

PALISADE 43: Where They Are Pt. 1

Transcriber: Iris (sacredwhim)

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Opening Narration

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

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

[audio fades in]

Austin (as **Speaker**): ...that's what I'm saying, I'm saying it's not just a mentality, it's like—it's a structure that keeps people, it—no, it *produces* mentality, it doesn't just...

One second, I think—I think we're live. I think the signal's up again. Hello? Hello? Are you hearing us? Hello, Palisade. Hello, Twilight Mirage. Hello, Qui Err Coalition. You know what? Hello to the Bilateral Intercession! I know you hate to hear us, [singsong] but we're back!

Back in the lab again, back finding mixtures and fixes for shit you done mixed up. Back in Black's chair, back at his microphone. I wish he could see it—the colors, the tone, the skies all rhinestones. I'm sorry, I'm stoned just a little. A little goes a long way here on our new home. A little ripple in the middle of war. I saw a missile transformed into straw hospital filled, but it's hard to ignore that the sky's on fire with light.

Yes, they name me Particular Emphasis, but there's a party up in here. I heard nothing is stationary—well, it's never been more clear. We're moving on them now, and it's up for them. It ain't even really close. 'Bout to hit the lick then take home [singsong] a full seven notes. So let me check mine, 'cause I know that I got some shit to say before small things grow big, before tomorrow turns yesterday.

This one's for Baldwin, for Black Screen—all caps, please. This one's for Phrygian, who's between the fuse and the bomb. This one's for the figure in our hearts who I hope is finally calm. This one's for those who've had their names stripped away, or with names we never say, or with many names, multivalence, but committed in each to snatching they chains today.

Nah, you know what? This one's just for me. If you're listening, Bilats, let me tell you what I see. We are ungettable, unforgettable, unfuck-wit-able. And we're really cute—we are unmistakable, undebatable, and we don't even need a backing track to do what we 'bout to do.

Introduction

[2:55]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker, and joining me today, Ali Acampora.

Ali: Um, hi. My name is Ali, which you know. I—[laughs]

[Sylvi laughs]

Ali: You can find me on this podcast, you can find me over at friendsatthetable.cash hosting a show called Gathering Information, go check it out.

Austin: Also joining me, Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Hey, you can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000), where apparently “Seductive Sunday” is trending, everybody.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: Happy Seductive Sunday to everybody.

[Ali snickers]

Janine: Is that, like, deliberately coinciding with world TB day? Are we really going back—

Dre: I’m not gonna click on it and find—jesus.

[Keith laughs]

Janine: ‘Cause Keith joked—like, we’re really back in 1850, huh? Okay.

Keith: [cross] It’s consumption. Yeah.

Austin: Keith Carberry.

Keith: Hi, my name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on [X](#) and [Cohost](#) at @KeithJCarberry, and you can find the Let’s Plays that I do at youtube.com/RunButton. And you can find the other podcast that me and Dre and Jack and Sylvi are on at mediacub.plus, and in your podcast app, and it’s great, and you should listen to it. Austin was just on twice, Ali’s been on.

Austin: Yeah. I was on the most recent episode as of the time that we are recording this, I believe.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Mhm.

Austin: Which is a hell of an episode, so.

Keith: We're recorded through the Yorknew City arc. We're about to start the Greed Island arc.

Austin: Right, right. Exciting.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Janine Hawkins is here, also.

Janine: Hi, I'm Janine, I'm at [@bleatingheart](#) on Cohost, I've been—if anyone doesn't know, I've been doing some farming streams usually on or around Fridays on our Twitch channel. And I've got a Thisbe PNGtuber that I use for those. And last week we did—or not, it won't be last week when this—I don't—forget I said that.

Ali: It will be last week, because this is this week.

Austin: It will be. It's this week, yeah.

Janine: Oh, okay. [chuckles] Last week we—several of us booted up the new Stardew Valley patch and started a little farm, and we're working on that. It's most—so far it's been day one was Dre, Keith, and Ali and me, and then day two was Sylvi, Ali, Keith, and me. And that's been fun.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Farming, who knew?

Austin: It's been fun to watch, it's very pleasing and, like, it's fun to just get to...

Keith: Thisbe knew.

Austin: I mean, Thisbe knew. Thisbe was ready.

Janine: Huh?

Keith: You said, "Who knew? Farming's fun. Who knew?" Thisbe knew.

Janine: Oh. [snickers]

Austin: Thisbe knew about farming. It's true.

[Ali chuckles]

Janine: Yes.

Austin: I'm gonna keep moving. Sylvi Bullet.

Sylvi: Hey, what's up? I'm Sylvia, you can find me everywhere at @sylvibullet. God, what else is there to plug? Did we—there was the Twitch. Did the YouTube get mentioned?

Keith: Uh, no, but you can watch all that Twitch stuff over on YouTube.

Sylvi: Well, shit, Keith took it from me.

Austin: Damn, you fuckin' stole—you fuckin' plug stole.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Sorry, gotcha. Yep.

Sylvi: I'll just go fuck myself, then.

Keith: Hey, let me just grab those crumbs, somebody get those.

Austin: God damn, bro.

[Art laughs]

Ali: [laughing] That was crazy.

Austin: That was crazy.

Keith: Yeah, you can follow Sylvi on Cohost.

Sylvi: You can't! I don't use it! I don't even use that one! I have it, but I don't use it.

[Keith and Ali laugh]

Austin: Unbelievable.

Sylvi: Now he's lying, too!

Keith: Or, you know, Bluesky. You can follow Sylvi on Bluesky.

Sylvi: Also don't really use that one.

Austin: Oh my god.

Keith: She's at @sylvibullet everywhere. Threads.

Sylvi: Yeah, so Keith is my new PR manager.

Austin: Okay.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: That's the way to spin this.

Dre: I like this. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Keith just works for you.

Sylvi: He works for me.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Exactly.

Keith: Check to the mail?

Sylvi: Absolutely. Same as every week.

[Ali laughs] [Jack chuckles]

Austin: Ah. That's good. Whew, okay.

[Sylvi and Dre laugh]

Austin: Also joining us, Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hello, I'm Jack. You can find me on Cohost at [@jdq](#), and you can buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquiteareal.bandcamp.com](#).

Austin: And Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, I thought for a long time about coming in with a Rocky impression, and then I just couldn't. I set myself up for it.

Sylvi: Now you have to do it.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Art: It would have really helped if Austin had a third syllable in his name, so I could sort of match it onto Adrian a little bit, but it's just not there.

Austin: "Auuustin." Yeah, it doesn't work.

Ali: Wow.

Art: Like, "Hey, yo, Aussss... tin."

Austin: “Austin...”

Janine: Well, that’s when you end up with, like, “Austin-uh”, and then you really lean into the “N” at the end, and you give yourself that extra syllable, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Ali: What?

Art: Um... But it doesn’t. It doesn’t sound good.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Art: Um, you can find me on Twitter at [@atebbel](#), [Cohost](#) and [Bluesky](#) @amtebbel, you can buy merchandise from the show at [friendsatthetable.shop](#).

Austin: There you go, that’s the plug.

Art: And support us on Patreon at [friendsatthetable.cash](#), I’m not sure that came up.

Austin: I don’t believe it did, so.

Sylvi: I think it did.

Ali: I think I did that one.

Art: I was too into the—whoops.

Austin: Oh, Ali said—fuck.

Art: Sorry, I was too focused on if the impression was gonna sound right.

[Ali snickers] [Keith laughs]

Dre: We’ve all been there.

Austin: We have all been there.

Dre: Except Keith.

Art: But come back for our next season, where I'll be playing Sylvester Stallone.

Austin: [snickers] Have you done that before?

Keith: Modern day?

Austin: I feel like you've done a Sylvester Stallone type before.

[Art hums]

Austin: Yeah, I don't remember.

Art: [gruff voice] What about this guy, the Mickey...

Sylvi: Yeah, no, it was Sovereign Immunity. Wasn't it?

Art: Well, I wasn't doing the voice.

Austin: Right, he did look like—he was supposed to look like—he was facecast as—yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah. I thought that was the—old Sly was the faceclaim for him.

Art: Well, the next one's gonna be someone very young, [chuckling] but with a Sylvester Stallone voice.

Austin: Oh, weird.

Sylvi: Ooh.

Austin: Okay. If you say so.

Art: Like a boss baby Sylvester Stallone.

[Keith laughs]

Austin: That's true. That's true.

Art: "Hey, I'm da boss bab—"

[**Austin** laughs]

Art: That doesn't—I'm gonna work on it.

[**Jack** chuckles]

Austin: Today, we are continuing our game of *Armour Astir* by Briar Sovereign. Our goals are to portray a world entrenched in conflict, to let the players make a difference, to connect the magic and the mundane, and to play to find out what happens. I'm gonna plug a thing before we get into it, because I have not really plugged this over here that often to the degree that the last time I was on the Friends at the Table subreddit, which, shoutouts to that community, that is not a huge community, but it's a community that every week someone makes the post to be like, "Oh, there is a new Friends at the Table episode," and then the comments are generally just like—it's the classic "I heard Palisade was crazy this week" over and over again.

Sylvi: Let's go!

Austin: And things like, "Hey, Media Club Plus rules," and "Hey, does anyone want to do a Hieron zine?" Which no one's responded on that. People should go respond to that from 8 days ago. But someone over there was like, "Hey, Austin—did you know Austin does a podcast about genre fiction? Because he never talks about it anywhere." And I've talked about it on social media and, like, I sent out a link to it last year on a newsletter I do very rarely. But I do, I do a podcast called *Shelved By Genre* with Michael Lutz and Cameron Kunzelman from the Ranged Touch network, it's part of the Ranged Touch network. We finished all of *Book of the New Sun* by Gene Wolfe, plus the kind of fourth book in that—or I guess the fifth book in that series, which is like, technically part of that series, but is kind of its own thing also.

And now we are moving quickly through the *Earthsea Cycle*, the books of *Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin, we are past the halfway point on that, we are doing—the next episode is the *Tales from Earthsea*, the first half of that, which is a short story collection. If you want to hear me talk about things like science fiction, and fantasy, and storytelling, and get into debates with Cameron about, like, the nature of those things,

and what—and also keep using wrestling terminology that no one over there knows 'cause they're not wrestling people, that's—you should go do it.

Sylvi: [laughs] The bad booking thing is so funny.

Austin: You know, sometimes you just need to talk about how a book has bad booking. You know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Someone in the Discord for that show thought I meant booking like I was verbing the term book, like, bad writing—

Sylvi: Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Art: Oh.

Sylvi: It's so good.

Austin: Like, you know what I mean? It's very goofy.

Keith: No, you were actually talking about the binding. It was falling apart. The book was falling apart.

Austin: [chuckling] The book was falling apart, yeah, exactly.

Keith: Yeah, the booking.

Austin: The booking.

Art: Um...

Austin: But—yes?

Art: I'll tell you from listening to Just King Things that they also don't know anything about baseball over there at Ranged Touch. [chuckles]

[Keith laughs]

Sylvi: Get their asses.

Austin: Mhm. Or Bob Dylan, is my understanding. Big Bob Dylan haters.

Sylvi: No, they—I think they’ve got that one, actually. Hot take.

Austin: Damn, okay. Okay, I’m waiting for him to show up in one of the books over that I do so I can do a Bob Dylan defender bit. Which I’m not, necessarily, but it would be a fun bit to do, so.

Sylvi: It would.

Keith: That would be a fun bit.

Austin: Anyway, you might—

Keith: I’m a Bob Dylan defender.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, I think there’s stuff to defend.

Sylvi: That tracks.

Setup

[11:56]

Austin: You might notice that Art and Jack are here, or alternatively, you might notice that the entire Blue Channel crew is here, even though this is normally where a faction game goes. We’re supposed to be going to the conflict turn today, but we’re not. What happened?

Sylvi: [chuckles] Well...

Austin: Well.

Ali: [laughing] We couldn’t—we tried—

Art: We met.

Austin: We did meet. We had, like, a long conversation. We did meet and go—I mean, I guess, what—the literal thing that happened was, 30 minutes before we were supposed to record the conflict turn last week, I sent a message that was basically “Hey, what is this thing we’re about to record? What is this? Does this work anymore?” Because the situation has changed so significantly based on the outcome of the last Sortie.

No longer is Palisade the launchpad, the kind of base of operations for an impending invasion into the Twilight Mirage, which, it’s worth saying, again, is the entire reason the Bilats were here to begin with, they were here to create a staging ground on Palisade from which they could grow enough strength and figure out, literally, a way to breach the Twilight Mirage in a way that was quick enough for them to then extract some amount of power, technological or otherwise, from it to help them win the war against the Pact, the Pact of Free States now, and now that Palisade is inside the Twilight Mirage, it’s kind of hard to say that that’s really on the table for them directly anymore. For a few reasons, that we kind of only came to after recording that last episode, and when we were getting ready to do the conflict turn. And for reasons that I kind of just hinted at.

It’s hard to get into the Twilight Mirage. You know, if they could have invaded the Twilight Mirage, they would have done it by now. That’s what the whole point of the season is. The time differential isn’t just that inside the Twilight Mirage, one day is ten days outside, it’s also that it takes a long time to get into it normally, which really recasts, if you think about that, some of the fact that the Twilight Mirage, the Qui Err Coalition, and things like the Cult of Devotion, sent people out here—like, Cori, I keep thinking about you leaving the Twilight Mirage, being launched out of it with enough speed that you would get here quick enough, but then knowing that it would take you decades to get back in, potentially. Right? Like, there’s a real, like, you’re giving yourself to this cause. Maybe you don’t ever come back into the Mirage. Maybe, you know, this is a big enough important a thing that they decided they want to go support this even though it means a long-term separation from life inside.

For people who didn't listen to Twilight Mirage itself, one of the things that gets established towards the halfway point of that series is that, you know, there is a big invading force there from this group called the New Earth Hegemony, and it takes some of their ships, like, generations to get there. Their biggest ships take, like—a person has to change bodies many times in order to live through the entire journey that it takes to get inside. And so there are—and other ships from that same fleet get there faster, because they're more maneuverable or better suited to moving through the Mirage. So like, these are the sorts of things that the Bilats were partly investigating, were ways to get in quickly, ways to get out quickly. Those ways seemingly exist, but they didn't have them. And also, they were just trying to, like, get enough forces together to go do that thing. That isn't the case anymore.

Now the three divisions of the Bilateral Intercession on Palisade, not only did they not have the majority of pillars on this sheet anymore—though actually, do they have the majority still? I haven't looked at that sheet yet. No, they don't. They only have four of the pillars on this sheet. If you imagine that all of the planets of the Twilight Mirage have the same amount of pillars, nine pillars, then let me tell you, they have four pillars out of, whatever—36 out of 45? Some huge number? So, I would say that the situation has changed dramatically to the point that going back and forth—this is kind of what we talked about last, when we went to sit down to do the faction game—it doesn't really make sense to play out individual scenes doing a tug of war over one point of Grip of the Temple of the Threshold at this point, right? It makes more sense to take big swings, and even if there is a tug of war style conflict happening, to start thinking about that in broader terms.

Have I skipped anything about that conversation that was important to bring over here? Art, Jack, or Ali?

Jack: Let me think.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Um... Yeah, it's a real sort of, like, good news bad news situation, [**Austin:** Yeah.] where it's like—

[**Sylvi** and **Keith** laugh] [**Ali** chuckles]

Dre: Mhm, mhm.

Jack: Bad news. Bad news, the Principality is now within the Twilight Mirage. This was their entire goal. Good news, the Principality is inside the Twilight Mirage, a gigantic extremely advanced civilization that prior to this point had held off engaging, first through inaction, [**Austin:** Right.] for, you know, centuries, and then for the, like, technical complications of leaving the Mirage. Something else that, you know, keeps coming up that I realized earlier today was the time difference has been in play while the season of Palisade has been happening.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: So at the beginning of Palisade, I don't know if Cori came over right at the beginning of the season, but I know that it was a few episodes before General Mourning, sort of the Mirage's emissary, came over with a bunch of Mirage troops being like, "We're here, we've arrived." And then, time continued to move.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: And so the Mirage has known that the conflict is, you know, they have been preparing to a certain extent, and now the planet of Palisade is within their lobby as it were, you know?

Keith: They don't even have to leave the Twilight Mirage to get to Palisade.

Austin: That's the thing. Correct, right?

Jack: Everybody is now on the same clock.

Austin: Right.

Jack: The Principality is vastly outnumbered. Something, you know, they are still very capable. The Principality is a very concerning force, and, you know, it's not quite like they've been sort of reduced to balloon animals or something.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: [laughs] That's what Ebullience does.

Jack: But they are outnumbered and completely outmaneuvered by both the power of the Cause, and just the sheer might, the sort of psychedelic might of the Twilight Mirage.

Austin: Yeah, the thing that I wrote in a message I sent to the chat after we had this big discussion was: "Given all of that, what's interesting in this situation isn't a beat by beat Grip tug of war—after all, with the Qui Err Coalition allied with the Cause"—this is what I just said before, da-da-da—"What's interesting is, we're left questions about what the characters want, and how the Bilats and outliers like Clem and even the Afflictions will respond now that they're backed into a corner. They almost certainly can't win a war of conquest at this point, but could they tear apart the Mirage with violence, propaganda, Divine manipulation, or worse?"

And so what I wanted to set the stage for here, before we move into our finale, we think—there's always a chance we get through this and go, "Wait, I guess we're wrong," because that's actual play, but the plan right now is to do this downtime faction turn combo thing in which players are able to frame a scene. We don't have to attend to things like how many, you know, how many Perils do you have to heal. We don't want to spend time on the normal maintenance of things, tapping and untapping factions. What I really want is a big scene from everybody, not as a group, though we should maybe start with a group one, because there's a lot to maybe put the whole Blue Channel crew onscreen that could be useful for.

But everybody should frame a scene. They can use a move that they have in their playbooks, we can go freeform if what you want is to just talk through a thing, we can be as abstract or embodied as you want, but the point is to explore some part of the current

situation now that you're in the Twilight Mirage, now that Palisade is here, now that the Principality finds itself on its back foot. I will do some filling in on the gaps via intro and outro, probably, based on what we do and don't show. You know, if we end up not showing, for instance, what Lucia Whitestar is getting up to, we might get an update on that via an outro, or you may have already heard it in an intro, for instance. If we decide that we're really, for whatever reason, not interested in talking about what's going on with the rest of the Cause, I'll do my best to make sure that we at least address that somewhere in the episode or in the episode description or something, right? So there's a little bit of an update.

And if not here, then in the actual finale, which we will be playing, we think, with a game called Questlandia, which recently released a second edition. We played a kind of official hack of it called Noirlandia back in season one of Bluff City, that was a really great game called—what was the actual name of that session? It wasn't Messy Business, because that was Lacuna. But it was the first episode that kind of had some Blough City elements in it. Oh, why am I blanking on the name?

Jack: I'm gonna check the wiki. It's called...

Austin: Why am I blanking on it? It's fine.

Ali: No Greater Love.

Art: There Is No Greater Love.

Austin: No Greater Love. No Greater Love, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, right.

Austin: Great episode, great arc. And so Questlandia, sort of like that—

Keith: Third arc, very early.

Austin: Yeah. But Questlandia's a little bit like that, except less focused on also discovering a mystery. It's really focused on character goals inside of a kingdom, inside

of an organization of a place that has its own sort of big picture health and stability. And so I think telling the story of Palisade in the Twilight Mirage—or maybe even the whole Twilight Mirage, we'll see how things go—is probably the way that we want to end that, but that game also lets us talk about character motivations, and character growth, and all that other stuff, instead of it being—you know, we don't want to do something that was just focused on just Palisade or just the Mirage. The characters have been such a focal point of this season, and I don't want to lose that when we go into big-picture finale mode, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And I say all that because some of the scenes that we're gonna show, or scenes that we're gonna do today, should be aimed partly at setting up a thing in Questlandia, which is that every character should have a sort of—there's a word I'm looking for that's not just question, but like, an animating question. Something about them, an animating goal, a thing they're working towards. Something big and difficult you need to accomplish, quote, “your life's work, your magnum opus, your loftiest dream.” Art, what were you gonna say?

Art: Oh, I was gonna say that, like, you mentioned that, you know, we're gonna get some characters in the intros here, some interstitials, [**Austin:** Yeah.] maybe in the finale, and if your favorite character doesn't come up there, well, maybe they just weren't that important.

[**Jack** laughs]

Dre: Mhm.

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

Jack: Wow, an opening salvo.

Sylvi: I thought you were gonna say that they were dead. Like, I thought you were gonna just declare—

Dre: No, that's my line.

[**Austin** laughs]

Sylvi: Well.

Austin: Well.

Art: Well, I mean, yeah, dead's a kind of important that ignored isn't.

Austin: Damn. Put that on time.is.

[**Art** laughs]

Austin: Art Martinez-Tebbel, "Dead's a kind of important that ignored isn't." Woof.

[**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Are there questions—

Keith: It's time to say that dead...

[**Art** and **Keith** laugh]

Austin: Oh, there we go. Someone was honking in the background?

Art: Now Keith's gonna get on time.is and I'm not.

[**Keith** laughs]

Austin: [chuckles] Yeah. Are there questions about our big picture goal here today? Or any of the way we want to do this stuff?

Jack: How—and we can establish this, you know, in play immediately, but how soon after the events of the bombs going off do we want to come back in?

Austin: Great question. I think enough that some part of—I don't know. I guess here are two options. One, there's immediate uncertainty. We're in the immediate uncertainty, we

don't know, is this good—is this good? Is this okay? Or is—or we could come in after some of the immediate uncertainty has died down. Right? I think a lot of that's gonna depend on what scenes people want, because if someone wants a scene of being like, oh, I want to freak out because earlier today, the Mirage bombs blew up, and I'm having kind of like, a moment to try to make sense of all of that, then we need to be in the moment of uncertainty, and if someone wants to do a scene that's like, well, it's been a couple weeks and everybody kind of knows what the score is now, then we need to be after the uncertainty for that. And maybe that's a good point of differentiation for, like, when scenes go. You know?

[Dre hums]

Austin: Kind of like, above and below the fold type situation.

Dre: I think the scene that I was going to pitch is not necessarily, like, in the immediate aftermath, but is probably in the early part.

Austin: Sure.

Dre: Austin, this is something I haven't talked to you about yet, because I just thought of it like an hour ago. [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah. I'm good with that. I mean, as long as it's—I mean, even if it's a new character, that's fine. Like, a new different character than what you pitched me, but.

Dre: No. Well, it is the new character that we have talked about.

Austin: Yes. Okay. That's good. Yeah. Yeah, I don't need to vet—I didn't vet anybody's scenes, you know what I mean?

[Sylvi and Dre chuckle]

Austin: No one pitched me explicit scenes for me to give a thumbs up on, to be clear, so it's okay that you did not tell me. I figured you'd nail it, so. So yeah, that could be a good point for that. Then, Dre, as we get close to wherever—and it might turn out that

everybody wants to go after some sort of immediate stability has been found, or some sort of non-immediate stability has been found that we want scenes to be, but. But yeah.

One thing I would maybe like to do on top of the individual scenes, though, is some sort of—and maybe this is just a good place to kick it off, is some sort of Blue Channel group scene in the aftermath of this close to when it happens. Right? Unless we think that it's fun to not show that, I would like to show it. And I don't know how people are feeling about it, or what the vibe is on the Blue Channel when that happens. Or, you know, in the wake of that.

I guess I'll ask y'all broadly, you're in the Twilight Mirage now. And in fact, here, let me—someone say one or—you know, I'm gonna go to this one first. I have two options for us here. Here's option number one, which is very thematic. This is, of course, by Annie, who turned this around incredibly quickly. Here we are, in the Quire System, in the Twilight Mirage.

Keith: Woah.

Austin: A really cool—

Art: It's so big.

Austin: Yeah, you gotta zoom out a lot on this one.

Art: You have to zoom all the way out.

Sylvi: Woah.

Keith: This is a...

Austin: I zoomed—I dropped it in and it was like, do you want this to be big or do you want this to be small—do you want the canvas to resize itself to this, or do you want this to resize itself to the canvas? And I said, the first one. And then I was like, oh, I have to zoom out all the way, huh? This great map of the Twilight Mirage, of the Quire System,

with each planet being represented by a cool button. I'm very fond of being able to see the Diadem on Palisade via the—

Keith: I would love to have a backup desk pad to my other Palisade desk pad that I have.

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

Austin: Uh-huh, yeah. Yeah. Of this? Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It's pretty good. And I really love the moon, Chimera's Lantern is like a little bead, it's like a little glowy bead instead of the buttons.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That's very fun. We also have a version of it where it's just planets, you know? And moons and a little sun for Palisade, but. But yeah. So, here's where we are now. What is the vibe on the Blue Channel in the aftermath?

Keith: This is insane. This is like waking up one day and my whole—and all of New England is, like, part of Canada, but also Canada is, like, the Bridge to Terabithia.

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

Austin: [laughing] Yes. That's right.

Dre: God. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, you're—and like, really explicitly, Gur—Future, now that we know, Future, has been—the world doesn't know that, necessarily, though I'm curious if you tell people that, Eclectic. Gur Sevraq has been preaching as if this place is the Garden of Eden, in, you know, sort of the Abrahamic religions, right? Like—

Keith: This place as in Palisade?

Austin: No, the Twilight Mirage, right?

Keith: Oh, okay.

Austin: The Twilight Mirage.

Keith: Do I know that? Is that something that was happening while I was there?

Austin: Yeah. This has been—the whole thing on the New Asterism is, “hey, we gotta get back to the Twilight Mirage,” right?

Keith: Oh, right, right, yes, yes, totally, of course.

Austin: There’s a sort of like, this is our, you know, our prelaps—our pre—

Keith: I was—

Austin: This is “when everything was pure and good, it was here.”

Keith: I had misinterpreted—I thought that this was like a, you know, like, the Twilight Mirage is what you make it, it’s here on—the Twilight Mirage is here on earth.

Austin: No. No, it’s quite literally the opposite.

[Art laughs]

Keith: Let’s make—it was literal, it was—yeah. Yeah, I totally misinterpreted this.

Austin: It was literally, the Twilight Mirage is out there, it’s prelapsarian, it’s when—it’s from before we had sin, we have to go conquer it.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: We have to go home.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Austin: We have to get home because that’s where good is. Good is home.

Keith: I thought the conquering was Palisade.

Austin: Mm-mm. Palisade is the—

Keith: “Let’s make Palisade our new Twilight Mirage.” Which then happened.

Austin: Palisade—well, Palisade is the jump-off point. That was the whole thing.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Palisade was just—It was only ever meant to be a springboard to here.

Keith: Right.

Austin: So, that has been the—and you know, more broadly than that, in the cultural milieu, the Twilight Mirage has been a mythological place, historically.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So it is—it’s not even just like the Bridge to Terabithia, it’s like what if you—what if Canada was Olympus, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah, what if Canada was sucked into the firmament? Like...

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: Future’s so dumb. If Future wanted to go back there so bad, get on a ship and be like, “Can I move here?” They’d probably say yeah.

[Ali and **Austin** chuckle]

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: It’s the Twilight Mirage. What are they gonna do?

Sylvi: Stupid ass Divine.

Austin: Future's goal is galactic conquest more than going home. It's the getting there to get stuff from there. It's a lie. It was lying.

Sylvi: Goofy ass Future.

Jack: God, Keith. Your question, "it's the Twilight Mirage, what are they going to do", I—we're in for some—for the next few hours. [chuckles]

Austin: Oh, that's the question.

Keith: Well, I just mean, if you go and politely say, "Can I move here?"

Austin: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. This is—one of the big questions for me is how does the Twilight Mirage deal with any of this?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Right? One of the first things I was thinking about was like, let's say you're Jesset City. Let's say you're, like, completely core part of the—actually, let's not go with Jesset. Let's say that you're, like, someone who made Jesset City lunch last week in Sinder Karst. You're a member of Grey Pool—

Keith: Brnine.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: No, 'cause Brnine is too famous. Brnine killed the fucking emperor.

Keith: Oh, no, I'm just saying that Brnine would make Jesset City lunch.

Austin: Oh, someone who would make—yeah, yeah, yeah, uh-huh. You're part of—

[Ali laughs]

Jack: You're like Herlight Actual, whose job is to make Jesset City lunch.

Austin: Exactly.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Can you go and visit Thyrus tomorrow? Or Brighton? Or do they think that you might be a Bilateral spy? How do they know? What's the system for that?

Keith: Right, yes. Yeah.

Austin: How do they start—who do they trust? Who do they not trust? What's the mechanism for any of that stuff? What happens if you're Occam Olio and you say, you know what? We lost, I'm turning in my badge and my gun, and going to—and I'm just gonna try to disappear into society. Or you say "I'm gonna go turn myself in" or something. Can you do that? Is that a—what happens after that? Is there some sort of—

Keith: Turn myself into a cat, more like.

Ali: Obviously... [laughs] They're gonna be like, "You're goated, so come on in."

[**Austin, Sylvi, Jack, and Art** laugh]

Jack: Yeah, I was gonna say, Occam Olio—

Austin: "Keep your badge and your gun, we're really [??? 31:25] cops."

Sylvi: "Keep your badge and your gun, bro, you're swaggy as hell."

Jack: Occam Olio would never surrender.

Keith: "Here's your badge back, here's your gun, here's some cat ears."

[**Ali and Jack** laugh]

Austin: God.

Sylvi: Jesus.

Austin: But these are questions I don't have answers to, and I don't want to pretend that, like, I'm coming in with like, well, obviously, they feel this way about that. That's a thing that we're gonna have to decide a little bit, at least.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: So, yesterday I sent Austin a message saying "What do you want Art and I to prepare?" And you gave both the most generative and, I think, concerning answer, which is, ah, go for it. You want to do a scene with someone for the Authority? We can do that. You want to do a scene with a character from the Cause? We can do that. You want to do a—play something from the faction game? We can try that.

And so, you know, to your point, Austin, of, like, not having come in here with a plan of how they're going to respond, I don't think Art and I have necessarily come in with a plan. I definitely took a lot of notes about ways they could respond, [**Austin:** Mhm.] and I think most interesting in terms of setting up for a finale in this sort of interstitial game, putting pieces on a table. You know, starting wheels turning that, in the sense of actual play, we don't quite know where they're going to stop turning, [Austin: Right.] or in what way they're going to spin. I am not coming into this with a sense of what is the clear response from the sort of major factional players here going to be, [Austin: Mhm.] or what is the ideology that is powering them, so much as "here are ways that they might start moving".

Austin: Right. Yeah.

Art: And I've spent weeks being like, "This is the scene I have to do. This is the direction that I am, like, honor-bound to go in."

Keith: Sylvester Stallone.

Art: And then this morning in the shower was just like, "You're completely wrong. [**Austin** laughs] That's not what you should be doing, you should do this other thing. That other idea is what a dumb person would think they should do with their scene."

Sylvi: Woah.

Art: So I've had a morning.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: That's creativity right there. That's how it goes.

[Dre hums] [Jack laughs]

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You know, and sometimes that voice in your head is wrong, and sometimes it's right, and it's really hard to know.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: I'm not gonna know for months.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I would say that might be the—

Austin: And you might not—you might even change your mind throughout the months, you know?

Art: I guess unless I say something today and everyone else in the call is like, well, that's not the right idea.

Jack: Which we're famous for doing here on Friends at the Table.

[Ali laughs]

Dre: That's true, yeah.

Keith: I've got my finger on the button.

Art: Well, what if it was a really bad idea?

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Everybody knows us as the “no, but” podcast, so...

[**Art** and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: Yep.

Jack: But I do think we should start with the Blue Channel. I think that’s probably the place to begin.

Austin: I agree.

[34:30]

Keith: I have one more facts and figures question about the Twilight Mirage, because of how long it’s been since I have been there.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Keith: How—

Austin: Are you gonna call me out on my Volition mistake?

Keith: No. I don’t even—I don’t even know what it is.

[**Art** and **Jack** laugh]

Dre: Mhm.

Keith: Uh—[laughs]

Jack: Hey, what if the sun was evil?

Keith: Right.

Austin: No, it’s not evil anymore.

Keith: No, no, I know what—sorry, I know what Volition is, I don’t know what the mistake is.

Jack: Sorry, Austin. What if the sun *was* evil?

Austin: Ha ha, right.

Keith: Uh... How—

Austin: Let's answer your question, then we'll come back around to the Volition thing.

Keith: How many Divines were hanging around in Twilight Mirage when we ended that season?

Austin: Great question. A number of them left with the new Divine Fleet.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Which would become the Divine Free States. Or, sorry, it was the Divine Free States, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and then eventually that joined up with the Rapid Evening and the Principality of Kesh and became the Divine Principality. A number of them left with the other new Divine Fleet, which was the Cadent, the Waking Cadent, and Signet. We've seen Signet's part of that, we have not seen—I mean, I guess we have seen Signet, Waking Cadent, and Belgard, but we haven't seen if, like, those other Divines wound up somewhere else. Did they—are they all part of the chimeric—Chimera's Lantern, are they all resting/dead in there, have they scattered out to the four corners of the galaxy? I know the galaxy has more corners than that, don't fight me.

[someone snickers]

Austin: But there were also things that were left behind, there are definitely also still—you know, Altar, the planet Altar, was covered with Divine, like, temples to the Divines that had been—we were really on it in Twilight Mirage. We were truly on our shit. Altar was a planet that re—that was covered in the relics and ruins of ancient Divines, some of which were alive again, all drawn from cultural memory, so that Divines who had died or gone missing were reinvented there. And this is, for instance, one of the ways that we eventually found Anticipation, an important Divine that also left along with a big group of people, New Earth Hegemony people, left with the Divine

Anticipation, along with Tender Sky. And so, the answer is a lot—and also, we saw the invention of new types of Divines like Arbit—not Arbitrage, but Arbit—who—which—who was a big machine that made all sorts of weird movements and shapes and it bounced around.

Keith: Yeah. It jittered about.

Austin: It jittered about in such a way that it broke the predictive engine of the Crystal Palace, AKA the Divine Past, AKA the Reflecting Pool, which is here now, by the way.

Keith: Right, back in—

Austin: Which is here on Palisade.

Jack: In the Crown of Glass.

Austin: In the Crown of Glass. Which, by the way, the planet Crown is just over there, where the Crown of Glass is.

Jack: Clem is now two for two of appropriating historical sort of—three for three, actually. First with the Panther, [**Austin:** Yep.] which was the actual Panther, then with the Rapid Evening, [Austin: Yep.] which turned out to actually be Gucci Garantine's Horizon.

Austin: Horizon, yep.

Jack: And now, finally, with the Crown of Glass, her capital on Palisade, [chuckles] that has now been subsumed into the Twilight Mirage where the actual remnants of the Crown of Glass still exist. What an idiot.

Austin: Yes. So it's—yes. So the answer, Keith, is a bunch, but we don't know the particular number. And so there's kind of a blank space for us there that lets us make some answers. I think towards—the heart of the Twilight Mirage is there should be enough around that they are meaning—that they're a meaningful part of society, but not a—not a religious institution that gives them power over people, right? Or that they are

people—I think maybe that's the most Twilight Mirage-y answer, is that they are in the mix the way that anybody is in the mix. And they have different capacities as Divines than many other people, but they are not kings or gods. And, in fact, exist inside of the Qui Err Coalition, inside of the Quire System, not inside of the Twilight Mirage, the Divine Fleet, you know, freedom zone or whatever, right? Like, explicitly—

Keith: What happens if a Divine commits a crime?

Austin: Great question. This is how we end up doing Twilight Mirage 2. We have to be careful. 'Cause there's all these great questions.

[Dre laughs]

Keith: [laughs] Sorry, what's the problem?

[Austin laughs]

Art: Instead of next week being a finale, we just do 70 episodes of Twilight Mirage 2 starting next week.

Austin: [laughing] No.

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Keith: I'm freaking out about what happens when a Divine [laughing] commits a crime in the Twilight Mirage.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I mean, I'm gonna tell you, that might be the point of your arc in Questlandia.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: [laughing] Because a Divine has committed a crime, I gotta tell you.

Keith: [laughing] Yeah.

Austin: You saw it happen.

Keith: Sure, yeah.

Austin: You saw the Divine Future kill your buddy, Figure, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and has now gone to ground. I don't want to get—I don't want to spoil what my one scene here is, but no one knows where Future is right now. That's what I'll say. For now.

[**Jack** sighs]

Art: "That's what I'll say... for now."

Austin: Volition—yeah, for now. Volition I described in the last episode as being like a black orb. Now, you might be thinking, but Austin, in the final episode of Twilight Mirage, or the final episodes of Twilight Mirage, it got turned into a sun. Does anybody remember that or am I—or is this just—

Keith: I remember that, I remember that.

Janine: Yes.

Sylvi: Definitely.

Austin: And in the, you know, the—with the goal of treating the Twilight Mirage as the Twilight Mirage, and thinking about it in this big expansive weird way, and also with the goal of saying sometimes you say a thing in actual play and it's a mistake, but then you roll with it 'cause it's cool, here's what I've decided. It's been 500 years since Volition became a sun, and it realized sometimes it doesn't want to be a sun. Sometimes it wants to be a weird black orb.

Sylvi: I've been there. [laughs]

Dre: Mhm, mhm.

Austin: Right? And it's allowed to go between those two states, or blend them in strange ways. Sometimes it's a weird black glassy orb that also produces sunlight, and

it's sort of like if it could just be its own eclipse. Right? And like, in the middle of the day, it just gets a little dimmer because it kind of puts—[chuckles] it puts sunglasses on itself, you know? It puts the shades down.

[Sylvi laughs]

Dre: Oh, it's like Goku.

Austin: It's like Goku.

Jack: This is really consistent with—and I checked the great wiki at fatt.wiki, it's fantastic.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: At the end of Twilight Mirage, Volition sort of adopts Polyphony as an Excerpt, and in that sense, it's sort of—the wiki writes “it allowed itself to exist in relation to people with a sun at its heart”, [Austin: Mhm.] and then, I remember this, it makes less Axioms, but it does still make them sometimes.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And I think that that is consistent with, ah, it's been 500 years. It's had enough of being a sun, at least for a bit.

Austin: Right. I think—or, it changes back and forth, or it becomes things that are not exactly like the way we think of a sun. There are things that are, like, you know, I think the specific emotional state that I was thinking about with Volition is that when it became a sun it tried so hard to just be a sun, just—it tried everything it could do to hit the notes right. Like, I know what a sun is supposed to look like, I know what a sun is supposed to feel like, why can't I just be like this all the time? But sometimes, it's just not what it feels. It's not the thing it is. And so sometimes, it becomes more like the thing it also is, right? And there are bits of being a sun that it really likes. And it moves between those things.

Keith: Hey, it's not healthy to make yourself be the sun 24/7.

Austin: Tell me about it, buddy. [chuckles]

[Dre chuckles]

Austin: It is a difficult thing, but the Twilight Mirage is the one place that we know of in this—in the galaxy of the Divine Cycle where such a being would have the freedom to explore that, right? And so I think that that is what it's done, and it's hit a kind of pretty stable balance at this point. People are not surprised that often when Volition changes at this point. It's like, oh yeah, Volition's trying something new out, cool. You know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And what it hasn't done is hurt people, generally. You know? So, that's good. Shoutouts to Volition and Polyphony.

Blue Channel

[43:22]

Austin: Blue Channel? The last time that we saw people in the Blue Channel, fake Gur Sevraq was giving a sort of, like, “hey, send your envoys, come talk to me” speech. We didn't really go deep on Figure dying, I don't know what the—maybe this is just the next day, you know? The sort of like, you've woken up the next morning and it's the Twilight Mirage outside. It's just like that all the time now. I'm gonna say it again, what is the vibe?

[pause]

Sylvi: Just saying “weird” is kind of an understatement.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvi: But, specifically for Cori, it's like, you've gone through another major personal loss, but also the sky outside your window is the same as your childhood home again.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: So it's just confusing, you know?

Austin: Yeah. Do you—

Janine: Does Int—

Austin: Go ahead.

Janine: Does Integrity have any thoughts that it might share?

Austin: I think in general your experience is really interesting, because—

Janine: I was wondering.

Austin: I think, you know, a thing that's true about the Twilight Mirage is that—and here's a thing I'm just gonna say out loud is, if we—if one of us talking to each other right now forgets something about the Twilight Mirage, please feel free to remind us, or think about the things that were cool about the Twilight Mirage, I'm not gonna have us all, like, reread the transcripts or relisten to the series so that we can go from here on out, right? It's been a long time, and we've made a lot of stories since then, so it's hard for us to keep up sometimes with our own bullshit.

[**Dre** and **Sylvi** chuckle]

Austin: But, for instance, a thing that I'm remembering is that the Twilight Mirage, one of the core elements of it, was that, like, the Mirage itself was a sort of medium that allowed people to connect via a sort of augmented reality layer. The Mesh, which was this kind of like, the internet, and the kind of digital world from COUNTER/Weight, existed in a much more spread way in Twilight Mirage. It was called the Veil at first, because we were playing a game called the Veil. I think by the end we started calling it the Mesh again just to get back on our own consistency.

And so I think that through that, Integrity allows you to immediately feel a sort of connection to other Divines throughout the Twilight Mirage. There's a sort of, like, awareness. I think, for you, it feels like—it feels like you're in—besides whatever room you're in on the Blue Channel, besides whatever part of Palisade you're in, you have a sort of positionality as if the Twilight Mirage were a really big room where you can kind of sense where other Divines are. There's a little bit of, like, being at a party and sensing where there are more people in the house, you know what I mean? Like, oh yeah, there's a bunch of people in the kitchen right now. Oh, yeah, yeah, there's a bunch of people over on Altar right now. I can kind of gesture in that direction and have a sort of weird connective, you know, sense of them.

Simultaneously, I think one of the things that I'm curious about for Thisbe is that, like, your big open clock right now has been about trying to connect to Divines, and—

Janine: Sure has.

Austin: And I think something that is really fascinating immediately here is just, oh, when the medium is different here. The medium of the world is different, and so could that be part of what was missing from previous attempts to do this? Could the Twilight Mirage itself be a sort of, like, you know, it's like trying to talk without oxygen, without air. There's no medium for sound to travel in a vacuum. The Twilight Mirage is like another type of air that allows communication to occur, is maybe part of what's become kind of obvious to you here. And I say obvious because I don't think it's like a—you didn't—I'm not asking you to roll anything, and I also don't want to tell you how you feel about that, I think this is just clearly true in a way that it wasn't clear previously.

Janine: Yeah. I had sort of been thinking that based on what I remembered about the Mirage, that something like this seemed pretty likely.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: I was just wondering about, like, how intense that experience would be. I think the metaphor that makes sense to me is that, like, what she was trying to do before, it was like, you know, being submerged in something super viscous, [**Austin:** Mhm.] like

tar, or like, pudding, or, you know, something where it's, like, really opaque and really heavy, and you can really only move so far before you get exhausted.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: And then the switch to the Mirage would be more like, this is just a pool now, you know? Like, not only can you move more easily, but like, it's facilitating that movement, [**Austin:** Right.] and you can see, because it's clear, and like, it's just a—you know.

Austin: Yeah, that's another...

Janine: The things that she was trying to do, that she was, like, that she was really exerting herself and struggling to have to do, are now potentially a lot more, just like, natural.

Austin: Yeah. A thing I'm really interested, also, about with Thisbe here, is—there's a million things I'm interested about Thisbe. 'Cause the world is just so different here, right? Like, it—Thisbe is a person and a creature of contexts, right? Thisbe was built to do a certain job, wound up doing different jobs, has been—the big question, or one of the big Thisbe questions, is, you know, "What is my purpose? I don't think it's fighting. I know I was built for this other purpose. Where can I serve that purpose, where can I develop a new one, what is it?" And the answers to that are just wildly different here than they are in the Principality, you know? And there are other types of people here that might already be tied to similar ends, you know? Which is interesting.

Ali: I have a question about what's going on with Hunting, and I guess a bigger thing of his culture.

Austin: Yeah. What's the question? Is it just that? Just like, what's going on?

Ali: Basically. Like, is there a higher demand for, um, like, the injections that they were taking? Is the change in atmosphere...

Austin: I think that it's—yeah, that's a great question. What do you think?

Ali: Um...

Austin: As the number one Hunting stan on this podcast.

Ali: [laughs] Right. Right, right, right. Right, right, right. Um, I don't know. I, like, I guess I—the way I struggle to answer myself is misremembering some of where we left the Concretists in Twilight Mirage, I guess.

Austin: In Twilight Mirage, yeah, yeah.

Ali: But like, my first reaction to what it would be like for Brnine, is like, even if you don't—even if technically, like, physically we're not supposed to feel the time skip, **[Austin:** Mhm.] or like, the feeling of being in a different atmosphere, like, if I go to parts of Colorado, like, I don't breathe as well.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Ali: And to think, like, being, oh, I'm in a different atmospheric zone, **[Austin:** Yeah.] like, there's like—you know, there's gotta be people with, like, rapid heartbeats or, like, fatigue, or like, things like that.

Austin: I think between that and—I think that between that, which I think is all dead-on, and the fact that the Perennial Wave stuff that just happened explicitly in that description I talked about, literally all around the galaxy, synthetic people, like, got sick from that. You know?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Not Delegates, because the Perennial Wave and Divines is weird, right? The Perennial Wave doesn't hit Divines like that, as a reminder. But for Columnar people, for people who are synthetic from non-Columnar cultures, for the synthetic people—I guess that's also a question I don't have the answer to in terms of the Perennial Wave and the Twilight Mirage, whether it breaches the Twilight Mirage properly. We'll talk about that in a second. But I think generally speaking, there is a lot of attention inside of Millennium Break bases, or inside of the world, taking care of people who have become sick

because of this big change. Both because of the change in atmosphere for the Concretists, also for the people who have synthetic bodies, or even who have partly synthetic bodies, right?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Humans who have prosthetics that require, that have, like, you know, breathing systems installed, or that have heart monitor stuff going on, like, the world skipped a beat for a second. Everything mechanical or electronic skipped a beat for a second. That means that there's lots of medical care being needed. I bet that things are a little overwhelmed right now. The nice thing, question mark, is that at least in the Twilight Mirage, this is a place that knows—has the capacity to help these people, both the capacity as in the medical facilities, and the understanding of what the Concrete situation is, like, you know, this is where that's from originally, those folks left here, and only left here a few hundred years ago, as far as this place is concerned, only 500 years ago, right?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Whereas, outside, not only would it—I mean, the problem that they're having is partly about being inside, but only partly. Their cybernetics also were affected by the Perennial Wave, so it's a double dip in that sense. But they have not only the technology, but they also have the kind of like, you know, compassionate capacity. No one here is checking their insurance, you know?

Ali: Right, yeah. Uh-huh.

Austin: Like, to do that, but I do think that the immediate question of are there enough resources, what is the problem, what is the affect of experience of living with shortened breath, or living with needing to do more injections per day, or needing to do more cannister refills on your concrete gas or whatever it is, like, that stuff, whatever the actual—and it might be different for different people what the fix is for what the current situation is. There's a lot of attention being spent on that right now just to get through the day, you know?

And so Hunting is probably among those people. I think Hunting—I mean, you tell me. Hunting has probably said “I need to get taken somewhere” or “I need to rest more today”, you know, “I don’t have it in me, Captain”, I think is probably one way to frame this. Is just, like, exhaustion, shortness of breath, fatigue, you know? And I’m guessing you’re not working Hunting to the bone despite that.

Ali: [laughs] “Get back to work!”

Austin: “Stay on those comms!”

Ali: No.

Austin: “Keep scanning!”

Ali: Well, with that answered...

Austin: Yeah.

[Ali chuckles]

Meeting

[54:29]

Austin: Are people mostly keeping to themselves in this aftermath? Do we want to just move into individual scenes and see how those line up between characters? Is there a team meeting that we want to do before that?

Ali: Um, I mean, I certainly think that one would happen. I, um—I guess, spoilers, since we’re gonna either do the scene or do other scenes, I think my scene was gonna be sort of a, like, a very sad attempt to force people into a movie night. [laughs]

Dre: Aw.

Sylvi: Aw.

Austin: We gotta do that. We simply have to do that.

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Austin: That we gotta do.

Ali: But, you know, Brnine will get their people in the hangar for the morning stand-up if that's what this—the recording feels it needs.

Sylvi: Morning stand-up?

Ali: Yeah.

Sylvi: Get a tight 5.

Ali: Yeah.

[**Dre** chuckles]

Ali: This is how this ship runs.

Dre: What's—

Sylvi: What's the deal with war drama?

Dre: God damn it.

Austin: Not that kind of stand-up.

[**Dre** laughs]

Janine: I feel like the term “morning stand-up” divided the room in half really fast.

Austin: Yeah, it did.

[**Ali** and **Keith** laugh] [**Austin** sighs]

Ali: Um...

Ali (as **Brnine**): Good morning, everyone. Uh... Thanks for making the time to, uh, to gather here. How'd everybody sleep?

[pause]

Keith: How early is it? Am I tired?

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: You're exhausted.

Keith: I'm tired. I ran from where the explosion happened over to—I mean, I guess I drove for part of that. Um... Did I actually make it back? I don't remember.

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Everybody got back eventually.

Keith: Well, I must have gotten back, but I couldn't remember if I made it to the arena.

Austin: Me either. I also don't remember.

Keith: I think that that was eventually going to be what happened, but then we just ended the episode instead.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, you were still far away, because you were doing PVP to keep Brnine alive from a distance.

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

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvi: God.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh, yeah, so, uh—yeah. I guess I can—I'm sorry about that. I just hope everybody's feeling okay.

Austin (as **Midnite**): I mean, you didn't do it.

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

Austin: Says—Midnite is like,

Austin (as **Midnite**): You didn't—why are you apologizing?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh, I just think it was an inappropriate question given...

Austin (as **Midnite**): Oh, okay.

Ali (as **Brnine**): ...the situation. Um... Safe to say everybody can take time to themselves today. Um... I'm glad everyone's here.

Austin: Partial Palisade raises a hand. Who also looks like he hasn't slept—I don't know how Delegates—both of the Delegates in this room are exhausted.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: What's that look like, Keith? What do we—what do robot—what's their robot sleepiness look like?

Keith: Um... I think it's a really still, like, it's like—

Austin: Oh, that's fun.

Keith: —you're not expending extra energy to sort of appear relaxed. It actually—

Austin: [chuckles] Our idle animations are off.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It actually takes a lot of energy to look relaxed, and so you've shut those off, and you just look kind of stiff.

Austin: Yeah. That's very fun. Partial is like,

Austin (as **Partial Palisade**): Has there been any word from leadership from the rest of the Cause? What our plan is, what we're doing, what we're supposed to do? What are we supposed to do?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um, I, um... There isn't a plan, so to speak. Um, I think that we are sort of, uh... gonna take today to think about it. Um...

Austin: This really is a morning stand-up meeting. This is—whew.

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

Dre: God.

Austin: Real morning layoffs energy, I'll be honest.

Ali: Well, yeah, well, I just think that Brnine sort of doesn't know...

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: ...what to do.

Keith: Huh?

Ali: And has built a routine.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvi: Routine's not here.

Ali: Shoutouts to Routine.

Dre: I mean, you did just—you did just lose some resources to a outside hostile acquisition.

Austin: [laughs] That's true.

[**Keith** chuckles]

Austin: Which, again, I want to be clear, because I saw some questions about this. Figure is dead.

Dre: Yes, Figure is dead.

Austin: Figure is dead. Yes. The body of Figure, a living walking shell, an animated shell, serving Future. Figure, not in there.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Figure's soul, whoosh, gone. That's why Perennial was crying, you know?

Dre: Yeah. Mhm.

Austin: So.

Ali: The better option for Figure in the end there, really. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um, well, I guess I, uh, just, um... wanted to be with everybody in the morning, and answer any questions, but I—

Austin (as **Partial Palisade**): Did—sorry. Did—

Austin: This is Partial again.

Austin (as **Partial Palisade**): Did Figure have people? Do we need to get word to Figure's people?

Ali (as **Brnine**): No.

Sylvi (as **Cori**): We were Figure's people.

Austin (as **Partial Palisade**): Oh, okay.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Right. Um, I don't think that there's anybody, um... with their last arrangement that is kind of worthy of the... yeah. So, um...

Keith (as **Eclectic**): Sorry, what was that?

[Ali chuckles]

Ali (as **Brnine**): [stammers] Figure's last assignment, I guess, is what we will say, before they were with Millennium Break was not...

Keith (as **Eclectic**): Oh, okay.

Ali (as **Brnine**): ...one they were, uh... right.

Austin (as **Partial Palisade**): Oh.

Keith (as **Eclectic**): I thought you were saying that they didn't have, like, a will.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Oh, um...

Dre: Don't have one of those, either, I don't think.

Austin: No, there's no, like... There's no, uh, yeah. "In case of emergencies, break glass" type thing that...

Dre: Sure. Secretly I have a very well-funded 403(b) that I leave to Millennium Break.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh] [**Dre** chuckles]

Austin: Aw, that's nice. Unfortunately, you can only access it outside of the Twilight Mirage, so...

Dre: [laughing] Yeah.

[**Keith** laughs]

Ali: Wow.

Keith: Hey, my Arbitrage app is saying "out of network".

Austin: Yeah. Which, I mean, this is another question I don't have an immediate answer to, actually, is—because we know that Arbitrage was in the Mirage enough to be at the Brink during our Orbital game.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But we also positioned Arbitrage, who was also weirdly decentralized in some ways, seemingly, as being safe watching on from a distance when this happened. So I don't know if Arb—I don't think Arbitrage is here, but I don't know what that means for Mustard Red, for instance.

[**Ali** snickers]

Jack: Yeah, I was gonna say, I'll tell you who is here, definitely, is Mustard Red. She woke up early this morning. She's got a little pair of glasses on. She's—

Austin: Yeah, but like, if her scouter isn't telling her messages from Arbitrage anymore, what's going on?

Keith: Right. You know, all of a sudden...

Austin: Or maybe Arbitrage has a way of getting comms in still. Maybe that's—

Keith: All of a sudden, I'm getting a really bad feeling from Mustard Red.

[**Austin**, **Ali**, and **Jack** laugh]

Keith: A person I used to have no problems with, all of a sudden, I just am not vibing with her at all.

[**Dre** laughs]

Ali: That's so weird.

Austin: Because she doesn't have the right answers to everything I say anymore. It's weird.

Jack: Oh, I don't know. I mean, part of the deal with Connadine was that Arbitrage would get access to a set of equipment.

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

Jack: And it could be that the capability of that equipment, that I don't remember how specific we've gotten, has already been worked on people like Mustard Red.

Austin: Oh, I see what you're saying. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That Mustard—well, Mustard was certainly under contract.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Right?

Ali: Oh, yeah.

Austin: Which, you know. I don't think that contract's broken. I think—

Ali: But like, signed the contract in the Twilight Mirage to our prior point, though.

Austin: That's true.

Ali: That's why it's...

Keith: Right.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, I don't think Mustard's loyalty is under question. It's is Mustard getting new directives?

Keith: Right.

Austin: Like, I don't know what Mustard is—

Keith: The cell tower's down.

Austin: The cell tower's down.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Maybe, maybe.

Austin: And Mustard, generally, seems to think that she does the right thing all the time.

Keith: Right.

Austin: So I don't think that she's like, now how can I—

Jack: [laughs] I would say that thinking she does the right thing all the time is maybe Mustard Red's raison d'être.

Austin: Exactly.

[Ali laughs]

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And so is she gonna keep trying to do the right—I don't know. I don't know. Ali, you're not playing Mustard Red in the finale, are you?

Ali: I'm not.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: Damn it.

Ali: I'm not.

Keith: Maybe, though.

Ali: I'm not prepared to make these answers right now. I would love to have some scenes with her.

Austin: Yeah, sure. She can be, like, a side character that we get some scenes with.

Ali: Right. But I feel like being honest, like, being honest with just the technological change [Austin: Mhm.] is probably, like, you know, for her the WiFi is down.

[Sylvi chuckles]

Ali: You know, how permanent that is is I think a question—an answer we can make together.

Austin: Right, right.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Arbitrage is working on it.

Austin: Maybe. Arbitrage has other goals. Like, I know what Arbitrage's goals are, and it's—

Ali: But like, Arbitrage—

Austin: —chaos in the galaxy. You know?

Ali: Right, but like, there's—Arbitrage isn't doing layoffs, though. Like...

Austin: No.

Ali: If it—[laughs]

Sylvi: Not at this moment.

Austin: But it might be one of those things where, like, you know, you're in a remote office somewhere, and you're such a small line item—"you" meaning Mustard Red—they're just like, "Eh, Mustard Red can run this whole branch, it's not a big deal." You know?

Keith: Sure.

Ali: Oh, sure, sure, sure. Okay, yeah.

Keith: Although a known multitasker, Arbitrage.

Austin: True. Yes, absolutely. I thought you meant Mustard Red.

Keith: I don't know—

Dre: Maybe.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Also a known multitasker. There's magazines to get, there is [chuckles] accidental destabilization...

Keith: A known multitasker in the human way where a long time ago I heard about a study that was, directly proportional, your self-evaluation of how good you are at multitasking with actually how bad you were at multitasking.

[Austin laughs]

Dre: Sure, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: I don't know how true that is, but I heard that like ten years ago.

Austin: [laughs] Yes.

Dre: I'd believe it.

Austin: Yeah. Anyway, it sounds like...

Ali: [mumbling] That's a good point to check out...

Austin: ...the end of the scene was you basically saying "Alright, go—y'all got some personal time today."

Ali: Um, yeah. Yeah, seems so. Uh...

Austin: Okay. Where do we go to from here? Who has a scene for soon after the Twilight Mirage bombs go off, I guess sometime in this early days after?

Gliding Through Currents

[1:05:32]

Janine: I have a scene for—honestly, probably soon after that meeting, even.

Austin: Perfect. Do you want to frame that scene? Is this scene using a move from Armour Astir, [**Janine:** Yes.] or is it more free—okay. What's the move?

Janine: I want to frame the scene a little bit first.

Austin: Yeah, okay, that makes sense.

Janine: Thisbe was present at that meeting, but not really paying attention.

Austin: Yeah, fair.

[**Sylvi** laughs]

Janine: And like, you know, I think in some cases it might be hard to tell, because she doesn't make expressions and stuff, she just kind of can point her head at something and like, eh.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: But I think there was probably, like, a flickering in her eyes that didn't really correspond to anything being said.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Like, it would be happening in like, a quiet sort of contemplative moment or things like that where it's just like, well, I don't know what that's about. And when everyone leaves, she stays behind.

[**Austin** hums]

Janine: I think—what's the room we were in? Was that like the bridge, or like...

Ali: The hangar.

Janine: Okay.

Ali: Or, no, actually no, um, the second floor—the above where the hangar is in the Blue Channel is like a Mass Effect “here’s where the NPCs are” area is.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Okay.

Ali: And that’s where it happened. Sorry. [laughs]

Janine: [chuckles] Then—

Austin: It’s very funny. As soon as you were like “above the hangar”, I was like, alright, where am I at in the Mass Effect ship? Okay. Yeah, I got it.

[Ali laughs]

Janine: So, I—yeah, okay. So Thisbe, I think, like, finds a place to sit down. It’s somewhere, like, relatively public, but also kind of out of the way, like people could walk through, or people could be like, wait, what the hell is Thisbe doing?

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: But mostly she wants, like, a big space with a degree of activity.

Austin: Interesting.

Janine: Like, almost white noise.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Kind of—

Austin: Yeah, I think it’s easy to imagine, like, a space where, you know, Saffron Septet, the doctor—who, by the way, is back in the Mirage, you know, from the Mirage

like you, Cori—is, you know, moving stuff around, is prepping supplies to ship out to—maybe to the Concretists of Sinder Karst because they need that. They need those supplies. Maybe Morning Matinee is here helping with some stuff. There’s that style of, like—I said Morning Matinee. Midnite Matinee is here.

Sylvi: Morning’s their sister.

Austin: Right, uh-huh. We have that sort of, like, motion throughout the space so that there is that activity that you need. It’s easy to imagine people, like, moving crates or moving supplies around or whatever, you know? Going through their idle animations.

Janine: Mhm. So, the thing I want to do, the move I’m using, is Worldwide Resonance.

Austin: Ooh.

Janine: It is a Resonant move. It says: “During downtime, you may lead a Glide Through Currents scene.”

[Ali laughs]

Sylvi: What?

Janine: “Glide Through Currents—” Hang on.

Ali: [laughing] Alright.

Janine: “The leading player may search the transcendent currents to ask the Director a question and gain useful information. Or, lay a trap in the all-encompassing expanse. If you lay a trap, pick a division; the Cause will succeed on a roll of your choice against them during the next conflict turn.” I really regret that we can’t take advantage of that. “During the scene—”

Austin: Well, we can take advantage of that fictionally, still.

Janine: Yeah, but it would have been cooler that way.

[Sylvi laughs] [Ali snickers]

Janine: “During the scene, anyone who participates may spend a token to do one of the following: face a premonition of the future; add a d6 to Plan and Prepare,” that’s one thing, “look further into topics of personal interest; advance or start a long-term project,” and “enjoy the wonder of the currents with someone else; advance your Gravity with them.”

Austin: [hums] Interesting.

Janine: So basically, if anyone wants to, like, astral project...

Keith: Sick.

Janine: Thisbe’s doing a little bit of astral projection.

Austin: Is this a thing you’re—you’re not explicitly inviting anybody to do this, you’re just publicly meditating, and so if people want to, like, come hang, they will be part of this experience.

Janine: Yeah, this isn’t a thing that, like, Thisbe’s necessarily announcing that she can do, because I think she’s just figuring it out.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I think this is probably why she was really preoccupied during the meeting, of just like, I think I can go further with things than I have been. I need to just sit down and do that.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: Which is why she isn’t really—

Keith: “I’m pretty sure I can glide through currents.”

[Ali laughs]

Janine: [chuckles] She didn't really make an effort to find a special place or whatever, [Austin: Right.] like, she wanted a place that just had a bit of background noise so that if she went too far she would have something kind of anchoring her, I guess.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: Like, there's a little—there's like a safety rope kind of thing there about not being in a perfectly quiet, isolated, place when she's not really sure what she's doing.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: But also, I think this is probably a thing where, like, if you get close enough, there's maybe like a field or something that kind of tugs you in.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's right. Yeah, I love that.

Janine: Like, it feels like the gravity increases a little bit when you get close to her and you can either back off or you can walk in.

Austin: Yeah. There's the sense that—it might even be bigger than just immediately around her, right? Like, the idea of people going about their tasks throughout the ship, but feeling this kind of, like, pull towards, like, "Hey, I'm starting to think a little bit about the future in a different way. Do I want to follow that line?" You know? Or, again, it's "face a premonition of the future, look further into topics of personal interest, or enjoy the wonder of currents with someone else." Right? So there's a lot of things you could vibe with on these currents, right? You could ride these currents a lot of places, which is an interesting—it's interesting that you're not just doing it for yourself, and even—it's interesting that it's, like, someone could theoretically—

Janine: I might think I am. Like, I...

Austin: Right.

Janine: Again, this is a—like, if Thisbe thought she was doing this with other people, she might have been like, "Hey, who wants to go on a weird trip with me?"

[Austin and Dre laugh]

Austin: Tripping with Thisbe.

Janine: But I think this is fully a thing of, like, you know, this is the first time I'm using this move, it's the first time she's done it, too.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Like, she doesn't know, really.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. What's fun to me is that it's like you're providing a—you're providing the medium for this, in a way, more than just being the leader, right? It's like, you're opening the door for other people to go on their own little journeys here, which is great. Does anyone want to get in on this? We don't have tokens, just tell me if this is a thing that your character—you know, if you feel that draw as you walk by, is that something you lean into, or is this something that at this point you're—'cause Midnite is like, "Nah, I'm keeping my head straight, I'm focused on moving these boxes." You know? "I'm trying to not go into flights of fancy right now."

Keith: You know, I can't pass up a chance to do psychic detective, spooky detective stuff.

Austin: Interesting. Yeah, sure.

Sylvi: I'll trip-sit Thisbe too. I'll be there.

Austin: Okay. Are you actually going through it, or are you just...

Sylvi: I think I'm actually going through it.

Austin: Okay, you're not trip-sitting. You're not a trip-sitter...

Sylvi: Well, 'cause, we've—one, I have, you know, despite all my tenets being broken, I do still have Flash as a move on my sheet, which means...

Austin: [hums] Interesting.

Sylvi: There's some level of, like, magical connectedness I can do.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: But also, Thisbe and I were the two who kind of spear-headed the kind of Divine communication clock and...

Austin: That's true, yeah. Your move Flash is like a fun version of the same type of thing of instantly communicating with other Channelers, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] so there's a little—there's a lot of gliding through currents happening here across the board.

Sylvi: I think that that is even, like, what sort of like—Cori didn't really know why she ended up moving, like, coming to this place, the same room where Thisbe ended up being until she got there, and was like, "Oh, I was feeling a pull from this."

Austin: Yeah. And so you do actively sit down with Thisbe.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Nice. I love this. And Eclectic, are you also coming to sit, or are you doing another task, but find yourself gliding along with—

Keith: I'm doing another task. I'm—

Austin: You're on your corkboard, you're on your—what are you doing?

Keith: I've got a projector with microfiche of—

Dre: Yeah, dude.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Oh, that's fun.

Sylvi: Let's go.

Keith: I'm looking at slides and video of fake Gur Sevraq, I'm investigating.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: He's got the Blade Runner monitor with the, like, grin on it, enhancing different squares, yeah.

Austin: [cross] Uh-huh. Enhance 42 to 38 or whatever, yeah. [mimics shuttering sound]
It does that little cool zoom-in mechanical feeling, yeah, that's great.

Sylvi: Yeah, exactly.

Dre: Mhm.

Ali: I would like to—[laughs]

Austin: Damn.

Ali: I was thinking—I was torn because I was like, I feel like Brnine should be, like, really caught up in other work, but if I could just be nearby, and just, like, slurp in...

Austin: Uh-huh.

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

Janine: I mean, that's the thing is, I think with Brnine, it's very easy to imagine a situation where Brnine doesn't actually go, like, "Oh, this is some weird shit that I want to do." It's more like, "Why is Thisbe sitting perfectly still and there's a bunch of other people with her and what the fuck is this? Why does it feel weird? I'm gonna go check it out."

[**Austin** laughs]

Ali: Mhm. "Oh, everyone's co-working today. I'm gonna come with my toolkit."

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Dre: Aw...

Austin: Oh my god.

Art: Hey, did Ali say “slurp in” or did I—

[group crosstalk]

Ali: [cross] No, I did say that.

Dre: [cross] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: [cross] Slurped in, yeah.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Dre: That’s what I snorted at.

Ali: I’ve said “slurped in” like 20 times this week because that’s also how I—you know, you get slurped into the Twilight Mirage.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Do you?

Ali: Yeah.

Dre: Uh, they did.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: If you’ve ever—if you’ve ever gone to a movie theater and you’ve gotten a blue raspberry Icee, you know exactly the feeling of being slurped into the Twilight Mirage. Just imagine that you are the—

Ali: Remember when Figure slurped up Brnine? We’ve—there’s been a lot of [laughing] slurping—

Austin: [emphatic] Huh?

Keith: Huh?

Ali: There's been a lot of slurping in this season.

Dre: Yo, what fics you been readin', bro?

Sylvi: Yeah, what?

[**Ali** continues laughing]

Austin: Wha?

Ali: When I—after I killed Dahlia, remember? I got slurped up.

Keith: Oh, yeah, you did get slurped up. Yeah, I remember that. Yeah.

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

Keith: Some people call it “teleported”.

Dre: [laughing] Yeah. Some would call it “magic”.

Austin: [laughing] She says slurps up! Survey says!

[**Dre** and **Ali** laugh] [**Austin** groans]

Dre: Alright, I'm pitching my new character, it's a surfer from the Twilight Mirage who always says “slurp's up”.

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

Austin: Okay. Slurps up. Slurps up, bro.

[**Dre** chuckles]

Austin: Janine, what does—sorry, is that everybody who's in this room—we've gotten answers from the whole of the remaining crew? I think we have.

Ali: [laughing] Art and Jack, you want to create an NPC and come down?

Art: I think I'm okay, but I really appreciate the invitation.

Jack: Yeah, I'm fine.

Austin: We could just slurp you right in to this scene. Or up.

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

Art: I appreciate the slurpability that you're observing, but...

Jack: And I don't. I'm a hater.

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

Sylvi: Wow.

Austin: Damn. Good to be—at least you're honest about it. I appreciate it.

Dre: Slurp vibes, wretched.

Keith: Spits down. That's what it's—Jack is spits down.

Austin: Woah, woah, woah.

Jack: What?

Ali: No, okay—

Keith: It's the opposite of slurps up.

Austin: That's too far.

Ali: [laughing] Thisbe—

Austin: Thisbe, I am going to ask you to help define what this—what is this experience like visually, you know what I mean? Or—

Janine: Yeah.

Art: Try to use the word “slurp” in your response.

Janine: Um, so, I have a metaphor that’s slightly out of reach, and then one that’s like, slightly more within reach, but they’re very very similar.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: So I was mostly thinking of that big aquarium in Berlin that broke. I think it was in Berlin. It was like the world’s biggest free-standing cylindrical aquarium.

Austin: It was like a hotel thing? Or like a—yeah.

Janine: Yeah, it was in a hotel lobby, it broke and it was very scary and bad when it did.

Austin: That was what I was thinking about last week when I described—when Future described the future as being an aquarium bursting. That’s literally the thing that I was thinking about when I made that comparison, so.

Janine: Yeah. But it also had, like, an elevator inside of it, which was kinda sick. The more accessible metaphor is like, you know when you go to Vegas and there’s like, that aquarium tunnel, right? There’s like some sort of—I think that’s in Vegas. There’s like a—it’s also in a lot of aquariums.

Ali: They have those, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. The Atlanta aquarium has that too, yeah.

Janine: But you know, like a tunnel where it’s like, yeah, you’ve got all the fish and stuff in the aquarium all around you. I think it’s like that, but combined with the concept of, like, you know the theory that everything that has ever happened or will happen is all happening all at once?

Austin: Yeah. Mhm.

Janine: On Earth, or whatever, in the universe?

Austin: Mhm. Yeah, like 4d cube space, or whatever. Cube time.

Janine: Yeah. I think it's that. Like, the aquarium is like, 4-dimensional, like, our perception of time is not actually what time is, time is nothing, and everything, blah-blah-blah.

Austin: Right, right, right.

Janine: And then, like, everyone in like a tunnel inside of that, like a little glass observational space.

Austin: Oh, that's wild. That's scary to me.

Janine: Someone's gonna throw up, probably, at the end, but that's okay.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: Probably Cori.

Janine: Cori, it doesn't have to be you.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: I can't remember if I have a mouth.

Ali: I thought it was gonna be me.

Austin: Oh, it could be you.

Janine: I have no mouth and I must barf.

Austin: Uh-huh.

[Keith laughs]

Austin: Yeah, I love that. I also love that because Eclectic is, like, looking through microfiche as this happens, so for him, it's like, eye down to microfiche, suddenly in the

tunnel of time all around me, is very good. Do you want to start with you, Thisbe, or do you want to wrap with you in terms of what you're gaining from this?

Thisbe

[1:19:06]

Janine: I think maybe start with Thisbe, because I think what she's doing probably takes—I was gonna say “takes time”, but that's sort of a nonsense concept in this thing.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Janine: But I imagine it, like, happening while other people are doing stuff. And I think she doesn't even really realize that there are other people around, or like, she's vaguely aware of them, but in a way where it could be that she's like, sure, maybe they're in the room with me in a place, you know, like, I don't know that she connects it like they've been pulled into this. And, yeah, I... I don't know that there's a trap I would want to lay right now, I think it's more honest to be like, I think this is a question. I think this is a question thing to kind of tee up for Questlandia. I think Thisbe is specifically reaching out to Volition.

Jack: Woah.

Austin: Oh, interesting.

Janine: Because I think—I don't know how much she knows about Volition, but...

Austin: Great question, yeah.

Janine: 'Cause like, I don't know what Integrity would know about Volition, I don't know what Ebullience—

Austin: Integrity wouldn't know much—the people from—the people from the Twilight Mirage that you know would know about Volition, right? And so, it's a question—it's a question less of what—if you had looked up Volition stuff before, talked to Saffron Septet about Volition, or read about Twilight Mirage history from something that they

brought with them. You know, Cori could tell you about Volition to some degree, you know? So you would have—you would have access to at least a baseline explanation of what happened in that story. “Oh, there was this big weird orb, and it was bad, but then it came around.” You know? Like, some version of that.

Janine: Because I feel like it might have—I feel like if that reason, or if that history was accessible, it would have probably rolled in at some point with Thisbe’s, like, looking into Divine communication and stuff like that, [**Austin:** Yeah, totally.] because there’s—that’s the whole thing there.

Austin: Yeah, absolutely.

Janine: So I think she’s reaching out and she’s trying to, like... I think the thing that Thisbe’s really interested in is what it would be like to unite Divines and even maybe to an extent Axioms into something that could act on, like, a shared desire.

Austin: Like a Gestalt—like, would they be acting together, or would they actually be joining into one being?

Janine: It’s kind of like a union.

Austin: It’s kind of like a union. It’s kind of like a union. Like a lowerca—like a union like you join a union, not like a union, like, two things literally becoming one.

Janine: Like you join a union, like a labor union.

Austin: Yeah, okay. Yeah.

Keith: The Columnar trash brain.

Janine: Basically like a thing that, like, you know, obviously not every design would—or every Divine would want to be part of that, [**Austin:** Yeah.] nor should be, [Austin: Uh-huh.] some of them have intentions that would be directly counter to the group, [Austin: Yeah.] but the idea of, like, the way that a group of people from wherever can

be together and have goals and act on them as a union, like Millennium Break or whatever, you know? I think she wants to learn about, like, do y'all talk? Like, what's—

Austin: [chuckling] Mhm.

[Ali snickers]

Janine: I'm walking into the room, I want to know, like, what's the relationship here?

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: If we aren't all talking, why aren't we all talking?

Austin: Fun that Thisbe is saying "we" now.

Janine: Yeah.

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: You get an Axiom in you, you have—you get a Divine through your body, and suddenly... Yeah, I think that the response is sort of—I mean, I guess to some degree I want to leave it open in the sense that I know what my instinct is, but if there's a more interesting answer here from somebody else, I don't feel like I have the monopoly on Volition, necessarily. Right?

My instinct is that to some degree, Volition is in a place where that does exist, that does happen, you know? Of course the Divines here talk. Of course the Divines here share their feelings about things. And in fact, part of what's hard for Volition to even understand from this question insofar as it's even spoken as a question. I guess that's a question. Are you asking this of—do you see Volition and ask it this? Does Volition appear to you in the aquarium tunnel across time in like, a, you can see all of its forms at once all around you way? Is it—

Janine: I kind of think that what Thisbe's looking for is an active conversation.

Austin: Okay, then yeah. Then I think that if—

Janine: It's sort of like walking up to a couple people at a party and like, maybe the party is in a different country, so you don't know the language super well, and then you find two people who are speaking the language you know, and you're like "Oh my god, thank you."

Austin: Yeah. I think that it's—I want that mundanity, but I want it to be shot like every version of Thisbe we've ever seen, going back to Thisbe as pure farmer robot before there was the scar on her face, going through all of the different—any costume variation of Thisbe we ever had.

[Ali chuckles]

Austin: You know, sari Thisbe is here. We have pre—

Janine: It was a sarong, it wasn't a sari.

Austin: Oh, it wasn't a sari. It was a sarong. Apologies.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, sarong Thisbe is here. Cape Thisbe is here. Golden horns Thisbe is here. Future version of Thisbe—the Thisbes of the alternate universe from Dust are here. All lined up in, like, a forever mirror, you know, and then across from them, every version of Volition we've ever seen, going back to the birth of Volition, the Volition that has Independence inside of it and is kind of all bubbling and dangerous and has, like, the black centipede of Independence inside of it, through the eventual pure golden Volition, and then now this kind of blend that can move between the two.

That is—they're all lined up and having this conversation, but it is a conversation. And so you ask, is there something like a union for Divines, or something like that. And I think Volition says, yes, of course, yes—what the fuck does Volition sound like in this space?

Austin (as **Volition**): Of course. We speak regularly about the things that concern us and concern those we care for, but I sense that you mean something more.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Have you ever spoken with the Lantern?

Austin (as **Volition**): It's new. It has never been in reach. An interesting configuration.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Why, if you can speak, and do speak, do you still choose to be scattered the way the Divines are?

Austin (as **Volition**): I can't speak for your Divines. We are proximal, but separate. Not scattered here in the Mirage. We simply like where we are, but that does not mean we don't come into orbit with one another, sometimes. But I sense that your Divines are... different.

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I do not think they all like where they are.

Austin (as **Volition**): What do you think holds them where they are?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): Subjection.

Austin (as **Volition**): Whose power is greater than a Divine's? Who could subject ones such as those?

Janine (as **Thisbe**): I don't—that's part of what I don't understand.

Austin: I'm thinking of how Volition would frame this.

Austin (as **Volition**): You have much traveling to do still. I spent my life, my youth, trying to eliminate contamination. Trying to make a world without any subjectivity because I feared it contaminated truth. That peace would be obtainable if only—if only the people were eliminated. This was incorrect. Because it presupposed that purity was itself uncontaminated.

I suspect that the Divines who are subjugated are subjugated in part by other Divines. Are subjugated in part by guilt. Are subjugated in part by themselves. Communication helps. Communication is not the only thing.

I sit in the center because it is good for me here. That does not mean that the other places are ill-suited to Divines. It does not mean that I dislike coming into contact with them. I simply sit where I like to be. I do not know what I would do if others came here and said that they would like my seat.

Janine: [hums] I don't know that I have a follow-up there.

Austin: Yeah, that's fine.

Janine: Let's see what other people are doing.

Austin: Yeah, I think that the forms, the multiple forms, kind of collapse inwards onto the current versions, who then kind of glide past one another.

Brnine

[1:30:00]

Austin: Alright, who else is looking to ask something and gain useful information, or facing premonitions, or looking into topics of interest, et cetera? We can have full scenes, we can sketch if we want to sketch quickly, up to y'all.

Ali: I can do mine if it's quick and people are still thinking.

Austin: Sure.

Ali: I think that I want to face a premonition to the future, and then we can just sort of like, narrativize how that's a Plan and Prepare thing.

Austin: Oh, yeah, that's fun.

Ali: Because I feel like—okay, the first idea I had that, like, the way to do this accidentally or whatever from the first meeting is that, like, maybe Brnine is in an adjacent room or, like, at Figure's work station, or something like that, [**Austin** hums] and like, cleaning those things up.

Austin: Can you be in the same room as Jesset? Can Jesset be there?

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Oh, man.

Austin: Because I have a Jesset thing for when you come out of your reverie.

Ali: Sure, [Austin: Okay.] if you promise to tell me what Jesset's trip is like.

Austin: Yeah. Well, Jesset will tell you what's going on, yeah, uh-huh.

Ali: [laughs] Okay. But I feel like the, like—the way that I got here was, like, the idea of Brnine coming across the Valence tape on Figure's desk.

Austin: [groans] Uh-huh.

Sylvi: Oh my god.

[Dre groans]

Ali: And that sort of like—[laughs] those just like, layers—

Sylvi: Multi-hit combo. Fuckin' hell.

Ali: Yeah. Just, just, just—and like, I feel like there's this sort of... this, like, tarot card energy that you can approach to this, [Austin: Mhm.] where I feel like for Brnine, there is two impulses inside their heart, [Austin: Mhm.] which is like—

Dre: There are two wolves.

Ali: "I don't want to be emotionally responsible for these people, I don't want to see their grief, I want to leave, I want to find that weird monster who said that I could be in a tomb and see if the deal is still on." Or there's the idea of, like, am I—Brnine is already a person so disconnected from the world that they were a part of, and the idea of, like, having to work through memories and be, like, "Oh, I never wanted to go back to Partizan, and now I don't even know—I don't even know if I can be, like, be at an airport

that's like that again." Like, the idea that, like, you know, there's a version of my experience where it's like, is—can I go to a place where, like, I can never get a bacon, egg, and cheese?

[Austin hums]

Ali: Like, that is the sort of, like... The, like, you know, how disconnected am I while being like, "Oh, yeah."

Austin: From your daily life.

Ali: And also, like, especially alongside grief in that way, of being like, "Oh, I'd love to go to that place that me and Figure went to, or me and Valence went to," and then it's just, like, "Oh, I can't... do that." Which is why—

Austin: I truly can't believe how Morning's Observation-pilled Brnine is right now.

Ali: [laughs] Right, yeah, exactly.

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: The like, the place with the sandwich. I want to go back to the place with the sandwich.

Ali: Uh-huh. Right.

Austin: And that's just off the table now, maybe.

Ali: Uh-huh. And that's why I think that, like, those feelings are so raw that they're not vocalized or, you know, really, like, "Oh, I'm really thinking about—I'm pondering about this question, I'm filling out this thing," it's just what's in Brnine's...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Like, emotional process right now while they're doing something really mundane. Like, oh, you know, these, like—I don't know if Figure ate, but like, [laughs] I should take

off these, like—[laughs] I should clean up their desk, I should put things back into a file, I should see if there's anything important there.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I should, like, dust some of these crumbs or whatever. I don't know if there's crumbs. I'm sorry, Figure. I don't know. [laughs]

Austin: Messy eater Figure established.

[Ali laughs]

Dre: Well, like, rock dust. Yeah.

Janine: I didn't understand what you were saying, because you said "Figure ate", and like, that's a thing?

Dre: Yeah, no.

[group crosstalk]

Austin: I mean, listen, Figure did eat...

Dre: Figure's new outfit? Figure fuckin' ate.

Sylvi: Yeah.

[Austin laughs]

Ali: Yeah, Figure—Figure—[laughs]

Janine: I mean, the thing is, also, seven eight nine, so.

Dre: Oh, fuck.

Austin: That's true. And figure eight, a figure eight, you put it on its side, what do you get? Infinity.

Sylvi: Woah.

Austin: That's right. Yeah.

Keith: Damn. Woah.

Jack: Hector's voice echoing through the radio waves.

Austin: [laughing] Uh-huh, yeah, exactly.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: So do you not—so does this—is this just the emotions you're feeling are that much bigger, or are you also—are you having the sort of, like, visualization of past memories that are so clear that they're, like, it's a little scary how clear they are? Or are you also getting a little taste of the future here?

Ali: I think that's it. I think that, like, being so close to, like, a mythological experience like this while experiencing such profound grief [**Austin:** Personal grief.] and also indecision, [Austin: Yeah.] is like, I would like there to be this sort of flash of like, thinking through "What am I even fucking doing? What am I gonna do? What the fuck is happening?"

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: This sort of flash of, like, oh, this is one of those things, is sort of a funny way to have that respond, I think.

Austin: What do you see? It's like, you know, I could say—I could come up with a premonition, but I think it's more interesting if you or someone else does.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: And then we have to see if we can get there. You know what I mean?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Or we don't get there, right? Because it's just a premonition of the future, it's not necessarily the future, right?

Ali: Right, yeah.

Jack: God.

Ali: God, we've said "future" so much, it's like the enemy is here. [laughs]

Austin: Well, and this is the thing—that's the thing that Future does. This is the thing Future does, is show you a premonition of a future. Except for, in that case, what Future does is show you a premonition of a future you want to have, but crystal clear. It gives you the sense of, like—it's like trying to paint something and not knowing what you're gonna paint, and then Future is like, oh no, here, let me help bring that into crystal clarity for you. Boom.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: This is the image you're going after. You know? You can see it in your head now. And that's not what this is, really. This is not asking you what future do you want to have, it's you getting a glimpse of a possible future you might have, right? So what is it? What's that life like? What's at stake for Brnine?

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Oh, god. [chuckles]

Austin: Because, you know, in some ways it's like, is the image that you see one of peace and rest here in the Mirage? Of course you find a good breakfast food place. I know a place, actually. We'll go there later in this episode, probably, at least briefly.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: There, you know, there are places like that here. There is—you could go live a completely normal life. You know, a thing that got asked of you on TV, galactic TV a few months ago, was whether or not you—why did you decide to make weapons for a

living? Why didn't you learn how to make medical equipment or whatever the fuck you were asked on that talk show? Do you remember this?

Ali: Mhm. I do remember this. I also think that's a funny thing, because it's part of the answer of what is at stake for Brnine, which is like, they were invested in Palisade, but Palisade was not the, like, end of their goals.

Austin: Right. Right.

Ali: Because they didn't really have goals. [laughs]

Austin: They had vague goals. They had vague pro-Millennium Break, anti-Principality goals, right? That, like—

Ali: Well, sure, sure, sure. Right.

Austin: But like...

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: They went on TV and didn't say the word Palisade once, though.

Austin: Right.

Ali: And I think that they've regretted that since, but that did happen.

Austin: Interesting. Yeah.

Dre: Hm.

Austin: Interesting.

Ali: Yeah, lot of things Brnine doesn't say.

Dre: [facetious] What?

Ali: Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: And so, yeah. That's the question, right? Is like, is the premonition of the future that Brnine gets one of fighting back out inside of the broader galaxy, or is it one here in the Twilight Mirage, living a peaceful life? And in some ways, getting either of those sets the stakes for the other, right? In the sense that, like, getting the vision of peace and, you know, rest is—sets the stakes of like, oh, really, you're just gonna stay here while the Principality continues to destroy people's lives out there? And doing the opposite of, like, oh, so you're just gonna fight until you fucking die? You know? You're just—so basically what you are is a soldier at heart. You know? That's—you're not—you can't imagine a better future for yourself. Right? Those are the—either one of them will set the opposite stake in an interesting way, or will set those overall stakes, I think, in an interesting way, but I do want to know what you see.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: What's Brnine's vision of—and this isn't—it, again, it isn't Brnine's vision. It is a vision brought on by connecting to the transcendent currents of the Twilight Mirage.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: There's a little bit of, you know, I mean, a word we haven't—a thing that has not been in this conversation that—at least, explicitly—is, Thisbe, as a reminder, Integrity went through your horns, right? It's—you have the golden horns, right?

Janine: Yeah, yes.

Austin: Which evokes the—why am I blanking on their names?

Jack: The Hypha?

[Dre hums]

Austin: The Hypha, who are strati, and the gold inlay that they would do on their horns, right?

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: And explicitly, they did that in order to glide through the rhythms—glide through currents, rather, not rhythms, I don't know where rhythms came from—but glide through currents and do strati-style stuff, and like, here you are doing that exact type of thing, and in some ways the, like... There are ways to think about that arc in relation to this, right? Where, like, for you, Thisbe, this is a thing you've now kind of come back to, this kind of, like, way to reconnect to people, try to build out the relationship with the Divines. Brnine, you—I don't know where the fuck I was going with this. I had a really important, clear thing that I was trying to reconnect to the Hypha. Oh...

Jack: The Strand, the...

Austin: Oh, oh, specifically—yeah, yeah, yeah, specifically, the last time that we actually saw people have this type of experience were strati in the Twilight Mirage, which were like, Tender Sky and Declan's Corrective, used to have this style of vision all the time, right? During the pre-midseason finale, they both had a scene that was very similar to this, right? This sort of like, feeling the future, feeling through the currents.

So this is a thing strati do, and, you know, I'm not saying Brnine is a strati, or that Thisbe is one, but we've seen this type of space going back to Mako in COUNTER/Weight, right? All the way back to there as a type of psychedelic vision of the future, vision of the world, connecting between consciousnesses, et cetera. And so, Brnine, I think, is—all of these scenes are in that—in relationship to those two, so.

So yeah, which is it? What is that vision? If those are the two possible ones, if the ones that you could see in this moment, one of them is peaceful Brnine working on a motorcycle engine, you know? Or something, here in the Twilight Mirage, and one of them is Captain Brnine, maybe [cross] under a new new moniker, right.

Jack: [cross] Like the Blue Channel in a tailspin.

Austin: Yeah, the Blue Channel in a tailspin. Exactly.

Ali: Yeah, I think I would like to center it on Palisade.

Austin: Okay. Well, then—

Ali: Just 'cause that's where we're staying.

Austin: Yeah. Then my question is, is it fixing an engine on Palisade, or is it the Blue Channel in a tailspin on Palisade?

[**Ali** laughs]

Jack: On Palisade.

Austin: On Palisade. Exactly.

[**Dre** laughs]

Ali: Oh, that's right, becau—oh, right. I remember that.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: I—right. That was a reference to something.

[**Art** laughs]

Austin: A reference to the intro, yeah.

Ali: Uh-huh.

Dre: Mhm.

Ali: [laughs] Um, I think that it's fighting.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: I think that, like, the impulse of “other people in my life were fighting for something, so I have to...”

Austin: Mhm. Yeah.

Ali: ...would not have left their spirit.

Austin: I mean, especially while cleaning up that stuff.

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: Jesset had put some stuff in a box to, like, carry it out somewhere, and just stopped while you had also just stopped to go through the same experience, right?

[**Ali** chuckles]

Austin: And then, like, kind of snaps to attention, and is like,

Austin (as **Jesset**): [sighs] You ever just feel like, uh... you're never going to get to stop moving? You know, like they say a shark—a shark always has to move. You ever have that?

Ali (as **Brnine**): Um... [exhales] Yeah, well. Stuff to do, et cetera.

Austin (as **Jesset**): No—no, this was different. This was, um... like a compulsion. I couldn't... I just had a daydream of me, sort of me, moving, walking in circles, pacing. I couldn't stop pacing, Brnine.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Uh... weird. Um... I don't know, we'll figure it out. Maybe take a break right now.

Austin (as **Jesset**): Yeah, that's a good idea.

Ali (as **Brnine**): Show yourself who's boss.

Austin (as **Jesset**): Yeah. Yeah, maybe I'll go see if I can help Hunting with something.

Austin: And then gets up—

Ali (as **Brnine**): That's not a break.

Austin (as **Jesset**): Right, sorry. I, um...

Ali (as **Brnine**): Go get me some juice.

Austin (as **Jeset**): Yeah. I'll go get you some juice.

[Ali laughs] [Jack chuckles]

Sylvi: Damn!

Dre: [hums] A little fruit flirty. Okay!

Jack: That's also not a fuckin' break. That's also work. That's just work for you.

Sylvi: God damn!

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'm fucking with you. I'm fucking with you. No, go sit down.

Austin (as **Jeset**): Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Go get yourself some juice.

Austin (as **Jeset**): Do you want anything?

Sylvi: Juice?

Austin (as **Jeset**): Juice, perhaps?

Ali (as **Brnine**): I'm kinda thirsty now, I'm sorry.

Austin (as **Jeset**): No, I'll get you some juice. I'll see what's in the fridge.

[someone claps]

Janine: "Can you make me a casserole?"

Keith: Juice, perhaps?

Sylvi: [sarcastic] Brnine, thirsty? That doesn't make sense.

[Ali laughs] [Dre groans]

Austin: And there goes Jesset. Someone—you may have—listeners may have noticed that in the last faction game that Jesset was in, the mech that he was in, which was this kind of, like, machine drawing on Motion technology, had been basically destroyed, and then he had it again last episode in the arena fight. And that's weird, because it was basically destroyed in the episodes before that. But it was back, I don't know, it was weird.

Keith: I mean, I've heard about Motion.

Art: I decided to think that was normal.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, everything going on with Jesset right now is super normal.

[Ali laughs]

Art: That's a relief.

Austin: He's gonna go get that juice for you, and then figure out another way to be active, another way to be useful.

Eclectic

[1:45:25]

Austin: Who else was gliding on the currents?

Keith: I'm gliding on the currents.

Austin: You're gliding on the currents. What are you—what's your experience like as you see all of time and space collapse into a 4d cube?

Keith: Yeah, I want, like, my little microfiches to kind of explode out from 2d into 3d, and then into 4d, and I'm like—

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: And then, like, I'm in the microfiches, and, uh...

Austin: And this is like, you're investigating Gur Sevraq and Future and stuff like that, right?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I mean, I think it's—in some ways, it's a little similar to seeing all of the versions of Future, except I do like them staying in the 3d microfiche world thing.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You are tripping looking at these microfiches.

[**Keith** chuckles]

Austin: And it's a lot of like, oh, these are all very similar shots. Here is Gur Sevraq giving a talk at the Church of the Resin Heart [**Keith:** Yeah.] on the Isle of the Prophet on Partizan. Here's Gur Sevraq giving a sermon during the Prophet's Path thing. Here's Gur Sevraq giving a da-da-da. And there's a lot of like, oh yeah, arms out, robes on, da-da-da, and then there's the post—there's the stuff that you know, which is current fake Gur Sevraq doing similar things, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And you even get images of that Gur Sevr—of Gur Sev—'cause we're in the fuckin'—we are in the Mesh, we are in unreality itself, you get Gur Sevraq in that same posture all of these places, including, like, talking to Clem on the—Jack, what was the name of the island you went to in...

Jack: Chorus Island.

Austin: Chorus Island on Partizan, speaking of the Dawn Chorus, and speaking of strati and stuff, there we go, Chorus Island. In that same pose as a ghost haunting Clem, in that same pose here in this, over in Figure's room, haunting Figure, in that same pose looking up at the stars trying to make sense of the various gods that they served, or thought they served, or believed they were working for, or towards. And then in

the—and then a lot of stuff after this, where they're in the same pose, fully in Future mode, right? In preaching to the Divine Principality, in preaching about the New Asterism, in preaching about Palisade and the Twilight Mirage, and you're flipping through them, and eventually you see one where they're still in that same pose, arms out, robes, you know, hanging low, wide, big arms, and then around them, people are being killed. And you don't—you don't recognize the exact place, but we do, and it is the Isle of the—where the Dim Liturgy and Devotion are. It is the Isle of the Broken Key.

Jack: [cross] The Isle of the Broken Key?

Austin: Correct. And the—you're looking at this, you're seeing it, you're kind of trying to make sense of it, and it looks as if what is happening, and it's happening now, is that it looks like the Devotees, or at least some Devotees, are turning on the Dim Liturgy, and are taking Gur Sevraq, are taking the Divine Future, from—

Keith: Taking as in adopting?

Austin: Hard to say. It's hard to say if what was happening here was that Gur Sevraq had been captured by the Dim Liturgy, had gone to Devotion, had—I mean, there's a few things that you can kind of see in the microfiche that's not real. When you come out of this trip, you're not gonna be able to find this microfiche, because it's live, it's live microfiche that doesn't exist.

Keith: Right. Right.

Austin: It looks as if—it looks as if the members of the Dim Liturgy who are, of course, driven by their belief in the prophecies of the Divine Past, AKA the Crystal Palace, that they are just letting it happen, including some of their own deaths. That they're like, oh, yeah, this is the point at which Devotion betrays us. Right, right, right, the Devotees kill us here. Right, right, right, right, right.

Keith: Right.

Austin: This is the moment where they do this and they take this person from us. And so—

Keith: We knew about this. We read about this.

Austin: We read about this. Yeah, yeah, yeah. We read about this. Right. And the ones in the room, some of them escape, and some of them get killed, and some of them go along with it, and—'cause that's what was written would happen, right? And in this moment—

Keith: Grim Liturgy.

Austin: That's right. Get 'em.

[Keith laughs]

Ali: Got 'em.

Dre: Get their ass.

Austin: They are being—you know, the image that you see is of Gur Sevraq being loaded into, again, still in the same preaching posture, you know, talking to people aboard a Devotee's ship as it leaves the atmosphere. And unlike some of these other ships, the Devotee's ship is a Twilight Mirage ship, is a Qui Err Coalition aligned ship, right? It is not the Blue Channel, where I think if the Blue Channel tried to launch right now, the Qui Err Coalition ships around the planet would be like, "Woah, now, buddy. Who are you? We don't got you on our records." But this ship does, and so what you get is Gur Sevraq, AKA Future, being smuggled off the planet by the Devotees, by the Cult of Devotion.

And then you see the future here, right? Which is, guess what? Still gonna keep preachin', still gonna keep hitting them airwaves, still gonna keep telling stories about how, actually, we need to keep talking about our relationship between the divine and the mortal, and between the Divine Principality and the Twilight Mirage, and—you know, I'm just gonna—I was gonna do this as a scene later, but this is just a great opportunity to abstract it a little bit. And maybe give you—maybe give Eclectic some very clear stakes.

You see it pretty clearly. Future is going to be, effectively, protected by Devotion and hidden away somewhere as a political refugee who is not here with any military troops, who is here as a religious outcast, who is here, who should be allowed to preach their beliefs, who is here to be an envoy from a different culture, and they're not Lucia Whitestar. They're not Crusade. They're just a priest. They're just a single priest. How much—how dangerous could a single priest be? What, a priest isn't allowed to preach anymore?

And so, the Devotees hide and protect Gur Sevraq, and allow him—fake Gur Sevraq, you know who I mean at this point—I mean, real Gur Sevraq's in there too, right? So I guess it's both of them. They are hidden somewhere. They have become hidden away where they will begin broadcasting their sermons here inside of the Twilight Mirage. Like I said, you know, however many—

Keith: Radio Free Palisade.

Austin: Like, truly that. Truly Radio Free Palisade. It is propaganda hour here. That is one of the threats in some ways going forward. “Ten: the Principality tear apart the Mirage with violence, propaganda, divine manipulation, or worse.” Well, here is propaganda and divine manipulation. Here is someone speaking to a population that is super driven by their ideals and their desire for a better future, and driven by “Can they imagine a better future?” And if they can, they can start to try to make it, you know? This is a place that there are lots of, you know—not literal, not literal—but baby Grand Magnificents out there, right? People who have that style—

[**Ali** snickers] [**Sylvi** laughs]

Austin: —of Grand Magnificent, you know...

Art: Hold on, I've got a great idea.

[**Austin**, **Ali**, and **Keith** laugh]

Sylvi: Oh, great.

Keith: Is it to make that literal?

Art: It's Grand Magnificent babies in the style of Muppet Babies.

Austin: Oh. Yeah, okay.

Ali: Ohh.

Keith: [to the tune of the Muppet Babies theme song] Grand Mag babies!

[**Austin** laughs]

Art: They'll make your dreams come true.

Austin: Oh, okay, right. Right. By building weird machines.

Sylvi: Yeah, they'll do something.

Austin: So, imagine, you know, in a world where that is the state of the artist in the world, you know? Future is kind of very—

Keith: We've seen that on the Brink.

Austin: Right, right, we have, yes.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And it's that, you know, these are—this is one of the ways in which the culture of the Twilight Mirage, the Qui Err Coalition, the remnants of the old Divine Fleet, there are members—there are people here who are not particularly practical minded, and who have—I've always said this about Twilight Mirage, that like, one of the interesting things about it is it's easy to have utopia be on a mountain, it's hard to have utopia down in the river valley where there is other—where you're coming into contact with the outside world, where—

Keith: Can I say that the message of the fake Gur Sevraq New Asterism [**Austin:** Uh-huh.] really, really lines up with the lyrics of the Muppet Babies theme song?

Austin: Oh my god.

Keith: It really does.

Austin: Does it?

[audible typing]

Keith: “Muppet babies, you’ll make our dreams come true. Muppet babies, we’ll do the same for you. If your room looks kinda weird and you wish that you weren’t there, just close your eyes and make believe and you’ll be anywhere. I like adventure, I like romance, I like great jokes, animal dance; I’ve got a computer, I swing through the air, I play the piano, and I have blue hair. Me, I invent things—”

[Sylvi laughs]

Keith: [laughs] “Me, me, me. Is everything alright in here?” Uh... Anyway, that’s—

Austin: Yes, nanny.

Keith: Yes, nanny. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. That’s—yeah, these are—I think, actually, if you read just “I like adventure, I like romance, I love great jokes, animal dance; I’ve got my computer, I swing through the air, I play piano, I have blue hair; me, I invent things,” that’s just the Notion from Twilight Mirage. Each one of those is a different member of the Notion, I’m pretty sure. So.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Austin: Or the Blue Channel. I don’t—you know? It’s one or the other, but.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So.

Keith: Anyway, they’re receptive, is what you’re saying.

Austin: They're not broadly receptive, but there's an audience.

Keith: They're specifically receptive.

Austin: There are—some people in the Twilight Mirage are like, “Now, wait a second.”

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: “Why should we XYZ?” You know? “Why should we limit ourselves to thinking about XYZ? Hey, why are you stopping—why are people trying to stop this guy from speaking? He's just speaking.” You know. We have a lot of work to do on thinking about how the Twilight Mirage responds to problems, you know?

[Dre hums]

Dre: The economy of ideas, baby.

Keith: The idea of economy.

Austin: It is a real problem that revolutionary movements have always had to deal with.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: It is difficult and it is—“what is your strategy there” is a big question, so. And that might be beyond the Blue Channel's aims, but the Twilight Mirage has to figure it out. The Qui Err Coalition has to make some moves. So, yeah. That's what you see, Eclectic.

Keith: Damn.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: It's worse than I thought, I was just gonna go with handcuffs.

Austin: What?

Dre: Huh?

Keith: To arrest Future.

Austin: You were just gonna be like, “Hey, I’m bringin’ you in, pal.”

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: “I saw it with my own two eyes.” Alright. So that leaves us with—

Keith: Oh, Eclectic just sort of mutters under his breath,

Keith (as **Eclectic**): What happens when a Divine commits a crime?

Austin: Oh, there we go. Yeah, thank you. Yeah, what happens when a Divine commits a crime? Yeah, you have to go do, like, extradition. You have to go, like, grab—you have to go do a—what’s the best movie about going into a foreign country to bring a war criminal out?

Dre: Uh, Fast Five.

Austin: There we go. You gotta go do a Fast Five about it.

Keith: The not-shitty version of Argo.

Austin: That’s right. You have to go do the not-shitty version of Argo about it. Uh-huh.

[**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Good luck with that one.

[**Ali** snickers] [**Sylvi** laughs]

Keith: Hey, Argo fuck yourself.

Dre: Is that Matt Damon?

Austin: [cross] It’s Ben Affleck.

Keith: [cross] Ben Affleck, the other—the other half.

Dre: [cross] Oh, Ben Affleck, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah. His better half. [laughs]

Keith: It's hard to say. At this point, it's hard to say.

Art: Yeah, the pendulum is swinging pretty wildly on that one.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: [laughs] God.

Ali: What's Matt Damon up to? No, we can talk about this later.

Keith: Doing commercials for bitcoin or something.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Dre: He's also doing Dunkin' commercials with Ben Affleck.

Keith: With Ben Affleck, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, they're doing those.

Sylvi: Yeah, they're trying to get in on the old man yaoi market.

Austin: They've kind of always been yaoi, you know?

Ali: The stock is high, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: I mean, yeah.

Keith: They're going through the—

Art: Yeah, they've been yaoi at whatever age they were.

Sylvi: No, they're just older now, so that's why.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Oh, I see what you're saying. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: It's like aged perfectly at this point.

Austin: Yeah. I see, I see. Anyway, Cori.

Cori

[1:58:28]

Sylvi: Yeah. I've been trying to figure out what she can see this entire time.

Austin: Yeah, fair.

Sylvi: Um... Part of me is wondering if this is how—so, last session, I broke my last tenet.

Austin: You did.

Sylvi: Which is a big deal for the Paradigm, because that means you have to choose a new playbook.

Austin: Yeah. You sure do. Now, we're not playing any more Armour Astir after today.

Sylvi: We're not playing any Armour Astir.

Austin: That doesn't mean you don't have to pick a new playbook.

Sylvi: But that doesn't—yeah, exactly. And I've done that, and it involves a patron.

Austin: Interesting.

[Dre hums]

Sylvi: And maybe this is how that connection, **[Austin: Yeah.]** like, is—there's like a reaching out there?

Austin: You're reaching out.

Sylvi: Yeah, probably.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Or, like—

Austin: I have a thought.

Sylvi: Yeah, please.

Austin: Maybe you're both reaching out to the same place.

Sylvi: I think that's it.

Austin: To the empty place where Figure was.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: What was your most recent Figure Gravity clock, Cori?

Sylvi: My most recent Figure Gravity clock was "Figure means well, but I can tell he sees me as just a kid."

Austin: Aw.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And Figure's previous one for you was—

Dre: Something along the lines of, like, you know, can I protect Cori from her own grief?

Austin: That's exactly right, yeah. A thing that never came up that I think is so interesting—do you remember, Dre, do you remember why you ended up—one of the key reasons why you picked Wither as a playbook for post-Chimeric Cadent, post-Clem Figure?

Dre: Ooh.

Austin: Do you remember one of the questions you asked me?

Dre: No.

Austin: You asked me if there was a move that you had—I'm trying to remember the exact—you were asking it, actually, about a different move from a different playbook, from a Revenant playbook, but we ended up talking about how it could totally work for, also for, the Wither. You asked if the move that let you see Gur Sevraq, eventually, that move, Cold Company, could let you talk to Cori's dad.

Dre: Oh, yeah!

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Austin: And there was some part of you that was like, I want to be able to give Figure—to give Cori closure about that.

[Sylvi groans]

Austin: Uh-huh. And that's gone now.

[Dre hums]

Austin: So, the answer to that, no, you can't, now. But at the time, I remember pointing out that, yeah, Cold Company doesn't say you get one ghost. It's you're followed by one or more specters, and so if you had wound up in that space, you could have ended up, you know, there could have been some—

Keith: Ghost team.

Austin: —Diesel—not Diesel, fuck—Griesel—some Griesel connection.

[Sylvi chuckles]

Dre: That ol' Diesel Griesel.

Austin: That's right. Diesel Griesel. Griesel Sunset.

Art: Honk, honk.

Austin: And I bring that up because, Cori, if you're reaching for the space, the sort of emotional space, the psychic space where Figure was...

Dre: Fuck.

Sylvi: Mhm.

Austin: Then you're going to reach someone else who was reaching there, too, and it's not Griesel, to be clear.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: You don't have to interact with Griesel here.

[Sylvi laughs]

Austin: It's the last person who reached out. It's Perennial.

Sylvi: Mhm.

[Ali gasps]

Austin: Right? You reach for Figure's hand, and instead you find Perennial's.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: What's that feel like?

Sylvi: There... I think there is something that feels very—comforting isn't necessarily the right word that I'm looking for here, but I can't think of another one, where coming in contact with another, like, entity that is feeling just as, like, angry and heartbroken over the losses that have happened recently, [**Austin:** Yeah.] as opposed to the way Devotion kind of was always sort of like, a passive, like, "sacrifices happen, you just have to get used to it" sort of god.

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvi: And like, connecting with a power that has that same sort of righteous anger that Cori has had is refreshing, in a way.

Austin: Yeah.

[Dre hums]

Sylvi: And also, a little overwhelming. You know.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: It's Perennial still. Like, it's still that, you know?

Austin: It is. I mean, I think you're doing this in a fairly public space. Is it—Janine, is it in the big hangar space where so many public things happen?

Janine: Yeah, so, also I should say, like, a thought that I had and then I realized I didn't say is that from the—like, people who haven't opted into this, I think, from the outside, it's kind of like that thing of, like, when you look into a black hole to where people are, if they're in there but you're outside of it and they're, like, moving hyper slow but to them it's normal, it feels normal—

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: I think there's a bit of a feel like that, so like, I think it might take a long time for someone to notice a specific thing happening if they're not part of the thing.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: 'Cause it just looks like oh, someone's standing up very slowly.

Austin: Right. I see what you're saying. That's fun. In that space is the Broken Spoke, Figure's Altar. And all of the Russian sage on it has withered since they died. And as you make this connection with Perennial, the withered parts, the withered petals, begin to be pushed off of the stem, because new flowers begin to bud. And so there's this kind of rain of dried Russian sage, this kind of like, falling Russian sage all around you from Figure's mech above you as you make this connection. You are now the Witch.

Sylvi: Hell yeah I am.

Austin: Do you want to read the Witch's little thing, or maybe the first move, or something like that?

Sylvi: Yeah, let me...

Austin: I'll read the little—in the playbook, it says: "Witches seize power through pacts with powerful creatures, knowingly or otherwise. This power fuels and binds an Astir as well as any other, but its sources can be demanding and mischievous." And you start with the Patron move.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah, should I read this one?

Austin: Yeah, read it.

Sylvi: "Your patron offers you two boons at random whenever someone Leads a Sortie. Additionally, they may spend Influence one to one to do the following: Help or Hinder you, succeeding as if they had rolled a 10 plus; reroll your boons for the day; or attempt to force you to do something. You may Weather the Storm to resist. As long as your patron has at least one Influence, your Channel trait is increased by 1. The more Influence on you a patron holds, the clearer their mark is upon you."

Austin: Which is interesting, because I don't know what Perennial—you'll have to tell me what Perennial's mark is as we go forward on you. We should really try to—

Sylvi: I got ideas.

Austin: Okay, good, I'm glad.

Sylvi: I got ideas.

Austin: The thing that I want to—let's stay in-character for a bit as this kind of connection happens, [**Sylvi:** Mhm.] which is, as you touch—as your metaphorical, metaphysical hand touches hers, she begins to pull away. She knows who you are because she's Perennial, but is, like, her hand is cold to the touch, and she is not—she doesn't trust you.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Right? She isn't out of power, but again, she's out of power to turn back time, which in her vision of reality, means she can't protect anybody anymore, right? And there's a degree of, like... "Playing hard to get" is wrong. [chuckles] It's a degree of grief and a degree of [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] trauma and being afraid of investing in someone again. But there—

Sylvi: This is perfect [**Austin:** Okay, good.] for what's going on with Cori, because Cori also feels like she can't protect anybody anymore.

Dre: [laughing] I was about to say.

[**Ali** whines sympathetically]

Sylvi: Like, she is literally going through this exact same thing.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: I, like, if we're—if I'm visualizing this, she's got like, the big Studio Ghibli tears pouring down her face [**Austin:** Uh-huh.] while she's, like, reaching with both hands to try and grasp Perennial's.

Austin: Oh... Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Like, frantically.

Austin: And Perennial doesn't have a hand, just as a reminder. Perennial is a disembodied, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] like, nervous system, or circulatory system or something. I think nervous system.

Sylvi: Or, like, reaching for the branches or whatever she can grab hold of.

Austin: You're reaching for the branches, yeah, a hundred percent. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And grasping carefully, and I think, like, as you grasp, the flowers bloom around your hands, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: You still hear the sobbing. The sobbing has stopped outside, but you feel it, you hear it, and it's like, deep, and you feel the weight of a body on you, you know? There is a real physical sense of someone putting their weight on you and just crying. Just, you know, pushing you down—the weight of the galaxy on you for this moment. And not having words to say because it's something beyond words, and in some ways, feels guilty even in the crying because she knows you lost someone you care for, and she did too, but she is crying as much for herself as she is for the loss of Figure. You know? She is crying about her own helplessness, her own inability to save anyone, her own inability to stop the wheel in the way that she really cares to stop the wheel.

Sylvi: Yeah.

And so, I think part of the Perennial playfulness here is going to be such a different—or kind of like, mischievousness, is going to be a little different than when we first saw Perennial with Teasel all the way back in our first Armour Astir game in the Road to

PARTIZAN, where back then, working with Teasel, she was like, a mischievous fox, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: She had kind of like that style of like, trickster deity. And here, I think it's a little bit of, like, this is someone who's back in their own shell a little bit, and who has to be kind of, like, you're gonna have to win some points, you're gonna have to impress her and make her believe that it's possible to change things again. You know?

Sylvi: I can do that.

Austin: Which is very funny. And it's a very interesting, I think, flip for Cori.

Sylvi: Well, yeah. Because Cori also wants to believe that she can change things.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Despite, like, what she feels is, like, evidence to the contrary, because she can't see the forest for the trees [**Austin:** Right.] with what Millennium Break's been doing.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: She just sees the fact that, like, her found family keeps dwindling smaller and smaller.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I have to ask what this means for and with Devotion.

Austin: Great question. I mean, Devotion isn't—that break happened last episode.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: Is there a—what does it mean post-break to make this kind of—not necessarily commitment, but this kind of divine move, as it were?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Well, so... I was relistening to this before we recorded, and I'm glad I did, because I think something I said was like, Cori got very angry at the fact that the Cult of Devotion and, like, what Devotion has become is not—I think the way I put it is like, not content just to chain your wings down, but they're chaining down the wings of your god, and, like, Perennial is the, like—we have, you know, positioned Perennial as the opposing force to a lot of the divinity in this. And I think that, like, having a connection with something that is both direct and also that you know is, like, working towards something.

[**Austin** hums]

Sylvi: Isn't just trying to advance the agenda of the people that, quote, serve it when it serves them. It's—Perennial has a, like—the idea of breaking the wheel, I guess, is just like, the thing that makes this appealing for her.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Oh, man. That's so sad. After Perennial has abandoned that idea at last.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Well, I don't know that—sorry, I don't know that Perennial's abandoned the idea. Perennial fears—Perennial feels like she has failed at it, but failing at something does not mean abandoning the idea.

Jack: That's true. She's failed—

Sylvi: I'm gonna prove her wrong.

Jack: She's failed at it lots and lots of times in the past, though, right?

Austin: Countless times.

Jack: This is a particular failure.

Austin: And it's a different type of failure. It is. But it's not an abandonment of the—I mean, or to some degree, that is what is at stake here, is can Cori reinvigorate Perennial? Can Cori make Perennial believe that even in just this timeline, we have the chance to derail this thing?

Sylvi: I think that's, like, part of—

Art: Help Perennial get their groove back.

Austin: Right. That's the reality of...

Sylvi: Yeah, well, I think that is part of what she said in this moment, is like, "I'm not gonna stop fighting if you won't."

Jack: Hm.

Sylvi: "Let me show you that this isn't lost," you know?

Austin: Yeah. And that's the moment, I think, that the new petals burst onto the thing, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: But they're different. Here we go. What if Russian sage instead of having the, like, lilac colors that it has, had black petals?

Sylvi: Yeah?

Austin: Is that a thing?

Sylvi: Yeah. I mean, it can be.

Austin: Russian sage but black.

Janine: I think they call that the goth colorway of Russian sage.

Austin: That's correct, yeah. Uh-huh.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Are you thinking what I'm thinking vis-a-vis wings, et cetera?

Austin: I think at some point, yeah, for sure, for sure.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: But I wanted to make sure that the black wing—we don't lost the black wings, you know? That's important.

Sylvi: No, that's important.

Austin: So. So, yeah. And I think that you get a, you know, Perennial is a very aloof god, and so does not get a lot of direct communication. Going back to Clem, even, it wasn't like big long debates at night, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: You know, long communion. There's a "what do you want me to fucking do, god damn it? Tell me," about dealing with Perennial. And so you don't get any—but you do get the sign. You do get the sign of the russian sage regrowing, and regrowing in this kind of black and this color of grief. But it's alive.

Sylvi: Hell yeah it is. You, me, Perennial, we're in this.

Austin: We're fuckin' in it.

Sylvi: We're gonna take 'em down.

Austin: That's right.

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