

Playing Their Cards (S2, E24)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So just a few things before we get into the episode today. We just had End of Days last week. We had Wes on. We had the opportunity to do some photos with Wes, as well. So you'll be seeing some new content from him soon. But we have End of Days again this Saturday the 14th at 10:00 pm. So tune into Twitch.tv/TheCritshow if you would like to see more of Tass's End of Days game. We're dealing with the great old ones. And by that sometimes I mean old television shows ...

Tass: Yup.

Rev: Sometimes ancient gods, sometimes old movie tropes. It's really -- you really -- it's a catch-all for old ones.

Tass: Yeah. It's very true.

Rev: I saw some of his notes. It seems like we're fighting geriatrics on Saturday.

Tass: It's, uh ... Golden Girls coming up.

Rev: I don't know if you guys saw this, but the Golden Girls were essentially in the X-Men this week -- in the new X-Men comic.

Tass: What?

Rev: There is this group of horticulturists who have, like, found longevity in life and have been working for years in botany to basically get control of all of the fruits and vegetables and plants with seeds, so they can control when they grow and when they die. And I mean, it's essentially the Golden Girls. It's four ancient women in like mechanical suits.

Tass: That's hilarious.

Jake: That was my favorite episode of The Golden Girls.

Rev: Where they just beat Cyclops's ass.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: I will be at Midwest Gaming Fest. I'll be running some games of Monster of the Week. There are still some slots open for that. If you plan on heading to Wisconsin for Midwest Game Fest, you can sign up for those on their website. And lastly, we have auditions going on until the 15th of this month. That is Sunday. You can find all the information you need on that at /auditions. And with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: Tass and T.J., as you have cut these vines, timing is off and this thing launches. And you hear it smashing through other things. Jake, you and Kolvar and Trog appear on the deck of a ship. It's strange because you see, right next to you, the Scoundrel's Fortune, but you're standing on the deck of another ship. And I think before you have time to like, "Oh, what is this ship?" It seems to explode as another boat seems to rocket up --

All: [Laugh]

Rev: From under water and crash through it.

Rev: KOLVAR: When I was on the boat, I wasn't sure where I was going to start. I thought there was a chance it would be in Dunehurst, and I asked around to the crew members. One of them did give me a name: Landara. They said that she was a tracker particularly well-suited for the terrain of Dunehurst.

Jake: "That sounds excellent. I'll check it out. Thank you."

Rev: KOLVAR: Perhaps I'll see you at the Haven.

Jake: "Oh, two more things." And I scabble in my bag and I dump 100 gold pieces in his hand. And then I give him a big hug.

Rev: And he returns it.

Jake: "Good luck, man."

Teej: I'm checking out Dunehurst, and like seeing how different it is from Alpo and Knottermore by the Bay. Like, this is a new world and I just want to, like, scope out the new scenery.

Rev: And as the camera pulls back from the Scoundrel's Fortune as it sails towards the Landing, we see, flying high over the ornate building at the center of town, the flag of the Dead Isles.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: So T.J., here you are at the front of the Scoundrel's Fortune. And as it sails towards the Landing, you see the flag of the Dead Isles flying above it. You think that this boat is going to dock within the next 10 minutes. What are you doing?

Teej: Yeah. I'm going to go find Jake, because Tass is in the water still, I think, right?

Rev: Yes. He's a dolphin, beside the ship.

Teej: [Chuckles] Yeah. Get out of the water! And I'm going to let him know that the Landing is being controlled by the Dead Isles this year.

Jake: "Shit." OK. I wanna like run over to the side and spot Tass and collect him back up to the ship. "Hey dolphin, get up here. We have to have a conversation."

Tass: "Nuh-uh!"

Jake: "No. No, no."

Tass: I think I would use whatever hold I would have to leap back up onto the deck, if I possibly can.

Rev: Yeah, no a problem.

Teej: Did you just Ecco the Dolphin that?

Tass: Yes, I sure did.

Teej: Nice. He'd be proud.

Jake: "So the Landing is currently controlled by the Dead Isles."

Tass: "Oh, shit."

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: "Um ..."

Jake: "I mean we can't, like, turn around. We're going to arrive there. I feel like we need to hit the ground running. We have not come up with a plan, here."

Teej: "Oh, no."

Tass: "No. I mean, besides get desert stuff. Like, that's all that's on my checklist. Oh, shit!"

Rev: "I haven't gotten any desert stuff."

All: [Laugh]

Teej: I need sand. Sand is a desert thing.

Tass: "No, I'm gonna go talk to Grandpa Tincher."

Teej: "Oh!"

Jake: "Yeah. I mean, yeah. I think that's -- we're close enough that you can be like, we're gonna make port soon. Where should we go?"

Tass: "Yeah. Maybe he'll even have something to advise. So. OK. Yeah. I'll be in the cabin."

Jake: "OK." I wanna read my book. Well -- now, my book. I wanna read Estin's book and see if there's anything useful in here about like how this operates. Like we know that it trades hands. I don't know. Do we need to be worried while we're here? I have not told them about Landara. "T.J. -- before Kolvar left, he gave me a name. He had talked to the crew and found out about a tracker named Landara, who is at the Landing."

Teej: "Oh."

Jake: "But I don't know where, or like what she looks like or anything. Do you want to go chat up the crew and see if you can find out anything more specific about her?"

Teej: I'm gonna go up to like the sails, where I've been working for the past three days or so. And I'm gonna like talk up some of the guys who I've been working the sails with, and

the rigging and all that. And maybe just like namedrop Landara as we go along and, you know, slip them a few coins if need be.

Jake: And I'm going to dive into the book and look for information about the Landing, its operation, its chain of command. All that.

Rev: All right. Jake. So this hasn't come up yet. I think, because you're not in Kolvar's body anymore, you don't have his mind to pull from. So I think that you can only Spout Lore when you use this book now.

Jake: Oh, no.

Rev: Like, you don't have that Rolodex to thumb through anymore. But you do have this book. So I think that if you want to Spout Lore, you've got to be handling this book at the time.

Jake: OK. This is like my new Bible. It was the song book, and now it is this.

Tass: Yeah, right?

Rev: Like one of the books in Dr. Strange. Like it's got the big chain around it, and you just wear it around your neck.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Yeah, OK. Under the apron.

Teej: Yeah. That's a very Warcraft sort of thing, anyway. Yeah.

Jake: All right. Eight.

Rev: So something interesting about the Dead Isles and the Landing. So the way the Landing works is that every year it changes who is in control. The population doesn't move, the businesses don't change. But essentially, the government does. They have a centralized set of laws that they have all agreed upon -- despite whatever their own individual laws are in their country -- that the Landing operates under. And so those people switch out. So it would be the inspectors at the dock, it would be the city guards, it would be really anybody who is in control of making decisions for the town. And it really is just the idea of having a shared space. It was to try to create a location where

everyone from any part of Fanarin could go and feel safe, and be amongst all the other cultures from around the world.

Jake: OK.

Rev: And so I think that the interesting thing you get about the Dead Isles is that it is basically a feudal system. It is people who own lands. There are, you know, he is Baron Adinock Bennari. There are other barons who are in control of different regions. And so they all serve someone above them. They are not like a what we would think of classically as like a evil society, but they have their own machinations within. Infighting, sometimes their areas get larger or smaller. So you would know that he is not, say, the ruler of the Dead Isles. He is just one of the barons of the Dead Isle.

Jake: Bennari's like Roose Bolton.

Rev: Yeah, kind of.

Jake: OK.

Rev: All right T.J., so you are up in the rigging, talking to the people that you have worked with the last couple days. You are trying to get some information from them about Landara, you're flashing some coin around. How much gold are you flashing?

Teej: Yeah. I'm going to drop like 72 coin. Because a compelling --

Tass: That's so specific.

Teej: Yeah. Well, a compelling bribe is 80 minus Charisma, and my Charisma is 8, so 72.

Rev: Oh, OK.

Teej: Yeah.

Jake: So yeah. So 72 and just, like, a flirty smile. And that's all they need. They're like, "Oh, you."

Rev: Yeah. I think that with that information that you have. You know that Kolvar was asking, you have the name, and you have this money out, that one of the sailors on the sails behind you actually swings over and he's like --

Jake: "I'll take your money!"

Rev: Yeah.

Rev: SAILOR: I know, I know!

Rev: And he gives you her description. He tells you that she has gray skin and black eyes, and that her hair is very close cut and is green. And that she can be found hanging out at a bar called The Foothold, and that she has a room there.

Teej: Awesome.

Rev: So Tass, you have run into the stateroom and you have gotten out the IPT communicator. What message are you sending?

Tass: I think I'm tapping out. "We're arriving at the Landing. Where can we find you?"

Rev: And there is a little bit of a pause, and it starts to flash back. But I think instantly you notice it's not flashing on the right side. It's flashing all over and it just seems to be random. And then it stops.

Jake: I'm picturing like a toddler's attempt. Just, a baby's got it, and they saw blinking lights and they're like, "Yay! Blinky lights!"

Rev: Like someone playing Simon with it.

Tass: Yes. New octahedron, who dis?

Jake: [Laughs] Who dis!

Tass: I'm gonna try: "Blink twice if you're OK. Three times if you're in danger."

Rev: There's another brief pause, and then you get a similar thing. It is not the same pattern, but it seems to just be random lights in a random order.

Tass: Shit. I'm just getting everything packed up. Shoveling it back into the bag, and getting everybody's gear ready to go.

Rev: So I think that six or seven minutes pass and the three of you reconvene on the deck of the Scoundrel's Fortune.

Jake: "Any word from grandpa?"

Tass: "No. It's like somebody has it. Somebody is hitting something, but it's all just random."

Jake: "Huh."

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah. That does not bode well."

Jake: "Well, did we get a lead on Landara?"

Teej: "Yeah, actually. She apparently is at a place called The Foothold Bar. At least, she has a room there. And she has gray skin and black eyes."

Jake: "Is that normal?"

Tass: Would Walfus know what that is? That description of gray skin, black eyes?

Rev: Yeah. Roll Spout Lore.

Tass: OK.

Jake: Please, God ...

Tass: Oh, yeah. That is eight.

Rev: Yeah. That is a pretty common description of someone from the Dead Isles, if they are undead. And I think just for the sense of this world, the thing that you know about the undead here is that they are intelligent. They are not people who have been killed and come back mindless. They have some manner of reproduction. Like, some people can be born undead. It is a group of people.

Tass: Oh, interesting. Huh. OK. Yeah, I will impart all of that. "Jake, did you find anything about the town?"

Jake: "Sort of. It's more like pertaining to the Dead Isles in general. So it's not like one cohesive unit. It's kind of broken up -- it's like Game of Thrones style. Like, there is one person in charge, but then they kind of delegate down. And Bennari is one of the delegates. So just because he's after us doesn't mean the Dead Isles are after us."

Tass: "OK."

Jake: "And specifically, the Landing is supposed to be like a -- like a safe haven. So I think we'll be OK. I think we'll be able to operate OK here, because their kind of core belief is like, 'Oh, everybody can come here and do their thing. And we all respect this independent rule set.' Unless like the employees here happened to actually be subjects of Bennari's specific zone."

Tass: "God. OK. So we just play it cool. And if it looks like we get recognized, then we try to GTFO?"

Jake: "Yeah. I think maybe we go by Honin and Walfus and -- like, I need something else. You know, just so that we're not spitting our names out there. But if we get physically recognized and accosted, we'll do something else then. Play it cool, lay low-ish. But don't run and hide."

Tass: "Oh that makes me nervous. That makes me so, so nervous. He has been a step ahead of us. He knows where we were, in the middle of the damn ocean. He knows that we didn't even die from the explosion." [Sighs] "All right. We -- yeah. Let's just -- let's just play it cool, and act if we have to act."

Jake: "Hopefully we can just get moving quick and not give him time to sic on us, if he is planning to."

Tass: "OK. And I think we should call you Baker."

Jake: OK. I'm gonna go let Trog know that my name is Baker now.

Tass: Awesome.

Jake: [Laughs] I'll do that.

Teej: Oh, yeah. Trog.

Jake: We need Trog in on the plan. He's been actually, like, remarkably convincing. I think the less we let him know, the less he could accidentally mess it up. So I'm just gonna tell him to call me Baker from now on, and we're all gonna act normal.

Tass: I like it.

Rev: All right. So you head below deck. As you head towards the galley, I think that the boat is pulling in and starting to dock. They're throwing out lines, they are starting to set up the gangplank. But Jake gets downstairs to the galley, and Trog is there. He's packing some things up.

Jake: "Hey, man. So we're making landing. Do you have any other thoughts on, like, what you want to do from here on? I mean, like, I promised you could travel with us. I intend to honor that. But I did know if, like, you'd fallen in love with cooking on the ship, or anything."

Rev: TROG: Oh, this place is a shithole.

Jake: [Laughs] "OK."

Rev: TROG: I mean, look at this thing. You saw my kitchen back at the other place.

Jake: "All right. So you still wanna roll with us?"

Rev: TROG: Yeah.

Jake: "Cool. So, as you know, like, we have a grudge among the people in the Dead Isles. Some of them. Don't know if that's gonna come up. But just in case, we're gonna go by ... You know -- you know Honin and Walfus?"

Rev: TROG: Yeah.

Jake: "I'm gonna go by Baker from now on, just in case."

Rev: TROG: Oh, all right.

Jake: "Yeah. Kind of keep it ..."

Rev: TROG: Yeah.

Jake: "Keep it on the down low."

Rev: TROG: Oh. Just a second, just a second.

Rev: And he goes over to one of the bags, and he comes over and he just dusts you with flour.

Tass: [Laughs] Yes.

Jake: OK.

Teej: That's smart.

Rev: TROG: Now you look like you actually been doing it.

Jake: "Perfect cover."

Rev: TROG: Yeah.

Jake: Um ...

Rev: TROG: Oh, does your tummy open? Like, could we put a fire in there? And you could just be like a big oven.

Jake: "No, not currently. Maybe. Maybe if I find a adequate ..." Oh, what's the --

Teej: Blacksmith?

Jake: Sure I was -- what's the DnD class that's like the magic item ...?

Rev: Oh, uh ...

Teej: Artificer?

Jake: Artificer, yeah. "If I find an adequate artificer." All right. Well, let's head upstairs and get ready to de-ship.

Tass: Yep, that's it.

Jake: I was thinking deplane and I was like, what's the word for on a ship?

Rev: Debark?

Teej: Debark.

Tass: No, that's leaving. Like you debark on a quest.

Jake: That's embark.

Tass: Embark on a quest. Unbark, is what I'm thinking.

Teej: Embark, I think.

Rev: Because debarkation is the process of getting off the ship.

Tass: Oh.

Rev: I only remember that because of the vacation that I just went on.

Rev: TROG: Yeah, all right. Let's go.

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

Teej: I think we're gonna go ahead and say goodbye to the captain.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: Yeah. You see him up by the wheel, and he is making some marks on a map.

Tass: I'll head up. "Well Captain, I know it's been kind of a wild ride. I don't know how this compares to your usual voyages, but we appreciate all of your help and your crew's help. And I apologize sincerely for any of the chaos that we might have invited to your ship. But hopefully in some small way, we were able to make up for that with the whole Hydra Vine, frogman thing."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Yeah. You haven't given me too much more trouble than most of the trips we've been on. We didn't get attacked by some big sea monster, or anything. So that was a plus.

Tass: "Yeah. Good. Good, good, good."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: I've been thinking. You know, it was strange that you said that you were kind of new to the area, and that explosion, and you said that you thought you were the target of it. Do you think someone on board is informing?

Tass: "Well, you just opened up my world view. That's a really good question, Captain. I guess it's possible."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Oh. What do I do about that?

Tass: "Well, I mean, we're leaving. So as far as that's concerned, I don't think you're gonna have any issues with us anymore. If somebody is informing on us, that's after us, they're gonna inform that we're leaving. I guess the thing that I would ask is maybe if anybody happens to ask, make something up about where we went."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Yeah, all right. We'll be set out here, well, not too long. So if you need anything, you know where to find us. Well, at least for the next hour or so. Good luck to you. To your whole crew, I suppose.

Tass: "Hey, something that just occurred to me. We never found one of those pirates that was under the water back there. May not hurt to look around and see if you have a stowaway. Not that I think it would matter at this point, but there's that chance."

Rev: CAPTAIN KAY BROADSTONE: Oh, all right. Gosh. So a stowaway, maybe a spy. This whole ship's just full of intrigue, isn't it?

Tass: "Yeah. You got a really interesting ship."

Rev: And he gives you a nod and returns back to his work.

Tass: Yeah. We're gonna head back down.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: Yeah. And as you head back down, Jake and Trog come up from below. And they have got the gangplank out. They are unloading crates by now. And you actually see two people walking up the gangplank. They both have white hair. One very short, one very long -- almost knee-length. But they both have gray skin and black eyes.

Jake: I feel like we should just kind of gather our things and head for the gangplank.

Teej: Yeah, I'm sure there's like a bunch of people ready to, like, debark. So we'll just get in line maybe, yeah?

Rev: Yeah. So you head towards the gangplank. You notice that one of the two people that came up stops at the edge of the gangplank, while the other continues onto the boat. And you can see that the one at the edge of the gangplank is checking tickets as people are getting off the boat.

Tass: Yeah, I'll just walk up and give a nod and give my name and all that.

Rev: OK, what about Jake and Trog?

Tass: I think I'm gonna be super honest. I'm going to talk about that we were out in the middle of the ocean and we got attacked with some Hydra Vine and some Frogmen, and we found these two out there and pulled them out. And most of the other sailors didn't make it.

Rev: Yeah. So he asks you to step aside for a second. And he helps the rest of the people through, and then he goes over to the captain and chats to him for a second. And then actually from where he is, with the captain, he just waves you off the boat.

Tass: Excellent.

Teej: Great.

Rev: So here you are on the dock in The Landing. What are you doing?

Tass: Breathing heavily.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: [Sighs]

Teej: Was thinking about jumping back on the boat.

Rev: This is my new life.

Jake: I'll tell you what I want to do. I want to go shopping.

Rev: Yeah, I think you guys have at least an hour to shop before it gets dark and everything starts to close down. What are you getting?

Jake: I personally just need some adventuring gear. I don't do potions or anything anymore. I got a lot of shit out of Estin's place, but I don't have any kind of mundane tools.

Tass: I just I've already written up a list of what I think that we could use. So I thought we would spend some on potions. So healing potions -- I wrote down 20.

Jake: Good god.

Tass: Just to have -- yeah -- just to have extra. Because who knows, in a desert situation, what we're gonna need. 10 antitoxins. I'll write down Jake's adventuring gear. And they have what are called the Bag of Books, which are 5 charges, and they just give you pluses on Spout Lore. So I wrote down a couple of stacks of those.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Yeah. That's really all I could think of, besides like looking for whatever we're gonna need for travel. Maybe horses or camels or, I don't know, whatever that they have there. I guess that's a conversation.

Jake: That might be something we determine after we find Landara.

Tass: Yeah, that's a good call.

Jake: "Actually, Yaga ran it by me that I could like ..." I'll like take off my chef hat. "I gave one of the gems to Kolvar so that he can meet us back at -- we're calling it the Haven now -- but Estin's place."

Tass: "OK."

Jake: "So that he can teleport. The only downside is like there's a little bit of a recharge while I'm there before I can pop off again. But I imagine that if we can get to Estin's, we've got a few minutes."

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah."

Jake: "But Yaga told me that I could put other gems in here and get other effects. Kind of like what the belt that T.J. has can do."

Teej: "Oh, sweet."

Jake: "Do you have any thoughts? What should I do? Should I? Because if I put them back in there, I gonna, like, I'm gonna hurt."

Rev: Actually, you won't. I think just to clarify this, since we didn't really get to talk about it last episode. You had 4 damage originally, when you had put in the two black jewels and the one red one. Each of those black gems were giving you 2 points of damage essentially, since they were death magic.

Jake: Oh.

Rev: So as long as you don't put a black --

Jake: Two more black gems.

Rev: Yes, exactly. Then you would take 2 more -- 4 more points of damage.

Jake: OK. Well then, never mind.

Rev: So you can get rid of the one black one too, if you want, and get those 2 hit points back.

Jake: Ooh, and never teleport again.

Tass: Oh, or maybe a white gem would offset that? I don't know. I don't know how any of this works.

Teej: If that's the case, just get tons of white gems, just embedded all over.

Jake: All over.

Teej: Yeah.

Jake: I have 700 hit points. I look like a disco ball.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: I mean, yeah. We know what these gems kind of equate to. So I guess let's just go to like a magic item shop and ask what's cool.

Rev: Yeah. Everything here is pretty clearly marked, so you have no problem finding a magic shop. What kind of effect are you looking for?

Jake: I don't really know. I feel like we as a party are still like fairly balanced. So just something that's got like a good ... A good utility that might help all of us or that could get us out of a pinch or something. You know, like --

Tass: Like would a life gem heal?

Jake: Yeah. Like if there was like a life gem that could do like a Channel Positive Energy type thing to heal us up, or ...

Rev: Yeah. That's exactly what it does.

Tass: Oh wow.

Rev: So a white gem would do essentially a Channel Positive Energy.

Jake: OK, that's pretty awesome.

Rev: Everything else would affect you. Like that's the only one that would be, what we would say, area of effect.

Jake: OK. What's like the Dexterity effect?

Rev: These are all gonna be pretty similar to T.J.'s belt. It will give you a bonus effect, and you'll roll a die to see how powerful and how long. So the Dexterity one would make you faster and more agile. The Constitution one would give you natural armor. It really just kind of comes down to the effect that you want.

Jake: I kind of love the idea of being this big, like, lumbering tank, and all of a sudden being very fast when nobody expects it. OK. I definitely want a white gem, because I think the healing will be clutch. How much will that run me?

Rev: So the white gem would cost 450 gold.

Jake: Oh yeah, super that. Bookkeeper, deduct it.

Tass: Deducted!

Jake: All right, what do we think? Like, T.J. has got the Strength effect covered. I'm already very armored. I feel like either Dex or Int. I feel like one of those. Either like the limitless pill, or a good comparison for a Dexterity equivalent. I can't come up with anything right now.

Teej: I personally would go with Dex, because I think the idea of you just choochoo training through things is pretty awesome. And doing it real fast? That's even better.

Tass: Yeah, that's pretty good.

Jake: How much will the Dexterity gem set me back?

Rev: 750 gold.

Jake: Hell yes. And I've got -- oh my god, my mohawk looks so good now.

Tass: Is it black, white, blue?

Jake: I think it's black, blue, white.

Tass: Hmm. Hmm. Interesting ...

Jake: [Laughs] I feel so judged!

Teej: Really says a lot about a guy.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: So the white gem, as I said, it does an area of effect heal. But it is an area of effect -- whatever is in that area. And you can do it once a day for 2d8. Or you can do it three times a day, and it'll be a d6 each time.

Jake: OK.

Rev: And on the Dexterity gem, you're actually going to roll a d3. And the number that you get is how many back to back actions you can take before anyone else can respond.

Tass: Nice!

Jake: Nice.

Teej: Whoa.

Tass: [Gasps] Do you need a d3? I have a d3.

Jake: Is that d3 for keepsies?

Tass: No. I might have two, actually. And if I do, I'll give you one.

Jake: So how does a 1 roll? Is this additional actions on top of like what I could normally do?

Rev: No. It is just -- it means that you will do something that no one ... Like, say that you are Hacking and Slashing. Like, they will not get to strike back at you. It'll still be the benefit of being fast enough that someone can't react. It would just be for that one event.

Teej: Oh god. So you could get like three hits in before they even get hit back. Is that what you're saying?

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: Oh, wow.

Jake: And is this a one a day?

Rev: Correct?

Jake: Hell yes.

Rev: If the effect of that blue gem lasts longer than four hours, call a doctor.

Jake: Call a doctor.

Teej: Yeah.

Jake: Call all of the doctors.

Rev: Unfortunately, they'll never be able to react to your call, though.

Jake: [Laughs] I've called every doctor faster than any of them can answer!

Rev: Is that all your shopping?

Jake: Do you guys need anything else? T.J.'s the only one who eats.

Tass: Yeah, that's what I was going to ask. How are you doing on food, Teej?

Teej: I have plenty of hardtack right now, so I think I'll be all right.

Jake: I've got all my mechanical healing accoutrement. I've got all my magic stuff, a sweet bag, and adventuring gear.

Teej: Here's a question: does Trog have everything he needs for an adventure?

Jake: Hmm.

Rev: TROG: Got my apron, and I got this hat, and I've got this big cleaver. And I've got my bag of food that I made. You remember when we made this food together?

Jake: "I do."

Rev: TROG: Yeah. I mean, what else do you need?

Jake: I was waiting for, I got two feet and a good attitude.

Rev: TROG: Yeah, not good feet. I've got two flat.

Jake: Two bad feet and a good attitude.

Teej: "Do you need like some pots and pans? Or like a bed roll? Or ..."

Rev: TROG: Oh, I don't know. Oh, I just realized. You said two of you don't eat. It's gonna kind of be boring.

Jake: "I can eat."

Rev: TROG: Can you? Where you gonna stuff it?

Jake: I'll just point to my grate.

Rev: To your grate.

Rev: TROG: Are you going to make like one of those Play-Doh spaghetti factories?

All: [Laugh]

Rev: TROG: No, I don't -- I mean, I don't think I need anything. This is what I've always had with me, as long as I've been doing this.

Teej: "OK."

Jake: I want to get him something nice. [Laughs] Just for coming with us, and being our friend.

Tass: Let's surprise him with, like, some brand new cutlery or something. Like we don't want to -- you know, I don't want to, like, hurt his feelings by like, "Oh, here's something better than the cleaver you have." But just like some more stuff.

Jake: Yeah. We're gonna secretly find Trog a nice knife block.

Rev: OK. 13 gold.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: You had to take me down to 3999, didn't you? You had to do it.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: OK. Let's go find The Foothold.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: It doesn't take long for you all to find out where The Foothold is located and walk there. The four of you walk in, and it's about eight o'clock at night. There's a good sized crowd here, people drinking, sharing stories, and playing games.

Teej: "All right. Look for a gray-skinned woman with green, short cut hair."

Jake: Yeah. Is there anybody that matches that description in here?

Rev: Roll Discern Realities.

Jake: How's an eleven do me?

Tass: Oh!

Jake: God.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: It feels good to succeed sometimes.

Rev: You get a hold 3.

Jake: What here is useful or valuable to me?

Rev: I think the useful thing here, as you walk in and look around, is that it's one of the few places that you've been so far, between going to the store and getting off the ship and walking through the town, where you have seen ... Really, the idea of this town in action. There's a lot of mingling, and tables filled with people that you can tell are from the different continents, just even by their clothing and their accents. It is very clear that the intent of this town, to make a mixing pot for all of the people who were involved in this war and to make sure there is a place on one of the continents where everyone could come together, seems to be working. And I think that you do see, at the head of one of the tables, this gray-skinned woman with green hair and black eyes. And she is standing up and slamming some cards down on the table, and pointing at somebody and laughing, and then sitting back down.

Jake: What should I be on the lookout for?

Rev: In the back corner of this room, you see that there is a cluster of four people. Two of them look like sea dogs, and one of them is undead and the other one is a dwarf. And the dwarf takes notice of T.J. as he walks in, and kind of says a couple things to the other three. And they give a glance, and go back to what they were doing. But there is a moment of hesitation when the dwarf turns back to the table, like he recognizes Honin. As you come to this realization, you actually see that when he moves his arm to drink, it bumps his coat open, and one of his arms is missing.

Jake: Oh, man. That actually makes like a few of these seem real good. I think I'm going to go with, what is about to happen?

Rev: You think that, based off what you saw from that corner, if too much attention is drawn to T.J., that person is going to connect some dots and tell the people that he is sitting with the story that he has.

Jake: I want to kind of lean over to T.J. and be like, "Hey, do you recognize that dwarf in the corner? Be very cool."

Teej: And I'm just going to kind of give a small glance over at him, and see if I can figure out who that guy is.

Rev: I think Defy Danger with Charisma.

Teej: Oh, to hide my glance?

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: [Sighs]

Jake: [Laughs] The worst one.

Teej: That is a seven.

Rev: So I think the mixed success here isn't a couple of options, because this is such a specific moment that's happening. I think that you recognize this dwarf. It was one of your escorts under the tunnel. And the mixed success is that the next time you try to avoid the glance or get out of the way of this person as they move through the space, if you encounter them again. Because you know who they are and you know the story that they know, it's going to be that the first time you try it, it's going to be at a -1, because you are nervous.

Teej: OK, I get that. "Yeah. That's one of the escorts that tried to take me from Alpo. He must have survived."

Jake: "Is that going to be a problem?"

Teej: "I don't know. We'll just try and keep cool, as best we can."

Jake: All right. I want to walk over to Landara's table and wait for an opening in the raucous game that's going on. Like, I don't just want to walk over and be like, I know

you're doing stuff, but talk to me instead. Like, I want to go over and kind of like observe and watch them play whatever they're playing. And when it seems like there's a moment that she could talk, be like, "Hey, could we have a chat for a moment, please?"

Rev: When you do that, the whole table gets quiet real fast.

Jake: Oh, no. That's right. I am a 300 pound robot. [Laughs]

Rev: Well, you are a war machine.

Jake: Oh. I am that, as well.

Rev: And they all stop and take you in.

Jake: What are they playing? Do I recognize the game?

Rev: You? No.

Jake: Um, OK. As they get quiet and seem to like, look me up and down, I want to give it just an appropriate beat, and then throw like 50 coin on the table. And be like, "I get next hand."

Rev: Jake, roll Defy Danger with Charisma, and give yourself a +1.

Jake: OK. Eight.

Rev: What they're hearing and what they're seeing doesn't match up for them. You know, they are seeing this war machine in a chef's hat and an apron covered in flour. And so they're all a little uneasy, but they do make room for you to sit down. And they deal you in. So I think you're mixed success here is that you are going to draw unwanted attention while you're playing, you're gonna have a -1 on your next Charisma check as you try to get this group in your good graces, or you're going to lose this initial 50 gold investment in the game.

Jake: I'll lose the gold. I think that just makes the most sense with how I'm trying to play this.

Rev: OK. So what are you doing?

Jake: I think I'm being as stupid as I am to alleviate their worry. Like, I think I sit down and I'm just like, "All right, somebody please explain to me what this game is. I have no idea what I'm doing." And just trying to be like a normal dummy, so that they're not worried anymore.

Rev: Tass and T.J., what are you doing while Jake is doing this?

Teej: I'm just going to order a drink from the bar.

Tass: Yeah, I think I'm gonna sit with them and just watch Jake's table, and kind of try to see how that plays out.

Rev: OK. So we have Trog and Tass and T.J. sitting at the bar, and Jake playing this game. And the scene that unfolds takes maybe a half hour before they start to get comfortable and talk to you, instead of around you.

Jake: Mmhmm.

Rev: But you do start to get the sense of the game. It's not very complicated. It's actually a game of deception. And you can tell that they're starting to be comfortable with you when they start joking about making you double ante, because you have very few tells.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: And so the game goes on for a while. And at some point, Landara, at the head of the table, turns to you and says ...

Rev: LANDARA: What's your story?

Jake: "Oh, boy. That's a good question, because it is bizarre."

Rev: LANDARA: I imagine. Just looking at you with the ... Well, I've never seen a Soul Trap chef before.

Jake: "Yeah. Yeah, it's, uh ... It's my passion. You know, I found my true calling in the apron. Currently, my story is I'm from out of town and I'm trying to find somebody. And I've been told that there's someone in this bar who can help me."

Rev: LANDARA: Oh, is that right?

Rev: And she throws down a couple cards.

Jake: "Yeah. Yeah. I have it on good authority from a group of trustworthy sailors that you might be the person who can help me find someone we've lost."

Rev: LANDARA: Interesting, that.

Jake: "It's great coincidence, because I'm mostly interested in the fact that you're fun to play cards with. But if you're also for hire to help me do a job, that's just icing on the cake."

Rev: She laughs, and she folds her cards and scoots the table away from her.

Jake: [Laughs]

Teej: [Table scraping sound]

Rev: And scoots her chair away from the table.

Jake: What a power move that would be. Every time you got up from a table, instead of pushing yourself away, you just shove the table away from you.

Rev: LANDARA: Why don't you step into my office?

Rev: And she walks over to the bar.

Jake: I will join.

Rev: LANDARA: What kind of thing are you looking for?

Jake: "A person, actually. Somebody that's been lost for a long time."

Rev: LANDARA: Hmm. And they've been seen here? Or around here?

Jake: "This is the last place they were seen. We have reason to believe that they're still here somewhere -- or somewhere in Dunehurst, at least."

Rev: LANDARA: Tell me a story. Who's lost, needs finding?

Rev: And she taps the bar, and the bartender pours her a drink.

Jake: "Well, he's an older fellow. Not from here. Kind of a smart guy. To be honest, I don't know what exactly his business was here. I don't know if he was taken, but I'm pretty sure he's on the run. So finding him might be tough. Because he wants to be found by the right folk, but I don't think he'll know who that is."

Rev: LANDARA: Can you describe him at all?

Jake: I'll describe what he looks like.

Rev: And she listens for a moment and nods, and she pulls out a piece of paper and she unrolls it on the bar. And you see a sketch of him.

Jake: Just already done?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Ooh ...

Rev: LANDARA: Looks a lot like this fellow here?

Jake: "Uncanny, actually."

Rev: LANDARA: Interesting. You're not the first person to come to me asking for him.

Jake: "Oh, who was?"

Rev: LANDARA: Dunno. It was just an envoy. Big wad of money.

Jake: "Did you help?"

Rev: LANDARA: Not yet, but I know where he is.

Jake: "What do I have to do to keep you on my side?"

Rev: LANDARA: Could be money. Could be a reason. Why? Why do people want to find this guy? All I've gotten from one side is the money. No story, no reason why. Not a big fan of "no questions asked" work.

Jake: "I mean, I can tell you the reason we want to find him is because he was part of our organization. He went missing, and we want to bring him home. I think the reason they want to find him is because he's a smart guy who could achieve a lot for them, or do a lot of work against them if he's alive."

Rev: LANDARA: So you've used a lot of generic words. Organization, person ... Who is this guy to you?

Jake: "He's a friend of mine's grandpa. He was a scientist."

Rev: LANDARA: A what?

Jake: Has there been any evidence of like conventional science in this world?

Rev: Not really. You've seen alchemy. You have seen some of the pseudosciences. But not anything that ... Like, you haven't seen steam power, you haven't seen electricity. You've seen chemistry and alchemy. That's really about it.

Jake: Yeah. "It's a term for, like, things like alchemy. Once you can refine the magic out. Or like me. Imagine a Soul Trap that operated without magic, but did the same job. Those are the kinds of things that a scientist can make happen."

Rev: LANDARA: Like a ... Oh. Is that -- I see. I see. So you're not really a soldier in a Soul Trap. You're like a little halfling in there, with a bunch of pulleys and levers operating this thing?

Jake: "No, I wish. Sadly, I am a soul. But you're on the right track. That's the kind of thing I'm talking about."

Rev: LANDARA: Huh.

Jake: "He had big ideas. He accomplished great things. You know, like I said, he's not from here. And getting here was one of those big ideas. And it it backfired on him."

Rev: LANDARA: Getting to Dunehurst?

Jake: "Yes and no. Are you aware that there are other worlds, beyond this one? Even like other planets? Has the thought ever occurred to you that there is other life out there beyond what's on this rock?"

Rev: She looks at you for a long moment. And then she unbuttons the top button on her coat, and she pulls it open. And you see a jagged scar that goes from her shoulder down her chest -- farther than you can see with the open coat.

Rev: LANDARA: Well, I've been to the Black Gate, so I know there's something out there. I don't think you come back from that experience believing that this is all there is.

Jake: I raise my glass to toast her, and I say, "First of all, cheers from another visitor to the Black Gate."

Rev: LANDARA: Really?

Jake: "Yep."

Rev: LANDARA: What'd it look like?

Jake: "A big dark gate of metal and wood, and a hooded figure who made me an offer."

Rev: LANDARA: Hmm. What were your surroundings there?

Rev: And she takes a sip of her drink.

Jake: "Void-like."

Rev: LANDARA: So when you say that there are other worlds. Are you from one of those other worlds?

Jake: "Yeah."

Rev: LANDARA: Well, I'll give you this much: I believe your story. Anyone I've ever talked to who's been to the Black Gate, they appeared in a place they felt safe or comfortable. But it was there. And I wondered, that figure who guards the gate? What would he see if he went? And I knew that he wouldn't see anything around, it because he wasn't of this world. And so if you didn't see anything? Hmm ...

Rev: And she finishes the rest of her drink.

Rev: LANDARA: Why did he send you back?

Jake: "So that I could collect this guy, and get the people like us -- that are here that aren't supposed to be -- the fuck out, and stop bastardizing his realm with our presence."

Rev: LANDARA: Oh. So there's more of you here that shouldn't be. He's one of them -- this Grandpa.

Jake: "I'll tell you yes, but I don't think I'm going to give you any more until I know that we're in business."

Rev: LANDARA: Hmm. That's unfortunate. I was just starting to find you interesting.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: LANDARA: All right. I'll help you find him. But there's something I think you should know about my trip to the Black Gate. You say Death sent you back to remove these unnatural presences from the world? Well, when I met Death at the Black Gate, he sent me back with a task as well. And it's the same one he gave you.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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