

Season of the Trickster

A rough outline of the events of the Season of the Trickster aka the season of content I made up surrounding Jed Harlow and all the chaos he causes in the city and with our friends in tslg. :) There are definitely a series of weeks where Not A Lot Happens- this season could be longer than 10 weeks but I've only written 10 weeks of like, Active Story Content. I'll probably add to this as I think of more stuff to write. This is something like, one part me thinking of it like an actual game event and one part me thinking of it like a disconnected narrative

I think i have forgotten a lot of stuff that we talked about happening during this time if u read something and r like "wait something different happened here" let me know and i will FIX IT

Week One

This is, of course, the beginning of the story. You're introduced to two of the main players in the season: Jed Harlow, and Virgil.

- ***something wicked this way comes.*** Intel from Ikora's Hidden, as well as Eris Morn, and other agents stationed on the moon, have drawn the Vanguard's attention to a new sect of Hive that's slowly gaining numbers and power on the moon. Upon investigating, it's discovered that this new group is gaining numbers and power underground and has been for some time- to what end, we don't know. These new Hive have an odd, off-kilter appearance, and behave in decidedly unusual ways for Hive that are pretty much baffling everybody. They seem to be in conflict with the other Hive on the moon, actively taking over and occupying/desecrating their spaces.
- ***a tale of two brothers.*** The Hidden agent Virgil begins contacting guardians to assist in his assessment of the situation, and takes point on the investigation from this point forward. When it becomes clear that they don't understand the goal or presence of these new Hive, he reluctantly begins the process of tracking down an old contact-- the infamously disgusting hive scholar Jed Harlow, for assistance. Thus begins the seasonal event- in my brain i call it Altars because its a heavily modified version of Altars of Sorrow (in the same vein as this season's event is similar to blind well). Altars are ran and cleared for the purpose of drawing Jed out of hiding so that they can contact her.
 - Through dialog during these Altars events, it becomes very obvious that Virgil is highly sympathetic to Jed. He believes that Jed is dangerous, a threat not to be taken lightly- but that he has been corrupted by an outside force. Perhaps in this Jed can be redeemed or cleansed of whatever has cursed him.

Week Two

This is when things kind of kick into gear. I think that while I've labeled this "week two" there would likely be a few weeks with this general tone this phase of the story likely lasted more than an actual week, along with the content labeled week three. Basically, this phase lasts just long enough for you to get comfortable with Jed as an ally- his general wackiness making him seem less of a threat than he actually is.

- ***center stage.*** At the beginning of this week, Jed makes his presence known. He confronts a party running through Altars and speaks to Virgil, delighting in the attention he's getting. He knows all about the Hive sect- where they came from, what they're doing, why they behave the way they do- and revels in the fact that Virgil and the rest of the Tower needs her so desperately. Eventually, she negotiates a "I scratch your back, you scratch mine," deal with the tower- he will trade information about these Hive and their plans, as well as assistance with clearing them out, but in return asks for specific Hive-related tower intel, and Guardian assistance with the Altars

seasonal event. After a series of awkward, over-comms arguments, its agreed upon, and a tentative alliance is secured.

- **altars.** During this phase, Jed and Virgil commentate for the seasonal event. Altars continues- something about the process creates or harnesses some sort of resource Jed claims vital to the defense against these new Hive. Jed provides guidance and advice- though it's often strange, cryptic, or altogether unhelpful- and is kept in line by Virgil's insistence. Jed occasionally in dialog during these events alludes to other relationships he has with those in the Tower, often asking about certain people by name- Virgil often shuts those lines of inquiries down, as that information was not agreed upon in their alliance. Characters he might ask about include his 'helpers,' such as Rook, Vysia, or Finn, his old friends such as Naomhaich, or whatever Ari's getting up to.
 - There are a number of 'rare' guest commentators for Altars during this week, in my mind including Ikora, but also idk i might write some dialog for other tslg guys [sweetbusiness]

Week Three

This week, the scene shifts, and a new player is introduced: Xel Airrakh, the Hive knight sworn to allegiance with Jed.

- **altars.** This event continues. Jed is delighted, praising Guardian teams on their progress and efficiency- he could've never done all this on his own! Now, however, there are other things for him to put into place, and so directs his contacts to speak with Xel- who he calls Xelly, or more specifically "my Xelly." Xel becomes the new commentator for Altars- typically, it's Virgil and Xel's awkward, tense banter, and occasionally it is Xel and Jed together or all three of them speaking.
 - Xel is exceedingly formal and not much for speaking with the Guardians or Virgil- he seems weary, as if this is just the latest of an endless line of petty assignments given to him by Jed. He speaks little on his relationship with Jed or how their alliance came to be, but those who interact with him can tell he holds a deep-running hatred for her and seems bound to her for some other reason.
- I don't remember if something else happened at this point.

Week Four

This week marks a shift in narrative, more heavily revealing the scrutiny that Jed is facing within the ranks of the Tower. Gameplay-wise this would be a rather boring week, events taking the shape of 'doing shit you always do but listen to NPC's talk over comms while you do it' that seasonal story missions love. I think maybe you'd be able to get some kind of cool weapon or something in this season, idk.

- **corruption.** Dialog, lore, and rumors this week begin to suggest Guardians that help clear altars are becoming Tormented by visions and nightmares, often taking the form of Jed Harlow herself forcing them to do her bidding- evidence pointing to the idea that something about the Altars and the energy being harnessed during the event is having a negative psychological effect.
- **secrets unburied.** Originally as written, Virgil argues here with Jonquil-9 about the state of Jed Harlow, but I've since kind of changed Jonquil's involvement with this storyline so it doesn't make as much sense. He could be arguing with Naomaich perhaps ? Either way, this is when Virgil's connection to Jed truly comes to light- though many could surmise already that they were close, Virgil's desperation to cover for Jed becomes a hindrance to the investigation. In game sense, I think here's where there'd be one of those cool illustrated cutscenes detailing Jed's fall from grace and now-murderous ways. Very cute
- **behind the scenes.** Ikora mentions that she's dispatched a fireteam to investigate Jed's base, after the location of one of his many hideouts has been located. They were sent to investigate and not get involved- but so far none have returned and nothing's been heard back.

- This fireteam included Cody-5-- and until his return further down the line, he is not present as a commentator in the lightless Crucible game. Dynamic duo now separated, Fletcher's commentary is lackluster and disinterested.

Week Five

There is a loud beeping sound in the office and i cannot focus

- **behind the curtain.** During this week, a team of Guardians receives a signal sent by Xel. Over comms, he is evasive, and requests that a team meets him in person. They are joined by Virgil, who doesn't like that Xel didn't contact him directly- it is revealed that even Xel has trouble trusting Virgil, due to his closeness to Jed. Xel is trapped in his arrangement with Jed, and though he doesn't necessarily like or trust Guardians yet, he's willing to work alongside them if it means taking Jed down.
 - Xel meets this group in one of Jed's abandoned hideouts- there, he shows them a collection of large, dull crystals and explains the process by which Jed has attained so much power- the ritual by which he traps and distills a Guardian and their light into these crystals, only to "eat" them and consume their power to use as his own.
 - He also reveals that the rogue hive sect are, in fact, under Jed's control- they're undead, reanimated by Jed's will, and have no actual goals or motives beyond doing exactly what Jed wants them to do. Jed's been playing everyone for fools, using them to get access to Vanguard records and use Guardians to run his Altars event.
 - Finally, he reveals that the Altars event was actually cultivating a power that directly benefited/fueled Jed's crazy research or magic or Something I don't know exactly what yet but it was a boon for Jed.
- Hidden agents begin searching for the location of Jed's main ritual site, so see if any of the missing Guardians can be saved.
- **Altars.** This event continues, but the objectives are changed in a way that reflects denying Jed power rather than feeding it to him. Virgil and Xel are the primary commentators, with occasional commentary from other characters. Dialogue during this week reflects that Virgil is finally beginning to realize that he can't cover for Jed any longer, and that she may be too far gone to be saved.

Week Six

- Flody Strike! This week, they've found the location of Jed's ritual site, and a strike team is deployed on a rescue mission to save the lost Guardians. This strike is run by Virgil and Xel, with support on the ground from Fletcher. With their help, the investigating fireteam is able to learn about the special crystal in which Jed has trapped his ghost- as well as his connection to the light. The goal of the strike is to break Jed's connection to the crystal- forcing him to end the ritual, and retreat to regroup. Unfortunately for her, she is instead captured and taken to the tower as a prisoner before she has the chance to regroup.
 - The only survivor from the original fireteam sent to investigate Jed is Cody, who takes his revenge in the form of a very humiliating (for Jed) 1v1 match of lightless crucible.
 - Cody and Fletcher return to commentating for lightless crucible together.
- **ghost hunting.** Anticipating Xel's inevitable betrayal, Jed kept the location of her ghost a secret from him as well as everyone else. Now, Guardians are scouring Jed's usual haunts on and off the Moon for any sign of his ghost. Altars event changes slightly once more- now, the energy generated from the event is being used to instead attempt to track Jed's ghost.

- Xel, Virgil, and others commentate on Altars. Occasionally, they are harangued by Jed, who seems wholly unbothered by her situation, and takes the time he's imprisoned to taunt them both at any opportunity.

Week Seven

This is another sort of stagnant week that's heavier on lore than it is on actual content. Which is to say, a phase of the story that works less as a week of seasonal content and more as a narrative in my head.

- **a dead god can dream.** Lore in the form of comms dialog on seasonal events/Altars/lore book pages mentions that people guarding and surrounding Jed are acting weird and having obvious bad reactions to him. This is sort of inspired by the line in the D1 about a sword that Ghost could literally feel the light of the Guardians it killed radiating from it- and in part by the derelict reaper quest in me2 lol- but the point of it is that Jed is so twisted by the way she's cannibalized the Light that even deprived of her connection to it, she maintains a potent effect on people's mental state. By existing, he warps reality in a way that makes everyone around him miserable. Because of this, they have to regularly rotate out guards in his cell.
- **reunions.** Virgil visits Jed in prison to try and talk some sense into him- and in part because Jed's aloofness worries him, and he wants to understand whatever Jed's planning. Jed mocks him for being so sentimental, but overall continues to be extremely unworried. He does ask about where Ari's been during this time, and to his disappointment is informed that its been keeping away from the mess Jed's kicked up.
 - Virgil isn't the only visitor Jed gets during this time. A few other Guardians involved in his business visit him while he's in prison, and his response to all of them is largely the same. These guardians include Ari-12, Naomhaich, and Vysia, and I can't remember if any one else visited him in prison.

(okay so i'm going to start writing little weekly summary paragraphs instead of bullet points after this one because these last few bits i don't have completely thought out in my brain)

Week Eight

This is the week Jed escapes from prison. He is freed by Vysia- the first of his "helpers," and the one who he has his claws in the deepest. Because of this, he's able to convince her to free him from his cell- to her immediate regret. She instantly goes for help, and so the hunt is on to find Jed before she can get back to her Ghost.

A point of contention arises between Virgil and Evv-7- he insists the focus of the witch hunt is to capture Jed Harlow, but Evv insists she be killed.

During this week, Xel is particularly antsy- he knows that Jed knows that he helped the guardians capture her, and worries for his own safety should she regain her powers. Altars continues in the same fashion as before as people in the tower hunt for both Jed and her Ghost.

Week Nine

The location of Jed's ghost is discovered- unfortunately, Jed is there as well, charging his connection to it. I don't exactly have this totally planned out in my mind, but he basically sort of drops the act/wacky character for a second to be like Alright you guys are actually starting to get on my nerves now. and make some huge show of power with his supercharged Light- something that makes you remember, oh shit, this guy is ridiculously op from consuming the light of so many Guardians. He captures Xel and Virgil and brings them down into his lair.

I think its unclear at this point what he plans on doing with them- he's acting a bit out of character here, a lot more angry/unhinged than his usual goofy and aloof persona. I have the shape of some dialog between the three of them in my mind at this phase i need to write out. For the first time in a long time Virgil fears genuinely that Jed is going to actually kill him.

Week Ten

Jed is in final boss mode in his lair- it's sort of like the Quiria expunge meets regular strike meets dungeon- there's a series of puzzles and defenses you have to go through before actually getting to the guy himself. His fight is difficult and long and involves multiple phases of disrupting his connection to his ghost and doing damage to him in phases between which she is immune. At the end, Jed dies (so sad!) and Xel and Virgil free themselves. Xel takes the ghost crustal and vanishes. The end. Or is it? A private and unknown secret about Jed is that she has actually created her own throne world- something nobody realizes. For now, people think Jed is dead as dead- which is why his later debut as a raid boss is such a shocking reveal!

Jedraid

(working title)

The whole point of Jedraid is descending into Jed's throne world and taking her out there- defeating her once and for all so she can't come back with a vengeance. The following notes are sort of just general aesthetic/design/gameplay notes, but there isn't actually anything super cohesive to the raid beyond that. Like the season of the trickster, it's one part actual game mechanics, one part thinking of it as its own disconnected narrative.

enter the dread clown's personal domain.

Jed's throne world is constructed out of her memories. It has an altogether very dream-scape-y kind of look- it takes visual cues from the Dreaming City and Last Wish raids, but different areas will look like different places and environments all smashed together. There are parts that look like locations in the City, that look like Jed's cave, that look like locations on the Moon or Venus or Earth, or parts of the house he used to live in with Ari. I very clearly imagine a scene that looks something like the tunnel in Sophie's dream in Howl's Moving Castle.



A visual inspiration collage for the aesthetics of the raid environment is forthcoming.

There's an "entering the throne world" phase of the raid that's sort of like the first part in DSC when you're going through the snow, but instead it's like venturing into the ascendant plane. From there, you're actually inside the throne realm. When you're inside, there is background ambient sound of indistinct whispers throughout the entire raid- these are memories as well, snatches of different conversations that Jed's had or heard. As you approach the end of the raid, these whispers will get louder/more distinct, and become shouting as you escape.



Various Stuff I've Thought Up:

There's definitely parts of the raid that just look like these crystal caves- reminiscent of caving, they require going through tight and uncomfortable spaces, walking one by one. There are a lot of hidden tunnels and jump puzzles in this area.

Sometimes the crystals will have little still images inside that are glimpses of memories of Jed's. Sometimes they're funny- Cody-5 chasing Jed in crucible, for example- but sometimes they're gross- like Jed grafting a hive arm onto himself- or sad- like Jed and Ari arguing in their old home.

The main enemy types are Jed's hivescorn zombies- these are like, basically ads. There are also enemies that take the shape of people Jed knew in life- and there are two types of those. The most common are "memory of" enemies- these are lower tier 'challenging' enemies rather than bosses. Like the stasis captains on Europa, they're more difficult than normal enemies and have unique abilities, but

are largely a straightforward fight. They look like a person silhouetted in a mask or with no face- think the starry silhouettes you see when trying armor for other classes in game. They fight with the preferred weapon type/elemental energy of whoever they are the memory of, and typically represent people Jed has consumed who are particularly powerful.

“Visions of” enemies are a higher level version of “memory of” enemies- these are mini-bosses and aren’t necessarily people that Jed actually ever consumed. Yes, there is a “Vision of Ari-12” and a “Vision of Virgil”-- visions are typically people who are both particularly powerful, and that Jed knows and cares about more than the average “memory of” enemies. Rook, Vysia, and Burger could be either visions or memories. Visions have unique battle phases and attacks- and each vision has its own move set/strategy. If this was Real in game it would be randomly decided at the start of the encounter which vision you’d get.

reality/unreality: this is a mechanic that exists within the throne world. Because its so dreamlike, the line between dream and reality can get very thin. So, certain people will get an “unreality” debuff that fucks with your perception of what’s going on around you- in game sense, allies/enemies can get confused, your radar might be inaccurate, you might see enemies that aren’t there, or health bars are deceptive to the amount of damage you’re doing. From a storytelling pov, whoever Jed ‘targets’ with unreality might see visions similar to nightmares on the moon- seeing things to freak them out and get in their head. As time passes, unreality stacks and further distorts perception as more stacks are gained. Those who do not have the debuff can “Reality check” the dreamers to reset the count. Certain parts of the raid will require a certain amount of stacks of unreality to see or interact with paths or objects.

(i think unreality is a contagious debuff btw and can pass to others if it gets enough stacks. if the whole team gets infected with unreality without anyone reality checking its a wipe)

boss fight: The final boss fight has 2 phases- one where you fight Jed as Jed- or, the normal form that you’ve seen throughout the season of Trickster, and another where you fight Jed as Final Form Jed- aka, Nightmare of Jed Harlow. Phase 1 is very reminiscent of the battle in the mission of the end of the Season of the Trickster where Jed dies for the first time- though there’d be some kind of Trick to it, it would basically be copy/pasted. Jed fights very aggressively with her supercharged light powers. She unfairly targets “Weakest” team members/those with lowest stats.

Phase 2- Nightmare of Jed Harlow- is the ACTUAL final boss of the raid. I don’t know exactly how I want this fight to feel, but overall I think it’s just creepy. The way she moves is really weird and marionette-like, and her robes/hair move as though she’s underwater. Unlike Phase 1 Jed, Nightmare Jed doesn’t speak or taunt throughout the fight- instead laughing/screaming/hissing/etc. She might say a few words/phrases, but is ultimately like a less talkative version of the corrupted Techeuns in Last Wish mixed with Sybil Reisz in Transistor. Phase 2 is when Fletcher drops bombs on Jed.

After Nightmare Jed is defeated, the realm becomes destabilized and you have a timer to get out. This phase has a similar feel to Queenswalk- having to remember a certain path through the level while a timer is counting down. Everyone gains unreality stacks and theres no way/time to reality check so you have to escape before everyone gets lost, something like that.