

COUNTER/Weight 39: Just Another Machine

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[00:00]

AUSTIN [narrating]: Twenty five months after the September Incident... It *had* to be more than a coincidence.

[MUSIC - *The Long Way Around* begins].

A heavy transport of surplus rations re-routed to hungry refugees on Ionias; a rampant defence matrix on Archonic reprogrammed into a mobile laser light show; an assassination attempt on Vox foiled by a synthetic barista being remotely puppeted from halfway across the quadrant. Each event, like the others in recent memory, all shared his flare for the heroic and absurd. And that's why Addax Dawn and Jamil Quartz-Noble of The Rapid Evening had finally tracked him down, to a Constellation Café on Counterweight.

AUSTIN (sternly, as ADDAX DAWN): Mr. Trig, how have you been?

KEITH (hesitantly, as MAKO TRIG): Err... I'm, like... I'm good... I'm OK.

AUSTIN (light, as JAMIL QUARTZ-NOBLE): You've been busy, certainly...

MAKO: I've just been hanging out, mostly, just doing my thing? Um, just thinking about stuff, doing a lot of thinking.

ADDAX: The thing is; we know what you're capable of, and what you're capable of is very impressive. It's almost...

MAKO: Oh, thank god! Let's talk about that; alright. I've been dying to talk about this, like: I'm really good at this stuff. At the stuff that I do.

JAMIL: We know.

MAKO: Yeah!

JAMIL: And we'd like to help you do more of it... For us.

MAKO: Will you keep telling me that I'm doing a good job?

ADDAX: Well, we'll see how you do.

MAKO: OK... Alright!

[01:31]

ADDAX: I just... have one question for you. How exactly is it that you are on Archonic and Vox at the same time?

[MUSIC plays out].

AUSTIN: Uhh, so what are you doing at Prom?

KEITH: Uhh, well, as much as I would like to enjoy the Prom, because I never got to go to my own Prom... [Austin makes sympathetic sound] Mako's own Prom...

AUSTIN: Oh... OK.

KEITH: I went to *my* Prom and it was dumb.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I didn't go to mine because it was garbage.

KEITH: I..I.. Instead, I'm going to try and look for... for...

AUSTIN: For Maritime.

KEITH: Yeah, Maritime... Maritime Lapel.

AUSTIN: Are you sure you're not going to dance? Because your friend Tower is there, and *he* is looking for a dance. What was his first name? Or his last name? Chalet... Right! Tower Chalet.

ART: Oh my god! In the future, everyone is just named like failed hip-hop clothing lines [Jack and Keith laugh].

AUSTIN: Yes! Tower is like... Tower is Hadrian. Tower is young, hot, Hadrian [Ali gasps]. Like; Hadrian in his *prime*... And, like, a little more boy-ish.

AUSTIN (hushed, as TOWER CHALET): Mako!

KEITH (impatiently, as MAKO TRIG): Hi, hey...

TOWER: Mako!

MAKO: Have you seen, have you seen, uhh, Lapel?

[02:48]

TOWER: No, but I, hmm... Yeah, yeah; she's been around. But like, let's... Can we dance? *Please*? No one will dance with me! It's cos I'm big and tall and they think I'm gonna step on their toes, but I'm not; I'm *really* good at dancing.

MAKO (overlapping): Okayokayokayokay! OK, OK - we'll... we can dance.

TOWER: Nice!

ALI (overlapping, as ARIA JOIE): Mako, I'll go look for her; you dance.

MAKO: OK, I'll dance.

AUSTIN: Alright... Mako and Tower start dancing, and I don't know what dancing looks like in the future [Ali laughs].

ART: The future trying to look like a fantasy show.

AUSTIN: Right... (pause) I think it's like a fantasy show fast dance? D'you know? It's like...

KEITH: Oh, so you're saying the... the... classic fantasy trope dance of *square dancing*.

AUSTIN: Yes, it's square dancing! You're doing square dancing with Tower Chalet... Who is much taller than you, and broader. Umm, he's like, trying hard not to lift you off the ground [Ali and Keith laugh]. He has to be very careful?

KEITH: Do my toes get stepped on?

AUSTIN: Not exactly...

KEITH: Not exactly? OK...

AUSTIN: Because your feet are above his feet because he keeps lifting you off the ground! [Ali and Keith laugh]. So it's impossible for him to step on your toes?

ART: That's clever for a man with that... with that hang-up...

AUSTIN: Yeah... He found his way.

KEITH: Yup...

AUSTIN: Aria: It's sounds like you want to give me an *Assess*.

[04:03]

ALI: I do...

AUSTIN: Let's get that assess going.

[pause]

ALI: That's an eight!

AUSTIN: OK, that's an eight, that's acceptable. So are you looking... what are you... what's your question?

ALI: Uhh... How many do I get? With an eight?

AUSTIN: Well, uh, with an eight? One.

[pause]

ALI: What do I notice, despite an effort to conceal it?

[pause]

AUSTIN: You notice... I think you do it by mistake.

ALI: Huh?

AUSTIN: I think you scrub... like: you're just so focussed on finding her? You end up, like, without doing the hand motions; without touching anything: you see the world scrub back and forth around you: watching Tower and Mako dance; and then watching them do the setup. And then you go forward, and you think you see her, and then you're kind of moving between the dancers and they're actually passing through you, because they're holographic, and non-existent anyway? And you see her duck behind the.. the... kind of where the cyber-band is playing? I think there's, like, an animatronic band playing? [Ali laughs] And they're all dressed like characters from Coun... Or from Hieron also? And she goes behind the bandstand, and through a back door. And you follow her there... And she's, you know, thirty feet ahead of you, and you're, again, kind of, scrubbing as you follow her. And she comes to a... a doorway, that she opens, and it's a control room, that has a lot of like, the... like, footage from the dancefloor in the pavillion. And there's big windows on the other side of it; it's lit with the sun behind it; and there's a door in the floor that she opens and crawls into, uh... and goes down into a hallway.

ALI: OK... Can I just follow her? Or...

[05:56]

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can totally follow her.

ALI: OK...

AUSTIN: But she's not, like... You're able to follow her in such a way that, like... you can't quite just... You're not Mako, right? So you're able to do this part of it, but you're not able to just snap it back in place when you want, and go back to reality. Do you know what I mean? So you're always, kind of, ten paces behind her.

ALI: OK... Am I able to, like, call out to her? Interrupt what she's doing?

AUSTIN: No, because she's just this video.

ALI: OK.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, the time it is, is still the time it is when Mako is dancing. That's still where the play button has been pressed? It's as if you've called up a second video version of the thing that's happening, and are scrubbing through that, but you can't - *you* can't hit play; *you* still exist in Mako's version of it. It's just that you're able to access the information from the other ones.

ALI: OK, cos I'm not the one who's like, jacked-in.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh. I should describe the interiors upstairs, Mako, as you dance around too; you get more of a feel for it. It's actually... It's a shame that Aria left, cos like, this is... this is... super Nacre. It... it... it is... like, all whites and golds and reds; weird gigantic pillars that are the shape of different buildings from Nacre; and then the area where the band is playing is set up to look like the markets, like, of the bay? And behind them is, like, a projection of the... the ocean. In fact, it's actually just a projection of the actual ocean to the east of the September Institute? Standing in for Nacre's... And in the distance, as the sun is setting, you can see a clap... you can see a flash of lightning, and Aria - because she's near the actual window - can hear a clap of thunder. Let's jump back to the woods.

JACK: No!

ART: No, wait, no!

AUSTIN: How's it going in the woods?

[07:50]

KEITH: It's going real weird in the woods; I'm really excited for this.

ART (overlapping): Bad! It's going bad! You know how it's going in the woods!

AUSTIN: Oh, is it? Huh... What are you doing? Oh yeah... Maxine Ming has quickly just gotten into reminiscing with Maryland September. Maryland is impressed... I'm not gonna do the thing where I talk to myself here... Maryland is impressed with like how... there's lots of like: "Oh, you've grown up into, you know... such a sharp young lady... oh my god, why is there mud on your dress? We can fix that... come with me." And they disappear into the back hall.

JACK: OK...

KEITH: Oh that's not... that's not a good thing, for them to be alone? I don't know... This whole thing is not good... you guys all fucked up so bad?

JACK: I'm going to deploy my shotgun and follow them, please.

AUSTIN: OK...

ART: Wait, I have... I have an idea.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

JACK: Oh, actually; yes.

ART: I have one gear and I have one hold... from my plan comes together.

AUSTIN (overlapping): OK... Yep.

ART: Can I use *either* of those to have something that can see through whatever makes this look like a log cabin?

AUSTIN: Yeah... I'll let you use the hold.

ART: Wait... the hold's better. Can I use the gear?

AUSTIN: Oh... Yeah, you can use the gear.

KEITH (chuckles): You could use both...

AUSTIN: Just use the gear. So what is it... what... what is the... oh! It's...

[09:03]

KEITH: You could have a little robot car.

[pause]

AUSTIN: You can...

ART: Why would I want a robot car?

AUSTIN: You can use the gear....

KEITH: I've got to be clear: a little spy car. You can follow them with it...

AUSTIN: So you want to actually, physically, totally see through it, right?

ART: I want like, some sort of like, cyber monocle [Ali laughs].

AUSTIN: Right. I'm trying to be real nice to you right now... I want to be real nice to you right now, Art.

ART: OK... that's OK?

AUSTIN: *Real* nice... So what you have is a thing that can... the part that broke from your fucking... erm... neural interface?

ART: Yeah...

AUSTIN: You can replace that with this new thing. It takes a few seconds... it takes a few minutes, probably, to like... chip this new thing into the side of your skull, but it gets that working again. It's still going to continue to decay over time, cos like, the... the... port is busted, basically? But with this new upgrade, you'll be able to see through walls for the rest of this scene. It's a bug... it's weird that it does that; it's not a permanent feature. But it's a thing that you can use for this, like, short little bit.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: So, yeah, what are you, you just want to...

ART: The first thing I want to know is it really... what is it all... what *is* this place, actually?

[10:19]

AUSTIN: So you like, flip through , like, different, kind of, zooms? And it's... it's a house; and then... it's, like, a laboratory; it's a greenhouse, on the... on the, kind of like, the other side of the cabin, right? So if on the east side was the big long warehouse, on the west side, there's a big greenhouse. In the warehouse, it's just, like, something gigantic on its back. Laying down.

ART: Oh great...

JACK: Oh, fucking excellent.

AUSTIN: You're not sure what it is.

ART: I have a pretty good idea of what it is...

AUSTIN: Hmm? Maybe... I think you'll be surprised. And then it's... they're... like, I think you probably realize that you're doing a creepy fucking thing? Because she's, like, getting the mud out of her dress, and Maxine is, like, just down to her underwear.

ART: OK, but she's not a person, really [Ali and Austin both groan/wince].

AUSTIN: Jesus Christ...

KEITH (overlapping): Wow, Art, that's...

ALI (overlapping): God! Hang on!

ART: Is she? Was she ever a person? Is this a per... is this a Divine pretending to be a person [inaudible under Keith]?

KEITH (overlapping): Art, you're pretending that you've never seen Blade Runner [Ali, Austin, and Jack laugh].

[pause]

ART: But they're not... they're not, like...? [inaudible under Austin]

AUSTIN (overlapping): They're chatting. They're having a visit...

ART: Alright...

[11:46]

AUSTIN: Maxine is... your, like, targeting computer situation? Shows that Maxine's, like, BPM is coming back under control; she's like... Uh... not BPM, BPM is for music, isn't it? What's the heart beats...

[Jack laughs]

ART (overlapping): Beats per minute is also a pulse.

AUSTIN: Is that also a pulse thing? OK... That's good... That's coming back under control... She's talking with Maryland...

ART (incredulously): She has a pulse?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Does AuDy have a pulse?

AUSTIN: No.

[pause]

ART: I'm very confused by this whole situation [laughs].

AUSTIN: I think I... OK...

KEITH: Divines are very weird.

AUSTIN: I said... I said she was *with* a Divine like, a billion times.

ART: Yeah...

JACK (overlapping): Yeah. Yeah, it was...

AUSTIN: I never said she *was* a Divine.

JACK: That's what I said.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Hmm-hmm: that's what AuDy has been saying over-and-over because... AuDy is AuDy.

[12:32]

JACK (slowly): I am going to... go down the path. No, actually... wait a second: I'm going to ask Cass what he¹ sees.

ART (as CASSANDER TIMAEUS BERANICE): It's... It's just what they said. They're not... nothing...

JACK (as AUDY): What?

CASS: Nothing strange is happening. I mean... everything's a little strange: the building's fake. But... but she is... just helping her with her clothes.

AUDY: OK...

JACK: Oh god... OK; I'm going to go down to see Maryland.

AUSTIN: OK...

ART: Alright...

AUSTIN: You walk through the hallway, and again... just from Cass' perspective, you're just seeing AuDy walk into, like, her... one of her, like, guest rooms, where she's, like... spraying a dress with... something in a spray bottle, and wiping it away. At this point, Maxine is, thankfully, already dressed into... in, like, some really comfortable looking PJs? They probably have...

JACK: September PJs...

AUSTIN: No... It's... I'm trying to think... I think it's actually, like... strange that it's actually... they're the *right* PJs for her; they're like, a nightgown, they're like *Kesh* PJs. So, like: a long nightgown, and some slippers.

AUDY: Maryland, we need to talk.

AUSTIN (impatiently, as MARYLAND): What do you want, AuDy? I'm working.

AUDY: The situation has worsened.

MARYLAND: How?

AUDY: Alternatively; you need to tell us exactly what's going on.

¹ Cass uses they/them pronouns.

MARYLAND: I don't know what else I can tell you.

[14:21]

AUDY: The log cabin isn't a cabin.

MARYLAND: Yeah. It wouldn't look great to live in a big gray warehouse though, would it?

[pause - Jack laughs]

AUDY: Thing number two: Something is with Maxine...

MARYLAND: Yeah...

AUDY: Do you know what it is?

AUSTIN: She looks at Maxine, and says:

MARYLAND: You've been in school a long time; do you know what it is?

AUSTIN: And Maxine, like... does the thing where she rolls her eyes up to think... specifically about a thing that she's probably known for a long time.

AUSTIN (as MAXINE): It's a Divine. The reason we... the reason so many of us have these powers... it's some sort of Divine, I guess?

AUSTIN: And Maryland nods.

AUDY: What is the name of the Divine?

AUSTIN: She stops scrubbing the, uh... the... dress... And she like, shakes her head a little bit.

MARYLAND: There was always a debate to that, actually. When Ibex and I... put it together... he *insisted* we called it *Hope*, or something like that... But that's not right. That's not what it does; that's not what it is. It's *Voice*. It's the thing that we knew was missing from the Diaspora. All those Divines... all of them under control of one individual; supposedly representing the will of the people. We're satirists, I guess; we thought: "wouldn't it be funny if we built one that... actually let everyone pilot it, all at once."

AUSTIN: And then she, kind of like, shrug... like... gestures with her hand; toward Mode City.

[16:21]

MARYLAND: So all of the, the ones who are born as Strati, the ones who... like Maxine, we... add some additional... augments to; even the ones who... have no extra powers at all; all of them together move Voice. All of them built this city: they just don't know it.

AUDY: Do you think that it's going to help you?

MARYLAND: I think it already has... When I came to this rock, it was a backwater... mining company. A couple of rebels who had fought off Service, and... had barely eked together a living for themselves. It wasn't much longer after that, that we'd managed to make it a booming metropolis; the only of its kind on the entire planet. And...

AUDY: You've made a mistake [Maryland chuckles].

MARYLAND: I've made lots of mistakes! I'm an old woman...

AUDY: This is the worst mistake you've ever made. You think you're holding a sword; but in comparison to what's coming? You're holding a stick.

MARYLAND: I never thought it was a sword, AuDy; that's the problem with you. All you can do is... think of things in terms of... whether they're weapons, or tools... It's... it's... you're so concerned with the outcome... that you're not seeing anything for what it really is. Anyway, it's just a name. It's just a... thing. The people here are happy enough; and I understand that... something like this could be... misused, trust me. That's why I left: because I wouldn't... (sighs)... there are people at the university who wanted me to do things that I refused to do. But people like Maxine, and some of the other students, are... going to make this a better sector, in the long run [AuDy laughs].

JACK: And I think AuDy does actually laugh, which is rare.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

AUDY: The planet is going to be dust.

MARYLAND: Yeah; one day, we'll all be dust, AuDy. [Jack and Art laugh] I'm not concerned with that, you don't understand: all I want is from the now to the then to be a little bit better.

AUDY: Then is tomorrow.

MARYLAND: You have no proof of that [Jack laughs]. Show me something to convince me.

[18:51]

[pause]

AUDY: That's how it wins.

MARYLAND: You're a machine, that has lasted for... how long? Eighty thousand years now? And you tell me you fought this Rigour, at least once. And I see how, frankly, pathetic you are in front of me. So much less than whatever form it is that... Ibex used to confide in you, while you were in. And I have to think if... *you* could survive this Rigour, then why not me? Why not Ibex? Why not... the Apostolosians? Why not... OriCon? Why not the September Institute? I think... that you're creating a boogeyman. I think that you're convincing yourself that, because it's old, it's powerful. New things are powerful, AuDy. That's why we call it progress.

JACK: OK, I'm going to turn around, walk out of the room towards Cass, and say:

AUDY: She's a lost cause; the planet is doomed [Ali chuckles].

CASS: That doesn't... what are you going to tell Ibex?

AUDY: I don't know [pause]. You go in there and try and convince her.

CASS (dryly): I don't think you want that... [Austin and Jack laugh].

AUDY: What do we do, Cass?

CASS: I don't know... I mean, again: we could... we could... we could take her [Jack and Keith laugh].

ALI: Oh boy...

AUSTIN: Orth, like... Orth...

ART: There's four of us: three of us are trained soldiers, and one of us is a very, very, strong robot [Austin and Jack chuckle].

AUSTIN: Orth, like, raises his eyebrow.

AUSTIN (as ORTH): We're not gonna *take her*. What are you talking about?

ALI: Thank you, Orth...

[20:49]

AUDY: Orth... Do you know what she's saying?

ORTH: I don't care what she's saying; I'm not kidnapping an old woman!

AUDY: I, believe it or not, am also on the side of not kidnapping an old woman.

ORTH: What does she matter, anyway? I don't care if Ibex is happy in the end; I'm surprised you are, Cass... Let's find out about Rigour... let's try and find out some way of hurting the damn thing... let's get the fuck off this planet!

AUDY: I'd convinced myself that Maryland would be instrumental in the defeat of Rigour; and now I am beginning to see... that she is leading us down blind alleys.

ORTH: AuDy... Lord! Ibex didn't want you to save her because she was instrumental in saving the day; he wanted to save her because he misses her! That boy's preparing for a funeral; he just wants to make sure she's there for it.

AUDY: So we leave?

ORTH: I think we get the others... Maybe look around the September Institute a little bit more; and then yeah... we leave.

AUSTIN: Jacqui nods.

AUSTIN (as JACQUI): Good salads though...

JACK: God! Oh my god! Can we just leave? Can we just not even say "goodbye" to her?

AUSTIN: Sure...

JACK: Can she just, like, come out of the room, and everyone's gone?

AUSTIN: We can totally do that.

ALI: I think she'd prefer that.

AUSTIN: Ehh? I wouldn't go that far... but... she'd be fine with it.

CASS: Fine... Fine...

AUDY: Yeah? Let's go.

[22:13]

CASS: Yeah... Fuck this: fuck all of this!

AUSTIN: Aria...

ALI: Hey!

AUSTIN: So, you've been following Maryland... Not Maryland... God, I just did it... Maritime: throughout the... the underground here; for the last, let's say... twenty minutes? It's a lot of, like, little hallways. It's similar to the... the underground hallways that led you from the, kind of... Ibex... outpost? Into this city to begin with. Very utilitarian corridors. But these, like, splinter off in a bunch of different directions, and lead back up into things like *the utility building*, or, like, one of the *security buildings*. There's one, though, that leads down... it's kind of, like, she kind of goes all over the place, but eventually, winds up back at the faculty labs, underneath it. -pause- This is not, like, a... this has been like, twenty? Twenty-five minutes? Of following her around, but you could get there quicker than what she did. It's clear that she's following some... like, tracking something? Herself that's going this weird route? But you could get back to the pavillion more quickly than that, or Mako could join up with you more quickly than that. In like five minutes, or something like that.

KEITH (overlapping): Am I still dancing?

AUSTIN: Yeah! You're still having a really nice time. Tower is, like... talking to you about... about how he bombed that test, but that's OK because he did really well on his paper, so... ahd he's like, nervous chattering at this point? Cos he doesn't know how to dance quietly? Because he's very awkward; he's a big awkward boy.

KEITH: Tower?

AUSTIN: Yeah... he's alright. The dance ends, and he's like:

TOWER: Thank you so much! I was so upset that nobody wanted to dance with me...

MAKO: Oh! You're a good dancer! It was very... *lifty*.

TOWER: [sighs] oh... I'm sorry...

MAKO: No, no! It's good; it's fun. It's like a ride [Ali and Jack laugh].

TOWER: OK...

AUSTIN: [laughing] he laughs...

[24:09]

TOWER: You want some punch?

MAKO: I'd love some punch!

TOWER: Alright... let's go get some punch.

ALL: Oh my god... He's Sailor Jupiter; we're fucked...

AUSTIN: Yeah... He's kind of Sailor Jupiter; I hadn't thought about that. But no: he totally is... Alright! Mako; Aria's gone.

MAKO: Shit...

AUSTIN: Actually; I think it takes you a second; you saw her, like, frozen in time in the same way that everybody else was when you... when you like freeze... It took you a second to realize: "Oh, no... that's just a hologram of Aria; that's just... that's not... that's not her."

KEITH: Like I was keeping tabs, and like... "Oh no: I wasn't keeping tabs: that's an after-image."

AUSTIN: Right... "I wasn't keeping tabs; I was having a nice dance." [pause]. So yeah; she's gone.

MAKO: Tower, listen... We can have this punch, but I have to go do something that's super important?

TOWER (sighing): OK...

MAKO: No! It's for real, like...

TOWER: No, I get it... Don't worry.

MAKO: No, after punch! Punch first though...

TOWER: OK! That's... OK...

AUSTIN: Aria, what do you do?

[pause]

AUSTIN: So... Maritime; she's... slipped into this doorway, and in the... in the... it's as far up as it goes. You can't go forward, past that; so you're caught up with her now.

[25:21]

ALI: But I still can't interact with her at all?

AUSTIN: Oh no; you're caught up now. That's what I'm saying. So she's... she's, like... now *actually* ten to twenty feet ahead of you, but just slipped inside.

ALI: OK...

AUSTIN: So if you want to catch up with her, you totally can.

ALI: OK; I would like to do that.

AUSTIN: Alright, so you, like... slip in past that doorway, And it's super dark, and it takes a second for your eyes to adjust, and then you see her, kind of, creeping along. She has, kind of, glowy eyes going right now? Sort of see-in-the-dark eyes?

ALI: Oh...

AUSTIN: How do you get her attention?

ALI: What's the... like... environment that I'm in right now?

AUSTIN: You're in an extension of those same... of those same, like... catacombic, like... hallways.

ALI: Oh, OK, so it's just like...

AUSTIN: But you're heading toward a stairwell that's going to take you up.

ALI: OK... I guess I just call out to her.

AUSTIN: She turns... and she has a gun in her hand, and she *nearly* shoots you.

ARIA: Whoa!

AUSTIN (as MARITIME LAPEL): Holy! [gasps].

ARIA (friendly): Hey!

MARITIME: Aria? What the hell are you doing here?

ARIA: What are *you* doing here?

[26:27]

MARITIME: Nothing! I... [breathing deeply]. There's some... there's something bad happening...

ARIA: OK... well, we can deal with it... what's going on?

MARITIME: I don't know... I... I don't...

AUSTIN: She, like, holds her head in her hands?

MARITIME: I can't... it doesn't make sense. I just... it doesn't...

ALI: I like, go up the stairs and put my hand on her shoulder.

ARIA (sympathetically): No... just, like, calm down...

MARITIME: Don't...

AUSTIN: She like... backs away from you, when you actually... when you touch her.

ALI: Oh...

MARITIME: You're... you're real...

ARIA (confused): Yeah... I... yeah...

MARITIME (scared): A lot of the people here aren't real... Like... a *lot* of them.

ARIA: No, I... I know... Are *you* real?

MARITIME: Yeah... Yeah... The thing is, I... I don't... I don't know... I saw some stuff... I saw some... something's upstairs. And I need to go see if it's... I think this is where they keep... I need to go look. Can you come with me?

ARIA: Yeah.

MARITIME: It's funny... it was a few months ago when I was helping your friend get to the hospital when I was saying we shouldn't have guns on campus: but here I am...

ARIA: That was...

MARITIME: With a gun...

[27:44]

ARIA: That was this afternoon...

MARITIME: What are you talking about?

ARIA: I... I actually don't know what I'm talking about, yeah... Let's just go.

MARITIME: OK...

KEITH: I should have... I should have been there for that [Ali laughs].

AUSTIN: So; she opens the door... and... there's, like... a glow in the room... of computer monitors and stuff. But there's *no one* in here right now. A lot of the computers seem like they were left? Like... left *on* in an emergency? Like... like... "Oh! Time to go!" Like... here's a cup of coffee that's half drunk, and, like, it's empty, and there's no one here to drink it. And she's, like, walking through this massive hallway of... of... uh, kind of... I guess, like, data analysis centers? Like, little... little... cubicles set up for that? And towards the door at the far end of this room that has a green glow coming from the bottom of it. Mako, you're done with your punch.

MAKO: Alright, Tower; I've got to do this thing. You can come with me if you want. But it's, like, dangerous, probably.

TOWER: Like, how dangerous?

MAKO: I don't know, like... it could, like... I'm gonna say, either... low chance it will be violent... slight chance that everything... everybody here is fake, and... might blow up.

TOWER (laughs nervously): Alright... It sounds like you have been drinking too many slurpies! I'm gonna stay right here and have a good time! And you should come back.

MAKO: OK. If shit is OK, then I'll come back. But... it might be, also, dangerous here.

TOWER: Oh... OK... I... well... Just be safe.

AUSTIN: And he, like, ruffles your hair [Ali and Keith make 'cute' sounds] [pause]. So, do you go to where Aria is?

KEITH: Yeah, I sort of...

[29:42]

AUSTIN: Alright... By the time you get there, Aria and Maritime have made it to that door, and they open it; you're at the entrance to that room. Aria; Maritime steps forward, and steps a few feet in, and then stops, and drops the gun. I, like, so desperately want to do a pull-aside! It's I thing I haven't done in forever! But I won't do it...

ALI (disappointed): Oh...

AUSTIN: Actually, I will! This is a thing... I'm gonna message... message Aria, cos I just want Aria to describe her facial expression... to Mako; and then I can describe what is seen.

-[typing sounds begin]

ALI: Oh boy... [skeptically] This is great! [Jack chuckles].

JACK: Oh yeah, this can't... it's not... it's a party!

KEITH: This is the good part here! Nothing bad's happening over here!

[typing pauses]

ALI: I smile really wide, laughing... No, hold on...

AUSTIN: That's not what happens! [Jack and Keith laugh].

[typing recommences]

KEITH: I don't like how confident...

ALI (incredulously): What?!

KEITH: I don't like how confident Austin was that Aria would not be laughing...

[typing pauses]

ALI: [makes terrified sound].

[typing continues]

[Ali laughs nervously, and makes sounds to suggest she is scared/grossed-out]

KEITH: Oh no...

[31:05]

[typing stops]

ALI: Oh no...

AUSTIN: Mako; you're almost there...

ART: That's what Ali sounds like when she's happy; don't worry [Ali laughs].

ALI: Well... sometimes...

AUSTIN: Mako, you're, like, walking at, like... a jaunty pace towards the door.

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Aria, what's your response?

[pause]

AUSTIN: Mako, do you make yourself known?

MAKO: Hey! Oh, you've found her. Great! Great! And that's a good thing.

AUSTIN: She backs up to you, Aria, and, like... slips past you, and starts running in the other direction.

ALI: I... see Mako, and like... back up away from him?

MAKO: Hi! No... what's going on? [Ali winces].

AUSTIN: Maritime sprints past you, Mako. And you can hear her, like [imitates quick footsteps] - quick-running down the stairs, back into the hallways

KEITH (overlapping): Past me?

AUSTIN: Yeah...

MAKO: Hey! Wait! Hold... Wait!

AUSTIN: She is... she is sobbing.

[32:02]

MAKO: Why is she sobbing? Hey! Aria? Why is sh... Why is everybody sobbing? And what's wrong?

ARIA (scared): Uh... I don't know... This is horrifying! I don't know...

MAKO: OK... hold on... what's horrifying? Should we chase her?

ARIA: I kind of want to, but I... I don't... I don't even know her! But like... I don't know... she was a really good roomie? Can you come up here? I don't know!

MAKO: OK, what's up?

AUSTIN: So, Mako, you step in... to that room?

KEITH: yeah.

AUSTIN: Everything's, like, alright with this blue glow. And it takes a second for your eyes to adjust, and then you see that... over to your right, there are these giant blue vats... filled with liquid. And inside, is Maritime Lapel [several people gasp/groan]. One, and then another, and then another, and then another, and then another... and then another, and another. And then your head goes straight forward, and... in a vat, you see another figure in the distance, and it's hard to make them out. And then to your left; you... your head, like, curves in forward, and there's another figure. And then it gets close enough, and you see... a whole row of Mako Trigs.

KEITH (unclear if in character): Am I a clone or some shit?! What!? Wait! Hold on... you guys?

KEITH: Wait, are they out of the vats?

AUSTIN: No, no, no... [Ali laughs]. They are all in the vats.

KEITH: OK...

ARIA: Mako? Do you know what this is?

MAKO: Yeah, hold on... there's a thing that I saw in one of the computers...

KEITH: And I want to use an Intel for this.

AUSTIN: Yeah; totally.

[33:30]

KEITH: What do I know about... the September Institute and cloning? [Austin laughs].

AUSTIN: So, how did you get this information? Like, how are you now coming to look at this information and suddenly put it together? Do you just want to know anything about cloning?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah... so what... the way that I got it was first looking into... when we first got to September; that first time I got access to the system, and I researched.

AUSTIN: Right... right...

KEITH: I saw...

AUSTIN: Was this when you were looking to find out when Maryland was escorted away? Not "escorted away..." Spoilers!

KEITH (overlapping): No, it was way before that, yeah...

AUSTIN: OK... then... it wasn't there...

KEITH: I got some Intel there too, so... I could do it there.

AUSTIN: Let's use that *second* Intel?

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: About...

KEITH: I was just thinking about how... "Oh! I read this thing, cos it was interesting, but..."

AUSTIN: So there was one little note... there in the thing about how... when Maryland, like... retired, effectively.

KEITH: Oh! I'm sorry; yes... This is then. I was confusing the endings then.

AUSTIN: Yes. When Maryland retired, there's, like, a line in some documentation that was part of her contract that said that biological data would be kept on hand... for further testing as part of the Strati program. And... your eyes go forward, to the vat in the center, and it's Maryland September: in the largest vat. And it just kind of comes together for you... I guess... that you, and Maritime, are all just... weird fucking experiments... weird variations on the genetic code of

Maryland September. And you don't know how many of you there have been; and you have a hard time knowing *exactly* how long...

[35:25]

KEITH: I'm the first one; for sure.

AUSTIN: You... [sarcastically] oh, well *definitely* [Ali and Jack laugh]. [pause] I mean... you can see that the ones here are probably numbered, in some way.

KEITH: OK; if there's a way to see where they're numbered?

AUSTIN: Yeah... but it's just like... well, the numbers are *big*; it's like... and it's just like... 'MT model'; it's not 'Mako Trig model', it's 'MT model', you know..., seventy-two. Version seventy-three, seventy-four, seventy-five...

KEITH: I have an idea: let's count how many empty vats there are.

AUSTIN: There are no empty vats.

KEITH: No empty vats... OK...

AUSTIN: That would be very inefficient.

KEITH: That's true... I guess I'm not the first one then...

ART: Wait, do they all have different 'MT' names? That would be so good! But also a lot of work...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Marcus Trogg...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

KEITH: Makus Tongue...

AUSTIN: Umm... And this is only these two rows, by the way [chuckles]...

KEITH: So, you're saying there might be other... people?

AUSTIN: Oh... yes... This is a big room.

KEITH: Is Tower in there? Cos that would be gross...

AUSTIN: Tower is not in there...

[36:26]

KEITH: Good...

JACK: His name begins with T.

KEITH: Well...

AUSTIN: I don't think there's anyone else here that you know? But it is clear that the September Institute has been producing people to experiment on?

JACK: God! For the longest time, we thought *Ibex* was the villain...

KEITH: He still kind of is...

ALI (overlapping): I didn't think that at all...

ART: Yeah... we're... some of us aren't ready to give that up...

KEITH (overlapping): Just because there are other villains, doesn't mean he's not one of them...
[Jack laughs].

ALI: He's a great guy! I don't know...

KEITH: It's like in Digimon, when they kill that first bad Digimon, and then that other one's like "I'm the for-real one, this time!"

AUSTIN: You hear her *scream*.

KEITH: Oh, let's run to that, then.

ALI (laughing): Yes... let's do that.

KEITH: I run to the screams.

AUSTIN: As you... as you run towards the scream, the, kind of... VHS effect reveals itself, over-and-over, and you see her running, again and again, and again... and again... and getting shot in the back, again, and again, at different parts of the hallway. Sometimes getting further; sometimes not even making it to that door on the stairs. But once: she slips past.

KEITH: Well let's... follow her though.

AUSTIN: and we jump back to the woods.

[37:45]

KEITH (whispering): Goddammit!

AUSTIN: How are the woods going?

ART: Wait: there are interesting implications back there!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

JACK (sighs): OK, so... the plan? Cass... OK, so I'm just going to straight-up ask.

AUDY: Cass; what's the plan?

AUSTIN: Good question!

ART/CASS (unclear if in character): Oh my god... I don't even know anymore...

JACK: Can you make plans in the field?

ART: No... I can't. I mean, I can...

[Austin, Jack, and Art all speak at once - total of what anyone says is unclear]

AUSTIN: ... have stuff left...

ART: I mean, I can literally make plans,

JACK:... when we botched it? [end of all speaking together]

ART: Yeah... a lot of stuff wasn't what we thought it was... we all tried our best!

AUSTIN: I just... There was *definitely* a longer Legwork segment you could have done!

KEITH: I'm gonna just... real quick...I'm just gonna read two Tweets from Jack from about an hour ago that I feel like still apply.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh...

KEITH (quoting Jack): "I'm so cross, Austin!" and "Hahahahaha! We (Friends at the Table) is doing something weird, and bullshit, and brilliant..."

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

[38:38]

ART (jovially): In real-world time, we spent well over an hour and a half doing legwork, and I think there was a point where I was just, like... "we've gotta get to it..." And yeah: I could have done better, but... [some chuckles].

JACK: OK... so... The way Orth was talking about it, Orth seems to want to - somehow - hit Rigour.

ART: And we don't even want to think about peaking into that warehouse?

AUSTIN: You can do that.

JACK: We can peek into the warehouse.

AUSTIN: Do you want to do that?

ART (determined): Yeah; I do. I really do.

AUSTIN: You... you want to... not get seen while doing it?

ART: I mean...

JACK: Ummm?

AUSTIN: Or do you not care?

ART: I mean... if you're going to ask it like that, I care so much... [Ali laughs].

AUSTIN: Alright...

ART: I've really never cared about anything more in my life [pause for chuckles].

AUSTIN: That's an *Act Under Fire*, Cool, then.

ART: Oh! I think I'm terrible at that.

AUSTIN: Oh, OK...

ART: Oh no; I'm not... But I didn't mean to cut off AuDy,

AUSTIN: No, go ahead... Sorry...

[39:41]

ART: Who had different... goals.

JACK: No, no, no... I'm super up for going into this warehouse.

ART: I succeeded... partially.

AUSTIN: Good; good job. So... [slowly] give a hard choice. Let's think... [pause]. Once you go in... So you, I think you..., you... do the thing where you like, touch the door, to open it... Ahh! Hmm... OK [laughs]. There is something when you get close, Cass, that like... as you go to open the door, something resonates with you. And you know that the second you open that door, there will be no doubt in anyone's mind, for a big distance, that the thing that's behind that door, is behind that door? Anyone nearby will know that you've opened that door; but... will know... will know that the door's been opened... Nah, maybe that's unfair, cos the thing was, like, no: you're not gonna get caught doing it. So that's too far... [pause] You're able to get in, but only by yourself; if you go in. It's...

ART: How do I... How do I get this information?

AUSTIN: You can just... the... the... door will... like, you're holding it open? [pause] No, that doesn't make sense... But that is the thing I want: how do I want this to work?

ART: I'm totally cool with it, I'm just trying to, like... find out how I know.

AUSTIN (overlapping): No... I'm just trying to make sure it's consistent, and.... Interesting. Cos, like: Oh yeah, AuDy would just rip the door off, obviously! [pause] Oh! OK... it's simple, it's just: you can open it enough for you to slip in, but not anybody else. Like you're thin, in comparison to the rest of them, and if you open it even a centimeter more, it will hit a wire... or like, a laser that will activate the security system.

ART: OK...

KEITH: Super good security system, though... that allows for the door to be opened partially.

AUSTIN: Yeah... hmm-hmm?

ART: I mean, I think... part of the security was the fact that it was completely invisible [laughter].

AUSTIN: Yes!

ART: That was the first line!

[41:51]

AUSTIN: Yeah...

ART: I have to turn the light on in this room, and I'm going to take that moment to think about this.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh? Oh, you mean in the room in... your real life room. He means his real life room...

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: I thought he meant the big warehouse room [Keith laughs].

JACK: It's just gonna be more Makos!

ART: Yeah, sorry about that: I was just noticing that I... was feeling some eye strain.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Welcome back!

ART: OK: I mean.. I assume that everyone's around me, and can sort of see this happening.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ART: And I... I think what Cass does, is he² kind of shrugs... and he sort of goes in... And then closes the door behind him.

AUSTIN: Good... And the door closes! And Cass is in there alone.

ART (flippantly): That's probably fine.

AUSTIN: There are, like, emergency lights on? You know, like, low-level lights on in that room?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But do... do you, like, find and turn on the big... the big, giant, [makes increasing-pitch sound; imitating a machine turning on] switch... to really light it up?

² Cass uses they/them pronouns.

ART: Yeah! That's certainly what this calls for, dramatically. [Austin laughs]. I've really enjoyed playing this character, you guys...

AUSTIN: No, it's good.

[42:54]

ART (laughing): I hope I can still participate in the finale!

AUSTIN: It goes, like: [makes several crashing sounds, imitating huge lights turning on] as the lights above turn on.

KEITH (overlapping): [not quite audible, but complimenting the sound effects].

AUSTIN: And there is something under a... gigantic tarp... [to Keith] Thank you... I... appreciate it. I know that... you're a sound master? So it means a lot coming from you. Ah... Keith can make *any* sound.

KEITH: I can replicate *any* sound. I can make... I can make the sound of any sound.

AUSTIN: Ah fuck! I just remembered what Lazer Ted's fifteenth job was, and I'm *really* mad that I forgot it [Keith laughs]. We'll come back to it.

KEITH: So you said there was a *big* tarp?

AUSTIN: There's a *big* tarp!

KEITH: Like, the biggest tarp...

ART (overlapping, laughing): Do we mean a real tarp?

AUSTIN: Oh my god... we mean a real tarp. We mean... a very real tarp.

KEITH: And how expensive is this tarp?

AUSTIN: Probably... Oh, no, not expensive at all, because this tarp is fake. Cos you hit a button... cos... this is Maryland September... so, you go up to a control panel, Cass.

ART: OK...

AUSTIN: It's near the big switch that you activated. And there's a button that's just, like... If this was 1960s Batman, it would be, like "Tarp Removal Unit..." or something... I think it probably

just says, you know... [pause]. I don't know.... I don't know what, like, the fancy way of saying that is!

ART: And, uh... just for... just for trying to respect the dramatic flow here, I probably shouldn't just do an Assess roll, right now, because...

[44:15]

AUSTIN: Oh; do one! Go for it... go for it! Always remember: I like rolls, cos that's the way I hurt you the best.

ART: I think the way you're gonna hurt me the best is with whatever's under that tarp!

AUSTIN: Oh, you...

ART: I was real wrong!

AUSTIN: So, I get to do two things here now... One is: I get to give you something really fucking cool.

ART: OK...

JACK: No... last time he did that...

AUSTIN: The tarps get pulled away... or, kind of, shimmer away... and the first thing you notice is the face of your father... except; not quite... it's... the face of your *line* though, certainly. In front of you, is Apokine; the first of its kind, the one that gave your line the *name* Apokine.

ART: Great.

AUSTIN: It's a *gigantic* machine... or statue... It's hard to tell; it has a shell-like musculature that, kind of... organises itself around where the... the... natural muscles on a well-built humanoid body would be. And... it calls to you. Even being near it: you can hear, not only *it*, but the voices of the Apostolosian people. And they're actually not in such a bad place these days: but it wants you to step inside... to take the throne.

ART: Oh my god...

AUSTIN: There's another thing, but I'll let you... you have a move, Cass, that says you still get to ask one question when you fail an Assess, so what's the question?

ART: I... wait... shouldn't I? Oh fuck!

KEITH: I know what the question should be: I wonder if Art picks right?

ART (laughing): Is it “How do I avoid trouble or hide here?” [pause]. Who or what is in control here?

AUSTIN: *You* are.

[46:08]

ART (lightly): Great.

AUSTIN: There is a thing, though... When it's revealed, I think we get a shot of Maxine holding her head in pain. And then, a shot of Mako doing the same, as Voice itself recoils at seeing its father too. And then... something hears that. Something senses the power that you've uncovered.

ART: Wait, I... I have things blocking my view; I want to see what clock is moving.

AUSTIN: You know what clock is moving...

ALI: Oh... buddy...

KEITH: Rigour's not real; Rigour's a myth! And he's³ definitely not in my backyard!

AUSTIN: He's not in the backyard... that's not Rigour. That really is Apokine; the first Apostolosian mech, that helped form the Apostolosian Empire. [pause] September runs in... to the... to the warehouse.

MARYLAND: What did you do?!

CASS: What did *you* do?!

MARYLAND: Why didn't you just *ask* me about it? [Keith laughs].

CASS: You stole my birthright from me!

MARYLAND: I found it here... It's yours... I know it's yours.

CASS: I had no idea to even ask this question, what a... what an insane...

MARYLAND: You knew well enough to come back here!

³ Rigour is it/its.

CASS: What can it *do*?

[47:42]

MARYLAND: When we built Voice... the problem with the Divines, like I said, is that they're... keyed to one person. Righteousness overwhelms Ibex because... how can Ibex hold it back? It's *Righteousness*. Or it says it is; and that's enough to convince a man like him. But Apokine... listens to the voice of its people. When you put those things together... that's how we built what we built. It's a machine: it's like any other machine. It can do *lots* of things. It can do more with *you* at its controls, though. I've been...

AUSTIN: And she starts, like, walking under its shadow. Her voice echoes through the warehouse. And she runs a hand along its, kind of... marble foot.

MARYLAND: I've been tinkering with it for ages. It's a hobby... It works, but I... have kept it hidden, because the same technology it uses to resonate with your people makes it a little loud.

CASS: Sure...

MARYLAND: It's funny; Ibex was surprised when we found this thing. You know how he felt about... Apostolos.

CASS: I do, yeah...

MARYLAND: He was shocked that your people could build the same thing that his did. And I told him what we've always known, where I come from; that it's narcissistic to think that... any technology is yours alone. So if you want it, it yours... but it's a target on your back.

CASS: I don't... I don't know. I... I didn't think I wanted it anymore.

MARYLAND: You kept your name, huh?

CASS: Yeah...

MARYLAND: When I ran away from home, I gave mine up (laughs) – and I gave it up

again. That's how I could tell myself I was committed, but even then, I don't know... I miss the old place. It's why I like seeing Maxine; reminds me of home [pause]. Take it... Prove to them that Rigour isn't anything to be afraid of. If it even exists... It's just another machine.

[50:29]

ART: I... I like, reach up, and I switch on *The Rigalia*? And I want to, like... hear it.

AUSTIN: You immediately get that rush that I was, kind of, talking about as a murmur before. Unlike the murmur of Voice, and all of the people tied into Voice, this one is a chorus. And it's in tune, and it sings, and it's the Apostolosian people, and some strange voices too... but singing in unison: hopeful; positive; you know, like... It reminds you of youth. It reminds you of the time before the war kicked up... into high gear. It reminds you of a holiday that you'd forgotten about for a while. But it also feels like a very busy Friday afternoon, where you have a ton to do, and all you want to do is go home and rest; but the responsibility is too heavy. Your father's face – the face of your line – turns to look at you. It's all marble; its eyes too, it's beard... Your parent's, not your father's, apologies...

ART: Sure...

AUSTIN: And it goes up on its... on its, kind of, back hands, and leans forward, and reaches out one of those hands and opens it, as if to ask you to step on and enter.

ART: OK...

AUSTIN: OK.

ART: It's very... It's very scary [laughs].

AUSTIN: Yeah... Meanwhile; in the September Institute... How you doin' Mako?

KEITH: Uhm... I don't... I... OK. So we're right at the doorway here, where...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: OK.

[52:32]

AUSTIN: And... you've seen all of these different versions of Maritime run past you and get killed, over, and over again. And I think... the thing ends up being, just like... you're chasing her through... out of the faculty labs, through campus, and again, and again, have to see her get caught... and killed. And one of them... And dragged away before anyone can see; because it's always on Prom Night when it happens, and everyone else is somewhere else on campus. And then... one time, she gets away, and... she finds that same little hole in the wall that Maxine knew about. And she sneaks out... and... a man chases her down through the alleys, and pulls the trigger... and she dies in the street, and a light goes on in one of the houses nearby; in one of the apartments nearby... and he realizes he can't go pick her up. And this is the one who got away and wound up in the news: "Girl found killed." And you wonder what happened to the other Makos...

KEITH: So there's no...

AUSTIN: There's no saving her... Because... it's not... How much of it is even... real, right this second?

KEITH: Right... I mean, I guess the only thing I can do is go look up in the room.

AUSTIN: Which room?

KEITH: The room with the vats full of me?

AUSTIN: Oh, sure... sure... I actually... here's what I actually like for that scene: I kind of, like, you and Aria chasing that way? And at some point, while running after Maritime, Larry splits off of you, and starts running backwards; past you, and also past you and Aria, again, and again, and again, as he makes his way back to the vats, so that you can see what's there. I actually really like the image of Larry looking up at all of those, because Larry is also implicated, in a weird way, here?

KEITH: Yeah... Larry's, like, the only clone of me that I made myself...

AUSTIN: Yourself... Yeah... So what do you do there? And I'll get to that clock I advanced, I promise.

KEITH: I want to see if there's any, sort of... of... I want to access the... the Mesh that's in this room.

AUSTIN: Go ahead. What do you want to know? I'll just tell you: we're here.

[55:01]

KEITH: I want to know how long they've been here. I want to know how many of them there have been; and which one I was... Probably the first, I'm sure...

AUSTIN: You're definitely not the f... well... who even knows?

KEITH: Right...

AUSTIN: There was no first... you're a copy of a thing that doesn't exist. There was no Mako Trig, ever. The first Mako Trig was a... was a... a variation on Maryland September, and who even knows if the one in the vat is the original Maryland September? Or if the one in the cabin is?

KEITH: Uhh...

AUSTIN: You're a copy of nothing.

KEITH (laughing): But am I the first copy of nothing?

AUSTIN: Hmm? Maybe you're the first copy... it's hard to tell.

KEITH: It's hard to tell?

AUSTIN: Uhh... No; you're probably not. In fact; the thing that made you unique... well, here's what you learn about the September Institute. Is that: yes, there are students here from Mode City; yes, there are women and men like Maxine, people like Tower – who are really here. Also; the majority of people are not: the majority of people are tied to a program that is running an experiment to see the limitations and the capabilities of a Strati... of a Stratus. And they run these year, after year, after year; and they've been doing it since... for the last... Eight or nine years? Ten years?

KEITH (overlapping): How did nobody notice?

AUSTIN: Who? Who would notice?

KEITH (overlapping): The ones that are real?

AUSTIN: They... move on. They don't see everything; like... it's all this weird illusion, all the time...

KEITH: Yeah... So... you were going to say what made me unique?

[56:38]

AUSTIN: Was that they let you go... so that they could watch you in the world. You were a weird experiment that, instead of just being left to live here, on campus, they wanted to see what would happen if they put you out there: they let you leave. We've always known that you were 'Owned' and not 'Hunted'...

KEITH: Right...

AUSTIN: Now we know why.

KEITH: Can I... Well I... I wanna fuck all this up for them.

AUSTIN: You do... you do wanna fuck it all up?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah... I do.

AUSTIN: What do you want to do?

KEITH: So...

AUSTIN: If you want to fuck it up for them, I think it means destroying these clones...

KEITH: No, I w... I can't... There's no way to... let them all go?

AUSTIN: Oh! I could... yeah; sure. Sure... If you want...

JACK: He wants, erm...

AUSTIN: All of those Makos, and all of those Maritimes to... That's not going to be pleasant for them!

KEITH: No?

AUSTIN: Like, it's not, like: "Oh! I'm here! And I'm totally well-formed now!"

KEITH: Yeah, no... I guess that's true. They would be... they would wake up... to a room full of themselves!

JACK (overlapping): It's probably closer to, like, moaning creatures!

AUSTIN: Yes... Yes...

[57:50]

KEITH: Ah... it's really hard. What are they... what do they want to use these ones for? Like... what do they... how long until... where do they put them?

AUSTIN: They die...

KEITH: Why do they die?

AUSTIN: Because they learn too much. Because they're Maryland September, and she was fucking smart as hell.

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: And because they're given a little more resource than anyone else: a little more leeway. You can... you also understand that, like, the rest of Rosegold is this... Or; Rosemoon: the whole of House Rosemoon. Anyone who's real there, is one of these clones. And then, like, a couple of people here and there. Ah... you also see that they've begun taking biological data from real students who are attending. You can see that Tower's biological data is there; Maxine's is there.

KEITH: OK... Well... I think I have an idea of what I want to do here, but I don't think it's something I can do right now.

AUSTIN: What is it?

KEITH: Uh, I would like to...

AUSTIN: Cos we're in it.

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: We're capital I, capital I, In It, right now.

KEITH: I want to find a way to.... to... take them and put them all in different places? So that they don't have to wake up where the rest of them all are?

AUSTIN: Right... I kind of like the image of Larry quickly, like... cyber... like... a holographic keyboard comes up, and he begins immediately, placing... like weird orders?

KEITH: Yeah...

[59:24]

AUSTIN: Like... just like... OK: just... movement order, you like... he jacks into the campus, like... uh... maintenance system?

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: And is... basically, programming a bunch of robots to come move these tanks around? But it's a big order... I like him at least working on that, while we cut to this. Aria and actual Mako outside... Up through the sunny sky, you can see the shape of ships, kind of like... almost as if, when you're underwater, and you look up and you can see the shape of people at the pool? Do you know what I'm talking about?

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Like: "oh look, there's people up there," but like... there's also a layer of water first. And to the East, you hear the thunder crack again, as... another storm? A bigger storm comes? And the ground begins to shake...

[MUSIC – *Rigour* – begins]

AUSTIN: And it's happening... I think everyone feels it; all at once. The walls of Mode City, of the buildings that, you know... a few episodes ago we revealed were just, kind of, holographic wallpaper, they all shut down, all at once. And it's just old, crumbling buildings. From the North, from the Mineral Cooperative, you can see dust and smoke, as stone and tree crumble and fall, as something begins to lift itself up. It comes up through the streets, the giant... the pink Bacchus Biotech Recreational District? Lifts into the air, flings itself across the city, into the sea. And *Rigour* is here. And it's... [scoffs] it's the biggest... it's... I don't know that anyone's seen anything as big as it. It's one of those things where, like... seeing it makes you suddenly wonder if... "Yeah, no... I can see the curvature of this planet... I understand how... that this is not a flat planet..." Cos it's... it's so far away that its legs dip behind the curvature. And when it stretches its body out all the way, it's as if a ceiling cracks, and the rain starts pouring in through all of September. And in the Prom, Tower drinks his punch, and looks at the band playing, and behind them, the Ordennan ships come to bay.

[MUSIC ends]

AUSTIN: Because, of course they do... It's time for the last dance.

[EPISODE ENDS]