

## **PALISADE 25: An Impossible Ideal Pt. 4**

Transcriber: Iris (sacredwhim)

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### **Opening Narration**

**Austin:** PALISADE is a show about empire, revolution, settler colonialism, politics, religion, war, and the many consequences thereof. For a full list of content warnings, please check the episode description.

### **Recap**

**Austin:** Hanging from the top of this cave, upside down, a humanoid figure.

**Dre:** Hm.

**Austin:** Like a bat asleep, its wings around it. And its wings—under its wings—

[Music Intro - "[The Stellar Combustor](#)" by Jack de Quidt begins]

**Austin:** —you can see the lumps of its arms. Or maybe just the lumps of its body that feel misshapen. It's—it's withered, wrinkled, and in parts, maybe skinless? It has long, scraggly hair that has faded in color. It is—it has splotches on its skin, it's angular in ways that are grotesque. And it is, nevertheless, somehow authoritative, maybe even regal, in its corruption.

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**Janine:** How does the bat monster really feel?

[**Dre** laughs]

**Austin:** Good question. It is sizing you up. It would like to know if you're part of the invading force that the other beings here have been fighting against. It doesn't think much of you. It thinks it could kill you pretty easily.

**Sylvi:** Well, I think the same thing, so.

**Janine:** Oh, gosh.

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**Janine:** I turn around, and I point up at the desiccated bat person...

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Janine:** And I say,

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I believe we are here to see them.

Dre (as **Figure**): Are you sure?

[**Austin** chuckles]

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Austin (as **Batlike Being**): Who comes to the court of the Chimeric Cadent?

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Dre (as **Figure**): Don't let her take me again.

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Austin (as **Chimeric Cadent**): So desperate for a third life. Here, in the one place that death is sacred. Are you sure you wish to live again, Figure? Or like the Divines here in this tomb, would you simply prefer to rest?

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[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Keith rolled a 1. Keith rolled a 1. Keith rolled a 1. So, someone is turning the corner. I mean, this is the thing that's gonna—the actual thing that's happening here is you're trying to move from one sector to another sector.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And the fridge has to be lifted, you have to lift it off the ground.

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** They have—you know when you're walking down a hallway in one of these fucking places, and then instead of letting there just be a ramp, or just the floor, like, at an incline, they just straight up put, like, a doorframe that you have to step over. And when you lift it up and put it back down, it's fragile. And something shakes a little loose. And your invisibility cloak is gonna fucking break. Your invisibility radio is breaking.

[Music Intro - "[The Stellar Combustor](#)" by Jack de Quidt ends]

## The Stellar Combustor

[3:50]

**Austin:** Which leaves you in a tough situation. I mean, let me just be extra super clear. There are two guards at the end of the corridor who just saw the three of you flicker into existence around this machine that isn't keeping you invisible anymore, and a camera pointed—probably pointed everywhere, at the whole hallway, which also would have picked you up kind of blipping into existence. I was gonna say,

“what do you do?” But I imagine that you’re going to spend one of your “Once the War is Over” Holds to try to get things back on track, right?

**Keith:** Correct. Um...

**Austin:** Correct. Do you need more time? Do you want me to go over to the other side while you brainstorm?

**Keith:** Uh, is that gonna cost me a Hold?

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** Okay. Then sure.

## **Chimera’s Lantern**

[4:41]

**Austin:** Figure.

**Dre:** Hey.

**Austin:** I think you have been placed down in the Devil’s Two Front Teeth in front of the Chimeric Cadent, after being, you know, brought to their breast and kind of like, the connection being formed and the offer being made. And they say, echoing through this chamber,

Austin (as **Chimeric Cadent**): Once your decision is made, approach us in person.

**Austin:** Which is to say outside of your—

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Your mech.

**Dre:** Oh, man. This thing’s probably really messed up. Um... I guess it’s—I forget what damage I had taken to it.

**Austin:** Oh, you had taken—oh, the mech, you mean?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, you had taken, uh... da-da-da-da-da...

**Keith:** Grounded?

**Austin:** Pierced and Unsteady, and there'd been a third one [**Dre:** Yeah.] that then we—got cleared because you succeeded on the—

**Dre:** Oh, right.

**Austin:** You got a 10 plus on the, um—

**Dre:** Bite the Dust.

**Austin:** Not Strike Decisively—Bite the Dust, correct.

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. But I—yeah, so I think even if it's not on the paper, thematically, [**Austin:** Mhm.] the Two Front Teeth has been pretty messed up. I think specifically we said the teeth had been broken off.

**Austin:** That is correct, yeah. We sure did.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or at least one of the teeth had broken off, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. So I think Figure has to, like, kick the cockpit open.

**Austin:** Yeah, I love that.

**Dre:** And boy, they look rough.

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, this is the thing, right? Is like, a thing I love about Armour Astir is you still have the the Dangers.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** You still have Pierced and Unsteady.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Because the, you know, mechs in Armour Astir are like extensions of the body in a way that, like, in Beam Saber, they weren't. Right? Beam Saber, they're like shields you hide behind.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But in Armour Astir, that's you, you know?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So how do you look?

**Dre:** [exhales] There's literal chunks of them missing.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** That's—that's what the Witch managed to grab onto.

**Austin:** Yeah. Snap off.

**Dre:** Before Figure could get away, yeah. I don't even think snap off. I think it's like—it's like, gouged.

**Austin:** Ooh.

**Dre:** It's like—hey, that episode of Hunter x Hunter, where the one prisoner, like, runs his hand through the guy that Killua ends up fighting, that runs his hand, like, through the wall.

**Keith:** Oh, the butcher?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Oh, Johnness. Yes, of course.

**Keith:** Oh, yes, yeah, Johnness, yeah.

**Dre:** Of course, yes, yes, yes. Yeah. It looks like that.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Media Club Plus. Media Club Plus, check it out. Coming soon.

**Dre:** Media Club Plus, check it out.

[Ali chuckles]

**Dre:** But it looks like that, right? It looks like someone literally gouged their fingers through Figure's shoulder.

**Austin:** Jeez.

**Dre:** Um...

**Austin:** You know, upon seeing you, I think the Chimeric Cadent, you know, lowers its hands as if, like, to the ground for you to step into. And this is gigantic, right?

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Like, the Chimeric Cadent is gigantic. And—but there is like a softness in this, having seen the damage done to you.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But also, it's still scary, because big.

**Dre:** Big.

**Austin:** You know?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Very big, and creepy. Whatever you feel about this person's, this being's morality or whatever, like, and place in the world, still, you know, [Dre: Yeah.] looks the way that they look. And, you know, I mean, you also kind of look the way you look. So maybe, I don't know, maybe your beauty standards have changed.

[Dre laughs]

**Austin:** But I made some descriptions before that I think were pretty creepy.

**Dre:** Yeah. Um, Figure stumbles forward, half steps into, half trips onto the Chimeric Cadent's hand.

**Austin:** What is your decision of the options that were laid out? And I'll go—you want me to go over them again real quick? Just so—

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** The short answer is being—continuing to be an Impostor class, maintaining your power, but such an arrangement would come at a cost, and that cost is likely that, like, they would become your new patron, you know? You would just be an Impostor still. You wouldn't have control over your own power source, your own needs, couldn't—you couldn't, you know, spend the time to meet your own needs, you would still need to go to an exterior source in that way. Tempest, which would break your chains from the Witch in Glass, but you would have no new fuel, and no new way to fuel up, you would just kind of be at risk of burning out. Wither, which is that you would be kind of moved from below the Witch in Glass in the—in the kind of string up to Perennial, to the side of her, and maybe even to such a degree that Perennial, the Perennial–Witch in Glass relationship would be threatened by that, let's say.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Austin:** I think that's fair to say. So you kind of break Clem out from being the mediator between those power sources. Revenant, which is that you would become—you would accept death in the way that the Divines here do, which is to say, the Divines here, you may have noticed, can emanate their power, despite not being active agents, right? Felicity has those, like, tooth monsters running around, the Garden of Souciance was able to help y'all see clearly or feel differently about stuff, right? But they're not—they're not alive, and they're not actively doing that. So you'd be a sort of emanation, instead of a husk. What that means in play, you'd have to look at the Revenant playbook.

And then there's also the Ordained, which would be like, becoming a cleric of the Resonant Orbit, or whatever we think of this version of what the Chimeric Cadent believes. Those are the big ones. And the other thing I want to underscore is no matter what we choose here, I think some element of self-care and maintenance will be a part of who the character is going forward, right?



**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Like, you're not being healed from being the Impostor, right? We're thinking about different modes of that.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Different ways that shifted the social relation around how you access care, versus it being not a thing you fundamentally need anymore in any way, you know?

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** So yeah, which are you leaning towards?

**Dre:** I am leaning towards Perennial, and the Wither playbook.

**Austin:** Okay. Do you have the Wither description in front of you from the playbook?

**Dre:** I can, yeah.

**Austin:** Okay, yeah.

**Dre:** "You wield something they'd soon forget to save what they hold dear. And though they call you comrade now, they won't forget their fear."

**Austin:** Love it. Fantastic. Um, alright. I think that they say to you,

Austin (as **Chimeric Cadent**): This will take some time.

**Austin:** And lift you up in one of their hands, and hold you to the—or actually, I think that they—they literally place you on that giant throne in the center, and then, producing another shackle, shackle themselves completely to it, their second leg to it. And they look up into the sky—or not the sky, but up into the roof. And their wings begin to flutter. And from the fluttering of their wings, a sort of dust begins to fill the room, or a—not a dust, but, you know, a—what is it that's on like, the back of butterfly wings?

**Keith:** Dirt. Mud.

**Austin:** Not—nope.

**Dre:** Pollen?

**Austin:** Oh, I guess it's like a pollen. Yeah, that's kind of fun. And, you know, it's—you can see it in the light. And there is a brief beam of—small beam of energy that pierces the ceiling, a purple beam of energy. And then that expands into being a wider lilac-colored aura around both you and the Chimeric Cadent. And you're both surrounded by this, and are being kind of enveloped in it. And from the top of your head, a sprig of Russian sage begins to grow. And it's growing slowly, very slowly, up towards the hole that has been pierced in the roof of this mausoleum. And then it starts to move. She's not done with you yet, Figure.

Your machine, the Devil's Two Front Teeth, already hunched and angular, bends and twists until it is a dangerous caricature of itself. It grows until it becomes as large as the Chimeric Cadent. It has this dark frame, and the dark, you know, body parts of it grow even darker, stealing the light from the room. Its spare, already hard angles somehow bend and break reality. They turn inwards and outwards at the same time, it is hard to look at. The wailing, burning bursts of flame that you could see inside of it, the kind of core of it that used to appear from its many gashes and wounds, now appear from its many mouths. It has been covered in new grotesque maws, from which flames, tongues of flame, reach out in search of meals, meals that will never sate it. It can never be filled, no matter how much it consumes. It has the same fiery hooked chains that you had, but somehow are sharper, crueler. Those free-floating spikes that you used to be able to send out at people now orbit around it like a shield. All of those old weapons you used in combat now belong to it. It is no longer the Devil's Two Front Teeth. It is the Ingrate, the first new Axiom to grace the galaxy in thousands of years. It is named this, because, of course, this is what Clem thinks of you, that you just aren't grateful enough.

The Axioms are a thing that are in line with what the Usher of Truth and their group, the Iconoclasts, wanted to bring into the world, to usher in these other true forms, these sort of Platonic or, again, Aristotelian forms, the truest of true forms. This is separated from human consciousness, supposedly, right? And so, this is some such form of, you know, ingratiating, right? The unthankfulness. It desires and desires and desires and wants to consume and eat everything. And it will never grow full, it will never grow sated. And in this particular moment, it is beginning to step towards you

and the Cadent, hoping to disrupt this ritual. It's spooky. It's big and scary. It's as tall as the Cadent is. And again, it is like, you know, think about like, the flames that come out of an exhaustion pipe, you know, on a hot rod or something. That is happening all over its body, coming out of these mouths, actual mouths, that appear in the metal all over its body. What do y'all do?

**Sylvi:** Um...

**Austin:** And by y'all, I guess I really mean Thisbe and Cori.

**Cori**

[17:08]

**Sylvi:** I actually have a new move that I think I could use here from the downtime session where I leveled up like three times or whatever.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvi:** I haven't used this yet. And it's kind of—the name's kind of funny considering one of the Divines that showed up this arc, but it's "Consecrate Ground: [**Austin:** Ah.] When you attempt to imbue an area or building with your divine power and presence, roll plus Channel. On a 10 plus, choose two; on a 7 to 9, choose one."

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** Do you want me to go through the options now or should I roll this first?

**Austin:** Nah, let's roll these dice and then we'll go over the options.

**Sylvi:** Cool.

**Austin:** What's this look like, though? What are you doing?

**Sylvi:** Um, I think that...

**Austin:** And this is—you're in the mech, right? You're in the Par—Paramerion?

**Sylvi:** Paramerion, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, Paramerion.

**Sylvi:** What does this look like? I think the lights on—it looks like the Paramerion shut off, I think, [**Austin:** Uh-huh.] is kind of the—or like, on standby power. And it starts, like, pulsing, kind of like a heartbeat.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** And by that, I mean, the inside—its, like, armor rattles a little when this happens. Which is it trying to communicate with Devotion, like, the core of Devotion, which we haven't, like, seen onscreen anywhere.

**Austin:** Yeah. We have not—we saw, like, little bits of it in the original Orbital game, but not since then.

**Sylvi:** Mhm. And I'm going to roll this and then we can see...

**Austin:** And then you confronted it, actually, with the eye. That was the other moment, right?

**Sylvi:** I did, yes. We did—

**Austin:** That was—it confronted you, let's say, briefly.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. So we've seen it a couple times, but...

**Austin:** Yeah. So this is Channel, 2d6 plus 2.

**Sylvi:** That's a 9. So, I get to choose one—

**Austin:** Alright, so you choose one.

**Sylvi:** And I am choosing "creatures within your consecrated area cannot take violent action against each other."

**Austin:** Oh, this is incredible.

**Ali:** Wow.

**Austin:** This is so good.

**Sylvi:** So I think the way this looks is—so, we’ve described—like we said, we described Devotion as sort of like, having this eye theming, and also the sort of capillary stuff going on with it.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** I think these vein-like—these vein-like, like, lines just shoot up all around this chamber and form kind of a dome around us.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** And if somebody tries to like, take action or anything, they’ll like—like, in trying to harm another—

**Austin:** They just can’t, right?

**Sylvi:** Well, they can’t. But I think that they—do we want there to be some sort of, like...

**Austin:** I’m curious. How does this—

**Sylvi:** ...actual response from Devotion to stop it?

**Austin:** Yeah, what’s the—what is the—you know, yeah, let’s say it tries to test this, right? It flings a number of these spikes that are kind of floating around it, orbiting around it, rapidly towards the Cadent and Figure. What happens when they hit this dome?

**Sylvi:** I think... I think they probably shatter, right? I think it just sort of disables—like, they almost become like glass in what they do.

**Austin:** Yeah, I love that.

**Sylvi:** Like, they’re—and also, it doesn’t seem like they’re hitting an actual surface, because there’s like, I’m feeling like it aimed between gaps in something, right?

**Austin:** Sure. Sure, sure, sure,

**Sylvi:** But it still just like, shatters when it hits this thin air. That's the barrier of this sort of bubble that I've made.

**Austin:** This move rules. This is a great move.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. It's—it's got—there are other options that I'm sure will come up at different points. It is one of the coolest moves in this playbook.

**Austin:** Seeing this, the Ingrate, which, by the way, all of Clem's—first of all, shoutouts to Art, who talked through this with me today, talking through, "okay, what's Clem gonna do with Iconoclast powers? And might it be 'bring back Axioms?' And then also, what do we call—what is the thing that she would do to get back at Figure here?" And Art said, like, "oh, you know, she would take her toy back." And in this really ineffectual way, where it's like, I said to Art that it's like taking a 10-year-old's toy truck away, where it's like, "yeah, I outgrew that. That's not who I am anymore. I'm not—I don't play with toy trucks anymore." It's this deeply disconnected, bad parenting, classic Clem inheriting from her own mother bad ways to try to keep people on your side. And this—oh, and also, the reason it's called "the" Ingrate is because Clem thought it was boring to just call Axioms, which she has now read about in the Archives, to just have them be—have a word. They should all have "the" in front of them, [chuckling] 'cause it sounds cooler.

[**Sylvi** and **Ali** laugh]

**Austin:** So.

**Dre:** I mean, you know.

**Austin:** The Ingrate. Yeah. Mhm. I mean, you know, it kinda works. I kinda get it. Anyway, the Ingrate, now seeing that it can't reach you, it doesn't matter, because that's not what it's trying—like, it's—you are a particularly juicy target in this moment, but really, it just wants to consume things, and consume things, and never be happy. It's a mouth, you know? It's not even a stomach, right? It's not a gut. It's not—it's not like—this is not a big body. This is like a twisted, turned in on itself, thin body. Not especially thin, but like, you know, it's not like a—you know, it still looks dangerous. It still looks sharp. But it begins to turn towards the structure. It takes those big

explosive chains that Figure used to use and have grown, and begins whipping at the walls and the ceiling, breaking more of the mosaics. Every once in a while, it just sort of belches fire out in a huge area around it from all of its mouths, burning, you know, the rug and tapestries and trying to just destroy this place. Sometimes the metal spikes will go around and grab something like another big piece of furniture, or the banister, part of the banister from one of these giant staircases, and like spike through it, like a knife being stabbed into a steak, and then fly back and deliver it into one of the mouths, where it is incinerated and consumed.

And this isn't great. I mean, it's just—it's just, you know, it's echoing loud noises constantly, and being near it is dangerous. This place is big enough, and you have been protected by the shield from Cori and Devotion, that you are safe from it directly. But there's a couple of problems. One is this is a sacred place more generally, and it would be bad for it to like, get into and damage one of these Divines. Or, who knows what's in some of these other rooms you haven't gone to yet? Who knows what important structural stuff is here? Two, you may recall that Consecration was already looking for a way into this place. The aptly named, or ironically named, Divine that had previously—you'd run into at the Garden of Souciance. And any damage from the inside here makes it more likely that Consecration could get in here and get at these Divines and resurrect them and turn them against the enemies of the Principality. Which, I don't know that y'all, like, have deep cares about Divines. I don't—I mean, Cori does, presumably.

**Sylvi:** I mean, you know. I'm a little—I got some biases at the very least.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, how does Cori feel about the idea of these Divines resting versus being put to use by somebody?

**Sylvi:** I—honestly, it's less to do with whether—of them resting or not and more to do with keeping, like, she feels like she shouldn't let these fall into the hands of the enemy, is more the sort of philosophy here.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Sylvi:** Like, Consecration is a Nidean Divine, and Nideo are part of the people trying to invade Palisade.

**Austin:** Yep. Right. Right.

**Sylvi:** Therefore, bad.

**Austin:** Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha. But for instance, if the god you believe in and defend were to whisper to you that they ought be hers—actually, theirs? Is Devotion they/them? I forget. We've been doing they/them for Devotion, I think.

**Sylvi:** I mean, honestly, I feel like you could use any pronoun for Devotion and it'd be fine.

**Austin:** Sure. Devotion, any. Sure.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Then, they ought be hers. How does Cori feel about that?

**Sylvi:** That the—

**Austin:** That Souciance and Dissent and Bounty and Loyalty and Sagacity should be raised and brought to Devotion.

**Sylvi:** I think there's a part of her that doesn't understand—that wouldn't understand why, [**Austin:** Sure.] and like, would try to question that, 'cause to her, she's like, "we have our Divine. Why do we need more of them? Why would a Divine want to have Divines under its control? Like, what is that about?"

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** Like, it just raises a bunch of questions for her as opposed to her just being like, "yeah, okay."

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** I do think that if—if keeping Bilat hands off of them, or is it—Nideo's Bilat, right?

**Austin:** Yep. Yep, you got it.



**Sylvi:** Yeah. I think keeping their hands off of these Divines, if that leads to them being sort of part of Devotion or under Devotion, it's not the worst thing.

**Austin:** The feeling that comes to you is less to do with that, and more to do with what is being sensed as a potential threat, an enemy, an adversary in the Chimeric Cadent. Which, you can feel how you feel about that. And this didn't—this is not a—this is not a Tenet being broken.

**Sylvi:** Mhm.

**Austin:** I think partly because you were a hundred percent upkeeping, or keeping up the “you are a shield, leave none undefended” Tenet. And the request is—again, it's an emotional—it's a feeling that's being pumped into you, right?

**Sylvi:** Mhm.

**Austin:** For reasons that aren't particularly clear. You're not, you know, Devotion doesn't talk to you the way—with much clarity ever. And the cases where it has been, it's been like, you've been next to death, or you have fallen into a big glass eye, not “you're in the middle of combat.” And this is so clearly the normal “you're in the middle of combat, please uphold my Tenets” Devotion and not the “we are having a transcendent moment of connection” Devotion. So, much to think about.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

## **Thisbe**

[27:57]

**Austin:** Before I leave this scene and go back to the space station, Thisbe—and Mow, presumably—how are y'all handling the Ingrate trying to destroy everything here? Are you just chilling in the protected dome? Do you have some plans?

**Janine:** Uh... I don't know. [laughs]

**Austin:** Fair. It's scary.

**Janine:** Yeah, I think there's also, like, a sense of like, how do you deal with this without making it worse?

**Austin:** Mm, mhm.

**Janine:** Um...

[pause]

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm not—I don't want to push you to make—to take bad action, to be clear. You know?

**Janine:** So I have a move that could work for this, but also, it just feels like, so temporary. Like, it just feels like... I don't know.

**Austin:** You only need a little temporary time. You only need enough time for the—I mean, it depends on what you're looking to do, you know?

**Janine:** Alright. "When you use magic to temporarily restrict the actions of another, roll plus Channel."

**Austin:** Alright.

**Janine:** "On a 10 plus, you prevent them from taking a single action move. 7 to 9, as above, but you or someone else rushes to act against them in Desperation."

**Austin:** This is fun. Tell me what this looks like. This is what you used on the tooth monsters, right? Or was that something else? That was—that was Animation Matrix, wasn't it?

**Janine:** Yeah. I was just like, talking to 'em.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Janine:** I think this is—but I think this is like a similar philosophy, like—or not philosophy, but like, a similar thing is happening here where like, Thisbe's will for something to be different in terms of like, what's happening? Or like, you know, her will is a certain way. And then this sort of power is trying to fill in the gaps between her will and what's actually happening. Right?

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** So before it was like, she really wanted to tell those things that they were cool, they weren't here to fight, et cetera.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Janine:** And sort of the underlying forces that she has access to, but doesn't really engage with in a conscious witchy way, for instance, [**Austin:** Mhm.] are able to do some business.

**Austin:** Yeah. Well, and here, I think, there's something special, which is like—or something I want to call out specifically, which is like, this is a new move for Thisbe, right?

**Janine:** Mhm.

**Austin:** And I think that it is—something about it is experientially different for you. I don't know what that feels like for Thisbe. But like, this feels like magic, in whatever way you want to characterize that, versus feeling like talking to the—

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The will exertion, I think, is a really good one. You know, a good touchstone. But yeah, do you want to say more off that?

**Janine:** Well, I—I'm just agreeing, because like, this is very specifically a thing of like, "I want this thing to stop." And then if she succeeds, it stops.

**Austin:** Yep, yep.

**Janine:** I think that's a thing of like, you see that happen and you're like, "oh." You can't—you can't wave that as like, "oh, the teeth monsters understood the situation."

**Austin:** Correct.

**Janine:** This is like, "oh, I did that."

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh-huh. Absolutely. And the other half of this is, if you try to connect to this thing with Animation Matrix, it is not—it doesn't have the I—the language is different. You know what I mean?

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** It is a—you said, “can you calm down?” And it was the sound of whirling knives and fire, you know?

**Janine:** Mhm.

**Austin:** It was that sound that Dre linked us to, when explaining how the Devil’s Two Front Teeth sounds, the wailing wind through the side—through the buildings, through the canyon of the buildings. It’s that, right? That’s what it sounds like in its own head, so. So yeah, let’s roll 2d6 plus Channel, which is 2.

**Janine:** 2.

[pause]

**Janine:** 10.

**Austin:** Ooh, that’s a 10. 5 plus 3 plus 2 is 10.

**Janine:** That’s a 10.

**Austin:** What’s it look like?

**Janine:** Um...

**Austin:** Does it just stop?

**Janine:** Does it just stop? Yeah, that’s what I’m won—like, but what about the whirly things?

**Austin:** Is there a visualization? Is there a—yeah, do they just [chuckling] fall from the sky and just clatter against the ground?

**Janine:** That feels like stopping more than one action.

**Austin:** No, no, no, the action is, it’s, I’m—I’m—we are at a different scale.

**Janine:** You’re being generous, I know, but like—yeah.

**Austin:** No, no, no, I'm not, because its action was "make enough damage that Nideo can get in." Right?

**Janine:** Right, okay.

**Austin:** It was a big—it's a big action, right? Its action was not "I'm throwing a punch," right?

**Janine:** Yeah. I wonder if it's—if it's not that they follow the ground, but there's like a holding pattern. There's just like, a predetermined, like—

**Austin:** That's good. Yeah.

**Janine:** "Hover in place." You know, "hover in a circle," or just like, you know.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Janine:** And they just kind of... do that until they receive further commands, kind of thing.

**Austin:** Yeah. And I think it—I think that it stops, and there is a... you know, I don't—[chuckles] I don't think Clem—I think Clem can see this, but can't—doesn't have direct control, you know? Maybe that's something she would love to get, which is ironic, given what Axioms are supposed to be, this thing that has no connection to humanity.

[**Janine** chuckles]

**Austin:** But of course, I think the Clementine position on that would be like, "well, yeah, no one else should control them, [chuckles] but I'll put them on a leash, and I can direct them," you know? And so I think she's watching impotently, mad that this, you know, wonderful final, you know, gambit she was playing has seemingly, at least briefly, fallen on its face, you know? Cool. Let's hop back over—again, this sprig of Russian sage at this point has grown. There is like, literally, Figure, a big bush of Russian sage, like, breaching out of the top of your head and growing closer and closer to the the roof of this massive mausoleum. It's growing very quickly, you know? I'm not gonna make the Hunter x Hunter comparison that I can make here, is what I'll say for fans listening.

[pause]

**Austin:** Alright, let's go back to the sun.

## **The Stellar Combustor**

[34:36]

**Keith:** Hi, from the sun.

**Austin:** Phrygian, you're the—you're the sun?

**Keith:** Yep. I'm—

**Austin:** You decided to become the sun?

[Ali gasps]

**Keith:** Yeah, I'm gonna be the sun.

**Austin:** I think Brnine might die from that.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. So yeah, back burner.

**Ali:** Well, a worthy sacrifice.

**Sylvi:** No, but this is perfect. You make them put the Stellar Comb—they're like, "oh, we put it around the wrong sun," and then they put it around Phrygian.

[Ali chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. And then I nab it.

**Austin:** Right, right, right, right. It's kind of like the Lucy and the football thing but with a big sun.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, exactly.

[Ali hums]

**Dre:** Mhm, mhm.

**Keith:** I mean, imagine rotating it. You're in a space station that rotates around one sun, and all of a sudden there's a second sun. You're like, "which one—are we on the right—are we on the right sun?"

**Austin:** [laughs] "Is that the—wait a second."

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** "The sun used to be on the inside window, not the outside window, right?"

**Keith:** Um, I have a couple—I have a couple ideas.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** So the first thing that I thought of when we cut to the other side was Phrygian could become a room again.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Keith:** This is—now, this one's kind of tough, because—so, imagine the inside of the room, like, is Phrygian's body. Everything would be inside it, including the camera, and the people coming in and watching, or coming—the people walking down the hall, except [**Austin:** Uh-huh.] Routine and Brnine would be outside the room disguised in some way, like, maybe the room loses two feet, like, it's like two feet away from the wall in a way that, like, it looks—it makes sense on the camera, it makes sense to the people that are walking through it, but actually they're walking through me.

**Austin:** What happens to—

**Janine:** You're gonna be, like, a chunk of hallway with like a gap in it, is that what you mean? So everyone's just walking through a hallway, [**Keith:** Yeah.] but—and Brnine is like, sandwiched between you and the real hallway?

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** I—I—I have lots of questions.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Like, what happened to the real camera? Did the camera get exploded, like?

**Keith:** No, no, no, it is the real camera. There's a cut-out—

**Austin:** You are the camera. Uh-huh.

**Keith:** You know, there's like a little cut out that—I go around the camera.

**Austin:** But what about the camera that existed before—I see. I see, I see, I see, gotcha.

**Keith:** So it's the real camera actually capturing my representation of the room.

**Austin:** Right, right. I still—I don't think that this stops the fact that y'all showed up on camera for a second.

**Ali:** Can Keith—can Phrygian become a form that like, fucks with communications?

**Keith:** But someone's gonna see us, see you.

**Ali:** Right.

**Keith:** Visually, as well as on the tape, I think.

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** I think. That's the case, right?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Presumably. But you're saying become this form that blocks the ability for that signal to get sent.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And then what do we do with this guy?

**Austin:** It was a couple of guys, I think.

[Ali chuckles]



**Keith:** Okay, what do we do with two guys?

**Ali:** Yeah, we're probably not in combat in this hallway.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Um... I feel like figuring out a way to like, fuck with communications.

**Austin:** I have a thing that I could do that I've been sitting on.

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Okay. Is it blow up the sun?

**Austin:** And you only get it once. I mean, I mean—[laughs]

[Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, the end. That was it, everybody. Thanks for listening.

**Keith:** Yeah, I've been sitting on this funny little idea.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** I have a funny little idea. I—I've been saving it, because—and I'd set it up a little bit. Right?

**Keith:** I don't know.

**Austin:** "Oh, there's this other transport that's heading towards the station."

**Keith:** Oh, you did set that up, yeah.

**Austin:** "Oh, I've been tracking—" I've been tracking the ways that the shit is spinning so I could figure out where you'll be. I had to do that so I could track something else happening at the same time. And it lined up—like, it truly, actually just lined up perfectly.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** The way things spun such is I could hit a—I could hit a button that’s not the “blow up the sun” button, but is the “this just got way more complicated and you have to move quickly and something else is—there’s an added, you know, there’s an added element here.”

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And I can hit that button. I was saving that button as a truly, in our heart of hearts, are we ready to hit the button on this season? And I was gonna make an offer. It—really, what it was, was I was going to turn one fail into a 7 to 9 is really what was my, like—my little thumb on the scale was if things get really bad in a way that’s not particularly interesting, or we’ve had a call off-mic—and we haven’t had this, where we’ve agreed to—this hasn’t happened, but where we said, “you know, we really love playing these characters. It’s a fun idea, but I feel like shit, like, telling a story about XYZ.” And we haven’t had that conversation, right? Like, we—our conversation is let’s play it out and see how it goes. As you’ve seen, the other side of the session has been playing it out how it goes and all that could get erased, right? Eh, you know. There’s some stuff over there. You’re dealing with weird magic power, right?

But the point being, the—I had that in my mind, and I could hit that button here. I could say—I could introduce what was on that transport, which would stop this. But it would also put us into chaos mode on this side.

**Keith:** On this side. Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah. And it would be—you would be shifting from the part in Mission Impossible where you’re sneaking in, to where you’re running, and it’s time to go, and we have to do it.

**Keith:** No, it’s not time for that yet.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** No?

**Keith:** No, it’s not time for that yet.

**Austin:** You're at the place.

**Keith:** It's hard... It just, it's—it seems impossible to deal with both issues at the same time. The camera and the people. I'm definitely more—I would rather deal with the people.

**Austin:** You know?

**Keith:** Well, okay, now here's this—does that—does that—that saves me my Soldier move.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Keith:** Okay, that's worth it.

**Austin:** Okay.

[Dre laughs]

**Keith:** It just is worth it. I mean, you know, save an automatic success, [**Austin:** Yeah.] that's definitely—that's definitely worth it.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Okay.

## Unexpected Encounter

[40:48]

**Austin:** The—there is a—the feeling of a distant explosion, followed by that sort of like, great EMP type sounds that you get in movies sometimes, that sort of like, implosion explosion, that like “boom, boom,” like that kind of build, release, and the whole station shakes, and the lights go out. And then you hear the sound of two pistol shots, silenced that like, you know, that classic—actually, I bet they're using the thing that we saw in one of the faction games, the like, flashlight beam that you can pull into a very, very thin, tiny beam, and then just shoot somebody with a laser. And the two guards who were turning the corner drop, and the emergency lights come on, and there are two people in front of you.

One of them is an Apostolosian, the other is a human with dark scraggly hair, and they pull their guns up on you and say,

Austin (as **Apostolosian**): You're not—you're not from here.

**Austin**: This is the Apostolosian talking.

Austin (as **Apostolosian**): Who are you?

**Austin**: Holding up a rifle. The one with the dark scraggly hair has knelt over and cut the breathing tubes of the people they already shot.

**Keith**: Phrygian looks at—looks over to Brnine.

[**Ali** laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Hey.

[**Dre** stifles laughter]

**Keith**: That's the lowest stakes "hey" I've ever heard.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Sylvi**: Jesus christ.

**Austin**: Do you want to do another take on that?

**Janine**: They just killed two people.

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin**: Yeah. Uh-huh. Maybe more, there was an explosion.

**Janine**: In front of you? Yeah. [casual] "Hey."

**Keith**: [yawning] "Oh, hey."

**Austin**: Is that it? You're not gonna give me another one? That's—

[**Ali** laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): We're not Bilat.

Austin (as **Apostolosian**): Well, that's good. My name's Cor'rina. This is Misericorde. We're here to stop this thing.

**Dre**: Oh, shit!

**Sylvi**: [shouting] Let's go!

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin**: And here's the complication. If you pull it off, they're gonna take credit for it, unless they don't make it out of here. And then the Pact of Free States gets to say they saved Palisade. STEREOMA, the Cor'rina Corrine and Misericorde faction, in Armour Astir, is—they're Agents, that's the type of faction that they are, which it says here: "they oppose with assassination and subterfuge, they disrupt the Authority," and if they get that outcome during a downtime session or during a conflict turn, they get to remove 1d3 Grip on a faction or a Pillar. This is the thing that they do. So, perfectly positioned in this case. Um, so, let's see how it goes. They say—I think Misericorde says, like,

Austin (as **Misericorde**): [scoffs] We only have five minutes. We have to get going.

[**Sylvi** giggles]

**Austin**: And Cor is like,

Austin (as **Cor'rina**): [frustrated] Yeah, I know. We have to get to sector one and sector four. We have to hit the two buttons there at the same time, here and here—

**Austin**: And like, you know, projects a map in the darkness for y'all to see.

Austin (as **Cor'rina**): —which will open up sector two. When we get to sector two, we have to make it to the northeastern corridor. In the northeastern corridor...

**Austin:** And explains what their heavily researched version of this mission is, in which what you have to do is get to sector one and sector four, and get access to this final place where their hope is, 'cause they don't really know. They don't know anything—they don't know what's in sector two. They know how to get to sector one and sector four, they know that there's a corridor in the northeast of sector two. If you can get there, hopefully we can figure out how to blow this thing up. That's our best chance.

Austin (as **Cor'rina**): Can we work together on this?

**Austin:** Says the deeply optimistic and idealistic Cor'rina, Cor'rina Corrine.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um, yeah. I mean, we were here to—we knew all that.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): We were here to do that.

**Dre:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** Phrygian nods.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Yeah, we were—we knew all that and we were here to do that.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** Routine is like,

Austin (as **Routine**): Aren't you guys assassins?

**Austin:** And Misericorde is like,

Austin (as **Misericorde**): Yeah, that's right. Let's go.

**Austin:** Sorry, I just decided after months of shipping Cor and Misericorde, I might now ship Routine and Misericorde?

[**Ali** laughs]

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** And I had to deal with that new informa—

**Ali:** Alright.

**Austin:** And I don't think it's—that's not true. That's not canonical, but it's my—it's my pet ship now. So, I'm allowed to have this.

**Sylvi:** Listen, ship anybody with the murder boyfriend. It's good.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Keith:** What happened to make this happen? They just saw each other.

**Austin:** I saw the two of them in the same scene together [**Ali:** Mhm.] and realized that there was energy there.

**Dre:** [hums] Sure.

**Austin:** You know?

**Ali:** That's all it takes.

**Austin:** That's all it takes. Sometimes it's all it takes.

**Ali:** Don't let people tell you otherwise.

**Austin:** That's right. It doesn't have to be science. It just—

[**Ali** laughs]

**Keith:** Some people say it has to be science.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** You gotta screw the light bulb into the potato...

**Austin:** [laughs] That's right. And so, here's the dilemma. You weren't going to one and four at the same time so you could get access to two. You don't have the air conditioning situation going there. So it's gonna be hot for you if you do their plan.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So.

**Keith:** Um... yeah, I can deal with hot.

**Austin:** You can deal with hot. Okay. Let's briefly swing back over—actually, no, let's stay here. You know? I feel like the stuff at the Chimeric Cadent is kind of—it's not dealt with, right? But like, the momentum has hit a good peak. We can come back to that in a little bit. Let's stay here. What's this look like? Gotta get to one and four. By the way, they're dealing with their extra heat because they have a—in fact, maybe they have one extra. I think they say, I think Cor says,

Austin (as **Cor'rina**): How are you dealing with the heat? Do you need a fix?  
We have one injection left.

**Sylvi:** Ah, I hate being low on my hormones when I'm away from home.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Keith:** How were we dealing with the heat? We talked about it for maybe nine hours, so, I don't...

**Ali:** We had it mapped out.

**Keith:** Oh, right.

**Austin:** You had a schedule you were keeping.

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Austin:** Which their plan does not fit to exactly.

**Keith:** Right.



**Austin:** Though I think you were gonna go to three and four, maybe. I don't remember exactly what you said. So maybe one of them is there.

**Keith:** I just said that it was gonna rotate, basically, count down, five, four, three, two, one.

**Austin:** That's what it was.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. Well, it's not actually a—you couldn't—I guess you could go six, five, four. You came in at five, remember?

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Keith:** Right, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. So maybe you could go from there to six, four, three, two, one. Yeah. So you can get to four.

**Keith:** Yeah. So I can go to four, [**Austin:** Yep.] and Brnine can take the thing and go to one.

**Austin:** And Routine can stick with you?

**Keith:** Right, because Routine also doesn't have a thing.

**Austin:** Right, yeah. Okay. The thing is a hypodermic needle filled with glowing blue goo.

**Sylvi:** Mhm.

**Austin:** That's right—that's right, Sylvi?

[**Ali** laughs]

**Sylvi:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sounds about right, yeah.

**Keith:** How much—how much goo?

**Austin:** A syringe's worth. It's like, a lot.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Misericorde is like,

Austin (as **Misericorde**): I can help you with it if you need.

[**Sylvi** snorts] [**Ali** laughs]

**Dre:** Oh.

**Ali:** Brnine pulling up their sleeve.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Nice to meet y'all. Thanks for the hookup.

**Keith:** It's a lot of trust.

Austin (as **Misericorde**): Are you Hexagon? Are you—what are you, pirate?  
What are you?

Ali (as **Brnine**): We're Millennium Break.

Austin (as **Misericorde**): Millennium Break. Terrorists. Cool.

**Austin:** And injects you with something that is so—if we were in like, a fight right now, you would be taking a Risk [**Ali** laughs] from it being so cold and bad through your entire system. But you're gonna—we're not gonna be in the same scene in a second, so it would clear. But yes, so, you are now insulated. You've injected yourself with the goo insulation. You're gonna stay cool for the rest of this mission.

**Keith:** Has anyone seen—

**Austin:** I think actually—yeah, mhm?

**Keith:** Has anyone seen The Abyss, the James Cameron movie?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I love that movie, terrifying, but this is—this is not exactly related, but just the vibe of it, like, everyone learning that they're going to have to drown in the goo water in order to—

**Austin:** Yeah. It fuckin' sucks.

**Keith:** In order to, like, make it so that they can breathe underwater by like, expelling all the oxygen from their lungs.

**Austin:** Yeah, I watched that scene when I was like 9 [**Keith:** Yeah.] with my grandfather who was like, "oh, this movie is the best." And it was like, one of those movies that opened my mind to the fact that movies could sometimes invent things that are way worse than anything that's real.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** And like, not—it's not like a monster.

**Keith:** No, it's just technology.

**Austin:** You know what I mean? It's just the way that scene is acted is so nightmarish, yeah.

**Keith:** To this day—and I'm not a completionist on James Cameron—it is to this day the only James Cameron movie I like.

[**Austin** hums]

**Keith:** Love it. I think it's phenomenal.

**Austin:** Great movie. Yeah.

**Keith:** I saw it on TiVo when I was 12.

**Austin:** Great.

[**Dre** chuckles]

## Mission - Phase 1

[50:25]

**Austin:** Alright. I think we need some Weather the Storms here to get to the rooms in—and again, they’ve said it, there’s five minutes to pull this off. You guys have to hustle. The situation is that there are two, like, security rooms that you have to get into, and then hit a button in order to open up the way into number two. I guess, here’s the thing. You could also just disregard that plan and do your own thing. Phrygian, you still have two of those 10s. If you told me you wanted to do some wild shit with that, [**Keith:** Mhm.] you could try doing that, you know?

**Keith:** Mhm, yeah.

**Austin:** But, you know? And again, they don’t know how to do it once they get into this thing that they think is the room.

**Keith:** They know everything except for how to do it.

**Austin:** They don’t know what’s in the room, even.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So, you know.

**Keith:** I mean, I feel like that’s where a 10 comes in.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Where’d you guys get your intel?

Austin (as **Misericorde**): We have sources.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Ah, yeah.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Probably the same as ours.

Austin (as **Misericorde**): [cross] Been doing jobs. Probably the same.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Probably the same as ours, yeah.

Austin (as **Misericorde**): Mhm.

[Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** I need these Weather rolls if we're gonna do the one and four maneuver.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Austin:** If we're gonna do something else, I mean, it'll probably still be a Weather roll, but it'll be a different Weather roll, right?

**Keith:** Okay. What is the—the thing?

**Austin:** I don't know. Weather the Storm, Defy? Sounds like you're going through this like—I mean, I guess it's that, like—we're going in, like, montage mode, right? So it's like, their plan—

**Keith:** Where did my buttons go?

**Austin:** Huh?

**Keith:** Oh my god, I'm in the wrong Roll20. That's where my buttons went.

**Austin:** Yeah, you're not in here. I just realized—yeah, you're not. Okay. Their plan is now to do the, like, “sneak around corners, knock people out, shoot them” during this five minute window where they can't send a signal out, you know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And so—and then it's fucked, right? Cause then they're gonna send this—they're going to send the signal out in five minutes.

**Keith:** So there's six minutes.

**Austin:** Six minutes is what we have, correct.

**Keith:** Wow, one minute per room.

**Austin:** Yeah, and you know what I'm gonna do now? Now that we've said that there's six minutes?

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Get a fucking clock on this screen, finally.

**Ali:** Yeah. That represents time, you know?

**Austin:** It repr—it's a regular clock.

**Keith:** It's a regular clock, yeah.

**Ali:** Wow.

**Austin:** It's just a—we finally—

**Keith:** We finally have a clock that represents a clock. [laughs]

**Austin:** [laughing] Very silly. Alright, let's make this a layer, token layer. Boom. And make that shit big. Boom. Alright. Time to make some fucking rolls.

**Keith:** If this was a really good clock, I bet, you know, it would—if it could, it would beep all the time. It would like, [**Austin:** Mhm.] tick down as beeps every 10 seconds until it's two minutes left and then every second.

**Austin:** Until it's—yeah, yeah, yeah. Yep. Who's going first? Give me an image of this montage moving through this place with your crew.

**Keith:** Phrygian's shootin'.

**Austin:** Phrygian's just shoot—what's your gun? What's your weapon?

**Keith:** [laughs] Caustic Breath, Buccal Outpocket.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Sylvi:** So Phrygian is actually spittin'.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[**Austin** laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Wait, 'cause you're just the same, big and small. You just have that gear still.

**Keith:** I think that that's true.

**Austin:** Right? Is that true? Maybe that's not true.

**Keith:** I think that we read that, and that it's true. If not, then the only thing that I can do is punch people with my wire arms.

**Austin:** That's probably still pretty good, [**Keith:** Yeah.] but, you know. It might be a special thing that lets you get—use your weapons small, but whatever, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Let's roll some dice. Weather the Storm. I'd say it could be Defy or Clash, depending on how loud you're going. Oh, neither of you are good at Clash at all.

**Keith:** Correct.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** It's because Phry—it's because the Transform move is Defy, and I went all in on Defy.

**Austin:** Mhm. Okay.

**Keith:** Because then I can Strike Decisively instead of—so, yeah.

**Austin:** Yes, this makes sense. Alright, who's rolling first?

**Keith:** I can roll first.

**Austin:** Alright.

**Keith:** Oof.

**Austin:** 1 plus 3 plus 3 is 7.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** Rolled a 1 and a 3, got a plus 3. Love the plus 3.

**Austin:** Yeah. Well, we know we—

**Sylvi:** A 7's still a partial, right?

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. 7's still a partial.

**Austin:** 7's still a partial, which means you're gonna get what you want, which is you get up to one—give me some images here. Tell me what I'm looking at.

**Keith:** Um... In the—in four?

**Austin:** In—tell me what—no, I think you were going to one, but yes. In one.

**Keith:** No, no, no, Brnine's going to one because it's gonna take the longest for the thing to get there, yeah.

**Austin:** Oh, you're right, you're right, you're right, you're right. Yes, yeah.

**Keith:** Me and Routine are going to four.

**Austin:** You're going to four, yeah. And I think—

**Keith:** I mean, I don't know what the fuck this machine looks like, but—

**Austin:** Well, this is a—yeah, this is a—this is a, some sort of scanner that is going to let you—is going to activate—it's gonna turn the key, right? This is a dual key turn, [Keith: Right.] except it's for scanning someone. [Keith: Right.] And the person that needs to be scanned is here, and we're just gonna get the classic—who's here with you? Is Misericorde here with you?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** Or is—yeah, okay, well, Misericorde is here with you.

**Keith:** With Routine.

**Austin:** And is go—well, no, because Routine is with—yeah, yeah, yeah, Misericorde and Routine, right, of course. My ship, I'm keeping them together now.



[Ali chuckles]

**Dre:** Of course, of course, of course.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. You know, one hundred percent does the knife to a guy's throat to make him do the face scan to activate this side of the thing, you know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And at the—and then as soon as it's done, just cuts that guy's throat, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This is Misericorde. Misericorde is a killer.

**Keith:** Right. Named after a sword.

**Austin:** Named after a sword. And the reason that—or the thing that is the 7 out of 9 is the clock ticks.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Twice.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Keith:** That's fine.

## **Brnine**

[55:48]

**Austin:** Brnine, how's your side now?

**Ali:** Yeah, hi.

**Austin:** Let's do this Weather the Storm.

**Ali:** Let's roll it and see what happens.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. 2d6 plus 1, right?

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** And that's a 6. [laughs]

**Keith:** Um, hey. Ah, this sucks. No... I mean, the roll came up, it happened so fast, I was still thinking about the clock, but I was wanting to give Confidence as part of my B-Plot thing.

**Austin:** I mean, you can aid and interfere whenever. Like, how are you even—

**Keith:** I can—I can—

**Austin:** Or not aid and interfere, but whatever it's called. Help?

**Keith:** Help and Hinder, yeah.

**Austin:** Help and Hinder. But you have to tell me how you would be helping and hindering from four to one.

**Keith:** Um... Maybe while the end of—ah, stupid. It's all stupid. That's the problem.

[Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** Uh-huh. You want to use one of your 10s? The thing that's happening here is I think you get pinned down, right? The two of you run into way more resistance than you thought there would be.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You know, they were pretty confident. "Okay, we're gonna hit this button and the EMP is gonna take care of the communication stuff."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There's a second EMP blast, it'll take care of the backup communication stuff. That's the ba-boom. Then the—we just kill a few people, get to the room, hit the

buttons, open the door, da-da-da-da-da. In fact, the thing that happened is battery-powered, new, automatic robots came online, right? Of a sort that we don't see very often anymore, right? We see a lot of robots that are people in this world. These are just like walking, talking—not talking, walking drones, right?

**Keith:** These are Roomba soldiers.

**Austin:** These are Roomba soldiers. These are like, Mass Effect 2 added that type of, like, the Loki soldier or whatever it was called. I don't remember what they were called. They all had those names. They all had like, Norse god names.

**Keith:** Cool. Very cool.

**Austin:** These are those, right? Very cool.

**Keith:** [chuckles] Love the 2010s.

**Austin:** And those just like—[laughs] oh, it's—the 2010s really were a time.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And they bust out of the walls and—or not bust out, right? But they're like, deployed from wall closet type hold thing, you know, cells, and begin to move through the hallways. And it's just like, a little too much fire, and y'all get pinned down in three, unable to make it. Or like, you're in one. You're just not at the part of subsector one that you—

**Keith:** Okay, so I do like this, because this was what I was going to say that I thought was stupid, but it makes a little bit more sense going from four to three than from four to one and back, [**Austin:** Mhm.] which is that we finish up in four, and I hear that there's still, like, skirmishing happening next door, and I can go in and, like, help.

**Austin:** I did say—I did say that they were in one.

**Keith:** Oh, they—

**Austin:** I said they moved from three to one, but they're in one.

**Keith:** Well, still.

**Austin:** So it is still—

**Keith:** It's still stupid.

**Austin:** It is still—uh-huh, it is still—it's not stupid. I think that you can't be doing this because this is happening while you're getting to four. You know?

**Keith:** Okay, you don't think—you don't think that we finished before they're done with this extra resistance? Or would we just be all dead?

**Austin:** I think that you finished and called over—you finished and called over and they were like, "oh shit, we're pinned down."

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You know? So you could go over there now, but that wouldn't be—that would not be saving you time. You know what I mean?

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** That wouldn't be the action. The roll was a 6, right? So you can give me a—you can—

**Keith:** Well, the roll was a 6 unless I help. And then it's—

**Austin:** But you couldn't be helping—you can help, but you can't help by being there in that moment.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** I don't know what that other help looks like, but it would need to be something where you can also be doing the thing you just succeeded the roll at doing, because you were rolling effectively at the same time.

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** You know what I mean?

**Ali:** Right. I don't mind just trying to do the Exchange Blows here, though.

**Austin:** I mean, a 6 is a failure.

**Ali:** Right. [laughs] Right.

**Austin:** Right? So, you know, on a 6, I'd make a move as hard as I want. And yeah, you know what? Maybe that's what I do. I'm gonna advance this by two minutes, right? You get pinned down. You didn't succeed. You had booked this much time. You didn't make the advancement. That's what's gonna happen here, right? Alternatively, you could use another Soldier move. Another Once the War is Over, Phrygian. I mean, that opens the door, right?

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** To wild shit, but I don't know. I get you wanting to hold on to both of those, the two remaining ones you have.

**Keith:** Yeah. Um... [slightly distant] Ali, what do you think? Is it starting to become too risky? [closer] I was too far from my mic. Is it starting to become too risky?

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** That was you just down the hall.

**Keith:** I was leaning—yeah, I was leaning—

**Austin:** [shouting] “Is it starting to become too risky?”

**Keith:** “Is it starting to become too—”

**Dre:** “Brnine!”

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** I was cont—I was leaning back contemplatively.

**Austin:** [hums] Mhm.

**Ali:** Mhm. I mean, I don't love the clock being at four.

**Austin:** Right.

**Ali:** Of six.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** But that's two minutes. [chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah, it's two whole minutes.

**Austin:** Two minutes.

**Ali:** Two minutes, two moves left, you know.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** And we almost basically probably even know how this thing works.

**Austin:** But you wouldn't have gotten one yet, to be clear. That's the problem. The problem is you would still need to roll to get one right, which you've just failed at doing.

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** But—and you're right, though, Keith. That's the other half of this. You don't know how it works.

**Keith:** Right. Um, I... [pause] Um, yeah, I can—I can use a Soldier move.

**Austin:** What's it—what is it? What's—what are you becoming to help Brnine in this moment?

**Keith:** Can I use a move that I don't have from my thing as like, a momentary thing?

**Austin:** Yeah, that's fun. What is it?

**Keith:** I have a move that I have been considering all season, which is We the People. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Oh, yes.

**Keith:** “People contain multitudes, and of course, that means you. When you are the Beast Within, you may instead transform into a small gang of Tier 2 Ardents.”

[Ali laughs]

**Sylvi:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** That rules, because like, the other robots come like, out of the wall holders and then you roll in as other yours?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or are you something else? What’s the form? What is this form?

**Keith:** I think that it’s the env—it’s Phrygian’s envoy form, but like, [chuckling] two feet tall. Like, it’s Cell Junior. It’s Cell Junior—

**Austin:** [laughing] It’s tall Phrygian? It’s Cell—okay. Oh, wait, sorry. Two feet tall, not two feet taller.

**Keith:** Two feet. Oh, no, no, no, not taller.

**Austin:** You have little Phrygians?

**Keith:** Little Phrygians, yes. Little Phrygians.

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** I got Phrygian juniors.

**Austin:** You got Phrygian juniors, yeah. Cell Juniors running around. Fuck.

**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Austin:** Or like Cybermen. But, right. They’re Cell Juniors because you’re Cell in this scenario.

**Keith:** Now, since these rolls were happening at the same time and I’m using a Soldier move, does this have any effect on my 7?

**Austin:** No. That's a good—you know what, Keith? I'm gonna give you a little thumbs up on the maneuver here. I think that's a—that's clever.

[Ali chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But no, you deployed them to back up Brnine.

**Keith:** [cross] How about a fifty percent—we get three minutes back, refund?

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** What do you mean three minutes back?

**Keith:** You took four minutes. I'm getting two back by helping.

**Austin:** You still have to roll to help. Oh, no, you don't—because you're getting the auto success on this.

**Keith:** Right, the auto success.

[Ali continues laughing]

**Austin:** Yeah, so you're gonna be at two minutes. You're gonna be at—you're here. You got the 10 on Brnine because you gave 10—you gave Brnine the 10.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So, you know, we're where we are.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Two minutes have passed, and it's the same two minutes on both sides. You know?

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Austin:** Also, this sucks, but like, those other little Phrygians aren't gonna make it 'cause of the heat stuff. You know?



**Keith:** Yeah, it's very sad.

**Austin:** Do you feel that? Are you—you're—you're them, right?

**Keith:** Look, you know...

**Austin:** Or is it like—

**Keith:** We know from the everyone's favorite—everyone's favorite filler episode of Naruto, where he shadow clones on the ship, and they all take on their own personalities and start to feel like the real Naruto, and then they all die. That's sad. I just don't know if they're around long enough for this to affect the core Phrygian emotionally.

**Austin:** Right. Right.

**Keith:** You know, maybe if I was like, more—in a less tense situation, [**Austin:** Yeah.] if there was less going on, I might be able to take the time to like, be upset about this.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I think that every shadow clone that dies in Naruto feels like a full person until the moment they die and their consciousness merges with the original Naruto, which is I'm sure what's happening here.

**Austin:** Right. They are re-merging with you and you're going, "oh, hey, you're back."

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** "Welcome back." Gotcha. Cool. Alright. One and four. What does this button thing look like? I think it's like a—or, no, it's what I said before, right? It's a face scan, right? And it's like—it's a—and you're starting to get a sense of what might be ahead, which is there is like a whole dedicated ass room to just this thing. The room is like, effectively empty except for security measures that have to get taken out here, right? And the security measures include one of those wall turrets that always shows up in like a, you know, a Fallout game, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah. Right, yeah.

**Austin:** It's that shit, right? And it's—that's the only thing. It's a bare metal room, and on the other side of the room is the face scanner. And there's one person in there, and their whole job is in case you need to get into this room, in room number two, you're here to scan the face.

**Keith:** Brnine, can I help you out and remind you to advance your Spotlight and level up?

**Ali:** Oh, sure.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah, okay.

**Austin:** Good, good. Big one.

[Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** Alright. As a reminder, too, the—you can take that level whenever you want from this. You don't need to—

**Keith:** And gain Confidence?

**Austin:** Mhm. Yeah, when you take a move from Spotlight level, I think—we went over this last time, but I've already forgotten.

**Keith:** It's just I can never remember if it's Confidence or advantage.

**Austin:** Yes. If you take the move, you can spend it with Confidence, correct. Right now.

## **Mission - Phase 2**

[1:06:02]

**Austin:** Alright. Time to move into number two. Y'all converge on this in such a way that I think only one roll has to happen here. Who is leading this assault on the northeastern corridor of subsector two, sector four, ring interior?

**Keith:** Sorry, can you repeat that?

**Austin:** Who's rolling the dice on this final assault to where this room is?

**Keith:** What is the roll for?

**Austin:** It's another Weather the Storm to get there, right?

**Keith:** Weather the Storm, Defy?

**Austin:** I mean, this might—at this point—yeah, I think it's Weather the Storm, because what we're doing is this kind of zoomed out montage, right, of fighting and dodging and sneaking and trying to hack through stuff, right? We're doing—we're in that style of...

**Keith:** I'm gonna—I'm just gonna roll Defy. I'm gonna do a straight Defy.

**Austin:** Okay. 2d6 plus 3.

**Keith:** 13.

**Sylvi:** Let's go!

**Dre:** Let's go.

[Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** That's wild. And I think that this is actually weirdly quiet.

**Keith:** Who gets here?

**Austin:** You're sneaking. Huh?

**Keith:** Who gets here?

**Austin:** All of you.

**Keith:** No, but that's what I'm saying. We all got here, but then it's out there. Who gets in here?

**Austin:** Right, I see what you're saying. Yes, yes. Well, I mean, this is the thing. There's two things, right? Which is, you've made it past that outside line of defense. You've managed to sneak past the interior line. You're right that it's not as heavily guarded in the same way, because there's just not as many people allowed back here, right? And I think we probably get like, the one shot of each of you doing a cool thing. What's your one cool thing that you've done to like, get past these rooms or guards or security devices?

Routine, I think, truly just spears through someone through a door. Like, literally hard enough to break through a door. Cor hacks into a thing, kneels down and does like, the classic "oh, I have the right tool for this job," and attaches like a—some sort of auto-hack device, you know, to hack through something else. I think Misericorde just blows a hole through one of the walls using some sort of, like, spray-on laser C4. Actually, you know what it is? It's like one of those brackets that are in Rainbow Six Siege. You know? They're like, "oh, I'm gonna put this bracket on this wall," and then blow a hole in the wall, except instead of using an explosion, it just uses, like, quick, single-use laser beams to cut a huge person-sized hole in one of the walls. Single-use device. You can't do it more than once. How do y'all—what is your contribution to this final move towards the—whatever this big door is?

**Keith:** I think Phrygian is doing—it's not quite silenced, but it's doing like, silenced pistol stuff with the Buccal Outpocket. You know that noise that dads make with their... [perfectly mimics the sound of falling water droplets] You know that?

**Sylvi:** Woah!

**Dre:** Woah!

**Keith:** You know that noise? Everyone knows that noise?

**Austin:** Excuse me?

**Dre:** Hey, what?

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** [continues mimicking water droplet sound] Has no one ever heard that?

**Austin:** That's real. That's real. I can hear it. I can hear the mouth in this.

**Dre:** I'm freaking out.

**Keith:** Do you all not know that noise?

**Janine:** I do. I'm surprised to know that it's just us, Keith.

**Sylvi:** [cross] I know the noise.

**Austin:** [cross] You can make—

**Keith:** [mimics water droplet sound close to microphone]

**Janine:** It's just us.

**Sylvi:** Wuh...

**Keith:** So, it's like that, like—but you know how—

**Janine:** [cross] I can't do it, but I know it.

**Keith:** Have you seen someone make that noise? It's very important to this.

**Austin:** I have now.

**Keith:** But you have to literally see what happens, is like, you kind of—

**Janine:** You're like flicking your finger in your cheek, right?

**Keith:** Yes. Yeah, it's that. You—

**Janine:** Inside of your cheek? Yeah.

**Keith:** So you're kind of holding your—

**Austin:** That's not true.

**Keith:** It is true. Yeah, you flick your finger on your cheek [**Janine:** Yeah.] and then you make like a—you just whoosh air out of your mouth while you flick your cheek. So the first noise is like the open...

**Austin:** Any noise. Any noise.

**Dre:** Any noise.

**Keith:** It's like the open—

**Austin:** Any sound. Not just noises.

**Keith:** [hollow mouth-thumping sound] So that's the beginning.

**Austin:** That—yeah, that I get.

**Keith:** And then the other part is like a whooshing. [rapid birdlike whistling exhalation]

**Austin:** That's different. That's a different sound than you just did.

**Keith:** Well, that's a different sound, but then you combine them. [mimics water droplet sound]

**Austin:** [laughing] I can't—I can't do this.

**Keith:** And it sounds like—[laughs] I can't believe that only Janine has seen this before. Anyway, it's an uncle thing and a dad thing. Maybe it's also a New England thing and a Canada thing. Although, no, Sylvi, you've never heard of this.

**Sylvi:** I think I do know what—you're doing the thing—you're like flicking the inside of your face, right? To do this?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, like I do know what this is, it's just also...

**Keith:** I hope it translates on the mic. Maybe it sounds really weird on the mic.

**Sylvi:** It's—it sounds—

**Austin:** No, it translates.

**Keith:** [laughing] Okay.

**Sylvi:** It is so clear that it's upsetting.

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. This is the thing. Do you know how Ali doesn't like [chuckling] Snapple Apple? [**Ali** hums] Because it tastes like an apple, but it's just a little—it's just a juice.

**Keith:** It's too apple.

**Austin:** It shouldn't taste like an apple.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's me and this sound you're making.

**Keith:** You're say it sounds too much like a drop of water?

**Austin:** It sounds exactly like a drop of water.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Keith:** It is a good noise. It's probably the best noise that I do.

**Austin:** I think you've gotten better at it, because this is like, one of the first noises you ever made on Run Button proving that you can make any sound.

**Keith:** Is that true?

**Austin:** And—yeah, I'm pretty sure. And—

**Keith:** Oh, oh, I did the fake water drop. Yeah, okay. I do actually remember the water drops. This is from the original bit.

**Austin:** [cross] Yeah, but this is so much better. Yes.

**Keith:** For people who—for criminals who listen to us but don't watch Run Button, the original "Keith can make any sound" bit comes from a Mario episode that we did where Kyle says that and asks me to make a bunch of different sounds, and I just do them as best as I can without actually trying to do them that well, or caring that I

can't do them. And one of them, I do a very poor "water drops falling on a tin—into a tin dish" noise.

**Austin:** It was pretty good, anyway. It was pretty good despite—

**Keith:** [laughing] I don't think it was very good, but—

**Austin:** Anyway.

**Keith:** But I always have been able to do that water drop noise. The difference is that's water dropping into a little bowl of water, not water dropping into a tin dish.

**Austin:** Right. Right.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Anyway.

**Keith:** So I'm doing—

**Austin:** So what about this sound is an important thing?

**Keith:** Oh, this is like—that is like, the sound of Phrygian sort of quietly firing the Buccal Outpocket at people's heads.

**Austin:** Oh, that's very fun.

[Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** 'Cause it's the—

**Sylvi:** That's the last noise a lot of people are hearing.

**Austin:** "Huh? What was that noise?" And then dead.

**Keith:** Right. [laughs] It's the flick of the wrist.

**Dre:** "Huh? Must have been nothing."

**Austin:** "Is there a leak?"

**Sylvi:** "Dad?"



**Austin:** Yeah. “Just a water drop.” Oh, dead. That’s it.

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** Brnine, did you have like, a cool—a cool person maneuver?

**Ali:** [laughs] I have to follow that?

**Keith:** I’m sorry that that was a sensation.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** It was sensational, for sure.

**Ali:** Um... I—Brnine has this cool gun that I think I’m gonna save, because I think that... No, I think—well, Brnine has this cool gun that is a Profane weapon with—that like, reshapes matter and creates new things. So, I think of Brnine, like, shooting it at people’s weapons so they like, disintegrate.

**Austin:** That’s pretty good.

**Ali:** Or do like, the funny, like, where in The Mask or, like, Roger Rabbit, [**Austin:** Mhm.] and like, the little pistol front of it just sort of deflates or starts melting.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Ali:** Um... yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, that’s fun. I like this.

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Austin:** This is good. Alright. The door has become accessible. It wasn’t there before the two buttons were pressed. This would have been the northeastern corridor. There would not be a door here, but the wall has peeled away such that a door has become visible. And yet again, I think this is a—they don’t know how to get into this. They don’t have—this is the one where they’re like, “okay, we don’t know how to get into this place. We thought that would open the door. Instead, it just revealed that there was a door.” So you have, you know. Yeah, the reason I made everybody go

through their “how do you get through a door” or “how do you get down a hallway” thing is you’re gonna need another trick here. This door is sealed shut. I think just the natural expansion of time means that we have ticked up to only three minutes left. How do you burst through this door?

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** And you can hear the sound of people running towards you here, down the hallways. The nice thing is, this place is hell to move through, as you might recall. And there are ways for them to speed it up, they can unlock certain doors to try to give them more direct access.

**Keith:** They know the way.

**Austin:** But like—they know the way to begin with, but they—this is still a riot-proof space, which means that they sometimes have to take long—or like a, you know, it’s a hardened space in that way, that makes it harder for them to get deep into the facility once you’re in deep into the facility. And this is the deepest place into the facility there is.

**Keith:** So there’s a lot of reasons why this was not a usable idea before, [**Austin:** Mhm.] but I think that here at the end of this hallway where we’re just bat—we’re—this is not stealth.

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** We are shooting our way through this hallway.

**Austin:** Yep. Three minutes left.

**Keith:** I think that here I could use the Beast Within and transform in the hallway and bust down the door.

**Austin:** You’re gonna be too big for this hallway.

**Ali:** I can do a... Can I do—[chuckles]

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm listening.

**Ali:** [chuckling] Can I do a—can I do a—

**Keith:** Wait, start saying "I can do". I like that.

**Ali:** [laughs] A Weather the Storm plus Know with Confidence from Asepsis doing, like, a lockpick situation?

**Austin:** Yeah, Know, make it through with quick thinking or an ace up your sleeve. You're gonna do that with Know and not Crew?

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Okay, I was thinking I would do it with—

**Austin:** You can do either.

**Ali:** Right.

**Keith:** Crew's—Crew's way better, right?

**Austin:** Are you using Asepsis or are you—is Asepsis, like, advising you on how to electronic lockpick this?

**Ali:** [cross] Well, yeah, I guess in my head it was like, Brnine is kneeling down doing the lockpick situation, [**Austin:** Yeah.] and then I have the—I have like, a 3D scan on my visor.

**Austin:** Right, that Asepsis is providing for you.

**Ali:** So that's—right. And then that would be—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Because it's either 2d6 plus 3 or 2d6 plus 1 with Confidence.

**Austin:** Up to you.

**Ali:** And I think I'm gonna save our last Crew roll. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Okay. So 2d6 plus 1.

**Ali:** Yeah, 2d6 plus 1.

**Austin:** But then the 1s count as 6s.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yep.

[Ali inhales and exhales] [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Look at that.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Ali:** Let's go!

**Austin:** 1 plus 5 plus 1 becomes 6 plus 5 plus 1, which is 12.

**Keith:** My heart sank when I saw that, because my brain didn't work that fast.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** Yep.

**Keith:** You see the red 1 and you're just—that just works faster than, "oh, yeah, Confidence."

**Ali:** Yeah. Uh-huh.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

## **Mission - Phase 3**

[1:17:37]

**Austin:** Um... The door opens. And I've already kind of teased this, that like, there are single-purpose rooms deep into this facility. And this one is the simplest of all. There is one of these people that you've seen before, the cyborg people who have been set up to be, effectively, you know, climate-controlled interi—interi—interiorily?

That's not the word. Internally. There we go. And—but they have more tubes set up in them that it becomes clear are effectively feeding tubes. This person is effectively on life support. And they are hooked into, through countless cables, a machine that has no screen. There's no—any sort of lights or anything to explain anything here. There's no buttons to press. They are hooked into a sort of—this feels like a medical operation. They are part of a machine here. The back wall is open. Not open, but is a window from which you can see the boiling heart of the sun. The—it is hot in here. Again, Phrygian, go ahead and take the Risk "Burning". Routine is also burning at this point. Like, can't do it. It is too much for him right now. And so he is also in a bad way. Brnine, you're alright, because you shot up the blue goo. You got that going for you.

The—Asepsis gives you a readout, Brnine. This person is the Elect, or an Elect, of the Divine Authority. Every stellar combustor across the galaxy has a little bit of a Divine in it. The Divine Authority, which imposes its will by managing all of this. Asepsis gives you the scan. This person's entire job is to be a failsafe, and the failsafe goes one of two ways. Way one is if someone comes in here and, you know, interfaces with them using their own cybernetic hookups, they can force the button to be pressed in a situation like the one that you're currently in. And if the situation goes the other way, and for instance, Millennium Break gets the button back on Palisade, they can come over—they can come here and interface and override the button's press, the ability for the button to press. That is the thing. But it all works through a person, and the person who is hooked into it has to be willing to do the thing, has to be willing to hit the sort of—be the living trigger or the living disarmament, you know, signal. And Misericorde goes,

Austin (as **Misericorde**): Well, what the fuck are we looking at?

[**Sylvi** giggles]

**Austin**: And Cor'rina goes,

Austin (as **Cor'rina**): It's alright, we're gonna figure this out.

**Austin**: And the clock ticks. Two minutes left. What do you do?

**Keith:** I don't know. You know, 25 minutes, maybe 45 minutes ago, we were doing something. And I was like, I bet it's a person in there that we're gonna have to kill, or something—something weird.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Keith:** So, okay, so how does this thing work?

**Austin:** There's a person who is cybernetically hooked up to it.

**Keith:** Got it. Got it.

**Austin:** Someone has to cybernetically hook up to them, and then send one of the two signals to them. Either disarm this thing or blow it up.

**Keith:** Right. But if they don't like it...

**Austin:** They can refuse it.

**Keith:** But can they do the other one?

**Austin:** They—no, they have to receive an external [**Keith:** Okay.] signal to do either of them. To be clear, this is not how it normally goes. Normally, the Stargrave hits a button, and it blows up or it disarms, right? And that—this doesn't have an—this can't override that without someone already being here to override it.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Do you know what I mean? The button press is the button press, you know?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** That's its own pathway. This is a backup that can either shut off—it can override that pathway if it's—or it has its own pathway, basically. You know?

**Keith:** Right. So this can—it can—this can disarm the button, but it doesn't have to go through this. So like, the button just works if the button gets pressed.

**Austin:** Oh, once the—well, once you've disarmed it through this, it's disarmed, right?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** If you're here and you disarm the button, the button is disarmed.

**Keith:** But if the—

**Austin:** They don't have another button.

**Keith:** I'm just saying, if the Stargrave presses the button, it doesn't pass through this thing unless someone intercedes.

**Austin:** Correct. Has already done the interceding, correct, yes.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** In other words, I'll put it this way—you have one minute before the Stargrave gets the message and hits the button. And it starts—you know what I mean?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** So that's the—that's a sort of second counter in a way.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We can go back over to the interior of the Chimera, Chimera's Lantern.

## **Chimera's Lantern**

[1:22:51]

**Austin:** The now ineffectual Axiom called the Ingrate has settled onto the ground and is—you wouldn't—the actual, like, physical embodiment is not of a child pouting, it is more like a—it is more like a volcano simmering, you know? But sometimes you might read a volcano simmering the same way you read a child pouting. There's a sort of like, "I really want to blow up, but I can't blow up the way I want to" about it. But the huge bush of Russian sage has reached the ceiling and has—we just get the out—we get the external shot of the surface of Chimera's Lantern. And let me just give you a little bit also here, Figure. As this is happening for you, you are seeing some wild shit in your, like, your mind's eye. Some of it is just the room you are in

changing and spinning and being weird. Sometimes you get glimpses from the cracks that have been put into the wall by the Ingrate where it looks like you're not in the same part of space you were in moments ago. Like, there's a hole into the—into space that the Ingrate had made when it was first caught, you know, throwing a tantrum, that you could see Palisade from. And then for you, for a moment, you saw that Palisade was not there at all. You were in a nebula, or you were next to a nova exploding, or you were—there are all these different visions of everything.

**Keith:** Let's hope that one wasn't true.

**Austin:** Then—yeah, I mean, who could say, right? Not—hopefully not a vision of the future in five minutes. But it feels like you've been being pulled around different parts of the galaxy, and you're not sure if that's from the Chimeric Cadent or if that's from Perennial.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** And then as you get this—you know, we see the sprig of Russian Sage, the top very—it's not a sprig at this point, but the very top, you know, branch of it poke through this hole that's been laser-drilled into the ceiling. It pokes through onto the surface, and it's just like, this single branch of Russian Sage against the, you know, the backdrop of Palisade, the sun boiling in the distance. And in this moment, you get Perennial's vision from the center of the galaxy.

There is a sudden... omn—not omniscience in the sense of knowing everything, but I guess it's more like an omnipresence. You're everywhere that Perennial is, for just a moment. You see it all, including places that have nothing to do with the Divine Principality, of which there are still some. Deep into the Branched space, deep into the one branch of the galaxy that the Principality hasn't reached into yet. Which is where you may recall the Nobel were. So you're seeing people of a type you've never even heard of before. And you're seeing image after image of just daily life. People sleeping, people working, people fighting, people fucking—everything that you could imagine a person doing, you're perceiving it for a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of a second, right? Just image, image, image, image, image, and things that aren't images at all, but are just raw emotions. And it hits you—it's all the same at a certain



point, it flattens out. It's—if it's not cyclical, then it's at the very least similar. Things just keep fucking happening.

And I think the thing that Perennial breaks through this with, for you, that I don't know that we've seen anyone else really get from Perennial, is that she would like—and I don't know how you feel about this. But underneath all of it, there is this cycle of—of pain and colonization and empire and cruelty. A cycle of authority, right? And on one hand, it seems inescapable. It seems like there's a pattern in everything you see, that people find ways to draw lines and build little kingdoms for themselves, and separate or degrade or diminish or oppress or enslave others. That's an image you start to see more than the images of daily life—of soft, good, kind, excited, angry, but good angry, daily life—those are smaller or less common.

And the thing that I think Perennial pushes to you, you know, you're reaching out to her, and she's reaching down to you in this moment, is she wants to fucking break the wheel. It's not that "the wheel turns" is good. "The wheel turns" is true. But what if we got it off track? How do we do that? And that's the moment that you come back to. The aura around you recedes, you find yourself on this giant throne, still. And you have the sense of a new—it's a connection you already had, but it feels more full, it feels like it's on your own terms. It doesn't feel like it's being meted out to you. It doesn't feel like you're breathing through an air tank, it feels like you're breathing the atmosphere. You've come up from underwater. What do you do? What do you look like in this moment?

**Dre:** Figure looks very different. Well, very different in some ways.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Dre:** They're still made of concrete. Those gouges that I talked about are still, like, there. But I imagine that those gouges are being, like, filled in by slowly budding Russian sage.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** What was this—it's called like, fiber-reinforced concrete. I'm gonna find it.

**Austin:** That sounds right. That sounds like a thing to me.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That's what that submarine that exploded was made out of.

**Dre:** Well...

**Austin:** Okay, well, bad.

**Dre:** This is gonna be better. [laughs]

**Austin:** Okay, good, good.

**Dre:** There's just this really cool image of a piece of fiber-reinforced concrete that has like—that's been like, cut in half, but it still looks connected. And so I'm just—I'm imagining that.

**Austin:** Oh, hell yeah. That looks so sick. Yeah, I just did a search for fiber-reinforced concrete. This is on the—theconstructor.org.

[**Dre** laughs]

**Austin:** It describes fiber-reinforced concrete. And so you're saying, instead of the wires connecting it here, [**Dre:** Mhm.] it's the Russian sage.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, I love this. This is fantastic.

**Dre:** Um... New clothes?

**Austin:** Sure.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Perennial can do a lot.

**Dre:** Yeah. So, Figure is wearing a—I'm describing it as a cropped jacket with a cape, and like, flowy sleeves. The type of jacket that I saw is apparently called a duchess cape. I'll link that.

**Austin:** A duchess cape.

**Keith:** Oh, very Princess Leia.

**Sylvi:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Oh, I love this.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This rules. Sure. A duchess would definitely wear this.

**Dre:** It has a paisley pattern on it. The paisley is like, sage with lavender accents. And the pants, he has a pair of pants—or they have a pair of pants on, that are like capris with two buckles on the bottom.

**Sylvi:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** This fucking rules.

**Dre:** And tall, like, just worn brown boots.

**Austin:** This is a banging look.

**Dre:** Thank you.

**Austin:** This is it. This is it. The Figure. And again, still just the Figure.

[Music - "[Visitation](#)" by Jack de Quidt begins]

**Dre:** Yeah, just Figure.

**Austin:** Love it. Just Figure.

## Visitation

[1:31:31]

**Austin:** I can't help but notice—I'm looking at your new character sheet.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** You've taken these moves. These moves are real, right?

**Dre:** Yeah. No, these moves are real. [laughs]

**Austin:** Okay. You are just coming to. You know? You're just getting your bearings. And there's a person in the room you hadn't seen before, on the throne with you. Are you standing? Are you sitting? Are you—what position are you in?

**Dre:** Um... The—god, the throne's big enough. Figure can just be laying in it.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, absolutely.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Then there is a figure above you looking down at you. Backlit by the kind of—the ceiling looking out into the sky, where you can see the—where the hole has been, now the sun burning is behind them, so you can't quite make out their face. They have a kind of a robe on, you kind of make out that silhouette. They reach their arms down to you. They have four arms to try to help you up. Do you take their arms?

**Dre:** Of course.

**Austin:** It feels like you're helping yourself up a little bit. You know, like, they're not providing a lot of pull. You are made of concrete, I guess.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** And they say,

Austin (as **Robed Figure**): I have heard much about you. I know we have not met, but you must trust me, because we are friends. My name is Gur Sevraq, and I have been waiting for you.

[music swells]

**Sylvi:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** You want to read the move you took?

**Dre:** Yeah. I took the Wither move Cold Company. “You are constantly followed by one or more specters, ghosts, or ghouls from your past. Their presence is distracting and difficult. [**Austin** laughs] Make all rolls with disadvantage until you succeed on a move with a 10 plus; this dispels them for a short time. Roll with advantage until you fail a move with a 6 minus, at which point your ghostly retinue and disadvantage return, and the cycle begins anew.”

[music fades out]

**Austin:** The wheel turns, baby.

**Keith:** Jeez.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Keith:** That move is wild.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That’s a really nice move.

**Dre:** Yeah, that move is wild.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** The Wither fucking rules, let me tell you.

**Keith:** Hey, how come Gur Sevraq is a distracting and difficult presence?

**Austin:** [laughing] Have you—have you met him?

[**Dre** laughs]

**Keith:** Okay, difficult, but not that distracting, and definitely not, uh...

**Austin:** Okay, but you can’t—you can’t—what if you couldn’t turn Gur Sevraq off? And the difference is—the difference is, this is the Figure, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The difference between like, Clem, who is able to turn Gur's voice off in her head, and the Figure. Right? Who's like—

**Keith:** [cross] What is the—what's up with that ghost? Is that ghost real? I can't remember.

**Austin:** This ghost seems to be real. It seems to be tied to your connection to Perennial.

**Keith:** [cross] I mean, now multiple people have the same ghost. I guess that's the question. Is this the same ghost?

**Austin:** Well, I don't think Clem has it anymore.

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** It's the same ghost.

**Keith:** Oh, he gave up—okay, gotcha.

**Austin:** That connection, Gur switched over when when Figure made that connection.

**Ali:** Ohh.

**Austin:** Gur came to someone who maybe would listen. And they've never met, right? But like, [**Dre:** No.] certainly Gur has watched as the Figure has been exploited by Clem. And Gur has been saying for *years* not to treat you like this! Right? But you couldn't ever hear their voice, because they're a ghost haunting Clem.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So, you know.

**Keith:** That's definitely the sort of move where you have to ask, is that move real?  
[laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh-huh. I mean, this move is real.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's real. It's real.

**Austin:** These are ghosts. A hundred percent. Yeah. Uh-huh.

**Keith:** I mean, it's as real as anything in a game like this is real.

**Austin:** That's—wow. You know what? True. Alright. Um... [exhales] sun time.

## **The Stellar Combustor**

[1:36:01]

**Austin:** Do y'all have a plan? Two minutes left.

**Keith:** Um, do we—we already—we always had two. Okay. I thought maybe we lost a minute just now.

**Austin:** No, you're at four.

**Keith:** No, we were at—yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** You're at four of six. Yep.

**Keith:** Um... I mean, I don't know. Part of me is like—I mean, I guess.... I guess I'm, I, like, I want to figure out how this machine works. Like, what is going on? Where are—

**Austin:** It is a person plugged into a Divine, is how it works.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Right?

**Keith:** So there's nothing to glean by looking.

**Austin:** There's nothing to glean by looking. It is a flat surface.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know? There are not buttons or dials or switches. It's a guy on a table plugged into a Divine, who has been trained to be a trigger. A thing that we knew that the Rapid Evening did for millennia.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** They never stopped. They never stopped Primary and Satellite.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** Last time we talked about how Primary and Satellite, “oh, that’s Brnine, and it’s Gucci.” No, it isn’t. It’s Stargrave Elcessor and this motherfucker.

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Who probably gets rotated out every year because it’s too much stress. And by “rotated out,” I mean they probably get killed. Right? Retired somewhere, maybe.

**Ali:** Yeah, this feels difficult to come back from.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Um...

**Keith:** Do we have to put on the visor? How many visors are there?

**Austin:** What?

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** No vis—there’s no visors.

**Ali:** Um, how do we... what—how do we stop it from being able to be activated? Is it removing this person, or is it—

**Austin:** No, that—Stargrave Elcessor can still hit the button without this person here.

**Keith:** Right, we actually need this person [**Ali:** Okay.] to make the button not work.

**Austin:** Right. To work through it one more time, Stargrave Elcessor can hit the button to blow up the world, [**Ali:** Mhm.] and 25 other star systems, total. Or, 25 total. This one plus 23 plus the Twilight Mirage. She can just hit that button. Then it sends a signal. Boom, it blows up. Let’s say that news comes that Millennium Break stole the button. You could use this interface, this person and Divine combo, you could



interface into them cybernetically and say, “hey, Millennium Break took it. Here’s my evidence of that in cybernetic world.” Right? “We have to block the Stargrave’s ability to hit—to block the button. We have to turn off the button.” Right?

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Austin:** “We have to deactivate that button. We’re gonna have to make a new button.” But until then, we just—we have to—the only way we can blow this thing up is by activating it directly here. Right? So that is a way to deactivate the button. Right?

**Keith:** Yeah. Mhm.

**Austin:** You could—you wouldn’t do this, right? But the other thing that could happen is you could say, “oh, no, they destroyed the button. We want to blow up the star. We’re gonna—I’m gonna cybernetically integrate with you, and then I’m the person saying hit the button,” and the cybernetic trigger man decides whether or not to hit the button. Right?

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Austin:** And has been trained to say yes, in most cases. I’m trying to remember—and I believe that this is the case. This is Satellite, whereas Gray Gloaming or—sorry, this is—sorry, yeah, this is Satellite. The Stargrave is Primary in this setup. And so, yeah, the thing is that this person can be the button themselves if they need to be. Or they can’t be it themselves, they need another person here in the room to interface with them.

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** Now, could you interface with them and do something different if you could convince them of it? I don’t know. We have to play to find out what happens. Could you replace them on the table with someone else who can interface directly? I don’t know. Play to find out what happens. You’re interfacing with a Divine, that seems scary. Could you—I don’t—you turn into a—I don’t—you have another form you could take, right? Could you turn into a second sun and just destroy everything? I guess. I don’t think you come back from that.

**Keith:** That one's a little bit of a bummer.

**Austin:** I mean, we know you don't come back from that. It's kind of a bummer.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** It depends on what you're trying to do here. The clock is ticking.

**Keith:** Um... obviously, I still have one move left.

**Austin:** You do.

**Keith:** It feels like going and doing a talk, but like, rolled with a 10. That doesn't seem like a super permanent solution.

**Austin:** No. It would not destroy the Pillar to like—what it would do—okay, so, let's think of it this way. Let's say you somehow cybernetic—first of all, you have to be able to interface with this guy.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You don't have that equipment right now. That's the equipment that's built into all the other people on this facility.

**Keith:** Gotcha.

**Austin:** Or on this—not the whole facility, sorry, just this sector of this ring. Right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** They have the cooling stuff, and they also have the “I can hook into this guy to tell him you have to hit the button” equipment. So let's say you figured out a way to, you know, jerry-rig yourself a cybernetic hookup, right? You have to do that. Then let's say you told him, “hey, turn off the Elcessor's button.” What that would do is get this clock off the screen.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But it wouldn't give you the Pillar, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Because the Pillar is still this thing that's here. And then there's not—he doesn't have the permanent "deactivate the thing" button. To do that, you would have to get into it some other way, or—I don't know, you have to figure out a cool way to do that and visualize it on the screen for us, or in the narrative, not on the screen, but you know. Visualize it in the ongoing focal point of this narrative, [**Keith:** Mhm.] you know, device that we use.

**Keith:** [exhales] Um... And the Divine is Authority?

**Austin:** That's right.

**Keith:** And this is just a piece of Authority.

**Austin:** Yeah, this is not—it's not every combustor has a different Divine in it, it's that the combustor, the combustor system, is the Divine Authority the way that the jumpgate system, the Portcullis System, is the Divine Space.

**Keith:** Right. Fan-favorite Divine type, this Divine is, you know, a bunch of Divines, yeah.

**Austin:** Is many places, yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. And sometimes that's tanks, and sometimes that's [**Keith:** Right.] an infrastructure system spread across the galaxy. Divine's a social category, it's not a real thing, et cetera et cetera et cetera.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Social categories are real things, but you know what the fuck I mean.

**Keith:** Yeah. It's not like a—it's not like a botanical nut.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Keith:** Like, where science can prove that something is a nut.

**Austin:** I mean, none of that shit's real, either, Keith. But, yeah. It's more real than this.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** There's—you can talk about like, descendency and stuff like that.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Like, "oh, this came from this," but. You know what I mean.

**Keith:** Well, that's why there's also culinary nuts, like peanuts.

[Ali hums]

**Austin:** Hm. Interesting.

[Ali chuckles]

**Keith:** Um... Divines are more like vegetables.

**Austin:** What are we doing?

**Keith:** Stalling. [laughs]

[Dre laughs]

**Ali:** I feel—I feel like—I feel like—[laughs] I feel like my first idea [**Austin:** Mhm.] is to replace this person, [**Austin:** Mhm.] but that's not a good idea, and it's probably very difficult.

**Austin:** I mean, we're in the world of very difficult.

**Ali:** Right.

**Keith:** I have a very difficult thing succeder—

**Ali:** Uh-huh. Right. But like—

**Keith:** So this is definitely on the table—it's definitely on the table, you know, full—cards fully on the table, there's definitely a world where I accept that to make this thing work, Phrygian, like, uses an automatic 10 on some move that essentially means that they get put in here and also are dead.

**Austin:** Fuck. The third and final form you take is the most, like—is a gear in the machine of the Principality, is a person reduced to—is a wire that fits in a machine.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Miserable.

**Ali:** Well, like, standing guard. You would be like Sailor Saturn. You would be standing guard to...

**Keith:** Yeah, I would be like Sailor Saturn, a character that I know.

**Ali:** Or Sailor Pluto, sorry.

**Keith:** Okay, Sailor Pluto.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Wow.

**Janine:** That worked out really well for—speaking of people who died in sad ways and stuff.

[Austin laughs]

**Janine:** That worked out real good for her.

**Ali:** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Keith:** What happened to Sailor Pluto?

**Janine:** That's a whole other thing.

**Ali:** Well, she's—

**Dre:** Yeah, that's different.

**Ali:** She's like, standing in front of a time door, is why I was thinking that Phrygian would be like—

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Standing in front of a time door.

**Ali:** —standing guard to this thing.

**Janine:** Oh, okay, you meant Pluto. I thought you said Saturn.

**Ali:** I meant Pluto. I said Saturn, but I meant Pluto.

**Janine:** Okay. Alright. Well, they both stand guard.

**Ali:** Yeah. Okay, yeah, fair.

**Keith:** And one of them tells the truth and one of them always lies.

[**Ali** and **Dre** laugh]

**Dre:** Okay, okay.

**Ali:** But then that would be like, for the rest of Phrygian's lifetime, question mark?

**Austin:** No, because they're just gonna come kill Phrygian.

**Ali:** Right.

**Austin:** Right?

**Keith:** I mean, it would—it—

**Austin:** That doesn't—I mean, what—sorry, what—doing the thing that Phrygian, you were suggesting, would give you access to the gu—would give you access to the Divine Authority. Right?

**Keith:** Right. It would give access to the Pillar.

**Austin:** And then you could—I don't know. It would give—well, no, it would give you access to then make the sit—like, you being—there's two steps here.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** There's you gotta interface in somehow, either through this person, or maybe Phrygian replaces this person and then you interface through Phrygian, and

then you gotta—you gotta come up with how you deactivate this thing, for real for real.

**Keith:** Right. That—yeah.

**Austin:** And maybe there's a way to do that inside the m—I don't have it. Like, I want to be clear, I'm not—I don't have the machine in front of me. We've gotten to the end of my prep. There's a guy here, he's the thing that I—"he's a trigger, he's hooked up to a Divine, what do you do?" is the final thing I got. And it's—it's you gotta hook into him, and you gotta figure out a way to deactivate it.

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** And right now, that's two rolls.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And I don't know what it is. It's two rolls. Unless, again, you become the sun or something, but that seems like a way to kill everybody in this room, too.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And I don't even know if that—you know, who knows, right? That probably works, but. I don't know if you could become the sun—I don't know if that's a thing. I don't know that we've seen Branched become planets or moons or suns yet.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I know you became part of space earlier, but like—

**Keith:** But we also—we also deleted that.

**Austin:** I think that might be pushing it. No, you became part of space to get into the station.

**Keith:** Oh, that one. That time. Okay, yes, right, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** Um... we could... yeah, I mean...

**Ali:** I guess my thing is like, in the interest of deactivating it, [**Austin:** Mhm.] even if we—I—you know, the Divine Authority has a very specific, um, temperate, I bet.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah.

**Ali:** And, you know. I don't know that the so-called terrorists are gonna have a great interaction with the Divine Authority.

**Austin:** Sure. There are other answers. There are other—I mean, there are other things you could do, right? You don't have to be the ones who talk. Maybe you can trust Cor'rina Corrine to make the pitch to stand down, this super naive, idealistic—

[**Keith** hums uncertainly]

**Austin:** —Pact person could do it. I'm not—this is not what I'm saying you should do. I'm saying that there are—these are ideas that like, exist. Right?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Ali:** Right, right.

**Austin:** You could plug Asepsis into it. You could get the Divine, Arbitrage back on the call.

**Keith:** Oh, that's definitely come up. Not Arbitrage, Asepsis.

**Austin:** We could—right, but I'm telling you the options, 'cause there aren't—there isn't—there isn't a good option. Right?

**Keith:** No. That's why—that's why we haven't come up with it.

**Austin:** Right.

[**Ali** chuckles]

**Keith:** If there was a good option, we would have thought of it, I think. I would—I'm giving us credit.

**Ali:** Mhm.



**Austin:** I think so. I agree. I'm gonna agree to this.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 'Cause like, you have the good option for how to set up the call, so to speak, right? Or how to interface, which is Phrygian can become the replacement unit here, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** The body in the table. Maybe Phrygian could even become a thing that could interface with the guy directly. Right?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** Instead. I think that's even a thing you could probably do. But what we don't have is that second step. None of those second steps are particularly tasty.

**Keith:** Right. Okay, so, I—let's—let me run through the places where I could use the Soldier move, and then what that means for the other move that we've got to do. I could set myself up to be—to talk to or become the thing that is attached to the Divine.

**Austin:** Authority, yeah. Mhm.

**Keith:** And then we make a roll about—well, I guess—I mean, if I use the move—if I use the move to become the guy, then it's me that you would have to ask to shut off the thing, and I would say yes.

**Austin:** You wouldn't be the guy. You would be—can you become a particular person?

**Keith:** Well, that's a—that's a yes and a no. Following the example of We the People from earlier, [**Austin:** Yeah.] I do have a move called Shifting Self. It doesn't exactly work here, but I'll read it to you anyway—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** “At the beginning of a Sortie, you may assume the form of someone you’re closely familiar. Gain advantage to pass yourself off as that person to avoid suspicion of your disguise. This transformation lasts until you use the Beast Within, and you can’t use this move again until you do.”

**Austin:** That’s a cool move—

**Keith:** So it says at the beginning of a Sortie, but I think that they mean B-Plot, that’s an obvious B-Plot move, I feel like.

**Austin:** Sure. At the beginning of a Sortie meaning when a Sortie begins, you know?

**Keith:** Right, yes. But it is—

**Austin:** The thing here—my real thing here is you’ve been doing this—you’ve seen this person for one minute, I don’t think you know them or are closely familiar with them. Right?

**Keith:** Yes, yeah, I’m just introducing—you know, there is like a [Austin: Yeah, yeah.] “transform myself into an undetectable copy of a person.”

**Austin:** Yes. That is a thing that you could theoretically have gotten.

**Keith:** Right. But I can’t, like—I can’t like, become this person literally.

**Austin:** I think it’s a little less feasible than—right. Right.

**Keith:** I can be a Phrygian that looks like this person.

**Austin:** Right. Well, you don’t know what blood type they have. You know?

**Keith:** Right, but the thing...

**Austin:** And if you knew them familiar, you might not need to know that, because of the way the move works, you know?

**Keith:** Right. The thing that I was—

**Austin:** Without that.

**Keith:** The thing that I was getting it was more like, hooking myself up to the machine instead of this person to be—

**Austin:** That you could do.

**Keith:** But then—

**Austin:** I think that you could totally do. But then the thing there being, then you have to—then Authority has to know you.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You know?

**Keith:** But this is a—Phrygian is a plane that is crashing, so, like, you know.

**Austin:** Jesus.

**Keith:** What is the risk, really, there?

**Austin:** Right, right, right.

**Keith:** And—but then, you know, when the request comes in to stop it, Phrygian goes “yeah, obviously, I grant your request,” because it’s the person, [**Austin:** Right.] not the Divine, that makes that call.

**Austin:** Right, but the Divine has to—you have to—you—again, saying you could deactivate it would then give you the time [**Keith:** Yes, right.] to try to have to do another thing to actually destroy the Pillar.

**Keith:** Right. I—

**Austin:** Just deactivating the button doesn’t—

**Keith:** Right, yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** But it would give you that time, you know? I mean, the time that is getting eaten away by also more people are coming to fight you, but.

**Keith:** Right, so—yeah, I’m just—you know, I’m just—

**Austin:** Yeah, you're just plotting out what we can do. Yep.

**Keith:** Right. The other thing is, we could try to do that exact same thing, but with rolls, [**Austin:** Right.] and then use the Soldier move, you know, to try and figure out how—the Pillar part of it. How to permanently deactivate it.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Which is always what I assumed the last Soldier move would be used on. Like, that's sort of the—

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Like, this is it. This is the time when you use the last Soldier move [**Austin:** Mhm.] is to turn the key to shut it—to like—I was saying turn the key to shut it off, but really we want to turn the key to turn it on, and roll it off of the cliff.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** The flip side is that someone—or the other thing that we could do is someone else could do that interfacing part, but I don't know what the benefit of that [chuckles] would be. I don't know.

**Austin:** I don't know. Again, you have Asepsis, you have—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You have the things you have.

**Keith:** What's the Asepsis thing that you can do, Ali? Did you take a move that works here?

**Austin:** Oh, good question.

**Ali:** Um, I—if I took a move that worked here, I think it would maybe be Information Network? “When you contact your superiors or an appropriate source of relevant intel, you Dispel Uncertainties with plus Talk.” Or, “when you roll plus 10 on Help or Hinder and choose Help, your ally may act with Confidence in addition to Advantage.”

**Keith:** Ooh, that is pretty good. That relies on a **[Ali: Yeah.]** very good, successful Hinder roll.

**Austin:** [cross] Help or Hinder, but yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Ali, how many times have you leveled up? Have you leveled up?

**Ali:** This is my first time leveling up.

**Austin:** Okay. So this is—so you haven't—yeah, okay. Got it.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Um—

**Ali:** But also, I mean, the... If you give me Confidence and I try to do an Asepsis thing, **[Keith: Okay.]** I still have a plus 1. I have like, I have the plus 1 from Plan and Prepare still.

**Austin:** [chuckles] You do. For an extra—well, it's an extra Hold, that's not a...

**Ali:** Right, so that would be—

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** That would be what I could use for Force Multiplier, or B-Plot, but I have all of the B-Plot stuff, so.

**Austin:** Right. I see, I see.

**Ali:** Um...

**Keith:** Um, I—I'm—yeah, I'm totally willing to give Confidence on the next move. I've barely used that B-Plot stuff this whole time, and this would be—so it would be—

**Ali:** It would be complicating things for yourself, and then **[Austin: Mhm.]** me rolling to interface.

**Keith:** Yeah. It could also be a Crew roll.

**Austin:** It could be a Crew roll, correct.

**Keith:** Which is plus 3.

**Ali:** Oh yeah, 'cause I haven't used—we haven't used the final Crew roll.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Ali:** That feels—that feels like it probably makes the most sense, though? Brnine creates a pathway in for Phrygian, who then gets the dub, [laughing] question mark?

**Keith:** Yeah. Step one...

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Brnine creates a pathway in, step two, blank, step three, Phrygian gets the dub.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Ali:** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Austin:** Phrygian gets the dub, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Austin:** Just like you drew it up.

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** And—sorry, and that's the Crew roll? Or is that the Confidence Asepsis plus 1 roll?

**Ali:** I feel like it could be either or both.

**Austin:** It could. It could be either or both.

**Keith:** It could be both?

**Ali:** I mean, why not? It's—I'm using Asepsis as part of the crew.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Ali:** And then using Asepsis to give me Confidence, because that's what Asepsis does?

**Keith:** Oh, so you can get the Confidence on the Crew roll.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay, I mean, that sounds pretty good. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. You want to do that? 2d6 plus 3 plus Confidence.

[Ali chuckles]

**Keith:** And this is to—jus to—this is to interface, to...

**Austin:** With the underlying system, is what it sounds like.

**Keith:** To create a—for me to interface. You're hooking me up. Got it.

**Austin:** Yes, for you to interface, yes. Through Asepsis—do you want to go through Asepsis through this guy, or through Asepsis just right to Authority?

**Keith:** Authority.

**Austin:** Yeah, I think that makes sense. Yeah. Mhm. Yep.

**Ali:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** I sort of think unlocking that, like, once I'm in connected to Authority, [Austin: Yeah.] I can okay—we don't have to convince anyone to do the okay. As long as it works, it works.

**Austin:** Yep, yep. Alright, 2d6 plus 3. 1s or 6s.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Roll the dang dice. That's a 9.

**Ali:** That's a 9. It's a straight 9.

**Austin:** It's a straight 9.

**Keith:** It's a straight 9. Can I help?

**Austin:** Sure, how?

**Keith:** I'm thinking of what even the problems could be with helping out—I could be ex—

**Austin:** Time. Time is the problem.

**Keith:** Time? I could be explaining, you know, I'm being physically hooked up.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I can not only be explaining how, like, where to put things in me, but also—

**Austin:** Yep. Give me the 2d6 plus 3.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I think this makes sense.

**Keith:** 2d6 plus 3...

**Austin:** But again, you would just have to—yep.

**Keith:** Uh... 13.

**Austin:** That's a 13, so this definitely—

**Ali:** [muttering] Jesus christ. [laughs]

**Austin:** So, Brnine, you get one more die to roll. You gotta roll a 4 for this to go up to a 10.

**Ali:** Okay. 1d6, right?

**Austin:** 1d6.



**Keith:** Nice.

**Ali:** That's a 6.

**Austin:** That's a 6. So that means you rolled a 6 plus a 3, which is a 9, plus a 3 is 12.

**Keith:** Beautiful.

## **Interfacing**

[1:57:28]

**Austin:** Alright. Phrygian.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** I just—here is where we are.

**Keith:** What—

**Austin:** What's this look like as you hook yourself into one of these little—these little Asepsis drones that are now hooked into the Divine Authority?

**Keith:** Um...

**Ali:** All the little drones are pulling at your cords and stuff. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, do they buzz around like little weirdos? Do they stay—

**Austin:** They're—a hundred percent, yeah.

**Keith:** —they stay still, they don't—they have no ability to just like, hang out? No?

**Ali:** No, they're chittery little guys.

**Keith:** They're chittery? That's extremely pure of them.

**Austin:** Yeah, I think that's exactly right.

[Keith laughs] [Ali chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Just pulling, like, little pieces of dust off of like, the...

**Austin:** Phrygian, do you know when you complete a circuit, and like, the signal comes through, or you complete a circuit to a radio or something, and the radio starts picking up a signal?

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** And you can feel the charge running through it? Every time they touch you, “let us control it. Let us control it. Let me control it. I want to run it. Let me have the combustor. Let me have the combustor. Let me have it. Let me have the combustor. We’ll help. We’ll do it right.”

**Keith:** Uh, no.

**Austin:** Brnine doesn’t hear them like this. No, I know. I know you’re not gonna say—you’re gonna say no, [Ali laughs] but my point is like, let me underscore it as clearly as possible. Asepsis wants the Stellar Combustor.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There is no—and wants it for them. It wants it.

**Keith:** Can I double-check that Brnine doesn’t hear them like this?

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Is it—does Brnine hear them differently, or—

**Austin:** Brnine has never—yeah, I mean—

**Keith:** Or are they more chill around Brnine?

**Austin:** They don’t talk to Brnine in this way.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** They don't talk—there's no—right? Am I wrong about this, Brnine?

**Keith:** Or do you just ignore them?

**Ali:** Um, yeah.

**Keith:** They're just constantly doing this to you, and you're just like, "eh, whatever. You're just a little—you're a dog. You're a little puppy."

[**Ali** and **Sylvi** laugh]

**Ali:** No, I think it's like, for Brnine, Asepsis is like a Windows add-on that gives you the weather, and tells you the temperature, and—

**Austin:** Right, right, right. And how trustworthy—what the trustworthiness score of various people are.

**Keith:** Right. No one has—

**Dre:** Sure, sure, Bonzi Buddy.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** No one's ever had problems either, like, sort of literally or security-wise with a widget, with a Windows desktop widget.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Dre:** Uh-huh, yeah.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Ali:** Brnine's scanner is now doing the Akademiks video [laughing] that Austin sent me.

**Austin:** Oh my god. The video of DJ Akademiks—who's not a DJ. He's not. He's not a DJ.

**Ali:** [laughing] He's not a DJ.

**Keith:** What is he?

**Dre:** Are you sure?

**Ali:** He's barely even an influencer. Anyway, I'm just gonna send this—

**Austin:** He's a Twi—he is barely doing it—yeah, go ahead and post it.

**Ali:** This is what's happening in my visor right now. I'm being like, “woah, Phrygian, are you okay?” [laughs]

**Austin:** Good, I'm glad you put this in just general dog pound, our regular open chat, it's important.

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Austin:** It's so funny. The thing that's happening in this video is someone's trying to stream, and then their Windows just loses it, and it's doing, like, the magnification thing, and like, this speech center thing—

**Keith:** [cross] Oh my god. It's going [mimics Windows alert trill]

**Austin:** Uh-huh. And like, it's zoomed in all the way. [laughs] You can't see anything.

**Sylvi:** [laughing] How does the second video feed come up at one point here?

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** It's so funny. It's so funny. It's the funniest video on the internet. This is happening to you, yeah, a hundred percent. Um, alright.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Phrygian, you just gotta plug yourself in and figure out what you become to stop a Divine—or to convince a Divine to permanently shut this thing down.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or to, I guess, interfere with its ability to [Keith: Right.] explode.

**Keith:** Doesn't necessarily have to be convincing. I feel like we've bypassed the convince.

**Austin:** Yeah, you don't have to convince this person of anything.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You have to stop the—permanently stop the mechanism that is **[Keith: Right.]** exploding the sun.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And you have the roll, but I don't know what it is you do.

**Keith:** Um... Does Authority feel like anything?

**Austin:** Authority feels like authority. You know the part in Jack's speech that was like, the Stargrave has her people practice dying?

**Keith:** Uh-huh.

**Austin:** This thing likes to practice dying, and it likes to practice killing. It likes to go off. It hasn't blown up in a long time. It would love to exercise its raw power. It is—it is a force of incredible—of an incredible self-confidence. It has the sense that it carries itself with superiority.

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** It is hard to be—I mean, what's this look like? Where are you as you hook into this? What's your perception? Like, are you sucked into the machine? [chuckles]

**[Keith laughs]**

**Austin:** Are you in the machine world? Are we in stratus space? We're not in stratus space, but are you in that style of—are you, you know...

**Keith:** I would love to—I would love for there to be some visuals and it's not just, like, sort of black.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** You know, inside of eyelids.

**Austin:** Yeah, I don't think that's what it is. I mean, I think you're seeing the Divine Principality, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You're getting that sort of galactic level view of everything.

**Keith:** Yep. Maybe feel—you can feel all of the Authorities.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And they're like—there's something rhythmic about it. They're like, operating on like a—like a pulse, you know what I mean? They're like—it's not a pulse, it's like a—what's the rhythm game where you tap—not Ouendan, right? But the more modern one where you tap your phone. Not Love Live, but maybe Love Live is also this. You know what I mean.

**Keith:** So it's not—

**Austin:** I mean that type of rhythm game.

**Keith:** Ouendan's Elite Beat Agents, right?

**Austin:** It's—Elite Beat Agents, yeah.

**Keith:** Right, okay.

**Austin:** I mean, it is—I'm describing that style of touch the screen rhythm game.

**Keith:** Right, yeah, touch and—yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** And it's like that. It's like [melodic staccato] *do-do-do-do. Do-do-do-do.* And it's that, but like, for the thousands—

**Keith:** They're hyping each other up. [melodic staccato] *Boop-boop-boop-boo.*

**Austin:** [chuckles] The thousands of the stellar combustors across the galaxy.

**Keith:** Yeah, that's so many. It's way too many. It's too many.

**Austin:** It's too many, but there are—how many suns are there, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah. A trillion, I don't know.

**Austin:** Yeah. Almost like you shouldn't [chuckles] try to have a galactic empire.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** It doesn't feel right.

**Keith:** Um... yeah.

**Austin:** And so you're in that rhythm. And there is something—I mean, this is also the Adagio, right? Like, there is something—this is being on cycle. This is—this is “the wheel turns,” right? Like this is—there's something pleasing about the rhythm it's putting out. There's a reason I went [melodic staccato] *do-do-do-do*, and I didn't go, like—

**Keith:** [mimics abrasive percussion]

**Austin:** [mimics abrasive percussion] Yeah, exactly.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Like, it feels orderly.

**Sylvi:** Ooh.

**Austin:** And I like [imitating heavy percussion] *dun-dun-dun*, you know what I mean? But like, that's not what it's—how it feels itself. It feels itself as—and it would love to change the rhythm up by exploding one of these things. It would be good—it'll find a new song. It'll find a new rhythm. But like, that's the perspective it has in all this, is that like, “I keep the rhythm to the whole galaxy. That's me. Everyone moves on my rhythm.”

**Keith:** Okay. Uh...

**Austin:** And it doesn't have a face. Do you know what I mean?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** It doesn't have a—you're in a—you're floating above the galaxy seeing these suns blink in this way.

**Keith:** There's no, like, little yes man robot?

**Austin:** There's no little yes man robot, no.

[**Dre** chuckles]

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** "Howdy! I'm here to represent the Divine Authority!"

[**Keith** laughs] [**Dre** chuckles]

**Sylvi:** "Dino DNA!"

**Austin:** [chuckles] Yeah, it's also the dino DNA guy. Yeah, exactly.

**Keith:** Um... I have a couple different thoughts.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Keith:** The first one would be, uh... So, I was—I have a Plex machine that I keep in my living room, and I made a mistake when I was buying the parts to put it together, because the motherboard that I got doesn't have, like, a server mode where you can turn it on without having a GPU plugged in, because it didn't have a GPU in it.

**Austin:** Oh, right. Gotcha.

**Keith:** It doesn't need one to run the Plex, but it does need one to turn on the machine.

**Austin:** [cross] But it does need one to turn on the machine, yeah. All the way. Sure.

**Keith:** And so I didn't buy a GPU, and it didn't have this headless mode where you could turn it on GPU-less, so it would error out. It would just be like, "there's no GPU, so we're not turning it on."

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** And what—something that I looked into that I thought might work was like, getting a dummy GPU.



**Austin:** Right. Just fill that slot with something that sends a signal saying it's a GPU.

**Keith:** Right. And basically I couldn't find a lot of info on it, but for a lot of reasons it wouldn't work, but I did learn a lot about dummy GPUs, which is that some people use them on machine—I can't—I think it was like, machines with—that only have integrated graphics cards. You could put in a—like, a dummy HDMI thing to to make it like, run at a higher power.

**Austin:** Ah. Sure.

**Keith:** To like, you know, get some more performance out of the integrated graphics. And so, you know, I think, like—I'm thinking maybe there's a way to like, sort of simulate the explo—like, make it think it blew up.

**Austin:** Make it think it blew up.

**Keith:** Give it what it wants.

**Austin:** That's really good, yeah.

**Keith:** Make it think it blew up, and then, you know, it's not surprised that it's been toasted, it's been fried by this.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Like, because I'm supposed to be fried, the thing blew up.

**Austin:** Right. Well—and so you're saying, wait—and send the signal to self-destruct the actual ring as part of this. Is that what you're saying also is happening? Or are you just saying it turn—it doesn't ever interface with this again because it thinks it's gone.

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Austin:** Alright. I think that's cool.

**Keith:** Okay. So then maybe I don't even need to save my other thing.

**Austin:** I think you maybe—sorry, I think—save your other—I mean—

**Keith:** We can talk through it.

**Austin:** I like this one.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I like this one. I—well, the thing is, I'm gonna also make you an offer.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** But I like this one. I think maybe what we—I think maybe there also has to be a, like—while you're in there, you're rerouting something to make the ring blow up, so that it doesn't actually—

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** 'Cause like, at the end of the day, if they just can land more people here...

**Keith:** Right. Then they can just fix it. Right.

**Austin:** And be like "re-interface with it, it'll fix it." Exactly.

**Keith:** Okay, but you're not saying blow it up now, like while we're all in here, now?

**Austin:** Oh, no, I'm saying, like, a countdown to blow it up or something, right?

**Keith:** Okay, and then we're—okay.

**Austin:** But like, not—yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Then you're getting out, right? Which, don't worry, Misericorde and Cor'rina have a way out already. You know? They're ready to go.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But, the point is, do you have another idea that would solve for this also, or are you good with this one?

**Keith:** Um, no, I think that the other idea that I had doesn't—doesn't make—doesn't change this part of like, needing to—

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** This—yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Here's the pitch I want to make you. You got a 10 on this, that's fine. You stopped this one.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You could roll the dice for real and stop them all forever.

**Keith:** But?

**Austin:** You just—what do you mean "but"? But you roll the dice for real.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** And you don't want to fail.

**Keith:** What's the roll?

**Austin:** I think it's Defy.

**Keith:** What happens on a fail?

**Austin:** It blows up.

**Keith:** What happens on a partial?

**Austin:** What happens on a partial... The clock ticks.

**Keith:** Okay. By—

**Austin:** By one.

**Keith:** But it's—

**Austin:** So you'd have—you'd give it a shot.

**Keith:** But it's done.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. No, no, no. No, you would not—you would not have gotten it. The clock ticks, you would need more time.

**Keith:** Okay. What happens on a—

**Austin:** I mean, maybe the—hm. 'Cause a partial would mean you get it, but...

**Keith:** Right, you get it, but...

**Austin:** Yeah, but. Yeah. Uh... hm. What happens on a partial?

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** You get it, but.

**Austin:** Yeah, but the “but” could be big.

**Keith:** The but could be big.

[Ali snorts]

**Austin:** Let me tell you, the but could be big.

**Sylvi:** God damn.

**Keith:** These days?

**Ali:** [exhales deeply] [laughs]

[Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** Thank god.

**Dre:** What?

**Austin:** We live in better times, that's all.

[Ali snickers]

**Austin:** The—on a partial... Oh, yeah, I mean, it's the same thing, right? On a—[chuckles] eh, maybe it's not that, because maybe they'll do that anyway. The Pact might claim this anyway, or try to. 'Cause on a full success, the point is you're in there, right? 'Cause you're dead no matter what, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And dead can mean many things. You're a Branched. In my mind, a success is—

**Keith:** We just talked about a way "dead" is not dead.

**Austin:** Right, exactly. And in your case, a full success would mean you are in there forever. Right? You are countering Authority across the galaxy forever.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Which is kind of what Phrygian wants, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** On a partial success—on a partial success, you succeed at stopping this one, but not the bigger thing.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Right? I think that's what it is. Because that way I'm also—I'm also bending it towards the core success, which is "this place is saved," but the other places aren't, necessarily.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And I want to be clear, that partial success doesn't mean "and then another one explodes instead." Do you know what I mean? It would just be you only manage to stop this one. You can only—it's not about, um—it's not about—the success there would be you actually just don't have it in you to stop a Divine. You only have enough

to stop it in this one place. That's all the energy you can keep—you can give it, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We found out how big a Branched could be, and it can only protect one system at a time inside of this weird mental space that the Divine exists in across time and space, you know?

**Keith:** I have—I have good news.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Ali, if you can give me Confidence, I can guarantee [**Ali:** Uh-huh.] a partial success. I think. If the math works, I think.

**Austin:** I love this.

**Ali:** I think I can only give you Confidence by complicating things for myself, [**Keith:** Yeah.] which I do not mind doing.

**Keith:** Because, so—

**Ali:** But it means complicating things for myself.

**Keith:** So, the lowest—let's say the lowest possible roll that we could get is a 2, 2. That's a 4 plus 3 is 7. Any lower than that is a 1, which becomes a 6.

**Austin:** Becomes—yeah, uh-huh.

**Keith:** So, absolutely, I take your offer.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** I love this. What a perfect way to end Phrygian, right?

**Keith:** Yeah. With some rules lawyering?

[**Ali** and **Dre** laugh]

**Austin:** Is—with some rules lawyering and some math, lining up one more headshot, and rolling the dice to see if it works.

**Keith:** Oh my god.

## **Final Roll**

[2:12:10]

**Austin:** Let's roll it. Let's see how much—let's see how much Phrygian can really do.

**Keith:** It's wild, because—

**Ali:** I believe in you, Phryge.

**Keith:** I know that I already did the math, and that it works, [**Austin:** Uh-huh.] and still this is the hardest button press of the thing.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** Aw. It's really good. 'Cause this—

[**Keith** groans]

**Austin:** Ohh!

**Ali:** Wow!

**Austin:** Wow! Wow!

**Dre:** Wow.

**Ali:** Aww.

**Austin:** 2 plus 2 plus 3. 7. If either of those was a 1...

**Keith:** Can I get help?

**Austin:** Brnine, do you want to help?

**Ali:** Oh, sure, yeah. Well, we haven't said how things are complicated.

**Austin:** Yeah, so here's the way—I know how things are complicated. Cor—I almost said Cori. Cori's wrong, but there's a—there's a—there's two Cors in play now.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** Uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, sorry about that.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. It's fine, don't worry about it. And a Misericorde, so there's lots of “cor” sounds happening right now. Cor'rina and Misericorde have been holding off the incoming waves of security robots, and I think Cor'rina says,

Austin (as **Cor'rina**): Our ride should be here any minute. We gotta go.

**Austin:** And it's any minute. It's any minute now. The back wall of this explodes, and the air begins to get sucked out of this place. They have on magnet boots, they're fine. And you see a giant frigate, a space frigate, arrive and begin to, like, effectively dock with this interior ring. It's not a giant frigate, right? But it's like a—it's not a—it's a capital ship, but it's like, the smallest of the capital ships, right?

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Austin:** And it is a packed Apostolosian ship that just kind of like, jumped in to dock and be their quick escape route vehicle. So this is their—this is the—and so, here's the thing. Your way out is onto a Pact of Necessary—or not Pact of Necessary Venture, Pact of Free States vessel. And they are gonna take you and bring you on board. It's also the only way to go. The other way is filled with robots coming to kill you. So, I mean, you know. There's your complication.

**Ali:** That sounds—that sounds complicated, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, mhm. That is a 9, so, that means you get a plus 1 here, or you get one more die to roll, Keith.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** And let me tell you, I'll give it to you on a 1. If you get the 1—



**Keith:** It carries over?

[Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** —it becomes a 6 and therefore, yeah, uh-huh.

**Keith:** 5.

**Austin:** It's a 5. 5 plus 2 plus 3 is 10.

**Keith:** Woo!

**Ali:** Wow.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** What's this look like visually? From Brnine's perspective, and then from yours?

**Ali:** Um... In terms of seeing Phrygian do this, or me leaving...

**Austin:** Yeah, in terms of—both of these things, yeah. How do you see Phrygian—is Phrygian just visually gone? Did Phrygian get fed into the machine in such a way that Phrygian is just literally physically gone?

**Keith:** The cables just get slurped up.

**Austin:** Is the body—maybe this is a Phrygian answer. I mean, really, yeah. Is that better or worse than the cables being there, but being like, they fall, like cables would? You know what I mean? Like, not like a body.

**Ali:** Right, yeah. Yeah, I feel like if Brnine is like, typing into this, like, Windows DOS screen or whatever—

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** —to essentially create a chat room between Asepsis and Phrygian...

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Ali:** Like, not seeing Phrygian's inputs come up anymore.

**Austin:** Oh. Right.

**Ali:** And, uh... Cor'rina and Misericorde being like, "yo yo yo, we gotta go. We gotta go, we gotta go."

**Austin:** "We gotta go right now."

**Ali:** And Brnine being like, "wait one more second," and being like, [chuckling] "Phrygian..."

**Austin:** Aw.

**Ali:** "Yo, Phrygian, text me back."

[**Keith** and **Ali** laugh]

**Austin:** No, not the "text me back" again!

**Dre:** Oh, man.

**Keith:** Brnine is always waiting for a text back.

**Austin:** Phrygian, if you can send one final—wait, Phrygian, if you can send one text message to Brnine before this fully consumes you, what is it?

**Keith:** Um... [chuckles] "Don't let them take credit."

**Austin:** Oh. Don't let them take credit...

**Ali:** I'll try my best.

**Austin:** Have you explained while this is going on that you're taking them all offline?

**Ali:** Oh, to—

**Keith:** Oh, so Brnine can't see that.

**Austin:** No, you're the one who's connected to the mind of the Divine that can see it all. Right?

**Keith:** Okay. Well, so, I'm going SMS rules, right?

**Austin:** Yep, mhm.

**Keith:** I have a longer text message that I can send.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** I'm adding to the beginning of that—

**Austin:** Yeah, mhm.

**Keith:** “All offline now.”

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** “All offline now.” Just staying up late reading the message over and over again. What could it mean? All—we're all offline, these days.

[Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, wow. Makes you—yeah.

**Sylvi:** I wish.

**Dre:** Makes you think.

**Austin:** Ever since Twitter became X, we've all gone offline.

**Ali:** Yeah, Phrygian, can you disable the Wi-Fi for [laughing] the planet of Palisade?

[Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Ohh. Phrygian. What's—

**Keith:** This whole season would be solved if people could go touch grass.

**Austin:** [laughs] [groans]

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Phrygian, what do you see? What is this process like for you? You've made—you've become your final thing, you know?

**Keith:** Okay, the entire world is made up of the sort of—the lighters that people would hold up before they had cell phones at concerts.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** There's no—there's nothing but those, and then as if you're in a baseball stadium doing the wave, they sort of like, flicker out from the other end in.

**Austin:** Permanently?

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** Or does that happen over and over again?

**Keith:** Like a strobe. Like a different—like a new—like a new rhythm.

**Austin:** Yeah. Like—yeah, yeah. I mean, whatever you want. This is your form, and this is what you are forever, and you're—this is you, isolated, but—I mean, I don't know. Do you die, or are you permanently blocking Authority? Which is it?

**Keith:** Uh, you know, Phrygian went to therapy one time, and verbalized that they had a 10,000 year plan, [**Austin:** Yeah. Uh-huh.] and this is the 10,000 year plan.

**Austin:** “I'm gonna live like this [**Keith:** Yeah.] for 10,000 years if it means stopping this shit from ever happening again.” Pour one out for a real one.

**Keith:** Do I have time to use my last Soldier move?

**Austin:** I mean, what are you gonna do? What are you gonna become?

**Keith:** I want to help—I want to do something that will help take credit.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

**Austin:** What do you want to do?

**Dre:** Hell yeah, hell yeah.

**Keith:** I want to, like—I want to beam out information about this, like...

**Austin:** Oh, you don't want to just draw the Millennium Break signal in the fucking sky?

[**Ali** laughs]

**Keith:** Oh, that's sick. That's some Aria Joie shit.

**Austin:** [chuckles] That is some Aria Joie shit.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I don't know if—I don't know if Phrygian is sentimental like that. But...

**Austin:** But yeah, you could al—you could do both. Oh, do you know a thing that hasn't actually been broadcast?

**Keith:** What's up?

**Austin:** You know what people haven't fucking seen, and actually might be how you fell this Pillar?

**Keith:** What's up?

**Austin:** No one's seen the fucking Stargrave Elcessor's weird-ass video.

**Ali:** Oh, really?

**Austin:** That was delivered to the—that was delivered to the council of Hexagon, and then that, like, got secondhand spread around the Hexagon folks.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

**Austin:** But like, that wasn't broadcast far and wide. The sun just started glowing weird one day, and I think the public propaganda has been "Millennium Break is doing something evil," you know? So like, you could broadcast that, plus some additional message from Phrygian, plus the cool Millennium Break logo being like "we did that shit."

**Keith:** I love that. I love the whole thing.

**Austin:** What do you say to people? How do you try to take credit for it?

**Keith:** I think it's got to be—maybe it's—maybe this sort of—this does sort of ruin the [laughing] last text message, 'cause I just do it. I just do that again, but maybe not—

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** You know, it's not word for word. I love the video idea, I think broadcasting the video is really good. How many—Phrygian would maybe know exactly after being in there how many stellar combustors there were?

**Austin:** Yeah, tell me. Thousands is what I said, right? Give me a number.

**Keith:** Yeah, let's say it's about 4,322.

**Austin:** Sure. Sure. 4,322.

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** The—no. 4,100. That's better. Who's building 22 things? That's stupid. [chuckles] Uh—they build them in batches of 50.

**Austin:** Right, sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah, that makes sense.

**Keith:** It's the video. It says—what did I say, 4,200? 4,100?

**Austin:** 4,100, yeah.

**Keith:** 4,100 stellar combustors turned off. [laughing] What is the—

[Austin laughs]

**Keith:** It's the—yeah.

**Austin:** [laughing] Oh, yeah, it is, a hundred percent.

**Janine:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** [laughs] Please, someone that remembers.

**Austin:** Oh, what is the whole thing? I'm looking this up.

**Keith:** "Born to die, world is a fuck, kill 'em all 1989, I am a trash man, 410,757,864,530 dead cops."

[**Ali** laughs]

**Sylvi:** [cross] Oh, let's fucking go!

**Austin:** Uh-huh. [laughs]

**Sylvi:** So is—what is it, is it, uh... So, "I am a trash man, I am a Branched man?"

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** I am a Branched—uh-huh. 4,100 stellar combustor—dead stellar combustors. No, that just says dead cops, still, actually.

**Keith:** [laughing] Yeah.

**Sylvi:** The dead cops line is the same. The stellar combustors is just added to the end.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh-huh.

**Keith:** Unfortunately, this is not a very Phrygian message, but I think it does read like this. This is the feeling I'm going for.

**Austin:** Yeah, I get you. Yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** It emerged just from trying to say what I would actually say, but it's—

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Keith:** Yeah, it is, you know, 4,100 stellar combustors turned off, thank Millennium Break, parentheses, Hexagon, parentheses parentheses—[laughing] "I am Branched Man" is very funny, but no. [laughs]

**Austin:** "I am Branched Man" is so funny.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

**Austin:** God, the idea that people go around being like, “you know about Branched Man?”

[**Keith** and **Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** “Did you know that Branched Man shut off the stellar combustors?”

**Keith:** Okay, leave it in.

**Janine:** Who would win in a fight? Branched Man or Skibidi Toilet?

[**Keith**, **Austin**, and **Dre** laugh] [**Austin** groans]

**Keith:** I’m leaving in “Branched Man”. I like it.

**Austin:** I like it.

## **Brnine**

[2:23:15]

**Austin:** Brnine, it happens—this is all like, so quick, right? Like, oh, okay, we’re gonna be on the spaceship, and it’s like, it’s weird to be on a spaceship—it’s an Apostolosian spaceship.

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Austin:** You’re from Apostolos. You haven’t been on an Apostolosian spaceship in god knows how long. And it’s like, the rhythms are the same. Right? The salutes are the same. A big difference is the people here have, like—they’ve become, like, elementals and furies. That’s the short version.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** The Apostolosians are digging into some wild elemental magic now, like nature magic, that is partly, like—they are just—some of them just have wings. Some of them are fur—are literally furry, or have claws, and other ones look sort of like the Figure in that they have, like, rocky outcroppings on their shoulders, or lightning in



their eyes. Right? Yeah, they were always furries, Janine. I—they were, but now they're different—they're multiple different—

**Keith:** [cross] They were scalies before.

**Austin:** They're not just—they're not just fish people, right, they're not just scalies, they're also—they're fish people who are then—a fish person can want to become a wolf, okay?

**Ali:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** I mean, they do just all fall under the anthro umbrella, if you're being, like, you know, general with it.

**Austin:** Just generally—and some of them, again, are more elemental, they're not just the anthro—you know what I mean? Some of them also do now have fire hair.

**Sylvi:** Well, it just means anthropomorphized, Austin, as like a humanized version of a thing.

**Austin:** I guess you're right. I guess you're right. I apologize. Sorry, you're right.

**Sylvi:** It's all good.

[Ali snorts]

**Austin:** Yeah. Thank you for being here to guide me back to the right—

**Sylvi:** No problem, just want to keep everyone accountable.

**Austin:** I appreciate it. You know, I'll—my notes app apology I'll post with the episode.

**Sylvi:** Cool, thank you so much.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** I'm putting down the hammers.

**Austin:** Okay, good. And that's where—you're on there, right? And are being led to like, a debriefing room like you were always part of some mission that you were not always part of. Misericorde just leans over to you at one point, and is like,

Austin (as **Misericorde**): Yeah, this place sucks.

**Austin:** And, [chuckles] you know, the vibe—and Routine is like, doesn't want to be here either.

**Ali:** Can I—

**Austin:** Uh-huh?

**Ali:** Can I—at the lean over, [**Austin:** Mhm.] can I be like,

Ali (as **Brnine**): You'll come back with me?

**Keith:** Woah.

**Austin:** [laughs] Bet.

**Ali:** "Fuck this." [laughs]

**Austin:** No, I think—I think Misericorde might—I would have to think about it. I think it's like—

**Keith:** Was that a fake "this place sucks"?

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** No, it was a real "this place sucks."

**Keith:** It was? It was real? Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, Misericorde is not a—is not a Pact stan.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Dre:** True believer.

**Austin:** Misericorde loves to destroy things and burn things and cut things, is not a—is not a true believer, yeah, uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** Mostly just there for, uh—likes violence and doing violence with Cor’rina.

**Ali:** Yeah, come through.

**Keith:** Was Misericorde the one was that said “cool” when we said—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I think—Misericorde is she/her, right?

**Austin:** Misericorde is he/him. Right?

**Sylvi:** He/they.

**Austin:** He/they, he/they, he/they.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I’m getting my tertiary characters mixed up.

**Austin:** Fair.

**Sylvi:** It’s fine, it was a Syl—it’s a Sylvi character, it’s like a 90% chance it’s a girl.

[**Austin** chuckles]

**Keith:** Anyway, when when we first got there, and they were like “who are you,” and we said “Millennium Break,” so—you said, but I don’t know who it was, said “terrorists, cool.”

**Austin:** Yeah, that was Misericorde. Yeah, uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Cor’rina is like a Pact true believer, is like the liberal “America, fuck yeah,” you know?

**Keith:** A little Gucci.

**Austin:** Yeah, but like, more, right? Because like, Gucci at least is on the right—

**Keith:** Right, but Gucci had a path to it.

**Austin:** Even then, Gucci was not—yeah, Gucci had a past. Yeah, that's true, that's true. Yes. Anyway. But Cor does, you know, cor wants to help people's lives, I think, generally. It's just, you know. Sometimes you're born into ideology and just, you know, slurp it up.

**Dre:** No, no, no, no, no.

**Sylvi:** That'd never happen to me, though. Or any character I've played.

**Austin:** [laughing] Uh-huh. Never.

**Dre:** Never.

**Sylvi:** Never. I'm different.

[Dre laughs]

## Closing

[2:27:09]

**Austin:** Speaking of, and we'll wrap here, I think, with this being the sort of situation. Inside of the—so again, Brnine and that crew are being, you know, escaping the Stellar Combustor with the giant Millennium Break logo flying above it, the—you know, also escaping from the Divine Plight, which was outside, you know, dodging the laser fire. That ship is like—that ship is being piloted by an incredible hotshot Pact pilot. We'll get into them maybe next time, 'cause I don't know what your situation's gonna be during downtime, Brnine. We'll have to figure it out.

**Ali:** [laughs] Uh-huh.

**Austin:** Meanwhile, Chimera's Lantern, interior. I think that now that the Chimeric Cadent is up, or is back from this ritual, unleashes themselves from the throne, and begins to—I guess at this point, looks at you, Cori, and is like,

Austin (as **Chimeric Cadent**): Let us deal with the defiler.

**Sylvi:** Oh.

**Austin:** Glaring back at the Ingrate.

**Sylvi:** Oh.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** There is like, a pause [**Austin:** Uh-huh] for a minute.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** And I think before she like, lowers the field, her mech pulls its two sickles back out.

**Austin:** Mhm. Just in case.

**Sylvi:** Just in case.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. And I do think that there is like, that intense eye contact with you. Of like, you know...

**Sylvi:** Oh yeah, absolutely.

**Austin:** It isn't dumb, it doesn't not think that, you know. It knows Devotion, so.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. I do drop the field, but I don't drop [**Austin:** Mhm.] eye contact.

**Austin:** Mhm. The Chimeric Cadent moves with incredible speed, and pins the Ingrate down to the ground. Is just more powerful than it, and is—was ready in a way the Ingrate was not. It's not a—we're not gonna roll this fight out, you know what I mean? But the Ingrate is going to be—it seems like the Chimeric Cadent has dealt with Axioms before, and it seems capable of—I mean, I think at some point, there is a sort of—something seems like it unclips from the back of the Chimeric Cadent, like,

between the wings, a little—or not little, it's gigantic because it's grown with the Cadent—a golden beetle that then flies around the held-down Ingrate, and applies a sort of binding to it, a tether binding it in place. And while this is happening, you are free to escape or retreat or—I think maybe the Cadent suggests that you find your way to the Chamber of Loyalty or to Bounty's Cocoon somewhere deeper in where you can rest and recover.

**Sylvi:** Uh, real quick, has—is Consecration still trying to get in here?

**Austin:** At this point Consecration has—there's not enough damage done for Consecration to pierce this part of the—

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** And also doesn't quite—again, this is a weird time-space zone. You know? You're not even sure there—again, there are times where it feels like you're not orbiting Palisade anymore. And so, yeah, you're able to retreat to a safe place here, wherever you want that to be on this map. And again, I think we're gonna pick up downtime inside of here. I don't know what that looks like, but...

**Sylvi:** Let's fucking go.

**Dre:** Do we get—do we see Phrygian's message?

**Austin:** I don't know, do you? Yeah. I think the Blue Channel, like, pushes it through to you, right? Hunt—Hunting makes a connection with you, right? Into all the different mech—I mean, you don't have a mech anymore, Figure. Where are you?

**Dre:** Uh, vibin'?

**Austin:** You're vibin'. Did you get into another mech? Are you riding Mow on the back, or the back of Mow with Thisbe?

**Dre:** Yeah, does anybody have space?

**Austin:** Did you get into the—to Cori's new mech?

[Keith laughs]

**Janine:** Mow's always got space.

**Austin:** Mow does always have space.

**Sylvi:** My mech does not have space for another person in it.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** No, no.

**Dre:** Alright.

**Sylvi:** A lot of wires in there.

**Janine:** You can come in the hatchback. You can just pop right in.

**Dre:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, there you go.

**Janine:** Ka-chunk.

**Austin:** Then yeah, then I think that the—through your comms, the Phrygian message gets played, and you all see it. The symbol of Millennium Break burning above the sun. And the sun is turning yellow again, right? The red has—the swollen red that it was recedes, and you hear it from Phrygian, the Stellar Combustor as a thing has been shut down in the Divine Principality.

**Sylvi:** Aw, bye, Phrygian.

**Dre:** Bye, Phryge.

**Ali:** Bye, Phryge.

**Austin:** Congratulations, Phrygian.

**Keith:** Brnine's already trying to replace me.

**Austin:** Fuck.

**Ali:** What?

**Dre:** Yeah.

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, I guess get Misericorde on board and you're good.

**Dre:** It's fine, yeah.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, wow.

**Keith:** Took nine seconds.

**Ali:** I'm just, you know... I'm friggin', um...

**Janine:** Playing the field, that's fine.

**Ali:** Opportunistic.

**Austin:** Yeah, you're linking and building right now.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Listen, Millennium Break can't save lives without proper, you know, HR departments.

**Ali:** I'm networking.

**Austin:** Right, mhm.

**Sylvi:** We need something for the intra-Millennium—the intra-Hexagon volleyball team that we have.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** We don't have enough people now, so...

**Keith:** We lost one with the arms, the crazy arms.



[**Janine** laughs]

**Sylvi**: Yeah.

**Ali**: Yeah.

**Austin**: God, what are you gonna do without Phrygian's room? Where are you gonna hold meetings now?

**Keith**: Where are you gonna keep your cereals?

**Sylvi**: Is—

**Ali**: I was never holding meetings in the—[laughing] in Phrygian.

**Austin**: Where was movie night? Was movie night inside of Phrygian or not?

**Ali**: No, no.

**Sylvi**: No, movie night was inside the arcade room.

**Ali**: Yeah.

**Austin**: Okay.

**Keith**: These are all—these are all posthumous insults. You're just—you're in—this is—

**Austin**: No, I'm not—I'm saying—I'm saying Phrygian was good.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Keith**: No, no, you're complimenting Phrygian—

**Austin**: Oh, you mean from them. Yes.

**Keith**: —by letting people have meetings in there. Everyone else being like, "we're not gonna have a meeting there." That's the insult.

**Austin**: Yeah, I see.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** I see.

**Janine:** It'll be okay. Whenever we miss Phrygian, we can just go into a random room and talk to it and then leave.

**Austin:** [laughs] Aww.

**Keith:** I just think we have a ship—

**Sylvi:** “My pronouns are he/room.”

**Keith:** —a spaceship full of people who underappreciated, crucially underappreciated, the value of a bookshelf that represented someone else's mood. That's a great way to find a new book to read.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

**Dre:** Yeah, no, you're right.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** They're not gonna notice it until they're looking for something to read.

**Keith:** Yeah, paved parking lot.

**Austin:** Damn. That's right. [laughs]

**Ali:** Damn.

**Janine:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** And stopped the sun from blowing up. So I mean, you know.

**Austin:** Yeah. Wow. Every time anyone looks up at the sun, they'll be like, “thanks, Branched Man.”

[**Ali** laughs]

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Thanks, Branched Man.

**Ali:** Thanks, Branched Man.

**Keith:** “What was—what was their name again?”

[Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Thanks, Branched Man.

**Keith:** “Who were they? They did so many—”

**Dre:** “They were Branched Man. What do you mean?”

**Sylvi:** “It was—I think it was like Figure or something?”

[Austin laughs]

**Keith:** “There was this weirdo who did something important, and I think their name was Branched Man. It was one week ago? Did they ever—”

**Janine:** “It was like a tree guy. It was like a tree...”

**Dre:** Tree man.

**Austin:** It was a tree. Tree man, yeah.

**Ali:** It’s fine. I’m gonna get on—I’m gonna get on CNN, and I’m gonna eulogize you, and everyone’s gonna go—

**Keith:** Yeah, it’s gonna be a whole episode about—

**Austin:** [cross] Oh, my God. They’re gonna put you on CENTRE/line while you’re on this—

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Holy shit.

**Keith:** No, CENTRE/line would never have...

**Janine:** “Tell us about Brunch Man. Was it waffles?”

[Austin laughs]

**Keith:** This is—this is—

**Sylvi:** Brunch man?

**Austin:** [laughs] It becomes Brunch man once it hits Stel Orion, for sure.

**Keith:** CENTRE/line is not having Brnine on in the same way that CNN was not interviewing Osama bin Laden.

[**Austin** laughs]

**Keith:** “So what do you have to say about all this?”

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, my god. Oh. Fuck, is Alise Breka, like, when VICE used to send people to go report from within the Taliban?

**Sylvi:** Yeah, except she’s writing yaoi about it.

**Ali:** Yeah.

[**Keith** and **Ali** laugh]

**Austin:** That’s better. That’s better.

**Sylvi:** I agree.

**Dre:** I agree, yeah.

**Austin:** I guess we still have a show to make, huh?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** [laughs] Sure.

**Austin:** We should all probably wrap this up, so. [laughs]

**Keith:** We could have wrapped it up a little earlier, but we chose to keep going.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** We did. We sure did. Brnine, what's that thing you believe?

**Ali:** "We will prove that Millennium Break can change lives."

**Austin:** Damn. Damn.

**Sylvi:** Pretty good.

**Austin:** Pretty good.

**Keith:** I can't believe Phrygian's a Divine now.

**Ali:** Turned the sun on. [chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I mean, kind of, right? Well, like, and this is the thing that, like—

**Keith:** Divines are vegetables.

**Austin:** I'll use this—that's right. I mean, a thing that I've never said out loud, maybe, about Branched—maybe I have, maybe I haven't—is that they're just people and Divines who have—they're both—they're post-human and post-Divine, right? They are—the Golden Branch made it. And what happened in the Golden Branch eventually is that the lines between human and robot and Divine fully collapsed. And once that happened, once that category, those hard categories were gone, they thought, "let's blow up some more categories, like what a person is altogether." And so like, the idea that you would be able to interface with a Divine in this way is not particularly, you know, outlandish, you know? There's Divine in you in some way, you know, insofar as Divines are a thing at all, you know? This is also why the Divine Principality hates the Branched at, like, a deep level, is the Branched are evidence that this divide between humans and Divines is not permanent, is not—is not categorically true. That these are—that these categories are malleable and social and can collapse and change. And I think that there is a sort of social and cultural hatred at seeing that this thing that the entire system is built around is absolutely bullshit, so.

**Keith:** And that a Divine isn't necessarily a, you know, a one-robot army that is controlled by the Divine Principality.

**Austin:** Right. Correct. Correct. Nor that controls it, right? Because there are people in the Principality that are like, [**Keith:** Right.] "well, the Divines are the real leaders," and there are people in the Principality who are like, "the people are the real leaders."

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And the Branched are a living embodiment of the idea that, like, those things can both collapse into one another, the idea that people and Branched—or, and Divines are fundamentally different. And, you know, it took 50,000, 55,000 years or whatever to get to where we are now. But like, it—that's what happened in the Golden Branch, so.

You know, and it's—it's not just that they're angry about what the Branched represented, you know, they were scared by it. I want to emphasize that, that so much of this comes from a place of cowardice. So much of the Principality. You know, you just felled your first Pillar. And the response from them here that I want to highlight isn't rage, or retribution. It's not, like, competence in the way that they respond to this attack. It's—it's fear. They're afraid.

I think that in Carleon-Upon-Wisk, the earls and the baronesses of the Fabreal Duchy begin a quiet revolt. They want their old Duke back. They've sent word to Joyous Guard that they're ready to negotiate. And in the offices and penthouse suites of the Frontier Syndicate, executives and technocrats and malefactor algorithms are driven to fearful diversification. In the Temple of the Threshold, that other Gur, the so-called prophet of New Asterism, issues calming words, and for the first time since they've arrived on Palisade, they find they do not work. Because what this means is bigger than just "Millennium Break scored a coup." It's bigger than "the Elcessor gets fired," though I'm very excited to hear what Jack tells us, what Connadine does in response to this. It's bigger than the 23 systems I listed at the start of this.

The Stargrave Elcessor is sitting in her office, just repeatedly pressing the button, just over and over again. Click. Click. Click. Click. Click. She's watching her feeds, hoping that it will explode, hoping that she will die, that everyone will die, because to her, death is less scary than the threat of fundamental, real change.

[Music - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt begins]

**Austin:** But nothing happens when she hits the button. Nothing will ever happen when she hits the button ever again, when anyone hits this button ever again. And to be clear, by taking them offline, it's not just that you've prevented them from exploding, it's that—you know, exploding is their secondary function already. It used to be that these things were built to explode, but for the Divine Principality, stellar combustors were built to prevent explosions, metaphorical and mundane. They were a threat meant to pause possibility, to halt history itself. And that is what deactivating the stellar combustors has done. This is what Millennium Break has done. It's opened up history. It's created possibility for people across the galaxy. Boots are still on necks, but the biggest hammer, the sharpest knife, the strongest disincentive against pushing back is gone.

And they might do it quietly, but the people on Tartarus 5 celebrate. On Lonn, and Helaine Delta, and Thulsa, and Xenacip, they celebrate. On Bhopal Kha, and Maine, and Bishamonten, on Carjel and Isfahan, and all the rest. On research stations, and refineries, and on standard spread worlds. Not everyone, not everyone, but some people touch hands, and light candles, and some launch fireworks, and hide before anyone asks any questions.

And some people make plans. On Altar, and Brighton, and Crown, and Gift-3, they make plans. On Moonlock, and Seneschal, and Skein; on Thyrsus, and on Volition, and on the Brink, and all throughout the Twilight Mirage, they make plans. And in Sinder Karst, and in Joyous Guard, in Carhaix, on the Isle of the Broken Key, in City City, on New Oath, in the Crown of Glass, in Baseline—all across Palisade, the plans are already in motion. Jade Kill in motion, Violet Cove and Rose River, Carmine Bight and Grey Pond in motion, the Blue Channel—they're moving on them now, because against all odds, tomorrow is coming, and it brings more work. And for the first time in weeks, the sun will feel good on their skin as they do it.

[Music - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt ends]

## Announcement

[2:42:58]

**Austin:** Hey everybody, it is Austin, again. This is Austin from the future. Well, the future of everything you just heard. I'm recording this the week before this goes out. I have a few—three, four? Four things, and then this podcast will end.

First of all, deep breath. I guess we gotta keep making this season. I'm very excited to chat about all of this in an eventual post-mortem, but I actually think we'll probably tackle it sooner over on our Patreon, [friendsatthetable.cash](#), where, if you don't know, Ali has been doing a sort of mid-season interview show called Gathering Information. We also do a bunch of other stuff there, including—it's five things. There's five things I have to say. Including a new bonus campaign, mini-campaign, of Grandpa's Farm, a really cool game by Tyler Crumrine, that takes place in the Nievelmarch setting from Shooting the Moon and Good Society. Jack, Ali, and Janine have been recording that and putting that out, so that's one.

Two, I wanted to say—maybe it is only four things. Two, your ongoing—I wanted to say thank you for your ongoing Patreon support, which has also let us do a new show, hosted by Keith, featuring Sylvi, Dre, and Jack, called Media Club Plus. If you didn't know, we used to do a show called Media Club as part of our Patreon, where we would watch the shows and movies and stuff that would kind of influence various seasons we did. And with Media Club Plus, which is a free show that you can get on your podcast app of choice right now, or at [mediacub.plus](#), we are doing that with the 2012 Hunter x Hunter anime. I'm on the first episode, which covers the first three episodes of the show, and that was a blast. I'm super excited to listen to the episodes I haven't been on, and to guest again in the future. I think Keith will say more about this on the first episode, or in a—maybe the lead-in to the episode zero, but ideally, don't watch this on one of the AMPTP platforms like Netflix. This is—it's available other places. It's available on DVD. It's available, I want to say, like, on the Roku channel. So if you can help it, please, you know—this is not struck work, the Hunter x Hunter anime was not made or recorded by SAG-AFTRA folks, but, you



know, please try to watch that elsewhere. It is available elsewhere, which is why I feel okay doing it.

Third—is this right? Third? Maybe it is only four things. Third—I feel like I’m forgetting a thing. Third, we got new merch. New merch alert. Do you remember, in this episode, when we joked about a Brnine and Phrygian “born to die, world is a fuck” shirt? Well, guess what? We teamed up with artist Coffee Johnson, aka @ahcoffeebeans, to make it. It is so good. There is a link to where you can buy it in the description of this episode, and on our various social media accounts, and I think that that link will be [friendsatthetable.shop](https://friendsatthetable.shop), but I am recording this before the link is set up, and I’m about to travel for a full week, so I will not be able to fix this recording if that is not right. So, again, just check the episode description. If you don’t see the shirt at that link, the—or if you don’t see the shirt at [friendsatthetable.shop](https://friendsatthetable.shop), the link in the description will be correct, but it should be [friendsatthetable.shop](https://friendsatthetable.shop). Thank you to Coffee Johnson for making this with us. You can find Coffee across [Cohost](#), [Bluesky](#), and [Twitter](#) at @ahcoffeebeans. Coffee beans. If you have not seen their incredible Palisade fan art, especially their Brnine-focused comics, you are missing out. Please go check those out and support them.

Also, speaking of artists, going back to Media Club Plus, shoutouts to Annie, [@dancynrew](#), who did the incredible cover art for Media Club Plus, which you can find again at [mediacub.plus](https://mediacub.plus). That’s correct. I thought it was mediaplus.club for a second, and that’s wrong. [Mediacub.plus](https://mediacub.plus).

And then, finally, thank you for your patience. As this series came out, I know a couple of those episodes came out a little late, and thank you for your future patience. I’m pretty sure we are going to take a week off next week after this very stressful arc, just so we can start getting things in place and getting backlog going again. We have a lot of irons in the fire, just generally speaking, between Palisade stuff, and, you know, Dre’s been doing Mecha Mondays every week, and we’ve been rebroadcasting all of Bluff City over on Twitch, with archives on YouTube, we’re recording Realis right now, which is our next big Patreon campaign. So again, patience is super appreciated as we get these gears going.

I cannot help but feel like I'm forgetting a thing I wanted to shout out. It's going to kill me. What was it? I don't remember. Thank you to everyone who has been listening this season, I guess, and thank you to my great players, who really took a—they're not my players, right? But you know, to the people we get to—I get to make this show with, and people who I get to tell stories with. You know, they really trusted me that we would bring this arc somewhere good. You know, there was some trepidation, nothing so dramatic that we thought we couldn't do it, but actual play, baby. You know? We really pushed for it, and we really got somewhere—somewhere good. So—I think good. I really enjoyed this arc, and was very happy with it. So, thank you so much for listening to it. Again, we're gonna probably take next week off.

[Friendsatthetable.shop](https://Friendsatthetable.shop), [Friendsatthetable.cash](https://Friendsatthetable.cash), [@ahcoffeebeans](https://twitter.com/ahcoffeebeans), [@dancynrew](https://twitter.com/dancynrew), [@friends\\_table](https://twitter.com/friends_table) most places, [mediacub.plus](https://mediacub.plus). Those are all the links. I still feel like I'm forgetting a thing. Oh, [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](https://notquitereal.bandcamp.com), where you can pick up the new track that you heard in this episode, along with all of the music from Friends at the Table, including all of the music from Palisade. Jack crushed it, as always, and when Jack sent me the sort of, like, test version of the scene where the new song played, it definitely, definitely hit me pretty deep. So, I'm very happy with it. [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](https://notquitereal.bandcamp.com), the last of the links, the fifth thing, the thing I needed to remember. Alright, everybody. That's gonna do it. We'll see you in a few weeks. Peace!