

PALISADE 21: In Their Fear Pt. 2

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Opening Narration

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

Recap

Jack (as **Aide-de-camp**): Terrorists of Millennium Break. As a result of recent assaults on sovereign holdings in the Bontive Valley and the central transit network of this planet, as well as targeted assaults on her office—

[Music Intro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt begins]

Jack (as **Aide-de-camp**): —the Stargrave has been left with no choice but to arm the Stellar Combustors entrusted to her, in holy power, for the preservation of the Divine Principality. [inhales] She has instructed me, in her wisdom, to communicate to you that any attempt to approach the Brecheliant

forest or the Stellar Combustor units, covertly or otherwise, as well as any attempt on Stargrave Elcessor's life or liberty, will be met with—[inhales shakily] will be met with an immediate detonation.

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Sylvi (as **Cori**): Like, Devotion's never brought anybody back to life.

Dre (as **Figure**): Well, I mean, I wasn't planning to be resurrected either. Um... [sighs] As far as, like, the mechanics of the process, I'm not the person to ask, but...

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Who would be?

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

Austin: Ah.

Dre (as **Figure**): That would—that would be the boss, I guess. Not—not Brnine.

Austin: Oh my god.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Gucci? Who—

Dre (as **Figure**): No. The Witch in Glass.

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Keith (as **Phrygian**): I guess I've always known that the job was sort of impossible, but now I feel like, "oh, it's just impossible."

Austin (as **Saffron**): What do you think the job is? When you say "the job"?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): To end the war.

Austin (as **Saffron**): You think your job is to end the war?

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

Austin (as **Saffron**): You hear how it sounds, right?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Right. It's impossible.

Austin (as **Saffron**): It's like—it's like if you said—if I said my job was to heal everyone in the galaxy.

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Sylvi (as **Cori**): You don't deserve the Cataphract. You never did. If I had it, things would have been different.

Austin (as **Elle**): You're out here crying 'cause you spilled some blood. You could never handle the Cataphract. You know, I wish I had killed him. It would make it easier for you.

Sylvi: I punch her in the face.

[**Ali** scoffs]

Austin: She smiles. She just like, takes it.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): You know what? The next time I see you, it's not just—it's gonna be a lot worse than just a punch to the fucking nose. Okay, Elle?

[Music Intro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt ends]

Downtime Continues

[2:52]

Austin: Alright. I think that that's—we only have the two scenes left, and those two scenes are Brnine's and... Phrygian?

Keith: Yep.

Austin: No, and—is that right?

Keith: Yep.

Sylvi: I have—

Austin: And you still have one. So we still have three left.

Sylvi: Yeah. I... I want to start a long-term project.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: And the only—I think that would end up being a—having to be a Listening Post to do that, correct?

Austin: No, we've added—we've added, we've—I've confirmed this.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: I've done this reach—outreach here to Briar. **[Ali snickers]** And was like, “hey, wait a second. It feels like da-da-da-da-da.” And I got confirmation that we can also get it from... **[typing]**

Keith: Oh, the one that the old book said you could do. Yeah.

Austin: Yes. It got—it got, uh...

Keith: Was it the outside one? What is that? Like, ‘cause you can do it in hallways and then outside.

Austin: Where did I put that? Didn't I put that somewhere? **[typing]**

Keith: Here. It's, um...

Sylvi: Also, where on the sheet would I put a long-term project?

Austin: It's on the “Cause” page.

Keith: Somewhere Nearby. That's what it is. Somewhere Nearby.

Sylvi: Oh, okay.

Austin: Somewhere Nearby.

Sylvi: Okay. Um... I'm trying to—we might want to work backwards from what the clock I want to make is to figure out the scene here.

Austin: Sure. What do you want to—yeah.

Sylvi: Which is get in contact with the Witch in Glass.

Ali: [gasps] Noooo!

Dre: [feigned] Noooo! Don't do it!

Sylvi: It's just get—I just want to talk. It's fine.

Ali: That's—

Dre: Hey.

Sylvi: It also might not end up—I might not—this like, might change, [**Ali** chuckles] but I think that Cori's initial response is like, “fuck, I need to be stronger.”

[**Dre** exhales]

Sylvi: “What if this weird witch made me stronger?”

Dre: How do I—how do I PVP against a clock?

Janine: It's really good when you're emotionally vulnerable to seek out a cult leader.

Austin: It is—it is—here's what happened here. Uh... ba-ba-ba-ba-ba. I will post the image. It is the Workshop or Lab downtime thing got cut at some point.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: It reads: “The leading player straps on their protective gear (or not) and gets to work on something. [**Ali** snickers] They may start or advance a long-term project to build something, run an experiment to figure out how a mechanism or spell works, et cetera. During the scene, anyone may spend a token and choose one: start or advance a long-term project as above; [**Sylvi:** Oh.] spend time tinkering or working with someone you have Gravity with, advancing it; produce something of trade value, or strip spoils of battle for useful salvage, acquiring it.” Or “acquiring Supplies 1: Valuable, Bulky, or Fragile; or make something that directly aids a faction, untapping it.” So it's another way to untap something.

Sylvi: This actually changes so much about what I could do here.

Austin: It does.

Sylvi: If—because of what Cori’s end goal is, which is like, she wants—mechanically, what she’s looking to do is get a higher tier mech now.

Austin: Okay.

[Dre hums]

Sylvi: She thinks that like, “if I have a stronger weapon of war, I will be able to save more people.”

Austin: Right. Sure. Of course.

Sylvi: So this could be that instead now, if we’re doing Lab and Workshop, that totally flavors it differently.

Austin: Totally. I want to—

Keith: [cross] There is a Soldier move.

Austin: Yep. Go ahead, Keith. Yes.

Keith: There’s a Soldier move that does this exact thing.

Sylvi: Oh, shit.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: It’s a six-step clock that gets you, like, one really impressive thing. It’s called—no, not Soldier *movie*. Ah, I lost it. Oh—

Austin: It’s called Midseason Upgrade. Is that what you were thinking of?

Keith: Yeah, there we go.

[Ali chuckles]

Dre: Oh.

Keith: Midseason Upgrade, yes.

Sylvi: Midseason Finale?

Austin: Uh... no, the one I'm looking at—

Keith: Yeah, it says—well, mine says Midseason Upgrade, yeah. “The opportunity to acquire something of immense power and value will present itself to you. It might be a Tier 4 Astir, a legendary Ardent, or some kind of powerful magical artifact, or something of more mundane importance.”

Austin: Yep. I think that would be what it is.

Sylvi: Shit, okay. Damn.

Keith: By the way, with Phrygian, can you imagine how powerful Fisher of Men would be?

Austin: “When you Strike Decisively and succeed, you may impose one of your Hooks on the other party, if they survive. If that character belongs to a player, it does not count against their usual limit of three Hooks.” You would have done this against—I guess that's the thing is, you didn't succeed against the other—the person you were trying to convince. The pilot, the Geradon pilot or what—not Geradon. What the fuck is the name of the—the Gambeson pilot.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But, yeah, uh-huh. You could make someone believe something—

Keith: [cross] One of my Hooks is “success for Millennium Break means a reprieve for my home.”

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: What if a bunch of our enemies started thinking that? [chuckles]

Austin: Uh-huh.

Sylvi: If—

Austin: Keith, it would make me so happy that at the end of the—at the end of the day, what you decided to do is take the move named after Ibex.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So. Uh-huh.

Keith: Well, also Jesus.

Sylvi: So—okay.

Austin: No, yeah, but—

Dre: Sure, yeah.

Austin: It's in this—it's not in this book 'cause of Jesus.

Keith: Maybe.

Dre: You sure?

Austin: I bet—

[**Dre** and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: [chuckling] I promise you, Briar Sovereign is not like, “ah, it's time to get some Jesus in this book.”

Sylvi: You sure?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I promise.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Keith: Also, Original Video Episode is maybe something we can consider for, uh...

Austin: Mm. Mhm.

Keith: “During downtime, you may lead a raid or operation against the Authority to disrupt their activities as your downtime scene. Tell the Director what you set out to

do and who comes with you. If it's anyone that you have Gravity with, advance it. During the next conflict turn, the Cause may start a conflict scene of their choice with one success already."

Austin: Very powerful. Incredible that the Cause would start a conflict scene. That doesn't happen normally, so.

Sylvi: Okay. I have a question now, then, since we have gone over the Soldier move stuff. Does that mean I should wait until I can take this move to get a better Astir and then—

Austin: I think that's probably better than starting a long-term project. If that's what you want to do.

Sylvi: Would—well, so I'm trying to think of some sort of upgrade project thing.

[**Austin:** Yeah.] And maybe it's like, she just wants to—we don't have a lot of guns on our mechs. So, like—

Austin: You don't. You could also go buy a gun, or build one with, you know—you could get a—you could use that other move to go get a new thing. Remember? Though, actually, is that only for—that's only for temporary stuff. It's not for permanent stuff, right?

Keith: Wanting to be more powerful and then going to buy a gun is [chuckling] very funny.

Austin: It is. It is.

Sylvi: I think it's like, modifying the Chariot, so it has like, a cannon.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, I think that's a long-term project.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: But if what you want is to—how close are you to a level?

Sylvi: Um, I—[chuckles]

Austin: You just leveled, yeah.

Sylvi: Not very. I just—I leveled up twice, remember? [chuckling] I'm at zero Spotlight.

Austin: Right.

Sylvi: I mean, listen, you never know. [**Austin:** Well—] I could break a Tenet and get a level up real quick.

Austin: You could break a Tenet and get a level up really quick. You could also get a—there's other things, right? Which is, you could... You could upgrade your Gravity clock with Brnine one more time, and that's a level.

Sylvi: Oh, true.

Austin: Advancement is all these different things, yeah.

Sylvi: Wait.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Could I have spent my token during that last scene to do that, then?

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Ali: Ooh.

Sylvi: I'm power-gaming this season, everybody.

Ali: Let's go.

Austin: Let's do it.

Dre: Let's go.

Sylvi: So, that's... That's gonna be three levels—

Janine: Oh my god.

Sylvi: [laughing] I think three level-ups in one recording for me?

Dre: Jesus.

Austin: Listen, sometimes all it takes to get some levels is to kill your dad.

Sylvi: Technically—

[Ali laughs]

Janine: I only just leveled once.

Sylvi: Technically, one of them happened last time.

Ali: I—[chuckles]

Sylvi: Technically. [chuckles]

Austin: You're very close to one with the Twill, you're... Spotlight filled. So that's the one, right? That was the one you got?

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: It's these Gravity clocks, you know?

Sylvi: Okay.

Janine: I only have two Gravity clocks, so I'm kind of operating at a disadvantage here.

Dre: Yeah, we gotta get you clockin'.

Austin: We gotta get you a third. Yeah.

Janine: Keith's worse. Keith only has one.

Keith: [cross] I'm worse, I only have one.

Janine: Yeah.

Keith: Well, I have two. I have two if you count "Own Self"—

Austin: Y'all should talk sometime.

Keith: We tried, it didn't work.

Janine: We tried.

Sylvi: I was also—

Austin: [laughing] I forgot!

Janine: We're just... We're too fucking weird. It's hard.

Keith: Yeah, it's the two weirdest characters. Yeah, it's hard.

Austin: Retroactively, you could do that clock—

Janine: [cross] Phrygian needs to turn into a tomato plant or something, and then we'll get along great.

Austin: That's a great Gravity clock description. [chuckling] "Phrygian needs to turn into a tomato plant."

Janine: Think about it.

Keith: I can do that.

Austin: Think about it. That might make you less war-weary.

Keith: Being a tomato?

Janine: Oh, that's true.

Keith: Yeah, tomatoes are never sick of war.

Janine: Oh my god. [laughs]

Dre: That's true.

Sylvi: Yeah, no. Witch from Mercury, streaming now.

Dre: I've seen Witch from Mercury.

Janine: You just get to be a little plant in a pot getting watered and stuff.

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: That sounds nice. I'd like that.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Mhm. Being cared for and whatnot.

Janine: Yeah. It's kind of a weird direction, but.

[**Keith** chuckles]

Janine: [chuckling] It's like, kind of—

Austin: You've been a room. Try being a plant.

Dre: You've been a couch, now it's time to be a plant, yeah.

Janine: But like, being a room would be different if you were being a room so that the housekeeping staff could come in and like, buff you up. Like, that makes it a little bit strange.

Austin: That's a different situation.

[**Dre** hums]

Austin: You know? As long as everyone agrees. As long as everyone's on board, I'm not gonna say nothing about it.

Janine: Yes, yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Austin: You know? No skin off my... how's that saying go?

Keith: I mean, I was a room. I expected people to be eating the cereal. No one's touched the boxes of cereal, no one's read a book.

Janine: 'Cause it's you. 'Cause the cereal is you.

Keith: No one's having any juice...

Dre: Yeah. What happens when we eat the cereal inside of you?

Keith: That's what it's there for!

Dre: I know, but like...

Janine: Is there like—do people have to like, use the bathroom in there afterwards, or...?

[Ali groans]

Keith: No, they can use the bathroom wherever. I don't think there is a bathroom.

Janine: Oh, so it's not like a part of you—

Keith: Yeah, yeah, I don't have—

Janine: —that's being taken away.

Keith: Uh...

Austin: Well—

Keith: It is, but it's not—

Austin: We are always losing parts of ourselves.

[Janine chuckles]

Dre: That's true.

Keith: Yeah, I'm not gonna turn back into Phrygian and be missing a chunk of my shoulder because you had a bowl of honeycombs.

Austin: Right, right.

Janine: But you couldn't be a galley that produces infinite food for us, because you would eventually slowly be consumed.

Keith: I don't know.

Austin: Yes, that's correct.

Keith: Eh, you know.

Austin: That is correct. You couldn't be... well—

Keith: Yeah, I don't know.

Janine: What if you—what if you were eating things at the same—like, if you started eating, and then...

Keith: [cross] But what does a Branched—how does a Branched eat when they are a galley?

Austin: I got a better question. What happens if you brought a new couch into the room and then Keith turned—Phrygian turned back into human Phrygian?

Dre: [feigned distress] Ahhh!

Sylvi: Yummy couch for dinner.

Keith: I don't know. I think if you gave it some—

Austin: [laughing] I know he ate that cheese.

[Ali and **Sylvi** laugh]

Keith: I think if you gave it some time... I think if you gave it some time, it would stick around. No, that's—no, I think right away.

Dre: I don't like this.

Keith: I think probably right away it's part of me. No. I don't know. See, I don't know. It'll come up. If it comes up, it'll come up. [laughing] I know he ate a cheese.

Austin: I know he ate a cheese!

[**Janine** chuckles] [**Dre** chuckles]

Austin: [laughing] Phrygian with the big cartoon cheese shape.

[**Keith** and **Sylvi** laugh]

Austin: Mm, cheese.

Sylvi: Mm.

Austin: [laughing] This is Cori and Giesel one week before.

[**Keith** chuckles] [**Sylvi** laughs]

Austin: “Hey dad, remember the—”

Sylvi: The last text she ever sent him.

[**Janine** groans]

Austin: [laughing] The last text she ever sent!

Sylvi: [laughing] Oh, god.

Austin: [laughing] A picture of Phrygian shaped like cheese.

[**Ali** laughs]

Keith: What is this couch?

[laughter continues]

Sylvi: I know he ate a couch.

Austin: [laughing] It’s that couch from earlier that Dre posted with the smiley face.

[**Keith** laughs]

Dre: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Austin: I know he ate a couch. Ahh... Anyway.

Dre: What a time. What a time.

Austin: So yes, you could start an advanced clock to try to get a long-range weapon. Part of me is like, are you gonna do that if you’re just gonna take this fucking move?

Sylvi: I mean—

Austin: Oh no, right, you just did it. You figured it out.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's why I'm also like...

Austin: Fuck it.

Sylvi: Yeah, maybe we just say fuck it.

Austin: So what is—so, okay, we're looking—

Sylvi: I don't need to do this scene anymore, then.

Austin: Well, you do.

Sylvi: Is the thing.

Austin: Because it's an opportun—it isn't you just get a level 4, a Tier 4 thing.

Sylvi: Oh no, yeah, for sure.

Austin: We gotta figure out where you're getting it from. But I want you to think about it, because, you know, she'll—the Witch in Glass will give you a Tier 4 mech. It's so easy.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Dre: [strained] Buddy, don't.

Ali: Please. [chuckles]

Sylvi: I know, I know. I'm... But see, guys, you're saying this and I'm like, oh, this makes me want to do it more, though.

Austin: Mhm. Rubbing my hands together like Birdman.

[**Dre** snickers]

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Because, yeah, what it explicitly says is “the opportunity to acquire something of immense power and value will present itself to you.”

Sylvi: Mhm.

Austin: You know?

[Dre groans]

Sylvi: This could also be something for when we go to the moon.

Austin: I mean, it could be. Yeah, a hundred percent, it could be. So you could wait, but you wouldn't have it until then.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I know where you'll get it from the moon.

Sylvi: No, but it'll be on... yeah.

Austin: I know where it is.

Sylvi: And, like, having it... [scoffs] "I know where the moon mech is."

Austin: I do.

Sylvi: Um... yeah.

Austin: But you could get it for that mission right now, or when we record next time.

Sylvi: Hm...

[Austin hums]

Sylvi: Yeah, I can't make the decision right now, 'cause I'm...

Austin: Yeah, let's sleep on it.

Keith: Can we talk about...

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Because we talked a little bit about Nightmare of Solomon. That makes a lot of sense. We've—I know a lot about Once the War is Over.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Can we talk briefly about Original Video Episode and what that mean—what that would really mean here?

Austin: It would mean that you could get a new—it's a new type of downtime activity that you do.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So you... It would be another scene, right?

Keith: Yeah, it would be a scene.

Austin: So you'd have to declare that scene. You would disrupt their activity. So I think that, to me, that's like, oh, you set back their—a clock that's advancing, right? And then you get the—during the next conflict turn, the Cause gets a conflict scene of their own, which is huge. Because right now, the Cause only can respond to conflict scenes started by the Principality.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Started by the Authority, right?

Keith: And is that one and done taking the move? Or is that every time that I use Original Video Episode?

Austin: No, that's every time.

Keith: Or every time, "every time" every time.

Austin: It's just—it's every time you use—sorry, it's every time you use OVE, yeah.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Yeah, every time you use Original Video Episode.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Correct. That's what you would be getting. It would be another chance for the Cause to strike—for Hexagon, please, [**Keith:** Right.] to get a win.

Dre: Please.

Austin: So that's a pretty good one.

Keith: Right. And so, "disrupt their activities", that can't mean, or could it mean, disrupting the, like, button press?

Austin: I don't think that would mean that.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: That's too big. That's not an activity. That's a contingent factor of life at this point that you're all living in.

Keith: Right.

Austin: I don't think it can get Grip that way, I think—because there's no roll associated. You just get it. Right?

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: And so for me, that's like, okay, you could stop a scheme clock from filling up.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Right? That's not bad. Like, I think "settlers and reinforcements for the Authority arrive" could get de-ticked by one, because you're blowing them out of the sky, or you're destroying the facility, you're destroying the construction sites where their homes are being set up, or you're, you know, whatever. Right?

Keith: Mhm.

Austin: But that's right. You know, you could prevent "harvest the Fundament nodes" from finishing, which is one away. Right? In some ways, maybe that's like a "you're just buying yourself time" thing. But, you know. It would also be a way potentially to stop—or no, it couldn't be, because I already finished "unlock the power of the Iconoclast for herself", so.

Oh, I need to spend another token to advance “Stereoma prepares for the Pact”. That goes up to 2 out of 4. As they continue to—you know, under this new threat, they are now moving faster than ever and more openly than ever. And their violence is just as—Stereoma, as a reminder, is Misericorde and Cor’rina Corrine. [Keith: Mhm.] Everybody just thinks that they are parts of Millennium Break. Right? Whenever this happens. Like, “Millennium Break just hit this other place.” And it’s like, “we didn’t do that. That wasn’t us.” You know?

Determining the Mission

[18:56]

Austin: I think that that leaves us with Brnine has a scene, Phrygian has a scene, you just spent a token. Before, I guess, then, we do the Brnine or Phrygian ones, we should probably commit to what the next mission is. We’ve talked about it a little bit, both on and off mic at this point. Um... what are you doing?

Sylvi: [laughs] Oh.

Austin: And how—maybe this is a Brnine question. I mean, I don’t know. I don’t know who’s making the call. And, you know, I guess kind of just to restate it, the—there’s the ultimatum. “Don’t come fuck with the Stargrave Elcessor, don’t fuck with the Stellar Combustor or else we’ll blow it up.” And so, I guess that’s one of the missions, is doing one of those. Or trying to help the Figure in Bismuth, or deferring, as always, to the Cause’s leadership who will ask you to go do something else. Right? What are you all feeling?

Ali: I am of two minds here. [laughs]

[Sylvi chuckles]

Austin: Uh-huh. After all this.

Ali: I am... Okay, what is it called when it’s a sunken cost fallacy, but it’s not a fallacy, you believe in the sunken cost? [chuckles] Is it just like—

Dre: [laughing] I think that might just be a sunken cost fallacy.

Sylvi: I think it's still that, yeah.

Janine: Yeah, the fallacy isn't that you don't believe it.

Austin: Yeah, the fallacy—

[Ali laughs]

Keith: No, no, Ali's right.

Dre: [cross] No, the fallacy is that you certainly believe it.

Keith: Ali's right.

Ali: Is it just gambling? Am I just gonna gamble? [laughs]

Keith: It's—[laughs]

Dre: [laughing] Just gambling.

Keith: No, I think—

Dre: Maybe.

Keith: I think—I think that the problem is that it only feels like we've sunken cost.

[Ali laughs] [Dre hums]

Sylvi: Hmm.

Keith: I just—I don't think we've sunken that much cost.

Ali: [chuckling] Right, the cost—we've spent the cost, the cost hasn't sunk yet. And I would like to keep it afloat, I think is where my heart is.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Ali's saying let it ride.

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: “There are cases in which”—this is from Wikipedia—“taking sunk costs into account in decision-makings, violating the bygones principle, is rational. [**Ali:** Mhm.] For example, for a manager who wishes to be perceived as preserving in the face of adversity—”

[**Ali** and **Sylvi** burst into laughter]

Austin: “—or to avoid blame for earlier mistakes, it may be rational to persist with a project for personal reasons, even if it’s not for the benefit of the company.”

[laughter continues] [someone claps]

Dre: Huh. Huh. Huh.

Sylvi: Huh.

Ali: Wow.

Austin: I didn’t finish reading the rest of where that sentence was going, for what it’s worth.

Ali: I feel like I just got, like, a tarot reading.

[**Austin** and **Sylvi** laugh]

Ali: I got fucking owned.

Austin: So what you’re saying is, you already made two bad bets.

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: You already made—

Keith: There—hey, hold on.

Austin: Yeah? I’m holding.

[**Sylvi** chuckles]

Keith: I’m—again, I’m—I disagree with the premise that these were—that we made bad bets.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: You already made a couple of bets.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: You didn't get the thing you wanted out of—you didn't get all of the thing you wanted out of them, yet.

Keith: The—

Austin: You're invested.

Keith: The hope was that we were going to win that bet. That that bet was gonna come up at the end of—

Austin: [cross] In the conflict turn, yes.

Keith: In the conflict turn. But the bet is still—it's still there. It's still on the table.

Ali: The game isn't done. [chuckles]

Austin: No, I—yeah, not yet.

Keith: Right, that's what I'm—

Ali: I'm not leaving the table.

Keith: That's what I'm saying. It's like—it's sort of like—this, it's not sunk cost fallacy, it's sort of like folding, like, in—it's like folding early in poker, like before you've figured out, like, do I have a good hand or not?

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: No, no, I mean, it's like folding in—it's like folding in poker if what someone has said is “don't—”

Keith: “If you don't fold, I'm gonna blow up the universe”?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Right. It's like you're choosing to either go all in or fold, and there's no like, make a little bet.

Keith: Right. Yeah, that's fair. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: [cross] You're folding after someone said "hey, by the way, I'm a poker champion."

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Dre: Mhm, mhm.

Janine: And you're like, a guy who plays Go Fish sometimes with your aunt.

Ali: Hey.

Janine: [chuckles] Sorry, that was—

[**Austin** laughs]

Janine: Right, I shouldn't say Go Fish. Um, gin rummy.

Ali: [laughs] I've been playing poker for a little while. I've been a part of the Cause.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Brnine is really good at Hearthstone.

[**Ali**, **Janine**, and **Austin** laugh]

Keith: Hey, almost nobody can be in the Cause longer than you.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: You know?

Dre: That's true. That's true.

Keith: You're Cause founder.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: It says that on the message board. Brnine has a little “founder” flag.

Ali: [chuckling] The little crown next to my name. [laughs]

Austin: The crown, yeah, uh-huh.

Keith: That was a Mustard Red.

Austin: [laughs] “Hey everybody, we’re gonna bring out a new tier and badge system on the Strand forums.” So—so you’re saying it’s time to go after the Elcessor, or the Stellar Combustor.

Ali: I believe so. I believe so. What are we doing? [chuckles]

Keith: TV. We’re doing TV.

Ali: Why not? Yeah, why not do it?

Austin: Okay. And is that—

Sylvi: The “why not” argument is very convincing.

[**Janine** chuckles]

Ali: [laughs] Hey, we should save the world, I think.

Austin: Oh, Brnine’s giving a speech.

Ali: I believe Millennium Break can change lives.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. I mean, speaking of changing lives, the other thing that’s on the table is bringing Figure to the—Chimera’s Lantern, the moon where they have figured out that there is some other—some other way to be, you know? Some other power source, some other technique, some other something, that could protect them from the Witch in Glass who draws ever nearer in power now that—now that she seems to have nearly mastered control of an Iconoclast?

Dre: Question mark.

Austin: Which—or, you know, and what is an Iconoclast, again, for people who did not listen to Twilight Mirage, the Usher of Truth, the character that we met on that train a bunch of episodes ago, this sort of post-human, powerful thing that—that, you know, we have a lot of post-human things happening in this setting at this point, because the Iconoclasts and the Usher of Truth are not quite the Branched, but they're not entirely dissimilar, right? Like, if the Branched are like, "I want to be this incredible form that is my idealized self" in the lowercase I, like, my—"the self of my aspiration is a painting hanging on a wall," or a, you know, "a bunch of bulls," you know, "wandering through a canyon. That's what I want to be as a person," the Iconoclasts are "the only thing that should exist is uppercase I, capital I, 'Idealized' forms." The Aristotelian, you know, sort of Platonic, but Aristotelian ideal. The perfect chair from which all other chairs, you know, are a version thereof. Eradicate—

Keith: And then we kill those other chairs, 'cause they're...

Austin: Yeah, eradicate all the other types of chairs. Just the one true chair, just the one true bull, just the one true canyon. Not a good thing—[laughing] Clementine Kesh is the one about to unravel some of that power for herself.

Keith: "True bull" is my favorite pétanque variant.

Austin: Good. Yeah. Uh-huh. So that's—that's the weight on Fig—or on, yeah, on the Figure's head right now, and so—that's also a "Millennium Break helps people" thing. Is that just off to the side, is this—it seems like, Phrygian and Brnine, you are Elcessor-pilled.

[Sylvi laughs]

Austin: You are gonna go deal with the Stellar Combustor in some way. And it—

Sylvi: No, that's the faction game.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah, I mean, they are Elcessor-pilled. That is fucking true. But they are—okay. They are, you know, "go fell that pillar", right? That is—they are anti-pillar-pilled. They're gonna go fell that pillar. It doesn't—it sounds—my vibe from

everybody else is “let’s take care of the Figure in Bismuth.” That’s what I get from Thisbe, that’s what I get from Figure.

Janine: Yeah, I truly think that like, if the thing that was put to Thisbe was “okay, our next mission is to go take down the Stargrave,” I think Thisbe would be like “cool, I’m going to evacuate people” or something, [**Austin:** Right.] like—“I’m gonna be gone.” I can’t—like, there is something that is like, deep repellent to me in my, like, Thisbe mode brain, and I think it sort of boils down to “my presence is a liability to my operants.” I think Thisbe just fully believes “if I go do this, we will absolutely fail, therefore the best thing I can do is anything else.” [chuckles]

Austin: Damn, no belief in the Blue Channel.

Janine: No belief in herself, the big—the big, extremely visible rebel robot.

Brnine - Command Deck

[28:00]

Austin: Can we get this actually on screen? Because, like... this is an important conversation to have. I guess, Brnine, is your scene figuring this out, effectively, do we think?

Ali: I think so, yeah. Command—I was gonna do a Command Deck.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: And Command Deck reads: “the leading player helps plan for the upcoming Sortie...” [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Ali: “...adding a d6 to the upcoming Plan and Prepare.” And the Sortie is a big question mark, IMO. [laughs]

Austin: Right. Yeah, so maybe that—like, did you call everybody in for a meeting? Is this like, a team—is this like, a house meeting right now?

Ali: I think so, yeah.

Austin: Well, why don't you do it? I don't need to fucking be the—you know?

Ali: Sure, yeah. Sure, sure, sure. Okay, so I don't—like, this happens, right? Like, before a Sortie, this is a routine thing, come into the meeting, figure out what's going on.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: I think last time we had, like, Brnine in front of the, like, City City whatever stuff, even though we didn't go do that, but I think it's a similar thing of like—but like, now the board is empty. [chuckles]

Austin: Mm. Mhm.

Ali: Because we haven't like, been assigned anything yet.

Austin: Yeah, I think your official mission right now is probably keep calm.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Like, take a break after that. "We're figuring out what we want to do with you right now," you know?

Ali: Yeah. There's maybe some pictures of spies still up, because like, Brnine hasn't cleaned their desktop.

Austin: Right.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Hello, everyone.

Austin (as **Crew Member**): Afternoon, commander.

Ali (as **Brnine**): So, are we, um... the messaging that I've received from the Cause is that we... I guess we're technically on leave for the next week? I guess we're technically on quarantine on the ship, and hiding. But, um... we—we have some things to consider as a group, I think.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Such as?

[**Ali** and **Sylvi** chuckle]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Thank you, Cori.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): I... The announcement from Stargrave Elcessor is disturbing, and, uh... bad.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Ali (as **Brnine**): But, um... [stammers] we have a certain involvement here. And we also have our own interests—

Ali: And I sort of gesture at Figure.

Ali (as **Brnine**): —that, you know, this downtime, this “break,” quote unquote, could be beneficial to if we were discreet. Um, I—[stuttering]

[**Sylvi** scoffs] [**Ali** chuckles]

Ali (as **Brnine**): I understand that you are all looking to me for some [**Ali** bursts into laughter] guidance here.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): And I, um... I’m scared, I think, a little bit. Um... I think that this is fucked up, and I sort of think that we should do something, ‘cause doing something is how Millennium Break even came to be, right? So... so, you know, opportunities, right? Anyway, I—the floor is open.

[someone applauds] [a second person joins the applause]

Austin: Is that Cori clapping?

[**Ali** laughs]

Keith: No, that was Phrygian.

Austin: It was Phrygian.

Sylvi: I did start clapping, but I don’t know if it came through.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvi: I was doing supportive nodding the entire time, but that's hard to say on a podcast without interrupting.

Austin: Mm. Mhm, mhm.

Austin (as **Hunting**): Well, what are we gonna do?

Austin: Says Hunt.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I think that we should destroy the weapon.

Sylvi: I point at Phrygian and be like,

Sylvi (as **Cori**): That's a good idea.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Yeah. The weapon is dangerous, and so we should stop it.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Hard to argue.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I—yeah, I, that's—that would be great.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I will not go.

Ali (as **Brnine**): O-okay. I guess I should leave that open for anybody who doesn't, you know, want to.

Dre (as **Figure**): Wait, why won't you go?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I will not be able to complete that mission. Successfully. And the cost is beyond high if we do not complete it successfully.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Yeah, I'm a little worried about us messing this up and obliterating billions of people?

Austin (as **Midnite**): Maybe trillions.

Austin: Says Midnite.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Definitely trillions.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Oh, I'm dizzy now.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Ali (as **Brnine**): I do agree that it's high-risk. I disagree a little bit about the assessment of your ability, Thisbe, but I think that we all need to make this decision for ourselves before we make it for the group.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): [applauds]

Sylvi: Once again, I start clapping a second later.

[**Ali** and **Keith** laugh]

Dre: So supportive.

Ali: [laughing] Just for people at home, that was again, Phrygian and Thisbe. I mean, Phrygian and Cori.

Sylvi: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Dre: God.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Phrygian, I think you can...

Austin (as **Crew Member**): So we just want to vote on it? Is what you're saying? Like, if we say we don't want to go to the—do an assassination—or, I guess, you're saying we should go blow up the device.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I will go... hm. I'm considering going regardless of a vote.

[**Ali** chuckles]

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

Sylvi (as **Cori**): That seems like you, yeah.

Austin (as **Crew Member**): How would you get there?

Keith (as **Phrygian**): I don't know.

Austin (as **Crew Member**): That doesn't raise my confidence.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Well, it hasn't gotten to that. I just assumed that we'd all be going because of... it just feels like what we would do.

Ali (as **Brnine**): You know, we should blow up the device, and we should show the people on Palisade that we can do that.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): Hear, hear. [whispering] Was that better?

Sylvi (as **Cori**): They probably have like, a lot of—like, a *lot* of security around that thing, and like, they just need to like, catch wind of us and then they'll pull the button on their doohickey and blow everything up. So like, I don't know. I'm kinda—I don't think I can deal with that responsibility right now. I'm gonna—I might sit this one out.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): If they have the weapon, and they can stop us by threatening us with the weapon, then what are we doing?

Sylvi (as **Cori**): I didn't—

Keith (as **Phrygian**): If they can win by saying that they'll blow us up—

Sylvi (as **Cori**): I'm not saying we should give up completely, but I'm just saying, like, I don't—are we ready to do a full-on assault of that, you know?

Austin (as **Crew Member**): We're a team—

Sylvi (as **Cori**): No offense, but like, you're not piloting most of the time, so like, I don't think you really know what it's like.

Keith (as **Phrygian**): [indignant] Excuse me?

[Ali and Sylvi snicker]

Ali (as **Brnine**): I do think—

Sylvi (as **Cori**): You went to a party, like, a week ago.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I—I think Cori has, um, uh, making a point here by opening up the possibility—

Dre: [laughs] By shit-talking?

Ali (as **Brnine**): —that there is a way that we can, um, target the Stargrave while securing the safety of some of the other members of the crew, in case of a, uh... a detonation. [clears throat]

[**Sylvi** chuckles]

Dre (as **Figure**): Well, I mean if there's a detonation, I don't think...

Sylvi: You can like, hear Brnine, like, frantically wiping sweat off their brow in your delivery, and it's really good.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Austin: Mhm.

Dre: It is really good.

Austin: I think Routine is the one who suggests, like,

Austin (as **Routine**): You know, the mission to the combustor might be easier with less people if you can get there. Less chances for the alarm to go off, less overhead. Smaller things are easier to keep out of sight.

Ali (as **Brnine**): As we have learned recently, we are an incredible distraction as a split group, and I think we could use that to our benefit.

Ali: And I think Brnine smiles in a little bit of a way where [laughing] they know that they're being a shithead, [**Sylvi** laughs] like, they're in on the joke there of being like, "yeah, they did that to us, let's do it for us."

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Yeah, okay. Are we actually gonna just be doing something useful, or are we just going out there and distracting them?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Well, yeah. And, I mean—I mean, this Figure stuff is still sort of on the table. Um...

Sylvi (as **Cori**): True.

Dre (as **Figure**): I will—

Sylvi (as **Cori**): The moon might have some stuff that could help with the Stargrave, too.

Dre (as **Figure**): Yeah. Brnine, I'll go wherever you need me to, but I will be very honest and say I am not at a hundred percent right now.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I understand that your situation is time-sensitive, yeah. And I think with the recent reports of Nideo on the Lantern, the clock is ticking. So you should go do that, is what I think. And I—me and Phrygian are confident. Right, Phrygian?

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

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

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Okay.

Ali (as **Brnine**): So I think that we have our missions, and I don't want to force anyone's hand here, so you can speak to me privately about what you would prefer to do, and that goes to everybody, or you can say it here.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Oh, I'm good to help with the moon stuff. I think it'll be—I don't—it sucks seeing Figure feeling so shitty.

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

Sylvi: Sorry, crummy, crummy. Cori says crummy, she doesn't say "shitty". I need—that was Sylvi who said that.

[Ali chuckles] [Austin hums]

Dre: I don't know. She's been through some stuff. Maybe she says "shitty".

Sylvi: No, I'm retconning it. That time—she's sworn once canonically.

Austin: Mhm.

[**Ali** and **Janine** chuckle]

Austin (as **Hunt**): I guess I also want to do the moon thing.

Austin: Says Hunt.

Austin (as **Hunt**): Unless you need—I mean, what's it—what's this really look like? Are we bringing the ship to the moon? Are we—are you dropping us off on the moon?

Ali (as **Brnine**): I think, tactically, what might be more...

Ali: Um... [laughing] This is Ali pausing, and not Brnine.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: What does Solid Snake do? What's the—

Austin: Oh. What's like, the...

Dre: Uh, smokes?

Ali: [chuckling] What's a fancy word for sneaking?

Keith: Stealth?

Dre: Infiltration.

Austin: Infiltration. You're looking for infiltration.

Ali: Yes. Yes.

Austin: Yeah, mhm.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I think what might be a more tactical infiltration might be if you, it's sounding like, drop me and Phrygian off. And then I guess you'll find out how we do.

A-Plot / B-Plot

[40:18]

Austin: Let me—let me, Austin, lay out a little bit of what it's—I mean, so, what this sounds like, and what we talked about a little bit was like, A-plot, B-plot, right? One group, Chimera's Lantern, figure out what's going on there. You know, deal with—I'll just say outright, you know, from the down—from the, sorry, the conflict turn, you know that Stel Nideo has landed troops there. You know that they've set up shop. I don't know how much research you've done into that, you know? Who's up there, what's going on up there. They have been sending people into the moon. You know that you will have to figure out what's going on there, and kind of seek the source of power on the moon, on Chimera's Lantern. I mean, even to do that, you will have to have launched without—launch from the planet in some sort of stealthy way without drawing attention. So that's like, no matter which way you go here, if you're going to the Stellar Combustor, if you're going to Chimera's Lantern, getting off planet without being seen is already—that's like, hurdle number one. Landing on Chimera's Lantern is also a hurdle, right? Or getting people onto Chimera's Lantern safely without being seen. That's like a classic engagement roll type thing.

Also, getting to the Stellar Combustor has like—I think you just—this is just, you understand this because this is not the first time—you know, Millennium Break has probably tried to blow up a Stellar Combustor before in the history of the last five years. I said in the first faction game, I think, that that the Principality has definitely used a Stellar Combustor before. And so I think Millennium Break has at least looked into “what's it like to try to deactivate one of these or take one of these on?” And you know that there's like, super sensors around, and a layer of high sensors, then a layer of like, regular ass constant patrolling. And then there is the combustor itself, which you've never been on. I don't know that Millennium Break has like, the blueprints of it, necessarily. Not right now. I mean, this is stuff that we can start rolling for, you know, both in the set-up roll here, but also with the upcoming rolls.

Getting on board, whatever it is, figuring out how to navigate in such a way that like, you can blow it up, dealing with whatever security is on board, you don't know what that is. Or if there is an on board versus a just “you blow it up from shooting it a

bunch from the out”—like, it’s something that can sustain itself around a sun, right? It is like a space station in some way that has been hardened against a star. So what’s it mean to blow that up? How do you go about doing that? That’s the other—that sounds like the other plot, right? That sounds like, again, if—I guess if it’s Phrygian and Brnine, that’s the B-plot to the A-plot being going into the Chimera’s Lantern to try to find something for Figure.

So that’s what those—that’s what the needs of those two things look like. It’s probably not as simple as “just go drop off Brnine and Phrygian at the”—I think getting there is already a big enough challenge that like, you can’t just—a lot of the action in where I’m cutting between people will be the approach for Brnine and Phrygian. You know what I mean? And in that way, I don’t want to do the approach, the extraction, then the A-plot lands on the moon. And then we do all the A-plot. Do you know what I mean? Does that make sense? It’s like, I need the A-plot characters to be on the moon, while Phrygian and Brnine are still approaching the the combustor. Because that’s part of the difficulty of that B-plot. Otherwise, it’s the A-plot.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Which, I don’t know how you’re getting there. I, like—this is an Austin, I truly don’t know—you know, you have some treasure to spend, you can try to get some other resources, you can try to figure out—you can get a ride, you can call in favors, we can, you know, figure that out. But right now, I don’t know how you’re getting to the Stellar Combustor.

Ali: And it’s not some sort of like, get into the atmosphere, like, launch a pod...

Austin: It might be. You tell me.

Keith: Yeah, the treasure is too little per—speaking of Solid Snake.

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: Right. Like, it could be this. Why not? Right?

Keith: Has that—that came up recently. Why did that—was that—

Austin: 'Cause I pitched that for—

Keith: In this context? Yeah, okay.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: That's what I thought.

Austin: Uh-huh. Which I don't know that that's right. I don't know—I don't know how that gets you past sensors and literal spaceships trying to blow you up.

Keith: They're made of lead.

Austin: Right, sure. They're made of lead.

Dre: Sure. Makes sense.

Austin: That'll resist incoming missiles.

Keith: Well, it'll—

Ali: Mundane material, yeah.

Keith: It just won't seem like a ship.

Austin: Right. It'll just—right.

Keith: Block sensors or whatever.

Austin: Mhm. Again, these are two hurdles. So you'll have to think about this. Like, I—this is a true, like, this is the Hitman level thing, right? I'm giving you what the what the difficulties are, you'll have to come up with a way through them. We're not doing this tonight, so like, you'll have some time to plan. And yeah, if you want to spend that treasure, as a reminder, that is a thing that you can do. And I know, Phrygian, you still have a downtime move, right? You can basically count that treasure as four points of the downtime move where you go get something, you know, you'll buy a cool thing, or find a cool thing.

Ali: Oh, a Somewhere Nearby?

Austin: A Somewhere—is it Somewhere Nearby? Is that the one? I'll find it.

Ali: Yeah, the “sees what resources they can muster and acquires equipment,” blah, blah, blah.

Austin: Yes. Yes. Yeah, exactly. Yep.

Keith: Yeah, that's what I was—that's what I was thinking of doing.

Austin: Totally.

Keith: Which, also, I know that we're doing the Command Deck move now, but it also gives me a different opportunity to spend my token to...

Austin: Yeah. Advance projects or do whatever else you're looking to do. But yeah, so I think that that's—like, the structure of this in my mind seems to be that there would be you and Phrygian, Brnine, going to do Stellar Combustor stuff. And then it sounds like, I mean, Thisbe—or Janine, is Thisbe more interested in helping Figure on the moon? Does that feel up to capability?

Janine: I think so, yeah. I think, like—I think because she sort of already has been like, that, you know, that's a priority for her, [**Austin:** Yeah.] that it would be either that or, like—I don't know, how do you evacuate a solar system? You kind of can't. But, like—

Austin: I mean, yeah, especially one that's under lock and key by the Principality, you know?

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. But I think she'd be more inclined to do that, for sure.

Keith: And then it's—it does end up being a little bit like taking a grain of sand off a beach.

Janine: I mean, I don't think Thisbe is of the mind that if you can't save everyone, you shouldn't save anyone. You know? Like, I think if Thisbe was in a field and the field caught fire, she would be happier to save three plants than none. So I think there would still be value to her in that. But that said, I don't think that she would necessarily be like, “that's the thing we have to do right now.” It's more just like, “I

can't do the main thing, but I need to do something." So with the moon being an option, that would probably be her "something". [chuckles]

Austin: Mhm. Figure, I guess it goes without saying you are—you are moon, you are on team moon here.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: You're not like, gonna throw yourself at the combustor, just to be clear.

Sylvi: It would be really funny if you weren't.

[Dre laughs]

Austin: It would be so funny if after all this, you were like, "oh, no, I'm gonna do the combustor. Everybody else can go—"

Dre: Yeah, no, I'm out here. Yeah.

Austin: "—get me the moon thing, I guess, whatever."

Ali: [laughs] "Have fun, y'all."

Austin: Mhm. So yeah, I think that's—that's it, right? Again, I don't know what—I don't know how much of this you want to decide right now versus decide ahead of the next thing. I am not plotting out this mission for you. I am not—

Ali: Oh, sure, yeah.

Austin: Do you know what I mean? Like, I am not going to do the thing of like, "da-da-da"—like, sometimes I do that, sometimes I don't. This is one of the times that I don't. I am happy to be like, "hey, we should do some more research before blah-blah-blah." I mean, I'll give you more pointers, you know, or more like, details about what you're stepping into, if the characters go do research and stuff. But what I don't want to do is just like, pre-plot this for you. And part of that is because the Cause leadership doesn't know about it right now. And so they're not gonna—that is the way in which I tend to give you like, "oh, and here's the mission," right? Is someone above you gives you the breakdown. And there isn't anyone giving you that breakdown on this because it's a self motivated thing, right?

And I'm guessing it's staying that way. Are you telling anybody about this? Because I think that's part of the thing of like, how do you safely launch without being noticed by the—all of the radar systems, or the space, you know, whatever sci-fi, you know, sensors that are in place around this planet by the Bilateral Intercession. Normally, you would call on the Cause, and the Cause would have a system for this, you know? So that's on you now, versus it being a thing that like, Gucci can provide for you, you know?

Ali: Yeah, I mean, I think in terms of like, planning stuff, I feel pretty good about the set-up of like, oh, in character, we can at least say, like, we have planned to have the Blue Channel on the moon.

Austin: Mhm. Right.

Ali: And sort of use this next turn to sort of find like, what other stuff we can kind of come up with.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: And I will admit that I—[laughing]

Keith: Publicly? Public condition?

Ali: I had planned to call Gucci tonight, so.

Austin: You plan to call Gucci tonight.

Dre: Ohh.

Ali: I had planned to call Gucci tonight.

Austin: Ah, I see. Yeah.

Ali: So, if that is, uh, one of my—

Keith: What about?

Ali: Well... [laughs] I'm gonna let her know what we're doing.

Austin: [laughing] Oh my god.

Keith: Oh my god.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: We need a new captain.

Dre: I gotta just link something here really quick into the Discord.

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Let me just copy the link... There we go.

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Ali: [cross] Everybody, I'm sorry. We took all this time to figure out what the mission is gonna be, but Brnine is gonna get—

Keith: I'm sure this is brutal.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh-huh, yeah. No, yeah, this is exactly what I thought it was gonna be.

[Dre chuckles]

Ali: Brnine is gonna get arrested, and Austin is gonna [laughing] sign you up to a mission after I call Gucci tonight. No, I mean, I'm gonna invite her to movie day after this next mission. There's a movie night every other Sortie?

Austin: Yeah. Mhm.

Ali: And we didn't have one last time. [laughs]

Dre: You know?

Janine: What movie are you gonna lure Gucci in with?

Ali: [continues laughing] Saffron's pick, sorry to say.

Austin: Right. Yeah, sure. Sure, sure.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Dre linked “Marvins Room”

Ali: Yeah. Uh-huh. [laughs]

Austin: By the way. Just to be clear.

Ali: A rare Drake W, I just want to say.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Dre: Yeah. A hundred percent. Yeah.

Austin: One of the few undeniable ones.

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Many Ls.

Ali: Yeah. A catalog of Ls.

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: Innumerable, yeah, uh-huh.

Ali: Yeah. A catalog of Ls.

Sylvi: Yeah, no, the man’s career is built on them.

Austin: A sort of procedural generator of Ls.

Dre: Original AI artist in only good Ls.

Austin: [laughing] Yeah.

Sylvi: This is unrelated, but I have had talks with friends about how Drake was created so just to have the sins of Toronto put on him.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: Oh. Alright, well, it sounds like you want to roll—[chuckles]

[Dre chuckles]

Ali: Plan and Prepare? Yeah.

Austin: —a d6 to—I guess you want to add your d6 to the Plan and Prepare. You're not rolling Plan and Prepare yet, right?

Ali: Right, okay, yeah.

Austin: You're—you automatically get to add that d6 to it because you're doing this thing. Does anyone want to spend tokens to “contribute to the planet and prepare above; report on aid that they've given to a faction, untapping it; report on intel they've gathered—the Director will reveal something useful about the Sortie, [Ali chuckles] or volunteer to take point, letting you lead a Sortie in Confidence at the beginning of the mission.”

Sylvi: I'm tokened out. I got no tokens.

Austin: Yeah, I thought so.

Dre: Same.

Janine: I have two tokens.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Am I only allowed to use one or can I use them both?

Austin: No, you can use them both. You can use them both.

Janine: Okay.

Keith: We have, what, five of six tapped factions?

Austin: I'll double check.

Janine: [uncertainly] Yeah...?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Janine: That's a lot of tapped factions.

Keith: Grey Pond is currently the only untapped one, including Blue Channel, which I didn't realize.

Ali: Oh, it's Grey Pond and Violet Cove. So we only have four tapped factions, and honestly...

Keith: Oh, Violet Cove is Grippped, not tapped.

Austin: That's right. It has 1 Grip.

Janine: Yeah.

[**Dre** hums]

Keith: Okay. I just saw the the X and counted it, but it's a whole different color.

Ali: Oh, just mechanically, of just—because I've looked at the other things here, what—if we go into the Sortie tapped... [laughs]

Austin: As far as I know, it's just—I mean, this tap represented what? It represented the spy—

Ali: This—yeah.

Austin: Is this the Zedd thing? Go ahead, explain.

Ali: Uh-huh. This was the Zedd thing, yeah. This is Zedd telling lies to my poor dog.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Austin: Oh my fucking god.

Ali: Zedd walked into my bedroom, first of all. First of all.

Austin: I mean, that did happen, yeah. You weren't there.

Ali: I wasn't there. And you know, looked at my poor Divine Asepsis...

Austin: Oh my fucking god.

Ali: Very hard, and believed lies so badly [**Austin:** Yeah.] that my little dog is confused now. [chuckles]

Austin: I'm...

Keith: Damn.

Janine: You're right, I hadn't looked at it like that. It's actually really funny.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Keith: Can't even use its big water jets.

Janine: I thought it was like, kinda—I thought—I'd been like, oh man, that's—when you phrase it like that though, it's very funny that he did that. [chuckles] I think I'm a Zedd stan now.

[**Ali** continues laughing]

Austin: He's gone. He's safe. You know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Zedd got out.

Sylvi: I'm glad.

Austin: We could have Zedd in a future season. You know what I mean?

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: He nailed it. He did a great job.

Sylvi: Our universe needs more hot shitheads, so.

[**Ali** and **Janine** chuckle]

Austin: Yeah, agreed. Uh-huh. [chuckling] There's definitely a lack of that here on Friends at the Table.

[Dre snickers]

Sylvi: Oh, definitely.

Janine: I would like to—

Brnine and Asepsis

[54:56]

Austin: “The faction the players belong to acts like any other during the conflict turn and can be tapped, untapped, or destroyed as per any other group. Though in the latter case, the players should consider looking for a different faction to group up with.” You’re tapped, right? I think that we play it fictionally, right? Which is that, like, Asepsis is fucked up right now.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: It is jumping at shadows. It’s doubting itself. It doesn’t—it is not a good threat detector in—which is to say in both directions. It’s overestimating threats and underestimating threats in ways that are bad for you, and bad for the Blue Channel writ large.

Keith: Well, I think that’s important to untap that.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Keith: That sounds bad.

Ali: I was—yeah. Well, so, I—full clarity here is that for the downtime, I wanted to spend some fictional time with Asepsis anyway because, like, I feel like I asked a lot of Asepsis last mission, sort of.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.

Ali: And then like, the faction game only complicated that more.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: So I would like to use my token for that, but I was kind of looking at the, like, you can investigate this thing. “Report on intel you’ve gathered.”

Austin: Sure.

Ali: And I was wondering how bad it would be to just keep that—keep us tapped for a little while, but in my heart of hearts I do wanna spend this time with Asepsis, so.

Austin: Alright, so you’re gonna spend the token and clear—

Janine: I think, fictionally, it makes the most sense for you to untap us.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Because of that Asepsis stuff.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. What’s that look like? What does spending time with Asepsis look like?

[Ali laughs]

Sylvi: How do you play with this dog?

Austin: Oh my god.

Ali: [laughing] Janine has, thankfully, included a GIF in chat from A&E for some reason of someone petting their dog. So, um, I... how does it look like? I, um...

[Sylvi laughs]

Ali: This is so funny, I—

Keith: Sorry, did you say of someone petting their dog?

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Oh, sorry, there's another one after that [laughing] and that's not how I would describe that second one.

[**Ali** and **Austin** laughs]

Sylvi: Well, yeah, there's two of them.

Austin: Can we please describe the image for people who cannot see it?

[**Dre** hums]

Keith: Yeah, this is a very sad and scared looking old golden retriever that is being gently pet by what looks like two very advanced Rock 'Em Sock 'Em robots?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yep. Mhm. Does not look happy about this. Poor bud.

Keith: No, does not look like he's enjoying the pet.

Austin: Also there's a—what do you call that? Like a brand stamp, a—what is that called? A—

Janine: Watermark?

Keith: Watermark.

Austin: Watermark that says "viral hog" on it.

[**Keith** and **Ali** laugh]

Janine: Does it say "hog" or "heg"?

Dre: It says "heg".

Sylvi: Wow.

Keith: It says "hag", I think.

Austin: I don't think it's "hag".

Keith: I think it's an A, I think it's like an at symbol.

Sylvi: If you're experiencing a viral hog, please go to your doctor.

Ali: Viral hag.

Keith: No, I guess it's not an at symbol. It does kind of look like an at symbol.

Janine: I think it's an O, but it's got another O in it for some reason.

Sylvi: Oh, viral hoog.

Keith: Viral hoog, yeah. It's viral hoog.

Austin: Are you sure it's not this, because the viral hog logo, the O is like a—

Ali: Ohh.

Sylvi: Am I gonna click viralhog.com?

Dre: It is a risky click.

Austin: It's really cute, actually.

Keith: [laughing] It is kinda—it actually is kinda cute.

Austin: It's a pig nose.

Keith: [laughing] It's a little pig nose.

Sylvi: Okay, that's not bad.

Janine: Eh.

Dre: Wow. Janine's seen better viral hogs.

Keith: Well, it's not—it's not what some people thought it maybe was gonna be.

[Ali laughs]

Sylvi: This is—yeah, no.

Dre: "Transformer B&W unveiled."

Keith: That's what I thought it was gonna be.

Austin: Great. Great.

Sylvi: Yeah, me too.

Keith: I thought it was gonna be Transformer unveiled.

Austin: Anyway.

Dre: "The Amazon Echo and Roomba can communicate."

Austin: Oh my fucking god. Yeah, this is actually a nightmare. This is for—

Sylvi: Yeah, never mind. Viral—

Austin: I guess, you know what?

Janine: It's for licensing—

Sylvi: Go to the viral heg.

[**Janine** laughs]

Austin: If someone does—yeah, if you have—[laughs] if you have a viral video, I want you to get paid for it instead of people just, you know, not paying you for it and putting it on their shit. So I guess a marketplace for that is not [strained] the worst thing in the world. Anyway.

Ali: So—

Dre: I can really hear the conviction in your voice.

Austin: Thank you, yeah.

Ali: [chuckles] I've previously described Brnine's room as being where Asepsis hangs out, primarily, [**Austin:** Mhm.] in its like, multi-drone form, and [chuckles] they have like, a loft bed, and then underneath—[laughing] I realize that I am bunking with Asepsis.

Janine: Yeah, wait, Asepsis has a loft bed, or you have a loft bed?

Ali: No, I—they, Brnine, has a loft bed, and then underneath that is sort of like an open area where Asepsis hangs out.

Austin: So you got top bunk, is what you're telling me.

Ali: I have top bunk, yes.

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Ali: And I think another notable thing in Brnine's room is that they still have the string of pearls plant that Thisbe gave in the, um... B92? B... Is it B92? What was the little robot from Partizan?

Austin: Bing?

Ali: Bing. Bing 92.

Austin: Oh my god.

Ali: Wow, sorry.

Austin: I don't think it's 92. I don't—

Sylvi: It's—

Ali: 32?

Janine: B6-12?

Sylvi: It's 32. I'm pretty sure it's Bing 32.

Ali: [chuckling] Okay. Bing 32.

Austin: I think there were a number of Bings, to be clear.

Ali: Right.

Austin: But yes, Bing 32 was the first one that you... "Broun"—I'm reading from the thing—"Broun's floating cat-sized drone able to use a variety of tools" was Bing 32.

Ali: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. So that is there, and it's also super grown out. And a thing that I've imagined is the little Asepsis drone being like one of those crabs in [chuckling] "crab eating food" videos, but not eating food, but like—like trimming it, like taking off all of the dead spots and like, making sure it grows all nice and fluffy.

Keith: Sorry, you said Asepsis is gardening?

Ali: [chuckles] I did say that, yes.

Dre: Mhm.

Keith: Okay.

Ali: And—

Austin: It's purifying the plant.

Keith: It's purifying.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It's accidentally gardening.

Austin: It's getting rid of anything impure near the plants. You know.

Dre: Sure, gardening.

Ali: It's trimming it. It's pruning it.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I bet.

Ali: It's a very healthy plant. It's been five years.

Austin: Yeah. Oh, I bet it's so healthy.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I'm sure—I'm sure that—in fact, I think, if you should let Asepsis free, Asepsis would find all sorts of ways to make the world healthier.

[**Ali** and **Keith** laugh]

Keith: One little snip at a time.

Austin: One—[laughs] yeah, exactly.

Ali: Um... Sure. Yeah. And—how would I actually do this?

Austin: Great question, because like, what's happened is it's lost trust in itself and in the world in such a way that it doesn't know that it... Like, how do you—are you recalibrating it? Are you...

Ali: I feel like it's something like that, right? And like, especially with... 'Cause I feel like Brnine—Brnine doesn't know the Zedd part of it, right? Brnine knows that it put Asepsis in a situation where it wanted to act way more than it did, [**Austin:** Mhm.] and Brnine had to be the person to be like, "no." Like, "I understand that these tombs and shit is confusing to you, and you want to make like, a whole Wikipedia dewey decimal system, but just please look into these spies for me."

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: So I wonder if it's like... I wonder if it like—if it's Brnine... if it's like... [laughs] If this is like, a tech guy Brnine thing of like, having a bunch of old hard drives that it lets Asepsis sort of go into, or if it's like, something part of Brnine's, like, captain duty, or like something where they've set up... like, I don't want to say an algorithm, but a thing where it's like, taking in...

Janine: Is it defragging? [**Ali** chuckles] Is it like when you defragment a drive and it puts all the colored stuff together in a little screen?

Ali: I think so, but I think also part of it is like, giving it information to go through. So as it's going through, it's like...

Austin: You're making it do CAPTCHAs?

Ali: [laughs] Not that, but analyzing, like—like, if—this is bad, but like, if Brnine recorded all of the tweets for a week, and then was like, “hey, Asepsis,” like, you know, “go crazy.” [laughs]

Austin: [disbelief] You’re making Asepsis read all of the tweets on Twitter?

Sylvi: Oh no.

Austin: This is therapeutic?

Janine: Asepsis GPT. Do not like it. Do not like it.

[Ali continues laughing]

Dre: Yeah, no, that sounds bad.

Ali: I keep getting—okay. Okay. Let’s—

Austin: Take three, take three.

Keith: Wait, no, hold on. I like it.

Dre: Yeah, hold on, time out, time out, time out.

Keith: I like this.

Ali: What’s a version of this that’s like, it could be information, but it’s not Twitter, but it could be like, world news. Like actual news? [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Let’s tune into the—who runs the news on this planet, again?

Keith: It’s the same as Twitter.

Ali: Well...

Dre: Yeah. [laughs]

Ali: You get what I’m saying. [laughs]

Austin: I—only sort of.

Keith: Hold on. Hold on. So the thing that's wrong with Asepsis is like, the calibration on what's pure and what's not is out of wack. It's worse than usual. It's different than usual. And—

Austin: And it's explicitly that it's erratic, is what I would say, Keith. Like, we know that the first time that we saw Ase—like, just as a—just to be as clear as possible, the first time we ever saw Asepsis in action, I believe, it was trying to eradicate—

Keith: It was eating a planet. I mean, eating a city. It was eating a city.

Austin: It was specifically trying to eradicate the Equiaxed from a Columnar city.

Keith: Right.

Austin: It was trying to do ethnic cleansing.

Keith: Right.

Austin: So between now and back then—I guess—Brnine has dialed it in a little bit already. [chuckles] Back to something less than, or different than that, in some way.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Now, I think that that thread is always still in there in some way. Divines are like this. Divines do change over time. We've talked about—go back to COUNTER/Weight, listen to me talk about Grace, how sometimes Grace gets like this. So we know that Divines on a long enough timeline, like if you leave an algorithm running, like if you leave RAM running, it can—like, you know how Chrome can just have like, a weird memory leak in it?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Divines are like that. They can shift and change and fuck up and end up facing—like, having different perspectives over a long enough time, right? So maybe Brnine's been doing some work to get Asepsis off of that. The thing here isn't—I don't think that this is it's gone back to thinking Equiaxed are impure.

Keith: Right.

Austin: I think it's that, like, it can look at the same thing twice and get a different trust score on it, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It can look at a candle burning and be like, "oh, yeah, that's just a candle burning," and then look again at it—

Janine: He taught it subjectivity.

Austin: Well, I think it's not even that. I think that it's like, it looks at the same candle twice and the second time it's like, "that could fall over and burn us all down," right? So to a degree, it's subjectivity. I think it might also be paranoia. [chuckles] It might also be overreaction in some cases, or underreaction in other cases.

Janine: Oh, he gave it anxiety.

Austin: Yeah. Yes. That is actually literally true. Yes.

Keith: Oh, so yeah. Now I get it. Twitter is a bad idea.

[Austin laughs]

Ali: [laughs] But like, the thought of, like... giving it information to analyze, so as it goes through those processes and it ends up seeing a candle over and over again and like, getting—and like, recalibrating its answers so those are aligned, is sort of what I was trying to get at.

Austin: Right. There is a—

Janine: You want to like, expand its data set. Because like, under the idea that right now it's operating on like, "well, I've seen five candles and half of them fell over, therefore..." But if you say like, "well, here's a thousand candles that didn't fall over."

Austin: That didn't fall over. Right. "And look, and we ran the simulation a thousand times," like, there is a version of like, evolutionary AI that is not—not the sort of AI that gets fed data, the sort of AI that gets asked to solve a problem and then like, regenerate itself over and over—I don't know if y'all have seen these things, right, where it's like "build a creature that can climb this hill," and the way it does it is by

like, continually generating new creature things. Like, “okay, this is just like, two sticks put together, and they sort of look like legs. Okay, that didn’t work. Let’s do four. Let’s do a wheel.”

Keith: So you want to make it play Spore?

Austin: That is kind of—you know.

Dre: Hm.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Austin: But it’s not as—I really need to just find an example of like, what these videos look like so you know what the fuck I’m talking about, but I don’t remember what—

Janine: This is the one I saw most recently, I think.

Austin: This is not what I’m thinking of, but yes, this totally—this does totally work. I think the thing is that I don’t know that DeepMind is specifically not doing—being fed data. Do you know what I mean? Versus—but maybe it is.

Keith: If we can go back to last season, imagine this isn’t a program, but it’s real.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Keith: This is a lot of the—this is a lot of the work to get the Columnar bipedal. This is like what I had—this is sort of what I’m thinking—

Austin: Oh, yes. Totally.

Keith: When they had to do the work to like, walk on two legs so that they could—would be taken seriously diplomatically, this is it.

Austin: Mhm. Anyway, the thing that happens in this, and so like, what—Janine, what you linked was this DeepMind—“Google’s DeepMind AI just taught itself to walk.” And it’s—it is, if you’re watching it, it is a hundred percent just like a bunch of little creatures, a little, like, orb with four legs trying to jump from platform to platform, where it’s given information and it’s told like, “alright, solve this.” And yeah, I could

imagine something like that, Ali, where it's like—it's not just "oh, look, the candle doesn't burn out." It's like, "hey, we can run the simulation on whether or not the candle is gonna burn out based on what happens," like, and what you have to do to make sure the candle doesn't burn out, you know? Or doesn't fall over and burn us all over. Like maybe it's like a training set of tasks, you know? But I think it has to be tasks and not information, because it has to do something, not just read that things are okay. You know?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: I want it to like, be a verb and not a noun. Does that make sense? That might not make sense.

Ali: Sure. Yeah. Um—

Austin: Like, I don't think that there's a database you could hook it up to just make it right.

Ali: Oh, yeah.

Austin: 'Cause if it—do you know what I mean?

Ali: Right. Um... yeah, I—right, yeah. I think for me, there, like, the... the thing of like, letting it sort through things in that way [**Austin:** Mhm.] was more of just like a way of it, like, doing its process. Like, the more that it is able to run the whatever programs it is, the more that like, it'll get straightened out.

Austin: Mhm. So is it off—what does spending this token look like, then? Because like that is—that's a thing it could do itself, right? So what's Brnine doing as part of this to help it get back on track?

Ali: Right. I guess that's—

Austin: Besides just hitting the button. You know what I mean?

Ali: Right, yeah. That—I mean, that's what the tough thing there for me was, 'cause what I was introducing there is that like, Brnine would spend the time to give it things

to go through. [**Austin** hums] But if that doesn't feel like it's a right solution, then I guess I'm...

Austin: I mean, what if it's like, what you're doing while it's—like, what if it's you—here's a pitch. What if it's you taking on its sort of role as being the security for the ship for a couple of nights so that it can just focus on getting its head right [**Ali** chuckles] by going over information and running through simulations and doing all that stuff, knowing that you're gonna keep the ship safe during its kind of time offline, so that it doesn't have to stress about that. Do you know what I mean?

Ali: Oh, so I'm putting it in sleep mode, and then it's gonna wake up and see that the Blue Channel isn't burning down and be like, "oh, okay."

Austin: Well, and also like, it's—you're putting it in sleep mode. I don't—it's like, you're putting it in sleep mode and the only reason it's agreeing to do that is because you're saying, "you trust me, I'm gonna keep the ship safe." And then you have to like, actually do the work to show that like, "yeah, I stayed at the cameras. I watched all the cameras for the 12 hours it took you to defrag yourself," or whatever, you know?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: And I think that's like, an actual material thing you could give it to—

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: —give it the space and time to, you know, calm down and work over all this stuff and get itself back to normal.

Ali: Okay. Yeah. I think that makes sense.

Austin: Also, then we get Brnine as being a little tired, a little sleepy, [**Ali** chuckles] because you have to pull all nighters doing what Asepsis normally does, which is like, flip through every radio station, check all of the different types of, you know, radar and sonar and stuff to make sure that you're not being attacked or being spied on or whatever, right? Like, doing all of the things that Asepsis normally does to keep you safe. Brnine has to do it themselves. And that's hard.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: There's a reason why you like having Asepsis around. I mean, I think there's actually a couple reasons why, but.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Some of them I don't trust. Um... I think that untaps you.

Ali: Okay, cool.

Phrygian and Jade Kill

[1:12:30]

Austin: Is anyone else trying to untap any of the remaining...

Keith: Yeah. I was thinking either, you know, and I'm not, like—I don't know even if it's that important of a question, but Jade Kill and Carmine Bight both tapped, both could be untapped.

Austin: Mhm. Both tapped, both could be untapped.

Keith: "Deliver a cut of loot to the Car"—ah, I guess Jade Kill, just in case.

Austin: Uh-huh. Just in case you end up with another pillar at zero Grip.

Keith: [cross] Just in case it comes up. Just in case, right.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Keith: You know, "gives key intel—key intel gives the party advantage when they next lead a Sortie." That's great, but, you know.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: Wait, where are you reading this from?

Austin: Jade Kill has—

Keith: Oh, that's Rose River.

Austin: That's Rose River. You're looking at Rose River.

Keith: Yeah, so I'm saying, like—yeah.

Austin: Jade Kill is “fell a pillar with zero Grip,” Carmine Bight is “deliver a cut of loot,” which is how you got that treasure.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And then Rose River is “key intel gives the party advantage when they next lead a Sortie,” if they had won any of their things. Which they did not this time.

Keith: Right, so that is, you know, thinking ahead, that's sort of like untapping that would help us in the Sortie after the next faction game. So it just sort of like, feels a long way out to like, want advantage.

Austin: Mhm. Yeah.

Ali: Mm, mhm.

Keith: Maybe that's short-sighted of me. You know, feel free for this to be playing in your head next time we really need an advantage after the next faction game.

[laughs]

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: But yeah, if—you know, maybe I'm talking myself into Rose River.

[Austin laughs]

Keith: Because like, what are the chances that we've got another—

Austin: Pillar at zero, or at—ready to be, even if you do—

Keith: But how bad would it suck if somehow this next thing resolves with nothing gets—nothing gets fallen.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: We don't fell anything, but it's still tapped.

Austin: I cannot—if you don't fell the Stargrave Elcessor, the campaign is over, Keith.

Keith: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[Ali chuckles]

Keith: Yeah. I'm just not—yeah, you're right. There's no way—I'm just—

Austin: That one is—that one is pretty set.

Keith: I'm just thinking—I'm just leaving the 1% chance that somehow we resolve it and win, but we don't do whatever thing gets set up to fell it. But I think that that's impossible. I think that—

Austin: No. I—yeah. I would never let you succeed and then not give you this pillar.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Austin: It's too fucking—I would have to be the worst person in the world.

Keith: Yeah. It would be way too much work to then not get the thing. It would be—

Austin: Yes. What is possible is, hey, do you end up with more Grip on other things somehow?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And, you know, I don't know. That is much more ambiguous in my mind, but.

Keith: Yeah. Um... I don't know. Does anybody have anything—I mean, I could do any of these, or if someone else has things to flip, that also—you know, I'm—

Janine: I still have two tokens, so.

Keith: Is anyone like, "I really think it's bad to not do Rose River."

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Sorry, Janine, what did you say?

Janine: I still have two tokens—

Keith: Oh, okay.

Janine: —so we can do both of them if we want to do both of them.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Yeah, sure, how about—okay.

Janine: Or I can spend both of those tokens to advance the next thingy. Like, I'm happy to do whatever is a good idea.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: I do want to call out that the “intel about the next Sortie” thing could be fictionally powerful.

Keith: Yeah. But it wouldn't be—it won't be—

Janine: [cross] Yeah, I was gonna do one of those, at least.

Keith: It won't be this upcoming one, it would be the one after that, or the one after that, depending.

Austin: No, Ali is talking about the Command Deck option, I believe—

Keith: Oh, right.

Austin: “Report on Intel that they've gathered, the Director will reveal something useful about this Sortie.”

Keith: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

Ali: Mhm.

Keith: That's great, yes. I think that is great.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Okay. Well, I'll stop worrying about it, and then I'll do Jade Kill.

Austin: Okay. What's that look like? What does untapping them look like?

Keith: Um... so, what happened in the last—in the faction game that they obviously were trying to—

Austin: They tried to assassinate the Stargrave Elcessor—

Keith: Assassinate the Stargrave. So their—

Austin: —and she was not where she was supposed to be. She got moved out at the last possible second. This is also what happened with Carmine Bight, who supported that assassination attempt. They both kind of just got outplayed.

Keith: Yeah. They both—yeah.

Austin: They went all in on that, and now, you know, they lost some people, and they're spread out far from what their support bases are. So in this case, I think it's like, Jade Kill does not have as much support, as they—or, you know, as many people, as they normally do to hold on to the bits of the Bontive Valley that they pushed into.

Keith: Yeah. Are they—how are people feeling about that? Like, are they bummed out? Are people upset at them? Like...

Austin: Great question. Yeah, probably, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Or not upset, but disappointed, right?

Keith: Right. Well, they're—that—

Austin: "Scared" is mostly—

Keith: We're in a tough spot that they failed.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh. I think that they're very—I think that everybody in the Cause is scared. Everyone in Hexagon is like, "oh, I could die any second."

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Any second.

Keith: I think that this is a rarity for Phrygian, but I think they're gonna go and—can I get there? I can get there. I can get there, right? I'm not like, that locked down.

Austin: To Bontive Valley? Yeah. I don't think—I mean...

Keith: Well, we're sort of quarantined and it's sort of—that's the—

Austin: Yeah. What's the thing that you wanted to do? We'll work backwards.

Keith: I kind of want to, like—I kind of want Phrygian to be like, "hey, I get it. [chuckles] I'm there with you. I'm—whatever—however you're feeling about this, I'm feeling about this."

[Sylvi laughs]

Austin: I think we need more than that to untap them, is what I would say.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: This is about aid you've given to a faction. You know? I don't—I think that like, the equivalent of getting everybody hyped there is more than just like, hanging out there for a couple of days. I think it's like, [chuckling] putting on a show, you know? Or like—

Keith: So you're saying Phrygian wants to—is gonna put on a show?

Austin: I don't know. I'm saying that if what you're—if your angle on this is the problem—"part of why they're tapped is morale, I want to raise morale," I think that's a fine direction. I think we need more than "you show up." Who the fuck are you? Like, no offense to Phrygian, who the fuck are you? You're not making the—I mean, hopefully you do make the sun not blow up, but is that like, you go and give a speech about how you're gonna make the sun not blow up? Probably not, because that's a thing you're keeping secret as far as I know.

Keith: Right. I like the show angle. What kind of show does Phrygian want to put on? Everyone's invited.

Austin: I don't know.

Keith: Phrygian found an old—an old Shari Lewis tape of Lamb Chop, Lamb Chop's Sing-Along, and learned about puppets—

Dre: Oh, sure, yeah.

Keith: —and is gonna do a puppet show for everyone at Jade Kill to make them feel better. No, this is a terrible idea.

Austin: [laughs] I mean, are you going and like, "I'm gonna just entertain the kids. I'm gonna entertain the kids. I'll take—everybody who has kids can just like, breathe a sigh of relief as their kids are entertained by the weird puppet show."

Keith: Oh, no, this is not appropriate for all ages. This is not a—this is not—

Dre: Oh.

Keith: [chuckling] This is—

Austin: An inappropriate for all ages Lamb Chop show?

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Austin: We have to—

Dre: [cross] I love this new Adult Swim pitch that you're putting together.

Janine: [cross] Wasn't that called "Puppetry of the Penis"? Wasn't that real?

[**Keith** laughs] [**Ali** groans]

Sylvi: Yeah, it was real.

Dre: Hey, what? What?

Austin: It was real. It was real.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

[typing]

Austin: And it is very Phrygian in my mind, actually.

Dre: Ay—ayo?

Janine: Don't Google it. I heard someone typing. Don't do that.

Austin: Are you not familiar? This is a real thing.

Sylvi: You should look it up sometime.

Austin: Yeah. It was an Australian thing.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvi: I literally saw a physical copy of this in a movie store like last week.

Keith: Uh... no, this is not—

Sylvi: Fucking insane.

Austin: Geoff Gershwin voice, "I was holding this in my hands just yesterday in the garage."

Sylvi: [laughing] Fucking honestly, though.

Keith: No, I don't think it's this. [laughing] I don't think it's—

Austin: [laughing] Okay.

Sylvi: [laughs] Are you sure?

Keith: [laughing] I don't think that Phrygian goes and does a penis show for Jade Kill. [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Hm. Hm. Hm.

Austin: That's good to know.

Janine: Mhm.

Dre: Interesting.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Keith: I just don't—I'm just struggling to see that.

Austin: Or any sort of puppetry, it's off the table. A USO show, not happening.

Ali: What if you turned into some sort of lounge or arcade?

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Dre: Ooh.

Keith: Oh, I did learn about arcades at the very first—

Austin: You did.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Keith: The very first Sortie this season.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Sylvi: Oh. A little untz-untz.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: The Blue Channel lands—

Janine: I can't believe we're closing the door on Lamb Chop.

Austin: Uh-huh. We are—[chuckles] I think we kind of have to.

Sylvi: We closed that door early.

Austin: Uh-huh.

[Ali laughs]

Janine: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: I'm not all—I'm not a hundred percent out on Phrygian does Shari Lewis's Lamb Chop Sing-Along.

Austin: The idea that you would like, land the Blue Channel and open the cargo bay, like, door, right, like the back door opens up—or the front, however—I forget if it's in the front or the back—and the inside is just a sort of carnival. Is just like, games to play, [Keith: Yeah.] and arcade machines, and someone doing a sing-along. And it's like, oh, that's all Phrygian. All of that's Phrygian.

Keith: It's also—all of it's Phrygian, and it's fully—it is fully featured, but like, fully featured as from a dream. Like, someone who has really 70 to 80 percent of an understanding of what someone would want out of this, which is like, pretty solid, but needs to fully and realistically recreate the whole thing.

Austin: Right.

Keith: You know, it's sort of like in a dream where you can't quite read, or like you have weirdly six fingers, or someone is like "oh, this is my friend from school, but they didn't look like my friend from school." It's that, but it's like, arcade games—it's like, games, so it's like, weird stuff, like—

Janine: What was that video game bus? You remember that video game bus?

Keith: Video game bus? I don't remember a video game bus.

Dre: Desert Bus?

Austin: No, you're talking about like, a bus that would drive around.

Janine: No, there was like a—yeah, it was full of like, Xboxes or something. Like, to schools.

Dre: Ohh.

Austin: Yeah, Microsoft had one of these.

Ali: Nintendo had one too, right?

Austin: The U.S. Army, of course. The U.S. Army has a big one of these.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah. I feel like Sega had one at one point?

Austin: Yeah, this was a thing. This was a thing. Do you have like, tick—like, you can win tickets from things, but then you go to cash them in, and it's like rubber bands and—

Keith: Oh yeah. Yeah, definitely. Yeah, but it's like, weird stuff. It's like, you know, the stuff is mixed up, like, you've got to throw darts into milk bottles, [**Austin** laughs] or you've got to pop—or pop balloons with balls, or you're—

Austin: With baseballs.

Dre: With the milk bottles.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Uh-huh. [laughing] With other milk bottles.

Keith: [chuckles] Stuff is sort of mixed—you have—

Austin: You have a milk gun that you have to shoot at milk bottles. There's a lot of milk bottles.

Keith: [laughs] It's very—yeah, there's a lot of milk.

[**Sylvi**, **Dre**, and **Ali** groan]

Keith: [laughing] Every—every game's got a little—

Austin: We got somewhere bad again.

Keith: [laughing] Every game's got a little milk.

Austin: I don't like it.

Sylvi: No!

Dre: Yeah, I don't like it either.

[**Keith** continues laughing]

Austin: It's sponsored by the dairy council. It's the Bontive Valley, right, like?

Keith: [laughing] Yeah, it's dairy-themed, yeah.

Ali: Well, you know, going into—

Keith: Pin the gruyère on the donkey, you've got—[laughs]

[**Austin** groans] [**Ali** chuckles]

Ali: What?

Dre: Hey, what?

Keith: Pin the gruyère on the donkey!

Ali: I—

Janine: [cross] It should be a goat or like, a sheep, 'cause they—there's more cheese from them.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: I was gonna say, like—

Austin: Harvests are high yielding.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: You need calcium if you went into space and the gravity fucks with your bones.

Austin: You do. That's true, yeah.

Keith: There's a big—

[**Sylvi** groans]

Ali: And instead you went to [laughing] pin the gruyère on the donkey. Oh, no.

Keith: I don't see what's wrong with pin the gruyère on the donkey.

Austin: Alright. Untapped.

Dre: Yeah. Yeah, no.

Austin: Who's next?

Keith: Oh, sorry, I gotta just say—I just want to say people love it, obviously. [laughs]

[**Ali** chuckles]

Austin: I mean, I untapped it, didn't I?

Keith: Yeah, you untapped it. I just wanted to make sure everyone knew that everyone loved it.

Thisbe Gathers Intel

[1:24:30]

Austin: Well, and you know what? This gives an opportunity for anybody who does want to spend a token to like, get intel. That could be what you're doing while the carnival is happening inside of Phrygian. You know, you're like, "oh, we're in a city, we're in Carhaix, we can like, go do research. We can go ask around."

Janine: I do hate when you say it like that, but yeah.

Austin: Mhm. [chuckles] It is what it is. Listen.

Janine: I also think that Thisbe would not want to be around this at the risk of being seen as an attraction.

Austin: Fair.

Janine: Because she's a large white [**Austin:** Yeah.] ungulate robot, and there's a lot of, you know... there's like, goat cheese.

Austin: Right. Mhm.

Janine: A lot of cheese actually comes from sheep.

[**Dre** hums]

Janine: I just think she would want to steer clear.

Austin: Get some distance, sure.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: So what are you—so are you spending a token to get intel on this mission?

Janine: Yes.

Austin: What are you doing to—what are you—it says “report on intel they’ve gathered.” So, what is the intel you’ve gathered or where did you get it? What question are you looking to have answered about these impending missions?

Janine: Um... I have an idea in my head that I don't know if it's possible, but I—do they have like, a cool telescope here or something, maybe? Or like—I would—

Austin: Sure, that's fun. I don't think that that's out of character for Carhaix.

Janine: I love the image of just like—yeah. I love the idea of just like, Thisbe just like, sitting down and like, getting coordinates and just, like, doing observational stuff. Maybe there's like a radar—not radar, but like, maybe there's a thing that like, you know, if you spend time, you can sort of map out the different sensor rays, and you can find little holes in them or something like that.

Austin: Mhm. Yeah, I mean the—

Janine: Just a like, “sit down and do the work” kind of thing.

Austin: So you're looking towards the Stellar Combustor stuff specifically more than the moon stuff.

Janine: Um, I think because we both have to get off the planet, right?

Austin: Sure, that's a—that's a good first—yes. Totally. That makes sense.

Janine: It's the like—it's the like, first half of the trip before we can split off and do the thing.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense.

Janine: Just like, how do we get out?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, I think that you identify, then—that's a really, really great place to start—effectively, like a blind spot in the sensors, right? Or a moment where there is one, right? The constellation satellites that we don't talk about that often this season, the ones that are, you know, the constellations of the Divine Principality's different months of the year, which are also all tied to the different, you know, Stels, those also serve as the, like, sensor satellites, and those are—you know, when they are reconfiguring or whatever, there is a moment where you can sneak through them, right? And so you know the time of day that that happens, and like, the place you'll need to try to lift off from.

We talked about this a little bit off-mic that like, Asepsis being a Divine gives you the sort of extra boost that you need, and just in general, being in the age of the Altar, all this new, like, hyper magic tech, the Blue Channel can launch itself into space. You know, it takes a lot of effort, it takes a lot of like, shifting all of your power into engines, so to speak. Asepsis has to give a lot of its power to give you that much thrust, but you can do it.

But yeah, I think maybe you have to launch, you know, from a particular place, you know, let's say—let's say, you know, over the the north pole, or over, you know, a particular part of the sea in the south or something. We'll decide maybe ahead of this next mission as I continue to plot stuff out. Or like, at the beginning of the next mission. But you find what that place is, and you find out that like, okay. In effect, when we do the roll to start the mission to lead the Sortie, that is what that will be, and so you have that settled. You know what what the time and place is.

Alright, anybody else doing any intel gathering while here? Yeah, what are the tokens—the only tokens left are...

Ali: I think Thisbe has more?

Austin: Thisbe has one and that is it. Right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Can I just like, put that into—towards Plan and Prepare or something? Like that kinda—

Austin: Yeah, you can... yes, you can contribute to Plan and Prepare as above. Yep, totally.

Janine: Okay.

Ali: Oh, so I'm adding another d6.

Austin: Yep, so I can bring that up to 4d6.

Janine: Hell yeah.

Austin: You could also, just as a note, volunteer to lead the Sortie in Confidence, which is also a bonus to like, kicking things off next time. Whereas Plan and Prepare is the thing that gives you the like, opportunities to get bonuses.

Janine: Ugh, the idea of leading a Sortie... [scoffs]

Austin: Uh-huh.

Dre: Mhm.

Janine: I don't know.

Austin: That's fair.

Janine: That's scary.

Austin: Mhm.

Dre: Save me!

Ali: I mean, Thisbe, I have delegated tasks to you before.

Janine: It does also seem—I guess, who's leading that Sortie in general?

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

Ali: If you fictionally want Brnine to request this of Thisbe, I will do it. [laughs]

Janine: You know, here's the way—I think we're sort of at a point where like, Thisbe wouldn't recognize herself as beyond orders, but like, she's been doing a lot of really independent shit—[chuckles]

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: Yeah. Mhm.

Janine: —in a way where it's like, I don't think she's looking for that.

Austin: Hm.

Janine: But I think—you know, may—oh, what is—okay, hang on, what does leading a Sortie involve?

Austin: “When it's time for action and you Lead a Sortie, decide who planned the mission, and roll. You roll plus Know if you're leading with wits or a clever plan, Crew if somebody else aboard planned the mission and you're just leading it, or Defy if you're heading into danger blind. On a 10+, you make it to the action unscathed. On a 7 to 9, the crew stumbles, misses something important, or is unprepared for what they meet.” In my mind, this is like, the person who's taking point as you open the door, right? Or the person who is saying “alright, let's go now,” right? Or whatever that looks like.

Janine: Yeah. It would have to be Crew. I don't really have—the others are not really options for me.

Austin: Yeah, you don't have Know or Defy so much, right?

Janine: No. And that—wouldn't that use up one of our crew things immediately?

Austin: No, I don't think so, because this is the beginning of the Sortie.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: This is kicking off the Sortie, and then you would have Sortie—the Sortie rolls are for in the Sortie. I wouldn't...

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Unless it explicitly says so in the book, in which case I would take it, but I don't think that's the case.

Janine: Maybe Thisbe does lead the Sortie in Confidence, then.

Austin: I think it kind of leads if you're like, you know—

Janine: Thisbe was very decisive—was very confident in saying [laughing] "I'm not going to the sun."

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: Totally.

Janine: And by—as a knock-on effect of like, "yes, I will go the other place. I will do this research," et cetera.

Austin: Also, I just double-checked—in the book, it says "plus Crew if success hinges on someone else aboard," and I think that being like, yeah, the crew has to execute on the thing that you identified, right?

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: Like, yeah, you found this little window that you can get through, [**Janine:** Yeah.] but the crew has to pilot the ship, and, you know, use the cloaking device

right, and da-da-da-da-da, to actually manage to avoid those sensors and get to the moon, you know?

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: So. You know, it makes sense.

Janine: Alright, let's fucking do it, then.

Austin: Alright. Spent that token. Make a note of that on your sheet, also, maybe, that we should do that.

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: Alright. Well, this leads a final downtime scene. Well, I know you want to call Gucci, so—[chuckles]

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Hell yeah.

Austin: Let's go to Phrygian.

Phrygian - Somewhere Nearby

[1:32:25]

Austin: Phrygian, are you gonna go get some stuff?

Keith: Yeah, I'm gonna get stuff.

Austin: Okay. This is Somewhere Nearby?

Keith: Yes, yeah.

Austin: Can you read that for us?

Keith: Sure. "The leading player rolls a d4 to see what resources they can muster and acquires gear or equipment with a total value up to the result. They may spend

extra tokens, or”—this is what I was thinking—“tap factions to increase the result by another d4.”

Austin: Mm. Mhm.

Keith: So it's tap factions, not untapping factions, which I don't want to do, obviously.

Austin: Right, yeah, yeah. But if you were like, “it's time for us to go all in on blank,” [Keith: Right.] you could tap factions to call in favors, effectively, to try to get more points to spend on whatever you're buying.

Keith: Right. So, “they can spend extra tokens or tap factions to increase the result by another d4, or trade objects with the Valuable or Treasure tags for +2 or +4 respectively. They frame a short scene around this, either alone or with invited characters. During the scene anyone may spend a token”—there's no other tokens, right? We're tokened out?

Ali: Mhm.

Sylvi: Mhm.

Austin: Believe so.

Keith: Okay, so that's...

Austin: Alright, so you're gonna roll a d4.

Keith: Gotta roll a d4. Let me get my right tab open. Let's see. Do I have to decide now if I'm using the treasure?

Austin: No.

Keith: 3.

Austin: Hey, 3. So that means you have 3 value to work with here. “Equipment like weapons, Altar parts, and so on have a starting value equal to their tier. So, a Tier 3 object has a starting value of 3. The Valuable and Treasure tags can increase this further by”—so if, like, it had that tag, it would be worth more, right? “Ardents, Altars, and Carriers have a value equal to their tier squared, so a Tier 3 Astir”—or, you

know—"Astir is 9, while a Tier 5 Carrier is a whopping 25, and are made using the same creation rules as those applied during character creation. Additions beyond that must be bought separately."

So with 3 value, you could buy one Tier 3 thing, like a Tier 3 gun, you know? Like an Altar gun, right? Or three Tier 1 things. Like, if you wanted jet packs, you could buy three person-sized jet packs. With the added four points from the treasure, that's—what, that's 7, right? Which is enough to even get you—I'm thinking about it now, you could get—you could spend 4 to just straight up get a—like an Ardent, a vehicle, a Tier 2 vehicle that you would build sort of like to—for you and Brnine, maybe? To get you from the Blue Channel or from space to the Stellar Combustor? That might be an option, I hadn't thought of that until reading this out loud, you know?

Keith: Not a bad option.

Austin: Or—you know?

Keith: And then we'd just have that.

Austin: You'd just have like, a cool space jeep or whatever. And you still have value to play with, right? So you could also spend that value—

Keith: You're saying if we use the treasure to get—

Austin: You'd have to use the treasure to get—

Keith: Right, to get 7, right, yeah.

Austin: Because 3 is not enough. Right, exactly.

Keith: And we don't have any value from any other things?

Austin: No, you do not.

Keith: Um... Yeah, I mean, I think use the treasure, get the—

Austin: Get yourself an Ardent.

Keith: —the Ardent, and we have 3 left over. What can we do with 3? Where—sorry, did you say there was like, a table somewhere of this?

Austin: Of stuff to buy?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I mean, there's a big—

Keith: There was a big long list.

Austin: There's the whole gear section on—

Keith: Gear, yeah.

Austin: Starting on page 71.

Keith: 71...

Austin: Example Tier 1 weapons, and example Tier 1 gear, so things like, a grappling hook, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: A personal invisibility cloak is on here, right?

Keith: Yeah. Don't need it.

Austin: Special sensors. You know?

Keith: Well, just out of curiosity...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: What do we get with 7? What do we—

[Sylvi chuckles]

Austin: Not—what do you mean?

Keith: Like—I'm like, I want to blow my 7 value on one thing.

[Ali scoffs]

Austin: Yep, sure. You would get something that's Tier 7, but you couldn't—it couldn't be like, a vehicle or anything, because a vehicle is squared of the thing it is. It costs squared. So what would, you know—you could get the Blue Chann—

Keith: [cross] Okay, so a Tier 3 costs 9.

Austin: A—yes, so to get like, a new mech costs 9, correct. That is correct.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: That's the example that they even give, right?

Keith: A Tier 7—

Austin: Uh-huh. Which doesn't exist.

Keith: But it couldn't be a vehicle.

Austin: Right, and you don't have anything that could use it. You don't have anything that is Tier 7.

Keith: Right.

Ali: Yeah, Keith, why—

Keith: I just—I'm just—

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I mean, a thing you should—

Keith: [cross] It's not all the time that you have a million dollars.

Austin: Which you don't have. You don't have a million dollars.

Keith: No, you don't think 7 value is a million dollars?

Austin: The Carrier that you're in costs 25.

Keith: 25 million?

[Sylvi laughs]

Austin: 25 value.

Keith: Right, 25, right. Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure.

Austin: So you're not even close to getting another spaceship.

Keith: No, no, that's why I'm saying, what could we get?

Austin: You could get a gun for the spaceship, or a new toy, you know what I mean?

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: 5 would get you a Tier 5 piece of equipment for the Blue Channel.

Keith: Right.

Sylvi: It's like \$15,000?

Austin: Yeah, you've got 15k to play with, you know? Maybe go to the tables, maybe go to the horses, see what you can do.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Maybe go down to Composure's Coliseum, make some bets.

Dre: Okay, alright, yeah.

Keith: Okay.

Ali: I just think it's just as valuable when you go to the ticket stand, and you get a little finger-locking thing, and a piece of gum, [**Austin:** Mhm.] and a cartoon wallet, and not like, the 30 ticket prize, or the like, 200 ticket prize. [laughs]

Austin: Right. The 3,000—

Keith: Let me tell you—

Austin: The—you don't need to get the Sega CD, you just need to get—

Ali: [laughing] There's an—yeah, the Discman or whatever.

Keith: Let me tell you a little bit of hurt that I've been carrying with me for a very long time.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Austin: Oh my f—

Sylvi: Oh.

Ali: Let's air this out, 'cause—

Dre: No, let it out. Come on.

Keith: As a very prudent young child, I said, "you know, I love the arcade. When we go to the arcade, I'm gonna save my tickets. I'm gonna save them for as long as I possibly can, and then I'm gonna buy something big and cool with those tickets."

Sylvi: Oh no.

Keith: And I had 10,000, 20,000, 25,000 Dave & Buster's tickets.

Austin: Nothing—there was nothing you wanted from D&B's that was worth those 10 or 20,000. That wasn't enough for you.

Keith: And, you know, finally I'm like—I went to Dave & Buster's. I'm—I'm gonna say 22.

Austin: Years old.

Keith: Years old. Time to break out those old power cards.

Austin: Oh, buddy.

[**Dre** hums]

Keith: Oh my god, I've known where these power cards were for 12 years. Why do all of a sudden I not know where these are? Missed my chance. All of it gone.

Austin: Oh, this is not—

Keith: All of it's down the drain. Nothing.

Austin: Wait, that—wait.

Keith: What?

Austin: The tragedy of this story is you fucked up?

[**Ali** chuckles]

Keith: Yeah, I didn't use the tickets—I didn't use the tickets when I should have.

Dre: [cross] Yeah, I thought this was gonna be like, your parent, like, threw the tickets out.

Keith: I don't know what happened to the tickets.

Austin: Or like, you brought them in to cash them out, and then they were like "oh no, these aren't any good anymore."

Keith: No.

Austin: "We changed it over and da-da-da-da-da." I thought you were gonna have been wronged.

Keith: No, that would cause—there would be riots in the streets if they ever did that.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Keith: They absolutely are not still doing that. I know because I went to Dave & Buster's with my siblings last month, and my sister's still using her power card from the days where I lost my power cards.

Austin: Now, wait a second. What if your sister took your power card?

Dre: Oh, shit.

Keith: Again, anything is possible. I know—I can tell you exactly where these are—these were for 10 years, they were in a little Dave & Buster's plastic cup that I kept on a shelf in the bedroom at my dad's house, and, you know, I'm—

Austin: Someone took those from you, Keith.

Keith: Someone fucking took them, that's what I'm saying. This is a—this is—this isn't a—I didn't just lose these. They just were gone.

Austin: Okay, I apologize for saying you fucked up.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You didn't fuck up. Someone has screwed you over.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Well, I'll tell you, I did fuck up, because I should have spent them when I had the chance—

Austin: Yeah, I mean—

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: —and gotten candy and little \$5 trinkets, because that's all that Dave & Buster's is good for anyway!

Ali: [chuckles] So I just want to say when you see 7, 3 and 4 is just as good.

Austin: That's right. That's right.

Keith: You're saying get one 3 and one 4.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: You can just get the 4, which is the—2 squared is 4, and that's an Ardent.

Keith: Yeah. I don't—

Austin: And that can be your little special ship to get you to the place.

Keith: I just don't think there's anything wrong with taking a look at what's on the 7 shelf. You know?

Ali: [laughing] Okay.

Austin: I got you.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: The answer is basically nothing.

Keith: Yeah.

[Dre stifles laughter]

Austin: Because, like—

Keith: And that's fair.

Austin: I think the thing in our system right now that is Tier 7 is Perennial, maybe?

Dre: Oh.

Austin: I think that might be it. Right? Like, Tier 5, the ship. It has a Divine on it, so it's Tier 5, right? Carriers in general in this system are Tier 5, but for us, it's like they're boosted by something else, right? The Kestral White was a Tier 5 thing, so that was another Carrier. It did, by the time you were really fighting it, have a Iconoclast-ed guy on the helm also giving it some powers. We didn't really get into that in that fight, it turned out. Don't worry about that. That's just in the ocean. I'm sure it's fine.

Keith: Now here's a question—

Austin: But like, other Divines like Crusade, the Divine Crusade, is probably Tier 6, right? I don't—I think the only thing in the system that I know off the top of my head that's at least Tier 7 is Perennial.

Keith: Right, but it wouldn't matter because to—if we were to—let's say we were to buy a Divine level thing. That's 36, not 6.

Austin: [cross] You can't use it. To buy a Divine would be 30—

Keith: Right, the—right, so—right.

Austin: Right, yes, that's what I'm saying. You could buy a—you, again, for 5 you could buy the Blue Channel something nice.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: And it would work because it would be a Tier 5 item. But Ali is correct.

Keith: Now, old habits die hard, and maybe—

Austin: Oh my god.

Keith: Maybe we just save it all, figure out some other way to get there, and now we've got 7—nah, let's get the Ardent.

Austin: Here's my suggestion. I think we should say that you have 7 value to figuring out what you're gonna bring on this mission, because you might need other stuff that you haven't thought about yet. Like, for instance, how are you blowing it up? Do you need explosives? Do you need silenced weapons? Do you need a sneaking suit? Do you need—

Keith: I'm a silenced weapon.

[Dre laughs]

Austin: I don't think you're silenced.

Keith: I'm invisible.

Austin: That's much different than—

Ali: [chuckling] What?

Austin: That's truly not the same.

Sylvi: Uh-huh?

Dre: Wow.

Janine: Are you just gonna spit on it until it's gone? [chuckles]

Sylvi: Uh-huh?

Austin: Right, this is what I mean. So, my point being, I think—

Ali: Since when are you invisible?

Austin: Since episode one. Keith has that thing. Phrygian has that thing to turn invisible.

Ali: [chuckling] Okay.

Keith: I used it in the last Sortie.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Phrygian has used this.

Ali: Okay, alright.

Keith: If anyone remembers when I one-shot the 5 Tier, that's when I used it.

Dre: [cross] I have a thing to turn invisible and I've like, barely used it, now that I think about it.

Austin: Mhm. Um... hm. So, I think we should take that 7 and say in between today and when we record again in a couple of days, figure out what you're spending that on, because I don't want to look at the book for the next 30 minutes being like "well, hm, let's see here, an Ardent, their example Ardents say blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. You could get a transport Ardent, it has a cargo hold, Spacious, and it has standardized parts, and—or you could get a service Ardent, it has condenser stave, and—or the tank, da-da-da-da-da." That's a conversation we should have off-mic.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: We should do that in a chat, and we should say that what you've done here is you've gone out to buy supplies for this mission, we'll reveal what those are in that next recording as part of the mission, right? Rather than like, "well, hey, how do you build an Ardent? What's that look like? How—is it the same thing as building an Altar?" I'd rather let's, like, figure that out off-mic than...

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But I think this goes well, right? You finish up being a carnival, an arcade, and then you go shopping in the Jade Kill, like, you know—

Keith: All the tickets—

Austin: “What can you give me for 7 value?”

Keith: All the tickets that people didn’t spend—

Austin: Oh my god.

[**Keith** laughs]

Austin: This is—is this what the Somewhere Nearby actually was? The Somewhere Nearby is actually they gave me money to play my bus—

Keith: *I’m* Somewhere Nearby.

Austin: You’re Somewhere Nearby. The three extra value you got?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Was people doing milk games.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[**Ali** groans] [**Keith** laughs]

Austin: Write that one down, Ali, as a potential episode title. “Milk games.”

Ali: Uh-huh. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Milk games.

Austin: I think people will really eat that up.

Dre: Sure, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Drink it up.

Austin: [groans] Oh my god.

Dre: No.

Sylvi: They sure will.

Austin: [laughs] Alright, um... a few more things and then I think we're done.

Cori - Midseason Upgrade

[1:44:30]

Austin: I know some people have calls to make [**Ali** scoffs] as their characters.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Cori.

Sylvi: I—yeah, I figured I'd do mine because I have a quick idea for one just to set up my Midseason Upgrade move that I took in this downtime.

Austin: Oh, you took a move that lets you get—

Sylvi: I did.

Austin: Right, we had floated the idea of what if the Witch in Glass gives you a new mech. Everyone yelled at you about it.

Sylvi: Yeah. And I'm not writing off Cori getting mixed up with the Witch in Glass, I want to be very explicit about that.

Austin: Mhm, mhm.

Dre: Please?

Sylvi: But I am—I did come up with a different idea for where she gets her new mech.

Austin: So this is a move called Midseason Upgrade, [**Sylvi:** Mhm.] which says...

Sylvi: "The opportunity to acquire something of immense power and value will present itself to you. It might be a Tier 4 Astir, a legendary Ardent, or some other kind of powerful magical artifact or something of more mundane importance."

Austin: This would be another place where maybe you could get a cool Ardent to do this mission by the way, [**Dre** laughs] for Keith and Brnine, if you did want to, for

instance, hold on to that 7 value for something else. Just putting that out there. So, Tier 4, that's what you're thinking.

Sylvi: That is what I'm thinking.

Austin: You want—you're ready to fucking go. You're like, "I want a more powerful mech."

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: Austin, what's my new Hook that I have?

Austin: Oh, you're right. It's about needing to be more powerful, right?

Dre: Oh.

Sylvi: I need to be stronger no matter what.

Austin: No matter what. Incredible. Alright, so who are you—what are you doing? Where are you getting this from if not from the Witch in Glass?

Sylvi: So, we—

Austin: Or, and we don't have to go over what it is yet. Maybe we should save that for the next Sortie, but...

Sylvi: No. I'm—the details I'm gonna give are who she's calling [**Austin:** Okay.] and, like, her side of that conversation.

[**Austin** hums]

Sylvi: So at the funeral, I sort of mentioned that Cori has two older brothers who showed up.

Austin: Right.

Sylvi: One of them I described as sort of looking like a Mormon missionary, a little nerdy boy.

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvi: I also messaged you about it, Austin, and said “hey, what if he was like an R&D guy for the Cult of Devotion?”

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvi: So I think she’s gonna call him. His name is Formido. That’s F-O-R-M-I-D-O.

Austin: Okay. It’s like the name of a god or something?

Sylvi: Yeah, no, so—do you want me to just say the naming convention I have for the brothers on here?

Austin: Sure.

Sylvi: So, I named them—like, in a roundabout way I named them after the two moons of Mars, which are Phobos and Deimos, but I like the Roman name for Deimos more, which is Formido. Or, one of the Roman names for it.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: So her brothers are Phobos and Formido. Phobos is more of a like, military guy.

Austin: Do you know what Phobos’s Roman names are?

Sylvi: Yeah, no, they’re good too. But one of them, I believe is—is one of them just Metus?

Austin: No, one—it’s Pavor or Terror.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah. Metus is the other—is the other Deimos one.

Austin: Damn, okay.

[Dre laughs]

Sylvi: Yeah, no, it is Pavor or Terror, and then Deimos, I believe, is—

Austin: Yeah, Formido or Metus. Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Formido is good. I like Formido a lot.

Sylvi: Formido is good, yeah.

Austin: Anyway.

Sylvi: Anyway.

Austin: So you're calling Formido, and you're saying "give me a better mech"?

Sylvi: Yeah, well, so the conv—what the audience gets out of this is—

Austin: [cross] What's your side of the conversation? Yeah, what's the camera see?

Sylvi: It's just her, like, on—I don't know, like, what the sort of interface of communication would be, I'm just picturing, like, a phone, but maybe it's a screen or something, like she's—

Austin: Mhm. We get you lit by the video screen, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah. She's got like, headphones on, so no one can hear what he's saying—

Austin: Shaky, yeah. Uh-huh.

Sylvi: But we can see this, like—he's got the same—he doesn't have any wings. That's—we've established that's not like, a family trait.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: He's just this like, dorky dude with glasses and pink hair like Cori's, [**Austin:** Mhm.] and she's like,

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Hey, sorry to call you about this out of the blue, but... You remember a few years back when I started piloting, and we had that big dinner, and you started talking about that thing you were working on, and dad

got all cagey about it? Do you think I could—could get a look at that? [pause]
Yeah? Okay, cool—cool. Awesome, thank you. I—thank you.

Sylvi: And—

Austin: Now, I do have to tell you, the move, it does say you get an opportunity. And so, I think there's a cost.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I think this cost is actually fairly simple.

[**Dre** chuckles]

Austin: I need you to deepen your “you are a sword; strike down our adversaries with impunity” Tenet all the way to Deep.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: Skipping over—so it's no longer a Loose. You were so close from slipping away from that and letting it rewrite you—being able to rewrite it how you wanted to. Not anymore. Not anymore.

Sylvi: No.

Austin: Deep hooks are—cannot be rewritten, forcibly or otherwise. So.

Sylvi: Hell yeah.

Austin: Love it when the cult has—makes demands. And yeah, we can talk about what that might look like on the other side next time.

Sylvi: Yeah, I got you.

Austin: Mhm.

Brnine and Gucci

[1:49:56]

Austin: Brnine.

Ali: Hi, yeah, hello. Hi. Hey.

Austin: Are you gonna make this Plan and Prepare roll? And is that you calling Gucci?

Ali: [laughing] I don't—

[Sylvi and Dre laugh]

Ali: Are those the same things? Do you think so?

Austin: I don't know.

Ali: I did not think that this Gucci call would have a mechanic benefit, I'm gonna be honest with you.

Austin: "When you review orders for the next Sortie, go over scouting reports and maps, or otherwise attempt to prepare the crew for what comes next, you're trying to Plan and Prepare." Which is different than leading a Sortie. You know, maybe, maybe not. I mean, we're gonna have to roll that afterwards no matter what, so someone's got to roll it. Maybe it's not you, but. What's this Gucci call?

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: We haven't seen you actually talk to Gucci in a minute.

Ali: Yeah, yeah. So I figured—

Austin: You've texted.

Ali: Right, right. So I figured I should keep her, you know, in the loop.

Keith: She's been very present.

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Mhm.

Ali: Um... yeah. Ring, ring, ring, ring. [laughs]

[Sylvi laughs]

Austin: So straight call? Question mark text back.

Ali: [cross] Am I not allowed to call her?

Austin: Question mark text back while you're ringing.

Ali (as **Brnine**): "Can we talk?"

Austin (as **Gucci**): "What's up?"

Austin: Text back.

Dre: Oof.

Ali (as **Brnine**): "I need to talk to you about something."

Austin (as **Gucci**): "What about?"

[Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): "About our situation."

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Dre: Wow.

[Ali chuckles]

Austin (as **Gucci**): "Oh."

Austin: Period.

[Ali laughs]

Sylvi: Oh my god!

Dre: Wow.

Austin (as **Gucci**): “Our situation.”

Austin: Period.

Dre: You know, I heard on Facebook that it was complicated, so...

Austin: Uh-huh.

[Ali laughs]

Sylvi: I’m on the floor.

Keith: Is this going well?

Austin (as **Gucci**): “Let me call you.”

Dre: Hm.

Austin: Call from an unknown number.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Hell-o?

Austin (as **Gucci**): [hesitant] Hi.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh... Rough week, huh?

Austin (as **Gucci**): Rough week.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Are you, um... I guess you’re like, in a bunker or something, or... or, uh...

[Sylvi chuckles]

Austin (as **Gucci**): I’m not supposed to be on a call with you.

Ali (as **Brnine**): [chuckles dryly] Yeah, I bet. Um—

Austin (as **Gucci**): Don't laugh. Don't. Do you know how many people you got killed?

Ali (as **Brnine**): [chuckles weakly] Yeah. Yes. Yeah, I do. Speaking of that, um...

Austin (as **Gucci**): No, not just on the Broken Key. In Baseline? In what followed? You know that kid who did the radio show in Sinder Karst? They—they kicked down his door and shot him on air. That doesn't happen if you don't disobey orders twice in a row.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Speaking of that, um—

Austin (as **Gucci**): [scoffs]

[Sylvi laughs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'm gonna do it.

Austin (as **Gucci**): [muffled] No. [laughs humorlessly] Brnine.

Ali (as **Brnine**): We're gonna do it.

Austin (as **Gucci**): No.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'm gonna do it.

Austin (as **Gucci**): No. No.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'm gonna turn the sun back on—

Austin (as **Gucci**): You're gonna turn—

Ali (as **Brnine**): —and it's gonna be okay, and they're not gonna come kill you, and [cross] I'm gonna make it great.

Austin (as **Gucci**): [cross] They're not gonna have to, because they're gonna kill all of us. What do you mean you're gonna go turn the sun back on?

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'm—they're—they turned—we're gonna—

Austin (as **Gucci**): Do you not think that if we thought that it was possible to go take down the Stellar Combustor, it wouldn't have happened already? Do you think we just like, sit on our thumbs here? What do you think we do?

Ali (as **Brnine**): I know what you do. I—

Austin (as **Gucci**): I don't think you do, because if you did, you would at least have given me the heads up before about not doing the mission.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I s—

Austin (as **Gucci**): 'Cause I could have fixed it.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I sort of did.

[Dre bursts into laughter] [Ali chuckles]

Sylvi: My god.

Ali (as **Brnine**): And I didn't—we were being tracked! We were being tracked, Gucci, and I thought if we went to Baseline, it would have been worse. And I was right that we were being tracked.

Austin (as **Gucci**): Why do you act like you care about me?

Ali (as **Brnine**): [muttering] Oh my god.

Austin (as **Gucci**): 'Cause you don't.

Ali (as **Brnine**): How can you say that?

Austin (as **Gucci**): You like the patronage. You've always liked the patronage.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I—we're—we've—we're in this together. Of course I care about you.

Austin (as **Gucci**): You're gonna go turn on the sun.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah, and people are gonna look at the sky, and know that we can do that.

Austin (as **Gucci**): You're gonna go capture the Stellar Combustor.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah, I'm gonna turn it off.

Austin (as **Gucci**): We can't stop you from doing this. I can't talk you down.

Ali (as **Brnine**): No.

Austin (as **Gucci**): What do you need?

Ali: [softly] [chuckles] Let's fucking go.

[**Ali**, **Dre**, and **Sylvi** laugh]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Well, me and Phrygian have secured a way there so far. So... I don't know if there are like, blueprints, you know?

Austin (as **Gucci**): [muffled] Mhm.

Ali (as **Brnine**): And yeah, that's probably... some sense of the layout would be good.

Austin (as **Gucci**): I should be asking why I care about you. [sighs]

Ali (as **Brnine**): I—

Austin (as **Gucci**): I'm gonna send you what we have on the combustor, and... [strained] Good luck.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I don't doubt that you care about me. That's why I don't ask.

Dre: Daaamn.

Sylvi: God. [laughs]

Austin (as **Gucci**): [strained, soft] I'm gonna send you what we have on the Stellar Combustor, and I'm going to hold my breath. Like I always do with you.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Sure. Um... stay safe, and I'll see you after. You should come to the Blue Channel, I think. I think people would appreciate that.

Austin (as **Gucci**): [voice breaking] Yeah, I'll give it some thought.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Cool, yeah, well, nice talk. Thanks for calling.

Austin (as **Gucci**): [scoffs] We should talk—we should talk again soon. We shouldn't go this far between calls next time.

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

Austin (as **Gucci**): Is—that's what you're supposed to say, right? When you think that, like, there will be [voice shaking] a next time? 'Cause like, fuck it, right? Because like, they could pull the trigger anyway, right? So why not?

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

Austin (as **Gucci**): Why not go and provoke them into doing it, and then roll the dice? 25 star systems. Trillions of people. You and Phrygian think you can handle it.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I will—

Austin (as **Gucci**): You know they used to put people in these bombs. The Rapid Evening. This group that used to be part of Stel Kesh, they were like, um—they were like space police, and they would put two people wherever they thought there might be so much trouble that they'd have to blow the whole thing up. And there'd be someone who's holding the detonator, and there'd be somebody else who was the bomb. They had roles, they were in contact, they had intense trust. One person was there to get as much information as they could about what the situation was. One person was there to take action on the ground when they could help keep things from needing to be exploded. Primary and Satellite.

And it's stupid, but—[laughs softly] when I first started learning about this place, I got it in my head that you and me were like a Primary and a Satellite, the person who could like, be on the ground and get things done, and the person who could see everything. [seething] And I'd excised the bomb from

the equation. But here we are, and you're gonna go climb into the bomb. [on verge of tears] I'll send over the blueprints. Good luck.

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'll call you again soon.

Austin: Hung up.

[**Ali** giggles]

Sylvi: God damn.

Ali: Five stars. Five out of five.

Austin: Yeah, you get the thing, "how was the quality of the call?"

Ali: [laughs] Hittin' a little smiley face.

Austin: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Ali: Putting my phone in my pocket.

Dre: No, you heard all that perfectly, so yeah.

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvi: Putting any part of that conversation over a midwest emo guitar riff.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Mission Overview

[1:58:08]

Austin: Alright. So, let's roll—and you get the—you get it, right? You get the picture of the Stellar Combustor, which we've never seen on screen before. You know, they've existed for as long as this setting has existed, they were core to the original pitch of COUNTER/Weight. They're in COUNTER/Weight -1, I think. They're in the hidden episode of COUNTER/Weight where we build planets for way too many fucking hours.

[Dre laughs]

Austin: Because they're kind of like what that setting is. We've never seen one directly on screen, like the mechanism, I don't believe. Maybe in one of the fiction episodes. But I know how this one looks, and so you get to see it, right? And I'm just gonna—I'll just sort of draw it for everybody really quick. Boom. Here is a star, right? You see the star?

Ali: Mhm.

Sylvi: Uh-huh.

Austin: Easy. The Stellar Combustor, as you now can see, is a series of rings. And let's just draw these on—let's get this—let's get a big silver... boom. Do you see that ring?

Sylvi: Mhm.

Austin: Boom. Do you see this one?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And a third. And these rotate—not just rotate like move around in a, you know, a circle around it, but they also, like—they also like, move up and down on basically every axis that doesn't make it collide with the star. And they occasionally overlap, and there's an outer one, a middle one, and an inner one. The people who live—because it is a space station, heat-treated in a way that only the Divine Principality could make it—the people who live on the outer edge make things like the food for the people who live on the middle and interior edge. The people in the middle handle things like communications and logistics, and the core machine, the thing that, you know, saps the power of the sun, or enhances it, you know, builds it until it's this kind of like, thing beyond even a supernova, is in the inner ring. That is where the mechanism is.

The only place to clearly dock is on that outer ring, you'd have to blow your way into one of the inner ones. There's security across all three of those rings. And the thing that happens is that like, you know, a couple of times a day, the rings overlap for five

minutes. And during that five minutes, you can move from the outer to the middle, from the middle to the interior. And that is the way that you would like, go in and deal with like, “oh, I’m gonna fuck with the engines,” or “I’m gonna mess with the generator,” or “I’m gonna mess with the batteries, I’m gonna hack in.” All that stuff is in the inner ring, and it’s really hard to get into that inner ring. It’s really easy to—it’s not really easy. It’s easiest to get into that outer ring.

That’s the general shape of this thing. Again, there is a—and this isn’t blueprints, right, but like, there are a great number of just ships out here, right? Patrolling all around it, across every dimension, right? And then there is a much larger sensor line that comes all the way out across the entire system in every direction. You know, constantly scanning for anything getting close. You’re—it’s explained to you that anytime someone moves into that closest ring, they have to immediately authenticate. And if they don’t authenticate within 10 seconds, a signal goes to the Elcessor. Takes a minute for the signal to get to the Elcessor. The second she sees it, she is supposed to hit the button, because someone is there that shouldn’t be. That is what you’re up against. There are a thousand people aboard.

Ali: Light work. [chuckles]

Dre: Mhm.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Keith: It’s the many hands that does it.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Four. Plus however many extra I’ve got.

Austin: Oh, I see. You have so many hands that it’s easy.

Keith: Yes.

Austin: I gotcha.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And to be clear, a thousand people is like, no people for a space station this size, right?

Keith: Sure.

Austin: But also, it's a thousand people who have committed to their lives that at any moment they could just be eradicated. Right? I mean, like, that's everybody on Palisade, [**Keith:** Yeah.] who's on the part of the Authority, but they're like, where it happens, you know what I mean?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So it's different.

Keith: There's like a—there's—you know, it's easy—it's not easy, but it's possible to put out of your mind, you know, how many—how long is it between stellar combustions? I know that there's been plenty, and there'll be more, presumably, but...

Austin: I hope not. It'd be great if there were no more.

Keith: You know, we've—this has been a long universe. We've been in this universe for a long time.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: And, you know, it doesn't—

Dre: You saying we're due?

Keith: It doesn't end with our last episode. Unless it does, that would be big. That'd be a big last—

Austin: [scoffs] I don't—yeah, that would be a big one. I—you know. I mean, part of this is—part of the thing that's worth saying is, this thing blowing up would not, like—like, it would derail an important part of what the Bilateral Intercession wants, [**Keith:** Yeah.] but it wouldn't even, like, hurt the Divine Principality writ large. I think, you know, maybe there's a world where it blows up and the Pact can seize on that to

win the civil war, but the Principality would not fall apart because they lost this planet, and the other ones that are nearby, right?

Keith: I'm just saying that, that, you know, we live in a world where people have been put in the position of like, "well, we could just get blown up any day."

Austin: Correct.

Keith: But it's not every day that someone's like, sending out transmissions being like, "hey, just so everyone's aware, the finger's on the button today!"

Austin: [laughs] Yes. I don't think that there's—you know, in the lifetime of anybody aboard this station, they haven't seen it go into the like, armed mode before. Yep.

Keith: Right, that's why it's like, 'cause it's easy to make the, like, of course, it could go off, you know—

Austin: Yes, yes.

Keith: —but it could go off if we were all on the planet, too, and we'd be dead there, too. And it's so long in between actual danger from the combuster.

Austin: Mhm. Yeah. Alright. Any other final things before we wrap?

Ali: Thisbe, good luck.

Austin: We got to roll the dice, is what we got to do.

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Austin: Let's Plan and Prepare.

Plan and Prepare

[2:04:14]

Austin: Plan and Prepare. Roll 3d6. There's 2 plus the 1 from from the Command Deck.

Janine: Who, me? Who?

Austin: No, this is Brnine, I think.

Janine: Okay, right.

Austin: You will do Lead a Sortie next time.

Janine: Yes. Yeah.

Ali: Okay. Um... so what am I rolling? Sorry.

Austin: 3d6.

Ali: Roll 3d6...

Austin: And I guess the question is, which is—which division is being targeted here? On one hand, it's—I think it has to be Kesh. Right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Like, the Sortie is targeting Nideo. Right?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But the—but the B-plot is targeting Kesh. And I think we have to be—

Keith: Sometimes you've got those episodes where the B-plot's really big.

[Ali chuckles] [Dre hums]

Austin: I think these are both big and people just don't know what's up with the fucking moon yet.

Keith: We don't know what—

Sylvi: The B stands for big.

Austin: "Big plot," right.

Keith: Yeah, we don't know what's up with the moon.

Austin: Yeah. Mhm. The A is “Also Awfully big.”

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That’s what the A stands for.

Sylvi: Mhm. A-normous.

Austin: Well, let’s give it a 3d6. I’m gonna say the difficulty here is—I’m gonna cut down the middle. Let’s say the difficulty is 4, because if it was just Nideo, it would be 3. If it was just Kesh, it would be 5. I’m happy to—this is, you know, I’m the GM. Let’s make a little house rule. It’s—difficulty here is 4. So 3d6, you’re looking for 4s or above. [pause] You got 2. Alright. “For every result that’s above the division strength, choose one: during the Sortie, you will have”—so you got 2-4-4. So, just saying that out loud. You would have gotten 4 if it had been the Nid—or you would have gotten two successes even if I had said the difficulty was 3, right? So.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: And you would have gotten none if I’d said it was 5. So, “for every result that’s above the division strength, choose one: during the Sortie, you will have an opportunity to untap a faction of your choice; during the Sortie, you will have a risky opportunity to fell a pillar with zero Grip; during the Sortie, you will have a risky opportunity to secure an outcome from a faction; the next Lead a Sortie is made with advantage.” It’s already made with Confidence. So that would give it both. And then “all players Hold 1. You may spend your Hold during the next Sortie as if it were Hold gained through one of your basic or playbook moves.” You may recall that that one is pretty fucking good.

Ali: Yeah, I think we should definitely do that. The Hold—“all players Hold 1.”

Austin: Some big rolls coming up. Uh-huh.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And then... I mean, I feel like... “Untap a faction” isn’t important, we do that during downtime. “You have a risky opportunity,” we’re taking the risky opportunity, right? Like, that’s what the thing is.

Austin: Yeah, that is what's happ—that's what the mission is, yeah.

Ali: "Secure"—

Austin: And I don't think there's another one at zero. So...

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Or like, you know, that is ready to be felled, so.

Ali: And I don't know that like, there are any outcomes that are more appealing—

Austin: Any Cause ones, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, than the advantage thing. But that's sort of double-dipping.

Austin: Yeah, this is one you really want to get the dub on in the Lead a Sortie, right?

Ali: Yeah. Unless we want something unexpected or strange to happen.

Austin: Always possible.

Dre: Mhm.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: That's always a good one. I always like that.

Ali: I thought you—you don't even want Violet Cove to be part of us anymore. Much less their outcome.

Keith: That is true, but I've always liked the "something unexpected and strange." It's the—you know. It's a give and take with me.

Ali: [chuckles] Sure. Sure, sure, sure, yeah. You and Violet Cove are also in "it's complicated."

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: The next Lead a Sortie roll is also made with advantage.

Austin: Okay. Thisbe, you are set up to win.

Janine: Don't say things like that. [chuckles nervously]

Brnine and Thisbe

[2:07:30]

Ali: I would like to fictionalize this with a heart to heart, if that's possible. I don't know how to do that, but. [laughs]

[Dre laughs]

Austin: Oh. Like, in order to do that, in order to give the—so like, that is mechanically, or that is fictionally, what that is. I think you can do a little heart to heart.

Dre: I like you saying that as Brnine.

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Brnine just saying "I don't know how to have a heart to heart."

Austin: I would love to see this heart to heart. [laughing] How soon after the call with Gucci is this?

Ali: [laughs] Brnine's very long night. Brnine has already stayed up for 24 hours to do the Asepsis job.

Austin: Right. Yep.

Ali: And is now walking over to Thisbe.

Janine: Is this just like, Brnine had too much coffee, and then they got off their duty, and they're just like, "I can fix every problem I have right now."

Ali: Uh-huh. [chuckles]

Austin: “I have all these conversations I’ve been dreading having, I’m just gonna have all of them today.”

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Just do ‘em all, just do ‘em all, just do ‘em all.

Janine: “It’s too late to go to bed, it’ll fuck my schedule up. I’m just gonna push through, and I’ll just do—I’ll just do stuff. I’ll be good. It’ll be good for me.”

Keith: “I’ll fix every problem that I have with every person and also I’ll save the sun.”

Janine: Hands shaking.

Ali: Brnine—would Brnine like, walk in on Thisbe doing preparation stuff if we’ve—if we’ve set up that Thisbe is sort of taking that role on herself?

Janine: Um... I—ooh.

[Ali chuckles]

Janine: I wonder, like—my kneejerk here is that the prep’s already done. My kneejerk is that like, the prep was like, while other stuff was happening. Thisbe was just like, “okay, this is just the thing I’m doing.” And probably was like, “you know what, I’ll—” in a way, maybe kind of doing what Brnine was doing, where it’s like, “I don’t need to rest right now. I’ll like, do a bunch of work, and then I’ll rest a little bit longer than normal right before we go, and then I’ll be good.”

Ali: Oh, well, then I can probably—a way that I—a way that I put the—[laughs] a way that I speak to Thisbe is by being like, “oh, did you download your things from the person—Hunting today?” Like the conversation in last downtime was like, “Oh, you know, I saw on your schedule that it was open. So come to the arcade with me.” Like, is there like, a—so like, I think Brnine, like, looking through the ship data or whatever, the like, ship Google Drive, and seeing that Thisbe has already like, uploaded the stuff or whatever—

Austin: [hums] Mhm.

Ali: —could go to her and be like,

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh, I see that you, uh... you set the mission schematics. I just wanted to say that I'm glad that you're taking the lead on this, because I think that's the right call.

Janine: I'm trying to answer for myself if Thisbe considers this as taking the lead, versus just doing the thing. I mean, I guess. I mean, I guess she's done a lot of prep, right? So she's—

Ali: I mean, even if—yeah.

Janine: She maybe sees herself as like taking the lead by default, [chuckles] because no one else has done it, or because Brnine is doing the other thing, so it's like, well...

Ali: I mean, she can fictionally not believe that, but like, the—

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: The way that Brnine would see it is like, "oh, Thisbe's doing this thing."

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: Like, "Thisbe has made this action."

Janine: I think Thisbe just says like,

Janine (as **Thisbe**): It's necessary to coordinate to a high degree.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Right, yeah. Well, I just... I would trust you the most with this, and I think Cori and Figure will be safe with you, so thank you for taking the initiative.

Janine: I think Thisbe like, looks at Brnine. The like, "I trust you the most with this" gets Thisbe like, kind of—not, you know, I don't think there's a difference with Thisbe between looking for a long time and staring, because there's not—

[**Ali** and **Keith** laugh]

Janine: There's not a lot there in terms of like, expression. But I think it's like, a longer than normal gaze.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Operant Figure in Bismuth would normally be a good candidate, but they are...

Janine: Waning, maybe? There's a little bit of like, you know, Thisbe being aware that some of the energy stuff is—there's maybe a cause to be worried about Figure being able to take lead. And Cori, or Operant—what the fuck, what's her last name?

Ali: Sunset.

Janine: Sunset.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Operant Sunset is also potentially quite distracted at the moment, so it had to be me.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Well, it should be you. You're the best person for this job, Thisbe. And I feel—

Janine (as **Thisbe**): At the moment.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Thisbe, you're the best person for this job.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): There's no reason why that should be true, outside of current circumstances.

Ali (as **Brnine**): But it is true.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I am currently the most fit.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Okay, in, you know, a universe where we have anybody, and I could have my dream alignment for what this is, you would be doing what you're doing. And I just wanted to say thank you for doing it.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I... I don't understand why that would be, but I'm glad you're happy.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Are you alright?

[delayed group laughter]

Keith: Oh, tables have turned.

Janine: Brnine just told Thisbe—

Sylvi: “You good?”

Janine: Brnine just told Thisbe—just, real—“if anyone could go on this mission, I would pick it—I would pick you.” And Thisbe’s brain is like, “but Superman exists,” or something.

[**Ali** and **Austin** laugh]

Austin: Superman doesn’t exist!

Janine: [chuckling] Like, “really, there’s no one else? What about like, a giant guy with a million guns?”

[group laughter]

Janine: There’s a lot of people—

Dre: That’ll be once the mission’s over, and then...

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: There’s a lot of people in a galaxy, and so I think Thisbe recognizes that statement as like, “okay, this is mostly sentimental and not like a reason—not reasonable words.”

Keith: The giant guy with a million guns doesn’t have good team skills.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Which Thisbe totally does, uh-huh.

Austin: What the fuck’s a giant guy with a million guns gonna do in the fucking moon?

Janine: [chuckles] Just hypotheticals.

Dre: Just gonna shoot his guns at the moon?

Austin: Probably won't even fit in the moon.

Janine: [clears throat] I think in response to Brnine's question, Thisbe's probably like,

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I'm concerned about outcomes.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah, um... Hey, you ever think of that old—that bull machine at the old pizza place back on Partizan?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): No.

[Ali and **Austin** laugh]

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

Dre: [strained] Oh...

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Brnine, you need a dub so bad.

Janine: Yeah, look—

Ali: [laughing] No, I know, I know, I know.

Janine: This conversation in my eyes as Thisbe's player is a dub already, but to us humans, is a nightmare. [chuckles]

Dre: Oh, no.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah, well, have a good night, Thisbe.

Janine: [chuckling] I do think Thisbe has been inspired, but also—

[Ali laughs]

Janine: No, she doesn't think about the mechanical bull at the old pizza place. She doesn't eat, or [chuckling] ride the mechanical bull. [**Austin** laughs] I don't know if she ever even went inside there.

Ali: Come on.

Austin: Yes, she went inside the—you didn't go—the deep dish—

Ali: We were sitting at that pizza place.

Austin: [laughing] Deep dish—it was a steakhouse, first of all.

Keith: [cross] Deep dish steak, yeah. Deep dish steakhouse.

Ali: [cross] You don't have to think about it, but I brought you there.

Austin: [cross] Deep dish steakhouse.

Keith: Why was it a deep dish steakhouse? I don't remember why. I remember it, but.

Dre: Why wasn't it?

Janine: It's funny.

Ali: [cross] We'll talk about it after. I was inspired by a very specific restaurant.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Yeah, have a good night, Thisbe.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Do not let—it feels as though everything is going to end, and I need you to say that you will not let it.

Ali (as **Brnine**): It's gonna be alright. We can do this, and right now is the time to do it. Same with Figure. So... I'm gonna do my job, and you're gonna do your job, and then we're gonna have a movie night.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Understood, Operant.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Cool. [exhales] See you tomorrow.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): You should go to bed.

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

Ali: [chuckles] And Brnine goes to bed.

Austin: I should advance your Gravity clock by one, I think.

[**Janine** and **Ali** laugh]

Ali: Sure. Would love to.

Outro

[2:17:28]

Austin: Mhm. Great. Good. Alright. Any final images of people sleeping before this mission? Any other final images? You know, the world continues.

Sylvi: Getting fitted for like, a new headpiece for my mech.

Austin: Oh, yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, we get like, the image of the mech in—like, covered in a tarp or whatever, you know what I mean?

Sylvi: Mhm.

Austin: Or like, not lit up. You can't quite make out its features.

Keith: Phrygian's little breakfast nook has a shelf with a plush milk bottle and a couple other trinkets from the carnival.

Austin: Mhm. Mhm.

Janine: I have an image that might be a little silly, but it's very charming to me, and I'm the one who gets to write the image, so.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Austin: That's true.

Janine: I think normally when Thisbe is like, recharging, it is sort of like a standing up against a wall thing, but I think it's like there is just a connector, kind of, you

know? Like a magnetic connector or something like that, probably. [**Austin:** Mhm.] And so I think she like, brings the connector into sort of the greenhouse-y area, the hydroponics area, where she often does stuff, and plugs in there, and then—[chuckles] this is really goofy. I kind of picture her like, curling up on the floor with the plants and stuff around her, kind of like a—sleeping kind of like—not curled up like a person, but curled up like an animal, like a cat or a dog or something kind of, where it's like, legs tucked in, like, arms kind of butterflyed, head resting on the arms—like, comfortable, but also like, low, like low to the ground, sort of around the basins and stuff where the plants are, just kind of like, letting herself be surrounded.

[Music Outro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt]