

PALISADE 27: Resentment and Frustration Pt. 2

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Opening Narration

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

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

Recap

Austin: Oh, was this on cycle? Is this—was this—was this part of your grand orchestra?

Jack: I'm mad at the Stargrave, you're mad at me. I'm mad at an organization that—that doesn't buy that three people—five, four? Yeah, five—can shut down every stellar combustor in the galaxy.

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Austin: Consecration is digging for the bodies of the dead Divines being protected by the Chimeric Cadent.

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Austin: Interesting. Okay.

Art: Fascinating. Alright, thank you so much, Keith.

Austin: Keith, this has been wonderful.

Art: I really needed this.

Austin: And this feels right.

Keith: [laughing] Okay, good. I hope it's the one that feels right. I should leave...

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Jack: And yes, she is being sent in, in part to mop up what has happened, [Austin: Mhm.] and to execute these reprisals, but also because the Pact is coming.

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Austin: The Paint Shop still exists, and the Gravtrain still exists, as Pillars, and will come back under Kesh control.

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Jack: There are some people who say the wheel turns, and they think that what that means is that, you know, you will magically end up on top or whatever.

Austin: [hums] Mhm.

Jack: No, absolutely not. Consequences result from actions. You need to take time, [**Austin:** Yeah.] those actions need to marinate. You need to shift your priorities at times. You know, there's plenty of time.

[3:00] [Music Intro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt ends]

Introduction

[3:52]

Austin: Alright. We should do some scenes. [chuckles]

[**Art** scoffs]

Austin: We got—

Jack: Well, the two of you should do some scenes, because I'm in a, you know, locked in a [chuckling] mountain castle.

Austin: You are. You are locked in a mountain castle, huh? This is true. Um, Art, do you know what you want to do with your conflict turn scene?

Art: [scoffs] Absolutely I do not.

Austin: Oh, okay. Yeah. Well, especially now that you're major—

Art: [cross] Um, do you?

Austin: I think I do, but it's kind of weird. I mean, I guess first things first. Beginning of the scene, all of our things kick—or beginning of the turn, all our things kick in, right?

Art: Presumably not—

Austin: Not the Bilats, or not the Intelligence Service, rather. Yeah.

Art: Alright. Well, mine's easy. I'm gonna start a four-step clock titled "take something that isn't theirs".

Austin: Right. New clock, same as the old clock, take something that isn't theirs.

Jack: Second moon. Find a new moon, take it.

Austin: Find a new moon. I mean, is it "get the Divines out of that moon"? Is it something else? Is it another—it doesn't—we don't have to answer. We can answer that when it fills.

Art: I don't—yeah, I don't think—it just, it doesn't say what it is yet.

Austin: It doesn't say what it is yet. Start the clock. Put one on the clock. Boom.

Art: People are gonna love it.

Austin: Whatever it is.

Art: When Signet and Belgard are on the Nideo team.

Austin: [scoffing] Oh my god.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: Nightmare. Alright, and mine doesn't trigger like that. Mine is I can force a reroll during a conflict scene.

Art: Oh, the military holds are gonna be so fun for you.

Austin: Yeah, dude. [chuckles] I'm excited. It's gonna be brutal. Can't wait.

[**Art** chuckles]

Austin: I mean, if we go that way, right? We might sleep on this and decide a different direction for what that group is. But it seems like it should...

Jack: I don't know, it might be war. It might be—

Austin: It seems like it's war.

Jack: You know, sometimes, unfortunately, the Principality has effectively trained a tactical genius [chuckling] and deployed her to the moon.

Austin: Uh-huh. Sometimes that's what happens. Um, so then, yeah—

Art: I might have to play All Out War. That might have to be my scene, but—

Austin: I am also thinking about playing All Out War, so maybe I pick—

Art: Can we both do All Out War?

Austin: We could both do All Out War. Because part of what I feel like is happening is like, my pitch for All Out War, for me, was—I mean, I have something else to happen first, right? Which is, I think, do our various clocks just advance, also? Is that correct? Or do I have to advance those?

Art: No, you just have to win a scene to advance a clock.

Austin: [cross] To advance a clock. Okay. So you do have to advance.

Art: Although, does yours say anything—how have you been advancing that?

Austin: I think I've been spending downtime tokens and then winning faction things, right? Winning—yeah, yeah, yeah. Because I remember “harvest the Fundamental nodes” came from, like, getting that big win as Occam, for instance, right?

Art: Sure.

Austin: And so, yeah. I think I know what my All Out War is, and it's actually—it's actually, you know, I was talking all that big game about March keeping his head down, keeping his nose clean and stuff, right?

Jack: Mhm?

Austin: But I kind of think that it is, with the Elcessor gone, if we peek at the map real quick, do you see where Viager is, south of Greenfield? I think it's like—

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You know, I should just, um, I need to station some troops in Tintagel, just to help protect it, right?

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: And the All Out War that I was thinking is actually with the—with Clem, as Clem, because the Crown of Glass, I mean, tell me if I'm wrong about this, Art, and maybe you have Clem ideas, because you've been thinking about this. But like, if Tintagel and the Brecheliant forest is where the Elcessor is, and the Elcessor was—and I just want to confirm this—executed live on television?

Jack: No. If we are not doing...

Austin: Okay, we are not doing that.

Jack: If we are not doing—that is a Kesh's weak move.

Austin: Yeah, okay. I see. Yes.

Jack: I think she is executed off-screen.

Austin: Yes.

Jack: I think that's right, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: My thinking here is sound. If we put her on television and we kill her, people are like, "Kesh can't control their own..."

Austin: Right.

Jack: "...people." Which is true, but we're not gonna...

Austin: [cross] Yeah, I'm not even sure that they'd kill her. I don't even know that they need to—you know, like, I—I don't know what her connections are such that... you know? Like, [chuckles] um...

Jack: I mean, what is the punish—yes, her connections might be a very real thing. What is the punishment for potentially torpedoing—

Austin: They didn't kill the Farmer, you know what I mean?

Jack: [hums] What she did was worse than the Farmer.

Austin: I mean, yeah. Undeniably.

Jack: Every combustor has gone... off.

Austin: [chuckles] Yeah, it's real bad. [laughing] It's real bad.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: It's real bad, and it's one of those things where it's like, it's too hot to touch, because it reveals the nature of the beast. That, like—

Jack: Yeah, we absolutely can't do anything publicly.

Austin: Right. Because, like, the sin she had was failing to keep her hand on the leash. The invisible leash that everyone knows we have that's very visible, but we don't ever talk about it as a leash. We just talk about it as a fence. It protects you, you know?

Jack: Yes.

Austin: It's a leash on all the other dogs, is what we say, but really it's a leash on you from becoming a dog. Not a dog, a person. It's a leash that we keep on you to keep you a dog, so that you can't let yourself become people. And now she dropped it. She destroyed all of the leashes we were holding. But we weren't holding leashes.

Jack: No, no, definitely not.

Austin: We were holding leashes from the Millennium Break leashes. So yeah, it's—

Jack: But she has dropped all of them.

Austin: [chuckles] She sure has.

Jack: Um... Uh, let's—

Austin: So maybe it is—yeah?

Jack: Let's not decide this right now. She is—

Austin: She gets taken off planet.

Jack: Oh, she is extremely off planet.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Um... yeah.

Austin: Great. Love it. The other way that this could go, by the way, is, doesn't even get out of—her own people kill her. Someone kills her. You know what I mean? This is a classic thing that happens in this scenario. Right? Bodyguard just kills her.

[Art hums]

Austin: I'm not saying we do that, but like, floating ideas that have happened historically in moments like this.

Jack: She is an absolute nightmare, and I want her around, but I don't want her around—I want to put her off screen for the time being, [Austin: Okay.] [chuckling] and we can decide whether she is dead or not later.

Austin: [chuckles] Right. Uh-huh.

Art: Great.

Austin: Sounds great. Heisenberg and uncertainty, Stargrave.

Jack: [laughs] Is she in the spaceship? I don't—who can say?

Austin: Right, who could say? Who could say?

Art: Be stupid to try.

Austin: Mhm.

Options

[10:46]

Austin: So, my thinking on the thing that I was gonna do was an All Out War in Brecheliant against the Crown of Glass. Though, that's not necessarily who is... You know, the Cause could still try to block this, also. Jade Kill could try to fell a Pillar via this, because that's what they do. Right? But I could also do a completely different thing that's just about, you know, trying to get this last win that they need to get the final of the, um... the Fundament nodes. So that could also be something else. That could be another Covert Op. That could be a duel to get it one-on-one, you know? I don't—I haven't decided where the last of these things is, you know?

But I do think the idea that it's in Kesh territory in this moment. Like, it could be in Carmathen. It could be anywhere where there is, like, neighboring Frontier Syndicate in Kesh space. But I like the idea of them being like, "oh, we need to move into Kesh space briefly in order to get the last—" [**Jack** chuckles] Truly, it's to get the last of these Fundament nodes. But what it looks like is just regular military action, is kind of what I was—you know, maybe it's in the Paint Shop and they're like, they're breaking into the Paint Shop directly. Maybe it's on another Diadem Gravtrain line, you know? And maybe that's the most—the best place for it, because that's the one that would be... You could imagine Jade Kill trying to take it at the same time to try to get the final—to fell that Pillar, right?

Jack: [hums] Mhm.

[**Art** hums]

Austin: Then it's like, during all of this, March has sent that same crew as before into Carmathen, which is a Kesh-held city, and is the center point of the Diadem Gravtrain system. I believe that that's correct. "While the vast trench-city on Palisade's equator lays abandoned, Kesh has reactivated its railway via an operations center in Carmathen." So yeah, I think that it's actually not All Out War. Here's my pitch. It is Covert Op, da-da-da... Or—or it's a Chase, right? It's one of those ones. Or it's One-on-One. It's a duel in front of the thing, right? It's one of these ones. It's not quite All Out War, but is "we're trying to get access to this last Fundament node and someone's trying to stop us". Any fun ideas on like, which way that goes? Any thoughts on what's more interesting here?

Art: I'm trying to work back from the end.

Austin: Right. Which is we open the door and get the last of these. Or we fail and don't, right?

Art: Right. So none of the Covert Op resolutions, [**Austin:** Yeah.] like, go that way.

Austin: Right. Wait, do they not? Is there not, like, the end of it is you get the... Oh, right, because it's about escaping or achieving your duty or whatever, right? Yeah, yeah.

Art: Right. Whereas I think One-on-One sort of... eh.

Austin: One-on-One's fun because it's like a duel, which we haven't really done a lot of, right?

Art: Yeah. "I drive you back to the point you could flee, do you run or stand?"

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Like, you could—you could go from there to what you want.

Austin: Yeah. It's tough because we just haven't gotten a ton of... 'Cause the last Frontier Syndicate characters we got were them doing that—I guess it's Occam. It's Occam, and then we have the three weirdos who went into—

[Jack chuckles]

Austin: [chuckling] Into the Sinder Karst place, right?

Jack: Right, right. Eugene Levy, but what if he was an elevator...

Austin: Uh-huh. [laughs]

Jack: One of the Lock and Cross assassins.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: And, uh... who's the third one?

Austin: The hacker, right? Silverbrick? Sorry, not the hacker. The, um, the... [sighs] Is that right? Is that right?

Jack: Silverbrick is "Eugene Levy, but what if he was an elevator?"

Austin: You're right. You're right. What's the third one? The third one is the hacker, isn't it?

Jack: Yes. Yes, 'cause—

Austin: Whose name, of course, was... ah. Why am I not finding this in my notes? Silverbrick's the architect. Uh, ba-ba-ba-ba-ba...

Jack: Cross? No, Lock.

Austin: Lock—Lock 'cause Cross died, right? Um, yeah. Yeah. No, other way. Margate Lock died, Maidstone Cross lived. Ooh, the fact that I can't find this person's name is gonna kill me.

Jack: Is it on the wiki?

Austin: It should just be in the thing I'm looking at. Oh, it's Blank Shore. Ex-Concretist hacker, happy that, quote, "the future is finally here", [**Jack** laughs] claims to be perfectly apolitical.

Jack: [laughs] Oh, gonna be so excited about the Pact showing up, maybe.

[**Art** laughs]

Austin: I mean, yeah. If only they knew. So yeah, we have those three weirdos, and we have Occam, Occam Olio. And you know, maybe we stay with Occam, right? Or maybe Occam has been dropped in here in place of Maidstone, and it's—or maybe it's just the hacker and Occam, this new breakout star, leading some sort of, you know, some sort of push to get to this place. Um... hm. Operating—I really like Covert Op, because I like the idea that if it goes bad, it could create disfavor, as the March Syndicate, or the March Foundation has been working—March Institute—has been working again in Kesh territory. You know what I mean? I like Covert Op for that reason. I know that the resolutions don't feel like they break that way, but I still think fundamentally... I think "escape without being caught" [**Jack:** Yeah.] is the thing that we're looking at, looking to get to.

Jack: There is something so funny about, you know, the crows swooping down to the carcass, thinking that they could get away with it easily, [**Jack:** Right.] and another bigger animal being like, "hey, no, look. No."

Austin: Yes. Yes. So—

Jack: "You thought that you could get away with that?"

Carmathen

[16:48]

Austin: Right. So the thing that the—the situation, I think, here, is: it is the middle of the night. It's Carmathen, which again is this—I've been picturing this as a fairly industrial Kesh city, or I guess not just Kesh, but the Fabreal Duchy, who—I floated this during the

outro, by the way, that they are like, “hey, we would really love to get the old Duke back from Jade Kill.”

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: “We’re kind of like, not convinced by the, you know, the Kesh folks anymore. The Viceroy died, the Stargrave has been, you know, taken off world. Hey, maybe we want our own leadership back. Maybe we were wrong to turn on the Duke. Or maybe we want a new Duke,” et cetera. And the Duchess turned out to be a weird monster, also, by the way.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: So this is one of their cities. Industrial city, you know, lots of train tracks, lots of factories. And Carmathen, at the heart of it, is this massive—what do you call it? Round table? Is that the right word? No. Roundhouse. Like this big, you know, train—we’ve had roundhouses on the show before, see Sangfielle. But this one’s massive and descends—it’s like a tower that descends into the ground, or you know, an inverted tower, this pit that can like, bring on the trains throughout the Grav—throughout the Diadem for repair and stuff. And it’s in some ancient train tunnel, you know, from when the Diadem and the Gravtrains that run along it and along the world was first built.

And it is a crew of Occam Olio and—not Silverbrick this time, I think just Blank Shore, the hacker. It’s those two trying to break into the—some, you know, ancient tunnel or ancient side alley inside of this corridor or whatever, try to track down the last of these Fundament nodes. And also maybe has, like, the equivalent of what were the—was it a PKE meter? Is that what the Ghostbusters device was called that found ghost energy?

Jack: I think so, yeah.

Austin: You know, trying to, like, scan for it. And above them, you know, the Kesh changeover is happening, you know? Ships are landing and leaving in the night. The changing of the guard you talked about is happening. You know, maybe people are putting on, in this part of the world, their old Fabreal Duchy guard uniforms instead of

their Stel Kesh ones, you know? And they're still loyal to Stel Kesh, but you know, that's what's happening above. And also, meanwhile, Jade Kill is moving in to counter whatever is happening here, so. "Everyone plays. The Director assumes the role of various Authority or Cause characters, while other players act as agents for the opposite. Discuss what kind of undercover operation you are leading, what happens should you fail." I think should you fail, this is it, right? Jade Kill will take control of the—they'll get their outcome and take control of the Gravtrain. They'll fell that Pillar.

I need one person to play as Occam Olio. I need one person to play as this weird apolitical hacker, quote unquote. I need someone to play as Jade Kill people, which could include Kalar, could include August Righteousness or other Delegates, up to y'all. Who wants to play what here? It could be a unit, right? It doesn't have to be one person, right? But Jack, this could be a Kalar moment for you.

Jack: Yeah, it could. Uh...

Austin: In this weird vertical—we could really emphasize the vertical tower nature of this place, right? The descending, circular descent of like, you know, railway—it's like a rail depot, but it's like, vertical, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Huge elevators that move up and down to move the trains into repair docks.

Jack: Sort of the big—the Everfall as well in, um...

Austin: Yeah, sure, sure, sure. In Dragon's Dogma?

Jack: In Dragon's Dogma.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Um, yeah. I think I want to be—you know, I don't think this is a Kalar moment.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: I think this is August Righteousness.

Austin: Ooh, okay.

Jack: I think this is someone coming to, mm... No, you choose first, Art, I need to think about this.

Art: Um, well... do you want to do Occam Olio, Austin?

Austin: I have no—I have no racehorse in this race, weirdly.

Art: Alright, do you want to give me a performance note on Occam Olio?

Austin: Um, I guess all we know is, like, what happened last time, which is like, grunt who stumbled into leadership, faced down a Divine and lived. And, like, not just any Divine, but Fealty?

Art: Sure. Alright, I think I can...

Austin: [cross] A thing that could only happen because of the abstractions available in Armour Astir that, like, let that be a possibility, but that's the game we're playing, [**Art:** Yeah.] and so that's the reality of the—

Art: By not having a built-in sense of scale.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. Yes. Like, the rest of Armour Astir has the tier differences, right? And that's abstracted here into the three versus five, you know, major—minor break, you know? So.

Art: Right. But is not accounted for in just weird—

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Yes, yes.

Art: —dice happenings.

Austin: So then I'll be Blank Shore, this hacker who is in the employ of the Frontier Syndicate. So yeah, Jack, up to you. Who do you want to be from—I guess you said you want to be August Righteousness.

Jack: I think that—I don't think Righteousness would come out. Do you think Righteousness would come out for this?

Austin: I don't know.

Jack: I don't know. I said Righteousness because I wanted to see him in action, but I don't know—

Austin: [cross\ Maybe. I mean, something we haven't said is, what is the response of Brnine doing the thing that they did? You know? Like—

Jack: God, it's astonishment. It's—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It's—and there's definitely people who are like, "I knew the Blue Channel could do it," you know?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: People who before would have been like, "you know, the Blue Channel are mavericks," and you know, don't care for them. I think there is a subset of people who are like—who are suddenly, you know, pinning their colors to the mast in a major way.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Uh....

Austin: You could also invent a new Delegate here we have not seen.

Jack: This is what I was doing. I was looking at a list of Divines.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: As a place to come from. Oh, god...

Austin: Yeah, I think I might have the list of who the Delegates are, but go—or who the, um—

Jack: Who the Delegates—who the Divines who have been turned to Delegates?

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Jack: Or not turned to, but... Yeah, I would love to see that, because I don't want to—

Austin: Mhm. Communicant, Dissent, Righteousness, Consultation, Emphasis, Versatility, Responsibility, Leadership, Fidelity, Guilt, and Wilkin.

Jack: Hm.

Austin: A classic third generation Twilight Mirage Divine.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: I may have—this may be a typo. It may have been Welkin. That seems more likely.

Jack: [chuckling] I think Welkin is—

Austin: Right? Like the...

Jack: Welkin makes more sense.

Austin: Than Wilkin. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's a classic "I'm typing on a phone" typo or something, you know?

Jack: Yes, this is a Delegate of the Divine Emphasis.

Austin: And then first names, generally, on Delegates are things—

Jack: Are adjectives.

Austin: Other adjectives, yeah, yeah. Variations thereof.

Jack: Okay, yeah, absolutely. This is Faithful Emphasis.

Austin: Great. Incredible.

Art: Mhm.

Austin: Writing this down. [typing] Faithful Emphasis. Okay. And then I am playing Blank Shore, and Art, you are playing Occam Olio.

Art: Mhm.

Conflict Scene - Covert Op

[24:42]

Austin: Alright. So, as always, here, we will—we've picked the conflict scene. We will—"players freely roleplay, issuing challenge"—oh, this is the wrong one. That's Unfurling Plan. Ahem. [chuckles]

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: "Players freely roleplay, issuing challenges to escalate and complicate the scene. Continue playing until at least three rolls have been made, or the scene reaches what feels like a natural end. Look at the resolutions below for what that might look like. During the scene, anyone may issue a challenge." So I think that this—go ahead?

Art: I'm sorry, what page are we on?

Austin: We are on page 112.

Art: 112, bottom of 112.

Austin: Bottom of 112.

Art: Got it.

Austin: Got it. I think that this opens with the elevator, this huge elevator platform, like, [imitating mechanical movement] *bonk, ba-kuh, bong*. Like, slowly, like, unhitching from one level and beginning to lower to another one, as Blank Shore and Occam, you know, leave behind a sort of secondary unit that'll come in to help extract the device, the Fundament node, once we have it. And I have one of these, like, meters. You know, again, I just really have the PKE meter in my head, which if you haven't seen, is a sort of box on a stick that has two kind of antennae coming out of the side of it that kind of like, goes [oscillating alert tone] *woo-doo-doo-doo*, like, up and down as it searches for any sort of ghost energy.

Jack: Ghosts.

Austin: Exactly.

Art: Yeah. It looked really futuristic in 1984, and looks like it's 500 years old now.

Austin: [laughs] Exactly. But, you know, this sort of, like, ghost hunting stuff, right? You would see something like this in Phasmophobia, you know, except goofier. And I think Blank Shore is like,

Austin (as **Blank Shore**): Yeah, looks like we're getting closer. Probably down one of these corridors.

Art (as **Occam Olio**): [hums]

Austin: And the bunny ears on this thing kind of finally point directly up, and then a bolt of, like, Tesla-like energy, you know, electricity, bounces between the two antennae of this device, and then forms an arrow pointing forward.

Art: Great.

Austin (as **Blank Shore**): Alright, this way.

Austin: Um, and then there's, like, a—

Art: I feel like Occam has, like, a hand signal for this, but like, it's only these two, so.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I guess there's still, like, the extraction people?

Austin: Yeah. You send a hand signal upwards to be like...

Art: "We're going this way."

Austin: Yeah. Exactly.

Art: I did a hand signal that it doesn't—it doesn't come across.

Austin: We're not on camera anymore.

Art: Whatever you think is a good "I go this way" hand signal, that's what I did.

Austin: Fill in the blank. Leave blank spaces, like we always say.

Art: Fill in the blank, yeah.

Austin: Alright.

Jack: Okay, I have a challenge.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: Um... hm. Actually, can I do this? I was gonna do "our plans are changed suddenly". Can I do "your plans are changed suddenly"?

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Jack: "Roll to see if it's for better or worse"?

Austin: Sure.

Jack: Somewhere far below you in the elevator there is the distant rumble of an explosion going off.

Austin: That's not good.

Jack: A little gout of fire goes shooting out of one of the things as distantly Jade Kill are beginning to make maneuvers down there.

Austin: And then the roll is to find out if it's—

Jack: If you are able to use this in a way for better or for worse.

Austin: In a way for—right. Yeah. Alright, I'll roll.

Art: Like we secretly booby-trapped that elevator with very heavy weights.

[**Austin** and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: Right, exactly. And now they're gonna fall on your head like in—like a Warner Brothers cartoon, in Looney Tunes.

Art: That's what we're doing here, right? This is the Looney Tunes.

Austin: This is Looney Tunes. Yeah, we're done with the funny—sorry, with the very stressful Stellar Combustor arc, and now we're in Looney Tunes mode. Alright, what do I have to roll? 1d6? And I have to beat a 3? I have to get under a 3? I have to get under a 3.

Art: You have to get under a 3.

Austin: I have to get under a 3.

Jack: Because you're rolling against—yeah.

Art: [singing faintly] Hello, my baby, hello, my honey...

Jack: [chuckling] A weak division.

Austin: Alright. Rolling—

Jack: "Going Looney Tunes mode" is what I call it whenever I fall over.

Austin: [laughs] “Oh, whoops. Sorry, I just kind of went Looney Tunes mode.” Alright, I’m rolling, looking for a 1 or a 2. That’s a 6.

Jack: Ooh, okay.

Austin: Uh, I’ll save...

Art: I would save that reroll.

Austin: I’m gonna save that reroll.

Art: This isn’t so bad, right?

Austin: This isn’t so bad. One—yeah, and let’s make sure—let’s track this here in the conflict turn thing here. Let’s go ahead and put one win on the Cause so far. One tick forward there. What’s Occam’s response to the sound of an explosion?

Art: I think it’s like... It’s trained, but you can see the seams.

Austin: Right, sure.

Art: I think somewhere deep inside, Occam’s like, “I got lucky.”

Austin: Right.

Art: But is trying to project this, like, “no, I’m the best soldier who ever lived.”

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: “Oh, what if it was a fluke?”

Art: But deep down, is like, “what if it was a fluke?” So I think it’s like, a jump, but then like, trying to make it look tactical.

Austin: Right.

Art: Like—like if this were a little more Looney Tunes, it’d be like a jump into a tuck and roll, but I can’t go that far.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Jack: I think the result of this, because I get to describe the way it has not gone—it has gone for worse for you, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Is that automated, uh—what's the word? Like, anti-fire measures suddenly start kicking in. [**Austin** hums] First, there is an alarm that begins ringing and obviously is going to draw attention to what you might be doing. And then a sort of, like... mist, like an anti-flame mist or smoke, begins to be pumped into these corridors.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Obscuring your vision. And I think that the device, the PKE meter, does not respond well to this.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: So you are not gonna be able to follow it as clearly as you could earlier.

Austin (as **Blank Shore**): That's okay. That's okay. We'll just use our backup.
Give me one second.

Austin: And puts the PKE meter thing away, and begins going through a backpack filled with odds and ends. And like, is produci—is pulling out stuff like it's a MacGyver episode. You know? This is—we're at the level of, like, getting a little metallic magnetized coin and some thread, and is gonna set up, like, you know, an ad hoc compass that's been tuned to the Fundament node by, like, swinging this coin in the way that it—like a pendulum, you know? And if it turns a certain direction, it'll get us the right way. And so is trying to put something like this together, this is not—I don't know that it's gonna work, but that is how Blank Shore is operating in response to this. Um... I'm gonna put one on you. Sorry, Emphasis, right? Was that your—you're Faithful Emphasis? Faithful?

Jack: Yes.

Austin: I mean, I think that this is just straight up, as y'all are moving in, the explosion has a second result, which is we get the descent of Kesh guards [**Jack hums**] via, like, ropes, descending down into the depths of Carmathen. And they, like, slide on these ropes past the secret March Foundation crew who are, like, hiding in the alcove. You know? And they don't see them, but they're coming down towards you. This is "tight guard patrols threaten to catch you. Roll to see if you can evade them."

Jack: Ooh, okay. So, crouched on the... I want to get an image of Faithful Emphasis and her team.

Austin: Yeah. What does she look like? What's her crew? And is—she/her? She/they? What's—

Jack: Yeah, Faithful Emphasis, she/her. She has a crew of two people with her. One is, I think, an agent from the Mirage.

[**Austin hums**]

Jack: I don't know this person's name yet, but they are, you know, dressed in sort of Mirage combat gear, which is textures that seem very, uh—you would not see them anywhere else in this—well, you will see them more now that the Mirage have kind of joined forces with these things, [**Austin:** Right.] but there is a mismatch of something that seems like silk, but is immensely strong, or something with the texture of sandpaper, or lizard scales, or you know, paper armor, things like that.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And then the second person with them is a Talonite, [**Austin hums**] the bird people Kalar is with. Faithful Emphasis is wearing camouflage, except the camouflage that she is wearing is a result of paint on the ceramic plates that form her body.

Austin: Ohh.

Jack: We've described Delegates in the past as looking like sort of segmented robots, segmented humanoid robots.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: We've touched on robots from Binary Domain, and I think Exos from Destiny as well.

Austin: Exos from Destiny, yeah, yeah.

Jack: And Faithful Emphasis, the sort of ceramic plates of her body can be changed in and out between missions, such that she is essentially functionally camouflaged for this thing. And she is crouched on this sort of lower balcony with her team, with a sort of a sniper rifle slung over her shoulder. And I am going to roll to see if I can evade these descending Kesh rope people.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: They're not rope people, they're coming down on ropes. Rope people are very cool.

Austin: That's different, yeah.

Jack: I think we've—they're in Sangfielle or something.

Austin: Well... A little Marielda. I think a Weaver is kind of rope-ish.

Jack: Oh yeah, Weavers are kind of rope people.

Austin: Not really, but they're kind of, yeah.

Jack: I'm rolling a—

Art: Rope-adjace.

Austin: Yeah. [chuckles] Rope-adjace. You've heard of rope-a-dope.

Jack: [chuckles] I'm rolling a 1d6?

Austin: 1d6. Looking for a 3 or higher.

Jack: I'm looking for a 3 or higher.

Austin: Ooh!

Jack: Ooh!

Austin: Look at that 1! That's a win for the Authority. So it's all tied up right now.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: What happens here? Are—you're—you're not Kesh, I guess, right? But yeah, do you—what happens as these soldiers get down there?

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Art is technically Kesh right now. Art has the, uh...

Austin: I guess that's true, yeah, yeah, yeah. Actually, it is true. You—these people technically report up to Crusade in this particular moment.

Art: Oh yeah, that's right. That's—that was our Nazi hyena conclusion.

Austin: [laughs] If that somehow got cut, then people are really confused right now.

[**Art** laughs]

Jack: Just making a series of dominoes with what gets cut.

Art: Ali, go back and cut it. Hear me right now, go back and cut it. Um... I want to just start underlying the war of it.

Austin: [hums] Yeah.

Art: Like, I don't want this to be cool or cinematic. I just want this to be a hail of gunfire.

[**Jack** hums]

Austin: And it's so loud.

Art: I want this to be the first scene of *Saving Private Ryan*, which is also so loud.

Austin: Yeah. Think about, like—

Art: What a loud movie.

Austin: That's a loud movie. Think about the bullet fire echoing around this huge concrete tube that we're descending into. Miserable.

Art: Mhm.

Austin: Like, you're hearing the echoes of gunfire that happened 30 seconds ago or whatever. You know, as it bounces around.

Art: Yeah, and it's—it's cumulative, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: It's [rapidly] *pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop*, and it's like—it's just endless cacophony.

Austin: Yeah. And it's scary, and it's dark.

Art: It rings for like—yeah, and it rings for 10 minutes.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: And so—

Art: Probably causing more gunfire as people think guns are still firing.

Austin: Right.

Jack: It's—it's a complete destruction of their position, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, this wasn't necessarily going to be a stealth mission, given that they had to do some breaching charge that caused that opening explosion. But I think that they had been able to move with a degree of confidence that they are no—they are now on the back foot. They are on the run.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Faithful Emphasis and her squad are now—oh, god. Um... I think that like, they flee, and the—I want them to like, fall a short distance, or have to jump or dangle down. You know? They find that a—that passage down a stairway or an elevator is blocked, **[Austin: Mhm.]** and so they have to sort of mantle off the edge of one of the things and drop down and catch another thing and scramble. And it's—yeah, it's a mess. And their position has been just completely destroyed. Um, let's see. I want to give you a challenge. The elevator—yeah, you're descending in this elevator, right? Or—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Or, no, no, no, we're going through the hallways at this point. We're out of the elevators.

Jack: [cross] No, you're moving through the hallways.

Art: We're out of the elevator, we're in the hallway.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. We're in hallway mode.

Art: The elevators have been what's been happening.

Austin: Yes.

Jack: Yes. And I want to play forward. You're in this emergency fog, **[Austin: Uh-huh.]** and there's the gunfire around. And I think what happens is that you come up very

quickly on a Kesh watchman. He is facing away from you. Mm, no, he's facing—yes, he's facing towards you. You walk into him, essentially, maybe not directly, but in the fog.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: I'm thinking of the really great fight in the blizzard in the first season of Fargo, [Austin: Yeah, yeah.] where nobody knows where anybody is and just suddenly stumble into these awful violent encounters. And yes, it's suddenly the face of a Kesh guard kind of looms out of you through this fog. "You must roll quickly and quietly to take out a watchman. Who will roll to do the job?"

Austin: It's got to be Olio, right?

Jack: It's got to be Olio. Prove yourself, you know?

Art: Yeah, I think so, too.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Austin, is there an extent to which, um—oh my god, what's this hacker's name? I'm so sorry.

Austin: Blank Shore.

Jack: Yes. Is there an extent to which Blank Shore is feeling a bit of like, "I'm on a mission with Occam Olio."

Austin: Oh, yeah. A hundred percent. Occam—there's, like, posters of Occam, you know? They are a hero inside of—they are like a—there are Occam Jays, you know what I mean? You can go get the Occam 7s from the Foot Locker at this point. You know what I mean?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Like people—we're selling Occam t-shirts, we are—we have merchandised Occam.

Jack: Yeah, Frontier Syndicate, baby.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Finally.

[**Austin** laughs]

Jack: And at least on some level—

Art: friendsatthetable.shop, get your Occam Olio merch.

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: Do not.

Art: It's not there.

Austin: It's not there.

Jack: On some level, you have given into astonishment here.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. A hundred percent given into astonishment. Occam Olio! O.O.! The O! Occam hit that 1.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Art: Ah, that's what they say.

Austin: Yeah. "Hit it with the one!"

Jack: Is it supposed to be like—is Occam—is Olio a palindrome? No. Olio backwards is Oilo. [laughing] Which is a different—

[**Austin** laughs]

Jack: Not right.

Austin: Well, now wait a second. Now wait a sec—do I want to use it here? Do I want to use my reroll here? I don't think—

Art: Maybe.

Austin: I don't think we're there yet. So I think we're still maybe going. Do you know what I mean? I think we're still in—

Jack: Because Art rolled—

Austin: A 6.

Jack: A 6.

Austin: Art rolled a 6. [grumbling] Art rolled not great. Fuck it, I'll reroll it. Let's reroll it. Let's do my one reroll. Art, reroll that 6. Hit me with the 1, Occ. Hey! That's a 2, that's a success.

Jack: [laughs] How does this—

Art: That's why they call Occam the DJ, 'cause he's¹ on the 1s and 2s.

Austin: That's right.

Jack: How does this look like it's going to go bad, but actually not?

Austin: Great question.

Art: I think it's still that little bit of, like, the crisis of conscience, just a little bit.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: You know, it's like... how many people do you think Occam has killed before now?

¹ In the dossier for this episode, Occam Olio is listed with they/them pronouns.

Austin: I mean, a lot, right? Or do you think this is now—do you think this is like, “oh no, I have to become a killer? I went from being in the trenches, but now—”

Art: [cross] I think this is like, “I went from a soldier to a killer.”

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Art: Like, this is personal [**Austin:** Yeah.] in a way that like, firing out of your future trench isn’t.

Austin: Mhm. Um, alright.

Art: And I apologize to everyone [laughing] that I can’t conceive of a new way of doing war than just, you know, war that’s already old now, but in the future.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: Sure.

[40:52]

Austin: Um, I am going to activate my trap card here, “a magical trap bars the way; take a slow route around or roll to disarm it,” as we once again come face to face with one of the Afflictions. It’s time to face one of these new ones. Um, hmm. Who should it be? Who gets—

Jack: And are you quite sure it’s not invisible minotaurs again?

Austin: I am certain. It is not—it is not the wonderful three-horn—three—

Art: Tricerataurs.

Austin: Tricerataurs.

Jack: Tricerataurs, right, sorry.

Austin: That was, of course, the Labyrinth's Thread, aka the Hedge Maze, aka Ravel, aka the Divine Logic. I mentioned this at the time that it was important that it was a three-headed, or sorry, a tricerataur. Remember this? I mentioned this. Now we've outlined exactly what the Afflictions are, that they were the original Divines who came with Palisade to kind of do this.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: This is the Divine—that was the Divine Logic, or they're the pawns of the Divine Logic who has become the Affliction Ravel—which, by the way, as a reminder, is the one on the top left here, the one that kind of looks like a massive loose brain neuron that prowls the hills and valleys. The Divine Fleet had an understanding of logic that was many-valued. It wasn't based on a true-false binary. There was always a third fuzzy category. This is a thing that's like, real, right? There's a way of—there's a type of logic that is like a—it's called many-valued logic, that is not as simple as a yes or no truth value. And that is how the Divine Fleet used to have log—the Divine Logic, when it was part of the Divine Fleet, this is the way it understood logic, right? In the pre-Twilight Mirage era of the Divine Fleet. And so that is why they are tricerataurs, because it is a non-binary three-value logic system that now there's three horns.

Jack: That makes—yeah, makes sense.

Austin: That makes sense. That's just science, right? That's just—that all lines up.

Art: Great. Yeah.

Austin: Anyway, this is not that. I think that this is either—I mean, alright, so we know about the—now we know about the Labyrinth's Thread, Ravel, Hedge Maze, Logic, top left. We know about Refrain, the figure on the stage, the second one there on the map, the Five Afflictions map that Annie drew. That, of course, is Refrain, aka the Ghastly Chorus, [**Jack:** Oof.] aka Yesterday's Reprise, aka the Divine Antiquity. Then we have, over on the right further, we have the—we have Cleave, right? Which we've already talked about. Cleave is aka the Sanguine Hatchet, aka Whetstone's Opposite, aka the

Divine Decisiveness, is who that was. That's the what if dragon—a dragon was made of blades? Do you remember that? What if a dragon was made of knives?

Jack: You can't speak around it.

[**Art** hums]

Austin: Can't speak, it cuts off, you know, language, confuses language. And we have two more figures here. I'll let you all decide. Who is it that roll—that is here trying to defend this Fundament node? Is it—who wants to describe those two remaining figures in the top right?

Jack: Okay. We have—

Austin: You really gotta get in there.

Jack: Yeah. We have a wobbly humanoid person.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: That's the figure on the left.

Art: Uh-huh.

Austin: Yeah, sort of a mummy.

Jack: Yeah, sort of a mummy.

Art: And I think on the right we have a flower doing air quotes.

Austin: Oh, that's kind of—yeah. Yeah, sure. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, sort of a block of stone [**Austin:** Yeah.] with two faces carved in almost—

Austin: Do you want me to tell you the descriptions I sent to Annie for these?

Jack: I would love to.

Austin: The first one is “what if a mummy could be a mech, shawled and wrapped and deteriorating?” And the second one is “a slowly moving statue whose features are always fluctuating under a stone shroud.”

[**Art** hums]

Jack: What is scarier to meet in a middle of a gunfight, [**Austin:** Mhm.] in an endlessly descending train turntable, while there’s also, like, anti-fire mist everywhere? It might be the mummy.

Art: I think it’s the second one.

Jack: Ohoho.

Austin: Oh, you seem divided—you seem divided on this.

Art: But maybe it’s the mummy.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Um, I—[chuckles] I think it’s the mummy because of what the mummy does.

Jack: Send ‘em in.

Austin: You know what—

Art: Slowly shamble after you?

Austin: It doesn’t—it doesn’t actually do that. It’s—because, remember, you’re really not gonna face the mummy. You’re gonna face the pawns.

Art: I’ve seen a lot of mummy movies, Austin. That is what happens.

Austin: That is—I mean, traditionally that is what happens.

The Affliction

[45:28]

Austin: I think it's the mummy, aka it's Dust. It's the Affliction Dust, aka the Looking Glass, aka Pride's Mirror, aka the Divine Reflection. And I think it's this because of the incredible situation that y'all have set up with this fight between the Kesh soldiers and the Jade Kill squad led by Faithful Emphasis. The effects—the pawns are beings made of compacted dust, which again, remember, this place, this ancient place, covered in dust at the lowest levels. And the dust just starts to vibrate upwards, and take the form of vague humanoid shapes.

[**Jack** hums]

Austin: They are beings made of compacted dust that ruins electronics and suffocates people if they touch them. And more importantly, quote, “a sound-muffling and sight-limiting fog made of dust descends over a large part of the world. You can only escape it after you confront yourself; something like a doppelganger situation. Its original worshippers of the Divine Reflection who came here on Palisade used this to talk through their own feelings, a sort of self-talk therapy. In time, that changed.” So, yeah.

Jack: [laughing] Oh my god.

Austin: I guess dust clones of the—first of all, everything gets quiet. [laughs] We were describing this as being cacophonous before, but all of the sound is just swallowed.

Jack: Oh, but it's not still, though.

Austin: Hm?

Jack: It's not happening—it's not still. It's just quiet.

Austin: Right, correct. It's just quiet.

Jack: There is, you know, a gun, um—impact and muzzle flare everywhere.

Austin: [cross] The muzzle flare and stuff, muzzle flash, impact, yeah, uh-huh. Yep.

Jack: Stone coming off things, but just silent.

Austin: Uh-huh. And then dust mummies show up who are also doppelgangers of everyone involved in the fight.

Jack: Oh my god. Out of the smoke come [**Austin:** Yeah.] Faithful Emphasis and her Talonite.

Austin: And—yeah, her Talonite. And yeah, uh-huh, and whoever is from the Twilight Mirage.

Jack: [cross] The Twilight Mirage.

Austin: And up top, we run into this also, presumably. Blank Shore and Occam Olio turn the corner to see a dust-made Occam Olio and Blank Shore holding the—yeah, uh-huh. It's like Us, kind of, I guess, right? I guess spoilers for Us.

Art: Sure.

Austin: Maybe that was in my brain when I first wrote—I wrote this down a year ago or something at this point. You know what I mean? Like, who even knows what I was thinking of?

Jack: But they're not made of—they're not made of dust in Us. They're not cool mummies.

Austin: You're right. They are not dust mummies in—yeah, uh-huh. And yes, there is no central—Dust, the Affliction, is not here. That's—it's somewhere nearby broadcasting this, you know? Maybe it's in one of the other tunnels. Maybe we hear it. Maybe—or, we don't hear it, because we can't hear anything, right?

Jack: God, what if we do hear it?

Austin: Oh, just it.

Jack: What if it's the only thing you can hear?

Austin: God, and as it steps, dust is shaking from the rafters and the old train tracks, and as it falls, it's cohering into the dust forms.

Jack: Because it's so quiet, you can hear the fabric.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, you can hear the fabric dragging again.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: [hums] The like, [imitating rustling fabric] *fwsh-fwsh-fwsh-fwsh-fwsh*.

Austin: Ooh, good.

Jack: But it's—again, you can't stop and listen to it because someone is shooting at you. Or—

Austin: Yes, you're in a firefight, [**Jack:** Yeah.] or being chased by your dust duplicate.

Jack: What's the thing I'm—what's the actual thing I'm rolling here? It's, uh—

Austin: I think we are—it's 1d6.

Art: We're making a choice.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. We are making a choice. I'm giving this almost to us, actually, here, right?

Jack: Okay, yeah, no, sounds—sounds fair.

Austin: Which is, do we take a slow route around or roll to disarm it? Do we confront our dust selves in this moment? Does Occam Olio walk up to dust Occam Olio [**Jack** laughs] in the middle of this ongoing self-crisis of, "am I really—did I just get lucky?" God, Occam is going through it.

Art: Yeah, but the answer is no.

Austin: Occam says “I’m going around.”

Art: I’m going around because right now we are not losing a Pillar, [**Austin** hums] and I will not lose us a Pillar.

Austin: Gotcha. You’re not gonna roll the dice.

Art: I’m not gonna roll the dice and lose us a Pillar.

Austin: God, so does Blank Shore see you retreat? Is this a fearful—

Jack: Wow.

Austin: Or is this couched in some fake—

Art: No, this is Solid Snake.

Austin: Oh, okay, okay.

Art: This is like—

Austin: But Solid Snake didn’t run from Psycho Mantis.

Art: Well, kinda, though.

Austin: You run—you take your shots. You take your—you get around the situation as best you can.

Art: Yeah, and then throw a chaff grenade.

Austin: That’s right, uh-huh. [imitating Psycho Mantis] “I see you listen to Sangfielle.”

Jack: [laughs] “Wow.”

Austin: “Good taste.”

[**Jack** and **Art** chuckle]

Austin: Alright, so we're not doing it. Alright. Back to you, Jack, as we [laughs] flee this, or strategically reposition ourselves to try to find a different way through.

Jack: God, do you say "back to me" to give you a problem? Yes, I suppose so.

Austin: I guess, or to give yourself one. You know, we're just bouncing around.

[pause]

Austin: I mean, if you want to roll on this one, that's also fine. [chuckles] I mean, it's not that, though.

Art: No, it isn't. We chose to go around.

Austin: We went around. No, no, totally, but like, if—hey, does this break bad for Jade Kill, still? Because this could also be [laughing] "our plans have changed suddenly" for Jade Kill.

Jack: Your plans have changed suddenly, now there are, uh, mummy duplicates?

Austin: Now there are mummy dust duplicates of yourselves confronting you and forcing you to confront yourself. And also you're in a—

Jack: Roll to see if it's for better or worse?

Austin: [laughs] Well, maybe it's—maybe you handle it better. Maybe Jade Kill can just kinda handle piercing the inside of their souls in a way that the Kesh guards above cannot.

Jack: Oh, God. I mean, let me see. Okay, so as it stands right now, the Cause has one win and the Authority has two.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. It's pretty determinate, I think, if this one breaks bad—this feels like a moment, right? Where it's like, if the Affliction gets in the way and prevents you from stopping us, we're going to get it, you know? But if you can turn the tide and fight off these Kesh people, you can continue to pursue us.

Jack: It's so hard not to say "I don't want the Pillar to fall, so I'm not going to roll." You know? I have to play as Jade Kill here.

Art: Fun, too.

Austin: Yeah, I mean, well, the one I'm giving you, the challenge I'm giving you, is roll. It is not—you do get to walk around.

Jack: Yes, that's true. Okay. Okay, you are giving me this challenge.

Austin: I'm giving you "our plans have changed suddenly, roll to see if it's better or for worse."

Jack: And I want—

Austin: I thought you just rolled a die in real life. I thought I heard a die roll.

Jack: No, I dropped my...

Art: No, you heard my chair.

Jack: No, I also dropped my Godspeed You! Black Emperor pin, [**Austin:** Ah.] which is a hammer with the word "hope" on it.

Austin: Wow. Yeah.

Jack: It's like a message. Okay, roll 1d6.

Austin: And you're looking for a 3, 4, 5, or 6.

Jack: Sure am. [inhales sharply] Oh!

Austin: Holy shit. Occam Olio undefeated.

[**Art** laughs]

Austin: That's a 2.

Art: Occam Olio cannot lose! Now the shirt's real! It's not.

[**Austin** laughs]

Jack: Austin, remember when you said, does the revolutionary organization, are they able to cope better with having to look into their inner souls than the Kesh guards?

Austin: I do remember saying that.

Jack: The answer is absolutely not, right?

[**Austin** laughs]

Jack: This becomes—it becomes an arc of the show Palisade for some off-screen characters.

Austin: Right.

Jack: They now go through—

Austin: We get the Lower Decks episode. Not the literal—not the new cartoon Lower Decks. There used to—there was an old episode called Lower Decks, Next Generation. Don't worry about it.

Jack: [laughs] But yes.

Austin: What's the Invisibles version of this arc? Do you remember what that episode, or the issue of the Invisibles was, where it's like, from the guard's point of view?

Art: Yeah, I know—I don't remember the name of the...

Austin: Well, it's fine. Don't worry about it.

Jack: But it's just—it's just a long, dark night of the soul, fighting Kesh guards here.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And also just, you know, constantly being faced with your own shortcomings, you know. I think that there is definitely someone here, the person from the Twilight Mirage is, you know, “you shouldn’t be here. This is not a place for you.”

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Not necessarily in the sense of you are “overstepping your boundary,” but in the much more, I suppose, selfish in one sense thing of like, “you were safe in the Mirage. You stick your neck out to help these people. And now you are, you know, in hell.”

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: “You made a mistake. You should have been back home on, you know, Quire.” It’s just—it’s a bad fucking time. And I think that they probably make it out, but not in a good way.

Austin: Best Man Fall is the name of the issue. Here on planetfiction.me, I will read the description of this. “Best Man Fall is a single issue of graph—the best single issue of graphical fiction I’ve ever read, and the most emotionally powerful issue that Morrison’s ever written. Using quasi-Rashomon structure-based twists to highlight a central theme could have easily been gimmicky and manipulative, but instead, it is—it is really good.” It compares this issue to Tree of Life from Terrence Malick.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: Something we keep referencing. The premise of this issue is that there’s like, a random guard who gets shot in the face in issue 11 of this initial volume of The Invisibles, or initial run of The Invisibles. And issue 12 follows—like, is a nonlinear deep dive into that person’s whole life, into how they became the guard who gets shot in the face in the previous issue.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: It's really good. I haven't read it in a minute. I should reread *The Invisibles*. Talk about an influence that is, like, part of the hidden curricula of *Friends at the Table*. I think Morrison in general, but *The Invisibles* especially is all over it. Anyway.

Art: Well, in four years when *Hunter x Hunter* is over, we'll start Media Club Plus—

Austin: [cross] [chuckles] We'll do *The Invisibles*.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Art: —the complete works of Grant Morrison. [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, I mean, truly, we would kind of have to go deep, huh? You and me and six soldiers, Art, [laughing] and no one else who cares. Anyway, yes. I love it. And I think that that's it. I think three to one is pretty definitive.

Jack: I think so.

Austin: And so, I mean, does—do you get away? I mean, what are the resolutions? The resolutions are “The agents are discovered and exposed. Can they still escape?” “The agents escape without being caught. How do they celebrate?” So I think that's what happened for us. Does Faithful Efficiency successfully withdraw?

Jack: Uh, Faithful Emphasis.

Austin: Sorry, not Efficiency. Emphasis. Faithful Efficiency is if the March Foundation got control.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, figured it out. Oh, god.

Austin: Yeah, does this little group get to extract safely, or are they lost in the tunnels?

Art: Oh, that's fascinating. The idea of being just like, forever transfixed with your own doppelganger.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Jack: Yeah. I love this. They don't leave the tunnels. They are not dead. They are—I mean, maybe they will die in the future.

Austin: No, you said it right the first time. It's better. They do not leave the tunnels. They are not dead.

Jack: Yes. Yeah, and you know, you don't want to write checks that you are not interested in cashing. But for the rest of this season, you know, for the rest of, you know, they are down there.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: They are trying to find their way out of the tunnels. They are talking it through and deciding that actually they would prefer to stay. They are briefly thinking that they have got out of the tunnels.

Austin: Right, one of them breaks off—

Jack: They are—

Austin: Right, one of them starts worshiping the Affliction.

Jack: Yeah, yeah. And then is brought back, and then is—

Austin: You know, we are in Annihilation. We are in—yeah, uh-huh.

Jack: It's just, it's just—and, you know, on the one sense, they are almost endless tunnels. On the other sense, they might just be going around the same, you know, 26 corridors over and over and over again.

Austin: Right. Yeah. Yeah. Maybe we get them back if anyone can ever actually capture this Pillar.

Jack: [chuckling] Oh my god, yeah.

Austin: Unbelievable.

Art: We're just putting a prize inside this Pillar, like a—

Austin: [chuckles] Yes.

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: Alright, I'm tapping Jade Kill.

Jack: Three miserable weirdos.

Clocks and Outcomes

[57:50]

Austin: And the extraction happens of the Fundament nodes, which maximizes this. Six. "Harvest the Fundament nodes" fills. I complete a clock. And what happens when you complete a clock? Let's see. Let's read from the book. If it's in here. It's got to be in here, right? Because we just did it with the moon, right? I know what happens when you complete a clock, but I just want to make sure—you know, I like to go to the book, you know? When you go like, "oh, this is what happens." Division schemes.

Art: Yeah, like a reverend.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. I like to go to the book like a reverend. When—"with the outcomes from conflict scenes, divisions"—oh, I guess actually I should be explicit here, right? Frontier Syndicate succeeded at a scene, and that means that I can either: "the Authority learns a secret about the Cause or a faction, the Authority starts a new scheme or advances an existing one," or "the Director takes two extra tokens during the next downtime." I am choosing to advance an existing scheme, completing the "harvest the Fundament nodes" scheme.

Jack: Nice.

Austin: "With the outcomes from conflict scenes, divisions can gradually start and complete long-term projects. These schemes, if completed, should create a large

advantage for the Authority that threatens to completely turn the war in their favor unless it is dealt with as quickly as possible,” [laughs] which has not been dealt with.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: “Alternatively, the Authority might undergo a long-term project to gain some of its stability by building a new Pillar, literally or otherwise,” which I don’t think actually fits with the way that the book also talks about not being able to repair Pillars.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Maybe you can—so it’s weird. Anyway, I’m gonna not do that. “Schemes don’t need to be one big MacGuffin that’s being slowly constructed. A scheme might be developing a plan for one decisive military push, slowly accruing reserve forces for an unstoppable offensive, or even the interpolitical turmoil of the Authority, slowly resolving itself into a state where its true might can be properly coordinated.” I think this is one big MacGuffin [laughing] that’s been slowly constructed, is actually what this one is. So...

Art: It doesn’t say it can’t be one big MacGuffin.

Austin: You’re right. You’re right. It truly doesn’t say it can’t be that, right? So, this actually ties to another clock. This ties to the “settlers and reinforcements for the Authority arrive” clock, which came after the Blue Channel abandoned Baseline, and Baseline’s attempted revolution, which was squashed, which gave the Frontier Syndicate the okay from the rest of the Bilateral Intercession to build these new kind of secular colonies all across Palisade in the model of Baseline itself, both model of and, you know, in some ways, new laboratory for City City. And in each of these new cities, there is something at the center. In fact, each of these cities is built in a concentric circle around this one building in the middle, a sort of power station. And in some ways, those power stations look like the rest of the Frontier Syndicate’s structures, right, kind of architecturally similar. You know, in general, they make buildings that look like kind of upscale, you know, showrooms with large windows and, you know, big steel curvature, and kind of ribbing, almost like luxury car headquarters.

But at the center of these buildings is, all of them, a massive smokestack in the shape and the color of an egg. It's like if you took an egg and you stretched it a little bit, you made it taller, longer, almost surreal in ways. And it's not really a smokestack, because if you pay attention, it's not releasing any fumes. It's pulling them from the air. It's drawing these kind of hard black clouds from nothing, from the clear sky. It's sucking them in. In fact, it's even weirder than that, because if you look close, you can see the clouds fail to sustain their own roundness. They sort of like, have a blockiness, almost like a low poly count thing. They're square cubes, bunches and bunches of square cubes aligned in all of these different angles, so that roundness is approached, but not quite arrived at. And they're being pulled from the empty air.

They have used—they have thought about what these Fundamental nodes are for quite some time. You know, in the initial building of Palisade the planet, which was Palisade the Divine, these nodes were effectively a medium for the Divine Palisade to become the—Palisade the planet, and for the people who are on the planet to then reconnect to Palisade. And they are not interested in Palisade as a planet. They're not interested in Palisade as a Divine. They're interested in the medium. They were interested in the copper wire, effectively, that has been laid throughout this planet and the interface that it can provide. This is something that can draw a Divine from the world into a new form. And we saw this happen with Palisade in the first arc, right? Palisade's mind gets brought from the world of Palisade into a new Delegate body. They're interested in a different Divine. They're interested in a Divine that's all around us. Does anybody remember what Kalmeria is?

Jack: Kalmeria is the result of a Divine from another—well, hm. From a being from another place [**Austin:** Mhm.] that calls itself the True Divine, or God, right?

Austin: Yep. The True Divine, or I think it is called God by other groups. It is also called Autonomy Itself, is what you're thinking, yes. And what else?

Jack: Um, it is Motion?

Austin: It is Motion. It is the Divine Asepsis devoured Motion at the apotheosis of a transformation. Motion is siphoning the power from—

Jack: The True Divine.

Austin: The True Divine, correct, of Autonomy Itself. And in that moment, Brnine releases Asepsis to devour and break apart what's there. And then it blends with the Perennial Wave, which is already, you know, here spreading through the galaxy. It kind of, you know, it bonds to it. And so Motion's been out there. Do you remember something else about our setting that's true about Divines? Maybe fresh to your memory, because of Chimera's Lantern, which is that Divines can never really die in Palisade.

[Art hums]

Austin: And so they're siphoning her back. They're bringing Motion from the sky down into the world. I think somewhere for the last six months, Exanceaster March has been staring at something in his office. I have this image of it on the floor. There's like a canvas tarp on the floor. And on top of that, oily and gross, is one of these Stel Orion engines. I think I've mentioned this before, that Stel Orion's big new hot, like, weapon, the thing that they've been selling [**Jack:** Oh, yeah.] all over the place are these mechs that use a part of—like, scavenged parts of Motion from the big fight at the end of Partizan. They are called... da-da-da. They are called, uh, Bouquets. You may recall the Bouquet. And then the Jury is the slightly more powerful version of it. And it is—they use the Motion Engine, which is derived from salvaged parts of the lost Divine, that allow the pilots to adjust the machine as needed during a Sortie. I have rules for like, how this plays out, if anybody ever had gotten into one of these, but we haven't really intersected with them too often.

And there is this other version of it called the Jury that is like, basically just this special engine. And then whatever gets built around it gets built to this special form using concentrated Perennial Wave stuff. The stuff that, you may recall, Motion used to do this as the Demiurge. And I think Exanceaster March has had this engine laid out in front of

him, you know, sleeves rolled up, staring at it for six months, pacing around it, like a—has invested power into it that isn't really there, and has thought like, "oh, they're onto something. They have all this stuff from Motion. I want Motion. I want this powerful Divine that was once part of the Pact." Which, by the way, remember, so was Exanceaster March.

Exanceaster March used to be the—like, the chairman of the Zenith Fund, which designed the Motion body. It designed Pneuma, it designed the Demiurgos. So it's like, there's a real—[laughs] there's a real "I want her back," but there's a real "I could use her again."

Jack: Hm.

Austin: And so he's getting it. He's pulling her from the air, from the Perennial Wave. There is a sort of, you know, nuclear fission happening here, right? The Perennial Wave is coming into these power units and being split into its component parts—or I guess Kalmeria is, rather. And when it's being broken apart, on one side is Motion, is the particles of Motion, and on the other side are the particles of the raw Perennial Wave. And they're capturing the energy from that split to power these new settler colonies, these new cities, these new cities and towns. And—and yeah, they're gonna rebuild Motion.

[**Jack** exhales]

Austin: And I know what you're thinking. It seems bad. It seems like a bad idea. Motion's part of the Pact. Well, they have ways of getting people to agree to things over in the Frontier Syndicate. And as we've learned recently, there are ways to make people make promises they cannot break. So. I don't know if this is a new clock. I think it's probably big enough that it deserves to be its own separate clock that the Cause can try to rush to stop. But, you know, I think it's in process. I think this is—

Jack: I don't feel good about the byproduct, either.

Austin: Mm-mm. What's that? Oh, you don't like separating the raw Perennial Wave now?

Jack: [chuckles] Yeah, no.

Austin: And what about Autonomy Itself? That seemed to not be mentioned in my little spiel. No, it wasn't. I don't think Exanceaster March has thought about that.

Jack: Nope.

Austin: I don't think he's too worried. So—

Art: These things are probably all gonna be fine. I think you're all being babies.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I'm going to start a new clock called "revive Motion". And it's a four-step clock. They gotta move.

Jack: It's four?

Austin: Mhm.

Art: That's not very many steps.

Austin: Listen, the nice thing here is Stel Orion already did half the work. They already built the Motion Engine that is the remains of Motion herself. So he already has the damn skeleton to put her in.

Jack: Hm.

Austin: He already has—

Art: This is good. This is a good shiny object.

Austin: Uh-huh. You were saying at the beginning of this recording, Art, that you really hoped there were things for them to care about, to focus on. Well...

[**Jack** laughs]

Art: I think they should get a Pillar.

[**Austin** laughs]

Art: I would be so upset if they [chuckling] took a Pillar.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah. So, there you go. Revive Motion. Exanceaster March. Gettin' there.

Jack: That damn wheel.

Austin: Bro, it keeps spinning!

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: And I mean, think about—for me, this is the other thing, is that like, Motion has always been this.

Jack: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Motion was the fucking under—I almost said undertaker Divine. The [laughs] undead Divine.

Jack: The undertaker Divine.

Austin: I mean—hit the undertaker music. That's Motion's music.

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: "By God!"

Art: "By God!"

Austin: "That's Motion's music!"

Art: "That's Motion's music!"

Austin: The Black Century rises, you know? Part of me wants to just put her on the fucking map. Do you know what I mean? Like, that's... But I'm gonna give 'em the chance. I'm gonna give 'em the chance.

Art: Wait, wait, wait. What if it's gonna be the Black Millennium?

Austin: Ooh. [rubs hands together]

Art: Ooh.

Jack: He's from Bluff City. Millennium Black is...

Austin: That's from Bluff City, [laughing] Millennium Black is—that's right, correct. Season one of Bluff City. We have too much lore.

Art: It can be two things.

Austin: It can be two things. So yeah, we'll see how that goes. Alright.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: Stel Nideo.

Jack: Oh, Stel Nideo plus the pseudo-Kesh.

Austin: Plus pseudo-Kesh.

Jack: Stel Nideo currently cat-sitting the world's worst cat.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: Yeah. Um... Hyenas are actually closer to dogs.

Austin: [hums] Right, right.

Jack: I see.

Art: I think we have to do All Out War.

Austin: Yeah. That's the fiction that you've set up.

Art: I don't think that we can turn this game the way I want to and not do All Out War.

Austin: Art, I think they're closer to cats. I think that's the thing. I think we always think they're closer to dogs, but they're closer to cats. I think that that's right.

Art: Is that right?

Austin: They're feliform carnivoran mammals. They are from the—

Art: Wow.

Austin: I guess they're just from the carnivore family. I don't—yeah, they're in the suborder Feliformia, which is the cat order. Yeah.

Art: Wow, those are cats. So that is cat-sitting.

Austin: It is cat-sitting.

Art: Wow, those are some dog-looking cats.

Austin: That's what I'm saying. They do got that dog in 'em.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Looking at pictures of hyenas now.

Art: I see it. I can see it. They got cat ears a little bit.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Dog snouts, though.

Austin: Now, wait a second. "Rise and fall of the dog-like hyenas."

Jack: Well, they're dog-like.

Austin: “Bone-crushing hyenas.” What a great subset of topics in the contents for the hyenas page.

Jack: On Wikipedia?

Austin: Yeah. I’m gonna post this...

Jack: They have a—woah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: “Rise and fall of the dog-like hyenas. Bone-crushing hyenas. Rise of modern hyenas.” And then—and you know this is the hallmark of a great animal—it has a whole section on folklore, mythology, and literature.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Mhm.

Austin: Yeah. Anyway.

Art: Oh, hyena cubs are adorable.

Austin: Hyenas are kind of cute.

Jack: Yeah. I think hyenas are kind of nice. They—I mean, no, there are horrid, weird, gross ones, but...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: But who ain’t?

Art: Anyway, Operation Hyena’s Bite.

Austin: Ooh.

Art: It’s a coincidence.

Austin: Oh, okay.

Art: They're also just really into hyenas right now.

[**Austin** and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: It's All Out War.

Art: "All Out War: Everyone plays. Players distribute themselves between the Authority and the Cause—evenly, if possible—casting themselves as soldiers, channelers, and other members of the division or a faction. The Director may freely play characters from both sides where needed to facilitate the scene. Decide together where your battlefield is, what the stakes of this fight are, and how these characters feel about the war and their place in it. Really roleplay the clashing forces: Astir against Astir, Carrier versus Carrier, and so on. During the struggle, anyone may ask anyone else for details on the situation's circumstances."

Austin: Yeah. I think this has to be—

Art: What is a logical...

Austin: Grey Pond has to be defending this. Partly because their outcome is "untap any other two factions or replace a seized faction," and it'd be great to untap some factions. Partly because it's kind of like, the person I kind of want to see doing stuff right now is Jesset City, is the Concrete Front people. Like, you know what I mean? It's like, I want to see—that's the other big group that took part of the Bontive Valley, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Art: Sure. Is that where this is taking place, then?

Austin: Maybe. That feels like the moment, right? Or the place to push. It's like, "alright, fine, you took the stellar combustors. You're not gonna get to keep the Bontive Valley. Even the little part of it you took. We're taking it back." I guess it depends on what outcome you're chasing, Art.

Art: I mean, what I would do if I won [**Austin:** Yeah.] is advance the Revive Motion clock.

[**Austin** and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: Damn. Yeah, I mean, yeah, advance an existing one is on the—yeah.

Jack: [cross] Oh, wow.

Austin: Which could be that though, right? It could be that you're taking more territory for these, for this—these settlements to be safely set up, right? Which allows for the factories to be safely set up, too.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: It's fun.

Art: Um...

Jack: God, how many—

Art: [muttering] I'm looking at my notes...

Jack: It's a four-step clock.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: "Revive Motion" is a four-step clock.

Austin: I mean, I could get it if I was cheesy, you know what I mean?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: But I'm not gonna be cheesy about it. I mean, if Art puts us in striking distance, what I'm gonna do is put it on the edge and say "you have to go stop this or it's gonna complete." So yeah, if Art wins this, awesome.

Jack: It's just such a great jump scare to be like [laughs] entering—it wouldn't go this way, but entering downtime and Motion is back.

Austin: Uh-huh. There's—that's Janine's "can you just be cool" GIF.

Jack: [laughs] No.

Austin: Uh-uh.

Jack: Motion has never been cool—who was—

Austin: In her life.

Jack: Who was Motion's elect? Um...

Austin: There were two, right? Because there was the older one.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Who—the older one. [chuckles] There was the one who was effectively a living corpse.

Jack: Yep.

Austin: Hyacinth.

Jack: Hyacinth.

Austin: Yeah, Hyacinth.

Art: That's older than most people.

Austin: And then, you don't remember who the second one was?

Jack: Is it, uh—

Austin: It's Laurel, who is the clone of Cassander. But I think is dead. I think that—I think Laurel dies in the finale.

Jack: Great. Great.

Austin: I'm pretty sure that that's true.

Jack: The Black Century could, in theory, be revived if Motion was back. They'd need to start again, right? Because they are gifted undeath by Motion.

Austin: [cross] By Motion, correct.

Jack: They are not like, a property of Motion.

Austin: Correct. Yeah, yeah. It's not like Motion shows up and summons a bunch of undead things. Though, listen, Armour Astir is not Beam Saber.

Jack: Yes, that is absolutely true.

Austin: We are in—like, go look at Dre's new, uh, class.

Jack: Playbook, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, playbook, exactly.

[pause]

Austin: Yeah, Laurel dies. Milli feels Laurel dying, in fact, through the True Divine, through the connection with the True Divine.

Jack: Oh, right.

Austin: Mhm. [chuckles] We sure do make stories.

Jack: [chuckles] We sure—we sure do.

Conflict Scene - All Out War

[1:17:32]

Austin: Alright, so, let's do the damn thing. Art, you want to read us the minigame? All Out War.

Art: Well, I did the first part already. "Players freely roleplay, issuing challenges to escalate and complicate the scene. Continue playing until at least three rolls." Rolls is in bold. It's always in bold. That's weird.

Austin: So, is this a siege of Carhaix, maybe?

Art: Yeah, I think this is a siege. And I think this is—and I've hesitated to do this before, but I'm—I have to play the major faction now.

Austin: Mhm.

Art: So, I think it is the Divine Crusade.

Jack: Oof.

Austin: Yeah. What's this look like? Crusade's "big" big, right? Crusade's one of the big ones?

Art: Crusade's "big" big, and it's—it's about the shadow. 'Cause it's made of this, like, stained glass.

Austin: Right.

Art: So, the march of Crusade is this, like, oncoming, you know, the sun's behind it,

[**Austin:** Yeah.] and it's just, you know, red, blue, yellow. It's—it would be beautiful, if it wasn't—

Austin: A nightmare.

Art: —the scariest thing. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: If it wasn't this, like, knight ass looking glass Divine.

Austin: And then, like, all around it, the buzzing of smaller Altars.

Art: Right, yeah. Just, it's all hands, if anyone wants to be anyone here.

Austin: Great question. I was gonna just be Jesset City on the defense. And I think part of the thing that I am—I'm interested in showing here from the—because it's Grey Pond, and Grey Pond is logistics, I think that this is, like, huge-scale conflict, but, like, part of—part of the operation—I mean, we should—you should frame it. I'm gonna be there as Jesset City. And, I mean—

Jack: I'm gonna be there as Clawed.

Austin: Who's Clawed? Oh, Clawed is the—

Art: Clawed is book.

Austin: Yeah, Clawed is book. Clawed is book. Yes. Ironically, Jesset City is in one of these Motion mechs.

Jack: [laughs] Oh, dear.

Austin: One of the ones from Orion. You know, one of those you just buy on the marketplace.

Jack: Yep.

Austin: You know?

Jack: Orion will sell to—oh dear, this is not good.

Austin: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So yeah, I think is in—let's see here. The, um—is this in the Jury, or is it in the... probably just in Bouquet. It's a kind of boxy mech, you know? It's kinda good if—hm. Do I want to make the—hm. You know what? I want to put Jesset in—I want to put Jesset in the Knight Err—or sorry, the Jury. The Jury is a Tier 4 mech. It has this kind of—I'll put the description in the episode description, obviously. "The Jury is the future of AdArm machines. As the first design which fully moves beyond the

platforms of the previous generation, it's a startling diversion from the bulky and boxy designs that the company is known for. In fact, the actual unit is only the cockpit around which the rest of the Jury forms using concentrated Perennial Wave Material (PWM). Gone is the old LCD eye of both the Bouquet and the AdArm Troop from Partizan era, replaced by a full pixel face that can send complex laser-based communications silently to any other AdArm unit that can see it, as well as display iconographic messages to anyone nearby." So we get the classic Jesset City emoji text just on the face of this machine.

"A close study of the machine's curved and ovaline elements suggests that it has as much in common with Motion's Demiurgos design that AdArm salvaged as it does with the company's previous designs." So yeah, hooked into this kind of—there's a thing in this thing called the neural transit system, and Jesset has hooked into that. So Jesset's piloting this thing that has some missiles, it has a shield—a liquid shield that it can kind of summon. Jesset is piloting, like, a mini-Motion from last season. And it's like, "alright, we gotta go all out. You know, up top, out in space, Brnine went all out. I have to use the cursed Orion machine because that is where we're at in this war." And Jesset is, I think, probably defending specifically an important key supply line. You know? "If we're gonna keep Carhaix, we have to keep this supply train moving." You know? "And we didn't—and we were hoping to be able to transport supplies on the Gravtrain, and we didn't get the Gravtrain."

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: "And so we have to go overland and go slow from Sinder Karst into Carhaix with materials." I think that's the thing that we're trying to defend from Crusade. And maybe we're like, trying to get to Carhaix in time to resupply them. I don't know, but that's what Jesset's up to.

Jack: Down in the tunnels, Faithful Emphasis is holding a skull in her hands, you know.

[**Art** and **Austin** laugh]

Jack: Behind her, someone is singing.

Austin: Right. Uh-huh. God. You got a friend in Jesus.

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: Who's that? I, you know, it's been a few hundred thousand years. I don't know. [laughing] I don't know the state of Christendom in our deep future.

Jack: [laughs] There's been some great books written about it.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Jack: And those books have been destroyed by time, and then more books have been written about it, and...

Austin: Yes.

Jack: That's the works. Um, Art, is Clawed... hm. We know that Ramondre and, I think, Ignadiah, we've seen fighting in mechs before. We've definitely seen them in mechs on Si Sweetman's incredible cover art.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Yes.

Jack: Does Clawed pilot a mech at any point when he is in combat?

Art: That hasn't really been established. The only thing that's important to me about any portrayal of Clawed is that he cannot let go of the book. He has to hold the book with both hands at all times, so any mech has to have some sort of control scheme.

Austin: Can he—yeah.

Jack: Woah.

Austin: Can he put the book into something and, like, hold—like, either—I don't want him to let go of it, because you're right, I think that's important. But can he, like, hold it into a stand or something in such a way that it's an activating mechanism.

Art: Well, I've always imagined it as like—it's like a hug.

Austin: Oh, it's a big—okay.

Art: He's like, holding it with both hands across the book.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Oh my god. So maybe I'm not him. Maybe he's not in this fight. I mean, unless we want to just—

Art: Or he just needs to, like, have some sort of drift control, right? Some sort of—

Austin: Right, right. Brains and legs and...

Art: Yeah, what if you controlled a mech with your legs?

Jack: Like an organist.

Austin: That's kind of fun.

Art: Like a recumbent bicycle.

Jack: [chuckles] God. Yeah, okay. It's a—you know, the big description for Clawed—two things about Clawed. Huge and carrying a massive book.

Austin: Mhm.

Art: Huge and book. Those are the important things.

Jack: The mech is large. It wields in one hand a—God, I was gonna say—hm. I was gonna say—

Austin: Oh, important, Jack. What garden tool is it named?

Jack: Oh, it is named...

Austin: I'm guessing this is a pretty unique one for Clawed, right?

[Art hums]

Austin: I guess it doesn't have to be, but...

Art: Everyone else just happens to have to use this recumbent bicycle. [laughs]

Austin: Right, that would be the thing that would be weird, exactly. It could be modified for Clawed, right? Definitely.

Art: Yeah, certainly.

Jack: Oh man, the thing is—so, what have we had so far? We've had...

Austin: Okay, we've had, for sure—I think I've said all of these out loud. The Riddle, the Rake, the Plough, the Secateur, and the Billhook.

Jack: Hm.

Art: [typing] Hold on. Oh, it's a company name, never mind. [laughs] It can't be the International Harvester.

Jack: God, what about the Broadfork?

Art: That is a brand of tractor.

Austin: The Broadfork. [typing] Yeah, look at this thing.

Jack: This is a Clawed tool, if ever there was one.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: This one word or two?

Jack: One word.

Austin: Broadfork.

Jack: "Used to break up densely packed soil to improve aeration and drainage."

Art: Oh, that's a—that's a broad fork.

Jack: [laughs] It really is.

Austin: And you step it—you step it into the ground, right?

Jack: Yeah, like you're using a fork, like a—

Austin: Or a foot. You're using your legs, is my point.

Jack: Oh, yeah, I meant like a garden fork, like a...

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Like your regular narrow fork that I will now refer to as a narrow fork. [chuckles]

[**Austin** chuckles]

Jack: Um, yeah.

Art: The wee fork.

[**Austin** chuckles] [**Jack** hums]

Jack: And I think that there is like a panel, almost like a panel of stained glass. Oh, it's a panel of clear glass with a border of stained glass around it, [**Art:** Oh.] through which you can see the book, or a portion of the front of the book. As if to say, you know, to make emphatic the—your opponent in this.

Austin: Right.

Jack: It wields a heavy hammer in one hand. The sort of hammer that you would think would need to be a two-handed weapon, but Clawed has got the skill that lets him use two-handed weapons in one hand.

Austin: Uh-huh, yeah.

Jack: Except I think it actually has a short handle. There's something frightening about this hammer, you know?

Austin: Ooh.

Jack: With a hammer that, like—I can't remember whether it's Ornstein or Smough wields, you know? They have that long handle with the hammer on the end.

Austin: Smough, it's Smough. Ornstein has the dragon—

Jack: The lance.

Austin: —slayer's lance, yeah.

Jack: This is like a short hammer. He is holding it in one hand, and in his other hand he is holding a fork, like a, like a—maybe even a broadfork. But the idea is that you are snared with the one in the left, and just clubbed with the one in the right.

Austin: [cross] And then boom. Ooh, ooh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Brutal.

Art: Great.

Austin: Love it. I actually love how this is so... basic compared to what I've now shown as Jesset's new mech, you know? And I think most of the mechs—

Jack: [laughing] Yeah, Jesset's new mech is...

Austin: Yeah, Jesset's new mech is like, "I'm gonna summon the Perennial Wave as a shield," and Clawed's is, "I have a fork and a hammer, try and stop me," you know? And to be clear, this is All Out War, it's not a duel, right? So like, we also do have other Sinder—or other Grey Pond mechs that are like the regular, the Bouquets and the other smaller, you know, probably even some mechs from the Partizan era that are only Tier 2

now, you know? And stuff, but these are the front of the line units for sure. And then Crusade is here.

Art: Right.

Jack: Yeah, are you playing Crusade, Art?

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Amazing.

Combat

[1:28:31]

Austin: Alright. Well, now that we have our mechs out of the way... Um, fuck. Okay, you know, I come straight for you. Weapons ready. Let's see what this thing can do. I'm coming at Clawed, I think. Roll to see if you can hold me back.

Art: Fuck him up, Clawed.

Austin: I think specifically the thing that I'm using here, again, the things that the Jury has, it has a rifle, a micro-roundless rifle, and the—it doesn't actually have bullets. It produces them out of Perennial Wave energy as the trigger is fired. So I'm charging at you with that, shooting with you at that, while I'm releasing these, like, javelin missiles that are guided missiles to just—I'm just trying to like bury you in fire, you know?

Jack: Mm. Great. I'm rolling a 1d6, and because you are now a major faction, Art, I do well with... anything higher than a 2? What is this?

Austin: It's anything under.

Art: No, lower than a 5.

Austin: Under a 5. 1, 2, 3, or 4.

Jack: Anything under, I've got it backwards. Okay.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: God.

Art: Oh, that's the most recent roll.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Art: This is for—this is now.

Austin: This is now. The year is now.

Art: I noticed that so far we haven't rolled a 3 or a 4, so so far this faction changing thing hasn't mattered at all.

Austin: This is true.

Jack: I rolled a 1.

Art: All our rolls have been 1, 2, or 6.

Austin: Jack rolled a 1, so that's an Authority win.

Jack: It is the—one of the, uh—what did you call them? Like, stinger missiles that you launched?

Austin: Yeah, sure, yeah. Mhm.

Jack: Hits Clawed square in the chest, and there is an explosion of fire and black smoke, and what Jesset hopes for one second is shards, and then out of the smoke comes, at great speed, the fork of the Broadfork—

Austin: [scoffs] Yeah.

Jack: —and snares like a, um... just pins it between the tines of the fork, almost. Pins this rifle, this special rifle that you have, [**Austin:** Yeah.] between the tines, and then Clawed's right hand comes out and just reduces it to bent metal.

Austin: Right.

Jack: With the specific, insulting, “don’t you try that.”

Austin: Right, right.

[Art laughs]

Jack: You know, “you’re gonna try and shoot me with this, it is rubble.”

Austin: Are you—is it—I have a really important question. Is it one big hammer swing, or is it a bunch of quick hits?

Art: Oh.

Jack: Ooh, that’s a good question. Is my answer here—are you going to reveal a trap, or rather a property about this gun?

Austin: No, no, this is just color, this is just—

Jack: Oh, it’s one swing.

Art: They’re both really... yeah.

Jack: It’s just, it is—it’s like seeing someone... I was gonna say it’s like seeing someone go down in a single punch, but it’s even weirder. It would be like someone just picking up and throwing a car, or something.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: There is just a “no,” smash, end of that.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: It’s so abrupt, and I think in the way that this is shot, we don’t even see the body of the mech, really.

Austin: Right, right.

Jack: You know, we see the missile hit it, and then it's just debris and smoke, and then it's the fork and hammer.

Austin: It's through the smoke, and then boom, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'd love to go big here. I'd love to go between this little small fight, and then the big all-out Crusade, you know, thing.

Art: Mhm. Yeah.

Austin: Alright, I think it's this then, Art. I think it's "I lead an unexpected ambush roll to see if I catch you by surprise."

Art: Yeah, I was leaning that way too.

Austin: Grey Pond has lived in tunnels for the last five years, or whatever. Right?

Jack: Hm.

Austin: In Sinder Karst. And they've been digging one out in front of Carhaix. They've just been digging a huge false, like, ground. They've dug out under this huge piece of ground. And it wouldn't give way to just a mech. It wouldn't give way to a battalion. But it would give way to a Divine stepping on it.

Jack: Uh-huh.

Art: Sure, a big Divine.

Austin: And it's just a huge dug-out pit. You know? They've excavated it down to, you know, deep rock. You know, past an entire strata of rock. Are—is it—do I catch you by surprise?

Art: Sure. And I will roll for that.

Austin: And that is a 4.

Art: You do not.

Austin: I do not.

Art: And I think this is just bad luck.

[**Austin** hums]

Art: You know, I think that it's, what if you stepped and only your toe was on the ground that was gonna bring way?

Austin: Right.

Art: But Crusade is a very sensitive Divine.

[**Austin** hums]

Art: The Crusade is always preoccupied with the conditions on the ground.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And so it feels the ground giving way, and it steps back.

[**Jack** groans]

Art: And I even want to do, like, a leap. The, like, the giant Divine takes to the air. Not even with, like, jets.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Just, like, its big robot quads [**Austin:** Yeah.] push it into the air and over the trench. And it probably hits something when it comes down.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Yeah, for sure.

Art: Buildings...

Austin: It lands on buildings, or it lands on a row of missile laun—missile, like, set, you know, Scud missile launchers that have been set up or whatever. Yeah. Buildings is probably right.

Art: Yeah. And I want to—this—I don't know. I'm gonna say this, we can decide if it makes sense. I almost want a Godzilla scream.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Woah!

Art: Like a kaiju roar as it hits.

Austin: Yeah. I know exactly the type of scream you're talking about, which has almost a metallic tinge to it already.

Art: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Cool. Love to see Crusade move.

Art: Um, I—

Austin: Still no Gention on the screen, right? We don't get inside of Crusade. It's only exterior shots.

Art: Yeah. And I think—for right now, I think that's right.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I saw a TikTok this week about how they made the tyrannosaurus rex sound in Jurassic Park.

Jack: Oh, it's so cool. I have also seen this.

Art: That it's a baby elephant.

Austin: Ohh.

Art: The like, *ehh*—the like, roar.

Austin: Yeah, [imitating elephant trumpeting] *bwrr*, yeah.

Art: And it was a sound that that elephant had never made before, and never made again.

Austin: Wow.

Jack: He knew.

Art: It's like God reached down and was like, "we need the sound for Jurassic Park."

Austin: For the t-rex.

Art: "Make the exact sound of a t-rex, roaring elephant."

Jack: Once.

Art: Once.

Jack: You only have to do it once.

Austin: One time only.

Jack: One time only.

Art: That elephant's a saint now.

Austin: Ah.

Jack: Ohh.

Art: Saint elephant.

Austin: Saint elephant.

Art: Um—

Austin: Anyway, uh-oh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: That's two wins for the Bilats. The Authority.

Art: Um...

Jack: The thing that's—you know.

Art: The logical next roll is "I separate you from your supporting forces, roll to see if you can regroup." Because Crusade is now behind the line.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yes.

Art: And there are just some bad, bad outcomes for, like—

Austin: Yes.

Art: Because Crusade is a one-entity pincer unit.

Austin: Yeah. Well, and I think here's what I want, is I want the—Jesset's gonna try to stop this. Jesset has given up on the gun, but still has this—the shield, right? I mean, fundamentally could re-summon one of these guns. That's how this thing that isn't even Motion yet can work in the Palisade timeline, right?

Jack: [chuckles] Currently being piloted by Millennium Break.

Austin: By Millennium Break. And I want to be—I think the thing that I'm trying to do is foreshadow how terrifying it would be if Motion came back in the Palisade era, in the era of the Altar, in the era of Kalmeria. And specifically, like, I think that—so this thing has a thing that's called the liquid PWM shield, which again, PWM is Perennial Wave Material. It's, you know, it's firm Perennial Wave. It's Kalmeria turned into—you know, it's almost like Green Lantern shit, you know? And I think that he pilots up there and starts trying to summon shields to block incoming fire from the—from in front. And then what's Crusade attack with? Is it these big shield—or, I'm sorry, big sword swings? What is Crusade's weaponry, Art?

Art: I think for this specific maneuver, [**Austin:** Yeah.] it's shards of glass.

Austin: Okay. Right.

Art: It's like, what's that Halo weapon?

Jack: The Needler?

Austin: The Needler.

Art: The Needler.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Like, what if a hundred Needlers were fired at once?

Austin: Yeah. And I think that Jesset is like, "I just need to hold long enough to keep the"—what's the exact question that you used again? It was supporting forces, separated from supporting forces?

Art: "Roll to see if you can regroup," yeah.

Austin: Yeah. And so it's like, Jesset is trying to Green Lantern shield these incoming attacks long enough for everyone to try to regroup. Trying to be the ace pilot, right? Who like, "I just need to provide 30 seconds for them to get to the side so that they're not pincerred anymore," you know? "And yeah, maybe we lose a lot of important territory here, but we can try to keep this going." I need, what, a 5 or a 6?

Art: Mhm.

Austin: Yikes. That is a 3. I don't think it's—and I don't think there's any tricks. I guess there's some tricks, right? As always—so Grey Pond is tapped, right? You could—I could tap—we could tap another unit, another Hexagon unit to just get a win here.

Jack: And reroll. Oh no, to get the win, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Which would bring in a different unit in a fun way, right? Like, Violet Cove comes to support, you know? Or—which is interesting, because we've never seen this, right? We've only seen Grey Pond and Jade Kill fight together. We have not seen the

idea that Hexagon would fight together in public for the other members of that group, right? Blue Channel, Jade Kill—you know, like, Violet Cove and Rose River and Carmine Bight have all been positioning themselves as if they're standalone groups, you know? It would be bad, because right now the only [laughs] untapped groups—let me know if this sounds familiar—

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: —are Violet Cove and the Blue Channel.

Jack: [groans] Here we go again.

Austin: But I kind of like the idea of Violet Cove showing up here. I'm going to tap Violet Cove to turn this into a win instead. And this is Elle Evensong [**Jack** chuckles] leading a group of the Isle of the Broken Key Devotion people, plus some Twilight Mirage people and the Dim Liturgy. This is the Cataphract showing up with its blood—you know, that's exactly what it is. It's Jesset's Perennial Wave shields breaking, and then a new [laughing] blood shield appearing to block some of these incoming glass shards as, for the first time ever, the members of Devotion and Violet Cove, the Dim Liturgy, come to outright support members of Jade Kill and Grey Pond, not just behind the scenes, not just "we'll give you intelligence," but "we're on the battlefield with you." You know, is it in—is the decision—I'm not gonna talk about Elle Evensong and what her particular position is in this and why she's doing it—

Jack: Friends in high places.

Austin: She has her own reasons—right, uh-huh, friends in high places, but is the decision to go public after the big Phrygian sacrifice partially, you know, part of the decision to go public here? I think so. And so Violet Cove has shown up, and there is one win now for the Cause, still in it.

Jack: And just to be clear, that is, you tap a faction for one dice roll, not one scene win.

Austin: Yeah, no, one dice roll win.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Yes, correct.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: And I guess I'll challenge back here, now that there are more people, right? So yes, we were able to regroup. Uh... let's see. You know, I'm curious about this. "Our battle endangers a group of civilians. If you refuse to hold back, roll." And I think this is for Clawed, who, you know, maybe recommits to this fight, but now the fight is happening around Crusade, which is to say, around the city limits, where people are, you know? Now that—or maybe behind, because it's behind the line, because of that big jump that Crusade made, you know? It's in the city itself, and not where we thought the front would be.

Jack: Now, Art, my gut here is that Clawed would not hold back. Is that accurate with the way you think of the character, or do you think that there would be a pause here?

Art: I think you could go either way. I think you should really play your gut on this. I think all of these characters are capable of either outcome.

Jack: Let's see. Okay. "Our battle endangers a group of civilians."

Austin: And these civilians could be loyalists in Carhaix.

Jack: They could be, yes.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yes, this is not necessarily—

Austin: Who are living, effectively, under Millennium Break occupation, you know?

Jack: Art, are any of the other retinue deployed on the battlefield?

Art: No. I think Ignadiah and Ramondre are sort of like a rear guard for this particular operation.

[**Austin** hums]

Jack: Because—

Art: And—or Perevel and Ramondre, I'm sorry, and Ignadiah, the cup-bearer, is not a mech person.

Jack: What does not having the—

Art: Wait. Do I still have that—did I have it right the first time? What are the—

Jack: Isn't it Ignadiah and Ramondre are the two, and Perevel is the cup—

Art: Are the swords—

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, Ramondre and Ignadiah are the swordbearers, yeah. That's correct. They're who we saw here before that one time.

Art: So Perevel, the cup-bearer, is not a mech person, yeah.

Austin: Right. Perevel is the knight of cups. Correct, yeah.

Jack: I'm trying to think about how the retinue talks about this after the fact. And is it, you know, Clawed... Does it look better for Clawed if you act in this moment?

[**Austin** and **Art** hum]

Jack: Or does it look better to... You want to be seen as decisive, right? You want to be seen as active. There's a chance, of course, that it could break bad, and I'd wound a bunch of civilians.

Art: I think Clawed is sort of above the repartee—

[**Jack** and **Austin** hum]

Austin: Sure.

Art: —of the other attendants. Clawed holds the book. Clawed doesn't talk very much.

Austin: Right.

Art: I think that like, this is—this is a concern for other...

Jack: Oh.

Austin: Oh, that sounds like do it.

Jack: Yeah, this sounds like, "should I act or not" is a concern for others? Time to roll.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[pause]

Jack: [laughs] Okay, I rolled a 2.

Austin: That is a 2. That's another success for the Authority. [solemn] Authority sweep. I think this is gonna be a hard—I don't know how to—I don't know what the case could be to come back on this one, you know?

Jack: God. He—uh... [typing] I'm looking for a very particular bridge. There's a bridge in Oxford called the Bridge of Sighs that looks like this. Obviously, I imagine this is higher off the ground, because we're dealing with large mechs here.

Austin: Mhm, mhm.

Jack: But I think that Clawed just brings the bridge down on you. Fighting underneath the bridge, sees the positioning, reaches up, maybe puts the hammer down, drops the hammer for a second, [**Austin:** Right.] and just claws through—I didn't do that on purpose—just claws through the bridge down onto you.

Austin: And onto the forces below, and also whoever was moving across that bridge, just gone.

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: No thought to it.

Jack: Where are we at?

Resolution

[1:45:18]

Austin: Is this definitive? Are we at the end of it? You know, it's until there's three wins, which you have now. Does this feel definitive? Is it time—what are the resolution options? “One side is forced to rout, are they cut down as they flee?” “A truce is reached,” no. Or “the battle will continue to mar”—I think this is “one side is forced to rout, are they cut down as they flee?” I think this is—I think this is—here's the image I have. I think the—this special Motion mech gets knocked under this bridge, the Jury, and it gets reduced to—like, it gets hit so hard that—remember all of it is just Perennial Wave that has been solidified, except for the cockpit. And I think it just, like, blinks out of existence, you know? I think it just—it doesn't blink out of existence. I think that it—I think that it falls like sand around the mech. It, like, gets hit so hard that it destabilizes, and it falls like sand all at once, and then just the cockpit is left, and it falls to the ground. And the question is whether or not Jesset escapes.

Jack: Now—

Austin: Does Elle pick up the cockpit and fly away with it? Does someone else, does—is there—I don't think—I don't think that Jesset can eject safely in this—

Jack: This is obviously your decision here, Art, but, I mean, they could take a hostage.

Art: I would honestly—a hostage—um, I was thinking that the forces of Crusade just indiscriminately fire upon the retreating people, and so I'm willing to, like, coin flip this as to whether or not that includes [**Austin:** Jesset.] any specific person, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Get Keith on the line.

Austin: Keith, we need the coin again. This is a smaller—what I mean—

Jack: God, do they just open fire?

Austin: Yeah, I mean, Jesset dying here would be real.

Art: And I don't think they're tr—

Austin: Yeah, no.

Art: Like, the point isn't to kill Jesset.

Austin: No.

Art: The point is to just...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Is—this is All Out War. This is—and you—it's what you just said, it's indiscriminate. It's "don't let anyone get away."

Art: Yeah. But if people get away, they're not gonna chase them. They're just, you know, everyone's shooting...

Austin: Shooting at the back. Yeah. Uh-huh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. I think we gotta roll some dice.

Jack: [exhales] God.

Austin: What's—what's what here?

Art: Heads, he lives? 1, he lives?

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: He sends such good emojis.

Austin: He sends really good emo—and he’s broadcasting them now, right? Like—or he was. I think the last broad—the last emoji on the face of this mech was like a retreat, the “all retreat” emoji. You know? I don’t know what emoji that was.

Art: I want Jesset to make it. I—

Austin: No, I get it.

Art: I could have—I could have left this not to chance.

Austin: I have it in the thing. 1 is “lives”? 2 is “dies”?

Art: 1 is “lives,” yeah.

[firm keyboard tap]

Art: And I have—

Austin: Hoo!

Jack: Oh!

Art: —covering this—alright.

Austin: Alright. That’s a 1. [groans] Uh, yeah. I think Elle grabs onto a handle on the side of this cockpit that was moments ago projecting a mech body around it, and begins to retreat with it.

Art: And just like, explosions everywhere.

Austin: Everywhere, right. And other people are dying. Right? Just not our named characters because they got the 50/50 win on their favor somehow.

Art: Yeah. I mean, honestly, pick a named character who could be there. They died. You don’t have to do it. Just you at home, go to the—go to fatt.wiki, [**Austin:** Uh-huh.] pick a

named character that could have been there, [**Austin**: Uh-huh.] and in your head, they're dead now.

Austin: That's scary.

Jack: That's a very interesting way of approaching media. [chuckles]

[**Austin** laughs]

Jack: I don't know what the long-term consequence of this is.

Austin: I don't know either. I guess we leave here now.

Art: Well, if it's conflicted—if it conflicts with the text later, it wasn't true.

Jack: Oh, I see.

Austin: Right. I see, I see, I see, I see. We reserve the right to say, "uh-uh. Nope."

Art: Yeah.

Austin: "We're taking it back. You were wrong. You picked the wrong name." Uh, alright.

Art: Good luck.

Austin: Then yeah, I think we retreat. And there are—again, "one side is forced to rout. Are they cut down as they flee?" They—we were not cut down—or some of us were, but Jesset wasn't one of them. Elle wasn't one of them. But we flee Carhaix, and we lose that territory. We don't lose the Grip in the Bontive Valley, which means we've ceded—you know, we still have enough one—I mean, I don't think that's one of your options, right? Remove 1 Grip isn't one of your things, right?

Art: Um... Oh, I'm on the wrong tab. No, I cannot remove Grip. I can start or advance a "take something that isn't theirs" clock.

Austin: Right.

Art: I can start or advance an existing scheme, and I can—

Austin: Which is what you're doing.

Art: Yeah. "A vulnerable or exposed asset or actor is fortified or hidden." And I don't really...

Austin: That would be like, for instance, if they had the—you know, I think we, in fact, did that to protect the Stargrave, maybe, at one point. Or we thought about doing it to protect the Stargrave. If we knew where Gentian lived, if the Cause knew where Gentian lived, you know, you could do that. Or like...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: In some ways—in some ways, you are doing that by advancing this clock. You're saying that you're advancing—you're giving them the protection necessary to revive Motion. Great. Great.

Art: It's gonna be cool. Everyone is gonna love it.

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah. A lot to do on the other side.

Closing

[1:50:55]

Austin: Any closing words for them? Any closing shots of this taking Carhaix back?

Jack: It's just miserable, right? It is just...

Art: Yeah, it's miserable. It's having a big celebration and acting like you've done this great thing.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: But everything's messed up.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: You didn't... I mean, you won, but you didn't win.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Like, we did it. We got the Bontive Valley back and it's—it's scorched earth in a real way.

Austin: Yeah, it's scorched—literally, yeah. Uh-huh.

Art: Literally, the earth is scorched here.

Austin: Bontive. That's why we call it the Bontive Valley.

Jack: God.

Art: And I'm sure that the—whatever those magical properties—it'll un-scorch itself eventually.

Austin: Yeah, no. The harvests are high-yielding. This is—

Art: Sooner than another place, but..

Austin: Yeah, the Divine Bounty was kind of seeded into this before it left, and maybe that'll come back, I guess. We'll see.

Art: Cool. Cool, cool, cool.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Do we get an image—

Austin: Oh, you know what would work, is if the Divine Consecration could dig up the corpse of Bontive—or, of Bounty, from Chimera's Lantern and then just make it go make the ground good again. That would do it.

Art: There we go. I was just saying, we haven't dug up any corpses lately.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: [chuckles] Do we get an image of Whitestar getting deployed?

Austin: I don't think—no, because it doesn't exist by—it won't exist here until—unless you mean out in space.

Jack: I mean out in space.

Austin: Yeah, maybe. What is it? Yeah.

Jack: You know, is there like—is it one of those—

Austin: The fleet, the armada being put together?

Jack: It's the armada, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: It's the shot, you know, weeks before—or I don't know what our time scale is. It's the shot before that classic Star Wars shot of an armada drifting through space, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It is just things—it is things in dock getting loaded onto massive freighters. It's people checking racks upon racks of weapons. It's mechs being—you know, crates of equipment being bolted in. It's someone checking that their dress uniform looks good, [Austin: Mhm.] making sure that it's all ready to be set up. You know, the military occupation is really coming.

Austin: Yeah. It's a view screen of the nearby sector, and like, we recognize the names now from some of these planets and stuff, and systems, because of the intro, right? It is—I won't go over all of them, right, but—now I can't find any of them. That's a problem. It is Carjel and Helaine Delta and Lonn and Xenacip and all of those. And it's—

Jack: Maine.

Austin: Yeah, Maine, of course. And it is like, the route from wherever Lucia is to Palisade.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You know, like, the hard yellow lines or whatever, blue lines on the map that connect from one of the kind of like, jump gates to the next. The Divine Space. Why am I blanking on the name of the thing that we called it?

Jack: Portcullis Gates.

Austin: The Portcullis Gates, yes. It's late. It's late, and we haven't done this in like a month. So, apologies. Yeah, the Portcullis Gates. Yeah.

Jack: They're on their way.

Austin: They're on their way. Big ship's coming. Alright. Final words? Other side? Anything else?

Art: I can't believe that we've rolled this well two faction games in a row.

Austin: People are gonna hate us.

Jack: You can check our rolls. You know? I—

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh. I'm lookin' at 'em.

Art: Well, not really.

Austin: I'm looking at them.

Art: We can. But if they thought we were lying already, it doesn't matter at that point.

Austin: Yeah, at that point, who cares.

Jack: Oh, the other cast members, the other side can check our rolls.

Austin: Yes, yes. Yeah, they're just in the same—

Art: Oh, that's who you meant is gonna be mad at us.

Austin: Yeah. Not the listeners.

Jack: Yeah. I don't know what I...

Art: Well, yeah.

Jack: ...what messages I have for the other side. I mean, it is interesting, I think, that it does seem like, you know, right back at the beginning of this episode, you said, Art, that we can either go bigger, or we can just start threatening more directly. And I think we've done both.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Well, this is smaller than "we're gonna murder everyone."

Jack: Yes. That's true. I—

Austin: Right. The immediate—the season won't end if this scheme comes to a pass.

Jack: It's true. There is—

Austin: It's different.

Jack: The most evil Divine we met in COUNTER/Weight. To—you know, evil is subjective.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I would say the most actively unpleasant Divine, [**Austin:** Mhm.] to me, we met during COUNTER/Weight. There is a very close—

Austin: There is no sense of negotiation, no sense of appeal could be made to the Divine in COUNTER/Weight that you're talking about, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, no. Yeah. But Motion's up there.

Austin: Motion's up there.

Art: Yeah, no one's pro-Motion.

Austin: Yeah, and a Motion who has been compelled by a sort of geas as applied by the Divine, Arbitrage? Probably real cruel, probably real bitter.

Jack: [groans] Isn't it good to be alive?

Austin: But probably can't wait to keep moving. You know what I mean? Can't wait, you know?

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: There's a—in my mind, this is Exanceaster March. I think part of the reason I like the image of the engine, and it's the same engine that was in the Jesset City mech, right? The Jury, looking at it, marching around it, is it also recalls for me the image of like, someone trying to summon a demon, you know?

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Like, the pentagram out on the ground, the candles lit, except it's an engine, and like, staring at it and thinking, "how do I get the demon out of this thing?"

Jack: And you know how that goes well for people, right? Who summon the demons?

Austin: Yeah, it goes well. You—Faust did this, right?

Art: Uh-huh.

Austin: Right. This is the Faustian bargain. It all works out in the end, right?

Jack: Faustian bargain traditionally means bargain easy to fulfill, consequence-free.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: Yeah. This can't bother me, 'cause I can't read.

[**Austin** and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: Yeah, it's great.

Jack: Well, good luck.

Austin: The smoke is going backwards into the smokestacks. Everything's good. How could that be bad? We're cleaning the air.

Jack: It's a garden.

Austin: It's a garden.

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