

PARTIZAN 08: Under the Boughs of the Court

Transcriber: lune daffodilian#8872 (0:00 - 7:01) coyote#8594 (7:01 - 144:33)

AUSTIN (as MOURNINGBRIDE): Well. You've come at a strange time. I'm afraid I cannot let you in.

DRE (as VALENCE): Is there, nothing we can do to help, or be helpful, in this? I mean, it sounds serious.

JANINE (as THISBE): That is Operant Valence.

(AUSTIN laughs)

MOURNINGBRIDE: There are others near here who, have sent their own pings, and who we have narrowly avoided.

(TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER starts playing)

My group lives in... fear, despite our strength. We hide ourselves, despite the pursuit of knowledge being our only true objective. And, it is important that the Columnar do not know for a fact that we live in these woods.

We don't have a checkbook, but there are things we can offer that Columnar, and Orion, and Nideo cannot. Information. Memoria. Technique.

(ALI (as BROUN) scoffs)

VALENCE: That sounds, more interesting to me than a checkbook.

BROUN: But if we were talking checks, what is this worth to you?

(cut)

AUSTIN: That beach has three mechs near the bonfire, and there are three people. All of them are Columnar, all of them are synthetics.

(cut)

JANINE: I want to fully charge the camera mech.

AUSTIN: There we go. Okay.

(cut)

DRE: Like, the scene I have in mind if this goes perfectly--

AUSTIN: Which is to say--

DRE: --is there's something in here that I get so that when I put out a comms message to Kensie, she is just like, "Who the fuck is this and how do you know this?"

AUSTIN: Right.

(cut)

AUSTIN: You know, here's, here is like a, the type of thing that's like, this is a personal thing that is not a deep invasion of privacy type thing? You know that she used to be in the 21st Voluntary Composite Division, which is, the big army of Columnar on the planet. She was going to be dishonorably discharged. I don't know that you know why, I don't know that I know why, uh, but instead, she kinda like, called in a favor and got demoted to this much smaller squad instead.

(TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER. continues playing)

AUSTIN: Um, and I think, we get just a little, I almost said animation. It would be. Of all of the Obscura's beetle wings, the two big beetle wings opening up, and you can see the camera pods-- they're *dying* to be launched, and they all kind of just like-- *duhduhduhduhduh*, almost stutter their way inside of those pods, and the wings are kind of shaking a little bit, and then just goes, *buoooh*. And shuts down.

Uh, and kind of collapses into the ground. I think what we're gonna see is that-- Kensie is in there still at this point, is what I'll say.

Alright! At this point, I think Dina and Cobra Junction have to make a decision, but at only two of eight, I think they're actually going to hold their own. I think that they think that they can make this win, that they can win this fight. Um, and so, I think what we get is a moment where Cobra is reloading his big gun, and Dina is now moving in towards you, broun, with their chainsaw. And you can see they're prepping to launch one of these electrified nets at you. What do you do?

ALI: Um, I would like to engage with them again, but what would doing a Survey before I do that give me? Just like, better positioning, or?

AUSTIN: I will say right now that giving-- a Survey will give you information that you do not currently have about the scenario you are in, (ALI: Okay) um, uh, I will say that it is, the other thing that it gives is an opportunity for things to go bad because you're rolling dice, right, without--

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: What it wouldn't give is, it wouldn't advance the bodyguards clock, but it would, um, it depends on what you're looking for. But I think it would basically-- It would definitely give you information, I'm not gonna say you wouldn't get something. You would absolutely get something important out of this, for sure.

ALI: Nonono, yeahyeahyeah. I just mean the benefit in terms of Surveying before attacking again. To be like, okay, wh-- how, in this situation, how can I hurt them the most.

AUSTIN (cross): Mm-- yeah, I don't think-- Yeah, what I would give you is, you can do this as a setup action. What you're describing is a setup action, which could raise your position or increase your effect, basically.

ALI: Yeah. I would like to do that.

ALI: Okay. I would like to do that.

AUSTIN: So yes. Yeah. So what's that look like, and what's your Survey?

ALI: (cross) I just... take this second to sort of... Yeah.

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

ALI: Um, my Survey, I have a one in Survey (AUSTIN: Okay) um, and, yeah, I don't know. It's, Broun is in their mech, um, and the like, I don't know that the camera situation is fantastic in the Three Cheers, (AUSTIN: Yeah) um, the way that I've been thinking about it-- oop--

AUSTIN: (cross) I actually think-- you might have to Scan and not Survey from here. The sort of (ALI: mhm)-- if you're Surveying from inside your mech, what you are doing is Scanning. Which is meant to be trouble for you. (ALI: Okay.) Like, that is part of the system, is that like, uh, being inside your mech means that there is this degree of remove between what your personal body is capable of, and what this machine that you're interfacing is capable of. (ALI: Okay) And so while your natural eyes could find something quickly, the cameras on the Three Cheers might not be there yet.

ALI: Okay. But the game gives you the option to do Study if I wanted to, right. I would just take... (??? 6:05).

AUSTIN: (cross) Totally, and what I would say is it would be a limited effect, versus a (ALI: Okay) standard effect. Because what you're doing is looking at JPEGs, right. It's like, (ALI: Right. Um--) if you were standing on top of, you, if Broun was standing on top of the Three Cheers and had all this vision in front of them, they could--

ALI: Nonono, I get it, I understand what you're saying. Um. I'm annoyed by it. (laughs)

(DRE and JANINE laugh)

AUSTIN: (amused) That annoyance is the game. That is the mech, mech are bodies.

ALI: (laughs) Okay! No, I know. Yeah. That's fine. Um. I'll just, do this one mission, rolling things I have zero in. (exhales, laughs)

AUSTIN: Yup! Level one is level one!

ALI: I *hate* Blades in the Dark.

DRE: I'm about to do that too.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but this is where you push yourself, this is where you get help, right.

ALI: Oh, oh yeah.

AUSTIN: I think this is actually a great point where Valence could probably help, right?

DRE: Okay, so walk me through what is it you're doing?

ALI: Um, I am just, this mech is approaching me, and I am looking at it to see the best way to like, counter the attack, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah!

DRE: Oh okay. Um, then yeah, I would definitely help, I think maybe I just like, kinda swing over behind you and am kind of in the background also trying to scan and pull up data and...

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally, take one stress and give one die. Or, again, improved position, improved effect, it's up to y'all. Um, this is, to scan, at this moment is risky standard. (ALI: Okay) I say at this moment because Cobra is reloading and is trying to like, get his feet back after Mow did that last attack.

ALI: And with the die from Dre, that just brings me up to one, right?

AUSTIN: That brings you up to one, yes, 1d6. You could also burn a quirk to get up to 2d6.

ALI: Yeah, I can maybe use Fast Acceleration just to get some distance to sort of make the... yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, i think that's fair, totally. Like, that shot in the anime of the mech quickly doing, like, the step back, to kind of like check "okay, whew, what do we got goin' on here".

ALI: Okay, so that's 2, risky standard.

AUSTIN: 2d6. 2d6 risky standard. That is a 6!

ALI: (quietly satisfied) Yay.

AUSTIN: Alright, so, lemme give you a couple things. One is, you're gonna get either increased effect or increased positioning in the next roll, which we set up, that's a setup action, but you're also getting something out of this, which is: behind Dina, immediately behind Dina, remember when I was like "it feels like things are really still"? What the scan reveals is that, in each of these warded zones, everything is really still, it's almost like, you know that moment before it starts to pour and all of like, the leaves go upside down? You know what I'm talking about, do I sound like...

JANINE: (confused) What?

AUSTIN: You don't know this?

DRE: No, I know what you're talking about.

JANINE: The leaves go upside down?

AUSTIN: Before it storms, leaves, like, invert. They don't go upside down, they like, turn... not inside out, they like turn upward. This is a thing, this is a real thing.

JANINE: Okay... I believe you, I just don't know...

AUSTIN: Um, they, yeah, so that happens, and that is happening in each of the four warded zones. It's also happening just to the south of Dina. Below, to the south of Dina, right where they are taking these steps back, there's like, a little bit of an area where you could push them where they would hit the mines without hitting you, but remember that area where I was like "oh, it feels really still", that's because that section was actually warded. Whether that's a ward that you were not told about by Mourningbride, or a ward that Mourningbride didn't know about, you're not sure, but that makes this a little bit harder, because if Dina takes a step back, they will end up in that spot for sure. (ALI: Okay) But that is a little bonus, on top of the actual bonus you're getting.

ALI: Okay, cool. Can I now use that momentum just to attack?

AUSTIN: Absolutely. Yeah, what do you want to do? Is it now just charge ahead, and...

ALI: I think so, yeah, so the, um... I'm gonna post another sketch into the chat for you...

AUSTIN: Love it, thank you, I love all this, this is all Patreon material, you love to see it.

ALI: (laughs) Cause I'd thought of this weapon a bunch before we started recording, and was like "oh, that's a good idea", didn't write any of it down, and now have to describe it into a microphone, but I think that the way that the, like, the spring-open mechanism works is that there's magnets on it that you can sort of flip (AUSTIN: Ooh...), um, and the way that you make it spring open is that you make the polars sort of hit each other, and then it opens up, and then when they're retracted, they kind of get retracted back, um, so I think I have it open the like, opposite way, and is just swinging it like a fucking hammer. Like just a baseball bat into the mech's fuckin... yeah.

AUSTIN: (cross) Aw yeah, okay, I see what you're saying. So you've like, yes, you've turned it into like a sick mace. (ALI: (laughs) Yes) I love it, that's really good. Alright, give me another...

ALI: Is that just another Battle?

AUSTIN: That's another Battle, is that also something you don't have anything in?

ALI: (sighs) Sure is, umm....

AUSTIN: Okay! Listen!

ALI: It's fine! (laughs)

AUSTIN: You live you learn! So that's a 0d6, but, but, it's up to you, did you want extra effect or better positioning?

ALI: (sharp inhale) What's my position right now?

AUSTIN: Still risky standard for like, this little bit. (ALI: Okay) But I think this is the moment where... is that right? Yeah, risky standard is right.

ALI: And what would better effect give me?

AUSTIN: Risky great.

ALI: Oh, ohohohohoh, umm, mmm, hmm...

DRE: And better standing would be controlled standard?

AUSTIN: Controlled, yeah, yeah. What that would have been would be like, I think here's how I'm gonna read this: Controlled would be you scanned and figured out a mode of ingress where you could charge in where you would dodge the eletronet plus chainsaw combo, whereas the greater effect would be you scanned and found a weak point in Dina's, y'know, machine.

ALI: Right. Um, I'm trying to think of what would be... (laughing) more honest of what Broun was looking for.

AUSTIN: Yeah, true, of what Broun, what they actually would be tryna pop off here.

ALI: Yeah, um, I think the fact that there's a net complicates this a lot, so I am gonna go for the controlled positioning.

AUSTIN: Okay, so controlled standard, then.

ALI: Um, I think that I can use Bulky Torso to push myself.

AUSTIN: Totally could, that gets you up to 1d6.

ALI: Yeah, haha, perfect...

JANINE: Oh, I have, um, I have an idea of a thing I could do to aid, (ALI: Yeah? AUSTIN: Okay) since I'm little miss distraction (laughs).

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: What if I broadcast a bunch of horrible noise with my... oh, I guess I already used my thingy, but does that matter for this?

AUSTIN: Uh, it doesn't, but it kind of, uh, it's... I would let you do it, I would let you do it...

JANINE: I mean, I could also broadcast it with me.

AUSTIN: Right, you could do another... my only note there is if we were writing this episode of TV, I would be like "we've done this trick three times now".

JANINE: Yeah, that's true.

AUSTIN: But I don't, but that's not how games work, but...

JANINE: I could throw a tree.

AUSTIN: You could throw a tree. You could throw a tree. You could mark a stress, I want you to mark stress, like, these are things you should be doing, marking stress and helping each other is the heart of the game, so...

JANINE: Yeah, no, I committed to... Thisbe exists because my goal is to play this game as hard as possible, so (laughs)

AUSTIN: Totally. So give me a marked stress, and then give...

JANINE: Gonna throw a fuckin' tree.

AUSTIN: Throw a fuckin' tree. (laughing) Just across this whole area, yeah.

JANINE: (cross) I got a lot to choose from, they're just, just fuckin' like a, a javelin.

AUSTIN: Yep, love it. Uh, so that means you can roll 2d6 Broun. Uh, and that is controlled standard. That is a 6!

ALI: Siiiiix (laughs)

AUSTIN: Damn, okay, so what's this look like?

ALI: (continued laughing) Um...

AUSTIN: God...

JANINE: This is so fucked up! We're a really... we are something else, this is the second mission in a row where it's just been... (AUSTIN: You're doing well!) we are messy bitches who live for drama, like...

DRE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yes!

ALI: Um, what do I wanna do, um... what's the, like, pose of this mech right now?

AUSTIN: Um, I think, uh, it's about to change as a tree is about to be hurled like a javelin at it, and then someone's gonna charge at it with a... giant nutcracker mace (ALI: Uh huh, uh huh), um, i think that Dina is like... you know what, actually what I think is happening is like, Dina is getting into a mode that maybe we haven't seen here, which is like, all of the joints kind of release and the, the wedge gets just a little bit taller and a little bit more lanky, so it's almost like a defensive maneuverability mode that, uh, they're slipping the mech into, because they realize that they are a little, a little... not outmatched necessarily, but outnumbered, at least. So yeah, that is what they're doing.

ALI: Okay, I think that I'm... I was swinging this like a baseball bat with the blade out... (AUSTIN: Yes) and I think that I'm like, reaching for the hip of the mech, and because I'm, because this is a six, (laughs)

AUSTIN: It is, it is a six.

ALI: (still laughing) This doesn't have to be true... I think that I like, twist the blade sort of downwards, and then try to do the like, flip thing again, to hopefully just pull off this leg. I understand if that's a second move, but...

AUSTIN: No, I think that's just, you're doing the damage here, so yeah, yeah, I think you completely rip this thing's leg off, and it goes like, flying, um... I think it probably manages, it does manage to like, get away from that javelin toss that Mow threw over, that Thisbe threw over, but that is what opened up that second follow-up attack that lets you just completely remove this thing's, one of its legs, and it topples over. Um, y'know, I don't think Dina's out of this fight necessarily, but it ain't... like, has control of the wedge's arms still, but that still is not necessarily... great.

ALI: Does it only have one arm left?

AUSTIN: It only has one arm left and one leg left.

ALI: Okay! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yes, you're doing some Bushido Blade shit, and more importantly, um, they won't be moving into the alarm behind them at this point, right.

ALI: Oh yes, yes.

JANINE: It's a little more like Deadliest Warrior shit.

(laughter)

AUSTIN: You're right, it is more like Deadliest Warrior shit... Um, so, Valence, I think this is the moment where, like, Corbra Junction... Cobra is... is the wildcard of the bunch, and there's a point at which you see a fight that you're losing and you go "I'm gonna bloody their fucking noses anyway". Um, and so, just down to a knee, like, opens fire at you in the sky. You still flying, or are you back down to the ground?

DRE: Uh, I mean I'm still flying, I'm not like super high or anything...

AUSTIN: Okay, then we just get this, like, quick burst of machine gun fire with tracers flying up at you at the sky. You are in his sights at this point, he's identified you as the weakest, like, the weakest link in this chain, in many ways, like one, in terms of literally you are in the middle, and if he can break you, then there's a line north of here which is much safer, because now that Kensie has revealed there are traps, uh, behind him, and now that Dina is down over to his west, he doesn't have any support here, so even if he's going to flee, he's going to, he's at the "I have to break through, not retreat", y'know, mode, and so he's laying down fire at you. I think actually he's laying down fire and walking forward, like walking towards the beach, towards you where he's gonna like, try to break out into a run once he gets to the beach. Uh, what do you do?

DRE: Hmmm...

AUSTIN: This is putting you in a desperate position again, instantly, because this machine gun fire is no joke.

DRE: Ummm, okay, I thiiink... I still wanna use my leverage, or my potential leverage that I have on Kensie... (AUSTIN: Sure) and I think I radio Kensie, and I say-

DRE (As Valence): Kensington B, of the- former commander of the...

DRE: Did you say she was a commander or just a...

AUSTIN: She was just a member of the other unit, of the... whatever I said it was

DRE: The three-oh... the twenty-first something?

AUSTIN: I think she's in the twenty-first now, but maybe I'm wrong... uh...

DRE: No, you said this was the...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're right, 21st Voluntary is, is yeah, what she was. She's now in the 301st, correct.

DRE: So I think I open up a comm message to her and say-

DRE (As Valence): Kensington B, formerly of the 21st Voluntary, I would please ask you to request your... uh, your subordinate to stop firing.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me... what is this, this is a...

DRE: That's a good question.

AUSTIN: Uh, I think this is like a, a Command? Or a Consort or a Sway. It's not a... probably not a consort.

DRE: Yeah. No. I would love to find a way to make it a Consort, but I don't think it is. I think this is more of a sway, in spirit. (AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah) Valence is not bossing people.

AUSTIN: Or to the degree that they are, that is a... you're lying, you're, it's not, you are not their commanding officer, or like, you are not secretly calling, you know what I mean? Like I think there's a way where you could imagine this being recieved as being "Oh shit, this person is... knows who I am, they must be part of my organization" and that is not what's actually happening here. So yeah, let's go with Sway. Ope, you're a 0d6.

DRE: Okay, so I'm gonna push myself, cause' I'm at zero...

AUSTIN: Okay, give me a 2d6.

DRE: Okay... wait, that would only be a 1d6, right?

AUSTIN: Sorry, a 1d6, right, a 1d6. Uh, what are you using to make this call? Is this the fine broadcast system, is this the same thing you used before?

DRE: Oh yeah, I guess I can't do that, huh...

AUSTIN: No, you can, it's just gear, gear you can use whenever. I'm not talking about enhanced comms, I'm talking about, I literally meant what was the gear, (DRE: Oh, oh yes) which is excellent speakers and transmission... like, are you saying this, or are you like, trying to radio on a local band, type thing.

DRE: I think I'm trying to radio on a local band.

AUSTIN: Okay so it's not a, it's not a broadcast, it's like a straight-up...

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay... um... then yeah, you'd be using your throat mic transceiver or whatever. But yeah, what do you, what would you be pushing... Oh, this is just, if you're just pushing yourself to do a conversation thing like this, that's just stress, that's just stress.

DRE: Yeah, yeah... two stress, right?

AUSTIN: Two stress, two stress...

DRE: Alright, I already marked that, um...

AUSTIN: So you're up to five stress, currently. A reminder, nine is when you get a scar.

DRE: Eh, that's fine, it's fine itsfineit'sfine...

AUSTIN: This is desperate... for sure...

DRE: Oh yeah, for sure, I'm being shot at, um, (laughter)

AUSTIN: I think it's desperate... it might be desperate limit- hmm... you have this information, it's a desperate standard.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh, is there anything else you could do to help, I will offer you... a different collateral die, let's see, um... you're going to get shot by Cobra while you're sending this thing, if you want the collateral die. (DRE: Oof... what sort of) Which would give your, the Hippocampus would get a... would get a level one, uh, eh, foof, uh, I'd give you a level one, which is like, winged, y'know?

DRE: Right, and you can take two level ones?

AUSTIN: You can take two level ones, correct.

DRE: Okay... I'll take that.

AUSTIN: Okay. Which does mean that like, maneuvering, like, this is going to start hampering what you're doing in your mech going forward, to be clear.

DRE: Yeahyeahyeah... Okay, so that gets me to two.

AUSTIN: Yep, 2d6, desperate standard.

DRE: What could go wrooong...

AUSTIN: Uh, I'm gonna mark...

DRE: Nothing. Nothing could go wrong, Austin.

AUSTIN: (cross) That's another fuckin' six... jesus christ...

JANINE: Killin' it.

DRE: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Killin' it! And it's desperate which means you get an XP in Resolve, which I've marked...

DRE: Oh, thank you.

AUSTIN: Kensie's comms come online, and I think that she does shout, like,

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Stand down Junction, stand down.

AUSTIN: And... Junction does not stand down. Junction, like, runs past you, and is now running towards the beach. Whoop, I moved the wrong thing, I moved... there we go. And at this point just like, stops firing at you, um, and, in some ways, this is definitely his... not his

morale breaking, but him changing his mind, which is like “I’m going to break past these people, and I’m just gonna sprint across this beach and get away”. Uh, so, is not standing down in the sense that he’s... I guess he’s standing down in the sense that he’s not shooting you any more, but he is not standing down in the sense that he is like, giving up the mission, or retreating, or surrendering. Uh... What do you do? I’m not putting him in this ward, because you got a six. If you’d gotten a four or five, lemme tell you. Ah, uh, we’re back around here, I think Cobra’s gonna make a sprint, try to get out of this place, following the beach north, if no one stops him.

DRE: Is Kensie just standing on some of these explosives, or did they already go off?

AUSTIN: I think, no, they already went off. I think Kensie is still inside of her mech, which has been basically completely shut down, at this point.

ALI: Yeah, they were like electronic explosives. Not like, yeah, it was just to disable them.

DRE: Okay, gotcha. I-

JANINE: So... sorry, who’s...

AUSTIN: It’s up to y’all, I think this is like a free, we’re in fre- we’re not in free play, but like, listen...

DRE: I would like to keep talking to my new best friend, Kensington B.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

DRE: Is that okay with everyone?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can, I’m gonna say like, you’re not going to advance the bodyguards clock by doing that. Cobra is at this point not- you’ve successfully done that route of, of affecting Cobra, right. Cobra’s decision here has been, like “alright, I’ll stop shooting, but I’m not...”, Kensie does not have the leash on him like that.

DRE: Gotcha.

ALI: Do we feel like Cobra leaving is a slight risk in terms of... people coming back to mess Morning Star again? There’s no way we can know for sure, right?

AUSTIN: A hundred percent, a hundred perfect, right? Like the mission here is to prevent them from getting further north or tripping these wards, um, so, so yeah.

JANINE: Yeah, so Cobra running north is... bad. (AUSTIN: Is bad...) I mean, I have a Cobra plan, um. (ALI: Okay) I have Cobra ideas.

AUSTIN: You have Co- Cobra’s so expensive, lemme tell ya...

DRE: It’s so expensive.

ALI: (laughs)

JANINE: I don't get... this...

AUSTIN: Cobra is, Cobra is the...

DRE: Yeah, you don't, that's an American healthcare joke.

AUSTIN: Cobra health insurance is what you can, what you're qualified to get if you get laid off, or leave a job, that will continue your health benefits but it will cost A Fortune.

DRE: Like literally \$400 a month.

JANINE: Yikes!

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

DRE: Yup.

(A pause for contemplation)

ALI: Um, I have... Dina plans, or I could help you out with Cobra.

JANINE: Maybeyoushouldjus, I'll just say my Cobra idea. Um, so Cobra's running north, I would like Mow to run north-west with a tree tucked under his arm. Like battering ram style, like a bigger tree. Like for a javelin, you're gonna throw a smaller tree (AUSTIN: (laughs) DRE: Sure). If you are charging at someone like you are charging a castle gate, you're gonna pick a bigger tree. (AUSTIN: Yes...) Probably like, with roots still hanging off it and stuff. And that is my plan, to hopefully meet Cobra... um, on that route, and... smash. Not smash, but...

AUSTIN: Okay. You may be passing through that west ward, unless, are you specifically going around it?

JANINE: I think it's probably likely given Mow's size that I'd like, clip the edge.

AUSTIN: You're gonna, yeah.

JANINE: But the idea is like, a triangle shape.

AUSTIN: Right, you're doing... y'know what, fuck it, let's telestrator this: you're doing, like, boop, boop, like this, and you're hoping to catch Cobra going this way, and then like, PCHOO PCHOO PCHOO (explosion noises), right?

JANINE: Yeah, (laughs) yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. I'm just, I'm noting the ward is there so that we know that a failure is...

JANINE: Yes, no, this is one of those things that's like, it is... y'know, you make a very clean plan, but also there's the possibility of something, y'know, going astray. (AUSTIN: Sounds good, yup) It just, it seems like going around it completely would just be implausible.

AUSTIN: Yeah, agreed. This, again, seems to me like it is a... Destroy. Or a Battle, actually I think this is a Battle, I think this is, this is...

JANINE: I don't think, I would argue this isn't battle, cause it's not vehicular close-quarters combat.

AUSTIN: It is literally the thing you- It is literally vehicular close-quarters combat.

JANINE: Ehhhh... it's...

AUSTIN: You're two vehicles, who are-

JANINE: To me, to me battle would be like, if Cobra was standing beside me and I like, swung the tree.

AUSTIN: Uh, for me, the way I think about this is: is the person aware that you are there, and can they put up defense? And the answer is yes. Like, we know Cobra has a chainsaw arm. You're coming at, you're coming at him with a big tree. There are ways that could be- you could engage, he could notice that you're coming at him and cut that tree in half, right, like, there are- if you were just trying to destroy an area around someone, that would be acceptable, um, but... and you can still roll it, but I'm saying I think that it is, it is less effect. Just for the record: When you Destroy, you employ overwhelming destruction through your vehicle. You might carpet-bomb a military base, you might smash a building with a wrecking ball. You could attack using a bus as a weapon, but Battle might be better. That is literally the situation we're in, right?

JANINE: Mhmm... Mokay...

AUSTIN: So, you can do it, but it will not, it will... it'll be risky limited instead of risky standard. This is another moment, too, where Tier difference contributes. (JANINE: Umm...) For the people at home who are like, "well what is the math drama here?", uh, limited would only tick this clock once, and it is at six of eight, so you really want a double, you really want that standard effect so that you can knock him out cold and end the encounter, which is what you would get from a standard effect success, but with a limited effect, you are only gonna get it up to one. And that's a full success, so... people could help!

ALI: Could I, yeah, could I help?

AUSTIN: Absolutely! Tell me how.

ALI: Um, you're basically just running and trying to hit this dude, right?

JANINE: Yes.

ALI: Um, I could shoot some stuff?

AUSTIN: You, you could shoot some stuff, it's true.

DRE: (laughs)

ALI: I dunno if this should be like, a flash-bang situation, cause that could get rough, um, but I'm willing to shoot out just more fire-bullets to disorient this guy. Um, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yep. Take a stress, take a stress, for helping, and that gives Thisbe another +1. So that brings what, your Battle up to- or you, you committed to-

JANINE: That brings me to one...

AUSTIN: Brings you to one... You have, you have some quirks left, right?

JANINE: Yeah, i can use intimidating bulk, pretty realistically.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that that's fair, so that brings you up to 2d6, yeah...

ALI: Um, that can't help positioning too, because when Dre helped me that gave me either option before...

AUSTIN: You could do either, you could do either, you could do positioning for sure, I don't think... yeah, I guess that is, that is the alternative, actually yes, you could- because this is not in my, this is not up to me- if you aid each other, you could raise the Destroy effect to standard.

ALI: Okay, and then we would get two ticks.

AUSTIN: Which, yeah, that would give Thisbe 2d6 from Destroy, and then give you two ticks on a six, on the clock.

JANINE: I mean that makes more sense, cause then I get an extra die.

AUSTIN: Then you get a, yes, absolutely.

JANINE: Basically, I go from zero to two, so it's-

AUSTIN: And in fact, you could go up higher if you tick intimidating bulk and go up to three, right.

JANINE: Yeah. Which I still would do, I think.

AUSTIN: Totally, and also this then ends in like, if it goes well, a dope fire on a beach and a person, and a mech being impaled by a big tree, like that's sick.

JANINE: I imagine like, crunched more than impaled, but...

AUSTIN: Okay, crunched, okay, fair. Alright, give me your 3d6, risky standard... two, two five, uh, so, let's see here... Um, i think this is, I think that you're getting this done, but Mow is gonna

take some harm in the process. Tell me what it looks like on your end as, uh, broun fires these incendiary rounds, or this like, kind of area-of-effect fire shot, and then Mow charges in with a big log. A big tree, a log feels like I'm underselling it, apologies.

JANINE: Yeah, it's, I mean, I did specifically say it has the roots on the bottom, still, like it's ripped out of the ground, a tree-ass tree. Um... I mean I think it looks... like that, right? Like it's, Mow is usually a quadrupedal mech, I imagine in this situation it's a case of like, having the tree under one arm, so running on three legs instead of four, um, but yeah, just charging with a tree aimed at this other mech trying to... fuck 'em up? And there's a rain of fire.

AUSTIN: Yup! Then there's a rain of fire, and then there's, uh, and then you close the distance, you fuck him up, and as you do, you take the level 2 damage, or Mow takes the level 2 damage, umm, let's take, let's see... let's just go with lacerated, as Cobra pulls this chainsaw across Mow's chest. Um, we've talked about Mow as like, being... Mo- does Mo- Can Mow go like "WRUUUGH" like, is Mow alive in that way? Does Mow feel this, or is Mow stoic?

JANINE: No, no, I think, I mean Mow is... Mow is like a big tractor, is how I tend to describe Mow. Like Mow, Thisbe is a few steps of expression above Mow, and Thisbe I don't think would even make pain sounds.

AUSTIN: Okay, so then Mow, it's actually very creepy for Cobra, who was like "gotcha, mother fucker" and then it's like yeah, you're cutting a big robot that doesn't respond, as it destroys you with this giant tree. And we get the slow moment of like, quiet, as everything ends and Cobra's wedge unit kind of collapses into the beach, and, y'know, Kensie comes out of the toppled-over Obscura, I suspect Dina does the same, hands up, y'know. I dunno what you do with them, what do you do with them?

ALI: Umm, I'm taking those limbs.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Good.

JANINE: The... mech limbs, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh... I hope...

(laughter)

ALI: (laughing) Not, nope, I'm not, uuh...

JANINE: Just gonna slowly escalate how horrifying Broun's part sales are.

AUSTIN: Then we would absolutely be moving into, what what the other name that we decided? Trafficker, human limb trafficker.

ALI: Kshh, oh jesus christ...

DRE: Jesus...

ALI: Um, I do think there's probably a fair amount of, like, I don't know that we go so far as to like, bring them back to Mourningbride, um, but there should be like, a sense of questioning so we can go back to Mourningbride with information that would be valuable so we can get stuff from her.

JANINE: I mean if they go back, they're gonna be like "hey, shit, there's weird shit... in the forest", right, like?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I- My hands are up, don't look at me. I'll play these characters, but I don't have, I don't have an easy answer here.

DRE: Hmm, okay, I mean, let's talk to 'em, then.

AUSTIN: Alright. Do you like, gather them near this fire and... uh, just like a visual recap of the situation: at this point, the two, um, uh, wedge mechs have been knocked out, and so has the obscura unit. Have you gathered these people together, have you, like, or are they all still near their wrecks? Like I'm not gonna make you roll to, y'know, handcuff people or drag them across the thing, or like, y'know, push them there, y'know what I mean? But like, how do you keep them, I just wanna know visually what this looks like, and what the scenario is when we, when the camera comes to rest on it.

DRE: I don't... yeah, I don't wanna handcuff them.

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: So you're just like "hey, get over here"?

DRE: Yeah, like let's, let's... let's talk

AUSTIN: So like, maybe, near the big fire, so that there's light, 'cause at this point it's night time, um, are y'all staying in your... I guess Thisbe isn't, Thisbe's never in a mech (JANINE: Nope) um but, for broun and Valence, are you staying inside your mechs, are you coming out, like what is the... I just need you to paint me this picture because you're in control, like you kind of have the authorship baton at this point.

ALI: Um, I think that we get out, at least, broun does. Um, I think we're all sort of have the like, group idea to kind of round them up and talk to them, that's gonna be like a... everyone participates sort of thing.

AUSTIN: Okay, um, so the big thing that, the one thing that I will say, as GM, is that like, Cobra is in a pretty bad way. Um, uh, his mech was wrecked pretty bad, and I suspect like, part of that big tree-hit damaged the cockpit in such a way that some of his internals have been damaged seriously. Y'know, he's leaking fluids, again he is primarily, or he's entirely a robotic person, just like all three of them are, um, and he's leaking fluids and definitely needs to be attended to, um, he's not, he's like... Uh, i guess he would be, I suspect he would be making painful noises. Kensie I think is... Kensie never had her spirit broken here, in the way that Cobra's morale broke, um, she was just defeated on the battlefield, and so I think she is like-

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Who are you people? What're you, Kesh?

DRE: Oh boy... who's our face, who's our face here? (laughs)

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Nideo?

ALI: I think it might be you, 'cause you're the face class. (laughs)

AUSTIN: That's, uh huh, that is true.

DRE: That's true, yeah, that's true.

ALI: (laughing) Sorry!

DRE: No, it's fine, that's fair.

AUSTIN: (laughs)

DRE (As Valence): We're just an interested third party.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): What the hell does that mean? You're in Columnar territory, are you- what's that- what the hell does that mean?

ALI (As broun): It means we were hired to kick you out.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): You're Apostolisian, what're you, an Apostolis- and Apostolisian hit group? Hit squad?

DRE: (As Valence): No, they don't really like us much either.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): I- Well, what're you gonna do with us? Cobra, are you okay?

AUSTIN: And Cobra, who is on the ground, y'know, with the rest of you, is just like "euugh..."

DRE (As Valence): You can tend to him if you need to.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): I'm not a doctor!

JANINE (As Thisbe): Do you have epoxy?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): What a poxy?

JANINE (As Thisbe): Some manner of filler. Adherent.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Oh, E-poxy, epoxy, I thought you said... I thought you said a poxy... um...

JANINE (As Thisbe): What would that mean?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): I don't know, that's why I asked you!

DRE (As Valence): Do you not carry first aid in your...

AUSTIN (As Kensie): (sigh) Yeah, in the... if you check one of the wedges, there should be supplies.

DRE (As Valence): Will you help me look?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): That's not protocol, what? Who are you people?

DRE (As Valence): Come help me look and let's talk.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): ... Alright...

AUSTIN: And Kensie moves with you over to the nearest wreck. Um, shows you basically a, there's a compartment on one of the wedge's... leg units, basically, opens up like, almost like, where the Achilles heel would be on this thing, there's like a little, like, resources compartment that opens up, and it's, it's- You almost don't even see it because Columnar design is so much more smooth than Orion design, um, but there's like, almost like a decal, but the edges of the decal are actually a, um... the wedges are blue and gold, which is why the picture of the cheese wedge on our screen is blue and gold, or blue and yellow, um, but they're blue and gold, and there's like a gold stripe, and at the bottom of one of the stripes, it actually opens up into a little compartment that has some, like, survival resources for exactly this scenario, and there's a basic medkit there, um, and, there is a gun, and I think there's this moment of Kensie looking at the gun, um, and... trying to decide what she should do in this moment, because she knows it's there, and doesn't know if you know it's there or not, but I'm telling you you do. What do you do?

DRE (As Valence): You could grab it, and probably would shoot me, I'm not great at, at that part. The other two are better than that at me. So I don't know how far you'd get.

AUSTIN: She... reaches in, and takes out the medpack, the medkit, and hands it to you, and then she reaches in and takes the gun, and holds it in her hand... and says-

AUSTIN (As Kensie): You're gonna go patch... you're gonna go patch him up, and... and then I'll decide what we're doing.

DRE (As Valence): Why are you out here?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): What do you mean, why am I out here? We're a reconnaissance unit, we're doing reconnaissance.

DRE (As Valence): On what?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): On what- On our territory!

DRE (As Valence): What are you looking for?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): You're- You're not my commander, I'm not telling you what we're looking for! You're dense.

DRE (As Valence): I prefer curious, but that's... one way to look at it.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Curious? You're hostile. I should put a bullet in your head right now, and flee with the knowledge I have. But I value my subordinates.

DRE (As Valence): So do you go first, or do I?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): You.

AUSTIN: And she points the gun at you.

DRE (As Valence): Do you prefer Kensington or Kensie?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Kensie. Now... I dunno who you are or how you got that information but you're gonna take me back to Cobra, and one of you's gonna patch him up.

DRE (As Valence): I can try, it's not... You would probably be better at it than me, but...

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Why would you say that?

DRE (As Valence): Because you're a soldier.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Yeah, I'm, I'm not a medic. I'm not an engineer. Don't make assumptions. Move.

AUSTIN: Um, back at the campfire with Thisbe and broun, I think Dina, who is also, y'know, of their mind, but uh, is not injured like Cobra is, but did kind of have their own, uh, morale kind of beaten down, is a little more friendly, and they are like, uh-

AUSTIN (As Dina): So... um, what brings you to the Teardrop? I'm guessing you're not from around here.

ALI (As broun): You would guess correctly.

AUSTIN (As Dina): Um... d'ya like live... nearby... you here for a visit... what's the deal? I'm sorry, I'm Dina... uh... um... I like your, I like your hollows, they're cool.

ALI: Um, this is the moment, where broun, who is a... scientist? (laughs) Thinks to themselves "Do I call myself by my callsign? What do I do here?" (laughs)

AUSTIN: Y'know, maybe!

ALI: Um, I think they say-

ALI (As broun): My- I'm Mira, this is, um, Diesel. (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs)

ALI (As broun): And um, we're entertaining the interest of someone who lives nearby.

AUSTIN (As Dina): So there are people who live near here...

ALI: ...Fuck, um, (laughs)

JANINE (As Thisbe): They're referring to me.

ALI (As broun): Yes.

AUSTIN (As Dina): To- you live near here. (JANINE (As Thisbe): Yes) Are you... who... Diesel, you're Diesel?

ALI: (snort)

JANINE (As Thisbe): I am Diesel.

AUSTIN: (laughs) It's so good.

AUSTIN (As Dina): Diesel and Mira, okay... um, are you...

AUSTIN: I wonder if, if Dina would have... ah, yeah, as a reconnaissance unit, I think Dina says something in coded language, they're like, um-

AUSTIN (As Dina): Apples don't grow on trees, they grow on bushes, right?

AUSTIN: As if to like, I mean, we- I know that what they're doing is trying to see if you're part of some sort of like, deep cover, Columnar spy espionage sabotage thing, because you're a big synthetic person, and thats... it's a possibility, but they don't, you don't know the other half of this weird code phrase.

JANINE: What was the code phrase again?

AUSTIN: It was "Apples don't grow on trees, they grow on bushes, right?"

JANINE: Um, I think... I think Thisbe's just like-

JANINE (As Thisbe): It depends on the variety.

AUSTIN (As Dina): ... Oh...

ALI (As broun): The only apples that I've seen come off of a truck. What're you talking about?

AUSTIN (As Dina): Um... never mind, uh...

AUSTIN: And then they kind of just, like, deflate, and they're like, remember that they're like a cool wheeled synthetic, so when they deflate, it's like seeing, like a, like a lever turn the other direction, it has like a very mechanical- y'know what I mean?

JANINE: Like the hydraulics on their computer chair just gave out?

AUSTIN: Exactly like that, yes.

(laughter)

JANINE: Click.

AUSTIN: And I think this is probably the moment where we get, uh, Valence and Kensie coming back, Kensie pointing a gun at Valence.

ALI (As broun): ... Oh...

JANINE (As Thisbe): Why is your commander pointing a gun at my laborer?

AUSTIN: (laughs) Um, uh, I think that they look up at you and then look over to their commander, and I think they don't respond. Uh, but, uh, but Kensie does, and Kensie says-

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Because I'm taking control of the situation.

JANINE (As Thisbe): I do not wish that for you. I do not think that will go very well.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): You're right. For either of us probably. You have us two-to-one, er... you have us three on, three-to-two right now, but I have a gun pointed at your friend's back, or your laborer's back or, whatever the fuck they are.

DRE (As Valence): Can I take care of Cobra?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Do you know how?

DRE (As Valence): I already told you no, but you told me to do it anyway.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): (sigh) Well...

JANINE (As Thisbe): It seems there are two guns pointed at people.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): I don't- No, that's... I have a, I have a gun, and I'm pointing it at the wolf.

JANINE (As Thisbe): And if nothing progresses from this situation, is it not as good as having a gun pointed at your friend?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): I already counted three-to-two, I'm basically counting that Cobra is dead already, we're gonna do the best we can, but I'm not gonna put the gun down!

DRE: Um, I'm gonna start unpacking the first aid kit next to Cobra.

AUSTIN: Okay. It has things like epoxy in it. It's like epoxy, and like, wire clamps, and replacement fluids, coolant, y'know, stuff like that. (JANINE: Sautering iron?) Honestly, broun, you see this stuff, and it's stuff that like, you would, it's stuff that would be in your workshop, y'know.

ALI: Oh, are they all synthetic?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, they're Columnar, they're all synthetic, yes, yeah yeah yeah.

ALI: Okay, oh, right right right.

JANINE: It'd be really gross if fluids were leaking otherwise.

(laughter)

JANINE: If that was the way Austin had chosen to frame that!

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Um, I think that broun says-

ALI (As broun): I'm an engineer, I can take care of your friend, but not for free.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): What do you want?

ALI (As broun): We want you to get out of here... and to not go any higher north than where we're standing.

AUSTIN: Um, I think that Dina at this point says-

AUSTIN (As Dina): The- I think the big one lives near here.

AUSTIN: And Kensie looks at Thisbe and says-

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Are there more of you?

JANINE (As Thisbe): I am a landscaper. I do not require assistance beyond assistance when it comes to guarding the property.

ALI (As broun): But there's dozens. Uh... (laughs)

ALI: broun says, to like, make them scared, but... is maybe fucking up.

AUSTIN: Is maybe fucking up, yeah.

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Dozens, landscaping, eh...

AUSTIN: And then as if, as if she's arrived at a bright idea, Kensie says, um...

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Apples don't grow on trees, they grow on bushes, right?

ALI: (whispered) Oh my god...

DRE: Where have you seen apples growin' on bush?

JANINE (As Thisbe): You are as confused as your friend.

AUSTIN (Kensie): Aw, fuck...

AUSTIN: Um, I'm gonna need a roll. I think that it's clear that Kensie, uh, isn't, doesn't know which way to go on this. I think that this is risky, to make this play.

ALI: Sure...

AUSTIN: So this is going to be... you tell me, someone here is gonna make this case.

JANINE: The only case I would make is kicking the gun out of Kensie's hand, so someone else should probably make the talking case, honestly.

(laughter)

JANINE: Like I'm ready to go, I'll do it, but...

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

ALI: I was trying to get like, leverage, I'm not good at any of them, but I'll do it.

AUSTIN: But you'll talk, uh huh.

ALI: But I'll roll one of them.

AUSTIN: Um, yeah, what do you, what's, what're you rollin'?

ALI: (snorts) I dunno, it doesn't matter. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Oh, you're at zero in literally everything under resolve, good. Good good good.

DRE: Yeah, yeah...

ALI: Love to play games, um, (laughs)

DRE: Can I dooo.... Hmm, before we try to actually convince her, could I do like a study or a survey here?

AUSTIN: Sure, what's that look like and what're you looking for?

DRE: I wanna see how committed she is to actually shooting her way out of here.

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me a gather information roll. Which is, uh, y'know, there's no, it's just a fortune roll. Um, and it's study, which is 2d6. Again, unless you want to push yourself, and bla bla bla bla, but...

DRE: No, just in case I need to resist being shot, I'm gonna keep my stress.

AUSTIN: That's a good idea. Yeah. You are currently at five stress so- Ah, there's a six. Nice work. Um, uh, on a gather information roll I think, uh, you should ask me a question and then I'll answer that question and then we'll go from there.

DRE: Um... there's not a list of questions, right, it's just... alright

AUSTIN: There is on your sheet, in terms of like, just, hey, here are some basic things that you could start thinking about, and those questions tend to be like, written towards whatever your playbook is, so for instance under the Empath one, which you have, is "How was this person hurt? How is this person vulnerable? Are they telling the truth? What's really going on here?" Whereas I think broun as a Technician has ones that are like "What do they intend to do? Are they- How can I find X? What can I tinker with here?". There's some overlap, obviously.

DRE: Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: And you can ask whatever, but that is like, a guideline, for sure.

DRE: Sure, yeah. Umm... How committed to this mission is Kensie?

AUSTIN: Um, very. And I think that this is, I think that the thing that you can kinda put together here based on what you gather from, from her Obscura unit and the kind of like, secret material that you stole is like... She doesn't have another fuck up in her, you know like, on her permanent record, to go. If... If she goes back... If everything goes fine right now, and she goes back and then no one says anything, then it's not a big deal, because... no one will say like "Oh yeah," they'll go back and say "We didn't find anything", and that will be fine. But if she goes back and says "We fucked up", or if Cobra or Dina says "Hey, Kensie didn't tell you everything, we had a fight, we ran into these people," whatever that looks like, um, if they get wind that there was something that Kensie didn't report, then she's shit out of luck, and kind of, I don't know how much you know about Columnar, y'know, culture, but there's a degree to which she is banking on like, getting a good pension right now, right like, she's doing her military service so that she can eventually leave the service, and then like, have a decent life, because that's the way that military service is promised in Columnar culture, in a kind of similar way that a lot of liberal democracies say that serving your country is like, a way to a good life. Um, but this will

like, get her dishonorably discharged, for sure, and she's already stressed because she's already trying to think about, like... I mean, at this point, she is not convinced she's gonna go home and not tell anybody anything, she might tell people to come and crush this place, because she already has to report that she's had three ruined mechs. Um, and like, how do you make that disappear? So you can kind of like, see her surveying the situation and trying to weigh options right now. Um, which means, if it means trying to shoot her way out, that might be a better option for someone like her than going home, getting dishonorably discharged, struggling to find a job, trying to figure out what the next step is when she has this whole thing weighing over her head. Um, I think the other thing I'll say is, she is trying to get Cobra repaired, because that is a clear win, if he lives then that's like, that's a win. Right, like, the rest of this who knows? But, but yeah.

DRE (As Valence): Kensie, if I may...

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Uh huh.

DRE (As Valence): I know you are very committed... to your Stel, probably more committed than the current post you have is befitting? I don't... I don't want, and I don't think any of us want this to be something that follows you home and mars you any further than you already have been. What needs to happen for all of us just to walk away?

AUSTIN: Umm... Give me a roll. I think this is a... i mean, you tell me what you're rolling here, and we'll talk, but...

DRE: Mmmm....

AUSTIN: Or I'll tell you what the positioning and effect are.

DRE: It's either consort or sway...

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think this is a situation where what I would say is: this is risky, cause there's a gun pointed at your back no matter what, um, risky... I think it's probably risky limited consort, because you're a stranger, you- why should she trust you, et cetera. Risky limited- or risky standard with sway, because you would be, you're kind of, you know, manipulating, um, and that manipulation gets past logic, it gets past trust, it gets to this other thing, y'know, or gets past like, not trust, but gets past sort of, relationship, and like the truth about the objective relationship that she has with you which is, you're a combatant who is clearly hiding something and all of those like, all of the regions of her brain that are going like "Don't trust this, anyone here," I think sway is the thing that would be... uh, would get you more effect here, um...

DRE: Gotcha.

ALI: Does the um, offer to help the wounded one count as an assist?

AUSTIN: Uh, I'm, I think that, um, yeah, that would count, so take a stress, and Dre can take a +1 from that, or, can inclu-

ALI: It's just the one stress?

AUSTIN: It's one stress to help someone, yeah.

ALI: Okay cool.

JANINE: I'd also like to assist.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. How are you doing it?

JANINE: Um, I think, um... I think this is maybe the moment that Thisbe like, climbs down from Mow.

AUSTIN: Uh huh (laugh).

JANINE: I've kind of been imagining her like, maybe at least like, sitting in his hand or something up until this point.

AUSTIN: Mhmm!

JANINE: Um, so I imagine like, maybe this is the moment where she, like, sets vaguely pointed hoof-like feet to soil, um, and like, deliberately separates herself from Mow a little bit, cause that's a, that's a whole image, um, especially after all the stuff that happened. And I think that, um... I'm tryna think of- again, it's so difficult, cause like, I truly don't want Thisbe to just be Audy two, um, in terms of how I play. Uh, but it's difficult to play a robot who... needs to express things but also shouldn't be inferring stuff as much as like, other characters, I think like, the thing that she just does is that she... turns around, like with her back um, to Kensie and like, crouches down to kind of like, fuss with some plants on the ground. (AUSTIN: Uh huh!) Like I think this is very much a show of just like, "you two just figure this out, like I'm not gonna..."-

AUSTIN: Right, I'm not gonna hurt you, or like...

JANINE: I'm, I'm a car sized deer woman robot, but I'm a landscaper too, and I'm just gonna look at this clover right now, and you guys figure things out.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um... Alright, so that's 2d6 right now.

DRE: I'm gonna push myself too.

AUSTIN: Okay, so take two more stress. Uh, you're both giving, just to be clear again, to Janine and Ali, you're both giving +1d here, not increasing effect or increasing, uh, position, or making positioning better?

JANINE: Yeah, I want this success more than the... particularities of the success.

AUSTIN: Um, I'm going to set up, I'm starting a clock here, which is "Agree to walk away". Um, this is the clock that you will now be progressing towards across these multiple rolls, um, uh, so

I just wanna be clear on that. It's a four-step clock, you'll need to complete it to get a clear and, y'know, they will walk away if this thing completes.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, so, go ahead and give me, uh, I guess risky- (DRE: Whoof!) Look at that, risky standard, a six, a one, and a five.

ALI: (sighs and laughs)

AUSTIN: Stay gettin' them sixes, stay gettin' them sixes... Um, on a six I think I click, I advance this by two, so, um, I think she says-

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Alright. Alright. Um... get to work on Cobra and... you just, you work on Cobra. I'm not puttin' the gun down, I'm gonna figure some stuff out.

AUSTIN: Um, and I think she like, takes a step over to Dina, and just kind of stands next to them. Um... so it's kind of up to this Cobra Junction repair roll.

ALI: Um, yeah. I, uh... is Valence still like, leaning next to the stuff, or... did they get up in the-okay.

DRE: Yeah, yeah.

ALI: I dunno, I think that, I dunno, I dunno if it like, strengthens the argument if Braun like, kneels across from them, and like they do it together, right? Um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, I, yeah, I would let Valence help, y'know, with like, spending stress, like I- you don't need a skill to spend stress you just need to like, tell me something interesting about- or to assist, you just need to tell me how you're helping, y'know?

ALI: Okay, yeah, um...

AUSTIN: So like if Valence is basically, y'know, being the nurse on this, that's 100%-

ALI: (laughs)

DRE: Right, yeah, like Valence doesn't know how to use any of this stuff-

AUSTIN: No, but they can hold stuff, can provide light, can blah blah blah

ALI: (cross) Yeah yeah yeah, I, yeah.

DRE: That's one stress, right?

AUSTIN: Yep, one stress to help. Uh, it's one stress to help as long as y'all have level one beliefs with each other, which everyone here does, cause no one has hung out with each other before.

ALI: (laughing) Are you sure?

DRE: Wait, what's your repair?

ALI: My repair should be, wait...

DRE: Oh, is that engineer, I guess?

AUSTIN: Engineer, engineer, yeah.

ALI: Yeah, and I have a two in engineer.

AUSTIN: I would, I just wanna make a special note here, which is: there is a special move for, for (ALI: I know..) uh, technician that's called doctor which is you can use engineer with bone, blood and organs to treat wounds or stabilize the dying, you may study a malady or corpse, everyone in your crew gets +1d to their healing treatment rolls- This is not, you don't have that move, and I don't think you could roll engineer if this was not a synthetic person, like if this was not a Columnar, I would not, or I would let you do it but at like, seriously reduced... Janine, did you just draw, fuckin, a bikini bottom on Mow?

JANINE: Sorry, I just, I hate the butt! I hate the butt on that gorilla, I've hated it since I saw it.

(laughter)

DRE: Too cheeked-up for Roll20...

AUSTIN: It is very cheeked-up... it is very cheeked-up. Now no one will see it, even the patrons won't get to see cheeked-up Mow.

JANINE: They'll like this more. (AUSTIN: Uh huh...) Let's be honest.

DRE: No they won't. No they won't, have you met our fans?

(laughter)

ALI: Anyway, yeah, I don't think...

AUSTIN: So that's 2d6 +1 from Dre.

ALI: Yeah, um...

DRE: You know what, let's do it, I'll give it to you.

ALI: Are you sure?

DRE: It's fine, I still got one left.

AUSTIN: Oh my god, I didn't realize you were that tight, that close, holy shit. Two three four five six seven eight.

ALI: (sighs) Dude, you might want two to push your, your very own self, y'know? (laughs)

DRE: Mmm... Okay, I'll keep it.

ALI: I have a two in engineer, I think I'm gonna be okay.

AUSTIN: (eagerly) Uh huh!

ALI: And if I'm not... (laughs) What are the positions again?

AUSTIN: Risky standard, for sure. The risk here is still, this could all blow up, right? A failure here is baaad.

ALI: Jesus Christ... If I push my own self, I can get to one from... the end, um...

AUSTIN: You could. You could also push yourself for effect, so right now it's risky standard, which means a six will get you a win, but a four or a five will only get you one more step towards the "agree to walk away", great effect means even on a four or five, you would get the, you would fill the clock, there would just be a harder, you know, thing.

ALI: Right right right... and do any of my fine engineering tools or anything would help here, or is it...

AUSTIN: Oh, totally, totally totally totally, um, I think that that, yeah, in fact, wait, yeah, if you mark that you have your fine engineering tools with you, that's absolutely enough to make it risky great instead of risky standard, so you don't even need to push yourself for that particular thing.

ALI: Okay. I'm an expert, perfect. (AUSTIN: That's true) Okay, I'm rolling right now.

AUSTIN: Go for it, so what is that, that's 2d6? You're not pushing yourself for a third die, right?

ALI: (whispering) Oh my god...

AUSTIN: Alright, that is a two, that's okay, that's-

ALI: Wait, that's not a-

DRE: No, that's a four!

AUSTIN: Or sorry, wait, sorry sorry sorry, that's not what I meant, I meant that we're gonna tick two on the clock, which fills it.

(laughter)

AUSTIN: Which is much better than a two, that is a two and a four, yes.

ALI: Okay, I was like "wait there's a four!" (laughs)

AUSTIN: You're good, you're good.

ALI: But the two is like, outlined, so i was like "wait, why would it be the two? What rule do I not know?"

AUSTIN: No, it's because it's bad, it's like, uh huh... The pilot does it, but there is a risky consequence. Um... let me think really quick... I think this is... um, this is a fun one. It's kind of a light one, but it's kind of not a light one in other ways. Um, I think... I mean it's not a light one partially, because it's gonna hurt you, and you're gonna have to decide if you're gonna resist it or not. Um, so as you're doing this repair, so I mean, you get into this repair job pretty quick, and you see that like, Cobra's... you are, it's very good that you are doing this. I guess you don't know, I don't know if you've ever worked with someone who's Columnar before, in terms of like, doing this sort of repair, um, but there is a real chance of permanent damage here, because of like, failsafes not, failsafes failing, right? Traditionally, the way it's supposed to work is that like, um, it's sort of like a, you know laptops used to have a thing, maybe they, I'm sure they still do, where it's like oh, if it feels that there is, that the computer is falling, it will lock down the hard drive, that way the hard drive can't be damaged, even if the rest of the computer is. Um, that failsafe has failed, and instead of it being about falling, it's about, like, heat buildup, all this coolant has leaked out and the entire internal cooling system is failing, and so it's as if... it's the equivalent of him having a really bad fever, and that was going to risk, like, destroying parts of his memory, and presumably even long-term function. But you succeed here, and you manage to make that work. However, in the process of trying to reestablish the coolant system inside of, inside of his kind of chassis, his torso, you end up needing to like, grab something, and it is incredibly hot, or maybe it's like you loosen something and scalding-hot steam pours out and scalds you, you're gonna take the level two harm "scalded". You can resist that if you want to. Uuuuh...

ALI: (sighs) How do you resist?

AUSTIN: Ah, you roll dice equal to whatever the relevant pilot action category, or attribute is, in this case I would say it's either prowess or resolve, you have three dice in either of them, and then you would take stress equal to six minus the, whatever your highest roll is. (ALI: (laughs) Mmm!) So, you get a four five or six... you get a four, it's bad, you get a four, you're gonna take, you're gonna stress out, you're gonna get a scar, you get a five or a six, you're golden.

ALI: Wait, I- It would be one two three is bad, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, sorry, yeah, one two three is bad, but-

ALI: Six minus four is two.

AUSTIN: Oh, you're right, you're right you're right you're right, yes, sorry, yes, yeah, one two three is bad, yeah. I think in this case, I'll make it so that- and this is not always the case, but in this case, I would say avoiding it would, resisting this would resist the harm altogether, because

of the fact that you have, like, the added tools, you have the medkit that they brought, so there are times at which I would say you resist it just to lower it from level two harm to level one harm, but in this case I'll say it would erase the harm altogether, you would dodge it, basically.

ALI: Yeah, I think if it's a really bad injury, I'm gonna go for the trying to clear it, and if this fucks up, that'll be funnn...

AUSTIN: Then you'll take a, you'll take a scar. No big deal. 3d6, either insight, which would be like, you knowing not to do this, like last-second remembering "oh wait, wait, that's the steam vent", or prowess, which is just like dodging out of the way. But it doesn't matter, you have a three in either, so... you're lookin' for a four five six here...

ALI: Let's go, let's do it...

AUSTIN: There's a five, so you take one stress, and clear that harm.

ALI: Ugh, thank you (laughs)... and I could still push myself (sighs, laughs).

AUSTIN: And you could still push yourself. Um, I think Cobra's, uh, Cobra's lights turn on, and I don't know that I actually, like, did much description of Cobra, Cobra's largely a humanoid Columnar, I think probably a similar build to, uh, Exeter Leap in terms of like, the types of legs, the kind of general stance, unlike Exeter Leap, does not have any organic parts, is not equiaxed, does have one, and you had to remove this, a very flashy like, vinyl bomber jacket with gold stripes, and a very big, like... I guess it's probably some sort of e-cig, it's basically an electronic cigar, but like, I don't know how he uses it, I don't...

JANINE: So it's like an analog? Or like a vape?

AUSTIN: It's- no, I think it just glows and probably is like a, does have some sort of interface system with his internals that just like, gives him like a puff of flavor and like, a little boost, but I don't know what the mechanism here is, but yeah, you've laid that down, and I think his eyes flicker back on and he's like-

AUSTIN (as Cobra): I feel like SHIT...

AUSTIN: And Kensie goes over to him and holsters the gun, like, just in her waistband, and is like-

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Junction, are you all right?

AUSTIN (As Junction): No, I feel like shit!

AUSTIN (As Kensie): (sigh) fuck... alright, alright. Dash, Junction, we're getting out of here, and when we report this out, we're gonna tell them what happened, which is: there was an unregistered squad doing their own reconnaissance mission here, and we got caught up, there was a fight, we got out with our lives, they took our data, and we had nothing else to report. There was an ongoing operation, and they might've been columnar too, uh, alright?

AUSTIN: And I think that, y'know, kind of gives the three of you a look like "I'm doing my best here, this is the best I can do".

DRE (As Valence): Where do the apples grow?

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Um, I don't think-

DRE (As Valence): Just so I can say that at the start next time, so we can just get along from the beginning.

AUSTIN: Um, she says, uuh...

AUSTIN (As Kensie): You saved my friend, but you're still a wolf.

ALI (As Broun): (laughs) Well, Valence, we know they don't fall far from the bush, can we get out of here?

AUSTIN (As Kensie): Yeah.

DRE (As Valence): (muttering) I thought they were on trees...

JANINE (As Thisbe): No one here knows anything about agriculture.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: All right! Y'all are done, mission complete, I'll move us back to the world map, as you, presumably, go back to connect with Mourningbride, right? I'm guessing?

ALI: Oh, I want that stuff. (laughs)

DRE: Oh yeah!

AUSTIN: Okay, real quick, there is, yeah, are you, are you-

JANINE: You're just gonna steal their stuff?

ALI: I'm taking the leg that I cut off and the flamethrower, yes!

AUSTIN: Okay, okay, write it down, write it down.

JANINE: Are they okay with that? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Um, they're not, what're they gonna do? They're not getting in their- their shit's wrecked.

JANINE: I guess it also kinda supports their story, right?

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. They are not in a position to- in fact, I guess what they would say is... no all of their shit is fucked, no none of their shit works any more. So yeah, take, just write down...

ALI: Can I take more of it?

AUSTIN: Well what're you carrying it out on, y'know?

ALI: Um, I have hidden compartments on my mech!

AUSTIN: Okay, well you're not taking three mechs in the hidden compartment in your medium mech.

(laughter)

JANINE: It'd be amazing if your mech was, if the compartment in your mech's leg was big enough to put another mech's leg in it. Tur-mech-en

AUSTIN: Another mech that's the same size. I think Mow could carry some stuff, y'know, and you could strap some, like a part from each of these things.

ALI: I think that I'm taking the one leg that I- the one leg and the one arm, and that in exchange, to be fair, I'm giving Kensie like, some spare... the like, switches in your house that like... electricity...

JANINE: Fuses?

AUSTIN: Fuses.

ALI: Fuses! Because that's how I fucked up their mech. Just caused, like, an electrical failure.

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure. Wow.

ALI: Just like, "hey, take this for the road, see ya" (laughs)

AUSTIN: Is that something that, that she could use to repair the Obscura now?... No...

ALI: If- If she wants to, I dunno, maybe

AUSTIN: I'm tryna decide whether or not- so, there's two things, one is how are they getting back, which they'll figure out that's not on you, uh, two is are they taking the Obscura back even though it doesn't have any data, it's obviously been fucked up, um, uh, the third thing is, one of the things that the Sable Court did, or not the Sable Court, but Mourningbride did ask of you was, or one of the kind of, like, secondary objectives, was to capture some of their equipment, and i'm not gonna make you carry all of it to them, and I'm not saying you couldn't take some of it for yourself, but if you were like, if you went back to Mourningbride and were like "Hey, uh,

here is where we encountered them, like, their shit is there for you to take”, that would be acceptable, you know. This is like, such a minor detail...

ALI: (laughs) Yeah, I had only mentioned it as like, a kind gesture, but I guess now that it sort of... stacks... um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's whatever, I guess there, really what it comes down to is do you want Kensie to be able to leave with the Obscura.

ALI: No, I can give, I can give, um, Cobra, some like, bandage equivalents or whatever-

AUSTIN: Right, yeah, that makes sense, that makes sense...

JANINE: Some joint grease so they can walk out comfortably?

AUSTIN: Right, exactly, yes.

ALI: (laughs) Yeah, just some robot painkillers for the road, or whatever.

JANINE: Or a little oil can, like from Wizard of Oz.

ALI: Yeah, yeah. You know what I mean.

AUSTIN: (laughs) God... Um, I kind of like the idea of like, a hydraulic clamp for his legs, so that he can like, it's almost like an exo-suit for a thing that's already kind of a walking exo-suit, y'know, that's like a, it just like supports his legs so that he can put more pressure on it.

JANINE: Oh, that's neat, yeah.

AUSTIN: I don't know why you have one of those, but you do, it's fine.

JANINE: I mean, I thought you could rig something if you're an engineer, and you're dealing, like, y'know, it's like a splint for a robot, where like, you need a join here but it's basically like a hinge, and you just strap it to each part of the leg and there you go!

AUSTIN: Yeah, and it's like, a little extra stability, little extra, yeah, totally, maybe not as much freedom of movement, but it keeps thing, goin'. Um, alright, so yeah, you're able to leave, and I'm guessing you go back to the place where you first met Mourningbride and once again send the signal for her?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, and I think she immediately sees that the, that your mechs are, uh, have a leg and a flamethrower and whatever the fuck else you took from the broken wedge unit, and she says-

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Yearling. I'm impressed. You may all follow me now.

AUSTIN: And begins to lead you into the woods. I'm guessing you all go along... and you go on a little trip, and at this point, I think, the sun is beginning to rise, or the light is beginning to come back through the trees, and eventually, she leads you to the Sable Court, the encampment of the Sable Court. This walk through the woods is definitely a lot of, like, avoiding certain places and walking past things and coming back around at another angle to avoid similar sorts of wards, and eventually I think what you see is a, um, a very dense line of trees, kind of pine trees, and she pushes through a place where a number of the branches of these low pines meet each other, as if, as if to like, produce a path where there is none, and as she passes through, and then you pass through, you see behind them, in a way that could not have possibly just been behind them, but there must be some sort of illusion happening here, some sort of, y'know, very advanced active camouflage, or something creepy happening, an entire encampment, including their own mechs, three of their own mechs in this encampment, there is a campfire going, there are a number of, um, buildings, made out of wood, it's clearly been recently logged, like the trees have recently fallen 'cause there's still stumps around, there are people, everyone here is Ashen, everyone here is the same sort of deer-like uh, humanoid that Thisbe is based on, and I guess maybe the first note here, the first like, visual note of what this witch encampment is, is that they all look like, they're all wearing like, surplus army fatigues, it's... there is not like, surplus goth or like army/navy goth isn't really a thing, or to the degree that military goth is a thing, it's more like fetish goth with like, some gross fascist overtones, this is not what that is. This is like, you went to the army/navy store and got a bunch of like, military fatigues, you got a bunch of like, M65 jackets in OD green. There's actually, like, while I was trying to do research, and like, see if anyone had done this specific thing before, the only good example of that I found was literally from someone else who was like "and also they should have mechs!" which is very funny to me, I will link a touchstone piece here in a second.

JANINE: They do make, you know those goth camo pants, or those goth pants with the straps and the huge legs, they do make those in camo.

AUSTIN: This is not that, this is not-

JANINE: Many people make them in camo.

AUSTIN: This is coming at it the other direction, (JANINE: Okay) this is coming at it as, from, um... I mean the truth of this is, and I think maybe you get this vibe pretty quickly, a lot of... Apostalos has lots of Hyphan- or y'know, Ashen folks in Apostalos, Apostalos is, of the five Stels, the one that has the most non-human humanoid-alien people in it, they're the most kind of open-borded in that way, and they have a huge military culture, um, and, one of the places that the Sable Court has ended up recruiting its members, are from people who serve and then get discharged from the Apostalisian front line, and it's one of the places where they kind of spread the knowledge because it's one of the only Stels in which you can like, have those sorts of intimate conversations without being consumed by the police state, who would hate to hear anything about an alternative alien history. So yeah, this like, a bunch of AWOL- or that's not the only folks, 'cause Apostalos is not the only place where the Ashen live, but there's a lot of Apostolisian veterans who then became members of this secret witch coven in the woods, and also they came with their shit, right, like they were discharged or they went AWOL, taking their equipment with them, and so there's a lot of like, converted military equipment that have now been turned into the sort of stuff that you would traditionally find in like, a druidic compound or something, which means that like, y'know, they have like a big mech hand that is like, in a

cauldron shape, they have overturned, uh, tank turrets and stuff being used as support structures for some of their buildings, um, there's a lot of, again, that kind of military coloring and a lot of military uniforms that have since been changed, either just worn down over a long period of time, or added to with what they know as ancient Hyphan, or what they believe to be kind of ancient Hyphan embellishment, and there are probably three or four dozen people here. And I think Mourningbride says-

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Welcome to the Sable Court. I'm sure you're all very tired. We have a place for you to rest.

AUSTIN: And she leads you to a barracks, with some kind of cots made up for you, there is, one of the cots is made of three cots. (JANINE: (laughs)) So that's- which still might not be enough, and I think she says-

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Yearling... we did what we could.

JANINE (As Thisbe): You didn't really need to do anything. I don't lay down.

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): ... I see. Well, operants, if the two of you would like to rest, please. We can handle payment when you arise.

ALI (As Broun): Very hospitable of you this time around, thank you!

AUSTIN: (scoffs) Okay, good.

JANINE: Little backhanded there, but (laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh huh, uh huh. Um, do y'all take her up on this offer to sleep?

ALI: Sure.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is not a trick, this is just- we've been, mechanically speaking, or like narratively speaking, y'all have been awake a long fucking time and fought a fight, and it's worth being like pause, you stayed here overnight.

JANINE: Imagine if it was a trick, imagine if this was the real fight. (others laugh) Like, you wake up and it's just this fuckin'... camo-wearing fuckin deer witches everywhere... (AUSTIN: Uh huh) all got knives...

AUSTIN: Um, I think I should also say that, like, Mourningbride definitely asked if you needed medical care or anything like that, but y'all didn't. Thisbe, while they're sleeping, what do you get up to in this camp? And also, what's it like to be around a bunch of people who look like you, or not like you, but the people for whom you were designed after?

JANINE: Yeah, it's probably a good moment to reiterate that Thisbe's relationship with Mourningbride is like an uncanny... kind of... uneasiness, it's the kind of thing that I wouldn't

consider positive or negative, it is just like a, it is what it is almost, like it's, um, again, one of those weird things where like, I don't ascribe too many feelings to Thisbe but I think she recognizes that like, this is a weird thing, and she maybe feels like, a kind of... guilt or vulnerability is the wrong word, but, um... culpability maybe for what she thinks she might make other people feel. Like what she thinks... y'know, I think she has an awareness of like, if maybe she makes people feel bad or uncomfortable, that's the kind of thing she's, she does, she is aware of even if she doesn't feel it like, the same way that we might feel it if we were making someone feel that way.

AUSTIN: Honestly, yeah... Totally, and I think there's a way here to get this onto camera a little bit, which is, as Broun and Valence go to sleep, um, take a nap or whatever, Mourningbride leads you then back out into the main area, and it's not very long until someone, another person here kind of comes over to you. This is someone who has on a black, uh, tanktop, underneath an unbuttoned, or unzipped kind of military jacket, and he has on, again, loose fatigues that are tied above his, his left leg is tied above the, like at the knee, where he's missing everything kind of under the knee on his left leg and he's on crutches, and he comes over and to Mourningbride, he says like, uh-

AUSTIN (As Sable Court Ashen): So this the, the little lost uh, the little lost deer you're talkin' about, huh?

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Chief Eiden, this is... this is Thisbe.

AUSTIN: Um, and he offers a hand to you, and says-

AUSTIN (As Chief Eiden): Eiden Teak, head of security here.

JANINE: Um... I think Thisbe puts her hand in his, or as much as- well, she has a big hand so-

AUSTIN: The other way around?

JANINE: Yeah, the other way around, like she kind of... I imagine her like, closing her hand around his, but it's like a very light kind of like, as if you were- I was gonna say if you were picking up a hamster, but like, you know, just kind of like-

AUSTIN: Yeah, a light... yeah

JANINE: She's not sure if this is a shake situation or a what, so it's sort of like a, she's forced because of her size to lead, but also doesn't really know what to do beyond taking the hand.

AUSTIN: And I think he is not hiding at all that he is like... curious and upset at your design.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Never seen anything like you...

JANINE (As Thisbe): Me neither.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Huh... That's a shame. (sighs) So what's your deal, Thisbe?

JANINE (As Thisbe): I help the operants.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): You help the operants, well that's something...

AUSTIN: And Mourningbride is like-

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Uh, chief-

AUSTIN: And I think he just immediately kind of spits back at her and he says-

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Initiate, you have things to do.

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Yes, chief.

AUSTIN: And she steps away, and kind of leaves you with this rube (scoffs) security chief. Revealing again that like... we know that Mourningbride is a big deal, Mourningbride used to be an elect, Mourningbride is like... a cool mysterious witch, but she's only been here a little while, and this place is like, an established community, and she is not like, high on the rungs yet, high on the ladder, and so she has now put you in hands of this slightly less friendly person, who then gives you a tour of the place, right, and shows you where people eat, shows you their own kind of, uh, workshop and mech stuff, they actually have models that are very similar to the wedges, um, they have... the wedges are basically like the models that Columnar use as their equivalent grunt troops, but for factions, other Stels, they often supply wedges as special reconnaissance units, special ops units, commander units, um, and they have different names, and so the ones that Apostalos uses, and that means the ones that the Apostalisian AWOL soldiers took, they took these thing called Kathēkons, which the people often just call Cathies, and so instead of being like, um, big blue and gold things, these are much more kind of camouflaged, they almost look like frogs, they have like a dark green color scheme, and their kind of roundedness, and the fact that they can be used for like, amphibious warfare and stuff, means that they often get called frogs, and it's let like, Kesh just straight up call Apostalisians frogs a lot, which is very rude IMO (JANINE: Yeah...), uh, but that is, welcome to shitty warfare. Um, and, so they have those here, there is like, a command center that is equal parts command center and like, reception hall, and I think at a certain point, he just straight-up says, like-

AUSTIN (As Eiden): I'm given' you shit but uh... there is someone who wants to meet with you. Now, listen... I need you to be like, super respectful, she doesn't take any shit, okay?

JANINE (As Thisbe?): I... (laughs)

AUSTIN: He does not change the way he behaves, even though- No matter how many times you're like, a robot to this guy, he does not miss a, y'know what I mean, he does not stop being the person he is.

JANINE: I'm tryna think of how Thisbe would phrase, like, "I'm truly not capable of giving shit".

AUSTIN: (laughs) Um, I'll note also, just because this is a recurring thing, that Eiden's antlers, he has like very traditional deer antlers, but a number of them have been snapped or broken, or

are healing, he's a very lead-from-the-front type dude. So yeah, you indicate that you are not capable of giving a shit- (laughs)

JANINE: Giving shit, giving a shit is different. Also kind of that, but to a lesser degree.

AUSTIN: Sorry, yes, um, and he leads you inside of this kind of large building that almost plays the same trick on you that the entire base does, which is: from the outside it looks like a wooden cabin, and then you get led inside, and it's as if it's nighttime, because it's, the interior ceiling of this place is just a (raises pitch) projection of, question mark, the night sky, even though it is daytime out, and you see with just like, startling clarity, the stars above you, and they look far away, it looks real, and the entire room is kind of lit by that. And you can see there's a point at which the stars kind of blend with the low, blue lights of computers and machinery as people inside of this kind of... main hall are doing work, on what you're not sure, and then seated kind of in the middle in kind of a massive chair is the largest Hypha you've ever seen. Um, she is almost more moose than deer, she certainly has moose antlers, and in fact, y'know, moose antlers have like, much more surface territory, is I guess the way I would say that, right, there's like, there's like space, it's as if the negative space inside of like, deer antlers was filled in with material, and here, that space is filled in yet again, those antlers are filled in yet again with, like, gems? I guess you would recognize at this point that they're multicolored Memoria, that special material that is mined here in the Memoria Teardrop, and it almost makes her antlers look like jeweled butterfly wings or something. And like, she turns to look at you, um, and you, I don't know how you feel, but there is, she is an imposing person, and Eiden Teak says-

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Uh, Thisbe, I'd like you to meet the Loess.

AUSTIN: And the Loess, uh, bows at you slightly, and says-

AUSTIN (As Loess): Thisbe. Welcome to my court.

JANINE: Um, I think Thisbe... Thisbe probably imitates her bow, because she's not capable of discerning what other kind of bow would be appropriate in this particular situation, so it is return the bow you're given and that's probably fine. I think, I mean also to speak to how Thisbe, I think she honestly feels something close to relieved, because this is not a small presence that she is up against now, so it feels a little more like... y'know, despite that warning, it probably feels a little bit less like she is in a minefield.

AUSTIN: Mhmm, mhmm... the Loess says,

AUSTIN (As Loess): Come closer. Let me get a look at you.

JANINE: I think Thisbe takes a few steps closer (laughs nervously)

AUSTIN: Uh huh, and as you do, I think there's like, a resonance, almost, the Memoria in her antlers, and then also your kind of ram horns, there's like a flicker for a moment, and she goes-

AUSTIN (As Loess): Ah, I see, I see. I did not know it was true. You are a very special being.

AUSTIN: (pause) No response, I'm guessing.

JANINE: I don't think Thisbe has a response to that, no.

AUSTIN (As Loess): There are things, I think, that the people here would hold against you, that they should not. You have... you have...

AUSTIN: I think she says, um...

AUSTIN (As Loess): You were made by the envy of this empire, but you cannot be blamed for that. Tell me what you know about yourself, Thisbe.

JANINE (As Thisbe): I... am strong (AUSTIN: (chuckles)), and... I can be fast, and I can... listen and speak very far.

AUSTIN (As Loess): Then you know what is important. What is it you hope to do, Thisbe?

JANINE (As Thisbe): I would like to go back to the farm.

AUSTIN (As Loess): I see... Tell me about your farm.

JANINE (As Thisbe): The farm is where I was found, and where I... started to...

JANINE: I dunno how to phrase... I think the way she says it is "started to remember", but she doesn't mean she started to remember things from before, it means like, she started to write to her memory again, basically. To phrase it that way, like she started to remember the present, again, she like became aware.

AUSTIN (As Loess): I see... have you found your farm?

JANINE (As Thisbe): No.

AUSTIN (As Loess): Would you like us to help?

JANINE (As Thisbe): Yes.

AUSTIN: I think she gestures at this moment, and above you, the stars, the kind of night sky, filled with these stars, there are lines that get drawn between some of them, and some of them, some of the stars, many of the stars, in fact, grow dimmer, and then some of them disappear entirely. And she says,

AUSTIN (As Loess): This is the map of the Principality, of this hideous empire. This is what they would tell you the galaxy was. This is a lie. They tell you you can travel only between their worlds, taking their gates, moving with the flow of power. But the galaxy is open.

AUSTIN: And she kind of moves her hand and the number of those stars return, the lines connecting some of them don't go away, but new lines appear, and in fact these lines kind of blur and open and cover multiple stars at once, and then they disappear, and then they open and they disappear, it's almost like a quick erase, you know, it's like you're drawing and the drawing disappears as you do it, or as it's done, and she says,

AUSTIN (As Loess): It's possible that your farm exists on such a world, a place meant to be forgotten, a place hidden by the empire. Tell me what you know of it.

JANINE (As Thisbe): It's very green. All year.

AUSTIN (As Loess): (cross) I see.

AUSTIN: Um, and moves her hand again, and y'know, a ton of these stars disappear.

AUSTIN (As Loess): What else?

JANINE (As Thisbe): The earth is very soft, there are almost no rocks until you get very deep.

AUSTIN (As Loess): I see. And the weather? Did it snow, was it hot?

JANINE (As Thisbe): It was always a little bit windy.

AUSTIN (As Loess): The wind is the most honest of the elements...

AUSTIN: And a number of stars go dim again, and now there are hundreds still lit, and she says-

AUSTIN (As Loess): This is good. Your farm is on one of these.

AUSTIN: And you can immediately like, cross-reference that with the list you have and, you don't know what, it's still a list, right, it's still a list of dozens, but it's a list of dozens instead of a list hundreds, and before that a list of thousands. You can mark one step on your long-term project clock, your find the farm one (JANINE: Yay.), and she says, um...

AUSTIN (As Loess): I wish you well in your search, yearling. You are welcome here, and I hope that the gifts we give will provide an aid in your search. If you need anything, you know where we are.

JANINE (As Thisbe): I am glad I could be of service.

AUSTIN: She simply nods, and turns back to her work. What do you do for the remaining hours while Valence and Broun are napping?

JANINE: Honestly, I think the thing that Thisbe does is she, do we have our mechs, we have our mechs, right? (AUSTIN: Mhmm, mhmm) I think the thing Thisbe does is she just kind of like, crouches sort of, I think Mow is like, on all fours but kind of like, settled low, and I think Thisbe

sort of crouches in front of him and is kind of like, inspecting the scratches on his chest, she can't do anything about it right now, obviously, so I think she's trying to, she's just... I mean, I don't even think she's assessing the damage, she knows the damage, she's just examining. Just like, as a thing to do, as a thing that's occupying her mind.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I gotcha. Some time passes, it's still daytime, it's still, y'know, the equivalent of like, the early afternoon when Valence and Broun, y'all, wake. Valence you sleep, right, is that a thing? I just realized, we didn't even talk about that.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, I don't know what your like, circadian rhythm situation is, iunno anything about the Nobel... so y'all wake up, there's food prepared for you, I think it's some sort of stew, probably, it's very good. Uh, what do you two get up to here? I think Mourningbride comes to wake you both, probably, y'know, you're kind of like her charges as long as you're in camp.

DRE: I think Valence is mostly curious and probably is trying to get it from Mourningbride because it's the only person they know, kind of just more general information about like, what is happening here, like what they want to achieve?

AUSTIN: Yeah, um, and I think you kind of get the breakdown over meals and over the day, right: The Sable Court wants to be left alone for now, at least. You get the big picture, which is, they are the descendants of a group that was assimilated by this empire, a group called the Hypha. They know that they were called the Hypha, and that now they are called the Ashen. They don't wear the ash that the rest of the um, Ashen now do, but I think that there is even discussion internally around whether or not they can rightfully call themselves Hypha, they want to, but they know that's not what they are, because that was a particular culture, in the same way that not all humans are, y'know, Babylonian. Not all people have that, y'know, have a particular culture that they've, that y'know, ancient culture in them, or that they can necessarily draw that line, but there isn't an effort to find and reclaim that, so that's part of their mission, is to identify more and more of their own history, and eventually, they hope, to leave the empire. They want to go to a place where... it isn't this. I don't know that they're unified on what that thing should be, or what it, what the kind of way that that culture should be, um, built, or who should be in charge. I don't know that there is even agreement on whether or not that should just be about... Like there are people that are like "we should have our own Stel", and there are people that are like "we should leave this whole place altogether. There is no one who is like "we should destroy the principality" because it seems impossible, or that we should have an internal revolution, or something like that. Um, and they tell you that this place is a place where an ancient Hyphan explorer crashed a ship once, and that that ship is what revealed, and I think that ship is probably like, has been uncovered here, right, like has been dug up, and is part of the, y'know like, they tell you this while you're under its wing, y'know? It's providing shade, you're eating soup under it. Y'know, it's part of where they learned part of their history, is the memory banks on this thing. Um, yeah, and you kind of like get the gist of that's what their deal is. Broun, how about you, what are you doing once you're awake, and eating?

ALI: Um... You had said that there was like a bunch of old military gear here, is there anything that would like, catch my eye?

AUSTIN: Um, y'know, I think the big thing here is just like, I think it's, the thing that's interesting here is the bulk of it is the sort of stuff you've never gotten to tinker with because it is Columnar stuff, it's Columnar stuff that was sold to Apostalos, and it's Columnar stuff that they have stolen from the people here in Columnar who've wandered too deep into the woods. And so it's like... I think the equivalent, in terms of like, fiction, in terms of like, a touchstone for you and I, is y'know, they are very much the... there's an episode of Mobile Suit Gundam, THE Mobile Suit Gundam, called "Time Be Still" in which ten Zeon grunts try to destroy the Gundam with like, time bombs, it's very good, and they're just like, randos, like they are just like, they are not aces, they do not have any, they are just regular soldiers, and it's like what if they got their hands on the Gundam, is kind of what your situation is, where it's like, these are, everything here is really sleek, y'know, like all their equipment, it's been dirtied because it's been, y'know, living in the dirt for the last how ever many years, but everything is a little smoother, everything's a little more rounded, everything's a little bit more like, y'know, lux, even if now, it has been like, turned into this sort of like, druids in the woods vibe. Um, so I think just stuff like that, I don't know that- I guess here is the big one, actually there is one, there is one big thing that they're doing, and I think you see it happening, which is: they have one of these Cathy units, these Kathēkons, and they are fitting a big piece of Memoria into its forehead, this like, huge, like, almost like a, it's like a teardrop shape or like a, that style of almost like a, not oval, but a teardrop shape, into like, a slot on the forehead of this mech. And you don't know what the fuck they're doing, like what're you, is it, does it just look pretty? But I think they put it in, and like it goes like "bwomm" and lights up for a second.

ALI: Um, okay, um. Is there anyone who I can like, ask about what they're doing, is there like a- (??? 1:47:39)

AUSTIN: (cross) Yeah, totally, Mourningbride's with you, and you can, you can, in general the main characters at this place that I have like, names and shit for, just so we know, are Mourningbride, who we know already, you could also talk to the chief of security, who is probably the person who knows this shit super well, he's uh, uh, uh, Eiden Teak, E I D E N, Teak T E A K, and he is the one who was showing Thisbe around earlier, and he'd probably be like, overseeing this happening, and the sort of person who would recognize that you're looking at it the way you would, like, look at work, and not just like "what is that pretty gem?", y'know what I mean, like...

ARI: (laughs) Yeah. I guess I'm trying to think of the thing that Broun would be like, the most curious about, um...

AUSTIN: It is the pear shape, thank you Janine for providing all of the cuts of gems.

JANINE: Are you sure it's not a pendeloque?

AUSTIN: Where is that at?

JANINE: In the bottom left.

AUSTIN: Oh, it is a pendeloque, it is a pendeloque.

JANINE: Yeah, that'swhati, that's what I thought.

ALI: (snorts, laughs) I think there's this sort of like, low whistle, (laughs) (AUSTIN: No, I gotcha), you know when you see a movie and a character does the like, impressed but condescending whistle?

(several overlapping whistle attempts)

ALI: (laughs) Thank you!

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh, got it. So I think he looks over to you and says, uh,

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Yeah?

ALI (As Broun): What's goin' on in here?

AUSTIN (As Eiden): What's goin' on in here, we're working on our machines is what's goin' on in here. What's goin' on out there?

ALI (As Broun): (laughs) You make jewelry in here, what's going on?

AUSTIN (As Eiden): (scoffs) Make jewelry in here, come on.

AUSTIN: And like, he comes over to you, he's still on crutches, and he's like, uh,

AUSTIN (As Eiden): No one... I'm guessing Mourningbride didn't give you the... the rundown.

ALI (As Broun): No, keeping it very close to the chest.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Uh huh. This is what ah, those Columnar assholes want. They don't know they want it yet, but this is the sort of thing that they want, it's why we can't let 'em find us. It's Memoria, but it's the way it's supposed to be, not the way they use it.

ALI (As Broun): (laughs) What's the difference?

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Tch, what's the difference, the difference is, okay... come over here.

AUSTIN: And he, y'know, leads you over to a work bench, and finds like, a raw piece of Memoria that has like, some of the stone mineral around it still, he has a piece that has been like, formatted, basically by the Columnar, which is like, it is now a memory device, and then there's another one, there is another gem there that is, um, that has been kind of worked over by the Sable Court, and it specifically has, I'm gonna say that it has the fine round shape from the chart that Janine posted, but when he holds it up, you can see inside the cuts, the cuts into the gem reveal like, there's almost like a hologram inside of it, um, and, uh, this is a hologram of... what is a good symbol for like, change, or flux? I think it's probably... I don't wanna do like, butterfly or moth, I don't wanna do like, it's not metamorphosis, it's something that's like, oh, it's waves, it's like, you look inside and it is this like, green/blue gem, and inside you can see just the outline of like, a wave crashing, almost as he moves it, it's almost a hologram, like it actually

does that kind of like, or a holograph, y'know what I mean, like, it's as if it's a foil card, and as he moves it it animates. And he says-

AUSTIN (As Eiden): I don't do this stuff myself, but I know enough to know how it works. The people in Columnar, they see these gems and say "hey, you can put stuff in there". What they don't get is, there's already stuff in there. We reveal it, it's like a sculptor, y'know? Sculptor sees a block of marble, and they work on it until they reveal the truth of what's in the block. That's what... y'know, the people out there do, here. What I do is I say "hey, what's in that one?" and they go "oh, this one's about energy, this one's about information", and I go "oh cool, put it in the robot's head, and then we can move some energy around". I'm practical. But uh, yeah, I, the one we're putting in there right now, it gets a little more juice outta the engines.

ALI (As Broun): Huh...

ALI: I think what Broun's trying to do is just like, cross-reference this description to things that they know work this way...

AUSTIN: This is nonsense, Broun.

ALI: Right, uh, but I think there's like, there's a version of being like, oh, I know what an SD card is, right?

AUSTIN: Oh, I know exactly what... It's the opposite thing, you know it, it's the Perennial wave but backwards. If there could be a thing that knocks out technology, that for reasons that don't make sense, reasons that are arbitrary, reasons that science has not been able to nail down, then maybe there's a way to do it the other way. Maybe there's something that can produce effects that are inexplicable, but it is not an easy analogy, it is not, it's not just "we've added more RAM", I mean, maybe that's what you think first, maybe that is the first thought that you have, right, but he says pretty straight-up, like,

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Listen, I spent twelve years of my life on the front lines, fightin' the Branched, and I've seen remarkable things, weird things, shit you wouldn't believe, but you'd believe it 'cause you've seen it, and 'cause it's still just stuff. This shit? This shit might be magic.

ALI (As Broun): (snorts)

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Don't laugh! I'm being serious.

ALI (As Broun): (laughs) Well, this is the most magical place I've been, so maybe you're, right or something...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Listen, I... supposed to let Mourningbride do it, but, this is the thing, right here, this one.

AUSTIN: And like hands you the big piece of Memoria with the wave in it.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): We're getting this one ready for you.

ALI (As Broun): (scoffs) Really? (laughs)

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Yeah really, what? You drove those assholes out of here, we don't have, like, a lotta stuff, we know how to work this, and, uh, we can get some people to show you how to fit it.

ALI (As Broun): (laughs) You're giving us crys-

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Or nothing!

ALI (As Broun): Nuh, I've, uh- Do not misunderstand me, I would be happy to receive this crystal with a bunch of waves in it, um...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): You say it like that, I feel like you're not that excited. You don't even know what it can do!

ALI (As Broun): (laughs) I'm very excited!

AUSTIN (As Eiden): You don't even know what it does, you're already tryna return it.

ALI: (cross) He didn't even know me, he doesn't know what I should like when I'm not...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Don't pawn it! If you pawn it, I'll be pissed.

ALI (As Broun): Em, uh, (scoffs)

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Also doesn't make a difference, you pawn it, no one knows how to use it except us, and now you if we teach you.

ALI (As Broun): You wanna teach me how to use this too?

AUSTIN (As Eiden): That's what I said, you're gonna learn how to fit em, into the, into your machine.

ALI (As Broun): Well, there's three of us.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Well I'm not gonna teach all of 'em.

ALI (As Broun): Do we get three crystals?

AUSTIN (As Eiden): You're askin' me to spoil the surprise, c'mon...

ALI (As Broun): Oooh, okay okay okay, okay okay. Um, yeah, I mean, come across shit like this, people don't know what it's worth anyway, so I wouldn't sell it...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): That's what I'm saying, okay.

ALI (As Broun): I've been around. I know this stuff.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): You've been around, where you been around?

ALI (As Broun): (laughs)

AUSTIN (As Eiden): I'll be honest, I, uh... I been around Apostolisians a lot, most of them don't have the, the... they don't offer that same tenor you got. You're a little more rough around the edges, if you don't mind me sayin'.

ALI (As Broun): (sighs) Well, the only place I've been around is this moon, so...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Okay, I got you. Well listen, uh, I'll call down some of the, eh... I'll call down some people, walk you through this whole thing, you can see what it all does.

ALI (As Broun): I- That is very generous. Could I ask you- just one more thing... Do you have anything that's like, really broken, that you can get rid of?

AUSTIN (As Eiden): No.

ALI (As Broun): L- uh-

AUSTIN (As Eiden): We need the things we have!

ALI (As Broun): Well just some old gear!

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Some old gear, what're you looking for?

ALI (As Broun): I don't- y'know, just, y'know...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Just some scrap? No! We live in the woods, operant Broun!

ALI (As Broun): Wha- wuh wuh wait, what's the operant thing? You've gotta know. What does it mean?

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Whaddaya mean, I gotta know? I dunno, that's what the, the big one called you.

ALI (As Broun): Oh, I'll ask her, then...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): I think it's like a robot thing, I think it's like a, like you're, you're her operant.

ALI (As Broun): Ugh, that's annoying, um... well, this has been lovely. I will try to act surprised later.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): All right, you better.

AUSTIN: Um, alright! Uh, Dre, you said you had one more thing to ask Mourningbride about.

DRE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: What's up?

DRE: Ummm... I guess Valence starts by asking-

DRE (As Valence): Would the Sable Court be interested in trying to go somewhere that is outside of the Stels?

AUSTIN: I think Mourningbride says,

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): It depends on who you ask. There are many here who... would appreciate the opportunity to start entirely fresh. And there are many for whom leaving would be an act of cowardice. And regardless, it'd be a decision we all have to make as a collective, as a court. The Loess would have final decision, but she would take our... advice into account.

DRE (As Valence): What about you, what do you think?

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): I think I am learning, and that it is not my place to make a decision for... my people. Do you know... a place beyond the empire?

DRE (As Valence): I'm from there.

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): You're from there, where are you from?

DRE: Tryna think if they have a name for where they're from that's not just Nobel, but I think it's probably just Nobel.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fine.

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): (quietly) Nobel... I- I'm afraid I don't know this place.

DRE (As Valence): Uh, we didn't know of this place-

DRE: And they kind of extend their arms around to say like, y'know, not just this place but like, this planet, this galaxy.

DRE (As Valence): Until someone from here found us.

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): You were... I see... This makes Cymbidium's message sensible, clear.

DRE (As Valence): How so?

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): He told your Thisbe to tell me... that they re-thread the strand, and that they sent it where they must not. If you are from beyond the gate, if you are from... beyond Partizan, then what he meant is that someone here, someone in the Principality, had traveled there, and not just traveled there, but traveled there using... ancient technology. Pre-wave. The strand is how the Hyphan people traveled. They did not need the portcullis system that we use. It did not need the dark engines of the Aposolisians. They could travel wherever they needed, wherever they wanted, they followed the strand. And they followed it... into new places all the time. If someone has that technology, they could have traveled beyond the gate without arousing suspicion. They could've gone to your world, or many others.

DRE (As Valence): Would it have to be a Hypha, or an Ashen?

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Valence... Thisbe's existence proves that the Principality has no problem taking from others. Hyphan, Ashen, whether they involved... barely matters. If someone here did this, chances are, they would have no interest in the ways of my ancestors, and no reason to live by their rules, their mores. They would've taken this technology for their own ends, or the ends of the Principality.

DRE (As Valence): Can we work together to... figure out who this is? Who this was?

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): Yes, I would... I would like to figure that out. This would be...

AUSTIN: And she checks herself for a moment.

AUSTIN (As Mourningbride): The world is unjust. We know this. This does not mean we shouldn't strive for justice. We will give you something today that will let us stay in touch. Yes?

DRE: Umm, Thisbe's mask smiles.

AUSTIN: Valence's mask smiles?

DRE: Uhfs, god, yeah, sorry, Valence's mask smiles. Very genuine, like, happy puppy dog smile.

AUSTIN: (chuckles) Alright, um, so I think, unless someone has something else to do, somewhere around midday, they present you with your payment. It's not like, a big event, it's not like "Alright everybody, gather up", (DRE: (trumpet noise)), yeah, exactly, but there are like a couple people around, and they do provide you with, uh, three pieces of Memoria. Special Memoria, the sort of Memoria that they work with, which, uh, I've been calling Clarified Memoria. Each of you gets something pretty special here, it's a physical thing, which means it could be damaged, it could be stolen, it could break, um, uh, and actually that's not true, it's not three pieces, it's two pieces, and then there is an offer made. Broun, you get the piece that I already mentioned, the sort of wave Memoria. This gives you a special ability if you fit it into your, into the Three Cheers. That special ability says, I'm just gonna paste it in here: Spend your spark to move up to two points of your mech's stats per mission, resets to normal at end of mission. This

is like a limited version of a move, there's a move from the Ace playbook, um, called more than meets the eye, which is about having a vehicle that transforms, and it lets you like, move gear and action ratings around, and it's way more powerful than this 'cause you don't have to spend anything, you get to do it, I think as many times as you want to, and you can just kind of have like, let's say, a plane mode and a fighting mode, right, this your like, Macross, your Transformers, your Zeta-Gundam thing, right. For you, again, it's spend spark, and spark is like a type of special armor, you'll see in your playbook, you should have three types of... uh, yeah, it should say armor, heavy armor, and then spark, and so once per mission, or once per mission or downtime, I think spark clears at the end of a mission, um, or I'm gonna say it clears at the end of a mission, and then like, you can use it again during downtime if that's a thing that would come up. Uh, you can spend your spark to slide up to two points of a vehicle action into a different vehicle action, so let's say you wanted to move your stuff out of battle and manipulate and into scan, that's a thing you could do. But you can only do it once per mission, so it's not like a, y'know, you're not necessarily doing this a lot, it's a big deal, but yeah, and this is the equivalent of like, moving your engine power into shields, or whatever you would do in like, y'know, you get the deal, right?

ALI: Right, yeah yeah. But a special crystal does it for me. (laughs)

AUSTIN: But a fuckin' special crystal does it for you. Uh, Valence, you are given um, a piece of, a much smaller piece of Memoria that does not fit into your mech. Instead I think, they might actually offer, maybe it's the same offer for you and Thisbe, because you both have faces that are not just flesh. Um, there's a piece of Memoria, a much smaller piece that has a leaf inside of it, like a, like a, kind of an oval-shaped leaf, um, that, uh, for you, Valence, lets you externalize the vision that you can see, it like, projects a sort of hologram of your farsight to people around you, so that you can share that vision very directly, so you're not just like "uuuh, it's like a beach?". It also gives you a special thing once per, same thing, spend your spark to give a +1 to any sort of survey using farsight, once per mission or downtime. So again, spend your spark. So that's like, it's not surveying with your eyes, it's only surveying with farsight specifically. You could add this to your, like, veteran move lists, maybe that's the right place for it. Um, and then Thisbe, the offer is basically made to you that they can... you have that scar on your face, right? And they're not gonna fill it in, it's not gonna get like, erased, but they're basically going to like, have a... um, uh, a filler, made of the, like a resin fill, from, like, Memoria dust that will, one, I think probably look cool, because it'll be like a cool gem scar, but two, will basically give you help with moving through large amounts of information. Specifically, it would give you access to, uh, same system of like, spending spark during a mission or downtime, to do the Proxy playbook move connect the dots, which is "when you gather information, you can ask one other question on a 4+, or two other questions on a six". Which makes you very good at learning things. (JANINE: Mhmm...) And that offer is made because, I'm making that offer to you because filling in a scar is like a thing, that's like, a moment, y'know, and I don't know if that's a thing that Thisbe is interested in, or if holding on to that part of who she is is important.

JANINE: Um... So I think that, um, 'cause the scar that she has is like, filled in, but it's filled in with clear, like, goop,

AUSTIN: Right, like epoxy.

JANINE: Like y'know, that's the reason I, that's why I mention epoxy is 'cause it just, it is like a, there's a special, oh god, what's it, it's called like E-41, it's like very famous crafting glue, but it's like, clear and it smells terrible, and it is very strong, and I just like imagine that being what's kind of like, holding her face together there, but like, sanded down and like, tidy. Um, I think she's on board with replacing that with another substance, but is not on board with like, making it disappear.

AUSTIN: Yeah, this would be filling it in with another substance, this would not be... your face would still have, you would still see that scar. What is the thought for her there? This is an interesting thing, like, thinking about how much she doesn't think of herself as... a self in that same way- she thinks of herself as a self, but she doesn't, she's very pliable when it comes to the like, demands of others, or the interests of others, it seems? Or at least those who she thinks are her operant, or identifies as her operants. (JANINE: Yeah.) So I'm curious, what does the scar mean to her, insofar as it means something?

JANINE: I think that for her there is like a very... there's like a significant conflict in between... y'know, I have to believe that a robot that functions at the level that Thisbe does would have some kind of self-preservation thing, especially because she's a robot that is like, so aesthetic, like she is built, she's like a show piece, like at some stage she was built not just for function but like, she looks that way for a reason. So it feels like part of what they would, what whoever made her would want was for her to be aware of that and to take care of that appearance to a degree, BUT, and y'know that's all like, get rid of the scar territory, but the scar is like, that is the thing that she has from the place that she is trying to get back to. And it's not like a thing that she can, she can't like, research that scar and be like "oh right, I'm from here", but it's, like, it is the thing that she has, so as much as there is part of her that is like, y'know, "you should seek a better repair, you should try and make this go away, you should try and get back to your sort of like, optimal condition", she doesn't want that, she kind of, that doesn't feel right, neither option feels perfectly right in that situation.

AUSTIN: That makes sense. Um, so yeah, uh, y'know what, I'm also gonna say real quick, this is such like, a cool aesthetic thing that I'd rather you and Dre figure out what these look like than me tell you what they look like. Um, I like the filling in the scar with the kind of like, Memoria resin, but like, in terms of color or whatever, I'd love to hear what color this is, or if it is a color, or if it's like a shiny, like what makes it stand out. And then with Dre, what color do you think would look best with Valence's dope wolf face mask thing. Very important questions, I know. And also where is the placement, et cetera.

ALI: Do you add it as a little wolf nose? (laughs)

DRE: Aw man... It's either I wear it on a necklace, or I put it on my forehead.

ALI: It should be a cool fang!

AUSTIN: It should be a cool thing...

ALI: It should be on your jewel fa- (wheezes, laughs)

AUSTIN: It should be on your cool jewel face.

DRE: (laughs)

ALI: Yeah, you should have one cool jewel tooth.

DRE: That's- Oh, shit. No.

AUSTIN and ALI: (laughing)

JANINE: That's my favorite Masked Singer contestant.

(laughter)

DRE: This is, this is my gold snaggletooth that also projects my brain visions.

AUSTIN: Yeah, aaah... Ya'll don't need to know right this second.

DRE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Janine, do you have a thought on the Thisbe... face scar coloring?

JANINE: Yeah, I just, you know I'm a simple lady, I like opals, I think it's like a silver-white opal, kinda thing, so there's a bit of rainbow shifting, but generally looks just kinda whitish and shiny. Goes with the blue, ya know.

DRE: I'm looking up gem colors.

AUSTIN: Okay, good.

DRE: Ali, what besides amethyst is kinda purply? (ALI: Um...) I mean, I'll open the floor to anyone but I know Ali's got that crystal knowledge, so...

ALI: Um, there are some rose quartz that are sort of crystallly, um... garnets can kinda get there, sugilite.

JANINE: Oooh, what about... ta- taffyite?

ALI: (snorts)

DRE: Is that just... is that John Taffer's element.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh.

JANINE: It has two As, T A A F F E I T... I can't tell if it's, oh that's like, pur- I saw, there's like a good image of it that's like, smoky purple, but I think that's just the cut, it's like a lavendery lilacy... kind of thing.

ALI: Um, there's... Alexandrite, which is like a teal purple.

AUSTIN: A teal purple?

JANINE: What?

ALI: Yeah (laughs)

AUSTIN: What the fuck does that mean- oh, yeah, this is like a teal purple, uh huh. That's a dope color, holy shit.

DRE: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah, no that's what this is, yup, yup, this is alexandrite, yep, thanks Ali.

AUSTIN: That looks great!

ALI: (laughs) Happy to be of service.

AUSTIN: How does it do this?

JANINE: I thought alexandrite was pink!

AUSTIN: ... N-No,

JANINE: No, none of these are pink.

ALI: Maybe it's lab created, maybe...

AUSTIN: It's Maybelline.

ALI: -maybe something's going on.

DRE: (snorts)

JANINE: That's pretty cool.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

ALI: Here's like a weird chart, um, that I don't really know what it's communicating, maybe, I dunno.

AUSTIN: The colors on the Wikipedia thing are good, of the alexandrite. "It's blueish green in daylight and purple-red under incandescent light", it changes color.

ALI: Anyway... (laughs)

AUSTIN: Anyway, um... Alright! Uh, is there anything else you wanna do while at the Sable Court?

ALI: Um... I do have an offer that I wanna... go back and make to that guy, but I think it's funnier as like an, out the door offer? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: But I want him... it's he/him, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, he's he/him..

ALI: The characters... name?

AUSTIN: Yeah... oh, sorry, his name is Eiden, E I D E N.

ALI: Eiden... Eeden...

AUSTIN: It's Eiden, it's Eiden, it's just E I pronounced ay.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Like he would say, "Ey", Eiden.

DRE: My guy...

AUSTIN: He is... yeah go ahead.

ALI: I think Broun approaches Eiden and is like...

ALI (As Broun): Listen listen listen, I know you need your stuff (AUSTIN: (laughs)), but I was thinking, what if I, if you give me something that you don't think that can be fixed...

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Uh huh.

ALI (As Broun): You givea me, and if I fix it, I come back, and you gimme a second thing.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Something I can't- that's like a challenge. Wait whatdo, wait, what do we get? That's not an offer!

ALI (As Broun): The thing! Wha- You get the thing when it's fixed when I bring it back!

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Well then what do you... But what do you get?

ALI (As Broun): The second thing!

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Oh, I see what you're saying, you're saying you just get the second thing.

ALI (As Broun): Yes.

AUSTIN (As Eiden): Well what typa thing you looking for?

ALI: Um... God, I'm wondering if this is an opportunity to ask for something very expensive or something related to the spaceship (laughs).

AUSTIN: It's, it should be something related to a spaceship, right?

ALI: (laughs) Um...

AUSTIN: 'Cause that's the play you're making, this is about your drive, right?

ALI: Yeah, but more in a long-term, like, I want stuff, 'cause I don't know, I don't know that Broun's like, trying to make a spaceship (AUSTIN: Right...) As much much as they're like, trying to... put together the funds to have one.

AUSTIN: Right, right right right. Um... Then what if it's... hmm... what if it's like, you're gonna fix something really useful for them, and in exchange, they will give you something that you know you can fix up and flip, flip for money. Do you know what I mean?

ALI: Yeah, totally, yeah)

AUSTIN: Like something that's not even useful for them, um, so like, the first thing that would be useful for them is... let's say some sort of, like what's a really useful thing that this... uh, maybe it's something about keeping them secure, right, like maybe it's like, there's some sort of hollow imager, or uh, something that's like a, there's a device that will make their entire coven like, silent, for anything outside, right, so it's like a big, round disk, that is like, uh, that basically makes everything inside of a certain circumference silent, and that's busted, and they don't know how to fix it, um, and if you fix it and return it, they're gonna give you, like, a fuckin' Maybach, like, a fancy car that's useless to them, but you know you could fix it and flip it on the secondary market, on the after-market, right.

ALI: Okay, that's perfect, yeah. I, I, yeah, the definite impulse here is like... gain clout, and like word of mouth, but yeah, that's perfect.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna say that's a six step, ah, I'm gonna say that's a five step clock to fix it, I've added it to your long-term project, just to, just to... uh, also on that note, I just realized, also, we need to, or I should have, Thisbe, it's probably worth clearing out your long-term project of "Get in touch with Mourningbride",

ALI: (laughs)

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: That's done, you're in touch. Um, also I should note, Valence, your cool new gem, your new alexandrite Memoria lets you contact them, uh, directly, which is like, the big thing, which like, you're now just in touch with this group.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Why, what, why're you laughing?

ALI: I just love that because I'm not, um, because I'm like, flesh and bone, I don't get like a cool bluetooth or a beeper or whatever?

AUSTIN: Sorry, yeah, no... listen, you're not, you don't have a weird wolf mask, you get a big mech, that-

ALI: (cross) Yeah, not trying to call these people, that's fine.

AUSTIN: Where are you putting the, where are you putting the-

DRE: Wait, I'm flesh and bone!

AUSTIN: Yeah, I guess we don't know, but I don't... Why would...

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: I don't know anything about you, is the thing, I know you gotta wolf mask on.

JANINE: Maybe they just want the option to leave Broun on read.

AUSTIN: Damn... Uh, real question real quick, Three Cheers, where does the cool gem go?

ALI: Oh, um...

AUSTIN: Do you put it inside, is it like an interface device? Is it like a...

ALI: Maybe?

AUSTIN: Is it on the outside, does it look cool?

ALI: Um, yeah, I dunno, everyone has such a cool face thing that I was like "oh it'd be nice if it was on the face of my mech", but then it would be the face of my... mech...

AUSTIN: Yeah! Then it would be... on the face of your mech, yeah, that's true...

ALI: So, let me take the day to think about it, um, to put it in a more secure place,

DRE: Oooh, I know where it goes.

ALI: Where does it go.

DRE: It uh, it replaces one of the wolf ears on the top of my mask.

AUSTIN: That's good.

DRE: So I just got a jewel ear now.

AUSTIN: Just got a jewel ear. Love it.

ALI: (laughs)

DRE: Got a chromed-out ear.

AUSTIN: (distantly) Fuck... great (ALI: Perfect.)) it's perfect, it's good, very important shit, um, okay, I think that that's that mission, I think that we're, you're done with that, which is good, good job. Anything else before we wrap up the Sable Court?... Okay. Um... I already did all the math on this shit, and there isn't much, which is good.

ALI: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh, you're getting three rep for this, um, y'know, this is the sort of group, the Sable Court's the sort of group who will spread word that you're good to work with, and in fact you're getting a plus with the Sable Court after this, this thing, um, so I think, you know, we can deal with most of stuff off-mic, I guess the last thing is, y'know, all said, the train trips and like, there and then now back, um, and the downtime and everything else, it's been, it's been a little bit of time, um, and I think, y'know, one of the thing I wanna emphasize is, while you're on that sort of train, or when you're out in the woods, like, you don't have cell service, y'know, you're not gonna pull out- Partizan Palace updates when you, when you load it into a terminal or when you're like, really close to, if a special model with like, a local network transmission thing, like a wi-fi thing or whatever, but those are rare, and so it, you don't, you're not up on the news, right? And so I think there's just this vibe, just like, in the air, as soon as you step off the train, (TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER. starts playing) um, partly it's the other train passengers getting updated by their friends who are there to pick them up, partly it's, y'know, the way people are moving, partly it's, I'm sure there's like, some newspaper, y'know, sellers in the street shouting out the news, um... Kesh has launched a new offensive into Aposolisian territory. They plan on overcoming Fort Icebreaker and finally punching into the heart of the Barranca and seizing a real victory.

(TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER. continues playing, ends)

