Sparkle's Planning

By SoundStorm



This doc will give an overview of how Sparkle from Honkai: Star Rail planned out Penacony, including the retrospective insights shown in patch 3.8. Her overarching goal is to create the most entertaining "performance" out of Penacony, and make as many people the "protagonist" as possible. To do this, she must ensure each protagonist is able to and motivated to pursue their own goal, while also manipulating events to cause the exact story beats, conflicts, and climaxes she wants. Her ideal story involves Sunday being defeated, but not without great conflict beforehand.

Spoilers for the HSR main story in patches 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 3.8. The hyperlinks typically will be used to connect her preparations with their consequences. After clicking on a hyperlink, read from the very top of the screen to see what it is linked to, not the centre. For any questions, my discord is soundstorm7.

Before entering the dream, she had met up with Silver Wolf and agreed to help the Stellaron Hunters ensure that Firefly's 3 deaths were not truly fatal.

- This gave her Silver Wolf as a contact which would be useful for a later part of her plan.
- It also allowed her to see Silver Wolf's part of the script for Penacony that she received from Elio. Although it was not very extensive due to Silver Wolf partaking only in small segments of the story pertaining to Firefly alone, it was enough information for Sparkle to craft a plan to incorporate Firefly's fated deaths into the grand story, while ensuring she doesn't actually die.
- Additionally, briefly joining the Stellaron Hunters gave her the small opportunity she needed in order to totally analyse them, so she can impersonate them later on.

She snuck into Penacony early to purchase the music box invitations from Gallagher, helping him carry out the Watchmaker's wish to distribute them to many factions.

- This is what brought all the variables onto Penacony and allowed her to start the performance in the first place. By convincing Gallagher to let her help him with the invitations, she gained the right to choose which factions exactly were invited. Everyone she invited was brought there for a reason, as she anticipated the roles they would play in the story of Penacony. This allowed her to create a rough outline of her plan from the beginning.
- While she was there, she also relayed information to Silver Wolf about Penacony's security and surveillance. This helped strengthen her alliance with the Stellaron Hunters, and also puts them in unofficial "debt" to her, which she uses to her advantage later.

She transformed into the Stellaron Hunters and trapped Acheron in a miniature dreamscape, before fighting her.

- This allowed her to assess Acheron's power level. By provoking Acheron into severing the boundaries of the miniature Dreamscape, she is able to deduce that she is secretly an Emanator of Nihility who would be able

to also sever the boundary that separates the 12 Hours from the Primordial Dreamscape. From this, she ascertains Acheron's place in the story, predicting that she would be imperative to Aventurine's plan, of which she had also already deduced the details of.

Sparkle gave a hint to Aventurine about "befriending a mute".

- This gave Aventurine the idea for part of his plan, which involved getting Robin to experience "death". Through this, he was guided into sending letters to Robin (the mute) about his suspicions about "death" and the Family in order to strengthen her resolve to investigate the strange occurrences in Penacony, despite Sunday's warnings. This would lead Robin to try and hide from the public eye as she followed the disturbances using her powers, ultimately leading her to stalk Firefly and TB, who were being suspicious. She followed them all the way to Dream's Edge, far away from the public eye and the Family's scrutiny, which was necessary for later.

She disguised as Sampo to spy on TB and Firefly, giving TB hints about Firefly's true identity, as well as giving them both hints about the truth of Penacony that The Family are trying to cover up.

- Giving TB hints about Firefly's true identity motivates them to investigate her further, therefore making them stick with Firefly throughout their trip in the 12 Hours, and also mentally prepares them for Firefly's reveal about being a stowaway, having Entropy Loss Syndrome, and being after the Watchmaker's Legacy during their talk at Dream's Edge, ensuring it is a moment of bonding rather than separation. This bond is one of the key factors in both Firefly and TB's decisions that lead to Firefly's first death.
- Giving them both hints about the Family's secrets makes them both more motivated to investigate the Dreamscape. This particularly applies to Firefly, as when she glimpses the Primordial Dreamscape in the eyes of Dormancy, she draws on her suspicion towards the Family that Sparkle kindled, and becomes more confident about a deeper conspiracy occurring.

- Accompanying Firefly and TB also meant she could keep an eye on Robin, who was following them, so she could ensure that Robin was effectively lured to where she needed to be.

While disguised, Sparkle convinced Firefly and TB to experience a 'recreational dream', shaping it so that the otherwise innocuous story parallels Firefly's tragic backstory of the Iron Cavalry being used as sacrificial weapons and being subsequently massacred by the swarm.

- This reminds Firefly of the suffering she endured as the Iron Cavalry, and further motivates her to pursue her goal of curing her disease and becoming her own person independent of SAM. This was necessary so that, as well as taking on her own character development, her resolve and wish for life would be great enough to trigger the Stellaron-induced swarm disaster later on.
- It also hinted at Gopher Wood's simulated swarm disaster in advance, from both the story parallels and a memetic replica of a Juvenile Sting in one of the trash cans.

When Robin attempted to pursue Firefly and TB further into Dream's Edge, Sparkle disguised as Sunday and prevented her from going any further.

- This prevented Robin from interfering with Firefly and TBs emotional moment at Dream's Edge, which was a key story beat in Sparkle's ideal performance. This allowed TB to form an emotional bond with Firefly, which again was necessary to influence Firefly's actions regarding her first death later on.
- By putting a "creative spin" on Sunday, she could antagonise Robin and feed into the distrustful relationship between them both. This dynamic of opposition between them both was necessary to influence Robin's actions later down the line.

Sparkle then hinted towards the Order's interference with Robin's powers, before "killing" her, transporting her to Dreamscape Reef.

- The hint she gave Robin meant that Robin now had the missing piece of information to complete her suspicions of the Family and the disharmony in the Dreamscape. This suspicion is partially what led to her rejecting Ena's dream later on and waking up.
- Killing Robin sent her to the Primordial Dreamscape so she could later meet up with Firefly and Constance (who she knew would end up there due to her later interventions), meaning that Constance could plant the Cremator's fire inside Robin's mind. This was a contingency in case Robin's suspicions were not enough to awaken her from Ena's dream, as that fire could burn away the illusory dream to forcibly wake her up.
- This also meant that Robin had disappeared from the public eye, meaning Sunday would start to suspect the existence of a mole within the Family who killed his sister. This heightened suspicion is what led him to initiate the trial with Aventurine and inflict harmony curse on him as a means of getting him to investigate this matter, which was an instrumental part of Aventurine's plan, as it enabled Aventurine to get the Jade cornerstone in Sunday's possession. This meant that the cornerstone could be later activated to redirect the wishes of the masses from the Order to the Preservation, acting as a way to prevent Sunday's ascension.
- This also led Sunday to suspect Gallagher as the one who killed Robin, ultimately leading to Gallagher calling on Dormancy to "kill" Sunday and transport him to Dreamflux Reef. There, Sunday could meet with Robin, who Sparkle had also sent there, and the rest of the Astral Express crew. This situation painted him as a victim who was in the same situation as everyone else, and enabled him to gain enough trust to accompany Robin and Welt to confront Gopher Wood, so that he could imprison them using tuning as per his plan. However, this also enabled Welt to use the transmitter Aventurine gave him to relay information about the Order to the IPC, thus allowing the IPC ships to gather and spread the power of the Preservation within the Dreamscape, which was essential for delaying Sunday's potential ascension into Aeonhood.
- Her killing of Robin also lured Constance to Sparkle's location, as Constance was currently acting as Gopher Wood's ally and surveyor of the Dreamscape, thus it should be in her priorities to prevent Robin from going further into the Primordial Dreamscape and uncovering secrets that might deter her from being Gopher Wood's chordmaster at the Charmony Festival.

Sparkle deliberately created an opening for Constance to use Sparkle's transgressions against her, leading them to strike a deal.

- On Constance's end of the deal, she would offer up knowledge about the Dream of Gnawing Oak and its significance. Sparkle would need this information so that she could later relay it to Firefly, guiding Firefly to cause a myriad of important events, such as her safe second death, the initiation of Gopher Wood's simulated swarm disaster, and the creation of a hole in the 2nd layer of the Dreamscape.
- On Sparkle's end of the deal, she would give Constance a piece of the script that she had received from Silver Wolf. This would give Constance enough information to later on impersonate a Stellaron Hunter and entrap Firefly in Gopher Wood's plan, as per her alliance with him. Therefore, Constance was able to intercept Firefly's later attempt to return to reality from A Child's Dream, which was a major factor in Firefly's first death.

Sparkle fabricated a crime scene of Robin's body having been stabbed by Dormancy, and presented it to Aventurine.

- This further pushed the narrative that Gallagher was the one who orchestrated Robin's death, and not Sparkle, shielding her from blame.
- It also helped further Aventurine's suspicions on "death" in the Dreamscape, helping him form conclusions that he would use when orchestrating his grand "death" by Acheron's blade.

She sent TB and Firefly to A Child's Dream, resulting in Black Swan meeting up with them in order to save them from Dormancy.

- This allowed TB and Firefly, and by proxy the Astral Express Crew and the Stellaron Hunters, to prove that there is more to the dreamscape than the Family presents, which is what spurs their following investigations.
- TB being in danger in the dreamscape gave Black Swan an opening to fulfil her end of the deal with Aventurine, since Aventurine needed Black

Swan to gain the Express Crew's trust in order to get a chance to isolate TB later. Saving TB from Dormancy was the perfect chance for Black Swan to gain said trust, and Sparkle used this fact to both facilitate the furthering of Aventurine's plan, and also lure Black Swan onto the stage as another "protagonist".

- Being sent to A Child's Dream allowed Firefly, who has superhuman perception, to glimpse the truth of Dreamflux Reef and "death" by gazing into the eyes of Dormancy. This guided her decisions pertaining to her first death later on, as it meant that she realised that being "killed" by the monster would actually just transport her deeper into the Dreamscape, and if the others witnessed this, they would genuinely believe it to be death and it would count as one of her 3 deaths.
- Sending Firefly into A Child's Dream directly after giving Constance the script segment caused Constance to pursue Firefly into the dream, wishing to pose as her ally and lure her to Gopher Wood's trap. This meant that, when Black Swan attempted to return TB and Firefly to reality, Constance intercepted Firefly and altered her memory to believe that she was an ally. From this point, Sparkle knew that Constance would not be able to let Firefly back into reality, as that would enable her to contact Silver Wolf who would tell her that Constance was a fraud. Thus, Constance was forced to convince Firefly to remain in the Primordial Dreamscape. Firefly remaining there meant that Black Swan and TB would both go back for her, TB because he cares for her, and Black Swan because she needs to follow TB to fulfil her deal with Aventurine. Sparkle used her contact with Silver Wolf and had her send a message to them that contained the code necessary to enter the Dreamscape that Firefly was in. Once Black Swan and TB entered and met with Acheron, the audience for Firefly's first death had been assembled.
- TB witnessing Firefly being killed by Dormancy was also an integral part of motivating them to investigate the mysteries of Penacony, serving as a strong emotional drive that led them to avenge Firefly's death as one of key protagonists in this story.
- This turn of events also led Black Swan to realise TBs potential to provide valuable memories, thus leading her to lend him the empty Light Cone. This would collect all of TBs memories, including the major flaw with Misha being in reality, which revealed they have been in Ena's dream from the start. This allowed Black Swan to come to this conclusion upon collecting back TBs memories after "defeating"

Sunday, enabling her to awaken the Astral Express from Ena's dream so that they could defeat Sunday for real.

She sent Acheron to the same dreamscape that TB, Black Swan and Firefly were in, just in time to meet up with Black Swan and TB.

- This prevented Black Swan from isolating TB before they got to see Firefly's death, since Acheron and Black Swan are wary of each other, so Black Swan wouldn't want to risk pulling any tricks in front of Acheron. This ensures Firefly's first death will be achieved, while still allowing Black Swan to isolate TB later on when Acheron is distracted while fighting SAM, which she also accounted for.
- This also makes Acheron and TB more acquainted, thus making the Astral Express Crew more likely to try and talk with Acheron in response to Aventurine's later claims about her rather than assume her guilt. This therefore increases the success rate of Aventurine's strategy of getting the Express Crew and Acheron to rally against him, ultimately leading to Acheron slashing Aventurine and severing the boundaries of the Dreamscape.
- Additionally, Acheron accompanying TB and Black Swan is a key part of what influenced Firefly's decision to let Dormancy kill her. Since Constance convinced Firefly that going directly to TB would be dangerous given Black Swan being there, and was also forced to prevent Firefly from returning to reality, Firefly's options were already narrow. Eventually she concluded that being killed by Dormancy in front of TB, Acheron, and Black Swan would be the best course of action, as it would count as one of her 3 deaths in a non lethal way, allow her to convey important info about "death" in the Dreamscape, and stun Acheron into not unsheathing her blade. This is because Firefly feared that Acheron, upon coming into contact with Dormancy, may unleash her power in battle and in the process corrupt TB with Nihility, who she wished to protect.

She acted as Robin for the public to help Sunday keep Robin's "death" a secret.

- This prevented the people of Penacony from noticing the strange occurrences, allowing Sunday, Gopher Wood, Aventurine and Gallagher

to continue their plans in secret. Sunday and Gopher Wood's plan of deceiving the masses into believing they're in a safe and harmonious dreamscape so they can remain ensnared in Ena's dream particularly required this in order to proceed.

Sparkle gave a hint to Aventurine that confirmed his theory about the truth behind Penacony.

- Sparkle knew this would give Aventurine the confidence he needed to go through with his plan of instigating Acheron into slashing him, since she knew his decision hinged on that theory being true.

She disguised as Robin in order to calm down each member of the public after the incident with Aventurine and Acheron.

- By gaslighting all of the citizens into believing the dreamscape was still safe and that the shocking display of Aventurine and Acheron's attacks were simply simulations for the Charmony festival, she prevented mass panic so that the "protagonists" could continue completing their own agendas without unnecessary interference.

Sparkle told Firefly to go to the Dream of Gnawing Oak, which she had located thanks to her deal with Constance, and leveraged the previous info she had given SW and Firefly to convince her to follow her instructions.

- This essentially steers Firefly into Gopher Wood's domain, causing her to fall victim to his tuning illusion which made her believe she was fighting the Harbinger of Death and the potential resurrection of the swarm. Due to this, and the previous conditioning Sparkle had done to Firefly, she wished for life in front of the Stellaron. As Firefly was a pathstrider of the Propagation, her wish was granted in the form of a rapid reproduction of life in a new, simulated swarm disaster. This plagued the Primordial Dreamscape and caused everyone to cry out for the Order's protection, thus setting up Gopher Wood's grand plan for Sunday ascension into Ena.

- However, it also caused Firefly to attempt to contain the Stellaron within herself. This resulted in the detonation of the Stellaron, which completed Firefly's second death in a way that did not result in Firefly's actual death, as Firefly was still within the Dreamscape.
- This explosion also created a hole in the second layer of the Dreamscape, which was necessary so that the Astral Express crew could later traverse through all 3 layers of the Dreamscape and fight Sunday.

Sparkle meets up with Robin after they both awaken from Ena's dream ahead of time, and antagonises her once again with the threat of blowing up and killing everyone in the 12 Hours with the bombs she had been planting.

- This, paired with Sparkle's earlier antagonisation of Robin, immediately geared Robin towards counteracting Sparkle's destructive act. Therefore, Robin took up Sparkle's challenge of protecting the people in the 12 Hours by calling on Xipe to keep them safe. Through this, Sparkle was able to blow a hole in the third and innermost layer of the Dreamscape so that the Astral Express crew may traverse through it, while also ensuring the safety of those in the 12 Hours.
- Provoking Robin into performing the Harmony's song also aided the Astral Express crew, who had been awakened by Black Swan due to the inconsistencies found in the Light Cone, in their fight against Sunday, by introducing disruption in the pathspace to hinder Sunday further.
- Robin's song also helped fine-tune the slumbering souls with the harmony and guide them back to reality while they try to escape the dreamscape after Acheron's slash.

(Questionable canonicity) She hid 999 fake bombs on the Charmony Festival Airship, making one of them appear as though it held the real bomb, and informed TB of this.

- This forced TB to create a group chat to alert everyone of the threat, causing a major emergency which everyone had to play a role in resolving, further increasing the believability of a real bomb going off. She predicted that Firefly would attempt to sacrifice herself in order to protect everyone from the bomb, which would cause everyone to believe

she was dead as the firework explosions went off, fulfilling her third death without actually killing her and resulting in a cathartic ending to the “performance” she masterminded.

Ultimately, she was able to orchestrate multiple character arcs, conflicts and events in the exact way she wished. She pushed Sunday and Gopher Wood’s plans to near completion, while also engineering the destruction of the layers of the Dreamscape, the awakening of the Astral Express, and the prevention of Sunday’s ascension, enabling a climactic fight of the Astral Express vs Sunday. She was also able to orchestrate 2 (or 3) of Firefly’s deaths. She did all of this with minimal resources, while staying undetected as the mastermind, despite the fact that she was up against insane adversity. This adversity consisted of Sunday’s Aeonic, multi-layered, galaxy wide deception hax, and 13 different secret agendas being pushed by various factions/individuals, some of which who posed immense intellectual adversity (Astral Express, Stellaron Hunters, Everflame Mansion, Sunday, Aventurine, Gopher Wood, Acheron, Black Swan, Constance, Gallagher, Misha, Robin, and Dr Ratio).