

Hi folks! Welcome to the second episode of Follow the Leader's second story! In this episode we continued our game of Kingdom, by Ben Robbins, from our previous episode. If you're here and you haven't listened to that episode, you might wanna go back and do that first, or [skim the episode summary](#). The players in this episode were Han, Jade, and Dora. (Direct quotes from the players are highlighted in their color.)

In the last episode, we established our Kingdom (a space station that is a hub of scum and villainy) and our characters (Kuiper Jasco, Power character and head of communications; Max Valera, Perspective character and head mechanic; and Sol Hawke, Touchstone character and bounty hunter). We also played through the Kingdom's first crossroads, deciding whether or not we should allow a hated band of pirates refuge on our station. Our previous episode concluded with our next crossroads: "Will the Kingdom spend some of its limited person power to attack the United Solar Fleet?"

SECOND CROSSROADS

FIRST SCENE: Max's scene, with Sol, in the maintenance crew cubby (1:28)

Max is smacking a tablet against the desk as the screen goes black yet again. Sol mentions she can probably hit it harder than Max can. "What, are you gonna smack it against your skull, or like what?" Sol points out that she can leave, but Max tells her she can stay, and hands her the tablet so she can give it a go. "I don't know how much smacking it will actually help, but by all means." Sol smacks the tablet hard and it goes back to normal. She asks Max about the rumor that they're going to hit UniSol, and she asks if she could pay Max to look at her engine, since she thinks she might be part of the strike team, "or at least I'd like to go beat the shit out of some UniSol motherfuckers." Max asks what sort of trainwreck she's going to get her hands into if she says yes. "Listen, I'm not the one who's unkind to my baby. It's not my fault I get shot at!" "Yeah, you're such a people person!"

Sol says she can take her cred somewhere else, but Max says there really isn't anyone else. Sol just wants to make sure her engines are up to snuff when she goes against UniSol, since they have more resources and she wants to make sure she can get out of their way. Max comes out from the cubby and says she'll look at Sol's ship, see how much work it's actually going to be, and then they'll decide from there. "Take me to your child!"

Jade marks the scene for Crossroads. A prediction is made: "if yes, UniSol will move against the station." Jade: "We need to take care of this God damn pirate problem!" Dora tells us the general station feeling is that moving against UniSol will allow many of the folks on the station to blow off some of their own steam after the Star Marlin Assembly's arrival.

SECOND SCENE: Sol's scene, with Kuiper and a tired NPC stockade guard, in the stockades (8:05)

"You fucked up, and everyone's gonna see that you fucked up, and then you can go back to work." — Jade

The stockade guard (Inken, played by Jade) is settled and reading something they probably shouldn't be reading at work (on space AO3) with their feet propped up on the desk. Sol, obviously drunk, notices Kuiper and asks what the hell she's doing in the stockade. Kuiper says she'll tell her if Sol tells her why she's in the stockade. "Oh, you know me. I see a stupid face and I just gotta put my fist in it." But this person really deserved it this time. Kuiper asks how long Sol's in for, since she only has a couple hours left, but Sol says she won't be let go til tomorrow at least. "He was one o' those Starlin Marlin fuckers." Sol asks again what Kuiper's in for "reci... recip... reciprocity." "Yeah, you got it! That was impressive." "Don't make me come over there." "Was... was that a threat?" Sol isn't even sure she can make it over to the other side of the stockade. Inken begs her not to vomit again. Sol says she has nothing left. "You said that before!" "Is fine! Is fine!"

Kuiper starts stalling a little, and Sol tells her she doesn't have to say, she was just trying to be friendly. "You're doing a great job!" Kuiper says that she may or may not have intercepted a communication that she shouldn't have, and was super caught. Sol asks if the communication was profitable. Kuiper says it was *super* profitable, but the people it was meant for caught wind. "I love this station, I love being here, I love our friends and comrades." However, there were some people who were taking bribes and were gonna sell out the station in exchange for immunity and a lot of money. However, the plan's already been shut down. Kuiper was going to keep that information to herself, but her higher-ups said that that was unacceptable. Kuiper asks if Sol's gonna be on the UniSol mission— she's got a weird feeling about it, that command doesn't want them to win. "That's fucked up." Kuiper asks Sol to think about whether or not she wants to be on the mission. Sol asks when she's ever let stuffy higher-ups change how she thinks.

Dora marks Time Passes, since the scene didn't do much for the Crossroads, but also a mark for Crisis since there's a possibility that the mission would be sabotaged by the higher-ups.

Han decides they want a reaction scene, which is basically just a tiny snippet where a character can use their role to make orders or predictions. Kuiper gets out of the stockade and immediately encrypts and archives the communication she intercepted that implicated the higher-ups in organizing a suicide mission. An order is made: "If yes, the communication implicating the higher-ups gets released to the entire crew."

THIRD SCENE: Kuiper's scene, with Max, in the central mess hall. (20:10)

"Max is like, poking at this bowl of noodle soup with the least amount of enthusiasm a person can have." — Jade

Kuiper slides onto the bench across from Max with a giant cup of Space Diet Coke. Kuiper awkwardly greets Max, whose eyebrows go up. Kuiper asks what the higher-ups have told Max about the mission; they haven't told her anything besides making sure they have as many ships ready to go as possible. "Like, 'Yo, Valera, make sure this is good to go'." She hears stuff, she isn't told anything. Kuiper asks what she's heard, then, and Max says things are suspect, with the way they're pushing the mission. Kuiper agrees with her.

"Right now, I'd quite possibly kill a guy for something that makes this taste less like ass, so whatever they wanna do, I'm pro it right now."

Kuiper tells Max that there's some bullshit going on in Command, like more than usual. "I don't think they want very many of us to come back from this thing." "Are you fucking shitting me?! That's one way to deal with a supply shortage! Jesus!!" Kuiper doesn't know what to do about it. Max asks if she knows who's doing it, but Kuiper doesn't have proof— "I don't need proof, I need a name, Kuiper." Kuiper might have a couple names, but her own name cannot come up. "You don't have my name." Max says they need to turn the public influence against the higher-ups, maybe even call for a vote of no confidence. "Is that something we can do?" "How long have you been here now?" But they need to run the mission; Max can put things in motion, but she can really only work to keep people safe. "People don't like going hungry, people don't like to share, people don't like having to deal with war rations, but they like their higher-ups fucking them over even less." Kuiper tells Max to enjoy her soup; Max asks if she has sriracha anywhere. "I'd kill a man for salt, I swear."

An order is made: "If no, the mutiny does not go through." Han marks the scene for Crossroads.

Dora takes a reaction scene, since Kuiper gave Max a name and Max has been gossiping about them. Sol's in the Monkey's Uncle overhearing some of the gossip, and Dora makes a mark for Crisis.

FOURTH SCENE: Max's scene, with an NPC higher-up, in the higher-up's private quarters (29:55)

"Max's excuse for being here is she's fixing the shower." — Jade

NOTE: This scene contains references to adult content.

The higher-up (Lieutenant Isaac Erikson, played by Dora) asks Max what she's doing in his quarters. "You put in a priority request, Lieutenant, to have your shower fixed, and you know all of us in the maintenance crew are all about that *snappy* service!" "Right."

Lt. Erikson is unhappy that she entered without announcing herself, and asks how she got in. All the maintenance crew have a master key, in case someone gets stuck somewhere. "I don't like your tone." "I'm so sorry to hear that. You can put a complaint in to the head of the maintenance crew if you like?"¹ Lt. Erikson says he does have the power to adjust the rationing for crew members, since he has the ear of the quartermaster. Max brightly tells him to go ahead, and then [transcription of the scene follows]:

Max: "Like I have said before, and there's a notice in every shower... Look, the drainage is only able to cope with water, really anything else shouldn't be going down the drain. You really need to not be doing..."

Lt. Erikson: "What are you implying."

Max: "Look, I'm saying your drain's clogged! If it was just water, there wouldn't be an issue."

Lt. Erikson: "It's only water."

Max: "You called me! You called us to say there was an issue with your drain, like... It happens, Lieutenant! I don't judge! I'm just saying in the future you need to not be doing that if you want your shower to work!"

Lt. Erikson: "... Right."

Max is grinning.

Lt. Erikson: "Are you quite done?"

Max: "No, if you just give me five minutes, I'll get this fixed, and I'm sure you have a complaint form you want to fill out about me."

Lt. Erikson: "Fine."

[end transcription]

Max unclogs the shower drain and plants a listening device in his room.

Jade marks the scene for Crossroads. A prediction is made: "If yes, the mutiny happens and Erikson swings."

FIFTH SCENE: Sol's scene, with Max, in the hangar bay (34:45)

Sol tells Max she's been hearing rumors and asks if Max has been hearing the same things. She's been hearing that it's not a great idea; Max has been hearing that people are disposable. Sol doesn't know who the higher-ups think is gonna run the station for them, bringing in business and cred, if they think people are disposable.

"I don't know what their endgame is, all I know is what I've heard. What I've heard is that there's people higher-up that would be happy to see a lot less people come back from this thing. I dunno what their reasons are." "Guess it behooves me to come back." "I refuse to believe there's anything that could kill your sorry ass. Like a cockroach." She means that as a compliment. "Nothin' wrong with being hard to kill." But not everyone is as lucky as Sol, to be as

¹ In case you forgot, that's Max herself.

hardy. Sol agrees; it's been shit since they took the Star Marlins in. Max says she said so, but no one listens to her. Sol says maybe they should start.

Dora decides to mark both Crossroads and Crisis. Both cards now resolve, and Dora would like to resolve Crisis first.

RESOLVING THE CRISIS (39:20)

First, we decide if this ends the game. The Crisis is not going to end the game.

The next step is to decide what the crisis is. Dora suspects the mutiny is going to happen whether we want it to or not. No one's been happy, not since the Star Marlins and especially not with talk of the higher-ups fucking around, and with no food they're angry and something's going to change. Next is to describe what each character sees during the crisis. Kuiper sits in the communications hub surrounded by screens with the stations vital information. All at once, the screens go dark; the mutineers have pulled the communication lines. Max sees people climb from their ships, armed to the teeth and making their way to central command. She sits in her booth and watches them. Sol sits in the corner of the Monkey's Uncle watching other people rabblousing, and she knocks back her shot and goes to join them. She ends up punching a guard in the face to make way for the rest of the crowd.

Next is what each character does— how they participate, or don't, in the crisis. Kuiper boots up a couple communications arrays and systematically intercepts any personal communications the higher-ups are sending, to make sure no escape plans or contacts with outside forces go through. Max walks through the empty hangar bay to the big door and locks Lt. Erikson in the bay with her master key, waves to him, and ducks into a maintenance hatch to get a better view. Sol isn't at the forefront of the people mutinying, but she's contributing with her fists— and her face.

Next is the outcome. The players decide whether or not the kingdom stands or falls: thumbs up if the kingdom survives, thumbs down if it falls, or they can remain neutral. Since no one tried to escape, no one is required to give a thumbs down. We decide that the mutiny happens either way, but we're determining the subsequent fate of the kingdom— whether new management comes in, or whether everything falls apart. Everyone votes that the kingdom will survive following the mutiny, with new management. Kuiper “super gets a promotion.” Max is in the same position, but now has a line to top tier management— “and top tier management owes her big!” No one is killing or retiring their characters, so the Crisis is resolved.

RESOLVING THE CROSSROADS (48:05)

First, we decide if this ends the game. This particular Crossroads will end the game.

There's new management right before the mission is meant to run, and theoretically does not want half the people on the station to be killed on a supply run.

Next is the decision from the Power. Han tells us that the higher-ups were in communication with UniSol and struck a deal to get UniSol to leave the station alone if they sent certain people of high interest on the mission. They decide that yes, the mission goes through, but the information UniSol has is no longer valid, so it's no longer a suicide mission.

Next is the predictions. One of them— if yes, the mutiny will happen and Erikson will swing— already happened with the resolution of the Crisis. The other— if yes, UniSol will take retaliatory action— is definitely also going to happen. The station and certain individuals who made out very well from the mutiny are on UniSol's shitlist. "Especially one person who has a very extensive criminal record." The station goes from being an annoyance and a haven to being UniSol's problem number one— and things are getting a lot more dangerous.

Next is the popular reaction. Everyone's pretty hopeful, what with new supplies and getting rid of the people who were trying to sell them out. Even though the Marlins are still there, things are smoother now; the Marlins helped in the mutiny and also a few went on the supply run.

Next are the reflections. Kuiper's wish has been fulfilled, and her fear changes to "I fear the Kingdom will overextend itself in ways that are no longer profitable." Max's fear has changed to a wish: "The kingdom will thrive in its infamy and prosper as a result," what with its new reputation. Sol's fear has also changed to a wish: "I hope the station prospers under new management and with the new bonds that have been formed."

Last is bond resolving. Pretty much everyone's bonds change. Max's bond with Sol has changed to "Sol might be a blunt instrument, but I always know how to use the right tool for the job." Sol's bond with Max changes to "Max's insight is good for the station and for me." Kuiper's bond with Max is now "Max has the ability to make or break management and I need to stay in her good graces." Max's bond with Kuiper is now, quite simply, "Kuiper is basically mine."

END EPISODE SUMMARY