

## [Drawing Maps Audio 11 - February 2020 - PARTIZAN 05-08](#)

Transcribed by Ril @kaorukeihi

AUSTIN: Hello and welcome to Drawing Maps for February 2020. I'm Austin Walker, you can find me on Twitter [@austin\\_walker](#). Please let me know if you can hear me okay in the YouTube stream. I'm doing a much better job of making sure I have a good local recording going this time, so that should make archiving this a lot easier.

And we have a lot to get to today, so just as a heads up, this episode will be talking about PARTIZAN episodes 05-08... I mean 01-08, really, but the focus will be 05-08 which are the two downtime episodes, and then the second full SBBR mission. Um, so this should be the focus, if you haven't heard those episodes yet you may wanna bounce, and come listen to this afterwards. Though the other thing we'll be focusing on here is the FAQ, I'll be answering questions, lots of people sending me questions, so I have a lot to answer, I have a lot to answer for. [AUSTIN laughs a bit]

And then also I wanna look at the faction turn, so to speak, the kind of tracking to see if squads succeed in their goals, and if in turn factions can pursue theirs. And so, that'll be kind of the end of the episode, and that will have very light spoilers for the next Rapid Evening arc. I've already teased parts of what's up with the Rapid Evening in PARTIZAN 08, at the end of PARTIZAN 08, so, to some degree the big thing won't be a thing that's new to you. I kind of like... signaled a thing that's gonna happen soon in the story already at the end of PARTIZAN 08, and so, and so that's the thing we're gonna be talking about, I'm not gonna be getting into particulars around what their mission is or what happens there, and blah-blah-blah, so much as a thing that follows that mission. And so, I will, I'll give another spoiler warning about that when we get there, but for now, briefly I wanna go over Drawing Maps...

As always, really quick, you're gonna hear us doing real prep, we're gonna focus on PARTIZAN today, though if some of the GM questions are a little bit broader than that, this is not... I'm not gonna talk about spoilers if I can help it, outside of the ones that are... future spoilers, spoilers that are not from stuff you've already heard. It's not a tutorial, though I will be trying to answer some questions. As always I'm kind of... I don't have notes prepared, I don't have anything like that. And as always, nothing here matters until the episodes come out, right? You could hear me say... you could hear me roll dice today, and be like "Ooh, that's good!" and then the episode's gonna come out, and then the dice won't be reflected because I'd have had a brainstorm about a different way to take the game. And as always that is the thing, that is the heart of let your heart of... Follow the heart of the cards, let your heart be your guiding key. When you're running a game, break rules to tell stories that are going to be evocative and memorable. And so, and so... Who knows, you know? But I have to roll them to begin with to start the brain juices going. So.

Today's agenda.

- 1) I'm going to review the GM goals and principles for *Beam Saber*.

- 2) I'm gonna, I'm gonna do... talk about some downtime and Sable Court Post Mortem type stuff.
- 3) QA. I'm gonna blow through these first two things, there's a lot of QA... Q&A, not QA, not Quality Assurance, Questions & Answers.
- 4) and then, and then Faction goals.

And there's a lot of Q&A, so I'm gonna, again, kind of blow through the first two steps as quickly as possible. So yeah, PARTIZAN downtime... One, kind of the both of the downtime episodes, and then Arc Three spoilers, and a little bit of Arc Four.

As always, my goal... During *Beam Saber* my **goals** are:

- to ensure everyone at the table is safe,
- to fill the world with detail,
- to convey the world honestly,
- and to play to find out what happens.

I think that downtime episodes are really interesting for all of these, because they open up the door for players to take the lead in a lot of things, and because the stakes are a little bit... are a little bit more... They're a little looser, right? When you're in a combat mission, you can put a character's life at risk very clearly, and the results of like a Cut Loose roll don't do that, and so... There's some degree to which there's a lot of pressure to still make it feel like you're playing to find out what happens, and not just like you're playing a resource management game. And at the same time that change in focus also opens up the possibility that you could fuck up keeping everyone safe in different ways, because I think running downtime takes a different set of skills than running a mission in *Beam Saber* or a score in *Forged in the Dark*. In that... you know, it's the difference between giving players the space where they can be comfortable exploring their character... Being, you know, violent on the battlefield vs confronting the results of that violence off mic, or, not off mic, but, you know, away from the battlefield. And I will say, I'm really happy with how everyone played.

I'll wrap back around to it in a second, but I want to sort of briefly call out a moment that completely, like, blew me away... Everything in both downtimes was great, and I'm only going on about downtime right this second because that's where my brain is... But the moment that... The two moments early on where Jack steps into Clem's voice completely just like... shocked me. The first time is that during the supply segment they immediately dropped into character to basically tell everyone that they're allowed to spend points to do their free Upkeep action, which is great. The second time is when they... when, when Clem was doing... not even a Cut Loose with Sovereign Immunity, Recover with Sovereign Immunity, when Jack just immediately is like: "Well, that's a fucking shit show." I was like "WHOA!" like, I jumped back from my desk, that was incredible. And in general, all of that stuff, I think, comes from having a good table relationship, knowing... Jack knowing that they can go there here, and trust both the other players and the audience to know that that degree of intensity is going somewhere. So I was really excited about that, and I think that that reflected some good stuff.

Uh, **principles**.

Be a fan of the pilots,  
address the pilots, address the players,  
fill the world with inequality,  
make the war the enemy, not the soldiers,  
make the war too big to defeat,  
make the pilots feel small and the mechs feel powerful,  
consider the risk,  
and hold on lightly.

To call out a couple of these here, I think the prison stuff on the Rapid Evening side has gotten really good around the “fill the world with inequality” stuff, seeing the members of the Rapid Evening who are not Clementine Kesh needing to kind of stretch a little bit has been really good. I think that the “make the war the enemy, not the soldiers” stuff really glowed in the way that the Columnar fight happened, the moment that Dre was like “Oh, what’s up with their commander? Let me try to get some information on their commander.” It reminded me to... I mean, to some degree I was already trying to insist on the personhood of these, of these characters, because they... We’ve got shots of them as people, I’ve obviously spent time designing what they looked like, and giving them little details, you know? The difference between “They are enemy soldiers.” and “This one has a fake cigar and a cool bomber jacket.” is enough to be like “Oh, okay, that’s a person, that’s like not just a thing I put my target on and pull the trigger with.” And so that’s one of the ways that you do that, but then once we got into like who is Kenzi, what’s, you know, what does she feel about her squad, what does she feel about Columnar, and then emphasizing that with an intro which we recorded later, which I recorded later... That felt really good, a really good way of being like: “A-ha, there’s this other side story happening for this other complete human being, who at any moment could be wiped off the map”, right? Like, could be killed. And we’ll talk about that later too. So, I was really happy about that.

And then, and then, you know, in the first one of these I complained about the inability of having like good mech combat in the first two arcs... Not that there weren’t... there wasn’t good mech *moments*, I think that some of the stuff with, you know, the way SBBR crushed Obelle was fantastic, and there’s obviously like the cool moment of, of Millie shooting the rocket, the RPG, or the bazooka shot out of the air in, in the first Rapid Evening arc... But this arc had some good fucking mech fights. And I was happy about that, and I will—here are some very light spoilers—this next arc also has some really good mech stuff, so look forward to that.

I’m gonna keep moving forward here. So, **what worked, what didn’t** in these, in downtime and in the, the SBBR arc that just finished, the kind of Sable Court arc.

Um, the funeral prom Cut Loose stuff, the kind of wake, the dance at a wake, what was the name of that episode? A Palace During a Wake... Sorry not sorry for that name. What a great collection of scenes that was! I think when we all talked about doing *Beam Saber*, when I first read it, or when I saw people talking about *Beam Saber* in relation to Friends at the Table, so many people were like: “Oh, I really wanna see them do Cut Loose, I bet they’ll crush it.” And to have that be the first instance... instances of Cut Loose was so fantastic. I

loved seeing the pairing there. And mechanically I'm excited to see how that shakes out, because it means that there's relationships between characters... Some of them are obvious, like, you know, you see the... I forget who in, in... which way this goes. But, you know, Clem and Sovereign Immunity, obviously at least one of them has a 2 with the other one now. But you also, I think, ended up with like Millie and Sovereign Immunity, and *that's* interesting, right? That's the stuff that doesn't... you might've imagined that it would've... that the groups would just pair off, but instead... Would've pair off and split themselves, Sovereign Immunity and Clem on one side, and then Millie and Leap on the other, but that isn't what happened. So that was fantastic, I think that whole thing had just so many good visuals... I can... We didn't do a lot of describing of like what the ballroom was like, but I can see that whole sequence so well, partially because all of the players had such good fashion stuff, partially because we're really just playing in a space that's well tread, but not one that we've used a lot. Ali messaged me while recording, or while editing that episode, and was like: "I've asked you for a ball for so many years!" And I was like "I promise there will be another ball this season, I promise! You're on the side where they don't go to balls that often." But we'll figure something out. But because of that, because the genre space is so filled with this style of like high class court ball dancing stuff, like, it was pretty easy to, I think, evoke that stuff without spending, you know, seven or eight minutes describing the walls. And also it was a good example of like not knowing that that's where this was going, right? I didn't... I kind of assumed that they would intersect with the funeral procession at some point that week, in the kind of week of downtime that we kind of abstracted, but I didn't know where or when, and so that's not a thing you can really prep for.

The second thing is Kenzi. I think, seeing the players respond to Kenzi really well, and then seeing the audience respond to Kenzi was really good. I think it was one of those things where you have to decide to go all in or not. Is this a bit character who never shows up again? Which happens, you think about COUNTER/Weight, and you think about like... the Netted Wave, and the NPCs there. It's like I think they maybe show up again once in COUNTER/Weight. Whereas if I say "Sister Rust", you know who Sister Rust is. And I'm not saying Kenzi is going to be Sister Rust, but... there was a... there's moments in that conflict where I was like: "Ooh, I can *feel* that my players like this person!" Even if they're not... Even if they end up killing her... [AUSTIN laughs a bit] There's a, there's a kind of frisson in the conversation... I don't know if I'm pronouncing that word right, it's a French word, I don't know French. But there's that like spark, there's this like... like a positive friction, if that makes sense. And because of that I recorded that intro after the fact. Which again, I'll address 'cause there's a question about this.

The Sable Court I think worked, it was really fun to work through those ideas. It was very much... I explained this in the Discord the other day, but let me, let me read what I actually said, because I think it's probably worth talking through the way you can just get an idea and then chase it down a little bit... Um... So, someone had asked basically what the... I'd mentioned in the episode that there was a particular art piece that was an influence. Let me see if I can pull it up over here, and then drag it over on the screen... Um, so. I had... Let me see here... So it starts actually with this particular tweet that's gonna be very hard to find... because it is from a Japanese account that tweets pretty often... and if I scroll down all of

their media tweets it's not coming up, so it must've been from a little while ago... Okay, it was from March 2016. Um... [AUSTIN laughs a bit] So that's no good.

There was a tweet from {[@tamachan2525](#)} from March 30th, 2016 that was this kind of like green lanky mech model, that was just kind of like really cool looking. I will pull it up on the stream for a second here. Really lanky mech parts with like some kind of rounded elbow joints and exposed gears and kind of... In some of the pictures it's holding this kind of big like... It's like a sniper rifle with a bipod, but it can also kind of, in some moments, especially when I'm looking at it on my phone, look like a big, you know, like heavy machine gun emplacement type thing. It has another rifle, or another gun on its shoulder, but like a tinier one. It felt really like... It looks rusted, it looks kind of like... it's been in deployment, it's been deployed for months and months and months, and it's like rusty, and kinda like it's on its last legs. And I was like: "Oh man, that's a cool aesthetic, I wanna bring that aesthetic into PARTIZAN as soon as possible!" And then I saw this other thing, which is this [MRGM 3 Multi Role Ground Machine by Marco Marozzi](#) which is a LEGO mech build. People build mechs out of LEGOs a lot, and it's just awesome, it's just this kind of like...

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Again, it's a little more shiny green thing, that kind of evokes a frog to me. Big plates, even more... It's like rounded but with kind of sharp angles where the rounded bits hit. Holding this big black, like, it looks like a... I don't even know what to call that weapon. Like, I guess it's some sort of a, you know, rocket or bazooka, or something, but it's like black and yellow, like hazard paint. It's fantastic. And so I was like: "Damn, I want to evoke *that* too!" These are things... And I like: "Ah, I can't evoke that though" because the next thing I'm going to is the Sable Court, which in my mind was a very particular model of just like witches in the woods, right? I've talked about them like Macbeth witches a lot. But that style of, you know, fairy tale witches, right? I'm talking about the like, you know... Brothers Grimm style witches, right? But I was like "Maybe that's not right? What if I *can* just do this right now? Has anyone done like, military witches? Like military goth? Lick surplus goth?" Because military goth is traditionally like black latex nazi uniforms, that's a particular subculture that I was *not* trying to evoke. Like, authoritarian dominatrix stuff, right? That's not really what the Sable Court is at all. So I ended up doing a search for basically like "military witches". And what I ended up hitting was this collection of stuff from an artist named—I have it right here, thankfully—named Jon Cameron Li, for a kind of personal project named [War of the Wicked 1945](#). And if you go to Jon Cameron Li, to their ArtStation.... It's actually J-o-n C-a-m—Sorry, [artstation.com/joncameronli](http://artstation.com/joncameronli), you'll see this art, and it was...

Immediately, like [the first one I saw](#) was like "Oh, damn, cool!" Like, there's a character named Mother, who's a combat acolyte, who has like on an olive green dress uniform or like a battle dress uniform with medic stuff, but is holding a health potion. Or here's a Maiden, a battle witch, who has like aviator goggles and again the flight jacket, and a combat wand that looks sort of like a pistol. Or here's the Crone, an artillery mage, who's holding like a staff, if a staff was also like a... Like some sort of... God, what's it reminding me of? It's as if a rocket launcher was just on a stick, and I'm forgetting what franchise I'm thinking of this

from... Oh, it's the things from Mad Max, the kind of explosive javelins that they threw in Mad Max: Fury Road, and in the Mad Max game, which sadly was not very good.

And then I looked further, and [the second thing which I saw from this War of the Wicked set](#) was literally like a big power armor exo-suit mech thing. You kinda see the pilot in there, so it's like riding the line between exo-suit and mech, that is literally a big green like World War II mech that as if the joints were all made of tree limbs, and roots, and stuff, and it's holding a giant, you know, machine canon... Anti-armor canon. And I was like "Damn! Like, this is the look, how do I evoke this?" And the best thing about this was just like no one else had really done this. I looked all over the place for more witches, more like military surplus, "go to your Army Navy store" witches, like, that particular model of goth. And you can find some goth that has that style, but you didn't find a lot that... You didn't find a lot, period. This was like okay, this is not a particularly overused aesthetic, but again, shoutouts to Jon Cameron Li, whose work, I think, really like cemented that this was what I wanted. There's a really fantastic piece called [Resting Golem. After the War. 1997](#), that reminds me of our Ech0 game. You can do a search for that and find this, because... I guess the actual piece on the website is just called After the Wicked War, that has this kind of mech all the way grown into the side of an abandoned house, and some kids are playing outside. It's fantastic.

So that, that was very much like "Damn, okay, let's do that." And I was really happy to get them on screen, and in general I wanted to like... How do you walk..? What does a coven that's been... that's filled with war veterans look like specifically? The... I'm sorry, I was trying to show art, and no one saw that, but guess what? Neither did anyone who was listening to the audio version of this. For those of you who are watching live, again, just go to the website I went to and you'll see all the stuff I was just talking about.

The... God, I've lost my point. The other part of the Sable Court stuff that worked like I was saying was the... I really wanted to evoke that... I wanted to think about where the Hypha had been. They'd been living as Ashen, they'd been living as couriers for some of them, like a culture built around that, which is kind of a fake thing, which is why it's like: okay, they can't just be couriers! Where would they naturally hang out? Or where would they naturally, over a long period of time, end up? And the answer is probably with Apostolos, the group most open to alien non-human species, and would have fought a lot. Like, would've spent a lot of time at the front line. And so, for each of those characters, I wanted to emphasize... really I wanted to make sure there was a character. We mostly saw with, with, with Eiden Teak, someone who like had... felt like a World War II soldier. Like, Eiden Teak was meant to feel like, you know, the... the dude from Brooklyn that shows up in every World War II movie, right? Who was like on the D-Day boat with you, and who's like a little smarmy, and you hope he gets through it okay. And he did! And like... But he took his hits, he's still a pilot, he's, he's the head of security for them. And then I'd hoped that, that he would have a really good rapport with Broun, and he did, so that was really great.

And then the relationship with... Also, wait, I'm just going to double check my own notes for that character, one second. Um... So yeah, so, I think that all worked great.

The third... the fourth thing here, rather, is mech fights, which I said before: I think that like having those sequences actually play out, seeing characters engage in different, in different ranges, seeing how Dre wanted to make Valence, like, fight, being primarily about not engaging in combat at all, but using their vehicle to get information was really fascinating.

Number five, another thing that was a win for me was loose... was just loose and fast session prep. I talked last time about the value of the mission report structure that is in the *Beam Saber* book. And it's fantastic, it's so easy to like throw something together, especially once you have all the building blocks, and have a few good ideas. I did not spend... This is the thing I mentioned about, I talked about last episode, was like... When I don't have a lot of time, it means pre-prepping a lot of stuff, and building stuff ahead of time. This was a case where I was like: "Well, no, I can totally run in three days, I can take tomorrow, and instead of like going into the office and doing XYZ, I can just like sit down and knock this mission prep out tomorrow with a..." And then run it the next day. Instead of having to remind myself of what it is, you know?

The final thing is that I love the kind of slow burn... I've written down that SBBR is platonic slow burn. The fact that there was no Cut Loose in the initial SBBR episode downtime, I was like bummed, because we had not recorded Rapid Evening's yet, and I was like: "Shit, I really wanted to see a Cut Loose!" Unfortunately, we didn't get one. Fortunately, we got one out of Rapid Evening. But, now that we've done another arc, we've not recorded downtime yet, so I don't know how that's gonna go. But we've done this past arc, the Sable Court arc... Seeing this group slowly come together, things like Valence and Broun needing to work together, has been really rewarding *because* we had that downtime where it seemed like they were all off living different lives. The idea they would all come together for this, this like errand that Thisbe decides she had to run [AUSTIN laughs a bit] was a great first step, and then seeing them in action again, then seeing them now kinda wrapping back around and going back into downtime feels really good. And I'm excited to see those relationships slowly grow as they become tighter and go through more together. It feels really organic.

So, four things that I wanna **keep working on** here.

I'm really bummed that I'm not getting a chance to show more of... Oxbridge or Cruciat. ...Not bummed, but like... hopefully downtime gives us a chance to do this, 'cause we're going back into downtime now. But I wanna be able to evoke really clear, almost physical feeling descriptions, I wanna... When I say those things I want to evoke a sensation on the body. And so I need to... we need to get in there, and like show these cities a little bit more, and I'm gonna try to do that with the next downtime episodes.

The second things is that math is boring, but also some people like math, but also math is *boring*. We... tried to figure out what do we want to do with the downtimes and the reward and math stuff, the kind of post-mission reward stuff. We've recorded the... Huh. So, we've finished SBBR part 1. We did all of the reward stuff up to rolling an entanglement. And it was terrible! We did it immediately after finishing Obelle, like that was the... we did all that, that was already recorded, up to the point where you roll for the entanglement. And... we were

so tired (because we just finished playing a game for like, whatever, four hours), that it was just trash. I was like "Let me just read, let me work out the math so I can just go... Let's like... I'm gonna listen to what we've already recorded, I'm going to write all that math down, we can go over that math again at the top of the next game, but in a much more, like, smooth way, 'cause the math will have already been done." And even with that, trying to explain all of the... All of the like bit by bit: "Hey, you got a +2 because of this, hey, you got a -1 because of this." It was still one of the driest radio we'd ever produced. So I ended up cutting that down even further, until it was where we ended up. Then people were like: "Oh, I really want to hear that math!" And so we left the math in on the Rapid Evening side, with the note that some of it was just off mic, period. Right, like... The truth is that even when I run these games... Even when I used to run games like these off... away from the microphone, away from doing content, like when I was running games in college, or after college, the sort of math that goes into, you know, session to session stuff, often just happens away from the table. And so I think in the future what we're gonna do is unless something's really important, we... readings called out, or something really exciting comes out of the math, it's just gonna end up being kind of backgroundy in terms of like whether or not it shows up on, on, on episodes or not. I'll probably... we'll probably cut most of it out, because most of it is pretty straightforward. With, again, certain exceptions when it comes to things like... I would just have to do a verbal callout when, you know, you lose status with somebody. Which we did still, it's just a matter of like... seriously doing the math on mic has been, has been rough. Or maybe I'll stumble into a way where it works. And this also will connect to something that I got some questions about later, which is about episode pacing, I'll talk about that in a little bit.

Third one is squad progression. Will either side ever tier up? I don't know. I've told both on mic and off mic that... both sides that they need to save up to increase from Tier 0. I don't know that it's gonna happen! I gave everyone, I gave everyone a free storage units to try to encourage them to like stockpile stuff, but maybe the opposite is happening? I don't know. I don't know! I don't know, I'll ask them again, but like, the thing I'm gonna end up doing is I'll start hitting them harder, and you heard me mention that I think during the last SBBR game. I was like: "Listen, tier matters, and the more enemies you make, the more you're gonna end up dealing with higher tier enemies."

The final thing that I wish, I wish I'd hit a little harder was that the Columnar mechs that showed up here were cool, but they weren't necessarily upsetting, and that's part of what the Columnar aesthetic needs to be. If they had dug around a little bit more, I think if I'd... if they had not immediately knocked out, uh, Kenzi's, um, mech... I forget the name of that mech, the... The Obscura, I probably could have come up... I could have like put the camera on something that made it, like... That explained how it does the things it does, and that is like a little gross, but I just didn't. And, and... I was so taken by the fact that they just knocked it out so quickly that I just moved on. But I could have had it groan, I could have had it yell, I could have had it make a noise, and that's what I need to do the next time.

Um, alright! So, those are the big picture things that I... that I called out here.



Let me pull up these next, um... Boom, here we go. Let's talk about **Q&A**. As always, if you have questions you can send them to [tipsatthetable@gmail.com](mailto:tipsatthetable@gmail.com), use the subject "Drawing Maps" so that I can actually, I can actually see them, and put them into the right thing. Let me take a drink really quick.

Alright. So, the first one comes in from **Jordan**, who says:

**"If Millie and Leap did escape from Clem's immediate custody, how would you have structured the parties? Would you still have episodes about all of the members of the Rapid Evening, even though 2 are AWOL, or would you have separated the Rapid Evening into two games?"**

I don't really know. That's a decision you make after it happens based on players, based on scheduling, based on what feels right narratively. We'd figure it out, that's not like... I know that I can make me sound like an NBA coach or something to be kind of... to shrug questions like this away, but it's.... the job is to figure it out, and the job is not to figure it out ahead of time, like, explicitly.

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To be clear, what I mean is: the job *is*... I don't mean that in a negative sense, I don't mean the job isn't figuring it out ahead of time. I mean the job *is* going into it with the commitment that you will figure it out when it happens and not before. Because when you start figuring things out before it happens, you start working yourself into corners, and start, like, giving yourself biases towards things like that. This also goes around the core question here, or the kind of core issue here: they couldn't. Because of the way drive clocks are situated. Drive clocks are... So both Clem and... Sorry, both Millie and Leap have drive clocks that are basically about escaping, right? What that is is a player telling me to not let them do that until those drive clocks advance. Sovereign Immunity could walk out tomorrow. Like, that's the truth of the way drive clocks work is you're not just flagging something as important, you're telling me as the GM, "This is the core arc... As an author, as a collaborative author in this piece, this is what my character's arc is going to be about: either achieving this thing, not achieving it, giving up on it, helping someone else achieve theirs, getting help to do it, something like that. And because of that, I need you, GM, to keep this away from me long enough to build momentum and earn it narratively." Sovereign Immunity could walk into the palace— could, you know.. If Art was like: "Oh, Sovereign Immunity is gonna try to make rolls to escape." In a weird way, he would be able to do that, because that's not the cornerstone of his character. The cornerstone of his character is being assigned to become Clem's Sovereign Immunity. In many ways doing that might actually hurt his chances to be assigned to being Clem's Sovereign Immunity, because it shows him pushing back against the rules, and it makes him lose face, and blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. And so, that's why he doesn't do it, right? But he *could*, and that is one of the interesting things about drive clocks.

**Ryan** writes in and says:

**"After listening to the first downtime episodes I'm wondering if there's a special way you have to prep for those, especially given they're more player-driven sessions?"**

**Also, how much do you think having 3 downtime actions instead of just 1 in Blades changes the tone of the game, especially considering that it almost seemed like the players had more actions that they knew what to do with?"**

I'll note here, Blades has 2, not 1.

**"Finally, how much is downtime shaping the upcoming sessions, the SBBR arc seemed to flow out of the downtime really well, leading to a mission already outside the established Stels, but I'm curious how this also shakes out with the Rapid Evening short terms and the game overall, if downtimes, with so much more freedom to move than Blades are how you best establish jumping off points for the next missions."**

I'll take these kind of one at a time here. Very low prep, right? I tend to ask people, you know, a few days in advance, a week in advance: "Hey, what do you think you're gonna do? Your plans for the downtime..." to try and prep an NPC, blah-blah-blah. 95% of the time I don't get an answer, and we play it by ear. I generally have a decent idea. I'm like: "Um, I bet this is the type of thing." But I'm always surprised, every time. The... So, no prep, very little prep. Mostly mechanical prep, understanding what is supposed to happen, knowing where things are in the book, anticipating how to answer the questions as they come up, understanding the board, understanding faction relationships, squad relationships, which NPCs might be around, etc. The... I'm remembering stuff from a session you don't know yet, it's very funny. Trust me. Trust me that when I say that one of the funniest moments in... We... Either this coming episode or the episode after that has a moment that I think I have not laughed as hard in my life in probably a year. So, look forward to that.

The, the question of like whether or not there's too many actions I think is really interesting. Players... It's clear that players are all like surprised by having it, and I suspect over the long... over the course of the season, some of those actions will become less... I think part of the thing is people feel like everything needs to be a scene still, and so everything feels a little heavier, where it's like... No, Millie just wants to roll Enhance and just wants to like work on her mech, like that should just... happen. I don't need that to be a conversation between characters. It would be cool if we had the time to do all of that forever, but that's not the model, and that's not the show, and it's also just not how stories tend to work, where like you have, um, you have that exact kind of rhetorical structure... not rhetorical structure, but pacing structure. Because if you had a scene, like real scene for each downtime activity, it would just go on and on and on. So I think eventually you'll see players get more comfortable making mechanical decisions, and then focusing in on key scenes when it makes sense. I'll say that you need it, you really do need that third downtime action. I think it's not felt yet in that first downtime, because everyone got out scot-free, but as mechs start to take damage, as characters start to take damage, as resources start to get used, you're going to see people need those actions to kind of patch themselves up and make progress, for sure.

Um, yes, this is as Ada in the chat says: I noticed in the Cenotaph actual play, when they only had two actions, they never had anywhere near enough actions to heal, repair, cut

loose and refuel / repair quirks” That’s exactly the case, and, and you’ll see... I think you’ll see going forward that this is gonna quickly become the case.

The final thing here is in terms of downtime shaping what’s next that’s gonna be it, like, yes, like my hope is to do that every time. The... So, you didn’t hear this, because of where cut that episode, but the end of the Rapid Evening episode ends with me giving Jack, giving Clem, kind of—and the party—two options for a mission. Both of those options comes out of play. One of those options comes out of downtime, the downtime structure, the other one comes out of stuff that happened in Obelle. And that’s how it’s gonna be going forward, is like... I want these missions to feel... I actually don’t know what the next SBBR— I don’t know what the next SBBR or Rapid Evening mission is *at all*. We still have to record both of those downtimes. My suspicion is during that downtime I will... Loose ideas in my mind will become firm ideas. Or even today that might happen, right? Like, as we continue. So, so yeah. Like, this is not... I don’t have episodes planned, I don’t have missions planned, I don’t have *anything*. Like, I have... I know facts about the world, and that is *it*, and that is the way the game has to run, otherwise I think it becomes really inauthentic, and it becomes me telling you a story, not us playing a game.

This one comes in from **Juliet**, who says:

**“This might be an inside-baseball question, but what are some of the factors that help you decide how many episodes long an arc should be? How do you decide where to end an episode, or turn two long ones into three shorter ones, or vice versa? Are there any insights you’ve discovered, individually or as a group, in pacing episodes this way?”**

This is as much an Ali question as a me question, and maybe we should ask Ali this also on like a Tips episode. But... Twilight mirage was a huge learning experience, I said this last time. If you look at the beginning of Twilight Mirage, we went so many episodes without switching between sides that people were getting fatigued. It’s natural for people to have a favourite character, right? You know, for someone who’s listening to that first... or, in Twilight Mirage maybe one person’s favourite character was ‘Signet’, and another person’s was Grand Magnificent. They’re on different sides of the game, and if you have to go a month, a *month* without hearing your favourite character, it’s gonna sting. And you need to know... You need to either have that buy-in to earn that ahead of time, or you need to have... to earn that patience, rather, or you need to know that this is gonna be an episode, or a series, an arc, that really earns that patience, you know what I mean? You either kind of have to have already earned it to where like somebody goes like “Eh, I’m not gonna see my favourite character, that’s okay, I’ll deal with it for three or four weeks.” or you need to know that that new episode that’s coming out, that new series is going to be... that it’s gonna crush it. This next arc of the Rapid Evening will probably be three episodes, and that’s just gonna be because of how long it is.

The other answer here is really just about that. I think, you know, someone has to tell me what the longest episode we’ve ever released is, probably three or four hours... Probably four hours, some sort of finale episode that we were like just desperate to get out because

we just wanted to fucking get it out. But the... in general I don't like to go over two hours, I think this season we've done that... kind of often. Let me see. ...God, I hate that this... I hate that the way this works is it doesn't tell me. I'm like looking on, I'm looking on our own website, and that does not actually break down the length very easily. Let's see. My guess is that the transcript page will have it. ...Uh. Um... Yeah, let's see. So, episode 01 is 02h20m, episode 02 is 95 minutes, so a little over an hour and a half, episode 03 is 2 hours, episode 04 is 02h20m, episode 05 is like 02h10m... You know, we're in that two hour-period. I think, yeah, episode 06 is the longest one, which is the... We knew that downtimes were going to be long, and honestly, getting through that whole... that whole downtime in under three hours was... the Rapid Evening downtime in under three hours was surprising, we did not think we were actually gonna be able to pull this off, honestly. But we did, and so... In general you... In terms of findings it's difficult, right?

Because you look at the two... the two truly, capital S, Successful actual plays, the ones that have like had crossover success in a way that I don't think anything else has... And I guess you could talk about Harmony Quest in here, but I don't think Harmony Quest does it... I guess it's probably worth it talking about Harmony Quest as a third case study. So. You have Critical Role. Critical Role is super long, and it's modeled after... or it's in the same model as Twitch stream actual plays, right? This is the stuff that I used to play with Adam Koebel, the stuff that Adam still does, the stuff that, you know, a million people... You look at the Rivals of Waterdeep stuff, you look at all of the stuff that Roleplay does—lots of four-hour sessions, and that audience eats that up, and many of them eat it up live, and many of them eat it up on video on YouTube. Our audience... We didn't grow an audience there naturally, right? That is not where our audience began, and not doing live streams gives us a great deal of benefit, because it means that we can do pickups, we can do intros, Jack can record music, etc. And the audience that we're already invested in, the audience that already came to us, doesn't expect four-hour episodes every week. They might expect two-and-a-half-hour episodes, they certainly expect me talking a lot, and very dense episodes at this point. But the audience that we've built is not looking for four-hour episodes, it would be really hard to fit them every week into your schedules.

The other model is the Adventure Zone, right? Also super super successful. And their model is, like, you know, an hour to ninety minutes every other week. Completely opposite model, very light listening in terms of how much you're gonna have to put it—and that's not a drag on that show in terms of like the hour count, it's just... I mean, you look at TAZ: Balance, that thing went on for *years* because it was shorter episodes than what we were putting out *and* it was every other week. And that allows a sort of different degree of relation to the thing, it's a, it's a lighter, less... It's like a fluffier listen, it's a snackier listen. It's really hard to sit down and listen to two and a half hours of people talking about deep fucking lore, or doing like... I know what we do is inaccessible... not inaccessible in accessibility terms, though also that, though we're trying to help with the transcripts, but in terms of the... of the raw like... There's lots of hurdles into listening to Friends at the Table. And so in general we want shorter episodes, in general we want to make sure that players... or that listeners don't forget things, which is part of why we're kind of trying to go back to this stick on one side model that we tried on Twilight Mirage, and it didn't really work on Twilight Mirage, and it's why this season has had shorter arcs in general.

I don't know that we've had a season that's had this many episodes where you get a full arc in two episodes. I don't even think Marielda was able to pull that off, really. Maybe it was. Maybe Marielda was... Let me think... One, two... Marielda I think was two-episode arcs instead of three-episode arcs. But even COUNTER/Weight had lots of three-episode arcs, four-episode arcs, arcs that bled into each other. And Dungeon World is filled with it, right? Hieron is filled with like "Oh, we're gonna have... In my mind, we're gonna do three big quests on each side." And it's like, no, you're gonna do two, *maybe*. And that's the sort of stuff that ended up happening both in... in all through Hieron. So, in general, I think that the sweet spot that we've always felt that we... that is like the perfect spot in ninety minutes to two hours. It feels midi, it feels like Friends at the Table. The week-to-week listens go down if you go higher than that, but in general people will eventually catch up, it's just a matter of do you keep sustained momentum week-to-week. But our numbers are very... stable, our numbers are like what they are, it's kind of what they've been. What we get is kind of like a... The growth for Friends at the Table has been people going through the back catalogue and like jumping on board at various places. But the week-to-week listens have basically been stable for two or three years, like slight incline. The other big growth is the Patreon, we convert people pretty well, the Patreon is still growing years later which is rare, and I'm really thankful for that. So, that is definitely, that is definitely it.

Yeah-yeah-yeah, Morgan in the chat says the train heist is two snappy episodes, but yeah, wow, Valentine Affair and the final, the final arc in Marielda are both four episodes. This is what I'm saying, like that's so fucking long! And it's longer, and this is, again, the Twilight Mirage lesson, it's longer when you have two different groups, because the alternative to "we're gonna do one side and then the other side", "we're gonna jump between the two Hieron style", the alternative... Sorry. When we started Twilight Mirage what we tried to do was: we'll do one side all the way through, and then the other side all the way through.

[00:45:00]

Team A, Team B. Team A 1-2-3, Team B 1-2-3, right? What we found out is what I said before, people were missing the characters that they loved, because people loved different characters. Then, later on we tried to go back to A-B-A-B-A-B, or A1-B1-A2-B2-A3-B3. And what we learned from that was: nothing happens. Arcs don't progress, because suddenly... If you have two... If you have two... Okay, it was like *the* realization we've made was... You get to Skein, right? Or just, I don't remember when we got to Skein, one of the planets in Twilight Mirage, where both teams had a mission. Both of those missions... You know, I'm just gonna look it up, because it's worth, it's worth straight up just giving you the specific information about the way we think about this stuff. So... Looking at Twilight Mirage, let's find... Alright. Episode 46, we get to Skein. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine episodes later, or eight episodes later, 46 to 54, we get downtime on Skein. That means that we're doing two arcs, two different arcs for... two, three... Wait, one second, I have to look it back up again. One month... Two months we spend on this one planet. And it takes two months for both of those stories to wrap. And I like downtime on, I like the Skein arc a lot, there's incredible stuff that's happening on Skein, that's like the milk arc, that's a fantastic arc. That's the stuff with the cool ribbon in the sky. Like, I love those arcs. But they're fucking

campaigns! Like, they're long, and it felt like there was not progress there. And so this season really snappiness had been a goal, because we want there to feel like there's motion, because we want it to feel like there's like calendar progress happening, and because we want to keep things fresh episode to episode. So yeah. Uh, alright. I'm gonna make sure that's it. Yeah, okay.

Jeff writes in. Jeff says:

**"Valence's plan to save the Oxblood Clan seems like one of those beautiful and unanticipated curveballs that players can sometimes throw at the table, and it's a decision that feels like it has big consequences on the world state."**

Sure does.

**"Did a mech blasting the Kesh National Anthem while blowing up a fuel depot also blow up your plans for the denouement of that arc, and what was your process of figuring out how widespread the ramifications would be?"**

Um, it's interesting because I've read this, and I was like: "My process? Shit, what's a process?" And the answer is obviously there is a process. Most of that process is the same process that I think any fiction writer has to develop for figuring out what happens next, and that differs from writer to writer. For me it was about thinking about the goals of the players involved, the biases and kind of impulses of those players, and by players I kind of mean states here, right? Apostolos, Kesh, etc. But also I kind of mean like people like the Swordbreakers, people like Crysanth Kesh and the Curtain, stuff like that. The... Not seeing that coming, I said this last time, was like such a boon because it gave such energy to this opening act, and it also... I think it's fair to say that it's also shook away any idea that the things were going to go even a little bit as planned. I said earlier, like, the job is to not be prepared in some ways, to be overprepared, certainly.

But I had expected that like, okay, Past is gonna crash. I don't know if they've any way of saving Past 'cause that's not their mission. And then someone is going to try to figure out what really happened to Past, because we don't really know what happened to Past yet. But that's not really been the focal point, and it hasn't been the focal point *because* of that Kesh play, because that opened up so... the Valence playing the White Star Anthem changes things so dramatically, that it shifted that focus now. And I'll talk about this in a little bit: *someone* is still going to try to figure out what happened to Past, and we'll see what... we'll see where that goes. But to work that out it really was just looking at the... looking at who is involved... And on like gut level... This is the thing, I figured it out immediately, like as soon as Dre did it, I understood what Dre was doing, understood immediately that Valence was endangering the people of the Prophet's Path, was suggesting that there was a second front that did not exist, stuff like that. So yeah. So... So yeah.

Morgan writes in, and says:

**"I was wondering if you had any advice with regards to figuring out where to draw maps & leave blank spaces! One thing that struck me as really interesting in the last SBRR mission is that you left Kenzington's past nebulous during actual play - you said she was basically on her last demotion before dishonorable discharge - and prior to that (but presumably recorded later), in the episode intro, you expanded on her past to talk about what specifically happened with the Divine Asepsis.**

**In my prep, I usually tend to figure out factual details like what factions are involved in a character's past or current situation, but leave their emotional state up to what feel interesting to the story at the moment (with the willingness to change the prep depending on player input or opportunity)! How do you decide what to commit to beforehand and what's more interesting to figure out at the table?"**

I actually reverse those two things. I don't really care, with rare exception... Like, again, you think about someone like Cymbidium, Mourningbride, Crysanth, Gur Sevraq, like particular characters who clearly are important to the story and have particular histories—those I need to know. Like, I have a chart, or I have like at the bottom of my brainstorming doc, I basically have like a thing that's like: "Here is what really happened". "Here it is, here is what happened, here is the sequence of events that started offscreen and ended with Past crashed on Obelle." So, I know what those answers are for the characters who are all involved in that, and... And so that is important, that sort of factual detailed stuff. But for someone like Kenzi I don't give a fuck what happens to Kenzi until the players do, and so what I need is the lightest sketch of a character—someone who's been demoted for something, who has a grudge, but also has personal and professional pride, and, and cares about her subordinates. The rest of that I can either come up with in play, or come up with between sessions once it's clear that players care about that character. I think that you can go back and listen to Marielda, and see this with groups like the Fontmen, you can see this with characters like Uklan Tel in Hieron... Character first, lore second. Like... Especially for these supporting characters, right? It's so...

Go back to Emmanuel, who was like: "Yeah, I guess this person... Here's what this person *feels* like, I don't know what their deal is. I don't know who he is, we'll figure that out tomorrow." I really... If I have to draw maps, what I draw is the lightest sketch of biographical information and then do my best to find the heart of a character, because that heart will... will emanate the facts around them, and those facts will be more true, because of how that character feels. So when I make Eiden Teak, I don't know what battles Eiden Teak fought in, but now I know like, okay, Eiden Teak has this sort of like down on his luck Brooklyn, you know, sharpshooter vibe going on, with broken antlers, and he's on his crutches... And like that's... okay, I can start producing from that. Like, well, what happens if Eiden Teak ever sees someone who's Branched? Like, okay, wow, I can build this out! Maybe there was already an encounter between the Branched and Eiden. Maybe Eiden fought the Branched on the front lines, I can start to do that sort of thinking based on just a voice and a, a kind of mode of being. And so that ends up being so much more important. But that's just the way I tell stories, I don't think that's universal. But I do think that it's... if you look, again and again that is the way we do this, is about emotional character first, and plot second. It's just that

those are... or at least, again, with these side characters, who end up becoming favourites, right? Lazer Ted is a 100% this, right? [Austin laughs a bit] So many, so many important...

Sister Rust is this! I didn't... Who was Sister Rust? My notes on Sister Rust, you can see my notes on Sister Rust if you're a Mapmaker backer, I think you can go back and get the COUNTER/Weight... I think I posted it in Mapmaker... The COUNTER/Weight transmission. And in that it's just like straight up, like, yeah, she runs this group, uh... I'm gonna see if I can find it really quick. Transmission, MechNoir. All of the notes I had for Sister Rust for the first Sister Rust mission were... Um, let's see. It's very funny to look at this stuff now.

"Threats: The Iron Choir. A mix of Golden War vets, Counterweight refugees, and spiritually inclined who worship the Dead Metal, turning the Diaspora's Peace on its head into Order." Which like... that's not even true! "Sister Rust: persuasive, zealous, big, boisterous." That's... it. That's all I had for Sister Rust! Persuasive, zealous, big, boisterous. That is it! I didn't have more than that! Everything else comes from that core. And... You know...

Wow, I didn't know this character was here. "Detachment: a Divine that watches over Counterweight and Weight, but which has broken off contact from the Diaspora and Grace herself. Apparently, detached does not mean uninvolved." Detachment's adjectives: detached, distant, silent, just. Jerboa's adjectives: severe, angry, eidetic, dominating. Detachment with Jerboa's adjectives: ruthless, vengeful, authoritative, fast. That is it! Everything else comes after the fact there. And in the case of Jerboa and Detachment that obviously comes after we developed other characters to be related to Jerboa and Detachment. But like, I conceived of those things really loose sketches of who they were, voices, ways to play, and everything else comes after that.

Um, **Sarah** writes in and says:

**"I'm curious about how the player teams formed. What happened first: individual character ideas, or the type of groups (ie: prisoners, mercenaries)? Did the players coordinate with one another on their characters? And how did y'all decide who would play in each group?"**

I mean, the answer to this is: it's different for everybody to some degree. The overarching thing is... I think it was probably at this point eighteen months ago that I pitched Ali and Jack on the very basic structure of this season. I pitched Ali and Jack at a Cheesecake Factory, I showed them the picture of the burning windmill, "This is Season 6." I already think... I think I'd already pitched Ali on, on... via DM, at this point, but then Jack was visiting, and we were at a Cheesecake Factory, like you do. It was the first time I'd ever been to one. And... explained that in my mind what season 6 would be would be a continuation of Twilight Mirage, in terms of... and COUNTER/Weight, set in the future Divine Principality, and that everyone would be implicated, and that what...

The pitch I basically made was: "You would have these characters who are doing bad shit for... You would have these good characters doing bad shit for the bad guys, and then these characters who would ostensibly be the good guys working... but who are immoral and mercenary." Right? Like, the pitch was literally: "We will have a group of..." It was probably



right after I first played Battletech 2, right? So it was: “I want a group that’s working with whoever is the most... one of the most powerful groups in the Divine Principality, to have a Dirty Dozen style prison squad.” Dirty Dozen or... It’s like a, this is like a pretty classic like trope inside of war fiction, is the like the group of prisoners turned soldiers. And I was like: “I want one side to be that, and so those are people who you care about, and who you feel like are getting the shitty end of the stick, but also are directly working with the group that is the most powerful. And then the other group I want to just be amoral mercenaries who happen to end up working for good people.” In my mind at the time I thought that they ended up working for like a senator. Like, I kind of imagined they were going to work for someone with righteousness in their heart, who was like more of a reformer than a revolutionary? And that might still happen, but that doesn’t feel like it’s on the table, at this point in the same way.

But that was the way if I had to like tell you the story of season 6 eighteen months ago, those were the things that I thought would come up. Obviously this was before the Road to Season 6 was recorded, this was before so much prep. And so eventually, as we do that prep, a lot of that stuff changes. And at a certain point I just pitch *Beam Saber*, I pitch “Here’s what I think season 6 is.” Actually it was before *Beam Saber*, I pitched “Here’s what I think season 6 is.” And then opened it up for discussion and conversation. Like, hey, does this work? Are people excited about this and interested in this? Are there other types of squads you would rather be? Are there other types of relationships you would rather be? Like, you know, etc. In general everyone makes their characters a 100% by themselves outside of conversations that happen on mic. I think basically everyone... Like, so, they had different paces, right? Janine had the image of Thisbe’s face in the sand sixteen months ago or something, right? If I go look at our chats I probably could find it. Like, that is, that is what she’d been thinking about doing since probably the end of Twilight Mirage. She was like: “I think the next character I wanna play is a robot face found in the sand with a crack in it”, right? That is the... that is the way that like Janine like works creatively—had that idea, probably had a Pinterest board or a Spotify playlist, was building that out from the jump. Ali... it wasn’t until we were done with Hieron, because how the hell could Ali focus on anything except finishing Hieron, there was so much work to do there! And so Ali came to that character, came to Broun really late. And, like, you know, just a week or two before we started recording. There is no single way.

And... I know this maybe breaks part of whatever the like real world illusion of like, all of the Friends at the Table people chatting all the time, or like hanging out, in... or being BFFs or something, but like, we’re not like... we’re not in roleplay mode, and we’re not talking about the... The group isn’t talking about...

[01:00:00]

I am often talking to people individually, because I’m priming people, and asking questions, or if they have any... You know, I’ll get a message from Sylvia, and Sylvia will be like: “I had a great idea! I think I wanna take this move! Here’s how I wanna do it,” blah-blah-blah-blah. But in general no one is like checking notes against each other until things really start to go. And then like a week or two before we record character creation, people are like: “Wait, wait a second, what is your character? Okay, blah-blah-blah-blah...”

One of the exceptions here was definitely me pitching to Art that he had... Sovereign Immunity had kidnapped... had kidnapped Dahlia, and that before doing that... Or I guess we'd already... Art had pitched me Sovereign Immunity getting exiled basically, right? The thing that's happened to Sovereign Immunity, but had not worked out what for. And so we worked out the Dahlia kidnapping ourselves. I wanna say that that was... I think I figured it out during the *Microscope* game, I was like: "Oh shit, this should happen so that that could be Sovereign Immunity!" And I pitched it to Art and Art liked it. Then, separately, Art and Jack wanted to have the relationship of like Sovereign Immunity wanting to be their advisor, wanting to be Jack's character, Clem's advisor. And that was worked out separately, but that is, like, it in terms of conversation that those two had about their characters. There is no other like secret conversation that... And if they had one then I don't fucking know about it, but I don't believe that that's true, because in general, my policy is: you have to tell me stuff so I can work it in, otherwise it's just not gonna happen. [Austin laughs a bit.]

So yeah. And then in terms of like deciding who played where... Again, it's kind of just like, I ask. Okay, where do people want to be? What makes sense for your character? And so like, for Leap it made sense, like, "Oh, Leap was a pirate, not a mercenary. Leap was a pirate and now Leap is gonna have been arrested, and that like feeds in there nicely." Thisbe could have been in either, maybe, but like it really made more sense to just be something that mercenaries bought. Likewise Valence, like... That feels like this character who is like... finds their way into this mercenary camp, or this mercenary unit. Vs Clem, who like had to be in... on the Kesh side, right? In general I think Millie was the character who's the most flexible, and we went back and forth, and I think what we ended up wanting to do... I forget... I'm trying to remember what the particular thing there was. I think that the final decision ended up being the stuff with like GLORY, and wanting to feel like Millie had gone AWOL, and, and we could do some good Kesh/Apostolos stuff there. I think that that ended up being the big decision maker there.

But, you know, I do my best to put so much of that stuff in the player hands, and say again and again like on the lead up to a season: "Hey, pump the brakes. Do people have other things that they want to talk about? Are there other ideas? Like, let's talk through this." And stuff will change dramatically based on that stuff. But sometimes it is also my job to just kind of like... I have to make a decision, because it can be hard for players at the beginning of a new season that has new setting to know the vibe, whereas now it would be even... If a character... If tomorrow, you know, Thisbe died—we don't have a recording tomorrow, but if that happened—I suspect Janine could come up with another character with very little prompting of my own pretty easily, because now we're a few weeks into it, a few months into it, I guess... The vibe is pretty obvious.

Guz writes in and says:

**"In the latest SBBR arc it seemed like the players went from wanting to fight to wanting to talk pretty rapidly. This led to a tense and memorable situation with Kenzi, but it strikes me as a situation that might have been tough to adapt to in the moment as a GM. Can you talk about your decision making/thought process during that?"**

Um, there was a moment in that play where I noticed that they did this, and we broke. I was like: "Alright, let's take a break." And then we came back from the break, and they still didn't know what they wanted to do, and I was like: "Alright, we can be do for today, and we can come back. Sleep on it."

Part of running a safe table is find... recognizing the ways in which your players are stressed. And I think it struck them that they were not ready to take this person's life, which to me was exciting, because it meant that I could put... I could put all of their lives in danger, because that gave me a little leverage even though they'd already won the fight. [Austin laughs a bit] They've already so in charge of that fight that I... that I... Sorry, I've lost my thoughts here. They've already so in charge of that fight that I was like: "Oh damn, they really just crushed this", but then I was like: "Wait a second! They don't want this... they don't want to kill any of these people!" That's actually way harder. Like, if they just wanted to step on the, the mechs until they all blew up, right? If they just wanted to squash these, these fools, they could do it. They were in complete control at this point. But they don't want to, and Kenzi is a professional soldier, Kenzi is a commanding officer, and who has real experience killing people, and so I can reintroduce the feeling of tension here, where the tension is actually... You know, we don't say it directly, but the tension is really in that whole... in the end of that fight is: will they have to kill these people? They don't want to have to kill these people, but I don't think there's any doubt that Thisbe could just like end the lives of any... any one of them, certainly Cobra, who is knocked out. Probably Kenzi, has a... even though Kenzi has a weapon. And the third person whose name I forget 'cause my notes aren't in front of me. Um... Dina, Dina Dash. You know, that's a fight that that crew probably wins, right? That SBBR probably wins.

And so, sensing that tension... And I think it came... I think we ended up taking a break right at the end of that fight sequence, where it was clear they'd won, I think it was after Cobra's clock filled is when I was like: "Alright, what are you doing? Like, what's... Are you just gonna kill these people?" And everyone was like: "Whoo..." I was like: "Okay, let's take a break, think about what your next step is." And we came back, and it was clear that the next step was... "We're not really sure what we wanna do here, and it's getting a little late. And this is stressful." And it's like: "Okay, well, let's just call it for the night, we don't need to wrap this up in a single playthrough, I'd rather everyone feel confident about the story they're telling than feel pressured into making a bad decision they regret." Because that bad decision will make the whole season feel bad. Like, the last thing you want, you know, two missions into a campaign is for someone to get a fulcrum point on which they can feel the whole season went bad, the whole campaign broke bad at that point. And so instead, take the step back, let people rest, let people think on it, and then move quickly, right? The... the... the session that's coming up, I guess in both cases, this arc, and also the Rapid Evening arc that's coming up, there's an episode break, and then we had to be really quick, liek, I was like: "We're not leaving this week without wrapping this up, I do not want us to forget the momentum, and more importantly to change our minds about stuff", right?

And so that SBBR game was followed pretty quickly, and they didn't... There wasn't enough time for them to be like... throw it all out, or to come up with some ridiculous plot. And the

same will be true when you hear this next Rapid Evening story. There's definitely a moment when we broke to... for the night. And then I was like: "I don't want... If I give these players five days, they're going to lose momentum and confidence on the very big plays they've taken, and I want them to commit to those plays 'cause they're really interesting plays." So there is, there is like an interesting element of still keeping that tension on, I'm not saying that it's all like step away and let [people think their way into neutrality and non-action, but safety is first and stress is a part of that, and it just makes for better storytelling and better games to recognize those moments, pull back, and then come back in after, after a break.

Um, I think this is the... Nope, two more. Two more. Alright. So. Actually I'm gonna do this one more and then I'm gonna take a break.

**Sniperserpent** writes in and says:

**"Something I noticed in this recent SBBR arc was that the full out mech combat resulted in zero fatalities (although some serious injury). With my background in mech fiction coming from Gundam, I thought this was an interesting choice, as trauma caused by killing opponents in mechs is frequently a focus there. Is there a specific thematic purpose in decreasing the lethality of the engagements that happen onscreen?"**

Um, not really so much as the way it happened worked out that way. Broun specifically talked about trying to disarm their opponent, right? Literally and figuratively. [Austin laughs a bit.] And Mow threw a big tree at a big mech. Now, I could've at that moment been like: "Okay, I... that tree collapses Cobra Junction's cockpit and Cobra dies." But at that moment it was already clear that the party cared about Kenzi, and was interested in Kenzi, and that Valence specifically had already done the work of digging into Kenzi's stuff. And so, I still wanted lethality to be a stake, but I wanted it to be a stake outside of the mechs, not inside of the mechs. It would've been so interesting to me if, you know, Broun fails the roll to try to heal Cobra Junction and he dies in their<sup>1</sup> arms, right? Suddenly that whole session turns out different. That whole session turns out different! The rest of the season is gonna turn out different if Cobra dies in their arms, right? Like everything is different there. But they succeed, and manage to move forward.

And the other half of this is like, sometimes you introduce a theme like "Oh wait, we're hurting people", you have to do it in multiple steps. It's not enough to be like "Oh, you killed that person in that mech, they're dead." It's like "Okay, yeah, we're fighting, cool." Now what I can refer back to going forward is that time that they hurt someone so bad that they came out of the mech, and then they healed that person up. That gets to now be a touchstone for the next time something feels very lethal.

So yeah, so I think it's a multiple step thing, it's not about decreasing the lethality so much as reflecting the choices the players made. I think if... Contrast this with "Do you know what the weakest part of the mech is?" right? That was Jack in that *Beam Saber* game during the

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<sup>1</sup> Austin uses she/her for Broun throughout this passage

Road, specifically calling out a decision to kill someone, right? You go and you look at the way Clem dealt with... um, with the... Cardiff Reach, the GLORY scientist... We're not a... This is going to be a season where people get killed. But that is going to be about the... It's going to have to follow from the fiction, it's not ever going to be me shaking my finger and going "A-ha! But you killed them, didn't you?" And I think a good place to look for this is the Twilight Mirage arc, the Wandering Sea arc, which specifically, repeatedly made "Are you going to kill these people?" a focal point. And that will come when the fictional stakes, and the fictional, like, context makes that appropriate. But Broun specifically trying to disarm their opponent, and then Mow throwing a tree—not quite there, you know?

Um, alright, I'm going to quickly pause, run to the bathroom, come back, and then we'll talk about faction stuff, so... BRB.

Alright, perfectly timed I think. We're back with one last question that's gonna lead us to the faction goal conversation.

**Dakota** writes in and says:

**"How will Faction goals progress in relation to the three unaffiliated factions, are they also working towards their goal, or is it strictly a patron faction process? And do independent squads usually pay in giving special moves to the players or was that a Sable Court thing?"**

I'll say up top, that was a Sable Court thing, that was a fun way to quickly communicate like: "Wow, they have some cool shit! Why would Columnar like totally just completely destroy these people in an effort to get this, right?" Emphasizing they can do shit that no one else can by me saying it is one thing, showing it onscreen is like a step better. But the best is being like, "Y'all have cool mech gems now." [Austin laughs] "Y'all have Infinity Stones. Let's do it." Also, those moves are cool, but because they all spend Spark, they can only be used once per... Each of the moves I gave them are basically weak versions of moves from other playbooks. Like, literally they were like what if you had this other playbook move, but only you could do... but you only could do it once per session? So I feel it was a fun way to communicate both the power of the clarified Memoria, but also not necessarily the like... not kind of putting them ahead of the curve in terms of power curve or whatever. Especially again, as these tiers catch up to them.

But, to talk about faction goals, we should talk about faction goals, we should talk about what you mean here, which for people who don't know... when you say "How will Faction goals progress in relation to the three unaffiliated factions?" what you're talking about are Stels Nideo, Apostolos, and Columnar. The affiliated factions—I believe this is what you mean, Dakota— you're talking about the Orion and Kesh, affiliated with the player characters, the patron factions, as you say.

**So, Faction Goals.**

“A Faction’s goal is the current strategic objective that they are trying to fulfill on their path of dominance in The War. The players and GM discuss which Faction goal makes sense for their patron Faction to have at the start of the game.” Which we did. “Things to consider in this decision are the amount of politics, combat, and brutality everyone wants, as well as themes they might want to explore.”

The goal, “each goal is represented by a 4-tick clock. Squads add ticks by taking actions during missions that work towards the goal, however only a single tick is added to the clock at the end of the mission. No matter how hard or how often the squad works towards the Faction Goal, it is too big to get substantial progress during a single mission.”

[01:15:01]

I’ll note that there is much more here to talk about in terms of just Faction goals, and you can find all of that stuff in the... in the Creating a Faction section of *Beam Saber*, which, by the way, I believe is about to go into Kickstarter, so people should look forward to that. You can find that info [@Notaninn](#) on Twitter (all collapsed NotAnInn) or at [tinyurl.com/BeamSaberKickstarter](http://tinyurl.com/BeamSaberKickstarter).

So, in the book when you look at the way in which you separate out factions from each other, one of the things you do is you create, you create Faction Goals. And... I’m trying to find then here really quick... There we go.

Those goals are:

- Assault the Foe, which is what it sounds like, beating up... or, you know, softening up a specific enemy region in order to capture it.

- Divided They Fall, which is manipulating enemy plans, planting false intelligence, etc.

- Golden Streets which is improving your wealth, your supply situation for the patron faction.

- Hearts and Minds which changes the popular... about changing the popular opinion of a faction for... them becoming more populous.

- Hostile Takeover which is about denying enemy supplies, so it’s like blockading, that’s about destroying infrastructure, etc.

- Intelligence Coup, which is about stealing intelligence or capturing VIPs, etc.

- Manufacture Heroes, which is about kind of generating heroes, about generating, you know, people that the whole world looks up to and kind of thinks of as kind of stellar representative of what it means to be whatever it is they are.

- and Secure Borders. which is when you kind of get your defences up.

To start out with, we had the following Faction goals:

Kesh had Divided They Fall, Nideo had Hearts and Minds, which again, is about kind of raising public perception, Orion had Golden Street, Columnar had Intelligence Coup, and Apostolos had Assault the Foe.

For the first arc... So, the way this works, the way these work is that when a player character... when player characters advance... do something that might advance their patron... Or I guess when the player characters do anything that might advance one of these clocks, you advance the clock between missions, between sessions. You don't roll directly for any of the factions, you don't like roll just like "Oh, did Kesh do this?"

What you do roll for is squad goals. "Goals are not necessary for a squad to have, however if a squad appears on screen it should be given a goal to direct the GM in the ways that it affects the campaign's narrative. Between sessions the GM should look at the goals of the squads that are currently active in the narrative. This includes any squads that were involved in missions in the most recent sessions, and squads that are likely to be involved in the next session. The GM should then make a fortune roll by rolling a number of dice equal to the squad's Tier to see how far the squad progressed in its goal. If the players had a mission that aids that goal since the squad's last fortune roll give them +1d. If the players had a mission that impedes that goal since the squad's last fortune roll give them -1d."

And so on, and so on. There's, again, much more here about, about squad rolls and stuff here. A key thing to note here is like, you don't want to roll for everything. If you looked at every single squad in play right now... You know, there are... You really wanted to talk about those that just showed up, not all of them in the setting, but just the ones that showed up on screen, you'd still be looking at over a dozen. And we're not gonna track all of those. But we are gonna track the... the ones that feel like narratively important in this moment. And... the, the ones that those are are: the Sable Court, House Brightline, Swordbreakers, the Red Fennecs, House Callister (which you don't know why they've showed up yet, but they've shown up), the Scrivener's Guild, and the Curtain.

And I'm gonna go back a second and just talk about where we're at right now with each of these clocks. I have not advanced Hearts and Minds, Intelligence Coup or Assault the Foe because I've only been tracking certain... I've really only been tracking the Curtain in terms of squads up until this moment, which is... which I'm rolling now post mission 2. Part of that just about getting the feel, and knowing if I was right about these various groups. And partly it was because it felt like... it felt like to some degree the whole thing was supposed to be in deadlock until... play started. And the Obelle stuff felt so... I didn't wanna spring on the players this like: "Oh, by the way, in between Obelle and mission 2 I rolled offscreen and everything is different now because I rolled offscreen."

The other reason is I didn't *need* to go offscreen to talk about faction stuff. I didn't *need* to roll dice to emphasize that like stuff in the Prophet's Path was changing. And the reason for that is, the first SBBR mission, the second... the first Rapid Evening mission, and the Rapid Evening mission you are yet to hear, *all* advanced Kesh's Divided They Fall goal. The first Rapid... the first SBBR mission rather also advanced Orion's Golden Streets, because as I mentioned, every time that you do... you successfully complete a mission for the Scrivener's Guild, they're taking a cut, Orion's getting payed off that, you're building on your reputation, etc. So like, they did, they did earn that, but also the White Star false flag that made Apostolos have to believe that they were being invaded on a second front, and therefore need to move military resources off of their other fronts, and onto a fake front, absolutely is

exactly the sort of Divided They Fall play that Kesh would have played by themselves if they had been involved in that mission, even if they were not at all involved in that mission. So I gave that to Kesh. Rapid Evening 1, recovering the body of the... of Cymbidium, of the Elect Cymbidium, recovering the body of Past, or enough of the body of Past, and then putting on the entire like show of the... the wake, the funeral, the public, you know, show of confirming that for everyone in Partizan what happened is Apostolos destroyed Past, that is what happened. And they recovered Past to prove that. And so that was a check. And then something that happens in Rapid Evening's next game also gives us a check. Again, I'm gonna be really broad here, not gonna talk about what happens, but from listening to the end of PARTIZAN 08 you should know that eventually where this goes is a firmer assault into Apostolosian territory from Kesh. I'm not gonna talk about what the stakes of that are, you'll learn that in the next couple of episodes, a few episodes. But that happens. And so, Kesh is at 3 of 4.

The other thing here is, the way that that would advance from 3 to 4 is either the next session or today when we do a roll for one of these factions, which is the Curtain, which I've advanced twice for similar reasons, player reasons, ways in which the players have worked with the Curtain over the course of the last few episodes. And a roll, I did a roll for them right after the first session, 'cause I was like "Well, the Curtain is... this is the Curtain's shit."

What I haven't rolled for yet are these other groups, that I think are narratively interesting and important. I could have easily added another five or six squads to this list that's on the screen right now, which, again, is: the Sable Court, House Brightline (which is Horizon), Swordbreakers (which is where Cas'alear is from, the kind of cool Apostolosian anti-Elect like strike force), the Red Fennecs (which were the, the smuggler group run by Tes'ili Serikos from the first SBBR game), House Callister (who you don't know yet), the Scrivener's Guild (which is who SBBR works for), and then the Curtain (which is the kind of secretive organization, secret society that runs Kesh that Crysanth is a part of)—those are the big ones narratively.

We don't need to talk about Silversky here, we don't need to talk about Carrion here. We could and if it feels like they're gonna show back up maybe I'll go back and do a roll, that's totally acceptable. Like, I don't need to... I don't need to do all of these rolls all at once, you know. I can go back, and be like "Well, what happened here?" And I can also just make a decision, because part of being the GM is just making narrative decisions. But I do wanna do these rolls 'cause it's fun. So, to figure this out what you're gonna do... I've made each of these a 4-step clock, 'cause each of these *feels* about like a 4-step clock to me.

I think the only one I'm a little bit "eh" on is the Swordbreakers, which I'll note I've written here "Old" and then an arrow sign to "Find the truth about Past's destruction" being their new goal. Their goal originally was just to kill Elects and leaders of Kesh, because they believe that they do that and end the war quickly which, you know, is not an original ideology, wartime ideology, necessarily, you may have heard that before. But they... that is what they believe and it's what they're here to do. But because of the way stuff in Obelle 01 and 02 happened, Cas'alear, who is the commander of the Swordbreakers is now like: "Alright, what the *fuck* happened with Past?" And I thought about making this a 6-step clock, but instead I



made that a 4-step clock because I think I want that to get out into the air. But I want it to come out in the air at an inopportune time, a time I can't necessarily predict, so I'm happy to leave it up to the dice, but I don't... but I don't want it to be in five sessions. If it's in three sessions—awesome, you know? If it's in four sessions—cool. If it's in two session, yeah, I can make that work. What I don't want is for it to happen in five sessions where... five arcs, where we're like deep into the season at that point. And so by making it a 4-step clock that guarantees even with bad rolls they will complete that within four arcs, basically, four downtime episodes, basically.

And the Curtain is very powerful. The Curtain is... The Curtain is a Tier IV, a Tier V... group. I wonder if they're Tier IV... They're Tier IV on Partizan, to be clear. They are... If this was a Galaxy thing, they would be a Tier V faction, maybe... maybe they would be a rare Tier VI faction.

So, I wanna pull up two things... over on my screen that you can't see I'm gonna pull up my sheets, my character sheets and faction sheets, and then over here I'm gonna get a dice roller. So. Let's get this [random.org](https://www.random.org) one. Here we go!

So. **The Sable Court**. We're gonna roll dice, we're gonna do this thing. The Sable Court has a goal. Their goal is **to create an undetectable coven**. It was originally to hex those who would intrude, but we kind of saw them do that, and saw what that looked like, and so now given the way things worked out with Broun and trying to figure out new technology and blah-blah-blah... One of the things we talked about was like it would help them just be invisible, straight up. And so that's what they're researching now. Um... They're an independent faction also, which means that a success here does not roll up to anything, if they fill this clock "Independent squads" is not a faction, you know, so it only helps them, and it's definitely a 4-step clock, it's a very light clock. It's not... This doesn't affect anything except their ability to not come under fire from additional forces in the future, or it would have kind of a leg up at least.

And so, let's go ahead and roll their Tier. Their Tier is II, so it's a 2d6... And then I'm gonna roll an extra d6, because they got help basically doing this, they got help in the last session from SBBR. So let's roll 3d6. This is a fortune roll, which means that it will be a tick of the clock if they get a 1-3, two ticks of the clock if they get a 4-5, and three ticks of the clock if they get... if they get a 6. That is a 5! So they get... it goes up to 2/4, they're doing a good job at kind of hiding themselves further into the woods in the... in the north of Memoria Teardrop near Lake Timea.

The second group we're rolling for is **House Brightline**. House Brightline wants **to build a Horizon stronghold on Partizan**. I thought about changing this to be "finding out the truth of Clementine Kesh and the Rapid Evening", but... Two things: it's just so fun to keep that on screen, and to keep that tied to things that they fuck up and not... on things that I do offscreen. The other thing is I'm just gonna start ticking that bit by bit per downtime as... without rolling dice. Like, I think that I want to be able to... When we go to the next downtime I'm gonna say "Hey, this is up to a 2 now because time moves past. And you're going to eventually..." This is a clock that is just going to tick every downtime until you deal with it. If

you wanna unclick the clock, if you want to untick the clock you can try to do that, but it will take you a downtime action, it will take you doing something vs just letting it roll. But Brightline's secondary thing is building a Horizon stronghold on Partizan. Right now I imagine that the Horizon forces are kind of like hidden somewhere, but that place is pretty vulnerable. You can think about them having their own FOB, and that FOB is not like, a stronghold, that FOB, if it was found, could be dealt with. It's probably just on House Brightline's grounds, right? But like, Kesh isn't looking to go to war with itself while it's already at war with Apostolos, so they're allowed to linger. House Brightline is... uh, Tier III, so they're getting 3 dice. I'll just hit "roll" again. That's another 5, so they get up to 2... 2/4 steps also. The reason, again, this is 4 is I think this is just a thing I'd rather see happen, I'd rather them actually build this stronghold, and I don't know where it's gonna be, but getting to 2 out of 4 steps means I have some time to figure that out. Um, so that's fun.

The third thing, **Swordbreakers. Find truth about Past's destruction.** You can imagine Cas'alear cares a lot about this and wants to, to kind of clear their own name, and, and will do everything, you know, cas needs to do to fix this. Again, this is a 3-step clock, no one helped them in this, and no one has harmed them, they're just doing this kind of in the background. This is another axe over the party's head, or kind of over the world's head. So I'm just gonna go ahead and roll that. That is a 4, which gives you another two ticks. A lot of 2 here.

Next up—and this is fun—is the **Red Fennecs**, Tes'ili Serikos, whose goal was originally... I think their original goal was simply to make a buck, which would have basically been them tiering up...

[01:30:00]

...working to become a stronger, more connected thing. Unfortunately for them, they... they actually have changes... Tes has changed the goal to **get back at SBBR**. Which means that... they're a level I, they're still a Tier I group, and also they're a Tier I group that was definitely acted upon in a previous mission, and their position was weakened, so they're only a... They're a Tier 0 group for this roll, which means they're rolling 0 dice, which means they're rolling two and taking the lower. ...Which is a 4! They rolled a 6 and a 4. So, even with that they still get to advance this by 2! Tes'ili Serikos has a plan and tes is going to figure it out, so get ready, SBBR. This should be a fun... This should be fun. I will probably... I'll probably tease that with them in the next session, and let them know that like Tes'ili is smelling around, trying to find a weakness, you know?

Alright, **House Callister**, a group that we've barely seen... I don't think you've seen them at all, maybe they came up... they came up in episode 00. House Callister—reading from the setting, the kind of faction sheet—is the newest house of Orion, whose status was earned through "heroism in battle..." which is to say state-sanctioned piracy. Led by and named for Callister Drive, now Callister Drive Callister, a sometimes ally, sometimes rival of the dreaded Exeter Leap. This is a group of people who used to be, or at least Callister Drive is ex-Columnar, and now a member of Stel Orion. And their goal is—"their goal" meaning House Callister, I believe Callister Drive is he/him—their goal as a house is **to steal secret**

**research and prototypes** from other Stels. They are only a Tier II group, so they're also gonna roll 2 dice, but they're gonna take the higher die... and they get a 6! So that advances to 3... Or wait! Wait, wait, wait. Uh... I'm gonna go back and roll that again, because they come up in the next mission and the party definitely opposes them, so I'm going to roll a fresh die on this. It's a 5, so it goes up to 2. And I'll note, just for people listening, that initial... that initial first die in that 2-die roll was also a 5, so. They've gotten two ticks on this anyway, so they're halfway to their goal of stealing some sort of interesting secret research and prototype. That should make the next time they show up fun.

Um, the **Scrivener's Guild**. Very powerful! The Scrivener's Guild, a IV Tier group, has wanted to **buy a Divine** for the longest time. They're saving up. That's... they're a bunch of accountants with guns who want to buy a bigger gun, the biggest gun you can, which is a Divine. I haven't thought through what they would buy if they got enough money to do this... I'm actually gonna increase this to a 6-step clock, because I think that's an endgame thing that's very fun, but again, I'll try to bring this into a downtime episode that we're gonna have with SBBR next. I'm gonna go ahead and roll these dice... That is a 5, so that only advances by 2. Players can always help them, and maybe I'll have that be part of this next session, we'll see how that goes.

Finally, **the Curtain**. The Curtain wants **to manipulate other Stels into war with Apostolos**. This has already been ticked twice from a previous roll right after the first session where I was like: "Yo, I wanna do this right away!" But the long and short here with the Curtain is they know that Apostolos probably loses a fight on Ke... or on Partizan against Apostolos. Sorry, Kesh loses a fight against Apostolos on Partizan—if they do it alone. And so, their whole thing has always been trying to get other people involved. And so, they get to roll a bunch of dice, because they have been aided on this multiple times... I'm just gonna give them a single bonus die, but they're gonna get 5 dice, because they're already a Tier IV, and then they've been aided by the Rapid Evening, so... Let's go back and roll 5 dice. And as long as they get a 4-5, they're going to succeed in this. The do not! This is incredible! Alright! They got 2, 1, 1, 2, 1! So they only goes up to 3. So that means this next mission might be the thing that pushes them over the... over the edge here. Or I'll wake up and be like: "No, I want this thing to happen, because they're so close and it's more interesting." But no, I think that this is... I think this is kind of good. So, that means that... Oh, wait! ...Yeah-yeah-yeah, okay, yeah. That totally works, that totally works. That roll was so good. Let me show that. There we go.

So, that means that right now Kesh is still not quite at Divided They Fall, this next, this next mission could be pushes them over the edge, and brings in a second group into this... into this fight. This is why I say like I don't prep for it. Because now I know... In my mind, this next mission for SBBR... or the next mission for the Rapid Evening, one or the other—maybe it's more fun if SBBR gets involved on that end—is about bringing in someone else. And I know who, and I know what the circumstances are, and I will talk... Maybe I'll talk a little bit about this.

You'll see here when you look at the faction goals, a lot of them are changing. the reason that Nideo is changing from Hearts and Minds to Intelligence Coup, and that Columnar is

changing from Intelligence Coup to Heart and Minds is because they actually have different responses to what has happened on... in Apostolos... in the Apostolosian Kesh war on Partizan. And what that is tied to is something I'm not gonna get into because it will be a spoiler for this next Rapid Evening session, but they've basically ejected on their current plans and are now quickly trying to rush... Basically, we're entering Phase 2. The reason Apostolos has switched from Assault the Foe to Secure the Borders is this new Kesh attack, plus their belief that Kesh is attacking from the south as well. The reason that Nideo and Columnar are switching is because they have new goals in relation to that war. And we'll see how that all plays out! Like, this is super exciting for me.

Alright, cool. So, those are the faction goals, that's where we're at with these now. What we know, again, is that Kesh is about to begin an offensive against Fort Icebreaker. And... and, we'll see if Nideo, Orion, or Columnar get pulled into that based on the attempts made by, by the Curtain and, unintentionally by the Rapid Evening.

I think that's gonna do it for us today. I'll try to get this edited and up as quickly as I can, so hopefully in the next day or two.

I hope everyone has a good night. As always, if you have questions you can send them to [tipsatthetable@gmail.com](mailto:tipsatthetable@gmail.com)—we're trying to do a Tips game tomorrow night, or a Tips recording tomorrow night, so look forward to that. We already have those questions set, so at this point it's too late for that one, but you can send in Drawing Maps questions, and Tips questions for future episodes for sure—[tipsatthetable@gmail.com](mailto:tipsatthetable@gmail.com).

And as always, thank you for supporting us, [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash) is the address if you wanted to go look at other stuff and recommend us to people.

I hope everyone has a great night, and enjoys the rest of the week!