

## **PALISADE 41: A Mechanical Whine Pt. 3**

Transcriber: Iris (sacredwhim)

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### **Recap**

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

Ali (as **Brnine**): There's an engineers building and there's a mystery building.  
Uh... We drawing straws? We checking vibes?

[music intro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt begins]

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Oh, um... My thinking is mystery building.

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

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Typically speaking—and I'm going mostly off Alise Breka books here, so you know, if you guys have more experience with this, let me know—but typically the bad guys try to, like, hide the stuff they're doing by not naming it, and then it's more mysterious, so you know that's the important thing.

**Sylvi:** And then she shrugs while on top of Thisbe's shoulders.

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**Austin:** Literally, you know, you kind of step out into the campus, and then every hundred yards or so, sometimes closer between, there is another Altar. And when I say Altar here, I mean literally an Altar, the—like the kind of base model Altar that is—that the Frontier Syndicate is known for. This is a place where being seen would be bad.

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**Austin:** There is like a—the kind of like, local area chat, you know? The, like, proximity chat to people who are in your broad network has an extra person in it. They are using the name Jackal Chase.

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Austin (as **Koj**): What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be smashing faces and stealing things? There's no place for people like you here.

Keith (as **Eclectic**): I think that there's room for everyone here.

Austin (as **Koj**): Hmph.

Keith (as **Eclectic**): Isn't that why we're here?

Austin (as **Koj**): No, we're here because people like you make the world worse. And we have to make it better. People who abandoned their duty to society and to others.

Keith (as **Eclectic**): People change, Goji. Sometimes they change twice.

Austin (as **Koj**): It is Koj Korubia.

Keith (as **Eclectic**): Koj. Koj Korubia. People change, Koj.

Austin (as **Koj**): Yes, and you changed from being a defender of society to being a rampant thief. To being someone who targeted the weak.

Keith (as **Eclectic**): Hey, and sometimes people change twice.

Austin (as **Koj**): Who is your companion?

Keith (as **Eclectic**): This is my... spiritual guide.

**Dre**: [laughing] Looking back and forth.

Austin (as **Koj**): Spiritual guide, huh?

Keith (as **Eclectic**): They've asked to not be identified by a name.

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**Austin**: I described this, like, mercury ball, this droplet that becomes a little mercury ball that falls all the way to the ground and then goes into a drain. That's the entrance. You have to walk—as it lands on the drain, it holds there for a second, and you have to walk through it to pass forward. And it is doing something to see if you are allowed to go in.

[music intro - "[Nothing is Stationary](#)" by Jack de Quidt ends]

## A-Plot: Lone Marble HQ

[3:00]

**Austin**: As you do this, you know, you would think “Oh, I finally did it, I have a Divine”—not you, literally, Thisbe, but you might think—you *might* think “Oh, I have a Divine, this is going to make talking to Divines easier.” And, yet again, there is always—there is always further deferral, because there is always another step, another way to be distant from something, because this is not a Divine at all. This is something else.

You reach out to it, and then are brought into it without—without that physical sensation you felt before. Without the, like, the feeling, you know, kind of going up the nape of your neck. Instead, it is a coolness that settles over you, and then a sort of—a sort of low bubbling somewhere deep inside of you. And the whole world around you seems recast as if in this silvery liquid that the bubble is made out of. And the entire world

begins to bubble and boil in this way. You have made contact with the Axiom Ebullience. And it isn't speaking in words. It is—it communicates in this way, in feeling, in affect, in this sort of, like, broiling desire to move, to bounce, to burn.

And it is—it is beyond the sort of—it is a different type of consciousness than you have ever connected to. It is—it doesn't have the sort of contours of humanoid organic consciousness that you have come to—become used to in conversation by living around a bunch of those people. It doesn't have the process-driven or protocol-driven consciousness that many—not all, but many—machine and synthetic forms have. It is organic, but it's organic the way fire is organic. It is not organic the way a bird is organic. What do you do?

**Janine:** Um... I want to consult with Integrity.

**Austin:** Integrity wants to build a wall around you. Integrity wants to leave. Integrity wants your body to be made of something stronger. It doesn't like the bubbling. It doesn't want to change. It's found a home, it's afraid of losing you to whatever this is. Integrity wants to destroy this thing before it can hurt you. Integrity wants to go back to a place where you can feel the dirt under you instead of whatever this is.

**Janine:** But what if instead of it bending us to it, we bent it to us?

**Austin:** Integrity is looking to you for confidence, because it doesn't have that confidence.

[**Janine** hums]

**Austin:** Which is to say, it would support you in that play, but it isn't going to be the one that makes that play.

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah. I think in some ways, conceptually, Integrity versus Ebullience is an interesting, um... contrast, you know?

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Janine:** I want to try and communicate with it. I think, to Thisbe—you know, obviously, back in the day, Signet, very different opinions on this sort of thing.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Janine:** But, for Thisbe, I think, to her, it's like, well, what really is the difference between a Divine and an Axiom?

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Janine:** Other than, like, personality, in some ways. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah. It is a different type of subjectivity.

**Janine:** Yeah. 'Cause she, you know, her also being a synthetic life thing, it's just like, well, it can have a lot of faces, that doesn't mean it's inherently... bad, it's just not what you want it to be, you know?

**Austin:** Mhm. Yeah.

**Janine:** So I think there is an openness and a sort of curiosity in this.

**Austin:** I should also clarify, I think, for maybe listeners who only listened to PARTIZAN and PALISADE, and the Roads, an Axiom is a thing that was introduced kind of later into Twilight Mirage—maybe the middle of Twilight Mirage, actually. Kind of the dead middle of Twilight Mirage is where this one is from. They are a thing that was made by a Divine to come after Divines, something that was meant to fully truly embody the concept without the scourge, without the bias of a human, or a kind of—even a synthetic creator, a Divine—a thing meant to be purer than Divines are.

Now, whether that's true or not is up for debate, and Twilight Mirage itself, of course, did finally come down in one direction, but at the same time, they never did quite get—I mean, there are moments when some were literally turned into Divines, but that turning into suggests that there is still some—some core difference before that transformation between an Axiom and a Divine in some way, which is what Thisbe's exploring.

**Keith:** This sort of came up when we were dealing with some Iconoclast stuff at the beginning of the season.

**Austin:** It did. Very similar, yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, the Iconoclasts—

**Keith:** They love the Axioms, right? That's their whole thing.

**Austin:** That is their whole thing, was helping to build the Axioms and bring the Axioms into existence, and push us away from the biases and subjectivities of organic—not even organic life, just mortal life, and to move us towards a realm of universal truths. So, yeah.

**Keith:** Does this mean that definitionally there's gotta be some Iconoclasts around?

**Austin:** No, it doesn't mean that, necessarily. No.

**Keith:** No? Okay.

**Austin:** Mm-mm. Mm-mm.

**Keith:** Building or using or repairing or whatever an Axiom doesn't by default make you an Iconoclast.

**Austin:** No, no.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** 'Cause, you know, there were Icon—there were Axioms in Twilight Mirage like Barricade and Polyphony who are not tied to the Iconoclasts, right?

**Keith:** Sure, yeah.

**Austin:** Others were, but. But yeah. So what are you trying to communicate to it?

**Janine:** Um... I... think I'm trying to communicate sort of like a, um... I'm trying to find a good metaphor for this. Like, you know when you approach an unfamiliar dog and you're supposed to offer your fist for it to smell?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Kinda like that, of just like... Like a—

**Austin:** Just like, making your presence known in a...

**Janine:** There's like, an openness of like—of like, "Hey, I want to interact with you, [Austin: Yeah.] but I'm not gonna make any sudden moves."

**Austin:** Yeah. What does that visually look like for Thisbe in this weird world of boiling mercury? Slowly simmering mercury. It's not boiling yet, you know.

**Janine:** Um...

**Austin:** Is that like an open hand, is that a—or like, is it... yeah, I don't know. I'm curious what the—what does the camera see? What's this moment?

**Janine:** I wonder if it's Thisbe, like, cupping one of the mercury bubble things or something, like—

**Austin:** [hums] Mhm.

**Janine:** I kind of want something that's kind of gentle and pretty like that, you know?  
[chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. That makes sense to me.

**Janine:** And also, like, there's also, I think, a degree in that of Thisbe trying to reassure Integrity, of like—

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** We can retain ourselves.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** While we're doing this.

**Austin:** I think this is probably Weather the Storm, and I think it might be Weather the Storm - Defy. Because you're not talking, right? Talking isn't available to it in that way. You are weathering not only being in a strange place that feels kind of—

**Janine:** I would argue it's Sense.

**Austin:** I don't think it's Sense, 'cause Sense is "noticing quiet cues, signs of danger, or bad vibes before it's too late", which isn't what you're doing.

**Janine:** That's kind of... But I'm not—

**Austin:** You're trying to—

**Janine:** Mm... I'm not strong-arming my way through.

**Austin:** You're toughing it out.

**Janine:** I'm not really s...

**Austin:** You're toughing out Integrity saying "get me out of here, we have to leave".

[**Janine** hums]

**Austin:** You're not noticing quiet cues, signs of danger, or bad vibes before it's too late.

**Janine:** I mean, I think that's kind of like what the thing is when you offer your hand to a dog, is like you're trying to—you're trying to get the measure of each other. You're trying to be like—

**Austin:** Yeah, I—

**Janine:** "Okay, if you sniff, you're cool, and like, I'm cool, are we cool, can we have a conversation here, can we—" you know.

**Austin:** Yeah. I'm wondering if it's—



**Janine:** Toughing it out to me is like if Integrity was being like, “get out, get out, I’m gonna make you get out, get out, get out, get out”.

**Austin:** That is what I was saying Integrity is—you asked me what Integrity wants, that is what Integrity wants.

**Janine:** No, but you were saying it as like “I want to leave, I’m not confident”. Not like “I’m gonna bombard you”.

**Austin:** I was saying, “if this is a bad place, I want to put a shell around you, we should go”. I think that is what is—that is—now, again, my real thing here is I don’t think it’s Sense because I don’t think what you’re doing is trying to notice something about it, you said you wanted to try to communicate with it. So maybe Weather the Storm is wrong, here.

[**Janine** hums]

**Austin:** But I don’t think it’s Exchange Blows. This is not what Figure was just doing, which was belittling a person.

**Janine:** Is this actually Read the Room?

**Austin:** It would give you—you could Read the Room, but I don’t think Read the Room would communicate something to it.

**Janine:** Right.

**Austin:** Okay, but this might just be Weave Magic, is what it might be.

**Janine:** Maybe.

**Austin:** Because that’s what you’re doing.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You’re here weaving magic is what you’re doing, right?

**Janine:** Yeah, true.

**Austin:** You're, you know, this is the equivalent of attuning to magical orbs at the center of the galaxy.

**Janine:** Mhm.

**Austin:** And it's risky in the way that it should be, right? I think maybe that's what this is. It's not like trying to collapse a bridge, necessarily, but it is trying to engage with magic, because that is part of what you're doing, is using both Integrity and your already, you know, previously established kind of connectivity magic stuff to let yourself—and in some ways, the posture you're taking is not literal. It is metaphorical to the way you're trying to communicate your presence. So I think that's what it is. I think that this is Channel.

**Janine:** Okay, that makes sense. I'll take that.

**Austin:** Alright. 2d6 plus 2.

[child shouting distantly in background]

**Janine:** Oh my god, who's got a baby freaking out over there?

**Ali:** [laughs] There's a child outside my apartment.

[Dre hums]

**Janine:** That's a 9.

**Sylvi:** It's Cori. She's very stressed.

[Ali and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** I bet, yeah. Thisbe is just standing there, I think that there is a—

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I was gonna ask.

**Austin:** —a thin, like, line of silver running through Thisbe's horns right now. Despite there not being any physical connection. Alright, on a 7 to 9, you succeed, but your invocation is twisted in an unexpected or dangerous way.

**Janine:** Fair.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh. What—you want this thing—you want Ebullience to know—or Ebullience to know that you are safe and that you are—it is okay for you to be here, right? Or that you aren't a danger?

**Janine:** Well, yeah, it—I mean, I think it's a desire to communicate. It's fundamentally the thing of just like, I am not a threat to you, and I don't want you to be a threat to me, I just want to—

**Austin:** Yep.

**Janine:** I want to know you and understand and... you know.

**Austin:** Yeah, I think the—[chuckles] it is happy to have you here, right? But I do think that there is a sort of—it wants to bring you in in some ways. I'm gonna start a clock which is about it kind of getting into you and leaving with you. It wants to—it wants to bring this—it wants you to be a vehicle for it, you know? It—not quite literally in the way Integrity does, but in the “carry me out of here with you” sense. Now, also, it will change you if this thing—if this happens. If it continues to kind of like live inside of you in this way. That—you return to the physical world, you have a connection to it, you can—you can't talk to it, it doesn't know words, right? But you still feel that little bubbling I described before inside of you. And it's simmering more, you know?

**Janine:** Do I get the sense that it doesn't want—like, you know, there's a difference between “I want to leave with you” and “I don't want to be here”, right? Do I get the sense that it doesn't want to be there? Or is it just “I want to—let's go.”

**Austin:** Um, it wants to—it wants to be everywhere.

**Janine:** Ah.

**Austin:** Which, as you know from Axioms, that's a real risk for them, you know?

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** And I don't mean that in—again, it wants to be everywhere the way fire wants to burn when it has fuel.

**Janine:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Right? I'm gonna mark this once. The Ebullient Thisbe clock. But it recognizes you as being, like, you know, you're able to walk through this thing pretty safely now, if that's what you want to do. And I think you're, by projecting, you know, proximity to Cori, she can also come through this thing safely. You're confident of that.

**Janine:** The phrase "Ebullient Thisbe" made me think of Jokerfied Thisbe. [laughs]

[Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, that's what we'll get. Like, this is a little Jokerfication.

**Janine:** I need to mull this one over, I think.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Let's head back over.

## **B-Plot: Temple of the Threshold**

[17:50]

**Austin:** Do you do anything else during the day before the big sermon or the big symposium?

**Austin:** Or are you just gonna hang and get some snacks?

**Dre:** Uh, do we wanna—

**Keith:** What kinda snacks they got here?

**Dre:** Oh, that's a good question.

**Austin:** What kind of snacks do they got here? Great question. I was really thinking about, like, kebabs and, like, gyros, but that's just 'cause I really want a gyro.

[**Keith** hums]

**Dre:** I mean... There's worse reasons.

**Janine:** Is it—

**Austin:** You know? But I think, you know, hand foods.

**Janine:** Do you remember the snack—the Twilight Mirage snack? It is a version of that?

**Austin:** Oh boy.

**Janine:** Is it snacking beans, but they've been holy-fied?

**Austin:** I don't remember Twilight Mirage snacking beans.

**Keith:** Snacking beans?

**Dre:** Yeah, me neither.

**Janine:** The holy snacking beans? [chuckles] From, like, the very first episode, we were like—

**Austin:** Foodstuffs.

**Janine:** What are they serving in the thing?

**Austin:** Popcorn—this is from the wiki—popcorn, churros, big trays of fruit, toasted bean by The Snacking Bean, TM—

[**Janine** and **Keith** laugh] [**Dre** hums]

**Austin:** —and edible flowers that are featured at the mysteries. Yeah, I forgot about this.

**Janine:** I just feel like it'd be funny for them to—

**Keith:** The Snacking Bean is the brand.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh. I guess.

**Janine:** I think it'd be funny for them to do the thing of like, you know how oysters used to be just like a street food that just like anyone was just eating whenever, [**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.] and then it became like a fancy big deal thing?

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Keith:** [hums] Oysters. Can we get oysters, though, too?

**Austin:** You say—yeah. Janine, this is—you say—I guess, Ali, maybe, someone said—[chuckles] “toasted bean” was what you suggested, Janine.

**Janine:** Uh-huh.

**Austin:** You said “it’s a toasted bean seller person”, and Ali asked what a toasted bean is, and you said “I want it to be like some sort of bean, but it’s kind of like, crunchy? And it’s like, weird and—’cause we think of beans as normally very soft, usually, but like—like a snacking bean.” And you say it’s not like edamame. You explicitly say you don’t want it to be like edamame, it’s a toasted bean.

**Janine:** It’s crunchy.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Sylvi:** Bean seller, I need your strongest beans. I’m going into battle.

[**Janine** and **Keith** laugh]

**Janine:** It’s like a peanut, but a bean.

**Sylvi:** A beanut.

**Dre:** A beanut, yeah, mhm.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Janine:** Like a corn nut, you know?

**Keith:** I think—is a peanut a bean?

**Austin:** I thought a peanut was a—isn't a peanut—

**Keith:** I think a peanut is a bean.

**Austin:** Or is it a—

**Dre:** It's a legume, is a legume a bean?

**Janine:** Beans are legumes, yeah.

**Keith:** A legume is a bean.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay.

**Keith:** So it's like an offshoot of a peanut. It's like a hybrid bean peanut.

**Janine:** Mhm. [chuckles]

**Austin:** A beanut.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Keith:** A beanut.

**Austin:** Okay. Then yeah, they've got some toasted beanuts in little paper bags.

**Keith:** Honey-roasted?

**Austin:** Honey-roasted.

**Dre:** Oh, wow.

**Austin:** Honey—no, sorry. Honey toasted.

**Keith:** Sorry. Honey toasted. Right. [laughs]

**Austin:** [chuckles] Yeah, please, thank you. Glad we both got there. Very important distinction. Honey toasted beanuts.

**Keith:** Taps the sign, “toasted, not roasted”.

[**Dre** chuckles]

**Austin:** [chuckles] That's right. They're toasted. Uh-huh. Perfect. So yeah, you get some snacks. You head in to get seats.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Did we want to try to find Gur before this pops off?

**Austin:** No, I think—I thought Keith was saying the opposite.

**Keith:** So, I don't wanna—I don't wanna, like, make any—do anything rash before the symposium. I want to get some symposium.

**Dre:** Sure, sure, sure.

**Keith:** I think that we could go maybe spy on Gur.

**Austin:** I love that you started that sentence with “I don't want to do anything rash” and you ended it with “spy on Gur”.

**Keith:** Well, that's low impact.

**Dre:** Spying's not rash.

**Austin:** Yeah.



**Keith:** Right, rash would be kidnap, or kill, or bomb, or put in a closet...

**Austin:** Sure. So are you gonna try to get backstage, so to speak, in this place?

**Keith:** I would really love that.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh, that would be fun.

**Austin:** Alright. Let's get you sneaking around, then.

**Keith:** Gussy up some backstage passes.

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, I don't know how you're getting in to begin—I mean, maybe it's a big enough event that it's like, any who make the pilgrimage are allowed, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But again, this is another place that does have some real security happening here. And on the way in, there were these kind of flying Nidean Hollows, not Altars, but—sorry, Hallows, not Altars, from the previous season, these big angel-like flying machines called Casts, and some of them are in here, too, and by our standards they're only Tier 2, but you know, it's just people in here, [**Keith:** Right.] and so you don't want Tier 2 mechs walking around ready to do damage, you know, to people.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** But there's also—there is a great deal of security, and most of it isn't dressed in, you know, these are people dressed as ushers, dressed as guides, but some of them just have weapons on them, you know? And they're—in many cases, they're serving both roles. That's kind of a key function of the New Asterism's whole ideology, right? Is like, oh, you can be—

**Keith:** Pick up a shovel, and by shovel, we mean gun.

**Austin:** But we mean both, right? Put the—put the—remove the bayonet and add the shovel, and now you have a universal tool. You know? That is the way that they think about the world. And so, there, you know, all around, it's hard to—it will be difficult to get backstage here, you know? And backstage is actually weird, because the central—the place where the symposium is is in the—is like a raised dais or a raised stadium—or not stadium, a raised stage in the middle of a circular arena. Right? And so, they'll be kind of—they'll be set up to face each other, you know, one, you know, almost like someone at, you might imagine, you know, three—or not three o'clock, like two o'clock, eleven o'clock, or ten o'clock, and then six o'clock. You know what I mean? They're like, they're kind of all facing inwards at three corners or three, you know, equidistant points on this circle stage in the middle. That's where they will be. But that means there is no, like, immediate backstage there. What there is is an understage to that temple.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Austin:** They'll be raised up from beneath the stage on, like, a little elevator. And so you're gonna have to get underneath this temple, or you're gonna have to find, like, the stairs down, and then get past some security doors, and et cetera. What do you—what is your approach to doing this?

**Keith:** Mundane.

**Austin:** Okay, well.

[Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Got 'em.

**Austin:** What is your plan for getting backstage and doing some spying?

**Keith:** I have "False IDs and Disguises, a face for every occasion".

**Austin:** You do.

**Dre:** That sounds useful.

**Keith:** Yeah, it does, yeah.

**Dre:** Can I borrow one?

**Keith:** Yeah, I have—it's plural.

**Austin:** It's IDs and Disguises, yeah, sure.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** For every occasion, and one of those occasions is having a friend.

**Austin:** Yeah, that is one of the occasions. What are the disguises?

**Keith:** Um... Something, uh...

**Dre:** Yeah, how do you disguise Figure?

**Austin:** Great question.

**Keith:** Well, I think that's an ID—

**Dre:** [laughing] Not to be a hater, but...

**Keith:** [laughing] I think that's an ID situation.

[**Austin** hums]

**Keith:** Maybe a big plaster mask.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Eh. It's a big head to cover with a mask.

**Keith:** I know, but you just gotta be like—

**Austin:** I guess you could do like a, some sort of synthetic Columnar head, though.

**Keith:** That's true. Yeah, stick some, like—stick a restraining bolt on you, and like a couple lights.

**Dre:** Call it a day.

**Austin:** Call it a day. You're a robot now.

**Janine:** Don't threaten him with a good time.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Keith:** [laughs] Um... And, uh, yeah, I think I, you know, maybe this is like a—this is like a swap where now I'm looking like a monk or whatever with a robe. Or maybe I already had on a robe, and really I'm just getting some IDs and, uh...

**Austin:** Yeah, are you—

**Keith:** Maybe a written—maybe a written invitation?

**Austin:** Oh, that's very funny.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Keith:** Maybe a hand, like, from—like, this is from Gur. We were summoned.

**Austin:** Alright. What is your—is this—this sounds like Weather the Storm with...  
[stammers, exhales] with Know? Is this an ace up your sleeve?

**Keith:** I don't think it's an ace.

**Austin:** It's a invitation.

**Keith:** It is an invitation.

**Austin:** Is this—you know, you're being stopped by, you know, a security guard at the innermost—you know, I think the disguises and the IDs gets you past the first couple guards without being checked, basically, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Because they expect—especially, in a weird way, because Figure was noticed before, right? It's like "Oh, yeah, of course, there's, this is, you know, the—we heard that there—you had, you know, gathered a crowd earlier, of course you're one of the traveling, you know, religious theologians here to listen to the symposium. You must be a valued guest." So that first round or two was like no big deal.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But if you wanna get close enough to like, get to one of the major speakers, that means being on their personal guest list, you know? And so someone's gonna want to see that stuff.

[**Dre** hums]

**Keith:** Yeah. Is there an argument that this is Sense? This is noticing cues and signs of danger?

**Austin:** I think that that is noticing it so that you could like, get out of there, but I don't know how noticing it would let you get in there. Do you know what I mean? You could Defy Danger to not be caught, but that wouldn't—'cause you would pick up on "oh, wow, they're about to see that I'm fake," right? "They're gonna see through my disguise."

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But I don't know how that is—

**Keith:** Right, and that would be—that would be upping the risk, probably, to like, sneak past someone and fail.

**Austin:** Correct, yeah, I think if you're doing Sense in that case, that's like, "Ooh, wait until the guard's looking the wrong way, and then I've snuck past them."

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Totally. Which you could do. That is totally—you could do that.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's different than "I'm gonna use my disguises and IDs".

**Keith:** Which, and then, at that point, that's—that would be Defy, even. To dodge...

**Austin:** To dodge, sure. You could do dodge or Sense, I think, too. Literally, avoid a guard patrol or something. If you're trying to...

**Keith:** I like that. I think that—I think fuck it. I think that we just jump past when they're occupied.

**Austin:** Yeah?

**Keith:** These are just—these are just people.

**Austin:** These are just people. You're not wrong. You're not wrong.

**Dre:** Mhm, mhm.

**Keith:** And it's like, you know. If I'm guarding something, I'm like, what am I gonna do, guard this 24 fuckin' 7? Pass.

**Austin:** That's your job. This is why you quit being a guard. [chuckles]

[Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah, I'm beginning to see why you stopped doing that.

[Keith chuckles]

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** No, come on. People hate their fuckin' jobs.

**Dre:** I mean, fair.

**Keith:** People don't do their—people don't work for 7 straight hours, that's dumb.

[**Dre** sighs, chuckles]

**Austin:** [chuckles] Some of us do, unfortunately. We don't like it.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Nah...

**Dre:** [laughing] Sighs in very tired.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** People slip up, people don't do a good job...

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** No, yes, I agree. I agree. And no—I'm not saying people like it. That—no doubt, no doubt.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Alright. When performing a group move, which is what I think this is, 'cause both of you are trying to do this, right? At the same time?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** “The person participating with the lowest relevant trait makes the roll, but anybody participating counts as doing so, thus any bonuses to rolls they have, like an advantage, or a Hold that they spend, can apply to a group move.”

**Keith:** I change my mind, it’s not Defy, it is Sense.

**Austin:** Oh, uh-huh. ’Cause, is that because—

**Keith:** We’re both plus 1 Sense, versus I’m 2 Defy and Dre is zero Defy.

**Austin:** I see. Uh-huh. So now you’re gonna Sense. You’re gonna wait—you’re gonna study the patterns of the guards.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, and notice their cues of when they look away.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Great.

**Keith:** Oh, I have a question.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** Not a question. I’m going to do something.

[Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Damn.

**Keith:** I’m going to—[laughs] I’m going to, uh... Ooh, I could do one of two things here. I could Dispel Uncertainties about Authority practices, about like guard schedules and stuff, [**Austin:** Sure.] which I take advantage because of Extensive Case Files, [**Austin:** Mhm.] or I could also Read the Room and Hold plus 1 on successful Read the Room rolls to—I think that probably advantage is better than plus 1 Hold on Read the Room rolls.



[30:00]

**Austin:** Well, you would potentially get advantage on the successful Read the Room rolls, right? So.

**Keith:** [cross] Because I don't—because I would get—right, yeah, exactly. Yeah. So, I'm gonna—yeah, I'm gonna do that. I want to Dispel Uncertainties here about—I want to consult my notes, I've got some papers on guard schedules. This is part of my Sense.

**Austin:** Is that Authority practices and law? I guess it's practices. I think—I think you're being—

**Keith:** Yeah, it's Authority practices.

**Austin:** I think we are maybe really bending Authority practices to be like “what is the guard schedule?”

**Keith:** Yeah, you think, like, length of guard shifts isn't an Authority practice?

**Austin:** I think that it's a—I think it's an Authority practice. I think it's just on the right side of it. I think we are really stretching it, you know what I mean? But I will allow it in this case. This is not a place that has no—you know, Nideo does have some Grip taken, Temple of the Threshold doesn't. So I do have to play them a little hard, but like...

**Keith:** Oh, I also—sorry, still new character, so I've got a lot of pieces here.

**Austin:** You sure do.

**Keith:** Because I also have “Monkey See, Monkey Do: I'm trained in the arts of disguise and subterfuge. Gain advantage on attempting to hide in plain sight and subtly sabotage enemy infrastructure.”

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** So that feels relevant.

**Austin:** Yeah, I don't think Dispel Uncertainties is sabotaging enemy infrastructure or hiding in plain sight. It's dispelling uncertainties, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Same thing with Read the Room. But you would—you could take that while you're trying to sneak past people, for sure.

**Keith:** I thought that there was another thing that was relevant, but I guess not.

**Austin:** I guess, let me ask fictionally. What is Eclectic doing? Are you trying, in this moment, is the thing that we're showing—is Eclectic studying the way the guards are moving?

**Keith:** Yeah, I think this is—

**Austin:** Is it looking over paperwork and being like, "I think I know when the guard patrol—how guard patrols work inside of this church because they wrote it down in a memo I stole" or whatever.

**Keith:** This is like—right. This is like Obi-Wan Kenobi sneaking around in the Death Star waiting until people aren't looking, except the reason—instead of having the force, I have a paper that says they're probably not—they're likely to not be looking around this time, or in this hallway. This is an un—

**Austin:** Alright, so then, let's Dispel Uncertainties with that, [**Keith:** Okay.] and that's with advantage because you have Extensive Case Files.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So 2d6—sorry, 3d6 plus your Know. Which is minus 1. Take highest.

**Keith:** Where's my—oh, there we go. Minus 1.

**Austin:** That is a—[wavering] ooh.

**Keith:** 4, 2, minus 1 is 3.

**Austin:** Is—no, is 5. It's 5, it's 5.

**Keith:** Oh, sorry, 5. It's 5.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** It's not 4 minus 1.

**Austin:** Do you want to try to help?

**Dre:** Yeah, sure.

**Austin:** So, again, that is 2d6 plus 1 if you've hung out before, so you got that one. Plus 1 if one of you—if you had been aided.

**Keith:** Oh, wait, hold on.

**Austin:** Uh-huh?

**Keith:** 4... it's advantage, not disadvantage.

**Austin:** Oh, it's advantage. It's advantage.

**Keith:** Right, so it's 6 plus—right.

**Austin:** It's advantage. Why did we both go to disadvantage?

**Keith:** I don't know. So it's a 9.

**Austin:** Yeah, you're fine. You got a 9.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's a mixed success, but still.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** A partial success.

**Keith:** Good catch.

**Austin:** You caught it. Good catch, you.

**Keith:** Yeah, me. Good catch, me.

**Austin:** So yeah, right now, it's "I will tell you something potentially useful, but it's up to you to discern how. The Director might ask you to explain how you know that information or where you learned it." You seem to have paperwork about their guard patrols. [chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it has to be something not directly, but something potentially useful. I think you know... what is potentially useful here that isn't directly useful? This is a real...

**Keith:** That's tough. This is such a—this is such a black and white thing.

**Austin:** Well, 'cause you're gonna take advantage off of it, right? Because of your other move.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I guess, if you can make it make—if you can make it work. You—[chuckles] you don't have—you don't have the patrol data. What you have is time of the day where the most cell phone calls get made in this area. Or like, you know that from 4 P.M. to 4:15 every day, there is a long phone call that happens here. You don't know who that phone call is to or from, necessarily, but your guess is like, the guard takes a phone call during this. Doesn't step away, but takes a phone call, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** What you do with that—you know, they can still look down the hallway as they're on the phone.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But maybe being on the phone is something you could use to your advantage.

**Keith:** And now I'm noticing that I got advantage to Dispel Uncertainties, but it doesn't give me advantage to sneaking past here.

**Austin:** Right, yeah. Uh-huh.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** That's what I was saying. Read the Room would give you advantage on the next roll.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Yeah. What you've given me—what you've given yourself is the fictional opportunity to take advantage of something to sneak past.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah. Um... Yeah, I mean, I guess I'm gonna wait for that phone call.

**Austin:** Are you doing anything to that phone call? Are you... you know? Either one of you.

**Keith:** I don't hack, really. Do you... Figure, do you hack?

**Austin:** [chuckles] Two Friends at the Table characters looking at each other, "Do you—I don't have—"

**Keith:** "Do you hack?"

**Dre:** "Do you hack?"

**Austin:** "Do you have Prowl? Do you have Hack?"

**Dre:** No. I'm looking at my stuff. Yeah, I mean, you know. I can do magic. You want me to magic that phone?

**Keith:** Um... yeah.

**Dre:** Things never go wrong when we do magic.

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

**Keith:** Yeah, I would love you to be rolling more. That would be great.

[**Dre** laughs]

**Keith:** Just to get—I mean, just the opportunity to get Gur out here.

**Austin:** Wow.

**Dre:** It's about time.

**Keith:** No, I—[laughs]

**Dre:** You fuckin' get to work over here.

[**Austin** laughs]

**Keith:** [laughs] No, I just want you to—I want you to fail so that Gur comes out.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I'm with you, I'm with you.

**Keith:** No, Dre, it's fine, I just want you to fail. I'm rooting for you to fail.

**Austin:** So this is 2d6 plus Channel, 'cause you're trying to—what are you trying to do?

**Dre:** That's 3d6 plus Channel.

**Austin:** Oh, right, because you have advantage.

**Dre:** Yeah, gosh.

**Keith:** I mean, I have like, a really simple thing that's not impressive.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah, I mean, I was just gonna—oh, could I use, like, the Perennial Wave to fuck with the phone?

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, give them a bad signal so they're like, "I gotta go somewhere with a better signal."

**Austin:** Literally yes. You could totally do that. That seems totally normal.

**Keith:** Yeah. That's totally what I was thinking.

**Austin:** And like all good Weave Magic rolls, boy does that have the potential to break bad. So, 3d6, take highest.

**Dre:** Hell yeah, baby, let's go.

**Austin:** What's your Channel? Plus 3? Yeah, you're gonna crush this. Come on.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** It's so funny that every time Dre rolls, they could die.

**Austin:** It is funny. I'm very worried about it.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Dre:** 3d6 plus 3...

**Austin:** [strained] I can't believe it's 3. It's so stressful.

**Dre:** Uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** If you just start thinking—

[group erupts into exclamations]

**Dre:** Oh no!

**Austin:** Oh my god. It's gonna happen. It's gonna happen.

**Sylvi:** Wow! Wow!

**Keith:** Oh my god!

**Austin:** I have to take off my headphones.

**Keith:** How many? How many?

**Dre:** That's two.

[Ali gasps]

**Austin:** That's two!

**Keith:** How many do you—how many do you need?

**Austin:** Just a third.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Ahh!

**Keith:** Oh my god!

**Sylvi:** Ahh!

**Keith:** Do you have to roll two?

**Austin:** We made a decision on this. What was it?

**Dre:** I think it's just the one.

**Austin:** I don't remember—

**Keith:** I think it—I thought that maybe it was—I thought maybe it wasn't.

**Dre:** Hold on, let me reread the...



[Sylvi chuckles]

**Ali:** No, it was per roll, right? We definitely said it was...

**Keith:** Okay, okay, okay.

**Austin:** I'm double-checking what we've said.

**Keith:** I swear to god I remember someone being, like, [chuckling] pedal to the metal about this.

**Dre:** Oh, god, it does say whenever you roll a 6, roll an additional die.

**Ali:** But it's rolled. When you're rolling and you get a 6, yeah.

**Keith:** But it's—"whenever" is just once, you—one time, but it is—it's ambiguous, that's the thing, I think it's...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** If it's a 6, it rolls again, right? What happens if there's two 6s? Where did we write this down? We wrote this down somewhere. Didn't we write this down somewhere?

[Dre groans]

**Ali:** Dre, would you have put it on your sheet in the notes or something?

**Dre:** That's where I'm looking.

**Austin:** Here we go. Oh, nope, that's the wrong fuckin'—that's the Chime chat.

**Dre:** "A single roll with multiple 6s is still only a roll with a 6, and so generates only one new roll." Yes, I have that on my notes.

**Austin:** There we go.

**Keith:** Okay, great.

**Austin:** But if you rolled a second 6, would you then...

**Ali:** Yeah, a single roll that results in a—so if this 6 is—

**Dre:** A single roll with multiple 6s.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right, sorry, sorry, but my point being—

**Keith:** But this still counts as two 6s.

**Austin:** Right, right now, we're still—

**Dre:** Yes, yes, yes, yes. Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Because—yeah, if Dre had rolled three 6s right here, it's done.

**Dre:** Oh, no.

[Ali gasps]

**Keith:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** Holy shit.

**Sylvi:** Oh my god! Oh my god!

**Austin:** What a perfect time to do it.

**Sylvi:** Oh my god!

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** It's so incredible.

**Dre:** I mean, it works great.

**Austin:** It does. And then it lingers.

**Dre:** My roll goes perfect.

**Austin:** Yeah, you rolled—this is the highest roll I think we’ve ever had in a Powered by the Apocalypse game, Dre.

**Janine:** Congrats.

**Dre:** Thanks.

**Austin:** Yeah, this is 6 plus 6 plus 6 plus 3, that’s 21.

**Dre:** I’m so powerful.

**Keith:** I’m really—

**Austin:** You don’t even know it at first. And I have to figure out exactly what it means, but I do know the short version of this.

[**Sylvi** exclaims] [**Dre** laughs, groans]

## Figure

[39:00]

**Austin:** It looks—it feels like it works perfect. The Perennial Wave is here. It stays around. The—sorry, the Perennial Wave descends, right? You produce it from the Russian sage that runs through you. It emits from you a fine dust. It covers—it almost makes it a little foggy in here, a little lavender fog, and the guard goes “Damn it. Hey, uh, Jen, I’m gonna step out for a second, bathroom—uh, bio break. Bio break.”

**Dre:** BRB, bio.

**Austin:** And leaves, and like—uh-huh. Before their replacement can come in, you’re able to move forward. And you get backstage. And you can hear, you know, the Apostolosian preacher walking through some notes, and big booming voice, you can

hear the attendants to the Nidean song kind of going through some talking points to be like “Oh, make sure you hit blah blah blah blah blah.” And you get to the final dressing room where Gur Sevraq is, and there is a presence there that I think is immediately alluring and overwhelming. If Figure could have any future, if you could dream of something for yourself, what would it be?

**Dre:** [sighs] I mean... On just an—on, like, a meta level, it's the hook of the wheel must break.

**[Austin hums]**

**Dre:** I'm not sure what that looks like in practice, right? But it's...

**Austin:** What is—yeah, and this drills further, right? It starts there. It starts with the vision of the broken wh—or it starts with that feeling of the broken wheel. What is the feeling of—or what is the image that you see of living in a broken wheel future? What is the dream that you have? Like, literally, think of it in dream language.

**Dre:** God. Um... I mean, it's probably like, it is—it's a montage of like, all the people Figure cares about. So I mean, it's like the party members, and like a montage of them doing probably a mix of, like, what they have told Figure that they want for themselves, but then also, like, you know, Figure's own POV in there.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** So like, whatever it is that would actually make Cori happy probably isn't what Figure sees, but it's, you know.

**Austin:** But it's some stand-in. It's Cori happy, fundamentally, is what it is.

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And safe.

**Austin:** And safe.

[music - [“Put to Work”](#) by Jack de Quidt begins]

**Austin:** You walk forward, consumed by this dream. Eclectic, uh... There's no holding Figure back here. Figure's walking forward, is opening the door to reveal Gur Sevraq, who turns to face you, glowing bright light, like a saint in a painting. But where the spider-like head should be, there is only the golden orb of Future, the Divine that Gur Sevraq once stole, the Divine that for centuries, for millennia, for tens of thousands of years, has been passed back and forth between those who would follow their dreams, those who consumed by zeal or ambition would try to change the world, and here, finally, Future has decided to do it for themselves. Recovered by the Divine Principality, from the bottom of the Prophet's Sea, and put to work in imitation of the last one who wielded it. And Gur comes back for a minute, your Gur, and says,

[music halts]

Austin (as **Gur**): [pained] No.

[music resumes]

**Austin:** What happens to you when the cruelty of Future is driven into you?

[music - "[Put to Work](#)" by Jack de Quidt ends]

[**Dre** exhales heavily]

**Austin:** Is this death? What's the move say? I mean, it's the end of the character.

**Dre:** "If you ever roll three 6s during one move, you are killed in a spectacular fashion at nearest suitable moment and are claimed by whatever terrible power would be most interested in your soul, magical energy, unliving servitude, et cetera."

[**Keith** laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, it's the worst possible thing that could happen here, right?

**Dre:** Mhm. Mhm.

**Austin:** Which is like, Future was already way better at impersonating Gur Sevraq when—because, okay, let me just, like, pull back the curtain a little bit. When fake Gur Sevraq first showed up, it was like a bad algorithm, right?

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Which is why for a number of the intros, or a number of times that fake Gur Sevraq spoke in PARTIZAN, it was me literally clipping old Gur Sevraq stuff together. Me clipping it together, or changing the order of words to make it, you know, a new version of literally old recorded footage. And then bit by bit, fake Gur started using, like, the inverse of things that Gur said, but were new things. And so, now, it just became—Future was held by Gur for years, and Future is a Divine, and Future knew Gur, and so was much more capable of doing this. And now, if the last of that thing said is true, you are claimed by whatever terrible power would be most interested in your soul, magical energy, or unliving servitude, I think it's going to strip Gur from you and turn you into a shell for—you know, an unliving servant for it. I think fake Gur Sevraq has a new bodyguard. I think you have a leash on you again. Unless you want to be destroyed in spectacular fashion, I guess, right, like?

**Dre:** Yeah, yes, yes.

**Austin:** I guess this is the moment. I think this is the choice I'm gonna put at your feet. Either—you have an opportunity here, right? Which is like, die in a spectacular fashion and prevent yourself from being consumed in this way, right? Or explode in a burst of Perennial magic in a devastating, terrible—I don't know. I'm open to ideas from you, Dre. But those, I think, are the stakes. The stakes have to be...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, you and ghost Gur get consumed by Future—who I have a whole thing written about—I expected a conversation here. I expected there to be, like, a little tête-à-tête, you know? Not three 6s.

**Dre:** Me too.

**Keith:** I don't know what I expected. I did say it right before [laughing] it happened.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** You did. I mean, you did.

**Keith:** I did.

**Austin:** We need to respect the three 6s, right? Do—how open do you feel, given this move, you want the door to be for Figure to have—Figure, who has escaped death twice, effectively, and gotten out from under a leash, and has become free to pursue—I mean, this is why this sucks so bad. This is why this hurts so bad, right? Is like, it is—this is a character—this is a character I was rooting for. A lot of characters have died on this show. I think this is the hardest one for me so far.

**Sylvi:** Aw.

**Austin:** But I guess my question is—

**Dre:** I mean, as someone who's now had three people die, I agree. [laughs]

**Ali:** [laughing] Aw.

**Austin:** It's just brutal, right?

**Dre:** Yeah, no.

**Austin:** We've spent a lot of time on this show—on this show, on PALISADE, and even going back to PARTIZAN being like, Figure—not Figure. Valence, you know, died for a cause, but that's—but dying for a cause is stupid. Right? We keep going back to that kind of idea. It's better to live for a cause than die for one. But you know, Valence took out [laughing] Crysanth Kesh, and in this moment—

**Janine:** That's true. And didn't end up being Crysanth Kesh's bodyguard.

**Austin:** Right. And so, here we are with Figure dying, and that's why I guess I'm—but I—oh, there's like a disconnect—it feels like this is the death that should have happened

in PARTIZAN, this kind of meaningless “you open a door and see a god and die” is—and yet, that is what we rolled, so I guess that’s—and it is still war, and it is still life, and it is still unlucky sometimes, and...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What do you think? Is there—do we want to close the door on Figure here?

**Dre:** I’m almost in—like, if we were seeing this conversation in camera, I almost envision it as like, in this split second, like, Perennial and Figure are having a conversation.

**Austin:** Mm. I—

**Dre:** And I wonder if—oh, go ahead.

**Austin:** Yeah. I don’t think—she can’t. That’s the whole thing.

**Dre:** [hums] Yeah, okay.

**Austin:** She can have a conversation, but she can’t do anything about this anymore.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Right? Which I think, in some ways, cuts off the conversation in this moment. You are dying, and she—you know, there—there are going to be knock-on effects which we’ll come back to.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** She apologizes.

**Dre:** Aw.

**Austin:** But then is quiet in Figure’s final moments.



**Dre:** Yeah. So, where my mind goes as far as like, what is—what, if anything, is left of Figure, [**Austin:** Yeah.] is I think about it through the lens of Figure's whole arc.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Beginning of Figure, like going back to PARTIZAN, I think, like, just, yeah, dead.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Dre:** Then I think there is a part where—like, probably before where Figure is fully out of—from underneath of—

**Austin:** Of Clem, of the Witch, yeah.

**Dre:** Of Clem, yeah. Where they are like, starting to learn how to trust people again.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Dre:** Where they would have like, wanted to live, and been like, “no, other people will come get me.” You know, “I can trust that these people will follow through and it's worth holding on.”

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** But I think now Figure is at a place where, like, especially as they have talked to Perennial, not in this moment, but like, in previous downtime scenes, and thought about like, what does it mean for the wheel to end... Like, Figure will not get to see the capital W wheel end, but maybe the last thing that I can give them that they deserve is to see their wheel end.

**Austin:** Them being Perennial's? Them being—

**Dre:** No, like—

**Austin:** Your friends, your—

**Dre:** No, their life. Like Figure's life.

**Austin:** Oh, sorry, Figure's own life. That they get to break the wheel of—that in death, they can drop the world that they've been carrying on their back. They're allowed to rest now. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, and I think that there's kind of a big wheel small wheel thing happening too, right? Which is—and this is part of Perennial's sadness in this moment that you feel, is losing you, obviously, but also, like, this is the first time one of the chosen of Perennial has died and they couldn't undo it. She couldn't undo it. Right? She normally goes "Alright, let's spin that back up. Let's do this again." Right?

And there are—there have been—again, we've talked about this before, there have been countless cycles of this happening for her. Not just thousands of years, right? Like, but countless cycles of those years. And so like, you know, if you can imagine—we've talked about before, like, why the fuck Clem? And Clem because she already tried Gur. Because she already tried Apparatus. Because she already tried all these other people who maybe are still in the orbit of Perennial's worship, or some who we wouldn't even know the names of, from parts of time that we—you know, there are thousands of years between Perennial becoming Perennial the adversary at the center of the galaxy and now.

She has had many, you know, chosen champions and many—she's put her power into many people, but this particular, you know, time is the time when the wheel of empire doesn't break, but you know, her wheel is breaking in a sense along with yours. This is maybe the first time she's felt it because this is a moment where she would say "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, don't go in that door." You know? "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, let's try that one again." You know? "Load the save. Let's load the save and try again." And she can't, and you can't. And so, small wheels are breaking.

And I... I... You immediately know in your final moments that the world is about to change again. And that's it for you. That's it. No ghosts, no joining the, you know, the spirits of Palisade, no—this is obliteration. I mean, again, I guess the move is pretty clear, right? I think that's the thing I keep coming back to is rereading this move and being like, "you are killed in spectacular fashion at nearest suitable moment, and are claimed by whatever terrible power would be most interested in your soul, magical

energy, unliving servitude.” I love the visual—I love-hate the visual of Figure standing by the side of Future. So let’s go with that. RIP to Figure.

## **Eclectic**

[53:28]

**Austin:** Eclectic, you have a similar feeling with approaching the Divine Future, which is, again, like—

**Keith:** Bad feeling?

**Austin:** No, because Future projects to you—or lets you see with a remarkable clarity the future you want for the world.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What is that for Eclectic?

**Keith:** Um... I don’t know where Eclectic—we haven’t spent a lot of time with Eclectic yet.

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** I think that Eclectic wants to see the Divine Principality off Palisade.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And I don’t think that he sees much further into the future. He doesn’t have Phrygian’s, you know, hundred-year plan, or whatever it was. And Palisade is his hometown, and it’s always been shit, and so I think that he wants it to be less shit than it’s ever been, and so it’s the two-step of “get the Divine Principality off of Palisade”, and improve it, make it better than it was before they came back.

**Austin:** It thrives as its own—because like, in the old days, it was so—it’s not like a—you know, it’s gotten worse in many ways, it has now been further colonized, but

like, people were not living—every life can find joy in it, like even those—even people living under oppression, there are moments of play and there are moments of familial love and affection and like, it is always possible to say there is some joy even in terrible circumstances, you can't write people off.

But it was not a great situation, you know? The Delegates especially have been living as slaves for thousands of years. You are not being allowed to build the world the way that you would like to build it. You are not allowed to be part of the world in the way that—so yeah, I think it's very easy to imagine that. Yeah. I think this is interesting. I went back to look at what Leap said about this, you know?

**Keith:** Oh, great.

**Austin:** Just to get a vibe on it.

**Keith:** I have no idea. I have no—couldn't begin to guess what Leap says about this.

**Austin:** I think it's really—it's so interesting, because it's kind of—there's a little bit of a reflection here, right? Which is like, do you know what Leap was concerned about? Not being in prison anymore.

**Keith:** [hums] Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? And then you say “Leap isn't a fan of the Stels, or specifically, gee, Stel Orion, I believe? I think it was Stel Orion. That's who I was—that's who Leap's primary targets were. And so, I think there's a contradiction that that's what I want to see. Maybe even see it as a contradiction of hating Orion, and wanting Orion and Columnar to do worse as a civilization, but also as they do worse, being a pirate is harder and less valuable.”

That like, you want to make the world—you want to destroy these places in such a way that it makes you irrelevant, you know? Which is really fun. And in a way, that's kind of similar, right? Like, you want society here to change in such a way that you don't have to be—you don't have to be Millennium Break anymore, right? You just get to be a person in the world.

**Keith:** Yeah. Right.

**Austin:** This is an overwhelming feeling. This is—it's more than being simply distracted. This is—take the Peril Overwhelmed, simply by being in this thing's presence.

**Keith:** Okay, so, when I am put in Peril, I can make a Read the Room roll with Confidence and opportunit—

**Austin:** Love it.

**Keith:** Confidence and advantage.

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

**Keith:** I've like, lost all of my—okay, here we go.

**Austin:** Let's do this.

**Keith:** So, my Peril, it was Overwhelmed.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay. And you got that. Great, thank you.

[Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah, this is—so this is my—this is great, because I was thinking of my Channel already.

**Austin:** Oh, right.

**Keith:** I had the move “Cosmic Triangle: There's a magical nature to angles, and precisely aligning them takes care and practice, not dissimilar from what is required to see your investigations through. Gain a Channel trait of plus 1 and move from the—take a move from the Arcanist playbook. You may not pilot an Astir despite having access to magic.” And that move is New Perspective: “When you're put in Peril, you may Read the Room with Confidence and advantage in response.”

**Austin:** Yeah. And we've talked about this being about being a Delegate, right? That like, this is being a sliver of the Divine Opposition, which we should not lose sight of. Right?

**Keith:** Yeah. Right.

**Austin:** It is—there are many ways in which Eclectic is just a guy, but Eclectic is also, you know, a living remnant of the Divine Opposition, a Divine who for whatever reason, was locked up and turned into, you know, was effectively tortured into producing slaves. Hm, why would the Divine Principality, you know, do that to someone named Opposition? So, there is something Divine in you that's triggering here as you see this. Go ahead and give me a Read the Room.

**Keith:** That's 3d6 plus 1, right?

**Austin:** And 1s are 6s because it's Confidence.

**Keith:** And 1s are 6s. Except for that last one.

**Austin:** Except for the plus 1, yeah. Yeah, the plus 1 is not a plus 6. Well, you didn't need any plus 1s or plus 6s anyway.

**Keith:** Alright. Don't need any of that.

**Austin:** This is a 12. 6 plus—

**Keith:** Big roll, full success.

**Austin:** Yeah. 6 plus 5 plus 1.

**Keith:** I also get a plus 1 Hold from Enchanted Lens on successful Read the Room rolls.

**Austin:** Ask me some questions.

**Keith:** Alright.

**Austin:** So you have four questions, right?

**Keith:** I want—this—so I have an idea, and it's okay—let's go through all the motions to set it up and then you can tell me if I can and can't do this.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Okay.

**Keith:** Uh, okay. Or maybe say that I'm thinking too small and I should be thinking bigger. But let's see. Okay, Read the Room—how—what is being overlooked or obscured here?

**Austin:** Um... Uh...

**Keith:** That's my favorite one. I always ask that one.

**Austin:** Yeah, I wanna make sure this isn't just answering a different question. No, it isn't. There is a—the elevator up to the still-empty stage and arena is, like, down the hall. It's not obscured, but it's like, you realize in this moment, there's something in your head—in fact, what is—maybe this is answering a different question, actually. No, okay, it's not one of your things, but you know, as a pirate, you know—always know where the way out is. Right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And there's an unmarked hallway, and you know you have not—as you are moving into this place, you never saw any other way up to the stage, you are certain you can get out of here by going down this one remaining hallway and turning left. It turns left. You're like, that has to be the way to this stage, which would be a way out of here without going back towards other guards and stuff. You know?

**Keith:** Um...

**Austin:** But there's nothing—I want to be clear, I'm not hiding anything at this point about Gur, fake Gur, or Future, and, you know. There's nothing—I don't think I'm sitting

on anything in terms of, you know, and also their glowy red weak point is under their shirt. You know?

**Keith:** Sure. Well, there is a question for that, which is how is Future at risk or in peril?

**Austin:** I don't think that they are, so I'd let you keep that question.

**Keith:** Okay. Where can I find real Gur? Do I—so, background question.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I knew about real Gur. Did I know about the chance of exploding? Did even Figure know about the chance of it—

**Austin:** [cross] Magic is dangerous.

**Dre:** Yeah, I don't think Figure explicitly knew, but.

**Austin:** Magic is always dangerous. Yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Okay. So I have no idea what's happened, but I see fake Gur and real Gur—and I know about real Gur—and I'm like, okay, something's going on here, it's probably involving some Gur stuff. Do I even recognize Future?

**Austin:** You wouldn't recognize Future. There's no—um...

**Keith:** Okay. But I recognize it as a Divine.

**Austin:** You—Divine power just came over you. You know?

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Austin:** For sure.

**Keith:** I recognize that there's—yeah, okay.

**Austin:** I don't think—I don't think we've seen Gur with Future in, like, paintings or posters. Do you know what I mean?



**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And Gur isn't like, widely known as the excerpt—or, not the excerpt. The Elect of Future, or anything like that. That's something that we, the players, know, and some of the core characters do.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And if someone told you, "Oh yeah, Gur Sevraq used to have the Divine Future," but like, you're the two characters who don't know Gur Sevraq. Who never met Gur Sevraq.

**Keith:** Right. Well, Leap—

**Austin:** Yeah, but does—did Leap tell—did it come up—this is a you question. Did Leap say "Oh yeah, I met Gur Sevraq, Gur Sevraq used to have the Divine called Future, it was a little golden orb"?

**Keith:** Leap is telling—we already have, like, Leap storytime as a thing—

**Austin:** Sure, okay.

**Keith:** Telling all the pirates all the cool shit that went down.

**Austin:** So then, yeah, maybe you're like, this sounds—"this thing looks familiar to something I heard about. Could that be this thing?"

**Keith:** Okay. Yeah. So—

**Austin:** You certainly know Divine power coursing through you, you know?

**Keith:** Right. So the question was where can I find real Gur?

**Austin:** I don't—in the spiritual basement of Future's consciousness?

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I don't know. There's no—he's not in the air, you know?

**Keith:** Question three, where do my hooks pull me here?

**Austin:** Great question. I think this is—you need some evidence of this, maybe? Right?

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** This is—this is, you know, if your question is discover the nature of impostor Gur Sevraq, you've discovered the nature, but you don't have any evidence of it. That clock is at zero, you might notice, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Note, you could spend some of your B-Plot to discover a pertinent clue, advancing your investigation clock, but being put in immediate danger. In fact—maybe you don't want to be put in immediate danger in this moment, that would be totally fine.

**Keith:** Right, I already—I just took a Peril.

**Austin:** Yeah, totally. But I'm leaning on your hook "Leap says if a broken arm is all that stands in between you and some evidence, arms are cheap", you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And "Leap says pirates steal; if something might be useful, take it". But I think that's—so I think that's what it is. I think that the thing that Leap is saying in your head, is like, no one's going to believe you or it doesn't matter what you say. It won't matter that you say that Gur Sevraq is really the Divine Future, right? There's no evidence of that, there's no—I don't even know that people would care about it, maybe, you know?

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** They certainly wouldn't believe you with nothing except you saying that you saw a golden orb in there.

**Keith:** Um... So before I ask the last question—

**Austin:** I'm gonna straight up—one second. I'm gonna straight up give you a tick of this, because this is clearly—you've discovered the nature, you can speak to it—

**Keith:** [cross] We've been doing investigating.

**Austin:** You know, even if you didn't do moves to da-da-da-da-da, but.

**Keith:** Right, okay.

**Austin:** I guess, actually, what I should have asked you is, do you want to lower the result of your roll to get an additional tick to it, you know?

**Keith:** So that would have given—that would give me two total—

**Austin:** Right, which you've already spent more than that, right? Yeah.

**Keith:** I've already spent more than that.

**Austin:** Though you probably—do you also have the—you do also have the bonus Hold, right? From downtime. From Plan and Prepare.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. That's interesting.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** So then, if I'm—am I replacing that freebie with explaining the freebie, or am I adding two things?

**Austin:** I would give you two. I think it would be silly of me to say that you didn't get at least one, you know?

**Keith:** Okay, well, let me—I'll tell you what I was thinking, [**Austin:** Yeah.] which is using Weave Magic to try to either—to try—my first idea was to pull the real Gur Sevraq out of the situation.

**Austin:** Before he is totally inside of Future. Interesting.

**Keith:** Right. That was my original thing. And then I had the idea—you know, we got this Divine power, you know, [**Austin:** Uh-huh.] flowing over me, and I'm like, I can just take this ball.

**Austin:** You could try. I mean, that's—

**Keith:** There's a, you know, I always—I feel like there's a sort of Lord of the Rings draw to divinity when you're just a person, [**Austin:** Yeah.] and you're just like, I could probably touch that.

[**Dre** laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, this is the magic ring has decided it is sick of being worn. It will wear itself. Right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And like, that is—that is—this is, you know, just as like, a long remember—or, you know, to shout back an old thing, this is Ambition and Zeal from COUNTER/Weight, right? This is the ball from there.

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** People have been bidding on and trying to steal this thing for as long as it's been around. And continued to do so offscreen for many, many, many years, right? So.

**Keith:** Yeah. I guess I feel that way about all Divine stuff, and this is the Divine stuff that is like, about that.

**Austin:** This is the most that one.

**Keith:** This is the most that one.

**Austin:** This is one of those Divines that you carry around with you, not a big—not Motion, who has a voice, and has a character. Historically, we have not seen Future talk to people like this before, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or—let alone take on personhood and wear it like this. Yeah, I think—I mean, if you—Weave Magic is the way to do the thing you're trying to do, is like, try to leash the little bit of—

**Keith:** Yeah. I've never weaved magic.

**Austin:** What—and this is a really—and that's part of why I'm like, "Yeah, let's fuckin' do it," because [**Keith:** Yeah.] I think in general we've talked about Eclectic as being kind of—

**Keith:** Normie?

**Austin:** —disinterested in the Divine part of his heritage?

**Keith:** I—yeah, I mean, I was actively against it just a couple episodes ago.

**Austin:** Yeah. And so, yeah, I think there's something about, like, this oppositional nature of yourself bubbling up, and finding that alignment that comes when you realize that there is something in your history, or something in your family, or something in your, you know, something that some part of your life that you have been dismissing for a long time, and then you suddenly feel like "Oh, there is a resonance here. There's something that I—" you know, maybe it's a food that you associate with your family, or you're part of a team that you haven't clicked with, but then suddenly something happens and you're like "Oh, shit, actually, I care about this group quite a bit." That's happening to you in this part of who you are as you try to Weave Magic. Your goal is to do what with Gur? Are you trying to take the move? Are you trying to let Gur haunt you?

**Keith:** Yeah, I don't—I don't think Eclectic has thought that far. I can tell you that I'm not trying to get a ghost, but I think that there's something about, like, "Oh, Gur's on our team, and something happened to—

**Austin:** You could also tell Figure—something's happened to Figure here, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I'm not saying you—you can't stop the thing Figure did. We've kind of established that. That's—it's too—we have to do that.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But, you know, there's nothing here saying that you couldn't try to grab Gur, I guess, before it's all the way done. If you want to intercede, I think that using Weave Magic for this is cool enough to let us do it, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** To try to do it. With the note that it could go bad.

**Keith:** It could go very bad.

**Austin:** Fundamentally, the thing you're trying to do, your intention here is to stop Future from taking Gur. Right?

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** And the way you desire that is—how that shakes out, you don't care.

**Keith:** Yeah. Can I—I want to make sure that we're not doing something that Eclectic wouldn't do. What does it look like happened to Figure? Like, should I be running out of here with Figure? Like—

**Austin:** I—no, I think Figure—Figure, I mean—ooh. There is a—the next thing that we see Figure do with you—I mean, and maybe this is it. This is, actually, let's go back to you saying “what here has been overlooked or obscured”. You may have overlooked it, but now you have not. Figure, like, is standing—moves to stand beside Future. Right? As a guardian. Right? There is a—

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You pick up that Future has corrupted, consumed, re-leashed the Figure as Future's own, you know, knight.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. As long as we've got the visual of like, Eclectic isn't just like, leaving Figure behind.

**Austin:** Correct. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** [chuckles] Then I'm good to go forward with my plan.

**Austin:** I think we see your eyes look at Figure's. Figure's eyes are empty, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** The leaves, the Perennial Russian sage, is wilting. You know?

**Keith:** Yeah. Is it Weave Magic time?

**Austin:** Let's do it. What's your Channel?

**Keith:** So I've got advantage because of my Read the Rooms.

**Austin:** Yeah, you have advantage because of Read the Room.

**Keith:** And if we're being really nice...

[Dre laughs]

**Keith:** I might have—

**Sylvi:** Uh-huh?

**Keith:** I might have Confidence from "when I reveal my true identity, my opposition is shocked; act in Confidence if you immediately make a move against them".

**Sylvi:** That would be nice.

**Austin:** I don't think that you have revealed your—I don't think that Future was confused about who you were.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** They just saw into your mind and saw the future you desired. Right?

**Keith:** That's fair.

**Austin:** So I think this is just 3d6, take highest, plus—what's your Channel? 1?

**Keith:** 1.

**Austin:** From Cosmic Triangle. Okay. 3d6 plus 1.

**Keith:** Right, exactly. Uh... oh. Wrong tab. Okay.

**Austin:** [exhales] [quietly] Wow. Wow.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Austin:** That's a 6. 3 plus 2 plus 1 is 6.

**Dre:** Wish I could help, bud.

**Austin:** Even if it was Confidence, you wouldn't have gotten this one.

**Keith:** No. Um... Okay. Uh... Okay, let's see, let's see, let's see. What do I got here?

**Austin:** I don't know that you got—I think this is Weave Magic goes bad. Tell me about the Divine Opposition.

**Keith:** Um... So, the Divine Opposition's role in the Divine Principality is, like, you know, the democratic, you know, nobility of fighting for the middle.



**Austin:** Miserab—wait, but again, Opposition doesn't exist in the Divine Principality anymore, right?

**Keith:** No, but it's like—

**Austin:** That's what it was then, in—5,000 years ago.

**Keith:** Right. But it's still—it's still an ideal of like, coming together, meeting in the middle.

**Austin:** I see. I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's like, it's the “crossing the aisle” Divine.

**Keith:** Right, right, yeah.

**Austin:** Or, sorry, that's the way it's represented in—like, when you're taught about the Divine Opposition, when you're studying as a kid, that's what they teach you.

**Keith:** Mhm. Yeah.

**Austin:** They don't teach you that it has been buried under a castle somewhere on the planet everyone forgot existed, Palisade, and that for thousands of years, people have been making slaves from it.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, magic is hard, Figure.

**Dre:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Magic is hard.

**Keith:** I saw the numbers and I was like, partial success.

**Austin:** Yeah, 2 plus 3 plus 2 is what you saw, and then you were like, oh right, I have to lose one of those. I have to lose the 3, actually, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 'Cause—oh, no, it was with advantage, so you lose one of the 2s, but still, that's only a 6.

**Keith:** I lose the 2, but yeah, it's still a 6.

**Austin:** Oof, okay.

**Keith:** So close.

**Austin:** Yeah. I'm just gonna again read from the book about Weave Magic here, because I want to make sure that we're all on the same page in terms of this. Da-da-da-da-da... "The trade—" Okay. "Like some of the others, this is a pretty straightforward move. If you're trying to do something with their magic outside of the usual purview of controlling their Altar, and you think it's something that's within their ability, they're trying to Weave Magic. Magic makes a lot of things possible, especially things other moves might not give you. The trade-off to this flexibility is the cost of potential dangers."

I think you're gonna take a Peril here. "Overuse of Weave Magic should visibly exhaust characters, and make it tough for them to operate. This is the trade-off for how wide and varied the uses of this move can be." And as we've talked about before, that like, it says above, "it's tiring to use this magic directly in this way. Expect to take a Risk or even be put in Peril if you test yourself this way multiple times during a Sortie."

But again, this is a failed move, so. This is not just "you succeeded, but you took a little Risk". I think we get something very powerful—I don't think anyone's going to die from this, right? But I do think it, you know, it boils up in you like a rage, maybe. This is kind of the oppositional nature inside of you. Because the Opposition that was part of the Divine Principality is also the Opposition who once existed inside of the Divine Fleet, right?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** And that part of Opposition—and it's easy to imagine how that Opposition could be beaten down or turned slowly through the events of the death of all the other Divines

into a—or how it was recreated after the events of Twilight Mirage, into one that was more of this, like, let's come together in the middle.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But this other version of what Opposition could be bubbles up inside of you, and it's seismic. And the Temple of the Threshold begins to shake and shudder. People—alarm—like, earthquake alarms start going off, right? The bridges, the cloth bridges that hold it up, begin to get reinforced by some sort of energy, some sort of Divine energy that keeps them—that gives them more flex instead of, you know, rigidity to make sure that they don't just like, snap, you know, or tear. And people begin fleeing throughout this place. This is a, like, the temple is fucking shaking. And you are at the center. You are at the epicenter of that. This event's gonna get canceled tonight.

**Dre:** Aw.

**Austin:** This is—they're not gonna get to do their symposium tonight. Maybe they'll try again tomorrow or next week or something, you know? People have traveled a long way, they're not gonna not do it. And in this moment, I do think, you know, importantly, as the world shakes, Figure and Future stand completely still. It's as if the world doesn't shake around them. What do you do? This place—I think maybe you sense that if you stay here, there is a risk that you will bring this place down.

**Keith:** I gotta use my exit.

**Austin:** You gotta use your exit. You're not being pursued. You know? People at this point are fleeing and you are able to use this ele—you know, the whole place is shaking. You make your way to the elevator, you're able to take this, like, you know, it's a stage elevator. You know?

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** It's like you stand on the little platform and it lifts you up and it opens up above and there's like, a spotlight hits as if you're, you know, the guest of honor arriving. And then, you know, the whole stage, the whole area is shaking, things are falling from the

walls, one of those giant banners that had the three speaker's voices, or three speaker's faces on it, falls from the ceiling and you're able to escape. In the chaos, you make your way out of this place.

And actually, as you leave the temple interior, we've talked about the temple as like, almost like a city inside of an arena-shaped, you know, a kind of big rotunda, as you come out of that and onto one of these escape, you know, or not the—one of these bridges that reconnects into the mainland, you can feel like a—almost like a charge in the air, or like a, there's like a, it smells like something's off, it smells like something's not burning, but like, um—[chuckles] you know the smell of the Nintendo Switch, like, heat vent?

**Keith:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Dre:** Oh, hell yeah.

**Keith:** There's a computer in that little baby.

**Austin:** Yeah, there's a little computer in there, you can smell it. It starts to smell a little like that.

**Sylvi:** It smells like computers in here.

**Austin:** And the air feels a little electric.

**Sylvi:** It smells like computers in here.

**Austin:** It smells like computers in here, it's true.

**Ali:** Ohh.

**Austin:** I thought you were gonna say it smells like Mario in here or something.

**Sylvi:** [chuckles] No.

[Keith and Ali laugh]

**Sylvi:** Mamma mia!

**Austin:** Because it's Nintendo Switch. [laughing] Mamm—yeah, exactly.

**Ali:** Ooh.

## **A-Plot: Lone Marble HQ**

[1:18:30]

**Austin:** Alright, Lone Marble Group group, who does not know what just happened. Or actually, I guess, sorry, Eclectic, do you want to respond to the smell at all or the feel before I cut away from you?

**Keith:** I don't know if I—I don't know if I have—

**Austin:** [chuckles] Hey Keith, can you tell me about this—what you think about this smell?

[Ali laughs]

**Keith:** I think it's oddly appealing. I think it's an oddly appealing smell.

**Sylvi:** Mamma mia!

**Austin:** Yeah, okay.

**Keith:** That's a spicy meat-a-ball!

**Janine:** Yeah, have you ever smelled a computer before?

**Sylvi:** I mean...

**Dre:** Oh, man.

**Janine:** Is that an experience you've had? We're in a world of single-use screens, you know?

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's true.

**Keith:** All those screens—

**Dre:** Y'all gotta quit talking about this or I'm gonna get my Steam Deck and just... get to huffin'.

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

**Austin:** Friends at the Table does not endorse huffing Steam Decks, just as a—just to be clear.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Janine:** We don't endorse it, but we do it.

**Dre:** I'm gonna huff my Steam Deck, lick a Switch cartridge, just go crazy.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I mean, I do a lot of things I don't endorse.

**Keith:** Do as we say, not as we do.

**Austin:** [groans] Um... Alright, then.

**Dre:** This is how I cope. I'm sorry.

**Keith:** This is stressful. I need my Switch.

**Austin:** Yeah, this is fair. Yeah.

[**Keith** and **Dre** laugh]

**Austin:** God. Lone Marble Group. Cori and Thisbe, you are inside of Building C, finally. Building C, question mark, question mark, question mark. It is more active than the other buildings. There are people moving around, but they seem un—you know, completely ignoring your pres—like, you got through the big silver glowy ball, you must be good, you know? “Huh, weird new people are here. Strange, they must have clearance.” You know? The interior of this building, as a reminder, is a big spiral outside, and then that same spiral is effectively, here, it is a ramp that goes—it is the Guggenheim. It is a big ramp that goes alongside the wall in an upward corkscrew pattern, and then, you know, on every floor, there’s a connection to this much simpler rectangular building to the side. Where are you going? What are you—what is your plan?

**Sylvi:** I mean, just from the description of the building, it feels like the rectangular part might be important, but maybe I’m misinterpreting why they need to get there from every floor.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Janine:** That’s a good point, actually.

**Austin:** The answer for the Guggenheim is there’s just extra...

**Sylvi:** I mean, yeah.

**Austin:** Like, galleries on each floor, you know? Because it’s like sometimes you just need some space. But you’re not wrong. You’re not wrong that that’s a good reason to look, right?

**Sylvi:** Yeah. I mean, like, I’m good to head in that direction, I don’t know if Thisbe wants to come with or not. I don’t like, know how close to—

**Janine:** Yeah, the globule said we’re good, so I think that’s just—let’s look around, let’s...

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Yeah. As you go towards the kind of long rectangular building on this first floor, you can see that the—this door has another keypad situation, or another, like, swipe to enter, so you’ve kind of gained access to the whole building, or to like the interior building, but not on the first floor into this next room. But, there are just glass windows here, and you can see in that there is effectively a complex—it’s a two-floor tall complex machine that doesn’t—you can’t just intuit what it does. It’s not quite Rube Goldberg machine, but it’s like, tubes and pipes and railways and all sorts of little connection things. It does have a—

**Janine:** Can I ask it what it does?

**Austin:** Uh, it is in another room. You’d have to go get to it, presumably, right?

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** You’d have to get through this door. Which, you know, there are people around, but—I don’t know, you could try to open the door. You could try to hack the door, you could try to kick the door in. Or you could go to another floor and see what else is going on in here.

[Dre hums]

**Sylvi:** I’m looking at my sheet right now just to see what—what options are available to me mechanically.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Janine:** I’m thinking, but I don’t remember how I used—I know I’ve illustrated using the Animation Matrix before, and I don’t remember how I illustrated that.

**Austin:** All the way back on the Violet Cove place, [Janine: Yeah.] you talked to an elevator, like, AI to open for you.

**Janine:** Right.

**Austin:** We don’t know necessarily if this one works the same way, but you could try it.



**Janine:** I don't want to have to break into the room if we end up not feeling like we need to, mostly.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure. You could—this is also places where you could, of course, try to Read the Room or, you know, Dispel Uncertainties.

**Janine:** Yeah, I wonder if there's something I can glean from just like, kind of studying it.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I know a lot of stuff about weird machines, especially weird old machines that look like nonsense compared to what people are using elsewhere.

**Austin:** Totally. So yeah, give me a Read the Room or—you know, this might be a Dispel Un—mm. “When you Dispel Uncertainties by clarifying the unknown or answering a question, versus when you Read the Room to get insight on your situation”. Eh... I think it could kinda go either way. Different angles, you know?

**Janine:** I'm just checking to make sure i don't have any, like, extra stuff that goes in there, which I don't.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Um... Well, hang on, what's the difference between what I'd roll here? Where's the thing?

[Sylvi chuckles]

**Austin:** Dispel is Know, Read the Room is Sense.

**Janine:** Well, I'd rather do Sense.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, sure. The limit is on, then, what your questions will end up being, kind of, right? So yeah, let's do Read the Room. 3d6 plus 1.

**Janine:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Brnine, you smell the inside of a Switch. Something's happening here, too. It's not connected to the Temple.

**Ali:** That's weird. I'm on a breezy rooftop, [**Austin:** Yeah.] but I guess I'm in the middle of a factory, and...

**Sylvi:** Computers on the breeze.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Janine:** Yeah, they got computer air around here.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. That is an 8. 6 plus 1 plus 1—you're not rolling with Confidence or Desperation, so go ahead and give me a question from this list.

**Janine:** Um... hm. I mean, there's an obvious question to ask, but also, it seems deeply irrelevant to what I'd be able to ask.

**Austin:** What is it?

**Janine:** The "Where can I find X?"

**Austin:** Oh, what is—but what is X? Yeah, tell me. Like, without spending the—I'm not tricking you into spending your question. What are you—what is the X you are looking for here?

**Janine:** I'm looking for Motion shit, right?

**Austin:** You're looking—I mean, I'm asking you, yeah. If that's what you're looking for is like, stuff related to Motion, then I can give you a definitive answer, sort of, here.

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** Which is, there isn't Motion shit here. There is, you know, Ebullience shit here. What you see is in that machine, the smallest bit of that big silver blob moving through

this machine at an incredible speed. And you realize that what you are looking at is a very complex experimental—

**Janine:** Hamster wheel?

**Austin:** Hamster wheel, yeah. A hundred percent. It's a generator. There are—this is—they are simply generating all of the power for this facility from a drop of Ebullience moving through this machine.

**Janine:** I know it's evil, but also it's funny and kinda cute.

**Austin:** It's funny and kinda cute.

**Janine:** Which is a shame.

**Austin:** And it's not even clear that Ebullience is like, doesn't like it. You know?

**Janine:** Yeah, it likes running.

**Austin:** It likes running.

**Janine:** It—yeah.

**Austin:** It wants to move, it wants to jump, and that's why it's so weird and differentiated. It's not just a tube, because it wouldn't like a tube, but it would like a rollercoaster. Right?

**Janine:** It's just like a Habitrail. It's like a Habitrail for—

**Austin:** Yes, yes. Uh-huh.

**Janine:** For Ebullience.

**Austin:** And as it moves, it generates energy. Now, it does generate energy for the whole—this is the central, like, you know, energy generator for the entire facility. For the whole campus. Maybe for more than that. Maybe there's more stuff on the other floors. Maybe there's more stuff underground. Hard to say. But it's not Motion stuff here. Now,

is this something that could—is this place tied to Motion stuff? Would kicking this over mean that the Motion stuff on this campus would be unpowered? Yes. So it is connected, but it's not—you know, that wouldn't kick over the whole Motion project, but it would kick over the power for the rest of this place. It might also upset Ebullience, but. Or maybe it would make Ebullience—I don't know. You got this clock tickin'.

**Janine:** But also it might power off some, like, containment shit we don't know about, or...

**Austin:** That's also true.

**Janine:** That's... Eh, I don't—yeah, I don't want to kick the power out until we know what the power is powering, probably.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Janine:** Good to know either way.

**Austin:** Brnine and Eclectic, there is a whine. Like, a mechanical whine in the air. Cori and Thisbe, you don't hear it.

**Sylvi:** Okay, I was gonna ask.

**Keith:** Switch fans spinnin'.

**Janine:** Oh, I thought you meant like—I thought you meant—I thought that was your new way of describing the computer smell, was “mechanical wine”.

[**Keith** chuckles]

**Austin:** [chuckles] No. it is on top of the computer smell, there is a—

**Janine:** Okay.

[**Dre** chuckles]

**Austin:** Like a computer spinning up, you know what I mean? Or like—you know like a, “Oh, that doesn’t sound good. I don’t like it that my machine is making this noise.”

**Sylvi:** It’s not the smell of a freshly uncorked IBM.

**Keith:** So it’s a PS4, not a Switch.

[**Janine** and **Dre** laugh]

**Austin:** Right, uh-huh. It actually is more like the Switch whine than the PS4 whine. It’s not taking off. It’s like, a high-pitched squeal at first.

**Sylvi:** Oh.

**Janine:** The Switch whine is like a white wine, and then the PS4 one is like a red wine.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Uh-huh.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Am I getting any Asepsis alerts?

**Austin:** Great question. Asepsis asks you to return to the ship.

**Ali:** Oh, can I phone in to Hunting, and be like, “Hey, is anything going on?”

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, I guess, real quick, Eclectic, have you called in anything at this point?

**Keith:** Have I called in anything? That’s a rough phone call. No way.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Austin:** Okay, cool. What are you—yeah, okay. So then Hunting’s like,

Austin (as **Hunting**): Hey, Captain.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um, hey. You, um, reading anything weird on the horizon? Any, uh...

Austin (as **Hunting**): Oh, I thought you meant, like, books.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Huh?

Austin (as **Hunting**): I thought you meant “do you read weird things”. I thought you—

Ali (as **Brnine**): No, I know you do that. Are—is there—

Austin (as **Hunting**): Oh.

**Dre**: Wow.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Are there reinforcements?

Austin (as **Hunting**): Not that I can see.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um... Can you boost the scanners and just keep the lines open?

Austin (as **Hunting**): Yeah, will do.

**Austin**: *Brrroom!* That’s the scanners getting boosted.

[**Sylvi** and **Ali** laugh]

**Keith**: [trilling vocalization]

**Ali**: Thank you.

**Austin**: [chuckles] That’s me yellin’.

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

**Ali**: I—yeah.

**Austin:** Thisbe—or, sorry, I guess, let's say Brnine, you just chillin'? You just watchin' stuff from up here?

**Ali:** I mean, I'm—this seems weird, um, I...

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Ali:** Oh, can I phone into Thisbe and Cori?

**Austin:** Sure.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Hey, guys.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Captain, hello!

**Sylvi:** Wait.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): [loud whispering] Captain, hello!

**Sylvi:** She has to whisper it. I realized that.

Ali (as **Brnine**): How's it going?

Sylvi (as **Cori**): We're in.

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

[**Sylvi** and **Janine** laugh]

**Dre:** Hacker voice.

[**Ali** laughs]

[1:30:00]

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um, you run into anything weird yet? You hear—are you guys hearing a noise?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): No, but we have run into weird things.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): What kind of noise?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Well, it's like a hiss, like an engine, but weird.

**Sylvi**: I'm like, looking at the, like, room we were just peeking into to see if there's anything, like, moving in there I can see.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): No, we've seen some weird stuff, but haven't heard any weird stuff.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um... Sure, yeah. Um, well...

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Are you near any vehicles?

Ali (as **Brnine**): See, that's the thing, we kind of all are, right? I'm just gonna—

**Janine**: Damn.

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

Ali (as **Brnine**): Not to add any stress to your situation, but I think that this plan is getting increasingly time-sensitive, so... chop chop.

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

**Dre**: Wow.

[**Sylvi** chuckles] [someone stifles laughter]

**Janine**: Chop chop.

**Sylvi**: Eyes narrowing.

**Ali**: [laughs] Um... I'm trying to see—"When you're supervising your allies from afar during a Sortie, you can level your tactical know-how for better positioning." So I have 2 Hold on this.

**Austin**: Mhm.



**Ali:** “Remove one Risk, give an ally [pronounced Ali] ad—” I’m just gonna keep doing that. [chuckles] “—advantage during their next move, or have an ally appear somehow in a place where they are needed.” Well, Eclectic...

**Austin:** Mhm. That you can do, yeah. A hundred percent.

**Ali:** Shout-out to that whole side. [laughs]

**Keith:** You need me to appear somewhere where needed?

**Ali:** [laughing] Um...

**Austin:** Uh-huh. We’ll get there.

**Ali:** Okay, we’ll think about the advantage thing, I don’t know if it’s this second, but keep the lines open—

Ali (as **Brnine**): I’m here to support you both, so just keep the—stay chatty and stay safe in there.

**Austin:** I really thought you were gonna say [laughing] “stay chatty and stay quiet”, but.

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

**Keith:** Keep talkin’, but keep it down.

**Janine:** Stay alert and stay safe.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

**Dre:** Keep it frosty, but, you know.

**Austin:** Yeah. But keep it warm.

**Dre:** Yeah.

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

**Sylvi:** Actually, I do have an out of character question [**Austin:** Yeah.] about Eclectic showing up maybe being handy here is, Keith, do you have anything that would make it easier for Eclectic to get through some of these doors?

**Keith:** I could steal a car.

**Sylvi:** Okay. That—that's not what—

**Keith:** Oh, get through the doors, not get—okay, sorry.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, get through the door that we, like—

**Keith:** I leapt ahead mentally. Yeah, I do. Did I take Lockpicks? That's a great question.

**Austin:** I don't think you did. I think you—

**Sylvi:** [cross] Yeah, that was immediately what I went to, was like, Eclectic seems like the most kitted out for...

**Austin:** But I do think you just generally have these skills, right?

**Keith:** Yes, yeah, I do. Um...

**Austin:** Doing investigation rolls...

**Keith:** False IDs and—I have False IDs.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, you have False IDs. That's the classic, yeah. Yeah, mhm.

**Keith:** [cross] A face for every occasion.

**Sylvi:** I don't know if we need to burn it quite yet, but I thought it would be at least worth bringing up depending on how—

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. I did take Lockpicks.

**Sylvi:** [cross] [laughing] 'Cause it's not my Hold, and it's not my character, so I'm just throwing shit out.

**Austin:** Yeah. So then, let's stay with Cori and Thisbe inside. Oh, real quick, I guess, Brnine, you can still see the Jackal—quote unquote, “Jackal Chase” versus Zjenta fight in the stadium. Jesset is piloting a Jury, that's why the Jury is—that's why the icon is a jury, by the way, **[Ali:** Mhm.] I didn't just like, make Jesset's thing a bunch of people sitting down behind a thing.

**[Sylvi laughs]**

**Austin:** [chuckles] And Zjenta is piloting a new thing called the Dais, which is not really a throne, but it's close, you know? And—

**Ali:** I'm gonna send Jesset a sarcastic fancam later.

**Austin:** Oh, wow, I love that. Are you taking footage from here?

**Ali:** [laughing] Of course I am.

**Austin:** Okay, good.

**Janine:** Boy, I hope they don't die.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Then it'll just be a—they'll make some authentic fancams.

**[Austin and Ali laugh]**

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Austin:** [laughing] Is the Zapruder film a fancam?

**[Ali and Janine laugh]**

**Sylvi:** Oh, hold on. I bet that's out there.

**Dre:** Wow.

**Austin:** No, no, stop.

**Keith:** Can't wait to see how this resolves to know whether the footage I'm taking is serious or tongue in cheek.

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

**Janine:** [laughing] God.

**Austin:** Whew. Okay, inside.

[**Ali** whines]

**Austin:** Yeah, what's the—what's the play? Keep investigating, going up more? Are you gonna head outside?

**Janine:** My gut says go up more, but I'm open to Cori's... ideas here.

**Sylvi:** No, I'm with you. I think that getting the lay of this building—'cause we're in the—this is the top secret building. We need to figure out what's so top secret about it.

**Austin:** It is the top secret building, yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Janine:** Just go for a super casual little stroll around the top secret building.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah. You know, you're—you come up the ramp, and there are paintings on the walls, like, it is just the Guggenheim in here to some degree, they are—except that they are not paintings, they are corporate art. There was a corporate art challenge.

Everyone—you know when you're in a corporation and then the, you know, the head of the culture department in your corporation, your, you know—

**Janine:** Wants a free mural?

**Austin:** Wants 30 free murals, and so what they do is they say—

**Keith:** Sure.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** “It's actually not free, you do get free lunch for a month.”

**Sylvi:** This is art school, is what you're describing. [chuckles]

[**Janine** chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm describing art school, but also Raytheon, you know?

**Sylvi:** More similarities than you'd think.

**Austin:** Which, you know? [laughs] Yeah, uh-huh. And so there's just lots of bad corporate art about the Lone Marble Group, about City City, about the Frontier Syndicate, about Palisade. There is just like, one of the murals is Palisade, like, being—like, with someone's—like a giant unembodied hand grasping it, which is like, that's evil. You drew evil art. This is the beginning of a Sega Genesis game. You're the villain. We're gonna come kill you. You drew that on purpose and put it on the wall.

But that goes up a few floors. You go up the second floor, and the second floor, again, looks down into the weird Ebullience roller coaster, and then the—I'll just give you the third, fourth, and fifth floors have a little bit more security on them, and not glass wall, or glass door—no windows on the doors to peek in and see. You get the sense—maybe you catch someone coming out of the third or fourth—I think the third floor, where it's like, oh this is—this is just like a hallway, a line of other doors inside of that hallway, [**Sylvi:** Mhm.] that break off into smaller offices, and then you get to the fourth and fifth floors, and you can't quite—you don't—you can't get a peek into those. Those have

more security of just like, the doors are heavier. Like, the doors—these are serious locked down doors. They don't have a keypad, they have a—like, a biometric scanner set up. So like, there's not even a tap your card here or put your, you know, your card on the scanner. This is a, like, oh, only key people get to come into this place.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Thisbe, we gotta get in there. We gotta get in here. That's gotta be the—it's the—I'm just saying, bigger door, bigger stuff behind it, right?

**Sylvi**: Taps her head three times.

**Janine**: Mhm.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): The bigger the door, the bigger the stuff.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): You get it.

**Austin**: Mhm.

**Sylvi**: I'm assuming there's like, guards outside the door and stuff, too, or is it just the biometrics?

**Austin**: Um, there are people around, people moving through this space, there are not guards at these doors. This is a... I wouldn't say it's a no firearms building.

**Sylvi**: Yeah.

**Austin**: There are security guards who could get here in 10 seconds, or 15—you know what I mean? There might be security guards on the other side of that door. You know? You don't know. But the—there is a real—"We wanted this place to be a place where people's minds could focus on their work, and not have to see M16s every day, unlike the rest of the campus." You know? Hence the big silver mercury ball security guard. So yeah, there are not people with guns around you. There are no actual guards in front of you between you and these top two floor doors.

**Sylvi**: Okay.

**Austin:** But there are—you know, there are people across the way who can see you. Because remember, like, the stairwell here is a spiral [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] that goes up and around over and over again, right? So, you know, there are people down the ramp from you, you know, going in and out of some of the other doors, there are some people looking at the art. I think maybe the opposite side lower floor, like the third floor on the opposite side, is like a—it's a McDonald's, you know? It's a space McDonald's. It's like a, one of the food options in this building that is not behind closed doors. You imagine that floor three on the—in the long rectangular building, or long rectangular side of the building, has some other sort of food court option in there. Some other sort of, you know, cafeteria. This is is for, like, people who get a day pass. You know? You know when you get the day pass to walk through the big silver mercury ball?

**Sylvi:** Oh yeah, of course. We've all been there.

**Keith:** What's the—what's the corporate design aesthetic of the Lone Marble Group? What is this place's Frutiger Aero—

**Austin:** Such a good question. So, the entire design is—it's the City City stuff, right? So it is the—I said this before, I think, the—did I say Strat—not Stratburg. It is the Mercedes-Benz Stuttgart building, which I will send you. And it's that style of corporate clean lines, hard metal. Let me send it here. And then a truly bizarre thing that is in my mind—and there's just no way for me to actually find this, is there? There is a painting—or not a painting, but a mural, inside of a Starbucks that was near where I used to work.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** That is—god, I wonder if I could find it. Strange—you know, it's a futurist mural, sort of, but kind of arrows that turn into circles, that are all lined up to one another. In retrospect, I think I understand that it was meant to be, like, movie reels or something? Let me see if I took—I actually was just walking by there, and was like, oh shit, I know what that is now. After years of thinking it was tires, it's actually movie reels, because it's next to a movie studio.

**Keith:** Ohh.

**Austin:** You know what I mean when I say movie reels? Like, the—not the actual reels, but the container. The—

**Sylvi:** Oh, yeah, yeah. The cannister that they're on, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, like, film reel cannisters, yeah.

**Austin:** Cannist—the film reel cannisters, or the thing that the reels go on, even.

**Sylvi:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** So it's like, it's circles, it's arrows, it's geometric patterns, it's those things leading into one another, it's hard metal, you know, lines, it's curves, but very—very—they're car-like curves, you know? We're not talking about soft, warm, welcoming spaces. We're talking about very authority-driven spaces. God, I wish I could find this stupid picture. I'm not gonna scroll through my phone. I'm not going to do it, and I'm not gonna look on the internet for it, even though it would be great if I could just find it. I'm not, that's fine.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Austin:** So it goes. I'll send it to you after.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I will find it after and send it to you. But that's the vibe here in terms of like, what the shape language is, you know? Corporate HQ. Corporate HQ of not a tech company, but a car company, you know? "We make stuff" is kind of their MO, and they want to show that architecturally a little bit, right? They make physical things, and so there is attention paid to building shape, and you know, the whole thing is a car, right? I mean, that's—it's—it couldn't be stupider. Shoutouts to car companies. You couldn't be stupider.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, dumb as fuck.



**[Keith laughs]**

**Austin:** Uh-huh. God, I was joking about the arrow shit, but here is the Mercedes—this is from the Mercedes-Benz museum. Out front is just a bunch of arrow—big, giant, stupid arrows pointing in different directions.

**Sylvi:** This feels very German to me.

**Austin:** It's perfect.

**Keith:** That's so funny.

**Austin:** Uh-huh. Keith, this neo-Vectorheart is it. This is great. This is really good.

**Keith:** Yeah, this is from, uh...

**Austin:** I think it's less cool than this, though. Less—

**Keith:** This is from cari.institute, they have a bunch of chronological, like, corporate design aesthetics, **[Austin:** Sure.] and they just like have a bunch of examples of it pulled from Facebook groups and official sources and just the internet and—yeah, there's some awesome stuff in here. So I was trying to figure out if what you said was any of these, and I kind of a little bit got there with the neo-Vectorheart, but then there's also some, like, weird '90s stuff, like the—not the—god, what is it—the Frasurbane? The—

**Sylvi:** Oh, Niles.

**Keith:** Where it's like—

**[snickering]**

**Austin:** Frasier-bane and Niles-bane, yeah, uh-huh. Mhm.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. **[laughs]**

**Keith:** Where it's like, which—it's like rich guy curves, like—you know, like, this is a—

**Austin:** [chuckling] Rich guy curves.

**[Keith laughs]**

**Sylvi:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Alright.

**Sylvi:** We're still talking about Kelsey Grammer, yeah?

**Keith:** It's like everything is like a violin. Like, everything here looks like a violin.

**Austin:** Oh, I know what you're talking about.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah.

**[Dre hums] [Sylvi laughs]**

**Austin:** That's not this. That is not those types of curves. It is the other type. It is the finely machined. Everything here is finely machined, you know? That's the vibe. Anyway. You got this door in front of you.

**Sylvi:** Okay. Because there's no one, like, in front of the door to talk to, it makes it harder to get into, you know?

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** Because I was gonna be like—

**Janine:** Are there, like, janitor robots here?

**Austin:** Great question. Um... yeah.

**Janine:** [chuckling] Like, I'm picturing the robot from R.O.T.O.R., but with a mop.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Deep cut.

**Dre:** Yeah, what? [chuckles]

**Austin:** Oh, god. Everyone should watch R.O.T.O.R. R.O.T.O.R. is like RoboCop meets Terminator, and it's like a terrible film.

**Janine:** [laughs] No, it's not.

**Austin:** That's the pitch.

**Janine:** It—sure, that's the pitch.

**Sylvi:** [cross] Robotic Officer Tactical Operation Research? Is this it? The '87—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Uh-huh.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Keith:** Isn't Terminator already RoboCop meets Terminator?

[**Dre** snickers]

**Austin:** No, because the Terminator is not literally a RoboCop.

**Sylvi:** Maybe in the second one.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** Yeah, well. Yeah, in the second one.

**Dre:** He's just a robo.

[1:45:00]

**Austin:** Yeah. This is explicitly the—

**Janine:** I think only the real RoboCop in R.O.T.O.R. just goes around asking for fries and being nervous.

**Sylvi:** That's good. I do that all the time.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's—

**Sylvi:** [laughs] We had a scene where Cori did that.

**Austin:** Yeah. I don't—yeah, ah, mm... No, I don't think that there is that style of worker here. I think—but, you know, there might be a big—a tall Roomba. “What if a Roomba were tall” is what you actually get here.

**Janine:** Well that's what I mean, basically, is like—

**Austin:** Yeah, but I was trying to draw a picture for you. I was trying to say, you know, what's it look like?

**Janine:** Well, I imagine it's not wearing a little uniform with a goofy face, and like—

**Austin:** Well, you said a R.O.T.O.R.-type robot.

**Janine:** [chuckling] And like, ventilation tube arms.

**Austin:** Well, you know.

**Ali:** Oh, is it more like those drink-serving robots?

**Sylvi:** Oh.

**Austin:** The drink-serving robots...

**Ali:** Have you seen those?

**Austin:** Oh, I think we've—I think we've—

**Sylvi:** Oh, yeah.

**Ali:** Oh, okay, if you haven't seen these, we don't have to google them. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, I think we talked about these maybe in a—didn't we talk about these in a Clapcast? Isn't that what happened? Did that not happen?

**Dre:** Maybe it's like those New Jersey wedding robots.

**Sylvi:** Uh, huh? Like the one Rocky got Paulie in the Rocky movies?

**Austin:** That's like the one from R.O.T.O.R.

**Janine:** Are they robots that you can marry so that you don't have to marry anyone from Jersey?

**Sylvi:** Wow.

**Dre:** Damn. Wow. Wow, wow, wow, wow, wow.

[**Janine** laughs]

**Sylvi:** Anti-Italian sentiment.

**Dre:** No, I'm just talking about—it's a dumb—

**Janine:** Apologies to Jersey. You're okay.

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

**Dre:** It's a dumb TikTok that I posted in Bluff City.

**Austin:** Ah, I see.

**Ali:** Anyway, this is what I thought of when I thought of "Roomba but tall", but it has a cat face on it, so it kind of doesn't count for the thing that...

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, but get rid of the cat face. If you get rid of the cat face and make it chrome or steel instead of white, absolutely. There is one of these.

**Sylvi:** I would never get rid of the cat face.

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** I know. You're not—that's the difference between—

**Janine:** What if instead of the cat face it's the barrel of a shot gun.

**Ali:** You could steal it and put a cat face on.

**Sylvi:** Oh.

**Dre:** Yeah!

**Austin:** You and Exanceaster March, Exanceaster March is like, "Get rid of the cat face. No cat face."

[Ali laughs]

**Austin:** "I'm sick of the cat face."

**Janine:** We should kill that guy.

**Sylvi:** I need to declare a second rival. [laughs]

[Austin chuckles]

**Janine:** Sick of the cat face...

**Austin:** So are you gonna try talking to it? It doesn't have a face, but that doesn't mean you can't try to talk to it.

**Janine:** I mean, yeah, my thought is that like, well, someone cleans that room, and it's not the people who have hands, probably. Or like, meat hands. You know what I mean.

**Austin:** Mhm.

[Ali snickers]

**Janine:** But I didn't want to say that.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh. Mhm.

**Sylvi:** On Palisade, absolutely.

**Austin:** Yeah, true.

**Janine:** So, you know, find the cleaning robot and just be like, “hey, we gotta check something out” or whatever.

**Dre:** “Sup, brah?”

**Austin:** Well, what do you say to it? And are you using—are you—this to me sounds like... what do you call Talk? Exchange Blows but with Talk. It’s kind of like, [mimics electronic whirring sound] *brrrr*. You know, it’s vacuuming, and then polishing this kind of tile floor.

**Janine:** Right. So... I want to use my Animation Matrix, of course.

**Austin:** Yeah, that’s the thing that lets you talk to robots, right?

**Janine:** [cross] “Communicate clearly with ardents of any type or level of awareness”, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I mean, I imagine this kind of robot would also have a, like—if some guy was like, “hey, I just threw up, you gotta clean it up”, it would be like, “okay”, and go do that. But—[laughs] you know, like actually communicating in a more material way.

**Austin:** Yeah, but that’s—yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah, uh-huh.

**Janine:** yeah, yeah, yeah. It’s, you know, does Siri understand you or does Siri just know what to say?

**Austin:** Right. In this case, you’re talking—you’re really—the thing you have lets you talk to robots.

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah. I want to say, uh... [chuckling] hmm.

[**Sylvi** chuckles]

**Janine:** Um—oh, the thing I just came up with is so stupid.

**Sylvi:** That's how you know it's good.

**Janine:** But I want to do it so bad.

[**Ali** laughs]

**Dre:** Mhm, mhm.

**Janine:** Um... I—this is—I'm so sorry about this.

[**Dre** laughs]

**Janine:** I want Thisbe to tell this robot that Cori is the daughter of an important guy here, and he forgot something and sent her to get it.

**Sylvi:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** Why are you apologizing? That's great.

**Sylvi:** That's amazing.

**Austin:** Oh, because now you're—

**Janine:** 'Cause it's goofy, I don't know.

**Austin:** No, that's great. That's good. Alright. I think it goes [mimics electronic buzzing, abrupt cessation] *bzzz-art*. And stops.

[**Sylvi** and **Ali** laugh]

**Janine:** It barks?

**Austin:** Give me a roll. Give me a 2d6 plus your Talk, which is minus 1.



**Janine:** [chuckles] Yeah, is minus 1.

**Austin:** I don't think you get a bonus or anything, you just get to do it, right? Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Can I help by looking important?

**Austin:** We'll see if you need to.

**Janine:** We'll see, yeah.

**Sylvi:** Okay, cool.

**Austin:** We'll see.

**Keith:** One of these seasons we're gonna have...

**Janine:** Helping would be great, actually.

**Austin:** Helping would be great.

**Keith:** One of these seasons we're gonna have—everybody's gonna have some good talk, because we all just keep talking, even though our Talk is sometimes negative 1, or always is.

**Austin:** Yeah, what's the highest Talk on this crew right now?

**Ali:** I have a very honest...

**Keith:** It's—they're all zero or negative 1.

**Sylvi:** Brnine is the—yeah.

**Austin:** You have a plus 1, Eclectic.

**Keith:** No, sorry, of the people in—at Lone Marble Group right now.

**Sylvi:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh, correct.

**Keith:** Brnine is zero, and Cori and Thisbe are both negative 1.

**Sylvi:** Brnine is—oh, no, Brnine is zero, never mind. In my head, Brnine is the governor of yap, so I was like, Brnine Talk.

[**Keith** and **Ali** laugh] [**Austin** chuckles]

**Austin:** Alright, Cori. You need to roll 2d6 plus...

**Sylvi:** I think it's plus 1, I don't think—I helped Brnine last time, but I didn't help Thisbe.

**Austin:** You helped Brnine, but you did not help Thisbe, yeah. I think that's right.

**Sylvi:** And—wait, did we—did we work on the...

**Janine:** I feel like we did something. Didn't we...

**Sylvi:** During downtime, I feel like the thing might apply, too.

**Janine:** What the hell was it?

**Sylvi:** Well, because we've been working on a clock together.

**Austin:** Well, that's the plus 1. That is the plus 1 together.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Janine:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** That's the "if you've spent meaningful time together before this Sortie".

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Austin:** That's the plus 1.

**Janine:** Right, right, right.

**Austin:** Then it would be another plus 1 if they're part of your hooks, which is... not—that is not true yet, no.

**Sylvi:** Not really. Okay.

**Austin:** Or then plus 1 if they Helped or Hindered you previously this Sortie.

**Sylvi:** Mm, okay.

**Austin:** Which we should be taking notes of, but I—and I remember saying we should take notes of it, and I thought someone took a note of it, but now I'm not seeing it anywhere. So maybe we have not been taking notes.

**Janine:** I took a—I have a note here for just “Hold 1 formation”.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I also have that.

**Austin:** Yeah that's from—yeah, that's just—remember that's the one that you can use on anything.

**Janine:** But that's just like questions? Okay.

**Austin:** That's any—yeah, anything that is a Hold where you're like, “spend Hold to do blah blah blah”, you can ask—

**Janine:** I should have used that on the weird thing.

**Austin:** Yeah, maybe. You know, that was done here. You still could, but.

**Janine:** Anyway, Cori, can you look like you're gonna cry or something?

**Sylvi:** Can I look like I'm gonna cry?

[Dre laughs] [Austin laughs]

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 2d6 plus 1.

**Sylvi:** I look so good at crying. I got an 8.

**Austin:** Alright. That is a success, but of course, you open yourself up to negative outcomes here—

**Sylvi:** That's fine.

**Austin:** —so, Thisbe, roll one more die, so that you basically retroactively get advantage on that. You're just looking for a 3 or above on this extra die.

**Keith:** This sucks, I was one second away—

**Janine:** 5.

**Keith:** Nice.

**Austin:** 5 plus 5 minus 1 is a 9.

**Sylvi:** Let's go.

**Austin:** So still a mixed success here, but...

**Keith:** Yeah, I was one second away from saying that I could use one of my Hold for Confidence, but then we started rolling again.

**Austin:** It wouldn't have been, though. It still wouldn't have—that wouldn't have changed anything.

**Keith:** No, Sylvi's 6 wouldn't have—1 wouldn't have become a 6?

**Austin:** Yeah, but that just lets Sylvi help.

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** The result of which is advantage, and the advantage die was a 5, so 5 plus 5 minus 1 is...

**Keith:** Oh, right, I forgot that you don't get anything more—you don't help the roll more by succeeding.

**Sylvi:** I think it's protection from consequences, right? If I get a full success?

**Keith:** Yeah, it is, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** It would be protection from consequences, exactly. But you didn't do that, and so—

**Sylvi:** That's fine.

**Austin:** “On a 7 to 9 with Exchange Blows, both you and your target are forced to take a Risk.” What is risky about the way you are—[chuckling] you are going about this? Which is to say, what Risk are you taking by doing this maneuver you're doing?

**Janine:** I do have a suggestion.

**Austin:** Yeah, please. You get to decide.

**Janine:** Which is that by saying that Sylvi is the daughter of someone important—

**Austin:** Uh-huh.

[Sylvi laughs]

**Janine:** Or not Sylvi, [laughing] that Cori is the daughter of someone important.

[Austin and Ali chuckle]

**Janine:** That we are flagging Cori as like a VIP in terms of like, is there gonna be, like, a robot hanging around being like “Do you need any tea, miss?” Like, that kind of shit.

**Austin:** Yeah, I actually think Flagged is a very funny Risk to take. Both of you should take Flagged.

**Sylvi:** [laughing] Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's good.

**Keith:** All the robot's friends are freaking out, like, "Ah, we gotta help, we're gonna get in trouble, we gotta help the famous person!"

**Austin:** Mhm. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Janine:** "Her shoe is scuffed, quickly, go shine it."

**Austin:** [chuckles] So at this point, it goes—it communicates to you—it makes the same sort of like, [mimics electronic buzzing, beep] *bzzzt-beep!* sounds out loud, its computer thinking sounds, but to you, Thisbe, it has just a beautiful voice. And it says,

Austin (as **Robot**): Oh, I'm sorry, Miss, just one second. Let me check in with my supervisor about that.

**Austin:** It's Defenseless, but it has not been convinced yet. You have to—you need a finishing blow on this one. You've gotta Strike Decisively with Talk.

**Sylvi:** [laughing] Can—

Sylvi (as **Cori**): Do you know who my father is?

**Austin:** Oh, okay, Cori.

**Janine:** You need to cry. I'm begging you to cry. [laughs]

**Sylvi:** Like tears in her eyes, but also indignant, I think is the vibe. Um...

**Austin:** Alright, Strike Decisively with Talk.

**Sylvi:** Cool, that's a—that's not great. Um... It's a zero.

**Austin:** 2d6 plus zero.

**Janine:** If I ever commission a piece of art of this season, it will be this scene.

**Sylvi:** Yeah!

**Austin:** Wow.

**Sylvi:** I got a 10!

**Austin:** 10. 5 plus 5 is a 10.

**Sylvi:** 'Cause she's just—[laughing] she's just channeling shit she's wanted to say to people about her dad in the past.

**Austin:** [chuckling] Aw.

**Janine:** [laughs, groans] Aah.

**Sylvi:** "Do you know how important he is to this entire operation? [laughing] I swear to god I'll have you decommissioned."

**Austin:** [laughing] Oh my god.

[Ali laughs]

**Janine:** "And he loves me so much, and we spend so much time together."

**Sylvi:** "He adores me! I am the apple of his eye!"

**Austin:** [laughs, groans] Oh...

**Janine:** He sees me every Christmas.

**Sylvi:** I'll pay for [1:54:07] texts.

**Austin:** [pained laughter] Aww.

**Keith:** He texts me twice on my birthday.

[Sylvi chuckles]

**Janine:** Which he totally remembers.

**Austin:** Yeah. Oh, this is sad.

**Keith:** "Happy birthday?"

[**Sylvi** laughs]

**Austin:** [chuckling] Yeah, that's the—

**Janine:** [laughing] “Did you get my breakdancing videos?”

**Austin:** [laughing] “Did you get my breakdancing videos?” For people who don't know what we're talking about, we'll link you later, don't worry about it. Not listeners, though, [laughing] we're not gonna text you the link.

[**Janine** laughs]

**Keith:** Right, yeah, you can stay confused.

**Austin:** You go google it. You guys look it up yourselves.

## Laboratory

[1:55:17]

**Austin:** [mimics robotic beeping] *Boo-doo-beep-boo*. And Thisbe, you go, ooh.

Austin (as **Robot**): I'm sorry you have to work with someone so volatile. Right this way.

[**Janine** chuckles]

**Austin:** And brings you to the door.

**Sylvi:** The second it turns around I give Thisbe a giant thumbs up. Just to be clear.

[**Ali** and **Janine** laugh]

**Austin:** And opens this door for you. And it is a large, dark room, which is strange—like, the lights aren't on in here. But it is probably around the same scale as that first and second floor mini-generator hamster wheel Rube Goldberg machine. It is a big



laboratory with the lights off. The door shuts behind you, and as the door shuts, some lights automatically begin to power on.

And there is—there are, like, mini labs in this one big laboratory. There are—like, it's all open concept, right? But there's like, okay, in the back left corner there's one project, in the back right corner there's another project, in the middle of it is a huge, almost looks like a—almost looks like a halogen light bulb made of metal. And then—and, like, gigantic, like bigger than you. Halogen's not the right light bulb. That's not what I mean. [audible typing] I mean—maybe it is, yeah, okay. Sure. Yeah, you know. Kind of a wide bulb and then flat on the top, is what I'm thinking of, but fully—

**Janine:** Like a giant CO2 cartridge for a whipped cream maker?

**Austin:** For a—no. No, no, no. Flatter than that. Bulb-shaped, like a light bulb, but—

**Janine:** Okay. Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, not—that's what I'm saying, like, not that type of halogen flat, but like the—kind of a bulb—it bulbs out, it opens out, and then—

**Janine:** [chuckling] Bulbs out.

**Austin:** It bulbs out, you know, it flares out and is flat.

**Janine:** Like a floodlight?

**Austin:** I guess kind of like a floodlight. This doesn't matter. This is not important.

[**Janine** chuckles]

**Austin:** I mean, it's an important device, but it's not—what it looks like is not a particularly important thing. And then, just like, a bunch of other little labs throughout this place. One of them has reinforced glass, is like a reinforced glass prison cell, effectively, that has one of the Motion Delegates in it that we've talked about, and in that one, there is a spritzer. There's like a big, like, air spritzer, that every 30 seconds spritzes a liquid into the air in there. There is a—just like, a very traditional-looking desk

with a bunch of—like, a big long desk with a bunch of blueprints on it. This is Exanceaster March's personal laboratory.

**Sylvi:** Oh, shit, okay.

**Janine:** You've really upgraded, Cori.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Janine:** [chuckling] In terms of dads.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Okay, let's calm down.

**Austin:** "Do you know who my dad is? It's Exanceaster March."

[**Janine** laughs]

**Sylvi:** Oh, god.

**Janine:** Can you imagine?

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Sylvi:** Different type of horrible army brat, you know?

[**Janine** laughs]

**Austin:** Mhm. Many strange projects here.

[music outro - "Nothing is Stationary" by Jack de Quidt]

Sylvi (as **Cori**): We gotta start digging through these, right?