

## **PALISADE 62: Above the Earth Pt. 6**

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### **Season Recap**

**Austin:** PALISADE is a show about empire, revolution, settler colonialism, politics, religion, war, and the many consequences thereof. For a full list of content warnings, please check the episode description.

[music intro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt begins]

Austin (as **Exanceaster March**): Our objective would remain the same. Crush the dissidents, secure Palisade, move into the Twilight Mirage.

**Jack:** Millennium Break. You do not know the sharpness of the dagger on which you walk.

Art (as **Ramondre**): You know, if Gentian were to come, none of your tricks would work on her at all. Pray that you do not suffer her attention.

Ali (as **Brnine**): You can count on us. Blue Channel has your back.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): An operant is someone who is qualified to command. I can evaluate the quality of commands.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Thisbe, can you take a picture of me?

Dre (as **Figure**): I only seek enough power to remove my own shackles.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): There's no one that can tell me no. But there's no one that can give the okay. I gave myself the job of staying.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): This plant needs water, light, minerals. For you, it's magic.

Dre (as **Figure**): I—

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I will find what you need.

Ali (as **Brnine**): We have to let them know that we're the ones who bloodied their noses.

Keith (as **Eclectic**): There's a problem with Motion. Factories popping up all over the place, suckin' black air into the ground.

Art (as **Clementine**): I think I have a lot to offer right now. I have a large and capable army, and we both want the same thing right now, which is the stels off the planet.

Jack (as **August Righteousness**): I don't care too much about these people's capacity for change. I care about making right what was done to me.

Dre (as **Levi**): This isn't a military operation. This is just trying to help do some rebuilding, provide resources that it seemed like people needed.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): The entire universe is afraid of the power that I am now part of. I think you're betting on a losing horse.

Dre (as **Levi**): I don't know if I have that kind of pull, but I know people who do.

Ali (as **Brnine**): The closer I get to this, the worse it's gonna go.

Keith (as **Leap**): I've been fighting against the Divine Principality now for years. Maybe you've seen that happen before. Maybe you've been at the end of my blade. It's been going on for so many years. Nobody likes this. Nobody's happy.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): It has certain properties of divinity. I've been attempting to develop the organic Divine.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Don't die prideful.

[song ends]

## First Moves

**Austin:** Leap.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Leap or Levi. What are y'all up to?

**Keith:** Yeah. Shootin'.

**Austin:** You're still shootin'.

**Dre:** Yeah, probably.

**Austin:** You're still on this ship, shootin' from the Third Opus.

**Dre:** Shootin', cuttin'.

**Austin:** Shootin' and cuttin'.

**Sylvia:** So I started blasting.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [laughs quietly] You are gonna start blasting. Leap, again, at this point—

**Keith:** Spinning.

**Austin:** You're spinning is what you are actually doing, yes.

**Keith:** Yeah. If anybody remembers from, what, like, 17 years ago, "How to Kill a Mockingbird".

**Dre:** Yeah, uh huh. Uh huh.

**Keith:** The t-rexes in space with the guns. [Dre and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** I have no fucking idea what you are talking about.

**Sylvia:** What are you—?

**Dre:** Oh my god! [sighs]

**Keith:** Early internet flash video of, like, a kid—

**Austin:** Wow.

**Dre:** Like, 10 minutes long.

**Austin:** Oh, wow. I don't know this.

**Keith:** Yeah, a kid bullshitting his way through a *To Kill a Mockingbird* book report.

**Austin:** Wow.

**Keith:** Called "How to Kill a Mockingbird", and it loosely follows the story for about half of the video, and then he's clearly stopped reading the book, and it goes into a bunch of nonsense that includes a space fight with a bunch of t-rexes with guns mounted on their shoulders, and every time they fire, they spin faster and faster along their, like, center axis.

**Sylvia:** All right.

**Keith:** Because of space. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** This is real 2000s, early 2000s internet. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** I'm watching it. I see it. This is wild. Okay, yeah, sure. Leap is spinning. The Third Opus is spinning and beset on all sides.

**Keith:** Shoutout to eBaum's World.. Sorry, go ahead.

**Austin:** Phew. [Dre chuckles] That's...has eBaum's World been said before on this podcast? [Keith laughs] It has to have been.

**Dre:** It has to have been.

**Austin:** [typing] I don't think it was. It doesn't come up on the search of the transcript.

**Janine:** You absolutely do not have to hand it to eBaum's World. [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** No. No.

**Dre:** Yeah, probably not.

**Keith:** Hey, when I was eight, I really liked their list of funny things you could say when you prank call a pizza place.

**Austin:** Great.

**Dre:** Hell yeah.

**Austin:** You're spinning. You are surrounded. You got a unit of spider mechs trying to tie you down with webs. You have a unit of Columnar Wizard-TALISMAN units.

**Keith:** Yeah. When is this not the case?

**Austin:** Truly. The TALISMANS, which haven't really shown up before, they have, like, a...they have, like, the drones like the familiars, the kind of, like, bits that fly around them, but they're all, like, different gems that do different elemental attacks, 'cause

they're talismans. It's fun.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And they're shootin' at you!

**Keith:** Yeah, they're shootin' at me.

**Austin:** They're fucking blasting at you. You are surrounded. Present is annoyed at you, but these other ones aren't, and you've managed to get close enough to shoot at Present but are, again, constantly under fire here. What are you doing?

**Keith:** Um, I think that it's important to keep on Present. I think that I've got to ignore the Pact and the— yeah, the Pact.

**Austin:** Okay. You are, again, going to need to make a Defy roll here, just to not get hit and line up a shot on Present.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** That initial one was— you know, you're going to have to keep doing that. You're under attack, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And space is big, so you can maneuver in three dimensions and try to, like, dodge all that stuff, but it is— you're not going to get to a safe place [**Keith:** Yeah.] while these other guys are all around you, including Present now, right?

**Keith:** Okay. Yeah. Maybe I should try to get 5 while I'm here, Pact 5.

**Austin:** You're going to— no matter what you do, you're going to need to roll to stay, to Weather the Storm before you take a shot.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Because you're surrounded by four other units. One of them is a Divine, so.

**Keith:** I guess it's about how long will I have to keep doing that, and I guess the difference is not that big. Like, if I...

**Austin:** If you can zero in on Present.

**Keith:** if I can shoot down enough of the Pact, maybe it will save me a couple of Defy rolls.

**Austin:** I see what you're saying.

**Keith:** But maybe it's not worth it. Yeah, I'll shoot— I'll do the Defy roll. Let's see. Roll...

**Austin:** Let's see how it goes. Yeah, 2d6 plus 1.

**Keith:** 2d6 plus 1. Here's a twist: am I harder to hit because I'm spinning?

**Austin:** No. [Dre laughs] It's space.

**Sylvia:** He tried.

**Austin:** We're all spinning, in relative terms.

**Dre:** Damn. Damn.

**Sylvia:** [quietly] Oh my god.

**Austin:** But in personal terms, you're spinning, comma, bad, you know?

**Keith:** Right. [Sylvia laughs quietly] That's an 11.

**Austin:** That's an 11.

**Sylvia:** You rapping bad.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** These rolls are going really good.

**Austin:** You're getting great rolls right now, even on +1, so.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So, yeah, you're spinning. The Opus is spinning around in wild ways, [**Keith:** Yeah.] to try and help you line up this shot [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] and to dodge incoming attacks as best as you can. You're going to take a shot at Present, presumably.

**Keith:** I am, yes.

**Austin:** All right.

**Keith:** Here's one. I would like to actually use my bolos, which are Ranged and Restraining.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Bolo the Clown over here.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, to Bolo the Clown.

**Austin:** Are you cashing in Guided on them, or you're just going to take the shot?

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** All right. So, 2d6 plus your...

**Keith:** That's a 10.

**Austin:** That is a 10. That is a 10. All right, how are they restraining to Present? Tell me what that looks like.

**Keith:** So, normally I think what they would do is wrap around bits of a mech [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and to keep them from articulating properly.



**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But I think that with something the size of Present, [**Austin:** Yeah.] what they actually do is, like, get lodged in important places. They just, like, go in, you know, like getting a BB stuck in your leg or something.

**Austin:** Ugh. Yeah.

**Keith:** And, you know, maybe it doesn't do much more than further annoyance, but it is, you know, a well-aimed shot could hit something that slows it down.

**Austin:** I think what it's actually doing is it's, like, malfunctioning. Present can transform, and I think right now it can't.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** I think you've kind of jammed up the motors, you know?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The, like, transformation motors here. And have prevented it from—

**Keith:** The little Michael Bay greebles can't move around.

**Austin:** That's right. Exactly, 100%. However, I do think that there is one thing that Present can do and is doing.

**Keith:** Shoot gun?

**Austin:** Teleport to anywhere in the galaxy.

**Keith:** Oh, teleport. I forgot about teleport.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** Fuck!

**Sylvia:** [quietly amused] Shoot gun.

**Austin:** And has just teleported— you know, being annoyed with you— I'm going to move the Leap icon away really quick. Has just teleported behind the enemy line entirely and back into what was once called the Landing Zone on the kind of shard that you're on and has landed, effectively.

**Keith:** Damn.

**Austin:** So, things to—

**Dre:** Nothing personal, kid.

**Austin:** That's fucking right. Uh huh. And coming out of it are the units that had been harassing Cori for the last year. The collection of mechs that have been harassing Cori have arrived, and they are...I'll just use the same Columnar set. I'll just drop a new one there. One second. So yeah, Present is dropping off more units to deal with. Switch over here...

**Keith:** I can't believe this guy got around me.

**Austin:** Levi.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** How are you doing?

**Dre:** [sighs] You know. We're making it. We're doing okay.

**Austin:** You're doing all right.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I guess I'm going to keep going after this Pact thing.

**Austin:** All right.

**Dre:** Pact 1: the shield orb.

**Austin:** Yeah, before it can...I guess it's already blown its shield, right?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So yeah, you can try to knock it out. Give me a Strike Decisively.

**Dre:** Oh, wait, no. It's at 1 out of 2. I can't Strike Decisively yet.

**Austin:** Oh, sorry, right.

**Dre:** 'Cause it used its ward. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** It used its ward. That's the thing.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** So, yeah, give me an Exchange Blows. That's a fucking 10. So, this time—

**Dre:** Bazinga.

**Austin:** Is this just a rerun of what happened last time? Except this time, you do get the hit?

**Dre:** Um, yeah, and I think it's that, like, you know, I'm launched, like, back up into space off of it.

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** And I hit the gravity switch on my sword.

**Austin:** Ohh, love this.

**Dre:** And I just come down crashing hard enough that I pierce through the shield.

**Austin:** Yes, okay.

**Sylvia:** Killer.

**Austin:** Yeah. So then, yeah, it is now Defenseless. Its shield has been broken. Its armor is broken. Do you want to now Strike Decisively while your sword is still inside of the ORB?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I imagine I just, like, land on top of it.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's my guess, yeah. So, give me a 2d6 plus 1 again.

**Dre:** Oh no!

**Austin:** But wait, is this also a— the 1's a 6.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** This is why you're doing this.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** 1's a 6.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** 1 plus 2 plus 1.

**Dre:** That's a 9.

**Austin:** That is a 9. So, on a 7-9 on a Strike Decisively: you overreach or underestimate, take a Risk; you waste ammo or words, losing a weapon until you can rearm or losing the weight of some bargaining chip; or you strike carelessly, causing collateral damage beyond your expectations.

**Sylvia:** Mm.

**Keith:** Can I help?

**Austin:** No, you are busy across the battlefield, spinning, fighting three other things around you.

**Keith:** I'm close-ish. I guess I'm not that close.

**Austin:** You're not close-ish at all, no. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** I'm not close. The new scale has thrown off the...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah. Ugh! Okay. So, my options are I can make myself defenseless.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** I can lose my sword.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Which is, like, the only thing that makes me useful in this right now. [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Or I can cause collateral damage beyond my recognition.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] What could go wrong?

**Dre:** Don't say that when Austin's listening.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I'm just saying, it's never bitten me in the ass, collateral damage.

**Dre:** That's true.

**Janine:** Yeah, your dad's not even here.

**Sylvia:** Exactly.

**Dre:** Jokes on you. My dad's in a different galaxy.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Then what could Austin even do?

**Austin:** That's true, yeah. There's nothing I could take.

**Dre:** I guess that's— I'm going to have to take that one.

**Austin:** Okay. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** The collateral damage one.

**Austin:** As the— the second this one goes up in flames and blows up, which it does, you know, sensing perhaps a shift in the battlefield, there is a sort of, like, a buzz and then a *bwoom*, as a new wave of Motion and the Motion molecules spreads around you. Levi, Leap, and Cori, you all— it all ticks up. It all ticks up by 1. You're all at 2 now.

**Sylvia:** All right.

**Austin:** And actually so would be Cas'alear's. So would be— like, you know. Everybody outside is—

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Everybody out in the battlefield part of this ticks up by one.

**Keith:** Now, is this a more intense Motion particulization than the stuff I was able to stop by being in my tank earlier?

**Austin:** 100%, yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** This is now...this is like, she's here, you know?

**Keith:** Right.

## **Thisbe's Plant [0:13:45]**

**Austin:** So, everybody goes up to 2. Presumably, Brnine and Thisbe, you're close to the— you're in the lab in the Perennial zone? Actually, where are you? Because you did suggest you were in the *Blue Channel* before. Or your ship was in the *Blue Channel*?

**Ali:** We're in Thisbe's ship.

**Austin:** You're in Thisbe's ship. Okay.

**Ali:** Yeah. Which is, like, docked to the *Blue Channel*, I think is what was said last.

**Austin:** It was.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Have you moved further away?

**Janine:** I had only just thought, like, that's where Brnine would be and then Thisbe's ship would be. I didn't really, like, think it through in that way.

**Austin:** Okay. I'm giving you the opportunity now to be further away, but. [Dre chuckles]

**Ali:** Well, yeah, you imagine Brnine walks through the bridge, and then Hunting is like, "Okay, I have to go be in the battle now, right?"

**Austin:** Right. Right, right, right. Yeah.

**Ali:** So, yeah.

**Janine:** Right.

**Austin:** Yeah. All right, so then, you're in Thisbe's ship, and Thisbe's ship is parked at the eastern side of this, further away than the new Motion wave hit.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Is my guess. Okay. That's kind of where you've been on the map, so this is not new information for me.

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** We just hadn't said that out loud, and there was conflicting stuff, so.

**Janine:** True.

**Austin:** All right. Speaking of, I guess— actually, no, let's tick a fucking clock really quick, a bigger clock than what we've had before. [Sylvia chuckles]

**Dre:** Sure.

**Ali:** Okay. [Janine sighs nervously]

**Austin:** You know, that wave of the Motion molecule spreading out here and hitting everybody, you know, is followed by the kind of shuddering sound of the Ekpyrosis beginning to open up, beginning to shift from, you know, vast hanging garden into— it's actually closing is what it's doing, because it's this big form, and then it kind of gets— you know, it kind of closes inward to become sharper and more violent-looking. I'm trying to shrink this, but that actually just looks terrible, so let me leave the token where it was. [Keith laughs] It becomes, you know, tighter and begins to charge up energy. It is going to fire a huge energy wave somewhere here.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** The type of thing that could destroy huge swathes of the battlefield. I think you feel this part of the station rock, as, you know, Present lands on the other side, teleports in. Which does tell you something, right? There is, even as damage is getting done, even as, you know, Valour has been driven off the battlefield, even as Present has taken some hits, they are getting closer, right? And if they can lock down where you are— they don't know you're there necessarily, but they know where they're going, and it's closer and closer to Perennial. The clock is ticking on you, so you do know you've got to wrap this shit up and make it happen. Thankfully, the Arbor clock is at 5 of 6, so that



means you're at whatever the final step is before, like I said, Thisbe has to do some sort of ritual, which we'll see what that looks like. What is step six here? Or the sixth click of the clock.

**Janine:** Uh...so, the cats learned how to go up the stairs.

**Austin:** They did.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You've done the clipping. You've run it through the internal processor or whatever, the Ebullience and Integrity system. You've...

**Janine:** [cross] I wonder, are we at the—

**Austin:** [cross] I think it's the pollen?

**Janine:** Yeah, I was going to say, is it like... [sighs] I talked about, like, accelerating growth, and it's like, is that separate from, like, whatever ritual it is to, like, unleash it? Or is that the ritual, you know?

**Austin:** I think it's separate. I think this is the accelerating growth, which is risky, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This is probably the riskiest click of the clock. It is— because you have to invoke Motion, and the whole thing here is try not to invoke Motion, right? [Ali laughs]

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Is like, don't get Motion-pilled, and also, Motion seems like she can also make herself appear places, so let's be careful.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm. True.

**Austin:** Directly applying Motion to the forehead is a risky maneuver.

**Janine:** Very true.

**Austin:** But it seems like it might be time to do that, and it might be— I think that this thing is risky in a way where I think you have disadvantage doing it, because it's—

**Janine:** [triumphantly] Oh, do I? Even though I haven't used my finale move: spend one Universal Hold to, [Ali: Ooh.] I guess, not have disadvantage in this case?

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Austin:** I guess that's— there you go! You've been saving it for this. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** There you go. [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** All right. Yeah, sure, fuck it. So, 2d6 plus 3.

**Sylvia:** We're gaming. [Janine laughs]

**Dre:** Hella gaming.

**Janine:** Why 3? Oh, right, 'cause yeah, sorry.

**Austin:** 'Cause we're using the Brnine thing, presumably, right?

**Janine:** [laughs] Yes, uh huh.

**Austin:** Yeah. What does this look like, before we roll? Like, what is the visual of applying— trying to direct the Motion part of Kalmeria onto this thing to make it rapid grow?

**Janine:** I think part of it is actually using— this sounds even weirder.

**Austin:** You're making it more dangerous, uh huh.

**Janine:** Using Motion to moderate Ebullience.

**Austin:** Okay. Say more.

**Janine:** Because there is, like, because the plant, as it's grown, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] you know, was grafted onto Thisbe. It has, like, a little bit of— like, it's learned stuff [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] from Integrity and Ebullience.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And so there is part of it that, like, wants to grow.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And wants to propagate. And Motion versus Ebullience, to me, a distinction is, like, it's a little more purposeful, versus just being completely frenetic.

**Austin:** Right. It sounds like you're letting Motion in more to do this roll.

**Janine:** I mean, I'm letting Motion in either way, right? Isn't that what we determined?

**Austin:** You are. I guess what I'm saying is it sounds like you're ticking the clock up intentionally.

**Janine:** I guess.

**Austin:** You're letting in some Motion to— you're letting Motion try to— or the Motion molecules, I keep saying, for some reason, even though we've been calling it the Motion Particle for years.

**Janine:** I mean, I could do just with Ebullience, but I assumed that Motion was part of this roll either way.

**Austin:** It is. No, it is. It is.

**Janine:** So, what makes it a Motion clock tick versus not a Motion clock tick?

**Austin:** I thought you were going to, like, fill a spray bottle with Motion and then spray some plants in, you know, a series of pots. But you're putting Motion into you as a way of being like, "I'm going to modulate Ebullience, which is inside of me, as the greenhouse," you know?

**Janine:** Okay, let's scrap that. Let's scrap that.

**Austin:** Okay. Scrapped.

**Janine:** Okay. So, the thing that's happening— rewind.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Janine:** [chuckles] The thing that's happening is Thisbe has Ebullience.

**Austin:** Yes, correct. Got it.

**Janine:** And Ebullience is metaphorically like Miracle-Gro.

**Austin:** Right. Yeah, sure.

**Janine:** And then—

**Austin:** Or 5 Hour Energy, depending.

**Janine:** Yeah. And then the—

**Austin:** It was 5 Hour Energy. You're turning it into— now you're like, "Ooh, I could use it as Miracle-Gro."

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** Maybe that's the thing, is I have a spray bottle of 5 Hour Energy drink.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** Mm. [laughs]

**Janine:** And then, like, atmospherically, Kalmeria is— and atmospherically the particles are around.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And it's like, what if I, um...I'm running out of metaphors. Like, atmospherically. Like, I don't know. [sighs] I don't know, maybe I am pulling Motion in. Fuck it. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, yeah, I guess the two versions of this in my mind—

**Janine:** I can dance around this and, like, write poems as much as I want.

**Austin:** You can.

**Janine:** But like, whatever. Fuck it. I'll tick the clock up. Who cares?

**Austin:** Here's the— yeah. This is the axis on which I think there are two things— there's a path in front of you. One of them is you bring Ebullience out of yourself and put it into these plants, which is potentially risky long term, because Ebullience could be in the air.

**Janine:** Yeah, that's not quite what I want to do.

**Austin:** The other version of it is you bring in Motion more to try to give order to the bounciness of Ebullience that is the kind of stricter version of it that turns it into Miracle-Gro, and then you're taking the risk instead of externalizing the risk.

**Janine:** Yeah. That's fine.

**Austin:** This is all weird bullshit, but that's the—

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's fine.

**Austin:** You know, that's the two buttons you're choosing between.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So yeah, I'm going to tick the Motion-Thisbe clock up to 3, as you begin to, you know, leverage that possibility. And now you can give me the roll. 2d6 plus 3. Let's fucking go.

**Janine:** 10.

**Austin:** Ain't it.

**Dre:** Bam.

**Austin:** That's a 2 plus 5 plus 3. That's a 10. That completes the Arbor project. What is the thing in your hand that you are left with? What is the thing that you're— is this a collection of pollen? Is it...? You take the mic and describe what you have ready to go bring to a ritual.

**Janine:** I'm looking at weird pollen pods.

**Austin:** Mm, mm, mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Janine:** Ew, these are awful. [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

**Dre:** Oh, you know it's bad then.

**Austin:** Mm. Yeah.

**Janine:** Ugh...

**Keith:** I'm allergic to pollen. I hate it. You ever wake up and your car is, like, covered in— or whatever?

**Dre:** Ugh, yes.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I don't have one of those.

**Austin:** It's, yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** It's just, like, yellow. Horrible piss yellow [**Sylvia:** Ew.] that makes me sick.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Okay, so I found, like, a not super gross one. It's still, like, a little bit yucky. But it's...

**Keith:** Hey, we're not here to be not yucky.

**Janine:** Sorry, this was from  
superfoodevolution.com/images/pine-tree-pollen-benefits-testosterone.jpeg. [Keith  
laughs]

**Austin:** Excuse me?

**Dre:** [sarcastic] That's probably real.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. It has the memory of testosterone.

**Sylvia:** [snorts] Same.

**Janine:** So, basically— [Janine and Austin laugh]

**Dre:** [laughing] This motherfucker.

**Sylvia:** Well, you know.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Swish!

**Austin:** [laughs] Swish.

**Janine:** Basically I'm looking at pine cone, pine tree pollen sort of things.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** This is cool looking. Yeah.

**Janine:** Like, a big soft pod. It's probably, like, not a pine cone, but it's probably squishy and like—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And like, is ready to— it's full of, like, stuff, you know? And it's probably pretty big.

**Keith:** It's like what if a pinecone was from Spongebob.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** I can see what you mean.

**Dre:** I could see it, yeah.

**Austin:** I could see it.

**Janine:** I'll show you the ones that I don't like.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Dre:** [sarcastic] Oh, good.

**Austin:** Yeah, please. Yeah, now we're talking.

**Dre:** [cross] Aaaah!

**Janine:** [cross] Which is  
[thumbs.dreamstime.com/z/longleaf-pine-tree-pinus-palustris-used-pollen-pods-cone-needles-up-against-base-sandhills-scrub-upland-habitat](https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/z/longleaf-pine-tree-pinus-palustris-used-pollen-pods-cone-needles-up-against-base-sandhills-scrub-upland-habitat) and then some numbers.

**Austin:** Fucking...

**Keith:** Oh! These are the ones that I know. These live near me.



**Austin:** *Pinus palustris* is right. [Sylvia chuckles]

**Dre:** A nightmare.

**Austin:** Let me fucking tell you. That's how I feel about this.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Well named. I don't know what it means, but it feels right. *Pinus palustris*?

**Janine:** If you squint, it just looks like someone abandoned a hundred sausages at the foot of a tree.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** I think it means "penis lust." [Janine and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** *Pinus palustris* used pollen pods. Eugh. I don't like it.

**Janine:** And that's where the testosterone comes from.

**Sylvia:** Disemboweled this tree.

**Austin:** They did.

**Sylvia:** Okay, sure.

**Austin:** And these are kind of tiny, because those are pinecones next to them, huh? Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I don't like it.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They're like worm husks. Ick.

**Dre:** Blech.

**Keith:** Where I grew up, these would be everywhere! I mean, there'd be hundreds of thousands of these, dried up, creating a horrible mess all over the place.

**Austin:** [sighs] Oh, life.

**Keith:** Yep.

**Janine:** Pollen pods. That's the metaphor I'm going with.

**Austin:** So, you have the not-gross version of this. You have...

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Like a big, soft, weird, nodular thing [**Austin:** Yeah.] of this weird engineered pollen that's going to presumably propagate in a weird way.

**Keith:** I used to pick them up like you do with wheat, like if you find wheat, like, growing.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** And you, like, run your fingers along it and pluck off all the things in, like, one little—

**Janine:** Where do you find wheat?

**Sylvia:** Ah, man. If I find out—

**Keith:** I lived where you find wheat! [chuckles] That's where I lived.

**Janine:** Are you talking about grass? Are you just talking about when grass has seeds and they—

**Sylvia:** I'm talking about grass. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Well, that too. That too, but wheat.

**Sylvia:** Hell yeah, man.

**Keith:** But you do the same thing with these. You just, like, pick it up and you'd slide your fingers, and all the little bits would pop off. I had no idea it was pollen. That's probably why I was so sick all the time. [Dre laughs]

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That'll do it. All right, you have the pollen nodules. Brnine, Thisbe's growing pollen nodules.

**Ali:** Shoutouts. [muffled laugh]

**Austin:** What's the next step here look like? What's the thing that we keep vaguely calling "the ritual"?

**Janine:** Oh.

**Keith:** I don't mean to slow this down, but is Brnine, like, watching Thisbe, like, inject Motion into this thing and is just like, "Yep, that's the next step"? I mean, that's not unusual for Brnine.

**Austin:** [cross] Yeah, what are you talking about?

**Keith:** [cross] I just want to know. [Sylvia laughs]

**Ali:** That was the plan.

**Keith:** Okay, great. [Keith and Ali laugh]

**Ali:** We talked.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** The first roll was talking through it. We talked about it.

**Keith:** These are the worst two people...

**Janine:** Eh.

**Austin:** Watching? Who do you think is holding the fucking needle? [laughs quietly] It's Brnine. Like, we're...

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This is collaborative.

**Keith:** These are the worst two people in any season to be doing something like this.

**Ali:** What are you talking about?

**Sylvia:** Ah, probably not.

**Dre:** Well...

**Austin:** Insane statement.

**Janine:** Mm...

**Sylvia:** Yeah. There's been a lot of...

**Keith:** No.

**Ali:** Uh, we...

**Sylvia:** Yeah, okay.

**Ali:** We have, uh...

**Austin:** Virtue became— like, come on. You know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, she...

**Keith:** PCs. PCs.

**Austin:** Virtue's a PC!

**Sylvia:** Virtue was a player character!

**Keith:** Oh.

**Janine:** What the fuck, dude?

**Keith:** Oh, right, yeah, yeah, yeah. No, no, no.

**Austin:** Damn, brutal. [Janine laughs]

**Keith:** I'm thinking of other characters.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Keep calling people NPCs out here. [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, man. Heard of the PC police, but this is different. [Austin laughs]

**Austin:** Brnine and Thisbe, I want to see you walk to the door of the ritual or whatever. What's...?

**Janine:** Do you remember that trap I set?

**Austin:** I do remember the trap that you set, two episodes ago or three, six episodes ago. Whatever it was.

**Janine:** The weird carnivorous plant with all the sticky bits that's, like, existing in in-between space?

**Sylvia:** [quietly] Are you talking about the Divine Motion?

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. It was, like, a trap in stratus space, in the slipstream, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, I remember that.

**Janine:** I didn't make that with the intention of combining it with anything.

**Austin:** Yeah, but here we are?

**Janine:** But it sure seems like that would be a good idea.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Keith:** And it's already done.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** I mean, well, the ritual wouldn't be done. I just still have to get this weird pollen sac into...

**Keith:** Yeah. I mean, there's already a car waiting for you to go.

**Janine:** Some kind of harmony with whatever the fuck that thing is.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Can you remind listeners of this? [Janine laughs quietly] Because if we only barely remember what it is, [**Janine:** Yes.] the listener probably needs...

**Janine:** I remember fully what it is.

**Austin:** It was your thing.

**Janine:** When I glided through currents...Gliding Through Currents lets you— gives you the opportunity to set a trap for the faction game.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** But we didn't have a faction game for this, so it was setting a trap vaguely, and we said we'd figure out a mechanic for deploying it later. It was basically— I referenced, like, those carnivorous plants that have, like, those, like, tendrils with the sticky stuff on the ends, [**Austin:** Yes.] and they, like, grab flies and then digest them.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** And they're like sort of tentacles with the little mini tentacles on top of them with the, like, sugary goop.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And I described Thisbe as basically creating something like this, while in that space, with the intention of being able to deploy it at some point during the fight to, you know, like, what's the antidote to Motion? It's getting stuck.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That rules.

**Janine:** Now, what if you got stuck, and then someone, like, put pollen on you?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Oh no! [Dre laughs]

**Janine:** And you were allergic.

**Austin:** That's bad. We've set up why that's bad for the last, yeah. Yeah, I like using that.

**Janine:** Or even there's pollen in the goop. I don't know. I'm spitballing.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** No, I like that.

**Janine:** I'm goopballing.

**Dre:** [laughs quietly] Goopballing.

**Austin:** The idea of, like, that's the third heat here, is the thing that makes it something that Motion can't avoid and can't even avoid in this sort of, like, metaphysical telepathic way.

**Janine:** Chekov's flytrap.

**Austin:** It's everywhere, right? It exists on both of these sorts of realities.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So you're kind of using that, and are you going physically to that, like, central hub where Perennial is, at this point, to make that—? To kind of walk that bridge between those two things?

**Janine:** I think that probably makes the most sense, right?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, and I think that there's, like, a nice bookending.

**Janine:** To get this, like, physical thing.

**Austin:** Yeah, and there's nice bookending effect here of, like, the Perennial Wave happens after, uh...whew. I said her name.

**Janine:** Teasel?

**Austin:** Yeah, Teasel Mode goes and hooks up with— or, you know, kind of actually installs Perennial at the central power node, 5— whatever, 2000 years ago, 2500 years ago. So, yeah. That makes sense. I think that we then see a kind of very similar shot as what we saw whenever Teasel did this originally, right? Which was like the sort of— a big gate opening up here, you know? You're confronted with the kind of raw, glowing, kind of pink-purple energy of the Perennial Wave here. And Brnine and Thisbe, you are



about to go, I don't know, tinker with the DNA of the galaxy. Let's take a breath.

**Janine:** [sarcastic] What could go wrong?

**Austin:** What could go wrong?

**Sylvia:** No big deal.

**Dre:** No, nothing.

## **Cori and Levi Move [0:31:03]**

**Austin:** Before we roll those dice, let's look at the battlefield here. How's everybody doing? Cori, you won your duel, and now the person—

**Sylvia:** Unscathed.

**Austin:** Uh huh, unscathed, which is sick. The Divine who's been harassing you for a year has landed on the shard where Perennial is and deployed two more units.

**Sylvia:** Bring it on.

**Austin:** Including two units who have been chasing you for the last year. There are still a handful of other Pact mechs and ships out in space, and the Ekpyrosis is charging a gigantic cannon pointed, seemingly, forward towards y'all generally? [Sylvia sighs] What's the play?

**Sylvia:** I'd love to try and stop that thing from firing.

**Dre:** Yeah, that sounds like a good plan.

**Austin:** It does sound like a good plan. Also, I should note, again, you and all of your allies have ticked up to 2 out of 4 on the Motion clock.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's the other state of play thing. How do you want to try to stop it from firing?

**Sylvia:** Uh...this is what I'm trying to figure out. I'm, like, frantically looking over my sheet here.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** I'll do the same thing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. 'Cause I don't think just straight up attacking it is going to be able to knock the cannon offline right away.

**Austin:** Uh, I will now tell you, now that you're able to kind of comprehend it and stand in front of it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's Tier 7.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Austin:** It's not always Tier 7, but when Commitment is kind of aligned with it and kind of running through it, it is Tier 7. It is two Tier 5s, and when they've combined like this, they've gone up to Tier 7.

**Sylvia:** I see.

**Dre:** It might be time for the doohickey.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it might be doohickey time.

**Keith:** Doohickey is Tier 6.

**Austin:** It is.

**Sylvia:** Well, doesn't it also have— does it not have any tags that make it higher?

**Austin:** Tier 6 is enough to try. Tier 6 is—

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** Is enough to try, [**Austin:** Yep.] but it's not a—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's a bad roll, and there's only three shots before Brnine has to run back to take the helm?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I thought it might have Bane or something.

**Austin:** I believe it has...let's see. Oh, there it is. Earth Cannon 6, Sniper, Divine, Decisive, Guided, Vorpai, Huge, Setup, Reload.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** No Bane. Damn.

**Austin:** No Bane.

**Keith:** Although, Guided.

**Austin:** Guided. Yep.

**Keith:** Guided.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And then what's the consequence to this thing talking a Risk? What does that do?

**Austin:** Uh, you know, the person firing it would take the Risk, Keith.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** So.

**Dre:** Well, it's got Vorpai?

**Keith:** And what kind of character is, uh, Hunting?

**Austin:** I think Brnine would take the Risk, because the *Blue Channel* is Brnine's.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Weirdly. That's the way the system—

**Keith:** Vorpai. Right, Vorpai's a weird one, right?

**Austin:** Vorpai is a weird one.

**Keith:** What does that one do?

**Dre:** Upgrades to a Peril instead of a Risk?

**Austin:** Once per— yeah, uh huh.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That's really good.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. And so, quickly, without saying much more, Brnine, but if the *Blue Channel*— the way that *Armour Astir* works is vehicles are fundamentally extensions of their pilots.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And so the *Blue Channel* is technically still your ship, mechanically speaking.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And so, any Risks it takes would go on your sheet, presumably.

**Ali:** I understand.

**Austin:** Unless someone else was piloting it. I mean, like, another player character was directing it and using crew. So, like, Leap, if you were like, "Hunting, fire the thing," then

I guess it would actually go to you, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] if it was you doing it, you know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Whoever's using the Crew roll, I guess, is actually who it would be.

**Dre:** Hmm. Do you roll Crew using, like, Brnine's Crew modifier?

**Austin:** It's the ship's Crew—

**Dre:** The ship's Crew modifier, yeah.

**Austin:** The party has a Crew modifier. It's +3, yeah.

**Dre:** Okay. Okay.

**Ali:** I mean, I'm fine with taking a Risk. I've been very safe. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Right, so like, if you get a call in from Hunting being like, "Here's the situation, Captain. Should I use the gun?" and you say, "Yes," then it would be you, I guess. Whereas, if it's Leap being like, "Hey, Hunting, I'm doing this," it would be Leap who would take the Risk.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** If you chose to use Guided, right? Instead of just rolling it, which you could also just do. And alternatively, you could come up with a plan to try to make it not be Tier 7.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Austin:** You could come up with a different plan to make it stop shooting, for instance. There are definitely things on the table that could do that that are interesting but are weird. We've seen...we have seen Cori stop people from shooting before.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I could try and Consecrate Ground again.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I just worry about that.

**Dre:** Could we go inside the ship?

**Austin:** You sure could. It's gigantic.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** It's a city, right?

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** In fact, I think if you wanted to Consecrate Ground, you would have to go inside the ship. It's that big, right?

**Sylvia:** I can do this.

**Austin:** You would have to find the, like, central power area and consecrate it.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Austin:** You know, or like, the gun zone. You know, if you could go find the gun zone inside of the Ekpyrosis and consecrate it.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** To prevent it from taking violence.

**Dre:** There's probably a sign.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. You just follow the signs.

**Keith:** [voice] Welcome to the gun zone.

**Austin:** [imitating Keith's voice modulator] Welcome— welcome— welcome to the gun zone.

**Keith:** [modulated with echo] Welcome to the gun zone. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Thank you. That sounds like a fun little mission.

**Sylvia:** I'm down.

**Dre:** Count me in. I'm going with you.

**Austin:** All right.

**Sylvia:** Operation Gun Zone.

**Austin:** You're all going to advance to 3, if you go inside that ship.

**Sylvia:** Is there a way to resist that at all?

**Austin:** No. Mm-mm.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Not with the—

**Austin:** I'll let you resist the fourth one. You're not going to get to resist just—

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** If you're entering Motion's—

**Sylvia:** Can someone bring the mister?

**Austin:** You totally could try to— you could mist yourselves first. You could give yourselves a little mist.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** You could have the *Blue Channel* mist you first.

**Sylvia:** That might be the move.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Mist me up, Captain.

**Sylvia:** If we're going in.

**Austin:** Let's do that.

**Sylvia:** Can I get some of that Axe?

**Austin:** [chuckles] God. [Dre laughs] All right. I think maybe this is a great moment for the *Blue Channel* to do the misting. Hunting does the misting. Everybody drops back down to 1.

**Dre:** Yay.

**Austin:** Spending four of the mist units and giving y'all time to— or, you know, a little extra— why am I doing this? It's all going to advance back up in a second anyway. I don't know why I did that.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I guess 'cause...

**Sylvia:** For funsies.

**Austin:** It's fun.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** It's fun to lower and raise meters and stuff.



**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Who's going in?

**Sylvia:** Well, me.

**Dre:** Me!

**Sylvia:** And Levi, it sounds like.

**Austin:** Okay. Let's put Levi back on the board here. Boom. Leap, are you staying outside to try to continue fighting the fight against the Divines and the ships?

**Keith:** Yeah, that really makes a lot of sense.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** It's very odd to be...there's not a lot of people left out here.

**Austin:** There are still a lot of allies here.

**Keith:** Allies. Yeah.

**Austin:** And you know what time it is? It's actually time for Valour to return to the field but on your side, along with a—

**Keith:** Damn. That was a quick switch.

**Austin:** Well, you know, sometimes the heart wants what it wants, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Damn. That's beautiful.

**Keith:** And I guess this is part of being valorous.

**Austin:** Exactly. Exactly. And along with that...where the fuck did I put...? I had the Ataraxia here somewhere, but I didn't show it. I don't know where it went. Cas'alear is in

cas's mech alongside Valour. The two of them once dueled, but now they are back fighting alongside one another. And so you have a little extra support here, Leap, and I think that they are basically going to, like, take care of the units that have been harassing you over the last little bit, you know?

**Keith:** Gonna mop up.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. All right. Move this to the token layer. Boom, there's Cas'alear. Cool. So yeah, let's— hah. Let's talk about what it's like in there, Cori and Levi.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. What's it like in there?

**Austin:** What's the way in that you find? Like, what's the...? When we see y'all going into the ship, like, what's the pathway or whatever?

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Dre:** Hmm. I guess it's got to be big enough to get your mech in.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Is it, like, a vent? Is it, like, a trash shoot? Is it a docking bay?

**Sylvia:** Are we venting sus right now?

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Dre:** Jesus christ. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** It's 2024.

**Sylvia:** It's been a long recording.

**Austin:** I know. I know.

**Sylvia:** I'm just riffing.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** You know.

**Dre:** No, no, no. It was a good riff.

**Sylvia:** Okay. I think that's kind of got to be the way in, right? Like, we need to to somewhere that's not next to weapons.

**Austin:** Yeah, and also, that makes sense, in terms of why your things advance back up to 2, right?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Is you go through the vent that it's pumping out the Motion molecules.

**Sylvia:** They're spraying exhaust in our face.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Exactly. All right. So yeah, they immediately advance back up to 2 on this clock. I'm going to move the clock over to where y'all are, so we can get a little more visual clarity on this very busy screen. [Dre chuckles] It is inside the places that were once big gardens and plazas, are sort of...I wouldn't say that they're mocking replicas, but there is a sort of...they're memories. They're echoes, and they are kind of...what they are is: once there was a park here, beautiful with trees and bushes and plants, and all of that still exists, except it's the inky black material that is Commitment. It's dripping. Everything's out of place. The trees are growing from the wrong places, at the wrong angles. It feels like if you touched any of this, it would cover your machines. I guess, Levi, you are— are you riding on Cori's mech?

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** That's fun. Yeah.

**Dre:** If she'll have me.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no.

**Dre:** I don't want to presume.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** No, hell yeah, man.

**Austin:** You're doing, like, the *Titanfall* ride. It's happening.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We're in it. Parts of what were here— I guess— heh. You sometimes see what look like people but are just weird Commitment echoes of them doing things like going about there day. Because, as a reminder again, this ship is the biggest warship in the Apostolosian fleet, but it's also the biggest city in the Apostolosian fleet or it was once that, and so it was filled with civilians who lived on the frontline inside of this giant warship and did things like bake cakes and, you know, ran errands and, you know, were off on their own little lives. People lived— you know, people were born, lived, and died here on this ship, and there are kind of echoes of what their daily lives were all around you. There are, of course, small person-sized spaces here, you know, hallways that you're way to big to go into, but there are also lots of these kinds of huge vents and hallways and connecting tunnels where military hardware was always being moved through, which makes this very convenient for you to try to move through. But I am going to need, I think from Cori as the pilot, a roll to not kind of fall into Commitment or, you know, kind of get picked up by Commitment [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] as, you know, a new problem. This is Weather the Storm, probably Defy.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Though potentially Sense or something else. You know, basically you're being—

**Sylvia:** [pressed] No, I think it's Defy.

**Austin:** Okay, Defy. [Sylvia and Dre laugh] Well, that's a fucking 13. You didn't even need the...

**Sylvia:** That's a 13.

**Keith:** I think it wouldn't have mattered, yeah.

**Austin:** It wouldn't have mattered, yeah.

**Sylvia:** No, but hey, listen.

**Austin:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Gotta be careful.

**Keith:** You could've rolled Talk.

**Austin:** You know, with the 13, you not only manage to avoid detection, but you start to notice something about all of the figures who are walking around, and some of them are on dates, and some of them are, you know, running to their battlestations, and some of them are— it's just, like, all of the things that used to happen on this ship. They're all Dahlia. They're all in the shape of Dahlia. They all have Dahlia's features.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Ooh.

**Austin:** They all have— they're all, like, weird black inky replicas of the now-dead former Princt, former Elect of Commitment, former Elect of Integrity.

**Sylvia:** Hate that.

**Austin:** None of them have seen you. Creepy in here. Leap.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Damn, we are venting sus. [Austin chuckles]

**Leap [0:43:15]**

**Austin:** How's it going, Leap?

**Keith:** It's fine. I'm good.

**Austin:** Are you going to continue dodging shit and trying to focus down Present?

**Keith:** Um, yeah. It's gone— you know, if I get hit, I'm due for a hit, and I think it's—

**Austin:** You're due for a hit.

**Keith:** Yeah. So, if I have to take one shot to get Present down to 0, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] then I think that that's a win overall.

**Austin:** Yeah. I will note that the—

**Keith:** I think it's boring.

**Austin:** It is.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] I'm sorry that I'm just rolling Defy and rolling shoot, but I'm in a tank.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I don't know that it's boring. I think it's very Leap-like to be balletically spinning across this battlefield shooting at things.

**Keith:** We've gotta remember the spinning.

**Austin:** We gotta remember the spinning.

**Dre:** That's true.

**Austin:** This is the thing. And I also think, to some degree, it's like, Leap is an action hero. We're seeing action hero shit happen, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah. I did think briefly about hijacking one of these ships. That would be cool.

**Austin:** That's a thing you could do. You're a pirate. You know how to do that.

**Keith:** Yeah. Maybe— what's going on with Present? Present's a ship, right? Nah.

**Austin:** Present is a ship.

**Keith:** [thoughtful noise] What is the nature of Present as a Divine? [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Present historically— so, Present is one of the original members of the Pact of Necessary Venture.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You know, which means very aligned with what the old Pact's goals were, in terms of moving the world towards a sort of set of liberal, pseudo-liberal republics, you know?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** Separating out the stels, getting rid of the Principality and replacing it with a group of five...you know, I say liberal, but liberal leaning libertarian, you know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Very free market focused. Very freedom focused.

**Keith:** So, liberal.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Classically liberal, Keith, is I think what Present would—

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But Present is also something else, which is like, Present has a certain bias that Gallica certainly had, but I think anybody who has Present's abilities has this, which

is Present can be anywhere in the galaxy at any point in any time, and so there is a sort of lover of fine things, [**Keith:** Mm.] a curiosity about what is in the world that they haven't seen yet. In this case, also a sort of doggedness against anyone who would stop this sort of hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, right? Present always wants new novel things, and anyone who would stop them from getting that or who would hurt them in any way becomes, like, public enemy number one, which is what happened to Cori here, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Damn. Present's sounding a lot like both Past and Future at the same time.

**Austin:** I mean, they were all—

**Keith:** And not very much like Present.

**Austin:** They were—

**Sylvia:** Whoa.

**Austin:** Well, you know, no, because the thing Present wants is: "Ooh, I want my current moment to be as cool as possible constantly."

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Right?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** And so I'm going to shape past and future until I can have that be that way, you know?

**Keith:** Well, I think we're in a— you know, we're in a moment here where the present looks a lot different than the present [**Austin:** Right.] that Present is fighting for. That is a present of the past.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah.



**Keith:** A present that let them constantly seek something to go to in their future.

**Austin:** 100%. And part of what they—

**Keith:** This guy's a...

**Austin:** Oof. Listen, I mean, this is why they were the members of the Pact, Keith.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? It was those five.

**Keith:** Hey, hey, I'm not— you know, I'm not surprised that this is not, like, a perfect [Austin: Yes.] you know, rock-solid ideology.

**Austin:** Perfect— yes, uh huh. Yeah. Or again, more importantly, again, this is why Past, Present, Future, Motion, and Space all worked together, in a way.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? Was to like, they wanted— they all had a vision for what their daily lives would be like, and all of them were very selfishly motivated and were like, [Keith: Oof.] “Ooh, we five could work together to align for where all of those things work for us the best.”

**Keith:** And yeah, I identify with some of these goals. I like nice things, you know? Leap likes nice things.

**Austin:** I think that—

**Keith:** What do you think Leap's doing all the time?

**Austin:** Leap and Present are more alike in some ways than not, in terms of personal desires maybe, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Are you going to crash your tank into Present at this point?

**Keith:** I've been playing a lot of *Sea of Thieves* again.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And one of my favorite things to do in *Sea of Thieves* is to get into a cannon and shoot myself at an enemy ship.

**Sylvia:** Yeah!

**Austin:** It's very cool to do. It's simply very cool to do.

**Keith:** And I have a cannon.

**Sylvia:** I love doing that, and I love using the grapple to pull people back.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, that's also very fun to do.

**Keith:** Oh, that's really fun. Yeah, that's great.

**Sylvia:** Just if you need another move later. You could do that.

**Austin:** Well, and this is such an established Leap thing, right? This is what your old mech used to do. [brief pause] Do you not remember this?

**Keith:** Did my old mech used to shoot me?

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** Your old mech used to breach into big ships for—

**Keith:** Yes. Right, yes.

**Austin:** Or your old— you know?

**Keith:** Totally. Yeah.

**Austin:** That was, like, the thing it did. It was like an ambulance vehicle that was meant to, like, pierce the outside walls of things and let people get in.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Except you turned it into a pirate vessel.

**Keith:** That was a great idea.

**Austin:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah. Um...let's do it.

**Austin:** All right. You're loading yourself into a cannon. Presumably this is a maneuver you know how to do already? Like, this is not a— this is, like, a known thing.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Okay.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** You have some sort of...

**Keith:** I have my blast shoes on.

**Austin:** Right, I see. Okay.

**Keith:** My compression legs.

**Austin:** Is it you, or are you in some sort of shell [Sylvia laughs] that is being fired?

**Keith:** Oh, it's me.

**Austin:** Okay. I think this is...this is either Defy Danger or it's Exchange Blows.

**Dre:** Yeah. [chuckles]

**Austin:** And the thing you'd be giving, the Risk, is like, "Leap Is Inside Now." [Austin and Keith laugh] Which I think is funny enough that it should be—

**Keith:** And it is a Risk!

**Austin:** It sure is!

**Keith:** Let's do it. Exchange Blows, "Leap Is Inside You Now."

**Sylvia:** [hesitant] Okay.

**Dre:** Mm...

**Janine:** No.

**Austin:** I didn't have to say it— I tried to avoid saying it like that.

**Janine:** It was different before.

**Keith:** You said it like that. That's how you said it.

**Austin:** No, I left the door—

**Janine:** Nope.

**Austin:** I very carefully danced around it. Give me a Clash. 2d6 plus, was it 3 for you too?

**Keith:** That's a 9. Oh, sorry, that's a 14.

**Austin:** Because the 1 is a 6.

**Keith:** 'Cause the 1 is a 6.

**Austin:** Not— wait, what is it? What's the— oh, it's Kalmeria, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, I'm Arcane.

**Austin:** You are Arcane, so yeah, that beats Divine. The 1 is a 6. That is the highest roll you could get here without a higher stat. Yeah, you have— please tell me what this looks like, Keith.

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** I'm giving Compromised is the Risk I am giving to Present. Presumably this is a Risk and not a Peril.

**Keith:** Yeah. So, this thing is malfunctioning. It's annoyed, which is sort of [**Austin:** Uh huh.] keeping it not present. It's full of holes. I've blasted it full of holes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And, like, I would love to be shot just into this thing, like through a broken window.

**Austin:** That's exactly what I imagined, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's, like, through an already— you didn't make a new hole.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This was an established, you know, problem with the armor.

**Keith:** And I shoot through and sort of, like, land feet first against, like, the inside wall [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and then sort of, like, hop down.

**Austin:** It's nice in here.

**Keith:** Like, red velvet nice? Or like...

**Austin:** Literally, yeah. Like, that's the vibe inside of Present, yeah, at least in the ship mode.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** Present as a ship is like, again, it's luxe, right? Like, it's meant to be a kind of, like, cool swanky, you know. There's definitely been a lot of parties thrown here.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** So yeah, it's nice in here.

**Keith:** There's a ballroom.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, uh huh. Open bar.

**Keith:** Most of the rooms are ballrooms because of its shape.

**Austin:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Boo. [Dre and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** Boo.

**Sylvia:** Boo.

**Austin:** Get out of here. Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Scram.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's a ball. It's a big ball.

**Dre:** Ohh.

**Austin:** So now everybody is inside of big ships at this point, importantly.

**Keith:** Yeah. [Dre laughs] And my crew is free, as a Tier 2.

**Austin:** To help, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, the Precipice, to help.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And does still have those Ruin weapons, so it can hit up to a Tier 4.

**Austin:** Okay. So, it's going to be fine against these other ships, basically.

**Keith:** I can technically hit up to a Tier 5, right? It could just hit without penalty up to a Tier 4.

**Austin:** Yes. You know, I think we're at the point here where it's like, you are— this outside fight, with the exception of Ekpyrosis getting ready to shoot this giant gun somewhere [**Keith:** Yeah.] and the *Blue Channel* being able to shoot the Earth Cannon somewhere, [**Keith:** Yeah.] we're kind of evened out, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The allies have— your allies have lined up. You're holding back things.

**Keith:** And I've got a bunch of pros. Burkhard, Martel, Dissent, Dissent, Bonaccorso, Robottom.

**Austin:** Right. These are pros. These aren't—

**Keith:** Monty Gloss and Alexandryah OctoberMalaise. They can handle it.

**Austin:** Yeah. Let's— and I know I'm holding Brnine and Thisbe back here for a second, but you know, I want to make sure the ritual comes at a cool moment. Ekpyrosis crew.

## **Cori and Levi [0:52:15]**

**Sylvia:** Yeh.

**Dre:** Yeh.

**Austin:** Where are you going inside the hell zone?

**Sylvia:** This is a fantastic question.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Are you trying to sense out—? Like, how do you find out where the best place to do a Consecrate Ground is?

**Sylvia:** Uh, would there be...? I mean, I'm assuming there's no, like, this is— you know, the maps at a mall. I don't think there's any of those in here, huh?

**Austin:** There are, but they're still all inky and black, and it just says, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] like, 30 different times, it says, "You Are Here," but it points to a bunch of different, you know, places, so.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** My guess would be to either do something in a command room, because then I could set the "things within this area can't harm things," [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and then you can't use your commands or whatever.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Or to get to, like, a core of some kind and do it there.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** How are you finding where those places are, is my question? Like, is there a...is this, like, an intuitive knowledge of where things are? Is this a— you know, "I know how ships are laid out," et cetera, or is this a— are you using Perennial magic?

**Sylvia:** Um...

**Austin:** Levi, do you secretly have scouting information we haven't talked about?

**Dre:** I don't, unfortunately.



**Austin:** Okay.

**Dre:** I mean, I do have my Maps and Tools.

**Austin:** Well, wait. [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** You also just got better stats for this sort of thing than me.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Pause. Sorry. You do have the thing, is what you're saying, Levi.

**Dre:** What thing?

**Austin:** What's the mouseover on Maps and Tools say?

**Dre:** Oh. Yeah, "You can always find a way through or past." Fuck me.

**Austin:** All right, so you literally have maps. You literally have already done this. Somehow someone provided you with Ekpyrosis maps at some point. This is the value of having friends, of having Levi's Boys.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Then yeah, I think you have to guide Cori through this place to one of those places, either the power supply or command center. Up to you which one you want.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** But you're going to have to do a— I guess probably a Sense to compare your maps to the world, you know?

**Dre:** Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Maybe this is a Read the Room. Maybe this is a Dispel Uncertainties. Up to you.

**Dre:** Yeah. I'm going to say...Sylvi, I'm going to say power supply, just because that

seems like it could be potentially less guarded?

**Sylvia:** Power supply sounds right. Yeah, I'm down with that.

**Dre:** And also, like, if you turn the power off, it doesn't matter if somebody wants to still shoot the gun.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** Whereas if you get rid of the person who shoots the gun, but the power is still on...

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** Let's Read the Room here, I think, maybe, 'cause that's the one that has, like, "where can I find X?" here in it as a question. So, this is a Sense. 2d6 plus Sense.

**Dre:** Okie doke. Okay, 9.

**Austin:** That is a 9. On a 7-9, hold 1, and spend it one-for-one to ask the following questions. Your Hold lasts as long as you leave the— hmm. As long— nope. Until you leave the current situation [Dre chuckles] or it changes significantly.

**Dre:** Sure. Hey, Austin, where can I find the power generator?

**Austin:** It's, uh, it's right over there. It's right down there, and then you turn left, and then you turn right, and then you go down a duct, and then you come out of the duct, and you've gotta spin around 180 and then go back through a different door. It's a little bit of a pain, but you can totally do it. [Dre chuckles] So, you have the pathway here. However, it does bring you closer into the kind of military zone, obviously.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** So, Cori, I am going to need another Weather the Storm, as you, once again, try to get past now not civilian guards but the replica guard— like, the replica military that has been produced by Commitment here.

**Sylvia:** This is still, um, Defy?

**Austin:** It's— I think, at this point, it's— I think there's like, are you being sneaky, or are you being brash? Are you being bold, right?

**Sylvia:** Well, which of those words would you use to describe Coriolis Sunset?

**Austin:** It's Defy. It's bold, right? So. Yeah, I think—

**Sylvia:** It's brash. It's bold. It's not sneaky.

**Austin:** Yeah, at this point of the ship, you know, you will be— you will be noticed but outrunning them if you use Defy, whereas, if you used Sense or Know, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] you'd be, like, sneaky mode, you know?

**Sylvia:** It's a roll that I have a decent chance of making—

**Austin:** I fully understand.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Versus a roll that is, like, a coin flip, so I'm going Defy.

**Austin:** All right.

**Sylvia:** And I got a 12.

**Austin:** And you get a 12 with the Defy.

**Dre:** Fuck yeah.

**Sylvia:** 5 and a 5 plus 2.

**Austin:** Now, I will say, you'd have gotten a 10 even if you'd been sneaky.

**Sylvia:** Now, Austin, why you gotta do this?

**Dre:** We don't know that.

**Austin:** You're right. You're right. Just saying it differently could have put different...photons in the universe.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. The vibes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** No, I've got it here. I've got it here. She would have made it.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Fuck! [Dre chuckles]

**Austin:** All right. You take the route that Levi has described to you, and along the way, you keep seeing these, like, faux-Dahlia figures that are, [**Sylvia:** Oh.] at this point, also, like, walking on the walls and the ceilings, going about their days as if that's where they're supposed to be, you know?

**Dre:** That's fine.

**Austin:** And, you know, one of them, who is literally standing at the top left corner of a room, points at you and, you know, opens its mouth to talk. It's not a per— it's a figure of a person, and, like, screams.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** Screams but it sounds like a motorcycle revving, you know, too high.

**Sylvia:** It's the, um, end of—

**Dre:** It's the Body Snatchers.

**Sylvia:** The Body Snatchers, yeah. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** And yeah, you are now being chased, but you're outrunning them. You're getting further, you're getting further, and you can feel that you're getting closer to some sort of power source here.

## **Thisbe and Brnine [0:57:40]**

**Austin:** All right, Brnine and Thisbe. Arbor project. Facing Perennial, facing the— I mean, I think you just get to see her, right? Among the light, the kind of pink and purple, is the floating, you know, Russian sage-like spinal column/nerve network shaped Divine that is Perennial. You know, and at her feet, around this kind of big vent of the energy, is, you know, eons of old, you know, flower petals that have fallen and died and turned to dust, and some of them are newer than that, and, you know, she looks older than we last saw her. She physically looks like, you know, an older plant instead of a younger one. There are more branches, and there are branches that have died, and there are some branches on her that are dead but still remain. She doesn't look so cleanly like a humanoid nervous system now. There are branches for her that have kind of turned in different directions. There are branches on her that seem like they've been infected by, you know, parasites that have long since died but so has the branch, you know? Some of the color in the flowers that have fallen, you know, aren't the sharp purple of the Russian sage but are kind of, even the newer leaves here, the newer petals, seem like they have taken on a more faded color, a browner color. And, you know, she doesn't so much as turn to you as, like, sort of swim around this well of energy and face you. What do you do?

**Janine:** Uh...god, do we have to, like, explain this to her, or...?

**Austin:** Maybe. I hadn't, you know, maybe.

**Janine:** Or is she just, like, cool with plant stuff.

**Ali:** Everyone made fun of me before for it, but I'm glad that I had the eye contact vibe check with Perennial before.

**Austin:** You did have the eye contact. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I swear to god, I thought you were going to do a British accent. [Ali laughs]

[British accent] "I can't believe." [Keith and Janine laugh]

**Austin:** Can you imagine if Ali just one day decided to pick up a British accent as an affectation? [Ali and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** That would rule.

**Janine:** That would be pretty funny.

**Austin:** That'd be very funny.

**Dre:** It would be very funny.

**Austin:** No one say anything if that happens. Everyone just be cool.

**Keith:** "Everyone tried to make fun of me for this." Proceeds with a British accent. [Dre chuckles]

**Austin:** You did do that vibe check.

**Ali:** I did.

**Austin:** So I think there is not immediate hostility or concern, but I do think a pitch is necessary. I do think you have to say—

**Janine:** I also think, thinking about it for a second, like, I think Thisbe would make that pitch, right? Because Thisbe's whole thing is, like, is trying to understand and respect the autonomy of Divines.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And, like, that whole situation.

**Austin:** It sure has been, yeah. Scattered shards.

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah, I think— so, I think Thisbe approaches with this big, like, polleny planty thing.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And I think just kind of, like, explains it as if, like, picking up an existing conversation.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** Just, like, really— like, extremely to the point in a way that, I think, would be jarring to anyone other than, like, a robot talking to a god robot.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** But I think is very much just a thing of: “This is what this is. This is what it’s going to do, hopefully. Let’s go,” you know?

**Austin:** Yeah. I think you probably do still need to make a Talk here. There’s not, like, I don’t think you need to Weather the— or, sorry, Exchange Blows and then Strike Decisively.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But I do think this is, you know, it’s a big...

**Janine:** Does it have to be Talk? Can it be, like, Channel? Am I Channeling?

**Austin:** No, doing it will be Channeling.

**Janine:** Am I talking?

**Austin:** You’re talking.

**Janine:** Right, yeah. Fuck.

**Austin:** You’re making a pitch.

**Janine:** [sarcastic] I’m really good at Talk.

**Austin:** And Brnine’s here to help, obviously. Not that Brnine has a higher Talk, but the

two of you together do have that +3 Gravity.

**Janine:** Although, I'm bad at Talk because I talk to people. Like, humans.

**Austin:** This is still Talk. This is a...

**Janine:** I know. I'm just saying, like, my rationale for taking bad Talk was that, like, people don't get Thisbe, you know?

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Janine:** But I guess this is also a strange enough thing that it's not wrong? But like, still.

**Austin:** Right. I do know what you mean. Yeah, uh huh.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, I think it's still Talk, and I think that, yeah, let's— because you're asking her to, in some ways, like, you know, she's trying to break the wheel of history, and to break something you have to touch it, and she's been able to touch it through the Perennial Wave for 5000 years or 3000 years or whatever, and that is— it's almost asking her to take her hands off the wheel, even as she's trying to break it, because she doesn't know what's going to happen if you try to inject it with this, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And the last thing that got injected into it both changed the world in dramatic new ways with Kalmeria and also led to Motion coming back and Motion currently charging up a cannon, which, by the way, just went off and destroyed the Portcullis gate that's connecting you to your allies. The Ekpyrosis shudders and shifts in the middle of this action when no one was expecting it, and you will not get more allies arriving through the Portcullis gate, as far as you can tell. It has been destroyed, along with many of her own people and along with the *Mosaic True*, the Apostolosian ship that was here to support you. Time is off the essence. You have to convince Perennial to support you before the next shot takes out more of your people.



**Janine:** Cool.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** [sighs] All right. I mean, let's— I have all this stuff, and I don't really remember what it's from.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** And I want to— I'll be honest, I want to clear out stuff that's not relevant anymore.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Janine:** I have, quote, “advantage from Cori murdering someone.”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Uh huh. [Ali laughs]

**Janine:** Which I think is not relevant anymore, because that was from outside, [**Austin:** Yeah.] from the outside fight, I think.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** So, I'll get rid of that. I have “one success into failure, comma, failure success.” I don't know what that is. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** I don't know how I'm supposed to help that one. I don't... [Ali laughs] Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Sure.

**Janine:** “Hold 1 on Divines having involuntary/knock-on effects, like Perennial's sage.”

**Ali:** Oh?

**Janine:** I don't really remember what that was about either.

**Austin:** That seems relevant.

**Janine:** That seems relevant, right?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And also, “take advantage on a first roll against giant mech-sized Perennial kaiju.” I also don't remember what that was.

**Austin:** Yeah, those have been largely dealt with. Those are the Nanobeasts. You learned about the Nanobeasts, you know?

**Janine:** Okay. Right, okay.

**Austin:** Yeah. “Hold 1 on Divines having involuntary/knock-on effects.” Oh, I remember that one. That was—

**Janine:** Yeah?

**Austin:** The thing that you discovered was, broadly, was like, oh, there are ways— I'm not going to get the phrasing on this right or remember exactly what we talked about, [Janine laughs] but the thing that you discovered was basically— or the thing you kind of realized was like, oh, there are things that Divines can produce or do or Divine processes end up with that aren't intentional, that Divines aren't always like— the thing that you found was that Perennial's—

**Janine:** Right.

**Austin:** The Russian sage was growing in places that we're not, like, explicitly put there by Perennial, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Which feels relevant here.

**Janine:** She wasn't being like, "And I'm going to put some sage here and some sage here."

**Austin:** Exactly. Exactly. Whoops, I didn't mean to turn that on. Yeah, exactly. And so I feel like there is a value there that's like, that's— you know, maybe take advantage on this roll from that, because you kind of have a line in. There's a way to frame the conversation around intentionality or unintentionally or, you know? Right.

**Janine:** Okay. Okay.

**Austin:** So, I think it's advantage.

**Janine:** All right. I'll take it.

**Austin:** Yeah. 3d6 plus 0, take highest. Oh my god!

**Janine:** Well, that...

**Austin:** Wow! Wooow!

**Keith:** Welcome to hell!

**Austin:** What goes around! [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Sorry! We're going to hell now. The season just became hell season.

**Janine:** Ram's horns, ram's horns, ram's horns.

**Austin:** What's this mean? What's the— hey, what's the last time we rolled three 6s?

**Dre:** Don't worry about it.

**Austin:** Hmm.

**Janine:** Yeah...

**Austin:** Damn.

**Keith:** It opens a portal directly to the finale of next season.

**Austin:** [laughs] I just think it's funny that it's like, the last time this happened, Figure died, and this time, it's you connecting to Perennial and convincing Perennial to do this. Three 6s, obviously it's a 12. We take the highest.

**Janine:** God, it's extra funny, because Perennial's the Devil.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Right? Perennial's the Devil.

**Janine:** It's got layers.

**Austin:** And Perennial was connected to Figure, and it's all here.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah, she was crying.

**Janine:** And also the ram's horns thing.

**Austin:** She was crying. What's the ram's horns thing? Is that— 6 is a ram's horn?

**Janine:** Just that the 6s represent ram's horns like the Devil has.

**Austin:** Oh, like the Devil. I see.

**Janine:** And Thisbe also has big curly horns.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Ohh.

**Ali:** And Brnine was there too. [laughter]

**Janine:** A 6 can look like a B in a mirror.

**Dre:** Hey, Brnine was here for all of it.

**Austin:** That's right, yeah.

**Janine:** It's like a backwards B.

**Austin:** Uh huh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** [imitating Vine] There's a B?

**Janine:** Brnine has six letters in the name Brnine.

**Ali:** True.

**Austin:** Wow, we can get anywhere with words.

**Dre:** Wow. [Ali laughs quietly]

**Janine:** And Brnine has "nine" in it, and nine is an upside down six.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, wow. Digital root.

**Ali:** This is true.

**Sylvia:** Whoa. Oh my god! [Janine, Keith, and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** Yeah, what's the digital root of 18? Huh? [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Brnine is Zero. 9.

**Austin:** It's 9.

**Sylvia:** Brnine People, Brnine Hours, Brnine Doors. [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Ali:** Wow.

**Sylvia:** Real eyes realize real lies. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Janine:** That was perfect.

**Austin:** Yeah, and I think that it's like, you know, Perennial is not one for many words, historically. Perennial is a— Perennial starts laughing. You know? Which is maybe creepy for people outside. Ekpyrosis just shot your only means of immediate escape or support. It's exploding. There's dust and, you know, everything looks bad out there, and then Perennial starts laughing throughout the air.

**Janine:** Yeah, that would be creepy. That does seem creepy.

**Austin:** But she's creepy! She's creepy! It's illegal? [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Eh, it's fine.

**Janine:** Let her be creepy.

**Austin:** To be creepy? To be a creepy woman now?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, come on.

**Janine:** Oh, suddenly a lady can't laugh when bad things happen? I see.

**Austin:** When bad things happen?

**Janine:** Okay, uh huh.

**Austin:** You know, Perennial felt the three 6s and had to laugh about it, you know? And, you know, I think that there is a burst of energy from this kind of pool of energy underneath her, you know, giant floating figure. The color kind of comes back to some of the leaves—not just the ones on her, the petals, the ones on the ground—and they begin to swirl up around you and Brnine, and I don't know what the next part looks like. How do you embed this thing into Perennial or into the Wave?

**Janine:** I have, like, a physical image that I like, but I don't have an image that transfers it into, like, the metaphysical, but maybe that's just, like, a part of it.

**Austin:** Let's start with the physical image, yeah.

**Janine:** I want Thisbe to crush that thing. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** To crush the thing being...?

**Janine:** The pollen pod thing.

**Austin:** The pollen pod. Yeah, sure.

**Janine:** That's, like, a really fun thing to do with, like...you know, like Keith was saying, like when you run your fingers backwards against it and you release all the stuff.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** You know. Like, it's— eh, it's really just, it's like a satisfying— I just kind of imagine her, like, between her hands, like a hand on each end, and then just, like, pushing it together, and it just sort of, like, is crumbling [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] into this, like, really thick pollen.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** But the pollen, as it gets sort of picked up in the air and—yeah, sure—picked up in the air and, like, kind of floating.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Janine:** Kind of, like, fizzles away? Like, there's maybe a part, each little particle of pollen turns into a particle of light and then disappears.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** So it's, like, kind of sparkly, but like in a dangerous way, like in an electrical kind of way.

**Austin:** I like this visual quite a bit.

**Janine:** Or kind of like embers.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Like when you burn too much paper at once.

**Austin:** Two visual notes here or two things. One: I would love for you to have to do this, like, floating in the energy of Perennial, right? There's a big energy vent, and it's like, you know.

**Janine:** Oh, yeah, I'd love to do that.

**Austin:** And two—

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'd love to, like, float up with one leg bent elegantly.

**Austin:** Brnine, this is fucking dangerous. [Janine laughs] There's no way Thisbe's going to get out of this. Like, this is— Thisbe has Integrity in her back, has Ebullience bouncing around inside, has three out of four ticks of Motion inside, is, you know. And I know that previously the pure Perennial Wave was, like, cleansing Motion, but it's all, like, in Thisbe now in a fucked up way. Is pouring the pollen around. Like, someone's going to have to pull Thisbe out of this thing if Thisbe's going to survive this ritual. I think your scouter is going to explode if it keeps scanning Thisbe's power levels, right?

**Keith:** Hell yeah. The one thing that scouters are meant to do.

**Janine:** Is it over 9000? [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, I wasn't going to give a number. I was going to just say it's pretty high.

**Janine:** 9000. It's over 9000.

**Austin:** It might be over 9000. It might be. You know.

**Ali:** Can I put myself in Peril to completely defend someone from another source of incoming harm?



**Austin:** Is that a thing you could do?

**Ali:** Yeah. I've been doing that.

**Austin:** You can totally do that. [Ali laughs] What's that look like, as Thisbe begins floating up into the pink purple ritual energy? [Ali sighs] How do you put yourself in peril to keep her from taking harm?

**Ali:** I think what I want to do is, like, distract the Motion in the air, so her, like, Motion monitor doesn't keep going up. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Right, uh huh. Yeah. Are you doing, like, a little dance and like, "I'm over here!"

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** Like, what's this actually look like?

**Ali:** Yep, that's— yep. I'm popping my *Fortnite* dance. That's what I'm doing.

**Austin:** Right, exactly. You're hitting the taunt button. [Ali laughs]

**Ali:** No, I think that I, like, want to...we're in, like, a very particular genre space here.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** But if Thisbe's in the air, like, floating in, like, pink clouds or whatever, about to do a ritual.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Ali:** If they start, like, becoming almost overcast or whatever, because—

**Austin:** Yeah, like, dark clouds are coming up the sides and are slowly turning the pink purple-black, right?

**Ali:** I want, like, to pull all of that down to me. I, like, want to be in the, like, *Princess Mononoke* evilness muck. [Janine chuckles]

**Austin:** Right. Well, how do you— my two questions here are: are you okay? [laughs] Are you going to be okay? What's the Peril you're— [Ali laughs] I mean, I guess the Peril could be a lot of things. But also just, how are you doing it? Is it— what would, in this moment, draw those Motion Particles to you instead of Thisbe?

**Ali:** I think the Peril that I'm taking is Smothered.

**Austin:** Oh, that's fun. Smothered is good. Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah. It's going to be yucky.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Ali:** And I...the first idea that I had for drawing the Motion in is, like...I don't have the mister anymore, and I don't know—

**Austin:** No. It's out in the field. Yeah.

**Ali:** It's not, like, fun to be like, "I have a vacuum," or whatever. So, I was thinking of taking the, like, nasty Motion gun that I have and, like, shooting the ground?

**Austin:** The nasty Motion gun that you have that I forgot that you've had. Is this the Final Grail?

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** Is that the thing you've had all season that we've not really...?

**Ali:** I used it once before to, like, shoot at the sniper, but I think, like...

**Austin:** Oh, right, right, right, yes.

**Ali:** Like, if it's weird Motion paint bullets, and like, Brnine shoots it at the ground, and it, like, splatters at their feet, and then all of these, like, Motion droplets get attached to it?

**Austin:** They kind of coalesce. They kind of, like...

**Ali:** Yeah, because some of— I mean, the way that we've been talking about the Perennial stuff is that it's like ozone, right?

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ali:** Like, the way that ozone works is, like, making that shit denser so it, like, drops?

**Austin:** Mm. I don't know anything about how ozone actually works. [Ali laughs]  
Scientists listening.

**Ali:** That's my understanding.

**Austin:** I believe you. I will let that, you know? Yeah, okay. I mean, I think I want there to be an element of this that is also, you know, personality-driven or characterological, which is that, like, we've seen Motion shit-talk you, right?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Like, Motion does have a sort of animus towards you, a sort of, like, disdain for your decision to take the backseat, you know, in the engine of history or whatever. And I think that there is a sort of, like, you've gotten her attention, and there is a sort of, like, compulsion, you know? In some ways, it goes back to, Thisbe, the thing that you noticed about Divines, which is that sometimes there's involuntary limbs for them.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They don't always fully control what they do at their furthest extension. And, you know, Motion...you know, Motion Motion is over to the west in Sector 0, coming in closer and closer, and these are extensions of her in that way, but maybe they carry her ire for you in such a way that once you gain their attention with a gun, you know, those dark clouds begin to circle around you and weigh you down and smother you and, you know. Is there a way to be lifted up into the air while also being pushed down further? You know, there's a sort of, like, crunch happening. I guess the thing here is it only has to last long enough for Thisbe to finish the ritual, right?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You just have to suffer long enough for Thisbe's magical girl transformation to complete or whatever, and then... [Ali laughs] Because otherwise this would just kill you, right? It's like, well, why wouldn't the Motion Particle just fucking end you?

**Ali:** Right.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Well, because it's only the one— I'm not Defenseless yet, is why.

**Austin:** Right. No, I understand.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes.

**Janine:** What if it's, like, stretching you a bit? [Ali laughs] Because you said you, like, planted your feet.

**Ali:** Yep.

**Janine:** So, like, what if your feet are on the ground, but you're getting— the rest of you is, like, getting—

**Austin:** Tall Brnine.

**Janine:** So, there's— [laughs quietly] They're not made of ela— they're not made of, like, plasticine. [Ali laughs quietly] They're not going to get tall and—

**Austin:** You know— remember that fucked up Mario from Mario Maker, like, the weird Mario? Weird Brnine. [Ali laughs]

**Janine:** I think for that to happen, like, spines would have to be destroyed.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** You know, just, like, an uncomfortable, like, being stretched thing.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Janine:** But again, Brnine is still made of meat. Brnine is not made of taffy. [Austin laughs quietly] Like, it's not going to be cartoonish.

**Austin:** No, I understand. Yes.

**Ali:** This isn't *Looney Tunes*, it's just uncomfortable, is what you're saying. [laughs]

**Austin:** Right. Uh huh, yeah. Yeah. No, I like this.

**Janine:** Well, it's probably quite painful, but.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah, this is good. I mean, Thisbe, do you— are you aware enough to see Brnine taking this action on your behalf, or are you so consumed by, you know, Arbor ritual, that you don't see this happening?

**Janine:** Um, I think this is a thing where, like, in the past, Thisbe would have been more aware of all of the things happening around her.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Janine:** But I think this is a thing where, like, this is so much her thing.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And like, you know, part of an experiment she's been, like, sort of single-mindedly focused on.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** Like, it has sort of become her new purpose.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** That it's kind of the equivalent of, like, well, when she was farming, would she have noticed, like, if someone, like, stopped the tractor over there? Like, eh, maybe.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Janine:** But I think it's just more like the task is very consuming.

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** She's probably aware that Brnine is still there, like, physically present.

**Austin:** Right. Right. Right.

**Ali:** Yeah. You have to get the job done.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah. [Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** I guess I should ask, Brnine, did you ever rewrite that Gravity Clock for Thisbe?

**Ali:** Yeah. I don't have to roll this. I don't have to roll the relationship.

**Austin:** Right, it just works. Right, you just take the Peril.

**Ali:** Yeah. I was thinking that, like, you know, Gravity Clocks evolve together, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and I feel like if Thisbe committed to hers, then I have to commit to mine a little bit, but [laughs quietly] I'm cheating a little bit by rewriting it as, "Thisbe is an important part of my life," to further...

**Austin:** Ohh, that's good. [Ali laughs]

**Janine:** Oh.

**Austin:** So from "past" to "life." That's fun.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** That's good. That's very good.

**Ali:** To further squish the layer cake that Brnine-Thisbe are.

**Austin:** Yes. [Ali laughs] And yeah. You're going to take the Peril "Smothered," and I think that that's like, again, unless someone uses a move to clear that from you, it sticks with you a little bit, you know? And it's a different feeling than, like, when Motion was inside Jesset. This is not a vibration. This is a weight. This is a...you know, if Motion is— I almost said the god of motion, which is not literally true, [Ali chuckles] but we've seen Motion's capacity for making you move, but it's also possible that Motion can make someone not move. That's also within their kind of domain, you know?

**Janine:** I mean, you know what's both of those things?

**Austin:** What's that?

**Janine:** A pendulum.

**Austin:** Sure. Right. Yes.

**Janine:** Like, heavy, but...

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah. Totally.

**Janine:** Heavy, a weight, but also there's that motion to it. It kind of destabilizes.

**Austin:** Yeah. And I think that that is...you know, when I think about Brnine for the rest of this mission, that is the way I will be thinking of them, is weighted, a little spinning out chaotically like a pendulum. Yeah. [Ali laughs] Perfect.

**Ali:** Just described me.

**Janine:** Trapped inside a giant clock.

**Austin:** Yeah. The clock of the galaxy, honestly. This is the wheel that must break. [Ali laughs] All right.

**Janine:** It's gears.

**Austin:** It's gears, yeah, exactly. A pendulum is sort of like a clock, in many ways, so.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Which is sort of like a wheel.

**Janine:** They're parts of— they're in there.

**Austin:** They're in there. They're just all connected. Cool.

## **Leap [1:20:55]**

**Austin:** Leap, you're inside of Present, [Ali laughs] and we'll come back for the actual ritual roll.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** We'll have to see if it actually fucking works, but. Leap.

**Keith:** It is true that I'm inside of Present. I'm walking its plush carpeted hallways, and...

**Austin:** There's, like— it's playing music. It's playing, like, you know, loungey, you know, jazz.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Dre:** Smooth jazz.

**Austin:** Yeah. I don't know that it's smooth. It's like bossa nova, you know?

**Sylvia:** "96 Quite Bitter Beings".

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Keith:** Sure.



**Austin:** It's like smooth bossa nova.

**Sylvia:** Oh!

**Austin:** You know?

**Sylvia:** [imitating] Boom, bah...

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [imitating] Bum, bum, bum, bum, bum-bum-bum-bum.

**Austin:** What are you doing in there? I'm guessing you're going to Strike Decisively, but I don't know what that means.

**Keith:** Bum, bum, bum... Um, I maybe should find the cockpit or the control center.

**Austin:** Yeah. We've seen it, you know?

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** Cori killed Gallica in there just a couple of— **[Keith: Yeah.]** just 1700 episodes ago, so. **[Keith laughs]**

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And there's no one here. Present is running itself, at this point.

**Keith:** I just, I'm at a crossroads.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Because it's a tremendous opportunity for a pirate.

**Austin:** I mean, can I— do you want a lot of time? Do you want a lot of time to figure out an answer to this, Leap?

**Keith:** [laughs] A little bit. I don't know. Maybe being forced to make a decision right

now isn't the worst thing in the world.

**Austin:** You're right. It would be fun. The thing that I was going to pitch is: as Ekpyrosis starts charging up this second shot, as Motion starts charging up this second shot inside of Ekpyrosis, there's a thing that Present could do, which is just leave.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** With Leap aboard, into the wild blue yonder. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Just leave!

**Austin:** [claps] Just gone.

**Ali:** Wow.

**Austin:** Somewhere else in the galaxy.

**Keith:** It could decide to go right into the center of the Ekpyrosis.

**Austin:** I mean, you would have to do that, for sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** Two versions of gone.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Yeah, there's the violent...Leap takes, you know, [laughing quietly] crashes into one ship so that he can crash it into another ship, which is very funny.

**Keith:** Yep. Yep.

**Austin:** And there is the: Leap disappears at the end of PALISADE with Present. What happens to them next time? You know, where do we see them next? You know, that's also fun. Both of these are very fun things.

**Keith:** It's a very nice reverse Han Solo.

**Austin:** Crashing it into or disappearing? Which one?

**Keith:** Disappearing at the climax. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** That's very funny. Yeah, god, I have no fucking— the problem is that I've gotten myself into, very quickly, into a scenario where, like, three or four very different very big things could happen.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** You know, making Leap a de facto, uh, what do we call them now?

**Austin:** Elect. Elect, yeah.

**Keith:** Elect.

**Austin:** Though Thisbe's blown up that model, to some degree, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Thisbe has some Divines aboard but is not an Elect. Doesn't have a name.

**Keith:** Elect is a social category.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Sort of becoming an Elect or becoming an Elect that doesn't call themselves an Elect.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Working with Present, piloting Present.

**Keith:** Piloting Present.

**Austin:** Bouncing around to all the greatest bars in the galaxy. [Austin and Keith laugh]

quietly] Becoming a pirate who has Present?

**Keith:** Finally, my thing. The last part of the finale put a curse on me where I can't find that fucking treasure.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's true.

**Keith:** Present could find that treasure, I bet. [Ali and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** Truly the, like, "I'm looking for a needle in a haystack in the galaxy. [Sylvia laughs] What if I just checked every haystack?"

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah. I found the haystack detector.

**Austin:** Exactly. [Austin and Keith laugh] Yeah.

**Keith:** So, that's one thing. It could be a simple thing of, like, using Present to, like, finish the fight, or a dramatic version of that. You know, setting a course for the center of the Ekpyrosis and bailing.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Or it could be, like, you know, setting the ship to self-destruct.

**Austin:** Right. Right.

**Keith:** Just like, "fuck Present," and go.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Like, there's a lot of big things to do when you find yourself at the helm of a Divine.

**Austin:** You could also theoretically, like, get everybody on board and be like, "Let's get out of here before the Ekpyrosis destroys this big space station at the center of the galaxy. That seems dangerous. Let's get out of here," you know? You could...you're right. There's a lot of things you could do.

**Keith:** I think that I've always played characters that don't like Divines.

**Austin:** You have.

**Keith:** Because there's...there's enough characters who like Divines in these seasons.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The quota— we've hit the, like, minimum required limit on that, and—

**Janine:** You did play a fraction of a Divine, though.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, but that doesn't mean—

**Austin:** Yeah, but he specifically...

**Sylvia:** Like, I don't like my dad.

**Austin:** Yeah. Eclectic—

**Keith:** A fraction of a Divine that was, like, frustratingly disinterested in that fact.

**Janine:** Yeah, okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** And, uh...

**Austin:** I actually don't know where you're going with this, which is fun. I don't know if you're about to say...

**Keith:** It could go either way.

**Austin:** Yeah, this could go either direction. [Janine laughs]

**Keith:** Well, 'cause one thing could be at this, you know, 10 years into the game, I finally, you know, like, take the helm of Order from back in COUNTER/Weight, [Austin laughs] and I'm like, "Let's fulfill that moment now."

**Austin:** Right. Right. Yeah.

**Keith:** But the thing that I really want to do is set this thing to reappear at the center of the Ekpyrosis and blow up the inside of it. That's what I really want to do.

**Austin:** Where Levi and Cori are currently.

**Sylvia:** Well.

**Ali:** Hmm.

**Dre:** Eh.

**Keith:** I've got comms.

**Dre:** Yeah, we'll figure it out. We'll get out of there. [Janine laughs nervously]

**Austin:** Okay. Yeah.

**Dre:** Hey, just don't put it in the power center.

**Keith:** No, you'd fall.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I can shoot it at the outside. Do you think that would give you a better chance of not dying?

**Austin:** I mean, first of all, you have to— if you're going to do the “shoot it at something,” you first have to Strike Decisively and take control of it, right?

**Keith:** Yes, I do. And, uh, do you think this is Talk?

**Austin:** Because then we get to disclaim power in a fun way or disclaim agency in a fun way, 'cause you could Exchange Blows to try to take it over, and then you'd still have to do the thing of trying to shoot it in there, and maybe if it goes wrong, [**Keith:** True.] you do end up teleporting somewhere else.

**Keith:** True. True.

**Austin:** And then Leap's in, you know, Leap's in over his head in a different way looking forward.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So, let's do the Exchange Blows, if that's what it feels like is the thing.

**Keith:** Or Strike Decisively?

**Austin:** Sorry, the Strike Decisively. Strike Decisively, yeah.

**Keith:** Strike Decisively: Talk?

**Austin:** How are you doing it? Are you trying to convince Present to do something?

**Keith:** Yeah, I think this is computer work. This is, like, trying to get the ship to recognize my control of it.

**Austin:** What's the argument? I mean, it's a being. It's, you know, Present has been making decisions.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's person-ish, at the very least.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's an agent.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** So, it's not just like, "Computer, I'm your admin now."

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** Right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So, what is the—

**Keith:** Well, if that's what it was, then it wouldn't be a roll.

**Austin:** Right, yes.

**Keith:** Or it wouldn't be Strike Decisively.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. So, what is the line of argument or conversation that Leap is taking?

**Keith:** I want to just bring my argument about not accurately representing Present back from out of character into character and sort of question, like: What are you doing? Like, you're fighting a battle to literally stay behind in the past.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** This thing is about to blow. There's nothing standing in between...like, there's nothing standing in between me and destroying this vessel of Present.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** So, you might as well let me use it to establish the present that we've fought to establish.

**Austin:** I'm going to let you make this roll.

**Keith:** But in a way where I don't say "establish" twice in a roll.

**Austin:** Yeah, well, and I'm going to let you make this roll, because I do think the idea of, like, "you're not being true to what you say you're being true to" is a fun line of attack here. I do think that, you know, the follow-up thing here of, "and now I want you to crash yourself into Ekpyrosis and die," is going to be a harder thing to do, in some ways, you know? Though, you'll have control, right? So, I mean, that's the thing.



**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You won't be talking it into it.

**Keith:** If that's a clock to get that to work, or...

**Austin:** No, I think we're moving faster than clocks right now, Leap.

**Keith:** Okay. [Dre chuckles]

**Austin:** So, give me a 2d6 plus 2...this is a hard one. This might be— I think this might— you know what? I think, like Cori trying to talk down Valour, you're at disadvantage trying to talk something into turning on what it...you know, Present really believes what it believes in, right?

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** I'm going to let you roll it, but I do think it's disadvantage. I think it's 3d6.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Take lowest. And obviously, you might have ways of changing that. You still have Retrograde and all that, but...

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** Okay, well, that is a 1 plus a 3 plus a 2, which is a 6.

**Keith:** Ugh. That disadvantage really screwed me.

**Austin:** It did.

**Keith:** Otherwise, it would have been fine.

**Austin:** It would have been. Do you want to burn Retrograde? It's your last Retrograde.

**Keith:** Um, yes, I do.

**Austin:** Now is the time, it feels.

**Keith:** So, does that turn it from disadvantage into nothing, and it deletes the 1?

**Austin:** Uh, you know, we have not— I guess so. Yes, that is what it would do. It would turn it from—

**Keith:** Boom.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly that. So, it would go 5 plus 3 plus 2 is suddenly...

**Keith:** 10.

**Austin:** A 10. What's this look like? What's it do in response to you saying all this? My instinct is it sort of, like, shuts down? Oh, I actually know— I know what it does, which is— 'cause again, the way that, on a 10, this works, is director characters are killed, forced to retreat, or otherwise removed as a threat per the fiction. In the middle of the kind of core of the control room here or, like, the cockpit, there is, like, a spinning disc, almost like a golden record that's spinning, and it spins, and it spins, and it spins, and it spins, and then it teleports away. And so you have the body of Present with its abilities, but Present.dat, the being Present, you've convinced it to flee.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** So, you do what you want with the shell, but the Divine seems to have left you behind. And you can see, actually, where it went, right? Like, there's a map, and there's, like, a button to follow it, right? There's like, okay, you want to, like, reconnect to the body of Present? You know, do you want to— or the mind, the place.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** You know, like— which maybe even, at this point, you're looking at the map, and you're like, "Oh, it has more shells like this across the galaxy," right? It could find its way back to one of those eventually. They're all in, like, cold storage somewhere. But you have its body here, right?

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You have this body here that you can do with what you please.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] Well, now I don't want to blow it up! It's just a ship. Who cares? This is mine now.

**Austin:** Great. [Keith laughs] Uh huh.

**Keith:** Yeah, it was valuable to kill. Now it's just a ship.

**Austin:** Now it's just a ship, yeah. All right. Leap—

**Keith:** Valuable to have.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Leap goes from, "I'm going to—" yeah. Okay. You know what? Different Han Solo moment indeed.

## **Cori and Levi [1:32:54]**

**Austin:** Cori and Levi, at the heart of the Ekpyrosis.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The power center is here. It is a beam of dark energy. In the sort of— I say it's energy, but again, it's goop. It's all gooped up in here.

**Sylvia:** Okay, sure.

**Austin:** There's, like, pillars of energy waves, except it's—

**Sylvia:** We've gotta find Gweneth.

**Austin:** Instead of energy— [laughs] Fuck off.

**Sylvia:** Sorry.

**Dre:** [chuckles] God.

**Austin:** You know, I think, in some ways, if Gweneth Paltrow could be like a *Dark Souls* boss, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, this is what you're seeing.

**Sylvia:** What a sentence.

**Austin:** Truly. Because the goop pillars, which are like energy pillars of goop, there are, like, arms reaching out of the pillars and, you know, heads emerging briefly and then being consumed back in. In my mind, the sort of power center of the Ekpyrosis are these kind of, in a good day, these three beams of bright, you know, colorful light kind of going, you know, up and down inside of a huge almost like a hangar, a giant power room. But instead of being light, they are now goop, and it is this kind of, like, these big echoes of Dahlia emerging and then being reconstituted into the goop, reaching out and then being pulled back in.

And in this moment, one arm emerge— actually, an arm emerges from each of the power kind of beams, the goop beams, and each of the arms clasps onto another, and the three of them pull each other out of the gross energy beam goop and become a sort of big chimera. In a very similar way to the three-headed Chimeric Cadent, we now have the three-headed kind of chimeric Dahlia, the chimeric, uh, whatever the— it's so late. I'm so tired. Princetp here. This kind of being of many limbs. I mean, I think it's not even as clean as the Chimeric Cadent, which was just kind of a big humanoid body with wings and heads. This is like a mass of arms and heads and body parts that are bigger than your mech, that are as big as, you know, what Figure's old mech became when it became that Axiom that time.

And yeah, it's here, and it is effectively trying to, you know, charge at you, seeing the two of you here. But this is where it's going to happen. If you're going to do the thing that shuts this thing down and prevents it from firing another shot, you are going to have

to do Consecrate Ground here, and you're going to need the time to do that, which I don't know that you could— if you just stand still and try to Consecrate Ground without being safely defended, you will die, Cori. So.

**Sylvia:** Being Hasty doesn't help?

**Austin:** Being Hasty lets you move first, but Consecrating Ground takes some time, you know?

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You're standing still and doing a— you're channeling, you know? So I think, Levi, it's up to you to try to...

**Dre:** Ooh boy.

**Austin:** Keep Cori safe. Unless you're going to do something else here.

**Sylvia:** I can't think of anything else we could do here.

**Dre:** No. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Should I roll that, or do we want to wait?

**Austin:** I mean, I think what...I think we have to start with Levi trying to take on this monster, you know?

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** But yeah, so Levi, what are you doing with this giant monstrous echo of the old Princept?

**Dre:** Um, I don't think Levi is going to try to fight this thing head-on.

**Austin:** Mm, smart.

**Dre:** I think it is more of, like, I'm going to keep this thing busy while Cori does her stuff.

**Austin:** What does that look like?

**Dre:** Oh, I'm just...

**Austin:** Are you just trying trying to guide it away? Are you trying to...?

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah. I'm insulting it. I'm goading it. I'm bouncing around. I'm, like, probably breaking stuff randomly.

**Austin:** Hell yeah. [laughs quietly] Wow.

**Sylvia:** Just one of those days.

**Dre:** Yeah!

**Austin:** Yeah, I love this.

**Dre:** I'm just creating chaos and being a nuisance.

**Austin:** That sounds like...that sounds like, uh...what is that? Is that Weather the Storm? Is that...?

**Dre:** I was kind of thinking Weather the Storm.

**Austin:** Kind of, yeah.

**Dre:** Because it's Defy to dodge, tough it out.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, I'll say that. Let's do Defy. 2d6 plus, what is it, 1?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And what is your approach? Your approach is Mundane?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Oof.

**Dre:** Is that bad?

**Austin:** I mean, I guess this is...is this only in—? I think it's— it is bad, 'cause this thing is Elemental.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Austin:** This is, like, the big Elemental thing. Oh, actually, you know what? It isn't. This is Divine, 'cause it's Commitment core. It's not the ship so much as it's Commitment.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** So yeah, it doesn't come up.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** 2d6 plus 1.

**Dre:** Boof.

**Austin:** Goodness gracious. That's a 4.

**Keith:** Dre.

**Austin:** 2 plus 1 plus 1.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** What is going on?

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't know. I used up all the good roles last time.

**Keith:** It's that Commitment core. It's...

**Austin:** Yeah. Do you have Retrograde left, or are you out? You got one.

**Dre:** I do. I also have a charge of Mobility left.

**Austin:** Oh. Which says?

**Dre:** When you're fighting somewhere with the room to be acrobatic and mobile, roll plus Defy, hold blah blah blah...

**Austin:** Oh, we should have done that first, 'cause that's what you were doing, right?

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, no, it's 'cause I roll this and then I get charges. I get Hold to spend.

**Austin:** That's what I was saying, is we should have started by you rolling Mobility to see if you get these charges.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Austin:** Right?

**Dre:** I asked about that earlier, and we said we couldn't do it, 'cause it just carried over from the last scene.

**Austin:** Oh, you already have that Hold. I see. I see, I see, I see, I see.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes, yes, yes. I see what you're saying.

**Dre:** Okay. Yeah.

**Austin:** Then yeah, you still have that one Hold, right?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So you could avoid an incoming source of physical harm, which is good, because you were about to take a Peril.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** And instead, I think you're going to take a Risk, so it degrades from a Peril to a



Risk. You are...what is, like, “on the run”? You are...you know, about to get squashed by a big goop monster. What is a good Risk for that?

**Dre:** Uh, Cornered?

**Austin:** Cornered is— ooh, Cornered is good, right? You've kept it— you've kept away from it for quite some time now, but you are nevertheless, now, there's not many places for you to run to. Cori, you see the situation.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Are you going to go forward with the ritual, or are you going to try to save Levi?

**Sylvia:** Well, this is kind of the big question, right?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** 'Cause like...

**Austin:** In some ways, the ritual could save Levi, if it's successful.

**Sylvia:** That's the thing. That's the— you've hit the nail on the head, Austin.

**Austin:** Mm, mm. I'm going to let you sit and think about it. Let's talk about the other ritual.

**Sylvia:** Fuck.

## **Thisbe's Ritual [1:39:43]**

**Austin:** Thisbe. Brnine. I think it's time to roll that Channel, Thisbe. Floating in the energy wave that is not filled with goo, the much more cool, pure, purple...

**Janine:** And Tiny Tim, who was *not* filled with goo.

**Austin:** Who was *not* filled with goo. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Ugh, I hope not.

**Janine:** I was looking at *Sailor Moon* GIFs before, and then I found a good one, and then I lost it. [Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** No! If you find it later, please share it.

**Ali:** Do you want me to roll—?

**Janine:** I mean, it was— we're doing the *Sailor Moon* thing.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Do you want me to roll what?

**Ali:** Uh, my assist in advance?

**Austin:** Oh, possibly.

**Ali:** Just so you have it?

**Janine:** You don't have to, right?

**Ali:** Well, I'd like—

**Keith:** Well, that way, you have it.

**Janine:** Didn't we say it was cool to assist afterwards?

**Ali:** But I'd like to.

**Austin:** It's cool to assist afterwards, but.

**Ali:** I'd like to establish [cross] beforehand that I am assisting, yeah.

**Austin:** [cross] You'd like to.

**Janine:** [cross] You'd like to, like, thematically? Okay. Okay. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. Let's do it.

**Janine:** You are, too. You're very much assisting.

**Austin:** Let's do it.

**Ali:** 2d6 plus 3 for an assist?

**Austin:** Plus 3. Yeah.

**Ali:** All right.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Austin:** That is a success.

**Janine:** 9.

**Austin:** So you'll get advantage here, Thisbe, which I think counters what I said before, which was it's naturally going to come at disadvantage, so.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 2d6 plus 3.

**Janine:** All right. Let's fucking go. Got the moon scepter. Got the crystal slotted in there.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** Uh, friends are in mortal peril.

**Austin:** They sure are.

**Janine:** All the check boxes are ticked.

**Ali:** This is the *Sailor Moon R* movie with the plant monsters. [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, right, of course.

**Ali:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Austin:** 5 plus 1 plus 3 is 9. This is Weave Magic, we should have said out loud. “When you weave magic to do something taxing with your power, roll plus Channel. On a 10, you manage to channel power the way you desired without ill effect. On a 7-9, you succeed, but your invocation is twisted in an unexpected and dangerous way.” But you did what you wanted.

**Keith:** Do we have any Retrograde left?

**Austin:** Yeah, do you have any Retrograde left? You must.

**Janine:** Um...wait, what's Retrograde again?

**Austin:** You do.

**Keith:** It's those three Hold that we have that we got at the beginning.

**Janine:** Oh, yeah, I used one of— I've used—

**Austin:** One. You have two left.

**Janine:** Did I use two of those or one?

**Austin:** No, no, no. You have two left.

**Janine:** Oh, did you change it when I did before?

**Austin:** I must have, yeah, because I'd be counting down instead of counting up on those.

**Janine:** Yeah. Well, either way, I've got at least one.

**Austin:** You've got at least one, so you could roll another d6. As long as it's not a 1, this will be a full success.

**Keith:** Weave Magic is a tough one to go halfway on.

**Janine:** Let's fucking go. Roll 1d6. That's a 2.

**Austin:** It's a 2! That's enough.

**Keith:** Perfect. That's all you needed.

**Janine:** That's all it's got to be. That's all it's got to be.

**Austin:** It's all it's got to be.

**Keith:** It's all it's got to be. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Love a bare minimum.

**Austin:** And I mean, I think that this is—

**Janine:** I don't need to do it with a flourish. Thisbe's not fancy. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Totally. And I think that this—

**Janine:** Thisbe just gets it done.

**Austin:** This is that thing of, you know, the— you can feel Motion clawing at you as you do this. The beam of energy does start to turn— I mean, this is a Motion infection, not a Commitment infection, so instead of it being a sort of black goo, it is like it starts to lose its color. It starts to fade for a moment, and then, you know, there is a burst of energy and light, as you Retrograde and gain the energy you need to power through and get the pollen into the Perennial Wave. And my god, we'll have to figure out what the fuck that means, because it feels big. It feels like something shifts and changes, right? You've kind of fed the material into the place where the Perennial Wave is emitted from, where it's designed, where it begins to spread, and so it won't just be here. It will be everywhere very soon, you know? As the Perennial Wave continues, or I guess, if it continues? I guess there's a world where— I'm basically just going to ask you how this changes, and y'all can— specifically Thisbe and Brnine can start thinking about this. How does the world change now because of this?

**Janine:** It's all grass now, baby.

**Austin:** Everybody's made of grass now.

**Ali:** Mm. [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** And it could be that. It could be—

**Janine:** No, it's not that. It's not that.

**Austin:** It could be that this breaks the Perennial Wave and the Perennial Wave stops. It could be that everybody has access to the Perennial Wave in a different way now or to Stratus abilities. I don't know.

**Janine:** I have an idea here. We can talk about it later.

**Austin:** Okay. We should do that.

**Janine:** We don't have to do it now.

**Austin:** Yeah.

## **Cori's Ritual [1:43:55]**

**Austin:** Cori, the Ekpyrosis continues to charge up. Are you going to do the ritual? Are you going to try to save Levi? What is the play?

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Levi, do you trust me [cross] to do the ritual, or should I help?

Dre (as **Levi**): [cross] Yeah. Yes. No, do it.

**Sylvia:** Okay. That is the key thing here. I just want to make that—

**Austin:** Do you say that in character? Was that in character?

**Dre:** Yes, 100%.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, straight up.

**Austin:** Love it. Great. Good.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** All right. Ritual time.

**Sylvia:** That's a 12.

**Ali:** Whoa!

**Austin:** That's a 12. 4 plus 5 plus 3 is 12. On a 10+, choose two. On a 7-9, choose one.

**Sylvia:** I cannot be stopped.

**Austin:** Creatures opposed by your deity or faith cannot enter the consecrated area; creatures within your consecrated area cannot take violent action against each other.

**Sylvia:** Ding.

**Austin:** Creatures within the consecrated area cool off with advantage; or creatures within your consecrated area cannot knowingly lie.

**Sylvia:** So, definitely taking the second one of cannot take violent action against each other.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I am so curious as to what would happen if I did the first one. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Cannot enter the consecrated area? Yeah.

**Sylvia:** "Cannot enter the consecrated area." They're already all in there.

**Austin:** They're already all in there.

**Sylvia:** Do they just get, like, jettisoned or...?

**Austin:** No, I think it's like they're stuck in there, you know? It's like, they can't enter or

leave, you know?

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** That could be useful though, right?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Presumably, they've got reinforcements in here.

**Austin:** Yeah, they— I think it would— yes. I think it would. I think it would help. Okay.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'm going to seal this thing.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** It can't— like, it can't attack, and it can't— nobody can leave or get in [**Austin:** Yeah.] if they're not on Perennial's team.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's the important part. We're allowed in and out, because we're not opposed by my faith. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Well, here's the thing. You're allowed in and out, and it can't do violence against you, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And so, it, about to smash Levi into bits. I think that the big, you know, Princept amalgam, the weird Princept monster does try to kill Levi, and we see what happens when it goes forwards with that, and it just, like, immediately dissolves into little floaty bits, you know?

**Sylvia:** Hell yeah.



**Austin:** Like, the arms come down, all 17 of them, and then they all kind of fade away like dust, and Levi is fine. And then the Ekpyrosis, all the goo in it continues to flow and begins to flow over the doorways.

**Dre:** The goo must flow.

**Austin:** The goo must flow. It can't hurt you, but it doesn't mean that it will let you out of it. The gun that was charging up, at this point, stops.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It can't fire. You've consecrated this ground. It is stuck here with you in it, and it seems like its plan is to simply keep you here until you die.

**Sylvia:** Well.

**Dre:** Well, jokes on it, 'cause I was about to die anyway.

**Austin:** I am, however, going to spend a point of Leverage.

**Sylvia:** Huh?

**Austin:** From the smoke of the Portcullis gate, a being emerges in a mech that you haven't seen in quite some time.

**Dre:** Oh, hell yeah.

**Sylvia:** No. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** I can spend a point of Leverage [**Sylvia:** Austin!] to make someone appear somewhere they aren't expected. Elle Evensong, from the dust of the Portcullis gate, emerges, having passed through it just before it was shot, and plunges into the depths of the Ekpyrosis.

**Sylvia:** Agh!

**Austin:** She's blastin', [laughs quietly] and has cashed in.

**Sylvia:** What? She can't— how? How's she blastin' if I've consecrated?

**Austin:** Well, she's blasting the outside part to get in, you know?

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** And is diving through the wreckage of this thing, trying to find a way to you, having earned enough glint with Arbitrage to perform one favor for the girlfriend she's been missing and has been unable to see.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. Aww.

**Austin:** And I think, you know, is trying to basically, like— I actually know exactly how this is working, because it isn't, um...as a reminder about how her mech works, she still has that blood mech that uses the blood of others to power it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And so she isn't using— she isn't doing anything violent. She's just using the innate, you know, goop power of the Ekpyrosis and of Commitment to, like, drain away its strength in key areas to open doors and stuff, right? She's just slamming back the Dew. She's just— and the Dew, in this case, is Commitment goo.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** And is opening door after door and, like, you know, busting through walls, once they aren't covered in Commitment and once it wouldn't technically be violent action against each other, and produces a way out for you to follow, like it's the end of a fucking Starfox game.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. This rules! When you said that, I was worried it was gonna be bad!

**Austin:** This is it. We've made it to the end of a season, and yuri gets to be real for at least one brief moment, yet again. [Dre chuckles]

**Janine:** End of season means everyone's girlfriends show up.

**Austin:** Everyone's girlfriends showed up! Yay, everybody.

**Sylvia:** I can't stop crying. We did it, kids.

**Austin:** Everybody gets a girlfriend.

**Sylvia:** We're doing GamemasterAnthony but for girlfriends. [Austin and Dre chuckle]

**Austin:** Exactly. That's kind of my career, so, you know, that's... [Sylvia laughs] That's how I pay my rent, you know? So.

**Sylvia:** Little bit!

**Dre:** You're the best at what you do.

**Austin:** That's fucking right.

**Dre:** And what you do is very nice.

**Austin:** Thank you, yeah. [Sylvia laughs] And so, yeah, I will of course need, from Cori, one more roll to get out of this place, like it's the end of a, again, a Starfox game.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Give me a Weather the Storm: Defy to find your way out of the crashing destroyed corpse of Ekpyrosis.

**Sylvia:** A 9.

**Austin:** All right. Well, you succeed but at some cost. It will keep you occupied longer than you thought; the Director will ask you to make a difficult choice; or you'll burn a point of spotlight as you take dramatic action.

**Keith:** You still have Retrograde.

**Austin:** You do. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I do. I feel like that's...

**Austin:** I mean, I can tell you the stakes too, which is...

**Dre:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Yes, please.

**Austin:** It's very simple, right? It's the classic thing of, like...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** New York strip.

**Austin:** Either you make it out in time to get a conversation and a reunion, however brief it is, with Elle, or you make it out, but by the time you escape, you've taken a different pathway out, and you don't get to see her, you know?

**Sylvia:** [strained] All right, so I'm going to use my last hold here, for, uh...

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Sylvia:** Listen, people would never let me live it down if I didn't.

**Austin:** Oh, of course. Yeah.

**Dre:** I also have a thing I could poten— well, we'll see if you need it.

**Sylvia:** 4.

**Austin:** 4 plus 5 plus 2 is 11. There you go.

**Keith:** As someone who's made choices that people have never let me live down, it's not that bad. [Austin chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, but I'm the people's champ, so.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Mm-hmm. 11. 11 is a success. 4 plus 5 plus 2 is 11. The two of you emerge. Levi, you are on the back of Cori's mech, so the three of you emerge safely. The goo is spilling out of the Ekpyrosis, and it goes hurtling towards the center of the galaxy, pulled in by the gravity thereof. Don't ask why it goes there and not to some other part of the space station. It just works that way.

**Sylvia:** No complaints.

## **Results [1:51:03]**

**Austin:** Thisbe, Brnine. Y'all have thoughts on galaxy stuff, or do you want to save that for another time?

**Janine:** I mean—

**Austin:** For Perennial Wave galaxy stuff is what I meant.

**Janine:** I have an idea that is unlike every other idea I've had so far tonight.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** Fairly simple to understand, which is that sort of the— I think, like, the underpinning intention in Thisbe creating Arbor [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] was the thought of, like, rootlessness versus roots.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And so I wonder if Arbor's presence in this, like, pollen makes the particles want to take root.

**Austin:** Oh, that's fun.

**Janine:** So, rather than being free-floating, [**Austin:** Right.] they want to find earth and— not Earth Earth, but you know.

**Austin:** That's right over there. It's not here. It's down at the bottom of the map.

**Janine:** Yeah. [Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** I'll just ping it really quick.

**Janine:** They want to find terrain [**Austin:** Yeah.] and anchor themselves there.

**Austin:** Right. So, we go—

**Janine:** And what does that mean? I don't know.

**Keith:** In this case, the terrain may be Earth.

**Austin:** Right, in this case, terrain is Earth. No, yeah, I— right, exactly. Like, it goes from the Perennial Wave is a thing that exists in the air and, you know, it interrupts radio communications and breaks technology in a sort of, just, like, in the waves of the world around us, and becomes strange growths, interesting growths. Not always bad, but sometimes bad. Weird things growing across the galaxy, weird things emerging from the soil. That's kind of fun. That's a kind of fun idea. We shift to a place where there's, like—you know, we've done a lot of, like, Consecrated Ground and other sorts of, you know, we had the both Cori and Thisbe working on garden stuff. We had, you know, Brnine working with the, um...not Wakeful, the Afflictions before that and trying to work with them, being like, "Okay, are there ways that we could live side by side?" There's a lot of, like, setting up spaciality in different ways and, like, places, so I think the idea of that becoming the way that this strangeness starts to express itself is really interesting. Also, it'll let me put the flower emoji on more things in the future.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's really fun. I think, you know, as the Ekpyrosis begins to veer towards the center of the galaxy, to make sure the work is done...I mean, no one can take violent action inside of the place, like I said. That's not going to stop Hunting from firing the giant Earth Cannon at it, as it's falling towards the center of the galaxy.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Hunting knows better than to let something like this, you know, linger. If that is where Motion herself is—insofar as it seems like she is—I think that that is, uh, the person who’s going to pull the trigger on her, it turns out, is Hunting, unless someone else wants to be there to hit the button.

**Sylvia:** Levi and I are busy. [Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. And I don’t think— I think that’s the thing, right? Is like...or maybe the visual here of this happening, you know, the Ekpyrosis is being destroyed, but around you, in this moment, I think we see the sort of, like, smaller exosuit-sized Motion begin to take form, sort of like the way we saw the Nanobeasts take form in the maze, except we see, you know, them kind of falter to come into being, and one of them says, you know:

(as **Motion**): You can’t stop me. I’m everywhere.

**Austin:** But she can’t even finish saying the word “everywhere,” as the kind of new Arbor molecules begin to, like, take her over, and sort of sprouting from the ground around her is the sort of vine that, you know, solidifies around her and turns her into what looks like petrified wood, you know? And there’s suddenly a statue garden of these, like, Motion exosuit forms, here at the foot of Perennial, and it seems like— and maybe this is a cruel thing, maybe this is too cruel, but I think it’s also kind of a fun echo of something earlier in the season. She doesn’t go away. She’s still there in the particle, but she can’t ever take form again in the world, and so she’s a little like Phrygian locked in the bomb. She’s a little like Gur, locked away in Future. She is in the particle—insofar as she is a she, in terms of a being, in terms of being a perspective—but like Gur and like Phrygian, she’s going to have to fucking learn to not be in the world in the same way anymore.

**Keith:** Eclectic, sort of.

**Austin:** Eclectic, sort of. Eclectic still gets to be in the world, sort of, though.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Eclectic gets to come out from time to time, and it's not the way—

**Keith:** We don't know how often that is.

**Austin:** No, we don't, but it's different. It's not...you know, it's not someone who can— and here is a classic thing. Motion can't come back from this, right? Motion is not going to be able to, like, overcome this. You have stopped the degree of which she can come out of the wave, at this point. She is a presence there. Maybe we'll have people who, like, want to use necromantic Motion power in the future, but we're not going to have people who can— she can't come back, right? You have stopped her from ever being able to take this sort of form ever again, and I think in the process, saved the galaxy. I think that you did it. I think it's done. [Dre sighs]

**Sylvia:** Look at us.

**Janine:** Is it actually done?

**Austin:** I think it's actually done.

**Dre:** Hell yeah.

**Janine:** It's done.

## **Aftermath [1:57:04]**

**Austin:** I would love some final conversations and stuff. Cori, how's the reunion with Elle? I think she says to you:

(as **Elle**): We have 66 minutes left before I have to go.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Okay. That's 66 more than I've had in...I don't know how long.



Where have you been?

Austin (as **Elle**): Doing things I can't talk about.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): What— okay. I don't want to do the whole “what can you tell me?” “oh, I can't tell you anything” dance again. That just kind of goes nowhere.

Austin (as **Elle**): I knew you'd win.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): [laughs quietly] Damn straight.

Austin (as **Elle**): But I also knew you'd get into trouble, so I'm glad I'm here.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): You know. That's kind of my whole thing.

Austin (as **Elle**): [laughs] Do you have anywhere we can, uh...nice to meet you, Levi, by the way.

Dre (as **Levi**): Oh, hey. Yeah, I was just gonna— just— I'm not here.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Levi, this is my girlfriend, Elle.

Dre (as **Levi**): [awkwardly] Yeah, no, I kinda got that part. Um...yeah, I'll just be...I'll just...

**Sylvia:** Cori's cheesing so hard right now. [Austin laughs]

Dre (as **Levi**): I'll just be on the back of the mech. Um...

Austin (as **crewmember**): [shouting distantly] Hey, Levi, you need a pickup?

Dre (as **Levi**): [calling back] Yes! Yes.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Cool. We're gonna go talk for...how much?

Austin (as **Elle**): 64 minutes.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): 64 minutes now? Fuck. Okay.

Dre (as **Levi**): Aw. If only you could get 5 more. [Austin laughs]

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Shut the fuck up.

**Sylvia**: That's in character.

**Austin**: Yep.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Shut the fuck up. [laughs quietly]

**Austin**: The Star Crossed ship comes by to pick you up, Levi, and it truly feels like a pickup truck coming up to let you hop in the back and drive away.

**Dre**: Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia**: I want Cori to, like, give something to Elle, 'cause she knows she's going to get pulled away again.

**Austin**: Oh, fun. Yeah.

**Sylvia**: As like, hey, I'm going to keep looking for you, and then also here's just, like, a little bit of me to carry.

**Austin**: What is it? What do you give?

**Sylvia**: I'm trying to think, 'cause like, my equipment, I don't really have a ton of, like... [laughs quietly] Do you want my ritual dagger, babe? Like... [Ali laughs]

**Austin**: I mean...

**Keith**: Do you want a vial of my blood?

**Dre**: Pretty metal.

**Janine**: I have a suggestion that's, like, maybe a little bit nasty.

**Sylvia**: What?

**Austin:** [laughs quietly] Uh huh?

**Dre:** [sarcastic] Whaaat?

**Ali:** I had one that was cute.

**Keith:** Used...a sneeze.

**Sylvia:** I want to know if it's the idea I had and went, "Oh, maybe not..." so please tell me what it is.

**Janine:** I thought Cori could clip off one of her little wings.

**Sylvia:** I was going to say give her some feathers, yeah.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm. I was going to say one of those *Beauty and the Beast* mirrors so you could look at each other. [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** What?

**Dre:** Oooh.

**Keith:** I was going to say give her 20 bucks. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah, she needs some gas money. Long trip. [Austin, Ali, and Keith laugh]

**Janine:** Uh huh, uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Give her my phone number so she can actually call. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** This is a real personality quiz reveal. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Listen.

**Janine:** We've never talked about the wings being, like, really...

**Keith:** Clippable?

**Janine:** I mean, they— I always kind of assumed they were, like, vestigial, so you could just snip one off.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I mean, they grew because of Divine stuff.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, I do feel them, but it's not...

**Austin:** Yeah, you feel— they're biological. They're in there.

**Sylvia:** You know.

**Ali:** Are they like—

**Janine:** I'm just saying, it's not like cutting off a finger.

**Sylvia:** No, it's like cutting out some hair. [laughs quietly] Like...

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** No, the feathers would be that, but the wings...

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The feathers, that's what I meant.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, you can do feathers.

**Sylvia:** I'm not cutting off a whole—

**Austin:** Feathers, I think, is...

**Sylvia:** I'm not giving her my arm! [Sylvia, Janine, and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like...

**Dre:** Wow, I thought you loved her.

**Ali:** How does she carry that around?

**Austin:** Yeah, I thought we were serious.

**Sylvia:** Fucking every lesbian that listens to this show being like, "She's a fucking fraud. Knew she was bisexual. God damnit." [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Ali:** Oh...

**Austin:** Ah, you should have just done the ritual dagger. That, I think, would have been acceptable.

**Sylvia:** I know. They would have been really in on it.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think it's that, and I think it's the little, um...I kind of like the idea of giving her the little, like, wing laurel thing that I had been using to pilot the mech that...

**Austin:** Oh, that's fun. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's like, I'm not going to need this for a while.

**Austin:** That's fun.

**Sylvia:** I can't take my mech with me when I travel usually, so.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Well, I mean, it's a whole new world now. Present seems to be in the wind a little bit [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and on the back foot, and who can say? Uh, does she have anything to give you? Uh, I think she says—

**Sylvia:** I made you a mixtape.

**Austin:** A mixtape is very fun. She gives you a thing that looks like an iPod, like an

old-school click wheel iPod.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Janine:** Oh hell yeah.

**Austin:** With a mixtape on it. And also it says...

(as **Elle**): This is from Arbitrage. You can use this to talk to me.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): [reluctant] Huh.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Has an account for you all set up. It has some glint in the account already. It turns on, and it says, like, "Welcome to the Principality Protocol!"

**Sylvia:** Oh...

**Austin:** It's the platform of tomorrow. You can send a message to her whenever you want, on this.

**Sylvia:** I feel like Cori looks at it like, "Yeah, I hate this, but I love you, so I guess I'll roll with it." [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Uh huh. That's how it works.

**Janine:** Dedicated Facebook Messenger device.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's the thing all your loved ones are on, you know?

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] I got a cell phone just for my girlfriend. It's fine.

**Austin:** Ohh. Okay, yeah, it's fine. [chuckles] Oh, everyone's on— it's all fun and games when everyone's on Whatsapp, but, you know, then Whatsapp gets bought, and...

**Dre:** Mm.

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That was never fun and games.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** [laughs quietly] Okay, fair.

**Sylvia:** I got European family. I've had to use Whatsapp a lot. That's not fun and games.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh.

**Dre:** I can't believe Cori's got two phones. [Austin and Sylvia laugh quietly]

**Sylvia:** Don't say it like that. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Levi? Shot of you and the boys, you and the crew, you and the Star Crossed?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What's your...

**Dre:** God. Fucking...

**Austin:** Yeah. What's it look like looking out on the future for you?

**Dre:** [sighs] I don't know about the future. I think right now it looks like everybody fucking cracks a cold one.

**Ali:** Let's fucking go.

**Austin:** Hell yeah, brother. [Dre laughs] Let's fucking go.

**Sylvia:** Save one for me, bro.

**Austin:** Party time on Perennial Station. [laughs quietly] Hey, Perennial, could you wave up some brewskis? [Dre laughs] Can you get on that? Couldn't you have poured a cold one into the Perennial Wave instead of fucking plants? What are we doing?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Perennial Blue Ribbon.

**Dre:** Levi's cooking something.

**Austin:** I was going to say. Are you cooking? Is it feast time?

**Dre:** It's feast time.

**Sylvia:** I love this.

**Austin:** I love this. Leap, inside of the empty shell of Present, are you...?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Have you and your crew taken over this ship, and— who's at the— who's tending bar at the bar? [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Um, I'm tending bar at the bar.

**Austin:** Of course you are.

**Keith:** And I've got, uh...let's say it's Horatio Robottom at the helm, figuring out the controls.

**Austin:** Uh huh. And he says, "How's this thing work?" Hits a button.

**Keith:** Yeah, how's this fucking thing work? Yeah.

**Austin:** An arm sprouts from the side of Present. [Dre and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** What's this thing do? I love that Homer Simpson is in your crew. [Austin laughs]



**Keith:** Wilky Burkhard is basically like a hat on the orb in the tank still. A.O. Rooke has delivered the tank to the top of Present.

**Austin:** Mm. Oh, I see. Right, yeah, uh huh. Yeah.

**Keith:** And, uh...everyone else I think is fixing, you know, putting out fires.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Patching people up who've been hurt.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I'd say half of the Pact folks immediately surrendered at the Ekpyrosis exploding. Others decided to try to go out through the Portcullis gates that were not finished. That didn't work, and they were either shot down or then they turned to try to just, like, flee. Most of them who are fleeing don't know where to go. They don't have—you know, outside of some of the Apostolosian ships, don't really have the engines necessary to get anywhere quick enough.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** So I bet some of them end up on Earth, and like, okay, good like. Good luck being on Earth.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's the rest of your life.

**Keith:** There's a big gun down there.

**Austin:** There is a big gun, but that's kind of it. You know, I never pulled the trigger on the loose sniper, and I'm just gonna be goofy with it. I think that sniper, who was chasing you around inside of the Nanobeast maze lair, just kind of quietly integrates into the party, you know?

**Dre:** Hell yeah. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Shit.

**Austin:** Doesn't— is just like, “Can I just pretend to be...” 'cause, you know, they could just very easily pretend that they're with one of the groups that no one knows about, 'cause they came in through the gate, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Is this Jack Spy again? Is Jack Spy back?

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** That would be so funny if it was that one spy.

**Janine:** Was his name Em?

**Keith:** Oh, from the...

**Austin:** It wasn't Em.

**Keith:** No, no, Em is a different spy.

**Austin:** It's not that Em.

**Keith:** We're talking about the cook, right? The cook from...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Violet Cove?

**Austin:** No, no, no. Yeah, was it the cook—?

**Sylvia:** You think he's the cook because he's Carmy from *The Bear*. Isn't that the thing?  
[laughter]

**Austin:** [laughs] That is exactly what it is!

**Keith:** The cook was the guy who escaped [**Ali:** Uh huh.] from Violet Cove.

**Austin:** And from the *Blue Channel*.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Remember the one who, like, snuck all through the *Blue Channel*?

**Ali:** Yes.

**Austin:** Isn't that the same one?

**Ali:** Yeah, that's the chef. yes.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it was actually a chef.

**Keith:** It was actually a chef, yeah.

**Austin:** And it was actually also Carmy from *The Bear*.

**Keith:** I don't know what *The Bear*— I mean, I know of *The Bear*. I haven't seen *The Bear*.

**Sylvia:** Eh, it's fine.

**Austin:** I do think that that is who it is. That's very fun to me. Though that person was more Arbitrage-aligned, but you know, [**Dre:** Yeah.] the world's funny.

**Dre:** Hey, you know, I could probably use a sniper on my ship.

**Austin:** Yeah, I could transfer.

**Janine:** [sarcastic] Especially such a loyal one.

**Austin:** Yeah. [laughs] Yeah, especially one who's definitely going to— I guess it was a Paint Shop guy is actually who it was, right? So, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, he's a Paint Shop guy.

**Austin:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Dre:** [sarcastic] Oh, everybody else gets to go enemies-to-lovers except for Levi, huh?

**Sylvia:** No, listen, hey.

**Dre:** Okay, that's how it is.

**Sylvia:** Hey, I support you. Let me know if you need tips.

**Janine:** Hey, you can— yeah, fuck whoever you want. [Sylvia chuckles]

**Dre:** Thanks, Janine. That's beautiful. Love is love.

**Austin:** I guess that brings us to Thisbe and Brnine.

**Janine:** I have a thing I would like— that Thisbe would like to say to Brnine before they leave and do whatever. I think it is the moment when, like, the energy is all kind of dying down. Thisbe is, like, floating back to the ground. She's doing that elegant anime landing, where it's like you've got one leg tucked up and the other leg extended, and you land on the one leg, and then the other leg comes down.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And I think Thisbe, like, takes a second to kind of get her bearings back.

Ali (as **Brnine**): You doing all right, Thisbe?

**Janine:** And then walks over. Yeah, eh. [Ali chuckles] Thisbe just says:

(as **Thisbe**): You're a good captain, Calvin Brnine. [Sylvia gasps]

**Dre:** Aww.

**Janine:** Or something that sounds a bit less like “You're a good man, Charlie Brown.”

**Sylvia:** I was thinking Charlie Brown too. [all laugh] Listen.

**Austin:** Oh, but has there ever been anyone more Charlie Brown coded in Friends at the Table? [more laughter]

**Keith:** Now let's go look for the Great Pumpkin.

**Janine:** Oh my god.

**Sylvia:** Who's Snoopy?

**Austin:** Who is? I don't know.

**Sylvia:** Leap. [Ali chuckles]

**Austin:** Anyway. Let's stay in character. Brnine.

Ali (as **Brnine**): [awkwardly] Oh. Um. Thanks.

**Dre:** Hell yeah, dude.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh...glad I could help, Thisbe. Are you sure you're feeling okay?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Do you mean have I absorbed some unwelcome presence?  
Or do you mean am I ill?

Ali (as **Brnine**): I mean that this all seemed kind of intense up there. So, uh...

Janine (as **Thisbe**): It is intense in a way I've been growing accustomed to. It was a long year.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Welp, we did it. [sighs]

Janine (as **Thisbe**): We should return to the ship. Would you pick a movie tonight? [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Aww.

**Dre:** Aww.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh, yeah, I could pick up a few.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): It's been a long time since I watched a movie.

Ali (as **Brnine**): What are you doing?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I don't have a TV.

Ali (as **Brnine**): We gotta get you a TV.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I have plant. I take care of my plant.

Ali (as **Brnine**): That's not movies!

**Austin:** [laughing] I have plant!

**Dre:** I have plant. [Keith laughs]

Janine (as **Thisbe**): It entertains me alone. It's fine. It's not a problem that I do not have a TV.

Ali (as **Brnine**): It sounds like it's a problem.

**Sylvia:** I have a laptop. I can stream on that. [Ali laughs]

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I was stating a fact. I wasn't mourning.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Mm...sounded like mourning to me.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] I love after the, like, super sweet moment, it's right back to sweaty Brnine. [Ali, Janine, and Dre laugh]

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** It's an absolute torrent of affection.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Ali and Janine laugh]

**Austin:** The end. [Ali and Keith laugh] I mean, like, you know.

**Sylvia:** The final shot.

**Dre:** What else would it be?

**Austin:** You know, I think there's bigger stuff that we should probably talk about, in terms of how this shakes out into the rest of the galaxy, but I can't think of a better final shot of this set of characters than Brnine and Thisbe going from sweet to slowly roasting each other.

## Outro [2:10:02]

[["Hit The Number, Call Me Up"](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Austin (as **Particular Emphasis**): What is happening, Palisade? It's your girl, Parti, Particular Emphasis, and I've got a question for you: what is going on the grill this weekend? This holiday weekend, you know we gotta do it big. All across Palisade, one year anniversary since the end of hostilities, a.k.a. since we took the planet back, so you know we're breaking out the fireworks. You know we breaking out the red hots. You know we smoking on that Principality pack. We kept a little in reserve, just to remember what it feels like! You feel me? So, hit the number. Call me up. Ain't no more pirate radio. We got real shit.

Austin (as **Layer Luxurious**): And that, of course, was the voice of Particular Emphasis, a.k.a. Parti, protege of the late Baldwin Home and firebrand DJ for the Cause and its allies. She didn't know it then, but in one of those little quirks of history was as she spoke those words that a few thousands light years away, Cas'alear Rizah would, under the protection of Exeter Leap and the crew of the Precipice, step into a stream of pure Perennial Wave and begin the broadcast that would change the galaxy forever.

She also didn't know that, after a few more decades—or centuries,

depending on your perspective—I would be speaking into a microphone right here, in the same hills of Sinder Karst, where she and others would fight for their freedom, our freedom, on Palisade. So, one more time: I am Layer Luxurious, and this has been Perfect Imperfect, a podcast about the end of the Perfect Millennium. And because that is our mandate and because we now have told you the story of the final days of the old Divine Principality, it is with bittersweetness that I must say that our time together has come to an end.

But history doesn't end, does it? Those who live through the trials of turning the wheel and those who try to jam its gears, their lives continue beyond the days of their greatest acts and their most dire struggles. Had their efforts paid off? And how would they be repaid by the galaxy they changed?

Some, like Levitation Cascabel-Gardner, would ride high into the new era, a new era which he and others proudly helped shape. Star Crossed, the group founded by Levi, was driven by a set of principles home grown right here in the Mirage, and they were perfectly poised to tackle the uncanny challenges that the new Arboreal galaxy had in store for them. Decentralized despite the central image of their founder, committed to fighting and feeding in equal measure, Star Crossed became less an individual organization and more of a blueprint for banding together locally. And in a galaxy like ours, there are lots of localities.

Others, like the erstwhile Captain Calvin Brnine, who had done so much to shape the final years of the Perfect Millennium, did what they did best: slipping back out of the spotlight and into the long shadow of history. In the years following the confrontation with Motion, Brnine continued to work quietly in whatever ways their talents could best help Millennium Break, though rarely in public ways. No more talk shows for our commander, at least not for a little while.

If some disappeared into the shadows to focus on local and personal concerns, others found that the darkness provided cover, allowing them to reach further and further in their machinations. Riah Connadine and the Divine, the Machine, comma, Arbitrage, and yes, Mustard Red, carrying with her operational



schematics for Millennium Break's Strand System, had vanished from Palisade. In that time, their new Principality Protocol became the unassailable bedrock of financial, social, and cultural exchange: not just a way to pay someone glint, but the universalizing, supposedly apolitical platform on which people of all persuasions talked, worked, met, and built their own visions of the future. So central that it became invisible, so insidious that even those who knew better than to trust it, those like Coriolis Sunset, found themselves joining the service.

In fact, Cori, who had escaped the ire of both Devotion and Present, found herself in a place that many who had survived latter days of the Perfect Millennium could relate. Her foundations had come unraveled. Her closest relationships, like that with Elle, came with caveats. Her ideals remained, as did her budding partnership with Perennial, but they were the rare stable islands set in a galaxy adrift. The future was an open-ended question, with all of the requisite excitement and disquietude.

Few had shaped the openness of that future more than Thisbe, whose exploration of the Synthetic and the Divine and the Axiomatic, sentience written with the widest margins possible, had led to the end of the age of Kalmeria and the beginning of Arbor's spread. New types of life blossomed and boiled and bled all across the galaxy, sparked by the change in the Perennial Wave. Some of it sprouted and spread as new irrepressible life. Some of it changed things that were already alive or even things beyond life, the laws of time and physics becoming unpredictable wherever Arbor's largest saplings took hold. And unlike Kalmeria, it seemed like this new molecule was harder to pin down and control; not fuel for war machines but a new take on the natural itself. And in the back of her ship, large enough to contain the trunk of the tree called Arbor from which the cuttings were originally taken, Thisbe explored the world she'd helped make, cataloging with curiosity and interest, collecting shards of all kinds in an effort to understand her place in a galaxy so shattered.

One whose curiosity was finally sated is Exeter Leap. Now, it's easy to find

records on the legendary pirate, but it's hard to know which of them are true. Some tell the story of a dashing planet-hopping adventure where Leap and his crew bounced from port to port, racing against rivals in a search for a treasure he was cursed to hunt for. Others suggest that Leap spent the better part of a year learning to control the teleporting shell of Present, which he'd stolen at the end of the conflict on Perennial Station, but that once he'd learned how it worked, reaching the treasure was easy. Our research suggests that it's a little of column A and a little of column B. Without the Divine Core powering it, Present's shell wasn't able to zip around with the ease it could in the past, but that didn't stop Leap from using it as a base of operations from which he did, yes, finally find what he was looking for, only to decide soon after that another career change was due.

And here on Palisade, the work continued, though maybe not exactly how it's told in your history books. The final days of the war on Palisade had drained August Righteousness in a real irreparable way, but his resolute commitment to justice never faltered, and he leveraged his successes on the planet—and the behind-closed-doors agreements he'd made with General Mourning—to ensure that Palisade maintained a policy of self-determination, becoming unquestionably part of the Twilight Mirage without ever ceding autonomy in matters legislative, economic, or judicial to the Qui Err Coalition.

As for the rest of the galaxy, the stels, Cas'alear Rizah and Cynosure Whitestar-Kesh, the Witch in Crystal, Millennium Break itself...well, those are bigger stories, and this is the end of Perfect Imperfect. [brief lull in music] But, thanks to your support, it won't be the end of our show. [music continues] Don't cut us from your feed yet, because we will be back to tell those and other stories about what happened in the chaos immediately after the Perfect Millennium, next year, when we begin the Year of Seven Principleps. Stay tuned.

[music ends]