

# Building reliable and scalable apps with Distributed Actors

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# Distributed actors

- Understanding Distributed Actors in Swift  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JoCkBSXQAlu05BW9cPidBNxX8jXwEvFX/view?usp=sharing>
- Meet distributed actors in Swift  
<https://developer.apple.com/videos/play/wwdc2022/110356/>

# Before we start

- What is reliability and scalability?
- Why we need distributed systems?

# Reliability

The system's ability to consistently perform its intended function, even in the presence of failures.

- **Fault Tolerance:** The ability to recover from node or component failures without significant downtime or data loss.
- **Consistency Guarantees:** Ensuring data correctness and state synchronization across nodes.
- **Availability:** How consistently the system remains operational and responsive.

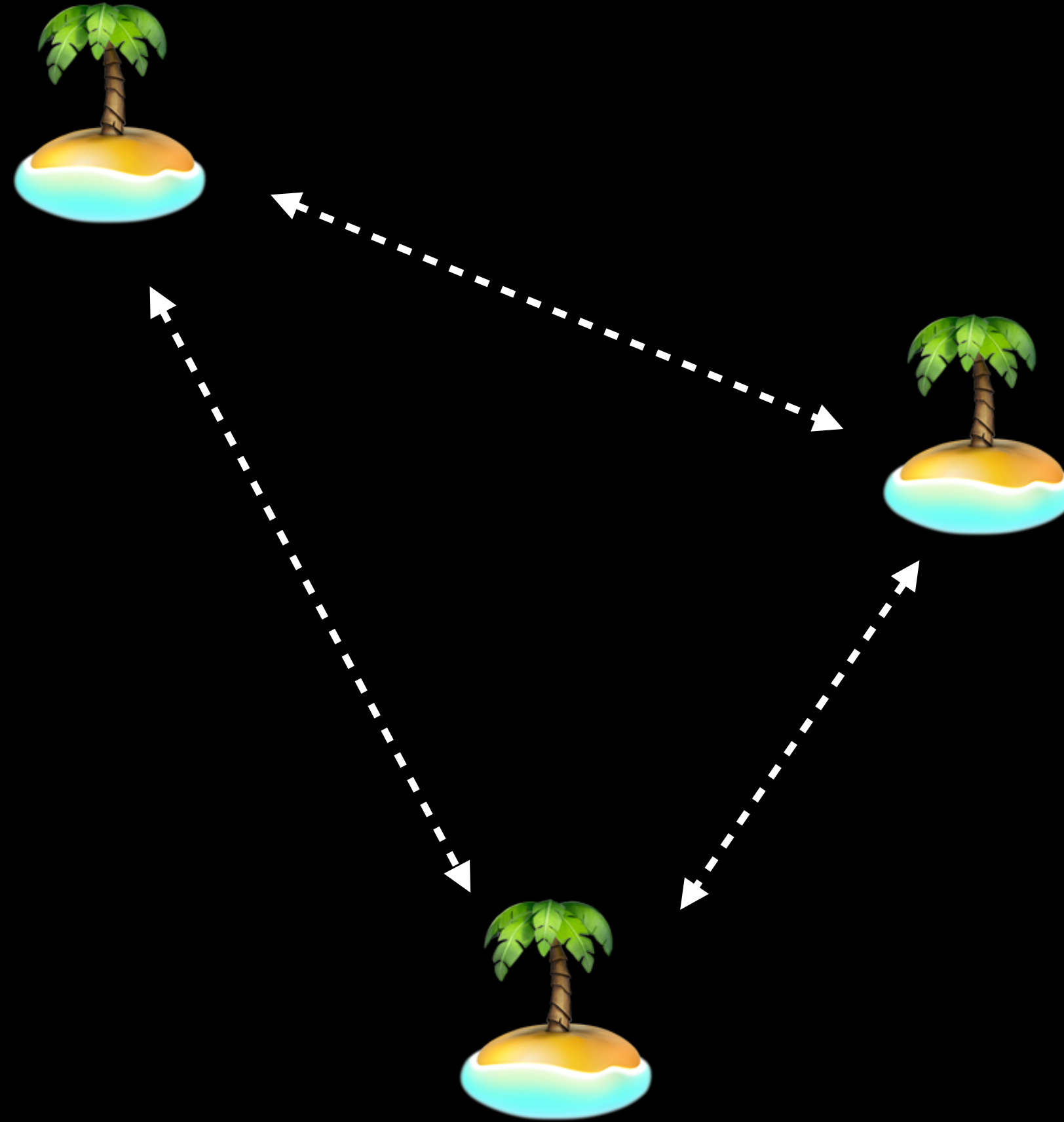
# Scalability

The ability of a system to handle increased workload or demand by proportionally expanding its resources.

- **Vertical Scalability:** Increasing the capacity of individual components (e.g., adding more CPU or memory to a single server).
- **Horizontal Scalability:** Adding more nodes to a system or cluster to distribute the workload.

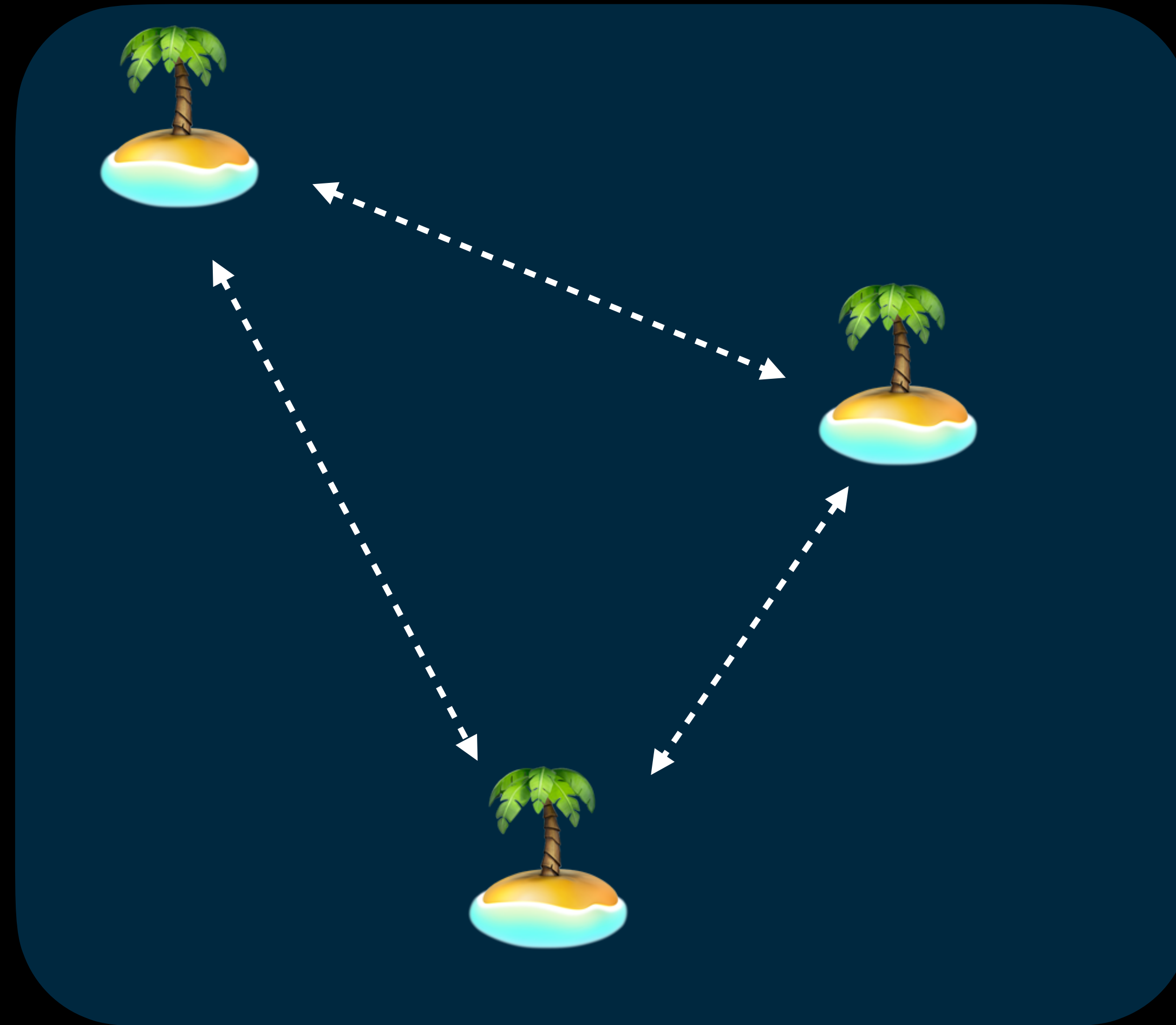
**Why we need distributed  
systems?**

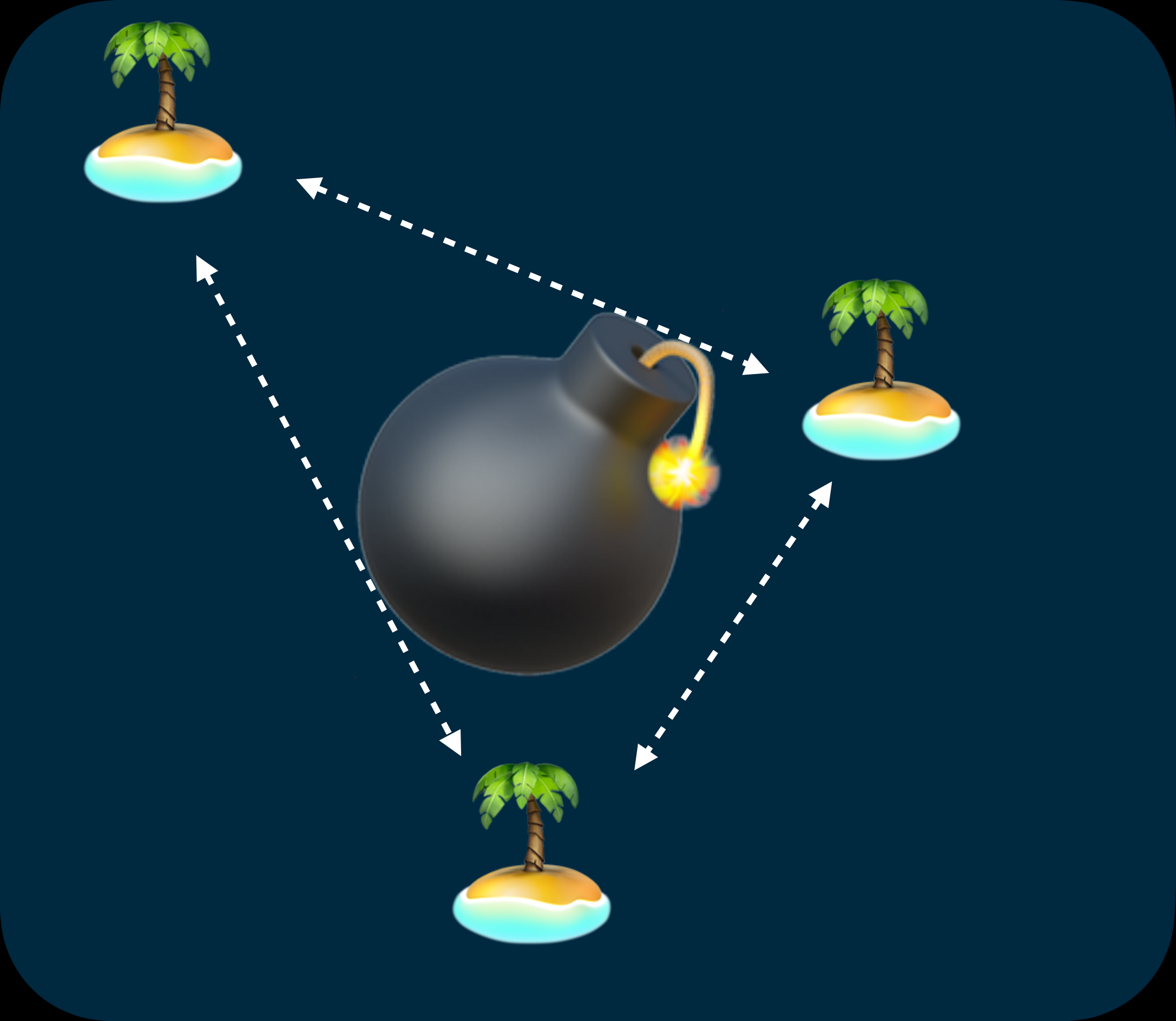
# Sea of concurrency





# Sea of concurrency



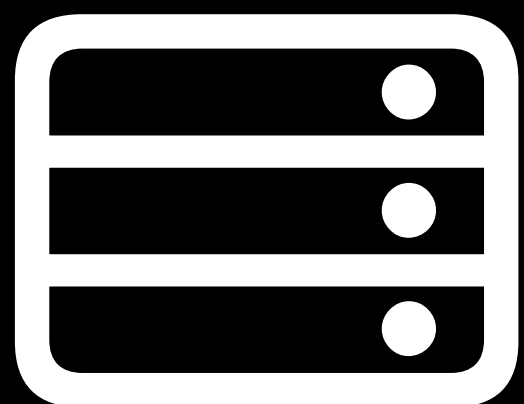




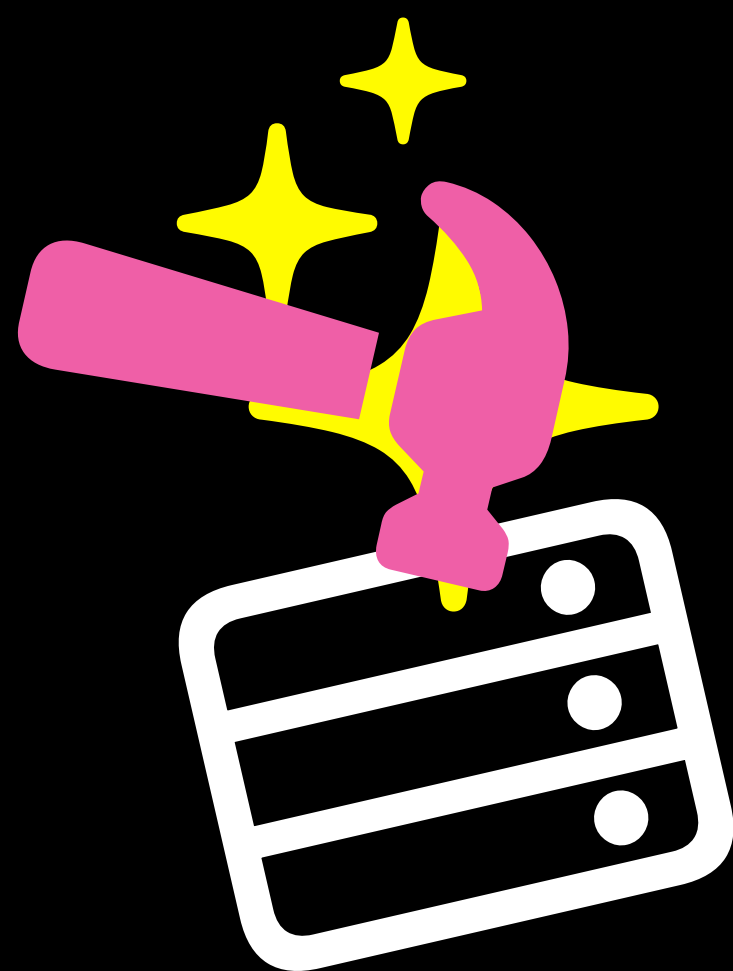


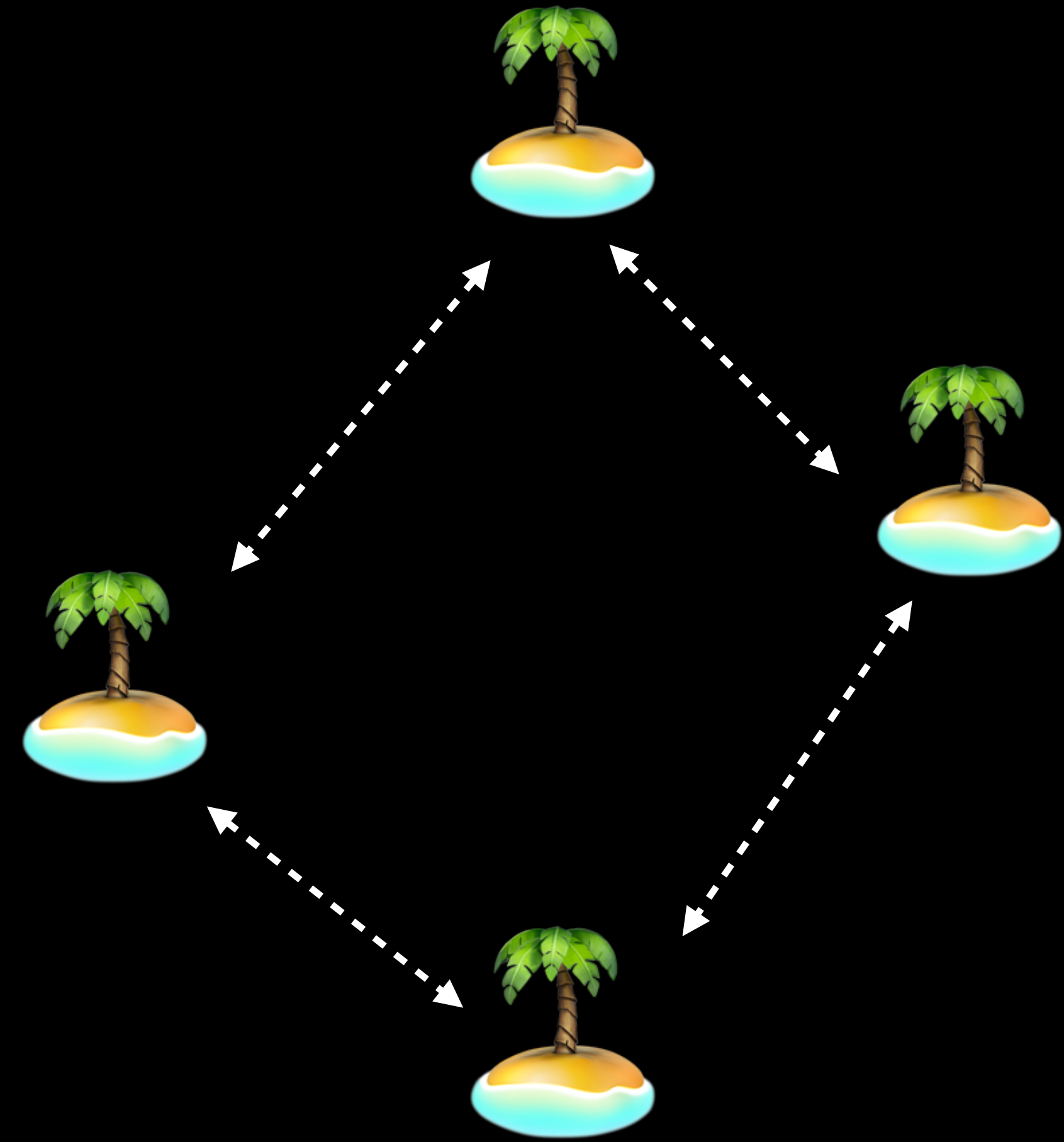
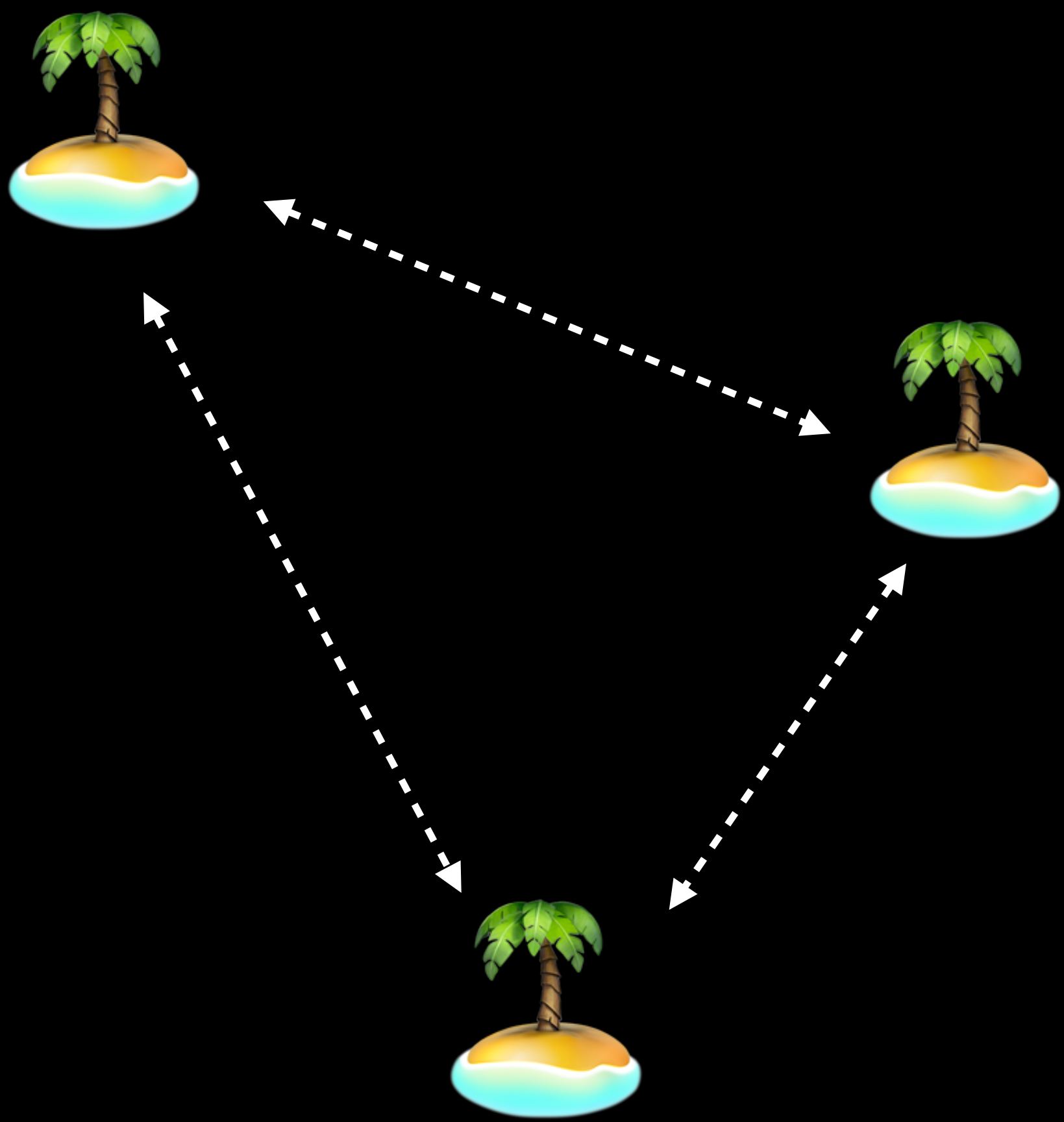


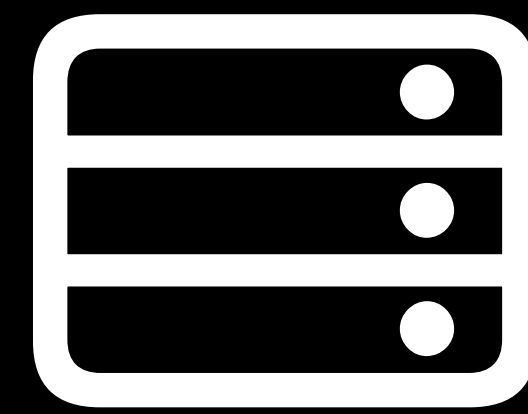
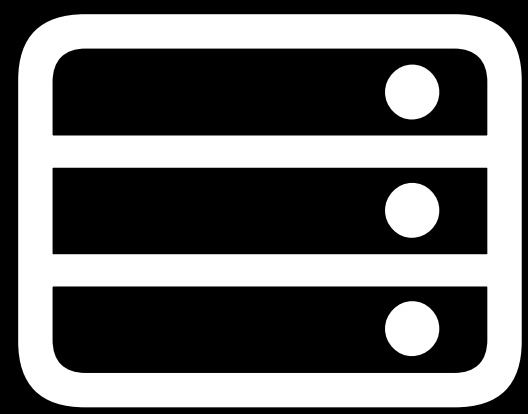




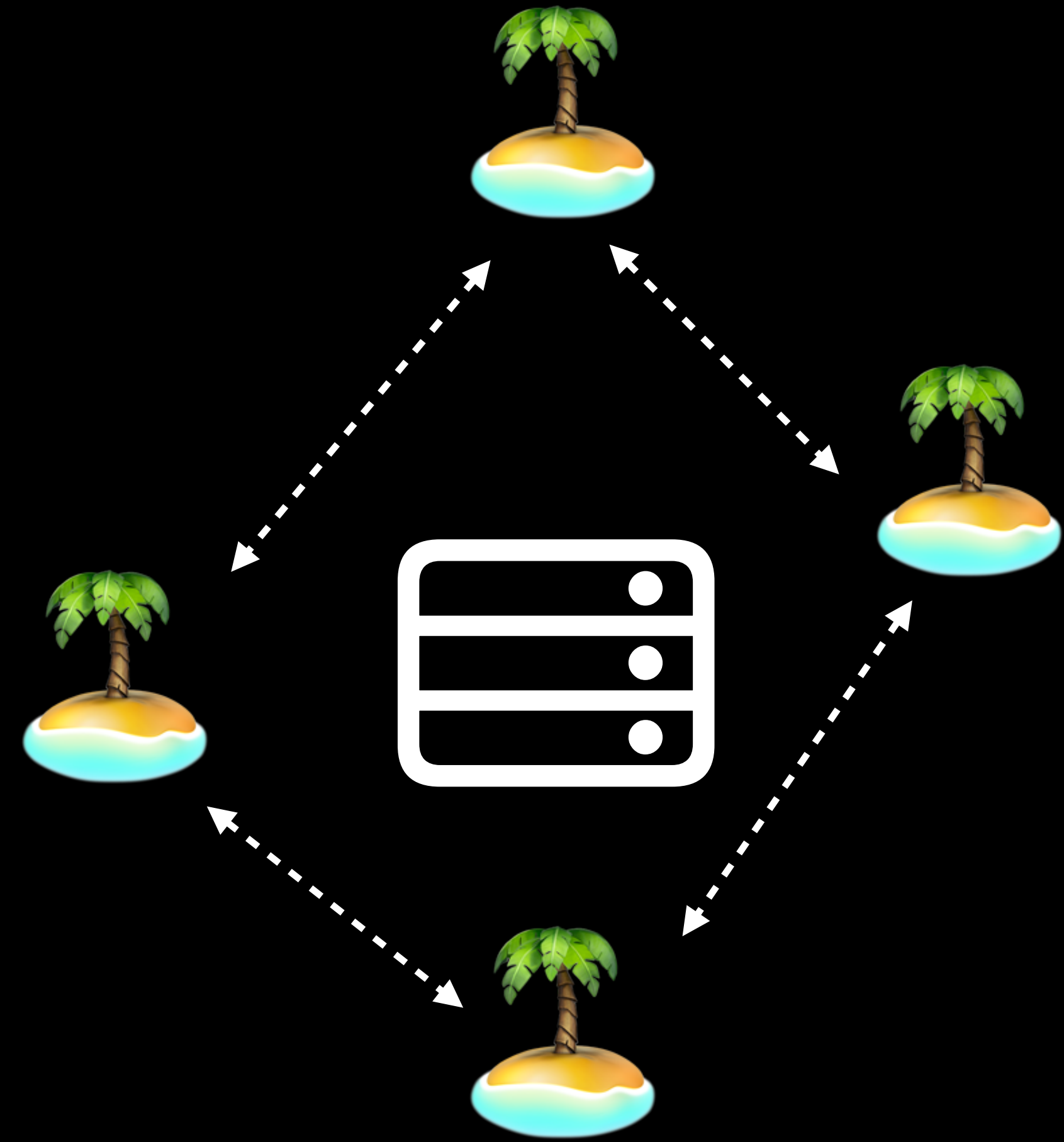




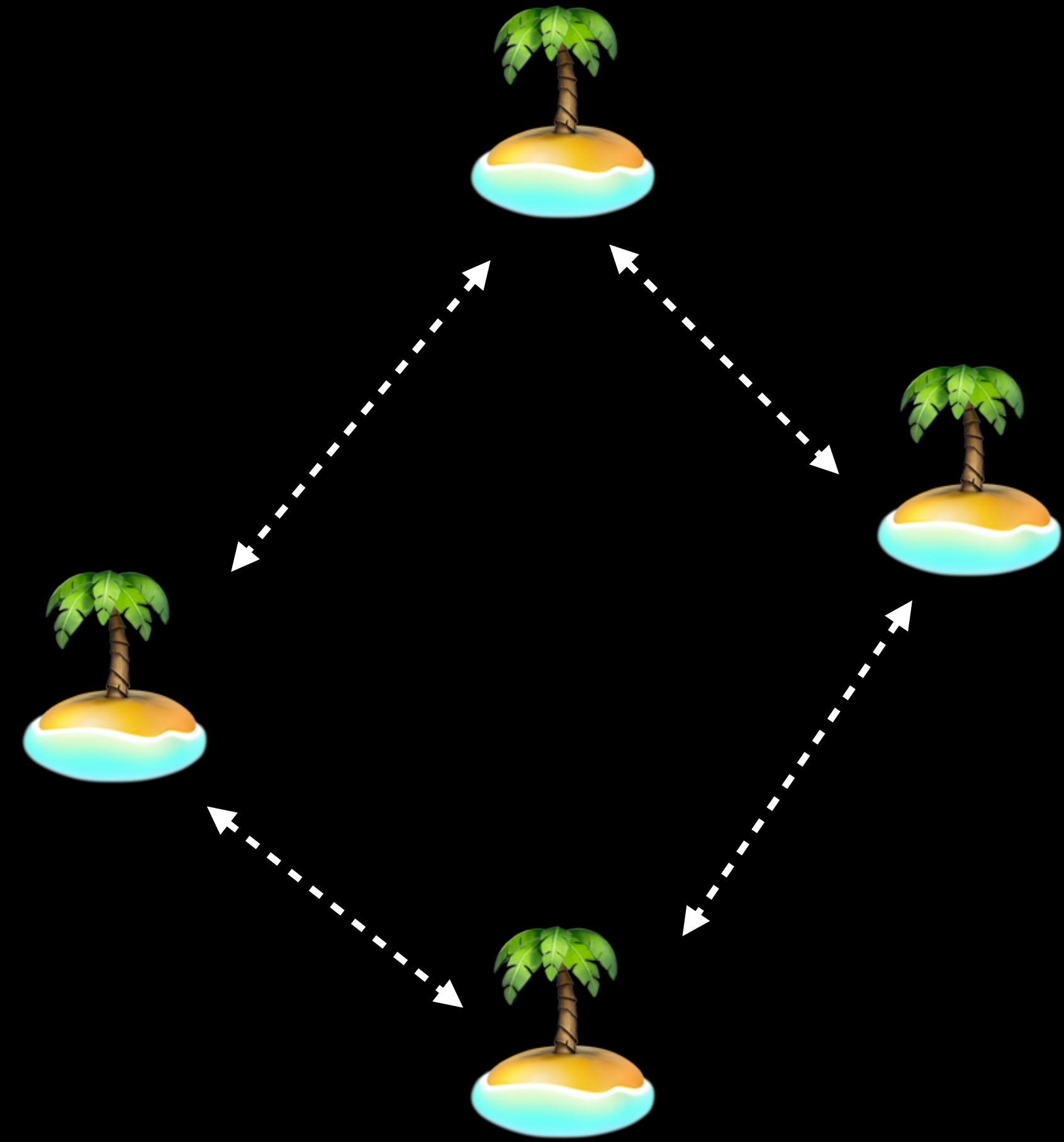
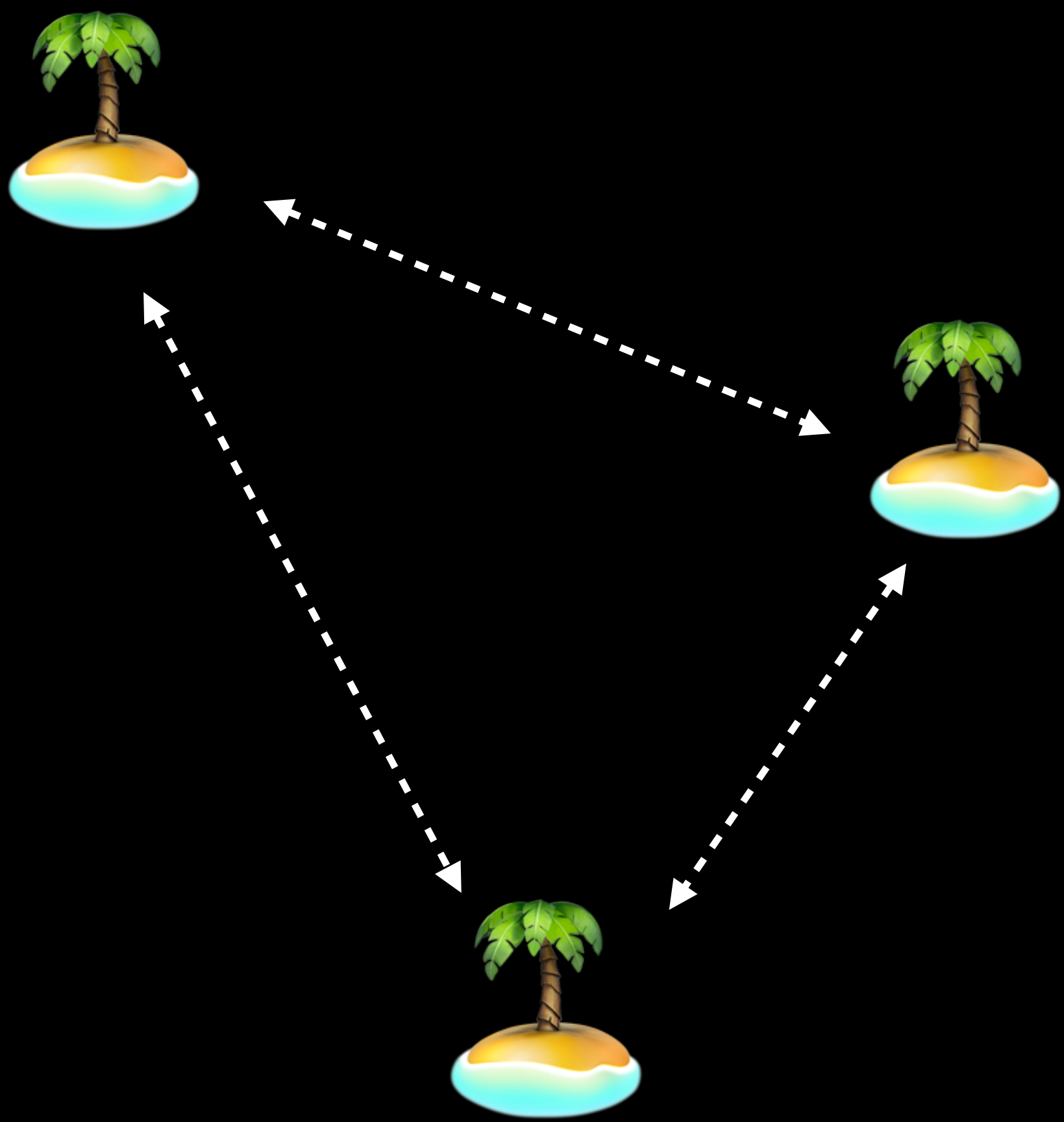


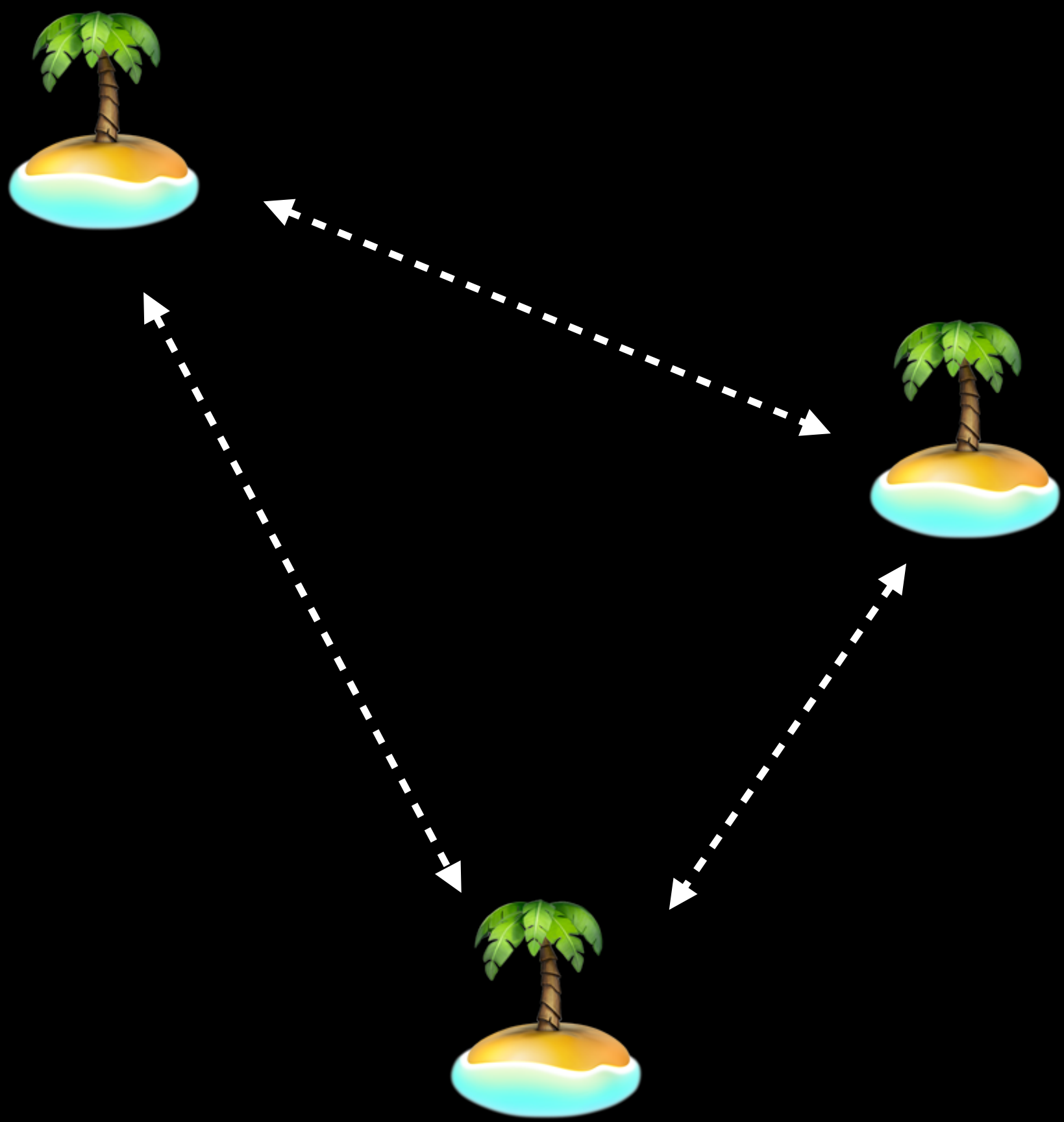


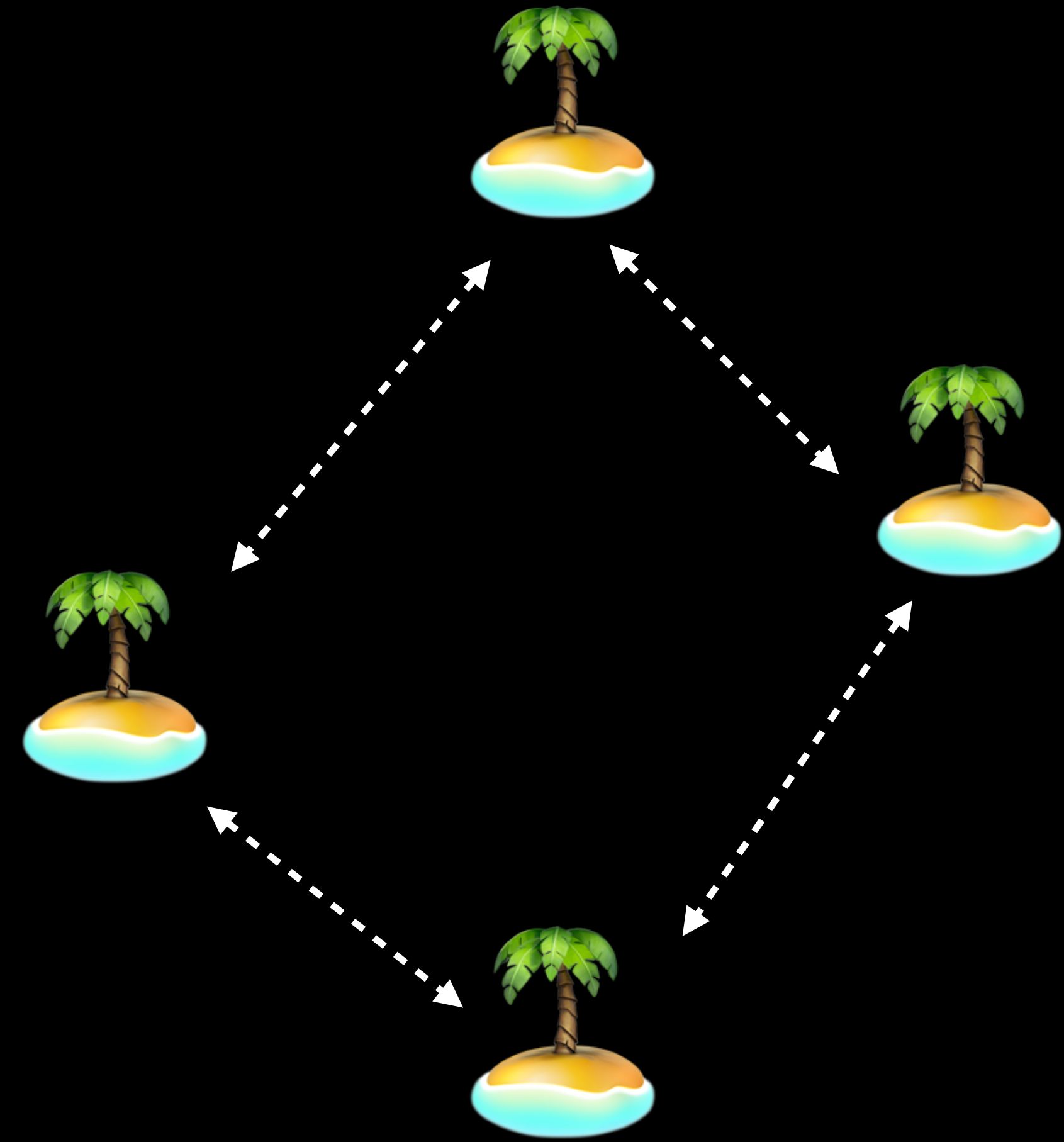




**Fault tolerance**









Messages

Toulouse is finished building Archers.  
 Year: 1768 AD  
 Archers lost to an attack by the Iranian Destroyer.  
 Archers lost to an attack by the Iranian Destroyer.

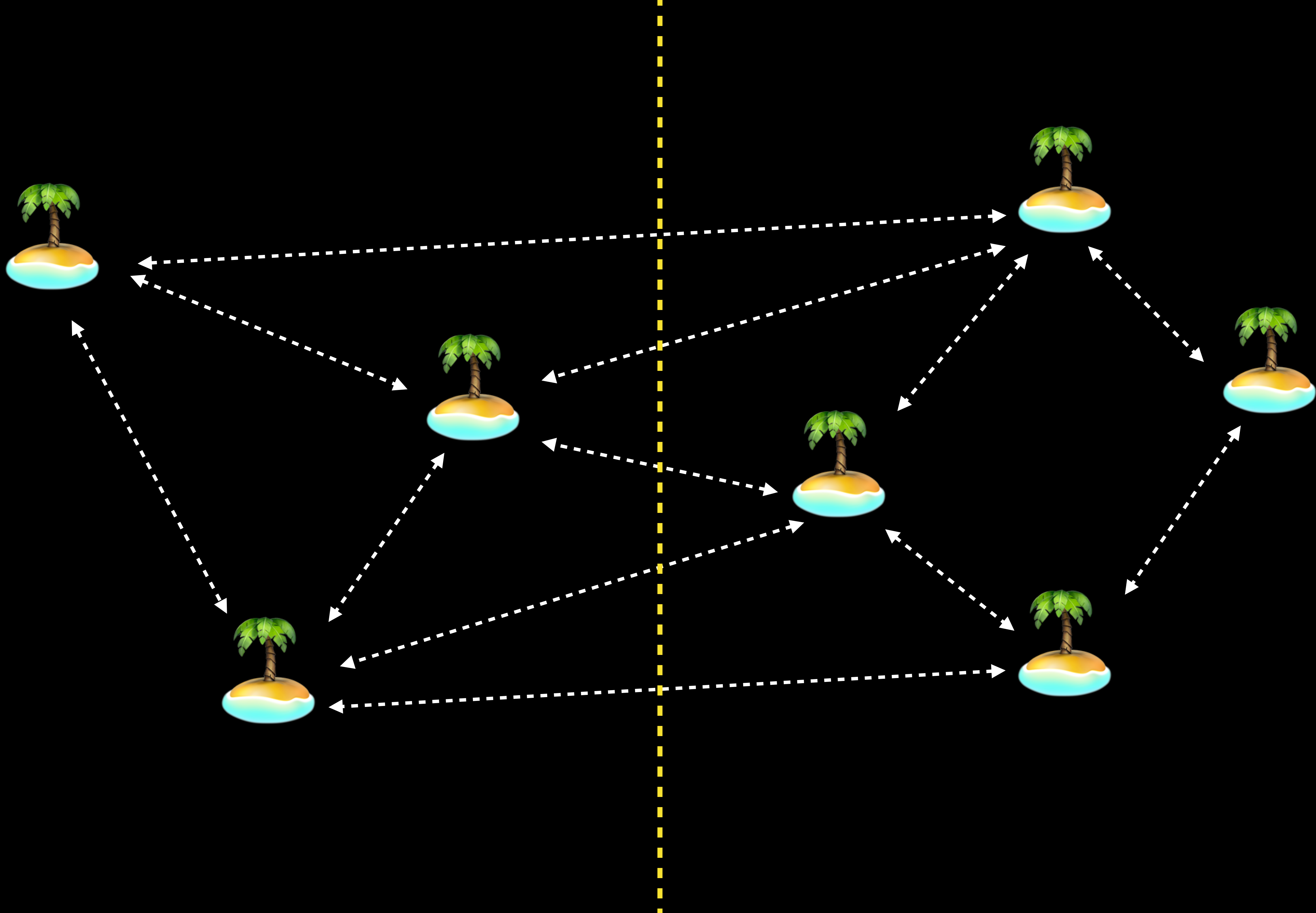


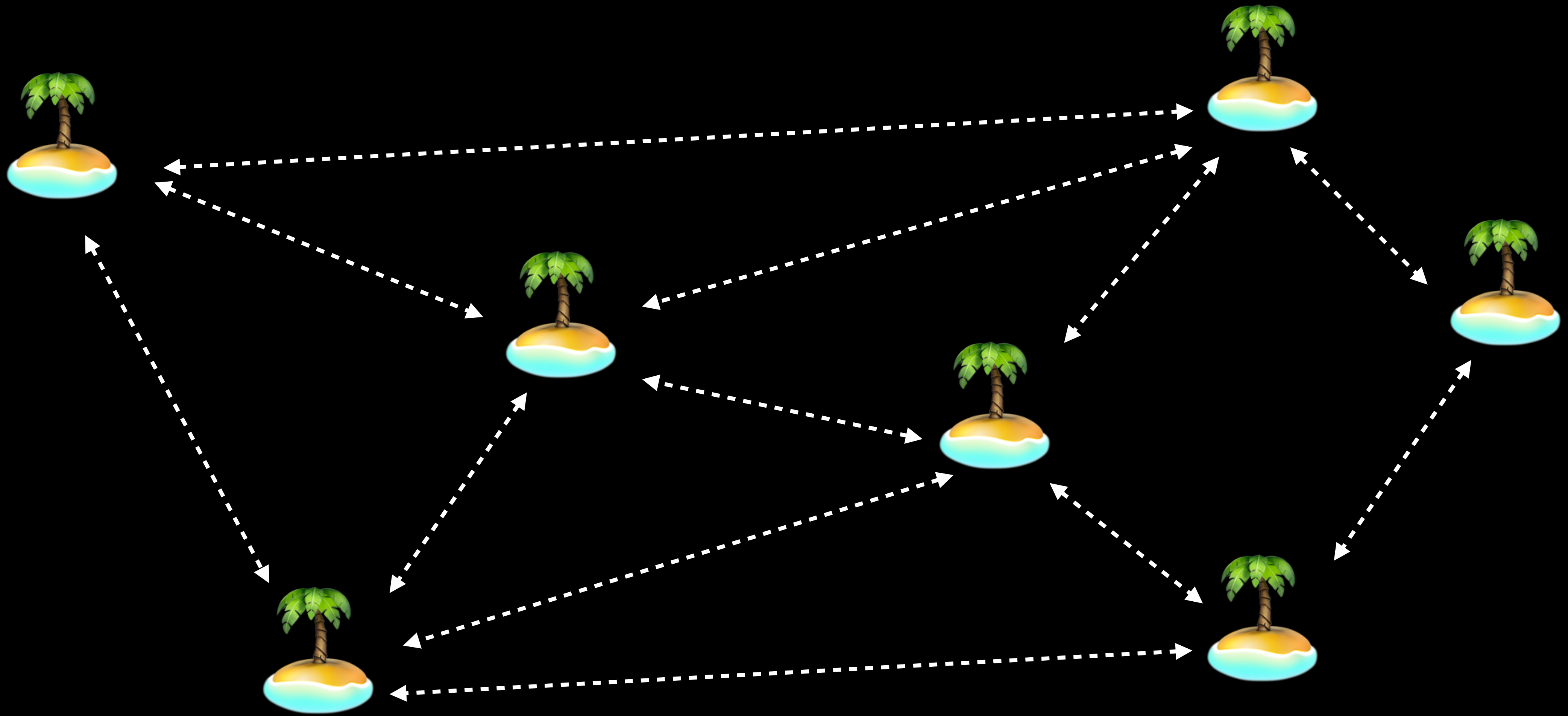
Units

Panel for displaying unit information, currently empty.





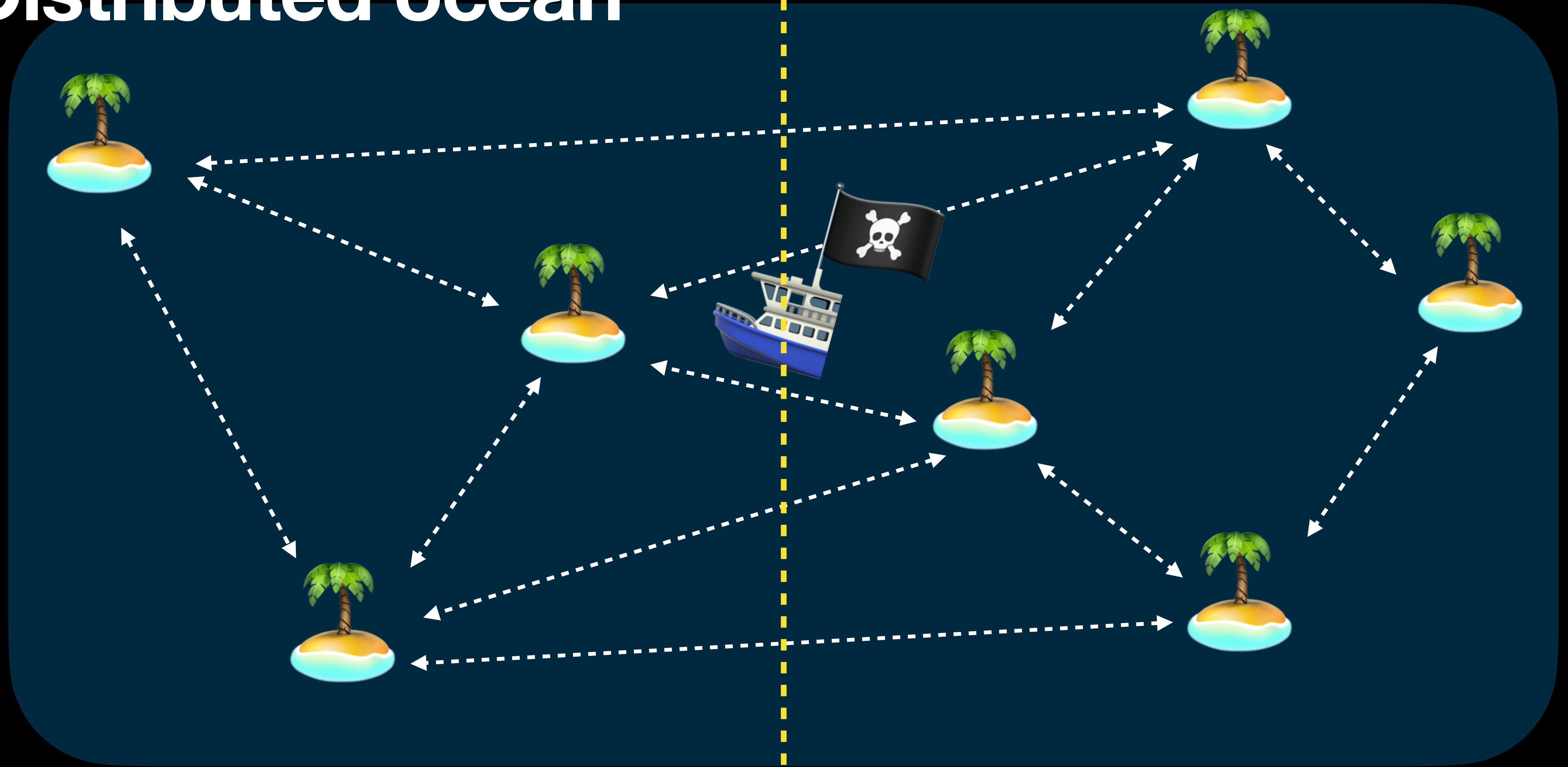




# Distributed ocean



# Distributed ocean



**Distributed system**

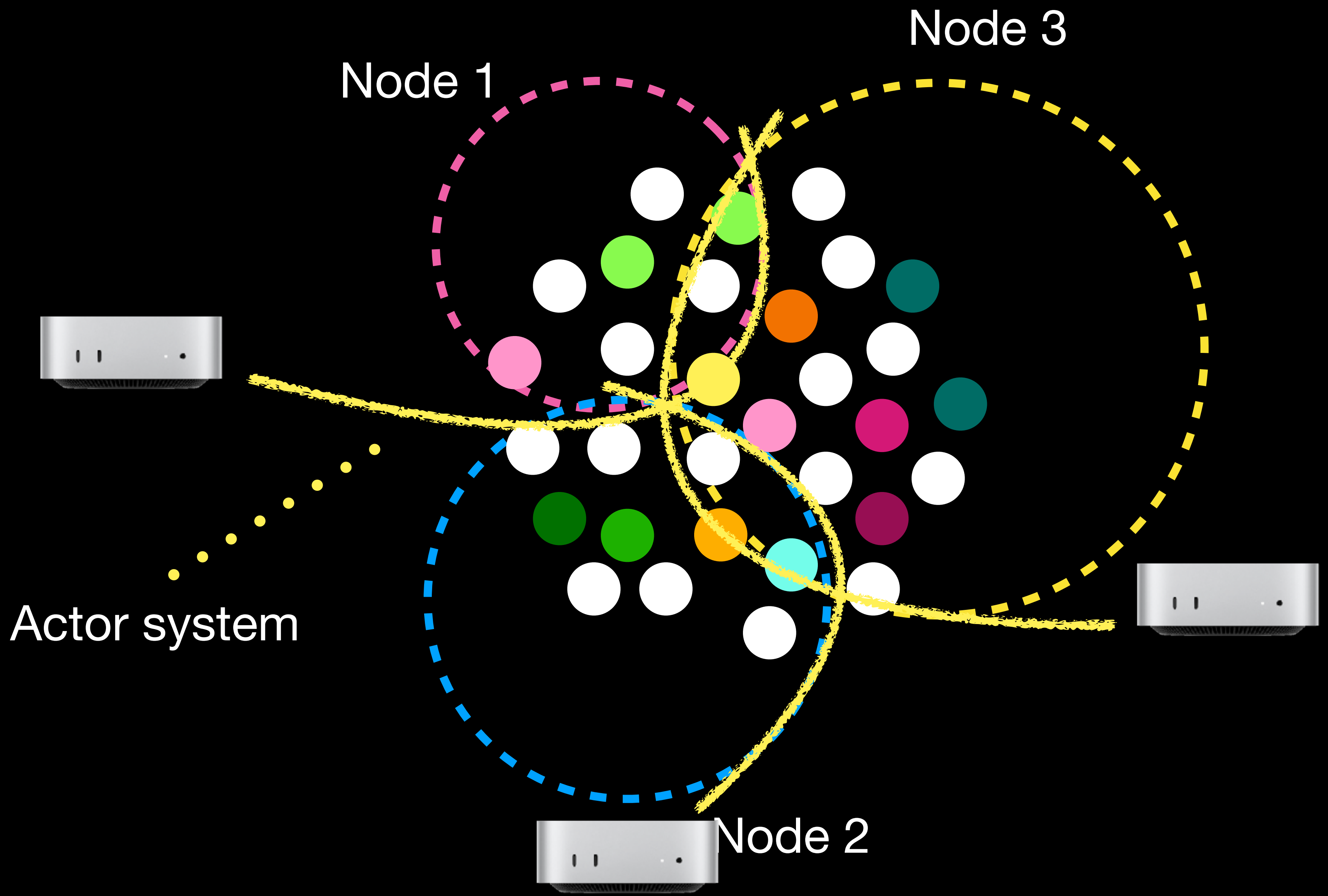


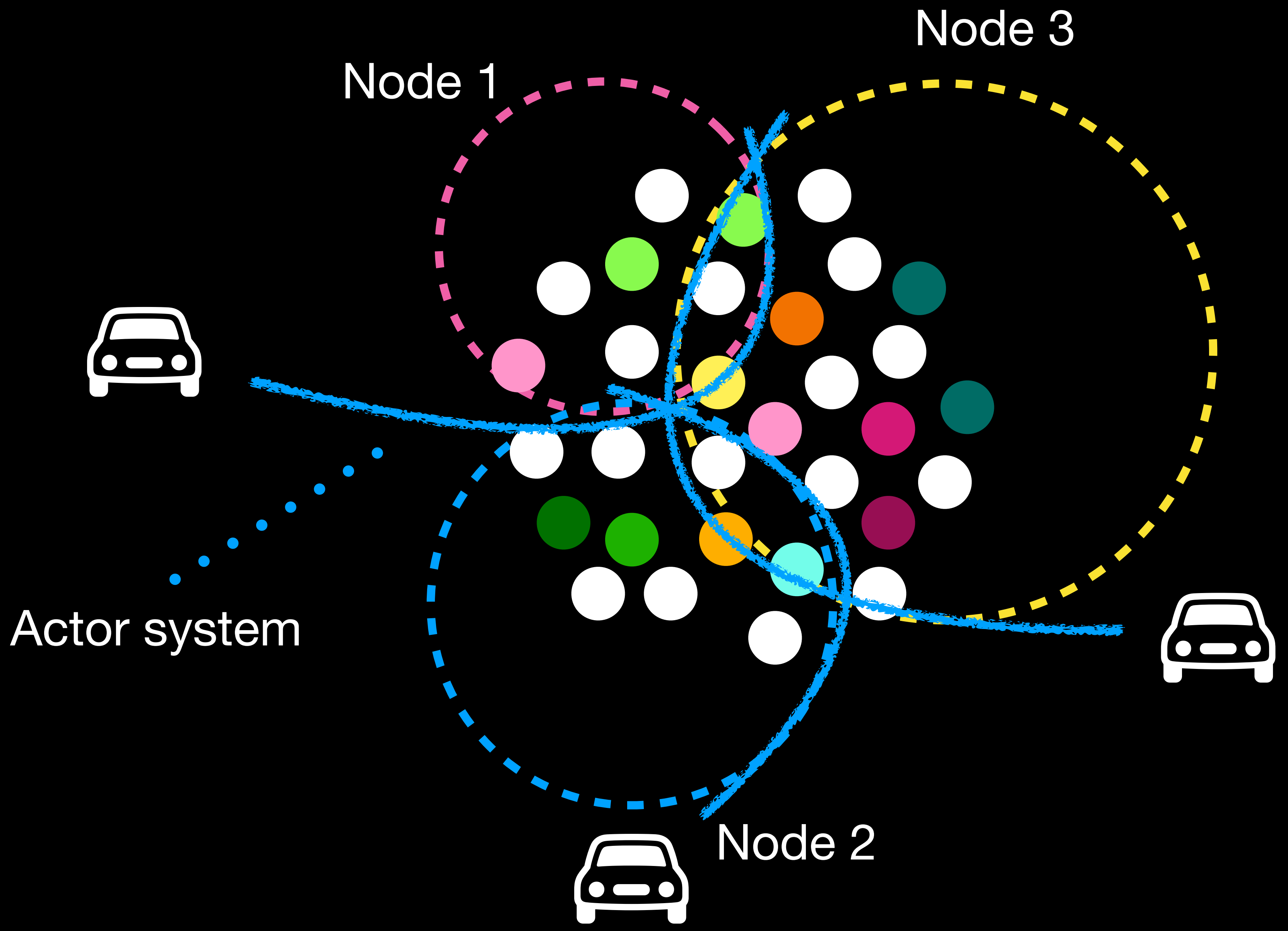
# Distributed Swift

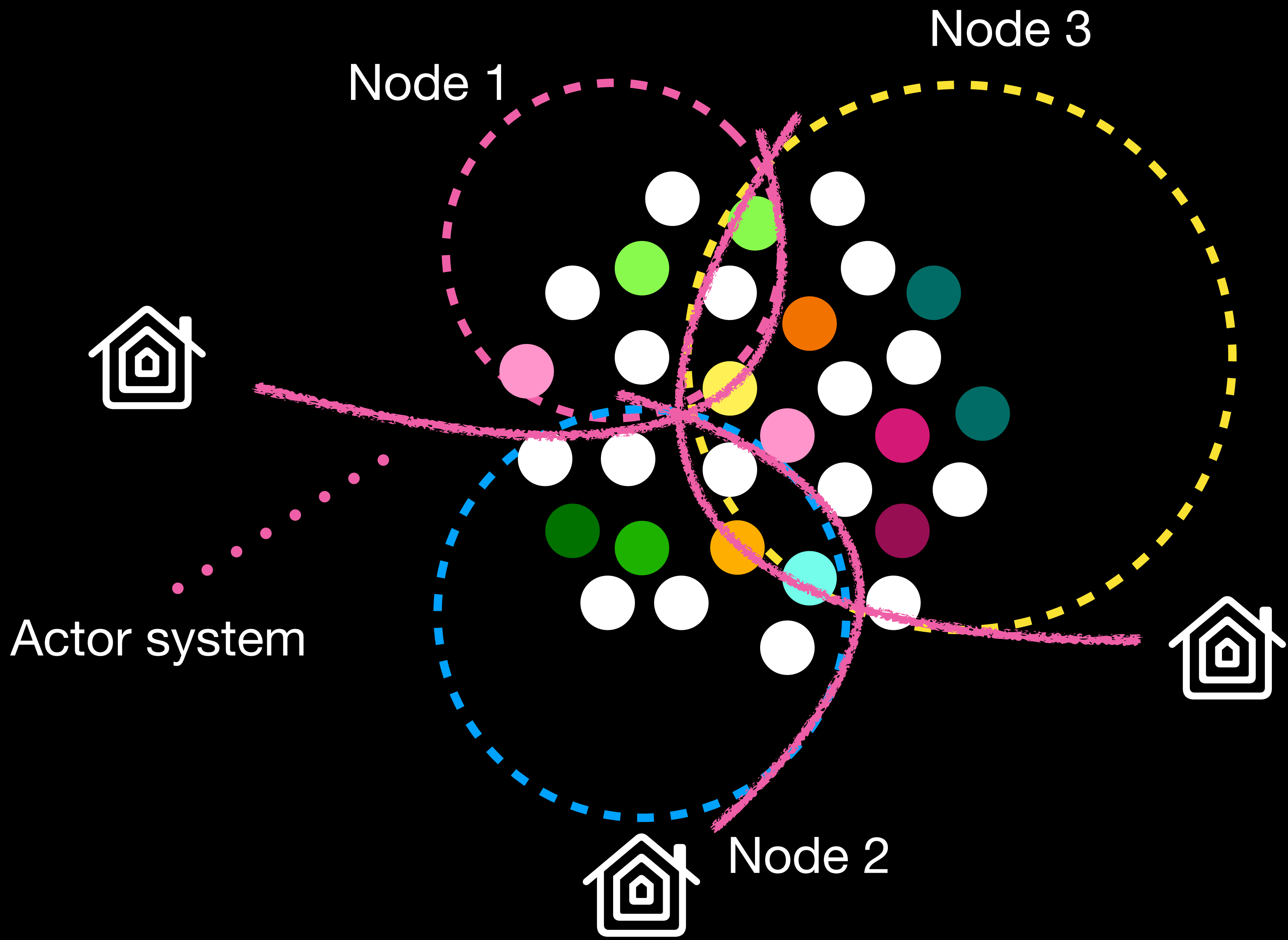
# Distributed Swift

Build systems that run distributed code across multiple processes and devices

- <https://developer.apple.com/documentation/distributed>
- Language feature
- “Bring your own runtime” mindset







# Example

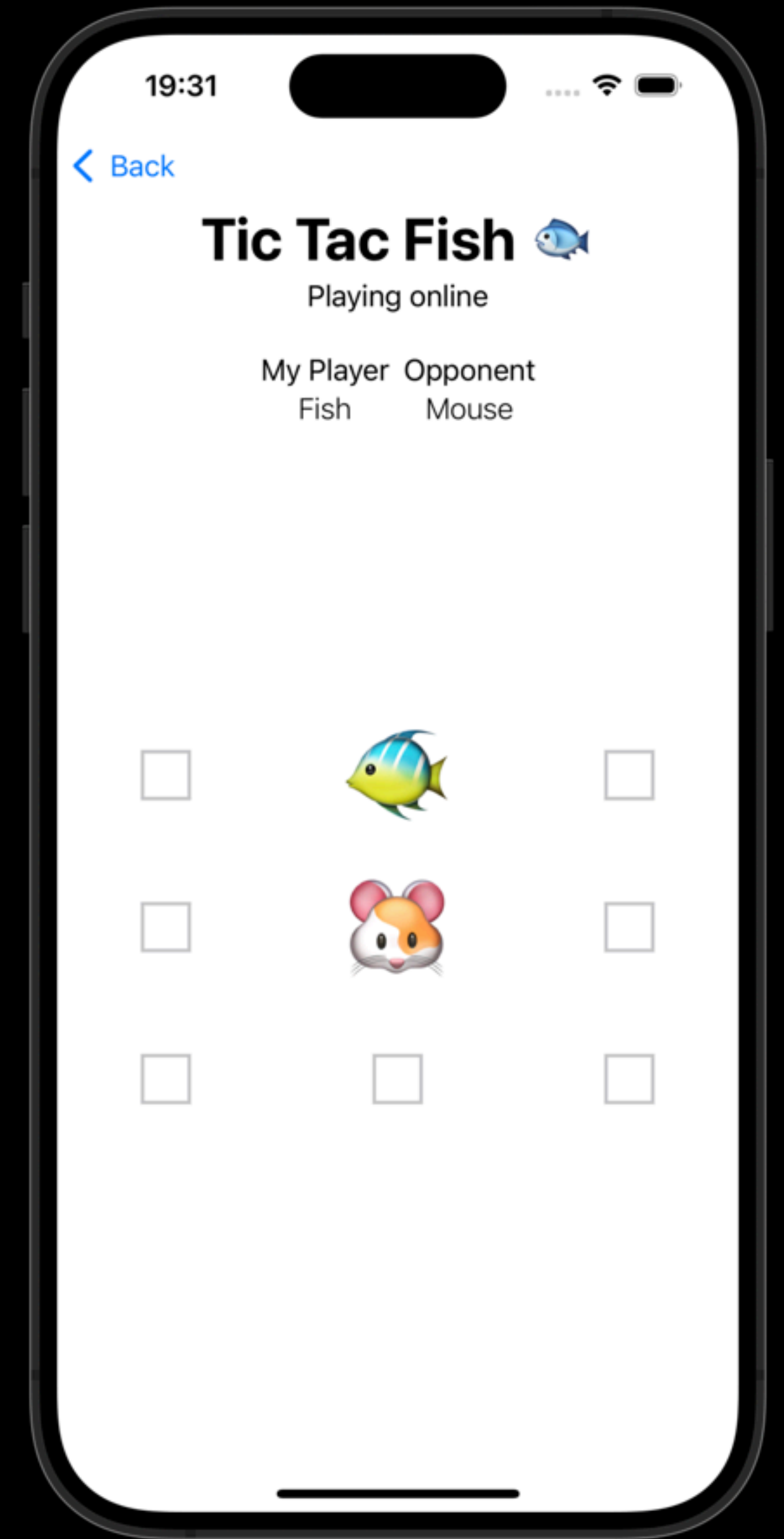
## TicTacFish: Implementing a game using distributed actors

- Meet distributed actors in Swift  
<https://developer.apple.com/videos/play/wwdc2022/110356/>
- [https://developer.apple.com/documentation/swift/tictacfish\\_implementing\\_a\\_game\\_using\\_distributed\\_actors](https://developer.apple.com/documentation/swift/tictacfish_implementing_a_game_using_distributed_actors)



# Example

- WebSocketActorSystem (WebSocket)
- SampleLocalNetworkActorSystem (Network Framework)



**Distributed systems is a  
complicated topic**

- How nodes find each other?
- What happens when node dies?
- How messages are transported and serialized?
- How to behave when messages are failed to deliver?

# Swift Distributed Actors Cluster Library

Peer-to-peer cluster implementation for Swift Distributed Actors

- <https://github.com/apple/swift-distributed-actors>

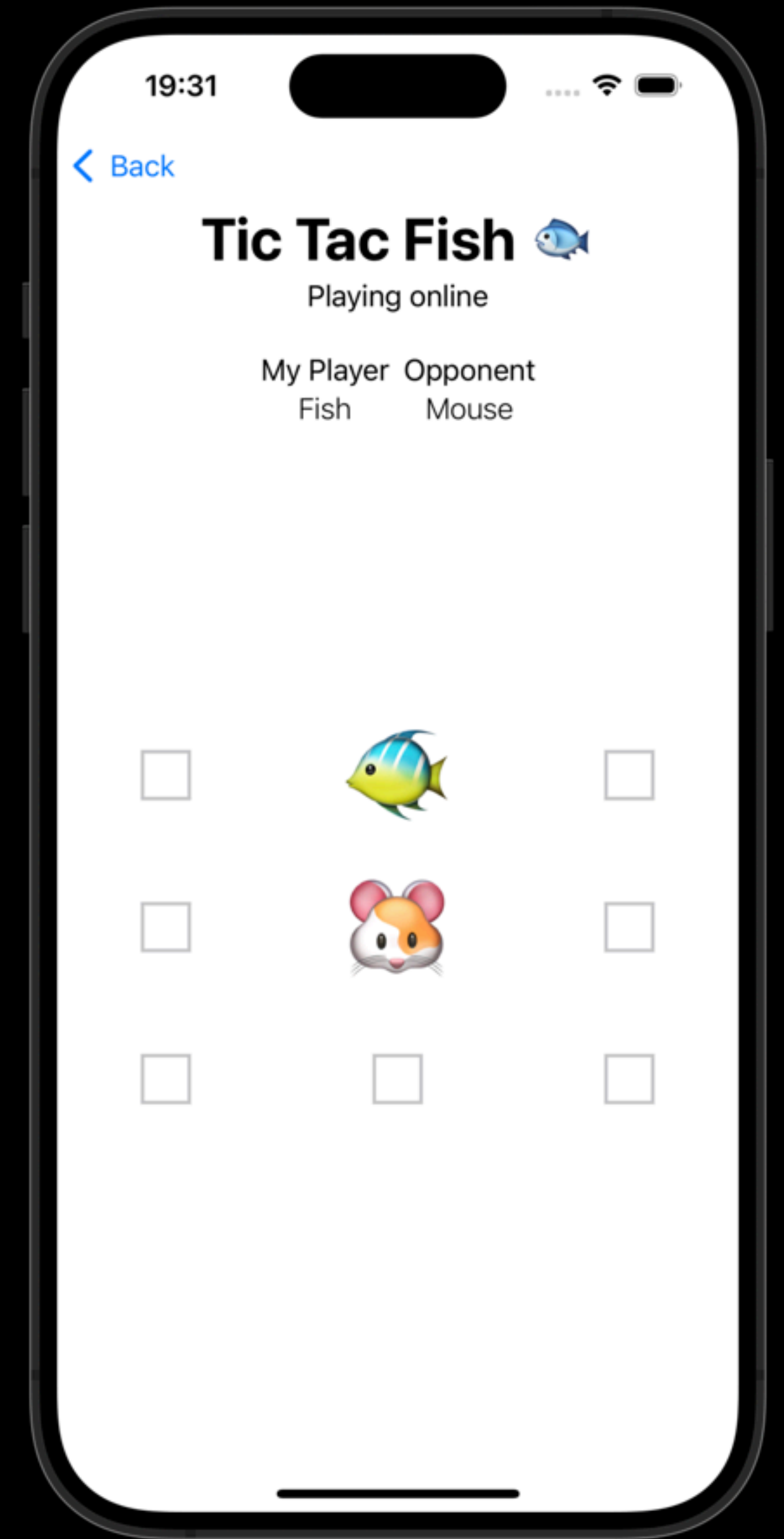
# Swift Distributed Actors Cluster Library

## Peer-to-peer cluster implementation for Swift Distributed Actors

- Nodes can join and leave the cluster dynamically, and the library ensures the state of the cluster is updated consistently across all nodes, it uses SWIM (Scalable Weakly-consistent Infection-style Membership) for managing cluster membership efficiently.
- Library includes serialization mechanisms to encode and decode actor messages and abstracts over the transport layer.

# Example

- WebSocketActorSystem (WebSocket)
- SampleLocalNetworkActorSystem (Network Framework)





Let's update the game



# Before we start

- How to form nodes and create actors?

```
import DistributedCluster

let sea1Node = await ClusterSystem("sea_1") {
  $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.1", port: 2550)
}

let sea2Node = await ClusterSystem("sea_2") {
  $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.2", port: 2551)
}

let island1A = Island(actorSystem: sea1Node)
let island2A = Island(actorSystem: sea2Node)

sea1Node.cluster.join(node: sea2Node.cluster.node)
```

```
import DistributedCluster

let sea1Node = await ClusterSystem("sea_1") {
    $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.1", port: 2550)
}

let sea2Node = await ClusterSystem("sea_2") {
    $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.2", port: 2551)
}

let island1A = Island(actorSystem: sea1Node)
let island2A = Island(actorSystem: sea2Node)

sea1Node.cluster.join(node: sea2Node.cluster.node)
```

```
import ServiceDiscovery
import K8sServiceDiscovery
import DistributedCluster

ClusterSystem("Compile") { settings in
    let discovery = K8sServiceDiscovery()
    let target = K8sObject(
        labelSelector: ["name": "actor-cluster"],
        namespace: "actor-cluster"
    )

    settings.discovery = ServiceDiscoverySettings(
        discovery,
        service: target
    )
}
```

```
import DistributedCluster

let daemon = await ClusterSystem.startClusterDaemon()

let sea1Node = await ClusterSystem("sea_1") {
  $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.1", port: 2550)
  $0.discovery = .clusterd
}

let sea2Node = await ClusterSystem("sea_2") {
  $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.2", port: 2551)
  $0.discovery = .clusterd
}

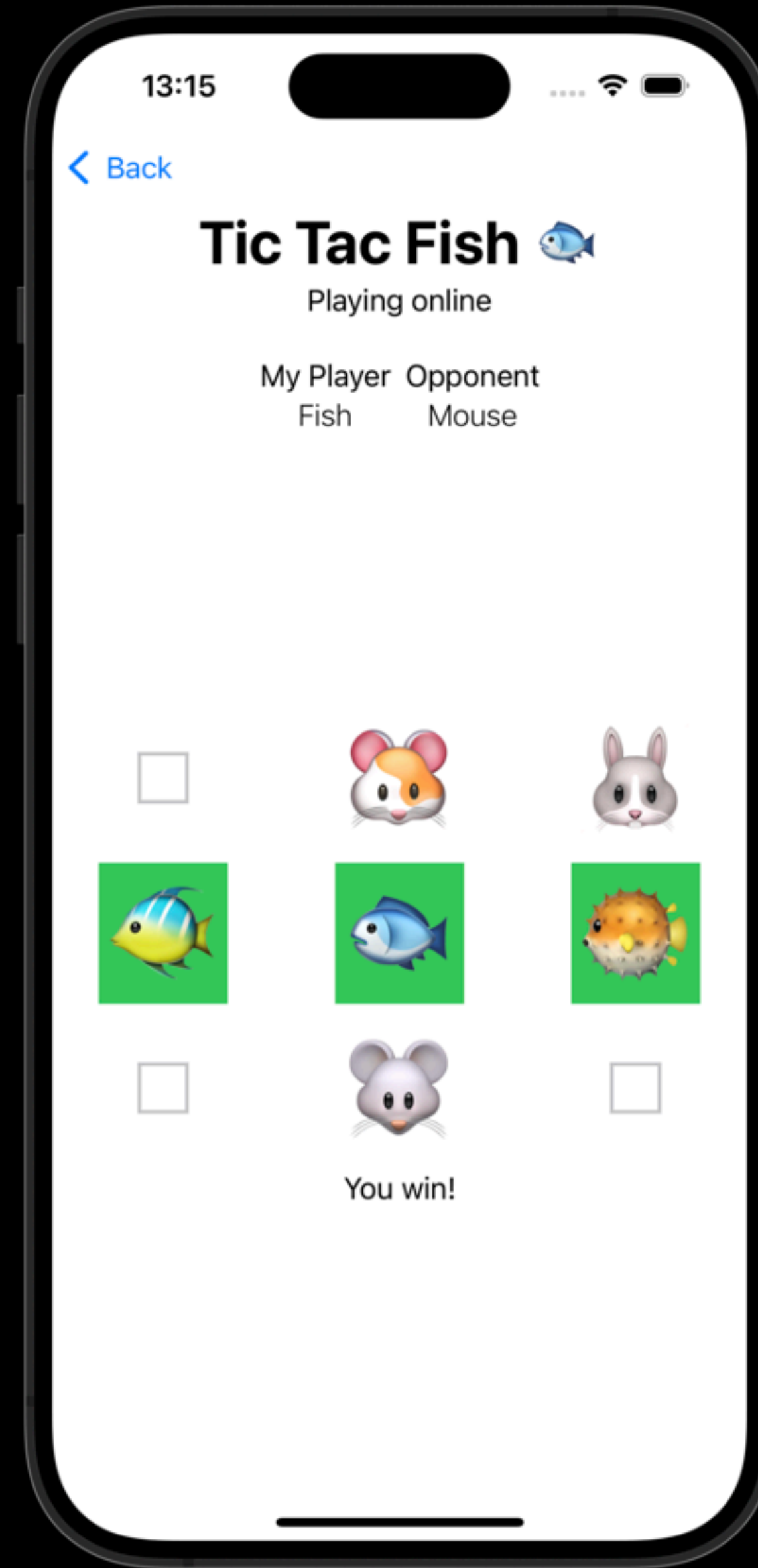
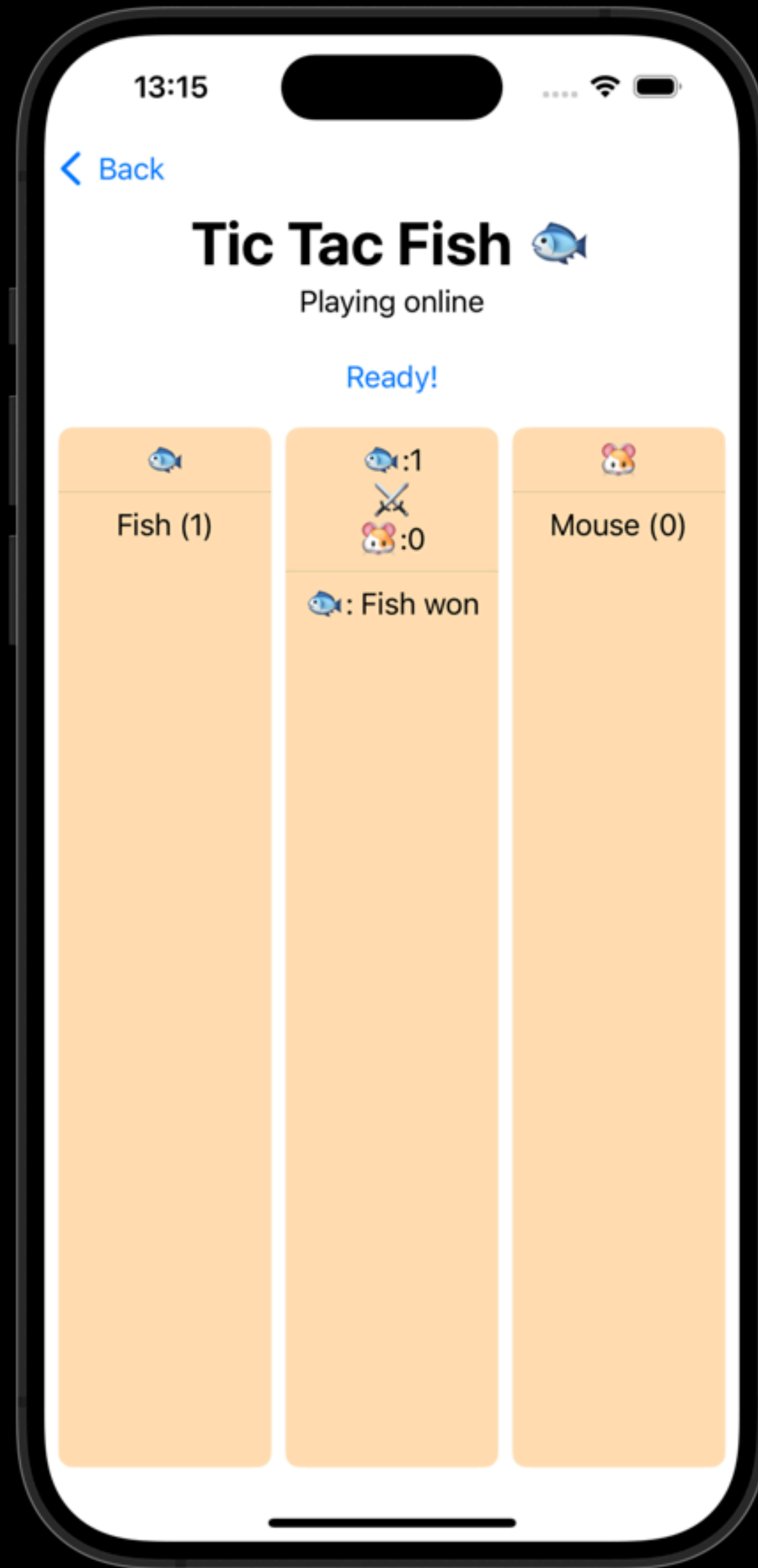
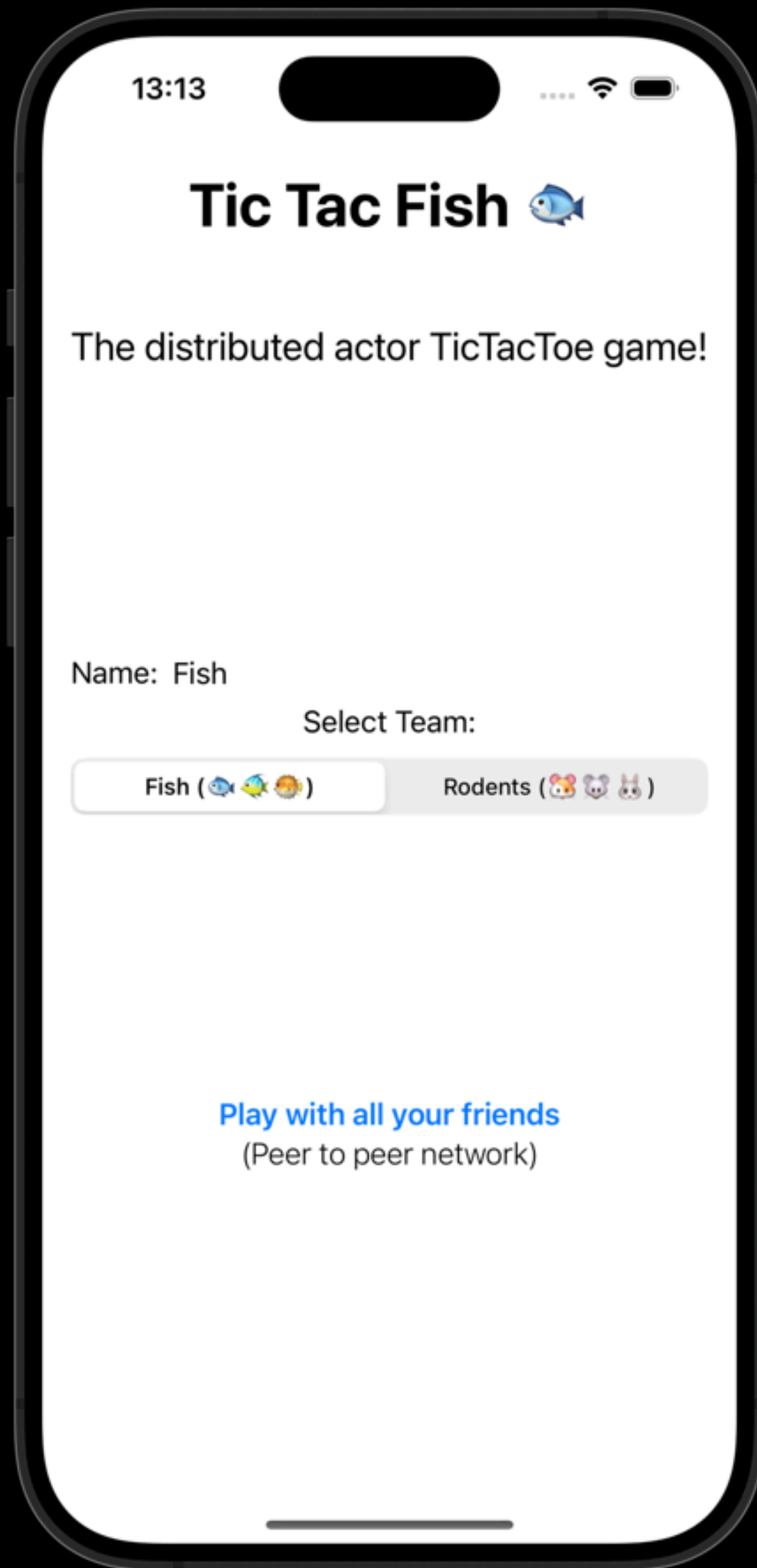
let island1A = Island(actorSystem: sea1Node)
let island2A = Island(actorSystem: sea2Node)
```

That's it!



**Now back to game**





```

import Distributed
import DistributedCluster

distributed public actor GameLobby {

    public typealias ActorSystem = ClusterSystem

    /// In progress sessions
    var gameSessions: Set<GameSession> = []
    /// Completed sessions
    var completedSessions: [GameState] = []
    /// Players waiting for a game session
    var waitingPlayers: Set<NetworkPlayer> = []
    /// Ready to play players
    var readyPlayers: Set<NetworkPlayer> = []

    /// A new player joined the lobby and we should find an opponent for it
    distributed func join(player: NetworkPlayer) { /* ... */ }

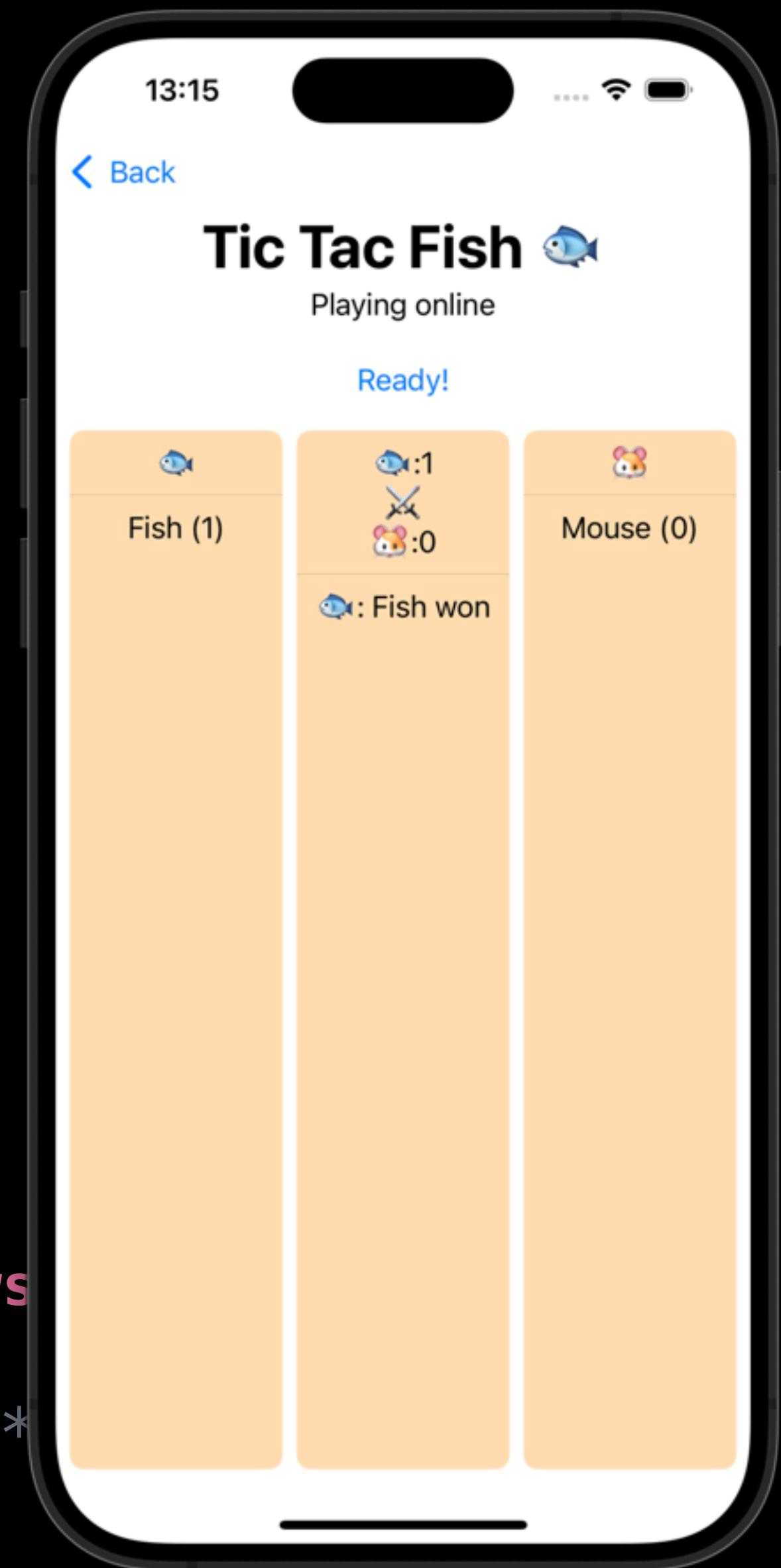
    distributed func setReady(player: NetworkPlayer) async throws

    distributed func disconnect(player: NetworkPlayer) { /* ... */ }

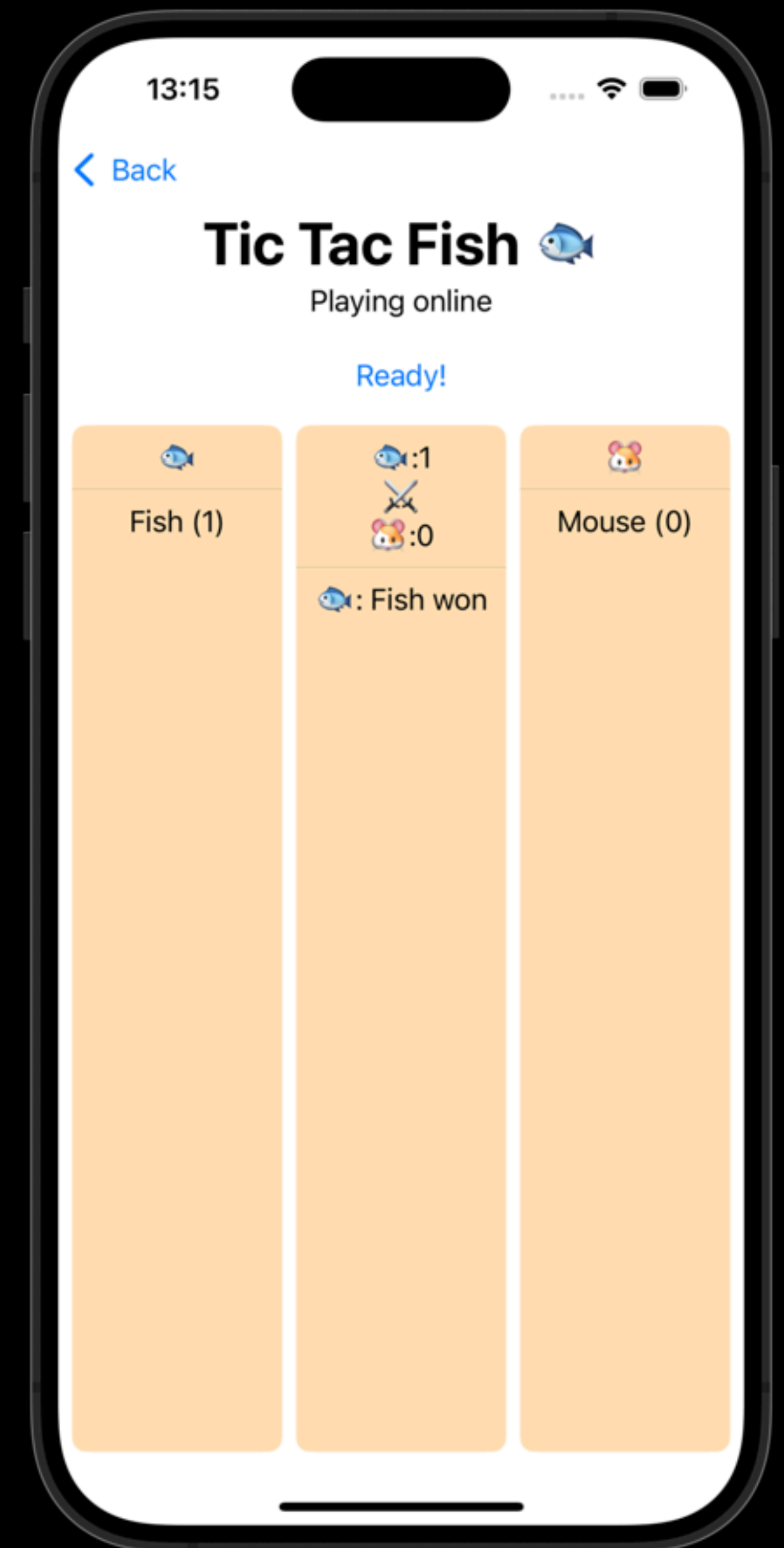
    /// As a session completes, remove it from the active game sessions
    distributed func sessionCompleted(_ session: GameSession) async throws { /* ... */ }

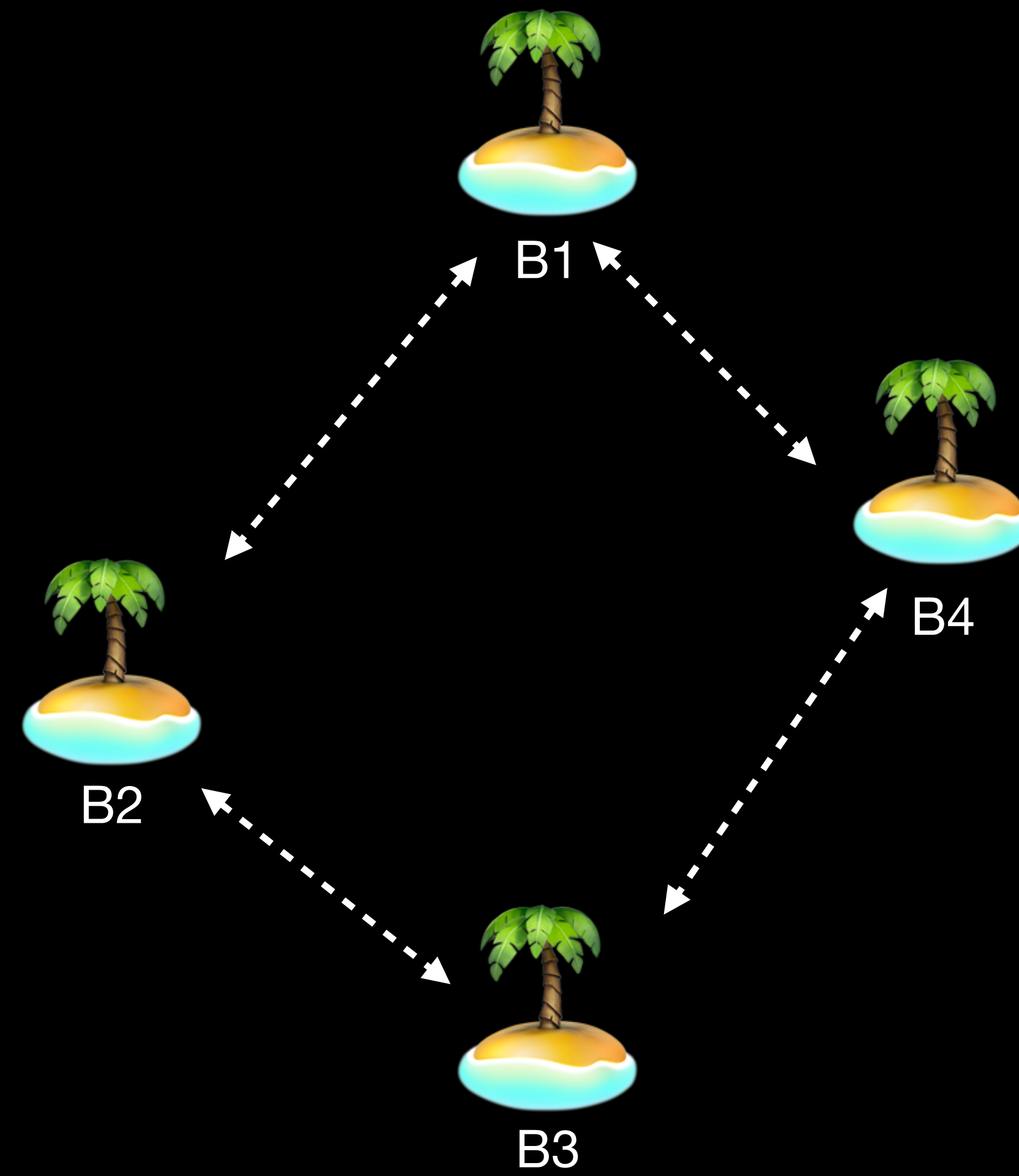
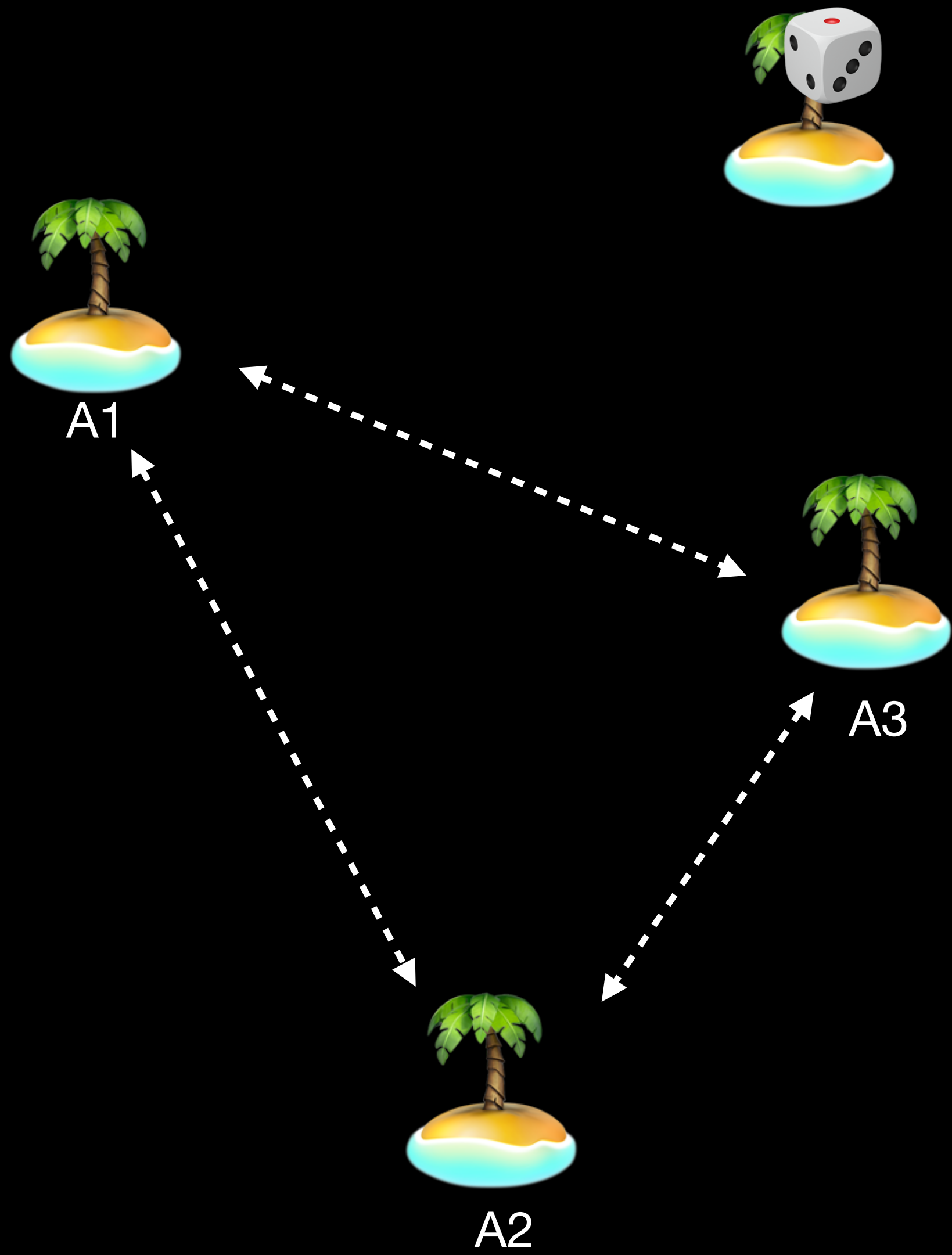
    /// Matchmaking logic

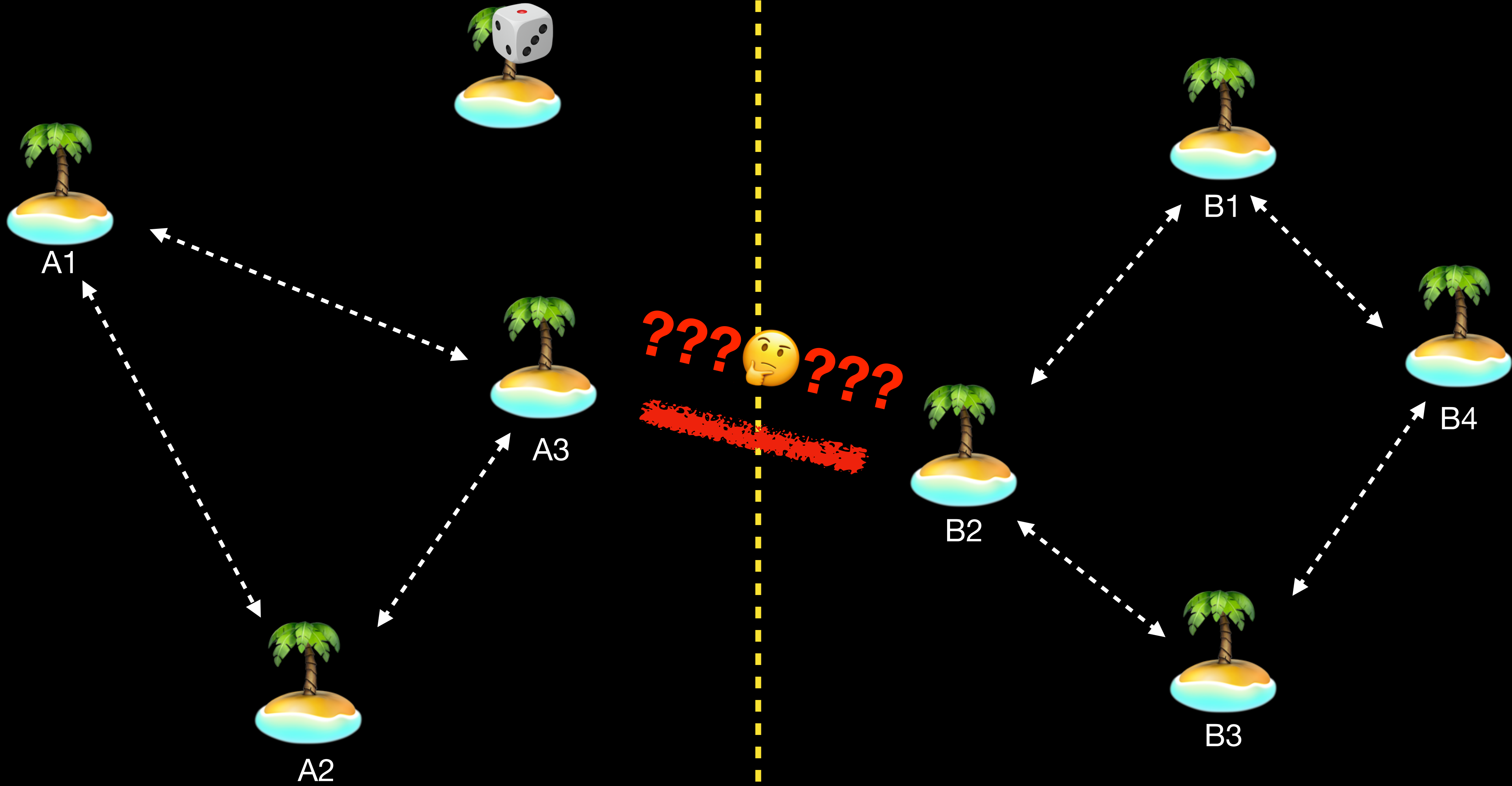
```



```
let lobby = GameLobby(actorSystem: actorSystem)
```











```
/// A cluster singleton is a conceptual distributed actor that is guaranteed to  
have at-most one  
/// instance within the cluster system among all of its Cluster/  
MemberStatus/up members.
```

```
public protocol ClusterSingleton: Codable, DistributedActor  
  where ActorSystem == ClusterSystem {}
```

```
let system = await ClusterSystem("main") {  
  $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.1", port: 2550)  
  $0.plugins.install(  
    plugin: ClusterSingletonPlugin()  
  )  
}
```

```
import Distributed
import DistributedCluster

distributed public actor GameLobby: ClusterSingleton {

    public typealias ActorSystem = ClusterSystem

    /// In progress sessions
    var gameSessions: Set<GameSession> = []
    /// Completed sessions
    var completedSessions: [GameState] = []
    /// Players waiting for a game session
    var waitingPlayers: Set<NetworkPlayer> = []
    /// Ready to play players
    var readyPlayers: Set<NetworkPlayer> = []

    /// A new player joined the lobby and we should find an opponent for it
    distributed func join(player: NetworkPlayer) { /* ... */ }

    distributed func setReady(player: NetworkPlayer) async throws { /* ... */ }

    distributed func disconnect(player: NetworkPlayer) { /* ... */ }

    /// As a session completes, remove it from the active game sessions
    distributed func sessionCompleted(_ session: GameSession) async throws { /* ... */ }

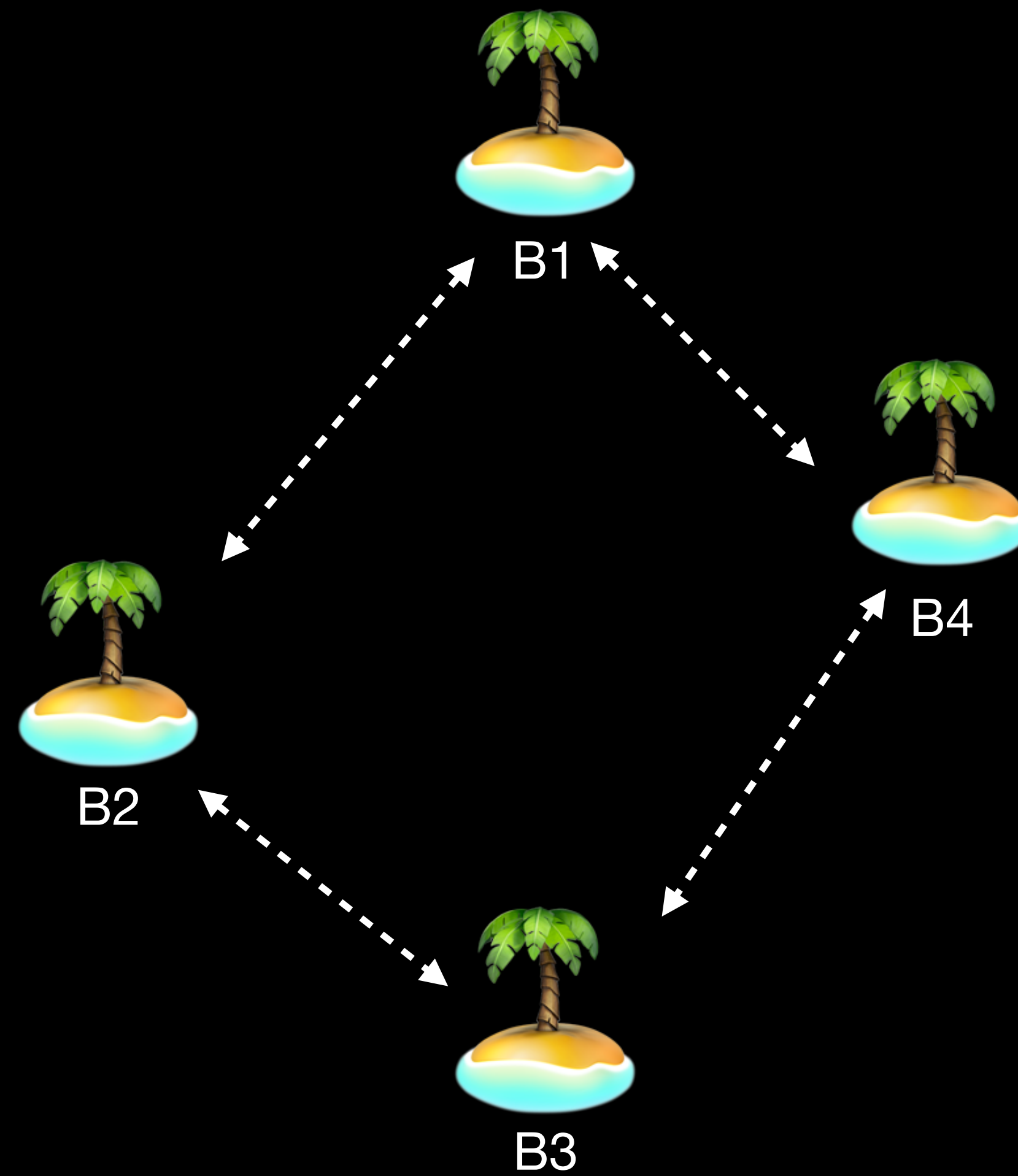
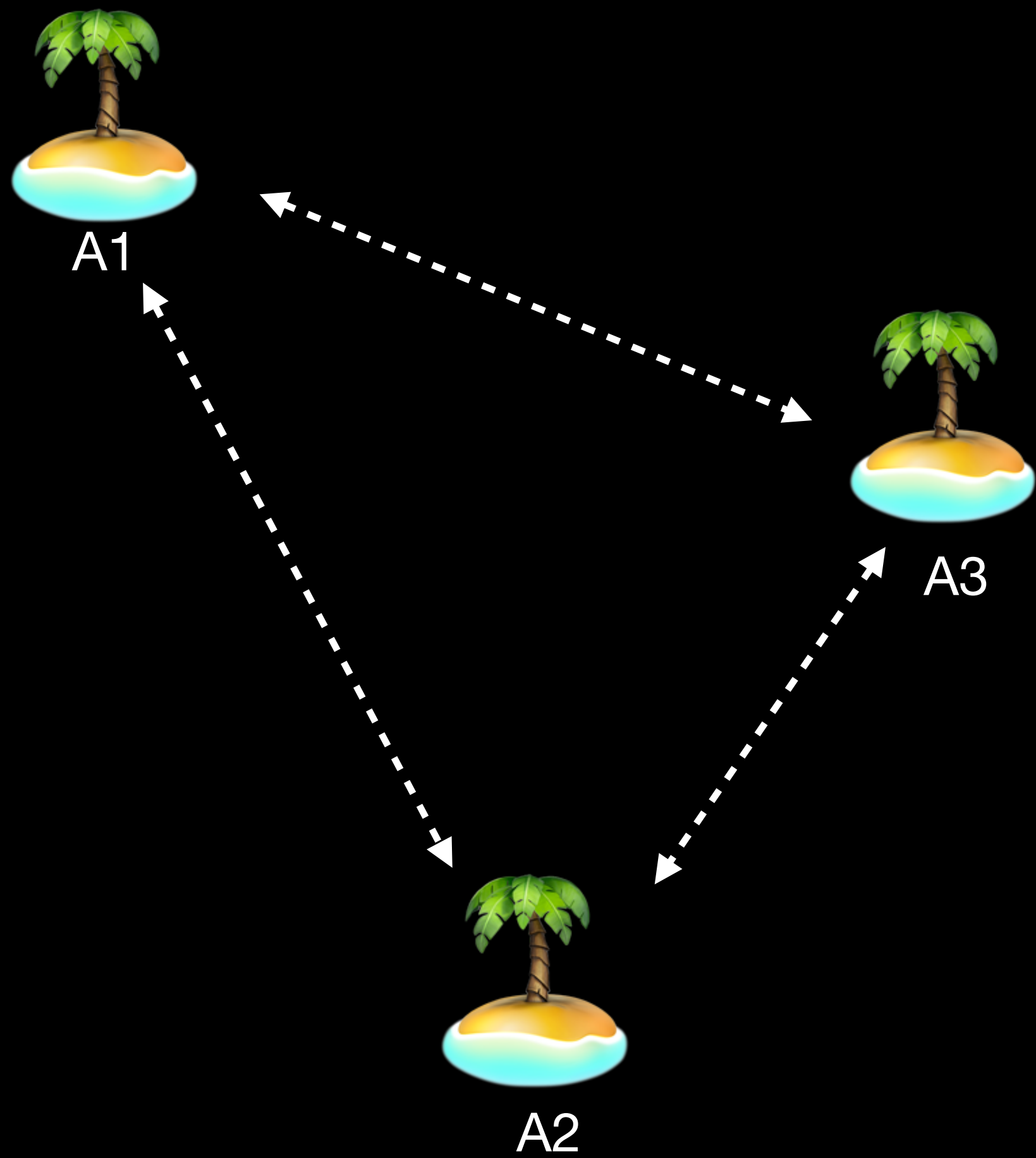
    /// Matchmaking logic
```

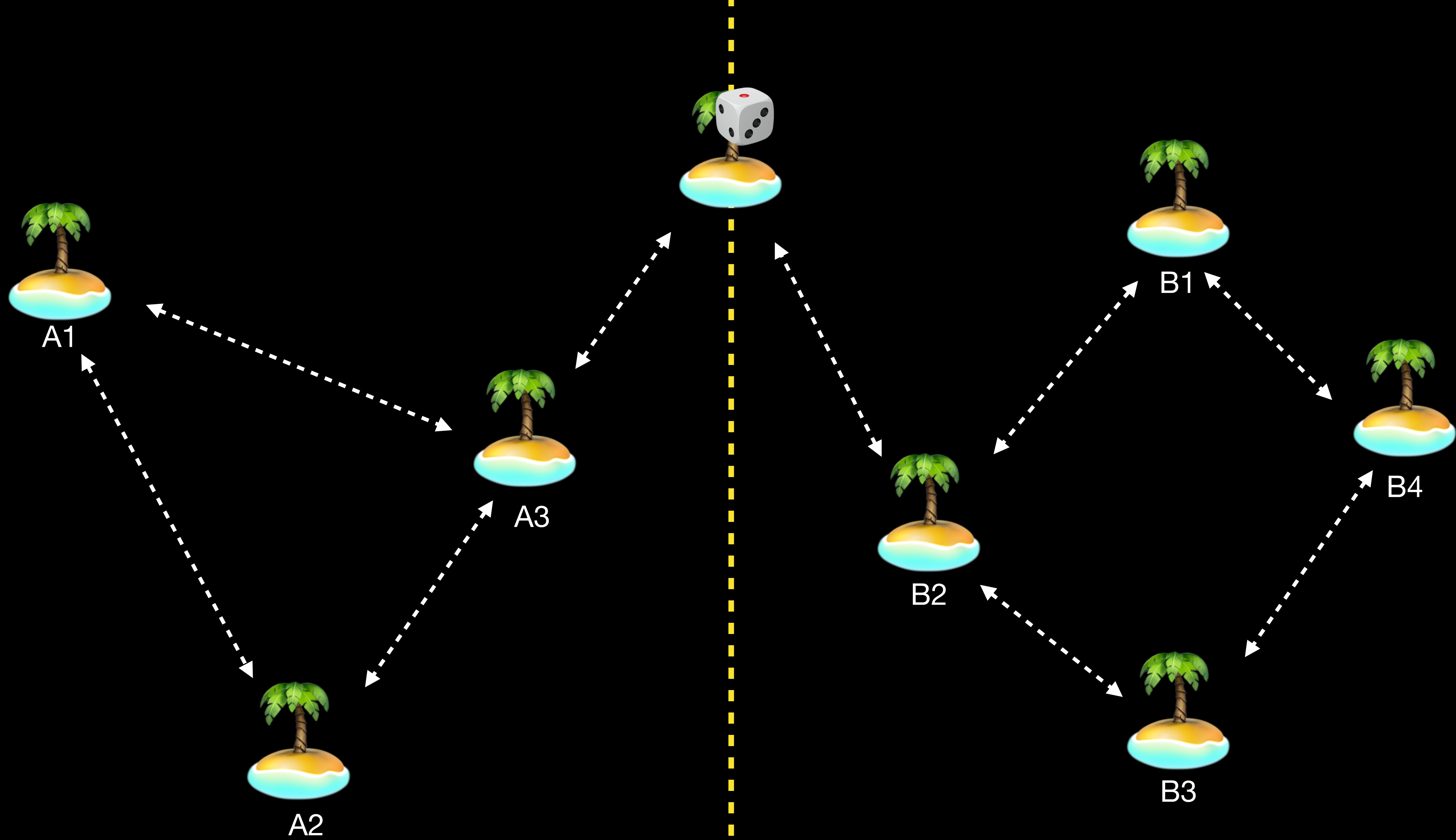
```
let lobby = try await self.actorSystem
    .singleton
    .host(name: "matchmaking_lobby")
{ actorSystem in
    GameLobby(actorSystem: actorSystem)
}
```

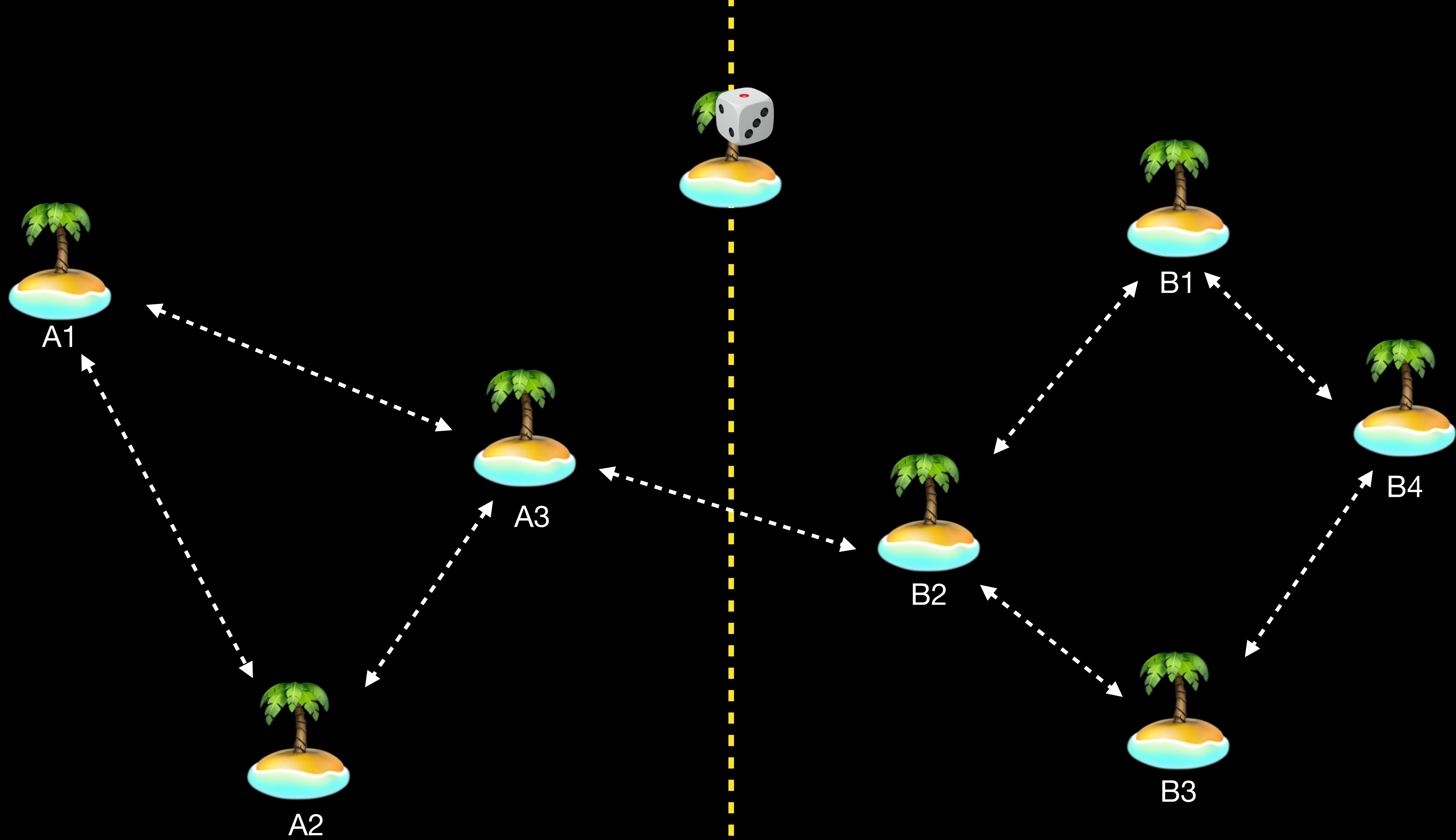


That's it!



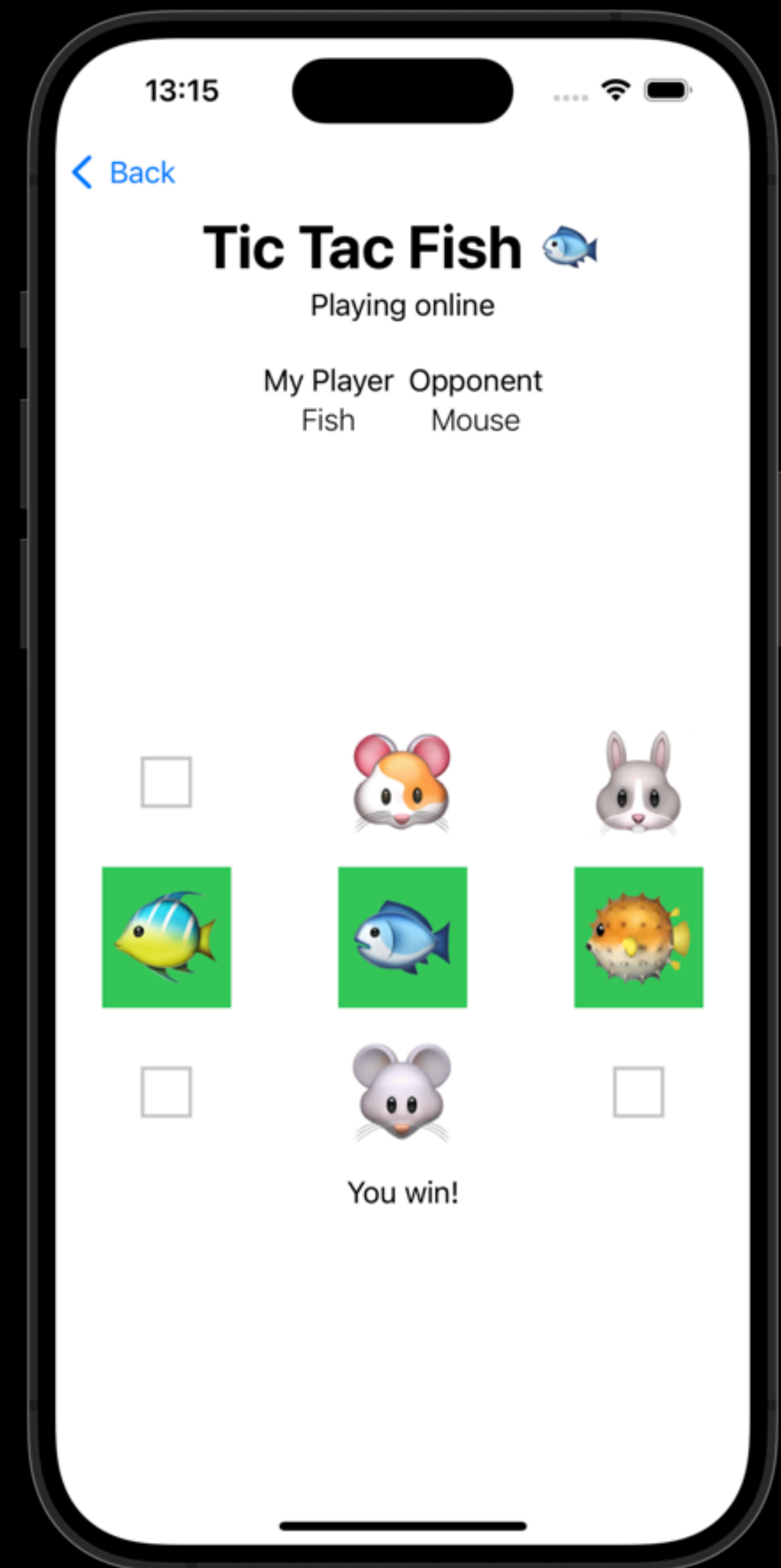




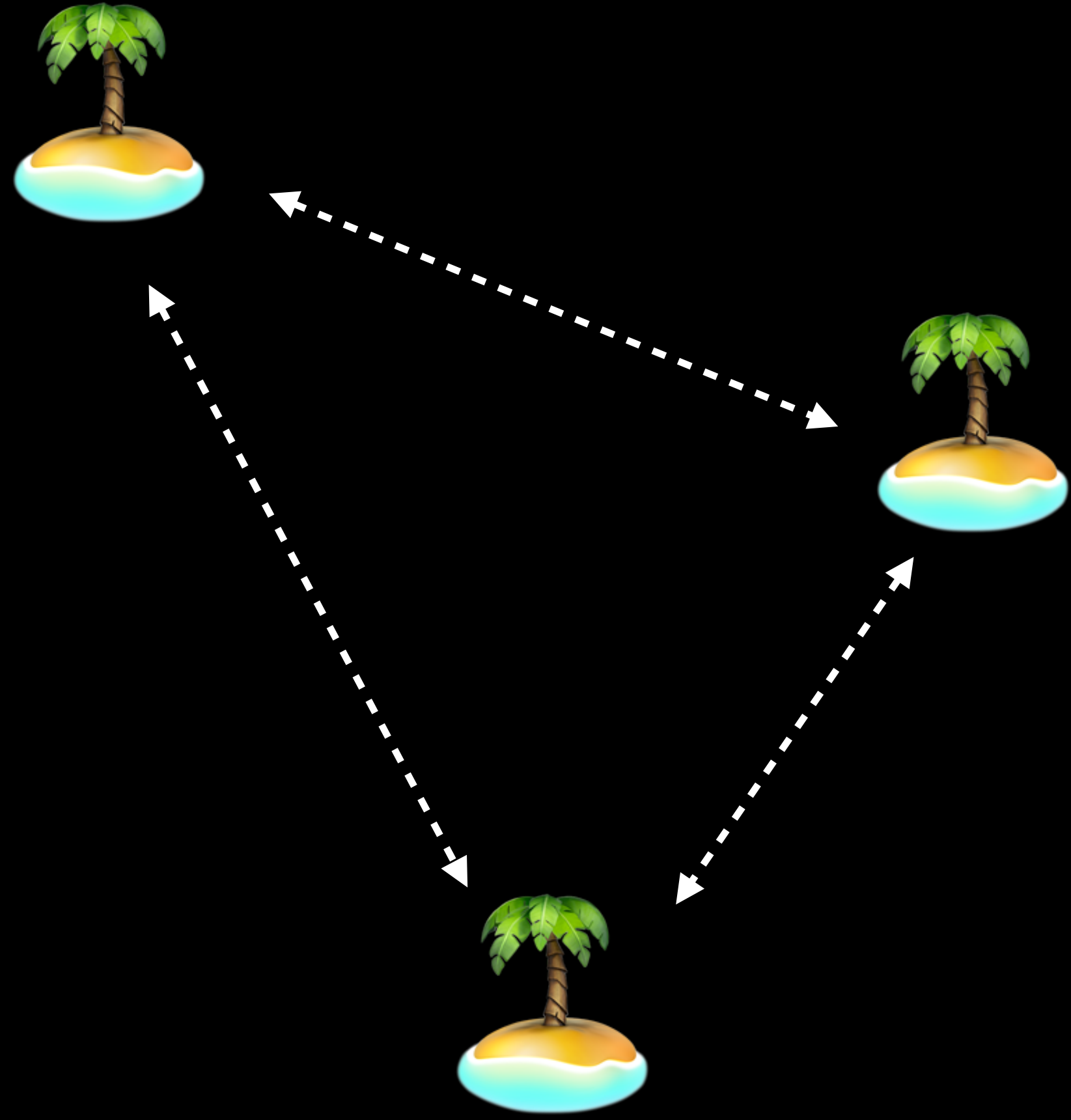


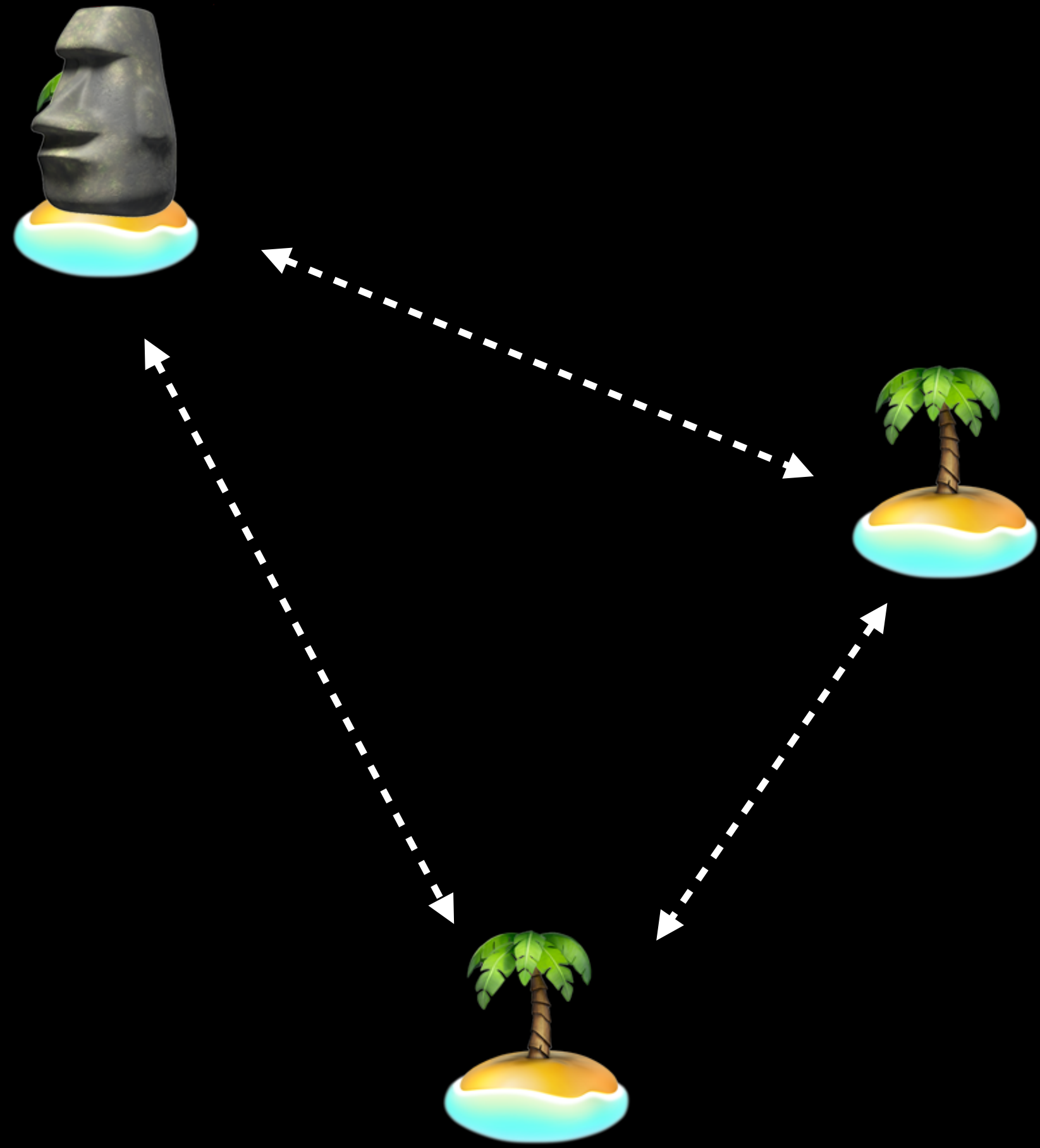
```
//// Keeps track of an active game between two players.
```

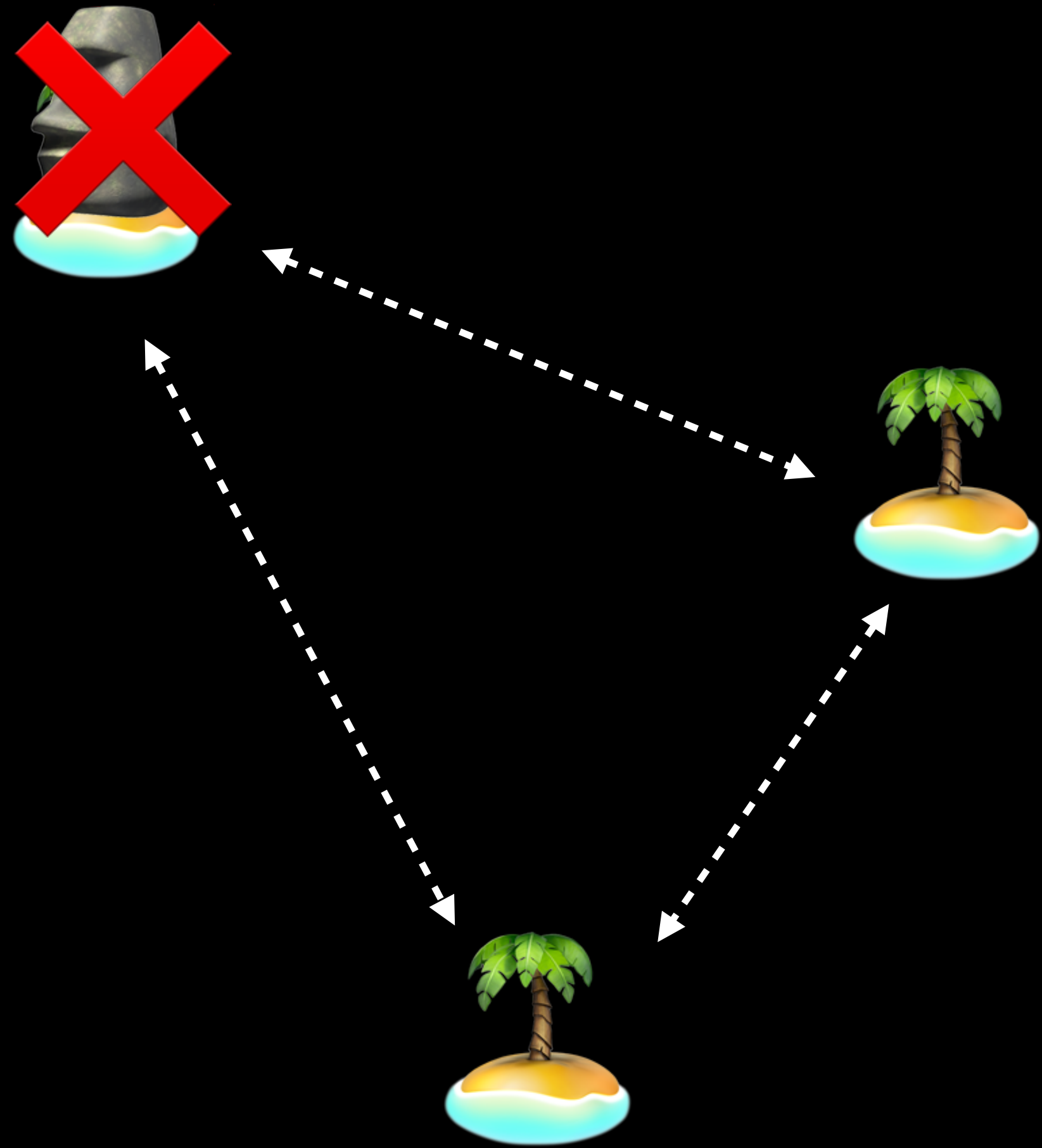
```
distributed public actor GameSession {  
  
    public typealias ActorSystem = ClusterSystem  
  
    enum Error: Swift.Error {  
        case illegalMove  
    }  
  
    var sessionId: String {  
        self.gameState.sessionId  
    }  
  
    let lobby: GameLobby  
    let playerOne: NetworkPlayer  
    let playerTwo: NetworkPlayer  
  
    var gameState: GameState  
  
    distributed public func playerMoved(_ player: NetworkPlayer,  
throws { /* ... */ }  
}
```

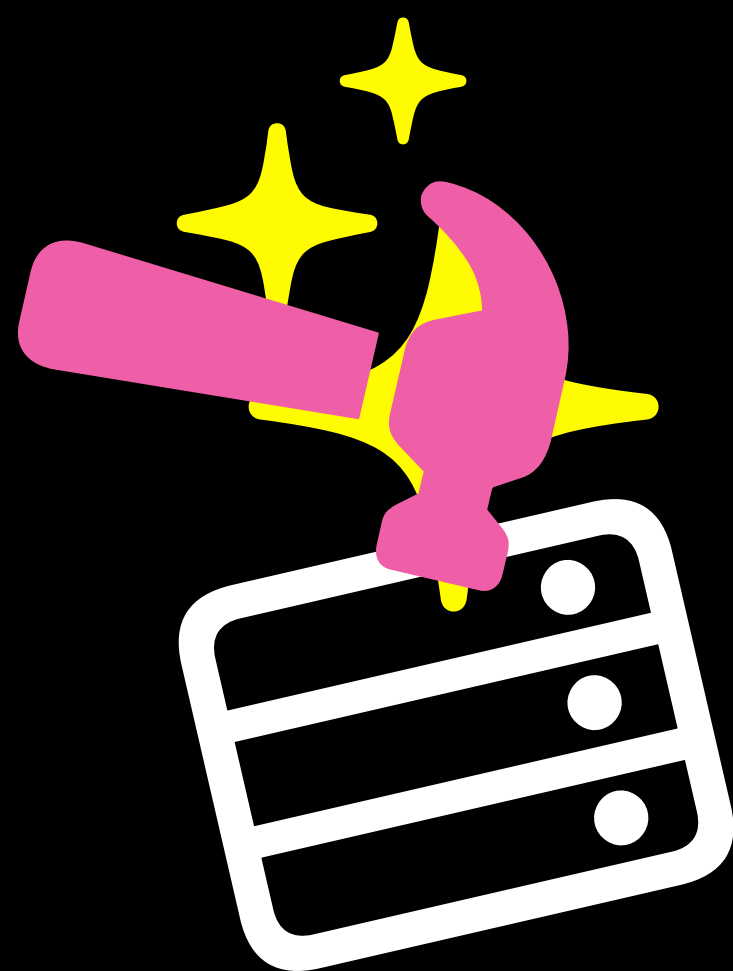


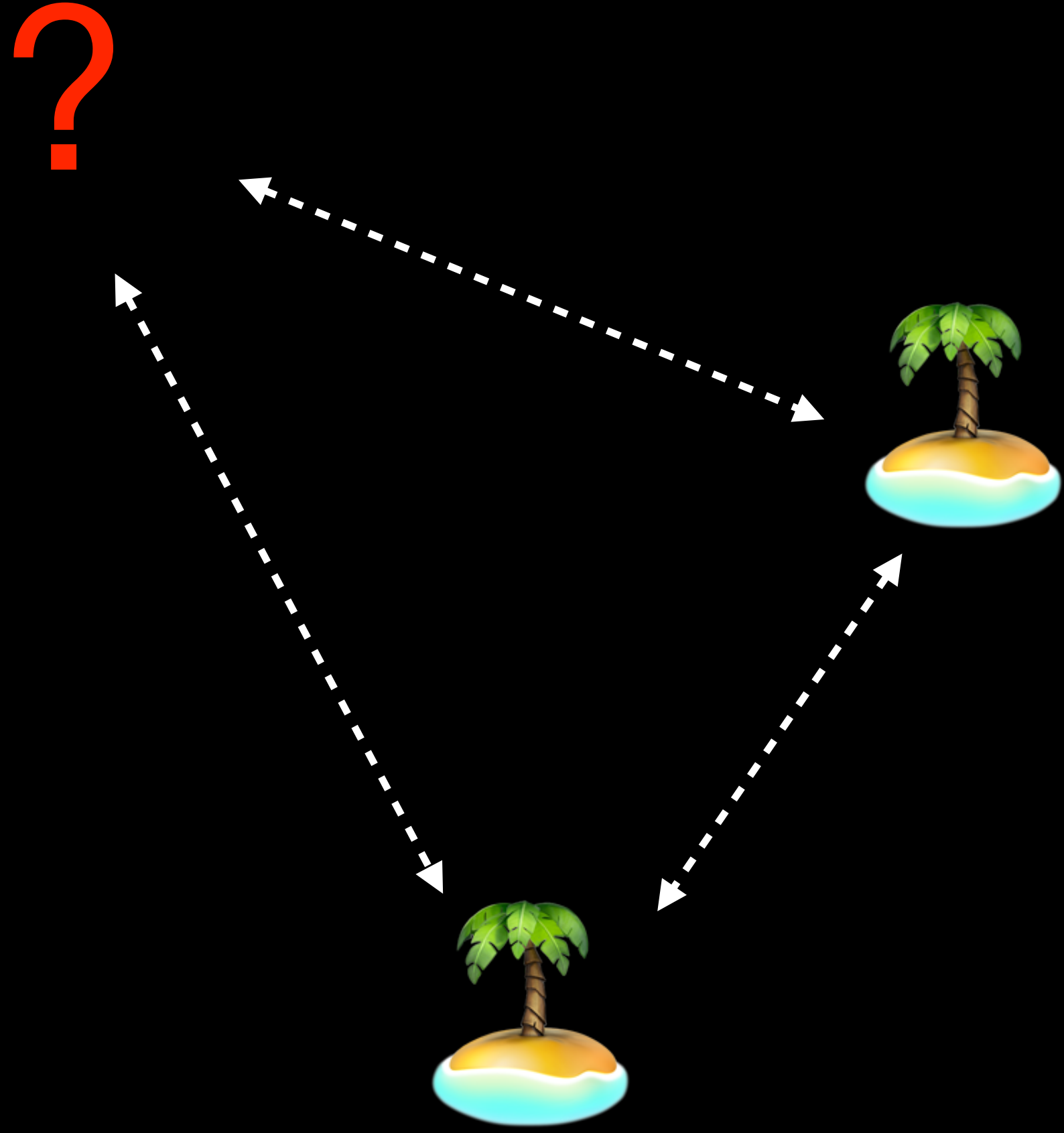




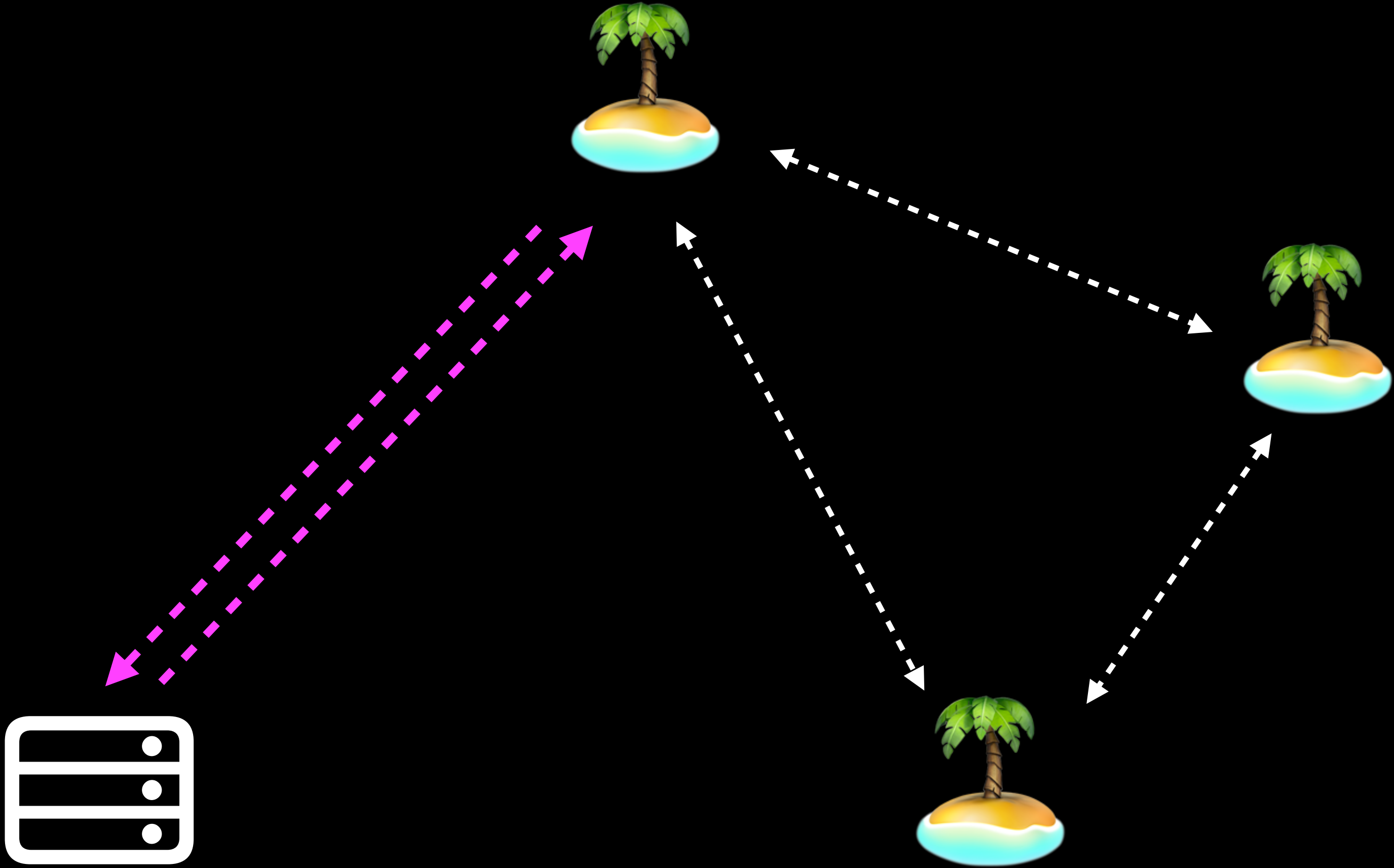


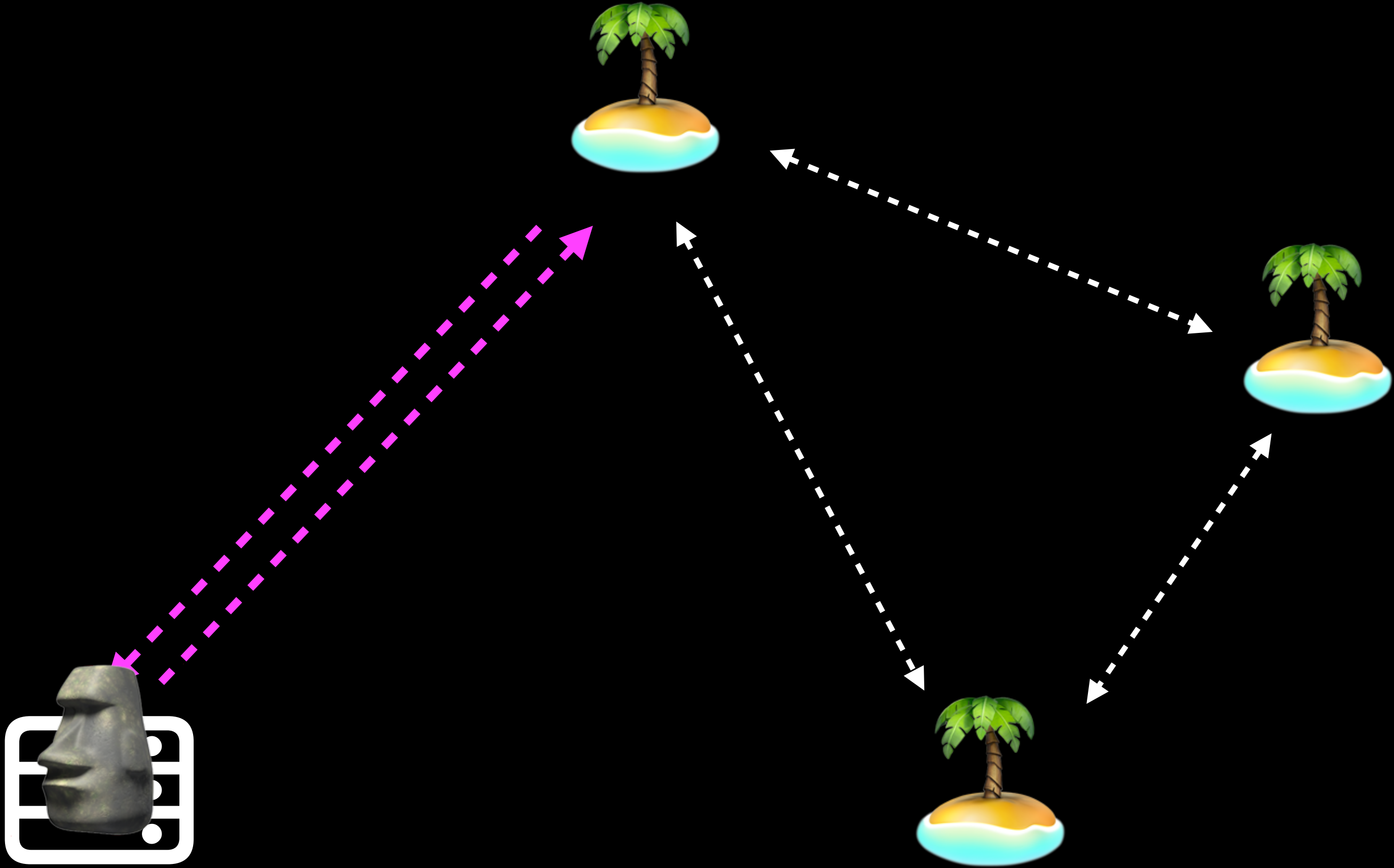


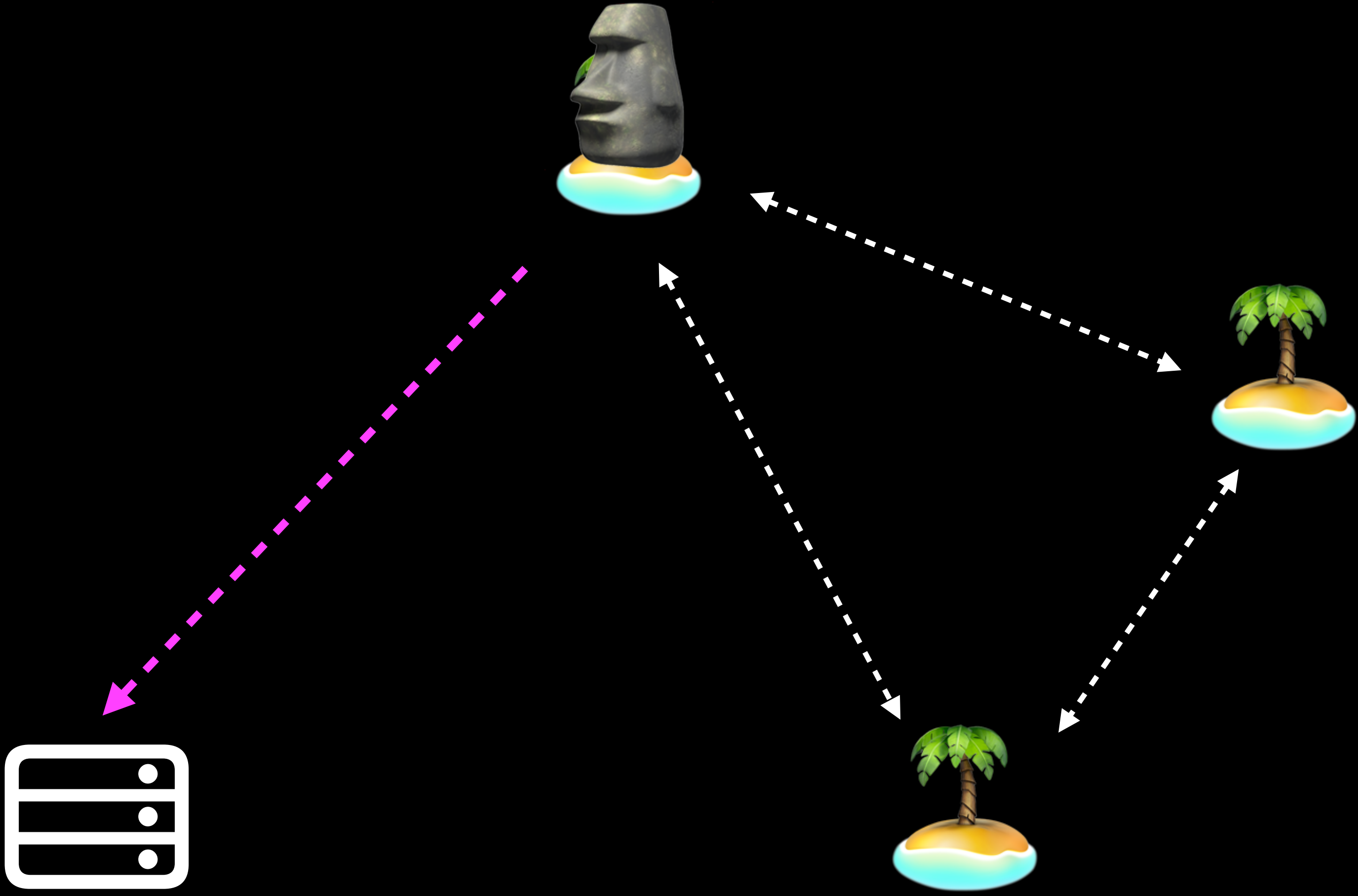


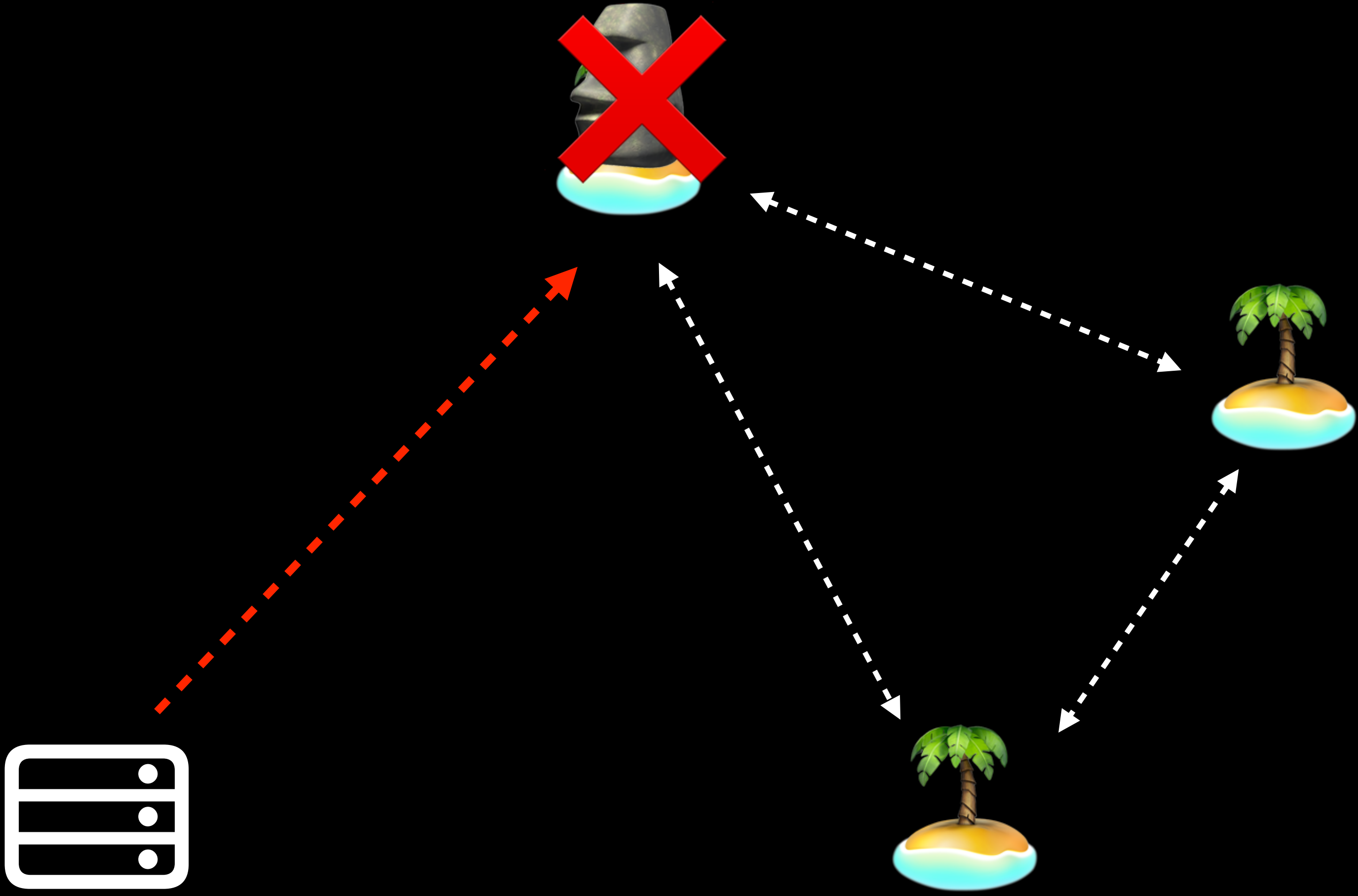


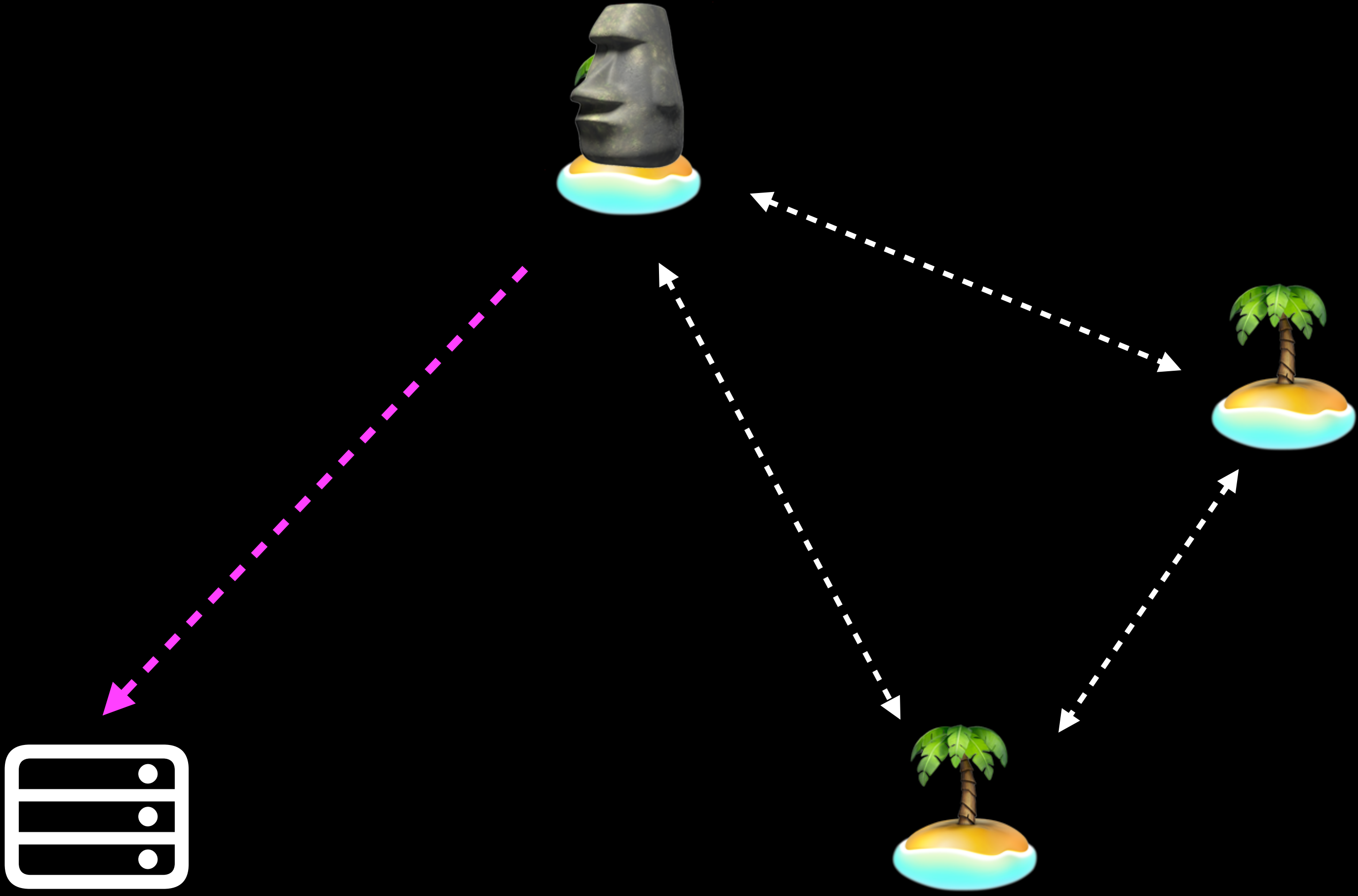




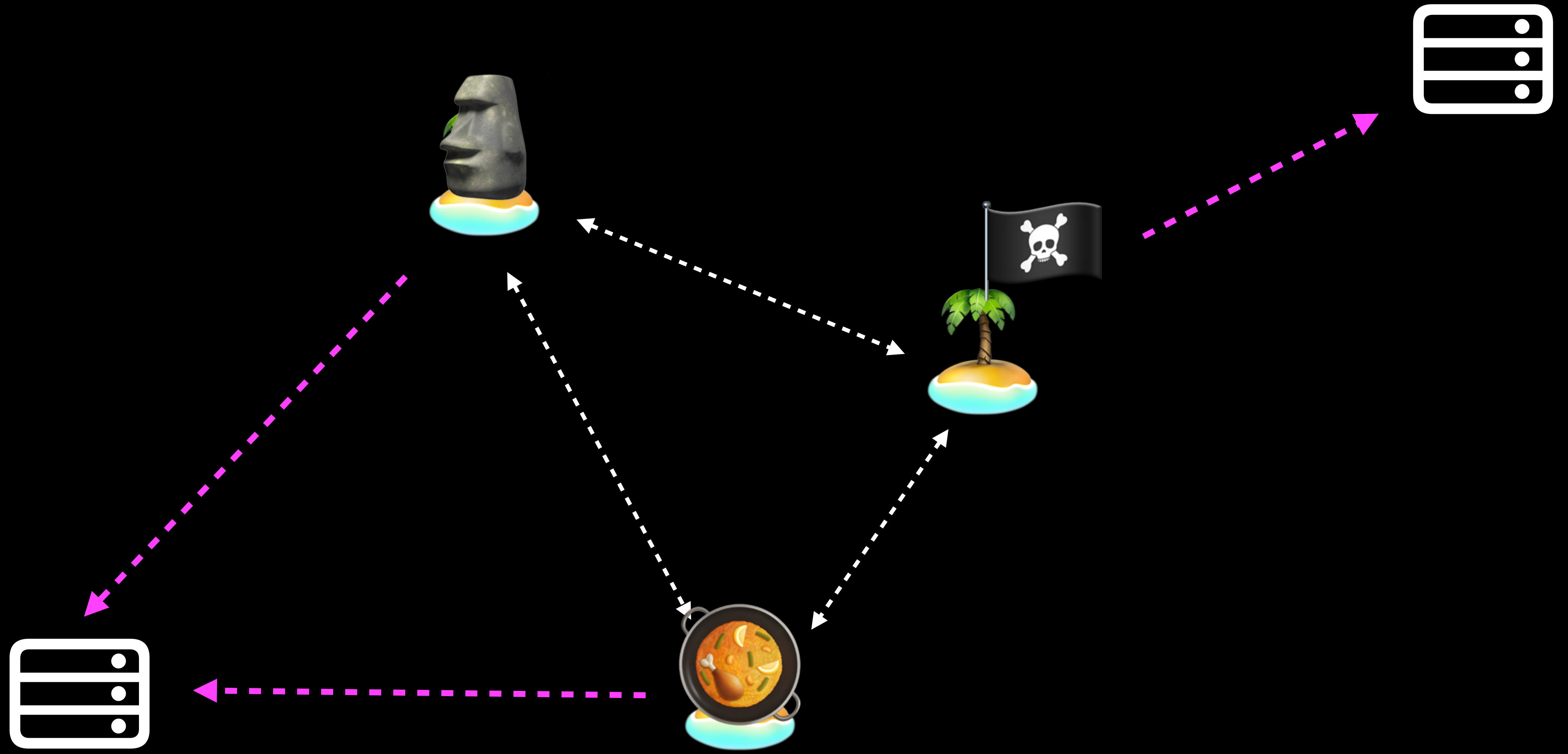


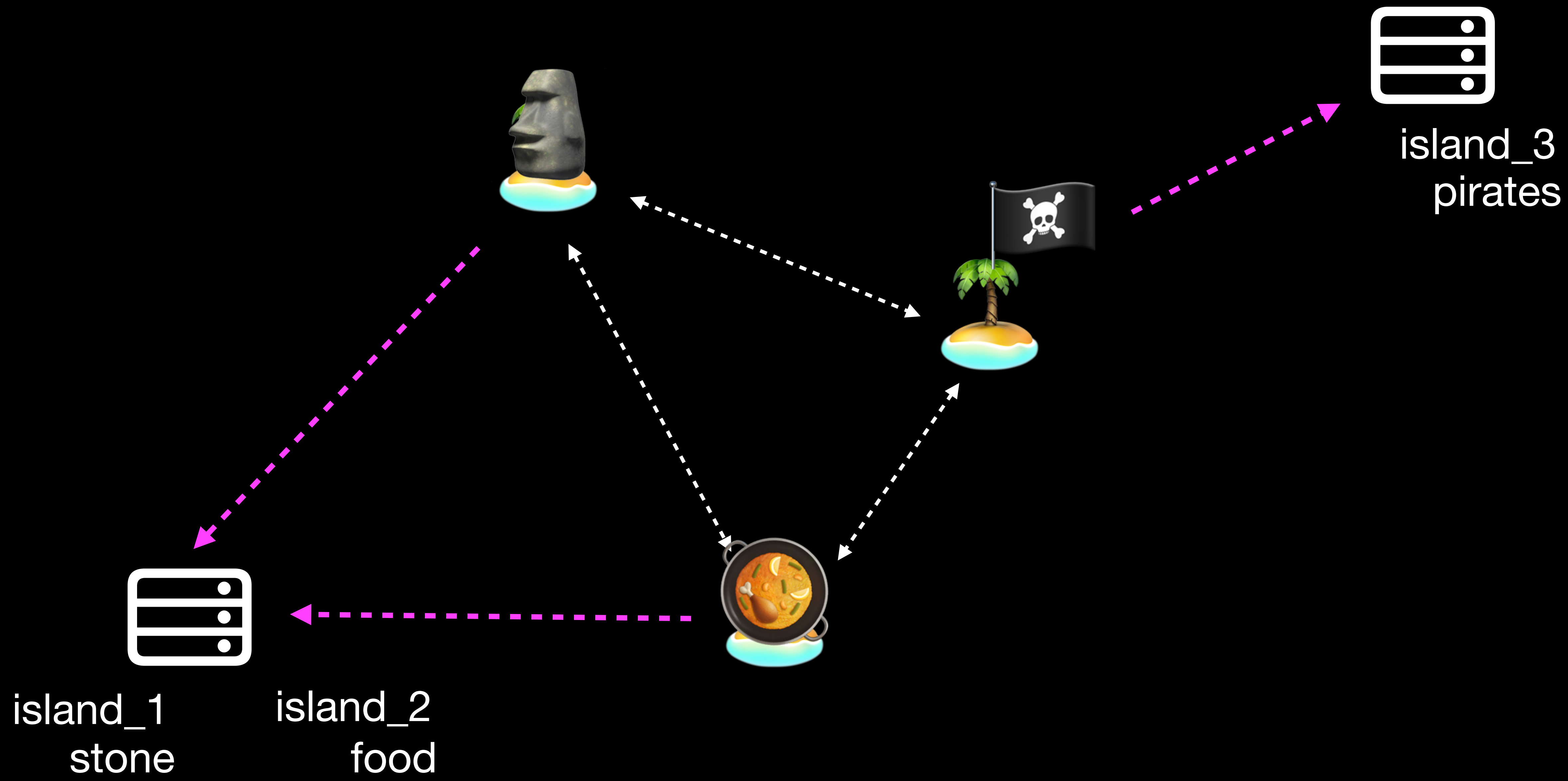


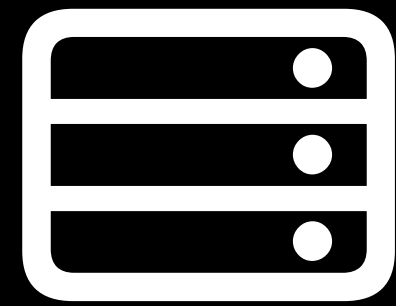






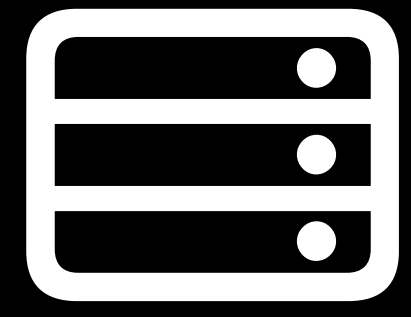
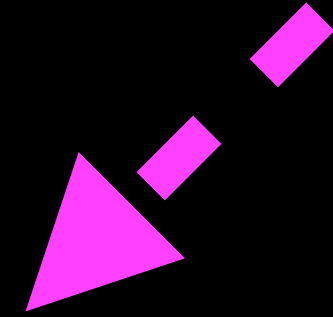






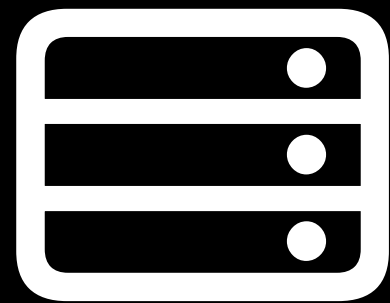
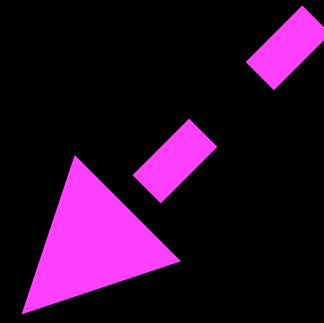


Rock added

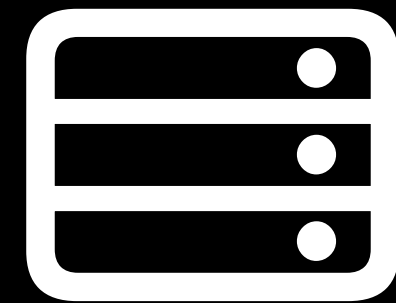


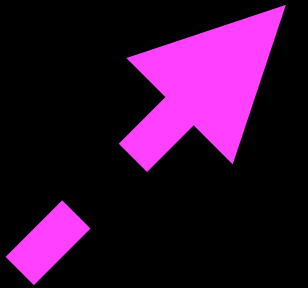
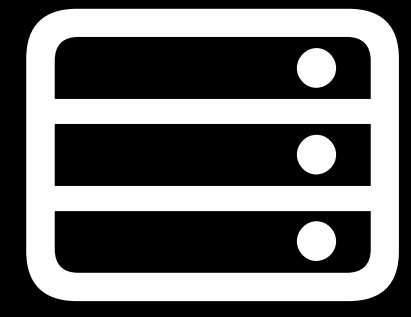


Rock mad

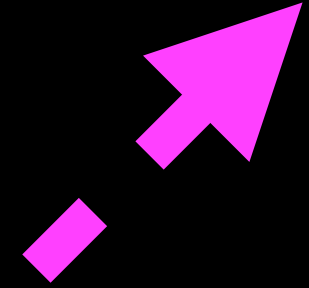






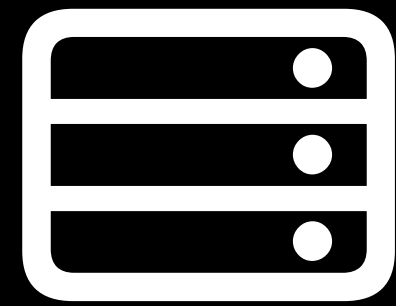


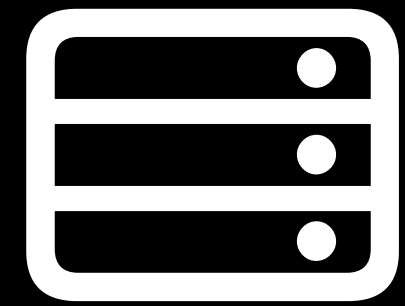
Rock mad



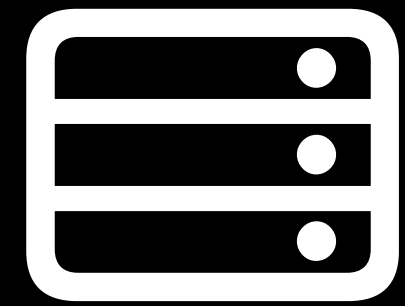
Rock added







Postgresql



MongoDB

# Event sourcing



# Cluster Event Sourcing

## Cluster system plugin

```
.package(  
  url: "https://github.com/akbashev/cluster-event-sourcing.git",  
  branch: "main"  
)
```

```
import EventSourcing

let system = await ClusterSystem("main") {
  $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.1", port: 2550)
  $0.plugins.install(
    plugin: ClusterJournalPlugin {
      _ in DebugStore()
    }
  )
}
```

```
import EventSourcing

/// Keeps track of an active game between two players.
distributed public actor GameSession: EventSourced {

    distributed public var persistenceID: PersistenceID { self.sessionId }

    public enum Event: Codable, Sendable {
        case moveMade(GameMove)
    }

    public func handleEvent(_ event: Event) {
        switch event {
        case .moveMade(let move):
            do {
                try self.gameState.mark(move)
                self.gameState.result = .init(
                    result: self.gameState.checkWin()
                )
            } catch {
                log("\(move)", "Incorrect move!")
            }
        }
    }
}
```

```
distributed public func playerMoved(_ player: NetworkPlayer, move: GameMove) async throws {  
    let playerInfo = try await player.getInfo()  
    guard playerInfo.playerId == self.gameState.currentPlayerId else {  
        log("\(player)", "Opponent made illegal move! \(move)")  
        throw Error.illegalMove  
    }  
  
    /// First emit the event  
    try await self.emit(event: .moveMade(move))  
    /// Then continue additional the logic  
    ...  
}
```

That's it!



**How to handle clients?**



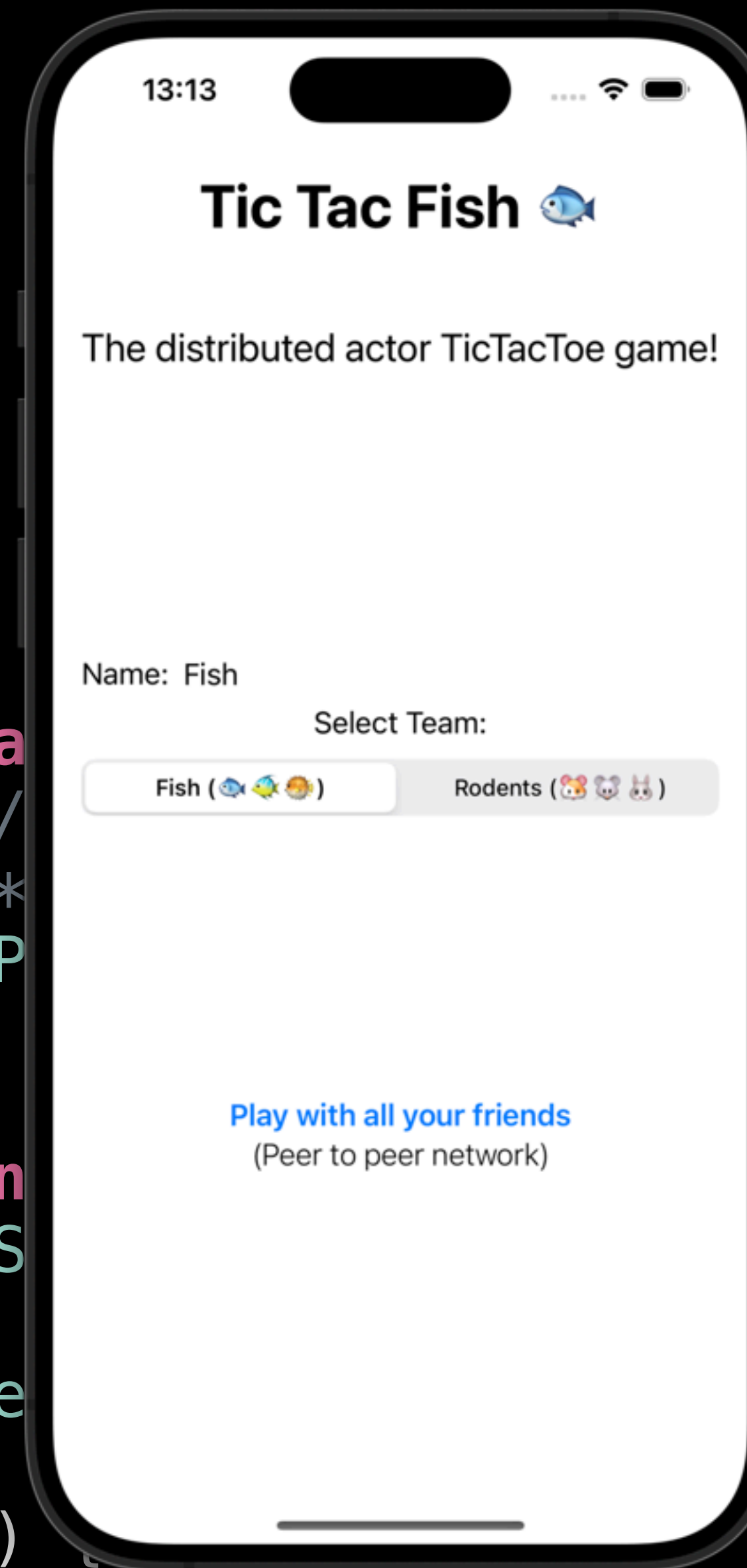
```

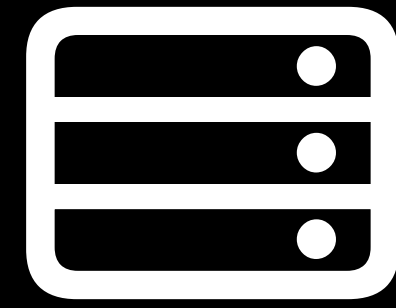
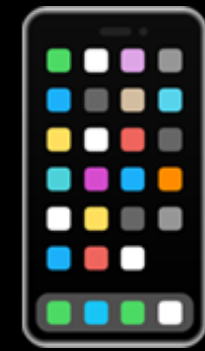
public distributed actor NetworkPlayer {
    public typealias ActorSystem = ClusterSystem

    let info: Player
    var lobby: GameLobby?
    var session: GameSession?

    // Communication with lobby
    distributed public func joinLobby(_ lobby: GameLobby) a
    distributed public func setUserReady() async throws { /
    distributed public func leaveLobby() async throws { /*
    distributed public func playerChangedStatus(_ status: P
*/ }
    // Session updates
    distributed public func makeMove(_ move: GameMove) asyn
    distributed public func sessionStarted(_ session: GameS
* ... */ }
    distributed public func sessionFinished(_ session: Game
* ... */ }
    distributed public func opponentMoved(_ move: GameMove)
}

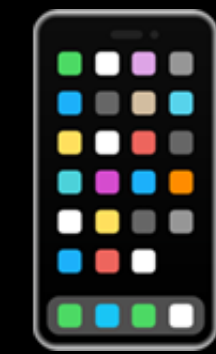
```



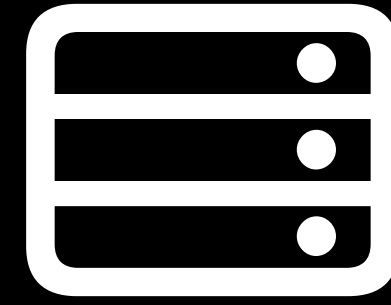
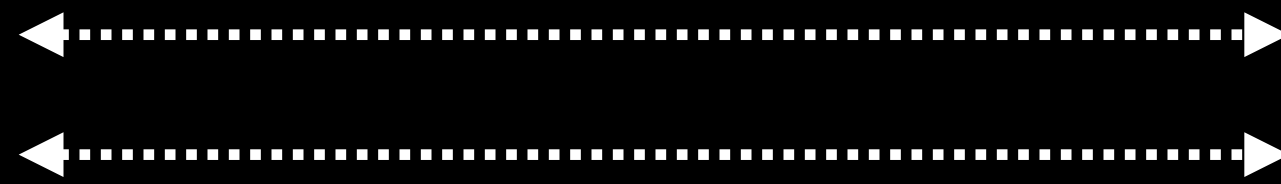


# Stateless clients

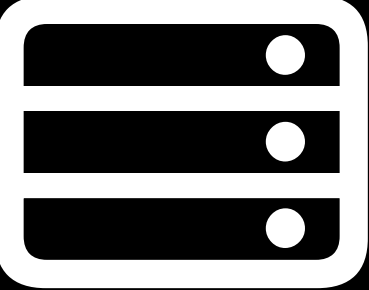
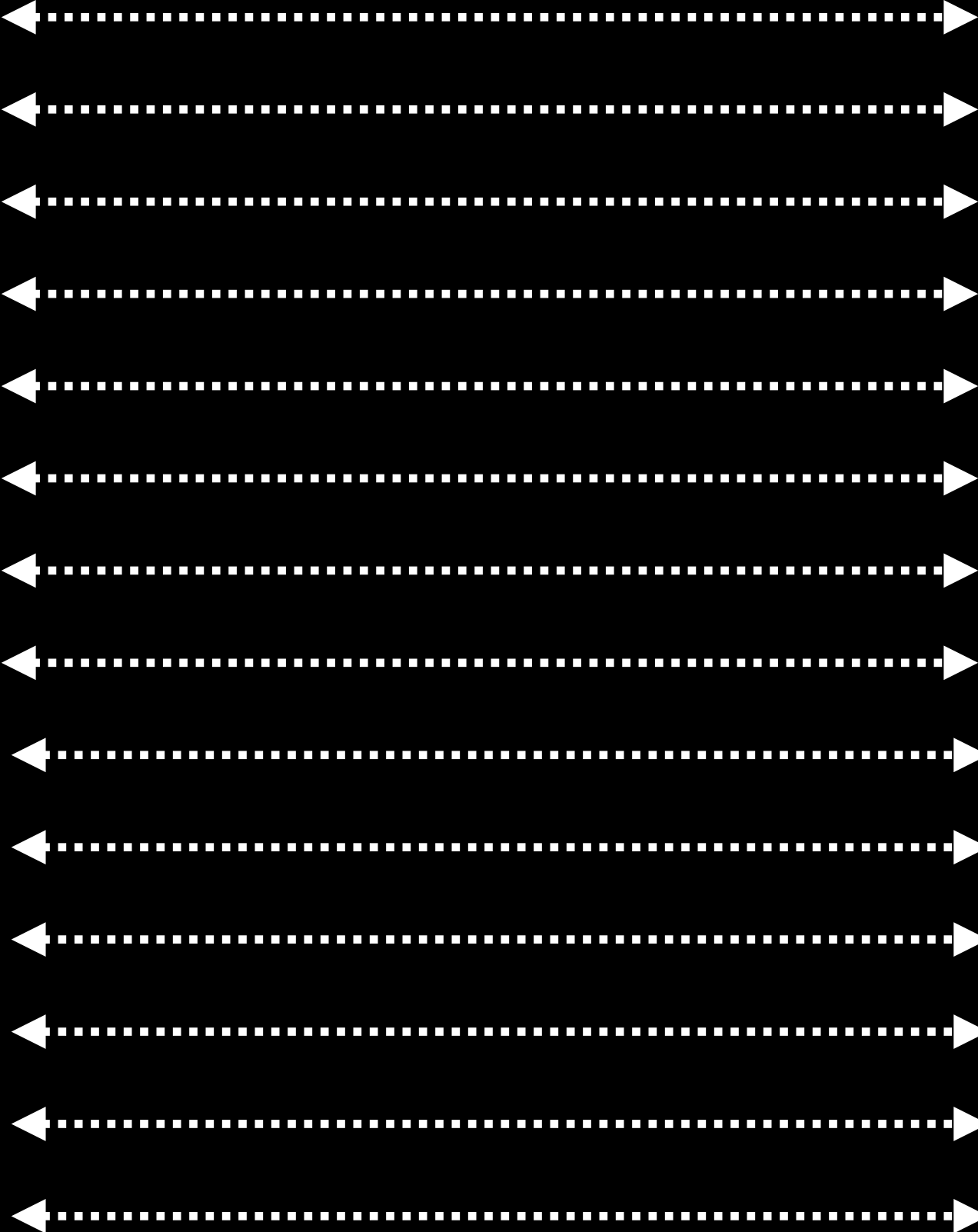
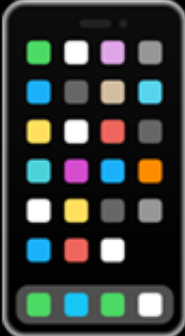


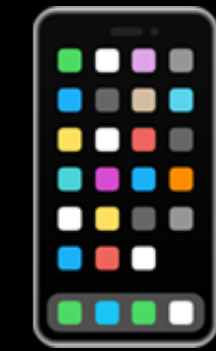


GET/POST

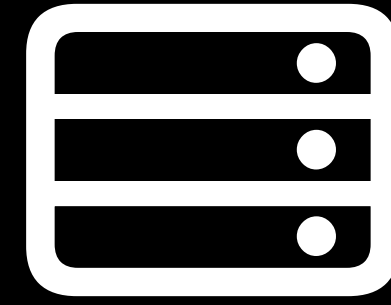


GET/POST





Message streaming





# Message streaming

- Websockets
- JSON streaming, SSE via HTTP

# Swift OpenAPI Generator

```
openapi: 3.1.0
info:
  title: TicTacToe API
  version: 1.0.0
servers:
  - url: 'http://localhost:8080'
paths:
  /matchmaking:
    post:
      operationId: connectToLobby
      summary: Subscribe to lobby updates
      parameters:
        - in: header
          name: player_id
          schema:
            type: string
            format: uuid
            required: true
        - in: header
          name: player_name
          schema:
            type: string
            required: true
        - in: header
          name: player_team
          schema:
            type: string
            required: true
      requestBody:
        required: true
        content:
          application/jsonl:
            schema:
              $ref: '#/components/schemas/PlayerLobbyMessage'
      responses:
        '200':
          description: A stream of lobby updates
          content:
            application/jsonl:
              schema:
                $ref: '#/components/schemas/LobbyMessage'
```

```
openapi: 3.1.0
info:
  title: TicTacToe API
  version: 1.0.0
servers:
  - url: 'http://localhost:8080'
paths:
  /matchmaking:
    post:
      operationId: connectToLobby
      summary: Subscribe to lobby updates
      parameters:
        - in: header
          name: player_id
          schema:
            type: string
            format: uuid
            required: true
        - in: header
          name: player_name
          schema:
            type: string
            required: true
        - in: header
          name: player_team
          schema:
            type: string
            required: true
      requestBody:
        required: true
        content:
          application/jsonl:
            schema:
              $ref: '#/components/schemas/PlayerLobbyMessage'
      responses:
        '200':
          description: A stream of lobby updates
          content:
            application/jsonl:
              schema:
                $ref: '#/components/schemas/LobbyMessage'
```

```
openapi: 3.1.0
info:
  title: TicTacToe API
  version: 1.0.0
servers:
  - url: 'http://localhost:8080'
paths:
  /matchmaking:
    post:
      operationId: connectToLobby
      summary: Subscribe to lobby updates
      parameters:
        - in: header
          name: player_id
          schema:
            type: string
            format: uuid
            required: true
        - in: header
          name: player_name
          schema:
            type: string
            required: true
        - in: header
          name: player_team
          schema:
            type: string
            required: true
      requestBody:
        required: true
        content:
          application/jsonl:
            schema:
              $ref: '#/components/schemas/PlayerLobbyMessage'
      responses:
        '200':
          description: A stream of lobby updates
          content:
            application/jsonl:
              schema:
                $ref: '#/components/schemas/LobbyMessage'
```

```
struct Api: APIProtocol {  
    func connectToLobby(_ input: Operations.ConnectToLobby.Input) async throws ->  
Operations.ConnectToLobby.Output {  
    let (outputStream, outputContinuation) = AsyncStream<LobbyMessage>.makeStream()  
    let stream = switch input {  
case .applicationJsonl(let body):  
    body.asDecodedJSONLines(  
        of: PlayerLobbyMessage.self  
    )  
    }  
    ...  
    let responseBody: Operations.ConnectToLobby.Output.Ok.Body = .applicationJsonl(  
        .init(outputStream.asEncodedJSONLines(), length: .unknown, iterationBehavior: .si  
    )  
    return .ok(.init(body: responseBody))  
    }  
}
```



```
Input>(to connection: AsyncStream<Input>) {}
```

✘ Parameter 'to' of type 'AsyncStream<Input>' in distributed instance method does not conform to serializati

**There can never be too few  
actors**

```
import Types
import Distributed
import DistributedCluster
import OpenAPIRuntime

distributed public actor ServerStream<Input, Output>
  where Input: Codable & Sendable,
         Output: Codable & Sendable {

  public typealias ActorSystem = ClusterSystem

  var handler: (any ServerStreamHandler)?
  var lastMessageDate: ContinuousClock.Instant
  var messageListener: Task<Void, any Error>?
  var heartbeatListener: Task<Void, any Error>?

  let output: AsyncStream<Output>.Continuation
  let heartbeatSequence: AsyncTimerSequence<ContinuousClock>
  let heartbeatInterval: Duration
```

```
extension NetworkPlayer: ServerStreamHandler {  
  
    var lobbyConnection: ServerStream<PlayerLobbyMessage, LobbyMessage>?  
    var gameSessionConnection: ServerStream<PlayerSessionMessage, SessionMessage>?  
  
    private func sendMessage(_ message: LobbyMessage) {  
        Task {  
            try await self.lobbyConnection?.sendMessage(message)  
        }  
    }  
  
    private func sendMessage(_ message: SessionMessage) {  
        Task {  
            try await self.gameSessionConnection?.sendMessage(message)  
        }  
    }  
  
    distributed public func handle<Input, Output>(  
        _ input: Input,  
        from connection: ServerStream<Input, Output>  
    ) async throws {  
        ...  
    }  
}
```

**There is still one issue we need  
to solve**

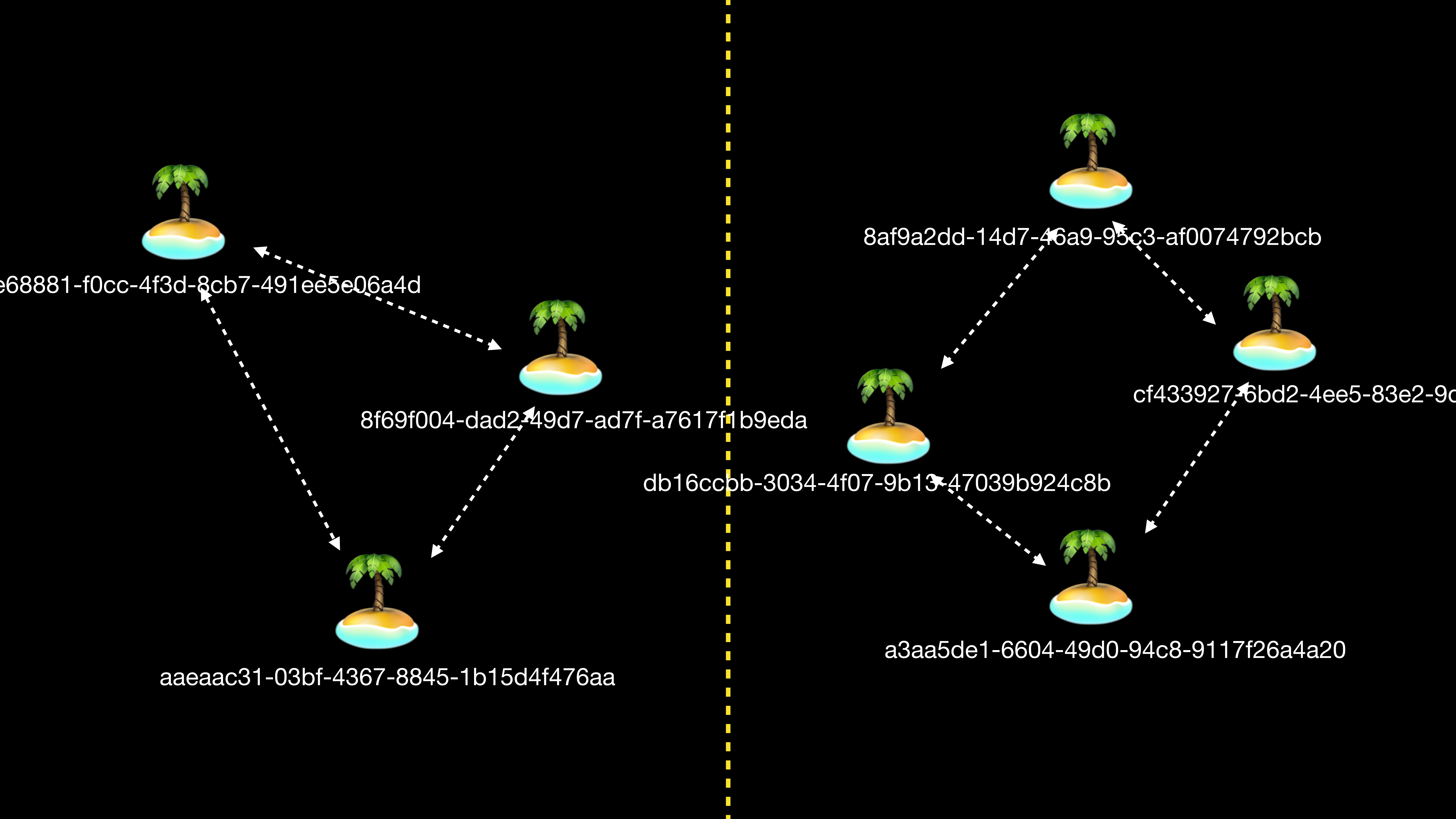
```
struct Api: APIProtocol {  
    func connectToLobby(_ input: Operations.ConnectToLobby.Input) async throws ->  
Operations.ConnectToLobby.Output {  
        ...  
        let playerInfo = try Player(input)  
        let networkPlayer: NetworkPlayer = NetworkPlayer(  
            actorSystem: self.actorSystem,  
            info: playerInfo  
        )  
        ...  
    }  
  
    func joinGameSession(_ input: Operations.JoinGameSession.Input) async throws ->  
Operations.JoinGameSession.Output {  
        ...  
        let playerInfo = try Player(input)  
        let networkPlayer: NetworkPlayer = NetworkPlayer(  
            actorSystem: self.actorSystem,  
            info: playerInfo  
        )  
        ...  
    }  
}
```

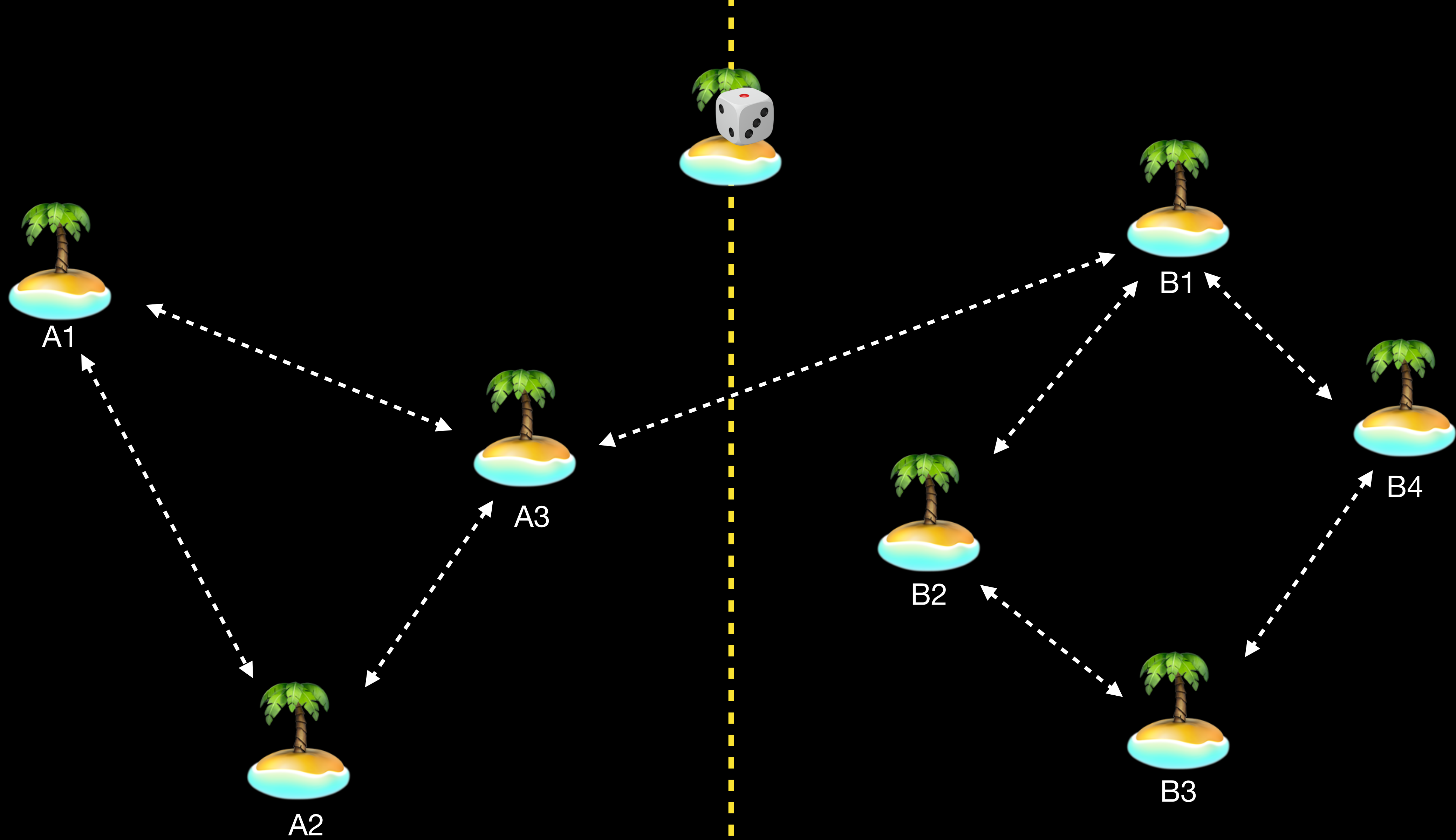
# Actor Identity

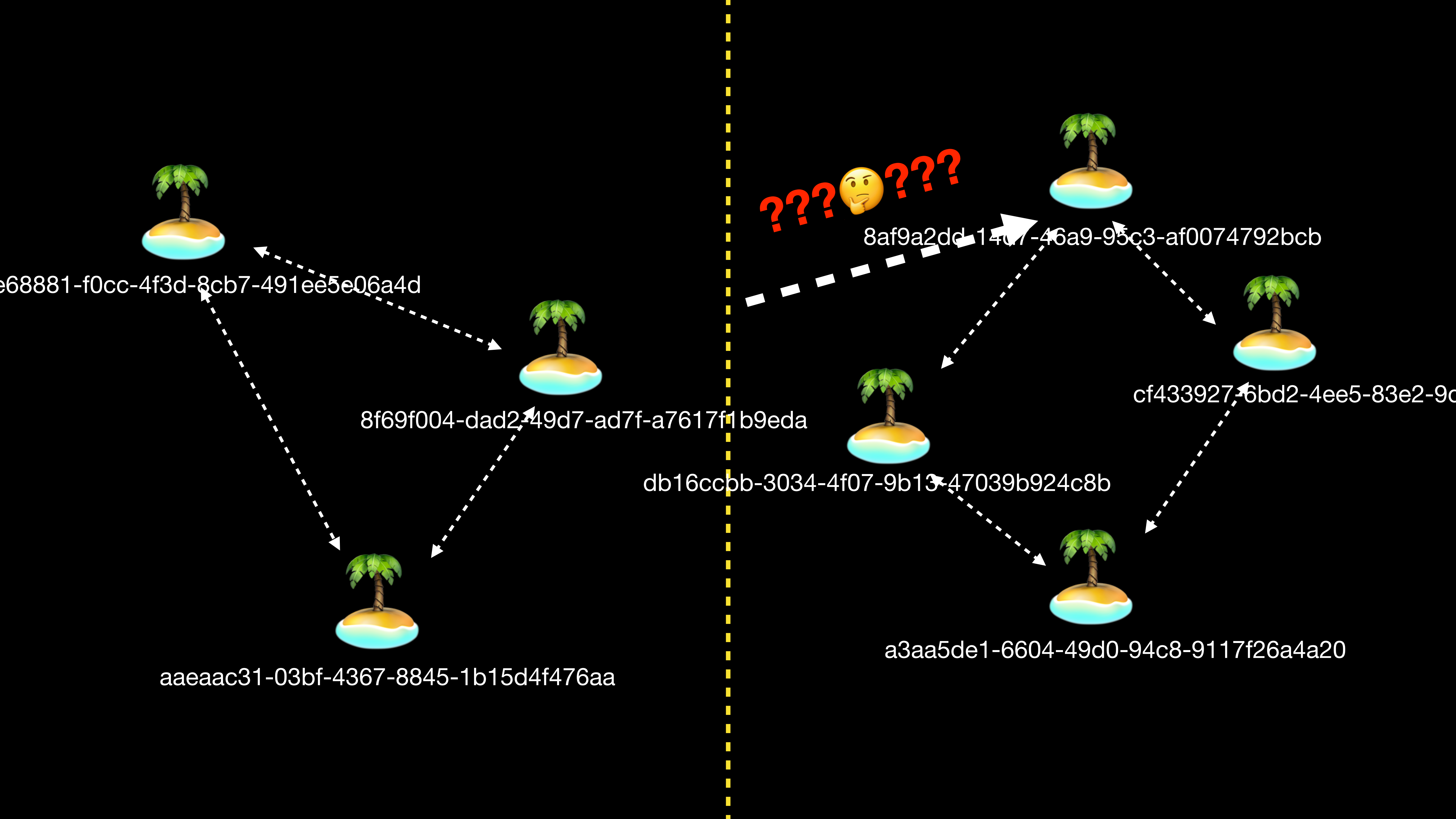
```
/// Uniquely identifies a DistributedActor within the cluster.
///
/// It is assigned by the `ClusterSystem` at initialization time of a distributed actor,
/// and remains associated with that concrete actor until it terminates.
///
/// ## Identity
/// The id is the source of truth with regards to referring to a _specific_ actor in the
system.
/// Identities can be treated as globally (or at least cluster-wide) unique identifiers of
actors.
...
public struct ActorID: @unchecked Sendable {
...

```













```

distributed public actor GameLobby: ClusterSingleton, LifecycleWatch {

    private var players: Set<NetworkPlayer> = []
    private var listeningTask: Task<Void, Error>?

    public func terminated(actor id: ActorID) async {
        for player in self.players where player.id == id {
            self.players.remove(player)
        }
    }

    private func findPlayer() {
        guard self.listeningTask == nil else {
            self.actorSystem.log.info("Already looking for nodes")
            return
        }

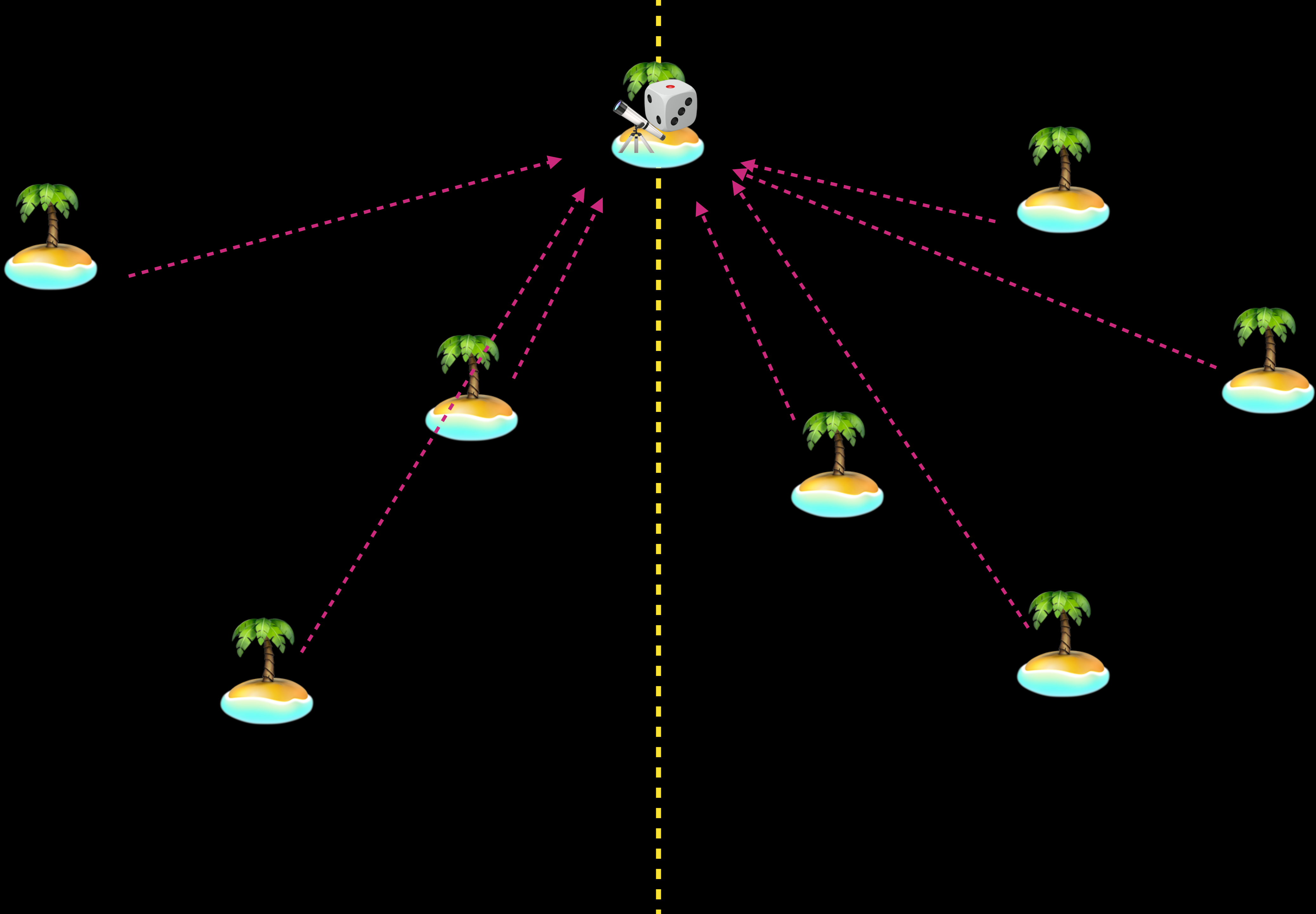
        self.listeningTask = Task {
            for await player in await self.actorSystem.receptionist.listing(of: NetworkPlayer.receptionistKey) {
                self.players.insert(player)
                self.watchTermination(of: player)
            }
        }
    }
}

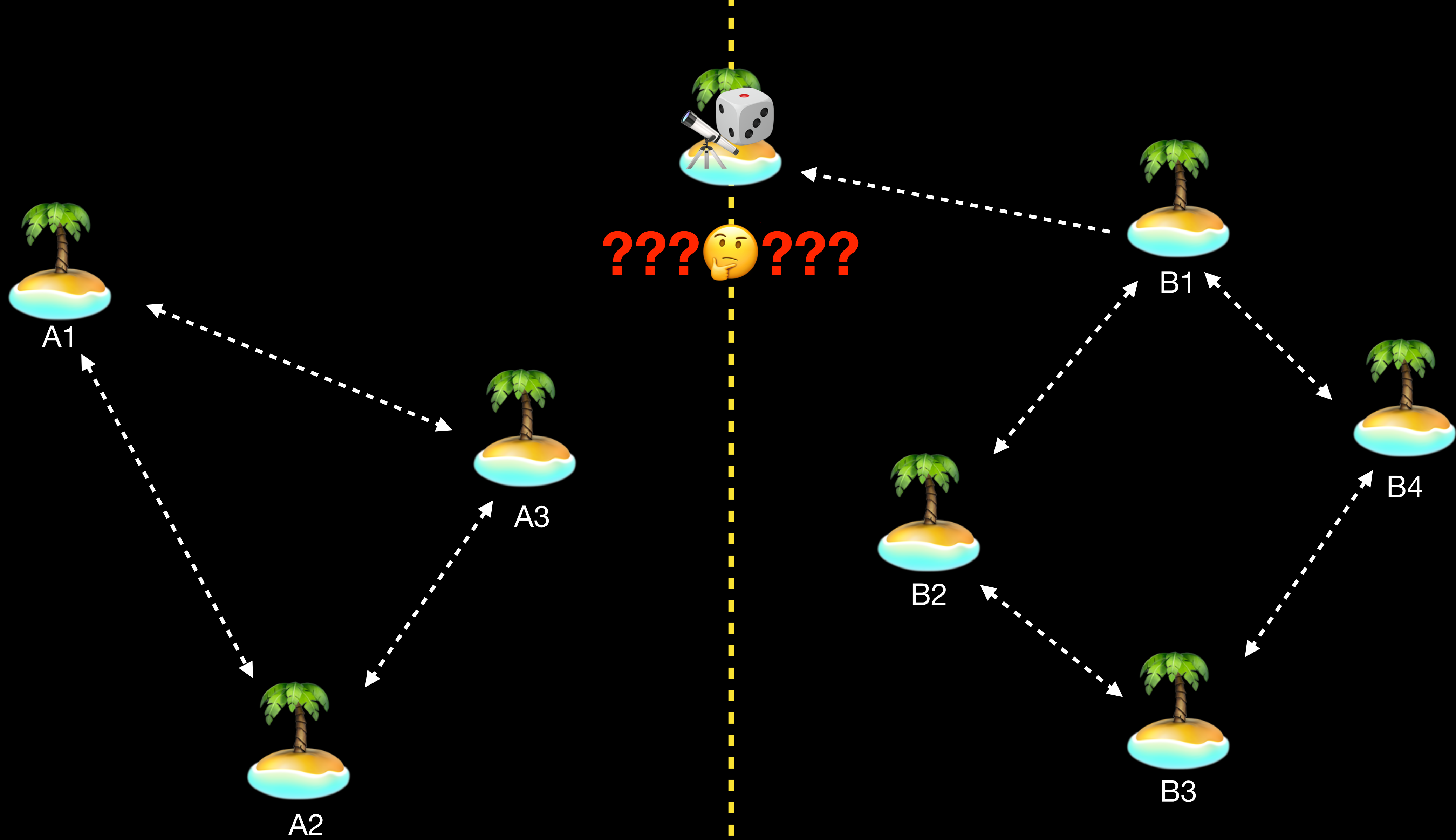
extension NetworkPlayer {
    static var receptionistKey: DistributedReception.Key<NetworkPlayer> { "player_receptionist_key" }

    public init(
        actorSystem: ClusterSystem
    ) async {
        self.actorSystem = actorSystem
        await actorSystem
            .receptionist
            .checkIn(self, with: Self.receptionistKey)
    }
}

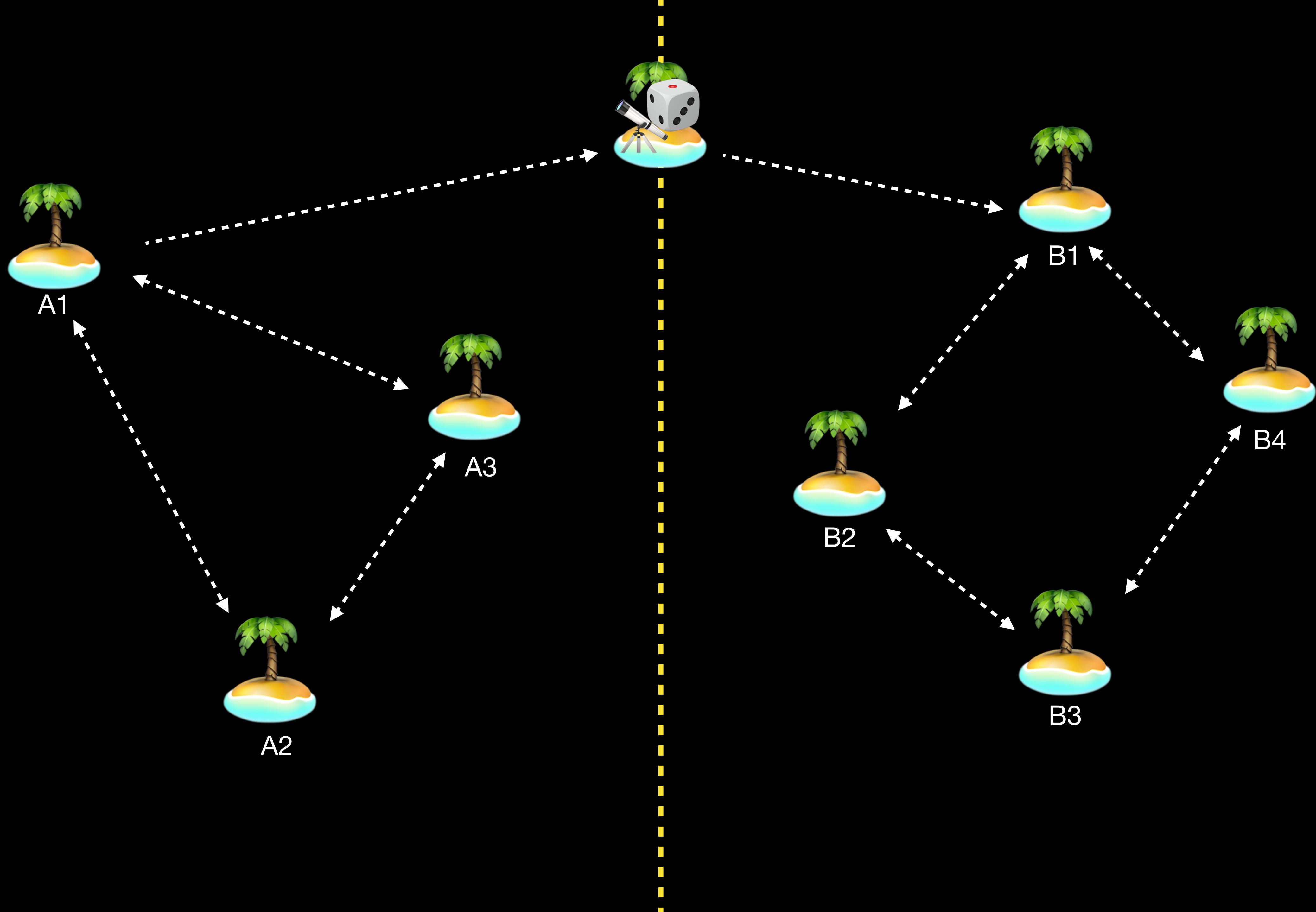
```

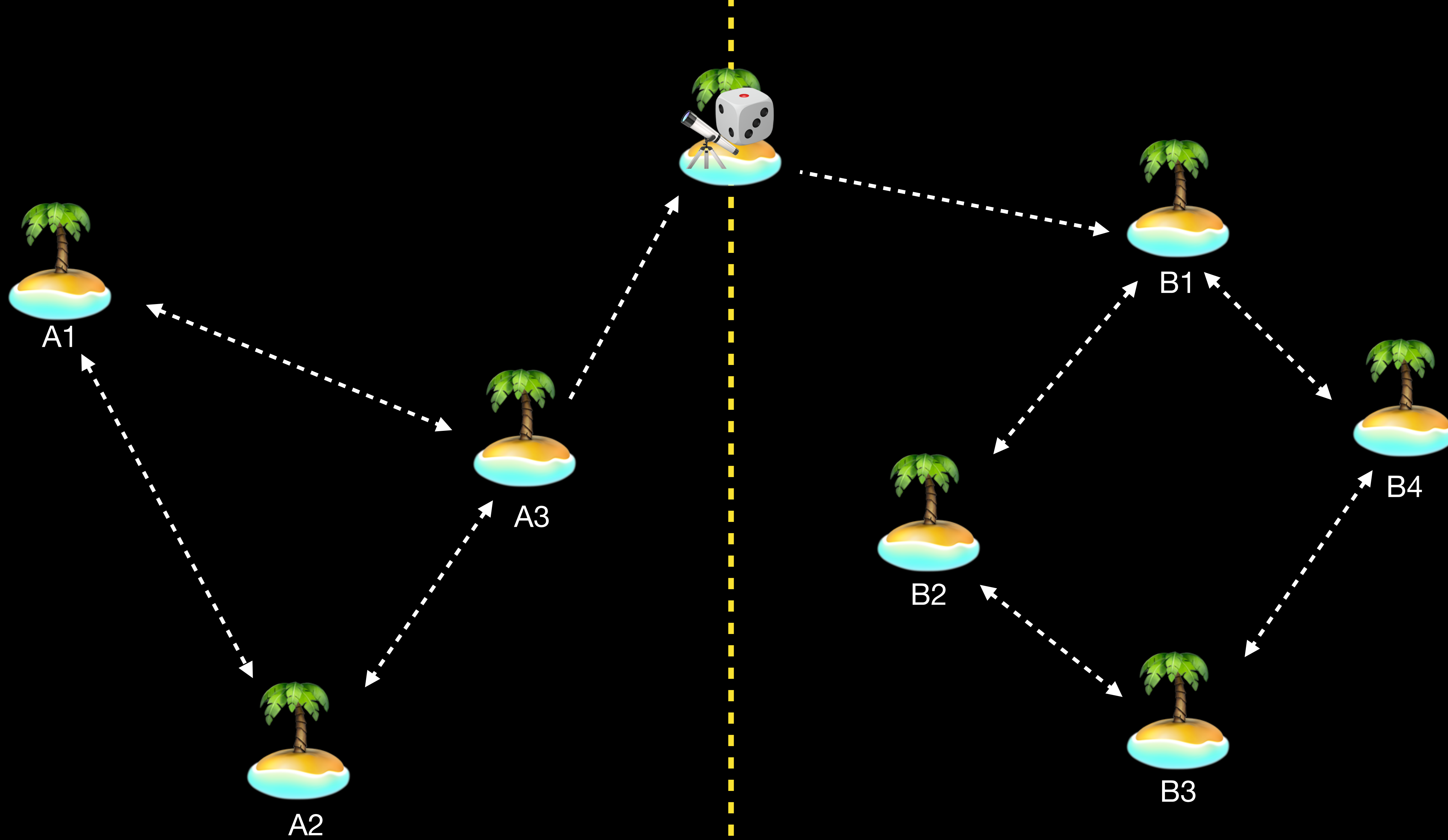


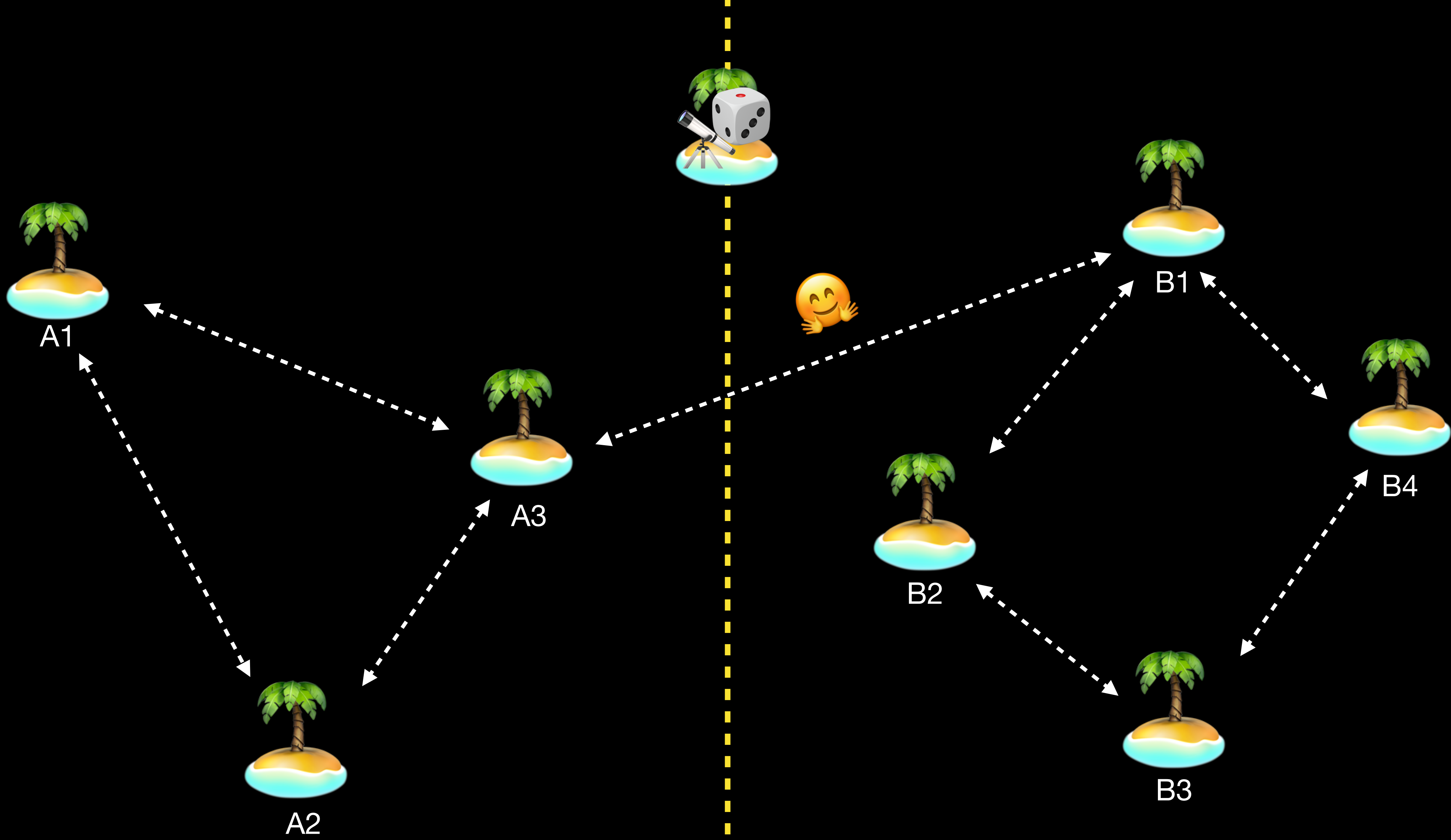








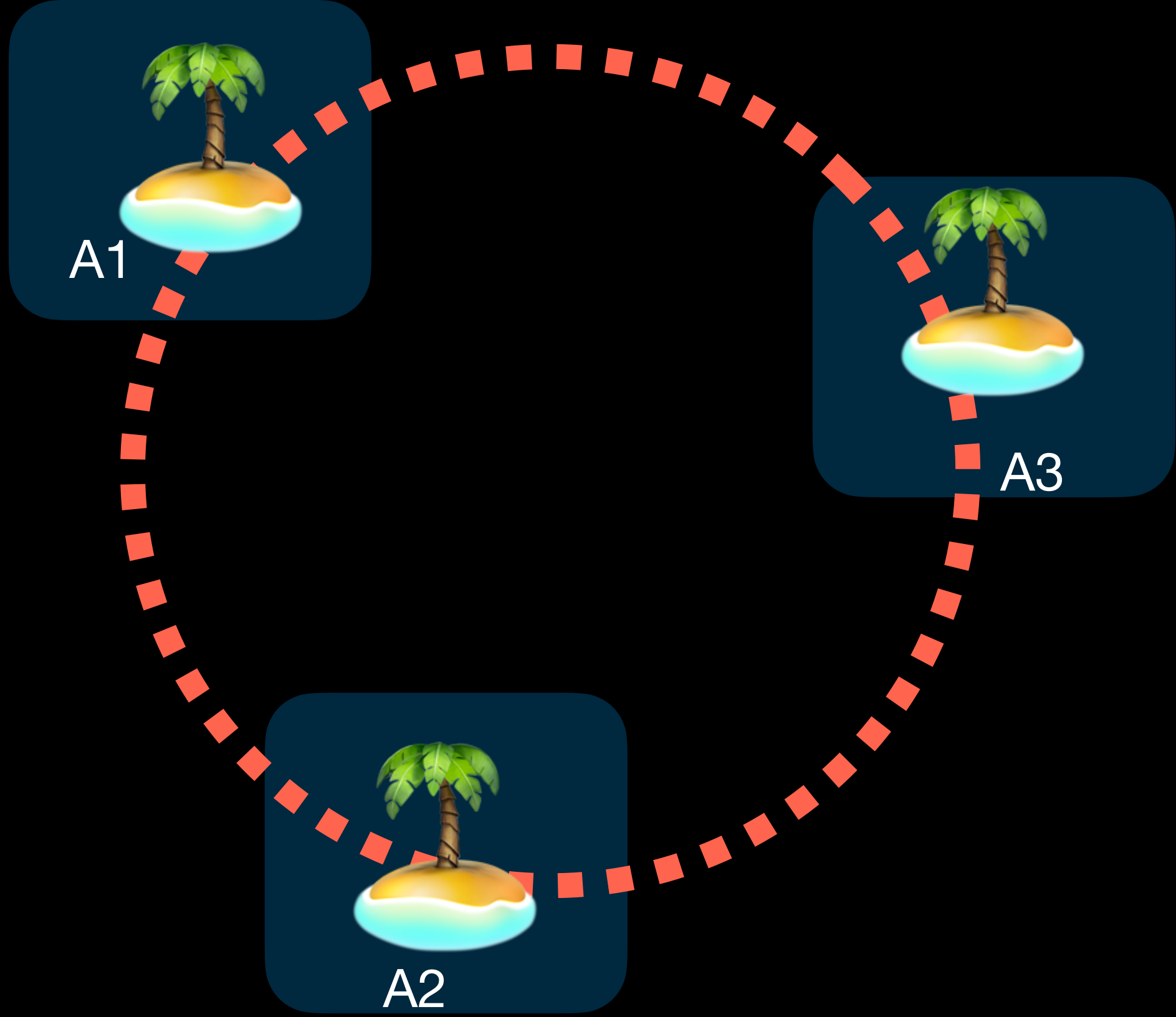














A1

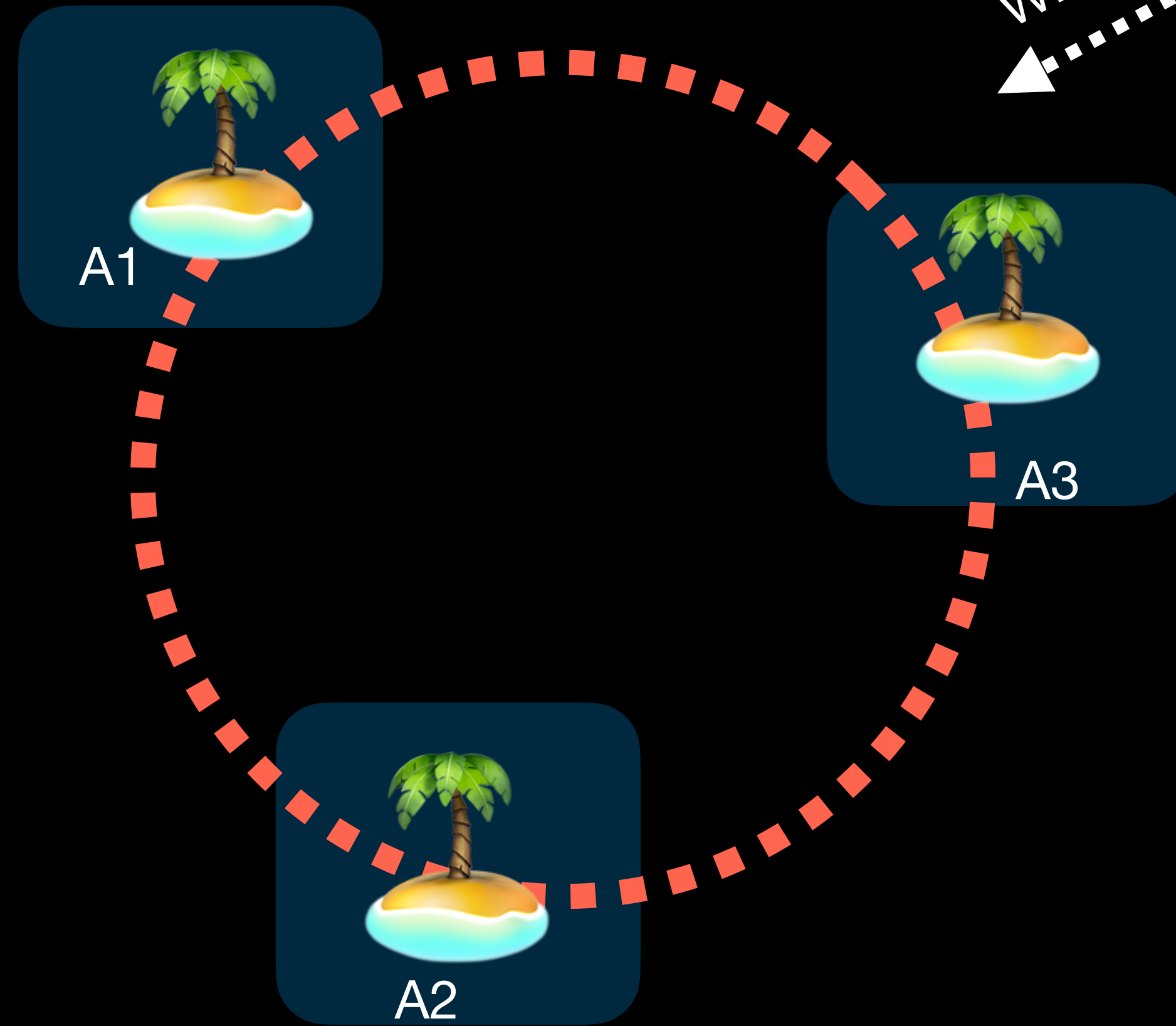


A3

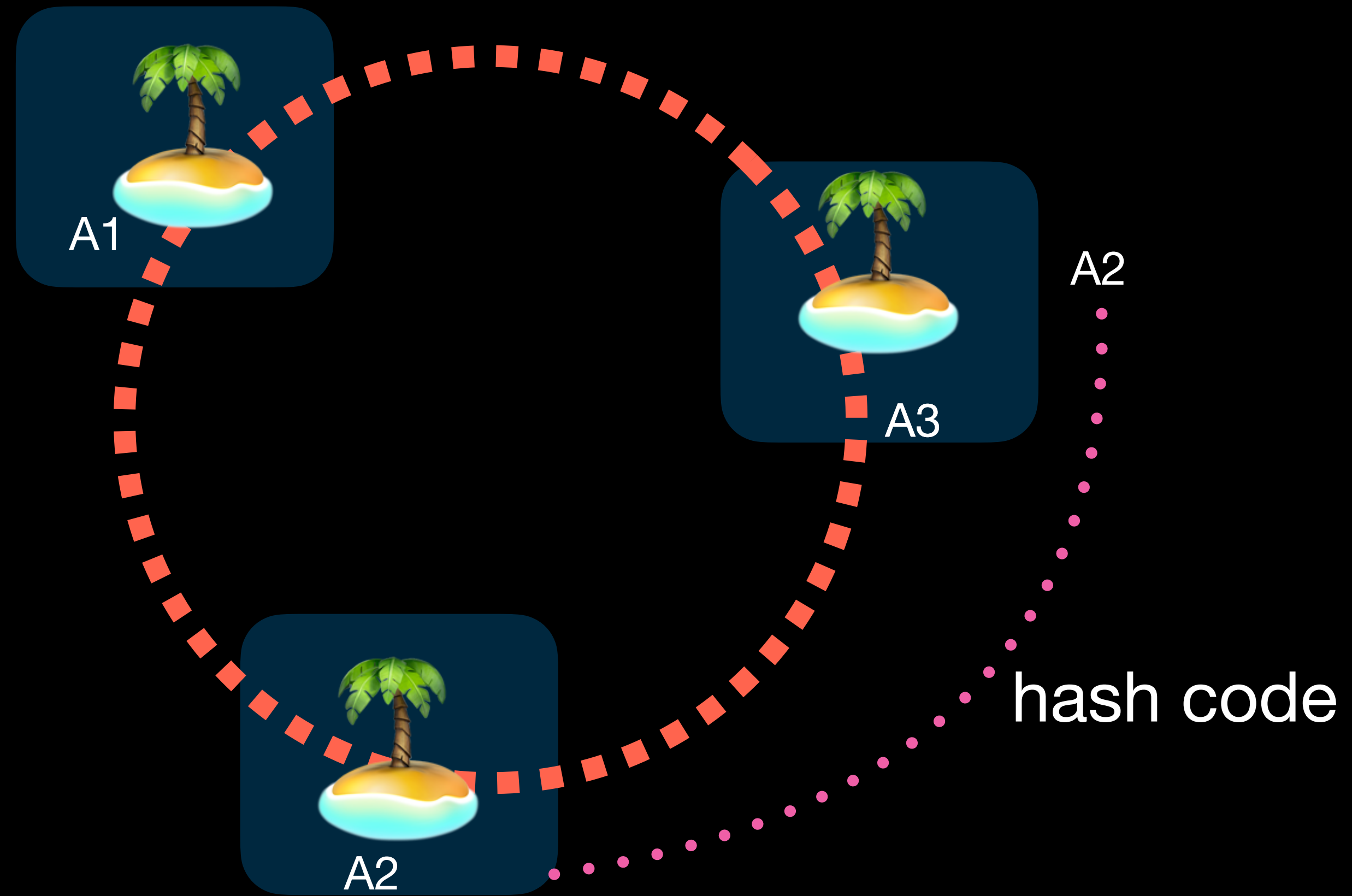


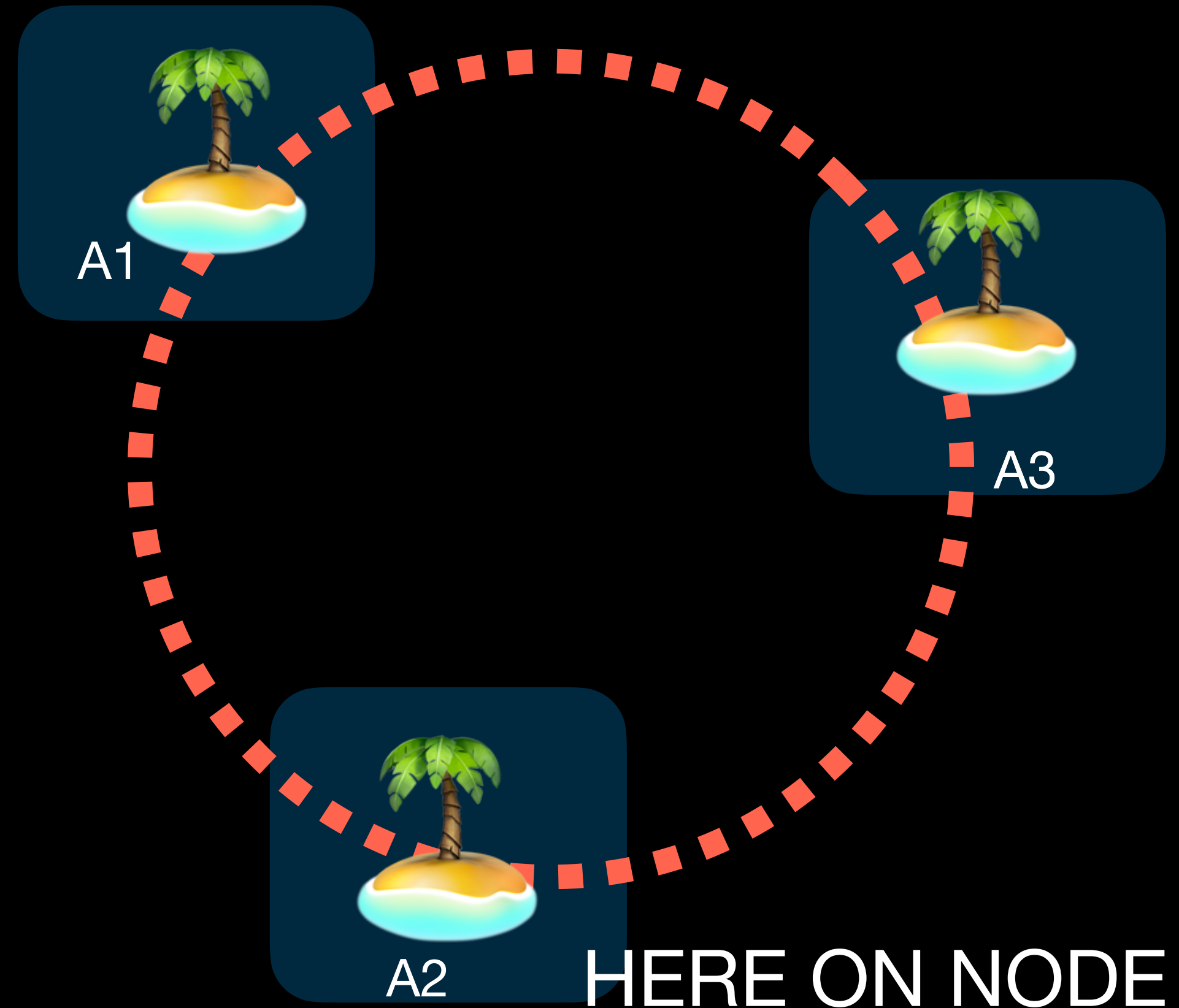
A2

WHERE IS MY A2?







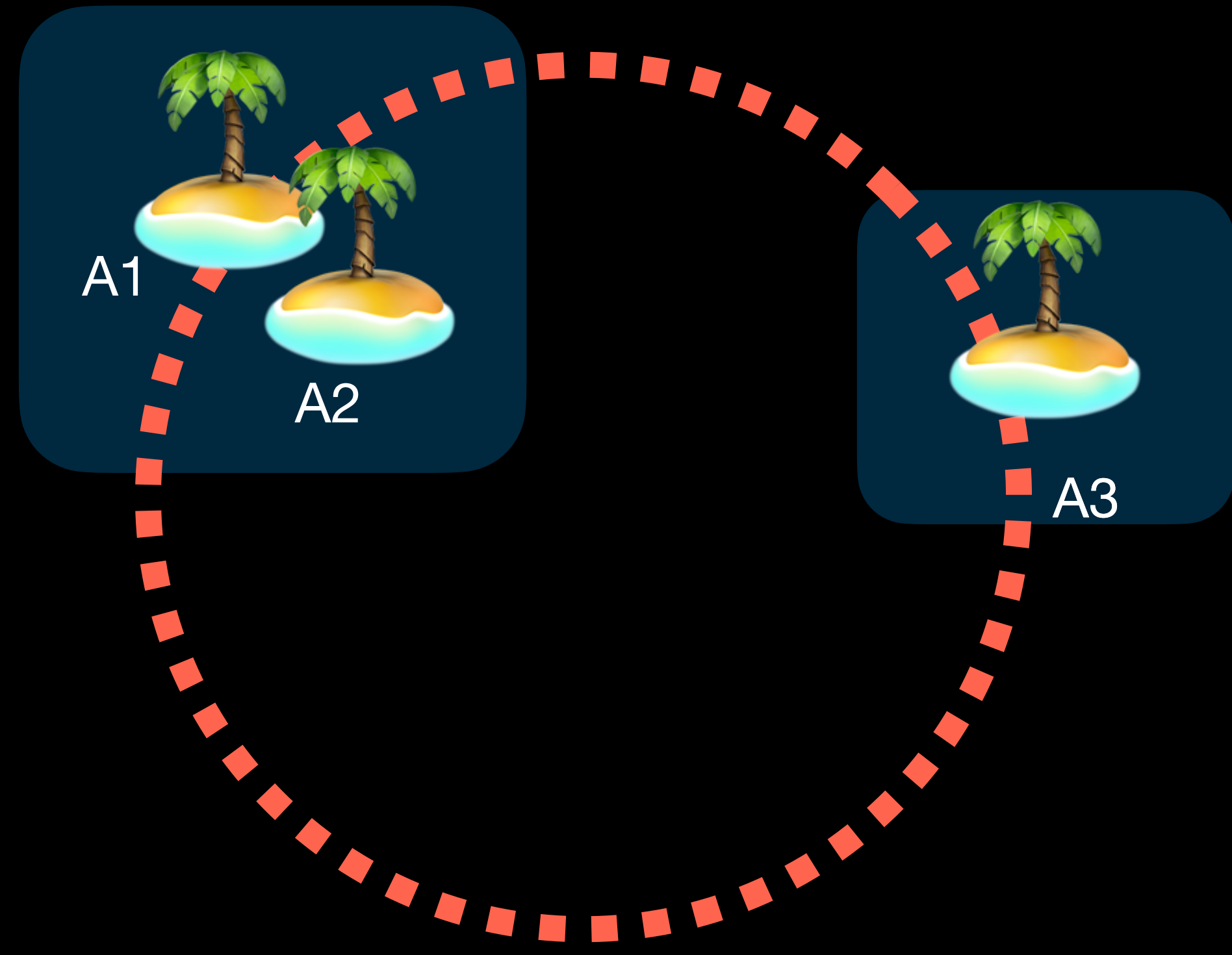


A1

A3

A2

HERE ON NODE 2!!!



# Virtual Actors

## Cluster system plugin

```
.package(  
  url: "https://github.com/akbashev/cluster-virtual-actors.git",  
  branch: "main"  
),
```

```
import VirtualActors
```

```
let system = await ClusterSystem("main") {  
  $0.endpoint = .init(host: "127.0.0.1", port: 2550)  
  $0.plugins.install(  
    plugin: ClusterVirtualActorsPlugin()  
  )  
}
```

```
extension NetworkPlayer: VirtualActor {
  public static func spawn(
    on system: DistributedCluster.ClusterSystem,
    dependency: any Sendable & Codable
  ) async throws -> NetworkPlayer {
    /// A bit of boilerplate to check type until (associated type error) [https://github.com/swiftlang/swift/issues/74769] is fixed
    guard let player = dependency as? Player else { throw
VirtualActorError.spawnDependencyTypeMismatch }
    return NetworkPlayer(actorSystem: system, player: player)
  }
}
```

```
    let (system, node) = await ClusterSystem.startVirtualNode(named: "players-\n(endpoint.description)") {\n        $0.endpoint = endpoint\n        $0.discovery = .clusterd\n    }
```



```
struct Api: APIProtocol {  
    func connectToLobby(_ input: Operations.ConnectToLobby.Input) async throws ->  
Operations.ConnectToLobby.Output {  
        ...  
        let playerInfo = try Player(input)  
        let networkPlayer: NetworkPlayer = try await self.actorSystem.virtualActors.getActor  
        identifiedBy: .init(rawValue: player.playerId),  
        dependency: player  
    )  
        ...  
    }  
  
    func joinGameSession(_ input: Operations.JoinGameSession.Input) async throws ->  
Operations.JoinGameSession.Output {  
        ...  
        let playerInfo = try Player(input)  
        let networkPlayer: NetworkPlayer = try await self.actorSystem.virtualActors.getActor  
        identifiedBy: .init(rawValue: player.playerId),  
        dependency: player  
    )  
        ...  
    }  
}
```

That's it!



**That's it, really!**



Demo

Building **reliable** and **scalable**  
apps with Distributed Actors


# Cluster System

## Frontend



swift-nio

## Players



Distributed actors

## Game Session




Distributed actors



# Cluster System

### Frontend



swift-nio

## Players

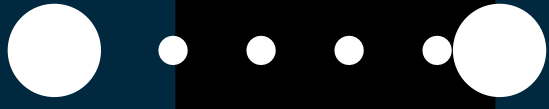
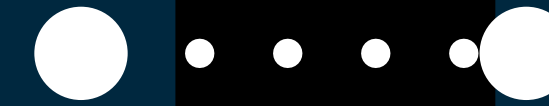
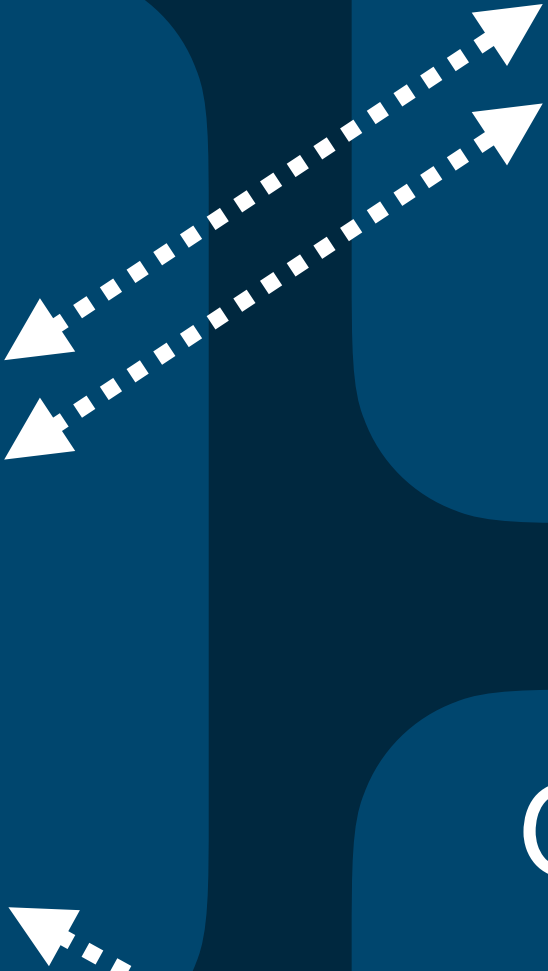


Distributed actors

## Game Session



Distributed actors



# Cluster System

## Players



Distributed actors

## Players



Distributed actors

## Pla



Distribut

## Pla



Distribut



# Cluster System

## Frontend



swift-nio


## Game Session



Distributed actors

# Cluster System

## Players



Distributed actors

## Players



Distributed actors

## Pla

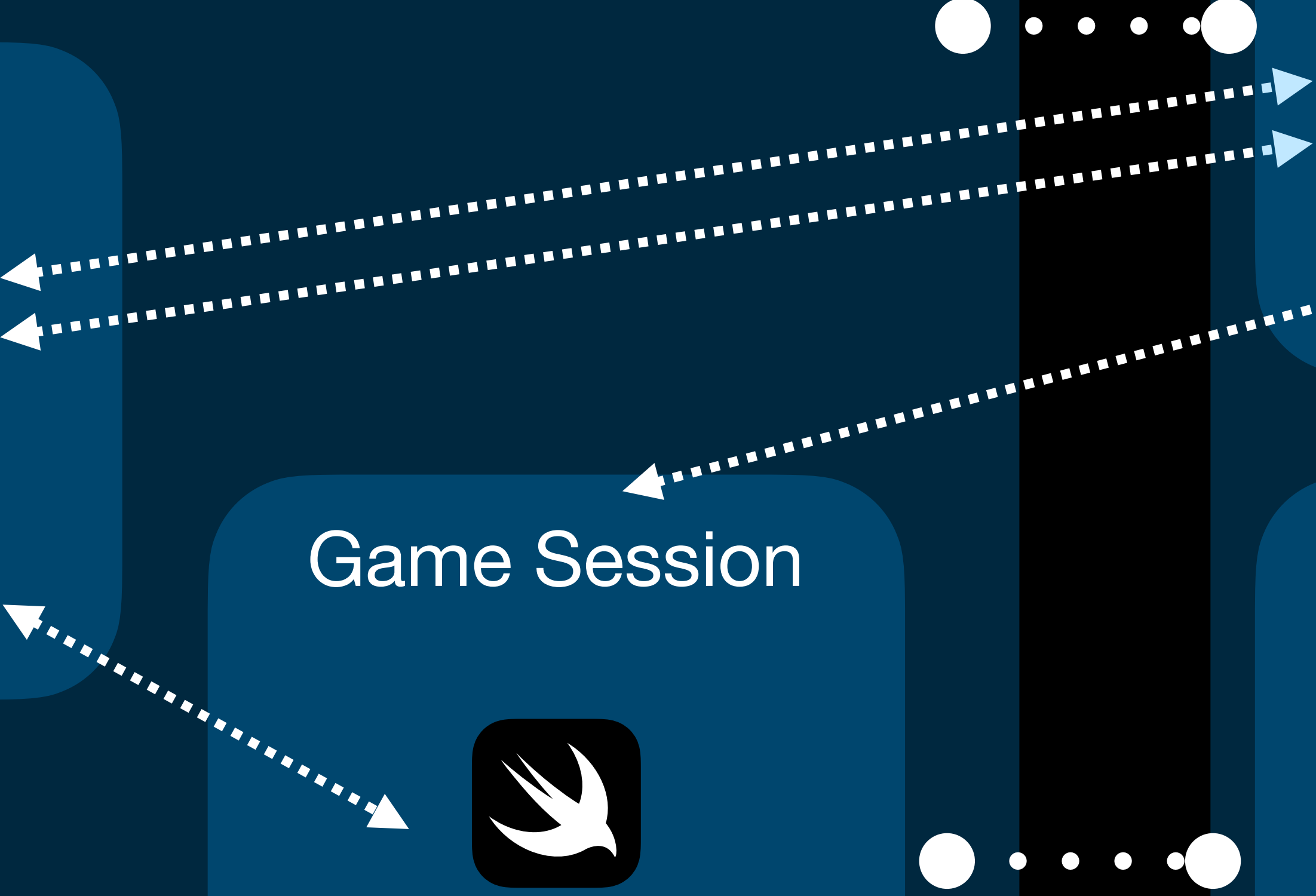


Distribut

## Pla



Distribut





- **Vertically Scalable**
- **Horizontally Scalable**
- **Fault Tolerant.**
- **Consistency Guarantees.**
- **Available.**



- **GameSession + ClusterSingleton**
- **GameLobby + Event Sourcing**
- **NetworkPlayer + Virtual Actors**







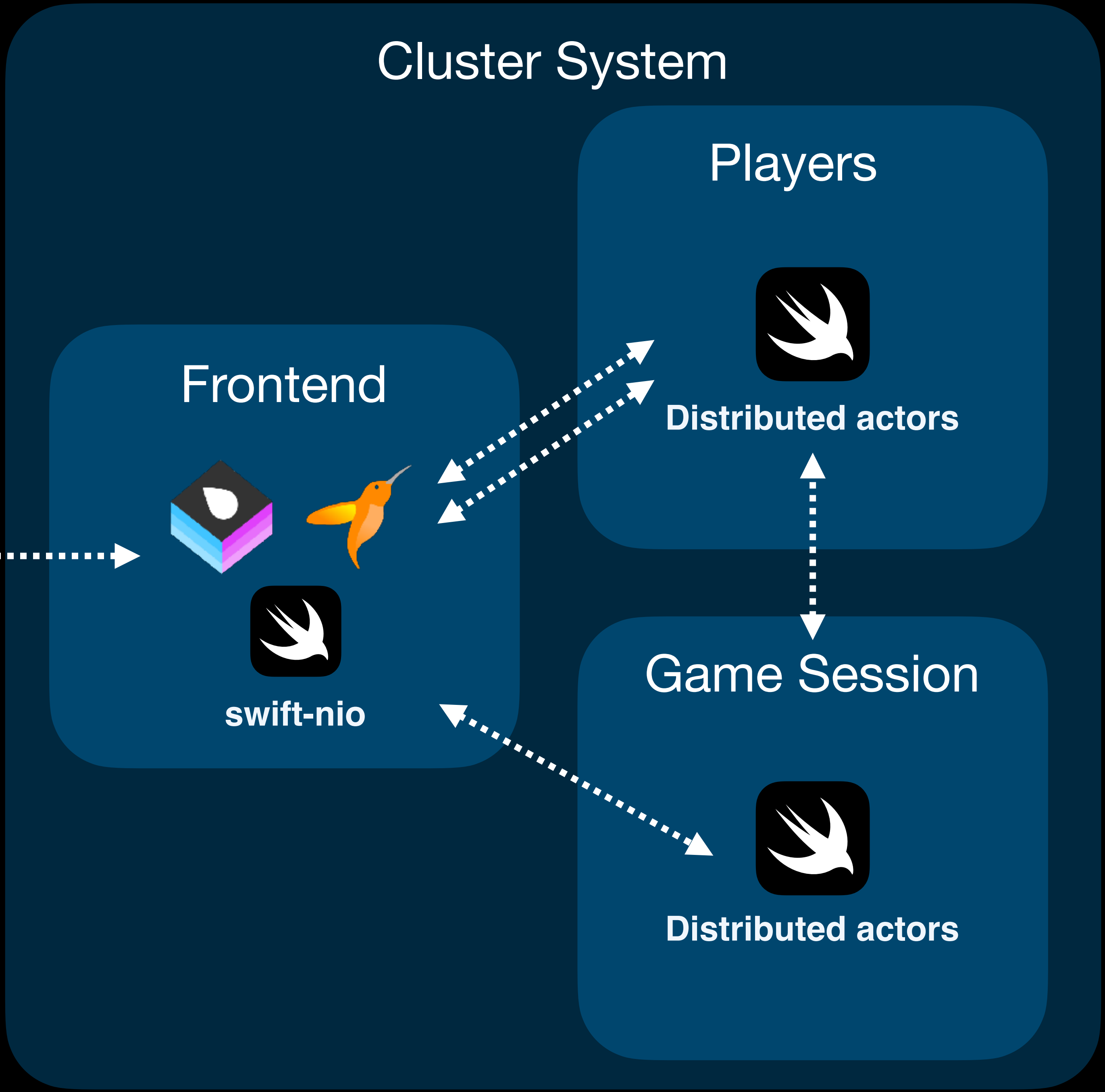
- Move ClusterSystem to Swift 6 strict concurrency
- Finalize Event Sourcing library and provide basic stores (Postgresql and MongoDB)
- Finalize Virtual Actors—watching actor’s lifecycle in runtime, provide snapshots and simple state storing.

**“First make it work, then make it beautiful”**

**Joe Armstrong**



Swift OpenAPI Generator



# Cluster System

## Players



Distributed actors

## Game Session



Distributed actors

## Frontend



swift-nio



SwiftUI



Swift OpenAPI Generator



Other declarative UIs:

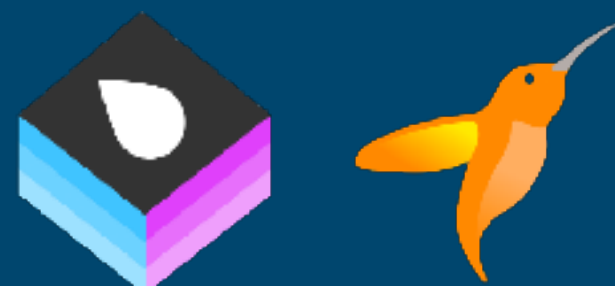
TokamaUI

Compose

...

# Cluster System

## Frontend



swift-nio

## Players

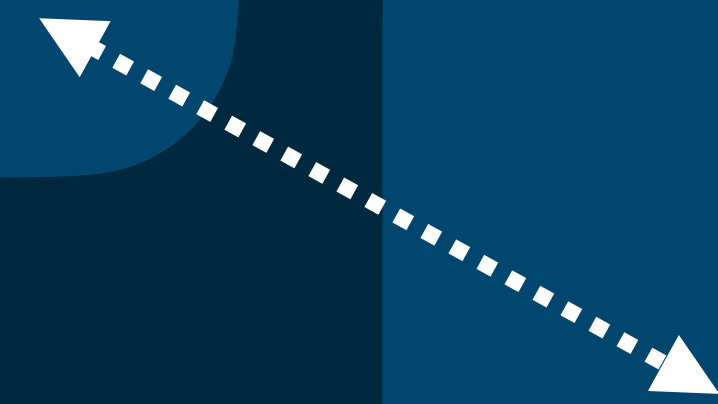


Distributed actors

## Game Session



Distributed actors









**Thank you**



<https://mastodon.social/@akbashev>



<https://bsky.app/profile/jaleel.bsky.social>



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jaleelakbashev/>

# Swift Open Source Slack



QA