

## STATION ARCADIA OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

### Episode #14: The Pomegranate Society

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**BRONWYN.** Hey, Bronwyn here. We really appreciate your continued support of Station Arcadia. If you haven't already, consider donating to our patreon, at [patreon.com/stationarcadia](https://patreon.com/stationarcadia), or sharing the show with a friend. Thanks, and enjoy episode 14 - The Pomegranate Society.

#### INT. STATION ARCADIA

**KASS.** Welcome, anyone. Careful not to get ahead of yourself. You're listening to Station Arcadia.

[THEME SONG PLAYS]

[MUFFLED THUMP AS A SMALL ROBOT BUMPS INTO A WALL. BEEPS, WHIRRS, AND ASSORTED SOUNDS]

**KASS.** -a moment. How did you get in here?

[MORE BEEPS AND BOOPS, KASS GOES UNDER DESK TO TRY AND FIND THE BOT]

**KASS.** Yes, keep beeping. Keep beeping...

**KASS.** Where are you...

[RUSTLING, AS KASS TRIES TO GRAB THE CLEANING BOT UNDER THEIR DESK]

**KASS.** *(As if speaking to a cat)* No no no, come here. Come here little guy.

[MORE SHUFFLING]

Here kibby kibby... pspspsp...

**KASS.** Oh sparks, the broadcast. *(in a louder voice)* Listeners, it seems like one of the station maintenance bots has gotten into the booth. They're not the most intelligent, even with Lyssel's updates... I'm pretty sure this one has got itself stuck underneath my desk.

[ASSORTED BOT NOISES. MORE SHUFFLING]

KASS. Ah, there you are! Gotcha.

[SCRAPING AND SHUFFLING AS KASS PULLS BOT FROM UNDER DESK AND STANDS UP]

KASS. (*Speaking loudly*) Lyssel, if you're here, this bot needs some updates.

LYSSEL. (*muffled, from vents*) Which one?

KASS. Uh, I think ...This feels like Pixel.

[METAL SOUND AS LYSSEL OPENS THE VENT. THEIR VOICE BECOMES CLEARER]

LYSSEL. That's my fault. I upped the censors. Sorry, sorry. I'll re-load and re-wire.

KASS. It's alright Lyssel! I'll just put it in the hall for now.

[VENT CLOSES. FOOTSTEPS AS KASS WALKS TO DOOR, DOOR OPENS, BOT IS PUT DOWN. DOOR CLOSES, FOOTSTEPS BACK, THEN A SOUND AS KASS SITS DOWN]

KASS. Alright, listeners, thanks for bearing with me. Let's get started.

[TWO CLICKS]

There are around ten thousand babies born every day in Talsoria. Baby number two-eight-six-four three-six-one-one three-eight-oh-seven is born in Expocity - An up and coming city center. It's freshly-paved streets are packed with people, whose faces are lit only by the glow of LCD billboards and OLED screens. A group of children scurry by; they're all wearing matching maroon smocks and gripping each other's hands so tight they might bruise. A woman in a sharp pantsuit pushes by; she's late, but not rushing just yet. It can't be all that important. She cuts through the group of kids and winds her way to a tall automatic door. Everything is glass and concrete here. It must be easy to clean. The woman's heels click down the white linoleum

hallway; she checks her holo interface and flashes a digital ID badge at a nurse. They're both needed in room 2378-A.

Every healthy child is brought into the world crying as their new lungs scream for air. The wailing of an infant is heard in the north-west wing of the second floor of the Expocity-Karnstein General Hospital, above the din of holoprograms and insurance representatives. This wing of the hospital is nearly as young as the child, and still smells faintly of fresh paint. In room 2378-A, a panting and sweaty mother holds her baby against her chest; they're both crying. After a few moments, we can see a nurse come to carry the infant over to a computer terminal. The nurse's nails click-clack against the touchscreen as they generate the twelve digits this child will carry for life. The terminal spits out a tiny microchip and the nurse gathers it in their free hand, carrying the child to the other side of the room. Behind a curtain, the infant only feels a pinch on their wrist. It's a rather crude welcome to this strange new world.

The sharply-dressed woman raps her knuckles against the hospital room's white door. There seems to be no answer, so she lets herself in. Her holo interface directs her to the bed near the window, where a woman lays weeping and smiling, her newborn child just out of reach. The woman sidles up to the side of the bed and takes the conveniently-placed seat.

"Have you given them a handle yet?" she asks. The mother nods.

"Wonderful."

The sharply-dressed woman brushes her hands against her burgundy pants as she stands. She starts pulling top-of-line tablets out of her briefcase. Each one has a pomegranate engraved on the back.

"The father has already signed the non-disclosure agreement?"

The mother gives a weak nod.

"Good, good."

"I'm sure you've already heard this a thousand times, but I am legally obligated to tell you that The Pomegranate Society engages a strict no-contact policy between donors and offspring. Even after they leave the system, contact can only be broached from the offspring's end. Is that clear?"

"Crystal" says the tired mother.

"You will be compensated the pre-discussed amount of credits on a monthly basis for the next twelve years. I have some more forms for you to fill out if you wouldn't mind?" The businesswoman says concisely. She sits at the woman's bedside, tablets in hand, and the mother barely even notices as her child is whisked away.

In the lobby of the obstetrics wing, the swaddled child lays sleeping peacefully in the arms of a stranger. The world is already so big and exhausting; it doesn't really matter who is holding you as long as you're being held. The stranger holds them only for a few hours and then another person in maroon scrubs comes to pick up the child and bring them home - home being a big, concrete & glass building on the outskirts of Expocity, full of other lonely children. The pomegranate logo adorns this building too. Our infant gets hurried inside, still in the arms of a childcare nurse, and away from the prying eyes of the other kids.

Our child is a little older now. They're old enough to huddle around the display screens and watch the feeds with the other kids. They even get to pick their own flavour of nutrient supplement every morning and evening. They have an odd fondness for "orange." They're old enough to have a favourite nurse and her name is "Molly." Molly tells them tall tales about pirates around the Gannon Islands, and vagabonds in The Empire. She tells them small tales, too. Like how she met her girlfriend when she left the Society, and all the things they can do with their Talsorian education. She's our kid's favourite because she doesn't sidestep the truth when they inevitably ask why they're in the Society in the first place. Why do some of the other kids in their classes go home to parents, rather than a big house with a pomegranate on the door? Molly uses big words like "socioeconomic" and "workforce". She tries to help them understand with whiteboard doodles on her holopad. Molly calls them "Jules," after a character in an old movie she likes. It seems to stick. A few years later, Jules watches sadly as she sets off for the Nexus to study at the best university a Pomegranate Society salary can afford.

So much is sugar-coated in Talsoria, whether it's the over-the-counter stimulants, nutrient supplements, or information. Jules is a student, spending all their hours in front of a holoscreen. Every morning they get to walk down a barely-paved road with all the kids, to a shiny new schoolhouse. Some of the children who live outside of the orphanage

have hoverbikes; they get to ride in from their homes in the city center. The single school teaches everything you'd expect it to. Arithmetic, language arts, natural sciences, Talsorian history. Science is Jules' favourite. With the best technology on the continent, they can simulate whatever they want. When danger is only simulated, a kid can mix whatever chemicals they'd like. Some of the Society teachers keep telling Jules they should become a chemist or a pharmacist. Jules likes the idea of helping people by using chemistry.

Most of the kids at school are from The Society, with a small percentage of kids that actually live with their parents. Jules has two best friends - one from The Society, and one they only see at school. Lola is their friend from the Society. She shares a room with Jules at the orphanage. She likes horses and wants to become a nurse, just like Molly was. Lola isn't her name just yet, but that's what everyone calls her anyways.

Jules' other best friend is Mim. Mim lives with their parents and a rescue cat in a big blue apartment building. Mim rides a hoverbike to school everyday, with their holotech in the front basket. Jules watches cartoons with Mim & Lola on their mandatory breaks, all huddled around Mim's tech in the schoolyard. It's a good life for a kid.

Mim moves to The Nexus a year before they all get to pick their official handles, when their parents get new jobs as cybertech surgeons. Mim begs and pleads to stay with their friends in Expocity, to no avail. Mim's argument with their parents is the worst that Lola and Jules have ever witnessed. The screaming and yelling almost makes them glad that they only have to deal with teachers and nurses. Almost.

**KASS.** Some days I learn a lot from these stories. I suppose today just isn't one of those days. This all seems fairly standard, so far. So uh, Let's go to a break.

[TRANSITION]

INT. MEMORIE/SOMA'S APARTMENT

[MEMORIE IS IN FAER ROOM, TAPPING AWAY AT AN OLD KEYBOARD.  
BEEPS AND WHIRRS SOUND.]

**MEMORIE.** *(to faerself)* Come on.

[SOME CLICKS, THEN AN ERROR NOISE.]

MEMORIE. (*frustrated*) Aw, ghosts!

[SOME CLICKS, ANOTHER ERROR NOISE.]

MEMORIE. (*sigh*) I give up. ERIS?

E.R.I.S. ..--..

MEMORIE. You want some upgrades? I need a break.

E.R.I.S. --.--

MEMORIE. Cool.

[MORE TYPING AND CLICKING.]

MEMORIE. C'mere, let me plug this in.

[E.R.I.S. MOVES OVER AND THERE'S A CLICK.]

MEMORIE. Okay, let's see...

[MORE TYPING AND CLICKING. SOMA COMES DOWN THE HALL.]

SOMA. Hey Memorie. Whatcha doing?

MEMORIE. I'm trying to upgrade E.R.I.S.

SOMA. Ooh, what kind?

MEMORIE. Just some expanded storage space. I might update the navigation system too.

SOMA. Cool!

MEMORIE. Yeah. What are you up to bud?

SOMA. (*excited*) I'm about to beat the final boss in Corroding 3!

MEMORIE. Are you now?

**SOMA.** Yup! Wanna watch?

**MEMORIE.** I'll be there in a few minutes, just let me finish up this strand.

**SOMA.** Okay!

[SOMA RUNS DOWN THE HALL.]

**MEMORIE.** *(sigh)* Alright.

[MORE TAPPING AS FAE CONTINUES TO CODE.]

[CYBERPUNK DOORBELL RINGS.]

**MEMORIE.** Ugh.

[FAE GET UP AND WALK DOWN THE HALL TO ANSWER THE DOOR.]

**MEMORIE.** Hello?

**NIKKI.** Hey kid. Been poking around again?

**MEMORIE.** Wait... aren't you that lady from the street? How did you get my address?

**NIKKI.** It's not that hard to find.

**MEMORIE.** What?

**NIKKI.** You're going to put yourself in danger if you don't stop looking into the revolution, Memorie.

**MEMORIE.** I knew it! I knew you were part of it!

**NIKKI.** Stay out of this. Stay safe. You have to look after your brother.

**MEMORIE.** How did you--

**NIKKI.** Like I said, information isn't secure. You should know that.

**MEMORIE.** But--

**NIKKI.** Be careful what you're searching. It was easy to track your IP address. You have too much about yourself on the web to be doing this sort of thing.

**MEMORIE.** I just want to prove that I can help. I may have jumped the gun on searching things without a secure computer, but I'm good at navigating the web. I can get you information and I'm the best hacker I know.

**NIKKI.** Yeah? Well you won't find anything about the revolution on the Internet.

**MEMORIE.** What? Why?

**NIKKI.** Why do you think?

**MEMORIE.** *Everything* is on the internet, and I've seen plenty of stories--

**NIKKI.** Do you believe they're true? Do you think we'd let information out just like that?

[PAUSE.]

**NIKKI.** You're looking into things you don't understand, and believing sources that are almost certainly false. You've got a lot to learn before you're even close to being helpful.

**MEMORIE.** But if I had a chance to show you, you'd see!

**NIKKI.** This is a warning, and a chance to let it go. I'm serious, Memorie. This isn't what you want to do.

**MEMORIE.** You don't know me.

**NIKKI.** But I know your type. I was like that once, and look at me. I've seen kids just like you go into this with the best intentions, and not make it out. I'm telling you not to follow the same path. It's a long and hard one. Listen.

**MEMORIE.** I...

**NIKKI.** You're a smart person, Memorie. I hope you'll make the right choice.



[NIKKI WALKS AWAY. MEMORIE HESITANTLY CLOSES THE DOOR AND RETURNS TO FAER ROOM.]

MEMORIE. *(sigh, contemplating)*

E.R.I.S. -.--- --- ..- --- -.-

MEMORIE. *(frustrated)* I just-- I want to do this so badly, ERIS. How am I supposed to just ignore it?

E.R.I.S. -.. .- -. --. . -.

MEMORIE. I know it's dangerous. But think about it. All those people are risking their lives to do good. To change the world! That's worth the risk!

E.R.I.S. -. --- - ... ..- ..- .

MEMORIE. They just haven't seen it yet. I've been working with computers for as long as I can remember. And from what I've seen, their communication network is limited to old tech and what they can get their hands on.

E.R.I.S. -... ..- . -.- --- ..- ..- ...

MEMORIE. Exactly! I'm going to keep trying. I can't give up now! The Prince didn't give up when faced with opposition, that's the whole point of the revolution! To stand tall when people try to push you down.

E.R.I.S. .. -.. --- -. .----. - - .... ..- -.-

MEMORIE. *(over E.R.I.S.)* Maybe this was a test, to see if I'd back down. Well, I'm not gonna fail this test. I can do this!

SOMA. *(from down the hall)* Memorie, are you coming?

MEMORIE. On my way! *(pause)* Thanks ERIS.

[FAE GET OUT OF FAER CHAIR, WALKING DOWN THE HALL.]

[TRANSITION]

**KASS.** Welcome back.

**KASS.** It's coming down to the wire now. Jules gets to pick their own handle in just a few months. "Jules", number two-eight-six-four three-six-one-one three-eight-oh-seven, dreams of no longer being a string of random numbers. It's an odd sort of coming of age, - after 4380 days you get to pick what everyone else will call you for the rest of your life. Your data point in the great big Talsorian system gets a concrete name.

Of course, there are the stories of kids who chose something embarrassing as their handle and can't change it until they turn 6570 days old and live on their own. Even then, the forms required for such a thing are in language only the best Talsorian attorneys can decipher.

The embedded tech in their wrist says that Jules is 4317 days old, their blood type is AB positive, and they're going to be under the care of The Pomegranate Society for 2253 more days. Lola is a bit closer, with 2229 days left to go.

Jules and Lola are curious kids, and based on their ID numbers, they think they must've been born in the same hospital within days of each other. They'll never know for sure, but it's a comforting thought: even when they were alone in the world the other was nearby.

No one wants to admit it, not even the nation's bravest psychologists, but no one in Talsoria gets enough physical contact. With Mim gone, it's left Jules and Lola more time with each other, and they snap together like two strong magnets. They stick to each other like glue in that way kids do, with no self-consciousness or shame. They spend evenings draped over each other between their beds, watching the holofeeds. When Jules starts having nightmares about the ocean swallowing them whole, it's Lola's bed they crawl into. They send message after message to Mim, but never hear back. Jules thinks their replies must've gotten lost in the sea of messages sent from The Nexus each day.

A few months pass and Lola picks her handle. "CherryLola17," she thinks, strikes the perfect balance between silly and serious, just like she does. Jules buys her a cherry cola from the vending-bot in

celebration. She gives them a sugary-sweet kiss on the cheek as a thank you.

Jules still doesn't know what they want theirs to be, and all the suggestions of the nurses fall flat. Even Lola is too wrapped up with the excitement of having her own identity to help Jules with theirs. With only five days to go, they decide in desperation to send a message to Molly in the hopes of finding some inspiration. It takes nearly a whole afternoon of research to find her handle and messaging address. It seems like no one who gets out of The Society really wants to be pulled back in. Jules agonizes over what to say - they haven't seen Molly in almost five years, will she even remember them?

Molly replies a day before they have to file for their new handle. She is, Jules realizes, what The Pomegranate Society would use as one of their poster children. She says she's living with her girlfriend, now wife, in The Nexus and she's studying to become a doctor. She says she misses all the kids, especially Jules, but makes no mention of coming back. She says that before the resources in Talsoria were all mined away, that you used to be able to find precious gems and jewels in the mountains. Molly says her favourite is the Cat's Eye. It's a pale cream colour, with a silky stripe in the middle that makes it look like the eye of a cat. On Jules' 4380th day, they name themselves "CatsEyeJules" and life goes on.

#### [MOMENT OF EXPECTANT SILENCE]

**KASS.** *(surprised realization, not disappointment)* Oh, that's it. I kept expecting something... different, to happen. Some great tragedy or another, like, conspiracy? I suppose, sometimes, these stories can just be about ordinary, everyday life. It seems like the orphanages of the Pomegranate Society haven't changed too much since I was a kid. My school was about 50/50 society kids to family kids, but I think that's just a matter of location. I always felt a bit bad for the kids with parents. I mean, who knew if they were following any sort of standard for care?

Or maybe that's just how we were told to feel. It's hard to say, sometimes.

Come to think of it, I'm not sure I want to reminisce about my childhood.

Remember, stay safe, stay moving, and stick close. You've been listening to Station Arcadia.

**[OUTRO THEME PLAYS]**

**Eli.** Station Arcadia is a podcast by Metal Steve Productions, and licensed under a creative commons attribution noncommercial share-alike 4.0 international license. It is produced by Eliana Esdi and C.V.V.M., and directed by Tovah Brantner. It is edited by Eliana Esdi and J. R. Steele, with soundscaping by Becker Hoang and music by Theo Goodwin. Today's episode was written by Pascale LaRivière, with scenes by J.R. Steele and Tovah Brantner. It featured Jade Virginia as Kass, Olly Davis as Lyssel, Ellison Cardenas as Memorie, F.A. Calkins as Soma, Laurent JL Hall as Nikki, and J.R. Steele as E.R.I.S. Join us on twitter and tumblr, @stationarcadia, for more content. Join us on Discord to chat with other fans, using the link in the description. Check out our website, stationarcadia.com for a transcript of this episode as well as information on the cast and crew. And finally, don't forget to subscribe to our patreon!

Today's Roman king of the week is Servius Tullius, who reigned from around 578-535 BC. Born a slave, he was raised to kingly status by rumors of his godly parentage and some clever manipulation on the part of the previous queen. He was a popular king, and improved living conditions for lower class citizens and immigrants. It was rather a shame when he was murdered by his son-in-law, and his daughter drove a chariot over his body. But these things happen.

----- **Promo for The Path Down** -----

**[Theme Music plays. "Tears in Rain" by Scott Buckley.]**

**Emilia:** So everything's okay?

**Vanessa:** Mami, cálmate. I'll be fine.

**Paulette:** We both know she's fretting about you, but I've been telling her; our baby girl is going to thrive.

**Vanessa:** Aw, mom. *(She laughs)* I promise, you guys. I have my telepathy completely under control.

**[Sound Effect: Theme music beat drops.]**

**Dexter:** Dante's Inferno seems really dark.

**Vanessa:** It's basically a tabloid. With poetry.

**Dexter:** Weird twist, but I'm listening.

**Lucero:** Well, I have to pay for school somehow.

**Vanessa:** You know, my offer still stands.

**Lucero:** Not this again.

**Dexter:** Here's the thing. I kind of do want to tell you. But...

**Chris:** Hey, no pressure. You don't have to tell me-

**Dexter:** My parents... passed away... two years ago.

[Tape recorder clicks on.]

**Vanessa:** I can't let myself slip like that... again. It's none of my business.

[Tape recorder clicks off.]

**Bellamy:** I remember what freshman year can be like.

**Dexter:** You're still in college!

**Bellamy:** I'm in my senior year! It's different.

**Chris:** *(He coughs, breathes fire, then coughs again)* God, I wish I had better control.

**Vanessa:** Tell me about it.

**Bellamy:** I'm worried about you!

**Dexter:** Quit it! I said I'm fine!

**Lucero:** I would do everything you do if I could, but I can't!

**Vanessa:** *(Crying)* How do I make this right? I don't want to lose you.

[Tape recorder clicks on.]

**Vanessa:** So...yeah! My first semester of college is going... great! I got this.

[Tape recorder clicks off.]

**Narration:** The Path Down. A sci-fi audio drama about grief, privilege, and superpowers.