

PARTIZAN 33: A Single Shot

Transcriber: Theo [Scared Civilian#8424] [0-1:54:23]

[Music begins: TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.]

AUSTIN (as Rye): A letter to Motion from Rye, Elect of the Divine Space, Second of the Nine Coronet of Stel Orion, and Chief Signatory of the Pact of Necessary Venture.

My friend, you know that I know, that you are granted a certain latitude among our little coterie, and you know that I know that you have your particular fascinations and predilections, and that I respect that. Part of what makes the Pact so unique is the understanding that a single voice does not a choir make. However, I know that *you* know that it is my job to ensure that the books come in right.

Now, in the past, I've not raised it if a few extra troop transports or a deck of hallows or a crate or two of rare materiel slide off the edge of a tanker. I have not minded that because you have gotten results. No one gets results like you. But ever since Future was stolen and Plumeria and Myosotis were taken from us, rest in peace, you have had a way about you that interferes with results. What I will say is what you are promising is incredible. The things you have shown us, they seem possible. Your little clones and the Perennial wave, and the Branched tech and the, uh, the god stuff. Ain't none of that's something to laugh about. Those are beautiful achievements. I admit it. But you don't need to wear a tuxedo to go to the market, do ya?

The thing is, Gallica and I, we've spoken. We talked it out... and we're of the mind that, well, it may be time to wrap up this whole Partizan thing. We both know how quick you could end this, and we don't care if you use your toys, your ploys or your boys. Break them little brats—and end it! This don't need to be cinematic. It needs to be over.

AUSTIN: You hear, you start to hear beeping.

JACK: Hmm. Hmm... Oh, you're not going to give me any more than that.

AUSTIN: Not yet.

SYLVIA (as Milie): We should get outta here.

AUSTIN (imitating a bomb timer): Beep, Beep.

JACK (as Kalar): Yep. Let's go.

AUSTIN: Uh, and Sabeeha activates the, um, self-destruct. Would not be a Gundam Wing nod without one mech self-destructing in a huge explosion. Uh, both of you or either of you, I guess you could do this as a group action, if you want to, um, uh, have to get out of here before it blows up.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Well, there's two ways to do this, I think. One is to, for each of you to individually roll, to get out safely. The other is to have someone lead a group action. In which case, basically one person is going to take the stress from the other's failure.

JACK: Okay. Hey Millie.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

JACK: How do you feel about leading a group action?

SYLVIA: I, you know what? I'll give it a shot.

JACK: I mean, what's your like...

AUSTIN: Is Millie better at this? What is... yeah, what are you...?

SYLVIA: I don't know what the...

JACK: I might actually be better at this probably

AUSTIN: Uh huh. This probably is a Prowl. It could be a Wreck.

JACK: I'm definitely better at this.

AUSTIN: Depends on how you're getting out of here.... Yeah. You're definitely better at this. But you're both at risk.

SYLVIA: If you want, we can do this separately. I don't want to like fucking... just, like, kill you already.

[Ali laughs]

JACK(contemplatively): Mmm... Hmmm...

AUSTIN: And for the record I'm using this. This is a, this is a rival acting whenever, whenever they want this is Motion still enacting this.

SYLVIA: So that's what, one more of those?

AUSTIN: One more, one more. Yep.

JACK: Yeah. Separately might be better.

SYLVIA: I'm fine with doing that. Cause I can like push myself or do some other shit.

JACK: Alright.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Risky, risky standard to get out of this warehouse. And basically the area before the, uh, the Aponia blows up.

JACK: This is a 3d6,

AUSTIN: 3d6 for you. And then a... [surprised/excited] Wuh! Uh Oh! no

SYLVIA: I'm pushing myself so it's a 1d6.

AUSTIN: Uh oh! Wait so you're using a Prowl or is there? No... I'm looking for other things you could do here. Yeah. Are you pushing yourself? So it's a 1d6.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All right.

JACK: Oh my God.

AUSTIN: This is like running through the hallways, jumping over things.

SYLVIA: Um, is there like a collateral die I could take?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes. Okay. And that collateral dive will be that, uh, Cas'alear will engage with, uh, the Aporia and the Demiurgos.

SYLVIA: Ah, fuck. Um,

ALI: Seems like a win-win. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah, I mean that... sure...

SYLVIA: I'm gonna take that one.

AUSTIN: Alright,

SYLVIA: Because I also am planning on heading that direction myself So what was this desperate, um, standard or?

AUSTIN: Yes. Ah, risky, risky standard. Risky standard, you heard the beeping, you're not in a desperate position here. I wouldn't. The desperate, desperate consequences are so strong, especially against someone who's as strong as Glory. Uh, it would be rough. So you, uh, both of you do riskys

SYLVIA: I'm going to um... roll this.

AUSTIN: All right. So it's 1d6 for you. And that's a six! A two, a one and a six. What's the... Oh wai- wait, wait no...

SYLVIA: Oh no, I rolled too many.

AUSTIN: You rolled too many... You gotta reroll that.

SYLVIA: I get the two.

JACK: (concerned) No!

AUSTIN: No no, I said that. I said this before. What are you rolling? You're rolling. Yeah.

SYLVIA: I'm rolling Prowl. I misread, I was looking at Finesse.

AUSTIN: Aha. I'm sorry.

SYLVIA: It's fine.

AUSTIN: Wait, so that means you were wait. That means you're rolling one die.

SYLVIA: Well, no, cause I'm getting the one die from pushing myself and then the one day from the collateral die.

AUSTIN: Oh, you're right. You're right. So it's two. So give me a fresh roll. Fan of the player.

[deep inhale and exhale from Ali]

SYLVIA: Thank you. I appreciate that. [rolls] That's a three...

AUSTIN: Doesn't fucking matter. It doesn't matter at all. [Ali laughs nervously] Go ahead and let's see Kalar, let's see your roll. So we can see if we're doing this all at once or what.

JACK: That's a four!

AUSTIN: [brisk exhale] I was so shook with the two ones up top.

[ALI and SYLVIA laugh]

Um... this is bad. Uh, uh, and, and, and I think part of this here is, is, um... God... Okay...

So, uh... Here's the plus. Kalar, as you're running out, you manage to not only see, but if you want to, tackle Sabeeha here. Um, uh, as you, as you're like chasing your, you found the quickest way out, and it happens to also be Sabeeha away out and at a four, I'm going to tick this, Sabeeha clock an additional, uh, two steps here, um, as you get a standard success, um, uh, and you are now just like above Sabeeha.

Uh, however, you've, there's two different, two different consequences for the two of you because you basically succeeded, which means you basically didn't get blown up here. Uh, however, on your way...

JACK: Oh that doesn't sound good for Millie.

AUSTIN: Oh, it doesn't

SYLVIA: (in a small voice) It's fine...

AUSTIN: uh, um, you, uh, Kalar on the way out. You get your, let's see here... I think you get your. Anti-mech blade stuck on something. And so I'm going to give you a, a hard choice here, or I guess you can resist this. If you want to resist it, you lose your fine anti-mech blade until the next mission, as it gets caught on like, uh, some piping and like you either have to like disconnect it and keep moving or stay behind and take really bad harm and so the, the risky consequence for you is losing a piece of gear.

JACK: Um, I think like close up on Kalar's face looking between the two objects.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Like it's a moral choice in a Ken Levine game. Um, uh, and then he just says
(as Kalar): easy, come easy, go. It's a fucking sword. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

JACK: And goes for Sabeeha

(as Kalar): it's a fucking sword, mate. What're...?

AUSTIN: It is, it is, you're not wrong. You're not wrong. Um, so yeah, so there's that, but then, uh, Millie. [**SYLVIA:** Mhmm] You're going to take a big one here. [Jack sighs]

SYLVIA: Tell me about it...

AUSTIN: Actually I think it's not, I think it's still only risky. So it's only level two damage, which is not so bad, cause it's only risky. Um, but if you thought you were blown up before...
[laughs and Jack laughs too]

SYLVIA: Well, I got saved. Thankfully...

AUSTIN: You did get saved last time. Um, I think you are going to take. That's too hard. That's... The word I have here is "shattered" and that's too fucking hard. Um, I think you're concussed. I think you get thrown by the explosion against a wall and are just like, this is not a good place to be. You have taken some head damage here

SYLVIA: And that's a level 2 harm?

AUSTIN: That's a little too hard.

SYLVIA: Millie's not having a good day...

AUSTIN: You can resist it,

SYLVIA: Ah... I can't resist it. I have two level 1 harms.

AUSTIN: Ah right. You can't. Yeah. Right. Totally. You can't resist it in your out of armor. Yeah. And you're out of your, out of load one, two, three. I mean you could...? No, you're out of load. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Or you have one load, but that's not enough.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All right. Um, Cassander engages. And immediately we get this like great fight between clean the shield or mech and the, the Beam Saber mech. Uh, except that they're both in the slow-goo, so it's like a slow-motion fight, but in real time, um, and they're, they're fighting to a bit of a standstill, uh, for now, at least. Um, but hey, it's another thing that's, Cas is another thing that seems like maybe is gonna slow this down. Um, Broun, what are you doing? Let's get you back into the action.

ALI: Um, okay. So I. I have a suggestion and I would like to be able to finish making the suggestion before you make a comment on it. Because...

AUSTIN: Yup. Sounds good. [Keith laughs]

ALI: I know a... [Ali giggles along with Keith] I know a second ago we said no Asepsis, but imagine for a moment, if I marked that I had fine destruction tools and that Broun had those same canisters from the end of the Kingdom game and were like able to launch shots that would land on a mech and then like cover them with like an oil or like with a dirt or something that would make Asepsis, like try to dig into it? Like below its...

AUSTIN: I love where your head is at. You have to earn it with a long term project. It's a Divine. If it was just that you found a cool... [Ali is agreeing and constantly laughing] you know what I mean? Um, I mean, here, I'll let you roll it. Uh, it will be desperate, no matter what forever. Whenever you use it, if you want to launch a Divine onto a battlefield...

KEITH: You'll need a six then it's like the
[Ali laughs mischievously]

AUSTIN: um,

ALI: I feel like this is part of the research of being like, "how would this react to action?"

AUSTIN: Totally. I'll let you do it. Out here. I'll let you start a clock. I'll let you start a clock. That's an, an eight-step clock. Oh you already have a clock? Don't you, already have it for research. Yeah, you are. Yeah. Uh huh. And it's an eight-step clock and until that clock is filled, anytime you do anything with Asepsis is desperate.

ALI: Sure. Okay. Um,

AUSTIN: Oh and I'll mark it. Every time you use it. I'll mark a clock. I'll mark a tick. so you're at one on your Asepsis clock.

KEITH: I... Side note. We're I think we're sidestepping this. I mean, this, I can't believe. Broun saw Asepsis and was like, "I could use that."

[**ALI** giggles maniacally]

AUSTIN: It's unbelievable. And she's now launching a Divine, parts of a Divine onto a battlefield where one of your crew members has the belief "no more Divines on battlefields."

ALI: [evil laugh] [Jack chuckles in response] We don't get along anyway. It's fine.

AUSTIN: Also, I love that, one of the, one of the rules for this mission, one of the rules of engagement was "don't deploy chemical, biological, or poisonous weapons."

ALI: That's not, that's not a poison...

AUSTIN: Right. This is mechanical. This doesn't count.

ALI: This is like a, like a, like a... mmm, no... this is... [Ali keeps laughing]

AUSTIN: And, uh, okay, go ahead. Declare it and uh... I don't think this is, I wouldn't say... one thing though. I do think this is a payload bay. I don't think that this is a... Whatever the other thing was, well fine just hmm...

ALI: You don't think this is a fine destruction tool?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I do. You're right. That actually makes sense to me. Yeah, go ahead and take it.

KEITH: I want to see the conversation where someone is yelling at us being, like "we said, no chemical weapons. We said no biological weapons" and Broun goes "well, technically..." [Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh we did...

ALI: Broun's already done that once before, to be fair.

AUSTIN: I was going to say, we saw that conversation once already. Alright, desperate. A desperate, what are you trying to do with it?

ALI: Well, the thing that I am literally trying to do is launch a rocket that's going to make these two mechs really dirty. And then the Asepsis things are going to be like, "I have to clean that" and try to like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Try to grind their way into that metal.

JACK: God... Miserable...

AUSTIN: Go ahead with uh... go ahead, desperate, desperate great. This is a bombard presumably.

ALI: Sure. Sure sure sure.

AUSTIN: And are you gonna push yourself?

ALI: I would love to push myself,

AUSTIN: Which thing are you using here is it Hidden Compartments? "Guess what assholes? I brought a Divine to a knife fight." [Ali laughs]

ALI: The, um, the only other idea I had like to do something similar to this was like, what if I use my exploding shrapnel to fuck up their connection with Motion. And that sucks compared to this other idea.

AUSTIN: No we should do this idea, the dirt bomb that causes the Divine to start eating... [Sylvia laughs] The Divine, whose mind you, I guess you've locked down so that it won't have freedom anymore. And all it has is the impulse to destroy dirt still. Great...

ALI: (matter-of-factly) Research. This is 3d6?

AUSTIN: Yeah, 3d6 or it could be... Yeah, 3d6. Here's a rule I'm making, you cannot push to change your position where you're using Asepsis. It's always, it's always desperate. **ALI:** Ok fair. No no no. I will take... Yeah. [laughs]

AUSTIN: You can push for greater effect, but in this case it's already great effect so...

ALI: And that's a six.

AUSTIN: And that's a six. Okay. So that's three... You can advance, you can advance ah, up to three things between these two clocks, basically. Um, uh, one of those clocks, it seems to have vanished. There it is the Aporia clock. So you tell me where you put these. Are you putting these on Aporia? Are you putting them on Motion slash Laurel slash Demiurgos? You, you break it down for me, how you're gonna do it.

ALI: um... and it's three?

AUSTIN: it's three.

ALI: God... Um, I feel like it's, take out Aporia and then put one on Motion.

AUSTIN: That's probably the play.

ALI: Yeah. Take one out. Hurt the other.

JACK: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, so this is like, muck just covers Aporia and those little like mouse-like vacuum units, uh, come out and just begin to crawl all over the body of Aporia. And, and like, we get the shot of;

Aporia that has like set down two shields on the front and the back, uh, or I guess I Apothesa does this in the front and the back, uh, behind them, um, to kind of be like,

(as Apothesa): I need a moment to get these off of me..

AUSTIN: Ya know, um, and, uh, The, the... completely just devours this machine from the inside out and at the last second, Apothesa ejects.

KEITH: How accurate is, are these dirt bombs? Is there splashback?

AUSTIN: Yeah sure, totally. Also part of this, part of the area definitely gets eaten a little bit, but with a six it's not, it's not enough to cause any real problem, but yes, of course, there's, uh... You can't deploy weapons like this without there being some problem, but I'm not killing anybody. No one gets hurt, but I bet you, someone has a bigger window than they did yesterday.

[Ali giggles]

KEITH: Well, what you're saying is people aren't getting hurt. It's not that, that's a rule. There's no rule that says people can't get hurt. [Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, absolutely not.

ALI: Broun can make it like an incredibly viscous fucking...

AUSTIN: oh my god I hate it...

ALI: ...material that won't have all the splashback with this.

AUSTIN: Um, well... So here's, the other thing is you get to learn something here too, which is fun.

ALI: (interested) Oh sure.

AUSTIN: Um... And we're going to move Aporia over here. Cause Aporia is done. Get rid of that. Let's go move the Katalepsis also over here.

JACK: Austin?

AUSTIN: Let's go move the Epoche also over here. What's up?

JACK: Can I get an assist on any of these?

AUSTIN: Uh, no. You're nowhere near here. And you have Sabeeha to deal with?

JACK: No, I mean, I mean. I helped kill those mechs. Can I get like a kill assist? You know?

AUSTIN: No. Absolutely not.

ALI: Heh. You want, the XP bonus?

JACK: I want the stress removal.

AUSTIN: Kalar has a thing that says, "when YOU defeat a machine of war greater than yourself, heal two stress," you didn't do that.

JACK: (disappointed) Awww I mostly did...

AUSTIN: Sorry, it doesn't work like that. Kill steals. They exist.

ALI: (totally not sorry) Yeah, I'm sorry...

AUSTIN: The other thing that happens here is they do you get to chip away at the Demiurgos and then the Demiu-, the Demiurgos reveals something else. In the same way that it can create things from the, the, uh, the Perennial Wave it can also reduce things to the Perennial Wave as the little machines, of Asepsis turn to dust and begin to follow it. Um, as it marches through this goo. Actually it doesn't march through the goo. It sees the goo, and marches through the buildings, uh, towards Cas'alear. And I'm taking the final, uh, the final rival move as Cas,alear, uh, covered in sticky goo, but not being eaten by Asepsis.

[ALI giggles]

Um, uh, get stabbed through the cockpit by the spear of Demiurgos. It's a level 4 harm. ah, you could resist it... Someone could try to resist it in Cas'alear's favor. Um, but I think what specifically happens is, there's a message that goes out, and Laurel says,

(as Laurel) That's too far.

Seeing you use seeing you use the bodies of, of Asepsis against, against them.

ALI: (chuckles) Uh... stay mad about it. [**KEITH** laughs hysterically] Um, what's the, what's the stress cost for helping?

AUSTIN: Tell me how you're helping.

KEITH: I think Broun's going to have a lot of saying that...

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Tell me how to help here or how you're, you're, you're resisting. How are you getting Demiurgos and Laurel to not kill Cas'alear Rizah?

Who I guess like, I'll paint the whole picture here. Is like, sees this happen. Demiurgos sees this happen. It's like you know, Cas'alear sees this... Oh not Cas'alear sorry. Uh Laurel sees this and then stomps through these buildings and Cas'alear who was like backed up as you've done this thing of deploying a Divine against, against your enemies. Like again, a brain-locked Divine.

Um, steps back. You know, mantid claws still covered in the goo of the, the defensive perimeter that you set up. Uh, and then just like claws up to try to attack Laurel. Um, there's a real animosity between Cas'alear and Laurel.

Uh, Cas'alear sees... Cas'alear knows the historical figure of Cassander probably better than anyone alive. Um, because of being, like the sibling of the Apokine and the, the, one of the Princepts, which means that you get kind of exclusive rights to more real information about the history.

Um, and so seeing this person take on the, uh, the, the name for their whole life and the identity of someone who was not just a great war hero, but was actually also like a doctor and like a thoughtful leader and the compassionate friend really upsets Cas'alear. And...

KEITH: And a good sibling.

AUSTIN: Absolutely. Uh, well... [laughs] sometimes, most of the, most of the time. Um, and we get Cas'alear do the thing of just like, claw, like huge robot mantid claw goes up and then just in the most anime way possible, you don't even see the Demiurgos move its hands. Right? Or you see like the first frame in the last frame as the arm of the Ataraxia gets cut off and like slammed against the building. Goes up to do it again. And again, just gets like pinned to the ground with the spear, um, and is going to kill Cas'alear. And this is,

this is I think what Laurel has realized, and Motion has realized: the best way to hurt you is to kill your best ally in Apostolos. Um, and that's the last rival move. So Broun?

ALI: Yeah. Um... God, this is actually tough. Cause I feel like Cas is sort of outside of the group in that way. Um, but in thinking of Broun, in terms of the person who is like, the manager, SBBR and the... **[AUSTIN: yeah.]** person who like outfitted people's mechs for this mission. Um, the, the first thing that I thought of is like having like a, um, like a remote, um, Like eject t thing that they're able to object for Cas, like the idea of Broun, like watching on their screen, being like, "Cas get out of there. Cas get out of there."

AUSTIN: Alright. right.

ALI: And like seeing Cas not do that because they're dedicated to the fight and like flipping that switch for them, so to speak.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay. I like that. So that sounds like what you should use is... If you're going to do this is, um, Yeah. Insight because it's you noticing it happening and reacting.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: That's 3d6

You are not in combat. So I don't think you get Forged in Fire here.

Mmm Hmm. I'll give it to you. I'll give it to you.4d6. This is still combat.

ALI: So 4d6?

AUSTIN: So you're gonna roll 4d6 and then take stress equal to six minus the highest number. So you are in range, you are in range of a scar.

ALI: (exhales in relief) Good.

AUSTIN: Take one stress. Um, this is still a level three harm, but you've moved it out of the death. Uh, and so, yeah, I think the eject happens and what we get is, we get, and I won't get too detailed here, but the blade of the spear enters the cockpit vertically as the ejection sheet, ah the ejection seat ejects. Uh, and so we just get... You know, uh, Cas'alear cut across the chest. You know, from this mech scale blade, just, you know, almost dissected down the chest. Um, as they eject away. And, um, um, you know, I think the, the ejection seat, plus the, you know, plus, uh, a parachute or something is going to land them a safe distance away. Um, but someone's gonna have to get to Cas quickly to, to... uh... You won't

have to, but you know, Cas is going to be seriously wounded from this, um, in a, in a real real way, uh, though alive.

KEITH: Um, is this where we could get A.O. Rook in here?

AUSTIN: Sure. Sure. What do you, by the way, [Ali laughs] this whole time you had had, and we didn't know which side had... Uh was... You know, you're both SBBR now, which means only one of you can use A.O. Rook and the cohort, um, uh, you know, at a time.

JACK: The toughs.

AUSTIN: The toughs, uh, at a time. Um, but yeah, so, so yeah, I can imagine you calling in A.O. Rook to, to come.

KEITH: I heard you almost say. We've had A.O. Rook this whole time, as in, we were doing all this, with with help we weren't using.

AUSTIN: No no no. Well, I mean, you, you could have called on A.O. Rook whenever, but it sounds like you want to use A.O. Rook to grab Cas'alear.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Uh, I'll note, one of the things I upgraded with Rook, A.O. Rook is that, um, uh, he is still loyal. He's still eager. The toughs are, are still that, but they're also rovers now. Because they have the vehicles. Um, and so I think A.O. Rook is probably here in the Panther. [ALI: Um...] is this the thing where you, you call him in to be like, "yo, we gotta get this person." Ali, what were you going to say?

ALI: Um, no, I was wondering who the fuck that bird was. Cause like,

AUSTIN: That's A.O. Rooke in the Panther.

ALI: Yeah. You said that. Yeah. Um,

KEITH: Get it? Panther?

ALI: mhmm

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh huh. Who... Yeah, I guess speeds across from point comma. What we, what I think is probably happening is A.O. Rooke has been holding down point comma this whole time. Right. Uh, and seeing Cas'alear ejecting is like, [makes whooshing sound] like dashing across to go grab Cas'alear. Um... And escorts Cas away.

Uh... the Demiurgos still stands and just at the door [Ali lets out a nervous sigh] and no one is nearby yet. I'm going to paint one really cool image as this continues. Just like I said

before, the Demiurgos can, can both create things from the Perennial Wave and also seems to be able to, uh, turn things into the Perennial wave and it shows that it can do that now, or Laurel shows that they can do that in the Demiurgos now. Yeah. By reaching a hand of this mech out. This thing that again, looks like an ancient classical warrior, pressing a hand against the wall and seeing it turn to fog and dust. And below all of the people who have like snuck out for cigarettes or who are being held back by guards, look up and see this thing and start screaming.

KEITH: They should have, they should already gone back inside.

AUSTIN: This has all happened very quickly, but yeah, you're right. Um, but I think the explosion also, I think it's a lot of like, alright, everyone has to go this way. And then like, Oh no, nope, there's an explosion that way. Now everyone has to go this way.

KEITH: Um,

AUSTIN: Uh, and so yeah, the, the Demiurgos is making a hole through the wall to like step into the High Altar and, and end this thing.

KEITH: I would like to rush over there.

AUSTIN: Alright, go ahead and move yourself and, and tell me what you do when you get there or whatever.

KEITH: Um, I feel like, I feel like magma me can get over this wall pretty quick. Um, this, this, this might just be a slip. I just wanna just be like, uh, um... Like I might just be running like, this might just be like, Oh, this is, yeah. This, this body can run and it is running. Um...

AUSTIN: Because you're... Wait. Have you, have you gotten rid of the lava? By firing it basically. So you're back to regular. Uh, Oh wait. No. Cause the last thing that happened was that you were, yeah, you're still stuttery, but you're, but you're or whatever hitching, but you're not... Um, uh, because remember, one of the difficulties of being in that lava form is you can't run particularly fast or, well, well,

KEITH: That makes sense. Okay. Yeah, we can say that. I shot out that way.

AUSTIN: Okay. I see you're back to your basic othered form, your, your Diminished, uh, and you're running over. Um, let's just get to whatever that action is. Like, what are you doing as you, as you sprint? Are you trying to get there? Are you throwing yourself at ah Motion? Are you like what's, what's, what's popping off.

KEITH: Let's see...I, I may try something again. Let me just, I, I don't understand this move. Can we go, can we read this move? And we can see exactly what this means?

AUSTIN: Absolutely.

KEITH: "When you push yourself, in addition to the normal benefits." And I didn't do this last time I could have when I pushed myself before... Uh,

AUSTIN: Well, you couldn't for... well, we'll talk.

KEITH: Okay. "When you push yourself, in addition to the normal benefits, you can also partially transform into declared other gear, but at pilot scale," [**AUSTIN:** Right.] "And drastically alter your appearance."

AUSTIN: So...

KEITH: This is saying that when I'm in my envoy form...

AUSTIN: Exactly, when you're in your regular form, you could be like, I'm going to push myself and summon my cool melee weapon that I normally only have when I'm in my other, but I'm going to do it. It's like, it's like, you're the T-1000, right? And you're like, I'm going to turn my hand into a whole blade because that's a thing I can do when I'm in my mech form

KEITH: The reason, the reason that this was worded confusingly for me was because when I, when my body transforms into Diminished, that is the pilot form for me, like in my head,

AUSTIN: Well, pilot is the word this game uses like where it says pilot actions to talk, to talk about a character. It is, I think it is literally the way,

KEITH: but for the, for The Transformed specifically,

AUSTIN: Uh, like, yeah. "the pilot" just means the person, the humanoid scale thing.

[**KEITH:** Yeah.] Not the mech, not the vehicle. It's pilot and vehicle basically in terms of scale. And then drastically alter your appearance could be... You turn into a diff- you're disguised, you look like a lamp post, you know, whatever. Um, uh, But you could do that part of Blurring The Line, but you couldn't do the, because you're in your other form already, your other form already, you couldn't use the first part or nor would you want to.

KEITH: Then I, then I think I want to use some sort of a... Similarly to that first, that first move that I made against the Katalepsis, uh, I'd like to finesse my way on to.

AUSTIN: The Demiurgos.

KEITH: The Demiurgos.

AUSTIN: All right. That to me sounds like a maneuver.

KEITH: Maneuver. Okay. Which I'm just as good at.

AUSTIN: Yeah. When you move your vehicle with skill and agility yeah... Or, or battle either, either one, um, ah...

KEITH: Let's say maneuver.

AUSTIN: Yeah. totally.

KEITH: Like this, sort of like, getting in and out of this...

AUSTIN: Definitely, this is the first time anyone is directly fighting the Demiurgos. Uh, this mission. The first few things, were it healing someone. Right. And, uh huh. Maybe someone did something in the last session. I don't remember, but this is desperate for you because this is Motion.

KEITH: I don't want to, I don't want to tip my hand a little early, but there is one thing that I have a over any of the other people. Well, maybe not Kalar. But, um, I, my mech isn't affected by the Perennial Wave because I don't have a mech.

AUSTIN: Um, but that's not, it's not. The thing that makes Demiurgos scary and makes it desperate is that it's Motion. Motion is in there and fighting a Divine as a desperate action. Also is a tier higher than everyone here. Or two tiers higher.

<30:15>

KEITH: Um, well then maybe this is who else is around. No one else is around.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You kind of rushed into it, which is fine.

KEITH: I did. Yeah. Okay.

ALI: I do a lot of long range stuff. I could support from afar

AUSTIN: This is true.

KEITH: Can we, could this be a setup action?

ALI: Um sure.

AUSTIN: Totally. What do you want to set up or who wants to set? What up?

KEITH: Could I use maneuver to, to bas-, to basically distract and hold. The Demiurgos in order to get a shot, for Broun and get a shot off.

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah.

KEITH: Okay.

ALI: Um Yeah. I was actually, um, hoping to kind of step in, out of turn. I don't know if this is going to work and we can talk through something that might be more effective...

KEITH: Okay.

ALI: But, um, I was hoping to maybe use my last payload bay use to use the, um, the stuff that sticks stuff together to try to, um, Like the effect that Motion is using with their hand to like seal that or whatever. But I don't know if that feels...

KEITH: Can we alley-oop the goop?

SYLVIA: Oh my God. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Could you, wait, could you describe the alley-oop one more time?

ALI: So yeah, I mean, and I. I'm having trouble deciding, because I don't understand what's happening with the like hand dust situation.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. They are, they are disintegrating the wall with their hands. They're reducing it to dust basically.

ALI: Yeah. But like, if there's a way to block what's whatever the communication between the hand and the wall is, or to even like...

AUSTIN: Yeah that would be, yeah. If you would hit it with something else to do... To lock it down or something, you know what I mean? Like fast acting cement or something like that?

ALI: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's, that's what I have and that's what I intended.

KEITH: Oh I love the cement thing.

AUSTIN: You're going to do the setup then, and then let Phrygian do the follow up is what you're saying.

ALI: I think Phrygian is setting me up by putting Motion's body in the right place for me to aim.

AUSTIN: Got you.

KEITH: Actually. I, I now have a new thing, and... [Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh my god this is a lot.

KEITH: Ali, could you please set up?

ALI: Would love to. Sure. What am I rolling for that?

KEITH: That's a bombard right?

AUSTIN: This is a bombard. I'm just thinking about the positioning and stuff. This is, this is still desperate. This is desperate standard.

ALI: Okay, um...

AUSTIN: Is that? Is that right?

KEITH: Can I, can I now? I can help?

AUSTIN: Yes, you can help.

KEITH: I can assist by holding it still. Instead of using that as a setup, that can be a helping action.

ALI: And then I set you up to uh, Okay yeah. Can I push myself?

AUSTIN: You can totally push yourself to do a set up. Yeah.

KEITH: So I can take one stress

AUSTIN: One second. Just making sure... Yep. I don't see anything that says that, that, that doesn't work. So I'll let you do it.

ALI: And then I take another stress...

AUSTIN: You take... You're pushing yourself.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In a mech?

ALI: Oh, it's a one quirk right?

AUSTIN: Which you only have... One quick left. So that would break down the mech.

KEITH: Although we could ask for a collateral die.

ALI: We sure could.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um,

KEITH: Unless we want to save that for mine...

ALI: I can ask for a collateral die and you can ask for one. There's die to go around.

AUSTIN: Definitely,

KEITH: It's a lot of collateral though.

AUSTIN: Um, the collateral for the first thing is Sabeeha will get away.

KEITH: Okay. Yeah, I don't like that...

ALI: :Um, I feel like I have, I mean, it's, um, this is a Bombard for me and that's already my, I would, that would be 2d6 for me. So I think I'm just...

KEITH: 3d6 because I'm helping okay.

ALI: Okay, 3d6.

AUSTIN: Correct. 3d6 and you're taking one stress, right? Phrygian?

ALI: Yeah. And then when you go, I can take a stress instead of using one of my...

AUSTIN: Exactly. So this is...

ALI: That's a six.

AUSTIN: That's a six! All right. So there's your setup? Perfect. Which means there's no consequence, which would have been very bad. What are you giving? What are you giving? Um, Phrygian? Or Phrygian What are you taking from that setup? Are you taking plus one on effect? or plus one on position?

KEITH: Plus one on... Effect? Uh...

AUSTIN: Well, depends on what you're, what are you doing? Let's start there. What are you doing as this, as this fast acting cement stuff begins to solidify.

KEITH: Well, I have good news, bad news. I was going to use secret move again, but I can only use that once.

AUSTIN: That's correct.

KEITH: Um, uh, but the good news is that this is still a great setup.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

[Ali giggles]

KEITH: Um, so, so it's fine that I can't turn my entire body into cement

[all laugh]

ALI: Next time.

KEITH: Next time we can do that.

ALI: Yeah when we're back together.

KEITH: Yeah. Um, I'm going to use, I was going to maneuver, but I think now I'm going to. To battle and use my fine Melee weapon and sort of, um, sort of hack away here.

AUSTIN: Then that is, um, by default, this is desperate limited. So you can boost that to either a risky limited or, uh, desperate standard.

KEITH: So?

AUSTIN: Also. Sorry, you have less effect right now, Phrygian from being damaged before starting as desperate limited. So you're going to start, you're going to increase that. But the thing is though, you're going to increase that to limited.

KEITH: To limited right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Then, you need to, I mean, you could roll the dice here, but we see what it does.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But if you want to push it further somehow, you can do that. You could do another quirk. You could...

KEITH: What are we still on this? Do we have the same collateral as before, or is there something here.

AUSTIN: Different collateral now. Um, I think bull Boole Batanka, will see... That... Will see you and be terrified of Millennium Break.

JACK: That's... This is sort of the opposite of what we were. Yeah.

KEITH: That's the chancellor, right?

AUSTIN: That's the chancellor. Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: It's one thing to know that there is a Branched working with, with Millennium Break. It is another thing to see it.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And well, Boole Batanka is, is, is one of the good ones, of people in Partizan, in the world of the world of the Divine Principality, but also has 100% bought into all of the propaganda about what it means to be a Branched. You know?

KEITH: This probably wouldn't be helped by pushing myself and expending my "terrifying" quirk.

AUSTIN: (laughing) No! [all laugh] But also kind of appropriate in a fun way.

KEITH: Yeah. So. I won't take the collateral die, but I will use, I will expend my quill "terrifying."

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: And I desperate limited. And I'm rolling three dice.

AUSTIN: Wait. What are you expecting the quirk to do? Oh, you're getting the extra die is what you're taking, not...

KEITH: Yes. I'm pushing myself, spending a quirk.

AUSTIN: Yup.

KEITH: Um...

ALI: Can I assist from like an engineering sense? Of being like... Of being able to explain where like a weak and a point would be rather than...?

AUSTIN: Sure. What do you, yeah, totally. I like that. I think that works.

ALI: Okay. Perfect. We figured it out.

AUSTIN: Yes. So then, what are you doing with the extra help?

KEITH: Well, definitely. I'm definitely, I'm still gonna, I'm still gonna take the, uh, the die from pushing myself. Uh, and I'm still gonna use the fine melee weapon. I'm just going to actually know. I assume there's a lot of little holes in this thing?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: I, now, the, the help is, "which of these holes are the important ones to wreck."

AUSTIN: Exactly. Totally

ALI: Oh sure sure sure. Like which...

AUSTIN: Where's the, which one matters.

ALI: Under the armor plating. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah. Okay, perfect.

AUSTIN: Um, so you are expanding, "terrifying" still, or no?

KEITH: I am still, expending "terrifying"

AUSTIN: And you're taking that help and to giving yourself.... What, uh...

KEITH: Sorry. I'm giving myself what?

AUSTIN: You're at 3d6 before the help, 3d6 desperate limited.

KEITH: Oh, 4d6?

AUSTIN: So you're going up, but you're staying limited, you're saying desperate.

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay. So 4d6.

KEITH: Yeah. I'd rather just improve my odds to get the six. Five...

AUSTIN: Unfortunate... But you got a five... Um... [briskly sighs] Alright. Uh, You find the right holes and start to do some damage...

KEITH: I got a straight though if that helps. I did get a two, four... [**AUSTIN** laughs]

AUSTIN: That's true. Um, what's it mean to be terrifying as you do this, let's start there.

KEITH: Um, I think, uh, maintaining a body that isn't your own costs something. It's, I mean, it's my own body, but it's not the, it is not like, uh... Uh, I'm not like a bowl of water. Like you can't just pour me into whatever and I'll, I'm just like, "okay, I'm this shap now."

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: So it costs something to maintain a shape. And maybe there's a point where I've expended some quirks.

AUSTIN: Let me tell you, yeah, you keep talking...

KEITH: I'm a little bit stressed out and then the force with which you've got to take this action here. It sort of destabilizes the form, a little bit.

AUSTIN: Funny you say that because you're about to take the level 4 damage, "obliterated." You slit, that the blade goes into the right hole there's sparks and then Motion just moves. You know, uh, her arm, uh, Laurel moves, the Demiurgos' arm. There's, it's kind of a blend of who is acting here, right? Uh, from the wall to you and you find it very hard in fact, to hold yourself together anymore. Um, and begins to do what, what they were doing to the wall, turning you into the Perennial Wave.

Ummm. This is a desperate consequence. Uh, but one of the desperate consequences is, uh, "a level 4 harm when appropriate," and fighting a Divine who can seemingly turn things into nothingness or damn near is certainly appropriate. Um, you can resist this, obviously. You have one quirk left?

KEITH: I do. I will resist it.

AUSTIN: I need to... The thing that's tough here is yeah, you can resist it, I think. Right? Cause you have... I would say this is an Expertise resist. Uh, so you, you would cost you one quirk to resist this, but it will resist it down from a level 4 to a level 3.

[**KEITH** whistles]

AUSTIN: What's the resist look like? What is this cork that you're using? This is actually, this works. This is good.

KEITH: This is "frayed cables." It's my last quirk.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Um, and I think that this is, I mean, if we're thinking, I know that this quirk is exhausted, but if we're thinking of...

AUSTIN: Oh, also this means you will be broken down that, the, you will break down and no longer be able to use the "other" form.

KEITH: Well, the other thing is that I die, right?

AUSTIN: No, I don't. That's yeah, no, uh, level 4 harm, I think is death.

KEITH: Level 4 damage?

AUSTIN: Correct. But you are the mech.

KEITH: Right?

AUSTIN: So this is a good question. Isn't it?

KEITH: With the transformed as a class.

AUSTIN: Let me... I know that this has come up in the Beam Sabre Discord. [Ali laughs] Let me just do a search for level 4 damage.

KEITH: It, it says it, you it's something other, it uses the same rules as a vehicle.

AUSTIN: Correct. I sent this question to Austin Ramsey who says, "huh? The other dies, I guess?"

JACK: Mmmm

AUSTIN: That's so fascinating. And, and the thing is...

KEITH: The other can't die? I am the other,

AUSTIN: I know...

KEITH: You see, part of the problem is...

AUSTIN: ah, are you separated from this part of your being? Is there more? Is there a, more of a violent thing? A better demonstration of what the Pact is capable of them saying, "you're not Branched anymore. You don't get to turn into other things anymore." Or if you do it's this much more diminished, apologies, way. Or you'll have to relearn this technique or, or spend time, like you said, I think that you're right. That it's more interesting. And I think that it is more,

KEITH: Yeah,

AUSTIN: It's super, it's super wild. And I think as we talk, I talk a lot about like, I don't like to no sell bad guys in stories. It's very easy to be like, and here's the moment where you get the one up on them and it, and it like you win. And you're like, okay, it's good. That, that you, it's good that you won, but did they suddenly look the, did, does the victory taste as sweet if you haven't set them up as very powerful? Um Yeah...

KEITH: The thing, yeah, this sort of goes to the, the thing about, and I don't want to, you know, I can only guess what. Uh, Austin doesn't know what's happening. Austin Ramsay doesn't know what's happening in our game right now.

AUSTIN: No, correct.

KEITH: Doesn't know what we're doing with this class.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Does know. Does know that it's, that you're playing a Branched specifically. This class was built to be the Branched. This class was built after Austin Ramsay listened to our, uh, For The Queen game.

KEITH: Okay. Well that changed... I'm still going to say what I was going to say, but it might change, change it. Part of the language of this class. Is that like someone has done something to you to give you this sort of like, Mr. Hyde form?

AUSTIN: Correct. That is, well, it says what they did to you was unconscionable or maybe you volunteered or were born this way and grew into it. So it's broad, but yes,

KEITH: So like, the other dying makes a lot more sense when like, if your Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, when someone kills Mr. Hyde, so you're just Dr. Jekyll now. Yeah. Um, and it, it, it, it, it doesn't fit as well...

AUSTIN: That's right. That's why I kind of like it being...

KEIHT: In a literal way. As in literally has it

AUSTIN: Austin Ramsay has replied again and says, "ah, the other dies, I guess, or becomes unavailable as it heals, read "heals" as being "replaced mechanically." And I think I like "replaced mechanically" and "heals", but I think that it's like a serious...

KEITH: I think it is replaced literally. I don't think it heals, I think I have to make a new thing,

AUSTIN: But I think that that is, but it's you, so it's also you healing both physically and presumably mentally, right?

KEITH: But I think this means like there's no more. I have to have, there can't be. There's no Diminished. I don't come back as Diminished.

AUSTIN: No, you wouldn't come back as Diminished. My question is, do you take a scar? This feels traumatic to me, given everything we set up about what the Branched are. The idea of like, I mean, though at the same time, it's a war form and that's the point of it though, right. Is to be destroyed in place of the true self.

KEITH: And then, and then also if we're following the mechanics of "it uses the same rules as vehicles," no one else would get a scar because their vehicle broke down.

AUSTIN: Yeah, correct. Correct. But also we're doing all sorts of wild shit right now. Aren't we, what's interesting to tell the story here is my question? What do you want to, what do you want to do here?

KEITH: I like the idea of do, I think, I mean, if.

AUSTIN: Maybe it's a long term project, basically to start rebuilding your "other."

KEITH: I think it's a long-term project or how to make a new one, a new form.

AUSTIN: A new war form.

KEITH: I'll have to go on a mission without, uh, without, uh, this part of,

AUSTIN: Yeah. I love that. Yeah. I think that's fascinating. Maybe you can still do Metamorphosis or Blurring the Line, the one where you get pilot scale versions of stuff or something, but you don't, it's not, you can't become Diminished anymore. Right. I love it.

KEITH: What if I touch someone else during, the rest of this fight? I touch someone else's mech and I, become...

AUSTIN: You can't become the mech. [all laugh] You can become the metal. You need to become a little, yeah, it manifests the traits, I guess. That's yeah...

KEITH: No, it has to be ah, metamorphosis has to be other gear. It can't be like a thing, right? Like I can't touch a broom and become a broom. It has to be...

AUSTIN: Totally.

KEITH: Well, I mean, I guess I could have a special melee weapon that was a broom, but whatever.

AUSTIN: Right. Um, All right. So then yeah, I think, I think, I think then take the damage. I think that's more interesting. I think you're totally right. You can't act as the other anymore. Um, and you're reduced down to... You're like, you know, do you just it's as if that part, of you is turned into the Perennial Wave, the fog is everywhere around you now. And you've now reduced down to your Envoy form. Do we get a flash of your true form as all of this is happening. I didn't like, you have to force yourself back into...

KEITH: I think that's where that is. What makes sense versus the scar. I think this is what you are reaching for, with, "do I get a scar?" but it's this,

AUSTIN: Which is, which is, what is your true form? What's a, what's a flash of the true form, not even a, a direct image of it. Do you know what I mean? Also, you were using terrifying and it kind of rolls over in an interesting way here.

KEITH: It's... If I could, if I could use, if I could just. If I could just say some key words. And phrases.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fine. Be as abstract, or as, as specific as you need.

KEITH: A sense sense of that, of Deck 7 of the haunted sort of something in the corner of your eye an operatic, uh, uh, a climactic, um, a climactic, uh, Sort of, I was going to say flamenco rhythm, but almost like the sort of flamenco lack of rhythm where, where there's no, there is no set. There's no set beat. It gets faster and slower as it needs to. And it's sort of these, these attitudes of like an incredibly tense musical climax with no resolution mixed with the sort of haunted carnival vibe.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And all of the people already screaming in, in at point ampersand outside of the high altar are just shook as shit. Um, and I think the, I think we get Laurel, uh, and Motion speaking together as they look at you fall away and they say,

(as Motion and Laurel): [condescendingly] Disgusting...

KEITH: Who does?

AUSTIN: Motion and Laurel together?

Um, Kalar, Millie?

Kalar, you have Sabeeha kind of cornered, let's say here, you know, to chase them down one corner, then another one hallway than the other, then an alleyway, and then finally to an alleyway with no, no escape, um, uh, Millie, you are, you, you've got come back to your feet. Um, and you see, you know, where Kalar has gone to, so I, I'll happy to put you both like in the same sequence again, but Sabeeha you know, has cocked the gun, uh, and is like pointing it kind of, you know, with fear at you. Um, and they say,

(as Sabeeha):[breathing heavy] Stay back, I'll pull the trigger,

AUSTIN: But you, but you have them, but you have them trapped in a way. Yeah. But, but this is, you know, you're at four of six here with Sabeeha.

JACK: Okay. Um, Hm. What position am I in?

AUSTIN: This is risky. Cause they still have a gun on you, but you have them trapped to some degree. So...

JACK: Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, then unless I roll really badly, they're not just going to shoot me in the head and I'll take level 4 harm. I was spooked by what the Divine Motion did to Phrygian.

AUSTIN: That could happen if you roll really badly. You would take a level three harm is what you would, or a level two harm is what you would take, I guess. Right. So yes, they could not do it. You're not in a desperate position. So yes, you could not take a level 4 harm here. That is important to know.

JACK: Um, Yeah. Okay. Do we have like cuffs or restraints without marking that as load?

ALI: Um, uh, yeah, you should. Um, it's on your sheet.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Gear specifically, actually, because remember you have Recon Rigging, which gives you two free load of tools or gear. So I would say, even if it is a thing on your sheet like that, that would be one of those two free free load of tools or gear.

JACK: Okay. Oh, yes right! Yes. To disarm them. If I was just going to disarm them with strength, like walk up and just knock the gun out of there. Um, is that a Struggle or is that?

AUSTIN: You could roll, it, it, Struggle is what would give you risky standard position on it? I would give you, I would give you either. I would let you choose here, desperate standard or risky limited?

I mean, what it says specifically with Wreck right, is, uh, "you could attack with pure strength, but struggle might be better." Um, and that is the case, right? You, by Wrecking, you would either be putting yourself in a more desperate position because you're acting more violently and more, um, erratically, you know, more just like without much caution rashly, uh... Or, by doing it in that way, you wouldn't have the same effect that like a careful punch or a grapple would do with Struggle.

JACK: Right. Right, right.

AUSTIN: But with struggle, you have one less die, so... You can also push yourself as always.

JACK: Hmm. What's the two... Taken to stress. I'll roll the three dice with Wreck that's a desperate, um... Desperate...

AUSTIN: Desperate standard or standard risky limited. Standard would win this fight if you've got a full success here.

JACK: Yeah. All right. I'll give it a go. I think Kalar has kind of had enough of this. Um, and I think it is more honest to the character...

AUSTIN: Really quick desperate brings the level 4 harm into play.

JACK: It does, doesn't it? Yes. That is a very good point. It does bring that into play.

SYLVIA: Do you want some help to somehow to maybe get your position better then?

AUSTIN: There you go.

JACK: Yeah. Right. Cause it's a good, it's a good like...

SYLVIA: I feel like that's easy to help with. Right?

JACK: Yeah. And we had that, that good moment with the armored wings. So maybe this is like, uh, the, the, the repaying of that. Yeah.

AUSTIN: What's it look like? How's that, what's the help?

SYLVIA: Um, it's simple. It can be simple. I think it is just literally like, there is someone else they're like, keep, like, Millie's like probably at a slightly different position. So she has a

better like view of, uh, Sabeeha, um, uh, and like just keeping her pistol like trained on them.

AUSTIN: Cool. Um, all right, so that raises your position then. So yeah. And now you are risky standard with Wreck. Okay. Which is what? 2D6 3d6?

JACK: Oh no!

AUSTIN: Yikes...

KEITH: (sarcastically) No, that's a six.

AUSTIN: No, that's not how it works. [all laugh] Sadly you don't get to add the numbers up.

SYLVIA: At least you're not going to take that level 4.

JACK: Thank you.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, totally.

JACK: Um, I rolled a two, a one and a three. So the three there is the,

KEITH: So not enough for a straight sadly.

AUSTIN: No, unfortunately not. Um, You don't get the success. So that means that they evade you here. Um... God, I love it so much. Uh, Two things happen at once. You're going to take two. Both of you are going to take a level one harm. The first is, uh, as you rush into grab Sabeeha, uh, who is again, arm back on the brick wall gun pointed at you.

JACK: (jokingly) "No, please don't hurt me."

AUSTIN: (Imitating Jack): "No, please don't hurt me."

You pass right through them and it's a hologram and you're, you look down at your foot and you get zapped from like an invisible ink style hologram. Like, zap device. Uh, Kalar, take the level 1 harm "zapped."

JACK: Oh no not a zap device...

AUSTIN: Um, and then Millie, you're gonna take the level 1. Um...

SYLVIA: Can't...

AUSTIN: God damn, that's gotta be a level 2. Doesn't it? It's almost like I worked that out.

KEITH: Why does it gotta be a level two?

JACK: Because Millie has full...

AUSTIN: Yes. Her, uh, level one, uh, harm is already all the way filled up. Um, so take the level two harm, uh, "hamstrung," um, as you feel a blade pass through your hamstring.

SYLVIA: Fuck!

ALI: Hamstrung...

AUSTIN: Uh, and Sabeeha sprints out of the shadows, um, and, and begins to make their way down a different alleyway having escaped you,

JACK: I think Kalar just turns around and goes,

(as Kalar) Fucking hell. There's a hologram. You okay.? It was a fucking, it zapped me?

SYLVIA (as Millie): I'm more concerned of the real one.

JACK (as Kalar): Is ah, how's your leg?

SYLVIA (as Millie): Pretty fucked up.

JACK (as Kalar): Can you walk?

SYLVIA: I think a Millie is like, probably shouldn't walk, but she gets up and is going to walk on this thing.

JACK (as Kalar): You probably shouldn't walk on that.

SYLVIA (as Millie): I'm going to try and get back to my mech.

JACK (as Kalar): Yeah. Okay. Is that - are they just a fucking lost cause now?

AUSTIN: No, they're still a level four clock, you could give chase again. You don't... you know... [AUSTIN laughs]

SYLVIA: Oh! can I like turn around and try and shoot? I have Sharpshooter.

AUSTIN: Totally! listen, Then yeah. Let's try it.

JACK: Oh great.

AUSTIN: You're at, you're at, this is a, this is a, hold on.

SYLVIA: I get... wait, hold on... Fuck. I have minus 2D though.

AUSTIN: Wait, what's the other minus, wait, what's the minus from?

SYLVIA: Oh do I only get minus from...

AUSATIN: You only get minus one. It's only minus one they don't stack.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: They don't stack it's minus one and it's less effect.

JACK: I can help.

AUSTIN: You can help. This is true.

JACK: So it's one stress?

SYLVIA: Okay. Well, I'll be pushing myself regardless because I want Sharpshooter to activate.

AUSTIN: Totally. I think this is a controlled position. From what I've described, they've turned their back to your running your way down an alleyway. Uh, your Sharpshooter though, does I think that is what you need here because you're making a range attack beyond what is normal for the weapon is what you're doing, right. Um, uh, because you described yourself as having what type of gun, a fine machine pistol,

SYLVIA: A fine machine pistol.

AUSTIN: Which is like...

SYLVIA: I don't think she's gonna like, pull out the sniper rifle.

AUSTIN: No, not for this no. Um, so yeah, that's, that's controlled standard, I would say. And then you're helping Kalar?

JACK: Yeah, I think I'm just going to a, what would you like an extra dice or would you like a... It's an extra dice, right.

SYLVIA: Uh... If I do. Yeah. Cause if I do an extra dice so I can get up to three dice.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that's the play.

JACK: I think Kalar is sort of like takes a breath and steadies themselves, like looks, looks down the length of, of Millie's gun, uh, towards, uh, Sabeeha in the distance and just goes like,

(as Kalar) okay, you've got this. You can do it.

SYLVIA: Oh, I like that. I also let's see...

(surprised) No, she doesn't! [Ali groans]

AUSTIN: It's only controlled...

SYLVIA: Can I describe what I think happens with...

JACK: Sylvie rolled a three.

AUSTIN: Yeah Sylvie rolled a three,

SYLVIA: A three a one and a three. Um, So, what I think happens here is that like Millie, like, it's just like, it's the leg, right. When she goes to shoot, she can't like stand up straight

and like, she's like trying to lean on Kalar, but that throws off her aim. Yeah. Like she just can't make it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Oh, and I think you, I think you've, you have wounded yourself further, take the level one harm with a controlled thing, which is going to now spike to a level three harm.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

JACK: Jesus,

AUSTIN: Uh, which is going to be. Like income, not income incapacitated.

SYLVIA: Fuck.

AUSTIN: You're in too much pain. You're like in so much pain. Um, uh, and I think, you know, you, you crumple it in my mind. There's a dumpster in this alleyway, you just kind of crumple against, it makes like that loud echoing, uh, um, you know, bang sound and Sabeeha yells from a distance.

(as Sabeeha) Maybe next time Millie!

SYLVIA: But I think Millie probably like loses consciousness...

AUSTIN: Awww... buddy...

You could... You know... You can't resist it. Cause it was just... [half groaning half laughing]

SYLVIA: I can't resist. I mean literally... My hands are tied. I've taken all the damage I can this game.

AUSTIN: I love it. And listen, there is, there is. Yeah, I, I, we're in a, we're in an interesting position here. Um, do we want to, where are you at? Where what's, what is the situation? Let me tell you, I guess here's the situation is you've beaten them down to a standstill. You've gotten four of them off the map. I think it would be, Sabeeha is really running away now. Uh, I shouldn't say that the clock isn't advanced all the way, Sabeeha disappears into the night. Could show up again. You didn't defeat Sabeeha.

[Jack chuckles]

Um, uh, and Laurel is at the door, right? Uh, and Phrygian is. Is, uh, back in envoy form, um, still capable and envoy form, but it, but, however difficult you think it is fighting a Divine as a mech, is that much more difficult to fight on the ground.

KEITH: Eh, I don't have that reduced the effect though.

AUSTIN: You don't, but you have a much bigger reduced effect from being a human sized person fighting a massive machine.

KEITH: There is a there's someone there's someone that we can call back.

AUSTIN: Huh? Who's that?

KEITH: A.O. Rook's right there with the Panther.

AUSTIN: A.O. Rook is right there with the Panther taking care of Cas'alear.

KEITH: Yeah, there's a whole, there's a whole squad of toughs over there.

AUSTIN: There's a whole squad of toughs over here. You could bring the toughs in. there, is, there is,

JACK: (in a singsong tune) Send in the toughs...

[SYLVIA laughs]

ALI: I feel like there's a..., Um, I'm sorry. I was saying words in, I forgot them...

KEITH: It happens.

ALI: Because the thing that I've been thinking of at what point is this just, you know, we would retreat at this point. Um, but I wonder if, because it's A.O. Rook and multiple people. I wonder if there's like a way of being like, some of them do a final assault and then one person like picks up Millie and Kalar or do they move in a unit, like so specifically.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, you could, you could split them up. I'd say, I think it would lower their effectiveness because they are a group in that way. Um, the here's what I'm going to put on the table here is, [Ali chuckles] um, the... What is the goal of Motion? Motion's goal is to show Boole Batanka that. The Isle of Logos should not side with Millennium Break.

Um, and it's very easy to imagine a world in which Motion, you know, tosses a spear at the feet of the chancellor, a giant mech size spear, the dust clears no one's hurt, but the point, and the point is made, and that means Apostolos didn't kill the chancellor of the Isle of Logos, which prevents further problems.

Um, and that's a loss. That means the mission is didn't work because Boole will not side with Millennium Break and the Isle of Logos will not throw their support in. Um, that's what, but also that would end the fight because in that moment then Motion and Sabeeha would disengage having succeeded at ruining this thing?

So that's on the table for you. [Ali chuckles] I'm putting it on the table that we can end the session there with everyone alive. Or... You know, press your luck. No whammies, no whammies, no whammies.

You could call in A.O. Rook. You could call in the toughs there on the map,

KEITH: Look at all those toughs over there.

AUSTIN: They're all there. In three troop units, plus a Panther, right. Panther ain't bad. Motion, just disintegrated Phrygian's other.

<1:01:05>

AUSTIN: uh, I, you know, and there are ways to... I don't know, there are ways and there are ways. I'm putting it on the table. I'm putting it on the table that you could here fight Motion. Motion's here also. That's the other thing. You can't kill Motion because Motion is Millie's rival and you need to spend two drive clocks to permanently defeat a rival.

Um, um, you, you could still theoretically win this situation. It's just tough

KEITH: Right. It's... I mean, look, that's five out of eight. We already did. That's... Look at all that sunk cost.

[**AUSTIN** laughs]

JACK: Um, uh, remember earlier when Kalar did the wing thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Can I do that? Can I make that move? We may make this move so rarely that I'm completely unfamiliar with how and when it triggers, could I make that move and take a level two harm?

AUSTIN: To protect Millie?

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Yes, totally. We'll have to think through how you take...

JACK: How that works, right...

AUSTIN: Because you've already taken... Um okay... We would just, we would just, retcon what happened there as to being another shot from the fleeing. Uh, Sabeeha instead of being the, the, um, the hamstring wound worsening, you know what I mean? We have the power to do that. Um, or it's, is it funny to have you... Like... No, it's, it'd be silly if like the weight of carrying Millie around gives you a bad back.

[**KEITH** laughs out loud]

SYLVIA: I was going to say, if we didn't want Sabeeha to fire back, we could have just had like Millie's shot ricochet in a bad way or something.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. That's kind of fun. Yeah.

JACK: Oh, yeah as Millie goes down, the shot ricochets.

AUSTIN: And just catches Kalar,

JACK: Kalar in the shoulder or something.

AUSTIN: And that way. But yeah, it's an auto pistol. You're firing rapidly down a hallway, basically down an alleyway. And also, and also maybe the thing there is you, you fall because you realize if you don't let yourself fall, you're going to do more permanent, serious damage to yourself. Right,

JACK: Right. Yeah. Okay.

AUSTIN: I'm happy to have that happen. That's way...

JACK: So I'm going to take...

AUSTIN: Two harm. What is it? Let's say...

KEITH: Instead of zapped. Cause you got zapped.

AUSTIN: No, no, you're still.

JACK: No, no, no. I'm still zapped.

KEITH: Oh in addition to zapped.

AUSTIN: In addition to zapped, instead of Millie getting incapacitated Kalar is going to get shot. Um, I think "bleeding" here makes sense.

SYLVIA: So sorry...

AUSTIN: Yeah it's... The bullet, the bullet passes through you. It's not, again, it's not organ damage, but you're bleeding, and that is... That does make it hard to be a person.

JACK (as Kalar): Okay, that's fine. Don't blame yourself. We can sort this out later.

KEITH: I've read the comics. [**AUSTIN** and **JACK** laugh]

JACK (as Kalar): Well worse things have happened at sea, um... What's the play Millie?

AUSTIN: Remember the background of all this is Kalar is a dad who reads comics and loves Millennium Break.

KEITH: Yeah, that's that's actually, that's one of the Leap pirate comics is "Worse Things Have Happened at Sea."

[**AUSTIN** laughs]

SYLVIA: I think Millie's move is still like, she wants to get back to her mech just because she feels like she can move in it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that makes sense.

JACK (as Kalar): Okay. How are you feeling?

SYLVIA (as Millie): Bad. Really bad.

JACK (as Kalar): Yeah. Uh huh. Yeah

SYLVIA (as Millie): Still alive.

JACK (as Kalar): Best way to be.

SYLVIA (as Millie): I'm so... I'm so sorry for shooting you.

JACK (as Kalar): No, no, no, no, it's really, it's fine. Uh, we can... Look, we can sort this out later. Now's not the time don't beat yourself up about it. Uh, you want to move together or shall I go try and deal with, uh, the big fucker?

SYLVIA: I, um, I think Millie's like, I can probably like, cause we're still near the warehouse where her mech is, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. You're just like on the road.

SYLVIA: She's like,

SYLVIA (as Millie): I can walk back to there. I'll be fine once I'm back in there. Um, you're probably more useful not playing babysitter for me.

JACK (as Kalar): Well, wait a second. No, look. No, it's not baby-. Don't don't undersell yourself here. Um, I don't like piloting mechs, but I'm fine. Like riding on

them. [Millie laughs] Um, if you want, uh, like, uh, a copilot on the outside, uh, I could be with you on the wings.

SYLVIA: Sorry. That was like, that was an in character laugh and Millie is totally like,

SYLVIA (as Millie): Yeah. Okay, come on.

JACK (as Kalar): Great. Let's go.

JACK: Just limp- Both people, just limping.

AUSTIN: Alright,

SYLVIA: God...

AUSTIN: Good. So you're, it sounds like you're fighting. It sounds like you are going to go through with it.

ALI: Uh? I, um, Can I repair Millie's mech?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Do you want to cut to you there already? I mean, the thing is the thing here is like, what we have is there's a real time crunch. Because it's fun to be like in the middle of the mission. You, I mean, you can do this. This is a thing that you know how to do Broun.

ALI: Oh, I don't have the stress nevermind. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, you don't have the stress. Nevermind.

KEITH: I mean, Laurel is right there.

AUSTIN: That's the actual thing is Laurel is in the doorway.

ALI: Um, yeah, let's just go for it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's just go for it.

ALI: Let's just fucking go for em.

KEITH: When did you use all that stress Ali?

AUSTIN: Everyone is very stressed except for you. [**SYLVIA** laughs] Look at everyone's stress Keith...

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Kalar is two off from a scar. Broun is one off from a scar. Millie is three off from a scar...

KEITH: When did I miss all these opportunities to...

AUSTIN: Also, quirks are fucked.

SYLVIA: Yeah,

JACK: I don't even have any, and they're fucked.

KEITH: Well, my, my my vehicle is gone.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I know. I know. You know, you, you just lost it there.

KEITH: Well, we were in the vehicle, so there's less stress, but when you're helping each other and also two of you were not in vehicles for part of it, there was a gunfight.

Remember?

KEITH: Yeah. Okay. That's fair.

AUSTIN: So funny. So just to be clear, Ali was thinking of a move that, uh, Broun has that says that they can repair and can jury rig or a Jerry rig a mech, but not jury rig it. That's a different thing. Jerry rig a mech, uh, uh, to reduce the effect of the damage done to it. So that like the, you don't have the same negatives basically, um, which would have been great on Millie's mech, because it would have dropped from less effects to nothing.

And instead Millie's mech, Millie's mech has less effect. Broun's mech has less effect. At this point. Um, I think it still is that, is that true still? No, that's not true. That would have cleared between sessions, right? Scrapped is from forever ago.

ALI: No scrapped is from the blade mech.

AUSTIN: Oh, totally.

ALI: That happened the session. That was not pre-kingdom.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Then let me tell you something, you should be in worse position than you are [Ali laughs] based on previous things. We missed that. So I will not uncheck anything, but know that any time you did anything with your mech, it would have gone a little worse.

ALI: Mmm. Yeah. Um, I, I feel like the only thing that I can reasonably do with the resources that I have left on my sheet is potentially do a set up action for A.O. Rook. And that's it. That's literally it.

AUSTIN: You do that. A.O. Rook could save this mission. A.O. Rook is also not. A.O. Rook is good, but is not, um, A.O. Rook Okay. Here's how, let me tell you how this works because it's important. I know what you're talking about, right? Or like what we are talking about here.

ALI: Sure. Right.

AUSTIN: Um, uh, Yeah, here's, here's the one I wanted to get to, "when a cohort is sent to it, a goal, uh, covered by its expertise, which this is covered. It rolls its quality to determine the outcome," in this case, its quality is two, "if the action is outside the expertise, it counts as having quality of zero." Don't worry about that. "If a pilot directs the cohort with orders roll Command. If a pilot participates alongside the cohort, they make an action roll with the cohorts scale and quality affecting the position and effect.

So you could use them as a bonus to you doing something basically. Or they could do it themselves, rolling their quality, basically, which you could boost with a setup action or by assisting I guess you can't assist, but you know, by doing a setup action.

ALI: Yeah. There's, there's a version of this where it could either be Broun. Doing like a maneuver to help them move through whatever the situation is. Cause Broun has the little like wheel version and is a distraction goblin. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh huh. You're a distraction goblin.

ALI: Or there's the version of Broun, which goes in with their big wire cutter and just helps them beat the shit out of something. Um, Both the same, [laughs] it's the same, uh, you know, rating for each of those actions.

AUSTIN: True. It's true.

ALI: Um, so... It's one of those. Um, so the difference here is either I am helping them use their own...

AUSTIN: Yeah, really... What, what would be what I would say the big difference here is. Is ha- is who's leading the action. Are you setting them up to do well, or are you taking the charge and they're supporting you, which is a big story thing for Broun in some ways, right?

ALI: Yeah. Um, It's tough because I think, I think honestly, the Broun, the thing that Broun is probably doing is setting them up because Broun is like a support character.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Um, and I think in their heart of hearts, they probably think that A.O. is a better pilot and they are...

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Um, again, they're a distraction goblin and can help them very well that way.

KEITH: (laughing) Huh? Distraction goblin...

AUSTIN: So good... [Ali laughs]

SYLVIA: This is actually the name of Broun's playbook. [Ali laughs out loud]

ALI: Well, yeah, that makes sense, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense to me. I think that makes sense to me. So then, so then you're going to do a set up action. Um, what are you doing?

ALI: Um, what am I doing?

AUSTIN: You said you were like giving them... You were. Like basically talking to them through pathways to get from there first?

ALI: I don't, I don't think it's talking to them through. I think that it might be Broun because Broun, like, I I've kept them here, but I think that they've probably been moving forward with each action that they've taken. And I think because their mech can transform into the like wheel mode, I think that they might be moving through the street, the, the like streets with like flares open on the back of their mech to be like, "come this way."

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah. Then I would say that that's a controlled standard. Effect here, right. A position and stuff and Maneuver for sure. Which is only one die...

ALI: Yeah. Yep...

AUSTIN: Uh, okay. But again... To be extremely clear, part of the reason it's controlled is, you making noise and, and literally putting a target on yourself with a flare on your back, right?

ALI: Yes. Yeah. Um, yeah. Um, great. Um, I don't even have anything to spend if I wanted to, I guess I could ask for a collateral die, um, or I have this one quirk left. If I...

AUSTIN: You would break down by using it, right?

ALI: Yeah. Uh, well maybe,

AUSTIN: Maybe having that second, maybe having that two D is not..., You know, maybe it's worth it's up to you.

[ALI hums while in thought]

ALI: Um, [laughs] um, I'm already about to have an incredibly bad downtime.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. Listen, if you get a breakdown, all the quirks reset, it's just not one of them permanently gets worse.

ALI: Oh, good for Broun. Oh, good for Broun. Um, Oh my God.... Yeah. Mmmm... [laughs]

AUSTIN: You know?

ALI: Mmm. Let me go. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Extremely kombucha dot GIF

[Ali and Keith laugh]

ALI: It's not, cause I...

JACK: Unless....

ALI: Uh, let me just take a minute. Um...

AUSTIN: You could also fill it up and then continue to take dire actions.

ALI: Sure.

JACK: Oh, no, I tried this one, sadly. [all laugh]

ALI: Um, I'm like, I'm just like thinking through how good of an idea the breakdown is.

Cause it doesn't feel that bad... It's worse, but it's not like clicked off for the rest of this game right?

AUSTIN: No, the example that it uses is that like, if you used to have a quirk called slow and heavy, it now becomes slow, clumsy and heavy or unresponsive and heavy. And it was giving me stuff to play with in terms of punishing you, when you fail.

ALI: Sure. And then there's a downtime action to like replace one of your quirks or is that just off the table?

AUSTIN: That's a lot. I think you can long-term project to change a quirk, but it's like a big deal. Yeah, you can earn, sorry. You can earn new quirks by doing the Enhance ability which Millie has been doing. Literally the entire game, if I remember, right. In fact has only ever put one in it. It's so hard to emphasize or to prioritize, Enhance.

ALI: Yeah, sure. I think I'm just going to go for it because like, I know how the rest of the season is probably going to be. [all laugh]

AUSTIN: Listen, we're in the back half. Why not? All right...

ALI: So, yeah. Um, yeah, let's do this.

AUSTIN: So you're break-, you're breaking down. What is this final? What is this? What is the thing you're using?

ALI: Um, I think my final thing is I'm using the bulky torso.

AUSTIN: Okay sure.

ALI: I... It's tough. I wonder how this breaks down. I wonder if it's like Broun, both, um, like, like, like. Um, using the like compartments that are on their mech to like both just like set off, like run of the mill fireworks, fireworks.

AUSTIN: (intrigued) Yeah yeah.

ALI: Um, but I also wonder if it's like a version of it. That's like the Three Cheers sort of moving through alleyways and stuff and like moving through spaces that it can't fit through. So it's like parts of it are breaking off as...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Getting banged up.

ALI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. Okay 2d6.

AUSTIN: 2d6 for a setup action. It's a useful one.

ALI: (under her breath) Oh my fucking god...

AUSTIN: Before you roll this before you roll this, here's what I want to be very clear about. They're going in to do, by default, do desperate limited, just like everyone else was doing against this Divine. This, this success will either give them. Uh, risky, limited or desperate standard. It's up to you, which,

ALI: Well, this is like the only, this is the only opportunity we have to strike at this point.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I, you have to do something in this moment or else, or else they're going to do the thing that they're here to do, right.

KEITH: As someone who spent the entire rest of the season, playing a character whose whole goal was to roll desperate actions, you not want to roll in desperate actions unless you are that one class. It sucks.

ALI: I, uh you know we're going to do this. And then maybe Broun gets out of the cockpit and....

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a six. Alright, perfect. No consequence for doing this.

JACK: We're in business!

AUSTIN: We're in business here. Uh, as A.O. Rook in the Panther, with like all of like the cool bits flying out around A.O. Rook and then a team of troops behind, behind him, uh, you know, descends in on the Demiurgos,

JACK: God... Does he get a cool line?

AUSTIN: Yeah, of course he does. What's he say?

(as **A.O. Rook**): You- you left me waiting by the phone? I could have been here earlier. This whole thing would have gone different.

ALI (as Broun): A.O. I'm not used to this. You could have come in.

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rook): I can't. I had to be at point comma. That's the whole thing, is I wait on point comma, I help down...

ALI (as Broun): We're not going to argue about this right now.

AUSTIN (as A.O. Rook): We didn't lose point comma.

AUSTIN: Alright. 2d6. That's a four. Alright. Risky is not as bad [Ali laughs] as, uh...

JACK: Four isn't a disaster.

AUSTIN: It isn't, um, I think Panther... actually I need the Clementine sheet. What the fuck did the Panther have? Um... It's been a minute...

JACK: Appropriated, Clementine's, appropriated mech,

AUSTIN: Standard... Friend or foe tags. Small armory. And these are not useful things. She, you had nothing good on this thing at all huh? [Sylvia laughs] I think it's a... Oh I know exactly what it is. A.O. Rook sends the various bits of the Panther forward at the, uh, at the Demiurgos, who again, does the like reach out, uh, its hand to disintegrate them as they get closer. And it's like, disintegrate one, disintegrate two, disintegrate three.

And then behind the fourth one is the Panther with its armor kind of shredded down, missing pieces of its body because it's been, they've been sent in ahead of it. And then it has this, this ancient beam saber, this like bright, white, lightsaber looking thing with like the entire, the bottom of the blade is like pulsing with energy. It's like exploding with bright white laser energy and it just swipes it down and uh, and cuts off the hand of the Demi, the left hand of the Demiurgos. The hand that it was using to disintegrate things.

Then the Demiurgos reconstitutes the hand. Uh, let's tick this clock by one. It goes up to a six. With a mixed cot-, with a mixed success on a risky, there's, there's a consequence. That consequence is to immediately do two damage to the cohort.

KEITH: How much damage does the cohort have,

AUSTIN: Uh, three damage total. Uh, so...

JACK: It's better than two.

AUSTIN: It's better, it's better than two. So instantly, uh, re- you know, repairs that hand, uh, and, uh, instead of like fucking around with summoning a shield or anything like that, or something, uh, uh, a spear or anything like that, uh, just like from the center of of this thing's outstretched hand, like a spike emerges. And it's like as if the world it's as if the air crystallizes into a long metal spike and that spike, the other end of that spike is the top of one of these Troop's heads, as that troop explodes, and turns, sending its cannon fire into the two other troops that were standing next to it. And the only one left in this unit from that single motion is A.O. Rooke. Who is, uh, the unit is now impaired and weak, which means reduced effect and minus 1d but you've built yourself a window of opportunity here.

Motion has two ticks left. And A.O. Rook is around to help.

KEITH: Can someone set me up?

AUSTIN: Can someone set Phrygian up? Phrygian is in desperate limited territory currently.

KEITH: If I could get, if I could get to risky, if I can get to risky or, you know, God forbid even controlled. I don't think that's possible.

AUSTIN: Definitely can't get to controlled, no.

KEITH: I can get to risky though.

AUSTIN: You get the risky,

KEITH: uh, I can use, I can use a big gun on it on

AUSTIN: It's true.

KEITH: I, I have a move. I have a move called blurring the line. "When I push myself. In addition to the normal benefits, you can also partially transform into declared other gear, but at pilot scale, so I could transform into a fine directed energy weapons."

AUSTIN: It would be a pilot scale one, which means that would not, it would still be, it would still not be. As a human scale being, you start at a desperate zero effect. So you would

need to pu- when with your push yourself Phrygian, that would bring you up to desperate limited. I had to make sure that that was true that there could be something that, that existed and that does exist.

I think person versus Divine, the message of, or one of the rules of the Divine Cycle is "When a single person fights a Divine. You start at desperate limited." Desperate zero. Sorry. You're right. Yeah. That's what I actually meant. Desperate zero.

KEITH: Am I better off? Am I better off not doing this? And let's let it settle someone else.

AUSTIN: I mean, Millie is back in her mech at this point.

KEITH: Right. But,

AUSTIN: But everyone is so fucked up,

KEITH: But doesn't that Millie has three quirks, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Everyone is fucked up right now.

JACK: I can assist on Millie's mech. I could in theory, assist on Phrygian. Right?

AUSTIN: Anybody could assist anybody at this. Yeah, yeah,

JACK: Oh no, I can assist with my spark with, with you on the wings.

AUSTIN: You have a special thing you mean, or what?

JACK: Um, with my move is With Me on The Wings, "you can spend your spark to assist a teammate, piloting a vehicle. Or push yourself when you attempt to brave and eye catching stunt," so I can basically assist without once without, um,

AUSTIN: Only for some one in a mech which means Millie or Broun, not Phrygian at this point. Right.

JACK: Okay. Yeah. Okay.

KEITH: Kalar is currently on Millie's mech?,

AUSTIN: Correct. Yeah. That makes perfect sense. Yeah.

ALI: I could try to either assist or set you up by using one of my... By taking an action with one of my gear items. Um, it's just a matter of deciding what that would be. Cause I have things like demolition tools, um,

AUSTIN: But a setup and a push would obviously get you up from there. If that's what you want. God, you're so close. It's so fucking wild. It's so, I love this game because you're a

two you're. If you can get a standard success, you win this fight. It's been so hard to get that.

KEITH: I have almost no stress. Let me help other people.

AUSTIN: Wait, that's the opposite of what I thought you were going to say.

KEITH: Oh, because you're saying, let me push myself a bunch?

AUSTIN: And resist because they can't resist if it goes bad.

ALI: Oh yeah. Yeah. You can get stomped on and resist it to survive. Though a desperate failure sucks so bad. That it's hard.

KEITH: I mean, can you, can you, but that would only, let's say it gets stepped on, right. In a desperate limited, that'd be level four harm?

AUSTIN: Level four or level three harm depending on the situation. Probably a level four,

KEITH: But then I could resist it down...

AUSTIN: To a level three and then armor it down further. If you wanted to.

KEITH: Okay. I guess I haven't used any,

AUSTIN: You've used none of your personal load yet.

KEITH: Wait and I could just do a bunch of armor?

AUSTIN: You could just do, a bunch of- you can literally do five, you do armor, armor and then heavy armor, which is very funny. [Ali laughs]

KEITH: Yeah, that's insane.

AUSTIN: That's fun. Yeah, that's right. That's why you, this is how the system works is you don't have to declare anything until you have to declare it. And so, in fact, you don't even need to declare a weapon because you're using your other ability to use that weapon, which is fun.

KEITH: Yeah. Um, I could, uh,

AUSTIN: Can we just do it? Do we just let this thing happen? Which is A.O. Rook swings in, distracts cuts the arm off the Demiurgos, reaches out, stabs through. And in fact, I like to be clear, the thing that's happening here is not just a stabbing through of, and turning of the troops. It's Motion, being Motion, and like getting her cabling in there and taking over it and turning it as it's being tilted down and yeah. Firing two perfect shots to take out the other

troops, but now Demiurgos iss, you know, is distracted and you have a moment here desperate...

KEITH: I'm raising my hand in class.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: I still have a plus one from that role. Well, at the very, very beginning,

AUSTIN: For fights literally right here, a hundred percent. This is the space where you get that plus one to a die a hundred percent.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Again, now, now is the moment I think.

KEITH: All right. Let's all right. Someone, someone set me up, someone else help me.

ALI: Okay. I'm going to set you up. Um, Broun is, has taken off their stupid leather Jacket. They've come out of the Three Cheers, which is just like smoking at this point. Standing on the shoulders of it, in their stupid shorts or their stupid suspenders and their really nice shirt. Um, and on that shoulder, they pull up what is like. Like I, it's an, I'm clicking off in an unusual weapon. Um, but I think that it's like basically a... It's like a fucked up bazooka with like an energy charge in it.

KEITH: What kind of goo does it fire? [all laugh]

ALI: It's a, um, it's a, it fires off like a, like a, like a solid metal baseball, um, that once it strikes something, um, like shatters into electrical energy to like try to, um, like disengage the mechanics in whatever it hits.

KEITH: Like an EMP thing?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That makes sense. Yeah. Okay. Give me... that to me sounds like...

Well, you have to roll it. [Ali laughs]

ALI: I do! Oh my gosh. Yeah. I described it without thinking about anything that Broun could do.

AUSTIN: I mean, this is the setup action, is now you have to shoot the Divine.

ALI: Great.

KEITH: With Bombard though.

AUSTIN: No, not with bombard. Cause, because they're out of their mech, they're doing this on their shoulder, their personal human shoulder.

ALI: This is an engineer that Broun is finding the right hole to fire. This fucking thing into. This is a whack-a-mole situation.

AUSTIN: I see. So the thing here is you're not doing any damage to your you're doing a setup, which means I'm I'm. I still think that this is. I think that this is still risky

ALI: Oh, I have to take two stress to do that. Fuck, I can't do that.

AUSTIN: Wait, what can't you do?

ALI: I can't use Rook's Gambit... To do it, to roll engineer.

AUSTIN: No. A hundred percent.

KEITH: She was saying that she could use engineer because she has Rook's Gambit. Austin, I think you were saying that she can use engineer because it's still, kinda makes sense.

AUSTIN: I think the, I think it does sort of make sense, but I, if it's pointing and shooting, it's not Engineer. Have you had some other way of doing this thing?

KEITH: Survey?

ALI: Well it's an usual weapon. So it could be,

AUSTIN: If it's a weapon it's Hunt, or Struggle, or maybe it's Wreck.

ALI: It could be like, um...

AUSTIN: Do you have anything else you can do to use this? If it's a weapon, you're fighting?

ALI: No, no, no, no. Yeah. Um, I,

AUSTIN: Or? You could push yourself to do it and still take...

ALI: I also don't have the stress for that. Yeah.

AUSTIN: I was gonna say and take a scar.

KEITH: I've got a, I've got a thing. This is an unusual weapon. Ali, you just made this up out of whole cloth right now. Um, it doesn't have to be something that you shoot.

ALI: Right. Yeah. I was going to say that this could be like find demolition tools or whatever it is. Have some sort of...

KEITH: It could just be an EMP button that you press...

AUSTIN: Totally Totally.

ALI: It's a battery scanner.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. It's some sort of long range EMP. I, well, I think that's fun. Cause that gives me more to play with. If you fail,

KEITH: This is such a, this is such a fun game. When it's like story stuff, moving around and whatever and talking, I love all that.

And every once in a while, it, it turns into the most desperate game of chess you've ever played.

JACK: I think it's... Oh, sorry, go on Keith...

KEITH: It was just like a thousand piece puzzle where you're like, I got all the pieces here. I know that I could win this.

JACK: Yeah. The thing that is making me think of that, I realized as we moved into this is, this just feels like Into the Breach.

AUSTIN: Yeah. A hundred percent. We're like how the fuck do we do this? We only have a moment, just I have to move this thing away from the core to save it.

JACK: It also feels like, Slay the Spire or Magic where you're just like, okay, the math's on the table here is pointing in theoretically a good direction. I just need to make sure... Come on, what a good game.

KEITH: Yeah. I have two hours to figure out how these next four seconds go.

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: Exactly. So I'll let you use engineer. If it's like an AOE, it's like a directed AOE EMP device,

ALI: This is a fine demolition tool, which is a well crafted tool for sabotage.

AUSTIN: I see... Yeah, love it.

ALI: That's true.

AUSTIN: Let's do it. That to me means... It's well-crafted. So that means that you're in a better, that means that that helps close the distance because of potency it's a little bit better, which means a tier difference isn't so bad. So I'm going to say that this is, I think it's still risky at the minimum, even though you're far away. I think it's still risky. I think it's risky standard on the setup.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But the risk is there. That's a six.

[Jack gasps, Keith whistles]

Look at this setup!

For the briefest moment, Demiurgos stutters and comes to a stop. The lights inside flickering. Phrygian? It's already, in the time it took me to say "Phrygian." It begins to start back up. [Ali laughs]

All it has to do is reconnect. Just reconfigure itself super quickly with the Divine core that can't be stopped or whatever. And it's beginning to turn back on, but you have a moment you've been set up. Are you taking a better effect or better position?

KEITH: Better? I think better effect, or has...

AUSTIN: So that brings you up to desperate limited, then you're pushing yourself. What do you do with the push?

KEITH: Up to desperate, limited. Great. So, but, Millie, can you help me?

AUSTIN: Millie? How are you helping?

KEITH: The person with the stress to help, by the way.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I got the most, I got the most free stress.

JACK: I could.

SYLVIA: Okay. Yeah, but I have three points and you have two points of stress, right?

KEITH: Yeah you would get a scar if you helped.

JACK: No, no. I'm tough.

AUSTIN: Only one stress to help.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Um, I think like would Millie LinkedIn more, the covering fire would be a good way to help here.

AUSTIN: Sure. Just like with the sniper rifle or with the Stray Dog? So yeah, totally. That works. Yeah.

KEITH: Just providing the briefest second for

AUSTIN: Boom! And like the...

KEITH: It to not know where the attack is about to come from.

AUSTIN: Exactly.

SYLVIA: Like when she was firing at the flying one that I forgot the name of.

AUSTIN: Yes, totally. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. See, that was, that was the... That was the Aponia or the Aporia who could say yeah.

JACK: Um, can see people help at once or is it just the one?

AUSTIN: Just the one it's just the one.

JACK: Okay. Just the one.

AUSTIN: It was the Aponia also. Cause Aponia is pleasure.

KEITH: So I'm desperate limited. I've got,

AUSTIN: You got help. So then what are you using the help for?

KEITH: I got help.

AUSTIN: The help is, is a plus 1D or is it a, uh, is it a position or effect.

KEITH: Well, let's see, I'm taking collateral die, maybe? What's that about?

JACK: Ooh. Don't, don't give him rope.

AUSTIN: Here's your collateral die?

<1:31:34>

AUSTIN: *This is it.*

[all laugh nervously]

AUSTIN: This is the one shot you get.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: If you don't get a two, you can't tick this clock twice. Motion will get what she wants. Which is to scare off Boole Batanka and will... and then escape, you know, you can't kill Motion without rival clocks. So, and then to escape. That is the collateral. The collateral is here is your, you have the opening.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So you can take one, but that will close. The window will close.

KEITH: I'm going to take it?

AUSTIN: Okay. So that's so...

KEITH: I've got, I have... Now follow me here

AUSTIN: What are you shooting with? Yeah, let's follow. I'm gonna follow you down this path.

KEITH: I'm I'm like on the Demiurgos I'm

AUSTIN: Sure

KEITH: I was in, uh, I was in my other form on top of this mech, and then I got turned back into a regular body or an envoy body. I'm... If I were to like scramble to the cockpit in a way that you might ah, draw a pistol. Could I use finesse?

AUSTIN: The thing is yes, but then you lower your, your you're going to lower your, um, uh, effect.

JACK: And, we have taken a collateral here. So like the fact that Austin.

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: If, I want to be really careful with this collateral, because like,

KEITH: Okay, so...

JACK: This is the moment. And that cuts both ways.

KEITH: So this is Struggle.

AUSTIN: This is struggle.

KEITH: It's a Struggle. I'm I'm I'm so I've got...

AUSTIN: I'm going to start writing it out. This is too important. Start.,

KEITH: So from the, from the setup action, I'm desperate limited.

AUSTIN: Set up becomes desperate limited then. Millie help moves you to?

KEITH: Desperate standard.

AUSTIN: Okay. Right. 1d6 desperate standard, but you're also pushing yourself.

KEITH: Can you push yourself more than once?

AUSTIN: No, but you didn't do the push yet. Did you? We didn't count the push.

KEITH: We didn't have the push. Right.

AUSTIN: So that's, it could be 2d6 desperate standard.

KEITH: 2d6.

AUSTIN: Okay. 2d6 desperate standard, plus the setup. wait, set up we did...

KEITH: We did,

AUSTIN: This is why I had to type it in.

KEITH: Is this plus collateral die?

AUSTIN: Plus collateral die,

JACK: Are we sure we want to do this collateral die.

AUSTIN: You want a success?

ALI: I mean, I feel like that collateral die's happening either way.

JACK: Okay.

KEITH: What else do we have?

AUSTIN: Right. I would not. I would not, you know, but here's the thing. You need a six. A successful desperate standard is not necessarily enough because one of the consequences can be limited success. Right? Can be reducing the success.

Keith don't you type it!

[SYLVIA laughs]

KEITH: How?

AUSTIN: Let me take this first, I needed to... Okay. You mistyped it. We're all so nervous. You typed "roll/3d6/roll."

[all nervously laugh]

AUSTIN: I also fucked up the word start while writing this 3d6, looking for a six.

ALI: I believe in you, Keith.

KEITH: That's 50, 50 that's bad odds. Is there anything else left that I can do?

AUSTIN: I'm looking,

KEITH: I'm turning myself into a, into a,

AUSTIN: Your arm reconfigures itself into the cool redirected to beam gun, where you shoot parts of yourself, energized parts of yourself. You know, that's happening right now.

JACK: Wait.

AUSTIN: Um, what's up?

JACK: Can we also just go, we're only rolling 3d6. But it looks here. It says one, two, three, four, 5d6, Austin.

ALI: No no no

AUSTIN: Desperate zero, desperate limited, desperate standard. Two. Three from the collateral.

JACK: Right, right, right, right.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Does anyone have a spark move?

JACK: No, I do, but I need to be riding a vehicle in order, to like...

AUSTIN: And you already have a help die. You already have the thing that, the thing that, that would give me that would totally, yeah, I think we've done.

JACK: We can't... anyone who's not Keith can't pull anything from a load, right. To like...

AUSTIN: You could... No...

JACK: I have a fine Keith helper in my backpack...

AUSTIN: Hmmm you can't assist and have it be a group action... like. Millie can't assist and lead a group action.

KEITH: How do I take another stress to flashback?

AUSTIN: What, what are you trying to do?

KEITH: Kill this mech!

AUSTIN: No but. What's the, flashback.

ALI: You can do a flashback to give yourself better positioning?

AUSTIN: Right. That's the thing you would be able to do. Oh, wait! no, no you do have one more die.

KEITH: Oh! I do!

AUSTIN: From the, from before. [Ali gasps]

KEITH: Is it plus die or plus one result?

AUSTIN: Die, not result. [Ali giggles]

KEITH: So I'm now, at 4d6.

AUSTIN: Yeah, from that early, that early setup from "whenever you fight inside of the walls of the high altar", I wrote it out.

KEITH: We wrote it out and still, almost fucked it up.

JACK: I know another, another option that I just want to put on the table is we don't do the collateral die and we leave room to make scrappy awful moves afterwards. Like basically like, like Kalar can move and can act. I have stress to play with. I definitely have damage to play with. If we fuck up this collateral...

AUSTIN: You're hurt really bad. I just want to be a hundred percent clear.

JACK: That doesn't bother me.

AUSTIN: That's true. And you only have less effect instead of having minus 1d and less effect. Truly, good time to have less effect fighting a Divine that you already would have zero effect against.

JACK: Okay. So I can't, I'm not saying it's good, but I'm saying we can like, if we don't take this collateral, we can maneuver after this and try and scramble for a better position. If we do take it and fail, that's it.

AUSTIN: I'm going to say something else. If you don't take the collateral die, you can scramble and so can Motion. And that means mistakes might get made. I'm not confirming that if this, if you take the collateral die here and fail, what Motion is going to do is put the fear of god in Boole Batanca and communicate to the world that Millennium Break can't be, can't succeed, uh, at protecting its allies, but, but she isn't gonna kill Boole Batanca or Gucci or Phrygian. That would be it, right? This would be, I mean, we'll see about Phrygian because that would be a failed roll and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

But if, if the fight continues, things could get messier than that.

So there is a, there is a, it's a collateral. It is a collateral almost on both in both ways. Um, I'm not saying don't take the collateral die or I'm not saying you have to take the collateral die, but I am saying. Once we, like what the collateral die does do is put a definite possible end here, that is... Do you remember when Gur Sevraq said, "I'm offering you a draw"

JACK: And Clementine said, "fuck your draw, "

AUSTIN: "Fuck you" and then they threw each other off the top of a, of a fort into the sea. Uh, this is similar in the sense I'm not offering you a draw, but I'm giving you a definitive conclusion, that's a possibility. If you reject that possibility by not taking the collateral die, the world is my oyster.

ALI: I feel like we just have to go for it.

AUSTIN: You think take the collateral die.

ALI: Yeah. This is it.

AUSTIN: Millie? Millie's also got a sniper rifle ready to go.

SYLVIA: Why not. If we're, if we're talking about taking the collateral die, then like I'm in. Like we have one shot. Might as well make it count.

KEITH: I also like that. I like the, "it all comes down to this"

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I like the buzzer throw.

AUSTIN: Yeah It's fun.

KEITH: Yeah. Okay.

AUSTIN: This is sports to me.

ALI: Can I set up and then also assist?

AUSTIN: No. There's already an assist. Someone's already assisting.

KEITH: So.

AUSTIN: OH! There is another thing you can do here, but it puts A.O. Rook back at risk. Which is you can use A.O. Rook... but I, but I, but use is right. Um, as, uh, let me see. uh, lead a group action. Where did it go? Why is it — here it is. You would, you would get, you would get better position or effect from having A.O. Rook fight alongside you.

KEITH: Okay. All right. Yeah. Better effect. So this is now desperate great.

AUSTIN: Better effect, which guarantees any success is a win. Because even if I reduce it...

KEITH: Four dice,

AUSTIN: Even if I reduce it, it's a four or five, it's still a, at least a standard effect, which gets the win.

KEITH: I knew that we have the tools to do, to get two damage off one roll. I knew he could do it.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Against a Divine. 4d6,

KEITH: Against a Divine.

AUSTIN: I think it's time to go. Pull the trigger.

A.O. Rooke flying across the, the, the rooftops of Auspice, passing by the hospital where Sovereign Immunity was, was kept, uh, for months recovering after the siege of Vigil City. Kalar on the roof of, of, uh, the shoulder of Millie's Stray Dog, going, "A little to the left. I think?"

Millie firing, **boom! boom! boom!** On top of the Three Cheers!.

Uh, we have, we have Broun doing this direct energy, you know, EMP device.

And Phrygian forming the gun of the now destroyed "other," the war form torn from them.

Looking for that one final shot against Motion. **Roll the dice, Keith..**

AUSTIN: (shouting) SIX!!!

ALI: (relieved) Oh my god...

JACK: YES!!!

SYLVIE: Oh my god.

ALI: Oh my god, it's a six.

AUSTIN: Six, two, three, three!

[All laugh]

KEITH: Only needed one die, baby!

AUSTIN: Yeah. Turns, turns, summons the spear, gets ready to throw it into the building.

And then what's this attack look like, Phrygian? This was the first die. It's so funny that with 1d6, theoretically, it would have been, but yes, go ahead.

KEITH: It's got to, it has to. It has to take a lot of effort to be able to get that bit of the destroyed other to manifest... The entire... Maybe it doesn't, maybe it isn't that short of an amount of time that the EMP blast goes off, but it takes me like three times longer than I expect.

AUSTIN: And, and you're forgetting how to make it. Like, as you're doing it, you're summoning and you're like, it's like losing... It's like forgetting how a song goes. You know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah. This could shoot water.

AUSTIN: Right. Who knows?

KEITH: It could've shot water.

AUSTIN: It could have shot water. Exactly. It could've just blown up.

KEITH: Secret weakness, to Motion.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: And it's point, it's point blank.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You're on like the back of it.

KEITH: What is, what's the scale? How big is...

AUSTIN: Oh it's huge? This is big. This is a large scale mech, right? This is bigger. I remember from when we first showed the original version of this model, back before it was the Demiurgos, but it was just the Pneuma. Um, it was, I think, 60, 70 feet. Maybe 80. It was like bigger than anything else we'd seen, basically, still not a skyscraper, but bigger than the building I'm in right now. You know?

KEITH: So I'm like nothing on top of this. And you see, so you have a, you have like a full shot of this thing on its back?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: On its back, about to throw the spear, a barely visible figure standing on top. And then if you can think of like, the way that in Dragonball Z, an energy blast.

AUSTIN: A hundred — I need you to know I'm with you, like, a hundred percent. We are mind linked.

KEITH: And it's, it gets so big so fast.

AUSTIN: It's Gohan, arm broken, one hand.

KEITH: The scale, exactly, and the scale, it changes the scale of the human body, to have an energy thing coming out of your hand that's that big, cause it's turning into the gun that is supposed to be on, again, like a, like a 60 foot tall thing,

AUSTIN: And you fire. Yeah.

KEITH: And it's pilot scale, but...

AUSTIN: It's still big. Yeah. Um, and, uh, it just blows a hole through the center of Motion, uh, the Demiurgos. Um, and immediately you see, um, the Demiurgos, takes a knee on the

spear. It's as if it's like kneeling with — like trying to hold itself up with the spear. Um, and then, uh, the, I think we just get Motion and, um, we just get Motion and Laurel kind of speaking together. And maybe to the whole squad, like through, at this point, everyone is within the Perennial Wave, like, zone of effect, you know? Um, and so can they, uh, they can use that collectively as a way of like sending a communication.

And god, what do they say to you?

Um, you remember when you saw Motion the first time during the Icebreaker mission? Um, when you saw her or kind of when she first showed up, um, she sort of twisted your perception of space. Um, you know, everything went inverted and you could see kind of leagues behind her, even though you really couldn't see that, there was that sensation of it. That happens again, except this time it happens with both space and time. Before, you know, you saw the writhing mass of the Black Century behind her as she crested over the hills at Juniper. Um, and now you see them to the north, too far for the naked eye, obviously, even too far for optical scanners, and they are thrashing through the ruins of Obelle. And then you see them tomorrow, too, moving further south towards Auspice and Marengo. And soon your perspective is of weeks and of regions, of months and of continents, covered by the Black Century's stygian color. And there are splashes of just like Glory's radiance, little sprites of, of bright color. Um, they're like terrible stars on a flag of ink, if the flag were the moon of Partizan.

Um, and I think Motion, with Laurel's voice mixed in with her own, speaks to you, um, even as this new body kind of does the one thing you haven't seen it do yet, but which has been its kind of back-pocket trick, as it turns into the perennial dust as a means of escape. She says to you, or, or combined with Laurel, they say to you, um,

(as Motion/Laurel): Is your obstinance so pleasurable, Ver'million? Come home, and we'll find an easier way to bring Partizan to heel.

SYLVIA: I don't like if they're expecting a response from Mille, there isn't one. Um, she is quietly bleeding in her mech. And very mad at herself.

AUSTIN: And now, um, she is not content with simply making you feel and see her vision of the Pact conquering Partizan. She shows you — not just you, Millie, but everyone here, everyone within range of the Perennial Wave, which is now kind of blowing everywhere, she

imbues you with something bigger. Um, you know, as the wave kind of clears in the wind, it passes through you, uh, and your vision shifts even further and you see images of what the Pact of Necessary Venture is doing and what they are capable of in a way that is so sharp and convincing.

And you know, it is, it is hard to piece together particulars, but you do know that you see them in ascent. Um, they crush Millennium Break. They burn away any memory of Gur Sevraq or any of the sort of sermons or literature or speeches or manifestos that made Millennium Break what it was. It dies here on Partizan. It will not go anywhere else. There will not be that dream of kind of galactic revolution that Jesset City laid out during the debates: dead, dead here. And then you see them turning what they've stolen from the God of the Nobel, The God of Logos Cantel, the God of the Church of the Resin Heart, into raw material.

You are reminded suddenly of when, kind of anxious, Gur warned that the Pact might just be able to kill his god. Um, and maybe, uh, I think maybe some of you, wonder if, uh, you know, they underestimated it. If, if the Pact might do something worse than just kill their god. Um, because as the other images start coming in, what comes next, what comes after Partizan? You see what they will build with what they have taken: what they have taken from the Branched, what they have taken from the God of Logos Kantel, what they have taken from Partizan itself, um, and what they will build, whatever comes next for the Pact makes the Principality's own empire seem apathetic.

You see their ships landing on new alien worlds, beautiful and alive in ways you don't have adjectives for yet. You see, just, rousing skies of twilight turned sick and stolid. You see the brimming life of trillions brought to a flat steady hum. It is a galaxy at peace. Motion has brought it to a stop. Which is funny, right? Because why would Motion bring something to a stop?

Um, and I think it hits you here. Uh, if it hasn't hit you already yet, in your, your rebellious lives. These things that we call Divines, whether we think of them as our weapons, or our highways, or our saints or gods or mirrors: they aren't ours at all. No matter how well we shop for names to place on their frames, our words are just ill fitting costumes. Whatever Motion is, whatever we've built in her, is now beyond us.

And I think this is the moment that Laurel, her elect, learns that too, as the Demiurgos finishes its transformation into the Perennial Wave. I think for a moment there is the thought that their life was supposed to be more than this. Um, and then there's the heavy weight of realization that their life *will* be more than this because something like a little defeat in Auspice, uh, does not mean that your time serving Motion is over. And then they're gone. Laurel, Motion, Demiurgos, the rest of Glory, gone underground.

Um, and over the rest of the night, uh, inside of the High Altar, the movie finishes, negotiations continue and everything goes great. But by that time you are gone, you have extracted Cas'alear and you are rushing back to Oxbridge.

JACK: Oh my god...

AUSTIN: Which means that you are not here when Girandole rises over the horizon and with it come the sound of bells and a strange shape in the clouds, bring along the Witch in Glass.

At last to Auspice. Um, She has at this point, gathered so many people from the broken buildings of Obelle and she is surprised to find pickings so slim here in Auspice. Um, but tomorrow Columnar will hit Marengo in a strike, meant to support a followup attack by Apostolos, which represents a slowly cementing allegiance between the two Stels...

[Music begins: TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER.]

And she knows she'll find more people there to bring into her Reflecting Pool. And from there she will drive her car east, she thinks. Things in Oxbridge, she has heard, are boiling over, and she hates to see anything useful go to waste.