

The Wizard's Cage (S2, E17)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Jake: We went on our annual haunted house outing last night, because it was like the only night possible with our schedules in this entire month. But I had, I think, my favorite haunted house experience ever. Which was after we were done with the haunted houses and we're on our way out of the park, I saw a woman who worked for the haunt. Not one of the scare actors or anything, just like in the t-shirt that says "Scream Park" on it, and her glasses with like a glow stick in her hand.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Who had discovered a woman in line who was so jumpy, that she could scare the shit out of her.

Tass: [laughs] Oh my god.

Jake: So as we're walking through the exit line to this ride, on the line in, I'm just watching this employee gleefully kind of duck under the ropes and walk up behind this woman who knows she's there and just go, "Boo!" And this lady scream bloody murder, and this employee just gleefully laugh and walk away a little bit, and then turn back around and start to creep back up on her. And the exact same thing, just -- [scares] and this lady going [screams] losing her mind. It was like -- it just looked like a dream come true for her. She's like, "I don't get to scare people, but I do."

Tass: I feel it. If I could get paid to scare people, I would never do anything else. Even if it was minimum wage, no benefits, nothing. If I could eat a meal by scaring people, I'm in. 100 percent, I'm in.

Jake: One of the, uh ... One of the attractions that this thing had an option where you could wear like a glow necklace. And if you did, if you took it at the beginning of the haunt, that meant that you were interactive, and they could use you and grab you and mess with you and like take you away from your group and stuff. And I was like, oh, I

really want to do that. But it was just me and Larissa. So if I got pulled away, she was alone.

Teej: She'd have been all right. I think she'd have been all right. She's a tough girl.

Jake: I had a thought, though. I was like ... I was talking to her in line. And I was like, you know what? No, I'm not sure this would be a good idea. I want to see a haunt to where they have an actor, they have a confederate in the line who's just dressed like a normal person, but just has like a blood pack under their clothes somewhere.

Tass: Oh, my god ...

Jake: And just like one of the haunt actors who are the walk around the line and menace people and get everybody kind of like, "ooh." Just like walks up to that person and they're like, oh, gosh. And then just stabs them.

All: [laugh]

Jake: And like busts the blood pack and they just collapse on the ground. And I was like, that might be too panic inducing. I don't think that's quite the attitude they're trying to shake up here.

Tass: Oh my god. I want so badly ... So. OK. Actually, I have to back up, here. It is in our family to scare people. Like, my dad would always scare the crap out of us. He would scare the crap out of his cousins and stuff too, when they were younger. And so then my sister and I do that a lot. So my nephews are just getting old enough where I can start to plan some stuff. And I almost, this last Friday, got to go out for one of their camp out birthdays to scare them. But I had to work late, so I wouldn't have been able to get there until way after stuff was over. I was so heartbroken. I had gotten the text from my sister: "Hey, it's time. Come scare the Lord out of my sons." And I couldn't do it. I'm so heartbroken.

Rev: So speaking of scary stuff. Just a reminder that the Halloween costume contest is going on. Get your submissions in by November 4th. You can send those into thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com, and we will enter you for a drawing for one of our

hoodies. And if your photo has something that pertains to the show, put your name in twice.

Jake: As far as what we're going to do on Halloween? Stream some games or something? Did you see that somebody modded the goose into Resident Evil in place of Mr. X?

Rev: Yes. Is that what we're playing?

Jake: [laughs] I can't. I wish I could afford it, so badly. I don't have that game still. But, oh, it's got to go on the list. Just an enormous untitled goose, like grabbing cars and throwing them out of the way, and chasing down the protagonist.

Tass: I'd heard about it and I was like, OK, that's kind of dumb. Until I looked at it and it's wearing the hat.

All: [laugh]

Tass: So I said, OK, I'm in.

Rev: Also, just a reminder that the Audio Verse Awards are going on. The Critshow was nominated for Best Improvised Production, and I was nominated for Best Player Direction. Can vote on that up until October 31st at 11:59. And I know I mentioned this before that this was going on. I just want to say thank you to everybody who has taken the time to vote. Awards like this, even being nominated, gets us heard by other people who wouldn't normally hear us. When they contacted us that we had been nominated, they had us put a package together of an episode that people could listen to. You know, even if they don't know the show, they can listen to it and vote. Every show that has been included has a little package you can listen to to get a sense of the show. So even being nominated gives us a chance to be heard by other people. Again, that is the Audio Verse Awards, and that ends on October 31st. We do have AcadeCon coming up, and that is on November 7th and 8th. Some of those games that we are running are already sold out. So if you're going to be there, make sure you get your spots at our tables now. Again, we are running Monster of the Week, Worlds in Peril, and All Out of Bubblegum. We're each running a session at the same time, so we will run a total of nine games. And I think three of them are sold out already. And then actually, this is not on the calendar yet. January

9th through the 12th, Midwinter Gaming Convention, which is one of the bigger gaming conventions that goes on in the winter. I will be there, and I am running five sessions of Monster of the Week over the course of the weekend. So you can just go on to the Midwinter Gaming Convention site and search The Critshow, and those will all come up. And tickets for those games are available now as well. And with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: So you start to dig. And it's maybe a half hour. And you come to the top of a chest. So you open this chest, and inside of it are three items. There is a yellow candle, a bottle that looks like it is empty with a cork in it, and 10 feet of rope. I think the unfortunate truth that you know about this bottle is that they are fairly rare, and people will kill to get their hands on one.

Teej: "Well, do you know the Scoundrel's Fortune? I was wondering if I could hire you to catch up with her."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: 200 gold?

Teej: "Yeah. 200 sounds about right."

Rev: So the crew gets up and starts to move around and gets everything in order. And it is not long before the camera pans up, and we see the Undertow headed out into the darkness, chasing after the Scoundrel's Fortune.

You know, your mind has been preoccupied with this plan, where are you, what's going on ... That at some point in this, he has pulled his hood back, and he's got long, stringy hair and very pale skin. So I think the unfortunate truth that you know here is that once this figure worked for Bennari. But at some point, Bennari discarded him. And this wizard went mad. He used to be known as Aldorin the Arcane. But if a figure of high esteem in the Dead Isles loses their standing, they also lose their surname. So Aldorin the Arcane, the figure standing before you, now is known as Estin the Mad.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Tass, here you are in your lynx form. It is dark out, and you have found this buried treasure. And some of it you can identify, but some of it is elusive in your head. But you do know the bottle that you are currently looking at is very rare, and that people would kill to get their hands on it.

Tass: Good god. I think I'm just like looking back and forth, like wondering if I should be plucking these out one at a time, or just shutting it back up and hiding it. I feel like ... I feel like I need to take it. I feel like I need to put everything back in the trunk and close it up and try to get it up out of the hole and take it with me.

Rev: I think there's a good like three minutes of lynx struggle trying to get this treasure chest out of the hole. But you do turn back. It took you a while to track the treasure down everything. So you are back in your halfling form.

Tass: Yeah. I'm just -- I'm gonna drag it with me.

Rev: So you start to drag this treasure chest back and you're following the path that led you here, which does lead you by the area where you had discovered a small ship had beached itself prior, and where you followed the tracks from. And as you're moving past this area, you do see in the distance lantern lights on a ship, approaching in the dark very quickly.

Tass: Oh, no.

Teej: We've seen this in Sea of Thieves. We know what to do.

Tass: [laughs]

Teej: Hide the loot ...

Jake: Scuttle the ship.

Teej: Scuttle the ship, and then come back later.

Tass: Oh, god. I think I want to take owl form, so that I can fly up in the dark and see what's going on with this boat.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Tass: Seven. So that's hold 2.

Rev: OK, so you turn into an owl and you start to fly out towards that boat. So roll Discern Realities as you get out towards this boat that is moving quickly towards this island.

Tass: OK. That's a nine.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Tass: What should I be on the lookout for?

Rev: You can see a number of figures moving around on the ship, but it is very dark down there. Like, you should be able to get a clear sight of them, but you'd have to get much closer. From here, you can just make out the shapes. But you can tell by the shape of the front of the boat that it is the boat that docked here a couple of days ago.

Tass: OK. I'm going to return to the chest and just drop my other hold for the owl.

Rev: OK.

Tass: And I'm going to run it back and start letting them know -- hey, there's another ship incoming.

Rev: All right. So you take the treasure chest back to the Scoundrel's Fortune and they are still working.

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Well, I'm not in the mood to get in a fight right now. Especially with everybody exhausted from working so long.

Tass: "Yeah, same. I brought this over. I found this chest. It has some items in it. I assume they are magical in some way. I don't think I would've had a way to put it back without it being obvious that it had been disturbed, so I just went ahead and brought it. So if this is

something that they're after, can be -- I don't know -- leverage to just say, hey, take your stuff and let's just call it square."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Oh, you think you maybe found their stash?

Tass: "Yeah, I think so."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Oh, boy. Hope they're not the vindictive type.

Tass: "Yeah, me too. But it didn't seem like a huge boat, so there's a whole lot more of us than there are of them."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: True. True.

Rev: So we pan out on Tass and Captain Broadstone standing amidst the crew of the Scoundrel's Fortune, and the camera moves through the dark night sky to the small, quickly moving ship that is on an intercept with a tiny island.

T.J., you are standing on the Undertow, and they have taken a little bit of a detour because the ship that they were chasing seems to be beached on this small island. And so they have taken a sharp turn and they beach onto this island. And you can see the Scoundrel's Fortune is six or seven hundred yards down the beach.

Teej: "Great. We found it! Good job."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Yeah. Interesting that they're here. I wonder ... Well, yeah. Let's go check out that payment.

Teej: "Uh yeah, of course." And I will start heading towards the Scoundrel's.

Rev: All right. Yeah. So they all get off of the ship with you and start to head that direction.

Teej: I want to see if I can find either of my two companions, especially.

Rev: Yeah. As you walk down the beach, you see Tass standing there, next to the Captain.

Teej: "Tass!"

Tass: "Wha --?" I am just running down the beach towards him.

Teej: I will run towards him. Yeah. [hums "Love Theme" from Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet] I'm going to lift him up into a big hug, and then I'm going to say, "I need 200 gold, now."

All: [laugh]

Teej: You know, like in real life, whenever I need money --

Rev: Whenever you hug somebody.

Teej: Yeah.

Tass: "What happened? What are you doing?"

Teej: "Long story short, on the way through the tunnel, we were attacked by goliaths and I was separated from the group. One chased me back to Alpo, and I killed it. Then I chartered this boat and we chased you down."

Tass: [chuckles] "OK."

Teej: "And I promised them payment of 200 gold."

Rev: And the captain of the Undertow taps your shield that is resting on her arm.

Teej: "210 gold."

Tass: "Ah, shit. All right. That's ... That's fair." And I will get out the coin and pay it up.

Teej: "Oh, thank goodness we have it." [laughs].

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: It's quite a party you got going on here.

Tass: "Yeah, we had ... We had some trouble. There was essentially an explosive put in our ship and blew a nasty hole, but not bad enough for us to not be able to fix it. So we're just chopping down some trees, getting everything patched up and be on our way pretty quick here."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Oh yeah, yeah? You explore the island at all?

Tass: "Yeah, a little bit. You know, I've been trying to make sure that there aren't any predators sneaking up on the guys chopping down trees."

Rev: And you see as she's talking to you, her eyes drift over your shoulder, and you see them sharpen.

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Oh yeah? That all you found?

Tass: I think I just sigh and grin. "No. No, we found a chest, too. Had some fun looking items in them."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Oh yeah. You know, they're for sale for the right price.

Tass: "Oh. You want to buy them?"

Teej: [laughs]

Rev: As she genuinely laughs at that. Like, it catches her off guard. But the sound of her laughter is --

Tass: Drowned out by the shriek of her transformation!

Rev: Is drowned out by the cracking of knuckles from behind her.

Tass: [laughs]

Rev: It catches her off guard, and she does laugh.

Tass: "Yeah, I can kind of tell from the look of your boat that that's, uh ... It's you that dropped it off in the first place. So, yeah. I don't -- I don't want anybody to be losing lives over some trinkets in a box."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: That's fair. That's fair. You got any more gold, I'd happy to part with some of those. Some of them are, I'll be honest, more trouble than they're worth having.

Tass: "Seems that way, if you're just going to bury 'em down deep somewhere."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Yeah. Some of those things are hard to unload.

Tass: "Well, what do they do? The rope I've got a handle on. But the other two, I'm not even really sure."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: That bottle ... You didn't uncork it, did you?

Tass: "No. No, no, no."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Good. Good. Yeah. The bottle, you uncork it and you hear a whisper. A whisper from another world. Something that's seeing your future, and it ... Well, it tells you about an impending moment in your future. Lets you avoid it. And the candle, well they used to use those on the prisoners of war. You light the candle and you drip the wax into somebody's ear, and they have to answer any question you ask him.

Tass: "Damn, that's good."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Yeah. It's also currently a war crime.

Tass: "Well, I mean, understandably. Yeah. Good lord."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: And the bottle, it's, uh ... You can sell for a high price. Problem is, kinda drives 'em mad when they see it. People'll kill for a chance to escape death. Ironic.

Tass: "Well, also understandable. All right. How much you asking?"

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: I'll tell you what. You give me everything you've got in your pockets, everything on you you don't need to survive, I give you all three of the things. Save me another trip to find another island. Can't bury it here -- you know where it's at.

Tass: "I don't think I can do it. Where we're going, we have to have a little bit of capital. And, um ... Tell you what: however you want to split it, I'd offer you 125 just for the bottle, 60 just for the candle, or 30 just for the rope."

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: I'll hold onto that bottle, just to ... You know, maybe have to sell it to a higher bidder. That's a wait I'm willing to deal with. And the rope, I was sure when I left that, I forgot that was in there. I'll say the candle. You get those other two items, get my chest back on my ship, and I'll give you the candle.

Tass: "All right. That's a deal."

Rev: And she reaches out and shakes your hand, and she waits for you to go get the chest and bring it over.

Tass: And I do. I take out the candle, and show her everything else is good.

Rev: And she loads it back onto the ship.

Rev: UNDERTOW CAPTAIN: Well, good doing business with you.

Tass: "Nice doing business with you."

Rev: And they climb back onto their ship, and they sail off into the night.

Teej: "Tass, where's Jake?"

Tass: "I don't know. He never made it back to the ship. Let's just help these guys get everything fixed up. I'll fill you in on everything."

Teej: "OK."

Rev: The next couple hours pass, and the two of you help them with the last of the repairs on the Scoundrel's Fortune. So I think that we find you in the mess hall eating breakfast.

Tass: "First thing, I'm pretty sure Nash knows we're here."

Teej: "Why do you say that?"

Tass: "He tried to blow me up again."

Teej: "Wait a minute. Explain to me how Nash almost blew you up."

Tass: "There was this crate on the ship, that was not one of their crates. It had markings on it of stuff that people here haven't even seen. There's like a compartment, and I opened it and there was a note that was talking about how there are certain events that are so profound that they happen over and over again -- essentially insinuating that this could happen on every world. And the goddamn thing exploded."

Teej: "How are you still here, even?"

Tass: "Rock beats explosion, I guess?"

Teej: "Oh! Oh, you transformed, then?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "Oh, that's great."

Tass: "Yeah. I barely survived that."

Teej: "Oh. But at least the ship is intact and so are you. And did anybody else get hurt?"

Tass: "No. No, thank God."

Teej: "Oh good. So all that story that you just told me, like, you know how nobody got hurt and even though it was this great big catastrophe and everything?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "My story is a lot different. So Ingrit and the Iron Striders were taking me down this tunnel, and it's this really cool sled that goes through this tunnel on ice. But then we hit this rough patch where the ice was melted. It turns out there are these goliaths out there, and they were melting the snow -- the ice on the track. And they devastated us. I ran for a hole in the rock face, and as I turned around, Ingrit jumped for the hole, and instead of her being there, there was a giant mace, and it destroyed her."

Tass: "Good Lord."

Teej: "Yeah. So then I sneaked my way back towards the Alpo station, and one of the goliaths tracked me and I was able to take it out. Then I was able to find the Undertow and its crew, and they brought me here."

Tass: "That's wild. I hate that people got killed by some monster thing, but good lord, I'm glad that you're back with me. I mean ..."

Teej: "Yeah. Same."

Tass: "Yaah, so ... Next stop here, we're gonna try to communicate with Grandpa again, see exactly where he is, and the hunt is on."

Teej: "Just wish Jake was here for this, you know? To help us out."

Tass: "Yeah. I don't know. I don't know what to do about that."

Teej: "Yeah."

Tass: "He was looking into some important things --"

Teej: "And never showed up again?"

Tass: "And never showed up again. So I trust that whatever he's doing is important, and hopefully we'll just meet back with Yaga."

Teej: "Yeah."

Rev: So about the time you finish this conversation, it is time for you both to take your stations on the ship. I'm gonna ask you both to roll Undertake a Perilous Journey. Tass, you are going to be the scout, as they ask you to go up in the crow's nest. And T.J., you are going to be the trailblazer, as you work the riggings and the sails.

Teej: Gotcha. Eight.

Tass: Eleven.

Rev: So for today, Tass, you are able to keep an eye on everything and warn the crew of the Scoundrel's Fortune about everything that they might see as they travel.

Tass: Do I see anything cool?

Rev: You see some ripples in the water that seem very large and unnatural. And that's actually one of the things they kind of tell you to watch out for, is watch out for large areas of bubbles. Or the water moving against the direction of the waves, and things like that.

And T.J., as the trailblazer, the ship is right on schedule. It's not any faster than it should be, but it does not have any issues. The wind stays with you, and it seems like you are still on course to be there in about two days.

Jake, here you are, sat in this cell. And before you stands a man known in this world as Estin the Mad. To go with the Spout Lore that you previously did, how do you know that?

Jake: He is used as like a ... Like a life lesson in this world. Like, the equivalent of "be careful who you trust" in our world? Like this story of like he belonged to this dude and was loyal to this dude, and he just got cut like that, and he lost his mind. Like, it's just a cautionary tale of like be cautious who you invest yourself in.

Rev: Oh, I see. I see.

Jake: You know? And then so people are like, you know, you don't want to end up Estin the Mad.

Tass: And does Jake recognize this face?

Rev: Yeah. Looking at the figure, there is a lot less decomposition to this face. This face is younger. There are not the elongated features that came with the vampirism. This man looks sickly, but the eyes are spot on.

Jake: OK. So here's what I want to do: is I want to get him on like the side of my cage. Like, I want to bend down and, like, reach out the bars. Is it like -- is the floor dusty?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I want to get both of our backs to the Soul Trap, and kind of reach through the bars and start like illustrating what he is talking about, but fucking it up on purpose. Oh I don't understand -- so you mean like this? But get it wrong so that he'll be like, no, no, no, that's not it. But keep his focus down and away, so that the knight can slip the keys in behind me.

Rev: OK. So yeah, I think this is going to be Defy Danger again, with Charisma.

Jake: Ten.

Tass: Nice.

Rev: Yeah. So you move to the corner of this cell, and you start to draw and sketch. Which of his projects are you trying to illustrate?

Jake: The drain trap that I got caught in.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Like, you know, I understood enough -- a little bit about it. So I want to just kind of try and illustrate that. Like, I just want to understand. So like the gem, the gem transfers the energy? Or it holds the energy? Like ...

Rev: Yeah. Yeah.

Jake: But trying to get the wrong answer.

Rev: He instantly goes into ...

Rev: ESTIN: No, no, that's not how it works. It, it, it drains. It's empty. I found a way to take them and empty them, and then we refill them from people, from the namegivers. It makes them weak. We can take from them, and ultimately I should be able to create a device that could just, like that, drain everything from a person. Become nothing. [giggles] They would not have anything. They would just be there. And then a husk.

Rev: And as he says this, you hear the keys slide on the ground behind you.

Jake: And I just want to step a foot back over the keys as I'm like, nodding at him. Like, yeah, that sounds so fucking radical, dude. Like, I'm super on board with this.

Rev: There is still eminent danger here, so I'm going to have you roll Defy Danger with Dexterity to cover these keys and keep them out of sight.

Jake: Ten.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: Nice.

Rev: You slide backwards as you are taking in what he says, and you just plop your butt on the keys and hide them underneath you.

Jake: OK.

Tass: I am sweating through this whole thing!

Jake: All right. So I need to distract him in a way that will give me enough time to go through the next three steps of this plan, basically.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: To get myself out and get a weapon and just coup de grâce this dude. So I have an idea -- and if everything goes according to plan, it's a great idea. And if anything doesn't ... [laughs]

Tass: God.

Jake: It's a ... It's not the worst idea.

Teej: How could it possibly go wrong?

Jake: Yeah. The subtitle of our entire experience.

All: [laugh]

Jake: So I want to start illustrating a magic that I don't think he knows. I want to pull the magic that Jake knows, not that Kolvar knows.

Rev: Mmhmm.

Jake: I want to start kind of tracing in the dirt or something. Or like if I can get him to give me, like, a quill and paper or something. I want to give him the building blocks for my shield spell, for the reduce all the harm from one hit to nothing? In the hopes that he will be like, "Oh, this rules." And start poring over it now, giving me time to do what I need to do.

Rev: Yeah. Looking at the spells that he has, that is the one from Jake's magic list that he does not have.

Jake: I thought ... Like, this is also kind of using Jake's like DnD knowledge. Like, all right. Well, he's like an arcane caster and this is usually a divine spell. So like, this is the kind of thing that he might not know? I don't know.

Rev: Yeah. So as you start to scratch it out on the ground, he actually goes back to his desk and grabs a piece of chalk and rolls it underneath the cell to you, and starts to watch as you sketched this out.

Jake: OK. So yeah, I want to give him enough. You know, like enough that he could start building on it on his own. Like, I don't want to give him too much, because then I don't have any time to do anything.

Rev: All right. So I think that this is going to be Defy Danger with Intellect. This is going to be you thinking quickly about how much you can give him to safely, not instantly, teach him the spell, and to get him to go away and figure the rest of it out for himself.

Jake: Oh, now I'm so nervous. This is a straight up and down roll. Seven -- a six and a one. I saw the one first and I went, oh, I'm dead.

Rev: So you can give him enough information on this spell to pique his interest and get him to go back to a blank space on the wall and start writing out the rest of it, trying to convert it to magic he can use. While he is there, he will either give you enough time to get the door unlocked, but he's going to notice that the Soul Trap has moved and get suspicious about it, and start to deal with that instead of this equation. He will learn the spell, but it will take him enough time that you'll be able to get out and get your equipment. Or you can get out, not get to your stuff, but in seeing the equation that he has written? As he learns it, you will as well.

Jake: Like, I don't know where I am. I don't know how long it is to get out of here. I think I've got to go with the first one. I think his focus still won't be on me, so it still gives me the chance to pull this off. But I think if he learns this spell, he casts it and I don't land the attack that can kill him, and then the Soul Trap obliterates me. Yeah. First one.

Rev: All right. So he holds his hand out for the piece of chalk.

Jake: I give it to him.

Rev: And he gets up and starts to move across the room, and he notices that the Soul Trap is not in the corner anymore. It was trying to move very slowly to get back there without being noticed, having given you the keys.

Rev: ESTIN: Why are you moving around on your own? I don't quite understand. This is not what you're supposed to be ...

Rev: And he goes over and he starts examining it, and he is chattering at it very quickly.

Jake: As stealthily as possible, I want to unlock the thing around my mouth and unlock the cage, and start creeping for my gear.

Rev: Yeah. So you are able, with your mixed success, to get out. You're able to get to your stuff, and now you are next to the cage.

Jake: I think this is an all or nothing. Like, I don't have time to put on my armor and shit. I'm going to grab my sword and I'm just going to try and plunge it through his heart.

Rev: All right. Roll Hack and Slash.

Jake: Please, please, please. So I rolled a six. But because I bought that nice new rapier, I roll it with Dex instead of Strength. So it's a seven.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Jake: Boy, I forgot about that part. [laughs] That's underwhelming. Four.

Rev: So you sneak up behind Estin, and you draw your sword back and you plunge it forward. The blade goes through, but there is no blood. It just sounds dry and rusty, almost like you're plunging your blade into a bag of sand. And you realize, as you're this close to him now, that you've heard him breathing, but it seems like it's out of habit. There is no blood. There is no breath. And you have the feeling that this has not done anything to him.

Jake: [laughs]

Tass: [sighs]

Jake: Yeah. I mean, I think I like yank the sword out. Like, I'm ready to just start getting my ass kicked. And I'm just like, "Well, I fucked up about as bad as I possibly could have."

Rev: Estin turns around as you draw the blade out, and dark energy rushes from his hands and washes over you. But as those words escape your mouth, you're talking in Jake's voice. And from behind Estin, you see the eyes of the Soul Trap glitter for a second. And it hits you like this strange sense of recognition, and you feel this sense of relief as the Soul Trap raises both hands and slams them down onto Estin's back, knocking him to the ground. And it turns and it runs towards the door with the black energy coming out from underneath it.

Jake: Does it seem like it's waiting for me? Or does it seem like it's going to do something?

Rev: It gets to the door and opens it, and turns back and is just staring at you.

Jake: I'm going to run that direction, I guess.

Rev: So you follow it into the room, and it pulls the door closed and it points at its temple, and then points at a spot on its hand.

Jake: Is there something on its hand? What?

Rev: There's not.

Jake: "I don't know what this means."

Rev: As you say that, you start to hear the crackling of energy outside of the door. And it looks at the door and looks back at you, and it points both fingers at both temples and then it puts its hands out to the room and indicates to the room.

Jake: Is there something else in this room besides the black energy? Like I look around real quick. Is there something?

Rev: There is not. So as you look around and you're starting to panic a little bit, you hear the metal of the door starting to rend, and the Soul Trap grabs you by the shoulders and like makes you look at its jewel eyes, and it points at its temple again, and then down at the floor.

Jake: "Think of a place?"

Rev: It nods.

Jake: I'm going to close my eyes and think about the cabin on the ship.

Rev: All right. So with a Room of Teleportation, roll +Int.

Jake: Oh, no. Nine.

Rev: So on a Teleportation Room, a mixed success gets you a safe location nearby. And so you appear at the front of the Scoundrel's Fortune. The ship is moving, it's midday, and you can feel the wind and smell the salt of the ocean.

Jake: Is everything ... Like, I want to look around. Is everything as it should be?

Rev: Yes.

Jake: Is the crew working?

Rev: And as you appear, you see T.J. up in the riggings working, and you see Tass, very small, up in the crow's nest.

Jake: "Hey guys, I made it."

Rev: [laughs]

Jake: And then I'm just going to collapse into a dying nap on the deck.

Rev: Yeah. So the two of you hear Jake call out, and he is standing there, and there is a large suit of armor standing next to him. And he falls to the ground, and you just see it kind of look down at him and then look back up at you.

Tass: "What the what?!" I'm gonna slide down the ladder to the deck.

Teej: I'll take a rope down.

Rev: Yeah. So the both of you make it down to Jake, and this large suit of armor is just standing there placidly watching you as you start to move around him and check on him.

Tass: I think I'm a little wary of the armor. But, you know, if it's not doing anything aggressive, I'm just gonna power slide over to Jake.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: [laughs]

Tass: "Dude, what happened? What?!"

Jake: "I found a secret passage in the museum, and this universe's Estin kicked the shit out of me and took me prisoner. But I got out, and we teleported here." And I like, gesture to the Soul Trap.

Tass: "How did you teleport here?"

Jake: "I don't ... I don't know. It was something that Estin had set up already. Wherever we were, I don't think it was the museum anymore. I think he took us somewhere, and there was just a room full of, like black energy or something. And it was like a teleporting room."

Tass: 'Good God. OK, man. Well let's just get you downstairs, and let's figure out what the hell's going on here."

Jake: 'Yes, please."

Rev: And I think that we fade out on the three of you, along with a suit of armor that's following Jake still, going below deck.

And now it is time for end of session experience. I think that you all get a meal and you get to sleep finally. And you can level up, if you've got the opportunity. So. Did we learn something new and important about the world?

Tass: Good Lord. Lots and lots of thing.

Rev: Yeah. Cause you guys have not rested really since before you left to start this journey on the Scoundrel's Fortune.

Jake: That's true. Yes, a lot. Like we learned about the pirates and how the pirate hierarchy works. We all learned our own individual shit on our journeys here. Like, I learned about Elseworlds Estin, and how he is bastardising magic in this world.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: I learned about the plight of the goliath, and how they've been pushed underground by a society that shuns them. And also that they're very deadly. And there's a really cool sled that goes under the ocean.

Rev: Yeah. You also learned about the Iron Striders, and your connection to them.

Teej: That's true.

Tass: Learned that Nash knows we're here.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Seemingly.

Rev: Yeah. Did we overcome a notable monster or enemy?

Jake: I mean, yeah. Again, the pirates. Like, the pirate lord we could even go with.

Teej: I did fight a lot of pirates. And then I fought a Goliath.

Tass: I fought the laws of physics, and ...

Jake: [sings] The law won.

Tass: I barely won.

All: [laugh]

Tass: I'd say we kind of evened out. It was a draw.

Rev: And did we loot a memorable treasure?

Tass: Yes. I got a dope war crime candle.

Teej: [laughs]

Rev: Yeah, but you bought that.

Teej: That's not looting. That's just purchase.

Rev: That's just commerce. I think it's gonna be two points of experience for everybody.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: And then what about your individual standings? Did anybody get their experience?

Teej: Well, if we consider the goliath a worthy opponent? Yeah. Got an extra one.

Jake: I did perform my art to aid someone, right? Didn't I sing a healing song, like in the market?

Tass: Yeah. You healed me.

Jake: Yeah, OK.

Tass: I have to eliminate an unnatural menace, which I don't think I did.

Rev: Yours is so easy to get, Jake. "Oh yeah, I healed you in the marketplace that one time. Experience!" It's so awesome.

Tass: Mine's impossible.

Rev: It is impossible.

Tass: Oh! No, it says eliminate. I was going to say, technically, you described the things that I was looking out for while I was scouting up top --

Rev: That's true.

Tass: As unnatural water movements.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: But we didn't exactly eliminate them.

Rev: Yeah. So does anybody level up?

Jake: Man, wouldn't you know it? I'm just one short. No, I'm kidding. I could almost level up twice right now.

Rev: [laughs]

Teej: Oh, shit. I actually did level up.

Tass: I also finally made it.

Rev: Oh, wow.

Tass: To level three, baby.

Rev: Level three. And everybody else is level four?

Tass: Yeah.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: All right. So what are you taking?

Teej: I will be taking the move Scent of Blood, which is on the Warrior's track. When you Hack and Slash an enemy, your next attack against that same foe deals +1d4 damage.

Rev: Oh wow. So you're gonna be rolling like four different dice now for your damage. What about you, Tess?

Tass: I'm going to take a move called Communion of Whispers. When you spend time in a place making note of its resident spirits and calling on the spirits of the land, roll Wisdom. You will be granted a vision of significance to you, your allies, and the spirits around you. On a 10+, the vision will be clear and helpful. On a 7-9, the vision is unclear, its meaning murky. On a miss, the vision is upsetting, frightening, or traumatizing. The GM will describe it, and you take +1 forward.

Rev: What about you, Jake?

Jake: I'm going to take another bard move called Eldritch Tones. Your arcane art is strong, allowing you to choose two effects instead of one. So now I can like both heal and buff in one song. It still applies to one target, though. So I can't like split effects.

Rev: So the three of you wake up from your rest, and standing next to the door, right where it stood when you were going to sleep, is the Soul Trap. And it is still just standing watch.

Jake: I'ma go give it a hug, cause it saved my life.

Rev: [laughs] It pats you on the back.

Jake: "I don't know why you helped me. Why did you save me? Aren't you stuck like this forever now?"

Rev: It nods and it points to its eyes, and then it points to you.

Jake: I wanna explain to these two. "So the way these things work is they're infused with a gem, or multiple gems. And they have an actual soul inside of them. So if they have black gems," and I'll like gesture to his eyes. "Like it does, that means that the soul was claimed. It was a soul taken."

Tass: "Oof."

Jake: "With white gems, it would mean that it was a soul given. That somebody offered it up for this process. So whoever this is," and I want to look back at the Soul Trap. "You know me."

Rev: It nods.

Jake: "We're friends?"

Rev: It puts its hand on your shoulder and squeezes. And then it puts its other hand out and it opens it, and you see that inside of the other hand, it has the piece of chalk that Estin was holding when you stabbed him. And it holds the piece of chalk up and starts to draw on its chest. And the name that it writes out on its chest is Grimby.

All: [laugh]

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

Carolyn: The Critshow is a Critshow Studios production, edited and produced by Brandon Wentz with music by Jake Pierle. You can find more information about us at thecritshowpodcast.com. To keep up to date with upcoming live shows, contests, and other special events, follow us at The Critshow on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. For even more weekly content, join us at Patreon.com/TheCritshow.