

The Road to PALISADE 03: Stealing the Throne

Transcriber: Daneran#6021 (having transcribed the Live at the Table episode, then editing that for the main feed)

[0:00:00]

AUSTIN: The Road to PALISADE is a show about war, politics, religion, revolutionary violence, and the many consequences thereof. For a full list of content warnings please check the episode description.

[A landline dial tone can be heard three times. The following scene sounds muffled and distorted.]

AUSTIN (as the receiver of the call) He— Hello?

JACK (as the initiator of the call): Good afternoon, sir! It is my unfortunate duty to speak to you today about a matter that... uh... we think better to bring to your attention.

AUSTIN (as receiver): Who is this? It's evening here.

JACK (as initiator): This is the Lace speakin'.

[["Permanent Peace"](#) by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

AUSTIN (as receiver): [takes a deep breath, tired] What is it that you needed to call me about?

JACK (as the Lace): Well, the Divine Discernment—you're familiar with it, sir?

AUSTIN (as receiver): Hm, big one... the eye...?

JACK (as the Lace): The Camera That Sees Everything. Uh...

AUSTIN (as receiver): [overlapping] Yeah, it...

JACK (as the Lace): [overlapping] Nideo has lost, sir.

AUSTIN (as receiver): [incredulous] Nideo has lost it?

JACK (as the Lace): The Divine's gone missing.

AUSTIN (as receiver): [with gathering frustration] It's gone missing?

JACK (as the Lace): Well, to be more exact, we believe that it has been stolen.

["Permanent Peace" swells in the background, with the bass synths coming in]

AUSTIN (as receiver): Stel Nideo lost the big camera?

JACK (as the Lace): The Camera That Sees Everything, sir.

AUSTIN (as receiver): Was this The Pact?

JACK (as the Lace): [chuckles curtly] No, sir. As we understand, it's those revolutionaries.

AUSTIN (as receiver): Wh... Who?

JACK (as the Lace): They call themselves Millennium Break.

AUSTIN (as receiver): These absol— [stops themself]

JACK (as the Lace): Sir, we didn't believe they had the capability for stealing a Divine, but the more we've looked into it—

AUSTIN (as receiver): [bursting with frustration] They don't have the forces! How could they even—

JACK (as the Lace): They only needed four, sir.

AUSTIN (as receiver): Four? Battalions?

JACK (as the Lace): [laughs dryly] No, sir. Four individuals... made off with The Camera That Sees Everything, sir.

AUSTIN (as receiver): [menacingly calm] Where are you right now?

["Permanent Peace" swells to new heights, with the drums and the electric guitar kicking in]

JACK (as the Lace): [caught off-guard] I beg your pardon?

AUSTIN (as receiver): Where are you. Right. Now.

JACK (as the Lace): [with some uncertainty] Well, when I spoke to you last week, sir, I was on vacation, and I... I remain on the planet Iraleph... [??? – 0:01:51]

AUSTIN (as receiver): [commanding with concealed anger] Stay there.

JACK (as the Lace): Sir?

[A robotic telephone operator's voice repeats the phrase "Please hang up!" three times. The distorted audio mixing ends. "Permanent Peace" reaches a lull, with hesitant synth twangs.]

AUSTIN (as Layer Luxurious): I am Layer Luxurious, and that was, once again, Cynosure Whitestar-Kesh, and if you think you've heard a little annoyance in the voice of the Peaceful Princept as he spoke, you're not alone. Some historians believe that it was this conversation with the Lace that led old Cynosure to draw The Curtain, and begin the so-called "Civil Reclamation" of his side of The Principality. But that is for a future episode.

Today on Perfect/Imperfect, the podcast about the final days of the Perfect Millennium, we're instead going to unfold how the radical group Millennium Break remained involved in this galactic struggle.

["Permanent Peace" picks back up in full force, with drums and the electric guitar.]

AUSTIN (as Layer Luxurious): They knew that if they wanted to support the people on Partizan, Palisade, and beyond, they would need to stay one step ahead of The Pact and The Curtain. And to do that, they would need something special.

This is the story of the impossible theft of The Camera That Sees Everything. Let's kick it off.

["Permanent Peace" concludes.]

AUSTIN: Hello, welcome to Live at the Table for October 2021. [chuckles] Just trust us, it's October. The holidays haven't happened yet. Uuh... [overlapping] And everyth—

DRE: [overlapping] What's your Halloween costume, everybody? [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing] Oh, wow we're hitting this one again, huh!?!

ALI: I have a plan! Okay, this is a sacred vow, because I'm about to say it live into a microphone.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: I have a plan for Halloween.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: 2022.

AUSTIN: Alright.

ALI: [overlapping] I haven't got a costume for fuc—

DRE: [overlapping] Also, you're a year ahead!

ALI: Yeah, well, sure. [laughs]

AUSTIN: I want to hear it, I'm excited.

ALI: I've been saving this up! I'm gonna be Bree from Animal Crossing.

AUSTIN: Wait, [overlapping] who from Animal Crossing?

ALI: [overlapping] I'm gonna fucking do it: I just have to get the ears; I just have to get a wig...

AUSTIN: Wait, who are you being from Animal Crossing?

ALI: Bree! The mouse—

[others vocalize in recognition]

ALI: The white mouse with the green ears. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, oh, you could be Bree!

ALI: Yeah. [overlapping] That's the plan.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh my god! Yes!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: The bangs! I love it! I love this for you!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I've seen you in this outfit! We've been to a diner with you wearing this outfit before.

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: You rock that! Let's go!

ALI: Everybody, it's February! You have... Right now is the time to think about these things [chuckling, overlapping] and make these decisions for yourself.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Uhum, make these plans! Make these plans!

ALI: September isn't the time.

AUSTIN: You're right.

ALI: [chuckling] October isn't the time.

AUSTIN: You're right. Fhuh... Okay.

KEITH: Sounds like a lot of work for one day!

ALI [laughs, overlapping] You just have to...

KEITH: [overlapping] I'm gonna be thinking about this for... I don't even like...

ALI: [half-chuckling] I don't want to say manifest it, but I mean manifest it...

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah.

ALI: Like, you have to make a decision in your heart...

AUSTIN: I get you.

ALI: ...so when you get—

KEITH: Hm...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] When yourself is in that place you could be like: "okay, I know all the things that I want to do..."

AUSTIN: I think if I just got a bow tie, and argyle sweater, and a book...

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I could be Blathers, like, pretty easy.

ALI: Yeah!

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: Maybe I'm just— I'm lucky that the things that I want to do on Halloween, that list is really short.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: Which is, like, I want to watch a non-scary Halloween movie and not do anything else.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you don't have to really plan for that.

ALI: Sure. Okay, yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. Maybe go to a non— It hasn't been an issue in so long because of Covid, but maybe go to a non-costumed Halloween party. Just a party that happens to take place on Halloween.

ALI: Um!

DRE: Um.

AUSTIN: I'm Austin Walker. Joining me today: Alisha Akampura.

ALI: Um, hi! You can find me over [@ali_west](#) on twitter and you can find the show over [@friend_table](#).

AUSTIN: Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hey! You can find me on twitter [@swandre3000](#).

AUSTIN: And Keith Carberry.

KEITH: Uh, hi! My name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on twitter [@keithjcarberry](#), and you can watch Dog of Wisdom at [Youtube.com/Joe](#).

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Is that right?

KEITH: Get it to 70 mil! I'm feuding with the dog. It's [youtube.com/RunButton](#).

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Today we're playing...

KEITH: [overlapping] You should watch it.

AUSTIN: ...Stealing the Throne by Nick Bate. You can buy this game for yourself at [ickbate.itch.io](#). I-c-k-b-a-t— or: ickbat! Ickbat. It's it's Nick Bate, just without the first and last letters: [ickbat.itch.io](#). Uh... Stealing the Throne is a GM-less and prepless heist game, in which a bunch of people are gonna steal a big robot! I guess the exact phrasing is: "a storytelling game of giant mech heists. Zero-prep and GMless, it's specifically designed for exciting one-shot play. Build a Throne, invent its fiendish defenses, and then take them apart one-by-one with your crack team of thieves." Um.

We are using it to play the next game on the Road to PALISADE, which, as a reminder, is our follow-up to PARTIZAN. Also as a reminder, especially if you're joining us

actually live, this is going to be a space where we will be spoiling PARTIZAN, potentially also Twilight Mirage and COUNTER/Weight — though probably mostly PARTIZAN. Um. But... you know, this is— we are in a spoiler zone, baby.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Like, that is part of the joy of doing PALISADE is... this is not an on-ramp.

DRE: [overlapping] Yup.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] This is not a season where we need to, like, try to convince people to give us a shot. I feel like we now have both PARTIZAN and Sangfielle as really good versions of that, that are very like: “hey we use the same system [chuckling] all the way through the whole season for once.”

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: “It’s not a sequel— direct sequel to anything else.” [overlapping] Yes there are gonna be spoilers for...

KEITH: [overlapping] I’m even gonna spoil some non-Friends-of-the-table-related stuff.

AUSTIN: [quietly] Okay. Don’t—

KEITH: I’ll— I’m gonna spoil a coupla things.

AUSTIN: Okay, don’t do that. Lawson in the chat says: “will there be spoilers for the previous Road episodes?” Absolutely! 100%! This is a serialized story... and so I don’t want to like— I’m not going to promise we’re not going to spoil the last session that we did. In fact, I’m going to probably spoil it within the next five minutes... So, if you want to go check that out first, I *seriously* advise it. Um... [chuckles] Where should I begin? I guess I should set up for Keith, Ali and Dre some of the stuff that... the kind of framing for this one. Because I’m doubting any of you who’ve had the chance to listen to those live games yet. Right?

ALI: U-um.

DRE: I have not.

AUSTIN Okay.

KEITH: I actually didn’t even know it was out. I’ve got the thing on my phone, but...

AUSTIN: Um, yeah... and also, you know: no hard feelings anyone who wants to head out! Because definitely listen to these stories in sequence!

KEITH: [softly] Alright!

AUSTIN: But also, yeah! Leave right now before I say the premise of PALISADE! Because I think that the way it's rolled out at the end of the first... of the intro games is— the end of the first recording of the previous game... is extremely— like, worked pretty well. And I don't want you to hear it for the first time for me talking right now! I want you to hear it from when it's revealed at the end of the first recording of HOUNDS. So I'm gonna give this another beat and then I'm gonna start talking some more. Alright, I'm gonna start talking some more.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: It has been some amount of time since the end of PARTIZAN. As y'all might remember, things were looking incredibly fractious... Fractious. Fracturous. At the end of PARTIZAN. The Principality has... in a real... in a much more material way split down, not just the middle, but along the sides in some ways. The Principality once... you know — mostly unified if occasionally squabbling — has now become a group split between The Curtain of Divinity and The Pact of Necessary Venture. Just colloquially: The Pact and The Curtain.

The Pact *tends* to be Columnar and Apostolos. The Curtain tends to be Kesh and Nideo. There're of course, you know, the occasional Kesh world that is loyal to The Pact; and the occasional, you know... kind of more traditionalist Columnar/Apostolosian world that is... loyal to the The Curtain, for instance. Or even inside of any given planet there are forces on both sides working, pretty much everywhere. Um...

Meanwhile Stel Orion has split itself down the middle, and then again down those middles, probably. And is basically... you know, has turned into a war of — not all against all, but certainly, some major sides: some people fighting for total independence from The Principality; other people hoping to return things to where they were; other people hoping for a sort of loose amalgamation of republics... or corporate— you know... corporate states or something like that. Orion's a fucking mess. It always has been, [chuckles] it always will be.

At the end of— or throughout the previous game, through HOUNDS, we learned that the state of the war was such that The Curtain — mostly Stel and Nideo¹ — are *not* keeping up when it comes to the ongoing conflict. They are not as technologically advanced as Columnar; they don't have the military discipline or techniques of Apostolos; and they don't have the sort of futurist drive that we've seen both of those other stels put to bear — the sort of willingness to go hard and fast and break things in in pursuit of victory. And so they are scrambling for things to give them a leg up.

The big reveal at the end of the first recording session of the first game — of HOUNDS — was that the thing that they are looking for the most is a way back into The Twilight Mirage, a place that they have not returned to in thousands of years. Partially out of the sort of mythological nation— you know, kind of self-identity that The Principality has built for itself, in terms of “hey we came from there that place is sacrosanct to us”; partially because they're afraid of getting their asses whooped because The Mirage doesn't fuck around. Um... but the time for that has stopped. And Nideo has gotten— I guess The Curtain

¹ He means Stel Kesh and Stel Nideo. – the transcriber

in general has kind of activated its... “it's time to get in there” plan. And the way in there, as far as we know, is a world called Palisade.

Palisade is a... a world that kind of exists on the very edge of The Twilight Mirage — like, the kind of false nebula — sometimes it's completely swallowed by it, other times it's visible if you're close enough. And it was a planet that was used as a staging ground for people going into The Mirage back when we were playing Twilight Mirage. And even before that, right? Um, it's the sort of place the New Earth Hegemony or The Rapid Evening would have used to stop and refuel and get its stuff together before going in deeper.

As a triple reminder, because it's been *years* since we've been to The Twilight Mirage: entering The Twilight Mirage is like entering the mythological Bermuda Triangle. You get in there and you just might not make it all the way through. Or it might take you a century to get through it or a millennia.

Nideo cannot wait that long, they are afraid of loo— I keep saying Nideo, because The Mirage is in Nideo space. The Curtain cannot wait that long. They don't want to, uh... They will lose this fight within a century if they don't— if they don't win the fight first. Right? If they don't find some sort of special weapon, or find a new basis of power, or something. As such, they have been on the hunt to get to Palisade and then hopefully getting from Palisade into The Mirage. Which they may be able to conquer depending on how things go.

The... end of the last game... I'm not gonna give away too much about the end of the last game for y'all here who are listening. [half-chuckling] And playing. Because I want you to hear it, and because I think Art and Jack did a really good job. Um. But! By the end of that, The Principality and The Curtain did *not* find Palisade. They did not get their way in. I won't tell you how those particular characters wound up because I think it's really fun.

But! What we know is The Curtain is going to continue trying to get in. And in today's game, in Stealing the Throne I think that the thing that they've done is either built or dusted off some sort of Divine to help them find this planet that they lost track of. I guess that was another thing we established in the last game is: at some point The Principality left Palisade behind for some reason. Um... That is a mystery... to anyone who is alive today. No-one knows why that happened. No-one knows why they *lost track* of a planet. Outside of, again, being at the kind of shore of The Mirage makes things tricky...

KEITH: There's a lot of planets out there.

AUSTIN: There's a lot of planets out there!

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: And anything at the shore of The Mirage is just easy to lose, right? So yeah. So...

KEITH: The couch cushions of the universe.

AUSTIN: That's what they call them! [chuckling] So... Um... I'm gonna just start— Any questions about setting, time, anything else? Before we start reading rules from this book...?

KEITH: Do we have a galaxy map for this?

AUSTIN: Sort of!

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] We have the map that Annie made a year— two years ago for us.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Based on my bad sketch.

KEITH: I— Yeah, I've just vaguely remembered...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I'll send it.

KEITH: [overlapping] ...that at some point you were like: "this is where Palisade is."

AUSTIN: Yeah

KEITH: And it's, like, circled.

AUSTIN: Yea-yeah, I'll send it to you.

[ALI chuckles]

KEITH: But I just... I totally forget where that...

AUSTIN: I will. I will. In fact, I'll put it up on this screen really quick. Uuh... pu-pu-puuh. Pictures.

[0:15:00]

KEITH: Where it is... okay here it is.

AUSTIN: All Divinity. Uploading. I will now move us also from the chat over to our... Roll20.

[pause]

AUSTIN: Bu-bu-buuh... [pause] "Uploading this may take a few minutes." Alright. Well... Um. Any other questions while this map uploads? [chuckles] Oh my god! It's huge.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: It's too big!

[ALI laughs, KEITH chuckles]

AUSTIN: Folks! Folks! We got a problem!

KEITH: I don't— Oh, okay. I see it. Yeah.

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling] Yeah.

KEITH: I was looking at Roll20 and it's not on the Roll20. [overlapping] It's on the—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It's on the Roll20!

KEITH: Well, it's not visible to me on the Roll20. It's only on your— on your screen.

AUSTIN: Oh, I haven't moved you over to this page. I see.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Boom. There you go.

KEITH: Yeah, it's big.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's big. Working on it! Working on it, folks!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Making it tiny! Annie, why'd you make this map so big? Why is the galaxy so big?

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Oh, space is big! This is what we were talking about!

KEITH: It's good to have...

AUSTIN: Alright.

KEITH: ...giant art.

AUSTIN: It is. So, Palisade is somewhere... Fuck, I can't get closer than this. I have to blow it up more. Alright, well.

[ALI & KEITH laugh]

AUSTIN: It truly doesn't super matter, but, like... Somewhere here in this little gap south of The Twilight Mirage. This red arm is The Twilight Mirage. Like, here.

ALI: [overlapping] Hm...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Or sorry, this red arm is Nideo space; this big white... like, blob is The Twilight Mirage. And somewhere here between the kind of dark of space...

KEITH: So, like, there?

AUSTIN: Like, yeah. Like, here. Yes, exactly. Somewhere there, right on the southern border of— The “southern” quote-unquote border of The Twilight Mirage. Um... Other, I guess, it's worth thinking about this for the map really quick. You know? Keith, can you not? [chuckles]

KEITH: Oh, sorry. Just having fun.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Uhm... Aha.

KEITH: [half-chuckling] I forgot that that's the one thing I could do that everyone could see.

AUSTIN: Aha. Yeah.

[DRE chuckles]

AUSTIN: This is— It's worth remembering because we played in Partizan for a year, where all of the stels are, and all of the stels touch Partisan. That's just not true *anywhere else* in the galaxy. In the middle of Nideo space it's Nideo for... forever. You know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Even up at The Golden Branch Orion doesn't connect there. [overlapping] So it's the only like—

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's very distinct in a certain way...

KEITH: It looks really close, by the— where The Golden Branch touches. But, yeah. It's really not. In space terms, it's close.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but it's or not—

KEITH: There's almost... [overlapping] something here...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Well, like, no, because Orion is so far away. Orion is the big blue arm. [overlapping] That's nowhere near there.

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh right, and we're here? Oh, no, yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, yea-yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That's this *huge* blue. And it just, like... It just doesn't touch there at all anymore.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Because most of that's Columnar our space — what used to be part of that Orion arm. Anyway! So, yeah, that's where it is, Keith. Any other setting-stuff questions before we talk... rules? Of stealing a robot? Alright. So.

[reads from rulebook] “Stealing the Throne is a GMless storytelling game for three to five players. Together you'll build a Throne and then devise its defenses before taking them apart one by one in an action-filled heist. The game begins with the Planning Phase. During this phase you'll gather the tools you need to play. Discuss player safety; choose which Throne you're going to steal; and decide where the heist is going to take place. As you make decisions about the Throne...” — which for us is a Divine — “you'll learn a little bit about its history, its capabilities, and why you want to steal it.

The Thieves. Safety first! The Thieves, your characters, in the game are about to do something incredibly dangerous. As players though, you should always feel safe. Stealing the Throne grants players considerable power to invent details about the history, technology, and people of the world in which the game takes place. As part of the planning phase it's important to discuss and agree upon the tone of the game, establish boundaries and put safety tools in place.”

I think we're pretty used to doing this, at this point. My suggestion is that we kind of stay inside of the same realm that we've always played PARTIZAN and most of The Divine Cycle games in. Which is to say: *mostly* PG-13... you know, many of the same vetoed stuff that we would have vetoed for — even for Sangfielle — around things like... particularly descriptive, like, trauma to parts of the body [chuckles] I would not love to get into.

DRE: Uhum.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: This for me is like: “What if Ocean's Eleven had mechs?” But... and... the same sorts of normal breaks around there is what makes sense to me. But if other people have other things they'd like to particularly ban or veto, I'd be happy to do that.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Everyone pretty much good on the— [half-chuckling] our kind of internal standard list of things?

KEITH: Uhum.

DRE: Yeah.

ALI: Yea-yeah. I— Okay. So... [laughs]

AUSTIN: Hm?

DRE: Uh-oh.

ALI: I haven't seen Ocean's Eleven but I feel like the distinction I make in my mind is like: Ocean's Eleven, not Fargo?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Hmm...!

ALI: [overlapping] And does that feel like an appropriate scale?

AUSTIN: That's probably an appropriate scale.

ALI: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I don't mind dipping into Fargo for this, but...

ALI: [laughing] Sure!

AUSTIN: But— And I'll say that only because there are instances of things, like, betrayal here, that...

ALI: Oh, sure-sure-sure.

AUSTIN: ...and also because, like, it is still a war game, right? So, I guess, I shouldn't have said Ocean's Eleven, because, like... someone may *die* during this. [chuckles] Do you know what I mean? [overlapping] Most Ocean's game—

ALI: Okay, yea-yea-yeah.

AUSTIN: Most Ocean's movies are not quite there. You know.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But!

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: But I do also get what you're saying about, like... I don't think we need the cruelty of Fargo probably? You know?

ALI: Right. [overlapping] Or the, like, the...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] The sort of cosmic difference?

ALI: Yeah. [chuckling] The gratuitousness.

AUSTIN: No, yes.

ALI: Yea-yea-yeah, okay.

KEITH: So, it's Fargo, but a romp.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: It's... Yeah. I mean, it's...

KEITH: I haven't seen any of the Ocean's movies, [overlapping] so I'm sort of just guessing.

AUSTIN: That's fine. Yeah, I can imagine it's being rompy. I think that that makes sense to me. [chuckles]

ALI: Uhummm...

AUSTIN: Alright. [reads from rulebook] "Building the Throne. Next you get to choose from which throne you're going to steal and where you're stealing it from." For us, we get to just name it! What Divine is this? And... we'll talk about what it does momentarily. My big pitch for it is: it's something Nideo has that is about *finding* Palisade. And they may have already used it. They may already know where Palisade is, having reactivated this. Or built it new. Or... you know, called on its power and directed it towards Palisade instead of directing it towards, like, the war against The Branched or the war against... The Pact, or something. But for now, at least, we need to know what it is. Is it like Vision? Is it Perception? Is there another cool word for, like, seeing stuff that people like for a Divine? What's another word? Is it Observation? That's not as fun as Perception. [overlapping] Or Perspective?

ALI: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or... the Divine— it's not Foresight, really. Right?

DRE & KEITH: [at the same time] Discernment? Ooh!

AUSTIN: Ooh! There it is!

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: Wow!

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: That's how it works, baybee! The Divine Discernment!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: You fucking love to see it, don't you?

KEITH: Through so many words...!

ALI: Uhum.

KEITH: [overlapping] Out of all the words...!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Out of all the words, we chose this one! Alright. The Divine Discernment. The second thing we do is we— we determine where we're going to steal it *from*. Their suggestions for instance are: "the hangar deck of the Battle Barge Stormsell; Generator Prime, where the Throne's reactor powers a moon; throne room in the heart of a city-sized holy palace; simultaneously from multiple places, the throne is in pieces; during ritual combat against the Throne; or the outer dark where the Throne stands in eternal vigilance," Um... Any thoughts on where this heist is taking place? I think this is an important one in some ways! You know?

DRE: [overlapping] Uhum.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] In many ways. In terms of, like, setting up the *vibe* of this game.

ALI: Uhum.

[a brief pause]

DRE: If this is... If we're talking about this having been, like, lost, the two that kind of makes sense to me would be: "it's in multiple places because it's in pieces..."

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: ...or the one about the outer dark, and replace that...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: ... like, with The Twilight Mirage.

AUSTIN: Well, we know it's not in The Twilight Mirage, because...

DRE: Yea-yea-yea-yeah! But, like, that it's on, like [overlapping] the edge of space there...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It's... It could be on the edge of space there. Or, we could do — I wish I hadn't deleted that fucking map that I said that we didn't need!

[the others laugh]

DRE: How they get ya!

AUSTIN: How they get you! But it should be just in here now. So I should be able to re— Oh, hey, look! It's small now! [chuckling]

ALI: Wow!

AUSTIN: [chuckles] It could also be— We could call the outer dark. There's two other places that come to mind. One is the space between two different galactic arms, right? So, like, the dark between the Nideo space and Apostolos space. The other is, close to the center of the galaxy, where Perennial rules. And the Perennial Wave can fuck you up. Um... That to me is also that style of, like, “oh this is a nightmare place to have to go!” You know? We even know that the Earth is there, somewhere. [chuckling] If you recall!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Does anyone have strong feelings about those, kind of, four ideas: split into a bunch of places; inside the kind of edges of The Twilight Mirage; in betw— in the black between two galactic arms; or near Perennial's center? Ali or Keith? Y'all have strong feelings? Or any other ideas?

ALI: If— It feels like if we've set up that, like... this is something that we've become recently aware of, or, like, something that has been, like, actively used...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: ...in a way... it feels like maybe if we had found it, like, hidden? Or, like, they keep it when it's “off duty” quote-unquote?

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: Or, like, while they're transporting it to where...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] They're going to need it?

ALI: [overlapping] ...they want to, like, go engage a mission, or whatever. And then we're like: [half-chuckling] time to... [overlapping] time to go get it.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Time to grab that shit.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: You mean a...

KEITH: A... Shit. National Treasure? You wanna do a National Treasure?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Is that... Is that in transit? [overlapping] Is that what happens to that one?

KEITH: Yeah, they... they steal it from the room where it gets *cleaned*, like, [overlapping] once a month or something.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Ooooh!

ALI: Ooooh!

AUSTIN: Interesting!

KEITH: Yeah. It's a National Treasure. [overlapping] Classic.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Interesting.

[KEITH laughs quitely]

AUSTIN: What if it's a... So, an interesting thing is we know... We know that, for instance, The Crystal Palace can't exist anymore. Because it's Past and also— You know. We know the Witch in Glass has control of that.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: But what if there was a... What if the way it works is that it has to go to the center of the galaxy to take a picture of the galaxy? And it has to do that once a year. Or once a month. And then it comes back out with the data. And so it's about, like, "can we get it on its transit from this very dangerous place near the center of the galaxy back into Nideo space, where it's gonna drop off the pictures it took?" Including having been zeroed in to try to find Palisade?

KEITH: Why is it taking the pictures?

AUSTIN: So that it can see everything.

KEITH: Right! Oh! [overlapping] Because it's the Divine of doing that!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Because it's the Divine of seeing things.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Aha. Yeah. Yeah, Daire surname says² "like a huge version of those 360 degree cameras." [half-chuckling] Yeah.

ALI: Oh, sure.

DRE: [intrigued] Hmm!

[a brief pause]

² In the chat.

KEITH: [overlapping] Um...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Does this sound fun?

KEITH: Yeah that sounds good to me!

DRE: [overlapping] Yea-yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Kescon sa— Sorry. Kescon says³ “has it been established whether the players are The Curtain?” No. I suspect they are not. I was assuming that they were Millennium Break people. Which, I guess, I hadn’t said out loud. That “we were trying to fucking steal this thing, so that we could find out where Palisade is and potentially... either *stop* The Principality from invading it; or make sure that we can also get there, and get some... be able to help them.” You know? Maybe that latter makes more sense, because we know The Principality will eventually get there. Right? That’s fundamental truth. So maybe it’s about, like: “hey, if we get this information, we can get there and try to... support whoever is there now — if there is anybody there now? I suspect there are some people there now — or stop them from getting there altogether.” You know?

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: Um. So. See, I don’t— Cynan says:⁴ “we get it uh Nideo’s into Foucault!” I don’t think that this has a disciplinary function the way the panopticon does. It is actually an intelligence gathering thing. This is not a thing to, like, make you self-discipline the way the panopticon does. So.

AUSTIN: So, yeah. That’s my pitch. [uncertainly] Is that interesting to people?

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. The next step. So I guess I should write this down. Scene of the the crime is, like... you know... it’s... [at a slower pace, and quieter, while he’s typing] “the near center of the galaxy as Discern-ment” [chuckles] I’m just gonna— I’m just gonna carrot return this “as Discernment is traveling back into Nideo space.” Please, fit! Uagh. Okay. Bring it back up! [in a regular tone] Something happened with... Roll20’s text stuff that’s made it really-really finicky, lately. And I’m so mad about it. [overlapping] It’s so weird.

ALI: Ohhh...

KEITH: Finickier?

AUSTIN: Way finickier!

³ In the chat.

⁴ In the chat.

DRE: [overlapping] Geez.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] After you— after you, like, finish typing, it will stay... It will stay sort of open, and will move, like, eventually. Like, it won't— See? It just did it to me again! Argh!

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: It's so annoying! Anyway. There we go. This is... uh, good enough. It's good enough. Alright. Um...

KEITH: Oh! I'm watching on youtube.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

KEITH: It moved again, and I was like: "it moved again!"

AUSTIN: It did!

[ALI & DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: It did move again! That actually, truly happened!

KEITH: [half-chuckling] Okay.

AUSTIN: [reads from rulebook] "Background and systems. Finally—" Finally, take a screenshot by mistake. [chuckling] "Finally uh...

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: "...take turns choosing and responding to either of the following prompts: either tell us about the dramatic moment— [corrects himself] a dramatic moment in the Throne's thousand-year history, or tell us why— [corrects himself] tell us why we must steal the Throne. After each response, another player describes a feature of the Throne that reflects the story you just heard: a subsystem, weapon, or visual flourish, or other detail. Write each of these features down on a separate index card! You'll need them during the getaway."

"Continue taking turns until each player has answered at least one prompt, you have at least three reasons to steal the Throne, and everyone is satisfied with the collective mental image of the giant mech you are planning to steal." I'm gonna put down the first one here which is pretty obvious is the, like, you know: [typing it up] has sight of Palisade. Um... Which feels like, the subsystem is, like, comprehensive... you know... uh... surveillance...? You know, system? Or something? [overlapping] Right?

DRE: [overlapping] Uhum.

ALI: Hm.

KEITH: This is the...

AUSTIN: Big—

KEITH: ...second of the two prompts?

AUSTIN: That is the systems one, yeah. That *fee/s* like the right way for that to go. Um. But we still need other things it's done in its history. And/or, rather, other *reasons* for us to steal it — is the other way of thinking about it.

[pause]

[0:30:00]

KEITH: It... Is there something else extremely important that it must have mapped in order to be...

AUSTIN: Mmm!

KEITH: ...like, if it is the Divine of [overlapping] Discernment—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Discernment. Yeah.

KEITH: ...it certainly must have discerned something more important than Palisade.

AUSTIN: In history. Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] Right.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Probably, right?

KEITH: Because Palisade is really important *right now*.

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: [overlapping] But it is just sort of like a fluke.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh! Is it?

KEITH: Right?

AUSTIN: Hey, Dre, [half-chuckling] does it have a picture of... Autonomy Itself? And, like, that whole... [overlapping] part of the space?

DRE: [overlapping] Sure.

AUSTIN: Does it have— What did we end up calling this? Celestia nullius? This... the uncolonized arm? Or the arm that hasn't been colonized by... um... the part— by The Principality, at least? [chuckles] So, a picture of The True Divine? Is it— Dre, do you think that it's The True Divine or do you think that it's, like, the peoples of that arm?

DRE: I mean, if we're gonna do it, let's go all the way.

AUSTIN: Alright, alright. You know. Yeah.

KEITH: Is all the way— it literally has a picture of The True Divine? [overlapping] Is that the...?

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

KEITH: That's all the way?

AUSTIN: That's fun.

KEITH: Yeh.

AUSTIN: Um... What's a system? That doesn't— It can be tied to that, but it should be another thing that isn't just "it can see far," you know? And take pictures. And as a reminder, these are things we're going to need to use to get away with this.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: So right now we're thinking of it as a big camera but maybe it also has some other sort of defensive features... Or, you know, maneuverability or something like that. Or shielding.

KEITH: Tied to that it has...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Wasn't it— It's, like, hard or dangerous or impossible or deadly to get into that... [overlapping] other arm?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, we saw The Pact to try to get in there and they got wiped the *fuck* out!

ALI: Hmm...

KEITH: Right. Right. So it... presumably... it either has to see so far...

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: ...that it could see it without going to it...

AUSTIN: Or...

KEITH: [overlapping] ...which is possible.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: Mm!

KEITH: Or it is durable in a way, like... this is like... also, sort of like... Maybe what you want out of a Divine that can see stuff is that it's like a GoPro? Like, a Divine GoPro? Where it's like: "yeah, it's a camera but it also can fall, like, off of a mountain."

AUSTIN: Right. I like that—

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I like that it's just, like, super sturdy.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Reinforced, right?

ALI: Yeah.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: I love this little ampersand in this font. This little — oop! — that little guy.
[overlapping] Like that.

KEITH: Is this one of the new fonts?

AUSTIN: No, it's an old font. It's one of my favorite old fonts, the handwriting font that's, like,
[overlapping] not good, but it's... I love it.

KEITH: [overlapping] It's kind of handwriting... one?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: Alright, we need... each need one more piece of history— Or not each, but, I guess, we need two more pieces of history and two more sub-systems-y things.

DRE: Hm... Um! My idea — and I can't figure out if it would be better to use as a system, or if it would be better expressed through, like, a history piece, but — would be... So, if Discernment is about, like, having, like, excellent exterior vision of itself...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

DRE: I like the idea of it being on the inside— being like... almost like: “There's too— This is too big on the inside! There's too much stuff in here! It shouldn't be able to, like—”

AUSTIN: Aha.

DRE: “If we lay it all this stuff out on a table it takes up more space...”

AUSTIN: Right!

DRE: “...than, like, than Discernment itself takes up.” It's, like, recursively constructed in that... it's way too big on the inside.

AUSTIN: That *feels* like it should be a system. And it feels like it should be tied to something about— I mean, we are now just going to make the fucking panopticon, Bentham machine...

[ALI giggles]

AUSTIN: Is it— Has it been used as a prison in the past? To keep people...

AUSTIN: ...lost inside of its weird... recursive labyrinth.

DRE: Uhm...!

AUSTIN: Or, [overlapping] has someone—

DRE: [overlapping] I see it more as, like, a collector thing...

AUSTIN: Hmmm!

DRE: ...than, like, a prison thing.

AUSTIN: Oh, had—

KEITH: Hmm.

DRE: Especially if you're using it for, like, scouting, and seeing far.

AUSTIN: Does it actually— is there some sort of armory, or a collection of ancient relics, or other types of information to... rival Past? Maybe not as all-encompassing as what Past had, but as... you know, more of a... There's just very important information that isn't available— or stuff that isn't available elsewhere. Has its elect, you know, historically been someone who likes to turn it into the British Museum? [chuckles]

DRE: [laughs] Yeah, I mean, I dig that. I think to me that fits better than it just being, like, a straight up, like, prison.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that's more interesting. A fucking nightmare... machine.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: So that would be like... You know. Is the history thing there? That it was effectively used as a...

DRE: Oh, maybe...! I mean, again, we're not thinking of it as a prison. But I bet if you were like, say, somebody who was trying to steal it previously...

KEITH: Hm.

DRE: [overlapping] ...and you didn't know how things worked in there...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh, totally!

DRE: ...somebody just died in there, trying to steal it before.

AUSTIN: I'm sure many people have done this, right?

[ALI chortles]

AUSTIN: I mean, The Principality's been around for five thousand years. I bet once a year someone— or once a century someone's like “I'm think I can fucking steal that thing!
[overlapping] All I have to do is get a picture of...”

KEITH: [overlapping] I mean...

AUSTIN: “...where the good gold is and then I'm...”

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: Honestly, even besides that, a lot of things that are prisons people don't consider prisons! [chuckling] So!

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Aha.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um...

DRE: We do be living in a society.

AUSTIN: Uh...

KEITH: I mean, it's basically like a god cop with a camera on it! Right?

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I mean, you don't have to be inside of it to be constantly perceived. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah, aha. I mean, this is what we were talking about. What I was saying before is that, like, I don't think we've established that people in this setting are afraid of being seen by Discernment...

KEITH: [overlapping] Right.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ...so it's not literally a panopticon.

ALI: [overlapping] Hm!

AUSTIN: Because that's the thing about the panopticon that everybody forgets from their undergrad classes is that it doesn't discipline you — you discipline you.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Because of... [overlapping] of the way it works.

KEITH: [overlapping] Isn't that the whole thing?

AUSTIN: That's the whole thing. But you— Listen. Let me tell you, as somebody's taught the panopticon...

KEITH: [overlapping] Fair.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ...a bunch...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: ...you end up getting— You end up getting essay answers that are like “the machine is so scary that it makes you do a thing.” And it's not that. It's not that. That's not what Foucault wrote. Anyway! Um... [quieter, rushed] That's close to what Bentham wrote. Anyway! [in a regular tone] And then its systems, there are: its “recursive interior”... its “strange and recursive interior.” Bigger. It's bigger on the inside.

KEITH: [overlapping] It's big inside. Big inside. Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping, half-chuckling] Bigger inside!

KEITH: Damn, another kind of prison that people don't consider a prison.

AUSTIN: Aha. Uhm... Ali, any thoughts on the fourth piece of history and/or subsystem?

ALI: Uuum...! Yeah... Um...

AUSTIN: Truly, if anyone can tell me how to deselect text in Roll20 now...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: I would be very thankful.

KEITH: Escape? [overlapping] Are you trying Escape? Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Trust me, Keith, I'm trying Escape.

DRE: Uhm...

KEITH: Look, it's the only— [overlapping] It's the only thing I can think of to help!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It makes sense! It makes *perfect* sense.

DRE: What about a... right-click?

AUSTIN: Let me try a right-click. Let me get in there and try a right-click.

KEITH: I think what I usually do, if I'm remembering, is I double click outside the box — [overlapping] is what I always do.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Nah. No, you could see... Yeah, it doesn't do it for me anymore. It's 100% just fucked up. It's just— You can see the [overlapping] inside...

KEITH: [overlapping] And that's the last system?

AUSTIN: [chuckles, then frustrated] Aargh! [overlapping] That just jumped again!

KEITH: [overlapping] I see! It's 100% fucked up!

AUSTIN: It's just— it's just fucked up! [overlapping] Shit's fucked up.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, so the history we got on that last one was that it's being used as a museum, and not, like, we have information that people have died in there?

AUSTIN: I mean, I think that...

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: ...comes from... I don't know that that's like— Does that make *history*?
[half-chuckles]

[ALI laughs]

DRE: [overlapping] Hm. Fair.

ALI: [overlapping] I mean, I think, like, there are...

AUSTIN: Every design has dead bodies in it.

ALI: Oh, sure-sure. Okay. Yeah. I— Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean?

ALI: No. But I just think, like, for our intel...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Hmm...

ALI: [overlapping] ...it's less like oh there's cool globes in there and more like...

AUSTIN: Oh, I thought they were, like, cool...

ALI: Yea— I said globe. You know what I mean. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

KEITH: Planets. [overlapping] Full planets.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I think that that's— For me that's “strange and recursive interior, bigger on the inside.”

ALI: [overlapping] Sure.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Because that's the system we would use...

KEITH: [overlapping] That's so...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] The history is, like, for us. It's not a thing that we— I guess, I guess maybe that's two different things! Is that two different things?

KEITH: What is the set— What is the thing that is maybe a different thing?

AUSTIN: Ali is noting that, like, “people die in there because they get lost in there” is... is...

ALI: Right.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: And for me that's part of systems, not part of— or that's part of “strange and recursive interior, bigger on the inside” But then, the, like...

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: The fact that we've talked about it's bigger in there because it's partly used to store a bunch of stuff that was, you know, stolen from people? [chuckles]

ALI: Uhum.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: That is now not represented as a system.

KEITH: That's in history.

AUSTIN: That's in history. We could probably combine that with number three.

KEITH: I'd say dead people belongs in both, I think. But...

ALI: Yeah. I just... I...

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: I was surprised by what we've...

AUSTIN: What we went with? [overlapping] I thought that we...

ALI: [overlapping] What we wrote. Yeah. But...

AUSTIN: Did we decide *not* to do the museum thing?

KEITH: No, we did. I think it was just the timing thing. Where we talked about the dead thing while you were typing into systems and not into history.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

KEITH: Even though it could go to either.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But I don't know. I wasn't watching.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna make an amendment, then, to the systems thing that says: “people get lost and die inside”

ALI: [chuckling] Sure.

KEITH: How big— How big is the inside?

AUSTIN: Big. It's a...

KEITH: People go in there?

AUSTIN: What?

KEITH: Like, do people— it's a museum, right? Like, are people going in? Like, is it open [overlapping] on Thursdays?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I don't— No I think it's open to— I think it's open on Thursdays to like Elects... You know...

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Heads of state. Heads of Asterism.

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Your major— High ranking members of... society. The Princept.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: Right?

KEITH: So the answer to the question "where is Palisade"... is not... a whole planet got [overlapping] eaten up by the machine?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No. It didn't get eaten up. That's— Yeah, that's a good point, though. That's a good catch, though.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um...

ALI: Anyway. So... [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I was thinking... Maybe part of its history would be that, like... there was, like, an attempted heist before... and someone stole, like, a piece of information instead of stealing, like, the whole thing...

AUSTIN: Hmm...!

ALI: Or, like, went in there to get... like, an artifact or something around that. And now, the systems is that, like... It has, like, reinforced hard drives or whatever! [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Oohh!

ALI: [chuckling] Like, you know, what I mean?

AUSTIN: Sure-sure-sure. There's, like, interior defenses of some sort.

ALI: [overlapping] Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Or just, like, it's hard to hack. It's hard to... Is it data protection? Or is it physical protection? Do you know what I mean? Is it—

ALI: It feels like: as we say, it has to be both, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. I think you're right.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: It's both.... it's hard to hack and it's Resident Evil 1 laser grids. [overlapping] The movie, not the game.

ALI: [overlapping] Shhhhhh... [laughing] Okay! Sure! Sure-su-su-sure! Yea-yea-yeah!

AUSTIN: Uh... “Once suffered a major heist” is the history. And now is “reinforced internal defenses (‘hardware’ & software).” I want to put hardware in quotes, because I’m being, like... You know? Hardware. Wink.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: Okay! I’ll zoom out a little here... [overlapping] I did not need...

KEITH: [overlapping] I think this all works! If I sucked, I would build this.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Yeah!

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: For sure, for sure. The Divine Discernment. [annoyed, but tempered tone] Oh my god! Aaaargh! Drag it back here! Okay. Alright. This is fine. This is now fine! I’ve clicked away somehow.

“The Divine Discernment. Scene of the crime is: the near center of the galaxy as Discernment is traveling back to Nideo space.” Its history is that it “has sight of Palisade; it’s that it has evidence of The True Divine; it was used as a colonial museum; and it once suffered a major heist.” Its systems and other features are: “comprehensive surveillance

system — galaxy wide, probably galaxy and internally, I guess —; two, it's sturdy and reinforced, like a GoPro" — I would add 'like a GoPro' here, but I don't want to fuck with text ever again —;

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: "...strange and recursive interior, bigger on the inside, people get lost and die inside; and then reinforced internal defenses, ('hardware' and software)." Okay.

So, a thing I'm gonna say is: the way the system works is: we will be inventing our heist characters as we play. But I know who we are. So if you want to— So I guess what I'll say is: you should start thinking of your character's name, pronouns, and specialty, immediately. Um... In my mind we are either members of Millennium Break, or we are people who've been hired by Millennium Break to do this heist.

Does that make sense? But I don't know... But if you want to be... I guess maybe that's enough breadth, right? As in that way you could be like a true believer or you could be a merc who's been hired for this. Um... But I say that now, because the book does not say "and now write down your thief character." That's gonna happen as part of play... But maybe have that in mind!

KEITH: I'm sorry, have what in mind?

AUSTIN: A name for your character, pronouns and a specialty. If you want to write it down now, you can go ahead.

KEITH: [quietly, overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Is what I would say. [reads from rulebook] "The Heist. The Heist phase consists of one round per thief. Each round is a scene, during which the thief faces a single obstacle, security feature, or threat. Once these obstacles have been overcome, The Getaway begins, and any survivors make their escape with the Throne."

"The roles. Stealing the Throne features three rotating roles: the Throne, the Thief..." Which is really thieves. "...and the Backup. During the Heist each player takes one turn as the Throne and one as the Thief. The Throne sets a scene by describing an obstacle that the Thief must overcome whether it's security measures, guards, defense systems, or some other complication. Go big, make it fiendishly difficult, and don't worry about how to get past it! That's the Thief's problem. The Thief faces the obstacle outlined by the Throne. They describe their actions in the moment: how they've prepared for the challenge, or whatever else makes for an exciting story about highly skilled thieves working a score. Everyone else is the Backup. They help the Throne set the scene by adding colorful details and answering questions the Throne asks them. If the thief needs help defeating an obstacle, the Backup can also respond to a call for assistance."

So, again. Briefly, shortly: we each get a turn as a Thief. When we are the Thief somebody else is the Throne — is the Divine — and the... kind of the antagonist. And the people who are not either of those roles during that turn are playing everybody else. Right?

They're adding detail. They're adding color. They're answering questions as they come up. And just, you know! You know how these games work.

Um... [reads from rulebook] -"Setup. To begin the Heist, shuffle the deck." Which I've done... but I'll do it again.

[0:45:00]

AUSTIN: Shuffle! Yes! "And deal three cards to each player. These are your thief's cards. You can look at your own cards, but keep them secret from the other players."

KEITH: Hm.

AUSTIN: Please, no one look at my cards! [half-chucklin] Which you could do, because I'm streaming. But. You know. I'm dealing three.

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh, yeah. I'm gonna pop...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] But don't do it!

KEITH: Yeah. I'm gonna pop out the chat, then. [overlapping] So I can just close the thing.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That's a good idea. Yeah.

DRE: Uhum.

AUSTIN: I guess I could do... Wait... I can deal to all players and that won't hit anybody else because nobody else is online. Deal cards to turn... I don't know what that means. We're gonna hit deal. We should all get three. Alright.

DRE: Yep.

ALI: Uhum!

AUSTIN: [reads from rulebook] "Place a deck— [corrects himself] Place the rest of the deck somewhere with an easy reach. This is the Throne's deck." I'm just gonna handle these cards for this session because it's just gonna be easier, I think.

KEITH: Ooh, how do I look at my cards?

AUSTIN: I think you click on them...

DRE: You click on 'em.

AUSTIN: Is that right?

KEITH: [Oh, it's a steal card, if I—

AUSTIN: Are you clicking on your own cards?

KEITH: Oh, that's— Sorry, no. I clicked on the wrong number.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: That's why.

AUSTIN: [muttering] Okay.

DRE: Don't steal my cards!

AUSTIN: [muttering] Okay. [reads from rulebook on a regular volume] "Place the rest of the deck somewhere with an easy reach. These are the Throne's deck." You're supposed to "have a six-sided die... on the table to represent the alert level. Set it to one." I'm not going to do that. Because we have another way of doing this that we've been using for years and years... Hey y'all! Remember this? It's back! [overlapping] Here's our fucking COUNTER/Weight clock!

DRE: [overlapping] Oh hell yeah, baby!

AUSTIN: Our COUNTER/Weight alert clock is back! And it's alert time. We're alerted. That's our one. [reads from rulebook] "It's time for the heist to begin! [half-chuckling] What are these cards for?" [half-chuckling] Says the book. "Each thief has three cards. You'll use one to face your obstacle during the Heist, and the second, hopefully, to make your escape during the Getaway. You could use your third card to either assist another Thief during the Heist, helping them to overcome their obstacle, or to power up one of the Throne's systems, making the getaway easier. Choose carefully, and remember that high cards are good!" [half-chuckles]

KEITH: Great.

AUSTIN: [reads from rulebook] "Playing out the Heist. The six steps listed below make up one round. Repeat them until each other player has played the Throne once and only once, and the Thief once and only once. Set up—" [corrects himself] Or. "Step One: The Throne. To kick off the round the player— one player volunteers to play the Throne. In the first round anyone can volunteer and subseq... [his tongue twist] subsequent rounds the Throne can only be someone who was the Backup in the previous round, and who hasn't already played the Throne. In a four-player game no one can play the Backup more than twice in a row."

Uh... Who wants to be... Who wants to be the Throne first? Who wants to be the baddie? Who wants to say how... Set up the situation for this and... and make it hard. Do you want me to do it as just, like, proof of concept?

[ALI chuckles]

DRE: Sure!

AUSTIN: [muttering] Okay.

ALI: If you'd like to.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm down. I'm down to do that.

[ALI giggles]

AUSTIN: [reads from rulebook] "Step Two: The Obstacle. The Throne describes the obstacle facing the thieves, using the current alert level to set the tone. Once they frame the scene, they deal one card from the Throne's deck face up, and a number of cards equal to the alert level, face down. These are the Throne's cards. No-one, not even the Throne, gets to look at the face down cards yet."

So... I'll describe the situation. Alert levels... And I'll just say this: alert level is One. That means [reads from rulebook] "all is quiet, the thieves are undetected. Two is localized alerts. Three is facility-wide alarms security dispatched. Four is defensive systems on high alert, thieves identified. Five is full facility lockdown. [half-chuckles] Six: how are the thieves still at large?!?"

So. Situation. You are... I guess I'm imagining we're approaching via spaceship, or via mech, or something. I don't know how we're approaching. But we get that great shot of this Divine. The Divine Discernment. Which, I realized, we don't have like an exterior image of. What's it— What's it actually look like? It's really hard for me not to think of it as looking something like an observatory. Or one of the Google car... The Google 360 cameras. Do you know what I'm talking about?

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah. Yea-yea-yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It's kind of a dome... a kind of a dome vibe...? Um...

ALI: Hm...

AUSTIN: But then...

KEITH: Like a security camera at a... like at a CVS, or whatever?

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah. Like that, but mixed with an observatory. But does it have a body bigger than that? Or is it just an orb? [half-chuckling] Do we just got an orb situation?

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: I kind of like it as being an orb that has... countless... I mean, they're not little because the Divine is big. Right?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's maybe not moon-size big, but...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: ...but it's bigger-than-a-small-mech big. It's in our classic “this is a Divine, it's so big that it's...” Again, the quote, again and again is: “when divines fight, you know, millions die.” Right? So, even this thing— If we just landed somewhere, it could fuck up a whole bunch of people.

KEITH: Oh, sorry. You're saying it's got a dome...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I think it is a... I don't know that—

KEITH: [overlapping] Like a domed shell, but it's a traditional mech body?

AUSTIN: I'm wondering: is it just a big orb? [overlapping] Is it just a big round orb?

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] My...

DRE: [overlapping] That's what Sputnik looked like, so...

AUSTIN: Hmm...

KEITH: Yeah, I was gonna think— I was thinking... Like, if it's... It's got to fly and it's gotta to be in space...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And so— I mean, I don't know if it needs to be able to, like, ground-to-orbit. Or if it just gets...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I don't think it needs to.

KEITH: [overlapping] ...dragged to space. But if it needs to... get really good pictures of stuff from really far away then I bet it's... The thing that I'm thinking of is just, like, an orb on top of a big box, covered in little, like, piston jets that, like, are able to move it in really precise way— [overlapping] 'Cause if you're trying to take a picture from... a light year away...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Hmm! You need super-super precise... So is it an orb inside of a cage? Not a cage, but, like uh...

KEITH: Like an elegant egg drop thing? [overlapping] Like, you gotta...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yea-yea-yeah! Like a... like a... Oh my god, what's it called on a car?

KEITH: Shock mount?

AUSTIN: Like a shock mount! Yea-yeah! Like a shock mount! Like a microphone shock mount!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's a... I'm looking at my shock mount for my microphone, currently. What if that was as big as... a country...

DRE: Oooh!

AUSTIN: ...and also it had an orb in there? [chuckles]

DRE: I'm linking a picture in...

AUSTIN: I'm excited for this.

DRE: I guess I'll put it in PALISADE instead of Scheduling. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah. Yeah!

KEITH: Yea!

AUSTIN: What is this? What is this?

DRE: It's supposed to be a gif and it's not spinn—

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: Oh, that's happened to me before! Yeah. You've got to download it and upload it if you want a gif to play.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

DRE: I'll just put the link...

AUSTIN: Gimme that link.

DRE: That's...

KEITH: The link... doesn't... wanna go.

AUSTIN: But I've...

AUSTIN: Okay. [overlapping] There we go. I got it to go.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I got! I got it.

AUSTIN: Ooh! What is this? What *is* this? What are we—

KEITH: Yea, think of this, but *boxier*.

AUSTIN: I think, yeah. The cage is boxier.

DRE: Hm.

KEITH: 'Cause it's— Yeah.

AUSTIN: But... [overlapping] But...!

KEITH: [overlapping] But this also works for the sturdy reinforced thing, too.

AUSTIN: It's kind of cool if it isn't boxy! [overlapping] I'm thinking about it now!

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay. It's kind of cool, and all the edges...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Pyramids are kind of fucking sick, aren't they?

[DRE snickers]

KEITH: [chuckles] And then also each face of this... what is this? Is this, like, a pyramid? Like, if you were to... if you were to connect all the edges would this be a pyramid?

DRE: [overlapping] I think it's...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I think it's a pyramid in the middle! But, like, from the outside it's not, 'cause the...

KEITH: A circle. It's almost like a hexagon, or something.

AUSTIN: It's just a billion little— This is “FIXED - Ovoplex v1.1 - GrabCAD Egg Drop Challenge” by Lance Skelly [overlapping] on grabcad.com.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah. I googled egg drop cage.

AUSTIN: There you go. [chuckles]

ALI: Hm...

DRE: So, there you go.

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: Thank you. This is cool as hell. Let's do this! I love— it has like all these little internal spirals— So for people who don't, who can't see this in front of us: there are... We're gonna count really quick. One, two, three, four, five, six intersecting long tubes— like thin tubes... They kind of look like ski... poles? Right?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Sort of? [overlapping] Intersecting...

KEITH: [overlapping] I think they would be straws in real life.

AUSTIN: They'd probably be straws in real life. Or some sort of 3d printing technology... plastic.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: I guess that's what that's called. Or resin, or something. It's probably not resin. Resin would break. And those are set up to be like a pyramid — but they also keep going. So it's not, like, it's just a pyramid. It's like what if you took all of the lines of a triangle or a pyramid, and kept drawing them for, like, [chuckling] twice as long as the pyramid is.

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: And then in the middle of that is this weird twisting... It's supposed to be like rubber bands or something? What is that?

KEITH: Yeah... [overlapping] I think it's a rubber band.

DRE: [overlapping] Rubber bands, yeah.

AUSTIN: Twisting, but imagine that's like, steel or some sort of, like— What if there was a steel rubber? You know? Rubberized metal. [overlapping] And...

KEITH: [overlapping] It's like... it's like Spider-Man web.

AUSTIN: I think it's stronger than Spider-Man web! And I know that's saying something because we know Spider-Man web is very strong.

[ALI chuckles]

KEITH: Because it's like steel. They describe it as steel.

AUSTIN: I know! [standoffish] I think it's stronger! I think it's stronger.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think this is stronger. I think the Divine...

KEITH: That's better than Spider—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Better than Spider-Man web.

KEITH: [overlapping] As stronger than spider-man web, as it is bigger. Which is the analogy that they use...

AUSTIN: This is... You know, this is true.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeamm.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And then inside of it is an egg. But for us it's an orb. And the orb is The Divine Discernment. So *that's* there floating in space! For some...

KEITH: Are the straws also not... or is it...?

AUSTIN: I think the straws are! I think that whole structure— [overlapping] I love that whole structure—

KEITH: [overlapping] Straws are. Okay. So the inside just... Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's like a... It's like a child's drawing of a star!

KEITH: [overlapping] Alright.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You know what I mean?

DRE: Oh, yeah!

AUSTIN: Where it's just like: "I" just add some more spikes to it! Just make it bigger and weirder!"

[ALI chuckles quietly]

KEITH: Right. Just cross the center a bunch, [overlapping] and then it's a star.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Yeah. By child I mean me as a child. So.

KEITH: This is also how I drew stars.

AUSTIN: Yes. The... Uh... What color of— are it? Is it probably not that purple and yellow. That's a little much.

[DRE laughs]

KEITH: It is a sickening color. It says bad combo.

AUSTIN: ALI, you're really good at color combos. Can you hook me up?

ALI: Oh, my— [laughs] Sure! Well, you want to be discreet, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Hm.

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh, this is stealth, right? It makes sense.

ALI: [overlapping] But the orb half's also fucked up. So maybe the orb is some sort of like, really bright color there?

AUSTIN: Oh, that's fun! Yeah.

ALI: And then all of the yellow is some sort of like, you know, the sort of sleek gray...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay.

ALI: ...sort of situation?

KEITH: Well this— Here's a thought: like, Ali, you just said that the center could still be bright. Maybe it's like trying to look like a star in the sky, sometimes?

AUSTIN: Hm.

ALI: Uhum.

KEITH: Like, you can't see the other bits of it. And it's just like: [overlapping] "oh that's just a star!"

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Yeah.

KEITH: Like it's... As close as you would ever get to it looks like a star in the sky.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Love it. Okay. Um...

KEITH: I hate this thing! This is one of my least favorite Divines that exists, I think.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: It's a pretty bad one! It's a pretty bad one. So, that thing is flying around. Is being escorted by a fleet. Or maybe not a fleet, but it has an escort. An attached escort that's probably a few hallows which are— Remember we've had Nideo... hallows in... in PARTIZAN before. And they often do just straight up have fucked up camera heads and stuff

like that. Um... and so, that's definitely what these are. These definitely have... I'm trying to see if I just had my— all my mech names on deck and I don't think I do, unfortunately.

KEITH: We were talking about the size of this just for... [overlapping] just for my sake, I guess.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Yea-yeah-yeah.

KEITH: Which is the diameter— Assuming this is a sphere, like, pretend that these circles become— that these lines become a sphere around it.

AUSTIN: Aha.

KEITH: Is it like the diameter of, like, France?

AUSTIN: You know, I've never seen France's diameter, personally. Like, in a one-to-one situation.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: But yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. I also— I couldn't tell you what it is. I know that it's...

AUSTIN: I know it's big!

KEITH: It's definitely big! It's one of the bigger European countries, I think. But not the biggest.

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: It's pretty— Yeah, it's... You know, it's 210 000 square miles, but I don't know what that means visually. Because I don't have a thing to look up at in the sky and be like: "well, that's that." Do you know what I mean? Um...

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: It's like looking up at a mountain. But even from our— even from a long distance away. You know what I mean? It's big.

KEITH: It's big.

ALI: Uhh.

AUSTIN: I don't know how big it is. It's probably not as big as France. France is probably too big.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Right?

KEITH: [overlapping] France is a...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Rigor is as big as France, right?

KEITH: Okay. So maybe...

AUSTIN: Or like when Schism stood up in Twilight Mirage. That— We described that as “Texas standing up.” And, like, I think Schism is bigger than this.

KEITH: Texas is only slightly smaller than France. So yeah.

AUSTIN: No, but that's what I mean. But I think this is an order of magnitude smaller, but still very big.

KEITH: So, maybe New Hampshire. That's a bad shape.

AUSTIN: I just— we're not talking about... you know.

KEITH: Yeah. Anyway.

AUSTIN: It has a bunch of escorts. There are ships flying around it, and then also a bunch of hollow or hallows — which is to say they're blessed by Discernment. Their cameras are especially good. And I think they have— they're equipped with... like, instant shot— If they were video game— If this was a first person shooter, they would have hitscan weapons. [chuckles]

They have — and this is a new development. I think I've talked about this before... when we played PARTIZAN there were not beam weapons that weren't, like, close range or super expensive ones. Like, not even hallows tended to have *beam* weaponry. Now, if you're blessed by a Divine that's the sort of thing you could have. The scale of technology has moved increasingly towards the impossible and supernatural.

And so, they have these, like, big camera, you know, heads? That also can shoot beam energy... instantly— You know. At a target. So that is our... the obstacle facing us. I guess now what I should do is I will draw one card from the Throne's deck, face up.

DRE: [overlapping] Hm.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Click and draw. Boop. Okay. And... I'll put that one face up. Flip card! That is a six of diamonds. And then I will draw an equal number to the Throne's alert, which is one, and that will be face down. Um... So. [reads from rulebook] “Step Three. A second player volunteers to face this obstacle.” The obstacle being the approach, effectively. Uuh... For—

KEITH: And that's the six. Is the approach.

AUSTIN: No-no-no. They're both of these numbers.

KEITH: [overlapping] Oooh! Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] The six and whatever that face down is, is the obstacle. "They introduce themselves with the following phrase or something similar: 'This is what I'm here for! I'm ____ and I'm a master of ____!'"⁵ [chuckles] Examples of expertise: cracking impossible locks; stealthy infiltration; aerial insertion; long-range firepower; martial arts; precise timing; mayhem; disguise; biotechnology; nanotechnology; forbidden technology; intricate planning; augmented reality hacking; or throne lore." [chuckles] So, who is—

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Who is saying: "This is what I'm here for. I'm ____ and I'm a master of ____!"

[pause]

KEITH: Damn. I'm not sure I'm masters of anything!

ALI: Uhm...

DRE: Yeah.

ALI (as Omi): I'm Omi, and I'm a master of precision timing. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Oooh!

ALI (as Omi): [half-chuckling] It's time to dock on this fucking crazy thing!

[DRE chuckles, then ALI starts laughing]

AUSTIN: So what's that? Is it, like, timing our approach? [overlapping] Do we have, like, a spaceship?

ALI: [overlapping] I think so! Yeah. 'Cause it has to be, like...

[1:00:00]

ALI: It has to be something that's, like... stealth enough that it can even get close enough to, like, one of these arms or something.

⁵ He pronounces these as "I'm blank, and I'm the master of blank!"

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Uhum.

ALI: [overlapping] Right? Or to the center. Past the arms to the center. [laughs] And then it has to be, like... I feel like, almost, like, launching, like, an escape pod. Not an escape pod. [half-chuckling] An escape pod-esque thing...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: ...from a different ship to be, like... You know, the... the Divine is on this flight path... and it's [half-chuckling] going at this speed...

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: ...to this. And then you gotta be, like: "Okay. Well, team alpha or whatever is gonna be launching now!" To, you know... [hits open palm with a fist twice]

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling] To time it perfectly.

ALI: [starts laughing] To...

AUSTIN: I can't see your hands Ali. This is not...

ALI: [still laughing] Yea-yea-yeah! To... you know, meet it. [laughing, overlapping] I don't know what the word I'm looking for is.

KEITH: [overlapping] Just...

ALI: But the, like, be at the right place at the right time.

AUSTIN: Right. Keith, did you—

KEITH: Dock.

AUSTIN: Yeah, to dock.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Sure.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: You already said— You said dock, already.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Okay.

ALI: [laughing, overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: Ahm...

KEITH: It was... Oh, I was gonna say: oh does this help? It was this. [hits open palm with a fist]

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. That's it.

[ALI & DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yea-yeah. Oh, you make any sound, huh?

KEITH: Yeah. That was my mouth doing that.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah, I was doing that with my mouth.

DRE: [overlapping] Wow!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's incredible.

KEITH: [nonchalantly] Yeah. I know.

AUSTIN: Alright, so... [reads from rulebook] "At this point the Thief describes how they try to overcome the obstacle. The Thief says what they do and the Throne says what happens as a result. The Throne can add minor complications, take on the role of characters other than the thieves, and call on the backup to answer questions and add color... to descriptions or attention to the situation. In the grand tradition of heist movies, the Thief can make liberal use of flashbacks. Role-play this out for as long as it's fun! Importantly, both sides should stop short of resolving the situation entirely. Step five: The Pivotal Moment."

I'm just going to read this ahead, so that we know what's coming. "When the Thief is ready to discover the outcome of their actions, the pivotal moment has arrived. The Thief plays a single card from their hand. The Throne then reveals all of their face-down cards. When is the pivotal moment? The Thief will usually declare that the pivotal moment has arrived. When it's unclear what happens next: the Throne has described the obstacle... and the Thief has responded. There's been some fun back and forth role-playing and 'then what happens?' That's the pivotal moment."

"Some players prefer to learn what their actions are... [corrects himself] whether their actions are successful before they start role-playing, building the scene based on the results, that's perfectly fine, too. The Thief decides when they're ready to see the cards. If the numerical value of the Thief's card is greater than the *highest* of the Throne's cards, they

successfully overcome the obstacle. The Thief then wraps up the scene, either by describing what their success looks like, or briefly role-playing it out with other players. If the Throne holds the highest card, or if it's a draw then the situation escalates. The Throne increases the alert level by one, and describes how the situation gets more complicated for the Thief.”

The Thief then has more options, which we'll get to if that happens. Hopefully, it just won't happen, it'll be a smooth heist! So Ali— Sorry, Omi? [overlapping] Omi is the name of your character, right?

ALI: [overlapping] Omi. Omi, yeah.

AUSTIN: You're— Are you seeing this from, like... some distance? Are you, like— Are you directing us, effectively, in our own little entry pods, or something? Like, what is... What is our mode of transportation?

ALI: Oh, yeah. Maybe it's like... we were on, like, a... like, a ship big enough to have, like, a launching shuttle, or whatever?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And we're on, like... [chuckling] I don't want to say, like, a Naboo Speeder, but... [laughs]

AUSTIN: No, a Naboo... [overlapping] It's what a...

ALI: [overlapping, chuckling] It's what I mean. Like, a very bullet-shaped sort of... Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] A... Sorry, a what?

ALI: Yeah. [laughs] The... the thing that Anakin Skywalker...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] The Naboo Starfighter. The...

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh, oh! Okay!

ALI: [overlapping] Yes, a Starfighter. Sorry.

DRE: [overlapping] Ooh! Okay.

ALI: [overlapping] I said Speeder, whatever. It's a Starfighter.

AUSTIN: Do we each have one of those, or are we... [overlapping] on a group one?

ALI: [overlapping] I think it's, like, individual little...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: ...like, four little bullets coming across space.

AUSTIN: Okay. And you're—

KEITH: I don't know why but I really thought you were trying to say amuse-bouche.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: We had a little amuse-bouche before we go...

ALI: Just a little taste!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, aha!

[KEITH laughs]

ALI: [overlapping] "I'm the ship chef..."

AUSTIN: Yum-yum-yum-yum-yum.

ALI: "I had to get you your granola bars [overlapping] just as you're leaving, and my specialty is timing..."

KEITH: [overlapping] My name's Omi and my specialty is small plates.

AUSTIN: Can you write down your name, pronouns and specialty, also? [overlapping] If you get a second?

ALI: Yea-yeah. Uhum.

DRE: Heart's get hungry stealing.

ALI: Um!

[DRE chuckles]

AUSTIN: The thing that happens, Omi, is that the... It becomes clear that one of the other Thief's... their ship is not— Something's wrong with the engine. And it fucks with the— your original timing plan. Like, it looks like: "oh, they're gonna arrive a second late." And get caught in the vision of one of these defensive... these hallows that's on the... prowl. What do you— What do you do? What's your— What's your way to get us back on your— onto precision timing?

ALI: Can you repeat tha— Sorry, [overlapping] I was typing through some of that... [laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No worries. One of the... one of our kind of... one of the pilots... one of us... one of our— the Thieves in our little personal ships, like, our engine falters and it fucks up the timing.

ALI: Oooh! Sure-sure-sure!

AUSTIN: How do you reconnect the timing? So that we're back on the right... you know... the right rhythm to not get seen on the way in?

ALI: That's a good question. Um...

[a brief pause]

ALI: Okay. Maybe it's— 'Cause it's four of us, right? We're the four Thieves. [overlapping] And one of us...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. We're four thieves. That's what they call us. The Four Thieves.

[ALI laughs]

DRE: Uhum!

AUSTIN: Is Omi part of Millennium Break? Or is Omi a freelancer? A freelance thief.

ALI: I'm fine being a part of Millennium Break.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

ALI: I'm thinking— Okay. I'm sorry to say more Star Wars things out loud. But we're in PARTIZAN, so I'm allowed to.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] In PARTIZAN, you're allowed to, mm-hm.

DRE: [overlapping] Uhum.

ALI: [chuckling] I'm thinking Omi as like a... synthetic being.

ALI: But, like, the C-3PO-like... I'm... I'm really good at, like, processing knowledge sort of thing...

AUSTIN: Hmmm! Fun!

ALI: Which is, like— you know, the, like: "I'm doing all these scenarios, and we have like a 40% chan—" You know what I mean?

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah.

ALI: So that's [laughs] precision timing. Anyway. [laughs] I think maybe the solve here is to, like, let the three people who are, like, still on the correct course, go and do the thing. But then to, like... once they're secure be, like, tell the first person, like: "hang back for a little bit, and then I'll tell you when... to, like, leapfrog." [overlapping] You know what I mean?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right! Right-right-right.

ALI: Like:

ALI (as Omi): Hit the thrusters...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI (as Omi): ...3, 2, 1, now!

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. Uh...

ALI: And maybe, like, now we're separated into— like, the entrance part of the plan, [overlapping] or whatever. But at least now we're all...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Hmmm! True!

ALI: Yea-yea-yeah.

AUSTIN: True. Okay. That means it's time to play your card! I think that makes sense! Like, your solution.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: So, you wanna play a card to succeed — to repeat, higher than either of the Divine's cards. Which, for us: we see the 6 of diamonds — we don't know what this other one is.

ALI: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I don't even know what this other one is.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: So you want to try to beat those — with the note that you... the other cards you have will be useful, also. Either as part of our escape; as part of trying to assist somebody else; or because you're secretly a betrayer, that you don't know yet.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: And are going to try to backstab us.

[ALI gasps]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] So, keep that in mind.

ALI: [imitating dramatic music, overlapping] Pa-pa-paa! Okay.

AUSTIN: What do you play?

ALI: And I'm just playing this face up? It's played?

AUSTIN: Face up, it's played.

ALI: Okay. I'm playing the te— Oh. [laughs]

AUSTIN: I guess it flips.

ALI: [laughing] The 10 of spades. Or...

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Wha— What is that?

AUSTIN: Clubs. Clubs.

ALI: Clubs.

AUSTIN: Alright! That means, now I will now flip over this other card... Let's see it...

ALI: [in anticipation] Ooh!

AUSTIN: [shocked] OOH!

ALI: Wow!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It's the king of clubs.

ALI: [overlapping] Hm...

AUSTIN: Alright, so...

AUSTIN: [reads from rulebook] "If the Throne holds the highest card, or if it's a draw then the situation escalates. The Throne increases the alert by one..." Do that right now. Boom. "...and..." describes how the situation gets more complicated for the Thief. The Thief has three options, see next page, 'Escalating the situation.'"

"If you want inspiration for what might happen when the situation escalates, refer to the suit of the Throne's highest card— [corrects himself] revealed card." And that's, in our case, it's clubs. Clubs is: "a heavily armed patrol arrives" [chuckles] Hearts is: "an old ally or enemy appears." Diamonds is: "a troubling or surprising fact about the Throne is revealed." Spades is: "a concealed defense system activates."

So clubs is: "a heavily armed patrol arrives." I think that there is just— and I don't think it's— like, we're only alert one, so it's not because of a fuckup. This is just a patrol we didn't see, because it was on the other side of the Divine. Or it was maybe behind one of

the big support structures? One of the... big straws that serves as a shock mount?
[chuckles]

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: Just, like, four more of these... Divines⁶ come by... I remember now, also! These are called Casts. C-a-s-t-s. That was the name of the... [reads from notes] "A mirror-coated, humanoid mech that appears like a four-winged angel, with loud jet engines hidden inside of its shiny, metallic wings. Just above its mouth, its head becomes an AWACS-esque flat sensor disc. Largely built for reconnaissance, and deployed by the Palace to gather information and recordings. Avoids conflict, though can defend or stabilize itself with a system of chains and hooks."

Now it also has a big laser camera head. That's the— that's the the Cast Mk.II. The Cast: Palisade Edition. The Recast. That's what they're called. They're called Recasts. So that's... That's what these are.

So! You have options here. [reads from rulebook] "One: you can call for assistance. The Thief asks for any backup players or if any of the other— [corrects himself] backup players will help them. Only one person can assist. If someone says yes, that player describes how their timely or perhaps pre-planned intervention assists the Thief and then plays a card from their hand. Add the value of this card to that of the thief's card to determine if the obstacle is overcome. If no one helps..."

KEITH: What is the value of the 10? I mean, of the king? Is it a 10? It's a 10. Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh. I don't know, it doesn't s...

KEITH: [overlapping] Or is it, is it, like, a 13?

DRE: [overlapping] No, it's higher. I think it looks like an 11, 12, 13.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It's probably a 13. I would imagine it's 13. I'm gonna see if it says anything about...

KEITH: Who does tie go to?

AUSTIN: The Throne.

[a brief pause]

KEITH: I'm out.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um...

DRE: I saw this here earlier...

⁶ He probably means hallows.

AUSTIN: Face card. I see it, I see it. One second. "You draw a face card...." Oh, no, that's a different thing. Fuck. Uh... [mutters while searching]

KEITH: Wait, these— are these the three— these are not the only three cards we'll be dealing with...

AUSTIN: The whole game.

KEITH: [overlapping] The whole game?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh yeah!

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: So—

KEITH: And when you use them up, we use them up.

AUSTIN: They are gone!

KEITH: Okay.

ALI: The Throne has... 19 right now? It's not... [overlapping] We're beatin' 14?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No. It's one or the other. It's the highest. It's just the king.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: Oh, wait! Ali, your card is the ten.

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: So you beat the six, but you lose to the king.

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: It picks the king. Yes. Exactly. It picks the highest. It takes the highest.

DRE: [overlapping] Okay, so we would need a...

ALI: [overlapping] But we can combine our cards?

AUSTIN: But you could—

DRE: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] This is— You're right. That's the thing. Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: I don't see anything about...

DRE: It's on page 3.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] There we go.

DRE: [overlapping] Jacks are worth 11, queens 12, kings 13, and aces 14.

AUSTIN: Got it.

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Perfect. Thank you. So, kings are 13. Oh, wow! Aces are high in this system!

DRE: Uhum.

AUSTIN: That's good to know. Um...

DRE: Okay. So you would just need a...

ALI: [overlapping] A four...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] A four.

DRE: ...a card to combine with yours. Okay.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So that's your first option. Lemme just finished giving you your options, Oni. Omi. Not Oni.

[ALI giggles]

DRE: Love— Love that game.

AUSTIN: Aha. [chuckles] Um... [reads from rulebook] "Optional rules: Uh... If you get..." Sorry I should actually finish reading the things— I didn't finish the main text box. "Add the value of this card..." The card that your backup is giving you. "...to that of the Thief's card to

determine if the obstacle is overcome. If no-one helps, or if the assistance isn't enough to overcome the obstacle, then the Thief must choose one of the other two options below." As optional rules: "If you refuse to help the Thief, say why! Is something keeping you busy? Or do you have a reason to distrust them? What is it?"

[ALI snickers]

AUSTIN: And then two: "When you help the Thief, say why you care about them!" Keith, why did you refuse to help the Thief? Fictionally.

KEITH: Uh... I'm... already overextended. I mean...

AUSTIN: You're already... Yeah.

[ALI laughs]

DRE: [quietly] Uhum.

KEITH: It's not— It's not like we're— It's, you know. Omi's the expert here. It's not, like, we're just sitting on our hands.

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah.

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: I gotcha. I gotcha. [overlapping] Sure.

DRE: [overlapping] It's tough to do. Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. It's tough to sit on your hands, and also help assist with the per— Like, it's... I'm... I see it! I always see it more, like: we're all assisting, but the assist is like at a... above and beyond assist. Like...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] ...I already was helping. And now I'm coming to fix your half of the thing that we're doing.

AUSTIN: Oh, wow! Okay!

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Number two. Your second option, Omi, is "Blaze of Glory." [reads from rulebook] "The Thief throws in their hand and goes out in a suitably spectacular fashion. They describe how they overcome the current obstacle, and how they are captured or killed in the process. Reduce the alert level by one." Level three— or number—

“Option Three: Betrayal. The Thief bypasses the obstacle at surprising ease and the heist proceeds. They take any one of the Throne’s cards into their hand for later use. During The Getaway they will reveal that they were working for the Throne all along! If a player runs out of cards for any reason before The Getaway their Thief is eliminated: captured, killed, or otherwise taken out of action. Their player gets a moment to describe their demise.”

“Sudden, but Inevitable Betrayal: if a Thief decides to betra— [corrects himself] chooses to betray the crew during the heist, they must reveal their choice to the other players. The other Thieves won’t find out until The Getaway, but the players can use the gap in their knowledge to add extra tension and spice to their role-playing.” So, Dre, it sounds...

KEITH: If Ali dies right here, what does she do for the rest of the game? Plays as Backup and Throne.

KEITH: Okay. Okay.

AUSTIN: But it sounds like Dre was gonna help— it sounded like, maybe?

DRE: Yeah. Yeah. I got a card I can throw in.

AUSTIN: What’s it— Who are you? What’s it look like?

DRE: Um... I guess do— Hm. I guess I don’t need to be playing my character, in this case? Or do I?

AUSTIN: I would say yes, you should. Because you’re going to answer the question of: “When you help the thief say—” It actually says: “Say why you care about them.” Why do you care about Omi?

DRE: Yea-yea-yeah. Um... Okay. Well my character’s name is Fingers Crossed.

AUSTIN: Oooh. Love it.

DRE: And I use they/them pronouns.

AUSTIN: Aha.

DRE: Um...

KEITH: Is that a mononym? Or a first name – last name?

DRE: [as if saying “I don’t know”] U-u-h.

AUSTIN: Good. Great.

DRE: [unfazed] You tell me.

AUSTIN: I love it.

[KEITH chuckles]

DRE: Uh...

KEITH: First name – last name. There you go.

DRE: Yeah. My...

[KEITH laughs]

DRE: [giggling] Thank you, Keith. I appreciate it.

KEITH: [laughing] You're welcome!

DRE: My specialty is forgery. Um...

AUSTIN: Hm...

DRE: Ali, how did you describe Omi, again?

ALI: [tersely] As a robot.

DRE: Okay. [overlapping] Fair, fair.

ALI: [laughs, overlapping] That's about all the description I gave!

DRE: [overlapping] Yea-yea-yeah.

ALI: [chuckling, overlapping] But you know, picture a robot in your mind!

AUSTIN: Got it!

[ALI laughs]

DRE: Uh... [hushed, to himself] Why do I care about Omi? [regular tone] Um... Did you say that you were a true believer in Millennium Break, or...?

ALI: I'm a member of Millennium Break. Yeah.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh! Well! Really? It's just a member, not a true believer!

[ALI bursts out in laughter]

AUSTIN: I see, I see, I see.

DRE: [overlapping] Yea-yeah. Okay. Coward.

ALI: [laughing, overlapping] Well, it's really in the game! I'm not saying anything out loud that I have to take back. [searches for words] But I'm certified... I was issued a coat...

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] ...this isn't my first rodeo...

[1:15:00]

AUSTIN: Yeah. I gotcha. Aha.

[ALI laughs]

DRE: [overlapping] Well, maybe—

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling, overlapping] “Issued a coat” is the most real fucking shit, ever.

[ALI laughs]

DRE: Yeah. Maybe I am a true believer.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: And so, like, this is my way of showing, like: “Nah, man this is— this is how Millennium Break does.”

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Yeah.

DRE: [overlapping] “We have each other's backs. We don't—”

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: Love it. Alright, so what are you playing?

DRE: Oh, right! I haven't put my card out yet.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[ALI chuckles]

DRE: But... how do I flip it?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You right-click it...

ALI: [overlapping] Right-click...

DRE: [overlapping] Oh, there we go. Okay.

AUSTIN: Boom! 7!

ALI: [overlapping] Nice!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That beats the 13 of the king.

KEITH: Nice.

AUSTIN: How do you help out? What's the— What's this actually look like, Dre?
[overlapping] Sorry, Fingers Crossed.

DRE: [sighs, overlapping] Oohhh...

AUSTIN: Fingers Crossed?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Fingers Crossed. Yep.

AUSTIN: And are you... a synthetic person? Are you a human? Are you a different type of alien that we've met? [overlapping] Or a new type...?

DRE: [overlapping] Umm... I think I'm human.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Okay.

DRE: What was— What was specifically, like, getting stuck in the obstacle?

AUSTIN: Uh... the fact that we... The thing that happened is a new patrol showed up.
[overlapping] A patrol of new Recasts showed up.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah, the laserface.

AUSTIN: The laserfaces showed up. Uh... Which— Coupled with, let's say, my ship's engine... stuttering...

DRE: Uhum.

AUSTIN: ...was bad.

DRE: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Meant: I almost got caught by this new thing, throwing off Omi's perf— precision timing.

DRE: Um... I have forged... a... access card, to allow me to get on to, like, the guards frequency.

AUSTIN: Oooh!

DRE: And I divert their patrol at the last moment.

AUSTIN: Love it. Fantastic.

KEITH: Hm!

AUSTIN: Love it. So good. Alright. Uh. [reads from rulebook] So: "Step Six: Moving On. One way or another the obstacle will eventually be dealt with. Discard all cards that have been played and begin a new round, repeating Steps One to Six, until everyone has played the Throne once and the Thief once. At the end of the Final Round, move on to The Getaway."

So, yeah. [absentmindedly narrating his actions] Let's just grab these... 2, 3, 4... And we can... we can just discard these... That's a thing that we can totally do... in this— No we can't, can we. There's not like a discard— I'm just going to move them. I'm just gonna grab them and move them over here. [half-chucking] This is our discard pile.

Alright! So I was just Throne. Who wants to be... Throne? And who wants to be— I guess, who wants to be the Throne next? That's how this goes. As we — I'm guessing — we all land safely at that point. And then disembark.

KEITH: We're landed on the Throne itself. [overlapping] We're on...

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah. We're on the... we are on The Divine Discernment.

KEITH: [overlapping] Deception. Discernment.

AUSTIN: So, yeah. Who wants to now be the new Throne player?

DRE: I'm going to be— I'll be the Throne.

AUSTIN: Alright. So. Set up the obstacle: what is the thing that's facing us, now that we are here?

DRE: Hmm...

AUSTIN: With the note, that with Two alert there are localized alerts. Word is starting to get out... that: "hey something seems fishy."

DRE: Yeah. Um...

[a brief pause]

DRE: I think the... the entrance that we were... like... the sneaky entrance that we were going to use has been blocked. Um... It's a heist, right? So we were gonna sneak in through a vent. And because of the higher alert... there's been, like... airtight grates put over the... or, like, really-really hardcore grates that have been put over the vents, [overlapping] so that we can't, like...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Uhum.

DRE: ...easily get into the vent system and sneak around.

AUSTIN: Love it. Um... [sighs] So we're trying to get through some grates. Does anyone have grates... plans...?

KEITH: Grates plans.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Grates plans.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Who's the spesh?

KEITH: [overlapping] Do—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Who's the one who steps forward here and says...

KEITH: Uh—

AUSTIN: ...I'm so and so and this is my specialty.

KEITH: Well, tell me about— Tell me what these grates... These are... They're blocking hallways? They're, like...

DRE: Blocking air vents.

KEITH: Air vents, not— So, not, like... normal traffic.

AUSTIN: Um...

KEITH: [overlapping] This is...

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

KEITH: ...like: "Okay we have localized alerts, let's close off the place where thieves go..."

DRE: Uhum.

KEITH: [overlapping] Thief house — which is air vents.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah, 'cause we've got guards, and other locked doors, at the other stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Okay. Um...

[a brief pause]

KEITH: Alright! I can do this!

KEITH: [overlapping] I can do that!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] What do you do? Let's... Before you play cards, let's talk about what you do.

KEITH: [clears his throat] So, I think that we check... [overlapping] the air vents, 'cause...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Wait, who are you? Who are you; what is your specialty?

KEITH: [overlapping] Aah...kay...

AUSTIN: You're master of ____.

[ALI giggles]

AUSTIN: This is what I'm here for. [a brief pause] You take off your helmet, your space helmet to reveal something. What is it?

KEITH: I'm...

[pause]

KEITH: Let's see... How do I... How do I... Sorry. I'm typing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. No.

KEITH: [overlapping] I'm typing my thing...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Listen. We've established that the typing is bad in Roll20, right?

DRE: [quietly] Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. I had a couple things copied and ready to go and I literally was setting them up to use maybe one or another. And... it broke. [chuckles]

[DRE laughs]

KEITH: The whole thing broke. Okay. So! Master of... This is... I'm gonna say: securities expert.

AUSTIN: Ooh, okay! Yeah, sure. Love it.

KEITH: So, I think my main— My original job...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: [overlapping] ...was mapping the ducts of the system.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Riiight!

KEITH: But when these vents show up— 'cause it's, like: "well obviously we go through the vents." That's a great way to travel! It's been in every movie...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: ...about thieves.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Yeah.

KEITH: But the vents close and you've got two choices. Like: "Okay. Well, do we force the vents..."

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: "...or do we just not use the vents at all?" And so, instead I've got a belt of drones that... that are, like, hacking hallway cameras.

AUSTIN: Oooh!

KEITH: Like, secured— This is like a security...

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: Like, we'll just walk through the hallways, then. This place is massive. Um... They're not— It is a... that trope of, like, something that is so... so defensible that it's easy to break into? Because you're like: "Well, who would even try to break into this thing? It's literally a big camera."

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: So it's like... It's, like, kind of... if you know the tricks and you can get pa— We know— We know about the lasers.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

KEITH: We know about the hallway cameras.

AUSTIN: Aha.

KEITH: We know the guard patterns. So let's just take the hallways. We'll just walk.

AUSTIN: We'll just— Forget about the grates.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I wanna... The camera — as the Backup here — I wanna add a little detail, which is just... the camera kind of immediately gets lost into... Not lost. But it begins to, like, move down these... [overlapping] passageways and tunnels.

KEITH: [overlapping] You've gotta be—

AUSTIN: And it's just like: "Oh shit! It just keeps going!" It's this bigger on the inside thing... is increasingly noticeable, kind of, on camera. So to speak.

KEITH: The difference between the text when you're...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I know. I know!

KEITH: [overlapping] ...typing versus when you're...

AUSTIN: Keith!

KEITH: It's unbelievable!

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: It's *unbelievable* how fucked up it is!

KEITH: And my name is: Robet Shpache.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling] What are your pronouns Robet?

KEITH: He/him.

AUSTIN: It's r-o-b-e-t?

KEITH: Like sherbet.

DRE: [overlapping] Aha.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And then s-h-p-a-c-h-e?

KEITH: Yep.

AUSTIN: Great.

KEITH: [overlapping] Robet Shpache.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I mean no no grate, actually.

DRE: Is this a... [overlapping] first name – last name...

KEITH: [overlapping] Right, yes, yes. We're not doing grates.

DRE: [overlapping] ...situation?

[AUSTIN chuckles]

DRE: [overlapping] Is this a mononym?

KEITH: [overlapping] This is a mononym.

AUSTIN: [incredulous] Oh, this is a mononym! Robet Shpache!

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Got it.

[DRE & KEITH laugh]

AUSTIN: Dre, does anything happen as this stuff happens? Should we go to cards?

DRE: [sighs, overlapping] Aahh...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Is there a counter to these drones flying around?

DRE: No. I think let's go to cards. Like, let's...

AUSTIN: Alright. So...

DRE: I think that dictates what happens

AUSTIN: Here's the public one. Oh fuck. That's the ace of spades.

[DRE giggles]

AUSTIN: And then...

KEITH: It sure is!

AUSTIN: They get two more. But let me tell you! It's not going to be higher than the ace of spades is it?

KEITH: [overlapping] No it's not.

DRE: [overlapping] U-um.

AUSTIN: We know it's going to be a 14. We got to beat a 14.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Keith, what are you playing? Sorry, Robet? Keep it lower!

KEITH: Ace of hearts.

AUSTIN: Ooooooh! So you still need a little help. Um... Alright. This is easy. Can I help you, Robet?

KEITH: You sure can!

AUSTIN: Uh... What happens? I guess, Dre? What's the— Why does this equal— I guess, actually. Wait. Sorry. We have to do the thing. I almost fucked this up. Because it's a tie, the Throne increases alert level by one and describes how the situation gets more complicated for the Thief.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: With spades... it's "a concealed defense system activates."

DRE: Ooh!

KEITH: So we don't know about it.

AUSTIN: I mean, it's activating, [overlapping] so we fuckin' do now!

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh, now we know about it. We didn't know about it before.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Which explains why you didn't know— why you weren't prepped for it. So what is it, Dre?

DRE: Um... As the orbs, like, swivel around a corner...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: ...a concealed... like, fuckin' laser arm pops out...

AUSTIN: Mm!

DRE: ...and just like shoots them down. And so now there's, like, armed AI arm drones.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

DRE: Around every corner.

AUSTIN: Um. I am playing Kinoki...

KEITH: Oh! Uh... Oh, okay. Sorry.

AUSTIN: What's up?

KEITH: Wait. Um... I was looking at ties and aces, because I was, like, surely an ace doesn't just beat all from the Throne...

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: Well... Not, surely. But I was just double checking.

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah.

KEITH: Because I didn't read the whole book.

AUSTIN: Yeh.

KEITH: And I saw this, and it says ties go to the thief. But it's just during The Getaway [overlapping] the ties go to the Thief.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That's The Getaway. [reads from rulebook] "During this part the Throne holds the highest card. Or: if to draw the situation escalates." The... I'm playing Kinoki.⁷ But it's k-i-n-o-k-i. But once it was "key: nokey." Which is... I am not a traditional synthetic being. I'm not from Columnar. I am a robot, but— This is a character who came up in world building, first PARTIZAN? But never really got to be on screen. She is a... She was a brute force hacking tool. That... was made by a programmer/thief.

[ALI chortles quietly]

AUSTIN: And then got busy and never picked her up. And so I just stay— I just kept doing the, sort of, evolutionary programming thing?

⁷ Pronounced as "key-no-key"

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Of just getting better and better and better until eventually I became a... I guess the exact line I wrote down is: "Kinoki is what happens when such a program was attached to a robotics factory and she forgot to turn it off." So I built myself a body, and I think I'm here as a mercenary. I am like: "I'm a professional thief. I'm happy to do this. This is like the sort of thing that gets me— gets my name written in all the history books as the greatest thief of all time." And my specialty is hacking, obviously. And so I say:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Robet, I've got it.

AUSTIN: And uh wirelessly connect to— No, not wirelessly. I throw out three tiny little... almost like tiny grappling wires that hook into this... these laser... Was it one laser-cannon, Dre? [overlapping] Or is it a few?

DRE: [overlapping] Uum... I think it's, like, several. It's probably throughout the whole... [overlapping] station.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Alright well I grab the nearest three on these... kind of little — It's almost like a fishing line with a little fishing hook — and begin to hack into them. And I say:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): It's light work for a hacker like me.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: [meekly] And play this little 2. Let's say I play this little 2. What's— You know, I don't need to— you don't need to go big. We just need to win. Right? [overlapping] So boom.

DRE: [overlapping] Uhum.

KEITH: [overlapping] Extremely light work.

AUSTIN: *Extremely* light work. And the alert stays, because remember: the alert happens during the escalation. Or the alert happens during the escalation, and the only way to de-escalate is the Go Out in a Blaze of Glory. [chuckles] So... Alright. Um... [overlapping] What's... what's...

KEITH: [overlapping] And Kinoki does not want to Go Out in a Blaze of Glory because they're not... like...

AUSTIN: I'm not trying to fucking die. I'm trying to be a...

KEITH: Uhum. Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ...a galaxy-rekonwn...

KEITH: [overlapping] She's trying to be like a real hacker with a job...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: ...and a bank account.

AUSTIN: A bank account. Yeah. Um. And, listen:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): I'll keep working for Millennium Break as long as they keep paying well.

AUSTIN: So what's the— what's our solution look like here? I guess, either Keith or Dre, talk to us about — both of you — talk to us about what success looks like in this scenario.

KEITH: Um... [overlapping] Are we...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Done the hacking. The drones get— or the laser grid goes down. Do you just lead us deeper in?

KEITH: Are we... we're not... We haven't done anything that gets our alert down. This is just— [overlapping] This is still Throne: 3.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No, it's still... We're on three we're gonna be on three unless someone Goes out in a Blaze of Glory.

[ALI chuckles]

KEITH: [half-chuckling] Pass. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Aha.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Well, you've already gone. So you will not now Go Down on a Blaze of Glory, at least.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Go Down in a Blaze of Glory.

KEITH: Um. Yeah, I mean, I think the lasers go down and I think— I would say, like — to color it from Robet's perspective — I think that maybe he wasn't expecting even this to be as hard as it was. He was like, you know:

KEITH (as Robet Shpache) I got it.

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: And in literally any other scenario, any other card comes up and it would have been... [overlapping] not a thing.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Fine. You're right. Yeah. Uh...

KEITH: Yeah. It was just, like, the one out of a hundred scenario where he doesn't have it. And so...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I think it's just like a thankful thing that this was not extremely embarrassing and deadly.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think... Kinoki says, like...

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): It's always one out of a hundred on the other side, isn't it?

KEITH (as Robet Shpache): Hm.

[a brief pause]

KEITH (as Robet Shpache): [sighs] Well, let's keep going!

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): I hate this place. [overlapping] I'm lost already.

KEITH (as Robet Shpache): [overlapping] It's terrible!

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Where did we come in?

KEITH (as Robet Shpache): Left. Back left.

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): [whispering] Okay.

AUSTIN: Um... Alright, at three alert, it's worth saying, three alert is "facility-wide alarms, security dispatched." So maybe that's the punch at the end of this is: the alarm start ringing? And...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: ...we can hear footsteps echoing through the giant interior of this place.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Uh... Who's up? Who wants to be Throne? I guess at this point it is Keith or Ali.

KEITH: [overlapping] Ah...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It has to be Ali, 'cause Ali was back up twice in a row— No, Ali... Ali went first! So, no. It doesn't have to be. It doesn't have to be anybody. It could be Keith or Ali. [chuckles]

KEITH: I could be Throne! Unless Ali, you had an idea. I don't have even an idea. So.

ALI: Um, I don't, no. So, I guess, whoever...

KEITH: Okay. Yeah I can be Throne.

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Alright. So, what is— what is the situation as we move deeper into this facility? This Divine. This Divine's interior.

KEITH: Aam... Yeah. So... Security is dispatched, and that— I think that means that for the first time, right, where the thing that we're dodging isn't just computers. It's, like, physical bodies who are, like, on the lookout.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[1:30:00]

KEITH: And not just, like, cameras that rotate back and forth.

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: And that's tough.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Um... and... I think that... moving deeper into the... Throne... instead of, you know, light security— instead what you have is, like, systems that ping... actual guards.

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: So we've got, sort of like, tiny microphones — like, un-deal-with-able microphones, as far as... um...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Like, they're picking up our...

KEITH: [overlapping] ...Discernment is concerned.

AUSTIN: Right-right-right.

KEITH: [overlapping] And there...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] So we can't hide at this point.

KEITH: Right. So, it's just, like— there's just, like, a computer that's being, like: “there's noise here; there's noise here.”

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: Uhm.

KEITH: Then cross referencing that with where are the guards, subtracting guard footprints, [overlapping] from that.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right.

KEITH: And then being, like: “anywhere where there's not noise there's a guard; there's no false alarms.” Like, everything gets checked out.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: This is a zero... like: “Well let's just ignore this one. It's a squirrel. A squirrel got loose from the squirrel exhibit.”

AUSTIN: Right. No, trust me I already have squirrel exhibit plans.

[DRE chuckles, KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: Do you wanna see what this card looks like?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: A public card? Our public card for the Throne is: Hey! A two of spades!

KEITH: Hm.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Ahh, fuck.

DRE: Pretty good.

KEITH: Easy. Easy.

AUSTIN: Who hasn't gone as Thief yet? Me and Dre?

DRE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Huh...

DRE: I mean, I can go.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You sure?

DRE: [overlapping] I feel like this is— Well, yeah! I feel like this... [overlapping] I feel like this is, like, pretty straightforward for the forgery person.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh, yeah! Yeah!

ALI: [overlapping] Yeaaa!

DRE: You know, like, I've got... I've got a costume. [overlapping] I've got. like, a guard costume...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah!

DRE: ...and I just have forged, like, all of the documents that get me past the checkpoints.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [overlapping] Do you have it for all of us?

DRE: [overlapping] It's...

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): Yeah, no. I—

DRE: Oohh. Uhm...

AUSTIN: Or are you just getting deep enough to shut down some sort of system? While we hang tight?

DRE: Yeah, I think I'm getting in deep enough to like shut things down. So it's like: "I've got like uh...

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): Yeah, I've got these emergency orders. Here's, like, all my— It's been stamped by everybody! And, oh wow! What a crazy day, huh?

[AUSTIN laughs]

AUSTIN (as Guard): Yea-yea-yeah. Aren't you supposed to be looking for people? What are you... What's— Where are you coming... [overlapping] from?

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): [overlapping] That's— That's why they're— That's why they sent me over here. Just to, like, reinforce... certain areas. I started... [sighs] I started, like, deeper in and that place is secure.

AUSTIN (as Guard): [overlapping] Hmm...

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): [overlapping] So they're sending us kind of like, you know, fanning out.

AUSTIN (as Guard): But what do you think this is? You think this is... Millennium Break? You think it's The Pact?

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): I don't know. It's probably just a squirrel.

AUSTIN (as Guard): [overlapping] I hope it's a squirrel.

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): [overlapping] But you know. Hey. You can never be too safe.

AUSTIN: Let's see your card. [chuckles]

[pause]

DRE: Uh... Flip?

AUSTIN: Hey! An 8 of spades! Alright, let's flip these other remaining *three* fucking Throne cards!

DRE: [overlapping] God, that's so many!

AUSTIN: [chuckling, overlapping] Well, there's a 9 of diamonds immediately. [overlapping] There's a king of spades...

DRE: [overlapping] Oof!

AUSTIN: So that's our— Or king of hearts... That's gonna be our winner: the king of hearts here, at 13. Hearts, by the way, as a reminder is... what. "An old ally or enemy appears." Fingers, who recognizes you? And is like: [overlapping] "Wait a second you don't..."

DRE: [overlapping] Boy...

AUSTIN: "...you don't work here."

KEITH: God, who fingers Fingers?

[DRE laughs]

ALI: [chuckles] Gee—

AUSTIN: Goddamn it. [half-chuckling] What's your backstory? Where are you from, Fingers? I guess you're a true believer in Millennium Break.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Did you used to be part of The Principality in some way? I mean, we're all here in The Principality.

DRE: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: So. But were you a member of Millenni— Or were you a member of, [overlapping] like, Stel Nideo or something?

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah. I'm a... God, who's the...? Listen, if we're going to talk about Star Wars let's go fucking all the way! I'm like the Crix Madine of the Millennium Break!

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay! You wanna fill in the listener?!?

DRE: Yeah. Crix Madine was the Imperial, like, intelligence—spy guy, who defected to the Rebels.

AUSTIN: The Rebels. Yeah, aha.

ALI: Ooohh!

AUSTIN: Nice beard...

DRE: Uhum.

AUSTIN: With a little hair wave... Aha.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um...

DRE: Features heavily in a lot of EU novels...

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: May they rest in peace.

AUSTIN: Yeah... You can still read those books. No-one stop you.

[ALI & DRE chuckle]

AUSTIN: Are you a...

DRE: [simultaneously] Disney cops will get me.

KEITH: [simultaneously] Disney keeps on sending me cease & desists...

[AUSTIN laughs]

KEITH: ...whenever I try to read The Jedi Academy series.

AUSTIN: Do you...

DRE: Every time I touch a book by Timothy Zahn, they just... [laughs]

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] I was gonna ask you some— So, yeah. Who do you think... Who's our... Wait! Who's our Throne? Keith? Keith is our Throne?

ALI: Uhum.

KEITH: Yeah, I'm the Throne.

AUSTIN: Who shows up? Who is the old ally of Fingers Crossed, or... or old enemy? Now definitely— Now an enemy.

KEITH: Okay, well this is... This has to be... The... The moff to Crix Madine's...

AUSTIN: Uhm!

KEITH: Whatever... Crix Madine was. Not a moff.

AUSTIN: Definitely not a moff.

KEITH: He was a general.

AUSTIN: General!

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah, his general. [overlapping] Uhm...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Is this the elect? Did you know the Elect of... Discernment?

[a brief pause]

DRE: Ooh!

KEITH: Hmm!

DRE: That seems fun!

KEITH: And is...? Ah, that's the tough— 'cause Star Wars is weird. Because it wouldn't be, like, Vader wouldn't be the Elect of the Death Star.

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: Because he hated the Death Star.

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: [tentatively] Well, you can hate your Divine, can't you...?

KEITH: Okay, yeah!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: That's the most Ali... That's the most Ali shit I've ever heard... yeah.

[ALI laughs more]

KEITH: It's true. You can hate your Divine. And it's... Maybe this guy's really more like ha—the Divine—the Elect's handler. But it could be the Elect! I don't know. This is—I think this is a Dre call.

DRE: Um... I think I did know the Elect. But I think at this level of security it would make more sense...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

DRE: ...that it's, like, the Elect's handler. Or just somebody that's, like, close to the Elect.

AUSTIN: Okay.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Someone who worked with you— Did you used to work for Discernment? Were you on this du— detail before, Fingers? And this is, like, how you got assigned to this? Because you knew enough of the... This is how you knew what to forge and stuff?

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] Or the flip is, that this is, like, out of space. The one in a million “I can't believe I saw someone I recognized in space.”

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Right. We go completely the other way where it's like: “you grew up together on some...” [chuckles]

[DRE giggles]

AUSTIN: “...on Tatooine.” And now it's...

KEITH: Like, 4 000 light years away, [overlapping] or whatever.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, aha.

DRE: [overlapping] Yea-yeah. No, I think I did, but I didn't tell anybody that I used to work on Discernment.

AUSTIN: Haa...!

DRE: Because I knew it would get me taken off.

AUSTIN: Love it. Fantastic. You should have told us. Um...

[ALI chuckles]

DRE: [overlapping] It's personal.

KEITH: [overlapping] Wait, you said you were on Discernment?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Okay. Hm...

[A brief pause. ALI sighs.]

KEITH: So... you run into someone it's almost like... you could have run into guards that recognized you.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Like, these guards could have been like: Aren't you Fingers?

AUSTIN: We already had this guard talking that was, like, completely wooed over. Convinced. Not wooed. But you know, convinced. Won over.

[DRE giggles]

KEITH: Swooning. [overlapping] This swooning guard.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Swooning. "Ahhh...!"

DRE: Uhum.

AUSTIN: "I just love your uniform so much, bud!"

[DRE giggles]

KEITH: "Blame the squirrels again!" [chuckles]

[AUSTIN chuckles, ALI sighs]

DRE: "I love it when you blame the squirrels"

[AUSTIN sighs, KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: So, yeah. So, this person shows up who knows you. I don't have a name off the top of my head.

DRE: Uh... Jimmy.

AUSTIN: Jimmy.

ALI: I'm trying to think of a backup.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I—

KEITH: Backup name?

AUSTIN: No a bac— A way to help here.

[ALI chuckles]

KEITH: Oh. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: You're at... 8. You need... 13? No, you need 14. 'Cause you have to beat 13.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah, we need 14.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yikes! Uh...

ALI: Oh... Okay.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: But I can get there! I can get there. [overlapping] Can you get there, Ali?

ALI: [overlapping] I can also get there. And I feel like precision timing might be a way to...

AUSTIN: Hmmm...! Uhum!

ALI: You know what I mean, to, like...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Kinoki...

ALI: [overlapping] ...recognize the situation that's happening. And then be...

AUSTIN: Kinoki says under her breath:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): I still haven't invented a way to hack people. I'm working on it, though.

ALI (as Omi): I think they'd frown on that.

KEITH (as Robet Shpache) Yeah, don't work on that.

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): That's unsettling.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH (as Robet Shpache): People will not like that.

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Ugh. Don't worry about it!

[DRE laughs]

ALI: Um. I feel like a distraction is the obvious thing.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] But, like... I don't know that, like... I can't think of a strong enough distraction that's like: "Don't look at this person who you feel like you recognize, but also not know that we're here." If you know what I mean?

DRE: Yeah. And, listen, sometimes the most important timing is the time that you [overlapping] throw a smoke grenade.

ALI: [excited, overlapping] Oh! !! Okay! Wa-wa-wait! Wa-wa-wa...

DRE: [overlapping] Okay, okay, okay.

ALI: Maybe I... [laughs] Bu— Because I am like a synthetic person, right?

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: Maybe it's more of a thing if... It's more of a thing of like... you're— Okay. [laughs]

DRE: Uhum, uhum.

ALI: Fingers is standing at this desk, being like: "my papers are getting checked yada-yada-yada." And then, like, someone else is approaching with, like, determination. Right? So, like, if I like... [laughs] Why do I think of like... like boosting the, like, wi-fi signal...

AUSTIN: Oooh, sure.

ALI: ...of like, [laughs] a very localized area. It could be like: "Okay you're all checked!" And we could, like, go through the hallway before there's the, like, intersection — [overlapping] "intersection" was the word that I was thinking of before, by the way —

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Um. Uhum.

ALI: ...of this person, like, coming towards you and you being, like: "oh I'm walking through the door now!" You know what I mean?

DRE: Hm. Yeah.

ALI: Does this feel... [laughs] like a real...?

DRE: No, yeah! Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I love it! Love it.

DRE: Basically just, like, get us rushed through the checkpoint.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [overlapping] As this other person is looking at you: "Is this...? Are you...?"

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah. You are a TSA Check+ or whatever.

[AUSTIN laughs]

ALI: [laughing] Right. Yeah.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Great. Uh. Play your card!

[a brief pause]

ALI: Flip.

AUSTIN: Boom! Love to see it.

ALI: 14.

AUSTIN: 14! [overlapping] Beats 13.

KEITH: [overlapping] Nice.

AUSTIN: And we move on through. Ali, you are the last Throne. We...

ALI: I am the last Throne!

AUSTIN: We're getting there.

ALI: We're getting in there, yeah... This has to be, like...

AUSTIN: This is the thing, right? This has to be like...

ALI: Right. We're getting into, like, the control center.

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah. 'Cause the next thing that happens is: we have gotten it. And we're escaping.

ALI: Aha.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Um...

[a broef pause]

ALI: Yeah. I don't want to be, like: "oh, the security is really tight." [laughing] You know, I feel like...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Oh wait, sorry. The alert does have to go up again. I just realized.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, really?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] So that means I need a second alert signal, here. [muttering] Wait, where's the other ones? One second, there should be another— So this says alert two where is it? I had— Hm. [regular volume] I wouldn't even done this if I didn't know that there was also another alert! [muttering] Where is it? Are you for fucking real? [regular volume] I'm mad at this shit right now.

[DRE laughs]

ALI: [commiserating, laughing] Oowwww...

AUSTIN: I... It's fine. It's fine. It's fine, don't worry about it. [muttering] How is it not here? I put one on this sheet *earlier today*! [overlapping] I'm gonna just dig through it.

KEITH: [overlapping] What is not here?

AUSTIN: You keep talking! You don't... Don't worry about it! I'm gonna find it the old-fashioned way...

ALI: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ...by scrolling six years into the past!

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: What's the next... [chuckles] What does the next alert mean? What is the...

AUSTIN: I just— The way— Do you see how the word “alert” won't fit there? [overlapping] In that little slot?

KEITH: [overlapping] Yea-yea-yeah.

AUSTIN: That's 'cause there's something else that fits in there. But it's from when we were playing... *The Sprawl*. And so I have to dig— Here it is! I got it! I got it. It's “alarm” instead of “alert”. [overlapping] There we go.

ALI: [overlapping] Ohhh-kay! Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's what happened. Yeah. Okay. That's on me!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: That's on me! That's on me.

ALI: And fictionally, this is... we're at...

AUSTIN: Oh, fuck! Where are we at? Four. Four, we are at... “defensive system on high alert, thieves identified.”

ALI: [overlapping] Oooh!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] So that means that, like, we got through that checkpoint and then it was, like: “Uh-uh! No!”

ALI: [chuckles] Okay. And that's an automatic...

KEITH: Wh— S—

AUSTIN: That just means that there's another card that the Throne has on its side. That's what it means.

ALI: Oh, su-sure. Okay! Oh, okay.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And it means, fictionally: they know that we're in the heart of this Divine, at this point.

ALI: Uhum.

[a brief pause]

ALI: Yeah. I'm sort of feeling, like the thing... the challenge at hand should be, like... the physicality of actually having to take control of this thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Um.

ALI: And I... [laughs] I almost regret that my mind is going here, but I almost feel like it's, like... a Legends of the Hidden Temple sort of [laughs] situation.

DRE: Oh, hell yeah!

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah! Absolutely!

ALI: [laughing] We evoked Resident Evil before...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yea-yea-yeah.

ALI: [chuckling, overlapping] I don't know this is a movie thing. It's definitely a Resident Evil thing. But the, like, task of, like, needing to prove a certain amount of, like... familiarity with the history of this thing...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That's fun.

ALI: [overlapping] To be able to, like, do this puzzle to, like... [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Is this in the museum zone? [overlapping] Or like do we need to have to collect bits of...

ALI: [overlapping] I think so! Well, I think it's... It's like a combination... It's like if a control center was like an airport lounge? You know what I mean? Because I think that it has this sort of, like...

[AUSTIN chuckles]

ALI: ...decoration of a place that, like, an Elect would hang out in.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] So, it's, like, exclusive and like very nice, and very leather or whatever.

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: But it's also the sort of, like... You know. [chuckles] Glowing... sector of the ship that like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: ...you know, has like a... intensity to it.

AUSTIN: It's a Cyberzone but it's also...

ALI: Right! [laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ...but it's also the Delta Admirals Club. Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] And it says so on the door.

ALI: It's— It's both a comfortable place to be in but also, like, has a foreboding... power vibe.

AUSTIN: Right. It's where Tron people go to vibe! Yeah.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: [laughing] Right. Right.

AUSTIN: Alright.

KEITH: We're in the future and we love to be surrounded by... slightly ominous tech.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: It's comfortable for us here.

DRE: Uhum.

KEITH: We're— But we're evil, and we have to show we're evil in our decor.

ALI: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right. In our... Yea-yeah-yeah.

DRE: [overlapping] Sure. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Again, the British Museum was already a touchstone...

ALI: [overlapping] Aha.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Alright, I'm gonna flip our public one.

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: Flip card! King! King of diamonds!

ALI: Great. Perfect.

KEITH: Oof...

AUSTIN: Kinoki... You know. I don't know that a robot's fingers can crack...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: Does the motion and then and as she does it, it plays... you know...
[half-chuckling] cracking-knuckles.wav?

ALI: [overlapping] Oooh! Su-su-su-sure!

KEITH: [overlapping] Right! I was about to say...

ALI: [overlapping] Like, a tech sound...

KEITH: ...she built herself a body, [overlapping] she knew that she was gonna want to crack those knuckles!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, absolutely!

DRE: Listen, if the Master Chiefs in the Halo Infinite multiplayer intro can crack their knuckles, [overlapping] which they do...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You're fucking right! Which they do!

DRE: [overlapping] You can crack your knuckles.

AUSTIN: I can crack my knuckles! I just want to shout out Dakota in the chat who 100% called shot at me by noting that I am playing, effectively, a Bioware companion. Which is 100% what my intention has been the whole time.

[1:45:07]

[ALI chuckles, DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: So... And I'm like:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): I got this.

AUSTIN: And I... This doesn't even have to deal with hacking. You know. You've seen my hacking prowess. This is: "I'm a classic robot. I can scan to see, like, thermal signatures and fingerprints on things."

ALI: Oohhh!

AUSTIN: I can tell what's been touched the most, and most recently. And I use that data to work backwards. And maybe I hack into the cameras. I'm, like— Actually, here's what I'm doing: I'm saying all that shit, like I'm Sherlock Holmes, but really what I'm doing is...

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: ...secretly hacking into the system to find out what the actual solution is.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I'm just bullshitting you about, like, how I could deduce this without hacking.

KEITH: You're IT— You're it googling.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I'm ex—

KEITH: [overlapping] Just someone has a problem, and you show up and you're like: [overlapping] "Yeah, I can fix it." So you just Google how to fix it.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I can fix it, by goo— Yeah, 100%. Uh... And so I'm gonna play the ace of clubs. Fuck a king. Let's see! Flipping these cards. 9 of clubs. It just can't be an ace. As long as there's no other aces. Queen of clubs! Jack of hearts! [overlapping] What's good! Crushed it!

ALI: [overlapping] Wow! Full house!

AUSTIN: Yeah! What... What happens when we win one?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: We haven— This hasn't happened yet. I guess just: it happens? [reads rules] "If it's greater than the highest on the Throne card, they successfully overcome the obstacles... The Thief..."

KEITH: Yeah, you just do it! [overlapping] I'm sorry.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] “The Thief then wraps up the scene...” No worries. “...either by describing what the success looks like, or briefly role-playing out with the other players.” I give each of you some stolen relic. Right? I give one of you a scarf from a Hyphan commune that was stolen. I take some sort of Apostolosian spear... I give— I guess, the scarf I’m gonna give to Omi. Robet, I’m giving you... a... There is a Rapid Evening era — like, old Rapid Evening era — a camera, of some sort. Like, a little spy camera. Like a... little pen cam. I’m giving you that to hold on to. And then... Fingers... I’m giving you the... the uniform of... You’re a human, you’re not a robot, right?

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Fingers?

DRE: [overlapping] Uh, yes. I am human. Yes.

AUSTIN: I’m giving you... I’m still gonna give you, like, some sort of... remnant of the... of Crown — which was the... homeworld of the Columnar, that was brutally destroyed by the Perennial Wave... And I’m like:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Alright, we just all have to hold these for... 10 seconds each and then drop them in the right order... at the doorway.

AUSTIN: And we do that makes no fucking sense...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: ...but it works! The cameras catch up that distinct... you know, visual cue, and the door to the heart of this thing opens up. At which point hacking it is... easy. Is easy peasy. Uhh... I guess we go on to the next step! Which... which I’m glad we got to! I was a little worried... [half-chuckles]

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: [reads from rulebook] “The Getaway. Finally, the Thieves have breached the Throne’s defenses and hijacked the ancient machines for themselves. All they have to do now is get away with it. Powering Up The Machine. Make sure everyone can see the index cards used earlier to write down the Throne’s systems. Any Thief with two cards in their hand...” [half-chuckling] Who’s— Does anybody have those?

KEITH: No.

DRE: [overlapping] No.

KEITH: [overlapping] Whoa! Yes, I do!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You! Okay!

DRE: [overlapping] Oh!

KEITH: [overlapping] I have two!

AUSTIN: [continues reading] "...may place one of these cards face up on a system. A system with a card on it is powered up, meaning, it can be used during the escape. If you like, describe what it looks like as the system is being brought online. [overlapping] What are you bringing online, Keith?

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay, so. So... I have two cards and it doesn't matter what they are?

AUSTIN: It just says... "one can be powered up" Let's see what powered up actually means!

KEITH: One. So I can use one card to power up?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can power up [overlapping] one thing...

KEITH: [overlapping] And then my other card is my escape card.

AUSTIN: That is correct. Yeah.

KEITH: Okay. So... I can power up "comprehensive surveillance systems";

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: "Sturdy and reinforced";

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: "Strange and recursive interior"; "reinforced internal defensives." So obviously— Wait and what does powering it up do for me?

AUSTIN: That is what I'm gonna figure out and read to you.

KEITH: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: Uh... Let's see. [reads from rulebook] "Once systems been powered up, The Getaway plays out as a montage, in which each player takes control of the narration for a single short scene. One player whose Thief has survived and remained loyal volunteers to go first. They are the Thief. Now deal one card face up from the throne's deck if the alert is one to three, [chuckles] or two if it's four or more. The Thief then describes a burst of action that takes place during the escape. At the climactic moment they play a card from their hand. They can also call upon a single powered up system, taking the card from that system adding its value to their own card and working the system into their narration."

KEITH: So it's a backup card.

AUSTIN: It's a backup card.

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And there's only one! [half-chuckling] So we're only gonna get one between us!

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's fine!

KEITH: Well... And I'm and I'm sorry to say... [muttering] I'm gonna put it out right here. [regular volume] I'm gonna put it on "comprehensive security system."

AUSTIN: Or a "surveillance system"? [overlapping] Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] Surveil— Yes surveillance system.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: And it's a three.

AUSTIN: Yikes. Okay. So it's not particularly good, huh?

KEITH: Yeah. And so, this is why I didn't help Ali.

AUSTIN: I getcha. Yeah.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I guess we could have been having those conversations more. But we were all just pretty eager to help when it was time to help.

KEITH: It said to not show them, [overlapping] so I didn't wanna do... I've got cheap cards...

ALI: [overlapping] Yeah...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] But I meant the in-character reasons...

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You know. Sorry Ali. It sounded like you were gonna say something, also.

ALI: Oh, no-no. I was just gonna say, the rules say not to tell people your cards, so...

AUSTIN: Right. Yea-yea-yeah. Alright, so three is on "comprehensive security—" or "surveillance system." Um... Yes, it's... No-one betrayed anybody, so there's no betrayals. We don't have to deal with that! [reads from rulebook] Take turns until every player's had a chance to determine the fate of their Thief. If at least one Thief beats the Throne the heist is

a success, but at what cost?" Uh... Alright! So, systems are powered up! Do we break— What if we break it out of the cage? And it's just like a free-floating orb?

DRE: [overlapping] Oooh!

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And it moves faster that way?

KEITH: [laughing] It's gotta be enormous!

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling] It's gotta be enormous! There's, like, shutters and all the... all of the shock mounts, you know... break. And we're, like, downloading the data. Because we just—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All it has to happen is we have to get aw— Ideally, we get away *with* it. But... it might be that one of us gets away with the data. You know?

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] Right.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] All it has to happen is for one of us has to get away. So “one player whose Thief has survived and remain loyal volunteers to go first. They are the Thief.” Who wants to go first?

KEITH: And we don't get to see— These are not public cards! These are...

AUSTIN: Uhhh...

KEITH: We're not flipping a card, [overlapping] deciding who goes first.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Let's see. Wa-wa-wait. Let's see. Let's see. I want to triple check it. Uh... “Powered up...” “The thief then describes a brief moment...” Uh... “If the total value of the Thief's cards is higher than or equal to the threat's...” Wait, maybe it is. Wa-wa-wa-wait! Uh... “Now deal one card face up from the Throne's deck, or two if it's...” Oh! A person has to decide their thief first. First they decide if they're the thief, then you deal the cards.

KEITH: Ah, fuck it! I'll do it! [overlapping] I powered up the system! I'm gonna grab the thing.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Fuck! You did! You did, you did. Alright. So what's your— What is your... I guess I'll play these cards. Let's see. Alright. First card... [chuckles] is a queen of diamonds. Second card is... [laughs] an ace of diamonds!

KEITH: No. I lose. I'm not even— I don't even— We don't have to pretend. I'm out. I'm dead.

AUSTIN: So, describe your single burst of action that takes place during the escape! Actually, you're supposed to do that before you play your card. You can also call upon a single Powered Up system, etc. So...

KEITH: That's fine. We can— I—

AUSTIN: Let's not talk about what card you just played. Which...

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You tell me what happens here. What is popping off?

KEITH: So... I put in a thing that... Okay. Alright.

[a brief pause]

KEITH: What i— So we're saying, what am I— I'm just framing this as like what am I [overlapping] trying to do whether or not I succeed?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] This is— Yeah. This is—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: [reads from rulebook] "This is the burst of action that takes place during the escape. At the climactic moment you play a card from your hand. You can also call upon a single Powered Up system taking the card from that system, adding its value to your own card and working the system into your narration."

KEITH: I think this is the very beginning...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: This is, like, barely— We're half a second into the escape. I have played... I have done something that is, like, convincing... This is — like, in a game this might even be, like, a compel, or... [overlapping] compel role, or something —

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right. Right, right.

KEITH: I'm just, like, trying to convince a sub-system to let all of the...

AUSTIN: Um...!

KEITH: ...to let all of the straws go. And it's, like, just drop the straws. Like, detach from the straws.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Um... And... And I'm gonna try to get them to detach... and then run away with the thing. Like a big stupid balloon...

AUSTIN: Aha.

KEITH: ...the size of a skyscraper.

AUSTIN: So what goes wrong as you presumably... Or where is the— What is the climactic moment here? Do you get interrupted while you're doing this?

KEITH: Um... Well, what does failure look like?

AUSTIN: It's either capture or death.

KEITH: Okay. So... Do you remember the old... The one of the first— The second Thief turn. There was a hidden security measure...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] ...that introduced the lasers? This is also a hidden security measure. No-one is supposed to do this. And so, there is hardwired into the thing, like, there's no turnaround there's no way to hack this: if someone tries to detach the straws...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

KEITH: ...from the body of the thing, then... like, a... a bolt shoots out of the computer terminal into whoever is at the computer terminal.

AUSTIN: Oooh! Brutal!

KEITH: And it goes absolutely straight through me.

AUSTIN: God!

KEITH: And it detaches...

[AUSTIN snickers]

KEITH: ...because I'm good.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[ALI chuckles]

KEITH: Robet Shpache is good.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But he's also dead.

AUSTIN: Fuck.

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Robet. Ohh... I really liked your cameras.

KEITH (as Robet Shpache): [whispering] Thank you. [hoarsely] Thank you.

[ALI & DRE chuckle discreetly]

AUSTIN: Alright. Who's up next? I'm gonna start downloading the data. I think it's time. It's time. I'm gonna start downloading the data into some sort of portable big hard drive. You know? Classic...

ALI: Hm!

AUSTIN: It's a briefcase, but it's a hard drive in there.

DRE: U-hum.

AUSTIN: Uh... We all get to see it. Wait, I lift Robet! I go:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Robet! Wait! Look, I got it!

AUSTIN: And you get to see Palisade for the first time. A thing I've said about Palisade is, it's purple from... looking down at it. Because it reflects parts of the light of the— of The Mirage in a way that makes it look bright and purple. But from on Palisade it is not purple at all. It is not— Like, maybe it's a trick of the atmosphere or something, but you land on it and it's— that's not the vibe. We'll get to whatever the vibe is at some other future date. But it's this bright, beautiful thing. And it's just, like: "Look at it before you go."

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): He's already gone.

AUSTIN: Alright. I'm gonna download this shit. Uh... Here come two cards! Um... Alright, I'm gonna flip these. [sighs] And then I'll narrate. It's a four of clubs. And that's a five of hearts. Alright we are going as fast as we possibly can. Through space. And um... the security guards are, like, banging on the control center to, like, try to get in. And I look to you, Fingers and Omi and I go:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): I'm gonna take the backup and get back to my ship, so that we can definitely get out with the data. And I'll try to lead them aweigh. Away. I don't know why I developed a weird accent there for a second.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): It's a quirk of my programming, probably. Sound good?

ALI (as Omi): I understand it's very stressful here.

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): Uhum.

ALI (as Omi): Good luck!

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Alright. Here's what I want you both to do.

AUSTIN: And I hand you— I, like, I produce, like... do you know those... warm... like, the solar blankets that are in survival kits? [overlapping] That you have...

KEITH: [overlapping] The shiny ones?

AUSTIN: The shiny ones.

ALI: [overlapping] Hm! Uhum-uhum.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You know what I'm talking about? They're just like: "hey you use this if you're, like, if you're in a plane crash somewhere, like, you need to retain heat because it's cold, or something. [voice going thinner] It gets the sun really well." Or whatever. I think that's how those work.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [in a regular tone, overlapping] I give you— I produce those from little pouches or little, like, mechanical pouches that are on my body. And I go:

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): These are going to cloak you for 30 seconds. Here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna open the door [chuckling] for 29 seconds. And they're gonna think it's empty in here and leave. You just gotta trust me.

ALI (as Omi): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Do you trust me?

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): Sure.

ALI (as Omi): Yes.

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): Alright.

AUSTIN: Do— I open the door. You're both hidden. I have one on two. And at 25 seconds I elbow the two nearest dudes — near the door — and sprint the other way, drawing their attention towards me, and take them on a chase through the entirety of The Divine Discernment. And... they begin to chase me through its strange and recursive interior. There's gunsh— gunfire going off all over the place. I almost trip on a squirrel... But in the end...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: ...I do make it back to my little Naboo Starfighter. I have the six of spades beating the five of hearts. Somehow! Somehow.

ALI: Nice.

AUSTIN: I believe that's— I believe that's how that works. It's... Totally. It's still the highest card. It is still the highest card. So, yeah. I make it out. That is my turn. Who's left? Ali? Dre?

DRE: Hmm...

ALI: I think I'm gonna try to get this orb outta here.

AUSTIN: Yeah? You want the whole orb.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: You want the Divine. Yeah.

ALI: I think my thing is going to be precision timing... the orb such... [laughs] while it's in orbit... sort of breaking it out of this thing so it can, like... find a propulsion once the like...

AUSTIN: Hmm.

ALI: ...the, like, rubber band things retract... Did they retract?

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah, they retracted.

ALI: [overlapping] I think they retract, now...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I think we brou— I think that Robet retracted them, before... he died. [overlapping] RIP Robet. Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, okay, okay! Perfect! Yea-yea-yeah. Um...

[2:00:00]

ALI: Yeah. And it's just, like, finding the, like, right... second to hit the, like... eject button on the orb.

AUSTIN: So that you can, like, use... [half-chuckling] the springiness of the shock mounts to launch us?

ALI: Aha. Basically. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Love it. [overlapping] Alright.

ALI: [overlapping] 'Cause this thing— I mean, this thing is twisting around and if you're, like...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] ...ejected at this point, and it's, like, twisting towards the north end and then, [overlapping] I don't know. You know—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right.

ALI: [overlapping] I don't actually know physics...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Yeah, space north.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Ohhh! This is a pair of jacks! This is a jack of diamonds and a jack of clubs!

ALI: This is very funny. Umm... [laughs]

AUSTIN: What do you— Tell me— Just talk us through the system before you play your card!

ALI: [through laughter, overlapping] Right.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Or talk us through to the climactic moment!

ALI: Okay. I'm just gonna bring...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Bring it out!

ALI: [overlapping] Putting my card there.

AUSTIN: [chanting/rapping] Bring it out, bring it out!

[DRE & AUSTIN chuckle]

ALI: [chuckles] Okay. I... Okay. Um... What do I do?

AUSTIN: What do you do?

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Are we attacked by hallows? Does the Excerpt get involved? I have to imagine the Excerpt's gonna get involved with Dre's shit, since that's— Since Dre's the— Since Finger's the one who knows... [overlapping] them.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, su-su-sure. Yeah. Yeah, maybe it's a thing of, like... the... like, structure itself starts—

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oooh! Yaaaah.

ALI: [overlapping] Like the alert is high enough that the structure itself is starting to get surrounded by other, like, units. Like, that's...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: That's also sort of a thing that we wouldn't expect, right? Like, we focus so much on the...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah...

ALI: [overlapping] ...the defenses of the unit itself, we don't know that there's, like, a warship, like... 50 kilos the other way [chuckling] Or whatever they can send out. Like, a spaceship with defenses.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] Like a backup whatever. Um... So, like, as the orb is like [imitates sound of a slingshot] pchew! [half-chuckling] Like a pinball coming out of this weird thing there's this, like... you know, wall of like other hollows...

[AUSTIN sighs]

ALI: ...that are, like, trying to intersect it to, like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Some of them are shooty, some of them are just, [chuckles] like, you know, [overlapping] basically football grabby...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Basically trying to catch it. Yeah, yeah!

ALI: Yea-yea-yeah! [laughs]

AUSTIN: We're doing Char's Counterattack! [overlapping] We're doing the... Axis Shock...

ALI: [overlapping] We're, yeah! It's like literally, like, mechs with, like... I don't know... Like, elbows linked? Like, maybe it's not...

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: ...you physically do the elbow–leg. But before this they were, like, we can get little hooks [laughs] for our mechs or whatever.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

ALI: Uhm... And yeah. They're trying to create, like, a lacrosse... [chuckling, overlapping] Planning to.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Maybe even the... the shock mounts themselves are able to deploy— Like, are able to reach longer than we thought they could.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, yea-yea-yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Like, those are actually alive in some way, and begin to— Well, not alive, but piloted in some way?

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: That's fun.

ALI: Or I mean if it's a Divine, it has some sort of eternal... [overlapping] internal... Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right! It— Yes. Yeah, totally! It reaches out its— Like, we thought that that was a cage holding it, but it's actually its arms were crossed... [overlapping] effectively.

ALI: [laughs, overlapping] Right. Yeah. Exactly.

AUSTIN: And it can, kind of like... the Nu Gundam's bits can kind of— Or fin funnels, can kind of move those around independently...

ALI: Uhum.

AUSTIN: And, like, makes a new wall to catch it. Um. This sounds bad. Do you have a way through it?

ALI: [quietly] I do not believe that I do [laughs, overlapping] Wait...!

AUSTIN: [excited, overlapping] You do! No-no-no! Listen, thats a 10! You could pull the “comprehensive surveillance system” boost that...

ALI: OKAY!

AUSTIN: Robet gave us! And get through!

ALI: Oh, and then it would be, like, an addition of the two...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You add the three and you beat the jack!

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, okay. Ri-ri-right. Okay... Okay. Okay! So— [laughs] Sorry for, I guess, of a too-soon flip! [overlapping] But that was the right flip. Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It's fine. That was the right flip. That was the right moment. Yeah.

ALI: Okay! [laughs]

AUSTIN: What, do you draw on the surveillance system somehow? To get the boost and and...

ALI: I feel like this would be the thing! It's like checking your angles, right?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, yeah.

ALI: [chuckles, overlapping] Like, this is an orb. It's not like— It's not like a ship that has to be directed in a certain way...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Hm...

ALI: [overlapping] ...like a sail or whatever. Even... even in space... you sort of need the propulsion to go one way.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] But, like, if it's an orb you can get the propulsion to go any way that you want. And because the... surveillance system is so... advanced... You know, you can't— They can't get the draw on us... in that way.

AUSTIN: Uhum.

ALI: You know what I mean? Like, they could make a big link of, like...

KEITH: [overlapping] Hm!

ALI: [overlapping] ...a bunch of people that look like a big net. But we can still... recharter to go the extra [overlapping] 45 degrees or whatever.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right.

ALI: You know what I mean?

AUSTIN: Yea-yeah-yeah. Damn!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Robet. Without Robet's Powering Up of that "comprehensive surveillance system" [overlapping] you would have got got.

ALI: [softly] Yaaaahhh...

AUSTIN: So you burst through and...

KEITH: He would have been happy to help, but he's dead.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Awww. Thank you, Robet.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah. They're in spirit.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Yea-yea-yeah.

ALI (as Omi): [overlapping] Thank you, Robet.

ALI: I say as I...

[DRE chuckles]

ALI: ...twist the knob on the control center.

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): [starkly] This one's for Robet!

ALI: Yeah... [giggles]

KEITH: They're still inside, in death throes...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: [sighs] "I'll never think about shpache without you!"

[ALI, DRE & KEITH laugh]

AUSTIN: Um... It comes to you Dre! You wanna see these cards before you start narrating your situation?

DRE: [unsure] Aaaah...!?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Are you going to set it up for yourself?

DRE: [overlapping] No, I've got it. Yeah, no.

AUSTIN: You got it.

DRE: Um. So, yeah. I'm a... a forger.

AUSTIN: [from a little further away] Yeah!

DRE: And actually I'm set up perfectly to forge myself as the Exarch. [overlapping] Because the Exarch is...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] The Excerpt.

ALI: [overlapping] Oooh!

DRE: Excerpt, sorry.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: [overlapping] Because the Excerpt's...

AUSTIN: [joking, overlapping] Exarch's a Hieron thing, please.

[ALI giggles]

DRE: Yea-yea-yeah. You're right. Um... The Excerpt is my twin sibling.

[ALI & AUSTIN gasp in shock]

AUSTIN: Fuck!

ALI: [imitates dramatic music] Pam-pam-PAM!

DRE: So... [overlapping] We need to fight to...

KEITH: [overlapping] Wait, who's your— Who's your—

DRE: Huh?

KEITH: Did you say ex-sibling?

AUSTIN: No, twi— [bursts out in laughter]

[ALI laughs]

DRE: [overlapping] No, my twin sibling.

KEITH: [overlapping] Twin sibling. That makes more sense.

DRE: [dramatically, overlapping] ...and my ex-sibling!

KEITH: My ex-sibling!

AUSTIN: Damn! [overlapping] Just so...

DRE: [overlapping] They're about to be my ex-sibling, because I have...

KEITH: [overlapping] The moff? Are you talkin' about the moff your— your...

AUSTIN: [cutting through the talk] I'm sorry. Elect! Elect. Not Excerpt.

DRE: [overlapping] The Elect. Yeah. Gosh. Yes.

KEITH: [overlapping] The Excerpt...?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Excerpt is Twilight Mirage. Sorry! Apologies.

DRE: Words.

AUSTIN: I heard Exarch, and that put me into Excerpt-mode. Apologies. Apologies.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Anyway.

KEITH: [overlapping] What's the first one that they were? The...?

AUSTIN: Candidates.

KEITH: [overlapping] Candidates. Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Candidates, and then Excepts, then Elect— And presumably many other types of things that we just never saw between COUNTER/Weight...

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: ...and Twilight Mirage.

KEITH: Yeah. Lotta years in there.

AUSTIN: Anyway, your twin!

DRE: Yeah. I— I gotta kill them. [overlapping] And steal the fingerprints.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Arms Crossed? What's their...?

DRE: No, their— Their name is...

[KEITH laughs]

DRE: Their name is A Friendly Gesture.

AUSTIN: Ooh! Love it! Damn.

KEITH: Wow! Who changed their last name?

DRE: Oh, me.

KEITH: [overlapping] You changed your last name to Crossed?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You changed your last name to... Right, sure.

KEITH: Finger— From Fingers Gesture to Fingers Crossed?

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Love it.

DRE: [overlapping] Nailed it. [giggles]

AUSTIN: So... What do you— What's the showdown like?

[pause]

DRE: [sighs] I mean, they're here, right? [overlapping] It's just...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: It's... God, it is... [sighs] I feel like in a lot of heist movies you have that, like, hide-and-sneak... Hide-and-sneak! [overlapping] Hide and seek.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No, hide-and—

KEITH: [overlapping] Hm.

AUSTIN: [half-chukling, overlapping] Aha!

DRE: [overlapping] Like, cat-and-mouse, like, showdown between [overlapping] two people.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah. Could be happening—

DRE: [overlapping] And so it's just—

AUSTIN: Oh, go ahead.

DRE: Yeah! I mean, it's us, like... you know, sneaking through the exhibits, taking pot shots at each other... You know. I almost get caught because they know the hallways and they know which one doubles back perfectly, [overlapping] to like get the jump on me...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Uhum. Their Elect name, for people asking, is Vigna.⁸ V-i-g-n-a.

[a brief pause]

DRE: You— You sure about that?

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah.

KEITH: It's not vigna?⁹

AUSTIN: It might be vigna.¹⁰ I don't know the pronunciation. I don't know how— I don't know how bean names work.

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: It's a legume. All the Elects in this Millennium are... are...

KEITH: Beans?

AUSTIN: Are... plants. Or plant names.

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh.

DRE: [overlapping] Hmm!

AUSTIN: And this is the...

KEITH: Talk about an all bean season!

DRE: [overlapping] Okay.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That would... That could be this season! You know, maybe they shifted it [overlapping] up to be just "Oops! All beans!"

DRE: [overlapping] "Oops! All beans!"

ALI: This is like the Vigna Ghina?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Is that— I don't—

ALI: [overlapping] My all-time favorite suit? [chuckles]

KEITH: [overlapping] What?

⁸ He pronounces it rhyming with "mal-IGNA-nt."

⁹ He pronounces it rhyming with "Enya"

¹⁰ He pronounces it rhyming with "Enya"

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I don't— Wait, what? Oh, is that where that is where they get that name?

ALI: [overlapping] From F91, yeah.

AUSTIN: That can't be where the name comes from, can it be? I guess it could be. No, this is the... This is the... Is it the genus? The genus that... is the flowering plants of the legume family.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, sure.

DRE: [overlapping] Ah!

AUSTIN: Legumes are orbs in my mind. [overlapping] They're not really but... you know.

DRE: [overlapping] Sure. Aa... Yeah.

AUSTIN: Anyway. I got here by trying to figure out what the... what the name for the black eyed pea was...

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling] ...to see if there was a fun...

DRE: Uh. Fergie.

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling] Fergie. That's the actual name of this... of this Elect.

DRE: Uhum.

KEITH: Isn't it just called a black eyed pea?

AUSTIN: Wait. It is. But it's also called the vigna...

KEITH: Oh, okay! [overlapping] Like the... bio...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ...Unguiculata... yea-yea-yeah. Unguiculata.

KEITH: [overlapping] What's it called... like a...

AUSTIN: It's a cow pea. That's the actual name of the type of pea that black eyed peas come from. Anyway! None of this fucking matters. What happens when your sibling shows up?

KEITH: Botanical name? What is it...? Yeah. Whatever. Doesn't matter.

[ALI chuckles]

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Dre, you're doing the hunt and sneak.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Can it be happening through the museum wings?

DRE: [overlapping] Oh, absolutely.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And you're, like, doing the thing of, like, hiding behind an old bear?

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] And then hiding behind, like, a suit of armor? Or *in* a suit of armor?

DRE: [overlapping] At some point we both grab dueling swords that have been stolen from somewhere and...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah...

DRE: ...and fight each other.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

AUSTIN (as Friendly Gesture): Fingers, I should have known that you'd betray us. You never— You always were a second best!

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): What? That's rude! That's... Why do you think I betrayed you? You're really mean!

AUSTIN (as Friendly Gesture): I think you betrayed me because you couldn't find a place for yourself inside of The Principality and you're weak of spirit and mind!

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): Again, you're— you're very much proving my point here. You're very mean.

AUSTIN (as Friendly Gesture): I'm very... discernful. I can see the truth of who you are.

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): See, this is why nobody likes you!

AUSTIN (as Friendly Gesture): I don't need to be liked! I need to be powerful.

DRE (as Fingers Crossed): Again: this is— this is why nobody likes you.

AUSTIN (as Friendly Gesture): En garde!

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Stab! Thrust! Parry!

DRE: Riposte!

AUSTIN: Step back!

DRE: Plié!

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Step back, jump—

KEITH: Twirl!

AUSTIN: Uhuh!

KEITH: Big twirl!

[a brief pause]

AUSTIN: Alright! Let's reveal!

[ALI chuckles]

AUSTIN: None of us have revealed yet! [overlapping] Do you want me to reveal the first one?

DRE: [overlapping] Uhum.

AUSTIN: Do you want left or right?

DRE: Uh. Let's go... Let's go... Let's go lucky lefty!

AUSTIN: Lucky lefty. That's a five of diamonds! [overlapping] Do you want to reveal yours?

DRE: [overlapping] Uhum. Boom.

AUSTIN: [excitedly] That's a ten of hearts! Let me reveal the right one! So, that's thrust! Then you riposted— You parried and riposted. And let's see if... if... What— Something Gesture? Friendly Gesture has a counter for your counter! They do NOT! A three of hearts! Do you stab them through the chest? What do you do? Do you just disarm them?

DRE: Um... No! I think, actually, they disarm me.

AUSTIN: Ooh!

DRE: Um. And can centre— and, like, continue gloating.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Um. And then I just pull out a gun and shoot them.

AUSTIN: Uhh. [chuckles, sighs] “The word’s discerning, asshole!”

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Alright, so you killed the Elect of Discernment... putting yourself in the hallowed halls of other members of Millennium Break who have killed Elects. Like Gur Sevraq. Um... And you... What do you do? What’s the end of this sequence? Do you get back to your Naboo Starfighter— I guess not, really. We stole the Elect! Or the Divine!

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We have the Divine! We should probably wait for Ali to get back. ‘Cause Ali had to step away for a second.

DRE: Oh, right. Yeah!

AUSTIN: We’re so close! We’re so close!

DRE: I have some sort of... some sort of — probably painful — sci-fi fingerprint cloner/scanner.

AUSTIN: Hm.

DRE: It’s probably not pleasant to redo your fingerprints.

KEITH: Eh, some people like it! [overlapping] Some people, somewhere.

DRE: [overlapping] Will Smith in Men in Black one. Not a fan of it.

KEITH: No.

[AUSTIN chuckles]

DRE: [overlapping] That was a...

KEITH: [overlapping] I think it was cool, though! That was a great scene!

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What.

DRE: [overlapping] The...

KEITH: [overlapping] Where they they burn off Will Smith's fingerprints in Men in Black?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Agreed.

KEITH: That's the point where you're like: "oh, this is serious." Like, they're like...

DRE: Uhum.

KEITH: ...serious-serious.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Hm.

DRE: [overlapping] I mean, listen, Keith. They straight don't exist. No names and no fingerprints.

AUSTIN: Uhum.

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: [softer] Uhum.

KEITH: [chuckling] Like. Yeah. Serious. Like I said.

[a brief pause]

KEITH: We should bring back the era of movies where... the main... the actor of the main character would maybe... do, like, a whole song for the movie.

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: I want more rapper/actors doing movie theme songs.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] Bring it back.

DRE: We really missed out, because John Cena could have done that for Suicide Squad.

[KEITH chuckles]

AUSTIN: He didn't do it? [overlapping] Did he not?

DRE: [overlapping] And he didn't.

AUSTIN: Wow.

KEITH: Did he not do a rap, are you saying?

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah. I don't think he did.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] He didn't do that for Suicide Squad.

AUSTIN: He's probably put the rapping behind him outside of, like, once every three years for the WWE, right?

DRE: Sure. Probably.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

KEITH: It's just a shame that it was born and died... It was born with Will Smith and then it died with Will Smith, at... doing...

DRE: Hitch.

KEITH: Uhj... No, not Hitch.

DRE: Oh, okay.

KEITH: Did he do a song for Hitch? No...

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: Wild Wild West is what I— [overlapping] was thought that he...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No! Definitely no. Because he did it with the newest Men in Black movie.

KEITH: [overlapping] Okay.

DRE: [overlapping] Oh, did he?

KEITH: Well, it's almost obligatory.

AUSTIN: Yea-yea-yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] What are we on...?

KEITH: [overlapping] I didn't see that! Was it any good?

AUSTIN: [half-chuckling] I didn't fucking see that!

KEITH: Okay. [overlapping] I really liked that first Men in Black movie, at least.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I'm pretty sure he did— Yeah. He did. I definitely think he did. Because I looked at what he looked like in Men in Black 3, and I remember him...

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: ...doing a song. Yeah. Oh, maybe I'm wrong! Wait... Am I wrong? Did he not?

KEITH: I think...

AUSTIN: No, he did— Um...

KEITH: I don't wanna— I don't want to pretend like I know Will Smith. I don't know Will Smith. I never met Will Smith.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

DRE: [overlapping] Sure.

KEITH: Shocker. But...

DRE: Uhum.

KEITH: Umm...

AUSTIN: Pitbull did a song for it.

KEITH: I think...

DRE: Ugh...

KEITH: I think there's a— there's a point...

[AUSTIN laughs]

KEITH: ...where if you're Will Smith I think that you're concerned about looking goofy doing a song for a movie, like it's still the mid 90s?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And that might have worn off by Men in Black 3, where it's like, “actually it would be good for me as a famous person to be seen as a little goofy”?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Um. But I still think that maybe... [overlapping] I mean...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Oh sorry! The newest Men in Black, of course, was actually Men in Black: International. Which came out...

KEITH: What?

AUSTIN: ...only [laughs, overlapping] three years ago!

DRE: [overlapping] Oh, yeah!

AUSTIN: Men in Black— MIB International. [overlapping] That's featuring... Chris Hemsworth and Tessa Thompson.

DRE: [overlapping] That's... That's, like, got... Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: I was about to say.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] Oh, right!

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh, I cannot believe that Men in Black 3 was 2012!

DRE: [overlapping] That's— I thought that's the one you were talking about, Keith, when you said the new one.

KEITH: No. I can— Okay. So, here's the thing: for me Men of Black 3 came out in, like, 2016.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I know. [overlapping] Time is bad, we're adults now.

KEITH: [overlapping] When, actually, there's one in 2012 and one in 2018.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [overlapping] It is a nightmare to think about time.

KEITH: [overlapping] Which is insane.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, Ali's back.

ALI: Hi! [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Hi. So! The Finale. Uh... [reads from rulebook] "If the Thieves manage to escape with the Throne, each survivor secretly notes down which of the reasons for stealing it must be addressed first."

[2:15:00]

AUSTIN: “When everyone's decided, reveal your choices to the table. Now the real work begins. Ask yourself: is your bond with the others— [corrects himself] with the other Thieves strong enough to survive the coming conflicts? Do you really trust them? If only one Thief makes it out alive, congratulations! You now have absolute control over the Throne! You command power beyond imagination and can lay claim to vast wealth, dominion over whole star systems, and seat— and a seat of the galactic council. [chuckles]

[an impressed whistle is heard]

AUSTIN: “Ask other players how long does it take until you're just as bad as the last tyrant to pilot the Throne.” So, our reasons for stealing it are: has sight of paliset— has sight of Palisade; has evidence of The True Divine; used as a colonial museum; or once suffered a major heist. Those are our, like, things that happened... or that it did that make it, like, valuable to us in some ways. So, privately, we're supposed to decide which is the one that we support, effectively? As like the thing to prioritize to do with it.

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: My understanding is: both of you are part of Millennium Break, right?

ALI: Uhum.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you have strong feelings on which one of these things is the thing that you support using Discernment for?

DRE: Uuh... I guess for me it would be the having sight of... Palisade.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Palisade. Yeah.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

ALI: [overlapping] Yeah, same.

AUSTIN: Um... I think... I can play Kinoki two different ways here. I've— And maybe we're in our rights just do whatever the fuck we want. One is, this sort of, like, Kinoki is the “fuck a museum” thief, right? Rob from the museums and return shit? I think that's kinda fun. I also think the version of: “it was my creator that did the heist” is kind of fun.

DRE: Oooh!

AUSTIN: The past heist. And it's like, and now I want to know who they are.

ALI: [appreciatively] Hmm!

AUSTIN: And so I get the data on that... past successful heist. So that I can say farewell to Millennium Break and go hunt down my creator.

KEITH: Hunt down? Or just find?

AUSTIN (as Kinoki): We'll have to see, won't we?

ALI: [imitates dramatic music] Pum-pum-PUM!

[KEITH laughs]

DRE: Yeah. Play to find out what happens.

AUSTIN: [in a mock-standoffish tone] Play to find out what *happens*, Keith!

[ALI chortles]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] We're never gonna get...

KEITH: [overlapping] I'm just— Look, I'm just asking questions! Does hunt mean hunt, or does hunt mean track?!?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And we don't have to answer it! But I want it on record that the question was asked!

AUSTIN: Aha. Aha. Uh... So, yeah! I think that— I think given that both of you want to use the Palisade stuff, that obviously makes the most sense. And... you manage to... we managed to now introduce the way in which Millennium Break will, itself, end up on Palisade. Perhaps after The Curtain does, but certainly after... Fealty and... Véronique get to The Mirage. As we saw at the end of the last session. The last game.

KEITH: After or before?

AUSTIN: After. [overlapping] Definitely after... Fielty's story.

KEITH: [overlapping] Af— Oh, okay. Right. Sure.

AUSTIN: Fielty's story happens first here, for sure. Our HOUNDS game is the first thing. That happens chronologically first. This happens sometime after. There's a chance we'll play another game that takes place between HOUNDS and Steal the Throne... Steal the Throne? Stealing the Throne. Um... [half-chuckling] Yes. Kevin Imrie in the chat says: "Kinoki is really important for successfully invading the Collector Base." Yeah! Uh-huh!

[someone coughs]

AUSTIN: Uh... So, yeah. That's— That is Stealing the Throne. I think... if I can leave us with, like, a thing it very much is: with this information Millennium Break has to start thinking “what do we do here?” Because... The Principality — and The Curtain specifically — it's an easy answer: you go move troops onto this planet. And use those— that place as a place— as a staging ground to then invade The Twilight Mirage. That's a-b-c, 1-2-3, knock it out.

For Millennium Break, who is all about, like, autonomy and sovereignty, that is a lot trickier. They are not allowed to just— They would not allow themselves to just go do that. Especially before... [half-chuckles] before The Principality even fucking gets there. Right?

And so, I imagine what follows for Millennium Break is a long series of talking through how do we do this the right way; trying to send messages there, figuring out how far in advance... if far in advance The Curtain is already moving towards it, having seen it already; um... and how do we start to build some sort of coalition with the people there to resist the power that is... that is The Curtain and and The Principality. So.

The next time we play we'll continue developing out what happens between PARTIZAN and PALISADE. Ali, and Keith and Dre, thank you so much for playing... Stealing the Throne! A really fun little heist game.

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: You can find that, again... on Nick... Bate? Yes, Nick Bates itch.io page, iclb.at.itch.io. Uh... I should say, because we didn't use them, but this game comes with a bunch of really sick playsets. So if you just want to play... if you don't wanna have to think about, like “what the Divine—” or, sorry “the Throne” is, there are some incredible pre-built complication lists, Throne lists, rivals, obstacles. There's a great, like, list for each of these. Of just, like, what the various obstacles might be.

So, like, for instance the first Throne that is given is The Burning Soldier. And so, the— a suggested Scene of the Crime is “the Coronation of her baroque majesty, Queen Calyxthea the Twelfth.” One of the background suggestions is “a massive spear still pierces the burning soldier's armor. Who had the strength to penetrate his defenses? Why has the spear not been removed?” The— An example throne system is... something called “The Nova Legion”! Sick! Love it!

[DRE laughs, KEITH & ALI chuckle]

AUSTIN: An obstacle suggestion is “ancient rights that require a soldier of the Nova Legion volunteer their life as the fuel that awakens the Throne. Someone important to the thieves or their plan is about to be sacrificed. Who is it?” So, all sorts of really fun things there. Go check that out! lckbat.itch.io. I-c-k-b-a-t.itch.io. Definitely go check those out! Really great art.

Ah, yeah, and Si Sweetman has some Throne art in here. Si Sweetman... Who also just recently — it's worth saying — [Si completed](#) the extremely long project [chuckles] of [drawing every mech from the... from Twilight Mirage](#). You can follow him at [@SiFSweetman](#)

on twitter, and find the thread of all of the mechs from Twilight Mirage. It's a really-really great project that was really fun to see [overlapping] completed.

DRE: [overlapping] Now Si has to repost them all in Onion order.

[AUSTIN lets out a tired chuckle]

KEITH: [laughs, then in regular tone] Stupid.

[AUSTIN & DRE laugh]

KEITH: [chuckling] I think that's still just straight order. [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing] It is, I think! If you don't -- yeah, Twilight Mirage doesn't... Uhh... Alright. That's gonna do it for us! Thank you so much for joining us today! [overlapping] We'll be back next week...

KEITH: [overlapping] Hey, can I give an extra plug?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Please! Give me your plugs! Plug it out...!

KEITH: For a Runbutton we just started our [Uru let's play](#), [overlapping] the Myst...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You sure did!

KEITH: The Myst... MMO, I guess? Uh...

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's correct.

KEITH: We do those with [Jordan Mallory](#) and [John Davies](#) and we've done Myst, Riven, Myst 3, and now we're starting Uru. Those are all really weird streams...!

AUSTIN: I love them.

KEITH: But I think they're great. Especially Riven and Myst 3. I think are really good. But if you're just interested in the weirdness of Uru, the first episode... I literally just went and made it public, like, right now. So.

AUSTIN: Amazing.

ALI: Oooh, exclusive drops!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Exclusive!

KEITH: [overlapping] Exclusive drop! [Youtube.com/Runbutton!](#)

DRE: [overlapping] Uhum.

ALI: [unfazed, overlapping] You heard it here first!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] They're very calming streams to me. Or videos to me. They put my mind at ease. I really love that series. Also, you've been doing them for a decade now, basically.

KEITH: It's so long! I went into the group chat—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: ...that, like, our old discord group chat, and the last time that we recorded was like literally... like, 16 or 17 months ago!

[ALI chuckles]

KEITH: And I was like what the fuck! It felt like six months ago!

AUSTIN: At some point you note in the stream that, like, the video quality is better— the screen share is better...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then someb— like, “oh it's the best it's ever been!” And, I wanna say, John Davies is like: “Yeah. We started on Skype. We started with...”

[DRE, ALI & KEITH laugh]

KEITH: [laughing] Yeah!

AUSTIN: [chuckling] “Skype!” [overlapping] And so...

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah! Yeah, Discord didn't exist when we started doing these.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah! So...

KEITH: I would say Myst 1 is a little confrontational. I wasn't having a good day, [overlapping] and I didn't want to really be there.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You were not having a good time...

KEITH: I really— Also, I don't I think— I stand by this: I don't think that the first Myst is very good.

AUSTIN: Aha.

KEITH: But I *immediately* was won over by Riven.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Um, like, I really liked Riven and Myst 3 a lot, so...

AUSTIN: It's very good. It's very good. Uh...

KEITH: Thank you. Appreciate it.

AUSTIN: I have an important note here from Annie Johnston-Glick in the chat, who says "God. Every time you have to mention The Onion I feel the need to apologize. But also, I do think it's funny to be a menace."

[ALI chuckles, KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Great energy.

DRE: [overlapping] Listen: never apologize!

AUSTIN: Never apologize! Uh... Alright! [overlapping] That's gonna be for us.

KEITH: [overlapping] Funny to be a menace?

AUSTIN: Yeah. [overlapping] Let's go to time.is!

KEITH: [overlapping] That's horrible!

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, no— you have...! Oh!

[KEITH laughs]

ALI: Keith!?!

AUSTIN: [laughing] You have no space...!

AUSTIN: ...Keith Carberry!

[KEITH continues laughing]

AUSTIN: Keith J. Carberry!

ALI: [overlapping] Keith!

DRE: Keith J "The Menace" Carberry! [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Alright.

ALI: [half-chucklin] He was being a menace right there! That's why he said it!

AUSTIN: You're right, yeah! [overlapping] You're right!

DRE: [overlapping] Aha!

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That's what...!

ALI: [shouting, overlapping] That's how much he fucking enjoys that shit!

KEITH: [exasperated, overlapping] The mena— The menace layers go really deep!

AUSTIN: Unbelievable!

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: I'm not— Yeah, it's sort of The Menace Onion, really, it's what it is.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: Just a different kind of onion.

[“[Permanent Peace](#)” by Jack de Quidt plays]