

COUNTER/Weight 24: It's Still Dark Out

Transcriber: ohno (@wunder_wirker)

AUSTIN (as Narrator): An excerpt from the journal of Addax Dawn, member of the Rapid Evening, Archangel of Counterweight.

"I've lost a dozen agents in the last two days and tomorrow I'll lose a dozen more. Our work here has failed, yet I am joyous. It made a mistake. It doesn't see it yet but it made a mistake.

[The Long Way Around starts]

In the eons since the first divine was tricked into slumber, the galaxy learned that with enough variables in play, even *gods* make miscalculations. Now, Rigour will learn that lesson too. That machine breathes power. It compiles its psychic graphics, it leverages all of post-humanities' post-industrial acumen but with the voice of the Evening in its ear, it has learned too much. It sees the pieces, and their movements and the board with a truly blinding clarity, and so it misses the character of these things.

It collects its pawns, one and then another, but fails to consider the weight of their number. It predicts the long arm of the bishop, but discounts her loyalty. It depends on the strength of the rook, but underestimates the allure of her other skin. It obsesses over the regent's authority, but misses her brilliance.

This is how I know the Golden Branch will survive, because for all its attention to detail, all its efficient algebra, Rigour can never imagine the impossible, necessary future of these beautiful radicals."

[Pause as the theme plays]

AUSTIN: (mock-cheerful) How's it goin'? (laughs) Who has another move to make?

ART: Uh...

AUSTIN: So the thing there is that there is, and you can confirm this using other research that you do just like the, I'm not gonna make you roll for, Keith, is that you can see that there is, just basically at the period where the big fireworks display is going to happen, there's going to be a brief window where the air space is- needs to be clear because the fireworks will be launching.

KEITH: 'kay.

AUSTIN: To be clear that means the fireworks will be also launching at that time period. While you're leaving.

ART: We got a great pilot, apparently what he¹ does is nothing like using a giant human.

AUSTIN and ALI laugh

KEITH: And we'll have a really nice view of the fireworks.

AUSTIN: That's true. Cass, AuDy or Aria?

JACK: Uh, we got Babs, we could go and see--

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) You should go see Babs.

JACK: I'm not sure, Babs is a shadow broker

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yeah!

JACK: Which might be useful. I can't quite work out yet in what way that could directly be useful but having a shadow broker is maybe something we should have?

AUSTIN and ALI laugh

AUSTIN: Always!

ALI: (still kind of giggly) Uhh um. Cause right now I'm torn between two options, do we need stuff or information?

AUSTIN: I think a little bit of both probably, right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like you have a way off the planet, you still don't know much about Detachment, you still don't have the engine you need, you still don't have a way to travel through either deep space or to travel undetected through the major space lanes.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: All of the major things that I think you should address before you bounce.

JACK: I-

KEITH: We do have a window though.

¹ AuDy uses they/them pronouns.

AUSTIN: You have a window!

ALI chuckles

JACK: I could go and see Babs. I think I've worked out what I would go and see Babs for.

AUSTIN: Is this- is this a "going to talk to a contact" then? Is that the roll you are making?

JACK: (crosstalk) Yeah I think so.

AUSTIN: Hit the street? Alright. Does anybody else either wanna join or...?

JACK: I could use aid here.

KEITH: (crosstalk) I would like to go.

AUSTIN: You're busy doing- you're doing...

KEITH: Okay I'm already- I'm still there?

ART: (crosstalk) I'll go with AuDy. I'll go there and provide aid I have a, I have a good working relationship with AuDy.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: And then, so then after that-

ART: Also a good personal relationship but he [sic] was also kinda just really insulting about the piloting thing.

AUSTIN: (laughs) But you weren't there so... yeah, and we'll, and then Aria will get a scene and then we'll reassess because that's where I'm at in terms of turns. So, Aria and, oh sorry, AuDy and Cass.

JACK: Yeah Cass, do you wanna roll aid?

AUSTIN: How are you aiding?

ART: Uhm.

AUSTIN: Good roll!

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Jesus Christ, rolled a twelve! So take that, take that plus one.

ART: The move that I didn't take from my, from my new move was going to be about like, giving pep talks?

AUSTIN hums in agreement

ALI and JACK: Aww!

ART: Yeah you guys won't get pep talks now, I'm sorry but this, this is what we have.

AUSTIN laughs

KEITH: What did, what did you take?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) He took "Tactical operations"?

ART: I took assessing while leaving, while leading a mission which isn't gonna come up for a while probably not until, until next session.

AUSTIN: (sceptical) Eh! I don't know, it might happen soon.

ART: But like I do kinda like, wanna like, give like-

ART (as Cass): AuDy? I know that sometimes you, you, you can have a little trouble, you know, communicating... covertly with people, but you are, you are by far our far best asset for this and you're an appreciated member of this team and I, I really, I really need you to, to focus on this one.

KEITH: Make sure by "asset" he [sic] doesn't think you mean an *object*.

AUSTIN laughs

ART: I just assume that that's, of course not what he [sic] would assume, because we're friends. We have, we have Link +3. Nobody would refer to someone they have Link +3 with as an object.

JACK (as AuDy): Thank you, Cass.

KEITH and ALI laugh

JACK (as AuDy): We have Link +3.

AUSTIN and KEITH laugh

AUSTIN: Good. Yup! Good, good, good. That could advance this thing and reset, we'll see.

SOMEONE crosstalks

KEITH: It's like that very early episode of Pokemon where they run into the school where they play the virtual Pokemon game and have like levels and stuff-

AUSTIN hums in agreement

KEITH: And I'm just like "c'mon."

AUSTIN: C'mon! C'mon! Alright, gimme a, gimme a "Hit the street", AuDy.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: And this is, remember, remind me, Benny Babs is in like the-

JACK: Benny Babs is, you know at the beginning of Die Hard when, when John log, tries to log in at that computer in the Nakatomi Plaza lobby?

AUSTIN: Yes! Yes.

JACK: That is Benny Babs.

AUSTIN: Yes, okay.

JACK: Except the lobby is much, much bigger and there's several of those computers.

AUSTIN: And there's like, other people are using them.

KEITH: (crosstalk) Benny Babs is the lobby.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Sorry?

AUSTIN: Other people are using the other consoles-

JACK: Oh yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: This is just, this is one that is the one where Benny Babs is.

JACK: Yeah, and you can super use this console to like, book things.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay.

JACK: "Babs" stands for Beneficial Automated Booking System Centralia Herald, so you, it's the news paper.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Oh right! It's part of the newspaper, it's at the newspaper lobby. Right, I recall this now, okay.

JACK: Okay! Right.

AUSTIN: Hit the street! That's a 7! Plus one, plus one is a 7. (relieved sigh)

JACK: Yess!

KEITH: I lo- I love that Counterweight's biggest criminal masterminds are all like, computers with blue-collar jobs.

AUSTIN: Yeah basically!

JACK: (laughs) So good!

AUSTIN: Yeah! Basically.

JACK: And then Ibex.

AUSTIN: Right. Well, Ibex isn't on Counterweight yet, so... Yet. So... Alright, you rolled a 7, that means, when you hit the street you get two, choose two from the list below. You've request, your request is gonna cost you extra... Oh sorry, you don't *get to*, you *have to* choose two to get your request. So what is your request? What is the thing you want here?

JACK: Things... things go missing- in, in dark space and then arrive at their destination. Everybody knows this. They disappear from the radar at one point and then they reappear on the radar at another point. And I want to know why.

AUSTIN: You wanna know why or you wanna be able to do it?

JACK: Are they s- are they ssss... actually yeah, I don't care about knowing why, I wanna be able to do it.

AUSTIN: Okay. (inhales deeply) now i have to decide how, how Benny Ba-, how Benny Babs does this. there's kind of two solutions I've had in my mind. one is the technology that Apostalos uses, the kind of like, golden sails. The other is experimental like, stealth technology. But that's like, it's not just, its not boring but i wanna little twist on it so if anyone has suggestions on that, OR thinks that Benny Babs would know one of those over the other. What do you think?

KEITH: Just for placing the tarp that we got?

AUSTIN: No the tarp is- (laughs)

JACK: (crosstalk) Nonono the tarp is literally f- (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) The tarp is literally keeping it hidden in the space port.

KEITH: (chuckles) Okay.

ART: I'm still pretty sure the tarp is a bribe

AUSTIN: Tarps are very expensive. Art.

JACK: Well that too- well yes they are *fairly* expensive. So I think that it's suppose-

AUSTIN: It's a *big* tarp.

JACK: Y-yeah, this is a tarp the size of a-- Art if we dropped this tarp on you from any height it would kill you. This is a gigantic tarp.

ALI and ART laugh

ART: Do you say, is this a literal tarp or are you just being like the su- the weight of the corruption would crush my being. Where are we at here with this metaphor?

AUSTIN and ALI laugh

JACK: Listen, the way you bribe someone is you buy 'em a tarp! It's how it works. So i think that, part of the way I'm thinking about this, Austin, is, I'm... kind of framing this in my head as... smugglers?

AUSTIN: Mh!

JACK: And the way that in the UK smugglers used to use combinations of... shining lights in windows and... special knocks on doors-

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And at the same time, you know, people used to lure ships into rocks by standing on the cliffs and waving big lights around-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Right. So do you think it's

JACK: So they thought they were lighthouses.

AUSTIN: It's literally not any technology at all, it's like, a set of procedures that Benny Babs can give you? To like-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Pass through the kind of smuggler world? Like it's the sort of thing that the Odamas fleet uses to-

JACK: Yeah totally.

AUSTIN: Get past Minerva security... It's like the secret handshake of, of the space world.

JACK: Yeah, I think, and I mean I think there's technology involved. I think what we're-

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Essentially maybe doing, is doing an incredibly long-ranged complicated version of that great *Elite Dangerous* video where they turn all that stuff off.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yes.

JACK: And slowly freeze to death, cause their ship-

AUSTIN: Cause like, if you turn off all of your heat stuff then the feds can't track ya. so...

JACK: Yeah, except we're doing this on every level of our phenomenal illegal ship.

AUSTIN: And bigger and bigger ship that you have *never flown* in space, *ever*. You've flown it there once, I think, maybe.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: (huffs amusedly) Huh, okay! So now you have to choose two from the list below. Alright, the request is going to cost you extra, the request is going to take some time to put together, your request is going to attract unwanted attention, complications or consequences... or your contract, sorry, your contact needs you to help them out with something. If you, if you turn them down, take -1 ongoing on this move until you make it right.

JACK: Okay. I think it's going to... cost more and I think it's going to- that Babs is gonna want something.

AUSTIN: Okay, so it's going to cost you four credits... and (thinking noises) what's Benny Babs need from you right now? Let me look at my sheet real quick. See what's, what other things are moving.

JACK: I mean it could be because they're a shadow broker, could be the case that's, that they are, they are representing somebody else.

AUSTIN: What do you mean, sorry, say that again? Like what, in what way are you expecting that? Are you, are you-

JACK: (crosstalk) Well, you know, I assume that they have hundreds of clients?

AUSTIN: Totally! You're right, so-

JACK: You know, maybe it's not something that Babs wants, maybe it's something that somebody else wants that Babs is able to facilitate.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yes! Yeah, totally. So I think the thing that they want... is... let me look at the clocks really quick... and also my new faction chart over here, my faction list. So I think (long pause, then laughs quietly) they have like a, a real... is this too dark? I've decided it's too dark, one second.

KEITH: Guys the biggest tarp that I could find was 170 feet by 170 feet for *five thousand dollars*.

AUSTIN: That's nowhere near as many as-

JACK: I could find you a way bigger tarp.

AUSTIN: Yeah, like, the Kingdom Come is more than 170 feet by 170 f-

KEITH: Oh yeah, no, I know. I'm just saying tarps, turns out, they're pretty expensive.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk, incredulous laugh) Tarps are really expensive! Yeah!

ALI laughs

ART: I still don't understand what we're really talking about right now.

ALI and JACK laugh

AUSTIN: My favourite thing about this is that there is like, the tarp fund, the Troubled Asset Relief Program that, that in the, in 2008 after the financial crisis- maybe we're talking about that! Maybe this is, maybe this is- (laughs)

KEITH: That's, that's w- I didn't want anybody to get confused, that's why I was calling it a tarpaulin earlier.

AUSTIN: I see. Thank you, I appreciate that.

ALI giggles

ART: Yeah I, I assure you, I had a lot of... mortgage bailout jokes, I just didn't think they were *really* in our wheelhouse here.

ART and AUSTIN laugh

AUSTIN: Benny Babs gives you an offer: yes, you will- they will, they will let you do this, they will let you, they will give you the, kind of the secret technology and the, the kind of code language. I think maybe this literally just- flashing lights, like it is just a system of lights that you run along the side of the Kingdom Come? That you install alongside the Kingdom Come and, and flash in certain orders and in certain hues, but they need you to make a delivery here on Counterweight before you go. There is a shipment of... uh, *film* that they need you to deliver to a couple of different... theaters in the Krillm entertainment district. Simple job, you walk in, you, you give them the film palettes and you leave. I don't think they're called films, they're called something else they're called like, digitainment-

JACK: Well, they're SSDs, right? They're just massive SSDs.

AUSTIN: God, I guess, who even knows?

JACK: So I guess... Cass?

ART (as Cass): Yeah?

JACK(as AuDy): Does this agreement seem... good?

ART (as Cass): Yeah I think we could, I think we could make it happen. I, I mean, we have, we have the tech to do that. I just have a, we just got some new, heavy lifting equipment.

AUSTIN: Oh these aren't very big. Like this is all popping up on a screen right, this is all text-based if I recall?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is this just like, oh, like-

AUSTIN (as Benny): "O H . . . these aren't very big."

JACK: Okay. Since this is gonna cost us four, we previously spent two on the-

AUSTIN: But that was personal, wasn't it? Or was that...

JACK: Oh no, oh well, sure okay, that fits too-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) What was that-

JACK: The first two was personal.

ART: We spent two on...

AUSTIN: Oh the *bribe* was two, right sorry, the bribe did come out of that ten. So that means you're down to four... in your fund.

JACK: So we spent two, plus another four... Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: Okay. (pause) Alright. Let's go to Aria and then we can resolve you delivering these things. Aria what are you up to?

ALI: (laughs) The only idea I have is kind of... it's kind of selfish one or one that's not like...

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) That's fine.

ALI: Official enough?

AUSTIN: Yep

ALI: But I kinda wanna go to Jamil?

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Just to be like: hey, I'm not gonna see you for a couple of weeks.

AUSTIN: (suspiciously interested) Uh-huh.

ALI: And then also just like-

AUSTIN: (suspiciously happy) I'm very happy you're doing this.

ALI dissolves into giggles

AUSTIN: You know how I always, how I always say... that there is, that things are moving, even when you are not?

ALI: (she knows that this can mean nothing good) M-hm

AUSTIN: (grinning) I'm very glad you're doing this.

ALI: (unsure laugh) Okay. Yeah, I wanna go do that and-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Where are you- how are you getting in contact with Jamil?

ALI: I think I would call her?

AUSTIN: (meaningfully) She doesn't pick up.

ALI: (unhappy) Eweh! (unhappy sigh)

KEITH: Jamil is not, is, is Jamil the one I had a crush on? No.

ALI: No Paisley is the one...

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) No Paisley is the one you had a crush on

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Jamil has been like (sigh) actually both Paisley and Jamil have been like, *vaguely* untrustworthy, but also *buddies* and also **hot**, so..

ALI laughs

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Jamil is, again, again from the, from the quote I have written down here "a freelance reporter who seems to make way more money than a freelance reporter should"

ALI: Right

KEITH: Paisley, Paisley is the one who looks like the, the dude from the Perfect Man right?

(typing in the background)

AUSTIN: Is that true?

(loud typing)

ALI laughs

KEITH: Yeah, or the Perfect Guy? Is that what it's called?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) The Perfect Man is (laughs) is-

KEITH: From the thriller that came out in 2015.

AUSTIN: Yes. Correct. Yesyesyesyesyes.

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Correct. The Perfect Guy. The Perfect Man is a different movie, The Perfect Man is-

KEITH: Yeah. Guys, The Perfect Man is a waay different movie.

AUSTIN: (laughs) It's a Heather Locklear/Hillary Duff vehicle.

KEITH: (laughs) Vehicle! The vehicle is a scooter!

AUSTIN and ALI laugh

AUSTIN: Also I think the Man in The Perfect Man is just Mr Big from Sex and the City and that feels like infringement!

KEITH: Especially because I mean that's not why it feels like infringement, it's that Chris Noth, yeah I think that's who that is...

AUSTIN: Yeah! Chris Noth.

KEITH: Especially because the three people on the cover of the Perfect Man are: a 40-year-old woman, an 18 year old girl and a 6 year old girl. Who is he the perfect man *for*?

AUSTIN: It's, it's daddy, daddy and *daddy*.

[Everyone laughs]

ART: Aw, good night everybody!

AUSTIN: HAH HAAA!

[ALI and JACK giggle]

KEITH: That is a gross dude.

ALI: I wish the show was over.

AUSTIN: (laughs loudly) Okay.

KEITH: Yeah that is, that is a big man.

AUSTIN: Sorry!

ART: (while ALI AUSTIN and JACK laugh) Everyone listening to this just like threw their, their phone out of whatever they're in, if they're in their house it's in the street, if they're in their car I guess it's also still in the street, lot of phones in streets is my point.

AUSTIN: Uuaaghh. Someone give me a roll, otherwise we're gonna, okay, what are you doing? You call in, you call-

ALI: (overwhelmed) God, I don't even know anymore!

AUSTIN: She didn't pick up the phone.

ALI: Okay!

KEITH: Austin, this though, I don't get this whole Mr Big thing.

AUSTIN: Me either, I...

ALI: Please, just let me (laughs)

AUSTIN: So he, so she doesn't pick up the phone.

ALI: Okay, would you say this has been happening like, often?

AUSTIN: Mhm. You've been in like a weird memory coma?

ALI: Oh, yeah. That's right.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) So, this is the first time you tried to, to get in contact, but, but yeah, it goes to, how about this. The first time you call? It rings out the full time and it goes to voicemail, the second time it rings twice and it gets hung up on.

ALI: (gasps) Oh-oh, that's rude... I guess I go- it's like mid-day-

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: I go by her office?

AUSTIN: Sure. I think you, I think then that's, that's part of the scene is literally, it's the, the, it's Cass and AuDy walking out from one door in the, in the newspaper office- what's the name of the office again? To set it?

JACK: Oh, the Centralia Herald.

AUSTIN: Centralia Herald, and then you walking in the other door. And, and going up to where she's, she's supposed to be. You find out quickly that she didn't come into work today.

ALI makes worried noises

KEITH: (whispers) Oh man! Oh fuck! What's that even mean?

ALI: (in a worried sing-song) This is so bad!

AUSTIN: They give you her like, her secretary gives you... what's your Style?

ALI: My style is...

AUSTIN: It's two, you're Aria Joie. So the secretary gives you her home address.

ALI and Jack laugh

ALI: Okay, which I probably-

AUSTIN: It's a loft in Centralia.

ALI: Okay, I probably know that so I would go there. (pause) Guys I can't leave Counterweight, my best friend is like- gone! There's a new mission.

JACK laughs

AUSTIN: Is this the new- yeah this is the most important mission.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Okay, what's your like, attitude going to this place?

ALI: Concerned? We- ouagh... did, did her secretary seem concerned?

AUSTIN: Mmmh not especially. This is the thing that, that she does sometimes, you know, sometimes she just no-shows, you know like maybe she, she caught a whiff of a, some sort of scoop and she's out getting it but, but! But she understands, she can tell that you're a little worried and so that's why she gives you the info.

ALI: Okay. Fair enough. I think that I'm a little bit worried but I'm also kind of like, hey sorry I showed up at your house, but I needed to talk to you about a thing?

AUSTIN: So you're probably not assessing the situation.

ALI laughs like she's trapped

AUSTIN: Being honest here.

ALI: (still laughs like that) Sure?

AUSTIN: Okay, let's just give me an Act under Fire then, maybe.

ALI: (groans) What is the- that's-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) That's Cool.

ALI: Cool okay. I'm very cool as well, so I...

AUSTIN: Swish! Look at that! When you Act under Fire you do it no problem. (pause, laughs) You get into, you get into the like, the elevator to go up to the, the floor where her apartment is and it's like a cool, like all crystal clear glass elevators going up this highrise and you pass... another elevator going down? And it is a very very large woman with a streak of purple hair...

with her hand on Jamil's shoulder like, holding her steady in place. You're pretty sure you recognize the, the very large woman.

ALI: (shriek-laughs) Oh no!

AUSTIN: She has two other, there are also two other men in that elevator with her. They are like, like all black everything uniformed-out.

ALI: (laugh sounds like a sob) What can I do?

KEITH: You can say, you can say Hi.

AUSTIN: So your elevator's just passing, like literally... that elevator's going down, you're going up. What do you do?

ALI: I have my hatch?? but I think it only, I can't hack into like anything with that, right?

AUSTIN: No, no. You would need Jack In for that, the way, the way Keith does.

ALI: Yeah (laughs) Oh, um, god, how do space elevators work? Do I make my elevator-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) I don't know.

ALI: No I get off at the next floor and then I run down the stairs.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you're like, you're like sprinting down the stairs trying to get them down?

ALI: (crosstalk) Yeah to, to go beat them, yes.

AUSTIN: Okay that sounds like.. a skill, that sounds like a thing, maybe that's Act under Fire also. Uhm, yeah when you race against the clock, yeah. So give me another Act under Fire.

ALI rolls

AUSTIN: That's a 9, thats a partial success! "You stumble, hesitate or flinch, the MC will offer you a worse outcome, a hard bargain or an ugly choice". Uhm. Okay, you can, you can get, you can beat them there, but they'll see you coming. Otherwise you, you get down there just as they leave the room and move into a very public space. Like a very like, filled with people, place. But you'll be behind them.

ALI: That seems safer. I'm gonna go with the second one. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Okay. Uhm-

ALI: (crosstalk) Uhm-

AUSTIN: They-

KEITH: Man, sometimes "partial success" is...

AUSTIN: Uh, that's a success, like you, you're still with them, they didn't get away, you know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It woulda been a failure, if she's failed, they would have gotten away. That did not happen. So you, you're on their tail and they leave the, they leave the loft, like apartments that, that they were in and move out into the city streets of Centralia, which are filling by the m- by the second, by- well, with more and more people, there are like all of these amazing aromas of food, from stands that have been set up in celebration, and there are like thousands of people out here. But you- I mean like... Jacqui Green is very big, you're not gonna lose sight of her.

ALI: No, of course not.

AUSTIN: And you're right behind them, it's her and two other, two other people... plus Jamil.

KEITH: I just almost googled the thing from our show-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) I fucking do it *all* the time! I do it *constantly*.

JACK: It's-

ALI laughs

JACK: It's, it's the worst.

AUSTIN: It's the worst.

ALI: Uhm-

KEITH: I really wish I *could*, because then I- like I wouldn't have to remember all the names.

AUSTIN: I know. Jacqui Green is the, was like the big buff lady that was part of the-

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Jack and Jill were the hitwomen who came after you during the concert that, the Aria Joie concert?

KEITH: right, yes, yeah yeah yeah when we were looking for the-

ALI: (crosstalk) Right, yes, yes.

JACK: (crosstalk) Oh.

ALI: She has two metal arms,

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yes. Yes. Yes

ALI: She's very tall, she dresses casually...

JACK: Wait this is, this is a message for the listener who's

ALI: She knew my code name...

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: For the listener who's listening right now, thinking "I should start a wiki" Yes! You should, you should!

ALI and AUSTIN laugh

JACK: That's a message for you! Listener.

KEITH: Like the sort of wiki that just has *all of the names-*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

ALI: laughs

KEITH: And then like, a few sentences about where they were from.

JACK: (crosstalk) yeah.

AUSTIN: I have the- I have just like some of that written down now, I just need to way more of it, maybe during- I'm like taking a couple days off this week, I might do some of that. We'll see.

KEITH: I ju- by the way I spilled soy sauce *all* over me.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Good! That's good.

KEITH: All over my pants.

AUSTIN: It's bad actually, so...

ALI: Why don't you take care of that, I'm gonna like-

KEITH: I just, I just finished taking care of it.

ALI: Okay. Okay! I'm gonna call out to Jamil? Or-

AUSTIN: (disapprovingly) Uhoooohng

ALI: No, I-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Okay.

ALI: Do I know- (very small voice) Do I know Jyll's name?

AUSTIN: Thats Jacqui's name, Jyll died, remember?

ALI: Jacqui's name? Ri- huaghh right.

AUSTIN: Jyll's on a spaceship now and doesn't remember anything.

ALI: (breathy) Yikess

AUSTIN chuckles

ALI: But yeah, I mean it's like a crowded street and I feel like, yeah I'm gonna call out to them-

AUSTIN: You're voice will be lost in this crowd.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's like- it's like, you know, it's a street festival all through Centralia in there.

KEITH: Good thing Aria Joie always carries a *mi-cro-phone*.

AUSTIN: That, that might actually be true. (laughs)

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Do you actually have-

ALI: I have-

AUSTIN: Don't you have some shit that does that?

ALI: Yeah my bracelet has a, like sound system in it. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Sure, okay, I'll let you do that. I'm- I'll honor that. What do you say? And what is your intent? What are you trying to do here?

ALI: Uhm, this is like a big crowd on like a street festival?

AUSTIN: M-hmm!

ALI: Uhm, I- (laughs) I hope onto a table and say that they won a prize? And they should like, come step up?

JACK: (quiet and breathy) ahhhh

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: The c- the, Jacqui and, and Jamil?

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Okay. Fast Talk.

ALI: And the like, people around them are like "Oh cool!" Like applauding.

JACK chuckles

AUSTIN: Okay so I think like the people you are trying to convince here are basically the people around them? More than them, right? Like, they're not gonna turn around like, they *know* you.

ALI laughs nervously

AUSTIN: Roll Fast Talk. Roll Style.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: When you try to convince someone to do what you want-

KEITH: This is a fucking real, this is a real Mako move.

AUSTIN: This is a real fucking Mako move.

ALI wheezes laughing

JACK chuckles

AUSTIN: woohfh

KEITH: can Ali get xp from *my* hindering the mission thing?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Right?! Seriously! Um...

ALI: (bashful) I was doing so well, I rolled a 5.

KEITH: That's a great idea, if that had worked, that would have been, like one of my favourite plans.

ALI: (crosstalk) Well wait...

AUSTIN: You rolled a 2 plu- you rolled a 2 and a 1 and you added 2 and that's a 5.

ALI: I still have the holds from Tea! But I can only use those on-

AUSTIN: On Tea. Yes, yes.

ALI: God damn it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Also that would bring you up to: 6.

AUSTIN and JACK laugh

AUSTIN: Uhm-

ALI: My pal~

AUSTIN: Oh, they see you. Like, people are like "Yaay! Prizes! Oh it's Aria Joie! And then like, Jacqui turns her fucking head and like (turns smug) grins? And pats one of the dudes in black, to like keep going with Jamil. And just fucking *charges* at you. Give me an Act- an "Act under Fire".

KEITH: How come no one went with Aria?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Hooh. Good question- uh cause everyone else was busy

JACK. She's capable.

AUSTIN: You've got a 5 on that one, you got a nice 5.

ALI: (crosstalk, frustrated high pitch) Oh my god. Nngh dammit!

AUSTIN: I need to look up her stats, one second, I have them written down here (pause) Th- oh, one second.

JACK (crosstalk) Did you just-?

KEITH: They're not written down, because he didn't think that Jacqui-

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: (disbelieving) One second, I *definitely* need to advance the legwork clock!

JACK Oh my god, wha- Ali! I like- you've just started a boss fight!

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Yeah! Alone, again. Good. So the, here's a thing that's different, is (coughs) so you know the metal arms that Jacqui had before?

ALI: (like she's grimacing) Right.

AUSTIN: It takes you a second to realise this uh until the sun is gleaming off of it, but those arms are now like connected to a, a metal body suit that's like- the whole thing- she's just in, like a tight-

KEITH: She's in one of the smaller mechs.

AUSTIN: Its not- its like smaller than the smaller mech, its the new line of like, post-Snowtrak mech? I developed a whole new line of them? (laughs) A post- uh, uh Petri- Petrichor Automedia version of it? This the, the lo suit, they're all named for- for moons of Jupiter now

KEITH: (crosstalk) Oh man. That means that the one that- the ones that *I have* totally pristine and unopened now have collector value.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Is that what that means?

JACK laughs

ART: Yeah that's not how tech works

ALI laughs

KEITH: (enthusiastic) Yess.

AUSTIN: (laughs, gasps for breath) His unopened Iphone 2s' are just (chef's kiss)

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Uhh, where the fuck are her stats? Oh, here they are. (worried) Oh buddy, ngh oh pal. Okay. Okay. So yeah she fucking charges at you and plants one of those great, like stick- sticky explosion things UNDER your leg?

ALI: (high-pitched) Whaaat?

AUSTIN: And then like boosts... off of the table, and it *explodes* under you, knocking you up into the air and then she fucking punches you into the stomach, sending you back down into the wreckage of that table, take uh, 3 damage.

ALI: That's a lot. That's too much, I think.

JACK (crosstalk) A prize!

AUSTIN: (laughs) It's a prize!

ALI: laughs loudly

AUSTIN: Uhm...

ART: Just for the, just for the sake of like-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) You a- (starts laughing as ART goes on)

ART: Dramatic irony I would just like to insert a cut-in of... Cass, which is what [they are] going to do is go to the, go to a library and do some (AUSTIN applauds, ali giggles) research. I just like the "Boom!" and then Cass walks into a library (AUSTIN starts singing elevator music) and starts talking to a librarian.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh! Good. Remember you have a armour jacket so you're only taking 2... harm here. But then you have-

ALI: Previously I didn't, I didn't forget, I didn't take off my harm from last session? So that's just, it's just there.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Oh that should be clear, that should be clear. Clear that out. Everyone should have 0 harm going into this session.

ALI: Yeah. But now I'm at 18:00...

AUSTIN: But also you need to make a harm roll? Um, "when you suffer harm, even 0 harm or S-harm, lower the harm affected by your armour, fill a number of segments, and then roll harm suffered", so roll 2 d6 plus 2.

ALI: (crosstalk) what's- (laughs) This didn't go the way that I thought (wheezes laughing)

AUSTIN: (in agreement) No. It didn't.

KEITH: It didn't go the way Austin thought it would go either. He didn't have *the stats ready*.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Me either.

ALI: (very sad) Oh~ harm is supposed to be low and I rolled a 12.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) I can not *believe* you rolled a *fucking* 12, Ali!

KEITH and ALI laugh

ALI: (in a tiny voice) What's happening to me?

AUSTIN: You get to choose one, at least. On a 10+ choose one: you're out of action, unconscious, trapped, incoherent or panicked. Take the full harm of the attack before it was reduced by armour, if you already took the full harm, take a +1. Lose the piece of- lose the use of a piece of cyberware until you can get it repaired, or *lose a body part*.

ALI: What!

KEITH: Oh this 12 is, this 12 is when it- it's supposed to be a lower number.

AUSTIN: Yeeah, uh-hUh!

KEITH: So that wasn't a *good* 12...

AUSTIN: That was a bad 12 to have.

ALI: (working through her trauma by laughing) That's a bad 12 to have.

KEITH: That's the worst possible 12.

AUSTIN: To be fair, I *definitely* described the sort of thing that was Bad. (laughs) So... so which one do you choose, this is up to you. You get to choose this one.

ALI: (crosstalk, deep unhappy sigh) Oh my god~

KEITH: (immediately) You should lose a body part.

AUSTIN: Noo, that's bad.

ALI: (crosstalk) No! Cause then that'll be a whole nother thi-

KEITH: (crosstalk, in serious empathy) She ripped out your heart.

ALI: She di- (speechless) god. Uh um, mehugh (laughs) Um-

KEITH: Now you could- get to have a robot heart.

AUSTIN chuckles quietly

ALI: God this is gonna go- like, we could have all just went to a bar, like sat down...

AUSTIN: M-hm!

JACK laughs

ALI: you know...

KEITH: Coulda played that four-player Pacman. (ALI sighs) That things great, right?

ALI: (distraught, in a tiny voice) My best friend and my girlfriend... (calmer) Uh, I am going to... so lose a body part, lose cyberware, be unconscious or panicked? Or, what was the-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Or take an extra h- damage.

ALI: What's the difference between...

AUSTIN: It's only one, you take another damage, you take one more.

ALI: But there's not like a significant difference between 18:00 and 21?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) No, it doesn't get bad until after 21:00.

ALI: (sighs) Okay. I *think* I'm gonna go up to 21:00.

AUSTIN: Okay. What do you do? (ALI despairs) Actually let's cut away for a second, like with /that, let's cut to- what are- what's the next round of people, what are other people doing? Now? Everyone else can do something? (pause) I heard something about a library?

ART: Yeah, I was gonna go see like, find out about the, the Divine.

AUSTIN: Sure, gimme a- a research check. You're just like asking the librarian?

ART: Yeah! I figure there's like- there's like books? Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure. I guess? Yes.

KEITH: Maybe check some *microfiche*?

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah, good! (tch-tch-tch thinking sound) What'd you roll? Oh, 9!

ART: I rolled a 9!

AUSTIN: That's pretty good. What's your question? Also, take *Intel*.

ART: Oh sure...

AUSTIN: Which you'll be able to use *against*... Detachment.

ART: How secure is Detachment? Isn't really the right question, but is...

AUSTIN: Nah, but that's good, I'll give it to you.

ART: (unsatisfied) Yeah.

AUSTIN: So here's the thing with Detachment. Detachment is... I think what you find is like, a post-war... OriCon file? On the divines? It's kind of written up the way... post-war western um, uh kind of like... military fandom stuff is written about, like Axis superweapons? Like "the superweapons of the Axis, like oh man, they had these big weird planes, thats cool! Like, lets completely forget about the politics of this situation! And like, the lives lost, and lets just fetishise this technology." So Detachment is called... a, uh "selective blockade". Um (huffs) and its ca-

KEITH: What's it selecting?

AUSTIN: It's selecting who gets in and who gets out. But it does it with the efficiency of, like a full blockade, right? Like, so a full blockade is like, oh, it's like we had to put up a bunch of ships and- and like, had to check everything... very carefully. And this is just like, oh, I'm good enough to do that like, with like laser precision. It is constantly in super fast orbit around Counterweight... is also very hard to see because of... a series of devices that use the light of the sun to blind its um, (something clicks) any pursuers. And it just has like some real devastating weaponry. So it's pretty secure.

The thing is, that those alternate, uh (quickly) I think there's actually one more thing, wait, one second, I- I also have to look at *its* stats. Um (pause, tch-tch-tch thinking sound) yeah that's- that's basically it. Um oh, ah, also it has, it has... kind of an EMP generation thing. So that any time it gets *hit* it lets off an EMP blast, that deactivates whatever hit it, or anything near it.

The good news is that it has all of that- all of tho- the kind of, um, the programming that runs those things, it's very in- it's very hard, to be a thing that's going a million miles an hour around a planet and *also* engaging in combat and *also* operating defenses? So it offloads that into a series of satellites, that are in geosynchronous orbit around Counterweight. And if you take *those* out? Then maybe you'd have a chance? That was like the theorised- it kind of says like "If it come- if it'd come down to it, the was what OriCon's plan was for dealing with Detachment, thankfully Detachment never, you know, activated during... the conflict. So, we never had to test it out." But if you can take down those satellites or hack into them, you could probably... you know, at the very least take out some of those defense systems.

Uh, yeah, no big deal. Who else is doing stuff?! AuDy and- and Mako? Maybe you wanna deliver some, some, some stuff?

KEITH: Um.

JACK: Mako do you wanna go deliver some movies?

KEITH: I...

JACK: Or, no, go on.

AUSTIN chuckles

KEITH: Is (huffs) would it be a dead end... if I'm g- to find out more about my *face* being in th- the robot man?

AUSTIN I'd- uh

KEITH: And is that having to do with this?

AUSTIN: N- I don't know how- how would you go about researching that?

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: I- here's what I wou- I would let you do, just, a *research* check. But that would mean like you're literally sitting in the Kingdom Come just like, logging in, over and over onto a system to kind of like s- experiment.

KEITH: Tryna catch it?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Right, like that's the only way I can think of.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're not gonna *read* about this somewhere.

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: How are we- how are we doing on time?

KEITH: Um.

AUSTIN: Cause that's not a bad *ending* to this. But let's- I wanna resolve some other things, but we can end on that and I can *give* you what's happening there. If you wanna wait and I'll just give it to you, you don't have to roll for it.

KEITH: (crosstalk) Okay. Yeah!

AUSTIN: So let's- I, I think there's a scene of *you*, Mako, in the Kingdom Come, firing this thing up and getting... and it's like you connecting to a bunch of different servers? And like-

KEITH hums in agreement

AUSTIN: And different operators coming up? Like remember we did that thing with... way early where it was like, oh, if you connect to uh, this- the... if you'd like the Applebee's server system it's just people who've recorded themselves? And like *all* of the different se-

KEITH: (crosstalk) Yeah, yeah...

AUSTIN: And like y- so you connect to different robots, you connect to different server systems, or service systems, and, every once in a while, you pop up as the- the operator, right? And you've never recorded one of these, or you haven't in a long time, anyway. And this is definitely-

KEITH: (crosstalk) Right, this is current.

AUSTIN: Current you who is showing up. And the same thing is repeating again and again of just like, a few seconds of... of them using your voice and your mannerisms and then cutting back to like their natural self and like, then shutting down. Uh, alright, AuDy? What're you up to? Are you delivering these palettes? These film palettes?

JACK: Yeah we sh- I'm gonna go- I'm gonna go deliver these, these /palettes.

AUSTIN: I uh- give me a- an Act Under Fire.

JACK: (sighing) Uh, man I'd love to do that.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're good at it. (upbeat) The *good* news is... there's good news here. (pause) Okay. You rolled a nine.

JACK: (crosstalk) I rolled a nine.

AUSTIN: Um, alright, so... that's "Stumble, hesitate or flinch"- uhm. (pause for thinking) You can successfully do this, you can successfully deliver all of these palettes um, of- of film, but it does mean... um. You have to like, *sign* them over? And that will leave a record of where you are. When you do this. Someone will-

JACK: Someone will know the signature?

AUSTIN: Yes. I will advance a clock, when you do this. You will do it successfully, you will- you will... not have failed Benny Babs, you won't- you won't take the negative outcome of that- of failing to succeed at this, but a clock will advance.

JACK: Uhm...

AUSTIN: Or you could- or you could dump the cargo, once it's clear that you will be identified.

JACK: What's the negative?

AUSTIN: What do you mean?

JACK: Oh, what- what does-

AUSTIN: Oh. You'll- you'll take neg- you'll take a negative 1 forward on Hit the Street, until you make it right with Benny Babs. Because like your reputation will be hurt, basically. So like going to contacts in the future will be bad. It'll be harder for you to do that because people ha- the word will have spread that you don't fulfill your promises.

JACK: I think-

KEITH: (crosstalk) I don't really wanna be an *oathbreaker*.

JACK: I y- (huffs) I am going to... to deliver it and sign it.

AUSTIN: Okay! Uhm. (laughs once) Good. (pause) I'm gonna just do a- a quick... a quick cut to the faction game here, the-

JACK: Hang on, wait a second, how does AuDy sign things?

AUSTIN: I f- you know, uh, b- you tell me! How *does* AuDy sign things?

JACK: I was thi-

KEITH: (crosstalk, quickly) Laser beam signature.

JACK: Sorry?

KEITH: (enunciated more clearly, louder) Laser Beam Signature?

JACK: I don't think they have lasers. Cause, I mean-

KEITH: Well, only for signatures. (AUSTIN laughs) This is a signature-strength laser.

AUSTIN: (laughs) I think this just comes with the pallet, like it's a, it's a pen that you like literally sign the side of the f- the future film can with? Like-

JACK: You know that AuDy can write in *fonts*? So maybe that's the-

AUSTIN: Yeah!

JACK: Maybe this is the, just like.. like Helvetica?

AUSTIN: (fondly) I like that a lot. Yeah. Um. Regar- the thing is that, like your *personal* identification number is used and tied to it, that's the thing. You know like, (JACK makes an incredibly short 'ye' of agreement) your- you- it is- it goes into the... depository of "Freelancer, successful deliveries".

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I wanna do a cut away to the faction game real quick, where in- what you've just done is delivered doctored versions of the latest hot Petrichor Automedia or you know the, the formerly Earth Home Entertainment hot flick, that the- the twins from-

JACK: Ohhh

AUSTIN: Minerva Strategic Alliance have sent out to kind of sabotage the growing... Earth Home... Petrichor uh empire. Also shoutouts to Shawn Ewing, fan of the show and friend of some of ours for- for telling about the word "petrichor" this morning. I was like, Oh! I needed a new name for a thing that's a dope name!

ALI giggles

AUSTIN: So... so that's-

JACK: (crosstalk) Well that's great.

AUSTIN: Yep!

JACK: But those- those films are *safe*, right?

AUSTIN: (audible grin) Oh, they're very safe. Very legal. Definitely.

KEITH: Well, there was no tarp on them, was there?

AUSTIN: There is no tarp. (laughs) So it must be legal. Uh...

KEITH: I love Jim.

AUSTIN: Ali, yes, Aria can mark experience (ALI giggles) for- for valuing heroism over the mission. By *far*. Abso-*lutely*.

ALI and JACK laugh

AUSTIN: Uh, who's next? What's up- let's go back to Aria, maybe. What are you doing? What are you up to?

ALI: Uh- I (anxious laugh) So I realised that ouh, I should've rolled for reputation... when I saw Jacqui again?

AUSTIN: Oh, sure. "When you meet someone of consequence who might've heard of you, roll Edge"

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, go ahead and do that now.

ALI: And that gets me some plusses. (chuckle)

AUSTIN: Yeah. Let's do that right now. (pause as ALI rolls) You got a 7, so on a uh, let's see, on a *hit*, on a hit, say what they know about you.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: What do they know about you?

ALI: Uh, I think she knows a bunch of shit-

KEITH: She knows you're a pushover.

AUSTIN: (huffs amusedly) Woof.

ALI: (giggles) She-hehe-

KEITH: Like literally can be, sorry, what I mean is "can be pushed over".

AUSTIN chuckles

ALI: Right. Um, she knew like my call sign...

AUSTIN: She did know that.

ALI: I- I assume she knows a bunch about the Chime, she is mad at me , so I guess she knows I'm connected to AuDy in some way, um...

AUSTIN: You know, you should have also probably rolled Driven before. At the start of the mission.

ALI: Uh, yeah, I wasn't sure if this... *counted*?

AUSTIN: Mhm! I think legwork's part of the mission.

ALI: Oh well, I don't mean, is I don't know if (a chime goes off in the background) this furthers my vision.

AUSTIN: So, you roll that at the start of the mission. I think the mission definitely furthers your vision. I think like-

ALI: (crosstalk) Okay!

AUSTIN: -The mission of like "We have to get out of the- we have to fuck up this corporation so that we can keep helping people" is definitely...

ALI: (crosstalk) Okay! Fair enough.

AUSTIN: The way you would spin that. So I'll let you roll that now and hopefully get some bonuses there, too.

ALI: Right now? Or at the start of the mission?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yeah, go ahead!

ALI: (quickly) Okay.

AUSTIN: We- you- you should have done that to begin with, but-

ALI:i (crosstalk) Okay.

AUSTIN: We can't just retroactively change- (Ali rolls) Look at that! So you gain three Hold and you can spend that Hold to get plus ones on anything.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Or minus twos for other- if you needed -2. Uh (fades out into a laugh)

ALI wheezes laughing

AUSTIN: Maybe. Maybe if something hurts you again, we'll see. Let's- so what are you doing? (ALI is still laughing) So yeah, she recognizes you um- I know that you've interacted with her

before (very throaty 'uhhh') she probably also knows that- that your crew is partially responsible for... what happened to Jyllian. Um. And I guess probably also respects you a little bit?

ALI: Aw, well that's nice.

AUSTIN: But like, hates you, also. So...

ALI: Right (breathy chuckle)

JACK: (crosstalk) You know, respect in a murder way.

AUSTIN: Yes! Yes.

ALI is wheezing

AUSTIN: Like "Most people I wanna murder- (conspiratory) I really wanna murder her." Like that!

JACK huffs amusedly

ALI: Oh that's uhh-

AUSTIN: Sweet girl.

ALI: That's fine. Yeah. Um. Uagh- (long pause, then quietly) God... So- Jamil is like still walking with those guys...

AUSTIN: They're, they are leaving quickly.

ALI: (crosstalk) Yes.

AUSTIN: They are like moving into the- remember, it's like thousands of people... here...

ALI: (crosstalk) Yeah yeah yeah... Cause I just like- to push Jacqui and just run for it? But that seems...

AUSTIN: That would maybe make me wanna rethink that you could value- that value heroism here.

ALI and JACK laugh

ALI: That would be me saving my friend!

AUSTIN: Oh, you meant run to save-

ALI: (crosstalk) Yes!

AUSTIN: I thought you meant run for it.

ALI: (crosstalk) Oh, nono...

AUSTIN: Just like "Peace!"

ALI: (laughs, then serious) No. Nonono.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Yeah that seems like a better option than extending this fight a second time?

AUSTIN: Okay, you're gonna need another like... Act Under Fire roll.

ALI: Yeah I have this weird whip but... it's not gonna work on her with her like, weird... thing. If I fail the roll, I dunno- I was gonna-

AUSTIN: Yeah if you fail the roll, I- I've been worried that, cause that whip has like Messy or Dangerous or something, doesn't it?

ALI: Um, it haas...

AUSTIN: Or maybe it doesn't, maybe I'm wrong.

ALI: It's S-harm, Area, Close.

AUSTIN: Okay, thats not that bad. I guess- but-

ALI: (crosstalk) Yeah it's just a- its just a stun weapon, so um-

AUSTIN: Right. But there are lots of people around and maybe whips aren't the things you wanna be using around lots of people.

ALI: (giggly, but beginning to realise how bad Austin will make this for her) Yeah, we'll see. Yeah I'm gonna, so I'm gonna like *push* her into the table I was (while wheezing) just standing on? (laughs)

AUSTIN: (defeatist) Okay.

ALI: (laughs) Bolt for uh Jamil. What dome are we in?

AUSTIN: Centralia.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yeah.

JACK: So lots of people.

AUSTIN: Loads of people.

ALI: Okay, but the Brilliance is close.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: (laughs) Cause that's what I wanna do, moving for-

KEITH: (crosstalk) Oh you're- you're in a big crowd, right? And they *all* know you, cause *famous*-

AUSTIN: They do.

ALI: Right.

KEITH: But they don't know that you're a terrorist now. Um.

AUSTIN: Right. You really need to get that *mask*, Aria.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: You wanna spend one of your holds?

KEITH: Like is everybody going- is everybody looking at Jacqui and going, like "Oh my god, this *person* is attacking-"

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) This has been-

KEITH: "Our favourite popstar!"

AUSTIN: (conciliatory) This has been like 4 seconds of combat, so like, no one knows anything that's happening yet, you know?

ALI laughs

KEITH: (crosstalk) Okay.

AUSTIN: I think most people are going "Oh my god there was just an *explosion*."

ALI: Yeah... yeah. Yeah.

KEITH: (crosstalk) Yeah.

AUSTIN: In the middle like, is this the shit that our government has been warning us about? Um.

ALI: laughs) Um. So I rolled a 6 so I'm gonna-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Spend one of your hold.

ALI: Choose one of those holds to get that to a partial success, I guess?

AUSTIN: Good call. So yeah, you can... you can definitely get to... Jamil, um but it would mean... it would mean hurting some people in between you and her. It would mean like, for you to catch up means to like, literally shove people to the ground and like... run over them. And also Jacqui is right behind you doing the same thing. There's no moving *safely* through this crowd to catch up with them.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: (crosstalk) Hmm, looks like someone needs a Ring of Saturn.

ALI and AUSTIN laugh

ALI: Yeah, I'll take that.

AUSTIN: Okay, we're good.

ART: (crosstalk) That old thing? Who would want that?

AUSTIN: Um, I'm gonna do-

KEITH: Someone who doesn't wanna *trample* an audience.

AUSTIN: (breathy chuckle) I'm gonna advance the- the leg work clock here.

ALI: (laughs) Okay.

AUSTIN: It's bad news footage to- to get caught fucking running over people. But you catch up to them, uh, and... they don't see you coming. Are you, are you- what are you doing when you get to them?

ALI: Hm. (laughs) I should've known where my end game is, no no no, um, would I be able to like, grab Jamil and like, go down, like in between two like buildings or whatever?

AUSTIN: You would need to make a move to do the grab-

ALI: (crosstalk) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Before you can do that.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: That would be like a "Mix It Up" probably?

ALI: Okay?

AUSTIN: Which is when you wanna take... (exhales) "Mix It Up"- "When you use violence against a h- an armed force to seize control of an objective, stat that objective and roll Meat" and it sounds like your objective is to get Jamil.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So that's, that would be a Meat roll. (ALI rolls) (disbelieving) Fuckin hell.

ALI: Oh my God!!! (incredulous laugh)

AUSTIN: You rolled a 2, you rolled two 1s. You rolled two ones.

ALI: This is a-

KEITH: I was, I was feeling bad because of *my* failing rolls-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Ho-Ly Shit.

ART: No Ali's having her Hadrian game.

KEITH: (crosstalk) This is like-

AUSTIN: (smiling) She is- you're having your Hadrian game.

KEITH: Ali might-

ALI: I already had my Hadrian game *last* time.

KEITH: Ali might get her character killed.

AUSTIN: Yeah I'm nervous right now (ALI laughs) 'cause I have to, like-

KEITH: What if Aria *died*, like, *today*?

ALI: Oh I'm gonna be fine.

JACK: Well no didn't- uh *you* died in one of the earlier episodes, right, when you got Perforated, right?

ALI: Yeah. We both did, we both did.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Pff, pff man alive, do I wanna help you. I'm, I'm thinking. I'm thinking hard. (ALI laughs) I'll look at your moves real quick. I can look at...

JACK: Oh my god, what if we're preparing for this major mission and then Aria goes off, (chuckling) sees something (AUSTIN sighs) in a cafe (ALI laughs) and then is just like "This is it, this is the-"

ALI breaks out in laughter

AUSTIN: (chuckles, breathes in) Man.

KEITH: I think the ve- these virtual dice are weighted.

AUSTIN: Yeah I (ALI snorts) I wish I could, I *wish* I could tell you that was a thing I was doing here. I really do, I wish I could say "Oh, sorry, I have the box checked that says (laughs) "Fuck Ali Over""

ALI: (meekly) Their relationship is really important to me.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) So I you like, (sighs) you grab Jamil, but when she sees it's *you*, she like, it's clear she doesn't wanna be with these guys, but she hesitates for a brie- you like grab her arm and you're like "Come on, let's go!" and she shoots you a look and is like not sure if she can trust you. And then they fucking pull their guns on you. Uhm... (sighs) I should just, I- roll "Act Under Fire", I'm giving you this, one roll.

ALI: laughs nervously

JACK: Ali, don't mess this up.

ALI rolls, starts laughing

AUSTIN: Uh, it's a 6, it's a 6, that's recoverable, that's recoverable. Um... you're gonna get shot or you have to let go and, and again, get into the crowd and have other people get hit here. Like you see them draw their fa- their guns on you (ALI sighs) and if you move, like there are people behind you, who will get shot. And now everyone is running and screaming, like... or you could get shot!

ALI: Nooo. (laughs) um...

KEITH: Good thing earlier you moved up to 21:00.

ALI: Right! That's great that that happened. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mhm!

ART: Guys, remember that time Aria Joie let all those people (ALI laughs) get *shot* and...?

JACK: (chipper) Oh I did that once!

KEITH: I will say this, Ali-

ALI: (crosstalk) No, I'm not, I'm gonna get shot.

KEITH: Like three hours ago or something, you said "Aria needs to be *more* of a terrorist."

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: That *is* a thing you said! That is a thing you said.

ALI: Her terrorism is helping people!

AUSTIN: (exasperated) Ohh god...

ART: That's what every terrorist thinks!

JACK: Uh- (unsure laughter)

ALI and AUSTIN laugh

ALI: I'm j- I'm gonna get shot.

AUSTIN: (sympathetic) Okay... take two Harm,

ALI: (crosstalk) Okay.

AUSTIN: Subtract one from it, roll Harm +1.

ALI: That brings me to 23:00, what does that mean?

AUSTIN: Well no, so remember, you're only up to- you're only up to 22:00.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: 'Cause your armour jacket reduces it by one-

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Now roll... Harm.

ALI: (sighs) 2d6+2 ?

AUSTIN: Yes. No, plus one! Plus one.

ALI: Plus one, okay.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ALI: 'Cause last time it was- but she had three Harm?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yesyesyes.

KEITH: We're looking for h- low rolls again.

AUSTIN: You want a nice low roll!

KEITH: Ali you need a nice low- you wanna roll ones...

AUSTIN: And you can subtract two! You can spend, you can spend your last hold to subtract this thing by two. Roll those twos.

KEITH: That sounds like a good idea.

AUSTIN: Roll those twos. (ALI rolls) Hey! That's a 6, you don't even need to roll anything. Look at that!

ALI: Oka- okay?

JACK: snorts, chuckles

AUSTIN: You sound very sad! (ALI laughs) Alright yeah, so-

ALI: (crosstalk) This has been a doozy. I don't know what happened here. (laughs)

AUSTIN: If you roll under a six, you're good, you just don't take any extra Harm, or anything, you're, you're fine.

ALI: Yeah, but I've gotten *shot*, like point-blank, that's fine.

AUSTIN: Ugh, yeah, it's good. Um- what are you, what are you doing? (ALI laughs) I think at shooting you, Jamil- when they shoot you, Jamil leg-sweeps one of them, uh, and like drops him to the ground and the next second Jacqui has her fucking hand around Jamil's *neck*. And like, lifts her up into the air and looks at you?

ALI: (nervous chuckling) That's so bad!

AUSTIN: (weird noise like he's yawning?) It's pretty bad!

ALI: Huh-hm! Wait, no.

KEITH: What if they were just like going on a regular meeting-

ALI: (quietly) Shut up, this is-

KEITH: Like this was all above-board?

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: No one talked, like no one ever talks, no one ever asks (disbelieving, kinda gentle) questions.

KEITH: I ask questions all the time.

AUSTIN: yuaeh

ALI: No. Ugh god, can I just bring the Brilliance here, that would be the worst, that would be the *worst* thing!

AUSTIN: That would be the worst thing. That might be the *worst* thing.

ALI: That would be the worst thing I could possibly do.

KEITH: I think you should use your fame to your advantage.

ALI: I don't think that's gonna work here, I just pushed all those people- but I also just got shot, I don't know. Um. I don't know what the (AUSTIN laughs) move would be...? (fades out into an unsure chuckle)

AUSTIN: In the, in the chat, Cass says "Have her say "The bells are ringing" (ALI laughs) when she kills Jamil."

JACK laughs

KEITH: I think the on- I think that the only thing (laughs) you could do is like a "Fast-talk" to everyone around you, to be like "I'm just a famous person, why are they doing this to me?!"

ALI: laughs

AUSTIN: That's- that would be a bad roll. I don't think that would work. I mean maybe it would w- maybe it would succeed and I'd have to give some wiggle but like...

ALI: (laughs) I (chuckles) I was gonna do a "Fast-talk" to be like "Hey, don't kill her" but I think that that would inspire Jacqui to *kill* her.

AUSTIN: Uh! I- you could make that roll. You could totally make that roll. Though, though I'm curious if that is... yeah, I think that that's... yeah I think that that's a "Fast-talk".

ALI: Yeah, I, I d- (sighs) I don't think that I have the time or the space to make it an (crosstalk from AUSTIN) emotional connection today...

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) No. You don't have that. You certainly (grinning) *do* not have that.

ALI: So (wheezing laughter) this is just gonna be a "Fast-talk", which is what I'm good at! So...

AUSTIN: Yeah... go ahead, gimme, gimme that hot "Style" check. (ALI rolls) Boom! That's a 10.

ALI: (sighs, then whispers) Jesus Christ.

AUSTIN: Uhm-

JACK: (crosstalk) The worm has turned.

AUSTIN: NPCs do what you want. What would you want- what do you want them to do?

ALI: I want her to let go of Jamil. (laughs)

AUSTIN: She sees you there, bleeding on the ground, and is like... drops Jamil- *pins* Jamil (smiling) on the ground, like with her, with her hand and then like steps on her, so she isn't going anywhere. And she's like...

AUSTIN (as Jacqui): You made a mess. This was supposed to be a... an easy job, she didn't even *fight*. Now you got people *killed*?

ALI (as Aria): (in a small voice) No one was killed!

AUSTIN: She set off that explosion before (laughs)

ALI (as Aria): Uh, well- that's on you.

AUSTIN: Hnyeah

KEITH: Qui- quick question: what was, Ali, what were you supposed to be doing here?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk with ALI) She just wanted to check in on her buddy!

ALI: (crosstalk) I was- (crosstalk from KEITH) yeah I went to go say hi.

KEITH: (crosstalk) Oh, you just wanted to say hi to Jamil.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: (grinning) That's literally what she was going to do! A thing I wrote, a thing I wrote was, like three hours ago, was "Oh, Jamil is going to get kidnapped by this group because of a thing that happened in the faction game". And...

ALI: Um-

AUSTIN: (happily) And I didn't think it would come up! Cause I didn't think anyone- I think maybe they're just gonna call Jamil, but that'll be (feigned boredom) hm...

ALI: I came here to say goodbye to her, because I'm leaving Counterweight for a little bit and then to get information about like, Ibex's new thing and-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: 'Cause we have a lot of information on him ten years ago.

AUSTIN: Totally. That's a good- that would've been a good thing.

ALI: That would be great. (laughs)

AUSTIN: But let's- hey! Listen, you let her- you got her down... I'm trying to think if there's a way to spin this in any way for your favour in a way that's real cool and anime or noir. (ALI laughs) And... I n- I... hmf, huh. (resolute) Okay, there's a way.

ALI: I'm a dashing protagonist-

AUSTIN: You are.

ALI: Helping my friend.

AUSTIN: Um, here's a thing, here's a thing you notice. Ah! Hmf (ALI chuckles under her breath), you have this moment, give me- (sighs) are you looking for anything, are you looking for a way here? Are you (grins) looking for something? Or-

ALI: I've *got* to be, right?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Like 'cause I ref- uh, I'm not gonna attack Jacqui, so-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Okay, then gimme-

ALI: So what I'm looking for is another way to like-

AUSTIN: Then give me an "Assess", give me-

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: "When you quickly- when you closely study a person, place or situation, or when you quickly size up an opponent in a- or a charged situation, roll Edge." (ALI rolls)

Okay, "Partial success, gain one Hold in the ensuing action you may spend one Hold at any time to ask the MC a question from the list below if your examination could reveal the answer.

Um, the MC may ask *you* questions to clarify your intent, take 1 forward when acting on the answers.

Questions are: What potential complication do I (chuckles) need to be wary of? (ALI laughs) What do I notice despite an effort to conceal it? How is blank vulnerable to me? How can I avoid trouble or hide here? What is my best way in or out- i- my best way in, way out, way past? Where can I gain the advantage? Who or what is my biggest threat in (chuckles) the situation? (ALI laughs) Uh, who or what is in control here?" Some of those you might already *have* the answer to.

ALI: (kinda frowny) Yeah! (laughs) Couple of 'em.

AUSTIN: I'll post those in Skype so you can see them.

ALI: Uh, no no, I have them open on roll20-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Oh, you have them open?

ALI: Yeah, um... (very quietly) Shit. I... there's three of these that are really good (laughs)

AUSTIN: (smiling) Uh-huh

ALI: Um...

ART: It's way out, Ali, it's way out (laughs)

ALI: She has her foot *on* Jamil, like (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right. I mean, I- you could probably even *know* your way out at this point, but like-

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Without a n- you know, like...

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Without even me answering that. But that's not "way out with the thing I want", you know?

ALI: Right. I'm torn between "What do I notice between an effort to conceal it?" or "How is Jacqui vulnerable to me?" um...

AUSTIN: Those are very similar questions at this point. You want me to- I'll give you the answer for either one of them?

ALI: Uh, yeah.

AUSTIN: 'Cause they're basically the same answer.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is... do you remember the last time you fought Jacqui?

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Do you remember how much *fun* she was having?

ALI: Yeah?

AUSTIN: She is not having any fun. This is like- she's kind of bored. She doesn't want to be here right now. And... (sighs) If you do it right, you might convince her to fu- fuckin, just... her heart isn't in this.

ALI: giggles

KEITH: That's sad. You're just guilty, Jacqui.

AUSTIN: Yeah, well, you fucking killed her partner. So. And now she's a mercenary instead of like a cool, freelance hitwoman.

ALI: We could be (inaudible). Come join the Chime! (wheezy laugh)

JACK: No, no no!

AUSTIN: Is that a r- ok we c- we could roll that. We could roll that. That's...

ALI: (continues to laugh until she catches her breath) Um.

AUSTIN: Um, she- I think she's also displaying that in the way she's standing around these people, right? Like- and like the way she's wearing this armour, like it's all very-

JACK: Oh my god, this is Emmanuel. (inaudible) with Emmanuel.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) It kind of is. This kind of is Emmanuel. Yeah. I think if you wanna- if this is like, I think you can Vision Thing here. I think like, here in the smoke and in the chaos is the

weird anime time and space for an emotional connection with someone, where you can passionately advocate for your vision.

ALI: I'm going to do that.

AUSTIN: What do you say to her? How do you... you *see* how sad she is.

ALI: I have to make this really cool.

AUSTIN and ALI laugh

AUSTIN: You do!

ALI: Oh my god, I can't- no. (laughs) For a second, I was like, yeah I should actually invite her to join the Chime, but that's insane, that's an insane thing to do.

AUSTIN: (whispers, then to normal volume) Ohhhh you just- it's kinda fucking cool, though. (ALI laughs) I'm not opposed to that attempt. Is what I will say.

JACK: Oh I'm *kind* of not opposed to that attempt, either.

AUSTIN: I kind of love it?

ALI laughs

JACK: Aw, man, especially 'cause they, when they're together, they work as like, partners? So we're kind of, possibly, maybe, getting the other one as well?

AUSTIN: Maybe.

ALI: That's-

JACK: I mean, they're in a whole deal right now.

AUSTIN: They're in a whole- it's a whole thing.

ALI: Yeah, that's a whoooole thing, um

AUSTIN: So wait- uh yeah, so what are you saying? And then gimme the roll.

ALI: I think that this is like, kind of like a Spike Spiegel moment for Aria, where she's like, wounded-

AUSTIN: M-hm.

ALI: But like, kind of smirking and like, knows that she's lost, (AUSTIN laughs) but is trying? And is like, is like (laughs)

ALI (as Aria): Listen-

KEITH: Who is Spike Spiegel?

AUSTIN sighs

ALI: Uh, weoagh?

AUSTIN: (grinning) Cowboy Bebop protagonist.

ALI: Keith, you know that, Keith you fucking know that.

KEITH: (crosstalk) Oh, okay, yeah that guy. Still only seen- Hulu only had the first three episodes, so that's all that I saw.

ALI and JACK laugh

AUSTIN: (defeated) Okay, cool.

JACK: He was called Spike in episode one.

ALI and AUSTIN laugh

KEITH: I've seen a lot of things, there's a lot of people named Spike in tv shows.

JACK: That's true.

ALI: Yeah, but we're not talking about like, the Buffy dude, anyway-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Let's- m-hm!

ALI: Nonono um so- ugh. (to herself) What does she say? (laughs) I think that she says, um

ALI (as Aria): I was ouhm (I think she just like-) I was really surprised to see you (AUSTIN laughs) Do you just wanna get a drink some time?

JACK giggles

ART: Oh my god.

ALI laughs

KEITH: You asked her on a *date*!

AUSTIN: (smiling) Gimme the roll!

ALI laughs

KEITH: That's not... the same thing as-

ALI rolls

JACK: Yes!!

AUSTIN: What's! up! Eleven! (chortles)

ALI: (laughs, high-pitched and squeaky) I did it!

AUSTIN: Gain two Hold. Spend one Hold to have the targeted NPC: give you something you want, (ALI laughs silently) do something you ask, fight to protect you or your cause or disobey an order given by someone with authority or leverage over them. (cheerful) How are you spending that Hold? (ALI laughs) Let me just- do you want me to just tell you how- what- you- spend one Hold to get the following thing to happen. (ALI laughs) She lifts her foot off of Jamil, she pats the two guys she was with on the back, lifts Jamil up, they are very confused, walks, like, a few steps toward *you* and then the things that she fucking put on on their backs *explode*.

ALI gasps

AUSTIN: 'Cause that's how she does, with her weird... C4 explosive shit. Uh and then yeah, she'll get- she'll get a drink with you.

ALI (claps, high-pitched) I did it!

JACK: (gravely) If we survive.

AUSTIN: If you survive. Um- (ALI laughs) I think we need a scene with Jamil- I (JACK and ALI laugh) She says she'll meet you at the spaceport, says, says Jacqui. Let's get a short Jamil scene and then a- like a rap-up final couple scenes here. What do you w-

KEITH (as Aria): Jamil, I know that I just *asked* your *captor* on a *date* (JACK, ALI and AUSTIN laugh), but will you give me this information.

AUSTIN (as Jamil): I didn't think you'd pull that one off, Joie.

ALI (as Aria): I- I didn't think I would either.

AUSTIN (as Jamil): You should see someone.

AUSTIN: She points to your wound, which I guess you're covering up with your fucking- you're like, bleeding out slowly?

ALI laughs

ALI (as Aria): Y- yeah the, the funny thing about this is that I came to say goodbye. Um, I have to leave Counterweight for a little while.

AUSTIN (as Jamil): (huffs a single quiet laugh) Funny thing, me too, I think.

ALI (as Aria): (laughs awkwardly) Uh, I- Do you wanna find a Constellation and talk about some stuff? (laughs)

AUSTIN as Jamil: I don't have time. I- listen, Aria? I need to tell you something. I- mh. There's some bad things happening, right now. In the sector. I think- I think my cover was blown. We- there's a- there's a list of us. There's a number of us, who... something really bad is happening on Ionias. I had a contact there and (hesitates to speak) I have to go, but I'll be in touch.

ALI (as Aria): Okay. I'm gonna be on planet... until tomorrow night. So, I'll call you later?

AUSTIN as Jamil: (insistent) If you see someone... who looks like me, tell them that the dawn will rise soon. And if they don't tell you that it's still dark out, *don't trust them*.

ALI (as Aria): (pause, bewildered) Okay? Okay.

AUSTIN (as Jamil): The arm looks good.

ALI (as Aria): (heavy sigh) I-

AUSTIN: And she turns and (ALI chuckles sadly) walks away. Uhhh, I think we're just all on the ship here, now. (ALI wheeze-laughs) This is just, we cut forward.

JACK: (crosstalk with ART) wait, is Jacqui also...?

ART: Cass is like tending to Aria's grievous gunshot wounds...

AUSTIN: Yeah you wanna give that a- you wanna do that a roll?

ART rolls

JACK: Yess!

AUSTIN: You rolled an 11. "If their harm clock is 22:00 or less, reduce their Harm by, by two segments, if there's- if it's 22:00 or *more*, reduce their Harm by *one* segment. (crosstalk from ART) So that means-

ART: And I get one additional... heal.

AUSTIN: Okay, so then yeah, you reduce it by two. So it goes down from 22 to 18, which is totally manageable.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So it's like... presumably like, some sort of like, weird... like cleansing stuff and like a sticky goo that helps seal it? I *think* Jacqui is just in there, like out of her armour, still with her big cyber arms. Her armour is just like docked in... the station, uh or like, sorry in the pods. The kind of like new, new uh mech pods- it's small enough to just store in there, no big deal. Um... and you're all just there. Meanwhile. *Mako*. You are um, you're still trying to figure this out, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I think the final scene here is- also you didn't buy engines- fuck how many, how many credits do you have left?

KEITH: Uh we have uhmm...

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Here's the thing. Fuck. Engines are gonna be more than that. Um (quick silent laugh) engines are ten cre-

KEITH: (crosstalk) We used two-

AUSTIN: Engines to like, get into space and move around space are *ten*.

JACK: Uhh-

ALI: And we have eight left?

AUSTIN: (at the same time as JACK) You have four left.

JACK: We have four left.

AUSTIN: Of that pool. So, (amused) I'm just gonna say, spend those? Spend the four, plus find another six, from yourselves-

JACK: I have three personal credits that I could give.

ALI: I could p- I'll put up two.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Okay, so we need one...

ART: I'll put that up.

AUSTIN: Okay. Everyone, do that math.

JACK: (crosstalk) Okay, so no money. Then I have no money.

AUSTIN: Okay. But you have the new engines.

ALI: I still have two credits, only-

ART: I'll put up two (ALI laughs) Jack, keep one.

JACK: (crosstalk) Austin- oh, are you sure?

ART: Yeah, I have four left, I've been very stingy.

JACK: Oh, cool. Austin these engines, like they're good enough, right, but they're still-

AUSTIN: Oh, they're still shit. Yeah

JACK: Like, it's the equivalent of like, driving a heavy car off a-

AUSTIN: Right, like the- the engines you *really* need are like 30 credits.

JACK: Hm, right.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? Like- uhdede- the engines you really need are *a different* ship. What you need is a better (starts laughing) *ship*.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Well, actually, you know what they are? They are the original engines for the Kingdom Come, that were sold off when it landed here- when like Orth, like mothballed it after the war.

JACK: Oh, yeah, absolutely-

AUSTIN: But *literally* those engines reattached after they've been on three or four other ships in the preceding ten years.

JACK: And these engines were designed for a Kingdom Come that doesn't have *another* warehouse bolted on top.

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly. Like it'll get you up there, but *woof*. Uh, also a big tarp you have to get out- (JACK laughs quietly) There's- by the way, uh, when you arrive, Cass? There's a big *tarp* (starts laughing) over the Kingdom Come? (everyone chuckles) It's blue, it's a big blue tarp.

KEITH laughs

AUSTIN: Uhh-

JACK: Oh, mine-

KEITH: (crosstalk) These are for the- our tarpaulin, not a uh, codename for the-

AUSTIN: Correct. So... when you- it's a big, it's a big bribe. Uh, the ship start, starts to take off, the hangar bay opens, the tarp slowly pulls away from it, we kind of get... close-up shots of each of the mechs in- in their respective mech pods.

Um, outside, the people are cheering, the- there's like a shot of... one of the OriCon um, uhhh, like traffic control tower people, saying like, alright, like clear the airspace, it's time, you know, everyone, everything's clear, good good good.

Uh, there's a shot of Jim, hitting a button on their arm. Um, the uh- Jacqui's just on this ship and, I think, talking, like joking with Aria? Like, joking around with her? Um, again it's muted, it's just kind of like, it's just sort of like... the images of you two laughing and like, poking fun at each other?

Um, there's... Orth, in the co-pilot's seat, waking up, like jolting up into being awake, the second the ship starts moving? (quiet chuckle) Uh, the cargo bay opens up. The, um, outside, you hear the first shots of fireworks, in the air.

Up, we get a shot of Detachment, moving in its orbit around, it has like, *big*, bulky, like everything, it's like- it's like it's a *small* mech, kinda very humanoid shape, but it's *in* a bunch of different armour pods around it? That are very s- like, rectangular and, and like *cubic* in shape. Um, with, with kind of rounded edges, and it's like moving at really high speeds, but we're moving *with* it, so that like, it's just Counterweight turning below it.

And in, in between all this, we get cuts of Mako, calling up different faces, and different things, on like, different services, to try to like, locate what the fuck this thing is that's, that's messing with him. And, finally, you find this, this server base that has been knocked, that's been like, set aside, it's not used anymore. But it's- it's the *second* you access it, your room changes. Like the, your quarters change. They're this, like really cramped... um, like storage room? Like, in a home? Whis is like filled with a bunch of boxes and stuff? And you're like sitting on your bed and (ominously) *your door opens*. And you walk in. Someone else, who looks like you, walks in.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: And sits down next to you.

AUSTIN (as the other Mako): (cheery) Hey!

KEITH (as Mako): (kind, but a little taken aback) Hi.

AUSTIN (as the other Mako): How's it goin'?

KEITH (as Mako): (still in the same tone) Good! Wha- well a little bit weird.

AUSTIN (as the ther Mako): What's up?

KEITH (as Mako): You're m- one of *me*.

AUSTIN (as the other Mako): Yeah! I'm one of you.

KEITH (as Mako): How come?

AUSTIN (as the other Mako): 'Cause you're one of me.

KEITH (as Mako): Why?

AUSTIN (as the other Mako): 'Cause you made me.

KEITH (as Mako): How did I- how did I do that? I don't remember doing *that!*

AUSTIN (as Larry): I'm Larry.

KEITH (as Mako): *You're* Larry?

AUSTIN (as Larry): Yeah, we're Larry. (A Long Way Around begins in the background)

KEITH (as Mako): We- *we're* Larry?

AUSTIN (as Larry): You and me are Larry, remember?

KEITH (as Mako): No, I'm a regular.

AUSTIN (as Larry): Heh. (very sure, with a smirk) We're Larry.

AUSTIN: And he puts his hand around your shoulder. And you *feel* it? And it's not supposed to feel like anything, but you feel him touching you.

KEITH: Like I can physically feel that the way that-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yes.

KEITH: Okay.

(A Long Way around continues playing)

[1:09:16]

KEITH (as Mako): Are we friends?

AUSTIN: That's- (smiling) we're closing there.

KEITH: Oh.

AUSTIN: I think you-

KEITH: Are we friends?

AUSTIN: I don't know! (non-committal) He seems friendly.

[A Long Way Around fades out]

ALI: Anyone can be friends.

KEITH: (crosstalk, unconvinced) Yeahh...

ALI: We've proved it. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, (chuckles) that's true, we *have* pro- proven that the power of friendship. Um, let's talk about personal directives.

KEITH: God, the episode ended before I could ask him for *drinks*.

(Everyone snorts)

AUSTIN: Good. Good. You *do* remember Larry, right?

KEITH: Yeyeyeah-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Okay.

KEITH: Larry is who I tricked into thinking that- I was him.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yes. Yah! You really did, you *really* tricked him. (ART and ALI laugh loudly)

AUSTIN: Uhh-

KEITH: Oops.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Whoops... Aria. When you value heroism over the mission, (laughingly) mark experience.

ALI: I have done that, yes.

AUSTIN: When your desire for fame draws unwanted attention- I don't think that came up.

ALI: No.

AUSTIN: Not exactly. AuDy, did you discover more about the cause of your sentience?

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: Or follow the laws of robotics?

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cass, did your former membership in the Apostolosian royalty hinder the mission?

ART: No, but it made me personally uncomfortable.

JACK: laughs

AUSTIN: I think it's hinder the mission because it- it *did* increase your... your legwork clock.

ART: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: I also think that you put the advice of Koda ahead of the mission.

ART: Oh- okay.

AUSTIN: I will suggest maybe changing that going forward, though? Because Koda will not be in the game for a little bit, probably.

ART: Sure. Well, we're also all gonna die.

AUSTIN: Right, also you're all dead.

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Uhh...

ALI: We're fine!

ART: We didn't actually manage to get past that divine.

KEITH: (crosstalk) There's two of me, I have a back-up.

AUSTIN: What's that?

ART: We didn't figure out how to get off this planet.

AUSTIN: Uh, you sort of did, you found out what its weaknesses were. You figured out that you could like, hit those-

KEITH: And we got that stealth thing and the sh-

ALI: Yeeah! We figured that out.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk with ali) Great. It'll be great.

KEITH: Remember the window that I figured out?

AUSTIN: Mako!

ALI: (crosstalk) Oh, come on...

AUSTIN: Did your lies about your identity or (laughs) past put the mission at risk yet?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: (accusatory) When?

KEITH: Uh, I guess when I lied about being Larry and now there's a second me walking around our ship.

AUSTIN: (unsure, hesitant) I'll give it to you.

ALI: Wait isn't that f-

KEITH: (crosstalk) I guess, I guess it's- it has not yet put the mission at risk.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) It *hasn't*. That's my thought, is it hasn't fucked you over *quite* yet. So let's wait on it.

KEITH: Would you like me to *wait*-

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yes.

KEITH: -Until it fucks me over?

AUSTIN: Or it might not fuck you over! It could be good. Uh, w-

KEITH: It might be good, you're right.

AUSTIN: Here's- uhh... and again, like this hasn't hindered the mission, so I don't think your persona has- has hindered the mission in this episode. You didn't fail any- any big rolls. Uh, alright, you got the job and you got- you launched the ship! So, take two from, from those. If you hadn't already.

JACK: Uh... oh I level up! I'll do that next time.

AUSTIN: Nice!

ALI: Yay!

AUSTIN: Uh, and then... there's one more thing, which is... links. Which we *a/ways* forget to do. Just about (thinking noise)

"At the end of each mission each player chooses another character, who as the result of the mission- uh, who as a result of the mission, has a better idea of how your character operates. Explain what happened and what they now know about your character."

Actually, you know what, sorry, this doesn't happen yet, 'cause this is not the end of the mission. We do that at the end of next episode. I just need to remember to do that, but, but yeah. Alright-

ART: But I mean we all- what we all learned. Is that,

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: That Aria is some sort of like... you know like a black hole is like an infinite gravity...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

ART: And nothing can escape from it (JACK laughs silently) no matter what goes in it?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: She's like that but with thirst.

EVERYONE laughs

AUSTIN: Woow! (breathy) Wow!

ART: I was gonna put a plus one link in parenthesis with her.

ALI giggles

AUSTIN: Yeah mark- yeah, sure. Mark that down for-

JACK: (crosstalk) How...

AUSTIN: The fut- for- we'll come back to that and maybe that will be the one that you want.

JACK: How many people *died* in that restaurant?

AUSTIN: Uh no, that was outside, that was an outside scene.

JACK: Ok, how many people died-

ALI makes a noise

JACK: *Outside* that restaurant?

AUSTIN: Uhh, I'm gonna say two...

ALI: (crosstalk) Like two people died, like maybe twelve were injured.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that sounds-

ALI: Oh, no, the-

AUSTIN: Well-

JACK: Make it twelve. Make it-

AUSTIN: Two for sure. She killed two.

KEITH: (crosstalk) She- It was two that she killed on *purpose*.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) And then I think probably a *dozen* are hurt, and then maybe a couple are dead.

ALI: (whispers) It's fine.

AUSTIN: It's fine.

ALI: (grimacing) It's fine!

AUSTIN: (evilly reassuring) It's fiiine.

[Episode ends]