

## **PALISADE 23: An Impossible Ideal Pt. 2**

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### **Recap**

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

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh...listen, everyone. I know you're gonna be out there doing something important and risky, and I'll see you when it's done.

[Cori and Phrygian applaud]

Sylvia (as **Cori**): Good luck out there.

[[“The Stellar Combustor”](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

**Austin:** You get here and realize: this is not simply a deep crater from an asteroid strike or a hole recently dug. The actual stairs here feel like they've been here—now that you're up close—for a while. There are tiny mosaics, like mosaic tiles, along the walls. The light is such that it's hard to make out their true color. There's not a clear picture here, and also they're kind of decrepit. Like, many of them have fallen off, et cetera. And likewise, the stairs look like they were once part of some sort of grand structure but have now begun to crumble over time. You didn't get noticed, but the whole group can hear gunfire from deeper into whatever this place is. There's a strange animalistic

screech from deeper in, but you're here now.

**Dre:** Hey, where can I find whatever made that awful screech you talked about?

**Austin:** Oh, absolutely. In fact, you begin to see them running northward from the hallway to the south. It is a pack—a swarm, maybe?—of creatures. Some of them run on all fours like dogs or some of them fly with insect-like wings. They are...what if you—imagine an animal, but instead of muscle, you had something that looked like the enamel of teeth.

There is a part of space where the stars are blocked out. I mean, it's bigger than your mechs, but it's not skyscraper sized, but it is a Divine. It is cast in black metal armor, and the robes that it wears are also black currently. This is the Divine Plight, and even entering close to it, there is a sense of pervading guilt that wells up inside of you, and I actually think that the laser catches you. I got bad news here.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The heat condensers are damaged. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** And you're instantly sweating. And this thing is like, you know...you're not gonna die, right away.

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** But you're still far out, and the closer you get, you'll die. At least you're still invisible.

[song plays out]

## **Chimera's Lantern [0:03:34]**

**Austin:** Chimera's Lantern crew. Last we left you, there were a bunch of weird tooth monsters rushing at you?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That seems like something to deal with.

**Austin:** What do you do?

**Sylvia:** What tier are these?

**Austin:** They are tier 2, but they're in groups of— they're in swarms, so they count as a small gang.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** So they're effect— they're working as tier 3.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Which is still less than you now.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Thinking about it.

**Sylvia:** Okay, so...I'd have advantage on this, but I wouldn't skip straight to striking decisively.

**Austin:** Correct, because you're a tier up.

**Sylvia:** With the way small gangs work.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** They are also divine as their approach, so that means if someone is, uh...what did we say? Arcane? Arcane has...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The arcane approach has advantage against them. Love these little divine teeth.

**Janine:** Wait, are they, like, robots?

**Austin:** Uh, what I said before was: they're like what if muscle was made of tooth enamel.

**Janine:** Right. But, like, are they ardents?

**Austin:** I'd say yes.

**Janine:** Of any type or level of awareness, for instance.

**Austin:** Any type or level of awareness, yeah. They sure are.

**Janine:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Oh, do you have a thing here?

**Janine:** Because then I can talk to them.

**Austin:** You can. The Animation Matrix: communicate clearly with ardents of any type or level of awareness. And given the fact that you can communicate with them, that also, I'm gonna say, means you have a kind of intuitive read. They are scared and violent and were just in a fight and assume that you are part of the same invading force.

**Janine:** Yeah, that's what I was wondering.

**Austin:** Right? That's pretty much on the nose, right? But.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's what's going on here.

**Janine:** I'm looking at, like, how can I do this in a way that doesn't involve me rolling Talk, which I'm bad at?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Uh...

**Austin:** Ain't that the way?

**Janine:** Yeah. Um...you know, let me look at moves. I feel like there's moves I don't use here.

**Austin:** Sometimes.

**Janine:** Um... [laughs quietly] Ooh. Okay. [laughs quietly] Mm, can I...? I want to, like, put out a vibe.

**Austin:** Oh word?

**Janine:** I want to, like... [Sylvia laughs] I want to, like, broadcast a, like, "we're cool" bubble? sort of, I don't know—

**Austin:** Oh, a "we're cool" bubble.

**Janine:** I want to, like...

**Austin:** I think I know what you're saying, but.

**Janine:** I'll tell you— what I want to do here is Weave Magic, is the thing.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Yes.

**Janine:** Because I've been looking for an excuse to start weaving magic.

**Austin:** Uh huh. You got some Channel to spend, so.

**Janine:** Yeah. I have Channel to spend. We're in a weird...place?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Mosaic divine place.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And I have this communication thing.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. I'd say that's invoking your magic to do something strange, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** To crumble a bridge, attune mystical orbs at the center of the galaxy, or otherwise do something taxing with your power. Sure.

**Janine:** And I sort of conceptualize this as, like, you know, I've played a lot with, like, Thisbe and Mow as, like, being able to broadcast stuff, project stuff, receive and send out signals, and things like that.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And so, in my head, Thisbe weaving magic is a bit like her pushing on that a little harder than she realizes and, like, that being extended by, you know, the rules of the universe being what they are now.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Again, in a way that she's not fully aware that she's doing. It is just a thing that can happen when she's, like, really focused on something, you know?

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. Give me a 2d6 plus 2. Your Channel is currently 2, because you only have one extra module, so. What's this look like visually? Is it like a cool blue glow? Is it like a...

**Janine:** Um... [laughs quietly] I have a really cheesy— I'm so cheesy lately. [Sylvia

laughs quietly]

**Ali:** Uh huh?

**Janine:** I have this image in my head of Thisbe, like...it shouldn't be this, 'cause this is anime.

**Austin:** We're anime.

**Janine:** But I'm thinking of— I know.

**Ali:** What?

**Sylvia:** We're anime!

**Austin:** What are you talking about?

**Janine:** I know. But I—

**Austin:** That's us.

**Janine:** I'm picturing Thisbe kind of, like, holding a hand up in front of her chest a little bit.

**Austin:** Uh huh?

**Janine:** Like, vertically, and turns so, like, the thin side of the hand is, like, facing and the palm is, like, facing the side? Do you know what I mean?

**Austin:** Yeah, I do.

**Janine:** I'm picturing kind of, like, that. And then Thisbe's eyes and also the scuffed up screen on her palm kind of flickering and glowing a little bit.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And then it is kind of like a teardrop-shaped light effect that a kind of want them to, like, part around.

**Austin:** Sure. Yeah. This is— and you're acting in confidence. You're arcane, and they're divine. So, 2d6 plus 2. 1s as 6s.

**Janine:** [clicks] Wait, that's not how you do it.

**Austin:** That's not how you do it. [Janine laughs] That's not how you do it. Ayy!

**Sylvia:** Ayy.

**Austin:** That's a 12.

**Janine:** I didn't even need the 1s as 6s.

**Austin:** You didn't. You just got a regular-ass 6.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 6 plus 4 plus 2 is 12. Yeah, they part past you, right? They 100%, like, sweep around you, and they each go down a different hallway, right? Or I guess they don't. They do. They, like, hang on the walls waiting for the rotating room to open its door to the various directions, and each disappears into the darkness beyond you, you know? This one runs up here. And yeah, they split around you and, I think, recognize you as not the same. They don't know that you're not a threat, necessarily, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But you're not the threat that they were just fighting and that they're running from, so. So yeah, they've disappeared into the fog of war.

**Janine:** I love to talk with ardents.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. That's communication. I'm trying to think if there's any other, like— you know, I think maybe you're able to, during this little exchange, effectively, as they splash against this, you know, blue teardrop thing— or I'm imagining it's blue, because your...

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.



**Austin:** I think of your energy color as blue, and arcane is blue in the game and stuff, so.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You get, like, flashes of images that they've seen, which you get them hunting Nidean soldiers in the dark. You know, they're very, like, Xenomorphy in places, right? They're very much, like, crawl across the ceiling and then jump down and eat someone. They did a lot of that, and then, bit by bit, the Nideans started getting the upper hand. There's, like, an image of the Nideans building a new weapon down here, some sort of altar in the depths of this moon, and then using that against them. You see, like, spears being thrown through the air, and you see big sweeps of arms, and eventually you see just the fear, you feel the fear that they had as they flee through these tunnels, disappearing now. Which way are you going? You got some decisions to make.

**Sylvia:** Uh, it kinda feels like jumping straight into the fire, but I am, like...I guess I wouldn't know about the stuff Thisbe just saw, though.

**Austin:** Right. Correct.

**Sylvia:** I was gonna be like, "We should go south to deal with whatever [Austin: Mm-hmm.] big new mech they're making, before they can use it against the Cause," but I don't know about that, so.

**Austin:** Uh, there's nothing—

**Sylvia:** Now I don't know.

**Austin:** I want to be clear. There's nothing saying that it's to the south and the only way down— like, that—

**Sylvia:** No, but that's where—

**Austin:** That's where they just had a fight, yes, yes, yes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and...

**Austin:** Yep.

**Sylvia:** You know, context clues.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. I getcha.

**Sylvia:** Do y'all have any opinions on our direction here?

**Janine:** As curious as I am about the little side ways...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** The fact that the teeth went that way...

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** I don't know. I don't necessarily want to, like, follow them and potentially re-instigate that.

**Austin:** That's fair. All right. So, you begin to head south through the doorway here? Also, is there anything else you want to look at in this room, before we move on? Big mosaics, weird rotating thing.

**Sylvia:** Hmm...

**Janine:** Are the mosaics just, like, patterns?

**Austin:** No, this is— they're divines, for sure. Cori can tell you for a fact that these are— these resonate with divine energy, even.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah. And they're images of divines that I don't think you know any of, Cori.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, they just...not even recognizing, like, anything about them?

**Austin:** Yeah, there's— I'm checking them. None of these are ones that you— I mean... [sighs] The only one— I described that there is— the mosaic is, like, kind of decrepit in places, right? And, like, falling apart. There is one section of it that is fairly new that feels like it is a recent addition, and that is not that dissimilar from the sort of color schemes and iconography that you have seen used in the Bontive Valley, connected to the Divine Bounty. I think there's probably an icon or an image of, you know, I don't think it's a cornucopia necessarily, right? But like, we haven't seen Bounty since *Twilight Mirage* directly, but we've seen the Elect of Bounty who popped up in the *Wagon Wheel* game, who had said that Bounty had just been lost fairly recently, whatever that means, so.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Janine:** Would there be any that I recognize, as an old robot? Like, is there anything that's like...

**Austin:** As an old— as an ancient robot.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Janine:** Is there anything that's, like...

**Austin:** Yeah, you know what?

**Janine:** That was, like, active when I was hanging out before?

**Austin:** Yeah, for sure. Give me just a d6, I think. Let me look at the list and see how many of these would have been around when you were around. Uh...give me a...one, two, three, four. Give me a d5—that's a real dice number—and I'll tell you which one you recognize.

**Janine:** 4.

**Austin:** 4. Sure. One of them is...it's hard to know how to read it. Partly it looks like arms. Partly it looks like walls. Partly it looks like...partly it looks like a womb. It's

enveloping a group of— a set of images of people, bringing them in close. This is the Divine Loyalty, which was a working member of the Divine Principality when you were around originally and is not anymore. And here, I mean, I—

**Janine:** It's probably for the best that it's not. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Oh yeah, I would say so. I would go so far as to say...I would go so far as to say the...you could, like, you know, studying it, you recognize that it's like— there's a sort of humanoid face to it, and the humanoid face is on its side with its eyes closed, resting. And this ends up being, like, a— this is a recurring thing, now that you've seen it. Like, oh, these are all, like, resting or dead divines is how they're being drawn. Divines can't die, right? We know this about the Divine Principality, but that's how they're being depicted here is either at rest or dead. In fact, maybe one of them is even, like, kind of a gruesome depiction of death, you know? It's the teeth. It's, like, a shattered divine. It's all fucked up. I'm not gonna get too close to it, but it's, like, a pretty gross depiction via this, with, like, the teeth are literally already out of its head, you know? So yeah, a little extra. Head south?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's where I'm feeling, yeah. [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** All right.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** You disappear into the darkness here. Let me reveal more of the dungeon and more, like, directions you could go. As you move further to the south, you come to a number of other branches. You also pick up pretty quickly the sense that there is— there was fighting down here, not long ago. Also, this travel's taking you a while, right? Like, I moved you down this hallway pretty quickly, but this is not, like, a two minute walk, right? This is, like, a 30 minute walk through these hallways or through this long tunnel. And again, like, it is decorated like a temple here or, you know, something like a temple, but it is also— it moves in organic ways, right? Like, it is not smooth level

walking. You're moving up and down. It's uneven. There's turns in strange ways. It feels like a mole dug this out, you know what I mean?

And yet again, you have a choice of directions you could be going in, right? There is a northeast path here. There is a further just directly east path. There's a south path, again, and there is a west path here. I'll make that a little more clear there. And this is, like, a big area, right? So like, I'm imagining— for people listening at home, this is sort of, like, a chalky-looking sketch of a map, and the east— the turn that goes off to the east is much earlier than the turns that go off— sorry, I guess the turn that goes off northeast is very high up in this, and then there's another east, south, and west a little bit further on. But I'm giving you all of this at once, because I'm imagining you're doing a good job of, like, scouting ahead and sending back data and, you know, talking about what you've seen.

There has been fighting here nearby, and there are cleary Nidean weapons that have been fired or thrown here—again, a gigantic spear, a pair of altar-sized knives wedged into the rock or the wall, a lot of dead versions of the divine teeth that you saw before—but whoever had the fight on the Nideo side has since disappeared. To each of the directions, [**Sylvia:** Uh...] you again, can kind of just make out light in just about every direction, light that is undeniably kind of sickly in its color. Sylvi, what were you gonna say?

**Sylvia:** I was just gonna ask if there was any sort of, like, indication of where— if, like— of where the Nidean forces had gone to, but I feel like that's probably a...

**Austin:** That's a roll.

**Sylvia:** I gotta roll for this?

**Austin:** That's a roll for it. Yeah, that's a classic Dispel Uncertainties or Read the Room.

**Sylvia:** Damn. Uh, hmm. Yeah? Is it?

**Austin:** I mean, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because I don't want to—

**Austin:** You're not a Know or a Sense, so much?

**Sylvia:** I'm dumb. I'm a -1 on Know and a 0 on Sense.

**Austin:** Well.

**Janine:** Oh, I have...

**Dre:** Let's go.

**Sylvia:** I think a 0 on Sense is just sort of the tagline for Cori as a character. [Austin and Ali laugh]

**Ali:** Aw.

**Austin:** It sounds like you're doing it, though.

**Sylvia:** I'll do it.

**Janine:** I have a 1 in Sense if— I don't know if anyone has better.

**Austin:** Figure has a 2 in Sense.

**Dre:** Yeah, I do.

**Austin:** So, Figure, yeah, you could be the person who's like— so, Cori, do you ask for this? Do you say, like, "Hey, which way did they go?"

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I'm— Cori's seeming a little impatient with people right now.

**Janine:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** So she's like:

(as **Cori**): Where'd they go? What are we doing here?

**Janine:** She brought out her new shit-kicking boots, and there's no one to kick shit out

of.

**Sylvia:** She's genuinely, like...

**Dre:** Yeah. I want to fight.

**Sylvia:** You can hear it in her tone that she's, like, itching to go.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Midnite Matinee, who's riding on the back of Popcorn, the old hollow, but is not in a mech, right? is like:

(as **Midnite**): Cori. Take a breath. Don't be so eager you get us into trouble.

Sylvia (as **Cori**): I'm breathing just fine.

Austin (as **Midnite**): You see how you got quieter? It worked.

**Sylvia:** We get a shot of Cori gripping her controls tighter. [Austin and Janine laugh]

**Austin:** Uh huh. Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Yeah, no, it worked.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Definitely. Definitely worked.

**Dre:** Okay. Let's see if I can find footprints.

**Austin:** Love that. Hey, that's a 9.

**Dre:** That's a 9.

**Austin:** Is anybody helping? We go through this dance a lot, but. All right, we could just do it with the 9.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, I think just do it.

**Dre:** Yeah, that's fine.

**Austin:** All right, hold one. It's Read the Room, so what's the question you're asking?

**Dre:** Uh, [thinking noises] I guess, yeah, where can I find, um...where can I find the soldiers that we're looking for?

**Austin:** I think that you actually have to go out and scout each of these a bit more, which is why you roll it here, right? And if you, like, dip into all of them— I mean, on first blush, it's like, oh, they've been down all of these different pathways, but eventually you find signs that, like, they recently moved to the east. So.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Not so hard to figure out. Y'all committing to going that way?

**Sylvia:** I'm down to go east.

**Dre:** Yeah, sure.

**Austin:** All right. Revealing more of this map. Eventually—

**Sylvia:** And that's also just part of the motivation too, [**Austin:** Yeah.] is like, ooh, I want to see what Austin drew. [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** Let's see what's over here. I'll reveal it all at some point. In fact, maybe not so far away. Again, after 20, 30 minutes of traveling down these hallways, even in your big mechs— and again, part of you is like, "Well, that's wrong. There's no way there's been that much— there's that much space down here." Like, you're getting real 'it's bigger on the inside' vibes here. You get towards the final turn of this twisting hallway, and I mean, as soon as you make it around this one edge, you can see that there is the sort of halogen glow of Nidean lights ahead. I'm not making you roll to, like, not get seen or whatever. You know that you're approaching a Nidean camp, some sort of base camp. It's pretty far in, so it means that— I mean, I don't know what it means, right? There's a Nidean base camp up ahead, 100% for sure. You can hear the sounds of people talking or you can hear the— maybe you can't hear the sounds of people talking, because— oh, you know what, yeah. You totally can. You can hear the sounds of people talking



with your regular sensors and microphones, as if they're talking in atmosphere.

**Dre:** That's weird.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

## **Approach [0:24:00]**

**Dre:** Uh, I guess, since I am invisible...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Would I need to roll to go take a closer look?

**Austin:** Uh, you could approach. I'd say you approach with advantage.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** So yeah, so you would have to Defy Danger to sneak through, but you would absolutely have advantage to not being noticed, but also you're a giant 60 foot tall mech. That does make noise.

**Dre:** Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** That does obscure vision in— you know what I mean? Like, hey, does your cloak also prevent the lighting from getting weird? I don't know. We'll see how this roll goes.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** So 3d6 plus Defy.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** Which I think is 1 for you. Look at that! That's a 12!

**Janine:** Woo!

**Sylvia:** Ayy.

**Austin:** Yeah, you absolutely make it up there.

**Dre:** Well...

**Austin:** What?

**Dre:** Wait.

**Austin:** Oh, no, sorry. Sorry, sorry. It's with advantage.

**Dre:** It's a 10.

**Austin:** It's a 10.

**Dre:** So, it's still good.

**Austin:** It's still good. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's 6 plus 3 plus 1. Right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I forgot how advantage worked for a second. Yeah, you manage to make it up there sneakily in the Devil's Two Front Teeth but it's invisible, and you get a good look at what's here. This is a pretty build out Nidean base camp. There are screens that have been hooked up to the walls here, you know, covering these old mosaics. You...I mean, and I'll come around to 'you realize what the room was' in a second, but there are tents here for people to sleep in. There are two big, like, as tall as the wall are, like, scaffolds for mechs. Two of them— or there's two of them that have mechs in them, and it's a type of design I don't think we've introduced yet. Correct me if I'm wong here. Maybe we have; I don't know. This is the Nidean...I'm looking at the wrong document. This is the...Nidean Secateur. Have I introduced the Secateurs before?

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

**Austin:** Okay.

**Dre:** I don't— yeah.

**Sylvia:** Doesn't sound familiar to me.

**Austin:** These are the ones who look like tortured saints. They are posed— these are the ones that look like what if St. Sebastian was a mech. They are— their arms are constantly in kind of stretched and bended form. They have these kind of glass expressions coming out of their body, like sharpened nodules, like wounds in reverse. And these things are, like, thrumming and glowing as if they are very dangerous, and someone is working on one of these like it's just a regular-ass robot, but it's like a tortured saint up against the wall while people below are, like, eating hot dogs, you know, like out of a tin over a campfire. I say there's probably a few dozen people here.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Then you realize what the room is, and it is some sort of...some sort of chapel or smaller temple, sub-temple. There's a place where an altar was, and there are lots of pillows for what would have been kneeling or sitting that have all been moved to a corner and just kind of tossed, just kind of discarded, right, like trash. And covering up whatever the original mosaic mural at the top of the ruin, the kind of northern end, is just a big screen that's almost like a big laser Etch A Sketch, and that reveals the whole map of the place, as far as they've seen it. Actually, you know what? I think that they have tech that does some sort of wild sonar, you know, radar type mapping. Right now, you can only see where it says The Mosaic Gyratory, right? You can't see any of the other words?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You can't see where it says Nideo Base Camp 2?

**Dre:** No. Yeah.

**Austin:** All right, well, then, guess what? I'm just gonna turn off the fog of war as you're

able to steal their map of the place.

**Sylvia:** We found the *Metroid* map room.

**Austin:** You found the *Metroid* map room, 100%. Did that work?

**Dre:** Whoa!

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Can you see this whole place?

**Dre:** So many teeth.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Austin:** Someone want to describe what they're looking at as best as they can?

**Ali:** It's a frickin' dungeon, man.

**Dre:** Looks—

**Austin:** It's a fricking' dungeon, man. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah. It is a frickin' dungeon.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Ali:** There's rooms, and there's areas, and there's branching directions.

**Keith:** I see a few...

**Dre:** There's a hand over here.

**Keith:** I see a few little guys in here. Hands and big heads.

**Janine:** Yeah, it's like the WarioWare alien.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Sure.

**Keith:** This is...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Orbulon.

**Sylvia:** There's a little bit of an internal organ vibe going on.

**Austin:** Yeah, there is kind of an internal organ vibe, huh?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's interesting.

**Dre:** Huh, weird. Huh.

**Sylvia:** Huh. Weird.

**Dre:** Is this the tummy?

**Austin:** Could be.

**Sylvia:** That's literally what made me think it. I was like, oh, that's a tummy, and then that's like a kidney.

**Austin:** [crosstalk] I did almost name that the tummy. I put— I wrote down what's in there instead of naming the room, but maybe it's the tummy. Or the gut. I don't know. Who could say?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** So yeah, there's a few...there's dozens of people in here, and there's, you

know, the two mechs. There's also some other little mechs here, right? The other type of mech is another one that I don't know that you've seen yet. They are less— and these are not up on the scaffoldings. These are down near the other mechs but just against one of the long walls. They're called Riddles, R-I-D-D-L-E, like the gardening tool. They are support hollows that are given— so, they're about the size of Popcorn. You know, they're like 15 to 20 feet tall. They're given to aspiring Nidean pilots who are looking to prove themselves. Though more of a large exosuit than a freestanding vehicle, the Riddle lets Nidean devotees get in close and prime the opposition for followup attacks. They have claw-like left gauntlets that do something else also that I'm not gonna reveal yet, and they can hit—

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** They look dangerous even against higher tier enemies. And then they have kind of a— you know what a bevor is? B-E-V-O-R. It's the type of thing that, like, sticks out under a helmet in a piece of armor? I'll send you a picture.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** You know. You know, one of these guys.

**Sylvia:** It's like a gorget.

**Austin:** It's sort of like a gorget.

**Sylvia:** Is that how that's pronounced?

**Austin:** It's the thing above the gorget. It's the little, like, extended...it's not the part that covers the sternum. It's the part that covers, like, the lower lip and the chin and the neck.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Right?

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** They have these, except they're extended very far out, and those are made of stained glass, and those can extend up and be like a visual— like a welding shield? You know how a welding shield, like, protects your eyes from sharp lights?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They can do that. Why do they need to protect their eyes from sharp lights? Great question.

**Dre:** Who knows?

**Austin:** Who could say? And there are probably six of those in this room. So it's six of those, these tier two little guys, exosuits, and then two of these big Secateurs, which are traditional tier three mechs, tier three altars.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** So, that's what you can report back on.

**Dre:** [sighs] I guess—

**Austin:** And they're settling in for dinner, you know? They have, like, some patrol— you see a patrol unit of just regular armed infantry heading south from here into this next little room.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** It's not a little room. It's actually much bigger than any of the rooms you've been in. I said "little room," but [**Dre:** Right.] that would be the biggest of the rooms you'd been in, so.

**Dre:** Can I tell if the big tortured saint mechs, are they, like, powered on?

**Austin:** They are in, like, yellow alert. You know what I mean? They're not...

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** One of them is being worked on, so that one is definitely turned off in the sense that no one's piloting it in this moment, but the—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** The things that I described as expressions, these kind of glasslike...they're almost, again, like sharpened nodules, right? They almost look like knives or swords or spearheads, or you could think of them as looking like the hilt of a weapon coming out of them all over their bodies? You know, the way, again, arrows would be coming out of St. Sebastian's right? Those are thrumming with power, so insofar as they can be off, that part isn't, you know?

**Dre:** Okay. Yeah.

**Austin:** Now, are they more vulnerable right now than if they were up and walking around and in a defensive posture? Undeniably.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** But, you know, if they had, like, plus Ward for instance, would that be on? Yes.

**Dre:** Okay. Hmm.

**Austin:** I'm not telling you they have that, but, you know.

**Dre:** Right, yeah. Uh, and I guess...since this is the first time we're seeing them, I wouldn't necessarily know whether these things need to have a, like, a person in a cockpit to pilot it?

**Austin:** Most things do.

**Dre:** Um, okay. Yeah, I'm just gonna radio back and ask for permission to engage.

**Austin:** To Thisbe?



**Dre:** Yeah. I mean, you know, other people can hear that communication, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] but yes.

**Austin:** I mostly want to zero in on, again, Thisbe leading this side of the mission and whether or not [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] she, like...how she responds to a call like that or if she does.

**Janine:** I mean, my kneejerk reaction as a player is like, oh, everyone's having dinner? Let's throw a grenade at the dinner table.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Yeah. Uh huh.

**Janine:** Like, it is fully that. It is fully just, like, that's a horrible thing to do, but also, strategically, these people are in our way in a big way.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** So I think...it's also very easy to imagine Figure, like, saying that and then Thisbe sort of...not, like, switching into taking-orders mode, but just saying something like, "Providing support, Operant Figure in Bismuth," in that, like, I got you. Let's go. [Austin laughs] Let's fucking go.

**Dre:** Mm, sure.

**Austin:** All right.

**Sylvia:** Oh, I'm zooming up after you, once I hear that. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** All right, let's swing on 'em. Let's see how this first opening shot goes, [**Dre:** Right.] and then we'll adjust. What do you do?

**Dre:** So, are these...

**Austin:** [quietly] Oh my god.

**Dre:** Are the saint mechs, are they secured to anything?

**Austin:** They're in the scaffolding. Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, you said they're in, like, a scaffold.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah. They're secured, not in the sense that they're, like, chained down, but that they're, like, in a support structure meant to hold them up so that other people can, like, work on them. You know. You know what I mean, right?

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Austin:** You know like when a Gundam is in its dock, you know?

**Dre:** Yeah. So, here's what I'm deciding between. Either starting off by trying to attack these saint mechs [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] or starting off by attacking, like, the area where most of the people are.

**Austin:** Great question.

**Sylvia:** I feel like taking out the bigger mechs is gonna give us the biggest advantage here.

**Dre:** Yeah. Can I just knock over the one that is currently powered down and being worked on?

**Austin:** Sure.

**Dre:** I just want to, like— I don't know.

**Austin:** You don't want to attack it with one of your big weapons? You don't want to...?

**Dre:** Well, I mean, if it's fallen over— listen, I've been playing a lot of *Battletech*.

**Austin:** This is true.

**Dre:** When they falled over, [**Austin:** Yeah.] bad thing happen.

**Austin:** I get it. Okay, I'm gonna need you to think about anime instead of *Battletech*.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Okay. All right, all right, all right, all right. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Which I love, but part of it is, like, that it's not anime in many ways.

**Dre:** Sure. Yeah. Then, if we're thinking about anime...

**Austin:** We are.

**Dre:** Then what happens is, seemingly out of thin air, because it's coming out from underneath my chameleon cloak, [**Austin:** Right.] my explosive chains go whipping out, and they...

**Austin:** Ah.

**Janine:** This is Escaflowne, yeah.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Janine:** This happens.

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** This does happen in Escaflowne, quite literally.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** And it's area, baby, so I'm gonna hit both of these things.

**Austin:** You are gonna hit both of these. I mean, we'll see, right? Oh, you know what? We're not gonna see. This is— you're invisible. I think this is do damage as established, right? I rolled to see if you could sneak up on them. They are not— uh, okay. One of them has a chance of counteracting you here, the one who is not— the one that the person is actually in. So, go ahead and give me a roll, but give it to me at advantage.

You're invisible.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** So, 2d6 plus Clash is 2, right? So 3d6, rather. 3d6 plus 2, take highest.

**Dre:** 3d6, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** That is...

**Sylvia:** Whoa!

**Dre:** 13!

**Austin:** 6 plus 5 plus 2, yeah, uh huh. I think you're gonna do fine here. [laughs] On a 10 or more on Exchange Blows, this is either your opponent takes a risk or you take a risk and put your opponent in peril. These are also vorpal, right? So, once per sortie, [Dre: Yeah.] you could upgrade a risk to a peril instead, if you want to do that.

**Dre:** Yeah, no, that sounds great.

**Austin:** All right.

**Dre:** So yeah, I will inflict a risk, use vorpal to upgrade it to peril, and not take...

**Austin:** And not take the thing back. And you're hitting both of these.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** In fact, I think these are— describe what this looks like, visually.

**Dre:** Oh boy. I mean, what's it look like when a mech that is mostly powered off just gets a bunch of explosives planted on it, and they all go off?

**Austin:** And they all go off. And they're area explosives, right? So they're like...

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They're huge explosions. I think that you're actually gonna get the peril on one of the other little exosuit squads too, so taking a big hit here. Let's just give them Scorched. We've used Scorched a lot this season with you, [Dre laughs] but it feels right to me, so.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah. Finally, I'm doing the scorching.

**Austin:** You're doing the scorching now, exactly.

**Dre:** It's scorchin' time.

**Austin:** Exactly.

**Dre:** That's what that guy says, right?

**Austin:** That's what he says.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Scorcheus, yeah.

**Austin:** Scorcheus says it. So, Scorched, Scorched. And these are...in fact, I think the little ones, one set of the little ones are just straight-up— the Riddles, one of the Riddle squads is now just defenseless, because it's an extra. It's not even a major, so doing great here. Let's get your arrival, Cori, and then maybe we'll bounce over to the other side. Cori, what do you do?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. So, there is...I should probably zoom in on this.

**Austin:** I mean, it's a little room, right? It's a...

**Sylvia:** It's a little room. Yeah.

**Austin:** A chapel that's been...

**Sylvia:** So, we've got one of the saint mechs taken care of, and one to still deal with?

**Austin:** They are not— neither of them are taken care of.

**Sylvia:** Oh, they're not.

**Austin:** They both have a peril.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** They all have one peril each. They need two perils— they each need two perils to be defenseless so that you can Strike Decisively.

**Sylvia:** I can help with that.

**Austin:** One of the Riddle squads is defenseless. The other one is fine, and people are running towards it now.

**Sylvia:** Hmm.

**Austin:** And one of the Secateurs is waking up, at this point, or is, like, stepping forward out of its place.

**Sylvia:** Can I get tier and approach on these?

**Austin:** They are— these are all divine, because they're Nideo.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** And the Secateurs are tier three, and the Riddles are tier two.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Uh, but they work as tier three, because they're in squads. So, imagine they're all tier three right now.

**Sylvia:** Okay. All right. I'm...I feel like going to try and get the second peril on one of the mechs that is a tier three on its own is my move here.

**Austin:** I think that makes sense.

**Sylvia:** So I'd probably strike at that.

**Austin:** Yeah. Do you want to strike at the one that's already moving?

**Sylvia:** Yes, the one that's moving I think is the one that I'm gonna...

**Austin:** What's striking at this thing look like? What are you doing?

**Sylvia:** So, I am...I think that I'm taking flight again.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** This mech has Aerial, [**Austin:** Ooh] because I have a transmutation—

**Austin:** [laughs] Sorry for that acid beam.

**Sylvia:** Sorry, what was that?

**Austin:** That was an acid beam.

**Sylvia:** That was my boosters.

**Austin:** Oh, that was your—

**Sylvia:** That was my thrusters were going.

**Austin:** Yeah. I didn't mean to do that.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** That was a mistake. Anyway.

**Sylvia:** For people listening, a big green [Janine laughs] fountain of, like, ooze sort of sprayed to the left on the Roll20.

**Austin:** It was gross. Yeah, I don't ever mess with [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] any of this stuff, but like, you know, I could make a holy beam happen at you, you know? Like, watch. Ready? Boom. Holy.

**Sylvia:** Oh. Whoa!

**Austin:** Uh huh. If what you were like was like, “Ah, I bet Austin couldn't make a frost missile,” fucking wrong!

**Ali:** Whoa!

**Sylvia:** You know, Austin, I've never said that about you.

**Austin:** Yeah. Boom, look at that. It's a frost missile. Thank you.

**Sylvia:** I've never doubted that.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** I think I'm flying in, and I'm using— one of my weapons here are twin sickles 4, which is a melee weapon: Bane, Messy, Two-handed, and Decisive are the tags on it.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** It holds one of these in each hand, and...

**Austin:** Jesus christ. That's powerful.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. And I'm just coming in and trying to cut this mech to shreds before it can even really, like, respond to anything.

**Austin:** I mean, it's Decisive too, right? Which is...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I guess that's good for Strike Decisively.

**Sylvia:** That's for when I Strike Decisively.



**Austin:** Right, okay. Gotcha.

**Sylvia:** I can reroll, I believe.

**Austin:** Yep. All right, give me your attack, your Exchange Blows.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 2d6 plus Clash.

**Sylvia:** And this is plus Clash.

**Austin:** Which you're good at.

**Sylvia:** Which, important to note, this mech does not have...this doesn't have the input channel [**Austin:** Right.] that the old mech had, so I'm not using Channel to pilot this in any way.

**Austin:** Interesting, which is useful, since your Channel keeps going down. Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** It sure does. So, 2d6 plus 2, and I have advantage, because I'm a tier above.

**Austin:** You do.

**Sylvia:** So, is that...

**Austin:** That's 3d6, keep highest.

**Sylvia:** And that's with advantage's extra die.

**Austin:** Yep, 3d6, keep highest.

**Sylvia:** Cool. Uh, so that's a 9 total.

**Austin:** That's a 9. All right. You're both gonna take a risk here. So, as you move towards it, it fully does produce...it has woken up. It's moving towards you. It reaches into its, like, ribs where one of these kind of spiky extensions is and literally just pulls out a spear, as if it was already impaled by a spear, but like, it's generating the spear body

**[Sylvia: Sick.]** as it pulls it out of itself, and, you know, engages with you in this room. Again, very Escaflowne. Big sweeps, blocks one of your scythes, but the other one swings into it. What risk are you taking? Because you'll take a risk, and it'll take a risk, making it defenseless.

**Sylvia:** I think...hmm. Maybe Stabbed?

**Austin:** Yeah. Sure.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] Is that—?

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool. Yeah, like it got me with the spear, I think.

**Austin:** I think the spear is left in you, right? So like, it's still in you. You could take it out if you can go cool down for a second, right? So it's still a risk.

**Sylvia:** Oh, I might change that to Impaled, then.

**Austin:** Yeah, take Impaled.

**Sylvia:** Because it sounds cooler.

**Austin:** Yeah, a little temporary Impaled tag.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it will take the Leaking tag or risk.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I feel like with the sickle that wasn't blocked, I got it. I kind of, like, dug it into a fuel line or something, maybe, is how we can do that.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Love that. Fantastic. All right.

**Sylvia:** This fucking mech's, like, skeleton-ass face right up in the grill of this other mech.

**Austin:** [sighs] In this thing that is increasingly beginning to feel like, now that you're in here too, like an underground mausoleum.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Cool. All right. Back to outer space. I mean, we're all— it's all outer space, I guess, huh?

**Sylvia:** Well, we're in a moon now. We're inner moon.

**Austin:** You're inner moon versus outer space.

**Sylvia:** Inner moon, outer space.

**Austin:** Yeah. Very important difference.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

## **Stellar Combustor [0:44:34]**

**Ali:** Hoo, it's hot.

**Austin:** Hi, combustor crew. It's hot! But listen, look! Look where you are! [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The sun.

**Keith:** We're at the sun.

**Austin:** So it's only getting hotter. [Ali sighs] You're gonna die from the heat.

**Keith:** Eh, I can fix the heat.

**Austin:** You're gonna die from the heat, if you're not careful, if you don't have a backup plan.

**Keith:** Fix. Fix it. Let's fix it. [Sylvia laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Ooh, we got this, guys. Eye on the prize.

Austin (as **Routine**): I'm gonna die from heat.

Ali (as **Brnine**): No, no, no, no. No, no, no, no. No, no, no, no. We got this.  
We're— home stretch.

**Austin:** The ship is peeling, right? Like, the ship itself has extra heat stuff built on. That's part of what you prepared, right? Was like, yeah, it's good to shunt the heat, but you also just need to be able to withstand it. And yeah, we live in the Divine Cycle, and there's all, you know, da-da-da-da-da, but like, it's the sun, and it's a sun that's been juiced up, because it's about to explode.

**Keith:** Yeah, this sun's...this sun is under investigation by Congress. [Austin laughs quietly, Ali sighs]

**Dre:** Brnine, are you just telling people to stay positive, and that will help them to not melt to death?

Ali (as **Brnine**): You're not gonna die. Just, um, close your eyes and think of the first thing that we're gonna do when we get back to Palisade.

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

Ali (as **Brnine**): Eye on the prize.

Austin (as **Routine**): Double margarita. [Sylvia laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'm gonna get a burger. I would like a burger right now, but—

Austin (as **Routine**): I would love a burger. No, I wouldn't. It's too hot. Can I get an iced burger?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Routine**): [wistfully] An iced burger.

**Sylvia:** Ew.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Burger shakes.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh. Phrygian, you ever have an iced burger before?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I've had burger shakes.

Ali (as **Brnine**): A burger shake?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Yeah. Iced burger drink. [Sylvia laughs]

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

Austin (as **Routine**): I'm gonna get sick. I'm gonna die from being sick. [Ali laughs]

Keith (as **Phrygian**): What?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'm picturing, like, both of you— like, the other two in silence, [Austin laughs] just looking at Phrygian after that, while they're melting. [laughs]

Keith (as **Phrygian**): How is a burger shake worse than an iced burger? It's the same!

Austin (as **Routine**): It's not the same.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Just one of them you get to drink through the convenience of a straw.

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

Ali (as **Brnine**): I mean, you put fries in shakes sometimes.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): You can dip fries in your burger shake, yeah.

Austin (as **Routine**): No, I don't. I don't do this.

Ali (as **Brnine**): You don't do that?

**Sylvia**: Mm.

Austin (as **Routine**): No. Fries are a separate food category for me.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): You don't have burgers with fries ever?

Austin (as **Routine**): I eat them separately. I eat them, but not ever in the same bite.

Ali (as **Brnine**): You're missing out, man.

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

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Yeah, that's such an odd line.

Austin (as **Routine**): I made it to 28, didn't I? You know? Not mixing 'em. I'm gonna keep not mixing 'em.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): You think that those are related?

**Sylvia**: [laughs quietly] That is the most fucking 28-year-old thing.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Can you prove that those are related?

**Austin**: Does a little, you know, like, [thump] hits his chest and then does a little shrug, like, "Here I am. Right?"

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

**Sylvia**: He's so right.

Austin (as **Routine**): The version of me that ate the fries? Would've died. [Keith laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Well, I mean, your number one choice, Phrygian, isn't a burger shake, right? What do you...?

**Keith**: Now, we've talked about this before, but I don't remember canonically if Phrygian needs to eat.

**Austin**: No, but I think Brnine's saying, like, after this mission, when you get home, what would you like to celebrate with? It doesn't have to be food. It could be, but for, uh, for my guy whose name I just forgot, Routine, it's a double margarita.

**Keith**: Right.

**Austin**: Or a frozen burger. An icy burger.

**Keith**: But not a burger shake.

**Austin**: But not a burger shake.

**Keith**: Bizarrely.

**Austin**: So what is that for— what is it for Phrygian? What's the thing that you would love to have after this mission, after this mission wraps up and you come home?

**Keith**: Phrygian would love to have...? Phrygian doesn't love to have.

**Austin**: Oh my god. Ain't this the problem?

**Keith**: Yeah, Phrygian doesn't love to have.

Austin (as **Routine**): [exhales] You're missing out. You're missing out.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Loving to have, it seems like it's making you sad.

Austin (as **Routine**): Some people say loving to have is the root of suffering. I don't agree.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah, man. Come on.

Austin (as **Routine**): I just don't agree.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): That's okay.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Phrygian, do you have dreams? I'm sorry if that's...is that fucked up to ask?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): No. But—

Austin (as **Routine**): Do you mean, like, literal dreams, or do you mean, like—?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Yeah, do you mean ambitions, or do you mean, at night, do I dream?

Ali (as **Brnine**): No, you're an ambitious guy. Come on.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I *am* an ambitious—? No, I don't think I'm...

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Eh, I guess I'm ambitious.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Look at you out here. Come on, man.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I guess it's true that I have ambitions, but I don't know that that makes me ambitious.

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

Ali (as **Brnine**): So you dream, then?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): [crosstalk] Do you mean at night? Is that really—

Ali (as **Brnine**): [crosstalk] You go to sleep, and you think of stuff?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Is that what you actually meant?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah.



Keith (as **Phrygian**): Yeah, I dream at night. [pause, Austin chuckles]

Ali (as **Brnine**): What about?

**Austin**: Sorry, Dre said, “Do you think this was the conversation they were having before that submarine imploded?” [all laugh]

**Ali**: Shut up!

**Keith**: I...I dr— [imitates pressure implosion]

**Dre**: “What are you gonna do when we get topside, man?” [laughter, Ali groans]

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I dream about— I dreamt last night about an apple, but the skin of the apple was on the inside. It was all skin all the way through, but there was a very very thin layer of apple meat on the outside where the skin would be in the same thickness as the skin, so you would bite into the crisp outer layer of an apple, but the inside is firm and waxy chaff.

Austin (as **Routine**): Yeah, an elppa.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): An elppa.

Austin (as **Routine**): Yeah. Yeah, I'm familiar. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I dreamt of an elppa.

Austin (as **Routine**): You should— did you ever have one?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Elppa shake.

Austin (as **Routine**): [sighs] You should try the elppa.

Ali (as **Brnine**): [quietly] That shit is fucking gross, man.

Austin (as **Routine**): We gotta fix the heat. [Sylvia laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Eye on the prize.

Austin (as **Routine**): How do we do that?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Well, we have to see what's wrong with it first. It's probably leaking coolant.

**Austin**: It's gone. It got lasered off.

**Keith**: Oh, so there's no way to fix it.

**Austin**: It is gone. You managed to dodge the big laser wall. You didn't manage to keep the AC unit attached to the side of your ship.

**Keith**: Uh, hey, we actually do have something.

**Ali**: Do we?

**Keith**: Yeah, we do. Because what's the— what, is the...you know, maybe the...it's us. We're the issue.

**Ali**: [gasps] We do have something.

**Keith**: Yeah, we do have something. Ali, do you want to tell them what we have? [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia**: Oh, let's go.

## **Invisibility Radio [0:51:15]**

**Ali**: The audience at home, I would like you to close your eyes and think of something. Have you heard of the Chug Jug of *Fortnite*? [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

**Keith**: I'm now lost.

**Ali**: It's a keg that you put down—

**Keith**: I thought I knew what I was setting up, but now I don't know. [Ali laughs]

**Dre**: Yeah, no, yeah.

**Ali:** It's a keg that you put down that generates a shield, and if you and your friends stand close enough to it, you become shielded.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** It's a very simple sci-fi concept. There's nothing weird or impossible about it. So, one of the treasures that we got—

**Keith:** And does it do something else beside shield you?

**Ali:** [laughs] Yeah. It's— it's— I've written it here as an “invisibility radio.”

**Austin:** [incredulous sound] [Keith and Ali laugh] I'm also gonna immediately— the tags don't work here. I'll explain why, but you go ahead and list them.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** Okay. Okay. Well, we—

**Austin:** And talk to me what it— what's it look like?

**Keith:** So, it's sort of like a Vietnam radio backpack. You ever seen those?

**Austin:** Yeah. Familiar.

**Keith:** So, it's big, and it's got, like...

**Austin:** It's bulky. Bulky's one of the tags.

**Keith:** Bulky is one of the tags.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah. [Ali laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Oh, I know why it doesn't work. I don't think that this actually is one of the tags. I see it now.

**Ali:** Hmm?

**Keith:** I see what the issue with the tags is.

**Austin:** I don't think you do. I think there's another different one.

**Keith:** It's not Valuable?

**Austin:** Go ahead. What's the one that you think?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** It is Valuable, Keith. It is.

**Keith:** Yes, that's the one that—

**Austin:** Why? Why is that not allowed?

**Keith:** It's not Valuable, because that would make it cost three times as much as we're saying that it cost.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ali:** Ohhh.

**Keith:** But we—

**Austin:** Because it would immediately be a way to break the economy in this game that you use a 1 valuable [Keith: Right.] thing to then buy something that is treasure and...

**Ali:** I copied and pasted that [Austin: Yes.] from what the invisibility cloak in the book has.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Got you. Yes, I see. I see.

**Ali:** So we were just like, "Oh, we'll start with what it has and then build to it."

**Keith:** Right. We already actually talked about how Valuable doesn't work for a different item.

**Austin:** I mean, it does in the sense that, like, if you...if I'm making loot for you to find, for instance.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Or if you, for some reason, wanted to get something that was, like, really good bait, right? Because Valuable, as a tag, says it's expensive to acquire and fairly sought after, so if you were like, "We want to set up a sting operation," Valuable would be a cool thing to put on an item, right? Because it would draw the attention of someone, you know?

**Keith:** Right. Yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But yeah, you wouldn't be able to use that to ignore the cost, the way that you're doing now.

**Keith:** I don't think that we— yeah, we did not mean to do that. That was just a copy and paste error.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Got it.

**Ali:** Yeah. My bad.

**Keith:** It was never part of our plan for the radio.

**Austin:** So, it's Bulky.

**Keith:** Yes, it's Bulky.

**Austin:** What else is it?

**Keith:** It's Fragile.

**Austin:** Uh...

**Keith:** It's Intimate.

**Austin:** Okay...it's Bulky, Fragile, and Intimate. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Yep.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Damn.

**Austin:** Okay, so, Bulky is, "It's large relative to its tier and difficult or awkward to move around."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's Fragile, "It's easily broken, either by shoddy design or frail materials," and it's Intimate, which requires you to get up close and personal, making it hard to use against anyone wielding something with better reach or anyone just trying to keep their distance. So you have to be, like, touching this thing is what you're telling me.

**Keith:** Yeah, you have to be up close to use this. Yes.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Okay. So that's -3 on the tag cost right now.

**Keith:** Right. The positive tags...

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** It is— it lets you be invisible.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's a tag, sure.

**Keith:** And it's Adapted.

**Austin:** Which means that it is...

**Keith:** It's cold. It's also really cold. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** You already had the Adapted tag on it to mean the other thing that you meant.

**Keith:** No, no. Wait, what was the other thing?

**Austin:** Oh, so it is not just an invisibility radio? It is an invisibility radio that keeps you chilly? [Ali laughs quietly]

**Keith:** That's what it's adapted to do, yes.

**Austin:** Come on. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** It's a— we spent on that.

**Austin:** No, because the thing that you've done is not “lets you be invisible.” Sorry, you don't have “lets you be chilly,” you have Adapted, which means that it works under heat. It would also need “lets you be chilly.”

**Ali:** [laughs quietly] Sure.

**Austin:** And that still wouldn't fix this problem, because the problem is the ship is going to blow up soon.

**Keith:** But we're not gonna die of heat before that happens.

**Austin:** Okay, so what you're saying is there's a countdown now, [Ali laughs] that you better find a place to land and get off this ship before it explodes.

**Keith:** Hey, that's something. Yeah.

**Austin:** It ain't nothing.

**Keith:** Okay, let's—

**Austin:** Uh, I think this is a fucking reach.

**Keith:** Okay. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Because I don't think your invisibility radio— I like the idea of the thing— I do. I genuinely like the idea of, like, we have this big bulky mini fridge with us

**Keith:** [laughs] Right.

**Austin:** But it's not really a mini fridge, but it's something that size that you have to touch to be invisible, and anyone who's touching it is invisible.

**Keith:** Well, this is— so, that's—

**Austin:** It's so fun. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** The thing that makes it a radio—

**Austin:** I love that.

**Keith:** The thing that makes it a radio is, like, we imagine that you've got, like, a little clip, so it's wireless, but you have to be, like, right up next to it anyway.

**Austin:** You gotta be right— because, again, Intimate means within arms reach in this game.

**Keith:** Right. Yes, yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? So literally you have to be able to be within arm's reach of it.

**Keith:** This isn't hands on a cold body.

**Austin:** So you're all right up—

**Keith:** But it is, like...

**Austin:** It's damn close.



**Keith:** It's close to that. Right.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You would have to be able to touch it [**Keith:** Right.] if you wanted to at any given moment.

**Keith:** So, like, a really nice version of this can let you be invisible slightly further away.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Keith:** Like maybe across the room, but—

**Austin:** Right, if you got rid of— if you added another negative tag, you could get rid of Intimate, and then it would be, like, a nearby thing.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But that's not what this is. I like the version of it it is. That to me is mwah, like, great sci-fi bullshit.

**Keith:** Huddling down the hall.

**Austin:** Yes, 100%. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Carrying a block of ice that also lets you be invisible, yes.

**Austin:** Yes. But the thing that I don't like is also it keeps you chilly.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** That, to me, is not a thing you could just go buy from a store.

**Keith:** But we've already been talking about how we made this stuff.

**Austin:** But you didn't, because that's not the roll you did. You didn't do a long term project.

**Keith:** Well, we did buy the parts, though.

**Austin:** And I've already stretched that about as far as it can go, Keith.

**Keith:** Okay. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** I stretched that to you have an ardent that lets you be invisible, and I let you have the procgen security pass, [Ali laughs] a thing that if existed for 1 value, we would constantly be seeing the Cause get Ws, right? I'm imagining that you've called in every favor to every— you called every Otacon you know to deliver you all of their secret projects at once, and I think that that's, like, procgen security pass? Come on, that's not one value. There's no way that's one value; that's a treasure. But I'm letting you have it, because I want you to win, but I can't let you have the invisibility radio that's also the portable cooling unit. [Keith and Ali laugh] That's two problems you're solving with 1 value.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** It's not fun. It's too much. You gotta fix the fact that your ship is gonna blow up or that you're gonna blow up or burn to death inside of it. You're trying to do a mission against the sun. Imagine if Tom Cruise was like, "Well, this is our invisibility machine, and it keeps us chilly."

**Keith:** That's...

**Austin:** You'd be like, "The writers fucked up. They forgot that it was hot, and in rewrites, they added that it makes you chilly."

**Keith:** [laughs] Someone offscreen goes—

**Austin:** You can see that they— you saw the back of Tom Cruise's— [Ali and Keith laugh] It's the back of his head. That's not even Tom Cruise. He ADRed that in. He called that in from walking on a biplane somewhere. He was like, "And it keeps you chilly!" and they just dropped that in there. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Look, at some level, you only get 3 value, you gotta cram as much as you can!

**Austin:** I get it, and I gotta push back on this one piece.

**Keith:** This is— [Ali and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** You know! I was like—

**Keith:** It's Bulky, Intimate, and Fragile. It's junk. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** I mean, I'm gonna make you roll to use it too. It's Fragile? You better be careful.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it's Bulky? Damn.

**Keith:** That's what Routine's here for. Routine's here to carry the radio. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** You get to roll Crew on it. That's fair. [Ali laughs] But I think you need another solution for the heat.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Whether that's just a personal thing and you're gonna roll the dice on trying—

**Keith:** Okay. You're saying—

**Austin:** But it's the sun.

**Keith:** Okay. By personal thing, you mean it flies for inside, but it doesn't fly for the ship. That's...

**Austin:** No, I'm saying this thing does not fly as a coolant also, period.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And I'm saying whether what you want to find is something that just keeps you cool but doesn't protect the ship or something that does both, you gotta dig a little

deeper here on this one.

**Keith:** All right. What else do we got? Do you have a move that creates a refrigerant, Brnine? [Ali laughs] No?

**Ali:** I don't believe that I do.

**Austin:** Well, and the wild thing is: there are moves for this, to be clear, right? Like, if one of you had Arcane Generator, a thing that lets you make an item, you know, on the fucking fly, you could do that right now.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That stuff does exist in this system, which again, is why I have to be, like, kind of a hardass, because it's like, if you leveled up and took Arcane Generator, damn. That's a cool thing to have at this moment, you know?

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** You've just gotta fail one more roll and then pick a different thing than what you wanted to, Brnine, and then you could get Arcane Generator. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I could— now, this is— I'm pulling this out of my ass, so if this doesn't work, then I'm not dedicated to this.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Keith:** Like, if this makes the scan not work, then it makes the scan not work.

**Austin:** Ah. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But I have Morphic Aura.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** While Ascended— so I need to transform. So, I need to go outside the ardent into space.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** As a transformed Phrygian.

**Austin:** Uh huh?

**Keith:** And “You may take on the qualities of something that you're touching until the end of the scene. You take advantage when using this adaptation to your benefit.” So, what I could do is—

**Austin:** So you would—

**Keith:** I could go to the part of the ship that's cut off [**Austin:** Ah.] and be touching the insulate— the canonical insulation that is part of the ship's design and basically turn myself into being insulation that covers the—

**Austin:** Yeah, but that's not enough without the— but that's— the ship is already covered with that.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You would need a better insulator. I think there is one here. I'm gonna give you the pitch on this.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You could do a pass on one of the rings that's built from a material that can withstand the heat, reach out and touch it, and use Morpheic Aura [**Keith:** Okay.] to become that and then encase the ship in yourself.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This is very risky.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** For multiple reasons.

**Ali:** Are we sure, if we're getting that close anyway, we don't want to just get off of the ship?

**Austin:** You will die before that.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** You will not— if you're— you're going to die in the next three minutes.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Okay. [laughs]

**Austin:** Right? Like, there is not— you're near the sun. Your heat system is gone. I have to treat that as seriously as if you'd been shot in the head. Like, it's the sun, and it's the sun that's been supercharged. The reason I say it's really risky to do is you have to roll Defy to become The Beast Within right now, which means that there's a dice roll where things could go bad, right?

**Keith:** Right. Right. Not that bad. Failing that is not the worst thing in the world.

**Austin:** You're right. It doesn't— it's not make a move as hard as you want. There are specific things that I can do. It's your transformation is incomplete, your transformation only lasts for the scene, or take an appropriate risk, which none of those are good, but it's not make a move as hard as you want, right?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** And then you'd have to Defy Danger to touch the thing without giving yourself away, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Which is dangerous, obviously. But it's doable. I think it's kind of cool, the idea that you would, like, become the material of the stellar combustor to survive the heat is sick. Shrug.

**Keith:** Uh, yeah, I can do that.

**Austin:** All right. So, do you go, like, to the airlock? This thing has an airlock, presumably.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And then, like, do you say anything to Routine and Brnine before you leave?

**Keith:** Uh, yeah, I say:

(as **Phrygian**): Get me real close.

**Austin:** Oh, is it— is it actually a— I guess maybe it's a helping. No, I think it might be a Brnine roll, then. Or a Crew roll to drive it close enough without hitting it.

**Keith:** No, this could be a Crew roll.

**Austin:** It could be. But first, let's do Beast Within.

**Keith:** Let's do Beast Within, yeah. Okay. So, that's roll as regular Defy.

**Austin:** So that's, what, 2d6 plus 3?

**Keith:** I think that my buttons still work.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Let's see. That's an 8.

**Austin:** That's an 8. 7 to 9, hold one, so you can spend that hole one-for-one for your various cool moves.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Which are, like, the Strike Decisively and da-da-da-da-da.

**Keith:** Or Morphic Aura.

**Austin:** Right. Oh, is Morphic Aura spend a hold?

**Keith:** It takes one hold. Yeah.

**Austin:** Ah. Well, there you go! Look at that. All right. Who is driving the ship? Is Routine driving the ship, or are you, Brnine?

**Ali:** Um... [sighs] I think maybe Routine is. Yeah, I think especially with Phrygian going out of the ship itself, I'm probably back on scout, on scanner looking at.

**Austin:** Okay. Then give me a 2d6 plus 3.

**Keith:** And I can help on this? I mean, I can wait, but I can't help on this.

**Austin:** If you have to, yeah, you could totally, right?

**Keith:** Big stretch.

**Austin:** You might be like, "I'm gonna reach out further. I'm gonna..."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. 2d6 plus 3, Weather the Storm, Defy.

**Ali:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Or not Defy but Crew.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** 10. Beautiful.

**Austin:** Ayy! Look at that. That's a 10. 5 plus 2 plus 3 is a 10.



**Keith:** So, I know exactly what this looks like. I have the—

**Austin:** Please tell me.

**Keith:** Something that's been lodged in my brain since 2003 or whatever. The, like, solar sail on the Jedi starfighter from Clone Wars, from Attack of the Clones.

**Austin:** Uh huh. I know this. Yeah?

**Keith:** And it, like, sort of shoots out, and it's like this weird shimmery silvery thing. It sort of shoots out from the front and, like, kind of opens up into this huge, like, sail.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I actually don't know what this thing does. I just assumed that that's what it is, it's a solar sail and it's used to help a small starfighter go, like, into hyperspace or whatever.

**Austin:** Yeah, that sounds right.

**Keith:** But the material has always been, like, exactly fascinating to me, and so I think that this looks like this sort of silvery shimmery— it almost looks like liquid kind of, you know, Phrygian's skin sort of unfolds into this weird smooth surface and kind of just  
[**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] swallows back up over the thing, kind of like the reverse of what happens in that movie where it kind of unfolds.

**Austin:** Yeah. All right. I'm gonna— we're gonna jump back over to the other side here, but I do want to say I'm gonna not count that as the end of the scene. Now that you're like this, you can do the thing.

**Keith:** Right. The scene has not happened yet. We're just pausing for dramatic effect.

**Austin:** Exactly, yeah. The scene is now you've set up that you can do the research, right? You're close enough. You're protected by this solar sail reflecting thing that's built out of the same material that protects the stellar combustor station itself, and you'll be able to do the research roll to try to find a way in when we come back to you. The reason I say that is because you have the thing that says once you're out of hold, you

transform back into your original self at the end of the scene.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And I don't want to make that happen [**Keith:** Yeah.] right now, even though you only have one hold, you know?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You spent your hold. So. Again, doing my best to be a fan of the players. So yeah, you begin an orbit. I will call out one other thing really quick. You are not invisible, and so you're a weird parachute thing, but you're very tiny, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But putting it out there: that's a potential risk that could come into being, right? So be careful.

## **Combat [1:06:40]**

**Austin:** Uh, Chimera's crew. Thisbe, your two coworkers have run ahead and begun to do a lot of damage to this place.

**Janine:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** The fighting is happening.

**Janine:** It sure is.

**Austin:** What are you up to? Do you swing in?

**Janine:** Um, what's the state of the board here?

**Austin:** Great question, especially because I have not added the thing I like to add sometimes which is, like, you know, the little icons that say how much damage they've taken and stuff. [typing] One second. Here.

**Keith:** Uh, I've gotta say, just because I know that this will— someone will have this thought in their head. It's actually Count Dooku's ship that has the sail, not the...

**Austin:** It is. It is. I thought the same thing, Keith, but I was like, "I'm not gonna give you—"

**Keith:** The starfighter has, like, that big circle ring thing that it leaves behind. Yeah.

**Austin:** It does, that has the— it has the thing that lets them have hyperspace. Yes.

**Keith:** So, you're welcome to whoever was agonizing over not wanting to tell me that on Twitter or whatever. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** All right, so, Janine. There are two of the Secateurs here. Those are the saints, the fucked up saints. One of them is defenseless. The other one is hurt pretty bad but not defenseless. Then, there are two of the little exosuit units, and those are— one of them is defenseless, and one of them isn't. I'm gonna type this just into the chat. [typing] One is defenseless. One has one risk or one peril—yeah, one peril—and needs one more. And then the exosuits: one group is defenseless; the other is untouched. Typed. Boom. Easy. So, yeah. So, one of these things is, like, in combat with Cori and is looking pretty vulnerable, could be struck decisively against. The other one is up and moving now but is not as damaged at this point. So, what do you do?

**Janine:** I'm trying to decide if...you know, on the one hand, I don't want to steal Cori's kill. On the other hand, [Sylvia laughs] is it just annoying to Cori to have to do the...you know, cross the T's and dot the I's of taking out the one that's defenseless before taking on the one that's already fighting back, you know?

**Sylvia:** Worth mentioning, I do— because my weapon is Decisive, decisive blows are very easy for me to do.

**Janine:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Or at least easier to do than most people, so I don't know if that affects your...you can kill steal. [Austin laughs quietly] I'm giving you permission, I'm just— it's

not, like, busywork. I have, like, a backup. I can roll twice, basically, if I fail it the first time, once per scene.

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** Can you see the life bars I've added to these things?

**Janine:** No.

**Austin:** You cannot.

**Janine:** Absolutely we cannot, no.

**Sylvia:** Nope.

**Austin:** Evil. Evil. Evil. Can you see that 0 of 1 now on that one?

**Janine:** Yes.

**Austin:** Look at that.

**Sylvia:** Yep!

**Austin:** Incredible. [Sylvia laughs quietly] See: visible to everyone. Boom! All right. So, if it says 0, it's vulnerable. It's ready to be struck decisively against. Pretend that there's— you know, you can just see the tokens. They're not in any particular positioning here, right? This is not a particularly— I mean, again, you're fighting in a big, like, chapel, basically. And so I'd say that, like, Cori and one of them, the more vulnerable one, are engaged in a melee, let's say towards, like, the back right corner of this room, near where the altar and some of the, like, cushions and stuff were positioned or, like, tossed aside. I think probably Figure and the other big one are fighting in front of the mural. We get, like, a cool— or the map, rather, that's covering up the mural. We get a cool, like, sideways profile shot of that exchange, of that fight that's happening.

And then one of the Riddles, the Riddle squads, the little exosuits are running towards the Figure in Bismuth or towards the Devil's Two Front Teeth to try to, like,

attack it from behind. Let's call that the one that's defenseless. They're trying to, like, get some hits in before they get knocked out of the fight. And the other group is, I think, probably forming up defensively around some scientists and soldiers who are not...who are just, like, the wounded and the people who are resting and stuff like that who are not able to fight right now, so they're, like, going defensive mode. So, that's my picture of the situation. Thisbe, where do you want to intercede here?

**Janine:** Uh...okay, I had an idea, and then I felt bad about it when you were like, "And they're protecting the wounded people." [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh?

**Janine:** Like, mm, okay. I don't— ew. Maybe not that.

**Austin:** Well, there's lots of other targets, right?

**Janine:** Yeah. Uh, I... [laughs quietly] Okay.

**Austin:** You're riding on top of Mow at this point, right?

**Janine:** Well, that's what I'm working through in my head.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Because I think I might be using Mow more than riding.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Janine:** Because I'm the one with the arcane approach.

**Austin:** Right, sure.

**Janine:** And Mow is mundane.

**Austin:** Sure. Sure, but mundane's not bad against divine especially. It's worth saying that you are so small in tier. You're tier one, I believe, right?

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You don't have a special thing that makes you tier two or anything.

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

**Austin:** That it's actually fairly hard for you directly to hurt something that's tier three.

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** You'd be rolling with disadvantage to even hit the one above you, and two above you, I think you would— I mean, you'd especially— you would start to need special equipment that has...

**Janine:** Right. Okay.

**Austin:** You know, Bane or Ruin on it to do good damage there, so.

**Janine:** I have Bane.

**Austin:** Okay. I believe you. Yeah, you do.

**Janine:** I have Bane on my hands, not on my robot, but...

**Austin:** You have Bane on your hands, yeah. [Dre laughs]

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah. Um...I thought I had something else with Bane, but I guess I don't. Okay. So, the thing— yeah, then Thisbe dashes up on Mow's back, gets into place on the little saddlehorn.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And I think is just gonna beeline for the little one that's trying to go for Figure's back.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I think it's very much like an intercept course kind of thing.

**Austin:** Sounds good. Let's do a...

**Janine:** That little group, I guess.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's a little group. Do a Strike Decisively, which is Clash, I believe. Yeah. Unless you're trying to talk them down, but I don't think that's the case.

**Janine:** No. [laughs]

**Austin:** 2d6 plus Clash. So, plus— Clash is 2, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Look at that, an 11. On a 10 plus, you strike true. Director characters are killed, forced to retreat, or otherwise removed as a threat, per the fiction. What's it look like? There's three of them. They're exosuits with, like, little claws, and then their right hand has— their left hand has a claw that they can— it's almost like a detachable bomb. They claw into you and then remove the hand, and the hand explodes.

**Janine:** Oh.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** Wow, I'm glad I went for them.

**Austin:** Uh huh! And then the right hand is like a blowtorch, like, blade basically.

**Janine:** Gotcha.

**Austin:** They are really good at, like, cutting armor up, you know?

**Janine:** Yeah. How big are they, relative to Mow?

**Austin:** Much smaller. [laughs quietly] Much, like...teensy.

**Janine:** Okay, so the thing that I want to do works.

**Austin:** Uh huh?

**Janine:** Which is... [laughs quietly] I'm, again, very goofy mode. [Dre laughs] I want Mow to do a running charge at them and then drop a shoulder and roll through them?

**Austin:** Oh, yeah. Like a Zangief roll.

**Janine:** Rolling sort of diagonally so that...

**Sylvia:** Fuck yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Rolling sort of diagonally so that Thisbe is still, like, able to not get knocked off or anything and not contact the ground, but it is sort of, like, a shoulder-back-hip-leg sort of roll.

**Austin:** Yeah. No, I know exactly what this would look like in one of those SNES Gundam games.

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** 100%. I got you. Yep, mm-hmm. Crushes them, right? They explode under Mow. Mow has some, like, you know, smoke on his side now, but there's no damage from this. Easy. Done. Off the board. Figure. You're dueling this one up here, or what are you doing here? I painted a picture of you fighting one in front of this big map that's covering the mural. What is your next maneuver?

**Dre:** Yeah, sure. Uh, buh buh buh buh buh buh buh...this one up here to the—?

**Austin:** Yeah, that one has one peril on it.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** You scorched it once, but it is now— instead of trying to do the spear attack with you, it has pulled out two tiny—not tiny, but, you know, gigantic, but compared to you, small—daggers from its body, as if, again, it had been impaled with them.

**Dre:** Mm.



**Austin:** And they are thrumming with this power and are threatening to cut you up with it, right? They're doing, like, you know, dual hand, dagger in each hand slashes at you and stuff.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And sometimes they'll throw one and grab another one, you know?

**Dre:** Sure. Sorry, I'm double checking tags.

**Austin:** Uh huh. No worries.

**Dre:** Um...you know, I haven't used these very often. I would like to use my restraint drones.

**Austin:** Ooh!

**Dre:** To try and, I guess, just pin one or both of its arms to the wall.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay. Give me a Clash. What do those look like?

**Dre:** Uh, they are...I mean, really they're just, they're like big spikes that are just hovering [**Austin:** Right.] around the back.

**Austin:** Sure. All right, give me a 2d6 plus 2, Clash. Holy shit!

**Dre:** Sick. Let's go.

**Austin:** Yikes!

**Dre:** I'm getting all the spotlight today.

**Austin:** Yikes!

**Keith:** I heard the reaction.

**Austin:** 1, 1, 2.

**Keith:** I thought this was a good one, a good whoa, but no. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** No. [laughs]

**Austin:** It super isn't.

**Dre:** It's the lowest roll I could possibly get.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** The devil's two snake eyes.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. All right.

**Dre:** Hey, uh, I think I'm gonna overheat here.

**Austin:** Yeah? Wait, to do what?

**Dre:** To retry a roll.

**Austin:** Oh! [Dre laughs] Yeah, now we're talking.

**Keith:** Oh, that's great.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, we don't ever— we don't get overheat very often at all. Is this a special thing you have? This is a general thing.

**Dre:** No, this is a...

**Austin:** Yeah, it's just subsystems or whatever, right? Or a...

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** A Channeler thing. All right, let's—

**Dre:** Right. But then I— well, I overheat all the time, because when I'm overheating, I get to take advantage on a speed move.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh, yeah.

**Dre:** So.

**Austin:** “When you heat up, when you push your altar to its limits and start to heat up, you may tick Overheating to retry a roll. The original results are discarded, and you must take the second roll, even if it's worse.” Well, can't be, so.

**Dre:** It can't be.

**Austin:** So, let's see it. 2d6 plus 2. [Dre laughs] Okay. Okay. Okay. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Still not good. It's a 6.

**Austin:** Still not good. That's a 6.

**Keith:** Ah, that's really rough.

**Austin:** Cori, you're so close to knocking this person out. Do you want to try to help here? Do y'all want to spend a Midnite token— I guess your last Crew token. That feels expensive. That feels like maybe not the play. I was trying to see if someone could help.

**Dre:** Yeah, it's fine.

**Austin:** You just want to take the hit?

**Sylvia:** Uh, yeah, I'm focusing on what's in front of me.

**Dre:** Yeah, it's fine.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** All right, well, uh, you do the restraint bolt. Like, the restraints come in and pin it

to the ground or pin it to the wall, and it simply pulls its hands through, right? It's all about [**Dre**: Good.] being impaled, you know? It's used to this.

**Dre**: Oh, that's true. [Sylvia laughs] Oh man, I just gave the freak what it wanted!

**Austin**: 100%, right?

**Sylvia**: Never do that. [Dre laughs]

**Austin**: And it rips its hands through the— its robot hands through the spikes and then just reaches into itself— actually, no, it doesn't. It just runs over and hugs you. It just grabs onto you [**Janine**: Aah.] with the spikes that it has impaling you.

**Keith**: Wow.

**Austin**: And just grows them through you. You know, like you turn a lightsaber on through somebody, you know what I mean?

**Janine**: Oh my god.

**Dre**: Sure, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin**: It does that but with all of the little spikes that are popping out of it.

**Sylvia**: That's dope.

**Austin**: And then, like, they go through you, and it reaches around and pulls one of its spears out from your back. Take the peril—

**Janine**: While we're here, does it—

**Austin**: Uh huh?

**Janine**: Is there any, like, weird head or face gestures? Any, like, head tilting?

**Austin**: Oh, like a head tilt? Yeah, a head tilt and a smile?

**Janine**: Like some sort of awful expression?

**Austin:** A kiss on the top of the forehead.

**Janine:** Like kind of a rattly head tilt?

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. 100%, yeah.

**Janine:** Ugh. Ugh.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Again, its arms are always, are always in JoJo's poses. Do you know what I mean? We're fucking in it, you know? [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Yeah. Take Pierced.

**Keith:** Wow, what a fun venn diagram between JoJo's and sort of tortured saints.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, that's just fashion, you know? [Keith laughs]

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** That's just— [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** I'm also gonna— I'm gonna increase my gravity crock— gravity crock. [laughs quietly] My gravity clock with Cori.

**Austin:** Oh, yes!

**Sylvia:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Because they have seen me put in peril.

**Austin:** Love that. 100%, for sure. So, Cori, make sure you advance yours too.  
Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Great. Love it. Cori, while you were ignoring your friend being pierced...

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Dre laughs] I would like to Strike Decisively.

**Austin:** Ooh, uh huh. I appreciate this. "You are a sword; strike down our adversaries with impunity."

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That's a deepened hook.

**Austin:** It is a deepened hook. You know what? You're not allowed to go be a shield. Though it does sting, and that's fun. All right, give me a Strike Decisively. It's Clash.

**Sylvia:** That's an 11.

**Austin:** That is an 11. What's it look like?

**Sylvia:** I don't even need to reroll it.

**Austin:** No, you don't. Tell me what it looks like.

**Sylvia:** So, I think...during this sort of, like, standoff, at one point, the spear that this thing is parrying one of [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] my sickles with breaks, and when it goes to reach for another one, Cori digs both tips of the sickles into where it's reaching for [**Austin:** Ooh.] and just pulls it in half.

**Austin:** Yeah. Love it. Love it.

**Sylvia:** This thing is ripped into two discrete pieces from the, like, waist up.

**Austin:** It sure is. Incredible. Great. Thisbe. There is one more group— in fact, I think that that one group that's protecting people is now trying to usher them south, further down into this hallway. You don't know to where necessarily, but they are fleeing with those other survivors, and then there is the one remaining mech to the north who has just done what I described to Figure.

**Janine:** Yeah. Uh...ooh. Oh, I should've—

**Austin:** Oh, I'm wrong. I have to rewind for a second. You didn't blow that one up. I forgot about a thing that it has. I feel like bad.

**Dre:** Uh oh.

**Ali:** Mm?

**Sylvia:** Oh, that's okay.

**Austin:** I feel bad about this. Tell me again how you killed it, Cori?

**Sylvia:** I pulled it in half.

**Austin:** You pulled it in half.

**Sylvia:** I ripped it in half with two sickles.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Visible to everyone. Martyr's Love: "When an ally would be defeated, take a danger on their behalf instead. If you already have a danger, take both a danger and a burden. When it takes any kind of danger, it regains any lost weapons or ammo." So, as you begin to cut it in half, the other Secateur, using this ability that it has, Martyr's Love, exchanges places with it. They teleport. One of them, the one that was hugging Figure and was nice and safe, is now where the one you were about to kill is. The one that you were about to kill is up there now and, you know, Thisbe's up there with Mow, and Figure is up there. And you do do damage to this one, and you give this poor person a burden, so it does take Sliced. But this is what having two of these things in place is, is that they're there to take shots for one another. They're martyrs, first and foremost.

**Sylvia:** Are they both defenseless now, though?

**Austin:** They are both defenseless now, though, 100%.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Boom.

**Sylvia:** Very frustrated grunt from Cori.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Just like, really like high pitched, like, I'd be screaming into a pillow about this right now if I was in my bedroom pissed about it.

**Austin:** [sighs] Love it. Fantastic.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I have a new move that I'm realizing I should have used before. Too late now, [Austin: Oh.] but I want to put it on the table for everyone else, that like—

**Austin:** Now, wait a second. Why's it too late now?

**Keith:** Yeah, it wasn't just too late for Austin.

**Janine:** I mean...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's true.

**Janine:** Well, I was gonna prevent the impaling part.

**Austin:** Oh. I see.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Janine:** Not the swappy part.

**Austin:** Okay. Gotcha.

**Janine:** The part before the...several moves back.

**Keith:** Mm...



**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** So that feels too late to me.

**Keith:** I'll allow it. [quiet laughter]

**Austin:** That's not how it works. [Sylvia laughs]

**Janine:** Very gracious.

**Austin:** I will allow you to stop the swappy part, which would let Cori kill this thing, but...

**Janine:** Well, so, what I'm asking is... [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Do we want to swap— do we want to stop the swappy part, or do we want to take them both being fucked up?

**Austin:** Good question. Yeah, do you want to return it to where one of them is not defenseless but the other one is dead, or do you want two of them that are defenseless?

**Janine:** Yeah, that's my...I would love to hear the table's opinions.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Oh. Um...

**Janine:** Especially the people who are directly entangled with the things involved.  
[laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** I would love to know, like, how confident you feel, things like that.

**Dre:** I'm doing fine. One peril's nothing.

**Sylvia:** I'm also, like, okay.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I mean, you know, I'm— I got one risk and a peril. I'm not, like, unscathed or anything, but...

**Austin:** True.

**Sylvia:** You know. I think I can handle this, if you wanna hold onto things.

**Janine:** Okay, because I can also just not do it, you know?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Ali:** What's the move?

**Janine:** The move is Deny: "When you use magic to temporarily restrict the actions of another, roll Channel." But I don't want to— you know, that's a— new moves are fun to deploy in fun ways, and I don't want to just, like, [**Austin:** Yeah.] do it 'cause, you know?

**Austin:** That's fair.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Yeah. So, let's see here. Okay, so wait, who swapped? And they're both defenseless?

**Austin:** They're both defenseless. That's what you need to know here, is...

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, the one who did the big damage on Phrygian is— er. [sighs] The one who did the big damage on Figure is now fighting Cori, [Sylvia laughs quietly] and the one that Cori almost killed is now fighting Figure, and the one little group of Riddles, the

exosuits, is escorting the remaining infantry and human people who are in spacesuits—or they're not in spacesuits. They, in fact— that's what's taken them so long is they've had to get into spacesuits. This area has some sort of air generator running in it, and so they were just out there eating hot dogs and whatnot, but now they had to get in their exosuits and their spacesuits to run to the south, so that's where this last little group of small guys is going.

**Janine:** Okay. And Figure, how are you? You're impaled still, but the thing that was impaling you is gone? You're just, like, crunched up, or...?

**Austin:** Still Pierced. The piercing still happened.

**Janine:** Right. Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, no longer hugged. De-hugged.

**Janine:** Congrats. Okay.

**Dre:** Yay, unhugged.

**Janine:** Ugh. All right. I...ugh. I don't know. Yeah, I'm just gonna— I just wanna go in on one of these.

**Austin:** Yeah, that sounds good. You don't gotta be—

**Janine:** Just, like, with Mow's chainsaw arm thing. Just...

**Austin:** Yeah. Let's do it. Strike Decisively.

**Janine:** If we're getting nasty and tearing them up, let's go.

**Austin:** That's right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah!

**Austin:** 2d6 plus 2, Clash. Fuck 'em up. 12! Fucked up!

**Keith:** Damn.

**Sylvia:** Let's go!

**Austin:** What's it look like? Which one did you go after, the Figure one or the Cori one?

**Janine:** So, the thing that Cori described before about splitting one of them halfway in half. Did that not happen?

**Austin:** That— it went—

**Janine:** Or did that still happen?

**Austin:** It did not cut them all the way in half. It got sliced but was not— the cut wasn't deep enough to cut it in half all the way.

**Janine:** Okay. Um...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. And that's the one in the— that's this one here that I just moved around a little bit.

**Janine:** I mean...

**Austin:** You gonna finish the job?

**Janine:** I can just finish the job, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Boom. Done.

**Janine:** I kind of love the idea of, like, it's tangling with Cori, and then just, like, a chainsaw emerges through it, basically.

**Austin:** Through it from its back? Yeah, uh huh.

**Janine:** Yeah, with like...yeah. It's between Mow and Cori and just, like—

**Austin:** Mm, love it.

**Janine:** Machine chewing, shredded.

**Austin:** Incredible.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Toast.

**Austin:** Shredded toast. All right, Figure.

**Janine:** I feel like we're getting a little *Realis* creep in here. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** You know, a little bit. [Dre chuckles] People will learn and know. [Sylvia laughs] Figure, you want to try and end this one?

**Dre:** Yeah, sure. So, it's just— yeah, there's just this one left?

**Austin:** Just this one left, and then, again, the exosuits are getting away, basically.

**Dre:** Right. Yeah. Okay. Uh, am I striking decisively?

**Austin:** I believe you are, [Dre: Okay.] unless you're choosing not to do that for some reason.

**Dre:** No, come on.

**Austin:** 2d6 plus—

**Dre:** Clash or Talk, yeah.

**Austin:** Clash, yeah, uh huh. Unless you're trying to talk them down.

**Dre:** No. They hugged me weird.

**Austin:** [laughs] That's a 10.

**Dre:** There we go. That's better.

**Austin:** These are the W's. These are the rolls that you want to see. What do you do?

What are you using? What's it look like?

**Dre:** So, this isn't the one that hugged me, right?

**Austin:** It isn't. That one's already been cut in half.

**Dre:** Sure. What sort of weapons did you say are stuck in this thing?

**Austin:** They're just these little, like, spikes coming out of it, basically, that it can grab onto and turn into spears or daggers basically.

**Dre:** Oh, cool.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** So, what happens if I, like, pull one out?

**Austin:** Yeah. That's fun. [Dre laughs quietly] I don't— we about to find out, I suspect. [Dre laughs] Yeah, what do you do?

**Dre:** Yeah, I mean, basically I'm imagining either I'm pulling the spikes out and they turn into weapons and then I, you know, stab this thing with weapons—

**Austin:** I think they stay this bad thrumming— like, you pull it out, but it really just— I think it does break off in a way that, like, when they pull it out—

**Dre:** Yeah, so I was gonna say: or I just, like, snap them off, and then...

**Austin:** Yeah, I think it snaps off for you. It doesn't do the extended thing that it does for them.

**Dre:** Yeah. That's fine. There's still a sharp end that I can stab it back into the other mech with.

**Austin:** Yep, there sure is, and you do. And there is a yell from the pilot here, and then there's nothing. And you have this little base.

## The Last Group [1:30:57]

**Austin:** Everyone else has fled to the south. I'm gonna disappear this, because no one gave chase. I'm guessing no one's giving chase here. Uh, you know what? Maybe Midnite Matinee gives chase to it, and we're not gonna follow— you know, we won't—I'm not rolling those dice out, you know? But Midnite—

**Janine:** I mean, I was thinking about giving chase, once stuff was settled here, but—

**Austin:** Oh. Okay, well, stuff is settled, so if you want to give chase. Midnite and Popcorn are on the way and call back, and I think what they say is like:

(as **Midnite**): They got some sort of elevator! Hurry!

**Janine:** Great.

**Sylvia:** I'll go after.

**Austin:** All right. You run through this area, and the temperature changes as you get closer, and there's just, as you emerge into this big bright room, a pool of some of the clearest bluest water you've ever seen. It's sort of like a lake garden, right? It's like a huge— whole place is flooded, and it's convex, so like, you could step down into this lake, and the lake is deep, you know? Mow could stand in this lake. Mow could hot tub in this lake. You know what I mean? It's that deep.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Austin:** And there is, towards— like, not far in, because it's not— it's still shallow enough for people to be walking in, over to the right, something that looks like an elevator, or not an elevator, something that looks like a tube that has pierced through the ceiling of this room, and it has, like, a big elevator opening on it, and people are trying to rush towards it. What do you do? And again, it's as if something has, like, pierced a hole through the roof of this place, like some sort of evacuation tube.

**Sylvia:** Um...hmm. I could fly up there to block it, right?

**Austin:** You could. You fly. You fly now.

**Sylvia:** I do fly.

**Dre:** Ooh, fly now? [Austin chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Don't do that. Don't do that.

**Austin:** What are you doing? Tell me what you do.

**Sylvia:** Don't do that.

**Austin:** Are you gonna cut this thing?

**Sylvia:** Sorry, what was that?

**Austin:** Are you gonna try to cut it? Are you gonna try to— what are you gonna try to do?

**Sylvia:** Um...yeah, right? Because we just want this to stop moving.

**Austin:** Yeah, I guess so. Again, it's like a big metal tube, and they're getting into, like, a compartment that's opened up at the bottom of it is what they're doing, you know?

**Sylvia:** Hmm.

**Janine:** Can two things happen at once?

**Austin:** I love it when two things happen at once.

**Janine:** I kind of would love to communicate with that group at the same time and be like, "If you just stop and chill out, we're not gonna kill you. Just stop." You know, that kind of...

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Janine:** That's not how Thisbe would say it, but like—



**Austin:** Just chill out. [Dre laughs]

**Janine:** I don't think we have an intention of killing a bunch of scientists.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Janine:** [nervously] Right? Everyone?

**Sylvia:** [cagey] Totally. [Keith laughs]

**Janine:** Right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Austin:** Now, wait a second.

**Keith:** Hold on.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Now, wait a second, Cori.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm?

**Austin:** You are a sword; strike down our adversaries with impunity.

**Sylvia:** [awkwardly] This is kind of the thing. Um...

**Janine:** But if they agree—

**Sylvia:** I was maybe gonna kill them.

**Janine:** If they agree to not be adversaries for the moment.

**Austin:** Thisbe rules lawyering Devotion here.

**Janine:** Yeah, I was gonna say, "Adaire voice."

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

**Ali:** Where's that "aye aye, captain" energy for Thisbe? [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** Ooh. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Damn. That's a good fucking point.

**Austin:** I'll give it to you. Fuck it. This is more interesting than rolling dice.

**Sylvia:** That's a good fucking point!

**Austin:** They pause to hear you out, Thisbe, or at least some of them do. Uh, Cori, you could kill them all right now, no problem. [Janine laughs]

**Sylvia:** Hold on. I'm thinking. I'm thinking. Uh...

**Austin:** If you refuse or resolve it in a way that angers or disappoints the divine, reduce your Channel by 1 permanently. Actually, that's—

**Sylvia:** I flipped a coin, and I'm killing them. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** You're killing them! Fuck! [Ali laughs]

**Janine:** Okay!

**Austin:** No, no, no, no, no, no. No flipping coins. You shouldn't have said that!

**Sylvia:** I'm sorry.

**Austin:** You've gotta make a decision. What's Cori do? Because Cori doesn't flip a coin.

**Sylvia:** I mean, to be fair, I was also like, "Well, I don't know which is which."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And then it got on heads, and I was like, [Austin laughs] "Sure, that seems like kill."

**Keith:** Heads seems like kill. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** “When you break or lose faith in a tenet, your deity will ask something of you” is actually where we are, right? So, are you gonna do it or—

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** That’s what the cost would be. You wouldn’t immediately break the tenet.

**Sylvia:** If Devotion—

**Austin:** Kill them.

**Sylvia:** —is, like, actively...

**Austin:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, Devotion’s telling me to do it? I’m sorry, that is a stronger “aye aye, captain” now.

**Keith:** Big captain.

**Austin:** They stop for you, Thisbe.

**Sylvia:** Especially while I’m piloting this. Like, *especially* while I’m piloting this.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** Remember when you were like, “Oh, I have room for another bond for Cori now.” [Austin cackles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Ah!

**Sylvia:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** It feels like we’re there, right?

**Sylvia:** I do.

**Austin:** I think so.

**Sylvia:** We might be there.

**Austin:** I think this might be a bond. Well...

**Sylvia:** Oh, I have a really mean one.

**Janine:** Whoa! Okay. [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

**Sylvia:** That doesn't mean I'm gonna go with it, but listen. [Janine laughs]

**Ali:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Cori's...Cori's in her listening to Linkin Park era now.

**Austin:** Oh, sure.

**Janine:** Oh.

**Ali:** Ohh.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Like...

**Ali:** Cori, stay out of my CDs.

**Sylvia:** She's angsty.

**Austin:** [laughs] Cori discovering who Linkin Park is because she's gone through Brnine's CD tower. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** What the fuck is all this Steely Dan shit? [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Hell yeah. That's what Phrygian's into, Steely Dan. [Sylvia and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** That makes sense to me.

**Sylvia:** That makes perfect fucking sense! [laughs]

**Keith:** It makes sense, because Steely Dan rules and always has ruled.

**Sylvia:** It does make—

**Keith:** Yeah. Steely Dan rules.

**Sylvia:** Hey, out of character: Sylvi thinks Steely Dan rules.

**Austin:** The metal tube that seemed like an elevator begins to retract, and it is an arm. It is the arm of the Divine Consecration which punched down through the moon to try to save some of its people. The Divine Consecration is a humanoid divine. It is out of reach of you, at this point. It is not— it would have to continue to do this enough to give itself entry to this place. It used a lot of strength to try to save these people. It failed to do that. It is not happy about this. The Divine Consecration is the divine that has been building these mechs, not just the ones with the weird things, but the Divine Consecration is a sort of living forge divine. It has this big open wound on its chest, this gouge from which it can reach inside and produce a range of objects. It and its pilot [Dre: Oh.] which is a Sovereign Immunity, a different Sovereign Immunity than the one you used to work with, are— [crosstalk] it would have to be.

**Sylvia:** [crosstalk] It would have to be.

**Austin:** Are expert—

**Janine:** No one here worked with him in any way, directly.

**Austin:** You did.

**Janine:** I guess kind of. Like, barely ever, though.

**Austin:** Yeah, you did. You were on that final mission with Sovereign Immunity.

**Janine:** I guess. I guess.

**Austin:** You were on the fucking Icebreaker Prime with Sovereign Immunity.

**Janine:** Sure. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Austin:** You saw Valence die with Sovereign Immunity.

**Sylvia:** Sovereign Immunity is just...

**Janine:** Okay, yeah, that's correct.

**Sylvia:** Sovereign Immunity's just "that bald guy" in Thisbe's memory bank. [Austin and Janine laugh]

**Austin:** You did a defrag, and Sovereign Immunity just got knocked out. Maybe it's like—

**Janine:** Old man, question mark?

**Austin:** Well, yes, Sovereign Immunity is Sovereign Immunity, so I guess they go in the Sovereign Immunity pile. It is the divine—it is the thing that builds the most of the war machines that we see for Nideo here on Palisade. It is from the Blessed Armory of Consecration, and it has taken up shop on the exterior of this moon. Shouldn't be a problem for you for the rest of this, but it's out there. It's on this moon. So, I'm just letting you know it's out there. Otherwise, you are in this big weird pool where it's kind of a nice water garden, and simply being here gives you a degree of, I don't know, focus? There's a sort of, like, absolute feeling of confidence in one thing that you believe. I'd love for anyone who steps into this pool to deepen one of their hooks as you find that you truly physically, spiritually, emotionally find that you believe that you have a handle on the truth in a way that you didn't before. Feel free to pick the one that you want, you know?

**Sylvia:** Great timing. Great time for this for Cori.

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, I guess, actually, I'll give you this. You could loosen one instead, because you find that you think it's not true anymore. Yeah.

**Janine:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I feel like loosening the sword one right after she killed some

noncombatants is actually pretty narratively consistent.

**Austin:** Yeah. You feel like— you start to come down from the...uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's kind of interesting.

**Sylvia:** I like that. Give her some guilt over it.

**Janine:** I also like the idea of loosening one in the wake of that.

**Austin:** Yeah?

**Janine:** I also added a gravity clock with Cori.

**Austin:** Let's hear them all. I'm excited for both of these.

**Janine:** My draft gravity clock for Cori is: "If I am a gun, Cori is a grenade. If she is not stopped, she will self-destruct and take others with her."

**Austin:** Mm. Love it.

**Janine:** That's my draft. It's open to change based on what Sylvi writes, et cetera.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** The hook I'd like to loosen—

**Sylvia:** Uh, the one I—

**Janine:** Oh, go ahead, go ahead.

**Sylvia:** Oh, sorry. Well, I was just gonna say the draft I have for one right now is "Thisbe doesn't have the stomach for command."

**Janine:** [laughs] Yeah, I mean, yes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Thisbe would agree with you.

**Sylvia:** I mean, yeah.

**Austin:** Thisbe doesn't have a stomach. Thisbe's a robot.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Yep. Also no lungs.

**Austin:** Right, yep, mm-hmm.

**Janine:** The hook that I'd like to loosen based on what just happened, I think, is "My presence is a liability to my operants." [Austin laughs] Because Thisbe has realized there are other liabilities. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And she's maybe not [Sylvia laughs] on the map in that way as much as she used to be.

**Austin:** Yeah. All right. Give that a one to start with, a plus one. That's a good clock. Those are fun clocks. And then, because we don't talk about this that often, I just briefly want to say: what does it mean for a hook to be loose or deep. A loose hook— one second here. Here we go. Deep hooks cannot be rewritten, forcibly or otherwise. Loose hooks, on the other hand, can be rewritten whenever you feel like it. If a loose hook is deepened, it returns to normal, and vice versa. So in this case, now, you can...generally, hooks can only be altered when you're prompted to do so, so like, a downtime scene might say "rewrite a hook," da-da-da-da-da. Biting the Dust or acting in desperation or confidence and then succeeding on desperation or failing on confidence, like the opposite, lets you rewrite stuff. Deep hooks can't be rewritten, but they can obviously be loosened, as just happened for you, Cori. And then, Thisbe, now that that's loose, you can rewrite that whenever you would like to, so keep that in mind. If something else happens that makes you go, "Hey, I want to rewrite this hook," you can do that. Figure, did you adjust any of your hooks?



**Dre:** Ooh. Um...let's see.

**Austin:** You can make it looser or deeper.

**Dre:** Yeah. I want to deepen my hook of "I've lived two lies. I'd happily die for the truth."

**Austin:** Ooh, that's very good. And then I should note this: when you take action that requires you to sacrifice, outgrow, or otherwise conclude one of your hooks, cross that hook off permanently. You may then immediately take an advancement and act with confidence if the hook was deep. So, for instance, Thisbe, if you decide, "Actually, I'm done with this," not this moment necessarily, but in the future, "I don't want to even rewrite it. I just want to be— I think that this arc of my character has been answered," you could cross that out and get an advancement, and if it was a deep one that you're doing, you could also act with confidence immediately. So, very fun. Cori I don't think you can do that, because they're not hooks, they're tenets, you know?

**Sylvia:** No. Yeah.

**Austin:** But Figure, you could. So, if you, like, commit to that in a big dramatic way, Figure, you know, you would be able to act with confidence and get an advancement all at once on that, so that's fun. All right. And again, I'm gonna give you a little bit here, which is this is clearly...I mean, you've already taken some divine inspiration from being in this place. This is some sort of watery, like...I guess it's kind of like a monument or a sort of— it's sort of like a water grave? You know, they talk about going to a watery grave? Well, this is one. This is for the Divine Souciance, who has clarified something for you.

Deep at the bottom of this, there is a long humanoid divine body with its hands on its chest holding a sword. You know, like, picture a classic, like, medieval sarcophagus, you know? With like a king holding a sword on his chest. You know what I'm talking about? Picture that but a divine at the bottom of this lake. It's sort of like, again, like a lake garden or a water garden, basically, with, you know, kind of some trees and stuff around the edges but then also just a lot of, like, water lilies and lotuses, and there are frogs jumping around in here, you know? And there are fish in this water,

and at the bottom of it is the corpse—question mark? there aren't supposed to be corpses of divines—of a divine. So, welcome to the Garden of Souciance.

## **Stellar Combustor [1:45:20]**

**Austin:** Let's hop over, before we wrap up for the night, back to the sun, the sun where things are hot. Less hot now, for you. I mean, they're still hot, but they're not, you know.

**Keith:** We're not dying imminently.

**Austin:** You are not dying— I mean, I fucking hope not. As Janine said in the chat, "Imagine all this happens and then the sun explodes."

**Keith:** [laughs] It could.

**Austin:** It could happen.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** It's on the table.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I think that we know where we are now, right? Which is y'all gotta figure out a way in. Right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I'm gonna put you up here. You're on the— er, sorry, up here, the innermost one of these, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The darkest of these three rings. [sighs] What's this process look like?

**Ali:** Phrygian being outside makes it easier, I bet?

**Austin:** Maybe, but Phrygian is also not in looking at, you know, scanning tools.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** Well... [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Does not have telescopes, you know?

**Ali:** Mm.

**Keith:** That's true, but there might be a little something. I have— we talked about the Morphic Aura move.

**Austin:** We did, uh huh. You used it.

**Keith:** Which gives me— I take on the qualities of something that I'm touching until the end of the scene.

**Austin:** Yep, mm-hmm. You've done this.

**Keith:** I take advantage in using this adaptation to my benefit. Maybe being made of [Austin: Uh huh?] the material of the thing helps me figure out what's on the inside of the thing.

**Austin:** No. Come on.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm. [laughs]

**Austin:** No. That's just not true in any way.

**Keith:** I don't know. There's technology in those walls. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Draw me your ribs. You couldn't.

**Janine:** If you were made out of cake, would you know what the frosting at the center of a different cake was?

**Austin:** We don't have to do that. I don't— we're made of flesh and blood and bones,

and we don't know what's going on in there. [Ali and Janine laugh quietly] It turns out that's a problem for us almost all the time.

**Keith:** That's true, but Phrygian is constantly changing shape—

**Austin:** That's true.

**Keith:** —and willing their body into different modes and looking different ways and being composed of different things.

**Austin:** This is a stretch beyond. We are— I have to pay you for giving me this stretching advice. This is... [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** I don't know. I think this is totally normal. I think it's not a stretch. It's fine.

**Austin:** How are you trying to find a way into this thing that is built to make sure that there are not safe ways in?

**Keith:** Uh, well, we're looking for— we're actively looking for a vent or a greeble or a, you know...

**Austin:** The thing about a greeble is a greeble is, like, a nonspecific thing.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You gotta find a specific thing.

**Keith:** Well, a vent is the specific. Greeble is the nonspecific, so I'm giving you one of each.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Uh huh.

**Ali:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** You know, like, I don't know what...I don't know what is on the ship. There's gotta be a vent. There's gotta be sewage, maybe. There's maybe trash. There's maybe...

**Austin:** You think they're ejecting the trash into...into something from the inner ring where everything is controlled?

**Keith:** It happens. I've seen *Star Wars*.

**Austin:** Okay. You don't think that they're transferring that through the daily transfer of stuff between the things to the outer ring where they have the most security?

**Keith:** Uh, I mean, that's totally possible.

**Austin:** It is. I'm not saying there aren't any holes on this thing, but like—

**Keith:** I'm just giving examples of holes that I might find. That's the best I can do, 'cause I've not been here. [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** Yeah, I gotcha. This sounds like a roll to me.

**Ali:** This could be another Read the Room split.

**Austin:** Yeah, it sure could. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** What was the last Read the Room rolled with?

**Ali:** When we were trying to scope out the divine thingy?

**Keith:** Right. What was— was that Sense?

**Ali:** Um, I think so. Let me see what it says. Read the Room is plus Sense, yeah.

**Keith:** Would you like to Read the Room, and if needed, I can assist you? We have the same Sense, but you're on the sensors.

**Ali:** Right, yeah, and I think part— like, when we discussed what we would be doing at this moment, it would be— it was to, like, take the time to look into this thing, so.

**Keith:** Right, to find, like, a good spot.

**Ali:** Yeah, uh huh. So, I am going to Read the Room. Uh...

**Austin:** Plus Sense, 2d6 plus—

**Ali:** 2d6 plus 1, right?

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** And then I'm just gonna look at my moves one more time [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] to see if there's stuff that I can do.

**Austin:** Is this a place where you want to give confidence, perhaps, Phrygian? Using b-plot?

**Keith:** Oh, can I do that too? Oh, I can do that. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I forgot that—

**Austin:** Mm-hmm, you have b-plot. You can give confidence.

**Keith:** There's some stuff that only Ali has because of b-plot.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Not that.

**Austin:** Not that basic b-plot stuff.

**Keith:** Not the very basic b-plot.

**Austin:** You can give confidence to another player on their next move but complicate things for yourself, remember.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Deny an actor from appearing during the sortie; they're busy, possibly with the same thing as you. Spend time to frame a downtime scene. Wow, would I want to know how you pull that off here. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Maybe once you're inside, you know? Or cut away from the sortie during a moment where time is precious, giving everyone time to think or room to think.

**Keith:** Yeah. And that's not mechanical, that is just literal.

**Austin:** Yes, that is literal, yeah. That is like, "Oh my god, let's get Austin to stop hurting these people for a few minutes so they can come up with a plan."

**Keith:** Right. Yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Um, complicate things for myself. It's pretty complicated for me out there right now.

**Austin:** It's pretty complicated for yourself, so maybe not, but I want to make sure you have the option.

**Keith:** Yeah, and you know what would be really bad, if something that complicated something for me [Austin laughs] made the inside of the ship an oven again. It would be bad.

**Austin:** It would be bad. It would be bad! Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** So I'm willing to not confidence, which is, by the way, that's 1s to 6s.

**Austin:** That's 1s to 6s.

**Keith:** Which is worse, I think, than...

**Austin:** 3d6?

**Keith:** Yeah, 3d6, take the top two. So...

**Ali:** Um...yeah. I could use Asepsis here.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You sure could.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** You could also, you know, use that one hold to get another question, even if you blow it.

**Austin:** That's true.

**Ali:** Oh, sure.

**Austin:** Yep. You will be rolling with disadvantage.

**Ali:** Okay. So that's...

**Austin:** Just saying, this is just how— it is hard to find the thing you're looking for.

**Keith:** Okay, I'll give confidence. [sighs]

**Ali:** Okay.

**Keith:** I'll do it. It didn't seem worth it before, [Ali laughs] but now with disadvantage, it does seem worth it. I will complicate things for myself.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Even— that's even on a success.

**Austin:** You will complicate things for yourself.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's even on a success. It will get complicated for you.

**Keith:** Okay.



**Ali:** You could not do that and then do an assist afterwards, but I feel like that's gamey.

**Keith:** I was kind of setting up to be able to do both.

**Ali:** Oh, sure.

**Keith:** Because this I can't decide to do after, right?

**Ali:** And disadvantage is what? Is that...

**Austin:** 3d6, take lowest.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, you can't decide to do this after.

**Keith:** Right.

**Ali:** 3d6 taking the lowest two, but I still get my plus 1 from Sense. Okay.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Ali:** Cool. That's fine.

**Austin:** And 1s would be great for you here because of this confidence thing.

**Ali:** Oh, right, right. Okay, yeah. 3d6 plus 1.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. 6, 7. You got a 7 here. You take lowest. No 1s, unfortunately. You rolled a 5, a 3, and a 3. You discard the 5 because of your disadvantage, so 3 plus 3 plus 1 is 7. So, you get to ask one question. Let's deal with that, and then we'll talk about the Phrygian complication.

**Ali:** Where can I find X? [laughs]

**Austin:** Looking for a way in. Looking for a way in.

**Ali:** I'm looking for a way in.

**Austin:** Yeah. I think that you can find it towards the, uh...you know, you find it, like, off on one of the— all right, I'm gonna talk about what the four quadrants of the ring are, right? I think it's just time to say that.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** I've already kind of talked about what it is, but there are four quadrants of each of these rings, like explicitly, right? So, for this inner ring, there is a place that is extracting the heat, that is pulling the heat in from the sun. That's a hole. It's so hot! [Ali laughs quietly] Flames on the side of my face.

**Ali:** Uh huh. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** You will not make it through there, probably. That will probably kill you. The second— so, one is extractor. Two is battery. There is a big section of it that is effectively the battery that holds the charge from the sun, builds it up to such a degree that it can help expand the explosive nature of this sun. The third area is the engineering area where there is a...the people who, like, run the machines and stuff are. Presumably, that's also where, like, the bomb part, the fuse is there, you know? The button is not there, because the button is on the Stargrave, but the mechanisms are in there. But obviously, if you broke the extractor or you— I mean, the extractor wouldn't be enough to stop the sun from exploding. The battery wouldn't be enough to stop the sun from exploding, but it would be enough to stop it from— destroying the battery would be enough to stop it from taking all those other star systems, for instance.

And the fourth of the four quadrants is the transfer quadrant, and that is where it sends the trash and other waste back out to the other place. So that means there are doors there, at least, right? Those doors could be pried open. Whether those doors could be pried open safely without setting off an alarm, good question, right? But there are the sort of, like, when it lines up, it runs hoses from one of these things to the other, right? So there's, like, the big airlock, but there's also hoses and stuff that have to run through, you know, from one to the other, and one of those, one of the places that that connects, you could probably get into, you know? If you could force it open. Any of the

vents— and I'll give you also there's a vent. That vent is going to be venting the heat that it's taken on from the sun, and so that's also going to be very hot to the point of maybe being too deadly for Routine and for Brnine, who can't become made of the stuff that the ship is made of or that the station is made of. But the waste tube, if you could open the access panel to the waste tube, you can get in through there.

The bad news is that's on four, that's on the transfer block, which is not where you're trying to be. You're trying to be on three or one or two, one of the places that has to do with the thing working, right? Four is also the place where there's most likely going to be people around, because it's towards the transfer zone, so once you're inside, you're gonna have to be careful, but that's your way in. Phrygian, it's gonna stop soon. You're made of the stuff that the station is, but the station does also get to vent heat, [Keith: Yeah.] and you don't have a vent.

**Keith:** Mm, I got a couple vents.

**Austin:** So— okay, well, you're gonna need to use 'em. [Ali laughs] And doing that would be— you know, you're going to— I think part of you catches fire briefly.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know? There's only but so long you can hold out. We are at the point now of you have to get inside or else you're going to burn up.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Which would be bad, because you took that move that lets you get wins, that lets you get successes.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And if you died before that happens, that would suck.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So.

**Keith:** Well, it might be time to use one of those.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** To do one of the two extremely difficult versions of...

**Austin:** Yeah. And it is very difficult, because if you're using— I mean, I guess there's two things, right? There's try to go in through the extractor or the vent, which is **[Keith: Yeah.]** so deadly for anyone. The vent— or the extractor might even be deadly for you, as this stuff, you know? But the vent would be really tough for Brnine and Routine. Or you go through the sewage tube hole, if you can open it safely, and that one's gonna be tough too, because that's near where the transfer unit is, and so there's, you know, people might see you. There's definitely cameras over this whole thing, but that's close to where a response could be issued, you know?

## **Phrygian's Move [1:57:57]**

**Austin:** So, what do you do? What's using one of these look like, if it's time to use one of them?

**Keith:** [sighs] Um...well, the thing that we worked out on this move, because...

**Austin:** Yeah. [Keith laughs quietly] Because, as you said about Phrygian.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Phrygian ain't looking forward to anything anyway.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah, as exemplified by Brnine's attempt, Phrygian is, like, not...you know, is not dreaming in that way. Is dreaming of...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Elppas. [laughs] What was—? Yeah.

**Austin:** Is dreaming of elppas. What did we say?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** It's apples in reverse, so whatever that is.

**Keith:** But Phrygian has been holding one thing back for almost the entire time that they've been in Principality space, which is transforming into something, you know, becoming something truly, like, complete for them.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** It's always the—

**Austin:** A form that they would like to be.

**Keith:** Yes. It's always either the war form or the, like, diplomat form.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** You know.

**Austin:** Or a room. Sometimes you get to be a room.

**Keith:** Sometimes I get to be a room, but that is, like...

**Austin:** But that's...maybe that's an extension of the diplomat room.

**Keith:** Right, this is, like, a...that is a piece. That's a piece.

**Austin:** You get to be a room that makes sense to the— yeah, but that's a room that makes sense to the people on board your ship, right?

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Austin:** You don't get to be a broken room. You don't get to be the Winchester House or whatever, right? You get to be a room that people sit in and have conversations in.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah.

**Austin:** Not a room where the walls are, like, made of salami, you know?

**Keith:** Right. So, that is my move. I get three transformations that are not quite exactly right.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. They're three things you would like to be one day.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And not necessarily built for the problem at hand, except here we are again, a Branched gets to turn into a form that would fulfill them in any other circumstance, but now you gotta problem solve with it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Instead of just get to be it. So, which of your unfulfilled Branched forms are we instrumentalizing right now, so that you don't have to roll with desperation and disadvantage to find entry into this ring?

**Keith:** That's a great question. Um...

**Austin:** Did you pre-script these, or are you...?

**Keith:** No, I did not pre-script them. I thought about pre-scripting them, but I've never pre-scripted them before.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** And I usually like where they end up, so I figured [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] that we would do it the usual way. But what I was thinking about was, with— [laughs quietly] with two people inside me, is the sort of famous, like, image— not literally image, but— I don't even remember his name, which I think is part of it, but the moment when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin are on the surface of the moon, and there's the guy that's floating in orbit above the moon is, like, the furthest away from people that anyone's ever been.

**Austin:** That's fucked up.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Hate that. Sure.

**Keith:** No one has ever been further from another human than in that moment.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** So, it's sort of like the galactic version of this. It's sort of like the Guinness Book of World Records across all of space version of the deepest darkest coldest space that you can find.

**Austin:** Right. The version of this that's not touched by any thermal energy, the space in between [**Keith:** Right.] galaxies, furthest away from light or heat.

**Keith:** Yes. Yes.

**Austin:** You become that and sustain it against the sun for as long as you need to in order for Brnine to open the door and get inside.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Cool. Yeah, that's a 10. You got a 10. Wow. You don't have to roll it, [**Keith:** Right.] because that's how this works. Two more.

**Keith:** Two more.

**Austin:** You can do that two more times, and then...that's it.

**Keith:** I don't know if Phrygian knows that they're doing something. Like, I don't know if...

**Austin:** No. I'm curious, right? Because you don't do this normally.

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** But maybe this first—

**Keith:** Like, this could feel like I'm expending something.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like I'm using something early.

**Austin:** That's my question, right?

**Keith:** I don't know.

**Austin:** You're digging a little deeper. You're— I think Routine is like— so yeah, you do this. Routine and, uh...Brnine. Why am I so tired?

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** You know, move the ship into place, like, surrounded by you in such a way that's like—

**Keith:** Do I have to convince—? I mean, not literally.

**Austin:** Yeah, I don't know.

**Keith:** Like, Ali, does Brnine feel like, "No, we can't or shouldn't do this. This is beyond what you're capable of. This is too dangerous"?

**Ali:** In terms of...

**Keith:** Going and driving the ship through the exhaust for the gasses of the sun? Like, am I able to— is it easy to be convinced that I can shield the ship from that?

**Ali:** Yeah, I think Brnine is sort of in it, right? And like, if you've already gone outside...

**Keith:** In it to be in it.

**Ali:** Yeah. This is all hands on deck.



**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I think it feels slightly cold, even.

**Austin:** Yeah. Well, like, and it feels...part of that story is about the distance, right?

**Keith:** Yeah. It's the immense—

**Austin:** And I get that it's, like—

**Keith:** It is a metaphor for—

**Austin:** It's a metaphor, but like...

**Keith:** For loneliness, really.

**Austin:** Yeah. Like, this is a tiny little ship with two people on it and one person around it, and you actually do all feel very distant from each other. There's just, like, if we were shooting this for real, there would be the slow shot of this ship, like, moving through the exhaust of the sun into the station in, you know, the intake valve or the intake slot, just slowly moving through this thing that would incinerate anything else. Quiet, not talky. Everyone's just silent, and then finally, you land inside, where the heat is being, like, siphoned into tubes and containers and is being processed. Like, live sun energy is being processed into something else, just in this one little room, right? And I think maybe, at this point, you know, you're able to get out of this thing and climb up onto some sort of, like, behind some blast shielding and, you know, you get inside enough to where you can, you know, breathe easily, and you can turn back into a different form, Phrygian. The coldness and loneliness stays for a moment, and then there's just the sense of how big the thing you are on is. This ring is bigger than Palisade is around, you know?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And, you know.

**Keith:** It's bigger than the sun.

**Austin:** It's bigger than the sun! And so you're like, "Okay, I guess we gotta go somewhere," and there's like, there's a tram system that runs across this whole thing, you know? It's massive. It's...the amount of work that went into building this is ridiculous, you know? It's bigger around than the Diadem is, the thing that we started the season in, saying "what a ridiculous invention this is." This is bigger than that, and there's three of them.

**Keith:** And it's for a much stupider purpose.

**Austin:** Way worse. At least that— and that was terrible, but at least that was about, like, "People could live in this stupid way," and this is, "What if we built a thing that could kill trillions of people, [crosstalk] and then put some people there to work?"

**Keith:** [crosstalk] Yeah. People do live in this place, but. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** They do. They 100% do. And maybe here's where we can wrap up for now, is we get the sight of some of them, and you know, maybe a tram is coming towards the nearest tram stop and the camera goes there. You don't see this necessarily yourself, but the people who work here at this furthest most inner ring are directly totally wired up with cybernetics to cool them constantly. They have coolant built into them. And in some cases it's the opposite, which is there are Equiaxed on board this ship, who we haven't seen in a long time. As a reminder, Leap, Exanceaster— nope. [laughs quietly] Not Exanceaster Leap.

**Keith:** Nope. Yep.

**Austin:** Exeter Leap. Same city. [Ali laughs] Exeter Leap is an Equiaxed. These are the Columnar who have human or organic body parts, and even the cyborgs are built with Equiaxed technology, right? This is a classic the empire, you know, taking shit from the group it's marginalizing for their own uses. These people have a combination of biological and robotic things and are...you know, there's a degree to which to live here is to die here. You might not die from the explosion of the sun. You probably won't. Most people who work here die alone in their sleep at 48 or whatever—a very stressful job—but they're here forever. They get modified to work here. That's a one-way

process. It changes their body chemistry and their cooling, the way that their bodies are cooled. They can't live away from here. They would freeze to death. So, it remains very hot here. I want both of you to take a risk simply by being here.

**Keith:** Too hot.

**Austin:** And that risk is Feverish. Yeah, too hot.

[["The Stellar Combustor"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]