

Crit or Treat 2019 (S2, E18)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So we've talked the last couple episodes about maybe doing something on Halloween, and I think we finally have not a game plan, but at least the outline of an idea of what will happen tomorrow.

Jake: Several game plans.

Rev: So Jake and I, I think during the course of the day, are going to play a couple of spooky games. And then that night we might do a livestream of like 10 Candles or something with Tass, and possibly Jessie here. So yeah, look out for that. We will send notifications every time we get online, and we'll make sure that it gets posted on all the social media. But if you've got nothing to do All Hallows Eve, then you can hang out with us as we play some games. Are you gonna be in costume while we do this?

Jake: Fuck, I guess. I can.

Rev: It's just the natural segue. Just a reminder that Monday the 4th is the last day to submit your photos for the costume contest. So again, just submit those to thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com. A photo of you. We've also got some photos of pets as well, celebrating the holiday. And with that, we will enter you into a drawing for one of our hoodies. And if you can get something about the show into the photo as well, we'll enter you twice. So again, that is Monday the 4th is the deadline for that. And then that following weekend, on the 8th and 9th, Jake and Tass and I will all be at AcadeCon. I am running Monster of the Week, Tass is running Worlds in Peril, and Jake is running All Out of Bubblegum. Some of those games are sold out already, but if you're gonna be in Ohio that weekend, you can find us on the AcadeCon website and sign up for those games. Period. There seems like there should be more to that sentence, but that's really the whole of the sentence. So with that, it's time to get to the episode.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: So here the three of you stand inside of your cabin on the Scoundrel's Fortune, and this Soul Trap has just lifted a piece of chalk to its chest and written out the name Grimby.

Jake: I want to give my big, monosyllabic friend a hug.

Rev: He does. He hugs you back.

Jake: "It's Grimby!"

Tass: "How?"

Jake: "I don't know. There must have been more to Grimby in Halloween than we understood."

Tass: "Yeah, clearly. I thought that the whole thing we went through is what gave him life. But ..." [sighs] "OK."

Teej: I want to go up to Grimby and like take his armored hand, and see like there's anything inside of it?

Rev: It does not come apart.

Teej: Oh. Like there's no holes in the armor that you can see through or anything?

Rev: No, nuh-uh.

Teej: Oh wow. OK. But he feels solid?

Rev: He does. He feel solid.

Teej: OK.

Jake: I don't ... I don't know what to do about this. [laughs]

Tass: "Grimby, are you from here originally?"

Rev: He shrugs.

Tass: "OK. So when you met us, is that like the first thing you remember?"

Rev: He nods.

Tass: "Huh. Well, I'll be damned. It's good to see you."

Rev: And he reaches out a hand and shakes your tiny halfling hand.

Tass: Aww.

Jake: "How did you end up with Estin?"

Rev: He shrugs.

Jake: "You don't, like, remember?"

Rev: He shakes his head no.

Jake: "How'd you know how to use the magic room?"

Rev: He shrugs again.

Teej: "I think he's having a hard time communicating because he doesn't have anything to write on. Maybe if we gave him something to write on?"

Jake: I like that he can write, but he can't talk.

Rev: He has no mouth which to scream.

All: [laugh]

Jake: "I wish that I could, like, magically figure out a way to allow him to speak. But I'm pretty certain that's beyond my abilities."

Tass: "And then when he does, he'll only be able to say his name anyway."

Jake: "At least that way we can get like, tone."

Tass: [laughs] "That's true."

Jake: "Like, if he's like 'Grimby?' We know it's like, 'Maybe?'"

Rev: Let me ask: the thought that you just had right now that you wish that there was a way that he could communicate. Are you saying that out loud?

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: The armor around his face shifts a little bit, and a mouth hole appears.

Rev: GRIMBY: Grimby.

Tass: "How? What?"

Jake: I am panicked, looking around for a genie right now.

Rev: You don't see one.

Jake: "Guys, I just said 'I wish' and it came true. This is awfully reminiscent of Halloween."

Teej: "It is. Um ... I wish I had a rocket launcher right now."

Jake: [laughs]

Tass: "OK, well if that's the case, it's one of two things. Either the wishes are connected directly to Jake because he was the first one to say I wish, or he is like in charge of Grimby now. In charge of the Soul Trap."

Rev: Grimby nods at that.

Tass: "Oh, OK. OK."

Jake: "So Grimby, did you make that happen? Can you kind of manipulate your form?"

Rev: GRIMBY: [affirmative] Grimby.

Jake: "All right. Well, there are limits, then. Boy, what are -- what are we going to do with you? I mean, I guess you're part of the team now. You're coming with us."

Rev: GRIMBY: Hmm ...

Jake: "This is weird. Because like, as far as we know, we willed him into existence. And as far as he knows, like he doesn't remember anything before us."

Rev: So as you are all having this discussion, you start to hear bells ring from all over the ship and you hear people upstairs shouting and yelling.

Tass: Ope! I'm gonna run up.

Teej: "Hey, bring Grimby. Maybe he can be useful up there." And I'm gonna head out.

Jake: "Come on, Grimby."

Rev: GRIMBY: Grimby.

Rev: And you all head out of the door to your cabin. And the first thing that you notice is that the ship is in a very dense fog. And there are people ringing the bells, the captain is up trying to steer the ship, people are moving around, dealing with the sails ... And they all stop, and they all start to jerk and move. Their limbs jutting side to side, their legs bouncing, their heads twitching. And very small girl appears next to all three of you.

Rev: LITTLE GIRL: Come dance with us. Come dance with us. It's fun. You'll love it. Come dance with us. Come dance with us.

SFX: CRIT OR TREAT THEME

Rev: Well welcome, everybody, to our 2019 Crit or Treat, our Halloween special.

All: [cheer]

Teej: Candy, candy!

Jake: Candy, pwease!

Rev: Oh, I've got candy. All kinds of death candy.

Teej: Oh.

Tass: What is that?!

Teej: Oh, you're one of those people who puts razors in, like, candy corn and stuff.

Rev: [laughs] In candy corn?!

Jake: It's well-hidden.

Teej: It's well-hidden.

Rev: That is an enormous candy corn, or a very tiny razor.

Tass: [laughs].

Rev: So here are the three of you are with this fog rolling over the ship. Everyone else on the ship is jerking and twitching. This little girl has appeared and started asking you to come dance with her. And before you have a chance to respond, the ship lurches forward as it runs into something, and she vanishes.

Tass: "Come on!"

Jake: I want to run up and see what we hit.

Rev: Jake, you run up to the front of the boat and Grimby follows you, and there is a small island. You can just barely see where the ship is run aground on it.

Jake: Is there like a map room or anything on the ship?

Rev: There is.

Jake: I want to run into the map room and see if this is something that's charted.

Rev: So Jake runs back towards the captain's quarters where the map room is. What are the two of you doing?

Tass: I'm running up to the captain to try to slap sense into him, see if that does anything at all.

Rev: It does not. You lay hands on him, you strike him, you try to shake him, and he violently continues to dance.

Teej: I'm going to go below and see if, like, us hitting this thing actually caused any damage to the ship.

Rev: So you run downstairs as Jake runs into the captain's quarters, and you get below and you don't see any damage on the ship. And Jake, inside of the captain's quarters, this island does not exist.

Jake: 'Guys, I think we're on some like, Themyscira shit, or ... I don't know. This isn't supposed to be here.'

Tass: "I can't snap anybody out of this."

Jake: I want to go to the captain and I want to try to sing a song to clear the enchantment.

Rev: Roll it.

Jake: [laughs]

Teej: Oh, man.

Tass: Hot start.

Teej: Like those dice dropped just solidly on those two numbers.

Jake: Four.

Rev: You move up to the captain and you start to sing a song. And as your mouth opens, we don't hear Jake's voice come out. We hear the little girl, and she's singing a melody that everyone on the ship starts to jerk and move to.

Jake: "Oh, no. I did it worse." Um ... Does it seem like -- does it seem like they're going to, like, hurt themselves? Or each other?

Rev: It does not. They are standing in place. Those who are up, like in the crow's nest or working the rigging, have an arm wrapped around something. Like, they are all in place, just bobbing violently.

Teej: I think I'll just come back up to the top deck.

Jake: "T.J., we are having no luck here. How's the ship? Is it intact?"

Teej: "It's fine. As far as I can tell, there's no damage, and the hold is dry."

Jake: "That's bizarre. I mean, I feel like we're going to have to venture onto this foggy island."

Teej: "Yeah."

Jake: "Unless ..." And I want to start dancing. And, just the best dance. Just the most passionate dance you've ever seen. And see if any of the crew respond in any way.

Rev: Jake starts to dance, and the little girl appears next to him.

Jake: Ah, fuck.

Rev: And starts to dance as well.

Rev: LITTLE GIRL: You're taking too long. [giggles] You're taking too long. You're taking too long.

Rev: And she throws a hand out, and some of the people dancing up on the rigging start to dance off and start plummeting towards the deck.

Tass: I want to just jump. I want to be jumping in the air, trying to take condor form to catch at least one of them, if I can.

Jake: Yeah. How many are falling?

Rev: Three.

Teej: Definitely want to go and brute strength catch them in my arms.

Jake: I basically try and like catch a bit of rope that runs like down the mast or something, to like catch them. Like loop around them and stop their fall.

Rev: All right. So Tass, roll your Shapeshift.

Tass: Five. So I get my one at least.

Rev: All right. So Tass and Jake, roll Defy Danger with Dexterity. And T.J., roll Defy Danger with Strength.

Teej: Oh, hell, yes. Fourteen.

Jake: Damn. Eleven.

Tass: Nine.

Rev: All right. So you can all save the three people falling from the rigging. But Tass, you're gonna be able to catch yours as you turn into a condor. But the momentum of it is going to throw this person into the water instead of onto the deck, you're going to take a -1 forward because you're going to pull something in your back, or you're not going to be able to turn specifically into a condor again for a while because something just didn't fire right.

Tass: Yeah, I like that one. I think I'm going to go with no condor for a while.

Rev: So T.J. runs and plants himself squarely, and catches one of the falling crewmates. Jake is able to leap on to the mast and wrap some rope around and snag them up in it. Tass leaps into the air and transforms into a condor, grabs them, lands on the ground, and is instantly shunted back into his halfling form. But you notice that both your legs are condor legs still.

All: [laugh]

Tass: "Son of a bitch."

Jake: "Kazooie, get in my backpack. Kazooie!"

Tass: "We have more important things than trolling me."

Teej: [Kazooie noises]

Tass: "Oh my god."

Jake: "Lets' go!" Um, go hop off the boat, I guess, and appease this scary little girl.

Rev: Everybody following?

Teej: Yeah.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: Grimby stands there and looks around the boat.

Rev: GRIMBY: Grimby?

Jake: "Do you want to stay here, or do you want to come with us?"

Rev: GRIMBY: Grimby.

Rev: And he shrugs.

Teej: "We could use him to look after the boat. Maybe make sure nobody falls again?"

Jake: "Yeah, I think that's a good idea. Grimby, can you stay here and just make sure nobody hurts themselves?"

Rev: GRIMBY: Grimby.

Jake: "All right."

Tass: "Thanks, man. We really appreciate it."

Rev: And as you start to go towards the front of the ship, he actually starts to pick up people and move them around. And like, as you're getting to the front of the ship, there's basically like a line dancing party, because he's got everybody in a big square together.

Teej: Nice.

Tass: Nice, yeah.

Rev: [sings] Heel, toe, do-si-do ...

All: [laugh]

Tass: It's the only other words he knows.

Rev: It just starts playing out of his mouth.

So the three of you hop off the front of the ship, and the fog is very dense here. What are you doing?

Teej: I want to look around for any tracks. Maybe this girl left some tracks on the sand we could follow.

Rev: Yeah. So roll Discern Realities.

Teej: I believe that is a nine.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Teej: What should I be on the lookout for?

Rev: As you move around this beach, you notice that you go about 100 yards in any direction and the fog gets so dense that you can't see through it. It's like there's a clear line that you step into a place where the fog is totally almost opaque. But then you step back and you can see the area that everyone is in. So it seems like you should be on the lookout for a clear path through.

Teej: OK. "Guys, look out for, like, fog that might be a little less thick. It seems like there's a ... Like a definite wall of fog, that if we step through it, we'll easily get lost. So we need to make sure that it's see through-able."

Tass: OK. Yeah. I want to look for those thinner spots and try to make my way through that.

Rev: All right. So Tass, roll Navigate the Mist. And this is gonna be 2d6 +Wisdom.

Tass: OK. Ten.

Rev: All right. So you get hold 2, and you can spend these hold: 1 point to see a vision in the mist, 2 points to return to a location you've already been to, or 3 points to find your way through the mist to a new location. And the way this move works is that points can be pooled. So if multiple people are trying to navigate the mist, you can pool the points together.

Tass: And I have two?

Rev: Correct.

Tass: OK.

Teej: Oh, OK. As I'm sort of defining the line of this fog wall, I want to take my flail and just kind of drag it along the ground where I feel like the wall would be, sort of to keep

like a border. So I know which way we're going. Sort of like breadcrumbs. And then I want to also try and find my way through the fog.

Rev: Roll Navigate the Mist.

Teej: That is an eight.

Rev: So you get a hold 1. A spasming hand comes out from the mist and grabs you. What are you doing?

Teej: I'm going to reel back and pull back on the hand.

Rev: Roll Defy Danger with Strength.

Teej: Ten.

Rev: Yeah. So you're able to pull backwards, and you pull this figure out of the mist. And there is this pale corpse spasming and twitching, its feet stomping, its arm shooting out to its sides, while its mouth clamps shut over and over. And as you see it movin, roll Danse Macabre: 2d6 +Wisdom.

Teej: Seven.

Rev: So you feel this start to get into your system. Your arms start to spasm, your mouth starts to clench. But it hasn't settled into you. So you have a -1 forward on your next action, but you'll be able to shake this off in a moment. And so Jake and Tass, you see T.J. dragging his flail along the fog, and what looks like a corpse comes out and grabs him, and he pulls it into the clearing. And you see that his body starts to mimic this dead body.

Tass: Oh good god, I want to try to throw my spear at it.

Rev: All right. Roll Volley.

Tass: OK. That is an even six.

Rev: Tass, roll Danse Macabre. And this again is 2d6 +Wisdom.

Tass: OK. Eight.

Rev: As you look at T.J. and you throw your spear, you know that you must have missed, because your arm is starting to do the same jerky motion, and you feel your head starting to slam side to side. And so you have a -1 for your next action as you try to shake this off.

Teej: It's a very hip hop dance going on here.

Rev: Very pop and lock.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: Jake, what are you doing?

Jake: So when I made off from the lair, I got my sword and I got my bag, but I did not bother to put on my armor.

Rev: Correct.

Jake: So I do not want to tangle with this thing. Or really, with anything.

Rev: [chuckles]

Jake: This is nothing that I know that I can do, but I want to sing a song. I want to try and redirect the thrall on this thing. Like whatever's making it dance, I want to make it dance instead, so that I can control what it's doing.

Rev: Yeah. So you open up your mouth, and you think back to the moment on the ship where you started to sing and the little girl's voice came out and everything started to move with her voice. And your voice comes out, and nothing happens.

Jake: OK. Then I would instead like to shoot it with an arrow. I don't think I'm going to magic my way through this one.

Rev: All right. Roll Volley.

Jake: Six.

Teej: [quietly] Oof.

Rev: Jake, roll Danse Macabre.

Jake: Christ. No. Five.

Rev: So Jake, you fire an arrow at this corpse that is dancing and shaking and jerking as it moves towards T.J., and you feel it start to come over you as well. And you are moving much more than Tass and T.J. Your bow clatters to the ground as your shoulders jerk and your legs start to jostle. You have a -1 ongoing to anything that requires precise movement.

Jake: Well, we had a good run, guys.

Rev: T.J., what are you doing?

Teej: I want to go ahead and bash the hell out of this thing with my flail.

Rev: All right. So roll Hack and Slash with a -1.

Teej: That's a seven.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Teej: That is also a seven.

Rev: And you take 6 points of damage, not armor-defeating. But you take a big chunk off of this corpse. You see the arm and part of the chest get knocked to the ground as you swing the flail. Tass?

Tass: I guess everybody's going to see what a ram with condor legs looks like.

Rev: All right. Roll Shapeshift.

Tass: That's a seven, with a -1, which brings us down to experience.

Rev: Yes. So you do turn into the ram, but you feel that this body is still twitching. And so I think that your -1 forward carries over again. What would you like to do?

Tass: I guess ... God, I guess I'm gonna try to just ram punt this thing back into the mist.

Rev: All right. Roll Hack and Slash.

Tass: -1, that brings me to a twelve.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Tass: Six.

Rev: Tass transforms into this bighorn ram and charges at this corpse and plows through it, and the pieces fall to the ground. And Jake, you are able to move normally again.

Jake: Oh, good. Is my -1 ongoing eliminated?

Rev: Correct.

Jake: Yes!

Tass: "Good god!"

Jake: "OK. Stay away from the edges."

Teej: Yeah. And so with that, I want to use the 3 hold to navigate through the fog.

Rev: So the three of you start to move through the fog. In the fog, you can hear the sounds of feet hitting the ground heavily, of bodies slamming together, of teeth chattering. But you do come out of the fog and you come out in a ring of trees. The grass here is long, but again, at the edges of your vision: dense fog.

Tass: OK. I want to look around and see if there's anything strange here. If a little girl is here, if there are like bones of some little girl or something like that. I'm just -- I'm looking for ghosty stuff.

Rev: So roll Discern Realities.

Tass: Oh my god, today! It's sixes all across the board.

Rev: So as you move along this grotto, you take 4 points of damage as something in the high grass starts to tear at your legs.

Tass: "Oh, god!"

Rev: What's everybody else doing?

Teej: I want to run over to Tass to see what's up with him.

Tass: "There's something there! Something in the grass!"

Teej: I want to look around in the grass to see if I see movement, and take a swing at it.

Rev: You do see movement. Roll Defy Danger with Dexterity to try to hit whatever is moving around in this high grass.

Teej: Boy, Dexterity. My weakness. Oh, not today. All right. That's an eleven.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Teej: Eight.

Rev: So you start to run towards Tass and you let your flail out, and you start whipping it around your head, letting it cut down into the high grass. And as your flail cuts through the high grass, there are a number of shrieks, and some blood comes up from the ground. And then the grass isn't moving.

Tass: Gross. I want to get down and see what he just smashed.

Rev: You see three or four little woodland animals. Like a rabbit, a squirrel, a opossum. And they have very thin bodies at very strange angles. And their teeth are all very sharp and their eyes are black.

Tass: "Oh, god. Yeah. Something here is even corrupting the animals. Man, I don't know what to do with this, guys. Like something needs to happen here, but I don't know what. Do we like keep going? Try to go back into the mist and go the opposite way? Try to like, get out to the other side or something?"

Jake: I mean, is there a path out the other side of this?

Rev: There is not.

Teej: We're just surrounded by fog, basically.

Jake: "I don't know. I mean, this doesn't seem like the source. You know? It seems like we need to get to whatever the source is, and then maybe we can do something about it

from there. So maybe we just keep trying to navigate this fog until we find something that isn't just a chipmunk and a rabbit trying to bite our legs."

Tass: "Yeah, I think we go back in."

Jake: "Sure."

Teej: "OK."

Rev: All right. Roll Navigate the Mist.

Tass: Nine.

Rev: So as you start to move around the outskirts of this grotto again, a hand reaches out from the fog and grabs you and tries to start pulling you in. But you do get a hold 1.

Tass: "Oh, god! We got another one." I think I just kind of want to drop and roll. I want to try to, like, roll out of its grasp, back into the clearing.

Rev: Yeah. Roll Defy Danger with Dexterity to try to get the slip on this grip.

Tass: Three.

Rev: The two of you see Tass vanish into the fog.

Teej: "Oh no! Oh, Jake. Oh no."

Jake: I want to try and follow after him, wherever he went. See if I can get eyes on him in the fog and get a hand on him, and get him back out.

Rev: All right. Roll Navigate the Mist.

Jake: Ten.

Rev: You get a hold 2.

Jake: But that's not enough to do what I want to do with.

Rev: Correct.

Jake: "T.J., I need your help."

Teej: "All right. Here I come." And I'm going to jump in where I see both of those guys disappear.

Rev: All right. Roll Navigate the Mist.

Teej: Four.

Rev: So as Jake starts to move towards the edge of the fog, T.J. joins him. And there is a loud scream from the center of the grotto, and all of the trees vanish. And floating in the center of the grotto is this wispy figure, with its head cocked dangerously to the side and its feet floating two or three inches above the ground. And it's just slowly swaying back and forth. And it looks at the two of you and starts to move in your direction.

Jake: I mean, I know that I can't go find Tass, so I'm going to trigger a vision.

Rev: So Jake, in this moment, you trigger a vision, and everything that you see shifts drastically. The trees are green. The sky is clear. T.J. is not there. Neither is this wispy form that was beginning to move towards him. And you see a little girl, and she has a toy in her hand and it has a flat bottom. And you can see that when she pushes the bottom of it, there's some kind of a spring mechanism, and a little figure on top jerks and hops side to side as she pushes the bottom. And she's laughing and giggling. And you see three or four animals come out from the tree line and start to watch. And she looks at them and she holds it out and starts squeezing it towards them. And as this toy dances, the animals start to shriek and jerk and jump in time with the toy. And then you're back in the fog filled grotto.

Jake: [sighs] OK. Were they the animals that we killed?

Rev: That'd be a safe assumption.

Jake: Is this spirit moving the same way?

Rev: It is not.

Jake: I'm going to address the spirit. Try and talk to it. Just, "Hey, what do you want?"

Rev: It points at you as you ask that question. And you take 2 points of damage as these tendrils come out from it and wrap around you and start to squeeze. T.J.?

Teej: I think I definitely want to protect Jake from this attack. So is there any way for me to slap those tendrils away or get in between them, or something?

Rev: Yeah. Roll Defend.

Teej: I got a twelve.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 3.

Teej: I would like to redirect an attack from the thing you defend to myself. And then I want to open up the attacker to an ally, giving that ally a +1 for it against the attacker. And I want to deal damage to the attacker equal to my level -- which in this case is four.

Rev: So T.J., you swing your flail around, and you throw it towards the tendrils that are coming at Jake. And so you take Jake's damage, but you have it. So you take 1 point of damage, armor-defeating. And as the metal touches the tendrils coming from this spirit, it recoils and turns its attention towards you.

Teej: I want to attack it full-on, if I can. I run up and just swing as hard as I can.

Rev: All right. Roll Hack and Slash.

Teej: That is a five.

Rev: You take 4 points of damage, not armor-defeating, as it opens its mouth and starts to stretch its mouth, as if it's trying to put you into it.

Tass: Good god!

Teej: Oh, lord. Help.

Rev: You don't take any damage. So yeah, Jake. You see that this spirit starts to stretch, and its maw opens and it starts to move as if it's going to swallow, T.J.

Jake: There are trees around, right?

Rev: Nope. They all vanished when this thing appeared.

Jake: Oh.

Rev: The grotto cleared.

Jake: I wanna put a fire arrow in its gullet.

Rev: All right. Roll Volley.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: All right. What is your consequence?

Jake: You have to move to get the shot, placing you in danger of the GM's choice.

Rev: So you draw the fire arrow and you fire it at this spirit that is opening its mouth to swallow T.J. And you sidestep, and as you let loose the arrow, your vision becomes engulfed by the fog. But your arrow does hit. Roll your damage.

Jake: Four.

Rev: And roll Navigate the Mist.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: You get a hold 1. T.J., you see an arrow fly in from the side and pass through this spirit, but you see that part of the wisps that are making it go with the arrow. And you turn to look where it was fired from, and Jake is not there.

Teej: Oh, shit. I'm going to turn around from where I saw Jake and I'm going to backhand swing this thing with my flail.

Rev: All right. Roll Hack and Slash.

Teej: That's an eleven.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Teej: Oh, and since this is the second time I'm attacking this thing, right?

Rev: It's true.

Teej: Oh, I get to do my ...

Rev: Your bonus damage.

Teej: My bonus damage. All right.

Rev: You could even do more damage if you want. I mean, it is an option with Hack and Slash.

Teej: How about fifteen?

Rev: Your flail swings around you and tears through this spirit three or four times, and it dissipates. And the hollow, and this grotto, is empty and silent.

Teej: I want to run to where I saw Jake last and jump into the fog, and hopefully grab him and pull him out again.

Rev: Roll Navigate the Mist.

Teej: OK. That's a seven.

Rev: All right. So you get a hold 1. How many collective hold do you all have?

Jake: I have 2 right now.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I have 1.

Teej: And I have 1. So that's a 4.

Rev: So right now you are all separated in the mist with 4 hold between you. What would you like to do?

Teej: Can I use the hold to navigate through the fog to find someone? Or is it just to find a clear path through?

Rev: Just to find a clearing.

Teej: Darn. I'm going to spend 3 of those hold to find my way out of this fog.

Rev: All right. So would you like to go to a location you've been to, or a new location?

Teej: I think a new location would be just peachy.

Rev: All right. So you travel through this fog for a moment, yelling Tass and Jake's names, and you come out to a meadow. And there is the embers of an old campfire and the structure of a derelict tent.

Teej: I'd like to look through the tent and see if there's anything inside.

Rev: All right. Roll Discern Realities.

Teej: Eight.

Rev: OK. You get a hold 1.

Teej: What here is useful or valuable to me?

Rev: So as you look around this little camp site, you sift through the embers and you look through the old beat up tent, and inside of it you find a small child's toy that has a flat bottom and a button and a little figure standing on top of it.

Teej: Does it look like the child?

Rev: It does not.

Teej: Or even the spirity wispy thing I took out earlier?

Rev: No. It kind of just looks like a stick figure.

Teej: Huh. OK. Very simple. I'm going to pocket that for right now, and then I'm going to go back into the fog.

Rev: All right. Jake, you are out in this fog. What would you like to do?

Jake: Not be.

Rev: That's fair. So roll Navigate the Fog.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: OK. You get a hold 1. So you're now back up to 2.

Jake: I'm going to go back to the beginning.

Rev: Yeah. So you wander through this mist for a couple moments, and you find yourself back on the beach. Tass, you were dragged kicking and screaming through this mist, and then the tension on your arm is gone and you're in a clearing. What would you like to do?

Tass: I'm immediately looking around for whatever might have had me, to see if anything's close.

Rev: So you sit up and start to look around and you see a couple of trees, you see a stream, and you see a field on the other side of the stream. And across the stream in the field, you see four of these corpses that you saw attacking T.J. And they are doing their grotesque jerky dance, feet pounding the ground, arms darting this way and that. And the little ghost girl is in the middle of them, laughing and clapping.

Tass: How much like foliage and stuff is here? Is this pretty open with a couple of trees? Or are there bushes? Is there anything else like that?

Rev: On this side, there are trees and bushes next to the stream. And the other side is more like an open field with grass that's maybe five or six inches tall.

Tass: OK. I think I want to try to Shapeshift. I'm using Thing-Talker, and essentially go down to like a bush, so that I can creep sneakily closer to get a better view of what's going on. So that I can maybe kind of incognito spy a little bit.

Rev: All right, roll it.

Jake: This feels like a Monty Python sketch.

Tass: I know. Damn every thing that exists. Five. So I get 1 hold.

Teej: But you also get one experience.

Tass: [laughs] I guess.

Rev: So I think what happens is that you shift into a tree instead.

Tass: [laughs] Good.

Jake: With condor legs.

All: [laugh]

Tass: Just a couple of the branches are just conspicuously ...

Rev: And so you can try to sneak up to this, but it's gonna be a little more difficult because you're not a, you know, 2 foot tall bush, but you are like a 14 foot tall tree.

Tass: [sighs]

Jake: Like you've made of the moving up on it much harder. But the hiding in plain sight? Excellent.

Rev: You're like one of the cactus guys in Super Mario.

Tass: Oh, for god's sake. I'm going to try.

Rev: All right. So how are you doing this? Are you trying to do it slowly and carefully? Are you waiting till she is looking another way? How are you doing this exactly? Just running straight at her and falling?

Jake: I was gonna say, just fall over like you've been struck by lightning.

Tass: [laughs] God, I think it is. I think it has to be that kind of sneaky, slow and steady. Like, I'm just trying to wait for those moments where I don't think she's looking. And, you know, root step, root step.

Rev: All right. So I'm going to have you roll Defy Danger with Wisdom. I think this is going to be ... Oh, I'm going to have you roll Defy Danger with Intelligence.

Tass: Shit.

Rev: Oh, were you happier before?

Tass: [laughs] Yes, I was. Oh, good. Here we go ... Oh, that still gets me a nine.

Rev: OK. So you can sneak up to the very edge of the river and get a good view of what's going on on the other side in this circle. But some of the corpses dancing with her, she's going to send back out into the mist, which means they will be out there to deal with. She's going to move her little party around one of the trees -- and I'll roll at random which one it is -- but they're going to do like a maypole.

Tass: [laughs] OK ...

Rev: Around a tree. Or after you gather some information, she's going to notice the out of place tree, and for lack of a better terms? Reset all the environments.

Tass: Oh, god. I ... Maypole me.

Rev: All right. So pick your number, one through six.

Tass: Let's go with a dirty old four.

Rev: OK. It's a six. So she vanishes from the middle of the circle as she's giggling, and she appears at another tree about 20 feet from you. And she starts laughing and clapping, and you see all of these corpses shamle through the field and across the river and to the tree, and start moving around the tree in that jerky fashion. Roll Discern Realities, now that they are up close.

Tass: That's an eleven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 3.

Tass: What here's useful or valuable to me?

Rev: So the first thing that you notice is that there is this strange black energy that is coming up through the ground into these bodies. And it doesn't seem to be emanating from the little girl, but that they are tethered to this place somehow. And I think with that knowledge that they are not tethered to her, you notice that the motions they're making as they move around her? If she were physical, if she were there, they would be grasping her and pulling her. But she's not there. And so they're missing.

Tass: In that case, could I ask who's really in control here?

Rev: You start to look closer at these moving corpses, and what you mistook for energy a moment ago almost seems like earthworms or roots, or something that is moving along

the ground underneath them, animating them. And all of those lines running from these creatures goes back through the river, across the field, and into the mist.

Tass: Is there any way for me to justify what happened here recently?

Rev: Yeah, I think that we could translate that into one of the mist points that lets you see a vision of the past.

Tass: Oh, OK.

Rev: So everything around you vanishes. And there is the clear bubbling stream. There is the field of green grass, the bushes, and the trees. And you see the little girl, and there is a man kneeling down in the water and he's got what looks like a pan that you would try to suss through the stones to find gold. And there is a woman who is scraping off a fish. And the little girl is playing in the water, and she moves across to the far side of the stream. And just on the horizon, you can see a figure moving in that strange, twitchy, spasming movement. And then two. And then three. And as it gets closer, it rises to its full height. And you can see this creature made out of dozens of bodies, moving towards the family very quickly.

Tass: God!

Rev: Jake, you are back at the beach. What would you like to do?

Jake: First thing, I want to get back on the boat and find someone who is wearing armor who clearly doesn't need it right now, and borrow it.

Rev: Yeah, no problem. What is your armor normally?

Jake: It's leather armor. It's just 1-armor.

Rev: OK. Yeah, I think you can find that, no problem.

Jake: Man. I'm trying to think if there's anything I can do on this boat, like, to be any better prepared for this. Like, before I go back into the mist that we should have done this, or I should've grabbed this. But ...

Tass: I feel like if you set the boat on fire, that would be a lot of light that would kind of pierce through the mist.

Jake: Mm hmm. Interesting. Well, I'm not one to question orders.

All: [laugh]

Jake: Like I don't think Grimby will fare any better out here, or anything. I don't think he's going to provide any advantage. So I don't think taking him with is gonna help. Yeah, I guess I'm just gonna try and head back in, just a little bit more steeled for what's happening here. Like, I want to get a torch out of my adventuring gear and light it. Just, you know, like have that in hand and have a sword in hand. Like, I am aware of the threats that are coming from the mist now. I want to ready myself for them.

Rev: All right. So roll Navigate the Mist. And with this source of light, give yourself a +1.

Jake: OK.

Tass: Ooh.

Teej: Nice.

Jake: Nine.

Rev: All right. So you get a hold 1.

Jake: I feel like I need to understand what the hell happened. Like, we can't fix it if we don't know what it is. So I'm going to strand everybody a little bit longer, but I'm going to spend that to trigger a vision.

Rev: So the beach clears, and what appears before you is clear waves and yellow sand. And there a boat, very small, that beaches here. And a man and a woman and a small girl get off of the boat, and they have very large backpacks filled with supplies. You see a tent. And the little girl runs around on the beach and she's laughing as the parents unload the boat. And she stops and she looks down into the sand, and you see the head and the arm of a little stick figure sticking out of the sand. And she starts to dig. And what comes out is a child's toy with a flat bottom and a little button. And she starts to push the button on the bottom, and the figure starts to dance. And she laughs and she turns:.

Rev: LITTLE GIRL: Look, daddy. Look. It dances!

Rev: And then everything is grey again.

Jake: Can I find that spot on the beach where she dug up the toy?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I assume the toy is not there anymore?

Rev: Correct.

Jake: But is it like freshly dug?

Rev: Roll Discern Realities.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: You get a hold 1.

Jake: What happened here recently?

Rev: You start to shift through the sand. And what you find almost looks like a tree root, but it's fleshy and wet, buried underneath the sand.

Jake: I want to poke this gross root.

Rev: You poke it and it recoils a little bit, and pulls its way underneath the sand.

Jake: OK. I think that what I'm going to do is follow it. Is like dig and poke and follow, and dig and poke and follow. Like, if it keeps recoiling, I want to see where it's recoiling to.

Rev: It recoils to the edge of the mist. And I think you dig far enough that you realize if you poke it again, it's going to vanish into the mist. So I imagine Jake on the beach with this 25, 30 foot long trench dug. Where he has dug a little bit, poked it, dug a little bit, poked it. And it has receded right up to the edge of the mist. So T.J., you have started to move back towards the mist. Roll Navigate the Mist.

Teej: Seven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1. As you start to move around the mist, one of these jerky corpse dancers comes out from the mist and starts to move toward you. Roll Danse Macabre.

Teej: Nine.

Rev: All right. So you, again, feel this come over you. You start to jerk and twist and spasm. And so you have a -1 forward.

Teej: I want to see if it will communicate. "Where did you take my friend?"

Rev: You take 7 points of damage as it grabs a hold of you and sinks its teeth into your shoulder.

Teej: Then I want to slam it on the ground and smash it with my flail.

Rev: All right. Roll Hack and Slash.

Teej: I don't put up with that. Except I do, because ...

Jake: [laughs]

Teej: I got a six.

Rev: Yeah. I think holding true to what happened with Tass, you take 3 points of damage, not armor-defeating, but the dance is still on you. And so you have a -1 forward still for your next action.

Teej: I want to throw this thing on the ground and smash it with my flail.

Rev: OK. Roll Hack and Slash.

Teej: That's an eleven.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Teej: Eight.

Rev: You spin your flail around and you take this zombie's head clear off, and it tumbles to the ground.

Teej: Yeah! Um, now that I have a bit of a clear vision of this zombie-looking thing, is there anything on it that I can track back to where it came?

Rev: Roll Discern Realities.

Teej: That's a ten.

Rev: You get a hold 3.

Teej: What here is useful or valuable to me?

Rev: So as the corpse falls to the ground, you notice that running along the dirt is this root, but it looks like it's made of wet meat. And it is in this corpse's foot, and it releases and starts to retreat back into the mist.

Teej: I want to dive and grab for this meat tendril thing and see if it pulls me with it.

Rev: Yeah. I don't think that there is a roll required for this. It is moving backwards pretty slowly. You've got 2 hold left on your Discern Realities. You jump forward and you grab a hold of this root as it recoils back into the mist, and it pulls you out of the clearing. Tass, you still have these corpses and this little spirit dancing near you.

Tass: Oh, boy. I guess I should see how fast I can drop tree form, and turn into something fast and sprint into the mist before they realize I'm there.

Rev: All right. So I think Defy Danger with Dexterity.

Tass: OK. That is an eleven.

Rev: Yeah. So roll your Shapeshift.

Tass: And that is an eleven.

Rev: All right. So you get hold 3, and you drop to the ground. What do you turn into?

Tass: I think it needs to be like a squirrel. You know, something small and low and fast.

Rev: And you dart back out into the mist. Roll Navigate the Mist.

Tass: Hoo, boy. Ooh, eight.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1. So that gives you 2 hold total. What would you like to do?

Tass: I think my thought here is, you know, I have a sort of a direction -- at least from that spot in my head -- that that tendril was going in a certain direction. But I'm not confident that I can find it right now, now that I think I've jumped into the mist. So I think I want to try to track back to the beginning and see if I can get my bearings from there.

Rev: Jake, you were standing there staring into the mist, and a rabid looking squirrel darts out of the mist toward you.

Jake: I stomp on it.

All: [laugh]

Jake: We just got attacked by woodland creatures.

Rev: Yup. Yeah, it looks just like one of them.

Tass: I headbutt his ankle with my horns.

Rev: That's fair.

Jake: "Oh, it's you."

Tass: "Oh, god. Hey."

Jake: I'll put down a hand so he can scurry up onto my shoulder.

Tass: And I will.

Jake: "OK. Here's two of us. Do you know what happened to T.J.?"

Tass: "No idea. I got yanked in while you guys were together."

Jake: "OK. I've had a couple of visions, here."

Tass: "Me too."

Jake: "So what I've seen is the little girl -- and I guess her parents -- made landfall here in a boat, and she found a toy. And it seems like, uh ... Have you seen, like, the flesh tentacles?"

Tass: "Yes. Yes. They're like -- I think they're controlling the zombies."

Jake: "OK. It seems like one of them, like, presented this to her, almost. She found this toy in the sand and it was being like held up by a tendril. I don't know if that was by design, or if like whatever the tendrils are just had this thing and it happened to be where she found it, or if it was like deliberately giving it to somebody. I don't know."

Tass: "Good Lord."

Jake: "But she got this toy, and then the next thing I saw was the area where we got attacked by the animals? Was her playing with that toy. And it's like a little dancing stickman. And it made them, like ... I mean, it made them dance, but it seemed, like, terrible. It seemed like painful and perverse. So it seems like whatever that thing is, it ensnares or enthralls, or like somehow controls creatures to dance."

Tass: "I saw things coming for the family. I saw them, too. The dad was panning for gold. And there was like a meat monster. It was like a big creature made out of more bodies coming towards them. And I could see the vines and stuff -- or whatever they are -- coming down from the creature. She was in a little clearing with a creek, and she was making several of those zombies dance."

Jake: "So it seems like there's something already here?"

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah. Big time."

Jake: "And it, like ... Not took her, but like used her?"

Tass: "Maybe."

Jake: "I mean, I don't really know where to go physically from here, other than diving back into the mist and just hoping we find a path that matters."

Tass: "All right, let's do it."

Rev: All right. So the two of you step back into the mist. Roll Navigate the Mist.

Jake: Ten.

Tass: Twelve.

Rev: All right. So the two of you step out into the mist, and you have 4 hold. What would you like to do?

Jake: Go somewhere new.

Rev: T.J., you are being drug through this mist as you cling on to this ... For lack of a better term, we're going to keep calling it a meat root. And you come out of the mist into a tunnel, underground. And the root is able to squirm out of your hands and pull itself further into the tunnel and into the darkness.

Teej: Is there fog here?

Rev: Yes. But only behind you, covering what you assume is the entrance to this tunnel.

Teej: OK. I'm going to explore further into the tunnel then, and see if I can find the root of this evil.

Jake: How did it take us this long to get to that joke?

Teej: I don't know.

Jake: I don't know. We're slipping.

Tass: Yeah, it's bad.

Rev: All right. So as you quietly sneak down, roll Defy Danger with Dexterity to try to be silent.

Teej: That's when it all went to shit. Five.

Rev: T.J., you start to creep forward, but it is very dark in here. And you trip and take a tumble, and you realize that this tunnel is at a much harsher angle than you realized. And you roll and hit at the bottom of this tunnel, and you hear ... [growls] You start to hear this thumping sound of something large moving in the darkness.

Teej: "Grimby?"

Jake: [laughs] 'How did you get here?'

Rev: Timing wise, I think this works out. Tass and Jake, you come out of the mist into this tunnel, and you hear the sound of something churning and breathing. And you hear, in the darkness, T.J. say, "Grimby?"

Jake: Oh, shit.

Tass: I want to trigger a vision.

Rev: So both of you see this, since you are touching. So the two of you get this shared vision, since you are in physical contact with one another. And you see the little girl, and she is walking down this tunnel with a torch. And she has the toy in her hand, and she's pushing the button. And it's moving and jerking. And one of these flesh roots comes out of the darkness from further into the tunnel, and it's almost moving like a viper, the way that it's moving side to side and watching her. She pushes the button, and the toy dances. And the tentacle starts to mimic the move. And it folds on itself and squeezes, and you see the end of the tentacle comes off and falls to the ground. Then the tentacle moves down towards it, and nudges it to the little girl. And she looks at it, confused. And then the figure on the toy starts to move without her pushing the button, and it leans down and opens up a tiny compartment on the flat base of the toy between its feet. And inside is a putrefied piece of meat. And she looks at it, and she takes it out and she throws it to the ground, disgusted by the smell of it. And the tentacle nudges the fresh meat towards her, and you see her head tilt as if she's hearing a voice. And you all hear the voice.

Rev: SINISTER VOICE: They'll all dance with you. Oh, how they'll dance.

Rev: And she giggles, and she picks it up and she puts it inside. And the little figure on top reaches down and closes the compartment. And then you're back in the tunnel.

Tass: "Ok. So first thought: we find that toy and destroy that. Right?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: "Actually, that should have been my second thought. Here's what should have been my first: T.J.? You OK, buddy?"

Rev: So I think with Tass asking that question into the darkness, we move down the tunnel to T.J. sitting in the dark, and the sound is getting closer and closer to you. It is heavy breathing and wet footsteps.

Teej: I'm going to pull out my torch.

Rev: Your torch illuminates. And before you you see, standing fifteen, sixteen feet high, a humanoid figure made out of dozens of bodies. And there are roots coming off of it from its feet to the ground, and spreading out into the earth. And it lets out a roar and lunges at you.

Teej: I want to dodge out of the way.

Rev: All right. Roll Defy Danger with Dexterity.

Teej: An eight.

Rev: All right. So you can get out of the way. But it's going to get between you and the tunnel's entrance, or it's going to start moving up the tunnel towards the sound of your friends' voices, or it's going to summon help.

Teej: I think it's gonna get between me and the entrance.

Rev: So yeah. Tass, you yell out, and you hear this roar. And some light appears, and then it's pretty dark again -- like the light is being blocked. What are you guys doing?

Jake: I want to, like, knock a fire arrow without drawing it. And then I want to take the torch and toss it the length of this hallway. And then draw an arrow and wait to see, like, if this illuminates something, I'm gonna shoot.

Tass: I am squirrel poised and ready.

Jake: It's my favorite Dixie Chicks song.

All: [laugh]

Rev: So you throw the torch down this tunnel, and it is a pretty steep decline. But you do see, blocking the exit into what you assume must be a much larger room, is a writhing mass of bodies that are making up a larger body.

Tass: While he's moving down the tunnel and kind of doing this, can I be focusing down on my communion of whispers now?

Rev: Oh, yeah. How does that work again?

Tass: So now that I have spent time in a place, making note of its resident spirits and so forth ... Yeah, I essentially call on them to be granted a vision.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Tass: It's an eleven.

Rev: All right. What kind of vision do you get?

Tass: I will be granted a vision of significance to you, my allies, or the spirits around me. On a 10+, the vision will be clear and helpful.

Rev: Yeah. So as you see this creature down the hallway, which you have seen in a vision, you get another vision. And it is of this underground tunnel. And there is an enormous crack in the earth, and this formless goo comes out of the crack in the earth and it starts going up through cracks in the earth. And your vision follows it as it goes through the dirt, and then breaks through the dirt into an open space. And there's something hard blocking it. And it hits it and hits it, and it breaks through. And there's a body, and it starts to wrap around the body. And we pan out, and we see, almost like a dissection of the earth, that this thing has come out underneath a cemetery, and is breaking through all the coffins and collecting the bodies and pulling them back down into the cave, as the bodies start to move and twitch.

Tass: God. Can I attempt to Spout Lore on this, and see what the hell exactly this is?

Rev: Absolutely. Roll it.

Tass: Oh, thank god. Seven.

Rev: So I think the interesting thing that you know is that abominations in this world exist. They are creatures made up of many bodies, and they are normally created by, like, a necromancer. This one seems to be primal or primordial. It came from inside of the earth and collected these bodies and formed itself, instead of being formed.

Tass: OK.

Rev: So Jake, you throw your torch down this tunnel. And sure enough, you see a giant creature composed of other bodies. And there are faces looking at you from the back, and just opening their mouth soundlessly.

Jake: I want to bury a fire arrow in it.

Rev: All right. Roll Volley.

Tass: [chuckles] Oh, no.

Jake: Five.

Rev: You fire the arrow. And as you let loose, you get pulled off of your feet as one of these flesh roots wraps around your foot and starts to pull you down the tunnel towards it.

Tass: Squeak!

Rev: Yeah. So Tass, what are you wanting to do? He all of a sudden is off balance, and is being pulled to the ground.

Tass: OK. OK. Hear me out.

Rev: No.

All: [laugh]

Rev: I refuse. No.

Teej: You are a squirrel, and you deal with.

Tass: I want to leap off of his shoulder as he's falling, onto the meat root and try to just bite clean through it.

Rev: OK. Roll Hack and Slash.

Tass: Nine.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Tass: Three.

Rev: See you bite ahold of this. And it does let go of Jake, but it whips around and smacks you, and you take 3 points of damage as well. T.J.?

Teej: I would like to take my torch and shove it as far into this thing as possible, if it has any gaps or anything, and try and catch it ablaze.

Rev: Yeah. You can thrust this torch forward and do some fire damage to it. So roll Defy Danger with Dexterity to try to get this into a gap of the bodies, and get at the kind of flesh mound that's underneath.

Teej: All right.

Rev: [sighs] This is just a horror show of words.

Tass: [laughs]

Teej: Well, it is Halloween, so.

Rev: That's true.

Teej: That is an eight.

Rev: All right. So you can get the torch between the bodies making up this monster and strike at its core. But you're going to lose the light from the torch as the flames go inside of the creature and don't spread outside, or you're going to drop something important and not realize it, or it's going to turn and leave you because you have hurt it badly -- and start to go after your friends.

Teej: I'm going to lose the light, then.

Rev: All right. So you'll have -1 ongoing while you're fighting in the dark. So roll the damage for that, which is going to be a d8 -- but it will be armor-defeating.

Teej: Oh, nice. Five.

Rev: As you thrust your torch forward, the goo inside of this creature ignites. And it lets out a roar, and there is smoke coming from inside that smells putrid and rotten. Jake?

Jake: "Tass, can you go, like, look around and either try and find the girl or the toy or something?" And I'm just going to keep picking at this thing.

Tass: OK. So I will try to like dart past it. Like through its legs or something, to get deeper down into the cave.

Rev: All right. Roll Defy Danger with Dexterity.

Tass: Oh, Jesus. Seven.

Teej: [sighs in relief]

Rev: Yeah. So you can get past it. But it is going to, in trying to strike out at you, strike one of your teammates, you're going to exhaust yourself from the movement and have a -1 forward, or you're going to draw its attention. Like you will get past it safely, but it is going to have eyes on you now.

Tass: I think I'm exhausted.

Rev: All right. So you are now in the dark with this creature. And T.J., somewhere. Jake?

Jake: I want to scream a Deafening Note.

Rev: Roll it.

Jake: That would have worked a couple sessions ago. [chuckles] Six.

Rev: How much damage does that do?

Jake: d10.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Jake: Two.

Rev: All right. So is that armor-defeating?

Jake: I would assume it's armor-defeating. It is hurting your ears.

Rev: Yeah. All right. So everybody takes 2 points of armor-defeating damage as Jake's scream echoes through this tunnel.

Jake: [high pitched cry] That's sort of what it sounds like.

Teej: [echoes it]

Jake: But very loud. [high pitched cry]

Rev: T.J.?

Teej: I want to take a swing at the creature, the abomination, and see if I can take it out.

Rev: All right. Roll Hack and Slash.

Teej: Nine.

Rev: All right. Roll your damage.

Teej: Four.

Rev: So you spin your flail around and you swing it into the abomination. And it steps backwards as you hit it and swings back at you, knocking you to the ground. And you take 8 points of damage. Tass?

Tass: First thing I need to do is drop my -- the rest of my hold.

Rev: OK.

Tass: And then I want to use one of my charges for my adventure kit for a torch.

Rev: All right. So you turn back into your halfling form and you reach into your bag and draw out a torch.

Tass: "OK T.J., we're looking for like a toy." And I want to start looking around to see if this cave goes any deeper, or if there's any way that I could try to spot this thing.

Rev: So as you look around this room with the torch, it is maybe 50 feet around, and there is nothing down here.

Tass: "Shit."

Teej: "I have a toy." And I pull it out of my pocket and I throw it to him.

Tass: "Oh, shit!" I guess I'll catch it, and I want to smash it on the ground.

Rev: All right. So you smash this on the ground and it shatters, and there's a little piece of meat inside of it.

Tass: I'm going to stomp on it.

Rev: Roll d4 for your damage.

Tass: Three.

Rev: Yeah. You stomp your heel down on this piece, and it's like stomping an earthworm. It just goes underneath your foot.

All: [laugh]

Rev: And the abomination roars and shudders and then collapses to the ground, and all of the pieces making it up fall apart, separate, no longer clung together. And all the meat tendrils coming out of it dry up and shrivel.

Teej: "Yeah!"

Jake: "Is that it? Is this ... Is that the end?"

Tass: "I don't know."

Jake: Is the mist still like at the end of the tunnel behind us?

Rev: You turn and you look up to the tunnel. And yes, there is still mist in the tunnel.

Jake: "I don't know if this was it. I mean, I'm sure this was an important step. But like, where's the little girl?"

Tass: "I don't know. I saw her back in the little meadow that had the creek and she was like making the zombies dance. But they were still attached to this thing, I think. If she is some kind of ghost or spirit or whatever, I don't know what's tethering her here. So there doesn't seem to be anything left in here. So out we go?"

Jake: "I guess so. We still need to find her, I think. The actual her."

Tass: "OK."

Teej: Yeah. And we'll head back on up through the tunnel.

Jake: She's not like among the pile of bodies that this thing just collapsed into, is she?

Rev: She's not.

Jake: Are the parents?

Rev: They are.

Teej: [gasps]

Jake: [groans]

Tass: Yeah. That's sad.

Jake: Yeah. Into the mist, then.

Rev: Where would you like to go?

Tass: Last I saw her was a clearing with the creek.

Jake: OK.

Rev: All right. So the three of you step out into the mist, and you appear at the creek.

Tass: Oh.

Jake: No confusion?

Rev: No.

Jake: Huh. Is there a little ghost girl here?

Rev: There's not.

Jake: Well, beans.

Tass: I'll go over to where I knew that she was dancing with the zombies, and even by that tree where I last saw her.

Rev: Roll Discern Realities.

Tass: Eight.

Rev: You get a hold 1.

Tass: What here's useful or valuable to me?

Rev: As you go through the creek to get over to the field, you walk by some pretty large stones and you notice that there is a small set of bones inside of this creek, next to the field.

Tass: "Oh, guys. Come here."

Jake: "Is that her?"

Tass: "I mean, probably."

Teej: Well, if anything, all we got to do is bury the bones. Give it a proper burial, like we used to do back on Earth."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "OK." I'll gather up those bones, and ... "Well, I don't have anything with which to dig a hole."

Tass: "I can probably take care of that." And I'll try to go down to like a coyote form.

Jake: "Here? Maybe under that tree?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "Like no spot here seems any less touched by tragedy than another. You know, she was happy it seemed like in most of these spots, until horror struck. So ..."

Tass: "Yeah, I agree."

Rev: All right. So Tass turns into a coyote and starts to dig a hole near this tree. And after a couple of moments, Jake fishes all of the bones out of the water and moves them over to the hole. And the little girl appears, and she watches as you place the bones into the hole and bury them. And she looks at you all and she smiles.

Rev: LITTLE GIRL: I liked to dance, but sometimes too much of something that you love can be a bad thing.

Jake: I want to walk over to her and just kind of kneel down and go, "I bet one more for the road won't hurt." And I want to hold a hand out to her.

Rev: And she reaches out and she puts her hand just over yours. And you get the sense that if she were to touch your hand, it would pass through, but she's trying to keep the illusion for herself that it's possible. And Tass and T.J. look on as Jake slowly spins with this girl and the mist starts to fade away. And then we see T.J. and Tass start to flicker, and they fade away as well. And the camera pans around, and we see the island and the sea and the ship all flicker and dim, and become indistinguishable blurs. And the camera falls back, and the only thing remaining is the only thing we can clearly see: Jake, standing and smiling. And then a dark haze slowly starts to appear around his eyes, and the surroundings around him start to shift and become clear. And we find ourselves looking at Jake standing in the middle of the laboratory, dark energy flowing around his body as he babbles to himself and twitches, his eyes distant. And in a nearby chair, closely watching and taking notes, is Estin, the Soul Trap standing placidly behind him in the corner of the room.

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.