

The Art of the Deal (S1, E31)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So it's actually kind of cool that we're at a place where we can say this to the audience, but, um... So for those of you who get to listen to this on Wednesdays right away, when you post online, beware of spoilers. I actually had someone message me the other day that was like, "Oh man, I hadn't got to listen to the episode yet. And I had something spoiled for me." I love the fact that so many of you listen right away on Wednesday, and talk to us about it. But if you're on Twitter or Facebook, do be careful for spoilers. So I guess maybe mark them as spoiler? Or, I don't know. How do you deal with spoilers?

Teej: You put the spoiler, and then you put a bunch of spaces afterwards. And then all of that that is written down afterwards is underneath the initial...

Rev: Oh. OK.

Jake: Accurate. It's past, like, the 'Read More' line.

Rev: I see.

Jake: Versus "Spoiler!"

Rev: How many enters do you have to do?

Jake: That varies. I think it depends on the platform.

Rev: OK. And in addition to that, actually, it was brought up the other day, I think to Tass. Hopefully if you have listened to the show at this point, you have heard the live shows. If you haven't, and this is completely my fault, because I think early on I was afraid that we would do a live show and things would just go to hell and everybody would die. That we would have a party wipe. And so initially I said, "Oh, yeah, the live shows are not canon." Clearly, they absolutely are at this point. Once we get into the second season, I will probably go back and re-number everything, so that you can see where the live shows fall in. But if for some reason you haven't listen to the live shows at this point, you do want to go back. Because there are characters who are now becoming relevant who either have a lot of their backstory, or were even introduced in the live show. So, I have gone back and changed the episode text on that. But I think in one of the episodes, we

even say it right at the beginning. Like, "Hey, this isn't canon!" Don't listen to Rev five months ago. He's a liar.

Jake: That guy's an asshole.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Listen to Rev now.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: So I think it's time to do the drawing for the fan art contest.

Tass: Oh, yeah!

Rev: So again, thank you to everybody who submitted. We got some really wonderful art, including some stuff just last minute. If you submitted something, do make sure to send us your address, so that we can send you something even if you aren't the winner of the hoodie. Because we want to make sure that we send something to everybody, just to show our appreciation for the time that you took to do this.

Teej: We love you guys.

Tass: We do.

Teej: Thank you so much.

Rev: All right. So, I'm going to draw this one.

Jake: *drum roll sounds*

Rev: Josephine Vano.

Jake: That's the doll.

Rev: That is the --

Jake: Calling her 'The Doll Lady' sounds creepy, but that's the Doll Lady, right?

Rev: Yeah. She had painted a doll to look like the spider queen.

Jake: And it's very good, and very unsettling.

Rev: Yes!

Jake: As I think the spider queen doll should be.

Teej: I thought the doll was hauntingly beautiful.

Jake: Thought it was simple, yet elegant.

Rev: The new Honda Accord, sponsored by The Critshow.

Teej: Yet elegant...

Jake: Sponsored by the spider doll. Just, like, crawls over the hood. *skitter noises*
Thumbs up.

Rev: So as part of our our six months... Today that you're hearing this, we have been out for six months. So we asked for suggestions on what we should do for our intro for the six month episode. And people started submitting questions. So I've got six questions here that we're gonna kind of go around the table and answer.

Jake: Nice.

Rev: So these are things that listeners wanted to know about. All right. So question number one: "Reveal your favorite moment from the first six months of podcasting." Could be story-related or recording/production-related.

Teej: My favorite moment making this show was the time that Rev took me aside, and he spanked me. Verbally, of course. Like, I... I wasn't too sure about the show, because I had never done it. It was something new to me. And if anybody who knows me knows that I start something and I usually don't finish it because I'm terrible. Sorry, ex-girlfriends.

Jake: *laughs* Oh my God....

Teej: Um. But, Rev took me aside...

Rev: And I guess, fore-warning future girlfriends?

Teej: So Rev took me aside and he's just like, "Hey. Look, dude. Shit, or get off the pot." That that was the gist of the conversation. It was like one of these moments where I realized how impassioned that Rev was. And like, it was very endearing that he would take me aside like that. Very professional, but also very like, you know, he's a good friend of mine, and we've known each other since college, and I have a great deal of respect for him. And so that was the moment I decided, yeah, I'm going to do the show and I'm actually going to enjoy it. And so, yeah.

Jake: I mean, I guess maybe this isn't a warning to future girlfriends, as much as it is like a, "But I'm doing it now."

Rev: Oh, yeah. That's fair.

Jake: "Now I'm doing a thing to completion. So, ladies..."

Teej: Ladies...

Jake: "I'll do the thing to completion."

Tass: Can we say "completion" like three more times?

Jake: Yes. Let's go around. Let's harmonize it. *sings* Completion...

Tass: *sings* Completion...

Teej: *sings* Completion...

Rev: *sings* This is why we're 'explicit' on iTunes...

All: *laugh*

Tass: Oh God. Um, I sort of have two. I'm just gonna go ahead and do that. I'm gonna be that guy.

Rev: That's fair.

Teej: We only have one.

Tass: No!

Teej: I did one. You do one.

Tass: The first one, just because it's so simple. Because it was a moment that legitimately took everybody here off guard, to the point that we were in tears. And it's the simple, simple moment of Jake pushing T.J. off that cliff.

All: *laugh*

Tass: Just the genuine surprise and joy we all felt in that instant is my favorite thing. But the thing that has affected me the most is something that you guys haven't heard yet. Up until this point, as much of this nerdy stuff as I do and love to do, I've never game mastered before. So sitting down and getting to present Hero Salad to these guys, who I respect so much, was so terrifying to me, that it opened up this whole new thing inside of me about storytelling. And I'm still riding that high. Like, I just... It was such a blast, and it gave me a much broader sense of, you know, what these guys really do when they're creating these stories. Because I have -- I have so many I mean, you guys have seen my room. I just have notebooks on notebooks on notebooks of stories and characters and ideas and worlds, and all these things that I build, but I've just never presented them to anyone. So it really meant a lot to me, to be able to share that with you guys. And eventually be able to share it with you guys, the audience. Yeah, that was nice. So.

Jake: I think I also have a couple, because they're both kind of small and short. Because you hear all of our favorite things that happen, like, in the show proper. So I want to do a couple of things that don't happen in the show proper. One of them was, I don't even remember... When did we do just the completely arbitrary game, where you guys were all like, bad guys? That I ran for like an hour or two, and it was just...

Rev: Yeah, we were testing new equipment. We were trying to record multi-tracks. And so that's how we did it.

Teej: He was one of the funnest scenarios, I think, I've ever played.

Jake: It was just dumb. And like we -- I mean, for as much as we goof around -- we take it seriously, and we produce a coherent story, here. And I'm very proud of that. And it was just a nice change of pace for it to be nonsense.

Rev: It was!

Jake: For like, a couple hours. Like Rev's character was a Scotsman with a chainsaw for a weapon. And it was just completely wild. And I just couldn't contain it. Like, I spent like 10 or 15 minutes trying to contain it. And then I don't remember what the moment was. I just went "Fine. Never mind. This is how we're doing this." And it just went completely wild. So that was awesome. And I'd imagine will never, ever be heard. That's just for us.

And then another one was in one of the stream games. I have been playing this weird, like, irreverent ninja character, who just isn't super invested in what's going on. Like, doesn't care about the consequences very much. So at some point we had to, like, sneak in and kill somebody who was posing as the sheriff. And I went around to the back door, and there was a key padlock. And I used magic to see if I could go back and see somebody enter the code. And I didn't roll it well enough. So it was short duration. So he gave me like the first three numbers and then I was like, "All right. Do you know the fourth number? Because I'm just going to guess." And he was just like, "OK." And he wrote it down on a piece of paper. And I got to just... I guessed one, he was like, "Nope." And I guess another one, and he's like, "Yeah, that's it. All right. You get in. Like, just... Just that. Oh, OK. You want to do this? That's fair, I guess. It would exist in the world. So let's do this."

Teej: "Is it one?" Nope. "Is it two?" Nope.

Tass: I even gave him, I said, "I'll give, you three guesses on this, and that's all you get."

Jake: You didn't tell me beforehand! You were like, "OK, you can guess." And I was like "Do you know it?"

Tass: Oh, that's right!

Jake: And you wrote it down. You went, "All right, go for it." I said, like, "Nine." And you were like, "Nope." And I was like, "Three." And you're like, "Yep!" And you held up the piece of paper and then you went, "I was only going to give you three before things went real bad. So I was like, oh, I'm glad I got it..."

Rev: I think my favorite moment in the story -- and this is just us at the table -- was the reveal that Ori was feeding the vampire. Was feeding Rachel.

Jake: Oh, my God.

Rev: The shock in the room. And I remember very clearly, because I thought, "Oh man, I'm really trying to hide Ori's involvement. And this is where she would go." And Jake

went to check on her. And so I was like, "Oh, this reveal's coming way earlier than I want." And so when I said it, I remember everybody just leaning back in their chairs, and me thrusting my arms up in victory because I was just like, "Nobody saw it coming! Yes!" That's always my goal, is for people not to see things coming.

I think that live stream, my favorite moment for me was when we were riding up the cable on a motorcycle with a sidecar on each side, and we knew that we had to hit this part of the bridge. And Jessie, who was playing The Wronged, had decided, like, "This is my end. This is how I'm going to go out." Because she had rolled a mixed success. And so she was going to take, just, a ton of damage when she hit this. And I was sitting behind her and one of my character's moves "Someone's taking damage? You can instantly switch places with them." And so at the last second, right before we hit the wall, I grabbed her and swung around and put her behind me, so that my character took just the full impact of that hit. And like, watching the video back, seeing people go, "Oh..." when that moment happened, yeah.

And then production-wise, the moment that I will never forget: the day podcast launched. I was driving to Terre Haute. And seeing the sun shining out my window, driving to Terre Haute, at like, you know, 8:00 in the morning. And seeing the episode title, and the name of the podcast on my radio was such a surreal thing. To like, see it where I see singer's names and album covers, and stuff like that. And to see, you know, The Critshow 01: The Halifax, was a moment that I'll always remember, so. So question number two. It seems like this might be pointed at me.

"Have any of you ripped off a piece of popular media while DMing that you thought none of your players would know, only to be called out about it?"

Tass: I mean, I've certainly ripped stuff off, but I haven't tried to hide it. We use this program called Paragon Chat, which is like the shell of the old game City of Heroes. And so people get on there. They essentially use it as a glorified chat program. But, you know, a lot of role players use it, too. So they can run around as their actual avatars, or their superheroes. So I had this story arc where I just full-on ripped off Jim Butcher's Dresden Files, in that three of the characters got swords made from the nails used in the crucifixion. So they're the Knights of the Sword in there, that... Yeah. Or, the Knights of the Cross, rather. And 100 percent of the time going "Read these books. They're so good. They're so good." So, you know, halfway. Kind of.

Rev: Yeah. I'm kind of with you on there. I don't... I've never put anything into a story that I tried to hide that I had stolen. You know, especially the podcast. Monster of the Week is an homage. You know, it is... It is a tongue in cheek title, because it is intentionally

spoofing Buffy and Supernatural, and all these things. So we've definitely borrowed from things, but always with a wink.

Teej: Well, I would say that I don't hide the fact that I reference all sorts of stuff, because that's just the way my brain works from doing improv and everything. Like, word association is my bread and butter. So as soon as I hear something, I try and jump on it with something that I have heard throughout the years, or whatever.

Jake: Yeah. I mean, I definitely take things. And I don't admit it from the beginning, but I admit at the end. Like I ran a mystery game for you guys for a while, and I am not clever enough to always come up with a mystery. So, like, I just took Peril at End House by Agatha Christie, and I turned it into a game because I knew neither of you had read that book.

Rev: I remember you asking me, "Hey, what Agatha Christie books do you know?"

Jake: Yeah! Yeah. And like -- and like at the end of it I was like, yeah, this was Peril at End House. But like, I didn't want to tell you through the game, just in case you stumbled upon something that said Peril at End House and you remembered it now, because that was in your brain, like...

Tass: Yeah.

Jake: So yeah, I just -- I just didn't. I take that plot. I've done... Actually, for that dumb, dumb game that I liked a lot, I was like, "OK, I'm using an episode of Psych for this." Like, I'm using the plot from an episode of Psych.

Teej: Which I've never actually ever seen an episode of Psych. Been told many times that I should watch it. I'm glad I didn't.

Jake: It is -- it's tremendous, though. You should watch it. It's one of my favorite shows.

Teej: That's what I hear.

Rev: Number three. "What is one thing your character can do that you wish you could do?"

Tass: Deal with spiders at all. I had to make a fundamental choice when the Elnore arc started, and you said spider-people started spilling in, where I had to go, "I'm either gonna be true to life, and I am literally useless for the entire story arc."

Rev: "I'm just going to lay down."

Tass: Yep. Or, "I'm scared of them, but I'm ready to shoot them." So, you saw the best version of Tass in that arc, because there ain't a chance in hell...

Jake: I wish that I could teleport anywhere that I've been before.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Like, boy, how handy that would be. And I tend to be late for things, anyway. So just to be, like, sitting on the couch and look at the clock and be like, "Oh no, I've got to be there in 15 minutes and it's a 20 minute drive," I'll just "OK, bye. I'm here now."

Teej: Well, as much as I'd like to say to perform an Ooops! move, like anytime, ever. That's basically my life. But, I would say build, like, anything out of junk, or whatever like that. Because that's such a cool power to, like, just combine things together, and make anything that could solve problems. That would be so sweet. Yeah.

Rev: I think just be able to perform magic. Like, the thought of having a circle in my house somewhere that I could go to and be like, "I'm going to summon someone, or see a moment in the past, or..." Just that ability to kind of explore other places, without necessarily exposing the people around you to that danger would be really interesting.

"Favorite moment from a different RPG that you've played?" I have two. One is a out-of-character moment. One is in-character. And they both actually come from Jake's game. So we ran a game before we started this podcast. It's actually part of what inspired us to do this. And it was about a pair of private eyes, Tass and I, and Jake would run these mysteries for us. You know, I don't think you can really escape the trope of Holmes and Watson. And so I had made an investigator who was very, very intelligent and focused. And I took a bunch of feats that made it so that my intimidation was all intelligence-based. Like, anything I could get was intelligence-based. And then Tass was kind of the muscle. And he was also just the "See things as they are" as opposed to breaking it down in a kind of a mental plane of, "Oh, this caused this, and this caused this."

But we had taken a long break from it and we had stopped in the middle of the story. And the story had stopped with us fighting a guy in the second floor of a house. And Tass and this guy were grappling, and he was starting to force Tass out the window. And we came back to the game and he was like "Rev, it's your turn. What do you want to do?" And my character's name was Rainier Faraday.

And I went. "Um, so he's, like, leaning kind of over the window?"

Jake was like, "Yes."

"OK. I'm going to drop kick him out the window."

And Jake just kind of looked at me. He goes, "OK, roll it." And I rolled it. And then after I rolled it and he's like, "Yeah, the guy tumbles out the window and hits the ground."

And I just kind of pause, and I go "I don't remember how to play this character." Because that was like the most un-Rainier like thing.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: Just... Just drop kick this guy out the window. "I don't remember how to play this character."

And then my favorite moment in-character, again was from that same story. But, there was this guy. He essentially was kind of like a Bruce Wayne, that he -- his parents had been killed, and he was going after the people that were involved in that. And from the first moment that we met him, my character was very much like, "This isn't OK. It doesn't matter why you kill someone, it's not OK. It doesn't matter if they've killed somebody. You know, you -- you're no better than they are." And so it was always this thing of we have to catch this guy and he's gonna pay.

So he gets arrested, and we find out we actually have to break him out to get help getting into a place. And so we break him out and he helps us get to kind of the ultimate bad guy of the story. And this lady is untouchable. Politically, socially. There's no way she's gonna pay for these crimes. And this character that we had broken out, essentially had her, you know, a knife to her neck and was like, "You know, come on, stop me." And my character kind of sat there for a minute, and just turned around and walked out. And he's like, "What? What will happen to, you know, 'It has to be justice!' And, you know, 'No one dies!' And blah blah blah."

My character stopped and said, "You've opened my eyes. I've come to realize that some people, the law can't reach. And if she does not see justice by your hands, she never will." And he just walked out. Because he just was like, "You have changed the logic with which I see the world," because he was entirely logic-based. Very little emotion. And this

guy showing him how part of the world actually works changed him. And I thought that was a really enjoyable moment for me.

Tass: Yeah, that was a powerful moment. Um, when I play any of these games, especially mysteries, I just am in the weeds a lot. Because I'm just not very smart. So I don't have a lot of great ideas to how to fix things. But it was actually that same game, where we were the duo, where I had one moment that I was truly proud of. Because it was that moment where we had to break that guy, The Hangman, out of jail again. And we came up with this whole thing about how we're gonna sneak me in. And one of us would be invisible and opening the door, and getting in. And then, you know, make this diversion to get out, and on and on and on. And it was go time. Like, potions had been taken. We have, like, only a few minutes to pull this off. And I had a thought too late to really do anything about it, where I went, "Oh, my God, this fixes so many things, but there's no time."

So I asked Jake if I could pickpocket Rainier, my own buddy. He's like, "Yeah, I guess." And so it was a kind of a... Well, the Pathfinder equivalent of a mixed success is like "You can do it, but you think he's going to feel it."

I'm like, "That's fine. He's just gonna have to feel an invisible hand in his pocket for a second." And so we get in and I sneak my invisible self into this room with the cell with the guy that we're supposed to break out. And that's when I, you know, mention to them, make them realize, that what I had pickpocketed was Rainier has a portable hole.

Jake: *laughs*.

Tass: It was just... It's like this, you know, vacuum space, magical thing. And so instead of doing this whole big chase that we were gonna have to do, I just opened this up and say, "Jump in, dude." And folded him up and walked out of the place. Like, thank you. Give me this one moment. Thank you, Christ. So I'm pretty proud of that. I really like that.

Jake: My favorite player moment was in a game that we were all players in, actually, and a friend of ours ran it. It was a Pathfinder game. It was Curse of the Crimson Throne. And, trying not to spoil it in case anybody ever plays that one, but I was playing a halfling gunslinger who's like my favorite character I've ever played, because it was... It was one of those things where he kind of started out as a goof to me. Like, it was just like a tiny man with a gun who thinks he's a cowboy. That's funny to me. And then became a very serious and, like, meaningful character to me. Toward the end of the game, it got harder and harder to get all of us together in the same room to finish this out. And that was OK. We would still play, with less people. So it was three of us that day. It was me, and then

Rev who was playing an oracle -- who was like our healer and our moral compass. And then our friend Lucas, who was playing a sorcerer.

And we had a few things we needed to accomplish. You know, like we had basically a checklist of big things we needed to take care of, before we could kind of move on the final bad guy. And for some ungodly reason, they were kind of letting me call the shots that day. And so I came up with one plan that was really funny to me, and I thought had a pretty good chance of working. Anyway. But mostly I was just like, "This is going to be hilarious. I love it." And it got one of them killed. It got Lucas killed. And that was like a huge character shift for me. But like at that level in the game, you can revive people. And like, we had taken lots of precautions to just be able to do that. So we went back and we brought Lucas's character back from the dead. But that was like, a hard shift for me. Like, I was like, "OK. I just did a thing on a whim, and it got this dude killed. And thankfully, we can undo that. But holy shit."

So then the next plan and we had, like, we had to fight a dragon and its rider. And so we were like, "OK, we're going to an abandoned part of town. We're gonna pick a building. I'm gonna get on the roof with my rifle and like, you know, pick out it as it comes in. And then once it gets there, they'll come out and they'll start blasting it with magic." And it used a move on Kester -- one of those just... A death move. Two saves, they're both easy to make. But if you don't, you just die. And he just died. Again. That was twice in a day that somebody had died on my watch. And I was like, gone. I was just dead inside.

Lucas's character was like, we need to get the hell out of here. And I was like, "This is not going to happen for nothing." I was like, "You take his body back. I'm staying here."

And Lucas, like, was like, "I'm Dimension Door-ing us out of here. But technically, you get a save against this." So I rolled and I made that save. And I just, like, waved goodbye as he tried to take me with him and failed.

And like, I ran to a point where I was at a low level where it had to come down to fight me. And so it landed, and its rider dismounted. So I just stood with my back against the wall, and round after round the dragon attacked me. The rider attacked me. I spit in her face and I shot the dragon. And then the dragon died. And then I just started shooting her. And it was just one for one. I was just getting the shit kicked out of me, but I was determined, whether I died or not, to kill these people, too. And I killed the dragon and subdued the rider. And like that was the best thing I've ever accomplished as a player. That was my like Holy Grail moment, I think. Of just, yeah, super bad ass and all by myself.

Teej: So we were getting -- or I was getting back into playing RPGs. Especially with Rev, and meeting Jake actually, kind of for the first time, playing Earthdawn again. My favorite moment was when we were playing this, and I played a... Sprite?

Tass: Windling.

Rev: A Windling.

Teej: A Windling! That's what they are. So they're like slightly bigger than two feet, and they kind of have wings like, you know, fairies or whatever. And so I was part of this crew, and we had gotten boarded on our little... It's like a cargo boat or whatever, and I had to hide. And so the thing that this boat carried was barrels and barrels of pickles.

Jake: *laughs*

Teej: And I didn't know how to hide the best way. So I was just like, you know what? I'm going to make armor out of pickles. So I started grabbing all the pickles and putting them on my body. And Rev, you're like, "Well, OK. Roll for it." And I rolled. And sure enough, I rolled high enough that it worked. And I was able to trick these people who were trying to come aboard with my pickle armor, by just kind of laying there in the pickle juice. The end.

Jake: God. And then the very next step was all of us trying to convince these guys that we're, like, here to help. Like we're "Oh, we're so skilled. Let us be on your squad." And they're like, prove it. And so I was the swordsman. And I like... I was like, oh I'm gonna, like, grab a pickle, for... Like, just because it's the only thing around. And like, toss it in the air and kind of like carve it up -- like real flashy. And he was like, "Roll..." I don't remember what he had me roll.

Tass: Percentage dice, or something.

Jake: But I realized as I rolled it and he told me I threw the pickle up, that I had grabbed Zippy in the Pickle Armor, and was about to carve him to shreds as he flew through the air. And then like first, like, somehow let me, like, roll to realize what I had just done and not murder him. And I just hurled him into the water, instead. And all the guys who got on the boat were like, "Good one."

Tass: Way to throw some pickles in the ocean.

Jake: Yeah. "Way to throw pickles in the river!" I was like, "Oops. Oh well..."

No, I remember... I think my favorite Game Master moment. Most of my favorite Game Master moments were from that campaign where you guys were the detectives. Just... It was incredibly satisfying. But similarly to Tass's was you were investigating some political subterfuge, like trying to figure out if this one councilwoman was, like, bad. And what she knew. And like you'd found her, and she didn't want to go with you. And I think you knocked her out?

Rev: No, she tried to run away.

Jake: And you threw it under her feet!

Rev: And I threw it under her feet!

Jake: Like Looney Tunes! And she fell into the portable hole, and they scooped up and they took her somewhere else. And then they opened up the portable hole. And they were like, "Sorry, but we had to get you out of there. That was a bad spot to be in. You can come out of the hole now." Like... "We're cool." *laughs* Boy, a portable hole is just a nightmare thing.

Tass: It is.

Rev: All right. So, question number five. "Is making a podcast harder or easier than you thought it would be? Why?"

Teej: Oh, it's super easy. Everything. All I have to do is show up, and there it is. The podcast? Done.

Tass: We just blah, blah, blah for a minute, and then go home. Yeah. I mean, honestly, from just player perspective, here. You know, we do, like... I might be generous saying we do about 10 percent of this. Like, you know, it's certainly a different thing than what I thought. But, it is a blast. But, you know, I can only really speak from the perspective of being here to to talk into this spherical thing, and make sounds happen. And, you know, just taking a few minutes every week to do the descriptions and stuff, I mean, is nothing. So, yeah, it's hard for me to really appreciate that question fully. I think that's a big one for you, bub.

Jake: I mean, yeah. I think it's... It's harder than I expected. And I think not in ways that I expected. So I guess maybe it's as hard as I expected, but not in the ways I expected it to be difficult.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Like I didn't think about scheduling something because "Oh, no, we need to have an episode this Wednesday, and something didn't work and we need to figure out -- we need to carve out a time slot." So, I mean, yeah. Like, I guess kind of scheduling is one of the harder things that I wouldn't have thought about. Or like, mike etiquette is something that I hadn't really considered beforehand. When we play normally, it's just a wild field day. Everybody talks when they want to talk, and there's lots of laughter and cross talk. And that's -- it's fine. We're just doing this for ourselves. But here, like staying on the microphone, and not mucking up the takes and stuff for other people, like that's just a... It's not hard any more.

Rev: But early on.

Jake: Yeah. It took a while to get used to.

Rev: I've been asked this question before, actually. It is difficult, but I've never gotten to a Wednesday, where I've uploaded the episode and thought that it wasn't worth it. Like the weight, the work, the whatever, never outweighs the feeling that I have hearing people respond to an episode, so. I assume as long as that is continually the case, that's a good sign.

And last question. "What is one failed roll you would take back if you could?"

Tass: I personally wouldn't want to change it, but I know in-game Tass would is, of course, Dr. White getting killed. And just that failed attempt at getting the monster's attention got him killed. And, you know, that's, I think, the biggest regret from that whole stretch of mistakes that were made. But, it's made such a good story. So, of course, I wouldn't change that for the world.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I don't imagine there are any failures I, as a player, want to change. Because it's taken us where it's taken us. And I love it.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: So like, the failures are what make it interesting.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: But yeah, I mean, I guess maybe in-game, like, as the character, failing to realize that he was about to detonate, and get everybody out of there. That's probably the biggest one.

Teej: I agree. All of that failing, watching people fail, is only just human nature. You know, watching a train wreck is so much fun.

Rev: There's one that if I could knock the table so your dice would land differently, it would either be the Halifax burning down, Estin's lab getting destroyed. And I say that only because I think that there is a lot of confusion about like, "Oh, what are these rings? What are these circles, what are these candles?" And so much of the information was in those two locations. You guys just never got to discover it. You never got to investigate fully what that part of the story is. And so my fear, I think, as a storyteller is that later when that stuff comes up again, it's gonna be like, "Oh, God. That's real complicated. We had no idea." It's like, yeah. It's cause, you know, your kind of blueprint got lost in those -- in those two failed rolls, so.

But no, absolutely. There's there's not many that I would change, because it's... You know, is what has created the story as it is now.

All right. So thank you again for joining us on this six month anniversary Q&A. This will be the longest intro we've ever had. It's just going to go directly into the end of episode music after we play the intro. So, yeah, this will be a long episode. Thanks again for submitting your questions. And thanks for joining us on The Critshow. It's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: You open the door and you can see the sheet that he is covered in. And there is a tag at the end of the metal tray that says T. Allgood.

Jake: "We're going to get him back, though. I talked to The Defender, and he said that he hasn't passed on."

Teej: "I need to find some equipment, and then get to the gravesite, so we can pick up the trail."

Rev: You notice a dollar bill, sticking out from underneath some of the rubble from the broken tombstone.

Jake: "Well, I think this is the best bet we've got."

Rev: And so he takes the dollar bill, and he puts it into the circle, and he closes his hands. Energy starts to radiate from his fingertips, and he spreads his hands across and smoke fills the circle. And you see the face of Damien O'Doyle, standing inside of the summoning circle.

Teej: *laughs* Son of a bitch!

Jake: "Did you collect his soul?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: I did. I don't have him anymore. I traded it.

Teej: "Where can I find my friend's soul now?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Well, that's information. And you guys already owe me one. So maybe we cash out on that, before we go making a second bargain.

Jake: "How do I fulfill my end of our bargain?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: I need you guys to pull off a little heist.

Jake: Yes. Yes!

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: I gotta ask, have you guys ever done any B&E before? Breaking and entering?

Jake: "...Yes."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Well, this is gonna be a little more tricky than your average B&E, because the thing about Strohm is she, uh... She can see the future.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Jake: "Well, that's pretty much our luck in most endeavors, so..."

Teej: "Yeah. So... How does she do that, exactly?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Well, she's got a magic necklace that lets her see the future.

Jake: "Like... 24 hours at a time?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: OK. Let's parcel this up, I think. One problem at a time, yeah?

Jake: "Sure."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: So like I said before, she deals with artifacts and information, and she trades one for the other -- and vice versa. So, her place is filled with, just, lots of valuable things. But that also means that it's filled with a lot of defenses. So let's go through floor by floor.

SFX: HEIST MUSIC

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: So the third floor, you come up the elevator, but you gotta have a key to get out on her floor. And then once you come out of the elevator, on the right goes into her private living orders -- which is protected by magic. To the left is where she does her business, is where she does her trade -- which is also protected by magic. That one's a little different, though. You can get in. She just has to let you out. So, if you're going to try to take out those runes, do that room last. So you can get out of it.

There's a set of stairs behind the elevator that go down. So onto the second floor, it's mostly just a big open room. But if you see, all the windows are protected by magic. So that can't just be shattered. And then there's a room marked with red right outside of the stairs. That's where she keeps her Cerberus.

Jake: *laughs*

Teej: "Did you say a Cerberus?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: I did.

Jake: I'm making notes. And I add, like, "lots of steaks?" Question mark?

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: To get down the stairs on the second floor, that door is blocked by some technology. It's a keypad. There's a code somewhere that she types in to get down. And then at the bottom of those stairs, that lets you onto the first floor, there's a magic barrier which checks for her DNA. On the first floor, you'll see the red lines that

make a perimeter. That's a suit of armor that she has, that patrols the room night and day. Just back and forth. And then inside this room, there's a lot of stuff. But what we need is inside of the safe, inside of that room. Luckily, that one is just the same keypad number. What I need is in there, highlighted in pink. It's a necklace. Five gems on it. The one in the center is twice as big as the other four. And it's red.

SFX: HEIST MUSIC ENDS

Jake: "What's it do?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: It's a prison. But you don't have to worry about it, it's...

Rev: And he sighs.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: It's already got an occupant.

Teej: "Who?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: My mother.

Teej: "Mrs. O'Doyle?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: If you understand how last names work, yeah.

Jake: *laughs*

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: And then there's another door, protected by magic. I'm not quite sure what that one is. That's where she keeps her really rare stuff. But that's not what I need, so...

Jake: "Is there a skylight?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: No.

Jake: "OK. But there are windows on that top floor? Like, we could get through those windows?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah.

Jake: "Does she ever leave?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Oh, yeah.

Jake: "Do you know what kind of things she leaves for?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: She leaves to meet people about business deals. She goes to social events. She's very much active in the town and the society. In both the richer part of the society, and the occult part of the society.

Jake: "Does she ever let people in that she's not negotiating a trade with?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Oh, yeah. She has, uh... When she has these galas. They are people that she's not necessarily trading with.

Jake: "All right. Well, so it seems like we have a couple ways to get into that top floor. We'd need a key card if we want to take the elevator -- or a way for you to trick it, T.J. Either you build a fake key card thing, or somehow we've got to swipe hers somewhere along the way. Her being able to see the future, that seems really difficult."

Teej: "How far into the future can she see?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: 24 hours.

Teej: "Oh. OK. There's got to be a way to erase her memory of the next 24 hours."

Jake: "Proactively? Like, before the 24 hours happen?"

Teej: "Well, heck, during the 24 hours, it doesn't matter. I could probably hypnotize her into forgetting all of the things she's seen in her necklace throughout the day, I mean..."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Would you hypnotize her from her seeing that you've hypnotized her? How you making that first step?

All: *laugh*

Teej: "Shut up, all right? Shut up."

Jake: "Let's come up with a plan as if it weren't against someone who could see the future. And then let's figure some shit out about how exactly she sees the future, and revisit the plan."

Teej: "OK."

Jake: "I think we could go through the elevator. We could break through a window. Or, if she has gatherings and there's one coming up, we might just be able to sneak in through that."

Teej: "Right."

Jake: "I don't love that one, because then there's just a whole lot of people that could see us doing what we're going to do, that we have to contend with. You know, the good news is the Cerberus probably wouldn't be loose, and that would eliminate that obstacle, and--"

Teej: "Not necessarily. I mean..."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: It roams the party. It's a centerpiece.

Jake: "Oh, so it's not just a beast. Like, it's cool with other people if it knows to be cool with other people?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: It seems that way.

Jake: "Huh. OK. So we might not need to, like, fight this thing. We might be able to just woo this dog, somehow. If it can be wooed, and can be happy with people. We just need to figure out how to be the people it's happy with. That's interesting. Let's say that we take the elevator, though. Let's say that you make a gizmo that can function as the key card that gets up to her floor, right? So we get up there, there are the four runes that we need to scratch out. Three of them are behind two magic doors. So, we have to get through the magic door into her living quarters. Do you know how to get through a magic door?"

Teej: "Not really, but I could probably get through a wall."

Jake: "The magic doors probably cover the walls. We probably couldn't just bust through them."

Rev: Yeah. Or else I don't think anybody would use magic words on doors probably.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: If you could just kick the wall in. Think of it like having a safe door. Like, the safe door is no good if it's on drywall.

Jake: Yeah.

Teej: "One of the things I've noticed about this particular blueprint, is that those runes are inside of rooms that have fixtures -- like toilets and sinks. And I'm wondering if there's a way in through there."

Jake: "Oh, man. We go in through the plumbing?"

Teej: "Yeah."

Jake: "We get real tiny, and we go on a borrower's quest, through the plumbing and out of the toilet."

Teej: "Mmhmm. I mean, we shrunk down a twenty five foot thing, no problem."

Jake: "That's a good, good point."

Teej: "And heck, even an air vent. Because we can go in from the top, because a lot of air vents are vented out through the roof."

Jake: "I need to find a taller building near this one that I can see the roof from."

Teej: "Or we could just rent a helicopter."

Jake: "I'm going to Google helicopter tours."

Teej: "Do we have any friends in news agencies?"

Jake: "Why?"

Teej: "Because news helicopters are all up in that city. Just get a really good pilot -- a daring pilot -- to fly us in, and get in and get out. Ocean's Eleven made it look hard. It's not hard."

Jake: "Heists are easy, especially against magi."

Teej: "Easy peasy. I don't know why it's so hard."

Jake: "We just have to research the time-seeing necklace. We can't accommodate for all of these possibilities if we don't know what she's going to see, and how."

Teej: "So Damien, what do you know about the necklace?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: I got the name. It's called The Necklace of the North Wind.

Jake: "Ok. And I mean, while we're at it, let's check out the Cerberus. See how one of those things works, how it's been dealt with. What else is in here that we might have to deal with..."

Teej: "That suit of armor that walks around."

Jake: "OK. Figure out how that thing works. Rev, do you know anything about any of those? You're, uh... You're scholarly. You're well-read."

Rev: REV: What were they, again? I kind of drifted off during that... You guys have been planning this for a long time.

Teej: "Sorry."

Rev: You see he's got sudoku up on his phone.

Jake: "The Necklace of the Four Winds, the suit of armor that is animated, and a dog -- the three headed dog."

Rev: REV: I do actually know about the Cerberus.

Jake: "Oh, OK. Well, that'll save us a step. Break him down for me."

Rev: REV: His name is Herkless.

Jake: "Oh. Is he like a unique? Is there only one three-headed dog?"

Rev: REV: No, I just... I traded it to her.

Teej: "What?"

Jake: "What?!"

Rev: That was the lore roll that I got, that I had a hand in dealing with it before.

Teej: "Oh, nice."

Rev: REV: Yeah. She provided me the materials to make my ring in the middle of the room there. You know, it's really hard to get all of those components. And I had heard about her, and I had found this on one of my outings, and wasn't sure what to do with it. And she was willing to take it off of my hands.

Jake: "What do we need to know about him?"

Rev: REV: It's mean. But I know that it's weak to scent. Like, if you could make yourself smell like someone that it's supposed to be okay with, you might be able to fool it. And it's nocturnal.

Jake: "OK. Well, that's one piece of research I guess we don't have to do at the moment."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Well it seems like you guys got this pretty well in hand. I got a couple of things I got to do. So... Hasta luego.

Jake: "OK. Yeah. I mean, we're gonna buckle in for some research, so I guess we'll just call you when we need your help again. Do I call you?"

Rev: He pulls his wallet out, and takes out a card with a phone number on it and hands it to you.

Jake: "That's remarkably professional."

Rev: And as he has his wallet out, he actually goes over to the summoning circle and picks up the dollar bill and puts it back in his wallet, and puts it in his pocket.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah. Make sure you call me if things go weird. Make sure you call me as soon as you get it.

Jake: "OK."

Rev: And he walks out the door, oddly enough. Which I don't think you've ever seen.

Jake: *laughs*

Rev: Look out the window and you see he snaps his finger, and the car appears. And he climbs in and drives away. Which one are you doing first, T.J.?

Teej: I'm gonna look up the Necklace of the North Wind first.

Rev: OK. Roll 'Investigate a Mystery.'

Teej: Eleven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 2.

Teej: 'What can it do?'

Rev: So the Necklace of the North Wind allows the wearer to activate it once a day. And it gives them a vision of their next 24 hours. And what they see is essentially like they were looking through their own eyes. So they see their field of vision.

Teej: OK. Well, that helps out a lot. I guess 'What is being concealed here?' About the Necklace of the North Wind.

Rev: So the necklace gives you a vision of the day. But if, say, she sees something bad happens that day, and acts to avoid it or change it, the rest of that vision is essentially void, because the world is now different. Different choices were made -- butterfly effect kind of thing. So if you can get her to act differently than she acted in her vision, somehow surprise her with something, or do something that she'd actively take steps to avoid, she won't have the benefit of an accurate future sight after that for the rest of the day.

Teej: OK. Well then I guess I will go ahead and start my research on the golem knight, now that I know all this crazy stuff about the Necklace of the North Wind.

Rev: All right.

Teej: Eight.

Rev: You get a hold 1.

Teej: 'What sort of creature is it?'

Rev: It is not a golem. You do know that for a fact. It is actually a suit of magical armor. It is an artifact that she has found. And while you cannot see anything inside of it, it's animated. And you don't think the pieces need to be connected to still be animated.

Teej: Oh, I see.

Jake: "OK. So we know that with the knight, we don't dismantle it. We either avoid it outright, or we stop it, somehow. We, like, trap it or bind it up or something."

Teej: "Sure."

Jake: "And the necklace... So we just need to stay out of her sight."

Teej: "Mmhmm."

Jake: "We need to pull the heist off perfectly. And if we didn't, then we're gonna know it." *laughs* "If we didn't, then she will have taken precautions to stop us from doing what we planned to do. So kind of like the first -- the first thing we get to that doesn't go how we want it to go, is when we realize that we failed this heist and she knows we're coming."

Teej: "Right."

Jake: "Well, then we need to not fail the heist, I guess."

Teej: "Mmhmm."

Jake: *laughs* "OK."

Teej: "Yup."

Jake: "I don't know that we can best her, when she has that ability. So first and foremost, I would rather just go try to talk to her, and see if there is a simpler way we can get this without having to rob her, or fight her, or try to kill her, or swindle her. So I think we make a trip to Chicago. Because I'd also rather go talk to her face to face, rather than be a stranger on the phone. I think that typically has better results."

Rev: So what's your plan? To drive to her building and knock on her door? Or...

Jake: Yes. I mean, she sees this day happen, so she sees us come and try to talk to her. And she has made the decision now on whether that's going to happen or not, so.

Rev: All right. So you head to Chicago. How you gonna get there?

Jake: Drive? It's only a few hours.

Rev: Gonna take Eddie and Jeff's van?

Jake: Oh. No.

Teej: I forget we had it.

Jake: Yeah, me too. No, I'll swap them back. I'll give them a call, and see if we can arrange a trade-off at IPT.

Rev: Yeah. Yeah, they answer and say it's no problem. They'll meet you there, and swap everything out. You get your car back, everything seems fine. There's just a little bit of plunger juice in what used to be Tass's old shotgun holster.

Jake: No! Plunger juice?!

Rev: *laughs* Yeah. So you guys arrive outside of the building that she lives on the top three floors of, and you park and you go inside, and there's a doorman.

Jake: "Hi. We are here to see Miss Strohm."

Rev: DOORMAN: Oh, is she expecting you?

Jake: "She should be."

Rev: DOORMAN: All right. Let me check.

Rev: And he buzzes the door, and there's a return buzz.

Jake: OK. We'll head in, and head up.

Rev: The elevator opens on the 33rd floor of this building, which is the top floor. And she's standing in the foyer when the door opens.

Jake: "Hi, Miss Strohm. How are you?"

Rev: STROHM: Good. How are you?

Jake: "I'm good. It's my understanding that you kind of just know what's about to happen, right?"

Rev: STROHM: To an extent, yes.

Jake: "OK."

Teej: "Well if that's the case, do you happen to know who we are?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes. But I find it rude to not let people introduce themselves.

Jake: "Yeah."

Teej: "Fair enough. I'm Teej, and this is Jake."

Rev: STROHM: Yes, I've seen you on television.

Jake: "Oh, yeah? What'd you think? Do I cut a good silhouette?"

Rev: STROHM: You do.

Jake: "Thank you."

Rev: STROHM: And I can tell by your aura that it's not bullshit.

Jake: "Oh, neat. Thank you. I am glad when people don't think that I'm a fraud."

Teej: *laughs*

Jake: "So yeah. Just for the sake of it, I know you know what's about to happen, but it'll make me feel better if we can just talk like normal. One of our friends died. One of the members of my team died. He's incredibly gifted. There are bad things happening in the world. You're part of this world. You know. There are greater powers, and some of them are bad. And we were working against one of them in particular. From my understanding and again, you know, I talk to a god -- a really, really important one -- that very bad things are going to happen to all of existence if we don't pull it off. But we can't pull it off without

this friend. In order to get him back, we have to cut a deal with the person who took his soul. And the thing that he wants is that necklace that you have that has somebody trapped in it, and the big red gem in the middle, I guess."

Rev: And she smiles when you say that, like something's dawning on her.

Jake: "I don't want to try to fight you. I'm tired of having enemies. You're just a person who deals in things, and you are 100 percent fine by my book. You're incredibly polite. I like you. Is there any way we can get that necklace? What do we need to do for you? What do we need to buy off of you? Or pay you? I don't care. You know, I'm on your side, and I want to be on your side. I just need that thing."

Rev: STROHM: I assume that you know that what I trade in is items and information. And, yes, I do have something that Damien wants. And I knew that he would not ask me for it directly, because I know how badly he wants it. But he did not know where it was until recently. That was a closely guarded secret. And you know how he found out its location?

Jake: "I dont."

Rev: STROHM: He traded me your friend's soul for that information.

Jake: I am just seeing red. Like, I am just furious.

Rev: STROHM: So yes, I will absolutely make a barter with you. I can give you back the soul of your friend, if you help me ensnare Damien O'Doyle.

Jake: "Uh..."

Rev: STROHM: I mean, to be fair, your friend's soul wasn't worth that price. He actually gave me three.

Jake: "You know who the other two are?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes.

Jake: "Do they matter to me?"

Rev: STROHM: Most likely.

Jake: "Will you tell me whose they are?"

Rev: STROHM: I think you know what my currency is. If you're giving away knowledge for free, you're a fool.

Jake: "How do you want us to ensnare Damien?"

Rev: STROHM: I've a number of different items that could capture him inside. Set up a ring, perhaps. Or stab him with a dagger that I have that will draw the energy of his being into the gem at the end. You could trick him into drinking something. It really depends on what you think you could do.

Teej: "Why do you want his soul?"

Rev: STROHM: Well, Damien has been a thorn in my side for a long time, and he's most persistent about freeing his mother from that gem. And your friend's soul means nothing to me. It was part of the package, and I'm willing to trade that to be rid of the annoyance of Damien O'Doyle.

Jake: "Can we have a sidebar?"

Rev: STROHM: Sure.

Jake: "Thank you." I pull T.J. aside.

Teej: Yeah.

Jake: "Look, I don't especially like Damien, all things considered. He's a demon. He's not a good person. He's helped us some, but not -- not for nothing. Not just to be good. So to that end, you know, I... I don't think the world would miss him. I'd feel a little bit bad about crossing him, because he's done us a favor and we haven't done him one. And we might have this lady as an ally now, which would be nice. On the other hand, either way, we're making an enemy out of this. Now, you know, my whole goal was just to not make a new enemy out of this. And either way, we're going to. So..."

Teej: "Well, I hate to say the old argument of the devil you know is better than the devil you don't, but..."

Jake: "But the devil we know is the devil."

Teej: "But the devil we know is a demon, so... I think I might have an idea, maybe?"

Jake: "Do you want to run it by me?"

Teej: "Maybe if we can get her to give us the necklace, so we can get close enough to Damien to stab him."

Jake: "OK. Yeah. I mean, that's possible. I don't think she'd give us the necklace for that, though. Because then we could just give it to Damien, and..."

Rev: STROHM: Yes, but then your friend's soul wouldn't be free.

Rev: She yells from the corner.

Teej: "Yeah. I was going to say that."

Rev: STROHM: You came back and asked me that, earlier. The wager for my side, you still don't get what you want. It'd be foolish to help him behind my back. In fact, I'd probably crush the gem that your friend's soul is in, just out of spite.

Jake: I give a thumbs up down the hall. And re-huddle.

Teej: "OK. So apparently she knows what we're talking about."

Jake: "Well, I mean, at least anything we clarified with her. Yeah. I don't know. Somehow, she seems more dangerous."

Teej: "All magic users seem more dangerous, because we just don't understand their motives and everything. She might be pretty cool."

Jake: "Ooh, man. I know he's a demon. It's hard for me to betray this dude. Like, oh, I think... I think I'm gonna, though."

Teej: "It's definitely not for me."

Jake: "OK."

Teej: "I know where my priorities lie."

Jake: "OK. All right." Go back over to her. "OK. Let's brainstorm how we're gonna trick Damien, and decide what we need to do it. We're not good liars. We're not going to be able to lie to Damien to get him to do anything, or get him close enough that we can do anything. We're not going to get him to drink something, like she suggested, because we just won't be able to convince him to do shit."

Teej: "Except for a Slurpee, maybe. Put it in an Icee, or whatever."

Jake: "Oh, shit. OK. That's not bad. If... If we... If we presented, like, as a tongue in cheek to victory, and a toast of Icees for all of us, we might get him to drink something. That's the only thing I could think that he'd have any reason to not be like. 'Why are they trying to get me to drink this?' That's the one thing that he'd be like, 'Oh, haha. I'm familiar with this. Yeah, I'll play along with this one.' Any weapon is an option? I don't know that I can best Damien, but the thing I do the best is fight. So, that's something. I could stab him with something. I could ensnare him with something. If we can have the necklace that he wants and just give it to him, that'll get us close enough to him to stick him with something? Or throw a trap over him?"

Teej: "I'm thinking we should just play to our strengths, and just stab the fuck out of him."

Jake: "Wow. This is very Julius Caesar, huh? OK. That. If there's a knife that can trap his essence, or something. If we can borrow the necklace he wants, just go 'Here it is.' Hand it to him, stab, get him, take the necklace back, come back to you, collect our friend."

Rev: She pulls them both out of her pocket.

Jake: "You are just wild."

Teej: The necklace and the knife? Oh, God.

Jake: "I'm so glad I didn't... I'm so glad I decided to come speak to you, instead. OK. I'll take them."

Rev: STROHM: All right.

Jake: And I put them in my little pocket dimension.

Rev: As you open your pocket dimension, which you have not done since leaving Elnore, a bow comes out, with five arrows on the quiver. You realize it's Fox's bow, that you never gave it back to her.

Jake: "Oh, oops."

Rev: STROHM: Oh, what's... What's this?

Jake: "This is a bow from an alternate plane, inhabited by magic nymphs. Hey, I have a thought about a different deal." *laughs*

Teej: "What are you doing, Jay?"

Jake: "Do you want a magic bow from a magic plane? In exchange for the souls?"

Rev: STROHM: I would need time to inspect it first, to see exactly what it is. I've never seen something quite so bright.

Teej: "What do you mean, bright?"

Rev: STROHM: The aura on it.

Jake: "Like it's super holy? Or just hella magic?"

Rev: STROHM: The latter.

Jake: "Yeah. Can we stay with you while you do that? No offense, I just don't know you that well. I'd hate to get screwed."

Rev: STROHM: Yes, of course. I have a special waiting room as people wait to do bargains with me.

Rev: And she gestures towards the door to the left.

Jake: "Now is that the one that's going to trap me in there, until you say I can come out?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes.

Jake: "I don't love that. Can we just wait here in the foyer?"

Rev: STROHM: Well, hand me my items back.

Jake: Yes, I'll hand her her items back.

Rev: She puts them back in her pocket, and she takes the bow and she leaves. And she comes back.

Rev: STROHM: Yes, I believe this will do.

Jake: "And this was for the three souls, right?"

Rev: STROHM: Oh, no. I don't believe I could do that. It will take me quite a while to find a replacement. I would hate to have to replace all three. Do you have something else to offer?

Jake: "Hmm..."

Teej: "Couple of the arrows?"

Jake: "I think the arrows are part of it."

Rev: STROHM: Oh, they're the most magical part. They're certainly a part of it.

Jake: "If we give you the bow and trap Damien, is it worth all three souls?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes, I do believe it is.

Jake: "What do you think, T.J.? Is it worth still trying to cross Damien to get these two mystery folk? Or do we just get Tass back?"

Teej: "Yeah, it's worth it."

Jake: "OK. Well, can I have the necklace and the knife back again, please?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes, of course.

Teej: "And then can we also have the bow and arrow back again, please?"

Rev: STROHM: No, I think I'll keep this for safekeeping. I mean, you are walking away with two of my items.

Jake: "I don't think that's unreasonable."

Teej: "OK."

Jake: "If by chance we fail to get Damien, is the the bow for our friend still a trade?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes.

Jake: "OK. Well, T.J., let's go stab an ally."

SFX: REVERSED EXPLOSION

Rev: Tass, you have felt this warmth wash over you, as Damien takes your hand. And you can very vaguely still see the graveyard around you. And he looks around.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: I don't got a lot of time here. Actually, neither of us do. Hey, I don't suppose you want to make a wager?

Tass: "What?!"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: You want to... I don't know. Maybe, maybe bet somethin'?

Tass: "What the hell are you talking about? I'm dead."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah, that's true. And you're dead now. So you're a soul. So whoever gets your soul first, gets it. Unless, of course, it belongs to someone else. Like if you lose it in a wager.

Rev: And he just kind of tilts his head, Stewie style, at you.

Tass: "Oh! Oh."

Jake: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Because I'm sure there is always someone around who's coming quickly to collect souls. Especially if it's one they might care about destroying. Or turning.

Tass: "OK. Yeah. Yeah. Damien?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Uh-huh?

Tass: "I would like to make a bet with you. I bet that I can win at one match of rock, paper, scissors. And if you win, you get my soul. If I win, I want the... I want the title to your car."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: I... You know what? I like that. That's a good bet.

Tass: "OK. I am going to rock your world."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Great. One, two, three. Shoot.

Tass: And I roll rock.

Rev: He throws paper.

Tass: "Oh, no..."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: All right. Looks like you've lost.

Rev: And he starts to reach into his wallet, and he pulls out a dollar bill. And he takes the keys from his pocket, and he slices his thumb. And he presses his thumb against the dollar bill.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: So, you know, as the laws go, that means that your soul now officially belongs to me. So that if anyone else was coming to collect it, well, they're just shit out of luck.

Rev: And he kneels down, and holds his hand up to you again. And when you take his hand, you feel your soul leave your body. And for a moment, you can see out of his eyes. And he says,

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: You know, normally you're supposed to leave a silver dollar on each eye for the dead. But this dollar is all I got. So I guess it'll have to do.

Rev: And he drops it on the ground near your body, and then you are somewhere else. It's very disorienting, because for a moment you were sharing his senses. You could feel what he was feeling. You could smell and hear what he was smelling and hearing. And now you're kind of yourself again, and you're standing on the lawn of your old childhood house, near the big tree. But it doesn't seem right, because when you look out away from the house, you see that strange void. And you realize that you're back in that mental space where you had sent Jake and T.J., when they were trying to track the dream.

Tass: "OK. Wha... What's going on, man? I mean, thank you? I think? But, I mean, this is real. This is real. Like, I died, right? I mean..."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah.

Tass: "Yeah. OK. So what's the plan, man? You've got me. Obviously, Nash wanted me dead. And yeah, you're right. I 100 percent believe that he, or something, would have... Whatever, you know. Finished even this part of me off. So what the hell do we do now?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: It sounds ridiculous. I feel like I'm in some stupid sci-fi movie. I'm going to play a message for you that someone gave me about 30 years ago, when they made this bargain with me to collect your soul.

Tass: "What?"

Rev: And he turns around and he walks into your house.

Tass: I'm going to follow him in.

Rev: And he goes upstairs to the room with the big TV and all the VHS tapes, where I think Power Rangers was showing when you guys were here last time.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Have a seat.

Rev: And he pulls out a VHS tape from his jacket, and puts it into the machine. And he presses play, and sits down on the couch next to you. And a woman appears on the screen. She steps away from the camera, as if she's just turned it on. And you recognize her. It is Lana King.

Rev: LANA KING: Tass, I'm sorry. If you're seeing this, then you're dead. I hired Damien to check three times, to try to find your body. And if he found you one of those times, and you're seeing this video... Years ago, I used to be The Chosen. Every generation, there's a chance for a Chosen to arise when there is a terrible danger, or when the powers that be activate them. And the person is chosen based off of the problem that arises. And I saw you in one of my visions. That was my gift. I could see possible futures. You are not the chosen of your generation. But you do contain the seed. Anyone who is a Chosen has something extra inside of them. A gem, a crystal. It's blue. That allows them to hold the spirit of someone else, someone that can grant them information, or give them power. And you have one of these inside of you. Grigori does not want you dead

because you have upset him. Grigori wants you dead, because he's going to try to bring you back as The Chosen.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC