

PALISADE 15: Upon Our Grace Pt. 2

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

Recap

Austin: It is a festival week on the Isle of the Broken Key. In fact, much of the Cause is celebrating this week. It is the Tide of Embarkation. It is a week-long celebration of the Principality leaving Palisade 5,000 years ago.

[["Nothing is Stationary"](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Ali: Well, we're just gonna bring these tomatoes, and then we're gonna hit up Baseline. And, you know, we're, [stammers] you know, maybe we run late, maybe we get entangled.

Austin: Ah, I see.

Ali: You know?

Austin: You're like, "oh, before we go to Baseline, [**Ali:** Yeah!] we just gotta drop these off really quick."

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And then, [mock surprise] "oh nooo, something happened."

Ali: "We're entangled." [chuckles]

Sylvi: "Oh, gosh."

Dre: Aw, I hate when I get entangled. Aw.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yo, Phryge, is that—is that that spy?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): That's that—yeah.

Keith: Well, do we—we don't know that this is a spy.

Ali: Well, the last conversation we had was you—us dancing and you telling me that you thought he was a spy, so.

Keith: Oh, okay. Well then,

(as **Phrygian**): Yes, definitely, this is the annoying guy.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): You two *danced*?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah, it was a party.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Yeah, it was a party.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Oh my gosh. [Austin laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Well, anyway, I think we should—

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Okay, cool. [bluffing] Yeah, totally, it was a party, I know what that's like. Totally, yeah.

Dre (as **Figure**): Can I accompany you?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I do not think that would be wise.

Dre (as **Figure**): [sighs] Because of the uninvited third party?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I would like whatever I find to remain advantageous.

Dre (as **Figure**): At this point, if we don't find something soon, I don't know how much advantageous anything can be. So if I can help, I would like to.

Austin: The thing that catches your eye is a piece of glass shaped like the eye of Devotion. You make eye contact with it, and it feels like eye contact, and then it blinks.

Sylvi: Aah!

Austin: And that is happening while hands are placed on the shoulders of Captain Brnine and first mate Phrygian.

Austin (as **Sea Crepuscule**): Guests! Did you not see the sign?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): But it was— it was him.

Austin (as **Sea**): Oh! Em. Em has had a troubled couple of months. Do you know where you saw him? We should go find him.

Austin: About, I don't know, a few minutes into walking through these hallways, you get the sense that you've been here before, and you have, because you're walking through

a scale model replica of the Divine Past. It is a copy of the archive of the Divine Past a.k.a. Crystal Palace. And so, Figure, you have the feeling of walking around. Like, you know where Clem's office is.

Dre (as **Figure**): Thisbe, I have a hunch.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Yes?

Dre (as **Figure**): I don't know how to quite explain it, but I feel like I know where we need to go.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Then we should go there.

[song ends]

Play Begins [0:03:07]

Austin: Let's hop back to the cave. Cave folks?

Keith: Hi.

Austin: Sea is trying to— Crepuscule, the Master of the Cave, is leading you away along with Em.

Keith: I thought his name was Crepuscule. Oh.

Austin: Crepuscule is the— yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes. Master Sea Crepuscule is leading you back up the steps as a group. Cori, you are not with them.

Sylvia: No.

Austin: Are you deep in the— speaking of being drawn towards strange things, have you chased this eye down?

Sylvia: Absolutely. Are you kidding? [Ali laughs quietly] If Cori thought that her god was trying to communicate with her, she would fucking have full tunnel vision on that.

Austin: Mm-hmm. As you get closer to it...I'm dinging you. Lower your Channel from three to two. [Ali gasps] You are not where you're supposed to be. You feel the eye of Devotion on you, which you know, you're comfortable with that feeling, in a sense. It's familiar; maybe it's not comfortable. But you've been judged. You were supposed to go to Baseline.

Sylvia: Damn.

Dre: Damn.

Austin: You were supposed to found a church there. Devotion could not have been more clear.

Keith: And that's forever?

Austin: That is forever.

Sylvia: That's forever.

Keith: Holy shit.

Ali: [gasps] There's no way to get it back?

Austin: Not on this page.

Keith: Level up.

Austin: Right, yeah.

Sylvia: I, uh...

Austin: I don't think so either, because that's not how Channel works. Channel doesn't have a...

Sylvia: No, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's permanent.

Austin: It's permanent. Permanently.

Dre: Damn.

Sylvia: Permanently.

Austin: And I want to be clear about this: you feel that gaze of Devotion on you. That's not the gaze of Devotion that was looking up at you from the glass from below, which is...I don't know how that makes you feel, but it feels— in other words, it wasn't like, "Oh, it saw me there, and so now I've been dinged." It's as if a more regular check-in. In fact, maybe it was at the moment you had to check your pulse, you know? You hit your pulse time, and during that is when the ding hits.

Sylvia: And this feels more like the typical feelings of Devotion as opposed to when I had that dream and there was the...

Austin: Correct. The big eye versus—

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: And the many other— you know. Yeah, yeah, yeah. The eye at the bottom is evoking the big eye from your nightmare dream. Go ahead, Keith?

Keith: Oh, it was just a dumb joke.

Austin: Okay. You want to make it?

Keith: Uh, it's called a capital I.

Austin: Good. Yeah. I get you. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Pretty good.

Austin: That's fun. I like it.

Ali: [laughs] Do you like it?

Austin: I do.

Dre: It's hard when you already made the tomahto joke, Keith. That's a hard one to follow.

Ali: Mm. Yeah. It was the top of the night. It was really...

Austin: Yeah, you set the bar really high. [laughs]

Keith: Sorry.

Ali: You started at 100.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Damn.

Austin: Cori, you get to the bottom. You get to the big glass eye. And the stuff that I'm not gonna make you roll for, because it's just written out places, is like: oh, this piece of glass broke off the holy text. It's big. This is like, um...how big is it? You know, you're looking at it from above, looking down on it, so it looked smaller to you at that point. Now you're down here. You know, you could— it's bigger than a surfboard. It's bigger than a... [Sylvia laughs] What are things bigger—?

Sylvia: Smash cut, Cori on a wave on this Devotion.

Austin: [laughs] God, riding the...

Keith: Is it bigger than a longboard?

Austin: It's bigger than a longboard.

Dre: Yeah, that's a good question. Okay.

Austin: It's bigger than a longboard.

Keith: Wow.

Sylvia: A surfboard is bigger than a longboard, so...

Keith: No! No, the surf longboard, not...

Austin: The surf longboard, not the— yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Oookay!

Dre: Not the skate longboard, okay.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. I believe so. I mean, maybe I should look at a surf one.

Dre: Boogie board?

Keith: No, no, no. Yeah, longboards are like...really long.

Austin: Boogie boards are smaller.

Sylvia: A boogie board is definitely smaller.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Well...

Sylvia: Also definitely more Cori's speed.

Austin: You know what, maybe it is about the size of a surf longboard. Oh, here's a wonderful chart. Different types and sizes of surfboards. I don't know if this is true or not. Yeah, let's say it's this. It's this SUP board, [**Keith:** Wow.] which has the oar, which is a little over 12 feet tall. Love it.

Keith: Sup, board?

Austin: Not much; sup with you? So yeah, it's like that big, and it's glass, and it's more eye-shaped than this board is. And the notes make it clear that when this thing broke...this thing broke about a year before the Cult of Devotion showed up, and when

it fell off, they read that as part of a prophecy and read, in this text, that they would soon be joined by like-minded travelers, you know? And began preparations for the Cult of Devotion to join. And so that is the short version, but it's clear that there must be more in this pane of glass about the Cult of Devotion and their relationship with the Dim Liturgy and Violet Cove and everything else. But also, it's just emanating. It's emanating something familiar yet strange. I mean, it's an uncanny, the definition on uncanny, the German word *unheimlich*; meaning, you know, unhomely, unhomelike. It's at once something familiar to you but also different, also somehow strange, your reflection twisted in some way. What do you do with this thing in front of you?

Sylvia: Oh my god. Um...does something happen if I touch it?

Austin: Roll Channel.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Which is plus 2.

Sylvia: [bluffing] Oh, I'm great at that. I have a plus 3— oh, right. [Austin laughs]

Ali: Aw.

Austin: Uh huh. Uh huh.

Sylvia: Oh no. I rolled a 6. They gave me three 2s so I knew what my modifier was now. I rolled a 2, a 2, and a 2.

Austin: They did. If your modifier had still been a 3, this would have been a partial success. [Ali gasps]

Keith: What is it that you're rolling?

Austin: Channel.

Sylvia: Channel.

Austin: Uh, Weave Magic.

Keith: Weave Magic? Okay.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [sighs] Take the danger...take the Peril...

Sylvia: Oh.

Austin: Let's talk about what happens. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Your hand passes into the glass, as if it were a door, as if it were a...

Sylvia: Oh no. I know what show this is.

Austin: Wait, which show? Now I don't know what show this is.

Sylvia: Friends at the Table.

Keith: [cross] The show where people lose hands.

Austin: Oh, right, yeah. Oh, right, Friends at the Table. Fuck! [Dre laughs] God damnit! I'm not taking your hand away.

Ali: Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: You feel yourself being pulled into the glass, as if it were a doorway, as if it were a portal, and it...what do you do, in that moment?

Sylvia: Um, I mean, like, I guess my question is how violent or hostile it feels, the pull. Like, is it a welcoming pull? Is it, like...?

Austin: This initial pull is...I would be scared of it, but I don't live a life as a soldier who gives my blood for my god, for instance. So, you might be more familiar with that pull, right? I think it's maybe a familiar pull in that way.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Maybe it hits like that. It hits in the “I am being tapped for blood” feeling; a similar, you know, drawing of you, but it’s of your whole body.

Sylvia: That’s...no matter how zealous you are, that is a scary feeling.

Austin: It is scary. Yeah.

Sylvia: When you know what that, like...the smaller version of that is accompanied by.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: [sighs] Is there friction when I try to pull my hand out? Like, is it...?

Austin: When you try to pull your hand out, you feel dozens of other hands and fingers grab you by the arm that’s already in there and yank you in.

Ali: [gasps] Ugh.

Sylvia: Oh no, I’m in the mirror world.

Austin: You’re in the mirror world.

Ali: Ugh.

The Concave [0:11:23]

Austin: Brnine and Phryge. You have been escorted out of the cave, and I think the Master of the Concave says to you both:

(as **Sea**): I appreciate that you’ve brought this to my attention. Like I said, Em has had some difficult times. I thought the festival would be good for him, but I’ll keep a closer eye on him. I appreciate it.

Keith: Phrygian tries something that they read about in a book, which is they are thinking the words, “You shouldn’t trust this person. There is something wrong with them. I think they might be a spy. You should look into this further,” but I’m just trying to say it with my eyes. I’m communicating all of that with my eyes.

Austin: [laughs quietly] You're trying to do telepathy?

Keith: I'm trying—

Austin: You read a book about telepathy once, and you're trying to—?

Keith: No, it wasn't about— it's just about the innate sense of what you can communicate with a very complicated look.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Janine: Keith, can I say—

Dre: Is this The Secret?

Janine: No, this is Keith's Roll20 picture, which for people who have pictures hidden—

Austin: [cross] Oh, I don't have— I do have pictures hidden.

Janine: Is the spooky pumpkin guy from *Over the Garden Wall*, but he's doing the thing where his head is tilted down and his eyes are big and looking right at you. [Ali and Keith laugh] And it's like, is it just this? Is this it?

Austin: Oh, yeah. You're doing this. Yeah. Uh huh.

Keith: Yeah, this guy is very Phrygian to me, which is why he's my picture right now.

Austin: He's good. I like him.

Ali: And what were you trying to communicate? I'm sorry.

Keith: "There is something deeply suspicious about Em. You should look into them. You should not trust them. I think they're a spy."

Ali: Oh, and you're saying this to the other guy, not—

Keith: I'm not saying it. I am merely—

Ali: You're communicating it.

Keith: I'm merely communicating with a very complex facial expression.

Austin: I think this is—

Sylvia: Phrygian's glasses are spelling out, "This guy is sketchy." [Ali and Keith laugh]

Keith: It's sort of— I'm sort of lowering— raising my lower eyelids and sort of slightly glancing towards Em and doing a tight curl of my lip.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I think this is—

Keith: And maybe an almost imperceptible sort of flick of the head.

Austin: You know what? I was going to say, "Give me a—"

Keith: This could be nothing.

Austin: Okay. Well...no. I want you to Read the Room, to get insight on your situation.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Because presumably you're like, "Do you get me?"

Keith: Right.

Austin: Right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Give me a Read the Room. Give me a plus Sense.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: All right, that's a 9, so you get to ask a question here. You hold 1.

Keith: I could ask 2.

Austin: You could spend your second hold. Right, your bonus hold, yeah.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Unless you have another thing that gives you another— you don't have like another—

Keith: No, no, no, no, no.

Austin: Okay, okay, yeah.

Keith: No. What is being overlooked or obscured here?

Austin: Perfect question. You...what is being overlooked? Instant eye contact back with you, a sort of knowing half nod, as if to communicate to you, like, "Yes, yes, yes. Of course I will." And the thing that's being overlooked is this is exactly what happened last time. Someone swooped in and was like—

Keith: Rescued Em.

Austin: Rescued Em.

Keith: And said, "We're definitely going to look into this guy."

Austin: "We're definitely— this time we're gonna look much closer."

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And this is the Master of the Concave doing it to you. And so, the thing that you're saying to yourself in your own head of "don't trust this guy. This guy is no good. This guy is a secret spy," you find yourself thinking those same thoughts but about Sea, about Sea Crepuscule, Master of the Cave, in this moment. But who is communicating back to you, [**Keith:** Oh...] "Mm, yeah, we'll get right to the bottom of this."

Keith: All right. Okay, so, I'm gonna just talk this out. I have a couple good options on what I could ask Read the Room here. Here's what my first thing was.

Austin: You could also save that other hold, if you wanted to, but.

Keith: Yeah, totally could, but I really want to get information here.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Keith: How is X at risk or in peril? I was thinking I could ask, "How is Em at risk or in peril?" because I'm having trouble finding how!

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: But now, hearing this corpuscul...corpuscur...what is his—?

Austin: Crepuscule?

Sylvia: Crepuscule.

Keith: Crepuscule. The word I know is corpuscular.

Austin: Ah, right.

Keith: And so I keep trying to mix those two words in my head. Now that you've given me this about Sea, I'm like, oh, maybe I want to ask instead, "Who has the upper hand here?" or "How does Crepuscule feel about Em?" But really, I—

Austin: Oh, wait. Did we get that? Wait, wait, wait. Maybe you're right. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Do you not—

Keith: Okay, okay, okay.

Austin: We didn't take the other. Or no, we did. Yeah, we took all players—

Keith: No, because we didn't do advantage.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: We didn't do advantage, yes.

Keith: We didn't have advantage in the sortie.

Austin: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Ali: Yeah.

Dre: Okay.

Keith: Okay. I'm gonna go with first thought: how is Em at risk or in peril?

Austin: Uh...great question. I mean, the obvious thing and the thing that I will mark as a Risk for Em or a Peril for Em is like, "discovered," right? You have discovered Em, but if you're looking for something bigger than that, um...you know, I guess actually the more interesting one here is it's clear that Em's cover is blown, and what you've just done is potentially signed their death warrant, right?

Keith: Ooh.

Austin: Because, like, if Em is a secret agent and so is the Master of the Cave, and it's become clear to the Master of the Cave that you think Em is a spy, it's done for Em, right?

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Em's gotta get burned.

Keith: This would be an inside job.

Austin: This is a *Burn Notice* situation. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Right. I'm still unidentified as the master of the...

Austin: What do you mean? Wait, what do you—?

Keith: Sea is saying, "I can get rid of Em, because they don't know I'm involved too."

Austin: Correct. Correct.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Yeah, Sea is now saying, “Ah, shit. I've gotta— sorry, Em. You know what? You, uh...”

Keith: Right. You're done.

Austin: You're done.

Ali: Your cover's blown, yeah.

Austin: Your cover's blown. Best case scenario, we're sending you back to base to work on paperwork. *Best* case scenario. Worst case scenario, I'm putting you in the fucking ocean. You want to know why they call me Sea? [Sylvia laughs] Well, because all the spies just have letter names, but in this case, it's also because I put people into the sea.

Keith: Could we try to take Em into custody?

Austin: This is a roleplaying game. You can do whatever you want.

Keith: I think that would be fun. [Austin laughs quietly] I think it would be fun to pull—

Austin: Oh, I should advance some clocks here. I think this is extremely, uh...I should have been advancing these the whole time. In fact, none of them are at 0. They're all actually already at 1. They began at 1. And so, Violet Cove, then: you noticed Em. You snuck in on Em. You've now managed to confirm that Em and that the cave master are both up to no good. You don't have any detail—

Sylvia: The cave master.

Austin: Yeah, the cave master. So, 4 of 6 is where you're at on that one. And the other one is Devotion weirdness; let's advance that by 2 also. And then I will also advance Sustenance for Figure as you got closer.

Keith: All right. I'm telling Crepuscule [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] that by...

Austin: Like, out loud.

Keith: Out loud.

Austin: In front of both Em and Sea Crepuscule, yeah.

Keith: Yeah. God, what is the name of the whole Cause?

Austin: The Cause?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Y'all never named it. That was a whole thing.

Keith: Ah.

Austin: No one's heard this, because this was like a behind— this was a we recorded a session zero, months before getting to the game, and by the time we got to the game, many of the things had changed.

Keith: Right.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But one of the things that didn't change was...

Keith: Was that we didn't come up with...

Austin: You didn't come up with a name.

Keith: Because I keep wanting to just call it Millennium Break, but it's really not Millennium Break.

Austin: Correct. It's not Millennium Break. And part of the reason the Cause doesn't have a name is it's not public. It doesn't have—

Keith: It can't be Millennium Break, right.

Austin: Well, and you've decided to pretend like it's not a unified front, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: That's part of what these two guys are trying to figure out, is: who else is in the fucking Cause?

Keith: Right. And so...and they already know I'm in the Cause.

Austin: Yeah, and they know the Blue Channel— so, again, it's worth noting: currently, the Authority has a clock that is Uncover the Cause's Membership, and that's at 3 out of 4. That's about to be finished. So, be careful.

Keith: No, I think that we should definitely take the people that are trying to find out

[**Austin:** Totally.] who's a member of the Cause onto the ship of the Cause.

Austin: [laughs] Ah!

Sylvia: We're so good at this.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, and I'm curious, because this guy's reaction could be like, "Sure, take him," or it could be panic, or it could be a number of things.

Austin: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Keith: But yeah, I'm saying that we've gotta take Em into custody.

Austin: Say it. Say it out loud. Put it into words for me.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): On suspicion of espionage and by the authority of the Blue Channel, we have to take Em into custody. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin (as **Sea**): Oh, that won't be necessary.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Unfortunately, it is necessary.

Austin (as **Sea**): Why don't we bring this to the abbot, and together we can decide on a matter, if it's—

Austin: And Em is like:

(as **Em**): [nervously] Espionage? What are you asking— there's no espionage!

Austin: And something clicks in Em's eyes.

Keith: No espi in this age.

Ali: Hmm?

Austin: That's nothing. You've gone from tomahto: great, mwah, love it.

Sylvia: To “no espi this nage.”

Austin: To “no espi this nage,” eehhh.

Dre: Deez nages. Is this anything?

Austin: Ugh.

Ali: Huh? [Austin and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: No.

Austin: He's on nothing!

Ali: [laughs] Repeat that?

Sylvia: Who let him cook?! [Dre and Ali laugh]

Austin: There's a moment in Em's eyes where you see the calculus, and Em goes:

(as **Em**): [anxiously] All right, I'm gonna come with you. I always liked you anyway, Phrygian. Uh, heh...

Austin: And steps a little closer to you, and Sea takes one step forward and puts a hand on Em's shoulder and is like:

(as **Sea**): You'll stay right here, my boy.

Austin: And it's clear, at this point, Em wants to go into protective custody.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Let's hop back to the Glass Archives. Oh, uh huh?

Ali: Can I just— because I would notice Cori is missing.

Austin: Cori's gone, y'all!

Ali: Can I have sneaked off while the conversation was heated?

Austin: Uh, yeah. You're leaving—?

Keith: You're gonna leave me alone with the Sea guy?

Ali: Well, because I was either gonna be like, [exaggerated] "Oh, I forgot my wallet!" and then Cori was my wallet, right? [Dre and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Aw!

Ali: But because I'm— [laughs]

Janine: Brnine this season is— this is wild.

Sylvia: It's true. I hold all of Brnine's stuff for them.

Janine: Oh my god.

Austin: Talking about Cori like she's a companion in *Skyrim*.

Ali: I just— no, I just need to...

Austin: You just give Cori all the heavy shit.

Sylvia: 'Cause you can keep her in your purse.

Austin: Yes, that's actually...

Ali: I just need to get back in to get Cori. We can't leave Cori! I should support— what did I write? I should support Cori while she settles in.

Austin: Oh yeah, it's right there.

Ali: And that includes not leaving her behind [**Sylvia:** Aww.] in a glass museum that we got escorted out of.

Austin: Let's— can we play forward here? You, in the middle of this, you say— I don't think you could have snuck away.

Ali: Okay. [laughs]

Austin: I don't think that that's possible. You could excuse yourself.

Ali: That felt like it was heated enough that I— yeah, that I could have—

Austin: I think we have different experiences of heated conversations.

Ali: [laughs] Sure.

Austin: For me—

Keith: Well, I also think that Sea is very aware of the two people that he's talking to.

Austin: Yes. This is exactly it. Yes.

Ali: [laughs] Well, Phrygian was really the lead of that conversation. I could be, like, fidgeting with something, and then I just slip out.

Keith: That is such a wild conversation to be fidgeting and wandering off during. [Ali laughs, someone claps] Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Phrygian is doing their “by the authority of the Blue Channel,” thing.

Austin: Yeah, Phrygian's putting on their best Hadrian impression.

Keith: I'm going to ho-hum over here. [Ali laughs]

Janine: And then the captain leaves. The person with the actual authority is gone.

Austin: Yeah!

Sylvia: I don't see what the problem is.

Austin: I think you'd have to make some sort of roll or statement to excuse yourself in a situation like this.

Ali: [sighs] Uh...

Austin: I mean, you could just start walking away.

Keith: Go prepare the brig!

Austin: You know what? You could step away, but it would be noticed that you have stepped away.

Janine: You could pretend that you're going to call Gucci to really pull rank.

Austin: Ooh, that's fun.

Ali: Yeah, maybe that's it. Maybe I put a hand up to the visor slash earpiece that I have with the big ear. [Sylvia laughs]

Janine: I love that you clarified as if none of us remember the cool rabbit ear *Dragon Ball Z* accessory you drew for us.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Ali: The audience might not.

Janine: We all know! [laughs]

Dre: That's true.

Sylvia: No, it's important.

Austin: You made a drawing. It was a visual aid.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: It's good and important and it articulates. It's cool.

Ali: [laughs] And I kind of do the thing of like, "Yeah," like I'm pretending like there's another call on the line. [Ali and Sylvia laugh] Like:

(as **Brnine**): Yeah, we're bringing someone.

Austin: And actually what you're gonna go do is go back down to find Cori.

Ali: I hope so.

Glass Archive [0:25:57]

Austin: The Glass Archive. You have found your way to the section of this scale model that, again—in both the current and the old version of this place of Crystal Palace, a.k.a. the Divine Past, a.k.a. the Reflecting Pool—is a sort of locked down special archives. It's still made of glass here, or at least the outside parts are seemingly made of glass, but it is completely blackened. Phrygian, again, it looks like it has same scorch marks that you do that are kind of—

Dre: Figure.

Austin: Oh, I said Phrygian. God damnit. [Dre laughs] Figure. It feels like it has the same scorch marks you do, as if it's been, you know, corrupted or corroded from the inside out, and so it's completely— it is actually completely dark to start going down these hallways, because they block the light from around and above, and the lighting—

like the internal lighting for this section is just not turned on for now, and there may even be a— there's probably some sort of doorway you're not supposed to go past. You probably get to that doorway, and it's fairly dark, and yeah. You know what you're looking for is behind this place, you're certain of it, deeper in.

Dre: Mm.

(as **Figure**): This is a silly question. Do you have lights? Thisbe?

Janine: [laughs] I didn't know if you were asking me or Austin?

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Keith and Ali laugh]

Janine: I was like, I'm sure Austin has lights.

Dre: Austin, you got a light, bro?

Janine: And then I was like, wait.

Keith: Austin, do you live in darkness? I can't remember. [several people laugh]

Janine: I was like, "Wait, are they asking me?" And I think in the past I have described certain parts of Thisbe as luminationy.

Austin: You have, yeah.

Janine: So I think maybe in response...I think in general her eyes are very, very dimly glowing, but I think in response they fully light up and just she's staring at Figure and maybe blinks. It's probably, like, blinding for them.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah, you can totally. Yeah, great.

Dre: Okay. Yeah.

Austin: You know, this is a...I think the thing you have to do to get further into the archive is actually take one of these little lifts up, but the lift is deactivated. You need authorization to take the lift up, and you can kind of just keep walking through the hallway, but you don't have the lift code or you don't have the authorization, so when you step on the lift, it's like:

(as **lift**): Beep beep beep. Authorization not detected.

Janine: Can I— mm...

Austin: Mm-hmm?

Janine: So, I took as my module today...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Animation Matrix: communicate clearly with ardents of any type or level of awareness.

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Janine: Can I talk to the lift?

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Janine: Cool.

Austin: What's that like?

Janine: Uh...

Austin: I'm asking you, because you are our lead on [**Janine:** Yeah.] these types of consciousness, these sort of— like Mow, for instance.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: We talk about Mow being...

Janine: Yeah, I would compare this to Mow, similarly.

Austin: Okay. Yeah.

Janine: I think this is a thing that sort of happens via, like, Thisbe's watch spring antenna type stuff. Like, I don't think it's like plugging in a cord to communicate.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: This is how I envision it with Mow as well, is that it is sort of like a...not quite Bluetooth, but like a local network, like when you're trying to get videos off your fucking Switch, because the fucking thing is stupid.

Austin: [laugh quietly] Uh huh, yeah. Uh huh, yeah, I'm familiar.

Janine: And you have to join a local network to download one 20 second video clip from a weird browser popup.

Austin: [laughs quietly] Yes.

Janine: So I think it's like Thisbe...ah, I wonder if, like, is Thisbe making the network? Is she joining a network?

Austin: Probably making a middle network you both join is my suggestion.

Janine: Yeah, like making— yeah, making a middle network and then sort of...

Austin: Sending an invite link? Sending, like, a...?

Janine: Yeah, airdropping.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Yes.

Janine: Airdropping the wifi password.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. And it joins.

Janine: I think she just communicates, like, "I need to request access."

Austin: Would something that's an operant, that also uses the operant language, call a fellow operant something? Because you're not its operant— well, it might call you an operant, in this case.

Janine: Yeah. It might.

Austin: And it uses that language because it's from your era.

Janine: An operant is anyone who is operating anyone or anything else.

Austin: Right, regardless of...yeah. So it says:

(as **lift**): Operant Thisbe. Unfortunately, you don't have the required credentials for me to be of service.

Janine: Mm...what's the best angle here? Uh...how do you convince— how does a robot convince a robot to do a thing?

Austin: I don't know.

Dre: "Come onnn." [Sylvia laughs]

Janine: Because, like, Thisbe...I don't think Thisbe...Thisbe can't lie.

Austin: Thisbe can't lie?

Janine: Or, I mean, Thisbe physically could lie, but I don't think it's a thing that, like...

Austin: Has Thisbe never lied? I feel like Thisbe must have. Thisbe could sneak, right? That's not lying, but like...

Janine: I think Thisbe's maybe told half truths or things like that, but I don't think Thisbe would say, like—

Austin: If someone from the Principality was like, "What are you doing here?" Thisbe wouldn't reveal that information, right?

Janine: No, but she probably just wouldn't talk.

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: No, actually, in that case, I feel like she maybe has said, like, "I am da-da-da..."

Austin: Right, yeah.

Janine: I don't know. I don't know. I think self preservation, though, is a different situation, because we've discussed before that she has sort of a self preservation mandate, where it's like, [**Austin:** Sure.] she can't do things that necessarily would be like, "Okay, you're gonna get destroyed now."

Austin: Okay, but I have a question.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Is "my presence is"— sorry, not "my presence is." Uh, what is— oh. "I must strive at all times to demonstrate my utility" not also a similar drive that enables you to act in certain ways? Especially coupled with "Find an alternate source of sustenance for the Figure in Bismuth." It feels like Thisbe has set up the preconditions to maybe not lie but to— whatever you— you know, it feels like: are those not also part of what makes Thisbe make decisions?

Janine: Yes, but I'm just trying to find the more honest approach here, which kind of feels more along the lines of, like, not arguing that she does actually have authorization but arguing more that, like, authorization in this moment doesn't matter.

Austin: Right. Right. Sure.

Janine: That feels like the more honest approach here of just like... [laughs quietly] The thing I thought was kind of mean, and I don't— yeah, I don't know how— mm. God, if it calls Thisbe "operant," does she just turn that around against it? Where it's like, you— because operant is acknowledging the validity of someone to control you.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Janine: So, by calling her “operant,” is it a thing of like—

Austin: This is the thing, is like, you are generally an operant. You would be allowed—you're a member of the Cause.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Violet Cove is a part of it. If you had the— like, if it moved somewhere else or if this was not under lock and key, it would operate for you, you know? and would recognize that. It's this particular use case that is...in the same way that, like, I don't think— there are probably times that Thisbe denied someone who was an operant [Janine: Right.] access to something, because it was part of your job was to deny them access, you know?

Janine: Mm...is the angle then maybe, like...oh, I know a thing that's not a lie. It's that I've been asked to fetch something.

Austin: Sure. Uh huh.

Janine: I've been asked to do this by an operant.

Austin: I think that this is a Defy Danger or a— it's a Talk is what it is, right? You're talking to this thing?

Janine: Ugh...is it Talk, though, or is it—?

Austin: You're trying to be convincing.

Janine: Are we talking?

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Communicate clearly with ardents of any type of awareness.

Janine: All right.

Austin: You are talking. [Ali laugh quietly]

Dre: Are we, like, talking or are we, like, *talking*?

Austin: Are we, like, talking. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: You're in the talking phase still.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. I think it is talking. I would say take advantage, because it is communicate clearly with ardents of any type or level of awareness. Like, you're not—there's no, like— you're able to communicate as clearly as you can here. There is not any weirdness around this, and you are being considered an operant.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Which is advantage here, so. 3d6, take highest.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: 3d6 minus 1, take highest, because your Talk is minus 1.

Janine: Right, yeah.

Austin: 6 plus 4 plus 1 is 11, so success.

Janine: Minus 1.

Austin: Oh, minus 1. Is 10, so success, full success. [Janine laughs] Still a full success. Oh, wait, no it isn't. That's a 9. It's a 9. It's a 9, right? Minus 1 is a 9.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: So it's a mixed success here. It operates for you. It goes "ka-clunk!" and just instantly, like, Figure— are you speaking out loud when you're doing this, or is this all digital?

Janine: No. This is digital.

Austin: It's all digital.

Janine: This is...yeah.

Austin: So, for Figure, it just goes, "ba-dunk," and it lifts you up a level, basically, allowing you to move forward. We get a visual cue which we've kind of seen before, which is a ping, a visual light runs down the floorway back the way you came, as if sending a message being like, "Hey, I just let Thisbe go forward. I'm just, you know, doing my due diligence to say that the person you sent here was accepted, but I'm making a note of it." And you're able to move forward, but there is a note sent to, like, central data or whatever here. It's like a beam of light that runs back down the dark hallways, and then you kind of lose track of it. Dre, let me know when you're back.

Dre: Oh, I'm here.

Austin: Oh, you're back.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Oh. That says "the Phrygia over—" who is— who— that's you? That's you, right?

Janine: That's Keith.

Dre: No, that's Keith.

Austin: Oh my god! [Dre and Austin laugh] Okay, right, the Phrygia, right.

Janine: It has the little pumpkin next to it.

Dre: Keith is back, baby! We're back on tomahto level! [laughs]

Austin: Back on tomahto. Yeah, we're back to tomahto town. All right. [Sylvia laughs] As you move deeper into this dark hallway, lit only by Thisbe's lights, the glass pane gives way to a concrete, and you make your way— the glass here is dark, but there's

white text written on it, and this area is filled with the information you might actually want, and so you can— this is a good place to do the rolls to find some idea of where you might get a different power source.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: Also, at the back end of this is a room built from concrete that has, like, a viewport that you can look through that is made of glass and a big heavy concrete door that you could presumably open, if you— you know, you're already past the sort of first tier of defenses here, and that is the area that you're in. What do you do?

Dre: Hmm. Is there anything on the door? Is there any markings or signage or anything?

Austin: Um...the door— yeah, I think that the door...you know, it's no. There isn't. This is the place you are, right? It is— whatever was once there has eroded, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: And in the same way that they're not, like, you know, building new copies of the glass, they've left this thing the way it is.

Dre: Gotcha. Um...I guess I would like to roll a Read the Room?

Austin: Sure. Looking for some information. So, roll plus Sense.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: What is your Sense?

Dre: It's plus 1.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: Right? Yeah.

Austin: 2d6 plus 1. And this would be a good place for that hold to come in handy. All right, that's a 7.

Dre: I'll take a 7.

Austin: So that means you get one question, and again, you can spend that second hold.

Dre: Yeah. Huhhh. I mean, I guess "Where can I find X?" Where can I find the information that I need? Is that too vague?

Austin: No, I was gonna go further than that.

Dre: Okay. Sure.

Austin: Right? Are you not gonna just ask, "Where can I find an alternate source of sustenance?"

Dre: Yeah. Sure. Let's go. Yeah, let's do it.

Austin: You don't get all of the details you might like, but between the two of you— and I actually imagine, Thisbe, you're very useful during this, because Figure has human eyes. Or I guess, wait, do you? How do you see, Figure?

Dre: I don't think we've ever...I think we've just kind of hand waved it as magic.

Austin: Do you have human-style sight?

Dre: Yes.

Austin: Okay. Thisbe, do you have enhanced robot sight?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Can you read tiny text a little easier than Figure can?

Janine: Probably.

Austin: Probably.

Dre: Shoutout to the Figure with readers fanart coming out of this episode. Let's go.
[Austin and Dre laugh]

Austin: You are able to— sorry, “human eyes humanize human eyes.”

Ali: Mm.

Figure's and Thisbe's Findings [0:40:35]

Austin: You just said “human eyes” twice. [Sylvia laughs] You're able to find something, actually, that's in line with the Tide, the feast that you're part of right now. It is the Tide of Embarkation, E-M-B-A-R-K-A-T-I-O-N, and I talked about this when we first started this mission, that everyone's celebrating this thing. And you are reading about one of these— it's a prediction about what's to come, and I mean, actually, it's very early on in the what's to come part, so it's very clear, compared to some of the other predictions. As a reminder, the oracle, the engine that they based all of this in, could see well into the future, and so this is a copy of ancient predictions. It saw into the near future much clearer than it could see into the distant future, and so the event that it saw in the near future is rendered here pretty clearly, and it is what would become the Tide of Embarkation, the fact that the Principality would kick off its galactic conquest by leaving this planet.

And we've already talked about how the first day is that there's this second moon known as Chimera's Lantern that lights for the first time, and really, Figure, this is the stuff that matters for you. This moon lit with a sort of power that seems like it could be sustenance for you, because the rest of that story is that on the second day the tides began to rise. It was like the moon had called on the tides to lift themselves up and flood the nascent Principality and harm them. And then on day three, Aram Nideo dies and gives this big speech about how you have to go out into the stars. And on day four, as it's celebrated in the Fabreal Duchy, it's the scouring of the enemy's forces by Saint Luster, this kind of early hero of the Divine Principality and what would become the

Fabreal Duchy. It doesn't— no one celebrates— no one knows who the forces were as they celebrate them. It's just kind of like, "the enemy forces were destroyed." It doesn't really get into who the enemy forces were, in the popular celebration of this feast. And on day five, the first Glass Duke is crowned; Saint Luster becomes the first Glass Duke of the Fabreal Duchy. And then on day six, they celebrate the fleet embarking; they leave behind a group of Divines for the Fabreal Duchy. Those are the Divines that they eventually experimented on and created Delegates from them and turned their bodies into glass and all of that other stuff.

But for you, the two big things that stick out are: one, there's something in the moon, the weird glowy wasp nest moon that gave power to people, that gave power to people that wanted to defeat the Divine Principality in its earliest form, that wanted to push them out of their home. It gave them— the way that it's written about here, the way that Crystal Palace saw it was that these are people who were raised with the light of justice and were raised as defenders against an empire vast in the future. They were trying to— they're people who were trying to prune something that would take over, that would grow over the galaxy. So that's one of the things you notice.

The second thing that you notice is that the feast is supposed to be seven days. There is a day one that isn't celebrated, a sort of day zero, and it's that the thing that kicks all this off is a massacre. The Divine Free States and the Principality of Kesh, who had only just become kind of allies and were becoming the Divine Principality as we know it, were hunting down the final remnants of a group that were their enemies called Advent, who had taken up residency in a city, a kind of Twill city. And it's not clear if they were being held there as— or if they were holding the place as hostage or if they had been adopted into the Twill community openly, and maybe a little of A, maybe a little of B, but what happened is a city, an entire city was obliterated by the Divine Principality. That city is Carhaix now. The Duchy and now the Principality celebrate it as like, "This is where we finally defeated Advent," but in truth it was the first true terrible clear crime of the Divine Principality where, you know, countless innocents were massacred, and that is what caused the power in the moon to activate and seem to give power to a bunch of people.

Now, that's not a thing that happens anymore, as far as you know. The Chimera's Lantern lights every now and then, and there's a bunch of spooky ghost stories about it, but it's not like there's a band of defenders of the people who are powered by the moon's light, you know what I mean? But that's it, and it's pretty clear to you that that's it, right? If you could somehow go to the moon and get, I don't know, resonate with the moon, the descriptions of what's being explained here feel like a better version of the power you have, in the sense that it's often about freeing people. It's often about letting people determine the best versions of themselves. People are— the warriors of the moon are kind of described as having their natural capabilities enhanced. There's a lot of verbiage that combines expression, like the idea of self expression and becoming a version of yourself that you want to be, with a sort of epic heroism. And so, yeah, that is the answer for you, or one answer. Obviously, you could also go find another witch or something, but it seems like if you could harness the power of Chimera's Lantern, you could get out from underneath the Witch in Glass. Sailor Bismuth, exactly, yeah. [Dre laughs] So, that's one of your questions. What's your other question?

Dre: Oh, do I get two on a 7 to 9?

Austin: Well, sorry, you have another hold. You could continue to hold that hold if you want.

Dre: I'm gonna continue to hold that hold.

Austin: Okay. So, then, a second thing happens, as you're poring over this. You hear a voice.

Dre: [sarcastic] Gee, I wonder whose it is.

Austin: It's not who you think it is.

Dre: [pleasantly surprised] Oh, okay.

Austin: It's kind of an—

Keith: [goofy voice] It's me!

Austin: [laughs quietly] No, it's kind of a nebbish, bureaucratic, whiny...someone goes:

(as **voice**): [annoyed] Hello? Is someone there, finally?

Austin: From behind, and it's like, you know, it's muffled.

(as **voice**): [muffled going forward] Hello? Is someone there, finally? Is someone—?

Dre: Oh, from behind the door?

Austin: From behind the door.

(as **voice**): Can you—? I have rights! I'm supposed to have a— are you charging me with anything?

Dre (as **Figure**): [whispering] Thisbe, what do we do?

Janine: Um...god. Hmm. So, it sounds like they're trapped?

Austin: Sure.

Janine: Or...

Austin: They certainly can't leave. It sounds like they would like to—

Keith: That's trapped, in my book.

Austin: Yeah, that's trapped.

Keith: It's a book called What Counts as Trapped.

Austin: It sounds like they're imprisoned, is what it sounds like. Like, to be very clear.

Janine: [laughs quietly] Is it the fucking book from *Nier*? Like, what is happening? [Keith and Dre laugh]

Austin: No, this is someone who's behind the concrete door, you know?

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: Oh, okay. [Dre sighs] I kind of think Thisbe just blinks at Figure, like, you know, this is...in a very like, “If you want this handled, I can...you know, I’ll go, but if you think it’s a bad idea—” Like, you know, she’s looking for a lead to follow. [Dre sighs]

Keith: What do they have to say?

Austin: I mean, they’re continuing.

Dre: Yeah, they’re just...

Austin (as **voice**): Don’t— are you ignoring me? Please— it feels like it’s been a week!

Dre: Oh, boy. This would be a great time where if we had, like, a cool secret knock or something.

Keith: How come?

Dre: Well, if there was just the universal knock of “I’m a cool good guy,” you know?

Keith: Oh, okay, sure. [Austin laughs quietly]

Janine: It would take exactly three days before the bad guys know it. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Yeah, well. That’s why it changes every two days.

(as **Figure**): [sighs] Keep your voice down. Who’s in there?

Austin (as **voice**): They...they kidnapped me!

Dre (as **Figure**): Who’s “they”?

Austin (as **voice**): I don’t know, these weirdos!

Dre (as **Figure**): Who are you?

Austin (as **voice**): [voice raising] Who am I?

Janine: I don't know, some weirdo.

Dre (as **Figure**): Yes, you're behind a very big door.

Austin (as **voice**): [sighs] Can you just get me out of here?

Dre (as **Figure**): No.

Austin (as **voice**): My name's Ken. Can you get me— they kidnapped me.

Janine: That's a minion's name.

Austin (as **Ken**): These cultists kidnapped me. [Dre laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Figure**): Why? What were you doing here?

Austin (as **Ken**): I don't know! I don't know. What do you mean? I wasn't here at all!

Dre (as **Figure**): Ken, you're being very rude for someone who's stuck behind a door and needs our help.

Austin (as **Ken**): [yelling, muffled] They kidnapped me! [Keith and Sylvia laugh] You're just them! You're fucking with me!

Dre (as **Figure**): We're not them, but you're very rude.

Austin (as **Ken**): [measured] I'm sorry. I've been detained for a reason I don't understand by a bunch of people in [shouting again] capes and cloaks! [Ali laughs]

Keith: Honestly, I'm giving it to Ken on this one. [Dre laughs]

Janine: I can't believe they trapped George Costanza in a library. [Austin laughs]

Dre: I mean...

Sylvia: I can.

Keith: [George Costanza voice] Cloaks, Jerry! [Austin and Dre laugh]

Dre: If he is...if Ken is saying that they have been kidnapped by the Cult of Devotion...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: We're technically on their side, on the side of the Cult of Devotion. Right?

Austin: Right. I mean, the strangeness here is what you know is this place has been shot through with spies and also is on your side, and this is...Violet Cove has two grip on it currently, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: By the Authority. So it's like, I don't know. Is this someone who's being held by...who are they being held by?

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah, is it someone who figured shit out and...?

Austin: Right.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Or are they— you know? Who could say? Also, they're a weird cult. Both— there are two— I know I spent a lot of time earlier being like, "The religiosity of this is serious, and people who have a deep spiritual—"

Dre: Sure! Eh, you know.

Austin: But also, one of the groups gives their blood to...you know, we haven't— the Devotion clock has not advanced really at all, actually. It's only at— I mean, it's getting— it's at 3, right? So it's not—

Keith: And I'll say: when you've got a political alliance with another group, it doesn't necessarily make them not kidnapers.

Austin: That's correct.

Dre: Well.

Austin: But also, who knows?

Dre: Yeah. Right.

Keith: Maybe they've kidnapped this person for a politically relevant thing for the, you know, war that you're fighting.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Maybe they just kidnapped someone. Some people are kidnapers.

Janine: I mean, also, we probably— the Cause probably has certain procedures for taking prisoners and shit, right? So maybe that's something to fall back on of like...

Austin: Maybe, yeah.

Janine: Maybe we should bring this individual back to Brnine.

Keith: It's probably not in the bylaws to trap someone in a room for a week.

Janine: Yeah, that seems bad.

Dre: I don't know.

Janine: I think Thisbe's gonna...we need to get off the boat, and I think in this case the boat is opening the door for the shouting guy but also maybe not letting him, like, run off.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Not to encourage more being on the boat, but you can talk to this guy before opening the door.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: Okay, well...okay.

Dre: I would like to ask who Ken is here on behalf of or here with.

Austin (as **Ken**): I'm not here with anybody!

Dre (as **Figure**): Then why did you come here?

Austin (as **Ken**): They— [frustrated] oh my god!

Dre (as **Figure**): No, like, to this planet. [Keith laughs]

Austin (as **Ken**): What do you mean to this planet?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): You're on a planet.

Austin (as **Ken**): Yeah? So are a lot of people!

Dre (as **Figure**): Oh, okay. I guess, like, this vicinity. [Keith laughs]

Austin (as **Ken**): They kidnapped me! I don't know what this vicinity is. I'm in a dark room. What the fuck are you talking about?

Dre (as **Figure**): [cross] Okay. where were you kidnapped from, Ken? [Ali laughs]

Austin (as **Ken**): I was on a train!

Keith: This fucking...

Dre (as **Figure**): Wait.

Keith: This guy hates you for—

Dre: Hold on, hold on, hold on. Did Ken just say that they were on a train?

Austin (as **Ken**): Yes!

Dre (as **Figure**): What train?

Austin (as **Ken**): [shouting hysterically] What do you mean what train?! [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Janine (as **Thisbe**): When and where did it depart from?

Austin (as **Ken**): From Carhaix! We were going to the coronation!

Glass Archive cont. [0:54:00]

Austin: Two kilometers east of the Isle of the Broken Key, a vast warship decloaks, and from its loudspeakers, the voice of Tenn Alpenglowl, the bodyguard of Kenneth Marian Colver, the Viceroy [**Ali:** Ah.] of the Principality, speaks.

Dre: Mm.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin (as **Alpenglowl**): To the rebels below: you have kidnapped my ward. I am here to recover him. Fight me with honor, or suffer the consequences.

Austin: And a blast of countless cannons fire from the top of his vessel. His vessel is a falcon-shaped ship. It is called the, uh...it is a falcon-shaped ship. It is called the *Kestral White*. It has sort of white tips of its not actual literal feathers, but where the feathers would be, and the top of it is just covered with an array of heavy cannons that fire off in sequence warning shots above everything, though one of them—

Janine: Did you deliberately name this after the *Star Trek* drug?

Austin: No.

Janine: Okay. [Dre laughs]

Keith: What's the *Star Trek* drug?

Austin: Is there literally a *Star Trek* drug called Kestral White?

Janine: Ketracel-white.

Austin: No.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: That's just coke. It's named after a Kestral like a hawk, you know?

Janine: Okay. Okay.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I was just wondering. It sounded very similar, so.

Austin: No, uh uh. And so, yes. Tenn Alpenglow—who you fought, Cori—is here on a vast warship to try to recover the kidnaped Kenneth Marian Colver. I just want to re-underscore something, though: you still don't know who kidnapped him.

Dre: Sure.

Austin: Violet Cove wasn't part of that operation, as far as you know. The whole thing was that you were there alone.

Dre: Which group is he with, again?

Austin: Uh, Kenneth?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Kesh. He's a Viceroy, which is like...he thought he was gonna come here and make a bunch of big deal shots and now has kind of been...the last thing we saw him do—

Keith: Kidnapped. He's been kidnapped.

Austin: He's been kidnapped, yeah. I mean, the two last things we saw him do onscreen were cower on that train, beneath Thisbe and Gem, and the other thing that he did was yell about bread prices to the elect of Crusade.

Dre: Sure.

Janine: What the fuck is he gonna do [laughs] when he sees Thisbe, at least?

Austin: I don't know.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: Oookay.

Dre (as **Figure**): Thisbe, I have a plan.

Janine: Does Thisbe recognize this guy's voice, actually, is a question.

Austin: Behind the concrete, it's tough, but yelling, once he gets to full yell, and once you hear— I mean, you've just heard this loudspeaker message.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yes. It's him. Um, yeah. Yep. That's what I'll say.

Janine: What were you gonna say, Figure?

Dre (as **Figure**): Uh, I have an idea. Let's find the heaviest thing in this room and put it in front of the door. [Sylvia laughs]

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Why? He already cannot open the door.

Dre (as **Figure**): To make sure— well, yes, that is why.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): The door seems sufficient in that job.

Dre (as **Figure**): Mm. It's more spiteful than practical.

Austin (as **Ken**): [levelly] Hey, what do you want? What do you want? What do you want? They're gonna kill me.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): They've had a week to kill you, if they desire to do so.

Dre (as **Figure**): [cross] You think we won't?

Austin (as **Ken**): No, not them! Not them! The guy who just— come on.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Your mentor?

Austin (as **Ken**): He's my bodyguard.

Dre (as **Figure**): Oh, he's gonna kill you?

Austin (as **Ken**): Yeah.

Janine: Oh, he meant "ward" in that sense. Okay.

Dre (as **Figure**): That's a bad bodyguard.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Why would he kill you?

Austin (as **Ken**): Because if I'm with you...

Dre (as **Figure**): Then you've flipped and you've already given all the useful information.

Austin (as **Ken**): Uh huh.

Dre (as **Figure**): Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Keith: There's a lot of that today.

Austin (as **Ken**): Uh, what do you need to know? I'll tell you anything you need to know.

Dre (as **Figure**): That's above my paygrade.

Austin (as **Ken**): I can raise your paygrade. What do you want, weapons? I know where their weapon cache is. What do you want, ships?

Dre (as **Figure**): [sighs]

Austin (as **Ken**): Altars? Good cheese. I know how hard it is to get good food here. I know.

Dre: [laughs] Talking to a robot that doesn't eat.

Janine: And a rock zombie. [Austin laughs]

Dre: And a rock zombie who doesn't eat, yeah. Like, can eat but doesn't need to eat in that way.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Dre: Okay.

Janine: Still appreciates a good cheese, maybe.

Dre: All right, out of character, to get off this boat.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: The two places that I see forward is that either we kidnap Kenneth ourselves.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Or...

Keith: I like that.

Dre: Or we just kill Kenneth.

Janine: That feels bad.

Keith: Let's kidnap two people today.

Dre: I mean, he's an uppity-up for Kesh, and we're at war with them, so.

Janine: Yeah, but that...

Keith: I mean, it sounds like he's flipped—

Janine: Yeah, he probably knows shit.

Keith: In the middle, he's like, "I'm on your team. Save me."

Dre: Okay, then we'll kidnap him.

Janine: If nothing else, he's like read some documents, right? So just killing him feels kind of like a waste.

Dre: Sure.

Janine: Even if he is a huge liability and annoying. [quiet laughter]

Dre: Well, then let's open the door and then knock him out.

Janine: I'm having Hieron flashbacks. [Janine and Dre laugh]

Austin: Why?

Dre: Which part?

Janine: Someone get some tea. Someone get some tea for him real quick.

Austin: Oh. [laughs]

Ali: Ohh.

Austin: There is a little bit of Isaac Addleton in this guy. You're not wrong.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Austin: I'm really channeling Keith's incredible Road to PALISADE intro with him being just the whiniest shittiest guy.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Oh, that's this guy.

Austin: Yeah, that's this guy.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Ohh.

Austin: "You can't colonize your own home."

Keith: "Your cousin's cousin."

Austin: "Your cousin's cousin." Yeah, uh huh.

Janine: Okay. Here's my "get off the boat" thing.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: I think Thisbe is inclined to open this door and specifically say:

(as **Thisbe**): You will either come with us or you will die here.

Janine: And it is Thisbe [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] being there and not shying away from, like, yeah, I know that you know me.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: You know what's up.

Austin: Yep, yep, yep. Give me a...this again feels like a Defy Danger or, sorry, a Weather the storm potentially. Uh, you know, I actually think what this is actually is a Strike Decisively. Mm, it's not a Strike Decisively. I had to think through something. I almost said something way wrong. I think this is just you're just gonna do this thing.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And what he's gonna do is say yes.

Keith: Because he kind of already offered.

Austin: Yes.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yes. You open the door.

Janine: Yeah. He wants to leave and also knows the other guy's gonna kill him, so it's like, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] okay, well, the other option is run around the cult place?

Austin: Mm-hmm. All right. You open the door, and he's right there. He...this is not a phrase we say often on the show, and I'm not gonna get very descriptive. He's naked.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: He is not wearing any clothing. And he goes:

(as **Ken**): Oh, thank god. All right, let's go.

Austin: And just gestures forward, like, lead me forward.

Dre: Okay. I genuinely do want to knock this person unconscious if we are kidnapping him.

Janine: Just because?

Keith: Why? He's coming with us.

Dre: Because I don't want him—

Janine: Again, this is exactly Adaire's thing of like, "Well, he agreed to help me, but I'm gonna poison him anyway." [laughs]

Dre: No, I don't want to poison him. I don't want him to make noise or try to run away.

Austin: All right, well, this will be a roll. This will be an Exchange Blows: when you exchange blows with foes capable of defending themselves, roll plus Clash. I don't think you're talking. I don't think this is a talking thing, Figure.

Janine: I have a cloak. We could just, like, roll him up in a little papoose. [Dre laughs quietly]

Keith: You could give him a very convincing look to knock him out.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Austin: Uh, what is your Clash?

Dre: It's good. It's plus 2.

Austin: Okay, yeah.

Janine: Just don't accidentally kill him.

Austin: So, 2d6 plus 2.

Janine: I guess we can, but. Yeah.

Austin: And you're just using your hands here, right?

Dre: Yeah. I mean, I have, like, a sword, but I don't want to use a sword.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I think that that's fine. All right, so, you got what? You got an 8?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Okay. [sighs] On a 7 to 9, you and your target are forced to both take a Risk. What sort of— Risks you give yourself, and I'll explain the situation such that you can make that decision for you in a second.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: But what sort of Risk are you trying to give Kenneth Marian Colver here?

Dre: Gosh, “unconscious” doesn't feel like a Risk.

Austin: No, because that would be— that's a Strike Decisively. Mm-hmm?

Janine: In this situation, “unconscious” does feel like a Risk, doesn't it?

Austin: No, it would be a—

Janine: You're unconscious in a place where a bunch of people want to kill you?

Austin: No, no, no. It would be a Peril.

Janine: Oh, okay.

Austin: Or it would be past Risk, is the— Risk is not a— Risk is too light, because a Risk is like “dazed” or—

Janine: You need three of them.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Janine: It's true in the sense of once the moment is past the thing would clear, which isn't true of Peril, right?

Austin: Right, yes, correct.

Janine: Yeah.

Dre: This feels, like, rules lawyery of me, so I don't even want to talk about this too much, but is there— I feel like this man is mostly defenseless against us.

Austin: He is not, my friend.

Dre: Okay. Okay!

Austin: What is the physical thing you're doing?

Dre: Um, I guess just trying to bop him upside the head.

Austin: Mm. What are you wearing right now?

Dre: Uh, just the usual, like Figure's kind of flight suit.

Austin: Perfect. Is it a zipper or is it buttons?

Dre: Ooh. Um...velcro.

Austin: Perfect. You slam your hand into his head, and like rubber, it pushes down into his body.

Dre: Ooh!

Austin: And his whole body, like, bounces downwards. And it's weird; you don't even realize this, but he's reached out to grab the velcro on your flight suit, and he's opened it, and a hand—

Keith: Is he trying to take your clothes?

Austin: A hand emerges from your chest.

Dre: Ooh!

Austin: And begins to pull itself out of your body. A body is coming out of the opening from the now de-velcroed flight suit.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: I need you to take the Risk "a living portal for the Iconoclasts." [Ali laughs]

Dre: Oh, good.

Janine: Yeah, I thought that's where this was going.

Dre: Uh, hey, Austin.

Austin: Yeah, what's up?

Dre: Can I...so, I've got this hold.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: I have a move that's called Hot Blooded.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Where once I accumulate three hold, I can use it.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: I'm at two. Can I use this one hold to get to three hold?

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Keith: That would—

Dre: Okay.

Keith: Oh, okay, gotcha.

Dre: The way I can use that is to succeed at a move as if I had rolled a 10+.

Austin: You can. I don't want to walk this back.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: This is...you should have done that to begin with.

Dre: Sure, sure, sure.

Austin: Before we got to me revealing what the stakes are.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. Hmm.

Austin: Because there's like, you're in a fight, and I'll let you reroll— I'll let you do that when it's like, oh, you took the Risk “bloodied” or something, but like, you didn't know how bad the situation was, and at this point—

Dre: Sure, yeah, yeah. No, that makes sense.

Austin: To quite literally put the Iconoclast back in the flight suit is a bit much, you know? I think it's a little too heavy.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I would let you do it to attempt something uncanny, superhuman, or unbelievable, or to immediately do it in the next thing, you know?

Dre: Sure.

Austin: But I do think this is a bit much to rewind on, you know?

Dre: Okay. Well, so, what is the Risk I'm taking?

Austin: Uh, “A living portal for the Iconoclasts.”

Dre: Sure.

Austin: There were— you may recall there were multiple people— there were four people. There were four people around when Constantina Malady, the Usher of Truth, made an offer. She offered the three of you—both Figure and Thisbe and Cori—various opportunities, that she would help you if only you would let her in.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Kenneth Marian Colver was also on that train, [Dre sighs] and Kenneth said yes.

Dre: Motherfucker.

Austin: And as a—

Dre: I think as soon—

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: As soon as the hand comes out, Figure goes:

(as **Figure**): We should have kept the door closed!

Austin: [chuckles] Uh, yeah, also, this is the concrete. This is the concrete. This is the Rapid Evening concrete. This is the way that you stop Iconoclasts is by putting them into concrete. This is the same concrete that the sarcophagus was made of, the Axiom—

Janine: Mm...

Dre: Mm.

Janine: I feel like we would have noticed that.

Austin: You know, yeah.

Keith: Just to go back to “unconscious is too much to be called a Risk.”

Austin: Yes.

Keith: Is “living portal for the Iconoclasts” also too much to be a Risk? [Dre laughs]

Austin: Uh, no, because all you have to do is close your flight suit, but you just have to—

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: If you could roll a Cool Down, you could do it.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Sure. Yeah.

Austin: Or if you took off your—

Dre: Oh, what's the Risk I get to give to this weirdo, then?

Austin: That's my question. That's what I was trying to ask you, was like: what are you trying to do?

Dre: Huh...

Keith: It's something way less cool in comparison. It's like, "dizzy."

Dre: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: It is, probably. [laughs] And the nice thing is he is now vulnerable to you.

Dre: Sure.

Austin: He only had one thing. This is the one thing he could do.

Dre: Okay. Um...can the Risk—

Janine: Now can I wrap him up in my cloak like a papoose? [Austin and Keith laugh]

Dre: Ooh. Can I give— because we get to exchange Risks, right?

Austin: Correct. Yeah. I get to— the receiver decides what the Risk is, traditionally.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Though, in this case, we've kind of reversed that. So yeah, you tell me what the Risk is.

Dre: Can it just be "barely contained" as I, like, rip my flight suit shut as fast as I can?

Austin: Yes. Sure.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Oh, no, sorry. He is not the Iconoclasts.

Dre: Oh.

Austin: He's a different person.

Dre: Gotcha.

Austin: The Iconoclasts are trying to get out of your chest right now.

Dre: Okay. Gotcha. He was just the vessel.

Austin: I just want to reiterate something from the faction game, which is Constantina Malady has a power, and it's anything— whenever she opens— and I think this came up in the previous session too. Whenever she opens— her power is opening doors to Iconoclasts, for Iconoclasts.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: And so it's anytime she opens anything. It can be a pen cap. It can be a trash can lid. It can be a person's flight suit. She can turn it into a portal. And so she gifted that power or she was working through Kenneth Marian Colver. Lots of witches this season. Here's a new type of witch.

Keith: That's what I'm saying.

Austin: It's a sort of door witch.

Keith: Delicious, by the way.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Is...

Austin: Figure, what's your— or Thisbe, go ahead.

Dre: Go ahead, Janine.

Janine: Is his power also that he's, like, Luffy rubbery?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: Okay, okay.

Austin: He is...yeah, yeah, yeah. He is like a...he is not quite "gets to turn into a paint *Akira* monster," you know? But he has become gifted with the sort of weird body paint power.

Janine: Okay, because at first when you described that, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] I thought it was just, like, his body being rent in a cartoonishly horrific way.

Austin: Oh, no. Uh uh.

Janine: Okay. So I was— [laughs quietly] okay.

Austin: No. Mm-mm. He's a Gumby man now.

Keith: Lot of Gumby this season.

Dre: Yeah, lot of Gumby.

Austin: Yeah, we're high on Gumby. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Okay.

Austin: [chuckles] I don't do drugs, guys. I'm high on Gumby.

Ali: Mm. [Keith laughs]

Dre: I would like to use my Hot Blooded move.

Austin: Uh huh?

Dre: To attempt something uncanny, superhuman, or unbelievable.

Austin: Oh, I love that.

Dre: And I would like to turn the material that Figure in Bismuth's body is made of into concrete.

Austin: Ooh! Ooooh!

Janine: Oh. [Dre laughs]

Keith: That's good.

Austin: Give me a Channel roll! [Dre laughs] That's a plus 3.

Dre: Which is great, because now it's plus 3. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. That's 2d6 plus 3.

Dre: Let's fucking go!

Austin: That's a fucking 11. [Dre laughs]

Keith: That's 11.

Austin: Well, here's my question, is like...is this coming from Perennial? Is that where this power comes from?

Dre: [sighs] You tell me. I don't know as much about Perennial off the top of my head.

Austin: I mean, it's not that. It's my question of being like: is it enough for you...you haven't freed yourself from the Witch in Glass yet.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: But you've learned that there's this other source of power in the sort of sphere that is Palisade that you could draw on, and you just read a story about guardians of this planet becoming a more expressive, you know, a self expressive, more realized

version of themselves, and now are you becoming a concrete, the Figure— you know, not the Figure in Concrete, obviously. We'll talk— you know, who knows.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: But is that...could you be drawing...is this the first time you've touched the moon, the Chimera's Lantern?

Dre: Ooh. Yeah.

Austin: And this is, like, proof that it's real. Whether or not it can save you and become a new source of sustenance is a thing we'll have to find out in a future sequence, you know? But could this prove that the power is real?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I like it.

Dre: And I think too it's the, you know, there's probably the flash— as the hand comes out and Figure puts the two and two together, there's the flashback moment of the Iconoclast being like, "Hey, you know, if you let me in, I'll kill her for you."

Austin: Right. Right. Yep. Mm-hmm. But this is not that.

Dre: And like, at first, that was Figure saying, "No, because I want to kill her."

Austin: Right.

Dre: And now it's like, I don't even need to kill her.

Austin: Right.

Dre: I can just be free.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah. There's an irony here, which is you've become concrete, but in this moment, you've never felt lighter.

Janine: That's beautiful. Put that on a shirt.

Austin: Phew! [Ali and Dre laugh]

Dre: Oh, uh, can I give Kenneth the Risk "terrified"?

Austin: Yeah, I think that that's fair, yeah. [Dre laughs] Yeah, yeah, Kenneth is...this is bad for Kenneth, right? The arms that were coming out of you solidify into a softer, into like a brittle concrete, and they turn to ash, right? They break off of you. They shatter on the ground. Kenneth, you know, falls back and is like:

Austin (as **Ken**): She said it would work! She said it would work.

Austin: So, we have that happening here. Kenneth is effectively ready to be knocked the fuck out when we come back. I need to make a note of this, but is defenseless at this point, easily. But then there's other things. Phrygian, you are now alone trying to arrest Em.

Keith: Great.

Austin: And I think Sea has—

Keith: Are we gonna rewind to before the ship and do that as—

Austin: No, this is all happening in the middle of...this is all...while you were doing your sneaking around is when the other stuff was happening, right?

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So we're sliding that stuff back on the timeline to line up with that, you know what I mean?

Keith: Got it.

Austin: So, you've— you know, whatever your—

Keith: So I'm out of time.

Austin: You're putting him in cuffs, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: I think Sea has relented and let you put Em in cuffs or grab his hands or wires. I don't know, how do you want to take him into custody?

Keith: Hey, I haven't used it for this before.

Austin: Uh huh?

Keith: I'm full of wires.

Austin: You are full of wires.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: This is true. So yeah, you're able to do this. I don't think Sea...Sea is afraid of blowing his cover, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: He doesn't know that you have figured this out, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: So, he is letting this happen and is actually, you know, it's when that's happening that the *Kestral White* shows up and decloaks on the horizon, and there's—you don't see it, but we do. The camera sees a sort of grin on Sea, as if like, "Oh, the timing couldn't be better for this bullshit." But also, even Sea does have a look where it's like, "I can't fucking believe this is happening." This was not on...this is a moment of the Authority not talking to themselves.

Keith: This seems like the U.S. funding two sides of a skirmish.

Austin: This is exactly what's happening, Keith. Yes.

Keith: Yeah. Yep.

Austin: This is the Bilateral Intelligence Service kidnapped Kenneth Marian Colver because, “Oh my god, that’s a fucking Iconoclast. We could use that. Or has a connection to an Iconoclast; we could use that.”

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: “Uh, lock him up in that ancient Rapid Evening detention center we have, until we can figure out what to do with him.” And Tenn Alpenglow being like, “I’ve been a terrible knight. I have let my ward be captured. I have to free him.” So, to be clear, all that shit Kenneth Marian Colver was spitting about “Oh no, he’s gonna kill me” is bullshit. He was just trying to get out and hurt you, obviously now, right?

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Right.

Ali: Ohh.

Brnine Finds Cori [1:16:16]

Austin: Three, Cori’s knocked the fuck out on the ground.

Ali: On the ground?

Austin: Next to this big glass eye. And real quick, Brnine? The eye is open. The glass eye has an iris. It has a retina. It has a—

Ali: Mm.

Austin: The glass has filled with color, and it’s blinking at you, and Cori is knocked out next to it. Has not actually been pulled inside of it, but is...I mean, Cori? You know how like in a video game sometimes, you get brought into the dream world, and it’s all fucked up in there, and you have like a little adventure?

Sylvia: You're talking to a *Kingdom Hearts* fan, Austin.

Austin: Yeah, we're doing that shit.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Austin: You're walking on, like...

Sylvia: I've been having these strange dreams lately. [Ali laughs]

Austin: You literally have! [laughs] You are standing on a large— I mean, it's not stained glass, because we used stained glass elsewhere, but you're standing on a large icon of the Eye of Devotion, and all around you, a million of those eyes open up and blink, and they say your name. They say...they probably don't say "Cori." They probably say "Coriolis."

(as **eyes**): Coriolis. Finally, you get to see me as I am.

Austin: And they blink once, and you tell me: which pair of your wings turns black? [Ali gasps]

Sylvia: Oh, fuck! [claps] Um...I feel like...oh. [Ali laughs quietly] Ohh.

Janine: I can't believe I posted the picture before that even.

Sylvia: Oh, this is so tough. Back wings. The back wings. It's gotta be the back wings!

Austin: Wait, which picture?

Ali: In the PALISADE Discord. [laughs]

Janine: In PALISADE.

Keith: In PALISADE, yeah.

Janine: I can't believe I posted that before you said the black wings thing.

Austin: Oh! [laughs] It's literally there!

Sylvia: Yeah. Let's fucking go.

Austin: Uh huh!

Ali: Janine, you want to describe what you posted?

Janine: It's one of those, like, you know like a Disney princess edit where they make them, like, modern or whatever, kind of?

Sylvia: Disney punk edit, yeah.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: But it's Alice from *Alice in Wonderland*, and her hair is pink, and she has fully tattooed arms [**Austin:** Uh huh.] and a black dress with, like, a weird embroidered apron or something? And she's talking to a cat.

Austin: Uh huh. Mm-hmm. All pink hair.

Janine: Smoky eye.

Sylvia: I said it was— I kind of knee-jerk said it would be Cori's back wings. I've changed my mind. I think we're gonna start with the arms. [Ali gasps]

Austin: Okay. The arm wings turn black first. I've had this in my notes for months. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: I'm so happy right now. I'm so happy right now, Austin.

Austin: I've had, "Whenever Cori loses Channel, find a way to change her wings from white to black," and here we are. [someone, presumably Sylvia, claps excitedly]

Keith: Yep.

Austin: Cori.

Sylvia: Hi.

Austin: You find yourself on the shore of a strange inky black world. The water has a sort of light blue tinge to it, almost glowing, and there is a figure in front of you who feels more like an iconograph than a person or feels rendered iconographically. They are a mountain, and they are a valley, and they are the rivers that run through the valley, but they are a person, and they seem stifled. I wouldn't go so far as to say this is a digital space, but it is a dreamlike psychedelic vision. You don't have your wings, but—

Sylvia: Any of them?

Austin: Any of them, in this moment.

Sylvia: Oh.

Austin: And you feel so young as to have not yet been born. I don't know what that feels like emotionally to you, but it feels like a time before who you were, and you feel that in reverse. What do you do?

Sylvia: I think I'm gonna approach this person, especially if they seem like they're in distress, because like, maybe I—

Austin: They do, yeah.

Sylvia: I think I ask, like:

(as **Cori**): Are you okay?

Sylvia: Or like call out to them like that.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Again, they are, you know, almost pictographic, and somewhere on this pictographic figure, there's like a puff of smoke, or not a puff but like a line, as if someone had lit a campfire on the side of a mountain or a bonfire but also as if someone was taking a drag of a cigarette. And they sort of sigh, and they say:

(as **iconograph**): Yeah, no, I'm...I'll figure it out. How'd you get here?

Sylvia (as **Cori**): You know, I don't think I actually have a good answer to that one.

Sylvia: And kind of just look around more.

Austin: Mm-hmm. The landscape is interesting. It is smooth in places and glassy in places, but it also— even the land, in ways, feels like it could be the sea. Like, in the distance, the same color changes, or the texture of the black part of this world changes, as if it's gone from solid and hard and physical to something like a placid lake, just waiting for something to disrupt it and for ripples to shake outwards. And this figure looks at you—this figure uses he/him pronouns—and says:

(as **iconograph**): This was gonna be the big one, you know? The last one. I was gonna figure it out. But I got up here, and, ah...

Sylvia (as **Cori**): The last what?

Austin (as **iconograph**): The last thing I build. The last thing I design, you know? Everyone says I had a good career, but it felt like nothing I've made, not in a long time, has been...you know, you're your own worst critic.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): I mean, I think it's kind of impressive that you made anything at all. I always— I struggle with that sort of stuff. I'm not super crafty.

Austin (as **iconograph**): Huh.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Like, what have you done, you know?

Sylvia: Trying not to be like, "I don't know who you are."

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Because this person seems like they have an ego about knowing who they are.
[laughs quietly]

Austin (as **iconograph**): Eh, it's not worth...it's not worth getting into all of that. You know.

Austin: Grinning. How does a mountain...how does a pictograph of a mountain grin? you know, it's as—

Sylvia: Like, smokestack over top of it forms into a smile.

Austin: [chuckles] I think it's less that. I think it's actually like a part of the...you know, it's like a complex pictographic, or even maybe not pictographic, maybe it's just like a...hmm, like a combined character, like a series of pictographs that have been put into one another, and it's as if part of them are dead trees, like trees in winter, and they become trees in summer or trees in spring, right? It's like they go from empty branches to branches with leaves, right?

(as **iconograph**): I used to build things that hurt people, and then I built something that stops people from being hurt, and I'd like the last thing I build to be something that actively helps people, but I can't get it right. I can't stop it from hurting people a little.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Um...

Sylvia: That's in character. She's doing that in character.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: That's not just me filling time.

(as **Cori**): I don't know. I mean, like...everything's got the chance to hurt somebody, right? Like...

Austin (as **iconograph**): Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Like, you eat too much, there's a chance you get a tummy ache, even though the food's good. It's, you know.

Austin (as **iconograph**): Mm.

Sylvia: Taps her head three times.

Austin: Mm-hmm. The tide is getting closer and closer, and the kind of figure settles down onto the shoreline here, as if to put their feet into the water, and just kind of looks out over the horizon a little bit, and you know, there is a sort of extension of...specifically, this is like an arm, as if an arm were, again, some sort of pictograph for a river, as if outreaching this river, leaping off the body of this mountain or maybe out from one of the valleys that make up this person's form, and they begin to sketch something in the sky. It's like they're drawing the line between stars and a constellation, and it is an eye that looks down at you, looks down at you both, and you recognize this as the right balance, the right shape, the right scale for Devotion's eye. You can draw eyes many different ways, but this is some early version of the Eye of Devotion, and you know here now that you are some years ago. In the Principality's terms, 4500 years ago; for those in the Mirage, only 450 years ago. And you are at the moment or near to the moment or some imagined version of the moment—maybe imagined by Devotion itself—of its creation. The eye blinks down at you, and you fell all at once that it is the acceptance of what you said, that you can't make something that can't be used to hurt someone in some way. And do you look at this thing? Do you continue looking at the figure on the shore? Do you say something else?

Sylvia: Oh, I think I sit down next to them and look up at it.

Austin: Mm. There is activity around you now, and the pictograph, the complex pictograph of this thing, this valley, this peaceful valley, is replaced by just a sort of living lexicon of dozens, hundreds of different names of people and things. Again, it's all this type of like, you're basically looking at kanji running around or something, right? Or hieroglyphics or something in between the two, right? People moving around. And you don't need to spend too much time here to understand what this is. These are the earliest Devotees, living on the black sun of the Twilight Mirage, living under the guidance of the new moon of that sun, a sort of deep eye that orbits around it and provides for the people. You didn't notice it, but it's easier to breathe now than it was a

moment ago, as if more air has been provided to this strange environment. You know in your heart that there is food and there is drink. You know that the people here will be provided for, that Devotion is a Divine designed to give to people in exchange for a small cost. And things go from this sort of strange pictographic mural that you're part of to a sort of descriptive text that you're falling through. It's as if you're falling through a living Wikipedia page about the Devotees. Maybe it's a dossier—in fact, let's call it that—about the Devotees written in the sort of functionalist dialect that you know—you don't know this, maybe, but the reader, the watcher, the listener would know this—of spies, right? This is written the way a Curtain report would be, and it describes the Devotees and their culture as you kind of literally fall through this space. Also, are you still being seen at this point as Cori, or have you also taken one of these weird idiographic forms?

Sylvia: Um...

Austin: I don't want to move us into a weird, you know, newtype space and not give you a chance to express yourself in that space in that way too.

Sylvia: I have an idea for, like...we've talked a lot about the sort of capillary images and stuff with Devotion.

Austin: Mm-hmm, right.

Sylvia: And sort of a wireframe of Cori made out of that is kind of what's in my head.

Austin: Mm-hmm. I love that.

Sylvia: And it kind of becomes more and more filled out as the time progresses.

Austin: Mm. You are moving through this text field, as if you were a mouse pointer. It's like someone's downloaded the Cori central nervous system...

Sylvia: Oh my god. Where do I get that?

Austin: Or it's not the nervous system, right? It's explicitly not. It's the capillary system, right?

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah. It's specifically trying to evoke, like, the veins in eyes.

Austin: The veins, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Which is close to the sort of nervous system branch and extension from the trunk of the spine, but it's different and importantly different, so.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Especially in a world where we already evoke that a lot with Perennial, so it's like there's two different versions of a very similar thing that are nevertheless, explicitly and importantly, not the same. So, you're almost like a mouse pointer moving through these words, right? We are in wild-ass 1970s psycho space, you know? We are in that mode. And, you know, catching some of the words as you pass by, it is the sort of cold escription of the people you call home or the people for home you associate with home. The Devotees, it says, are infamous for being late on schedule. They constantly leave parties a little early, because they find themselves drained too easily. Sometimes they're short in temper, but they're always honest in apology. They are described as living in a sort of cult on the moon Volition—or the sun Volition, depending on your perspective—at the center of the Twilight Mirage. They are described in this form, in this document, as being extremists, extreme collectivists. They willingly give of their own lifeforce so that they need not worry about food or drink or air. It says, at the bottom, “exploitable resource.”

And then there is a sort of dagger that punches through the page, like a letter opener that doesn't know how to open a letter and only how to pierce through it, and it is the sort of slender blade that you might associate with someone of great power in Stel Kesh. We are no longer in the world of idiographs and Wikipedia pages. We are now at the bottom of the Concave, where you are being woken up by Brnine, but you can see

that the final image that you have of what this dagger is is it is as if you've gone to the Wikipedia page for— or not even a Wikipedia page. It's like a museum artifact page for this knife, this dagger, and it is a weapon or a dagger from like 1400 years ago in the Principality, suggesting that something from the Principality reached into the Twilight Mirage 1400 years ago and, using this information, touched Devotion in some way, changed the story, exploited that exploitable resource. You don't know how. And again, 1400 years ago here; only 140 years ago in the Twilight Mirage. So, something about Devotion changed in the last century and a half. Brnine is looking down at you, as you wake up next to this big glass eye. What do you do? And Brnine, what do you say?

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Captain! Oh my gosh.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Hey. Hi, hey.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Wha— did you get the creepy guy?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um, I think Phryge is dealing with it. Are you okay? You all right?

Sylvia: Um...actually, genuine question: Austin, before— last time, we had said I took a Peril, but we didn't define it.

Austin: We didn't.

Sylvia: So, this kind of flavors that answer. [chuckles]

Austin: It does. It does. I think that you are— and again, Perils tend to be given by the GM, [**Sylvia**: Mm-hmm.] versus Risks that you take on yourself. I think you find yourself, I'm gonna say, “alienated.”

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: And really what I mean here is, like, separated from your connection to Devotion traditionally.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: But you can also read that socially if you want to. You can read that however you feel like it, right? There are lots of ways in which Cori, I believe, is alienated.

Sylvia: Yeah, little bit.

Dre: Damn. [Ali laughs quietly]

Austin: And you can read that as you want to.

Sylvia: Okay, then I think her answer is just like:

(as **Cori**): Ah...I'm a little disoriented, but I don't think I'm hurt. What happened?

Ali (as **Brnine**): I...I found you here. So, yeah, I don't know. Um...we got separated, I guess. I'm sorry.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): No, no, no, no, no. No, wait, oh no. Thank you, but no, it's okay. Captain. It's okay. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Ali (as **Brnine**): You're good, though? Can you stand up, do you think?

Sylvia: I think she does stand up after being asked that, and like brushes herself off, and then I think last time we mentioned that it was her arm wings that turned black.

Austin: Uh huh, it sure was.

Sylvia: And I think that's when she sees that, and she's like:

(as **Cori**): [taken aback] That's new.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh. They don't change color?

Sylvia (as **Cori**): N- no? No. At least, mm...I mean, I guess the answer is yes now, but...

Ali (as **Brnine**): Sure. Well, yeah, I mean, you know, that's...it looks great. We'll get that— we'll get you checked out when we get back to the ship. Do you want a, um...

Ali: Can I pull out like a granola bar or something? [laughs]

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: Oh my god!

Austin: Very funny. Why not? Very good.

Sylvia: The fucking camp counselor vibes right now.

Austin: Uh huh. [Ali laughs] Truly.

Ali: I think it's like a rations pack. It's like a fruit bar. Because it's space, you know?

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

Sylvia: Yeah.

Janine: Is it like a little MRE?

Ali: I guess so, but it's like—

Janine: Where it's like, there's an energy bar [Ali laughs] and then like a pack of drink mix and then like a stick of cinnamon gum and then a little pouch of like enchilada bag.

Ali: No! No, no.

Janine: Okay. [laughs]

Ali: I was thinking like a granola bar but if it was made of, like, dried fruit.

Dre: Oh, yeah, sure.

Janine: Oh, like one of those RXBARs.

Austin: Oh, yeah, I know exactly what you're talking about.

Ali: Yeah, and have like a gummy quality.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, to make it more sci-fi.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah. That sounds good. I would like to have one of those.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah, no. I would go for that right now.

Austin: Yeah, can we bring some of those around or nah? [Ali laughs] As you are handing this over, you...what type of shoes are you both wearing?

Ali: Huh?

Austin: I need to know what type of shoes you're wearing.

Sylvia: Um...

Ali: Space Timberlands? [Dre laughs]

Austin: See? See, and you were like, "Huh?" [Ali laughs] You don't think that's an important thing to know about Brnine? That Brnine has space timbs on? [Ali and Dre laugh]

Ali: With the, like, laces tied around the ankle, you know?

Austin: Yeah, I know. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, okay, just making sure. [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

Dre: Hip hop hip hop.

Austin: Cori? Yeah.

Sylvia: How do I fucking follow that? How do I fucking—? [Ali laughs] I think they're just, like, sneakers, but she's got little wings on the heel.

Austin: Oh, that's very good.

Ali: Ooh! You got the Jeremy Scotts? [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

Austin: I'm gonna say, given these two answers, that it is Cori who first feels that the floor is being flooded?

Sylvia: Oh shit.

Austin: I don't think the water gets through your timbs is the thing, Brnine.

Ali: Mm, mm, mm-hmm.

Austin: Whereas I do suspect that you can tell pretty quickly that this bottom level of the Concave feels like it's flooding somehow, and it doesn't feel like there— as far as you— you're like looking around. There's no, like, leak. You know what I mean? You don't see a leak here, anyway.

Sylvia: Is there still— is there water on the ground, though?

Austin: There sure is!

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: There sure is. Let's cut to Phrygian, who, last I remember, was arresting somebody. Correct?

Phrygian [1:38:21]

Keith: Correct. Someone who, at this point, wants to be arrested. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yes. Yes, and in fact, we rolled, and you were successfully arresting him.

Keith: Yes.

Austin: I think that, at this point, what we'd decided was basically, oh, Sea, the head of the Concave, doesn't want to blow his own cover any further than he may have already done, and so he feels like he has to let you. You've succeeded on enough rolls to where you're bringing Em back to the Blue Channel. We should decide real quick— I guess we did. We put the Blue Channel out here, kind of southish or down the cliff. I don't know, the perspective on this gets weird, but it is just outside of the kind of abbey or whatever. And so you're heading back there when this big ship appears, let's say off the northern end of this coast, and the big announcement came that— and the sort of warning shot was fired, noting that you would be— if Kenneth Marian Colver wasn't handed over immediately, that there would be serious repercussions. [chuckles]

Keith: Does Phrygian know Kenneth Marian Colver? He's a big deal enough that I would know who the Viceroy is?

Austin: [cross] He's a big deal. You would know. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You know, I don't know that we're at... I don't know how Millennium Break and the Cause talk about the various leader— like, I don't know what their propaganda system is, but you've definitely seen [Keith: Right.] this dude's face on a dartboard or on a playing card or on some sort of, like, this motherfucker.

Keith: Roll of toilet paper in the bathroom?

Austin: Yeah, a roll of toilet— sure, totally. [Ali laughs quietly]

Dre: Yeah, put him on a urinal cake. That'll show him.

Keith: Eheheheheh!

Austin: Oh my god. [Sylvia and Keith laugh] What was that?

Keith: That's the nasty scoundrel laugh [**Austin:** Ohh.] of someone that wants to pee on the president.

Austin: Right, yeah. I guess so. I guess so!

Sylvia: God. God!

Austin: Mm-hmm. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: This fucking show.

Austin: So, what do you do?

Keith: Um...I mean, Phrygian is like, this is not— I think Phrygian is like, "This is not what we're doing here. We have to go."

Austin: Mm-hmm. So you're just rushing towards the Blue Channel, at this point.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Okay. This is a great sequence, then, to show off what happens as you do this, because at first, this is not a problem. No one's getting in your way. You're moving with one of the monks, so people are like, generally— people are already yelling, because a battleship just showed up and is flying above them and shooting warning shots.

Keith: Right.

Austin: And so, we get a kind of running, you know, *Children of Men* one-shot here of you trying to get to the Blue Channel, and at first, it's just like, fast walking. You can fast walk. You're moving past people, et cetera. And then, in the kind of wide shot of seeing all these buildings behind you or around you as you move past the Park of Devotion and you see the Glass Archive in the distance and the Convex—the one of these archives you didn't go to—you know, in front of you, and then there's the Twill and the Twilight Mirage kind of camp. You're moving past all these things, or they're all in the background. You kind of see the slow unfolding of what the repercussions are, because no one has shown up to be like, "Here's Kenneth Marian Colver," instantly. The first

thing that happens is a follow up shot from one of these big cannons that is much closer to— or one of the huge rays of the big cannons, that is much closer to the ground and ends up clipping part of the top of the Glass Archive, so like, you know, parts of the roof go flying past your— over your head and towards the camera, and you know, their explosions are leaving a kind of ringing noise in your ear. This is huge and loud and it's going from warning shot to more direct fire, and then you see a sort of wing of five smaller mechs. For us, we would think of these not as Altars, because they're only tier two, but the kind of old term for them. They are...why am I blanking on our old term for mechs like this?

Keith: Minions.

Austin: They're minions. No, they're not minions. [laughs quietly] They are hollows or hallows, depending on whether or not they have been blessed by a Divine. How to describe them? These are Kesh units called Gambesons.

Dre: Hmm.

Austin: They...imagine— you know what an iron maiden is.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Vaguely, right?

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Austin: Imagine an iron maiden that is...the doors are open, and instead of being, like...they're open, and the bottom hinges are off, so as if the interior— as if the doors are wings. So if you look at an iron maiden torture device, right?

Keith: Okay. Right.

Austin: Imagine that those outside doors—

Keith: Are wings.

Austin: Are only hinged at the top, and as such, are lifted up and are around them or, you know, above them as if they're wings. And then, also, there is a cage, and in the middle of that big cage— and again, this is a mech, right? So it's still, like, 20, 30 feet tall, right?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And this is a small mech, so it's smaller than any of your mechs, but there are five of them, and one of them is golden. There are people in there. They're not in a cockpit. They're just, like, caged and trapped inside of these things. The Gambeson is a unit that is almost always piloted by a criminal who has been conscripted by Kesh.

Keith: Oh my god!

Austin: And forced to pay off their debt in combat. And they are flying over this facility, and the interior spikes of the iron maiden are being launched downwards into this facility like a barrage of missiles, except instead of missiles, they're just very sharp physical spikes. Yeah, this is like as metal as Kesh can get, which is to say evil. As evil as Kesh can get is conscripted prisoners in torture devices flying in formation and just laying havoc to this place openly. The voice of the commander of this unit, Alpenglow, Tenn Alpenglow again says:

(as **Alpenglow**): This will end the second you deliver my ward, Kenneth Marian Colver, to me.

Austin: You know, it's the sort of faux care, the faux honor that often comes from people in roles like this. But regardless of whatever his motivations are, it is making it hell for you to get back to the Blue Channel. I do think I need a Weather the Storm roll from you. What's this look like? What does trying to avoid all of this look like? I guess it might not be Weather the Storm. I guess you tell me what you do, as this kind of huge gang of these small but still very deadly mechs comes into view for you and begins kind of harrying this entire place.

Keith: I think that my concern is, like, not losing Em and also not letting either of us be hit by debris or whatever.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: So like, sort of acting as or being ready to act as a shield for anything like that
[**Austin:** Sure.] that might come and, you know, clock him in the head.

Austin: Yeah. I think that that is probably still Act Under Fire. Or Weather the Storm, rather.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That make sense to you?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Do you think that that is Defy? Do you think it's Sense?

Keith: I think it's Defy.

Austin: To dodge, tough it out, strongarm your way through. That makes sense to me.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And your Defy, of course, is...

Keith: Is 3.

Austin: Oh. Yeah, damn. All right, 2d6 plus 3. Ooh, that's...

Keith: Oh, it's a 9. That's a bad...

Austin: Nevertheless, only a 9 here.

Keith: Oh, actually, that's a 10, because it says plus 2.

Austin: Oh.

Keith: I leveled up, and I didn't change it, so that's a 10.

Austin: You did not change it in the— yeah, you hit plus 2?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yep, I gotcha.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: All right, so that is a 10. Absolutely. So, then, what's this look like? What's the success here look like as you dodge through all of this attacking, these kind of strafing runs from these living torture device mechs?

Keith: I think it is, like, very...you know, I think it's very traditional sort of Weather the Storm, like, kind of literal.

Austin: Oh.

Keith: Like, oh, there is debris. There is big waves of, like, broken rock [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] sort of jutting at us that I'm kind of just taking. It's not big enough to do damage to me but might be big enough to do damage to Em.

Austin: For sure. Yeah.

Keith: And I think it's just sort of, like, I've just gotta be in the way of this so that we can get to the ship without something bad happening.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, neither of you take any serious harm here. Em is shaking scared, at this point. Is convinced— I think Em is like:

Austin (as **Em**): They're coming for me! They're coming for me. [Keith laughs]

Austin: Has completely made this about himself and is as confused by this as...I guess, actually, is this not true? I guess Em— yeah, Em doesn't know. Em doesn't know that— Em is not high enough up on the food chain to know the stuff that was actually happening here, that Kenneth Marian Colver was being held because of connecting with

the Iconoclasts and was another exploitable resource for this new contemporary version of the Curtain, et cetera, right?

Keith: Well, he does presumably know that he is not Kenneth Marian Colver.

Austin: Yes, he does know that. Yeah, 100%. And he knows who Kenneth Marian Colver is, but he's very much like:

Austin (as **Em**): That's a front! That's a lie! [Keith laughs] That's an excuse for them to come kill me.

Austin: You know?

Sylvia: What's the first letter of Marian?

Austin: Exactly.

Sylvia: It's M.

Austin: It's M!

Keith: It's M.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Oh my god.

Austin: M. Killer. Not Colver, Killer! [Sylvia laughs] So, you are gonna manage to make it back to the Blue Channel here. I guess, at this point...Brnine, what is the policy for reacting aboard the Blue Channel in a moment like this? Like, what has your crew been trained to do when an enemy ship shows up in an unexpected place and enemy mechs and shit start attacking a nearby allied facility? Because like, I could decide what this crew does, but I'm much more curious to know what your training would lead them to do.

Ali: Right, sure. I mean, it's like everybody gets into positions, right? So, Midnite would be sort of at the helm.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And then Routine would have, like, a gun of some sort but wouldn't be using the ship's guns.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: He would be on...like, on command to either go into a small mech that he has of his own or just, like, his own weapons.

Austin: Right. Right.

Ali: Whereas Hunting is tech guy, and he would probably be the one— so, the Blue Channel has...I think it's the Asepsis drones that need setup?

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Ali: So he would be the one who's, like, in the bay preparing all of that stuff.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: And then also checking that the systems are fine. Like, he's the one who would be like, "Oh, shields are down. I'm gonna reconfigure the energy to put the shields back up," or whatever.

Austin: Right. Doing engineering type shit, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Gotcha. So then, yeah, maybe it is Routine who is in the landing bay and has a huge gun, like a huge— like, the sort of person— in my mind, Routine is holding a sort of machine gun, the sort that you have to put down on a biped to use, except just has it hauled over his shoulder in the way action hero guys do sometimes. [laughs quietly]

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And he's like, waving you in, Phrygian, as you come up. And he's like:

(as **Routine**): Who's this?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Spy.

Austin (as **Routine**): Spy.

Austin: Like, does a little “mm, yeah, spy,” nod.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin (as **Routine**): You know where to put him. [Austin, Dre, and Sylvia laugh]

Austin: And kind of finger— thumb over the shoulder. I don't know if there's a brig. Did we— we've had this conversation before.

Keith: Yeah. I think that—

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Lock him in the rec room.

Keith: Because I was gonna say that we put him in, like, the cargo hold.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Because I think that's...I think that we had the Twill in there when we...

Austin: We did.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But the Twill weren't prisoners.

Keith: No, but if we don't have somewhere for them, I don't think we would have somewhere for Em either.

Ali: The cargo hold is more of like a big open space too.

Austin: Yeah, that's how I'm imagining it.

Ali: Because it's in the mech bay, basically.

Austin: Right.

Ali: It's like a big garage.

Janine: Yeah, you're bringing in a whole little village of people.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Sure, we don't have enough bedrooms for them, but we probably have just, like, a room that locks from the outside. Right?

Ali: Right. The way that I had been imagining it—

Austin: Phrygian could be a room that locks from the outside.

Dre: Ooh!

Janine: That's true.

Austin: I'm not saying that they should do that.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Austin: [laughs quietly] I'm not saying that.

Keith: That would take up a lot of time.

Austin: Okay. I didn't know that, but sure. [Ali laughs]

Keith: No, no, sorry. I mean it would mean that I can't do anything in the episode.

Austin: Yes, yes, yes.

Janine: Mm.

Austin: I understand. I gotcha. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Like, I could be a room and then go make a sandwich and eat it [**Austin:** Uh huh.] and then come back and maybe people have made it back to the Blue Channel.

Austin: Right.

Janine: That's also a very forward proposition when you barely know someone, to...

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Janine: Yeah, you know?

Austin: For sure, for sure.

Ali: So, the layout of the Blue Channel, as far as I consider it, is that it's two levels, and there's— you kind of go in through that big cargo hold that we spoke about, and that's where all of the mechs come in and out.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And that's kind of like, not as big as a high school gymnasium, but like, that kind of vibe. And in that, there's like a wall of smaller rooms where people have their private quarters. That's probably where the rec center is. There's probably, like, an empty— you could lock him into the rec center.

Austin: Lock him in the rec center.

Ali: And then just keep a bodyguard or have like—

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I don't know that we have an empty quarters? That seems ambitious for this, but—

Austin: Especially since you've already taken on, uh, whatsherface.

Ali: Septet, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, Septen Septet. Or Saffron Septet.

Keith: This is a big ship. We could have a room, an empty room.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: I don't think that's a big deal.

Ali: And then, from there, there's an upstairs area that's way more cramped, and that's like the command deck [**Austin:** Right.] and sort of like an informal meeting room.

Austin: I think the rec room is the one that's funniest, and so...

Ali: Okay.

Austin: And maybe actually what we get here, then, is rec room and then Saffron can be the guard in her Torch body, in her big strong Torch form, her old NEH, you know, war robot form.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Is that allowed?

Austin: I don't know. That's a good question.

Ali: I mean, I already think that Asepsis is not cool with Em being here.

Austin: Oh! That's a good point.

Ali: Much less... [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, this is me being distracted. Yeah. I think that's how you find out any of this is happening, besides the floodwater, which you don't understand and no one should understand quite yet.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Keith: On what grounds? I'm curious.

Ali: Um, I don't know that Em has a very strong integrity, especially in terms of supporting Millennium Break.

Austin: Yeah, definitely not.

Keith: No. But is that really Asepsis's priorities on how they—

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Absolutely.

Keith: It is?

Austin: Yes.

Ali: That's where that hook comes from.

Keith: Okay.

Ali: The backstory of that hook is that a Millennium Break spy once came onto the Blue Channel, and Asepsis figured it out. So like, yeah, very sensitive to spies, IMO. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Okay. I was thinking of, like, the ping from the NHS robot and being like, oh, Asepsis's priorities are weird and obscure and kind of—

Austin: They're also that because of Asepsis's age.

Keith: They're also— right.

Austin: But the primary ones are like— remember, Asepsis didn't like the Twill being here even, so the idea that this is a person that you suspect [**Keith:** Yeah.] is actively being an enemy agent. How do you know this isn't part of the plan? How do you know they don't have a— did you check them for bombs? Did you check them for viruses? Did you check them for anything? You arrested a person and brought them onboard. They might be about to bite you in the ass. You didn't even do a— you didn't even pat them down.

Keith: Oh, I'd like to see him try to bite me in the ass. [Austin and Sylvia laugh] Can you even find it, Em?

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Dre: Hmm. Hmm.

Austin: I think we put Em in this room, and we'll see what happens. You did arrest Em. Em does not seem like he can successfully reach to any hidden weapons or anything like that.

Keith: Yeah. I mean, I'll make a roll here. I'll...

Austin: I will...you succeed at making sure that Em does not have any secret weapons or whatever.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: But Asepsis is pissed that that—

Keith: Is suspicious.

Austin: Is suspicious and is pissed— doesn't believe that you succeeded at that.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Asepsis can— Asepsis and Brnine can verify integrity, right?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: In Asepsis's mind.

Ali: It's okay. I just have to go talk to my little guy once I get back to the ship, and we'll work it out.

Austin: Well, an important thing is your little guy is actually—and maybe this is part of it—is mostly with you, because your goal was to upload Asepsis.

Ali: Uh huh.

Keith: Right, in the backpack.

Austin: And so, Asepsis is one of these, like, distributed Divines that can be in a couple places at once, but I think the distribution can be weighted and is currently weighted towards in the backpack of Brnine.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: In the slowly flooding basements of the Concave. So, uh oh.

Ali: No worries.

Glass Archive cont. [1:56:54]

Austin: Uh huh. Speaking of places flooding, Figure in Bismuth and Thisbe, the similar...the ground seems to be flooding as if from nowhere is happening for y'all, but you have a slightly different view on it, because you might recall you were on a slightly elevated level [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] when you went up to find these kind of ancient...the oldest and clearest of the— or not the oldest, but the clearest of the prophecies of the old oracle engine. Those ancient kind of slabs of glass are on a higher level, and so you can look down and see people running around, splashing in the water through the glass in the distance. Like, it is flooding in here. This whole place is flooding somehow. And also, you do still have this defenseless and scared but not fully...

Dre: No, I don't think we knocked him out.

Austin: No, I don't think you Struck Decisively. And you don't have to knock someone out to Strike Decisively. You could talk them out to Strike Decisively, you know what I mean?

Dre: Sure.

Austin: You could say, “Don't give me any fucking problems,” and if you Strike Decisively, they will be taken out of the scene, so to speak, right? So, you know, we'll follow the fiction, effectively. So, at this point, I think you have those two problems. The place seems to be flooding. The emergency lights all come on. Remember we talked about the light from the robot that you— the elevator robot sending a message back and letting people know that you had come in here? Which seems like such a small problem, at this point.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: That same pathway of light is now lit up and directing people towards the exits, so you have a way out, but also, Kenneth Marian Colver is refusing to go with you and is trying to— I guess probably trying to get past you, actually, and trying to run away and escape your hold. That's probably the— or escape past you, kind of break past you and run off into the dark, basically.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: Which, if you let him do it, he'll just disappear, right? Up to y'all what you do.

Dre: Um...

Janine: Can I fucking kick him?

Dre: Yeah, go for it.

Austin: You can totally fucking kick him. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Hell yeah. Now I don't even have to do it.

Austin: When you Strike Decisively with Clash or Talk, whichever is more appropriate, you go ahead and roll one of those. What are you— this is Clash. This is definitely Clash and not Talk.

Janine: Yeah, it seems like Clash.

Austin: Uh huh. 2d6 plus 2, I believe.

Janine: I just realized I wasn't loaded in. Here we go.

Austin: Hey, that's an 11. [chuckles] So, I think you got him here. What is the, um...again, it's not a Risk or a Peril. It is just he is...I'll read from the book again or I'll read from the sheet again. "On a 10+, you strike true. Director characters are killed, forced to retreat, or otherwise removed as a threat, per the fiction. Player characters should roll Bite the Dust." So yeah, removed as a threat from the fiction. What's this look like? What is the play?

Janine: Can I...can Thisbe just have, like, clotheslined him with her leg as he tried to run?

Austin: Absolutely. [Dre laughs]

Janine: And then he just gets knocked out?

Austin: Just gets knocked the fuck out. Yep. Easy. Done.

Janine: That's perfect. I love it.

Austin: Yeah. Like, and when you say clotheslined, you literally mean lifts the leg up to a clothesline.

Janine: Yeah, I mean, there's maybe—

Austin: You're not tripping him.

Janine: No. There's maybe a bit of kick force.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: But I think Thisbe's very aware that if she actually kicked this little weiner [Sylvia laughs] it might destroy his ribcage or something, and that's not desirable.

Austin: Right, sure. Right.

Janine: So, I think it's very much a thing of like, just lifting the leg, and there's a bit of like a pivot, like a swing, **[Austin: Mm.]** as she gets into the right position. That's where the force comes from, but mostly it's him running into a metal beam.

Austin: Mmph. [laughs] Full speed. Love it.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Do you just lift him up after that? Are you just— what do you— you take him with you?

Janine: Oh yeah.

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Janine: Yeah, I'm just gonna haul him up.

Austin: Okay. Yeah, great. The two of you also, I guess, can hear the violence outside, and some of it actually rings home, as one of these big spikes—that's, you know, taller than you, Thisbe, 10 feet tall or 12 feet tall or something—comes rushing through the roof of this building and actually shatters one of these ancient panes of glass. Do y'all just begin making your way out? What's the game plan?

Dre: Uh, do we have comms?

Austin: You do have comms. Yep.

Dre: Okay. I immediately radio Brnine once we have this man under control.

Austin: What do you say?

Dre: Um...what was this guy's name again? Viceroy?

Austin: Kenneth Marian Colver, the Viceroy of Palisade.

Dre: Okay. Okay.

Dre (as **Figure**): Captain Brnine? Are you there?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh, yeah.

Dre (as **Figure**): Uh, myself and Thisbe are in possession of the Kesh Viceroy.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh shit. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Dre (as **Figure**): How should we proceed?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh...

Ali: I haven't heard the big— I'm like underground. I do not know.

Austin: You're underground, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, okay.

Austin: I think, again, the first thing that you...the thing that you note is Asepsis gives you the ping on the spy being brought onboard.

Ali: Right.

Austin: And maybe it's like, as part of that, you see that the ship is in, like, red alert mode or orange alert or whatever, you know what I mean? There's like—

Ali: Right.

Austin: The message has data associated with it, and it's like, "Current status, ship status," you know? [laughs quietly]

Ali: Uh huh, uh huh.

Austin: And it's like, "Preparing for combat." So you knew something was up.

Ali: Right.

Austin: But deep underground here, the thing that you've been concerned with is Cori seems to have woken up from a strange trance, has weird black wings—

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: And this room is flooding.

Ali: Yeah, and the flood. Right, right, right.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: But I haven't heard, like, the shots or anything, is what I was...yeah. Or the big announcement.

Austin: I think maybe the cannon fire, which maybe you thought was thunder, you know?

Ali: Okay. But I didn't hear the big speaker thing.

Austin: No. Not down here, no.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

(as **Brnine**): Are y'all good?

Dre (as **Figure**): Uh, yes. We are safe for the moment. However, it would appear that the settlement is under widespread attack.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh, not ideal. I...

Janine: Do you want to mention something about how this guy tried to summon a guy out of you?

Dre: Oh. No, we can talk about that later.

Janine: Okay. [Austin chuckles]

Ali: Okay. Sure. Not essential. Not mission critical. [laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Figure**): The commander of the Kesh forces has said they would withdraw upon receiving the Viceroy.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Wait, they're here for him? [Austin laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Figure**): That is what they have broadcasted.

Ali (as **Brnine**): And y'all have him?

Dre (as **Figure**): Not on purpose, but yes.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh boy. Okay. Um... [Sylvia laughs] I...okay, prioritize your safety. Bargain, I guess?

Dre (as **Figure**): Uh...okay?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Well, like, best case scenario is a ceasefire, right?

Dre (as **Figure**): The Viceroy seemed to believe that this was actually an attempt on his life.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Who cares?

Dre (as **Figure**): That's fair. [Austin laughs] Captain, I will follow orders, but it seems like this is something you should do?

Ali (as **Brnine**): I don't have the guy! [Keith and Ali laugh]

Dre (as **Figure**): Which I think maybe puts you in better bargaining position, but fair.

Janine: Also, I don't know what the Thisbe way to say "don't be a sucker" is, [Ali laughs] but he did say, "They're gonna kill me! Help!" right before trying to put a guy through you. [Austin laughs]

Dre: Sure.

Janine: So I don't know how much stock we can really put in that.

Dre: Fair.

Janine: And also, I don't know, let them kill him.

Austin: Just one guy.

Ali: Thisbe, distantly, in the back of this call, like... [Janine and Ali laugh]

Janine: I think the Thisbe version of that is:

(as **Thisbe**): I am not concerned about this person's welfare.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I will throw them at the invading ship if we need to.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Great. Cool. Yeah. I kind of have a situation going on here. When I get to ground, I'll check back in, but just try to leverage it, and if he dies, he dies.
[Austin chuckles]

Dre (as **Figure**): Roger that.

Janine: Just try to leverage it. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Austin: Mm-hmm. Exploitable resource. Mm-hmm. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Uh huh.

Janine: You're right. Maybe they brought some tomahtoes. [Ali laughs]

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Uh, hi.

Keith: Phrygian's also here.

Austin: Oh, you're— Phrygian's here. [Janine laughs]

Keith: I also have a headpiece. I was just listening before.

Dre (as **Figure**): Sure. Hello.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh, hi.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Do you think that they're actually gonna stop attacking if we give this guy back?

Dre (as **Figure**): Probably not.

Ali (as **Brnine**): [quietly] Oh.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Okay. Then we should just run away. Also—

Janine (as **Thisbe**): We don't want this guy, and we do not want him to be here.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I don't want this place to get destroyed.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Yes. It's desirable, if there is a chance to have this individual removed from Violet Cove, that is worth taking. And if it does not work, then we will destroy them, and he will also be destroyed, and that will also be an acceptable outcome.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Right. Sounds acceptable. Great. Thisbe, you're gonna take point on this one. [Janine laughs] I'll check back in when I'm on ground.

Austin: All right. What's—

Janine: Acknowledged. I guess.

Austin: Damn.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: Damn.

Ali: [laughs] Thisbe: the most level-headed one in the group, according to Brnine.

Janine: Thisbe's in charge now! [Ali laughs]

Austin: Just quickly checking your gravity clock things to see if there's anything there that triggers. I don't think there is, no. This is definitely not— this is the opposite, Thisbe, of someone— of Brnine underestimating you and you proving them wrong. [Ali laughs] They are, in fact, properly, maybe, estimating you.

Janine: But does this check “Brnine is like everyone else. They are not a uniquely privileged operant”?

Austin: It does, but gravity clocks don't just change because of conversation, right?

Janine: Oh, okay.

Austin: As far as I recall.

Ali: We would have to do a roll together, right?

Austin: There would be some sort of dice roll involved or a downtime sequence about this.

Janine: Oh.

Austin: Do you know what I mean?

Janine: Sure.

Austin: I'll double check really quick, just to confirm, but I'm pretty sure we need more than... [types] Yeah.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Yeah, there's that trigger, and it's when that thing happens or when...et cetera, right? You help and hinder somebody. You blah blah blah blah blah. You roll to work with them or against them or you hurt them.

Brnine and Cori Investigate [2:08:36]

Austin: All right, so...let's stay with Brnine and Cori for a second, because it seems like you're just trying to get out of this place as it floods? Or are you trying to do something else? I will say this is probably also a place where you...if Em...I guess you don't know what Em was looking for necessarily, but in the same way that Em was looking for information down here, this is also a place where you could try to find a place to upload Asepsis or et cetera, you know? So, to kind of put a hard decision in front of you, it's continue your investigation of Devotion and Violet Cove or get the fuck out of here. Or figure out what's up with the flooding, but I will just tell you that is...that is a thing that will solve itself, probably, momentarily, and I don't necessarily need you or want you to spend 20 minutes being like, "We gotta find out where the flooding is coming from!" because it's not coming from down here.

Ali: Right.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Ali: Sure, sure, sure, sure. But like, it's a slow flood?

Austin: Not as slow as you would like it to be!

Ali: [laughs] Can I go up a floor—?

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Ali: And find a terminal to put Asepsis in?

Austin: You totally can. I'm gonna have you roll dice.

Ali: Sure, I would love to do that.

Austin: This, again, is definitely Weather the Storm. And I think this is probably Weather the Storm Sense, because what you're looking for— it's about finding a place that you can upload Asepsis safely and doing it quickly.

Ali: Okay, and I have plus 1 in Sense.

Austin: There you go. 2d6 plus 1.

Ali: Roll 2d6 plus 1. Hooo.

Austin: All right, that is a 9. Do you want to help at all here, Cori? To try to give advantage?

Sylvia: Um...

Austin: Do you feel like that's a place Cori is?

Sylvia: I think Cori would want to help, if given the option.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Is usually where she is regardless, so.

Austin: Mm-hmm. That's fair.

Sylvia: Yeah, sure, why not?

Austin: All right. Then, I would say you can roll your Gravity, which I think is plus 1, right?

Sylvia: I believe it is. Yeah. Yeah, it is.

Austin: I believe that's right. Uh, I'm just double checking this. Oh, sorry, it's not that. I always forget this in this system. If you spend—

Sylvia: Right.

Austin: It's plus 1 if you've spent meaningful time.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: You can also always roll your gravity clock in this situation. Or plus 1 if you've spent meaningful time together—you have—plus 1 if they've helped or hindered you previously this sortie, and plus 1 if they're part of your Hooks. They are not part of your Hooks, I don't believe.

Sylvia: No, it'd be a stretch to...

Austin: Yeah, I think it would be a stretch. So, that's probably still a 1. I don't think you have helped or hindered each other this...

Ali: I gave Cori a fruit bar.

Sylvia: This is true.

Austin: That's not a Help or Hinder roll.

Ali: That's a help!

Austin: No, it's Help or Hinder, the move.

Ali: Okay. [laughs]

Dre: Damn.

Austin: The move we are doing called Help or Hinder.

Dre: Damn.

Sylvia: Yeah, but like, [Austin laughs] we should get a die for it. We should get a granola bar die.

Austin: Yeah, the granola die. Yeah, uh huh. Unfortunately, it's kind of dry, so you also lose a die, you know?

Ali: Whoa!

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah.

Ali: Come on.

Austin: You should have updated your granola stock.

Ali: Come on!

Sylvia: I also rolled a 9.

Austin: All right! On a 7 to 9, you become entangled in the consequences of their actions and possibly cause them. So that means, Ali, go ahead and roll one more die as you gain advantage on this roll, and you want a 4 or more on this thing to push that up to a 10. Ayy!

Ali: That is a 4.

Sylvia: Look at that.

Austin: That is a 4. You absolutely find some sort of...it's one of those things that it's hard to find at first, because all this shit is made of glass, and it's like, you just can't—it's hard to focus on any individual thing, because you just can see through everything, and eventually you find a data port that is also made of glass that fits with one of the—I don't know, does— what's your Asepsis hook-in device look like? What's the mobile Asepsis computer thing?

Ali: I probably have... [laughs]

Dre: Uh huh?

Ali: Maybe Brnine has one of those keychains of other, like, tech hookups?

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Like, sometimes you'll have one that has, like, a USB-C and a USB-B and a micro USB and things like that.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And I think that Asepsis probably has, like, a proprietary sort of situation. [laughs]

Austin: Right.

Ali: Where it's like, two...like a plug-in, you know what I mean?

Austin: Yeah. It's like a weird 13 pin system or whatever.

Ali: Yeah. Uh huh.

Austin: So you can't just put that into anything. You need to have the adapter, and you have the keychain with, like, a thousand adapters on it.

Ali: Yeah, uh huh.

Austin: Good. You find the right one.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: You manage to upload this thing successfully, without— and you do it quickly. The flood is coming up the stairs now, but it is not quite at— which means its over the desks of the room below you. That Devotion glass is floating on top of the water and is like, you know, approaching the ceiling of the previous level, at this point. So, that's creepy. But yes, you've now logged Asepsis in. Is your goal here to dispel uncertainties, to learn something? I think it is. That makes sense, right, at this point?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: All right.

Ali: Yeah. Because this wouldn't be, like, a Read the Room, or...

Austin: No, exactly. Yeah, you're not like using Asepsis— you're not, like, R2-D2 slicing in to find where the guards are. You're digging through a database to find information.

Ali: Right, yeah. And that's roll plus Know?

Austin: That's roll plus Know, yeah.

Ali: Um...

Austin: Do you have any bonuses on that? Is there any...?

Ali: I have a plus 1 Know. Could I— uuuuh. Could— no. I couldn't roll Crew here in a very stretched way—

Austin: [cross] I don't think so. Your crew is—

Ali: —to consider Asepsis part of the crew? [laughs quietly]

Austin: Oh my god. No. [Ali laughs] I don't think so.

Ali: You sure?

Austin: Uh huh. [Dre laughs] I mean, you could— once per sortie, I guess twice per sortie, act with confidence. That's how Asepsis works, right?

Ali: Oh, right.

Austin: It says you acquire something—a tool, ship upgrade, a caged malevolent sentience, et cetera—

Ali: I always forget that I do this.

Austin: That allows the carrier and its staff to operate far better than usual, but it has a downside. For each of the below drawbacks you give it, once per sortie, you may act with confidence. And the two drawbacks are “It whispers in your ear. Change one of your Hooks to represent its demands,” and “It's fragile and needs protecting. It gains no benefit while damaged or destroyed.”

Ali: Right.

Austin: So, you could do that. You could act with confidence here. That's the way we represent Asepsis.

Ali: And what does confidence do, again?

Austin: It means any 1s you roll are in fact 6s.

Ali: Okay. So, 2d6 plus 1...

Austin: Right, and then we treat the 1s as if they're 6s.

Ali: As 6s. Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Well, that's a fucking 12 now.

Keith: Wow, that's 11. Oh, yeah, 12. [Ali laughs]

Austin: An 11. No— yeah, you're right, 12. 12, 12, 12. Yeah, it's a 1 and a 5 plus 1, and then that 1 becomes a 6, so yeah, that's a 12. Instantly paying off here. God. Asepsis is like...I want you to know the feeling of this, of Asepsis moving through this system. And you know we're near the Twilight Mirage, because I'm talking about the feeling of moving through a database, like the physical feeling of it, which is not how Partizan shit works. It feels like you're walking 10 dogs and they want to run. Asepsis wants to tear this place limb from limb. It wants to erase information that it thinks is heretical. It wants to clarify things that it thinks are not clear in the *ancient prophecies*, [laughs] and like, you know, it wants to sand everything down so badly. But you succeeded, so you manage to keep it in check. You keep it from destroying the records that have been here for 5000 years, and instead, you get to ask me a question. On a 10+, the director will tell you something directly useful that you know about the situation or subject at hand. What do you want to know?

Keith: Asepsis is like autocorrect on your phone when it changes "were" to "we're" because it's like, "You meant 'we're.'"

Austin: [laughs] You meant "we're." You *meant* "we're." [Keith and Ali laugh]

Ali: I...so, the out-of-character thing here was that we were trying to lessen the grip on Violet Cove.

Austin: Right, well, yeah, it's almost like there's two directions you could go here, right? You could learn more—it feels like you could lower that grip by identifying...digging into this database and this, you know, server or whatever, in such a way that you identify how badly the Bilateral Intelligence Service has infested, you know, Violet Cove with spies. Identify who all those people are. Or you could get to the bottom of the Devotion weirdness, which is like, what are they doing? What are their plans? What's going—why is it like this? And it's clear you only have time to do one of these things, and let's make it really nice and dramatic. Cori, you can tell that Brnine has this decision to make. It's on the screen somehow. [Ali laughs] You know, it says: which of these two files do you want to open? It'll take seven minutes to decrypt. You know what I mean? Whatever. I think that that's the version of it, right? It's like, we only have time to get one of these files here, you know? It's the agents list or it's the...and it's not literally like, "spies.txt," but it's like, the information you would need.

Sylvia: Be great if it was, though.

Austin: It would be.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It's the information you would need to identify what's...who here is, you know, has been compromised or how compromised things are. Versus, hey, are the Devotees up to some weird stuff? And the answer is, of course, yes. *We* know it's yes.

Sylvia: Well, yeah.

Ali: Right. Yeah, I think the priority for right now...I know that I have— find out what's going on with the Devotees is "my" clock, quote unquote, but I think in terms of what's more time sensitive and what really brought Brnine back to this place was not "I heard Griesel say some weird thing," it was like, "Phrygian had that really weird experience, and I don't feel great about what's happening." So I think that I'm gonna go for the, like, how...

Austin: Just, like, how compromised the...yeah, Violet Coast.

Ali: Yeah, compromised is the exact word that I'm looking for. How compromised is this system? I think the best way to— I feel like the way that Asepsis would figure that out is like through tracking logins; through tracking communications in and out; any weird, inconsistent, like, schedule? Not like scheduling, but like, isn't it weird that this person came into this door at this time and then came into that door again at that other time, and what's going on with that ID? or something in that nature.

Austin: Yep. Totally. All right, then, yes. What...just to have our cake and eat it too, the thing that— those are the complex files that Asepsis digs through, and then Asepsis outputs a file called “spies.txt,” [Ali and Keith laugh] that gets uploaded quickly to your home files.

Ali: Asepsis has a popup that says, “Name this file.”

Austin: Yeah, exactly. [laughs]

Ali: And Brnine very quickly said, “spies.” [laughs]

Austin: Spies. These are the spies.

Sylvia: Nodding very enthusiastically. Great job, Captain. Good choice.

Conclusion [2:20:45]

Austin: [laughs] Mm-hmm. Phrygian, you're on this ship now, and so you can kind of see a broader picture of what's happening here. You can see these mechs doing strafing runs, and I think maybe you see the arrival of Tenn Alpenglow in his new premier mech. The last time we saw him, he had kind of like a cool mech, but it was just a sort of customized version of a regular run-of-the-mill ground unit, and now he seems to have brought out the big guns. This is the sort of thing that would not fit on a train. It is a special Kesh unit called a Plackart, P-L-A-C-K-A-R-T. You know, most Kesh mechs look like knights. They're meant to be...to communicate a certain sense of nobility and honor and a weird faux sense of history. The Plackart looks more like a living castle. If most of these mechs are, you know, 20 meters tall, which is very tall, this thing is like 30

meters tall, 35. It towers over maybe every mech here. I think all of your mechs, even Mow. It's like a little closer to a Divine in scale than it is a regular Altar. It is tier four as part of that.

It comes leaping out of the *Kestral White*, the ship that he piloted here or that he was on, and lands with a huge thunderous crash, as he hits the ground and breaks the stonework of the Devotees' little park area, the kind of central, like, you know, the stone mosaic that's in the middle of the eye-shaped park. It is made— it feels like it's made out of stone directly. There's, like, moss growing on it in places. Its shoulders look like ramparts. It has a massive tower shield that almost looks like the front gate of a castle, right? And it has, like, you know, on its ramparts, it has guns set up as if they were, like, crossbowmen or something, or, you know, archers up there. And as it hits the ground, and maybe we also see this from...I guess Thisbe and Figure, are you heading out of the archive at this point, to get back outside and maybe do something, or are you staying in there? What's your first step here? I just need to know if you see this also, as you...like, perspective wise.

Janine: I think we're probably heading out, right?

Austin: Okay.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: To try and exchange some stuff?

Austin: Yeah, that's what I thought. I just wanted to confirm. So yeah, as you step outside, you along with— just as Phrygian sees on the kind of cameras on the ship, the ground beneath this thing wavers, and it's as if the ground itself is being suffused with water. It's getting soggy and wet up here. And you all feel the touch of elemental magic, a type we have not really seen much of except that it is the type that Phrygian uses, because Phrygian is Branched, and on Palisade, elemental magic is magic infused with the posthuman power of the Branched. This is something that someone in the Bilateral Intercession cooked up by studying a Branched. We saw that in the Road to PALISADE, that the Branched would sometimes be captured by members of Stel Kesh and used as

houses or turned into science projects. We know that sometimes Branched have turned traitor. We know that there is at least one Branched in the Pact, though this is not the Pact.

And in this case, we also talked before that magic has a certain sensory experience whenever you— or Principality magic specifically has this terrible sensory side effect. For elemental magic, it is touch. The sense is touch. So, maybe that feels like you're carrying a backpack you're not carrying, filled with stones, or it's an itch you can't reach or something in your eye or a tasteless film on your tongue. It's some physical sensation, or whatever Thisbe's equivalent of that is. I don't know what Thisbe's sensory experience is like, but in the same way that I think Thisbe would know if someone grabbed her arm, that same— whatever that version of that is, is happening, you know? You can tell me what that is if you want to, but I just want to set that that's the physical sensation of being in the presence of one of these elemental Altars.

Janine: I mean, it's...you know the Novint Falcon?

Austin: Yeah! Totally.

Janine: It's probably like the way that—

Austin: Can you explain the Novint Falcon? [Dre laughs]

Janine: The Novint Falcon was like a...hmm.

Dre: Revolutionary. [Austin laughs quietly]

Janine: Like, controller with force feedback.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Where you could like touch stuff and it had motors or whatever that would push back, so you could tell the density of stuff?

Austin: Right, yes.

Janine: [sarcastic] Isn't that a great example?

Austin: I know what you mean. Yeah.

Janine: But I think it's just that, like—

Austin: Very weird.

Janine: You know, the way the Novint Falcon would interpret, like, the force that you're applying versus the force it needs to apply. That's probably how Thisbe would sense—would perceive, like, weight and force and things like that.

Austin: Mm-hmm. That makes sense. Yeah. So then, yeah, you feel this thing arrive and get the sense, again, it's pretty clear: this thing is using some sort of stolen Branched technology or being to turn the ground into water directly, to flood this place from the bottom up. What do y'all do? I think Midnite Matinee who is at the controls just immediately begins to lock onto this thing—but is not gonna pull the trigger, Phrygian—from the cockpit of the Blue Channel.

Keith: This is a precautionary lock on.

Austin: Yeah, this is a “all right, if this sort of negotiation that Brnine said we should do doesn't go well, I'm going to pull the trigger.” Who wants to take— I guess, Thisbe, you were given the duty of taking the lead here. [Ali laughs quietly] Do you approach this giant mech? What do you do?

Janine: Uh... [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: Also, all these weird floating iron maidens fly back into formation around it in a sort of defensive posture, you know?

Janine: [sarcastic] Yeah. Cool.

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Janine: I wasn't super joking about just throwing this guy. [laughs quietly] Uh...because I kind of just, like, I truly want to get it over with, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Like, I think that's the Thisbe approach of just like, let's just— can we just do it? Can we just...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: If this is gonna be a whole thing, then make it a whole thing, but otherwise, like, can we just not? [sighs] Um...you know, I wonder if this is a...because I have the Animation Matrix, is it just Thisbe putting out a ping [**Austin:** Mm.] type thing for the various mechs and computer systems in the area, of just like, "We have this guy. We don't want this guy. You want this guy."

Dre: Come get your guy.

Austin: Come get your guy. Yeah.

Janine: Let's just— let's be cool. Let's be cool and just go, and everyone can leave here intact.

Austin: God.

Janine: Because otherwise everyone is not going to leave here intact.

Austin: Yeah. I think...I mean, this is— there's no roll on sending that message out.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Where do you suggest you meet for the exchange in this message? Like, where do you— is it like, "I'm in front of the archive"?

Janine: Hmm...I mean, I'm trying to think of a reason why she wouldn't do that.

Austin: Yeah. I'm not saying no.

Janine: Why she wouldn't be like, "Listen, I'm right here."

Austin: Right.

Janine: And so's this guy. Get this guy.

Austin: All right. Is that what you want to commit?

Janine: [hesitant] I guess.

Austin: All right.

Janine: There's a naivety to it, but I...

Austin: There is. There is.

Janine: But you never know.

Austin: Mm-hmm. You send it out. Let's say, at this point, I guess, really quick: Cori and Brnine, are you leaving now that you have the information? Are you getting the fuck out of here, or are you staying here?

Sylvia: I mean, I think, Sylvia the player thinks they should probably leave the flooding place.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Cori's not gonna abandon her captain here, though. Like, come on. So.

Austin: Well, you've gotten the info, so.

Ali: Yeah.

Sylvia: Well, we got the— no, I just wasn't sure if Brnine had other shit.

Ali: No.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: I think it's time to go.

Austin: All right. Then you're also up top. I just want to make sure everyone is, like, you know, everyone can see the events that are happening, right? Thisbe puts out the signal. There's a sort of a moment of a beat, and then the main of these kind of torture convict mechs flies over to you, the Gambeson, and this is being piloted by a former member of what would become Jade Kill, the Delegate group, up in the north—I guess actually the name of the smaller group is Reunion, but Jade Kill, the group that is Kalar's giantkillers plus the Delegates up in Joyous Guard—that was arrested for treason years before the Cause even, probably, so probably like two or three years ago, and this is a Delegate who has been strapped into this thing and is running this crew now. Lands this mech, which again, this smaller mech is, you know, 12 feet tall or something, so not that much bigger than you, Thisbe. You know, taller than you, but not, you know, three times as big as you, 10 times as big as you like some things are. And it lands in front of you and just waits there, as if to say, like...in fact, maybe he does talk, and he says:

(as **Delegate**): Bring me the Viceroy.

Austin: Just kind of hovering over you. And these are mundane magic, which means that even though they are projecting a great deal of force to stay afloat, things are just utterly silent. The sound in this space has gotten kind of cold and muted.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You can't hear beyond 20, 30 feet away from you anymore.

Janine: I think Thisbe, like...uh...I want to say puts the Viceroy on the ground but then does a, like, [laughs quietly] Link dodge back a couple things.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Like a couple just, like, little hop hop hops.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Oh, I thought you were doing the backflip when the sword's out. [Austin laughs]

Janine: Maybe the last one is a backflip. Maybe it's hop hop flip.

Sylvia: Let's go!

Austin: Hup hup hup hwep! Yeah, uh huh.

Sylvia: Mario style.

Austin: Right, yes. [Janine laughs]

Dre: Wahoo.

Austin: It lands, and the pilot closes the wings around it, like an iron maiden wing, you know, arms close inwards. And then lifts away, like as if the wings weren't part of its mechanism at all. And there's another beat, and the Blue Channel is briefly locked onto by the *Kestral White*, and then the lock goes away, as if internally there was some debate about whether or not they should engage you and use this opportunity to hurt you, given who you are, but then they leave.

Janine: I'm the new captain! [Austin laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

[["Nothing is Stationary"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]