

Twilight Mirage and Patreon Announcement!

Transcriber: Mason

ALI: Hey everyone, it's Ali here. So as you might know, we streamed our Post-Mortem for Hieron yesterday, where we answered some of your questions, and we kind of reflected on the season.

ALI: This isn't the entire Post-Mortem, obviously, but we made a few really big announcements that I just wanted to get on the feed sooner rather than later for people who couldn't turn in or people who, you know, listen to this podcast like it's a podcast.

ALI: So I'm just gonna let Austin take it from here and just play the audio from yesterday so you can get the-- the full experience there. Ah, here we go!

AUSTIN: So, it's time to talk about Friends at the Table Season 4. [ALI agreeing noise]
Everybody go mute really quick again.

JACK: And listen to the-- the stream.

AUSTIN: Yeah go listen to the stream. [ALI agreeing noise] Yeah, uh-huh, right right, oh wow! People-- people on the call haven't heard this yet, like at all! This is exciting. M'kay.

[00:57 seconds *The Twilight Mirage plays*]

AUSTIN [as Narrator] [at 01:48 seconds]: Floating in the sunset hued safety of the Twilight Mirage, the Divine Fleet hums and pulses, it's ships bright beacons of culture and technology in an age where both are under threat.

AUSTIN: All through the Fleet organic and synthetic citizens work side by side to protect a utopia that the universe thought impossible. In the past, we convinced ourselves that our technologies were just reflections of those who made them, tools to fit our hands, robots to ease our labour, artificial beings to teach, protect and entertain Us. We believed that our greatest achievements, the machine-gods we call Divines were simply idols made in our own image.

AUSTIN: We were Wrong. Since the first grain silo, the first cathedral, the first ship, since the first computer, the first time we put pen to page, we've always made things bigger, quicker, longer lasting, different than us.

AUSTIN: For a long time, we thought we were building mirrors but now we know better. We were setting fires.

[music ends 03:52 seconds]

AUSTIN: Friends at the Table Season 4 is called Twilight Mirage. It takes place 30, 000 years after the events of COUNTER/weight. Nothing in COUNTER/weight is really going to be specifically, relevant, there might be some references, obviously Divines are there, but it is our chance to do two things. One: it is our chance to talk about a world that is-- er, at least, y'know, was Utopian. It's about a utopia under threat, it's about a utopia in decline and what that looks like and what people in it will do to protect it.

AUSTIN: It is also our chance, or at least my chance, to complicate the ontology of season 2, the notion that we've built technology to look like us, because for that whole season, obviously, I'm speaking specifically about giant robots there, but also about other sorts of technologies and the ways they do look like us. But also the stock market doesn't look anything like us, and in many ways cathedrals don't.

AUSTIN: Y'know, there's moment when I was walking past, a building being constructed by the VICE offices a couple of months ago and I took out my phone to take a picture cause I could see a person with the sledgehammer knocking an iron spike into the top of the building and, I dropped my phone and it broke, ah, which was not great, But I got the picture! And what was important about it was I realized that, y'know I'd been thinking about the ways in which the Divines were Not human-like, the ways in which Righteousness, for instance, doesn't have a body let alone a humanoid one.

AUSTIN: And I realized that wasn't new, the future of COUNTER/weight, of that universe, it isn't a new thing that technology didn't seem like people, that that was always something that we'd done and I wanted to explore that, along with this notion of What a Technological Utopia Might Look Like, like what does happen [ART stretching noise] if we successfully seize the means and can rebuilt a world in the image that we want.

AUSTIN: Um, and so that is, what we're doing, we will have more to say about that very soon I think.

[ALI agreeing hum]

AUSTIN: So, that's exciting. I'm like, I should also note this was Season 6. I think like, [ALI laughing] 7 months ago [DRE laughing] we were like, let's start writing down notes about Season 6, like that's cool, um okay yeah, this is, this sounds cool. [ALI laughing] Oh boy, what if it was like, huh, okay. [ALI giggling] And then. And then.

JACK: But it's not Season 6, it's [AUSTIN overlaps] Season 4.

AUSTIN (overlapping): It's Season 4

ALI: Yeah, we should say specifically that, we were talking about Season 6, right when we ended Marielda, [AUSTIN overlapping] cause originally we were going to do like a hack of *Blades in the Dark* with robots.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we totally were. [ALI laughing] And instead what we're doing is *The Veil* [ALI yeahs] as some people have guessed, um-- um, by Fraser Simon, who gave us copies of the book. When I was reading it, I was like 'this is cool, we really wanna do this' he very graciously sent us all copies of the book.

AUSTIN: Um, it's a game about emotions, it's a game about, in which you don't roll your Strength or your Cool or your Edge, um, you roll what you're feeling at the moment that you do it and that is a really interesting thing because instead of just saying 'What Do You Do?', I get to say 'What Do You Do And How Do You Feel About It?' and it's just very fun to do that and to get like a good image of somebody.

AUSTIN: Um, so yeah! So yeah, mechs, robots, spaceships, there's so much more I wanna talk about but you'll just have to wait. [ALI agreeing hum] Um, so yeah, that's-- that's, these are our shows now, I just wanna look at this art that Craig, um Craig did, again you can find Craig Sheldon @shoddyrobot on twitter, who has just been incredible at giving us just amazing art the last few years, um. [ART overlapping] So, so good, yes, yes absolutely.

ART (overlapping): Craig is very good.

ALI: Yeah

AUSTIN: Also I'm so curious about whether or not this table perspective thing is intentional. [Dre laughing] [JACK laughing]

KEITH: Wait, what's intentional?

AUSTIN: Look at where the camera is in each piece, it's slowly going to be a top- [KEITH overlapping], from-- from under to above the table. Um-

KEITH: Oh [laughs]

KEITH: Yeah.

ART: Then we're going down the other side of that table [laughs]

AUSTIN: God damn it [KEITH overlapping] ((not sure what Austin says))

KEITH (overlapping): Upside down table, there's going to be [AUSTIN laughing] 5 Seasons where the table is upside-down.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh god, um, and so that's-- that's, you know the big announcement, is we're going to move right into this next season, like I'm so excited for that because it has seriously been the thing I've most wanted to do for months and months, like I've just been so stoked about trying to get here and trying to get to this place. There is another thing, um, Ali, do you wanna talk about this?

ALI: [Stammering] Oh, [laughs] [KEITH overlapping] I'm going to be the one to talk about this?

KEITH: No, it's, no she doesn't.

[overlapping laughter from DRE] [ALI laughing]

AUSTIN: Okay! [ALI overlapping] You don't have to, you don't have to. [ART overlapping] You just, [ALI overlapping] you can just, we can just, you can just mute yourself and I'll just hit play on this video that Sylvia¹ made very well and-- and we'll let this video talk instead, how's that sound? [ALI laughs]

ALI (overlapping): No? Please?

ART (overlapping): Alright.

ALI (overlapping) (stress laughing): We should have talked about this beforehand

[*This is 8:11 minutes*]

ALI: That sounds good.

AUSTIN: Alright, be right back.

ART: What is this? [JACK overlapping] [???

[08:17 *Patreon Video* plays]

JACK: Fingers crossed!

AUSTIN: Oh my friend. [JACK and ALI laugh]

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

[08:18 *Marielda* plays]

AUSTIN: You rolled a 1. [JACK laughing] The door wide [ALL whispering 'oh my god' and laughing] and there's an operating theatre.

JACK: So I've successfully picked it.

AUSTIN: You've successfully picked it. You go inside, there is a clean steel table in the middle, you look up and see there is a-- an observation room above, uh, which is empty and once you're both inside the room, Silas closes the door behind him and swigs his cane at your head.

AUSTIN: Hey, I'm Austin Walker, GM and host of *Friends at The Table*. What's *Friends at the Table*? Well, *Friends at the Table* is an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization and fun interaction between good friends. What that really means is that my friends and I love telling stories together and over the last two and a half years we have told a bunch of them, something like a hundred and twenty episodes, over two hundred and thirty hours. We've explored a post-apocalyptic fantasy world together, we've robbed trains in a magical city, we've looked up at giant mechs and thought, "We could have built them look like anything, but we made them look like us."

[09:24 *The Long Way Around* plays]

AUSTIN: I am being as sincere as I possibly can here, this show has meant so so much to all of us. And we want to do more, but to do more we need more resources, we need time and we need more rpgs books and we would love to get some better audio equipment. And you can help with all of that. Below on this page, you'll find everything you need to know about our Patreon campaign. We've got all the good stuff, from backer levels to stretch goals, we've got postcards, we've got maps, we've even got something I am super excited about that is pretty unique.

AUSTIN: One of our stretch goals is an experimental new campaign idea, its call Bluff City. We want to tell the story of a little dwindling gambling town in the mid-Atlantic through tonnes of little one-off games. We'll see the same place through the eyes of different people. Some criminals on one last heist, a group of teens investigating rumours of a haunting, up-and-coming pro-wrestlers who want to make it big just so they can leave town. It'll be a little bit Bruce Springsteen, a little bit *The Wire*, some *Twin Peaks*, maybe a little *Fargo* and it's something that I really, really want to discover with you and with my friends.

AUSTIN: But more than anything else, we just want to keep telling rad stories, and we would be honoured if you helped us do that. So check out the page, donate at a level you're comfortable with and please, spread the word the way that so many of you already have. The only way

we've ever grown has been through word of mouth so even if you can't afford to support us monetarily right now, letting other people know about this seriously helps. Thanks.

AUSTIN: And we are back, uh, so yeah, so we are finally starting a Patreon. After [ART laughing] years of threatening to start a Patreon. [ALI laughing] [JACK laughing] Ah, you can go to this domain that Ali set up friendsatthetable.cash [ALI hums agreeingly] [AUSTIN laughing] to go to our Patreon page. Um, we have a bunch of stretch goals and we also have a bunch of reward tiers, um, the lowest reward tier is a single dollar and anyone who pledges that or anything more will immediately get access to the first ever *Clapcast*. [ALI giggling] Ali, do you want to talk about-- [JACK overlapping] It's really good!

JACK (overlapping): I really wanna do this!

ALI: Me too! It's really [ART overlapping] good!

ART (overlapping): Well where's your dollar Jack? [Many laughing]

ALI: Whoa! Okay!

JACK: I'll trade you a download of the-- the *Twilight Mirage Theme*.

[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]

ALI: Um, anyway, yeah so we-- anything that like, happens while we're playing the game, I try to keep cause it should be there, but like-- the like before recording like 'how was your day? Jack isn't here yet, he went to go grab some tea stuff' is like, stuff that I've [KEITH overlapping] constantly trying to fit in-- yeah.

KEITH (overlapping): He went to make a hot water bottle.

AUSTIN: I still don't know what that means.

[ALI tries to talk while laughing]

KEITH: It's a-- it is a big plastic bag of hot water that is relaxing I assume.

JACK: The size of a man.

AUSTIN: Right. [sigh]

[ALI laughing]

ALI: Um, but yeah, I've been trying to figure out a way to get that stuff into the show and this is a good way to hold on to it [AUSTIN overlapping], so I made um, I made a sample episode of like the clips that I have that I didn't wanna delete. And they're all really good. [ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (overlapping): Totally.

AUSTIN: They're all very good. Um, then on top of that we also have a number of other levels, um, there's a level at which you will f-for five bucks you'll get access to some other bonus stuff I'll talk about in a second, for ten bucks there is, you get to see our roll20 character sheets, all of our maps, like obviously I try to give maps whenever I can but there are a lot of junk maps that no one sees. Um, like the one I showed at the top of the-- the episode today when you could see all the weird purple stuff, you would see that stuff.

AUSTIN: Um, there will be a--a--a, there's a level where you'll receive a postcard, a real live physical postcard with original art and design by Janine with microfictions set in the *Friends at the Table* universe, one of them, one of the *Friends at the Table* universes [ALI giggles] written by Jack and I. Um, there is [JACK overlapping] a level where you will get a behind-the-scenes kind of, uh, collection of stuff including some of my notes, um, you know things like, I think I found the other day the original *Tech-Noir* transmission that eventually became *COUNTER/weight* that I ran for some other friends that was just a, it was like a cyberpunk Atlantic City.

JACK (overlapping): So excited about that.

AUSTIN: That's the sort of thing I would totally just put in one of these, um or a peer at the NPCs that showed up here, like stat lines for these NPCs that showed up this sea-- this past week or this past, you know, throughout this past month, um or just like notes on characters like, there is definitely, remember when-- when Primo first showed up all those, all that time ago in *Blades in the Dark*, I just had like, really basic character voice notes on like [ALI giggles] how to sound as him, like what does Primo sound like? Ah, and I'm-- I'm trying to remember like, what was-- was it, here we go! "Low, gravely, hey uh how's it going? Almost [ALI giggling] Canadian cadance", [JACK overlapping] god, I don't have the other one here which was like, I think it was Aziz Ansari's Canadian Uncle or something [ALI laughing] like that. [JACK laughing]

JACK (overlapping): God.

ALI: That was my suggestion when you lost your notes.

AUSTIN: That's what it was, thank you. [ALI laughing] But like, notes like that are the sorts of things that would be in that level. For those of you who are like-- [AUSTIN chuckling] and apparently there are already two of you-- who really want to support us, you know if you support us for 100 bucks a month for six months and then every year after that we'll all sign a copy of an RPG book that we've played that year, send it all around to all of us along with all the postcards

and send it off to you, which is rare because we've literally never all been in the same place at the same time [AUSTIN and JACK laughing], so it's not like we can all just like go over to Ali's house and sign the book. We have to actually send that internationally three times [AUSTIN and ALI chuckling] and then send it off. And that's all--

ART: We've already hit our one thousand dollar goal.

AUSTIN: Wow, thank you, that makes me--

ALI (overlapping): Oh, yay!

AUSTIN: that makes me blush a lot, so.

JACK (overlapping): Oh my God.

AUSTIN: Well, good news. That means we can upgrade our audio equipment and get everyone using the same basic recording setup, which--

JACK (overlapping): Oh my God, I'm suddenly on a better mic!

ALL: [laughs]

AUSTIN: --Instantly

KEITH: I, I do want to be clear. We're actually at nine hundred and ninety *seven* dollars.

AUSTIN: No, we're at a thousand twenty-four.

ART (overlapping): No, we're at one thousand twenty-two.

KEITH: Oh, we are? I refreshed it twice and it didn't-- okay I see it now.

AUSTIN (overlapping): One thousand sixty-one, actually.

KEITH: I'm lagging a little bit behind, I apologize for that.

AUSTIN: The second thing here, is there is at three K we're going to start another bonus podcast called Tips at The Table where we'll start answering questions. You know, I *skipped* a lot of questions here today. I skipped some stuff that I thought was really *good* but that we could hit at a later date, and it's things like that, right. Like, there are a lot of questions of that *type* in this mix, right. There were definitely things that were like "Austin how did you balance the need to expand upon very complex metaphysics of Hieron while also appealing to the principle 'Draw maps, leave blank spaces?'" You know, like that's the sort of thing I can talk about *broadly* in

how as a GM you can both deal with the complex rules of a fictional universe and also try to keep open spaces for your players, right. Lots of people write in with questions for players about how they decided to do this thing or that thing and Tips at The Table will be a way for us to do that. So that is our next goal, and *then* after that is the one that I am like, very excited about. Once we hit six K, we will start Bluff City, which is that bonus campaign that I talked about in which we will be kind of slowly uncovering and building collectively this small, Mid-Atlantic, kind of Atlantic City stand-in. Gambling city, down on its luck, *vaguely* existing in a time period from the 80s to the 2030s in my head. Like definitely weird technology, but also just kind of crummy local economy, you know. It's just sort of a weird mix of things, and we'll do that by playing games like Fiasco, World Wide Wrestling RPG, Tales from The Loop, like all sorts of games that we have wanted to play for a long time but we couldn't dedicate a whole season to it. I say this of myself as a storyteller, I don't know that I could run a season long Monsterhearts game. I absolutely can run a Monsterhearts game set in a fictional Atlantic City called Bluff City, [ALI giggles] like that's gonna happen for sure. So like, that is probably for me the goal that I am most excited about and would love to hit. I think that's it, does anyone have anything else? Are there questions in the chat?

ALI: [sighs]

AUSTIN: I haven't looked at the chat in a little bit, because I've been refreshing this page and covering my heart. [ALI coos, touched]

JACK: Thank you all so much for your support, it's like overwhelming in a way that is very tangible and also very good.

ALL (overlapping): [Affirming yeahs and yeses]

AUSTIN: [laughs] Unlike most overwhelmings

JACK: Mhmmm

ART: Do you want to talk about the higher, the ten thousand, the Live at the Table

AUSTIN: I don't-- oh yeah, yeah we'll talk about that. Is that, I didn't know if that was on this yet. Was this on that one?

ALL: [Yeahs and yeses]

AUSTIN: Okay yeah, sure, so at ten K, if we hit ten K we will start a monthly livestream where we just play a system that's voted on by our Patreon supporters. You know, there are times when we want to play something that is a little goofier, you know slightly more button-down mode. Back when Ali was raising money for some dental work, we did a stream together where

we played like The Sims and some other games and then it was late and were like “what if we just do a quick RPG?” and we played a game called Laser Feelings and had a really good time--

KEITH: It was a ton of fun, yeah.

AUSTIN: --and it was really button-down *us* and like it was-- Again, we get a lot of notes that say “I miss the looseness of the first season,” and at a certain point you want to start telling a story that is like really considered and you lose that looseness because its just not the thing that you’re there to do anymore, and thats not a diss on the looseness, it’s just “oh I got interested in this other thing,” and that other thing is still really fun and we still want to do it, and this would let us do it and do it live. And if you are backing at the right level, you can come watch us do that live. Obviously we wouldn’t just be streaming it [AUSTIN laughs] to no-one, so. [ALI and KEITH laugh].

JACK: Lasers and Feelings we should also say is like, coming. That’s going to come out, I just didn’t want to release an episode without music on and I wanted to take the time to get that feeling good. Also I was really nervous that I wouldn’t be able to do synths, but--

AUSTIN: Boy, it turns out [ALI laughs].

JACK: Now, I have to, so.

AUSTIN: Also I am so ridiculously excited for like whatever music Jack makes for Bluff City if we hit the Bluff City goal.

JACK (overlapping): I am so excited! I’m just

AUSTIN (overlapping): Are you fucking kidding me, so.

KEITH: *Oh* yeah.

AUSTIN: Thank you all so much--

JACK (overlapping): Its gonna be--

AUSTIN: Go ahead

JACK: Oh, I just like, God, the amount of places and styles we’re going to move through in that show and just doing one-shots will let me do some really bullshit stuff with music that is going to be really exciting.

AUSTIN: I am so happy to be doing this with everybody here and I mean that with everybody in the chat but also everybody on this call, like I love you all so much. We’ve made, I say this

again, and I said this in the video, but I'll say it a little longer here. I have had a very exciting few years. I have had a very dramatic few years in terms of like going from living in a box in Can[ada?]- like, dealing with my Landlady telling me I had 20 days to move to a new apartment to where I'm at today and despite all of the other things that maybe got more visibility or people might know me from now, the thing I am proudest of is building this with all of you and telling these stories and finding these characters and kind of connecting with an audience and just exploring all of these ideas. It has been like a point of pride and a point of-- I feel most like a person when I am doing Friends at The Table and I want to do it for as long as we can. So thank you all so much for helping me do that, thank you all in the chat and who are listening to this not in the chat but later in the archived version. Ali who is going to very kindly quickly turn this around for this week. We are incredibly lucky, I am incredibly lucky to keep doing this so, thank you.

ART: Yeah, do you hear that, Kurzman? He likes us best!

ALL: [raucous laughter]

ANDI: Holy *shit*.

AUSTIN: God *damn*, [ALL still laughing] Jesus Christ. Uhm, alright. I think that's going to do it for us.

ALI: And yeah, so that's it, that's what we're doing. We are so so excited for Twilight Mirage and also from everything that could come from the Patreon. Right now we'll definitely be doing Tips at The Table, so there will be more details about that on the Patreon in terms of how to send in questions and when it will be posted and so on and so forth, so really excited to figure that out. We're also really close to being able to create Bluff City which is just incredible. We really really want to do that, but the effort it would take and buying new systems and playing new systems really required us to have it be through Patreon and to see people as enthusiastic about it and want to support us so we can do it is the best thing because I cannot wait to be able to start digging around in there. Honestly, your support really means everything and I'm echoing Austin a little bit here but Friends at The Table is really and truly the thing that I am most proud of. Working on the show has been fulfilling and rewarding in a way that like nothing else I've ever really worked on has been, and I know that a lot of the cast feel that way and really all we want to be doing is doing this and doing it the best that we can and doing it as often as we can, and the Patreon really helps us be able to dedicate time to it in a way that we haven't been able to. So thank you so much everyone who has already supported. Thank you to everyone who is *going* to after listening to this. Again, you can head over the friendsasthetable.cash for that. Its an incredible url. You should just go to it because it's fun to type! And, God, like apart from that Twilight Mirage is going to be really really really good. We're all so so excited for that, to the point that we want to get it out as soon as we can, and that is going to be my opportunity to say now that the first episode of Twilight Mirage is actually going to come out this Friday. I know that people were probably expecting it to be next Thursday but we kind of just want to like, get it out

there and do it and keep the momentum going with announcing it and with patreon and everything else, so I, God, I'm really excited for you guys to hear about all of our Twilight Mirage characters because they're all great, especially mine, All of them are really great but especially mine. So look out for that, the Post-Mortem in full is posted on YouTube right now so if you wanted to just go watch it, you could. But the audio for it is going to be in the feed latest Thursday, earlier if I can get it. So yeah, look out for that. The links to everything are going to be in the description of this episode, so if you are looking for our patreon at friendsatthetable.cash, that's going to be down there. If you want to see the new art for season four, that's going to be there. It is *beautiful*. There is also a discord that we opened for the show that is mostly a space for fans to hang out and to talk to other fans but we're also there and can kind of like interact with you guys, and it's been really fun so far. You will see that link either in this post-- we also have the link when you become a Patreon backer there, it's on our twitter, it's on our facebook. Or you can just like at me on twitter if you forgot to join it when you were either listening to this or when you backed us and you want the link, I will give it to you. I'm @ali_west on twitter. So yeah, that's everything. Patreon, discord, new season, it's where we're doing it. We're ready to go, and I just wanted to put this in the feed here so people would know about this as soon as possible and just so people could know that there's going to be *a lot* of episodes this week, so look out for the Post-Mortem and then look out for Twilight Mirage because it's *so good* [ALI chuckles]. But yeah, I'm just going to stop talking now because I'm going to keep going if I don't, so thank everyone for everything, and have a good night!