

COUNTER/Weight 30: Another Facility Among Trees

Transcriber: Ray B.

[00:00:00] AUSTIN: It had been a nice visit, the school had blossomed even further than when he was last there and he felt like he had come to peace with his past with Maryland. But when it was time to go, he suddenly welled up with regret, and something else: fear. The things she was working on would, well...

[[The Long Way Round](#) begins]

And so he chose a man, someone bright, someone who came from nothing, like he himself had, someone who had been with the September Project from the start, from before it was even September; and Ibex anointed this man his proxy. Except the fear remained. What would happen if Twelfth couldn't reach him? What would happen if Oricon discovered the institute's true nature? Their voices broke the mood wide open, *their* voices broke the mood wide open. 'What you need,' they told him, 'Are people so righteous that they'll be on their best behavior, even when their god isn't watching them. Let us do this for you. Let us build you a presence there, even when you are absent.' Ibex's eyes drew in.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): For a Divine that doesn't have a Candidate, you sure are eager to delegate power.

AUSTIN: Liberty and Discovery reached out with their many limbs, resting it on his left shoulder.

AUSTIN (as Liberty and Discovery): No more Candidates,

AUSTIN: They whirled a solution into place, even as they spoke to him.

AUSTIN (as Liberty and Discovery): Only peers.

[[The Long Way Around](#) plays]

AUSTIN: Hey everybody welcome to Friends at the Table, and actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends, we are presented by streamfriends.tv and runbutton.net. We are continuing our game of The Sprawl by Hamish Cameron, that book is so beautiful. I finally had a chance to look at that book, that book is so beautiful!

ALI: It's so good.

AUSTIN: That is Ali Acampora, you can find her on Twitter [@ali_west](#). Also joining me today, Jack DeQuidt:

JACK: Hi there, I'm [@notquitereale](#) on Twitter.

AUSTIN: Also Art Tebbel:

ART: Hey I'm @atebbel on Twitter.

AUSTIN: And... Keith J. Carberry:

KEITH: Hi, I'm @keithjcarberry on Twitter and you can find the let's plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton. Did we all decide to drop saying at, with Twitter handles? Did y'all-- is there a meeting I didn't know about?

AUSTIN: I still type it-- so I'm in this position now where because I've been putting up so many guest pieces on GiantBomb that when I write the like-- the bios for people, or when I like add the Twitter link, I'm really... unsure whether or not I should say at, and then the @ symbol, their name. Or is it--

JACK: I feel like it's like saying www dot,

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Like you don't really need to do it. Unless you're a grandma or a grandpa? They're allowed to do it.

KEITH: Well here's the thing is because most-- a lot of people don't have their name as the thing, like Jack I'm gonna-- I'm gonna pretend that I'm you for a second.

JACK: Hi!

KEITH: Hi, I'm not quite real. And then until you say on Twitter I just think that you're starting to craziest sentence.

[laughter]

JACK: Hi, I'm not quite real and it's Sunday.

[More laughter]

AUSTIN: [laughing quietly] Good, good start. So.

[Yet more laughter]

AUSTIN: Start of the game. Our agenda [reading] *"make The Sprawl dirty, high tech, and excessive. Make big things bigger and small things smaller. Fill the character's lives with action, intrigue and complication. Entangle the character's lives in The Sprawl and play to find out what*

happens" Our personal directives-- I think these are still them, more or less? Aria, did you change yours or are yours the same?

ALI: No, I'm keeping mine.

AUSTIN: Okay, [reading] "*When you value heroism over the mission, mark experience. When your desire for fame draws unwanted attention to the mission, mark experience.*" AuDy, I only have *one* of your's written down on my paper because I'm a bad GM... I've actually been prepping from Roll20 so I've seen whatever it is now, I just didn't ever actually copy it over to...

JACK: Ah, okay.

AUSTIN: [reading] "*Continually broad--*" Okay, your first one is "*When you discover more information about the cause of your sentience, mark experience. Continually broaden horizons, look for hidden things, and cultivate saplings. When those hinder the mission, mark experience.*" Cass... you also changed yours, right?

ART: I did.

AUSTIN: Yours are...

JACK: Fuck Divines.

AUSTIN: Right. "*When you harm a Divine or their interests, mark experience.*" and "*when your former membership in the Apostalosion royalty hinders the mission, mark experience.*" And Mako, yours are [laughing] "*When your smart ass mouth ruins the mission, mark experience. And when someone-- When you take something the September Institute wants, mark experience.*" I think that needs to still be in the form of it being... it can't just be like 'when you get the thing you want', like that's not-- I kind of just like revisiting it now.

[00:05:00] KEITH: Yeah, yeah. Well I put it out there for feedback, and then no one said anything, so I wasn't even sure if we were taking that.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think it's mostly good... the big thing with it is that personal directives should be about-- like everybody's personal directives are about like a thing that is their thing that... kind of does get in the way. Like, personal directives are... the thing that happens in the Cowboy Bebop episode, where the rest of the Bebop is like 'I fucking can't believe you Spike, why the hell are you off doing that bullshit?' or like 'god damn it Fey, how do you owe this person this much money?' Those are where they get experience.

KEITH: So it should be something that's like 'when you buy more robots than you have money to pay for...'

[laughter]

KEITH: 'mark experience'

AUSTIN: Yes, but there are occasional things that are like 'when you discover more...' so I don't want to say it's completely off the-- off the mark... let's just keep it for now, you know what, maybe it's fine

KEITH: Yeah, cause I spent the rest of the game with...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you spent a lot of time not gaining anything from that one, so...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Let's keep it... Right now our-- our mission directives are "*When you take the job, mark XP. When you obtain actionable information on Rigour, mark XP. When you locate and secure Maryland September, mark XP. If every member of the Kingdom Come leaves September alive, take two XP. And when you get paid, take XP.*"

KEITH: Last episode was... crazy?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Because... now we're basically working for the bad guy...

AUSTIN: I guess.

KEITH: Just 'cause he asked us to.

AUSTIN: Well no, 'cause he's paying you twenty credits.

JACK: And also, other fairly major reasons, like... maybe...

[laughing]

KEITH: No, I'm not saying he didn't make a good case.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: It's just fucking crazy.

ALI: [overlapping with Keith] We're just working for a guy because we just work for random guys? Like its not...

AUSTIN: Right, like-- tell me a time you worked for the good guys.

JACK: I've worked for this guy before, he's fine.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: That's true.

KEITH: Some guys-- the one-- the sad one we work with is good.

AUSTIN: Orth is pretty good, he doesn't exist in a position to hire you anymore though.

ALI: Yeah he's a member-- we hired him?

AUSTIN: [laughing] He's-- yeah...

KEITH: The only position Orth exists in is the fetal one.

[Everyone makes sad 'oh no' noises]

AUSTIN: Baby Orth.

[Ali laughs]

JACK: Oh my god, Austin, does Orth count in the 'people can't die' thing?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, that's *every* member of the Kingdom Come.

JACK: Did you just put Orth and Jacqui...?

ART: The two people most likely to die.

AUSTIN: Yeah weird.

JACK: Like did you just put them on our ships so you could kill them later?

AUSTIN: No, I put them on the ships so that one of *you* would die so they wouldn't, obviously.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: We'll find out.

JACK: [overlapping with Austin] Honestly that's *your* mission directive.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yes! No, my mission directive is... to fill your lives with action, intrigue, and complication.

JACK: And sadness.

AUSTIN: And I've taken XP for that quite often.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Um... so here we are! You're on September, you're in this old, abandoned facility... what do you do?

[quiet laughing]

KEITH: I assess!

JACK: [sarcastically] Good move.

AUSTIN: What's that mean though, like what are you-- describe to me your assessments.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: I just-- I want to know even what the building that we're in is.

AUSTIN: Um, AuDy can just tell you that, which is-- this is-- AuDy recognizes the design straight up. It is a... it is a building built in the style of the kind of resistance bases that were established to defeat Rigour on that planet ages ago. It's like-- it's a super modular design that has stuck around for all of that time, and that literally runs on the pre-Divine version of the Liberty and Discovery software. But there's more to learn, so... I guess the other thing you know is that this is a-- it's coordinates that Ibex gave you, right. So it's some sort of base that's tied to Ibex, but go ahead and roll Assess if you'd like to. Which is... Edge.

KEITH: [quietly] Edge...

AUSTIN: So I like this as an image of just like, you're all here in this place and Mako is just like wandering around... and misses, good.

[quiet laughter]

KEITH: Yeah, I wander around and nothing useful happens.

AUSTIN: One second, let me take a look at your sheet...

ART: Well bad things happen when you miss assess.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes bad--

JACK: Oh, they do, don't they!

AUSTIN: Yes, never miss a roll.

[Ali makes a scared noise]

AUSTIN: Let me just look at your sheet real quick.

KEITH: Oh, no, well I guess I didn't--

AUSTIN: Think that through...

KEITH: Take into account the consequences of looking around.

AUSTIN: Listen, there's--

JACK: I am curious, how does Mako screw up assessing a place?

AUSTIN: There's lots of ways--

JACK: Is that just not looking at a thing? Or is it failing to see a thing?

[00:10:00] AUSTIN: [overlapping with Jack] This is-- no, that's-- those sort's-- I mean that could be one way, right that's totally a way I could do this. It could be like 'oh no you think everything here is cool and fine' that's a totally acceptable thing. Another thing to do, and a thing I actually started to do in Dungeon World last campaign, was I started giving false information, and we-- and I only did this a couple of times, it was a-- it was a suggestion by a friend of the show, Faylen Parker who, when he runs his Dungeon World games, has a house rule that if someone messes up a research, or an assess style roll, give them false information, and if they act on that false information and it hurts them, give them experience.

JACK: That's so good.

AUSTIN: And I like that quite a bit, but in this case what I'm actually going to look at is... some of... your...

KEITH: So where does-- sorry, where does it say where the bad stuff is?

AUSTIN: There isn't, the bad stuff--

KEITH: [overlapping with Austin] -- the basic moves the same question?

AUSTIN: The bad stuff is just whenever-- whenever you roll a six or below, the MC gets to make a move as hard or soft as they want.

KEITH: Oh, okay, so it's just a general...

AUSTIN: That's just the universal rule is 'don't fail a roll'

KEITH: Okay, I thought there was a specific assess thing that wasn't working.

AUSTIN: No. No, no, no, any failure-- I mean some failures have extra, special things where it's says like 'oh if you fail this then this is the result' but... but assess is just like-- most moves are just 'oh, I get to do a thing' and I have a list of moves just like I did in Dungeon World and if you go back to, I think, the first episode of the Sprawl, I went over what those moves were. But those are the sorts of things that are just like... a gesture that there's something bad coming, or do damage as I've established it already, but in this case what I'm actually looking at is stuff on your character sheet to see if there's something that I can like reference, in terms of you being back on September. For instance you have... I thought you had the-- oh, right yeah, you have the Owned tag, right?

KEITH: I do, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes. So--

KEITH: The-- Mako doesn't know that he is Owned.

AUSTIN: [overlapping with Keith] Correct.

KEITH: He thinks that he is Hunted.

AUSTIN: Right, though it's actually extra interesting now, because that means something different than it did last episode.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Owned used to mean that... when-- in my mind, Owned used to mean that at the end of the day, September owned whether or not you could be... whether or not you could use your abilities. And now it doesn't necessarily mean that. But so what I think it means now is that... you walk into a room, and the lights turn on, and it says:

AUSTIN (as September AI): Welcome home, student Trig!

KEITH: Mmm... they forgot to take me out of the system.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: I think you're alone in this room, it's just like a barracks-- it's like a quarters. There are some old cots, like old bunk beds.

[Jack laughing]

JACK: Does it say something like 'you have forty credits in unpaid library...'

AUSTIN: [overlapping with Jack, laughing] Yes!

[everyone laughs]

JACK:... Late fees.

AUSTIN: 'you have four hundred and twenty two new messages' and it's all just like-- it's all just messages from--

JACK: 'Come to the international student meeting, in...'

AUSTIN: That's exactly what it is, it's exactly those, yes.

ART: The library would like to know about all those robots you bought from them.

JACK: Book stacking robots...

AUSTIN: So...

KEITH: Come to their show of Spies and Dolls.

[quiet laughter]

AUSTIN: So what else-- what else are people doing?

JACK: Um... what do-- what do these Discovery terminals-- what are they doing? Are they just inactive or...

AUSTIN: [overlapping with Jack] They're waiting, waiting for input, basically.

JACK: Oh, cool... can I interact with one of them?

AUSTIN: Totally! What are you doing?

JACK: Um [sighs], I'd like to... see if I can see the last messages that were sent or received on this terminal.

AUSTIN: Sure... it's gonna be a roll of some sort to like interface with this. I think this might be... I think this is probably a research roll. That sounds to me like [reading] "*when you investigate a person, place, object, or service using a library, dossier, or database, or a combination of them*"

JACK: That sound exactly what it is, right?

AUSTIN: And the question that you asked would be like, the way you under-- you got to ask the question "*who owned or employ blank*" or something like that, you know.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So go ahead and give me a mind roll.

JACK: Okay...

AUSTIN: So AuDy just walks right up to this machine...

JACK: And I miss it.

[Ali makes a worried noise]

AUSTIN: Good, great.

JACK: This is a great start.

AUSTIN: It is.

KEITH: We're bad at this planet, this is not a good planet for us.

AUSTIN: Yeah, this is bad-- well you're getting all your bad rolls out of the way. [sighs] So...

JACK: Never a time like now!

[quiet laughter]

AUSTIN: God... When you approach it and you start tapping the keyboards, it says-- I guess, are you tapping a key-- what's the interaction look like?

JACK: Oh, I think it's... you know like at drive-throughs they have those touch screens that really aren't that good.

AUSTIN: Yes, mhm.

JACK: Because they're pressure based, rather than like the ones on our phones.

AUSTIN: Yes. So you press it once, and it's definitely an old screen, you've definitely used better, newer touchscreens, you're totally right, it's like the drive-through ones. And it-- as soon as *you* touch it, it says-- it says 'nearfield communication identifies new...'

JACK: Aw Jesus.

AUSTIN: 'New firmware upgrade: beginning.' And it wipes the database and installs the newest Liberty and Discovery system into the-- into the base, lifting it from you. You feel the doors now.

[short pause]

JACK: I mean I guess this could be interpreted as a good thing.

[quiet laughter]

[00:15:00] AUSTIN: Anyone else making rolls?

ART: [overlapping with Austin] That's what everyone says after good things happen.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH (as Mako): [away from the microphone, as if yelling from another room]
Something weird happened, I had a few messages and they're all gone!

[Everyone laughs]

KEITH (as Mako): A couple of them looked like really solid leads!

[More laughter]

AUSTIN: [smiling] Aria, what are you doing?

ALI: [laughing] What's like... I guess it would be another assess, but is there like anything valuable in this warehouse that we could... take?

AUSTIN: [inhales deeply] That does sound like another assess, I think... I think it might be.

JACK: Come on, please let there be--

AUSTIN: No, no no, that's...

KEITH: Pilfer, it's the pilfer roll.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: It would be a pilf-- yeah, give me a pilfer. Yes, I think that would be another assess, something like 'where can I gain the most advantage' would be like yeah I could tell you some cool stuff that's here.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So yeah, so that's 'when you closely study or situation'

[Jack gasps excitedly]

AUSTIN: Look at that, Ali rolled an eleven.

ALI: [spoken] Ha ha ha!

AUSTIN: Aria finally breaks the-- so, I gave--

ALI: Plus three hold.

AUSTIN: *"Gain three hold. In the ensuing action you may spend one hold at any time to ask the MC a question from the list below if your examination could have revealed the answer. The MC may ask you questions to clarify your intent, take plus one forward when acting on the answer."*
[reading the potential questions] *"What potential complications do I need to be wary of? What do I notice despite an effort to conceal it? How is blank vulnerable to me? How can I avoid trouble or hide here? What is my best way in/way past/way out? And where can I gain the most advantage?"* And also more *"Who or what is my biggest threat in the situation? And who or what is in control here?"*

[quiet laughter]

ALI: Um... I think I'm definitely going to go with 'where can I gain the most advantage?' in, just like... looking around at all the stuff that's in here and trying to see...

AUSTIN: Sure. So you find two things right away. One is... you notice that there are only two ways in and out. You find a-- you a like map of the facility. And it-- it clari-- it confirms that the way you came in through the kind of landing pad and the stairwell that's attached... to that-- that

like goes up to where that landing pad is, those are the only ways in and out where you are and there's another way out of here but it's kind of far from here. There's a long underground passage you can take that plops you up, southwest of where you are... and I'm going to reveal it... on the map... here. Alright. So that's all you see. So that's-- that's your best-- so in other words the place where you have the most advantage are like up near the choke points. There are really only two ways into this place.

ALI: Okay, what do I notice despite an effort to conceal it?

AUSTIN: So there is... what are you doing, like where is Aria looking?

ALI: I think that she's more like just exploring the facility, like Mako was.

AUSTIN: Mhm, okay so... alright so you find a... an armory, like a barracks style armory where it's clear a security unit would have geared up, and it's basically empty, all of the lockers have been cleared out of weapons and gear, but you find an ID card that probably slipped out of someone's pocket. On the card is a picture of a man who has kind of tan skin, like weathered tan skin, a square jaw, tight eyes, a really big wide smile which is kind of awkward because he's also just in military gear, and it's just like-- he looks maybe a little more... just a little more happy than most people would look in a picture like this. And it says Declan M., Tzadik Unit, T Z A D I K. Tzadik Unit...

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: And then it probably says... I think that's all it says, it doesn't say anything else. There's a-- there is... when you lift it's, it's kind of like a-- it feels like it's made of metal, it has like a heavy density to it, it's nice, it feels good in your hand. And you can imagine that it probably contains data.

ALI: Okay, would I recognize the word Tzadik from any signs or...

AUSTIN: No, you've never heard it. No, unlikely. Deeply unlikely.

ALI: Okay... I'm gonna save my last hold.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cass, what are you doing?

ART: I'm gonna roll "I Love It When A Plan"

JACK: Yes!

AUSTIN: Okay, sounds good.

ALI: Do we have a plan?

JACK: Absolutely.

ART: [overlapping with Jack] I don't have to have a plan, that's the point.

[Soft laughter]

ART: There's my Plan move...

KEITH: [overlapping with Art] It's the other one that has to have a plan.

ART: Here's the Plan: I need a plan. I Love it When a Plan Comes Together...

AUSTIN: [Smiling] No plan necessary.

ART: Yeah, I'm just going.

AUSTIN: Okay.

[Art rolls I Love it When a Plan Comes Together]

ART: Well that sucked. That was bad.

AUSTIN: Buddy. You rolled a six, how did you roll... what are you doing?

[everyone groans]

[00:20:00] AUSTIN: Oh boy, y'all are making it hard for me right out the gate, huh?

ART: Yeah...

AUSTIN: I wasn't- I was not prepared to- you don't... I'm gonna have to move you over, I think, from this screen to this screen.

JACK: Oh dear.

ART: Wait I can't see it, I have all my character sheets open.

[laughter]

JACK: Ah, clocks have been upgraded.

ART: Look at this!

KEITH: This looks really good.

AUSTIN: This looks pretty good, so there's a new clock.

KEITH: I know that nobody listening has ever really seen the clocks but...

AUSTIN: The old ones... were garbage that I made with the tools just in Roll20 to like draw circles and stuff. Now I've lifted the really nice digital setup from the *Sprawl* book and then added some nice colour...

JACK: I feel we should say that

KEITH: [overlapping with Jack] Did Hamish get *Doc Brown* to help with the art for the book?

AUSTIN: Oh no the alert stuff is all- I mean yes, Doc Brown was involved with the clocks. Totally. And then...

JACK: [overlapping with Austin] The thing is...

AUSTIN: [smiling] Go ahead Jack.

JACK: [laughing] What we're looking at are digital clocks with boxes that could be filled in coloured to show that the clocks are moving. Instead of colouring in the boxes though Austin has written, in a digital clock font, the word "Alert" in *each* box and then in the last box are three exclamation points.

[Ali Laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping with Jack] Yep, because there are...

JACK: So there are [counting under their breath] Nineteen alerts on screen right now and nine exclamation marks.

AUSTIN: Okay so- [laughs] It's a lot. Cass... so you're doing your plan which I think is just like... you're seated somewhere and you have your HUD up...

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right? To... review all the details that you have, to try to like- you're just doing the *first* step, like literally the first step in your planning process which is like: I'm gonna put everything all

out on the table, if this was a physical thing you wouldn't have even gotten your thumbnails and your red yarn yet. Like you're still in the 'I'm gonna lay out all of my photographs' stage.

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: And... one of the like digital photographs has like a little... there's a little dust on it? And you go to touch it, like Minority Report style to like get- 'why is there weird digital dust there?' and you touch it and it... it just turns to digital dust. Your neural interface is breaking. Your neural interface with hardware decay? You can't use it for the rest of this mission... until you get it repaired.

[Soft laughter in the background]

ART: Wait but- aw... that's not what my neural interface did.

[Louder laughter]

AUSTIN: Mm.

ART: [Fake indignantly] Fine.

KIETH: What else did it do?

ART: That was a- I thought it was a targeting computer.

AUSTIN: It's a neural interface *with* a targeting suite, it's not *just* a targeting suite.

ART: [vague grumpy noises] Great.

ALI: Remember before we started this when Austin was like 'make sure you use your cyberware'.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ART: [overlapping with Jack] Well mine's broken.

JACK: Oh sorry you can't. It just says 'alert' now. That's *twenty*.

ART: Well I still get my one hold for the plan so...

AUSTIN: [smiling] That's true. Good job buddy.

ART: And once we get to a point where we *can* have a plan I still have my other planning...

AUSTIN: And listen you could totally get your neural interface fixed, that's a thing you could... like none of you-

ART: [overlapping with Keith, sarcastic] Yeah that sounds totally plausible.

KIETH: Could I fix that?

AUSTIN: ... No you'd need to find a Tech. A Tech has moves that could do that.

KIETH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Again unless you had- you could if you had the move that was like 'repair stuff'...

KIETH: I don't have that move.

AUSTIN: But I don't think anybody here has that stuff...

ART: I mean there's some good things about these clocks... like who cares how high the Righteous Vanguard clock gets at this point.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: I'll go over what the clocks are right now. Legwork clock is empty, action clock is empty, there's a bunch of corporate clocks, Petrichor Automeia is at twenty two hundred which means there's only two slots left before things go really bad there, three- Hands of Grace is at three- twenty one hundred... Rapid Evening is at eighteen hundred, Righteous Vanguard is at twenty two hundred, The Golden Branch Demarchy's *all* the way back at fifteen hundred, and the Minerva Strategic Alliance is at twenty two hundred.

JACK: Do we need to worry about Righteous Vanguard at this point?

AUSTIN: That's what Cass was kind of saying... I wouldn't want any of these clocks to continue advancing is what I'll say.

JACK: Right, so is this almost like that video game thing of like 'we're with these guys now but maybe their people don't know so [laughs] they're still shooting'.

KIETH: My favourite clock is the threat clock that has two alerts and then the name is just four question marks.

AUSTIN: Uh huh, so I know what that is, I have a- on the GM side *each* of those threats has a name next to it [laughs].

ART: What I like is that clock at the bottom that's "The Kingdom Come".

ALI: Yeah what's that?

JACK: Oh no...

AUSTIN: We established that during our... during the disinterest- Detachment, I always say disinterest. The Detachment fight.

KIETH: You just don't care to learn the right name.

[00:25:00] AUSTIN: [sarcastic] I know, I can't decide. You know I'm just a little ambivalent about the whole thing.

ART: Boo

[laughter]

AUSTIN: The Kingdom Come's clock is the damage done to the Kingdom Come, it's the Kingdom Come's harm clock.

ALI: Ohhh

AUSTIN: So it's basically fine. It's at fifteen hundred it's been hit once but like you know, at some it won't be very nice.

JACK: [overlapping with Art] Rear left engine... you know

ART: It's gonna decide it hates us and start to work against our interests.

AUSTIN: No... no.

JACK: The ship doesn't have an AI on it other than... well as far as we know [laughs].

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah. Okay...

JACK: Ah, right...

AUSTIN: There's some other question, was there another question? No. Oh, I wanted to say something else about the Righteous Vanguard thing which is: if you recall there was a bit in the last episode where Ibex kind of said like 'It would be great if I could just say we're even, but some things are out of my hands'.

JACK: Yeah...

AUSTIN: It's important to note that killing Ibex does not automatically end the Righteous Vanguard, right?

JACK: Right he def- he probably has shareholders and things, like a board...

AUSTIN: Shareholders and a Divine and... you know, a population he has promised some things to.

JACK: [laughing] And a Divine that is fairly antagonistic towards him.

AUSTIN: Yes, so... so that is why I have not yet wiped this thing.

JACK: Okay.

ART: I think in the resulting confusion we could at least...

JACK: We could at least? Okay I'm wondering whether or not... Ah, how stealthy do we want to be at this point?

ALI: The most stealthy.

ART: [overlapping with Kieth] So stealthy.

KEITH: I vote *very* stealthy.

[quiet laughter]

AUSTIN: I'm bringing us back over to the map.

JACK: Okay so I won't do my plan.

AUSTIN: What was your plan?

JACK: I'm scared to say it now Austin...

AUSTIN: [smiling] Okay.

JACK: You might just do it.

KEITH: Well let's listen to the 80,000 year old secret robot life.

[Everyone laughs]

JACK: I'm doors now.

[More laughter]

JACK: Okay, so should we just, do we want to take this big long tunnel? My plan was I was gonna try and page Maryland September through the computer system... but I think that wouldn't be great because I feel that a computer just saying 'Maryland September to the terminal please' would alert... *everybody*.

ART: Oh yeah...

ALI: Yeah, that's- mmm...

ART: [overlapping with Jack] Not my favorite plan.

JACK: Also we don't know what condition she's in. No...

ALI: So like we, we can go outside, like there's the September Institute but there's also like towns and stuff?

AUSTIN: Yes, when you're flying over... this is, you're near a city, you're outside a city by a couple of miles, you don't know anything about that city and that is the city where... the main September Institute campus is.

ALI: Okay, does...

KEITH: It's a nice campus!

AUSTIN: It is a nice campus.

ALI: Does Mako know anything about that city?

AUSTIN: Sure, probably.

KEITH: Yeah!

AUSTIN: What do you want to know about that city Mako? In fact, here's what I'll say is... you can ask me questions as if it were, as if you had successfully rolled a ten on Research.

KEITH: Okay, uh... well I guess, real quick I want to talk to everybody else, what is our primary... what do we want to get done first?

ALI: Hmm, we want to get into the September Institute, right?

KEITH: Okay

JACK: Would it be maybe worth attempting to secure Maryland before we even consider making a move on Rigour?

ALI: [Emphatically] Yes.

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: [Overlapping with Jack] She's a like...

JACK: I mean, Austin laughed there because the idea of making a move on Rigour is so wildly implausible.

AUSTIN: [Laughing, overlapping with Jack] Yes. It's so implausible that I didn't make a- I didn't give you a directive that was "make a move on Rigour".

ALI: [Confused, incredulous] Yeah, wh- are we doing that at all? 'Cause we shouldn't!

JACK: Hey, last time I tried to fight Rigour it went really great until it didn't go really well at all. Ever.

[Laughter]

ALI: You don't have a Candidate anymore so maybe it'll go better this time.

AUSTIN: [Overlapping with Ali] That's true.

JACK: Mmm...

ALI: Mm [Laughs]. Ah yeah anyway I was gonna say that like, Ibex told us specifically to find out what's going on there, but we don't want to like... we don't want to cause a shuffle... inside of the September Institute. Right?

JACK: What d'you mean by shuffle?

ALI: We just want to like investigate and go, right? We don't want to...

JACK: Oh, you mean a *ruckus*.

KEITH: Yeah, there's definitely no one there I still want to...

ALI: [Overlapping with Keith] Yes. No ruckuses!

KEITH: ...punch in the mouth!

AUSTIN: I mean there might be.

KEITH: That's my whole thing now. That's my new... character trait.

ALI: [Laughing] You like sockin'em?

JACK: [Overlapping with Ali] Mouth punching.

ART: That should've been your new directive. 'When mouth-punching gets in the way...'

[Ali laughs]

JACK: Do we know the...

KEITH: [Overlapping with Jack] When socking someone right in the jaw puts the mission at risk...

[Laughter]

JACK: [In their serious voice] Where does this tunnel come out?

AUSTIN: Scroll the map down a little bit.

JACK: All I can see is a tiny, teeny-tiny square.

AUSTIN: That's a building.

ALI: It's a single...

JACK: [Overlapping with Ali] Do we know what that building is?

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: So we know that it comes up... at a building.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Okay.

JACK: Do we want to split the party?

AUSTIN: Good! Great! Always the best sentence. Like. In all RPGs.

[00:30:00] KEITH: [Overlapping with Austin] Just don't... let's *not* do that. No, no, no, no, no.

[Laughter]

ALI: [Laughing] It's worth-

AUSTIN: [Smiling] I'm not saying it's a bad idea

JACK: I'm saying that it might actually be... cool?

ART: [Overlapping with Jack] We can cover twice as much ground that way.

JACK: We can cover twice as much ground that way!

AUSTIN: Maryland will be safe twice!

KEITH: [Overlapping with Austin] You're making- I've seen Scooby Doo, I know the reasons why it's not a good idea.

JACK: [Overlapping with Keith] It goes so well in Scooby Doo.

ART: [laughing] They always catch the bad guy, Scooby Doo never loses.

JACK: Yeah, they do!

AUSTIN: [laughing] That's true!

KEITH: Yeah but Shaggy always gets so scared!

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Is Mako a Shaggy?

ALI: [Laughing] Yes.

AUSTIN: Oh no...

JACK: [Confused] Mako?

AUSTIN: Mako's a Shaggy...

[Laughter, then a quiet moment]

JACK: Austin, do I have security camera access?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Can I turn on a- well hang on - should I turn on a security camera at the bottom of this tunnel?

AUSTIN: [Overlapping with Jack] They're on.

JACK: Oh, okay, can I see the security camera at the bottom of this tunnel? Will that attract attention?

AUSTIN: Will turning- No.

JACK: What's in the...

AUSTIN: Where do you want to- which one do you want to turn on? 'Cause there's a ton.

JACK: {Overlapping with Austin} I want to see what's going on... I want to see what's going on in that building.

AUSTIN: Inside the building is an... it's a bunch of empty cubicles. No it's not a bunch of empty- it's a bunch of cubicles that are filled with tables and desks, and that have consoles on them, and... there's nothing in them, and it's clear that no one has ever worked there. There is another- Mm, I think this is a roll. I think... no, you failed that other roll, I'll give you this one, I'll let this stand. There's another camera facing outside of that building and it is a kind of a large street... What time of day is it?

ALI: Mid afternoon.

AUSTIN: Okay...

JACK: Getting towards evening.

AUSTIN: So... there's a camera outside that reveals- you kind of flip through a bunch of different cameras, you flip through one that's the interior of that office that's completely fake and empty, then there's a reception area and that has a person working the reception desk. And then there's a camera facing outside from there that is, every once in a while someone walks past and there are two other office buildings that you can kind of see from there.

JACK: Okay, I'm going to convey this information to everybody.

ART: How-

KEITH: Can I ask my research questions?

AUSTIN: Sure.

KEITH: How secure is the September Institute?

AUSTIN: [Sighs] It's pretty- it's pretty secure. You're still looking at the map, right?

[Collective mhm's]

AUSTIN: Or wait, do I have you on the map or do I have you on the clocks? I have you on the map.

JACK: Map.

AUSTIN: So... you know that the institute itself- and you're able to relay this, is surrounded by four- by three walls. By three walls and an ocean, and also along the side of the ocean are these big weird... basalt formations, big rock formations...

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: That come up and form a kind of a natural cover, or a natural... obstacle to approaching it from the seaside. There are... there are guards at the gates, very few people get in or out... without clearance, either being workers or students, and you know that there is security there, and while you were there, which was a while ago, things never got violent, but you know there is armed security there.

KEITH: And we already know... Maryland's position in the September Institute. She's like... head honcho?

AUSTIN: [Overlapping with Keith] No, not really, like... no.

KEITH: We don't?

AUSTIN: You never met Maryland...

JACK: Twelfth is...

AUSTIN: Twelfth is the head of the September Institute-

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: He is the Headmaster, and the... Provost Regent.

JACK: Also terrifying.

AUSTIN: Also kind of terrifying... I don't know, I have mixed feelings about him. Maryland you never met, and was gone by the time you were a student.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: She was a... she founded the Institute, is what you know, there's like a statue of her, there's a statue of her in a nice little park and a... quad. I guess it's not really a quad, it's kind of a triangle, it's kind of a tri? [laughs] And there's a statue of her inside of that... and you know that she's spoken of as being the... the first person to have really discovered Stratus... like the science of studying Strati. She wrote a book called... Strati and Socio- what was it, it was- I wrote this down recently 'cause I'm the biggest nerd. It's not the one that was already mentioned in a previous episode either!

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: It's Strati and Sociologistics Towards an Interventionist Structuralism.

ART: Oh my god...

AUSTIN: That's what it was called. Uh huh.

[00:35:00] KEITH: [Laughs] Okay, so that's, that's all stuff that I knew.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And does Cass say 'oh my god' when Mako tells us this?

AUSTIN: Does Mako know the name of that book?

KEITH: No, Mako had to struggle just as hard to figure it out.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Good! Good!

[Laughter]

ART: I don't think Cass-

KEITH: Is it only because like a one- a 101 professor said it like ten times.

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly.

KEITH: Like, and had to, you had to mention her book.

ART: Cass doesn't find it quite as precious that the universe decided that's what that book is named.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Yes. That's just 'cause Cass doesn't know the universe's creator on a name-to-name basis.

[Laughter]

JACK: Right! Yes, that's also true.

KEITH: Does that count as my follow-up or do I still have a follow up?

AUSTIN: You have a follow up.

KEITH: Okay! Let's see...

AUSTIN: If there's something that's not here and you just want to ask generally, go for it, but I want to make sure we at least thought in these terms before we jumped to just asking broad questions.

KEITH: Yeah... Do we- did we get... coordinates to Maryland or do we just like know 'oh she's there'.

AUSTIN: No, they're- they're...

JACK: [Overlapping with Austin] We got coordinates to the base, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, the coordinates you got were the ones that took you to this base.

KEITH: Can I ask where would we find Maryland?

AUSTIN: You would have no idea.

KEITH: Yeah, that's what I figured. Ah... maybe I know a secret spot!

AUSTIN: No, like you know like a nice cafe, that's what you know.

KEITH: Yeah, I know where the best coffee drinks are.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: I'm sort of like interested in a follow up to the security question if you're taking, like, ideas.

KEITH: I'll take an idea!

ART: Like... armed guards is one thing, how seriously are they checking credentials? Like I've been to college campuses before, and on most college campuses you can walk around wherever, but most colleges aren't teaching you how to... destroy weapons of war.

AUSTIN: It was never hard for you, Mako, because you were a student.

KEITH: Okay, right. It still says I'm a student!

AUSTIN: There was this time that you wanted to bring someone back to the dorm with you, they did not get in, and you were like 'why not' and they were like 'because they didn't file- fill out the right paperwork, it's gonna take them three months to fill out the right paperwork to visit you for a night,' and you were like 'mfef' and snuck them through a wall. That was a good night.

KEITH: Through a wall?

AUSTIN: Like over a wall, like you snuck them through a... a back way. In fact I think you probably- what you probably did was very romantic and silly, was walked them through this like, weird back area near the bay- near the ocean that runs up against it, hopping from stone to stone around the back of this thing.

JACK: Hmm, so it's...

AUSTIN: It was very dangerous and you were very young and stupid.

KEITH: But I did it, it works!

JACK: [Overlapping with Keith] It's simultaneously a weapons research facility and also just a university-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: In terms of like, you can just sneak in if you're really careful.

[laughter]

ART: Is- is everyone-

KEITH: The head scientist has a sock on his doorknob [laughs].

[snrk]

ART: Is everyone a Stratus or is there someone there studying like, literature?

[00:38:00] AUSTIN: there- there are strati in there studying literature

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: It is-- it's because--

KEITH: It's a liberal arts...

AUSTIN: It *is*, right? Like it's- this is the thing is, is at least when you were here the modus operandi was 'hey what is a Stratus?' Part of that was 'how do we weaponize these,' but part of it was, like, what does it mean to have this weird enhanced empathy and also read great fiction?

JACK: I cannot believe that we're this late into season two of *Friends at the Table* and this is the first time we've gone to a university.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: [smiling] It's amazing.

[Keith laughs quietly]

ART: Well I mean part of that's because we destroyed the only known university in season one during the world generation.

JACK: [fake indignant] Well now hey, now hey now... [laughs]

KEITH: I bet there was a university where- where wood elf David Bowie lived.

ALI: Ohhh...

AUSTIN: Naw he just kinda hung out, he just kinda hung out in the woods.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: He was nice, I miss him.

ALI: Ok--

JACK: Ok... So I feel like we should make a hard move, I feel like we're trying to get into the boat here.

AUSTIN: You are definitely--

KEITH (as Mako, jokingly): Listen, I know this back way where we hop on rocks [he laughs]!

ART: Could Mako get us in the system... I mean I know child Mako couldn't but could adult Mako, you know, fog their security devices?

KEITH: You mean could I make it look like three months ago you did all the proper paperwork?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uhh, not right this second, not from here, but from there? You could definitely give it a shot.

ART: Let's get- let's get Mako there, that should be our first...

KEITH: Alright, get me--

ALI: Yeah we have to--

ART: Maybe this is the start of a plan.

JACK: Oh, hey, hey!

ALI: Well we have to get into the building so...

ART: Yeah but I could, I could help, I could help...

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: He's saying he could make a 'here's where the plan'...

ART: Right, I could make a "Here's the Plan" but we should all like...

AUSTIN: Oh, right, not 'here's where the plan'...

ART: ...'cause the plan is ridiculous.

[Ali laughs]

ART: Here's a "Here's the Plan".

JACK: So run me through the here's the "Here's the Plan."

KEITH: What's the here's the "Here's the Plan" plan?

ART: Here's the plan plan...ing.

[00:40:00] AUSTIN: Oh boy.

ART: So we, we go through the tunnel, we get to the building at the other end of the tunnel, and we try to get Mako into the system there. Once we're credentialed we can theoretically move around the campus unfettered. The problem with giving everyone else a task contingent on this is if Mako fails this first bit everyone loses their plus one.

AUSTIN: That is true!

JACK: Also...

ART: So here's a very- here's what I think I can say that doesn't necessarily hinge on this. I think... oh...

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: If you don't specify how I'm getting you in I could try several different ways to get you in, surely one of them will work.

ART: No, it's fogging, fogging is the way, that's... fogging or people fogging as we like to call Mako talking to...

[giggles]

ART: And once we're in...

JACK: I don't think...

KEITH: [00:41:02] ...They get very confused, a little bit dazed...

ART: So, so post credentialing, or even, no matter what happens with the credentialing we have to, we have to go forward from there and when we get through with that I think we should split up... Scooby Doo style, and I think it should be... me and Aria going for September, and Mako and AuDy, because AuDy's gonna continue to run into problems and Mako can try to smooth

those over... and they go for the actionable information, or however that was phrased. I thought I wrote that down and I-

AUSTIN: That's right, you're right, ok!

KEITH: Ok.

ART: Unless anyone has a problem. This is the time to iron that out.

ALI: This seems ok, do you want to give...

JACK: No, this seems fine.

ALI: ...Can we give Jacquie and Orth tasks?

AUSTIN: Sure.

KEITH: Oh, right, they're here!

Mako: You guys are really quiet.

JACK: Could we get them to...

AUSTIN (as a character): It's very overwhelming! Yo0u know it's just [sighs] you know I was just on Counterweight a couple... weeks ago. I miss a lot of-- I...

Mako: You're homesick?

AUSTIN (as a character): Yeah... I'm a little homesick.

KEITH (as Mako, but it's a goof): I get it, whichever one of you is talking. [smiling]

AUSTIN (as Orth): It's me, Orth. [just talking in his normal voice] when I'm down here I'm Orth...

AUSTIN (as Jacquie): [talking in a higher, southern voice] And when i'm a little bit more wisecrackin' and quick talkin' it's me, Jacquie!

[everyone laughs]

ART: Ok....

[more laughing, Ali giggles]

JACK: From the saloon!

AUSTIN: Howdy pardner! Cowboy Jacquie!

ALI: [laughing] Stop!

ART: Can I, can I send them on their own mission or is that a bad idea?

JACK: No, no we want to put them in the safest possible room, and just have them close the door!

AUSTIN: [overlapping with Jack] Yeah, you could totally send them on their own mission, yep!

ART: So I should have them do like their own guerrilla operation against the security to try and like draw them away from us.

AUSTIN: You could totally do that. *You* would make a roll for that.

KEITH: [overlapping with Austin] Couldn't we just have them go to the library to get microfiche of Maryland?

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Aw, that would be-- only if I get to just write that short story happening, if I get to write that fanfic of them hanging out.

KEITH: [quietly] Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so here's the, here's the thing...

KEITH: It's the safest and most useful place for them, so they don't die.

AUSTIN: There is a thing I want to...

ART: ...Operations?

AUSTIN: Yes. so there are operations in this game, it's a thing I don't think we talk about very often... if you turn to page... whatever page this is, 220 in your *Sprawl* manual... mission packages. There is a thing called operations, there's a move called "Conduct an Operation."
"When you lead a planned and coordinated operation, describe your plan and who is carrying it out, and then roll Edge. On a 10+ everything goes according to plan, you and your team are in perfect position to carry out the final element of the plan, the MC will describe the scene and present you with an opportunity to act. 7-9 you get your opportunity to act, but it won't go as smoothly as you would like, choose 1. Either: a preliminary task was not completed on time or accurately, choose a task and the MC will describe how it causes a problem, or: There is an unexpected complication, choose a consideration and the MC will describe how it causes a problem. On a 6 or minus the MC will describe the scene and make a move that puts you on the back foot, both problems described on a 7-9 apply as well. Conduct an operation will be used

for side missions, or any part of the main mission that the players or the MC don't want to spend a lot of time on. Use it when failure or complication could be interesting, but the details of the mission and its execution are not." Then there's a bunch of like, mission kind of... parameters that it suggests, like "destruction." Like if your thing is I wanna go destroy a building, or destroy a... something then like... the tasks you need are: "determine the location of assets, establish the matrix overwatch, take positions," and it could be complicated by: "security teams, environmental factors, or the mobility of the target asset." And so you just make that roll, and we would just zip to, your in position to pull the trigger, right? Instead of like... instead of having a whole big scene where Mako gets into matrix overwatch, he would just be there. So I'm totally up for using those here, because this is such a big thing, but I also really just like the notion of using it as a way to talk about what Orth and Jacquie are doing. But it would mean, it would mean Cass making that roll, and something could go wrong.

[00:45:00] KEITH: Does Cass have to make that roll?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

KEITH: What is your edge like?

ART: It's ok... it's a one.

[Ali makes a scared noise]

AUSTIN: But...

JACK: I could aid him on it.

KEITH: [overlapping with Jack] I could assist?

AUSTIN: You could definitely aid him on it, yeah. Again that would mean it would open you up for, for repercussions if the roll went bad.

ART: We should figure...

[Everyone talks all at once, it goes horribly wrong.]

AUSTIN: Whoa, whoa, whoa, one at a time.

ART: We should figure out what it is first.

AUSTIN: Yes, you should figure out what it is, and if you want to do it, before you talk about aiding or anything else.

[Jack hmms]

AUSTIN: So what would you like them to do? And what would you like you to do?

JACK: Um, ok, so do we, do we want to have them moving around at the base, or do we want to have them accomplishing a task that they could from within the kingdom come?

ALI: They're probably safest in the base, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, they're super safe here, I would not hurt them unless you all failed some rolls really miserably... and like, I would, I would show you-- quote-unquote I would 'show you the barrel of the gun.' I would not be like, 'oh they're dead, you come home and they're dead!' without first giving you like five scenes of them being like 'we're hearing weird noises, what's going on?' and you being like 'eh whatever, they're fine.' And then I would kill them.

JACK [as Orth]: People are shooting at us.

AUSTIN: Exactly.

ART: So we could like-- basically they could just be rear guard.

AUSTIN: Yeah, they could just--

ART: You know, make sure no one's coming behind us, but that, that seems like a waste of their talents, you know?

AUSTIN: This is such a boat thing, and it's just, it's not even funny, i'm just really excited. for a certain moment of this game. there's a thing y-- god.

KEITH: I think they should come with us, and they should go to the library and do some research!

JACK: I have a suspicion that we're gonna leave this building and the planets gonna be in ruins or something. [laughs]

AUSTIN: No, it's like, whatever the opposite of that is.

JACK: [kind of sarcastically] Oh, ok.

ART: Nothing's as terrible as we imagine it to be right now?

AUSTIN: [knowingly] That's part of it, sure.

JACK: Uh, yeah, I reckon we can just go out, I reckon that until the gates-- I reckon we can just move in this area without fear of Rigour. No, without fear of anything *except* Rigour.

AUSTIN: [in an ominous GM voice] Alright, I think I have to do a thing, just to like, be fair, 'cause I'll, as much as I-- I have to do a thing to be fair. AuDy, on the Liberty and Discovery system, like you're in that system now, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There are a bunch of buttons, and like all of the messages and stuff are gone, but there are still a bunch of buttons on the screen, and like the cameras was one of them, like security or something like that. Resources is one of them, and you click on that and that's like, totally empty, 'cause it's just like a list of the armaments that used to be in that armoury, and a couple of Riggers, and those are clearly checked out, there's a, there's one thing that's like Supplies, and it tells you how much food and rations and water and electricity is available, and you're set on all those things. it's almost like an IOS game, like it's almost like a bunch of menus that you can go into, and one of them just says Map.

JACK (as AuDy, but only sort of): [laughing] Alright, fine, who wants to look at the map, I have a map.

KEITH (as Mako): There's a map?!

AuDy: Yep.

AUSTIN: You click the button... I just want to make sure the scale is clear, and the rest of the map is... here.

ALI: Thaaat's a big one!

JACK: [makes a slightly scared, incredulous noise]

Mako: What's that swirl? What's that angry swirl?

AUSTIN: That is... the Slate Mineral Cooperative.

JACK: When Austin said he was doing a lot of prep for this episode... [laughs] there is a complete map on the screen at the moment, showing multiple districts, and...

KEITH: (overlapping with Jack) Yeah, what he meant was copy/pasting triangles.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: There's a lot of that. And I resized some of them also, thank you.

JACK: What are those little dots to the right?

AUSTIN: You don't know. Buildings, like it actually says buildings. If you click on one it just says "a structure."

ART: What if we just sent Orth and Jacquie to do like, recon in the town?

AUSTIN: Totally doable.

JACK: We could do that, yeah...

ALI: Yeah, I was thinking that... or like the empty office building, 'cause that seems weird?

AUSTIN: I mean, you'll have to go there too if you end up...

ALI: Ok.

JACK: Yeah I feel that the tunnel is probably our best bet in.

ART: Whoever's gonna role to aid me, do it.

JACK: Keith and I have the same so...

AUSTIN: [overlapping with Jack] So who wants to do it then?

JACK: Go for it Mako.

AUSTIN: Ok. And how are you helping?

KEITH: I guess, I guess the way that im helping is by describing like the layout of the town, and where to go if they're in trouble, and like, where to go to find people that know stuff?

AUSTIN: That totally works, yeah.

KEITH: Eleven!

ALI: [quietly] Oh thank god...

AUSTIN: Alright! so take a plus one.

ART: Do we get anything for getting more than ten there?

AUSTIN: No. I'll double check, but I don't think so, no. It just, the thing is, if you mess up, Mako's fine.

[00:50:00] KEITH: Plus one! There you go, seven!

[Ali makes a scared noise]

ART: Plus one, seven!

AUSTIN: Ah, alright, so you get to decide...

KEITH: Love those Aid rolls.

AUSTIN: So I'm gonna call this infiltration from the established things.

ART: That's what I'm trying, yes.

AUSTIN: Which is... *"when you want to maneuver without being detected complete these tasks: determine entry points, establish matrix overwatch, avoid detection, and maneuver to objective point. it may be complicated by these considerations: position and status of security teams, virtual surveillance, vigilance of enemy, location and environmental factors."* Cass, you choose, either one of those tasks was not completed on time or accurately, or there's an unexpected complication from that list of potential complications.

ART: [quietly] Shit. [louder] What was the last complication again? The thing about environment?

AUSTIN: Location and environmental factors.

ART: That one.

AUSTIN: I'm also gonna ch... ok. So... I think you-- I also just love this like, 'whatever we do we cant get Jacquie and Orth killed,' and before any of you have left this base youve sent them into this fucking city.

[Jack laughs]

ART: Well I sort of imagine this happening in parallel, that's just not how the roll system works.

KEITH: [overlapping with Art] It's a nice place!

AUSTIN: Right. Alright. As they come through, and, and you can watch them on, AuDy pulls up the camera system, and you see them leaving that first, that building you're in, and you kind of hop from camera to camera, there are a couple of other ones like, down the block that are still like, where they're still viewable, where you can still move into them. You're not hacking into them, they're just part of this system to secure, to make sure the blocks are secure, and they're secure... and then there's the sound of thunder. And from the coast a rainstorm starts to move into Mode City, also the name of this place is Mode City, and theyre able to go do their mission but like... I don't know if its a, if its a-- I think Mako can probably tell you, sometimes when the storms hit here, when they hit really bad, communication gets really rough. So they're theoretically doing recon, but actually contacting them is going to be very difficult.

JACK: [sarcastically] The most useful recon.

AUSTIN: Yeah

AuDy: Well let's go, how are we splitting up? Are we splitting up?

Cass: We're splitting up after we get there

Aria: Yeah

AuDy: Ah yeah, we're getting credentials first. Ok, and what, do we want to take the tunnel? Or do we want to risk it through the forest?

Aria: Uh... tunnel?

Cass: Tunnel.

AuDy: Yeah, why not, I have bad memories of trees.

AUSTIN: Alright, alright you're in Mode City, you're in an area of high-rises, the buildings cut up pretty high into the sky, and its-- how many of you have been in... real cities before? AuDy? Like non-domed cities? AuDy?

JACK: Presumably, at some point.

AUSTIN: Cause you used to park cars on Archonic. Mako, you've been here before, Aria, you must have toured to places that didn't have domes, right?

ALI/Aria: Yeah I, I moved, I've only lived on Counterweight for like six years

JACK: And I guess Cass has seen them in the war, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, or at least has seen...

ART: Well what's the capital of Apostolos look like?

AUSTIN: Yeah... well it looks sort of like this, right? So that's the thing about this place, Cass, you come up and... I think you have this weird, it's not quite deja vu, but like... Alright so when I lived in London, Ontario I moved to a place eventually where there were all of these buildings that had this like, very... very strange yellow stone... and like all of them had it, like this strikingly bright yellow. And it was just like, I don't know what happened there, I don't know if it was like the same developer had them, the same developer built all these different homes, or what, but now, even now when I see anything built with that yellow stone I think about that place, and like my-- it's like 'oh I'm thinking about it' but like something in me fires and I'm there, for a split second, thinking about that. And the second you come out of this building, or the second you look, you see it out of a window, when you pop out of where this building is, that like 'oh weird,

this is Apostolosian stuff that's been re-- it's been either take over or, or kind of, a new facade has gone up over it, but you recognize the like, the sandstone, and the general architectural style, of Apostolos. The other thing is... as you come up through this... I guess we're not, I can't believe you sent them out first, ok. You...

ART: [indignant] It's how the rules work, we didn't have a choice!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: You could have gone to this thing first, and then come back, and made it-- it's not-- no one's in a rush. So you, you come through...

[laughter]

KEITH: We're kind of in a rush, I think?

AUSTIN: I guess? I don't know? Listen, the-- the faction game moves in thirty day chunks, you've been here for six hours or something, maybe not even.

ALI: [quietly, scared] Oh god.

[00:55:00] ART: You were getting impatient with us! You, Austin!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yes, yes but not in like... not in like this way, not in the meta, broad sense, only in the micro sense. So you come out of the, it's like a basement floor, it's like a sub basement floor, through a set of... of doors that then lead to an elevator, that comes up the, there's no button for the floor that you're on, like there's no, it doesn't look like there's a way to go back down that way, but AuDy, you, you know that you can just run this elevator, so it's not a problem... for you anyway. You leave the elevator and you're in that empty office building. Things seem... like it's not dusty, it doesn't smell bad in here, but things are definitely... under used.

[[The Long Way Around](#) starts playing]

AUSTIN: Like there are old computer consoles that are, they're out of date, like they were definitely here before... Mako was a student. It'd be like finding a windows 3.1 desktop today, and as you start moving towards the main exit, you hear the voice of... Aria probably notices it first? You hear like, the voice of a famous television, or like a famous whatever the television equivalent entertainer is, like a youtuber basically, that's playing on some sort of device in that next room. What do you do?

ALI: Oh...

JACK: If there's someone in it, they're probably going to be a little disturbed by just someone coming up through their basement.

AUSTIN: You know there is someone in it, because you saw her in the previous... when you were looking at the cameras.

ALI: The receptionist.

JACK: Oh yeah! You see, receptionists are pretty good at talking to people, just not when they have come up through the building of the reception. Lets go, why not!

ART: Yeah, we could be maintenance, who knows what we are.

JACK: Yeah!

KEITH: [laughing] Yeah, who knows what we are?

ALI: Yeah, one of us can like, distract her, while the rest of us sneak past and out of the building, maybe?

JACK: Mako, you're up!

[00:57:36] [The Long Way Around plays]