

PARTIZAN 02: Obelle, On Fire

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AUSTIN (as K.O. Rooke): So two weeks ago, we were contacted by a client who requested a VIP retrieval from a territory controlled by one of the five Stels. The client specifically requested that the VIP retrieval was to be done by an independent squad with no Stel affiliation.

[Jack de Quidt's [TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#) begins playing.]

AUSTIN (as K.O. Rooke): *[cont'd]* So we assigned the Oxblood Clan. I believe that you are acquainted. But, the Oxbloods can't do this alone, especially because the new pickup point is a little more hostile. House Bittenbach was supposed to support the Oxblood Clan, unfortunately they are no longer able to complete the mission. You are the only people in my book close enough to offer the Oxblood Clan support.

—

DRE (as Valence): How much do you know about what happened with Bittenbach?

AUSTIN (as Anchor Afton): I heard their machines were sabotaged. Which, honestly, fuck 'em, but it isn't auspicious for us or this mission. It means there was more at work here than what K.O. told us.

—

DRE: We could also like, do this in reverse? Like I know that like, the bonus objective is to destroy the mechs at Point Dory?

AUSTIN: It's true.

DRE: But like, if we destroy those first and then that draws, y'know, the rest of the troops away from Barnacle and Carp...

AUSTIN: That's true. Okay so yeah, so then Mow, so Thisbe's at the back of Mow on this, on this saddle type thing, Valence and Broun, you're in the gutted cockpit and are carried across, the hatchback opens, you, y'all can hop out and get to work if you want to. Also I should note like, I guess there are people yelling, but they can't see because of the explosion that they can't really hear each other, some people are like mumbling? It is a scary thing that you have done, to be clear! Y'know, the sun opened up for a moment in that base and then closed, y'know?

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Like, everyone is just shook.

DRE (as Valence): Do you all— okay. Do you all wanna like, go put these things on the mechs, and I'll go see whatever this extra... tarp is?

ALI (as Broun): Yeah, you don't think it's dangerous?

DRE (as Valence): No, I mean, it is, that's why I wanna go see what it is.

*[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]*

ALI (as Broun): I mean, do you feel in danger doing that alone?

DRE (as Valence): It'll be fine.

ALI (as Broun): Alright.

[Jack de Quidt's [TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#) ends.]

**[02:50]**

AUSTIN: Yeah, you pull back the crate— you pull back the tarp, and underneath is a crate filled with cigarettes. And under the next one is like a crate filled with whiskey. And you hear the lights, those like, ka-clunk, and the lights in here turn on. And an Apostolosian in a military outfit comes in—

AUSTIN (as the Apostolosian): Ah, come on. We can make a deal, right?

DRE (as Valence): Yeah, there's always space for a deal.

AUSTIN (as the Apostolosian): Oh, you're someone I can work with! My name is Tes'ili. You can call me Tes.

DRE (as Valence): So what is all this, Tes?

AUSTIN (as Tes): You don't need to worry about it. I mean— the one thing I can say is, you can take anything here you want, it's yours. But I need you to... I need you to leave. Whatever you're being paid, I'll double it. But I need you to leave. And we could do some work afterwards, we move things, all across Partizan!

DRE (as Valence): Hm.

AUSTIN (as Tes); But if you make a mess here, people are gonna come look. And if people come look, we gotta move all this stuff out of here.

DRE: [*scoffs*] Are they not aware of the mess that's happening already? [*laughs*]

AUSTIN: Well, that's why, this is why they're saying like, you gotta leave, stop doing whatever you're doing, y'know?

DRE: Hm. I mean, that was the plan for us to leave anyway, so?

AUSTIN: They are asking you to not— I mean, I guess I'll say, they will straight up say like— "Whatever your operation is here, call it quits."

DRE: Ah, okay. So they don't just want us to leave this place they want us to stop— okay.

AUSTIN: [*cross*] No they want you— they don't want you to hit Barnacle or Carp, right?

DRE: Gotcha, okay. Oh, that's tough, because we have a, a reputation to maintain?

AUSTIN: It is, what's your reputation again?

DRE: Um, what is our reputation, isn't it like daring or something?

AUSTIN: It's *daring*. Which I think you've been pretty fucking daring so far!

DRE: Yeah! [*laughs*]

AUSTIN: By the way.

DRE: And there's nothing daring about us seemingly having them over the barrel and being like mm, you're right, let's be friends.

AUSTIN: [*laughs*] Let's be friends instead with these smugglers, yeah.

DRE: Yeah. Um...

DRE (as Valence): I think the best deal is probably for *you* to leave.

AUSTIN (as Tes): [*sighs*] It's so much work! You need to understand— a situation like this, so far from the front, we've set up a nice base here. The people in Obelle, they, they benefit! We bring them things that they couldn't get otherwise. We have a nice... a nice uh. Y'know. A point of departure here. Everything moves through Obelle. You gonna ruin all that for these people?

DRE: Okay, I don't trust this person.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: And I feel like at this point I'm trying to figure out like, are they trying to stall for time, like, is there somebody else coming in through like, another door to like, take a shot at me or something?

AUSTIN: Sure. Um... That seems like you know, a Survey or a Study.

DRE: Yeah. I mean I guess they're both kinda the same for me.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* I mean— yeah, totally. Yeah. But again I actually, this is— yeah, I guess, you can make this roll, this is controlled, controlled great.

DRE: But I think this is Survey.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: 'cause I think it is like, okay, what is this guy trying to get out of this...

AUSTIN: Predict outcomes, yeah, for sure. Yeah. So, 2d6? That is a five, so that is a... a five on a controlled— and what are you trying to get here again, just like information— just, kind of like, know if they're bullshitting you?

DRE: Yeah, and then also like to make sure that like, you know, I'm not just like sitting here while somebody like sneaks up behind me or...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah. You make maneuvers such that your back is to a wall safely, and you... the thing that happens is they... they end up talking you in circles a little bit here and burn some time off the clock, that is the consequence for getting a five, a mixed success, but you're not only safe, you're pretty certain, you can, you can hear the troops outside getting up and beginning to march? You're completely in control of this situation, and Tes'ili, Tes'ili Serikos is being completely honest with you. Like, this is, they are not hiding something from you, there is no one about to come around a corner with a gun. You judge them, both just generally, but also like, you get the sense that you've caught someone with, y'know, with their pants down, but not like, someone who's gonna try to like get one over on you here. Outside of just general, y'know, smuggler getting one over on someone!

DRE: Right, yeah. Um... okay.

AUSTIN: I will say, this is like, pretty straightforward in terms of like, the offer is on the table.

DRE: Yeah, and I mean, I'm saying no.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, okay.

DRE: I'm trying to see if there's anything else I can get out of this?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Like, um... like there's, I'm wondering if there's a way that I can basically like lie to this person to like— ah, yeah let's, okay. Well we're supposed to be going to point Z, so you know, if you just send your folks there, then...

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: But I think there's— like, again, I think this is an interesting character moment for Valence because they're not the person to say like, hm, you're right, I'll leave, when they've got somebody over the barrel.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: But they're also not gonna like, just rub their nose in it.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yeah. Yeah.

DRE: So I think they just, they just kind of like, you know, Tes is talking and Valence just waves their hand and is like—

DRE (as Valence): Okay. This is, this is enough. You should just go. Just leave. We're not taking the deal. Just get out of here.

AUSTIN (as Tes): Fine. I— I'll remember you. You know what? This is not the last time that you will hear from Tes'ili Serikos, and the Red Fennecs.

AUSTIN: Closes their eyes as like, you didn't know the name of our squad until then. Great. Good. Okay. And backs away out the door and is like— "Ohh you took my Troops also! Okay."

DRE: *[laughs]* And I think Valence gets on like, the comm and says like "There's a lot of stuff we could steal in here."

AUSTIN: *[laughs, sighs]* There is. Yeah. So the three Troops are on their way to Point, to Point Barnacle. At this point like, you're, Mow is here and uh... y'know, the both, both Thisbe and

Broun are able to like, do whatever you wanna do here. I guess we didn't— Is the Hippocampus here or is the Hippocampus also across the river still?

DRE: I think probably also across the river.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay. So what is the next action here as, as Valence notes that there's a lot to steal?

DRE: Um... yeah, I guess do we just wanna go, or do we wanna try and grab some of this stuff as well?

AUSTIN: Yeah, what's our best method for doing that right now?

DRE: Like, is there like, a forklift or anything in here?

AUSTIN: Probably, it's a warehouse, yeah. But I don't know, what— are you gonna drive that all the way up and around the bridge, are you... you gonna drive it out for Mow to carry?

DRE: Ye— hmm.

ALI: Can Mow carry it, or can we get like, is there like a... *[laughs]* like a helicopter situation where we just do it that way?

AUSTIN: I— there is not a helicopter, they had these three Troops and some like—

ALI: *[cross]* Fair, yeah...

AUSTIN: Guns and that is it.

DRE: Is there any sort of like, 'cause I don't think my, my vehicle doesn't have some kind of like, y'know, I push a button and it shows up for me.

AUSTIN: Uh, it does not have remote vehicle control. You could declare another remote vehicle control, but that would be permanently in your vehicle.

DRE: Yeah, no. Um... Yeah, I think we probably just have to end up leaving this stuff.

AUSTIN: I guess it wouldn't be permanent, because that would be a pilot gear thing that you could have set up beforehand. You could have been like, and then I'll call in my vehicle. But it's up to you. Or again yeah, Mow could grab it. I'd say like, you could grab one load of, of... like, contra— excuse me, contraband that would equal out to be an extra supply point at the end of this mission? Like an extra reward, basically?

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: But that's— Thisbe, is that a thing Mow can do? Mow can just grab stuff, right?

JANINE: I mean, I have described Mow as quadrupedal? So.

AUSTIN: Hm, true.

JANINE: Define grab.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: We can strap things to Mow, or put things in that hollowed out compartment for sure.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Maybe do like one armload of stuff, but I imagine he'd be a little slower for it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. I'm, I'd rather just give this to you though, I'd rather get off the boat and be like yeah, you've confronted this person, you can steal from— for me, the more interesting thing is do you steal from this smuggler?

ALI: Absolutely!

AUSTIN: Okay, well then— *[ALI laughs]* You get one, one— grab some shit, y'know! Grab some shit and I'm immediately going to mark you at negative one for them going forward.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: At this point, soldiers are starting to get their wits about them again, and with the Troops having left, they are starting to turn and look at you? Or like, look for you. What do y'all do? Also at this point it's been enough time that I'm just marking up Albacore another point.

DRE: Sure, yeah.

AUSTIN: The Albacore clock to two.

DRE: I mean att his point we should probably just book it to Carp.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. Give me a... Thisbe. You still have to pilot Mow, right? So at this point, getting out of Point Dory as people are now like, trying to attack you is going to be, you'll have to make some sort of action here to get out. What are you— what do you do? Are you... like. You just tell me what you do to get out of here.

JANINE: Is everyone like, loaded up and?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, I'm not gonna make people roll to get loaded up. It's not the interesting bit here. What's interesting to me is like, you're loaded up, the camera is showing you like, looking for a way out, y'know?

JANINE: And we're going to Point Carp, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: I think the... most logical thing to do is kind of follow the shore?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Where there's the sort of bare strip between the buildings and the shore.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Get some cover.

JANINE: Because that gives like a straight sort of, that gives like a straight shot with, with cover sort of on both sides, so there's only really one direction people can come from, mostly. And then cross the river and go to Carp from there.

AUSTIN: That sounds like Maneuver to me. *[reading]* "You move your vehicle with skill and agility."

JANINE: I don't have anything in that!

AUSTIN: You don't, which— which is not good! You—

JANINE: I'm going to push myself.

AUSTIN: So, so, when you push yourself—

JANINE: *[cross]* Or can I, right, it's a vehicle though, so I use a quirk?



AUSTIN: *[cross]* It's a vehicle. So you spend a quirk to push yourself, yes. And explain how the quirk does that. So I'll read again, from the book really quick just so that we, y'know, know what the hell that means. *[reading]* "Quirks are unique qualities that a vehicle possesses that a pilot familiar with it can use to their advantage. However, these quirks are not wholly positive and if all of them are applied without maintenance, the vehicle suffers a breakdown." So you never wanna, likewise, the same way that you could suffer a scar if you burn through all of your stress, your vehicle will suffer a breakdown if you burn through all of your quirks. The, and breakdowns will add up, et cetera. Um... using quirks. *[reading]* "A pilot can push their vehicle by exhausting a quirk for each of the following benefits. 1d for vehicle action, improved effect with vehicle action, or to take a vehicle action when that vehicle has level three damage." So, what would you like to push, or what would you like to, to emphasize here?

JANINE: Um, I would like to emphasize Mow's intimidating bulk?

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Okay! Sounds good! Mark that, so take plus 1d from that. Uh, does anyone wanna aid here? So now Janine is rolling one dice to escape Point Dory. It's controlled, for what it's worth, but.

DRE: *[cross]* Um— Yeah, I'll aid.

AUSTIN: Okay, how are you aiding? And aiding is always stress. It's not quirks, obviously, you're not spending a quirk from your vehicle across the river on this.

**[15:00]**

DRE: Right, yeah. Um... I wonder if I have like... I'm trying to like look through, because basically almost what I'm imagining is like, the equivalent of me being up in like the crow's nest with like, binoculars being like okay, well go this way! 'Cause there's like some weird thing stuck in the river when you go this path.

AUSTIN: Right. I don't think you need to declare gear to be doing that necessarily, to be providing a different thing.

DRE: *[cross]* Okay.

AUSTIN: So yeah, just, just burn the stress and Janine, you're up to two dice, 2d6. Controlled great.

JANINE: I don't know what that means in terms of rolling.

AUSTIN: 2d6. Controlled great just means—

JANINE: The controlled great part just...

AUSTIN: *[cross]* It means—

JANINE: *[cross]* Is it just for effects and stuff later?

AUSTIN: So, uh, so. In Forged in the Dark games, you always have a position, either controlled, risky, or desperate? And you have a degree of effect, either... limited... middle? And great. *[JANINE laughs]* Uh, limited, standard, and great. If it is, if you're in a controlled position, it means that there's like, hey if things go bad, they can only go so bad. Y'know, you can always back out and try a different type of action or it's not gonna hurt you too bad. If things are desperate, things can go really fucking bad, y'know?

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Likewise, the effect is like, well how effective is this tactic that you're using, yknow. You could've decided—

JANINE: *[cross]* Using your bare hands to stop an asteroid then, even if you succeed you don't.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Then— right. Exactly! Exactly. So, 2d6.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You still wanna see a good number. Four is a success!

JANINE: I got a four.

AUSTIN: A four is a mixed success. On a controlled, there are, again, degrees of consequence. Just to show you what I mean here, I'm gonna actually give you two consequences here but they're both controlled consequences. One is I'm going to tick the Point Albacore clock again, so that's gonna go up to three. I'm gonna— at this point you can, actually I'll talk about the Point Albacore clock in a second. The second one is, I'm gonna move you to a risky position. So, the crew is no longer in a controlled position, you're in a risky position, because people know where you are. The people at Point Carp are going to be able to see that Mow, this gigantic intimidating uh, gorilla mech is heading across the river as gunfire fires from behind him from the soldiers at Point Dory? The soldiers at Point Dory are calling, y'know, in a local radio, say like hey, head's up! Mechs are moving all over the place, get ready. So that's, that's risky. You could um, resist that if you wanted to, because this is the other way that this works is that when you have a consequence, a pilot is able to resist it by using either, if it's a thing that the pilot does, a dice roll and their stress, or a, their quirks if it's in the, if you're in your vehicle? It is... it's pretty expensive to resist the vehicle ones? Unlike- when a pilot resists, no dice are rolled for vehicles that resist consequences, instead a vehicle resisting mut exhaust four quirks minus the attribute rating being used to a minimum of one. So in this case, if I— I mean you have a one in both of

these, it would cost you three quirks to resist one of these consequences, which is probably not a thing worth doing. It's probably not worth breaking down Mow to stay in a controlled position, right?

JANINE: No...

AUSTIN: This is fine. This is a pretty standard, y'know. It should be risky at this point.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so—

JANINE: So Point Carp should see us coming, 'cause there's nothing, there's a— it's a big field.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* It is a big field of nothing, yeah.

JANINE: *[cross]* And there's a lot of nothing there.

AUSTIN: There's like, maybe some dunes and like, if you were super quiet and tiny you could do this but, I'm guessing... one, you're not.

JANINE: *[cross]* No!

AUSTIN: Neither you nor your mech that you're riding on the back of are tiny! You're both as big as possible! I should note I guess like, how tall is Mow? I feel like stand—

JANINE: Mow is— I feel like Mow is big because I picture him relative to Thisbe, like, y'know, again the metaphor of like, a kitten standing on a sheep or— y'know?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah yeah yeah totally.

JANINE: A puppy riding a llama, or things like that.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah.

JANINE: Where it's like, Thisbe is like seven to eight feet tall, and she is still a baby animal on the back of mow.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* A baby! *[laughs]* Yeah, so I think Mow like, on the quad, on the like, on his front two hands is still like, fifty-five, sixty feet tall? Which means standing up, like towers over all these other fuckin' mechs. Worth saying that. Uh, for Broun and Valence, do you get back into your vehicles at this point, now that you're back across the river?

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cool. From Point Albacore, two things happen. One, you hear like, heavy cannon fire echoing in the distance in the night? Right? You see like the flash of lights of gunfire. You hear the sounds of metal hitting metal as a melee begins. Two, you hear um, Jesset call in over the frequency, like the local radio and is like— "Oh boy, yeah. Yeah. We got company, I'm not that surprised, but— " Actually this is not Jesset's voice, this is, this is... that is Anchor's voice. Jesset is a little quieter and like, very very slightly British.

AUSTIN (as Jesset): Yeah, it's— *[sighs]* it is what it is, they showed up. There is definitely... Six, seven, eight? We're doing our best. How's everything with you?

DRE (as Valence): Uh, proceeding smoothly.

AUSTIN (as Jesset): Alright.

DRE (as Valence): .... Do you need help?

AUSTIN (as Jesset): No, I think we have it. Look at that...

AUSTIN: And like, pings something in your like, you— on some display, a point pings. I'm\ most imagining it's like a sky chart. And you can see that there is a ship or something coming down through the atmosphere at this point? It is a bright orange as it passes through the atmosphere. And then there's like a beat, and then you note that there is like, explosions around it? Even like... bright laser lights around it? There's some sort of battle happening around whatever is landing. At Point Albacore. You're approaching Point Carp. You hear the like, you're far enough away from it where it's like, in fact, check this out, ready? I'm gonna see if you can... can you see, can you see this?

DRE: Mhm.

JANINE: Yeah.

DRE: Ooh!

AUSTIN: You're four kilometers out from Point Carp. Which is pretty far, but it's close enough for their like heavy artillery shots to start coming in? They're missing you right now, it it is a risky situation, they may start hitting with this like, anti-tank weaponry that they have. What do y'all

do? Who's taking the lead here, or who's doing what as you approach? Like Janine said, it is kind of a straight shot at this radar base!

DRE: Hm... I mean yeah, at this point, aren't we just...

ALI: Yeah, are we just going for it?

DRE: *[cross]* Like, charging in?

ALI: Am I the only one with Bombard at this point?

DRE: Um, I also have Bombard.

ALI: Okay.

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Let's talk about your mechs really quick, because now we know Mow is a big gorilla with a gutted cockpit. A... side-saddle, a makeshift psionic amplifier and a scary weapon and intimidating bulk. Tell me about the Hippocampus, Valence, and then Broun, tell me about the Three Cheers!.

DRE: Um, so the Hippocampus is, I mean, you called it a chicken walker earlier.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: And that's, that is, it's a... I picture it as like a small kind of like, ovoid cockpit? Almost like a fighter jet cockpit, sort of?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Sure. Yeah.

DRE: That has like, two like, chicken walker legs attached on the side. And then it has like, helicopter blades that basically fold out from inside the cockpit to kinda give it some flight, but it's definitely not like, very high maneuverable flight.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Cool! Can you read me its quirks, just so we know?

DRE: Yeah, its quirks are foldable rotors, custom OS, enhanced comms, and recognizable appearance.

AUSTIN: Great. Broun, tell me about the Three Cheers!, exclamation point.

ALI: *[laughs]* Yeah, so the Three Cheers! is kind of your... semi-standard bipedal mech. Also kind of vaguely humanoid. It has like a really pointed chest, and really high... shoulders, where missiles come out of.

AUSTIN: *Gotta* have it.

ALI: And uh, its quirks are hidden compartments, fast acceleration, bulky torso, and... compactible limbs, which basically means that they can like, fold into themselves to like, be— if I wanted to be really short, suddenly, or if I wanted to grab someone from something and then like, fold my arm into itself so they couldn't like, take it back, y'know?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Oh, interesting, yeah yeah yeah!

ALI: Like, I would be able to do that. Yeah, so.

AUSTIN: Totally. Is it, is it running? Is it, is that what it— is it like a mech that runs around? Is it a mech that has like... what is its motiv— it is just a bipedal mech.

ALI: Yeah, it's a bipedal—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Okay.

ALI: I, I— *[laughs]* God, there, one of the mechs that I was like, inspired from this, by this has like a version where it can like, kind of fold up and almost be like a little car that zooms around? And I think that it has something similar to that, where like, if I fold the um... The legs down, like the hips sections maybe have little wheels that pop out?

AUSTIN: Is that the fast acceleration, basically?

ALI: Yeah. I think so.

AUSTIN: Is that like— yeah. Cool.

ALI: I also think that it just has like, a good engine. Right?

AUSTIN: Sure. Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

ALI: Where like, if it was just a straight like, let's race to whatever, like, y'know.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* It would do well.

ALI: There's, yeah. Yeah, yeah yeah. There's like a, certain amount of like, RPM that like a robot can— *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Right. Um... sizewise, really quick, Valence, the Hippocampus is light, how tall is that?

DRE: Oh gosh, um...

AUSTIN: Like thirty feet? Are we like...

DRE: I'm trying to remember...

AUSTIN: A Gundam is sixty feet is a good way of... like.

DRE: Yeah, it's definitely....

AUSTIN: Smaller than that.

DRE: Closer to thirty like, twenty-five, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. And then, and then what is the... what is the Three Cheers!?

ALI: Um, I think if a Gundam is sixty feet, it's like in the, it's like in between the fifty and sixty range?

AUSTIN: Okay! Cool. Yeah, that's like, that's where the Troops are, right? The Troop is fifty-five, so I feel like that's—

ALI: *[cross]* Right.

AUSTIN: That's like, that's like, the standard size in some way? Like, to some degree it's like oh cool, I can use some of that same equipment 'cause it fits the right scale and blah blah blah.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Y'know?

ALI: And I think when it folds down, it's probably like thirty-five, it doesn't lose a lot of its bulk, but. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Cool. Alright!

ALI: Um— but yeah, for this, this opening thing, especially since I can move kinda fast I was thinking that like, one of us can kind of like, approach very quickly with like, some ground fire.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Which gives other people an opening to approach like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: *[cross]* Y'know.

AUSTIN: I'm down with that.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You said you had Bombard, but I don't see that you have Bombard.

ALI: I...

AUSTIN: Am I misreading?

ALI: Think... oh, wait. Oh. I guess I don't? Wait, I *have* to.

AUSTIN: You probably should have some Bombard. Did you just put it in the wrong place?

ALI: Yeah, no....

AUSTIN: My guess is you have a point you could move around, y'know?

ALI: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

AUSTIN: But yeah, that's the thing you do. You do bombardments. So yeah, you're gonna like lay down covering fire to let, other people get closer, basically?

ALI: Right, yeah exactly—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* That makes sense.

ALI: I think also like, approaching Carp but like, in a roundabout way?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What are you, what are you... what are you using? What are you shooting, y'know, you...



ALI: Oh, right, let me, let me look at uh... stuff I got here. Um...

AUSTIN: So we should— You have a thing called Payload Bay, which is what you used with that flashbang before, mixed with a thing called rack of missiles or rockets, which, I don't think we said, but you also have to mark that, to shoot the stuff in the Payload Bay, and together that is, that is basically a, like, a warhead launcher? And the things that it can launch... include things are like weapons, like, they all have effects. The default ones, and you can develop new ones during downtime but like, explode into shrapnel, burst into intense flames on contact with air! But there are also things like, cause blindness for a few minutes, cause an incapacitating sensation of drowning, permanently fuse two surfaces until parted with a neutralizer, or neutralize the effects of other chemicals.

ALI: Um, yeah, I think... can I launch something that sort of like, launches as one complete piece but then kind of like, sparks out into multiple pieces that, once they separate, burst into flame upon contact with air?

AUSTIN: Yeah, like an, like an— you're looking for like an AOE?

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly, yeah.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Like, fire thing? Yeah, yeah yeah, totally.

ALI: *[cross]* Yeah. Just something that—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Are you trying to— are you trying to do damage, or are you really just trying to like... do, get people like, distracted or whatever?

ALI: What's exactly shooting at me? Is it like other mechs, is it?

AUSTIN: It's like a big gun in placement. It's like a single... like, anti-tank cannon is what I'm imagining?

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which are, I'll show you exactly what I mean. It's like, World War Two had these things that were this exact thing. It's like— Imagine a tank cannon, except instead of being attached to a tank, it's attached to like, a wheelbarrow? Uhh... here, let me post this image. It's like a, kind of like two treads with a big tank cannon attached to the front. And so like, they can wheel it around and move it, but like, they are loading it by hand. This thing is an antique, even for them.

ALI: Okay, yeah.

JANINE: *[cross]* I—

AUSTIN: [*cross*] But if it— if it hits, it's bad. What were you gonna say, Janine?

[30:00]

JANINE: Sorry, I have a question that actually might affect this, but I don't really know. Is Push Yourself— is Push Yourself a different thing when it's in a vehicle? Because I have a power that affects Push Yourself, but is that only when I'm pushing *myself* and like, spending stress, or does that also include spending a quirk?

AUSTIN: Y'know? Um, I think the thing, the move you have would be you.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Not your, so the move you have is called Supercharge, which says "When you push yourself, in addition to the normal benefits, you can also act with extreme strength, act with extreme speed." I think it's about your artificial body, right?

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Not built into your, yeah yeah yeah. Because you'd be pushing— you'd be pushing Mow with the quirk, versus with the stress, so yeah.

JANINE: Yeah. I just wanted to clarify.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Totally worth it. Okay.

ALI: Yeah, then I think in that case, if it's like one single gun... with people around it, I do want it to be something that's like, primarily disorienting instead of...

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Um, burning these people alive.

AUSTIN: Okay! [*ALI laughs*] Sounds good!

ALI: Mhm! I also, I think specifically because it's fire, it's probably causing— I'm assuming those lines are also field type stuff? Like they are on the rest of the map?

AUSTIN: Those are fields, for sure, a hundred percent, yeah yeah yeah.

ALI: Okay. So I think like yeah, causing some wheat to go on fire, like even, definitely creates this effect of like, who am I attacking and where?

AUSTIN: Yeah. yeah. Alright, give me a... a Bombard. Your Bombard is one, do you wanna spend any quirks to push yourself here? Do you want to... does anyone wanna help? Which again, you still aid with stress, even though you're in a mech. I'll again offer you a collateral die, that collateral die will be that you... hm. What do I want it to be? ... I will start— I will, I will not start another clock, I will reveal something else. Another mech will enter the— hm, but that makes it sound worse than it is. *[ALI laughs]* Um, you know what, I guess I'll put it this way, I will, I will... I will start a troublesome clock.

JANINE: I'll aid.

ALI: I, yeah, I was gonna use a quirk, so. I will take me using my quirk and the aid.

AUSTIN: Okay. How are you aiding, Thisbe?

JANINE: So here's the thing, I've been thinking about like, what Thisbe's doing in this, and it's the kind of thing where like, I don't think there's a roll for it yet, even for the thing she's doing? But the thing she's doing is she's just driving Mow directly straight at them.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Okay!

JANINE: She's not swerving. There is no— there is, that's the thing is there's no maneuvering, she's not shooting, she's not close enough to be destroying anything—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* No, no no! This is— yep!

JANINE: It's just a fucking straight shot as a giant robot gorilla.

AUSTIN: Mhm! No, that's a, that's an Assist roll. Or not a roll—

JANINE: *[cross]* That's something for them to shoot at!

AUSTIN: That's the thing is like, you don't need to— you just spend stress! That's all you've gotta do is spend one stress, and then you're giving one extra die!

JANINE: And that's happening.

AUSTIN: That's happening, exactly. Alright! Give me a... a Bombard, then. What's the quirk you're spending, Broun?

ALI: Uh, the quirk I'm spending is fast acceleration, because I am trying to—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Okay.

ALI: Do this quickly and like um... yeah.

AUSTIN: Love it. Give me a Bombard.

ALI: What's my position?

AUSTIN: 3d6, risky standard at this point. That is a four, so, uh, when you get a four on a risky, um... *[reading]* "The pilot does it, but there is a risky consequence." What type of consequence, I wonder. I will say... um. Alright. So... let me look at the gear you've set up here already. So you only have the payload bay already declared, right, on the actual vehicle?

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah? Okay. Alright, so, I am, I am going to... this actually totally works. Tick two clocks. You, so. You get your, you get your effect, the... so this is like a, like a incendiary grenade, or an incendiary missile or something right, that splits and starts creating fire all around everybody and it's scary? Right?

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Sorry, I'm looking for something that I always lose track of. Here we go, okay. Alright, so. I'm going to advance this four step clock that's on Point Carp by two, so there you kind of have it halfway done. As your incendiary missile strikes the ground, I imagine there's just this great shot of them firing the anti-tank cannons at Mow, and it's just like, at the distance they're hitting Mow, and maybe even like the speed Mow is moving at, it's just like plink, plink! Just like, it's not doing the effect, it's very scary. And then Broun yeah, the incendiary lands in the fields and at, or kind of around the sensor station, it lights up and it's very scary and I'd say like, y'know, half of the people inside this facility just leave. They just like retreat? They're just like uhhh no! No! *[ALI laughs]* Getting the fuck outta here, they're not here for this! That's not what, y'know, this is literally not what they signed up for— I mean actually it is what they signed up for, it's what they thankfully got away— it's what they like, called in favors to get assigned differently from? Or away from? Um, so. Half of them leave, there's still one person who fires— who's like gonna fire a couple more rounds from this anti-tank gun. I imagine it's basically like the World War Two anti-tank gun I sent, but it fires like rounds in succession instead of needing to be reloaded one at a time, so it has a few more shots left. I don't know that this one person is going to be able to reload the whole thing by themselves though? And then there's probably like, a commander or something inside the base, still, who's like prepping for an assault? 'Cause they don't know, they don't know if you're gonna come smash this or try to take it over or what.

But, there are two consequences, and again, you can resist these consequences, but you'll have to do it with quirks instead of with stress. One is Point Albacore ticks again by one. And the second is that you hear the sound of jet engines as a mech lifts from the center of town. It is... I wonder if you know what it is, I guess you're a mech— you're a mech uh, engineer. So

I'll just give you what it is. God, what do you see? I guess, on like a camera? Or you know who probably sees it best is, is you, Valence. There is a, from the center of town near that hotel I mentioned, near that inn, a kind of mirror-coated humanoid mech that lifts into the sky. It's actually really hard to see at first, because of the mirror coating? It's just like very cheap visual stealth, because once it gets in the air, it's just reflecting the sky around it? And at this point it's just like stars reflecting the wrong direction, or moving as it moves. And you can kind of meet, kind of see the silhouette. It has kind of four angel-like wings, which is to say like, they look the way angel wings look in like, Renaissance paintings, y'know? That are at weird angles? They are not all just like, they're like... they're coming out— it's a JRPG angel? You know what I mean?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You know what the fuck it is.

DRE: Yep. Uh huh!

AUSTIN: Uh, but the wings aren't flapping, so much as hiding jet engines inside of it? And you kinda hear them— [*jet engine winding up foley*] as it lifts off? But then they kind of like, quiet down once it's stabilized up in the air. And the way this thing's body works is like, it's as if it has two legs that are attached, kind of at the middle? And so they're like— it's kind of like on pointe? On— on *pointe*, how do I say this, Janine you're the person who knows French, *en pointe*? What's, how do I say on pointe?

JANINE: I mean, because it's just a, it's just a dance term at this point people would just say on pointe.

AUSTIN: [*cross*] It's just on pointe. Okay, so it's like on pointe to the degree—

JANINE: [*cross*] Like, *pointe* with an E, not on point like you've got it, you're really— yeah.

AUSTIN: [*cross*] Yeah, yeah yeah. [*laughs*] Yes, I mean, that is what I'm referencing. It's like on the tips of its toes, but its toes are... like, it's all fused into one giant leg, basically? And so it kind of comes up in that way and is kind of floating above Obelle, and then it has, it has its two hands kind of like in like... in front of it in prayer? Almost, like you'd think that's like, it's holding its hands clasped in kind of a prayer position. And then above that, we hit its— also its arms are like wrapped in chains, again, it's very JRPG, Stel Nideo does not fuck around. They are all the way out here. And then, when you get to its head, a very weird thing happens, which is— you get a neck, you get a mouth, right? And then where its eyes should be, is like, do you know, have you ever seen like those, those reconnaissance planes? They have a thing called AWACS? Which is a very funny sounding acronym. Do a search for A-W-A-C-S, and you will see what I'm talking about. It's like a disc, it's like a big radar disc that's on the back of these special reconnaissance planes.

DRE: Ohh! Okay.

AUSTIN: And so instead of having like, the top of its head, above its mouth— and maybe a little bit of its nose, it becomes this. And it has like, six glowing red eyes that are around it, that are like cameras, that are like spinning constantly and taking in what's happening below. And actually, I made that a six step clock, that's wrong. This is a four step clock. This is someone watching. Someone is recording this and is trying to identify everyone who is here. So, this is like... being identified is a four step clock, and it's at tick one. I'm gonna say y'all probably just straight up know that these are used by... what are called Recorders? Which is like, there aren't reporters in this world, there are just Recorders? Or, there are reporters, but not for the Partizan Palace. The Palace is the... the Palace is like, Wikipedia and the newspaper all rolled into one? But it's also pushed through a censor? It's also pushed through, y'know, lots of people who redact things or rewrite things, and it takes all the known information on a given world, plus any new information that comes in from outside of the system, which happens like once every ten days. You kind of get an update through like, the, the kind of, the gates that open?

And you... it kind of gives you, everybody, y'know, in fact, Thisbe, you have that handheld computer, right? If you looked up like, who was the thirteenth Princept, it would be— you'd be looking it up on the Palace, the way we would be looking it up on Wikipedia, if that makes sense. But likewise, if you were like, who won in the game last night, uh, you'd be looking it up on the Palace, and so that is, that is, this person probably works for this kind of, wikipedia slash newspaper situation. Alright. Y'all are, you basically get to the edge of this field, the flames are everywhere, again, you can hear that battle raging at Point Albacore way in the distance, as more artillery shots are fired off, but at a different battle. There are people screaming, you're at Point Carp and are, I'm gonna actually say with that last success, back in a controlled position because they just don't have anything here that threatens you besides this one gun. What do you do?

JANINE: Do we know where the radar is?

AUSTIN: It's a big radar dish in front of you, it's, it is that is the thing that's here, Point Carp is just a big building with a big radar dish on it.

JANINE: Did we have any specific rules about not destroying the radar?

AUSTIN: Nope! Not at all!

DRE: Oh no.

JANINE: Okay. Thisbe doesn't stop.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Okay! Uh, I think I know what you're rolling, but what are you rolling?

JANINE: *[sarcastic]* Um, I *believe*, I think, possibly that I'm rolling Destroy?

AUSTIN: I think you're rolling, Destroy, yeah!

JANINE: Which I have two in.

AUSTIN: Which you have two in. Do you wanna push yourself and use another quirk here? Or do you wanna save those?

JANINE: Um... Hm. It feels silly to... I don't know, a lot of them don't really apply.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I—

JANINE: In this particular situation.

AUSTIN: What was the scary weapon again?

JANINE: It's like, it's—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah, that's probably more—

JANINE: *[cross]* It's for like threshing stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Fair.

JANINE: It seems like overkill to get that all jammed up with a, with a radar dish.

AUSTIN: Yeah, fair, does anyone wanna help with this? You're just fucking wrecking it, right? You're just running through this whole building.

JANINE: Yes. That's my intention, is— I mean, we've got all this good momentum.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Why ruin it? Why give it up?

DRE: *[cross]* Yeah!

JANINE: Momentum is a resource!

DRE: Just shoulder check a house.

JANINE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: I— yeah, basically. It's very good.

JANINE: Mow heavy!

AUSTIN: Mow heavy. *[DRE laughs]* Anyone helping?

DRE: I cannot think of a way that I could help shoulder check a house.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I mean you could clear the path?

AUSTIN: You could clear the path. Yeah. Broun, you have that— Broun has an ability that would work here, but go ahead if you have something here, Valence.

DRE: I mean, the only thing I could think of would be to like, y'know, duck in front and basically like, draw fire.

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah, that would actually— that would totally help.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Put yourself in harm's way, yeah, gimme a, take a... take a stress.

DRE: Okay. And that's me, right? I'm not using a quirk?

AUSTIN: That's you, you're not using a quirk.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So 3d6. This is, again, I'd say... I said controlled before, controlled— controlled standard. That is a six!

JANINE: *[cross]* I got a six.

AUSTIN: Let me tell you. There *used* to be a radar station south of Obelle! *[JANINE and DRE laugh]* What's this look like?

JANINE: Um, I mean this looks like a... like a ram horned glass robot woman on the back of a giant gorilla.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!



JANINE: Completely obliterating a radar dish.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: It probably— I imagine it just like, explodes— not like explodes with fire, but just like explodes the way...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: That a glass explodes when you drop it on a cement floor, like?

**[45:00]**

AUSTIN: Totally. Love it! Great, yeah no, you totally just slam all the way through it and, and you've completed this part of your mission. Point Carp, done. People here who are left flee. Many of them further into the fields, some of them north into point— into, into Obelle proper. You have a moment to breathe. Above you, this one mech flies, taking in everything it can see, and to the northwest, the fight continues at Point Albacore. I think at this point, Jesset comes over the radio, and says "I think— I think we're fighting the goddamn Swordbreakers!"

The Swordbreakers are, you know from like, popular reporting basically, are like a unit of, they're a unit of Apostolosians, one, who have a direct connection to like, the leader of Apostolos. They are led by the sibling, the adopted sibling of the leader of Apostolos, Cas'alear Rizah, and Cas'alear and their crew are famous for targeting and killing leaders of Kesh. Like, elects and generals and everything else. They're like, they're not like, they're like tier three, but they're a very effective tier three, you know what I mean? They punch above their weight, if that makes sense. So this is— Oxblood is a little shook. What do y'all do? Point Barnacle, by the way, if you like check in, your Troops have gotten to Point Barnacle and are fighting the one troop thats there, the one, the one... mech that's there. And doing a good job, like given that they're on automated, but they're not like... some, someone either needs to like take manual override at a distance, which you can do 'cause they're remote control, or... needs to get up there and give them support to finish this up there. Or you could sacrifice them. That's the other thing, you're right, like you could just say like, run in there and blow up and I don't care. We'll pick through the pieces. But it sounded like you wanted to take them home.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Y'know?

DRE: That does have the most money afterwards.

AUSTIN: It's good shit!

DRE: Okay. So... we still need to do... the one thing we're here and also sounds like that Oxblood is having more trouble than they anticipated.

AUSTIN: They are. But you have a, you have a rule of engagement about this.

DRE: Oh, yeah, listen, I'm not gonna go over there.

AUSTIN: Okay, okay.

DRE: I'm trying to...

ALI: Is, is there any way we can support them from afar?

AUSTIN: Is there *any* way? Absolutely. Like?

ALI: *[laughs]* Fair!

AUSTIN: Sure! I don't know, you tell me, right?

DRE: I have a potentially bad idea, if you wanna say yours first, Broun?

*[AUSTIN laughs]*

ALI: Um... I didn't have an idea, I was thinking maybe if there was like, equipment at this place that we're at that we could... I don't know. I don't know! You can say your idea.

DRE: So one of my like, potential like, vehicle gear things I can pick is a fine broadcasting system?

AUSTIN: It's true.

DRE: That allows me to have excellent speakers and transmission units so I can broadcast audio and video. What if I just start blasting like, the equivalent of the Kesh national anthem?

AUSTIN: *[stunned]* Oh my *god*. Oh god, okay! What's— it attempts to like draw whoever— the Swordbreakers away from Point Albacore and towards you?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay! That's. That's fun! That's a fun thing to do. I'm glad— you know what? I'm so glad, there's a bit of prep that I almost didn't do. *[DRE laughs]* But then I was like, there's a— just a small chance that I will need to design this other thing, let me just have it on lock. Let me just have it! What do you— I— *[sighs]*

DRE: We should— if we're gonna do that.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You're gonna do it after Barnacle.

DRE: *[cross]* We should do it at— well, we should do it at Barnacle because then we also have three other...

AUSTIN: True.

DRE: Like, mechs with us.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yes. Oh, I love it! Mwah! Let's do it!

ALL: *[cross]* Right. Also we could just leave. Right?

AUSTIN: Right. Uh huh!

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: So y'all head up towards point— towards Point Barnacle?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay. I, just like, I'm gonna describe the situation there, which is like, there is a Troop who is engaging with the... with your Troops, but it's like, piloted by someone who's actually pretty decent? This is like the trick about Point Barnacle was like, oh, wait, there's actually a good pilot here who just wanted to retire to Obelle? And live out a nice life before they died? But like, they're like a retired ace, basically. Like, semi-retired, and are like holding off these other three pretty good, in fact I think probably has like already disarmed one of them. And is like, using... the, the, is like kind of positioning them through pressure too close to the fuel depot, so that if one of them hits the fuel depot, they will blow up, and so they have to play super conservatively, basically. By play, I mean do war. They have to do war super conservatively here. *[DRE laughs]* And so it's, it's very much like, dodging in and out of these, these kind of fuel— there's like, y'know, big cyl— fuel cylinders that are arranged in kind of um, rows and it's moving between them and trying to like, pick them off one by one if that makes sense. But y'all can approach from the south. No one is shooting long range things at you— I guess they're again, there had been a sniper, but I think your Troops took out that sniper in a watchtower no big deal!

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: What do y'all do at Point Barnacle?

ALI: Um... I mean, do we have any more like, high level things that we wanna do? 'Cause I feel like we can just play this music and then bounce, and then not be there when they show up, right?

AUSTIN: Just let— you're saying just let it play out at Barnacle.

ALI: Right. I mean... yeah. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: There's a chance— there is a chance you don't destroy Barnacle if that happens.

ALI: Oh, okay, fair. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right? Like that is the, that is my one note there.

ALI: Okay.

DRE: I mean, if we do just wanna like, get out, we could just detonate one of those Troops.

AUSTIN: That's true.

DRE: And then just get out.

ALI: Yeah, why not, I mean we sent them there to explode anyway, right? *[laughs]*

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: True!

DRE: We're leaving with two! We came in with zero.

ALI: *[cross]* Fair.

AUSTIN: That's— That's a win! You're right. You know what that is? That is the like, yeah I'll take the hundred thousand dollars, Regis, I'll see you!

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know what? I'm not gonna go for the mil, it's okay! This is, you know, my kid's college fund, we're good!

DRE: Yeah! You gotta know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em.

JANINE: *[reading]* "Connections: Broun will sell or trade me in the moment my usefulness is expended."

*[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]*

ALI: Uh huh!

AUSTIN: Oh, I love it! So... what is the— I think that this is, this has to be a roll of some sort. There are risks that— there are many risks involved here! There are two rolls here, right, 'cause there's the music roll and there's also the explosion roll. Who wants to roll something for this, for this... setting a thing up to blow itself up?

ALI: I would love to.

AUSTIN: Okay. Is this, what is this, what are you gonna roll for it?

ALI: Um, let me look at my sheet very quickly to see...

AUSTIN: There's a lot of things that could work here, because there's like, nothing that works here, do you know what I mean? If that makes sense?

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Like, you could use a bunch of different things.

ALI: Oh, placed explosives!

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ALI: Does that work? Wait— if we're here anyway can I just place explosives on the things we wanna destroy and then we still get three mechs?

AUSTIN: Sure, but you will be putting yourself at a greater harm.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or a greater risk. Not harm. Well, if it goes bad it's harm, right? But yeah, if you wanna like, start running around there and start doing it because I know you have a move specifically for this?

ALI: Yeah... Yeah, I have Saboteur: "When you Wreck, the work is much higher than it should be and the damage is hidden from casual inspection. If you use placed explosives instead of wrecking tools, the work is not quiet, but you get plus 1d to the action."

AUSTIN: Yeah, I would give you that, if you wanna take some placed explosives!

ALI: For sure.

AUSTIN: That's a weapon, for sure.

ALI: Yeah, no no no, it's not...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. So yeah, so then at that point, the risk here, the immediate risk for you is not being noticed by this old ace at point Barnacle. Who is prowling, we kinda get like this tense sequence of you then trying to like, set these up? And again, it's the question of like, do you do it sneaky or do you do it quick? Based on what you roll here?

ALI: Yeah, is it— is it gonna be like, two separate actions to like approach and then place, or is it?

AUSTIN: Nah, it's—

ALI: *[cross]* Okay.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna, it's one. It's one.

ALI: Okay, yeah. Uh... I don't know, does it seem like a Finesse to you? Or...

AUSTIN: Oh, you know what? I think it's a Wreck if you want this...

ALI: Oh, sure. Yeah, yeah! Okay!

AUSTIN: If you want this plus one, because that's what Saboteur says, it gives you a plus one...

ALI: Okay. Yeah, sure!

AUSTIN: When you Wreck, so yeah, that's two right now. 2d6.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Is anyone helping, are you pushing yourself?

ALI: I think I'll push myself on this, this seems...

AUSTIN: You have a ton of stress, right? So.

ALI: *[cross]* This seems stressful.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah, this is definitely stressful! I will, again, offer you a collateral here if you let me tick Point Albacore one.

ALI: Wrong clock, I will not be doing that.

AUSTIN: Okay!

JANINE: I'll help you, if you want.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: How are you helping? Again, does, you don't even need to look at like, moves or anything, just like, yeah.

JANINE: Uh, okay, so let's, let's hang on, let's recap, let's recap what Broun's doing here.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yes.

JANINE: Specifically so I can see where Thisbe would fit in without ruining it.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

ALI: I'm— I'm trying to get into the building to place explosives on the thing that the, the fuel tanks.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so there's like fuel tanks out in the, out in the field, right? There's like, eight fuel tanks, big cylindrical things, you know what I mean when I say that. And there is, they're big enough that like, even these 55-foot tall mechs are able to like hide between them? And so there's kind of like a game of cat and mouse happening here, where this old ace who's, who's defending it is like, able to like, sneak around and hit some of these mechs. But is also now, there's, the risk for Broun is that they might get seen by the ace, who is prowling this place. So. Distraction, or, y'know, something like that maybe.

JANINE: Yeah. Um, and this is like... we're talking about like, farmers' fields, kind of?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah yeah.

JANINE: Fairly flat, right.

AUSTIN: Yep, yeah. On this side, on this side of the river it's pretty flat. On the other side, it starts to get like dunes and, and stuff like that. Low dunes with shrubs and stuff on them.

JANINE: What are they farming?

AUSTIN: We said wheat already, I think? So we're gonna stick with that, even if it's, it's alien wheat, you know? But it's that style— it is that style of tall, y'know, crop.

ALI: Tall, wispy.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah. Exactly.

JANINE: So, I... this actually is almost so much that it feels like an extra roll, but it's also a fun idea so I'm just gonna put it out there and you can decide what you want to do with it! I already talked about having, about Mow having sort of like a thresher farm tool kinda...

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You did.

JANINE: Arm weapon... thing. So I think maybe the way that I would like to aid here is that, the... I guess the way I'm picturing them is kind of like, something between like a chain— like chainsaws and like those things they use to like pull crushed dirt and sand and stuff out of mines? It's like a conveyor belt with little buckets and stuff?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: It's basically meant to like, tear up and throw?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And what— I think what I wanna do is like, basically start tearing up the wheat and throwing it like in huge... clumps?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah.

JANINE: Over the... the like, tanks and stuff, just so it's harder to see, 'cause there's just like, wheat?

AUSTIN: Yeah!

JANINE: Being fuckin' piled?

AUSTIN: I'm down. I like this. I think... one, I think you get your plus one from your labor purpose for this.

JANINE: Hell yeah!



AUSTIN: It's being used in a unique way, but you have Purpose-Built, take when you create an official, choose a frame type, blah blah blah, choose a purpose, and you've chosen labor: "When you directly attempt to fulfill your purpose, take plus 1d." I think that's totally using labor to do this. I am going to say that this is a separate roll and not just a stress expenditure?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Because you're basically trying to like, cause a, a, what it's gonna do is gonna, it's gonna put Broun into a much safer position, for sure. Give me a roll. Probably Destroy or Manipulate here, right?

JANINE: This feels like Destroy.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: 'Cause it's mostly about ruining something.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Give me...3d.

JANINE: *[cross]* This is not— when you ask the farmers, they're gonna call this destruction?

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Maybe you leave it all behind, in a nice pile? You wrap it all up in straw! No? Okay.

JANINE: *[laughs]* A nice pile, between some gas tanks.

AUSTIN: 3d6. That is a...

JANINE: A five.

AUSTIN: A five! Okay. That was risky standard, I should've said. So yeah, so I think the, the... you produce a really great opportunity here. One, is you draw the ace away from not only, not only Broun, but also the Troops? Mow is a very big target. And they like, um, so there's... again, I'm gonna say two consequences. One is Albacore is ticking. You're at five of six on Albacore. The other is that... you take harm, or Mow takes harm, let me just double check how this works, 'cause I know you have armor and stuff, so maybe this doesn't even matter. But yeah, I'm just gonna say, the ace fires a shot at Mow that will do... damage to Mow. Unless you resist it with armor.

JANINE: I've committed to giving Mow at least two armor.

AUSTIN: Okay. So then uh, then go for it.

JANINE: Because he's big, and I just—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* So— that two that you filled in is actually one armor. Mech armor is very heavy. Which is why there's two of them like that, but that's fine. You spend it to reduce damage. And the thing about that that's good is you'll just get that back. You don't have to spend anything to get that armor back at the beginning of the next mission it will be repaired at no cost.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So yeah, so it like slams into Mow, and then just like, the armor plating falls off, but everything underneath it is safe and secure. Alright, Broun, you're at controlled, controlled great.

**[1:00:06]**

ALI: Perfect, controlled great, and then I have one in... what was I using? Oh, Wreck.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You have— you have— yeah, you have Wreck, and then you have two in Wreck—

ALI: *[cross]* And then I'm pushing myself, yeah.

AUSTIN: Or do you have one in Wreck? Or do you have... yeah, you're pushing yourself and you get the plus one from Saboteur.

ALI: So that's three.

AUSTIN: That's three. 3d6.

ALI: Oh, perfect, okay, cool. So that's a six...

AUSTIN: That is a six! Boom, that's great effect! That increases the clock from a one to a four, tell me what happens, paint me a picture! *[ALI laughs]* Give me, gimme the scene of, of Broun and then this explosion.

ALI: Yeah, I think that they're, they're out of their mech at this point.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And it's like, running through the fields and like, avoiding the... *[laughs]* the wheat, but I think that it's, it's a two step process, right? Or the— the, the tanks aren't like inside of a building, they're just out there, right?

AUSTIN: They're just outside, yeah, yeah yeah. Totally.

ALI: Okay, yeah. I think in that case, it's like... it's a placed explosive, and it's like, it's like multiple small like, three inch by three inch packs that are getting put on like, you place one down and then there's a wire that goes and then you place the next one down and they're like, kind of... running around the, the circumference of these tanks to be like, one two three, one two three, one two three, and then setting them and then getting back to their mech before they go off?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Love it. Alright! And then, yeah, I think we get just a great moment of like, the ace lines up a shot against Mow, and Mow just like stands up full height, like prepared to just take this shot, and then you start hearing the explosions go off, and before they can do anything, the ace goes up in flames and so does Point Barnacle. *[explosion noise]* That is mission complete. You've done your job. You can leave right now. Very rich, honestly! *[ALI laughs]* But it sounded like, Valence, you had a plan here to try to help.

DRE: Yeah, I just don't want Oxblood to like, not do their part of the mission.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I got you! Their part of the mission is *the mission* in a sense, right?

DRE: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: You've given them the freeway, you know? You give them the highway outta here, but they need to pick up the VIP, so. What do you do?

DRE: Um, yeah, I think I will do my weird diversion plan.

AUSTIN: Which is it?

DRE: *[cross]* Is there—

AUSTIN: Yeah, go ahead?

DRE: I'm trying to think if there's like a specific like, Kesh like, person or squad or something?

AUSTIN: Yeah, so, as—

DRE: That I could like, namedrop in this broadcast?

AUSTIN: I mean, yes, definitely, right? So... as a reminder, the current situation in the Divine Principality is that Stel Kesh, the oldest of the Stels, one of the oldest ongoing cultures in space, is at war with Stel Apostolos. They've been at war for five years, ever since the leader of Apostolos, who was originally from Kesh, but was kidnapped by Art's character and then rescued from Art's character by Stel Apostolos, they declared themselves leader of both Apostolos and of... and of Kesh. They— and of the Divine Principality at whole. They were originally supposed— they were like, the baby emperor, right? They were like a child when they were kidnapped. Not a baby, but they were a child when they were kidnapped by Art. And then were rescued by Apostolos, then grew up and are now of age, and they have said, I am now the leader of Apostolos, Kesh, and all of the Divine Principality. And also have, has claimed, has *claimed* some things about the history of Apostolos and Kesh and the Divine Principality that has basically said that Apostolos was manipulated into joining the Divine Principality? But then Kesh was like, no, that's an Apostolosian ploy, fake news, like, false flag, et cetera... [DRE laughs] Actually, we're the ones being taken advantage of, et cetera, et cetera, and they have put up a st— they have, Kesh has now put up their own like, would-be Princept. Their new, their new leader. And the group that I would say Kesh would want that would get the effect you're talking about here, is probably... God. Um... [sighs] I think it's probably just like, the voice of that— oh, you know what, yeah, it's, it's, um. House Whitestar, which is the house from which the current leader of, of Kesh is from. I say leader, I put leader in scare quotes here, Kesh is not that simple. But the leader of, of Kesh is from there. And so yeah, whatever the House Whitestar like, theme. Not theme, y'know, uh... anthem is.

DRE: [cross] Anthem, yeah.

AUSTIN: I got there! I got it, it just took me a little longer than I wanted it to. The Princept's name, by the way, is Cynosure Kesh.

DRE: Okay. Then yeah, I think I just start like, blasting that, and you know, yell something like, y'know, for Cynosure, for like, for the honor of Cynosure.

AUSTIN: [cross] Yeah, yeah. Alright, give me a— what is this, what do you, what are you rolling for this?

DRE: That's a *great* question, I've been trying to figure out what the hell this is! [laughs]

AUSTIN: I— [sighs] I think it's probably a Sway?

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Probably? Sway is when you persuade with guile, wit, or charm? I, I guess you could roll Consort, but that's not really what it is, and it'd be very limited, like—

DRE: [cross] No...

AUSTIN: That's not what you just described for me.

DRE: No, yeah. And I guess this is, this... this is more about like me as a person making this believable than it is like, rolling something, my vehicle doing something.

AUSTIN: Yeah, your vehicle is not...

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Doing this. Right? Like, this is about yeah, this is about what you your character are doing, which right now you have zero in this, you have zero in Sway.

DRE: Mhm!

AUSTIN: You could push yourself for one.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I will collateral you being identified ticking twice for one? If you want?

ALI: Can I assist?

AUSTIN: How? I'm up for it, but I wanna know what it is, I wanna know, yeah.

ALI: I think that like, if the... the endgame here is to like think that there's... like a bigger fight going on and there's other people here—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah.

ALI: I wanna launch off another one of those like, like big spears that break up into another one.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah.

ALI: Turn into fire so it looks like oh, there's someone like, with a railgun out there doing a bunch of shit.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Sure.

ALI: And like, just the idea of like, there's like, 'cause the fields are already on fire right?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah.

ALI: So there's like smoke in the air and then you see the smoke, and then there's like lights against it, and it's like oh there's some shit, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* And now there's a fuckin' anthem playing, yeah, yeah yeah, totally.

ALI: Uh huh! Yeah, yeah yeah. So I would like to do that too to support.

AUSTIN: Okay, so that's once, take stress. And then, so then and then Valence take, you're taking two stress from pushing yourself, right?

ALI: Oh....

AUSTIN: Or are you not now, because you're getting the help?

DRE: Let's see...

AUSTIN: You're close, you're at four right now, so this would push you up to six.

DRE: Yeah. Well, I think I am gonna take your bargain.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, being identified is gonna go up to three. I think we see this mech in the sky, it's called a Cast, C-A-S-T, which is the... which is the uh, collective name for a group of hawks, or one of the collective names for a group of hawks, it's also called a kettle, but this mech is called a Cast, is scanning you.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Scanning towards you. You can like see laser lights kind of like, bwowowow, doing like, scanning over this whole area.

DRE: Fuck it, I'm gonna push myself too.

AUSTIN: Alright, so you're up to 3d6, you're up to six stress, this is— this is risky— this is risky standard.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Dre. Wait. Do— you don't have any— oh, boy yeah, I just want you... you're an Empath. I want, I'm Newtype flashing you. *[DRE laughs]* This is very dangerous. I'm letting you do it! But I am just... I'm putting my hand on yours. *[ALI laughs]* You're about to hit play. You know what I mean? Like, you're, you're, your finger's about to hit it, and... that's all I'm saying. I love it! I love it, but I just needed to put that onscreen, you know what I mean?

DRE: *[cross]* Yeah, no, let's, let's have— let's have a good time.

AUSTIN: Okay, gimme a roll! 3d6! ... A four.

DRE: A four.

AUSTIN: Four isn't as bad as it could be, uh, but it ain't great! Uh— *[laughs]* It's a success! You're getting the attention right, that was your goal. Right?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: *[reading]* "A pilot does it, but there is a risky consequence." There is a *risky* consequence. Um... *[sighs]* Alright. The risky consequence is. God. Um... I'm just gonna describe stuff, and then we're gonna get to where we get to. You see, as this happens... there's just like immediately something new on your scanners, as like, um, a... machine begins to move at you the ten kilometers from ten kilometers away at Point Albacore, at *ridiculously* fast speeds. It is twirling through the air and you can only see it by the lights on its extremities? It takes you a moment to recognize the build? I think you probably don't know what it is at all, but again Broun, as an engineer, you know that this is Ataraxia. Ataraxia is a kind of a, it's a mantis-shaped mech? It is Apostolosian. It is custom-built for Cas'alear Rizah, the leader of the Swordbreakers, who is again, like the adopted sibling of the Apokine, of the leader of Apostolos, slash the self-declared Princept. And this machine is basically like a white, purple, primarily white with some, some like purple and yellow highlights and like, y'know, extra little spots? Mech that looks like a— looks like one of those like, orchid mantids, or mantises, like very flowery. Except all of its, or, you know what it actually looks like is if you do a search for Final Fantasy Eleven, or Final Fantasy Twelve mantis, it's that style of like, very big head, very heavy claws? Like, very like wide, but still very floral? It's like that, except one, it's flying constantly. Two, whenever it lands, it seems like it lands on different limbs, and it's totally okay with that. And three, each of its six limbs has like, the very edge of it lights up with a beam. This is our first beam saber in this game of Beam Saber, except instead of one, it is six. This is like, a flying mantis that is a whirlwind of violence. And it is blessed by the Divine Commitment. A divine I think Dre came up with, uh, in, in our Microscope game, thank you Dre, and it is charging towards you.

Now. This isn't the consequence. This is just the thing you wanted. You got what you wanted, the most dangerous thing left Point Albacore. Um... The, the six, or like, the thing that's happening is that beh— so you just get this great shot of, of Ataraxia, piloted by Cas'alear charging towards you over these dunes in the sky, as the battle behind them rages and as like, you can kind of see the lights of Oxblood fighting against... the, the Swordbreakers. Cas'alear is charging you. And then behind Cas'alear, you see something enter your field of vision. It is... the Divine Past. It is a town, as big as Obelle, maybe bigger, encased in crystalline glass. And it is on fire. And it is charging towards you. Not towards you so much as towards Point Albacore, but like, it's coming rom the west, coming down through the sky. And it's headed right towards uh, everyone who's at point albacore, except for Cas'alear who's now left it to charge you. And... I don't know how you can resist this part of the roll? I mean, here is— the consequence is, and

you can tell me how you resist this, it's going to crash into Point Albacore, and hurt everyone there. Badly. It is not in control. It has been damaged or, it— it is not in control. What do you do?

DRE: Hm!

AUSTIN: Again, you could resist this by spending... by spending uh, quirks? Equal to your... let me find it. It'd be, the way you resist inside of a— I guess, actually this is not a vehicle action right, so this would be a stress resist.

DRE: Yeah. Which...

AUSTIN: Which, your stress is at.. Six. Six of nine!

DRE: Yeah. Yeah. So it's basically a coinflip if I black out. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh huh! You would, I would choose what you resist with here. And I think it would be Resolve as you quickly send a message, like oh, actually no, everyone leave! Please please please, or something like that? And that would be—

DRE: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: That— the way that we would do that is that you would roll... 2d6 and then it would be, what is the number? How does this work again? How have we not done this in so long that I've forgotten? Here it is. *[reading]* "A pilot resisting consequence using insight, prowess, or expertise rolls dice equal to the number of actions in that attribute they have at least one point—" So, two. "They suffer six stress minus the highest dice result from that example." So yes, it would be... 2d6. And then six minus whatever your highest roll is. To determine how much stress you get, it would be a coin flip.

**[1:15:02]**

DRE: Hoo boy. 'Cause if I get three...

AUSTIN: Yeah!

DRE: I'm still okay, right? It's that if it goes over, I'm bad?

AUSTIN: Uh, I don't— I thought it... hm. This is the thing we're not— I'm not sure on. Let me double check it. Scars. Stress and scars, here we go. No. It's when you reach your max, it's nine.

DRE: Okay.



AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Gotcha. So really, it's a...

AUSTIN: And if that happened to you—

DRE: Thirty three percent chance!

AUSTIN: Yeah, if it happened to you, you can either choose to remove yourself quietly, where you'd heal all stress and choose a scar suitable to the event that filled your last stress box. You would leave the situation in a terrible state, but you could return later at an appropriate time, and you'd be fine for— you'd be around for the next downtime. You could push on recklessly at that point and take a dire action, which is wild! So you could like get to max stress and decide not to take a scar and instead, this is new for Beam Saber, ignore harm or damage you have. You can't spend stress, you can't make resist rolls, you could still spend quirks as normal. If you get a six, then you can take another dire action, potentially letting you like, chain dire actions together, but if a five or lower is rolled, or you choose to take no further action, then that is your last action, and it... like, consequences occur, basically. And then you would take a level— an appropriate level three harm, and be removed from the scene in bad shape. "With their stress maxed out, several things happen when they return..." Thank you for saying several things happen, Austin Ramsay. Your stress is healed, you gain a scar, and it's like as if you'd maxed out your thing. But like, you could basically stay in combat at a high risk to yourself even if you maxed out your stress in this system. Also if you roll a crit, you heal a stress. And you get to, you don't have to take dire actions anymore. It's very risky!

DRE: Oh boy. Um...

AUSTIN: But this is it, right? And like, I think you feel this in your, your Empathic brain, right? Or your heart, whatever, however Empaths work. There is the— this is about to break really bad.

DRE: Yeah. Sorry, I'm both thinking and then also trying to find where in the book it says the thing that you just talked about so that I can like, make sure I know what I'm getting into.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is on page forty-seven, where scars begin to be talked about. The bottom of forty-seven. Scars are... conditions that are not easily removed and affect the pilot's personality. They are things like cold, obsessed, reckless, vicious. They are effects of the, the difficulties you've gone through on, y'know, in the battlefield? If you take four of them, you have to retire the character. But, the way that they work is, if you have a scar, you can mark XP— If you have a scar and the scar creates a repercussion in play, then, whether that's through narrative play, like you deciding like hey, I'm reckless so I'm gonna throw myself into danger? Or through me, you failing and me going oh, I know this fail— this failure works, it's because you're reckless, blah blah blah blah, you get XP. And then if you see an opportunity for your scar to— sorry, and then you just get XP from that, you get to mark XP when that happens, basically.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, so. A scar isn't necessarily the worst thing to happen, but. First game, y'know?

DRE: Yeah, no, listen, let's do it.

AUSTIN: Let's do it! Gimme the roll.

DRE: *[cross]* So...

AUSTIN: So this is 2d6 to resist.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because you have two resolve, which is you have two different resolve skills, basically.

DRE: So basically I need a five or a six.

AUSTIN: You need a five or a six on one of these dice.

DRE: Uh, those are both threes.

AUSTIN: Those are both threes, you're gonna max this out. Are you going to take a scar or try to continue by taking a dire action?

DRE: Okay, so if I take a dire action—

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: I...

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You get to—

DRE: *[cross]* I basically, I still have to make a roll, or do I just get to do something?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You stay in the scene.

DRE: *[cross]* Okay.

AUSTIN: You basically get to stay in the scene. The problem is, if you fuckin' roll less than a six going forward, you are going to take a level three harm. Which is a very bad harm. That's viable,

given that you have like, an end boss charging at you? *[DRE laughs]* Do you know what I mean?

DRE: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, I have the pieces at the table to hurt you pretty bad right now.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: But you could also at this point say you know what, no, I'm gonna take a scar and this blah blah blah. The other thing is you, you did resist it, right? So tell me— let's talk about this first. What happens? How do you— how do you get these people out of danger?

DRE: Um... boy. I mean I think it— okay. Hm. Oh, Austin.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Is this an opportunity for Emoji?

AUSTIN: Maybe? Do you wanna read me Emoji?

DRE: *[reading]* "You know the secret method to interact with an app or an AI as if it was a normal human, regardless of how corrupted or rampant it appears."

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, I can paint you a fuckin' weird-ass thing here. What do you, what did you— what is the effect you want, and I can work backwards from that. Are you like looking to send a signal, are you looking to like— yeah, go ahead.

DRE: *[cross]* So I know you said— Like, okay. 'Cause I'm, like, the weird things on the table here that would kind of, I mean this is like trying to do something in terms of talking with the Divine Past, I guess?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Of like, trying to like, almost like, I don't know, is this giving the Divine Past a fuckin' pep talk so it doesn't just like crash and burn in the middle of the city?

AUSTIN: So, I think the Divine Past is not who you end up talking to with this, right? Like—

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: I, the thing that I really wanna emp— and like it's not that you could never do that, but the thing that I wanna emphasize with Emoji, or with any of like the hacker-y abilities?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: About what the system calls apps or AI, is that it's... you're talking to, like I don't want you to talk to the Past, what I want you to talk to is like... the, the like echoes of information that are like, corrupted, that are travelling alongside— the unfragment or the, the like, remnants of a defragmented hard drive in Past, do you know what I mean? Like, Past is... the other half of this is like, Past is going to crash. This is a roll about getting people out the way. Now, if you wanted to signal them somehow, if you wanted to like, create a weird aura, y'know, or a shield that protects them as it crashes. But there's no way to protect— to prevent this thing from crashing.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: Even with your power. Y'know? At the speed it's going. It's a town.

DRE: Yeah. Well then maybe it is just the, like very, very like... quick like all of the like, weird like, music and bullshit like cuts off.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: And it's just like, me very like, not even on like the right channel, just on like, the broadest band channel possible.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Like, just like, panicky telling people that they have to get out.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I, I do wanna touch it with Emoji, just a little bit here, where it's like as you do that, the world can see the audio become visual as bits of, I mean, the other thing that 's happening here is like as this happens, I think we get like, as Past approaches, it's literally pushing the Perennial Wave closer? Like there's, it's— it, its gravity and its force are literally throwing more and more of the Perennial Wave at you? The Perennial Wave being the thing we talked about last episode, where it's like, or I guess two episodes now by the time this, this is cut up into two episodes, like nanomachines that have spread all across the galaxy, and which like, interfere sometimes with technology? And it's like, as you do it, the, as you're sending this message out, the perennial wave is so dense with these nanomachines and your, your empathic powers are like at such a high nervous energy, that like, they light up as like a, a like, a flash, a flare in the sky, as if you could like see the radio waves as they like move through space. And that's, it's so shocking that it stops the fighting for a moment, and everyone understands what's

happening, and yeah. The, the, you saved the lives of the Oxblood Clan here. They all manage to like, quickly retreat away. You can see like, some of them have dope Centaur mechs, we'll get into that at some point in the future, and they all like, begin to retreat full speed away. And at seeing what's about to happen, I think the Swordbreakers like— I think Cas'alear comes to a hard stop very close to y'all? Like, this big road coming out of town that's only like, y'know, a kilometer away, which for mechs is not that far? Like, comes to a stop, lands on the ground, kind of twirls, and spins back to watch as their crew begins to kind of bug out and get away?

And then, the Divine Past slams into these dunes and shatters. And there is like a very heavy shockwave that sends everyone flying who's close to it. Y'all are safe, you're across the river, and y'know, whatever, fifteen kilometers away. But y'know. Some of the buildings here, it's bad! Like it's a huge— it's a huge crater out west beyond the river and beyond the area past that as like, just to like summarize, this is like the Library of Alexandria type situation, this is like... this is like... the oldest library in the galaxy? This is a thing that remembers... forty or fifty thousand years of information. And it's a Divine... which means for you, you know that means it's immortal. It will be rebuilt, it can be put back together, but like I don't know that anyone knows what that— it's never been destroyed before! Does that mean that like... the information is lost but its capacity to store information is retained, will you get parts of that information back? I don't know. In any case, the Swordbreakers all retreat north at this. And you still have a choice to make here, I guess, which is like, do you go look at the destroyed Divine to the west, or do you just fucking get out of here?

DRE: And I guess that's the choice of do I take a scar or do I do a dire action?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yes. Yeah. And then it's also the choice for everybody, y'know? But yes, that part of it is definitely... yeah.

ALI: Um, if we, would it be like a downtime thing if we wanted to try to go salvage stuff, or would it be like, the area's too hot?

AUSTIN: It would be way too hot.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is like, this is about to be the hottest place, like— poor fucking, Tes'ili Serikos was like, oh no, what if someone pays attention to my little uh, uh, smuggler town! Bruh. Like, it's bad right now! You gotta get outta here. They are in trouble.

ALI: So I'd like to do that. But.

AUSTIN: Uh huh! *[ALI laughs]* There is stuff there! I'm not— like...

ALI: I bet.

AUSTIN: The VIP is there! I mean, I don't know what condition the VIP is in. That was bad. But like, there is stuff there. I have stuff written down, looking at it, I can tell you what's there. But... woof. Also, there is still this reporter mech floating in the sky watching all of this happen. And you are one tick away from being identified.

DRE: Woof. I think I'm gonna take the scar.

AUSTIN: Do you know which scar you're gonna take?

DRE: That's a great question.

AUSTIN: We can sleep on that. We don't need to know right this second.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But I— yeah. But in terms of just like... you check out, do you pass out? Do you... like what's the...

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: Are you overwhelmed? Like, is this an empathic like, shock to your system?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Yeah, I think it's like, it's like a thing of putting... putting the Hippocampus on autopilot and just like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Slumping into their chair.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It like, the Hippocampus just like walks into formation with the three other mechs you stole? Like in exactly their formation, y'know? But to Thisbe and, and Broun, you have a choice to make here still. Yeah, do you go poke around the wreckage, or do you get the fuck out?

ALI: We like, we know this is a Divine, by like sight, right?

AUSTIN: This is one of the big, famous Divines, do you know what I mean?

ALI: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. But it's still shocking? Do you know what I mean? Like it's still like—

ALI: No, no no no, okay, yeah, no no no, that's what I mean, is that I think that like...

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah. Yeah.

ALI: I'm, I'm trying to make that exact point, because I think that like... you don't be a professional smuggler slash scavenger slash whatever without like knowing when to weigh your risks?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: And like, this mission has gone really well in a couple of ways.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

ALI: And has gone really bad in a other couple ways, and just being like oh, okay, this is already the biggest check that I'm gonna get this month. One of the three people that I'm— *one third* of my squad is like, incapacitated right now, like, also Divines are terrifying, and like what is gonna happen to me if I even approach, 'cause I don't know if that thing is still alive in some way.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And it's like, you know what, maybe we uh... we call this one complete.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah. Yeah. Thisbe? Do you have a very similar feeling? I mean, probably—

JANINE: Thisbe's always just gonna do the thing that's like, how am I useful to whatever is happening.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But whatever is happening has to happen.

AUSTIN: Actually, Thisbe, can you do me a favor, can you give me a Fortune roll, which is just, just roll me 1d6.

JANINE: Okay? I got a six.

AUSTIN: That's a six! Um... You know, let me give you the... hm. I think you just see the shape of a Hypha, of an Ashen. Which is another person who has the same basic shape as you, they're like uh, he— in this case it's he— he is a, like a human-sized deer person. He has very

complex antlers? Coming up above his head, and is— I don't think that you even see, it's like a silhouette of a person, it's like an echo? And, and his voice is sort of weak and wavering at this point, I mean, he's buried in the rubble of this thing. And uh, it's clear that he's confused, because he thinks you *are* a Hypha? And as you're walking away, through your own sensors, and through Mow's psionic amplifier, you hear his final words. He says—

AUSTIN (as the Ashen): Sister. I did not know that Mourningbride would send one of our own. Please tell her, tell her that I forgot what we learned in the Garden. That I lost control. *[shaky breath]* Tell her that they rethread the Strand, and that they are sending it where they must not, where they cannot. Tell her that I know she carries courage in her heart, and that I know that she can do what I have failed to.

AUSTIN: And he's gone. And I think the three of you kind of travel back. Y'know, we don't have to be really close here and we can do downtime and payment and stuff next recording, but, y'know. On your way back by boat... you learn that word has travelled fast about all of this. Y'know, thanks to the Nideo Palace recorder. None of you were implicated, but there are still things that get passed around as if they're fact. I think within a week, the streets of Cruciat, which is Kesh's kind of, capital city in the snow to the north, its streets are filled with protesters, with signs and shouts, and they all say one thing. Remember the Past. And all through Apostolosian territory, the rumors begin almost immediately. Why was, why was House Whitestar to our southern border, that's, that's the Prophet's Path, there's not supposed to be *any* Kesh folks there. There's not supposed to be any Kesh military people there.

[Jack de Quidt's [TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#) begins playing.]

AUSTIN: Could the people of the Prophet's Path be secretly working with Stel Kesh? Could they be aiding members of House Whitestar? It was already a war, but now, there's this extra layer of paranoia. There's all this rage. And it's regular folks who are gonna get caught up in that. It's one of those things that echoes, in a way that I don't think anyone could've predicted. One bad night in Obelle, and suddenly, everything's changed.

[Jack de Quidt's [TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.](#) ends.]