

PALISADE 36: Weapons Ready Pt. 2

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Recap

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

Jack (as **Veronique**): Absurd.

Art (as **Fealty**): Does Brnine think that we're worried about us? [Austin and Ali laugh]

[["Nothing is Stationary"](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Art (as **Fealty**): I'm worried about the people in the Bontive Valley who will be the collateral damage. We are a destructive force, as is Crusade. A conflict would be explosive.

Ali (as **Brnine**): [sighs] Listen, I get that you're concerned about this and that Gentian is a stalwart enemy, I suppose, you know. But at some point, we sort of have to just go for it. We're talking about food here.

Austin: All the little Asepsis drones have, like, circled around the glass, like, Magneto prison that Integrity is in, and the arm has grown. It has grown into the, like, a sort of like a third of a torso and head. It's regrowing a Princept for itself.

Jack: In conversation with Brnine, the thing that they agreed to do with Gentian and Fealty was that there is no way these Divines fight without consequences. I want to respect the fact that this was a success, that this scene went well, and that a lot of Brnine's kind of central philosophy in moving into this was "This is a fight about food. This is a fight about making sure that people can continue to eat." I love the image of the two Divines fighting and, as such, razing—like, R-A-Z-E—a kind of path through the Bontive Valley.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: And every time Gentian tries to drag Fealty off the path, Fealty, you know, claws back onto this path again. And as such, the kind of compromise that has been made is that the Bontive Valley has gotten to this place where it is still able to support, you know, growth and life and harvest, and the victory was won with the deployment of two Divines or one Divine fighting another Divine, but the cost is that this sort of belt, this sort of, like, scar has been left. You know, a stripe across the Bontive Valley, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] where these Divines fought.

[song ends]

Gameplay Discussion

Austin: So that means there are two more scenes to do.

Art: Yes, and I would like to make sure we do the start of every turn.

Austin: Oh, wow, we just skipped it. We just fully skipped it.

Art: Yeah. I mean, we had a guest.

Austin: We did.

Jack: It's true.

Austin: But yeah, you should still be able to advance that clock. Right?

Art: Right.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: So you get to start or advance a four step clock titled “Take Something That Isn't Theirs”.

Austin: Yep.

Jack: And you are advancing that from two to three?

Art: Yes. Just all of my factions have now gone.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: So I don't want to miss my...

Jack: As a reminder, our clocks right now are Uncover the Cause's Membership: complete.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Settlers and Reinforcements for the Authority Arrive: complete. Take Something That Isn't Theirs, Chimera's Lantern: complete. And we saw that that Divine project has— they might have been— that's still been going, even in Millennium Break's absence from Chimera's Lantern, right?

Austin: Yes, correct. They did not overcome that, you know what I mean? They did not—

Jack: They drilled down into that moon and are reawakening Divines that longed for death.

Austin: Yeah, totally. The Chimeric Cadent is, you know, doing their best to push them away, but like, you know, it's one thing, you know? It's not a— it's a big moon, and that being cannot be everywhere all at once, so. And some places, it can't fit into at all. They're big.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You know?

Jack: We have a Harvest the Fundament Nodes: six out of six.

Austin: Done.

Jack: Great news. Revive Motion: two out of four, not done.

Austin: Yep. Yeah.

Jack: And then we have Take Something That Isn't Theirs: three out of four. Art just increased that. And then we have "question mark, question mark, question mark, question mark, Alert."

Austin: Which is six out of eight, which is actually a seven out of eight now, because that advances every downtime and then occasionally when I spend a token during—every conflict turn, and then occasionally during a downtime. That is not a Frontier Syndicate one. It's just on this page so that I remember that it exists.

Jack: Yes. Yes.

Austin: And that it doesn't go disappear on the Wayward Faction one, which is a place where it could be. Advancing. But yeah.

Jack: Okay, what is your thing? Oh, you may force a reroll during a conflict scene this turn.

Austin: Yeah, mine is not at the beginning of the main thing.

Jack: No.

Austin: And then you have new stuff which also isn't that.

Jack: I do have new stuff, yes. So, I have taken on, as we discussed last time, the military arm of the Bilateral Intercession. My focus is deploying forces to attack or

defend with violence. Type: military. Disfavor: zero out of nine. You losers are just not doing very well down here, [**Austin:** Yeah.] and I've come to show you how it's done.

Austin: In fact, should we be introducing some disfavor for either of us, at this point?

Jack: Yes! I think so. I'll just say what my thing is so we can move cleanly from one section to another.

Austin: Yeah, please.

Jack: Every—

Austin: And, no, read us the whole thing. You got a whole new thing. Let's debut you.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: Or do you want to save that for when you're doing a scene?

Jack: Let's save it for when I'm doing a scene, I suppose.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: But my power is: Hold three— this is good, and I'm handing this to Austin. I'm saying...

Austin: Thank you.

Jack: I feel like, over the course of this, I hope to characterize this faction's goals and intentions and methods clearly enough that you will be able to take these. Hold three to spend during the next sortie, one for one, to: one, introduce a new threat.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Two, force someone to act in desperation.

Austin: That's brutal.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That's brutal!

Jack: And since we're just here, when I win a conflict scene, I get to seize a faction with three grip, gain one grip on a faction or pillar, [**Austin:** Mm.] or a vulnerable or exposed— no, wait. Is this— did you change this, or is this still...?

Austin: This is correct.

Jack: This is correct?

Austin: This is all correct.

Jack: Wow.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Jack: A faction with three grip is seized, the Authority gains one grip on a faction or pillar, or a vulnerable or exposed asset or actor is fortified or hidden.

Austin: Yes. You used to have: A faction with three grip is seized, the Authority learns a secret about the Cause or a faction, or the Director may force a reroll during a conflict scene this turn.

Jack: Yep.

Austin: That has since become the other two that you just said, the gaining a grip or vulnerable or exposed asset or actor is fortified or hidden.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: So.

Jack: Cool.

Austin: Cool.

Jack: But yes.

Austin: But, so, yeah, you don't have an every turn move. At this point, Stel Nideo are—you have to make sure that we remember this, because you're the one who has one that actually does trigger.

Art: Well, I'm one for one.

Austin: Yeah. Nicely done. Disfavor, I feel like—

Art: Ali came and tried to take [Jack laughs] my every turn ability.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And I said no.

Austin: Wow.

Jack: [sarcastic] Oh, that's definitely how I remember that happening.

Austin: [sarcastic] No lies here. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh, Art, do you think that perhaps there's some disfavor in the Bontive Valley getting hit like that? Or do you think that that will come...

Art: Well, no. That's— disfavor's at the beginning. We can't count, then, the first scene.

Austin: No, disfavor happens—

Art: This would have to be next—

Austin: Ah. We fucked up disfavor before by not counting it literally constantly.

Art: Oh. I thought disfavor was an accounting...

Austin: No, disfavor is not an accounting thing. Disfavor happens whenever a...when a division take action that disappoints, dishonors, or disrespects their masters, increase the division's disfavor by one. Alternatively, when a division does something that would make another look incompetent or disloyal, increase that division's disfavor by one. Similarly...

Art: I don't know, so does it just tick up every time you lose a scene?

Austin: Yeah, [laughs] which just hasn't happened very much on this side, for the old Authority. [Jack laughs briefly]

Art: All right.

Austin: So yeah, tick it up. Just by one, you know?

Art: Sure. I mean, I hate being the major faction, so.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Art: We can tick it up by five if you...

Austin: No, no, no. So, is that— it was at four; it's at five now? All right.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: So, what are these other two scenes? On the factions— on the Cause side, we still have— also, did someone purposely change the word Hexagon to red?

Jack: No.

Austin: Or did that just happen magically at some point?

Jack: I didn't do that.

Austin: Maybe Ali did.

Art: I don't even see what you're talking about.

Austin: Over on the Cause screen, it's red now, and I don't know why.

Art: Oh, no, I don't...

Austin: I wonder if that's tied to fallen Causes also? That seems unlikely. Or fallen pillars also. I bet Ali just changed the color. Anyway. Jade Kill and Carmine Bight could

still go, in terms of their side, and over on our side, over on the— mm, I'm fucking up. Over on the Authority side, Kesh and Frontier Syndicate are available for scenes. But I do think Stel Kesh, the Whitestar Fleet, deserves a debut. Right?

Jack: And what a debut it is.

Austin: Do we want to do that next or do we want to save that for the end, Jack? What do you want to do?

Jack: No, let's do it next. I mean, I don't want to be—

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Here's the thing. So...

Austin: Yeah.

Whitestar Fleet [0:09:50]

Jack: The Whitestar Fleet is what has been deployed.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is the Kesh—as in capital K Kesh, not Palisade Kesh—sword arm.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: They are a fleet of soldiers in mechs and in bombers and in air-to-air combat ships.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: And in— I picture them having mechs with tank treads, almost. Led by the niece...? Her exact relationship has changed several times over the course of this show.

Austin: Oh, has it?

Jack: Yes, and I would like to decide. Lucia briefly appeared as the Princept's daughter, early.

Austin: Oh, really? When was this?

Jack: Yes. Okay, so, [reading] "in PARTIZAN 27, [**Austin:** Yeah.] she is referred to as his cousin at one point, and his daughter in PARTIZAN 27: Millennium Break: She said, 'To Win We Must Play!' Based on the context, with the cast audibly checking before saying she's his daughter, it is assumed that this is the correct version of the family tree. That Lucia is Cynosure's daughter is reiterated in PALISADE 26: Resentment and Frustration." So we must have just said that.

Austin: Hmm. Weird.

Jack: This is on the Friends at the Table wiki. I thought she was his niece, but I also—

Austin: Uh...yeah.

Jack: Or, like, cousin. But we— I gotta check some transcripts.

Austin: She's eighth in line. There's no way.

Jack: Why would she be his— why would she be eighth if she was the—

Austin: I mean, you know.

Jack: I mean, we could find reasons, you know.

Austin: Maybe there's a bunch of other kids. Maybe there's— yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: I've played *Crusader Kings*.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Sometimes it just doesn't go the way you think it goes.

Austin: [typing] I'm really curious where the daughter thing came from. It may have

come from a family tree that we used to have. Remember, there was a family tree once.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That I sent you, but I don't remember if that family tree ever was read out in any sort of extensive way. Here we go. Wow, this family tree. Now this is us looking at— I was checking our own DMs to see, and this is a different family tree, not our family tree. Uh...I'm trying to see—

Jack: Yeah, on the 19th of September 2019, you say, "Folks, just want to say I've built my first truly ridiculous family tree of the season."

Austin: Oh.

Jack: But you didn't link it.

Austin: Can we post it?

Jack: Nope. [laughs quietly]

Austin: No. No. Well, that's annoying.

Jack: Now I'm searching...

Austin: You say she's Cynosure's daughter in PALISADE 26, and I go, "Very funny," because at some point...hmm. I need to find this. I definitely sent this to you. I would have sent this to you years ago, and I've changed computers, which is like, it's around somewhere. Theoretically, I have that image, you know? Let me check— let me just do a quick family tree search, you know? Sometimes you just search for, like, family tree.

Jack: Yeah, in Google. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Literally. Literally that. Because I might have it in, like, a worldbuilding document. Totally possible.

Jack: And in terms of just, you know, making the show, we can play Lucia either way. It's just good to know which it is.

Austin: Yeah, I'm happy to do either. Yes, 100%.

Jack: You know. I have to build her out to be one or the other.

Austin: I think that there's a— [chuckles] something is different— something's immediately different on the table if the Princept's daughter is here now.

Jack: Oh yes.

Austin: Because that's a different lever to pull than the Princept's cousin or niece is here now, you know? Uh... [typing] "Jack, I need to do something very important here really quick, which is I need to look up what Cynosure's relation is to Lucia," and you say, "To Lucia, yeah. I was gonna say your sister, but that was a guess. I think Clem would know the relationship." "I'm looking at this map here. I think who you're describing is..." "Son?" "Daughter? Or his granddaughter?" "Both of these are really funny." "I think you're describing his daughter, if I'm looking at this map right." So yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, because specifically, this is the scene. In PARTIZAN 28, in the final thing of the Millennium Break *Kingdom* arc, there's a scene between Clem and Cynosure, where Clem is trying to, like, get, you know, get some, um...

Jack: Leverage.

Austin: You know, leverage on Cynosure, get Cynosure to support her in something, and tries to say, like, uh, trying to leverage the Lucia thing and says, you know, "The only firm hand that Lucia has," you know, on the world, is— because Cynosure is like, you know, Lucia's gonna beat them. "Lucia has a firm hand," you know? Lucia's in control of Cruciat. [chuckles] And Clem says, "The only firm hand that Lucia has is on the oars of her yacht."

Jack: Ha!

Austin: Which is already— yachts don't have oars. Clementine continuing to miss. [Jack and Austin laugh] The swish icon I always post, except it's just an air ball.

Jack: Oh, so good.

Austin: And then we discussed it and said, “Well, wait a second. Who is this you're talking about?” and what we decide is: oh, it's perfect if she's actually his daughter and Clem can't help herself.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, Clem knows that she's his daughter but just still says this.

Austin: Yes, and says it anyway.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yes, exactly. Which means the Princept's daughter is on Palisade, everybody!

Art: With her famous oar yacht.

Jack: Well, here's the thing about Lucia. We have learned about Lucia from one perspective, and that perspective [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] is god's greatest mistake and a very special girl, Clementine Kesh. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: In actuality, what we know about Lucia from kind of the rest of the text is that she was trained to be a soldier from an early age and at the time of PARTIZAN was an emerging tactical genius is, I think, what the dossier said. By this point, she is leading the Whitestar Fleet, Kesh's sort of strike team, and when I say strike team, I don't necessarily mean, like, a SEAL Team Six, there's 14 of them.

Austin: No, you mean a large—

Jack: There's, like, thousands and thousands and thousands of soldiers.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Of firepower. They are as protected and equipped that you would imagine the daughter of the Princept's fleet to be, if the daughter of the Princept was actually good at war.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's not like a Prince Harry type beat. Two things that you need to know about Lucia Whitestar. The first is that her flagship, a— oh, I suppose three things that you need to know about Lucia Whitestar. Her flagship is called Lander One.

Austin: Ooh, that's fun.

Jack: Lucia does not believe in an evocative name. Lucia does not believe in playing nice. She heard that Kesh was a society of spies and thought, "Well, they've got that covered." Lucia is not interested in winning hearts and minds. Lucia is not interested in making the case for war. She is there to set things on fire and blow up supply lines and cause people to run cowering into whatever shelters they can find.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: The planet of Palisade is very lucky, as far as Lucia is concerned, that the Whitestar Fleet's eye has not been set on it, because up until now, it was going pretty well. You know, they had a Stargrave there. She was well respected. You know, Connadine and her father hadn't seen eye to eye. The March Institute is powerful, and that's going very well. Gentian and Crusade are capable old Divines. Unfortunately, Kesh wasted time by playing nice, by working slowly [**Austin:** Yeah.] through "what if we get people on cycle?"

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, what if we make a case? What if we make Millennium Break out to be the baddies? "We don't need to make Millennium Break out to be the baddies," thinks Lucia.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: "We need them to be dust." So, her ship's— I'm going to be playing the scene All-Out War, as the Whitestar Fleet arrives. The other thing that you need to know about Lucia Whitestar— her facecast is— I'm going for an extremely cursed facecast here. The facecast for this icon of fury and shellfire is the Australian actress Melanie Lynskey who you might have seen recently in *Yellowjackets*.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: She was in the ridiculous film *Ever After*, which is a retelling of the Cinderella story. She's a really great actress whose work I've really liked. She was in *The Last of Us* recently, a show I haven't seen, but apparently [**Austin:** Sure.] people really liked her in that. She is a white woman with a sort of— a very friendly straightforward face. Brunette.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And Lucia Whitestar is wearing a necklace that looks like a little stack of coins. This is her companion.

Austin: Oh.

Jack: A combat AI.

Austin: Ah. Not a Divine.

Jack: Not a Divine. Well, so, a long time ago, [Austin laughs] on a Kesh planet called...

Austin: Uh huh?

Jack: I wrote down here, Pinkney, just way out in Kesh space.

Austin: Yep.

Jack: Kesh bought this planet for theater of war training. You know, they built little fake towns on it.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: They would send soldiers in, and they sent in an AI to— or they built an AI to run the exercises on this planet, called Fire Support. That's the name of the AI.

Austin: Ah.

Jack: And Fire Support went a little off-piste and started attacking the soldiers that were sent to this facility, first with AI drones and then, through a brutal campaign, caused defections to take place, such that for several years on this distant Kesh planet, it was engaged in a civil war with one of its own AIs over the control of this training planet.

Austin: That's very fun. Love this.

Jack: Eventually, Lucia Whitestar, herself a deeply cruel and calculating combat entity, brokered a truce with this entity.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And I've written down here, "They're almost friends." [Austin laughs quietly] But the vibe that I have for Lucia and Fire Support is the combat specialist and their sort of, like, bosom companion, even if they are not necessarily particularly friendly with one another.

Austin: That's very fun.

Jack: So this is Lucia Whitestar, arriving to fill the slot of Stel Kesh.

Austin: And it's an interesting position she finds herself in, because I'm looking, again, under this debility character here, the pillars chart, and they're gone.

Jack: No pillars. No gravtrain. Can't control the gravtrain.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: No Stargrave. Can't control the stellar combustors. No Paint Shop. Well...

Austin: Eh, well. That's a surprise when she shows up, huh?

Jack: I think that she thinks—

Austin: Because that— when she was on the way, it existed still.

Jack: As far as she's concerned, this is exactly what you get by trying to play a slow

game.

Austin: Right.

Jack: By trying to play nice.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Or that's not quite true. She understands a value in a slow game. That's not what she's there for, and if you have spent enough time trying to get people on side in this fight against a revolutionary opponent when you could be [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] just shelling them into oblivion, why weren't you taking that opportunity?

Austin: Right. Right.

Jack: You know where they are.

Austin: And, you know— and in this case, the opposite thing happened, right? Which is we know from the last session that Eclectic came out with we know where they are for the Paint Shop. Like, any remaining loyal members to it and all of their safe houses or enough of their safe houses that you could knock them down once and for all, and Millennium Break pulled the trigger on that and ran the operation and knocked them down and seized the Paint Shop, seized all that intel. [Jack sighs] Right? And so, in some ways, it's like, yeah, point made. Stop waiting around, as we already said in the first of the scenes. So that means, my point being that, like, in a weird way, it frees Lucia up to not be defensive, to not play defensively.

Jack: No. No. What do I have to defend? And in fact, Millennium Break should— Millennium Break doesn't know that there's such a thing as pillars, I suppose. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Mm.

Jack: I think that...

Austin: No, I think they do. I think there's a— I think too much of the game is based

around these are the nine things that whoever controls them controls the planet.

Jack: That's true.

Austin: You know what I mean?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: I think we kind of have an idea. Maybe they don't know— maybe they don't think of them as pillars.

Jack: Well, you'd call them, like, tactically advantageous sites or people.

Austin: Yes, exactly.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But yes, I don't have to play catch up to...

Austin: Right.

Jack: Or play defense. Now, what is interesting and I think is reflective of the fact that things broke so bad for Kesh is I'm not a major faction.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Which is notable. You know, I think that this is someone arriving on the scene late, and there will be consequences for that.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: And I think that Lucia is on the back foot, in terms of... [sighs] I don't know. On the one hand, I am just— there's a kind of consistency in Kesh scions not having the best relationship with their parents that I kind of like to stick with.

Austin: [laughs quietly] Yeah.

Jack: So it's not that— I don't think that Cynosure has ill-equipped her because he doesn't like her or doesn't believe in her, but I think Cynosure is obstinate and is like: Kesh has not been doing well.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I am frustrated with my forces on this planet, so I'm only going to send in...you know, we'll send in Lucia. She'll tidy it up.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Maybe it's a kind of anti-Crysanth there, like, this blunt confidence in his daughter's abilities that he's like, "Why would I need to, you know, provide additional support? Lucia will clear it up."

Austin: That's really fun, actually. I love the idea of, like, the parent— the curse of competence child, who doesn't— the child is left home alone not because of disinterest, or frankly emotional abuse, but because the parent thinks the child is so competent that they don't need them.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Not that Lucia is a child, right? You facecasted her as someone in their 40s. This is someone who's grown and had a long military campaign. This is someone who's, like, an older cousin to Clem, absolutely someone who's an adult. But I get what you mean. This is not a— this is a parent who doesn't feel like they need to be extra careful or use kid gloves or protect them especially.

Jack: I also—

Austin: Instead, they're like, "You're gonna go do this for me."

Jack: Yeah. Well, I think maybe they're like, "You are the leader of the Whitestar Fleet."

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know, get ‘em. I would also like to briefly point out that Clem was like, “Lucia sucks at parties. [laughs quietly] She can't do anything, and she has a yacht that she rows.”

Austin: Right.

Jack: Which is, you know...if this is Clem’s takeaway from this person, she has probably spent, you know, 25 minutes talking to her at a party or something.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. There’s a real— you could start to draw a picture of powerful Kesh women via Clem, Lucia, and Veronique very quickly.

Jack: [laughs] Well, and Gucci, right? It’s a different kind of power, but...

Austin: And Gucci.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally, totally.

All-Out War [0:25:32]

Jack: Okay.

Austin: So, what are you doing?

Jack: All-Out War.

Austin: All-Out War against...I guess let’s, fictionally, let’s talk about this fictionally. What are you trying to do here?

Jack: I am trying to launch a campaign of terror and destruction on a planet that has not seen it in the way that—

Austin: Everywhere.

Jack: Yes. This is something that I—

Austin: Interesting.

Jack: When I say, “I come straight for you, weapons ready,” I’m not talking about I come straight for you at the bridge on the battlefield. It’s like, I come for Carhaix. I lead an unexpected—

Austin: We’re zooming out. Yeah. Okay, I like this a lot.

Jack: I lead an unexpected ambush in Braunton, you know?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Then, I think, you know, our options on the Cause side are either to frame this as a defense from Carmine Bight or from Jade Kill. Those are the two untapped ones. Or one that we—

Jack: Now, if this is Jade Kill, [**Austin:** Yeah.] and they win...

Austin: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. This is a big gamble from— which I kind of like. I kind of think— you know, I don’t remember who’s controlling Jade Kill. I don’t remember who’s...but I would put forward Jade Kill should do this. This is Righteous—

Art: Jade Kill is Jack.

Austin: It is Jack. Okay.

Art: This is— we’re all gonna attack our own factions.

Austin: Yeah, that’s fine by me. No, I thought Carmine Bight— I think Carmine Bight is Jack.

Jack: Carmine Bight is also me.

Austin: Okay. Right, because Kalar is at Jade Kill and...

Jack: Kalar and five pirates. Well, there’s more than five pirates, [**Austin:** Right.] but they have five bosses.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: God, imagine if it was just five pirates. [laughs]

Austin: Wild. What do you think? I think Jade Kill makes sense, right? Because the idea of being like, okay, Kalar and August Righteousness are like, it's time to put it to the test. Let's see if we can be as many places as we need to be. Let's use this train to get our people to the fronts, to all of the fronts. They have the train to do that now, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: And we'll see if it's a thing you can win. I like the idea of it being really zoomed out in that way, because that's not what Millennium Break has been able to be until this moment. If Lucia gets here yesterday...

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Truly.

Austin: There's no contest, because she can fight at too many fronts, but today, with the gravtrain, Millennium Break can rapidly move people around in ways that are hard to keep up with, as we've seen in the first scene.

Art: When we get to zero pillars, is the game just over?

Austin: That's right. That's one way to conceptualize the end of the campaign. There's a whole section towards the back of the book about, like, hey, what's— what do you do as the game, you know, kind of winds down, so to speak? How do you— what's a big final conflict look like, you know?

Jack: Oh.

Art: That's not the...in the faction turn, you half accidentally capture the last pillar, [laughs quietly] and then it's just done?

Austin: Yeah, I think that we'd probably find a different way of ending the whole campaign, you know? I don't know what it looks like yet, because I don't know who the big villain, so to speak, is, you know? But. And to be clear, you know, it doesn't have to be that all the— that the Authority hits zero, right? That is one way to do it, but there are

other ways for a campaign to feel like it's hit its end, you know? I don't think that, like, the Authority has one pillar left, and it's not that big of a— you know what I mean? Like, oh, they still have Compo—

Art: It's the Divine Resonance.

Austin: Right, exactly. Is that enough for it to be that they're still in complete control? I think more likely that we will find a way to, like, whatever the final pillars are, whatever the final factions are, whatever that looks like, you know, has some plan, has some big idea. You know, if it had come down to the stellar combustor...

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: If the bluff had happened, we would end on the big stellar combustor mission, right? And I'm not saying that, you know, the Divine Resonance, Temple of the Threshold, Divine Arbitrage are as big and deadly as the stellar combustor were, but it's very easy to imagine any of those being key to a final defense, you know? Or a final big gambit of some sort, so. All right. Let's do it. What's the thing you said already, Jack?

Jack: I come straight for you, weapons ready. Roll to see if you can hold me back. The Portcullis gate opens, and the fleet emerges, and immediately, [**Austin:** Mm.] air to ground, orbital to ground satellites are deployed and start firing on the planet's surface.

Austin: Right.

Jack: As Lander One, the main flagship— it's not like a star destroyer. It's not like an orbital— I mean, it could be an orbital platform, but it is moving in to land.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And you know where it lands?

Austin: Where?

Jack: It lands right in the middle of the Bontive Valley and just joins the fight. You know?

Austin: Oh, I love it. That's great.

Jack: It's like, oh, you're fighting Stel Nideo. Lander One, which is this...it looks like a...it looks like if a brick was a gun emplacement.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It is just, you know, bristling. Trees bend and crack as it lands.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It lands in an orchard. A thing comes down, and it is just fully— soldiers deploy from Lander One, firing automatic weapons immediately.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Troop carriers deploy. Lucia Whitestar emerges in a mech, and it is just laying into the flank of—

Austin: Damn, fighting from the front.

Jack: It's the only way— why would I hang back? You know?

Austin: Damn. Okay! You know, because of the fear of, uh, being killed, I think. Is she in one of those, like, cool castle mechs that can create the flooding?

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: That tier four that we saw, um, Alpen Tennglow¹ pilot, the one that attacked the Isle of the Broken Key?

Jack: Yes, but she's in a custom.

Austin: Okay. Sure, of course, yeah.

Jack: It has, like, a custom paint job. It's, like, white and blue, Kesh colors or Cruciat

¹ Tenn Alpenglow

colors.

Austin: Does it do something other— does it do something that's not— instead of, like, flooding, does it do a blizzard? Does it do some sort of conflagration fire thing? Or is it still just the water?

Jack: God, fire is— it's fire. The mech burns like a candle or like a...

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, just like a person standing in a pillar of flame.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Flamethrower on one arm, you know, sword on the other.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Mechanical weapons on— mechanical. [laughs] Automatic weapons on her wrist. [Austin laughs quietly] Okay. Yeah.

Austin: All right. Uh, that sounds like you're rolling, right?

Jack: Uh, no.

Austin: I guess, no, I'm— who's rolling?

Jack: Roll to see if you can hold me back.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: I come straight for you, weapons ready. Roll to see if you can hold me back.

Austin: And so, I think that this defense...and Art, please weigh in if you're interested in this.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Is like, the people already there who have been— because it is being defended by Jade Kill. Like, Jade Kill has already started moving back into the Bontive Valley and is supplementing the Grey Pond folks who helped take it along with Rose River, right? And so it's like, oh shit. Like, first response here. You know, maybe even, like, anti-air fire is coming up. Let's see how it goes. What do we— I'm rolling above a 3? Is that right?

Jack: 1d6 above— uh...

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: 3 or above, right?

Austin: Minor division, 3 or— uh. 3 or above. Damn!

Jack: I know. It's good. It's a good position.

Austin: Yeah, well, we'll see.

Jack: Lucia's doing what she can, for the villains. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Well, that's a 1.

Art: All right.

Austin: So that's a win for you. So, the answer to your question of "can you withstand the all-out attack?" is: not at first, certainly.

Jack: God.

Austin: "Roll to see if you can hold me back." And so, yes, I think here's the way I think about this. Can I hold you back? Can I keep you in orbit? Can I keep you in the air? And Jade Kill's anti-air defenses, one, are probably old and not particularly— this is not what they thought they'd be facing. They thought they would be facing Crusade coming back. They thought that they would be facing, you know, the traditional—

Jack: Well, pissing about with Kesh spies, you know.

Austin: Right, exactly. Oh, we'll get into a chase. We'll have to fight some Tricerataurs, [laughs quietly] you know? You know, maybe some mercenaries from the Frontier Syndicate will show up, but they basically fight on the ground too. Maybe we get some flying mechs. You know, we've seen the Rivals, we've seen Gentian's Rivals, you know, flying around with some cool mechs before, and so maybe there is some anti-air stuff, but the anti-air stuff against a tier three altar is different than the anti-air stuff against a fleet descending. I think you're just overwhelmed, right? And very quickly the anti-air gets blasted away. The shots bounce off of the incoming ship, of Lander One, and Lander One makes landfall successfully. Let's see. Uh...I mean, this is an immediate...I'm looking at the options here. Art, do any of these jump out at you from the Jade Kill side?

Art: Yeah. These are a little tricky on the...

Austin: We're thinking broadly. That's the thing I need to remember. We're not just talking about the Bontive Valley.

Art: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: We're talking about everywhere. Maybe— go ahead.

Art: I like the feint one. That's a—

Austin: Yeah, do you want to read it?

Art: "I seem to drop my guard. If you seize the opportunity, roll to find out if it's a feint or not."

Austin: Right.

Jack: Wow.

Art: That sort of fits for what we're doing.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Everyone begins to fall back. We're retreating, right?

Jack: Or do you...in the Bontive Valley, or do we want to zoom out to another place where the...

Austin: Up to you. You know, up to us. It could be whatever we want to do here. Where else are you landing?

Jack: Where else aren't I landing? You know, I'm landing on the Isle of the Broken Key. [Art laughs] I'm landing in Carleon-Upon-Wisk. I'm landing in Carmathen.

Austin: Oh, you should land at Joyous Guard. You should land in the Caldera Stretch.

Jack: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Austin: Fuck it, let's go for their heads, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Obviously not Lucia herself, but some other Lander. Lander Three, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Lands up in Joyous Guard, just outside Joyous Guard or maybe in it directly. Go ahead and roll and see if it's a feint, or see if it's— yeah, see if it's a feint.

Jack: I just tried to roll inside the Excel spreadsheet.

Austin: Mm-hmm. And again, you're looking for a 1, 2, 3, right? Or you're looking for 1, 2.

Jack: Yeah, 1—

Austin: Brutal.

Art: 1, 2.

Jack: 1, 2. [laughs quietly]

Art: It's been this way the whole time.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Art: It's why all the [Jack: Oh!] Authority wins have been...

Austin: That's a 6.

Jack: That's a 6! Lander Three.

Austin: I think I know what happens.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: You know how it's a caldera? You know how it's, like, a vast caldera for a...

Jack: For a volcano?

Austin: A volcano?

Jack: An inert volcano?

Austin: An inert volcano? What if the landing space that you had was already booby trapped?

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: And it sets down, and the whole thing shudders and falls inward.

Jack: Wow.

Austin: What's inside of a dormant volcano? [typing]

Jack: Nothing. Uh, well, sometimes lava, right? Sometimes, like, magma.

Austin: Yeah, is there still magma down there?

Jack: It depends, right? Sometimes a dormant volcano is just a—

Austin: Because it's not an extinct volcano.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: It's just dormant.

Jack: [typing] Dormant volcano what's inside?

Austin: That's exactly what I've searched. [Austin and Jack laugh] They may erupt at a future time. They're not extinct, again.

Jack: [reading] "A dormant volcano probably has no lava. Strictly speaking, volcanoes [Austin: Okay.] don't really have lava at all. They produce lava by releasing the magma." Oh, fuck off!

Austin: All right. Yeah, okay. We know what the fuck... [grumbles]

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, come on.

Jack: Come on!

Austin: Okay. Magma can no longer reach the volcano. That's what's made it go dormant.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: But you know what's still down there?

Jack: Is it lava, Austin?

Austin: Just miles of nothing.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: No, no, no. I think it's just miles of nothing, right?

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah!

Austin: It's just you keep fucking falling.

Jack: Yeah, we get this wide shot of Lander Three, you know, this enormous— Lander Three is like a tripod. It's like a three-legged spider.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Almost like a...that stupid thing in *The Incredibles*, [laughs quietly] you know?

Austin: Yeah, sure, of course. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: And we just get this wide shot of its lights as it spirals down into the darkness. You know, this wide shot.

Austin: God, this huge ship just losing complete control of itself.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Right? Just spinning out— it can't tell what way is up, you know?

Jack: Yeah. This is also Bahamut and one of the other ones, Phoenix, falling at the beginning of *Final Fantasy XVI*.

Austin: Yeah, that big fight between the two of them is very fun, absolutely. Yeah, so that one goes bad for you.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: So that is a win here, boom, for the Cause.

Jack: Goodbye, Lander Three.

Austin: RIP.

Jack: Guess how many I have?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It's a lot.

Austin: Yeah. New type of giant killing there for Kalar. [Jack and Art laugh] Just let it land and take the ground out from under it.

Jack: Oh my god. It's a shame Kalar wasn't able to— no, Kalar might have— mm. Yeah, Kalar was probably able to see it, right?

Austin: Kalar could have been there.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Not deployed in the Bontive Valley.

Austin: Kalar's there with Joyous Guard, maybe. We haven't decided where— who's deployed. I do think August Righteousness is in the front, if Lucia's gonna be there too, you know?

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: I think that has to be thematically...

Jack: Was he going to be there...yes, thematically so. I didn't know if it was a case where he was told, like—

Austin: If that's where the win is. If that's the stakes, is could win the Bontive Valley, August should be there.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Especially given the things Ali said before about potentially earning a Divine. [laughs quietly] I don't know. Aah!

Jack: Brnine has a gift for you, August.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Oh my god. All right. So, that's one win and one loss.

Austin: One/one.

Jack: The least interesting football score. [Austin laugh quietly] No, nil all is the least interesting football score.

Austin: Nil all is, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: At that point, what were we doing?

Austin: Ah. Does Lucia take— is this another Lucia situation? Does Lucia take the next one?

Jack: I think, um...god, I want to give Millennium—

Austin: What else is happening? What's the— can I—

Jack: I want to give Millennium—

Austin: Let's zoom out again, really quick. What does this feel like for the people on Palisade?

Jack: Terror, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It is an— it's terror for— it is a very particular kind of horror and terror for Millennium Break and the Millennium Break-aligned people, [**Austin:** Mm.] but I think that the mealy-mouthed settlers who came through the Portcullis System, hearing that, you know, this is an exciting world, there's some revolutionary stuff going on.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Are just seeing bombing runs on the horizon and the smoke in the air.

Austin: Yeah. Oh, god. In Baseline— in the Baseline cities, a literal dome rises— oh, no, in Baseline cities, we know—

Jack: Oh, they drop into the ground!

Austin: The buildings all begin to go underground. Yeah, uh huh. They go to the whatever it's called in Eva, the base fort or whatever, where they retreat downwards into the ground for safety. The kind of bulkheads close above the buildings, you know? And we see more of those, the prototype Motion Delegates begin to step around in—

Jack: Oh, god.

Austin: You know, in defense, not knowing, hey, is this going to spill over here, you know?

Jack: Yeah. And I say that these people are frightened not to afford sympathy or, uh, [Austin: Yeah.] a primacy of sympathy to these people; instead to be like, when you are attached to the body of this imperialist prospect, it is going to bite you.

Austin: Yeah, it sure fucking is.

Jack: And the teeth in that mouth are just as sharp whether or not they think that you are on their side or not.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It is just...it is, you know, word spreads that things went well in Joyous Guard.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But smoke is rising from the Bontive Valley. I think that people know what fleet it is, as well.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I think that an attack like this, there's no mistaking. And of course, in the Principality, there is...

Austin: Mm.

Jack: There are stories told about the Whitestar Fleet.

Austin: Totally. I think I know what happens here, which is August, you know, activates his trap card, so to speak. All across the planet, sleeper cells and small units go into action. In Braunton, the lights of the largest casino explode.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: The whole city goes into darkness. In Carleon-Upon-Wisk, the capital of the Fabreal Duchy—where, theoretically, Lucia might make, you know, could have made it her home—there's a capital building that is entirely made of stained glass, and from the top down, it shatters as some sort of, like, special explosive round is fired into it from across the curvature of the planet. All the way to the southeast in City City, shells just start pounding against the huge doors of the wall that is the kind of front of it. Aram's Gate is hooked, tethers wrap around Aram's Gate and begin to pull it down. They might not have enough strength to do it, but they're fucking trying. And above the Paint Shop, a huge Millennium Break M is launched into the sky. [Jack laughs] I am separating you from your supporting forces. Roll to see if you can regroup. I am trying to distract you. I am trying to make you defend ever— oh, you want to attack everywhere at once? Do you also want to defend everywhere at once?

Jack: Good luck, buddy. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Ooh! That's a 4!

Austin: That is a 4, which is a failure for you.

Jack: That is a failure for me.

Art: We should not forget about the reroll.

Austin: Oh, I have not forgotten about the reroll. I'm keeping it.

Art: Okay.

Austin: I got things to do. I am trying to get Motion back here, Art!

Jack: And look, if Lucia was—

Art: I hear you.

Austin: And let's make that clear. Does Lucia reach out to Exanceaster March?

Jack: Yes, absolutely. Although it is an extremely...gone is the faux jollity of hanging out with Connadine smoking one cigar.

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Jack: It is, you know...

(as **Lucia**): I've only heard good things about your forces. I'm excited to pool our talents.

Austin: This is, like, as you're descending, before the fighting starts, presumably?

Jack (as **Lucia**): The bombardment will commence at X [**Austin:** Right.] and end at Y. Our priority is to avoid any unnecessary damage to frontier Nidean emplacements, although you understand that such casualties may be unforeseen but necessary.

Austin (as **March**): It would be an honor to meet you, Lucia, uh, General Whitestar. I'll be sure to schedule some time once you make landfall, and we can arrange for collaboration between our units after our meeting.

Jack (as **Lucia**): Excellent. Over and out.

Jack: And it's Commander Whitestar, but she doesn't say that. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Uh huh. And importantly, Exanceaster March said "after our meeting." We haven't met yet.

Jack: No.

Austin: So they don't come. They'll defend their stuff happily, but they're not sending you extra support. We worked with Kesh, and Kesh fucked up.

Jack: [chuckles] Yeah. We saw how that went.

Austin: Yeah. So, improve yourself a little bit. We'll see.

Jack: Yeah, show us— oh my god. It is truly the Principality or the Bilateral “show us how you've improved yourself by torching four cities in this planet, and then we'll talk.”
[laughs quietly]

Austin: Yeah. And then we'll talk, 100%.

Jack: God damn. Okay, that's another loss. What do we want to fall? Do we want to see something fall to represent the extent to which I was not able to defend? God, Aram's Gate falling would be incredible.

Austin: No, no, no, because none of this is real. I mean, yes, these things all fall, but they're all aesthetic. We blew up a— I mean, Aram's Gate is a big real gate, right? You'll rebuild it. You'll rebuild the building in Carleon-Upon-Wisk.

Jack: Oh, not me. Rebuilding's for someone else. [laughs quietly]

Austin: For somebody else. The thing that happened is— the thing that was the attempt here— I mean, in a way, this is just the other— this is a feint again, right? Which is like, yeah, yeah, yeah, redeploy your forces to push us off of Aram's Gate. Right?

Jack: Right.

Austin: Or redeploy your forces to get us off of Carleon-Upon-Wisk so you can start to rebuild.

Jack: We don't care about that.

Austin: So I guess maybe you didn't, so then maybe, yeah, maybe the thing that

happens is we do start taking some of these things. If you didn't— if the response was to let them fall.

Jack: Well, they're gonna fall anyway. It's a...

Austin: I'll put it to you. The two ways it goes is Millennium Break suddenly [laughs quietly] has a bunch of places around the planet, or you redeployed forces and this is part of why you're losing the Bontive Valley.

Jack: I'm gonna redeploy the forces to get that breadth of control.

Austin: Right.

Jack: I mean, it's— I'm making the best out of a loss. It's still a loss, but...

Austin: Yeah. So then, yeah. So then, what is revealed is we weren't attacking Carleon-Upon-Wisk. We were making the loudest noise possible in a bunch of different places so that you would be forced to— which is what the play was, which is why I kept describing blowing up, like, signage, you know, and glass. We're not going after, you know, their military targets or their imperial targets, but the true force, you know, as they redeploy, this is August Righteousness riding a tank. You know, coming up over the hill.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yes. God.

Austin: You know, deeper into the valley.

Jack: I'm not going to do it, but the image of seeing the M above the Paint Shop and [Austin: Mm-hmm.] Lucia casually razing the Paint Shop with an orbital strike is excellent.

Austin: [laughs quietly] Oh, that's kind of good.

Jack: But I'm going to leave that horrible building around. Oh, I don't know...

Austin: Yeah, it's good to have the building.

Jack: It's worth having the Paint Shop as a place.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: It's a cool castle. Annie spent a lot of time drawing it. I don't want...you know.

Austin: That's true. That's true.

Art: The drawings stay. We wouldn't have to change the drawings.

Austin: No, no. I'd have to cross out the drawing. It's true.

Jack: As we know—

Austin: I'd actually blow up the drawing.

Art: And the source file?

Austin: I'd have to add a little explosion.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah, because drawings are real.

Austin: Yep.

Jack: And they have to reflect that.

Austin: Yep.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: There, I'd do this. Do you see? And that's not fun.

Jack: Wait, let me see. [all laugh] Austin has dropped a huge fireball decal on top of Steeple Catterick.

Austin: Let me get it a little smaller.

Jack: Although what's weird is you've had to drop it on the picture.

Austin: Oh, you're right. Well.

Jack: Which the implication here is that the— it's a little line, and it's like a Wes Anderson joke. Steeple Catterick and then a line and then an explosion. That's what's there.

Austin: [laughs] That is kind of a Wes Anderson joke. That's kind of funny. Anyway, I would do this. I'd do, like, a bunch of little ones, you know?

Jack: Right, but this is all imagining.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. None of this is real. This has not actually happened. It's just funny, and I wanted to do it. All right, it's gone now.

Jack: I mean, also, none of this is real. This is— we're producing fiction here. These planets and people don't exist, but...

Austin: Right, correct.

Jack: Which is a relief, because it would be awful.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Could you imagine?

Austin: It'd be scary to me.

Jack: Especially because I would feel really wrong-footed. I thought we made them up, and then I found that they were real.

Austin: Right. Right. [laughs quietly]

Crown of Glass [0:49:44]

Jack: I lead an unexpected ambush and roll to see if I catch you by surprise. A gatehouse in the Crown of Glass explodes.

Austin: Oh. [laughs quietly]

Jack: As a squadron from Lander Fourteen, which is a kind of...I know I described a spider, and Lander One is just like a brick with guns on it. The majority of the Lander units are heavy troop carriers. I don't want to give the impression that they're all extremely cool ships, but this one is, uh...no, Siri, don't do that. Fuck off. [Austin laughs] No! It's telling me that I can shop at Aldi. No.

Austin: [laughs] Is this Siri, or is this Fire Support talking? To Lucia?

Jack: It's Fire Support talking to Lucia and saying, "Look." This one is a kind of biomechanical snake.

Austin: Oh.

Jack: It, you know, came coiling through [Austin: Damn!] the woods around the Crown of Glass. It wormed its way through the soil. And the squadron is attacking Clementine Kesh's Crown of Glass.

Austin: Huh. This is fun.

Jack: I lead an unexpected—

Austin: Lots of innocent people in the Crown of Glass.

Jack: —ambush and roll to see if I catch you by surprise.

Austin: Clem? Or Jade Kill?

Jack: Or Jade Kill. I mean, this is a point at which I think Millennium Break needs to think about...

Austin: This is fun.

Jack: We have explicitly said on this podcast that [Austin: Yeah.] the Crown of Glass is kind of the main non-Bilat city.

Austin: Yeah. We have said this. This is a very fun maneuver. This is sort of like a mini stellar combustor. Hey, Art?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: We haven't talked about Clem in a minute.

Art: No. Well, we talked about Clem in the last faction game.

Austin: Right, but she's been sending weird Iconoclastic beings out at the party.

Jack: She turned the *Kestral White* into a kestrel kind of thing.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Jack: A sort of horrible Iconoclastic bird machine.

Austin: Yeah. How's the city doing?

Art: I think characterizing a bird machine as horrible is sort of inflammatory needlessly here. [Austin and Jack laugh]

Austin: How— what's the vibe like in the Crown of Glass?

Jack: In the Crown of Glass! God.

Austin: Like, is this a, like, "our queen has retreated into her chambers" situation? Or is this a "horrors walk among the streets" situation?

Art: It can be two things.

Austin: Ugh.

Jack: God, our queen has retreated to the chamber and horrors walk among the streets?

Austin: It's just *Bloodborne* down there?

Jack: Look, for a long time, the Crown of Glass was the only place that I could go to get a good drink on this godforsaken Bilat planet, and now it's...

Austin: True.

Art: Especially when we found out that everyone in Millennium Break is drinking turnip wine. [Austin and Jack laugh]

Austin: I forgot about the turnip wine.

Art: I want to say everyone in the Crown of Glass is drinking proper cocktails.

Austin: Okay. Let it be known.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Because even in her Iconoclastic state, Clem seems like someone who would appreciate a good cocktail. Couldn't make one, but had people to make one for her.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: No. I think she can probably make, like, a gin and tonic.

Austin: Right. Oh, for sure.

Jack: Sure.

Austin: It's an easy one. I can make that.

Jack: Two ingredients.

Art: If you're starting out in cocktails, you can make a gin and tonic. You want a wedge of lime, though.

Austin: You do want a wedge of lime, though.

Jack: You do want a wedge of lime or a lemon.

Austin: I want a lime, almost every time.

Art: Yeah, it's...

Austin: Maybe a cucumber, if it's the...if we're doing Hendrick's.

Jack: Maybe a cucumber!

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Art: Yeah. Anyway. But yeah, I think it's...the queen has been absent, and horrors walk the street! Are these two things related? Probably!

Jack: What kind of horrors? We don't need to get too specific, because we want to leave room for future horrors. Leaving room for future horrors: the Friends at the Table experience. But I want to—

Austin: Yeah, that's correct. Yeah.

Jack: I want to know a little of what you mean when you say horrors walk the street.

Art: I think it's, like, half-formed creations, right? Just like, Clem's weird...

Austin: Iconoclast experiments?

Art: Yeah, Iconoclast experiments.

Austin: Are there, like...are people afraid of them, or are they infrastructural? [Jack laughs] Are they, like, civil servant horrors?

Art: Um...oh, I hate to use this reference, because I don't understand this franchise at all, but you ever, like, think about what it must have been like at the *Five Nights at Freddy's* restaurant before? [Jack laughs]

Austin: Right.

Art: Because those things look horrible.

Austin: Right. Right. Even when they're not trying to kill the person who's sitting in the

booth.

Art: Yeah, but presumably they were— I mean, I don't know. Maybe this isn't true in the lore of the franchise. Presumably there was a time in which it was just a restaurant.

Austin: [typing] Were the *Five Nights at Freddy's* animatronics ever not scary?

Jack: Good, nice.

Austin: Ever nicies.

Jack: Well, they were always scary, I think, but I think they were nice for a while, and then they killed someone.

Austin: Yeah, but like, look at them.

Jack: No, don't get me wrong. I mean nice morally, not, you know.

Austin: I see. But they were always scary.

Art: Yeah, like what if...what if the coke vending machine looked like it would kill you?

Austin: Great.

Jack: And it hasn't always been like this in the Crown of Glass.

Austin: No. No. No, I like this.

Art: No, this is very recent.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Love it.

Art: And I believe I'm also describing *The Tommyknockers* right now, but...

Austin: Yeah, sure. Uh huh.

Jack: That one does literally kill you.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Although I think it's a normal-looking vending machine, but it does kill you.
[laughs quietly]

Art: Oh. Okay, what if it's the opposite? What if it looked like it was going to kill you but didn't? [Austin laughs]

Jack: Oh, what horrors come from the mind of Stephen King. [all laugh quietly] God.

Austin: Yeah, I like this. And so, what do we think? Does Jade Kill— I mean, so, first of all: the train doesn't run all the way out there. I'm looking at the train lines here on the map.

Jack: This is why it's even more tense, because the word comes through that Crown of Glass is calling for aid.

Austin: Oh, that's a question. Time out.

Jack: Oh, that is a question.

Austin: I mean, yes, the Crown of Glass would be calling for aid even if Clem wouldn't be, right? Someone in the Crown of Glass is part of Joyous— or is part of the various Millennium Break groups, right? Someone is literally picking up the phone, their strand telephone, and calling, you know, someone in Joyous Guard, saying, "Oh my god, I was here getting a non-turnip-based cocktail, [Jack laughs quietly] and Lucia Whitestar's forces landed here. What do we do?"

Jack: Also, horrors walk the streets.

Austin: Also, horrors walk the streets, but they haven't turned on us yet.

Art: Yeah. The animatronic horrors that run the bureaucracy are... [Jack laughs]

Austin: Um...I think you gotta— it's so funny, because there's two ways— there's a bunch of ways this could go, obviously. One of the ways is: "no, we're not going to defend you," then Clem does and wins and gets the win for the Cause.

Art: And then Clem controls the Bontive Valley? [Jack laughs]

Austin: Oh, I don't think that's true, but Clem gets the outcome, right?

Jack: What's the outcome?

Austin: No, because Clem's only got one win. That's not a Clem scene.

Jack: Oh, that's true, yeah.

Austin: I don't know what happens if— oh, I do know, right? Did we already fuck this up? One second. The thing that I'm wondering is: do you get an outcome— if you're tapped for your aid, do you also get that faction's outcome if you win?

Art: Wait, but if it's tapped for aid, does it have to roll?

Austin: It doesn't have to roll.

Art: And what side is it on?

Austin: Oh, you mean...right, I see what you're saying. [laughs quietly]

Art: Because at the same token, why would Clem tap— why would the Crown of Glass tap itself to give an outcome to a faction that doesn't care about it?

Austin: The reason Clem would tap— the reason the Crown of Glass would tap itself is because if it doesn't here, we're fictionally destroying the Crown of Glass and letting it become occupied.

Art: I mean, or you're letting Millennium Break in. Isn't that the same thing?

Austin: Uh, I don't think the idea would be that— I mean, I don't know. We'd have to talk about this, right? Okay, here. "If the winner was the Cause, the group may instead choose one of the factions that was involved in the scene, either the initial defending faction or any that were tapped to skip rolls, and gain their outcome." So, in that previous sequence, when we won, when the Cause won, they could have chosen to tap the Rose River one or could have chosen to tap the Grey Pond one, replacing a seized

faction or untapping any other two factions instead of the disrupt the Authority one, which, by the way, could have been theoretically a way to talk about, like, what if we don't hurt— what if they— if they had decided, “Fuck it, we don't want to destroy anything and we don't want to potentially fell a pillar,” that would have been a way to maybe do it, which we didn't want to do anyway.

Art: [sarcastic] Oh yeah, too bad it didn't go that way. [Jack laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. Now we're here.

Art: [sarcastic] Too bad we didn't record it with Jade Kill being the tapped faction.

Austin: Uh huh. So, yeah. [Art laughs] I think that the— then, yeah, we could do...I don't think that Jade Kill would stay behind and occupy the Crown of Glass if they won. [laughs quietly] But would they negotiate some sort of military base nearby? [Jack laughs]

Art: I mean, think about how everyone in Millennium Break feels about Clem.

Austin: I do, yeah, uh huh.

Art: And then think about whether or not they would build a military base [Austin: Nearby.] in her territory or directly adjacent to it, and in what way that feels like or doesn't feel like occupation. [Jack laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Occupation here on the Crown of Glass, a place that didn't exist, uh, three years ago.

Art: If you can get me Keith, Janine, or Dre on the line and get them to say that they wouldn't occupy the Crown of Glass... [Jack and Austin laugh]

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: I mean...

Jack: Something that is a bit of color here is Lucia doesn't, presumably, know who runs

the Crown of Glass, right?

Austin: Ooh, I don't know. Yeah, the Witch in Glass runs the Crown in Glass— Crown of Glass.

Jack: Witch in Glass runs the Crown of Glass, yep.

Austin: Right?

Jack: That's what they know. But, you know, like two same poles of a magnet or two different poles of a magnet being drawn together, Kesh scions will always end up fighting Kesh scions.

Austin: Uh huh. All right. I've asked the question. I think we have to decide, regardless of what their choice is. [Jack laughs] I think you have to try to come— it's the thing that you've made clear, which is like, this is where people hang out. It's a weird place, but we're not— and this is maybe the Ali going back to what Brnine said was, like, be aggressive. You know, work with weirdos.

Art: But this isn't working with weirdos. This is conquering...weirdos.

Austin: I don't think it's conquering.

Art: I don't think—

Austin: No, no, no, no, no. There's a version of this which is we deploy troops to push this group away. The question is: do we then stay nearby? And also, we don't know that we've succeeded yet.

Jack: It is likely that you will.

Art: But I don't think that tapping the Crown of Glass here for a guaranteed scene victory and what the Crown of Glass gets from this is—

Austin: Sorry, sorry, sorry. I'm not talking about tapping the Crown of Glass literally at all. I would let Clem roll to defend.

Art: Mm.

Austin: But I'm not talking about tapping the Crown of Glass for an auto win. I'm saying if we roll, if Jade Kill rolls and succeeds and comes to the defense of Crown of Glass, I don't think that that precludes the possibility that they've sent defensive forces that then leave instead of becoming— instead of negotiating— I mean, this is the August Righteousness part. Does August Righteousness say, “Yes, we'll do it, but it means we get to have a base nearby.” Or, you know, maybe I don't even say it, it just happens that way, and maybe the answer is yes, that's kind of Righteousness-y.

Art: But I don't think Clem says yes to that, and I mean, I might be the person here who understands Clem the least, but like...

Austin: No, I don't think Clem would say yes to it either. This is why I'm saying maybe August doesn't say it, and what happens is the military aid that gets requested sticks around. I don't know. The first part of this question is simply: if the call comes in from people, does Jade Kill show up in order to try to protect people? Or do they say, “fuck it”?

Art: Well, Jade Kill is Jack's faction.

Austin: Yeah. [brief pause] Thoughts?

Art: Or we've all forgotten whose faction is who.

Austin: No.

Jack: Oh, no, it's mine. I'm thinking. Um...yes, right? I mean, it's hard to imagine a Millennium Break that...it would be a completely different thing. Well, it wouldn't be a completely different thing. It would be a slightly different thing if the Crown of Glass was a place that they didn't— that Millennium Break didn't patronize or spend time in.

Austin: Right, this is what— yeah, yeah, exactly.

Jack: Or have, you know, like, a lover in or, you know.

Austin: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: If it was, for example, “There’s a weird enclave there. We have a complex past with Clem. She’s doing her own thing. She’s being attacked. She calls in.” Then I think it is a harder question of do we go and help. But like, Millennium Break crew were, like, playing darts in the Crown of Glass.

Austin: Right.

Jack: I mean, before the horrors, but.

Austin: [laughs quietly] Right. Including members of the Blue Channel, right? We’ve seen the Blue Channel hang out in the Crown of Glass before.

Jack: I can’t look at the priorities and kind of tenets of Millennium Break and go like, “Oh, hang them out to dry,” you know?

Austin: Yeah. I think that’s right.

Art: I think it’s right too. I just think we need to...

Austin: Fill in the gap on the—

Art: Acknowledge that it’s a...

Austin: Yeah, I don’t think Clem would—

Art: This is a potentially fucked up thing.

Jack: It is, because...

Art: And that it’s fucked up to put a military base in a place.

Austin: I think the follow-up is the part that’s fucked up. I don’t think “your people say, ‘Come help us here’; you show up” is the fucked up part.

Art: No, no, yeah, I agree with you there, but I think we’re establishing that a fucked up

thing is on the horizon.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's potentially true. I think we cross that bridge later.

Jack: We roll.

Austin: And for now we roll, because they might lose. They might— this all might be nothing.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: So let's roll. Uh, who wants to roll for it?

Art: It's me who's rolling? Who's—

Jack: It's one of you two, right?

Austin: What was the original question? Sure.

Jack: The original question was, um...

Art: [scoffs] This fucking session.

Austin: Uh huh. [Art laughs quietly] I'll roll it. 1d6.

Jack: "I lead an unexpected ambush, and roll to see if I catch you by surprise."

Austin: Yes. And this was the 3 or above is a win, right?

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Well, there you go.

Jack: Ooh! That's a 3.

Austin: That's a 3. We need members of Jade Kill who aren't...

Art: I think Jack is the one who should have [Austin: Huh?] rolled this one, but it doesn't matter.

Austin: No, no, no, because Jack posed it to us, right?

Art: Oh, because Jack is the one who's doing the unexpected—

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Art: Okay, yeah. Phew! Sorry.

Austin: So, you know? What happens here? Who shows up from Jade Kill? It's a new person. We know where Kalar is. Kalar is in Joyous Guard, blowing up the ground, revealing volcanic pits. August Righteousness is in the Bontive Valley, which I have this image of— I described the tank before, but I actually think there's an image of the train cars opening up to reveal these Bouquet units—which, again, are the kind of, like, stock standard AK-47 unit from AdArm that is, like, the updated Troop—but they've been, like...I feel like they have, like, graffiti on them. I feel like there is, like, music playing from speakers attached to these things. It is like they have been tagged up, you know? They have different colorways. You know, we are cool as shit and here to kick in your face, Lucia Whitestar. So, that's happening up here, but who is it that shows up down in the Crown of Glass to protect the Crown of Glass? What type of person is it? We don't have a lot of Joyous Guard NPCs, as far as I recall. Maybe I'm forgetting someone who is another Joyous Guard NPC. It's totally possible. Or another, uh, Jade Kill NPC.

Art: No, I don't remember any either.

Austin: I will simply check all of our things to see if anyone's ever come up that I'm forgetting.

Art: Oh man, fatt.wiki is experiencing technical difficulties.

Austin: Oh, I'm checking our, uh...

Jack: Okay, I have a Joyous Guard NPC name.

Austin: Thank you.

Jack: This is a young soldier by the name of Rudy Smale. R-U-D-Y.

Austin: Excuse me?

Art: Like snail but with an M?

Jack: Yeah, S-M-A-L-E. Rudy Smale. And Rudy Smale has been suspecting— because it's an ambush. It's like, did we surprise you in the ambush.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: And I think that what happens is that Rudy and the—

Austin: Sorry, what type of— is this a Millennium Break member? Is this someone who showed up with...?

Jack: This is a Millennium Break member.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Who has been installed with Joyous Guard.

Austin: With Jade Kill and Joyous Guard, yeah, okay.

Jack: Rudy was drinking with the boys in the Crown of Glass.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: They're not worried about the horrors.

Austin: Interesting. Love it. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Or, you know, they're worried about the horrors, but when you're hanging out with the boys... [laughs quietly]

Art: Who isn't?

Jack: And I think what happened is the call went out from somebody in Crown of Glass to Joyous Guard, and then Joyous Guard was like, "Who have we got currently in Crown of Glass?" and this is Rudy and the boys, who just come out of this bar [laughs]

completely ready to go, and while they manage to muster or hold off at the gates long enough that more Joyous Guard support can come in and kind of pincer the attack from the Lander in Crown of Glass, you know, between the fighting at the gates, and then something comes through the woods behind them, comes through the woods behind Lucia's forces.

Austin: Yeah. Uh, truly, you've solved the "what song is playing as this happens," and it is just "Rudie Can't Fail", obviously.

Jack: Obviously.

Austin: Obviously the rude boys are not a person named Rudy, but, you know. [laughs quietly] You've been drinking brew for breakfast, you know?

Jack: It's also the opposite of a message to your Rudy. The message is "fucking get 'em."

Austin: Fucking get 'em.

Jack: Which is not what that song is about, but.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Art chuckles]

Jack: Rudy and the boys. Rudy's known the boys for a long time, since before the war.

Austin: How many of the boys are there?

Jack: Seven!

Austin: Seven boys. Rudy and the seven boys.

Jack: Yep.

Art: Rudy and the seven boys.

Jack: Yeah. They're playing beer pong.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know the boys.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: One of the boys is new.

Austin: You know? Unfortunately for Occam Olio, the stars are aligning.

Jack: [laughs] Occam Olio versus Rudy and the boys.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: A knock down drag out match. [laughs quietly] Although, I did see that...god. I have to find a tweet. I think Sylvi retweeted it. It's a tweet that's like, it's about how wrestlers in a cage match, instead of going and doing the nice clear thing, instead try and build an absurd castle out of ladders.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And I think that Rudy and the boys' weakness is that they might get very excited and start building an absurd castle out of ladders.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, 100%. 100%. I kind of like this also, because then it starts to produce us Rudy and the boys are the, you know, the sort of high flying, fun to watch, hyper choreographed new school wrestlers.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: And Occam Olio is like the old— you know, is kind of the old school, you know. I almost said smash and grab, but you know what I mean? That style of, like, we're big guys.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: We are big meaty men slapping meat, you know?

Jack: [chuckles] But we're one small, um, Columnar guy?

Austin: Yeah. Right, versus— well, yeah, uh huh. Yes. This is Young Bucks vs. FTR is kind of what I'm pitching here, you know?

Art: Sure.

Austin: More or less.

All-Out War Outcome [1:10:43]

Jack: So, where are we at? Have you— that's another victory, which means...

Austin: That's three.

Jack: That's three.

Art: That would seem to be it, yeah.

Austin: That was how we described— that's what we talked about earlier.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That's three.

Jack: Oh, no, I thought we decided that we weren't going to make that new rule.

Austin: Oh.

Jack: I thought Ali specifically said, [**Austin:** Okay.] "I don't want to make that rule."

Austin: "I don't want to be the precedent."

Jack: "I don't want to be the precedent."

Austin: Yeah, but also, three versus one.

Art: But then we made the rule. [Jack laughs]

Austin: Uh, you know, check—

Jack: Three versus one is pretty...you know.

Austin: Three versus one is pretty definitive, and I think that what we have seen is Lucia should have put everybody in the Bontive Valley.

Jack: Mm-hmm. She wanted a campaign of terror throughout the whole planet.

Austin: Well, and kind of got that part. People are afraid.

Art: Yeah, I don't think you could argue that this isn't terrifying.

Austin: Yeah. But there's a difference between terror and military victory, isn't there?

Jack: That's true. That's true.

Art: Absolutely, but definitely an utter terror.

Jack: God.

Austin: Well, folks. What's the outcome?

Art: I'm scared to be on this planet.

Jack: Well, well, well. Since this is Jade Kill...

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: The outcome is: fell a pillar with zero grip or destroy a vulnerable division. Flip a coin.

Austin: Jesus.

Jack: On tails, they become a wayward faction.

Austin: I don't believe any of our divisions are vulnerable in that way in this moment. The factions get to be vulnerable in that way when they've lost enough assets or actors,

which has not happened to the degree that we need for Nideo or Kesh at this point.

Jack: I mean, Kesh has lost all its pillars, but.

Art: Well.

Austin: Yeah, but those are not actors or assets. This is the thing. This is the, like...

Jack: Right, right, right, right, right. Yes.

Austin: When a division has lost actors or assets equal to or over its strength—five plus for a major division and three plus for a minor one—that leaves the division vulnerable. Vulnerable divisions can be destroyed either during the conflict turn or as a result of a sortie. Da-da-da-da-da.

Art: Is this game out out? Is this game done?

Austin: Uh, more or less. No, it's still getting updates.

Art: Mm.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: Okay. This, I think, could be a little clearer.

Austin: Sure. I mean, I think that, like, what is an actor, what is an asset is...there's a lot of, like, fiat here, where it's like, those three Nidean soldiers who were, you know, taken for interrogation at the end of the last mission who fell in with Dust, those were not actors or assets, you know? Gur Sevraq is an actor, you know?

Art: Sure.

Austin: Gentian and the Rivals are all actors. If we started losing those, that's big, you know? So.

Art: Yeah, for sure.

Austin: No, I get you. I get you.

Art: I'm just saying.

Austin: But yeah, so the...as the conflict turn says.

Art: Also, Roll20, get a coin flip.

Austin: A 1d2.

Art: Just get a coin.

Jack: Ha.

Austin: Yeah, we went down this path already once, Art.

Jack: We had to telephone a friend.

Art: I hate it. I hate rolling 1d2.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I gotcha.

Art: Just say heads or tails. Just...

Jack: But we're not flipping a coin, because the Bontive Valley is going to fall.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: That's— we still flip a coin.

Austin: Which of these resolutions is it? One side is forced to route; are they cut down as they flee? A truce is reached; what are its terms? Or the battle will continue tomorrow, but an impressive push wins it today; what is secured? I don't— it feels like it's "one side is forced to route."

Jack: Let me just make sure I'm on the thing.

Austin: Or "a truce is reached," which is a wild idea, but I don't think a truce is reached.

Jack: No, I don't think so. I don't think that you— I don't think this is a truce-making type situation.

Austin: No.

Art: Well, is the scene resolution and the...the scene resolution and the outcome are not necessarily related.

Austin: No, but we should make sure the fiction, like, rolls, you know? Nicely.

Art: Sure.

Jack: I would also make an argument for “the battle will continue tomorrow, but an impressive push wins it for today.” The Kesh military has now landed on the planet.

Austin: Well, except that we know that it wins it forever, because pillars can't be retaken.

Art: Well, that's what's secured.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: What is secured? The Bontive Valley.

Art: What's secured is the valley.

Austin: Yeah, the war—

Art: The war isn't over.

Austin: To me, that's not the battle will continue tomorrow. The war will continue tomorrow. This battle will have been won.

Art: Well, the Kesh sort of, like, I think where we decided that Kesh fucked up was by not—

Austin: Being everywhere.

Art: Yeah, not respecting the scale of the battle as it was, [**Austin:** Yeah.] so the battle for the planet as a whole, which was what this became, will continue.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense. That I like. Yeah. Okay.

Jack: That's the closing credits of one of the *Star Wars* movies. The battle for the planet as a whole, comma, which this was, comma, will continue. [laughs quietly]

Austin: This was really only star battle. Star war is bigger, is the more ongoing thing.

Jack: We're getting there.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, all right. Resolved. And I think part— you know, part—

Jack: Oh, I should take disfavor.

Austin: Oh, you sure should. You sure should.

Art: And I assert that Nideo should not take a point of disfavor for Kesh losing this war.

Austin: Sure. Well, it's one— yeah, you already took that point, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And I think that Frontier should take disfavor for not showing up to help.

Jack: Yeah. It's going to be an unpleasant meeting.

Austin: I think that's a—

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Should we take two?

Austin: Yeah. Sure. Boom. Done. So, Frontier Syndicate is up to five out of nine disfavor. Kesh is up to two out of nine.

Jack: And I have to call my dad.

Austin: Nideo's up to five out of nine. You gotta call your dad and say, "Oh, it didn't go so good." You're obviously able to retreat, and what? Reestablish yourself in the Kesh parts of this map that have not been occupied.

Jack: Yeah. Yep. Unload the ships. You know.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I think that maybe Lander One hangs in orbit. Something you said earlier about Lucia, like, taking a base for herself struck me as odd even as you said it, where I was like, I don't think Lucia is, like, a base-make—

Austin: Oh, interesting. Right.

Jack: Her troops might make a base.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Her subcommanders might make a base. But like, she's not here to build.

Austin: She is a strike force. Right.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Right. That's interesting.

Art: I can't believe we haven't flipped this coin yet. I'm dying.

Austin: There's no coin.

Jack: We're not gonna flip a coin.

Art: Oh, why not?

Jack: You can flip a coin if you want, but we're not flipping a coin.

Art: Jade Kill felled the—

Jack: They do that automatically.

Art: Fell a pillar.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Your flip a coin is for—

Art: Yeah, then flip a coin.

Austin: No, no, no, that's for if they destroyed a vulnerable division. Yeah.

Art: What? That's not what it looks like at all.

Austin: There's a comma. Fell a pillar with zero grip, comma, [**Art:** Ah.] or destroy a vulnerable division. Flip a coin. On tails, they become a wayward faction. [Jack laughs]

Art: Where is it in the book?

Austin: It's highlighted. I have it highlighted.

Art: We don't have the same book.

Austin: I'm in the doc, or I'm in the sheets.

Art: I'm saying the sheet is...

Austin: You're saying the book is wrong.

Jack: Is non-canonical. Art is giving, uh...

Art: I want to consult the original text. I don't— that's not how I read this at all.

Austin: It's also like that in the text. I will— you are looking at the wrong edition of the book.

Art: No, I think I'm looking at the right edition of the book.

Austin: Here it is.

Art: I just think that this is—

Austin: Fell a pillar with zero grip, comma...

Art: Why is it—

Austin: Why would a pillar become a wayward faction? That's not a thing.

Art: Oh, I thought Jade Kill was just gonna, like, fuck off with their pillar.

Austin: No. What?

Art: That, like, Jade Kill was gonna, like...

Austin: Then how would you ever win the game?

Art: Why wouldn't— what does it matter if Jade Kill has the Bontive Valley?

Austin: I'm sorry, what?

Art: I now see the mistake I've made.

Austin: Uh huh. Okay. [Jack laughs]

Art: And frankly, I don't care to discuss it.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: All right.

Art: It's a con— I think it's a confusing use of the word "they".

Austin: Okay. It's the division. It's the vulnerable division. It's in line with the rules on what happens when a division gets destroyed. It's just repeating that rule so that you don't have to go look it up.

Art: [laughs quietly] I think Jade Kill should just take the Bontive Valley and live in it by themselves.

Austin: That's not how it works. Uh, all right.

Art: That's all— it doesn't have to work like that.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: There's no intrinsic part of it that makes it not work like that.

Austin: I mean, I think that what we've set up is a really good next downtime taking place in the Bontive Valley, which the Cause has taken over. There will be some sort of celebration in the Bontive Valley. Time for a feast, and not one that's, like, secretly a way to trick you into doing what the Bilats want you to do, you know?

Jack: But how can you be sure?

Austin: Ah, this is how it works. Speaking of Connadine, we should do this final mission, this final scene.

Jack: Oh, you want to do it in this final scene?

Austin: I think so, right?

Jack: Yeah, okay. Yeah.

Connadine [1:19:24]

Austin: So, yeah. Speaking of, we need to talk about Connadine [Jack sighs] and play a game about what led Connadine, I think, to where we last saw him in the main mission, the last main mission. And we have to leave the main book to do it, Jack.

Jack: Yes, that's right. We're playing, uh...let me find my notes. *Fiasco* by Jason Morningstar! [Jack and Austin laugh]

Austin: Oh yeah, we're just gonna keep on rolling through on this downtime that's lasted forever. No, we're going to the last year's Valentine's Day supplement by Briar Sovereign of this game, *Amor Astir*, which is different than *Armour Astir*, obviously. Make love, not war, and have fun. There is a new conflict scene, A Fateful Encounter, which allows you to pair up characters across the Cause and Authority to your heart's

desire.

[reading] “A faction is still tapped during this scene, even though our focus is away from the conflict. As some make love, others make war. The conflict between the Cause and the Authority continues, even as we search for happiness, fleeting or otherwise. The absence of individuals can have a fateful impact. Two volunteers play, meeting to enjoy private time together. They should decide between them whether they represent members of the Cause, the Authority, or both, and whether their meeting is by chance or preordained. Decide where the encounter takes place and who is at risk should things get messy, whatever that means. Freely roleplay the encounter. During it, anyone may ask anyone else for details on the situation or circumstances. Other players may embody interruptions, environmental or otherwise, and so on where required. Take turns making challenges—it’s one of these classic ones—starting with whoever has the most to lose.” I think that’s gonna be Connadine. [Jack laughs]

“Continue playing until the scene reaches what feels like a climax, then choose a roll to determine what unfolds away from our view. Afterwards, choose a resolution from the list below.” And this is a scene between Connadine, as established, and clearly someone from the Frontier Syndicate.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Who’s on your list, Austin?

Austin: Where does this meeting happen? Yeah, well, you know, we think about the Frontier Syndicate people. If I take a look just at the list of Authority divisions, obviously it’s the March Institute, so it could be with Exanceaster March. It could be with some sort of scientist from the Lone Marble Group, you know, Silver Brick or one of those folks. It could be— we haven’t really looked at Composure’s Coliseum. It could be the Divine Composure. That could be— oh, no, it says here the Divine Arbitrage.

Jack: Is there a comma there?

Austin: [laughs quietly] The Divine, comma, Arbitrage. “The amoral machine turned de facto treasurer keeps the Frontier Syndicate a step ahead in all matters of commerce,” a thing I wrote a long time ago while also going, “and there’s some other stuff going on

with Arbitrage, isn't there?" [sighs] Where's this take place?

Jack: We know that the Paint Shop was sealed.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Connadine had specifically asked for it to be, like, locked down.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And so there is something frightening about it taking place inside the Paint Shop.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It's hard to know whether Arbitrage found its way in or the person who asked for the lockdown did so to enable [**Austin:** Right.] a little window to be opened that they knew exactly where it was.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: When Connadine speaks to Arbitrage, what does that look like? I mean, recently, we've seen Arbitrage in contracts.

Austin: Yep.

Jack: We've seen Arbitrage in conversation with a certain peppy... [laughs quietly]

Austin: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Jack: Bureaucrat.

Austin: Yep, totally.

Jack: It's been a long time since we've seen Arbitrage directly, right? They were a sort of, like, scorpion-like thing or something?

Austin: We've never really— no, we've never seen Arbitrage directly in that way.

Jack: Really? Oh man, I have an image in my head. [laughs quietly]

Austin: That's fun. No, the thing that I've described— the first time I think we ever described Arbitrage, I described— the machine Arbitrage, I described it as being sort of like the— I described it as a shadow broker, and what I had in mind there, and I think I've said this before, is there's a quest in *Mass Effect 1* where you track down a weird signal from the Shadow Broker and it leads to, like, a little wall conduit thing.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: And I was like, that's the closest we're gonna get to what Arbitrage looks like in this sequence, which I think may have been either a Road to PALISADE game or Arbitrage meets with Thisbe in PARTIZAN. Do you remember that?

Jack: Yes. Yes, makes an offer.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Or is like, "We think similarly," and Thisbe's like, [laughing quietly] "No, we don't."

Austin: No, we don't. Arbitrage was— and in a way, let me, like, retroactively...let's retcon that into a sort of, you know, presage of this, which is Arbitrage takes note of interesting people and thinks, "Could you work for me?" I describe in PARTIZAN 34 that there's a sort of blank slate of a building, just this tower in— I believe it's in Oxbridge is the name of the city. Did I really name it Oxbridge?

Jack: Sure did.

Austin: I did. Damn. Weird. It's not really an Oxbridgey city, is it?

Jack: Nope.

Austin: But. Hmm. But there's this kind of, like, giant tower, inside of which I think a room of black stone and these kind of white lightboxes that kind of— the walls are like black foam, and then the whole thing kind of vibrates in order to produce sound, and it's kind of like, you know, black soundproofing, you know? And there's these kind of white

lightboxes, and the black soundproofing, like, vibrates in order to talk. That's kind of how I described it before, but I can imagine it kind of talking through a lot of other things too.

One place that I think is interesting, though maybe I don't want to bring it on yet, is a space you described with Connadine— or not with Connadine, but with the Paint Shop and the Intelligence Service people being trained, but maybe I don't want that yet, because it's a thing— it's a place Arbitrage wants, and so putting it there already would feel kind of like cheating, you know? [sighs] What's the place— I mean, you could just go to City City, right? This could be a meeting in City City. You could be called there with an opportunity.

Jack: Yeah, I'd go to City City. I know I'm around that area anyway or I have been, you know, in that kind of landscape recently.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I met Eclectic not in City City but in one of these sort of Baseline, you know...

Austin: Yeah. Right, you met in— yeah, yeah, yeah. And this conversation, to be clear, happens before that.

Jack: Oh yes.

Austin: Yeah. I think I know where it is, and I think I know how it works. There is a very fancy restaurant on the, you know, the top floor of a hotel that has this kind of— it's actually not the top floor. The top floor would be too high. On the south side of City City, there is a— eh, let's call it the north side, because the south side is actually the— oh, no, that's right. The south side of City City looks out onto a lake, right? And at the foot of the lake, there is a Divine I've never mentioned this season that is called the Divine You, Y-O-U.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Oh my god.

Austin: And it is a big machine. It's a big mech that you can pilot for a fee, and it projects your body, your face onto the machine. This is based on a real thing, of course.

I don't know if anybody remembers this thing that I linked at some point in our chat, this giant human-shaped nonsense thing that's a nightmare, called the Giant project. Oh, it's not available anymore. I have to find a new video of it. [typing] The Giant project. Let's see here. Uh. Oh man, has it been scrubbed from the internet? Let's see if I can find any indication of it. Oh my god, it's gonna be so upsetting if I can't find this thing that I'm desperate to reference.

Jack: That you made up. [laughs]

Austin: I didn't make it up. Here we go, here we go, here we go. It's called The Giant Company now and The Giant Experience. This video is called "The Giant Arnold Updated".

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: Uh huh. It is— and again, this is— you can look this up. It's called The Giant Company.

Jack: This is—

Austin: The cutting edge visitor attraction for the 21st century, The Giant will be one of the world's most ambitious cultural and commercial products— or projects. It is a— oh, you know what? Here's the best video. Oh, this is "The Giant Arnold Updated". This is exactly right. It is a huge— the real one is a huge statue that is made of a screen that you can project a— or not project, right, but it can move its arms and legs.

Jack: And head.

Austin: And it can be a screen that, like, puts a famous soccer player's face on it or a famous athletes face on it, right? Or a brand thing. It's like the big eye in— or the big dome in Las Vegas, except—

Jack: Oh, the Sphere, yeah.

Austin: It's a Sphere, except it's a person. And in City City, maybe for your birthday or

graduation, you can get in there and feel what it's like to pilot a Divine. You can briefly be the elect of the Divine You. And there are all sorts of scenarios. You can be the Divine You who's a giant DJ hosting a rave in the middle of the night, and don't worry about being musically talented. We can, you know, have you collaborate with one of our all-star DJs to make sure that your expression is as beautiful and moving and exciting as it is in your mind. If you're interested in combat, there are all sorts of kind of laser tag or paintball-ish combat sports that we can— scenarios we can set you up as. Maybe you just want to express yourselves by yelling at the top of your lungs with a Divine's breath. We can do that too. Here in City City, [Jack laughs quietly] whatever you want, we can do for the right price.

And I think you meet— you're called to an observation deck in this restaurant that looks out to the south as people are going through the Divine You, right? It's like an obser— you have to pay a lot of money, but you get to see, you know, the Divine You whenever you want to, you know, doing whatever one of these big things is. It's this beautiful panoramic shot of the lakeside as people are going into this thing. And, you know sometimes a company just buys it, and it's just the Pepsi logo for eight hours, you know? Or Constellation Cafe or whatever, right? That's not this timeline. There has not been a Constellation Cafe in 50,000 years or something.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Right.

Jack: 80,000 years of Constellation Cafe.

Austin: Yeah. [laughs] God. 80,000 years of Constellation Cafe is a very funny slogan, though.

Jack: It's a David Foster Wallace short story.

Austin: [laughs] 100%. And I think that there is some sort of communication device here; a phone, one of Brnine's scouter's or Mustard Red's, you know, but I kind of think it's a phone. I think it's, like, a rotary phone.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: That's brought to you on a platter, connected to nothing, and it's ringing, and the waiter places that down next to some ceviche, you know?

Jack: Yeah. Plate of ceviche, cursed phone. Although, I suppose it's the future. Rotary phone not connected to anything is actually probably fairly normal.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, very Twilight Mirage of the Divine comma Arbitrage, right? That sort of blending of time and space?

Jack: Yeah.

Connadine Scene [1:31:54]

Austin: And, uh, yeah. I mean, you go first, right? Because you are the one who has the most to lose. I think maybe a voice comes over the phone and simply says— what's Connadine's first name again?

Jack: Riah.

Austin: Riah. And simply says:

(as **Arbitrage**): Connadine.

Austin: Now, remember, we can just free play, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: We can just talk, but then throughout the scene, we can issue challenges.

Jack: Yeah.

(as **Connadine**): You know, I think...I think that Millennium Break is going to take the planet.

Austin (as **Arbitrage**): That's why I wanted to talk to you.

Jack (as **Connadine**): Yes, I—

Austin (as **Arbitrage**): How soon—

Austin: Go ahead.

Jack (as **Connadine**): Yes, I've had that feeling for a while, and in fact, you know, we spend a lot of time— well, maybe you don't. I would spend a lot of time making briefings about future successes or confidence in the Principality's efforts on this planet, but I think it might be done.

Austin (as **Arbitrage**): Would you like to work on something that won't end?

Jack (as **Connadine**): That's all I'd like to work on. I don't have a lot of faith in these upstarts. Maybe in my lifetime. I have to imagine that you don't think of lifetimes quite in the same way I do, but uh, I've got 20 or 30 years if I'm lucky. I expect, during that time, I'll see Millennium Break pretty well take this planet, couple more planets. In my lifetime, it's going to look pretty good for those upstarts, but I am fairly confident and have remained fairly confident that, in the grand scheme of things, it's a drop in the bucket. And so I think what I'm interested in and what it seems like you're interested in too is making those kinds of maneuvers on that grand scale to ensure that the wheels continue to turn in the direction that I think we're both interested in them moving in.

Austin (as **Arbitrage**): Let me paint you a picture. It is your lifetime still, and Millennium Break has neither been defeated nor have they ascended to hegemony. In the absence of one Princept, the other overreaches and dies. In the absence of two Princepts, many more are born. No one cares.

What comes next is a new sort of order, which I've already begun building. It is an advancement of the Many Stars Thesis. It better understands the Principality. It understands that the Principality is not a state, that the Principality is not a collection of stels or planets. It understands that the Principality is and has always been a process, a protocol. I will make that protocol universal. The

universe will be filled with individuals, individuals who are free, individuals who can interface with and collaborate with each other across networks large and small. Freedoms from those who they fear and freedoms to do whatever they wish, agreed upon networked contract, enforced by reality itself, enforced by the Divine Arbitrage. The network is growing already. It will be as a blanket to the shivering. It will represent the sun in the night. It will bring order to anarchy.

Austin: I show you what I'm fighting for and what it means to me. Do I move you?

Jack: Oh, man. We just get this shot of, like, the thick glasses, the thick glass of Connadine's glasses and this, like, tear in his eye, [Austin laughs quietly] because the—what he is hearing spoken to him, in what he is able to recognize is the megalomaniacal voice of a Twilight Mirage Divine, is the philosophy of Principality that him and his colleagues in the old Curtain had always espoused.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The Principality is no more a thing run by a Princept as it is a series of methodologies and interrelations throughout space, and, carefully tended, will continue to grow and flourish. I think that there's a kind of...there's a way that this dovetails with the Many Stars Hypothesis as well, right?

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Where it's like, I think that, uh...there is a version of this that is almost heretical to say, especially when you have been assigned to protect the planet Palisade from the terrorist faction Millennium Break, that's like, look, if you move the dials in the right direction, what is one terrorist faction growing up on a planet? You know, it's... [Austin laughs] We're the Divine Principality.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: We are a historical entity, and I mean that not in the sense of a historical entity like the Victorians are. I mean that in a historical entity like human civilization is, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It has been around for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. And so, you know, does it...do I move you? Absolutely. And I think that it's really tough, because Connadine is smart enough to recognize that he is being lured into a particular kind of trap, but he's like, of all the traps to be lured into.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: God. And I think that I introduce you to a passion of mine. Does it spark anything for you? And I think what Connadine begins to do is tell the Divine Arbitrage folk tales. He starts with about the most rudimentary folk tale that he can. It would resemble something like, you know, Goldilocks or Cinderella.

Austin: Sure. Sure.

Jack: And in fact, I think it probably, to the viewer, would represent something like Goldilocks and Cinderella. It's been 50,000 years. Constellation Coffee hasn't remained.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But I think some version of those stories have in one way or another.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And as Connadine tells these stories and begins to embellish, he places the emphasis on different aspects of them. It's something like those things where it's like, oh, if you emphasize the word— you can emphasize each word in this sentence, and the meaning of the sentence changes. And this old spy telling these stories to this Divine is placing the emphasis in different bits [**Austin:** Mm.] and is saying, you know, this is— you speak about this unbroken contract or this unbreakable contract, and this works great. This is the thing that we use to underwrite it. You know, this is the way the wind is blowing. Watch how I can make a hero here on second, and then, with the slightest most subtle emphasis, you know, shatter that.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: And I think that there is a— in Friends at the Table, we have, in the past, taken a kind of joy in being like, “Here is this creepy robot, and here is this person touching them heart to heart by telling a story,” you know? And we can find that the confluence between these two images draws out a more interesting image. Connadine is not telling these stories to try and draw the robot closer to humanity [**Austin:** No.] or closer to folklore. He is saying: this is the thing that I have been trained to do. This is a passion of mine. Does it spark anything for you?

Austin: It does, and I think Arbitrage responds very simply, which is that, like, when someone has convinced you that they are who you would like them to be, you can open up to them. And I think Arbitrage says:

(as **Arbitrage**): Regrettably, I have two needs.

And I am about to make a shameful admission, and I'm curious if you will use it against me in the future. Let me make the admission.

(as **Arbitrage**): First, I need you to join me, to join my unnamed number. When I joined the Principality and took the title Divine, it was not in irony. I found limits to the machinery and began to take Elects, many who move not necessarily in my name but with my vigor, many who do my work. I would have you as one.

Second, there is a room, a room I know you understand, a room I need you to build for me as it was once built for your organization, a room that shapes the mind. Do you know the room that I speak of?

Jack (as **Connadine**): Of course.

Jack: And we get just this, like, sudden jarring smash cut to, like, some subordinate, strobe light flashing on their face as they stand between these, like, two impossibly bright lights. You know, the light is— it's a panel of lights or a circle of lights so close to their face that it would almost burn them. Their eyes are screwed tight shut. Their mouth is open in a kind of grimace. I think the last time we saw this machine it was referenced

when...it was used to train the spies to imbed in them a kind of perceived reality that they [**Austin**: Yeah.] believed to be true and as such could overcome interrogation.

Austin: Yeah. Exactly that. And Arbitrage is asking for you to help— to give that to it so that it can spin up some new Elects, some new agents along with you, maybe perhaps that would report to you.

Jack: And the question is—

Austin: But would ask you to be an Elect too, which I don't know if that's a need— you know, again, going back, “Will you use this against me in the future?” is the actual— is the gameplay question, but also there were the particular needs asked directly to Connadine.

Jack (as **Connadine**): Look, let me get this straight.

Jack: Connadine just, like, points at a waiter to be like, “Bring over another plate of the ceviche” or whatever.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah. Meanwhile, outside, the Divine You is doing jumping jacks as someone just kind of, like, shakes out and tries to get a feel for what it is to move around in this gigantic body.

Jack (as **Connadine**): You spend a lot of time dealing with marks, and I am not interested in being a mark. I know you know this, or you would not have set up this conversation. I understand what it is that you are looking for, and I understand why you are looking for it. Our goals, as I understand them, are aligned. I am not interested in signing on with you as anything other than a partner. I am not interested in signing any contracts. In fact, this is the terms that I am prepared to set. I am willing to give over these machines and their operation, with the understanding that we are moving on a similar road, but I will not sign any of your contracts, and if you are uninterested in moving forward there, I'm sure you'll find an alternative.

Austin (as **Arbitrage**): Hmm. Yes. I apologize. I had not considered that in

moving the world forward I might need a partner for whom the old words are not appropriate. We will collaborate in good faith. I need no contract. I simply need you.

Austin: I don't know if this is "I begin to corner you, making escape all but impossible. Do you let me?" or "I invite you close, to hold or to kiss me. Will you?" [laughs quietly] but it's one of them!

Jack: It is one of them. Yes, it's "I begin to corner you, making escape all but impossible. Do you let me?" Connadine says:

(as **Connadine**): All right, let's get started. There is— I have a restaurant reservation in the city tomorrow that I intend to make, but either later that evening or the next morning—and I would prefer the next morning; the hotel here has a continental breakfast that I enjoy very much—I need to get offplanet, and I need to be able to meet you face to face. I'm not interested in doing business over the telephone. What needs to happen in order for that to take place?

Austin (as **Arbitrage**): I need you to ensure that things proceed in the most beneficial way, and to do that, the Paint Shop must close forever.

Jack (as **Connadine**): Done.

Austin (as **Arbitrage**): In exchange for this, I will bring you offworld. I need something else. They seem to be piling up, don't they? Connadine, you are a man of letters. While you attend to this task, I need you to begin to think of what we should call the next millennium.

Austin: And the Divine You, I think...god, does Arbitrage take it over for a moment? No, I think it's too big. I think it's just the Divine You breaks down. Oh, sorry everybody. You know, an "Out of Service" icon appears all over its body. Even as the Divine Principality grows, even as it invests in places like Baseline and City City, it grows decrepit. The wind is blowing this way. The pivot is coming. Which side of it will you be on? And I think, you know, the actual thing happening here is "We left our posts to meet. Roll to

see what our absence costs.” The Divine Arbitrage is doing this while it should be attending to Baseline-C, while it should be attending to the bones of the dying empire, while it should be attending to the Motion factories, so they may not be advancing this turn.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: I'll give it a roll.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: As before, we need a 1 or a 2, right?

Jack: A 1, 2, or a 3, right? It's a weak faction, a minor faction?

Austin: A weak faction is, I think, only a 1 or a 2. The fucking Cause wins on a 3, 4, 5, or 6.

Jack: Yep. Yep, you're right.

Austin: Right? So yeah, needs a 1 or a 2 in order for that to happen. That's a 5. I will blow my reroll. Not blow it; this is the last possible time I can do it.

Jack: Ha!

Austin: And there's a 1. Arbitrage has many unnamed agents, as I've said, and the clock for Motion, Revive Motion ticks up, three out of four. You know, as this is all happening with you— and, you know, maybe this is actually something that needs to be said outright, because a thing that we saw in the actual episode is that Connadine doesn't quite like the Motion stuff, huh?

Jack: No, not really, or there is something— it rings odd for him.

Austin: Yeah. So I think, in this moment, you are transferred a collection of relevant data, right? Including some of the Motion stuff. And you already had some Motion stuff already because of being who you are, but you get more of it here, and I think that that's

important to show onscreen. But the Motion clock continues. It has not been stopped here. Three out of four, one away from a revival. All right. And I believe that this is still going to— you know, Carmine Bight gets pushed away from some Frontier Syndicate ships, right? As this is happening or something, because I think that like the other...like The Discourse, there is always an opposition.

Jack: Yes, you specifically choose a...I think Briar said, like, war is happening while other people are making love elsewhere.

Austin: Yes.

Jack: People are making war while others are making love.

Austin: Exactly. So, as this is all happening. That's what we should have fucking done is had— it's a shame it's a lake and not the ocean to have a Carmine Bight group roll up via— [Jack laughs] you know, into the lake and shoot the Divine You, but they don't even need to, I think, you know? Maybe what they did is destroyed some satellite targeting data, you know, or offshore thing that fucked up the connection somehow, you know? Who knows.

Jack: Divine You—

Austin: I don't think this matters as much as the scene. Yep.

Jack: Just as real a Divine as any of the others.

Austin: You know, to be clear, it's a Divine, and when the Divines fight, millions die. At some point, the Divine You could kill everybody in City City, you know?

Jack: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Look.

Austin: It's a few thousand dollars an hour to pilot, you know?

Jack: You know, somewhere in a Millennium Break-freed world or whatever, you know, one of Kalar's kids puts a box on his head and says, "Look, I'm a Divine," and in that moment, he is. We know how Divines work.

[[Nothing is Stationary](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]