

Palisade Post-Mortem

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Introduction

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. Joining me today— what order should I go in? I'll go in the call order here. Ali Acampora.

Ali: Hi, my name is Ali. You can hear me on this podcast. I guess there's an additional podcast you can Google, it's called amorecivilizedage.net. Go to amorecivilizedage.net.

Keith: I love to Google A More Civilized Age.

Austin: Yeah, we're— it comes up first.

Sylvi: It better.

Austin: It's not something that—? Also joining us, Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, hi. You definitely didn't hear my voice before. I don't know what any of you are talking about.

Austin: Especially our podcast listeners.

Art: And I just want to shout out to— yeah, especially podcasts, well, they could've been doing anything. And I want to shout out Nextlander, who we currently have more viewers than!

Austin: Art.

Sylvi: Why!

Ali: What did they do!

Dre: Wow! Wow!

Austin: Why, why are you being like this to our friends?

Ali: I— Yeah. Yeah.

Art: I thought that was lighthearted and fun.

Janine: Austin— [laughs]

Austin: I don't know about all that.

Janine: Austin's literally on their podcast outfit now.

Austin: Yeah, I'm on their podcast. I'm recording a podcast with them on Monday. Anyway.

[**Janine, Sylvi, Ali, Dre** laugh]

Art: Again, I thought that was lighthearted.

Austin: Also joining us, Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Hey, I would just like to say, I've met Brad Shoemaker once at PAX, [**Sylvi** laughs] and he was great and I wish nothing but the best. And I hope he gets a lot of viewers.

Janine: He's very sweet.

Austin: Is he streaming Fallout? That's what he's doing over there?

Dre: Oh, I don't know.

Austin: That's my guess based on the title.

Art: When I bury someone, you'll know.

Austin: Wow.

[**Janine, Sylvi, Keith** laugh]

Art: You won't be thinking about it.

Austin: Damn. You really got that LA in you.

Janine: The girl dad's really kicking in on Art now.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: [laughs]

Austin: Also joining us, Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, I'm Jack. You can get any music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com. And that's it!

Austin: And that's it. Janine Hawkins.

Janine: Hi, I'm Janine Hawkins. I'm @bleatingheart on places. I write the newsletters that we do every Tuesday that will keep you up to date on the stuff that has happened. And this week, occasionally, the things that will happen. I was going to make a joke about like, I hope everyone's ready for the live part three of our finale! And then I was just like, that's so mean.

Sylvi: Yeah...

Janine: That's like, that's like so mean.

Sylvi: It's mean to me.

Janine: I can't do that.

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah. Don't give us—

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: We could do it, but we shouldn't.

Sylvi: No.

Janine: No.

Austin: Keith.

Janine: I don't want to hear everyone's back tense up is all.

Keith: Hi!

Austin: J. Carberry.

Keith: My name is Keith Carberry. You can find me on Twitter and Bluesky at @KeithJCarberry. You can find the Let's Plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](https://www.youtube.com/runbutton). And you can hear me, and Jack, and Dre, and Sylvi doing Media Club Plus, a podcast where we talk about Hunter x Hunter and we're halfway through, and it's been really good!

Austin: How do you feel about ants?

Keith: We're talking about ants. Austin's talked about ants, and we'll talk about ants again, [Austin: I have.] actually, the next time we record, I think.

Sylvi: When will you talk about ants?

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: In the last episode, I said, I don't know how bad the next block of episodes are going to be, or like how intense? [**Sylvi** exhales] And Keith said, well, here's a little tip for you. Austin Walker is going to be joining us. [**Sylvi** laughs] And I made a sound of such like, distaste and confusion [**Sylvi**: It was so funny!] that everyone had to stop and be like.

Austin: Okay but I'm like— I'm joining for a goofy reason, not a serious reason.

Jack: Okay, well, see, that's good. [**Ali**: Mmmm.] [**Austin**: I think.] Because my first thought was, [**Keith**: It's both.] you're showing up because something bad is happening.

Austin: It's both? Oh, fuck. Mmm. Hm! Okay.

Ali: Is something going on with those ants?

Keith: No, actually.

Jack: No, it ain't good.

Austin: There's something wrong with those ants.

Dre: They are discovering that they too also live in a society.

Ali: Yeah, I've been shocked by the ants. I haven't guested— there's been some things going on, but let me tell you. Go listen to Media Club Plus to find out about these ants.

Sylvi: I'm thinking about those ants.

Ali: It's, wild— you don't know.

Sylvi: You have no clue.

Keith: Yeah, you think you know, you don't know.

Ali: [wheezes]

Austin: Also joining us, thinking about them ants, is Sylvi.

Sylvi: Hello! You can find me on whatever social thing you use @sylvibullet. You can check out—

Janine: Plurk?

Sylvi: What?

Janine: You on Plurk @sylvibullet?

Sylvi: What is— is that real?

Janine: Don't worry about it, keep going. It's fine, don't worry about it.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: I'm on Weibo as @sylvibullet. [**Janine** laughs] I'm on Tubi as @sylvibullet. You know, you should— Did we mention that there is a Patreon stuff for Media Club Plus? Because we should. We've watched JoJo, we've watched—

Janine: Dragon Ball!

Sylvi: We're in the middle of some Dragon Ball Kai stuff. We watched the original Dragon Ball.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Sylvi: You should go check that out. Also, if you like emo music, I have a band. [instagram.com/emoboyskissing](https://www.instagram.com/emoboyskissing), or @xxemoboyskissingxx. Hold on. I had it wrong for a second. The X's are really important. They're silent, which was how I made that mistake. Thank you.

Dre: Sure sure sure sure.

Keith: Plurk is a social network where you can share your life on the line with short messages, links, videos and more. Join now and discover what's happening right now!

Sylvi: I'm on Quibi as SylviBullet.

Austin: Thank you to Madelonia for gifting a bunch of subs [**Janine:** Yeah!] over on our twitch.tv/friendsatthetable as always. You can support us there and you can support us at patreon.com/friendsatthetable— friendsatthetable.cash. That's the easy way to actually get the URL right. You can also support us by going to friendsatthetable.shop and picking up any of our merchandise, which I'm saying slowly because I don't know if—?

Art: The— it's there.

Austin: What's there?

Art: The first thing.

Ali: [snorts]

Austin: What could it be?

Art: It's a t-shirt.

Austin: Describe it for me.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Art: Well, it's—

Janine: There's like four holes in it.

Art: There's a table.

Janine: And your head and your arms.

Art: Yeah, there's four holes.

Austin: friendsatthetable.shop.

Art: In a T shape.

Janine: Oh! That's why they call it— ohhh!

Austin: Uh huh, wait, no—

Keith: Something is here.

Janine: A T-shirt.

Art: You have to go to-

Keith: Oh there we go. There we go.

Dre: Oh it is—

Austin: You can go to our products.

Art: Yeah, not it's on our front page for some reason.

Austin: A celebration dance shirt.

Keith: Maybe we can change that right now, while someone else has Fourthwall open.

Austin: You know what they say, always take the time to celebrate. Join hands with your friends and peers, designed by Raven Warner—ravenwarner.com—who are *these people*?

Sylvi: These nerds.

Ali: [laughs]

Jack: This is great. Can we get this on—?

Art: Now, hold on though. Don't buy this yet until we're done talking.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: We do have an additional thing to mention.

Janine: [chuckles]

Austin: Yes, sure. Keep talking.

Sylvi: Imma— Art? You opened the door, [**Janine:** Oh my god.] I don't want to take charge.

Austin: You, my friend?

Art: So there's a table. [**Jack** chuckles] And then there's a bunch of people around this table, and they're dancing. [**Austin:** They are.] You know they're dancing because the title of the shirt is dancing.

Austin: Celebration Dance Shirt. Yeah.

Art: Celebration Dance Shirt.

Austin: Oh, that's Grand Magnificent. That's—

Art: That's Grand Magnificent.

Austin: That's Thisbe. That's Fantasma.

Art: That's Fantasma—those two would not get along. It looks like they're getting along, they would not get along.

Austin: Oh, I want them to meet *sooo bad!*

Sylvi: Oh, that would be really funny.

Jack: [chuckles]

Ali: [cross] There's some scholar reasons there. No, Fan— [chuckles]

Austin: [cross] I hate crossovers. But I want them to hang. Yeah.

Art: And then we have in order. Pickman, Mako... Aubrey.

Austin: Got there.

Art: Hella, Gur Sevraq, that guy's— Kodiak.

Austin: Yeah, true.

Art: Throndir.

Austin: Depends on how you're counting, but yeah.

Dre: Yeah yeah yeah.

Art: This is Hector.

Austin: Hector Hu, of course.

Art: Then we have Thisbe.

Austin: And then back around.

Dre: Mhm.

Art: Yeah. And the only problem, I think, with this entire shirt is that we have two Hieron-verse people touching.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah, because time cop rules. They would— they— yup.

Jack: Mmmm.

Ali: Ohh.

Art: I think— Time cop rules.

Austin: Right right right right. Sure sure sure sure.

Ali: Well, no. Hella— Hella did some time dimension-ary stuff!

Art: I just think maybe Mako and—and I didn't notice this until right now, I've seen this image a hundred times—but [wheezes] I think time cop rules apply. But otherwise, it's a perfect shirt.

Keith: I would love to fix that the What's New section is totally blank. But if you go to the Fourthwall behind the scenes, it is supposed to not be totally blank.

Austin: No, it's not blank. It's right here.

Keith: That's weird.

Austin: Yeah, Celebration Dance Shirt. [**Dre:** Ohhh.] Obviously, we will also have our other recent drops, like the Marielda Burns shirt and poster, and the Ducartes branded tote. We also have another thing coming, that won't be up today necessarily, but will be up soon. Is that correct?

Ali: Mhm. Yeah, there was something going on with the Fourthwall backend so there was also going to be a celebratory poster by Annie, [**Austin:** Mmm. By Annie.] which will be added to the shop.

Janine: Worth saying it is a different design than the shirt, if that's a thing that you think might excite you, then you might want to get them both, but you know.

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin: It is a different design than the shirt. Yes. And we're holding off on showing that or are we showing it?

Keith: I think we show it.

Art: Just, just show it.

Dre: Show it!

Keith: Yeah, I think we show it.

Austin: Is it in one of these chats that I can click on, Jack, Ali?

Jack: Ali is going to make sure that you—

Austin: Get a good one.

Jack: Both of these pieces are fantastic. We are so grateful and so excited to have worked with Raven Warner and Annie Johnston-Glick on these. They look so cool. The pitch of like 10 Friends at the Table characters dancing in a circle was something that we pitched to Raven who said, immediately, [**Janine** and **Ali** chuckle] I've got it and I know exactly what it's going to look like, this is going to be great. Do we have this on the screen? We're currently on the Starting Soon page.

Austin: We're just getting it, Jack.

Jack: Oh, I see.

Austin: Here it comes loading in live.

Art: They did great work in a short amount of time, too. They really hit a tight deadline.

Austin: Yes. Look at this sick poster. It looks like there's a number here, celebrating perhaps a 10-year anniversary of a show, and then a billion cool details. I see the Apokine up here. I see the Red Zephyr over here, dreaming of other things and it's—

Sylvi: Austin, it's not up.

Janine: It's not up, no.

Art: Does anyone else see us up?

Sylvi: I'm sorry!

Janine: It's starting to.

Austin: I'm sorry. Well, too bad.

Janine: There you go!

Sylvi: There it is!

Art: There it is.

Austin: There it is.

Jack: God, it's so cool.

Austin: I thought people were saying they could only see the coming soon section of the shop. Now, I understand. Yeah, here's this. I mean, the nice thing is everybody else could see— could go to friendsatthetable.shop before to see the product we were describing. But they couldn't do it with this, which is gorgeous and excellent.

Janine: You should throw the shirt up there, just additionally?

Austin: I will, yeah. Boom. Here's the shirt, look at this. Boom. Here it is for people watching the archive.

Dre: Wooooaah!

Sylvi: It's beautiful.

Austin: Doing the walkthrough.

Janine: Shout out to Raven for taking my note about making Thisbe's butt bigger.

Sylvi: [claps, laughs]

Keith: Okay I see the butt— I hadn't seen it post-butt.

Austin: You did send that note. You did send that— yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. I can see the difference.

Austin: We asked you questions like—

Art: There's a real Pixar mom energy there.

[**Dre** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: We went to you with questions like, is this the right horn color? Should there be Arbor-related updates? And you were like, butt.

Sylvi: Give her a BBL now.

Janine: Yeah. **[Keith laughs]** Yeah.

Austin: Which was right. Then yeah, back over to Annie's poster, which is not up on the shop yet, but will be hopefully sooner than later. I think that there's just— my understanding is like, poster ratio custom situation where they just need to manually hit yes or something like that, right?

Ali: Mm. Mhm.

Jack: My favorite details here is that, you've got the Oratorio of the Davia Pledge, is pouring out of the top of the steam train **[cross]** in all its nightmarish form.

Austin: **[cross]** Here it is, yeah. And then Zevunzolia above that.

Jack: Yeah, Zevunzolia above it. There is a playing card stuck in the sand in Bluff City.

Austin: Yeah, sure is.

Jack: I love that the Red Zephyr itself, which is like a werewolf train, also seems to have like a wolf shape appearing above its smokestack, which I really love.

Austin: **[cross]** Oh sure, yeah mhm. It's good.

Jack: **[cross]** The like, snout of a wolf.

Dre: **[cross]** Ooooh!

Jack: I'm really, really so happy with this.

Ali: Hi, this is Ali just interjecting a little bit from the future. Hello, hi! So the aforementioned poster is available on friendsatthetable.shop right now. Go and get it. It's gorgeous.

There is just one small thing where it is kind of a limited item? We've been really happy with Fourthwall. The way that they fulfill our products has been really great. But for this

specific one, just like on the sizes that we wanted to offer, and the paper quality that we wanted to offer, and the turnaround that we wanted to offer in terms of also getting it on the site in a time-sensitive way as well, is that we are just going through a different fulfillment option than through Fourthwall. And so we're selling it on sort of a preorder basis.

So you can buy it until October 1st, including October 1st. It's going to be pulled from the website on October 2nd. But yeah, there's like a little postcard version. There's like a mid-sized version. And then there's like a big 12 x 18, if you really have the wall space for that, hell yeah, thank you. And then yeah, this is already a five-hour episode, so I'm not going to say more than that. Thank you very much. And if you check it out, I very much appreciate you.

Jack: @hellavarawr who Twitch brilliantly censored as “****avarawr”, [**Art, Sylvi, Keith, Ali** laugh, **Janine** sighs] has gifted two of the shirts in Fourthwall. Which is great, you can type exclamation points and enter it. And yeah, we have Twitch integration set up with Fourthwall, so it's very easy—

Austin: And it's working today.

Janine: Yeah!

Keith: Sorry, can I just?

Austin: Which is good.

Keith: We have— we have it censoring *hell*? We gotta fix that. That's crazy, we gotta—

Janine: I— no, that's, yeah.

Austin: No, it's not us. We've talked about this. This is not us. This is Fourthwall, this is not us.

Keith: Okay. Ohhh!

Art: Twitch is a very god— Fourthwall is a very godly company.

Austin: That's right.

Ali: [giggles]

Art: They don't want us blaspheming on our streams.

Austin: Uh huh. They're protecting us.

Janine: Little did I know.

Keith: We did this on the Run Button channel, somehow everything got turned all the way up on the auto sensor, so someone got censored for saying the word coward recently?

[**Janine** and others laugh]

Sylvi: I love that. That's the C word, right?

Art: Because you can't say cow?

Ali: Yeah, that's looking out for you, truly.

Austin: Cow... language like that could lead to fatal duels.

Jack: I was about to say, it's 1750.

Austin: I've seen Romeo and Juliet.

Keith: They censored the coward, but they didn't censor the glove thrown on the floor.

Austin: They censored biting your thumb at someone? Because they should.

Janine: Kids these days.

Jack: Twitch brought to you by Barry Lyndon.

Austin: [chuckles] And hey, one more thing [**Art:** I also—] I want to shout out— yeah, do you want to shout it out, Art?

Art: Only if you're talking about Chaotic Cataloging, the Hieron zine that launched today.

Austin: I sure am! Here it is, *A Chaotic Cataloging: A Seasons of Hieron fanzine*. What do you want to say about it, Art?

Art: It's super rad. I was not expecting the— the binding?

Janine: It's thick! It's a big one.

Austin: Oh, It's gorgeous. Yeah.

Art: It's thicker than Thisbe.

Janine: Ayyy— it's not.

Dre: Wow.

[**Sylvi** howls, **Janine** chuckles]

Art: No, I'm doing a bit—!

Austin: Doing bits.

[**Ali** howls]

Sylvi: It's the second time we've just been like, no, fuck the bit.

Janine: [chuckles]

Austin: Let's say “yes and” to Art at least a few times tonight. I think it's only— he's worth it, you know?

Art: They're over at Crowdfundr? That's without an E.

Sylvi: Yeah, Grindr style.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: .com/HieronZine.

Austin: HieronZone, capital H, capital Z. Maybe that doesn't matter, but that's how it is in my browser.

Art: Yeah, they've got 30 days left from now, which is the 12th of September if you're listening to this later. [**Austin:** Yup.] Right now, there's a ton of community copies. If you're like, oh, this looks cool, but I'm a little light right now. You can get one on everyone else.

Austin: 194 community copies are left. Those are PDF copies. There are, of course, also physical copies.

Janine: Also—

Austin: We didn't do anything except make Hieron, I should say. This is not like any official thing, but we all just think it's sick.

Janine: We did a lot of things to make Hieron, but not this.

Austin: I know, but I'm saying not this, you know. But all profits are going to the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund, which is amazing.

Janine: And if you want to add to the community pile when you back it, there is an option to pay an extra \$10 or in the increment above that, and you can add a copy to that community pile for people to pick up if they want to.

Austin: Yeah. Also, this Blade in the Dark keychain is soooo good. All of it's good.

Art: It's sick!

Ali: [laughs] It's so good!

Dre: It's super good.

Austin: It's so sick. I'm so happy with all this. And also the postcard?

Dre: What's the uhh— what's the URL for this again?

Austin: crowdfundr—

Art: crowdfundr—

Dre: Okay.

Austin: .com.

Keith: .plurk.

Ali: There's no 'e'.

Austin: /HieronZine. crowdfundr.com/HieronZine. No E in Fundr.

Dre: Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: Fundr like Tumblr.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Yes, exactly!

Dre: Ohhh!

Austin: Right. Fundr like Tumblr. Yeah, exactly.

Keith: Mmm, when you say it like that, I think it's not like— this doesn't feel like it's like that.

Austin: Yeah... I guess that's fair. Yeah, this stuff is great. I'm so excited to see this, I'm so excited to get my copy. Thank you so much— what a gift for us on our 10-year anniversary. Like you know, obviously, it will probably come up a few times in these questions, but we've been doing this for quite some time. And for me, some of the most exciting stuff is seeing what fans make, how they respond to the work, how they make it their own. So this has just been a joy. And then especially again, raising money for the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund, which I think is something we all really care deeply about, and just an awesome, awesome thing to wake up to, you know?

Sylvi: Mhm!

Keith: Crowdfundlr.

Austin: Alright.

Keith: The Crowdfundlr.

Austin: [sighs]

Sylvi: No.

Janine: Oh my god.

Sylvi: Get him away from me.

Keith: [cackles]

Art: That's a Batman villain.

Janine: Jesus.

Art: *Ha ha, it's the Crowdfundlr!*

Sylvi: This guy stinks.

Jack: Eugh. Awful.

Austin: I hate it. Alright, are we ready to do [**Sylvi:** No.] post-mortem?

Sylvi: Oh, yeah, yeah. No, yeah, we're fine.

Jack: Yeah we are!

Dre: No?

Austin: No, no—

Janine: Ali?

Ali: No—

Sylvi: Wuh—?

Keith: Huh—?

Sylvi: Oh, I said it as a bit.

Ali: There's one more thing to say, which is that [laughs] throughout, you know, we're going to be taking some breaks in our questions tonight to [**Austin:** Right.] find the winners of the giveaway that we had announced? [**Austin:** It's true.] Unfortunately to the people in the Twitch chat, if you did not fill out this Google form, I believe you are too late. [chuckles] But, [**Austin:** Oh, great.] we have some sample packs, like sample products that we've ordered, and some exclusive things to give away as a celebration.

Keith: I love exclusive things, I for one.

Ali: [squeals in delight]

Austin: Huh.

Ali: Yeah. So we'll be going over that, you know, tonight, there's going to be four prizes, four winners. Yes.

Jack: The pink hat, the pink Millennium Break hat. [**Ali:** I know... I know...] There was like a moment where I felt an actual gut reflex of [**Sylvi:** Same.] "I should enter."

[**Dre** and **Ali** laugh]

Jack: But then I thought, I was like, this is going to be a random number drawn. [**Austin:** Yeah.] And, what's it going to be like in the post-mortem if my number comes up and we're like, the hyper rare pink Millennium Break hat goes to Jack.

Keith: I don't want—

Sylvi: Enter under someone else's name.

Jack: I suppose—

Art: Jack.

Keith: I don't want to—

Sylvi: I didn't do that.

Keith: I don't want to like devalue the pink hat. But Jack, you can have that hat literally whenever you want. You can log in to Fourthwall and make that hat. **[Ali laughs]**

Sylvi: Yeah, we can.

Austin: Right, we can make— we know—

Jack: *We* can make the hat.

Ali: If you see one of the cast in this hat one day and you're the winner of it, just feel like you know, when you go on eBay and you find the— the staff shirt for, you know, a 90s movie.

Jack: Yeah yeah!

Austin: Riiight. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Ali: [wheezes] This is the one of 10 jackets that they gave out to the you know, the direct cast.

Jack: The crew of *The Thing*. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Famous 90s movie.

Austin: Alright. I'm going to list the categories for today's post-mortem. A thing we've never done before.

Art: Are we doing this like, Jeopardy style?

Austin: Season structure and behind the scenes.

Keith: Potent potables.

[**Janine** and **Jack** chuckle]

Austin: Gameplay.

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin: Characters. Music and Intros. And, Let's do a silly one.

Sylvi: Sports History— oh, okay.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Sports— [chuckles] Where should we begin?

Jack: Wow. We should begin with Structure.

Keith: [laughs] I thought “Where should we begin?” was a category!

Austin: No, no, no, it's not, yeah.

Ali: We can't start with a silly one.

Art: We can—

Jack: Let's— maybe we start with a silly one to get our eye in? Or what do we think?

Austin: We totally can, but I got to tell you, we only get but six of them, so.

Sylvi: Yeah, we should hold off.

Janine: I think we also need something that will settle us. We're a little— we're a little rowdy right now.

Austin: Oh, we're already silly.

Dre: Yeah.

Art: You need to—we need to duck duck before you can goose.

Austin: Alright, then let's start with a straightforward one that will settle us down. This is the first one under season structure and behind the scenes.

Cinna: Most Proud?

[00:21:00]

What are you most proud of this season?

This is from Cinna.

What are you most proud of this season? What's your biggest regret?

Ali: [snorts]

Austin: Now, I like that it doesn't say *this season*. [**Sylvi:** Oh, man!] [**Janine** and **Ali** laugh]

Sylvi: How long do you got?

Austin: It just says, generally speaking, what's your biggest regret?

Ali: [laughs]

Art: Yeah, because like, what I'm most proud of this season is being able to step back and do like, bigger picture work, and my biggest regret is not spending more time with my dad before he died.

Sylvi: Fuck!

Janine: [gasps]

Austin: [gasps] Right, it's like that.

Jack: I see, okay.

Austin: Cori, is that also *your* biggest regret? [wheezes]

Sylvi: Weirdly enough, that is my answer to what I'm most proud of this season, though. So, [**Austin** laughs] not a joke!

Austin: Say more!

Sylvi: Literally, that made everything click into place with what her arc was going to be. And I was like, oh yeah, rolling with this punch is a really fun idea, and it worked out really well, I think. Yeah.

Austin: Absolutely. And Art, not to step into your proudest moment— of your proudest thing. Because I think that you're right.

Art: I think I'm done.

Sylvi: Bye.

Art: Good night, everyone.

Jack: [chuckles]

Austin: Because yeah, that makes sense. Anybody else have answers for these off the top there?

Janine: Yeah. For me, I think the thing I am most proud of is, I feel— this is the thing that I think might come up later, so I won't get into it. I'm really proud of how I made myself a liar through Thisbe.

Austin: Mmm.

Dre: Interesting.

Keith: Love it.

Janine: My biggest regret is fumbling that roll with the Chimeric Cadent in the first finale, [**Keith:** Oh yeah.] cause I don't— I just wanted, I just wanted cooler stuff. I really like how horrible that being is.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Yeah, the Cadent's fantastic. I think I am most proud of weird little details within Faction Game turns? I think the Faction Game had to sort of necessarily move in these really broad strokes. [**Austin:** Yeah.] And I'm really proud of working in and finding just you know, tiny little details like the Rose River person moving her hand through the dust, or the fight in the wedding shop, or the statues buried under the ground in the skirmish with Veronique and Fealty. Just lots of like little granular bits inside the broader war play on the planet. And I think my biggest regret, is maybe I wish that I had found my footing more effectively after my spies and my Combustor were taken out.

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: We'll invariably talk more about this, but I think that like something that I really— maybe I'm sure that you could hear me wrestling with this season was like, trying to take big impactful swings and then trying to be quick on my feet when, when the follow through of that swing took me through like, a plate glass window or something.

Austin: Sure. That makes sense. Anyone else have anything here that stands out? We don't have to go through everybody necessarily, but—

Ali: Um—

Keith: I would say— oh, Ali, go ahead.

Ali: Well— okay, I can be quick. I think the thing that I'm most proud of is creating the Blue Channel?

Austin: Mm!

Sylvi: Yeah

Ali: I think like, having an anchor in the season for the cast, like you know, it was built really well to give everybody the boost that they needed, and then just like fictionally I think it came through as like, a space that people were interacting with? That always felt like, kind of fresh and fun to return to. And I think that my biggest regret is...

[**Sylvi** and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: Throwing my hands to a big bird man, uh huh.

Ali: My biggest regret for the season, I think is, there was a little bit of floundering towards the end, and through the two finales. [wheezes]

Keith: Floundering?

Ali: Maybe a different version of me would have gone through smoother. [**Austin:** Sure.] But I loved Brnine and I had fun, so.

Austin: That's how it goes.

Keith: Flondering because fish.

Ali: Fishy— it was fishy. Fishy. It was just fishy at the end.

Dre and **Jack:** Ohhh!

Sylvi: Yeah...

Austin: I see, I see, I see. I think for me— I am— the thing that I'm most proud of is like, very not me-focused, except it's me as a facilitator more than me as a traditional, we think of as like a GM? Which is I was really hoping this season to get a really good sense of camaraderie between player characters, between like, the sense like of people hanging out and people like talking and bantering and stuff like that. Especially after Sangfielle where there was such a professional, *hard professional* relationship between

player characters. I think all the way through the season, like from the very earliest bits of people hanging out in the Blue Channel and Movie Night and stuff, through all the way to the final narrative beats with Cori and Levi. You know, part of my job there was just to set the table right, and ask the right questions, and try to put the right characters and scenes together? And so I think that, I was really happy about.

My biggest regret is almost the opposite, which is— this is the hardest it's been, I think, for me to get key NPCs having time on screen where they could build relationships.

Partial Palisade— I mean Partial Palisade and Figure had like a handful of great scenes. Gur and Figure had a handful of great scenes, I think we'll talk about these in the future. But really, truly, a tiny amount. And I don't know that there is a— was there— even characters who I think are kind of like memorable and fun, like Exanceaster March, like barely show up in the season. And I think that that's part of just trying to balance it right? There are a few people who I think got the right amount of time. I think earlier stuff with like Kenneth Marian Colver was extremely fun.

Jack: I love Kenneth Marian Colver.

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Austin: I think— and I think there are key one-off NPCs, like the interviewer, the guy who interviews Brnine, right?

Sylvi: Oh my God.

Austin: That scene was really good.

Dre: Yeah, that was really good.

Sylvi: One of my favorites.

Austin: But I— but I think in conjunct— you think about the long history of our show, you go back, it's been 10 years since Hieron, right? And you think about Hella and Adelaide, or about you know Hadrian and Samothos, right? And I think most seasons have some sort of really strong NPC player-character interactions, and they're just not

the focus of this season, which is fine. But I do wish I'd been able to find a little more of it because it would have let us address, I think, a number of things that I wish had gone differently this season in terms of like, showing more Palisade character interiority, right? That's like one way we would get to do that. And it just didn't come up as much as I wish it had, you know? Anybody else?

Keith: I have a couple of quick ones. The first one is I'm proud of following through on the Phrygian stuff at the Stellar Combustor, which I spent weeks agonizing over.

Sylvi: You should be. That was sick.

Keith: And it was really difficult.

Austin: It was a blast.

Keith: And my second thing was the first scene with Eclectic I really had a ton of fun with? And I had this idea in my head that I would show up like Batman, and then just abandon that facade because it's not really who like, Eclectic is? **[Dre chuckles]** He's just trying to do the thing. And I don't know how it works as a whole thing, but I had a blast with like doing that, and then just dropping it, like pretending like he wasn't like that when he first showed up. I thought that was really fun.

My biggest regret is at the beginning—or it feels like at the beginning—but like episode 15 or whatever, around there, I feel like I started the thing of being mad at the Faction-side **[Dre chuckles]** **[chuckles]** for making things difficult as a joke that became a sort of truth in the listening.

Sylvi: Ahhh.

Austin: Mmm.

Keith: And I regret that. I didn't believe—I was just complaining to be fun!

[Sylvi and Ali laugh]

Keith: I wasn't— I didn't mean it! And I feel bad for causing any anxiety. And then my other regret— oh, I had a second regret. Oh, it was uhh... no, I got— I lost it.

Austin: If it comes back.

Keith: I don't regret it anymore, it's fine.

Austin: You must know—

Sylvi: That's how it works.

Dre: That's beautiful, Keith.

Keith: Yeah, I resolved it. I resolved it just now.

Austin: Amazing.

Dre: Yeah. I would say most proud of just Levi and all of that, like how quickly Levi got shifted in. Biggest regret is taking that *fucking move!*

[**Ali** and **Austin** chuckle]

Austin: Oh, buddy! You know, that's how it goes. [**Sylvi:** Yeah...] [**Dre:** Yep!] We'll talk more about that, I know there are other questions in here.

Dre: That's dice.

Austin: That's dice.

Ali: You were having fun— you know, we were having fun...

Sylvi: Yeah!

Austin: Love having fun. We do.

Ali: [snorts]

Art: Fun to have fun.

Austin: Anybody else, lingering answers here? I think we went through most folks. Alright! New category. Do we want to go Gameplay—? Do we just like cycle through one once?

Janine: I think that's a good idea.

Dre: Sure. Yeah yeah yeah.

Art: Why don't we have like a big wheel or something?

Janine: Wheel equals time eater. Let's just cycle through.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's a good point.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: This is gameplay and this one comes in from Eamon.

A thing I really loved about—

Also really quick. Everybody wrote in like really nice things to say up top of like, “Congratulations, 10 years!” and the bottom like, “Woah, Palisade was crazy good this week” [**Sylvi** chuckles] But I had to cut all of those to keep them on the screen? So please note, thank you to everybody who— and I did— when we looked at all of them, I did not pre-edit those away before putting them in a big doc for everybody to look at. So if you said something really nice or really mean, we saw it, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] everybody saw it. Just so you know, I didn't pre-edit the nice and mean things away, I kept those. But here, I've zeroed in on the question. Alright, Eammon writes,

Eammon: Mechanics and DM?

[00:31:05]

A thing I really loved about this season was how much the mechanics became a focus of a lot of your play. It felt like Austin got to step into that more traditional

'devious DM' role, prepping dungeons, boss fights, and more. While on the player side, we saw a lot more character 'builds' as it were.

I'm curious how much of this was a conscious effort on your part, an aspect of how Armour Astir contributed to this season, or just pure coincidence. Additionally, if the crew has any reflections on this playstyle compared to previous seasons.

Sylvi: I can at least say when it comes to having a specific build in mind, I definitely like had one, and then strayed from it pretty quick.

Dre: [chuckles]

Austin: Mmm.

Sylvi: The thing that stayed was Cori being able to take hits and stuff and being able to like, bear the brunt of a lot of things?

Austin: Kinda tank a little bit? Yeah.

Sylvi: But she ended up skewing a lot more magic-y. And I don't mind that. I think it was really cool when she got like, "Consecrate Ground" and stuff like that. That ended up being used in defensive ways too, I don't think it's skewed too far from like, where I was originally going to be? But I came in being like, I'm going to be a tank, and then by the end, I was "Little Miss Blows Everything Up" you know?

[**Dre** and **Jack** chuckle]

Austin: Totally. Anyone else here?

Dre: Uhhh...

Keith: I think I've always been very build-focused.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Keith, you lean this way, generally speaking, I think.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. I have had more of a like, a gradual slide into like, really liking when something happens because of the dice instead of because of like, a conscious move towards doing something specific? And I think that that came up a lot this season, partially because Armour Astir has a lot of ways to do a bunch of different weird stuff.

Austin: Totally, totally. And a lot of freedom on the interpretive, you know, the dice finish, you go, you get a seven to nine, what's that mean? How open-ended is that? I say that in contrast to Sangfielle, which I really loved. I really like Heart: The City Beneath, but I felt—we were talking about this during last season's post-mortem—I felt really constricted by Fallout, the system that that game uses for negative outcomes. It was really nice to come back to something where I could just kind of freewheel a big outcome when it felt like it was the right time, which is another thing that will come up, I think, across some other questions.

Ali: Yeah. I think Armour Astir has such good guardrails for like, setting the classes apart? For me, I was full capital S, capital C Support Character. I didn't have a Channel score, I didn't have a mech, [**Austin:** Mhm.] but I had very specific additional things, like the B-plot move, and I had the Blue Channel and things like that, that like, it felt like, for as much as I was missing, in terms of what other people had to play with, I had just as much to move on the board? And I think you know, based on the example of how proud I am of the Blue Channel, the joy of sort of like, moving those things on the board really felt like an opportunity instead of a restriction. So I— my hat's off to Armour Astir, and to Brnine for being a helpful little guy. [laughs]

Sylvi: Yeah!

Dre: [chuckles]

Austin: Any other thoughts on this stuff?

Dre: I mean, I'll just say first, I really loved playing Armour Astir. I feel like, I mean, just building off what Ali said, I feel like it does such a good job of giving each class unique, cool things to do [**Austin:** Yeah.] that feel meaningfully different? But I never— like, I

was always jealous of all the cool shit everybody else got to do, but also very excited about the cool shit I was going to do.

Ali: [chuckles]

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Does that make sense? [**Austin:** Yeah!] [**Keith:** Mmm.] It's like, oh, that's so fucking cool, I wish I could do that, but *check this out*. [**Ali** giggles] I, like— but I— and I feel like Armour Astir also does a really good job of balancing being a *build* game with also being a much more narrative game, compared to like something else that could be like crunchier or something.

Austin: Right, right.

Dre: Yeah. Gun to my head right now, I might say Armour Astir is my favorite game we've played, for a season.

Sylvi: Wow!

Jack: Wow.

Keith: Oooh.

Ali: Yeah!

Art: Woah!

Sylvi: Yeah, it's definitely up there, for sure.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. The other thing I'll say just to speak on like the, the devious DM role for Austin. [chuckles]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: [faux devilish cackle]

Dre: Maybe devious is a good word here. But like I think this— a big part of this speaks to the dynamics of us making a show while playing a game, versus like playing a game at a table just to have fun? But like, when Austin is quote unquote “devious”, like that is always with the understanding at the table that like, this is to build drama? And it's like, I never get the feeling that Austin is like, I bet your character can't do this shit. It's, “I'm going to put something in front of your character because I'm really excited to see how they're going to overcome it and how they're going to deal with it.”

Keith: I wonder if— I never detected the devious thing this season. I wonder if it's because like Armour Astir is good at giving you like, real solid tools to overcome things and like, just by default, the way that you have to build an encounter or whatever is to make sure that you've got actual real challenges, because if not then we will just wipe the floor with stuff? I don't know.

Austin: Yeah, you know, I think in terms of like devious DM role, I think in this case Eammon maybe is talking about things like, this was a real— and this was a conscious thing. There were dungeons this season in a way that there have not been traditionally in Friends at the Table. Like revealing the Chimeric Cadent's, like the interior of the Chimeric Lantern moon.

Jack: The maze as well.

Dre: It was sick.

Austin: The way that entering the Stellar Combustor had like a weird timing mechanism, [Ali chuckles] and there was a real like, structural layout of that place. I was like, alright, how are you moving through this place? I think a lot of those things are explicit— were *explicitly* me trying to emphasize that this was a science fantasy season? You know, the series opens— or the season opens with y'all going down into a

dungeon, right? It's— what's the name of the opening track, Jack? What's the actual, or the opening—?

Jack: Um, the— Palisade Orbital Descent [**Austin:** Orbital Descent.] is an early one. Or, On the Approach—

Austin: On the Approach, right? And yeah, it's On the Approach. We really wanted the opening to— I mean, I'll say this, given that the intros became so part of this season, I originally didn't want intros. I didn't want Divine Cycle-style intros for this. I wanted to do Hieron-style intros. I wanted to do in media res, like the arrows flying through the air intros, because I wanted to capture that part of the kind of Hieron feel, of like party going on an adventure, the world is happening around them. And so things like the increased focus on dungeons, on gear, on boss fights, on puzzle fights, is a hundred percent purposefully trying to capture “it's cool to get a plus three swords sometimes”, you know? So yeah, I appreciate that. I don't take too much heat here from being called devious in this one. Are we good to hop to a Character question, or do we want to stay here for a second?

Sylvi: I'm good.

Jack: I think I'm good.

Ali: Let's hop. Hop hop hop.

Dre: Let's jump.

Austin: Characters. This one comes in from Anonymous. Wait, is that right? Yes, I think that that's right. Wait one second, 30. Anonymous.

Anon: Leap's Return?

[00:39:00]

For Keith: Did you always intend on returning to Leap at some point? I mainly asked because I felt like Eclectic had a hard time making connections with other characters and wondered what the thought process was behind the switch.

Keith: This is an easy one even though the answer is both yes and no. Even from before the season started, even at the end of the last season, I was telling Austin, I really want to play Leap again. And like, there was a sort of background path of moving from Phrygian to— back to Leap. And in my head, it was sort of like, half Leap, then half Phrygian, then half Phrygian, then half Leap. That's sort of the idea that I had in my head.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: And then it became this thing of like, Phrygian is a key that unlocks a big problem called the Stellar Combustor? [**Austin** chuckles] And it sort of forced, you know, I allowed it to force my hand into choosing a new character. And I was going to pick Leap for a while. I wanted to come back as Leap, as the Almoner, [**Austin:** Right.] and like, instead of as a pirate, but as like, you know, throwing gold around, being like a weird [chuckles], a weird financier, like ready—

Austin: The Almoner is from Yuri Runnel's 106th Astir Squadron #2, [**Keith:** Yeah.] the Almoner and the Ordained. I said Yuri Runnel's— Yuri Runnel and August— what's August's last name? August Orion. Really great playbook, that is like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] it's what you just said, Keith. [**Sylvi** chuckles] Throwing money around, kind of being a small business owner.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. Like controlling resources and stuff. And—

Austin: Which was partially— which was partially motivated by wanting to affect the metagame more, the Conflict Turn more, right?

Keith: That's true. And also really wanting to illustrate a big change from Leap the last time we saw it, not just coming back as the same character, but coming back as like, oh no, I did the pirate thing, and it was wildly successful [**Jack** chuckles] and now I'm this new guy. But partially due to needing another kind of character that wasn't the Almoner to be in the game, and also due to being like, do I really want to bring Leap back now? Would it make more sense to do something else? I thought up Eclectic and I had a really great time. And then when actually Leap did come back, it was fully 100% spur of the moment, never once did I consider Leap was going to be back in the season.

Austin: We had no plan on that, yeah.

Keith: You can kind of hear it in the episode that I was like, deliberating over whether or not to kill off Eclectic in order to— I mean basically in order to use that mechanic to not lose the game really badly? Because at that point we were really losing badly in Questlandia. And I was like, I can do a lot of good work by dying here. And then that's when Austin messaged me like, hey, you can be Leap. And I was like, oh, I can? That's— cause I— because Leap wasn't there. It didn't, it wasn't— Austin had this thing that he knew existed about or thought— I don't know what you thought about it.

Austin: What I knew was that Cas'alaer was coming, right? [**Keith:** Right, okay.] And I was like, well, I could work Leap returning via Cas'alear pretty easily. [**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.] You know, so...

Keith: So, yeah, it's funny that I did think Leap was kind of coming back at every moment until he didn't. And then when he did, I had no clue that that was going to happen.

Austin: That's how it goes. Well, happy to have Leap back in the end, though obviously, had a great time with Phrygian and Eclectic this year too.

Keith: Yeah. And then I got to do some of that Almoner stuff, vibes-wise, in Questlandia.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Questlandia Leap is just that.

Keith: Yeah, it's exactly my plan for.

Austin: And then even like, in the way you ended up playing Leap in the kind of downtime before the coda-final-super-finale, you get a little bit of that vibe too, you know? So.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Caro: Intro Goals?

[00:43:00]

Austin: Alright. Next category, Music and Intros. This one comes in from Caro, who says,

Friends at the Table intros have always stood out as fun and engaging framing devices, but Palisade's brought them to a whole new level. It's apparent from Austin's consistent use of meter and rhyme to foreshadow Palisade getting on Cycle, to the harrowing use of TikTok voice for the Divine Resonance in episode 30, to the season-spanning montages during Questlandia and the finale—but even all the way back to the rest of the cast appearing in Perfect Imperfect during the road games, it's clear you all were pushing at the form in dynamic and exciting ways.

Did you have any particular goals or intentions you really wanted to hit with the intros this season? Did you approach them differently than you have for the past seasons? Are there any details or Easter eggs that you're particularly proud of that listeners might have overlooked?

They're really fun to make, and also like a silly thing for me to do after, again, as I was just saying, like, I started the season being like, I don't want to do intros at all. I want it to just be last time ons, and you know, in the middle of, in media res style opening sequences. But it became really clear quickly that there could be something fun with, as Caro points out here, getting on Cycle, this idea that music has its own way of tilting words towards it.

You know, I guess maybe in some ways the Easter egg that I'm particularly proud of or that I'm interested in is in one of the Road games? Gur Sevraq says that he doesn't believe in music, but he does believe in dancing. And he doesn't believe in music because it will make you fucking sing. It'll make you sing— it'll change the word you're saying so that you stay on beat, so that you can fit into proper scansion, etc. Not that it doesn't do that with dancing too, but you know, there's something metaphorical happening there.

And when Jack came to the show with the Adagio, and the idea of Connadine wanting things to get on cycle, it became— and the fact that that kind of had its own power even separately from— like once you started that machine, not that it's a literal machine, but once you started that process, it could kind of like, catch you in it? I had a lot of fun over the course of the season with like, who speaks in rhyme, who doesn't? Are there ways to learn how to speak in rhyme such that you escape the pull of the Adagio? Because you end up with characters like Black Screen and Parti, who are like, able to still be revolutionary despite that? Or there's an ambiguity, which is like, if they were truly revolutionary, wouldn't they get off beat? And there are at least one or two intros where I am explicitly not on rhythm because it's a character who is outside of that influence and who is positioning themselves outside of that influence, which is— which is really fun for me.

For instance, why did Perennial speak in rhyme?, asks someone. It's because Perennial is like a little witchy, fun jester. And like, Perennial is not immune. Perennial, Garfield pointing at sign, who's that for? [Dre chuckles] And so I think that was one of the most interesting things for me. It's like, who did I decide to bring outside of the— that sort of rhythmic stuff. I don't know that we get another question— yeah I don't know that one got picked, but like, Jack, you didn't have a clue I was going to do that stuff when you composed that first track, right?

Jack: Um, I think about halfway through one of the first demos, you said, “oh I think I know what I'm going to do with this.” [Austin: Yeah, right.] So I know that I was finishing the theme, knowing that that was kind of what we were going for? But I hadn't started

pre-production on it. Going into pre-production, actually, the thing we had been talking about was, let's do in media res intros. But by the time, and you know, we have Motion screaming in the main theme you know, as the season begins and by the time Austin and Ali and I had sort of said, alright, we're going to try and do this style of intro, sort of led by Austin coming out with this opener with Nothing is Stationary, it snapped together, like Austin said, so much for me in terms of Cycle, in terms of speaking in rhythm.

Also, you know, I feel like it's such a nice pair to the way we problematized gardens and thinking of gardens? It's something that I was really trying to problematize with Connadine and co. was this idea that like, culture and mass culture is a place for like, escape and release and comfort when it can so often be a place that is you know, getting you on beat, getting you on Cycle, getting you, you know. What's the line that the assassins say? It's like, Connadine has them speaking on rhythm or whatever.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah, a hundred percent, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, I think the only little, the fun easter egg from— oh, and by the time we got really into the season and as we were prepping intros, I was like leading Austin into traps, deliberately— like fun traps deliberately.

Dre: Devious!

Jack: I wanted Austin to do a triplet flow for the finale— devious! [chuckles] And I didn't even say this is what I'd like you to do, but I sent it to you and you immediately gave it a triplet flow.

Austin: Oh yeah, a hundred percent. You put me on cycle.

Jack: We got it.

Austin: You did.

Jack: Yeah!

Austin: A hundred percent.

Jack: The only fun easter egg for me is that, in keeping with nothing being stationary and Motion hard at work on Palisade, every single one of the titles in the soundtrack references a verb with a few exceptions. Adagio is a, like a tempo measurement for music, and Just One Second, you have the second of a clock, but that's when the bombs are going off. But otherwise, you have Nothing is Stationary being the theme, then descent, approach, swing, combust, visit, cut, work, see, recalibrate, scatter, declare, look, rest, and Hit The Number, Call Me Up.

Austin: Yeah. And then briefly going back to the Road intros, you know, the entire Road premise of Perfect Imperfect, one of the big questions that we were trying to explore with that whole season is like, how is history told? Who gets to tell history? And that's not even like just a Palisade thing, that was the end of Partizan, right? **[Jack: Oh yeah!]** The end of Partizan was like, what do people learn about Millennium Break? Do they think that they're cool? Do they think that they're dangerous? Do they, you know, what is the takeaway there?

And so it was continuing that question and sort of exploring it from a different, a different perspective from the galaxy, right? Like once we knew it was the Twilight Mirage, I got to say like, okay, well, what if the Twilight Mirage was telling the story? What would that look like? And the answer is, I guess, still it would look a lot like— oh my god, why am I blanking on the podcast?

Jack: Blowback!

Austin: Blowback, it would seem a lot like Blowback, which I believe season five starts fairly soon.

Jack: Ooh, exciting! What's the season?

Austin: I don't remember. I need to— I'll check before we wrap up and I'll shout them out one more time. But people should go listen to Blowback, Blowback's great. Alright,

Let's Do a Silly One. What do we say? Gabby writes in with what might be my favorite question.

Jack: This one is so fucking funny.

Gabby: Media Club Screenshot?

[00:49:36]

Austin:

In an alternate universe, you're about to start a new podcast called Media Club Multiplication. For your first season, you'll cover the 2011 Friends at the Table: Palisade anime adaptation. Before the season starts, you're going to do a screenshot stream and you must find an out of context image that will baffle or intrigue unfamiliar viewers. What scene/moment from Palisade do you choose to screenshot?

And then in parentheses,

((Who/what is the dodgeball gorilla of Palisade?))

Sylvi: I have one.

Dre: [chuckles]

Austin: Okay, listen to Media Club Plus. For anybody who is like, what are you fucking talking about, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] go listen to Media Club Plus, Episode Zero, and then also the rest of all of Media Club Plus.

Keith: Media Club Plus is really good.

Austin: It's really good.

Jack: Oh yeah, I mean, in one sentence, to provide the context here, in the early part of Media Club Plus, the show about Hunter x Hunter, the cast showed me a series of

screenshots from an anime I had never seen before, with the explicit intention to confound and amaze me, and asked me to try and draw conclusions about the show based on what I had seen.

Janine: I have one.

Austin: So.

Keith: With extraordinarily mixed success.

Jack: [chuckles]

Austin: Janine.

Janine: Mine would be the crew inside a room looking really dubiously at a box of cereal.

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Dre: [laughs]

Ali: Oooh!

Austin: Good one. [**Janine:** Yes. Yeah.] That's quite like one of the Hunter x Hunter ones actually. So, yeah.

Jack: Mine would be Calvin Brnine brow furrowed, sweat on their brow, looking down at what is clearly a sort of like plant mister [**Dre** laughs] that they are busily inventing, built out of absolute garbage, while out of a *huge* window behind them, like a galactic scale battle is taking place around the Perennial station.

Sylvi: Everybody listening at the door when Gucci and Brnine are arguing.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: Oh god.

[Dre and Jack laugh]

Austin: Oh, that's funny.

Dre: Figure and Partial Palisade playing basketball.

Sylvi: Oh that's also really good!

Austin: Yeah. That's killer, that's really good.

Art: Phrygian and Brnine when they're like, moving that like air conditioner box, [assorted laughter] so they don't die in the sun? I bet there'd be a good still image of that, you know?

Keith: Oh, yeah. Kenneth Marian Colver becoming a portal for an Axiom?

Sylvi: Oh my god!

Austin: Oh my god. Yeah. Keith, that's a lot like the one [Ali: Uh huh.] [Sylvi laughs] that you wanted, that I said, that [Keith: Sure.] Sylvi and I said it was too much of a spoiler.

Keith: Not, I have to remind you, not wanted, knew was too much, but maybe only barely too much.

Austin: It's right on the line.

Sylvi: You're splitting that hair real fine.

Austin: Something gets split in that scene. Yeah, it's true.

Keith: [chuckles] The good one about Kenneth Marian Colver, that happens like episode 1, I think.

Austin: It's like episode 20.

Sylvi: Well, he shows up in episode 1— chapter 1 of the manga.

Dre: Episode 1 in Friends at Table.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, he's in the first episode of the manga, right? Kenneth Bricks. **[Sylvi bursts out laughing]** Yes, exactly.

[Jack and Keith and Dre chuckle]

Austin: I think for me, it has to be something in the old decrepit mall we kept going back to, **[Ali: Oh my god.]** that rings the— it has to be the DDR machine in the mall, **[Dre laughs]** it has to be, I don't know, one of those things.

Ali: My first answer was going to be an establishing shot of Brnine's desk with little Asepsis and Bing-32s like chittering on it? **[Austin: Mhm.]** But now, I really want it to be Brnine and Phrygian at the party?

Janine: [chuckles]

Austin: Ohh! Party Phrygian! With the Phrygian glasses?

[Jack and Art exclaim]

Ali: The Phrygian glasses and Brnine's fucking like, suits— LED razor pants.

Art: Will Fourthwall make us Phrygian glasses, have we even checked?

Ali: Huh?

Austin: That seems hard to make.

Dre: That seems hard.

Art: Will Fourthwall make us Phrygian glasses...

Jack: Amanda in the chat says, a screenshot of the magazine [laughs].

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Ali: [cackles]

Austin: I mean, if the Road is on the table, that's too much because the Road has so many wild—

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: How many— how many pictures of the picture that kills you until it stops killing you?

Jack: Wait, they haven't tried— they have tried that. We don't know the answer to that.

Austin: We don't know— we have to come back to that fucking magazine. I can't believe we never wrapped back to the magazine.

Ali: It's just out there!

Austin: It's just out there.

Keith: It's just out there.

Ali: How many things kill you in the universe?

Janine: So many.

Ali: If it's just a magazine, who cares?

Dre: A lot of things.

Jack: It's for girls!

Ali: [cackles]

Janine: There's like small rocks out there that can kill you. A magazine is like relatively, [Dre: Yeah!] you know.

Austin: Oh, that's funny. Alright, everyone get an answer and anyone else want to hit one before we go back to the top? Or actually now we can open it up and jump between things, it's up to y'all.

Janine: I think we should just keep cycling.

Dre: Oooh.

Art: Spin the wheel.

Janine: I'm the minority, I guess.

Austin: If someone will bring me a wheel— okay.

Janine: We have so many to answer. I just want the thing that is the most fluid and the less like, let's debate.

Ali: I agree.

Austin: Alright, then let's just jump all the way back to the top.

Dre: Sure.

Art: You can't argue with a wheel.

Janine: You can and I am.

Art: That's ridiculous.

Anon: Ending Planned?

[00:54:49]

Austin: This one's actually really easy. I can answer this one really quick. From Anonymous,

My question is, when you went into the season, how much did you know about where you wanted to end? I know you never really have a story planned out in advance, but in a way that Partizan was about the Empire as a burning windmill—

That's not exactly true. It was just about a burning windmill. Who knew about Empire? Who the fuck knew?

and Palisade was about a revolution with the potential to succeed, did you already have a shape of what the third season would be about, however broadly? And if so, how much of that influenced Palisade from the outset?

Jack: Good question.

Austin: Not at all. I had no fucking idea what three is. I knew the— I knew the name of the third season, broadly, but it was middle of the season before I had a clue, even loosely, what the— what we would be setting up for the next one of these.

Art: And I remember when I said “Austin, “Broadly” is a terrible name for the third season.”

Keith: Yeah, Partizan, Palisade, then Broadly.

Art: It doesn't hit the meter.

[**Jack** and **Keith** chuckle]

Austin: It was the one thing Vice gave me, was the trademark to the website Broadly, and I'm going to fucking use it, okay?

[**Dre** and **Keith** laugh]

Jack: Yeah, might as well.

Austin: The— so, I say this in relation to like Partizan, where in my heart of hearts, I knew that Partizan was a game of Beam Saber and the follow up, whatever it would be called—because I didn't know it would be called Palisade—but that would be Armour Astir, that we would get to Armour Astir somehow, some way. There's lots of ways that fantasy and magic stuff can find its way into the season. I'd already thought broadly about the idea that like— I didn't lock in on that and like start drawing us towards that direction until the Kingdom game in Partizan? But like I had an early desire, I was like, oh, it would be really fun if we did Beam Saber and the world changed such that it could become Armour Astir both in terms of magic and magic type stuff getting introduced to

the world, and also the idea that revolutionary ideology had become real across the galaxy and across the Principality, because that was a necessary condition for Armour Astir. Armour Astir is a game about revolutionaries, right? And so we couldn't have that in Partizan yet, because no one was doing that in a big collective way, in a way that mattered. And so I had that broad structure, not even close to having that from Palisade going into what's next.

I think not until we started working out some of the Connadine and Arbitrage stuff did I start thinking, ooh, big stakes around you know, platforms and surveillance and all that. And even now, I don't have a game picked necessarily, I have a loose idea, but I've kind of gone back and forth, and I haven't pitched anything necessarily to anybody. I did wake up from a dream two nights ago, with, and then immediately wrote a thousand words that I sent to Jack. And I think Jack, you're the only one who I've shown that to at this point, where it was like, I think I know what the next season is.

Jack: Yeah, what were the exact—

Austin: Because I can't make any— no one else should start thinking about it yet. It's way too fucking early for us to think about Divine Cycle stuff again.

Sylvi: We got another season to think about it.

Keith: I don't know, I might start thinking about it.

Austin: We sure do.

Jack: I do want to say that at 8.23 in the morning, you said, "With regrets," [Ali and Dre laugh] and then the next message, "I dreamt of," and then blank, the name of the season. [chuckles]

Austin: Uh huh, which is to say we'd finished the season, and I still didn't have a strong sense of what moment to moment next season would be, right? Or where it would be, or what the stakes would be. I knew that it would be a sequel to Palisade, and that's kind of it. And now I have a stronger sense of what that might be. You know, I sent Jack

some, like, touchstones, and like, an example sortie. So it's like, I know what the vibes are? I don't know who's in it. I don't know when it takes place, necessarily.

Keith: Yeah the only thing we know for sure is that it'll be longer.

Sylvi: I'm going to shoot you.

Jack: [chuckles]

Austin: Oh, we know that the next Road, I announced the next Road in the finale, which I think people weren't sure if it was real or not, but the Year of Seven Princepts will be the next road to season 10, I guess, right? It will do— in the way that we did one off episodes based on the Crunchyroll answers last time. I want to tell— I want to tell the story of like the really bad year of the Principality and the way that there was like the year of six emperors in Rome, which was like, oh, this shit's *done*, dog. Six people said they were emperor this year and they went bad for *all* of them.

Jack: It's going to be so good.

Austin: We're having that but for Princepts. And I don't know if that's anybody we've even met before. It might be all new Princepts, who knows, right?

Jack: It's all new Princepts.

Austin: It might not be the— any of the Princepts that we've already met. It might be five years from now, you know, so.

Ali: We know that Brnine's going to be one.

Austin: Oh my fucking god. [**Jack** laughs, **Ali** snorts] Finally, Brnine's downfall, Princept Brnine, unbelievable.

Janine: Oh my god.

Keith: And then immediately killed, finally.

Austin: Yeah. So yeah, we'll see. Yeah, that's the easy one, that's a quick one. Alright, Characters— nope, Gameplay. Kala asks,

Kala: AA Tier System?

[00:59:15]

What are your thoughts on the tier system in Armour Astir? Were there any standout moments that the tier system enabled, or any times you felt you were fighting against the tier system? Cori, Brnine, Leap, and Levi all had unique relationships with tiers by being higher or lower than usual. Did you feel those differences while playing those characters?

Sylvi: Yeah, I really liked the tier system, but that's because [**Dre:** Yeah.] I got to use— like midseason upgrade in a way, got to make it be like a pivotal character moment for Cori and then sort of marked a new phase for her? And yeah, it helped me roll better, sure. But also, it was cool to have something mechanical that I could point to and be like, yeah, this is— this is what would happen in the anime adaptation of this or whatever. It's— she kills her dad and gets a new scary mech.

Austin: God.

Dre: [chuckles]

Keith: I have fun with the tier—

Austin: I have like a lot, but go ahead, Keith.

Keith: Oh, I had fun with the tier system. Phrygian also—not in the exact same way—but, Phrygian's like, main move [**Austin:** Oh right.] [**Dre:** Uh huh.] was being able to skip straight to Strike Decisively.

Austin: To vulnerable— to Strike Decisively, right right right.

Keith: Regardless of tier, which is how they shot down.

Austin: Or regardless of risk or something, right? Something like that.

Keith: It was that I would take a risk in order to Strike Decisively on any target is I think what it was. But it reminds me of the tier stuff, you know— ten years ago now, Austin, I think, you talking about dragons and like, rolling a 20 to hit a dragon with a stick or whatever?

Austin: Oh, the classic Stras Acimovic 12 HP Dragon post, which was a classic thing— Stras would go on to make a game we played and liked, Scum and Villainy, would also go on to— sorry, co-make that— I forget who the other author is, if anyone in the chat room can remind me, that'd be great. Stras made a post called the 12 HP Dragon, which was kind of explaining what Power by the Apocalypse combat was for people who, you know, ten years ago, did not get their heads around. How could a dragon only have 12 HP? And here we are, yeah, 12— 10 years later, and Keith, [**Keith:** Yeah.] you really internalized it, right?

Keith: It really just feels like a mechanical expression of that, like, you know, one above normal Scum and Villainy stuff, where, like, you know, it doesn't matter how well you shoot your pistol, it doesn't do anything to a Star Destroyer.

Austin: Right, right. It just doesn't. That's just not true— it just can't do it, it doesn't matter if you crit.

Keith: It doesn't— yeah, the Star Destroyer's hull doesn't care about 20s.

Austin: Right. And yeah, John Leboeuf-Little was the co-author, co-designer on Scum and Villainy, thank you, chat. And yeah, that's part of why I really liked Armour Astir. It has a really— it's like some really firm structure, with some flexible, like jello insides in those structure, you know? So a tier three thing will always just be stronger than that tier one thing. But there's always a way for the tier one to kind of climb up and get some some hits in, if they have the right equipment or the right situation. And that structure actually reminds me a lot of the stuff that I really like about Blades in the Dark around things like Position and Effect. It's just a little— it's a little simpler in some ways, so, big

fan. Any other thoughts here, should we jump back to characters? And maybe we'll do a few character ones this time, because we have so many character questions.

Janine: I have a... I... so, for me, **[Austin: Please.]** and I think this is probably because I'm not a build person? I'm not a person who like, I don't, when we're starting a season go like look at a Reddit for the game and like look at people who've got really cool builds, and I don't like— I don't do that for video games either, it's just not— it's just not a way that I enjoy engaging with stuff. **[Austin: Right.]** I kind of just like playing it by ear and being like— even when I try and plan stuff out in the moment, it'll often just kind of be like, well, I feel like this is the right thing to take right now.

And the downside of that is that in a system like this, as cool and as enabling as it is in some ways, for me, it definitely felt like because I wasn't planning ahead in that way, I often got into situations where I was like, well, I didn't build my character to be able to do the thing I want to do right now. **[Austin: Right, right.]** And that's not a thing that we usually encounter. Usually, it's like, well, if there's like a big scary thing, there's usually still something you can do about it in some way. Maybe you have to like, wiggle around to like figure it out? **[Austin: Uh huh.]** But like, it's never a thing of like, well, I don't have the right gun for this, so I guess I'll just focus on these other things. And that— I think, I think the fact that that combined with the fact that I was playing Thisbe? Who is, who, you know, in last, the last season was big and strong and it felt like—

Austin: Was basically tier two in this system.

Janine: Yeah, that made it feel kind of like, strange. And again, I think that's, that's more to do with like how I built her and the way that I play these games than the fault of the game itself, but it is, you know, it's slightly different vibe than other folks had.

Keith: I need to clear my name. I've never looked at Reddit, building a character. I've never done it.

Ali: [squeals in delight]

Keith: I had to exonerate myself.

Austin: No, Janine was talking about me. I'm build-brained in that way—

Janine: I didn't say anyone's name. I was—

Dre: Yeah, same.

Sylvi: Now everyone's just admitting it.

Keith: No, no, but we were talking earlier about— about builds.

Ali: [giggles]

Austin: I have no problem admitting it, it's a joy. Yeah. Yeah. Listen, I'm going to own up.

Sylvi: The truth come out.

Austin: [laughs] Alright, I'm jumping ahead back to Characters. I think we've done this one, yes, this next one though we have not. There's two here that I'm putting together for some reason. First one's from Muna who says,

Muna: Brnine Characterization?

[01:05:45]

Hi, Ali! There's a lot of very fun Brnine characterization via texting this season. Did you have this in mind coming into the season or did it come about organically?

Also: were they still texting Jesset and/or Gucci in that year alone?

Jack: PC/NPC Affection?

[01:06:00]

And then for everybody from Jack,

Which character, (PC or NPC) did your character (or you!) have the MOST feelings about (affectionate or derogatory)?

I think maybe because— Jesset and Gucci, I feel like most feelings about affectionate or derogatory, I don't want to broaden that out—

Ali: [laughs] Sure, sure. This was fully organically— I, you know, I've always thought of Brnine as like a fiddler? So like, the thought of Brnine always having something in their hands is a thing?

[**Sylvi** and **Keith** laugh]

Keith: Oh. That's what you mean. [laughs harder]

Ali: A fidgeter perhaps is the word that you might use there, if you were not trying to confuse Keith. Then also, if I'm in a scene, the easiest way for me to get into a scene is like, to talk to an NPC. Then Brnine was also in the position where like, you know, the fact that Brnine could talk to Gucci set up the whole like, hidden information thing in that whole first conflict, do you know what I mean? Like that was such a part of what Brnine's role is, that it like made sense that they would be, you know, sort of have their ear to these other conversations while everybody else was on the field? So, you know, it was really fun to go back to, it was like just easy characterization to be honest. So yeah, I had fun doing it and I'm glad. I can't speak to that year. If we played it—

Austin: Yeah, we didn't play that year.

Ali: Yeah, I would be able to tell you. You know, they're all a part of Millennium Break, so you can, you know.

Austin: Have fun.

Ali: An archiveofourown.org. You can figure that out.

[**Sylvi** and **Dre** laugh]

Austin: Everybody else, who do you have the most feelings about, affectionate or derogatory?

Jack: The Blue Channel, both. **[Ali giggles]** I feel like I was constantly being like— I mean, we'll get to this in other questions, but like I missed playing with everybody very much? And I would listen to the dailies, and I would be like, I'm excited to see what these characters are doing, I'm excited to see where the story's going, and I think that my absence making the heart grow fonder from my friends as well of like, oh, those guys are great! And so I would always feel a real sort of affection for the characters of the Blue Channel to be like, oh, what are they— that team out there, what are they doing?

And then at the same time, it was just wildly infuriating, that you know, it was like one squirrel carefully burying nuts for the winter, and another squirrel just following behind and [chuckling] digging them up and eating them. And it was like, that was the double thing for me. It was Blue Channel for positive.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Both positive and negative.

Jack: Yes, yes.

Janine: I can't choose—

Sylvi: I feel like mine's obvious.

Janine: Go ahead.

Sylvi: I feel like I don't need to say mine? It kinda goes without saying. Rival system is cool.

Ali: [chuckles]

Janine: Your dad? Oh.

Sylvi: Yeah, my dad is-

Austin: Oh, Rival system.

Dre: Mmm.

Sylvi: Obviously. Yeah, no, Elle. Elle's great. The only— the only 'L' I ever took on the show.

[**Dre, Ali, Jack** laugh]

Janine: Wooow.

Sylvi: Thank you.

Austin: Incredible. Incredible.

Sylvi: And I'm out for the rest of the night!

Ali: [giggles]

Austin: Farewell.

Keith: My experience— oh go ahead—

Janine: I was just going to say, I have like— I don't have three answers, but I have three thoughts. One, I think the real answer is, Thisbe most thought about Thisbe? Which sounds very weird, but the previous, but you know Partizan, I don't think Thisbe ever thought about Thisbe. I think it's like that contrast of like, she spent a lot of this season acknowledging like she was a person to think about, at all.

I think after that, though, the like slightly more satisfying answer is definitely Brnine, like that relationship went through a *whole* thing, even just again, acknowledging it's a relationship and not just to like, this is the person who owns my paperwork kind of thing, you know?

Ali: [chuckles]

Janine: And the third thing is like, probably Clementine, probably just in terms of like, inserting herself into Thisbe's mind? Like everyone else is there organically, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] but Clementine just being like, "hey, we're friends!", is just like.

Austin: It's so funny.

Janine: Oh, I have to actually think about that. That's, I don't have an automatic reaction of that, that's weird.

Austin: I really like— hooo... I really like Marlon Styx, **[Ali:** Oh yeah.] the really awkward monk, double agent— triple agent, early on.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Jack: The man who reads one prophecy and goes, oh, shit, it's real.

Austin: *Fuck, oh, shit!* But if we're extending all the way out to the Road, I think it has to be Mustard Red. **[Jack:** Mustard Red...] But really just the whole Brink crew is just so good, but Mustard especially. What a nightmare. Absolute nightmare person.

Keith: My experience in life is that the person that you normally hate the most is your boss? **[Austin:** Uh huh.] So for me, it is both Mustard Red and Gucci. And I'm sorry to Brnine for— or to Ali for both answers.

Ali: I'm proud of that response, thank you, Keith. **[Austin:** Uh huh.] But yeah, if I can move you guys, then— [laughs]

Keith: I'm including Gucci in this. Hating—

Austin: Gucci is great. Gucci is fantastic. I love playing the worst revolutionary of all time.

Art: Yeah, Gucci is my answer for both.

Austin: She's like top 10. She's at the worst—

Sylvi: She's a top 10 revolutionary?

Keith: [laughs]

Ali: Yeah.

Art: Top 10 best?

Sylvi: Okay I thought you were saying top 10 best, I was like, yeah??

Art: Usually when we say top 10, it's a comment.

Ali: Well I, you know, I'm just trying to give her some wiggle room here.

Austin: Uh huh. Top five alive, yeah. I— there's some really fun Gucci scenes this season, I would say. I really love— and also just like, slippage between what does she believe in, what does she believe is really possible? What does she—? Gucci is a really fun character to play, because she's a character who was raised to believe in the radical possibility of change, but doesn't believe she's actually capable of being anything but a figurehead for it? Which is like, deeply sad. I don't think she actually thinks she can change the world. I think she just thinks she can be around people and maybe like, inspire people who actually do that work.

Keith: But also take credit for it.

Austin: Oh, a hundred percent— well, she thinks that's what her job is, right? She thinks that's the best thing she can do, because she was trained to speak well, right?

Dre: Yeah, she's marketing.

Austin: She's marketing, a hundred percent. It's why back in the previous season, she was the person who thought, well, maybe we should be a little more reformist. Not because she doesn't believe in what— she doesn't believe that you all are right, but because she believes that like, this is the only way— this is the way the world works. She's just like, so deeply unconvinced that the people that she has in her can be the people who make the change happen. She's great. Love playing her.

Ali: If I can answer with a character that I wasn't involved with, [chuckling] mine is the woman in charge of the Stellar Combustor trigger?

Sylvi: Oh yeah.

Jack: [chuckles]

Austin: Oh my god.

Keith: Oh yeah.

Ali: Just like— the thought, like, you know, I— we all have our characters, there's a bunch of NPCs I really love. But in terms of thinking of a character whose interiority, like I wanted to think through a lot? Like the thought of her going through the process of having that responsibility, and then even just like, the thought of what her life is now without it, is like something— like if I was writing my *Palisade At a Certain Point of View*, it would be about that. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Nightmare lady.

Keith: Mhm.

Austin: Any other feelings about— big feelings about characters that we haven't hit?

Sylvi: I mean, I'm sure there's somebody I'm forgetting about.

Austin: You know, I can think about Partial Palisade for fucking ever, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Person who is— you know, Partial Palisade was already kind of a fun rerun of a Hieron character, except explicitly disempowered? This idea of like, you used to be the world and now you're just a person on it, is so interesting to me in terms of interiority and like personal perspective, especially as a metaphor, right? Because Palisade, again, the reason I wanted to get to Armour Astir is because like magic is a really compelling metaphor for change. Magic is a really compelling metaphor for like, a thing you thought couldn't ever happen suddenly can. And so for this person who has had that stripped from them, this person who like, could be the world, could shift the world,

could make the world whatever it needed to be to help people and now can't do that?
Oh! Love it. Fantastic. Could stay in that brain forever, you know?

Keith: Buddy Bronco.

Sylvi: Oh, Buddy Bronco!

Dre: Buddy Bronco...

Sylvi: My goodness. How can I forget?

Austin: Buddy Bronco...

Keith: [laughs] Those are my favorite kind of scenes in Friends at the Table, just when a fucking wacko shows up.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Just messin' around with a wacko. [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Who's Buddy Bronco?

Austin: Oh yeah, a wacko. A wacko, like Eclectic, you mean, [**Ali:** Jack, it was—] the real wacko in that scene. Buddy had his head on.

Keith: That's a real wacko— I had a normal request— I had a *normal* request, I just wanted *normal* information. I got a *weirdo* being weird to me.

Ali: [wheezes]

Jack: [chuckling] Who is Buddy Bronco? I remember the scene, but I don't—

Keith: Buddy Bronco is like a cop that Eclectic knew and called for information and basically was like, stonewalling with a bizarre personality. [laughs]

Austin: We stumbled into the Philip Seymour Hoffman, [**Sylvi:** Oh my god.] Adam Sandler—

Sylvi: Punch-Drunk Love?

Austin: Yelling at each other from Punch-Drunk Love scene.

Jack: [chuckles] Oh right! Yes.

Keith: Oh. I've never seen that.

Sylvi: It's alright!

Austin: You should just watch that scene.

Sylvi: Yeah, that scene for sure.

Austin: You'd be like, yeah, uh huh. Alright.

Art: I mean, that movie is fine if you have a slow afternoon.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's right.

Keith: It's the movie that I haven't seen, that I talk about the most as if I've seen it.

Dre: Oh!

Keith: Not as if I've seen it, but the idea behind it, of Paul Thomas Anderson taking the fake Adam Sandler character from all his other movies, and making— turning him into real—we talked about this on Media Club Plus a couple of times. [**Sylvi:** Yeah.]—turning him real?

Austin: I thought you were saying, I thought you were saying it's the movie I lied about.

Sylvi: Yeah, me too.

Keith: No, no, no. I just— I just found one really interesting thing about a movie that I watched five minutes of and didn't like? But I still really like the idea of putting Adam

Sandler in real life, like his character? I don't really know that that's what the movie is about, but it's what it feels like.

Sylvi: That's kinda what the movie's about.

Austin: You should watch the movie, yeah. Alright, I'm going to turn the page. More Character questions from Billy the Squid and Mike R.

Billy: Levi vs Occam?

[01:17:02]

Listening to the Questlandia game, it was really cool to see Levi's success as snowball and it was reminding me a lot of the string of W's that led to Occam Olio's rise to herodum within the Frontier Syndicate. Given that these two faced off in such a dramatic way, was there any thought or intention given to the parallels between these two characters? Or was it luck (or improv skill) that their stories rhymed in such a way? Thanks.

And then from Mike, a similar kind of snowballing out of nowhere new character, everyone loves them question.

Mike: Hymn and Spontaneity?

[01:17:32]

I was completely captivated by the way Hymn emerged into the story during the COUNTER/Weight special. Friends at the Table is a collection of great and memorable NPCs, but it's hard to beat COUNTER/Weight for the number of 'willed themselves into the narrative from nothing' characters. Is there something about that setting or system that allows this kind of narrative play more frequently? On a higher level, how do those kinds of moments play out at the table? When do you know to roll with it and differentiate a bit from a fully rounded character?

Keith: Remind me, Hymn is Aria's boyfriend?

Austin: Yeah, Hymn was Aria's boyfriend who vanished from the show after the prequel, [**Keith** laughs] [**Keith:** Yeah, okay.] never to be heard of again.

Keith: I forgot that we—

Ali: Like that isn't normal!

[**Sylvi** and others laugh]

Keith: Boyfriends disappear all the time. I forgot that we decided that Hymn was spelled H-Y-M-N and not—

Austin: Yeah, that's— “he's him”, yeah uh huh.

Keith: [chuckles].

Art: And of course, we all remember that we decided that Hymn was in the background of a bunch of COUNTER/Weight scenes—

Austin: Yeah, we just—

Ali: [incredulous] No, you break up with people! What is wrong with all of you?

Art: Sending texts that Aria isn't answering.

Keith: [laughs]

Austin: Ohhh! It's so funny. I mean, so that's—

Keith: If Ali had broken up with him, it would have come up.

Austin: Right, [**Keith** wheezes] we all would have been like, yeah, Aria is still dealing with the breakup.

Art: Yeah, Aria is going through a breakup.

Austin: She already had a different breakup that defined that season! You text people for a little while. [**Sylvi** wheezes] Everyone's being so weird!

Keith: No, you were together for four years and it devastated you.

Ali: [snorts and wheezes]

Janine: Was it like a Disney Channel thing where it's like, oh, they make like Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears date for a bit and then it just stops?

Austin: Oh.....

Keith: Oh yeah, Hymn ended up writing a really insulting song about—

[Austin, Ali, Art laugh]

Ali: Sometimes it doesn't work out, you know!

Art: Hymn's "Cry Me A River", but I hear it—

Ali: He's just some guy! Anyway.

Austin: Wow, just some guy!

Art: That Aria was in a conservatorship for a while and it was really fucked up—

Ali: In the interest of time, I can just answer this question because I really appreciate this question because it does put into focus, I think like, a thing that's important about both of those games, I think some of the vibe— the vibes of each of the games. Again, I am a person who will like, the way for me to engage in the scene and feel like my characters are part of it is to like, interact with the NPCs, and just like the joy of playing Aria again? I think you can list those episodes and hear me forget to be involved with that mission. [**Sylvi** and **Austin** chuckle] But, I think like, you know, the Technoir— the Mechnoir game that we were— no, we weren't playing the Technoir, were we? Or was it—?

Austin: Yeah, totally. We were playing Technoir. We totally were.

Ali: It was— okay. The way that that game puts characters on the map, like on a piece of paper that you're looking at, and is like you know, these are the connections that

you're going to make, the more that you know these people, the more that you're going to know about the world? Like felt— like let COUNTER/Weight feel like a world that lived and breathed and had a rhythm to it. There's a million other things that you know, the way that we set those up, the way that those characters interacted with people around them. Like, that's how it was easy to slide into that mode?

Whereas, with Armour Astir, you have a faction, and you have names that are on a spreadsheet, and you have the Blue Channel and you have this like sort of core group, and this sort of core location with these characters who are interacting all of the time. And then you sort of have these moments where it's like, oh, let me check this off the list, let me see who needs help. And it's like, we didn't find a lot of big engagement moments for those because it was like, it's a different UI screen, you know what I mean? So—

Austin: Totally. And also how Occam Olio breaks through is by winning, right? **[Ali:** Right!] By like, the dice just kept hitting. Occam was not a well realized character. Occam was a statistic improbability who we gave a face to, right? And we all loved, until Levi came through in a sort of game where Occam didn't really get to— Occam's luck does not work in Questlandia.

Keith: Occam got Nemesis System-ed.

Austin: Right, yeah. A hundred percent.

[Jack and Dre chuckle]

Austin: Yeah, cool. I'm going to do one more character thing here. Because it's something we briefly touched on. Matthew writes in and says,

Matthew: Art on Clem?

[01:22:17]

Art, you talked about being resistant or uncomfortable playing Clem, but killed it once you did, can you talk about where you ended up on that?

Art: Sure, yeah. I guess I don't want to go over territory I've covered too thoroughly before, I was resistant and uncomfortable. Clem is like such a big character? And felt to me very specific to Jack's performance. And I didn't want to like, do a bad job. I didn't want— I didn't want to be sitting here at the post-mortem being like, what a shit job playing Clem, you know? And I think I just had to—

Keith: Who would've made you say that.

Dre: Yeah.

Art: Yeah. The chat would have been saying it, it would have been all the questions, this post-mortem would have been a three-hour interrogation of all of the missteps I made playing Clem. Because that's what everyone is like.

Austin: Uh huh, right.

Keith: Swinging the lamp.

Art: Yeah. And I tried to find this. And maybe it didn't happen, maybe it happened in-person, maybe Discord search function is trash, maybe it's all of these things. But I think I had like, a very short conversation with Jack about it. Of just like Clem touchstones? It's also possible, I imagined this.

Austin: Right, sure. But really well.

Art: This is like a conversation I had with myself.

Keith: Jack notably not chiming in.

Art: And just.

Dre: Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Well, I wonder if we had this conversation in person. That might have— that might have been it.

Art: Yeah, I think it might have been it.

Jack: Because we cannot search the Discord history for this.

Austin: We've been in this season for so long, but there's actually a high likelihood that we all saw each other multiple times.

Janine: I do feel like I heard second-hand about this.

Keith: It's the only season we've lived—

Art: Well, when the season started, Jack lived—

Janine: I feel like I heard second-hand about you meeting in person and having this conversation at a burger place or something.

Austin: At the desert.

Janine: Oh, maybe, yeah.

Art: A burger place in the desert.

Austin: Like genuinely, it might have been, yeah.

Keith: It's the only season in which I've seen everybody on the show. And with most of you, it happened multiple times.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: That's nice.

Art: Yeah. And it's, you know, with just a little bit of coaching and a little bit of like, well, get over yourself.

Jack: I don't— I don't think I said that!

Dre: No, that sounds like you, Jack.

Art: A little bit of coaching is you, [**Jack** chuckles] and a little bit of getting over yourself is what I then had to do— to do it is— you just sort of jump in and do it. [**Keith** laughs, **Jack** chuckles] She's been awful. And she's awful in her own way, and you have to sort of get to that kind and variety of awful? Finding the ways that she's different from Grand Magnificent was important, because that's what I think of when I try to be an awful person. But Clem isn't like Grand.

Austin: Grand has talent.

Jack: Yeah, I was about to say Grand— Grand has made things.

Art: And, Grand has talent— [chuckles] and has made things, and isn't consumed by this profound lack of love and worth.

Austin: I was going to say Grand is surrounded by people who are willing to give up a second chance.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Janine: Clem's made things. She's made enemies. That counts.

Sylvi: Oooh!

Austin: [chuckles] That's true.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: Woah!

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And yeah, and then once you're doing it, you're just doing it. It's— once you're riding a bike, you're not thinking about how you're balancing out the bike.

Austin: Once you're in motion, yeah.

Sylvi: You don't want to be in Motion.

Dre: Ohhh...

Austin: No, don't be in Motion. Clem plus Motion would be really bad. So glad that fucking— that door is closed.

Keith: Maybe Motion would be taking the edge off a little bit. [laughs]

Austin: I don't think so. I— oh my god, miserable. Do we want to take a little giveaway? Unless, Ali, [**Jack:** Oh, wow!] reading now, it reads—

Ali: Oh, yeah. No, we can go! We can go. I would be happy to go do a giveaway.

Giveaway #1

[01:26:00]

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: We can go over to roll20.com. But yes, so we had a hundred— a thousand— 1226 responses.

Sylvi: Woah.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: So I will now be rolling a 1— I'm rolling a 1D-whatever.

Austin: Do you want me to zoom in on the dice roll?

Ali: Sure!

Keith: I believe that it's not going to just— going to show you the number 1226.

Ali: In the chat, yeah.

Austin: What do you mean?

Keith: No, because that's not a roll of a D-something.

Austin: Oh, yeah, roll D-1226.

Dre: Oh, 1D— yeah yeah yeah.

Ali: I think we discovered that I shouldn't do that before.

Austin: You need the D.

Jack: No, you typed rolling—

Janine: Yeah, the thing we discovered was you can't type /rolling—

Art: Rolling was the problem.

[table hammering as a drum roll sounds]

Austin: Yeah. Alright. So this is for what? Tell me what this is for.

Ali: This is going to be for our— a free product on fourthwall.com.

Austin: Of any type.

Jack: Of your choice!

Ali: Of your choice.

Dre: Oooh!

Ali: I'm going to email the winner, say, hey, what do you want? [**Sylvi:** Hey, what do you want?] And it's going to be sent to you. [wheezes]

Austin: Sorry, not on fourthwall.com. Friendsatthetable.shop.

Art: What do you want?

Ali: Yes, friends— yeah yeah yeah [wheezes]

Austin: Okay let's roll some dice.

Ali: Let me go buy you a Danny Gonzalez shirt. No? Okay.

[**Janine, Austin, Jack, Dre** chuckle]

Ali: Okay, 575.

Austin: 575!

Ali: Let me consult—

Jack: Calvin Brnine says 575.

Janine: It didn't— it didn't update on stream. Oh, did it? Okay, mine is like frozen, never mind. Weird.

Ali: I would like to congratulate Laurel.

Austin: Shout outs to Laurel.

Dre: Shout outs to Laurel.

Ali: Whose favorite character is Snitch Nightly? Horrible choice, but sure.

Sylvi: Wow.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: Last time we saw Laurel in this show, Laurel opened up the cockpit of a mech and shot Millie in the face.

Keith: What's wrong with Snitch Nightly, I don't get it?

Sylvi: And you've done it again by enjoying Snitch Nightly. Like pellets in my chest from a shotgun blast. I'm bleeding out.

Art: I don't think that when we ask people to put their favorite character, you're going to judge their choices. [laughs]

Sylvi: It's out of love. It's out of love.

Austin: Snitch Nightly shout outs.

Sylvi: Congratulations!

Dre: Art, *you're* going to like, be the person who says that?

Jack: [chuckles]

Art: Yeah! I'm protective of contest entrants.

[**Ali** and **Janine** chuckle]

Austin: That's good of you.

Art: [chuckling] This is consistent with my character up until now, it just hasn't come up a lot.

Dre: Guess who we're getting rated by right now, Art.

Janine: Yeah! [laughs]

Sylvi: [howls with laughter] Hey guys!

Keith: [laughs]

Austin: Hi, Nextlander. Thank you.

Dre: Hi Nextlander! [laughs]

Austin: This is a weird one to get raided into. We're definitely— this is a— we're doing a post-mortem. [**Janine** chuckles] [**Sylvi:** Now we definitely got more viewers than them.] for the end of a season— oh my fucking god.

Sylvi: That's a callback! That's a joke!

Austin: We're doing a post-mortem.

Art: I was being nice.

Austin: It was a joke. But they don't know that.

Sylvi: They don't know that, that's why I said it!

Austin: They were hanging out playing Fallout with Brad—shout outs to Brad Shoemaker!

Dre: Shout outs to Brad Shoemaker.

Austin: I will say, an hour and 35 minutes ago or so, we were all talking about how great Brad is.

Janine: That's true.

Austin: So, shout outs to Brad.

Sylvi: There's a funny story on one of the 999 videos where Brad Shoemaker's name getting mentioned as a punch line.

Austin: It's true. I almost DM'd Brad to tell in that story. But I'll— we will do that after this. Brad, if you're watching, I'm going to DM you after this and tell you about a Sylvi story in which you come up.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: It's very funny. Anyway, so yeah, for people joining us just now, we are doing a post-mortem Q&A segment. We've just finished a season of Friends at the Table, and people wrote in to ask us questions, and we're answering those questions. So, feel free to hang out even if you aren't a listener. I bet it's confusing, [**Ali** giggles] but that's how it's going to go.

Art: But we'll have fun.

Dre: Yeah!

Austin: Yeah. Let's Do A Silly One. How's that sound?

Sylvi: That sounds fun!

Ali: I would love to.

Sylvi: Which is what we are.

Austin: Alright. That is what we are.

Sylvi: I'm doing the really hard sell.

Austin: Let me get this to update. One second, did this update— this did not, yes it did. There we go.

Art: You can't say you're doing a really—

Sylvi: Shh. No, it's part of it. Because it's honesty, it's transparency.

Austin: Andrew— Andrew writes in and says,

Andrew: Movie night choice?

[01:30:00]

What movie would your character bring to movie night post-finale? Would love to hear what Art and Jack think Clem and August would pick.

Janine: Mmm.

Sylvi: [chuckling] I have a good one.

Ali: I have such an easy answer here, because this is a story about my real life. The night—

Dre: Oh, wow.

Ali: The night that I—because this is such a Brnine movie—the night that I was editing the finale, the final episode of Palisade, and Brnine and Thisbe have that conversation about like, let's go see a movie, I had tickets to go see Lady in the Water at Nitehawk Cinema over here in Prospect Park—they're great, shout outs.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Ali: And I was like, I'm not gonna do it, I have to finish the episode. And then like, the spirit of Brnine and Thisbe and like celebration at the end of the season, I was like, I'm standing up right now. I'm going to make it. I need to go see that movie. That is such a Brnine movie? It is so good. You might not think that movie is good.

Austin: I don't think that movie is good.

Ali: [laughing] Historically, people don't think that that movie is good.

Austin: The only thing that ever comes up from that movie is the guy whose one arm is bigger than the other.

Ali: It's hilarious, it's good, it's like this fairy tale. It's all these people living in this apartment complex. It's like, bizarre.

Austin: It's very Bluff City coded.

Keith: What movie? I—

Sylvi: Lady in the Water.

Ali: It's so Bluff City movie. Cibo Matto plays in the— in the party scene?

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Ohhh!

Art: It's like the start of the wheels falling off the—

Austin: That's right, Art.

Ali: This is such a Brnine kind of movie because I used to— this is— when I was like in college and I was really stressed out, I would watch that movie to cry?

Sylvi: Oh my god. We're getting real tonight.

Ali: To like process my— [wheezes]

Austin: Wow, we're in it.

Janine: Oh my god!

Ali: There's a very specific moment with the main characters having this— it's a very good, watch the movie, it's great.

Austin: Oh, buddy.

Ali: I love Brnine, Brnine loves this movie.

Austin: I should re-watch this movie now. I have to like watch this movie to figure out what the moment is.

Dre: Welcome to Media Club Plus Bonus [**Ali** howls] where we're going to watch like—

Sylvi: Like, I've watched it.

Austin: I'm just— M Night. Shyamalan Media Club Plus mini-series.

Sylvi: In a heartbeat.

Ali: Well, I could do that. I could do that really easily.

Jack: That's a really good idea.

Austin: Yeah. Some of those movies are trash, but.

Art: Every M. Night Shyamalan movie has redeeming qualities.

Austin: But yeah, each of them have at least something to talk about. So, whew. Alright.

Sylvi: Wow, yeah.

Austin: Alright, do we have any other answers? Anyone else want to get vulnerable with it?

Ali: [laughs]

Keith: I think that was a showstopper.

Art: How do you follow that?

Dre: Or I can—

Art: Frankly, is anyone else's question in there too?

Dre: Well, I can go because I think this piggybacks well off of what we just talked about. Figure's pick would be Good Will Hunting?

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Dre: And then during the scene—

Art: Oh Jesus Christ.

Dre: Where Robin Williams says it's not your fault, he would just make eye contact with every member of the Blue Channel.

Janine: Oh my god.

Dre: And then go look in the mirror.

Sylvi: That's— that's to him and Cori's relationship.

Ali: [chuckles]

Dre: Yeah, uh huh.

Sylvi: Except [chuckles] Robin Williams doesn't lose his soul.

Dre: Yeah. Levi would bring 2 Fast 2 Furious.

Sylvi: Oh, okay.

Austin: Yeah, that sounds right. That sounds right.

Keith: Phrygian is really susceptible to like, bottom of the barrel movie tropes and would bring Failure to Launch with Matthew McConaughey.

Dre: [bursts out laughing]

Janine: Oh my god.

Austin: Yeah, of course.

Keith: Leap is me, and would bring Wet Hot American Summer. And Eclectic would bring Muppet Treasure Island because it reminds him of Leap.

Ali: Oh, cause he loves Leap!

Sylvi: That's so cute.

Dre: Aww! Is Failure to Launch the one with the old football man in it, Terry Bradshaw?

Sylvi: What?

Austin: Mm, I dunno. ...Maybe.

Dre: I swear there was— this is like the, what's the— it's like when the movie with Mila Kunis and the other movie with Natalie Portman about being friends with benefits came out at the same time?

Sylvi: Ohhh...

Jack: Oh, two of these.

Dre: I feel like there were two Fail— Failure to Launch movies that came out at the same time.

Austin: Ohhh... there were.

Keith: There were— yeah.

Austin: This is, yeah, Terry Bradhsaw's in this movie, Dre.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: You got it.

Sylvi: I'm torn between two answers with this being post-finale, because if it wasn't post-finale, it would be [chuckles] Whiplash, and Cori would be like, isn't he such a good teacher?

Austin: Good teacher? Yeah.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: Jesus.

Sylvi: [laughs] He's getting such good results! And then post-finale, after all the shit with Elle, I think Portrait of a Lady on Fire.

Janine: Ah.

Ali: Oh boy.

Austin: Wonderful.

Ali: It's great to yearn.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: I know!

Janine: Fern— FernGully.

Keith: Sorry, would also bring Seinfeld— would also bring one episode of Seinfeld.

Janine: It's FernGully, for— FernGully.

Sylvi: Oh my god!

Keith: FernGully.

Austin: FernGully, wow.

Janine: Because, I think— it's a thing of like—

Sylvi: Love Tim Curry.

Janine: I think Thisbe would think that it's visually appealing? That there's an interesting message there? But also, I think there would be a conscious thought of like, this looks like it's cool, so maybe other people will also like it.

Jack: [chuckles]

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: I adore Thisbe so much.

Dre: Aww.

Austin: That was after Is Corn a Grass kind of flopped—

Janine: Yes, hearing like whatever that's— Land of 1000 Dances, or whatever the fuck that song is, and being like, people probably would like this music, I'll pick this.

Austin: [chuckles]

Jack: I think August is going to bring like— my first thought was Italian neorealism in a big way. You know, August brings like Rome Open City, which is a film about Nazi occupation of Rome shot during the Nazi occupation of Rome. Or he also brings like a Ken Loach movie, like The Wind That Shakes the Barley, or you know Land and Freedom about the Spanish Civil War. And it's very much just like, you know, these are moving, stirring stories about revolution.

Austin: Battle of Gears, like, uh huh.

Jack: About the cost of revolution.

Austin: Gur can't make it, but I think is like a, My Dinner with Andre type guy?

Keith: Mm.

Jack: Aw yeah!

Sylvi: Oh!

Art: Oh sure.

Austin: Just like movie about two people sitting and talking?

Jack: The number one thing Gur loves to do.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. No more talking for Gur though, not for I think— well, I don't know. I don't know what's going on, I don't know. Gur and Future just alone forever together in a rock somewhere.

Sylvi: I think Gur would like Mikey and Nicky.

Keith: I think Gur would like, like Mike. [laughs]

Dre: I think Gur—

Sylvi: I think Partial Palisade would like-like Mike.

Keith: [chuckles]

Austin: I think Partial Palisade would like-like Mike! What's the best basketball movie?

Jack: Do you think Gur would like—

Keith: It's Like Mike.

Sylvi: Ohh...

Austin: Oh, okay.

Dre: Man, that's a good question.

Jack: Does Gur like The Boy and the Heron?

Sylvi: White Men Can't Jump is pretty good.

Austin: I think Gur would be really sad about the end of The Boy and the Heron.

Keith: People are saying Space Jam, I have bad news about Space Jam.

Sylvi: It sucks?

Keith: It's the most psychotically paced movie of all time. [**Jack** and **Austin** chuckle] It would be long and trash. I do love it, but it is a nightmarishly bad movie. [**Austin:** Yeah...] It's like the person who wrote it didn't know how movies work?

Sylvi: [laughs]

Art: I've heard the second one is really bad too.

Jack: Yeah the second one is— like the actual content of Space Jam is okay. I heard that the second one, the actual content is miserably bad.

Dre: Yeah, it's bad. Love and Basketball, shout out to wambachumba in the chat.

Austin: Sure, sure.

Dre: Whoever said Hoosiers, you're wrong.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Damn.

Ali: Wow.

Art: Yeah.

Dre: I'm sorry.

Art: No, don't—

Austin: No one says he got game. RIP.

Art: I have like a serious answer and a joke answer?

Austin: Please.

Art: My serious answer is Lady Bird.

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: Clem? Yeah.

Sylvi: For Clem, okay. I was like, she hoops?

Dre: Oh, yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: [laughs] She hoops!

Sylvi: She's from Sacramento, like, the Kings are a big part of it.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Uh huh.

Art: And the joke answer is Mean Girls.

Keith: Mmm.

Austin: You sure it's a joke answer?

Ali: Sure.

Janine: The Mean Girls remake?

Austin: Yeah. These are good answers.

Janine: Or the original?

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Austin: Oh my god.

Janine: Or the musical?

Art: No.

Janine: Okay.

Art: The non-musical remake. Wait—

Keith: I have—

Art: There's a remake? I thought the remake was the musical.

Janine: Well, there is, but I meant like the stage musical. Like a cast recording versus—the one they produced versus the original.

Austin: Mhm.

Art: I think the origi— I think, you got to go for the classics.

Keith: I have to read this from the chat. I don't know if he wants his name out because of the thing, but someone in the chat said, I worked on the original Space Jam movie and the filmmakers absolutely did not know how making movies worked, which is very funny.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Wow!

Keith: You can tell! It's a 75-minute movie with a 65-minute long second act, it's insane!

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Incredible. Alright. Let's bounce back to the top and look at a Season Structure and Behind the Scenes question. Did we already answer this one? We did. I think I kind of already answered this a little bit. This might have been your most ambitious— an anonymous question.

Anon: Why Return to TM?

[01:39:02]

This might have been your most ambitious season. The collision between the sci-fi magical madness of the Mirage with the nightmare that is the Divine Principality was exciting and fascinating. Where did the idea—

I didn't answer this one yet.

Where did the idea of returning to the Twilight Mirage and bringing together the themes of the two seasons come from? Was that the plan since the end of Partizan? How was the experience?

So no, that was not the plan since the end of Partizan. I thought Kalmeria was the kind of plan since the end of Partizan. Oh, new era, new wave of technology, kind of you know, revolution in the age of an industrial boom, stuff like that. And then magic again is metaphor for change. But I actually went looking for this to make sure I had a good answer. And there was a particular moment when I was like, *oh, I know what this is, I know what we have to do.*

This was January 30th, 2022. So well over two years ago now.

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: And I sent a message to Jack and Ali in our production chat. I said, oh, is it— is it a line back? Do we have to just do it? Do we have to draw a line back from Partizan to the Mirage? And I said— I linked one of Annie's many incredible fan works. This was— I think this was the 2022 Secret Samol fan work that Annie Johnston-Glick made, which was a post-canon Echo/Grand comic.

And I wrote, I was reading this. And when I got to page four, I started tearing up thinking about the Mirage. And I'm wondering if the arc here, if it sort of always had to be, what the next set of stakes is, quote, "what happens when the people in The Twilight Mirage decide however safe we are in the Mirage, we owe it to the world to make it better".

Also, it might answer what Palisade is and why it's called that. It's like this world—because we already knew the season was called Palisade at this point. We didn't know what it was. It's like this world caught on the edge of the Mirage's furthest reach, the wall between the galaxy outside, and the place where time works different. Also, this could be very easily how we get to the things Sylvi suggested about being from some divine order of knights. I bet there are still some saints kicking around.

And then images of me zooming into the original map of the galaxy, etc. And so, it's just like, you know, not said here is, years of feeling conflicted about Twilight Mirage as a season, and the kind of slow return to feeling really strongly and positively about it after years of feeling, it was like one of the most troubled things we'd made and one of the most difficult things we'd made? And I think like, wanting to tap into that well, partly seeing years after it came out, a lot of fans who got to experience it all at once instead of week by week having a much stronger, more positive relationship to it and thinking, oh, we've maybe never made a place so sacrosanct as the Twilight Mirage? We've made decisions that I think are more strong, we will never bring back Rigor, right? But Twilight Mirage felt like such a safe place, but that safety came at the cost of isolation.

And that becomes a really interesting, compelling question that I didn't really zero in on until right before we started, you know? And what happened from there was a really quick period of me pitching people this idea, coming up with this idea of the purple on

the horizon, the distant planet of Palisade, and then the kind of you know, purple wall of the Twilight Mirage, which then we brought to the foreground at the end of the first HOUNDS game. Like it hit as a sort of like, we have to go do this thing.

I do think that that is part of why Palisade ends up being in a weird place almost emotionally or thematically in the season, because the structural stakes are about the safety of the Twilight Mirage, a place that we're not even at until the final arc, and the finale, and the final coda of the season. And so Palisade, even though Palisade is sort of a post-Mirage place canonically, it's hard for it to— it's easy for it to feel like it's in a third place after Partizan and the Twilight Mirage at points, because it's structurally— the season comes from a love of and a fear for the Twilight Mirage, right? Which is part of also why I think like the Brink Orbital game is so strong. It's like all of those feelings about the Twilight Mirage came out there so well.

So yeah, that's my answer for this one. This is a pretty strong one. I don't know how other people felt about Twilight Mirage, really going back at that point outside of everybody kind of saying like, alright, yeah, we can do that. But I don't know anyone else has thoughts on returning.

Keith: I'm just broadly glad that Twilight Mirage has sort of turned around opinion-wise for people.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Same. Definitely.

Jack: It was exciting in the moment, I think, and it remained exciting. And, I'm— we've talked in the past about deliberately and consciously walking a tightrope as the season went on in terms of like, how much of this is Twilight Mirage, and how much of it isn't— and of course, once the bombs go off, that question becomes all the more pressing as the Twilight Mirage kind of sweeps in. And we would in theory have the latitude to say, alright, we're going to go hog wild. We're going to tell you *all* about what's happening in

the Qui Err Coalition. We're going to bring in, you know, what has happened to Mirage justice in the time between now and then? You know, how is the Qui Err Coalition governed? And then musically, you know, saying, how much do I really want to just like tip the Twilight Mirage synthesizers over this soundtrack and saturate it? How do I want to be circumspect about this, etc.?

I think, you know, towards the end, that was all really stuff we kind of went into consciously and deliberately and not unhappily. But at the beginning, the sensation that I really felt was excitement, right? Was like, Twilight Mirage is such a specific and meaningful place for us and is a site of some of our most outré storytelling for better and for worse? And knowing that we were going into that opening Road to Palisade game, bringing us closer to the edge of the Mirage for the first time was really thrilling.

Austin: Absolutely. I'm going to say on this kind of behind the scenes tip for another another one of these questions. This one's a little heavy, but I think it's probably worth reading. This is from Jack. Not our Jack, different Jack.

Jack: IRL affecting the show?

[01:45:03]

Other seasons have had big life moves, but between the length of this one and how many of you have faced life changing events this year, this has been a lot. If you don't mind my asking, how does IRL stuff like this affect your ability to play a game and craft a story together?

Jack: I mean, I think something that you know, any kind of creative output is reflecting the circumstances in which it's made. You know, you could look at a perfectly polished and ready to go movie that you don't initially see any flaws or cracks or thumbnails in, and the actors are awake in the middle of the night, or the sound guy is worrying about making rent, or, etc. etc.

I think what makes this project, and what has always made this project really interesting in terms of this exact question, you know, how does IRL stuff affect our abilities to play a

game and craft a story together, is that for the most part, you are seeing it in real-time. That is to say, you know, it is a long-form piece of storytelling over a year, that we don't know where we're going to end when we're beginning it. And you're also hearing us improvise it to a vast majority. You know, Austin will come in with pre-written stuff occasionally, we'll sometimes have a sense of where we're going. But you are watching us build the tower, you know, as it is appearing in your ears, which isn't to discount the post-production and editing that Ali and Austin and I do after the fact. But it's a very different thing, for example, than sitting down in a movie and watching two hours of something that was put together you know, over a long time. And all of this is to say that I think that this year for me it was really difficult. I moved house midway through the year and I was prepared for that, but I don't think I was prepared for the— how tiring that would be. [chuckles]

And then I think as the season went on and as I felt less and less sure of my footing, I could feel sort of like an exhaustion and a burnout starting to creep into my own work. And I think my work suffered for that in retrospect. You know, I'm proud of the work that I did. But I think to your question of how does IRL stuff in a big year affect your abilities to play a game, I think you can hear it. And I don't lose sleep over that too much at this point. You know, I would lose sleep over it during the season when I would go, I just don't think this is working. Or like, I don't think that what I put in the microphone was good, or half of it was good, and we need to make a little alteration here or there. But you know, that would be bumming me out. Now, I'm proud that we have finished it, and I'm proud of the thing that we made. But I do look back on it going, this was a hard season for me to make, and I was tired through a lot of it.

Ali: Yeah, I think when you think of the length of Palisade, like the fact that like, from the Road to Partizan, it's been about two years? I think that this is—

Austin: The Road to Palisade, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, sorry. This has also been the season where it feels like we've taken the most breaks, [Dre: Mmm.] we've had the most off weeks, the time where we've made that time for ourselves when we didn't have it, you know? There are a billion weekly

podcasts or whatever, but I don't think that all of them are regularly between two and four hours a week.

Austin: Mhm!

Ali: And I feel like that's significant on a, like just a— logistics?

Austin: The whole damn thing, yeah, truly.

Ali: The fact of doing that once a week and I'm glad to do it.

Austin: I don't know if it made this question, I don't know if I added it, but someone did ask like, hey, did you notice that the season is long and every episode is long?

[**Ali** and **Dre** laugh]

Sylvi: No. This is the first I've heard.

Ali: But yeah, I mean, I think that there— you can count—don't do that, but you could—go through and see within the weeks on the calendar how many episodes were actually out? And I think, you know, it was a shift in the way that we treat each other and we treat ourselves in terms of just being like, we can release on a Friday. You know, if we need to take this week, we can. And I'm glad that we've, you know, this is our 10-year anniversary! [chuckles] I'm glad that we've, you know, come to the majority and the confidence in our work that we aren't making sacrifices on it to hit a deadline, you know what I mean?

Austin: And also, we're confident that the support will sustain. You know, in the middle of the season, we did the big shake up of the Patreon, right? Or was it before the season?

Ali: It was some time ago. [laughs]

Austin: Time and time ago. But we came through that period, and we launched Media Club Plus. And a lot of that, I think, gave us a lot of faith that, like, if we release on a Friday instead of a Thursday, it's not going to— people aren't going to get furious with

us regularly, you know? Or at least not people who are like, are— we don't need to worry too much about that. Or if we decide, hey, we really need a week to catch up after this arc, that arc took a lot out of us, or someone's busy, or we have travel, or we have medical stuff, like, it's okay for us to take that. That's one of the benefits of being independent, it's one of the benefits of having patrons and supporters who care about us. We, you know, I joked when we were moving from the finale to the finale, from Questlandia to the final sortie, that like, we don't have— Cheez-Its isn't sponsoring us, right? Tostitos didn't buy an eight-episode series from us. Now, that means like none of us could buy houses off this, [**Ali** chuckles] but it also means that like we can go extra long sometimes. Or it means—

Keith: I am personally sponsored by Pirate's Booty.

Ali: Yes. Yeah.

Austin: We know.

Sylvi: You got to stop bragging about it.

Austin: We all know about your Pirate's Booty sponsorship.

Keith: [laughs]

Dre: You don't share any of that with us.

Keith: That's why I have a house.

Austin: [laughs] But there is like a—

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: It's made out of Pirate's Booty wrappers.

Austin: [chuckles] Yes. But there is a— the benefit, part of the benefit of that is we can take the time. We're not disappointing a sponsor because we had to take a break between two sections of an arc or something, you know?

Art: On the other hand, I had a baby and then you're like, you're out of the finale.

Austin: I didn't say that, I said, no one with babies is allowed. It wasn't about the timing, it was more of a principle thing.

Art: No, it was— yeah. This is how we feel about parental leave. [**Jack** chuckles] You can't contribute anymore.

Austin: That's right.

Dre: Mhm.

Keith: And this is where we're announcing Art's not going to be on the next season.

Austin: No, we are not. Don't joke. [**Dre** and **Keith** laugh] Jesus Christ.

Janine: Also, Art did take some parental leave. That's also worth saying.

Austin: It's worth saying.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, absolutely.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Super important.

Art: It was not being in that finale.

Austin: It was not being in that finale— but though we did sneak you in, we did get the bit at the end— it was actually post-parental leave, really, because the way the schedule kind of worked out was, we were able to get you to call in briefly as Clem [**Dre** cackles] to show up as an 80-foot tall projection, remember?

Art: 90-feet tall, please.

Austin: Apologies, my bad.

Art: 80-feet tall is for idiots.

Austin: Oh, wow.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Gucci putting back her—

Keith: Yeah, I was gonna— [laughs]

Austin: —80-foot tall projection back in the closet. “*Fine.*” Extremely funny.

I mean, I will add into this that there's the micro and the macro here. There's the context and the particular. We are making a series about war and revolution at a time when there are multiple large-scale conflicts happening across the world, including genocide in Gaza, including an ongoing settlement project in the West Bank that many of us care deeply about. That's why we did the fundraiser with one of our merch launches last year, that's why we've all individually done our best to support efforts to stop that as best as we can. And, there are— that context, that macro thing can be scary sometimes because it's like, oh my god, can I actually fucking say anything, like, compared to the horror of what this is? I don't mean, can I say anything like, can I say it's bad, because we say it's bad, you know, go look at my Twitter feed, which is, spoilers, my Twitter feed has a much bigger followership than the show.

Sylvi: Wow.

Austin: I'm not saying that to brag, it's just the way Twitter fucking works? Now, most of them are probably bots, but like, that audience is— there are more people who are interested in video game criticism or Star Wars shit, it turns out, than good storytelling for some reason? The world is big enough.

Sylvi: Yeah, I know that about Star Wars at the very least.

Austin: I— oh yeah, absolutely. The audience is mid. Not this one, but the Star Wars one. And so like, that audience— I have no problem speaking out there in any way, but

when you're trying to tell them these stories, you're often like, am I gonna come up short? How do I try to tell a story about this to the best of my ability when I am so far removed and safe? Or the opposite, when we have friends, and many of us do, whose family members are directly impacted by what's happening there, how do we do justice by that? It can be really hard. So that's like the macro version of that.

And then in the middle of all of that also, moves, babies, I spent— this season was the first full season where I started it already doing a full-time job where I was doing world building and narrative lead stuff for Possibility Space, which meant that I was coming to sessions, having already done the job once, you know, five days that week, right? Contrasting that to being at Waypoint or doing podcasts about video games and Star Wars, right? So I'd already like used those muscles a lot. So coming in, it was like, ooh, I'm like tired of doing this sometimes in a different way. And I lost that job in the middle of the end of the season. And I am so grateful for everybody on the podcast for seeing me through the final six months of this season? There were absolutely episodes where before we started, I was like, I don't have it, I need y'all to carry me, like, I don't fucking have it. And people did, which I'm so grateful for. And there were times when I was like, snippy or I was— and I'm sure Ali did her best to make sure [Ali chuckles] that I came across well. But there were times when I was like, couldn't take a joke because I was so sad.

And I think for me, this highlights out this— all of this culminates in a thing that I'm like embarrassed by, which is Art, a couple of months ago, you messaged me. And you were like, wow, you really killed it in this Jesset in that scene. And I couldn't bring myself to tell you that I was like— Jesset wasn't in that scene. Like that was just where I was. Like, it just feels like failing all the time forever. And that was well-timed to be able to like, to be able to capture that and bring that forward? But that like, Jessett's whole arc at the back of this, this like consumption by this idea of needing to move forward, this idea that you have to do more, but also feeling incapable of doing what you have to do, is like 100% what it is to make art in the face of all of all this stuff. And so I'm glad it's in there, right? But hard one, I think, especially because if you go back and— I didn't go look for these, but Ali, did we ever fucking curse ourselves coming into this season, [Dre

chuckles] coming out of Sangfielle, because I think you and I said, this next one's going to be so easy to do!

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: You guys got to stop calling shots.

Austin: So many times!

Ali: It was for a while.

Austin: It was for a while.

Ali: Also, in Gathering Information, we said that all the time, like, oh, we're having a great time! There's no friction here. [**Dre** chuckles] And then a bunch of spies showed up and we all destroyed each other.

Austin: Well, the specific thing was like it's— it's Ground Game and Faction Game. So that means the schedule is going to be so much easier to handle, which it was. It's back to a setting we know really well after Sangfielle, where we kind of like were feeling it out for the first time. And then and then like, it's just going to be making the show. It's Powered by the Apocalypse, we know how to do this.

Jack: God, yeah.

Ali: We had a good time, we did a great job.

Art: Austin, taking— taking real emotion and applying it to a— to a character is what an actor does, that's— you're just describing acting.

Austin: No, it's cheating. It's cheating! No, no, no, no, no—

Jack: [chuckles]

Sylvi: He's being Catholic again.

Austin: That's right.

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: He's being Catholic again...

Austin: So yeah, I think I appreciate these questions. We had a few questions around stuff like this. And it's like, you know, we're going to do our best every season. I think I'm really interested in what we're doing next season, which I don't know if we're going to end up talking about it later tonight or not, but like, one of my big notes to everybody was about like thinking lowercase 'p' political instead of capital 'P' Political, really focusing on the personal, really focusing on big picture emotional melodrama because that feels like a way to not do two big politics seasons back to back and to think about big thematics and operatic feelings instead of—

Sylvi: Scratching at my idea to have my character do a presidential campaign.

Art: The next season is going to be a breeze.

Jack: [chuckles] Yeah, just to be as explicit [**Austin:** Yes.] [**Ali** laughs] as possible in the same way as not joking about Art leaving the show, we are not making Friends at the Table less political in the next season.

Austin: That's right. Well—!

Sylvi: No.

Keith: Well, I am.

Austin: I— I don't think we're making it less political, but only because I think everything is political. [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] You know what I mean?

Jack: Yes, exactly.

Austin: If that makes sense.

Art: Right.

Austin: But we'll see. I'm going to hit this next one super quick. This is someone who writes in and says,

Jack: Sheet Admin?

[01:57:47]

I've noticed you kept character sheet admin off the mic more and more. I really like it, it adds to the immersion of the storytelling with the trade-off as I feel like I learn the game systems less. I'm curious, how do you think about the meta-interplay between the story you're telling and the game as you're learning to go? Where are you currently sitting on that editorial spectrum?

I don't think we cut anything [**Keith:** No.] this season in terms of sheet admin. We just didn't— it's all pretty quick with Armour Astir.

Sylvi and **Dre:** Yeah.

Austin: You take a move, you update your bonds as you play, you know? I don't know that we were— unless Ali, you have a different perspective on this.

Ali: No, I mean, the Downtime stuff is what you hear. [**Austin:** Yeah.] There's games that really mechanize that—I'm going to move on—that really focus on that, and games that don't? And I think that like, you know, the time spent in maintaining that stuff was, you know, who's going to use the token to help the Cause this week? [**Austin:** Right.] Who's going to, you know— what scenes are we to do, who wants to be in the scene? And it's not like, oh, we're going to sit down together and figure out what moves we're going to do. That's sort of like the, you know, you go home and do that. That's your homework.

So, yeah, I mean, if anything, I feel like we spent— other scenes have, but I feel like we spent more time on that sort of mechanical stuff just because Palisade ended up filling out such a rhythm of like, here's four episodes of the action, here's two Downtime

episodes where we spend as much time as the downtime stuff as we can, **[Austin:** Mhm, mhm.] and here's two whole episodes on the Faction turn.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And like, the more that we fell into that cadence, the more routine some of the work through of that stuff became.

Austin: Yep, totally.

Ali: And that's our, you know, that's Armour Astir sort of telling us to do that. [chuckles]

Austin: Whereas, we recorded a bunch of Realis at this point that will start coming out sometime in the future. And when it does, there is a end of session debrief that is part of those episodes, you know? And I don't know how we'll deploy those, but that's like, it's part of the game in a real way, and so you'll hear that, you know?

Ali: I do think, you know, another thing that we like to do because we play with moves narratively and like character building? **[Austin:** Mhm.] There are a lot of times where it's like, oh, let's not say what the move that you took is until it shows up on screen.

Austin: Yes, totally true.

Ali: Because we like to create those moments for our characters. So that's why it might feel like you're missing that in the— the, you know, logistics of playing the game, but, and that's just mostly because we want to be like, when this guy pulls out this gun, it's gonna be fucking cool!

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Austin: Right. And then Brnine, you can go the whole season without getting to use your cool gun.

Ali: I'm fine with where that gun ended up.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, I'm glad.

Ali: Do I— Do I wish that I had realized earlier, like maybe three or four weeks at least, that was a Motion-powered gun? [laughs] [**Jack** chuckles] I do. But I think that the, you know, Chekhov's gun was on Brnine's hip the entire season, and then they used it to save the world. So, can't do better than that.

Austin: Yeah. Well, I think speaking of those types of moments, this one is from Rosie in the Gameplay section, who says,

Rosie: OMG Gaming Moment?

[02:01:08]

Y'all are SO good at tying the mechanics of a game system to the story—

Sylvi: Thank you.

Austin:

—you're telling and to the ontology of the setting—

Wow. You're welcome.

Sylvi: I'll take the compliment.

—and Palisade was no exception. There were many moments in the season where my response was something like, “Oh my god, gaming.” Sometimes exhilarated, sometimes heartbroken!

Oh my god, gaming. [**Jack** chuckles]

I'd love to hear each player's favorite such moment from the season: a particular roll, a use of a move, etc.

Sylvi: Triple sixes, baby! Wow! Gaming.

Austin: Oh, triple sixes is up there.

Keith: That's one of the heartbreaking ones.

Art: Yes, it's triple sixes.

Sylvi: Yeah, that one's both, if I'm being real?

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvi: Like, there is a—I'm sorry, Dre—there is a degree of joy that comes from that.

Austin: Well, and also the opposite—

Dre: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: I think summoning Brnine back from the center of— from—

Sylvi: Also really good.

Austin: That, that— that was incredible. Yeah, a hundred percent.

Dre: That was pretty sick.

Keith: Oh yeah, oh yeah, that was pretty sick. That whole bit.

Ali: I mean, I don't—I don't know what this season is without that moment, right? Like, where does Brnine end up? [wheezes]

Austin: You're playing a different fucking character, my friend.

Ali: Basically, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, you're dead.

Austin: Which is maybe a sick season also, I don't know! We'd find out what happens.

Keith: Talk about— about sheet management and table talk, that whole thing was like, how the fuck do we walk this wire?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: It's so good, I'm sure there's other stuff. I mean, I think— I think I really love the— this isn't exactly like just a move, but it is kind of like thinking about how it all comes together, and maybe we'll get some of these questions soon. But like, the Arbor-Motion particle stuff in the final few episodes was like something I was not prepared for fucking at all? And then like working through Thisbe's various moves to realize like, oh, we could kind of do something here with this, was a joy. So, I really like that.

Jack: Keith one-shotting things?

Sylvi: Always a good time.

Dre: A hundred percent. That'd be mine too.

Keith: Glad someone else said it.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: Um, Kalar showing up with the wrong playbook.

Austin: Oh! That's it for me. That's the one. The— the you refusing to do the same type of fight as the other— as Ramondra did or whatever, as Kalar.

Art: Oh, yeah!

Austin: Kalar being like, I'm not having a duel with you. I'm having an out and out fight. That's it. That's like so— that's fucking gaming. That's why we play role playing games to me.

Dre: [chuckles]

Jack: Oh, also, anytime Occam Olio— it was watching Occam Olio emerge, [**Austin:** Yeah.] be birthed from dice results was really, really fun.

Austin: Agreed. I really loved the way we mechanized the Dust flashback stuff?

Sylvi: Oh yeah.

Jack: Oh yeah, that was great!

Austin: That stuff was really fun, and I really like— like you know I already kind of talked about it, but lots of drawing maps and making people decide which pathway to go down, which is not a move, but it is like, ooh, look, we're generating narrative based on player decision— based on player agency and the cool little dungeon I pre-drew. That's really fun stuff that we just don't do a ton of on the show.

Keith: I really just— stuff that I feel strongly about at the time, was having to take that Soldier move with Phrygian, and having this weird thing that you're able to do because it's in the game and being like, we can solve this big problem with this horrible move.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Then similarly, in Questlandia, looking at the rolls that we were having and being like, I think that we're going to lose this game if Eclectic doesn't die in this scene? And then, I feel like at the end of the thing, it bears out— like if I had had three more stress from not— from clearing that stress or whatever, it would have been a disaster, let alone all of the worst rolls that would have happened from having that stress. Is that what it's called in Questlandia?

Austin: I don't remember.

Sylvi: Misfortune?

Austin: Ask me anything about Questlandia.

Keith: Misfortune, misfortune— yeah, misfortune.

Dre: Yeah!

Jack: Misfortune.

Austin: Misfortune.

Keith: But yeah, I really like— really felt at the time like, I can see the end of this game, and having a billion stress, and then we lose without this. And then I felt like it played out like how I hoped it would.

Austin: Any other thoughts here? Any other standout moments? I'm going to jump ahead to answer something from Tom. And I'll summarize part of this here, which is, you know, it's always been Austin's job to be a fan of the players. Whereas this season I had more of a hard obligation to act against them because of the Faction Game and tokens.

The one instance that sticks with Tom—and really Tom is asking about the Ground Game players' experience of having me actively work against you this season.

Tom: Tokens and Faction Game?

[02:05:38]

The one instance that sticks with Tom is during an early Downtime game, where a benefit gained by Sylvi after a scene with Ali was immediately removed by Austin via the use of a token. Obviously, this paid off narratively through the development of the Devotion storyline, but at the time, it felt incredibly jarring to me as a listener. I was wondering how it felt for the players themselves, and whether there was any wider conversations that needed to reassure them that it wasn't just a mechanic being used for its own sake.

I can only talk about my perspective on that, but I am curious if the way the token spend stuff in Armour Astir ever felt hostile, or like frustrating.

Sylvi: Not really. Because being honest, I don't remember you doing that even. Like, that's how this stuff was just— it felt very like, easy to flow in and out of with tokens.

Janine: Yeah. That's like— you know, I sort of— I don't like the word antagonism— ooh, we lost someone— oh, they're back. I don't like the word antagonism for this because I think if you're doing it well, even if the game has you taking more direct actions against players and not just responding to bad rolls specifically, like you are specifically doing

things to make things harder? If you're doing it well, it just feels like you're complicating the story.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Like, and that's— so like, this question kind of took me by surprise. Before today, I really had not considered at all how this game does you know, make the GM take actions against players in that way. It just hadn't occurred to me because to me, it was very much just like, well, you know, this season is a little bit hardball, like it has high stakes, [**Austin:** Mhm.] so of course Austin is going to push a little bit. Like, truly, the most mad I've ever been at Austin for a GM thing was making me roll to see if I knew what a dam was. Like— [chuckles]

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Well I— why would Adaire know how a dam works?

Janine: [laughs] I'm just— I'm just saying, *that* was the only time I ever felt like a little— and that wasn't antagonism and you were right to make me roll for that.

Austin: Yeah! You know. [**Sylvi** chuckles]

Janine: But I am just saying, I have never felt a heat like that. [**Austin:** Uh huh.] Like, this season didn't even occur to me that it could be called antagonism because it just felt like we really need to push stories forward because it's, you know, it is this season.

Art: Well, if we're settling scores, here's where I got mad.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: The airing of grievances.

Austin: It's time.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Feast of Patina baby, let's go! Slowly Building.

Art: Which is um, the Blue Channel tapped a bunch of stuff to take the Bontive Valley?

[Austin: Mhm.] Then the next session, Austin starts with like, well, you took the Bontive Valley, so you can untap three things or whatever it was. It was like, well, then they just took it for free. You—the cost was they tapped those things to be vulnerable to take this thing. And then you said as a result of taking the thing, they don't have to face the consequences of overextending to take the thing. And that was when I felt that I was antagonized.

Janine: But you gotta have the things to tap in the first place. You gotta have things to tap in the first place—

Austin: Well, I can actually answer this question by jumping too ahead to this question from Tyler, who says,

Tyler: Fiction vs Mechanics?

[02:09:00]

During the Stellar Combustor arc, what was your approach to rebalancing “the move says I can” with staying true to the fiction? The finale felt to me like it leaned heavily towards the former—

“The move says I can” versus the true to the fiction.

—so would be curious to know your thoughts. For example, when Phrygian defeated Authority, not just in the local system, but in every instance across the galaxy, that felt like more power than a PC would typically have. Or when Feverish, Hollow-blooded Brnine killed Dahlia, the post-human god-emperor in command of the two Divines with a jerry-rigged knife, fictionally that felt like a stretch to me, even if mechanically it was fine.

And the irony for me is, you're actually backwards, Tyler. Mechanically, it was not fine.

Brnine should not have been able to kill Dahlia, who should have been a higher tier than

they were. Fictionally, in the genre space we are in, Brnine, the hero, with the one moment of possibility, outshines the tier system.

For me, the heroes getting the Bontive Valley *immediately* means they get to eat again, even though we know that that's not how like, you get resources from a place. But in the fiction of, kind of, high melodrama revolution story, part of the way I could put my finger on the scale this season was by pushing the simulation towards that genre space and away from, let's say, the Battle of Algier, right? We were not doing a war documentary. We were making a season that was supposed to be, you know, more about a group we could root for getting wins when they desperately needed them. And there are times in the season where it's like, oh my god, we can't get a win to fucking save our lives. And so, one of the ways that you as a GM at home, if you're listening, can make the genre come to life is to think about how genre works in these types of situations and to emphasize that there's no such thing as like, a pure simulation, and to play with the kind of the rules of the simulation, the game that you're playing, in order to ensure that at those kind of breakthrough moments, the tone you're pursuing comes through, right?

Brnine alone in the room with Dahlia, who is like part-Divine, part-Branched—or part thing like a Branched at this point—and I go, well Dahlia is tier four and you're tier one, so you can't even try anything at this heightened moment, is not an interesting storytelling beat, right? That's just Brnine dies alone in a room. Everybody gets the—the heroes get the Bontive Valley stuff, and then it doesn't do anything for them, which I should say the rules make it clear that when you do succeed at like felling a Pillar, the player—the GM is allowed to give the Cause something positive? It's not—that's not just me spit-balling, but that is inside of the sort of heroic genre space that we are in.

Likewise, the genre space allows for things like, hey, the bad guys can threaten to blow up everything. We talk a lot about—I think, Jack, you referenced when you introduced The Stellar Combustor, the excellent Dog Eat Dog, a post-colonial critique that is also a game that you can play, that emphasizes that one of the things that a colonial occupier can do is decide to kill everybody. And leveraging that doesn't come—there's not a rule in Armour Astir that says that, but we'd set up the fiction such that that was a possible

threat to put on the table. And so in the same way that I often was willing to put my finger on the scale for opening up possibility for dramatic revolutionary success, we also had to have those moments where when it was dire and when the stakes were high, they really were high, so that when those successes came through, they really felt like successes.

So I think to me, that's the answer to both—why did it sometimes seem like things were so hard for the Cause, and also why did it seem like their wins could be bigger than they should have been? Why is it that Phrygian can hit everywhere across the galaxy? And it's because in the beginning of Perfect Imperfect, my man says, this is the final year of the Perfect Millennium. And those are the— that's the scale that the whole story is gonna take place on, in the same way that you know, the opening of a Shakespeare play kind of sets up, are we talking about a kingdom here, are we talking about a household? Are we talking about a foray into the woods? What is the scale of play? And for us, it was this big—even though it only takes place on Palisade—it's affecting the whole Principality, if that makes sense, so.

Keith: There's also like, you know, it's not just one role for the Stellar Combustor. You make a thousand rolls to get in there. [**Austin:** Oh, sure. Yes.] You can't rob the vault from outside the vault. Once you're in the vault, that's where the money is, and you've got a move called Once the War's Over that lets you automatically win.

[**Sylvi** and **Ali** chuckle]

Austin: In exchange for what?

Keith: In exchange for then dying.

Austin: Right, exactly. Exactly right. So—

Keith: It's a move that calls for a big cause and a big effect.

Austin: Exactly, and to me, that was like, those are the ways in which we actually did hit the genre space that I wanted to hit this season, even though there were times when it's like, oh my god, this is so much sweatier than I thought we would be. I thought we

would be in high-flying, you know, energetic, doing backflips mode, [**Jack**: Right!] and instead, we are in the fucking trenches.

Ali: So you gotta do the work.

Austin: You gotta do the work.

Ali: The Blue Channel did the fucking work is— go listen to Palisade.

Austin: I heard— I heard Millennium Break can change lives.

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: Let's go to character stuff, it's been a little bit. We did the Art one, or the Clem one. Hey, speaking of Phrygian and Authority,

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Zeedee wants to know,

Zeedee: Phrygian sacrifice?

[02:14:30]

What went into the decision to sacrifice Phrygian in the Shackled Sun arc?

Or that's not the Shackled Sun arc, is it? It's the— or is it? Is that Shackled Sun?

Keith: I just think of the Stellar Combustor.

Ali: The sun was shackled.

Austin: Yeah, Shackled Sun I think, is the end of Partizan. That's the actual name of— that's Operation Shackled Sun.

Jack: Oh! But what is it— it's called In Their Fear... right, is the Combustor arc? What's the name of the Combustor—?

Art: I— or was In Their Fear the Downtime before the Combuster?

Austin: I think it was the Downtime before, because it's—

Jack: An Impossible Ideal.

Janine: We do know the one they mean, though. [chuckles] Okay.

Austin: An Impossible Ideal. We do.

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: We do, yes. I think.

Keith: No, I'm confused. Really, it's a lot of stuff. You know, we talked earlier about the latent sort of background radiation in my head about really wanting to play Leap again. Like, that had been sort of on the table for me, a route to not be playing Phrygian, a character who I love, but don't love having to be for four hours in a row. And, the other thing is like, I had gotten it into my head around that time that we hadn't made a lot of progress as the Cause and it was time to start winning the game? And the Stellar Combustor sort of exploded out of nowhere—I guess it did not explode at all.

Sylvi: [laughs] Very important!

Keith: The concept of the Stellar Combustor came into the season much earlier than I think anybody thought. And because of that, it felt like there was sort of this trump card on the table of like, Keith's idea to start winning now is being stopped by if you keep trying to win, we'll blow up the world. And it really felt like a very long road to shutting that down and getting back on track to like, doing the missions that will tick off the boxes that say the Cause is winning the war? And I really had like the— the spreadsheet in my mind of like all the little tick boxes that the game says that we need that was like, totally bare at that point in my head when— I don't remember how the Soldier move came up. Austin, I think that you were like, by the way, you've got these Soldier moves if you want to do this.

Austin: Yeah, I knew that that move was in there, but I also just knew that people were getting to the point where they'd taken a lot of their— their regular kind of level ups, their regular new moves from their sheets. [**Keith:** Yeah.] And it's like, there are these really powerful moves that you can take once you get like two or three from your main sheet, you know

Keith: And there was also this sense from everyone else at the table that maybe we really didn't want to push it. And I felt very strongly that we should push it and that it could— it could fuck everything up, but also like, I'm— I think that one of the— the things that's good about having a GM or a facilitator or whatever the game that you're playing calls for is like, having someone there to match what you're doing and to like take the stuff you're doing and like, you don't ever want to go into a game that where you're way overpowered or way underpowered. And then the GM just like, lets you either be slaughtered or absolutely trampled every— it's not fun or interesting, especially for a show. And so I was like, there's no way that we can't do this because that wouldn't be good to release as an episode. And I just got really in my head about like, the way to do this is to take the move that lets me succeed on rolls, and to try to storm the castle, and, you know, the sort of like latent, not really having a great time role-playing as Phrygian, sort of in my mind. But really it's like, spreadsheet tick marks, trying to win, trying to like get us past this big roadblock, trying to have like a big, explosive, cool arc, you know?

Austin: And I should say, and I think I suspect everyone else in this call agrees, you crushed it as Phrygian [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] throughout all of your playing as Phrygian. I do recognize that doesn't mean that it wasn't hard work, you know, but or wasn't enjoyable even maybe, but like Phrygian is an all-timer. What a character, what a very clear, sharply rendered character across they are.

Keith: I'm glad that people like Phrygian and that I did a good job.

Austin: You did a great job. Speaking of doing a great job, Nerf has been trying to ask for two years,

Nerf: Serious Reading Improv?

[02:19:13]

How improvised was the ending of the Serious Reading game? Was any of Art's outburst pre-planned or was it entirely generated by Art's random little topic? Quote, "doing something good could inconvenience someone somewhere". Also, could you please speak on the decision to include contemporary soundbites in the intro?

Art, were you planning on exploding in a fit of rage at the end of that episode?

Art: No, not at all.

Austin: That was just pure improv genius?

Art: Yeah, that was— that was just group mind— and I mean, I want to shout out you, who— I had walked away from the microphone because I was laughing too hard at what was going on? And you sent me a DM that was like, get back to the microphone, and instantly it was like—

Austin: Lock in.

Sylvi: Sitting forward in your chair.

Art: Let's—

Austin: Oh, it was so funny.

Jack: "Doing something good could inconvenience someone somewhere", is like, it's like an improvised line that is so perfect that it makes me mad. It's wonderful.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Serious Reading is maybe one of the most fun times. We've had a lot of fun times, but Serious Reading was so funny.

Keith: Yeah. It was really great.

Austin: I would love to redo that at some point. Someone asked, like oh, are you ever going to redo it? I don't know, maybe. We hacked it together to make it work to begin with, we could do it again. I don't have any plans, but.

Keith: I was so glad when we got to look at those questions from the Crunchyroll thing and, Austin, you were like, we should do these as— [**Austin:** Uh huh.] and then all of a sudden, this fucking stupid answer that I *didn't* answer the question right on purpose, suddenly became a really fun idea to do.

Austin: Because your answer was like, shitty centrist podcast, right?

Jack: Yeah, Pod Save the Principality, I think was what you said.

Janine: [chuckles]

Austin: Pod Save the Principality, oh, it's so funny.

Art: Oh my god.

Austin: Oh, the Pod Jons are so mad at us.

Keith: [laughs]

Dre: [chuckles]

Jack: [chuckles]

Art: I mean, I love that the last— that since that episode, those people have just totally lost it.

Keith: Oh yeah, they've totally—

Sylvi: Shocking.

Austin: Union busting and everything, yeah. Uh huh. Never have we been more right about anything— and I mean, that's also the answer to why there's contemporary soundbites in the intro right, Is like, that game comes from Keith saying, I want to make Pod Save the Principality in the Crunchyroll interview, and so my mind was like, oh yeah, we should— I want to be as explicit— for people who don't remember, that's the intro that just has over the road to Palisade music, a collection of contemporary news clips from— everything from the WTO protests, Occupy Wall Street, to Hurricane Katrina response, everything in between. And I think that's the closest I wanted to get as a creative storyteller to be like, yeah, we are talking about right now. We are talking about today. Like, I don't— you know, I do my best to not say much of anything, and I do my best to do the David Lynch [laughs says nothing], but like, this is it, like, this is— it's *constant*, we're surrounded by it. We're surrounded by people from the center and the right saying, like, why do you want things, [**Keith:** Yeah.] over and over? Saying, “doing something good could inconvenience someone somewhere”, right?

Keith: I think— I'm thinking all— every day, I'm like, I get mad all over again about like, how difficult it is to get people to see a base level of reality around them. And that is like, the Pod Save American thing is like the ultimate expression of like, guys who think they're smart, who everybody calls smart, who literally cannot interpret the world around them in any meaningful way?

Sylvi: Yeah. Dumbest fuckers on the planet. Yeah.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: And in fact, the opposite of a meaningful way, an actively harmful way.

Austin: Mhm. It's great.

Sylvi: Yeah?

Keith: [laughs]

Austin: It's great to live in the world. It's just great, it's just fantastic, I love it. I'm going to go deep into the bucket here, Music and intros. This one's from Jude.

Jude: Electric guitar?

[02:23:07]

Palisade was the first season whose soundtrack makes extensive use of electric guitars. What sort of sounds were you aiming for, Jack? Do you have any guitarists you admire and/or have attempted to emulate?

Jack: I think, you know, something that struck me so much about Partizan was how sharp-elbowed the sound was? How it really— it was heavy and industrial and grating. And I didn't want to pull back from that, but I did want to sort of like, drench it in this like, singing electric guitar sounds, if not to soften that blow, but to like, shape the room around those harsher— those harsher sounds.

I started out by picking what I thought would be very useful guitar sounds, you know, and then sort of assembling amp and pedal chains. All the guitar stuff, I mean—the guitar I was playing was live—but all the processing and amps were digital this season for a couple of reasons. I am much more familiar with a digital workflow for an electric guitar than I am for an analog one. At that point, I had a downstairs neighbor who, as pleasant as she was, I did not want to you know, pump a big amp directly above her bedroom, which was below my office. And also because I knew I could work quicker if I was like, look, I've got these presets all ready to go, all set up. So I spent the early part of the season kind of establishing the guitar chains that I wanted in terms of tuning the amps, sorting out the pedals and things like that. I started with a very reverb-y, metallicky, dreamy shoegaze sound, that ended up sort of being played as like a rhythm guitar part throughout. I had an overdrive guitar, like a heavy distorted guitar. And then pretty quickly, I also settled on the lead guitar sound, which is a— like a saturation plug-in and reverb engine called Raum, that's R-A-U-M, which I really like. And that was two phases set differently, and then a compressor, and then an echo pedal, or like a delay pedal. And that produced this kind of like, sort of psychedelic, sort of screaming clean guitar that shows up a lot?

Dre: [chuckles]

Jack: If you think about like, the melodies that play on the electric guitar occasionally, they're usually coming out of this thing, which in my notes is called, double distorted phase, I guess, because it has to do with— [chuckles]

Sylvi: Hell yeah it is! You get some really incredible tones this season.

Jack: Thank you so much! I was actually— I knew that I wanted to play a Stratocaster because they have this really— they have the capacity to have this really strange percussive sound? They have this switch on them, which lets you select which pickups you want. And Keith can correct me here—or rather, Keith can illuminate here—I play with the switch in the lowest position— what pickups are turned on there, Keith?

Keith: The one closest to the bridge, you mean?

Jack: [voice away from mic, checking the guitar] No, the one furthest.

Keith: That's the neck. It's geographical, so the switches near the neck play the neck pickups, and the switches near the bridge play the bridge pickups.

Jack: Okay, so it's just the bridge pickup. It is. It's as far to the right as possible.

Keith: Yeah, it goes bridge, then bridge, then middle, then middle, then middle, and neck, and then neck.

Jack: And that kind of like, botches the sound in a really interesting way, if only the bridge pickup is turned on. And so I could get this really like, squawky, percussive, strange sound that still—

Keith: The *famously* harsh sound.

Jack: The *famously* harsh sound of the Fender Stratocaster. [Sylvi chuckles] But at the same time, it's a strat that I've also built to sound really sweet, and so if I'm playing up on the neck, I can have this really nice compromise between a harsh percussive sound and, you know, bending strings really beautifully and getting stuff going like that. And that kind of sound, I mean, I've always really liked the sound of Mark Knopfler, the

legendary Dire Straits guitarist who is, I think plays a Fender Jazzmaster primarily, and is able to make these liquid beautiful guitar lines.

Keith: And a Strat and a Les Paul.

Jack: And then as the season— and a Les Paul and a Strat. And then as the season went on and Keith got me into Steely Dan, [**Sylvi** and **Austin** chuckle] Jeff “Skunk” Baxter is a Steely Dan guitarist who plays incredibly, and also has a wonderful name. And then recently Mk.gee, who is the lead guitarist for Dijon’s band, and also has kind of spun off to make his own music under his own name. Mk.gee has this remarkable, kind of indescribable sound where he is constantly sort of like, oscillating between these like, muted bassy guitar tones and really bright brassy sounds up the neck, seemingly with the same set up, I’ve seen him do it live, it’s extraordinary.

Keith: How wet is your reverb, Jack?

Sylvi: Yeah!

Keith: Sounds really wet.

Jack: It’s pretty wet!

Keith: Sounds really fucking wet. It’s way out there.

Jack: It’s way out there. The plug-in that I use is called Raum, it’s *really* great. And yes, my actual reverb dial is 100— [chuckles]

Sylvi: Yeah, that’s the wettest it can be.

Keith: [laughs] Oh my god. You can tell, you can tell, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, with low diffusion and 4.8 seconds of decay, yeah, and—

Sylvi: Let’s go.

Keith: Four—

Jack: I set this up because I—

Art: Um.

Jack: Mm?

Art: Can I ask a stupid question?

Jack: Yeah.

Art: Because we're going short here. How does— how does an electric guitar work?

Sylvi: So there's these things called strings.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And you pluck them.

Jack: There are, uhh—

Art: Uh huh. Explain to me the— yeah, the relationship with the entire amp.

Sylvi: Now this I don't know.

Keith: I don't want to jump in to answering this, but I do know how this works.

Jack: No, Keith, you go— Keith, go right ahead.

Keith: Okay, so the string is made of steel, which is being picked up by magnets in the pickup. It changes— it detects the magnetic— the electromagnetic change in the string vibration. It sends this tiny little amplitude signal from the passive—usually passive—pickups, which are detecting the changes in the magnet, it sends it into an amplifier, which then does what's called pre-amplification, it basically takes that signal and magnifies it? It's like blowing up an image, which is why it causes distortion and artifacting in the sound, it literally is like the audio version of Enhance, and like CSI or whatever. Then it sends it through an EQ layer, which changes how it sounds. And then

it goes into the power amp, which is like, then it *massively* magnifies the amount, and then that's like now, loud audible sound coming through a speaker. Yeah.

Art: Okay, follow-up question. Why can I not— why could you not plug the electric guitar directly into your computer and just have the computer correctly process the sound into a file?

Keith: You absolutely can do that.

Art: So then you wouldn't need your amp to disturb your downstairs neighbor.

Jack: Yeah, that's what I'm doing. Yeah, that's— I have digital amps that are doing that processing for me. I send a signal in, and then I have this absurd chain of— what's my fake amp here called? And then we should move on. This fake amp is called— it is a British Cabinet, it's called a Vintage British Head Cabinet. [**Sylvi** and **Keith** chuckle] It's branded Logic.

Keith: You can hear that, you can hear the British.

Art: Wow, wild. Okay, great, thanks.

Keith: Not a joke.

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: I hear the accent.

Keith: American speakers sound way different, it's crazy.

Austin: I believe this, that's weird. Briefly, shout out to @HeorotPanic, who gifted a bunch of subs to our Twitch.

Keith: Thank you.

Jack: Thank you, @HeorotPanic!

Austin: twitch.tv/friendsatthetable. I want to do a silly one, and then we'll do another giveaway. This silly one comes in from Crop, who says,

Crop: Maybe have a tail?

[02:30:58]

*In the PARTIZAN post-mortem, Dre stated that Valence could “maybe” have a tail.
Are there any characters in PALISADE that you all think could “maybe” have a tail?*

Sylvi: I don't know what the fuck's going on with Cori's physiology, you know?

Jack: This is— [chuckles]

Dre: [stifles laughter]

Sylvi: She got wings, she could have a tail, who gives a fuck?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, I— I have written an answer for this in the doc, which is that Phrygian could have a tail in the literal sense of “could” or “could not” at any given time.

Austin: Right, right.

Jack: [chuckles]

Keith: Not “maybe has a tail”, “could have a tail” or “could not have a tail”.

Austin: But not maybe.

Keith: But not maybe has a tail.

Austin: Could have a tail—

Keith: Definitely does and definitely doesn't.

Austin: Have a tail.

Keith: Have a tail.

Austin: Anybody else? Any other characters?

Art: It's a shame that Thisbe doesn't have a tail.

Janine: I was just going to say she can't, because like, if it's like— **[Austin:** Because of the butt?] if it's like a deer tail, then it's sort of gross to me? Like it just feels like, it feels like gross in terms of the person who designed her? It's just like, ew, what's wrong with you?

Sylvi: [laughs]

Keith: I'm curious what you mean by that.

Janine: But I—

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Don't worry—

Sylvi: It's fine, I love that answer.

Austin: I agree.

Janine: When I think of Thisbe with tail, I think of like a big, long, spiny Xenomorph tail, and like that's wrong too, that's not the vibe.

Dre: Oh...

Austin: Oh that's cool! What if Integrity just keeps growing and becomes a big fucked up Xenomorph tail?

Keith: Or instead of growing, it just sinks down to be level with the butt and comes out from there.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah. We should answer some Integrity questions after we take a little— not a break, but another dip into the— into the—

Jack: I don't have an answer to this. I just want to say that I think Dre's answer of “does Valence have a tail”, answer, “maybe” is peak.

[**Janine** and **Keith** chuckle]

Austin: Is peak. Ali, do you want to do another giveaway?

Ali: I would like to.

Austin: Also shout outs to everybody who is doing giveaways through friendsatthetable.shop—

Sylvi: Yeah!

Dre: Yeah, for real.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: —Fourthwall interface? It's so cool that that works. It's a great way to give stuff to the community, people have been doing it. Shout outs to everybody who's been doing it.

Ali: Yeah, it's been going really fast, so we haven't been able to shout them out, but thank you so much! Also, before I do this giveaway, Brnine definitely doesn't have a tail.

Janine: *Does?*

Keith, Austin, Jack: [incoherent jumble of “Does?”]

Ali: Does not, sorry—

Janine: No, you said does! You said does and now—

Ali: I'm wrong...

Sylvi: Sometimes, you know, there's those clip-on ones that you put on a carabiner—

Art: It's a contract.

Sylvi: And you put on your pants, [**Janine:** Yeah, okay!] and everyone knows you're a wolf boy that way, and I think Brnine could probably do that.

Austin: Oh...

Ali: I've been very upfront in the ways that Brnine looks weird. And my— one of the things that I'm proud of this season is that I was able to make Apostolosians slightly more elf-like via Routine, so.

Sylvi: That's true.

Austin: That's true, that did happen.

Jack: Oh, yeah!

Austin: Do you think Hunting is a little bit— has a little furry energy?

Jack: Yes, but—

Austin: I think so too.

Jack: Oh it was for Ali.

Ali: Maybe... yeah, I think so.

Keith: You know what's funny about the late 90s? They used to sell it like souvenir shops, like skunk tails that you could put in your pants, like for kids.

Ali: Oh, they do that. Yep, they did that.

Keith: And it didn't mean— well, now it means some— it didn't mean anything back then.

Sylvi: Now it's flagging.

Keith: It just meant you were a kid.

Ali: Oh...

Austin: Mmm...

Giveaway #2

[02:34:10]

Ali: Okay, well, we're going to roll the tape now. [**Sylvi:** Yeah, sure.] I am making—

Austin: Yeah, I need you to screen share again for us, Ali, thank you.

Ali: Yes, please. It should be already up. Is it not already up?

Austin: Oh did I do—

Ali: Oh, no, I restarted.

Austin: Yeah, you restarted whatever.

Ali: I restarted Discord by accident.

Austin: There we go. Watch stream. I will come back over here and I will re-grab it and bring it—

Ali: Okay. I'm also making a call right here, if we get a duplicate number, I'm just rolling again.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense.

Ali: Just obviously.

Jack: That'd be very exciting though, wouldn't it?

Art: Yeah, one per customer.

Ali: Shout out to whoever's number comes up twice, but it is what it is. Right now, we're going for the—

[drumroll begins slightly and fades off immediately]

Austin: One second— don't do it yet because I have to get it on screen.

Art: It's not on the thing yet.

Dre: Mm, mm.

Ali: Yeah. We're going to go for the sketch cup, a version of our sketch cup.

Sylvi: Ohhh.

Dre: Oooh.

Jack: Ahhh, I love the sketch cup!

Ali: Gorgeous, gorgeous, like bugs in the grass.

Austin: Can you explain what this is? Do we have an image for this?

Ali: I— let me see if I have the one that I can just send you.

Austin: You try to find it while I try to get this back on screen.

Jack: I will explain while Ali finds— tries to find it. We made a wonderful Bug Riders cup by Mar Julia, that's available for purchase. During an early part of the process, Ali wanted to test how colors worked, so requested an early sketch from Mar, and then hand-colored it herself, and then printed it.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Ali, could you drop it into the Roll20 screen, actually?

Ali: Oh, I don't—

Austin: Can you do that? No you can't do that.

Ali: No, I gotta— I'm not like—

Austin: Can you send it to me then?

Ali: Oh, I can just open it in my browser. Do you see that?

Austin: Oh, did you do this? Yeah, I sure can!

Keith: Ooooh.

Ali: Yeah, I did this and paid— shout outs to Mar Julia [laughs] for doing the illustration! But yeah, it's just a very dorky version of this cup. I like looking at it.

Austin: It's so good.

Keith: I do like it.

Ali: I think that somebody might enjoy having it in their cabinet. And we're going to see—*ba dum ba ba*—who that person is going to be. Another 1D— 1226, [musically, like a trumpet call] *ba dum ba ba!* 14—

Keith: Nice new catchphrase.

Sylvi: *Ba dum ba ba!*

Ali: [wheezes]

Austin: *Ba dum ba ba!*

Keith: When Ali comes into a room it's like *ba dum ba ba!*

Sylvi: Get 'em on the soundboard.

Ali: [laughs] 148— okay, 148, you're not seeing that, okay. And that person is, going, to be, doo do doo—

[applause soundboard starts and stops]

Austin: Ba dum ba ba!

Sylvi: Ba dum ba ba!

Keith: Ba dum ba ba!

Dre: Ba dum dum ba ba ba ba ba!

Ali: Shout outs to— [giggles] Shout outs to Alex B.

Austin: Shout outs to Alex B.

Ali: Whose favorite character is Fero, question mark(?), impossible choice. I agree it's an impossible choice.

Austin: A hard choice, but Fero is a great one.

Keith: Easy choice, and take off that question mark.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Ali: Also, I'm really glad that somebody who has a favorite Hieron character is getting this cup.

Austin: Yeah!

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Especially that one, that particular one is a great fit.

Jack: We did that on purpose through—

Art: I'm glad that we've kept the reason that if you win this, we're going to be able to make a movie.

Sylvi: They like it.

Austin: Just a little.

Keith: Hey, it was Alex that was mean to me.

Austin: What?

Keith: Putting a question mark after Fero.

Austin: Oh my fucking god.

Dre: This fucking guy.

Ali: [spits and laughs]

Art: Oh god.

Jack: Next question!

Austin: Unbelievable. Alright, let me find—

Art: You're not— that's not very ba dum ba ba—

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: [laughs]

Keith: *Ba dum ba ba!*

Austin: We're all trying to— ba dum ba ba over here. I can't do it. I can't do the ba dum ba ba.

Sylvi: *Ba dum ba ba!*

Austin: See great, incredible people.

Sylvi: Thank you.

Austin: Like not me.

Sylvi: This is why we collaborate.

Keith: Presenting, Carlos Mencia.

Dre: Jesus.

Keith: [laughs]

Ali: Just a reminder, the people who do win this are going to receive an email tomorrow if you're like, oh, I think that was my name, but I didn't get anything, I don't know, this will be sorted out. This is sort of a private giveaway, and shout outs to you all for listening to us for 10 years, thank you!

Austin: Thank you.

Sylvi: Yeah. Thank you.

Dre: Thank you.

Austin: Alright. I'm going to jump back to—let me first of all bring the right screen up—and then I'm going to jump back to question 15, which is in the Season Structure and Behind the Scenes section from Alice.

Alice: Integrity sans Thisbe?

[02:38:25]

Hello. What was the plan for Integrity if Thisbe didn't adopt it?

Jack: Ho ho ho!

Dre: [chuckles]

Austin:

Someone was going to be holding that scepter, and I'm so curious to know who it was.

Ali, you marked this one and so did I.

Ali: Yeah, I— Brnine is somebody who is invested in the strength and capability of Millennium Break. They would have given it to another Cause faction person. [**Austin:** Mhm, mhm.] My idea was going to be August Righteousness because I'm obsessed with that character and really wanted to foster a Brnine—

Austin: I had this scene in my mind, Ali. I practiced it in the mirror.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah...

Austin: I didn't practice it in the mirror, but I thought about it for weeks.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, but it's like— I love Janine. I would never, you know, put—

Austin: Oh, never— it went way better.

Ali: Yeah. I wouldn't, yeah.

Austin: Janine taking it was the right call.

Ali: Yeah. Once Janine was interested in it— and not even the like— the immediate-ness— like, it is already text on— in Partizan [**Austin:** Uh huh.] that if Thisbe jumped off of a bridge, Brnine would? [**Sylvi** chuckles] So the thought of Brnine not considering this, because you know, Thisbe's— they were not aware of Thisbe's interest in this, until Thisbe was like, hey, can I have that? [chuckles] And like that there's no version of Brnine that's like, "I don't know, Thisbe. [laughs] I think somebody else should." It's just like, "no, yeah, okay, Thisbe, do you want to have lunch after this?"

Sylvi: [Brnine impersonation] *No, okay, that's fine.*

Ali: [laughs]

Janine: I was going to jokingly say, it's as if Thisbe was like, you're going to eat your fries, and then you went with lunch anyway.

Austin: I had a very clear image of what was going to happen. You were going to give it to August Righteousness— I think if you will listen to these episodes, I might even be like— you might even be able to hear me like, bouncing, because I'm so ready to do this thing.

Dre: [chuckles]

Austin: Which is you're going to give it to August Righteousness and he was going to hold it down like an animal, and beat it to death with a hammer.

Sylvi: Jesus! That rules!

Ali: [cackles]

Janine: Oh my god!

Austin: He was going to break it into pieces and then throw it away. [**Keith:** I was—] He was like, a hundred percent this thing has to be destroyed.

Sylvi: Oldboy octopus scene! [**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Violently, publicly, as clearly as possible.

Keith: The thing that's so—

Austin: I was like, so ready to do it. Oh, it would have been so fun— but this is better! This is better.

Ali: [laughs]

Janine: [laughs] Yeesh!

Keith: The thing that's interesting about Integrity—

Austin: Literally— it was before that was like meme— [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] it was before “let's beat him up with hammers”. August Righteous is Northernlion in so many ways.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Ali: [chuckles] I'm always saying this...

Keith: The thing that's interesting about Integrity is one of the few Divines that we've got that can be killed still.

Austin: A hundred percent. Right, that was explicitly the thing, Keith.

Keith: So that we didn't kill it I feel like, was such a failing of—

Austin: That was exactly the thing was like, I'd been sitting on that particular piece of information, which I hadn't quite said out loud yet at that point in the season, right? Like, ooh remember, some of these old Divines are different, right? They don't have the Gumption thing inside of them, which is one of my favorite pieces of lore that is clean, unlike a lot of our lore, which is complex and weird? The thing of like, some of these Divines will fucking die for real, *for real for real*, is like so crisp and good, and it being Integrity is one of them is great, so. Anyway, shout outs to Integrity. Let's stay on the Integrity train, let's talk about Thisbe a little bit. Let me find the right one to jump ahead to— I know it's in Characters, let's see. I think there's two of them in a row here.

Keith: I have a two-two for the Integrity train.

Ali: I think you're looking for 35 and 36.

Austin: I think it's 35 and 36, yeah. This is from Nicole. Nicole says,

Nicole: Thisbe Divine?

[02:42:00]

Thisbe's personal evolution, particularly her deepening entanglement with Divines, was one of my favorite story threads of PALISADE.

Did you anticipate, Janine, exploring Divinity with Thisbe from the outset of the season, or was there a different narrative path you thought Thisbe would take?

Janine: I absolutely did not in any way— I— I mean, this— you know, this is the thing is like, I did originally promise Thisbe wasn't going to secretly be Divine, and I was like, very dedicated to that. **[Austin:** Uh huh.] I was like, this is just not a thing I'm interested in exploring with this character. We have— I even— at various points, we've explored robots plus Divinity enough, like, I don't want— I want to do something else. But like, at the beginning of this season, I very specifically— [exhales] you know, the reason I picked up Thisbe again at all was like, well, it didn't feel like her story was done. Like, she wasn't where she needed to be in a million different ways, and I kind of was like, well, the goal that I had, I don't think even makes sense where this character is at, like I needed to find something else. So I didn't really know where to take her, just that she wasn't there. She wasn't where I wanted to leave her.

Whereas like now, I can really clearly say, I wouldn't pick up Thisbe again. I think, I mean, never say never, but I think I'm happy with leaving her where she's at in her story. But yeah, it was so— it was so much more like a thing of, she kept being in proximity to Divinity in these moments where she's trying to understand like, herself? So it became a thing of like, well, not only like, how am I— how do I define myself as different from everyone that I'm with, but also, if I'm a robot and they're a robot, why are they like a super— you know, why are they whatever they are, and I'm whatever I am? And it gets like, woven and enmeshed in this sort of thing of like, why is anything anything? And that's how you get there [chuckles] Yeah.

Austin: And that's how you get there, yeah.

Janine: I still don't think of— I don't think of Thisbe as like a Candidate or a Divine or like I— I... no.

Austin: Very explicitly not one of those previous categories, right?

Janine: I don't think of her as anything that we've kind of seen in interacting with Divines.

Austin: Yeah. I'm going to read this next one though. You may have just answered this too. Jordan wrote in to say,

Janine — You've described Thisbe taking Integrity as a spur-of-the-moment decision in play. Given that you've been open about not wanting Thisbe to be a Divine, it was quite fun to see Thisbe's post-Integrity arc about synthesizing the shattered shards of Divinity into something whole. What inspired you to explore those themes and how do you feel about where Thisbe is post-Palisade?

Janine: Yeah, I— I think I have to get the question. I think I have sort of answered this right, or?

Austin: Pretty much there. I guess I'm curious about the post-Palisade where we're leaving Thisbe, how do you feel about that.

Janine: Yeah. And I will also say the “shattered shards” thing is a little more like, linguistic. I don't know that Thisbe believes that Divinity needs to be a big chunk. Or like needs to be— I think it's a thing that can become a fixation for her because like, it's a thing that's representative of other stuff that she's working through. And like, it's easier to work on that than to look inward and figure out her own deal. [chuckles] Like, you know, her identity is also really shattered. Her— the people that she should have, there are probably other— other, you know, units like her out somewhere, we've sort of discussed that before, but like, it seems impossible to track them down, so like what does that mean? I think in terms of inspiration, it is just like, that same kind of thing, right? That same like, [exhales] what is anything? What is anyone?

Thisbe started out as like, you know, all my characters, I tend to like be— I tend to use them to work through something. And Thisbe is very much like my relationship with work and like value, and the idea of like, you know, is value tied to productivity? Why do you feel it is when, you know, consciously we want to say it's not, or wouldn't hold other people to those standards. And part of that I think comes to like, it becomes really easy when you are decent at something to make it your identity. And if your identity is bound up in your work and you try to take the work part away, what are you? Who are you,

what are you doing? Like— so it's all— it all kind of, and that stuff I kind of like tripped into, you know? It was a lot of like, I didn't architect it as deliberately as I have some things in the past, but like I am happy with where it was. Yeah.

Austin: That's honestly why it was so exciting for me too. You know, we have this other question here from Elle, who says,

Elle: Nature and Empire?

[02:48:00]

Was it planned in any way, long term, for the end of Palisade "Taking Root" to echo-rhyme with the Road to Partizan in the birth of the Perennial Wave and even further echo-rhyme with COUNTER/Weight's An Animal Out of Context and the edict to Cultivate Saplings?

Not mentioned here is the Spring in Hieron stuff obviously, [**Janine:** Yeah.] but maybe gestured at.

I find it fascinating that Austin insists nature cannot protect itself from empire, but you all have chosen—time and time again—that nature will overcome, so long as people are there to support it.

Curious to hear your thoughts on this, and shout outs to Clem, I hope Thisbe called.

Very curious if she did.

Janine: Not deliberately.

Austin: Yeah— yeah not deliberately. No planning, truly, none of the Arbor stuff—

Janine: I pulled up the message that I sent you.

Austin: I knew Janine was building towards some broad stuff— sure.

Janine: Yeah, it was right after I sent you a screenshot of a character that I pulled in a gacha game that I was excited about?

Austin: Uh huh, good setting up the— uh huh.

Janine: It was on June 21st, 11:50 AM, “As a heads up, since it might be a thing,”—and then a dozen dots, like a long ellipses—”I think Thisbe is trying to make a plant Divine.” The idea of her carrying a bonsai or a rose cultivar on her ship expanded into, well, wait, what else can I do with this idea?

Austin: And all I said was, “ooh, that’s really fun,” because I didn’t want to talk through it too much.

Janine: Uh huh, and then I— [chuckles] yeah, and then we just posted a bunch of YouTube videos back and forth [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, we posted YouTube videos back and forth.

Janine: Unrelated. Totally unrelated.

Austin: Kind of unrelated.

Janine: It was very much just like, it was like a vibes thing. It was just like a— this feels right kind of thing.

Austin: Yeah, and I didn’t know if it would resolve this season, or if it would be a thing that you carried into the next one. And I didn’t think it would end up being tied to the Motion— Motion particle/Kalmeria stuff. But then it was the perfect thing for when the terror of that question showed up in the finale, which is like, oh my god, how do you beat something that is in the air in that way? Which, we got another question in that I won’t read all of it— it’s in here, but we’re trying to move as quick as I can at this point.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But Kate wrote in, and— it wasn’t Kate, fuck, somebody else wrote in and was like, hey, when did you know Motion was going to be a thing? Vivian, Vivian wrote in

and was like, obviously Motion's in the theme song haunting everybody, but like, when did you know Motion would be important? And I always knew Motion would be important in the season at some point, because the core threat of both post-Gumption Divines being they can always come back to life, and she is *in the air*. And the mirrored threat with Brnine, the thing of like, Brnine, you decided to retreat from this thing called Kalmeria, I would have like used it to build myself a throne, was always so juicy to me. And I just didn't know when we would get to it.

And then, and specifically the thing of like, this is really scary, how do you overcome this thing that you— sorry, to pause and put a bracket around that. To me, Motion was *never* like Rigour, because of that. You didn't beat Motion at the end of Partizan. Motion dispersed into— into reality itself the same way Perennial had been dispersed into reality itself. Motion was always a sort of thing waiting to return to be confronted again.

At this point, that has been done in such a way that it has changed the galaxy in another big way. I think Janine, you phrased it in that episode as being like, you can't get to the end of a Friends at the Table episode without some character deciding to do something that's going to dramatically rework how the world works, right? And so for me, that was very much— this was the surprising way that this was going to happen, I had no clue. Truly, the final recording session might have been when this came up, right? Maybe one before the final recording session, but it wasn't even like a, we had private conversations about Arbor or about changing the Perennial Wave. Literally, all that stuff happened right then, which was so validating, I will say?

You know, we haven't read a specific question about the second finale stuff yet, but I think a lot of us went into— came out of Questlandia, feeling a bunch of different ways about it. And the one way for me that was overwhelming was like, I want a big final climactic confrontation. I want a big fuck-off boss fight at the end of the season. I want our heroes to have to banter and come together and collaborate on a big final, you know, solution to the problem in front of them— bad phrasing. [chuckles] A big, you know, figure out the way to solve the puzzle that is “Motion could come back and kick your ass at any time”. And being able to get that from Janine, you and Ali figuring out

the Motion stuff and the Arbor stuff, was so rewarding because it's like that was the sort of thing that I felt like Questlandia kind of boxed us out of because of its structure. Which isn't me dissing Questlandia, but it means it's like that was one of the things that was hard for it to support and help us to elaborate. And so finding that there was *such* a joy, you know?

And also, I stick to my guns on this one— nature will not save us, right? You know, it does require us to step in. Nature will continue to be exploited by imperial power, will continue to be exploited by capitalism. It can't protect itself.

Janine: Importantly, that Arbor isn't doing that itself.

Austin: And I don't even know that Arbor is good for people necessarily, right?

Janine: No, no. I— that's another thing, is like, I embrace that— I normally at the end of a season kind of fight that, I kind of get frustrated. It's like, I just want to do a good thing, why can't I just do a good thing, that's just good? And this time I was like, no, this is going to be bad, but I'm just leaning into it. This is just a thing that Thisbe thinks is worth doing for whatever reason.

Austin: Is worth doing, yeah.

Janine: She doesn't see the future. She only, you know— and I think has at some point actively acknowledged that she can't anticipate stuff like that in a way that, like, you know, Adaire would never actively acknowledge that she can't anticipate the outcome of something?

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: I think Thisbe is very much just like, I'm doing this in the moment because— because I want, you know, I'm going to. It's a thing that I want to pursue.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And yeah, it's, it's probably going to be horrible in the future, but that's the future's problem.

[**Jack** and **Dre** chuckle]

Austin: Let's see some more Character things, I feel like everybody still has some more there. These are for Dre and Ali from Rozecrest.

Rozecrest: Brnine & Valence?

[02:54:45]

Ali: Can you tell us more about the choice to have Brnine be so reticent to ever say Valence's name or talk about them directly? Their relationship to grief is fascinating to me, and many were waiting with bated breath for when they would be head-on acknowledged.

Related, for Dre: what have you thought about how Valence has been gently haunting the season?

A lot of hauntings for you in Palisade!

And what do you think they might think about where Millennium Break is at now?

Ali: I have a bunch of answers for this. I, you know— there was— it was hard to go back to Brnine having a different name, having the Blue Channel still established in Millennium Break, and not feel like they had this weight hanging over them? Like, the debt that they have to Valence is not something they would have gotten rid of.

I think, you know— [chuckles] it's two things, which is like I, you know, when I was playing Brnine a lot, there were times when I didn't want Valence's loss to be the only thing that they did, or like felt, you know? I, you know, I imagined a lot in the span of time—especially in their place of a captain—that like, you know, the staff of the Blue Channel probably changed a lot. If they were like being this sort of like, you know,

ground team that went from place to place to do these sort of like undercover, or like under the nose missions, like they had lost people and gone through that a lot.

And I think that like, you know, that's why I had losing Phrygian as such a pivot there too? That's why like Brnine's— like, you know, the Stellar Combustor doesn't happen without Keith and it doesn't happen without Phrygian advocating for it. And I couldn't get that out of Brnine's mind as a character in terms of thinking like, I'm out-living people who are better at this than me? And the— you know, the most valuable thing that I can do is either try to act like them, or sacrifice myself like they did. [chuckling] Which is like why some of that behavior at the end of the season comes to light.

But, you know, it's tough. There's the early season where Brnine is trying to bring up those memories and wants to talk about it. And unfortunately, the only character that they ping pong with is Thisbe. And like, [laughs] there's like really sad moments with Thisbe where it's like, I do want to engage with you on this, but Thisbe doesn't give a shit, and has not been like holding these thoughts in their head for five years or however long we said was between the seasons. So that was sort of like, I tried to make it. It's funny that those scenes went as sadly as they did, and I can just sort of keep pushing on that bruise sometimes when I want to?

And then another thing that really came into perspective for me in terms of like how Brnine has been living through the past X amount of years or whatever, was that like, Gucci/Brnine movie night fight, where like, you know, Brnine is finally able to say like— like they're having this conversation past each other, and like the most vulnerable Brnine gets is like, I miss Phrygian. I can't do this without Phrygian. And like Gucci immediately being like, *“oh my god, are you okay?”* Like— like the imagination of like, Brnine trying to work through their Valence grief with Gucci, and getting that same sort of stonewall, like, “oh, I'll just send you a sympathy card, and the next time I talk to you, I won't bring it up and it'll be fine!”, like that's what, that's how it became easy to carry that characterization. And it was fun to do! [chuckling] I think that there's like, after that Gucci conversation, I was like, I'm *never* saying the word Valence, I'm never doing it?

[**Austin** chuckles] And I think that like if Palisade was scripted, there's a version of me that's like, in the writer's room—

Austin: Fighting.

Ali: —fighting that Jesset conversation. [**Austin:** Yeah.] But like, it is improv and it felt like if there was going to be a moment to do it, it was going to be that?

Austin: That was the moment, yeah.

Ali: And it was like, you know, if anybody cared about that, it was Jesset.

Austin: Right— that's I think that— it only could be Jesset. It *has* to be Jesset because Jesset also cared about Valence— maybe not in the same way, but were also someone who was hit by the grief of Valence, right? And I think had the same fears that Brnine did, which is like, how could I ever live up to the people who've died, right? Like that, very similar overlap there. And yeah.

Janine: I do want to say, Thisbe didn't not care [**Ali** laughs] that Valence died.
[chuckles]

Austin: No, totally!

Ali: It's just— it was Brnine—

Janine: I think Thisbe just thought like it was her fault in some capacity, [**Austin:** Mmm.] and that was like, that was the thing where like, I think she was easy for her to mistake grief for like anger? Especially after the little plant thing, where it was like, [**Austin:** Right.] “oh, I did bad and we lost someone important, so I'm in trouble,” like that kind of train of thought. I think that's more—

Austin: [amused] Sorry.

Janine: It wasn't indifference or anything. [chuckles]

Austin: Si in the chat said “Operant Valence is died” right after. [chuckles]

Ali: [laughs]

Janine: Oh, god.

Austin: An all time moment.

Janine: [sighs]

Austin: Oh, it's good. It's not bad. It's funny.

Ali: It does really feel like in the beginning of the season, like Brnine is trying to rekindle this relationship with Thisbe, and the sort of like life— version of their life that they had gotten away from when they got away from SBBR. And it's like, you know, when you're playing like, like a dating game or something, and you're like, you know, bringing up topics too early? [**Austin:** Right.] Of Brnine being like, well, do you remember that time? And does Thisbe being like, no, I don't think about those things, like I don't— so I, it felt good. I felt good, I was really happy with it, I like Brnine.

Austin: Ali, you saying that made me think of how, when you play wrestling games, you try to do like a strong move early in the match, [**Ali** chuckles] and the other character just shrugs it off. Once again, proving that wrestling is yuri, so, you know.

Ali: Yeah, uh huh.

Dre: Mhm, mhm.

Keith: I got this image of Ali giving gifts to Thisbe and the hearts won't show up— I'm like, is the game bugged? Why do I have no hearts with Thisbe still?

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: It's because you're still in the tutorial. You have to get out of the tutorial before you can start earning hearts. I'm sure that that's not exactly— I mean Janine, is that your experience at the beginning of the season as Thisbe, or where was Thisbe at in that part of the relationship?

Janine: Thisbe— I mean, you know, again, trying to find her place, right? She just wasn't quite there.

Austin: Yeah. Right.

Janine: She just didn't quite— it was a swing in how that relationship worked, in a way that like, was confusing for her because she was used to like, okay, let's go do this mission? More than, okay, you want to go to the arcade and hang out? **[Ali chuckles]** **[Austin:** Yeah.] Because then it's just like, well, what am I doing— like, what's the mission at the arcade, you know?

Keith: There's this awful thing that happens in real life where you meet somebody and you're like, I don't know how they feel— **[Ali laughs]** why can't they tell if they enjoy when I talk to them? I can't figure out what's going on here. Some people *really* never give up, and some people do, and Brnine is, I think, the first kind of person.

Austin: A never give up person.

Keith: It's almost— I think in a lot of ways, it's not important exactly what Thisbe— for Brnine, I mean, or for a listener, it doesn't feel entirely important exactly what Thisbe believes or how Thisbe feels about Brnine, because the Brnine end of it is such a huge weight around the neck of like, I really feel like I'm getting *nowhere* here.

Ali: [chuckles] I mean, and I do think like, you know, the biggest moment for me in the finale-finale is like, the like getting on screen, the sort of shift in the way that Brnine and Thisbe can communicate with each other. Where like, you know, Thisbe comes to Brnine because there's this feeling of their sort of equals, right? And Brnine is able to be like, you know, instead of doing the talking and like doing the like sociality of this stuff, that like Thisbe never connected with, just being like, can I upload this thing to you, and we could just fucking get to work? And like, when you think about like Brnine texting people, or the way that they like, interact with Asepsis or stuff like that, like this sort of like, nonverbal, or like meeting you where you are thing was not a skill that they had at the beginning of the season, obviously, right? So like, to see that sort of come through over time was good. I enjoyed it. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, definitely. I again, don't think that this made into the spreadsheet or the slideshow, but someone did point out like, Brnine and Thisbe are the two characters from the previous season who made it through— from the beginning of the previous season. Obviously, Phrygian came in and so did Figure, but from the first episodes of Partizan, the only characters who came back for this season were those two. And that's like, a lot of weight and a lot of gravity that like you know, gathers there in a real way. Really, really happy that y'all you know, kind of were able to explore that relationship so much over the course of the season. I really loved the Dust— I will never get over the conversation y'all had during the Dust episode [**Ali** giggles] at the sort of like, multi-stacked up bar [**Janine** chuckles] in the— that whole sequence, which is fantastic. So yeah, really loved it.

Dre, did you have any thoughts on Valence haunting this season? If not, I have another question for you that I can follow up with.

Dre: Um, it's not— I don't have a lot about— it's just like, weirdly nice to know that, oh yeah, that character mattered.

Austin: Yeah, definitely. I think it's tough, like, we— this is the I guess, ongoing continuity with the most character death? And it's interesting to see where—

Dre: And it's all mine! [laughs]

Austin: A lot of it, not— you and Keith.

Dre: No, I know, yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: Right? And Art—

Keith: Hey, none of my characters died.

Austin: Okay, well great. Yeah— yes, I guess.

Ali: [chuckles]

Sylvi: Technically, yeah.

Austin: Technically, yeah.

Sylvi: All technicality Keith over here.

Janine: You did say death multiple times when referring to those instances [Ali chuckles and snorts] literally like an hour ago, but—

Austin: It's true. It's true.

Keith: I'm allowed to be on both sides of this. [laughs]

Dre: It's funnier that way.

Jordyn: Figure and Levi?

[03:06:10]

Austin: Well, speaking of death, [Dre wheezes]

Dre—it felt like the loss of Figure this season, especially when it happened, hit you hard from the listener's perspective. How did that impact playing Levi and how do you feel about Levi's arc from naive Twilight Mirage giantkiller to star-crossed hero of the galaxy?

Dre: I feel like I've said this before and maybe this— I don't know how much I've said it on mic. It sucked! Figure dying was really hard. Like, we tried to be like, should we talk about this more? Should we revisit this when it happened? And I was like in a place where I was like, I can't, I cannot, I cannot like, separate how I'm feeling in this moment to turn it on and make this be a good show right now. I think we did that, we got there, sure.

Austin: Yeah, we came back, we took some time off. We were like, okay, let's do the thing that we do where we like, let's finish the scene out and then if we sleep on it, we hate it, we'll come back and do something different. And we did a little bit of that, but we didn't— you know, you never said, let's, we can't, I can't do it. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have

taken the move, but I can't do it. Can we find a way to game it back? Or can we leave the door open in some special way? Or— it seemed like it hit hard, I know it hit *me* hard, it shocked me. And it was the most— even though we knew the sixes were gonna hit, we *knew* the sixes were gonna hit!

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Every fucking time you rolled the dice, it was like, it's coming.

Janine: Yeah. It— can I ask—

Dre: Yeah, it's just like where it came, you know? Yeah, go ahead, Janine, sorry.

Janine: Can I ask, because I think this is— I think this is, again, a case of like, how people build their characters differently. If I took a move like that, I think from the day I put it on my sheet, I would be thinking of that character as dead already. So when it happened and it was like a big thing, it was like, for me, it was a little bit like, well, we've been making jokes about this for like what, months now. This was gonna happen, wasn't it? Like hadn't this kind of, in a way, already happened? I don't understand. So I kind of like—

Art: You have to have the soul of a gambler.

Janine: [chuckles] So I just— just have always wondered, do you regret taking that move? Like, your motivation for taking that move at the time, do you stand by it? Like, you know? I'm just curious.

Dre: Uhh, I— yeah, no, I regret taking the move for sure. I think maybe I jokingly said that earlier, but yeah, no, I totally do. It honestly— taking the move just was more based on like, this feels like thematically appropriate for like how, like how this came about with Figure and like that big, like class-change in the middle of the season, right?

Janine: Sure.

Dre: Yeah, and I think like— go ahead.

Austin: The whole thing— the whole thing— sorry, what was the— what's the name of that class again? I'm trying to remember. I'll find it, I'll find it. You keep talking.

Dre: Yeah. I mean, I definitely think like, to your other question, Janine, like there was a part of me that very much like, knew that like this was going to hit at some point? It's just very foolishly, even though we've done this show for 10 years, I was like, well, it's not going to hit at the most absolute worst time I could think of. And yet.

Ali: [chuckles]

Sylvi: We've never had heartbreaking moments on this show.

Dre: No, never.

Sylvi: Not even once.

Austin: [sighs] So tough.

Dre: And I do think like— that is a thing I would point to like every single time where someone's like, isn't it like, really hard and stressful to like storytell and it's just improv the whole time? And it's yes, but it's moments like that that like, that make it.

Austin: Right. We, Dre, went back and forth about what class you wanted to pick up. I ended up, you know, I'd sent you— obviously you read *Armour Astir: Encore*, which is where the *Wither*— which is the playbook you end up playing is from, but we'd also read a bunch of stuff from Yuri and August. We looked at stuff on itch.io from other people. We— I kind of laid out a bunch of options for you in text and being like, here's where— here's the various ways we could think about this, right? You know, the Chimeric Cadent was saying, hey, you could become the imposter; I could maintain your power, but such an arrangement would come at a cost. You could become the Tempest; you could break the chain, but then you wouldn't have any new fuel, you'd just be burning yourself. You become the wither where you get to maintain your connection to Perennial, but you break the Witch's position in the middle— and we went through like six of these.

Do you remember the thing that ended up making you commit to the Wither, which is the one where there were this playbook where this move was from?

Dre: No.

Austin: Well, specifically, you were interested in the fact that the wither could talk to the dead.

Dre: Oh, yeah!

Austin: Which we mostly played out with Gur, [**Dre:** Mhm.] but that was not who you were interested in.

Dre: Oh, no. Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: I don't know if we ever said it out loud.

Dre: No, we were going to do a seance with Cori's dad. [laughs]

Sylvi: *Oh my god!*

Ali: That's right...

Austin: That was your motivation, [**Dre:** Yeah.] [**Janine** chuckles] was like Figure wanted to be able to help Cori find peace about her dead dad.

Sylvi: Aww... I'm going to cry.

Austin: Which was, you know, really great. I think somewhere in there, Number of the Beast just felt like— you know, it's sort of similar to the way, Ali, you were just talking about Brnine, right? Which was like, what do I have to give anymore to this? And you had already started playing Figure a little bit, Dre, with a sort of like, I'm giving this my all, I'm burning myself down. And yeah, I— if I could go back in time, I would *really* be like, ooh are you sure you want to take it? But.

Dre: Yeah. But I just giggled there because, going way back to that question of like, how does real life impact your play? Like, this was a year wherein I got diagnosed with

autism and then realized that like, *ohhh*, like everything you set up to make yourself successful is like actively harming you. And you have to like, relearn how to do it all. Which is kind of like rolling an extra six every time you roll a six. [laughs]

Austin: Every time. Mhm. Mhm. Well, then the other thing that happened with that whole shit was like, because of the way the character was so powerful in terms of the die, we also didn't get a lot of Gur and Figure— we just got hints of it—

Dre: Yeah, which was a bummer, honestly.

Austin: Which was a bummer, honestly. Yeah, 100%. We had someone else write in to be like, Dre, you were obviously giving Austin a gift by bringing Gur back as a ghost so that Austin could get to play his favorite character again. [Dre chuckles] Which I don't know if that's how it actually worked out, but if it was, thank you.

Dre: Yeah, I do not remember. [laughs]

Austin: But yeah, really, really unlucky in terms of just how much we could lean in to that stuff, and that's actual play. I think a lot of the questions we get—and I'm not going to call on a particular one here, but I think I saw some notes from other players in the, or from other cast members in the doc about some of the questions like this, so please feel free to chime in—but sometimes it feels like the act of listening to the show must feel more like watching a TV show or something. Because some of the questions we get end up treating it like we do have a writers room, [Sylvi and Dre chuckle] where it is a linear thing, where we knew where it was all going and had the opportunity to go back and edit or something. But it *really* is us playing the damn game and getting stuck sometimes and getting you know, in the middle of something.

Keith: It's hard to underestimate how often things happen because we need to have the roll go right, or the roll didn't go right or the roll did go right and something springs out from there and it's like, that's the whole— that's really at the end of the day, it's like the whole thing is built around the structure of the game.

Austin: Totally, totally. It's— it is really common for us to find ourselves in a surprising place, I think. In this season, maybe more than most, we kept finding ourselves there. And I think partly because of the faction game split, partly because of things like the way Questlandia you know, shook out. But like, big weird, I guess we're here now, for sure. Right. So yeah, someone in the chat, @BasilAPlant says, it feels less like watching TV and more like reading a book to me. It couldn't be—as somebody who's written fiction—it could not be further from anything than writing fiction.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Like there's so much more control that you have as a fiction writer, from the fact fundamentally that you could do a draft and then go back and edit the draft. Like, you can do stuff in the edit in an actual play podcast, but barring throwing out an entire recording and doing it again, you can't really do what you can do— and even then, you just never know how it's going to shake out the second time.

Keith: I think people might not even believe how few times we've decided to change something and record like, a different thing because it didn't work or whatever, it's like, so—

Austin: Statistically nil, right? Over ten years?

Keith: It's less than a percent. Yeah, it's like a fraction of one percent.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, @asmalldragon says, FatT is a lot like a tabletop recording. I think that's right.

[Ali, Keith, Jack laugh]

Jack: Now we're getting there.

Sylvi: That does sound accurate.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvi: Early on, it seemed like Cori was—

Speaking of—

Art: Hold on.

Austin: Oh, yes, please.

Art: Before we move on, and I just know that I just heard everyone say all that about Dre, about all the— how stressful and bad the thing that move ended up being. If we are ever offered a move like that again, [**Keith** laughs] I'm going to take it.

Ali: Wow.

Austin: Of course.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: Cause you have the soul of a gambler.

Art: You couldn't get between me and that move.

Austin: Because you love the drama of it. Or because you love the bonus of it.

Art: I also just love the— yeah, the meta-textual drama. I'm never going to roll—

Keith: Well, that's how— [laughs] that's how I feel. What I remember at the time is like, it was such an intoxicating idea— it's so fun on the paper. [**Dre:** Yeah!] It tempts you into like, not considering the negatives of it.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah. I mean, I think there was at least one point where I was like, I can take a move from another playbook. And that's another playbook, but I didn't. It's tempting, it's always tempting.

Austin: It's tempting. God, if Cori had picked up that move after Figure died from it, I would've lost it.

Ali: [cackles]

Dre: Oh, for sure.

Keith: Let's do a season where we all have that move.

Ali: Hm!

Austin: We could build that setting, that's a fun setting to build. I will say someone said earlier— was like, and you never chose not to take the benefit of it— it's not how the move is written.

Dre: Yeah, you gotta.

Austin: The move says *whenever* you roll a six, they know— you can choose to roll an extra die. It says whenever it happens, you roll the die, which is part of the way that you're kind of chained to it.

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: Also really quick, Dre, I will say, the rest of that question was like, did it change how you played Levi? And how do you feel about Levi's arc? I love Levi's arc. I'm curious if you left feeling really strong about Levi.

Dre: Me too. No, I had a really good time with Levi. I mean, I think it did give me a chance to do kind of a reset of like, because Figure was very much me trying to explore, okay, what does it mean to do all the really hard interpersonal stuff if you're in this situation? And Levi doesn't have to do any of that.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Levi is like, the difficulty is doing the task— is doing the job, [**Dre:** Yeah.] more than is like, getting along with the people in a way. I love Levi and it's— you know, at this point you have some experience coming in late to a season with a new character.

Keith: It's rough, it's tough.

Austin: But both, I was gonna say, Keith, you and Dre have both talked a lot about how hard it is.

Keith: Yeah, it fucking sucks, it's the worst.

Dre: [bursts out laughing]

Keith: It's not good at all, it's horrible.

Austin: Sylvi, you also did this during Sangfielle.

Sylvi: It's hard to find a— it's hard to hook into the party when you come in late.

[**Austin:** Yeah.] [**Dre:** Yeah.] It's doable, but it's tough.

Keith: The thing for me is like, finding— yeah I mean, Sylvi, like you said, it's finding the hook, but having the question mark over like, how long do I have? [**Dre:** Yeah.] Eclectic had no— had *one* mission that ended with Figure dying. Like I didn't even spend the whole time with one— with more than one person, you know what I mean?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Like, so it was— and we were already so long on Palisade, it was going on for a really, really long time. And I was like— and it's not a surprise considering that I was in the middle of trying to start up a new character, being like, I don't know, I think that we can sustain like six, eight more episodes of— [laughs] of Palisade—

Austin: Of Armour Astir.

Keith: Of Armour Astir, *which* we did end up taking.

Sylvi: We had *a lot* of them, yeah.

Austin: We just put on the back side, yeah, a hundred percent. I mean, the thing that was going to be tough to sustain was Armour Astir missions on Palisade—*on Palisade*. But also really quick just, Levi fit in so well, partly I think because Levi felt like Twilight

Mirage. Like we got to the Twilight Mirage and then Levi showed up, it was like, oh, this is a Twilight Mirage character. Like has the vibe, has the Twilight Mirage energy, just really— just really worked. And I was really relieved, especially some of the big mid-Questlandia stuff, the like, helping your neighbors stuff. It's so like— it's kind of like basic in some ways, but like having the Twilight Mirage character be the one who voices all that stuff was so, so, so sharp.

Keith: And Levi's really well conceived in that Levi's a character that's really convincing when walking into a room and being like, I belong here and everybody's friends with me. I want to be everybody's friend here and everything's going to go well and let's get things done and I'm ready for the job. And like, Phrygian is not exactly like that and Eclectic is also not exactly like that.

Dre: [chuckles]

Austin: Right, right, very different. Sylvi,

Sylvi: Yeah?

Matthew: Devotion arc?

[03:20:48]

Austin:

Early on, it seemed like Cori's arc would involve turning against the Cult of Devotion, but she ended up mostly ignoring them after a point, can you talk about that narrative change?

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't know. I, my— with Cori was never going to be— I don't think it was ever going to be like a big dramatic confrontation? Maybe like early on when we were doing the stuff where I was getting the visions at the, [**Austin:** Mhm.] whatever building that was called? That was a year ago, you know? Over a year ago.

Austin: At the Isle of the Broken Key. It was over a year ago.

Sylvi: But like when she was getting the visions of the like, original Devotion and stuff, there was definitely a place where that would go, but it was always more about her breaking with them than actually setting fire to the institution, I suppose.

Austin: Well, it's funny—

Janine: She found another way to be special.

Austin: Right, she did.

Sylvi: Yeah!

Janine: It's part of it— I don't mean that in a mean way!

Sylvi: But that is also, you know.

Austin: She ended up sidestepping something that would have been like— I don't know. I don't... I don't think we're going to probably come back to Devotion stuff, so I'm happy to say where I was going to bring that stuff eventually was like. You know, the story that Cori learns in the Isle of the Broken Key, in the Dim Liturgy place was like, oh, people from the Principality came and corrupted Devotion, and kind of got in between the real Devotion and, you know, who Devotion was and stuff like that. And in the end, the way that that was all going to shake out is like, you don't get to save Devotion.

[**Sylvi:** No.] The corruption happened to Devotion a long time ago— we never said that super explicitly? So I could imagine listening along being like, well, when's Cori going to go save Devotion, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] the real Devotion?

Sylvi: Sorry, we're not reforming the church here.

Austin: Well, right, because the— you know, Devotion got hit by the iceberg, Devotion hit the iceberg 500 years ago, or 300 years ago or whatever, and it has sunk already. And the thing that Cori was getting is a sort of a message out of time. If you think about Hieron, to some degree, it's the sort of similar thing with Samoths being like, “who are you really talking to in this moment?”, except filtered through Twilight Mirage, timey-wimey bullshit, where it's like, oh my god, like, this whole time, Cori has been

getting echoes of kind of cries for help from something that can't be helped anymore. And so Cori, I think, very luckily pivoted to Perennial.

Sylvi: Yeah. But, you know.

Austin: And dodged whatever disappointment would have come from sticking things out with Devotion.

Sylvi: The Sunday School to Satan Worship Pipeline is well-documented. I'm right here.

Dre: [chuckles]

Austin: Uh huh, absolutely. Though—

Keith: That's from the—

Austin: Sorry, go ahead, Keith.

Keith: Just from the player side, you know, when we're playing through the seasons, it really feels like sometimes you set, like a bunch of steam rockets to go and like some of them just kind of run out of steam, and then we're like, okay, well, this is what lets us focus on these other things that are still going. And it just— it felt to me without knowing what was going on, without knowing what Sylvi was going to choose to be interested in, it just— it felt like, okay, we're just kind of not as interested in following up on some of this Devotion stuff, and we're looking at other things. And maybe if we had all looked really hard at Devotion, it would have blasted off, but.

Austin: Totally, yeah and I think that that's the— that is the thing that like as a GM, you kind of have to let the— you can't just stick with the things you thought were going to be your big beats over the course of a campaign. Play where your characters— where your players want to play. Go to those sandboxes, play in those spaces, because that's where you're going to get the stuff that makes them excited, you know? And yeah for people in the chat are like, oh my god, I can't believe I didn't— I thought that there's going to be an old and new Devotion.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Like you know, I was explicitly— that was ambiguous on purpose while we were playing.

Sylvi: Yeah, we were fucking with you.

Austin: Like I was very much trying to, there's definitely active misleading happening there, for the big tragic twist being, oh my god, there was once a decent Devotion. It was long— it was corrupted long ago, that we have to address the present, you know, we can't address a hypothetical present we wish there was, right?

Sylvi: Just to wheel it back to Cori's stuff for a sec, [**Austin:** Please.] like and the other thing too is that a major connection between her and the cult was her father, who died pretty early all things considered. [**Austin:** A hundred percent.] And again, that changed plans.

Keith: Yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: It sure did. Speaking of things— plans changing and early intentions needing to pause or change.

Matthew: Pirates?

[03:25:24]

Jack: Clearly a lot of time and energy went into defining Connadine and his crew, and we got a lot on them. In comparison, we got relatively little on the pirates, but there was seemingly also a lot of thought put into them. Can you tell us anything else about the pirates, and maybe speak as to why they didn't come up to the same extent?

Or, you know, to extend this thought, you get all that focus on Connadine and the Adagio, you get that incredible speech—which left me breathless when you delivered that. Art, I don't know about you, but Jack did that Connadine speech early on and I was

like, I am fucking outclassed, we can't— Art, we got to go do a different show. [**Sylvi** and **Jack** laugh] I don't know how we're going to keep up with this, but then—

Art: Mm, yup. That's why I decided I wasn't doing any—

Austin: You're like, I'm not even going to try. Right.

Art: Yeah, I am indirectly doing that—

Austin: And at that point—

Keith: That was my second regret, my one in-character speech at the end of the season. [chuckles]

Jack: Oh! With the—

Austin: With Cas'alear.

Keith: Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: Cas'alear.

Keith: The thing that I didn't plan to do until the second it was happening and really had nothing.

Austin: It was fun, though. It was great, it was a blast. [**Jack** chuckles] Anyway, Jack.

Jack: Yeah. So I mean, I think going into the— we were really helped out by the structure of the Authority and the way that Briar's books and sheets sort of helped us set those things up. Not just mechanically, but I think they guided us really well into giving them just enough detail to start to make them sing, and then without expending so much effort into them that, like you say, if the players don't pick up in that space, it doesn't feel like wasted work or like misaligned work. And you know, you're working on something that has a completely different tone to what you had prepped or something like that.

So I definitely started out with— I think a lot, Austin, about how— I think it was during a Hieron post-mortem, you were asked about coming up with NPCs very quickly on the

spur of the moment. And it's just like, *how does this person stand? How does this person talk? What do they want right now? Go.* And I feel like the books guided us to getting something like that for the factions, where I was like, okay, we have art spies, we have—they're sort of like contemporary art spies or conceptual art spies, sorry—I have a bunch of weird pirates that I want to differentiate from other pirates. So I'm going to make them, you know, sort of like contemporary pirates in stolen shipping vessels. They're going to have like these weird chains that they drag ships down with. And I'll write out some members of the crew. And then we have the woman who has the Stellar Combustor. And that's sort of all we really need to know about that at this point, we'll cross that bridge if we come to it, and then we did.

And then as the season began, I deployed spies really early because I felt like that was the classic thing you do when you're playing a spy unit? Is it's like, you know, when you're playing Crusader Kings, you got to send out your schemers nice and early, especially because narratively, the joy of a spy story is seeing all the pieces start to come together. They were there all along. This person doesn't know that they're actually talking to a spy. This person is trying to double-cross a spy, you know. All that stuff was benefited by pulling the trigger on the spies really quickly.

And then the players responded with *enviable* attention and effort and violence towards my spies, that the focus then just became the spies, which is, you know, that is like neutral storytelling. I don't really feel any particular kind of way about that. I'm glad we got the Paint Shop. But to answer the question of like, you know, we learned a lot about the spies but not so much about the pirates, why is that? That's just responding to the players. And I think that if it had cut the other way, you would have been saying, we learned so much about the pirates, and, you know, we didn't actually get to hear too much about the spies. I think that the stuff that I said about the pirates on camera, you know, here are their names, here's what they do. You're seeing the whole thing at that point, you know. You're seeing the front of a stage flat and going, oh, sick, [Austin chuckles] there's probably a whole building behind there. And, you know, that's the game. I don't—that's absolutely fine. But there isn't a building behind there until we start playing with pirates.

Austin: I think that's partly because we don't build stage flats or stage sets. What we build is, you know, I don't want to— eugh, I don't want to deploy the word 'algorithmic' because it's not right. We build processes and we build starter kits, you know?

Dre: [chuckles]

Jack: Yeah, exactly!

Austin: It's not that the pirates are just a collection of costumes. They're explicitly a collection of costumes and story prompts, which are dense enough to generate something for you in the future if you need them to. It's like having a fire starter kit, you know? You can make the fire. You have what you need to make the fire. And that's distinct from someone who has a hot plate that they can plug into the wall to heat something up. Like, no, you can make the fire, but you have to do it still. And I think that's why it has that sense that there's more going on here than there might look like from just what you hear on mic, you know? Yeah, hooks, It's hooks. It really is, is what people in chat are saying.

Jack: Yeah, I think the only thing I didn't say— it's hooks all the way down. Have I ever talked about No Smoking? One of the pirate ships was called No Smoking, and it was a huge, like, tanker that had been seized and written across the back of it, like they have in real tankers, to like, warn the crew not to smoke with the words No Smoking, except that was the name of the pirate ship that they had stolen.

Austin: Right. That's fantastic. I feel this way about so many of the factions this season. I was so happy to finally get the fucking Frank Ocean and Tyler the Creator faction from— [Dre chuckles] or characters from, a Twilight Mirage episode description series [Jack: Yes!] on camera, however briefly, via Violet Cove— oh not Violet Cove, Rose River. But we like, we get Rose River *twice* in the whole series, and one of the times it's Occam Olio beating their asses, and it's like, alright, well, eh, they're there. You know, I can always go back and write fic about them if that's a thing I need. But I *really* love Rose River. Likewise, we had such a fun time with Veronique and Fealty in The HOUNDS game. And then they're— they're key in certain— certain moments throughout

the season, but they're not capital— they're not major players, despite feeling they could have been. And there's just not enough time, you know? I think that that's a big part of it. And I also think I do think that the way we think of the Conflict Turn as an us versus them, or even as a players versus puppet-masters or players versus— players of two different tiers or two different scales, changes where the focus would have been, versus if we had all had player characters, which wouldn't have worked for a number of other reasons, obviously, [**Jack** chuckles] and then tried to do a big seven-person conflict turn, or eight-person conflict turn. Yoshi-P nightmare, yeah, exactly.

Jack: Right. Nightmare. Yoshi P. Leaning into the microphone.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: *Nightmare.*

Austin: So yeah, it's a really tough thing to get there where, you know, if we had had all of the players at the table for the Conflict Turn, it's an increased chance that someone might decide they're interested in the pirates, you know? So yeah.

Art: But we didn't— we didn't write out Veronique and Fealty, right?

Austin: They're still out there. Yeah.

Art: They're still out there.

Keith: Wow, still out there.

Art: So you never know.

Austin: This very day.

Sylvi: If they're cold, you're cold—

Art: I don't have any plans, I wasn't certain, but you know—

Keith: I have plans.

Austin: Ohh. *You* have plans.

Keith: Yeah, I have plans.

Art: Oh, there you go.

Austin: Damn. Okay.

Sylvi: Sneaky Keith.

Austin: So sneaky. We're done with Evil Keith and now we're on to Sneaky Keith.

Sylvi: Well, I'm just trying to assign less moral things to the behavior, so.

Keith: I thought you were just doing a branding exercise.

Sylvi: I mean, you could— do you wanna be sneaky Keith? We're four hours into this, I'm getting punchy.

Austin: I saw a puppet play at Sneaky Keith's.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Sylvi: That is like—!

Art: Cut out that extra syllable though.

Art: Like the Burger King man.

Sylvi: The problem is that Sneaky Keiths got bought by condo developers.

Annelise: Questlandia?

[03:33:13]

Austin: Hell. Let's ask the actual— this is what I think everyone has some feelings about. Annelise says,

What was the experience of playing Questlandia in Palisade? Do you feel like it suited the pitch of the season and the format of the finale?

I mean, it was the format of the finale, yeah.

Sylvi: Can I— can I say something without anybody getting mad?

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Probably.

Sylvi: I didn't really like that game?

Austin: Yeah, I think that that's a fair thing to say.

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't know, it was fine. I had— like, I enjoyed y'all [chuckles] and what we did with it. But the mechanics, I don't know. I always felt like, I don't know. It never— that—

Janine: It's really—

Sylvi: Go ahead.

Janine: Sorry. I was just going to say it's really tough to approach a game with an idea in mind of like, [**Sylvi:** Yeah...] and here's what we're doing. Especially a game like that.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: I think if we had used that game for like, [**Sylvi:** Mhm.] a Road or something?

Austin: Yeah. With less pre-built—

Janine: And could sort of come at it fresh, with— yeah, without all of the tremendous fucking weight of two entire seasons, plus also Twilight Mirage kind of, to hang on it. That's a lot to ask.

Austin: We did, statistically, we came out of it pretty clean compared to how bad it could have gone, shockingly?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: [spit takes] We're so— [laughs]

Austin: No, no, no, I mean.

Janine: Actually, I felt okay about how it wrapped up at the end. I was one of the few people who was like, oh, okay.

Sylvi: I was happy from a character perspective, but you mean big picture.

Austin: I mostly mean— I mean big picture. I mean, you know— go ahead.

Keith: Just one of the troubles is I think that everyone, I think, started to identify what the game was asking you to do to succeed at a different point with the Misfortune? It became clear, I think, too late, for a lot of people who just had a bunch of Misfortune for different reasons that like, oh, this Misfortune, I'm running out of ways to deal with this, and it's going to affect not *me*, but the whole thing, which is one of the big thing—

Janine: Keith, can I tell you, I didn't care about the Misfortune.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Keith: But that's what I'm saying—

Janine: From the start— from the start I didn't fucking care. It wasn't that I didn't know, I didn't care.

Keith: Okay. Well, that's insane, but it's still— [**Janine** and **Jack** laugh] that's crazy. That's what the game was.

Sylvi: Keith plays to win.

Janine: Uh huh. The game— the game was playing a story [Sylvi: Yeah. We're playing toys with my friends.] and seeing what happened.

Keith: The story was a collection of Misfortune.

Dre: Mm.

Janine: Yeah?

[Ali and Sylvi laugh]

Austin: You See, that's the part— so I will say all of— that's the part of the game that I think fundamentally I'm happy with. There is nothing for me that is like, we are guaranteed a good outcome this season. And in fact, part of— for me, what was so fascinating about Questlandia was, what happens when you win the war, but it might not matter, because you can't get the support you— that's the true, go read about the revolution historically, because you win the revolution, and then what happens? Do you get international support or like Haiti, do you end up needing to pay reparations despite being a group of slaves who just fought your way to freedom, right? Do you— are you able to build an international collective that supports your freedom or do you end up being tied to a bigger supposedly utopian power that undercuts your ability to self-determine? All of that to me was juice.

The stuff that wasn't for Questlandia was that it's so zoomed out, that we didn't get character interaction the way I wanted.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: We didn't get *people* talking to one another and we didn't get climactic dice rolls that feel appropriate for the end of a high intensity, high action series. I'm super happy with the group scatters at the end. What I'm not happy with is that that comes at the end of scenes where they didn't get to talk. Which maybe we could replay it and find that? But it really felt hard to find those character-driven scenes for us.

Jack: Yeah. And to your point earlier, Austin, about people— you know, you said something earlier like, well, of course, we could, you know, throw out the thing and re-record it, but that's really hard to do and you stopped at that point. But I think it's worth saying when you say something like, well, we could probably have— we could have figured it out. The thing that we all on the call know and aren't saying is that, like, those recordings, **[Austin: Oh my god.]** full-cast recordings are really rewarding, but they take *so long* and they just chew up the cast and spit them out, in terms of like, an intensity of thinking, an intensity of listening really hard **[Sylvi: Yeah.]** to people that you care deeply about, and then coming back and having to do it again the next day, and then it goes into post-production.

Austin: Wait a second, because Jack, we have a hard out. I'm not— this is not me putting any, I'm not throwing Art, I'm not throwing you to the bus here, I want to be clear. But we all were like, we need to wrap this the fuck up so Art can go have a baby.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: We *need* to record at a pace that we aren't thrilled with, because we're all exhausted. I had *just* lost my job. Like literally, I got fired— I didn't get fired, but we all got laid off. No, still no— any sort of severance, by the way, shout outs to the Strains.

Jack: Severance.

Austin: *Just* happened, it *just* happened. There was no time to be like, well, I guess we can all take a month off while we figure out what to do next. Like we went from, **[Jack: Yep.]** oh my god, this faction game doesn't work anymore, what the fuck do we do? To like, alright, we have to wrap up enough of the season to let Art go have paternity leave. **[Sylvi: Yeah.]** So Jack, that's all to say even before we get to post-production, it was— that's where we were.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. And we're so tired because we're making the thing. And then we put it into the production team and now the production team is really tired as well. And so

we say, alright, so we can do pickups, but pickups that we want to— we want to prioritize pickups that don't contort the cast into really weird shapes, because scheduling that is going to be really hard. And everyone is so tired that picking up their characters again is exhausting and not necessarily something they want to do.

So by the time you get to that point, the theoretically very plausible thing of like, well, we could have tried it again. We could have thrown it out and tried it again with a— with an increased focus on these internal character conversations, bringing the scope in. You're talking about *hundreds and hundreds* of hours of work. That is like, conceivably possible, but our relationship to our own work, and our relationships with each other is more important to us than making those decisions.

Austin: And I really— like not to over sell this, because I know that this can sound like a pity party. We started recording the post-m— sorry, we started recording Questlandia on April 15th. April 12th, termination notice. Three days after I lost my job, we started doing this. It's hard to facilitate a game like this on the best of days. And I was doing it where I was the most stressed and depressed as I've been in years and years and years. Which I don't say as like, an excuse, but I do say because that loss of capacity is deeply real? And when we play these big games, I often don't play a character so that I can do as good of a job as I can to highlight— find the way to weave together where other people want to go. And I just didn't do a great job at it this time. And I'm not, again, this is not me being like, I want pats on the back for this. And if you've listened to me talk about my work for a long time, I'm one hundred percent someone who is like, it's about batting averages, and I have a pretty good batting average all set. I'm really proud of the work we do here.

But sometimes you miss. And I think that there are specific moments in the recording throughout the early parts of the Questlandia game where I *just* missed a cue, or I *just* misheard what a player was looking for and I didn't help set up a scene right. Or I over-GM'd or I under-GM'd. And finding that in the mix of the hard deadlines that we were up against was just like, we're going to see where it goes. And then the blessing of what we do is, we are not sponsored by Cheez-Its. [**Ali** chuckles, **Sylvi** laughs]

Sylvi: Suck it, Cheez-Its!

Austin: And so we can try to fix it not in post, but by continuing to record, by going back to it and saying, is this right? Do we feel right about this? Can we fix this with a different— can we fix this with a Twilight Mirage-style outro that's focused on the characters? Can we make this feel warmer with different types of intros? Can we record some one-on-one scenes between characters? How do we get there? And I think thankfully, you know, I— there was literally a day I woke up and I went to Ali and Jack and I was like, I think we have to do another story. **[Ali laughs]** And I need you to both know I have it. I have what the concept is. I think it's going to work and be fun. It's a throwback to our Armour Astir Road to Partizan game, which means the concept is kind of hooky and catchy in a fun way. And I have the encounter in my mind in a way that I think is, like I have it as a GM in a way I didn't during Questlandia.

[soundboard: Delicious.]

And so I definitely think that like, all of the concepts that— all of the problems that I think we all had with Questlandia that are structural and formal are 100% accurate. I'm not saying that like it was the right choice game, but it was all because I fucked up or something like that. But I think that there's like, a real sense of all of the contexts of needing to make what we were trying to make. *Plus* it was a difficult fit for what we were doing, made us have to like push really hard to get what I think is some really good stuff in there? But the pound for pound like, I— you know, what's the saying, the, I don't know that the blank was worth the blank?

Keith: Juice is worth the squeeze.

Dre: The juice is worth the squeeze.

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin: I don't know that the juice was worth the squeeze. There was juice! And the juice is pretty tasty. I think Wakeful fucking rules. Like, one of my all time favorite things I didn't know we were going to be making and then we ended up making there. I think all

of Levi's stuff is fantastic. I think there are some really great one-on-one scenes between characters by the end of it, but it *really* took a squeeze.

Keith: It's I think maybe the first time in the history of Friends at the Table where I was like, can we hurry this up?

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Damn.

Keith: [laughs] We can maybe not take so long on this shit?

Ali: Yeah, I mean now that we're like ten years into this, I do feel like it is now going to be like a defining moment of my career of like, getting three fourths into Questlandia and not asking the question of like, does anybody even like this? Should I not— should we not release this? Like I feel like that's a conversation that we should have had more then, and instead then it was just like, well, we have to. Well, we have to.

Austin: Well, here it is.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It's hard— it's hard to know until you get into the meat of it.

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Keith: That it's not good.

Austin: Totally.

Ali: And, yeah. I mean, you know not that I— not that we're ever going to have the pile of circumstances that we had [laughs] in April.

Sylvi: I hope not.

Dre: I hope not.

Ali: But like you know, if it did happen again, I would want us to take the month off. And I feel like I'm glad that we did that [**Austin:** For sure.] because now I have the experience like, in the position that I am to say, hey, everybody, nobody likes this. [chuckles] Like, let's just— we're going to release it, it's going to be weird. Let's just all not do it, and yeah.

Austin: Totally.

Art: Well, we recorded the last bit of Questlandia one week before I had to go.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Right. Totally. In retrospect, we should have just paused the season, right? And been like, hey, we're trying to figure out what to do next. We tried something. It didn't work to the way that we wanted it to— though it was hard to know right? Because I think— it was so funny we wrapped that up and I think it was a week later, I was like, hey, is there anybody happy with what we just did? I think we were all so exhausted that everyone was just like, happy enough, man, you know?

[**Ali** and **Dre** laughs]

Austin: But we knew right away, like—and I'm happy to talk openly about this, I think it's cathartic to talk about it—Jack, I messaged you immediately.

Jack: Yeah, straight away.

Austin: I don't think I said it exactly in these words, but I was like, I don't feel like we should go get mozzarella sticks, and when we finish a season, I'm supposed to feel like we should go get mozzarella sticks. [**Jack** and **Dre** chuckle] That's what it's *supposed* to feel like. And it hit me actually because Janine, I talked to you about it and you were like, this kind of feels like the end of every season. And I was like, *oh fuck, this is what the end of the season feels like for other people?*

[**Ali** and **Dre** laugh]

Janine: Well I— [laughs] I mean, kind of— A, kind of yes, but B, look at it from my perspective where it's like, you often have at the end of something, and also leading into the end of something, [**Austin:** Oh. Yes.] some *real* emotional swings. And so from my perspective, the thing that I am doing is like, I just need Austin to— I need to help stabilize him through this. Then once we have a little bit of distance, we'll have clarity on how we actually feel about this? But I don't want to rock the boat here. I'll be honest if I feel really bad about something, but like, mostly the goal is, okay, Austin's freaking out and we just need to kind of get through this part.

Austin: Normally, that happens before a finale, where I'm like, we're not going to find— I can't find the thing— or before a season.

Janine: Both, often. I mean, the lead-up is always worse and longer.

Austin: The lead-up is so bad. Normally, when we get through the final recording for a thing, my whole body relaxes. It feels like closing thirty tabs at once, [**Ali** chuckles] and Ali and I go get greasy food somewhere to celebrate. [**Janine** chuckles]

Keith: That's so funny. I have the exact opposite of the, like, I feel nothing until the second it's over, and then I'm like, *ahhh, it's over!*

Ali: [squeals]

Janine: [chuckles]

Austin: Is that good, or is that a bad, what's the—?

Keith: Uhhh— it's neutral! It's just energy. It's just a lot of energy.

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Dre: It's just vibes, Austin!

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I guess— I guess there was a difference this time in terms of like—you know, it's hard to read remotely and stuff obviously—but normally, the post-season, I don't know the word I even want, energy, it's, it is more of an energy. It's more of an anxiety.

Austin: That makes sense.

Janine: It's more of a like, there's like a buzz. It's like, there is a general sense of relief, but then there's this thing of like, I hope we did this right. [**Austin:** Oh, totally.] I hope this is perceived. I hope people like this. I hope the edit shakes out like all of that stuff, but this time it did feel more like more like... more.

Austin: Oh, it was—

Janine: It was more.

Keith: It was also so protracted despite recording. I think once we even recorded—we recorded three days in a row one day?

Ali: I think so, yeah.

Austin: Almost certainly.

Dre: That sounds right.

Keith: And despite—

Austin: I mean, what was our final— what was our final count of recordings for the Questlandia game again?

Ali: I really don't wanna know.

Keith: 15?

Sylvi: We got up to "i" in the alphabet.

Ali: [snorts, laughs]

Austin: I've never seen— I've never seen the letter we got to in a recording ever before.

Art: Yeah, it was “i”.

Keith: But we— despite recording a *massive* volume, but— I'm sorry, despite recording multiple days in a row, multiple times, it still took like a couple of months to get through, or like a month? I don't— time is bizarre.

Austin: It was May, or June, and it was— yeah.

Keith: It also took a long time to start and then finish. And so it had this added weirdness of like, needing to be editing and releasing parts of the finale while we still had like, three more sessions to record for it?

Ali: Mhm. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: And then as Jack was saying...

Janine: Sorry, I have my planner.

Austin: Oh please, go ahead.

Janine: I was just gonna say, I have my planner here and can specifically look at like, okay, I think it was... April 15th or something, I have the first mention of Questlandia that I can find.

Austin: That's right. That is the first day. That's day one.

Janine: That might be a bit wrong but that's only— mhm. Yep, Questlandia, 7 p.m. And then Sunday, the 21st, Questlandia, 2 p.m. And then, Tuesday, we got into a good rhythm of doing Questlandia on Tuesdays for a little bit [**Austin:** Uh huh.] on the 23rd, etc. And then you go forward here, and you get the week of May—not 13th, it was after that.

Austin: May 21st is what I have.

Janine: Yeah. May 21st. It was also the 20th. We did the 20th, the 21st— but also we had done the 19th. Yeah.

Austin: God. And then the 19th— this is the night— 14th, 19th, 20th, 21st.

Janine: Yeah. Palisade 4:30, Palisade 7:30, Palisade 7:30.

Austin: And that was it.

Janine: And that was when we— yeah.

Austin: We did not have another game.

Keith: This is when I think I invented a way to do moves fast?

Ali: [laughs] Yeah.

Austin: Right, I remember this.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: You did. You totally did.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: Which is huge for us.

Janine: But like, we can talk about that being a really intense run, but also at that point, we'd already been doing it for like two months, a month and a half?

Keith: That was crazy [chuckles].

Austin: A month and a half, yeah. And then I have Palisade 18i epilogues, because then we still had— as Ali and Jack— as Jack was saying a second ago, [**Janine:** Right...] we still had the post-production on those episodes to do, regardless of whether or not there was going to be another you know, follow-up recording of Palisade 19 or 20,

which of course there were, eventually. We had to at least figure out like, well, what's the sound like? Jack, what scenes need music?

Jack: And Ali is in the middle of this extraordinary piece of needlework of like, what is canon? What has happened? What can we cut without pulling out, like— because we would be saying things like, okay, so should we maneuver this? And Ali would say, alright, fine, but I don't really want to touch these four things so that they do that. It's like— I feel like I'm going to just come apart talking about it. It was nightmarish.

Ali: Yeah. And I do think what Keith mentioned before about like, us releasing it before we finish is such an important thing? I mean, that's another reason we had those breaks in Palisade, because like, it is very hard to release the start of an arc without knowing the end of it. Like I don't want to decide on a title of a thing? I don't want to think about what the last time ons are going to be. I don't know— right, like.

Austin: Do we have to do an fucking intro for a thing that doesn't have an ending yet?

Ali: Right. We need to know what the mission was about, and what characters came forward and what story beats were important before you can create those framing around it that people end up seeing? And like for Questlandia to not have that, for us not to like, come out of the gate and be like, we know what the structure of this thing is and we know that we— how we want to like, present it with this, with the forward thinking of knowing what the exact last shot is going to be, is very, very difficult from a production side? Just because like I, you know, the standard that I hold the show to is like, the audience shouldn't see it until we know those things.

Austin: Yep, yep. It can be— it can feel like at the same time, the other— the other half of the voice is like, the audience is waiting, the audience is waiting, [**Ali** chuckles] the audience wants to hear where we're going. [**Janine** chuckles] And that's tough.

Jack: And we're— the kitchen is burning! We don't— the food is going to come out at some point. I just, I just— I stopped reading what people were saying about the show at all, I was just like—

Austin: I mean that was a thing— someone wrote in and was like— one of the questions that came in was like, do you find that you change how the show works based on public response? And it's like, I don't know where public response is anymore!

Keith: Yeah, I have no idea.

Austin: Because I think it's mostly in the Discord, I'm guessing— I'm not in the Discord anymore. I see stuff, I saw stuff on Cohost—RIP to Cohost, shout outs to Cohost—if stuff is tagged. I see stuff on Tumblr, if stuff is tagged. And then every once in a while, I get lunch with a friend who is still in the Discord or something, [**Ali** chuckles] and they'll be like, oh wow, yeah, people were you know, really polarized about XYZ. And that's basically the only time I get to see what public response is, because otherwise things don't really bubble up in the way that they used to. You know?

Keith: Mhm. Yeah, I feel the same way.

Austin: But.

Jack: Does that answer your question, Annalise?

[**Ali** and **Dre** laugh]

Keith: Yeah, are you happy with that?

Austin: No, I will say something, I'm gonna turn the page and read one that I have the opposite answer to, which is funny. Anonymous says,

Anonymous: Road return?

[03:54:07]

The long Road and the faction game this season were incredible. Do you see them returning in future seasons? What would you change? Will Serious Reading return?

I don't know if Serious Reading will return. I could have done the Road to Palisade forever.

Ali: [spits, laughs]

Keith: Forever, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, the Road to Palisade was so much fun.

Janine: [chuckles]

Keith: I sort of feel that way about—

Art: You're lucky we ever got to Palisade.

Keith: There's a trope in the long history of playing tabletop games of like, the forever game, like the person who's like, I've just been playing this D&D campaign with my friends for 20 years.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Like, I don't think that I ever really want that, but there's a sense that the Partizan-Palisade thing is like, I could just record one of these every week. This doesn't have to shut off for me?

Austin: [chuckles] Yes.

Keith: That's sort of why it was tough at the very beginning of the Questlandia, where there was like, sort of mechanical and narrative reasons why the faction side decided they wanted to end the, like— not do the fact, like the faction game, we can't do it anymore. And then we get into Questlandia and I'm like, god, I would have rather contrived some reason why we could have just done that instead of doing this.

Austin: Well, this is the thing that's so fucking wild is like, and again, Dre, this is not—

Keith: Cause then, the Questlandia did contrive that in Questlandia, it brought the people that couldn't— weren't there anymore, it brought them back.

Austin: Right, sure. Right.

Keith: Sorry, go ahead.

Austin: I was gonna say, this is the thing that's so fucked up, is like, when the sixes get rolled, what happens is—and this again, I'm not dragging Dre, because I also like that move, [Dre chuckles] I wanna be one thousand percent clear—but like, we took the most interesting thing that could happen when the sixes go off, which is one of my all-time favorite moments is Perennial being hopeless, and then eventually setting off the Twilight Mirage bombs and pulling us into the thing. And like, this is— this is a point to Ali, what you were just saying about like, it's hard to release something until you know where it's going? We did not understand where we put ourselves when we blew up the Twilight Mirage bombs from the sixes going off until we sat down to do the Faction Turn, at which point the episode was already out, you know? [Ali: Right.] So it's not like we could like take back the Mirage bombs going off, you know? And we liked the Mirage bombs going off. [Ali laughs] We just didn't know what to do from that point.

Keith: I mean, it's one of the best things that happened in the whole season was drawing a straight line back to the Orbital game. It was perfect. It was great.

Austin: I think so, too. Yeah, a hundred percent— I would play Orbital forever also. [chuckles]

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I loved those characters. But every one of the Road games, I think, had so much joy. I— Dre, one thing that came up, I don't think we have this question, but I do want to just ask, how do you like running Lancer for us?

Dre: Oh, man. Uh, I did— I enjoyed it. It also just gave me like, a very different perspective on what it feels like to do this show.

Austin: You were playing a type of game that we don't often play for what it's worth.

Dre: That too, yeah. But yeah, no, I enjoyed it. It was really fun. I'm glad that I did it and I'm— I'm glad that I don't do it for a whole season every season. [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: But yeah, you know, I— I have a pretty— I have a loose idea of what the next season is game wise at this point, the next Divine Cycle season. But truly, you know, there's a world, there's a part of me that's like, let's just do a bunch of mini games forever for a whole season. I mean, we do that. It's called Bluff City. It's called Bluff City, we did it for two seasons.

Keith: It's Bluff City and it is as good as it sounds.

Austin: And it is as good as it sounds. Go listen to Bluff City, you know. Loved it so much. I'm going to do a silly one— do you have more raffles? How was your raffle situation, Ali?

Ali: We have two more raffles left. I could— I would love to do a raffle right now while we have this break.

Austin: Let's do a raffle. Then I'll go to a silly one. I'll double check that we're not missing any other super important questions because I think we're running late, as always.

Ali: Yeah, we sure are.

Sylvi: Us?

Keith: Post-mortems are long.

Ali: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, they are.

Austin: They sure are.

Art: Well, we're going to midnight, right? Like we're doing a kids' New Year's?

Austin: The— where'd it go? Come on.

Dre: Come on!

Austin: Every time I try to recapture this footage, it doesn't work. What's the next thing, Ali?

Giveaway #3

[03:58:05]

Ali: So the next prize that we are going to be auctioning off is indeed the Millennium Break pink hat.

Austin: Oh, it's the pink hat.

Janine: Not an auction. We're not auctioning— [laughs]

Ali: I'm sorry.

Sylvi: Giving away.

Austin: It's a giveaway.

Dre: Giveaway giveaway giveaway.

Ali: I love this thing.

Sylvi: [laughs] It all turned into robots.

Keith: Five, five, ten? Do I hear ten?

Ali: I love this thing. I initially ordered it because it was like very early stages, Fourthwall, I wanted to check the color of this hat and the quality of their embroidery, but this specific design never hit the thing. I would, you know, there's going to be a more fantastic pink hat that releases on our shop one day. But this is— I love it so much. I, it

is sat on my hat rack for a while, because I thought I was going to keep it, and then we were giving this giveaway, and I knew that it had to— it had to move on.

Keith: What's— Ali, can you do your catchphrase? I was missing the catchphrase.

Ali: *Ba dum ba ba!* [wheezes]

Sylvi and Keith: [cheering] Yeaahh!!!

Austin: Yeah!

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Say it.

Ali: Here we go.

Austin: I need to go over there. I need to go over— I need to show the roll.

Ali: 518, 518, pulling the bingo thing out of the thing.

Sylvi: 518, 518!

Art: Wow, two in the 500s.

Ali: Scrolling back up, scrolling back up, scrolling back up. 518 is Rebecca R., whose favorite character is Thisbe! We're getting another season character match.

Sylvi: Let's go!

Janine: Yay! We have an echo, by the way. Yay.

[applause sounds]

Austin: Oh, there's an echo. I'll fix it, I'll fix it. There we go.

Art: Wait, someone has to say something mean there.

Ali: No, we all like—

Dre: Well, that's what you're doing tonight, Art.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Sylvi: I bet you're real happy about the butt's bigger, huh.

Ali: [laughs]

Dre: Got 'em!

Art: [laughs]

Sylvi: I don't know.

Dre: No, it's good.

Sylvi: Okay. I tried.

Austin: You tried. Congrats! Alright.

Ali: I'm jealous.

Austin: Let's do a silly one. Alright. Which of these? Let's see.

Janine: Which character do you think should have a bigger butt?

Austin: That's right.

Sylvi: Samoths.

Austin: From Twelve,

Twelve: Table where?

[04:00:18]

Hi, everyone. Important question about the cover art for this season:

Where's the table?

Keith: It's on the ship.

Ali: I'm going to answer this because this is— [chuckles] I feel like I— I wouldn't— I just want to fundamentally defend ourselves. We've been doing this for 10 years. We owe *so much* to Craig for establishing an aesthetic for our podcast. [**Austin:** So true.] You know, Craig was like a friend of Nick's. We were so lucky to just chance upon this person who did very fantastic work for us, who were like, just strangers, who did not know that this is going to be this thing.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh,

Ali: Craig's professional life changed over 10 years, which I think we can all say here. We are so, so, so thankful for Craig for being a part of this. But Palisade was the first season that we had to you know, present without his art. And like, you know, a separation from the table is a separation from Craig.

Austin: Mmm.

Ali: Like, the thought of the logo treatment is Craig's alone, [**Janine:** Yeah.] but like a logo is a logo, and you know, we wanted to keep that. But to be like, hey, Erica, can you also draw a table and just keep the vibe of this other artist, was like not appropriate at all? We had to move forward. We're probably not going to have more seasons of tables on our cover in the future.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: There's a fucking 100,000 tables in this picture. [**Ali** laughs] You just can't see them.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: [chuckles]

Janine: Every frame a table.

Austin: Every frame a table.

Sylvi: Well, if you zoom in really close, what is a pixel? It's a square. Look at a table from top down, sometimes they're squares, so.

Dre: Oh shit.

Sylvi: It's all tables.

Keith: It's all tables.

Sylvi: Woah.

Page: Palisade AMV?

[04:02:15]

Austin: Let's go back to— did we do this one? No— from Page,

Palisade as a season felt like it had a lot of high-octane, anime-inspired dramatic sequences with their physical violence or verbal confrontations. There have been some amazing community AMVs and edits, but I was wondering what scene you would choose to make an AMV if you could wave a wand? What song would you put behind it? Thanks!

(Inspired by Simon's great question, the Palisade post-mortem— Partizan— at about two hours, nineteen minutes.)

Jack: Palisade...

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin: Thank you.

Ali: I have such a bad answer for this. And I'm going to say it because I know that it's bad. I was going to do an AMV of the Stellar Combustor arc with Phrygian and Brnine to t.A.T.u's "They're Not Gonna Get Us"?

Sylvi: *Wooooow!*

Ali: And people would watch it and be like, is this shipping video? And it's not. [**Janine** laughs] But it's just— [laughs] just like the wrong song choice from somebody with a very narrow musical sense.

Austin: But it has that energy. Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Sure.

Janine: Wow.

Austin: Right, sure.

Keith: Brnine?

Ali: Huh?

Austin: From Brnine.

Ali: [laughs] Well, from me— from me watching the show, [**Keith** chuckles] and— yeah. Yes. Yes.

Austin: That's great.

Keith: I don't know that song, I don't know what t.A.T.u is.

Ali: Oh, don't worry about it.

Dre: Wow.

Austin: That seems impossible.

Janine: Really? Oh my god.

Austin: That seems impossible.

Dre: Wow!

Art: Wow.

Keith: Do I—? Is this Maybe That I Do? Is that what it—?

Ali: No, it was a big 90s— we'll talk about it later. [**Keith:** Okay.] [**Dre:** Yeah.] I think my follow up one is probably a Cori AMV to “ANTIFRAGILE” by a K-pop group whose name I forget.

Janine: [chuckles]

Keith: That one I know.

Ali: [giggles]

Austin: Um—

Janine: Um—

Austin: Go ahead.

Janine: I think mine would be— this is like heavily affected by the most recent AMV I saw, which was the Hunter x Hunter AMV—

[**Sylvi** and **Keith** laugh]

Austin: Mm!

Janine: [chuckles] So I think it would just be— I think it would just be a montage of times that Thisbe has thrown fists post-Integrity, [**Austin:** Mmm.] set to “Touched” by VAST?

Sylvi and **Dre:** Oh...

Keith: That one's made up. [**Ali** laughs] “Touched by VAST”, that's not anything, that's like, a makeup line.

[**Janine**, **Austin**, **Keith**, **Ali** laugh]

Dre: Wow.

Austin: Damn.

Keith: I got myself a bit.

Jack: I would do the Stellar Combustor arc, but only the bit where they're inside the awful tiny ship, kind of getting burned up by the heat of the sun, to Godspeed You! Black Emperor's, seven-minute "Undoing a Luciferian Towers".

Sylvi: Wow.

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: Love it. This is great. I would—

Sylvi: I would— Cori fancam set to "Be Nice to Me" by Bladee, or "Hotel Breakfast" by Bladee, but it's a Bladee song, regardless.

Austin: It's a Bladee song *for sure*.

Dre: Nice.

Sylvi: Yeah. Pop up like a toast.

Dre: Highlight reels of Phrygian sniping people, set to "96 [Quite] Bitter Beings" by CKY.

Sylvi: *Get it!*

Austin: Good, yeah. Okay, yeah, good.

Keith: [laughs] Wow. That's it for Sylvi.

Sylvi: Sorry, I got activated.

Austin: I heard.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: [chuckles]

Austin: I want a Brnine/Gucci/Jeset, nightmare relationship video AMV [**Dre** laughs] to Dijon's "Many Times". [**Ali:** Yeah.] I know many people might not know this song, but I'm going to read the hook:

But there you go again

Putting on your own rodeo again

There you push me out, just to flash that smile on lasso me in.

Well, I've been here a thousand times.

I don't want to go again.

I've been here a thousand times.

One thousand and one won't be so bad.

That's them! That's them to me.

Ali: Yeah, uh huh.

Sylvi: Wow.

Janine: Damn.

Austin: I need it. I need it.

Jack: And then Mk.gee plays an extraordinary guitar lick over the top of it.

Austin: Yes, an incredible guitar— and you're like, are those two dating? I don't—I can't—the vibes are incredible.

Keith: I'm doing a scene of Eclectic walking in the streets of City City, investigating people set to "Sign in Stranger" by Steely Dan.

Austin: Ohh... wonderful.

Sylvi: I was going to say Griesel Sunset "Deacon Blues".

[**Austin, Keith, Jack** laugh]

Keith: Greasel Sunset is “Deacon Blues” for sure.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: God...

Janine: I have another one. Sorry, you go ahead you go ahead.

Art: No, I just have the Lucille Bluth answer— [**Ali** and **Jack** chuckle] I don't understand the question, and I won't respond to it.

Janine: Well, that's good because I have one for Clem.

Austin: Ohhh, good.

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Janine: I think one for Clem post-Perennial business? [**Austin:** Mhm.] Like post-post-Perennial, I guess, not— you know, when that falls apart [**Austin:** Yeah.] and she is all like, hey, what if I get really into these goop monsters? It would be “Giving In” by Adema?

Austin: Mmm, mhm.

Janine: These are all 20-year-old songs for you to look up. [**Austin:** Is that a goop song?] You got homework.

Austin: They might be older now.

Janine: These are my big AMV songs from when I was in high school.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I truly— I watched— there was an AMV of Final Fantasy VIII, a game I never played, that I watched every morning before school, for at least a week, set to Adema “Giving In”, [**Ali** chuckles] and I thought it was a great song at the time.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: How did you not play Final Fantasy VIII?

Janine: We were a Sega house for a bit, [**Dre:** Hell yeah.] and then we had a PlayStation, but also I have always had attention problems in such a way [**Sylvi** chuckles] where the only JRPG that I have finished front to back is Grandia II. So.

Art: I didn't finished Final Fantasy VIII, but I started.

Janine: I started IX and got like an hour in and then I forgot it existed, so.

Austin: Well. A good time to revisit some JRPGs, I think, personally.

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Ali: While we have the floor to talk about songs, [chuckles] My Gucci/Brnine shipping songs are "Sunday, Pt. I" and "Sunday, Pt. II" by Cibo Matto.

Austin: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah. On my Brnine playlist, after we did the Stellar Combustor Arc, I immediately added "Blue Train", "Sunday, Pt. I", "Sunday, Pt. II", [**Austin:** Uh huh.] and "Mortming"?

Keith: What are—? I don't know what anything anyone has said. [**Ali** laughs] What is going on?

Janine: What's Mortming?

Keith: Mortming?

Janine: I don't know Mortming.

Keith: What about the Sunday one, what was that?

Sylvi: Keith—

Keith: What is going—?

Ali: They are songs by Ciba Matto, I think that you should—

Keith: “*Chibamoto*”? That's a video game with a little robot for the Game Cube!
(Chibi-Robo!)

Sylvi: No—!

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: Okay, wait a second. Keith, there's *no* way.

Ali: I'm sorry to say—

Austin: There's no— Keith, this is—

Keith: I—

Janine: Cibo Matto— Cibo Matto had songs [**Austin:** Yeah, Cibo Matto—] [**Sylvi:** Cibo Matto is great.] on like, Buffy the Vampire Slayer season one soundtrack. They've been around.

Austin: There's no way.

Janine: Sugar Water, come on.

Keith: I— the— it is so rare that people are talking about music and I have no idea what they're talking about. And usually, it's because they're talking about like—

Ali: Listen to Stereo Type A after this. I'll send you a YouTube video. [laughs]

Austin: I think I need an Exeter Leap fancam set to 21 Savage's “Bank Account”? I think that's an important one for me.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Cibo Matto sounds like a drink that's like tomato juice and beer mixed together.

Dre: Eugh.

Janine: Or cigarettes. It's tomato juice and cigarettes.

Ali: They wrote a song about food.

Austin: It's Italian for food, right? It's Italian for something, for food something.

Sylvi: Yeah, “Cibo” means food [chuckles] and “Matto” means... something.

Austin: Fuck it— fuck off. Let me look this up— I don't remember, it's been a long time since I've thought about Cibo Matto.

Ali: It's Italian for crazy food.

Austin: Crazy food!

Keith: Crazy food.

Sylvi: Okay.

Janine: Oh.

Keith: They should call it Crazy Food, that's better.

Janine: That's a lot less elegant.

Sylvi: So I was closer than I thought. [laughs]

Austin: You were closer than you thought!

Sylvi: Also, once again reiterating this because I think it came up during the main season, but Cori would make— just remake that one Tom Wambsgams AMV [**Austin:** Oh, yeah.] [**Dre** chuckles] at— about— set to “Gee” by Girls' Generation, but with Captain Brnine.

Ali: I appreciate that.

Sylvi: It's really important to me that I mention that one more time.

Art: @chikinparm in the chat says, “cibbo matto was my favorite star wars character” and it does have a very strong Glup Shitto energy.

Austin: It does have a Glup Shitto energy, you're not wrong!

Keith: It totally does. It totally does.

Sylvi: Unless it stands for shitty food. [**Austin:** That's right.] Or sorry, food shitty.
[laughs]

Dre: Huh!

Austin: Food shitty.

Keith: Food shitty.

Art: Food shitty.

Gav: Midnight diner order?

[04:11:05]

Austin: Food.

What would your character of your choice order at a diner half past midnight?

Sylvi: Pancakes. Doesn't matter what the time is, she is getting three pancakes.

Austin: Pancakes— this is from Gav, by the way. Shout outs to Gav.

Sylvi: If they have chocolate chip pancakes, those are the ones she's ordering.

Dre: Aw.

Ali: Black coffee and disco fries.

Sylvi: Now, [**Janine:** Eugh.] what's a disco fry?

Ali: It's American poutine.

Austin: Well it's not the morning— yeah, American poutine.

Sylvi: Oh okay, okay. Say enough.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: It's not morning, it's half past midnight.

Ali: I know.

Janine: Oh. *Oh*.

Sylvi: Yeah, I said breakfast— I said pancakes.

Austin: Janine said— yeah, Janine said, morning.

Janine: I got hung up on breakfast, on breakfast time.

Keith: Leap is ordering a tall stack of pancakes, and Phrygian is the griddle.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Janine: Eugh.

Dre: Hell yeah, dude.

Sylvi: Oh, the Griddler is here.

[**Keith** and **Dre** laugh]

Art: [laughs] I think Clem orders like, the London broil. [**Austin:** The steak, yeah, a hundred percent.] You know how every diner has a steak entree you would never order?

Jack: [chuckles]

Austin: Oh, this is so funny to me.

Keith: Every once in a while, that steak is really good.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: I was just thinking, it's been forever since I've had a London broil.

Art: Go with god. I'm not going to—

Austin: I'd go get one right now.

Janine: They can be fine.

Austin: See, this is the energy that I normally have at the end of a season. [**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.] I'm like, let's go get a fucking diner steak!

Sylvi: Hey, maybe after this, though!

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You know what I'm saying? If we all lived in the same city. I would go out to the diner *right now*, [**Sylvi:** Aw!] even though it's 11 p.m. I mean, actually, it would be great.

Sylvi: It'd be perfect.

Ali: So I'll see you in 40 minutes.

Austin: I mean, dead ass, like! [laughs] I'll find one halfway between us. Let's do it.

Art: I think we still have some work to do.

Ali: Have a good night, everybody, take it home. [chuckles]

Austin: Have a good night, everybody. We do have more, but— uh huh?

Janine: I was going to say, Thisbe doesn't eat, [**Austin:** Sure, sure, sure.] which I feel like locks me out of this in a way. *But*, if Thisbe was like, tonight I'm going to eat

something at a diner, I think—and this isn't fully like a diner food, so it's kind of fucked up—but I think if she could get it, edamame. If she couldn't, tater tots.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Ali: Aw, you can have some of my disco fries!

Austin: These are both Thisbe-coded foods for me.

Janine: No. They'd have to be dry tater— dry tots. Dry tots, nothing on them.

Art: A tater tot is not a disco fry.

Austin: Salt? Salted tots?

Sylvi: No, I love this.

Austin: You don't want salt? Salt's like a rock.

Janine: It's not about taste, she's not doing it for taste!

Ali: Oh yeah, yeah yeah.

Keith: Yeah, this is caloric density.

Austin: But you can feel the salt on it.

Sylvi: She's so relatable.

Austin: And it's like a different texture.

Janine: Wow. What?

Ali: No, it's not quite so crunch based, let's not question this.

Keith: I love that— I love—

Janine: Wait, are you talking about edamame or tots?

Austin: Tots. Edamame— both of them!

Ali: Edamame too, honestly. Salty meal.

Austin: Salt— salt, yeah, you put some salt on the edamame, it's different. I don't just mean taste. I mean—

Keith: That's what salt is.

Austin: The texture experience is different.

Janine: I mean— sure, I don't know. Maybe this is a thing someone else would have to do for her, I don't think she would be like, yes, put salt on my tots that I'm eating for the first time in my life.

Austin: Maybe there'd be some with and some without, so you could see how it feels.

Ali: [giggles]

Janine: How would that work? What?

Art: Is it gonna give her that—is it going to give Thisbe that weird—

Austin: What do you mean how would that feel? Or how would that work? You just put salt on part— on some of them, and not all of them.

Janine: I— mmm.

Austin: The left half has salt, the right half doesn't.

Sylvi: [wheezes]

Janine: No, but you can't really divide that cleanly.

Keith: Shout out to the humble tot, which has the bravery to exist in a world where fries are better one hundred percent of the time.

Austin: No. A hundred percent?

Dre: Mmmm...

Art: I'm about to start a fight with you right now.

Sylvi: Not a hundred percent of the time.

Austin: A hundred percent?

Keith: Ninety five percent. Ninety five.

Janine: You're wrong.

Austin: You're wrong.

Sylvi: Ninety seven, dude.

Janine: You're so wrong.

Keith: The tot is a bad food.

Janine: Also, a tot reheats way better.

Art: Is the salt going to ruin Thisbe's finish?

Janine: No, I imagine her finish is not— she's a farming robot, like— [chuckles]

Art: As a salt farmer? I mean—

Ali: [snorts, chuckles]

Janine: You use chemicals in farms. It's— gotta have a lot of stuff going on. Keith.

Keith: Tots are uniformly, to a one, *too soggy* to eat when you get them.

Ali: No. No.

Keith: That is why they fail.

Sylvi: I don't know if that's true.

Janine: You're getting bad tots. Get better tots.

Austin: You're talking about tates— yeah, get better tots. You— you—

Art: Yeah.

Janine: The fuck are you talking about?

Austin: Wait a second. [voice lowers] Who hurt you? Who's been misleading you?

Ali: [giggles]

Sylvi: Damn.

Keith: I've never seen a non-soggy tot!

Janine: Are you— are you blaming your school cafeteria on tot?

Sylvi: This seems like New England shit to me.

Keith: Concept— it has too much moisture left inside, it leaches out so fast. [**Ali:** No.]
It's like the cereal of potato.

Janine: What are you talking about?!

Sylvi: Yeah, this is New England shit.

Art: No, no. This is— this is like you're from another universe.

Ali: [laughs]

Janine: Do you need me to like, teach you how I cook tots at home? [**Ali:** Woah.]
Because I'll do it— like it's just frozen ones, but like, it's easy.

Austin: Wait wait wait, Keith, have you made your own tots?

Keith: I'd rather die than cook tots at home.

Austin: Oh my god. I'd rather die than cook tots.

Sylvi: Rather die!

Austin: Are you getting tots delivered? What are you doing?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: No, sometimes you have them— you order fries at a restaurant and it comes out and it's tots and you're like, [**Sylvi:** That's not—] oh great, I thought that I was having fries today and it's never been a tots.

Janine: Okay—

Austin: I'll defend you there. If someone brought me tots when I was expecting fries—

Janine: That restaurant is fucking you.

Austin: Yeah, you're getting screwed.

Sylvi: That's who hurt you.

Janine: You ordered fries.

Austin: Which is why they're bad, it's already a dishonest restaurant. You can't trust their tots.

Janine: Yeah, their tots and that's it— and that's just their backup for something else. They're not planning for tots.

Sylvi: This is the most heated we've ever done—

Keith: It's not the only time I've ever had tots, but in the— you know, in the last 15 years because I stopped ordering tots because of how bad they are. [chuckles]

Sylvi: [laughs] Yeah, double down!

Dre: Motherfucker.

Keith: I've learned to never order them. But sometimes, you order a sandwich and it says it comes with fries, and instead they give you tots. And it's like, oh great, room-in fries.

Janine: Sometimes you make food for yourself because you make it good.

Keith: Yeah, I agree.

Janine: And the other people are wrong.

Keith: I only eat salmon that I've made because I don't like how anybody makes salmon unless it's sushi. So I like salmon from home.

Janine: Maybe you should have some salmon and tots.

Keith: I'll have salmon and tots.

Janine: Maybe you need a salmon and tot lunch this week.

Sylvi: Make a salmon tott.

Keith: Although Janine is the raw potato eater.

Ali: That's a different situation.

Janine: Yeah?

Ali: I will—

Austin: Yeah, that's a different situation.

Sylvi: Why are you bringing a bowl of chips—?

Jack: I feel like I need to blow a fucking sports whistle [**Ali** and **Janine** chuckle] like in the Hunter x Hunter episodes where it just goes *poot!*

Keith: That was legal. That was a legal hit.

Jack: [chuckles]

Art: I think we need to— I think we're in like an existential—

Sylvi: I agree, I can say that tots are better than the potato wedges.

Ali: Does anybody else have any other answers for their character? [wheezes]

Jack: What are we—?

Janine: [chuckles]

Dre: Yeah. Bacon, double cheeseburger, butter, and curly fries.

Austin: Oh, that's good. For Levi?

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvi: Plate of tots to throw on the ground.

Austin: Oh my god.

Dre: These motherfuckers.

Jack: Kalar Anakalar, two hot dogs from the hot dog roll.

Sylvi: Oh, that's pretty good.

Austin: Shout outs to Kalar.

Dre: That's pretty good.

Austin: Kalar's out there, right? Kalar's out there. One day we'll get back to Kalar, maybe.

Jack: Kalar is out there in the galaxy.

Austin: In the galaxy.

Sylvi: Millie would get black coffee, and that's it.

Austin: Did everybody catch my little Milly reference in the finale?

Sylvi: Austin, of course I did.

Austin: Okay, good. In the final dossier.

Sylvi: It's good.

Jack: I'm sure I did, but I was so tired then. [chuckles]

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin: That's fair.

Sylvi: As opposed to now.

Jack: As opposed to now.

Austin: So there are other questions here. If anybody has one that they want us to go to— I mean, if you're in this thing, you're like, go to page whatever, I'll do that. But otherwise, I feel like we've hit most of the topics, you know what I mean?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: Yeah, I'm looking through them and I don't think—

Sylvi: I feel— I feel satisfied. [chuckles] I know I'm satisfied.

Ali: [chuckles]

Austin: Know— yeah, how do you know?

Jack: I think we've said the stuff that we want to say. I mean, I suppose broadly, and I've alluded to this in some Gathering Informations, but I think it's worth saying just to put it

on the record in the— in the post-mortem. I found playing the Faction Turn really isolating and difficult.

Ainsley: Faction Turn feel?

[04:18:57]

Austin: Yeah, that was one of the remaining questions was very much,

Why did you decide to do a Faction Turn, and how did that feel?

Jack: Yeah, I mean, the short answer to why did we decide to do it, was a combination of wanting to shake up the form, go back to old stuff we had done and see how we did it differently, accommodating for scheduling and additional sort of concerns, the difficulties of handling an eight-person crew on the regular. [**Austin:** Yep.] It seemed like a good idea and I think it was a good idea. And I think we did good work.

Austin: Especially because part of what we wanted to get back from COUNTER/Weight was that sense of a unified crew, who bantered with each other and felt like close friends and felt like they had a close relationship, which, you get double the amount of kind of missions by having a single group, basically. And then you would double more when you do it for two years instead of one year.

Keith: [chuckles]

Jack: Yeah. But I ended up finding it very... very difficult, very isolating. I— and I think I did good work and I think Art and Austin and I all did good work, and I love working with them in any context. But, I missed being able to play live in scenes, and I missed being able to play with my friends, you know. Of like— the kind of like— I felt isolated from the season as it was happening? It felt like it was something that was happening over there, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] that I would sort of occasionally get involved with. And, you know, there was a lot of joy built into that joy in listening to the dailies, hearing the other party's move, and then like, these great big swings of interacting with you through stuff like the

Combustor, through stuff like popping in and out, and kind of putting the cat among the pigeons.

But like, I don't, I didn't find— musically, it meant that I didn't feel like I was really locked into the sound of the thing, and it was only in retrospect that I, you know, looked back— by the time I was doing Just One Second or something, when I was doing those big tracks, I sort of started doing those big tracks being like, I'm not really feeling the music for this season. I don't think I've worked it out, even this late in the game, I'm going to push myself really hard to make something big so that I can try and— you know, sort of trial by fire, figure it out. And I think that that kind of like, broke the seal for me? And from then on, I sort of understood what I was doing musically. **[Austin: Mhm.]** But I am so excited to be playing Friends at the Table, like, you know, in person, if that makes sense again.

Dre: Yeah! Friends at the Table-ass-Friends at the Table.

Austin: Yeah, at the table.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly.

Austin: Art, did you have any other faction game feelings? Faction Turn, Conflict Turn?

Art: Um, I mean, I— I share Jack's feeling about it feeling a little isolated. We made the decision to do what we did for a lot of different reasons. I think it was the correct choice for what was going on. But like, when we made the decision, we didn't know this season was going to go on for so very long?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Yeah, but I would— I would consider— I would consider being a faction person again, in like, however more years.

Austin: I don't have any near— that's the thing, right? It's like, I don't know that we go back to it super soon. If we did it again, I would want to do it in— I would want it to be more holistic in terms of who's— who has access to it, **[Jack: Mmm, mhm.]** the way that

Armour Astir is written. Or I would want it to be something like Legacy, which is a game we wanted to play in some format for quite some time, where like Legacy— Legacy, I guess, V2. What's the— what's the subtitle for that game?

Sylvi: It's been so long.

Austin: Life— Life Among the Ruins. Life Among the Ruins.

Jack: That's a good game.

Austin: Legacy, Life Among the Ruins 2nd edition has a lot of zooming in and out between kind of faction scale and personal scale? It's a game I think is really cool, and I'd love to play at some point. We don't have any plans to do that anytime soon. But that would be a version of something where you can imagine there being faction episodes. But those faction episodes would be the same players as the rest of the games, you know?

Yeah, I like Microscope quite a bit, but if you go back and listen to COUNTER/Weight, we're not playing Microscope. [chuckles] Like, I know that that's what we set out to do.

Sylvi: [laughs] We're just doing improv!

Austin: We're just doing improv, right? We don't talk about black scenes and white scenes. We're not laying out cards, [**Dre** laughs] which is a key part of Microscope fundamentally. Like, Microscope is the cards on the table and seeing stuff play out that way. All we are doing is playing the faction turn from Stars Without Number and then also doing some scenes, which I loved, you know? But yeah. Microscope was a necessary component for us to understand what we were trying to do. Yeah. There's— @frank_scenario says “isn't there a game inspired by Castlevania that does something similar?” Yeah, there's Voidheart Rhapsody, and then there's also another different Legacy sub-game, or side game that's another— it's like a different Castlevania spin. But I don't remember what that one's actually called. They're all cool. One day, there's a million games—

Sylvi: Moonlight Rhapsody?

Austin: —I want to play, you know. Sorry, say it again?

Sylvi: I think it— are you sure it's Void? Voidheart makes me think—

Austin: Voidheart's the Persona one. Rhapsody of Blood is the Castlevania one.

Sylvi: Yeah, okay. That's what I heard.

Austin: Symphony is the— is the Persona ish—

Sylvi: Yeah. I just— I heard Voidheart Rhapsody and I was like, oh, people are going to look for a game that doesn't exist.

Austin: It's Symphony. You're right. Voidheart Symphony. Yes, yes. And then I think this is like the same thing here from brandon b who says,

brandon: Lessons from experimenting?

[04:24:17]

Y'all have a history of changing your story's pace and storytelling and also kind of taking it in experimental ways. Courtroom drama, murder mystery, Faction Turns, finale games. What have you learned about keeping your games and seasons fresh and responsive?

I would say go back and listen to us just talk about Questlandia. I think if there is one big lesson that I've always tried to hew towards, it's that like, it's better to try the idea—especially when it comes to a narrative idea—than to sit on it and wait for the perfect time. And then the biggest thing that I kind of realized this season was just like, we aren't beholden. We can do what we want. We can try something. And Ali, as you pointed out, that can include saying hey, we're going to take a month off because we tried something and it didn't work. Having that in the back pocket is really useful? I think as long as we use it in really smart ways, you know? But yeah, any other questions in this hopper that people want to answer?

Ali: Yeah, there's like two sort of totems that I hold in being a professional podcaster, [chuckles] which is a position that, you know, the wealth of reality that it holds. [laughs]

Sylvi: [chuckles] Yeah dude.

Ali: There's a poster that I saw called—

Twitter: Like on Twitter?

Ali: Why Cheap Art? A manifesto by Bread and Puppet Theater. That like, yeah, that like, you know—

Jack: Bread and Puppet's great.

Ali: I make a show every week that is— we work as hard as we possibly can on it, and we obviously get supported for it, but like it is free, people can listen to it, it should exist, people should have access to it. I— It feels... it's meaningful to me that I spent a lot of time on this. But I think like the second thing that I have now is when you said, we didn't book two months of studio time.

Austin: We sure fucking didn't. Yeah.

Ali: We can do whatever we want with this. [chuckles] If we want to record another thing, we can do that, and we should. And if it is what it takes to fix the way that we feel about it, we can spread the way that we feel about it to the audience. Because there shouldn't— there's always going to be a gap there, but we should be proud of what we're doing. So, that's [laughs], that's how I feel about this question. [wheezes]

Austin: I've been trying to figure out what my life is anymore because of the job stuff. And I'm doing some contract work, it's going to be fine. But I haven't been like, what am I doing? Right, because I'm very, very, very grateful to be able to float for a while on combination of money I saved when I had a job, plus podcast savings. That will not protect me from a random health crisis or if my parents suddenly have one, right? But I am in a very lucky place where I get to say like, what do I want to prioritize right now?

And I don't know if anybody else saw this, but last year after Steve Albini died, people were—I guess it was this year, I don't know what time is anymore—but there was this letter that he sent to Nirvana to, to basically pitch like, hey, I want to— I'm happy to work with you all. I want to, I want to work with y'all in, in, on, in utero. And kind of similar, Ali, to the Why Cheap Art Manifesto—? Less of a manifesto, because it's more him literally going like, I want to help produce this album for you. I don't work the way a lot of other producers work. I don't want points, I don't want X, I don't want Y. I just want to fucking make this thing to be, to sound the way it should sound, and I— it's not, I'm not trying to remix other engineers, or the work of other engineers. I'm not trying to mix it for radio in a particular way. I don't have a final set of like, laws and rules that I apply to. I'm doing my best for what the individual product is, or project is. And that has been sort of like, ooh, there's something here.

And it's like, I'm not a record producer. It's not what I do. So it's not— it doesn't map easily necessarily. But there is something about this style of approach that really appeals. And I think that it is also just kind of the reality of the size and scale of the thing that we are, you know? And the benefit of being the size and scale of the thing that we are, the benefit of not having the Cheez-It sponsorship, right? [**Ali** chuckles, **Sylvi** laughs] And then like, we should lean into that as hard as we fucking can. Because if one day we get the Cheez-It sponsorship, we're going to have to book studio time, and that's going to be annoying. And so we should take advantage of the fact that we don't have to do that right now, you know? And hope that one day, if it does happen that way, we'll be ready to adjust for whatever the fuck that means, you know? And I don't know that that's going to ever happen necessarily, but, I'd rather try to figure out what success and stability looks like without that for us. Because I think that's such a key part of who we've been. Or the Pirates Booty sponsorship, which most of us don't have.

Ali: [giggles]

Sylvi: Well, Keith's hogging that, so.

Keith: Yeah, that's a personal, that has nothing to do with the show. You can go to piratesbooty.com/keithfromrunbutton.

Austin: So is that a Run Button sponsorship?

Sylvi: It's not even— we're not even mentioned.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, well, I just, you know, I didn't want to— I knew that not everybody was down with Pirates Booty specifically.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: And they asked, you know, what I wanted my URL to be. And so I figured that that was— it's also very longstanding.

Dre: It's really respectful of you.

Keith: Yeah, thank you. You know, but maybe we can pick a less delicious snack to clown on than Kellogg Brand's Delicious Cheez-It Flavored Snacks.

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: Fuck, he signed the deal in the middle of this. I can hear his voice.

Austin: Fuck life. Fuck!

Janine: I will say, you do need to change that— if you want to keep using that, you need to change that joke, because the URL isn't actually piratesbooty.com?

Keith: It's piratesbrands—

Janine: It's hersheyland.com/pirates-booty.

Ali: [chuckles]

Sylvi: Sure.

Austin: Wow.

Dre: Dash Booty.

Ali: So, throwing in with Hershey.

Austin: Did they change brand?

Art: Pirates always get the booty.

Janine: I thought this was popcorn, forever, but this is like corn curls.

Keith: It's fake popcorn. Yeah, puffed corn. It's like corn popcorn. It's like corn, it's like—yeah, it's weird. It's weird. It's weird.

Austin: [laughs]

Sylvi: I'm— please blow the whistle, it's 11.30.

Janine: I think— yeah.

Austin: I think that's going to probably do it for us.

Ali: We do have one more giveaway, unfortunately.

Austin: Let's do this on the go, let me pull up—

Dre: What's that “unfortunately”?

Jack: No no, don't say “unfortunately”.

Sylvi: It's okay, it's fine, it's fortunately. Let's do it.

Ali: Yeah.

Art: We're not going to tell people about the next season.

Austin: I was going to say, should we do that also? Do we want to? I will say this, there was another world where there would have been an article today where the next season was announced, but they didn't come together. It might still come together in the future, but it's not in any sort of—

Janine: We live in this world. We live in this world.

Austin: I talked to the writer today, we live in this world. It could come together as soon as next month, but I would love to maybe announce the season before that, maybe.

Ali: Anyway. [laughs]

Jack: Wow. Would you like to—

Ali: Yeah, yeah, you can just—

Jack: Please, please, please. We have to go for the unfortunate giveaway.

Giveaway #4

[04:31:12]

Ali: While I'll just take the mic for a second. Our last prize is, speaking of support and things that are attainable in the wholeness of our career, a very very kind of premium Patreon tier that we have is our Pala-din level, where if you are extremely generous, we reward you by buying a system that we've played. I'm not fucking ordering anyone fifth edition or any shit like that, it has to be something that we've played.

Austin: [wheezes]

Sylvi: Yeah!

Keith: Ha!

Dre: Yeah, get fuckin' bodied.

Ali: It has to be in print. If you want me to preorder you a copy of Armour Astir next month, I will do that.

Janine: That would be so funny, though.

Ali: But, yes. Anyway, so—

Austin: Oh, well, sorry, one second, apparently, this is already announced. Lin— Lin Codega from Rascal—formerly from Rascal or partly—is working on an oral history of Friends at the Table. So that's where this announcement was going to happen. But I didn't realized it had been already announced, thank you to Ro and Zeal for having already said that.

Ali: But, yes. The winner of this is going to get a system that is made for us with a bookplate that has been signed for all of us. It's going to be the newer bookplate design, so I don't have a picture of it. You know, shouts to this person who is going to get this. 49! Ooh, that's a high one.

Austin: Wow, low roll!

Sylvi: Wow. That's an age someone could be.

Keith: Sorry to hear that. [laughs]

Ali: Well, that's somebody who heard the announcement and was like, I'm going now.

Austin: Yes!

Sylvi: Yeah, you were on top of it.

Keith: A low roll is a low roll. Sorry.

Austin: Oh my god.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Ali: I would like to congratulate Jason, whose favorite character is Grand Mag?

Austin: Wow!

Dre: Wow.

Ali: I feel like this—

Sylvi: Art, are you going to be mean?

Ali: This is another—

Jack: Good choice.

Janine: Grand Magi.

Ali: This is another prize—

Art: This should be everyone's favorite character.

Ali: Character match, I think. I think Grand Mag would want one of these for a podcast that he really liked, so.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's right.

Sylvi: What podcast? No, we can't.

Art: Or what my idea now, which is get myself one of the book places.

Sylvi: Someone in the chat said “Gratz Jason” and that's a character name now.

Austin: Gratz Jason.

Ali: [laughs]

Jack: [chuckles] Gratz Jason is really good.

Ali: Again, all the winners will receive e-mails tomorrow morning. Yeah. We've been doing this for five hours, almost. [laughs]

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Almost.

Dre: Whoah.

Janine: Mhm.

Keith: It is a Palisade length post-mortem.

Austin: It sure is.

Sylvi: I was going to go to the gym after this. That's not happening.

Keith: Do you all not remember how long the last post-mortem was? It was almost—

Janine: This is the gym now.

Sylvi: No dude, it was a year and a half ago. More than that!

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: More than that. More than two years ago.

Austin: Yeah. I did just remember another question I was going to answer that I didn't put in the thing. I'm just not going to answer it. People have to wait and find out what was up with the Argosy, Spliced and the NEH— maybe it'll show up next season. Not next season, but the season after, because we're not doing— imagine if it was like, next season we're still continuing the Divine Cycle.

Janine: Oh god.

Sylvi: I would—

Jack: I would just tear my headphones off my head.

Sylvi: Walk to where you are and slap you.

Janine: What are we doing next season?

Dre: Oh!

Austin: Okay, so first of all, there's stuff that we already— that people already know, but I want to reiterate, which is we're doing over in the friendsatthetable.cash Patreon feed, we will be starting up Realis very soon. We have— we're recording it in a weird way,

and we will have a ton of it recorded, and also enough of it recorded to where we can start. So people should look forward to that over in the Patreon feed. That will be—

Ali: Yeah, I just want to say, it will be probably late September, early October. **[Austin:** Oh, you're right!]**]** I do want to say that we're sort of like a couple episodes back on that, and to reflect that whole—

Austin: You mean back on that feed, in terms of— yes. Yes.

Ali: On that feed, on what we owe people for their \$5 a month. So that whole first arc is probably going to be released as a chunk to fulfill that backlog before we switch to monthly— I just want to make that completely—

Austin: And I think we're going to put some of that at least in the main main feed to tease, hey, you should go listen to us on the Patreon. So that'll be what you hear *next* in the main feed *before* our next actual season.

Keith: I highly recommend people go to friendsatthetable.cash just on face value.

Ali: Uh huh. Yes. [giggles]

Austin: There's so much there.

Sylvi: [wheezing] You almost said friendsatthetable.cat— [howls]

Art: That's what I've been saying.

Janine: I also— I was biting my— if we weren't so short on time, I had such a joke.

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: Sorry, sorry, it really got me!

Austin: It's fine.

Janine: friendsatthetable.cath

Austin: So expect to see that in the main feed before you see our actual next season, which I don't think we have an immediate start time on. We just spent a lot of time saying we're trying to be kind to ourselves and give us the time that we need. We've not started recording this. We have— we have, you know, our world building episode is scheduled, is where we're at our next actual season.

Janine: We've had some meetings. We've looked at some books.

Austin: We've had some meetings. We've had some meetings.

Sylvi: We've picked a system.

Keith: And a very busy summer for a lot of people.

Austin: Well, busier than we thought, because we thought we were done with the show and we weren't.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: Uh huh!

Austin: Consider.

Keith: I think it went great, though.

Austin: Bluff City is not dead. Bluff City is going to wait until Realis finishes. And then we'll go back to— I know what Bluff City Season 3 is, I've known this for like two years. It just— we're waiting for Realis to go into that spot. We only have but so much time.

Janine: It's just Wings. We're going to do Wings.

Austin: We're going to do Wings.

Janine: Can we do Wings? A's Bluff City Season 3—

Austin: There are elements of the TV show Wings that I think will be in that. The next Bluff City Season 3.

Sylvi: What is Wings?

Ali: We'll talk after class.

Keith: You know wh—

Dre: Don't worry about it don't worry about it don't worry about it.

Art: Don't worry about it.

Sylvi: Sorry, sorry.

Janine: It's okay.

Austin: That's a sitcom.

Art: It's a Cheers spin-off.

Janine: It's an Adema song.

Sylvi: Huh.

Dre: Wow.

Closing and Announcements

[04:37:09]

Austin: The next main series that we'll do— I guess we have a name for it, on top of the game name. Are we good on the name?

Sylvi: I mean, you're the one who does that.

Dre: Yeah, you—

Janine: Yeah, you tell us dog.

Sylvi: [wheezes]

Austin: I think it's called—, I'm going to be vague about premise stuff, but it's called *Perpetua* and it will be played in the game *Fabula Ultima TTJRPG*. And if you're familiar with *Fabula Ultima*, you may now know why we've been joking about JRPGs, and the Dreamcast and why I said—

Keith: I'm always joking about the—

Dre: Yeah, I'm *never* joking about the Dreamcast.

Austin: Oh, you're right, sorry. [**Janine:** Mm-mm.] Which, by the way,

Sylvi: I'm goofin'.

Austin: Dreamcast's 25th anniversary was three days ago—

Ali: Shout outs.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: 9/9/99. So we are blessed.

Ali: Ba dum ba ba!

Keith: It's a system of my heart. It's my heart system.

Art: Of all time.

Austin: It is a system. We made— oh my god. Should I show this?

Sylvi: No. Some of us forgot to put our stuff in there.

Jack: No no no. No, we shouldn't.

Austin: I won't show it.

Keith: Oh, well, I— I helped.

Dre: Oh.

[shushing noises]

Janine: [chuckles]

Ali: [snorts, laughs]

Austin: I won't show it.

Sylvi: It's fine. Don't put me on blast.

Austin: But we were trying to make sure everybody knew what the Dreamcast was, and so we put together certain guides on what the Dreamcast was, because I really want to make a season that has a Dreamcast aesthetic. Fabula is a really cool game that it draws— it draws on stuff like PBTA, but has a completely different— and Blades in terms of things like clocks, but it has a really different vibe in terms of the focus of play. If you liked some of the stuff this season around things like dungeons and bosses and exploration, there's going to be more of that.

It's a brand new setting, we are not returning to a previously established setting. This is partly because some of the stuff in Realis gets *wild dark* eventually. It doesn't start that way, it kind of starts at hijinks? But by the middle of where Realis goes, it gets into some Sangfielle places. And so if you liked Sangfielle, I suspect you will really like a lot of Realis. And so we didn't want to feed— we didn't want to go to two dark, grim places at once. We wanted something that was bright and colorful.

And I think partly the appeal for Fabula for me is like, JRPGs have always been influential on what Friends at the Table has felt like, but we've never leaned all the way in. We've always kept it like one step away, right? Hieron could never have a pure JRPG character. We always need to be a little more restrained than that. That is not going to be the case with Perpetua. We are going to go hard into as wild and big and bright and operatic as we could. Maybe you'll see here why earlier I was saying that like, I think this is going to be a season about personal relationships and about feeling more than about capital P political revolution or something like that. Yeah, I'm excited. People

are pitching characters, [**Jack**: I'm so excited.] a little world building done, but not a full game yet, so.

Jack: Yeah, we— we are going to hold on to it for now, but we have the premise. [**Ali** chuckles] We know what we're going to do roughly. It's really exciting.

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: Mhm, yeah..

Jack: I know what it's going to sound like musically. It's going to be great.

Austin: We don't have a trailer. We're not there yet.

Sylvi: No, we don't have a trailer. We said that at the beginning of the stream, I think. But it's been five hours, so.

Austin: I know. Someone in the chat said, doesn't it have a much more complex combat system? And it doesn't— I actually don't think it has a more complex combat system than something like D&D. It has a focus on gaminess that I think will be really fun? I'm very excited to build puzzle fights for people to have. I'm very excited for people to do ridiculous things in combat. But for instance, it's not like Lancer where there's like— there's no tactical map or anything like that, right? So I don't think— I think it will make perfectly fine radio. And we'll see, right? We'll play through it, I'm really excited to get playing and truly, if the system ends up not being a fit for us, I have some backup plans for the way we can continue playing with the world. I have lots of big ideas for the core premise, and— what I don't have is a lot of world building. I'm doing my best not to come in with a ton of capital L lore. So— so yeah.

Keith: I'm excited. I think it seems like a fun game.

Austin: Me too. Alright. Is there anything else? Do we want to restate—?

Jack: Yeah. We've been doing this for 10 years. I think—

Janine: This single postmortem.

Keith: [chuckles]

Sylvi: Congratulations, everyone.

Jack: Yeah. We've been here for 10 years, at— I'm so grateful to have been making this for so long and have been supported in it both by you know, people listening and by the people I get to make it with, which is just about—

Austin: It truly is— I mean, 10 years, we're approaching a life's work, you know, quality at this point, right? Most people do not get to work on one thing for 10 years, especially a side project, especially something that gets to be about telling stories and art and you know, the stuff that we get to do here.

Thank you, everybody on the show. Thank you, everybody who listens to the show and who supports us. Shout outs to everybody who has ever pointed people our direction.

The best thing you can do for us is to try to tell people to come listen to us. Hopefully this new season will be another good new jumping on point for people. So, yeah.

Final— any final words?

Sylvi: 10 years is so long. [chuckles] **[Dre:** It's so long!]) That just hit me when you said all that.

Austin: It's so long.

Sylvi: A third of my life, dude!

Art: Almost nothing in this— in this genre does this, you know?

Austin: Almost nothing, truly. Very grateful to be able to do it. Alright. I think that's going to do it for us. I'm going to play—

Keith: I have a plug. Can I do a plug?

Austin: Do your plug. Do we—

Sylvi: Fucking Pirate's Booty?

Art: If this is for Pirate's Booty I'm going to be so mad.

Keith: This is for Pirate's Booty— yes, it's really good! It's delicious, it's a refreshing light snack, it's lighter than popcorn—

Sylvi: I'm going to choke you like Homer does to Bart.

Keith: No. Speaking of doing things for a long time, I've been recording podcasts and doing videos with Kyle Churchill for 15 years this year, I think— maybe 14 years. And it's the like, 12th or 13th anniversary of our Let's Play 20 Years of Sonic, a Let's Play series where we played every Sonic game and we are redoing that whole thing. [**Austin** chuckles] We've started recording it, we are spitting it up, it's going to come out. It's called "Let's Replay 20 Years of Sonic", [**Ali** laughs] or it's maybe called "Let's Play 20 Years of Sonic Remake".

Austin: Sure.

Keith: And it's a stupid idea that we're going to spend three more years doing and you should watch that. You should go watch Run Button, it's really good.

Austin: Very excited to see all that. Again, you should go to friendsathtable.shop to check out our new T-shirt and our new poster. You should go to crowdfundr.com, no E in funder, /hieronzine to support the excellent A Chaotic Cataloging—A Seasons of Hieron fanzine, the profits of which are going to the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund. You should go to friendsathtable.cash to support us on Patreon. If you've enjoyed Palisade, consider checking out our Patreon. We know a lot of you already do this, but we also know not everybody does it. And as Ali said, we do make the show for free. *The show* will remain free for as long as we're allowed to make free things, you know, I guess if the law changes somehow.

Sylvi: Oh boy. Don't put that out there.

Ali: And ad-free as long as I fucking live, I think. [chuckles]

Austin: That's what I mean.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah. So, yeah. Thank you so much for your support, those are the places you can go to support us. You can review us, please do on your various platforms of choice.

Ali: I'm very sleepy, so I'm just going to say to Google this instead of pulling it— or it's weregazelle at itch.io. [**Austin:** Oh weregazelle, yes.] If you like Palisade, Armour Astir is getting a physical copy via Kickstarter next month.

Austin: Whoo!

Dre: Yeah. Hell yeah.

Austin: I should've said this earlier, my bad Briar.

Ali: This is the best time that we have to shout it out. That game is fantastic, [**Austin:** Yes. It's so good.] it shaped so much of what you liked about this show? [chuckles] So.

Austin: I've said this before, but I spent years with the cover art up on my screen every night. I'd go to bed with it up on the screen, because I was so desperate to get to play that game. I'd wake up and turn on my monitor and it would be there? [**Ali** laugh] And like, we finally got to fucking do it. We did that season and it's—

Keith: And we *really* did it.

Austin: And we *really* fucking did it! Yeah, Zach Morrison's art is so good, Briar's game is so good. You know, in a way, it has been with us since we started doing this part of the Divine Cycle, I think, because of doing it in the road to Partizan, I think both it and Beam Saber have contributed so much to what makes these characters and this world so good. And If you like Palisade, please go pick up Armour Astir: Advent. Please check out Yuri Runnel and August Orion's support— what was it? 106th Squadron, is that right? 106th Squadron.

Keith: Yeah, 106th.

Austin: Along with some of the additional stuff that they have put out. I want to say that there's another collection called—

Keith: Two more?

Austin: There's a few of them. Just go check out Yuri's itch.io, I think most of them are there.

Keith: Strangers in the Night?

Austin: Strangers in the Night. Thank you so much— Strangers in the Night. Yeah, you can go to yurir.itch.io for that. That's it. Oh, no, there's one more, notquitereal.bandcamp.com for you to get the soundtrack to this season.

Sylvi: An important one.

Austin: Jack, thank you so much for the incredible soundtrack.

Jack: Thank you.

Austin: Thank you for also doing a listening party the other day. It was a blast.

Ali: More eight minute songs!

Jack: Oh, so much fun. So much fun.

Ali: [laughs]

Jack: No, Ali.

Sylvi: Let's do it!

Keith: They passed the law. No free podcasts. No podcast songs under eight minutes.

Dre: Shit.

Austin: Finally mediacub.plus. Go listen.

Sylvi: Do it.

Keith: I can't believe the quality of that show— it's very high.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: It's good. Alright.

Sylvi: You should go tell your friends about the quality of that show and this show.

Austin: Let's do a time.is a clap with everybody.

Dre: Oh yeah!

Ali: With everybody!

Austin: With everybody. Happy Day of the Programmer everybody.

Jack: Let's do a quiet one—

Sylvi: Come on in, guys! And you too, chat!

Ali: Everybody at home, go to time.is and clap with us!

Sylvi: Yeah!

Dre: Yeah! Chat clap, chat clap, chat clap!

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: Clap if you believe in podcasts! [wheezes]

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh. Uhhh... 15 seconds?

Keith: Yes.

Sylvi: What?

Jack: Yep.

Janine: Uh huh.

[clap sounds]

Austin: Alright, we did it.

Janine: Even that felt long, oh my god.

Austin: It did.

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: I thought you said 18, I was like, it couldn't be 18, [**Austin:** No, 15...] it has to be 15. So I clapped at 15, and I was right.

[music outro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt]

Austin: And you were right.

Dre: You're a fucking pro.

Austin: Alright, everybody, have a good remainder of the night. Bye bye bye.

Dre: Bye bye bye!

Janine, Ali, Sylvi: Bye!