

PARTIZAN 03: SHORESIDE RECOVERY - DINNERDATE

Transcriber: gray @waveechocave/waveechocave#6851 (until 20:50), Brigid @woodlandmists/brighty#2727 (from 20:50 to end)

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[MUSIC - "TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER." starts]

[musical cue plays alone briefly, then continues behind AUSTIN's intro]

AUSTIN: Within a day, it is everywhere, whether emitted from tabletop holo-projectors, flickering on the screens of handheld Partizan Palace units, or displayed with forensic clarity on command center monitors. The footage is shown all across Partizan. On street corners and private yachts, in kitchenettes and throne rooms, people argue about what they've seen. About what it might mean.

AUSTIN: The Divine Past, the galaxy's oldest library, a living archive the size of a town, encased in crystal and glass and bronze and brick, shudders in the night sky... and falls. Perhaps it was due a peaceful entry, set to touch down just west of this desert burg. Instead, tracer fire draws dotted lines in the air around its body. Clouds are lit by the false heat lightning of explosions. And below, near its would-be landing zone, neon-bright beams slash and whirl and cut into metal bodies, introducing heavy steel to its liquid form. And to the east of the village, the sound of heavy cannonfire is a prelude to a new orchestration: the rumbling, rattling destruction of a pair of support facilities leads to the stirring anthem of House Whitestar, home to the so-called Peaceful Princept.

AUSTIN: The symphony builds and turns and quiets, just for a minute, before an unearthly light welcomes the most percussive arrival of Past across the messy, shrub-covered dunes west of Obelle. Its impact hits with a force that sends the camera into a spin, and when focus is found again, there is only one subject that matters: the ruins of Past, spread for miles, lighting the desert with its pieces and parts.

[musical cue cuts out very suddenly]

AUSTIN: A Divine holding its own vigil.

[musical cue plays again, until end of theme]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual-play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker, and today we are continuing our game of Beam Saber by Austin Ramsay, a hack of Blades in the Dark by John Harper. I am joined by Keith J. Carberry.

KEITH: Hi, my name's Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on Twitter at @KeithJCarberry and you can find the Let's Plays that I do at YouTube.com/runbutton.

AUSTIN: Art Martinez-Tebbel.

ART: Hey, you can find me on Twitter at @atebbel and I'd just like to pre-emptively apologize for any, uhh, weird attempts I make this episode trying to find the voice of this new character.

AUSTIN: (laughs) That's fair. That's all of us. Uh, Sylvia¹ Clare.

SYLVIA: Hey, I'm Sylvia. You can find me on Twitter at @captaintrash and you can listen to my show, Emojidrome, wherever you listen to your podcasts.

AUSTIN: And Jack de Quidt!

JACK: Hi! You can find me on Twitter at @notquitereal or buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

AUSTIN: Uh, you can follow the show on Twitter at Twitter.com/friends_table. You can follow me at @austin_walker. And you can support the show by going to friendsatthetable.cash, where there is a ton of additional content: shows, livestreams, a ton of background material—if you think Partizan is interesting, but you wanna know more about the philosophy of Apostolos, and Kesh, Nideo, and everybody else, you- there is a lot of it there for you to- for you to take in. So go check that out. Um, uh-

ART: My playlist that I understand is, like, 8 hours long.

AUSTIN: It is 4 hours long. But 5 hours long. But... Uh, it- you know, you try to listen to a 5 hour long podcast- or, uh, playlist- it's gonna take you 8 hours. You know, you gotta pause. You gotta run to the bathroom. You gotta do other stuff. Uh, but yeah. There is, for all \$1 patrons and above, there is a 75-song playlist that has been what I've been building literally for a year. I think the first song on it is from November of 2018, I put- I added. So I think that that- I think that that counts. Yeah, November 27th. So by the time that you hear this, definitely over a year. (laughs) Uh, of me, like, poking and prodding at this fuckin' thing.

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use.

AUSTIN: Um, my principles, uh, today- my GM's, like, the things I'm supposed to do- I think they're called principles? There's another one. It's, it's not principles. It's, it's uh... What's the other one called? My co- the-

KEITH (cutting in): Dean.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. That's-

JACK (also cutting in): Goals. (KEITH laughs)

AUSTIN: It is goals. Thank you, Jack. Ten points-

JACK (overlapping): Oh, I was joking, I-

AUSTIN: Ten points to Jack. My goals, uh, are to ensure everyone at the table is safe; to fill the world with detail: people who have names, cities that breathe, buttons that click, screens that glow, and cloth that flows; to convey that world honestly; and to play to find out what happens.

AUSTIN: Ummm. So, this is the first day that we're playing with this group! This is the first meeting of the Rapid Evening. Uh, we are- we are picking up, I think, the- gamewise, just one day, um, after the last episode that you heard. In real life, only a couple of days after that last recording, so for me, the GM, it is super fresh. For the rest of the people here, I don't- you haven't- not only have you not heard it, we didn't do like a debrief about what happened in that other game. Um, uh, but I did summarize a bit of it just now, which is to say that in the small town of Obelle, which- if you zoom in this map of the world that you're looking at, and look to the left- the west, where the Apostolosian territory hits the Prophet's Path. You'll see a little orange, like, square. Um, that is basically where the town of, uh, Obelle is.

AUSTIN: And, uh, that is where that last mission took place. And that last mission ended with the destruction- not the permanent death, because- some people might remember, Divines are immortal at this point in history. Um, but the- the complete destruction of the Divine Past, uh, who, uh, crashed into the desert west of this town. Um. Uh, that news has spread quickly and they're all sorts of repercussions of what happened in that first set of games.

AUSTIN: And we'll- we'll get to that, um, as we play, I think, and- and feel free to ask questions as we play, both in and out of character. As always, uh, y'all should feel- uh, you know- at ease using the X Card, if you want to stop going down a certain route, or pull back a veil if we get into any territory that you'd rather leave offscreen, even if it's in canon. Um,

and if there's anything else you wanna talk about, just- you know. Hit- hit a button here and say, hey Austin, real quick, can we talk about this? Uh, or- or just speak out loud. Um. I think where we're gonna- you know, before we get into the action, I'd love to just quickly go back over our characters and then talk a little bit about what your squad is before we bring the camera to the palace that you- that one of you lives in and the rest of you probably live near. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh, Clementine, tell me about yourself. Um, just what your class is, what your drive is, what your beliefs about the rest of the crew are, and- and maybe just introduce what the crew is, briefly.

JACK: So, uh, I'm gonna be playing Clementine Kesh. She uses she/her pronouns. Uh, up until fairly recently, she was the sixth in line to the throne of Kesh, um, but was removed and sent to Partizan with the excuse of being sent on a religious pilgrimage. Um, instead she has been sent to leave- to leave? To lead, a kind of, um, plausibly deniable- (AUSTIN laughs) black ops squad comprising, uh, uh, Kesh prisoners. Um. Kind of at the pleasure of, uh, a higher-up in Kesh command.

AUSTIN: Right. The higher-up is her mother.

JACK: Uh-

AUSTIN: Let's- (laughs a little) let's be clear.

JACK: Yes. Yes. Uh, well, you know, working for your mum is kind of embarrassing.

AUSTIN: I see, you didn't wanna say it. You didn't- right, you didn't want people to think it was nepotism even though it was absolutely nepotism. (chuckles)

JACK: (amused) Look.

ART: (laughing quietly)

JACK: I have beliefs for everybody in the squad.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

JACK: Um. Uh, my belief for Art's character, Sovereign Immunity, is "when Sovereign Immunity's loyalty to my family was tested, he failed. He is not to be trusted." My belief for Ver'Million Blue, Sylvia's character, is "Million may prove an effective bodyguard." Uh, and

my belief for Exeter Leap, Keith's character, is "Leap is a loose cannon. I will make him a useful one."

AUSTIN: You also have a belief about an NPC which we should mention.

JACK: I do! Uh, I have a belief about, uh, a- a House Brightstar attache called Gucci Garantine. Uh, and my belief about Gucci is that "Gucci Garantine is hiding something."
(clicks tongue)

AUSTIN: That's a good belief... She is. Uh, the reason you have a belief for her is because she is your rival.

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Which- which means that when we start, her squad, which is, uh- House Brightstar, actually has a lower status with you even though you have not encountered them on screen yet. You're coming into this town with a rival. Rivals are very powerful but when you mess with them, and when they mess with you, they can also be a source of XP and drama and everything else. So hopefully we'll see some of her in the near future. Um. Cool! I think that's good enough. You're an officer. We don't need to get into your abilities. But, you know. You should keep them in mind, and when they come up, they come up. (small laugh)

JACK: Oh, my drive.

AUSTIN: Uh- yes! Your drive.

JACK: Um. My drive is that I want to rule Stel Kesh.

AUSTIN: Love it.

JACK: I want to be number one. In the big chair.

AUSTIN: Love to- love to be that. Fantastic. Uh, next up, Art! Tell me about your character.

ART: Uh, my character is Sovereign Immunity, um, a member of a- a religious order of political advisors. Um. I've decided that the- the personal names for this Sovereign Immunity, because- because every person who does advisor work is Sovereign Immunity-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Um, the- I guess the broad one, which is like the one that everyone would- would know, is The Farmer.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: And the personal name of this Sovereign Immunity is, uh, Byron.

AUSTIN: Love it. Uh, can you write that down? Up here, somewhere?

ART: Yes.

AUSTIN: Awesome. Um, people who listened to The Road to Partizan might remember one intro in which someone refers to "The Farmer's sin." Uh, Art, what was The Farmer's sin again?

ART: Umm. Caring too much?

AUSTIN: G- there you go. You know what? (KEITH laughs) Yeah. I love it. Uh, you- you kidnapped the previous princept, who is now the leader of Apostolos after they were kidnapped away from you, or rescued away from you, depending on who you ask, by Apostolos.

ART: Yeah. Caring too much!

AUSTIN: Caring too much.

ART: Yeah. Caring too much!

AUSTIN: Caring too much.

ART: Uh-

AUSTIN: Got it. Uh-

ART: Just tryin' to bring some, some buzz (AUSTIN laughs) to a cause. Trying to make a moment.

AUSTIN: (amused) Love it.

ART: Hashtag... kidnapping.

AUSTIN: We should note that you're playing the Hero playbook- (wheeze of laughter; KEITH laughs) Uh, symbol of something greater.

ART: Mhm.

AUSTIN: It's a prototype playbook, available if you support, uh, uh, Austin Ramsay's uh, uh- Patreon. The Beam Saber Patreon. You can get a bunch of, uh, extra little playbooks that are really cool. Uh, and the Hero is, y'know, if the Officer's all about giving orders, the Hero is all about, like, being a symbol. Um, and so we'll see how that plays out. Uh, tell us about your drive and your connections.

ART: (clicks tongue) Uh, my, my drive is to become Clementine's assigned Sovereign. Uh, currently I am the assigned Sovereign of the Warden of the prison in a thinly-veiled (AUSTIN laughs) imprisonment. Uh, Wardens don't need a lot of political advice, you know.

AUSTIN: No. Yeah.

ART: Uh, my beliefs, uh... For Clementine, Clementine's affections are my ticket off this lousy rock. For Million- and this one might need to change, some- later- is uh, I'm a scalpel. I'm not sure I have need of a hammer.

AUSTIN: (impressed noise) Okay.

ART: And then for Exeter, it's uh, I love a c- I love a scoundrel; I hate complications.

AUSTIN: Okay! Um. Uh-

ART: I tried to be very self-centered with these.

AUSTIN: It worked! Um- Exeter Leap. Keith. Tell me about, uh, your character.

KEITH: Uh, sure. I am playing Exeter Leap, um, he is an Infiltrator. That's my playbook.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Um, uh- He- His drive is to break out of prison.

AUSTIN: Ah.

KEITH: We are all in prison except one of us, who runs the prison, I guess. (AUSTIN laughs) Um. And, uhh, my connections are, uh, for Sovereign Immunity: Sovereign Immunity is playing in a bigger game than anyone else here.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

KEITH: Um, for Million it's, I bet there's something expensive around here and I bet Million would help me steal it. (AUSTIN laughs) Um, and for Clementine it's: Clementine's job is to keep us around and I don't think she can do her job.

AUSTIN: Love it.

JACK: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Love it. Love to have a hostile party out the gate. For real. Uh, briefly, I didn't ask you to say this, but you are a f- you are a former space pirate, right?

KEITH: Oh, yes. Yes.

AUSTIN (overlapping): And, and a-

KEITH: Well, being behind bars doesn't make you not a pirate.

AUSTIN: True.

KEITH: It just makes you a pirate behind bars.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Spoken like a true-

JACK: I'm a pirate here.

AUSTIN: Yes. In this jail! Uhh.

KEITH: (laughs) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh, you're also, um, uh, everyone else we've mentioned so far is human. Uh, you are a, uh, you're a Columnar, which is a type of robotic, uh, synthetic person, but also an Equiaxed, right?

KEITH: Right, and so I, uhh, I am a, um, we have to come up with a bett- I do like the word 'reverse cyborg.' It's very-

AUSTIN: I get what you mean.

KEITH: I think it immediately shows you what it means, but yeah. I'm, uh-

AUSTIN (overlapping): Keith, we-

KEITH: A person who started as a robot and became partially, uh, flesh.

AUSTIN: You're right. You did come up with a different word, and it's Equiaxed.

KEITH: Right. Well-

AUSTIN: We-

JACK: (laughs)

KEITH: A, a word that's descriptive-

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: -but also, uh, I guess a- once someone hears it, now they know. Equiaxed.

AUSTIN: Equiaxed.

KEITH: But I guess, I guess my point is just that every- every Equiaxed isn't a reverse cyborg.

AUSTIN: Dream of the world in which Friends at the Table becomes so, uh, influential that in a, in a century people, say, describe the thing you're talking about as "being Equiaxed." (short pause) You know?

KEITH: That's pretty sick, though.

AUSTIN: See? Uhh, Sylvia! Tell us about your character.

SYLVIA: Alright. My character is Ver'Million Blue. She goes by Million, though. She is an Apostolosian soldier, uh, from the Glory Program, which were soldiers that were genetically modified to be clones of past Eidolons, which are basically saints or deities in Apostolosian culture.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Um, she went AWOL and betrayed them after, like, blowing up a carrier, uh, and disabling her partners' mech on a, like, routine assignment. Um. And now she's been imprisoned for a while after being on the run.

AUSTIN: Love it!

SYLVIA: Um. Yeah! My uh-

AUSTIN: Um-

SYLVIA: My drive is, claw your way out.

AUSTIN: Great.

SYLVIA: And my connections are, with Sovereign Immunity: a history with Kesh and he's pal with the Warden? I definitely can't trust this guy. (AUSTIN laughs) Leap's is: Leap was a pirate? Maybe I could join his crew. And then with Clementine it's: Clementine has no business being here. She's going to get me killed.

JACK: Off to the fuckin' races.

KEITH: Technically, Clem is the only person for whom being here is business.

SYLVIA: True.

AUSTIN: Yes. Well, ah- Sovereign Immunity feels like... like... He's trying-

KEITH (overlapping): Oh, I guess that's-

AUSTIN: He's trying to find- you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Sometimes you go to a place and you don't have business there yet but you're like, I hope I- I think I can- I think I can scrounge somethin' up. Um- uh, any questions before we dive into game- the game? And actually playing? (short pause) Alright.

AUSTIN: So I think we, you know, we kind of open on that description I gave before, in- in the intro. This description of, like, people all around Partizan watching, uh, the Divine Past

crash into the desert. You know. It's the shot from the movies of people, like, crowding around TV stores, y'know? (laughs) You know, the windows, and watching it there, and like- and people have these, there's a lot of handheld computers in this world. They're just not advanced ones. And so it's like really low quality. Like, people are degaussing their palm pilots, basically. (laughs) Uh, and watching really grainy footage there. But then really rich people are able to watch in like super HD.

AUSTIN: But, uh, Clementine Kesh, you don't know any of that yet, because you are asleep. Um, and you are asleep, um, even though it has been kind of daytime for a few hours, because you had a party last night. You had a party last night because your mom left that day. (laughs; JACK laughs, too) Your mom was leaving, your mother was leaving, um, uh, the city that you live in- uh, Cruciat, and was, uh, boarding a spaceship, of which there are not that many, uh, and was- and was going up to, um, (clicks tongue) up- not only up to space, but supposed to be out of the system. Um, uh, and it was night- it was a nice night to have a bit of a party. Um. (laughs) And so it is- it's been a daytime for a few hours now, uh, and you're in- What is your bedroom like? Is it, like, pl- is it big? Is it plush? Like, what's the vibe?

JACK: It's, like, too big.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: It's like, too big for a bedroom to be, and it looks kind of uncomfortable in that sense. I think it feels like the room is kind of swallowing the bed.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Uh, which sort of sits on a far wall. Uh, but yeah, it's really plush. It's got, like- like a decadent amount of pillows. (AUSTIN laughs) Um. I don't know if it's like a four-poster, but it definitely has a really high padded headboard, um, like pale blue wallpaper, um-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Like, it's a room that h- it's a bedroom that has multiple sets of chairs and tables in it, in case you need to just sort of like, work at a table (AUSTIN laughs) that's not a desk or something.

AUSTIN: Must be nice. Uhh, so- you awake when a servant comes into your room and, and throws open your gigantic windows. Or- not the windows, but the- um- actually, she does both. She opens both the curtains and then the windows, which brings in this, like, howl of cold air. Um. You live in Cruciat, which if y'all check your map, uh, is in the north. There's

kind of this cross-shaped, like, peninsula or island. Cruciat is the jewel of Kesh's holdings in Partizan, um, and it is where the entire Stel Kesh Winter Palace is. Um, it sits on this kind of cross-shaped, uh, island in the northernmost reaches of the Prophet Sea, um, and it is broken up into a bunch of different districts. Uh, it's like- you know, the- you know, up north is where all of the kind of- lumber and industry and transport comes in from the continent to the north of the island. To the west is like where the- the kind of military bases are, and the- kind of the left side of the cross, the western side of the cross, the western, like, arm. The eastern arm is kind of like residential but also like- uh, working class residential, primarily. Like it's- it's very cramped. There's lots of, like, tall apartment buildings and tenements. Um, and then the southern- the center is like a commercial shopping district. And then the southern, the entire long southern, like, bit of the cross, the longest part of this cross, um, is where the Winter Palace is, but it's also where, like, the government is. So it's like civil bureaucracy things and then- and noble homes and stuff like that. And the Winter Palace is at the very southern tip of- of the isle of Cruciat.

AUSTIN: Um, and uh s- so you open- you know, these windows open, and you can look all the way up this island. You know, you can kind of see the cross in front of you. Um. Uh. And- and without missing a beat, as your eyes begin to open, you can look at the servant first- you recognize that it is your mother's servant. Second, you can- you can see that she mouths at you a bunch of words. But the ones that you- that you catch are the word- is the word, "mother." Um, what do you do?

JACK: Just like- rise, hungover, from the bed. (AUSTIN laughs) And put uh- and put a hand out to, like, get a robe that is hanging over the side of the-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Of the- of like a chair nearby. And this is just like, like very padded- I guess, is the weather in Cruciat cold usually? Because we're up in the north?

[20:50 TRANSCRIPTION BY @waveechocave ENDS. TRANSCRIPTION BY @woodlandmists BEGINS]

AUSTIN: Yeah, like it is not the very furthest southern point of Kesh holdings, but it is- basically Kesh landed even further north than this when they first arrived-

JACK: (overlapping) And was just like "Oh, too fucking snowy." And moved south.

AUSTIN: Yeah, and they went south till they hit Cruciat, and they were like, "This is cool! I like- this is goth as shit, it's a cross-shaped island, we should live here!" They built their winter palace here.

JACK: With the palace at the bottom!

AUSTIN: Exactly, it's probably least cold there! And they did, and then over time- you know there's also the case that maybe parts of this territory are recent gains. Um, across this kind of big bay from Cruciat is a place called Westhaven, which is a Kesh military holding. It's like a province, but it's very very stacked with military because it shares a border with Apostolos who, as a reminder, y'all are at war with. Because of the kind of two competing people saying that they deserve to be the Princept. And so Westhaven is like- is where the army is. And that's further south than Cruciat and that's probably- I bet the soldiers are happy about that. And briefly, just while we're on the geography stuff, like I have all this shit written out, so I may as well mention it really quick. Off to the east are the Eastlands, and uh- sorry, not the Eastlands, they're the Estatelands, because across this like long taiga, this long, like, big, open, cold plain-

JACK: Like out here?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. I guess it's actually, it's like, is where things get most temperate, especially as you go south there. There are dozens of noble families who like, have their estates spread out in this- in this long forest. You know, I think it's probably least- or no, it's actually where it's most dense in terms of the forest because the trees are able to live there, but that is where a lot of the nobles live, right? So like House Brightline has a house in Cruciat, but their estate is out east, you know? There's a lot of that stuff. So. So yeah. So you put on the robe. You head out of your room, presumably?

JACK: I think I just turn to the servant, and say like,

JACK (as Clementine): Good morning. Where is she? Did she come back?

AUSTIN (as the servant): (whispering) She is waiting for you, hurry.

JACK (as Clementine): She came back?!

AUSTIN: You can hear like- I think in this moment, we hear like, the sound of pen on paper as someone is writing in some sort of common room down the hall and it's quiet enough that you can hear that, you know?

JACK: Yeah, just like, slipped feet on the reflective tiles-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah.

JACK: On the floor of the corridor, like down the corridor towards where my mother is. Suddenly awake.

AUSTIN: (laughs) So you walk down there and- and go into this room?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think it's like a study, it's like a drawing room, or like a-

JACK: I knock on the door!

AUSTIN: Oh, it's open. It's open and she is in like- your mother is here and is dressed to the nines. I don't know what that means- (stammers) -tell me about- tell me about your mother. (laughing) Tell me only the nice things about your mother.

JACK: (laughs) I think she's tall. I think she's very angular. (AUSTIN laughs) I think she's wearing like, some kind of like- what does space- what does a suit look like in space? Not like a spacesuit, but like-

AUSTIN: I don't know. Kesh is- Kesh's fashion is interesting because it's all- they're the ones most interested in tradition and in-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: To the degree that they can feel stuffy. Nideo is also interested in tradition, but they're interested in tradition the way that like, you would never- there are things in this world that you would never call tradition, but are absolutely tradition. Do you know what I mean? Like blue jeans are traditional.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: We would never call them that and in fact they take on the character of casualness.

JACK: (overlapping) Traditional trousers!

AUSTIN: But they're- but they're fucking traditional, and that's Stel Nideo. Stel Kesh is like a classic cut suit, you know what I mean? In comparison

JACK: (overlapping) Yeah, I think it's like a classically cut suit that would have been like mind-bogglingly fashionable like twenty-five years ago.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: But she is still somehow carrying it off.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that is- to be clear, this is the exact cycle of culture in this world, is that Columnar develops- mm. Someone on the peripheries of Columnar, either a group that is being colonized, or was recently colonized, or a group that, inside of Columnar is doing dope artistic shit, develops something new and cool. Orion, rushing to keep up, begins to mass-produce similar things, at which point Nideo adopts it as kind of like the hot new shit. And then eventually it works its way to Kesh, and Kesh reinvents it as like a love letter to the past. (JACK chuckles) Apostolos is doing its own thing and is- is like "Yeah, we could take whatever we want from the rack and make it work." Apostolos is all about dynamism and change, and so is happy to pick up a new trend, but also happy to like, mix and match with something old, so. So yeah. That's- she looks up at you in this suit, very tall, similar features to you presumably. Or some. And she says-

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): Clementine, it is the third hour of the day and you are still in your bedclothes!

JACK (as Clementine): (overlapping) I'm sorry-

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): (sighs) No wonder you call it The Rapid Evening.

JACK (as Clementine): Very funny Mother. You- you're back, you came back! Is everything okay?

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): *No*, everything is not okay! Why would I be here if everything were okay, take a seat.

JACK (as Clementine): Of course.

JACK: Just like, sits down, like ramrod straight in a chair with an equally straight back.

AUSTIN: She like, takes reading glasses off and slides like a little projector, like a little like- it's like one of those circular, conference call devices, do you know what I'm talking about? It's like a little ring that would- that has like speakers on it, but also a button. And she hits the button and the thing I described at the beginning of the session happens. You see the Divine Past come under attack, or seemingly come under attack and then crash into the desert. And she's like writing things down as this is happening. Like, not even paying

attention to you. Or maybe- Sorry, she is absolutely paying attention to you, but she is not giving you-

JACK: (overlapping) The visual of the thing-

AUSTIN: The pleasure of seeing that she's paying attention to you, yeah, exactly. She says-

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): Past was destroyed in some backwater Apostolosian hellhole and I need you to go get the body. The bodies.

JACK (as Clementine): Are you sure?

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): Am I su- no, I-I-I changed my mind, we should let the Apostolosians have a library which contains all of our state's secrets, dear, yes I am sure!

JACK (as Clementine): When would you like me to depart?

AUSTIN: She like, puts down the pen and says-

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): One moment.

AUSTIN: And you know, opens up a book and you know, pulls out her like, palm pilot thing, puts it down and says-

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): There are some details. (sighs) So. As you know-

AUSTIN: And you do know this. In fact I think she just says,

AUSTIN (as Clementine's mother): The treaties remain in place.

AUSTIN: And what you know that means is that, we've talked before, the Principality is a structure where it assumes there will be internal conflict and skirmishing and fighting and you know wars of succession inside of Houses and even inside of Stels at kind of the high levels, and so there is a rule, there are the treaties, which say if someone loses an Elect, which are the pilots of these great, immortal Divines, you can- their body will be retrieved and recovered or returned, and that, because Divines are so important to the Divine Principality writ large, and because sometimes when they're destroyed, they need to actually be rebuilt directly as seems to be the case with Past, you're allowed to send

someone in to recover the bits of it, right? Like the whole idea is that none of these wars are supposed to destroy the Divine Principality, and so there is you know- you don't want to do permanent infrastructural harm, because so many of these Divines are that important, right?

And so she tells you that the treaties are still in place, and I'm gonna get a little abstract here, as she kind of goes over these details, just so that we can keep moving. The- she wants to send this other group, or she is sending this other group also, called Silver Sky Restoration and Recovery. A group I should note, that you have a negative one with, right? And we should actually go over that real quick. Let me finish this statement, then we'll go over what your statuses are and what's up with your squad.

She wants to send Silver Sky Recovery and Restoration to retrieve the remnants of Past, but that, because of the events recently, because Apostolos sees this as a new incursion from Kesh, you know, you're looking at the map here, Kesh shares a kind of- Kesh's western border basically goes with Apostolos. I guess another way of saying it is Apostolos borders Kesh on its east and its north. This was an attack that they see as coming from the south, from the Prophet's Path, and so for them, they're like oh shit, this is now a war on two fronts, we have to move troops around, have people- have the like free people inside of the Prophet's Path betrayed us?

[TIMESTAMP 30:18]

AUSTIN: For this side of the game, cause we didn't talk about this, the Prophet's Path is kind of like independent territory. There's a city there called Logos City, which is where Logos Kantel did the miracle that created the Prophet's Sea. And the Prophet's Path is filled with villages and towns that are like, not part of the Stels. And so there is immediately some doubt on Apostolosian side, even at this point, that like, oh shit are they working with Kesh? And so their- tensions are extremely high.

And so your mother- Crysanth, by the way, her name is Crysanth Kesh. Crysanth is worried that if she just sends Silver Sky Restoration and Recovery that they will be killed. And so she kind of lays out your objectives like this. One- I mean, one, the target you're going up against is Apostolos generally. This is just like, breaking things down in the Beam Saber terms. Target: Apostolos. She thinks that the Swordbreakers, another unit you have a minus one with, are there. The Swordbreakers are an elite unit of Apostolosians who target and kill Elects. She thinks that because an Elect is dead. And also because- or an Elect is you know, presumably dead. And also because the leader of the Swordbreakers, their mech was there. Their mech called (mispronounces) Ataroxia, Ataraxia showed up, was in the footage, was like the neon-bright lights, could only be Ataraxia. And so, is worried that the Swordbreakers, who are a very strong unit, are there, and so gives you kind of a heads up, hey you can do this however you want, you can kick down the door and try to like steal back the body and the- and the remains of Past, or you can try to negotiate, or whatever you want to do, but heads up, I think the Swordbreakers are there.

And then gives your rules of engagement. And she tells you, one, no use of chemical, biological, explosive, or poisonous weapons. Even in the case of open combat at this point, none of those weapons are allowed to be used. So even if it comes down to like, we're in a big firefight in our heavy ass mechs, no using chemical, biological, explosive, or poisonous weapons, because it would be a nightmare for the optics, because people already think that Kesh, or maybe Kesh did already blow up a bunch of shit. And so if you blow up more infrastructure that feels like a crueler thing than fighting military hardware, you know? This is a city, this is a town, it's not just a military base.

And then the other rule of engagement is that you are required to kill or capture anyone who has access to the Divine Past's memory for the reasons that she laid out before, which is that there are the very most important state secrets in the Divine Past's memory. She doesn't know if the Divine Past's memory is intact or accessible, how could she, she has not seen the body. So that's the gist of your mission. I'm gonna dump those rules of engagement and those objectives into the Slack chat. Um, boop, there we go.

JACK: That's what Crysanth says, I'm gonna dump the rules of engagement-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Crysanth): Into your group chat. For you to peruse at your leisure. I've arranged for transport; there is a ship in the yard. And if you need anything else, I trust your ability to requisition it.

AUSTIN: She wouldn't say that. Nope! She wouldn't say she trusts your ability. She would say, um,

AUSTIN (as Crysanth): I suspect you've learned enough to requisition it by now.

JACK (as Clementine): I have. I won't let you down. Thank you for this opportunity.

AUSTIN (as Crysanth): (overlapping) Don't make promises, Clementine.

AUSTIN: And just nods at the door.

JACK: And like her- her attendants just like ushers me up out of the chair, right? Like I'm being-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah, absolutely.

JACK: Like, not even gently kicked out of the parlor.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. As you leave her office, you see, waiting for you in the hallway, for an appointment you almost certainly forgot about, Clementine, is your rival, Gucci Garantine. Who I've facecast as this great model named... duh duh duh... Amy Deanna, who is a black woman with vitiligo, which is like she has white- white spots on her skin, uh, and she's straight-up wearing this thing I just sent you in the second piece, the second- the second link here, like a black, like kind of form-fitting, um synthetic fabric suit with this like really awesome red kind of piping and like-

JACK: God, I thought it was velvet! I thought that was like light-bounce-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) It might be velvet.

JACK: No, I think it's piping. But I like- I love that it is- I thought it was like specularly on it, at first.

AUSTIN: Ohh, no, I definitely think that's piping, yeah. And she is straight-up wearing this necklace that is like this awesome golden necklace that doesn't clasp around the front, just hangs like- it's like very firm around the back of her neck, and I think- I think her hair is different than here, I think she has like this- this sort of natural black hair pompadour. It's kind of like curved to the side a little bit, and kind of cornrows mixed in there, and a nice like, you know, uh, what do you call those, um buh-buh-buh-buh-buh, why am I blanking on the-

JACK: Like a clasp?

AUSTIN: Like clasp. Like a barrette, you know. Like a fancy barrette. (clears throat) And she is here to talk to you about a thing you did not remember making this meeting for, which is like the lumber taxes for the next season. (JACK and AUSTIN laugh) And is again, surprised to see you in your bedclothes. Do you push her away, or do you have that conversation, which we will not have on screen. We are not-

JACK: I think it's like a Aaron Sorkin walk-and-talk-

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Except it is interrupted halfway through by Clem reaching her room in the corridor, entering, dressing offscreen, as the conversation is happening, and then exiting-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Right, the camera hangs on-

JACK: (overlapping) On Gucci.

AUSTIN: Right, yeah yeah yeah. On Gucci. Love it. Love it. Um cool. So I'm curious what the prison is like. It's presumably on palace grounds, right?

JACK: (overlapping) Oh, me?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) This is for everybody. I assume- I- you tell me. We should talk about like, what the Rapid Evening is, you know?

JACK: Is there an extent to which Kesh simply would not- you know how like- uh like prisons and hospitals are like, uh peripheral to the way we build cities usually.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: It's like they live out- they live out there. Like is there an extent to which Kesh just wouldn't stand to see one of their prisons built in the palace grounds?

AUSTIN: Well this is one of the things where it's like, is it a prison in the way we think of prisons, or is it a black site. Like, there's not a- are they in a- are they in a proper prison or are they being held on grounds, where like there are guards positioned if they try to run, do you know what I mean? Or, I guess here's the question, is like, when you need them, how do you get them?

JACK: I don't know, I speak to someone.

AUSTIN: How do they get there? You know, you can speak- you can answer out of character here. Are they- are they transported across town?

JACK: It's like a convoy, right?

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: It's like a convoy of cars. I- sort of like the Dark Knight, right?

AUSTIN: Right, so maybe they're on the western- maybe they're on the western, like arm of- of this cross-shaped island then. And so you like, send for them, and then we- do we just get a shot then, of the three of you, Leap, Million, and Sovereign Immunity, in the back of like an armored truck, being transported?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I- I'm okay with that.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Yeah, I'm- yeah.

AUSTIN: Here's a question, have y'all run missions before, at this point?

KEITH: Good question!

AUSTIN: I guess you have beliefs about each other, so you must have at least worked together a little bit.

KEITH: Yeah- well we could have just known each other from hanging around the black site.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yeah. You've at least trained together at this point. Presumably.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: To have developed this. And you know what, I guess- you know what? Your base does not have 'quarters' listed, so you don't live at your base. "Your FOB has comfortable sleeping space for everyone, otherwise the squad's pilots sleep away from the FOB in vulnerable locations." So yeah, you know what, you don't live on this black site. Maybe that's a thing you could invest in later if you want to. We will see. Briefly, other stuff about your crew; you are a Frontline playbook crew, which basically means that you get into fights and fight stuff, you're the front line. You have a very good move, which we'll get to, I'm sure at some point today. You have two upgrades. You have the Airfield upgrade, and then you have- what was the other one? Duh-duh-duh-duh-duh. Workshop, right?

KEITH: Yeah, that's right.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool, and then the default two, which are Prowess, which is- or Prowess Training. Prowess training lets you level up your Prowess abilities for cheaper in between sessions. Or not level them up, but you can take the- the- the 'train' downtime activity for your Prowess abilities and get extra XP when you do that, and then you have a cohort of Toughs, which are, like a fire team of like, specially tough people. You have a few- you have like a couple people who are led-

KEITH: We have some bruisers.

AUSTIN: You've got some bruisers. Exactly. Maybe they're in this- this truck with you.

AUSTIN: Um, uh, with you then is also A.O.- uh, A.O. Rooke. Audacious Opportunity Rooke? Is that- is that the name I wrote down? Is that- that sounds like a thing I would

have written. Or is it Overture? Audacious Opportunity Rooke. Um, uh, who is like a young man, um, uh, who I-

KEITH: Is that hyphenated? Opportunity-Rooke?

AUSTIN: No, it's- it's Audacious Opportunity. A.O. A-O. Or Ey-yo. Rooke. Um, who I've facecast as the rapper Mikey More. And so, I think he's already talking a big game in the back of this prison truck. And is just like-

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): I cannot *wait* to be deployed. Like, oh, I wanna make a name for myself. Imma get out of this prison. They're gonna give me a palace. For just me.

(SYLVIA chuckles in the distance)

SYLVIA: That's an in-character laugh.

AUSTIN: Okay.

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): What- okay- you- if you wanna visit, Millie, you can visit.

SYLVIA (as Million): (sarcastically) Oh, you sure- can I get, like, a whole guest wing, maybe?

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): Okay slow down. The guest wing is for guests. You can stay in the guest wing.

SYLVIA (as Million): Okay, I'll stay in the guest wing. I'll crash there for a while.

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): (overlapping) You can stay in the guest wing. Alright.

SYLVIA (as Million): (sarcastically) Can't wait.

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): You gonna come, Leap? You seem like someone who'd enjoy a party.

KEITH (as Leap): I like, um- can I have a gazebo?

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): You can have a gazebo.

KEITH (as Leap): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke) I have three gazebos.

KEITH (as Leap): I'll come if we're having a- if we're hanging out in the gazebo.

(AUSTIN laughs)

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): I'll- you know, I'm gonna throw a special gazebo party, just for you. Each gazebo will be a themed gazebo.

KEITH (as Leap): It- I want- I- Mostly I just want the Me-themed gazebo.

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): We'll have to figure out which one that is, it'll like a surprise.

KEITH (as Leap): Ga-Leap, Ga-Leap-

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke) Ga-Leap-O. Ga-Leap-Oh. I don't know about the priest guy though. I don't know about you. You don't seem like you throw back like that.

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): Mmm.

(AUSTIN laughs loudly, KEITH joins in)

KEITH (as Leap): I think you're right. (laughs loudly)

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): I'm a good judge of character, what can I say?

KEITH (as Leap): I didn't know, I wasn't sure, but I think that now you're right- I think you're right.

AUSTIN: Um-

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): I've certainly never been to a gazebo party.

AUSTIN: (laughs) And the truck- the van pulls into the palace yards and drops y'all off at what I've been imagining now for a little while as like a um- a roundhouse? Do you know what a roundhouse is?

KEITH: It's a type of... foot attack.

SYLVIA: (overlapping) It's like a train house, right?

AUSTIN: It is a train house, yeah. So, a roundhouse is like a place where a train can pull in and then like, spin around. And I think the palace grounds basically has one of these? I'm gonna post a picture in the chat, from the top down here. Where it's like- it's a place where a train can come and get on a part of the track can spin and like spin you around. Uh, and inside is just like a big abandoned like, warehouse looking thing. Um, with the tracks going different directions, and this is also, I think, part of you- like your airfield vibe, is this is actually- this is like a roundhouse for both- for both trains, and also ships, and also planes, and mechs. They all can like, kind of be lifted up through like a central, like um... like hangar elevator that comes up to this like, big open warehouse top. And then all through, through, like vertically, through this kind of underground system is like where all your, your training areas are, and everything else. Your workshop, everything else. So I think the van just drives onto this middle platform and then takes you down into the base. I guess I'm kind of echoing a little bit of uhh, um- both Evangelion, but also... what's the fucking game that just came out. Death Stranding has this style of like, elevator in the middle of a- of a warehouse building. Uh, so, sorry, but that's what's happening. Um, and then I guess, Clem, are you just there when they get out of this truck?

JACK: Yeah, I think so. I think just like, standing, like waiting for the- the place where the truck is going to pull up.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, we can do this a couple different ways. I've given you the mission now, which is go with this crew you don't necessarily like very much, um... I guess actually let's- let's name what those are really quick while we- while we're all-

KEITH: Did- did you say- are we like handcuffed? Like what's the-

AUSTIN: I don't know. Um, you are- you are- they're not... new to this. So yes, probably, right? I think Clementine has to uncuff you, and there are guards in the room with guns, watching you this whole time, you know? This is one of those things that's like, there has been time for them to make sure this works right, you know? This is not a thing where it's like, we- they just got into this business. This is Kesh, you know? Um, so yeah, you're probably handcuffed, probably have leg cuffs also. I guess actually, this is, this is really a question for Clementine. Cause if Clem says you can not wear them, you wouldn't have to wear them.

JACK: I think handcuffs.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, before we move on, briefly I just want to say out loud that you have a plus one relationship with The Curtain and with House Chasmata. House Chasmata is a tier five, um family, or or or, squad in Stel Kesh, they "have governed Stel Kesh's holdings for as long as Kesh has had holdings on Partizan, but in the last century, the family seems

more interested in an archeological dig in the northern ice cap than in managing its estates.” You have a plus relationship, a plus one relationship with The Curtain. The Curtain- “If The Curtain, a supposedly cryptocratic organization pulling the strings of Kesh existed, it would certainly have holdings on Partizan, the largest world where all five Stels hold significant territory, and if it did exist on Partizan, it would absolutely have members secreted across the moon in every Stel, across class lines, and in senior leadership positions. Thankfully, The Curtain simply does not exist.” And then, you have a negative with House Brightline, who is where Gucci Garantine is from, and with Silver Sky Recovery and Restoration, the recovery and restoration unit that you’ve been assigned to work with on this mission. Uh, and finally, you also have a negative with um, the uh, Apostolosian group I already mentioned, the Swordbreakers. Um, because I think your mother has run foul of them a number of times; has- has thwarted their plans. And so, anyone related to her is an enemy to them.

KEITH: And literal enemies in that there is a war on.

AUSTIN: Correct. Right. Yes. So how do you want to do this? Uh, either Clementine can like- we can just jump to the point at which Clementine has just summarized this and we can start thinking about how you want to do the mission, we could do some more characterization here in the prison...

SYLVIA: I’m definitely not happy to see Clementine waiting there, I’ll say that. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm. Is it- why is that? Just in general?

SYLVIA: Million just like keeps- Million’s kind of been in denial about this thing. She’s either like okay, they’re going to end up shooting me at some point before I actually get deployed-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Or this is just- she’s gonna get cold feet and we’re not actually gonna deploy. Um-

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: Like every- the few interactions she’s had with Clementine have not inspired confidence.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK (as Clementine): Good morning, thank you for coming.

SYLVIA (as Million): Ugh.

KEITH (as Leap): You're welcome.

JACK (as Clementine): We've been given a job to do, and I trust that you will be beside my side as we accomplish it. We are to be deployed to the city of uh-

JACK: What's it called, Austin?

AUSTIN: Obelle.

JACK (as Clementine): We are to be deployed to the city of Obelle. You may have heard that following a skirmish with the Apostolosians, the Divine Past came to ground among fighting. Our job is very simple. We are to recover the body of the Elect and any components of the Divine Past, alongside a scavenger unit. (deep breath) In addition to this, we are to detain or kill anybody who we believe to have had access to the memory of the Divine Past. Any questions?

SYLVIA (as Million): When you say "we..." You're gonna be there with us.

JACK (as Clementine): Yes.

SYLVIA (as Million): Not a soldier.

JACK (as Clementine): You really think that Stel Kesh would dispatch four people such as you into a disputed territory without someone to keep an eye on?

SYLVIA (as Million): No, I think they'd deploy someone to keep an eye on us who knows how to use a gun.

JACK (as Clementine): (pause) Any other questions?

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): Detain, or kill?

JACK (as Clementine): Yes, detain or kill.

(AUSTIN laughs)

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): No, no, no. Detain. Or kill?

JACK (as Clementine): Well, of course, every situation will have to be approached

uh. Situationally.

(AUSTIN laughs)

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): Great.

AUSTIN: Auh. Love it.

JACK (as Clementine): Are we done here?

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): Who are we fighting?

AUSTIN: Asks A.O.

JACK (as Clementine): Well-

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): Apostolos probably, but.

JACK (as Clementine): Apostolos, of course, uh we have encountered many of their efforts in that area, though none as severe as this. Uh, it is also rumored that the squad known as uh, the Swordbreakers have been seen in the vicinity of- of the crash, so we may expect some resistance from them.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) I'm trying to think of like-

JACK (as Clementine): (overlapping) I trust you've heard of them?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm trying to think of what the equivalent would be here. Um. They're a big deal. Like, they're not like a tier- they're not like tier five- it's not like saying the U.S. Army will be there-

JACK: (overlapping) Would it just be like- would it be like- be like, "Oh, who are we expecting to meet?" "Well, I heard the Red Baron got into the plane today."

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

JACK: Everybody be careful.

AUSTIN: You know that the Swordbreakers- collectively you will know this. The Swordbreakers are r- are uh, run by a commander named Cas'alear Rizah, and Cas'alear is like, the adopted sibling of the Apokine, the leader of Apostolos-

JACK: (overlapping) Oh, shit.

AUSTIN: -self-proclaimed uh, um... Prinept.

JACK: So they're like, politically a big deal, as well as-

AUSTIN: They are- yes, they're politically a big deal; they are famous for like, being a big adherent and believer in like, their sibling's vision for the future of the Divine Principality, but also being very like- the best of Apostolos. But also like particularly has- have built a squad meant to eliminate the Elects of Stel Kesh. Um, uh. Like so, it is- it is- it is kind of on in that way with them.

KEITH: So there's sort of like not really a real-world analog to what they are, but it is sort of like a paramilitary group, like a-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Oh! You know who it is?

KEITH: (overlapping) Like a very high-ranking paramilitary group.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's like- it's like- again, we're going to fucking Hideo Kojima shit. Like, I wouldn't go as far as like, Big Boss, but like that style of oh yeah, famous soldier, in that model, you know?

KEITH: (overlapping) Yeah, that's what I was thinking of. Yeah.

AUSTIN: But- but part of a real country. Like, so it isn't paramilitary, it is a military organization. Like it is- it is- it is like-

KEITH: (overlapping) Oh okay. Well you said *not* like the U.S. Army.

AUSTIN: Because the whole- it's not the whole U.S. Army. It's like going up against like, the Navy Seals, you know what I mean?

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: It's like going up against like, a particularly well-known fighter squadron.

KEITH: (overlapping) This is Seal Team Six.

AUSTIN: yes, exactly. They make movies about this, this person. Um. Yeah, so I think, I think A.O. is like-

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rooke): Alright, let's go. What are we- we have like a plane, a boat?

JACK (as Clementine): Um...

AUSTIN: There is a boat made available to you.

KEITH: A boat-plane?

AUSTIN: A- just a boat.

JACK (as Clementine): Yeah. Um. Follow me.

JACK: Uh, and I just turn and walk out of the- the place, toward the uh, the dock, I guess.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: The guards like, file out along with me.

AUSTIN: All of the mechs are already loaded onto the ship. Um, the ship is run by a, a, a, kind of a defamed house. There's a house called House Longyear, um and they, like twenty-five years ago were hot shit, um but they are-

KEITH: Now they're not shit?

AUSTIN: Now they're not shit. They were hot shit and now they're not shit. Part of the thing that happened there is that the Longyear House was a House built historically between allegiances between Kesh and Apostolos (laughs a little). Um, and so recent hostilities (JACK giggles) have led both sides to kind of disinvest from them. Uh, they are a Kesh noble house, so they're loyal to Kesh, but their, their one remaining noble basically just has this big, big ship, and that is- like their grandmother's- or uh- yeah, their grandmother's big ship, their grandmother's vessel, which is the last real asset that House Longyear has to their once affluent estate. Um, and so they are going to be your like- (amused) they're gonna be your, your captain this evening, as they move all of your stuff, plus all of the much, much smaller mechs that the um- that the Somber- Somber Sky's- I guess the name of the place is Silver Sky Recovery and Restoration, along with Somber Sky, who is this like engineer, who is gonna go with you to recover this stuff. Um, so yeah, it's like a boat. It's like a big, big ferry. Um.

The thing to decide at this point is how you're gonna do this mission. If you'll take a look at the book. The thing that we need- I need from you before we get into this is that you need a tactic. The tactic is the method that the squad is going to use to- use to accomplish the objective. This is a general strategy and requires a detail that explains how the mission opens. Select one of the following tactics and then determine the detail. And the tactics are assault: open violence against the target. The detail I would need is the point of attack. And I can show you a map of this place in a moment. Two, deception is luring, tricking, and manipulating a target; the detail is the method of deception. Three is scientific. Uh, scientific is engaging with technological power. The detail is the unusual procedure used. Also, these are over in the handouts, by the way, if you click on 'journal,' there's an 'engagement tactics' page that you can pull up, along with a bunch of other pages I put there. Social is when you negotiate with, bargain with, or persuade the target. The detail there is the social connection. There is stealth, which is when you take action undetected. The detail I would need is the point of infiltration. And transport is carrying cargo and people through danger; the detail there is the route and the means, which I don't think fits her, because you don't have the thing you're transporting, you just have- you have to get to the thing. So that's what we need to decide at this point, along with your pilot loadouts, before we do an engagement roll. What's, what's, uh- what comes to mind here?

SYLVIA: Are we able to see the map, or do you not have that yet?

AUSTIN: Yes, I can pull that- I can absolutely pull that up.

SYLVIA: (overlapping) Cause that'll help me.

AUSTIN: Boom, here we go. So this is Obelle. There is- Obelle is split in half by this river. Um, there on the eastern side of this river is the actual town of Obelle, and the western half is an Apostolosian base that has been fucked up. You'll see also in the north and the south there are buildings that have been destroyed. Um, those are support structures that have been destroyed. The north was a fuel- kind of a fuel tank area, a bunch of like- a refueling zone; the south was like a big sensor station, like a giant radar dish. In the northwest, now there's a giant crater that you can see. Um...

JACK: Damn. That's where it came down?

AUSTIN: That is- that is the eastern part of where it came down. It came down west of there, but it like, came through the desert for miles. Um, the fact that it didn't just devastate everything indicates that it was in somewhat of a controlled fall; it was not going full-speed, you know? But it did crash. It did not, you know. We didn't get a colony drop here, but it did fall pretty rough into the desert. Um, you'll see I've marked like an inn and a temple. Um, according to the treaty, you should be able to pull right into the dock here, and you

know, send word ahead that you're coming, and they are supposedly- they should let you in, you know? If you wanted to do-

JACK: They'll hate it, but they'll have to. In theory.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) That's- right. In theory. that, to me, would be a social plan? Where you're like, hey, not deception, I am here to do the thing I am here to do. We have paperwork. This is about, like- there's a negotiation there.

KEITH: The treaties!

AUSTIN: Right, the treaties, exactly. Um, there's farmland all around it to the east- the north, east, and south, as you can see. That's kind of what the, the hatching is there. And again, there is a river coming from the north, but north is more Apostolosian territory, so you're not gonna come from the north. You can come from the east, cause that's the ocean, you can come from the south, cause *that's* the ocean, and also more farmland, but you cannot come in from the west or the- or the north.

KEITH: I'm- I'm feeling like, first mission, things aren't so hot right now. I- I- I'm thinking that if we're- if this is the time- if ever was a time for social, it's this first time.

JACK: We have the treaties.

SYLVIA: We've got our mechs as {collateral}- as like backup, in case things go bad.

ART: I have- I have a- I have an in-universe and an out-of-universe thing.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

ART: Um, it's like more fun, for like, new characters to do a social engagement the first time.

AUSTIN: Agreed.

JACK: (overlapping) Yes.

SYLVIA: (overlapping) Yeah.

ART: And also, um I'm very excited to have- to accompany Clementine into Apostolosian territory.

AUSTIN: That is in-character.

ART: Yeah, uh-huh.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah, okay. Um-

ART: Also, I don't think- I don't think they brought my weapon.

AUSTIN: I don't... think they did either. Um, it's in shipping, I think. So.

ART: Mmm.

AUSTIN: They have- you have your mech, but probably not like your big weapon yet.

KEITH: Four to six weeks.

AUSTIN: Yeah, four to six weeks. Maybe after this mission, we'll see. Um-

SYLVIA: It- If we're

ART: (overlapping) I don't know why you would check 'ground.' (AUSTIN and JACK laugh)
You know ground is always a crapshoot.

AUSTIN: I mean, actually, let me-

KEITH: It was ten dollars cheaper!

AUSTIN: I'll note something really quick, which is the way shipping stuff works here, off-planet is like a big, weird deal. So, um-

JACK: It's like a fucking catapult, right? Or something?

AUSTIN: Well, that's off-world; out-of-system is even wilder, because it's this big Portcullis, it's this big gate that opens, this like energy gate that opens. And those only open once every ten days. Um, and then to get there takes a long time. It takes days to get there, even at fast travel. Like, the Divine Past probably got into the system eight days ago, and then got here last night, and then the Portcullis was supposed to open again in three or four days, cause that's when your mom was gonna get there, but, like, it's not- it might not open now because a Divine was killed and a- and an Elect was assassinated. I bet Kesh is already trying to be like "Hey, we have to shut down all routes out of the system-"

JACK: (overlapping) Petitioning to-

AUSTIN: Yes. "Orion, you know, whoever's in charge of this, do not open the gate until we have, you know, until we know for sure who killed our Elect." You know? Um, so yeah, there's stuff that's just like, not gonna come in through the system gates. People are gonna be like "Hey where are- where" it- it's mostly stuff that's just like cool, luxury goods. Um, Partizan is unique in that it's very self-sufficient- I guess actually a lot of the Principality would be pretty self-sufficient because of the lack of travel. Um, but it is- it is- on one hand it's a big shipping hub, because it's the place where all five Stels hit, but also, it is a place that has all five Stels doing all their shit, so you can get like, a Columnar style, you know, luxury technological good on-planet, just because they're produced on-planet, you don't need it to be shipped across the entire galaxy, which is what you would need if you lived up in like, Nideo space. Um. So it sounds like social.

[TIMESTAMP 1:00:15]

KEITH: Yeah, I think.

ART: (overlapping) Yeah, we're just gonna ring the front door. Ring the front doorbell.

AUSTIN: Just, yup, okay. So, after the mission is planned, uh, play jumps right into the action- Okay, actually really quick, I just want to raise that you could do legwork for additional- for additional information here, but it's tough because you've not been to this specific place, and you'd have to tell me how you're doing that. Um, I'll just read this out loud before we roll, because I'd rather you know and be able to do it. "When a pilot wants more specific information about the game world, the GM will decide if that information is common knowledge, or if there is an obstacle to having it. If there is a barrier to obtaining the information, then an action roll is necessary, with the pilot picking an action suitable to their method for acquiring the information. If successful, I will answer that question honestly and provide detail equivalent to the effect level of the action." So, if you wanted to gather information before you commit to this style of engagement, we can do that. Um, you'd have to tell me how you're doing it, but I would absolutely let you try it if you had, like a cool idea about digging up more information about Obelle, or about what happened last night, or anything like that.

ART: Could we just like, bring a copy of the treaty?

AUSTIN: Uh, I think that's just a thing you would pick in your gear, yeah.

ART: Alright, well that's my only idea.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Which, you don't- you don't need to pick gear yet. You do need to pick load, you do need to decide how much you're carrying, which is on the kind of right

side of your character sheet. It's light, medium, or heavy. As always, light means that you're kinda, look more peaceful, look more relaxed, whereas medium's kind of like hey, I'm kind of loaded- loaded to get into some trouble, and heavy's like, you are a soldier, looking to hurt people, um which is the kind of spread there. So think about that. Does anyone have any legwork, get information stuff, gather information stuff they wanna try?

KEITH: Um, I've been in handcuffs, so.

AUSTIN: Totally, but I- you know, (KEITH laughs) if you wanna raise an idea here.

KEITH: Yeah, no. My- honestly my idea like, we should look over this treaty, but that's also what Art said, so.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you have the treaty. The treaty is legit.

KEITH: (overlapping) Like make sure we have the- know the minutiae of like...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh there's a gear thing that takes up one load called 'documents,' so as long as someone has that, I think that is the treaty.

KEITH: Sounds like a Clem job.

(AUSTIN chuckles)

JACK: Yeah. (laughs) I got-

AUSTIN: Alright, so it sounds like no one has any gather information-

JACK: (overlapping) I've got room with all the guns I'm not carrying.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: I'm trying to think of a convincing way that, like- something that would be useful to know that I actually could have done.

AUSTIN: Uh, as always, this is a Forged in the Dark game, which means you could flashback it. It could be a thing- you could spend stress for it to have been a thing... I mean honestly, if it's a thing that makes sense for your background, I wouldn't even necessarily make you roll for it, but-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, if you want to have studied- delivered something to Obelle once before to know something about it, but also I don't know if there's anything there that I didn't just give you, you know?

KEITH: Yeah. I also think like, part of the fun of the social-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Mmm. Mmm-hmm.

KEITH: Is that- that it's- choosing that as a tactic is like, the idea that nothing even *would* go wrong, (AUSTIN and JACK laugh) so what's the point of preparing.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) So what's the point of gathering- yeah. Sounds good to me. Let me count this up for you, then. Is the mission bold? (inhales)

KEITH: No!

AUSTIN: Is the mission especially complex?

KEITH: No!

SYLVIA: (overlapping) No.

AUSTIN: Alright, so, so far you're still at one die, you start at one- one die for engagements. Does the mission-

JACK: I could make an argument for bold.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

JACK: We're trying to recover the body of a *dead Elect*.

ART: It- It seemed more- it's- it's more chutzpah than bold.

SYLVIA: I feel like chutzpah is boldness, though.

(AUSTIN laughs)

KEITH: We have a treaty that basically says there's no difference between doing this and like, going to the shop, like...

AUSTIN: Yeah, I guess. I'm gonna give you one.

ART: Yeah, but we also brought- brought wetwork people to do it.

AUSTIN: (laughing) You did. I'm gonna give you one for this, so you're up to two. Does the mission exploit the target's vulnerabilities?

KEITH: Yeah, shouldn't have signed the treaty.

AUSTIN: Shouldn't have signed the treaty- well everyone signed the treaty, so yeah, three. Is the tactic ineffective against the target? No. Uh, do you get external support for the mission?

KEITH: We have these toughs, right?

AUSTIN: Those- those- that-

JACK: (overlapping) And we have the scavenger squad.

AUSTIN: That's internal support. Here's the problem with those-

ART: We have the weight of treaty.

(JACK laughs)

AUSTIN: That's exploiting the target's vulnerabilities. Uh is anyone interfering with the mission other than the target, and the answer is yes-

KEITH: (overlapping) Yes.

AUSTIN: Yes, which is both- the answer is yes, in ways you don't know yet, but also the Silver Sky doesn't like you, and so there's like an indirect interference, which is like, they're going to undercut everything you do as you do it. Um, so that's back down to three-

KEITH: And they would do that even if they genuinely thought there was nothing they could do to actually stop us, too.

AUSTIN: Correct. Yeah. You-

KEITH: (overlapping) Like even if it's just to fuck with us.

AUSTIN: We should note, there's bad blood here because you got a workshop upgrade they didn't. And they're like "You're a- you're prisoners? Why- why do you get my

wrenches? Why do you get, like the cool place I could work on a giant robot? Why would you get that?"

KEITH (as Leap): Why would I know the answer to that?

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. They're mostly mad at Clem. Like everyone else.

KEITH: (overlapping) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh, wait, so one: regular. Bold: two. Vulnerabilities: three. Interfering, but also external support, cancels each other out, three. Any other factors... (makes thinking noise) Um, difference in squad tier hits you here. You are going up against someone higher tier than you. You are tier zero, the Swordbreakers are tier three. Uh, so that's a minus one. Uh, even though they are not- even though this is not an armed conflict, like- or maybe it will be. So it's 2d6, unless someone has a roll- a thing that changes their engagement roll.

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: I don't think anyone does.

JACK: I *nearly* did.

AUSTIN: You did nearly do this, yes.

KEITH: No, I don't have anything for engagement roll, do- don't- do we have anything a, a squad thing for engagement rolls? Or am I making that up?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) No, the squad thing you took is a very good one, which is that, it is called, Forged in the Fire. "Each PC has been toughened by cruel experience," especially Clementine Kesh. (JACK laughs) Uh, you get plus 1d to resistance rolls and you exhaust one fewer quirk for vehicle resistance. This is very strong. Uh, so it sounds like 2d6. I don't see anything else here that would increase your engagement roll here. Somebody give me a 2d6. (SYLVIA laughs) That's a three. A three- if the result is a one to three, the starting position of the squad is desperate.

JACK: Oof, *jesus*. (laughs)

SYLVIA: (overlapping) Hey!

AUSTIN: So. I'd say it's- it's a couple of days before you get from Cruciat down to Obelle. Uh, you're on the ship for a little while, um I think that there is like- tensions are high. Um,

not only among the squad, as we already established, but also along with the squad of Silver Sky Restoration and Recovery. Um, they are headed by a person named Somber Sky. Somber Sky uses she/her pronouns. She is the chief engineer at Silver Sky Recovery and Restoration. Um, you may remember from the worldbuilding episode that she stays out of politics, except for when politicians bring her new gear to play with. This is one of those moments. She has like a rosy complexion, she's white, with a rosy complexion, with like, wavy, too-symmetrical hair. She has like, a bob down to like her, her chin, um, with long bangs. Um, she has on like, a baggy bomber jacket, and there's a (amused) picture of herself on the back.

SYLVIA: Wow.

AUSTIN: And she has on aviators, and like a black tank top, and a bunch of belts with wrenches and shit, and little hover bot nearby with a camera that she can use to look through the camera bot with her aviators. Um, and she is just like, lots of popping bubbles in your ear as you walk past on this trip. On this multi-day boat trip. Lot's of just like-

AUSTIN (as Somber Sky): (sarcastic) Can't wait to get there...

JACK: (overlapping) Just like, visible derision.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly.

AUSTIN (as Somber Sky): Sure would be nice to have a workshop.

AUSTIN: Etcetera. Um, to be clear, they already have a workshop. They're like a tier two faction, it's not like they don't have a workshop.

SYLVIA: And they're like extending this attitude to all four of us, not just Clementine, right?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Oh yeah. Cause- cause they are-

SYLVIA: (overlapping) Okay, just wanted to make sure.

AUSTIN: You're Clementine's guards, you know, you're with Clementine.

SYLVIA: (overlapping) Yeah, exactly.

AUSTIN: And so the thing is, I think as you arrive onto- at Obelle, in this port, you get that same extension of attitude, right? Because we know that- *we know* that the Swordbreakers, and Apostolos in general, has beef towards Clementine's mother, but the Swordbreakers

especially, and all they see is like, Silver Sky shows up with Clementine, with the daughter of this like, fancy, bullshit ari- you know, aristocratic leader, uh, Crysanth Kesh. And that is, hey, fuck Crysanth Kesh, fuck her daughter. They don't know anything about the Rapid Evening. They don't know what the Rapid Evening is; that's not a name that's been used yet, like broadly. Um, and so I think there's a degree to which it's just like, oh, Clementine is here with all of her friends, right? Um, and so you rolled a desperate position; I'm gonna tell you what that means. One, it means that as you pull in, um, despite the fact that this- that this portside military base has been like shot through with cannon fire, and there's like, um, lots of like, places where it's clear mechs stepped on stuff, and were like, really- you know, it looks like- You know in Titanfall, where you put a mech on auto mode, and it just kind of wanders-

KEITH: (overlapping) Yeah.

AUSTIN: It looks like someone did that to a bunch of mechs, and they just wandered through this entire military base, and stepped on shit, and were not particularly uhh, careful about where they were walking. Um, and it looks like there was lots of small arms fire here, and also some- some shots from a distant cannon in this general direction. Uh, a couple things you notice right away. One, is there are people there waiting for you, um, and they change their stance as the boat approaches, because they recognize that you're coming with a ship filled with weapons. Um, like, you know, I think we the audience see the person there to greet you with an attaché of their own, and the attaché leans over and says like, "I can't believe Crysanth would send," you know, "an armed unit for negotiations." And so part of the reason you're in a desperate position immediately, is like, this was supposed to be a diplomatic mission, but you're a bunch of fuckin' toughs. They *did* send a wetwork team to go do some diplomacy, and so everyone immediately gets into like, a harder stance. Um, the person who greets you here (laughs a little) is also part of your desperate position, is Cas'alear Rizah. That is spelled C-A-S apostrophe A-L-E-A-R, Cas'alear. Rizah, R-I-Z-A-H. Two- two words. Uh, they are Apostolosian, they take they/them pronouns, like many Apostolosians. They also take 'cas' as a pronoun, um, C-A-S. So, "cas goes to the store;" cas is about to walk you to an inn where you will be staying and having the negotiations. Um, cas is wearing, Cas'alear is wearing uh- Cas'alear has like, Mediterranean-brown skin and has teal hair up in a- in like a ponytail. I'm very much imagining that they have the body and kind of like, basic features of Karen Joshua from 08th MS Team, if y'all remember Karen Joshua. Uh, I will link you a picture of K- Do-

KEITH: She's like the lieutenant of whatever?

AUSTIN: Yeah, she's like the lieutenant. Except, instead of being like, a badass warrior type, I mean they are still a badass warrior, Cas'alear is still a badass warrior, but uh, instead of being kind of like, this kind of blue-collar character, um, they are extremely

proper-looking. Cas has, one, darker, kind of like iridescent scales, because they are Apostolosian, kind of up their back, like fish scales up their back and side of their neck, and it frames their face with this, like very, like, perfectly angled, kind of noble chin. Um, they have emerald eyes and very sharp features. Um, they have on this like, blue-grey coatee, which is like a- kind of like an old-school military jacket I'll post in here. So it's like blue-grey, like kind of a bluish-grey, with a long tail and high waist, with like bronze buttons, and, and kind of additional, like, fringe-work, and then like, black straps, and some additional, kind of, detailing. It's like, very fancy-looking. And then like, light khaki or tan uniform pants, with black and gold boots. Um, they are holding a- they are wielding a sawn-off rifle, like a- like a sniper rifle that's been sawed off, or it's hanging under in like an underarm holster, um, very long, and it doesn't necessarily look particularly comfortable, but they make it work. And then the other big thing is, underneath each of their eyes is a tattoo of a broken sword. Like, very like, iconographic, do you know what I mean? Like, almost like- not an emoji, but like a very simple vectorgraphic-style thing. For Keith, you might, you- I know Keith has watched Hunter x Hunter. You know how Hisoka has like, the teardrop and the star?

(SYLVIA laughs)

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess Sylvia also. It's that style of under-eye tattoo, you know? Like that style of oh, those are just- they're not very detailed, they're just the shape, and so it's like two broken swords. Um, and it would almost look like something you would see in like, a printed pamphlet from the eighteenth century or something. Like that style of very basic iconography, but with a little bit of uh, a little bit of style to it. Um-

KEITH: I'm thinking like, if- if a sword was a suit in a deck of playing cards.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah, totally. That's exactly it, right, but broken, right? And like, broken in exactly this way where there's like a little edge. Like duh-duh-duh. A little like, three-angled, broken- like a broken heart, but it's a sword. Um, so they are there. And here's the third part and I'm- I kinda just wanna like, narrate through this, because it all happens pretty quickly. You get escorted, one, away from your Hollows, which are your mechs, which are left on the ship. Two, to an inn in the middle of town, which is, you'll note here, that the way the town is broken up, there's a long river, and the only way across is up north of the military base. So you have to walk through this busted military base, up and across the bridge, and then all the way through town to your inn, so there's no like, hiding you. Um, and the people here are like, glaring at you as you walk through, through town. There's lots of like, (whispering) "They're from Kesh." Like, "They did this, they're the people who ruined our city." Uh, someone spits at you. There's lots of people from like, the

third story of buildings, like looking down at you and like, closing their curtains as you walk by. Um, this is not a particularly friendly town to be in. Uh, and here's the final part of this desperate position is, Cas'alear set you up in this inn, that is kind of like it has a big courtyard here, um, that's across from a temple, and some shops, and there's like a well in the middle of this courtyard, but like, it's two guards at the front door, Cas'alear inside with you, and that is it. Um, if this town decided they wanted to kill you, they would be in here in a second. There is not much in the way of like, protection here, and you're very far away from your most powerful weapons.

JACK: And they know that- that's like a deliberate visual play on their behalf, where it's like a calculated not-guarding, just being like, "we don't care about you."

AUSTIN: Give me a get infor- gather information roll. This is not- there's no risk here-

JACK: (overlapping) Damn!

AUSTIN: But I'm gonna give you this. Uh, you tell me how are you- that sounds like a study to me. Um, it sound like you studying-

JACK: (overlapping) Yeah. Before we do-

AUSTIN: Yeah, go ahead.

JACK: Shouldn't we have picked a, a, a detail for the mission?

AUSTIN: You do, the detail is the social connection with the Swordbreakers, which is a negative; that's part of why you got a negative.

JACK: Oh, damn! (laughs) Okay, right, sure.

AUSTIN: It's the treaty and them. Uh. But, but yeah. So give me a- what I do need at this point though, is load, so let's actually all declare load. Um, your personal load not your- Your vehicle load should be declared by now. Um, so everyone actually, one go through and declare your-

KEITH: (overlapping) Which is a permanent thing.

AUSTIN: That is a *more* permanent thing. It's *possible* to change it, but it's really hard. Like, turning a sports car into an eighteen-wheeler. Whereas- and it's even hard to change what you pick in your vehicle load. Um, once you've committed to something, it costs

resources to change it out, um, because it's like changing a sports- a sports car with regular doors to a sports car with the doors that open up sideways.

KEITH: Butterfly doors.

AUSTIN: Right, butterfly doors, or, or yeah. That costs, you know, resources. Um, but your personal-

SYLVIA: It's more than just stretching a Hummer.

AUSTIN: Ye- exac- it is. Thank you. Yes. That's the motto to, when- (laughing) When Ver'million retires and opens up a car shop, uh, the motto will be stretching- "It's much more than stretching a Hummer."

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: (overlapping) "A stretched Hummer requires more than stretching a Hummer."

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So what do you-

KEITH: I thought you were going with modifying a mech's size is called stretching a Hummer, but no one really knows what a Hummer is anymore.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) But know one knows what a Hummer is? Kesh would. Kesh loves old shit. Um. What is the- what are your vehicle loads and what are your personal loads gonna be here?

JACK: Uh, my vehicle load is medium, and my personal load is light.

AUSTIN: Okay. This is a diplomatic mission, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Uhhh, Sovereign Immunity? Farmer. Byron.

ART: Um, my vehicle load is medium, my personal load is medium.

AUSTIN: Okay. So you're- you look a little more ready- ready like, armed to bear, you know?

ART: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Little bit.

ART: Little bulkier.

AUSTIN: Yeah, little bulkier. Leap?

KEITH: I'm gonna also go light for personal, and medium, uh, for my vehicle load.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) For your vehicle, okay. And, uh, Millie.

SYLVIA: I am going medium for my vehicle load and medium for my personal load.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you- there- it is- it does 100% look like a diplomat surrounded by her bodyguards. Um, here. And also A.O. is with y'all, um, and similarly is- is kind of loaded for bear, and I think there's probably two other guards, but I think- I think A.O. is gonna stay back with all your mechs to protect them and make sure no one fucks with them. Um, he is on a short-range, like, transceiver, like, radio thing with y'all. Uh, you'll see that one of the options you'll have in your personal equipment is throat mic transceiver, which is "a device pressed against the throat that can transmit the wearer's voice over short distances." Um, and so you- you can- and that's a free, that doesn't cost any weight, and so that's a free load for you to take. Uh, so you can always at this point, as long as you're in Obelle, talk to A.O. and the rest of your, your cohort, without, you know, very quickly and quietly. Uh, so, what I was gonna ask is for Clem to roll something to- to study this, uh, person.

JACK: Okay! I have no things in study.

AUSTIN: You don't.

JACK: Um, I do have things in survey.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um.

JACK: Which lets me "observe my surroundings and predict outcomes, you might spot trouble before it happens." So-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah, I think that that's in line- I think that's totally in line, and the way this system works is you tell me what you roll, I will tell you greater or lesser effect and stuff. This is not- this isn't an action roll, cause it's a gather information, but it's not a um... it's not a roll that has consequences if you fail, outside of not getting a lot of information.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: I'll let you survey. This is also not like a desperate roll, or anything like that. This is just a gather information roll, so you're just gonna roll 1d6. You could push yourself here. I could give you a collateral damage, or a collateral die, which is this system's version of Devil's Bargains. Um, if you're interested.

JACK: (overlapping) I feel like the consequences this early... I'm, I'm happy to just go for it and see- see how it goes.

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me a 1d6 then.

JACK: Roll 1. D. 6!

AUSTIN: Wait did that go- nope, that's a one, Jack.

JACK: It is a one, Austin!

AUSTIN: You said six.

JACK: What?

AUSTIN: Oh, it came across- it sounded like you broke up and you went "six!"

JACK: No, no, no, I was saying rolling a 1d6, and then I rolled a one.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) (laughing) Okay. You rolled a one, so what was-

KEITH: (overlapping) Oh yeah, you broke up and it just sounded like you just yelled 'six.'

JACK: Nope!

AUSTIN: So a one to three provides limited information. What was the- you were kind of asking- you were kind of like, looking at your surroundings, looking at Cas'alear, and trying to like, judge what was going on here, right?

JACK: Yeah, judge specifically their intent at putting us in such a-

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Right.

JACK: -scantly defended place in such a visibly hostile environment.

AUSTIN: Okay, then I- with limited information, what I can give you is, this is not necessarily their choice. Um, this is them playing by the book, is what you can get with limited information. I can't give you more than that without additional conversation or a different tactic. Um, you are all- you all get your own rooms. Um, they're all like, well-equipped rooms on this inn. Um, this is an inn that is often, uh, visited by people coming from Apostolos down the coastline towards the Prophet's Path. Um, and it sees trade going between the Isle of Logos and the Prophet's Path communities up into the Apostolosian territory in the Barranca, which is the name of this group, or this region. Um, so it's like a- it's like- it's like a small town inn, but it's still kind of nice, there's a degree of like- you know you go to a hotel and you're like, someone bought those fucking paintings, like wholesale, like this whole hotel chain bought a thousand paintings at once. These are-

KEITH: They bought them from a warehouse that sells paintings for hotels.

AUSTIN: Exactly. This is not that. This is like, someone in this town probably painted these paintings, you know? They're paintings of like, local areas. Like, there's probably a person here who did this. Uh, and like, and you know, it has a nice, a nice vibe. But, you are the only people in the inn beside Cas'alear, who has, like the- Cas'alear and their personal attaché, and they have, uh, guards, again, two guards at the front door of the inn and that is *it*. Uh, so you are there, and I think Cas'alear- it's nighttime when you arrive and I think Cas'alear gives you the option- um, I have to find this character's voice. They say, um-

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): I will put it in your court, Miss Kesh. Do you want to have these negotiations now, or in the morning, after breakfast?

JACK: (as Clementine): Well, uh, Kesh- Stel Kesh thanks you for your consideration in this matter, as well as for putting us up in such a beautiful, uh, environ. Uh-

JACK: And I just like, glance at Sovereign Immunity.

AUSTIN: Huh, wow, passing the buck immediately!

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): You're doing great.

(Everyone laughs incredulously)

KEITH: Oh my god!

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): Well, first I was surprised that someone as experienced as Crysanth Kesh would send armed soldiers instead of diplomats bearing gifts, but now I see that she's also sent a rookie. (sighs) The morning, then?

JACK (as Clementine): We can do it now.

AUSTIN (as Cas'alea): Excellent. Excellent.

AUSTIN: You know, I think there's probably also some service workers here. Um, there's probably like, an open kitchen, who will provide, you know, drinks and some light snacks. And then like- there's probably like a small restaurant here, and it's empty except for you, and you're just like, having this, like- They sit down across, at a long table, probably in the middle of the long table, so that it's like, the two of you across from each other at the center, and then your respective, um, you know, seconds seated nearby, or standing nearby, at like, the rest of the table. Um, and so, I guess here is the final little bit of why you're in a desperate position.

AUSTIN (as Cas'alea): (sighs) Thank you for coming all of this way. Um, we do believe that we have recovered the body of one Elect, the Elect Cymbidium. We will- we've already begun to prepare the Elect's body as is done in Kesh, and are prepared to hand him over to you. Is this acceptable?

JACK (as Clementine): What are your conditions?

AUSTIN (as Cas'alea): None. The body of Cymbidium deserves, uh, a funeral, as begets all Elects in service of Divinity.

SYLVIA (as Million): What about the rest of the stuff?

AUSTIN (as Cas'alea): Oh, you did bring more than one spokesperson, I see. Um, well the rest of the stuff is, (SYLVIA snorts) um, unknown salvage, and so until we finish our preliminary reports and research, we are not authorized to hand it over. In fact, I'm not sure we, uh, will be.

SYLVIA: I think Millie just like, shrugs, and then is like-

SYLVIA (as Million): Alright.

SYLVIA: Gives, like, (AUSTIN laughs) Clem like a, alright, your- your job.

AUSTIN: True patriots here.

JACK (as Clementine): Well, I'm afraid that doesn't work for us.

AUSTIN (as Cas'alea): Ah, I'm sorry to hear that.

JACK (AS Clementine): We anticipate the return of, uh, all salvaged components of the body of the Divine Past, along with the body of the Elect.

AUSTIN: Um. Turns to their attaché, and says-

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): Let the record show that, I, Cas'alear Rizah, do not accept the, um, the definition of the salvage west of Obelle, the descriptor as the remains of the Divine Past. As of this moment, there has been no confirmation that what crashed here was the Divine Past. Vessels take many forms.

JACK (as Clementine): I'm sure they do. Uh, I do not understand why you would be so hesitant for us to be uh, involved in the salvage effort then. Surely the, the uh, debris leftover from the fall of the Divine and the subsequent conflict is as much uh, the purview of Kesh as it is Apostolos.

AUSTIN: This sounds like the beginning of a negotiation. It sounds like you are trying to get access to the recovery effort?

JACK: I want those bits!

AUSTIN: (laughing) You want those bits, alright. Um, so you're, you're- give me what you're actually negotiating for here. This is for- like to be part of the team picking through the trash basically? I mean, long term-

JACK: (overlapping) Yeah, I suppose. I mean like, long term, what I want is- I want both bodies.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Yeah, be careful, don't, don't lose the forest for the trees here, right. Just negotiating too hard to be on the salvage team doesn't matter if they don't acknowledge your- your claim.

JACK: But like, do we want to start smaller, right? Do we want to just say, let us in the room, I guess.

AUSTIN: Here's what- it- I'm gonna set up an eight-step clock, which is Rights, uh, which is, which is-

JACK: Salvage rights. That's what we're talking about here, right?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah, it's- you know, I'm gonna- the eight step is everything. The eight step is, is the body of the Divine Past. Which, you and I know it is. A hundred percent. Alright, so there's an eight step that you will work to, not just in this conversation, but through the course of this, this session. That make sense? That way, like, if you get the rights to go out there search sal- looking through the body, uh the wreckage, that will advance the clock, here. But the end of the whole mission will be filling this clock. Filling this clock means you will have succeeded. Um, so, give me- this sounds like you're at a roll. You've- you've now made a specific request, which is, hey, let us go check it out ourselves. Like, let us be part of the recovery operation then, if you need confirmation. Um, what would you like to roll to make that argument?

JACK: (deep breath) This is consort or sway, right?

AUSTIN: It could be. I think- I think it could be command. It could be any of them.

JACK: Command could be like, we are bringing the weight of Kesh's diplomatic-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Like, we're basically saying as a government, we want-

AUSTIN: Yeah. When you command, "you force immediate obedience; you might lead a fire team in combat or browbeat a person to give in to your demands." You may be- I don't know that you've been browbeating anyone, I don't know that Clementine Kesh knows how to browbeat anyone yet, uh-

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: It's up to you though. If you think you are doing that or you wanna rephrase it, um, it's always up to you, the player to determine whether or not that's something you want to do. Uh, you could go back and say, you know what, let me make this more browbeat-y, you know?

JACK: I'm trying to work out whether or not, like, their refusal to let us do this, we might be able to threaten troop movement? Um-

AUSTIN: I mean, so the two things to remember here is, (laughs) I mean yes, you could. Um, not only because- So, the active conflict tends to be in the northeast here, of Apostolos, like up near where things are colder, north of the Prophet's Sea. But-

JACK: What, like up here and stuff?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. But now, they currently believe that you have a force here, somewhere hidden in the Prophet's Path, south of Obelle, because of this attack that just happened. Where-

JACK: Sure. Which- which we don't really have anything about. Like, my mother didn't- wasn't like-

AUSTIN: No!

JACK: We asked for this, or anything.

AUSTIN: No, that was one of the things you could have looked into, right? You could have looked into, hey, did House Whitestar do this?

JACK: (overlapping) *Did* we do this?

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. *Were* we involved? Um, but yeah, that could be a thing. Could be like, we wouldn't want a, a follow-up, you know?

JACK: Yeah, alright! Let's frame it this way. Uh, I think Clem just like, sits back- sits back in her chair and says-

JACK (as Clementine): Make no mistake, the refusal of Stel Apostolos to allow Stel Kesh, um, movement and salvage rights within the debris area, would constitute an aggressive act, and we would have to respond in kind.

[TIMESTAMP 1:30:03]

AUSTIN: Love it. Uh, that is definitely a command. You have two in command. Uh, is anyone helping, do you want to push yourself, uh, also-

ART: I'll assist.

AUSTIN: Okay, how will you assist?

ART: I'm uh, uh- Sovereign Immunity stands and moves to the left side of Clementine, which is the traditional place of a- of a Sovereign serving a regent.

AUSTIN: Okay. And that's just like, your presence basically says like, this person is not talking out their ass.

ART: Yeah, I'm- I'm helping evoke the spectre of political power.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Because I'm *not* sure that it's- that it's real.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Fair. Uh, do you want to spend a stress, do you want to spend your spark? Uh, you have a move called Heart of Gold, Fists of Steel, that you could use here, I guess.

ART: I don't think that's quite appropriate, so I'll take the stress.

AUSTIN: So, uh, that brings you up to three, uh, ticks here, or sorry not ticks, three dice. Do you want to push yourself or would you like a collateral, uhhh, die, uh option?

JACK: Um, I'd like to push myself, I think.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Or do just want to- okay.

JACK: Because this is like, a first.

AUSTIN: Yeah. This is a big deal.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's also a desperate- this is desperate, for sure. Um-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: If you- if you spend load on the documents, I will make it desperate great.

JACK: Yeah, absolutely, I have the documents.

AUSTIN: Okay. Do you want to mark those on your sheet?

JACK: (overlapping) I can describe them.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah, yeah. *Please* describe them.

JACK: The documents are like a, um- they're like a- they almost look like they're made of like, bakelite, like early plastic.

AUSTIN: Ooh, love it.

JACK: Um, and it's a cylinder. It looks like a scroll. Like a- a rolled up scroll.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: Um, except it just has, like- it has a red button on the top, and like, biometrics on the handle, so that like, the person holding it, is basically like, password sealed with biometrics.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And when you like, activate it, it just like, rapidly holo-prints into the air, (amused) the text of the document.

AUSTIN: Love it. Desperate, uh, great. I also realized something we have to decide basically immediately. Uh, let's resolve this roll, and then- and then see.

JACK: Okey-doke. So, because I'm pushing myself-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Forgive me, it's been a while since I've played a- a Forged in the Dark game-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Do I take stress?

AUSTIN: You take two stress, yes.

JACK: I take two stress, okay. And, uh, now because of how I'm doing it in Roll20-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Uhhh, I have two command, I'm pushing myself, so I'm gonna roll three dice?

AUSTIN: But no, because also, Sovereign Immunity helped you. Well-

JACK: I pushed myself, and Sovereign Immunity's helping, so I'm gonna roll four dice.

AUSTIN: Given- the question actually is, really quick, Sovereign Immunity, do you want to give one die, do you wanna have- give them improved effect, or improved position? Noting again, right now, they're at desperate great, which is- yeah.

ART: Then I guess position.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, so risky great, Jack.

JACK: With three die.

AUSTIN: With three die.

JACK: Dice!

AUSTIN: Dice.

JACK: Dice.

AUSTIN: Dices.

ART: Dies.

AUSTIN: Dies, thank you. Dies.

JACK: (overlapping) Dies!

SYLVIA: (overlapping) I hope not.

ART: (overlapping) Dices.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Dias. Dais.

JACK: Okay, so I'm rolling... command.

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

JACK: I am in risky position.

AUSTIN: Yup.

JACK: Uh, the effect is great.

AUSTIN: Yup.

JACK: And I'm rolling three dice.

AUSTIN: Here we go. Beginning of a season. That's a six!

SYLVIA: Ey!

AUSTIN: That's a six! Look at you.

JACK: Whewf.

AUSTIN: So, when you get a great effect, uh, you- "when you make greater gains than usual, they have great effect. The pilot fills three ticks on the relevant clock, if applicable." And I will describe how the bonus dice uh- or how that bonus success kind of pays off, so to speak.

KEITH: This roll was for the command, right?

AUSTIN: This was for the command, yeah. This was a good roll.

KEITH: Great! That's a great one to come out as a six.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yes. Uh, I'm gonna recreate-

JACK: I love that we're like, right off the bat, threatening border troop movements.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

JACK: Possibly without mandate.

AUSTIN: A hundred percent without mandate, are you kidding me? Um, and so here's what I think happens on that is, um- Oh, do you want to use your thing, Clem? You have a move-

JACK: (overlapping) Yeah, hell yeah I wanna use my thing! Absolutely! So, I have a move called um, Heart to Heart. "When you make the weight of an agreement clear to your opposite, and both agree to terms-" Ooh, this is interesting.

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

JACK: "Surrender, cease-fire, prisoner exchange, et cetera, you are all emotionally invested in the deal. If either party or their squad breaks the agreement, the negotiator takes level three harm Despondent." This is kind of fascinating.

AUSTIN: Yes, it is. If you, Clem, or anyone in your party breaks the agreement you're about to come to, and then two, if Cas'alear, or anyone on the Apostolosian side breaks the agreement you're about to come to, then the negotiator will get the level three harm Despondent. Uh, what is this particular agreement? So I think- I think you show the treaty, you make this big play, Sovereign Immunity stands up, and um, I think Cas'alear nods and says-

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): Given this, I would happily have you join in with the recovery and analysis effort. By my word as a commander of an Apostolosian legion, you will be protected during this process, and should it be determined that the wreckage is the body of the Divine Past, then I will support your, uh, reclamation of key parts of the body, as is requested. Is this acceptable?

JACK (as Clementine): What do you mean, key parts of the body?

AUSTIN: This is- this is not a maneuver. This is- there's no way you're going to fit the whole- The Divine Past is a town, right? You're not gonna fit it all on a boat.

JACK: (overlapping) Oh, sure. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: So it's like, enough of it to rebuild it, basically. Um.

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): In exchange,

AUSTIN: They say-

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): You are to swear to me in this moment that you will bring no violence to this town, it has seen enough already.

JACK (as Clementine): This I swear.

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): This I swear.

AUSTIN: And they offer you a hand. They remove a glove and offer you a hand.

JACK: Yeah, I shake their hand, just like a- like a small, limp handshake.

AUSTIN: Okay. They have- they have a very powerful handshake. Um, I think like, eyes locked on you this whole time, for sure.

(JACK exhales heavily)

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): Would anyone like a drink?

SYLVIA (as Million): Yes.

KEITH (as Leap): (overlapping) What have you got?

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): (small laugh) We have a bar.

KEITH (as Leap): Okay, I'll take one.

AUSTIN: Okay! (KEITH laughs) Yeah, no, this is like, okay, that is like, the night- the tension leaves the room at this moment. So, that night, like unless anyone has something else, I think to some degree, Cas'alear switches modes a little bit, and this is now professional soldiers in a room together. Um, and this is someone who has definitely fought and maybe even killed Elects before. Probably has killed Elects before, but in this moment, like, I think that they drop- they don't drop their guard, um, they never- they're not like, getting messy drunk, right? But like, Sovereign Immunity, you've definitely seen this mode before, right? Of like, the commander who feels like they are on equal terms with someone and so they can- it's like talking shop, a little bit. Um. I'm curious if anyone has anything they want to pursue during this night, or if they kind of wanna- or like what they're up to.

ART: Um-

AUSTIN: We could also jump ahead to like, the next day, you're out in the field, you know? But go ahead.

ART: I'm sort of like, interested in one, not drinking, (AUSTIN laughs quietly) and two like, gently trying to figure out, do these Apostolosians know- do they know who I am?

AUSTIN: Good question. Do you wanna do a- that sounds like a gather information to me. Um, what are you using? How do you- how do you pursue this?

ART: I think it's like- I mean I would like to use, like, consort.

AUSTIN: Sure. With consort, you "mingle with allies and acquaintances. You might gain access to information, resources, people, or places. You might make a good impression and make a new contact with your social grace." Um, that sounds right, what's- are you just

kind of like- Do you bring it up? How do you make it happen? How do you make the- the question here rise?

ART: Yeah, I have no idea. Um. I mean, maybe it's just like, sort of circling, you know. Like, "how long have you- how long have you been in the service?"

AUSTIN: Right. Right. To see if they start bringing up you in that way?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, well ever since, you know, um-

KEITH: You stole that child.

AUSTIN: Right. Dahlia is the name of their sibling, the current, uh, Apokine of Apostolos, uh, which is spelled A-P-O-K-I-N-E. I realize now, the last recording I did not spell it. Apokine, if you haven't heard the term before. Um, yeah, give me a- give me a consort. This is, again, a gather information roll, so no consequences for failure here. Um- Nmmm. I changed my mind. (laughs) Given the situation. There are-

KEITH: (overlapping) Yeah, I- It kind of- I didn't kind of, connect the dots that like- that this was *their* sibling.

AUSTIN: Right, this is- well, it's their adopted sibling, right? So, they know the- they became adopted siblings because- in a roundabout way because of Sovereign Immunity. Sovereign Immunity kidnaps Dahlia, Dahlia is then rescued by the Apostolosians, so... Uh, I think this is- this is risky. Trying to like, dance around this information and not knowing how to approach it seems risky to me.

ART: And the effect is standard?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Standard. Yeah.

SYLVIA: Come one man, you owe me one, I gave you a sibling.

AUSTIN: (laughs) So yeah, 2d6. Unless someone wants to push- unless you want to push yourself, um, or again, I'll give you a collateral die if you let me introduce a new clock to the situation. A collateral die is like a Devil's Bargain in this system.

ART: Yeah, I don't- I'm not interested in any new clocks.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I'm also not interested in failing this roll. It's a- It's a real, uh-

KEITH: -Devil's Bargain.

AUSTIN: (amused) It kind of is, right, yeah.

ART: Eh, whatever. Hey!

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Hey it's a six! Alright. Um, they- so what is- I guess I still wanna do the kind of gather information here, so you're asking if they know, right? Uh-

ART: Well, I'm not *asking*.

AUSTIN: No, no, no, you're trying to determine. You're asking Austin if they know.

ART: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I think the answer is... it takes a moment, but yes, eventually. Um, it takes more than a moment, it probably takes, you know, some time until they put it together. Um, and the thing that ends up happening is like, there's a moment where they're pouring you a drink, everyone else is- or you're not drinking. They're pouring you a water, right? Or a tea, or something. They're making a tea for you.

ART: Sure, yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, and they kind of lean close to you and they say, uh-

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): Does the rest of the group know who you are?

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): (sighs) Well, uh, the princess definitely does.

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): (laughs a little) The *princess*. It's a good call sign. You be careful. I'm surprised you run with them.

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): It's just politics. It's just business.

AUSTIN: I think that they like, give you a smile, um, and say-

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): It is good to know that someone who walks with her-

AUSTIN: Nodding to Clementine off in the distance.

AUSTIN (as Cas'alea): Someone who walks with her carries justice in his heart.

ART (as Sovereign Immunity): Absolutely.

AUSTIN: Uh, and then comes back. I'm curious for Million and Leap and Clementine, is there any socialization between the three of you? Is it *very* awkward or is it only sort of awkward?

SYLVIA: I feel like it's not super awkward between me and Leap?

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: Um, I think I'm like, trying to ask him about like, pirate drinking games and stuff.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Leap, you drink right, cause-

SYLVIA: (overlapping) Um, but I'm kind of giving the cold shoulder to Clem.

AUSTIN: Great. Leap, you- you have-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We've talked about this in our- in the character creation episode, the worldbuilding episode, whatever. Episode zero. That you do eat and drink, that is part of why you are- that is part the ways in which you are Equiaxed.

KEITH: (overlapping) Yeah, I not only eat and drink, I eat and drink *a lot*.

AUSTIN: Right, constantly. You are snacking-

JACK: (overlapping) He loves it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: It's- Well , it's the way- it's the way my frame is powered, is biologically, so I eat about four times more than a typical human would, in order to power the robotics.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) God. I love it. So you just chowing the fuck down right now?

KEITH: Oh yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh. I love it so much. I think this is definitely like a- like a- got some, some you know, rotisserie meats-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Some- some salads with some good, like, yogurty dressing stuff going on. It's good. It's a lot of food.

KEITH: Well, also there's a bar, which means there's bar snacks, which means we can play, uh, I think maybe Leap's favorite bar game, which is, see how many, like small snacks, like nuts or olives or whatever, you can throw in the air and catch in your mouth in row, like reverse jacks. Where it's not like throw one, catch it, it's like throw four, and then catch all four.

AUSTIN: Wow.

KEITH: Yeah.

ART: Can I pitch an idea here?

AUSTIN: Always.

KEITH: Like, is it another game?

(AUSTIN laughs)

ART: Uhh. You know, uh, you know the cartoon, really the cartoon franchise, Scooby Doo?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: (overlapping) Heard of it.

JACK: (overlapping): I've heard of it.

SYLVIA: (overlapping) Sounds familiar, yeah.

JACK: That's the one with the dog.

ART: (overlapping) You know- yeah.

AUSTIN: The dog, yeah, the dog.

ART: I don't know if you would consider this the lead character, or the second lead character, but you might be aware of Scooby Doo's best friend Shaggy?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh, hrmph. What's his deal?

SYLVIA: Matthew Lillard?

ART: Matthew Lillard.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, Matty. Mm-hm.

ART: (overlapping) Matthew "Shaggy" Lillard.

KEITH: (overlapping) The- the best part of every bad movie he's in?

AUSTIN: Right. Uh, Twin Peaks: The Return's Matthew Lillard.

(KEITH laughs a little)

ART: Mmm. Yeah. Uh, well, I- I- Shaggy eats in a comical and cartoon manner.

AUSTIN: (amused) Uh-huh.

ART: Huge quantities of food, often in like, exaggeratedly fast.

JACK: (overlapping) Stacks?

AUSTIN: Yeah, stacks, yeah.

ART: I think that's a funny way to eat.

(Everyone laughs)

AUSTIN: What a pitch.

(SYLVIA and KEITH laugh)

SYLVIA: I agree...

KEITH: (overlapping) That's a really funny way to eat, why not just have two sandwiches, why have a sandwich that is two sandwiches tall?

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: And then like, your mouth could open really- like, wider than you would think.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) You're a robot. You're, you're- yeah.

ART: And you could just eat that sandwich in one bite.

AUSTIN: And this is an anime. So we could do whatever we want.

KEITH: (overlapping) Well, I- You- Well the part of it- Part of it is, you've gotta, you have to have the fuel, but it's like, you have to incentivize yourself to eat the food, which is what tongues are for-

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Because food tastes good.

AUSTIN: Food does taste good.

KEITH: So you do wanna- you do wanna savor the food.

AUSTIN: S you- right. That's fair. Maybe there's modes, right? Not literal- not like you're flipping between- Okay you have a Shaggy mode, where you're like, I gotta get food in here right now, and then-

KEITH: Yeah. Maybe it *is* flipping a switch. I don't know.

AUSTIN: Maybe it is. And you have like a, again, Han from Fast and the Furious, where you're just constantly nibbling on things, you know?

KEITH: Yeah. Little bit of both.

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Your low- your slow roll money.

ART: Rest in peace.

JACK: (overlapping) Also uh, Rusty from um, Ocean's.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Also yes. Yes.

JACK: (overlapping) Brad Pitt's character is constantly eating.

AUSTIN: Yes. This is a classic thing that happens in movies, is a character who just eats all the time, in every scene. It's just dy- a little more dynamic. Anyway, uh, so yeah. Clem, I'm curious about you. It sounds like Leap and Millie get along really well. Millie is fine, for me to say Millie?

SYLVIA: Yeah! Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. But what about- what about you, Clem? Are you trying to make any inroads here?

JACK: I think it is a straight, even split between, um, doing whatever the equivalent in Partizan of like, sitting and looking at your phone is?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: I don't know what that is, cause we know that like we don't- we have single-use devices, more than-

AUSTIN: So there are non-touch-screen multi-use devices. The only thing that can't be multi-use is a touch-screen device. What- what basically everyone does have is a thing called a Palace, which is a- "a palm computer with useful programs" is the thing in the book here. It's one load, so maybe you don't have yours with you, but maybe you do. "A small book sized computer with handy but simple apps." Um, it is like a- it is- I've described it as being both the- your newspaper, your wikipedia, everything else. It doesn't update that often. Um, it probably updates-

JACK: Oh yeah, you have to like-

AUSTIN: Yeah, so-

JACK: Update it is like a whole thing, right?

AUSTIN: It's a whole- *you* have to update it. You probably have to like, put it into a- into a, a hard- like you have to put it into a, um, like a charging dock, you know? And when it does that, it downloads the new information. All of the information passes through Nidean sensors. Um, you wouldn't ever say that out loud or believe it. What you believe is that

correct information is put in there. Information is like scrubbed for, you know, inaccuracies and stuff like that. Um, but the Partizan Palace is the, kind of the local newspaper slash wikipedia slash, you know, database of everything that happens. Um, and so there probably is like, really- it is not something you can up- it does not update itself wirelessly. It doesn't update itself like- you can't scroll your Twitter feed, what you could scroll is the last twenty-four hours of Twitter that were stored the last time you charged it, do you know what I mean?

JACK: Yeah. I think that because I'm on such a light load, I don't actually have it with me.

AUSTIN: Great.

JACK: I think instead what I have is, uh- I am setting my watch to the time zone of Obelle.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: Given that we have, presumably moved far enough to just be like, you've gone back an hour, or whatever.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Um, and then resetting it again, and then just like, playing with her bracelet.

AUSTIN: Great.

JACK: Um, and just like, kicking her feet. And then occasionally just sort of being like,

JACK (as Clementine): Wow Leap, you look hungry.

(AUSTIN laughs a little)

KEITH: I, um... I throw a grape in my mouth, and then I throw a grape at Clem.

AUSTIN: Clem, do you catch it?

JACK: (overlapping) Clem just like, catches the grape out of the air, goes back to resetting her watch.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Just with your hand you catch it, yeah? Just out the gate.

JACK: (overlapping) Yeah, just being like, ka-chunk.

AUSTIN: Yeah, great. Good.

SYLVIA (as Million): Okay, try me again, try me again.

KEITH: I throw another grape. I throw two grapes.

SYLVIA (as Million): Ack. Next time.

AUSTIN: Is next time immediately?

SYLVIA: Next time is immediately.

KEITH: (overlapping) Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay. Ahhhh.

JACK: (overlapping) Just, more grapes.

KEITH: (overlapping) There already was another one. I threw two directly and then I arced one up. So, "next time" and then another one like, hits her in the forehead.

(AUSTIN and SYLVIA laugh)

AUSTIN: Perfect. And this goes on until people go to bed.

KEITH: We've- I think we've made a *mess* in that room.

AUSTIN: Oh, definitely, um, absolutely. For sure. Um, the day comes. Again, like this is one of the things, it's a long night in the sense that it takes a long time for it to be dark-dark. That's just how life is Partizan, uh, cause it takes a long time for the planet to set. Um-

KEITH: I have a question. Do people live based on like, these longer weird days or is it people living according to other planet's cycles?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Yeah, I- No, people live on their own local cycles. There's lots of localism in the world of, of Partizan, broadly, because of- there's not a lot of space travel. Space travel is rare enough that it's hard to insist on- the Divine Principality does its best because it has things like- the calendar for this world is that there are ten months and each month has fifty days, and that is universal across all planets in the entire galaxy controlled by the Divine Principality. There didn't always used to be- Years didn't used to be five

hundred days long, they used to be four hundred. And then they added two more months. They were two hundred before that, you know what I mean? Like, they added, and they just add days to the calendar, because it's not-

JACK: It's like a real, like French Revolutionary calendar nightmare?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. Uh-

JACK: Where it's like, fuck it, more months!

AUSTIN: More months. Just add 'em on. And we're not dividing these up based- So, a thing that's very popular, or a thing that your Palace device would get updated with is a- a- Almanacs are very important. It's like, well, okay, what is the thirtieth day of month Chimera, what does that actually mean on this planet, this, this rotation around the sun? Um, there are certainly-

KEITH: Month Chimera is the last three months put together.

AUSTIN: That is, it is- So. (sighs) I have- there is an actual- I did this calendar. This calendar exists. This is a real fucking thing that I did. Uh, month Chimera is month...da da da da seven. It's the seventh month of the year. It is the month associated with Stel Columnar. Each of the Stels has a, has a legendary animal associated with it. Kesh is sphinx, Nideo is phoenix, um, Orion is dragon, uh, Columnar is chimera, and the- Apostolos is serpent, like a sea serpent, like a- like a big leviathan, sea serpent thing. And so that is- (sounding very tired) I also did- I designed all the- I designed all of their constellations that go with it, it's a whole thing. I did a lot of worldbuilding this fucking- for this fucking game. (laughs) Um, so, so yeah. That is the way that time works here. And I think people- people live their lives according to the way the days break though, despite that like, outside influence of what- how the way calendars work. Um, and there- I think that there probably are like- There is an official time associated with each of those days that does not line up with your own thing, so like, checking the date, the galactic date, the Divine date, does not-

KEITH: (overlapping) Yeah. So sometimes noon is in the middle of the day and sometimes noon is in the middle of the night.

AUSTIN: Totally. But people go like, I'm going to bed when the sun sets, or when, like, it's dark out, you know?

KEITH: (overlapping) Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: I bet some people- There's a lot of wiggle room, I think, around the sort of like, morning and night. Around like when people-

KEITH: Because the day and night is so long.

AUSTIN: Exactly.

KEITH: There's people who like to go to bed when it gets dark and wake up when it's still dark, or go to bed when it's been dark for a while, and wake up with the sunrise?

AUSTIN: (overlapping) Right. Exactly. Yes, yes. Um, and I bet you different Stels have different expectations around these things, right? Like, Orion is almost certainly like, sun's up, you're doing work in our factories. Or in our fields, you know?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: And the people who we will continue to employ-

KEITH: Which means you get way before the sun's up.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly.

KEITH: So you can get there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, probably a big nap culture, I bet? Anyway. In general, like, across Partizan. Uh. So, the next morning, uh, y'all wake up. Uh, and I think you're just gonna get escorted to the crater. Um, which you can see in the west side of town here, across the river, out beyond the river, uh, there's a huge crater. Does anyone want to do anything special here, or is anyone looking to like, bring something?

KEITH: I'm not looking to do anything yet.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, so, I think Cas'alear leads you all over there then, um, this next morning from the middle of town in like, a convoy of military trucks, and um, as you approach, the first thing you see, besides the raised lip of this huge crater that just totally spans the western horizon, um, is a building northeast of the crater. It is a recent addition. Um, it's one of the kind of, modular, easily-deployable Apstolosian structures. Um, they arrive in these kind of big, eighteen-wheeler sized crates, um and then they automatically unfold like a solar panel, or a bunch of solar panels, and then they keep unfolding to reveal walls, and doors, and windows, and everything else that you need for a forward operating base, or like, an overnight research lab. Um, at that base is a single mech, um, kind of medium-sized mech, kneeling at the facility, uh and there are some other big, kind of like, cargo trucks parked there, their engines turned off. And then climbing up over the lip of that

crater are a couple of smaller salvage rovers, that kind of like, think about like, moon rovers, or off-road go-karts almost with heavy duty tires, uh, some simple metal frames, a really bouncy suspension, and they're all filled up with like, different materials from the crash. Um, and you know, Cas'alear keeps driving and you keep being led, and eventually *you* see the crash finally too. You, you pull up over the lip of the crater, and, you know. It just stretches for forever. Uh, maybe in your heads, you thought you would reach this point and see like, a town, the way that the Past was supposed to look, or you know, maybe you would see some of the old spires of information but they're all lying on their sides instead of standing up, but it's just- it's just a mess. It's just like- it's totally ruined for miles, just beyond wrecked. It's like- it's impossible to even recognize the original, it's like if you took a thousand thousand jigsaw puzzles and turned them over and mixed them up, if you know, a jigsaw puzzle was made of copper piping, and wires, and like shattered glass, and sparking batteries, and girders, and coolant spills, and like, there are just like, sporadic fires all throughout the whole thing. It's just like, it's a bunch of *bits*. Not even bits and pieces, it's just the bits. And I think maybe the most surprising thing, you know, I already said the kind of, old towers aren't there, but it's not tall. Like, I think it would have been easy to imagine you would get there and, and it would be this big, tall wreck. But it's low. It's like, it's not only smaller or lower than your own mechs, but it's lower than these kind of Con-Con units, these construction- converted construction mechs that are picking through the rubble. Um, it's, you know, it's in the sand, it's spread across the sand, it's under the sand, and you know that somewhere in there, or like, somewhere *as there*, that is the Divine Past. It's all of that... shit, together. Um, and I think, at this moment, uh, Cas'alear kind of, kind of drives you down the edge of this lip and stops the cars, and everyone gets out-

[Jack de Quidt's [TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#) plays]

AUSTIN: And you're just in the, not the shadow of this thing, cause it's not tall, but, you know, in front of it, almost like an ocean, almost like the coast, you're at the coast of this wreck, um, and cas says-

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): I'm going to leave you, uh, with the lead scientist, who is doing- who is excavating this region and leading the effort. Um, I have other matters to attend to back in Obelle, but you have my frequency. If you need anything, call me.

[Jack de Quidt's [TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#) ends]

(NOTE TO TRANSCRIBER- All transcripts with Sylvia's deadname are being changed over from today with a note on the first instance to explain the audio/transcript discrepancy, so please move forward transcribing as Sylvia. Thank you! -Cole, TATT person in charge)