

[The Road to PARTIZAN 03: Armour Astir \(PART 1\)](#)

Transcriber: @LoftyInclination#0019

Austin (as Gallica): An excerpt from the journal of Gallica, elect of the Divine Present, chief emissary of Stel Nideo, Verse of the Holy Church of Received Asterism, and Anodyne of all Divinity in this, the fourteen hundred twenty third year of its Perfect Millennium.

Could you hazard a guess as to why I first dreamt of being your elect, Present?

[Jack de Quidt's "[HOURGLASS. SUNRISE. CRYSTALLINE.](#)" begins playing]

As a little girl, I wanted nothing more than to see the stars. I knew by then, of course, that we had written the same constellations across all the skies of all our worlds, but even still, I wanted what only you and your elect can have: To spend the morning commanding warships in the pulsar light of a neutron star, to lunch at the furthest tip of Divinity's Reach, to compromise an enemy asset in some evening marketplace on Partizan, and to retire to the comfort of a world mapped only by us.

What is better than to be anywhere you want in just a moment? Well. Now that I have held the title for a dozen years, I can say, perhaps to not have such responsibility at all.

Divinity's eyes are on us, Present--and they should be. Ours is the only famous visage that anyone in the Principality might truly believe they'd have the chance to see. That gives us access, and access lets us do our work.

But in time, those glances of affection may turn into fearful consideration. If we could be anywhere, then... why do we go where we go? Which disasters might we let strike? These are old questions, I know, but in truth, there are some even I cannot shake.

Where were you, Present, when Stel Nideo needed you most? Three thousand years ago, when everything turned? What were you doing when Perennial struck the Galactic Core?

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AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends.

I am your host Austin Walker and today, you'll be listening to part 1 of an edited version of a game we streamed back in January of this year as part of the Road to PARTIZAN, the ongoing anthology series of games meant to bridge Twilight Mirage and the forthcoming sixth season of the show. I'm recording this intro in October, though, and wanted to give you a heads up of what to expect today before digging in.

As I said, today's episode (and also next week's episode) have been edited for both dead air and also general length. The original game was a meaty 5 hours long, and I've cut basically a full hour off the top of this episode where we went over every player's character and their moves, and we labored over some larger table setting, all of which I'm gonna try to do here in the next 15 minutes to 20 minutes or so. If you really want to hear the whole uncut thing, you can do that by going to friendsatthetable.cash, signing up at the \$5 level and looking up the January 2019 Live at the Table game, which is available either as a single YouTube video or as a pair of mp3s. (That said, I definitely advise listening to this version, and not only because I spent a lot of time editing it.)

Today's game, we will be using the excellent *Armour Astir: Advent* by Briar Sovereign, a game that we mispronounce over and over again in this recording, so, I am sorry again Briar! *Armour Astir* is still in development--you can check it out at weregazelle.itch.io/armour-astir. Armoured spelled A-R-M-O-U-R. It's a Powered by the Apocalypse mech game. It's drawing on shows like *Escaflowne* and *Gundam* to enable players to tell fantasy mech stories. It has a ton of great ideas and rules, and it is a system I would LOVE to return to at some day in the future in some capacity.

So, some set up for this particular game: First of all, more so than the *Dialect Game* for the last couple of weeks, there are some end-of-season *Twilight Mirage* spoilers in this arc, in this episode and the next episode. Again, there's nothing to do with major player characters from *Twilight Mirage*. There's nothing to do with the personal arcs of those characters, but there are some big world building details that pop up at the end of next week's episode. And so, I think you can hear those and still totally enjoy the end of *Twilight Mirage* if you haven't done that already, but I do know different people have different degrees of spoiler tolerance, so I want to put that up front.

Today's game takes place between 500 and 1000 years after the *Dialect* game. I don't have a specific date, but what I can say is that while the *Dialect* game took place in what the Divine Principality is calling the Ascendant Millennium

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AUSTIN: And today's game takes place in the following era, the Miraculous Millennium.

It is called the Miraculous Millenium because, in truth, the time we see here in *Armour Astir* is the height of the Divine Principality's technological prowess. By the time we will reach *PARTIZAN*--and for reasons that will become apparent--the level of technology will look a lot more like it did back in *COUNTER/Weight*, maybe even prior to *COUNTER/Weight* in some cases--think *Battletech* here, think about the *Nostromo* from *Alien*, think about *Star Wars: Rogue One* and its big clunky harddrive towards the end. The rule that I have now for *PARTIZAN* is that- you can have a touchscreen, but if you do, it can only do one thing. So if you want screen where you can control an engine by touching a screen, well, then that's gonna be your engine screen now. No multipurpose touchscreens. A very 70s and early 80s vision of sci-fi.

But at the start of the Miraculous Millennium, things were not like that. They were... miraculous: If you've heard the old Arthur C. Clarke line about how advanced enough technology becomes indistinguishable from magic, this is that moment for the Galaxy and especially for the Divine Principality.

The Divine Principality adopted the name "the Divine Principality" back in the Dawn Millennium, then it began expanding in the Ascendent Millennium (during the Dialect game is the Ascendent Millennium). And now it's the Miraculous Millennium, and part of that miracle is not just about technology, they also refer to it [that way] because that is the era when it became what it now is today in shape and structure. It adopted what is called the Many Stars Policy, or the Nideo Thesis (N-I-D-E-O), or the religion, Asterism -- A-S-T-E-R-I-S-M. So not *astir* like the name of the game. Aster, like the flower. Or Asterism, which is another name for a constellation, is an asterism.

That is a political and religious philosophy created by the now-long-dead Aram Nideo, who you may remember as a bit character from Twilight Mirage, and also one of the founders of the Divine Principality soon after the end of Twilight Mirage. He posited that in the era after COUNTER/Weight but before Twilight Mirage, the galaxy was in a sort of extreme Rousseian state of nature, where we could all be our natural, compassionate selves. But now, with the galaxy fractured, we have been turned against each other in eternal conflict.

To solve that, to bring us back to this peaceful state of nature, he proposes that we obliterate time and space by creating a perfect state that all of the galaxy is part of. Inside of that state--which is the Divine Principality--there can be minor skirmishes caused by ideological conflict or material difference, but because everyone involved is all legally and kind of identitarianly tied to the Divine Principality through a long chain of fealty, through a universal culture, through all these other things, no single small conflict, he theorized, would shake the whole of the empire. (Of course, we know *PARTIZAN* kicks off at a moment of great fracture. That is the plan... so.)

Everything about the Divine Principality follows from that core goal: From that goal of creating a state that will not shake apart. An unshakeable, eternally expanding empire meant to conquer all of the Milky Way. From there, you get the system of Stels (S-T-E-L or plural S-T-E-L-S) which will become the Principalty's five major houses, each of which count innumerable noble families and minor dynasties within them. Right now there are only two major Stels, in the moment of the Armour Astir game, but in the long term there will be 5. By the time we get to *PARTIZAN*, there will be five.

From that goal--the unshakeable empire--we also get an educational system based on a strict and "universal" system of "constellations," which are these kind of organizational diagrams and schema that are meant to "clarify" your position in society. From that goal, the goal of the unshakeable, expanding empire, you also get to Received Asterism, which is the largest single faith in the galaxy. It's a faith that sees Divines as the approximate representations of the powerful characteristics of the state--so if there's a Divine called Courage, believers of Received Asterism will tell you that the Divine Courage is like the

physical embodiment of Divine Principality's courage. But at the same time, it is not as courageous as the Principality is itself.

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It's as close as any *thing* could get to the state's courage, so it's sort of like a guide for people, like "Ah, I wanna be as courageous as the Divine Principality, this terrible empire I'm part of, but I don't know what that looks like. Oh look, there's the Divine Courage! I should be more like the Divine Courage!"

If all of that sounds like a sort of twisted expansion on what you might remember from Twilight Mirage as the Resonant Orbit, which was like the lead faith in the Twilight Mirage, well, then, yeah, that's it exactly. This society has done what many other ones have done before, it has found the quiet threads of authoritarian logic in culture and has pulled on them until they become an entire ideology that justifies, or is meant to justify, does not actually justify, but is meant to justify, imperialism. And I'll note here that is like the focus of this season. This is gonna be a season that starts with compromised characters inside of a pseudo-medieval empire (again, you can think of Battletech here as a big touchstone). When that empire starts to fracture, what happens? That is kind of the question. Will they develop radical ideology? They don't have it at the start, they can't even imagine another world. But could they develop that? Could they become revolutionary? We will see. What will they do?

In some ways, the characters of today's game--the Armour Astir game--who begin with a clear goal in mind--are steps ahead of where the PCs in *PARTIZAN* will be, because they have a goal. They understand they want things to be different and are taking steps to changing that.

Which is appropriate in some other ways because by the time we reach *PARTIZAN*, this whole era, the miraculous millennium, will be thought of as a sort of time of fables, partially because of the high tech stuff, but also because it's so far away and because life has changed so much for the average galactic resident.

In fact, when I first pitched this game, I talked about hand waving some of the more science fantasy stuff here, the stuff that looks more like *Escaflowne* and less like *Gundam*, by saying "well, let's play this game and pretend that it's sort of a fable. It's a parable told in the time of *PARTIZAN* that is filled with all of the sort of touchstones that our own fables are touched with." Right? So I mean literally, characters have ray-guns like it's a, you know, 1950s sci-fi serial. The player classes are things like Witch and Arcanist and you can imagine those existing next to like knights, and dragons, and wizards and all the things that exist, you know, in the stories that were passed down to us, too. So you can imagine that today's characters might be looked at one day by those in the world of *PARTIZAN* as exemplary. As... like, "This is what heroes might look like. Not like us. We're just regular folks. You can't expect us to be like them."

Speaking of classes, I should set up the player characters so that we can move into actually playing the game. If our game of Dialect was focusing the camera on those hurt by the

imperial expansion, today's game focuses instead on those who tried to stop it from within. Half of the PCs come from a great deal of privilege: They are human. They are loyal servants to an established and powerful Divine, named Perennial, who is different than a lot of the Divines we've seen on screen over the years. She is not stoic or isolated. She is, in fact, kind of mischievous and playful, as a goddess. She looks like a long branch of russian sage which is this kind of purple-green plant. Looks kind of like lavender, I guess, but broad. It's like that, but if it was like a giant, free-floating nervous system. Classic Divine looks.

The player characters, um, of... You know, let's just go through all the player characters at this point. The first two are the ones that definitely have the great deal of privilege and are part of the Divine Principality in the most direct way.

The first is Briar Brightline, who is played by Art Martinez-Tebbel. Briar uses he/him pronouns and uses the Captain playbook. He is named after Briar Sovereign, the creator of this game, who has a dope fucking name. Briar Brightline is a member of Stel Kesh--one of the two "Stels" of the Principality--and is also the head of Horizon, a group that wants to return the principality to its roots (as both the guardian of the galaxy and also... de facto monarchy). He is the Captain of the Constellation Class Cruiser Hellebore (also known as the Ivory Prince),

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AUSTIN: And in today's game he will be leading a clandestine mission to the center of the galaxy to disable, destroy, or take over a device that can produce near-endless energy. (Which might be familiar sounding to those of you who listened closely to Twilight Mirage, again.) As a captain, his moves are about aiding the rest of the crew, either directly through action or through keeping them safe and supplied. As you may already have heard, Art loves it when a plan comes together. [laughs] And Briar Brightline is part of a long string of characters who can make that happen.

Next up is Cerise Sky, played by Sylvia¹ Clare. Cerise uses she/her pronouns and the Arcanist playbook. She is the low consul of the center and pilot of the Perennial Hallow named "Aster," A-S-T-E-R. And that's a lot of words, I know, what do they mean? Well, she is like a space paladin or a space wizard, who is loyal and blessed by- loyal to and blessed by the Divine Perennial, which is why her mech is called a "Hallow." Mechs not blessed by Divines are called Hollows, mechs blessed by Divines are called Hallows. Shout outs to me mis-hearing something during an episode of GEN:LOCK, another mech show, for inspiring that particular choice. Because she is an Arcanist, arCANEist? Arcanist? I think Arcanist? Arcanine? She is not an arcanine... Because she is an arcanist, Cerise is a trained scholar and magician, who can reference her knowledge and also deploy her arcane powers through spells and rituals--including one that lets her create illusions. The Aster, her mech, is super flexible in terms of its abilities, very kind of well rounded, but also can punch above its weight because of its special rifle that lets it hurt higher tier enemies.

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use.

Next up is Teasel Mode, played by Janine Hawkins. Teasel is one of the two characters who is from outside of the Divine Principality, but aiding in this effort. And she uses she/her pronouns and the Witch playbook, and is also an Ashen--which we talked about as kind of the name that the Hypha eventually would take in the long run. So Hyphan, Ashen. And she is also the pilot of the mech the Day's Eye--like D-A-Y apostrophe S, E-Y-E-- which is where the word Daisy comes from, believe it or not. The Day's Eye is neither a Hollow nor Hollow--or I guess it would be considered by a Hollow by the Divine Principality, but it is still driven by a Divine power. It's just that the Divine power is not recognized by the Principality... or the Divine *power* is, but the fact that it powers this mech has not granted the mech, quote-unquote "Hallow" status. Witches, the witch playbook in *Armor Astir* "seize power through pacts with powerful creatures, knowingly or otherwise." What a great little phrase and rhythm: *witches, seize power, through pacts, with powerful, creatures, knowingly, or otherwise...* and then they channel that power into their mechs. In exchange, the creature in question gains influence over the witch.

In the case of Teasel, that creature is also the Divine Perennial, who has blessed her mech and who has influence over her. Teasel is able to lean on Perennial when in trouble, and also gets special boons from her, like the ability to use her magic skills and stats for offense and defense instead of more physical skills. Her mech, the Day's Eye, is good at taking down smaller foes, and it wields a very cool sniper rifle that I will let Janine describe when we get to the action.

Finally, there's Vessel's Gold, played by Andrew Lee Swan. Gold uses they/them pronouns, is using the Imposter playbook, and as you might be able to tell from the possessive in their name, Vessel's Gold--whose Gold? Vessel's Gold--they come from a much different culture than the rest of the Divine Principality. They are a mercenary--also called a hound--and ace pilot that... from the planet Earth which, if you've listened to *Twilight Mirage*, you might recall, it is not in the place it is now in 2019. Vessel's Gold is the descendent of a group that was left behind by their nation, left to fend for themselves as the others from that place went on to something incredible and life changing. Vessel's Gold, I guess Gold's' ancestors fell through the cracks, were not brought along, and they did their best to survive. And now many, many, many generations later, Gold is a mercenary who lives on a ruined Earth, which is towards the center of the galaxy.

The book writes that Imposters "sidestep magical talent with the gift of augmentation," which opens a big door to readings and conversations about this playbook in relation to disability and prosthetics and some other stuff, and those ideas don't come up today in this one shot. I do think that there's a conversation to be had there, and I think a long term campaign using this playbook would have to talk about that, because just like mechs are about bodies, cyborgs are about bodies.

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AUSTIN (continued): And about disability and accessibility and everything else like that. I'll also note real quick that if you've been following the Drawing Maps updates on Patreon lately, you'll know that issues--disability and accessibility---have been really front-of-mind for

me lately, largely due to some great comments and really useful letters that people have sent me. So briefly, I just want to say right now that I've started up like a series of consulting-consultant meetings--I had the first one earlier this week; I have another one scheduled for next week--with regards to the depiction of both disability and chronic illness in PARTIZAN. It's something that does mean a lot to me, not just in the sort of scholarly "I've read a couple books about disability studies" way, but in a kind of personal way.

I grew up in a household where, you know, when I was six or seven, my mom had brain surgery which gave her kind of a chronic condition. Or, it was treating a chronic condition; it was treating an arterio-venous malformation. But the result of that was living with a mom as a child who had recurring seizures, who had lost much of her sight, and was not able to do certain things that were put on her back and she did her best to get through them. And yet, despite that personal close relationship to it, it's not a topic that I feel super strong about my ability to tackle. And when we're talking about mech stories and we're talking about war stories where people are certainly going to be hurt badly, it's something where I felt like, um, especially given the comments we've received, I wanted to reach out to someone in the consulting field to get some additional perspectives on some goals. So, know that is something I'm taking into consideration as we move forward into the next season.

In any case, Vessel's Gold is a, uh, Imposter playbook. Which basically just means that they are a fucking rad ace pilot who specializes in really high risk/high reward combat. That should be easy for Gold because they have a super fast mech called the High Price, which charges around the battlefield with a big lance.

So, those are the notes. Those are... everything. This has been like 25 minutes. That's still better than the literal over-an-hour that this was in the original file. So I'll call it a win. Alright. That's all I got. Let's get on with the game.

[Setup]

AUSTIN: So. How- when do we want to jump in here? I think we want to jump right- kind of into it. Does that sound right? I don't-

JANINE: We're still going to talk about fashion, right?

AUSTIN (sincerely): A hundred percent. You know-

JANINE (over Austin): Okay

AUSTIN (over Janine): you can begin- Well- yea- Everyone is in the war room. Everyone is looking at the one map, that is a holographic map, it's a table that pres- that like, does like the cool like, 3D, kind of- it's almost like a, a- imagine like a, a vectrex, mechtrex, or like, you know, old school vector graphics with a super, super bright light, like if you're playing Star Wars the arcade game. The original Star Wars arcade game, just super bright, except this has colours and stuff. And so, so you know like a big floating diamond represents your ship, and you can see, that you are nearing, a, a facility.

AUSTIN: You are at the centre of the galaxy, you are nearing the centre of the galaxy. And I don't mean the dead centre of the galaxy, you know. Like, the dead centre of the galaxy is, is, whelp, don't look at some of those maps. I think they're fine; I think none of the maps I just showed are bad. None of the- there's no spoilers in there. So I don't mean like this- the very centre corner like- or not corner, but like, circle of the map, but this kind of like, outer glow area. The Earth is orbiting this whole long thing, you know? I think it's, it's, it's on this very specific orbit that they figured out to- and also, if you didn't listen to Twilight- to Twilight Mirage, and you're like "why the *fuck* is the Earth at the centre of the galaxy?" go listen to Twilight Mirage; the answers will surprise you. [Laughs]

ART: We'll see you back here in eighty hours [Austin laughs], I think it is.

AUSTIN: That's accurate. And so it is, it is orbiting this, and then, it is also- so I think you can kind of see the Earth from the window, so to speak, and it's off in the distance. But what kind of takes up the bulk of your view is this, long... You know, the name of your group's Horizon, but there's almost a horizon out in space because of this thing, that is this long metallic space station that goes around, it looks like the bulk, or all, of the centre of the galaxy. You lose sight of it, right? It goes as far as you can possibly see.

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AUSTIN: It is a, I kind of imagine it as a being a horizontal long, like shelf. Think of it almost like literally a shelf, and like, you put a single shelf into you're- onto your wall. You know, you hammer it in there, you screw it into the side of the wall. There is the long horizontal part, right? Then there is a little bit under it, and a little bit above it, that's the back of the shelf. So not just the shelf, but the shelf with a backing thing; do you know what I'm talking about? Except imagine that, is made of metal, and it's gigantic. It's, as big as a continent, up and down- bigger. And, and then there's kind of this big shield almost in front of it, made of some material, that protects the, the internal part of it from a, from, from the light of the centre of the galaxy. It is constructed in some way that prevents it from falling in.

AUSTIN: And the thing that's weird is, we've previously described this place as being a Dyson Sphere. But you don't see a sphere here. Until you look on your readings, and what's revealed is, there is an infinite number -- by which I mean such a large number that it's impossible to count -- of nanomachines orbiting above and below in a sphere, around the entirety of the galactic centre. And those are syphoning some sort of power from it. You don't know if it's from the super massive black hole in the middle, from the light from all of the star-stuff that has been absorbed therein; you don't fucking know. You're not scientists; you're magicians. And this may as well be magic.

AUSTIN: And so, what you know is, if, the- if the Divine Principality gets control of this thing: well... they will have a lot more power. And, Briar Brightline, you are leading a mission to either destroy, deactivate, take over, disable, this device. And you've identified a place by which you can do that. There is a... there are automated defences, so it will be very difficult for you to approach from above and below. But, those defences are for ship scale things, not

for things smaller than ships. And so you can drop off a team of mechs, who can get in closer, who can disable the defences, and who can, effectively, get close enough to a main computer system- or maybe it's actually more-- I don't think it's a computer system, I think it's a mechanical, like power station, that will, either let you jack into it and take control, if you can theoretically hold on to it and defend it, or where you can plant charges that will bring this entire thing down, to be absorbed into the centre of the galaxy.

AUSTIN: I'm going to draw like a very simple version of this. By which I- when I say simple, I don't even mean a sketch of the thing. I mean a kind of a sketch of the mission, if that makes sense? So, I'm gonna draw this long corridor. And imagine this as though you're looking down at a map. And while I'm drawing, I would love to know what you all look like, around this space map, as this is all being shown. Janine, can you tell me what, what your character is wearing?

[Character Descriptions]

JANINE: Yes. So... the quickest way to, to get a baseline is I'm basing this look, on [laugh] an Italian Ad for stockings from 1955. [laugh]

AUSTIN: You know what? Great. [laugh from Janine] Good.

JANINE: It is, and ad for- I don't know Italian; I'm not going to pronounce any of these things well. I also tried to look up the context for this ad and was not able to find like, what is the company, what is the product [agreement from Austin], it just says "mille aghi, franceshi," and it's like for these blue thigh high stockings that have these sort of stripes along the foot and toes. And the ladies feet look kind of like hooves, and I was like [interested noise from Austin] "man, that's a cool look"

AUSTIN: Can you [link it](#)?

JANINE: I can link it. [sound of typing] I'll link the tweet that brought it to my attention. It was a Pulp Librarian tweet, going through like, the history of like, stocking ads. And... So, she's wearing like these sort of sheer blue stockings, like very bright blue, and there are these sort of triangular black and white, I guess like chevron kind of things, along the toes? And she's also wearing sort of a dark, very simple dress. So I think, in terms of Teasel's robes, I'd like to go with something- that is like a very fitted, dark grey to black, but most -- probably more dark grey -- woolen kind of dress, that's very heavy.

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JANINE: Heavier than I think it, it would be, you know, if I was just using this outfit from this whole [laugh] fucking stocking ad. Very full skirts, kind of a high low thing, where it's like quite short in the front, but probably at the ground in the back. Very like, loose and drapery. It would probably look amazing if she spun. But she probably doesn't spin.

AUSTIN: [chuckle] Never?

JANINE: And then on- no, I don't think she's a spinner.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

JANINE: And then, on top of that she's got a gold kind of-- I forget the specific term I want-- It's like collar or mantel or yoke kind of necklace; it's like... It goes up until, under the jaw, but it also covers like the neck to shoulder area in like a full kind of... Yoke might be the word I want. But it's like a big thick gold neck piece that is probably like, requires hinges and stuff to, to be fitted on there. And also, because Teasel is Hypha, Teasel, you know, has a deer head.

AUSTIN: Yup.

JANINE: And antlers. But her real, her real antlers are like little nubs. And then over, or like attached to those nubs, Teasel has... I think the best way to describe it would be like, you know when you go to a shitty gift shop, and they have all those like, etched glass plaques and cubes and stuff, and you put it on an LED light base and the light shines through it, and it's like, the light catches on the etchings? [Agreement from Austin] Her horns are like that. She has that over the little nubs.

AUSTIN: It's extremely extra, I'm already here for it. [Janine laughs] People are asking, wouldn't the centre of the universe be a black hole? One, yes, and we're handwaving a little bit, like I said it's a supermassive black hole. And things do orbit black holes. You would need to speed them up to prevent them from falling into the black hole, and that is certainly what happened for the Earth for a long time. Will it eventually fall into that black hole now? Probably. And when I say now, I guess this is kind of part of it, and maybe this is a thing I should note for your character really quick, and then you should describe them, Gold...

AUSTIN: The bulk of people left Earth. Again, without spoiling specific things in Twilight Mirage. Most people, are gone. But most when you have billions and billions and billions of lives, still leaves millions. And, you are the descendants, the descendants of those who were not allowed to leave, or who couldn't afford to, because everything has a cost, even, even, you know, a free handout, requires you to walk to the hand. And not everybody can do that. And so you are the descendants of the subaltern of Earth. You are those who were left behind. Which made you prize picking for the Divine Principalities expansion.

AUSTIN: I don't know what Earth looks like here, at this point. But with all of its infrastructure, and its leadership gone, I think over time it probably, became a different place, a more fractured place than it may have been at the time of Twilight Mirage. So, you know. That is, that is- those are the people you come from, and part of why you feel the way you do about the Principality. What do you look like? Besides the looks at the top, like, what's the, what am I imagining when I, when I see them, when I see Vessel's Gold?

DRE: Alright. I don't have all of the details sketched out, but I've got the really important ones.

AUSTIN: Good.

DRE: The biggest thing you gotta know about Vessel's Gold, is they have a very very sick bomber jacket.

AUSTIN: Love it

DRE: And I- very like, classic like- big fuzzy collar. And on the back, there is a stitched in design that says, "Up Close and Personal." And I can't decide if I want a, like, pinup lady, or a pinup beefcake dude, like holding the lance that my mech has, and like [notification noise] winking and blowing a kiss.

AUSTIN (laughing): Good question, Sylvia, in the chat; "Why not both?"

DRE (over Austin): Yeah why not both!

SYLVIA (over Dre): Yeah, why not both.

DRE (over Sylvia): Hell yeah, both.

AUSTIN (over Dre): Why not both?

DRE (over Austin): Yeah, no, totally both. Yep. Maybe, maybe, one is like, winking and blowing a kiss, and the other one's like, doing finger guns.

AUSTIN: Perfect, good.

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: That's the most important thing.

DRE: Yeah- well, obviously.

AUSTIN: Okay

DRE: Yeah. I think... What I- I was kind of like, trying to figure out like what their, you know, what their, like, augmented limbs would look like.

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AUSTIN: Yeah

DRE: I keep kinda going back to Automail, like from like Fullmetal Alchemist.

AUSTIN: Sure, yeah yeah yeah, I like that.

DRE: But I think they, to go with the kind of neon magic, I think they have, like, the equivalent of tattoos, but they're in like, you know, very bright neon lights.

AUSTIN: Awesome. And it is- Is it limbs that have been replaced with, with your augmentations? [Conflicted, disagreement noise from Dre] Is it something else? Is it like just the chest, is it face, is it... It's not hair, I'm not letting you do this again.

DRE (laughing): Yeah, no. [laughs] Listen....

AUSTIN: I made this character, this shit's on me.

DRE: Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. I don't know, maybe, maybe it's just arms.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cool. Let's go with you, Cerise.

SYLVIA: Alright. So, I'm thinking like, with the dress uniform, just going -- I'm just going to start with the style here -- with the dress uniform I've always kind of preferred when we go with like, naval looks for that kind of thing.

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: So I think like, it's a nice jacket with a lot of buttons and stuff. She's probably wearing like a matching like, skirt. But it's- the main rea- thing with the dress uniform is that it is like, pristine, in contrast to her like, hair, which is always very messy, and her glasses, which are kinda- like her glasses are fine; they're oversized, but like... I want to go with the bookish thing, because I'm, you know, it's me. [laugh] And I think she's always got like a, she's got like, um... They're not medals for service, but they're medals she's- they're commendations that she got while she was training to be, a, ah... Arcanist -- I don't know- I guess we don't have the actual... title for what they are, but like, I think it's more... It's like--

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Yeah. Yeah, I know what you mean though, it's the name of the class. So, close enough.

SYLVIA (over Austin): Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. She's got- and it's specifically what- the one that she's, that is always very polished is something that signifies, like, Perennial, or whatever, even if it's just like a little like, si- sigil, or whatever. And then also one of her family's House, as well.

AUSTIN: Awesome. Cool. We've got to figure out what those sigils are, because, because they're- sigils are dope. This is the thing I'm talking about when I said- in the last game, I talked about how like everyone's going to end up with a favourite House of this shitty evil empire; they are, because, Sigils are Cool. Because, empires control aesthetics and make them cool. And it is important for us to keep the camera on people who are not part of the empire, or who are put down on it. But also, I am interested in what that sigil is, so let's think about that. Urm, Brightline, what do you look like?

ART: Alright, thank you for letting me go last; I've used all of this time to look up, different naval uniforms so that I can really combine them appropriately here. First things first-

AUSTIN (sighing): Yeah.

ART: I think neckties have gone away.

AUSTIN: Just in general?

ART (over Austin): I think- Yeah I think-

AUSTIN (over Art): We're out of them?

ART: The neck- the necktie is out.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: So I don't want like the shirt and tie look, it's it's, I guess it's like a more futuristic Star Wars-ey neck, or Star Trek-ey neck.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: And like, the kind of like, the kind of like, shirt look. But then I need the extremely extra, coat, the, the admiral's coat, esque thing. I'm going, I think Soviet with this

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: Pure brilliant white.

AUSTIN: Okay

ART: With gold buttons. And I want it to do that thing where it like, swoops down, where it like, at the waist, it starts to go back? Like-

AUSTIN: Like, like- is it starched?

ART: Noo. It's like... (quietly) Well that's a really long link. Uh, it doesn't even preview? Come on.

AUSTIN (laughing softly): Did you put it somewhere, where'd you put it? [Okay. I see](#). Okay, I see what you're saying, that's a good look.

ART: Yeah, uh huh-

AUSTIN: But all white? But all white.

ART: All white, gold buttons, and I want the like, the more pronounced shoulder.

AUSTIN: More than this?

ART: Stuff. You know, like the...

AUSTIN (over Art): [Disbelieving] More pronounced than this?

ART: More pronounced than this.

AUSTIN: Do you want these *gigantic* medals? [quiet laughter]

ART: I want a, I want a couple gi- not that many gigantic medals. That's too many.

AUSTIN: Okay. It's doable. Cool. Alright.

ART: But then like, see like, hold on. This is [quietly] this is what I'm looking for. In terms of shoulders.

AUSTIN (over Art): Okay. We've got more coming. Okay, we've got shoulders coming. [Oh that's a lot of shoulders.](#)

ART: Yeah. The fringe is important to me. [Dre cackles]

AUSTIN: Can I- one second, I'm getting a call- I'm getting a call I have to take, I'm gonna pause this really quick. You keep, *you* keep talking; I'm going to mute myself.

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ART: Is this real or is this a bit?

AUSTIN: Not a bit.

DRE (over Austin): I think that's real.

ART: Okay

JANINE (over Art): This is real.

ART: And then I'm struggling with the hat; you need a hat. Officers need a hat. If you're not wearing a hat, no-one salutes you. So you know, like a fancy captain's hat, but futuristic-y. [Laugh from Dre] Maybe the brim like glows. I don't know.

DRE: Sure, yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

DRE: When in doubt, make it glow. Does it change colours?

ART: Absolutely it does.

DRE: Is your hat by Razer? Is what I'm asking.

ART: I think it's more like a mood hat.

DRE (choke laughing): God

JANINE: What?

DRE: Uh huh, yeah. No.

ART: You know like a mood ring? [Agreement from Dre, understanding from Janine] Like, what if that was a hat? It could tell, from-

SYLVIA (laughing): You know [Dre and Sylvia giggle] I feel like that's not a great thing, for like a military commander to have. [Janine laughs] A thing that sorta signifies when your moods may be off. [Laugh]

ART: I think it's great, that way the [laugh from Sylvia], the subordinates on the ship know, what, what's kind of happening. Like, "Oh, I don't need to take this that seriously." You know. "They're really anxious today."

DRE (over Art): "Aw, shit. He's got an orange hat"

JANINE (over Art): Or like when you're like, telling-

ART (over Janine): Yeah or like...

JANINE: -them that "everything is okay. Just do your job," but your hat is like, panic coloured. [laugh from Janine and Dre]

ART: Yeah, uh huh.

SYLVIA: So, we've got Tom Brady Big-Shoulders and a multicoloured hat, for this guy's outfit; I'm really into it.

ART: Uh huh, yeah.

SYLVIA: I'm going to put the, [Tom Brady Big-Shoulders in the chat for people](#).

ART: I mean the mood hat doesn't have to have every mood, you know?

JANINE: Does it just have like mood categories, like, like “Intense”, or “Looow”

DRE: [laughs] God. [inaudible]

JANINE: Like, is it like a-- is it like a mood int-- is it like a mood intensity thing in general? So it's like, “oh, you can't tell if he's like really happy or really angry,” ‘cause it's just like, reading the really [inaudible] part of that.

ART: Yeah, I guess- cause isn't that how real mood rings, work? Like, a mood ring is really just, tracking-

JANINE: No.

ART: The temperature of your finger.

JANINE: Sure, yeah, that's a completely [laughing] different. Real mood rings have no connection whatsoever to your mood. They're just like “are you hot now? Are you cold now?”

ART: Alright, so I think this is like the same thing. I think this also doesn't work. [Laughter from Sylvia] But like, people think it works, and so it kind of does [agreement from Janine, disagreement from Dre, agreement from Janine again]

DRE: People.

ART: If your brim turns orange and you know that you're, you're heating up, you're gonna heat up.

JANINE: Did Briar like, distribute- did the people who work with Briar get like a, like a hat colour key?

ART: No, I think everyone just knows this; this is just like a thing you know.

JANINE: Oh, okay.

ART: Like, you know that red means stop and green means go, you just know. [Agreement from Janine]

DRE: You don't- Wait, you don't just know-

JANINE (over Dre): That's- I mean that's socialised.

DRE (over Janine): Yeah, you learn that. [laughter from Dre and Sylvia]

ART: [Disagreement] But you like remember-

JANINE (over Art): That's like, most people--

DRE: It's not genetic!

ART: But do you remember learning it?

JANINE: What does blue mean on a mood ring? Does- do any of us know what blue means on a mood ring? [Considering noise from Dre] Don't look it up, just say it.

SYLVIA: Ambivalent.

ART: Calm?

DRE (over Art): Da boo dee, da boo daa, is what it mean, on a mood ring.

JANINE (laughing): Okay

DRE: No, okay.

ART: "Don't look it up," I don't know where to look up

SYLVIA: I mean, I bet calm?

JANINE: I bet you could just... [typing noises] "what does blue mean on a mood ring?"

DRE (over Janine): I thought blue would mean like "sad," right? 'Cause you're feeling blue.

JANINE: Light blue- "blue on a mood ring means that the wearer is calm and neutral; in a state of relaxation, your body will be at a normal temperature, given that the room is not overly hot or cold." [Laughter]

DRE: What's, what's the sad colour?

SYLVIA: Oh, purple, apparently.

DRE: Oh, purple.

JANINE: No, this says, not purple- This says that purple is, "very happy, love, passion, romance." [Agreement from Dre] There's actually no sad on the chart that I'm looking at here-

DRE (over Janine): There's stressed.

JANINE (over Dre): The closest thing is- yeah

ART (over Janine): Can't be sad with a mood ring. That's just, that's just science.

DRE: Yeah, you know what? Nailed it.

JANINE: That's true.

DRE: Got it.

SYLVIA: The one I'm having has- the one I'm looking at has "pleased, relaxed, subdued, unhappy, aggressive and excited." And unhappy is like, purple on this one.

JANINE: The one I'm looking at has nervous listed for three separate colours; black, grey, and amber.

SYLVIA: Okay.

JANINE: They all have nervous in them. [laughing]

ART (over Janine): Big Mood, big mood ring. [Laughter from Dre, Janine and Sylvia]

DRE: [sigh] Can you still get a mood ring? I haven't seen a mood ring on sale.

JANINE (over Dre): Almost certainly. When I was little I had a mood ring, but the mood part was- It was a mood ring but, it was also a dimetrodon ring. Like the, the thing on the front was a dimetrodon, and the inside of the dimetrodon was coloured with mood stuff.

(Art and Austin overlapping)

AUSTIN: What's a dimetrodon?

ART: And I think I speak for everyone here when I say we all know what dimetrodon means, [Austin laughs] you don't need to explain it.

JANINE: A dimetrodon is like the- you would know one if you saw one, it's like a pre-dinosaur. I has a-

AUSTIN: That's what the judge said, the judge said you'd know a dimetrodon if you saw one. DE-MET-RA-DON.

JANINE: It's the one with the big fin on the back. It has a big tall fin on its back, it's like a lizard.

AUSTIN: Oh, a *dimetrodon*.

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Of course. Good.

JANINE: I wore that and a sailor moon mood ring and that was my look.

AUSTIN: Sylvia, thank you for this picture of Briar's shoulder pads. [Sylvia and Art laugh]

SYLVIA: Yeah, no problem.

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AUSTIN: Very good. Very good. Alright, I am back- Everyone's described, in ways that I don't need to hear because it's not that big of a deal. I hope, I hope I didn't miss anything too important. Cause now I've realised that I didn't hear any of that stuff, so if anything *really important* was said, I just have to not know.

ART: Look, there's going to be a lot of talk about hat colour, and you just don't need to worry about it.

AUSTIN (concerned): Okay.

JANINE: He has a mood hat.

AUSTIN (incredulous): You have a mood hat?!

ART (over Austin): A mood hat. [Dre laughs]

AUSTIN: Jesus Christ. Already, some good, some good posts, some good [fanart here from Bee](#), in the chat. Teasel, already looking great. Alright, we should play this game.

[Mission Details]

AUSTIN: The mission is in front of you. You have to get through, a number of zones, to get to the place. You can't get past- you can't just get right there because there's- I guess I should add this to the map, you scroll down all the way you'll see what I'm talking about. There are, anti-ship guns down here. Anti-ship, canons. So you cannot just like, zip there. And those cannons like, they- they cover everything up until the security forces. So, you have to get at least to them in order to let the ship kind of close in; and the ship has to get there, in order to, get to the power terminal. And what I'll say is, on the other side of that power terminal, is nothing. Like, there's like a gap in this big ring around the galaxy, and that means that like, the- all of the light would hit this ship and would eradicate it. So like, you have to- you have to keep it- it's like built right up against the line of when it gets too hot to fly, and so you're able to fly it kind of behind the station and the heat shields that protect the station. But if you got- if you went past the power terminal, it would just, dev- it would just destroy your ship. So you have to be very careful here also.

AUSTIN: Jesse M. says "wait, how far past, uh, setup actually is this?" Talked about characters, we've set up the, the kind of mission, we've described what they're wearing. The

three important parts of setup are complete. [laugh] We can, we can begin playing the game now.

ART: We're basically done.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we're basically done; and then they fight some stuff, I guess. There are mechs. We could describe what the mechs do, that's probably gonna be fun, and then we're done. Does anybody want to do anything while you're still on board the ship? And I know actually, Captain, uh, Captain Brightline, you will probably stay on the ship and continue to assist from afar, and I really need you to lean into your best captaining, while that all happens, because, really just got to paint a picture of, of the crew going through shit, all the way out here, as as...

ART: I'm drinking rum with my foot on a barrel right now.

AUSTIN: Why do you have a barrel in your room?

ART: In case I need to be a Captain.

AUSTIN: Alright. So what are you doing? What are you doing at this point when you're like- the ship is kind of here at the landing zone, safe from whatever is on this next kind of tier of the station. That is- there are going to be parts where you're like inside the station, and there are going to be parts where you're just outside on top of the station. The station is built for that sort of thing. So. What are you doing on this ship, as you hover above the landing zone? Is anyone investigating anything, using any scanners, prepping their mechs? Like, what's popping?

ART: Yeah, we should use some scanners.

AUSTIN: Yeah! What's that look like, on the screen? Do you have- Briar, do you have someone you turn to to be like, "can we scan the area ahead?" Like, what does that look like?

ART: Yeah, I think- I, I just don't have, I just don't have a name for them which, which is rough- I don't have a, I don't have a document of names for this setting.

AUSTIN: I can get you a name really quick. Your, um, is it like intelligence officer maybe?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is named... Duh duh duh, I'm going to move some stuff around here... Rosarium Rennari.

ART: Great.

AUSTIN: So Rennari, Lieutenant Rennari.

ART (as Briar): Lieutenant Rennari, I need a, I need a mock up of what's coming up here.

AUSTIN (laughing): That's you cap- that's the way you talk? Okay.

ART: Yeah, I think officers are on a bridge level thing, I think it's pretty for- I think it's pretty informal.

AUSTIN: Huh, okay. I'm good with it.

ART: Like, formality I think is for people who are like, several ranks-- This is someone I work with every day, what am I going to be an asshole all the time?

AUSTIN: All the- all the- yeah, you know what, that makes, that makes perfect sense to me.

JANINE: Hang on. Can I- Art, can I petition you to say what colour your character's hat is at the beginning of every scene? Or at some point.

AUSTIN: God bless you, Janine.

ART: Yeah, I think we're at, I think we're at like a lime green right now.

JANINE: Okay, thank you, thank you.

AUSTIN (laughing): Okay, I think this is a, Dispel Uncertainties, more than a Read the Room. Maybe it's a Read the Room. You, you look at these. Read the Room says "when you Read the Room to get insight on your situation roll +Sense; on a 10+ hold three, on a 7-9 hold one," and then you ask questions like "who has the upper hand here? What does x really feel?" But those are about people mostly; those are about things you already know about.

ART: Yeah, Dispel- Dispel seems right.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay. "When you Dispel Uncertainties by clarifying something unknown or answering a question, roll +Know."

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AUSTIN: I do feel like this is more of a +Sense though. Or, do you have something that makes this a +Crew? We could also just house rule it to be a +Crew, you know? Uh, wait-

ART: I am "Asking a Crew Member"

AUSTIN: You are literally asking a crew member- "Read the Room +Crew to assess the battlefield." I'm gonna say you can do +Crew for this, even though it is not Reading the Room, and it is Dispelling Uncertainties. So go ahead and, and do that. +Crew, so-

ART: Same-

AUSTIN: 2d6+2. Yeah.

ART: It's the same, same number plus. [long pause, then quietly] Why is this taking so long?

AUSTIN: That's an eleven; look at you.

ART: Oh.

AUSTIN: Rosarium Rennari, who is a, I don't know what the ranks are here, but the equivalent of like a, of a... what's higher than a- like a lieutenant- smaller than a- what's lower than a lieutenant, but higher than like a- I guess like sergeant? Is sergeant that? But sergeant feels so- are there naval sergeants?

ART: Um, great question.

AUSTIN: What's the naval equivalent of a sergeant? It's just sergeant.

JANINE: I have a friend who's going to be very mad at me for not knowing any answers for you right now.

AUSTIN: Okay

ART: Ok-ay, naval ranks, lowest to highest.

AUSTIN: Thank you. There is sergeant.

ART: There's seaman recruit, seaman apprentice seaman... petty officer third class, second class, first class, chief petty officer, senior chief petty officer, master chief petty officer, fleet commander.

AUSTIN: Wait, it feels like you jumped from, chief petty officer to fleet commander!

ART: Uh, fleet slash commander, master chief petty officer.

AUSTIN: I see.

ART: Master chief's petty officer of the navy. Chief-

AUSTIN: What's above an ensign? We got an ensign yet?

ART: Lieutenant. Lieutenant junior grade, lieutenant, lieutenant commander-

AUSTIN (over Art): So it does go ensign to lieutenant junior grade, okay. Maybe it's lieutenant junior grade then, or maybe it's ensign. It's- she's an ensign,

AUSTIN: Rosarium, Rosarium Rennari is an ensign, so she says

AUSTIN (as Rosarium Rennari): Yes, captain, right away.

AUSTIN: And hits a button, and there's like a "woom, woom, woom" sound, as the scanner begins to, to happen. And I think we get two, no we get three added symbols on the hover, holo-map, inside of where I've written security forces. And then I think, do you, do you ask a question, or does it just...? [thinking noise] I'll "tell you something directly useful or knowledgeable." So, we get three symbols show up here. Two of them are... pretty small- oop, let me fill this in as red, also. Three of them are- two of them are pretty small, and then one of them's a little bigger. Rennari says

AUSTIN (as Rosarium Rennari): Three constructs ahead, captain. It looks like, yes, I think it's fair to say we have, one Astir class mech, and then two Con-cons.

AUSTIN: And you all of course know that a Con-con is a construction mech, it is a Converted Constructor, a con-con. Which is a- I guess she also wouldn't say Astir, that is the name of the mechs in this system; she would say,

AUSTIN (as Rosarium Rennari): And a tier three Hollow.

AUSTIN: So it is two kind of like construction mechs, which are smaller than, than military mechs, and then one tier three mech, which is about equal to what yours are. And then she says like,

AUSTIN (as Rosarium Rennari): I'm also sensing, two more in storage nearby, two more con-cons, each at the end of the next section.

AUSTIN: Trying to think if there's anything else that would be revealed from this. [Thinking noises] Simon Sweetman says "what's a Hollow versus a Hallow"? They are both just names for mechs; Hollows, H-O-L-L-O-W, are mechs that have not been blessed by the Divine; Hallows have been. Which puts the mech of, of Teasel in a weird place. It's why I don't have a Hallow or Hollow written anywhere because it certainly has been blessed, but Teasel is not a member of the Divine Principality. So the Principality would probably classify it as a Hollow, instead of a Hallow. But, we know better, and we know that these categories are fucking bullshit. But they're cool to say. I think that that's it. In my mind, I thought there was something else I wanted to give you, but now I can't remember it. If I do, I'll remember it by Rennari figuring it out in the middle of a future action, to be like "Oh, captain, one more thing." [Laughing] So yes, so yeah-

ART: So these scanners take a long time, right? They have to construct everything in hologram; it takes a little bit.

AUSTIN (over Art): Exactly, exactly. Oh, there is one more thing. So she goes,

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AUSTIN (as Rosarium Rennari): Oh, wait, it's a- I think there are local Hounds.

AUSTIN: Which are like mercenaries. You know that already Captain, because you're an expert at this. I think, Gold, are you here?

DRE: No

AUSTIN: Okay

DRE: I am in the... I mean do we have like a mech bay hanger thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, of course, totally totally.

DRE: I'm doing upside-down crunches hanging out the cockpit of my, my mech.

AUSTIN: Perfect. Perfect. Well then you hear, you hear Rennari speak through your comms. And she says, she says that, this group of, of, officer- that this group of, of mechs that's here in this first kind of zone is a group of local Hounds. They have like, their IFF, their like, friend or foe, thing, is recorded to a... is broadcasting a, the name of a local mercenary unit. And the name of that unit is... the- it's Barter System, that's the name of the mercenary unit.

DRE: Like, like, B-A-R-T-E-R

AUSTIN (over Dre): B-A-R-T-E-R, yeah yeah yeah. And, you know that the- 'cause you're a Hound; you're another mercenary. You recognise Barter System. You know Barter. Barter is the, is a mononym, but it's, he is a, he's a rival mech pilot. He's gotten some contracts you wanted before. He's not like a piece of shit, but he's kinda grimey, you know what I mean?

DRE: Okay

AUSTIN: And you know that he... he always has something in his back pocket, but he's reticent to use it. He's always like- he always has a backup plan, but one of the mistakes he makes is that he under commits his forces. So if you could hit him quick, before he can activate his backup stuff, then, he's- then he's toast, you know?

DRE (contemplative): Okay. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Anyone else doing anything in this, in this pre-stage? I guess we need to figure out your rituals, really quick.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Ah, Cerise.

SYLVIA: Yeah, so. Should I prepare the rituals first and then-?

AUSTIN: Yeah, prepare the rituals first, yeah. So, roll +Know.

SYLVIA (faintly): Okay.

AUSTIN: Which, your know is what, two?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So it's 2d6+2.

SYLVIA: That's a fourteen. That's a perfect roll.

AUSTIN: Jesus Christ, that's a perfect roll. Six plus six plus two. So yeah, you choose up to three rituals; they expire at dawn.

SYLVIA: Okay. Should we talk about how I'm, what the ritual looks like?

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Yeah, what's this look like? Yeah.

SYLVIA: So... I don't know. I can't remember if we described what Perennial is like before the break, but-

AUSTIN: We described what, what she looked like, as being-

SYLVIA: What she looked like- Okay, cool-

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Yeah yeah yeah.

SYLVIA (over Austin): Cause I've been thinking about that since you told me, and I saw the "Roaring Elements" thing. I really liked the idea of it being a lot of like, si... like those similar Russian Sage looking plants.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Like she keeps part of, Perennial even, maybe, and it's a lot of like... I've always liked the, like, ritual circles thing [agreement from Austin] like in- like Fullmetal Alchemist style, I guess-

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

SYLVIA (over Austin): Is the immediate style I jump to there.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: So I think it's a lot of like... laying that out, and then her in the middle with these pieces of Perennial surrounding her, and then just like, rushing wind that sort of comes out of nowhere from beneath her.

AUSTIN: Hell yeah.

SYLVIA: And all this other stuff- it's basically just like, pure elemental looking force around her, mostly wind and plants, I think?

AUSTIN: Cool.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that makes sense. Do you speak to Perennial when this happens. Do you hear Perennial?

SYLVIA: I think there's a connection there. I don't know if it's speaking in the way that we'd think of it. Like I don't think it's a verbal thing in any way, but there's definitely this sort of mental connection. I've been playing a lot of Kingdom Hearts.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

SYLVIA: So there's a lot of unspoken non-verbal communications in my head,

AUSTIN: Absolutely.

SYLVIA: But I genuinely think that it is a little cooler that it's more of like this presence that you feel, but don't directly interact with when you've got a Hollow mech.

AUSTIN: Totally. Well then, what I will say is, there's a degree to which... I think maybe becoming... becoming -- this might be a situation where I'm gonna start using the term for the mech also for the pilot -- Becoming Hallowed, becoming, you know, one of Perennial's Hallowed, is... was a weird thing for Cerise because Cerise heard from other mech pilots and other, other Hallowed that they had this very, like, what's the phrase I'm looking for? Not stoic really, but a very solemn relationship with their Divine. You do with Perennial, I think you do on your side, but sometimes it's like... You know, you know in Sorcerer's Apprentice- oh my god, we're both in Kingdom Hearts mode, fuck. [Laughter from Sylvia]

DRE: Hell yeah.

AUSTIN: You know how in Fantasia's Sorcerer's Apprentice, where like, animated objects have a sort of mischievous quality to them? There's a degree of that in this-

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Where like, when the elements start coming, they're, they're teasing, right? Like, a gu- a gust of wind will hit-

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AUSTIN: -for a brief moment, but you'll really have to burn that sage right or redraw the chalk circle. There's a lot of like, you've really got to convince Perennial to come out, and it's not because you're doing a bad job, it's because Perennial likes to see people consistently put in effort and rewards it eventually, but like there's a degree to which you know you're being played. Whereas all of the rest of the Divine, all of the other Hallowed's that you went to school with, are like, you know,

AUSTIN (as Hallowed): My first experience, you know, connecting to the Divine was... was immaculate. You know, the lights went off all at once.

AUSTIN: Whereas at least once, Perennial has blown out all of the candles in your room except for one, which forces you to stand up and relight all of the candles. So. Extre-

SYLVIA: Not going to give up; I'm going to get through.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

SYLVIA (over Austin): Cerise is going to get through.

AUSTIN: Well, you crushed it, right? You got fourteen?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So like, you did perfect, and in this moment, and maybe this says something about where Perennial is at, you get all the rituals you want, and you don't have to repeat anything, and the wind blows just so. So what do you choose? What are your three rituals?

SYLVIA: So, the first one I'm gonna take, for sure, is the Ritual of Channelling, which is "when you make a move when piloting your Hallow, you are attuned to, you can roll +Channel instead of the usual trait."

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: And on a seven to nine, it'll begin to burn out, giving me the risk of overheating.

AUSTIN: Perfect.

SYLVIA: The other one I really liked was the Ritual of Contingency, where I have to specify-

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Yes.

SYLVIA: Three specific situations. I have one, I know for sure, and I'm still kind of piecing together the other two, but I'll have them before we go into... battle.

AUSTIN: Combat or whatever-

[Sylvia and Austin overlapping]

SYLVIA: The first one *for sure* is...

AUSTIN: What is the first one?

SYLVIA: -the- I want, the, the Aster to be ready to retreat in close combat because it's not a close combat mech. Like the weapons it has is ranged. So I want just a contingency plan as an escape. And then... I think the last one I'm gonna take is the Ritual of Mending, which is, "you may at any time end this ritual-"

AUSTIN: Sick.

SYLVIA: "In order to repair any damaged modules, weapons, or limbs on your Astir."

AUSTIN: Love it. Cool. So that is, yeah, okay, yep, I've marked them. We're good. So yeah, just think up the next two situations for Contingency. Rad, does anyone else have a pre, thing, a pregame thing, a pre-roll? I already forget- other than the boons from you, Teasel? I don't think so. [Pause] Okay. Anyone else doing anything before we, we, before the mechs launch? I'm trying to think if the crew has any questions or anything here. I don't think so- I think, you know I think, Teasel, I think that Perennial kind of does begin to speak to you, as- I think you can probably sense whenever the ritual happens. And whenever the ritual finishes, Perennial kind of slips into your mind. What's conversation with Perennial like on your side? Does, is this, is this words in your head? Is this communication though something else?

JANINE: Um... Hmmm. I think it's, okay. I think it's words in my head, but like, not in the Signet sense. Like, with Signet it was, it was that long distance conversation was kind of this like, words in your head to the point of like, you were almost speaking out loud to reply, but it's [agreement from Austin] like very head- in the front of your head. And very like, I think what we would think of in a like traditional sort of spiritual way. I think with Teasel though, it's in her head, but in the way that something is in your head when it is vibrating through the bone.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, if you, if you like, put a chopstick or a wooden spoon or a fork or whatever-like something between your teeth and then flick the end of it, [understanding noise from Austin] the sound of it that sort of goes through the bone of your head, I think that's what it is.

DRE: Urgh.

AUSTIN: What's it like to feel a sort of like, as soon- so as soon as the ritual ends like, I think Perennial effectively sighs, and you, you can feel that happening through the back of your neck and down your spine, your long, deerlike spine. And then, and then the like- you can feel her steeling herself, which again is not a thing you get that often. And, I think, maybe this is one of the moments where... there's a, there's a move called Whims, in which, in which the, your, your patron can give you a minor goal. And you can get a reward for it. I haven't given you that move because based on the fact that we're just doing this as a onceshot, that isn't really gonna, it doesn't work really?

1:05:00

AUSTIN: Basically [agreement from Janine] you would get to choose something different in the next time you play, or you'd be able to choose your, yours Boons instead of rolling them. Which is a cool fucking move, by the way, but because we're not going to play these characters again I didn't want to actually give you that. But. There's the first bit of a request being made, and I don't think that she makes it clear. But it's something around a sort of like, as she leaves your bones, and as she says like, or as she's about to retreat away, the way she normally does, I think part of her stays there. And so there's just this low hum... there with you. And, she basically says,

AUSTIN (as Perennial): Bring me with you today.

AUSTIN: And that's kind of vibrating through you, in this moment.

[Mech launch and descriptions]

AUSTIN: So I think that's all of our characters, in their pregame. Brightline, do you, do you hit the button or make the call to be ready to launch?

ART: Yeah, I love the idea that there's just a button.

AUSTIN: What is the button?

ART: I mean, I want it to just be, like, a big blue button that says "Launch."

AUSTIN: Do you, do you hit that button once and it like, primes it, and then you hit it again to actually do the launch? Or do you just hit it once to like, "alright it's time to get going"? Or like- do you know what I mean, like people aren't in their mechs yet. You don't just hit it and then three empty mechs launch out into space right? [Dre giggles]

ART: Okay, first things first, it's a mood button.

AUSTIN: [sigh] What's that me-... [laughter from Janine] Okay, yeah, of course it's a mood button.

JANINE: Is it a mood button before you hit it or after you hit it or while you hit it?

ART: After.

JANINE: Okay.

ART: And only for a little bit, it goes back to room temperature.

JANINE: It has like a finger mark on it 'cause like the body-heat.

ART: Yeah, uh huh. Well it's, it's a full palm button. It's a- [agreement from Janine]. And I think there's like a little, one of those little things, you can like lift up the little plastic thing, and there's like a little switch.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: And *that's* the prelaunch switch.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Gotcha. So then like, do the lights change to match whatever your mood hat is? Or is there a specific-

ART (over Austin): No, I think it's generic-

AUSTIN (laughing): Okay

ART: Just like an orange light.

AUSTIN (laughing): That would be confusing I guess if it was different lights each time.

ART: Yeah, the, the, the "get to your mech, we're about to launch" lights have to be the same each time.

AUSTIN: Fair. You know what? Fair. Alright

ART: What if you're not even looking at me?

AUSTIN: Good point. Which is so hard to do, to be honest, to not look at you. So, I mean, maybe it would work out?

ART: Yeah, do you have any idea how much space my shoulders take up? [Austin and Dre laugh]

AUSTIN: So. Orange lights hit everybody. You move to your mechs. Everyone's getting ready. You stop doing your upside down sit-ups, Gold. Who launches first? And also, actually, here's the other thing. There are some other thing- I just remembered, there are like

two other things. One is, I guess, uh, Cerise, you can start coming with plans as specific things enter the fray, but remember you have this move about making plans that can, that can, give you XP. But I guess again that doesn't really matter, but. Remember that you should be a planner.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Two is, what is the opening, what is the, the opening plan here? Because, one of the things that we have not talked about is this game does also have an engagement roll, just like Blades. And someone has to make that roll. The options for it are... let me find it... Ah, "Lead a Sortie," is, "when you lead a group into a sortie, decide who planned the mission and roll. You roll +Gravity if a faction is helping you. You roll +Know if you made the plan. You roll +Crew if someone, if someone else aboard made the plan, or you +Defy if you're heading into danger blind." So who is, who is actually the leader here? Is it Brightline, or is it one of the mech pilots? Like, de facto.

ART: I think it's de facto Brightline, but I don't think it is this time.

AUSTIN: Interesting. Why?

ART: 'Cause, because I don't feel like it was. [Dre Laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh. [Dre laughs] Okay.

SYLVIA: I mean-

AUSTIN: Who is it this time?

DRE: Uh, I mean I guess it, it could be Gold? 'Cause if they know Barter...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Do they say something about a plan? Like, do they have a plan?

DRE: Yeah, well I mean if, if they know that like, the thing about Barter is that like, they have lots of good backup plans-

AUSTIN (over Dre): Yeah.

DRE: But they are hesitant to ever use them, then they'd probably devise a plan around just going in like really hard and really fast.

AUSTIN: Right. [laughing] Thomas Whitney in the chat says "I thought you were saying that you roll +NO," N-O, "If you made the plan, like an extra mean way of saying plus 0" [Dre laughs]. No, don't worry, what we just figured out is, in fact, that ah, that Vessel's Gold is gonna roll, and Gold has- they have a negative one in Know; they don't have a zero Know.

1:10:00

DRE: Hell yeah, perfect.

AUSTIN: Kickin' it off. Love it. I'm trying to make sure there's nothing else before we go in. I don't know why I'm so nervous; I'm very nervous about all of this. Oh, there's one thing I should also note is, Cerise, I upped your Gravity with Brightline to two because those should be the same going both directions.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: So I fixed that during one of the, one of the many breaks we took. One of the breaks I took.

DRE: Alright, and what is, what is our, what is our primary objective here?

AUSTIN: Your primary objective is to -- If you scroll down, you'll see this power terminal? -- [confirmation from Dre] It's to get close enough to deactivate the anti-ship cannons and lead the Ivory Prince to the power terminal where you will be able to disable, destroy or take over this station. And all of the near infinite power therein.

DRE: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: The initial priority though is to get past whatever security forces are here in the kind of far end of this section of the space station.

DRE: Got it.

AUSTIN: So, give me a roll Know- or, hmm, a Know Roll. [laughter] 2d6-1.

DRE: I'll roll the you know that I know [sad/annoyed/disappointed noise from Austin], what Gold knows.

AUSTIN: Yep.

DRE: And they know about an eights worth.

AUSTIN: That's not bad. "On a seven to nine, the crew stumbles, misses something important, or is unprepared for what they need." And so, here's what happens. Okay, first of all, I need the image of each of your ships launching and what do you say. Let's start with you Gold, since you are launching first.

DRE: Sure. I think Gold is very straightforward, just says like,

DRE (as Gold): Connection Solid, Punchin' Out.

AUSTIN: Love it; "Connection Solid, Punchin' Out" is great. And, you mech, which has a cool big lance, like a neon lance?

DRE: Oh, I totally drag the lance behind me, and it kicks up sparks in the most badass way possible. [Austin lets out a happy sigh]

AUSTIN: Thank you Dre so much. [Agreement from Dre] Who's next? Cerise or Teasel?

SYLVIA: I have mine.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Also, before we go, should I run by my contingency plans really- run them by you?

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Yes, please.

SYLVIA: So the other two I had- cause I was trying to think of, one, bad situations-

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Yes.

SYLVIA (over Austin): That we could possibly get into, and po- and moves that I could actually apply it to. So I was thinking the other could be... a bonus towards help- like, rescuing another teammate.

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Sure.

SYLVIA (over Austin): Like, a nobody left behind sort of contingency plan? [Agreement from Austin] And then the other one I had was- I don't have like a catchy name or anything for it, but just like, being able to shake a tail that's trying to get- when we're trying to get out of there. if someone's trying to come back with us, basically.

AUSTIN: Okay, so es- Let's say just escape in general. Escape-

SYLVIA: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: I want to go as broad as possible for you here, like-

SYLVIA: Then I'll leave- okay.

AUSTIN: Is that okay? Or do you want- Okay.

SYLVIA: Yeah, yeah, for sure. I just need a third now [quiet laugh] Cause I had escape already.

AUSTIN: Oh, cause that's retreat. Right right right, I see what you're saying. Well no, 'cause that one's escape from close combat. I'm thinking-

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Escape, escape as in, get the- like, get the fuck out.

SYLVIA: Like- Okay. Like a tactical retreat as opposed-

AUSTIN: A tactical retreat.

SYLVIA: To just- Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah like a retreat from the battleground, you know? 'Cause Shake A Tail means more that, I guess, right? Or, do you really want like...

SYLVIA: No, I think, I think we're on the same page.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I basically just want to make sure that when we're getting out of there-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: It's like, smoother. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, cool.

SYLVIA: And then-

AUSTIN: I want to make sure, to be clear, I- it's not that I don't want you to be able to do it when you have a tail, it's that I want it to be broad enough so that if, in case you-

SYLVIA: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: -don't have a tail, you'll get this plus two forward on something.

SYLVIA: Thank you. No I, I, I got you. And then I think, for when the Aster launches, what Cerise says is,

SYLVIA (as Cerise): The Hollowed Aster, In Bloom.

SYLVIA: -and then it takes off. [Awed noise from Austin]

AUSTIN: [Makes chef's kiss noise] Love it. So much. Teasel, it sounds like you're last.

JANINE: Yeah. So, I think, I think my phrase, well my, [conflicted noise] I want to say- Okay. Okay. So, I don't have the best mech ideas. The mech idea I do have is that the sniper... I have like a, like a sniper rifle thing, right? That's what this is?

AUSTIN (over Janine): Yeah, totally, yes, yeah yeah yeah.

JANINE: So I think that-

AUSTIN: Or it's whatever you want it to be. The thing that it is is "Blast, Decisive, Messy, Reloading."

JANINE (over Austin): Yeah yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: But yeah.

JANINE: I think this thing... is- it isn't carried at first. I think the thing it is is it's like, it looks like it is built into the back.

AUSTIN: Cool.

JANINE: I'm imagining it as a very un-gunlike gun. I think it is just kind of, um... Like a, long, rectangular sort of flat thing.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: I think basically it embeds as the mech's spine.

AUSTIN: Cool.

JANINE: Like it looks like the thing's spine, but there are- you know those paper chains you can make, not the ones with loops, but the ones with flat rectangular bits that zigzag? Like you can make them out of Starbursts wrappers or whatever?

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, yes.

1:15:00

JANINE: I imagine it has four of those kind of flying off of it, so it kind of, initially at launch, those are streaming back; they're very long.

AUSTIN: Cool.

JANINE: They're probably not actually paper, but they look like that. And then when the gun is sort of taken out, it is like, you know, you're reaching behind, but instead of taking something out of a holster or whatever, you're taking it out of your back. you're taking your

spine off. And the paper chains sort of come with it and kind of stream off of the gun and kind of like spiral around?

AUSTIN: Yep. Good, I'm glad you've gotten body horror in already. [Janine laughs] Mechs are about bodies, 2019. [Agreement from Janine] Also, I see you've put an extra point into thrust.

JANINE: Yes, I decided that was reasonable for a sniper.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm here, I'm here for it.

JANINE: And I think the thing that Teasel says is,

JANINE (as Teasel): Day's Eye, Branching.

AUSTIN: Love it. Uh, this is the best. This is a gift to me- I've had a long weird week. I've had a long weird day; this is the best. [Dre giggling in the background] Another question here is colours, like, what- just really, like, people are gonna read these descriptions that are on screen and figure out their own breakdowns, but like, colours, "Is it smooth? Is it round? Is it blocky?" for each of these mechs. Anyone who has an idea can go first here.

JANINE: I think the Day's Eye is very, is very sleek. I mean like I said the sniper rifle is very sort of ah, um- weirdly I'm picturing the gun as being kind of like a, a stapler refill. Or something to that effect, of like, long and- Just, box-like, when you put two stapler refills together to like, store them, and it's just a long rectangle of like, weird metal stuff. And I think the, the, mech in general is a very similar like, very highly machined, very sleek, not full of like, chunky extra bits and like tubes and whatever. [agreement from Austin] It is just like a very, sleek and precise looking machine. I think it is mostly also sort of a bl- like a, like silver-ish, but like a blue-ish silver.

AUSTIN: Awesome.

JANINE: So like in the light, it kind of shifts a bit.

AUSTIN: Is one- okay, I just need to know if any of these are going to be mood mechs, and just, start thinking. Dre, Sylvia?

DRE: I'm googling right now.

ART: There's nothing out there for "mood mech;" we're inventing this right now.

AUSTIN (laughing): There has to be; that's bullshit. "Mood ring, but a mech." This is just mood rings.

SYLVIA: I have the- I have this idea where the Aster's like, very segmented.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Because it's supposed to, it's supposed to like channel energy through it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: And I had this kind of look where each part of it kinda looks like it could come off, but then there's this smaller thing underneath the armour that glows a little,

AUSTIN: Sure

SYLVIA: And that's kind of what's channeling the energy of Perennial as well. Yeah.

AUSTIN: That makes sense. I should note, you have five Mana, and ev- the closest to you has three, on the Day's Eye, and the High Price only has one. So like, five is- what makes the Advent Class mech so good is that it can use the subsystem ability a lot. And so, take advantage of that throughout this sortie.

SYLVIA: And I just colour scheme wise.

AUSTIN: Yes.

SYLVIA: Very quickly.

AUSTIN: No, please.

SYLVIA: I think that the energy underneath tends to look very like, a lilac-y colour.

AUSTIN: Cool.

SYLVIA: Is what I had in mind, like a light pastel purple, and then the rest of it, again, I'm really going with the plant motif; I do have this like, very bark colour in my mind, like a, like a light brown. Not for like a- not like a very deep one, but it's, it's like when you- it's like someone whittled away at a stick, basically.

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: That colour, the- that under the bark I guess is what I meant.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I gotcha. I got it. That sounds like a cool combo. How's the, how's the googling going, Gold?

DRE: It's good, I was trying to remember the name of this- have you played Xenosaga- or Xenogears?

AUSTIN: Years ago, and I never beat it.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's a big, it's a big, uh, gamer sin.

DRE: [snorts] I don't, I think that's too far, but okay. [Sylvia laughs] I love that game, but I don't know if gamer sin- anyway.

AUSTIN: Welcome to my new YouTube channel, Gamer Sins.

DRE: Gamer sins. So, I'm thinking of something- there's this, there's this Gear -- because that's what they call their mechs in Xenogears -- called the EI-Stier. I just linked it in there. It is like, very- it has very big long chunky legs, and like-

AUSTIN (over Dre): Oh wooow.

DRE (over Austin): Not much of a body.

AUSTIN: What is this thing fucking called? What's this called?

DRE: The EI-Stier?

AUSTIN: Spell it?

DRE: S-T-I-E-R? Sty-er, maybe? I'm not sure.

AUSTIN: S-T-I- wait, S-T-I, E-R?

DRE: There's not very many good pictures of it on the internet.

AUSTIN: I see, yeah. So there's- [this](#) is the one you linked me, and then the [ones I'm seeing](#) are like, they have colour to them, but they're big. That's a big, those are big chunky legs.

1:20:00

DRE: Yeah. And I imagine that's just like, that's where all the jets are.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, that makes sense.

DRE (over Austin): Cause like if you're charging in with this big fuck off lance.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you gotta have them-

DRE (over Austin): You gotta have big strong legs.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally, love it. Gaming Sins by the way is a real thing, and it's terrible. Sorry.

DRE: Urgh, that sounds terrible. [Agreement from Austin] As far as colours, I think like a lot of like, brushed copper, steel...

AUSTIN: Very metallic, like, unpainted metallic. [Agreement from Dre] Or if painted, but just painted the, the metallic colour.

DRE: There's probably a lot of like, like lots of of like wear and tear, like scratches and like... yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright.

DRE: Ooo. Thanks Sylvia.

SYLVIA: I just put some concept art in the chat. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh nice, that's, that's good. Wow it's like a little more mechanical, that's kind of neat. [Agreement from Dre] I like it a lot. I should, I should find time to play JRPGs again in my life, who the fuck has it?

DRE: Good luck, dude.

[Engagement Roll]

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, you rolled an eight on your engagement, uh, I almost said ring. [Dre laughs] Your engagement roll. And, here's what I think happens, is like... You know, *you know*, that what Barter does is hold back on, on, forces. Barter has decided not to do that. Which, again, should be a signal. Which means that one, maybe Barter already knew who was coming. Two, maybe Barter's taking this a little more seriously than, than he normally does.

AUSTIN: But, instead of being unprepared, or only using half of what he has, he in fact, as you guys come, come kind of skidding down or launching down and landing on this, this platform, he has already deployed his two backup Con-cons. So he has a total of five mechs out there. He is in the big one that is the same scale as you. He has a Tier-3 Hollow, and then he has four Tier-2 Con-cons. Now, the thing to know about tiers is, and this is one of the mechanical things, and in this case it helps you quite a bit; "Just like the things wielding them, weapons and other pieces of equipment have a tier, too. Usually the same as their wielder, since they're made for them." Not always though. "Weapons designed-" so for instance the carrier ship has a Tier-5 cannon, but also has Tier-3 weapons, I'm pretty sure.

AUSTIN: "Higher tier constructs and creatures often have much more robust defenses, so equipment of one tier isn't effective on things of the tier above, unless that piece of equipment has the Bane tag," B-A-N-E. "Anything that's more than one tier above is still out of reach, unless it has the Ruin tag instead." Brightline, some of this should be ringing bells 'cause you have abilities to give things Bane or Ruin. "In play, this typically means that

“Exchange Harm” or “Strike Decisively,” two moves for attacking, can’t be triggered if your weapon is a lower tier than your target, unless you have some cunning idea to overcome that distance.

AUSTIN: “Working in the other direction is a little different. When using a weapon to physically harm something of a lower tier than it, you can use the Strike Decisively move, without them being defenseless.” Which means- so traditionally you use Exchange Harm to kind of make the enemies- to put the enemy in danger, to give them Risks or Perils. And then once you’ve gone through their HP, kind of, once you’ve given them enough Risks or Perils, then you can use Strike Decisively to strike decisively and end that conflict, to end that fight. But, when you’re fighting something with a lower tier, you don’t need to- you don’t need to, ever, Exchange Harm with them; you can just immediately Strike Decisively, with the note, that you take a -1 per tier, to reflect the difficulty in hitting a smaller target. If the weapon has the Blast or Cleave tags, you can ignore that minus, “beware the dangers of trying to paint details when using such a large brush.”

AUSTIN: If this is all a bit much at first, the important thing to remember is if you want to hurt something up one step tougher than you, you need Bane. If you want to hurt something more than one- more than one step tougher, you need Ruin. In this case, you have one thing that’s equally as tough as you, the, the Hollow that Barter is piloting, and then you have four Con-cons, which are one step lower than you. So, Gold as soon as you land, like fire starts coming in from the north and the south of you, these two red rectangles here, which are Con-cons. They are- but that, but their incoming fire is immediately like, bouncing off of your, your- I guess it’s not bouncing off. It’s- actually, you know what it is? It’s, the initial fire is not small arms fire; it is not something that would bounce off of you. There -- as soon as you land, a huge magical ballista bolt flies over your cockpit, like right past your cockpit. You stop just in time with this eight to where it is not the worst possible thing, you didn’t get hit here, you’re not- you don’t have to roll to, to dodge it because it’s still basically a success. But, the, the thing you, you do know now is even these small ones have some sort of ballista that if they can reload and fire, can do real damage to you.

1:25:00

AUSTIN: So, the three of you have landed. What do you do as these four construction mechs and this one real-ass military mech are all around you? Who does something first? Who takes the first, the first action here?

JANINE: I feel like it’s a practical thing to do to try and snipe one of the little construction ones.

AUSTIN: Totally. In fact, I think- I’m going to check a thing really quick cause I think the way blast works... Buh-buh-buh...

JANINE: Yeah, there’s a bit of a...

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a blast, right? [agreement from Janine] So it hits everything close to the target. So do you want to go for maybe the...? You tell me where you're going for.

[Janine and Austin crosstalking]

JANINE: I'm trying to find the...

AUSTIN: For the people at home, there's like a, there's a northern enemy, a southern enemy, and kind of a trio in front of the crew, in front of the main crew, of two small ones and a big one.

JANINE: You know my gamer instincts tell me to shoot for the middle on that trio.

AUSTIN: That's, you know what, this is, thank you. Is that, is that a thing for, for, for Teasel? Is she a gamer? [Janine Dre and Austin laugh]

JANINE (conflicted): Man... [Austin laughs]

SYLVIA (over Janine): I mean you were trying to make her unsettling earlier. [Art laughs]

JANINE: That's such a hard- That's a heavy question.

DRE: Ah, fucking got-em.

AUSTIN: God. [Disgusted/tired noise from Janine]

SYLVIA: Sorry.

ART: Teasel says, "nerf this."

AUSTIN: Oh my god. [Dre groan-giggles]

JANINE: Yikes.

AUSTIN: Yikes. Alright, well, if you're aiming for one of them it sounds like you can do strike decisively because they are defenseless to you in comparison.

JANINE: Cool.

AUSTIN: What do you use to roll? Do, do you have the thing that lets you roll, Clash...?

JANINE: I have a thing for-

AUSTIN (over Janine): Or Channel?

JANINE (over Austin): For Strike Decisively, I get to roll Channel, right?

AUSTIN: I think you have that thing.

JANINE: Cause that's one of my Boons?

AUSTIN: That is one of your Boons. I'll double check.

JANINE: Although, should I use that... is, is this- are the Boons a thing where it's like [haltingly] I should use these, or I should not?

AUSTIN: You should use them.

JANINE (over Austin): Or I should wait?

AUSTIN: You don't, you don't, you don't use them up.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: These are your Boons-

JANINE (over Austin): And there's no like cost or anything? Okay.

AUSTIN (over Janine): Indefinitely. The cost is that there's an extra risk in doing it, which is, if you -- or there could be a risk -- if you get a seven to nine, your mech will begin to burnout giving you the *Risk*, overheating. [Understanding from Janine] Which is a Risk, which is, that's a thing you could address through other maneuvers, but, in other words, you-

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Also as a note, Tier-3 things, people like you have three HP basically. You can take three dangers before you're quote-unquote defenseless. And then, that still doesn't mean you're done, that means that, if you fail, it's bad for you, right? If, you- the enemy in the main mech, Barter, has three danger levels also. But the Con-cons only have two. But also, it sounds like you're just gonna try and take them out directly, you know. But Tier-2 enemies have two dangers instead of having three.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So, Teasel, Gamer, Gamer in chief, go ahead and give me your 2d6 plus Channel to Strike Decisively.

JANINE: It's plus three this time right, too?

AUSTIN: Yes, totally.

JANINE: For the Channel? Okay.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JANINE: That's a, that's a five, that's a bad.

AUSTIN (over Janine): You got the *worst possible* roll.

JANINE: Wow.

AUSTIN: Oh my god. We're rolling off on one. And you're too far off to even get a help to get there; a single person's help couldn't do it. I'm looking to see if there's any other way to address this. Briar in the chat says "oof," but Briar the game design- I'm just going to start saying Weregazelle because I named Captain Briar after, after them, but now that's confusing. Weregazelle, is there anything, is there anything that she can do here based on what we got going on? I don't think there is. [Hurt noise- "urhwee"]

ART: I would, I would just take Captain Brightline if you're looking for a...

AUSTIN: There we go, Captain Brightline, that will be you, thank you. So I think, I think this is gonna go bad. Yeah, Weregazelle says "not from a five, I don't think."

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: I think the, you take this shot and the, the- I mean I can tell you exactly what happens, which is you take the shot and you expect it to hit and slam into them, but it hits this like, almost like a particle field, like... As it almost hits them, it explodes, and there's smoke. And then the smoke disperses, and behind it, there's a glowing green particle field that you can see kind of wavering and then shutting down. As if, as if you hit their, they have some sort of like, armour ge- like shield generator. And it seems to have overpowered their shield generators, so it's not like you got nothing here. However, the front one, the front of these two Con-cons ducks. And the one behind it has already lined up this shot with its kind of sniper rifle equivalent, which is just a giant ballista. And it balances it on the front Con-cons shoulder and pulls the trigger. And that fires back at you. And I think it's gonna hit you; I think you get the- Do you get a... duh-duh-duh...

1:30:00

AUSTIN: I don't think- so you definitely don't Bite The Dust. I think this is going to give you a Danger. So do you see where it says Risk? Mark one of those Risks.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSIN: And then, I'll read from the book on how Risks work. So... I can't search this document; I keep trying to search the quick-start document, and that document does not actually let you search it. I mean you know what? We can just use the Risk- I know exactly what it is. It's like, I think they're getting to fire back, and so that will be a thing you have to

dodge, but the Risk that you take is, Overheating. So, mark one of your Risks, and then write above it "Overheating."

JANINE: [disagreement] Ah, isn't- don't I only Overheat if I get 7-9?

AUSTIN: I can make a move as hard as I want, so, so. Yeah.

JANINE: Okay, so, just also- okay, I didn't know if you were making that move because it was in the thing or just-

AUSTIN: No, no no, I mean I could give you a different Risk, but what I'm going to do now instead is say they're shooting at you. And so I'm going to ask, what do you do, or what does anybody else do here as the shot starts to come in?

SYLVIA: I have an idea. I want to use my tactical illusions.

AUSTIN: Ooh, what's that do?

SYLVIA: When you distract your foes with magic, roll +Channel. On a ten plus, choose two, on a seven to nine, choose one, but illusions also distract an unintended audience.

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: And then, I- they can last until I stop sustaining them. They can affect anyone that can perceive them, rather than a single person. Or I can create illusions that can be heard and smelled rather than just seen.

AUSTIN (laughing): Okay.

SYLVIA: What I'm trying to do, because, you know, the system says describe what you're trying to do first. What I'm trying to do is create doubles, or things that like, from afar, look like doubles.

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: So it throws off the ballista's aiming.

AUSTIN: Cool.

SYLVIA: So, this is a plus 2, and I got a twelve!

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): That's a twelve!

DRE (disbelieving): Jesus.

SYLVIA: I've rolled a six and a six and a five and a five.

AUSTIN: Okay, well that means you're good for like, a couple more turns, and then it's going to go bad, if this trend continues.

SYLVIA: So, the two I'm gonna choose are, "your illusions can affect anyone that can- ah, affect anyone that can perceive them, rather than a single person," and then I'm going to take "they last until I stop sustaining them."

AUSTIN: Awesome, cool. So, there are doubles of you out here now, and then yeah, the ballista that was going to slam into, into Teasel's, into the Day's Eye, in fact slides past and hits- and like goes through the duplicate. And I'm going to say that the illusion are mirrored. So like, if you're at the northern end, it's at the southern end, you know? So those are kind of like matching you as you move across this, this- You know, in my mind I'm not going to lie, I'm very much thinking about the fight against Sovereign at the end of Mass Effect 1, where it's just like the outside of a space station that has just like, weird boxes on it for some reason. You know, chest high cover is just spread around, and there's just like, big weird boxy units on the side that you could hide behind or take cover behind. Which I could add here, but, you know? Do your, do the, the imaginary thinking stuff. Imagining, is that what that's called?

SYLVIA [laughing]: I think so.

AUSTIN: Okay, do that. [Sylvia still laughing softly in the background.] Ah, cool; Gold, what are you up to at this point?

DRE: What is the biggest slowest target?

AUSTIN: The biggest *slowest* target is definitely Barter's mech specifically.

DRE: Perfect. I want to slam my lance into that fool.

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me a, with the regular attack one, that I'm already forgetting the name of. Exchange Blows.

DRE: So that's rolling Defy?

AUSTIN (over Dre): Yeah "when you charge at your foe with your blade, engage someone in debate, or try to provoke them" -- I love that the fight move is also the debate move.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: As Gold charges in with the fucking lance, "Debate me!" [Dre laughs] -- "Or otherwise act against someone able to defend themselves, you are attempting to exchange blows. When you do, advance a gravity clock if you have one-" I think that means with them, which in this case you don't.

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: And then “roll +Clash or +Talk, whichever is more appropriate. On a ten plus, either your opponent takes a Risk, or you take a Risk and your opponent replaces a Risk with a peril. On a seven to nine, you both- you and your target are both forced to take a Risk.” So 2d6 +Clash, unless you have some move which changes what that is.

DRE: Yeah, I’m going to double check just to make sure.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: No, I don’t think so.

AUSTIN: Cool.

DRE: Not yet, I have to have other stuff for things to happen

AUSTIN: Cool. Yeah yeah yeah. Alright, 2d6 plus Clash.

DRE: Oh, I guess I have, plus one to Exchange Harm.

AUSTIN: Yes, you do.

DRE: When I charge into melee from afar.

AUSTIN: That’s- nice catch, so, plus three. Good catch.

DRE: “My Lance is sick, Change My Mind.” 11.

AUSTIN (laughing): No one is gonna change, change your mind with an eleven. So, that means that you get to add a, “Either your opponent- either your opponent takes a Risk, or, you take a Risk and your opponent replaces a Risk with a Perril.” They don’t have any Risk yet, he doesn’t have a Risk yet at all, so you can go ahead and give him a Risk. What is the first Risk you give him?

DRE: Okay. Is there like a list of these I should be looking at?

1:35:00

AUSTIN: Not really, but like- you know, ah, maybe there is. Let me just, let me just double check. So, duh duh duh, Dangers. “When twenty foot long swords and magic guns are involved, injuries tend to be the severe kind. Thankfully, characters in Armour Astir are plenty capable of defending themselves up to a point. Should enough problems and distractions arise, you may find yourself defenseless. The dangers that make it harder to defend yourself come in two kinds. Risks are temporary things that can be resolved during a Sortie, like, having the low ground during a fight, being on fire, or being distracted. And Perils are more

permanent issues that must be solved during downtime, like, serious injuries to you or your Astir, being heartbroken, being exhausted. Characters can be affected by a certain amount of both before they are defenceless. Players, Rivals and Elite Foes are defenseless at three dangers,” blah blah blah blah. “When a move or other effect says you take a Risk or are put in Peril-” also that’s a note really quick, that, that, Briar, the game designer didn’t explicitly just give me, but that’s a thing worth, worth saying; it is not that this character is, a Tier-3 one that gives them three dangers, it’s that they are an Elite. And they have, but they have rookie- or they have veterans with them. In fact, I think two of these are rookies and two of them are veterans, but whatever it doesn’t matter.

AUSTIN: “When a move or another effect says you take a Risk or are put in Peril, it means you are being given one of those dangers. Sometimes it will be specific examples, so, ‘take a Risk (Outnumbered),’ means you add ‘Risk (Outnumbered)’ to your character sheet. If there are no brackets, it means that you can choose what the Risk or Peril is. Generally, if it’s being inflicted on a player, it’s that player’s decision, and if it’s being inflicted on a non-player character, it’s up to the GM. You are, of course, free to discuss with the table in either case.”

DRE: So do you have any ideas about like what Barter’s Astir looks like...?

AUSTIN: Yeah, so I think, I think Barter’s Astir here, or Barter’s, I guess, Hollow if we’re using the terms that we kind of tried to set up before-

DRE: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Are- is a... Basing it on what the weapons are here. It is like the most stock. It is big bulky shoulders, like big, like, blocky shoulders, with a rounded head, and a big blocky torso and then rounded legs. It is sort of like a comic book soldier, you know? Like, [giggle from Dre] it’s as if there were a GI-Jane named, GI-Joe named Robot, you know?

DRE: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: And I think it’s like, straight up has like, splitter camo, like old school naval splitter camo.

DRE: Oh yeah

AUSTIN: On its legs and arms, if it were wearing, like a shirt and pants. And it’s like, you know, silver and white style, sil- splitter camo. And, and, Barter’s mech also has- also I was wrong, Barter is- Barter is a veteran. Barter only has two dangers; you only need to put two dangers on him to knock him out.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or to get him opened up for Strike Decisively. And the other ones *are* all just one. I was looking at the wrong part of my notes. And then as a weapon, Barter just has the kind of like, basically the assault rifle equivalent, a Force Repeater, which is ranged and magic;

nothing special, but like, totally a- if you picked it up in a game of PUBG, you would be happy to be like “oh good, I got this thing. This is fine.” So, what do you do here? What’s the d- what is the, the Danger you’re giving the, the Risk you’re giving to Barter?

DRE: Yeah, so I think, I don’t directly hit Barter.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: But, I’m coming in like so hot and so fast -- Did we establish, is Barter he, they?

AUSTIN: Barter’s he, he/him. Yeah.

DRE: Okay -- he has to like, dodge very erratically out of the way.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: And he gets separated from the majority of his forces.

AUSTIN: Oh that’s good; I like that. So like, Risk: Seperated?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Love it. Cool. So I’m going to slide Barter back, and I’m going to slide you kind of back here, also, as if you’ve like, done a pass, you know? Awesome. [Thinking noises] Teasel or, or, Cerise? What you up to?

JANINE: Okay- can we- can I ask, what does magic look like?

AUSTIN: You tell me.

JANINE: In this?

AUSTIN: What does magic look like here? ‘Cause again, the framing for me really is, this is a story being told some amount of time in the future, maybe parent to a child, maybe this is whispered in the halls of House Brightline, maybe it’s, it’s turned into a, a, a comic book somewhere else in the world, you know what I mean? Like, what does it look like?

JANINE: Okay, um. [Laugh] Uhh, so I have an idea for a thing I want to, but I just don’t know how feasible, or like, how- I don’t know if it, if it fits.

AUSTIN: Teasel-ble. [Pause, Dre snickers]

JANINE (confused): What?

AUSTIN: Teasel... ble.

ART: Wow, woah. [DRE booing]

1 : 40 : 00

SYLVIA: Swing and a miss.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sometimes you gotta take swings.

SYLVIA: Oh no, for sure.

ART (over Sylvia): You know we only need six people to remove Austin from this company.
[All laugh, Sylvia continues laughing]

JANINE: Uhh, anyway the thing I wanted to do was to mess with someone's blood.

AUSTIN: [sigh, Dre laughing in the background] Heads up for body horror for whatever is about to happen. Is this a situation where it's like-

JANINE (over Austin): I'm just-

AUSTIN: Yeah, go ahead.

JANINE: Yeah, that's why I'm asking what's feasible here, is our magic like, electricity, or, you know...?

AUSTIN (over Janine): What did you pick- you picked:

JANINE: Withering Curses.

AUSTIN: Withering Curses! So.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, is that what happens... [pause] I don't want to say "paint me a picture" because it's not one I would approve.

JANINE: That's good 'cause I was actually going to use a paint metaphor.

AUSTIN (quietly): Good, well good. What, what are you trying to do? What is your intention?

JANINE: To... hurt Barter.

AUSTIN: Okay. By using magic?

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, the thing that I want to say is Barter is still in that mech. Which means...

JANINE: See this is what I was asking about.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah, so this is what I'm going- this is what I'm going to work out. You are, you are channeling magic through your mech. Now, what this means is your sniper rifle is shooting magic. Right?

JANINE: That's fine; I had that worked in.

AUSTIN: Okay, well then I think you're probably fine. What's, what, what are you doing?

JANINE: Hang on does the sniper rifle have, does the sniper rifle have to actually shoot it like a bullet, or is it just being used in the process?

AUSTIN: I think it has to shoot it like a bullet because it does- range matters. It's messy; it has blast. So like, maybe it's-

JANINE: Okay, I can still work with that. I just wanted to know.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so, too.

JANINE: Okay, so, the thing that I want to do with this magic, and, and Barter's blood. [laugh]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So, uh, a thing I've been doing a lot lately is putting two water colours in pans, and when you do that it's really frustrating because you'll put the paint- you'll put the paint in the pan, and it'll be really smooth and nice, but then once it dries out it cracks and gets all like chunky?

AUSTIN (over Janine): I love that- I love that you're going from-

ART (over Austin): Oh, I'm going to hate this.

AUSTIN: From camp counselor to body horror and back, with, just, expert ease.

JANINE: [laugh] We've met. [Agreement from Austin, laughter from Dre] So basically I want to do like that. But to Barter's blood.

AUSTIN: But, and like-

JANINE (over Austin): Like a little bit, probably. Not, you know.

AUSTIN (over Janine): But that's like, a, a magic bullet, or a magical burst comes out of this gun, and that is actually what happens, if it hits.

JANINE: Yeah- I imagine also the, the way that it is shot would be, the front end of the sniper rifle is, like, jammed into or set upon the ground-

AUSTIN: Yeah sure, so-

JANINE (over Austin): And like the paper streamer-y things do some streamer-y stuff, but then you tilt the gun forward kind of like a mortar and shoot the magic out of that.

AUSTIN: So here's what I will say, is if you stop right now and shoot from here, you will be hit by one of the other small Con-cons. Your gun has the Reloading tag, which means like [understanding from Janine], hey, it takes a second to do like- but that's fine, so what I need you to do, if you want to do this is, is do a Weather the Storm to set, to set up this shot, basically. And you can use that with [JANINE: Okay] Glance, and be like "hey, I'm just, my armour's gonna take this incoming hit." You could use it with Thrust and try to move to a position where you can take that shot. You could...

JANINE: I also have a, one of my Boons is for Weather the Storm.

AUSTIN: Yeah totally, so maybe do that. What's that look like?

JANINE: So is this- oh hang on, I need to read Weather the Storm.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: "Defy to dodge-" oh but this, my move is only for Glance.

AUSTIN: No, that's fine though.

JANINE: I think.

AUSTIN: No no no, I think it's just when the- what's it say specifically?

JANINE: I think it says specifically glance.

AUSTIN: That would also be fine though because what you'd be doing then is like, channelling a shield or something to, to prevent an incoming...

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that would totally work.

JANINE: Alright. We'll say it's channeling a shield then, especially with all of the streamer-y stuff. That would look really cool.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it would.

JANINE: If it's like, streamers and also like an energy following them.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: To like, loop around, like a fucking, aerodynamics test, kinda looking thing.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: Okay, I'm happy with that then. What do I roll...?

AUSTIN: So yeah, go ahead and give me a...

JANINE: I'm rolling that horrible roll I did before.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so Channel: 2d6 plus 3, which is a great roll, to be able to roll.

JANINE: Yeah. [sigh]

AUSTIN: It's about as good a roll as you can get. There you go; that's a ten.

JANINE (over Austin): Alright that's a ten; that's a ten.

AUSTIN: So yeah, so, we get the other two Con-cons, you like slam down the sniper rifle thing, you're right it's resting on the ground or something, like, not on the ground, but you know, on a bipod or whatever. And, the, they shoot in their ballista, and it just bounces off of this, this shield you've, you've summoned. Thomas Whitney says "wait, she's not only a gamer, but a streamer." Fuck off. [Janine laughs] Now, now you can give me the attack roll, the... again apologies for me not remembering all this stuff off the top of my head-

1:45:00

AUSTIN: Exchange Blows. Though actually this is like one of those things where it's like... Let me look at, let me look at tags really quick.

JANINE (over Austin): There is like a magic thing specifically.

AUSTIN: I mean Strike Decisively is, would again be a Channel for you because you have that Boon. But the thing that I'm- sorry, Exchange Blows would be that. The thing that I'm not sure with is whether or not the fact- I don't know if... No, I think he's still, I think he still has defences. Like, he still understands what's happening here; he's distracted -- or he's... whatever the thing was I wrote down before. What was the, the first thing that I wrote down? Dre, what did you do again? You did... Separated. You Separated him. [Agreement from Dre]

But he still has some defence, which to me means he should still be, you should still be Exchanging Blows... Though if you're out of range...

JANINE: Is it not Weave Magic?

AUSTIN: No, Weave- weave-

JANINE: Like, what's Weave Magic for then?

AUSTIN: Weave Magic is for doing something taxing that doesn't fall under one of these other things, right? [Understanding from Janine] It's sort of like, you remember in Masks, there was like, Use Powers? [Confirmation from Janine] Where it's like, yeah well, if it doesn't- if it, if it falls under the attack one, you're using your powers to do an attack, you're gonna roll that one. And regardless you can roll Channel because of your Boon. The thing that I want to check on is whether or not -- and Weregazelle in the chat you can, you can answer this for me, this is very useful -- does the fact that Teasel has a sniper rifle and is at sniper distance mean that Barter is defenseless? Because he's at, he's out of range. Or is his knowledge that he could be being shot give him some level of defence? My guess is it gives him some level of defence, even if it wouldn't be easy for him to strike back.

JANINE: But is he expecting bullets or blood-pain?

AUSTIN: It doesn't matter, right? Like, it does matter in the fiction.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: But he's not defenc- you know. God. "They can defend, they just wouldn't be able to return fire easily against Teasel," awesome. So yeah, go ahead and give me a, a Exchange blows; so 2d6 plus three for your Channel.

JANINE: That's an eight.

AUSTIN: That's an eight. That's respectable. And I want to make sure that there's no other pluses here. You don't get any, you don't have any of that cool Gold shit where you just randomly get a plus whenever. Cool. So, at an eight- I mean this is the thing that's kind of nice here is even though you are, uh... Oh actually, I guess this, we do know where this comes from, this is getting interesting visually. You're going to have to tell me what Overheating- what more Overheating looks like. Like, you're fucking just glowing, I guess. Right?

JANINE: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Because one of the, the Scouring Boons was...

JANINE: Seven to nine.

AUSTIN: Seven to nine, giving you the Risk Overheating. So I think that happens again. But yes, this bullet hits. And, the, I think he, at this point drops down to, he is now defenseless. I don't want to paint this on the screen extremely well. But- or extremely like, with a lot of precision and with a lot of resolution. But, you see the bullet hit; you see his mech do something- what's the Risk you're giving him? [Considering noise from Janine] Is it like bleeding? Is it...

JANINE: It would be like the opposite- it would be like clotting. Right? Like it's the opposite of bleeding.

AUSTIN: I'm going to write it down and never say it again. [Laughter from Janine] So, and then, and that means that he's still trying to move the mech around, but he's defenseless at this point. Which means if somebody else successfully hits the, the... Strike Decisively, that will end this fight against Barter. Barter will, will be knocked out of the fight. You know, that is how that goes. But yeah, I think it's just like "pop," and then you see the mech just stop for a moment, and then maybe it's even in just like, it's in like auto-defence mode? You know when in... Titanfall, you leave your titan, and the titan is like, following you around and stuff, but it's not as good as if you were piloting it? It's that, basically. And so, I think it just turns and is like, you know, moving to reconnect with the rest of the unit, but is not necessarily gonna do the best job of defending Barter.

ART: I'd like to make a move at this point.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. What are you gonna do?

ART: I would like to use a Tactical Genius to remove one Risk for an ally 'cause it looks like the heat situation is getting pretty bad over there.

AUSTIN: What's this look like?

ART: I'm not sure because I don't want to be like-

JANINE: Do you have a water gun?

ART (jokingly as Brightline): "Hey Teasel have you thought about not being so hot?"

AUSTIN: One, that's a, that's a, you're flirting. [Janine laughs] The thing you're describing is flirting. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

JANINE: The answer's no.

AUSTIN (laughing): And poorly.

ART: Because I don't want to be like, "I know this thing about your mech not being so hot that you don't know." Because that's-

1:50:00

AUSTIN (over Art): Is it like- is it like... Yeah, are you shooting water? Are you, is there like a cooling stream? Are you... are you hacking into something nearby to send like a blast of cool air?

JANINE: Oh, what if there's like-

AUSTIN (over Janine): Into space?

JANINE: -like vents? 'Cause you mentioned the, the end of the Mass Effect one, where you're sort of on the, at the thing- What if Teasel's just like, happens to be standing on a cold air vent that's not operating?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I love it, honestly.

ART: Sure, yeah.

AUSTIN: What's that look like, and also what colour is your hat? [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

(Art, Janine and Austin crosstalking)

ART: I think it's a light purple.

JANINE: It's so good.

AUSTIN: We're so good. Fucking- we're good at this; this is the best. [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

ART: The hat is a light purple, which I think offsets well with like the red hue the room has taken.

AUSTIN: Great.

JANINE: I just want to say for any fan-artists who might be wanting to draw Art's character, you can get liquid crystal display paint [interested noise from Austin] that you can put on things, and then when you rub it it changes colours. You can also probably get mood paint, but the liquid crystal paint's probably pretty cheap, comparatively.

AUSTIN (whispering, over Janine): Wow. Hell yeah.

JANINE: And then you rub it, and it'll change colours like when you push on an LCD screen.

AUSTIN: Love it. Alright, remove one of your overheated Risks here.

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Great.

ART: Yeah, we use the, we use the ship to like, hit something with...

AUSTIN: Yeah, do you just like fire something to open it- like, what- what do you do here?

ART: Yeah, I think it is. It's like a, it's like a pinpoint shot to open the cooling vent.

AUSTIN: Totally. You have these Tier-3 turrets which are like, that's not enough to hurt a, a mech, like a good- well, I guess it would be actually. But, you do it successfully. You spent the hold; I'm not going to make you roll for it. What do you say to your, to one of your subordinates to make this happen?

ART: [pause] Hold on, I'm trying to figure out the level of formality here.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: [pause] Do you have a rank?

AUSTIN: N- this is a Lieutenant. For sure. This is Lieutenant Garantine.

ART: Oh no, I meant Teasel.

AUSTIN: Oh, Teasel, sorry. I thought you meant your weapon's person.

JANINE: If Teasel was ever given a rank, I don't think she remembers it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Teasel's not- Teasel is here as like a, an independent contractor. We don't- I don't know what the, what the- like a freelancer, to use the medieval term actually.

ART: Sure. Well there must be like a, a word for that...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Like, a, like an official visitor, like an official... [pause, Austin and Janine snort] Here's my favourite thing about all of this, is, lord, you should know that the Brightline, Rennari and Garantine families are going to continue to pop up throughout the course of this.

JANINE: Yeah, I don't, I don't know for-

AUSTIN: I don't think you need this rank.

JANINE: From, rank.

AUSTIN (over Janine): Don't get caught up on this rank.

ART: Alright, how about,

ART (as Brightline): Conscript Officer Mode.

(Austin and Janine crosstalking)

AUSTIN: Love it.

JANINE: That works

ART (as Brightline): Um, just... hold still for a minute. [Austin and Janine laugh quietly]

JANINE: I don't [laugh], okay, so I don't think Teasel actually replies; I think you get the like, "beep" of like, incoming reply, but then it's like "boop," like, channel closed.

AUSTIN (laughing): Good.

JANINE: Like that's her, that's the thing she's doing that's like "yeah." You know, and just flick the switch.

ART (over Janine): Well we have really good sensors, so we can tell, you're not moving.

AUSTIN: Good.

ART: Also, suits too hot.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Urm, yeah and ah, what, what did you say the weapon's officer was?

AUSTIN: Lieutenant Agile Garantine.

ART (as Brightline): Alright, Lieutenant Garantine, can you open that vent?

AUSTIN (as Garantine): Uh, ye- Roger.

AUSTIN: Is like, "brmhp."

JANINE (jokingly as Garantine): I Garantine it!

ART: Oh my god. [Dre laughing, Sylvia groaning] Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Bye.

ART: I wish I wasn't sitting down so that I could go and sit down. I need to get lower than this. [Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: And you hear like “brmm, burr” [mechanical foley], and the, one of the guns on the front of ship turns and like “phuh” [gun firing foley], “pew” [explosion], and then the vent opens and just like a rush of air, you know, emerges. I think we get like the holographic, you know you saw it on the holo, the holo map. Like you traced this vent path, and, and you could see like the blue air, and it rushes out and hits, and hits the Day’s Eye and cools you down a little bit. So you can remove one of those risks.

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: I don’t know why we’re so punny today. Alright, lets go to Cerise, who we haven’t seen in a second.

SYLVIA: Alright, so. Let me just look at what’s on the table left, for us to deal with.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, so, what we know is that, Barter was defenseless, and then there are four still active small mechs, Con-cons. But I don’t know, you know. You tell me what happens. There are lots of ways to win a fight.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I- I’m just trying to figure out the numbers specifically. So it’s just a couple of can- uh, con-

AUSTIN: It’s four Con-cons. Yeah.

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SYLVIA: Four Con-cons, okay. Okay, I think I’m gonna open fire on these two down the middle here.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: And because I did the Ritual of Channeling, I can roll Channel for my open fire.

AUSTIN: Sounds good.

SYLVIA: Or whatever it’s called. I don’t remember- I don’t know why I said open fire; that’s not what the move’s called.

AUSTIN: It’s not.

SYLVIA: That’s what I’m doing,

AUSTIN: It’s not what it’s called.

SYLVIA: But whatever.

AUSTIN: You can do it with, yeah, is that for- It's just anything that you do, you use with Channeling?

SYLVIA: Yeah, it's, yeah. But if I get a 7-9, I overheat.

AUSTIN: You overheat, yeah. So yeah, go ahead and give me a, a strike decisively here.

SYLVIA: A nine.

AUSTIN: Alright, so, the- you are able to- "7-9, you succeed as above, but choose one." So on a ten plus, you would have "stike true, non-player characters are killed, incapacitated, or otherwise removed as a threat, as according to the fiction. Player characters and rivals should bite the dust." That's a specific move. "On a seven to nine, you succeed as above, but choose one; you over reach or take a vulnerable position to deal the blow, take a Risk; or you waste ammo or words, either losing the use of a weapon until you can rearm, or losing the weight of some bargaining chip or piece of leverage." Not that one 'cause you're not talking.

SYLVIA: I think I'm going to take the second with the ammo because I'm already taking a Risk from the overheating-

AUSTIN: Okay. Oh, right, right right right.

SYLVIA: -from the Ritual of Channelling.

AUSTIN: Good call.

SYLVIA: So I don't want to take two.

AUSTIN: You don't want to take two; fair.

SYLVIA (over Austin): And- but yeah.

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): So then yeah, take, take that, and then, and then yeah, what I'll say is... what is the weapon you have? You have a Rayrifle?

SYLVIA: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: It does say limited, so yeah, that's- that's- You line up the shot, and you take it, and it's just like- in fact, I'm going to kind of retcon to- for this to be the last action of the previous little- remember the initial exchange, where it's like...? Or you know what? I don't have to do that. I think it's just that they find you again, and they're aiming to shoot at you, and they pull the trigger, and it's revealed that they shot at another illusion again. And now, it's back- and it's like, "oh shit," and they turn, and it's you, and they pull the trigger again. And this time- or they go to pull the trigger again, but they have not reloaded yet, and you fi- pull up your shot

and pull the trigger, and the beam just like- goes right into the ballista of one of these, four Con-cons, and it explodes. Nice work. I'll get rid of this one. Boom.

SYLVIA: A risk...

AUSTIN: Let's go to Gold. And yeah, add your Risk up top.

DRE: Alright. [Pause] I'm almost wondering if it's worth just like... Just blowing past Barter and just going on.

AUSTIN: And leaving them behind you?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Huh, that's interesting. In front of you, for people who can't see the screen, is a, is a, the next stage. It says "vertical mass servers," so it's like, it is the computer servers that operate this section of the big super, super, super big, like massively big space station that circles the centre of the galaxy. And it also says "strange readings."

DRE: Hmm. [Pause] I guess, I guess... No. Gold's, Gold- Gold is cold, but they're not brash and reckless, so...

AUSTIN: Right, they're not- yeah, exactly.

DRE: And they get paid to do a job.

AUSTIN: It's easy to imagine that, it's a mi- it's easy to imagine that cause we're, we're leaning into like, cool mercenary but [agreement from Dre] you're exactly right, yeah.

DRE: Yeah, they get paid to do a job, and that probably doesn't include leaving the other like, three people on the ground behind you to go do goofy shit.

AUSTIN: Totally.

DRE: So, yeah I guess let's, let's take out- I wanna take out Barter in a way that like is not, like, lethal.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: 'Cause like you said, they're- like, Barter's like a fellow mercenary, and even though he's like kinda grimey, he's not like an awful dude?

AUSTIN: Right. Here's a question.

DRE: And I- Yeah.

AUSTIN: Are you- do you want to take him out with words? I know your, your talk is a zero, which isn't great, but.

DRE: My talk is bad.

AUSTIN: Your talk is bad. The reason I bring this up is you need to re- you need to rebrace your lance.

DRE: Oh that's true, yeah

AUSTIN: So you're actually in a position where like you don't have- I guess you could just roll in, he's defenseless, so he- you could just roll with just a fist and do the damn thing at this point. Which is also rad, but... I mean, tell me what type of person Gold is. Is Gold- Gold sees that he's defenseless. He's-

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The blood bullet hit, and you know what that means. You know? You've, you've, you know, rolled with Teasel long enough to know, that is the sort of thing that sets somebody up for a coup-de-gras. And so it's like, do you go for that, or do you try something else?

DRE: No, I think, I think I do, I think this would be a good time for a Face to Face. Because I think they've probably worked on jobs before, and even though they are rivals and they're competitive, it's more of like a shittalking competition.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Than like an actual like, "fuck-you get-mine" kind of competition.

AUSTIN: Right- I will say that you don't need to Face to Face to talk to him.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You could just go up and grab the mech's arm, and it will do the sort of like- you've seen Gundam; when mechs touch each other they can talk.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mechs in the same, like, communication- on the same team can talk to each other as long as they're like-

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AUSTIN: -near the same, near like the same ship, or like, their communications aren't breached. But enemy mechs, you can just go up to it. And this is a rule of this game, this is

not just me bringing in some Gundam ship [Dre giggles]. There's- shit. There's specifically a rule that says like, yeah if you're touching his mech you can talk to him

DRE: Okay. Okay,

AUSTIN: But, but yeah.

DRE: Then yeah, I think I, I just, roll up on him and I'm like,

DRE (as Gold): How you doing there big guy?

AUSTIN (as Barter) [groans]

DRE (as Gold): Okay, that sounds rough.

AUSTIN (as Barter): [Groans] Gold?

DRE (as Barter, over Austin): Alright listen. Yeah hey, hey, listen. This, listen, this is pretty much done, right? We don't gotta keep doing this.

AUSTIN: All the Con-cons stop to watch this happen, and they're trying to figure out what's going on, and they hear their bosses voice. And they like, we definitely get a shot of these two, two Con-cons -- the two from across, like, the hall. Like, there's the one to the north and the one to the south. One of them is holding a giant wrench, and the other one is holding like a giant plasma screwdriver -- Don't ask. [Dre giggles] And they kind of like shrug at hearing their boss being all fucked up. Give me a Strike Decisively with Talk; 2d6 plus zero, right?

DRE: Okay. Uhh, yes.

AUSTIN: Real quick, is there any way to give you a bonus on that?

DRE: That's what I'm looking for.

AUSTIN: People could help.

DRE: I guess- I'm not, I'm not "charging into melee from afar;" that's for sure.

AUSTIN: No, that is not what this is. Con-cons are manned, yeah. Con-cons are manned.

DRE: Yeah, I don't think I have anything.

AUSTIN (over Dre): They're just smaller construction mechs, basically. Con-cons is also, I think- yeah, they are called... Are they golems in this system? I forget what they're actually called.

ART (over Austin): I can just give you a plus one forward by using on of- a Tactical Genius. But, if-

AUSTIN: Phew, that feels like a-

ART: It just feels early to be down two Tactical Geniuses.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Totally, totally. Someone could just do a help roll. Who- someone with a good Gravity with, with them. I don't know what that looks like?

JANINE: I could?

AUSTIN: Yeah, what's-

JANINE: I also could guess what that looks like.

DRE: Yeah, what other fucked up magic shit are you going to do to this poor man?

JANINE: I was gonna, I was gonna ease off the f- I was gonna like, when, when you're talking, like maybe lessen the blood pain thing that's happening.

AUSTIN: Oooh. Okay.

JANINE: To be like "hey, we didn't-"

DRE (over Janine), laughing: So he's like actually able to speak and be lucid?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Love it.

JANINE: So he can speak, is lucid and also knows like "oh, this isn't, this can stop. Yes, this can-"

AUSTIN: Totally. Go ahead and give me the Help/Hinder roll, Teasel. 2d6 plus two.

JANINE: [Typing noises] Plus two.

AUSTIN: Eleven, nice.

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Which is great for you because it means, one, Gold gets a plus one on their roll, but also, you will not become entangled in the consequences if they fail.

DRE: Ayyy.

AUSTIN: So, 2d6 plus one for you Gold.

DRE: Ah, that's a six.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN (under his breath): Fuck. God damn it.

DRE: [laughs] Hey, you know what, we had to, we had to roll one sometime.

AUSTIN: You gotta, gotta roll those ones sometimes. I'm just double checking again to make sure there's nothing else that is gonna be bad here. No, okay, so I know what happens. Guh, boy, this is a good solution for this issue. The, the mech that, that Barter is in turns and takes your other hand. And you're like, "alright, we're going to have a real talk." It's like when someone grabs both of your arms at the, at the wrists, as if like, "oh wow, we're really close." And Barter is like,

AUSTIN (as Barter): Gold. I can't stop fighting. He'd never let me stop fighting you for this.

AUSTIN: And then you hear like a slow engine beginning to charge up. [Engine charge up foley] Bwooom. And he says like,

AUSTIN (as Barter): We all gotta take care of ours. Get out of here guys.

AUSTIN: And the Con-cons jetpack up and away. And he is preparing to self destruct.

DRE: Oh, that seems bad.

AUSTIN: What do you do?

JANINE (over Austin): I kind of thought that was going to lead to a robot supplex, I'm not going to lie. [Austin laughs]

AUSTIN: No, but he's like holding tight to your, your mech, to the, to the High Price and is going to self destruct, which is going to- When a mech like this self destructs, this entire area is going to take some fucking hits.

DRE: Yeah. I have an idea of what I want to do, but if anybody else wants to do something about this.

SYLVIA: Uh, I do get a plus two forward to escaping, right now. [Dre laughs]

AUSTIN: You do.

SYLVIA: So, I could probably help. A little. If I want to use my Ritual of Contingency. I'm just trying to think of what that would be like, in fiction.

AUSTIN: I mean that would even be... rescue someone else, could even be it.

SYLVIA: Oh true- I mean either way it uses up the ritual.

AUSTIN: Yeah, true, fair fair fair. Wait, doesn't it use- it does- does it use all of them? Or does-

SYLVIA: It expires after I use it one time.

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Oh, oh oh, okay, I didn't realise- I thought you had all of them. Gotcha gotcha gotcha.

SYLVIA (laughing): I did, too. I just reread it and was like "Oh, okay".

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Damn, damn. That's a shame. Okay.

SYLVIA: That's fine.

AUSTIN: It's still nice. Yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

JANINE: Also, if I'm not entangled in the consequences, does that mean the distance I'm at is a safe distance?

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AUSTIN: It means you can get to a safe distance without needing to roll.

JANINE: Okay. Alright.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Because this whole zone is fucked, basically.

SYLVIA: Okay. I have an idea... using also this ritual to help me pull it off. I think I'm going to like- so, we've mentioned vents and stuff all around here, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Can I like, body check this mech inside something? Where it can blow up?

AUSTIN: Yep, uh huh. [Dre and Janine giggle]

SYLVIA: I think I'm just going to do that.

AUSTIN: [quietly] Ohhh yeah. Give me a- this is, this is a- definitely a Strike Decisively.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Strike Decisively, plus, are you channeling to do it?

SYLVIA: I- mmm, let me look at my...

AUSTIN: Plus two Channel- what's your-

SYLVIA (over Austin): I have a plus, I have plus one to Clash, and I'm getting a plus two forward on this.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so that's probably good enough; plus three.

SYLVIA: But also, I get- then I get a plus four, and if I succeed then I don't overheat.

AUSTIN: True.

SYLVIA: If I do the channeling.

AUSTIN: True.

SYLVIA: I'm going to make the bad decision, and I'm going to channel it, too.

AUSTIN: Alright. 2d6 plus four, that's a great roll. You gotta, you're gonna be fine; it's going to be fine.

SYLVIA: Austin- Okay, I got an eleven. [overlapped] With a one.

AUSTIN: Phew, it's wild that you got a plus four, and you still only got an eleven 'cause you rolled a six and a one. Yeah, awesome, you- what's this look like?

SYLVIA: I think it's like- *oh*, I have an idea. So, the, the illusions are still up. I think it's the Aster comes through one of the illusions. Like it breaks through it.

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): Oh, it's so good.

SYLVIA: And again, like, pushes it off, like cause then, he couldn't see me coming that way.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

SYLVIA: And after I do that, I'm also going to dispel the illusions.

AUSTIN: Right, of course.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That just looks cool; that's just like a cool.

SYLVIA: Exactly.

AUSTIN: So then, yeah. You slam into, into it at the side. He goes into the same vent that the cool air was coming through, and then like clunk-clank-clunk, you hear it go tumbling down. And then, it does explode, but deep in the heart of this thing. And so the whole station begins to shake. It's not destroyed; it's a huge station. But, it is- this particular section has taken some damage at this point. So. Everyone can breathe a sigh of relief. I think Risks clear at this point. I'll double check, but like, you could, you could at this point, safely, like, cool off. Like the fiction around it is such that, it's not a Peril; it's not going to stick. So you can clear your risks, I think. If anyone has like overheating risks, or similar types of things.

AUSTIN: "Risks clear between scenes, yeah," says Weregazelle. "Unless there's some weird reason you wouldn't be able to fix that specific thing." Sounds good. Cool. And this is a situation- Here's a- here's actually another situation is getting rid of, because, because the Aster mech, the Hallow Aster -- [cough] excuse me -- ran out of ammo in that one last thing; is that ammo back, do we think? Or is that a thing you need to, get a resupply on?

SYLVIA: I'm not entirely sure.

AUSTIN (over Sylvia): I bet that would be a resupply because the thing that you did was, "losing- use- losing use of the weapon until you can rearm," yes. So I think you would need to rearm at this point to get that back. Is that a roll that you can just make? Is that like- Let me see. It's on Downtime, certainly. [pause] Oh, is this a thing that you can do Brightline? Can you rearm people? Is it that requisition one?

ART: No, a weapon- oh yeah-

AUSTIN (over Art): Yeah.

ART: -I can, I can replace lack of ammo.

AUSTIN: What's that- how do you do that? What's that look- do you want to do that, one, I guess.

ART: I mean I can do this as many times as I can roll Gear and have Supply, and I have plenty of Supply right now.

AUSTIN: Cool. So then yeah, I think it's like the mechs are now- are like situated near the, the door to the next zone, so to speak. I don't think it's a door; I think it's like a big wall that you have to like, leap over. But that gives you some degree of like control. And then yeah, there is something moving on the other side of that wall. Or there's like, there is some, some sort of signal. And then yeah, Brightline, you can, whenever you want to give me a 2d6 plus one for your Surprise Requisition. [pause] That is a six.

ART (over Austin): Ooh that was bad.

AUSTIN: That's a two and a three and a one; that's a six.

ART: So I guess it doesn't work.

AUSTIN: Yeah, does it not? That's interesting. Yeah, here's what I think happens is, do you like shoot out a... uh, like a clip, so to speak, for this gun?

ART: No, it says it reveals that I had the thing prestocked.

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AUSTIN: Ooh, interesting. So, it's just not in fact prestocked. Do you go to like activate it, or do you...? Maybe it's just, maybe this is a situation where the move failure is not actually tied to the move, specifically. The move failure is like, as you're waiting to like, check to see if y'all have supplies to move forward-

[Jack de Quidt's "[HOURGLASS. SUNRISE. CRYSTALLINE.](#)" begins playing]

AUSTIN: You hear something on the other side kind of respond to that explosion. You hear that- you hear the same sound as the explo- Barter's explosion, but from the other side, as if something was echoing that back. Like a- like something was mimicking that sound.

[music plays to finish]