

PARTIZAN 31: The Grand Premiere

Transcriber: Theo [ScaredCivilian#8424] [0- 2:27:48]]

Intro

AUSTIN: A letter to the Glorious Princept, elect of Divinity Itself and Apokine to the people of Apostolos, from their loyal sibling Cas'alear Rizah.

Dahlia, it has been one month since I joined Millennium Break under your blessing, but these fifty days have felt more like five-hundred. Partizan burns...

[Music begins: [*TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.*](#)]

AUSTIN [as Cas'alear Rizah]: When I first joined Millennium Break, we'd gained holdings in every major settlement on the moon. Today, we have three, though each is sizable. Captured Cruciat in the North; the deep mountains controlled by Lambic House in the East; and here, where I write this letter, the coastline of the Prophet's Path, the three city alliance of Obelle, Auspice and Marengo. But they are distant, and without port in the sea it is hard to move supplies between them. Which is why Miss Garantine, whose professionalism and leadership I admire, believes that an alliance, or, something more with the isle of Logos is essential. I still fear it may be too late, the rest of what we once had evacuated, raided, blood soaked, ruined. And in each instance of destruction, a rumour spreads.

They say that after an attack, a malign force, breaches the morning mist with rapturous announce, a pied piper and her cloudborne home. They call her the Witch in Glass, who picks over the battlefield and scurries away with whomever yet breathes. I would call her a myth, but the Stels whisper about her too. They are not immune to the chaos, after all. In fact, as alliances grow deeper, Nidean clerics throwing in with the Kesh elite, Columnar biasing those who claim to fight in your name, the battles here grow longer, dark into the night, and when Girandole rises, its light reveals more than can be borne by any loyal child of the Principality. Orion, meanwhile, has begun to tear itself apart in both meadow and metropolis.

What I do not know is if this present alignment of forces is unique to the holy moon, or if it is as the old adage holds: "As goes Partizan, so go the stars." Which is why I ask, and I hope to hear from you, this year or next: Do we still have hope for peace and glory, sibling? Or do the stars burn, too?

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual-play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host Austin Walker and joining me today are Alicia Acampora.

ALI: Hi! You can find me over [@ali_west](#) on twitter and you can find the show over at [@friends_table](#).

AUSTIN: Keith J. Carberry

KEITH: Hi my name is Keith J. Carberry, you can find me on Twitter [@KeithJCarberry](#), you can find the let's plays I do at [YouTube.com/RunButton](#), I tried to buy a thousand peanuts but the site broke!

[Austin Laughs]

AUSTIN: Sylvia Clare.

SYLVIA: Hi I'm Sylvie. You can find me on twitter [@sylvisurfer](#) and you can listen to my other show [Emojiidrome](#) wherever you get your podcasts.

AUSTIN: And Jack de Quidt.

JACK: Hi, my name's Jack. You can find me on Twitter [@notquitereal](#) and buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#).

AUSTIN: Ah, as always you can support the show by going to [friendsatthetable.cash](#) where you'll find our Patreon with a bunch of different bonuses and extra content and you can follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/friends_table](#), follow me [@austin_walker](#).

Today we are continuing our game of Beam Saber by Austin Ramsay. Our goals here are to ensure that everyone at the table is safe, to convey the world honestly, to fill the world with detail and to play to find out what happens.

So as I set up in the intro, it has been over a month since the final events of the Kingdom game and in that time Millennium Break has been both solidified and also come under additional attack. As a group, you have been left with three major holdings: Cruciat and the area around it, a deep mountainous region in the Pique ridge controlled by Lambic House, and then over here in the west you have the Prophet's Path where there are these kind of three cities on the coastline. Obelle in the north, which is where the first two missions were. Marengo in the south, which is technically an Orion territory, which is where you first met the information broker Sloe Uplight in the Kingdom game. And then Auspice where you recovered after the attack on Vigil City. As a reminder, the reason you are left with only these three big holdings is because of a Kingdom prediction about the independent cells of Millennium Break all coming under heavy attack.

Today you are going to be in Auspice. And by "you," what I mean is this half of The Society of Banners and Bright Returns. That includes the previous SBBR members Valence, and Broun and Thisbe along with Million but also two new arrivals.

Let's go over everyone's beliefs and stuff and that's how we'll get introduced to these new characters.

Millie, let's start with you. Also I'm going to clear your stress. You're not stressed right now. I mean. You might be stressed but you don't have any stress boxes checked.

SYLIVA [Over Austin]: Hmmm! Okay.

AUSTIN: Millie, what's up. I guess actually this doesn't make sense because you'll have to reveal. You, you need... Now that I think about it. You need two new beliefs too.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So maybe we should do this the other way. You get introduced to the new characters and you and Broun can start brainstorming some beliefs about these new... These new friends.

AUSTIN: Jack?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you want to talk about your character?

JACK: Yeah. Okay. So I think that in the weeks following the events of the Kingdom game, and as the eyes of Millennium Break begin to turn towards what their next objectives might want to be and the kind of major threats that are still on the table, a Millennium Break officer is summoned from a distant cell to Cruciat. To be introduced to the squad and to join in, in a kind of specialist capacity. And so my new character is a Talonite called Break Lieutenant, that's his rank, Kalar Anakalar, who is, first name Kalar, second name Anakalar.

AUSTIN: K A L A R

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: In both cases.

JACK: Mhmm. K A L A R space A N A K A L A R, he is a tall, big Talonite with white and grey plumage. I think the last time we saw a Talonite on screen would be Kitcha Kanna back in Twilight Mirage

AUSTIN: Kitcha Kanna in Twilight Mirage. Yeah maybe there was one that popped up in... like, there was one in my prep for the very... the second arc of this season. The second Obelle arc of this season, specifically. But uh... that person never showed up. Actually I think maybe you know him? There was a priest there, a priest of the divine Peace in Obelle named Raka Amakan, and Raka was a priest of Peace in Obelle which I believe is where you're from or maybe you're just from the Prophet's Path. I don't know... you tell me.

JACK: No I'm from Obelle. I think I'm from a sort of Talonite religious community inside Obelle. Or, from the sort of... I, Jack live in a kind of rural place and when people ask me where I am from I say the nearest big city. And I think, in that sense, Kalar is probably from Obelle and that's legitimate. I think he probably spends a lot of time there, he does shopping there. Um... he used to take his kids there, to go to like classes and whatever. Um so yeah... he's from Obelle.

AUSTIN: Oh, so he's a dad?

JACK: He's a dad. Yeah he's a dad of three. His husband and his three children are not with us. I don't mean that in a euphemistic sense. I mean they are not on Partizan. Which is... I guess... notable. And so I think, you know, word gets around aboard Icebreaker and in the kind of halls of Millennium Break in Cruciat, that there is this Talonite wearing a... wearing military fatigues and a long coat, or a cool coat, I don't know whether or not it's long or cool.

[laughter from Sylvie and Austin]

JACK: With an impromptu Millennium Break patch made on it. Lugging a series of enormous bags and suitcases behind him. Because Anakalar is a Giantkiller, which is both the name of his class, and his callsign. He is a Talonite specialized in bringing down mechs without ever entering a mech himself. When Austin made my character sheet, I like this Austin.

AUSTIN [over Jack]: yeah

JACK: In the entire vehicle gear section, you have just written the word "NO!"

AUSTIN (laughing): With a full stop. Yes.

JACK: Mhmm so...

AUSTIN: You don't get that.

JACK: Nope. I don't get that.

AUSTIN: Ah, it's worth noting that the Giantkiller is a fan made, or fan made is probably... like made by another game designer... Is a playbook made by Ben... Ben Auden Roswell who you might know the name of because we just played another one of Ben's games called "Sports are Just Numerology"

JACK: Yes!

AUSTIN: In a previous bonus episode in the feed so...

JACK: Yeah. The, the thing that I keep thinking of is... remember the beginning of Blade Runner 2049 when Harrison Ford goes and kills Dave Batista?

AUSTIN: That's Ryan Gosling though. But.

SYLVIA: Ryan Gosling

JACK: Oh, it's Ryan Gosling who kills Dave Bastista. Um and..

AUSTIN: But yes, I do recall.

JACK: As soon as that scene has ended, you go, "well why? Why isn't he the protagonist of this movie?"

AUSTIN: Haha yeah

JACK: That's one of the fucking coolest characters I've ever seen.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[SYLVIA AND AUSTIN continue to laugh]

JACK: So I thought to myself, "What if Dave Batista was a massive birdman who takes down mechs on foot."

AUSTIN: With a combination of raw strength and also cool gear.

JACK: Yes and that is...

KIETH: Or long gear

AUSTIN AND JACK: Or long gear, cool or long gear.

JACK: Gonna work it out

AUSTIN: And a great deal of kind of like ethical compulsion right. There's a degree to which the giantkiller is... not only is the giantkiller without a vehicle, they also come with specifically, a sort of cause. Which is key... be-besides your drive. You have a drive but you also have a move called "David's Song" which says, part of what it says is:

"When you create a giantkiller, choose a value to protect. Your family, your home, your team, your culture, or your heritage. When you directly act to defend it, take +1 D. When you defeat a machine of war greater than yourself, heal 2 stress."

So... what is your value?

JACK: I am seeking to protect my home... which is... I think, most specifically, the villages in the valley around Obelle where I come from... but more broadly

AUSTIN: Mhmm

JACK: That kind of region of the moon.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I would say like it's probably like everything in the Prophet's Path where there are people and like those border regions around Obelle and Marengo which bleed into Apostolisian and Orion territory specifically. But like... you know... it's the places you would have been and travelled your whole life.

JACK: Yeah

AUSTIN: Ya know.

JACK: And worked and spent time with my family.

AUSTIN: Right right, yeah. You were not always... You were not always a giantkiller. You previously were...

JACK: Ah yeah, I used to be a steeplejack which is somebody who climbs church towers and or um towers or spires of any kind to repair them or to you know, install lightning rods, or to do any of that kind of stuff. Where did we fall on "Can Talonites fly?" Austin?

AUSTIN: They can jump real high.

[12:51]

JACK: Yeah I feel like, I feel like the thing about like Anakalar is that he can fly more than I can.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Hehe yes, correct. He can certainly glide...

KEITH: Sorta like a chicken.

JACK: Sorta like a chicken.

AUSTIN: A little bit, though though I think...

JACK: It's a lot of effort.

AUSTIN: It's a lot of effort and there's a difference between gliding under the best conditions and then being tossed or thrown off of...

JACK: Yes, totally.

AUSTIN: A big mech than you're climbing on. And you specifically have a piece of gear called an anti-impact generator that...

JACK: You don't want to fall.

AUSTIN: ...Can be used to negate, yeah, to negate falling damage basically so I don't want to undercut that.

JACK: No no no no no so also this...

AUSTIN: By saying "no you don't fall ever, you can just fly"

JACK: This fits into kinda what I was thinking which was like Anakalar can maybe get, ya know, like uh... maybe ten feet into the air just by springing which...

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: ...And then glide down or flap with great effort or whatever. The point being, they are not a steeplejack because they are a bird person. They are a steeplejack because they have a great head for heights. They have always been interested in religious architecture or in tall buildings. They've always felt comfortable kinda suspended above the earth working with fellow steeplejacks and things like that.

So when the war came and when they realized that mechs were horrifying machines of both destruction and self-destruction, they said to themselves, "I reckon I can take a crack at these without going in one."

AUSTIN: Right, right. Do you want to tell me what your drive is and what your connections are, your beliefs.

JACK: Yeah, totally. So my drive is to get my family back to Partizan. Before the war, or as the war was brewing, I pulled a lot of strings and I spent a lot of money to smuggle my husband and three children off-moon. They were smuggled off-moon in a stone smugglers — people who bring black market stone to masons and building sites, and they took them off Partizan, and they are safe. As far as we know, but they are not home and Anakalar misses them a great deal, he doesn't get to talk to them very often — he must be able to talk to them sometimes right? When the gates open right Austin?

[15:10]

AUSTIN: You can send a message. You can't talk to them.

JACK: Yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: There's no live comms but you can send letters basically. It's expensive, it's a pain in the ass, like they can only be in a certain format, they can't be a certain length or more or less, you know.

JACK: Yeah and Anakalar loves Partizan as does his husband and children. Where it's, you know, like, they know the hills around their village. They have family friends that miss them. They... It is a source of pain for Anakalar not just that his husband and children can't be with him, but also that they are estranged from their home.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And, I have three beliefs. Belief number one is with Ver'million Blue. And Anakalar, who has heard of Millie a great deal, because, of course, Millie is one of the kind of lead squad of Icebreaker Prime, says, "Millie is a remarkable soldier. There is a lot that I could learn from her."

For Broun, Anakalar says, "Broun designed the weapons I destroy. Is this just another paycheck?" And then I have a third belief with Keith's character, who I do not want to spoil so I will hand over to Keith.

AUSTIN: Hi Keith.

KEITH: Hi.

AUSTIN: Tell me about your character.

KEITH: My character is from the Golden Branched, their name is Phrygian. And hmm... I guess we'll start with their look.

AUSTIN: Yeah

KEITH: I have written here, "Wires and cables ripple and snap, sympathetically vibrating with the noises around them, contained within a buttoned white shirt and a tailored velvet jacket. The dancing components make an altogether convincing face."

AUSTIN: Love it.

JACK: Amazing.

AUSTIN: Love to look at Phrygian.

KEITH: Ah... yeah, I was trying to get... and I remember seeing people... I would say, playfully annoyed by — fan artists who wanted to draw Leap. And I was writing that and I went, "oops sorry."

[laughter from all]

JACK: Take two, this one's worse.

KEITH: You may know Phrygian as Deck 7. They were being forced to be a lab as an experiment?

AUSTIN: Yeah, and being experimented on, simultaneously.

KEITH: Right. They were captured. Actually so my my... I have here listed my tragedy, it's, it is almost the same as Leap's tragedy which is captured. With the added, experimented on. But they're a frontline researcher. Which is something I don't know if that exists but it's the Branched and that seems... it seems that they, uh... their, their job is to like do research, but they're sort of all... or at least many of them are... have these "war bodies?"

AUSTIN: Yeah. For people who don't remember the Branched. They first showed up in... or who didn't listen to the Road to Partizan, or dig into any of the supplementary materials in the dossier that's in every episode description, for instance... There are... Right now, in the middle of all the things that are happening of all the things that are happening here on Partizan, there was a war that dwarfs this by, you know, an exponential degree. A war across multiple planets...

JACK: Big war.

AUSTIN: Yeah huge war. It's lasted hundreds of years...

KEITH: A war so big that the people that are fighting this war are all on the same side of the other war.

AUSTIN: (laughing) yeah in the other war, exactly yeah. They're like, "well we all hate each other right now, but one thing's for sure, we gotta kill these motherfuckers." And it's against this group called the Branched. Which are a post-human collective society and when I say post-human, I really mean... I don't mean transhumanist, I don't mean like, "oh they're humanoid bodies that have cool cybernetic enhancements or have other types of..." we've talked about that style of transhumanism before. A lot of Twilight Mirage characters had genetic body modifications, had surgeries that gave them this or that. Maybe this included... Maybe what the Branched are started there. But what they are now is indistinguishable from, from, or is is *completely* distinguishable from "human."

KEITH: But they're also not like beings of light or floating brains.

AUSTIN: They could be that, but that would be one example of a thing — I think the example I gave you last night Keith included a pit of ants, um the sense of... god, there was another... there were three of them that I gave you in a row. Let me search for the word "ants" here.

KEITH: You said ants a lot.

AUSTIN: I did say ants a lot. I like that example. A pit of ants crawling in circles, another could have been the smell on a particular day on a particular planet. Another might have chosen to become an endlessly spreading set of buildings or liquid toxin in the shape of a bird. And the

reason that they are these things is that they sense an affinity with these configurations of matter. And they do that, based on a sense we don't have. Like, it's like, we were trying to talk through this last night Keith and one of things I asked you was like, "imagine I had never tasted tea, or anything that could be compared in taste to tea. How would you explain what your favorite tea tasted like?" And what you said was, you used a different... you were like let me go with a sense that you do have, as a bridge right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I would describe it as "bright" or something like that. And I said exactly, and so if you asked "why do you want to be a pit of ants moving around in circles?" then a Branched would look at you and tell you "Ah I guess I would tell you it's because that it's bright." And like, word? Is it? Is that bright? Because it doesn't look bright. It doesn't feel bright to me in any way. But there is a different sensory apparatus happening here. They are as often poems as they are... or bad feelings, as they are like pure physical manifestations of something that you can describe in an easy way.

Some things that are true:

They are individuals.

They prefer to be in this huge variety of forms, many of which are hard for a human comprehension to address... to even understand as an individual. And to see them move in their truest forms is actually a little sickening or scary in the uncanny sense. Or in the way that you see a spider out the corner of your eye. Not, not not you are looking at a spider and you like spiders. Your brain responds negatively to cer... you put your hand on fire, right? Not, you choose to put your hand on fire, but you slip up and touch a hot oven when not even trying to do that.

KEITH: It's reactive. It's not the same. It's not the same as having a spider phobia, but it's, [AUSTIN: Right correct] but it's like looking down and there's already a spider on you.

AUSTIN: And you didn't expect there to be one [KEITH: Yeah] and you do that jump right? Um maybe there are cases in which there's a similar thing, but for other types of emotional responses and certainly with a long period of time — if there could be a world in which humans could interact with the Branched in a non-hostile environment, I suspect you would go through the entire arc of fear, to exoticization, to, you know, collaboration, probably some gross assimilation in both directions, and eventually, you would have people living side by side in a way that was something else. But the Principality has decided, "This is the best rhetorical device we have to unify our entire people around." These are monsters and they look like monsters. Partially because of what their natural form...

KEITH: It's an easy sell.

AUSTIN: Right, it's an easy sell and everyone buys it by and large because the only way that they've interacted is primarily in war and subterfuge. The Branched take what we've been calling "war forms" we also talk about "envoy forms." I suspect your, your buzzing thing that makes an altogether convincing face is what you would call an envoy form.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Something that lets you interact with humans in a way that they can [KEITH: Right] Humans and other species inside of the Divine Principality. Humanoid species, non humanoid species, but species that recognize individuality in this embodied way. Not, "you're the deck of a ship." And... ah... you were billowing and inky right? [KEITH: mmmm]

KEITH: Or a perception that a part of me was billowing and inky.

AUSTIN: The envoy form is that... exactly, yes exactly. That's the envoy form and you also have, and what many Branched have built is something called a "war form" which is the way in which you do... you fight. And part of that is just like "this is a good way to fight, this is a body that's functional to me" but part of it also that war form is not just a reflection of your true self. So if you were a pit of ants in a circle, walking around in a circle, you would not want your war form to be that thing because that's you. You don't wanna... again the analogy I gave to you last night was like if you spent your whole life being a composer and then you go to war, you don't necessarily want to fight with your music. Because that was not your goal as a composer for your whole life. That's not what brought... that's not the affinity that you had towards music and composition. Um and so like, it's not just like, "well now go kill people with that ability" instead they take these kind of other forms on and there's a variety of them and we'll find out about yours, I guess, soon. Um but but... that is represented in your other, because you are playing a playbook that is also from an expansion. From an Austin Ramsay expansion that is coming out... I believe later this year? Called "The Growing Conflict." Do you want to tell us about "The Transformed?"

KEITH: Ah sure! The Transformed or... its little subtitle here is "a person changed" ah ah when you take the transformed playbook, you automatically start with one move called "something other": When you create a transformed, take this ability. Create your "other" in the same way you would a vehicle, using the same rules as a vehicle. To transform between pilot and "other," an entity that operates on the same scale as vehicles, you must spend 1 stress. Gain the scale and gear of each form.

AUSTIN: So yeah, you get to switch between being humanoid scale and being mech, or being human scale and being mech or vehicle scale ah at will... spending one stress. Which is... really good [scoffs] and we don't have to go over each of your moves, they'll come out in play [KEITH: they'll come out] for sure.

KEITH: Yeah there's some really good ones in here.

AUSTIN: It's so dope.

KEITH: (Muffled) ...that I'm really excited about.

AUSTIN: And then, can we go over your drive, and your connections?

KEITH: Yeah, I, I have a... I have a template of a drive... I wanna, I wanna really, I wanna dig into the wording on this. I'm not exactly satisfied with it but this is sort of the direction that I'm moving in but my drive here is, "deal a lasting blow in the war against the Divine Principality."

AUSTIN: I think that that works if what you, if you rephrase it around, you know, "help Millennium Break do that" because then it is about a faction. **[KEITH:** Yeah] Drives have to be about individuals, squads, or factions and if you're operating at that scale then it all just kinda clicks together. What are your connections? Your beliefs to the rest of the party?

KEITH: Sure. I have ah... with Broun I have, "My allies have been killed by their weapon designs" [Austin chuckles] Dude, I was surprised to hear Kalar also had something about Broun's weapons designs but [Austin chuckles] from the opposite direction. **[AUSTIN:** Fast friends] "I killed those weapon designs"

AUSTIN: Hehe yeah... To be clear, the Branched are fighting against Orion made weapons at an incredible scale so... Ya know... Maybe Broun didn't specifically build like the Troop. But they've certainly worked on some sort of munition that was deployed on the front line against the Branched.

KEITH: Well technically I could ask if it's true or not... eventually...

AUSTIN: That's true. You're right. You're right. It could be wrong.

KEITH: With Kalar I have, "Kalar seems dedicated to their work, and Millenium Break." I think that possibly could've been "on", but I think it works either way. "Millie started as I ended up; an Apostolisian experiment."

AUSTIN: Cool. Really quick, do we want to go back to Kalar. What is your belief with Phrygian?

JACK: Sure. My belief with Phrygian is, "Phrygian's motives are unclear and concerning. Please don't let this be a work."

AUSTIN: Which I think should underscore something. Which is the idea of working with a Branched is very... new... Like, this has never happened as far as anyone knows before. You know, there's lots of blank space for fanfiction and for us to fill in the gap with like a fun side story or something. Maybe this isn't like [With emphasis] **the first** time. But noone in their lives has ever heard of it. **[JACK:** Right] There's no like famous tale. this is not like a common... you

know what I mean like there isn't bad movies about how a Branched and a, and a human from the Principality fall in love and fight against odds. It just doesn't exist, it's 100% vilification 100% of the time. There's been no bridge building, even the most like insipid.

JACK: And it's like, Kalar thinks of themselves and probably is like a radical leftist revolutionary. But even for him, it's like, "Well... time to join the revolution with the concept of freezing to death" and is like, [All chuckle] "oh? They're on our team? The feeling of freezing to death is on our team? Well... Okay...."

AUSTIN: Right. But don't worry. The feeling of freezing to death will comport themselves into a body that is more... [JACK: mmm almost a face] approachable. Almost a face. A thing approaching a face. Which I guess really quick, we should hit... Kalar, what are Kalar's pronouns Jack?

JACK: He/him

AUSTIN: And then Keith, for Phrygian?

KEITH: They/them

AUSTIN: Okay. alright, with that said, Broun and Millie, can I get your drives and beliefs or anything else that's changed. I don't think... I think those are the big things right?

ALI: Yeah I think that's it.

AUSTIN: Alright, cool. Uh Millie, let's go with you first.

SYLVIA: Okay. so my drive has changed from "Claw your way out" to "Destroy GLORY" because, you know, she can focus on that now [AUSTIN: yeah] Quick question, should I go through my connections just for the people who are here?

AUSTIN: Just for the people on the call yeah.

SYLVIA: Okay. So for Broun, I have, "Broun intentions sometimes worry me, but they're useful to have around." For Phrygian, I have, "Phrygian knows what Apostolos is capable of, I wonder if they'll help me stop them." and I'm still kind of like, workshopping one for Anakalar if I'm being honest. [AUSTIN: That's fair] I'm thinking like... I'm trying to get a less wordy version of "I respect what they're do-... um what... I respect what Anakalar is fighting for, but I worry they won't survive to see it."

JACK: Damn.

AUSTIN: Yeah. There's, there's an interesting, there's an interesting dilemma there or not dilemma, but like for all of Millie's. Like oppositional position to all of the Principality and especially Apostolos one of the things that she has no problem with is getting into a mech and shooting a gun, or like she wants to live a peaceful life. She wants to retire, but there was no, like, there was no skepticism that Mechs are a good way to do fighting... Right?

SYLVIA: Yeah. Like her whole thing is like, if we're fighting people in mechs, you should probably have one just to even things out.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. [**SYLVIA:** And so] Whereas, uh, this did not come up with Kalar you do have one other thing that is not quite a drive, but it's pretty key to your worldview. Right?

JACK: I do. Oh, yeah. About divines. [**AUSTIN:** Yeah.] Yeah. Kalar has a, Kalar has a, fairly radical idea. Uh, no more divines that fight. [**SYLVIA:** Oh?] You know, the divines that, uh, the divines that help us with crops, the divine that helps us with music, the divine that helps us with a feeling of hopefulness or courage, the divine that helps us process our anger. Great. Do not put those fucking things on battlefields. Which is a, it's a lofty goal. But, uh, it's something they hold in their heart.

AUSTIN (chanting): No more bullets!

JACK (joining in): No more bullets!

AUSTIN: I know you... I know it started as no more nukes. Uh, but the idea is that radical in this world, the idea that you would really [**JACK:** an alien idea]. Yeah, absolutely bizarre. Um, Brown. Can I get your drive, if you have a new one and then, and then relevant beliefs.

ALI: Sure. Um, yeah, my drive has changed from "to own a spaceship" to, uh, "to find a future for Millennium Break off of Partizan.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's a good one.

ALI: Yeah. Uh, my beliefs for the party are, um, for Ver'million Blue. I have, "I can count on Millie. I need to remember to watch her back. If she's watching mine" um, for Kalar, I have an option here, which is, um, It's either, "Kalar will prove useful if they don't break anything important" or "Kalar is naïve and they're trying to endanger their family."

AUSTIN: Ooh,

JACK: Wow. Wow.

AUSTIN: Wild, wild.

JACK: Look,

ALI: Don't bring them here.

JACK: Look, you know...

ALI: It's a bad idea. It's a war zone.

AUSTIN: Wait wait wait to be clear. You sent your family away originally, right? Because of it being a warzone.

JACK: Yeah. When I say, bring my family back to Partizan, I don't mean right now. I mean, I want to get Partizan into a state where I can bring my family back.

ALI: Just get, just get out of here. What are you doing?

AUSTIN: The opposite impulse of Broun.

JACK: [laughing] Oh so good.

AUSTIN: We gotta fix this place.

ALI: And then my final one is... can I just get the pronunciation on this one more time?

KEITH: Phrygian.

ALI: Phrygian. Okay. My, uh, drive or my belief about Phrygian is "working well with Phrygian will improve my reputation."

JACK: God... Fucking... Broun is just Broun in all directions.

AUSTIN: Ah I love them. I love them so much. All right. Um, are there, is there any final, uh, paperwork type stuff where you need to do before we get into it? We could, Oh, let me, let me, let me just shout out one thing that you might not remember. Because you were out on this side and then we'll just do like the last of the paperwork. And then we can take another break, uh, one is y'all are now a tier two squad, not a tier one squad. Two is you have the upgrade experimental coms. You may use teamwork. With any squad member, regardless of the distance separating you by taking one stress you're whispered messages heard by every squad member. Those are two abilities connected. So that means that you can talk to anybody in the squad to, to use teamwork together, basically, which is, you know, you're, "I want to help you by spending a stress," um, because you all have like a more advanced version of the coms tech that Broun and Sedra and Millie were working on during the Kingdom game. I think that was Millie who's part of that too.

As I said it has been a month, um, since, since the events of Kingdom, I guess first and foremost, what's the vibe been for y'all after that, given, uh, you know, I should note again, Gur and Clem just vanished one day. It like took a while for anyone to even realize they were missing. Um, like then you have to dig through the files and get like a blurry camera shot of them fighting and falling from, you know, some, you know, deck three window, you know, they crash against the, the some outcropping or whatever. Um, so it takes like days for that to even come to light. Um, meanwhile, you know, Millennium Break is spending this time being increasingly sturdy and, and unified. Um, but I'm just curious what the vibe has been for y'all generally, before we even get to whatever this, this current mission is.

SYLVIA: I think like immediate aftermath though, it was like very complicated feelings for Millie. Um, Because, like, she didn't really know Gur very well, and she knew Clem pretty well, but it wasn't in a good way.

AUSTIN: No.

SYLVIA: Um, but it's still like the complicated feelings that come when someone you've spent so much time working with like suddenly dies. Um, but I think like she kind of threw herself into just like doing Millennium Break stuff after that, like. Tried to make sure people didn't get so caught up in Gur Sevraq, like passing away that later, it became just like a bunch of people mourning for months on end.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. That makes sense. Yeah. Brown. Um, obviously I know you're not like super tight with either of those people either. Uh, but having talked to Dre, I know that, you know, Valence obviously was kind of in their feelings with Gur disappearing. I'm curious if that gives you an angle on any of this.

ALI: Yeah, totally. It's weird. Cause I think the Broun's sort of... you know, knew Gur as like a community member, right. At the very least.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And we left them in Kingdom as a perspective. Yes. So I feel like there's like a, a version of that where it's like, you know... There's the need to sort of fill that gap above, um, among the people who are still like in—

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: A supportive role in that way.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

ALI: And then also just being like, uh, we're fucking losing people out here aren't we?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I, you know, to go through the like victory of taking over Kesh and then like losing Gur, I think is sort of a weird whiplash that people felt, um, and just sort of navigating that.

AUSTIN: Uh, I didn't get a chance to bring it up.

But like retroactively, I do think it's worth saying that Gur was really into the work you and **Si'dra** were doing with the coms network. It doesn't, it hasn't come up since the initial kind of sermon that Gur gave during the Prophet's Path. Um, um, you know, pilgrimage, um, but the Church of the Resin Heart's goal is to create a vast galactic communications network.

Um, Gur, like truly believes in the power of... like organization and community and thinks that one of the ways... basically said like the Principality literally and figuratively walls us apart from each other so that we can't organize against it. Um, and, and that we need to build something that can communicate between worlds so that we can then understand what this thing that we're part of is doing to us, and fight against it.

Um, and so I definitely think, you know, not to retcon it too hard, but like, I do think there were probably even imagine a couple of times where a Gur was like, "Like you ever see something where like someone who is not there. I mean, it is what it is. A priest shows up and is like, tell, talk to me about your cool electronics, right? [Ali chuckles] And it's like a hobbyist in a sense, do you know what I mean?

They were not, uh, they, you know, Gur did not know how this stuff worked necessarily, um, was not a communications technician, but did have this as a long-term goal. And so there was a lot of like, "Show me your cool project. Let me know." Yes. Sylvia in the chat says "Are ya winning son?" Yes, exactly. The deep and like really believe, like wants you to be doing a good job. Um, so yeah, I definitely think that there was some behind the scenes, weird interaction there, but positive.

ALI: Yeah, I think to that end, you know, there's that absence of like Gur not stopping by the comms office anymore.

AUSTIN: Right. Totally.

ALI: Which feels weird, but it's not like, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Um, Phrygian, how has, what's it been like to assimilate into this group to some degree? There's a weird thing. We also didn't. I also didn't pause and explain something else about you. As we talked about you being a frontline researcher, you were explicitly sitting here with a group of other Branched to figure out what the hell is going on in Partizan. And specifically you had heard about Gur Sevraq and the true divine and, you know, AKA "God", AKA, uh, "autonomy itself". And the Branched were like, Yo does the principality have God on its

side, we should find out we should genuinely find out, because what if there is, what if there is a God and that God is against us?

AUSTIN: All we know is...

KEITH: The answer is no.

AUSTIN: The answer was no, the answer was that it seems like, it seems like the true divine is kind of anti-principality these days. Um, so, so you learned that, but then in the process of being here is part of when you got captured and experimented on, um, and so, and so, but like after... that means you did spend some amount of time here, presumably you probably were in a, you know, at, you probably saw Gur Sevraq give a sermon before you were captured at some point, you know? Um, but I'm more interested- I'm less interested in that and more interested in just like, what's it like to be around people like the ones we know?

KEITH: Yeah. I, I, you know, I, I think, uh, it's an awkward feeling to like, make a bunch of new friends whose old best friend has just died.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Um, or, you know, and to people who were not Gur's friend, they're like,...

AUSTIN: Here's like, yeah, here's actually an interesting question. We have not thought about it at all. Did you know Gur Sevraq?

KEITH: Was like, was I, did I already know Gur Sevraq. [**AUSTIN:** Yeah,] and Gur Sevraq know that I was like, in there.

AUSTIN: And be like cool with it. Cause that's how Gur Sevraq is...

KEITH: Right and even...

AUSTIN: Or would even Gur Sevraq be like "Whoa, this is too much..."

KEITH: We all went ghost hunting and Gur Sevraq was like, "ha ha"

AUSTIN: Yeah, ha ha ghost hunting. I guess Gur wouldn't have known that you were there. Gur would not. It's very funny, but I think Gur would not have been like, and I'll leave them like that. [KEITH laughs] Don't worry about it. I'll leave them locked up as being an entire weird ghost deck.

KEITH: Oh, you think I was like, I kind of assumed that I had just been like. Like I'm just not going to move. I'm just not going to be...

AUSTIN: That's what it was, that's a very, that's a very, uh, Branched thing to do. It was like, I'm just gonna stay like this for now. This is pretty cool.

KEITH: I'm just gonna be like it's better than going up there where, who knows what's going on at least down here I'm a haunted deck.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's pretty sick.[**KEITH:** Yeah.] Yeah.[**KEITH:** That's bright.] Yeah, [Laughs] exactly. God... extremely good. Because going back to literally the first thing we recorded for Partizan, the first Road to Partizan episode, the Hyphan word for like awesome is "bright sky". So I'm glad we've just wrapped around to another culture calling things "bright" to mean "Good." [KEITH Chuckles]

AUSTIN: Um, yeah. And so I guess what I would say to speak on behalf of the Millennium Break members who are not here is there's a real range of... Of attitudes to you being around. Do you think everybody knows that you're Branched or do you think, has there been some,

KEITH: Yes, I think everybody knows.

AUSTIN: Okay. There has not been any sort of hiding that that's what you are.

KEITH: Like if there's, if there is someone who doesn't know...

AUSTIN: Like, "that's just a weird looking columnar." Yeah.

KEITH: If there's someone that didn't know, like in the show version of this, that someone who didn't know would just be used to illustrate that everyone else already knew. You know what I mean?

AUSTIN: Okay. Gotcha. Gotcha. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, Then I will say that there was probably.... there were probably some people who defected over this, um, not enough to ruin Millennium Break.

KEITH: Right

AUSTIN: But there are definitely members, especially of groups like this, the, um, uh, the Company the Spade who were like, (defiantly)"nah, fuck this." [**KEITH:** Right.] "We are not having a Branched on our side. That is a sign that we have gone too far."

KEITH: The Company the Spade? That was the group led by that cop. Right.

AUSTIN: Which one? Uh, yes, there was the one led by a mercenary. They, they are not cops, but they are literally... they're. They're like an organized... they're a worker's collective. They're just a fairly conservative worker's collective.

KEITH: They were like, kind of patriotic. In a weird way...

AUSTIN: Very patriotic. Yeah, absolutely. They believe in the principality. They, they, you know, believe in divines. They are like, you know, blue collar families is kind of the vibe, right? Like that's the, that's the gist of stereotypical,

KEITH: Not everyone?

AUSTIN: No, including their body that's, that's what they are. They're like, that's who they are by and large. They go out on asteroids and dig for stuff and fight anyone who comes to deal with them.

And they work in, in super-hot places.

KEITH: Right, Combat mine--. dangerous combat miners.

AUSTIN: Dangerous combat miners. Exactly. But that's their vibe. Like Deep Rock Galactic but mechs is kind of their vibe. Uh, and so, and so it's like, yeah, they're kind of cool, but like, and, and they absolutely want a world in which Orion is more led by labor unions then by CEO's. Uh, but there is a limit to what, where that, where that political philosophy will get you.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: And for some of them, that limit is "we don't want monsters on our side." Um, and that's terrible, but that's the world. Right? Um, and that is certainly some of them... enough of them that, that it probably was felt. Um, uh, in fact, enough of them that it was felt that I'm just going to, this is, this is good. I'm lowering the, the tier of Company of the Spade. Um, they have enough of them left. They dropped from a tier four to a tier three. They're still powerful, but, um, What are you going to say?

KEITH: I thought you were gonna punish us that's...

ALI: Yeah

AUSTIN: No, no, no, no, no, no. Y'all rule and y'all can do y'all can decide whatever you want. SBBR, blah, blah, blah. I think Oxblood is down, you know, um, I think the Cult of Perennial is obviously down. I think the Sable Court.

KEITH: Down like "into it" Not down a tier?

AUSTIN: Into it, into it. Yes, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Down with it, like, yeah, this is, of course, this is what you do.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Um, I suspect Leap's fleets, which I don't know if you have a good name for that.

KEITH: (chanting) Leap's Fleets

AUSTIN: I just wrote Leaps Fleets is what I wrote. [all laugh] It's probably down with it. Yeah. Um, I bet the Red Fennecs, Tes'ili Serikos and them, not as into it... but so, so they're tier one, no one cares what Tes wants. Right. Um, and so... sorry to Tes, but

JACK: Were like, "can you sell to them?"

AUSTIN: Right Exactly. Will they buy things like...

KEITH: "Will they buy cigarettes?"

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Yeah, exactly that.

AUSTIN: Um, so yeah. Um, and then finally Kalar how, what's, what's it been like integrating with SBBR? And, you know, trying to like work. My, my vibe with you was that you were kind of a lone operator before, is that right?

JACK: I think I had a squad. Um, I think I, I think I had a squad or like a, I had a, uh, the thing that keeps coming back to me is that like Kalar had a party in the same way that an RPG group has a party. Uh, I think there were probably like four of them total. Um, there was like a, um, you know, like a rogue or like a, like a DPS, a rage, DPS and melee DPS, a tank and a healer or whatever... Um, and I, and I think, I think Kalar probably misses those people. Um, but, but is, is a little overawed.

KEITH: Which one are you?

JACK: Oh God, I think what... Austin?

AUSTIN: Melee DPS right.

KEITH: I was thinking maybe like melee DPS but I guess he could tank.

JACK: Yeah, tanky stuff but like... yeah....

AUSTIN: No, you're not a tank [**ALI:** no...] because you fight tanks. [**ALI:** Yeah... I don't think...] You can't be the tank.

ALI: Yeah. Kalar's not absorbing any damage.

JACK: No, that's very true.

AUSTIN: Exactly. You're a glass cannon so you are like the definition of a glass cannon.

KEITH: So yeah, that's sort of what I was thinking was that "does someone who fights a tank barefoot have to, that's what I call not being in a mech, it's called "barefoot"

AUSTIN: Barefoot yeah, mmmm`

KEITH: Someone who fights mechs...

JACK: Keith, that's amazing. Have you always called it that?

KEITH: No, I just made that up, uh, that fights mechs barefoot. Uh, they'll have to be able to take a hit from a mech, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. But, but no, no, no, no, no, no. That, they cannot do.

JACK: Yeah. I've got ways and ways...

AUSTIN: Yeah you've got ways and ways but if you take a hit dead on,[**KEITH:** got it] it ain't good for you.

JACK: It kills me.

KEITH: Okay so you're melee DPS, got it.

AUSTIN: I don't think you get... you have a little extra stress from a move. You can assist people a bit better. You can do less or more damage than a role says, those are your abilities. You don't have shit. That's like,

JACK: Mmm... I got that soldier move.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's useful. That's useful, but it's still a lot. There's still a scale difference. That is serious. So don't get hit by a Mech is what I'm going to tell you.

KEITH: Yeah don't get hit.

JACK: Yeah,

AUSTIN: We are. We are playing gloves off right now, so.

JACK: I think Kalar is like a little overawed... overawed. they're a professional. They've been doing this for a long time. They are not afraid of anything because of their job.

AUSTIN: Had they already been fighting big robots for Millennium Break?

JACK: That's why they were brought in, I think. Gur Sevraq... Yeah, definitely. I think Gur Sevraq knows. That this is the giant killer. Or knew... **[AUSTIN: right]** Um, and so put measures in place, uh, to, to bring them in, um...

AUSTIN: Right. Your requisition order got signed, you know, a week before Gur Sevraq falls off the top of Fort Icebreaker.

JACK: And I think they're just, they're very excited on the trying to keep. Themselves stoic. I sort of, I imagined them as a, like an older person, like in the late forties, mid-fifties. Um, and I think they are, they are thrilled to be walking the same decks as heroes of the revolution. Um,

AUSTIN: Okay. interesting

JACK: You know, they are part of a revolutionary cell, they know that cell is important. They understand the Millennium Break works because people all over the planet are able to, uh, come together. But here they are in head office, uh, kind of for the first time, uh,

AUSTIN: It's funny that...

JACK: They'll just see Sovereign Immunity or they'll like...

AUSTIN: Right. It's funny you say that for a couple of reasons. One is, you were kicked out of head office basically immediately as SBBR is redeployed to Obelle or not to Obelle to Ox-, to Oxbridge. And you're living under a weird, like, uh, A secret underground base underneath a, um, underneath the lighthouse on a little Island outside of, uh, ox-, ox-, uh, -bridge. And then, you get sent somewhere else almost immediately. You get sent. To Auspice where you are sort of from... you get sent back to basically one of the towns near your hometown, um, which is where today's game is going to kick off at least, and probably take place by and large.

Um, So, um, I guess let me set it up like this for the last few weeks ever since the end of the kingdom game, um, you know, with all of the attacks on Millennium Break territory, we're kind of taking out all the independent cells except for Cruciat Lambic House. And here at the Prophet's Path. The kind of Auspice Marengo Obelle area. Um, Millennium Break leaders have turned to the Isle of Logos as a potential ally. Uh, and there have been these intense negotiations for again, since, since in this entire month, basically, um, the hope is that they will ally or join, or even just give Millennium Break access to ports and markets and, you know, shipping lanes to help fix some of the logistical problems that Millennium Break is running into. Now that. The kind of vast network has been attacked, but at the same time, chancellor Boole

Batanca... who was one of the kind of two main leaders of the Isle of Logos understands that doing that would put a big target on the Isle's back? Um, obviously it would be, you know, a political incident or an international incident and a, a religious, um, uh, scandal in some ways. If a stel attacked the Isle of Logos, because this is the place that Logos Kantel, created the sea of Partizan. And so it's an important religious, um, you know, location, uh, but it's not beyond them. Um, obviously, uh, the, all of this has meant that Boole Batanca, the chancellor has been kind of. Gun shy to some degree about signing any permanent deal. There've been a number of talks, uh, though, and they have been positive Millennium Break kind of has three big things on their side. First, uh, you know, the Isle of Logos has always wanted to see Partizan free of the hegemonic control of the principality and Millennium Break is literally working on that.

Ah... second. Um, the negotiators are Gucci Garantine and Apparatus Aperitif, and they're very good at this. [laughter] So they're, they're, they are pros. Um, third, the loss of Gur Sevraq during the assault on Cruciat has really galvanized not only the Church of the Resin Heart, um, who is a big deal, both on the Isle of Logos and here in Auspice. Um, but also a lot of the citizens, uh, on the Isle, um, you know, whom Gur and his church had helped over the years. Um, now we are, uh, nearing the final step of the negotiation, kind of the, the final, big, um, you know, Millennium Break is, is kind of playing their final card. Uh, As you can see from this map, Auspice is sort of like an arrow or a finger shaped peninsula. Uh it's the mainland is on the West it's kind of broader there. And then it kind of comes to a point on the East pointing out to the sea. Um, on that Eastern end, are the docks, including a place, a marked Point Bracket, which will be your extraction point. If things go bad today, hopefully they don't. Uh, in the middle of the peninsula is a kind of a sprawling residential area. Uh, and then over to the West a little bit is a light industrial zone... Far to the West. You'll see that there was a Point Ampersand. Uh, that's like at the base of the peninsula. And that is a big structure called the High Altar, which was one of the very first temples built by the followers of Logos Kantel a thousand years ago on Partizan and it is now maintained and operated by the Church of the Resin Heart. Um, and so during the kind of Millennium Break rebellion over the last few months, it became, uh, one of your basis of operation on the mainland. Um, below the High Altar, uh, there is a sound and shock proof bunker that is meant for kind of large scale mission briefings, uh, protection of people who are in danger if the city is attacked, um, and that space has been retrofitted by Gucci's order to turn it into a high end theatre where Zola's documentary about the movements, rise, and spread, uh, will premiere. The name of that movie is "We Will Leap."

KEITH: Excuse me? I didn't realize that ah Leap was the star of this.

AUSTIN: Well, you're main, you're like a main character in it, but it's not, it's not just about Leap it's, it's Leap is, is remember the final rule of, um, of the, one of the final rules of the Kingdom game. That was the Millennium Break manifesto was "We will leap," um, in any case, Gucci... Bless her heart, believes that after seeing the film, the chancellor will commit to the cause. And you know, she's probably right to some degree. I'm not, I don't want to undersell her. Uh, you know, some it's very effective propaganda. Um, but she also knows that the rest of the world, what has been knocking at your door, I will say that you've been running security for the last

month with Gucci and Apparatus. And Apparatus isn't here tonight. Apparatus, they are... they are back on the Isle of Logos and plenty of those other talks have been at other places like, Obelle, like the Isle, like, you know, undisclosed places, you know, Cruciat, uh, you know, I must said mother base, right. Icebreaker. Um, and, and throughout there have been spies and saboteurs that you've run off or reconnaissance people, or even maybe small fights at the edges. So it's been kind of exhausting, but you've stuck it out. Um, and now, today you know, um, or, you know, recently as you're in Auspice now to the North, about a half day away by car, let's say just beyond Obelle, uh, the Black Century, which as you may recall, is Motion's crew, right? A has been laying siege to the very edge of Millennium Break territory. Kind of the border between Obelle and the rest of Apostolisian kind of territory? Um, and they've been fighting against the Company of the Spade up there, who, you know, the Company, the Spade sucks in some ways, but also they are a member of Millennium Break and they are able to hold off this, this march from the Black Century, um, Cas'alear Rizah, who is with you, deployed with you here on Auspice is itching to go confront them, uh, and break the century. Um, but Gucci has been keeping them here in Auspice as another kind of force, just in case you get attacked, um, In fact, Gucci is so nervous that she has, has finally basically said, you need to... SBBR you're in charge here of the final kind of preparations. The night of the premiere. You will be running security across the entire event. Uh, and you have a few very specific missions.

Objective, number one. Protect the theatre for the whole showing of the film. Um, you know, they're going to go down there. Maybe there'll be an intermission or something, but like you have to keep them safe, uh, barring that, if the theatre comes under attack and the chancellor's put under threat, escort Boole Batanca to an escape point on the town's shore. Um, you'll also note that, uh, there is to the Northwest a third objective. This is a secondary objective, and that is point Comma, which is a little standalone structure. Um, and that is like a long distance radar station. Um, it's like a strand Semaphore base, one of the ones that lets the different bases talk to each other. Uh, and this is the thing that keeps you connected both to. Um, you know, basically to all the other strand Semaphore bases on the, on the planet, but especially to the one in Obelle and the one in Marengo to your North and South respectively. Um, this is like an obvious target if there's going to be an attack. So a secondary mission here is, "Hey, Don't let that fall either."

JACK: Also listeners, in case you're wondering... Is the High Altar shaped like a massive letter F? Yes, absolutely.

AUSTIN: I didn't do that. That's just a map generator. If I could have not made it an "F"

JACK: Can I get an "F" in the High Altar?

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: "Fs" to the High Altar... God, I hope not because your mission is to prevent that from happening. No, no, absolutely. No "Fs" in the chat, please, uh,

KEITH: So we're at Ampersand, we're...

AUSTIN: Well you're wherever you want to be. You have, you have free reign of this place. If you want to put yourself various places, you can put yourself in various places. **[KEITH:** Well the the...] But the showing ah the premier is Point Ampersand. Point Comma is the, uh, escape location. Yeah. And then Point Bracket is the, is the kind of forward operating radar based type thing. Um, there are also as always some rules of engagement here. One is, if there are, if there is an attack, um, I mean, spoilers playing this game, there's going to be an attack of some sort. If you get prisoners, you have to keep them alive. You cannot kill prisoners. Um, it's a bad showing to kill prisoners in front of a world that already thinks of you as terrorists. uh, but also more cynically. You need bargaining chips and you need intel. Uh, and so if you could capture people, that would be useful. Second is, please do not deploy chemical, biological, uh, or poisonous weapons. Explosions are okay. Uh, but nothing beyond like regular explosions, um, uh, you know, you could use a projectile weapons and stuff, but no gases, no toxins.

ALI: (disappointed) Awww

AUSTIN: Sorry, Broun. Uh, these are your people and it's super important not to give the enemy any sort of, um, you know, propaganda to use against you while you're showing your own propaganda. That'd be really bad to be like, look at what great heroes they are. An outside Broun is gassing another city. So...

KEITH: Can we,... Can we one time, though, do, do a, a mission where it's like, if, "if the fight shows up" and was like, "Oh no fight showed up." You've been here for three hours. Nothing happened. [all chuckle] I mean, we hung out. (sarcastically) "Oh I guess that's the mission."

AUSTIN: Presumably that, Oh yeah. Presumably we, we, you've done that in the downtime to some degree, right. Or at the downtime, but in the, that's been the last month of your life, maybe once in a while. There's a skirmish, but by and large, it's looking through a scope and nothing happening and being in this like, "Ugh, I'm so tired... I've been at this for 12 hours.

KEITH: Yeah and I bet that's common. You know all of the times where nothing happened, we don't show except for... This free time in the future where we actually do it.

AUSTIN: That's a great idea. That's a great bottle episode. Isn't it? Um, I love it. Ah, this is not going to be that episode, unfortunately. Um, or maybe it is, or isn't it. Do you know? **[Ali laughs]** Or is it? who could say, um, All right. So tell me how and where you want to like, come in on this again, y'all have time to set things up, to do legwork, to talk to people. If you want to have a scene with each other, like I'm a, all I'll say is at some point, like it will be the premiere night. Um, uh, and so until then, you know, you all kind of have free reign.

KEITH: I'm kind of curious for Phrygian, like... [**AUSTIN:** yeah.] The path from... "I was the haunted deck" to "I'm on a mission. Just normal style." [**AUSTIN:** Yeah.] Is a little bit, I mean, that's a kind of a funny path.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I bet the first time was, was very, very, just like, I mean, you tell me, yeah what do you think that was like?

KEITH: Well, this could even be the first time. I don't know. I'm not dedicated either way,

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's up to you.

KEITH: But I, I, I guess I... I mean, we went through a little bit like, Oh, some people left over this. some people are into it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. The thing I don't want is the idea that we have to spend a lot of time today with characters acting like you're a complete stranger to them. [**KEITH:** Yeah. Yeah.] That's the thing I don't want necessarily even known them in other, maybe you've been at SBBR base for a while, but not necessarily.

KEITH: Sure. I, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not dedicated either way to this being a first mission. I would just, I, I guess I want a little bit of input on how do you go from being the haunted deck to being... To being out, especially when, when like a lot of people consider me being here, a controversial issue on its own.

1:01:39

ALI: Um, if I'm able to provide some context of what you're looking for [**AUSTIN:** please] I feel like, um, cause I feel like how we got from point A to B here was like post-kingdom. Broun was just like, hey Thisbe, can you post some like job openings for SBBR? And see what happens. [Chuckles]

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Um, and I don't know that Phrygian would be like, yeah, "I'm going to apply for a position now or whatever."

KEITH (as Phrygian): Ooh they're hiring up there...

ALI: Um, but like through the recruitment process?

AUSTIN: Right. So maybe, of the groups, like SBBR is the one where there's another alien, right? The Nobel are not from here. Uh, and so Valence might have been a draw for you in a

real way, because that's a culture of the Branched have never interacted with and they worship the true Divine.

KEITH: And Valence and Gur are most connected to that god.

AUSTIN: Yes, Yes. So maybe there was some Phrygian Valence stuff that happens off-camera here too. Yeah, I think that makes sense to me in advance. I cannot to speak for Dre here, but again, I can so easily imagine Valence being like. "So do you want to like stick around?"

KEITH: Yeah. That's extremely Valence. You're not wrong.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And we can keep talking about this, you know, anyway.

KEITH: Oh, I like that. That works for me. That's- that's all I needed. Unless someone has something specifically, uh, uh...

AUSTIN: Um, cool. So talk to me about how you want to do this. I mean, there's, we can really hand wave a lot of it and we could jump to engagement and talking about like, okay, well, what is your core strategy here? But I want to make sure you have some, some downtime here and we can, we can spend as much, or as little time around this, this premiere as you want, you know? Um, we could, we could have the camera be with Millie and her mech on a mountain somewhere. But you could have the camera be in, you know, at the red carpet. It's up to y'all.

JACK: I think I'd like to get the lay of the land. **[AUSTIN: Okay.]** I think I'd like to spend some time, um... What's the tallest building in Auspice?

AUSTIN: It's, it's the High Altar for sure.

JACK: Oh, wow. Excellent. What's the tallest building that would give me a view of the High Altar?

AUSTIN: [Scoffs] Um, I don't know that there's anything with tall enough that you would look down on the High Altar. It's the high- it's the High Altar.

KEITH: Are those lines to the left. Are those Hills?

AUSTIN: No, those are it's farm- farmland.

JACK: Farmland, the opposite of a Hill.

AUSTIN: That's where Thisbe and... Yeah, aha. Point, point, Point Bracket. honestly, would probably be it, it's a tall tower that has like, you know...

KEITH: Of the top of the Semaphore thing.

AUSTIN: The top of the Semaphore thing. Yeah. Would be a place... Or, far to the, to the either direction. Right. Or any North, South. Or West, we could theoretically have some Hills where you could be looking down on the town, but that's pretty far, and you're just a person you don't get to like,

JACK: Yeah no...

KEITH: Well, as a, as a, Talonite, you could just jump real high over and over.

JACK: Like when you were in a video game and you're trying to determine what's on the other side of a fence or something.

AUSTIN: You could be... I think maybe the, the, the tallest place that gives you a view on the building of the High Altar would be like this parapet on the, the, uh, wall surrounding it. You know, um, uh, or like we could say, like this building down here is kind of tall and it gives you a look at like this whole district. Um, not give you a good view in past the wall of the High Altar.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Necessarily.

JACK: Um, no. Oh, sorry. Allie?

ALI: Sorry but. I don't want to interrupt and I'm very sorry, but the last mention led me to a really important question, which is can Kalar, double jump?

JACK: Ooh!

AUSTIN: Yes! [All laugh] Yes! We've seen, I believe Kitcha Kanna double jumped at least once.

JACK: Absolutely. Could you kind of might even have triple jumped, Austin?

AUSTIN: Yeah, but you're no Kitcha Kanna. No offense. [ALI laughs]

JACK: Yeah. I am absolutely no Kitcha Kanna yeah. Kitcha Kanna has absolutely no fucking morals.

AUSTIN: Yes. you're not the Bird Leader of Advent. Yes The opposite of Kitcha Kanna. Yeah.

JACK: Um, no, I think I just, I really like this image of like a door that says like "No entry mind your..." Of, uh, like, or like dangerous...

AUSTIN: I swore you were going to say "feathers". **[SYLVIA:** (laughing) Ha!] I swore you were going to say "mind your feathers."

JACK: Ah, "Mind your feathers" No, I think it's, it's this like "Danger of falling. Keep out" and like a little, a pictogram of a Talonite falling. Um, And then just like ah ah... Tight on Kalar's face frowning, and kicking the door open and kind of walking out onto the rooftop. Millie as a sniper, do you want to come with?

SYLVIA: Yeah, sure. I think that makes sense. It's a good way for Millie to scope out like where invading forces would be coming from.

JACK: So what would be like, let's say where, like up here, I think Kalar kind of just like, uh, uh, like hoists himself onto the railing and dangles his feet over the edge and looks back at Millie and goes,

(as Kalar) "This is quite exciting. Isn't it?"

SYLVIA: I think Millie is like, doing fine climbing up, but is struggling a bit more, uh, like she can't jump so high. Um, twice, this is more like a normal, yeah, this is, she doesn't have the double jump power up yet. [Ali chuckles] So it's like a normal human trying to climb. **[AUSTIN:** right right] Um, and so she's a bit more like,

(as Millie) "Yeah, no it's great. This is super fun." And like, Clearly just like dying to get to somewhere where she can stop clinging onto this thing for a bit.

JACK: (as Kalar) No, you've got it. You're doing great. This is, this is great. Like just before, you know, before we got started, I am, not much for words, but I wanted to say what an honor it is to be deployed with you here today. Your work has meant a lot to me and to a lot of people on this moon. So it's a, it's a great honor to be fighting alongside you in such a beautiful city.

JACK: Just like looking out across Auspice.

SYLVIA: I think like that's when Millie's finally like pulled herself up and was like sitting on the ledge and I was like,

(as Millie) Oh, uh, That's like really nice of you to say, um, (awkwardly) Thanks bro.

SYLVIA: And then like offers like, offers up a fist bump to him, like, she doesn't know how to respond to people being like, "Hey, you're like the work you do is important."

JACK: I think that's what Kalar says like, I think he just fist bumps you you and goes,

(as Kalar) The work you do is important and I'm glad to be a part of it. Yeah. So, uh, you're the, you're the sniper, right? That's what they told us. Well, I mean, that's what the comic books kind of showed. Um...

SYLVIA: (As Millie, under their breath) Oh God, I forgot about those...

JACK: (As Kalar) But like they would, they were kind of like chill comic books. I don't mean to like overawe you or anything, but like you're, you're a sniper. You got any, got any opinions about all this, like the lay of the land where people might be coming from.

SYLVIA: (As Millie) I mean, like the advantage of this is that from here, we can see pretty well over the ocean. So I don't know if anything's going to be able to surprise us that way. Um, but it's over just towards Bracket where I think we really need to focus our attention. The, the fact that this is so much like more elevated than anywhere else in Auspice does give us a whole pretty decent advantage though, for keeping an eye on things.

JACK: (As Kalar) Oh yeah. Love to be elevated.

AUSTIN: Um, Millie, one of- one of the two of you should do a gather information check.

JACK: Yeah, I'm gonna, I'm gonna do a Gather Information Check about... Yeah, I'm just going to do other information check- do I need to tell you what it's about?

AUSTIN: Well, yeah, once you, once you roll it, you do. Uh, this will be a survey from what you're saying, it sounds like study would work here too, because you meticulously examining details for better understanding. Um, but, but, uh, but survey is more a letter of the law for sure.

JACK: Oh, okay. So that is a 1D6 for me.

AUSTIN: Yep.

SYLVIA: Mine would be the same, so, yeah.

JACK: Hmm! Oh!

AUSTIN: That's a one. So, limited information on this Gather Information role. You still got to ask me a question though. What do you, what, what are you asking me? A one to three- yeah, go ahead.

JACK: I don't think Clem gathered information once Austin. I'm afraid I'm a little caught short. Um, **[AUSTIN: uh, yeah,]** so I just get to, I get to just ad lib a question, right?

AUSTIN: It's not you have to as lib... like there's a set of questions that like are tied to who you are, uh, like what your, your playbook is, towards the bottom of the time sheet, but you don't need to, they're your examples. Those are so things like. "What is this machine's weak point?" for instance, would be one question that is like a giant killery question. also "Who hates the war here as much as I do?" So it's a pretty broad scheme of things, but you could ask, you could ask any of these, or Any other one you can come up with?
It's just that you're going to get a limited answer, limited information because of your, your one, your one to three.

JACK: And this can translate into position or some advantage in future.

AUSTIN: Yeah. When you, when you, um, uh, act on this in the future, you can, you can get a bonus to it. Yes. for instance. Yeah.

JACK: I think Kalar produces a worn notebook from one of his pockets and pulls a pencil from behind his ear and draws. In like a, like a thin linework, what the layout of the skyline around these low buildings. Uh, and so the question I want to ask is "what other routes along and around the rooftops are surrounding the High Altar?"

AUSTIN: Um, you see... Limited information, um, you see only one point at which someone could get into the High Altar via roof tops. Uh, uh, and that is, let's see here that is this... Uh, I'm going to mark it on the map with a X that's. What I'll do. Um, that is right.

JACK: The "X" is for extra dangerous rooftops. [Sylvia chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yes. Um, that's right here. Um, uh, there was like enough and it's not even the rooftop. It's not like the roof goes up to it. It's that there's enough loose bricks in the wall that someone, you know, someone adequately, um, uh, dexterous could climb up. The the, uh, side of this kind of Southern parapet on the wall, um, uh, the side of the wall, up to the parapet and then get inside of the, the main gate beyond the main gates. Um, Millie, if you want to roll here too, I will not stop you from doing that. I was not going to encourage it, but then, but then, Kalar rolled a "1".

SYLVIA: (Laughing) Yeah, I might, I think I'm going to,

AUSTIN: Um, yeah,

KEITH: Can't be worse.

JACK: I think Kalar just says, "well I've got fuckall. Do you wanna have a go?"

AUSTIN: I mean, you do have like, "Oh, Hey look over there. I bet someone could climb over there." That's not nothing.

SYLVIA: I got a five.

AUSTIN: You got a five. So that's a, that's a, um, uh, you know, standard success. What, what's your question?

SYLVIA: So I think this is more like, "what's like the fastest route to our escape point from here."

AUSTIN: Yeah. I'll ask you a question. Draw it for me.

SYLVIA: Oh, damn.

JACK: (Excited) Oh yeah!

SYLVIA: Oh crap. Okay. Hold on. I gotta get my mouse. I'm on a track pad.

JACK: Friends at the Table: Maze Edition

SYLVIA: Maze edition. You draw it for me. That'll be it. And you can tell me why it is. Cause like there's an obvious, just like straight line type thing. But if you want to tell me, actually the more effective path is this way, because of the way people block the streets, or it looks an alleyway, you know? Right. We're talking about...

KEITH: To Point Comma we're talking about?

AUSTIN: It's Point Comma. Yeah. Okay.

SYLVIA: Um, wow. See, I definitely do think it's like, uh, God, I gotta find a decent color for those. So I don't like, so it's like visible without destroying everything. I'll just do red. Um, I was thinking of it being something like this, and then they go, I guess I should let go of that. So you can see that. And then they go up towards the, like up here. [**AUSTIN:** Okay.] And then down. The docks.

AUSTIN: Down to here down all the way around. Okay.

SYLVIA: Yeah, because I've- that way you avoid the residential area more and also it's like a straight line, like you being next to the water means like, if we have water transports, they can move to meet us, stuff like that.

AUSTIN: Sure, sure. And you just don't have to worry about that side of the- [**SYLVIA:** yeah,] sure. Okay. Um, Wow. Do you have a follow up question? With a five, I'll give you one follow up question.

SYLVIA: Dang, okay. Okay. Um...Oh, I'm really struggling to think of like a good follow-up question right now.

AUSTIN: I'm looking at your gather information questions here. Most of these are about things you already know about, but... there's stuff that's useful.

SYLVIA: I think like, in a similar sort of vein is like why, if we get attacked from like, Point Bracket like Westwards, where would be the best place to like, defend? Like stop invading forces, you know?

AUSTIN: From hitting Point bracket? or after they take Point Bracket?

SYLVIA: After they hit Point Bracket, like to cover our escape, like tying with that, like we would do like a choke point to sort of stop things?

AUSTIN: Um, it depends on what they attack with, but what you suspect is, or what you know is true is that the. Um, these walls are pretty sturdy. Um, and, and the act of like shelling the walls or trying to break through the walls would be, um, or at least. What would you expect? There's two things. One is they, there's something to jump over. Like they could climb on top of these buildings with a mech and then jump from the building on top of the wall somewhere, you know what I mean? But there are no buildings to the West or the North, right. There's like some of the North, but you see what I mean? Like this whole like Western area is not, does not have any buildings. So you probably wouldn't just try to hit the wall from the West where they would probably try to do is come in through kind of main town, like. This area up here, um, or try to loop down and around here. So they could use these buildings as like a jumping point. Um, or just to like wrap around to the main entrance. Um, and so. You should have kind of defenses at those points, if you want to stop them after Point Bracket. But also part of the thing with Point Bracket is... if you lose Point Bracket, they might, they might be coming from the East or the South or the West. And you won't know because of the loss of long distance sensors, you know?

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: So, but, but at that point, who knows, but, but if they are just like at Point Bracket, they'll probably follow that road in from the North and then cut through town. That's probably the easiest way, uh, for most vehicle types anyway. All right. Good. All right. Broun and Phrygian. What are y'all up to?

ALI: I am. I think like, sort of building off of the information that, um, Millie and Kalar just got, and just through like, you know, walking around Point Ampersand, like Broun, like hitting their fist on different walls and shit to just like find weak points. Um, the, the, the thing that I want them to actually do is to set up like, um, like trip line flares throughout the city. So once there's an invading force, we can like, sort of identify where they're coming from.

KEITH: I have a question. What is the w-- sorry, what is, what is the tapping do? What are the, what are you doing with the tapping? [Ali laughs]

JACK: You got to kick the tires.

ALI: Yeah. You know, these walls could be weak. I don't know if there's a...

AUSTIN: They could be hollow... There can be hidden secret routes in them that you don't know about.

KEITH: Hey, as someone whose body resonates with the environment, I would be particularly good at helping with the tapping, if there was anything to find there I would sound it.

AUSTIN: Are the two of you walking around together and tapping on walls and...

KEITH: Yeah I'm being like a tuning fork.

ALI: Yeah. [Laughs] Yeah, I was definitely, um, uh, envisioning this as Broun leading Phrygian around, um, in like an almost, not like leading, but no, there's a very specific way that like Broun uses Thisbe. It's sort of this way too. Like, "Hey, come with me, I'm inviting you, but I'm not. Can you carry this thing for me?" Um, so it's that just hanging around?

AUSTIN: So that sounds like you're doing like some sort of setup action to be, to deal with stuff later. I would do... that to me sounds like an engineer or something? Or maybe a- cause your goal here is to just set up... [KEITH: study?] It could be either, but, but if you're setting up, it sounds that there's two things happening. One is the investigation, which that, to me from you sounds like study or survey Phrygian. But then from Broun, if they want to set up these flares that are going to give them an advantage at spotting people or whatever, that's an engineer probably. There are two different things happening.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Do you want to do a Gather Info, Phrygian?

KEITH: Pretty sure. Um, and if I'm using study, I'm using two?

AUSTIN: You have a two in study. Yeah. 2d6.

KEITH: Six!

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a six. All right. What is your question? How do you want to kick this off?

KEITH: So, I mean...

AUSTIN: You'll get follow ups also here because you had a six.

KEITH: Yeah. Let me, let me, uh, Shoot this over to the boss...

(as Phrygian): Broun? I found all these spots. I think I found spots where there's something or nothing. What did you want to do with them?

KEITH: And then I can ask my question based on that,

ALI (as Broun): I, um, was trying to identify points of, uh, attack.

KEITH (as Phrygian): Okay, weak points in the wall.

ALI (as Broun): Where we could be Infiltrated. You know what infiltrating means?

KEITH (as Phrygian): (offended) What infiltrate means? Oh my god!

AUSTIN: Oh my god!

[all laugh]

KEITH: I am literally a scientist!

[all laugh]

JACK (chanting): Clementine 2, Clementine 2!

AUSTIN: Do you see why going into Kingdom, I was pretty sure that what was gonna happen was... Rapid Evening would survive and Broun would join the Rapid Evening.

ALI: God.

KEITH: Is there, is there anything significant about the construction of these walls for us to set up defences or attack?

AUSTIN: You were talking about the walls around the High Altar, or are you talking about just like walls in general throughout Auspice?

KEITH: Uh, let's say the, uh, the walls of the, of the high, al- surrounding the High Altar and that, that like border right around them of that, not the resident, the yellow area,

AUSTIN: The yellow area. It's like that, that the commercial and governmental buildings, the streets. Yeah. Um, what I would say is the, the, the main walls around the High Altar are like surprisingly sturdy, um, which I kind of already set up to some degree.

Um, uh, Hmm. What, what I think you. What I think you know about the areas around it though? Um, is that those buildings, I mean, there's a couple of things here. One is those buildings at night are pretty empty, uh, and this is going to be a premiere at night. So on one hand, it means you don't necessarily need to worry as much about, about collateral damage in that zone. Um, uh, but also. It means that if you see people moving around there at a rapid pace, you will know to be more suspicious of them. So if like someone is, you know, if it looks like someone is rushing to work, they probably aren't. Um, uh, And so that gives you like a little bit of an advantage of just like, hmm, what are the flows of people around here?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, other, I don't think there's anything super special about the construction of these buildings. I, I imagine in my mind, this place has lots of stucco. This place has lots of like plaster work, um, um, uh, lots of like tan and like with brown accents and some, some greenery here and there. Um, the. I'm trying to think if there's anything else to build off of, just like in the construction. I think... one thing here is, uh, uh, Ali, I think you should take a plus one just on your, um, engineer roll or a plus... you get, you get a plus one D on this, uh, setup. So that's something, but I'm gonna go back to Phrygian. You get a follow up here. If you want to ask something else related on...

KEITH: I do. I do have a follow up. Sure. So it seems like the walls for specifically the High Altar are sturdy enough where... There's a possibility that, if there's an attack, it wouldn't be sort of like a direct smash and grab?

AUSTIN: You don't know if- I mean, I'll put it this way. There's no roof on those walls. Right? Um, so who knows,

KEITH: I guess, I guess what I mean is while I'm doing this and we got "these walls are sturdy". Is there some other way people, is this, could this be a sneak in?

AUSTIN: There are a billion ways to sneak in, right? Um, you could drill under the ground. You could already be among the people inside. You know what I mean? You could be there as a, uh, as a paparazzi, you could be there as a guest would be there as a caterer. Right? **[KEITH:** Classic]. Classic caterer Hitman level of situation. Um, Uh, you could be launched over the top, or climb the walls, um...

KEITH: We have to look in the closets for waiter bodies, but you're not allowed to.

AUSTIN: They won't let you look in the closet!

JACK: For waiter bodies!

AUSTIN: Um, but yeah, that is totally a way in, right? Like, um, like, you know, thinking about this as a, as a, I think maybe this does come to you, you're, you're realizing that you have a lot of military forces here, but military forces are not going to by themselves stop some sort of like assassination attempt, you know? Um, at some point, uh, the chancellor was going to walk through, you know, the, the doors of the High Altar. And like wave at people. And at that point, someone could pull out a hatchet and throw it across the room and it could like heat seek to their head, um, or, or do some other Hitman shits. I'm going to throw a can of spoiled spaghetti, you know, uh, classic Hitman shit and, and ruin your day. But I think you're realizing that this is one of the weaknesses of the entire system is... you have very high, like hard defence, but your soft defence is pretty weak currently. Um, and, and you believe that's true for like, basically everything on, on deck, right? Like they... this is a big public event. Um, uh, you know, it hasn't been planned. It's not like it's been public for weeks and weeks. It kind of happened fairly recently in the last like five or six days. That's plenty of time to get an agent into the building to get an agent, you know, into some sort of some sort of role.

KEITH: Basically what you're saying is that the chancellor needs like. Two body guards that only sometimes leave at the same time.

AUSTIN: Yeah. to open a window. Exactly. Um, Broun, do you want your engineer roll to set up the...

ALI: Yeah. Does that plus one, turn it into a 3d6 or is that a 2d6?

AUSTIN: 3d6 ah... 3d6? Yeah. Yeah, you got it.

ALI: 3d6.

AUSTIN: (impressed) Whew! That's a crit!

JACK: Whoa! [claps]

AUSTIN: You did very well here. Um, God, how do I even know? What do I, even one second, like, I don't even know how a setup or a... cause this is like a unique, this is a pretty unique... here's what I'm going to do. I think this is so good. That you get a bonus die on your engagement role when it's time for the engagement role.

ALI: Perfect.

AUSTIN: Um, uh, because that's not really what it basically does is give you increased... Also while yeah, I think that's actually, no, I'll do something stronger than that, which is you have one position better than whatever you roll on your engagement. So if you roll desperate, you're

actually risky. If you're, if you roll risky, you're actually in, in standard or uh in limited- or uh in controlled position. Um, so that's very good. Tell me what that looks like though. Tell me what your, your setup here is and why you did so well at it? Also it was a Six, six, five, like there was no failures, even without that bonus die you would've gotten two sixes, so.

ALI: (laughing) Yeah. Um, I mean, I think it was a team effort, cause I specifically was like, Broun is getting the information from the other people and then working on it. Um, um, I think that also extending Broun as being like a community person now, I guess, um, is able to like speak to people from Auspice. So be like, "Oh, you know where, um, because you know this better, like where do you feel like you're the weakest, [**AUSTIN:** right] this town that sort of need the most offense in that way?"

AUSTIN: Um, Um, I would say that right now, the, the, and this is not a Gather Information roll necessarily? Um, but, but yeah, I think that this is the, the, gist of what you've set up here is, is that you feel pretty confident about the various troop placement across the city. Um, not capital-T Troop mechs, cause most of those are deployed to the North where, where, uh Obelle is and then where the Black Century is. Um, but in terms of just like extra background, uh, military characters, Gucci's crew, stuff like that, you know? Um, uh, yeah, I think that goes well then your, your, your illumination, you know, flares are ready to go, uh, at a moment's notice. So you can pull the trigger on those and get a plus one on, on whatever happens after you do that... Um, All right. Any other final setup here before it's- it's the night of the premiere? Also, I need to know who is where I guess, in the setup for that premiere, like are certain people on deck as bodyguards are certain people deployed to the roofs to Point Bracket, to the docks? Are people in their mechs or not? I guess there's only two mechs here now, which is an interesting change, right?

JACK: It's one, it's two too many. [Keith chuckles]

KEITH: Based on, based on the results of my last Gather Information roll, I might have tried to do that again. If I can,

AUSTIN: I would, at this point a further gather information roll would be at the, the would be the first thing to do once engagement starts.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You've kind of done our down our like legwork segment or, what I'll say is you can do it, but I start to get to, tick clocks at this point. Which is maybe a trade-off you're willing to do.

KEITH: Uh, yeah, I think so. I think I'm willing to do that if, if no one else minds, I mean, it's just, it's it's uh,

AUSTIN: Information is good. This is like, it isn't, it is not a joke to say, it is important to have good information.

KEITH: Yeah. Well, if we did the engagement first. If we did the engagement first, you would still be ticking clocks when I make my first move. It's just that we would have engaged with less information,

AUSTIN: Correct. Yup.

JACK: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. Um...

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: So... I have, I had this previous gather information roll. Where the, the, thought that Phrygian had was. "Hey, we have this like big wall that is, you know, well protecting us from this one kind of attack," but all of these other kinds of attacks that we know that exist because of the rules of the game, it lists all the different kinds of attacks that can happen.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Um, uh, yeah, They're also going to engage with you and have to choose a type and all of that theoretically, right?

KEITH: Yeah. So, uh, so I'm going to... I think I'm going to like walk the floor, look behind the stage, look at the path that the chancellor's going to walk down, and just like try and pick out different things that I can see that are off. If there's maybe a caterer who's not catering properly, um, uh, pretentious pretending; a bartender, pretending to make drinks for an hour. Uh, stuff like that.

AUSTIN: Alright. Give me a study or a survey. I've ticked a four step clock one time.

KEITH: Do I get a, do I get a plus one on this for acting on my last gather information?

AUSTIN: No, only if you want to give that up, like, yes. If you want to spend that here.

KEITH: Well I could get another one.

AUSTIN: You could.

1:31:11

KEITH: Uh, no, I'll just roll it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Three.

AUSTIN: Damn...

AUSTIN: Well, yeah, but at the same time you didn't blow it at least.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Well at the same time you didn't blow it. You didn't lose it. Maybe that would have been a one, who knows? Um, uh, what's your, uh, given what you did. W- what do you use, you're looking for like, is there a point of failure here? Is there an, is there a, uh, here's, what I'll say is, um, you observe, uh, based on what you just said. There's no.... everyone who's worked with this catering company has done it for a long enough time that, that no one's coming in through that. The, all of the people around know each other. Um, you don't see any failure in that part of this situation.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Likewise, you walk the, you know, you walk the court, it's a limited success. I can only give you so much, but like you don't see any obvious. There's nothing. There's no, like, and this is the, I mean, there's...

KEITH: No one's blowing it.

AUSTIN: No one's blowing it. The building is not built specifically to, for a getaway plan. Like there isn't a, there isn't a, yes, there was a backstage, you know what I mean? But that's just a regular backstage. There's no secret hideouts or secret passageways, and those passageways are guarded right now.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So right now the ground game seems pretty good. You're pretty confident.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Anyone else want to do something? Or should we start talking about the play? Whatever that is.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Um, Yeah. I feel like it's hard to think of an engagement plan. Cause I feel like what I'm waiting for us to see what the engagement plan that the other party.

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah that's it...

KEITH: I'm waiting for a wall to explode and get blown in. And we're like, "Oh, that's the thing."

AUSTIN: That's the thing,

JACK: Ah it's a wall attack.

AUSTIN: I think one of the ways to think about it is, um, Oh, I mean one ways is like, how do you, how do you decide on a defence in a game of football. Right. Um, uh, you know, without knowing what the offense does, you have to like, kinda like, "I guess they're going to do a passing play. We should put some people back there."

KEITH: Right.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: Um, but, but the other way of thinking about it is, is to kind of spin some of these ideas. So the tactic, the squad uses to do the engagement, um, it depends on what, you know, what their basic plan is. So assault is open violence against the target. The detail is the point of attack. For me, that would mean that the, the kind of pivot point of your plan is just sheer military might. And the detail will be where you're putting your forces. Deception is luring, tricking, and manipulating the target. The detail is, the method of deception, is you could come up with some way of deceiving them about where the chancellor is, or about what the easiest path to take is.

JACK: Mmm, fake chancellor.

AUSTIN: Right. Is there some, or is there like a pit you've dug out? Whatever. Scientific is...

JACK: A pit of ants.

AUSTIN: Scientific... Pit of ants would be scientific, engaging with technological power, the details, the unusual procedure being used. So if you were doing a Gur Sevraq miracle, that would be scientific. If you were doing Valence is weird, super powers that would be scientific. Um, social is when you negotiate with, bargain or persuade the target, the details, the social connection. This seems hard. I guess if you called the Black Century up or Apostolos, more generally and were like, "Hey, you want to work this out? We could play that game instead"

KEITH: Let's think about it before we do anything too rash.

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: Stealth is for taking action undetected. The detail's a point of infiltration. To me, that would be like setting up ambushes, which is sort of like deception, but not as deceptiony, you know, that was just like, being in place, lying in wait successfully and then trans-

KEITH: I have something for that.

AUSTIN: Okay. Let me just do the last one. Transport is carrying cargo and people through danger. The detail is the route, and the means, I read that as like, we're not going to protect this thing. Let's just get very good at getting this person out. What was your thing for stealth?

KEITH: So presumably there's paparazzi, and there might even be the film crew that did... that made the documentary.

AUSTIN: Sure. Yeah. I think Alise is here, I think Zola is here. I think, you know, their, their group, their whole crew is definitely here. I bet they're getting the day off. I mean, there's a, there's like a junior team being allowed to shoot some of this stuff.

KEITH: A "B crew."

AUSTIN: Yeah. "B crew." they're BP. They're not bee people. Well, I should say really quick. The chancellor is a squid person. I didn't mention this before. The chancellor-

JACK: Oh no, you didn't.

AUSTIN: The chancellor, ah, Boole Batanca, um, is like a cephalopod type species. We saw someone like this in Twilight Mirage. Um, a character named Gigus, Gigus Acano

KEITH: I remember Gigus.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah Gig. Um, everyone's favourite Gig.

KEITH: The only Gig.

AUSTIN: The only Gig. Um, uh, they have like a white blue skin with a kind of black and brown markings. Um, they have like tentacle hands and a tentacle mouth. Um, and their eyes kind of, this is the thing we didn't talk about before, but their eyes adjust over days. So if they're in a place that's like very bright and the weather is always clear skies like here, their eyes get. Smaller.... I guess? Cause it's the other way. Maybe I forget...

KEITH: When it's dark your eyes get bigger.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's actually right. Your eyes get bigger. Yeah. So here their eyes are kind of small cause it's very bright and subtropical or whatever. Whereas up in Cruciat, you had the whole eyes- did you know squid eyes grow asymmetrically? That doesn't happen here [Sylvia shudders] because this squid does not, the squid person does not like swim around with one

eye looking upwards and one eye looking downwards. Um, but anyway, Um, uh, this one also has like ah, Gigus did not have this. They have like a shell, like structure running up their back and also part of their head. It's almost like a helmet or hair, that's kind of like pearlescent. It's very, it's very pretty. Um, and they're wearing, they are wearing for the premier. I have their outfit. Uh, they are wearing this combo of maxi dress and cape. Um, get ready to see a cool outfit. Um, it's sort of like a burgundy, the, uh, uh, it's like a burgundy dress with like a cool, I don't know what type of plant that is...

KEITH: (impressed) Oh wow.

AUSTIN: But just like on the front and then just a dope long cape with some like, uh,

KEITH: It looks kinda like a Christmas tree topper.

AUSTIN: It does look like a Christmas tree topper, and then it does look like trees and stuff on the... Like very minimalistic icon trees.

JACK: (impressed) Oh wow.

AUSTIN: This is a dress by the designer, Masaba, um, uh, that you can find by doing a "Masaba burgundy dress or a burgundy cape." You'll find this

KEITH: Cape dress.

AUSTIN: Cape dress. It's a Cape and a dress, that's the thing. So it's that, but also it really brings out their, like the browned speckled parts of their, of their face. They, they use "they/them" also as pronouns. Um, does, does, Boole Batanca, uh, and they are the chancellor of the Isles of Logos. I think there's a dual. There's like a dual executive setup. There's like a, probably a prime minister and also a chancellor. And this is the chancellor. Anyway, we don't need to go down the prep that doesn't fucking matter, but that I've done.

KEITH: So.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Squid outfit, always in season.

AUSTIN: Well it was a lot of cameras. Yeah, sure.

KEITH: We could have, we can have a two pronged, or a two birds with one stone sort of stealth defence here. Where... two Talonites. Um, the, if we, if we, if we're able to commission some of the film crew or a film crew from somewhere to be like a live video feed for a hidden defence squad, that also would set them up to be able to use that film in further anti-Stel propaganda. Because they would be then crashing this, like basically resistance party, um, where they're just

trying to, where they're trying to show this for this movie, this resistance movie. Um, that's my pitch for that.

AUSTIN: So that would be like, that's a, I guess that's a stealth engagement, but it's like a, more of like a long-term play than anything, right?

KEITH: Yeah. It's like a two for one.

AUSTIN: A two for one.

KEITH: Cause we have, we have the whole place, you know, videoed up.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Um, so that we wouldn't have to be... Like visibly guarding.

AUSTIN: Right. I see what you're saying. Thoughts? I will need to know where you are actually guarding also, but yeah, go ahead.

JACK: Is it enough leverage? In this situation itself, you know, it gives us a lot. It gives us a long-term thing, but are we hoping, like if we see it on video, is it already too late?

KEITH: It's live- live feeds.

ALI: Yeah. I think some of the like, cause we have those flare set up. Right. So like as soon as somebody comes into the town, there is going to be like an explosion. Um, so I feel like having that be like a stealth thing or whatever, the like, disorientation one is in terms of like, oh, we've, we've tricked you into thinking that you're immediately under siege when you enter the city, even though you aren't. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah. When did the, when did the flares go off?

ALI: Um, it's like tripwire, basically.

KEITH: Oh right.

AUSTIN: Like tripwire the areas where they would be coming in basically. Right?

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: And we could use those empty buildings that. That um, Kalar learned about, or no, I did, wait. Who did?

AUSTIN: Whoever did, whoever, you could use those.

ALI: We all did.

AUSTIN: True. True. You can find like, in some old warehouse to just like put your stuff hidden...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That can like spring out at that moment.

KEITH: We could even be in, We could have, whoever's going to be in a mech, be in a mech, like already.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: So this sounds more and more like an ambush.

AUSTIN: It does. This sounds more and more like an ambush.

KEITH: Reverse ambush.

AUSTIN: This, this does sound more and more like stealth to me. Which, which is like again, um, yeah, I don't know that it's deception, deception, cause you're not luring or tricking or manipulating anything. There's nothing. That's like an "aha, come this way." There's just, you're being quiet and waiting for them to trip the wire.

KEITH: If they're going to come, they're going to come and we'll be there. Ready?

AUSTIN: Right. I don't think there's, I want to be clear unless there's some sort of a bonus I don't know about, I don't think there is... not on this side or hey, cause there's only one side now. Uh, but, but, uh, I don't think that there's any bonus here for doing deception over doing, uh, uh, or over doing stealth. I think they're the same in this case. Pretzels is the same. Um, I'm just double checking

JACK: Pretzels?

AUSTIN: Pretzels is the same. It's a- no, you don't know that bit?

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Okay. You don't know a...

ALI: Talk about it after...

AUSTIN: Okay. I won't look it up. Ali, you know though.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I don't see anything here. That's like, "make sure you use this." So, um, I think it's a good plan. Alright. Are we ready to roll for this?

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: So take plus one. So you take one for the base, then take another plus one for that. Good. Or no, we're not doing it as a roll. We're just going to boost you up one success level because of the crit, which is not as written. I just think it's dope. I'm being a fan of the players and the characters. Is the mission bold? Is it especially complex? I don't know that it's either.

JACK: No,

AUSTIN: I don't think sit and sit and wait is bold, but I don't know that it's especially complex either. So that's no pluses. Does the mission exploit the target's vulnerabilities? Is the mission's tactic ineffective against the target?

KEITH: Hmm. I don't know if it's either.

AUSTIN: You don't even know about the target. Yeah. We don't know anything about the target necessarily. You don't know enough about the target at this point.

KEITH: Yeah. Maybe they're really easily startled.

ALI: Mmm, that could be good...

AUSTIN: Right. Sure. Um, um, I should give you an... I should give you a second here. What I'll say is, there are ways for you to try to learn about who the target is, uh, that have not been pursued necessarily. Uh, it's worth saying that out loud before I pull triggers.

KEITH: Oh, sorry, the target, as in the, attackers not....

AUSTIN: Yes

KEITH: We know that the target is the chancellor.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but the target, sorry. When it says, does the mission exploit the target's vulnerabilities, the target is your opposition in this case? Yes.

JACK: You'll tick a clock if we look this up, right?

AUSTIN: Oh, I absolutely will. And you might not get it.

JACK: Mmm. But do we want to just, everybody, everybody in the city go, "well... fuck knows who's coming. It's going to be someone, someone's going to want the chancellor." Do we, do we want, do we want to have some idea? Um, what do others think? I feel like it would be good, but I'm wary of ticking clocks.

KEITH: I love ticking clocks.

SYLVIA: I think it would be useful just to know who we're up against like specifically, um, and also yeah I like ticking clocks. What else are we here to do other than tick clocks?

AUSTIN: Alright. Advance this to two.

KEITH: I will tick a clock and I don't even want to know who it is. It's just fun to tick clocks.

[all laugh]

SYLVIA: Okay. Well let's hold on.

AUSTIN: All right. Well, what are you doing to look into this?

SYLVIA: Um, so you mentioned that there's been like. There's been some skirmishes and stuff, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. There's like an ongoing siege for the last week up in Obelle, basically, just North of Obelle. It's not in Obelle proper. They haven't breached. Like I'm imagining, there's like a line of mountains separating Obelle from Apostolisian territory, like where the Barranca picks up. Um, and that is like where the fighting has been. Um, and Millennium Break. You know, the Company of the Spade has held back the Black Century, um, which is, as you may recall, Motion's crew, uh, for the last week successfully. Um, but it's like very intense fighting and the Black Century does not stop coming because that's what they are. Why were you gonna say though, is there any way?

SYLVIA: Well, I was going to say if there's any way we could get, like, cause I don't know, like through a zoomed in map, I don't know it's backwards from here.

AUSTIN: I can pull it back up.

SYLVIA: Um, but like would we be able to get, um. Like just any sort of info from, um, about like movements that they've seen and stuff like that. Like dealing with the other, um, enemy forces that have been skirmishing and see like, oh yeah, they might be doing this. Or they might be like sending these people.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Go ahead and give me, give me, um, what do you, there's a couple ways you can do this I guess. Um, there can be talking to people. This could be looking at data. This could be-

SYLVIA: Yeah, I kind of pictured it as looking at like photos and like,

AUSTIN: Alright then that sounds like some study to me then, probably.

SYLVIA: Okay. Yeah. I got 1d6 in that.

AUSTIN: Let's roll it.

SYLVIA: That's a two,

AUSTIN: That's a two...

ALI: (disappointed) Hmmm

SYLVIA: I'm sorry...

AUSTIN: No, listen. It's still a limited success, which means you can get a real... ask me a question, and I'll give you a limited, you know, response. Um, but you just kinda want to know what troop, troop movements look like and stuff like that.

SYLVIA: Right. Anything that can give us a little bit of a hint on who is attacking?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Um, Motion hasn't shown up.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: The Black Century's there, but like, that unit that, you know, Motion likes to pilot, has not shown up. There hasn't been that style of like, um, psychological warfare that Motion does where she speaks to your mind or her Elect does. Um, and there also isn't like- here's, I mean, here's a big thing is just like. The Perennial Wave hasn't shown up. Um, and you, so you personally associate that with Motion pretty strongly, Millie, because of the way the Black Century first appeared. Um, and, and you get the sense that that was not entirely luck based. Maybe it was partially luck based, you know, but Motion seemed comfortable there.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: So, Hey, maybe Motion's involved. Mmm. Which, you know, we'll see, uh, anyone else want to do a final. Tick of the clock. Wag of the finger? What does that from? What is, Oh God, that's an old Colbert bit. Jesus.

[all laugh]

KEITH: Oh yeah that was a segment. That was a Colbert report segment, but...

AUSTIN: It sure was.

KEITH: Welcome to 2008.

AUSTIN: How did we get here? Colbert wagged his finger at all the bad guys.

SYLVIA: (laughing) Ha!

(Ali sighs and groans)

KEITH: I saw him do it.

AUSTIN: I saw him do it.

SYLVIA: That rally was supposed to restore sanity. I don't know what happened.

ALI: Oh my god, I'm just, I've thought about that rally so much lately.

AUSTIN: Me too.

SYLVIA: It's the worst thing.

AUSTIN: It's the worst thing, anyway. Cool... Um, can you imagine just...

ALI: (sighs) Anyway, moving on...

AUSTIN: Ugh, anyway... It's the same people! It was about the Tea Party. It was about the people who are now in the White House. And what they said was, "We should really just, we have more similarities than differences."

(Ali groans again)

AUSTIN: Anyway...

KEITH: And they were right, for the absolute wrong reasons.

[Austin and Sylvia laugh]

AUSTIN: (recovering from laughing) Oh... anyway,

ALI: So Broun's out of their mech.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Um, I think Broun has, uh, the Three Cheers stored, like behind Point Ampersand in the field over here. Um, just cause I don't think that they know. If they're going to be best to try to get people out of the space or to get into their mech and fight people. Um, so yeah.... (laughs)

AUSTIN: Okay. So that's where you are. Gotcha.

ALI: Yeah. Alright.

AUSTIN: Do you want it to..., But you are, and you are where? You are on- in Point Ampersand?. You were in the High Altar?

ALI: I think that I'm in the High Altar. I, um, I think the Broun is. At the party, but like being kind of a fake security sort of situation?

AUSTIN: Are you like undercover? Are you like in, are you like there- or are you in security? Where- are you in formal wear? This is really what I want to know.

ALI: I'm in formal wear,

AUSTIN: Okay

ALI: Um, the, the, the, the walls of this place, um, like, can you move through them? Is it like,

AUSTIN: Mhmm, they're like big, thick walls that have like, um, I guess they probably actually what's probably true is you can move through them at the top. You can move from one, like parapet. Is that the word I'm using? Am I using that word? Right? I've been saying it a lot.

KEITH: Parapet? That's like the top of a castle.

AUSTIN: Yeah okay. I guess...

KEITH: Where people shoot arrows out of?

AUSTIN: That's what I thought, right? Yeah.

KEITH: Yup

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah. So then yeah, you can move between those, those things on a walkway that connects one to the other. Um, and each of them has like an interior, like tower structure that you can go into. And they're probably like bunks in there, and armouries and stuff like that. But I don't know that you can walk inside the wall from, from place to place. It would probably make the wall a little too weak. Um, if that makes sense, or I don't know if that's true or not, but you know what I'm saying. It's a very thick, sturdy, fully built wall. It's dense.

ALI: It's like bridges between each of the towers right?

AUSTIN: The bridges are just on top of the wall, basically. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Yeah. So you're up there on one of those?

ALI: Yeah

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, and yeah,

ALI: I've moved.

AUSTIN: Well, wait, what's your formal wear? More important.

ALI: Okay. Hi. So.

AUSTIN: Hello.

ALI: [giggles] Um, Broun is wearing the leather jacket that the antagonist from Total Recall is wearing. Which is just like a leather suit jacket that I became obsessed with because it's like light and soft enough leather that it just like sits like fabric would. Um, I have a picture.

AUSTIN: Please, I need the picture.

ALI: Michael Ironside's character from Total Recall. I believe it's Richter... to anyone's googling.

AUSTIN: Oh, yes. I know this jacket.

ALI: But it's just like, it's just like a leather suit jacket!

AUSTIN: It's just a suit jacket, but leather.

JACK: (impressed) Oh wow.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, what a look!

ALI: Um underneath that...

JACK: A fucking Fargo look.

ALI: (chuckles) Yeah underneath that though. They're wearing like a chiffon sheer white buttoned down, um, that has. um embroidery of a bunch of hands holding paper fans.

AUSTIN: (amazed) Oh my God.

ALI: The pull I'm making here is there's a tattoo artist on Instagram. You can find her @lizlizkimkim, who does like very dainty, um, art in that style. Um, then they are wearing a pair of dark navy, formal shorts.

AUSTIN: Amazing.

ALI: Um, (laughs) they're wearing a pair of yeah. Of like Teva, strappy sandals?

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

ALI: Um, the way that I'm imagining this is that like, you know, those are sort of a modern brand now, and I can imagine Tes being like- or not. I can imagine Kesh being like, "Oh, that's formal wear. "

AUSTIN: Right. Totally. This is fashionable now.

ALI: This is fashionable now. Yeah. And I imagine Broun just finding like a suitcase when they attacked Kesh.

AUSTIN: Oh my fucking god...

ALI: And be like, "okay this is my one formal wear"

AUSTIN: "This is sick, I'm keeping this!" Yeah. I love it.

ALI: (laughs) Um, yeah.

AUSTIN: Great.

ALI: Also they're wearing a, um, they have like lavender coloured suspenders on under the jacket. Um, I don't think anyone's going to see that, but like imagine if you thought Broun was hot at a party.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And then you saw them take their jacket off later...

AUSTIN: Yeah, like "pew it's kind of hot."

ALI: Well, yeah, you were like, "Oh, those colors go really well together. You're a hot person, thank you."

AUSTIN: And then underneath yeah there's the, (Sylvia laughs out loud) yeah. uh huh, Perfect.

ALI: And then there's the shirt...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Great. Okay. Well, so you're on site up on one of these towers, Kalar, I'm guessing you're also up on one of these towers?

JACK: Yeah, I think Kalar, I think we just get like a really cool quick montage of Kalar dragging. Yeah. A, uh, like a garden chair up a set of stairs? And then setting the garden chair carefully on the ledge and then laying a series of tools out on the ground, around the chair. Like one of those fucking Instagram aesthetic photographs where things are arranged very beautifully,

AUSTIN: Amazing.

JACK: Uh but there's just a chair in the middle. Uh, and then just sitting in the chair, staring at the skyline and chain smoking, um, until I guess something happens...

AUSTIN: Happens. Yeah. Millie.

SYLVIA: Uh, yeah, I'm trying to think of a good position for Millie. Cause I want her with her mech, um, specifically because Broun isn't with theirs and that's the only other mech we have. Um...

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Kind of.

SYLVIA: I was thinking... Kind of, I was thinking somewhere along this road here. Oh, I'm still on draw. Up along this road here. Yeah. Like on top of one of the buildings and like maybe the mech is in like an alleyway next to it.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay, cool. Yeah, we've established that the mechs can be hidden in a, in ways that can be surprising when they get activated.

SYLVIA: So I think she she's just like hanging out with her rifle and like, just like fidgeting with shit to pass the time.

AUSTIN: Fair. Um, okay. Uh, the... Phrygian, how about you? You're the last person?

KEITH: Uh, I had a, I had a thought, and this is... I've only been playing a, a Branched for a little while, so we can, we can stop me if I'm not doing it right. Uh, but could I, could I find somewhere to let some, uh, some more, uh, normal form sort of leak through, and have just- be a really sinister alleyway?

AUSTIN: That to me would, yeah. You could be in a place in that mode. Yes. The thing that I want to emphasize is that it does not feel good to do war as yourself. It's like...

KEITH: No, it would be just, it would just be waiting, you'd be waiting.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I want to emphasize, even that feels bad. You can do it, but it's traumatic to do that. again. Like, you know, the only thing I can think of is like you spent your whole life- it is not the same thing as culture necessarily, or sexual identity or race, but it is an identity for you. And to weaponize your identity is difficult and, and emotionally, and psychologically costly. Because of how intimate that part of your iden- and individual that identity is, if that makes sense. Um, um, yeah, it is, it is, it is the thing I come closest to is like being an artist and then being told, "paint this picture so good that you get to kill people with it." And being like, "nah, like they suck for sure, but couldn't, I just use a gun. Um, because I'll after this, I want to keep doing art and not associate it with killing people."

KEITH: Gotta talk to Grand Mag about this one.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. Or Broun. Um, but I mean, I think that's part of it too is, to some degree over a long enough timeline that switch could happen and it would be tragic if it did. Right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That like the way you become Broun is by being so, by- by, giving in to that impulse enough times, that over the course of generations that of course, you're going to use your cool post human bodies to kill people. And that's a subdivision of any type of production, but the Branched up until this point have not, have done their best to not do that. There may be, there is slippage. And if we do this, I'm fine with you going down that road. But I want to, I want to characterize it that way because... That is sort of the stakes of the Branched in some way. They are a culture that got out, like they got past imperialism. If this whole season has been, um, starts with the question of, "is there any other shape for humanity," right? For culture. We keep coming back to imperialism, the shape of empire. The Branched are not an empire. They were not an empire. They were living happy, simple lives, more complex lives than ours. And then they got invaded. And is that, is the response to that to then redevelop, not just, not just defensive capabilities, but to slip back towards empire again, and colonization and conquest. Um, and so that is like, what is at stake for them to some degree, which again does not mean you can't do this. This is dope. Um, but I do want to characterize it in that way, if that makes sense.

KEITH: Well, I guess I would, rather then... hang out outside this wall, and just chill.

AUSTIN: Okay. And be, be on the lookout effectively. Can you ping again or just move yourself?

KEITH: Yeah. I moved my token there. just like on the outside of the wall.

AUSTIN: Yeah, there is also then, I'm going to note, **Ataraxia**, which is the big cool mantis mech that, uh, Cas'alear pilots is also to the Western side of the wall. Um, I guess, actually, I guess a Broun's mech is there. Maybe they would move it somewhere else. Maybe Cas would position... Cas is going to be positioned down here in that other kind of circled zone of a potential attack.

ALI: Can I get a Three Cheers token?

AUSTIN: No. Yes. Oh yes, absolutely. Did we have one before.

ALI: I don't think so, it could be anything.

SYLVIA: Oh, I forgot something important.

AUSTIN: Yes. What's up.

SYLVIA: Millie has a cool new jacket.

AUSTIN: Oh, please tell me about it.

SYLVIA: So it's also a leather jacket, but this is like a biker leather jacket. And then on the back and just like big block letters, it says the words, "Divine Retribution."

AUSTIN: Incredible!

SYLVIA: And that's her cool new jacket. And I love it.

AUSTIN: That's a good, that's a good detail.

JACK: (amused) Sick!

KEITH: I want to have this moment where everyone is in like, these clothes and it's not clear why everyone's changed clothes for Phrygian. [Sylvia and Austin laugh] And I'm like, "what are we doing? Or is this something that we do?"

SYLVIA: Well, she wears that. I just want to make it clear. She wears that like all the time now or...

KEITH: Alright so you didn't change leather jackets when the mission was about to start? Like Broun did?

SYLVIA: No.

AUSTIN: This is just your new look jacket.

SYLVIA: This is, this is her post-timeskip, redesign in the anime. After the month after the kingdom game.

AUSTIN: Right. Thank you.

SYLVIA: So that's all.

AUSTIN: There you go. You should be able to control it now.

KEITH: There's, there's two kinds. There's, there's two kinds of anime, the kind where no one ever changes clothes ever, and where people are constantly changing clothes. And we're the second part. And sometimes you have characters that change clothes and no one else ever does? That's hard to-

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes. Um, all right.

KEITH: Which character changes clothes all the time, but no one else changes clothes. That's a good one.

AUSTIN: Uh, it seems like everyone's in position. Um, we should roll this, these dice. Starts at two. Not bold nor complex does not exploit the target's vulnerabilities, um, is not ineffective either. Um, not exactly. So you're still at two, uh. External support for the mission. Um, I'm gonna give you... yeah, I'm gonna give you a plus one for Cas'alea. Is anyone interfering with the mission other than the target? Um, Yes, plus one minus one. Uh, are there any other factors that affect the mission? Take plus one for each that benefits the squad minus one for each that hinders. Uh, I'm counting that as, as anyone interfering with the mission. So that's, that's already that minus one. I don't think there's a plus one that I can think of that benefits you here. So go ahead and give me a 2d6 on this engagement role.

KEITH: So we didn't really. So we gained one, didn't lose any, is that what? That, yeah.

AUSTIN: Correct. Okay. In fact, you didn't even gain one, you gained one. Yes, yes. Yes. You gained one from, um, external support. Yeah. Right. So is that three? No, be, Oh, no. You lost that for interfering with the mission. So where's the other one comes from what's the other one come from? Plus one, just regular start at one. I think it's just one. The other thing is not a plus one. The other thing is it's going to be...

KEITH: Sorry everyone.

AUSTIN: You're good. Thanks. Weren't we supposed to have a pop quiz today?

JACK: Yeah, fucking homework hahaha...

KEITH: I was trying to get us one extra. Not lose us one.

JACK: (laughing) Spectacularly

AUSTIN: You start with one. You start with one. The other thing is not a plus one to the roll. It's better than that. It's that you're going to get a plus one to the result.

2:01:37

AUSTIN: So if you get one, you'll start it. You're not going to start at, you're not gonna start at desperate, no matter what.

ALI: It's advanced positioning.

AUSTIN: It's an advanced position more- cause exactly. So one die.

KEITH: Who's rolling?

AUSTIN: Up to y'all.

ALI: I can do it.

KEITH: Okay.

JACK: I didn't roll great. The first time I tried it.

ALI: So what am I rolling?

AUSTIN: 1d6

ALI: Is this one fortune roll?

AUSTIN: Fortune roll. Yeah.

ALI: (disappointed) Three...

AUSTIN: That's not good. That would be a desperate position, but it's only a risky one because of your, your set up here.

JACK: Only risky...

AUSTIN: Here is where we will begin. Um, some the radio at Point Bracket turns on and then quickly turns off... You are in a risky position. What do you do?

KEITH: Uh, it sounds like something is happening at Point Bracket.

SYLVIA: (as Millie) I can head the Point Bracket like I'm the closest to it and I can use my mech to get over there.

ALI: (as Broun) Sure. Let me know if you need backup.

SYLVIA: (as Millie) Alright.

SYLVIA: Um, this red circle is where the trip mines are right on the map.

AUSTIN: Yeah, those circles are the points at which you believe that they would enter from, and it's the illumination and flares and stuff will all go up there.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: You can avoid that. I'm not going to make it a roll to avoid traps.

SYLVIA: It was like, um, yeah, like an alleyway, like here and then over. Like around those buildings.

AUSTIN: Kinda through the farms or like, not behind the farm. Yeah. Yeah. I got you.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Right...

AUSTIN: Yeah. You, you were able to get over there. Um, um, and you don't see anything out of the ordinary on the outside. Guards are walking around. Um, I think one of them like waves that you, um, you know,

(as the guard) I like, I like your mech.

SYLVIA: **(as Millie)** Thanks.

AUSTIN: **(as the guard)** Does that overlay come out?

SYLVIA: **(as Millie)** You haven't seen anything weird around here, right?

AUSTIN: **(as the guard):** No?

SYLVIA: Shit... Okay...

AUSTIN: Radios in. And, uh, you know,

(as the guard/alpha 2): this is alpha two is, is everything okay?

(as alpha 1): This is alpha one everything's good here.

(as alpha 3): Alpha three checking in. Seems fine.

SYLVIA: I'm going to like radio back to the others and be like,

(as Millie): Yeah, there's nothing. Nothing seems to be wrong at Bracket right now, but I'm going to stay here.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Um, some sort of hacking situation? Is there anyone on comms over there?

SYLVIA: Oh, shit.

AUSTIN: That's a good question.

SYLVIA: I mean, I'm going to go look for someone who's like, like in a technical role here,

AUSTIN: Okay so you like, get out of your mech?

SYLVIA: Yeah, for sure. Like just outside.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, uh, so you hopped down and then what you go inside or you, you just kinda like ask this person like, Hey, where is,

SYLVIA: Yeah. Like where's the person who's like, your, I don't know what the title would be like. Who's your tech guy, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: Um, the, the, the Semaphore thing is on the top, right?

AUSTIN: It's the whole building. You would have the, you have like someone inside of the, you know what I mean? It'd be like one of those things. Um, uh, because I needed the character immediately. I just need you to know how this, how this just happened. Uh, I. Went to a random name generator, which is not what I've used before, behindthename.com. And I clicked "just give me a fucking name." And the first name it gave me was Hyacintha Gill, which is ominous, because Hyacinth is the now dead elect of Motion who you might recall...

So... Uh, just things start to line up sometimes. Um, anyway, the person you're looking for is not Hyacintha because that would actually- god, you know what? It's Hyacintha uh, we're just gonna roll with it and, and, uh, yeah, there's this guard who you're talking to is like,

(as alpha 2): Uh, you're going to want Hyacintha um, she'll be inside. Just look for the look for the comms room.

SYLVIA: (as Millie) Okay.

SYLVIA: Like visible- like moment of visible, like surprise at that name for a second, before like everything clicks into place.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. There's no way Millie doesn't have the thought, right?

AUSTIN: Right, no, a hundred percent. A hundred percent. Oh yeah. Yeah. Like to the point where she might like even like, be like idly, like having her hand near her holster when she's going to the room.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

SYLVIA: Um, But like, I think it's like one of the, sorry, what pronouns or Hyacintha? Did you say?

AUSTIN: She/her, she/her

SYLVIA: Okay. I think when Millie finds her, she's like,

(as Millie) Hey, I, we ha--- what exactly happened? There was like a weird thing that happened with?

AUSTIN: It's like her radio blinked on for a second and then turned off. Um, which is that someone calling for help? Is that someone's slipped on a button.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is this the mission where nothing happens and everyone's jumping at shadows?

KEITH: Yes.

ALI: Yeah. Okay.

SYLVIA: So I'm going to just be like,

(as Millie) Hey, we had some weird activity on the, on the comms, and I was wondering if you could help me either get to the bottom of this, or like, just tell me that there was... just tell me someone here accidentally hit a button and that would save me so much stress.

AUSTIN: Yes. Um, she's like, um,

(as Hyacintha) Ugh, That's we have all sorts of rookies these days. Uh, someone must've hit a button. I'm so sorry. You're with the Millennium Break, SBBR, SBBR, right?

SYLVIA (as Millie): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): Uh, thanks for doing everything. I'll make sure that they don't do that again. I know that it's really important that you stay in town.

SYLVIA (as Millie): It's- yeah. You're not able to like, there's no history of incoming or outgoing, uh, messages is there? There's nothing you could check just to give me a little peace of mind.

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): Yeah, I can, I can pull that up. Um,

AUSTIN: And, uh, leads you over to like a teletype type thing, you know, like the great like (Austin is making the heavy printing sound) dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, like that style of printout, and like runs the printout.

Um, and, um, what you see is a bunch of ingoing and outgoing messages that are all standard. And there was one that was being, um, it looks like it was being, um, brought in from, it was like being rerouted through this, towards you towards like the SBBR crew from Obelle. Um, and it's like, it got caught, it didn't- the transmission didn't finish and, um, Hyacintha is like...

(as Hyacintha): That's weird.

SYLVIA (as Millie): Yeah. That's... okay. I need to. This is really freaking me out...

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): We can- okay let me, and like... type, type, type, type, type, type, type, type, type, type, type, type, type. It might be in the buffer... type type, type, type type.

Um, Hyacintha has like I'm imagining Hyacintha is like kind of deeply like, um, like, uh, not unspectacular, but very, very, you know, it's like, Hyacintha's face is a little" long and a little, a little wide and like short, wavy hair, but nothing...this is the epitome of background character in the anime." Do you know what I mean?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, face and body, both like a little long, a little chubby, big brown eyes, bushier brows than normal, kind of olive skin. And, um, and, uh, uh, eventually it hits a button and then like, yeah, it, it spits out a longer message. Um, and it says, "losses severe, send backup, send backup."

SYLVIA (as Millie): And is there, there's- does that say where it's from?

AUSTIN: Obelle, Obelle.

SYLVIA: Okay. Yeah. I'm immediately relaying this to the rest of the crew. Um, and that was, so I guess this is more just me, like, assuming, but that was basically cut off because it didn't get to send all the way?

AUSTIN: You're not sure, but I think Hyacintha is like,

(as Hyacintha): Yeah, sometimes there's blips like that. I don't know. Thanks for making me look. I would've just thought it was a rookie greenhorn. Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Millie): Uh, I got, uh, okay, so...

AUSTIN: I'm advancing this clock by one. This clock is at step three.

SYLVIA (as Millie): Thank you so much. and then immediately...

AUSTIN: Uh sorry, continue.

SYLVIA: And then it's just like right on the coms being like,

(as Millie): guys, there's something happening in Obelle and it might be heading this way. Um, Something about heavy losses. It was a transmission that got cut off, and it's the only info I really have right now, but we need to be careful.

JACK (as Kalar): Hmm. The uh...

ALI (as Broun): That was sent just now?

JACK (as Kalar): Sorry?

ALI (as Broun): That was sent just now? Uh, did we,

AUSTIN: This was like, it was like, it was right before you left to go check. It was not like an hour ago. It was like five minutes or however long it took you to get from the edge of the city to this place, go inside, get the thing printed out. So 10 minutes, you know?

ALI: Okay,

SYLVIA (as Millie): Yeah. So, yeah, it was recent.

JACK (as Kalar): Perennial wave?

AUSTIN: Do you say that to, to Hyacintha or to-

JACK: To Mille.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's to Millie. Okay. Right. You're right.

SYLVIA (as Millie): I mean, that would explain the communications thing, but there's no other signs of it, right? And like,

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): Oh, we could do a scan.

SYLVIA (as Millie): We could do a scan,

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): Um, one second.

JACK: Oh?

AUSTIN: Type type type, type, type type.

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): So what we do is we send out a signal and see how far it goes and we know how far it is. And if there's any, like, you know, if it hits a dead end, if it hits dead air earlier-

AUSTIN: Type, type, type,

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): Yeah, it looks like it.

SYLVIA (as Millie): Okay, great. Now we got Perennial coming in.

ALI: Do I think that Valence is in Obelle?

AUSTIN: No you know, that Valence is an Oxbridge.

ALI: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: Or at least that's where, where you left them. Valence, Thisbe and ah... Sovereign Immunity are all in Oxbridge at base. You know, they, they, they may do another mission. You know, that Valence is like itching to figure out the Exemplar stuff? Correct, Keith in the chat. Yes. Hyacintha is saying... well, at least it's somewhere within range. I guess. You'd have to wait a few minutes to see if it's getting closer, you know, but-

KEITH: I was thinking, could this be a lie?

AUSTIN: What's that whether or not the Perennial wave is coming in?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, Millie can look at that data. You can do a study to see if that data is correct.

SYLVIA: I will sure I'll do that. Um, I'll also push myself to get an extra die here.

AUSTIN: Alright, Take two stress.

KEITH: Six.

SYLVIA: I got a six.

AUSTIN: Hell yeah. All right. Um, it's a hundred percent accurate that, um, it's a hundred percent accurate that this is a Perennial wave coming in. Um, with a six on this, you notice something else which is, there are some sort of like, echo on that Obelle message. Um, there's another message- there's a couple of things you notice. There was another message from Obelle earlier that did not come through at all. Um, uh, that did not even do the blip. And then two is, this one seems like a repeat of that first one? Um, and it's, you can tell that the origin point was not Obelle.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: But the message is there from before. So like an hour ago, there was a message that was sent from Obelle that did not come through, perhaps because of the Perennial Wave, which is real, um, perhaps not. And then the second thing is this new message is like a repeat, but not being sent from Obelle.

SYLVIA: Okay.

JACK: Huh? An identical message...

AUSTIN: Uh huh

JACK: Coming from somewhere else,

AUSTIN: Mhmm

KEITH: Like it was relayed or...

AUSTIN: Maybe.

SYLVIA: Yeah, this feels to me like I, and I think like Millie saying this over the comms is like,

SYLVIA (as Millie): This feels to me like someone delayed this message. Um, I don't know if that's possible, or if this is just Perennial but...

AUSTIN: Cas'alear is like,

(as Cas'alear): I can't let them take Obelle. We have people there.

SYLVIA (as Millie): We don't know if Obelle's still there. If this came, if this was supposed to come however long ago it was supposed to get here. Right?

AUSTIN: They are seething.

SYLVIA (as Millie): I'm not saying you shouldn't like be concerned, but, um, we need to, like, I don't want you running into somewhere just to get killed by yourself. You know?

AUSTIN (as Cas'alear): Then come with me. [Millie scoffs] This is... what you're doing here has a great deal of value, but we know that some of the most vulnerable people in our territory are in Obelle. It's fine. I'll sit tight and wait for another broadcast about how it's too late.

ALI: Can we reach out to Obelle?

SYLVIA: Was the... I don't know if the Perennial Wave was like between, like, um, the ping we sent out was between...

AUSTIN: Uhm... Are you relaying this to Hyacintha?

SYLVIA: Yeah. Like, like if we can send another message to Obelle, I'm going to relay that to Hyacintha. Like...

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): We can try, we can try to send something. The Perennial Wave being what it is.... I don't know. But what do you want to send?

SYLVIA (as Millie): I think just we're like looking for a status update. We're just looking for like anybody to report back. Cause we got a distress signal.

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): Of course. Um, I'll...

AUSTIN: Type, type, type, type, type, type, type, type, send.

AUSTIN (as Hyacintha): It'll be a few minutes, even on the best of times. So I guess we sit back and wait?

SYLVIA (as Millie): Fuck, I guess so!

SYLVIA: Millie is like, really like frustrated right now.

AUSTIN: Um, go ahead. Also just, I mean, just color really quick. People-, the red carpet is rolled out. People are taking photos. Um, you know, everyone is like... There was a speech. Someone gives a toast to the great crew who helped film this. The, the, the guest of honor, uh, Boole Batanca, you know,

(as Boole Batanca) Wow. I can't wait to see, it's been a pleasure to negotiate. These have been difficult, but, but important talks over the last few weeks. I'm glad to be here to celebrate the work that you did,

AUSTIN: Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Um, and now, and now, and that's all happening below you, you know? Um, it's, it's one of those things that we're like, it's blown out, the light? All of this is lit for cameras, which means looking down on it. It's just, it's just the whole of the High Altar is lit up. By, by these, this kind of like movie lights basically. Um, and it's, it looks bad. Like it's not built for this sort of light to be put on it. Um, and, and it's night-time. It's the rare, you know, we've said before that the days are very long here, but we're going into the night and the planet that you orbit Girandole, Girandole is bright in the sky. Um, but is, is, is still like... it's not what you... Maybe it's, it's at us- at a position where it's only over the edge of one of the one horizon of the moon. It's not like dominating the entire sky tonight? Um, and so there is a degree to which it's a little darker everywhere else. Um, and so it's just a pain on the eyes to look down at this temple, um, uh, versus looking out over the, the dark of the farms, or the city. You had something to say though, Jack.

JACK: Yeah. Um... I think, uh, I think, uh, Kalar goes on the comms and says,

(as Kalar): Ah, Millie, this Perennial Wave, the Motion fighting up in Obelle, the skirmishes up there. You fought them before in something like this, right? The wave hit. And then they came out of the fog.

SYLVIA (as Millie): Mhmm

JACK (as Kalar): I read the notes. Um... how did that go?

SYLVIA (as Millie): I mean... we fought them off, but it wasn't easy. And we had, we had time to prepare for that.

JACK (as Kalar): Ha, aha... We got a bit of time. I think that, I think that they're coming, um,

JACK: Just like smoking cigarettes, put cigarette out on an armchair, like, uh, garden chair, then lights another cigarette.

JACK (as Kalar): Um, if you had to sort of give like one tip, like one sort of... like what's the number one thing, piece of advice you would pass on on how to fight this fucking thing.

SYLVIA (as Millie): If you think you have killed something fighting for it,

JACK (as Kalar): Uh huh?

SYLVIA (as Millie): Double check.

JACK (as Kalar): Uh huh?

SYLVIA (as Millie): And check again.

JACK (as Kalar): So three times, so that they don't get up..

SYLVIA (as Millie): At least,

JACK (as Kalar): At least three times.

SYLVIA (as Millie): Motion, Motion is just going to keep things just fly-, coming at you nonstop.

JACK (as Kalar): Okay. Right here. Great.

SYLVIA (as Millie): And, um, yeah, you pretty much have to destroy something to stop it from coming back at you.

JACK (as Kalar): Oh yeah, I know a bit about that. Um, listen, uh, they got like flying things. They got like walking things, someone... anybody who can fucking talk to these people down there. Can you tell them to like clear the courtyards or something? I'd do it, but nobody listens to me unless I'm destroying something.

ALI (as Broun): Got it.

[all laugh]

KEITH (as Phrygian): Great.

JACK (as Kalar): Ten-four, keep doing the good work.

[Ali continues to giggle]

AUSTIN: So you're telling people to clear the courtyards.

JACK: Well I'm telling someone to tell someone, to clear the courtyards.

AUSTIN: Well I'm asking Broun. Yeah...

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so Broun then is, are you like telling people basically like, all right, let's get inside and get out of the open basically. It's like time to move on?

ALI: I think so. So yeah. Um, I, yeah, I think I mentioned this before, but I think that Broun is like, has an ear in with like just local security, like people that aren't us. Um, just in terms of like, get the word out, get some people to, to, you know, move from where they are.

AUSTIN: Um, all right, then, then, uh, The thing that, um, they do, it's like, you kind of like put in the words, such that, all right, let's get past this kind of preliminary part.

(as the security) I mean, we'll move inside now and we'll have drinks inside. Uh, there's a chill coming, so everyone should get inside where it's nice and warm.

AUSTIN: That type of thing. No one wants to get anyone nervous quite yet. Um, and so, and so everyone moves inside and the courtyards get cleared. Um, so. I guess broadly the situation is, Perennial Wave is potentially incoming. The, uh, there's some weird messages happening here from Obelle, a weird echo. Um, um, and then, uh, it's dark and spooky.

JACK: It's like legit. Spooky. Yeah, it feels spook-

AUSTIN: It feels good. I like it. This is what I was hoping for. I plotted this one out.

JACK: Um, God.

AUSTIN: For the sake of, I just want to remind; Everyone's in a risky position currently. Which I think has been emphasized.

JACK: Okay. I sort of, I sort of hoisted myself by my own petard, like on a ship where, where I put so many points into fighting and moving that I'm less good at getting ready to fight and move.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: You sure did. It's almost like, that's why I asked you last night, please finalize your stats so I can prepare a mission for you.

[Sylvia laughs out loud]

JACK: Oh, you're saying you did this on purpose.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

JACK: Um, okay. Can I, um, through binoculars at the direction

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Between, between us and Obelle just like scanning the field,

AUSTIN: Uh huh, go ahead and give me a Survey.

JACK: Okay so 1d6?

AUSTIN: This is Gather information. This is Gather Information 1d6. So no, it's a fortune roll. No, uh, position or effect.

[Jack laughingly scoffs at the roll]

AUSTIN: That's a two. So you get limited information. Um... just at the edge of the horizon. Alright. You're good at this, right?

JACK: Mm. Very.

AUSTIN: You know the horizon should be a little further away than it is.

JACK (as Kalar): Okay. Eyes up everybody.

AUSTIN: Something's obscuring your... Uh huh.

JACK (as Kalar): There's something coming.

KEITH: Horizon is coming.

AUSTIN: Horizon is coming... No. Horizon's here, I mean Gucci's here, but.

JACK (as Kalar): That must be... yeah... those fields in that direction. Uh, what, North?

AUSTIN: North, North-northwest,

JACK (as Kalar): Uh, there's a mill out there, I should be able to see it. I can't see it. Everybody get ready. They're coming...

JACK: Cigarette. Sits back down in chair.

AUSTIN: Love to roll a two.

JACK: Yeah. Just like the enemies we know are coming. (sarcastically enthusiastic) I can visually identify where they might be!

[Ali giggles]

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Or the Perennial Wave is rolling in. Who could say?

JACK: Mhmm

AUSTIN: Or just the fog. It's just fog. What you see is fog. Hard to determine whether or not it's fog or a near infinite number of nano-machines.

KEITH: It's the fog, or war.

AUSTIN: Wuh? (laughingly) Yes!

[Jack and Sylvia laugh]

JACK: Oh God... It's my favorite Victor Hugo novel.

[more laughter from the rest]

AUSTIN: Who else is doing something? [Ali exhales a sigh] Or are we just sitting and waiting right now?

JACK: How can we, is there anything we can do, that we know that the Motion squad is coming,

AUSTIN: I'm going to start a clock. That's a good- that's the clock you want to advance here? Cause you hustle people inside. This is a, "the movie is on" clock, this an eight step clock.

JACK: What does Motion hate?

AUSTIN: What does Motion what?

ALI: Mmm

JACK: Hate, to fight?

SYLVIA: (matter-of-factly) Me. [scoffs then laughs]

JACK: Millie.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Um, I mean, I could like try and fire like a flare or something into the mist.

ALI: I, um, yeah, the thing that I, [giggles] um, the thing that I've been wanting to deploy and to thinking about is that, uh, the Three Cheers has a hollow projector,

AUSTIN: (in agreement) Mmm.

ALI: Um, which is basically a Roomba that displays a fake projection of a mech.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Oh yeah!

ALI: And I feel like Broun being like, Oh, okay, someone's coming, someone's on the hunt. If we throw a rat into the maze or whatever, and kind of see, yeah...

AUSTIN: Bait them out! Now we're into deception. Yeah. I like this. This, this is what- do you, what are you going to roll for this? So you're moving into Three Cheers to do this, or are you, what- are you remoting it?

ALI: Um, I, I mean um...

AUSTIN: Oh we all fucked up. I need everyone to tell me how much, how heavy their gear load is. Are they light, are you lightening them up?

ALI: Oh sure Okay.

SYLVIA: I'm going to go with medium because heavy sort of like reduces your movement.

AUSTIN: It can. Yeah. No, it can. It can. If you're like in a chase, that's one of the things I can kind of call on to make it harder for you to et cetera, et cetera.

SYLVIA: I See, I'm going to go with medium.

KEITH: And this is personal load, not vehicle load.

AUSTIN: Correct. You'll determine that when you become a vehicle,

[Sylvia laughs]

ALI: We still get the plus one, right? That was a SBRR thing that everybody still gets...

AUSTIN: A what?

ALI: We get a...

AUSTIN: Oh you don't get a plu-, you get a, it, it's specifically that you get a...

ALI: You get another load.

AUSTIN: Two free load of tools or gear, which Broun, you have marked with the green things.

ALI: Oh, sure sure sure.

AUSTIN: It's not just a +2 it's specifically tools or gear.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which for people who don't have it marked, already, weapons don't count as that. Burglary gear, climbing, gear that's gear. So you get two free load of that, that type of thing.

SYLVIA: Okay.

ALI: I'm going light. Cause I'm at a party.

AUSTIN: You're at a party. You're in that outfit you described. That is not medium, thanks for being honest.

ALI: Yeah. Um, I I'm willing to do with the, the thing I just suggested is like a, um, assist if Millie wants to be the one on the ground, like launching it. Um, if that makes sense.

AUSTIN: So Mille takes...

ALI: Cause it was kind of both up there...

AUSTIN: To get there, are you going to the Three Cheers to pick this thing up or did you already preload it on Millie's mech or?

ALI: Yeah, I could do a flashback to give it to Millie. It's a, it's a, uh, uh, it's a Roomba

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[Sylvia laughs]

ALI: It's the size of a vinyl or whatever.

AUSTIN: Yes.

SYLVIA: Thank you so much,

ALI: So yeah

SYLVIA: All right. And then...

AUSTIN: How does that work? So do you have to do- to launch that from inside the Mech basically?

ALI: Yeah. You know?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: It's like a Beyblade or whatever it is.

AUSTIN: It's like a Beyblade.

SYLVIA: Oh hell yeah! I understand completely now.

AUSTIN: Now we're on now we're talking Millie's language.

KEITH: This makes like a hologram.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh huh

ALI: It is a projection of a mech.

AUSTIN: Um, so this is the you're going back to the Stray Dog right? So you leave Hyacintha.

SYLVIA: Yeah

AUSTIN: Um, alright, so. You get back to the Stray Dog. Um, you like- does it kneel down to pick you up? How's that work?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I think like it's similar to how we, I think we described it early on as like it using its hand to sort of pick Millie up and put her in the head.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, the head, like it picks you up. It puts you in, like brings you up to the head. [Jack de Quidt's "[TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#)" begins playing] The cockpit opens up and you're shot in the chest with a shotgun by someone with a thin and wiry frame...

SYLVIA: (surprised) OH SHIT!

AUSTIN: Weary eyes, kind of Mediterranean skin. Um, they have kind of vintage clothing on, uh, and they have kind of greenish-black hair cut, kind of like I guess like the Persona 4 protagonist's look. Um, and they say,

(as the attacker): I love it when a plan comes together.

AUSTIN: Take level three harm from Laurel. The elect of Motion.