

COUNTER/Weight 36: Everything is Temporary

Transcribed by Kay @sokratesnikon (through m19) and Jen @wronghandle (m19 - m111)

AUSTIN (narrating): A note echoes through the halls of the September Institute's two vacant laboratories,

[MUSIC: "The Long Way Around" begins]

repeated once and then again and then again, shifting in tone until it becomes an old song from the days of Earth, somehow passed down countless millennia. And Sinner Twelt, Provost-Regent Twelfth, whistles it as he goes about his work.

As fog rises above the tanks of liquid coolant and metallic cylinders inject data itself into flesh, Twelfth opens v-screens around him, trying to tune into what's happening across the sector. But with the storm raging on September, he can only get splotches of the goings-on. A fleet moving here. A new treaty there. A refugee crisis. A gala. A quake. See how they run. He doesn't need a clearer picture to know that everything is moving according to plan. Everyone else in the sector is running blind through a maze. He is the only one with real perspective. His whistles turn to singing as he slips on gloves. And deep below Mode City, it sings too.

[MUSIC: "The Long Way Around" ends]

AUSTIN: Hey everybody, welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am Austin Walker. Joining me today: Sylvia¹ Clare.

SYLVIA: Hey!

AUSTIN: Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hello!

AUSTIN: We are back to our faction game of COUNTER/Weight, in which we are using Stars Without Number and a little bit of Microscope. But as we play late into the night tonight, my guess is we'll probably lean heavy on the thing that just easy dice rolls can help us with? So probably more Stars Without Number tonight than Microscope.

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

We are kind of bouncing back to the faction game, because there is a window here in which I think it's a good idea to think about what's happening in the rest of the Golden Branch Star Sector, while things unfold down below on September. So— god, where do you wanna start y'all?

SYLVIA: Where did we end last time?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Good question, where did we end?

SYLVIA: Good question. Was it—

AUSTIN: And where— what is the state of things? Obviously you're both caught up on the ground game, on the Chime game.

DRE: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you kinda understand what things are. I guess let's go over what the different factions are, and then what their goals are. That might be a really nice—

SYLVIA: Yeah, that's always a good reminder since we do these like a month apart.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: A quick summary? Yeah. Hands of Grace were— their goal is Peaceable Kingdom, which I believe is they need to go a certain number of turns without launching an attack on a rival faction. It's four turns. So that was one. They've gone one so far. Oh, I didn't mean to change their name to 'one turn complete'. [laughs]

SYLVIA: [laughs] Aw man, the new gaming-based faction.

AUSTIN: Yeah. One Turn Complete, it's all vaguely gaming-related phrases will eventually be just gaming websites.

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Ugh, fucking true dystopia.

AUSTIN: True, absolutely. [SYLVIA laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing] That's the other thing that happened with the Hands of Grace last time, is that they just got wrecked on Counterweight.

DRE: Yeah, they got fucked up.

AUSTIN: In fact, I don't think they have a base of influence on Counterweight anymore.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I believe we destroyed that base of influence.

AUSTIN: Because the—

SYLVIA: That's where we ended last time was with the Righteous Vanguard, which we'll get to in a minute.

AUSTIN: Let's get to the Righteous Vanguard right now.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Righteous Vanguard and Ibex, their goal is Planetary Seizure. They're trying to seize Counterweight. To do that, I believe they need to remove all other— god, what do they actually need to do to completely seize the faction? I don't remember if it's that they need to have the biggest base of influence? Or if they need to— here, let me just peek at it real quick.

SYLVIA: [reading] Take control of a planet, becoming the legitimate planetary government—

AUSTIN: Yes, that is the action that they need to do. What is the thing that— how do they do that?

SYLVIA: I think you just have to take down the ruling faction? It's kinda vague. I mean, as far as the numbers— it's just difficulty equal to half the average of the current ruling faction's force—

AUSTIN: Okay. No, sorry. There's also the action which is here. It is Seize Planet.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay!

AUSTIN: [reading] The faction seeks to become the ruling body of a world. The faction must destroy all unstealthed assets on the planet belonging to factions who oppose their attempt before they can successfully take control.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: So, that's an important thing, right? Is anyone opposing this move?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's an interesting thing that we'll have to come back to, to see if anyone is— can— still opposing.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Because the Minerva Strategic Alliance is still on there, I believe.

AUSTIN: It is. It totally is. And I think there might even be a couple more things that are— I mean, I think the— see, Minerva has a bunch of stuff there. They have a base of influence—

SYLVIA: Yeah. Oh, Petrichor does as well, but—

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right, Petrichor does. The Odamas Fleet even has a base of influence there—

SYLVIA: [excitedly] Oh shit!

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: What's up!

AUSTIN: So a lot of people here could make that resistance. Okay, who's next? Let's go back to the faction tracker. Let's talk about the Minerva Strategic Alliance, the Steiger sisters, Colleen and Crystal, along with— what was the dude's name who they were pushing around?

SYLVIA: Oh God. [DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: [audibly covering face] That poor schmuck.

AUSTIN: Was that Oren? No, that was—

SYLVIA: No. And it wasn't their other— our other lawyer guy.

AUSTIN: No.

SYLVIA: I think it was a new character.

AUSTIN: No, because it had been a— oh yeah, you're right. It totally was a new character. You're totally right. We could check the wiki, which again, thank you to everyone who runs that wiki.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

DRE: Seriously!

AUSTIN: It helps a lot for when our notes don't quite live up to what they need to be.

SYLVIA: He was part of— was he a part of Slate?

AUSTIN: No, he was—

SYLVIA: He was part of something.

AUSTIN: He was part of the OriCon Expeditionary Group.

SYLVIA: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: Which was the former leader role of OriCon in the sector. The thing that, god, I just listened to— see, I literally had just gone back, because a couple of weeks ago [SYLVIA laughs] I had to do an introduction that referenced that dude again. And I completely forget his name. It's not that important. But I went back and listened to them pushing that dude around a bunch, and that was really good.

All right, what do they want right now? They want to destroy Petrichor, which—

SYLVIA: Huh. Good luck!

AUSTIN: — which could be tough. Could be a tough one.

DRE: [sarcastically uncaring noise] Eh!

AUSTIN: Do they even have anything near Petrichor's stuff? Where's Minerva's shit at these days?

SYLVIA: Minerva's got a lot of shit.

AUSTIN: They do.

DRE: Yeah, they do.

AUSTIN: Okay, so they have a lot of—

SYLVIA: I mean, they have Archonic. And Archonic is right next to Joypark.

AUSTIN: Archonic is their home base. They also have stuff on Minerva itself. And they have stuff on— they have some stuff all over the place, kind of.

SYLVIA: Yeah, they're pretty spread out. Because they were probably the biggest conglomeration of stuff.

AUSTIN: Right. But they don't have anything— they technically don't have anything on September.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: You know, let's say that maybe if things had gone a little bit different for Paisley Moon, they would have a thing on September. In fact, I might just give them a thing based on the way things played out with Paisley Moon. I might just write it down for us to see, but not the listeners at home nor the players in the Chime. [DRE laughs] Because the way that shit played out was a little bit rough.

DRE: Yeah. Is he technically alive?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

SYLVIA: I believe "vegetative state" were the words used?

DRE: Yeah, I thought so.

AUSTIN: Yeah. One of the things I mentioned was that, you know, one of the benefits of working for Minerva is like a really good insurance plan, it's just, also, sometimes, insurance plans own you a little more than you own it, y' know? Let's insert one below here, and then insert in a new thing that's for them. Put that right there, and put that one on September!

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Ooh! Ooh! I like that!

AUSTIN: Yeah. Don't work for Minerva.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They're the closest thing I think we have, at this point, to a traditionally evil megacorp that's left in the game.

SYLVIA: Yeah. They're the most traditional cyberpunk villain.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So let's keep moving. We also have the Rapid Evening, whose goal is to expand influence to Minerva XII. Remember they had landed some soldiers on the moon of Minerva XII. Minerva XII-A.

SYLVIA: Kiva's unit.

AUSTIN: Hmm?

SYLVIA: Kiva Helsing's unit?

DRE: Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Kiva Helsing. Is that written down somewhere?

SYLVIA: Yeah it is. Trust me, I double checked. I've had that name in my head. It's the best.

DRE: Yeah, it's on the faction notes.

AUSTIN: And then—

SYLVIA: They did their planetary drop drill thing and—

AUSTIN: Yeah, that was really dope.

SYLVIA: It was dope.

AUSTIN: The Golden Demarchy, Sokrates's new kind of semi-republic up in Apostolos, wants to siege... siege... seize?

SYLVIA: Seize.

AUSTIN: Seize!

SYLVIA: Both!

AUSTIN: That's the word I want, seize. Not siege.

SYLVIA: Eh!

AUSTIN: Uh, Gemm, which is currently totally probably a thing that they can start working towards, if that's the direction they go.

SYLVIA: I mean, last time they dealt a pretty— they managed to ward off Fortitude, I believe?

AUSTIN: I think that's true.

SYLVIA: I'm pretty sure it's— is Fortitude the right Divine?

AUSTIN: Yes. Mmm. Fortitude and Gerenuk are on Gemm right now.

SYLVIA: It was—

AUSTIN: And then—

SYLVIA: — Ariadne was the—

AUSTIN: Yes. Good call!

SYLVIA: — name of the Apostolosian who did that. Yeah, she's² the sort of— I don't want to use the word missionary, but she's spreading the word of the Demarchy on Gemm, and she was the— in the Kingdom game she was the person who Sokrates kept from getting executed.

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. So that's added to our legacy feat too. We've been doing some work here. The Odamas Fleet is continuing to move towards Kalliope.

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SYLVIA: Kalliope, yeah.

AUSTIN: Where are you at now?

SYLVIA: I remember this because I almost shit myself.

AUSTIN: Yes.

SYLVIA: We, I believe, just went through Joypark. And I was worried about Rigour going to Joypark to cause problems for me. But Dre sent them to September—

AUSTIN: Instead.

SYLVIA: And I was like, "Yeah!!!" [laughs]

² Ariadne uses they/them pronouns.

AUSTIN: Wait, so does that mean you're at Joypark now?

SYLVIA: Yeah, because we had to use stealth.

AUSTIN: So you're at 7-0—?

SYLVIA: So the square we're in is Joypark.

DRE: Sylvia, I would never stand in the way of your cool fleet.

[AUSTIN laughs]

SYLVIA: Thanks for not killing me with giant robots.

DRE: I mean you've got giant robots too.

SYLVIA: Not as big! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Not as big, definitely not as big. Speaking of big robots that are very dangerous, what's Petrichor doing? What's their goal? Oh, they want to seize September.

DRE: Mhmm. [SYLVIA makes a worried noise]

AUSTIN: Where do we even— we have to end there, right?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We have to end at the seizure of September one way or another.

SYLVIA: Totally.

DRE: The thing that's interesting about like, Rigour and Petrichor is that I feel like they're more thematically terrifying than what they have mechanically.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: If we're like, going through like Stars Without Number's dice rolls and stuff like that--

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

DRE: Because I don't have a lot of big force stuff the way that Righteousness does.

AUSTIN: Yes, you're right. The thing that I think you do have is that you have GM fiat on your side.

SYLVIA: You have plot power.

AUSTIN: There's a point at which what I'm going to say is "Oh, Rigour does a thing."

DRE: Yeah, Rigour wins. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Here's the other thing I haven't told them about yet. You guys are watching my screen on— er, you're watching the Roll20 screen. Here's their current clock screen.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

DRE: Oh! [laughs]

SYLVIA: Okay!

AUSTIN: Do you see this Rigour threat here?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: So when that fills up something happens in the faction game, not in their game.

SYLVIA: Ooh! I've been wondering if/when something like that would happen.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That for me is the difference between that Rigour threat and the Petrichor clock.

SYLVIA: [quietly] Huh!

AUSTIN: The Petrichor clock is about them. The Rigour threat is about the sector, in this case.

DRE: Mmm. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And there's some things you probably can't see because they have question marks.

SYLVIA and DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Some of those are about the ground game, some of them are about the faction game.

SYLVIA: Yeah. No, totally.

AUSTIN: The other thing is, things that happen here can also advance this Rigour clock.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So we could be in a very unique situation today. There's only two more before it's maxed out.

SYLVIA: Mhm!

AUSTIN: So. They're gonna hate me if that happens, but.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Well, whatever.

AUSTIN: You know! It's what we're here for! We're gonna start—

SYLVIA: It's revenge for them shooting Mac tonight in the head. [AUSTIN laughs] That's what I call Paisley Moon. I can't see him as anything else. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: That's really good. It's really good. Okay, so I think there might be a thing that needs to happen that is outside of the Stars Without Numbers rules a little bit.

SYLVIA: Okay!

AUSTIN: Which is— in the last time we saw Ibex, when he was sending them to September, what he said was— and we've seen like the very first starts of this in last week's intro. He's like, "I'm gonna put out word. It's time to put aside all of our shit and make good." Like, try to get together a coalition to stop Rigour before it's too late.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you have any ideas on what that looks like?

DRE: Well, I mean, the biggest name that Liberty and Discovery/AuDy told Ibex that he had to talk to was Grace.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Oh wow, that's a fun conversation.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: I wanna have that conversation. I wanna— hmm. That's a good conversation, and we should definitely have that conversation in a second. I'm trying to figure out, is there a way we need to determine how that shakes out beforehand? Or is that a thing that we should, I guess Microscope-style, figure out along the way?

SYLVIA: Yeah, we could just use Microscope rules for that.

DRE: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Since there's no Stars Without Numbers dice roll.

AUSTIN: There's no roll to convince. No. Totally not.

SYLVIA: No.

AUSTIN: Okay, so what's that look like and where's it happening.

SYLVIA: Well, so Vicuna and Grace are on Sigilia right now.

AUSTIN: Yes. But remember two Divines can open a door.

[overlapping]

SYLVIA: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So Candidates can meet instantly wherever they need to be. Do you think Ibex goes there? I think--

SYLVIA: I think he has to.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna step into the shoes of Ibex here since I've played him the most. [laughs] He sends out the word, probably not right to Grace. He probably sends it through Loyalty.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Maybe he even asks for—

SYLVIA: Loyalty's probably a good mediator there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. He asks Kobus to be the middle ground there, to be the mediator.

SYLVIA: This little 12 year old! [laughs] Aw.

DRE: Yeah, we haven't seen Kobus in a while.

AUSTIN: No. [sighs] Oh boy. And I think it's happening on Sigilia. The last thing we talked about the Hands of Grace was or about Grace herself was that maybe it was time to activate whatever was on Sigilia to regain an upper hand. Ha. Jokes.

SYLVIA: Ayy.

AUSTIN: Because she'd lost her hand.

SYLVIA: Ayyy! [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: I kind of like the image of— I kind of like it as— it's in the shadow of Grace as she's in the background way bigger than anyone else. Right?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think she's the only Divine there at all. I'm trying to picture if these characters are standing or sitting because I think it's not just, "We ran into each other." No. It's like, "I came here to talk."

SYLVIA: Can I just for this— some set dressing stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

SYLVIA: For Grace standing in the background, sort of being suspended by people working on her since she's been injured, and in where her arm is, is just tubes that have been connected into it.

AUSTIN: And then those tubes run into the ground.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They're not hooked into anything else. They run into clamps that are hooked into the ground.

SYLVIA: It looks like if you tore off— if a fire hydrant got knocked over. They're going into that.

DRE: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

SYLVIA: And the tubes are pulsating just a little bit, and— yeah.

AUSTIN: What's the planet like? The planet itself.

SYLVIA: I think we described it last time as being very shades of yellow and red.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: And I imagined it being a little desert-y because of that, but not like--

AUSTIN: Oh. I actually like that a lot. I hadn't thought about that.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Not like a super sandy desert, but very rocky and craggy.

AUSTIN: American Southwest.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

AUSTIN: I also like that because that puts it on a nice parallel to the snowy mountains and plateaus of the Tower game Jack and I did a couple of months ago.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I like her hanging from machinery that's literally built into the side of a giant plateau. And then the sun is, at the start of the scene, directly overhead and then throughout the negotiations, slips back behind the plateau as a shadow slowly moves across it? On this planet, the rotation is really rapid for where the sun is. Or maybe there's multiple suns.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's kinda cool.

SYLVIA: I like the idea of three suns or something.

AUSTIN: Yeah, and not—

SYLVIA: Two suns is not a lot. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Two suns is— listen. Listen, we're a fuckin' three sun podcast! Don't get it twisted.

[overlapping]

SYLVIA: Yeah!

DRE: Yeah! [SYLVIA and DRE laugh]

SYLVIA: The Three Sun Mafia.

AUSTIN: If you're binary suns, get outta here! [mafia voice] Yeah. Three Sun Mafia. Exactly, thank you Sylvia--

SYLVIA: [laughs] [copying Austin's tone] No problem!

DRE: I have to leave.

AUSTIN: We got— [laughs]

DRE: I have to go.

AUSTIN: [still laughing] We're getting Oscars for this. [SYLVIA laughs] All right. So. I guess there probably-- I mean, maybe we open with the door opening. It opens, and it looks at first like it's just another shadow on the ground. And then the camera moves just so, as if to show, no no no, this isn't etched in the ground. This is standing upright. And Ibex walks through it and moves forward.

Who are you two playing? Who wants to be the 12 year old Kobus? I don't think Kobus is actually 12, I think it's probably 13 or 14—

0:19:13

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think it's at least a teen. Kobus is maybe 15.

SYLVIA: Oh, Kobus is—

DRE: I can be maybe Kobus.

SYLVIA: Who?

DRE: I can do Kobus. Sylvia, have you played Grace before?

[overlapping]

AUSTIN: I feel like you have. Er, you could be—

SYLVIA: I have not Vicuna yet.

DRE: I feel like you have.

AUSTIN: No? I thought—

SYLVIA: I've played Kobus before. No. Dre's played Vicuna, and you've played Vicuna.

DRE: Oh, you're right!

AUSTIN: Well, let's mix it up. Let's do this one. Let's do— okay. So where are Vicuna and Kobus at?

SYLVIA: I think Vicuna has been— because her arm got broken too.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That was really good. I forgot about that.

SYLVIA: I think she's been doing—

DRE: Is her arm still fucked up?

SYLVIA: No, I was going to say, I think she's been doing some physiotherapy for it. So she's—

AUSTIN: She's not getting all cybered out.

SYLVIA: Yeah. No. I think maybe a little bit? She's got something in there to make it heal a little faster. And that's why she's had to do— because I've had broken arms. You don't normally— I don't know, I never had to do physiotherapy for a broken arm. But I'm not an expert. But I was thinking maybe on the joint or something, because it just completely shattered. They had to put something in there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. What's she wearing? A lot of the fan art of these characters has them in almost pilot-style G suits, basically. Which are cool, but I kind of like this being in formal wear? And I'm really curious what formal wear looks like.

SYLVIA: Oh. Formal or informal?

AUSTIN: Formal.

SYLVIA: Oh. Shit. Because my idea for her was a jumpsuit that— the top half is tied around her waist, and she's in a tank top—

AUSTIN: Oh, that's kind of cool too.

SYLVIA: — because she's been exercising.

AUSTIN: Maybe that's better, if she's straight from physiotherapy. And Ibex rolls in in his dress
proppers.

SYLVIA: Yeah. He's always fucking perfect.

AUSTIN: And what about Kobus?

DRE: Didn't we— doesn't he³ — I mean, he sleeps inside his Divine, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah. They have a very parent/child relationship with their Divine.

DRE: I mean, I feel like if anyone's wearing a flight suit, I feel like it's him.

AUSTIN: Okay, like he has on his tight-fitting actual Candidate's—

DRE: But maybe they're not? I'm almost picturing him - maybe this is too childlike - but his are
almost more like PJs than a flight suit.

AUSTIN: That's really cute.

SYLVIA: Yeah! No, I like that they're designed to be stuff you can wear for days on end.

DRE: Yeah. Because they don't change often. [laughs]

AUSTIN: No. Okay. And maybe Loyalty, which we've never actually described before other than
to say it is a humanoid mech—

SYLVIA: It is a robot. Yeah.

AUSTIN: It is a robot. Is kneeling next to Grace, not that far away.

SYLVIA: Yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: Head down, like a knight kneeling.

SYLVIA: Oh man! Maybe every now and then, there's some lights from one of them, and then
the other lights up a little bit.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's really cool

SYLVIA: So that they're talking to themselves.

³ Kobus uses they/them pronouns.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And I actually like— Kobus is totally tuned in to that in a way that most Candidates— obviously, Candidates all have different relationships with their Divines. I think Kobus's is 100% tied in. Little flicks of the eye.

SYLVIA: Oh shit. I already know what I want Loyalty's insides to be like. I want Loyalty to be literally a womb. (AUSTIN: Mhm.) And Kobus has to interface with— not a literal umbilical cord, it doesn't go to their belly button. [DRE giggles] But they're connected with cords to Loyalty, more so than any other Candidate would be.

DRE: Does Kobus have Matrix-style jack-in ports on themselves?

SYLVIA: Are they a scooper Neo, is what you're asking?

AUSTIN: Yes. [DRE laughs] You can't—

SYLVIA: I can't joke about things that we did on Skype! Sorry. [DRE laughs again] It's a long story.

DRE: I don't think so. I feel like it's too gross.

SYLVIA: I don't think so. I think it's more like a headset.

AUSTIN: So the thing I want to be cautious about is one, running against other things that we have going on, undercutting those by deploying it too often. But then two, there is something unsettling about how pristine the relationship between Loyalty and Kobus is. That, in the face of the other Divines, like Integrity literally coming out of the flesh of Sokrates at this point - who probably needs a Candidate name, now that I think about—

SYLVIA: Ooo!

DRE: Ooo.

AUSTIN: I don't believe we haven't had that fucking conversation yet. We'll wrap back around to that.

SYLVIA: Yeah, we need to have it.

DRE: Let's go with some hooved animals!

AUSTIN: [laughs] But let's have this conversation. I think Ibex—

SYLVIA: I'm looking up fish.

AUSTIN: No, it's all— oh fuck. I hadn't thought about that. Golden Sector is all hooved animals. It's all mammals with hooves. But man, fish would be pretty good.

DRE: [announcer voice] Next time, on Fishteen Minutes.

AUSTIN: [laughs] So. Ibex, I think, steps forward in his formal wear. Not as— probably not a traditional suit. It still has a certain military vibe to it. It's still pretty tight-fitting, but slacks instead of weird military pilot tights.

SYLVIA: What do they call it? Dress regalia?

AUSTIN: Yeah, basically. Yeah. No hat or anything, though.

SYLVIA: Oh yeah. He wouldn't wear a hat, doesn't seem like a hat guy.

AUSTIN: I think he walks over to them both. I'm guessing that there's a table set up? I kind of like that there's a table set up with some water, a pitcher of water and that's it. And some glasses and three chairs, and it's a much bigger table than that. But there's three chairs. They're seated close to each other. It's not three chairs spread across a giant table. It's three chairs at the end of one table.

SYLVIA: I think Vicuna's sitting at an angle, and she's got her arm on the table, her broken arm. And she's flexing and unflexing her hand and stuff. She's absent-mindedly just getting used to being able to move her arm again.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Vicuna. Kobus.

SYLVIA: She doesn't look at him.

AUSTIN: Of course.

SYLVIA: She's— yeah. No.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): It's been too long. May I sit?

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): If you ask me, it hasn't been long enough. But I'm not going to stop you. [brightly] How's Counterweight?

AUSTIN: He gets himself some water.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): In danger. Still.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): Oh. Weird. Too bad we can't help with that.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): You may be able to if we can agree to a few things. And I suspect it will be in all of our interests for all of us to leave this table in agreement.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): Oh, I've gotta hear this.

DRE: I think Kobus is tennis-ing back and forth between the two. [laughs]

SYLVIA: Awww. Buddy!

AUSTIN: I think Ibex sits down. Again, pours himself that glass. Takes a sip.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): How much do you know about Rigour?

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): [exasperated sigh]

SYLVIA: She rolls her eyes.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): Everybody's heard the fairytales, Ibex. Come here to just scare me some more?

AUSTIN (as Ibex): One second.

AUSTIN: And he rolls his eyes up to access Righteousness. Taps a button on— taps his cufflinks—

SYLVIA: Of course.

AUSTIN: – and holds them up and projects an image from them into the pitcher filled with water, that then projects it up above the table. These are—

SYLVIA: Does it look like when light reflects off an aquarium so it's all wavy?

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: I love it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's a wavy image of Ionias.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): I received these images after a great deal of effort by some agents of mine.

AUSTIN: And it's images of Rigour emerging from the snows on Ionias, killing all those people.

SYLVIA: Vicuna's paying attention now, the second she sees this. She looks up, sees this, and she turns and is facing him now.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): I've never seen anything like it before. I didn't believe it either at first. I thought it was a fairytale too.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): How long ago was this?

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Too long. Months. I think.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): And this thing has been completely unchecked for months now?

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Yeah. And it's moving. It won't be long until it comes for us.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): Do you know where it is right now?

AUSTIN: Does he? I don't remember if he knows that it's on September. Yes, because they had to do the thing where they had to dodge it to get to land on September. And also actionable information against Rigour. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. He nods.

DRE: So I know that Loyalty has that link through Voice and Twelfth to September. How much does Kobus know of that?

SYLVIA: Kobus doesn't know about that.

AUSTIN: Well, Kobus knows there's that connection but - remember? - thinks that it's not— Voice pretends to be an actual— well.

SYLVIA: Didn't Voice pretend to be a different Divine?

AUSTIN: Yes. I don't remember what Twelfth said that was.

SYLVIA: Might have been pretending to be Grace.

AUSTIN: No, no. Because it was— it might have just been calling itself Voice at the time.

SYLVIA: It might have been. We'll have to go back and check. It was our first session.

0:29:13

AUSTIN: Yeah, we will for some other reasons, for lots of reasons. But it was pretending to be a Divine on the up and up. We've since learned that Ibex helped design a thing like a Divine that then got implanted into kind of neo-Strati to help them hack into Divines. And that's the thing that Twelfth was using to— er, was using a bit of Righteousness itself, in a weird way, to communicate with Kobus and Loyalty to get them to divert attention from one battle to another, basically. Or something like that. Oh, you know what it was? It was to let them build facilities on that planet, on Vox.

DRE: Right. And didn't we do it like they were the one trying to control the media or something like that?

AUSTIN: It was something like that. Yeah. And that's part of how Vox ends up being in the Righteous Vanguard instead of the Hands of Grace. But I don't know that Kobus knows who Rigour is.

DRE: Yeah. But does he know that Voice is based out of September?

SYLVIA: Oh. No.

DRE: Really?

AUSTIN: No. That's the thing he doesn't know, definitely not. He thinks that Voice or whoever that Loyalty was talking to was— like, "Oh, that's a Diasporan Divine." Definitely nothing to do with September at the time.

DRE: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: So yeah.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): September. It's on September. I have some other agents there now, trying to find some way to slow the damn thing down or— [exasperated hiss]. There's no killing it. We know there's no killing it. It's as old as all the Divines, older. And I don't know that it can be stopped.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): Something stopped it before or at least slowed it down to before it got here.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): I've been looking into that, and that came at incredible cost. You remember at the

AUSTIN: I'm trying to think of how he would talk about this.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): You know how, after the Diaspora left OriCon before it was OriCon, it had to burn the bridge back behind it so that Rigour wouldn't pursue. That's how the fairytale goes, anyway, and it uses that terminology. Burn the bridge. Just cut a bridge. Let it fall so that it doesn't cross. The first time, they destroyed thousands, millions of worlds to prevent it from reaching. The second time, the details are even more slim. But the same thing happened. And the bridge between the Orion arm and the arm of the Diaspora was destroyed again, trillions dead. Now, there's some calculus you could do, maybe, that tells me we should do that again. That's how dangerous Rigour is. But the thing is, the number would be even higher now. There is no bridge to collapse this time. It's just both of our civilizations, all the way back home. So I don't know. But I know that if we're clawing at each other, there's no chance we'll be stopping this thing.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): So you're proposing a ceasefire or a temporary alliance to deal with this?

AUSTIN (as Ibex): I'm open to ideas.

AUSTIN: He leans back and takes another sip.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): You know that I don't think that you or Grace are weak or incapable. You know that what I'm doing here, what I've done on Counterweight, what I've done in this sector is not about some long-term power grab. It's about trying to achieve a state of stability. That's always been my goal here. And the thing is, moments like this, moments of great instability, are often opportunities to even things out a little bit. I don't want to waste this opportunity. And I don't want to die.

SYLVIA: She laughs a little at "I don't want to die."

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): Yeah, no shit. Nobody does. No, Ibex. I know you don't think we're weak. You're smarter than that. Hell, you're pretty smart showing up here, trying to get us to help you out. I'm gonna need to talk to Grace about this.

AUSTIN: He nods. I like the notion that— after Rigour's image was projected, I think we probably got an image of Rigour's— er, not Rigour's, Grace's tubes going extra fast, pumping even faster. And the lights between Loyalty and Grace beaming back and forth even more rapidly.

SYLVIA: Oh man. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Kobus, what about you? What about Loyalty?

DRE: God, what does a 12-year-old kid say in the face of—?

SYLVIA: I mean, a 12-year-old kid who's been raised to be much more mature than their years. Right? So you don't have to play them like a kid.

DRE: But also incredibly sheltered though too.

SYLVIA: Yeah. That's true.

AUSTIN: Maybe— here's an interesting thing. Does Kobus just believe— has Kobus always believed the fairytales? Is Kobus young enough where they never got cynical about the fairytale of Rigour?

DRE: Yeah. I could definitely see that. Yeah. I think that Kobus is— a silly child, a normal 12-year-old is wrong. But I do think that there's probably—

SYLVIA: There's a naivete there.

DRE: There's a naivete, but I think it's a good thing because I think for him, when he hears temporary ceasefire, he says— maybe that's what he says.

DRE (as Kobus): Why does this have to be temporary? Why don't we just fix it now and fix it forever?

AUSTIN: Ibex reaches out and picks up the pitcher of water and pours a glass for Kobus.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Everything is temporary. You think this is the first time we fought? We fought before any of us was alive. Fight again after that. Ain't nothing /but/ temporary. It's just a matter of how long a temporary it is.

DRE (as Kobus): You don't seem to want to be temporary.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): It's complicated.

AUSTIN: He laughs.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Talk to Grace, but we need to decide quick. This isn't a thing we can joust back and forth over. You want more place on Counterweight again, be my guest.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): I'll let you know within the week.

AUSTIN: He nods.

DRE: I think Kobus just sort of looks at Grace and,

DRE (as Kobus): We have to fight.

SYLVIA: Vicuna just sort of gives a little smile at that and gives a little nudge on the arm.

SYLVIA (as Vicuna): Naw, kid. We gotta win.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Ibex nods to Kobus in a “Yeah, I’m agreeing with your mother” sort of way.
[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Yeah, that’s right.

SYLVIA: I like the idea that Kobus is either the little sibling to everybody—

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: — or your nephew or niece. What’s the gender-neutral term for that? I think nibling?

AUSTIN: Is that? Is that a thing?

SYLVIA: I’m pretty sure. I’m 90% sure it’s a word.

AUSTIN: Okay. That’s a word. Okay.

SYLVIA: Yeah. It totally is.

AUSTIN: Weird. Okay, good to know.

SYLVIA: Sorry for that.

AUSTIN: No, that’s fine.

SYLVIA: But yeah. That’s kind of the relationship I like to see between Kobus and other people.

AUSTIN: Ibex gets up and from nowhere produces as pair of sunglasses—

DRE: Motherfucker, get out! Go!

AUSTIN: — as the next sun appears, just in time for the light to hit him, obviously. This is how he does.

SYLVIA: So the sunglasses make a sword-unsheathing sound as he pulls them out? Shhhing!

AUSTIN: Well, it’s funny that you say that, because he says,

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Righteousness, of course, couldn't make it, but sends a gift for Grace.

AUSTIN: And he puts a little data pad thing - not a pad, I'm actually imagining a little USB stick basically, but very tiny - on the table.

SYLVIA: A micro SB?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, basically.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): A weapon for the arm of hers. Some data that we recovered from the infrastructure that you left behind on Counterweight.

AUSTIN: And he nods his head.

SYLVIA: She gives him a nod back and looks at the data chip.

AUSTIN: We'll talk about it when we figure out what's up with that arm.

SYLVIA: I'm excited to figure out what's up with that arm! [DRE giggles] I'm really excited about that arm.

AUSTIN: I think he walks back towards— oh, this is a cool thing. I actually like this a whole bunch. So I think the way the door looks depends who's on the receiving side, which Divine is opening it on the receiving side. So the reason it was a shadow when Loyalty did it was because Loyalty is the shadow of some other Divine always. Always in the shadow of another Divine, that's what it is. It shadows them. It's in their shadow. But when Righteousness does it, it's just— a line of fire in the sand opens up, and he walks through it.

DRE: Oh, that's sick.

AUSTIN: And it closes on the other side. And remember? Liberty and Discovery's was opening a door. It was a new door appearing and opening up. I really like that a lot.

SYLVIA: I really dig that.

AUSTIN: All right. So that did nothing for our Stars Without Number game.

SYLVIA: But that did a lot for the game as a whole, I think.

AUSTIN: Yes. Absolutely.

SYLVIA: And I mean, the weapon that was given to—

AUSTIN: Yeah, to Grace.

SYLVIA: — to Vicuna and Grace, that could come in to the game at some point.

AUSTIN: So I think it's a mode for that new hand you've been describing to me off game.

SYLVIA: Yeah! All right.

AUSTIN: So let's talk this means— let's talk about what happens here with the Hands of Grace and the Righteous Vanguard in Stars Without Number.

DRE: I think the Righteous Vanguard goal changes, probably.

AUSTIN: Okay. You think so?

DRE: It's no longer Planetary Seizure.

AUSTIN: Okay. I think that they have to spend a turn to do that, but that seems super appropriate, given what this move was. [reading] Once you move successfully, blah blah blah. If a faction chooses to abandon a goal, the demoralizing effect of it and the wasted preparations cost them that turn's faction credit income and they cannot perform any other action during that turn. Yeah. Totally.

SYLVIA: So can we just set their new one now, or do you want to wait?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Totally.

SYLVIA: Would this be Destroy the Foe Petrchor?

AUSTIN: Oh, absolutely! It has to be. Right?

DRE: I think so.

SYLVIA: Just making sure. I thought so too, but I wasn't sure if we wanted to do Bloody the Enemy first.

AUSTIN: No. It's all in. Right?

SYLVIA: It's all in? All right. Yeah. No, that makes sense to me too. I think we're all—

AUSTIN: What about Hands of Grace?

SYLVIA: Oh, what happens to the Hands of Grace? Well, their thing is still Peaceable Kingdom.

AUSTIN: Do they keep— well, we'll see. Does that represent the nature of this?

SYLVIA: It could also represent the ceasefire.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sure.

SYLVIA: Because they're still waiting to be ready. Right? So it could also symbolize them getting ready for an upcoming war? They're at peace right now. But also, whoa, they're making a lot of more weaponry.

AUSTIN: Totally. But then that means they still get a move this turn. Because they're not changing, so they can do whatever the fuck they want. Good question.

DRE: They got a lot of money.

SYLVIA: Yeah, do we do money stuff for them?

AUSTIN: I just did it just now for Hands of Grace. I'll go through and do it for everybody else right now. Christ.

SYLVIA: I kind of think maybe they could buy something to symbolize them getting ready. Because they can get any force thing they want, because they have force 8.

AUSTIN: Mhm. So I think either they buy something this turn or they try to make even more money in preparation.

SYLVIA: Do you think— do you want to wait, and maybe they're trying to save up to get a capital fleet?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Maybe. Maybe. Maybe that's what they're doing. What else do they have? Let's see. Assets— oh, they already have a capital fleet. I think that's Grace already. Grace is already a capital fleet. In fact, it costs to— can they afford that now?

SYLVIA: Yeah. It's only 12. And it's force 4. It's sort of a mid-tier force thing.

AUSTIN: Okay. So you want to do that instead of saving up for something bigger?

SYLVIA: We could also—

DRE: Waaaait.

SYLVIA: We could also do psychic assassins.

AUSTIN: We could.

SYLVIA: They don't have those, because we've been talking about some stuff with Grace's telepathy.

AUSTIN: Where do they have things? Where do they have bases at?

SYLVIA: Oh, they already have psychic assassins on Sigilia.

AUSTIN: Okay. Right. It's already there. It's already the thing we're talking about.

SYLVIA: That's why we were talking about it.

AUSTIN: And they already have a strike fleet, also.

SYLVIA: I mean, they could have more than one.

AUSTIN: They could have more than one. You're not wrong.

SYLVIA: God, they just—

AUSTIN: They already have a lot.

SYLVIA: Do you want to just call it for now? And if we change our mind, we could do something later?

DRE: Do they still have a base of influence on Counterweight?

AUSTIN: No. They don't. And they don't have anything on Counterweight, so they can't even buy one. Maybe they just use this shipping combine to make money? Er, no. A shipping combine is moving things. Right? God, do they have no way to make money on a given turn? Oh, they have industry. Okay. They could roll to try to get some more money if they wanted to. All right. That is 1d6.

DRE: Oh, that's right. Because the only thing they had was that base of influence on Counterweight, so.

AUSTIN: Ouf, that's not a great roll. They don't make any extra money. In fact, they lose a little bit because of upkeep on that capital fleet.

SYLVIA: Great!

AUSTIN: I mean, I think they still made it— they're still gaining. It's just not super quickly. Okay. So that is the Hands of Grace and the Righteous Vanguard. What about Minerva?

SYLVIA: For the last couple turns, we've been biding our time, and I think now they've gotta do something.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Well, they also have just a ton of money.

SYLVIA: Exactly.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They have 30 credits right now, which I guess isn't the most money. But it's a lot.

SYLVIA: It's enough to buy some serious shit, though.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes. It's enough to buy the most expensive wealth thing, which is what their highest stat is.

DRE: How much money do they have? 30?

AUSTIN: 30. 30.

DRE: They can buy their own damn space marines if they wanted to.

AUSTIN: Yeah. They totally could.

SYLVIA: Do they have the force for that?

DRE: 7, yeah.

AUSTIN: They have 7, so yeah.

SYLVIA: I say let's do that.

DRE: The only thing they can't do is a capital fleet.

SYLVIA: And you can put stuff on any planet that you already have things on, right? Or is it only planets that you have base of—

AUSTIN: I think it's base of— I thought it was a base of influence, but—

DRE: It has to be a base of influence, I'm pretty sure.

SYLVIA: Okay. Because I was going to say, "Oh, they could start putting space marines on September." That'd be pretty cool! And also—

DRE: Or do they do it on Archonic to ship them over to Joypark and then down to Ionias?

SYLVIA: That's good too.

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: Actually, I like that too.

DRE: I fucking love the image of space marines landing on space Disney.

SYLVIA: [muffled] Fuck!

AUSTIN: Meeee too. [DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Fucking fuck you, Banksy! We're better than this shit! [DRE and AUSTIN laugh] Sorry. I couldn't help it.

AUSTIN: Naw, it's fine. He listens, so he'll hear it. [DRE giggles] He's a big fan. It's strange, I know. Here's my question. Does it make more sense for them to do space marines or the scavenger fleet? Which do you think it— just mechanically which one would they prefer? And then we'll talk about—

SYLVIA: I mean, mechanically they'd want the scavenger thing, wouldn't they? Because that's what they're better at.

AUSTIN: Because it's wealth versus wealth, and I think they're the richest.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Space marines also do less damage and less counterattack. Is that right?

SYLVIA: Yeah. Do you want to just go with that, and we'll figure out in fiction what that means?

AUSTIN: God. Let me read the scavenger fleet right out— I'm pretty sure I know what it is, but. [reading] Scavenger fleets can very rarely be persuaded to throw in with factions. These ragtag armadas bring enormous technical and mercantile resources to their patrons, along with a facility with heavy guns. As an action, a scavenger fleet can be moved to any world within 3 hexes. Scavenger cost 2 a turn in maintenance.

SYLVIA: I really like that.

AUSTIN: Do they not have— they don't have any of those at all yet, do they? Yeah, they do.

0:46:07

SYLVIA: I don't think anyone has that.

AUSTIN: They have one on Tetrakal. Actually, if they have one on Tetrakal already—

SYLVIA: Move that for their turn?

AUSTIN: Dog, they could move that wherever they want.

[overlapping]

DRE: Yeah. They could put on Si—

SYLVIA: Wait, they have a scavenger fleet on— I know what that is.

DRE: They could put that on September—

SYLVIA: That's a bunch of people—

AUSTIN: They could put that on September.

SYLVIA: — who were kicked out of the Odamas, probably.

AUSTIN: It's that, but it has to be way bigger than that, too.

SYLVIA: No. Yeah, no. It's partially that, and then partially former Horizon people.

AUSTIN: I think it's actually — yeah, it's probably former Horizon. But I think it's probably just like — remember, the Minerva Strategic Alliance's whole thing is like they're pulling together all the remaining mega-corporations in OriCon—

SYLVIA: Oh, true.

AUSTIN: — in the Golden Branch Sector. So it's just like, it's every, if you run a bank, you have one or two spaceships. If you run a Dairy Queen— if you run space Dairy Queen, you have a spaceship. Not a bunch of them. We talked about this—

SYLVIA: It's fucking goon squad or goon swarm or whatever it's called in EVE?

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's basically GoonSwarm. Yes.

SYLVIA: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: It's them being— all right, if you— this is the Steiger twins pulling together every single— they're building the biggest armada that has ever been in the Golden Branch. It's just like that because— you know what it reminds me of? In European history, the Holy Roman Empire was this weird amalgamation of all these squabbling kings, all these squabbling princes kind of across central Europe who, because they were squabbling, were never as powerful as they would have been if they'd been completely unified. But when they did unify, they were just an unstoppable force. And I feel like this is the moment where the Holy Roman Empire of space kind of managed to get its shit in order and pointed in a direction.

SYLVIA: I really like that. Also Steiger kind of sounds like Kaiser...

AUSTIN: Oh, it totally does. Steiger means— my understanding, again, I don't speak German. My understanding tells me that Steiger means two different things. There are two things— okay, so it means— that's the one I remember.

SYLVIA: I don't know if this is the one you meant.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I remember the second one that you just found.

SYLVIA: The mean one?

AUSTIN: Yeah. The mean one I remember. [DRE cackles] Oh, it means overseer or pit foreman. Someone who can— which is perfect, and we had no idea. And it also means to mount something, which is why schwein steiger means pig fucker.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Steiger means fucker.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So I love that their name is like, "Oh yeah, overseer. Or fucker."

SYLVIA: I should have remembered that. The curse words are some of the German I remember. I'm kind of mad at myself right now. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: They're the best. So yeah. I think that they move that fleet down and then maybe just buy another one.

SYLVIA: They could move it to Archonic and then buy another one on Archonic.

AUSTIN: I mean, fucking no, they could move it to September, dude.

DRE: Oh shit! They could!

AUSTIN: It's on Tetrakal.

SYLVIA: Oh fuck. I was not even thinking of that.

AUSTIN: It's right there.

SYLVIA: Oh, you know what's really good? They could do a pronged thing, where they have one—

AUSTIN: And then buy the other one on Archonic so that that launches at September the next turn, you're saying?

SYLVIA: Yeah. Or they move that to Joypark, depending on—

AUSTIN: I see what you're saying.

SYLVIA: It's there so they could do resources, or they could send it to Joypark to hit Petrichor while they're distracted.

AUSTIN: They could hit Ionias from Archonic. They can move three.

SYLVIA: Yeah. They build one on Archonic.

AUSTIN: And then next turn they move? Is that what you're thinking?

SYLVIA: Do you want to move first or build? We can't do both, right?

AUSTIN: No. And we can't move— the other thing is, you can't move two at the same turn anyway. So it's not like we can build it this turn and then move them both at the same time.

SYLVIA: I say we build it first because then what we could do, because if we don't do that, the order we're going is: move, build, then they're just sitting there for a turn. But I want to move them there because then it makes the ground game so much more interesting.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It makes the ground game so much better if they move this turn.

SYLVIA: I say, let's take one for the team and move them now.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I like it. It paints the Steiger sisters as impulsive, which I like.

SYLVIA: Oh yeah. Totally.

AUSTIN: Impulsive because they're rich. Like, "Fucking move the ships—"

SYLVIA: "We can get another one!"

AUSTIN: — "We'll buy them new ships." Yeah. Exactly. You can always get more ships. I actually like that as the only scene we see here. Is one of them says, "Send the ships. We can always buy more ships." And the other dude who they're ordering around says, "Yeah, but what about the people on the ships?" "We can always get more people, too." Like, "Everything is replaceable, you idiot."

SYLVIA: "That's what Human Resources means, right?" [DRE giggles]

AUSTIN: Yes!

DRE: Oh boy. [SYLVIA makes a drum and hi-hat noise to go with their comedy stylings]

AUSTIN: So then the thing we actually have to do here still is determine if they can be stopped from entering September. Which happens when—

SYLVIA: It's something to do with the governing faction.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The governing faction has to say like, "Oh, can this—" yes. Oh, actually, wait. Does it have a special— it doesn't have a special thing, right?

SYLVIA: You can also buy stealth.

AUSTIN: Wait a second. I just need to see— it might be the best. Oh shit. This might be the best.

SYLVIA: Oh man. Really?

AUSTIN: I think it doesn't need permission.

SYLVIA: Oh fuck yeah!

AUSTIN: Because it's just a bunch of merchant ships.

SYLVIA: That's perfect for them, too.

AUSTIN: I'm just double-checking it, because it doesn't the P thing. So the thing is, you need— if it has the P on the list of assets, it means permission. It means you— [reading] a P special code indicates the need for planetary government permission to raise or transport in the asset.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it doesn't have that.

DRE: September does have the transport lock-down asset.

AUSTIN: Oh, does it? What's that do? How's that work?

DRE: [reading] On a successful cunning versus cunning attack against a rival faction, the rival faction cannot transport assets onto the planet without spending 1d4 fat creds and waiting a turn.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay. So does Twelfth— oh wait. Can it not do that because the Righteous Vanguard already moved this turn? Or we did decide that that's a thing they can do in defense anyway? I think we may have—

DRE: I feel like that's a defense. I think that's what we did last time.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think we may have said that that's an okay thing to do. Let's see. I guess my question is who's in command there? Who makes that decision? If it's Ibex, does he say, "Fuck it, let them throw their thing at this" just to see? Or if it's Twelfth, does he make the shitty decision to be like, "No, we can't let that fleet here."

DRE: I mean, I think you can make an argument that Ibex wouldn't want the fleet to come in either, because he would be like, "D'oh, you idiots, we have to form a plan! Don't waste these resources!"

AUSTIN: Right. We can't just throw ourselves at— okay, yeah. You're right. Let's make the roll. I will roll for the Righteous Vanguard, which is 1d6 plus I think 7.

SYLVIA: What is this roll again?

AUSTIN: It's cunning versus cunning. So yeah. I'll roll 1d6 plus 7, and then someone else— who wants to be Minerva?

[overlapping]

SYLVIA: I'll do it.

DRE: I'll roll for them.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay. You do it.

DRE: No no no. Go ahead.

DRE: Go ahead, Sylvia. No, you go.

AUSTIN: Oh boy.

SYLVIA: Aaaa! Politeness battle! [DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Oh, I have to get a perfect roll.

AUSTIN: All right. I think it's 1d6 plus— yeah, you gotta get a perfect roll. Nope! [SYLVIA groans] But here's what I actually like. So you failed that, but I like them being— actually, wait. What's the thing actually say. It says you have to— [reading] the rival faction cannot transport assets onto the planet without spending 1d4 credits and waiting one turn. So spend the credits. Let's roll 1d4.

DRE: Yeah. Of course. Let's fucking money.

SYLVIA: Yeah, throw money at the problem.

AUSTIN: One. Yeah, sure. We'll spend a credit. I like them being basically blockaded— er, not blockaded, but just— they appear overhead on September above the storm. And you can see their shadows from the ground. I actually kind of like— we get an image behind AuDy and Cass as they are at Maryland September's long cabin. Above them in the storm clouds are these other ships that appear. And you can probably even see them— it's sunny in Mode City from the weird effect that the storm is having on the weird mesh stuff there. I kind of like that you can even see the outline of them sketched into the sky there, of these ships hovering above the city in the atmosphere.

SYLVIA: Since we talk about this as if it was a TV show, I really like the idea of maybe we've seen some of these ships in the background of past stuff.

AUSTIN: Oh, I looove that! [whispers] I love it so much.

SYLVIA: And now, in this scene, you're like, "Oh, that's why these ships were there! That's why this Dairy Queen freighter was around." [AUSTIN and SYLVIA laugh]

AUSTIN: Right. And now you get— what's Dairy Queen's motto?

DRE: It used to be "Hot eats, cool treats."

SYLVIA: I think it's still that. And then there's also "It's not fast food, it's fan food."

AUSTIN: That's— no, it isn't.

DRE: Yes, it is.

AUSTIN: No, it isn't.

DRE: It is. Yes. It is. "It's not fast food, it's—"

AUSTIN: Bad. That's so bad. What was the other one? What was the one you just said, though, Dre?

DRE: "Hot eats, cool treats."

SYLVIA: It's way better.

AUSTIN: I like "Hot eats, cool treats." I like them both. Maybe it says one on one side of the ship and one on the other. And then underneath those slogans that have been spray-painted onto the side— er, not spray-painted, air-brushed onto the side — is just, guns roll out of the sides of the ships. Slots open up, and out come giant chain guns. Good. Thanks, Dairy Queen.

DRE: There's a neon light animation of a Blizzard being flipped upside down that just goes back and forth.

AUSTIN: Yes. Perfect.

SYLVIA: There's an ice cream cone on top that turns to its side, and it's a cannon now.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Good. Delicious.

SYLVIA: And then it changes to say, "Hot lead, cool dread." I can't think of a rhyme. [DRE giggles]

AUSTIN: Good. Good. It's not— you're close.

SYLVIA: I don't know.

AUSTIN: Good. Good.

SYLVIA: I also like the idea of Lazer Ted trying to buy ice cream from them, and they're like, "Fuck off! Go away, we're doing shit."

AUSTIN: Naw, he would get his ice cream.

SYLVIA: No, he would get it. But they'd try to get rid of him.

AUSTIN: [laughs in distress] Aww, Lazer Ted. Oh, I'm so nervous about what's going to happen to him.

SYLVIA: If you kill him, I'm quitting! [AUSTIN laughs]

AUSTIN: All right. I'm going to make a note that "Minerva's scavenger fleet is above September; arrives next turn." Okay. Which means they can't attack next turn.

SYLVIA: Yeah. No, they have to spend a turn— the next turn is as if they had succeeded in that roll.

AUSTIN: Correct. All right. Let's keep moving. Now we're getting good stuff here. Good lord.

0:57:18

SYLVIA: So Rapid Evening now?

AUSTIN: Rapid Evening.

DRE: Yeah, let's talk about the Rapid Evening.

AUSTIN: They want to expand influence to Minerva XII. That's what they want to do as of this second, anyway.

SYLVIA: I can't remember what they have on Minerva XII.

[overlapping]

DRE: I think it's space marines.

SYLVIA: I think it is space marines.

AUSTIN: I thought it was space marines.

SYLVIA: So how does building a base of influence work?

AUSTIN: I think you just spend money?

SYLVIA: But do you have to have a thing on the thing?

DRE: Yeah. I think it's how much money you spend is the HP?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I'm pretty sure that's correct. [reading] Expand influence: the faction buys a base of influence asset on a planet on which they have at least one other asset. The faction then roll 1d10 plus cunning rating against similar rolls by every other faction on the planet. Any of the others that equal or best the faction's roll may make a free immediate attack against the base of influence if they wish. Other assets present on the planet may defend against the attack as normal. The base of influence cannot be used until the beginning of the faction's next turn. So yeah. They spend whatever else— how much money does the Rapid Evening— they don't have much, because I think they just spent a bunch of money on— okay.

SYLVIA: They have 15?

DRE: They have 10.

SYLVIA: Oh. No. It's the right— 10.

AUSTIN: They have 10. All right. So I think they're going to buy— I think they're just going to dump all their money here.

DRE: So this is a cunning versus Minerva?

AUSTIN: It is a 1d10 plus cunning against— does anybody else have anything on Minerva?

SYLVIA: I mean, Minerva does.

AUSTIN: But anybody else besides Minerva? I just want to make sure that that's—

SYLVIA: Sort by planet, right?

AUSTIN: Odamas does. Odamas has based a fleet on Minerva.

SYLVIA: Oh, right!

AUSTIN: So they also get to make a cunning here.

DRE: Hold on.

SYLVIA: 1d6?

AUSTIN: 1d6 plus cunning.

DRE: I guess I'll roll for Minerva.

SYLVIA: Yeah. I'll roll for Odamas.

AUSTIN: I rolled like garbage. I rolled a 1.

SYLVIA: Aww, you rolled the worst.

AUSTIN: All right. So everybody knows that they're trying to building this 10-cost base of influence. Anybody who beat that roll can now attack it immediately, which means Minerva probably will.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I don't think Odamas gives that much of a shit.

AUSTIN: No. I also don't think Odamas has an attacking thing there. I think they just have a base of influence there.

SYLVIA: I think it's just more like they notice what happens.

AUSTIN: Yes. So what does Minerva attack with?

DRE: I mean, they have their blockade fleet. I think that's kind of—

SYLVIA: Lobbyists, obviously. [DRE cracks up] Venture capital clout. Yeah, I think blockade fleet's the one we gotta go with here. Right?

DRE: Because that's the force—

AUSTIN: Okay. So then it's—

SYLVIA: Force versus—

AUSTIN: Yeah. So it's force versus wealth, which is interesting.

SYLVIA: That's very interesting.

AUSTIN: So that's 1d6. The space marines will defend this, because when you attack, you can— when you attack Rapid Evening, even to destroy their base of influence, they can defend with whatever.

SYLVIA: I think the wealth thing actually makes sense because we described them as having limited resources. So that's what we could sort of—

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah. I like that a lot. So go ahead— what is the force of— this is actually kind of interesting, because force is not Minerva's strongest suit. It's still really strong, though.

DRE: It's 7.

AUSTIN: 1d6 plus 7 versus 1d6 plus 4. Oh jeez. That's it.

SYLVIA: Did you roll a 6?

AUSTIN: It doesn't matter. No, because he rolled an 11. So I rolled another 1. All right. So that means you get to do that damage, which is 1d6.

DRE: Is this the first time the Rapid Evening has lost a roll?

SYLVIA: Yeah. I think it is.

AUSTIN: Things are not going great for them.

SYLVIA: No, they lost one early on. On Sage. The same type of roll, actually.

AUSTIN: How much damage did you do?

DRE: Just 1.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. Well, that's not even a thing. So here's my fact. I have to look up how counterattacks work. Is that autofire or—?

SYLVIA: I think it's just what stat they have.

AUSTIN: No. It's if the defending asset—

SYLVIA: Succeeds?

AUSTIN: — succeeds at the defense. Okay. So that doesn't destroy the new base of influence at all, actually.

SYLVIA: It does take off 1— er, no. It just does damage to the space marines. Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it just damage to the space marines, so not even a big deal.

DRE: Yeah, how much HP do they have?

AUSTIN: 15.

DRE: Oh, okay. That's more than the blockade fleet has.

SYLVIA: Space marines are scary as shit!

DRE: Yeah. They are.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So what's that— does that just look like this blockade fleet is bombing the moon, because remember, it's not a Warhammer space marine troop. I felt like it was a more dug-in, almost WWI-style trenches type situation. They landed, and they're setting up shop under the ground of the moon? And I think maybe Kiva loses 1 person from this squad of a handful of people, which sucks but— maybe even doesn't lose them. They just get wounded?

SYLVIA: Yeah. I think more like nobody gets killed, but a few people are hurt here and there. Like, one person has serious wounds.

DRE: I think Minerva gets wind because they were too slow to set up the shield generator.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

DRE: So somebody's getting chewed out tomorrow morning, and they're going to have to redo their whole training on how to set up shield generations.

SYLVIA: God. She runs a tight ship.

AUSTIN: The base is set up. Yes. Kiva doesn't fuck around. All right. Let's do Odamas? Let's do Golden Demarchy. They're actually next. So they want to seize Gemm. Is that still what they want and what do they have?

SYLVIA: They don't know about Rigour, so I think yeah.

AUSTIN: No. They don't. Ahh, the word has gone out. The word's gone out. We've talked about this on the intro. The intro to the last episode basically says everybody knows about Rigour, or at least has heard the rumors. This is part of why Minerva is moving.

SYLVIA: Should we do something with maybe Sokrates trying to figure out what to do?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I kind of like that.

SYLVIA: And Argus is his, basically, head of security, I believe.

DRE: Yeah. He's admiralty.

AUSTIN: Let me just peek at where they have stuff, too, just to be 100% on point.

SYLVIA: I think Gemm is the only one outside their little northern part? But I'm probably wrong. They probably have a little smattering of stuff here and there.

AUSTIN: No, that's right. Yeah. And they wounded the space mariners that Hands of Grace have on Gemm in the last turn.

SYLVIA: Yeah. That was—

AUSTIN: They knocked them down from 16 to 8, which is really good.

SYLVIA: Oh yeah. Man. They fucked up Fortitude, huh?

AUSTIN: They fucked up Fortitude pretty good. Pretty good. So yeah. What's Sokrates doing?

SYLVIA: Sokrates has to be in— do you think they're in a strategic room, like a planning table or something? Or do you think they're in the throne room?

AUSTIN: What if those are the same thing? What if it's just Stargate-style? The throne just drops into the floor, and—

DRE: That sounds sick.

AUSTIN: — on the next level down, it's a dope—

SYLVIA: I have never seen Stargate, but that makes me want to see it. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: I mean, I don't think that actually happens in Stargate, but I'm imagining lots of that sort of classical architecture. There was a cool set of teleporting rings, not just the big Stargate rings, but there's vertical ones that drop down vhuu vhuu vhuu vhuu vhuu. And then they teleport this emperor dude up to his spaceship, but then he gets caught in a mid— a bomb hits. It's— you should watch Stargate. Stargate's— mmm. You should watch Stargate at least one.

SYLVIA: Because Divines can open doors, could we do something with that, maybe? Or is that—?

DRE: Oh shit. Because he can do that now, huh?

AUSTIN: Yeah, but remember, you need two Divines to do it—

SYLVIA: Oh, never mind.

AUSTIN: — the door opener and then— you need someone to knock and then someone to answer. He could knock on the door.

SYLVIA: “Hey Fortitude, ‘sup?”

AUSTIN: Yeah. He could just knock on that door. Totally.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: Or he could knock on anybody’s door. That he knows.

DRE: If he knocks on a door, I think it’s probably Ibex. [AUSTIN blows out his breath]

SYLVIA: Is it time for that? We could do that.

AUSTIN: We could do that. We could do Ibex leaves the fire door and walks in to—

SYLVIA: And he’s suddenly in the throne room.

1:06:23

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: That’s really good! [DRE yells off mic]

AUSTIN: I actually really love that.

SYLVIA: The third character in the scene could either be Argus or it could be Integrity itself. I just really like the idea of Ibex coming in and Sokrates is there, tired.

AUSTIN: Do you think Integrity opened the door without Sokrates?

SYLVIA: Integrity opened the door but told Sokrates that they’re opening the door. Because they gotta be honest. They’re Integrity.

AUSTIN: Right, right, right. Totally. But it was, “This conversation needs to happen whether you want it to or not, but I’m telling you because I’m Integrity.”

SYLVIA: Yeah. “We need to have this face-to-face conversation. It’s the right thing to do.”

AUSTIN: Yeah. So what does Integrity’s door opening look like? We just got Righteousness’s weird fire. Liberty and Discovery’s is literally a door appearing and opening. Loyalty’s is the shadow door, the natural shadows in the room become a door that opens.

We've described Integrity as this— Integrity's also another super fucking Stargate thing actually, now that I think about it. I've been thinking—

SYLVIA: I've been thinking of Integrity as a warframe-looking thing, super—

AUSTIN: Those things are very similar. There's overlap.

SYLVIA: Guyver is what Integrity is to me.

AUSTIN: I'm going to find you a dope Stargate GIF. Hot Stargate GIFs! But you keep talking. Keep thinking while I'm looking at ...

SYLVIA: Yeah. No. Um.

DRE: It has almost—

AUSTIN: Integrus maybe? That's not very good.

DRE: Yeah. I'm thinking like a scroll unfurling.

AUSTIN: I kind of like that.

DRE: But I don't know what that actually looks like.

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Maybe it actually is something simple. Oh, that's sick. Yeah. I was thinking of—

DRE: Oh, damn.

SYLVIA: — Integrity as being a little less streamlined than that.

AUSTIN: Oh, totally.

SYLVIA: It's a process to get the actual of form of Integrity out. And it's not pleasant for the Candidate. I think it's why—

AUSTIN: I definitely— I realize this is what I've been thinking about in terms of coloration and design, in terms of it having little wings in the head unit. I've googled Stargate Anubis, by the way, for people following at home, and then clicked on type Animated in a Google Image search.

SYLVIA: Oh, I found what could possibly be a candidate name for Sokrates.

AUSTIN: Oh, what is it?

SYLVIA: Isurus, I-S-U-R-U-S.

AUSTIN: Spell it again?

SYLVIA: I-S-U-R-U-S. It's a clever little reference to who originally played him, too. It's the genus for mako sharks.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's really good. That's really good.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Little shout out to Keith. It's also a really nice name. It kind of sounds like Icharus to me too, which I dig.

AUSTIN: It does. I kind of like that. So there's one other way we could with it that I thought of, which is it could be a sea mammal.

SYLVIA: Ooo.

AUSTIN: That way it could still be a mammal, but also— I do like Isirus, though. That's pretty good. But what about some sort of otter?

SYLVIA: Yup! [DRE giggles]

DRE: Are there multiple species of otter?

SYLVIA: There's definitely—

AUSTIN: Oh, there are infinite otters.

SYLVIA: Infinite otters?

DRE: Oh, what if we call him the Congo clawless otter?

SYLVIA: Congo clawless, the most dangerous— [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: [reading] In Japanese, otters are often called kawauso. In Japanese folklore, they fool humans in the same way that foxes and tanuki do.

SYLVIA: Oh shit.

AUSTIN: [still reading] In the Noto region, Ishikawa prefecture, there are stories where they shapeshift into beautiful women or children wearing checkered-patterned clothing. And if a human attempts to speak to one, they will answer “oraya” and then answer “araya.” And if anybody asks them anything, they say cryptic things like, “kawai.”

SYLVIA: Oh my god. So the genus name for the sea otter is Enhydra, which is kind of dope.

AUSTIN: Ohh, that’s dope!

SYLVIA: Let’s go with that.

AUSTIN: Where is that? Spell that. Oh, I see it. Enhydra. Of course. Sold! Let’s add that over here on our list of things.

SYLVIA: Also I like the beginning it and Integrity are kind of the same pronunciation, which is a nice little connection thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah! I like that a lot.

Dre: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Ah, I didn’t erase that, did I? Okay. Enhydra. All right. So who is playing Sokrates/Enhydra?

DRE: Let’s see. Who can do the best Keith impersonation? [laughs]

SYLVIA: Oh, I don’t think Sokrates is like Sokrates was at all anymore.

DRE: I know. Yeah, I know.

AUSTIN: Me neither. Well, I think he’s⁴ still maybe a little stubborn the way he was then.

SYLVIA: Oh yeah. But there’s the thing—

AUSTIN: But he’s lost his playfulness.

SYLVIA: — he’s leading an entire conglomeration of planets and has this thing inside him.

AUSTIN: How about Dre, you do Sokrates. And Sylvia, you play Argus Korba, who is the Eidolon of Security.

⁴ Sokrates uses they/them pronouns.

SYLVIA: I was thinking I could play Integrity as well, I think. There's something about Integrity being part of the scene that I like. But I'll also mention if Argus does stuff, because I don't see Argus doing much here.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

DRE: Yeah, I don't either. But what does it— I guess we can get to this. But what does it look like when Integrity talks?

AUSTIN: That's my question. That's exactly—

SYLVIA: I think Integrity communicates with Sokrates. That's the thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

DRE: Or does it talk through Sokrates? Does a very different voice come out of Sokrates when Integrity— I guess Integrity wouldn't take over. That's not a very integritous thing to do.

SYLVIA: Yeah, it wouldn't do that. I think it just talks to Sokrates. And then Sokrates—

AUSTIN: I don't think they can speak— they can speak together as a gestalt with themselves that says things that neither of them would have said independently. Do you know what I mean? Again, part of the reasoning behind having Candidates, at least in theory, is that it's supposed to achieve an effect that having just the machine or just the pilot wouldn't do.

DRE: Do you think that other Candidates or other Divines can hear Integrity in a way that normal people can't?

AUSTIN: Hmm. Probably.

DRE: The normal person would hear those two voices together whenever Sokrates talks. But a Divine Candidate or a Divine can hear the behind-the-scenes discussion or whatever, the geras churning.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah. And I also think we've kind of established that there are methods for communication between Divines. Right? So there's got to be a way for Integrity to communicate with other Divines, which makes sense that a Candidate would recognize that as well.

DRE: Yeah. So Korba's in this room, and to him⁵ it just looks like Sokrates and Ibex are talking. But there's this whole other conversation going on that he's not aware of.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Is Sokrates wearing— it Integrity out right now? Or is Integrity in? Or is there some weird middle state?

DRE: As soon as that door opens, I think it's out. Because I don't— I mean, Sokrates is probably not very nice to Ibex.

SYLVIA: I say that—

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's the equivalent of Iron Man putting on— like, "All right, it's time to fucking suit up." It's like—

SYLVIA: Yeah, except it comes out of Iron Man's skin.

AUSTIN: Yeah, and it hurts a bunch.

DRE: And I bet it hurts even more, because I bet Integrity was like, "No, don't do— okay, all right, we're doing this."

SYLVIA: Yeah. Integrity resisted at first, so it stutters and stops. We've talked about it being the base of the neck. So it starts coming out and bristles almost at the base of the neck and the spine. Where it's normally smooth, spikes are coming out of it. And it's trying to retreat. And then it just starts doing the normal thing where it comes out.

AUSTIN: Is it the door as simple as the opposite of Loyalty's thing here of just— there's already a shaft of light here that is hard to see into. And then Ibex walks out of it.

SYLVIA: I think that's perfect. Yeah. I think that works better than— I had the idea of it looks like a reverse transformation of what Integrity does, where just all of a sudden a humanoid form is there as if it's made out of the material Integrity's made out of. And then that fades away. But I like the light thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I thought about that too, but it feels like it's just— it's a step too— this is already basically magical. I understand that. There needs to be a— something needs to be the medium for it come through.

SYLVIA: It's using some form of matter. And in this case, it's light.

⁵ Argus Korba uses they/them pronouns.

AUSTIN: For whatever— yeah. Exactly. I don't just want it to be a thing appears on stage. You need the explosion and the sparks and the smoke.

SYLVIA: Ibex comes in on a zipline.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Perfect. All right. So—

1:16:12

SYLVIA: And then I think Argus has an assault rifle. He always has it with him. But when dude shows up, he's got it not on his hip, he's got it in his hands. He's the leader of the army and also Sokrates's personal bodyguard.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Ibex sighs to himself. [SYLVIA laughs]

DRE: Second time he's had a Apostolosian with an assault rifle on him. [SYLVIA and DRE laugh]

SYLVIA: Apostolosian royalty, huh?

AUSTIN: Yup! Here we go!

SYLVIA: "Maybe I should have sent one of the robots."

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Apotine. Apokine. Candidate Enhydra. It's a pleasure to meet you again.

AUSTIN: He still has the glass of water [DRE giggles] and puts it down on—

SYLVIA: Of course!

DRE: Does he still have his sunglasses on?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think he takes them off like, "Ugh." Rubs his eyes. [DRE Is cracking up]

SYLVIA: I wanted to mention really quick. I think that Argus doesn't— nobody really refers to Sokrates by his Candidate name in the Demarchy.

DRE: Of course not.

SYLVIA: So when he says, "Enhydra," he's a little confused by it because he doesn't know what the fuck that means.

DRE: I wonder if Sokrates even likes that name? I feel like he wouldn't. I feel like calling him that would be— Sokrates is not into that. It's not his name.

SYLVIA: Yeah. It's not part of the—

DRE: That's what he is now to get done what needs to be done. But that's not who he is.

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: I think Integrity senses him sort of punching at that and just— I cannot do the soothing voice that I'm picturing for Integrity. It's a whisper, basically.

AUSTIN: Divine ASMR. Got it.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Integrity is a sentient ASMR coming to life. It's actually— that's how they're going to get the Demarchy back on its feet, is really popular ASMR videos that they're going to modify.

DRE: Are you just offering to give him a simulated shave? Is that what this scene is?

AUSTIN: All the tingles.

SYLVIA: No. But Integrity just sort of whispers,

SYLVIA (as Integrity): It's okay. That's your name as well. That's your name now. It's fine. It's a title you should be proud of.

DRE (as Sokrates): Ibex, talk fast before I punch you in the face.

AUSTIN: He rubs his jaw. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Ah. God. Just like your brother. You called me here.

DRE: Oh wait. Wait wait wait. Does Sokrates know that Cass is on September?

AUSTIN: Noooo.

SYLVIA: Sokrates wouldn't even know that Ibex has met Cass. And Argus— is it common knowledge that Cass is alive?

AUSTIN: He⁶ was at the funeral, so— he was at the royal funeral.

⁶ Cass uses they/them pronouns.

SYLVIA: Okay. So Argus isn't super shocked, but he's like, "Mmm?"

DRE: Yeah. No. We're not talking about anything else, because now Sokrates wants to know what the hell Ibex knows about his brother [sic].

SYLVIA: Wait. There's two brothers [sic] that are still alive. Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. There's Cassander, and then there's the— what is his⁷ actual—

SYLVIA: I can't remember his name, but he was the heir. Right?

AUSTIN: He was the heir, and I think he may have been given one of the Demarchy titles as a way to try to soothe that. But I don't remember which one.

SYLVIA: We didn't write that down. I don't even know his name.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's written down somewhere. Art sent it to me forever ago, but— I just have to find it again. Yeah.

DRE (as Sokrates) : What have you been doing with Cassander?

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Your brother [sic] ran afoul of some of my ... corporate enterprises awhile ago. We struck a deal. Everything is fine now. He's running with a very effective crew of operators out of Counterweight, and he is contributing currently to a galactic crisis. I guess it runs in the family.

SYLVIA: I guess Argus speaks up then, when the words "galactic crisis" come up.

SYLVIA (as Argus): What are you talking about?

SYLVIA: Really fucking on edge. He's super ready to shoot this guy. [AUSTIN and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Ibex looks around the room, and he picks up that glass of water he brought and puts it on the table in front of him and does the same thing he did before. [DRE and SYLVIA laugh] Like, "I just did this pitch. Yeah, okay, cufflink. Okay, Rigour."

AUSTIN (as Ibex): You've probably never heard of this. This is—

AUSTIN: Er, actually. Again, he sent those messages out, so he actually says—

⁷ The character being referred to Euanthe, uses they/them pronouns.

SYLVIA: Well, I think the Apostolosians have heard of it, but maybe they have a different story for it?

AUSTIN: Maybe—

SYLVIA: Or actually, no. Because it's not from their part of space.

AUSTIN: No. That's what I'm saying. Not at all. But he did send out message for this. Again, I think that that came up in the intro. I think even Apostolos has—

SYLVIA: Maybe Argus just doesn't even fucking know—

AUSTIN: Keep up. Yeah.

SYLVIA: Argus has just been following orders. And maybe Sokrates has been trying to keep it quiet so to not panic him?

AUSTIN: Sure.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Rigour is a very real threat. It's a machine like our Divines, except larger and older, without the fail safes and the weaknesses that we have. It's time that we put aside our differences and work together for the betterment of the galaxy.

DRE (as Sokrates): I feel like I've heard this before. [AUSTIN as Ibex laughs] I know I've heard this before.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): And I was right then, too. I don't think we'd be in this problem if you'd listened.

SYLVIA: I think Integrity just sort of chimes in quietly,

SYLVIA (as Integrity): Candidate Ibex does not come here with ill will.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Sokrates—

AUSTIN: And he uses that name intentionally here, I think.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): I think you've done— I wasn't joking when I said on Counterweight that I'm impressed by what you've done. And if I'm honest, I think that you could probably use all this chaos to reach even further. Within a year, maybe two, the Apostolosian Empire— sorry, your new Golden Demarchy could be as strong as it ever was. But that would come at the cost of lives. And I know you value those. Millions of

them, billions, more. You help us stop this thing, and I think you cement in place all of the achievements you've made in the last few months.

DRE (as Sokrates): So did you give this speech to Grace before or after you started riots on Counterweight?

AUSTIN (as Ibex): After. After, and they weren't riots. Barely a shot was fired. The people on Counterweight knew, as the people here on Apostolos did, that the old rule had become stagnant and had stopped looking out for them. But I spoke with Grace, and she's thinking about it. Have you spoken to her?

DRE (as Sokrates): No.

AUSTIN: I also really like the notion of— he's not saying he spoke to Vicuna, even though all he did was speak to Vicuna. He spoke to Grace, it's like saying, "I spoke with England." No no no, you spoke with diplomats from England. You spoke with diplomats from China. "No, we spoke with China." I like that when you speak to the Candidate, who you're speaking to is the Divine.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): Have you spoken to anyone since you took this on? Any one of us, I mean.

DRE (as Sokrates): If we're being blunt, Ibex, let's be blunt. You know I'm going to help, because as you said, I actually care about what happens to all of these people that you prop up as your toys.

AUSTIN (as Ibex): You don't know. Hooo. I bite my tongue because I care about them. You know that I could kill your man here in a second, and we could see where this would all go.

SYLVIA: Argus pulls back the— he doesn't pull the trigger. He just— you know the lever action?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Cocks it.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Cocks his gun, basically, and is like, "I'd like to see you try." He doesn't say it, but that look is like, "I'd like to see you try."

AUSTIN (as Ibex): So let's not do the thing we do. But I want to make sure you're not going to burn out with all this. You're holding two titles now. Apokine, the title held by the ruler of Apostolos. And Candidate. No one does that! It's too much. No one's a CEO and a Candidate, not for long, trust me. You gotta delegate.

DRE (as Sokrates): No one's a Candidate for 15? 20 years?

AUSTIN (as Ibex): It's been awhile. It's been awhile. Been a good run.

DRE (as Sokrates): That remains to be seen, I guess.

SYLVIA (as Argus): Oooo!

SYLVIA: That's Argus in the background.

AUSTIN: Says Argus, "Ooo!" [DRE laughs uncontrollably] Got him!

SYLVIA: Super serious chin beardy guy.

DRE: No, it's not Argus. It's Sokrates's shitty brother.

SYLVIA: It's Integrity. It's Integrity just like, "Daaamn!" [they all laugh]

1:26:56

AUSTIN (as Ibex): You're right. But I'm confident. I sent out that message because I knew I couldn't do this alone. Just like I came to you in your ship all those years ago because I knew that Stability couldn't be reached from the shores of Glimmer. It has to be done through Counterweight, it has to be done through the heart of this sector.

You don't have much on Counterweight now, huh? I think you should build up there with me. The Apostolosians did not get a fair shake at the end of that war, and the people there— I've seen them starving. I've seen them struggling. I've seen them turning to OriCon, to the Diaspora, to me because they don't have their own leader there. Not really. A doctor here, a soldier there. Come with me to Counterweight. You call it the Golden Branch Demarchy, not the Apostolosian Demarchy. Build it at the center of this thing.

SYLVIA: I think Argus sort of walks over and does that thing where he's leaning in to to Sokrates's ear with his back to Ibex. He's like,

SYLVIA (as Argus): I have some contacts on Counterweight I could get in touch with. We could make some moves there.

DRE (as Sokrates): All right, Ibex. You'll have the Demarchy. But here's the deal. When this is over, we will, I think you put it, do what we do, because when you threatened my man, you showed the difference between us. And it won't be long until everyone else sees it too.

AUSTIN as: Deal.

SYLVIA: He says, "Deal." Integrity makes Sokrates put his arm out for a handshake.

AUSTIN: And Ibex shakes it. It's a cold hand.

DRE: Does Sokrates punch him with the other hand anyway? [laughs]

SYLVIA: Naw, I think that might be a bad move.

AUSTIN: Probably not. He probably doesn't.

SYLVIA: Ooo, I know what's happening. There's a shot of Sokrates's other hand clenched up and shaking, and the armor is seen tightening. So it's Integrity keeping him from punching him.

DRE: And Ibex definitely knows this.

SYLVIA: Oh, totally.

AUSTIN: Of course. He steps back, turns back to the sun that is the door, puts the sunglasses on again—

DRE (as Sokrates): Your glasses look stupid.

[SYLVIA shouts with laughter out of character]

AUSTIN (as Ibex): It's very bright.

AUSTIN: And he walks into the sun.

SYLVIA: God. Have some chill, man. You run a—

AUSTIN: A country, a whole—

SYLVIA: — space country.

AUSTIN: — of billions.

DRE: Hey, man. Everybody's got that one person. [laughs]

AUSTIN: That's fair. That's fair. That was honest playing. You're playing honest to the character. It's true.

SYLVIA: Honesty.

AUSTIN: So I think what's happening there is I think maybe we activate the Netted Wave officially which means they get to be added as an asset. I don't know what sort of asset they are. And maybe you get to buy a base of operation and—

SYLVIA: Probably a lower-end force one? Not low end. But not space mariners.

AUSTIN: Yeah. They're not space marines, certainly not.

SYLVIA: The postech infantry? Or—

AUSTIN: Hold on one second. Lemme— what's Demarchy's highest thing? Cunning is their highest, and it's 6.

SYLVIA: Do you want to do a cunning thing then?

AUSTIN: Let's see. What's cunning 6? None of those really— not moles. And then they had force 5.

SYLVIA: Force 5 blockade fleet?

AUSTIN: No, they're not that ready. Maybe postech infantry is right.

SYLVIA: Yeah. That's the one that immediately jumped out. That or strike fleet.

AUSTIN: Yeah. They don't really have— they're not a space—

SYLVIA: Yeah. Their vehicles are ground-based things. Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. So yeah. Maybe just postech infantry. And then he just gives permission for that to be there instantly, Ibex does. I mean, listen. They could be psychic assassins, they're not.

SYLVIA: Are they? Because that would be cool! I'm all for psychic assassins and cyber ninjas.

AUSTIN: You're always for psychic assassins. It's true. I'm going to look at cunning again.

SYLVIA: Literally the two things that I will always be like, "Maybe we should make this" are psychic assassins, cyber ninjas.

AUSTIN: [laughing] That's fair. They're cool. They are the best shit. [DRE laughs] Maybe it's— I guess organizational moles isn't wrong either, necessarily. Now I'm think of the rules-based—

what's the smartest, what's the most powerful thing that they could get there. I guess it's probably actually psychic assassins.

SYLVIA: Woo hoo!

AUSTIN: Which again, is not what they actually are.

SYLVIA: I don't know what they actually are, but I love that it's written down on paper.

AUSTIN: I know. [laughs] I kind of like that for two reasons. One, we've talked about before how hard it is to hack Apostolosian stuff because it's just not human. Right? It's not human in the same way. It doesn't have whatever space language base is for OriCon or the Diaspora. I like it because whenever we've described them, they've had this sort of otherworldly presence. They fly around on a weird sand boat that flies in the sky with weird neon energy sails. And they've been stealth through this whole time. They've basically always been there. That's the thing that made me like, "Oh, they have pretech stealth gear. Okay, they have this weird stealth stuff."

SYLVIA: And I think you can contextualize that as them lying low after their brush with the Chime.

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah, exactly. So how— so let's definitely do one of those. And then how many points is their base of influence? How much money do they have?

DRE: For which planet?

AUSTIN: Oh, that's not what I wanted.

SYLVIA: They don't have—

AUSTIN: Wait, how much money do they have?

SYLVIA: 12.

AUSTIN: Okay, so how many points do you think they put into this base of influence on Counterweight?

SYLVIA: 8? Two thirds of their stuff. I don't know. We could go all in.

AUSTIN: Whoops, did I fucked that up? Yeah, I fucked that up. Oh no, I didn't.

SYLVIA: I'm just thinking maybe keeping some for— to save—

AUSTIN: No. Yeah, yeah. Give them some money.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Because they're about to be waging a war as well.

AUSTIN: All right. So that costs 8. Oh, I did the wrong button there. Okay. Faction tracker. That goes down to 4. Okay. And then they also have psychic assassins. That's not how you spell psychic. There we go. Come on, you can fill this is. No? There we go. Counterweight is 0304 on the map. Okay. All right, Netted Wave here. Okay. Cool. Cool.

Well, we did everything else, didn't we? No, we didn't do Odamas yet. Odamas just moves?

SYLVIA: Yeah. I don't—

AUSTIN: I know it's boring.

SYLVIA: I don't have any— the only ideas I have for scenes are quiet stuff, so—

AUSTIN: Also it's after midnight now, I have to get up, actually, in the morning .

SYLVIA: It's late.

DRE: Is it? Holy shit, it is.

SYLVIA: That's why I'm saying, the only scenes I have are quiet stuff. So we can just move them and move to Petrichor.

AUSTIN: Is that where they are? They're on Petrichor?

SYLVIA: They are in Petrichor space. They're moving towards Ionias now. They are moving from Joypark to 0706.

AUSTIN: Okay. How far can they move in a turn? It's just one, because they are a strike fleet? No, they are pretech infantry. Right right right. They can move to one world. Yeah. That's right. Okay.

SYLVIA: So it's— would that be Ionias, or would that be—?

AUSTIN: No, it's 0706. God, all they want to do is get home, and I think they're going to get caught up in the middle of a whole bunch of shit.

SYLVIA: Yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: Oh boy. All right. What's up, Dre? [DRE giggles]

SYLVIA: It's time.

DRE: Oh, you know. Just stuff.

AUSTIN: [sighs] What is Petrichor doing? Their goal is to capture September.

DRE: Oh, hey. This is new.

AUSTIN: What's that?

DRE: This genetic engineered slaves on September.

1:36:07

AUSTIN: That was from last thing.

DRE: Was it?

AUSTIN: I'm pretty sure. I'm pretty sure.

DRE: Yeah, no. You're right. You're right. You're right. You're right.

AUSTIN: It was from one of the tags. I'm pretty sure. Because it's a weird eugenics cult, whatever eugenics cult is the actual tag that it has now. It's not super good. But it can do an extra— it's super good in that it's going to hit a lot because it gets an extra 1d10 on an attack or a defense by it. So really good defenders, actually.

DRE: Oh boy. What do we want to do?

AUSTIN: What else do you have on September? Oh. You have Rigour on September. Right. Oh, that's all.

DRE: And Natalya.

AUSTIN: Right. Eugh, god. Maybe it's this, actually. Maybe this is actually right?

DRE: Oh boy. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is that? I just made it so that on our spreadsheet so that the grav tank on September is Rigour and the geningeered slaves is Natalya—

SYLVIA: [distressed] Awwwww.

AUSTIN: — in kind of a unit still. But [DRE laughs] she's very good at defense.

SYLVIA: In my heart. Just right in my heart!

AUSTIN: Just right in the heart. Right in there.

DRE: You didn't need that. You're fine. Does Rigour— I think Rigour just tries to blow something up. I mean, that's really the only move I kind of have because I don't have any money to buy anything. I mean, I could technically build a base of influence on September, but I don't think it would be successful.

AUSTIN: You already have it.

DRE: Oh, do I? Oh.

AUSTIN: You already have a 10 base of influence. It's going very well. It's going very well.

SYLVIA: Huh, things seem to be going well with the evil death robot.

DRE: I mean, I only have 6 credits to my name.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but you gain pretty quick. Or maybe you don't? But I think you're right. I think it's time to swing on September.

DRE: Yeah? What do I want to blow up? Let's see.

AUSTIN: Well, I think you just attack, and then—

DRE: Oh right. And then they choose what they want to defend with. Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I'm pretty sure that's the way attacking works.

DRE: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: You launch against known— oh, I guess it can be launched at a known asset. [reading] They select one or more of their own assets and targets a rival faction within the same world. One at a time, each attacking asset is matched against a defending asset chosen by the defender. So you could attack with Natalya and Rigour. Oh, I think this is the first time we've ever had two attackers at the same place, two attacking units in the same world.

DRE: I'm trying to see what's on September.

AUSTIN: So September has demagogue, which is Twelfth. It has transport lockdown.

DRE: And then it just has a regular base of influence.

AUSTIN: It has a base of, yeah, a base of influence. And that is it.

DRE: Ohhh. Does Natalya try to assassinate Twelfth?

AUSTIN: Maybe. Do you have Natalya on— I mean, you could put everything on Twelfth.

SYLVIA: Oh Jesus.

DRE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

SYLVIA: Well, we said we were thinking of doing something with Twelfth.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I also think—

DRE: Because I can see— I feel like that's the more dramatic move. But then also, blowing up the transport lockdown so that more things can come in—

AUSTIN: Oh, right. You don't get to decide. Sorry.

SYLVIA: Oh yeah. Chose one defender.

AUSTIN: [reading] One at a time, each attacking asset is matched against a defending asset chosen by the defender. Each attacking asset can only attack once per turn, though a defending asset can defend as many times as the defender wishes, assuming it can survive multiple conflicts. So I think it opens with trying to defend the transport lockdown. Right? Though actually, wait. Can it not even do— yeah, I guess it could. Yeah. It can totally do that. So grav tank first, maybe?

DRE: Cunning?

AUSTIN: Like, Rigour first?

DRE: Yeah. And so I just roll cunning?

AUSTIN: No. No. Because you're attacking, it's force versus force.

DRE: Oh, okay. Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

AUSTIN: Which is maybe not good for September. It might be actually fine. Let's see—

DRE: Yeah. Because you roll as the Righteous Vanguard, don't you?

AUSTIN: Yeah. So it's 1d10 plus 8 for me. And it's 1d10 plus 6 for you. And also I want to make sure that the Righteous Vanguard doesn't have a thing it wants to do. Psychic academy is very good.

SYLVIA: I want to say that Petrichor had 8 force.

AUSTIN: It didn't. It just has a really big robot.

DRE: It's got the good shit. Yeah.

AUSTIN: If Rigour wins here— I mean, if Petrichor wins on September, I will bump that up again. I just need to make sure— [reading] psychic academy once per turn can also force a rival faction to reroll any 1d10, whether or not this faction is involved in this roll. That's so good! God. Okay. So force versus force. 1d10 plus 8 for Righteous— Sylvia, do you want to roll for Righteous Vanguard?

SYLVIA: Sure. That is 8, right?

AUSTIN: 1d10 plus 8. And then Dre, 1d10 plus 5.

DRE: Uggh.

AUSTIN: Or is it 1d10 plus— er no, not 5, 6. Plus 6.

SYLVIA: 1d10?

AUSTIN: Yeah, 1d10.

DRE: You'd have to roll real bad to lose.

SYLVIA: It's not rolling for some reason. Oh wow!

DRE: Ahh!

SYLVIA: I did roll real bad! But I beat ya by one.

AUSTIN: It's just one off, huh? You beat him by one. All right. There's no counterattack here, though, because it's just this fucking whatever it was, blockade fleet. Is that what was? No, the transport lockdown. God, I don't even know what that looks like. Let's think about what that looks like. Hmm. Let me read the transport lockdown writeup here. Transit web, that's not right.

Transport lockdown. [reading] techniques like pressure on local routing and shipping companies. Yeah, that's not really— that doesn't really do it.

I guess maybe the thing here is, we've talked about Rigour having slammed into September. And I think it's underground. Maybe it's like— so we've talked about Voice being, on September, the thing that makes the Strati function, the thing that Ibex and Maryland built that is their Divine. Maybe it's the thing that is in motion there, and it has basically blocked the underground routes of travel to prevent Rigour from emerging. It's doing everything it can to—

So I guess I'll put this one chip on the table. The way that Rigour can most easily get into Mode City, where the September Institute is, is the Slate Mineral Cooperative, is this giant hole in the ground from when this used to be Slate II when it was held by the Diaspora forever ago and Service operated here. There's ways up from there into Mode City, but I kind of like the notion of Voice and the Divine of September, the Divine that allows the Strati to hack into Divines, collapsing bits of the mine so that Rigour can't push through. Just constantly, in the middle of the storm. It sounds like thunder. Maybe that's actually the shot, is the shot of September in the storm. And you hear thunder. But then you get the cross-shot, or you get the cut. And then it's clear that it's actually detonations in this mine.

So that's that first attack. There's now a second attack, which the gengineered slaves.

SYLVIA: Oh man. I have something I want.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And that one you get to add an extra 1d10 to.

DRE: So am I rolling—?

AUSTIN: 2d10 plus—

SYLVIA: Is it the same stats?

AUSTIN: God, wait. It doesn't actually say if it's force or not. Let's see.

SYLVIA: I'm sure it's like—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Force versus force.

SYLVIA: You want me to roll again for Righteous Vanguard?

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: Okay.

DRE: Six.

SYLVIA: Ooo!

DRE: That's a good roll.

SYLVIA: That's a very good roll. That's a 15.

AUSTIN: It is.

SYLVIA: And that's not enough!

DRE: Not good enough, sucker!

AUSTIN: 23. So I think the Righteous Vanguard probably uses its psychics to make you reroll one of those d10s. So reroll the 9. So right now you still have an 8 plus a 6, which is still—

SYLVIA: Actually, the minimum you can do is tie here.

AUSTIN: And you win. All right. So that's a 1d6 damage. Right? So roll 1d6. That's a 3, that's not terrible. And I guess— yeah, we're continuing to block with that transit web. So do you think Natalya is— er, not transit web. The transport lockdown.

Natalya is counter-hacking into Voice, into the systems that are trying to block Rigour from getting loose, basically.

DRE: Yeah. I almost like— what if she just gets out of Rigour and just starts digging her way up—

AUSTIN: Oh, that's so good!

DRE: — though one of these collapsed tunnels. And basically just finds an old access panel and then starts counter-hacking, basically.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I love that so much. I also like that it's not that she gets out. It spits her out, and she crumples. She gets shot out of its shoulder, the same ports that in the Tower game, Rigour's troops kind of descended on those zip lines from. Now it just kind of spits her out. And she gets up to her feet and then drags herself to— she's totally capable. Right? She's still Natalya, the ex- Rapid Evening agent. And just starts climbing and leaping up the side of these ruined walls of the mine as more explosions are heard in the distance at kind of regular 30-second intervals. And then, yeah, she finds the box and starts counter-hacking.

So it's 3 damage?

1:46:47

DRE: Yeah. So it's down to 7 HP?

AUSTIN: Yup. Sure is. Let's see. HP. 7. Boop.

SYLVIA: Does this end with Rigour being above ground now? Or not yet?

AUSTIN: No. I don't so think. I think that's a— we're still—

SYLVIA: So it's when you defeat the—?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think so. I think what we end on is Natalya has begun doing the work of getting Rigour out of here and up onto September proper. And it's dark.

[MUSIC: "The Long Way Around" starts]

And Rigour— I think she hits a couple of the switches and starts tapping on the thing. And Rigour is clearly impatient. It shines lights on her and steps closer and leans forward to watch everything she does. And I'm going to advance the Rigour clock because now it's working on getting up.

[MUSIC: "The Long Way Around" ends]

AUSTIN: Oh boy.

DRE: Think of how much fun the Chime could have if they could get out.

AUSTIN: Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on crying, I think, in space.

DRE: And clocks!

AUSTIN: Lots of clocks. Clocks and crying. The Clock and Crying Hour.

SYLVIA: A bunch of people going "Ah jeez—"

DRE: Oh boy.

SYLVIA: — and then it ends. That's Friends at the Table, right there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm. Lord. Where can people find you?

SYLVIA: You can find me on Twitter at captaintrash. Yeah. That's pretty much all I got going on other than this podcast right now. I'm hoping to have a few more things in the works, so just check there.

AUSTIN: Rad. Dre, what about you?

DRE: Hey, I've got new things to plug.

AUSTIN: You do!

DRE: You can find me on Twitter at swandre300. I have started doing some streams with some folks over at Stream Esteem, which is streamesteem.com for our live Hitbox page. And you can also do streamesteem.com/archives for our archive. That takes you to our Youtube page. As part of that - it's not out yet because we're still waiting on some final things to come together - we're also going to do an actual play podcast. I'll be GMing. We're going to be playing Numenera, which is by Monte Cook Games. Basically, this campaign is my kind of love letter to Phantasy Star IV and Destiny. So yeah, follow me on Twitter, and follow us on Stream Esteem so you'll know when we post our first episode.

AUSTIN: Rad. Awesome. Thanks so much everybody. Have a good week. Next week could be weird because I'm super busy. But I'll try to get something in the feed at the very least if we don't have time for a whole game.

SYLVIA: It'll be me singing a song.

AUSTIN: That'll be it. We'll get Sylvia to sing.

SYLVIA: Sing a little ditty for ya.

DRE: Can you just post your Paxmania promo?

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's post that. That'll be great.

SYLVIA: Oh, finally, the World Wide Wrestling RPG episode! [AUSTIN and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: God. Okay. Have a good week everybody!

SYLVIA: Bye!

DRE: Bye!