

PARTIZAN 26: Millennium Break: Breaking Vigil

Transcriber: Karlis (@townout on Twitter)

INTRODUCTION [00:00:00]

Austin: Gallica represents a group called The Pact of Necessary Venture, which is a different revolutionary group that also wants to see the world without any Principles, wants to see the world without any thrones.

[TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER. by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Austin: And that they have been paying close attention to you, and that they would like to help you on your way. In exchange for nothing!

Austin (as Gallica): I know I'm on friendly ground because of the Divines that are on board already.

Austin (as Gur Sevraq): Absolutely not. We have to say no to this. There is no offer good enough to work with them.

Dre (as Valence): Maybe we should say yes.

Austin (as Gur Sevraq): (sighs) Valence...

Jack (as Clementine Kesh): Absolutely not.

(Austin laughs)

Jack (as Clem): What?

Janine: Gucci's eyebrows shoot up her forehead—

Jack (as Clem): Who do they think they are?

Janine: *Shoot up.*

Jack (as Clem): Honestly, I stepped down for two, three weeks? And we start making deals with the Pact? Who do they think they are?

(Janine chuckles)

Dre (as Valence): Okay, you've probably had to make deals with... Or maybe you didn't. I don't know, have you ever made deals with somebody that you hate?

(Austin laughs)

Jack (as **Clem**): Yeah...

(Austin keeps laughing)

Dre: And I think (chuckles) Valence like stops for a minute and is like,

Dre (as **Valence**): Oh... Well, like, but before that one.

Art (as **Sovereign Immunity**): Yeah! Um, uh-huh.

Dre (as **Valence**): Did you do it because you wanted to or because you had to, or?

Art (as **SI**): I did it because it was my *duty* and then I did it because it was how I thought I could be free.

Janine (as **Gucci Garantine**): You've put a lot of...

Janine: I was gonna say "zest".

(laughter)

Janine (as **Gucci**): You've put a lot of thought into this, haven't you?

Ali (as **Kal'mera Broun**): Well, it's food.

Janine (as **Gucci**): Yeah. But... you know, where's... the angle?

Ali (as **Broun**): (laughing) Excuse me?

Janine (as **Gucci**): I'm just curious.

Sylvia (as **Ver'million Blue**): So you're the only person I know with a Divine... I just... What other Divines could be here?

[the music swells; then fades to silence]

Austin: So, here, then, is your next crossroad. As long as people are good with it. The... I think this is kind of like... After— you know, the days and weeks after the Mourningbride stuff, who I'm guessing y'all have just put in the brig? And have somehow disabled Courage? Temporarily destroyed Courage? What's happened? What did you do? What's the situation? (chuckles) I guess the powers are kind of in the position here but I'd like to open it up to the floor in terms of just ideas.

Keith: Um, static restraints! It's all cloth, right, so we make like a static machine and it keeps it—

Austin: Oh, okay, (chuckles)—

Ali: Ohh—

Austin: I thought you meant static as in “they don’t move”.

Keith: They don’t move because of all the static electricity.

Sylvia: I do like just a little, like, electric field keeping this thing contained.

Austin: Yeah. Love it. And then—

Keith: She’d destroy it—

Austin: —Mourningbride is locked up. Right, we could do an *entire* crossroad about whether or not we try to kill this Divine, uhh...

(**Ali** chuckles)

Austin: But I’d like to keep moving at the meta— or the macro level, if that makes sense?

Keith: To Aperitif it seems like... I mean, if... if they were playing the game, they would say,

Keith (as **Apparatus Aperitif**): Why would we spend all the time on that? Just *do* it. We all should agree.

Austin: There’s an open conversation here, both from a writing and character perspective. What’s, what’s the vibe? With the knowledge, again, that, according to everyone alive in (laughing) the Principality, you can’t ever permanently kill a Divine. They’ll always be able to either be brought back to life or will bring themselves back to life.

Keith: Fair.

Sylvia: I wonder if, then, it’s better for us to just keep it where we can see, you know?

Austin: Mm.

Keith: We have—

Sylvia: We can kill it and assume the problems over and then I can come back.

Keith: We have to do something where it can’t...

Austin: I’m not going to use it as a threat in the rest of Kingdom, is what I’ll say.

Sylvia: Okay—

Austin: Maybe in Beam Saber there's a world in which it comes back, do you know what I mean?

Keith: Right. Okay.

Austin: Likewise, I don't think— I mean, unless someone else predicts and then Mourningbride— you know what I mean? If one of y'all wants to do it. But as the GM, those aren't threats— I have so many threats in my pocket, I'd rather use a new threat, you know what I mean? (laughs)

Keith: Yeah. My sort of Medic consideration is, like, if we can't kill it because we maybe can't kill it, then—

Austin: You— I'm not saying—

Keith: Just—

Austin: I'm not saying you couldn't put it out of commission for— Past isn't back yet, you know what I mean?

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: But I'm just saying, in terms of like thought, no one would believe, like, "And that's it we'll never (laughs) have to deal with Courage again."

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: It's like Dragon Age Archdemon rules, unless someone— unless you kill it in a very specific circum—, well, even then.

Austin: Even then, it's gonna come back.

Janine: —its soul is gonna go somewhere and...

Keith: Yeah. I guess I think—

Janine: (quickly) Okay, so that's what we need to do, we all need to drink some Courage blood and then five of us will survive—

(Keith laughs)

Austin: Right.

Janine: —and then one of those five people can die in order to (chuckling) kill Courage and then we're good!

Dre: Oh, okay.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah! (whispering) God.

Keith: I guess, yeah, I guess I just rather would not spend the time thinking about it and just move on to more stuff.

Janine: My thing is like, if there is... My thinking is, if there is a risk, regardless, that this thing is going to come back and bite us in the ass because it is a Divine, do we want it to bite us in the ass immediately because it's in our backyard? Or do we want it to bite us in the ass in a delayed way where... Where it's not in our backyard.

Austin: So you're saying... Kill it. Dispose of it—

Janine: I'm saying like, do we put it in a Faraday cage and drop it into the ocean? (chuckles)

Art: Ooh!

Keith: Yeah, I like that. I was gonna propose something very similar, so yeah, I like that.

Austin: Powers seem to have a decision on their hands.

Janine: Cause like, it feels like such... Keeping something like that around it—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: —it feels like just a matter of time. So—

Austin: To some degree, you're keeping it out of your own hands as a weapon to use against yourselves (chuckles), as writers, you know what I mean—

Janine: Yes, because all it takes is either— Yes, as writers but also in the fiction, all it takes is—

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Janine: "Mourningbride gets free." Or "Someone gets a brilliant idea about, well, like,"—

Austin: "Well, we got Courage!"

Janine: "Well, we got this th—" Like, you know, what if we get discovered by the Stels—

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: —and there's a big fight and everyone's freaking out and someone who has access to a switch says like, "Well, maybe this thing could help."

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, for what it's worth, my idea that seems very similar but not— I like the ocean part of it, is like, just put it in a box where it's stuck with the static machine that I mentioned, but also make it so that if anybody tries to go in, then it kills it.

Austin: Mm... Let's drop it in the fucking sea. I think it's done. I think let's move on.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Mourningbride though, indefinite prison?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. No one's speaking up in her defence, so I'm going to move on.

Alright, so, um, as things continue to get worse across the moon. As this, you know, plague spreads through crops, as the rationing becomes more severe, as the blame starts to be put on— someone is looking for a scapegoat. And you get the sense that someone is looking for a scapegoat. That is— that is absolutely the vibe, in the reporting on it, etc.

You get a message about... Remember I mentioned the Equiaxed kid who painted the Millennium Break symbol on the giant building in Columnar territory in what's called Vigil City? So, you get a message from them, from that group of Millennium Break that says that that group is potentially under threat. The Equiaxed commune—

Keith: The Equiaxed group.

Austin: Yeah, the— it's the Equiaxed commune, which you know the coordinates of, Leap, because Callister Drive gave them to you, do you remember this?

Keith (as Leap): Right, yeah.

Austin: That was like part of the deal, but you never really had time to make contact with them—

Keith (as Leap): Yeah, it's—

Austin: You didn't *get* a contact with them at all. You just got like, here's a number—

Keith (as Leap): No, I just got their address.

Austin: (laughs) You got their address, exactly. And then, what you did is went back to prison. They have been a trading partner with the Sable Court for a long time. And I think that Sable Court probably reached out to them but like... they're not a military group. They're a small community that barely gets by. They literally live under the nose of the rest of the Columnar, they live literally underground in Vigil City. Well, I'll describe what their situation is if we get there.

And those are— Columnar are people who would force them out of their bodies if they could, and into bodies they don't want to be in. As a reminder, the Equiaxed, and, **Keith**, correct me if I'm wrong, are people who integrate organic material, you know, organs, flesh, etc. into their otherwise robotic bodies, their Columnar frames.

And the situation with them is that they had previously come under threat. And maybe some of this actually makes sense to you, Valence. They'd previously come under threat years ago by a Divine. A Divine named Asepsis, which is a Divine that "keeps the city streets of Vigil City clean". That is its stated purpose? It is a big, weird Divine that has a bunch of tiny little bits that follow it around and like spray clean everything with various purifying agents? And they came under threat, and the Divine couldn't get to it for some reason, which we'll get to. And so they were supposed to send in a military unit to take care of the people or to take care of the— whatever it was that was stopping the Divine from approaching, and that military refused to go. The military unit refused to go fight these Equiaxed people who were basically civilians, and that military unit was led by Kenzi, your friend. Kenzi, not Kinsey, *not* Kinsey! Kenzi (chuckles), your acquaintance, Valence.

Uh... *The* thing— they have a device that stops Divines, that's what they believe they have or at least some Divines. It seems to work against Asepsis. And they have been fed false information... that has made them leave the place that they are in with that device, or that device has been sent away, for some reason. And they, I guess, actually, I'll give you the specifics here because this actually comes in from the Sable Court. Basically, this kid showed up at the Sable Court with this device and was like, "I heard you guys were in trouble, I'm here to help!" And they were like, "Um. We're *fine*." And that means that that device, which is called the EDICT System, something else from the old Beam Saber Road to Partizan game, is not there to protect them from the Divine Asepsis anymore.

And so they are incredibly vulnerable right now. And they're also in a major metropolitan area, they're in Vigil City. Y'all haven't ever done landfall at a major Stel city before. You're building this stuff over in Auspice. You are— you know, you've done military base raids and maybe— some of those are probably near urban areas or whatever. But this is one of the five capital cities on this planet, right? This is a dense urban environment. And, you know, it is... It would mean something different to commit to this big armed military action that can't be wiped away as, like, banditry. This is specifically coming in to try to stop a Divine from crushing a community. Crushing a marginalised community that is— has always been the target of oppression and, in this case, has been targeted and *blamed* for the virus that is spreading across the wheat fields currently, across— or, y'know, the crops across Partizan. They have been identified as the like,

missing link between this digital virus and this physical virus, or at least again, that is what the popular— This is what the rhetoric is. Who *knows* if any of that shit is true, right?

And so the Crossroad is simple, which is like, “Will you rescue the Equiaxed commune in Vigil City, which is your furthest inland operation yet? Will you commit resources to basically attack Columnar territory *directly*, where there are people, where there are not just... You know, it’s not just a military base. So let me write that down as we begin to think about what that scene looks like. (typing) “Will the kingdom invade Vigil City in order to rescue the Equiaxed commune there?”

Um... And I think that this comes in, again, as a message partially maybe through the Sable Court, because they’re the ones who are able to, like, get that— You know, Eiden gets a message that’s like, “Hey, do you know anything (laughs) about this kid? (pause) This kid says that he came here to help protect us from a Divine, he has a weird box with him—”

(Ali laughs)

Austin: “He like drove a big truck into the—”

(Ali laughs)

Austin: —you know what I mean? Yeah, exactly.

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Austin: Um... So...

Keith: Is the kid with the box *here*? Or at the Sable Court like—

Austin: (crosstalking) No he’s at the Sable Court’s territory in the Memoria Teardrop, up near the woods, near Lake Timea, where the Sable Court is. You know, it’s like him and one of his friends showed up with two giant 18-wheelers with— I don’t know if you remember this from the Road to Partizan game but y’all had to like protect these giant trucks that had this device on them? It’s like a big thing, this EDICT device, that’s basically like, you have to think of it as like, an EMP that takes down Principality Divines, basically, right? And so— it’s a cool thing to have. Unfortunately, the Equiaxed don’t have it anymore.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Um. Does anyone have a scene to debate...? Or not debate but to start talking through what this might mean?

Keith: Um... I think... I would like to start with a scene with Leap.

Austin: *Sure!*

Keith: And, uhhh, let's see, let me look at... I kind of want... This feels like a bigger scene to me, maybe? Like, it feels like a discussion scene?

Austin: Sure.

Keith: So like, I don't mind if anybody specifically wants their character there, although I *kind of* want Apparatus there also, because Apparatus is Columnar, I think.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yes, but at least also is not, um, an asshole. And in that case I think— in the book it lets someone else play your minor character? I would like, probably, someone else to play my main character (chuckles).

Austin: You can just have Apparatus there and if you want to say that you're saying something as Apparatus, that's fine.

Keith: Yeah, okay.

Austin: We'll be fine, we'll be fine with it.

Keith: So I want the both of them there.

Austin: Uh, I'd love to be there as Gur.

Keith: Yeah, I think Gur should be there; I think, as the other power, Gucci would be there.

Ali: I'll have Eiden there because he seems relevant.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah and honestly, just so that I don't have to read through all names—

Austin: Everyone who wants to be there—

Keith: Literally anybody who wants to be there can be there.

Austin: Yeah. Is this like on the command deck with like, a map of the city and stuff?

Keith: Yeah, and I think we built a nice new, big table for it.

Austin: Nice, yeah!

(**Ali** chuckles and **Keith** laughs)

Austin: I love it, I love that we're just churning out these tables!

Keith: (quietly) Yeah, we love tables!

Austin: I'm gonna re-upload this picture of Vigil City just so we have a good image of it.

Keith: It's nice! Look at that...

Austin: Lots of like, pristine... It's like, lots of like, white and off-white structures with lots of like—

Keith: The upper city, at least.

Austin: Yeah, well, this is actually part of— this is literally, this view is literally the building we're going to. It's— we are going to— this is from the postcard series, which stars some of the characters (chuckles) involved in this. So yeah, it's like this, you know, city of these structures that have a certain... This very particular style, which is like caught between two things. One is being accessible for humanoids. But also kind of resenting the fact that they need to be accessible for humanoids. There's a very popular string of Columnar architecture that is explicitly about the sort of like, resentment of being part of the Principality or needing to consider themselves... Or like, make decisions that enable *people, humans*—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: —from like Stel Nideo to come through. Like, we don't need stairs, I could just upload myself upstairs! I don't need— this is stupid. And that is like, absolutely caught up in all sorts of shit around— Like, this is a very complex idea in some ways because it is both anti-accessibility but also like, anti-imperial in a weird way? It's these two impulses caught up—

Keith: Yeah, if I can complicate it a little bit, I don't want to get too mired in the—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: —in the Columnar stuff, but part of the sort of adoption of Columnar as a Stel came after and alongside the major adoption of, like, legs, uh—

(**Austin** chuckles)

Keith: —leg frames by... So like, there's this sort of like, political class of bipedal humanoid Columnar, but then also this strain, among those same people, that is resenting—

Austin: Right! That resents that, yes—

Keith: —this thing that they have intentionally done in order to be—

Austin: In order to become— yeah, exactly, exactly, yeah.

Keith: *And* in order to elevate themselves as a class above the rest of Columnar. So it's—

Austin: Though at this point, I think the leg stuff is pretty standardised, like?

Keith: Yeah, it's been hundreds of years and—

Austin: We don't have time to go into all of it, but we talked about it a little bit that like, yeah, there are straight up like subsidised frames that you get— like, that's how most people get their bodies is from subsidised, you know, from this kind of neoliberal government that provides only the stuff that's safe and that is approved and is made by one of our partner companies and blah, blah, blah. It's like, it's a nightmare.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Anyway, there's also wires running everywhere because this part of town is very much like, "Hey, uh, my neighbour over there has cable. (chuckles) Let me just run a wire over there."

(Ali laughs)

Austin: "Hey, you have access to the grid, let me just hook into that real quick." Especially because of the fact that underneath all of these buildings is an Equiaxed commune, literally in an almost mirror of these buildings that go underground into a huge cave system? Where there are lots of the Memoria, the crystals that the Sable Court uses to create like, special magic shit and that the Columnar use to create, you know, (laughing) high-capacity hard drives. Um! So, everyone's here—

Keith: (sarcastically) Rare earth minerals.

Austin: Yes, yes, rare earth minerals. Everyone's here, Leap.

Keith (as **Exeter Leap**): Yeah.

Austin: What's your— what's the case that you're making for us to kind of reveal ourselves and—

(Keith sighs)

Austin: —and *invade* a *major* city that's *deep* inland? I don't know if y'all can see, because like, you posted that section of the map, but like, it's pretty far from any ocean.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And very far from where we have now set up our more permanent spot.

Keith: Um, I think that it's a more emotional pitch than we're used to hearing from Leap? I think Leap is very excited about being a pirate and is very involved in being sort of like, a blow-shit-up

kind of guy. Um, and I think it's like— I mean it just very obviously a “hits close to home” thing. I mean, it's— I don't know exactly... I think Leap is from the Equiaxed territories within the Columnar region of space *not* originally—

Austin: Yeah, not here.

Keith: —from Partizan?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: But like, I think that he's very familiar with this sort of thing, and it's just like...

Keith (as Leap): I want to go, I *have* to go. To do this. And I think that we should— I think it shouldn't be just me, I think more people should come.

Austin (as Gur Sevraq): We'll *need* more people, certainly. If just Leap goes... No offence, Leap, you're very talented, but... (inhales) You will die. In fact, I'm not convinced we have the forces, as it stands, to... Raid one of the largest cities on the planet without severe casualties.

Keith (as Leap): Could we get the thing that they need back? Is there time to do that? Can we go and get the... get the, um, the Divine truck?

(**Austin** chuckles)

Sylvia (as Milli): The EDICT?

Keith (as Leap): Yeah, can we get the EDICT truck?

Austin (as Gur): If they knew enough to move it out of place, then... my suspicion is they'll be waiting for it with conventional forces if it tries to return.

Keith (as Leap): Could we magic it there?

(multiple sighs)

Keith (as Leap): (quickly) I don't know how it works, I can't do it.

Austin (as Gur): (laughs) Miracles are difficult to do. And often aren't up to decision so much as time and place. The answer is maybe but I wouldn't build a plan around it.

Keith (as Leap): Okay.

Ali (as Broun): Well, how time sensitive is this?

Austin (as Gur): Very.

Austin: Out of character, extremely.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: This is like, we're like— I think we have to zoom in on scale here, is like, this is one tough day. You know what I mean? Of like—

Ali: Right.

Austin: What are we doing? We have to decide this.

Ali (as Broun): Then how many people would we need to send?

Austin (as Gur): More than we have. Unless we're willing to take severe losses.

Austin: I'm just gonna make this prediction right now, which is, Gur Sevraq says— I don't know why— (laughing) Gur Sevraq doesn't say "Gur Sevraq says" (chuckles).

(**Keith** laughs)

Austin (as Gur): We will take severe losses in the rescue. If yes. But I think Leap is right. We have to figure it out.

Dre (as Valence): I also agree with Leap.

Ali (as Broun): Yeah, we can't abandon those who have taken our banner.

Sylvia: Oh, I just— Milli is like,

Sylvia (as Milli): Oh, yeah, I assumed it was already, like, clear that I was in with Leap on this.

Keith (as Leap): Oh!

Austin: Haha!

Sylvia: And then the whole like, / think that they have a handshake at this point.

Ali: Ooh!

Austin: Like a cool one?

Sylvia: We can sort of sort out the details—?

Austin: Yeahhhh!

Sylvia: But maybe they do that!

Keith (as **Leap**): Okay. This is good, this is— I was thinking this was going to be a harder pitch. But... I mean, I guess this is why we're here, I guess?

Austin: Yeah!

Ali (as **Broun**): (sighs) It's a worthy cause.

Austin: Wait, say that again?

Ali (as **Broun**): I said it's a worthy cause.

Austin: Oh, it's a *worthy* cause. I thought you said, "What do they cause?"—

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: And I'm like, "I don't know what that means..."

(**Ali** and **Keith** laugh)

Austin: Weirdly, it sounds like we're in agreement here.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Valence, do you have a prediction here from another perspective?

Dre: Um, so who is it that we are basically rescuing the Equiaxed from, I want to make sure I'm getting my geography right—

Austin: They are called... It is one of the Divines of the Columnar. It is a Divine called Asepsis. The write up of the Divine Asepsis reads, "Vigil City is the densest urban settlement on the moon. And yet every morning it is spotless. Give thanks to Asepsis' swarm of robotic servants. Do not give thanks to Asepsis' last elect who the Divine rejected violently." (chuckles) Asepsis does not have an elect, Asepsis runs itself and very much so is...

Keith: Terrifying?

Austin: Terrifi— terrifying? Terrifying.

Keith: I mean, the thing about Divines, if you're listening and you haven't noticed, is that they usually get a word that means a good thing?

(**Austin** laughs)

Keith: Or (chuckles) and then they're *really* bad, still. Asepsis is *not* a good thi— like—

(Keith and Austin laugh)

Ali: Well—

Keith: The Divine—

Austin: Yes.

Keith: —of making sure nothing is impure sounds *really, really* bad.

Austin: (laughs) Yeah, it's not good! It's not! There's nothing *good* (chuckles) about it.

Keith: Like, it didn't even *start* with a name like, Courage. It started with like...

(Austin laughs)

Keith: Like mouthwash that burns you.

Jack: Is it like a second or third generation Divine with a name like Asepsis?

Austin: We don't even know— I think at this point, the idea of multiple generations is just gone.

Jack: It's just, yeah, this is like, this one's got Courage and this one's called Asepsis.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Keith: If it's a Columnar Divine then it's probably something that they built—

Austin: Yeah, it's—

Keith: —and the Columnar are weird and don't totally get the (laughing) naming system, I don't think.

Austin: Yeah, it's fucking called Asepsis, what are you gonna do? "We need our streets clean."

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: "It's dirty out here. Oh, I thought— you were the ones who don't want to get sick from bacteria or whatever, weird humans!"

Keith: Yeah.

(Ali sighs)

Keith: "You said we couldn't call it Vacuum!"

Austin: (laughing) “You said that was weird!”

Sylvia: (majestically) “The Divine Roomba!”

(**Sylvia**, **Keith**, and **Austin** laugh)

Austin: God...

Dre: I will make a prediction though.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: If no, support for Millennium Break will begin to crumble. Because everybody seems to be in agreement here that this is... This is kind of what we should be doing.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah. God... The only description I have of what Asepsis looks like, is this: “Lots of little machines.” It’s... (laughs) Without spoiling a future postcard... You know Valence’s mech that has the kind of ovoid, like, cockpit and then like big chicken legs? This says: “Lots of little machines kind of like Valence’s mech but smaller. Two legs with huge beaks with little hoses hanging underneath.”

And then above all of those little ones, there is like a huge, dark shadow, which— I don’t have a description for that one yet. But I’m imagining it looking very much like— you said a Roomba before, but not a Roomba so much as like— but that style of modern, you know, houseware, you know what I mean? Like, I don’t know if it looks like a... You might look at it and think “Is that like a fancy coffee machine?” (chuckles) You know what I mean? *That* style of strange home... home good, you know, style of thing.

So that’s a good prediction. If there’s no other conversation here, I think I will just take my reaction immediately with Gur to make a second prediction here, um, which is... Hmm... Actually let me sit on it for a second. I will mark the Apparatus turn, though.

Keith: Um...

Art: Alright, I have— Oh, sorry.

Keith: Oh, I have a power move real quick.

Austin: Mm-hm!

Keith: Uh, we seem to have the food thing straightened out?

Austin: Seems like it.

Keith: At least a little bit, we've got— we've hit the farm, so we've got food coming in. Um, I think it's time to steal some robots!

Austin: You could order that, the thing is, like, on this timescale, it won't have happened before we finish this...

Keith: Okay, that's fair.

Austin: ...this specific thing, you know what I mean?

Keith: Well, I still want to order it, it seems important, even if it doesn't help *this*.

Austin: Sure. Definitely! (chuckles) **Keith**, you've linked a very interesting percolator or what is this?

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Keith: Uh, this is my— this is *my* espresso maker. It's called—

Austin: The Divine Asepsis (laughs).

Keith: —the Cafelat Robot, if you want to look for it.

Austin: (typing) "Cafelat Robot, espresso machine..."

Janine: Does it, like... (sighs)

Austin: Uh-huh?

Janine: Does it come out of that part?

Keith: It comes out of the butt, yeah. (chuckles) The arms lift up and then you press them down—

Austin: It looks like a robot! Do they know that—?

Keith: (crosstalking) It looks like a robot, yeah!

Dre: (crosstalking) It *does* look like a robot.

Austin: It looks like your robot—

Janine: Looks like a robot that poops out your coffee...

Austin: Poops out your coffee for you. Huh. Okay. Well, good to know—!

Keith: It's great! It makes great espresso and also it's the Divine Asepsis, maybe.

Austin: But I do love this— There is something about this that is also, yeah, like instead of going with that modern furnishing stuff, if it goes this like War of the Worlds, long, thin arms with claws, big, you know, bulbous head, cylindrical body, I love— I like that idea a lot, that style of, like, 1950s... I know War of the Worlds predates... You know what I'm saying though.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That style of golden age of sci-fi. Strange robot thing... is good. **Art.** It sounded like you had a Sovereign Immunity scene.

Art: I just have touchstone deal-y, what's it called?

Austin: Oh! Yeah, a token.

Art: Token! I'm going to put a frowny face token on "Yes"...

Austin: Okay.

Art: To reflect— there's going to be heavy losses. And again, it's going to be heavy losses among a group of people who are not represented... in the power structure. The foot soldiers of this—

Austin: Right, right.

Art: —of this movement are not...

Austin: The people—

Art: The people who are going to die are not the people who are in that room.

Austin: Right. Okay. Any reactions here? I had a prediction and now I've forgotten my other prediction!

Dre: I have a scene I would like to do.

Austin: Okay! What's up?

Dre: Valence wants to reach out to Kenzi.

Austin: Ohhh, interesting... What do you— Let's use this as a reaction, then, because it's not another player character—

Art: Yeah.

Austin: I mean another person could play that character, but—

Art: No, it's fair, yeah, yeah.

Austin: But what is the reach-out? What are you trying to do with it?

Art: Um... I think like, the big swing is Valence to get Kenzi and maybe a decent amount of people to join them. I think the lesser swing is to basically say,

Art (as SI): Hey, is there a way that you can, like, tell us a way to get in and out with the least amount of resistance? Or can you give us a window?

Austin: Right. I mean, you're making the prediction here. What's Kenzi give you—? I guess, in my mind? I— Kenzi could give you either one of those things, I think. Which is like... Either prediction, in my mind, could be like... We'll be able to get people out safely. Or members of Columnar's military, or like, you know, members of dissatisfied Columnar military will support us, or something like that? Which is interesting, certainly (chuckles).

Art: I think maybe the big swing, then, here, is— Mm.... Can I make *two* predictions, like a yes *and* a no? Or can I only do the one?

Austin: You're only supposed to do one? Well— it's weird. It doesn't explicitly say— I keep going back and forth on this. It *does* explicitly say you need to be *in* a scene to make a prediction— to do your ability. It *does* say you absolutely need to do that. I keep thinking it says once per whatever? But I— now I only... You know what it is, I think the touchstones can only do once per turn crisis. I guess it doesn't explicitly say predictions are only once per turn. And we've basically been playing it to where, like, if you want to make another prediction at the end of the thing, you could do it then?

Art: Sure.

Austin: So, maybe in this case, we can just— I'll just let you do it, you know? Why not.

Art: Well, I'll just say— So my "if no," I think... If no, then I think that is when dissatisfied or even disillusioned Columnar would potentially come?

Austin: Ohhh, you're saying— Ooh, that's interesting. Like, this is such a... This is such a terrible thing that...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Huh.

Art: "This sucks."

Austin: Even though support for Millennium Break begins to crumble, it actually wins us fans with (chuckles) the military— with Columnar military?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. Um... All right! Anyone else? I'll mark that as Valence.

Ali: I have a scene, I think.

Austin: Mhm!

Ali: Which is that, um... Because the timeline on this is so fast and because I feel like the order is coming down from the top right away, I think that the scene is Broun sort of expending the material they've sort of been collecting to re-outfit the mechs that are going out?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Like, specifically for this sort of mission, whereas before it was like, "Oh, everybody has their own mech and, you know, it is what it is."

Austin: Riiight.

Ali: Specifically I was thinking, in Beam Saber, Broun has... One of the materials that Broun is able to easily come by or make is a, uh... A liquid that, like, fuses two surfaces together until they're neutralised by a different agent?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And I was thinking that if, because it's a bunch of small little robots (laughs), if you could get like, a bunch of guns that have this thing in it, you could, like, Katamari them? To make the—

Austin: Love it!

(Keith laughs)

Ali: —playing field a little easier? (laughs) So, I think that's what Broun is busy with today.

Austin: So like, quickly outfitting... Like, using this material with the stuff that you have around and like, getting everyone... Not goo guns but like, some sort of spray that...

Ali: (sighs) Yeah...

Austin: How is it administered?

Ali: I think that you can put it into a bullet.

Austin: Okay!

Ali: I think— I do a lot of like, weird Pokeball or like, grenade stuff with Broun and—

Austin: Riiight, right.

Ali: —I think it can be that kind of thing where it's like a bullet that hits a thing but it's really soft, so it shatters and then gets that weird like paint—

Austin: It's like a paintball almost.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: That like— yeah, yeah, yeah, that's great, I love that.

Ali: And then, yeah, I think it's like... To colour the scene, it's probably like Broun sitting with Valence in the waste thing, trying to figure out weird (laughing) Valence containers—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: (laughs) —and like, working on this thing and then like running around the hangars and stuff and like going from mech to mech and talking to people, and delegating, and yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Cool! I will quickly react to this, and we're gonna blow through these, which is— I'm fine with. I think Gur Sevraq... I don't think this needs to be— you know what, can I do a scene with Clem? We haven't had a Gur and Clem scene in a minute.

Jack: Yeah, of course!

Austin: Can we play chess, Clem?

(Ali chuckles)

Jack: Oh, hell yeah! Absolutely.

Austin: Can we do the thing where we both have— we have two chess boards set up? We have to like match each other's moves exactly?

Jack: One on either side of— yeah!

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Which is like— which I love because it means that I have to touch Clementine's— like it's... We're compromised again, right? Like we have to touch each other's pieces. We have to put the— we have to *do* the work of reaching across the board and moving your knight or whatever, even though it's your knight.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin (as Gur): Have you heard the news, Clementine?

Jack (as Clem): No.

Austin (as Gur): Do you know the Equiaxed is a group of Columnar?

Jack (as Clem): Uh, yes! I've heard of them.

Austin (as Gur): They are under threat. We're mobilising as we speak to go rescue them from a rabid Divine.

Jack (as Clem): Oh! No one's... spoken to me about it.

Austin (as Gur): No, I suppose not.

Austin: How do I make a move...

Austin (as Gur): It's an interesting situation. As it stands, we are... a movement. Like something you see out of the corner of your eye. The word "Millennium Break" is spoken, but there is no headquarters, no leadership. There is a symbol. But no one could make connections between cells because there barely are any. If we do this, it will be clear that we are a force and not simply a cause. It's like we would be showing our king in order to better position ourselves for the attack.

Jack (as Clem): Are they confident about this?

Austin (as Gur): That it will be successful?

Jack (as Clem): Mm-hmm.

Austin (as Gur): Yes. At cost.

Jack: I think Clem moves a piece.

Jack (as Clem): Are you?

Austin (as Gur): (hesitates) Yes... But there will be a cost. And maybe more than one. (chuckles) Are you familiar with the...

Austin: (chuckles) Can't believe I'm gonna fucking do this, I'm a nerd.

Austin (as Gur): Are you familiar with the concept of Zugzwang?

Jack (as Clem): No, I— (sighs) If I'm honest, this is the third time I've played chess.

Austin (as Gur): I can tell. It is... a moment in chess where... the player's only moves worsen their position. They can't *not* play, the rules *demand* action. There is no passing

a turn in chess. But with each step... they lose more and more ground. A piece they thought was sure is taken away. And soon they are simply deciding which pieces they will lose, not... Not which they will take. Not which ground will become stable for them. Only how long it will be until it all falls apart. I would ask you if you knew how that felt but...

Austin: And they move a piece (chuckles).

Jack (as Clem): (chuckles) No one has— no one has asked me. No one has asked me for help. You know, you'd think that maybe Apparatus or someone would come down and... I have a mech! Up there.

Austin (as Gur): (chuckles)

Keith: Oh, let's steal the mech...!

(**Austin** and **Ali** laugh)

Keith: Yeah, we don't need Clem for that mech!

Austin: (laughing) Hard cut. The Panther has been picked over for parts. (sighs)

Keith: No, it's much— it's much more useful if someone who knows how to fly it can fly it—

Austin: Like a pilot that can fucking fly it? *Jesus Christ...*

Ali (as Broun): Oh my God, let me put goo in the Panther funnels... (laughs)

Austin: Godddd...

Ali: (laughing) What are we doing—

Austin: Does Leap steal the Panther??

Ali: (sighs) God...

Keith (as Leap): I— no, I like my mech, I built my mech!

Austin: Okay, fair.

Keith (as Leap): Or, you know, I built it out, at least.

Austin: Uh huh! Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith (as Leap): But— or maybe even just draw straws for it, whatever! (laughs)

(Austin sighs)

Austin (as **Gur**): Clem. Do you really expect that... One of these days someone will come barging down here and say, "Oh, Lady Kesh. We need you now." Are you waiting for the day?

Jack (as **Clem**): Maybe they're not desperate enough yet.

Austin: ...whoa, where's this headed? (chuckles)

Austin (as **Gur**): I don't know what to do with you. In another world or another time... I can't help but think you could have seized this moment and become something different than you are.

Jack (as **Clem**): Well, what am I supposed to say to that?

Austin (as **Gur**): That you feel you need to respond is evidence enough that we are not in that world. (dramatic pause) It's your move.

Jack (as **Clem**): Listen. I think you're doing a great job. It means a lot that you came down here to talk to me. I'm sorry that I'm not a better chess partner, or the chess partner that you were hoping for when you started this game. I'm sure that the offensive will go very well. And, uhm I hope that... the losses that you suffer are justifiable by those at the head of your columns. And that you will still remain in good stead when Kesh comes.

Austin (as **Gur**): (small laugh) Of course. Let's leave this game where it is and pick it up later, after the offensive.

Austin: And... Stands up and leaves! You have a prediction here? Perspective, Clem?

Jack: Yes! If yes, Fort Icebreaker will be infiltrated while the main force is away.

Austin: Oh...

Ali: (whispers) God... (sighs)

Austin: (typing) Oh, lost it, there we go. Um... God. And my yes... My yes is the one that we need to say out outright, which is like...

Jack: Oh, we win?

Austin: Despite the losses, we— Yeah, it will... You know, the commune will be secure— will be rescued, you know, will be on our side. The civilians of the commune will be safe. And, you

know, will be *saved* is maybe all I'll say, I'll leave it open in terms of what that looks like. All right, that's my turn! Reactions or new scenes.

Sylvia: I have a quick, like, I guess it's more of a reaction than a scene with Milli of just like... kind of, like, harkening back to the aforementioned squad mom stuff earlier—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: —her back on the hangar but very, like, frantically getting things ready for like mechs to be launched whenever they can.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Like it's a very stressful, very, like... Everyone on the hangar is like running around right now just chaotically and trying to make sure— because we don't know when we're launching or not. And because this is such a tight timeframe...

Austin: Yeah...

Sylvia: I also kind of dig the idea of... So did Broun figure out that weird...

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Sylvia: Like, goopy gun stuff they were doing?

(Ali laughs)

Austin: It sounded like it!

Ali: Yeah, no, that's something they've used.

Sylvia: Okay!

Ali: That's something they have on hand. They're goood up!

Austin: Mmmmm...

Sylvia: Could we— I think, like, loading that up in Milli's mech would be kind of a cool, like, visual? Because that can take special ammo?

Ali: Oh yeah, yeah!

Austin: Hell yeah.

Sylvia: So I think she's doing that to prep, as well.

Ali: (laughs) Yeah, I love the, like, idea... Like if it was like a comic shot of this wide vision of this whole hangar with all these mechs in it. And then Milli and Broun are like, "Oh yeah, here's all the different bullets I could find!" (laughs)

(**Austin** laughs)

Ali: (laughing) Just like— put together— (keeps laughing).

(**Art** and **Sylvia** laugh)

Austin: (smiling) Incredible.

Sylvia: Alright.

Austin: Um, okay! That was Milli...

Sylvia: Mm-hmm!

Austin: Sovereign Immunity, Clem, Gucci.

Art: Um, I worry I've done too many just short reactions?

Austin: Mm-hmm...

Art: But like, the idea I have is... I don't want to say "bad". "Bad's" not the word I'm looking for, but like... Limiting? Let me say it out loud and maybe we can like work it into something that's possible?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: Which is the idea of like, Sovereign Immunity going out as like a preliminary or recon person?

Austin: Ooh, that's interesting. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah...

Art: Trying to like use... You know, a little bit of stealth with a little bit of, well, you know, if they catch them, they sort of have to just send him back...

(**Austin** chuckles)

Art: ...to like, get the lay of the land and like try to figure it out, and... You know, a potential end of the scene is the like, "Alright, let's just walk out of here! Just right now, you and me, let's just go!" And then getting, like, trapped?

Austin: Trapped *in* the...

Art: Trapped in the city, yeah—

Austin: ...in the place, in the city. Right. The, um, I even like you—

Art: That much is a reaction scene, as defined by the book—

Austin: Yeah, I think that that's fine. Yeah!

Art: —more or less.

Austin: No, I think that's a good— I kind of like the idea, then, that like, we've placed Sovereign Immunity— Sovereign Immunity is there, and for— First of all, one of things that we have to— I just have to say out loud is, we have to get there really quick somehow, which we have not figured out. We have not— We have to cross the planet very quickly here, or you know, we can hand wave and say we're kind of near— we're closer than we were before, even though we're actually all the way across the thing. And we know that travel is really long here? But I like the idea of us having had to have called in some sort of *wild* favour with some sort of superfast plane that could get us there, like the next day or that night or whatever. And that, to me, means that we're going to get to drop mechs out of, like, a low orbit plane or something, you know—?

Jack: Yeah, I have an idea here, which is—

Austin: —which is sick. Go ahead?

Jack: Like, what if, um... So I wonder if Icebreaker Prime has stuff built into it to dramatic— ugh, "dramatically," to *rapidly* launch units to Icebreaker stations further down the thing—?

Austin: Riiiiight, yes!

Jack: I don't know why it wasn't used during the major Icebreaker fight... earlier in the season—

Austin: It was damaged!

Jack: It was damaged... They didn't have Broun—

Austin: It was damaged, that was the first thing that Chasmata took out— Yeah, they didn't have Broun.

(Ali chuckles)

Austin: Yeah, exactly! Yes!

Jack: And I wonder if these are like, almost little like, um... You know when cruise ships have all those lifeboats hanging off the side (chuckles)?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I wonder if these a little pods that are like jettisoned kind of violently up into orbit—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: —they like, burst away on little like retro thrusters, and they just go shooting up into the sky. And just—

Austin: (smiling) This was an old Rapid Evening thing. This is a COUNTER/weight-era Rapid Evening thing.

Jack: Oh, that's great! Wow. So this—

Keith: Oh, the ODST thing.

Austin: The ODST thing. Uh-huh.

Jack: Plus, you know, plus, what, 40 or 50,000 years?

Austin: (chuckles) Yeah.

Jack: Of just like, the way it's so fast is that its launch thruster is extremely powerful. And it basically goes up and prescribes an arc and then comes down somewhere else—

Austin: And it comes back down, yeah, uh-huh. The thing that I love about setting up with this is, where I'm building with it is, "And then Sovereign Immunity takes one of them" (laughs).

Jack: Sure (laughs), yeah.

Austin: But the thing that I like here, Sovereign Immunity, is that like, you get there first to make contact with this community, right? And to let them know it's going to be okay. And also, Sovereign Immunity, the *farmer* is here?? You bring your big scythe??

Art: Yeah, big scythe, no mech. Mech's are harder for recon.

Austin: Yeah, of course! Yeah, they would have seen— Yeah, absolutely. Um, so I can give you a little bit more— just a little bit more flavour here, is like, again, it's as if you're looking at... Like, when you find your way to this place, you basically find your way to like a car park or an abandoned office complex? And take an elevator *down* instead of up. Like, you go to the sub-basement, walk across the sub-basement, take a second elevator, people recognise you immediately and let you in. And what's revealed is like a *huge, giant* cave underneath these buildings where, like, the buildings go down more and then are like— it's as if there's a mirror.

It's as if you're looking at a mirror reflection of these like three or four, let's say four or five, buildings upside down. Like, above was this office park and then below is like, the office park is hanging, like, stalactites because they hang tight, right? Is that right? Stalactites hang—

Keith: Yes. Stalagmites come from the bottom—

Jack: Stalactites cling tight to the floors, stalagmites might be on the floor...

Austin: That's (chuckles) great—

Janine: Stalagmites might fall on your head, stalactites... will tuck you into bed.

Jack: Yeah!

Austin: Will tuck you into bed, yeah!

Jack: Uh-huh!

Austin: Stalactites hanging down and then *all* around you, glistening, are these incredible, like, gems in the wall, right? These, these, these... The Memoria all underneath this place. And yeah, you can see, like, they've clearly had to fight things out of here before, there are scars from previous attack attempts. And there are— but there are just like *not* any other— they have some old, old weaponry here, but they just don't have their own military force in any way. They're just a community of people. And there's a bunch of them and, you know, I think that the vibe is almost like living in an apartment that's like— you're basically in a bunch of apartment buildings with like, really tight neighbours. Like really close neighbours.

Small fact that will not come up here, but is interesting: the woman who designed Milli's mech is in this building (chuckles), so.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Fun thing I know from... the postcards!

Keith: All right, I don't want to step on your thing. I think, if possible, Leap might have gone with Sovereign Immunity to do the early thing?

Austin: Then you don't have your mech.

Keith: I just assumed the mech could come in its own pod later. If that's the trade-off, then I'll probably wait, then—

Austin: Yeah, I think that the specific thing here is that like... My thought on this is that Sovereign Immunity is inside; by the time y'all get here, the attack will be happening. You know

what I mean? And it's— you won't have time to like, go outside, get in a mech, come back inside to try to fight?

Keith: That's fair...

Austin: But maybe I'm just rethinking— maybe I'm just overthinking what that fight looks like, you know?

Keith: If it complicates things, where we have to reorganise things, then whatever, it's fine.

Art: I'm not a mech-forward person so this plan I made didn't revolve around mechs but we can—

Austin: Right, right.

Art: You know, you can, if you want to, if you want to do it that way, we can do it that way. You know, yeah, I agree with the thought that like, once it starts, you might not be able to go outside? But like... Be where you need to be—

Austin: Yeah, that's my... My suggestion, there, is like— My real suggestion there is, you got a mech that's good at a dramatic entrance. You know?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: But I also do understand the urge of being like, you want to be there for these people. So, I will defer to you and which way you want to play this.

Keith: Um! No... it's f— it's... I— It... isn't a crucial thing if we can just— we can just do it the way that it was...

Austin: Okay.

Keith: ...that we had already thought that it was going to shake out.

Austin: Um. Well there is Sovereign Immunity's thing, who is a touchstone now, not a perspective, so no predictions. Clem and Gucci!

Art: I predict I'd very much like the thing to happen. Otherwise, I'm stuck here.

Austin: Yeah (laughs).

Art: It's not I'm finding pretty—

(Ali, Keith, and Art laugh)

Austin: Gucci? Or...

Jack: Do you have anything particular in mind, **Janine**? Or...

Janine: I mean, Gucci *is* mech-forward, right?

Austin: Oh yeah (chuckles).

Janine: Like, Gucci's in a fucking mech. Uh... That's, that's all I've really got in mind, is like... This is, you know, Gucci knows how to do *this*. I'm not really sure where else to take it beyond that, you know? Like...

Austin: Yeah, yeah. I think part of it is like, everyone is just ready to do this thing and, like, is positive on it. We don't need to frame more scenes here if we don't want to, you know? But Clem, I don't know if you have a final...

Jack: Yeah, I'm just thinking if I want to... Yeah! Okay. Um, I think I'd like to talk to Apparatus [pron. A-puh-rei-tuhs]. App— How do you say it?

Austin: Apparatus [pron. a-pr-a-tuhs]?

Keith: Uh, Aperitif is the—

Jack: Apparatus [pron. a-pr-a-tuhs], I see, okay.

(**Austin** chuckles)

Jack: I'd like to talk to Apparatus.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: I don't— I think, I think Clem probably just asks their guard, like...

(**Austin** laughs)

Jack (as **Clem**): Can I talk to— (chuckles) Can I talk to the Night Mayor?

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Yeah. Clem?

Jack (as **Clem**): Hello. I think this is the first time we've spoken.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Yeah, I think so!

Jack (as **Clem**): Not at a trial or anything?

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Trial for what?

Jack (as **Clem**): Well, you seem to have just put me in here.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Right, for your crimes.

Jack (as **Clem**): Ohh, I seeee, you're one of *those* people.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Well... There's not a lot of other people in the cells.

Jack (as **Clem**): There's Mourningbride!

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Right.

Jack (as **Clem**): We've been talking—

Keith (as **Apparatus**): She tried to kill everyone.

Jack (as **Clem**): I know, she, uh... She seemed to say as much. She's not h—

Keith (as **Apparatus**): So, figure out the bar, there's the bar.

Jack (as **Clem**): (inhales) You're about to leave—

Austin (as **Mourningbride**): Sedition.

Austin: (chuckles) She yells from across the—

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Sedition. It's sedition, is the bar.

Austin: Uh-huh (chuckles).

(**Jack** chuckles)

Jack (as **Clem**): You're about to leave, Gur Sevraq told me you're heading to, uh. Vigil City.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Yeah, I had some ideas about that. What were you gonna— What did you call me down for?

Jack (as **Clem**): I'd like to offer you my services.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): We're on the *exact* same page.

Jack (as **Clem**): Oh, excellent. How can I help?

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Well, let me hear your offer.

Jack (as **Clem**): It's not complicated. Deploy me to the front, I used to lead a squad. We were very successful. I think you're standing in our greatest success.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): (pause) (sarcastically) The brig?

(**Austin** and **Jack** laugh)

Jack (as **Clem**): Fort Icebreaker.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): What do you want from being on the front lines? (pause) What's your aim? I know how you work.

Jack (as **Clem**): How do I work?

Keith (as **Apparatus**): With aims.

Jack (as **Clem**): (chuckles) I see we're very alike—

Keith (as **Apparatus**): End goals.

Jack (as **Clem**): I just, uh... I just— I want to make myself useful. I feel like I'm letting myself go, down here. My talents are going to waste!

Keith (as **Apparatus**): I don't mean... Well... My impression is you've never needed to feel useful in your entire life, Clem. Why now?

Jack (as **Clem**): I want to get out of here. And I don't know what the path is to getting me out of here? But if— if helping on the front lines is the way, then I'm more than happy to lend you my services. I'm capable. I can shoot a gun. I can pilot a mech. I have always led from the front.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Well. You've given me half of mind to reconsider, but, as you know very well, it's *incredibly* possible to keep a prisoner *and* put someone on the front line at the same time.

(**Austin** laughs)

(**Jack** sighs)

Keith (as **Apparatus**): And so I believe, in a way, (sarcastically) things have come to roost for you. Because you will take your mech, you will go out on the front line, and you will come back to the cell.

Jack (as **Clem**): Fine, I wasn't expecting to get out straight away.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): There's no straight away. It took a *lot*. To get the people that you had behind bars out of bars. And it will take something even bigger to get you out. It's

more than a little goodwill can do. You can't... This isn't— there's no next move. The game's over.

Jack: Okay! Um, I would like to make a prediction.

Austin: Sure!

(**Ali** chuckles)

Jack: It's tough, right, because the prediction I really— (laughs) The prediction I want—

Keith (crosstalking): It's great—

(pause)

Jack: Oh, go on?

Keith: Oh, I was just gonna say it's great. I literally did— I, for real, was going to have this happen. So I'm glad that you were also on that page.

(**Austin** laughs)

Jack: Um... I'm trying to— I just— I don't want to like... No, I mean, I don't think I'm— I actually don't think I'm going to make a prediction. I don't want to undercut the success of the... I don't want to undercut the success of outflanking Clem—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: —by like sniping a prediction.

Austin: Right, this is not... You're not, like... You're not predicting, "and then everyone will love Clementine" (laughs) because—

Jack: No, or even like— like, one would be like, both prisoners escape. But I think that, especially given that like—

Austin (crosstalking): Yeah, yeah...

Jack: —the first half of the season was about the struggle of escape?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: To then just use the way predictions work in this game to be like, (sarcastically) "And Clem just does it" would feel really cheap? I do want to be clear, though, that I don't think Clem is acting in good faith whatsoever, this is—

Austin: Yeah. Oh, yes, of course not!

Keith: Yeah, no. And then—

Jack: Clem is not having a come to Jesus moment by being like, “I’m gonna work my way—”

Keith: That you have had the idea has given... Aperitif a moment’s doubt. (chuckles) About—

Jack: Right.

Keith: About their idea—

Austin: About the idea. Right (chuckles). When it was *your* idea—

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Keith: We agreed on this which *seems* like maybe bad news for me.

Austin: (laughing) Right...

Keith: If things went a particular way, and you know, I do— I do understand the impulse to try to get out of prison, that is the—

(**Jack** laughs)

Keith: —that was the point of the front half of the season. And out of character, I do feel a little bit guilty for having one of the main characters behind bars. It seems to have impacted—

(**Jack** laughs)

Keith: —like, the ability to participate.

Austin: Oh... She’ll have her time—

Jack: Eh... You know...

Austin: —I promise.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, it’s— she’s. she’s... She’s a bad egg. Um...

(**Ali** chuckles)

Jack: But yeah, no, I’m not gonna make a prediction then.

Austin: Okay!

(something falls in the background)

Austin: Boom. Gucci! Or are we just good? Cause remember, you seemed like you were just like, "Yeah, I'm gonna be at this fight," more than anything.

Janine: Yeah, I mean... Gucci is in this fight. I don't know what the like...

Austin: Okay!

Janine: What—

Jack: Is this like a full—

Janine: I feel like there *should* be like a power move. I feel like there should be, like—

Keith: I—

Austin: Yeah...

Keith: I have a small power move to make.

(**Austin** chuckles)

Keith: Does anybody want to pilot the Panther who is not Clem? Who will be flying a sort of...

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: Please put her in a fucking—

Jack: Just like a troop unit?

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, put her in like a troop— Put her in, like, yeah. God. Can A.O. Rooke fly the *fucking* Panther—

Keith (crosstalking): Anybody who speaks up can fly the Panther.

Janine: That feels—

Austin: Can A.O. Rooke—

Janine: That feels so, like sabotage-y, though. Like if you want Clem to be useful, then she should be useful—

Jack: Oh, they don't care about— like, Clem is not a great— The damage Clem can do in a troop is the same as the damage Clem could do in a Panther—

Janine (crosstalking): Okay, okay, that's— I wasn't sure.

Austin (crosstalking): (laughing) It might be *higher*.

Art: When Clem said she was a good pilot, that was a lie.

(**Austin** laughs)

Janine: I wasn't sure if this was a thing where Clem like learned to drive on automatic, and then you put her in a standard and she doesn't know what the fuck to do—

Austin: The answer is yes, but the standard is the Panther.

Keith: Well—

Austin: That's actually exactly true—

Keith: Yeah...

Austin: —it just already happened (chuckles).

Keith: Right, it would be easier to fly a troop because it's made for people with less training.

Austin: Right, that's ex— Right.

Jack: Yeah, on some level, this is like taking the weighted— taking the weights off, except you're taking the weights off on like a smaller, worse weapon.

(**Austin** and **Ali** laugh)

Jack: But I do think it's just like—

Janine: It's actually— Isn't it... (sighs) I mean, the other—

Austin: Putting the weights *on*? (chuckles)

Janine: The other angle of it is, like, in terms of actually using the thing it's like that. But also in terms of... You know, like, isn't Clem's— isn't the Panther also like designed to be super super protective of Clem?

Austin: Yes (laughs).

Jack: Yes!

Austin: True.

Janine: So now she's in— Now she's basically in a shitty— in like a, in like a car that also has—

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: —very bad suspension and is like bouncing her around all the time?

Austin: Uh-huh!

Keith: Yeah, sure! Clem could die.

Austin: Yep! True!

Jack: I just—

Janine: Jostling her around the way that's maybe a little like, "Oh, this is how other people are in these, huh?"

(**Austin** sighs)

Keith: If Clem died on the front line, it would make... It would make Aperitif's slight nervousness about giving Clem—

(**Jack** laughs)

Keith: —what she says she wants, it would totally erase that!

Jack: It would absolve— yeah.

Keith: It's fine. Nothing came to bear.

Austin: (laughs) "We can move on!"

Jack: But I do think we just— we get this image of like a flight crew person in like one those orange flight suits—

Austin: (sighing) God...

Jack: —like, climb— on like a two step ladder and saying like, "Troop Four, go!" and slamming down the cockpit and that going, and then "Troop Five, go!" and it's just like, Clementine wearing a flight suit and, like, eye shadow and a big helmet, just, buckled in to the seat of the troop.

Austin: God, incredible.

Keith: Did no one want the Panther, by the way? A.O. Rooke?

Austin: I said— my suggestion was A.O. Rooke.

Jack: A.O. is great.

Art: Yeah, that's great. Yeah.

Jack: I think A.O. flying the Panther would be fantastic.

Austin: Yeah. Totally. Totally! He's *been* in those simulators. He's been waiting for it. Um, all right! It sounds like it's time to go to the Crossroads.

(pause)

(**Austin** starts humming)

(**Dre** laughs)

Jack: Is that Crossroads music?

Austin: Yes, the Crossroads music. That's—

Dre: Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm.

Austin: (quietly singing) "Tell me what you gonna do..." Um. **Jack**, that was the song Crossroads by Bone Thugs N Harmony.

Jack: Oh, which is now here. Thank you, **Dre**.

Dre: You're welcome.

Austin: Thank you. Thank you, **Dre**. (laughs) It's, you know...

Jack: Is this a montage—?

Austin: Alright, so.

Jack: Oh, we haven't even decided if we're gonna do it yet. *Could* it be a montage?

Austin: Right, we should— (chuckles) It *could* be a montage, yeah. Um, alright! So, resolve the Crossroad! Step one, let's review it. Um, "Will the kingdom invade Vigil City in order to rescue the Equiaxed commune there? If yes, Gur Sevraq says,

Austin (as **Gur**): We will take *severe* losses in the rescue.

Austin: Sovereign Immunity says...

Art (as SI): Womp womp.

Austin: Sad face! Yeah, womp womp (chuckles). Clem says—

Art (as SI): Loss is bad!

(**Austin** laughs)

Jack (as Clem): Icebreaker— (laughs) Icebreaker will be infiltrated while the main force is away.

Austin: Unchallenged. And then Gur Sevraq says,

Austin (as Gur): Despite losses on our side, the civilians of the commune *will* be saved.

Austin: If no, Valence.

Dre (as Valence): Uh, support for Millennium Break will begin to crumble—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre (as Valence): *But* disaffected members of the Columnar military will join Millennium Break.

Austin: Okay, that is what the stakes are. Power!

Keith: **Austin**, you said “unchallenged” for Clem’s prediction, we can— I mean, that gets challenged later, right?

Austin: Yeah! We could— Yeah, yeah, I just meant up until this point.

Keith: Right.

Janine: Also, wait, do I have like— Is there like... What are the rules for a Power if you don’t use your power move in your scene? Do you like...

Austin: You can always just declare a thing?

Janine: Okay...

Austin: What’s that mean— Yeah, before we get to the Crossroad, if you want to declare a thing, you can declare a thing, you know?

Janine: Um... (sighs) Yeah, I just—

Austin: We can like frame a quick reaction scene, you know?

Janine: It's like a thing— I want to specifically declare something that kind of addresses one of these predictions, is the thing.

Austin: Mm-hmm! You can do that. Because then, when we get to the— when we *get* to the Perspective segment, we can say, “Hey, has that changed?”

Keith: Right.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And at that point, if it hasn't, then you can challenge with more stuff. You know?

Janine: We don't have— we don't happen to have any, like, cloaking (chuckles) or anything, right?

Austin: Um... A...

Janine: Other than miracle-type—?

Austin (crosstalking): I was gonna say, months ago there was—

Keith (crosstalking): We spent a long time raiding military ships.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, the Sable Court had that whole thing built for them—

Austin: Oh, (laughing) the Sable Court *does* literally have that.

Ali: Yeah, and it's like *super* nearby.

Austin: Yeah, but if we were gonna get there and then get to— What do you— What are you trying to do? What are you trying to... Yeah.

Ali: I mean, if we could get all the way to this thing, whoever sold the Sable Court could bring the security thing, like, 12 feet or whatever (laughs)—

Austin: It's more than 12 feet, it's also far. To be clear.

Ali: No—

Keith: Wait, Sable Court is near the city not near us?

Austin: It's six *hundred* miles away from the city, *to be clear* (laughs).

Ali: Sure. But we were like six *thousand* (chuckles).

Austin: Mm, like three thousand. But yes, yes.

Ali: Mmm, my point stands!

Keith: Let's hear what **Janine** was gonna say, first.

Austin: 2700. Anyway.

(**Janine** chuckles)

Austin: **Janine**, what were you gonna say?

Janine: I wanted to know if we had some kind of stealthy-type thing that we could either use to augment the force of our attack? *Or* to mask Icebreaker in some way, while we're gone.

Austin: Ohh... Mmm...

Keith: That's where I thought you were going, was the second one. So that makes a lot of sense.

Austin: The former, I think, *is* feasible for the reasons **Ali** just said, right? Which is like—

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: —you could land your people at Lake Timea, you could meet them halfway. As long as they're not travelling with the EDICT System, they probably will be un-harassed, right? It *does* mean putting— it *might* mean putting the Sable Court's HQ at risk, while you take it away from there? But yeah, maybe! Maybe you could—

Keith: But they've got EDICT System! (chuckles)

Austin: But they have the EDICT System, which will protect them from Divines.

Janine: Also, aren't they *already* at risk because there was a spy living there forever?

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh! Totally. But that spy was deep undercover, that spy clearly didn't— not from *Columnar*, that spy was a Nideo spy, right?

Janine: Sure.

Austin: And so, like, (smiling) unless Nideo is ready to invade (chuckles), you know. *Or* rats them out, who knows? Maybe that happens. Um. I guess that's a decision we could make. Like, is part of this convincing the Sable Court to leave that space because it's too risky at this point because of the Mourningbride stuff. And as part of that, join this attack or use the stealth stuff

and relocate? Or, you know, give *you* the stealth stuff for this attack but then relocate somewhere else.

This is an important place for the Hypha in a weird way? This is like— not the Equiaxed, but the place that the Hypha are set up, the Ashen, the Sable Court, is where the original ship from the Hyphan fleet landed on this planet thousands and thousands of years ago. And we're, like, kind of where it crash-landed on the shore, so it does *have* significance. But you're *also* right that like, we *know* Stel Nideo knows where they are (chuckles).

Janine: Yeahhh... And also— Well. It's worth telling them that.

Austin: Yeah, totally. I think Eiden would have—

Janine: Because they might have an opinion, it's not like— This isn't a thing where like, this is all on us to decide whether they stay or go—

Austin: No, totally.

Janine: If we tell them, "Hey, here's what's up with Mourningbride..."

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: They have a choice in that too. Like...

Austin: Totally, totally. Um.

Janine: Um. Yeah, basically— I mean, the thing— the thing that I want out of this is Gucci... Is Gucci as military power. Is Gucci saying like—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: "Here is a strategic thing we can do in order to lessen our risk." Um.

Austin: Yeah. Um. I like this— I like that idea for the attack, like I... don't know that the... That you'd be able to get it— You definitely wouldn't be able to get it back to hide Fort Icebreaker.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But... But yeah. I don't mind that idea.

Keith: You don't think there's some other cloaking thing in the military stuff we were raiding for—?

Austin: *Definitely* not.

Keith: No?

Austin: It's like— it's not a... It's not a common thing, you know? Otherwise, we would have just done that when Gur Sevraq had to do that Miracle to make it happen. And there are conditions for when Gur Sevraq can do Miracles is what I'll say. Um. Which might be time to hear, I'll— You know, let me roll some dice real quick. (pause) It is *not*, unfortunately.

(**Keith** laughs)

Austin: We were looking for, uh— You know what, I can't tell you what we were looking for, or else it will— I mean, no, I guess I *can* now, the fucking— the curtains have been pulled back here. I just rolled 1D50 because there's 50-day months, right? Every— I guess I could've just rolled a 1D10. Every 10 days is when the Portcullis System opens. When it's open, Gur Sevraq can do miracles. Because that connection—

Jack: God, that one rules.

Austin: Yeah, that's the thing. That has always been the thing with Gur Sevraq is, if that's happening, there's a window on which he can draw on the power of the True Divine to do miracles. Unfortunately, that is not today. Today is the 25th, according to—

(**Ali** laughs)

Jack: I thought it was gonna be like, every time you want him to work, you have to play a round of Yahtzee?

(**Austin** laughs)

Jack: And (laughs) if you win...

Austin: Do a Miracle.

Jack: ...he gets to do magic.

Austin: That's— as if they were a, uh, an Animal Crossing villager you were asking to stay (laughs).

Jack: Yeah, exactly. "Is this number higher or lower?"

Austin: (laughs) "Which suit?" Um. So yeah, I like that idea. I do like that. Okay. Any other final things before, I guess, Powers decide? I think we're at the "Powers decide" part of this.

(pause)

Keith: Uh, Power is ready to decide over here!

Austin: Go for it.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): I'm voting "Yes."

Janine (as **Gucci**): I'm also voting "Yes."

Austin: Okay! Perspective, "Show us the consequences. Perspective, tell us whether each of your predictions on the winning side of the Crossroad came true or not. Describe your character seeing what happens." So we know the "No"s just don't happen. Yes, we will take severe losses to the rescue. This is, I think you're right, a montage. Talk to me about this montage. Um.

I guess to set the scene a little bit on, you know, what we set up. It's like, I like the idea of this diversion, or this diversion to go pick up the stealth stuff, meaning that you're running a little late. Not very late, but a little late because then what we get is Sovereign Immunity alone as the only— and, you know, a handful of basically ad hoc militia members with ancient anti-tank weapons, or whatever, getting ready as Asepsis, like, drills its way or *burns* its way, like, *acid* burns its way into this cave system.

Dre: Is this like, end of The Matrix vibes? Is this like—

Austin: Yeah, that's exactly right.

(**Dre** laughs)

Austin: Yes, totally.

Art: All right, it's a...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Whatever those things were fucking called.

Austin: Sentinels was what they're called.

Art: That's it.

Dre: Oh yeah!

Austin: Yeah, again, I don't think that's the shape of them, but that's the vibe. They're like forcing their way into this cave system that you're in.

Art: There's sparks and shit's getting dark.

Austin: Yeah. Exactly, exactly that, yeah. They cut the power to these underground, upside-down, you know, inverted buildings so that like all the lights go out. What do you— what's— give me a shot of Sovereign Immunity trying to hold back this horde of little robot chicken Divine, you know, creatures.

Art: I think it's like a little bit of like trying, you know— I think the first shot is like one of them, you know, it's a close up on one that gets like stabbed through the top with the giant scythe. And like you pan back to see him trying to, like, coordinate people like, you know,

Art (as SI): Patch that up! Do this!

Austin: (laughs) Right.

Art: You know. And then like, you know, clubbing one with the blunt end and then like— But it's always pulling back, there's no— They can't advance.

Austin: Right.

Art: It's like, you know, tip the couch over and run.

Austin: (laughs) Right.

Art: But with real stuff.

Austin: They might have just used couches for barricades, shit!

Art: Yeah. (chuckles)

Austin: Honestly? That's great.

Art: Tip over the couch and the one professional barricade.

(**Ali** and **Austin** laugh)

Austin: And run!

Keith: Give them a bunch of mess to clean up along the way like a vampire.

Austin: God.

Art: Mm, the rice! Dropping grains of rice, yeah.

Keith: Yeah! Yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Um, let's go to Leap because I know Leap, this is— these are your people, in a real way. With the addition of the cloak, how does the Heads Up arrive to try to threaten— to try to, not threaten them, to save them, to threaten Asepsis and give the Equiaxed here some space?

Keith: Um, well... Heads Up is built for high impact and... The thing about these little— these little guys... is that like, I don't know! It seems hard to crush them but you can actually maybe get a whole bunch of them.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I think so. Do you like break through the cave—

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Austin: Like do you... Do you launch in from a distance such that you just crashed through the...

Keith: Like horizontally into the system?

Austin: Yeah. Like the same way that they are trying to drill their way through, you just do it?

Keith: Right. Right, they drill with acid and I drill with a big metal body that's *spinning* in midair.

Austin: That's built to do this specific thing?

Keith: Right.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith and Austin: Um.

Keith: It'll ruin my saying "My Divine dropped in" but...

Austin: Fair, right, mm.

Keith: (chuckles) But I think it's a good idea.

(**Austin** laughs)

Keith: And I think that, uh, I really like— I really like Broun's goo idea!

Ali: Mm!

Keith: It seems so... It seems so *obviously* effective that these little things can't buzz their little robot wings.

Austin: Yeahhh...

Keith: They have wings?

Austin: Nah, I don't think so. I'm imagining, you know what else is a good touchstone for them, is Mousers? Is anyone here old enough her for Mousers from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles?

Dre: Yeahhh!

Keith: Uhh—

Art: Uh-huh!

Keith: No— well, I mean I watched it but I don't remember what a Mouser is.

Austin: (keyboard clicking) I'll send you a picture of a Mouser. They're great.

Dre: Are they the little bipedal thing— yup, mm-hmm.

Art and Austin: Yeahhh...

Keith: Oh, they're little, uh... AT-STs! Oh no, they're little dinosaurs!

Art: I think you go, "Ow, my toe!" if they bite you in the game.

Austin: "Ow, my toe!" Yeah, wow, I'd forgotten that's a thing that they do, holy shit!

Art: Uh-huh!

Austin: You just like activated a part of my memory (laughs).

(**Ali, Janine,** and **Keith** laugh)

Austin: Yeah, here's a horde of them, this is probably where they come from. You know what I mean? Like in my mind... is these fucking things.

Jack: Is that the only line you get? "Ow, my toe?"

Keith: Oh, and they've even come through that door there.

Austin: (laughing) They've even come through that toe there! Or that— (laughs loudly)

(all laugh)

Austin: (laughing) They came through the toe!

Jack: Ow, my toe!

Keith: They come out of Asepsis toe! The big Asepsis toe.

Austin: (smiling) Ow, my toe... Yeah. Um... So wait, what do you do with the goo—

Dre: That was Turtles in Time, right? That was the one of the "my toe" thing?

Austin: I think so, yeah. Anyway...

Dre: Hey!!

Austin: We're not gonna— I'm not gonna be able to find that particular instance, but.

Keith: Uh, so, my mech has a quirk. Um, I don't have it in front of me but it's like tissue something— It's like—

Austin (crosstalking): A li— yeah!

Keith: Ligaments, tissue, synovial fluid?

Austin: That's right. I think that's right.

Keith: And I'm thinking about the synovial fluid, which I know that I've used before, but what if we replaced it with goo and I would just— leaked goo!

Ali: Mm...

Austin: This goo that seizes things together, that like... that like chemically bonds two different things?

Keith: Right.

Austin: It's almost like a chemical cement.

Keith: I'm bringing to life **Ali's**—

Austin: Or like regular cement...

Keith: —Katamari Damacy...

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: *God*. I love it.

Keith: And, right.

(someone starts whistling the Katamari Damacy theme music)

Austin: And you get in there first and just kind of spray it everywhere so that as the rest come in, this is a thing that can start happening.

(whistling stops)

Keith: Yeah, and it's coming out of my joints and it's like dripping on the floor.

Austin: Ugh.

Jack: God, between the Lacrimosa Drive and whatever the hell this is, the Rapid Evening—

Keith: This is an Equiaxed mech.

Jack: —is getting a lot of... Wet mechs.

(**Ali** and **Keith** laugh)

Austin: Wet mechs.

Keith: You want wet mechs, baby, we got 'em!

Austin: (singing) "W-E-T..." Fuck, how's it go? "W-E-T..." What's the pet song?

Dre: M-E-C-H-S, I would've—

(**Keith** laughs)

Austin: I know but there's the Wet Pets San Pablo song. I guess it's just—

Keith: There's a song called Wet Pets?

Austin: Yeah. (singing) "W-E-T-P-E-T-S."

(**Ali** sighs)

(**Art** laughs)

Austin: (singing) "Wet Pets, San Paaablo." No? Okay.

Keith: Is this like a fish store??

Janine (crosstalking): Why are they wet?

Ali: (sighing) I would like to move on...

Janine: Why are the pets wet?

Austin: Okay—

Keith: Fish, why are they wet?

Janine: Ohhh, right...

Austin: Okay, we have to pause, (laughing) everyone needs to watch this.

Sylvia: Oh my God...

Austin: (singing) “W-E-T-P-E-T-S. Wet Pets, San Paaablo.” (murmuring)

Keith: Oh my God (laughs).

Jack: **Austin**, are you *from* San Pablo, what is happening?

Austin: No.

Jack: Why do you know this?

Austin: What’s up. This fucking has the best lyric of all time.

Keith: (laughing) Oh my God.

(The Wet Pets San Pablo song starts playing)

Janine: Ohhh...

Austin: “Kick back with hamsters and dogs, parakeets—”

(laughter, music stops)

Janine: Those aren’t wet! Most of these pets aren’t wet.

Austin: “Parakeets, rabbits and scorpi-on-s.”

(**Ali** laughs)

Sylvia: (smiling) I love that line so much...

Janine: Heads up, there’s a snake.

Austin: There is a snake, sorry.

Keith: That’s best song I ever heard!

(**Austin** and **Keith** laugh)

Jack: Yeah, this is fantastic!

Austin: What’s up? It’s the best song that’s ever been... (smiling) That’s it, that’s the end of the sentence.

Jack: That's ever been made! (chuckles)

Austin: Yeah. All right, we have to keep moving.

Ali: Please— (chuckles)

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Thank you for the diversions. I apologise, I'm tired and thinking about Wet Pets San Pablo.

Keith: We'll never know why they're wet.

(someone's whistling the Wet Pets song)

Austin: Where were we—

Ali: Next montage?

Austin: Next montage.

Keith: Ohhh, wet was a wet mech.

Austin: Wet Mechs, (singing) "W-E-T-M-E-C-echs." (chuckles)

(laughter and long inhale)

Janine: "M-E-C-X," just go with X. Because then it still works, it still sounds like "mechs".

Austin: (singing) "W-E-T-M-E-C-X".

Janine: That's how "mechs" is spelled now.

Austin: (singing and laughing) "Wet Mechs, San Pablo".

(**Jack** and **Dre** laugh)

Austin: Alright.

Sylvia: San Pablo is a Columnar city—

Keith: Oh God...

Austin: (laughs) Yeah. Uh, before she was Saint Dawn, (laughing) she was San Pablo.

Sylvia: (laughs) God...

Austin: Uh! So, all right, so everything is gooey and roly up-y. And what uh, who's next? Who shows up, now that everything has begun to— Now that like the foundation of this goo attack has happened. Also you're invisible? You're cloaked as you arrive, which is *just* terrifying for... I mean, I don't know that the Divine is terrified. But it's frustrating, certainly.

Keith: Right. It's terrifying in an objective sense.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Not necessarily for a specific Divine.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Or for any onlookers, it would be— it *would* be terrifying.

Austin: I bet it's terrifying even though they know you're here to help them. It's like, there's an invisible force slamming through all this shit.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So who's next in this montage?

Ali: I think Broun is in the fight but I have like a post-fight thing?

Austin: Okay. Yeah, we'll come back around to it.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Clem—

Austin: How's A.O. doing—? Let's go Clem. Let's go Clem and then we'll go into Clem's mech after. (chuckles)

(**Ali** and **Jack** laugh)

Jack: I think you mean Jace's mech.

Austin: (laughing) Yes, I do. I do mean Jace's mech.

Jack: Yeah! Clem is doing fine as like a troop unit coming screaming in, like, running as it hits the ground. Like a spray of fire from one of its arms... Like the Tony Stark facecam of Clem inside the cockpit just looking, you know—

(**Dre** laughs)

Jack: Overwhelmed.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But I think it's just a very dull— It looks like an infantry person fighting. It's just... It's not very showy, or particularly good, but it is someone in active combat in a mech (chuckles)?

Austin: Mm-hmm. A.O., meanwhile, in Jace's Panther.

Art: I think my touchstone for this is the last— Or maybe just the training sequence? In the Fast and the Furious Tokyo Drift.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: The like... The going down that mountain in the middle of the night?

Austin: Yeah...

Art: I think *that* is the smoothness with which A.O...

Jack: *Hell* yeah.

Art: Operates the Panther, yeah.

Austin: God... Just—

Keith: A natural!

Austin: Yeah. Just a natural.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Some people wonder if A.O. Rooke is a Stratus (chuckles). Does A.O. Rooke do things with this mech that you didn't know could be done, Clem?

Jack: Yes! It's *galling*. It is...

(**Austin** laughs)

Jack: It is, *absolutely*— You know, Clem is the kind of person who is legitimately prepared to come and do this but is not prepared to do it in good faith. So she is *furious* about this.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And it's so humiliating! Seeing not just your mech be piloted by someone else but piloted by someone else who is better at it than you could *ever* be.

Austin: Right, right.

Keith: First time.

Jack: Yeah, first time!

Austin: First time! Yeah, first time. As far as you know. (smiling) Maybe what we're revealing is *secretly* A.O. Rooke (laughs)—

Jack: Joyriding.

Austin: (laughing) Has been joyriding. Yeah.

Keith: Well, you said that he's been in the simulations.

Austin: That's true! Yeah, uh-huh! And for once in—

Art: Yeah! Or maybe the rest of the movie Tokyo Drift has taken part with A.O. Rooke in the Panther, we just— it just hadn't been on screen for us. Yeah.

Austin: We didn't see it. Exactly, exactly. Uh, it opened with A.O. Rooke joyriding a different mech through a half-built, like, (laughs) suburban home, whatever, project, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Sylvia: I really liked the Hulk mech.

Austin: (laughs) Bow Wow is great!

(Sylvia chuckles)

Keith: So, I think— cause really what it means is that if... If he was in the simulation running, like, Panther sorties...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Like, really what it just means is that A.O. Rooke worked harder than Clem did, to be good at piloting the— (laughs).

Austin: That's true!

Jack: Yeah! Pretty much.

Austin: That's *absolutely* true. Yeah. Uh-huh, for the first time ever in science fiction running the simulation turned out to be enough (laughing) to be a good pilot.

Jack: Yeah! And like, you know, I think that this is a deeply— From the perspective of the camera? This is a deeply triumphant moment, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: This is like, this is fantastic for the viewer to just see, like, this... this bullshit happening?

Austin: Yeah, and a reminder—

Keith: (crosstalking) And to see the Panther realised as an effective combat machine.

Austin: Yeah, as a reminder—

Jack: (crosstalking) Yeah, and poking Clem in the eye at the same time.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. As Clem stomps by in her generic troop unit. The thing that the Panther can do is like disconnect parts of its body to turn them into separate, like... What in mech fiction we call funnels or bits. These kind of free-floating guns that have their own... Or like, they're not always guns, sometimes they produce shields. The Panther can do all sorts of shit with them. Kind of free-floating drones that are also controlled by the main pilot. And the Panther does it to such a degree that it's almost hard to identify where the cockpit of the Panther is anymore. That's how many pieces it can kind of break into. So.

Keith: And Clem knows how to do this, but only as like a light show, right? Only to produce something like—

Austin: (crosstalking) Correct, (laughing) Clem can make a big flag.

Jack: (crosstalking) Yeah, Clem doesn't even realise how it works.

(**Sylvia** chuckles)

Austin: Yes. Perfect. Um! Uh, all right! Who else is here?

Sylvia: Uh, I think I might?

Austin: Yeah!

Sylvia: So I kind of have this like idea of Milli trying to use that like cannon to do crowd control?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Next to like some just like... infantry soldiers basically? And I think it like... As it goes on, there are too many for that to work.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: And I like the idea of them getting overrun and then sort of like, in the comic or like show of this, it cuts to a wide shot and then like...

Austin: Mmm...

Sylvia: The sound effect for Milli's mech roaring is playing. That's it.

Austin: Yesss... Love it. Um. Is that the— is that everyone who's there? From our main— Oh, is Eiden here? And then, yes, Gucci also

Ali: Oh, yeah, for sure, does Eiden have the tech— uh, a mech?

Austin: Oh, yeah. Yeah, definitely. Eiden has a Kathekon, which is like, a kind of like leggy frog-like mech that we've talked about once or twice before?

Ali: Oh, hell yeah.

Austin: Also called Kathes?

Ali: Sure. Do they hop? Is that a hopping...?

Austin: It...

Ali: It's frog-like...

Austin: Well, we've said that they—

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Mostly they're frog-like in that they're able to go in the water and in...

Ali: Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Austin: I think the big thing with them is that like... Yes! You know what, here I'm reading my notes. "Kathekon is a flexible fighting platform with fully articulating hands, advanced imaging and jump jets designed to allow low, fast, horizontal hops." (chuckles)

Ali: Oh hell yeah.

Austin: Absolutely.

Ali: Yeah. I think that he's doing like big, kind of sweeping, um... like, gun runs basically? By hopping back and forth. And by doing that to, like, jump between different, separate units to provide backup?

Austin: Mm-hmm. Love it.

Ali: It's sick (chuckles).

Austin: All of it's glistening again in this cave, it's sick. Alright, Gucci! Saint Dawn.

Janine: So I think... I think Gucci and Thisbe both have to be here.

Austin: *Sure*, (chuckles) yeah.

Janine: Just because you don't, you know... Someone's got to stay home and guard the place but also you're probably not gonna leave Thisbe there.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And I think Thisbe is doing her usual thing, which is just like... being monstrously destructive both as a weapon and as a distraction, as it suits the moment?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: (smiling) So I think that is a familiar scene. I think Gucci... I mean, we've also seen Gucci, so this is also kind of a familiar scene, I think, where Gucci is making those more precise strikes. Is a lot more strategic than Thisbe tends to be.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: But I bet there's also that moment where Gucci does the *thing*, which is like the cladding on... on the Transgress Oblige pop—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: —And we saw that before, right—?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Where it's just like... There is that sort of exterior cladding layer that can be dropped and the interior (chuckles).

Austin: Reveal this almost diamond-like interior, yeah.

Janine: Yeah, is like this sort of, you know, beautiful nightmare, um, that can...

Austin: God, what does the Divine Asepsis see, when it looks at itself in that mirror? Does it *get* it for this moment, this terrible moment? Maybe it does and like that gives the opportunity for a death shot to him. Right? Like, you've frozen this thing that has been built for and has consumed— *let* itself be consumed by this innate logic of purity.

Janine: Oh...

Austin: Go ahead.

Janine: I think I maybe understand how this, how it would make that understanding.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Of like... The thing that it sees is maybe like the effect of the damage it's already experienced?

Austin: Oh. Right...

Janine: So it, like, it sees itself and realises, at this point, it is maybe— it is a pure and more effective thing to just scrap and be reborn. You know?

Austin: Right (chuckles). I love that.

Janine: To do that, to come back pure (chuckles), basically.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Janine: Rather than live on all fucked up.

Austin: Well, and so, like, maybe— here's like two things— Two things happen here. The first is, it self-destructs. And as it does, this just wave of acid pours through this cave and does a lot of damage to you and your mechs, and a lot of the rest of the crew that's here. You managed to protect all the people here, I'm not retracting my previous "Despite losses on our side, the civilians of the commune will be saved," that's still good.

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Austin: Um. I'm also not retracting "We will take severe losses in the rescue." Y'all can challenge me on this, but here's what I think happens next. Is, the military shows up (chuckles). You're now, like, barricaded in and you've defeated the Divine, which is incredible. But you're in... You're in, like, Washington DC, you're in New York, and you're trying to lay siege to it. Yes, this initial fight, you had the element of surprise. But once Columnar activates and starts sending its— Columnar is not in a land battle anywhere. They're in, you know, border skirmishes, but their shit is not like deployed over in Apostolosian territory, they *have* their shit.

And I kind of imagine the idea of this just turns into a longer siege than anyone was ready for. And it's just like, they *keep* fucking coming. We *didn't* get the thing where disaffected members of the Columnar military join. You know, **Dre**, if you want to say that Kenzi does, I can imagine that happening. Or like even maybe that whole unit does, as this happens. Like this is, this is why Kenzi wants to leave to begin with, was this exact style of attack on this exact set of people.

But the bulk of the community or the bulk of the military is going to follow orders here and you're outside invaders from a terrorist group, assaulting (smiling) what seems to be a big collection of very important resources that they didn't know was there. Or that they say they didn't know was

there— Clearly, Asepsis knew it was there. And... *And* people who have been scapegoated with this disease.

So I, yeah, my pitch on like, where do the severe losses come from? It comes from the next *week*. It comes from the next week of like, slowly trying to escort people out of here successfully. Getting them into, you know, on board to— you know, escort ships back into the sea. It comes from, you know, needing to fight your way across Columnar land, basically? And like that's a *tough* fight. But it *is* a prediction, which means it *can* be challenged.

Keith: (quick exhale) I'm tempted to challenge it.

Austin: Mm-hmm? What is your alternative? With the note that, like, I will probably not ever be like, it's good enough to say you were just better (chuckles).

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: The numbers just *don't* lie.

Keith: That's what I'm trying to— That's the line I'm trying to... That's why I'm tempted to challenge it?

(**Austin** laughs)

Keith: And not just challenging it.

Austin: My, you know, I'm curious because I do think that it's... (inhales and sighs) The idea that like, we went to war against a Stel and *won* is not something I'm afraid of going— Like, I'm cool with going down that path. But it is a matter of like, by default, the thing that will happen there is, "And we took a lot of losses doing it," you know? I think that that initial plan was so good that I don't think you took those losses against Asepsis who is, at this point, a non-factor, you know, for the rest of the season, basically. But next, question mark, question mark, question mark (chuckles).

Ali: Um—

Keith: I guess— Let me open it up and see if, see what, how everyone's feeling on it.

Austin: Ali?

Keith: Knowing that I'm tempted but also not, uh, committed.

Ali: I just have a question about Asepsis, it's completely destroyed at this point?

Austin: It'll be rebuilt, like every other Divine! But yeah, but yeah.

Ali: Yeah, my specific Broun thing, was gonna ask...

(**Austin** laughs)

Ali: If Broun collected all of the parts...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Um... Do they keep their divinity?

Austin: (inhales) That's a—

Ali: And if so...

Austin: Yeah...

Ali: Can the Divine be weakened overall by splitting it in two, in that way?

Austin: This is like...

Ali: This is gonna be like the longest term project (laughs), yeah.

Austin: The answer is— The answer, at the end of the day is, they will build another thing and call it Asepsis.

Ali: Sure, okay yeah.

Austin: But also! But also... if what you want to do is steal parts from a Divine and see what you could fucking do with it? We can open that book.

(**Ali** laugh loud)

Austin: It's a *book*. It *is* a long term project, like, I *don't* know what the answer to this is—

Ali: Sure.

Austin: —because we know that there is something real in, *in* the Divinity— Okay, so. The word Divine is a socially arrived-at thing. Something can become a Divine in the history of this show because people decided that it was a Divine. There are major Divines that literally are hunks of scrap, welded together, that we've decided, "That's a Divine." It doesn't do anything special or it sort of does something special? But like, it isn't a—

Keith: They decided that that *guy* was a Divine!

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: They decided that that *guy* was a Divine. He wasn't a Divine! He was a *human*.

Keith: He *was* a Divine! That—

Austin: Right, you're right! But yes, he was a Divine. Yeah, exactly. You're right. Right, right, right. But we also know that *this* Divine has something *in* it that lets it regenerate itself. That lets it keep consciousness, it seems? From being to being. We *think*.

Um... I would *love* to see what Broun does (chuckles) with this shit on a table.

Ali: (chuckles) Sure.

Austin: So fill— so yes. You know?

Ali: Okay. Yeah, just wanted to—

Austin: Fill the holds and we'll open this up later. Let me make a note that you're doing this.

Ali: Okay, yeah. Sure. But yeah, that's Broun's battle action.

Austin: (typing) "Stole Asepsis." I see. Yes, that makes sense (laughs).

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: (typing) "Stole the body of Asepsis." (chuckles) Love it. Um. So yeah, still open but I think there's a degree here that's like, it's almost like The Warriors? But in mechs? Right? It's like you have to get back to the coast. You have to withstand this initial attack and then get back to the coast to get out of here. And I think there's probably losses and wounds!

Keith: Yeah, I guess my... I don't know. I guess my only thing is, it *doesn't* say, "If yes, we will take severe losses fighting Asepsis," it says we will take losses in the rescue?

Austin: Mm-hmm!

Keith: Which is what you're saying is where we lose people.

Austin: Right. Yes. Exactly.

Keith: Which essentially just means that nothing changes.

Austin: Yeah, I haven't changed anything!

Keith: Right, that's—

Austin: I'm saying this is the— Yeah. I'm saying, if you want to challenge that, it's— y'all can come up with ways of challenging it?

Keith: Yeah— (sighs) It just feels like such a weak challenge. Like my challenge would be like, you know, “We prepared for the fight with Asepsis and did better in that part of it, and lost as many people as expected in the second part of it, which was the actual rescue.”

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And so it's like, we take severe losses— We take one notch below severe. Like at that point it's like, well, we're splitting hairs. There's no number on this anyway.

Austin: Right (chuckles), right. Exactly. What I will say is, I think that like... It's probably the case that there are characters who get wounded here that we know? If someone wants to say that a character we know died I'm happy to go down that road here, right? Like...

But I also don't know that... Yeah! I don't know. We had this conversation before with Tone, right? But I also think that like things like, we've now had scenes of people not treating (chuckles) each other in that way (chuckles), and trying to like... Broun, trying not to be like that anymore! Milli trying to make connections with everybody and make sure everyone shit is good, you know, like... So... If it happens, I don't think it happens because of that nepotism from before (chuckles), you know?

But I'd be fine with like, Jesset gets hurt. You know? Jesset gets wounded. Lives and will recover eventually, but like... Woof, it gets rough for him. You know? I don't know if anyone else has any thoughts here.

And then, fictionally, we can talk about having lost more people than that.

Janine: Yeah, I want to say, I feel like if we're saying that there's heavy losses, then I want to reflect that.

Austin: Yeah. Yep!

Janine: I don't mean— I'm saying— like I'm not saying that like I want us all to reflect that— I'm saying like... I think Gucci gets hurt.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I don't think Gucci dies. But I think Gucci, you know, takes a few rough shots and is going to need some time to recover. I think Thisbe gets hurt! Thisbe basically *has* to get hurt—

Austin: Yeah (chuckles).

Janine: —because she's one of the few people who's on a mech but not *in* a mech.

Austin: Uh-huh! Yeah, definitely. Um. God, is there a moment with Gucci where like, you do the Transgress Oblige thing? And it *just* doesn't work. You've *done* it too many times to these

people. Like, they know it's coming. "Fucking put your visors down, don't look at her stupid cockpit, *shoot* her." (chuckles)

(**Janine** laughs)

Austin: Um... You know! That's not to say it never works again, but this is a long, extended fight, it's probably against some of the same people.

Janine: Yeah, that's— yeah. It's a long fight and like, when it's your big trick that you're used to using to get your way, in a sense?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: There could absolutely be a tendency to overuse that—

Austin: To overuse it? Yeah, totally.

Janine: —and then get caught extremely off guard the, you know, the one time that it really doesn't work out (chuckles).

Austin: Yeah. All right! Well—

Art: I think it's appropriate for Sovereign Immunity to be pretty hurt? I mean, in a building like that, eventually you run out of space to run. I think that's, you know...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Acid burns, you know... Scuffed up, you know... Some time in the infirmary is coming.

Austin: Yeah. Which I like because it means that, when we prep this next, uh... this *next* crossroad, we know that like... troops are low, right? Things— you don't have a lot— you don't have a big hand to play with here. Um.

Keith: Oh, I have— I have one. I think, for the foreseeable future, the Heads Up does not work because it's full of goo.

Austin: Love it. Great.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: It's just being hauled across the— (chuckles) Well, not goo, but—

Keith: Right, it's—

Austin: Specifically this...

Janine: but goo—

Keith: Whatever Ali's thing is.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh! (chuckles)

Janine: (crosstalking) Not goo but goo.

Art: (crosstalking) People are chiselling the goo out.

Ali: It's goo bullets! Oh, I guess you put, you injected it right into the mech's...

Austin: Yeahhh...

Keith: Right in the— Right, basically, like, what if you replaced your, like—

Ali: Oh! Um...

Keith: —your ligaments with goo (laughs)—

Ali: (crosstalking) Broun—

Austin: (crosstalking) Goo.

Ali: Broun also develops the neutralising agent though. That's the point of the thing.

Austin: Yeah, but what if it— But what if it just like, it's like running through the veins of this mech? Ugh!

Ali: Yeah (laughs).

Janine: It's like removing spray insulation or something?

Austin: Yeah...

Keith: It's— I mean, you've got the thing which is why, for the foreseeable future, and not forever and ever.

Austin: Mm. Yeah, yeah.

Ali: The Heads Up need a juice cleanse.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. (laughs)

Ali: Don't do a juice cleanse.

Keith: Needs a goo-begone... enema.

Austin: Ew.

Janine: Ew...

Ali: Okay, we're moving on...

Austin: Ehh, moving on.

Sylvia: *God...*

Austin: Have left Millennium Break wounded and under-crewed.

Sylvia: I think, really quick just with Milli. I think... She came back, actually, in pretty good shape but of the group that she went with she was also the only one who came back?

Austin: Ooh, okay.

Ali: Oof...

Sylvia: Like the people that she was directly with and her mech is like also very banged up.

Austin: (exhale) Fuck, okay! Well. Alright, I think that is Perspectives. Touchstone!

Keith: Do we take, are we taking them with us? Where are we—

Austin: I don't know! Well, we didn't say that, right? That's not a prediction. So this is like kind of up to the powers, in some ways. Um.

Jack: Also, Icebreaker has to get infiltrated.

Austin: Oh fuck, my bad. Clem! Tell me how Icebreaker gets infiltrated.

Jack: Have you ever seen The Lives of Others?

Austin: I haven't. Wait—

Jack: It's a movie about a, um... A university professor—

Austin: Oh, I see...

Jack: —who gets bugged by the Stasi?

Austin: Oooh, okay.

Jack: And the bug's in his house. And one of the early scenes are the installation. And I think it happens very quickly. Where it's like... (sighs) God, I don't— "Icebreaker will be infiltrated while the main force is away." What Stel would have the most interest in bugging or sending a small infiltration team?

Austin: It *has* to be Crysanth, right? It *has* to be! Like, dramatically.

Jack: It could be Apostolos because we have their warship.

Austin: Yeah?

Jack: But *the* fictional spy is Crysanth. So it's probably Crysanth.

Austin: It *has* to be Crysanth, and I would appreciate that—

Keith: I—

Austin: —because I can pay it off almost instantly. **Keith**, what were you gonna say?

Keith: Well, I was gonna say Crysanth makes sense. I think that because we had the "Location revealed" thing cancelled out last term that—

Austin: Mm.

Keith: —it has to be, or that it *should*—

Austin: It could be the Pact.

Keith: Right, it should be something that *isn't* specifically a Stel or like a Stel power—

Jack: Oh, sssure!

Keith: Crysanth makes more sense because that's the Curtain.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But I still think that avoiding that "Our location will be revealed thing" should help with—

Jack: That's true, yeah.

Keith: Should dictate what— who it is that infiltrates.

Austin: Yeah. Sylvi, did you have something?

Sylvia: I just, if we did, like, I think we're moving away from Kesh as an idea but I did want to mention, because I thought about this earlier, we've mentioned like really early in the season that Milli's RUNT has a Kesh-like bug in it, basically?

Austin: Oh, true!

Sylvia: And **Jack's** idea kind of reminded me of that.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: God, that's true. I like the— I still lean Crysanth here, with specifically the note of, this is Crysanth and the Curtain, *not* Kesh more broadly? Crysanth has not said, "I know where Fort Icebreaker is, I know where my daughter is," you know?

Jack: Sure, who's the...? What's the name of the... who runs Kesh?

Austin: The Princept?

Jack: Yeah, what's the—

Austin: Or do you mean the most powerful—? Uh...

Jack: No, what's *our* Princept's name?

Austin: Cynosure Kesh.

Jack: Oh, Cynosure—

Austin: Whitestar. Yeah, house Whitestar is where Cynosure is from.

Jack: Um, I think that this is a really spooky scene, it's probably intercut with the fight because it *is* like—

Austin: Ooh.

Jack: —seeing the practical application of the Curtain? In a way that we haven't really seen in the show.

Austin: Right.

Jack: We know Crysanth spies, we know that Sovereign Immunity had weird connections. And I think this is just, like, two men and a woman in diving gear on a boat. Climbing up a— Oh wait, we're not in the ocean anymore. We moved, right?

Austin: I think the ship might still be in the— Icebreaker might still be like in the bay. I like it in the bay a lot, in my mind, for some reason. In my mind, I see that place.

Jack: But it's just *very* business-like.

Keith: Pulled up to a pier?

Jack: (chuckling) In your mind, you see that place. Yeah, just quietly climbing struts, moving in, setting things up, activating bits and pieces, and then just getting back on the boat and leaving.

Austin: Yeah, I love it. I kind of like— Can we get a sequence of them, you know, getting the diving gear from someone, just being like—

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Austin: “Hey, Josh!” and like, (deeper voice) “Oh, hey. Nice to see you again!” Like that style of (chuckles)—

Jack: Yeah. It's like—

Austin: “Hey! How's the weather?” No, that's not— but I (chuckles) wasn't trying to do a Fultor there but I stumbled into one. But that style of like, that era of Cold War espionage, of activating someone— Someone who you would never expect is actually secretly a spy and like has been waiting for this opportunity for, you know, eight months while they've been doing menial tasks at your dive shop. And then they steal your fucking dive suits, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Like that style of—

Keith: And they're a man-horse.

Austin: (chuckles) Right, exactly. Yes.

Jack: It's the way that, I really like the way that the Coen Brothers know how to make two different kinds of hitmen? They know how to make terrifying, like, horror movie-monster hitmen?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Or they know how to make like weird, goofy, normal people who suddenly become hitmen?

Austin: Right.

Jack: And then, very occasionally, you get the Venn diagram in the middle—

(Austin laughs)

Jack: —and it's always the scariest, where it's just like, this one very genial guy who suddenly reveals that he's...

Austin: Right, "Hey, Josh!" Poof!

Keith: A brutal murderer? And it probably is just a brutal murderer?

Austin: And then just like— yeah, shakes the hand, then produces a gun from the back pocket or from, like, the waistband and ends this person's life—

Jack: (crosstalking) Spent the last six months pretending to be a dentist? (laughs)

Austin: Yeah— (laughs) Yeah, *exactly*! Yeah! Exactly that. God... I need to go back and finish the Fargo show.

Keith: So someone... Did someone die there?

Austin: Oh, that was just an— that was not a...

Jack: Oh! No, no, no.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But this is the ease with which Crysanth's operatives are working.

Austin: Yeah. And yeah, infiltrate! And I will pay that off when we get to the next Crossroad. For now though, I think Touchstones. How do y'all feel?

Sylvia: Um... I was thinking of marking a Crisis just because of depleted numbers—

Austin: Yeah...

Sylvia: —and because that fight like did not... Like, we *technically* succeeded on our mission, but it didn't really feel like a *victory* victory, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Well, even a— even a Pyrrhic victory on an impossible mission is a big win.

Sylvia: For sure! I just also think though that, like, it is hard to escape the feeling of, "Oh, a lot of people that I know died in that."

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Right? Like, there are people on Icebreaker now who have like missing members of their family.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's tough!

Austin: Mm-hmm. Um... Other Touchstones agree with that assessment? Feel similarly? Sovereign Immunity?

Art: Yeah, I think that pays off my token as well.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: It's hard to paint as myself right now because of being just hurt?

Austin: Exhausted— Oh, oh, yes. Yes. (chuckles)

Art: But like... Like (chuckles), being in the... the... What's the matter with me?

Austin: You're *tired*, we've been doing this all day.

Art: Medical place.

Austin: Infirmary.

Art: Infirmary! (chuckles) I was gonna say hospital, I knew that wasn't right.

(**Austin** chuckles)

Art: But like, that's not like—

Austin: God, but wait, what if you *can* be in a— what if, what if they let you rest in Auspice, looking out over the bay?

Art: Mm!

Austin: In like a hospital.

Art: That's not bad! And that kind of like—

Austin: That sounds *great*.

Art: And you can pull— we can pull out a little bit and see that like, all the rooms are full?

Austin: *Yeah.* Uh-huh. But people are like, positive? You know what I—? Like, It's sad. It's— no one's happy because everyone's hurt. But it's like, this thing is working. We're doing— We *beat* a Stel. We went in— (laughs) We fucking knocked on their door and won it. But also, *fuck*.

Art: Yeah, yeah, that's about right. Oh, yeah, I think one Crisis is about right.

Austin: What do you get when you win a war? More territory to put the wounded soldiers in. Right? God... Uh... And Broun, yeah.

Ali: Um, yeah! I think my thing is kind of an extension of that. I think the feeling is generally like, it's great that we did this. But before I was here, I was in positions where I was facing impossible odds and was gonna die. And it just feels weird to like, you know?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: It doesn't feel like it's a way out? I think for...

Austin: Ooh...

Ali: Um... (chuckles)

Austin: Is that getting to— Wait, is that getting to them? Can I zoom in on that a little bit? Is that feeling of like... Because like one of the things is, you're on the, the hemisphere of the planet that you can see the loop.

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: The thing that you use to launch yourself into space, here. That Apostolos has. You can see it every day.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Launching things into space. And you don't get to go there.

Ali: Right. Yeah, yeah, for sure. I think, secondhand, there's also just the feeling of like... There are people who want to stay at this Millennium Break base?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: But then it's like, "Oh... We're already understaffed."

(**Austin** laughs)

Ali: So it's this weird tension.

Austin: Yeahhhh, that's good, too.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Um, so that sounds like... what? That sounds like one Crisis between the three of you? Or does somebody else want to tick it?

Ali: I think so, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: We each put in one third of a Crisis.

Austin: Right. Exactly.

(**Ali** chuckles)

Austin: Did I already? What happened here. Wait, did I already? We've not marked it yet, right? No, it does not look like we did. Alright, so we're up to *five*. Five out of *seven* Crisis points. Incredible.

So before we move on, we need a law, I believe.

Keith: (clears throat) Ugh.

Janine: What about something like, as a starting point here, we will not turn our back on allies in need.

Keith: That's a good— that's, that's, I think that's pretty good right off the bat ! I don't mind that at all.

Austin: Y'all are the powers, right? There's nobody else in power right now?

Keith: No? Nope!

Austin: Okay, Gucci and Apparatus. "We *will* not turn our backs on allies in need." No need to belabour it! We will have an opportunity to revisit these in a bit so, so it's chill, if we just take those and roll with it.

All right. So, now it is time for Time Passes. "Decide together how long this is going to be and if it will be the end of the game." I *don't* believe this is, I don't believe this is the epilogue for our Kingdom.

(**Ali** exhales)

Austin: So, "Months, years or even decades." *Not* decades (chuckles), probably not years? What do y'all think? A month, two months?

Keith: Um, I don't mind two months!

Austin: With the note that, again, it's not that things aren't *happening*, it's just that like, we don't have a Crossroad. It's like the Kingdom is *functioning* for those two months, yeah.

Keith: *Right*, there's no...

Ali: Yeah...

Janine: We need, like, recovery time! People need, you know—

Keith: (crosstalking) There's no flashpoint.

Austin: We *do* need (chuckles) recovery time.

Ali: Yeah...

Janine: Wounds need to be healed, mechs need to be repaired...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: That feels like one or two months.

Austin: Mm-hmm. All right, well. Let's say somewhere between one and two months, and we'll see, based on what we do, if it matters that we narrow that down further.

Step two is The Good and The Bad. "Describe what your character's life is like during the hiatus, tell us something good and something bad in your life! Keep it personal. Focus on your character, not the Kingdom. You can describe new developments in your own life, marriage, kids, etc. But do not introduce new developments for the Kingdom except extensions of what we have already seen. Each player who wants to retire their character should say so, narrate a brief epilogue of them retiring, dying or leaving the Kingdom. You'll introduce your new character later on."

Who wants to start?

Keith: Um, I have something pretty quick to—

Austin: Sure!

Keith: —as... I mean— Actually, I don't know if we're doing this part of it yet, but Leap, I think, wants to spend more time on the ring.

Austin: Okay. The—

Keith: The decoder ring.

Austin: Yeah, totally. So is Leap... Is Leap basically just... I guess one question from me as the erstwhile GM (chuckles) is, does it seem like Leap is committed at this point to this whole thing? Or is Leap's— like when Leap sits down to work on those rings, is that like, "Once I get these fucking rings working, baby, I'm out of here!"

(**Ali** chuckles)

Austin: Or is it, like, "We can do so much once I got these rings decoded." (chuckles)

Keith: Well, we just got back from the mission to help the Equiaxed, right—?

Austin: Yeah!

Keith: And that was a big ask and everyone was sort of all the way on board.

Austin: Yeahhh.

Keith: Clem's in prison... Um, I feel like, you know... I don't think Leap has everything he's ever wanted but I think that, like, people are listening to him, people are taking the things that he's concerned about seriously, and there's— and Clem is literally a non-factor. The prison, you know... I'm still... You know, technically *wanted*.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: I'm sure that I would be classified by Stel Kesh and the other Stels as—

Austin: Now more than ever, maybe!

Keith: Yeah! As a wanted criminal, as an escaped convict. But like...

Austin: Yeah!

Keith: I guess, uh...

Austin: Doing this for— like, you will *let* people know when you finish these rings. Or—

Keith: Well, let's see what they say.

Austin: Okay... (chuckles)

(**Ali** and **Keith** laugh)

Keith: (laughing) Let's not get crazy! Let's see what's going on there first!

Austin: Okay, yeah, okay, fair!

(Ali and Dre laugh)

Austin: Okay, so that's a good thing, what's a bad thing?

Keith: Um (sighs)...

Austin: You know, life is life, sometimes bad stuff happens.

Keith: Yeah! I think there's... uh... I don't want to— I want to have a good bad thing, can we come back to me for a bad thing?

Austin: Sure. Absolutely. Anyone else have a good thing and a bad thing? Little snapshots of their kind of downtime here as time passes?

Ali: Um, yeah! I um, I feel like I have a ton that I want to say because Broun is fucking busy (chuckles).

Austin: Yeah!

Ali: Um, I feel like they've gotten so much more ingrained in this than they meant to, in like ways that are fast and slow and big and small.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Like the... the farming stuff was not self sustaining and, if it was designed to be, it is not after we lose like 30% of the staff? (chuckles)

Austin: Yeah...

Ali: So I think it's being really involved with that? Or like another version (laughing) I thought of it is like... Bing 32 ends up just becoming a farming robot? (laughs)

Austin: Ohh woowow...

Ali: And Broun's like, "Damn, I fucking need another Bing 32," and then makes another one, and then someone is like, "Oh, actually we could use a bunch of those if you could make some." (laughs)

Austin: God...

Ali: And Broun has to make like ten of them and they're like in the base, chilling. I think—

Austin: Is Thisbe also helping with this process?

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Partly because it's farming related?

Janine: Uh, the process of making more Bings?

Austin: Yeah! And like teaching them how to be farmer robots and shit.

Janine: I really like the idea of Thisbe teaching the Bings how to like harvest berries or something.

Austin: Uh-huh! Yeah.

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: You can't—

Janine: Because if you have to be kind of—

Austin: Yeah!

Janine: You have to like—

Keith: I was trying to remember what the Bing is but luckily **Ali** built in a weird mnemonic in to trying to explain what it was—

(**Ali** laughs)

Keith: I was like, "Bing. What is that? I think I remember that," I was like, "Alright, Bing, thing, because it carries things but it's a purse" (laughs).

Ali: Yes! (laughs)

Janine: Yep!

(**Dre** laughs)

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh! Great.

Janine: It's a lunch box! It's a stacked lunch box robot...

(**Ali** laughs)

Jack: I have a question about the Bings?

Ali: Please.

Jack: (sighs) Okay. So, Bing Thirty-what?

Austin: Two.

Jack: Bing 22.

Ali: 32.

Jack: Is the next thing that you make called Bing 32 too? Or Bing 33?

Ali: I was— (laughs)

Jack: Or Bing, like, are we going up numbers, or is this Bing 32A? What— How is this?

Austin: Or like a model number where like...

Jack: What is the situation?

Keith: Bing 64?

(**Austin** chuckles)

Ali: Yeah...

Jack: Yeah, more polygons (chuckles). Bing 64 really, semi-open world, it was great.

Ali: (chuckles) I think that it stays as Bing 32 because it had that model number from being from the Things Corp, duh (laughs).

Austin: Right.

Ali: But I think it ends up becoming like a Bing 32 ABC situation.

Austin: Okay, that makes sense!

Ali: Yeah. Sure. (laughs)

Austin: I was looking to see if I could find your initial sketch here but...

Ali: *Oh* yeah, and I had a better one on Twitter that I— (laughs)

Austin: It's so far back at this point that I— yeah.

Ali: (laughs) I'll find it in a second.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I was just gonna say that Bings are probably better at getting under like the smaller kinds of crops? Like berry bushes—

(Ali chuckles)

Janine: —where they could kind of like swoop under and like open their flip top? I forget if they had a flip top—

Ali: They have a flip top. Yeah. Their base flipped up— yeah...

Janine: So they have a flip top, they can open that and they can... Maybe like Thisbe shakes a little bush or something and the berries fall on her head.

(chuckling)

Janine: And they snap their lid shut and zoom off.

Ali: Yeah, they have little containers. You could probably—

Janine: Precious.

Ali: —plant sprouts inside of them and have them in this like temperature-controlled zone before you—

Austin: Perfect.

Ali: —move them to another thing.

Keith: (crosstalking) Oh, they can move in and out of the sun!

Ali: (laughing) They can do that.

Austin: They can! It's true.

Janine: *Oh my God.* What if the thing that they do (laughs)— What if, for— some of the farming space is like indoors, right, and like lamps and stuff?

Ali: Uh-huh.

Janine: But what if— what if one of the things the Bings do is they, like, take some of the plants for walks on deck so they get actual sunlight.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Wowww... Incredible.

Janine: Just like little Bing trains all holding hands.

(**Austin** laughs)

Art: It took me so long to figure out that you meant like the plants were in a pot or something and not just like—

(**Ali** laughs)

Art: (terrified) “Do we have walking plants now? I missed that completely!”

Austin: (sarcastically) Yeah, we got walking plants, uhh, you missed— yeahh, it was one of the predictions in the last one. Severe losses and also, we’ll breed a type of *walking* plant, fill our base with it to replace the people we lost.

Art: You know, I don’t want to like nitpick this process too much, but I really think that’s two predictions next time!

(**Austin** and **Ali** laugh)

Austin: Are you also doing this on like— I know we kind of talked about Icebreaker being like at Auspice now? This town that’s like towards the eastern end of the Prophet’s Path. And we kind of have like... In my mind, a thing that’s happened is, we’ve... I’m just going to increase this thing and take a screenshot and then, like, show y’all, but like...

Based on where we were saying the Millenium Break’s, like, base was or getting more civilians with us, it almost feels like we have— there’s like a zone of control being established almost? In the kind of like western half of the planet between like Marengo, Auspice, and maybe even as far up as like, Obelle? Which, to me it’s like, do we just have farms and shit all through here? I’m gonna make a screenshot and put it in the chat.

Like, we know we’re in Marengo, based on meeting up with Sloe Uplight, we know that we’re in Auspice and, you know, I think it’s kind of interesting to think about us like making inroads in Obelle, since that’s where everything started. Obelle being where that smoke is on the map.

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Austin: And so I’m curious, like, are your Bings also being distributed to like small farms? And, you know, stuff like that? Like, do they become part of what it is to be associated with Millennium Break or to take help from Millennium Break, stuff like that?

Ali: I *think* so, yeah. Because I think of them— being droids, they can be used— I have to stop saying droid (laughs).

(**Austin** laughs)

Ali: I think of them as being robots that can be used as like... for other purposes because they're just storage anyway?

Austin: Right...

Ali: Another version of this that I was thinking of is like... You know, Broun really stepped in it when they revealed themselves to be someone who was like,

Ali (as Broun): Oh, the blast cartridges that we use for Fort Icebreaker, you know, have a lot of steam and we can (laughs), you know, filter that for water.

Ali: And I think somebody over hears that and is like, "Oh, can you come to this meeting?"

Austin: Right.

Ali: And it's like, community managers trying to figure out like other templates for Millennium Break bases that could be made in other places?

Austin: Right, it's like, "Well okay, over here we have a fresh, you know, food supply but we don't have water because the Governor controls all of the fresh water in the area. We don't have access to that. How do we drill for underground water? Like what do we do—? How do we build something that can do this?"

Ali: Right.

Austin: That's interesting. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah. Yeah. And I think attached to that and also the, the Semaphore stuff...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Like, the communication between different bases isn't great, obviously, because it's never going to be. But I think that there's like an attempt to sort of align those things in such a way that it feels like it's, you know—

Austin: It's improving! Yeah, totally, totally.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Maybe not everyone's on the same exact network or maybe security isn't super great. But like, there is, we're moving towards that being a thing that sets Millennium Break apart, maybe, from most of the other Stels, is having that style of instant communication between different bases, you know?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Love it! Is there a bad thing (chuckles)?

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: Or is that your— is your bad thing being bought in too much suddenly (chuckles).

Ali: Yeah. That's part of the bad thing. I think that the bad thing, there's two things that are bad, which is that, I think that Broun... This really tenses the Broun-Valence relationship? (laughs) I feel like it's worth mentioning because it's my bond. But I think that... it is the type of anger that Broun would really hold onto (chuckles) and let fester. (laughing) Because it's like, it's this thing of being like,

Ali (as Broun): (smiling) Well, isn't it funny that I tried to make an election Wikipedia zine, I guess? And now I'm an engineer for a cellphone company and I spend 30 hours a week doing this?

(**Sylvia** laughs)

Austin: Right.

Ali: (laughs) It's like,

Ali (as Broun): Yeah! I've done all this work for Valence. I've done my half of it. What the fuck is going on?

Austin: "When do I get off this rock?"

Ali: (chuckles) Right, yeah! And then there's the third version of it, where it's like,

Ali (as Broun): Oh, I've done all of this for Valence and they gave it away in a handshake behind a closed door, in a conversation that took like less than an hour.

Ali: (laughs) And like... For as many ways as that isn't true, I think Broun could make it true from their perspective? (laughs)

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. The Last Dance, starring Kal'mera Broun. It's always personal. Yeah...

Dre: Right?

(**Ali** and **Dre** laugh)

Ali: And I think the second bad thing with Broun still having the wrong impulses and learning the wrong lessons is that they, on top of being really busy with everything else, really throw themselves into the... Aspis project? Is that how you pronounce that?

Austin: Asepsis, Asepsis.

Ali: Asepsis. Just like, you know... looking through files while waiting on a response from other people.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Staying up another hour to like research like the sort of steel that that shit uses.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: (laughs) I don't think that it's like... it's not like... I mean, like, if this was real Beam Sabre, I don't know that it's the sort of like work that would be, like, mechanically efficient? That would bear fruit like in a Drive Clock way?

Austin: You would just start a Clock? Or you wouldn't— Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: I think the Clock is being started and Broun is doing like all this preliminary research to like, eventually...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: ...learn something, but for now, it's just like filling the time and making themselves miserable. On purpose. (laughs)

Austin: Love it.

Ali: That's Broun!

Austin: Love to do it.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Okay! Anyone else have good and bad?

Keith: I've got my bad thing, if we want to go through it real quick.

Austin: Let's do it.

Keith: Um, so I think probably everybody is bummed out about the quote, "severe losses" that we took. And I don't think that's unique for Leap. But I think there's also like, a... there's sort of like a selfish angle to it, where... there's not enough people to go on raids. There's not enough— there's no— all of the— There's— People died, mechs are broken, this sort of major

outlet for Leap is gone, which is both like... Leap is, is now less useful, as someone helping out, but then also that was sort of his big outlet to not...

Austin: Work off steam and feel useful and feel productive and all that?

Keith: Well, yeah! But also like... hobby. I guess.

Austin: Okay. Sure!

Keith: Job, hobby— Yeah, I mean, it's— when you're, when you're not...

Austin: Fulfilment!

Keith: It's not my primary job, but it's still like, you know, it's my, it's my calling.

Austin: Right. Uh-huh. Got it. Um... Who else?

Dre: Um... I mean building off of Broun being busy—

(**Ali** chuckles)

Dre: —I think, during these one to two months, Valence puts themselves further into Broun's debt because they don't have a body anymore (laughs).

(**Ali** and **Austin** chuckle)

Dre: And so I think Valence has Broun create a new body for them. And I think it is a lot...

(**Austin** and **Ali** chuckle)

Dre: It is a lot less subtle and, like, human looking than their old body was. I have— My idea and **Ali** kind of pointed this out too that, you know, it's not that they're probably lacking materials as much as it is that there's probably not a lot of the same materials? So there's probably a lot of mismatching parts here?

Austin: Mm...

Dre: I have two images that I'm going to link here which are kind of my main pitch here.

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: I'm excited.

Dre: But the main idea here is that like, it is no longer just a solid, like, mechanical unit. There are holes and like patches through which you can probably— no, not probably, you *can* see like the gas part of Valence. They are very easily noticeable now, as an alien.

Austin: Oh, wow.

(Ali chuckles)

Dre: So, and I think the mask is no longer a mask. I think it is just— that's just their head, now.

Austin: It's still that wolf shape but it's just like—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah. Okay.

Dre: So the pictures I've linked are a... there's one statue and it's either a wolf or a coyote. It's some kind of canine animal. But it's made out of what I think is like either rusted steel or bronze or something. And you can tell that's what it, that's what the animal is. But again, it's got lots of patches and things. And there's also just this like, chicken-wire sculpture that's full of pebbles that's a human body?

Austin: Mm-hmm! Sure is!

Dre: And yeah.

(Ali chuckles)

Dre: So I think there's just... Valence is very clearly an alien now.

Austin: Right.

Dre: I don't think there's any hiding that.

Austin: You can find— or I was able to find the metal wolf sculpture by searching "metal wolf sculpture".

Ali: Oh!

Dre: Perfect.

Austin: It's just like, it's the first one of what I searched for. Maybe it won't be for you. Uh, Recycled Metal Wolf Sculpture by Greg Congleton. Or Congleton [pron. Conn-letin]. One or the other, is that one. And then this other one is... how would you even find this? Gabion? Gabion **Art**? G-A-B-I-O-N? Is the, I *think* is the either style or artist of this person who does these wire— or of this style of like "wireframe with rocks inside" art. It's like a recurring type of thing. So, yeah. Very cool.

Dre: Mm-hmm. They also have a new outfit. I don't know how deep you want to go into the fashion part of this now, but.

(**Ali** chuckles)

Austin: What's up? What's up? No more robes? What's up?

Dre: Well, no more robes. They do have— so, I think the main piece here is, you know, Anakin's, like, tunic that he has in, I think it's Revenge of the Sith? Is that where he has the black tunic?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That sounds likely (chuckles).

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Dre: So, similar to that, but I also think it is like very long in the back? Like it has like a trail in the back?

(**Ali** chuckles)

Austin: That's just Anakin.

Dre: Sure!

Austin: I'm just—

Dre: I don't think Anakin's is that long though.

Keith: (crosstalking) Even longer, is what you're saying like... this is on the floor—

Dre: Yeah, here, I'm gonna post another picture. Not on the floor but like at least down to like ankles.

Austin: Oh, I see.

Dre: In the back.

Austin: Okay. Less a cape, more a cowl.

Dre: Yes.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: And I think they don't have a robe per se, but now they just have a very big, long, billowing coat—

Keith: Inky...

Dre: That they wear.

Austin: Cowl is wrong. What is— what am I? What's the other word for that?

Dre: Tunic is the word that I think of.

Austin: Yeahhh, it *is* a tunic it just— Yeah, yeah. You're right.

Janine: Asymmetrical with a train— with a— a cowl is like a hood.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's why I said, it's not a cowl. Yeah, I was wrong. Um.

Keith: Um.

Austin: (crosstalking) Okay! What's— wait, so that's good?

Keith: (crosstalking) Now, is this change in outfit as thematically significant as it was for Anakin Skywalker who, in *Revenge of the Sith*, as we all know, turned to the dark side.

(**Ali** chuckles)

Dre: I guess we'll see.

(**Austin** gasps)

Ali: Oooh...

Keith: Damn...

Dre: Probably not though.

Keith: Okay.

(**Dre**, **Keith**, and **Austin** laugh)

Austin: Yeah, spoilers. What's the bad thing? This feels like a good thing to me.

Dre: Huh... Yeah, no, it is a good thing. It is a good thing for Valence to have a body. Um... I think the bad thing probably comes from Valence now being very obviously an alien?

Austin: Mm...

Dre: I think that they have to become a lot more isolated? They can no longer be like a person who tries to be a face of Millennium Break. Like they can't be the person who shows up on their own to do negotiations or to say like, "Hey, this is who we are."

Austin: Right... Mm-hmm.

Dre: Because now they're just a gas-powered wolf robot.

(**Ali** chuckles)

Dre: And that can probably put people on edge.

Austin: Yeah! No, I think it puts people on edge in a real way. I think that's fair. You know, we've touched on it here or there and maybe we will again shortly but like, there's a degree to which we shouldn't confuse the revolutionary character of Millennium Break with our own idealistic revolutionary, like, beliefs? In the sense that... *you* are the first of your— like, this is still a society built around a type of racism, not that ours isn't, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But like, *very* fundamental beliefs about what it means to look like a person have not been... have not been had throughout the entire Principality, and lots of people who are with us around... Like, to some degrees, it's still a very bourgeois, you know, revolution? Look at the fact that like, we haven't seen Agon on screen necessarily a lot, but we know that it's a lot of her people who are involved here, just by the breadth of how big that organisation is. And like the Company of the Spade wants to get paid better and probably wants elected officials and is all the way in on all that stuff, but I'm not even sure that they want to like eradicate all, you know, all of the— all of the aristocracy [pron. eh-*ri*-sto-kruh-see]. Right?

Why am I saying this word wrong? Aristocracy [pron. eh-ruh-*staa*-kruh-see], there we go.

(**Ali** chuckles)

Austin: You know what I mean? Like there's a degree to which, and so, "weird gas-cloud person" is *definitely* a hurdle you have to overcome with people. For sure. And even if they're like... Even if they're like, "No, I'm cool with it, I'm cool with it." They're still saying "I'm *cool* with it," instead of just *being* cool with it? (chuckles) You know what I mean? So even the steps forward are steps that are steps. Cool.

Ali: I have a question.

Austin: Sure!

Ali: Is Valence's, like, cloud body like in a container within the shell of all of this metal stuff? Or... Are they just like vibing? (laugh loudly)

Dre: I guess they're just vibin'!

Ali: Okay, sure.

Austin: Just like hanging out— It's like, it's not made of... There's not like a glass layer or something inside of it. Or like a...

Dre: Well? Maybe there has to be because now that I think about it, I remember at one point describing, like, when Valence got really beat up in one mission—

Austin: Yeah...

Dre: —as like the gas sort of leaking?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Dre: So maybe there is like a, like...

Austin: But what if it's not glass?

Dre: —plexiglass or something.

Ali: Oh yeah.

Austin: What if we go with the same thing— **Janine** mentioned meshes earlier?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: When we were describing what the jail cells were like? What if there's just like a very, you know, cool mesh that is... that adds some texture, do you know what I mean?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Like it's a thin enough mesh or, I guess, a close enough mesh that you don't leak through it. Like coiled... You know what I mean? But maybe it's also still sort of see-through? Can we see the gas when we look at you now?

Austin and Dre: Yes.

Austin: Right? That's like the big— Yeah, okay. Gotcha. Cool. Um. Cool! Ah, who else?

Jack: Um, Clem isn't having a great time.

Austin: Oh, really? Why?

Jack: Uh, she's in prison. Um, I'm gonna lead with the bad—

Austin: Mm, yeahhh, that'll get you! Sure.

Jack: Yeah! She is... She's miserable.

(**Austin** chuckles)

Jack: As for the good, she has been spending time working out!

Austin: Okay.

Jack: And she has been spending time reading. I think that—

Austin: She can do that?

Jack: Oh, well that's a good question!

(**Sylvia** laughs)

Austin: Okay.

Jack: That's a great question! Can I?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, probably.

Jack: Well, I don't know. Let's— Let's let—

Austin: I was joking. I mean, I was being facetious in the sense that she is a rich spoiled brat who doesn't *need* to do that? But actually'

Jack: Oh, I thought you meant like, are they allowing her to read?

Austin: Oh, no, (chuckles) no, I was— no.

Keith: Oh, I also thought that—

Jack: You were doing a "Can Clementine read?"— I think Clem can read.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, I don't know—!

Austin: Is she allowed?

Jack: Are they allowing her to read?

Keith: Yeah!

Jack: Great!

(Ali chuckles)

Jack: Okay, she's reading her favourite books, which are a bourgeois romance and war stories.

Austin: So Alise Breka is here, is—

Jack: Oh, yeah! Absolutely!

Austin: (laughing) You're *literally* reading the—

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Austin: Yeah, great. The Renegade Hearts series. Love it.

Jack: Is that Breka's series?

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh. That's established.

Jack: Yeah, I think that's definitely, like... I think that's got to be Clem's favourite genre.

Austin: (sighs) Fucking unbelievable.

Keith: If Clem didn't know Leap, the novel that's gonna— or the book— I don't know if it's a novel.

(Ali laughs)

Keith: The book about Leap might have been Clem's new favourite book in another universe!

Austin: It would be so fucking funny. God.

(Keith laughs)

Austin: When it comes out, oh, it's gonna be so good. I think— Can I use this moment, too, to... Mourningbride has probably started to, occasionally, when the right guard is on duty, you know? When there's a change, when someone, you know, leaves the two of them alone long enough or someone drifts off to sleep. Definitely begins to like, work out some thoughts about trying to escape.

Jack: Mm.

Austin: Or like prod to see if that's a thing you'd be interested in? Like, that's the vibe from her. I think she's very much like, you know, just to get a little bit of this on screen, I'm not going to zoom in on it, but like...

Keith: Who is it?

Austin: Mourningbride. The other person in prison.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: (chuckles) Is very much like,

Austin (as Mourningbride): Hey, a third of the people here are heretics. A third of them are like naive anarchists. The other third probably don't want to see, you know... Cruciat or Vigil City or any of these other places in the hands of anyone except the— they still are loyal to *the* Principality. You know, they are not, they are not the radicals here. I bet if we— I *bet* we can figure out how to get out of here. You know, there was a minute there where I thought maybe these people had some good ideas, you know... Elections seem all well and good, but.

Keith: That's a lie, right? From Mourningbride?

Austin: Mm... It's complicated! Right? Mourningbride is the descendant of a colonised population. And I think, spent a lot of time undercover in a radical group that was a place where she was able to learn about part of her heritage that had been completely locked off to her. And so, is there a world in which she thinks that there's like... "Yes, of course there should be more museums about the Hypha." (chuckles) You know? That's who she is.

Jack: Oh, wow! (singing) "Oh, Clementine and Mourningbride! What a team, here we go."

(Ali, Keith, and Austin laugh)

Austin: Right! That's it! Right? Like, that is the... she is—

Art: I can't wait for the episode when that song's all done...

(loud laughter)

Jack: (smiling) I don't think so, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Oh God...

Keith: Is their whole new style!

Austin: Yeah! It's weird!

Jack: It's really weird! Mid-season switch!

Austin: (smiling) Mid-season switch, yeah! It's all new, yeah.

Jack: Um.

Austin: Um, but that's the vibe—

Janine: Had to buy a piccolo for it but oh well!

(**Jack** and **Austin** laugh)

Jack: Yeah, I think Clem is very into this. I think this is very compelling? I think that Clem is definitely metering this with like...

Jack (as Clem): Well, you know, we're gonna have to do this... If we even want to think about doing this? Which, I hear where you're coming from, and I'm grateful that you would talk to me about this. We're not gonna be able to rush into this. You spent time undercover for a very, very long time. That was very admirable of you. But we can't simply up and run because my prisoners tried that and I caught them straight away.

(**Austin** laughs)

Jack (as Clem): We need to be cleverer about this. Pick our moment better. *If* we're going to do it at all. You know, I don't... I don't want to commit to anything here, you know?

Austin (as Mourningbride): You have no need to doubt my patience, Lady Kesh.

Jack (as Clem): Well, good—

Austin (as Mourningbride): There is nothing as patient as the Principality and we are its representatives here, among villains.

Jack: I'm just like nodding.

Austin: Yeah, like "Hmm!" Yeah. Uh-huh (chuckles).

Jack: *We* are the representatives (chuckles).

Austin: Uh-huh! We, (laughing) in prison behind this cage mesh.

Jack: (smiling) Two members of rival Stels. God! Yeah, it is absolutely the Stel system closing ranks.

Austin: Yeah! That— yes, 100%, so... I do have a good and a bad thing for Gur Sevraq, also. I think the good one's interesting because it's not... I mean, let's do the bad one first. The bad one is, Gur Sevraq did not go on that mission with y'all to Vigil City because that would have been dangerous. But the reports, from what it sounded like, of this incredible cave filled with unrefined Memoria. And like, there's a degree to which I think, when talking to some of the soldiers who've come back who slipped almost into, like, you know, free verse, poetry as they try to describe the beauty of this cave? There's a moment where I think he realises that what is being described is one of the parts of this thing that Gur Sevraq was ordered by the True Divine to build? The exemplar of the True Divine has countless eyes under the Memoria Teardrop somewhere, and he's like, "Oh! That's there."

(Ali chuckles)

Austin: The bad thing is, it's— Yeah, it's still there. And now that place is like under Columnar control, like—

Jack: Oh, what the fuck? We— They just didn't get it? It's just—

Austin: Why would— Why would we have? Right? We got those people out instead.

Keith: Right, we saved everyone and left the rocks.

Austin: We saved everyone and we left the rocks, and we left their homes. We like got them to safety and it's confusing.

Jack: Oh that's got to be galling.

Austin: Oh, it's terrible! Um, you know—

Jack: To just be like, it was *right* under our fingers! But we just— now Columnar have it.

Austin: We lost it and now Columnar have it. And what they know is— they're going to turn it into hard drives, right? This is like (chuckles)—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Like— (sighs)

(Jack chuckles)

Austin: God gave us a gift. We could have used that gift to build something that could have stopped the Pact, that could have stopped God. that could have could have connected— you know. And that is now, it's not off the table, but it's way harder now. So that's the—

Keith: You know what it feels like, it feels like when, you know, the— you know, as an empire, Columnar, their expressed goal, right, was, you know, Asepsis being like, "Oh, we've got to take

out the Equiaxed that live here. They can't live here. We have to take them and give them new bodies, whatever." Like that— Well, actually, now they just have a pile of resources.

Austin: And this was always the thing. This is like—

Keith: (chuckles) Yeah.

Austin: I mean, this is like, to pull of the curtain a little bit—

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what I'm saying, like it's—

Austin: "Oh, wow! Hey, during that—"

Keith: It's like when people say the United States lost the Vietnam War, because a bunch of people died. Like a bunch of Americans died, so we lost the Vietnam War.

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah. No, this is like... people have been displaced. There's all sorts of like, other— but for Columnar, this is a huge win, right? And this is what they always wanted. This is what Asepsis was going in there to do *to* begin with, was like, recover all of this, all of these assets. So that's the bad thing.

I think the good thing is, is a surprising good thing? For Gur and certainly for Apparatus. Which is that, given Apparatus's prominent position in Millennium Break, we've seen an adoption of the Metronomica across Partizan? Not *widely*. You know? This is not now like the (chuckles) third largest religion on Partizan or something like that. But like, it's almost as if there's this degree of the general beliefs have filtered down into the culture, almost in an Enlightenment sense, right? Where like, you didn't need to be a scholar of the Enlightenment to suddenly have different thoughts about what, about government or about liberty, right? You didn't need to be reading the philosophers of that era *to have* philosophical thoughts.

And I think that that's happening here because of the kind of, just too like the practical shape of the way these Millennium Break cells are starting to be formed? And as— part of it's like, "Huh," like, you know, who's told us Millennium— or who's told us Perennial's been bad our whole fucking lives? The Principality. Right? And it's an easy, it's like an easy and like kind of punk-ish, you know, way to kind of throw, you know, sand in authority's eyes? To be like, "Hey, fuck off, actually, I'm gonna get a sick sick tattoo of the symbol of Perennial, which is like Russian sage."

And I think that that's... That's, for Gur Sevraq, who is someone who's originally from the Cult of Perennial, there is something kind of like... comforting about not needing to hide that part of himself anymore? Or not needing to... There's like a shame that's been lifted because part of what led him to the Church of the Resin Heart was his faith in Perennial but also was this idea or, not— this, at the time, knowledge that the world was not yet ready for the Cult of Perennial to be in the protagonist's chair? (chuckles) And so I think there's a degree of like relief here, and a

connection to that part of their mixed, kind of, spiritual heritage at this point, which is interesting! So. So yeah! That's the Gur positive.

Sylvia: I think I figured out mine?

Austin: Mm!

Sylvia: For Milli? I think the... I'm gonna start with the bad one because I think it kind of like comes off of where we left her last, like... last we saw her? After the rescue mission going kind of bad for her crew, she's sort of become more like disconnected from just like—

Austin: Yeah...

Sylvia: —the regular military folk. It's mostly just like the people she's really close to now that she interacts with? Like Si'dra and Broun because of the project they do. And then like Leap and... Yeah, that's the list!

(**Austin** laughs)

Sylvia: And I think... it's been like really shitty! Like, she's been much more— Like, because... she's been doing better since things have been sort of turning with the direction of Millennium Break. And this sort of— she's gone back to being very like shut off.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think the good thing is that she is now, though, able to— I think, we mentioned the Semaphore stuff getting— or the Strand stuff getting set up in different Millennium Break settlements?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I like got this idea in my head of her and Si'dra basically travelling around, making sure that stuff's set up—

Austin: Hell yeah.

Sylvia: —and Milli getting to actually see Partizan without shooting it up.

Austin: Yeah!

Sylvia: Um...

Austin: You eat so many different like meals? You eat so many different foods that you've never had before.

(Ali chuckles)

Austin: Because they're just like—

Sylvia: Oh yeah!

Austin: "Here's like a local dish we make." And you would not have had this on the military base or in prison (chuckles). Um...

Sylvia: (smiling) It's just like coming back with like snacks for Leap to try?

Austin: (laughing) Yes!

Sylvia: Really good.

Austin: Like, "There's candy bars like this over here, it's *wild*." I love it.

Sylvia: They put pretzels *in* the chocolate.

(Austin, Ali, and Keith laugh)

Austin: Alright! That leaves...

Keith: That sounds good! Sounds good right now!

(Sylvia laughs)

Austin: ...Gucci and Sovereign Immunity?

Art: I'm ready I think.

Austin: What's up?

Art: I think I have to— I need a couple clarifying questions because there's something I wasn't clear about that seems to matter?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: We ended the last thing with Sovereign Immunity in a hospital?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: With a bunch of other people.

Austin: Yeah—

Art: Like a shot of the outside of the hospital?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: An image that I later thought would make a really good Netrunner card, but that's really not what we're doing here—

Austin: That would be a *sick* Netrunner card. We should get Netrunner. How do I get—

Art: —is art directing Netrunner cards (chuckles).

Austin: Why. Why aren't we doing it? Let's give us the Netrunner licence. Whoever has it at this point, Hasbro? Whoever has it, I want it.

Art: Well, there's the people making the secret, the fan cards! We could—

Austin: We could— NISEI, yeah.

Art: —partner with them.

Austin: Yeah, we could.

Austin and Art: Anyway.

Art: Where is the— I thought that hospital was where we were...

Austin: Yeah! That's in Auspice.

Art: But we— but everyone else left. (chuckles)

Austin: Eh! It's months, right? So—

Art: Sure.

Austin: And Icebreaker is still in Auspice. That's why I kind of did that thing where I drew the, that, you know, square around this whole area is like, "Hey, what if we just have this area over this period of time?" You know? Or—

Art: Sure. I think the bad thing is it takes like almost this entire time for Sovereign Immunity get out of the hospital.

Austin: Other people doing things makes that even worse, then (chuckles). Right? Uh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: That even makes it better— or makes it *better* as a bad thing, in a sense.

Art: It's like the shot I'm thinking is the like, you know, the focus on like him gazing out the window as the time lapses?

Austin: Yeahhh.

Art: As it gets dark and light, like people come in and people leave, and like it's just his fixed gaze out because you know, this is a real... You're a lot older than you were the last time you tried to fight a war.

Austin: Yeah. (laughs)

Art: Um (chuckles). You know, it's—

Austin: The last time you were fired through low Earth orbit (chuckles) at a city.

Art: Right, yeah! You know, I'm thinking, you know, *I'm* in my mid 30s. And if I have like two or three drinks at night, I'm just like *worthless* the next day. I think back like 15 years ago where you know, it was *nothing*!

Austin: Right.

Art: That but for war and being 80 or whatever he is.

(**Austin** laughs)

Austin: Good thing?

Art: I think that's like a real bummer.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: The like, "Oh shit. Not only is time passing these two months, time has *passed*."

Austin: Right.

Art: You know?

Austin: Right!

Art: *Time* passes.

Austin: *Time* passes. Yeah.

Sylvia: Sure does...

Keith: Time...

Austin: Dot is.

Keith: It passes.

Art: It passes!

Austin: Yeah. So is there a good thing?

Art: Um. I mean, I think the good thing is the like, the good moment of him like getting back onto Icebreaker and people being happy to see him—

Austin: People clap. Can we clap for fucking Sovereign Immunity?

(all clapping)

Austin: Sovereign Immunity comes back on board, everyone's like, "Hey!"

Sylvia: 7pm, everybody go outside and clap for Sovereign Immunity!

(**Austin, Ali,** and **Keith** laugh loudly)

Austin: (laughing) Stop clapping, you're making my grandpa too strong!

(**Sylvia, Ali, Dre,** and **Keith** laugh)

Art: Uh, yeah, exactly that!

Austin: So, who's left? Gucci!

Janine: Yeah, um... I actually had similar (chuckles) good and bads for Gucci? Sovereign— I mean, obviously not— one of hers isn't being old... (chuckles) So, I think for her, because Gucci was hurt in that fight... I think her, her bad thing is that it also takes her longer than she would like, to recover, but it's not— it's not so much because, you know. Like, she's still young, she's still... you know, springy? I don't know what the word I want is (laughs). She can rebound better. But it's just that the system is really overburdened.

Austin: Right.

Janine: And it's a case of like...

TIMESTAMP [02:30:00]

Janine: You know, while being in that hospital, it's really difficult to... (inhales) It's really difficult to feel like you're making progress because every little thing takes longer than it would under normal circumstances.

Austin: Right.

Janine: But I think the good is that like... So I kind of... I think Gucci probably got like nerve damage or something in her arm or... Like, something like that, I want...

Austin: Uh, yeah, yeah.

Janine: I— it frustrates me a little bit when we do— we do a lot of stuff where people get hurt and then the next time we see them, they're fine.

Austin: They're fine, yeah, totally! It's worth saying that... One second, I need to— I'm blanking on an important word that I need to... It's worth saying that, so Gucci has vitiligo, which is a condition— It's like a, it's a long-term skin condition, where there are like, there's de-coloration of pigment? Right? She's a black character but has part of her... Part of her body is covered in kind of white patches. She's specifically modelled after a character— not a character, a *model* named Amy Deanna who you can Google and who has some— some great stuff.

It's worth saying that people with vitiligo often also have associated conditions? Including some like autoimmune stuff. Some of that stuff is like, you know, some of that stuff is like psoriasis, right? But some of it is also like, and I'm not, it's not me being like, "Who cares about psoriasis?" You know what I mean? But that's also things like rheumatoid arthritis. I want to say Addison's disease. There's a few other like, things that already move in that direction around— Uh, celiac disease. Like those things would already have been elements of Gucci's life that she was managing or want— maybe not all of them, certainly, right?

But there's a high chance that she probably had an autoimmune disorder already. And so and so I can imagine being wounded badly requires a great deal of additional care and recovery time? I don't know what that specific second one is because I didn't— This is like a note that I have (chuckles), and like, "Huh, I should figure this out!" and the next thing you know, it's the middle of the season, you know? But I don't know if that's something here too. Right? Like autoimmune, you know, issues are serious and.

Janine: I mean, you know, you know what's bad for arthritis? Is being stuck in a bed for a few weeks.

Austin: Yeah! Totally, totally.

Janine: So, I mean, maybe that is it, maybe it is a thing of like, she already had sort of these... You know, maybe she already had issues with her joints and stuff—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: —but it was a thing that she had learned to deal with because she was, you know, living a certain lifestyle and not, you know, stuck in a hospital.

Austin: Right.

Janine: And then, you know, once she's... Once she's deemed fit to be discharged from the hospital, it's a case of like, well... I mean I guess that's the other part of it, is like... There's rehab, there's rehabilitation steps before you can even get out of the hospital—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: —but then once you're out of the hospital— What I wanted to build to, I'm just gonna cut myself off—

Austin: Yeah, get there. Get there.

Janine: What I wanted to build to is like, the bad thing is, she had to spend a lot of time in the hospital and it's difficult for her. And the good thing I wanted to build to is that, because Fort Icebreaker has a lot of like trained fighters but also, you know, there are academics in there. There's people— like we've got the Winter Doctor, we've got...

Austin: Right, right.

Janine: Like a pretty... I'm also specifically thinking of Eiden Teak here? I feel like it would be a really good place to get, like, smart— not physiotherapy exactly, but like, you know, when you are hurt and recovering, there are some things you can do wrong that will make things worse long term.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: And I think I want to establish that this group has people who know what to do right.

Austin: Right.

Janine: So it doesn't get worse long term. So there is like, you know, there are people that— I mean, Gucci already probably, you know, as you said, she's probably been managing this condition to some degree for a while. So she probably knows things as well. But in terms of, you know, in terms of having people on hand who can like help you, who can support you in that? It's very valuable.

So I think that the good is that like, even though she really struggled with this recovery, there are people around who can make sure that, going forward, it doesn't need to get worse than it already would be, you know? Like it's... it's not going to be a case of like, aggravating the issue more—

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: —because of just the way things are, because of, you know, neglect of services or whatever.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Right. Yeah. It makes a huge difference to like not just have a medical bay but to have like a room for physical therapy.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Exactly, yeah.

Ali: Or like, you know...

Austin: And a culture where like that is an expected part of— like recovery time is baked into what you're doing, right? Like it's not like—

Janine: Yes.

Austin: She's not been like, "Alright, you're back! Get in the fucking— Get in the robot!"

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: "Go back to—" Like, to the degree... Not to say like she wouldn't do that if she was called on in that way or there was a need to, I'm sure that Gucci will get into the robot again in this recording, probably. But specifically like having that, not just allowance, but that like... almost requirement built in? That's like, "No. We're gonna take care of our people." I think it's a huge part—

Janine: Yeah. We have space for it, we have, you know, we have expertise, we have the necessary, you know...

Austin: I shittalk—

Janine: ...tools and techniques.

Austin: —Agon Ortlights a lot and the Company of the Spade as being kind of like... (inhales) very bougie in their membership of this group? But they are literally an entire company built around the understanding that, like, human bodies are variable and that, to enable them to be, you know, to work the way the people who have those bodies would like them to work as best as they can, is like a core tenant of how they work. That's, you know, they were doing jobs that left them wounded badly or going into environments that required bodily modification, you know, so there's *all* sort of— that culture is there already?

And I think insofar as we can, like, look at the Company of the Spade, and be like, "Oh, that's a good thing. That is one of the best things about them." On top of being, you know, still

fundamentally a worker-led organisation, there is not like some rich, shitty CEO at the top of the Company of the Spade? It is a, like a co-op or in the same way that the Oxblood Clan is. So that part—good.

(Alichuckles)

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Anyway. Part of why I think Icebreaker and Millennium Break *have* that culture is because we can point to these specific— we're not just being like, "And that's a good thing and that's why it's there. Because it's a good thing." It's like, "No, this is a group of people who would care about this." You know? Cool.

Keith, you were very Exeter Leap-focused and I know I hit the Apparatus stuff a little bit with Gur? I don't know if you have anything else there or if anyone else has like a big minor-character thing that they want to get forward?

Keith: Um, yeah... I was focused on Leap because of the... because of Drive Clocks and stuff.

Austin: Yeah, no, I'm good with that!

Keith: But... I don't...

Austin: It's fine, I'm not—

Keith: I don't have anything prepped for Apparatus—

Austin: Yeah, really this is more for like, if someone has anything jumping out that they're like, "Oh, wait, before we move on!" But if not, that is totally okay.

Ali: I do actually, which is that... (inhales) I didn't mention in the last recording, but I think that Eiden got pretty badly burned in the Columnar mission?

Austin: Mm.

Ali: And I think that his mech got fucked up too. And I think it's just been a lot of time, like, spending time in the hangar and stuff like that!

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: That's kind of where I see him. And then I completely blanked on a huge thing...

Austin: Oh!

Ali: ...that I wanted to mention with Broun (chuckles), is that, um... I think because Broun is so much more involved in an organisational side of the Kingdom, that they are now a Perspective!

Austin: Oh, interesting!

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: That's good!

Ali: Um, I've only ever played a Touchstone in this game (laughing) so I'm...

Austin: Ooh! Damn. Okay!

Ali: ...a little apprehensive but I'm excited to change.

Austin: I'm down! Sounds great.

Keith: Is that including, um, COUNTER/weight?

Ali: That includes Jace, yeah.

Keith: Okay, wow. You never switched for all of that? Actually, I think I was—

Ali: No, Jace, uh, Jace was an emo boy and had feelings...

(**Austin**, **Sylvia**, and **Keith** laugh loudly)

Keith: I think I was Perspective for that whole thing. So. I guess I can't—

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. There was not a lot of moving around, if I remember right there.

Ali: Mm-mm.

Austin: Besides the Ibex stuff. Anyway. Was there another thing here?

Janine: Can I add something before we move on?

Austin: Yep! Totally.

Janine: I don't know how close we are to moving on, I just want to—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I just had an idea and wanted to make sure it happened.

Austin: Mm-hmm!

Janine: Um, (chuckles) I think after spending a little while teaching small robots how to farm...

Austin: Uh-huh...

(**Ali** chuckles)

Janine: I think one day Thisbe shows up at Clementine's cell. I think maybe she— maybe she like asks permission for this first, probably? But... it's one of those things where I don't want to assume that permission will be granted but also I think if a big robot came to the Council—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: —and was like,

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I would like to see if Princess Kesh can farm.

Janine: They would be like, (laughing) "Fucking go for it"?

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: Yeah, that's hilarious (laughs).

Janine: (smiling) I don't know, **Keith** let me know!

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Like get out of the cell?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Well, she can't farm *in* the cell.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Mmm... If she can farm in the cell, then *definitely*.

(**Ali** and **Austin** laugh)

Art: This is why you need the walking plants!

(**Austin** laughs)

Janine: Yeah...

Ali: (sighs) See, there you go...

(**Art** laughs)

Austin: Listen, we— y'all let her go out in a *mech*. Not gonna let her go to the farm? Under Thisbe's supervision?

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Yeah, but that was... That was... I guess I'd call it petty justice.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Look, she's getting comfortable in there—!

Austin: You don't think—

Janine (as **Thisbe**): She's *reading* books and just like kicking back. You don't want to put her to work a little bit?

Austin: Make the princess dig ditches!

Janine (as **Thisbe**): She's reading her *favourite* books (chuckles).

Austin: (chuckles) Yeah! And doing, as **Dre** points out in the chat, clap pushups.

(**Ali** and **Janine** laugh)

Keith (as **Apparatus**): But! But. Self-admitted miserable. So, got the books but it's not helping being in the cell—

Austin: Yeah...

Janine (as **Thisbe**): She'll tell you whatever you want to hear, I bet!

(**Austin** laughs)

Janine: Yes or no. If Thisbe shows up and says,

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I would like to see if Clementine Kesh can farm. I would like to watch her farm (laughs), like I would like to bring her to the farm. And instruct her.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Bring her... to the farm. You mean the above-deck farm?

Janine: Like, I'm not saying that she's gonna keep her there. I'm saying like,

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Can I bring Clementine Kesh to a field for a couple hours.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Fine.

Austin: "Under gun."

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Fine.

Austin: Okay.

Keith (as **Apparatus**): Ask Leap.

Keith: Leap says,

Keith (as Leap): Fine.

Keith: But is also mad about it.

Austin: Mm-hmm! Clem?

Janine: Uh, then Thisbe shows up at Clementine's cell! What does Clementine think? (chuckles)

Jack (as Clem): Of course, I would be happy to do my part.

Austin: (smiling) How's it go?

Janine: How is Clem at farming? (chuckles)

Jack: Oh, it's a disaster, right? It's, it's, um, it's one of those things where like... On one level, more hands is always good for some tasks? And on another level, lacking the awareness or willingness to do what needs to be done, it just makes things slower or worse. I think picking stuff up, moving it around is fine, because Clem doesn't need any particular guidance there? But I think as soon as it's like, make judgments about how this thing should work or how that thing should work even on a small scale, it just... does not go good.

Keith: If she's bad at it, does Thisbe keep her around?

Janine: Um... I mean, I think the way that I envisioned this happening is Thisbe sort of starting off high? Like starting off being like,

Janine (as Thisbe): Well. Clementine Kesh is a human being. Humans understand...

Janine: You know, like, generally, a person who has gone to school understands you put a seed in the ground—

Jack: Oh yeah.

Janine: —or you put a seed in some soil and then you water it and, like, understand these basic things. So Thisbe might maybe assume a higher skill level and be like,

Janine (as Thisbe): Okay, here is a trowel.

Janine: And... I guess we still haven't decided if this is hydroponic, there would not be a trowel (smiling) if this is a hydroponic thing.

(Keith chuckles)

Austin: I think it's a mix of things, right, because like what's on deck versus interior—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: —versus out on the fields, you know, on shore. So.

Janine: Yeah. Um, well, you know, Thisbe hands her like some basic tools and like escorts are probably to a very small area? Like a restricted, just to kind of like see? And then Clementine underperforms in a way—

(**Ali** chuckles)

Janine: —that Thisbe is immediately like,

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Okay, we will— we can... we will move the bags of soil.

(**Jack** laughs)

Jack (as **Clem**): Yeah, let's just carry thing from A to B.

Austin: God...

Janine: There's a moment of Thisbe considering a wheelbarrow. Like looking at the wheelbarrow, looking at Clementine, looking at the wheelbarrow and just deciding to go with the smaller bags of soil.

(**Jack** laughs)

Austin: Amazing. All right. I have to really quickly— there's something important in the chat before we move on to the Crisis Fades step. Sylvi in the chat says, "Do we have dogs on Fort Icebreaker or what pets do we have?"

Sylvia: Yeah, I actually thought of a good answer for this.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: Um. Because I think it would make sense for the lady who named her mech the Stray Dog to keep coming back from these trips with a different stray dog (laughing) that she's picked up?

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: God... Amazing. God.

Sylvia: And people keep bringing it up! And she *doesn't* stop.

Austin: No, there's just dogs on the ship now!

Sylvia: It's like, she can't just leave them there!

Austin: Amazing.

Sylvia: Yeah. So it's just all sorts of dogs. And other! Other animals too, I imagine, but...

Keith: Train them to hunt the ghost.

Sylvia: Oh my God...

Austin: Why don't we just train them to hunt the ghost? Yeah.

Art: That seems like animal cruelty, that ghost could be anything!

Austin: Hmm, true.

Keith: People train dogs to hunt!

Art: Hunt *things*.

Keith: Right. What is it ghost but a thing?

(**Ali** chuckles)

Art: A ghost *isn't* a thing!

Sylvia: Uh.

Ali: Do we have like a single— Oh, we have to have like chickens. We have to have like space chickens... And like a cow...

Keith: What, for eggs, you mean?

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Yeah, sure!

Ali: I was thinking of like a single goat— I was trying to think of like what animals help with farming, a goat...

Keith: I think we should have a married goat.

Austin: (disapprovingly) Mm...

Ali: A married goat...

Austin: Instead of a single goat?

Keith: You said a single goat... (chuckles)

TIMESTAMP [02:45:00]

(**Ali** sighs and starts laughing)

Austin: See? Do you see what **Keith** was doing?

Ali: Yeah, I get it.

Austin: Okay.

Art: You loved it! (chuckles)

Ali: (chuckles) Mm-hmm!

Keith: Everyone here loved it.

Austin: (laughs) You could hear! Uh, all right. I love these animals.

Crisis Fades! "If there are any Crisis boxes checked, we'll see whether the situation in the Kingdom has calmed down during the break. You may be influenced by how other players described their hiatus. Everyone simultaneously holds out one hand pointing fingers to show how much you think Crisis should be reduced, one to five fingers or a fist for zero. Take the second lowest number, even if that's a zero or a tie and erase that many checks." We did it before, we'll do it again. Let's put our numbers in the chat from zero to five. Don't hit send yet. We'll do it all at once.

I'm ready.

Dre: Wait, it's how many were going down.

Austin: Correct.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Um...

Austin: From zero to five.

Dre: I'm struggling and I—

Jack: I'm ready.

Dre: Um, okay!

(**Ali** laughs)

Austin: If you're ready, say that you're ready.

(everyone says "Ready")

Austin: Three, two, one, go.

(sound of everyone hitting the Enter key)

Austin: (excitedly) What a mix!

(**Ali** chuckles)

Austin: We got a zero! We got *two* ones— *three* ones. We got three twos. We got a three. The second lowest is one! So, reduces by one. Incredible. Uh, **Keith** at the three was not what I was expecting—

Keith: I can't believe the zero, frankly.

(**Ali** chuckles)

Sylvia: Yeah...

Keith: This is— we had zeros and ones the last time—

Austin: We lost a lot of people...

Keith: —this was so much more stable of a situation. Unbelievable.

Austin: There's different types of stability, we— lots of people just *died*.

Keith: Yeah. In a way, makes things more stable!

Sylvia: We also are setting up new bases though—

(sounds of outrage)

Austin: *Whoa!*

Art: Oh...

Dre: Whoa!

Janine: Mm...

Austin: No!

Sylvia: Wow! Also—

Jack: (singing) “Elections, elections!”

(**Ali** and **Austin** laugh)

Jack: “Happy to say my name will be on the ballot.”

(**Austin** and **Ali** laugh)

Austin: (laughing) The advertisement: Apparatus says, “Death is good for stability?” Question mark? (chuckles)

(**Dre** laughs)

Keith: Out of character and also as a joke.

Austin: Uh-huh.

(**Sylvia** chuckles)

Ali: Mm...

Austin: All right. I’m guessing no one is changing characters? No one’s character is retiring, leaving or dying? Question mark? Okay. Sounds like no.

All right, so it’s time for the next Crossroad, which I haven’t prepared! I’m going to give you the prompt because I kind of want y’all to help me come up with what this crossroad is.

Two messages arrive for one Clementine Kesh at the same time, or within the same period of time. The first one arrives to your Strand Semaphore account, your official one, not the onboard one. And I don’t think anyone notices until there’s a beeping noise inside of Clem’s bedroom?

There’s a message sent to Clem’s account. Does anyone get Clem to log in and read this message? And Clem, would you do this if someone required you to?

Jack (as Clem): I don’t think so...

Austin: Okay! Well, then that one... It goes unanswered.

Jack: That's the opposite of "Yes, and". Is it better if I do?

Austin: Mm-mm! I— it's enough— um, the camera can see it, which is all that matters, right?

Jack: Sure (chuckles).

Austin: The camera sees that there's a message that is from Cas'alear Rizah. That goes unread. Cas'alear, the leader of the Apostolosian Swordbreakers. Who is the one who told you about the Pact of Necessary Venture. I don't know if that changes (chuckles) your calculation here.

Jack: I think Clem is too proud to say, "Go into my emails."

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. Fair. Then the second message comes and it does not— it comes addressed to you, but it comes in a little envelope that begins to make noise when it's opened.

Jack: Oh, fuck these things. (chuckles)

Austin: Clem, you don't know— Yeah, you don't— you don't hear this at all, but it's opened in a secure room. It has the seal of Crysanth Kesh on it. Everyone knows this is a nightmare— you know, thing, this could be a bomb, this could be filled with poison (chuckles). Who the fuck knows, how did this get here? It just *shows* up one day. Like it's just *on* the command deck one day.

And it is an invitation. It's an invitation to something called the Summer Passage of Arms.

[*TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.* by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Austin: Also just called the Summer Passage. Yeah, it's close. It has the same like the kind of gilded seal with the Crysanth Kesh thing and her voice comes through and it says... you know,

"Daughter of mine,

Your presence, or the presence of your Champion, is requested at the Summer Passage, which you know is a yearly tournament of hollows and hallows held at the Isle of Summer, which is west of the Isle of Logos, but still independent territory."

[the music continues until it swells; then, fades to silence]