

### [The Road to PARTIZAN 11: Summary & Recap](#)

AUSTIN (as Cynosure Kesh/The Peaceful Princept): A declaration to All Divinity in this

AUSTIN (as Dahlia/The Glorious Princept, overlapping): -in this, the year 1418

AUSTIN (as Cynosure): -of its Perfect Millennium:

AUSTIN (as both, swapping and overlapping): My name is Dahlia [My name is Cynosure Kesh.] And today I die, so that I may rise again as the Living Princept of all space and the material instantiation of the will of our people.

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

As is demanded, I offer this final testament of service:

AUSTIN (as Dahlia): I will that Dahlia's victory at Torru be inherited by Ker'asilia, as it was Kers skill and fortitude that won that day.

AUSTIN (as Cynosure): I will that the praise offered to Cynosure's collection of verse, *In All Days, the Sun Second*, be granted to Fiona Anthelion the Eighth, whose composure and aplomb breathed life into his words.

AUSTIN (as Dahlia): I will that their title as Six-Fold Champion be bequeathed to the elect Licania, whose might and honor in the tournament lifted the field, whole.

AUSTIN (as Cynosure): I will that his unifying efforts in the Kesh-Coronet Trade Dispute of 1390 be passed to the elect Rye, who, though a rival in those proceedings, assured a most harmonious outcome for the Principality writ large.

AUSTIN (as both, swapping and overlapping): I will that all remaining assets and acclaim be reclaimed by the true masters of Divinity, her noble citizens. And in my first act as the True Living Princept, I say this:

AUSTIN (as Dahlia): I say this: It is time to right the wrongs perpetrated by the corrupt elites of Divinity-

AUSTIN (as Cynosure): -and reject the disunionist lies of the False Princept.

AUSTIN (as both, swapping and overlapping): I vow this: In my reign, we will retake our homes, and from the People's Throne, I will usher in a new age, a new Millennium:

AUSTIN (as Cynosure): The Millennium of Peace.

AUSTIN (as Dahlia): The Millennium of Glory.

['HOURGLASS. SUNRISE. CRYSTALLINE.' finishes playing]

[00:02:02]

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 this is the final episode in The Road to PARTIZAN, The Road to Season 6 as it was originally called. Our plan today is to recap everything that has come before this, to kind of walk through the *Microscope* game, the timeline from the *Microscope* game but also just kind of talk through The Road to Season 6, The Road to PARTIZAN altogether. I was originally gonna do this by myself, but then our schedules lined up right, and it was Sunday morning, Dre and I had just guested on [The Great Gundam Project](#), a great podcast about Gundam, where we did a draft, we did a Gundam draft which was very fun, and you can hear that at Abnormal Mapping's Discord— or not Discord, [Patreon](#). [Austin laughs] Hm, I guess you could go to their Discord and just be like “Hey, someone tell me how that went!” [Quiet laughter in the background] but that would be rude, don't do that. Go to the Abnormal Mapping Patreon for that. So, Dre was around, I was like “Oh, it would be cool to have Dre here to just bounce stuff off as I walk through this, this *Microscope* map, this *Microscope* timeline.” And then I thought, “Also it'd be cool... Jack is around. Jack, can you hop on?”

Originally transcribed by Ril (@kaorukeihi)

[T/N: The events as written on the map are bolded. There are time stamps at the beginning of each Period.]

[00:03:16]

AUSTIN: And you haven't seen this game of *Microscope* yet. [JACK: Nope.] And your outside perspective... But you've been in a number of these games, [JACK: Yes.] or have heard them, hopefully. And so, combined this is gonna be like an outsider perspective and an insider perspective. And so we're gonna walk through these one at a time. Does that sound good?

JACK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [DRE: Yeah.] There's a *lot* here! This rules!

AUSTIN: This.. Oh, Jack, this game *fucking* ruled! ...The way I'm thinking about this is: what if we did it where we each took one like era? And we read down the list of events, and we could pause and be like “wait a second, what's happened here?” if there's a question. Does that sound good?

JACK: Yeah, that sounds great.

AUSTIN: Jack, do you wanna start with **“The Birth of the Divine Principality”**?

[00:03:58 - Birth of the Divine Principality]

JACK: Of course! Okay, so **“The Birth of the Divine Principality”** is where we begin. Right of the bat, do we want to say a time? In terms of how close or far this is from the story that we know in Twilight Mirage?

AUSTIN: We... This is soon enough after that the first card has someone’s name from Twilight Mirage on it.

JACK: Sure, sure. Okay, so. Right of the bat, **“Aram Nideo becomes the Resolute Regent,”** Aram Nideo is like “Let’s go!”

AUSTIN: Let’s go. Meaning... By the Resolute Regent I mean- I mean the **“de facto ruler of the Divine Principality”**.

JACK: Yes. Takes his seat, [AUSTIN: Yes.] is like, “I’m in charge.”

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Next up, **“Crystal Palace is designated the Divine Past”**. We talked a lot about how Crystal Palace was basically a Divine in everything but name...

AUSTIN: Yep. And here it is. We did not in this game, Jack, go into what Past does now, outside of gesturing at some of the monologue from the end of Twilight Mirage, around just like, it’s looking backwards now.

JACK: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And then we have some **“Early conflicts between minor Houses”**. What do we mean when we say “minor Houses” here? Are these the Stel structure yet?

AUSTIN: No, I don’t think they are, right? I think I actually may have added a thing somewhere that explains like “here is where the Stel system happens”, but... No, the Stels- the Stels emerge partially because of this minor Houses, right? Which is like, “Hey...” [JACK: Sure.] What I guess we didn’t talk about in the *Microscope* game, Dre, is: with Crystal Palace destroyed, with the new society building, there’s a lot of sudden conflict inside of both the Divine Free States but especially [JACK laughs quietly.] probably like within the Principality of Kesh, right? [JACK: Yeah, uh-huh.] Where it’s like “Hey, we used to be on cycle, and now we are not. [JACK: Yeah.] Now what?” And so...

JACK: There’s also got to be like factions who are just like “I’m not super jazzed about what Aram Nideo has just done.” [They laugh a bit.]

AUSTIN: Yep. Yep. Totally.

JACK: And then, **“Nideo Pens the Many-Stars Argument (AKA “The Nideo Thesis”) and creates Asterism, a faith about order and purpose.”**

AUSTIN: Right. And the thing, the key of this, maybe one of the biggest things that we’ve figured out during this game, the biggest thing that we spoke to during this game is like: Asterism believes that the state, the Divine Principality—It’s sort of a federalist position in some ways, you might think, or it’s a... I guess it’s not really a federalist position, it’s a... Like, it is about a federation, it is about like an affiliation of autonomous states that speak upwards towards a grander state project. But it is... there is a degree of autonomy between, you know, between them as long as their loyalty goes upwards, but more importantly, the state is a divine project, if that makes sense. The state is... There is an aspirational thing called the State, called the Divine Principality, there is the reaches of divinity, and that is perfect and self-correcting, and we should try to [DRE laughs quietly.] teach ourselves to take the order of the aspirational like true state of the Divine Principality, right? Divinity itself corrects itself, [JACK: Yes.] it does that sometimes through border skirmishes, it does that sometimes through internal wars, but what doesn’t shake is the Divine Principality itself. Divinity cannot falter because it allows for a degree of flexibility and movement. It’s earthquake-proof, right? It has that sort of like... [JACK: Yes.] It wobbles in the wind, it doesn’t expect to be perfectly firm.

JACK: And at this point, Asterism is the doctrines and kind of principles that guide that understanding of a flexible order and a flexible purpose.

AUSTIN: Yes, though... [JACK: Up to a point.] He’s only written these at this point, right? He’s like, “Ah! These Houses and conflicts...” [JACK laughs.] “These conflicts are pretty bad, let me consider a potential solution to that.” [JACK: Yes.] The other way to think about it in terms of what those arguments look like is they are probably very neoreactionary, they’re probably monarchist, there’s a- [JACK: Sure.] there’s a very like... I’ve said this before but Nideo is sort of like Rousseau, in that he believes that there was a state of nature, and that state of nature was positive... To contrast it with like Hobbes and Locke, who think about the state of nature as violent and conflict-driven, Nideo thinks the state of nature... Which is to say, before there was history, before people had... before there were events—which is a philosophical concept more than a thing that actually exists—he thinks people were good, and people were orderly, but in this like... Or safe, people were safe, people were productive, people were... But not capitalism productive, productive in like... creative, people were creative, they were passionate, and there wasn’t conflict to drive them apart, because they were all kind of like “Oh yeah, we’re all *people*”. And for him... He has set up the era of the Divine Fleet as that, right? [JACK: Sure.] The utopian era of the Divine Fleet is his like second state of nature, when everyone was cool. And so one of the big things he pushes forward in Asterism is: we should reunify everything. [JACK: Uh-huh.] If we could rebuild... If there was only... If we can obliterate time and space by

making everything one thing then we can reenter the state of nature. So. Asterism. [JACK: Uh-huh.] Everything's in its right place, constellations, etc.

JACK: Yeah. He'd quite like him to be on top of that as well?

AUSTIN: I don't think he thinks he'll live to see it. I actually think this is a genuine philosophical position. I don't think that he has written in, like, any sort of like... You know what there probably is? Like "These are the traits of a good ruler." And it's a mirror. [JACK: Like, "Wow, it's a lot like Aram Nideo!"] Totally, totally. But I think it's also kind of Hegelian in the sense that he thinks this is the natural order of history. Order will- History will progress in this direction, this is not a call to arms, this is a philosophy of history. Does that make sense? And so he's like "Ah, these are... Let me look through history at the things that have survived." It is the things that have been flexible, [JACK laughs a bit.] it is the things... I bet you he's like, "Apostolos is a great story, because Apostolos was once an empire, became oppressed when they were colonized by OriCon and the Diaspora, but they kept their national character. They still remained Apostolosians, and eventually they developed the Demarchy, and blah-blah-blah-blah-blah." Right?

JACK: So the title card here *really* is "Aram Nideo learned all the wrong lessons from Twilight Mirage"?

AUSTIN: [laughing] And COUNTER/Weight, yes. Exactly. [JACK: [laughing] And COUNTER/Weight.] Dre, do you want to handle the "**Age of Local Expansion**", which you might note, has switched places with what was here before?

[00:10:43- Age of Local Expansion]

DRE: Oh yeah, what was here before?

AUSTIN: Uh, the Time of Fables was here before, but [DRE: Gotcha.] we talked... I talked to a fan, Matthew Guzdia, who notes that something that happened in the *Armour Aster* game *requires* the Age of Local Expansion to go first.

DRE: Gotcha. And I mean, the Age of Local Expansion is basically just the *Dialect* game we've played.

AUSTIN: Right, yeah. Totally, totally. With like... It's open for us to fill in the blanks if we want to down the road, right?

DRE: But that's the two events we have in here right now. [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] So, yeah. The "**Age of Local Expansion**" starts with the "**Assimilation of Hypha and other smaller**" creatures, uh, "**cultures**".

AUSTIN: [laughing] Those little squirrels, little...

DRE: [laughing] Yeah, just rabbits, bunnies...

AUSTIN: Yes. Which, at the beginning of that *Dialect* game, basically... Or I guess those are both kind of part of the *Dialect* game, right? Both of these things.

DRE: Yeah. I mean is it worth doing like a review of, you know, what the Hypha are, and kind of what they...

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, Jack, you don't know anything about the Hypha, right?

JACK: No. This is- This rules! My whole thing has been.... [Laughter] I am composing the end of Hieron right now, [AUSTIN: Yes.] and so, a thing I'm very excited about is wrapping Hieron, and then listening to [AUSTIN: All of this. That we're spoiling for you right now.] the Road to Season 6 like listeners... No, this is cool, 'cause I get the fun, the bit when you sit in the cinema, and then Robert Downey Jr. is on screen, and he says "Have you heard that Avengers: Endgame is releasing next year?"

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah, well the other part of this for me, one of the reasons I wanted to work with you on this is like: let me give you more to play with in terms of musical influence for thought, right?

JACK: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, the Hypha, the Hypha. Dre, how would you define the Hypha, how would you, quickly..?

DRE: Alright, so, the Hypha were... I mean, they're deer people.

AUSTIN: Yes. [JACK: Hell yeah!] They're humanoid deer people. The note is that they're not... they don't have fur.

DRE: Oh! I forgot about that part!

AUSTIN: This is like Janine Body Horror Shit. [DRE: Yeah.] They just have skin. But they have like deer skull heads. [DRE: And antlers.] And antlers.

JACK: Oh, it's that, it's one of those horrible guys, Austin! From last night!

[They all laugh.]

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah, it is! It is, yes. We were playing the *Remnant: From The Ashes*, Jack is referencing an enemy type that we just started calling The Bad One, because of how bad it was to fight them. So, what was the second part of that, or do you want to talk more about the Hypha real quick, Dre?

DRE: Well, the Hypha, their kind of big thing that we talked about in the *Dialect* game as far as like what made them unique, outside of just their biological characteristics was... They had the ability to, like... They had the Chorus Bond, which is something that they could, like, share amongst themselves, that allowed them to be... I'm forgetting what we called them in COUNTER/Weight.

AUSTIN: Stratuses, basically. Strati.

DRE: Yeah. Yeah. [JACK: Oh wow!] They had this ability to like... They infused something into their antlers, right? Isn't that what it was?

AUSTIN: Yeah, there was like a degree of like inlay, or replacement of... with like special metals, they understood how to create Strati. [DRE: Yeah.] And not in a way that like... This was like a core part of their culture; and it also the way that they travelled from... They were a nomadic culture, and they would use their Strati to see these things called the Strands, which would be like these bright colorful explosions of light, and... Well, not explosions, like blooms of light [JACK: Hmm.] out into space, which would direct their fleet from one place to the next. Where they would land, refuel, you know, kind of take in the local culture, and then move on. Not generation by generation, I think it was like yearly, or every few years, or something like that. But, the Hypha, along with other smaller cultures that we didn't see, but like, you know, there are lots of cultures in space. We've seen the Catboys, we've seen the Talonites. Presumably, a lot of those things have gotten swallowed up by [JACK: Right.] the Divine Principality. [JACK: Yes.] And then, Dre, do you wanna hit the second one here, too?

DRE: So, after the become consumed by the Divine Principality, **"The Hypha become the Ashen,"** and some begin secretly tutoring others in the ways of the Chorus Bond.

AUSTIN: Yes. Which, actually, we... I should rewrite that, 'cause I looked that up, and that's not exactly right. [DRE: Oh.] **"Some begin secretly solitarily studying the Chorus Bond,"** is actually what happens there.

[00:15:06]

JACK: What's the distinction between Hypha and Ashen?

AUSTIN: You'll have to listen to the game. [JACK laughs.] They wear ash on their skin... So, what happened was, at the very end of that- of the *Dialect* game, there was a point where a character had a choice, which was basically... One of the characters who could— named Timea

Asche, who was a Strand Runner, a Thread Runner, or something, who basically was the person who went ahead, who... Were they following the Strand? Or were they leading it? It's hard to say, right? And instead of this bright, colorful Strand, that would lead them a little bit far away, they learned how to produce this very far Ashen threads, that would go very far away, keeping them out of the hands of immediate assimilation by the Divine Principality.

JACK: Oh, right. So, they're a subsection of the Hypha?

AUSTIN: They are the non-assimilated Hypha at this point in time, [JACK: Yeah.] to the degree that now I bet you would find both, right? You would find people who are Hypha, but the Hyphan culture as it stands has this stuff with people wearing ash, it's a little more solitary, a little more sedentary, less nomadic, and more, like... That is kinda where we left them, to some regard. So, they survive, but they lose a lot of their culture, right? Like, part of *Dialect* is they lost their language eventually. They lose all the terminology, and religion, and faith, and technology, right? At that point anyway.

JACK: Okay.

[00:16:42 - Time of Fables]

AUSTIN: Third age is the “**Time of Fables**”, so called because technology is at its height. Even outside of the Twilight Mirage, things are at this moment indiscernible from magic, and this is the period during which that stops happening. And so we start with the “**Adoption of the Many-Stars Policy which restabilizes the Principality**”. Someone, internally—I don't know who—pushes Nideo's original—probably a Nideo [AUSTIN laughs a bit]—

JACK: So, Nideo's still alive at this point?

AUSTIN: No-no-no, he's dead, I'm saying a Nideo.

JACK: Oh, this is like “My great-great-granddad had very good ideas.”

AUSTIN: Exactly, exactly. “And look how it would work for us”, right? Again, similarly to the ways in which various philosophies had been pushed by political leaders in the past and in the present, right? It is not... You don't have to go to far for people reaching to theological or philosophical underpinnings to push their political policies. And especially in a world where we're in a Time of Fables, it's easy to talk, to lean into that same style of storytelling and like, the good old days... I guess, it is... In some ways it's like... I bet this happens throughout this period, maybe even after the final notes in what happens.

AUSTIN: We have the creation of the group called Horizon, which happens in the *Armour Aster* game... Or I guess, they exist by the time the *Aster* game starts. They are a group led by someone named Briar Brightline, or I guess, Briar Brightline is a major member; the Brightline



family is a key part, what I guess becomes House Brightline, or... I don't think we're using Stel for Houses, we're only using Stels for like the big cultures, right? [JACK: Sure.] So, I would say, House Brightline creates Horizon, this group that is about trying to unseat Stel Nideo's control and corruption of what they see the original Principality's best features and best qualities being.

JACK: They're like, "Hang on, fuck this!"

AUSTIN: "Fuck this! You know what we need? We need a monarch again." So, [JACK laughs.] even they are maybe a little compromised, you know. [JACK: Sure.] They lead a group to the center of the Galaxy where, they've learned, Stel Nideo... 'Cause the card is "**The Perennial Wave spreads through the Galaxy**" (*Armour Aster* game), which has two events, or two scenes in it, "**Will the Divine Principality be able to capture the power of the Galaxy itself?**" Which is Stel Nideo trying to capture a Dyson sphere that is at the center of the Galaxy, which is something that we teased in *Twilight Mirage*, and they wanna capture it, and use it to continue to power all of their stuff, and to make them kind of unbeatable. Thankfully, **Horizon stops them**, along the way revealing the **true nature of the Divine Empyrean**, and kicking off **the Perennial Wave**, which... I think the third thing here, and this is the bit, another thing that.. This is the bit that Matthew Guzdial reminded me of, is that at the end of that game, one of the characters, who'd been a Hypha, relearns some of the Chorus Bond stuff. [DRE: Oh, yeah...] And I'm double checking here. So, that was the bit that I had *fully* forgotten.

JACK: Oh, which just straight up wouldn't work if these were in the other order.

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly. They were like a group of mercenaries... Alright, here it is, here it is, here it is. So. The Perennial Wave is a thing that got kicked off by the Divine Perennial. Basically Horizon was like "Hey, let's stop Stel Nideo from doing this!" And Perennial was a Divine that was aligned with- with House Brightline and Horizon, and to who I think two people on that party were loyal. And one of them was Janine's character, who was a Hypha Witch, basically—because, again, we're in the Time of Fables—and led Perennial to get control of this Dyson sphere. And the Dyson sphere, it turned out, was literally made of a bunch of tiny little spores, just like, nanomachines, just infinite nanomachines surrounding the black hole at the center of the Universe, drawing energy from it somehow. And so, Janine's character put that in control of Perennial, the Divine Perennial, who shot them out into the Universe, and used this nanomachines to kind of deactivate and interfere with super powerful technologies. It kind of brings us back to a pre-COUNTER/Weight level of technology with some exceptions, [JACK: Are there..?] we'll find out why there are exceptions... Do you have a question, Jack?

JACK: This is like... In the past I think you've talked about the Perennial Wave as being like, almost seasonal or something?

AUSTIN: There are... There is like a high and low tide, where... I think that there are moments both... It's like pollen, right? There's Perennial season, there's allergy season, right? [He laughs a bit] Where it's like "Oh wow!".. [JACK: [laughing] But for nanomachines.] Right, but for

nanomachines. But there's also... I mean, the clear analogy that Keith pointed out was they're Minovsky particles.

JACK: ...I don't know what that is.

AUSTIN: They're from Gundam, they're the reason why you can't fire missiles from a long range, and instead you have to fight close, hand-to-hand, using mechs.

JACK: Oh! Okay.

AUSTIN: But they are also this thing that is like "Hey, there are nanomachines literally everywhere, we're all breathing them in, they are part of our..." They fill the Galaxy. Because this is like an infinitely powerful factory at the center of the Galaxy constantly making these things. [JACK: [laughing] Oh my god.] And it's a place that still has Twilight Mirage level of technology, right? Like, that place has it, and Perennial defends it. And like, don't go fuck with the dragon, you know? There Be Dragons, for sure. [JACK: Yep.] But that brings everyone's level of technology much lower, and... There are days, or there are moments, where like... You know, someone is going to fail a roll this season, and I'll be like "Oh, the Perennial Wave just came through." You know, like, the tide is high. [JACK: Right.] So that can happen in a moment's notice, but it also happens with like long periods of like "Wow, the Perennial Wave is really high for the next month", you know? [JACK: Right-right-right.] So, we'll see how that plays out.

AUSTIN: The other half of that event is about this group called the Columnar Tabulary which we haven't seen before, which are a group of synthetic... It's a culture of synthetics that are- that we introduced in the *Microscope* game, and they are impacted pretty negatively by this. [JACK: Sure.] We saw a robot, **1-2-3-4 Treefall, watch as their Crown City's AR falls apart**, and they would **go on to join the Equiaxed**, which was a subgroup inside the Columnar Tabulary which were **trying to blend biology with their synthetic nature**, replacing the bits of them that had broken.

AUSTIN: So like, a robotic species, a robotic culture. And when the Perennial Wave hits them, it hits them *hard*. Because they are super networked, they're constantly seeing stuff in AR, they're constantly, you know, sending communications across the Galaxy, and now they cannot do most of that stuff, right? And so, one way that one part of the group... You know, I think, a big part, most of them, respond to that by just trying to build new technologies, [JACK: Sure.] build the old, less AR-dependent one that work, right? But many of them also, or a subgroup of them—the way that Keith talks about the Equiaxed is to think about them like an ethnic or linguistic minority—they start to build or integrate organic stuff into them. They're cyborgs, but like, inverted cyborgs from what we normally think of.

JACK: They're like "What I really, *really*, super want is a kidney."

AUSTIN: Or eyes, right? [JACK: [laughing] Yeah.] Biological eyes that can't be hacked, that can't be hit by the Perennial Wave, right? So like, there's absolutely an interesting thing happening with them, where it's like part... Or! "I think hair is dope," right? [JACK laughs.] There's definitely a blend here of aesthetic, medical, disability discourse happening throughout this group, for sure.

AUSTIN: Then... This is a new thing. There are some... Dre can note, that many of these things are red, I've added new red cards to the *Microscope* list, [DRE laughs.] which are things that I knew were true, but I needed to say out loud. **"The Principality's FTL methods fall apart, which begins to emphasize differences between Nideo and Kesh cultures as travel and communication becomes slower."** It used to be, there was just FTL travel, it's what the Divine Fleet had, it's what, you know, the Principality used to use, we saw people move faster than light all the time. Different speeds of faster than light, but it happened, especially in the Mirage. Here, those traditional methods of speed, of FTL, have fallen apart completely, and so, there is like... The Nideo and Kesh cultures become more and more distinct, but the state stands, because of the Many-Stars Argument, the Nideo Thesis, the Stel structure does stand here.

[00:26:13 - The Divine Clash]

AUSTIN: Jack, you're back for **"The Divine Clash"**. This one you know, I think.

JACK: Uh.... Yeah, I know some of it! Yeah! Okay, so. An alliance is formed...

AUSTIN: Oh, really quick, I just remembered a thing, which is I didn't say the bit about why I know what the end of the Perennial thing with the Hypha is—which I should actually add to a card here—which is. I say to Janine: "Can I tell you one other thing that happens? Perennial remembers old things... Something that was lost a long, long time. The Chorus Bond." So one of the ways that Hypha—and the Ashen, I guess—regain part of the Chorus Bond stuff is through Perennial. **Perennial gifts Teasel the Chorus Bond.** [JACK: Oh, that's great.] Yeah-yeah-yeah. So, still probably studying it small groups, but yeah. [JACK: Alright, so...] Alright, go ahead. The Divine Clash is the new era.

JACK: Yes. An alliance is formed between **OriCom**... which stands for the... Is that the Orion Combine?

AUSTIN: It is the Orion Combine, yep.

JACK: **And the Divine Collaborate.** ...Yes, the Divine Collaborate. [AUSTIN: Divine Collaborate, yeah, uh-huh.] They make an **Alliance against the Divine Principality**. This takes place in our *Dusk to midnight* game. And as I remember it, this was kind of just like two factions, who have sort of been uneasily next to each other, recognized that it is in their best interest to be like "Right, let's consolidate against our resources. The Divine Principality fucking sucks."

AUSTIN: With the other note that they kinda didn't exist before the Divine Principality forced them to exist, that they had kind of splint... OriCom is not just OriCom for the last 50000 years...

AUSTIN: ...OriCon from COUNTER/Weight had become a bunch of smaller states... a bunch of smaller non-states, companies, like whatever. And in seeing the threat of the Divine Principality first formed OriCom, and then formed an alliance with the Divine Collaborate, who similarly are an evolution of the Divine Autonomy... eh, not Autonomy, Diaspora. The Autonomous Diaspora from COUNTER/Weight.

JACK: So, we're seeing a kind of... It's reductive, but we're seeing a kind of ghost [AUSTIN: Yeah.] of what if OriCon and the Diaspora joined forces?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Absolutely. Yeah.

JACK: What could be bad enough for them to be like "Now, hang on..."

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah. Exactly. Which we've realized happen once before, which was Apostolos, right? [JACK: Yes.] But that was even more tenuous, then they be... Well, well. This goes a certain way, so yeah. Uh-huh.

JACK: Uh, "**OriCom develops EDICT**, which stand for **the Electronic Divine Interface and Control Technology, which takes control of hostile Divines**. This is kind of like a... God, what are these things called? That we use to take control of missiles? On Earth? [AUSTIN: Uhh...] Like massive defense networks that we can use to be like "Ah, that missile doesn't work anymore"?

AUSTIN: Like, electronic countermeasure?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is that what you..? [JACK: Yeah.] ECM, yeah.

JACK: Yeah, but this is it for a Divine? [AUSTIN: Yes.] A hostile Divine...

AUSTIN: Well, even more so, right? And also, there's lots of question marks here. Because we know "Divine" is a fake word. [JACK and DRE laugh.] We know there's nothing in a Divine that makes it a Divine, outside of social...

JACK: A Divine is an extremely powerful... usually an extremely powerful synthetic.

AUSTIN: Sometimes! We know that by the end of Twilight Mirage that's not even true anymore.

JACK: Oh damn, that's true. Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know, a Divine is something that a group of people... enough people say "That's a Divine", and that is a Divine. [JACK: Yeah, right. Sure, I guess.] But what OriCom has developed presumably then is something that will work on the Divines that they have been facing, and also that they are aligned with.

[00:30:02]

JACK: Yes. Because as an answer to the question of the Scene "**Will the Alliance stop the encroachment of the Divine Principality?**" OriCom promptly **betrays their allies**... I don't quite remember how this betrayal works.

AUSTIN: They used the Divine... They use the EDICT [JACK: The EDICT. Oh, sure.] against the incoming rescuing Divine force... whoever it was that was coming to help them, I think, gets EDICT. The thing is you have to get EDICT—you didn't know what it was—to a power plant to charge it. And then you did that, and then it fired.

JACK: It was a part of a test, right? [AUSTIN: Yeah.] It was like a weapon's test. [AUSTIN: Basically.] And we found out that not only does it work, it works kind of regardless of who we point it at.

AUSTIN: So everyone there got hit with it.

JACK: Yeah. And in response to this, [they laugh a bit] OriCom becomes **Stel Orion**.

AUSTIN: Right. As a reward.

JACK: Is this the second great Stel that we have..?

AUSTIN: This is the third Great Stel.

JACK: The first Stel is Stel Nideo, the second Stel is probably...

AUSTIN: Well, Kesh and Nideo are... I don't think either of them can claim... They probably both claim to be the first Stel, right? [DRE laughs]

JACK: Oh, sure, okay. So, the three are Nideo, Kesh, and now Orion.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Orion. Yeah.

JACK: At the bottom here you've written in red "**The Portcullis System comes online**," [AUSTIN: Yes.] [DRE: Hey, what's that?] and I don't know what this is, and I'm afraid of it.

AUSTIN: That is a gate system, it's a warp gate system. [JACK: Oh damn.] You may remember the other day in the Discord I was like "What's a good word for like a cool like kind of... it should sound sort of sci-fi but not exactly, like warp gate or jump gate"? And so it's called the Portcullis System. Every colonized system, or most major colonized systems of the Divine Principality have a big... I think it's literally a stone... stone like, octagon, or something, that like... Not an octagon... what's the word I'm looking for? Like a... if you took an octagon, and then you stretched... Not an octagon! Not a pentagon, what's the... a hexagon? [Quiet laughter.]

DRE: A hexagon has six sides.

AUSTIN: Yeah. What if you stretched a hexagon wide? What's a wide hexagon called?

DRE: I think, a hexagon.

JACK: A lozenge?

AUSTIN: [obviously smiling] A lozenge, yes.

DRE: [laughing] A lozenge!

AUSTIN: Actually, wait, what's a...

JACK: That's the name, that's like a kind of cut stone, right?

AUSTIN: I think so, yeah. You know what I'm saying though, right? Like...

JACK: It's a lozenge!

AUSTIN: Like... God, I'm looking for like a shape... Here, this shape that I'm putting in the chat. [DRE: Stretched hexagon...] Boom. Like that shape. Really long top and bottom...

DRE: Ohhhh, okay.

JACK: Yeah... Is that a trapezium?

AUSTIN: Actually, is this..? How many sides does a hexagon? Is a hexagon six?

DRE: Six, yeah.

AUSTIN: Six. Okay, okay, okay. Yeah, so, it's like a long hexagon.

DRE: A parallelogon?

AUSTIN: Maybe? Maybe.

DRE: I think a parallelogon is another like broad term for 2D shaped, but...

AUSTIN: Hm. [typing] "types of hexagon"... You know what, we don't have enough time for this, we should just move on.

JACK: And this does not... This is not bothered by the Perennial Wave?

AUSTIN: Right! This is kind of a gate... Like a sci-fi jump gate system, it's what they have in *Cowboy Bebop*, it's what they have a bunch of other shit, right? Where it's like you...

JACK: *Ancillary* series...

AUSTIN: Yeah, the *Ancillary* series, exactly, has this exact thing, right? Where it's like you... A bunch of ships line up, the gate comes online, you drive... you pilot your ships through, and you transport through jump space, you know, to get to a new location. [JACK: Uh-huh.] So, this reconnects all of these different Stels much more quickly again. So it is not instant travel, but it is much much much much faster. Still FTL.

AUSTIN: Alright. So that is the Divine Clash. Dre, do you wanna talk about "**The Courting of the Columnar Tabulary**"?

[00:33:56 - The Courting of the Columnar Tabulary]

DRE: Sure. Okay, in this era "**War is past and largely forgotten. Planets are scarred and filled with decontextualized robot carcasses.**" As seen in the *Ech0* game, which I still haven't listened to, so any [AUSTIN: Oh, it's so good.] big things you wanna highlight from that?

AUSTIN: It's just funny.

JACK: Basically, it's funny, it's good. [AUSTIN: It's tragic.] I think a thing the *Ech0* game kind of makes clear that we haven't really touched on in the Divine Clash thing is that we are talking about like large scale battles during this time. [AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes.] Like massive planetary wars. [AUSTIN: Yeah...] Like, I think one of the robots, one of the mech pilots in that talks about killing two hundred mechs with one shot of her shoulder-mounted cannon, like.

DRE: Jeez.

JACK: It's like bad.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So. So, you know, again, decontextualized robot carcasses...

JACK: Kids playing on them...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um.

DRE: Alright. So, after the *Ech0* game, **“The Principality “gifts” the Divine Commitment (an inky metal blackness) to the Columnar, who accept it and become Stel Columnar. Commitment requires two Elects, one from Columnar and one from Orion, and which leads to ego death for both.”**

JACK: Oh Jesus! Wow! [AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh.] Oh my god! [AUSTIN: Yeah, we’re in it.] So this is kind of like a real, real Divine/Elect relationship that we’re seeing here. [DRE: Yeah.] In a sense of like... you know, we’ve talked about how like often Candidates or Excerpts or whatever are just like people who exist with their Divine. [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] In this case, is it just like “Nope. You’re gone.”?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I guess so? We haven’t seen... Just wait, Jack. We’re about to get to some wild shit there.

DRE: Yeah, the Principality comes back.

AUSTIN: You keep coming through.

DRE: **“The Equiaxed, a culture of synthetic beings who blend their bodies with organic matter, lose their semi-autonomous status and freedom to be cyborgs.”**

AUSTIN: Yes. So, that group, The Equiaxed, who like, you know, it was a subgroup that blended and became inverted cyborgs, or being cyborgs, blending technology and biology... They are no longer their own like semi-autonomous region inside of the Columnar Tabulary. They are part of the Columnar Tabulary now, they are citizens and taxpayers, and whatever whatever whatever, so. That sucks.

JACK: Uh-huh.

DRE: **“Titus Waning forms the Waning Institute to study the Equiaxed and their cyborg nature.”**

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: Hm. Is Titus Waning an Equiaxed?



AUSTIN: No. Sorry. Titus Waning of Stel Orion... [He laughs a bit.]

JACK: Oh, cool, right, so just a guy show up and he's like "Interesting..."

AUSTIN: Yes, "Let me see you, actually..." [DRE laughs a bit.] Very important shit here.

DRE: "**A computing glitch results in an autonomous trash drone accidentally beginning a journey from the Waning Institute to the coordinates of—I'm gonna like zoom in to read this—**

AUSTIN: Sorry. Yeah.

DRE: No, it's fine. This is *my* fault. I did it. [Laughter.] Uh, **coordinates of 33550336.8128.496, a desolate moon orbiting a nondescript gas giant.**"

AUSTIN: Uh, we are setting up something for later. Don't worry about it.

JACK: Okay. ...Wait, hang on. [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] Just so I get that clear. [AUSTIN: Yeah.] Something is wrong in a computer. [AUSTIN: Yeah.] [DRE: Uh-huh.] And a thing like WALL-E sets off... [They laugh ]

AUSTIN: Oh, it's more like a dumpster than WALL-E.

DRE: Yeah.

JACK: Oh, it's... Okay. Sure. Okay.

AUSTIN: We were very much imagining it like a dumpster with jets on it. [DRE: Uh-huh.]

JACK: Okay, so a dumpster that would usually be carrying trash from place A to place B [AUSTIN: Yep.] now instead decides to carry it from the Waning Institute to a *moon* somewhere?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah. Don't worry about it.

JACK: Great.

AUSTIN: So, two new things here, that I'm tagging on. [DRE: Yeah.] One, and this I talked through with Keith: "**The Assimilative Perspective system—which is a thing I named, it might be named something else in Season 6 but—is replaced with tracked, representative democracy in** what would become **Stel Columnar.**" Which is the next new Stel. I guess that's

also one that should be in here, that... They become, the Columnar Tabulary become Stel Columnar, a group of... an entire Stel that's primarily synthetic beings. There are organic beings in there too, you know, they live on a bunch of planets, and presumably they've met some other humans... When I made them in *Stellaris*, I mixed... I gave them the thing where they had humans who worked with them and for them. [He laughs a bit.]

AUSTIN: And The Assimilative Perspective is a new thing. That is that before the Divine Principality showed up, the way policy was made is that everyone who was a robot uploaded their like, week's perspective. They, like, said "Okay, what have I seen this week?" They didn't say that, they just took it, and uploaded it into a big drone, maybe a big dumpster-looking drone also, and that drone carried it to where the rest of those big drones were, and they put them all together, and then they could collapse, they could bring in all of the different perspectives—including internally inconsistent ones, right?—inside of a single person, who might, say, for instance, want there to be more public parks, but also understands that that could cost a lot of money. Or like might want there to be better light on their roads, but also understands that some people don't want the light in their windows. That sort of internal conflict is accounted for, and then the Principality comes in and says "Well, we understand that you already have a system where everyone, I guess, you know, decides things together. And we're not gonna overturn that. But we need to have records of who's voting, and what people want. You can't just send in a weird mixed signal." So even the move towards representative democracy is about erasing what Columnar used to have.

AUSTIN: And the other new thing is "**The Palace**" comes online, which is a **news service built on the backbone of the Assimilative Perspective system.**" Which is the ability to take information and quickly, going through the Portcullis System, bring that information to centralized places where then you can break in down and redistribute it. So it's like... It's not the Internet, no one has the Internet in these worlds, but you could pull up a data center, you could pull up like a... If you had a computer-like device that was... If you had a Palace device, you could connect to the Palace and then get information from the Palace. But that would just reflect whatever the most recent updated version is, does that make sense? [JACK: Uh-huh.] It's like a local file. And the other thing that they're taking from the Assimilative Perspective system is very dense file compression, which allows them to like... You know, the Columnar are able to literally upload their entire memory for the last week into a USB-drive, which is a wild piece of technology. So, they are using that instead to basically pass information around.

AUSTIN: So that is The Courting of the Columnar Tabulary and the Founding of Stel Columnar. Next up is "**The Schism and Reformation of Asterism**".

[00:41:00 - The Schism and Reformation of Asterism]

AUSTIN: Asterism, again, the kind of state faith.

AUSTIN: Uh, one. **The Equiaxed Prophet Kan'tel Logos speaks to God and performs miracles.**" Jack, this was the first Event of this game.

JACK: Wonderful!

AUSTIN: I was like, "Oh, this is where we're starting, we're starting with "Someone speaks to God." We've filled in some detail here, making them an Equiaxed, making them Kan'tel Logos etc. as we continued, but it was like "The Prophet speaks to God and performs miracles."

JACK: They are Equiaxed?

AUSTIN: They are Equiaxed.

JACK: So they are one of these reverse cyborg sort of figures?

AUSTIN: Right. Yes. And also I should make a note here which we now know is true... [typing] **On a desolate moon... orbiting a nondescript gas giant**, because that is where that happens. It happens where that trash drone went to.

JACK: Great. Just giving a thumbs-up to the screen.

AUSTIN: Thank you, Jack. [DRE laughs.] This is a lot of... I wanna be a 100% clear, a lot of this is Dre and Keith, [JACK: This rules.] who did some shit that rules.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I gave them "A Prophet speaks to God and performs miracles." And they gave me... Well, I guess we knew it was the moon, I gave the moon, too. [DRE: Yes.] But y'all gave me The Equiaxed Prophet Kan'tel Logos speaks— or does the specific thing which is... **"What is the First Miracle performed by the Prophet? And it's The Prophet creates a sea on a moon that orbits a massive gas giant."** [JACK laughs.] So that's good.

JACK: Oh wow!

AUSTIN: **"Initial talks between Pique Nideo**—I don't think it was supposed to be "the Pique", I think it's his name, "Pique Nideo", was the name of that—**the leader of Asterism, and Logos, the Prophet**". Those talks broke down very bad, Jack, there was a Scene that we played out here...

JACK: I heard that Scene! I was playing Final Fantasy, and I was like, "I'm gonna just see what my friends are doing"...

AUSTIN: And that's where you came in.

JACK: And it was great, yeah.

AUSTIN: **Logos refuses to acknowledge the authority of Stel Nideo (or much of anything the Principality has said at all).** So just like, complete refusal to engage.

AUSTIN: Then, at some time later, **“To limit Logos’ reach and power, Pique Nideo orchestrates the creation of a competing version of Asterism (“Progressive Asterism”) that incorporates The Progression Mantra.”** Because, Dre, as you played Logos, the thing that you returned to again and again was this one word, “Progression”, right?

DRE: Uh-huh, yeah.

AUSTIN: And so, Nideo orchestrates, which means, Nideo is not publically the creator of Progressive Asterism. I bet that like the books will say that Kan’tel Logos created Asterism, or Progressive Asterism, or was the Prophet of Progressive Asterism, but somebody else actually created it. [JACK: Huh.] Probably someone else from the Columnar, I would bet. Like that is where this church is from. Or is like, tied to.

JACK: But orchestrated by Pique Nideo.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Pique Nideo was like “We can’t...” What did Pique Nideo turn to? Pique Nideo turned to his great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather’s Many-Star Argument. Which is, it’s okay for there to be conflict, as long as it all goes up to the same main thing. So you can have two different types of Asterism. What you can’t have is two different types of leading faith that would contradict each other. And so, the Progression— Here’s a quick moment where we can like hit this thing really hard. Which is: the version of Progressive Asterism that goes into form says this: “Orthodox Asterism is wrong about...” Let me slow down. Orthodox Asterism believes that Divines reflect the truth of the states perfection, right? So if you have a Divine named Courage, it reflects the courage that is true about the Divine Principality. It is a role model, it is a way that we as flail mortals—

[00:45:02]

AUSTIN: —not flail, frail mortals can’t necessarily directly access the courage of the Divine Principality itself, but we can see it in the Divine Courage. Divine Courage is like a, like a, like a... what’s the word I’m looking for? There’s a word... Is it synecdoche?

JACK: Synecdoche?

AUSTIN: Is that how you pronounce that? A synecdoche, yes. A synecdoche is like... I guess that’s when a part refers to the whole, so it’s not really that... It is like a representative, right? It is a... not just an idol, but it is a... Like a stand-in, a more comprehensible stand-in for the traits

of the state. So, the Orthodox says “You see the Divine Courage, what you’re seeing is an emanation of the Divine Principality’s courage.”

AUSTIN: Progression... Progressive Asterism says: “No, courage is part of God. Courage exists in the Universe, and the Divine is a reflection of that, and the state should aspire, both the Divine and the state should aspire to that thing.” [JACK: Huh.] Also they say the mantra “Progression” a lot, and I want to be clear, the thing that I just said is not necessarily something Logos Kan’tel said. I think that’s true, Dre, right? Logos Kan’tel did not say like: “Oh, the Divine Courage reflects true courage.”

DRE: No, probably not.

AUSTIN: The Divine... The Prophet Logos Kan’tel probably said: “Progression”. [DRE laughs quietly.] Or asked a question about Courage, you know? [JACK: Uh-huh.] Certainly led meditation on the concept of courage. But was not this sort of like dogmatic rulemaker, in the way that we see the beginning of the Progressive Asterism.

AUSTIN: And then, finally—and this is new—The Tranquil Princept—this is the first time we’ve seen the word “Princept”. Princepts, Jack, are the leaders of House Kesh, of Stel Kesh, they are... the Prince in the Principality is the Princept, which is a gender-neutral term for whoever is the leader, like the de jure leader of the entire Divine Principality, and the de facto leader (most of the time) of Stel Kesh.

JACK: So, all of the Stels’ kind of like “boss” is the Princept?

AUSTIN: Is the Princept. Again, like, that is the— that is what they say. [JACK: [laughing] Yes.] There are times coming up where that is less true. Or even if you go back to Aram Nideo as the Resolute Regent, the Regent— the Regent is basically taking that power for themselves, you know? And saying like, you know, “I’m representing the Princept, but *actually*...”

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: And the reason by the way, the reason why it’s a Princept and not an Emperor, or King, is because they are the heir to the people. They are the true... The true rulers of the Divine Principality are, of course, the people, the Princept is their heir. But also Princept is like a term, that is like combining “prince” or “princess” with “precept” or “concept”, you know? There’s again the degree of like, again, aspirational thinking, the Princept... Sort of like an Apokine in that sense. [JACK: Uh-huh.] And so, **The Tranquil Princept**—a title that this Princept gets presumably long after their death... Maybe not, maybe *at* their death, they become the Tranquil Princept—**rules that no one may expand beyond the system of the Prophet’s Sea**. Which is what the area became known as. Or sorry, that’s what... the sea that the Prophet made was known as the Prophet’s Sea, and so that system becomes kind of a final marker on the

expansion of the Divine Principality. [JACK: Hm.] That is of course the system that we will be playing this game in. And so...

JACK: What motivates that decision?

AUSTIN: We don't know. [JACK: Okay, just like...] It's a holy place, partially. But also, you know... I don't know. I'll note that as... you see how there's a whole arm that is uncolonized? [JACK: Uh-huh.] That is... that is why. That is... the furthest point there...

JACK: Oh, so like literally here is kind of where the Prophet's Sea is.

AUSTIN: Yes. And like, no further than that moon, no further than that—oops, went to the wrong thing—no further than the system that the Prophet's Sea moon is on.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: That is not the name of the moon, by the way, we're just referring to the fact that there's that sea there. Dre, because you have to go, do you wanna do the next one?

DRE: Sure. That's The Schism and Reformation of Asterism?

AUSTIN: No, it's the next one after that, that was... We just did that one.

DRE: Oh god, shit, sorry.

AUSTIN: We're almost done, we're at the **War against the Branched**.

[00:49:39 - War against the Branched]

DRE: I scrolled my stuff around... Alright, War against the Branched. **"The planet Kesh is captured by / joins the Branched."**

AUSTIN: We don't know which one. [DRE: Yeah.] Kesh is either captured by or joins the Branched. Jack, the Branched are the Golden Branch— the people of the Golden Branch. [JACK: Hm.] They are... they show up in a thing that's coming up later in this segment, the *For the Queen* game. They are humanoid who can refactor and change their bodies in scale and shape. They... What they ha— What they do seems like it flies in the face of the Perennial Wave, because they can like turn themselves into war machines. Literally the character I was playing in *For the Queen* had a large but humanoid still body... who could become a giant robot. Just... their body could just do that.

JACK: Hm! Wow!

AUSTIN: Yeah. They are in constant war with the Divine Principality.

JACK: And distantly, distantly-distantly-distantly, these people's ancestors were familiar with Weight and COUNTER/Weight, the joint pair of planets... The September...

AUSTIN: Yes! 100%, yes. They are an extension of the technology that made Jacqui and Jill, that let them reconfigure their...

JACK: Okay. Sure. So there is like a direct link there...

AUSTIN: But also a connection to the kind of hybrid people of Calliope from COUNTER/Weight, and also a connection to the ideologies that led Aria Joie, the Righteous Vanguard... This sort of like belief in... in a life that was about not just self-determination, but like self-expression, [JACK: Yeah.] and so they literally made their bodies a method of self-expression. ...Dre, do you wanna continue?

DRE: Yeah. **The Audacious Princept says that whichever Stel recaptures Kesh may expand past the Prophet's planet.**

AUSTIN: And so that is new also, that is marked red because [JACK: Right.] that is immediately... Or I guess, we don't know how many years are between eras here, but some time later there's the War against the Branched, and some time during that long war, which I think is a very long war, not just a short two year war—short, God—it is an ongoing lifelong thing— This Princept says: "Hey, you know what? I want Kesh back. If you can get Kesh, I will lift the ban on expanding beyond the Prophet's Sea." You wanna continue?

DRE: Yeah. **The Apokine travels to negotiate peace with the Princept, carrying the Divine Integrity with them.** And that's basically the *For the Queen* game.

AUSTIN: Yep.

DRE: After that game **The Apokine attempts (and fails) to assassinate the Princept and other leaders using all four members of their Retinue, and is captured.**

AUSTIN: Great.

DRE: We know that Integrity was used by Orbit to try and storm the palace in one of those assassination attempts, [AUSTIN: Right.] and basically that goes sideways, and Integrity is missing, we don't really know where Integrity is.

AUSTIN: Right, we have no idea.

DRE: Yeah. And so then as a result of the Apokine being captured, **the debt that the Apostolosians owe the Divine Principality... The Divine Principality sends a fake Apokine back to lead Apostolos and turn it into a Stel.**

[AUSTIN laughs quietly.]

JACK: [disbelievingly] No! [Jack laughs]

DRE: Yeah, because the whole thing with the *For the Queen* game was that Apokine was like... We chose the “Queen” that was like hooded, and like dark, and like, they just look like a Sith lord, so...

JACK: No!..

DRE: So nobody knows what the Apokine looks like. [AUSTIN: Yeah.] So then...

JACK: Damn, wow!

AUSTIN and DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Dre, was that you who did that scam? Were you the..?

DRE: [laughing] I think so.

AUSTIN: You had it. You had a number of *fantastic* turns in Microscope.

JACK: So, like Stel Kesh is basically “Oh wow, they are hooded, and no one really knows who they are. Interesting...”

AUSTIN: Literally it's every leader of the four other Stels. [DRE: Yeah.] It's like half Keith, like, they're interrogating the Apokine, and then the Stel Orion—who, by the way, has quickly become like... I didn't anticipate this, I thought Stel Nideo would be the people who would be the most like manipulative, you know, backroom dealing... But between the Columnar Tabulary play and this play, Stel Orion is, is— has really become some fucking scumbags, I love it.

JACK: I guess my question here is like, when did the Apostolosians show up?

AUSTIN: They were also being invaded by the Divine Principality. The Divine Principality was invading both the Golden Branch and also the Apostolosian territory.

JACK: Okay, so they're independent of the Branched, [AUSTIN: Yes.] but as we talk about the War against the Branched, [AUSTIN: Yes.] we're also talking about a war against...



AUSTIN: A colonization effort against Apostolos, which they're going to lose. Like, part of the thing with *For the Queen* is we set up as like, they are going to lose that fight. After they try...

JACK: Who is going to lose?

AUSTIN: Apostolos is not going to win that fight against the Divine Principality, [JACK: Okay, sure.] so... Can this... You know, basically the question in *For the Queen* was: is the Queen, or the Apokine coming to make peace with the Divine Principality or what? And the answer was actually leading a bunch of assassins, [He laughs a bit.] and now we saw that the assassinations went bad, and now the Apokine has been replaced with someone who's loyal to the Divine Principality, and so... I guess we didn't actually say this here, but... I guess, without a transition period Apostolos becomes Stel Apostolos.

DRE: Yeah.

JACK: Wow.

AUSTIN: So. Love it.

JACK: Wow! 'Cause the Apokine gets back and is just like "I've had a great idea..."

AUSTIN: Yeah, a 100%. [JACK laughs quietly.] "I've led... Not only do we have peace, we have joined them, and we're safe now." [JACK: Damn! Wow.] "Also we should all start fighting the Golden Branch. Because we're not safe now, [JACK: Again!] we are actually the neighbours of the Golden Branch." Exactly. The Branched immediately go to war. Two more things in this one, Dre.

DRE: Yeah. They are... Meanwhile, back on the Prophet's planet [He laughs a bit]... [AUSTIN: Yeah.] **A mostly dormant Resin Heart is found by military at the bottom of the Prophet's Sea. And then, sparked by said Resin Heart, the Disciples of Logos form a commune and church near the Prophet's Sea.**

AUSTIN: I should note, a mostly dormant *three foot tall* Resin Heart is...

DRE: The size of a child.

AUSTIN: The size of a... So. Child-sized. [DRE laughs.]

JACK: What's a Resin Heart?

AUSTIN: It's a heart made of resin.

DRE: Yeah.

JACK: Oh, okay. So we're not talking about some kind of weird... So, they find it, and they're just like "This looks like a human heart..."

AUSTIN: Yep.

DRE: Yeah.

JACK: And it's made of resin.

AUSTIN and DRE: Yeah.

DRE: And it's the size of a 9-10 year old.

JACK: It's the size of a 9-10 year old. [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] You keep saying this and I'm not...

[AUSTIN laughs quietly.]

DRE: This is just a dunk on Sylvia<sup>1</sup>. Sylvia, I love you.

AUSTIN: No, it's perfect.

JACK: Oh, oh, this is... This is where Sylvia's... [They all laugh.] confusion on how tall a child is... [DRE: [laughing] About the size a child is, yeah.] Okay, okay. And the Disciples of Logos are like "Well, this is clearly holy."

AUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely.

DRE: Sure.

JACK: Okay.

DRE: It's at the bottom of the Miracle Sea, Jack.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Uh-huh. "It's time to build a church."

AUSTIN: "Time to build a church." Finally, we go into the final stage... Jack, do you wanna start walking us through this?

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<sup>1</sup> The name in the audio recording is no longer in use.

[00:56:30 - Acceptance of a State of Constant Conflict]

JACK: Okay. **Acceptance of a State of Constant Conflict.** [AUSTIN: That is a period...] That is Season 6 of Friends at the Table.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah, uh-huh.

JACK: **Someone in Stel Nideo seemingly kidnaps the Princept from Stel Kesh in a play of power.** Okay, right. So now, all the... [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] The gloves have been thrown, Stel Nideo is just like “We’d like the Princept, please.” [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] And they kidnap them.

AUSTIN: Yes. We think. Because the actual card that I played here was the next one. I didn’t play... That red card I put in here just for clarity, because we don’t know, and I wanna make it clear, that someone in Stel Nideo...

JACK: Oh my god. I read ahead. What just happened?

DRE: Just go on, Jack. Yeah, just keep going, it’s fine.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: **The Apokine**—who we know is fake...

AUSTIN: No-no-no! This is many years later. Sorry, this is a *real* Apokine... [DRE: A “real” Apokine.] So. The War against the Branched is a different Period, right. So, over a long enough period, Apokine becomes a real Apostolosian.

JACK: Still House Apostolos?

AUSTIN: Still House... Stel Apostolos, absolutely Stel Apostolos. [JACK: Okay.] But the switch was just “Okay, we’re part of that now, we build a culture around being a Stel.” [JACK: Sure. Okay.] This is many... This could be hundreds of years after that happened, you know. That’s how Periods in this work.

JACK: So, **The Apokine rescues the child Princept, who had been kidnapped by Stel Nideo, and announces that they will raise the child themselves.** So now the Princept has changed hands seemingly once again.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: There’s been a third switch.

AUSTIN: The Apokine says “I can’t put the Princept back in the hands of Kesh, Kesh clearly can’t protect them.” [JACK: Hmmm.] “I will do the raising.”

JACK: **The Living Princept** [JACK bursts out laughing.]

AUSTIN: Which is now the Princept who had been kidnapped.

JACK: —**decides to become the next Apokine, gaining the support of Apostolosians. They also reveal the old Apokine Plot,** [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] **and vow to lead Kesh and Apostolos.** So they’re basically like: “Alright, I’m Apokine now, and I’ve got something to tell you. We...” [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] “We did a bad thing. We did a switch.” [AUSTIN: Yeah.] “But don’t you worry, I’m gonna kind of get *some* kind of revenge, and then gonna lead you [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] *and* I’m also going to presumably take Kesh.” Or like, “I have the right to Kesh.”

AUSTIN: Yes. I have... exactly that.

DRE: It’s the birthright.

JACK: “I’m the Princept. Basically like they screwed up.” [AUSTIN: Yeah.] “We’re calling their bluff.”

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Then **The Divine Commitment reappears...** This is the one that...

AUSTIN: This is the black inky one that causes ego death, that requires two pilots and causes ego death.

JACK: **The Divine Commitment reappears under the control of the new Apokine,** [JACK laughs a bit] **who pilots it by himself.** Does this result in their ego death?

DRE: [makes “who knows” sounds]

AUSTIN: We don’t know. [DRE: The Divine...] Go ahead.

DRE: The new Apokine has the birthright of two people, [AUSTIN: Yeah.] and so therefore they reason that they can pilot Commitment on their own.

JACK: W... wow.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. **Stel Columnar is not pleased.**

JACK: They're piloting... They're also of neither of the original Houses... Stels that piloted Commitment.

AUSTIN: No! No, Commitment was piloted by Orion [JACK: Columnar and Orion.] and Columnar, was a gift to Columnar... Columnar is like "*Excuse me...*"

[DRE laughs.]

JACK: It's now technically, possibly being piloted by Stel Apostolos and Stel Kesh...

AUSTIN: But one person.

JACK: Yes. And Columnar is like "Hang on a second..." [AUSTIN: Yeah.] "That's our Divine."

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: **The Anti-Princept**... [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] Oh, this is an Antipope. [AUSTIN: Yeah.] Huh. [DRE: Uh-huh.] Great, so...

AUSTIN: From Kesh, they're from Kesh.

JACK: So this is like the ruler of Stel Kesh who's like "No-no-no-no-no..." they **manufacture a claim** [JACK laughs.] [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] **that the child was a fake** [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] **tied to an Apostolosian ploy, and takes de facto leadership of Stel Kesh with great support.**

[01:00:05]

JACK: So, they're now basically... This is the Boy Who Cried Wolf situation. [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] Where they're basically like, "Look. We tried this shit before, but now they're doing it to *us*." [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] Are they saying they're not really from Kesh?

AUSTIN: Right! Right!

DRE: Yeah, and the other part.

AUSTIN: And probably denying the other Apostolosian play too, right? [DRE: Sure.] The original play around the Apokine. They're saying "No, that's bullshit... No, the Apokine..."

JACK: "*They* are the ones doing this."

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly. "We *never* did that."

JACK: This is like a person being tried for murder pointing at the judge and saying “Maybe *you* did this.”

AUSTIN: [laughing] “Maybe you’re the killer.” Yes.

DRE: And I think, Austin, you said this was housed in some like, very... almost like... Not almost, but... a racist view of the Apostolosians.

AUSTIN: No, absolutely. Of the Apostolosians, right. Of like... [JACK: “They’re liars.”] “They’re liars, they’re duplicitous.” Exactly, exactly, exactly. They have an imperial... [JACK: “They want to take command of our Stel, the oldest Stel...”] Yes, exactly that stuff.

JACK: Okay. Sure. Basically, “these upstarts...”

AUSTIN: Yeah, and I’ve added two more cards here for you to hit. These are new.

JACK: Okay. [laughing a bit] **Stel Orion announces neutrality in the matter of the Princept...** So, stel Orion who is not directly involved in this, [AUSTIN: No.] is, “Now, listen... Can we all cool it and stop pretending that we are the Princept of other people’s Stels?” [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] “We are fighting the Branched...”

AUSTIN: Well, yeah, totally.

JACK: “And it is so important that we focus on a larger war effort, while you’re out here saying ‘They’re not actually from this Stel, they’re from that Stel’...”

AUSTIN: As a reminder, Jack. I’m gonna move you to the map to show you who is fighting the Branched. You can see there’s fronts, four fronts on the Branched, Stel Four—Stel Columnar, Stel Nideo, Stel Kesh, and Stel Apostolos. Stel Orion shares zero border with the Golden Branch. [JACK laughs.]

JACK: [still laughing] They are the furthest away! [AUSTIN: Yeah.] Oh, that’s wonderful!

AUSTIN: And are happy to remain a dealer of arms... You know, ‘cause Stel Orion are very much going to be our economic powerhouse, our manufacturing powerhouse, I already have names for all the mechs they make, so.

JACK: This is a complete play for popularity within the Palace, right? ‘cause like Palace things come out, [AUSTIN: Right. Yes.] And the headline is like “Stel Orion focuses on the importance of the strength of the Stels, the values of Asterism, and asks that Stel Kesh and Stel Apostolos put their differences beside them... [AUSTIN: Yeah.] against the threat of the Branched...”

AUSTIN: You got it.

JACK: And then **Season 6** starts.

AUSTIN: And then the final card: "Season 6". Um, I thought there should maybe be another card here for like what Stel Columnar is up to, but I think I'm gonna leave that open. I'd really like Keith to have some input on that...

JACK: We know that they're pissed.

AUSTIN: We know they're pissed about the shit with the Divine Commitment, but I also think that they're just generally... You know, so we're playing *Beam Saber*—we announced that in this game, Jack— [JACK: Oh, rad! Okay, cool.] And all of the factions have a different government type. [JACK: Uh-huh.] So like, Stel Nideo is a theocracy, Stel Orion is a corporatocracy, etc. Stel Columnar is a democracy, but we're gonna do everything possible to problematize that. Like, I think that they're a democracy that's is happy to also be very... to, to have that democratic freedom. One, that democratic freedom is... replaces a different sort of democracy that the Stels didn't like, that the rest of the Divine Principality thought was like, weird, and not the right type of democracy. [JACK laughs quietly.] So it's been replaced by good traditional democracy. And two, I think that there's a lot of like, they have their freedom because the Divine Principality is an empire, you know what I mean? [DRE: Yeah.] So, so yeah. So that is where we're at, and...

JACK: Oh, it's so exciting.

AUSTIN: Thank you, Dre and Jack, for hanging, and knocking us out, and I'll put this at the end of the last file, that way... the last Road to Season 6 game, that way we have just a quick... You know, a quick run-through, a quick 40-minute run-through, an hour long run-through [DRE laughs.] of this stuff for people who don't wanna hear the whole game. As always, thank you for supporting us...

JACK: Maybe we should... Oh, sorry.

AUSTIN: Go on, what were you gonna say?

JACK: Maybe this should just be an episode on its own, 'cause otherwise people would get... have to listen to the *Microscope* game, and then...

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK: It's long enough.

AUSTIN: It is long enough. Alright. Thank you for joining us, and for hanging out. Dre has to run, so I think that's all we're gonna do. Let's do a quick time.is.

JACK: Let's do that.

AUSTIN: Join us in Season 6 where we get up to some fucking nonsense.

JACK: Oh my god.

[White noise, followed by mechanical sound, like a tape recorder starting.]

AUSTIN (as Keen Forester Gloaming): Exigency Register A-TM-V-742 - Total Record of Events, Entry 394

Well. If the doctors are to be believed, this will be my final record.

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

For all the damn good it will do: I think the only thing that'll ever hear me at this point is whatever the hell they're calling that damned machine days.

If you've listened to the rest of these then you already have a list of my mistakes as long as the last few decades that it took me to record 'em. The people I let down. The... well, I don't think you need precis on all the mistakes I've made but, but I figured, maybe before I go, that maybe it's worth pulling something together.

See, I spent my life believing that I was fighting for justice, because in my mind "justice" was inevitable. Actually, maybe it's more fair to say that I believed justice was *inevitability itself*. Don't get me wrong, I didn't think it those *words*, but... the engine of history was on a track, and whatever stops it made along the way, whatever twists it took, it moved towards equality, freedom, justice. And so I spent my life, devoted to keeping those tracks well greased and in place.

And then one day, I saw that I was wrong. I didn't want to believe, even now I don't want to believe, but on nights like this, I look around and I see foundations being laid for the construction of ill houses. And it makes me certain... the only thing that guides the tracks of history is *power*.

So, on the long shot chance that someone other than an indifferent machine hears this? Then do me a favor. The inevitable engine of history? Derail the son of a bitch.