

## PARTIZAN 16: BITTER AIR - BEHEST

Transcriber: thedreadbiter

[music: [TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#) begins]

**Austin:** Twisting alleys lead like tributaries to packed avenues, where civilians hocked their wares to passing sailors. Bar room shouting played prelude to street-side sparring matches. Smoke brought the smell of charred food up from one level of the city to the next, and the sea added its own salt.

This bustling seaside metropolis, spread across a terraced bay, wrapped around a lush inlet, was Lion's Rest. Home to all the things that reminded good Apostolosian soldiers what they were fighting for. It was also home to the Serpent's Head, de facto leadership of Stel Apostolos on Partizan, equal parts armada and diplomatic corps.

Which was why Cas'alear Rizah, leader of the infamous Swordbreakers, was here to begin with. They had reviewed the reports, watched the reconnaissance footage. They *knew* that Apostolos wasn't the villain that Kesh had made them out to be. Apostolos didn't kill Past, and they didn't kidnap some *priest*. So why wasn't leadership trying to convince anyone *else* of that! Why deflect, instead of deny. Why rush to the parapet instead of to the press corps.

They got their answer from the corner of cas' eye. Coming down some old stone stairs in a fury, looking out to the sea for comfort, Cas was taken, for a moment, by the sheer beauty of the Apostolosian Navy churning through the bay. Each ship bristled with charged violence: gun barrels and aircraft, launch decks and porthole rifles, mine layers waiting to deploy concentrated misfortune.

It all moved *for the sake of moving*. They didn't try to de-escalate because they wanted to see their ships dance in the sea, light the sky on fire, serenade foreign shores with artillery rhythm. It hit them like a bullet in the gut: Oh, this is how we lose the war.

[music plays out]

[2:35 - intro ends]

**Austin:** Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interactions between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker, you can follow me on Twitter at [austin\\_walker](#). Joining me today, Art Martinez Tebbel.

**Art:** Hey, you can find me on Twitter at [atebbel](#).

**Austin:** Also joining us, Sylvia Clare.

**Sylvia:** Hey, I'm Sylvia, you can find me on Twitter at [captaintrash](#) and you listen to my other podcast Emojidrome on your podcast app of choice.

**Austin:** Jack de Quidt!

**Jack:** Hi! My name's Jack, you can find me on Twitter at [notquitereal](#), and buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#).

**Austin:** And Keith Carberry.

**Keith:** Hi, my name is Keith J Carberry, you can find me on Twitter at [keithcarberry](#), and find the Let's Plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](#).

**Austin:** All right. Today we are picking up our game of Beam Saber by Austin Ramsay, and as always, my goals are to ensure everyone at the table is safe; to fill the world with detail: with people who have names, cities that breathe, buttons that click, screens that glow and cloth that flows; to convey the world honestly; and to play to find out what happens. Um. When we last left off — I guess — let's actually just slow down. Let's pause and go over — let's not even pause. Let's start today [slight laugh] by going over everyone's current situation, starting with your amount of Stress, your Scars, any Harm you or your mech have — your vehicle have, and then any — what your Drives are, where your Drive clocks are at, and then what your connections are. I know that's a lot, but given, uh, the potential intensity of this mission, I wanna have everybody on this on board, I wanna have everybody knowing where everyone is. So, Clementine Kesh, give me the rundown.

**Jack:** Okay. My name is Clem —

**Art:** [incredulous] Starting with Clem?

**Austin:** Uh. Clem is first in this list of names. So.

**Art:** [wry] All right.

**Austin:** You know.

[**Keith** and **Sylvia** laugh loudly]

[**Austin** laughs]

**Jack:** My name is Clementine Kesh. I have 4 Stress out of a possible 9. I am obsessed. I have a level 2 harm called ill, which gives me a minus 1D on — is that every roll, Austin?

**Austin:** It's any roll where it would have a —

**Jack:** Where it would have an effect.

**Austin:** An effect, which, being ill has a lot of different effects, I would say.

**Jack:** Absolutely, one hundred percent. My Drive is to rule Stel Kesh, and I have one Drive — [laughs] and I have one Drive clock with three marks in it. Let's see, how's the Panther doing?

**Austin:** Seems fine. Seems fine.

**Jack:** I think the Panther seems fine. Oh, yeah yeah yeah! I haven't exhausted any quirks.

**Austin:** No, you're good.

**Jack:** That stuff all seems to be fine.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** I'm sick, though.

**Austin:** Gimme your connections.

**Jack:** I have three connect — I have four connections. My connections with Sovereign Immunity are: "When Sovereign Immunity's loyalty to my family was tested, he failed. He is not to be trusted"; "Sovereign Immunity wants me to succeed so that he can get out of prison". For Million, I have "Million may prove an effective bodyguard". And for Leap, I have "Leap is a loose cannon. I will make him a useful one". And then for my rival, Gucci Garantine, I have "Gucci Garantine is hiding something".

**Austin:** Mm. All right, Sovereign Immunity.

**Art:** Hey, um. Sovereign Immunity has 1 Stress.

**Austin:** That's not too bad.

**Art:** No harm, doing great.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Art:** Drive is to become Clementine's assigned Sovereign, I am at three Xs. My beliefs as they pertain to Clementine are, "Clementine's affections are my ticket off this lousy rock" and "Clementine can be the just ruler of a Stel". With Million, I have "I am a scalpel. I am not sure I have need of a hammer" and "Million is a delight. I simply must show her to the whole universe".

**Austin:** Incredible.

**Art:** And, uh, for Leap I have "I love a scoundrel, I hate complications".

**Austin:** Great. And —

**Art:** And my mech is doing great, and I just took a new move.

**Austin:** What'd you take?

**Art:** Carry a big stick. If you got a 4 plus on a roll to offer a peaceful solution, you get plus 1 die in combat for the rest of the mission against anyone that refused your offer.

**Austin:** Ooh. Love it. Good. Good good good. Leap.

**Keith:** Hi! My name is Exeter Leap, I am a happy and healthy...

[**Sylvia** laughs]

[**Keith** starts laughing too]

**Austin:** And so humble!

**Jack:** Wow! He's ready to go!

**Sylvia:** Oh my god!

**Austin:** Must be nice.

**Keith:** Uh. Equiaxed prisoner. That's, I guess, the one caveat to being...

**Austin:** [laughs] Happy and healthy!

**Keith:** Happy. And healthy.

**Austin:** Is being in prison!

**Keith:** Is being in prison.

**Austin:** Being forced to fight on behalf of a nation that has imprisoned me!

**Keith:** Well, the boss is sick.

**Austin:** Yeah, true.

**Keith:** Um. I am very excited to break out of prison, which is going pretty well, and to repair my little robot friend. My Drives, or my beliefs, with Sovereign Immunity are "Sovereign Immunity is playing at a bigger game than anyone else here". With Clementine, it's "Clementine's job is to keep us around, and I don't think she can do her job". And for Million, I have three beliefs: "I bet there's something expensive around here and I bet Million would help me steal it", "Millie can draw attention, and drawing attention is useful", and "Millie will get me in trouble doing something reckless".

[**Sylvia** laughs]

**Austin:** You're at three, which means the next time that you cut loose with Millie, you get to test one of those, reset the clock, and take an XP, which is fun. All right. Millie!

**Sylvia:** Yeah! So, I am Million. I have 5 Stress. 1 damage to my mech. My Drive is "claw your way out", which I have two points in the Drive clock for. And then for connections, with Sovereign Immunity: "I have a history with Kesh, and he's pals with the warden? I definitely can't trust this guy". With Leap I have "Leap was a pirate. Maybe I could join his crew" and my new one, "Leap has my back. As long as it's convenient for him".

[**Jack** and **Austin** chuckle]

And then with Clem, I have "Clementine has no business being here. She's going to get me killed" and "Clementine is better suited to ballrooms than battlefields".

**Austin:** Love it.

**Keith:** Did we cut loose with each other last time, or was that from before the last downtime?

**Sylvia:** No, we did cut loose with each other last time.

**Austin:** I think so.

**Keith:** [cross] We did.

**Austin:** [cross] Yeah yeah yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yep.

**Austin:** Um. Just as a note, that 1 damage for the Stray Dog, Millie's mech, is dented, a level 1 less effect harm. Not great. Um. Not good! Not good! Everything here is, it's fine.

**Jack:** Well. Good news is, it doesn't seem like we're gonna do anything particularly militarily drastic, does it?

**Austin:** No. Um. [**Sylvia** laughs loudly] It's gonna be fine. I have a question, which is, there's two scenes to do here before we actually do the engagement. The first one is to... get the kind of mission breakdown, like what is this mission. The second is, you took a group move at the very end of the last recording that didn't make it into the actual episode, because it was after we kind of stopped recording. we'd already kind of gone all the way out of character. But you had leveled up the Rapid Evening, and taken the move Sponsor. And I wanna know if you wanna do

that move first, or if you wanna do — or that scene first, or if you wanna do here's the mission first.

**Keith:** I think we should do Sponsor first. That's — but I'm willing to be disagreed with.

**Sylvia:** Yeah...

**Jack:** I think—

**Austin:** it doesn't super matter in terms of anything except for narrative framing, do you know what I mean?

**Keith:** You know, I have — when we recorded last.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Since then. I have forgotten who we decided the sponsor was. [**Jack** laughs]

**Austin:** Okay! Well, don't worry about it!

**Jack:** Okay, I think we should go Sponsor first.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Do you — who calls this meeting? Who does the — who initiates this? I guess, I think you have to initiate this as a — have to initiate the request, right?

**Jack:** It doesn't come from them?

**Austin:** No! Right?

**Jack:** No, I don't think it would. 'Cause that would be like a patron thing that we don't necessarily...

**Keith:** It might be Sovereign Immunity. If Clem is sick, and I...

**Austin:** Yeah, maybe that's right.

**Keith:** Me and Leap don't know what's going on. 'Cause I've forgotten.

**Austin:** [slight laugh] Even though it was literally your idea, Keith.

**Keith:** Yeah, I do remember — that's the thing — I did remember that it was my idea.

**Austin:** Okay, good.

**Keith:** But I have still forgotten. When we say it, I'll remember.

**Austin:** Sovereign, do you wanna...?

**Art:** Yeah, it does seem like it's my job.

**Austin:** It does sound like that. So, what is the situation that you go to Gur Sevraq in?

**Keith:** Oh, right.

[**Art** laughs lowly]

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** Love it!

[**Sylvia** laughs]

**Art:** See, we should have had Leap do it so we could have had the reveal on...

[**Austin** and **Jack** laugh]

**Keith:** Yeah, just saying like —

**Austin:** "Hey, you!"

**Keith:** "Hey, I'm looking for help, uh, you."

**Austin:** [laughing] Yeah! [sighs]

**Keith:** Try to guess who it is based off the voice you're doing.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly, right? Uh.

**Keith:** I'll go with you! Now that I remember.

**Art:** O...kay. Yeah, I think this is just like a... It's an... Are we still keeping Gur in the tunnels?

**Austin:** No — it seems like no? Because we know that Gur has been like libraries and stuff, right, so.

**Jack:** Under like, it's been — I think Gur's movements have been very careful.

**Austin:** yes. Yes.

**Jack:** I think —

**Austin:** They have not been...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They have not been seen, and so it's like moving via tunnels between rooms, is my guess.

**Jack:** [quietly] Yeah.

**Keith:** Well and they've been preaching.

**Austin:** In the tunnels.

**Jack:** [cross] In the tunnels.

**Austin:** [cross] He's been in the tunnels.

**Art:** [cross] In the tunnels, but the— [indistinguishable]

**Keith:** Okay, sure, but we've — people know, now.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yes, yes.

**Art:** I think — I mean, maybe the library — maybe the palace — the Winter Palace library is the best place for this conversation.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Art:** Yknow. For our purposes. I think it's just like. What's Gur's title again?

**Austin:** Uh. No really a title person, like, has just been Gur Sevraq, as far as you know. The Friend. Has not really been like...

**Art:** Austin, you're giving it away.

**Austin:** What?

**Art:** You're giving away the... you're giving away the...

**Sylvia:** [laughs] What?

**Art:** The secret.

**Austin:** What secret?



**Art:** The Gur Sevraq secret.

**Austin:** I already said that secret. That's how Keith knows.

**Art:** How Keith — what? Keith didn't know?

**Austin:** What?! [confused noise]

**Keith:** Wait, what's the secret?

**Sylvia:** Who's on first?

**Jack:** We can bleep this if needs be. I think Art is referring to the fact that Gur Sevraq's name is ROT13 code.

**Austin:** Oh, people have to know that by now, right?

**Jack:** People have definitely worked that out. I've seen —

**Austin:** Maybe they haven't! Have they not?

**Jack:** No, I've seen it.

**Austin:** Okay. Okay.

**Jack:** I've seen people go, this is a silly name.

**Keith:** Well, there's — some people seem to have, and I bet some people didn't even consider it.

**Austin:** Right. You know what I thought about this morning was, ROT13 is on decline because Discord just has spoiler tags now.

**Jack:** Oh, spoiler tags!

**Austin:** But on Twitter, I'm sure people have run into this issue.

**Jack:** This is why we're introducing...

**Austin:** That Gur Sevraq is a hard thing to ROT13.

**Keith:** Oh, because people are going to ROT13 something and it's ROT13ing Gur Sevraq.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** To The Friend.

**Austin:** Yes. That is it. We've solved the puzzle, we've solved it. We've given people insight into what the fuck we're talking about. But no, I don't think that there's a title. I don't think [slight laugh] Art, coming back to Sovereign Immunity, I don't think that Gur Sevraq has had a title — you know. There's probably like...

**Keith:** Would Sovereign Immunity give them a title? Would you call them like, Your Eminence or whatever?

**Austin:** Yeah, probab — well, it's up to Sovereign, right?

**Art:** Um.

**Austin:** I shouldn't have answered at all.

[15:00]

**Art:** What's — it's tricky, right, because you don't wanna give someone a title that they're going to refuse, because then you've started the conversation with like, you kind of seeming like an asshole.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** You know, if I started talking to one of you and was like, "what's going on, Your Eminence", you wouldn't be like.

**Austin:** [laughs] [cross] Well, if you said it like that!

**Art:** [cross] Art's having a normal one.

[Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Eh! I don't know, I think more people could stand to refer to me like that.

[Austin laughs deeply]

**Art:** [chuckles]

[as **Sovereign Immunity**]: Gur Sevraq. I had hoped to broach a difficult conversation with you. [amused] And I brought Exeter Leap.

**Keith** [as **Leap**]: Hey.

**Austin** [as **Gur Sevraq**]: Mr. Leap. I — you do not normally attend these meetings. This must be serious.

**Leap:** There have been other meetings? Has no one been telling me about meetings?

**Gur Sevraq:** The Sovereign Immunity and the scion have come to me for insight. You are welcome to do the same. What little I offer is offered freely.

**Sovereign Immunity:** [sighs] We were hoping that perhaps we could ask a little more of you.

**Gur Sevraq:** And would this too be given freely?

**Art:** [amused noises] Um. What's polite for, "no, we'd murder people for you too"?

[**Austin** and **Keith** laugh]

**Austin:** Something about commitment, right?

**Art:** Yeah. Um.

[as **Sovereign Immunity**]: Of course I wouldn't expect you to — to do us a favor without getting anything in return, we are... grateful and devoted, as a unit.

**Gur Sevraq:** Exeter Leap. What is it that you are, above all else, devoted to?

**Keith:** Um. I think when... when Sovereign Immunity said "devoted, as a unit", I think that Exeter started squinting.

**Austin:** Yeah. [laughs] Is that — for Exeter Leap, is that like a mechanic eyelid starts to close?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Over the lens? Love it.

**Keith:** And the sort of the mouth.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Sort of retracts a bit, or...

**Austin:** [laughs] Oh, god! Love it.

**Keith:** The half-beak.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** Um. What am I devoted to?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** What was it? What am I...?

**Austin:** What are you devoted to. I think this is the moment for Exeter Leap that we've seen now with Clementine and with Sovereign Immunity, the like "what does the future look like, for you?" What is the dream in Exeter Leap's heart, as best as you, Keith, can kind of enunciate it, what is the vision that Exeter Leap has for not only his own future, but for The Future, which is not necessarily a thing that he's — I don't know if he's thought of it in those terms before, do you know what I mean?

**Keith:** No. No, he's been very immediately concerned with not being in prison anymore?

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Um.

**Austin:** It would be acceptable to me to think about — we can talk about it. I think the first step for this, is there a way, in this moment of clarity, where Leap can think about a moment when he was free, whether he thought the world should be different. And it would be — again, in a flash, in a way that previously had been almost pre-linguistic. Like, not just words, but just like a feeling that now starts to coalesce into words. the second half of this is, it's totally — it would be very interesting to be like, "no, I'm in prison, I cannot even begin to imagine. Like, I don't have the luxury of revolutionary thought right now, because of the conditions of my existence", but also, plenty of — *plenty* of revolutionaries have spent time in jail, so it's not like that's like closed off, yknow, and it doesn't mean that — you don't need an education to wish the world was better.

**Keith:** But those are revolutionaries who were arrested, not —

**Austin:** You were —

**Keith:** — pirates.

**Austin:** [laughs] Who were detained.

**Keith:** Who were detained — right.

**Austin:** Illegally, and put in a black site. Some of them may have, I don't know. it's up to you. It's up to you whether or not you think that something can coalesce for Exeter Leap here or not.

**Keith:** Um. [pause] And this isn't like with —

**Austin:** Or, do you know what it is, what's happening here is almost like — what's happening here almost is like an immediate Socratic dialogue, right, where instantly, what is being asked is like, what does a better world look like, and then if it's an image of Exeter Leap free, the thing that

is happening very quickly is the Divine Future and Gur Sevraq are making you zoom the camera out a little bit. So, what does free mean, tell me what a day looks like.

**Keith:** Okay. I —

**Austin:** And then you hit someone, and then it's like what's their life like? Yknow?

**Keith:** I have a — I have a slight picture of something. And of — probably from — probably an idea from pre-arrest.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Which is — and you can tell me if this is not enough, because it technically isn't like a dream or a vision of the future.

**Austin:** No no, it doesn't have to be — yeah, visual.

**Keith:** But I think — yknow. Leap isn't a fan of the Stels, specifically, gee, Stel Orion, I believe. No, um... It might have been —

**Austin:** Which one?

**Keith:** — I think it was Stel Orion, right, that's who I was — yeah, that's who Leap's primary targets were, or like.

**Austin:** Often, yeah.

**Keith:** Columnar and Orion trading ships.

**Austin:** Mm-hm. The big capitalists. The space capitalists were definitely your go-to targets, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. And so I think there's the contradiction — this is what I see, maybe even see it as a contradiction — of hating Orion, and, yknow, wanting Orion and Columnar to like do worse—

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** As a civilization, but also as they do worse, being a pirate is harder and less valuable.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. Is there a — so that's probably like a fleeting thought that Leap had three years ago, right, was like "Huh. You know, if I'm a good enough pirate, I'll be making my own job worse eventually".

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It'll be harder for me to make bank, because they'll stop sending so much stuff in front of me to fucking steal.

**Keith:** Yep. And — so this is the overlap between...

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Between piracy and — the not — the NGO non profit sector.

**Austin:** [laughs] Right. Is there a follow-up thought here, then? Which is like, what would you do if you didn't have to be a pirate, if that is... the kind of like next step in that line of thinking.

**Keith:** Uh, error!

**Austin:** It's just nothing. Just...

**Keith:** Uh. I... [stammers] It's like, um... Yeah, I think it's — this is where the...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** "I just have to get out of prison" thing starts flashing.

**Austin:** Right. Then I will introduce this — then I will introduce this to you, which is like, I think this question begins to gnaw at you a little bit. This isn't a game that has beliefs in that way, because beliefs are about other characters in this game, but it would be as if I'd written down on your street — on your street. Jesus. On your sheet! "I have to figure out what I wanna do after I get out", right, or after —

**Keith:** "I wanna figure out what I have to do after I get out", avenue.

**Austin:** Exactly. [laughs] That's where you live now, that's where your mind — part of your mind resides there. You visit that corner every day now. Yknow? You walk by it and you go like, hm, okay. And then you move on! You don't need to answer it today, or tomorrow, or next year. But it is in Leap's head as a more — you ever have that thing happen where like five years ago you were really into a band and then you completely fall off of them and then one year it comes back around and you're like, "Oh shit, I forgot I love this band, I can't stop listening to this band".

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's that, but for that question of like, "what would happen if I didn't need to be a space pirate? Huh." And that just begins to turn. And like, it is just the right set of questions, the right set of impulses, that begins Leap down a line of thinking about other things. And I don't know if that's gonna end up tying to things like the Equiaxed or other parts of Leap's history or identity,

but like, maybe it does, we'll see. Um. All right! And I think at that point Gur Sevraq nods, pleased, and says... [sighs]

[as **Gur Sevraq**]: Sovereign Immunity. I can give you more. It will require... devotion to the dreams you seek. It will also require a belief. A belief in something greater. I know you are a man of faith, Immunity.

**Austin**: He wouldn't say Immunity.

[as **Gur Sevraq**]: I know you are a man of faith, Farmer. But are you also a man of sacrifice?

**Art** [as **Sovereign Immunity**]: Look at where I am.

**Gur Sevraq**: Hm. Very well. Before you leave, I will see what I can do about ensuring that... you may be... You may be disconnected from the imperial might of Stel Kesh, because of the tenuous relationship you have with those in power. I will see to it that you have support from elsewhere. I will need to send a message, though?

**Sovereign Immunity**: Okay.

**Gur Sevraq**: And also. Before you leave, see me. I may have further blessing to offer. I will need to see you all as a unit.

**Sovereign Immunity**: This is probably not where we would do it, though. We would need to do it in a more discreet location.

**Gur Sevraq**: I will need to do it in your hangar. I need to see the weapons you bring with you.

**Sovereign Immunity**: That's, honestly, one of the more discreet places we operate out of.

**Austin**: And I think a smile crosses their spider like face, and he says,

[as **Gur Sevraq**]: Very well. I'll see you when you're ready.

**Austin**: And goes off to prepare the message. And I think within a day [sligh laugh] that message goes out, and then, yknow, as everyone is still gearing up for this mission, members of the Church of the Resin Heart, some of whom come in from the Isles of Logos, but some of whom are, yknow, basically church members. The sorts of people who would have gone to the Prophet's Path. Begin to show up! They get the clearance they need, and become, like, extra repair staff. They become extra members of the infantry unit that you have. Suddenly, the Rapid Evening has... a sponsor, right? The move is: "Sponsor: when you advance your Tier, it costs half the supply points it normally would. Who is your sponsor? Why do they help you?" I think

we've gone over that. And this has allowed you, finally, to go from [laughs] Tier 0 to Tier 1. But as a reminder, this helps all future Tier increases. every other Tier increase will now be cheaper, which is great. So.

**Art:** [baseball cheer voice] Rapid Evening! [claps rhythmically]

**Austin:** Great.

**Jack:** [27:07] [???] Put that in the cache.

**Art:** I had to pull that clap at the last, so it doesn't go all the way.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

[**Jack** laughs]

**Austin:** Yes. Uh.

**Keith:** That's what, uh, that's what you meant by "devoted unit", is that we do baseball cheers.

**Austin:** Right, exactly, a hundred percent. Um, all right, so. Let's talk about this —

**Art:** Gonna work on charge next.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah, that's about right. That's accurate. Let's talk about this mission.

[laughing] Speaking of charges! Um. So I think we get — what is the — I guess I'm gonna go to Clem. Clem, what is the like room, like grand strategy hall look like? What does the war room look like for the leaders of this offensive? I'd say there's about two dozen people in this room at maximum. Including you.

**Jack:** Yeah. I mean, I'm thinking of like the war room from [Strangelove](#), except what if the scale of everything has been constricted into a less like...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Expressionist, brutalist space? And is like — I remember back when we were describing like, the flight deck of the Kingdom Come, we kept coming back to like, it's cramped, there's paper on every surface and everything.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Jack:** And I don't quite want that, but i want this sense of like, um, it's like a big room in the Winter Palace that has blinds drawn, and there are like acetate projectors projecting things onto surfaces and like generals and managers and people, you know, milling about, and I think there are those long sticks and they're pushing things basically around like a big rectangular table in



the middle of the room. I think it feels — if Strangelove feels like a very spooky brutalist war room that descends into chaos, I think this feels like people playing war games. It's like a big...

**Austin:** Okay. Yeah yeah yeah.

**Jack:** Rectangular table.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Jack:** With rulers.

**Austin:** Um, and there are, you know, that style of like, lots of polished hardwood. Lots of kind of faded maps that have that watercolor aesthetic. Globes.

**Jack:** People smoking.

**Austin:** People smoking, yes, exactly. A bar on wheels that gets moved around the room. I think there's a vast painting of a sphinx leading a military charge?

**Jack:** Oh, yeah!

**Austin:** That's just like, the sphinx is the primary figure there, and then behind her is just like an army, like kind of a Greek style — all right, probably not a Greek-style army, given you're going to war against Apostolos. Uh, but yeah, but a vast —

**Jack:** [laughing] Screw those guys!

**Austin:** A vast army behind — in fact, actually, what it probably is is this like really, you know, reductive thing of a Greek-style sphinx, you know, with a woman's face and hair, and then behind her are five different armies, because Kesh is projecting itself as the head of the Principality, right?

**Jack:** [amused] Sure. Uh-huh.

**Austin:** The different armies do — there is the Greek one, you know—

[30:00]

**Austin:** — there is the one of, you know, modern-day soldiers, or like they kind of look like what if — like World War 1 soldiers. You know, there's a blend of different styles from different Stels. And it's miserable. And yeah, there are a collection of people here. Notably absent from here, though I guess one of them it doesn't — she wouldn't have been here anyway — Crysanth is not here, which is maybe a notable thing, though you get the feeling that she doesn't need to be here to be here. If that makes sense.

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** And then the other one is... Gucci is not here, but also Gucci is an attache, right. We know that Gucci has a military situation.

**Jack:** We know.

**Austin:** We know. But. That does not mean, however, that... that she would be in a room like this, normally.

**Jack:** The implication is she's off moving papers somewhere else, or like...

**Austin:** [struggles] Yes.

**Jack:** Prepping a meeting with someone somewhere.

**Austin:** Exactly. Exactly! That seems likely to me. [slight laugh] That's definitely what she's doing, not something else entirely, don't worry about it. ...At the head of this table is a woman named Lucia Whitestar. She is a member of the Whitestar family, which as you may recall is the family from which the Princept, the Kesh Princept, was kind of plucked after Dahlia, the Princept who sided with Apostolos, decided to side with Apostolos. And Lucia is like a high-ranking general with Whitestar. There's a bunch of other people from all the different families, and some other different factions, or squads inside of Kesh here, we don't have to go over all of them. The other person here is another person whose name I needed to just write — was Alberz Chasmata, who is the military lead — or honestly I think probably the head of the household, here on Partizan. Chasmata is the like de facto strongest house on Partizan, has a huge mining operation to the northeast of here by a little ways, you can see it on the map where it says the Chasmata Quarry. Huge mining operation kind of at the north pole of the planet, and it looks northeast but also it's the north pole, which mean it's kinda — it's up there, you know what I mean?

**Jack:** Mm. Wraps all the way around.

**Austin:** The map's a little tight up there, yeah, exactly. Basically at the north pole, and wraps around it. Um. And... you know, both of them are in their finest gear. I imagine Alberz as being kind of, you know, dark skin — or not dark skin but, you know, Latino in descent, with kind of greying hair that is kind of waxed back, with a white suit with gloves and like a — not like a pocket chain but like a... Not a pocket chain at all, like a — what do you call — one of those weird — like a glasses chain, I guess, something that goes into one of his uniform shirt breast pockets and then comes back —

**Keith:** Like a monocle thing.

**Austin:** Like a monocle thing. Yeah, but doesn't go to a monocle — I don't know what it goes to, but there's a chain up there. He's kind of all-white everything. And then Lucia is kind of a black

military jacket with red leggings and gold trim, and she is the one who is basically here to give you this mission. And is also one of the ones who was insulted when [slight laugh] A. O. Rooke's insulting claim that you would have broken the Fort Icebreaker line came back to her. she was one of the many people upset by this, because, of course, she is here representing the Princept, the leader of all Divinity, and so the idea that like, a skunkworks squad from underground would have broken this thing that no one would have been able to break for years, is ridiculous. Right? And I think she gives you the rundown on what your mission is.

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: For those who somehow do not know, Fort Icebreaker is not a fort so much as what might be called the main line of resistance separating us from Apostolos across a 500-mile stretch of this cursed moon. Despite its name, Fort Icebreaker comprises hundreds of military facilities, including watchtowers, artillery emplacements, anti-armor barriers, and an array of advanced surveillance systems.

**Austin**: And she kind of like clicks through, you know, photographs that are being projected on the — I think maybe actually there's the [slight laugh] the sphinx painting is not a painting at all, but is a screen that's like a very high resolution screen that looks like it's a painting — or not even — it's not a high resolution screen, it is a projected, a high-resolution projected image that has now been replaced by this new image. Which like —

**Keith**: Oh, the whole sphinx is a projection?

**Austin**: The whole painting is a projection, yeah, exactly.

**Keith**: Okay.

**Austin**: And has like a little clicker in her hand, is like, click, click, as she goes through these images.

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: Fort Icebreaker is additionally comprised of twelve major bases and a Fort Icebreaker itself. It is a real thing. It is massive. It is an arsenal, it is a garrison, it is an airfield, it is a fire base, all rolled into one. Worse, it moves.

**Austin**: And she clicks it again and there's footage of this thing, and it is like a rumbling land carrier, like imagine a battleship or an aircraft carrier, but on the ground. She says,

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: It prowls the tundra armed with innumerable weapons, and it houses over 10,000 of Apostolos' most skilled soldiers. And, worst of all, it does not simply move across the ground —

**Austin**: —and she clicks again, and it's in one of these twelve major bases, like basically taking up the entirety of the base. It's like over — you see a fortress, right [laughs], and then this thing, this like rumbling, moving city, is above it, almost like it's sprouting from the middle, and she says,

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: But underground, too.

**Austin**: And it begins to fold itself in and then lower into the fort as if it's going down an elevator.

**Jack**: Great.

**Austin**: And up on the — basically pulls up a map on the screen at this point, and it is, you know, if you zoom in where it says Fort Icebreaker, do you see the green lines, the green dashed lines?

**Jack**: Yeah.

**Austin**: If you count from like, the furthest-east one, the first one that starts to come west: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, you basically get twelve of those dashes, right, from like here to like here. This is the 500-mile range of Fort Icebreaker. This is the kind of main line of resistance between Kesh and Apostolos, and what Fort Icebreaker does is it moves, either aboveground or below ground, between these bases. As necessary. Those bases, each one of these dashes, basically, is also a fully, you know, reinforced base. But it is.... it is the fort, the big mobile fortress, which has basically been able to turn away — and the fact that it can move throughout this system — that can turn away any offensive.

The fact that we've never broken Fort Icebreaker is because not only does this huge tunnel system, big enough to contain this giant city and move it underground — not only can it do that, it can move supplies, it can move troops, and it can do that without moving them through the aboveground weather, it can do that in the middle of the night, without needing to be spotted. It makes it im — really fucking hard to break through this line. And, again, on top of that, there are watchtowers, there's artillery, there is everything else. Um.

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: Point Juniper —

**Austin**: says Lucia Whitestar —

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: is one of the two central bases in the fortress' long line. It is also one of the weakest of them. Partially that is because any base with a river running through it is going to be weaker by virtue of it being a little more porous. But it is also weaker because, as one of the central fortresses, it is also the one most easily reinforced. We're counting on that. Here is our plan. And please, officers, raise any questions as you see fit.

**Austin**: I'm gonna send you over the plan. Um. And makes another click of her pen, and this appears on your... screen. I already sent this once—

**Jack**: So like —

**Austin:** — but now it's been updated. Hm?

**Jack:** A harassed attache comes around with a manila envelope and just hands the pieces of paper out to...

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Yeah, well, it's like a piece of paper that is — it's like an overhead slide, right. That like — or it's probably a small piece of film, it's probably a very small piece of film that is being somehow enlarged and keeping a great deal of resolution and detail. And it moves, it's almost like — if you could have a piece of film that was a GIF. Do you know what I mean? And so it slides into this projector, and we get this four-step plan. This is Lucia Whitestar's brilliant belief on how to break Fort Icebreaker. You will see that you have a starring role in it, Rapid Evening. Zero, actually!

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: There's four steps here, but there is a preliminary step that is already underway. Our intelligence operatives have already begun to make noise about a House Whitestar attack from the south of the Apostolosian Barranca. This won't be happening, of course, because we at Whitestar do not have any forces deployed in the Prophet's Path, despite popular rumors, but we will support that decoy with naval maneuvers and engagements. This ploy, and the length of the Barranca's southern border, will keep nearly half of Apostolos's ground forces detained until we're done this maneuver here. This means we only have to fight half of Apostolos' army, which should help.

Step one. My good friend, Alberz, will lead a large House Chasmata assault on Point Spruce. This will be an overwhelming force, perhaps strong enough to crush their way through the perimeter. If they do, well, then we've won. I believe Alberz is an excellent commander, it is within the realm of possibility that he will smash Apostolos as they need to be. If our friends in Chasmata are unable to breach Point Spruce in the northwest of the line, then it will turn into a feint. At that point, Fort Icebreaker will rush to the defense of Spruce, and leave the rest of the line open. Now, with the speed with which Fort Icebreaker moves, this technique has failed us before. It would often defeat whatever assault we have in the northwest or the southeast, and then rush back in time to deal with the secondary offensive. Here is where —

**Keith:** So this is not the first assault on Fort Icebreaker.

**Austin:** This has been going on off and on for five years.

**Keith:** But like even — like they've been trying it—

**Austin:** For five years.

**Keith:** — and like actually trying-trying, not just like trying to try.

**Austin:** Yeah yeah yeah. The first fighting was real. It was five years ago and it was serious, and it didn't break.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Then this past like has been three weeks, four weeks, a month of offensives — it hasn't broken. And then there have been attempts throughout that five-year period when things get heated. It has never been as heated as this since the original moment.

**Keith:** Got it.

**Austin:** So this is like — this is the biggest offensive, but it hasn't broken. Uh.

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: Once Icebreaker is drawn out of place, and has successfully intercepted Chasmata, and the southern reinforcements have sent their reinforcements to the middle, to reinforce the enforcements that have left, that is when Clementine Kesh and you unit will step in. you will assault the central fortress at Juniper, where you should face, all said, lighter resistance than what would normally be there. At this point, you must take hold of Juniper and resist any incoming forces, including a potentially weakened Force Icebreaker. Alberz and the Chasmata troops will do their best to do as much damage as they can, and to prevent Icebreaker from returning towards you, but they can't hold it forever. At that point, you will — under your command, as you have so nobly, Ms. Kesh... volunteered for this difficult service — prevent the fort from travelling further southeast, because it is at Point Pine that I will be leading House Whitestar to victory. We will break through at Pine, leading an offensive, and at that point, we will set up naval landing points, we will set up a spearhead that will strike at the heart of Apostolos... and victory will come shortly thereafter. Do you have any questions?

**Austin:** I think someone in the room is like:

[as **Someone**]: Why is Clementine Kesh in this room?

**Austin:** And everyone looks at you.

**Jack** [as **Clementine**]: I am in this room, officer, because I have volunteered myself and my squad for service.

**Someone:** I hadn't heard that you had a squad.

**Clementine:** [cross] There are lots of things that you —

**Sylvia** [as **Millie**]: [cross] I hadn't heard that we volunteered.

**Keith** [as **Leap**]: I hadn't heard that you weren't still sick in bed.

**Austin:** [amused] Clem is the only one in this scene. Y'all didn't get invited to the secret war room.

**Sylvia:** Oh! Sorry.

[**Jack** laughs]

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Jack:** They're texting me.

**Austin:** [laughing] Yeah!

[**Keith** and **Sylvia** laugh]

**Jack** [as **Clementine**]: There are lots of things that you don't know, and there are many more that it would be wise for you not to know. Do you have any further questions, officer?

[45:00]

**Austin:** Grumble grumble grumble. Um.

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: It is as she says.

**Austin:** Says Lucia Whitestar.

[as **Lucia Whitestar**]: The unit under Kesh's command will be receiving an additional 20 troops of infantry, and an additional two Troop units. As a reminder, your objectives are clear: you will take Juniper, you will hold it as Fort Icebreaker begins its march southeast towards Point Pine, you will send a flare once you have captured it, so that we know we may begin our Pine offensive, and the only rules of engagement for you are to consider are that you must treat all of your captives well. We are a civilized nation. And you may not let anyone flee, because if you do, then our ploy may be given to the air, and once it is, then we cannot guarantee that anyone will take the bait.

**Jack:** Hm. Do we have any questions as a squad that you would like me to relay? To Lucia.

**Sylvia:** Nah, I don't have anything.

**Jack:** Um. Okay, um, what's her rank? Is she Commander Whitestar?

**Austin:** Lucia is — Commander Whitestar, Lady Whitestar.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yknow.

**Jack [as Clementine]:** The reach of Kesh's spies is well known, Commander Whitestar. Do we have any resources within Fort Icebreaker itself that we can rely on?

**Austin [as Lucia Whitestar]:** We have leveraged all of the resources that I know about, but if, like your unit, there are additional resources available to you, Lady Kesh, well, those are, of course, at your own disposal. I trust you to handle reconnaissance and information gathering as any Kesh could.

**Clementine:** And I trust you to break through the line at Point Pine with glory and honor, Commander Whitestar.

**Austin:** She like tiptoe-nods.

**Jack:** [amused] Yeah, it's just like [laughs]...

**Austin:** Mm-hm!

**Jack:** Sip of drink.

**Austin:** Yeah! Um. I guess there is one other thing. There is one other thing, which is, um, we do have this, the blueprints of Point Juniper.

**Jack:** Holy shit, wow! That seems like a big get.

**Austin:** Eh, yknow. You go to war for five years. Yknow?

**Jack:** We've flown countless drones over this thing.

**Austin:** Yeah. What we believe is — I guess, to describe what we're looking at here, it is a fortress. There's some farmland to the south, southwest, southeast, and east of this fortress. There's a river running vaguely northeast to southwest through it. There's a single road leading in from the northwest and going out southeast. That is the kind of main aboveground line that is part of this...the Fort Icebreaker line, that is also presumably where the tunnels go, is underneath that line. The river kind of divides it into two sides, the western side are these kind of three giant buildings. That is, you believe, the side that like initiates the kind of folding-in of Fort Icebreaker when it goes underground. The other side is the operations side, that's barracks, that's surveillance rooms, that is warehouses, armouries, that is where the infirmaries are, y'know what I mean, all of that stuff. So yeah. And then, like, these two things are big watchtowers, these two like T-shaped buildings outside are big watchtowers. So that's the gist of it. There is time to do some legwork, if you did — if anyone here wanted to do stuff before engaging, engagement, we could totally do that.



**Keith:** Yeah, I would do some legwork! That seems like a good idea, this seems like a tough one.

**Austin:** [amused] Yeah.

**Keith:** We are not — uh —

**Jack:** [amused] Break the Apostolos line?

**Austin:** Uh-huh!

**Keith:** Yeah. This doesn't seem like an easy job?

**Austin:** No! Are you — I'm guessing you just kind of give them back this exact pitch, Clem?

**Jack:** Yeah, totally. I mean, um....

**Austin:** 'Cause that's the thing, right, is like they can ask you anything as if you were the person giving the mission.

**Jack:** Yeah, um. Yeah, okay! I think I give them back stuff, I think any kind of pre-mission, like, rallying speech can be saved for after we do legwork and roll for engagement. And know how we're moving in on this thing.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah yeah yeah. Yes. Yes. Yeah yeah yeah, that will be — we need to have that Gur Sevraq scene, which'll be the point at which you could do that. Yknow?

**Jack:** Yeah yeah yeah.

**Austin:** Uh, so legwork ideas, or questions. Questions about the mission.

**Jack:** Hm.

**Austin:** As always, you have flashbacks, you can do that, you can always flash back and fill in the gaps later, but.

**Jack:** Our legwork — is legwork limited by anything other than narrative pacing? Can we do as many of these as we want?

**Austin:** No — um. Clocks tick.

**Jack:** [laughing] Sure!

**Austin:** I think in this case, in this case, clocks tick in the sense that we know that right now there is the southern offensive is being faked, and so that's a really important clock here, right, is like well how long can you trick Apostolos into thinking that there will be a southern offensive.

And so, that is the like the wait of you — in general, I like it to be like everyone gets one legwork thing, after that, clocks start to tick. But the first one is a freebie. I'm never gonna be like you can't do — maybe not never. In circumstances like this, when a mission comes across the table, it's like, hey, yeah, here you go, do some legwork! Get some preparation in. You know?

**Jack:** Yeah. Did you have one in mind, Keith?

**Keith:** Um. I was — we were given like a position to take to— where like this is where we start, right? There was like a —

**Austin:** This is it. Juniper is — this is it.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You're looking at it, yeah yeah yeah. If you look at the map that I put in the chat, it's the thing marked in green, marked Juniper. It's like the — so for people who can't see this, there is a kind of a line that goes northwest to southeast, kind of a light curve, and there are twelve red boxes on it representing different bases along this line. There's one in the top left called Spruce, there's one in the southeast, there at the bottom right, called Pine, and —

**Jack:** Are these our names, or Apostolos's?

**Austin:** Um. I don't know!

**Jack:** [amused] Okay.

**Austin:** I think that they could be either. I think that like this is, yknow, they're the names — I think they're probably the Kesh names. I think these are probably Point Juniper, Point Pine, and Point Spruce, right?

**Jack:** Like the woman in the battlefield— [Battlefield 1](#), who says "Point Apples". [cross] When you attack Point Apples.

**Austin:** [cross] Right, yes, exactly. Yeah yeah yeah. No, I wanna be clear, this is the like third or fourth time I've done one of these bits, this season, and it's all just a callback to when we played Titanfall and did.... whenever we did Point A, B, C, we always came up with new Point A, Point B, and Point C things.

**Jack:** Different names...

**Austin:** Yes. Um. So. So yeah.

**Keith:** God, a lot of Friends at the Table...

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Uh, is owed to Titanfall multiplayer.

**Austin:** [laughs] It's true.

**Art:** Yeah, I mean, if you think of the three biggest influences on Friends at the Table, I think it's undoubtedly Titanfall, Home Movies, and three weeks of playing Guild Wars II.

[**Austin** and **Keith** laugh]

**Austin:** Ah...

**Keith:** More dead! [???] [52:44]

**Austin:** God!

**Art:** And then like, media. But.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh. [laughs] Oh no, it's the media. Um.

[**Art** laughs once, loudly]

**Austin:** That's just for Art. [laughs] The media's comin! All right, what, uh — so, Keith, did you have an idea for legwork?

**Keith:** Yeah, I think, as... If I had to say that Leap had a specialty, I would say that that specialty is finding a point of entry slash exit, depending.

**Austin:** Mm-hm!

**Keith:** And so I think that my first impulse here is like, okay, well, we've got this map. What's the best way to actually get in?

**Austin:** Yeah, and I wanna be clear — [cross] you can get —

**Keith:** [cross] And to get in fast, just not get stuck outside.

**Austin:** That's probably a good one. Yeah, I wanna be clear that legwork is really broad, here. This can be as broad as — this can be as safe as "I am going to... y'know, go to the — try to requisition additional drones to do a flyby to get a picture of what's happening here, or to look at already established spy footage of this area" to literally going there yourself and framing your legwork to be moments before the mission, this style of this time right here can be anywhere in this leadup, so you can kind of know what you're getting into.

**Keith:** Um. I think — do we have like... So we have this blueprint.

**Austin:** Mm-hm!

**Keith:** Do we have — which I was already thinking this felt like a Death Star mission, and now we have blueprints...

**Austin:** Uh-huh! [laughs]

**Keith:** In more of the Death Star thing.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** Um. Do... Can I go to like a tech person, and get this like rendered? Like a 3D...

**Austin:** Like a 3D render, based on this and maybe some additional footage? Sure.

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, let's see. You probably — I don't think you personally have anyone but give a — what I'm gonna do is I think this is just a straight-up... Let me think. I'm looking at Kesh squads to see if there's someone you could call on a favor for. I think Silversky probably has some people — and I don't think you need to go outside of that, I think you can just give me a... Just give me a Study roll for that. You're gonna give me... [sighs] Yeah, you're Tier 1 now, just give me a straight Study as a Gather Information roll, which...

**Keith:** Okay, so my Study's really bad, what if —

**Austin:** Mm. I see.

**Keith:** — instead of finding someone, what if I try to do it myself using Survey or Engineer?

**Austin:** Using Survey or Engineer. I think... I think the other thing you could do here is actually —

**Keith:** Or, even Prowl.

**Austin:** — sorry, is Consort — Prowl would be going there and doing it yourself.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Uh, Consort is what you would need for “hey, can I find somebody who can do this for me”. Survey or Engineer — Survey would also be going to do to yourself, Survey or Prowl would be both that. Prowl would be “I'm getting really close, I'm really getting in there” and that would be a Risky thing to do, in a real way. Engineer I think you could... It's a little more mechanical than that, unfortunately. I think that what we're talking about would be either Study or maybe even.... maybe even Interface, to do the sort of thing you're talking about, but, eh!

**Keith:** Interface, is that...

**Austin:** I would let you do Engineer. I would let you do Engineer.

**Keith:** Yeah?

**Austin:** Given the degree of technology that we're at. It just wouldn't be —

**Keith:** I'd do it with blocks, if that helped.

**Austin:** Right! Right right right. Like, I mean, I get that. The thing for me is like, well, how do you get more information from this blueprint? Yknow?

**Keith:** Well, and — but, well, maybe this is the exact thing that Leap is like —

**Austin:** I see.

**Keith:** Well, I can do it this way and it's not that effective, I could do it this way and that's not effective. And then maybe at some point I just go, fuck it, I'll just go there.

**Austin:** Right. Do you wanna save that for before we actually do engagement?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** Because that way it's at least clear that like hey, everyone is there. You know what I mean, there's a forward operating base over the horizon, that's been hidden or whatever, that's getting ready to go, and then the last thing we do is like your thing. Or you could go out there early! Maybe that's actually what it is, is like you go out there now with a preliminary — you get like a flyover or you get like an escort there and back to do, yknow, a...

**Keith:** That's sort of what I was thinking.

**Austin:** Yeah, let's do that, let's go ahead and do that with a Survey. That's a Survey.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Or a Prowl, a Prowl if you get close —

**Keith:** Prowl.

**Austin:** The things with Prowl is I will say even though this is a Gather Information roll, I think that there is potentially — I think Survey is a Gather Information roll. Prowl is an action roll where it's a Controlled action roll, which means that the negative consequence will be pretty limited. But the...chance is that there is a consequence, right. They could see you doing this, whereas Survey is explicitly going to be you're safe, you're doing this from a distance. But it's going to be more limited in terms of what you can get out of it. And also, just to be clear, you have 1 in Survey, 2 in Prowl, this is why Keith might be interested in doing Prowl instead.

**Keith:** Right, yeah. Um. I will accept potential consequences here.

**Austin:** All right.

**Keith:** To Prowl.

**Austin:** 2D6.

**Keith:** [sighs] Um.

**Austin:** You can push yourself if you want to, now that it's an action roll.

**Keith:** Not only can I push myself, but I can ask for a collateral die.

**Austin:** You could do that, that is true. Um. Let me... look at my...

**Jack:** Are you gonna give Austin armament literally this early in the mission?

**Austin:** Immediately, huh? [Sylvia laughs] Just immediately, is happening.

**Jack:** [amused] Keith is just handing you his cards across the table.

**Austin:** Uh-huh, I like it...

**Keith:** Well, I feel like my signature move for the season is the collateral die.

**Austin:** Yeah, you've kind of owned the collateral die here. Um. yeah. I... will.. hm. I was not ready to give collateral die this early. So let me look at my list of collateral die, one second. One second. One second.

**Jack:** You've wrongfooted him, Keith!

**Keith:** Season Three gave me — [Sylvia laughs] not Season Three. Season... Five.

**Austin:** Spring?

**Keith:** That was last Hieron, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, Spring. The Devil's Bargains — was that —

**Austin:** That was — no, you're thinking Four. You're thinking end of Twilight Mirage, Devil's Bargains.

**Keith:** I'm thinking Twilight Mirage.

**Austin:** You're thinking of Scum & Villainy. Yeah yeah yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, Scum & Villainy. The Devil's Bargains were such a blast in Twilight Mirage, and I felt like I wasn't using them as often as I could have been in like the first two-thirds of the season? And so now I'm like, well, it's there. It's always — you could always just get one.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh, here's what I'm gonna do, this is actually a pretty light collateral die all said. I'm going to need you to pre-emptively mark 1 load as being used, and I'm gonna take something from you. I'm gonna take... let's see here. Actually, I'm not gonna take it from you, but you're gonna be 1 load, personal load, down for this mission.

**Keith:** So if I do medium my load will be 4.

**Austin:** Yes. Exactly. Exactly. And maybe it is that you've already declared something —

[1:00:00]

**Austin:** I'll let you declare it right now, but you'll have gotten into some sort of sticky situation — and this is even if you succeed. You will had to have used burglary gear, or climbing gear, or whatever it is, fine optical camo, which we've never seen you use. [laughs] But seems really good.

**Keith:** Oh, now I have to say, now is when I have to use it.

**Austin:** Yeah, you'll have to declare it now. Even if it won't come in handy for the rest of the mission. Y'know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Night vision goggles, whatever it is. Like maybe it's night vision goggles, but this isn't gonna be a night mission, or, y'know what I mean? Like, it has to be... you know, I would say it's probably fine optical camo, that seems like a useful thing.

**Keith:** That does seem like a useful thing. But that — I don't know that that has — no, that does have load. Okay, got it.

**Austin:** It does, it does, it does. Yeah yeah. Anything that isn't italicized. So, yeah, 3d6! Control — or no —

**Keith:** Oh!

**Austin:** Hm?

**Keith:** I think it might be — it's night vision goggles, I think.

**Austin:** Okay! You're doing this at night. That's fine.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Go ahead and mark it. Give me your 3d6.

**Keith:** All right, so. I have 3d6.

**Austin:** Yes. Wh — you're pushing yourself also, or no?

**Keith:** [blows air through lips] Taking on 3 Stress? I don't know about that. [**Austin** laughs] I mean, 2 Stress, that's 2 Stress.

**Austin:** It is 2 Stress! [loud exhale]

**Keith:** 5.

**Austin:** Oh my god. You wanna read what the other two fuckin things were?

**Keith:** It doesn't matter!

[**Sylvia** laughs]

**Austin:** 1, 1, 5. Thank god you got that collateral die. [laughs] Jesus christ. So yeah, you've already marked the night vision goggles, right. So yeah! Here's what you get. You get a couple of important things. What were you specifically looking for, was like an easier way in? Right?

**Keith:** Um. Yeah. The way — like, here's — yeah, the point where like we can get in as fast as possible. We can just like burst through like a weak point in a wall, or there's one spot that has like a window.

**Austin:** Okay, there's no windows. The easiest way to get in is clearly the river. The river is mostly frozen over, but at the base of it, or in the river itself, the gate that closes, it's like a big, big, big — it's not even a gate, it's a door, it's a metal door — has not closed all the way. Which means that you could probably get some sort of big mech's fingers under there to rip it up, and that would just let anyone go in through that... kind of opening. There is a main gate. There is, you know, you could theoretically fly over the walls of this thing if you had a mech that did that. But getting a bunch of people in underwater could work. But that is probably the main thing. There is not like a secret window or a back door. Um! You know what I'm gonna give you is, because you were there for real-real, right, actually, is yes. I think maybe you see the big gate thing that I just mentioned. You also, on a whim — on a whim, you go further north in the river, instead of further south in the river, and you find a little underground tunnel cutting off from the river that leads to an underground like tunnel system, that is presumably the same tunnel system that connects to the rest of.... the rest of the Fort Icebreaker line. Right, like the



underground tunnel system. This seems like it's a smuggler's route. The other reason I'm giving this to you is you have hidden routes and paths, and this is it. There is —

**Keith:** I know a hidden route when I see one.

**Austin:** You know a hidden route when you see one, you've been through hidden routes before, and this is one of them. Now, this is not enough to get a mech through there, this kind of "rip the gate off" would. This could get — maybe this could get a light mech through here, but I don't think any of you have a light mech. And... neither of the two Troops that are being given to you are light mechs. But you could get infantry through here. You could get like people in wetsuits carrying equipment through here. You'll probably need more than that to take over this base, and to hold it. But, that is something that's available to you, and I'll add that to the map now.

**Art:** Oh, this synergizes so well with my planned...

**Austin:** Okay. Good.

**Art:** Leg work action.

**Austin:** What is your plan?

**Art:** And it's gonna be so horrible when I just fuck it up real bad when we're through.

**Austin:** Okay, also I do have to give Keith another consequence, 'cause he did get a 5. Thankfully, it's only a single Controlled consequence. i am going to... put a clock on the board, which is called... wait, where did I put my clocks? Oh, my clocks are on the other thing. I'll do this, and we can keep moving, and I'll take care of it. It is called the... The "word gets out" clock. And this is because, whoever is using this smuggler port knows when someone has been through their smuggler situation, and so has gotten a little extra... nosy. A little bit more paranoid about what's going on here. [pause] Uh... so, who else has a legwork?

**Art:** I have an idea that comes out of this, but if someone else has a very strong idea, I don't wanna like necessarily go next, like it doesn't have to go next.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Sylvia:** I don't really have anything I can think of, and like I don't think there's a way for me to like fix my mech up anymore, so.

**Austin:** You could spend Materiel, if you have any Materiel.

**Sylvia:** I don't know if we have any.

**Austin:** Yeah, you have 1 Materiel left.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I'd like to do that, if everyone's okay with that, but I don't remember — are we saving that for anything?

**Austin:** You just spent a bunch of it to level up.

**Keith:** Could that be used to help Clem not be so sick?

**Austin:** Materiel can't, but Personnel can. But that would be Clem's action, would be to roll on the recovery again. It's up to you, though.

**Jack:** No, I think I am going to dispatch like a container, like a cargo container of the Materiel to Millie's — to the workshop.

**Austin:** Okay. Good.

**Sylvia:** All right!

**Austin:** Millie, go ahead and do your Recover action, right? That's what we need to do. Let me find it, real quick. Do do do do do, Recover. Not Recover, Fix is what it's called, I think. Bup bup buh.

**Sylvia:** I think it's just roll...

**Austin:** I think it's just— yeah... bup bup bup bup — I think it's Engineer, but you don't have Engineer, right? Or do you have Engineer?

**Sylvia:** I have Interface, so I'm gonna...

**Austin:** That is not it, no, unfortunately.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Let me find it for you, that way we have specifics. Downtime activities...

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah, no, Engineer, it was the one insight thing I didn't have.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah. It costs 2 Stress if you don't have a workshop, but y'all have a workshop, so that's good. Um. 2 Stress, do do do do do... Um... Yes. Okay. Yeah, I think it's just — I think you're gonna have to roll — unless someone else here has Engineer and will do it... For Leap, or for Millie.

**Sylvia:** I can do it, if — yeah, I can do it.

**Jack:** I don't think I have it.

**Austin:** No, I don't think anyone else has — I think Leap might have Engineer? Leap does have Engineer, but I suspect —

**Keith:** I have 1 in Engineer, yeah.

**Austin:** Leap is probably out doing this right now, specifically, so yeah, Millie.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. So...

**Austin:** This is a 2d6 take lower, which is not great. Oh no, it's a level 1 Harm, so it doesn't —

**Sylvia:** I got a 6 and a 5, so.

**Austin:** Oh my god! Yeah, okay, it's cleared. You un-dent it. What's it look like as you're removing the dents on this thing?

**Sylvia:** I think like... I think part of it is just replacing some of the armor.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And then also noticing that like —

**Austin:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** — some of the armor just kinda like buffed out a bit, or is filled in in some places.

**Austin:** Yeah. I think as part of this, also, is like, you get some of the people who are from the Church of the Resin Heart who've shown up, to help you do this. And they like straight up show up with extra new armor plating, for your mech.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Maybe one or two of them were even at the... Prophet's Path, and saw the Stray Dog at the time, and give you compliments on your work during the — like, "you really helped a lotta people there." Yknow?

**Sylvia:** Oh. Oh my gosh, thank you!

**Austin:** [laughs] You have fans. All right. Sovereign Immunity and Clementine. Do you wanna do anything before we... we engage?

**Jack:** I would like to visit Crysanth.

**Austin:** Okay!

**Jack:** Um... Yeah. I'd like to — is she in her office? Where is Crysanth when she's like — if Clem wants to pick a time where she thinks Crysanth will be most receptive.

**Austin:** [dry amused noise] Um. It would be — it would be a well-scheduled lunch at a very expensive restaurant.

**Jack:** Damn.

**Austin:** And you find her there in a very sleek suit. Her attention is elsewhere, as you sit down, and she does the thing of being like,

[as **Crysanth**] Just give me one second, I have to attend to — a few more moments.

**Austin:** And then the waiter comes, and she's like

[as **Crysanth**]: Yes, I'll have a...

**Austin:** and, you know, orders a martini and food for both of you.

[as **Crysanth**]: I know what's good here.

**Jack:** Just like a — yeah, doesn't give me any ordering —

**Austin:** No. No, no — exactly. Yes.

[as **Crysanth**]: [sighs] Now, Clementine, what is it?

**Jack** [as **Clementine**]: I was surprised to see you not in the situation room during the briefing, mother.

**Crysanth:** There are situation rooms and then there are situations, and I was attending to the latter.

[**Keith** snorts in the distance]

**Clementine:** You must be very confident.

**Crysanth:** In?

**Clementine:** Well, in our offensive.

**Crysanth:** Yes, of course. Clementine, you will do very well, because you are a Kesh, and you know what it means to sacrifice for our nation.

**Clementine:** ...Thank you! That means a lot.

**Crysanth:** I hope that I see you again, and...

[**Keith** laughs]

[**Jack** also laughs]

**Crysanth:** Barring that absence, I hope you understand that I am very proud that you've done so much with what you have.

**Clementine:** I would ask a little more.

**Austin:** Crosses her legs.

[as **Crysanth**]: Ah. Of course.

**Clementine:** When I spoke to Lucia Whitestar — Lucia Whitestar was leading the briefing, mother. You know how I feel about her.

**Crysanth:** Yes.

**Clementine:** She seemed to suggest that the Damask and her had exhausted the resources of our spies inside Fort Icebreaker.

**Austin:** I don't know that you know the word Damask. I don't know — do you?

**Jack:** Oh, damn! Is that fully Curtain-internal lingo?

**Austin:** That's Curtain shit, yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. A hundred percent.

**Jack:** Wow! What did they call themselves... [cross] but wouldn't I just know that as a —

**Austin:** [cross] But you don't even know who that is, so — for the rest of this crew who probably has not heard the most recent intro or read the dossier yet, the Curtain has five people. And if you've listened to the last episode, you heard a little bit of this in the intro, and if you looked at the dossier, that's where this information is. The Curtain has... a very specific organizational structure. There are countless Curtain cells across planets and star sectors, and then also a kind of lead cell that operates across the entire galaxy, or across all of Divinity. At — the planet level reports up to the sector level, which reports up to the kind of galactic level. At each, there are a lot of operatives, but five lead operatives. There is the Silk, who is the kind of minister in charge of diplomatic espionage, and also any sort of public — any sort of people in public roles who are infiltrated agents. There is the Damask, who is the sort of researcher, scientist, philosopher, academic, whose purview is kind of verboten information and research and knowledge. There is the Lace, who is the — the Lace is the one that you meant, also — is the marshall in command of the military forces, who still has kind of spies, but their spies are reconnaissance and military sabotage —

**Jack:** Paratroopers.

**Austin:** Paratroopers, exactly. The Linen, who is kind of the steward, the kind of quartermaster, armorer, the kind of bookkeeper, very much in charge of industrial espionage, stealing industrial secrets, stuff like that — more of the like hey, where are the weak points on this thing, or how do we get a more efficient engine. And then the Gabardine, which is what Crysanth is, and the Gabardine is the chief spymaster, the keeper of all information, and traditionally, is kind of the executive who makes decisions regarding large-scale cross-branch action. Crysanth is the Gabardine of Divinity. Which means that she is incredibly powerful. She is not like — she is not like the boss [laughs] of the Curtain, she can't unilaterally make decisions that can't be vetoed by the four other members, but she is *incredibly* important. And then each world has its own these, and in the previous intro, Crysanth was — I guess at this point, it's not the last episode, it's the last episode that came out when we're recording this. It's episode 13, I wanna say? Crysanth was complaining about the Lace here, and the Lace, the military commander, had basically — she was saying — had been a coward, and that he had not necessarily done his duty in fighting and winning this war. We don't know who that person is, necessarily. And I don't— unless we think that Clementine is more in on this than we think —

**Jack:** I don't think so.

**Austin:** — but I have not seen anything that says that, right? Anyway.

**Jack:** No. No no no. So I think — so I think Clem doesn't actually know this.

**Austin:** Yes, go ahead.

**Jack:** But I think what Clem can say is...

[as **Clementine**]: Lucia seemed to suggest that the Stel had exhausted its espionage resources as far as Fort Icebreaker is concerned.

**Jack:** And Clem is just like poking at the shrimp on her plate with a fork, and like studiously avoiding eye contact.

**Austin:** [laughs] Uh-huh.

**Clementine:** Surely that can't be the case, mother.

**Austin** [as **Crysanth**]: [sighs] I don't know why you raise this with me.

**Clementine:** Because I am your daughter!

**Crysanth:** Yes, and? If you have issues with Lucia Whitestar, you should raise them with Lucia Whitestar.

[1:15:00]

**Clementine:** [deep breath] Well, I'm sure all of us in Kesh have issues with Lucia Whitestar, mother.

**Crysanth:** It seems that you're fishing for something, dear, and I wish you would simply order from the menu.

**Clementine:** [another deep breath] Fine. Lucia Whitestar plans to lead the charge across Point Pine.

**Crysanth:** Yes?

**Clementine:** House Whitestar plans to break the Apostolosian line and establish the forward, while House Kesh is relegated to holding off Fort Icebreaker, a noble cause, I'm sure, and one that I'm certain you have signed off on. Mother, I am simply asking that if you would like your daughter to come back as a martyr, that is something that I will entirely agree to, lord knows I've been trying hard enough already. But if you would like her to come back as a hero, I would ask that you...*offer* the scion of your line a little more than "listen to Lucia Whitestar".

**Crysanth:** Daughter, you are so caught up with being the prima ballerina that you fail to recognize that we own the ballet. If you want additional support so that your victory can be a little more grand, then....certainly. Understand also that you have the starring role. When Fort Icebreaker hits Juniper, you will be the one to turn it away. Yes, Whitestar will waltz in, just as they've waltzed everywhere else we've opened the door for them to. But everyone will know that you were the one who gave them the key.

[pause]

Now, if it is materiel that you need, I'm happy to move things around for you. But please do not expect me to rewrite the play so that you can have the starring role. It's not what we're in it for.

**Jack:** I think just like — I'm trying to think of like what Clem is eating that lets her express her  
[Austin laughs] — like, the like — this is the person like breaking the lobster or something, on the side of the plate.

**Austin:** [laughing] Yeah. Yes.

**Jack:** So just like — I'm trying to think if — I think it would take a lot of courage for Clem to push as hard as she's pushed.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Jack:** And to be rebuffed so colossally...

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Jack:** I don't know whether or not she has the stamina to be like, no, I would actually prefer X thing or Y thing.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. I mean, that is the game that she's playing, right? I mean, I guess — I would let you do a roll here if there is something that you want her to give you without having said that you want the thing. Do you know what I mean? 'Cause that's the kind of game that you're playing at, right?

**Jack:** Right! It's tough, though, because it's like the person who is the most susceptible to flattery in this scene is Clem?

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Jack:** And Clem is trying to flatter Crysanth.

**Austin:** Right [laughs], Crysanth.

**Jack:** Or at least, you know, it's like — what I really — [sighs]. I think what Clem is thinking is that Crysanth can give her much more than just moving materiel around.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Jack:** Like, is that really what Crysanth Kesh is gonna do here, is just move materiel around?

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** I don't know what the roll is there, because I don't...

**Austin:** [laughs] You don't —

**Jack:** I wanna walk the line between Clem's obsession and her fear of Crysanth.

**Austin:** Right. It's certainly not Command or Sway, right? Um. I think there's a middle ground here, which is not a roll, and I think this is the thing that it sounds like maybe would make Clem happy.

[as **Crysanth**]: Here is what I'll give you, daughter. You want to dance? You want to be applauded? I will give you a stage. I will ensure that you have an attache of the greatest documentarians we can quickly assemble. Everything you achieve will be on film.



[**Jack** laughs]

So your heroism, or your sacrifice, will be known to all.

**Keith:** Just so that I'm clear. Crysanth is intentionally not understanding or not giving Clem what she wants? Or do I not know what Clem wants?

**Austin:** What do you think Clem wants?

**Keith:** Like, more stuff to do the job with.

**Austin:** Clem should ask for that! [**Jack** laughs] Crysanth wants to win the fight, which is making her daughter feel small.

**Jack:** Yeah. And like—

**Keith:** Right. And not — the fight isn't the battle at Fort Icebreaker.

**Austin:** Who cares. Who cares. Not the battle. So like, just to be a hundred percent clear, the win of this situation for Crysanth Kesh is that more forces are forced to join this war. It's not that...

**Keith:** [cross] It's not this particular battle.

**Jack:** [cross] She's — it's not like she's setting up a suicide mission, but she is also throwing herself at a wall deliberately just to hear it rattle.

**Austin:** Not herself. [cross] She is throwing oysters, and lobster.

**Jack:** [cross] Oh, just throwing her — [laughs] yeah.

**Austin:** She's throwing a few dozen, thousand, you know, whatever — thirty thousand, fifty thousand, a hundred thousand people on Partizan into a wall.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There are trillions in this galaxy, she doesn't count that.

**Jack:** That's the other thing, right, like Partizan is one planet in Divinity, which has gotta be tens of thousands of planets.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** Um. [sighs] Yeah.

**Austin:** And it's an important one! It's one of the most important ones.

**Jack:** It's the sacred planet of Partizan!

**Austin:** It's like this, Kesh — yeah. Uh-huh! [laughs] Yeah. But it is one planet, and it's one battle on a planet, and winning this battle doesn't win the war. Yknow?

**Jack:** Also, she does not — she.... She does not care if Clem doesn't come back. She —

**Austin:** I mean, you should a— these are all questions you could ask her. Do you know? Like, what do you care about? She — *I know* what she cares about. And this battle is one front on which — this war is one front on which she's fighting for what she cares for. Um. And I think it's even fair for Clementine to like kind of — to be shocked that she doesn't — that this is not more important. Yknow? I think that that's a fair read.

**Jack:** Yeah, I think that — I think that Clem is satisfied with the documentary crew, if not for the reasons that Crysanth has necessarily pinned.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** I think Clem hears that and is just like, has this kind of like germ of an idea that doesn't even necessarily — and I think that the rest of the meal is, yknow, they sort of tuck into their meal, they talk for like five minutes, and then Crysanth gets up and leaves, and it's just like.

**Austin:** Yep. Mm-hm.

**Jack:** That's the end of that.

**Austin:** And then that night, yknow, some people show up with cameras. And I think a Cast unit, which is the thing that we saw on the very first arc — [cross] that is a kind of flying —

**Jack:** [cross] Oh yeah, the kind of floating —

**Austin:** — yeah, floating... Mostly used by the Partizan Palace and the Nideo crew, that does all of the kind of like news broadcasting and filming. And that will like be able to basically fly at a high altitude and take in, you know, images of everything that's happening around you. But there are also some people who are gonna do like actually interviews with you. [laughs] Which is silly and fun. And bad, also.

**Jack:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Has she also moved materiel, or is it like a one or the other thing? Is it not clear whether or not that's even happened?

**Austin:** Um. I don't think she does that at all.

**Jack:** [laughs] She was just sort of like, I'll offer that as my initial...

**Austin:** She was saying that, you didn't say yes!

**Jack:** Ugh. Yeah, I mean, you know, fine, I'm not...

**Austin:** She said if you want that, ask for it. Yknow?

**Jack:** Yeah. No.

**Austin:** Stop fishing. Yknow, that's...

**Jack:** Uh-huh!

**Austin:** And that was an insult, but also, that is how she operates.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, definitely.

**Austin:** She does not put on kid gloves for her kid.

**Jack:** [laughs] God. Or any planet.

**Art:** I love the idea of Crysanth just getting up like literally in the middle of lunch, like there's three-quarters of a lobster on the plate and it's like, well, I'm bored of this.

**Austin:** [laughing] Right, yeah, she just gets up and leaves, and then we just get Clem alone in the restaurant with like the restaurant foley in the background, and it like hangs for a few seconds too long, and then it cuts to commercial? Yknow?

**Art:** But like it has to be a low shot so you can see Clem — and lik the perspective is a little different so it looks like Clem is just sitting there with two lobsters now.

**Austin:** Yeah [loud laugh], yes!

**Jack:** [laughing Yeah!]

**Austin:** Perfect. Ah... love it. All right! There is Clem's. Also, again. No mention of you being sick. No mention of any of that.

**Jack:** Nope!

**Austin:** I'll not, going back really quick, because of Leap's scouting, I did also reveal a few things on this map. You'll see there are two like rifles — two towers — two of the kind of — what do you call those things?

**Keith:** Clarinet guns? Parapets.

**Austin:** Parapets, yes.

**Jack:** Clarinet guns!

**Austin:** Clarinet guns. [laughs] Parapet guns. On two of the north-facing parapets, and then one big artillery cannon — really it's an anti-aircraft cannon, but it looks cooler than the artillery cannon that this token site has. Shoutouts, again, to game-icons.net, which has really cool simple icons to use. So yeah, those are three things that you saw from your initial scout. And you barely saw this artillery cannon. I'm not saying that you saw everything that's in there, there could be more, but in terms of what was available from the angles you were safely able to get through, on a 5. That's what that was. All right! Sovereign Immunity.

**Art:** Okay. So we have a way in that we could people through, and not mechs.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Art:** And we also have mechs that we would like to be there.

**Austin:** ... Yeah! Sure.

**Art:** So. What if the mechs were already there? What if we smuggled our mechs in...

**Austin:** Into where?

**Art:** Disguised as like...

**Austin:** Oh! Into the facility. Love it.

**Art:** Into the base, what if we got into the base and our mechs were there.

**Austin:** [cross] How would you do that?

**Jack:** [cross] Oh my god.

**Austin:** Okay! This is doable.

**Keith:** I thought you were going shrink ray, but this is also good.

**Austin:** [cross] I also thought maybe shrink ray, which seemed wildly tonally...

**Jack:** [cross] Yeah, i thought it was gonna be a miracle, but it might still be a miracle.

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Art:** Shrink ray doesn't even sound possible. I know that —

**Austin:** It doesn't. Yeah, I know. [laughs]

**Art:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** What is the, um...

**Art:** I just figure like a military base like this probably gets a lot of shipments, right?

**Austin:** Uh-huh! I love it.

**Jack:** Jesus.

**Art:** You know, munitions.

**Austin:** Is not the... Is this not...

**Jack:** We tried this in Twilight Mirage. I had to fight spiders.

**Austin:** [laughs] You did. That is true! Is this not the actual engagement roll? This is like a setup to the engagement roll, which I don't know is a thing.

**Art:** This is — I mean, what I'm doing is putting our mechs in boxes and writing "medicine" on the side.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Art:** [cross] And putting it in the post!

**Keith:** [cross] "Just food."

**Austin:** [cross] Yeah, I've played Metal Gear Solid V. Yeah, I get it. [laughs] Yeah. What is... This is a weird thing to roll, huh? And also, is everyone on board, first and foremost?

**Keith:** I don't dislike it.

**Jack:** Does Gur need...

**Keith:** So this doesn't count as legwork, this is something else.

**Austin:** No, this is — I don't know what this is.

**Art:** I think it's legwork! I'm forging a shipping manifest.

**Austin:** Yeah. The other thing it would be is a — again, an engagement roll. This could be the way you engage. Yknow? Because the followup here is what, that you swim underneath and you get everyone inside, right? And then you get —

**Art:** Yes, Metal Gear 1.

**Austin:** You Metal Gear 1.

**Art:** Metal Gear Solid 1.

**Austin:** Metal Gear Solid 1, right. Metal Gear 1 he just walked on screen from the right. [**Sylvia** and **Jack** laugh] Not as dramatic. Different time for video games.

**Jack:** Oh, god. What a great engagement.

**Austin:** [laughing] Yeah. [**Keith** laughs] Uh, I think for this engagement we wanna walk on screen from the right?

[**Art** laughs]

**Keith:** [Solid Snake voice] "Okay, I'm here!"

[**Austin** laughs]

[**Jack** laughs]

**Austin:** [gruffly] "I made it."

**Keith:** [Solid Snake voice] "I'm in!"

**Art:** You know, stage right.

**Austin:** Right!

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh. Also, I'm a liar. He does in fact parachute in. I'm a fucking liar, that was pretty dope. They did parachute, that looked kinda cool. Anyway. It's fine. What... How do you go about doing this in a way that doesn't get discovered immediately?

**Art:** Carefully.

**Jack:** Wait, does Gur need to see our mechs before they go?

**Austin:** Yes!

**Keith:** For what?

**Austin:** You'll have to ask Gur!

**Keith** [as **Leap**]: For what, Gur?

**Austin:** I think at this point Gur Sevraq has called all of you, along with A. O. Rooke, and maybe a couple of other of like your tight infantry crew, not the additional 20 people or whatever who are gonna come with you. And says.

[as **Gur Sevraq**]: You may not know this, but you are about to face the divine. I hope that this —

**Art:** [distantly] Oh no!

[**Jack** laughs]

**Gur Sevraq:** I hope that this shakes none of your commitment, none of your devotion to your cause. I... I do find myself feeling a degree of responsibility and protectiveness, given our arrangement. I would not see you go against such a foe unarmed. I must have your deepest promise that what I am about to show you will remain... sacred. Secret. Ours. Do I have everyone's word?

**Jack** [as **Clementine**]: You do.

**Gur Sevraq:** In this instance, Clementine Kesh cannot speak for everyone.

**Clementine:** Well, hang on.

[**Art** cackles]

**Jack:** Just like blushes, steps back.

[**Austin** laughs]

**Sylvia** [as **Millie**]: You have my word.

**Art:** A solemn nod from Sovereign Immunity.

**Leap:** Uh, I, yes. I also agree.

**Austin:** A.O. and the remaining infantry people say like, yeah yeah yeah yeah, of course, of course. And Gur Sevraq —

[1:30:00]

**Austin:** — moves one of their spindly limbs out from underneath the layers of cloth to reveal that they are holding kind of a golden orb. I'd say it's like smaller than a volleyball, bigger than — like around the size I guess of like a bocce ball? [amused huff] And... It begins to float.

**Keith:** So like a bowling ball.

**Austin:** Like a — yeah. Like a candlepin bowling ball. [amused huff] And it begins to lift into the air, just a few feet above their extended hand, and begins to hover like almost near where Gur's shoulder is, or like, yknow, up and around. When I first ever described a Divine moving like this, forever ago in Counterweight, I compared it to a Fantasy Star Online MAG. I will again make that comparison now.

[as **Gur Sevraq**]: This is the Divine Future. And if you would have its strength, its perspective, its clarity of vision, it would offer you those. I need to know if you become Future's Hallowed, with all it entails.

**Leap:** What?

**Art** [as **Sovereign Immunity**]: Absolutely.

[**Austin** laughs]

**Jack:** Boy. Okay, so just like, for us, Hallowed are like units that are blessed by a Divine, right?

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

**Jack:** Do they have, as far as we know, special properties, other than sort of narrative ones?

**Austin:** You know that you've heard stories — you've absolutely heard stories of properties — of Hallowed having special properties. They... I don't think it's anything you've seen in person. I think that what you know is like, almost fairy tale, maybe tall tale. The Hallowed of... I'm trying to think of a Divine that — the Hallowed of Strength, you know, could lift more than [amused huff] anyone else in the gym. The Hallowed of Strength [laughs] could [**Keith** laughs] you know, perform feats that similar models were unable to do. Yknow, smash through walls that an unblessed Hallow — or Hollow — could not do. As if there was some divine reserve of strength. You've also heard that sometimes this is about like, getting invited to better parties. Yknow?

**Jack:** [laughs] Sure.

**Austin:** This is about rank, this is about story, this is about, yknow, things like that. Not about... y'know... Not about a special ability. The way that Gur Sevraq is talking, this is about some sort of special ability, though.

[pause]

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Leap:** What does it do? What does it do?



**Gur Sevraq:** It offers clarity and perspective, it offers possibility where there had only been failure.

**Leap:** Like literally, like it literally does that?

**Gur Sevraq:** Yes. The Divines do incredible things. Not things unlike those we could do, were we unshackled. Were the walls broken. Were we free.

[pause]

**Clementine:** Yes. Well. Um. We would be grateful for your gift.

**Austin:** And the orb begins to pulse and radiate a sort of gold aura. And so do your machines, as if they had like an interior light underneath the paneling, the armor paneling, running through the wires, running through the gears. Their screens take on a new glow. If previously they had been kind of green and black, old LED screens, they are now amber and gold. And what this does in a combat situation y'all have to see in action. Uh. But when we get to our first roll, I will reveal what this does.

**Jack:** Hey, Austin?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Did you ever play that mod in Dicey Dungeons that lets choose what dice value you want?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** [cross] Fifty percent of the time.

**Austin:** [cross] No I haven't, actually, but.

**Jack:** Dicey Dungeons is a game about rolling dice and certain dice values do certain things.

**Austin:** I've played Dicey Dungeons, I just haven't played this particular mod, yeah.

**Jack:** There's a moment in it where you can just suddenly start choosing what numbers are on your dice, but there is a 50% chance every time that it will fail. Which is very good.

**Austin:** That's very funny. This is something like that. That is not the effect. I know what the effect is. I have the effect. It's in my clipboard, currently. I'm waiting to paste it in.

[Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** Ooh!

**Jack:** Hell yeah.

**Austin:** It's a cool ability, so. Yknow. We'll see how it goes. All right. So.

**Keith:** So — I do, I have a question about Gur.

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Keith:** They... They have their own priorities.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Obviously. And it's not — it doesn't really seem like they have decided that they're on our side?

**Austin:** You —

**Keith:** But that —

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** — whatever we do, correctly or mistakenly, will end up furthering...

**Austin:** Yes. His — yes. You are an asset, now.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Unlike Crysanth Kesh, I think that he sees you as a valuable asset on the field in which they are playing, and also a... also a project of sorts? It seems like Crysanth Kesh doesn't care if her daughter ever becomes something. Gur Sevraq —

**Keith:** Including a living person.

**Austin:** Including, yeah, a person who's alive on Tuesday. Gur Sevraq, at this point, is invested. Gur Sevraq sees the ways in which you could come out better than you are.

**Keith:** Gur Sevraq also is a person with fewer pieces on the board, too.

**Austin:** [lightly] Sure. Let's say that.

**Art:** Gur Sevraq sees us as an asset, and Crysanth sees us as a liability. [laughs]

**Austin:** There you go. Yes. A hundred percent.

[**Jack** laughs]

**[Austin laughs]**

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** Yeah! Uh-huh!

**Art:** It's what side of the ledger are we on.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Totally.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Love it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Well, who gave who the squad to begin with?

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, true. Um. Yknow, I don't think that she thought you were gonna *do* anything with it.

**Keith:** Fair. All right. Good point.

**Jack:** [laughs] Those are playthings.

**Austin:** Yeah. All right. We should do this roll for your plan, Art. I think it's a setup action for your engagement roll. Which means it could go bad. Setup actions are rolls. The fact that they are — when you make a setup action, you are weakening an obstacle or empowering an ally. With a success, any squadmates that follow through on your action have improved position or increased effect. Um. Yknow, an engagement roll is not — so this is the thing is like I feel like this is just an engagement roll. The plan that you have is the plan, right? It's like sneak — 'cause if you fail, what happens?

**Keith:** We lose all of our mechs, [cross] because they are now...

**Austin:** [cross] You'd lose all your mechs.

**Art:** [cross] [laughing] We lose all of our mechs.

**Austin:** And then at that point that's the engagement roll. Yknow?

**Jack:** [laughs] We have a new mission! Recover the mechs from Fort Icebreaker...

**Austin:** Yeah, good — yeah, uh-huh!

**Jack:** Yeah, I think this sounds like an engagement roll.

**Austin:** Mm-hm. All right. Engagement rolls. Okay. So the plan is to sneak your mechs in via a mysterious transport, right? And then to — you know what, I am gonna give you — here's the thing I'm gonna give you. I'm gonna give you a chance to roll for a bonus die here, and this is gonna be just like, Sovereign Immunity, you can put your ear to the ground to hear if there's some way you can get a benefit on this engagement roll, do you know what I mean? If there's some way that you can get — is there anyone here who would help us with this? You work out of a prison. Certainly someone understands smuggling shit in and out of places, right?

**Keith:** Speaking of smuggling, is it the smuggler who we tripped off?

**Austin:** Which — oh, y — well, it's not that smuggler. But that is the thing, right, can you get a contact to that smuggler, would that smuggler work with you, is the question — safely. [stammers] So this is just a fortune roll, this is not an action roll. This is just, will this give you a bonus on this dice. So give me a... give me a Sway or a Consort, I think, SI?

**Art:** All right. It's gonna be Consort, I think I'm much better at that.

**Austin:** Sure. That also just makes sense, that feels like you're talking around the prison and being like, yo, does anyone know anybody at Point Juniper or whatever the — Fort Juniper. So that's 2d6. Fortune roll, so it's not a Desperate — Standard — it's nothing. All right, a 5! Okay. I'll give you a plus 1 on your roll. There is a — *you* know that there is a smuggler who brings things in and out of Juniper pretty regularly. They would be happy to bring in whatever you need here for a price. That price is something that you can have paid as part of this operation's budget, so I'm not gonna charge you anything. So yeah! You've given yourself a plus 1D here. That would've been higher if you'd gotten a 6, but oh well. So, engagement roll time. [laughs] We get the sort of footage of the trucks showing up with your... your captured mechs or whatever — what does it say? How are they... How are they boxed up, so to speak?

**Art:** I'm trying to think like what are the boxes that they'd be least likely to check?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** So I think it would just be like —

**Austin:** Yknow, seven huge — six huge boxes! [laughs]

**Art:** Yeah. Like what's the most boring thing that could come into a military base?

**Austin:** Let me give you an idea. What if you sent them —

**Art:** K-rations.

**Austin:** — six giant wooden horses.

[Art laughs]

**Keith:** I was gonna say prefab concrete walls.

**Austin:** Sure. Hey, we think, uh, an attack is coming soon, and you'll have to rapidly —

**Jack:** That's absolutely the way it's framed, right?

**Austin:** Which is — here's the thing, Art? That is what your mech does already.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So they could crack open the first one, see your mech, and be like yeah, okay, yeah, this is a defensive perimeter barrier bot, sure. [laughs] Y'know?

**Art:** Yeah, that one is labeled 1 of 7.

**Austin:** Right, exactly. [Jack laughs] So they check it, they go "huh! Okay, works out." Yeah, totally. Totally. Love it. A hundred percent. Is the mission bold? Take 1D. Yes. So you're already at one, plus one is two. Is it complex? Is it *especially* complex.

**Keith:** No?

**Austin:** I think succeeding at this first roll means it is not especially complex. You're just swimming through an underground water tunnel. That's, again, traditional black ops shit. Does it exploit the target's vulnerabilities? Yes. You're up to three dice. Is the tactic ineffective against the target? No. Does the squad receive external support for the mission? Take plus 1D.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** Yeah, you have bonus people with you, the whole thing is part of a larger operation. Take another one, so 4D.

**Keith:** You know what, this is great. Can I say something? I feel like we've been doing these sorts of engagement rolls for years.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. 'Cause you have.

**Keith:** And I have never been able to internalize thinking up a plan that takes these questions into account, and it always ends up [Jack laughs] fucking us, and we either lose dice or get maybe one extra, or nothing.

**Austin:** Yeah! Uh-huh.

**Keith:** And I can't believe, for the first time ever, accidentally, we're getting a lot of extra dice here.

**Austin:** You're at 4! You're at 4, no one is interfering with this mission, meaning the entanglement part of this mission. Obviously, Fort Jun — or, Fort Icebreaker could be interfering as things go. Are there any factors that affect the mission? Take plus 1D for each thing that benefits the squad. Minus 1D if it hinders them. This might include differences in Squad Tier, specialized equipment, or unusual terrain. I think that's it, I think it's 4 dice. And 4, as we know from last recording, is the lucky number. For sure.

[**Sylvia** groans]

**Austin:** Right?

[**Jack** laughs]

**Keith:** And — [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Basically a guaranteed success.

**Austin:** Basically a guaranteed success.

**Keith:** We're talking 94%, you'd have to be... [**Austin** laughs gleefully] You'd have to be a total...

**Austin:** Goofball to mess this one up!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Give me your four dice. Give me 4D6, someone. I think this is Keith or Art, who both — I think it's Art. Art, this was your plan, right? Keith discovered the underwater thing, you build on it.

**Art:** All right. So.

**Austin:** You could each do two if you want. [**Sylvia** laughs] You could all do one, that's fun!

[**Jack** laughs]

[pause]

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** I like the each doing two or all doing one thing.

**Austin:** Let's all do one! [cross] Everyone does one die.

**Sylvia:** [cross] Let's all do one.

**Jack:** [cross] Let's all do one!

**Austin:** That's fun.

**Jack:** Austin, do you wanna join in? You can do one as well.

**Austin:** No! I can't! Unfortunately.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

[All laugh very loudly]

**Austin:** All right! That was Art: 5, Sylvia: 4, Keith: 1! [laughs] Jack: 3. We got a 5. That means, on a 5, you get a Risky position, on a 6 it would have been a Controlled position. Uh. someone paint me the picture. We already saw the bit of the trucks bringing in your mechs and piling them up. I'm gonna say on the eastern side, like, let's say, do you see this big empty spot next to the river, there's like this offloading zone, is what I'm gonna say? Like there's just this nothing spot between buildings?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Mm-hm.

**Austin:** That's where I think they are. I'll put like a little mark there.

**Keith:** Sorry, who is "they"?

**Austin:** Your mechs.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. Yeah.

**Austin:** Here's a big — all your — the crates. I'll put down this crate. Which will represent all of your mechs. All of your vehicles are in there. Um. so we got that. I think maybe in the distance we see the Cast flying high into the sky, that can take images of everything here. And we've seen maybe from its perspective. You can see off in the distance all of the different militaries moving into position. You can see the Fort Icebreaker, way to the northwest, kind of engaging —

[1:45:00]

**Austin:** — with the...encroaching forces of the Chasmata army. You can see off to the northeast, very far away still, the forces of House Whitestar prepping for their attack, and the camera zooms down below to you. And the reason I actually — here's a note. A fun thing to know is that the horizon on this planet is like shorter than the horizon in our planet. Our planet's horizon is like three or four miles away, Earth. I think this is probably more like two miles away. I read last night that you can be in a crater on the moon and not see the walls of the crater you're in. Which is really fucking wild to think about. Because they're beyond the horizon —

**Jack:** Wow! it just drops away?

**Austin:** It just drops away. They would have no idea [laughs], which is fascinating. And this, given the ranges we're talking about here, given this is like a 500-mile stretch of land, definitely, definitely, you couldn't see. I think even the Cast probably struggles to see 250 miles away, even from high up in the sky. And yeah. So that is the kind of the setup. And there's your unit, which, again, is what I said. It's the four of you, plus A.O. Rooke, plus the kind of like five core members of that team, of the infantry team, plus, now, and additional number of people. There are another — what'd I say, 20? — given to you — 20 additional infantry people, and then two other pilots with you who can get into the Troops that you were also given. So yeah, it's seven crates? Six crates? What did I say? Six crates. I don't know why —

**Art:** We had said seven crates, but we can change that now.

**Austin:** What was in the last crate?

**Keith:** I believe we said both seven and six crates.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Six crates was second.

**Austin:** Okay. Maybe the seventh crate — maybe the second is the fake barriers, the fake concrete barriers — or they're real concrete barriers, but they're the decoy ones. So if they cracked open a second thing, that's what that would have been. Um. All right! What is it that you look like as the, I guess, almost 25 people begin this infiltration? Or do you leave people — yeah, what is the plan at this point, with your Risky success? I know at some point you're all gonna be inside this underground tunnel system, or some amount of you, but who is it? who is where?

**Sylvia:** Uh, yeah, I was gonna ask. So this is where are we starting? Is the question? Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, just give me an image of you coming through the water. Is this all 27 of you coming in through the water? Is this a smaller strike team going through?

**Sylvia:** Um. I mean, I think personally I would, if we're trying to be quiet, we'd want a smaller team to go first and then give a signal to a secondary team, but I don't know what the rest of the crew feels on that.

**Jack:** I would sign off on that. I think that sounds like a — like a very temporary split, rather than it being like we're sending in two specific units, it'd be like, send someone to get the lay of the land, check that all our shit has arrived.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.



**Sylvia:** Like, the plan could be like to signal them when we get to the mechs, right?

**Keith:** As a visual, 20 people swimming through an underwater cavern is pretty cool.

**Sylvia:** That's true.

**Jack:** It does kind of rule.

[**Austin** laughs]

**Sylvia:** Okay. Well. Hm! Maybe we do that.

**Austin:** You tell me.

**Keith:** And we've already got the fortune roll, so we can do it.

**Austin:** That's true.

**Sylvia:** That's true, okay! Yeah, fuck it.

**Jack:** Is this just the detachment? Is it just like shots of people slipping into the water further down the river?

**Austin:** That's what it —

**Jack:** Lights moving under the water.

**Austin:** That's what it kinda sounds like to me. Yeah.

**Keith:** 20 people doing the Jar Jar Binks breaststroke.

**Sylvia:** God.

**Austin:** God. Bad. [**Jack** laughs] Bad. Uh. There is a shepherd's crook. Do you see that?

**Art:** I do.

**Austin:** Art. That is you.

**Art:** Great.

**Austin:** Millie.

[**Sylvia** laughs loudly]

[**Jack** laughs too]

**Austin:** A sick coffin.

**Sylvia:** Thank you!

**Austin:** Of course. Of course. Exeter Leap, right here. I'm sorry, I could only find a hand with a single ring on it.

**Jack:** [laughing] A single ring.

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** There's Ringbearer. Can I get callsigns one more time, also? Now that I think about it?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. My callsign is Debutante.

**Austin:** [intrigued] Oh! Still good.

**Jack:** My callsign is Belltower.

**Art:** My callsign is Tenure.

**Austin:** Oh, it's still good.

**Jack:** Oh, it's so good!

[**Sylvia** laughs]

**Keith:** Um. What is my callsign?

[**Austin** laughs]

**Art:** What? That's what we started with!

**Austin:** Ringbearer!

**Keith:** Oh, that was it? Ringbearer? I had forgotten.

**Austin:** [amused] Yeah, Ringbearer. Ringbearer. Yeah yeah yeah. And then, here's a crown for you, Clem. A.O. Rooke gets this [laughing] sick flexing arm!

**Sylvia:** Yes!!!

**Jack:** [laughs] [sighs] Oh, god.

**Austin:** All right. Let's reduce these down into a reasonable size. Comparing them to the sizes of like the guns and other shit that we have out here already. All right.

**Jack:** And then, not to get too bogged down in numbers, but we have like a small assortment of —

**Austin:** Correct.

**Jack:** — infantry units, two Troops.

**Austin:** You have — yeah. Two Troops.

**Jack:** And then a documentary team?

**Austin:** I think the documentary team is mixed in with the infantry group. Right? It's basically like some of the infantry people at this point have GoPros on.

**Jack:** Oh, those cool backpacks with a big long...

**Austin:** I was going with GoPros, but yeah, sure. Yes. [**Jack** laughs] Plus the Cast in the sky. But yeah, I think mixed in — by... By documentary team, I guess what your mother meant was documentary team plus, um, they can hold a gun. That doesn't mean that they're good at holding a gun, but they can.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So. Yknow.

**Keith:** Documurdery team.

**Austin:** Thank you. Good. Love it.

**Jack:** Oh! Wow!

**Austin:** All right! So. What is your play? You've come up — the four of you? The five of you? All of you, you decided, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Have kind of gone through, and I think given the Risky position, I think you kind of like move down through the river, there's like, you have your underwater breathing gear on, and you pop up — on Risky, I'm gonna say you pop up here in this other kind of — in the kind of the back of the facility. Not in the midst here, but you can see this alleyway, basically.

**Jack:** Mm. Mm-hm!

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And you manage to get through. I think there's probably some moment where you have to disable a camera, there's a moment where you have to sneak past a laser grid and deactivate it, but the engagement roll took all of that. And now, as the sun is setting on Partizan, as the vast gas giant of [soft G] Girandole — that's not right — [hard G] Girandole — maybe it is [soft G] Girandole, it's Girandole — of Girandole begins to set, you all emerge topside in this cold military base behind some buildings. There are hundreds of people in this military base, even with the ones who've already left to go northwest to reinforce Fort Icebreaker. There are also a number of long-range weapons that you've already gotten past, which you know about, but there may [laughs] be other forces worth worrying about here. What is your first move? Who takes the lead here? Who moves? Who moves, and what do you do?

**Sylvia:** [sighs] If we haven't been spotted yet, we should try and keep that up for as long as possible, right?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, the risk here is very much you've wound up on the side where a bunch of people are. But you are off to the side a little bit, right, but that is, yeah. It would be nice to not be seen. There are also 27 of you. Right? So.

**Sylvia:** Yeah...

**Keith:** There's so many of us. What is... What's the over-under on like if we just all act normal, we can just walk as a big group...

**Austin:** Um, one of you is Apostolosian.

**Keith:** So low.

**Austin:** Low. Millie, maybe! That's not to say there are no humans in Apostolos' ranks, but [laughs] 26 humans...

**Jack:** Wearing tactical gear?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I could — like, I wouldn't be out of place—

**Austin:** That's correct.

**Sylvia:** — so I could like go ahead.

**Jack:** Damn!

**Austin:** Yeah. That's kinda dope.

**Jack:** Yeah, that's fantastic.

**Sylvia:** You could even — like, I marked medium gear —

**Austin:** [cross] Yeah, we should actually do that. Let's —

**Sylvia:** [cross] — but even in military stuff, it's not gonna matter, 'cause this is a military base.

**Keith:** Oh, right. I was actually gonna mark heavy.

**Austin:** Go for it. [cross] Let's all mark...

**Jack:** [cross] Oh! That means you are visibly...

**Austin:** Yeah. I think we still have to treat those as... what they are. Like, I get the idea of like in a military base heavy is more reasonable. It is. But it's about like, oh wow, that's the sort of gear — we don't use that sort of gear here. That's clearly — you know what I mean?

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah, true. Yeah.

**Austin:** But I —

**Sylvia:** But I have marked medium, so I'm not like armed to the teeth.

**Austin:** That's fine. Yes yes yes. I think Leap just said — someone just said that they've marked heavy.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I marked heavy!

**Austin:** Who else is declaring their load? I guess everybody needs to. So Millie, you're medium. Leap is heavy. Clem and Sovereign Immunity?

**Art:** Medium.

**Jack:** Uhhh [amused huff]. I think I am going to go for a medium load.

**Austin:** Okay. Go ahead and mark that.

**Jack:** I'm also gonna clear my flashlights, flares and glow sticks that I used.

**Austin:** Yep. Those are clear. And so is your fine cover identity, that doesn't take up any...

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** But you do have that! That is a thing you could deploy here. Or, yknow, just give it a shot.

**Jack:** Yeah, all this stuff I can...

**Austin:** Yeah. All right!

**Jack:** [laughing] Although it didn't work last time I tried it.

**Austin:** No. It was bad, it was a bad one. Millie! It sounds like you're sneaking off.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it kinda sounds like the plan is to... sort of like have me take point, almost, and then make sure everything's clear before they move ahead?

**Austin:** Is that what — okay. Is that what you're gonna do, is basically you're gonna —

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** In that case, it sounds like you're leading a group action, more than you are like going off alone.

**Sylvia:** Yep. That's what I was worried about!

**Austin:** Uh-huh!

[Jack laughs]

**Keith:** You know, if we're doing a group action, I have something to maybe add to this.

**Austin:** Uh-huh? What do you have?

**Keith:** We could do... it's called a diversion.

**Jack:** Mm!

**Austin:** Never heard of it.

**Keith:** What if you placed explosives — if you didn't lead the way for us to follow —

**Austin:** Right. Then that —

**Keith:** But instead blew something up —

**Sylvia:** [very excited] Okay!

**Keith:** — on the other side of the —

**Austin:** That would then be what I would call a setup action, in which you are weakening an obstacle or empowering an ally.

**Sylvia:** [excited] That is something that I am way better at doing.

**Austin:** Hell yeah!

**Keith:** Nice.

**Austin:** Okay, so.

**Jack:** Um.

**Austin:** Yes?

**Jack:** Real quick, before we move. Can we just like... In the most basic possible terms, is our goal here just to like hold off Fort Icebreaker until the other people get through down in Pine?

**Austin:** There's sort of two phases as it was explained to you. The first is taking Juniper, and then it's holding it as Fort Icebreaker comes to get you.

**Jack:** Okay. Sounds good.

**Austin:** And holding it — holding the fort against them — against this other fort, this bigger fort — until you can manage to — until the main assault on Pine, the Whitestar assault, succeeds, at which point you will — that will be communicated to you via flare, just as you're communicating to them via flare that you've taken it, this base. And then you can retreat. That's kind of the basic gist of the whole thing, right, it's like Chasmata feint, you attack and hold this chokepoint, you hold the choke point as Whitestar does the final push, where it will be the least defended because everything will have rushed to the center, both from the side that Whitestars attacking and the side that... Fort Icebreaker has gone to, and you'll hold the line there. Yknow?

**Jack:** Right. Sounds good.

**Austin:** But, of course, you can change that, and who knows what happens in play, so. So, Millie. Where are you going, here? Ping me a spot on the map, and tell me what it is, 'cause these aren't specific things, you can tell me what you wanna blow up.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That — really quick, I guess, is I was thinking of going this way.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Unless you want — well, unless the crew wants the diversion to be more up here. 'Cause I can — it looks like there's two directions, really, from where the like river is...

**Austin:** Yeah. For people listening, there's kind of a river walkway that is in the open, in a real way, and then there's kind of a back alleyway that's connected — that's like hidden between

buildings and the outer wall. And to Millie's point, I would think that the outer wall line is easier to hide in, because it's not as out in the open.

**Sylvia:** I actually got an idea as we were talking, I'm gonna ping something, let me know how you guys feel about it.

**Austin:** There you go!

**Sylvia:** The bridge.

[**Jack** laughs]

**Austin:** The bridge isn't bad. Yeah. The bridge ain't bad.

**Jack:** Oh my god! Wow!

**Sylvia:** 'Cause like...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's gonna [laughs] help us a lot, in the long run, and also it's a thing that a lot of people are gonna have to go deal with.

**Austin:** Yeah. I should note something really quick, before we continue, because it's gonna come up. And I wanna be clear that I think it'll be dope as it comes up, but the river is partially frozen. And I think you had to swim through partially frozen ice to get here and it was very cold. That bridge might — that might not be enough to like, hold people, the top of it might not be, but you are in a tundra, so I did wanna set that up so that I'm not pulling it out of nowhere.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Just as a hundred percent clarity.

**Sylvia:** But like it —

**Austin:** And also something you can rely, but y'know.

**Sylvia:** A bridge is way easier to transport people over —

**Austin:** Yes. a thousand percent. A hundred percent.

**Sylvia:** — than ice, right?

**Austin:** Yes. Absolutely.

**Sylvia:** So, at the very — even if it doesn't stop people, it'll stop...



**Austin:** A hundred percent.

**Sylvia:** Bigger things.

**Austin:** Yes. You're totally right.

**Jack:** This is way funnier, to think about trying to cross a frozen river on the ice instead of on a bridge.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes. A hundred percent. But I just wanted to make sure it was clear it wasn't just like a regular moving river. It is a big, icy, messy river. All right. I like that idea. I think we should just do it and keep moving here.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Okay!

**Austin:** What is your... how are you — hoo, boy! Millie, I thought you were really good at these things.

**Sylvia:** I did too. I actually don't have Destroy.

[**Jack** laughs]

**Sylvia:** [cross] Or what is it, it's —

**Austin:** [cross] But it's not even Destroy, this would be Wreck, for the explosions.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Acting with brutal force. Or Engineer, which would be... tinkering with an object, like a bomb, or Prowl, which is really what I need here, which is can you get there safely.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or Consort, or Sway, to blend in?

**Sylvia:** [laughs] All the stuff i don't have?

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Sylvia:** Okay! Um. That's fine.

**Keith:** It could be Finesse, secretly draw a bomb instead of a pistol.

**Austin:** I would let you do —

**Sylvia:** I was gonna make a pitch for Interface to set up the remote explosives?

**Austin:** So, Interface — did you just —

[2:00:00]

**Austin:** — put this point into Interface recently?

**Sylvia:** No, this was like —

**Austin:** This was default.

**Sylvia:** From my backstory. Yeah.

**Austin:** Gotcha gotcha gotcha. I think Inter — so Interface in this world, and given your backstory I think this is acceptable — Interface is this other thing. Interface almost has a super science element to it.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** The vast majority of stuff in this world is Engineer. Interface is literally for talking to Divines. Or like not even talking, but like, communicating with Divines. Doing stuff with the Perennial Wave, doing weird cult magic ritual shit. Gur Sevraq has a 4 in Interface, is what I will say.

**Sylvia:** Okay!

**Austin:** Do you know what I mean?

**Sylvia:** Okay!

**Austin:** That is what Interface — Interface should be the thing that feels the most magical in this setting.

**Sylvia:** That still works for me.

**Austin:** Yeah, totally!

**Sylvia:** But that's good to know.

**Austin:** Yes. I don't think it works for setting a bomb on a bridge, uh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Not right now, but I guess—

**Austin:** But. Not the type of bomb you have — you had some sort of spirit bomb, not like Goku spirit bomb, but like a —

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. But also?

**Austin:** But also! Then maybe.

**Sylvia:** Um.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** Regardless, I do think Finesse could work. I do think Finesse could work here, where —

**Sylvia:** Okay!

**Austin:** What do you — you have to declare the bomb, obviously, right?

**Sylvia:** Yes. Which I'm gonna do now... I'm gonna do placed explosives. Which is...

**Austin:** Yes, placed explosives, boom.

**Sylvia:** Uh, a brick of moldable explosive putty with a timer or remote detonator. Never quiet.

**Austin:** There you go, so that's 1. So yeah, go ahead an — I think it's fair to — the Finesse thing means to me that you're going to be — you're already in a Risky position. If you were doing Prowl, I would have given you Controlled, because you can blend in, you know how to move around Apostolosian bases, you're Apostolosian.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But, given the fact that you're not in Apostolosian uniform, and are really focusing on the Finesse roll, this is Risky Standard.

**Sylvia:** OKay. Um, I'm not gonna push myself now.

**Austin:** Sounds good. And again —

**Sylvia:** [closer to the mic] Unless someone's gonna help me, this is just gonna be 1 dice. Though!

**Keith:** No one else has any...?

**Sylvia:** Collateral, maybe!

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** Uh, yeah, sure! I can give you a collateral die. Now that we're here! I will introduce a new clock and begin to tick it.

**Sylvia:** I mean, it's fuckin Friends at the Table, baby, let's do it!

[Jack laughs]

**Austin:** All right!

**Sylvia:** So that brings me up to 2.

**Austin:** Okay. Um. I will take this...

**Keith:** I would help, but that's so much Stress!

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no worries.

**Austin:** Oh wait, you're at — right, you have a three with [cross] Millie now, right?

**Keith:** [cross] Yeah!

**Sylvia:** [cross] I got a 5.

**Austin:** You got a 5, okay, that's a mixed success. [typing] Mystery clock. And drop that here, and then put that on the right thing. Whoop. I didn't mean to put it on a random side, that's not what I meant to do at all. [laughs] I rolled a 1, or a 0, which is wild. Layer — token layer, boom. All right, so you got a 5, so that's a mixed success, on a Risky action. What's the — paint me the picture here, Millie setting this bomb, are you setting it under the bridge, are you setting it on like the side?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'm definitely picturing it as being under. Like I think maybe she even like swims back part of the way.

**Austin:** Oh, okay!

**Sylvia:** Like, 'cause this is right along — actually, you know what I think she does, is if we're cool with this, is... No. 'Cause I think crossing the river would be — that's wider than I actually realize.

**Austin:** Mm-hm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, she's gonna set it underneath the bridge, kind of here, on the sort of corner there.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Just on some supports.

**Austin:** So. As you... Okay! Here's what it is, I know the consequence is actually very easy here, which is, as soon as this explosion goes off, the — everyone starts yelling. Everyone

starts making noise, and I am going to advance both of these clocks by 1. The “word gets out” clock goes up, as immediately, people begin to yell to send word that they’re under attack.

[music]

But the specific reason that this goes up — the “word gets out” thing is not just that they’re under attack, it’s that this is some sort of trick, is because like, why the fuck would a bridge blow up? And someone here is smart enough to understand what the fuck is going on, a little bit. I know who that person is, and we’ll see if you run into them. The second clock is a mystery clock, and it advances as someone begins to suspect — someone else begins to suspect that this is where the action is.

[music continues]

[2:06:34]