saying like, do you say like, "oh, Sam's going to be down?"

Austin: No, I didn't. I came down at such an angle that I did not interact with you.

Jack: But what if we've, we've waved you over?

Austin: I have not, I have not made eye contact.

Dre: Oof.

Austin: I like— not by choice, by focus on what's in front of me instead of what is at my sides.

Jack: Yeah. Damn.

Ali: I thought you were looking for them.

Austin: No, I said if I happened to pass them I would let them know. **[Ali: laughs]** What I was doing was scouting ahead.

Ali: Ooohh, sure sure sure sure sure. Yeah, I mean, I'm willing to come down and meet up with the group. I think that I have attempted to catch up with the Auger after she leaves. Unsuccessfully.

Austin: And you would of course see the rest of the group because you're actually paying attention to things that are not the road ahead.

Jack (as **Already**): What's going on with the Auger?

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh, she's, um, she's, um...scouting ahead.

Jack (as **Already**): I was rude to her yesterday.

Ali (as **Sam**): Yeah, it sounds like you were.

Austin: Damn!

Jack: Wow. I think that Already was expecting sympathy?

Dre and Ali: [laughing]

Jack: Was expecting like the, friend listening to friend describe the worst possible idea and going, "Mmm, yeah, yeah." You know? [laughs]

Austin: [That one TikTok](#), the like—

Ali: [laughing] Yeah.

Jack: Friend describes the—

Austin: When you're on the phone. Yes. [laughs] "Mmm, yeah, yeah, mmm, yeah totally! And if— mmm, yeah, uh huh? Yeah."

Cast: [laughs]

Jack: Oh, god, what do you do? What is the response? When someone parries you in that way? I think Already blushes, just like an angry blush. Not like a contrite blush. And says like:

Jack (as **Already**): Well, she's a, she's a— prediction. She makes predictions. She predicts things. She could have predicted that fucking fish problem that we just had.

Ali (as **Sam**): [annoyed] Fish problem, like she has time to think of a fish!

Jack (as **Already**): She has time to think about our own safety and well being. They nearly charged—it was a School of fwish truck! You know how they get.

Ali (as **Sam**): Well, what are you doing eating fish from a fish truck?

Jack (as **Already**): The kid was hungry!

Ali (as **Sam**): Okay, fine. Fine. I'm just saying, maybe the middle of the night isn't the time to be bringing things up.

Jack (as **Already**): Well, I was anxious.

Ali (as **Sam**): Well—

Jack (as **Already**): I was in a moment of vulnerability.

Ali (as **Sam**): Sure. Well, I was gonna ask what happened and then you're, you're coming to me trying to be like, "Oh, well..." And, you know. Don't "oh, well" me.

Jack (as **Already**): So you two, you two are friends now?

Ali (as **Sam**): Hey. I'm just saying. Let's ju— let's ease up in all directions.

Jack (as **Already**): Okay, okay. We've still got a ways to go. Apparently, she's striking off ahead of us. And that's, that's fine. That's fine.

Ali (as **Sam**): I'm sorry too, alright? Let's just get out of here?

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah, okay. Okay, everybody, we're gonna go catch up with the Auger.

Austin: Arms out like a plane, Quincy rushes ahead.

Dre (as **Robyn**): [exhausted] Oh my god.

On the Road Together

[01:03:27]

Austin: You come to find the Auger. Again, it's kind of like a dewy morning, but there are still, there are still some clouds overhead. I imagine that that rainstorm, maybe has taken a break but it isn't over. And instead of holding a parasol in her hand, this time, in both of her hands, she is holding a total of four umbrellas. I'm using my normal move, "gather supplies." And I have come back. I'm waiting in the road in exactly the same way. But I'm holding four open umbrellas as the group approaches.

Jack (as **Already**): Oh! Where did you, where did you get those umbrellas?

Austin (as **Providence**): They're not real umbrellas. They're props.

Jack (as **Already**): Oh.

Austin (as **Providence**): But they'll serve.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Where'd you get prop umbrellas?

Austin (as **Providence**): There is a small structure north of here, filled with all sorts of things. Including these umbrellas.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Is it, is it supposed to rain, keep raining? I guess it already was raining.

Jack (as **Already**): She doesn't do predictions.

Austin: Smile.

(as **Providence**): I don't do predictions, but it seems like it will rain again today.

Dre (as **Robyn**): [muttering] Something, okay, weird between you all, okay.

Austin: [laughs]

Jack (as **Already**): What's the difference between a prop umbrella and a real umbrella?

Dre: You just asked the same thing.

Jack: Hm?

Dre: Oh, I thought you said proper umbrella.

Jack: No, no, prop, a prop umbrella or real umbrella.

Austin: A prop umbrella.

Austin (as **Providence**): Presumably the props aren't made to stand up for as long?

Ali (as **Sam**): Can't handle the wind?

Austin (as **Providence**): Or they could be designed to break quicker in the wind for cinematic effect. I wouldn't trust them. But they're better than nothing.

Dre: [breaking umbrella] Snap!

(as **Robyn**) Oohp, yep, they break really easy.

Austin (as **Providence**): Three will have to do.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh, it's fine. I meant to do that. This is— oh, there's good stuff in here. I mean you can use this fabric for something? All the little, all the little pin pieces in here?

Austin (as **Quincy**): Can I hold one of the umbrellas?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Uhh...

Austin (as **Quincy**): I just wanna hold, I just wanna, I just wanna, I just wanna hold it.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Sure!

Dre: I give Quincy half of the umbrella [laughs] that I've broken and am taking apart. Does this count as something crucial?

Austin: [laughs] Is that said out loud or is that one of your moves?

Dre: No, that's one of my moves, is to "take apart something crucial to repurpose its parts."

Austin: Yeah, I think so.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: You've destroyed one of our four umbrellas. Uh huh. Quincy is thrilled, by the way. I thought about playing Quincy as being mad to have not gotten a real umbrella, but— and you've given Quincy an incredible toy, which they are now playing with.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Oh god. Yeah. In the same way that—

Dre (as **Robyn**): Quincy, it's hollow, you could turn it into a blow dart.

Ali (as **Sam**): [whispering] What? Don't say that!

Austin (as **Quincy**): [cross] No, it's a swooooooord!

Austin: And starts:

(as **Quincy**): "Wah wah wah psheew psheew!" Gotcha!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Ooo!

Austin: Doing sword moves.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Aarrgghhhh!

Austin (as **Quincy**): Ha ha ha!

Dre: I like tuck it [**Austin:** Right. Yes.] under my arm and fall over groaning, dying.

Jack: In the same way that you picked up the natural world card, Austin, and described the sound of the morning? If we were watching this on a screen we would get a sudden jump cut to a black and white piece of film that was what these umbrellas were originally intended for use of. And it is a bunch of people sheltering themselves with umbrellas as a bomb goes off distantly, and the umbrellas like bending and breaking in the shockwave of the umbrellas. But you don't have the audio of this film. So we just get the silent image playing and then cut back to Robyn and Quincy playing with the broken umbrellas by the side of the road.

Austin: Love it.

Jack (as **Already**): Well, thank you for the, thank you for the umbrellas. Are we good to keep going or do we want to check out this place further? I think...I think I sort of— I'm a bit worried about who's coming after us. So I feel like we should probably get off the road.

Austin (as **Providence**): That would be wise.

Austin: And then with the umbrella still closed, gesturing forward with it like a pointer as if to say, "after you."

Jack: Yeah, and I like drop down off a little embankment at the side of the road, down into like grassland. Soggy ground 'cause it rained. Maybe it, maybe it is actually like slightly flooded ground. So you know, goes up the sides of the boots and sort of starts trudging across this like scrub and field in the vague direction of the dentist's office.

The Fears of Already

[01:08:20]

Austin: As we trudge, I wait and find a moment for Already to be just separated enough that I can either speed up or slow down enough to get a kind of one on one moment. And I say:

(as **Providence**): I understand your frustration.

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Providence**): Already, what is your greatest fear?

Austin: And I'm spending a token.

[loud siren and honking of passing truck]

Jack: This truck—

Austin: Yeah, uh huh?

Dre: [laughing]

Jack: —coming at me. [laughs] Oh man.

Austin: This is a strong move. One of my— one of the things I can do. I've spent— I'm down to one token.

Jack: What is the move?

Austin: It is me asking the question, "Ask '*What is your character's greatest fear?*'" Which you have to answer. This is "some moves on each list are italicized questions. While there are questions about the characters in the story they're always asked from— I guess they're always asked from one player to another with an honest answer given in response, even if their character remains cagey about it. The answer is knowledge that your character deduces, intuitively or manages to get out of someone through

conversation." So I think abstractly what's happening here is..I mean, I think the actual question being asked, is more like...it's more of a statement at first, which is like, I— it comes back to the thing I said before, which is like I understand your frustration and it's kind of poking at that and trying to unfold that frustration into fear. What is it that— why is it that you reacted so strongly when I simply said to get rid of the phone, what's underneath there? What's the thing driving you in that way? And this might be a 20 minute conversation that, you know, gets boiled down to this question of what is your character's greatest fear? Which maybe you don't say in character but that Providence gets [Jack: Yeah.] from the from whatever happens.

Jack: This is interesting, right? And we can, we can edit this out or whatever, but Already is in some way a reflection of the little girl in the Tales from the Loop game, who saw herself in a Hungry Hungry Hippos commercial on the television. And following the end of that Tales from the Loop game upon learning that she could manipulate the reels of— what do we call them, tape, the sort of the buffers down in the Tunnel Project, started making a bunch of tiny changes.

And I think Already's fear is that they are responsible for the way the world is. [Austin: Mm.] Which is not true, because all apocalypses are caused by, you know, so many different circumstances. And even on a very literal level. There were wheels turning in play that Already had no connection with whatsoever. But I think Already is caught by a guilt that what they have done, has set the world in motion to be the way it is today.

Which on the one hand is quite a selfish thought. You know? The feeling that you are in some way responsible for the end of the world. But I think on the other hand is so eclipsing a guilt, is so monstrous a responsibility, that they are destroying themselves about it. However, I don't know that I want to explicitly acknowledge that in the episode. So I want to talk about a way to—

Austin: I think it's good to— I think that's good to explicitly...I don't think, I think our show is at our best when we stop being cagey about some of the fun stuff in the shadows, and have the confidence that those things are...[Jack: Yeah.]...if they move us they will move other people who listen. And I— yeah, go ahead.

Jack: And I suppose it's worth saying and I think part of the reason that I have a real desire to be cagey about this is that I did it by accident? Already in Tales from the— Already in Dream Askew showed up first? [**Austin:** Right.] And was just like a drifter, who worked for a grocery delivery company, and I didn't cross their name off my name list. So when I named Frankie Already in Tales from the Loop, I was just like, "time for another character!" [laughs] And it was only when I started looking back through it that I was like, wait! Shit! Fuck!

Austin: So you did all the TV stuff as Frankie Already without any thought about this Already?

Jack: Yep, none at all.

Austin: Love it.

Jack: And there was something really joyful about that blurriness to me, and about like making moves and not knowing why you're making them. And, you know, I think—

Austin: So is this just— is Already just talking loosely about their childhood without ever saying these words to Providence.

Jack: Yes, I think so.

Austin: But saying, "I used to really love television when I was a kid" or whatever. Right?

Jack: Yeah. And I think also just like this vague concern that they have a responsibility for, like gestures widely and horribly. You know, all of, all of this.

Austin (as **Providence**): One second.

Austin: Says Providence, and then turns to look at the group and says:

(as **Providence**): We'll be right back. If you keep going ahead, go at half pace, so we can reconnect.

And then grabs you by the arm, high up on the arm, Already, and begins to lead you towards the huge wind turbines further out in the marshes. You know, we're still headed in that same kind of northwesterly direction, but I think everybody else is probably more on the northwest and we're maybe branching southwest to get to the wind turbines.

(as **Providence**): I need your help with something.

Jack: Already's — oooh, okay. Already is panicking. Already thinks that following this confession, following this, you know, here's "I'm responsible for this," the Auger is going to enact some sort of retribution [**Austin**: Ah.] because the world that Already grew up in was one— was from the Outlying Gangs, you know?

Austin: Right, right.

Jack: Like, oh, I confessed something vulnerable to you and now you're going to punish me for it.

Austin: Mhm. But I do explicitly say I need your help with something.

Jack (as **Already**): Whe— yeah, where are we going? What's happening?

Austin (as **Providence**): The turbines. Did you see the power? The power?

Jack (as **Already**): What are we doing there?

Austin (as **Providence**): It— no, that wasn't...that was somewhere else. We need to fix the power. I need someone else.

Jack (as **Already**): Robyn. You need, you can talk to Robyn. They've—

Austin (as **Providence**): No. It has to be you.

Jack (as **Already**): I'm sorry. I didn't—

Austin (as **Providence**): It happened somewhere else. It has to be you.

Jack (as **Already**): I'm sorry. I don't know when I could have made this right. But I'll do, I will, I will make it right now. Just— we can go back to the group. And keep going.

Austin (as **Providence**): You have to make it right.

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah, I will!

Austin (as **Providence**): And you have to be right with me. Come with me to the turbine.

[pause]

Jack (as **Already**): Duke?

Duke, you know, comes with.

Austin (as **Providence**): The dog can come.

Jack (as **Already**): Good.

Okay. Just sort of like allows myself to be led to the turbine looking, looking back at the group walking at half pace. Are people in the group looking back at Already and the Auger?

Dre: Yes.

Jack: [laughs] Okay, cool.

Austin: We walk to one of the wind turbines and I ask you to stand on the side opposite from me, so that the camera is picking up each of us from behind, standing in front of the wide round base of these wind turbines. It's a tall column. It's a single columned wind turbine. And the scale of the column is so big that it obscures most of the screen, let alone the other person and I call to you from around it. I say:

(as **Providence**): Okay, get, get as close as you can. Get up against it.

Jack (as **Already**): Okay.

Austin: Alright. And I do the same. I say:

(as **Providence**): Put your hands out.

Jack (as **Already**): Mhm?

Austin (as **Providence**): Put your hands out as far as they can go.

Jack (as **Already**): Mhm.

Austin (as **Providence**): Wrap them around the turbine.

Jack (as **Already**): Okay.

Jack: Confidence coming back to Already now 'cause this seems like a ritual and not that they're gonna get shot.

Austin (as **Providence**): I need you to touch my hands.

Which is impossible. It's impossible. This thing is—

Jack (as **Already**): It's too far away!

Austin (as **Providence**): I need you to touch my hands.

Jack (as **Already**): I don't think, I don't think that I can do that. I'm sorry.

Austin (as **Providence**): You said that you would, that you would make it right. I need you to reach out from where you are. And to touch my hands. I'm reaching too, Already. I'm there, I'm reaching. I need you to reach my hands.

Jack: Mm. Okay. Um, yeah, I think I manage it. I think...oh, is it— do we just get like an extreme close up on the hands?

Austin: Yeah, just on the hands. A hundred percent. I am doing a move. I am commencing the ritual "tripping the circuit." And so yeah, I think we get that close up

shot of the hands impossibly touching, but easily touching on the close up, right? **[Jack:** Yeah.] It's like the bulk of the shot. And the turbines stutter and then begin to spin backwards for a moment.

And this doesn't— this has not fixed anything in the timeline. [laughs] The world is not coming back too, but somewhere in another, in another time the power will hold instead of go out in a bar and a conversation won't be cut off in the middle. And maybe in our world, the conversation will continue as well. And in fact, maybe back at the Enclave the power will stay on today and the doors will stay shut as the bounty hunters begin to prod, to see if perhaps we're still there. And everyone will have the electricity that they need to send up the alarm and to close the shutters and to be safe. But we've tripped the circuit and kept the energy flowing.

You tell me how it feels for Already, because there is something...there is something otherworldly happening here. Something that either was about to spin off or had spun off reconnects.

Jack: Yeah, God. I think that Frankie, aged eight, is lying on her bed and is looking out at the window at the foot of her bed and she can see down the street, you know, all the lights in the street have— it's nighttime and they've all gone out. And all the porch lights on the houses down the street snap on, kind of like one by one and Already goes like, "huh" and like turns the page in her magazine and the front page of the magazine is like "Ridley's fighting Kevin in this week's climactic episode of *The Girl on the Bridge!*" And you know, Already keeps reading, keeps reading that and in the marsh the water, you know, sort of begins to seep through the hole in the toe of Already's boots.

Austin: Anything happening with the others as we've run off to do this strange ritual?

Ka-Ching, Ka-Ching

[01:20:10]

Ali: Um...

Dre: Hmm.

Austin: I feel like this is a classic, we've split the party and something should happen circumstance. I feel like maybe— is this, is this potentially a moment where we could get another— I mean, we've already set up, the trucks are roaming, so maybe what happens here is simple. Which is one of the...a Potato Potat.to truck comes over the bridge further up on the road and you're able to see it and and react to it but it's going to pass by where you all are. What do you do?

Ali: Is there like a place that we can hide off, like off the road?

Austin: Yeah, I imagine you're already— I imagine that we are like, if we ducked off here to the wind turbines, that y'all are similarly in this general area. This kind of big middle zone approach. I guess if we're going north, you could be across the way near the Bluff City Studios buildings. So you could literally go into there or you could go into like the wet marshland that ends up connecting to the secret tunnel there. But showing the barrel of the gun a little bit here **[Dre: Sure.] [Ali: Yeah.]** as they kind of draw the thread in on us.

Ali: And I think that's like a good image of us like leaving this sort of like lush, green space and the sound of like truck engines in the distance as Sam looks over her shoulder and we're now going into this like mucky building.

Austin: Right, this building that flooded years ago and never really got repaired. As far as I remember it? When we saw it in Tales from the Loop and the prop stuff it was all still fairly— oh actually we saw it in...we actually, [laughs] we actually saw this building in Gravity RIP, right? Because it was repurposed as the casino supply place.

Ali: Oh, that's right.

Dre: Ooooh.

Austin: Where they sell, where they like repair and sell new slot machines and stuff. So we're like, need to in some ways, this is another interesting gangs slash like borderline Society Intact place, right? So needing to like walk the line between being out of the

road enough that you don't get caught by the trucks, but don't get too near to this like terrible place of power that's tied to the Society Intact. You know? God, the Gravity RIP game was so funny. I forgot entirely about that place until just now. And maybe part of what's happening here, since this is...Jack, I'm gonna, I am gonna, / am going to pick up the Society Intact here.

Jack: Oh yeah, go ahead.

Austin: Because you have wandered into the Society Intact.

Jack: Yeah, one hundred percent.

Austin: And I think there are instantly the hum of camera drones lifting into the air as soon as you put a single footstep even within 10 meters of the old Bluff City Studios buildings that have now become this casino repair place. And they begin scanning for any sort of intruders. It's very important that no one understand how the slot machines work, for fear of them being hacked or gamed or outed exactly how, you know, exploitative they are. You know, they're in there cooking up the most, the most...what's the, what's the phrase I'm looking for? Not hazardous UX, there's a, there's like a term...

Jack: Oh, like dark UI?

Austin: Dark UI. Yes, dark UI shit,

Jack: The like addiction by design, sort of.

Austin: For people who don't know, dark UI is not just when you put together a dark theme for your favorite app. It is the dark patterns, which is, that's the, that's the actual phrase I'm looking for, is dark patterns, are things that are meant to deceive you and bring you deeper into a system that's meant to kind of exploit you, so think about— I think we've talked about this on the show before but things like having a button that says like "do you agree to give us your data?" and then it's like, "yes," and then there's no "no" button. You have to like find the X button to say no, and even that doesn't ever feel like you've maybe done that necessarily.

Jack: Yeah, another good example for one is like Battle Pass or microtransactions that you can only make for a short period after signing up to a thing as like, this is your, you know, welcome pack that you need to get.

Dre: Oh, the gacha games, love that one.

Austin: Oh, yeah, they're filled with this, a hundred percent. A hundred percent. So yeah, they're the— they are devising the most dark of all dark patterns inside and so are ve— like, you know, I think there are guards walking the periphery of this place. And unlike the bounty hunters from Potato Potat.to, they don't necessarily...they're not looking for you or for Already specifically, but they are looking for anyone who they will assume is some sort of corporate spy, you know? Or worse, maybe someone from a government, ugh. You know, and so they are on the lookout. I think, I think maybe it's not just these camera drones but it's people you know, dressed in bright security uniforms with...they have whatever the logo of this casino repair place on their thing, you know, some sort of slot machine giving a big thumbs up, you know, and then underneath it's says security—

Jack: It's called Ka-Ching.

Austin: It's called Ka-Ching. Ka-Ching and then just big bold block font "security" underneath it.

Jack: [laughing] The world's worst security company.

Austin: Uh huh. I mean, they're all holding guns also, right?

Jack: Oh, yeah!

Austin: It's, it's...they're here to hurt people if anybody gets too close. So be careful navigating this space, is what I would say to Robyn, and Sam. And Quincy. Quincy is fucking quiet. Quincy got super quiet. [Ali laughs] And is clutching the broken umbrella close to their chest as like a, you know, a sort of protective symbol. What do you do?

Dre: [sighs] Okay.

(as **Robyn**): Sam, which way are we going?

Ali (as **Sam**): You're asking me? Um...

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah!

Ali (as **Sam**): [defensively] Okay! Um, um, um...

Austin (as **Quincy**): You're gonna repair me, right?

Austin: Says Quincy.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah, of course! Are you, are you alright? Are things getting worse?

Austin (as **Quincy**): [distorted] No!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh, they're getting worse.

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh, hey, Quincy here.

Ali: And I think I pull out like a peppermint from my, my, my pocket.

Austin: Just a loose peppermint?

Ali: No, it's in a plastic!

Austin: [laughs] Okay. Like a little pla– like a, like a–

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah. God, you remember the day we got the peppermints, the pep– someone brought back peppermints from some sort of Delve they went on into the ruins of the Society Intact. And they came back with just like 5,000 mint– like peppermints? And we all got sick on peppermints that week?

Jack: They were peppermints that were created on brand for a company that folded before the event that they were going to be given out at. [Austin: Yes, yes.] So one side

of the peppermint says like the name of the company, they're called like, you know, like, "B&R," like "Bioengineering." And on the other side, it says like—

Austin: Oh! [laughs heartily]

Jack: What?

Austin: Oh, the company, not that— I thought that you were saying that was the manufacture— that was the mint company...

Jack: [laughing] Oh, no no no.

Austin: ...was "B&R Bioengineering."

Jack: Maybe it is, I don't know. And the other side says like...it says something like "Radicalizing the Future!" And these were just like in a massive— you know, like, post office bins, you know, like those huge wheeled bins full of letters, just contains B&R Bioengineering mints. Radicalizing the future.

Austin: Love it. Yeah. And, and Quincy takes the mint. And is like,

(as **Quincy**): Mhm.

Ali (as **Sam**): We're gonna be fine.

Austin: And so yeah, you're, again, looking at the map you're not that far from the secret entrance, but it does require moving through this part of the territory that is right next to Ka-Ching, which I'll change on the map now to say Ka-Ching. Uh. [imitating cashier register sound] Ka-Ching! Casino repair.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay. Sam, I need you to do me a big favor.

Ali (as **Sam**): What do you got for me?

Dre (as **Robyn**): If we're gonna make it through this quietly, I gotta go pick some stuff up? For Quincy. So I need you to just kind of take care of Quincy for a while.

Ali (as **Sam**): [slowly] You have to pick some stuff up?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah.

Ali (as **Sam**): What kind of stuff?

Dre (as **Robyn**): It's kind of one of those things, you don't really know it till you see it.

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh, right. Yeah.

Dre (as **Robyn**): I know it sounds like bullshit, but—

Ali (as **Sam**): No, no. I mean.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Don't, st—...now of all times is a bad time to be cussin'.

Austin: And then does like a really loud peppermint like [juicy teeth sucking sound].
Like, like to try to—

(as **Quincy**): I need more flavor!

Ali (as **Sam**): Okay, well just, just do what you got to do and we'll be...should we meet you somewhere?

Dre (as **Robyn**): No, I'll, I'll, I'll find you.

Ali (as **Sam**): That's not going to work! Look at where— look around!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah, I know where you're going. I'll find you.

Ali (as **Sam**): Ugh, yeah, okay. Yeah, okay. Can you find the other two? While you're out there? While we're all wandering?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh my god, I have to find your ex now too?

Austin: Oh my god.

Ali (as **Sam**): [sputtering] They're...they're companions! They're part of the— Already's out there, too.

Dre (as **Robyn**): They're fine. They're off hugging big equipment or whatever they just did.

Ali (as **Sam**): That stuff is important. Like whatever you're doing. And can we just have some group unity? For once today?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Geez. Okay. What are you so worried about?

Ali: [laughing] I don't know why I'm acting like this to be honest.

Austin: [laughs] Sometimes you just have a day! You're a night person, you know?

Ali: [laughing] You know what? I don't know why I'm bringing this energy to the table today.

Dre: No, it's great.

Austin: That's, that's how it goes.

Dre: Somebody's got to be the grownup here.

Ali (as **Sam**): We'll meet you by the entrance. And yeah, just, you know, just...just keep an eye out.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay.

Ali (as **Sam**): Okay.

Dre: I'm doing this as one of my weak moves. [**Austin**: Ah.] I am isolating myself to work on a secret personal project.

Ali: Ooooh.

Austin: [groans] Ooh, no. Where are you going to get these— to get this equipment?

Dre: Oh, you know where I'm going. Come on.

Austin: You have to say it out loud.

Dre: I gotta go into Ka-Ching.

Austin: I knew it, no, bad. Oh, no. So what is it, are you like hopping the fence and like sneaking between guard paths and et cetera? What's this look like?

Dre: I'm just looking for the biggest dumpster.

Austin: [wearily] M'kay.

Dre: I mean, I don't need the nice stuff.

Austin: You're right, I guess you don't need the nice, the nice stuff. I think there is a— unless someone else who has ideas here for, for what, what does approaching the dumpster of Ka-Ching? What threats does it hold? Besides just the security guards and the camera drones?

Dre: [cross] Uhh...bees?

Austin: [cross] Or is it as simple as that? You know?

Dre: Yeah. I mean that stuff's pretty bad.

Austin: I'm sor— did you, did you say bees?

Dre: Yeah. Bees.

Austin: Because of being a dumpster and being like this kind of wet, terrible morning. Yeah, I kind of—

Dre: Mhm. Bees and or mosquitoes.

Austin: I mean both probably, right?

Dre: Could be a snake in there?

Austin: I was pro— okay, it's not, it's probab— let's stick with the bees.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: That's scary enough. [Ali laughs] Yeah, I mean, I think, I think that you're able to get there, hopping this— I mean, actually are you? What's, what do you, how do you...how do you go about this? How do you go about actually getting into this locked up compound and finding the, wherever the dumpster is and...what's that look like? And then what sort of move are you using?

Dre: Hm. I guess the move I'm using is "head out to scavenge or barter for supplies."

Austin: Yeah, for sure.

Dre: And it's probably not jumping the fence. It's probably finding like a big enough hole in the fence. A place where like it's twisted enough or weak enough that I can kind of do a couple of quick snip snips and open up enough space to move in there.

Austin: Right, you finish the job. Yeah. That makes sense to me. Yeah, I think you're able to get there, you're able to get to the dumpster. What is the thing you're hoping to find? You know, equipment wise or, you know, materials wise.

Dre: Anything that has to do with...like, anything that like picks up transmissions of any kind.

Austin: Oh, like an old radio or a...

Dre: So like a radio, a walkie talkie, part of like a t— like anything. A telephone, a modem.

Austin: Right. I think, I think— ooo, a modem is fun. What would they have here? What would they have thrown out? You know, I think that they have thrown out...you find a webcam or something like it, that has its own broadcasting array. It was a prototype that was meant to attach to slot machines so that it could read the eye movements, the micro movements of the eye, to see if a player was getting ready to leave the casino behind and leave the slot machine behind and it would give them a minor win to keep

them there. But it couldn't do that processing on board, it'd have to— and also all the slot machines themselves are tested for things like that, you know, but the camera could send that thing off, that request off to the cloud, and the cloud is allowed to process the micro movements of a gambler's eyes, just the machine itself isn't legally allowed to.

Dre: Oh yeah, sure.

Austin: And so this has like, you know, some sort of 5g or future-g chip thing. And I think that you are able to like, "oh yeah, this is perfect," like this totally has the sort of, the stuff that you need. You get a few of them. And in the middle of you digging through the trash, someone just shows up with a small trash bag? Like a small— not a trash bag, like a takeout food plastic bag filled with stuff and he's wearing a button up shirt, actually he's wearing a polo shirt that says Ka-Ching on it. It says Ka-Ching and then in big block font underneath that it says, "Manager." It says "Floor Manager." And he's like, "Wh—?" And he just has like his lunch trash. And he looks at you. And he goes:

(as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): You're not supposed to be here, buddy.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Yeah, you're right.

Austin: And then gently flings his lunch trash into the dumpster. He doesn't like throwing out food trash inside. He thinks it gets bugs and so he goes outside every day after finishing his lunch.

Dre: Sure, and look at the bees.

Austin: Look at the bees.

(as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): What are you doing here? I'm gonna have to, I'm gonna have to call security.

Dre (as **Robyn**): [sighs deeply] Do you have to?

Austin (as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): Yeah, it's my responsibility.

Dre (as **Robyn**): No.

Austin (as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): What's your name? What's your name?
What's your name?

Dre (as **Robyn**): Uh, Robbie.

Austin (as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): All right, Robbie, what's your email?

Ali: [giggles]

Dre (as **Robyn**): [disappointed] Oh. Is it re— does everybody have an email but me?

Austin (as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): Robbie, no email. You know, I'm gonna get my phone out. Yeah, I'm moving sl— you—

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh, you have one of those? What kind you got? Hey, let me see it.

Austin (as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): [imitating dialing] Beep boop beep. No, stay away from— Hey, stay away from me, buddy. Robbie. Robbie No Phone. No email. Security? We're gonna— I'm at the back dumpster.

Austin: He says into his—

(as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): It's Angel. It's Angel? I'm at the back dumpster. You stay right here. All right, that's proprietary. You drop— put those down.

Dre: Um...hey, does this person have a gun?

Austin: No. This is, this is someone who is some sort of like repair floor manager. No gun.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: This is an authority figure, is what I've introduced.

Dre: Hey. I have a follow up question.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: I don't remember if we definitively said what happened to the gun of the bounty hunter that I knocked out.

Austin: Anybody remember?

Jack: I also don't remember. I feel like...hmm. Well, we wouldn't have left it with Ketchle.

Austin: Almost certainly not.

Dre: I mean, if we are okay with it I'm gonna say that I have it.

Ali: I'm fine with that.

Austin: I'm fine with it. Uh huh.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: I pull the gun on Angel, but I'm holding it upside down.

Austin: Which is to say...you're, it–

Dre: It's a pistol right?

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Dre: Yeah. So like I have my pinky finger–

Austin: In the trigger. Uh huh.

Dre: –looped around the trigger. Uh huh.

Ali: That's still not great trigger discipline.

Austin (as **Angel**): Trigger discipline, buddy. Hey, don't put your g– hey hey hey, s'got a gun. They got a gun? This...uh, th– help?

Austin: And you can hear the feet of security coming closer.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh, boy. Okay, see, I thought, I thought that would make you hang up. That didn't do it, huh.

Austin (as **Angel**): What are my options? What are my options?

Dre (as **Robyn**): You could have just been chill.

Austin (as **Ka-Ching Floor Manager**): Chill!? You're stealing! That's work! You're stealing from, [with gritted teeth] you're stealing from work.

Dre (as **Robyn**): It's not my work.

Austin (as **Angel**): It's my work!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Did you work on this?

Austin (as **Angel**): Maybe!

Dre (as **Robyn**): How does it work?

Austin (as **Angel**): It's proprietary. I signed an NDA. I'm not telling you nothing.

This could be a little, this could be a little sting operation. You're trying to see if, if I'll say the details I'm not supposed to say.

Dre: [sighs] I'm trying to think about how...hm. I'm looking at my moves. To figure out how I want to like color the scene. I really don't want to appeal to justice and reason with this person.

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: Um...boy, the idea of treating this person like a project instead of a person is interesting to me [**Austin:** Oh my god.] but I have no idea what that looks like.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: Oh okay. All right.

(as **Robyn**): So what, what could I do to make you hang up?

Austin: [sighs] Great question. Is this one of your...is this one of your things?

Dre: No. No, no, no, I'm, I'm treating this person like just a problem to solve.

Austin: Oh, I see.

(as **Angel**): Well, I'm gonna hang up as soon as they get here. So you can just sit right there and you can put the gun down and I'll hang up.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay, so if, if I keep the gun up, you don't like that?

Austin (as **Angel**): No, I don't like that!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh, okay. Interesting. Interesting. So if I keep the gun up, you don't like that.

Austin (as **Angel**): Gah, put it down!

Dre (as **Robyn**): No, I don't think I will. Will you hang up the phone?

Austin (as **Angel**): Buh buh buh buh do- uh, if you put it down!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Mm, I think, I think you need to hang up the phone first.

Austin: And there's like a glint in his eyes as if he sees something you don't. And he goes:

(as **Angel**): All right, sure, yeah, I'll put the phone down!

Austin: And just drops it, just drops the— hangs up and drops the phone. Because they're here. They're within eyesight now.

Dre: Okay. Sure. Yeah. Uh, hmm.

Austin: What do you do?

Jack: I think you know, coming over the hill, come two figures. These are the security guards that have been called. One of them is called Legs, and is just like a huge fellow with a shotgun. You know, like, held loosely in his hands. And the other one is called Big Arnie.

Ali: Oh.

Dre: That's fun.

Jack: And he is riding a Boston Dynamics dog. They both have the Ka-Ching thing. And Big Arnie says:

(as **Big Arnie**): Hey, what's the probl— hey, you! Drop that!

Jack: And shoots a warning shot over your head.

Austin (as **Angel**): Yah!

Dre (as **Robyn**) Whoa!

Austin: Angel's on the ground.

Dre: Yeah, I jump into the dumpster.

Austin: Hands over head.

Jack and Ali: [laugh]

Dre (as **Robyn**): Angel, get in here! They're crazy!

Austin: Angel is not— Angel is hands on head, on the ground.

Jack: I don't know how to be honest to the fiction here in a way that doesn't involve them capturing Robyn. Or—

Austin: I don't— me either!

Jack: Like, capturing if we're lucky.

Dre: Listen. I can get out of this. This is fine.

Austin: [snorts] Yeah?

Dre: Yeah!

Austin: All right. All right.

Dre: I mean, I could— one of my strong moves is just "get out of harm's way."

Austin: Sure. But we also have to be true to the fiction and right now in a dumpster.

Dre: Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Surrounded by [laughing] two men and a Boston Dynamics robot. And the Boston Dynamics robot is like, singing like a bird. And what you have learned this is, is the way that the robots communicate with the drones. The robots and the drones are constantly in conversation with like, sounds that are right on the edge of human hearing. So it sounds like hearing a thrush singing or a hummingbird singing. But it's like the trill of the robots communicating with the drones to like take position around the dumpster.

Dre: Hm hm hm hm hm hm hm.

Ali: I, um...I don't want to like buy Dre an out here?

Austin: Uh huh?

Dre: No, that's fair.

Ali: But I kind of want these bees to swarm these attackers.

Austin: Oh, that's fun.

Ali: As a way of being like— 'cause one of the, one of the Earth Itself's desires, which is what I'm picking up here, is strange new forms? And I feel like we're close enough to the tunnel [**Austin:** Oh, yeah.] and some of what we established with the Earth Itself is like, like physical change. "When you want to describe weather, mutation, beasts or the natural world," and I think beasts slash mutation is what I'm picking up here.

Jack: BEE-sts.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Ali: And I, well I like the...I like kind of interrupting the scene with this as this like, this additional tension in terms of like, oh, it's like, people with guns and a war robot can show up but like, it's still fucked up out here in a way that they probably can't contend with either? Just because like the world has shattered.

Austin: God, what if they just start— Okay, what if when...here's my pitch, unless you had a particular pitch already, Ali.

Ali: No, no, I'm open to...

Austin: When Robyn jumped into the dumpster...I don't know that they like hurt the hive or if they...I don't think that they necessarily did hurt the hive. But I think that the effect is...here's really where I want to get to. Bees start showing up and they don't stop showing up. It's like an alarm went off for them to return home to protect whatever is near this dumpster that they would be defending. The queen, the hive, whatever that is. And they just spill out of the marshes all around us. They spill out of the vents for the building. There's too many of them. They are a mass, they block out the sky, like not entirely but in blotches, you literally can't see through them to the blue of the sky. And you know, some of them had been resting maybe during the rainstorm and so they've all woken up from the sound of the gunshot and it's not— I don't know that they're like targeting the security guards so much as targeting everything and everyone in the area. You know, they are like, they are in red alert mode. And again, they're big and they

move faster than bees are supposed to move. And they flicker in and out and they are here.

Ali: Yeah. I love that.

Austin: Bad time to be a Ka-Ching employee.

Ali: [laughs]

Dre: Mhm. Mhm.

Jack: Yeah, I think, you know, the guards respond as you would expect when swarmed and attacked by bees. I think that the robot...uh, Big Arnie tries to get the robot under control but it doesn't 'cause the robot is also, its sensors are all getting fucked up. And it like throws him off the back. And so he gets up and starts running indoors. They open a side door and someone sticks their head out and says "what's going on!?" And then just like a wave of bees sweeps into the Ka-Ching facility.

Austin: [laughs] Oh, no!

Jack: You know, you can...I'm thinking of the great bits in the first season of Fargo where an assassin enters a building and we just track the chaos outside the building without seeing what's going on. You know, you get the sense that bees are now starting to move rapidly through this facility giving you the opportunity to slip away with the goods if you want, Dre.

Dre: Hmm. Yeah, sure. Um...yeah, the only other thing I was gonna do was also try to rob Angel— Angelou, but I should probably just get out while I can get out.

Austin: What are you gonna take from Angel?

Dre: I don't know, what does he got?

Austin: The phone, um, I guess it's on the ground now.

Dre: Eh, I don't want that phone.

Austin: Wallet, cash. This is all Society Intact shit. You know what I mean? **[Dre: Yeah.]** So it's all like the thing that says where his car is parked. Um. Chapstick. That might be useful.

Dre: Oh, where's his car parked?

Austin: Out front. At the— or out to the side of the parking lot.

Dre: Does he have car keys?

Austin: There's like an underground— yeah, he has his car— well, he has his car fob. It's a thumbprint fob. **[Dre: Sure.]** That you, you know?

Dre: Hey, can I take his car?

Austin: I mean, you don't have his thumb to use the thumbprint thing.

Dre: Ooooooh.

Austin: You know?

Jack: Also I feel like this car has some grim telemetry that could—

Austin: Oh yeah.

Dre: Oh yeah yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: Do you want to be known— but I mean if you get back to your shop. Maybe!

Dre: Hm. Hm. Hm. **[laughing]** When you said it needs his thumb, Austin, I just had the worst thought because my first weak move is "take apart something crucial—

Austin: Oh my god.

Dre: -to repurpose its parts."

Austin: Jesus Christ.

Dre: I'm not gonna take apart this guy's hand.

Austin: I was going to say, I feel like the Robyn we know— I mean, I don't know! I don't—

Dre: I will say this. I think Robyn does not give a fuck about Society Intact people

[**Austin:** Right.] in a way that is vastly different.

Austin: I wouldn't want to linger on it?

Dre: But I still don't think they are a cut your thumb off person.

Austin: Okay. That's an important distinction. I'd allow it but I, you know, we got content warnings for a reason.

Dre: Yeah. No, no.

Austin: But, but yeah.

Dre: That's fine! You know what? I'll take, I'll take his wallet though.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Dre: There was a thing where we could have used money earlier. So.

Austin: That's true! That's true. All right.

Dre: I'll throw— he can hide in the dumpster. It's fine. It's safe in there.

Austin: I think he's going to get stung a bunch is what's going to happen and he's going to try to run inside. And then he's going to see the bees are already inside which is a problem.

Ali: Oh, he's going to do the little Animal Crossing...[laughing]

Austin: A hund— yeah, he's doing the whole...he has had the whole Animal Crossing...that one, that one, TikTok again, with the music playing? Where he kept thinking he was okay. And then wasn't.

Jack: [laughing] Oh yeah.

Austin: God.

Jack: The tarantula coming up from nowhere.

Austin: Yes. Exactly.

Dre: [laughing]

At the Tunnel

[01:50:55]

Austin: Cool. I think at this point this is probably time for Providence and Already to have gotten caught back up with Sam and Quincy.

Jack: Yeah.

(as **Already**): Hey.

Austin (as **Providence**): Where's Robyn?

Ali (as **Sam**): They had to, um, they had to, um, go get some stuff. Important.

Ali: And like sort of side gesture to glance at Quincy.

Austin: Right. Yeah, Quincy. Yeah. Nodding slowly.

(as **Providence**): I see.

Ali (as **Sam**): How'd y'all fare?

Austin: I just look at Already.

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah, good. We did some kind of ritual. We got the...we turned the power back on during a...during a blackout.

Ali (as **Sam**): Oh, cool. Yeah.

Austin (as **Providence**): It should sustain.

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah. It was, it was, yeah, it was good.

Ali (as **Sam**): So we're straight now?

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah, I think so. I think so. Um, yeah, I feel like we should, we should probably...we should probably make for wherever Robyn wants to take Quincy.

Ali (as **Sam**): Yeah, they said they'd meet us there? So I think getting as close to where we're going is our best...our best bet.

Jack (as **Already**): Are those bees over there?

Ali (as **Sam**): [sighing] Yeah.

Austin (as **Providence**): Robin will be fine. I think.

Jack: What does the—

Austin: [cross] We hear the gunshot over here?

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: Probably! Gunshots are loud.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, gunshots are *loud*.

Jack: Oh man.

Ali: And we probably don't hear that many of them.

Austin: No, it was just the one. Which is worse.

Jack: Yeah, but I feel like in this world as well, you don't go towards the gunshot.

Ali: Oh no.

Austin: [shaking head] Mm. Mm.

Jack: Is this like a real fixing our expressions and going "we're going to meet Robyn at the rendezvous point."

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: Mhm. Quincy is worried. Quincy is visibly worried, I think. And is like, the thing that they can't put into words is they're worried that Robyn is hurt. And they're worried that if Robyn can't—, if Robyn is hurt, then no one can help them.

Jack: Right.

Austin: And they don't know how to like untangle— and they feel guilty that that's why they're afraid. They feel like they should be, they should be scared that Robyn's hurt but really they're scared that Robyn being hurt means that they are going to get hurt too, and they don't— they feel like that's not...their mom taught them that's not how you're supposed to treat people. You're not supposed to treat people...people are important, it's not what people can do for you that's important. People are important. And, but they feel like they're breaking that rule right now. But they don't know how not to be afraid of that right now either. But what that's coming out as is them being like:

(as **Quincy**): We shouldn't he— we should, we should help, we should— we need to help them. We need to go help them. If they're in trouble. You're supposed to help people.

Ali (as **Sam**): No, no, they're not in trouble.

Austin (as **Quincy**): I feel like they're in trouble.

Ali (as **Sam**): Well, sometimes you have to trust that your friends are capable when they ask you to trust them.

Austin: They have one of those like snap bracelets, you know the snap bracelets from when we were kids.

Jack: Yeah. With the hologram on?

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah. And they're snapping it over and over in a way that is like...it makes their whole wrist waver with like...like the video footage of their wrist is like coming more and more out of sync with reality and it's like wobbly. And they're like:

Austin (as **Quincy**): Mhm mhm mhm mhm?

Jack (as **Already**): [soothing] Hey, buddy.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Mm-hmm!

Jack (as **Already**): Give me that. I want to take a look at that.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Mm-mm.

Jack (as **Already**): No?

Austin (as **Quincy**): This was a gift.

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah? Where'd you get it from?

Austin (as **Quincy**): Robyn gave it to me.

Jack (as **Already**): Oh.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Robyn found it in a car.

Jack (as **Already**): Wow. Well, then, that's a bit of Robyn that's with us right now, and you know, just as surely as that snap bracelet, you know, uh...can...

Austin (as **Quincy**): It's called a gauntlet. It's my gauntlet of power.

Jack (as **Already**): Whoa! [Jack chuckles]

Austin (as **Quincy**): You can't see it, because it's invisible, but when I snap it, it comes on, and I get my powers.

Jack (as **Already**): That's incredible. What are those powers?

Austin (as **Quincy**): Uh, telepathy.

Jack (as **Already**): Oh!

Austin (as **Quincy**): Telepathy is when you can move things around with your mind.

Jack (as **Already**): Yep.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Um, and I can see the future, also. If I put it up, I can see. I, like, cover—

Austin: And they reach up and cover their eyes, and they can see the—

(as **Quincy**): I can see the future now.

Jack (as **Already**): Whoa! What can you see?

Austin (as **Quincy**): It's snowing.

Jack (as **Already**): Whoa! That sounds great.

Austin: Hearing all of this, Providence kneels down, as if it's real, [Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh] as if it might be some sort of relic. And I do think that she leans over and is like:

(as **Providence**): That relic is a powerful gift from a loved one. Treat it with kindness and treasure it always.

Austin: And Quincy is just like:

(as **Quincy**): Yeah, obviously!

Austin: And then kind of, you know, involuntarily turns to look in the direction of the

tunnel where they know they need to go to get fixed up.

Jack: How do we meet back up with Robyn?

Dre: Oh, I'm at the tunnel.

Jack: Oh, you're just— you're fully there when we arrive?

Austin: You've just made it.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: We arrive, and you're already there. Ah!

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: God, I love this repeat image of, like, groups of people encountering people [Austin: Mm-hmm.] that they were or weren't expecting to see in the road. Like, this is the same thing that we've been doing with Augur.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Yeah. You come upon me, and I'm still holding the gun upside down. [Austin laughs] I'm trying to figure out if there's a better way to use it.

Austin: Robyn runs— sorry, not Robyn. Quincy runs over to you, Robyn, and jumps up to be like:

(as **Quincy**): [hushed] Ooh, I have a secret. I have a secret. I have a secret!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Oh, hi.

Austin (as **Quincy**): I have a secret. Hi. Every—

Dre (as **Robyn**): Uh, hold on. Hold on, one second. One second.

Dre: I put the gun down on the ground, very gingerly. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay, what's up?

Austin (as **Quincy**): [hushed] Everybody else was so scared, but I told them—
[Jack laughs] I told them that you had it and it wasn't a big deal. I said— I said,
“Put it on their tab.” [Jack and Ali laugh]

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay. We still have to teach you how to use that right, but I
really appreciate it.

Austin: Beaming. Smiling. Beaming, literally. Putting out light. Literally, there is a glow
to this child.

Dre: Yeah.

(as **Robyn**): Okay, hey. I've got something for you. I've been working on it, while I
waited for you all.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Uh huh?

Dre (as **Robyn**): First, I need you to open your mouth.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Aaaah!

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay. Can you close your eyes?

Austin (as **Quincy**): Mmm!

Dre (as **Robyn**): I'm gonna put something on your tongue, and then I just need
you to swallow, okay?

Austin (as **Quincy**): [mouth open] Uh huh!

Dre (as **Robyn**): It's gonna feel a little funny, but it's gonna help a lot.

Austin (as **Quincy**): Uh huh.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Okay. Here we go.

Dre: And I place the, like, USB plug [**Austin:** Uh huh.] from the end of the webcam onto Quincy's tongue. [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh.

Dre: The cable has been, like, cut open, and the cords have been, like, frayed out and rearranged into different shapes and numbers.

Austin: Ooh.

Dre: And then they re-meet at the end again, and I've just, like, fused the ends shut.

Austin: Is this some sort of move?

Dre: Yeah. I'm using one of my strong moves, which is "ease somebody's pain."

Austin: Amazing. And I think that that totally works, then, right? The signal kind of comes back into focus a little bit more, to the degree that I think a thing that happens is...Quincy has, like— I mean, the signal— I guess that's not true, because this is easing someone's pain. The signal hasn't been fixed yet, just the pain has.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So I do think the more...the bits of Quincy that were, like, bouncing around aren't bouncing around anymore, but the picture is still fuzzy, because we still have to go into the tunnel to get that all fixed up, you know? Which we're basically at the tunnel now, so now it's time to navigate a strange, you know, horrific space that's part M. C. Escher and part *Control*, as we try to find our way to wherever the Quincy, you know, VHS tape is. And we keep saying "VHS tape," but as a reminder, these are like huge reel-to-reel things using magnetic tape that is—

Jack: Drums of tape, right?

Austin: Yeah, big drums. Big, huge, tall cylinders. Like, person-sized, you know? Are

any of us any good at moving through spaces like this?

Jack: I am, but I feel complicated about it, because this is where Already would go to futz with the recordings.

Austin: Oh, right! Uh huh. Right.

Jack: Just fully disassociating here. Just, you know, like, pale. Has gone pale. Is, you know, almost silent. Walking with purpose to try and get— you know, I think Already recognizes that they're useful here, but this is the site of what they consider to be the way they caused the apocalypse.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: And there's definitely been a softening of that since the turning on the light ritual [Austin: Mm-hmm.] which I think definitely sort of eased, uh...what does Dre's move say? Like, ease somebody's pain.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But this is scary to them.

Austin: Have you been back here since then?

Jack: No. There was a point at—

Austin: It's changed.

Jack: Ooh.

Austin: There are more hallways than there were. You know that experience that you have sometimes when you go back to a place from when you were a kid, and you're like, "This place is smaller than I remember. Like, I remember it towering over me, and now it's just this little...this was the hallway I used to walk down, and I used to dread walking down this hallway to class? It's like nothing."

Jack: Mm.

Austin: This is the opposite of that.

Jack: [laughs] Okay. It's just bad.

Austin: There are more twists and turns than there used to be. There are doors you're confident you know what's behind them, and it's just a hallway closet instead of another hall that you're supposed to take. The lighting's wrong. The lighting is— it's like someone came in and changed all of the emergency lighting to be a little, like, sicklier, a little darker. Not...it changes from hallway to hallway and room to room. Sometimes it's like red lighting that lets you maintain your night vision, and then sometimes you walk into a room, and it's just bright blue light that's like everything is overlit by these florescents, and it just completely fucks you up, so the next time you're in a dark hallway, you can't see for shit until another, like, five minutes of adjustment happens.

Jack: God.

Austin: And most importantly, you know the direction you're supposed to— you have, like, the north/south/east/west, like...you know you're supposed to go south from here, but you can't catch the right doorway that's going to let you go south for more than a few feet, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: I mean, that's the situation as it stands. You can make your moves and stuff, obviously.

Already's Vision

[02:02:45]

Jack: Yeah, I'm gonna make a move, which is “accidentally open your brain to the psychic maelstrom.”

Austin: [amused sound] Oh.

Jack: And what happens is that the screen turns blue, the screen of the podcast that you're listening to.

Austin: Uh huh, that you're listening to. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: And the opening strains of the *Jeopardy* episode play, and Johnny Gilbert says, "Live from the Alex Trebek stage in Los Angeles, California, it's *Jeopardy*!" and *Jeopardy* candidates characters are introduced, and they look at the board, and they say, you know, "Joining us today is so-and-so from Maryland, and you know, what did they do today?" and the person looks straight at the camera and says, you know, like, "You broke the world. You and your tampering with our lives destroyed this, and you will be remembered forever in dust and filth," and then Alex Trebek looks at the stage— or I guess it's Ken Jennings now, because it's the Alex Trebek stage.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Jack: Looks at the screen and says, you know, "It's true," and we move through some more questions. And of course, for the rest of the group, they're just watching Already, just, you know, tears silently pouring down their face. And eventually, they just— Already breaks off at a run through this dark hallway, and by the time you find them, they're just curled up in a ball on the side of the...just on the side of the pathway, as the 25 minute episode of *Jeopardy* in which all of their destructive faults were replayed as come to a conclusion. So, I'm gonna take a token for that weak move.

Austin: Were there commercial breaks?

Jack: Oh, yeah, there are commercial breaks. There's the *Hungry Hungry Hippos* commercial.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Jack: Except the Already in the the *Hungry Hungry Hippos* commercial is just, like, gaunt and pale-faced, and there's like a little line of blood coming from her nose. And there's commercials for, you know, cereal boxes, but when people turn the cereal box over, nothing comes out. [Austin laughs quietly] Fridges full of rotting meat. It's just, it's a

real bad look.

Austin: That sounds terrible.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, and it is about 25 minutes long, so I guess it's half an hour with the commercials, for Already's experience of it.

Austin: I think someone should pick up the Psychic Maelstrom as you opened your brain to it.

Jack: Yeah, since we're here now. [Ali laughs]

Austin: We have to select a second desire for it. Our first desire was "human dependence." The other options are—

Jack: And a human showed up.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: [laughs quietly] A human has entered its territory.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Yeah, "pick up when someone uses a psychic gift, seeks out the strange, or invokes the Maelstrom." You've definitely done that. The other possible desires are cosmic revelation, revenge, entropy, fervent intimacy, or to be ushered into the world forever.

Dre: I think I picked it up the first time, so I want to let somebody else pick it up this time.

Austin: Mm. Ali, do you have strong feelings about any of these or about making any of the moves that are listed here?

Ali: Well, I feel like it's already entered someone's sensory experience.

Austin: It totally has, yes. You've seen that happen.

Ali: Perhaps not at the right moment, but certainly a moment.

Austin: No, no. Mm-hmm. So maybe we've already done that move.

Ali: Yeah. Boy.

Austin: It's interesting, right? Because I feel like if we pick cosmic revelation, then we have undersigned the vision that Already just had, and I don't know that I think that's true. I don't think Already is responsible for this. I know that Already isn't responsible for it, but I don't want to say mechanically that that vision was therefore a revelation. But is it revenge? Is it being spoken from this desire to be ushered into the world forever? Not really, if it's blaming Already for it.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Maybe it is revenge, in the sense that it doesn't...what if the psychic maelstrom doesn't want to be a psychic maelstrom and wants to be at ease and is blaming Already and others for ushering it into the world already? But then it is, again, putting the blame on Already.

Jack: Right. Yes. Already did the equivalent of, you know, like, scuffing up a carpet in a building that was already on fire.

Austin: Right. Right. Now, is it possible for someone to see that and go like, "Yeah, well, it was people like you who did this, people who thought..." you know.

Jack: And I could definitely see that, because on some level, it was people like that.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It was people saying, "I can utilize the function of narrative [**Austin:** Yeah.] to exclude or include people," which is on a much larger scale, but is similar to what Already did [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] when she was saying, "What if they brought back the Crystal Pepsi?" you know? [Jack and Austin laugh]

Austin: Right. Exactly.

Jack: “Can I make them do that?”

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: “Can I make me be...”

Austin: The same impulse that said, “Quincy is a bad Pokémon. Get Quincy out of this show,” is the same impulse that said, “Bring me back Crystal Pepsi.”

Jack: Or is the same impulse that made Already say, “I would look better if I was taller.”

Austin: Right. Right. Yeah.

Jack: And then they engineered it so that they were.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Or, you know. Um...

Austin: We don't have to answer this, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: We can leave this open for now, if we want, and maybe it'll become clearer.

Jack: Well, on some level, this is inevitable, as we have physically moved our characters' bodies to the site of this place. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. Mm-hmm.

Jack: But yeah, we could just progress. You know, we could see how things develop with Quincy, and, you know, the psychic maelstrom can continue to rumble away.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Is anyone caring for Already in this moment?

Jack: Okay. That's interesting.

Austin: I mean, yeah. I'm curious if— I mean, I'm giving people a moment to maybe

look at moves [**Dre:** Mm.] and to think about whether that's a thing that they would do.

Jack: But I do— you know, Already's character is an outsider who has come to the group.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And has caused a lot of problems, you know?

Austin: Mm.

Jack: So I do also want to leave space open and be honest with: the answer might be, "We've got our own stuff to deal with right now." I think that is...that is equally interesting.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: I do— hmm. So, like, what do we see, as you're experiencing this?

Ali: Yeah. That was part of my question too.

Jack: It's like a breakdown. I think Already is crying and runs; you know, tries to get out of— move their body out of the situation that they are in. But by the time you find them, they are sort of in shock. They've curled themselves very small. I think they're recovering. I think they know that it's there, but they did just...they saw Hell *Jeopardy*, and that was a very real experience for them, but it has sort of...it has passed now, that wave of the psychic maelstrom.

Austin: Mm. Then yeah, I think...you know, partly I think this is sitting with you. [laughs quietly] I have— uh, here is— I sit with you for a moment, or for the moments that you're crying, quietly. My legs are crossed. I take the tin cup of, you know, that I have, and fill it with water from a little canteen or from a little water bottle type thing and place it in front of you in much the same way I did with Sam when she was waking up, just ready for you to drink when you need it.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: And I say...once you're quiet, I say:

(as **Providence**): Do you need anything?

Austin: And what I mean is that I'm asking you, Jack: how could I deepen your character's sense of belonging and purpose in this place?

Jack: Wow! Huh. I think Already just says, you know...or communicates that we need to get this done quickly and get out of here and never come back. Like, this is not a place of honor. This is, you know.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Then I think Providence stands up and says:

(as **Providence**): Then we should continue.

Dre (as **Robyn**): Mm-hmm. Do you want me to give you a once-over really quick?

Jack (as **Already**): No, no. I don't think...

Dre (as **Robyn**): Are you sure?

Jack (as **Already**): Yeah.

Dre (as **Robyn**): You got all your fingers and toes?

Jack (as **Already**): Yep. Yep.

Dre (as **Robyn**): You wiggle 'em all for me? You still feel 'em?

Jack (as **Already**): Yep.

Jack: Holds them up.

Dre: I think then you hear Johnny Gilbert ask you...

Austin: Mm.

Dre: “What have you lost forever?” And that’s me asking you: what has your character lost forever? [Austin laughs quietly]

Jack: [laughs] Oh, dear. And we flash back momentarily to Already walking home in the rain after having spoken to the Augur who said, you know, “Just get rid of the phone.” And Already is looking at photographs on the phone of them playing with the kids, of them playing with Tiny, [**Dre:** Mm.] of like a scanned version of a scan of a photograph of the hangout. Just, you know, scrolling through the pictures. And back to Already in the thing just sort of being like, “All right, let’s go. Let’s move on. I’ve had enough of this.” [Ali laughs]

Austin: Mm.

Ali: I think—

Austin: No more questions.

Jack: I don’t need any more doctoring.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Ali: [laughs] Aw. I think Sam has been assisting by, like, teaching Quincy how to play, like, patty mack or whatever.

Jack: What is patty mack?

Austin: Oh.

Ali: It’s like a hand game.

Dre: Is that like patty-cake?

Ali: Oh, yeah, yeah, patty-cake.

Austin: Patty-cake. You’ve combined patty-cake and “Miss Mary Mack”.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: Right?

Ali: I guess that's what I did.

Dre: Right.

Jack: What is "Miss Mary Mack"?

Austin: You don't know "Miss Mary Mack"?

Ali: Oh. Wow.

Dre: [singing] "Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack."

Austin: [joining in] "Mack, Mack, Mack."

Ali: Mack, Mack, Mack...

Austin: "All dressed in black, black, black."

Dre: Black, black...

Austin: "With silver buttons, buttons, buttons / all down her back, back, back. [someone begins clapping rhythmically] She asked her mother, mother, mother / For 50 cents, cents, cents / To see the elephants, elephants, elephants / Jump over the fence, fence, fence." I don't remember the rest.

Jack: Whoa! What happens?

Austin: It's like, [singing] "They jumped so high, high, high."

Jack: They touch the sky.

Austin: "They touched the sky, sky, sky."

Dre: You remember a lot more than I do, Austin. [laughs]

Austin: And then, like, it changes. It's like...and they—

Jack: [singing] The winter came, came, came. The snow— [Austin and Dre laugh]

Austin: The snow fell. I don't remember the end of it. And it's a hand clap song, [claps rhythmically] you know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, so I see why you were thinking of patty-cake, right.

Austin: It's like patty-cake.

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: It is a similar...you're doing, like, [pats chest] chest, [claps] clap, and then outward clap.

Dre: Yeah, it's like chest clap, hands clap.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Like, you hit your knees and stuff. Yeah, there's like a whole...

Austin: Ooh.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Knees. I don't remember the knees, but yeah. You know, it's one of those.

Jack: Right, right, right.

Austin: So, you've been doing that with Quincy.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That's fun. Quincy's into it.

Ali: Just, like, waiting. To like wait for the situation to sort of [**Austin:** Yeah.] de-escalate

and not just have this kid staring at y'all.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Which is great background noise to this crying. [Ali and Jack laugh]
Quiet crying and drinking of water, lukewarm water. I think we continue, then. I'm still curious who's able to get us through this place and to where we need to go.

Jack: [resigned] It's me, right? It's probably me. But...

Austin: It's probably you.

Jack: But it's not good. It's...let me check my moves. I could spend "reveal a previously unmentioned skill," which is I, you know, know this place inside out.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Well, I kind of knew this place inside out. As you point out, it is worse and different, but I think I can navigate it.

Austin: But also, spending a move is one of those things where you're like, "Oh, I get it now. I can cut through the difference."

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You see the thing, and it, like, re-seats you in reality in such a way and in your memory that you can make sense of it.

Jack: Yeah. Eventually, we show up at a room that I used to be very familiar with but is now bigger even than— or rather, bigger than I remembered it, and it was already huge. You know, it's this large, dark room. I think, you know, we talked about Escher meets *Control*, which, if you're not familiar with the game *Control*, is a series of like, large, brutalist...very strikingly brutalist rooms and architecture lit very strikingly. So, I think it's dark concrete, gray concrete with, you know, how many of these cylinders, these tapes, Austin?

Austin: I mean, in this one room, I think we described last time as having a dozen of them, but there are many such rooms now.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: And people will just run off of the tape eventually. Remember, there's like a time component, which is part of probably what the maintenance here is, right? Is that, like, Quincy needs to stay on the tapes or else Quincy will be deleted, you know?

Jack: But this is Robyn's specialty.

Austin: Which makes this whole thing deeply fucked up, because it's like, the tape situation is bad, but also, currently, it's the only way that the void folks can live, is its maintenance, its ongoing upkeep.

Jack: Right.

Austin: Which it isn't being upkept really anymore, right? Because the job that it was doing seems to be, in all intents and purposes, done. You know, so. So yeah, it is Robyn's turn to step up, maybe, and do a little something.

Robyn Restores Quincy

[02:16:43]

Dre: Hmm. I'm still not sure what it looks like to do maintenance on Quincy in that way.

Austin: Well, I mean, yeah, I think, based on what we have set up, it is about keeping...again, you can imagine the interior of like a VHS machine, **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** except it's tall, and there's like 12 of those things running. And Quincy is contained on those things, and something's wrong with one of the— you know, Quincy's being recorded over or Quincy is being— the tape is loose or has come off the tray.

Dre: Sure. Okay.

Austin: You know, something's gone wrong with the machine.

Dre: Gosh, I do like the idea of, like, somewhere along the way, another tape of another character or another show got like spliced in.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Maybe that's why Quincy's so mad about Pokémon this morning, [Austin laughs quietly] is because somehow the Pokémon tape got mixed up with Quincy's tape.

Austin: God. The fucking, Ash is retiring, and so they're trying— they're like, "All right, well, if Ash is done, we're gonna boot Ash to Atlantic City," and is...

Ali: [quietly] What?

Dre: Jeez. Wow. [Ali laughs]

Austin: And is overwriting the Quincy tape. [Ali laughs] Just, you know, some other show is getting canceled, and instead of being...you know, instead of getting— being, you know, canceled here in both the show is over, it's run, but also the interest has died down. People don't care about it like they used to, and Bluff City's sort of terrible interest in popular genre stuff means if you're not gonna make the cut, you're gonna get the boot. And so whoever— maybe not literally Ash Ketchum, right? But.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Maybe it's some other Pokémon. Again, I think there's something very fun in the fact that Quincy's own "I don't like the bad Pokémon" is part of what got them put in this situation to begin with, is someone said that about Quincy. Someone looked at this weird sheep kid and was like, "I don't like the weird sheep kid. Get rid of that."

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: "They don't belong here." So.

Dre: Kids do that.

Austin: They do.

Dre: They say something very mean and hurtful, and then they just pass it to other people without even thinking about it.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: I think what this looks like is I think first, like, I ask Quincy to lay down next to me.

Austin: Mm-hmm?

Dre: And I open up all of the pockets that are on my overalls, and I am gently humming a lullaby to Quincy, because I need them to go to sleep for me to do this work.

Austin: Can I tell you something about Quincy that hasn't come up yet?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Quincy's so tired. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Dre: Yeah, I bet.

Austin: Quincy is so tired.

Ali: You don't say.

Dre: It's been a big day for Quincy.

Austin: And they didn't sleep good last night, and so yeah, they are out.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Out like a light.

Dre: Yeah. And out of my pocket, I take a pair of scissors that are probably the nicest and cleanest thing any of you have ever seen Robyn have.

Austin: Mm. [laughs quietly]

Dre: And then, out of my other pocket, I unspool a long thing of video tape. I keep

copies of all of Quincy's tape back at my shop.

Austin: Mm, smart.

Dre: And I use the scissors to cut out the spool— what's in the spool that's running that's not supposed to be there.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: And then carefully snip the bits and pieces of my copy of Quincy's tape and reattach it back into the main spool.

Austin: Is this a move?

Dre: Yeah, I'm doing a strong move, spending a token: "Have everything required to fix or make a thing right away with no compromises or sacrifices."

Austin: Perfect.

Jack: Fantastic.

Austin: Yeah. And now is the moment where, as I was starting to say earlier, I think Quincy has...like, Quincy, you know, has more definition than they used to, and the specific detail that I thought about was, like, I think that they have a firm, strong, black outline around them now, [**Jack:** Ha.] like a cartoon character does, that separates them from the world but also makes them feel more contiguous and more, you know, dynamic and whole than they did before. They're not slipping away into the air, the way the rest of us normal people are, you know? So, that's fun. I want to give a little extra color here. I think Providence...as soon as we come in here, the Augur sits down and, like, begins to meditate or think or consider, eyes most of the way closed but not entirely. It looks like meditation, because she is also a void person but has, like, dodged this fate because of being moved into the physical form that she has, and so there is a sort of quiet consideration of it all here. And doesn't say anything about it, just sort of sits, just sort of considers what else might have been. And yeah, Quincy eventually wakes back up and is still very tired but is fine. And from here, it seems like it could be an easy shot,

down the tunnel—the tunnel part of the tunnel—and then up and out onto this last little bit [Jack sighs] to get to the dentist's office.

[[“Give Way to Open Sky”](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]