

The Mysterious Depths (S2, E19)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Yeah, that's a good noise. You hear that sound? That's the sound of Jake shaking up the entries so we can draw the winner for the Halloween costume contest. Jake and I are actually here alone right now because ... Well, we couldn't record the intro when we normally do because we were waiting for the deadline for the costume contest to come to an end. And so Jake is over here, and we're preparing for Acade -- no, AcadeCon.

Jake: Asady-Con!

Rev: Asady-Con! For AcadeCon, and realized that we should record this intro before the episode goes out. Just a couple things before we get to the drawing. If you head over to our Reddit page -- r/TheCritshow -- Syndactyl, one of our mods over there, is doing an art contest. He's going to try to run this I think every two months, and there will be a theme and the prize will go along with the theme. And the theme this month is Werewolf T.J. And the prize, I believe, a Monarchs of the Moon shirt. So if you head over to our subreddit, you can find all the details for the art contest there. And if you haven't subbed on Reddit, you should do it anyway, because there's some other cool stuff that gets added there.

Jake: And please try not to draw him too muscular. Like I know it's hard not to draw T.J. super buff and muscular like he is in real life, but just try and keep him lean. You know, he doesn't feel comfortable when people really highlight his bulging powerful muscles.

Rev: Yeah. More werewolf-like, less ...

Jake: And less just mortal man T.J.

Rev: Yeah, yeah.

Jake: Greek god-like.

Rev: Yeah. Less were-Hulk T.J.

All: [laugh]

Rev: So yeah, you can head over to the subreddit to find out all about that, and that contest runs until the end of this month. Also, we'd like to welcome our new patrons: Ben Chill, Benjamin M., Zachary M. and Lorne A. So Jake, let's draw this name. We got a good chunk of entries this year. A lot of animals.

Jake: All right. One more shake.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Good foley.

Rev: One more shake, and then a sensible dinner.

Jake: [laughs] And the winner is ... Oh, they're Post-Its. Oh. Oh, they're glued together.

Rev: It is. I made it impossible to hack this ballot.

Jake: And the winner is John W.

Rev: Oh, John! John entered the costume contest. He was the blue d20 from our logo.

Jake: [laughs] That's excellent.

Rev: Yeah. Yeah. So congratulations, John.

Jake: Congratulations, John.

Rev: I believe I already have John's address. So we will get that hoodie to you in the mail very soon.

Jake: Sounded creepier than I think you meant for it to.

Rev: Yeah. John is ...

Jake: [creepy] I know where John lives.

Rev: [laughs] John is in one of the Chosen tiers, so. So thank you, everybody who entered. We love seeing all the different costumes that were sent in, especially all the adorable pet costumes. And with that, it's time to get into the episode.

SFX:

CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: We find ourselves in Estin's lab. Jake has picked up his blade and moves silently towards Estin as Estin examines the Soul Trap. We know what happens next. We've already seen it once. Jake pierces Estin through the back, and finds that it has little effect. Estin spins around and engulfs Jake in dark energy. But instead of the Soul Trap coming to his rescue and ushering him to the teleportation room, the moment the dark energy washes over Jake, his eyes go distant. He drops his weapon and starts to mutter to himself. Estin takes a moment to examine Jake, and then moves to the center table, gathering a few items and sets them on the ground in a pattern around him, then sits at his desk and begins to take notes. Over the next few hours, Jake becomes more animated. Drawing an imaginary bow, waving a torch that isn't there, shouting through the room at unseen allies ... Even slowly dancing at one point, as his body acts out the dream state that he's entrapped in. After a while, Estin looks satisfied, turns back to his desk, and starts to write.

So Jake, you are dancing with this small ghost girl. And this weird vertigo comes over you, and your eyes get hazy and blurry for a moment. And then they clear, and you're back in Estin's lab. And he is sitting at a desk with his back to you, writing.

Jake: I mean I pulled off my plan, like almost to perfection, and it clearly didn't help. So I think I'm gonna take a moment to kind of resolve what just happened in my brain.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I think I get it.

Rev: Yeah. That you thought that you were free, and something happened, and --

Jake: Yeah. And it seems like that was all, you know, vision or an illusion or something. So I guess I'm just gonna speak up. "Hey, was that ... Did you put me in a magic trance? Did everything that just happened to me not happen?"

Rev: ESTIN: Oh! Oh, you're awake.

Rev: And he turns around and looks at you from his desk.

Rev: ESTIN: Yes, that's quite accurate. You seemed to be aggressive towards me. So I just put you into a little bit of a ... Well, I wouldn't call it a trance. It's kind of a ... Mmm, torture is not the word I would use. It wasn't a bad thing. But it helps you calm down.

Releases good endorphins, makes you feel like you're doing the things that you want to be doing. The best version of what could happen probably happened for you, and it let me study you a little bit, and see exactly how you physically reacted to the things that made you happy, to joy. To see the energies that came off of you. As I said, you seem very strange, not quite from around here. I thought that there might be some interesting readings to be gotten off of you.

Jake: I'm just standing in this room? Am I like mobile?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: All right. I'm just gonna do a big, like, yawn and stretch. "Well, you put me on a ghost island with a terrifying girl. So not exactly the most joyous scenario."

Rev: ESTIN: Oh. Did you save the day?

Jake: "Uh ... Yeah."

Rev: ESTIN: Well, there you are. [giggles]

Jake: "What'd you learn?"

Rev: ESTIN: Oh, I learned that there's something extra about you.

Jake: "Yeah, I am extremely extra."

All: [laugh]

Rev: ESTIN: Oh girl, don't I know it.

All: [laugh]

Rev: ESTIN: You have a capacity for endurance unlike anyone I've ever seen. Most people would stay inside of that vision for days, weeks, months. We've only been in it for a couple of hours.

Jake: God, really?"

Rev: ESTIN: Yes.

Jake: "So what now? Are you gonna put me back in? Or are we gonna talk? Or do you need to hear anything from me? I don't -- I'm just curious about what your process is. You know, your methods."

Rev: ESTIN: Oh, well, there are any number of tests I could put you through to see how your body reacted, your mind, which direction it would bend to before it broke. I always find that very fascinating.

Jake: "Mmhmm. Me too."

Tass: Sonic Scream.

Jake: [laughs] No, I'm pretty resolved to the fact that I cannot fight this guy. I live with this man, now. [laughs] I don't know what to do! I want to look at, like, the stuff around me and see if I ... See if I can understand like what exactly he did to me. Like, he explained that he put me in a vision. But like, I know that there's shit on the ground around me and I saw this black energy. I want to see if, from observing that and thinking about it, do I know what exactly that was?

Rev: Yeah. So as you look around, the thing that, I think with the conversations you've had and the stuff that you've studied, the thing that you notice is that on the ground, what is around you are a couple of the very small white gems. The ones that you know deal with life.

Jake: I don't know what to do, man. I don't --

Rev: [laughs]

Jake: I'm trying to think of what to do. But all I can think is just to walk back to my cage and shut the door behind me.

Tass: [laughs]

Jake: "You know, I know an Estin. He was a lot like you."

Rev: ESTIN: Oh, is that why you're ... [gasps] Are you from another ... Another world?

Jake: "No, no. I just know an Estin. Like, another person with the name Estin."

Rev: ESTIN: Oh. Is that so?

Jake: "Yeah. Who's similar ... No, another world? What?"

Rev: ESTIN: There are many other worlds. I have been given gifts through many of them. I have travelled to them. Not for long, because the body does not take well to being exposed to new places that it was not built for. It'd be like going into the vacuum of space.

Jake: "Like where?"

Rev: ESTIN: Oh ... [giggles] Come. Come here. Come, sit. Come sit.

Rev: And he stands up and he moves next to the desk, and gestures to the chair.

Jake: I'll go sit at the desk.

Rev: And as you sit down, he pulls out a very large tome and he starts to flip through the pages. And he starts showing you drawings and sketches of different land masses, of different creatures, of different people, items. It is like he has made a catalogue of all the things he has seen, and they are all labeled with different numbers at the top.

Jake: Do any of them look like Earth?

Rev: They do not. You know the number for Earth, and you don't see it in the numbers at the top of these pages as you flip through.

Jake: "This is a hell of a thing."

Rev: ESTIN: Yes. It changed my perception of the world, and how I see everything in it and around it.

Jake: "So are you just in pursuit of knowledge? Is that just what you're going for? You want to learn?"

Rev: ESTIN: Yes. I want to learn. I want to understand. Understanding is often the key. It's often also the end goal.

Jake: "I mean, is it -- is it just for you?"

Rev: ESTIN: No. Now, it is just for me. It was ... Once, a man set me on a path to tell him the things that I had learned, and we would work together to understand some of the things out there in the universe. But he cast me aside when he thought he had found an easier method. And so now I ... I work alone. I will show them the things that they could not behold, and I will understand many of the answers around the worlds and the universes, all the way up into the infinite.

Jake: "You talking about Bennari?"

Rev: ESTIN: Yes. Yes. Bennari.

Jake: "OK. We can help each other, Estin. I also don't like Bennari."

Rev: ESTIN: Wait, really?

All: [laugh]

Tass: I have not been as creeped out by anything that has happened in this show as that two second response. Oh, God. I'm gonna see that in my fucking dreams. [Estin impression] "Really?" Fuck!

Jake: "Yeah. Really. What say we strike up an alliance? You stop experimenting on me, we talk about a way to take down Bennari together."

Rev: ESTIN: What assistance could you provide?

Jake: "Well granted, as you can clearly tell, I'm not as capable of a spell caster as you are. But I do come with a team."

Rev: ESTIN: Oh, what kind of team do you speak of?

Jake: "I've got a guy who smashes things, and a guy who is good with nature."

Rev: ESTIN: You would have to have people infinitely more powerful than yourselves, I imagine. You -- I like your spirit, the energy that your spirit puts off. But your form is weak and small.

Jake: "So put me back out there, coach. Let me go. Let me get out there. Adventure in the world. Power up. Put me back with my team, we all get stronger, we rendezvous, and we kick the shit out of Bennari."

Rev: Roll Parley.

Jake: Eleven.

Rev: ESTIN: Interesting. Hmmm ... Interesting. I could use an ally against someone like him, just to show him. I have put so much of my energies into simply learning things that he could not figure out without me, so that I could rub them in his grey face. But! But, a distraction as well to slow him down. Something to clog up the gears. But, this would not do. I would have to make improvements to you. It would be like pitting a kitten against a bear.

Jake: "What sort of improvements? For starters, might I recommend giving back whatever you took from me and putting a gem, when you initially trapped me? Because I feel shitty. Overall."

Rev: ESTIN: Yes. I think the improvement I would make for you, that little missing piece of yourself wouldn't matter.

Rev: And his eyes start to gaze across the room at the Soul Trap.

Tass and T.J., so we find you on the Scoundrel's Fortune, at the end of your first full day at sea.

Tass: Before we jump in, did we actually level up, since that was sort of pretend-y time?

Rev: OK. Yeah. So that's a good question. We should talk about this. So, yes. The two of you, at the end of this day, will have leveled up. This is the end of the day. You're getting ready to have a meal. You're getting ready to go to sleep. So if you have everything, which we've already actually gone through, yes, you do level up.

Tass: OK. Cool cool cool.

Rev: So is there anything you two want to do in particular this evening, before you head to bed to get up for what will be your third day on the Scoundrel's Fortune, your second full day at sea?

Tass: I think a little bit of paranoia has me checking over the ship again. Just ... I have no idea how that explode-y crate got on. And so there's just that idea of, is something

following us? Or is something magicking something here? So that would be a priority for me.

Rev: Yeah. So you go down to the area where that crate was at. Roll Discern Realities.

Tass: Oh, good. Six.

Rev: Yeah. So as you look around down here, you don't see any indication of how this got here. Anything that may have tipped you off was lost in the explosion. You know, that whole section had to be rebuilt after it was lost. So there's no clues to be found.

Tass: Awesome.

Jake: I was just waiting for like a, "Yeah, roll of d20, and that's how many more times you explode on the ship today."

Tass: [laughs]

Rev: Yeah. You go back down and there's another crate there.

Jake: [laughs]

Rev: Right in the exact same spot.

Tass: Well, I'm going to open it ...

All: [laugh]

Rev: T.J., is there anything you're doing this night?

Teej: I think I'm just going around checking the ship for any more damage. Like, you know, we fixed it up and everything, but it seemed like it was a patch job. So I was like thinking maybe I could help to double secure some of that.

Rev: OK. Yeah. So you go around the ship and spend the evening doing some of the more fine tuned repairs, making things level and flush as opposed to just making it seaworthy. And so that actually speeds up their process. You guys have dinner that night. The captain comes by and thanks you for your help. Yeah, I think you go to bed, unless there's anything else you want to do.

Tass: No, I don't think so.

Rev: So the next morning, you guys head back to your normal jobs. And I'm going to have you roll Undertake a Perilous Journey.

Tass: OK.

Teej: Well, that's not great. That's a five.

Tass: Eleven for scouting.

Rev: OK. And I assume that T.J. is still the trailblazer since he is working the rigging, and Tass is the scout, since he is up in the crow's nest.

Tass: Indeed.

Teej: Yeah. And I envisioned this, since I failed, that I'm like trying to hang off to the front of the ship, trying to move water out of the way.

Jake: [laughs]

Teej: Just like, "Get out of the way, water!"

Rev: Yeah. So you do slow down the process. It's going to take a little bit longer to get through the full journey. But Tass, the thing that you notice as the day goes on is that in the distance, maybe half a mile to the northeast, you see a ship, just stopped in the middle of the water. And it is right next to another ship. And one of them has a sail that you recognize. It is dark fabric, with a moon painted on it.

Tass: Well, I've seen that. All right. I'm going to ring the alarm bell and slide down to report.

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: What's going on?

Tass: "Looks like the Monarchs of the Moon are out there again. They're next to a still ship."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Oh, is that right?

Tass: "Yeah. I ... You know, I don't know what you guys want to do about that. If we're going to avoid altogether, or ... I assume they're raiding somebody. We could potentially get the drop on these guys and help out."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Well I mean, really, you're our fighters. If you want to stop and check 'em out, I'm more than happy to.

Tass: "T.J., you want to stop slapping the water and get in a fight?"

Teej: [giggles] "I mean, I have no problem with it, but it could be dangerous if we're not careful."

Tass: "Oh I mean, it's gonna be dangerous. But they look engaged. I think we have a good chance of doing some damage."

Teej: "Then yes. Let's get back at these jerks."

Rev: All right. So you guys let the captain know, and he starts to adjust the course and head towards the Monarchs of the Moon ship. It doesn't take very long for you to get there. Where are you at, as it approaches?

Teej: I'm on one of the guns. Yeah.

Tass: I feel like I would take the form of something to fly out and try to scope out exactly what's going on.

Rev: OK, so roll your Shapeshift.

Tass: These dice are just failing me utterly today. That's a five.

Rev: All right. So what were you trying to turn into?

Tass: I think a hawk.

Rev: OK. So what I imagine is that on this fail, you're trying to become something that is conspicuous in the sky, over the sea. And what you become is like a brightly colored condor.

Tass: Could.

Rev: You start to fly out that direction. So roll Discern Realities.

Tass: I mean, my god. I am melting this orange die down because it has rolled literally a one every time, except for my scout so far.

Teej: No. Don't do that. You'll catch up with me and Jake eventually.

Tass: Oh my god. That's a six.

Jake: He has a good point. You're power leveling.

Rev: So as you start to fly out that direction and circle around, you hear the sound of wood creaking and starting to snap, as the Scoundrel's Fortune is stopped dead. T.J., on board, you are shifted to the side as the ship stops.

Teej: "Oh, shit. Captain, what happened?"

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: I don't know. Something stopped us dead. You hear that sound? It sounds like the boards are trying to give way.

Teej: Oh, no. I guess I want to do ... Because I -- because I've seen it in Sea of Thieves, I want to jump in the water and see what's under water.

Rev: All right. So you leap into the sea. Roll Discern Realities.

Teej: Oh, boy. That's a three.

Jake: My god!

Rev: T.J., it is dark and cold in this water. And you start to sink. And then you feel something grab you, and you are moving very quickly through the water, lower and lower. So Tass, you hear the sound of the boat come creaking to a stop. You look back, you see T.J. jump off, hit the water, and not come back up.

Tass: Good god. I can't imagine doing anything other than dropping this condor form and diving in the water after him.

Rev: OK. Are you turning into anything else? Are you just going in in your halfling form?

Tass: I don't know that like a mountain river trout would do much in the ocean. You know what I mean? Like, I don't think I have anything.

Rev: Well luckily you started a horse, so.

Tass: [laughs] I know. I think the only thing that occurs to me is to try to just turn into, like, humanoid water, and see if I can use that to move through the space faster. Even though it's not going to be ocean water, it'll just be creek water, I guess.

Rev: Right.

Teej: Mountain spring water.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: OK. So roll it. And this is using your Thing-Talker that lets you become elements, or elementals of that element?

Tass: Exactly. Come on, for god's sake ... [rolls] I cannot even believe.

Teej: [laughs] What is that like four, five in a row?

Tass: Not in a row, but almost. Of the like six rolls I've done, that orange die has been a one. So that brings me up to a four, for 1 hold and whatever else you got for me.

Rev: I can't imagine anything other than you just turning into water and being dispersed in this ocean. Like ...

Tass: I one-shot killed myself.

Teej: So did I. So it's OK.

Rev: Yeah. Um. So Tass, I think you try to transform into the water from your homeland. And instead of the, like, river water, you turn into the water from the hot spring that you have described where the council would meet.

Tass: Oh, no.

Rev: And so you're too warm to go deep.

Tass: [laughs] Oh my god.

Rev: Like you can't get low, but you are in the water. You are a water elemental. But you're having a struggle getting below the surface, because you are the warmest water here.

Tass: Good god.

Rev: So what would you like to do?

Tass: Um. [laughs] I guess I want to try to spot him, to see if he is like embattled or something, and that's why he hasn't come up?

Rev: I don't think there's a roll for this. If you're just looking to see if you can see him, you don't see him anywhere.

Tass: Then I just want to take in my surroundings in general. Like, what am I seeing at all?

Rev: Roll Discern Realities.

Tass: I'm giving this set of dice one more chance, and then I might actually melt them. OK, here we go. Yes, that's a threat. [rolls] I can't --!

Jake: [laughs]

Rev: How many 1s have you gotten on the orange d6?

Teej: That is unreal.

Tass: Five. I have gotten five 1s off of the same die. That's a six.

Rev: So as you glance around in the water trying to get a sense of your surroundings, you hear the Scoundrel's Fortune creak and groan some more. And then it starts to move, but not in a way that a ship should move. It starts moving sideways, just directly towards the other two ships. And it gets there and stops, and then you hear more creaks and groans, and it seems to solidify into place. Like, it's hard to describe it. It seems like it locks into place.

Tass: "What the hell is this?" Oh, sorry. [talking underwater] "What the hell is this?"

Teej: [chuckles]

Rev: You're like the Liquidator from Darkwing Duck.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: I love Darkwing Duck.

Teej: Yeah.

Tass: Um, god. I guess I want to try to move towards the Monarch's ship and try to get up the side of it, and see what's going on on deck.

Rev: All right. So Defied Danger with Dexterity to climb up the side of this ship.

Tass: That's a seven.

Rev: So you can climb up the side of the Monarchs of the Moon's ship. And to be clear, it is the one in the center of these three ships now. So you can get up to the top and get a look around. But you're going to notice that in your transition from condor to water elemental, you dropped something -- and it'll be at random. You're going to draw unwanted attention, or the crew is going to be so busy dealing with what's happening on the Scoundrel's Fortune that no one but the captain will be able to join you here to look around.

Tass: I really like that last one. Partially, that seems like that could be maybe better for the Scoundrel's Fortune overall, if there is more people staying over there to kind of maintain. But I know that that isn't as great for me to get help. But that's OK. I'm willing to take that.

Rev: So the gangplank comes down from the Scoundrel's Fortune, and you hear Captain Kay yelling to the crew, and you can hear everybody rushing below deck. But he comes down the gangplank.

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: What seems to be going on down here?

Tass: "That's what I'm trying to figure out. I don't know where anybody is. I don't know what's going on here."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: I've never felt my ship move that way. It was like all starboard all the time.

Tass: "Yeah, that was bizarre." And there's just nobody out here on the deck?

Rev: Correct.

Tass: Oh, god. I guess I want to give him a nod and walk towards the first door I see. Or hatch, or whatever is here.

Rev: So on the Monarchs of the Moon's ship, there is a cabin at the back and at the front. And then there is a gangplank going off of the side, now onto the Scoundrel's Fortune, and then onto the other ship that is unfamiliar to you.

Tass: OK. I'll check the cabin at the back first.

Rev: All right. So you go into the cabin at the back, and Captain Kay joins you. Roll Discern Realities as you come into this room.

Tass: Nine.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Tass: What here is useful or valuable to me?

Rev: So the thing in this room that is useful is that in the corner of the room, you notice a tangle of seaweed. And it seems like it's coming up through the floor.

Tass: "Captain, do you see this?"

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Oh, yeah. What is that?

Tass: "Looks like seaweed. Is this something you've ever seen before? Something growing up through like this?"

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: No. But you could roll Spout Lore if you want.

All: [laugh]

Tass: Yeah. I want to see if there's anything in Walfus's Rolodex, here.

Rev: All right. Roll Spout Lore.

Jake: The captain's like, "You could roll Spout Lore if you want." And like his eyes flutter and he kind like of starts breathing heavy. And he's like, "What the fuck just happened?"

Rev: "I feel like a pawn in someone else's game."

Tass: Here we go ... What unfortunate truth do I get to know on that three?

Rev: So with a three, the thing that you know is that this is a type of seaweed called Hydra Vines. And what they do is latch into a ship and pull it under the ocean's waves.

T.J., you have fallen into the water and started to sink, and then felt something grab you and start to pull you deeper. And the water rushes by your eyes, making it impossible to see. Your ears start to pop as you get pulled lower and lower, and your breath starts to run out. And then all of sudden you can breathe, as you're thrown onto your back onto a hard surface. What are you doing?

Teej: I'm opening my eyes to see what's up.

Rev: You see a ceiling above you, and you're just laying on your back gasping for breath.

Teej: I want to get up. Is whatever's holding me still holding me?

Rev: Yeah, so you go to get up and you hear ...

Rev: FROGMAN: [grumbles indistinctly]

Teej: Holy what the -- what the ... I want to look around for the noise.

Rev: You turn, and standing next to you is a person who looks like half human, half frog, and they have a very large spear and they are pointing it at you. And next to them, on both sides, are cells.

Teej: "I come in peace." And I raise my hands.

Rev: FROGMAN: [indecipherable language]

Rev: And it gestures towards one of the cell doors.

Teej: I will go towards the cell door.

Rev: Yeah. It is unlocked.

Teej: I'm gonna go inside the cell.

Rev: All right. So you go inside the cell, and it follows pretty close behind you and it pulls out a key and locks it. And across from you in the cell, you see a very familiar pirate. It is the captain from the ship of the Monarchs of the Moon.

Teej: "Oh, Leif."

Rev: LEIF: I didn't expect to see you again so soon.

Teej: "Same here. Course, I was beating the hell out of your guys whenever we first met."

Rev: LEIF: [laughs] Oh yeah, beating the hell out of my guys.

Teej: "Yeah. Yeah, I was. I trashed most of them."

Rev: LEIF: Yeah.

Teej: "I don't know why you're laughing. What are we doing here? What is this place?"

Rev: LEIF: Well I mean first off, let's get it straight. You took the bait on beating us. We got our little package aboard your ship.

Teej: "What little package?"

Rev: LEIF: Well, I've heard that your friend got blown up all nice and bright.

Teej: "Oh, that was you! OK. Great."

Rev: LEIF: You see, you do something in one hand, and while people are paying attention there, you do what you're really trying with the other hand.

Teej: "Yeah. We'll ... We'll circle around back to that. So do you know where we're at?"

Rev: LEIF: Not really. I was sent here by Pardum to check out this derelict ship and then the next thing I know, we were being swarmed by these frogmen.

Teej: I kind of want to look around the room and see if there is anything else going on here.

Rev: So you look around the room and what you see are six cages, three on each side of the hall. And then there is a frogman sitting on a stool at the end of the hall next to a door, and at the other end of the room, the wall there is made out of water.

Jake. We are in Estin's lab, and he is standing next to you, gazing at the Soul Trap.

Jake: "Uh ... You want to turn me into a Soul Trap?"

Rev: ESTIN: Yes. I think that that would make you so much more than what you are.

Jake: "Nah. Nah, nah, nah ..."

Rev: ESTIN: Oh, no. This is a very good idea. Yes. This is one of the better ideas someone else has ever given me. I usually come up with my own methods. But this ... Sometimes someone has to come and inspire you, and you are very inspiring.

Jake: "But what happens to the soul that's in the Soul Trap if you take it out and put me in there?"

Rev: ESTIN: Oh, no. This is just one. I would not put you in one that's already filled. What a waste of a soul.

Jake: "Totally. All right. I'm -- I'm thinking about it."

Rev: ESTIN: Mmm.

Jake: "But hear me out. Let me make you one pitch, here. Because what's the most powerful weapon we have? You and me. All of us. What's the most powerful weapon we have?"

Rev: ESTIN: Ooh. Arcade magics.

Jake: "Close. What's it stem from?"

Rev: ESTIN: Oh, the ether --

Jake: "The mind. Free will, right? What is the most -- why are we the apex predator? Because we got big brains. Because we can think. We can make choices. We can do what seems right. I will let you make me a Soul Trap, but you have to leave me with my agency. You have to let me make my decisions, do what I'm going to do, without consequence. You give me that extra power. I am attached to your magic still, but I am able to act of my own accord."

Rev: ESTIN: Oh. You understand the way that the Soul Traps work, I see.

Jake: "I do. Which I also want to be a white gem Soul Trap, and not a black gem Soul Trap."

Rev: Well and that would be, mechanically speaking, exactly what you're talking about. That is the difference. A black gem Soul Trap is a automaton. It is something you give orders to. Whereas the white gem ones have their free will still, and can act on their own accord.

Jake: OK.

Rev: ESTIN: Hmm. We'll give this some thought. I've never really worked with someone who was working in my best interests. I think some trust between us would be required. Some kind of bond, or time spent together. Conversations. Had to know the men that I would be entrusting some of my important work to. Yes, I will think on this. And later, we will have a dinner. Yes?

Jake: "Sounds good."

Rev: ESTIN: I will leave you to roam through here. There is no way out. But I don't see any point in locking you back into your cage. You seem to be clever enough to get out on your own, so. Be careful not to get into things you shouldn't.

Rev: And he turns to the Soul Trap.

Rev: ESTIN: If you see him messing with anything that could hurt him, or us: hurt him.

Jake: [laughs]

Rev: And he turns and walks out of the room.

Jake: OK. Well I'm going to scoop up my belongings and re-equip myself.

Rev: OK. Yeah. That takes you just a couple minutes to get your armor back on, get all your gear on.

Jake: I got to have a conversation with the Soul Trap, though. Estin's gone?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Is there anything in here that leads me to believe that he could be, like, listening?

Rev: You do see the big Yeti microphone at the center of the --

All: [laugh]

Rev: Yeah. Looking around, I don't think you see anything. But also I think that you, knowing magic, would know enough to know ... You know, if he was scrying on you, what he was using would be with him wherever he is now to see wherever you are now. But you don't have the impression that he is interested. You know, he said he was gonna go away and think and he would chat with you later and have a meal, and just turned and left you to re-armor and re-equip yourself.

Jake: OK. Then I want to talk to the Soul Trap. "You helped me."

Rev: It nods.

Jake: "Shouldn't you not care? I'm not your master. Shouldn't it not matter to you to listen to what I say?"

Rev: It just stares at you for a very long moment. And then it touches its chest, and then it touches you.

Jake: "Your name's not Grimby, right?"

Rev: It shakes its head no.

Jake: "That was a ... It was -- the vision. Nevermind. I don't ... I don't understand what the chest touch is. Are we linked or something?"

Rev: It shakes its head no, and then shakes its head yes.

Jake: "Are you from here? Are you from this world?"

Rev: It shakes his head yes.

Jake: "Do you know Kolvar?"

Rev: There's a moment of stillness, and then it nods and raises its hand and taps itself on the chest.

Jake: Oh, my god. Oh my god!

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.