

Follow the Leader Episode 2.1: Unpronounceable by Human Mouths
Featuring Dora as Sol, Jade as Max, and Han as Kuiper

Dora: Hi everyone, this is Dora. I just wanted to do a little housekeeping before we get to the episode. We realized that our lines didn't include racism and sexism when they should. Unfortunately, we recorded several sessions without the correct lines, so you'll probably be hearing this message on a few episodes before we've gotten it corrected. Anyway, now that that's out of the way, enjoy the show.

Dora: All right. Hi folks, welcome to Follow the Leader, a podcast focused on telling character driven stories through the use of GM-less tabletop games where we can all take the lead. Today we're playing Kingdom, by Ben Robbins. For those of you who are new to this game, here are the basics. Groups are stronger than individuals. In a kingdom, we can work together to do great things. But we may not agree what path our kingdom should take or what it should stand for. Can your vision of the kingdom work for mine? Can everybody get what they want? Because if you're part of a kingdom, it makes demands on you too. You're pressured to do what it thinks is right. The question becomes: do you change the kingdom, or does the kingdom change you? This game is about seeing what happens to the kingdom and the people in it. How the characters change the kingdom and how it changes them. As players, we all have equal authority to influence the game. It's up to each of us to push the kingdom in directions we find interesting. What will our kingdom do? What will it become? Will it burn or flourish? Will it stay true to its ideals, our ideals, or will it become some twisted shadow of our dreams? The kingdom's fate is in our hands. I'm Dora, and you can find me at harpydora on Twitter, and my pronouns are they/them. Playing with me today we have...

Han: Hi, I'm Han, you can find me at mercutioes on Twitter, and I also use they/them.

Jade: And I'm Jade. You can find me on Twitter at jadeoxfordrose, and I also use they/them pronouns.

Han: Hell yeah.

Dora: Our lines, which are things we absolutely do not want to see, are homophobia, transphobia, violence against children, sexual assault, domestic or intimate partner violence, attacks by dogs, or unwanted pregnancy. [theme music starts- dice shaking, cards shuffling] Our veils are things which we're fine with addressing but we'll just fade to black on, steamy situations, graphic depictions of bodily harm. And that's it. Now that we've got all that, let's get started.

Jade: Woo.

Han: All right.

[theme music plays]

Dora: Each player creates a character that they'll use to explore the fate of the kingdom. The first things that we'll do is we'll determine our role within the kingdom. There are three roles, which are power: you have authority over the kingdom, you decide what the kingdom does and doesn't do; perspective: you understand the kingdom, both its merits and flaws, you can foresee the consequences of the decisions the kingdom makes; and touchstone: you reflect the desires of the people of the kingdom, your attitudes show us what the populus wants and how they are reacting to what's happening. Let's start with Han. What, uh, who's your character and what role will that character have?

Han: All right, so, I am playing Kuiper Jasco, she uses she/her, and she is- her role is power in this one. And she's basically the head communications officer for this enclave that we're building.

Jade: My character is Max Valera, also goes by Max Damage. [laughter] She uses she/her pronouns. And she is the mechanic- she's sort of head of the maintenance crew. The way I've described her is she has high amounts of energy and little to no fucks to give about anything outside of her remit, ??? and she's a perspective.

Dora: I'm gonna be playing Marisol "Sol" Hawke. She's a bounty hunter in the station where this is taking place. I have her written down as "Angsty McMan Pain But A Lady". She's very broody and gruff. And she's going to be our touchstone because she's basically the quote-unquote working class on this space station.

Jade: Yeah, I suppose we should say what our kingdom is.

Dora: Oh, yeah! [laughter] So, by the way-

Jade: We're good at this.

Dora: By the way, we're playing on a space station, which is kind of like a pirate enclave slash hive of scum and villainy.

Jade: Because yes.

Dora: Yes.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Dora: 'Cause what's a sci-fi story without a hive of scum and villainy floating in space?'

Han: Obviously.

Dora: Yeah. So, kind of lawless, a lot of room for grittiness if we so choose.

Jade: Mm-hmm.

Dora: The threats to our kingdom are- we have threats from, sort of quote-unquote legal organizations. The one that we've identified is the Unified Solar Fleet, which is kind of like, you know, the main naval force in this area. So there's always the threat that they could come in, shut us down, wipe us out. There's also the threat of infighting between the crews that are staying or currently docked with our space station. And there's always the threat of being short of supplies, since we're a space station, we can't really produce our own stuff, it all has to be imported and there's only so much oxygen scrubbers and water filtration systems can do.

Jade: We all came up with locations relevant to our characters. We're talking about the kingdom, did we wanna put those out-

Han: Yeah.

Dora: Yes.

Jade: -and then go over more character-based stuff.

Han: Yeah. I can start if you want.

Dora: Yes please.

Han: Okay so, the two locations that I can up with, which are basically where Kuiper can usually be found. I think there's probably like a main... Well first of all, just- are we thinking that this is like, a bunch of ships together? Or are we thinking this is like, a station that's like, one large ship, kind of deal.

Jade: I was thinking more like a space station, maybe we're orbiting a shitty moon-

Han: Mm-hmm. Okay.

Jade: -or something like that. Like it used to maybe be an observation thing, like, and it got reclaimed by the pirate folk.

Han: Okay.

Jade: Like, twenty years back or something.

Han: Cool. Okay.

Dora: It probably has like, things that have been cobbled on, like ships have been bolted on to create expansions and that kind of thing, but...

Jade: Yeah.

Han: Cool. Okay. So, my two locations are the main station bridge, where the- I'm assuming a lot of the communications equipment is housed for the larger station. And then the second location is the... Hmm, this is actually not pronounceable by human mouths. The Joyopolis Game Hall, which is like a really shitty neon arcade. Where she's usually playing probably not skeeball, but something adjacent.

Jade: The two locations I've flagged for where you're probably solidly gonna be able to find Max at any given time is the maintenance level, and that's less of a specific location and more a state of mind. No. [laughs] It's like a series of back corridors and ducts and back elevators and supply lifts, like anywhere in a mall that you shouldn't be. It's all of those kinds of nooks and crannies, like lots of shortcuts and stuff like that getting between matters. And also the docking bay. And I imagine that the maintenance crew kind of have a little- like a little office-y thing in there? With like a shutter where one of them's usually propped up if crews wanna come and see if they can get somebody to fix their ship. They might help you out if your money is good, or you have something good to trade. But I like the notion of there being like a really shitty- not quite Lucy's "The Doctor Is In" from Peanuts kind of vibe, but not a lot better. They're just like, with a lot of tools in there, where there's normally a member of the maintenance crew, if not Max herself, just hanging out.

Han: Incredible.

Dora: So Sol... The two locations that she can typically found, uh, there is a local seedy dive bar, possibly the seediest on the station, called The Monkey's Uncle. And she has a quote-unquote reserved stool there, and has probably picked many a fight with people who have tried to sit there. And the other place that she can be found would be like the stockades, because she's either throwing someone in there because she's collecting a bounty on them or she's been thrown in there for drunk and disorderly.

Han: Cool. Love it.

Jade: What a treasure.

Dora: I love her already, she's just so terrible.

Han: She's the worst.

Dora: Yes.

Han: Okay.

Dora: So the next thing we're supposed to determine about our characters are their wish or fear for the kingdom. And this is something that has to be sort of general to the kingdom, it's not a personal thing. So, you can't say, "I wish I get a promotion, but what you would more likely be able to say is, you know, "I wish there is more room for upward mobility in the kingdom."

Han: All right, so, Kuiper's wish is, "I wish the kingdom would take on riskier jobs. We're pirates. We're in this for the cash and the glory and there's no point in caution." Yeah.

Jade: For Max, it's, "This place is held together with spot weld, duct tape, and hope. My fear is that one of these is gonna run out sooner rather than later."

Dora: Yup, that sounds about right. [laughter] Sol's fear is, she fears that the kingdom will collapse under the weight of people who can't see past what's right in front of their noses.

Han: All right.

Dora: And the next thing that we determine is what's your issue- what's some personal issue that is going to affect your role in the kingdom.

Han: Mm-hmm. So, Kuiper's issue is, "The crimes of my past are never far behind me." I'm not 100% sure what those crimes are right now, but are... near.

Jade: I mean, there's a reason why she's wound up on like, a pirate space station at the edge of the system.

Han: And also why she thinks the pirates need to do more crime than they're doing right now. [laughter]

Jade: For Max, her issue is that she takes on way more shit than she should, 'cause sleep is for the weak, and stims are for people who need to get shit done.

Dora: Um, yeah. I love Max already.

Jade: Mm-hmm.

Dora: For Sol, her issue is, "I can't put my past to bed, and that makes it hard for me to see any kind of future, good or bad."

Jade: Aww. Sol. Buddy.

Dora: She's Angsty McMan Pain.

Jade: But a lady!

Dora: Yes.

Han: As it should be.

Jade: Yeah.

Dora: Yes. And then the last thing that we need to determine for our characters is bonds. What are our relationships with each other? And typically this is done with, like the person to your left, but we have a kind of order set up. So we're doing it that way. And it can be either a friendly relationship or it can put you at odds. So Han, I believe your bond should be with Max.

Han: Yes. So, my bond with Max is, I rely on Max for upgrades slash mods slash other kinds of tech for the communications equipment to upkeep my quote-unquote side gigs, which are, sort of on-the-side crime jobs in addition to like, the big crime jobs, in exchange for some yet undefined favors or information or something.

Jade: Hmm. For Max, her relationship- oh, her bond, I should say, with Sol, is that "Sol is a destructive force that I'm forever having to clean up after."

Dora: Yes. And for Sol's bond with Kuiper, "I depend on Kuiper to give me the best information on bounties. She is integral to my livelihood."

Han: Mm-hmm.

Dora: And that's it for our characters. So, the next thing that we do is we get ready to play. And when we're playing Kingdom, kingdoms have crossroads, which are decisions that the kingdom has to make to go forward. So we have the crossroads and we play scenes to determine how that plays out. But not all scenes are necessarily going to have something to do with the crossroads. They can also count towards another thing called time passes, which just is sort of exactly what it says on the tin. And we also have the risk that the kingdom is going to fall into crisis. And for each of these things, we have little boxes that we can check after the end of each scene. And that'll help us work toward a resolution: either resolving the crossroads, resolving the fact that time has passed, or resolving whatever crisis we're having to deal with. The current crossroads that we're going to start with: "Should the kingdom take in refugees from the Star Marlin Assembly, even though they're loathed among the population?" And so what we'll do is, we'll start with Han, and Han will set a scene for us to see what happens in the kingdom.

Han: Yeah. Can we, like, define or like, figure out who the Star Marlin Assembly are a little bit?

Dora: Sure!

Han: More?

Dora: Yeah, I was just thinking that maybe they're a band of pirates, obviously, who may have had their noses pretty badly bloodied by UniSol?

Han: Okay.

Dora: And so they're looking for some sort of refuge while they try to lick their wounds, but unfortunately they're just a nasty group of people who have not been good about making friends, and-

Han: Okay.

Dora: -our station is sort of like space Switzerland in that respect, but there are a lot of people who would be very angry to see these people wandering around the station.

Han: Mm-hmm. Okay. So. I think- let's see. The first scene... I think it's probably going to be with Sol. [pause] So it'll be Kuiper and Sol, and I think Kuiper goes to find her... Hmm. Probably not in the stockades. Let's not start there. [laughter] We can start at the bar. So I think Kuiper goes and finds her at the bar. And... yeah, is there anything else we have to do to set up the scene, or just like... [crosstalk] go for it.

Dora: [crosstalk] No, I think... I, yeah.

Jade: Say who's there and...

Han: Mm-hmm.

Jade: Yeah.

Dora: Yup.

Han: Okay.

Dora: I think the bar's probably... kind of then- I imagine this might not be at like, peak hours.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Dora: But Sol's just kind of like curled at the bar, shoulders hunched, nursing some form of rot gut alcohol that might be two steps above toilet wine at this point.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Jade: Lovely.

Han: That's- that's good. Okay, yeah, so I think Kuiper like, takes the stool next to her and... Hmm. I think she orders, like... God. What does she order? I think it's like, whatever the brightest neon drink you can get at this bar is.

Dora: Oh my goodness.

Han: Like it's not an appletini but it's close.

Dora: Oh my goodness.

Han: It's like, bright purple. And, I think she says,

Han as Kuiper: [sighs] So, you didn't hear this from me, or you did, I guess it doesn't really matter who you heard it from, but the... those- that refugee pack? There are some really, really high profile bounties in there.

Dora as Sol: So uh... Are you telling this to me because I got a payday coming, or are you telling this to me because I need to look the other way?

Han as Kuiper: I'm telling this to you on- there's a couple different reasons I'm telling you this. One, I am more than happy to send over a list of names for you know, a finder's fee. We've done this before, you know the deal.

Dora as Sol: Mm-hmm.

Han as Kuiper: Second, there are a couple names on that list where it's sort of either... we put them in jail and you get the bounty or... Or they put me in jail and they get a bounty. So... I'm hoping that we can maybe prioritize a couple people on that list.

Dora as Sol: Yeah, I'd rather you not end up in jail, 'cause that hurts my bottom line, so.

Han as Kuiper: I thought it was because you cared!

Dora as Sol: I mean, I care about you too, but, you know, a girl's gotta eat. Girl's gotta drink. Can't drink without you! All right, I'll take a look at that list-

Han as Kuiper: That's- yeah. Mm-hmm. Okay. I'll send that over. Yeah. You uh... you're here earlier than usual.

Dora as Sol: I'm here whenever I feel like it.

Han as Kuiper: That's- Listen. I don't know. I don't ask questions. It's fine. You do you.

Dora as Sol: All right.

Han as Kuiper: Uh, you know where to find me.

Dora as Sol: Cheers. Bottoms up.

Dora: And uh, she kind of holds up her tumbler and just knocks the rest of it back and then slams the tumbler back on the bar.

Han: Mm-hmm. Um, and I think Kuiper... leaves. To go do whatever the fuck she does.

Dora: Cool.

Han: All right.

Dora: So does that count as crisis, time passes, or crossroads?

Han: Hmm. I think... I think that's probably... a crossroads box, just in that like, I'm pretty firmly throwing in my support on the side of let's take these refugees.

Dora: Yep, that sounds legit.

Han: Cool.

Dora: Any orders that came from that or anything like that that we need to note down?

Han: Um... Let's see. I don't know if specifically prioritizing people's- like prioritizing certain bounties is an order, or...

Dora: Maybe, maybe if we vote to take them in, some of these people are going to have bounties collected on them.

Han: Okay yeah, that works.

Dora: 'Cause that definitely seems like what got decided, so.

Han: Mm-hmm. Yeah. No, that sounds good. So, that goes in under the [crosstalk] yes column.

Dora: [crosstalk] Under the yes.

Han: Okay, cool.

Dora: Yeah and, i forgot to mention part of the thing you can do when you're a power is you can make order, which are things that depending on which decision is made, are actions that need to be taken.

Han: Right. So if yes, certain members of the refugee group will have bounties collected on them. And I guess that's the, that's the scene.

Dora: Yup.

Han: Awesome. So Jade?

Jade: Okay, um, I am gonna be in the hangar bay, or the docking bay, working on another crews runabout kind of ship, like a small shuttle craft. I think I've got maybe a member of my crew with me. And the craft that we're repairing is somebody who had a run-in with the Star Marlin Assembly.

Han: Mmm.

Jade: And I think this would work with either Kuiper or with Sol, or both, if people just tend to be around, but I think the scene kind of starts with the person whose ship or shuttle this is just like, just storming away, having heard the possible gossip about what's happening, and like, Max is on her back, on a little dolley, like a little hover dolley, working on something, like... I don't know engines. [laughter] Like the booster on the back or something. And uh, yeah. She's got like a really ratty looking cushion underneath one of her legs, 'cause it's in like a full brace from about mid-thigh down. It's got an articulation on it, but yeah, she needs that to get around. So... yeah she's just working on that at the moment.

Han: Okay.

Jade: Trying to sort of process.

Han: Um, Dora, do you have any preference, do we want both of them to be there, or?

Dora: How about Kuiper starts there, and if there is an interesting time for Sol to be a nuisance, she can amble on in.

Han: Okay, cool. Yeah. And I think like, I think Kuiper probably heard about this run-in and like, went down to invest- not investigate, but like, just scope out what's going on.

Jade: Sure. I think Max has got like a small radio going, like something playing music as she works. Maybe she's sort of whistling along too.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Han as Kuiper: [sighs] So, how long do you think this is gonna take?

Jade as Max: This, I mean, not that long. If we're talking about this engine. If we're talking about how long that captain you just passed is gonna be pissed off, that depends on how things go, doesn't it?

Han as Kuiper: I mean, you know. People can be pissed off all they want, but... Doesn't change that, you know, I think we could make a good amount of profit off of taking these people in, is all I'm saying.

Jade as Max: Yeah, sure, having loads of extra people in a small confined space that you can't get off easily, that's in no way gonna end up in anything bad.

Han as Kuiper: Well, that's a pessimistic way of viewing things.

Jade as Max: That's a realistic view of things, Kuiper.

Han as Kuiper: Okay, same thing. I'm just saying, that...

Jade as Max: [laughs] Yeah?

Han as Kuiper: [sighs] Listen. If we take the refugees on, then that captain who's pissed off can deal with that personal vendetta themselves, and the rest of us can get on with our lives, and possibly, I wanna reiterate, make a shit-ton of money off of these people.

Jade as Max: Look, I'm not saying they don't have money and that money can't be made if they're here. What I'm saying is on balance, is it gonna be worth it?

[pause]

Han as Kuiper: Um...

Jade as Max: People making money, that's great. Some people are gonna be happier, that's great. Quite frankly, I'm gonna be here doing this shit regardless of what happens. So...

Han as Kuiper: Well, I mean...

Jade as Max: Yeah?

Han as Kuiper: I mean you could be doing more- you could be making more money off of them if you wanted to? Listen.

Jade as Max: Mmm? You're cute when you're trying to convince me to do something you want me to do, yeah.

Han as Kuiper: Aww, thanks. I'm just saying-

Jade as Max: Yeah.

Han as Kuiper: -that you are going to have [crosstalk] basically unfettered access-

Jade as Max: [crosstalk] More work to do?

Han as Kuiper: -to their ships, if they end up here.

Jade as Max: Yeah. A bunch of ships that are gonna be sorely in need of repair.

Han as Kuiper: Well, in need of repair, but you know, if I were to bring in a damaged ship and you repaired it and gave it back to me, like- I wouldn't be able to tell whether it was repaired or stripped for parts or... You know. You know.

Jade as Max: Look, I don't get a vote in this. Like, if the higher ups decide these folks are gonna come in, they're gonna come in, and I will do what I always do, which is make the best of it and not get enough sleep while I'm trying to deal with the shit that comes with it. 'Cause regardless of the good, there is always gonna be shit that comes my way! Believe me, I know, I have to clean out that set of systems as well when they break!

Han as Kuiper: [sighs] Fine, fine.

Jade as Max: I'm not saying I can't make a good thing of it. What I'm saying is, people are gonna be pissed, Kuiper.

Han as Kuiper: People are always going to be pissed. You're pissed right now! People are gonna be pissed. [laughter] Just, think about it.

Jade as Max: Mm-hmm. Look, what, you want me to back you on this, is that what this is?

Han as Kuiper: I mean... A little bit, yeah.

Jade as Max: [sighs] Can I remind you that you owe me a favor right now, and by a favor I mean I have a list about as long as my arm? Of shit you owe me?

Han as Kuiper: Oh- I mean, yeah...

Jade as Max: Yeah.

Han as Kuiper: Wha- Are you trying to collect right now?

Jade as Max: No, I [laughs] No, I'm just saying that... Look, I'll see what I can do about soothing some hurt feelings, perhaps if I can get this fixed up quick enough, the captain can be out of here before the Marlin Assembly lot show up. I'll see what I can do, all right, but-

Han as Kuiper: Okay.

Jade as Max: I make no promises! You know.

Han as Kuiper: You're the best.

Jade as Max: I know. [laughs]

Han: Okay, I think that has to be scene.

Jade: Sure, sure. [laughs] All right, I gotta do a thing.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Jade: Right. Uh, I think it's crossroads, I don't think it's- it doesn't feel like crisis or like time passes, and I need to [in a different accent??] make a prediction. [muttering] If yes, tensions will run higher than usual and the station will suffer for it. By which I mean, the sort of toll on the place itself. If that makes sense.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Dora: I think my scene is probably going to be... it's probably going to be in the bridge. Actually no. It's gonna be in Joyopolis. It's gonna be Joyopolis. [Han laughs] Sol's gonna be finding Kuiper.

Han: Yes.

Dora: And... Sol... probably looks pissed?

Han: Kuiper's playing Time Crisis 5, I think, is what she's playing.

Dora: [crosstalk] Oh my goodness.

Jade: [crosstalk] [indiscernible] -up to five. [laughs]

Dora: Yeah, Sol just kind of stomps up and is seething, and is just,

Dora as Sol: I don't know who you told, but there's a group of people out there in my bar saying that they've got a crop of bounties coming in, and... I thought we had a deal. I thought you were giving me first pick. I saw that list. Who-

Han as Kuiper: I'm not- I'm not the only one who knows who's coming in.

Dora as Sol: All right. Well.

Han as Kuiper: Other people have access to that info.

Dora as Sol: All right. Well. I'm not planning on sharing any of these bounties with any of these fuckwits, so.

Han as Kuiper: I gave the list to you because you're the best one out there. So, I don't know why you're so concerned.

Dora: And uh, Sol just kind of gets this super indignant expression on her face, [Han laughs] and is like,

Dora as Sol: I'm not concerned. I'm pissed. Because this is... All right, fine. You know what, that's fine. I'm gonna deal with this, and we're gonna see what happens, but it's gonna be bad, I'm telling you this right now, it's gonna be bad, because there's gonna be all these vultures all over these people.

Dora: And uh...

Han as Kuiper: I mean, you have to be used- isn't that how bounty hunting works? Like, correct me if I'm wrong, but usually there's more than one... more than one person after a given bounty.

Dora as Sol: Yeah, and there's- there's a whole stellar system out there, and yeah, we compete, but this is gonna be like having a bunch of, oh I don't know, Wolverines competing over a single scrap of meat in a barrel.

Han as Kuiper: Well then you just have to be the fastest Wolverine. I don't know what to tell you.

Dora as Sol: It's fine, you don't have to tell me anything about doing my own damn job, but just try to keep a tighter wrap on... who's on that passenger manifest, 'cause otherwise it's gonna get ugly. It's gonna get real ugly.

Han as Kuiper: Okay. Listen. I mean, if I keep too tight a lid on info, then people are gonna start investigating my ass, and then you're out of a job, so... Cut me some slack here.

Dora as Sol: All right. Well. I've said my piece. I think we're done here. You- you enjoy that... that... mmm.

Dora: And Sol just is like- shakes her head and... storms off. And uh, I think that's scene.

Jade: Does she punch any gaming machines on her way out and break them? [laughter]

Dora: Yes. She punches- she punches- aw shit, what's a good game- there's bound to be like a Dance Dance Revolution 58-

Han: Yes!

Dora: -in there somewhere, and so she punches that, and one of the screens won't- will flicker, so it won't be useful.

Han: Nice. [Jade laughs]

Dora: So...

Han: I love it.

Dora: Because I'm touchstone, I get a special privilege. I'm going to say that that is moving us toward the crossroads to be sure, but um... That's one of the crossroads to be sure, but I also think that public opinion is not doing so great right now, and so we're also moving toward a crisis with this. So, next up is Han.

Han: Right, 'cause we keep going until we resolve the crossroad, right? That's the deal?

Dora: We keep- yeah, we keep going until we resolve any of them, so if-

Han: Okay.

Dora: -somehow the next three scenes are all crises, then [laughter] we'd resolve the crisis. [more laughter]

Han: Okay. Um... Yeah. Let's see. Does anyone have any ideas, or things they wanna-conversations they wanna have?

Jade: I'm not sure about Max, but like we can always throw NPCs in-

Han: Right.

Jade: -and just, if we need to like- if we wanna like, search something out in fiction, like we can always bounce that.

Han: Yeah. Um... Hmm.

Dora: Something I think may be worth looking into is, you know, Max brought up some of this, you know, do we have the supplies to take these on- these folks on temporarily, or is this going to completely fuck up everything? So it may be worth having a scene with the quartermaster or something like that-

Han: Yeah.

Dora: -at least involved, so- May I suggest maybe like, Kuiper and Max and NPC Quartermaster?

Han: Sure.

Dora: Talking about the logistics of taking these folks on?

Han: Mm-hmm.

Jade: Sure, sounds good.

Han: Yeah, that makes sense.

Jade: So maybe up on the um... in the main bridge?

Han: Yeah, I think the bridge would make sense. Um... And I'm having a hard time not just picturing a Star Trek bridge, but I'm gonna try my best.

Jade: I imagine it more like- imagine like- oh shit, like- you know like, I kind of feel like- it's just because bowling alleys always have really shitty lighting and shitty carpet-

Han: Mm-hmm.

Jade: -and I kind of have that kind of visual of those kinds of brightly colored bars with chipping paint and just like, screens everywhere [crosstalk] and carpet [indistinguishable]

Han: [crosstalk] God that's really good.

Dora: [crosstalk] Oh, that's really good.

Han: That's incredible. Okay. [laughter] Um, yeah. So I think like, Kuiper's at like the communications station, and like this isn't necessarily the main communication hub, but it's like a place where she can access that info. And I guess this nameless quartermaster and um... and Max are like, standing over her shoulder, looking at these like, lists of people and resources coming in, um. Dora, do you have an idea for who this quartermaster is?

Dora: Yeah, I'm trying to- let me go to a name generator really quick, but I do have an idea for who this quartermaster might be. And I'm thinking vaguely like Scotty from Star Trek, but a lady.

Han: Okay. Yes.

Dora: Because we're- we're doing-

Jade: Ah, ah, what about Kirsten Vangsness who plays Garcia on Criminal Minds? The long blonde hair and the always brightly colored glasses and clothes, like she's...

Dora: Oh, yes, that's a-

Jade: Sorry, I've had a crush on her for like ten years. Like... [laughter]

Dora: No, that's perfect.

Jade: Oh, did we say what everybody looks like? Like, our characters?

Han: I don't know if we did.

Dora: I don't know either. So Han, you describe what Kuiper looks like.

Han: Um, I mean, I do have this very specific picture of Kristen Stewart, but it's Kristen Stewart at her butchest and grimiest. Um, and just like... When she just looks like the shittiest, shittiest person. [Jade laughs]

Dora: It's delightful.

Jade: Max is basically Gina Rodriguez in Annihilation, like with that cropped- like, with the buzzcut on the sides, and the hair like pulled up in a tiny little ponytail, like tattoos down the side of her head, like chipped nail varnish, grimey as fuck tanktop, toolbelt around her waist always, so. Is always something in there- actually I think as it starts, you see her rifling through one of these pouches on her toolbelt, and she just slaps like a stim patch on one arm and pulls out some gum and just starts chewing gum really fast.

Han: Okay.

Dora: Beautiful. Um, so I don't have a faceclaim for Sol, but she's kind of like built like a brickhouse, she's broad and muscled and tends to wear like, biker black leather all the time-

Jade: Oh no.

Dora: -and has like, close cropped hair, dark hair, dark eyes, kind of brown skin, and uh, yeah, she's very gruff, and- she's not grimey though. Unless she's been in a bar fight, in which case she's probably got bruises, maybe a rakish cut over one eyebrow [laughter], that kind of thing. Um. I'm not playing somebody who's my type at all!

Han: Absolutely not.

Dora: So I think the quartermaster is going to be Kat Zimki. And uh-

Jade: Yes.

Dora: she's- she looks like the character from Criminal Minds but is very much more a Scotty personality, and she's just kind of got a grim look on her face and is like,

Dora as Kat: I'm running the numbers Commander, I'm running the numbers Commander Jasco, and this is... [sighs] Unless they're willing to give us a hefty portion of their supplies, I don't know how we're gonna make this work without having everybody be on an absolute shoestring ration plan.

Jade as Max: Oh yeah, that always goes so great for morale as well. One more reason for everyone to be pissed about these guys showing up. Great.

Han as Kuiper: Yeah. Um... So... Okay. So what you're telling me is that we do have the resources to take them on.

Jade as Max: [high pitched] Mmm.

Dora as Kat: That is not what I said, ma'am. [crosstalk] I said-

Han as Kuiper: [crosstalk] Okay, it's really- okay. Side note. It's really throwing me off when you call me ma'am. Please do not do that. [Jade as Max laughs] [crosstalk] Do I look like a ma'am to you?

Jade: [crosstalk] That's in character- that's in character laughing.

Dora as Kat: You look like a superior officer that I don't want to piss off, so I will call you Queen of the Universe if that's what it takes for you to both A) not try to kill me, and B) well, listen to what I'm saying.

Han as Kuiper: Listen. I am 100% listening. And what I'm hearing is that it would be hard and bad, but we can do it.

Jade as Max: Look. Like who- have we got anybody in the sector that we can try and divert a supply line here to try and take the weight off? Is there anybody nearby?

Han as Kuiper: I mean... I'm sure there... I'm sure we could find someone... I mean-

Dora as Kat: Is there-

Han as Kuiper: There's-

Jade as Max: We could kick- kick them some cred for showing up like... [sighs] I'm sure there's somebody making a delivery to a nearby settlement that could be persuaded to come here.

Han as Kuiper: So... Okay so here's the thing. There is... a teeny tiny little UniSol contingent in the vicinity that we could take on if we needed to.

Jade as Max: [groans]

Han as Kuiper: Don't- [Jade as Max still groaning] No don't- don't give me that noise.

Jade as Max: I will give you what noise I see fit.

Dora as Kat: [sighs]

Han as Kuiper: We-

Dora as Kat: All right. All right. If there is a source of supplies, if they can give us what they've got, if we can quote-unquote persuade someone to go knock over a UniSol frigate, then I can re-run these numbers and see what we've got.

Han as Kuiper: Okay.

Jade as Max: I mean, if we're able to take like, one of them whole, I could like, [sighs] I could get the scrubber off it. Like, we could try add to the bank that we've got, try and replace some stuff, [sighs] I could try and do something with water recyclers.

Han as Kuiper: So I'm hearing a yes.

Jade as Max: I'm saying if you are desperate to get these people in here, then you're gonna need to do something first.

Han as Kuiper: Sold. Done. Okay.

Jade: That feels like scene-

Han: Okay?

Jade: -if you're cool with it.

Han: Yeah. Yup.

Jade: A nice sort of like stamp on that.

Dora: Yup.

Han: All right.

Jade: I love Kuiper. [laughter]

Dora: Kuiper's so good.

Jade: I love her!

Han: She sucks. Um... okay.

Jade: It's great.

Dora: Crossroads? Crossroads or crisis?

Han: This feels like a crossroads.

Jade: Yeah.

Dora: Okay.

Han: And I think the order is that... I think it's just- if yes, hmm. If yes then we have to- or, I don't know. I don't know if that's an order. I think it's- hmm.

Jade: Well I think we just kind of established in fiction that we're gonna have to bloody the nose of UniSol-

Han: Right.

Jade: -to pull this off.

Han: Right.

Jade: I think that's [crosstalk] clear enough.

Han: [crosstalk] Yeah. So I don't think that's an order because that would go the other- that's a different direction. Um, okay. So I don't think that there's an order in there.

Dora: Okay.

Jade: Okay.

Dora: Any prediction?

Jade: No, I don't think so. Can I make predictions when it's not my scene anyway? Can I do them as a reaction? I can't remember.

Dora: Yeah, I think- let me double check. I think that you can.

Jade: Mmm.

Han: Mm-hmm. I think it's when you're in a scene.

Jade: Yeah, 'cause I think it's only touchstone that can do stuff when it's not their scene.

Han: Yeah.

Jade: Unless you're challenging, in which case-

Dora: Yeah.

Jade: -it's a bit different. So...

Han: Okay.

Jade: Okay. Hey!

Han: So...

Jade: We filled up a card!

Dora: Yeah.

Han: Yeah.

Dora: Cool, so...

Jade: Cool.

Han: Resolving a crossroad.

Jade: Yeah.

Dora: Yup! So when we fill up the number of boxes on a particular thing, either crossroad, crisis, or time passes, we have to resolve it. And in order to resolve it, we kind of... ask some questions and describe how things go down. So the first thing that we need to do when we resolve a crossroad- we need to decide if this is the end of the game. And I think that we all want to see what happens from here, so... [laughter]

Jade: Definitely.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Dora: Yup! So the next thing is to set the stage. So, we kind of sketch out what- what's about to happen, basically. So we're at a situation where we have- we've established that we potentially have to capability, but we're gonna need to- not make some concessions, but kind of go out of our way to make this work.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Jade: Yeah.

Dora: And then it's up to the power or powers to decide which way we go on the crossroads.

Han: So, we currently only have stuff in the yes column. And I think... Hmm. And like currently in the yes column, if yes certain members of the refugee group will have bounties collected on them and tensions will run higher than usual and the station will suffer for it. I think... I think I am gonna go with yes, though.

Jade: Hell yes.

Han: I think- yeah. I think because like- even though tensions will run high in like, the lower- the people lower down the ring of command, the people who have the authority to allow these refugees in want that- want to strengthen this as an alliance. And so, are going to go with the yes option here.

Dora: Yep. That sounds legit. So the next thing that we have to do is we have to resolve certain things. So, in doing so, we need to resolve first the orders that were given by the power. So I think we only have one of those, correct?

Han: Yeah, and that's the one about bounties, and I think that definitely happens for sure.

Dora: Yup. 'Cause they're desperate, and they need a place to lick their wounds, so they're willing to give up a couple of people for the greater good.

Han: Yeah. Yup.

Dora: Um, then next we resolve predictions from our perspectives. So it's like, do you think that the prediction is still relevant, and then how does that prediction play out?

Jade: The prediction was if yes, tensions will run higher than usual and the station will suffer for it. That definitely still happens. I think that crew that had had the run-in with them was still there when it showed up. I think fights started kicking off and there was a significant amount of damage done to some of the station, and like Max and her crew running ragged trying to deal with it. And that the resources that might have gone into amping up the water recyclers or the oxygen scrubber have had to be put on hold, because they're having to like, patch up something more important because somebody got thrown through a wall and ruptured a line or something. [laughter]

Dora: Nice.

Han: Okay.

Dora: And then we do the popular reaction from the touchstone. And I think... Honestly the popular reaction is essentially what's already been described. I think the stockades are a bit fuller than normal because you have more fights breaking out, and I definitely think some of those fights are either instigated or ended by Sol trying to do her job.

Jade: Sure.

Dora: And then, the next part is reflection, which is where we go through our character and kind of, you know, make sure of where we're at, if our bonds have changed, if our wish or fear has changed, that kind of thing. So, starting with Han...

Han: Okay. Um... So Kuiper's wish, which I think is gonna stay the same, is, "I wish the kingdom would take on riskier jobs. We're pirates, we're in this for the cash and the glory and there's no point in caution." Think that is still very much in effect.

Dora: Okay. And any change to your bonds at all?

Han: Um, I don't think so, no. They seem-

Dora: Okay.

Han: -still legit.

Jade: Uh, for Max, her fear is, "This place is held together with spot weld, duct tape, and hope, and my fear is that one of those is gonna run out sooner rather than later." Uh yup! That's still the fear! [laughter] You know, we're just gonna fill up this bottle and screw on the lid and shake it a couple of times. Fine, I'm sure. [laughter]

Dora: It'll be fine! It's great!

Jade: I kind of wanna change... I feel like something in my bond with Kuiper's gotta shift a little.

Han: Mmm.

Jade: Just because it's just like, this isn't that you owe me big time, or you didn't make good on what you owe me. I'm not quite sure what I wanna change it to?

Han: Right.

Jade: So...

Han: I kind of like- I kind of like, being the- you owe me big time, in that like, I don't think we ever really established that like, Max was cashing in on something.

Jade: Yeah. Okay so Kuiper owes me big for supporting her.

Han: And I'll just add, "I owe her big time" to my bond.

Jade: Yeah. I've put, yeah, "Kuiper owes me big for supporting her," I just- 'cause we know what that's about, just like, yeah.

Han: Yeah.

Dora: Yeah.

Jade: Something that could definitely come into play [in an exaggerated voice] for sure. [normal voice] Sol?

Han: And we checked time passes- oh wait, yes, it's you.

Dora: Yeah. Yeah. So Sol's fear is, "I fear the kingdom will collapse under the weight of people who can't see past what's right in front of their noses." And... I think that's still true. I think that she... Because she's kind of in touch with what's- what the popular opinion is, like this is a short-sighted decision, and this could ultimately be bad, even though she was excited about it at first because, you know, money. I don't think her bonds change at all. There's no easy way to just kind of like indicate that being integral to the livelihood has kind of soured a little bit. But I mean, the bond is still effectively the same. All right, and I've checked time passes. So, that means we start on the next round, so I think we start with Jade this- oh, nope. Nope. We have to determine our crossroads. We had a couple of ideas for crossroads coming into this, and I think the one that [music starts - dice shaking, cards shuffling] most definitely fits based on what we just discussed is, "Will the kingdom spend some of its limited person power to attack the UniSol?"

[theme music plays]