

A Door Left Open (S2, E32)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Hey, everybody. So before we get into the Q&A for Dungeon World, we just got two quick things we want to do. First, we're going to announce the winners of the 200k giveaway. We have drawn them at random using a computer. Science!

Teej: Pseudo computer science.

Rev: I'm just saying, we've upgraded. We used to literally draw names out of a beanie. Now it's a computer that does it.

Tass: It grabs it right out of that beanie.

Rev: Yup.

Jake: Hello, future.

Rev: Yes. It's the robot's beanie, too. Like he's taking it off. [Robot voice] Put them in here. All right, the winner is ...

So the five winners are Adam Sibbald, Ruth Nelson, Jacquelyn Gitzes, Mary Margaret Healy, and Rebecca Harvey. So we will be contacting you through email so that we can get your sizes for the shirts and get your addresses to send you the swag you have just won. So congratulations.

Teej: Whoo!

Tass: Congrats!

Teej: Yay.

Rev: And then of course, we also want to thank all of the patrons who joined us in January: Kate, Selina Erin, Cassandra Kate, Bobby Silicani.

Jake: Maybe.

Rev: Maybe. This is -- this comes in, like, we decided like, oh, we want to read people's first and last names, put them on the website, because we're starting to get doubles of names. The thing I didn't take into account now is I'm probably going to be guessing on a lot of last names. Joe Louie, Hounde, Timothy Southern, Remus Sanders, Tiffani, Mary Margaret, Megan Keck, Limited Int, Katon Gerky, Paul Parnell, Master of Otterspace and Clams, Stu Masterson, Charles Richards, and Danielle Sparks. So thanks to all of you for joining us this month. If you are a member of our Patreon and you have not yet gotten on to the Discord server, do it. Do it now!

All: [Laugh]

Rev: We've had a couple of people who have had issues connecting to the Discord server. If you are someone who has tried to get on and cannot, or it gives you an error message, send us an email at thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com, and we will make sure to get you on there so you can chat with everybody. And on the Patreon just the other day, we released the three episode arc of our first story for Tales from the Omniverse, which we play Dragons Stew, which is a DnD supplement that is a mash up of Monster Hunter and the Great British Bake Off. So we have some other things lined up for tales from the Omniverse, including one that actually I forgot to mention last week. We got such a good response from Fate of Cthulhu. We got a hold of Ed, we talked to the people at Evil Hat, and we are going to finish out our Fate of Cthulhu story as one of the Tales from the Omniverse. So if that was a story you really enjoyed, you want to hear how it ends, we will let you know when that one is released. So again, to find information about all that, you can go to Patreon.com/TheCritshow.

And now we're going to go into the Q&A for Dungeon World. I think we're going to do this one a little differently. We're going to pass these around. We'll let different people ask some of these questions, because there are ones targeted at different ones of us, whether it's the player, the GM, or one player in particular.

Jake: What happened to the goblin that we paid off to run away?

Tass: [Laughs]

Teej: I believe he's the only actual living goblin who became rich, because he took that 22 gold and invested wisely.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: And so he started a community, became a well respected member of the goblin world. And now he lives the high life.

Rev: Yeah, he's got a wife. I can't remember where we talked about this, but we decided that their name was Krim, and that was all from a misspelling on Discord. One of our Discord members, Kim, had misspelled her name and I was like, Krim -- that's a great goblin name. And so you're a goblin, Kim. Congratulations, I guess?

Jake: Krim the Investor was born.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: Yep.

Tass: Since the departed trio were from such different locales, what was their common thread or bond? How did that group assemble before their unfortunate end?

Rev: So really, it was just a group of people who were wanderers, and they answered an ad on a bulletin board. And then they discovered that they liked each other's company, so they started to work together. And they had been together for a couple of years before their ultimate end, so.

Teej: Where are Walfus and Honin's souls?

Rev: They gone. Kolvar's was captured by Estin with one of his traps, but the other two just released upon their deaths.

Teej: Yeah, we assume that -- no, I assume. I assume that they went beyond the Black Gate, wherever that may be. That's my guess.

Jake: What would have happened if T.J. had gone the whole way to his dwarf character's home?

Rev: You know, I feel like a lot of this stuff we can talk about, because this door is kind of closed. And so I think that giving any kind of backstory or spoilers for this world doesn't really affect the story from here on out, because there's not a chance to do anything about it, really. So yeah, there was a plot going on there. Bennari had a person who had infiltrated the Iron Striders and was trying to see who would fit the criteria for the sacrifice that they needed. So I think that if T.J. had gone, he probably would have uncovered

some of what was going on there and maybe had a chance to save Aurin, who was sacrificed.

Tass: Dang.

Rev: Right?

Tass: Were there any monsters you wanted to use but couldn't find a way to include in the plot line?

Rev: I did have a stack of sea monsters that we never got to.

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Rev: It just never kind of clicked right. You know, I've talked before about how I have a timeline for everything, so. The NPCs or the creatures or whatever are doing their things, and I know it's going to take them two days, four days, six hours -- whatever. So that when people intersect, it's because those two timelines intersected. So they never kind of crossed paths with where a monster would have been when. Instead, they came across the captured monarchs of the moon instead, so.

Tass: Oh. Right, right. Right.

Jake: What was the thing in the well? No pouting.

Rev: [Laughs] So the thing in the well was a creature from, I believe, Inverse Worlds. And it is exactly what was described -- it is a creature that lives in the well. It's very polite. I believe in the book it is called The Thing in the Well. And it creates clean water for people and it's very intelligent, but it keeps its secrets. And if anyone goes down into the well, they don't come back.

Tass: Ooh.

Rev: I was -- I was waiting for you to dive into it as a dolphin, just to see what had happened.

Tass: Oh my god ...

Rev: Do you think you all used Spout Lore an appropriate amount of time? Could you have done it more or less often? What kind of effect do you think it would have had?

Tass: I think we could have stood to roll better on it?

Rev: [Laughs] Yeah. Yeah, I think the -- I mean, the amount that we used it, any time that they didn't know and I felt like their character in the world could know. I think it's a great move. I don't feel like I ever had you roll for something that was common knowledge.

Jake: I don't really have any other frame of reference. It seemed like an appropriate number of times to me. You know, enough to answer questions we didn't know the answer to, and enough to establish some lore for the world. But it sure didn't seem to me like it was, like, in excess.

Rev: And, you know, the kind of effect that it would have on the world. I mean, I talked about this a little bit when we interviewed Sage. I love that ramification of "you know an unfortunate truth." Like, that's my favorite thing probably from this game. Because suddenly the world changes and becomes a little more dangerous. And it doesn't just change in the moment that you're in, but it changes globally. Like, oh, I've failed Spout Lore on this troll, and now I know that trolls travel in packs of three. So instead of just one troll, there are now three somewhere around us. And everywhere in the world, a troll gets two buddies.

Tass: Yeah, yeah.

Teej: If they try hard enough, can they find a material exit from Estin's hideout?

Tass: Ooh ...

Teej: Good question. Rev?

Rev: No I don't think so. He basically had it built inside of a little extradimensional space so that it was the only way he could get in and out, essentially. It had started that he could get there by a spell that he could cast, and then he was able to build it into the portal, so.

Tass: OK, so what happens? We take in a pickaxe, we just start chiseling at a wall, we get through the concrete. What transpires?

Rev: Yeah, it's like void energy.

Tass: Oh.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: OK.

Teej: So it would be like vacuum?

Rev: No, just like another plane of existence. Not like outer space.

Teej: OK.

Rev: Yeah. And because we touched on that just briefly, that Grandpa Tincher seem to get better while he was there a little bit, and that it was the fact that whatever was from kind of Fanarin wasn't penetrating to here, he wasn't being affected by -- by things. So he was definitely on another plane, there.

Tass: Why does Grandpa sound kind of like Estin?

All: [Chuckle]

Rev: So it went away after a while, but it was to emphasize the -- kind of the madness that comes from the effect of the time magic on his brain, that Estin and Grandpa Tincher were kind of suffering from the same thing. And so for me, it was just that lilt, that pitch was part of being lost in your own thoughts and disconnected from time. So that was something I wanted to build in there.

Teej: Can you re-explain why GPT got caught in DW? ASAP. PDQ.

Tass: At KFC.

Rev: I assume GPT is Grandpa Tincher?

Teej: [Laughs] I hope so.

Yeah. So essentially his understanding of it is that he came here and he stayed too long before realizing that the time affected his body and his mind in real time in this world. And so by the time he made that realization, if he were to go back, he would -- he would perish from it. But he also -- and this is not something he actually got to talk about -- he didn't have a portal to go back. He doesn't know why. And he never got any of the messages that were sent, but he never talked about having a way to get back.

Tass: Ooh, that's a good point.

Rev: And you all know that he had, you know, gone to other places before. NOEL told you that. You know, she said that he went in and never came back. But you also found NOEL shut down.

Tass: Right.

Teej: Oh, OK. All right.

Jake: The party was pretty forcibly split due to the Iron Striders, Estin's trap, and a bomb. Did you plan for it to go a lot differently, since the party almost immediately regrouped?

Rev: [Laughs] Yeah. So I, you know, I never know how to plan for any of the things, directionally, that you guys do. And I assumed once you split, you were all split up for a very long time. I was super impressed how you all got back together. I never imagined you would get back together until maybe the very end. So it was very impressive, the way you all kind of stumbled back into each other's stories.

Tass: Yeah. I fully expected to not -- in particular, to not see T.J. for a long time.

Rev: Yeah. And I assumed that whatever Jake was doing, like sort of in-character, I assumed whatever Jake was doing, he would find his way back first. And so ... [Laughs] Obviously that didn't happen.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: And I'll admit that I was ready to go all the way to the dwarven mountain and everything. And then you put those colossi in my way. And I thought, oh, this is one of those things where Rev is trying to like, you know, put a message into there to tell me to go back. [Laughs] And that's what I thought!

Rev: [Laughs] Why would I tell you to go back? I tried to send you there!

Teej: But they were so big and dangerous! And I thought, no, I should probably just hang out with my friends.

Jake: You know the famous video game logic that like when you encounter enemies, it means that you're going the wrong direction. You need to turn back.

Teej: Yeah!

Rev: [Laughs] Oh. I see, I see.

Teej: It means you need to go, you know, level up, you know?

Jake: Back to safety!

Teej: Far more experience.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: You know, and I think what T.J. says there actually points out a huge part of the split, is that those goliaths were a fail result. That was not something that I had planned to be there. You know, I've talked about how whenever fails happen, it changes the world here. And that was exactly what happened with the -- really, the entirety of this party split. If you asked me like, oh, how do you think this is going to go from the moment that we meet Honin's sister? I assume the three of you go to the dwarven place, and you deal with that problem. And so the party split there, I is like, oh, OK, well ... But then the two of you splitting up, and Tass putting himself into a meditative state for four hours, and then Jake's failed roll inside of the museum. I knew that Estin had a connection to this place, Bennari had a connection to this place. And like, yeah, that stuff was there to find if you had all gone to the museum. But the fail made it so that he was there and it was active. So yeah, I had no plan to try to get you all back together. And when the party split happened, I was like, oh my god -- this is awful, and I love it.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: So yeah, there was not a planned split, and it was also not a plan to get everybody back together. The three of you guys kind of all stumbled into both of them in very beautiful ways.

Tass: [Laughs] Yup. T.J. really did fail his way back down that hallway.

Rev: He sure did.

Teej: The team seemed to be in a no-win situation at the end. What happened, or did you plan it that way?

Rev: No, not at all planned that way. It was a rough situation at the end. But you all have encountered a person before with this necklace and found a way to get around their sight. I said before we can talk about some spoiler stuff because this world's kind of closed off now. There were a couple of things that I had specifically put in locations that could help you deal with the necklace. Having gotten to Grandpa sooner and talking to him and getting him to a better mental place so he could teach you some of the time magic that he had learned would have allowed you to maybe do some kind of a counterspell. T.J.'s sister's gauntlet -- you know, one hit from that undoes the magic of anything, but that was lost down in the tunnel. And then Estin, of course. I never in my wildest dreams imagined that Jake would get Estin onto his side.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: But Estin had ways to counteract that. But Jake made the smart move to destroy Estin once he got him to trust him so that it wasn't a problem in the future.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: So that's just a handful of things that were there to help deal with that final situation. And also too, just --

Tass: And we flushed them down the toilet.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: And then also too, part of it was just the timing. It's so weird to talk about things in retrospect because you don't have any choice but to do the things that happened. That's why you do them. But even making that decision after you rescued Grandpa to sleep for a night, that was a very pivotal twelve hours, with Kolvar skulking around Bennari's place and finding out what was going on. You know, you guys had just missed Kolvar checking in, essentially.

Tass: Oh, wow.

Rev: He was set to check in right before the riders would show up to take Grandpa away. And since all of those things kind of happened in the series of -- that long series of fails with the sandstorm and the Formians and all that stuff, that timeline kind of got bumped forward.

Tass: Yeah, we sure did let a guy get back and say, "Hey, we don't have him."

Rev: Yeah. And so then that put Bennari on alert, and that's what got Kolvar found. So yeah, there were a handful of things that could have been done. There's even one thing that could have been done, very similar to what you all did to Strohm, that would have been enough to stop Bennari, but would have been not a great idea for you. But if you had presented the thing that they had been hunting for, that Benari and Grigori were looking for, that piece of paper that Grandpa had.

Tass: Oof.

Rev: Like the presentation of that would have been enough to, like the bow and arrow, knock Bennari out of that time frame, because this is something that's kind of hidden from time. So it would have been something he had not seen coming.

Teej: Oh nice.

Tass: Oh yeah. Hmm. It just seems like, especially the latter half of this run, it was either a series of very critical moment fails that seemed like, "Oh, this is a wacky little fail in this moment," but had a much bigger scope, or a decision that helped us a ton in the moment, but we couldn't see ...

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Just, that built up on us much, much bigger and more devastatingly than I think we realized.

Rev: Yeah. And those little fails always came in like a run of -- seemed like four or five or six of them, and they were all about the time you got to dealing with Isolation.

Tass: Yeah. Yeah.

Teej: I'm thinking about getting weighted dice for my birthday.

Jake: [Laughs]

So yes. Absolutely no no-win situations. I've said this to them before off mic. Like, I would never put you in a place where you can't get out of it. Even having lost the things that I had intentionally planned, there were still things could have taken Bennari out of it, even just, you know, once the, kind of, the rules even of the fight were revealed, what kind of

hits he was willing to take from you versus what he would actively work to stop and and not let happen and then be out of that cycle.

Tass: Can you reveal the other predicted fight turns for the big battle? Oh!

Rev: OK. So the moves in the envelope. So no, I can't. Because we've talked about this before that we record and, you know, the episodes get broken up a little differently. Originally, the episode ended with the reveal of the Necklace of the North Winds. And so I was going to make them that night, before we recorded again. But then they all came back in, and just kind of chatting about what it was they thought they were going to do when they came back. And the conversation of, oh, you know what? I think we might go back to Knottermore. And so at the time, I just didn't write them out because I didn't want to -- I honestly didn't want to spend time trying to pick the thoughts out of your heads of what your next moves were going to be unless I had to, so. But I knew that really, once the kind of game was revealed, it would all be a whole new experience after that. Like once it was like, "OK, I've tried to guess your moves." It's obviously going to -- you guys are going to come to the combat with a different energy now, trying to, you know, to outwit him. So yeah, I did not actually write them out yet because there was a break right at that point. And then when we came back, they decided to leave, so.

Tass: Nice.

Rev: Is Discern Realities the appropriate roll to discern if Landara was flirting with Jake?

All: [Laugh]

Jake: My god ...

Rev: I don't think -- listen, one of the big rules of Powered by the Apocalypse is if it is obvious information or if there is no ramification to the fail, there's no roll.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: So you don't have to roll to know that.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: I don't know why, but absolutely, Landara was flirting with Jake. I got this question from multiple listeners.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: I just want to throw that out there.

Jake: I've said it before and I'll say it again: you and I just need to stop having such electric sexual chemistry at this table.

Teej: They're always, like, eyes affixed to each other. It's really strange.

Jake: Yeah.

Tass: Well they are facing each other.

Rev: It's true.

Jake: [Laughs]

Teej: Oh, all right.

Tass: Oh. Before I ask this question, I have a question and the question is, please. So let me hit the question. Is it possible that NPCs from Dungeon World will show up again? Please?

Rev: It's ... You know what? Nothing is impossible.

Rev: [Laughs] That's the answer --

Teej: Just in the world, in general.

Tass: As a kid when you're like, "Can I have this toy?" Nothing's impossible, and then they leave the aisle.

Rev: I don't want to say no, because as soon as I do, you guys are going to figure out some way to sneak back into Dungeon World, or like bring people from Dungeon World. And I will say too, we talked about this earlier in the intro, but in Dragons Stew, you've got three hours of Trog there.

Tass: That's true.

Rev: We put out a little audio teaser of it. I play Trog in Dragon Stew, so. And it could be similar too that, you know, like with Estin, like with Baba Yaga. You might see some of these characters again, just other versions of them in other worlds that you may travel to.

Tass: Nice.

Rev: And then is there anything that you all wish you would have found out more about or uncovered in that world before leaving it?

Tass: Mine kind of jumps back to Bennari, and that whole fight. Is I just, oh, I just hate love that necklace so much. And part of me the whole time goes, if I have a necklace like this, I'm going to show off with it once or twice, knowing they probably beat my ass, but I'm trying to scare them down from doing anything else. Like that's my theory on what happened, is he watched it not necessarily go great, which is why he addressed having it. And that like, that was kind of his gambit to make us fuck off.

Rev: I remember when you guys got back -- this happened off mic -- but when Grandpa was like, oh, I know something about that necklace. I think it was Jake that was like, I was waiting for you to say, "Oh yeah, I drained the magic from that necklace to try to do some of my research." And then I was going to quit and walk away forever. I was like, oh god, that would have been brutal, if Grandpa had just been, "Oh yeah, I know that. I drained all the magic from it so I could study more time. Why, what about it?" And just like, pie face everybody.

All: [Laugh]

Teej: In the Dungeon World book, there is the ability to purchase, for one million gold coins, a very nice castle. Would you have allowed us to eventually get to that point?

Rev: Oh, yeah.

Jake: The end.

Teej: OK. Just making sure.

Rev: Also if -- I think if you had won the Iron Striders, there was a really nice fortress that would have been yours.

Teej: Damn it! Can we re-do? Re-do?

Jake: I have a question.

Rev: Yes.

Jake: How many of the rewards for going the Iron Striders route have you added after the fact, just to piss T.J. clean off?

All: [Laugh]

Teej: Oh, yeah. He had a fortress, you would have had an army ...

Rev: Oh, man.

Jake: Bennari would have had a heart attack, just seeing it in the paper. He wouldn't have been a threat anymore.

Rev: Yep. Yep.

Jake: Were there any other magic items along the way that either we missed out on or that you considered dropping in and didn't?

Rev: There's really only one that I can think of off the top of my head. I love magic items. I love making them. So if there was a chance for them to be missed, I kind of go by the Dungeon World rule of I don't necessarily put a specific item in a specific chest in a specific room. I have empty rooms that can then be filled in as the story goes on. But everybody involved ... This gonna go back to what Jake's other question was. But everybody involved in the fight to take control of the Iron Striders had a magical weapon. You know, T.J. had his belt, his sister had the gauntlet, and Aurin had a shield that had three charges in it that you could use each day. So three times a day, the shield kind of ... Float, is the best word I can use. It looks like it's on your forearm, but it's actually floating there. And you could spend one of those three charges to turn a mixed success on a Hack and Slash into a full success. So it would kind of hover to move to block the hit.

Tass: Oh, nice. Yeah.

Rev: Any other final questions before we move away from Dungeon World?

Tass: Can I ask you all and the audience a question?

Rev: Yes, but they won't be able to respond.

Tass: Well, I mean, they might anyway.

Rev: After Tass asks his question, if you have an answer, wherever you are right now, yell it aloud.

Teej: In the subway.

Rev: At work.

Teej: In Wal-Mart.

Rev: In a bathroom at your friend's house.

Tass: This will be easy, because it's just a yes or no question. Can I ask you all to join me in a small retcon? Like the one and only after the fact retcon that I would ever request in a storytelling podcast? Is, you know, we build the lore from, you know, these moves. Like, we are literally building how this world works as we went. And very early on, before we knew some critical information, I started saying that all of the creatures that Walfus turned into had that blue tint to it, and then found out that blue was for Dexterity -- a thing that Walfus was not.

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: Decidedly not. So yeah, maybe it was all -- it was green. It was green the whole time.

Rev: OK. So everybody vote now, aloud. Ooh, close margin. OK.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: So yeah, early on, if you go back and listen to this arc, when Tass is describing all these blue-hued animals early on, just they're -- they're a little more green.

Tass: Li'l bit.

Teej: He's within the margin of error.

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: All right. Well thank you to those of you who submitted questions. Let's get back into the story.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: Jake, you open your eyes and you see the ceiling of the subterranean lair. And in one hand is the capsule, in the other hand is this five inch black metal nail that feels cold to the touch. What are you doing?

Jake: I'm going to get up out of my bed and figure out where the rest of the crew is.

Rev: So what did you guys do after you threw this through the portal?

Tass: Probably just got off of the pad, like just kind of off to the side. Because I know that even if it's going to take him a little bit to get to it, for us, it's not going to be very long.

Teej: Yeah, I'd be getting food ready for Jake to return.

Rev: OK. So you stand up, and Tass is standing next to the portal, peering inside of it, and T.J. is in the kitchen, in the fridge, and Rev is at one of the workstations, and they're all just doing their thing.

Jake: I am beelining for the kitchen. "Oh my god, I haven't eaten with any reason to eat in so long. I cannot wait to taste again."

Teej: And as soon as I finish the final piece of bread on this amazing turkey sandwich, I cut it in half and give him half.

Jake: Oh, yes. I thought you were just going to say, I take a big bite and throw the rest in the garbage.

All: [Laugh]

Teej: No.

Jake: "Guys, it worked. Grandpa is in another world. The device worked. We tested it. I think everything's squared away. I managed to squirrel these out," and I will hold up the

capsule with the key in it. "And this," I'll hold up the nail, "was given to me by Death himself on the way out."

Tass: "Why?"

Jake: "To kill Koschei."

Tass: "Oh shit."

Rev: REV: How are you supposed to kill Death with a nail?

Jake: "It is a nail that was pulled directly from the Black Gate. Which means nothing to you, I realize. I was trying to sound impressive."

Rev: REV: Do you want me to react? Wait, tell me what the Black Gate is.

Jake: "It is the gate you pass through into the afterlife."

Rev: REV: OK, now say that again.

Jake: "It was pulled directly from the Black Gate."

Rev: REV: Oh shit.

Jake: "Yeah, that's what I wanted. There we go." [Laughs] "So whatever it is, it's magical. Clearly. Heavily. Because it was able to come through with me. He said that if we drive it into his heart, he'll die and the gods will come back. It will restore balance."

Teej: "Well, that's pretty awesome. I could probably make like a nail gun that we could use and it could shoot the nail. But you'd only get one shot, obviously."

Jake: "I mean, I'm no good with guns, anyway. I think I'd be just as well off trying to punch it into his heart. My big question is, how do we even find him?"

Tass: "Absolutely no idea. Hell, that might be a question for our Baba."

Jake: "So what's the -- what's the plan now, beyond that? I mean, we can definitely put that on the itinerary, but like, do we have any things we need to do right this second?"

Tass: "I mean, we certainly have a few things to talk over, with the information we have now."

Jake: "Such as?"

Tass: "Well ... I mean, the big one is we have to discuss where we think Nash is going next and why. Or how to figure out where he's going next." I think I'm in this moment very specifically, like, positioning myself so that just these two are seeing my eyes dart over to Rev.

Jake: "OK." And I wink.

Teej: "It's good to see us back to normal."

Jake: [Laughs] "Oh, speaking of, I've learned a couple of things while I was still there. One, Leif survived."

Tass: "Oh!"

Jake: "He had a magic hat that turns into a boat."

Tass: [Laughs] "What?"

Jake: "Yeah. So he's good, and somewhere in the world."

Tass: "OK. Lovely."

Jake: "I also found out Bennari spun the tale of our intrusion to justify the killing of three people. So whatever they did, they killed three people and claimed that it was us when we intruded. And it was Nyx ..."

Tass: [Sighs]

Jake: "And the paladin from the bar, whose name was Danthor. And whoever ended up taking control of the Iron Striders instead of you -- guy named Aurin."

Tass: "Shit."

Jake: "I didn't figure out what they did or why it was those three."

Teej: "It makes me wonder if they were part of the ritual that Nash was doing."

Jake: "Yeah, I think that's definitely accurate."

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, absolutely. We were so close. Damn it."

Jake: "Yeah. I don't know that there's anything we can do with that. It's just, it's something I picked up. I also might have turned Landara into a vigilante, which is pretty cool."

Tass: [Laughs] "OK."

Jake: "And we'll never know. But ..."

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah, I tried to go back through myself and it's like something stepped in the way. I got body blocked."

Jake: "Yeah. That doesn't surprise me." How do we go somewhere to talk about Rev? [Laughs] This would be like if us in this room right now decided to have a conversation about Rev.

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: "You know, I haven't really had any contact, but it may be worth it if we just go talk to Margaret. Like check in and tell her about James and tell her about the whole thing. I think that's certainly worth a sit down instead of a phone call."

Jake: "Oh, it'll be good to drive again. Yeah. Let's go get in the car and go talk to the agency."

Tass: "Ok."

Teej: "Yeah."

Tass: "Rev, it may not hurt to go ahead and shut this down."

Rev: REV: Oh, yeah. I mean, if it doesn't work, if you can't go back, there's no point in leaving it on.

Tass: "Right. Especially if -- I still don't know how it works, if something from there tries to come through, or if they even can. But it may not hurt to take away that choice."

Rev: REV: All right.

Rev: And he goes over to the control panel and starts to power it all down.

Tass: "Is there anything you need down here while we're out? Like more groceries, anything?"

Rev: REV: I mean, I wouldn't turn down more groceries. T.J. just ate all my turkey.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: REV: He Scooby Doo-ed his way through my fridge.

Teej: Made the largest Dagwood sandwich ever.

Tass: "Yeah, we'll just kind of take stock and get stuff we need and check in with Margaret. You know, I can't imagine we'll be gone long."

Rev: And the three of you head out to IPT. Margaret is there. She is in her office. Jingles is actually with her. They're having a conversation.

Tass: "Hey, how's it going?"

Rev: MARGARET: Oh, not too bad. How are you?

Tass: "OK. We've been through a hell of a few weeks, even though it's only been a couple days for you, I guess. We found James."

Rev: MARGARET: Where is he?

Tass: "He is currently in another world. Long story short, the place that he was, it sort of didn't let him age. And the time discrepancy was enough that he was over there for over a thousand years. And he could see it when the crystals were activated, but he couldn't send anything back. But we found him. He's safe. Mostly OK. And the best thing we could come up with is that he realized that if he just tried to come through a portal, because of the time discrepancy, he would just waste away the second he was back. So he's trying to do it a little bit at a time. He's trying to go to a world where that time difference

between the one he's in now and here is just slightly off. And then another, and then another, with the hopes that he sort of pressurizes the right way to be back in our world."

Rev: JINGLES: Oh shit, man. That's some, like, SciFi channel stuff.

Tass: "Yeah, right? Says the robot elf."

Rev: JINGLES: Yeah. I mean, that's messed up. Like time just waiting on you and, like, waiting to sucker punch you when you walk back in your planet. That's fucked up, man.

Tass: "It really is."

Teej: "It's the story of our lives, Jingles. Story of our lives."

Rev: JINGLES: Man, I missed you.

Tass: "I missed you too, buddy. Yeah. So we don't know how soon, but we're hoping he'll be back. He looked exactly the same way that he did, you know, in the pictures that y'all showed us of when he went missing."

Rev: MARGARET: But he lived for a thousand years there?

Tass: "Yeah. A little more."

Rev: MARGARET: Well, he was always an explorer. So hopefully he finds his way back.

Tass: "Yeah. And whatever Nash did on the other side? Looks like he succeeded. We still can't get a bead on exactly what he's doing, but we couldn't stop it."

Rev: MARGARET: Hmm. Well, nothing to be done except keep looking, I suppose.

Tass: "Any updates from the last couple of days?"

Rev: MARGARET: No, we've just been getting everyone into their new positions. And Jingles has been working to integrate himself with the NOEL system to make sure that everything is running correctly, and that all the agents out in the field have what they need. So it's really just been a time of rebuilding. It's -- I realize a lot of time has passed for all of you. But for us, it's just been a couple of days since we got the satellites back in the air.

Tass: "Yeah. Well, we're going to get back out there and see what we can find, I guess."

Rev: MARGARET: Well, keep me updated.

Tass: "Absolutely. All right, boys, where do we want to go to talk?"

Jake: "I mean, here is fine. Somewhere. Let's go sit in the lobby, or something."

Rev: All right. The three of you head into the lobby and take a seat.

Tass: "All right. So we have no context. So how do we approach this? He's not what he appears to be. Like what -- what is that?"

Jake: "Is that exactly what it said?"

Tass: "It said, Rev isn't who he seems."

Jake: "I feel like last time we talked about this, we determined that it was going to be a conversation, didn't we?"

Tass: "Yeah, I just don't know how to approach it, I guess."

Jake: "I think we should go back with groceries and be friends and bring it up. Whoever he is, he's been doing us hella favors for a good long while here, so he's earned the benefit of the doubt."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "So let's go to Kroger."

Tass: "All right. Let's go."

Rev: All right. So you three head out to get groceries, and you head back to the subterranean lair. Do you get anything particularly good?

Jake: I think we do. I mean, something to celebrate that this chapter is closed. Lots of treats. We're going to just indulge tonight.

Tass: Some of that sparkling grape juice?

Jake: Definitely some of that -- the red or the white?

Tass: Both.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: In a fountain.

Jake: Yes. In two fountains that end in the same pool.

Tass: Yes!

Jake: So you can just kind of go stick your mouth under it and get hit by both.

Rev: So you carry the haul down into the subterranean lair.

Rev: REV: Oh is it, uh, treat yo'self night?

Tass: "It -- it is. Two of us, for the last however long, haven't eaten. Like, this side of the portal or the other. It's just bizarre. It's time to party."

Rev: REV: Yeah. I haven't seen the sun in months.

Tass: "Oh, buddy ..."

Rev: REV: That was not like a, uh ...

Jake: "Like a, 'My strife is worse than your strife.'"

Rev: REV: Yeah. Yeah. That was not like an insanity tilt. It was just more so like, oh I've been, you know, I don't want to leave the portal. Like, what if something goes through? So ...

Tass: "Do you want to go for a walk?"

Jake: "Let's go, like, eat on the roof of the IPT or something."

Teej: "Or let's go to the canal or something."

Tass: "Last time we took him out, he got clubbed on the head and taken to Florida."

Rev: REV: Oh, that's true. I guess I was outside recently. The knock on the head made me forget.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: REV: That's right. I was in a bag. Oh, god. And then I fell from the sky! I don't want to go outside.

Jake: "Ever again."

Rev: REV: I'm glad we're eating here.

Tass: So I think we just go into this whole thing of making some food and sitting around and talking, and even telling him about what all we went through. I think he's probably gotten a little bit of that from T.J. and I over the last couple of days anyway. But kind of more bullet points, as we have been antsy and like waiting to make sure that Jake's going to get back safely, and all that. So this is probably more of the info dump.

Rev: So you eat and you chat. I think the three of you kind of decompress at the same time that you are being debriefed about what has happened.

Jake: Yeah. I think once we get to like the end of eating and it's just kind of hanging out instead, I'd wait until there was some, you know, like break in the conversation, like some lull. "Hey, Rev?"

Rev: REV: Yeah.

Jake: "Um ... I don't really know how to do this. There's something ... There's a conversation that the four of us need to have. After the whole thing in Florida, Damien gave us a note, a slip of paper, and he told us not to open it until we got back over there. And when we did, it said verbatim, Rev isn't who he seems."

Rev: REV: What does that mean?

Jake: "I was hoping you could tell me."

Rev: REV: Uh ... Oh, god.

Tass: "Hey --"

Rev: REV: This is not --

Tass: "Hold on. Our lives have been in your hands for so long and in so many different circumstances that we can't not trust you. So we don't know what this means. So, you know, tell us whatever you think that this means without fear of repercussion. Because if this were something awful, you could have dealt with us any way you wanted in any number of situations. I mean, look at this. This isn't fake. Like, we're not putting this on. We're not, like, sitting around and eating food and stuff and trying to, like, fake chill here. We're cool."

Rev: REV: [Sighs] So this is ... I guess I don't know how I imagined it would ever come up. Um, I'm not the Rev of your world.

Teej: "I knew it. I knew it. Oh god, I knew it."

Jake: Slip T.J. a twenty. [Laughs]

Teej: Yes.

Rev: REV: Like not in mind, anyway. This is his body, and I'm in it.

Tass: "So somehow you're doing what we just did?"

Rev: REV: Yeah, kind of.

Teej: "What do you mean by that?"

Rev: REV: Um, I think it's probably easier just to show you.

Rev: And he stands up and takes a couple steps away, and holds one hand up towards the wall and starts to make a couple of gestures. And you've seen this effect before. It is when he peers into another time and place. And you see this image that almost looks like you're looking at it through a few feet of water. There's just a little waviness to it. And you see the three of you, standing on a floating patch of grass. T.J.'s leaning over the edge of it, looking under it, and Tass and Jake are looking around towards this non-existent sky. And there is a three story metal house behind you. And T.J. gets up, and you all start to go inside. And as you do Tass gestures to T.J. to leave the door open, which he does. And then the point of view that you're seeing this from rushes towards

the building, into the open door, then turns and closes it. And the image vanishes, and he turns back around.

Rev: REV: Does that look familiar to anyone?

Tass: "Yeah, it sure does."

Rev: REV: So I was lost. I was cast out of my body and my mind was, I thought, lost forever. I was -- I was conscious, I was aware, and there was nowhere to go, because my body was not my own. And then I realized that I could somehow see the other versions of myself that existed across different realities. And I don't know a better way to say it, but when you left the door open to this Rev's brain, I saw my chance and I went inside and I closed myself in.

Tass: "Well, shit."

Jake: "Where did you come from?"

Rev: REV: It's a world so close to this one. I honestly think it's why there wasn't a step missed in talking with you guys. But my world, things turned out different. I've been trying to peek in at it, to see what all has changed. And that night at the Halifax, you weren't able to save me. And the world changed drastically from there. The Soul Bat grew so powerful, and I can't even -- I can't even think how to tell the whole story, but it is a danger that keeps growing.

Tass: "Oh, man."

Teej: I think I get a little bit of a shiver down my spine, because that sounds horrible.

Jake: "Is it's still like running off of you over there?"

Rev: REV: Yeah, I am ... I'm the host body. Like it has taken others, but I was the first. People are still fighting back, but it's not a fight they're winning, because they don't know what to do. And so I thought that if -- I thought that if I proved myself useful and along the same lines as your Rev, that maybe I could talk you into going there and trying to save my world. The three of you are still alive there. If you went there, you would go into your own bodies. But you're so different there.

Tass: "Bud, come on. You could have told us this from word one. From minute one."

Rev: REV: Yeah, I just ... If someone came to me and was like, "Hey, I'm your buddy. And at some point, I forcibly took over his body." [Groans]

Tass: "Yeah. No, I get it."

Jake: "Where is our Rev's mind now? If you're in there?"

Rev: REV: It's in here. It's just compartmentalized.

Teej: "He's not hurting, is he?"

Rev: REV: It's like he's asleep.

Tass: "Well, hell. This wasn't exactly on the itinerary, but we also don't exactly have an itinerary. I don't know. What do you think, guys?"

Jake: "I mean, if we head that way and we throw that piece of paper through, doesn't cost us anything. Nash is home, right?"

Tass: "Yeah. If Death let you through, I assume he has to be."

Jake: "Unless he's already moved on to the next thing. But in a couple of days? I would doubt it."

Tass: "How do we get to your world?"

Rev: REV: I've got the code for it.

Tass: "All right. Let's go save a world, huh?"

Teej: "Yeah. Sounds like fun to me."

Rev: And he goes over and starts inputting information into the control panel for the teleporter.

Rev: REV: As I get this all set up, I'll give you guys a little bit of what I know from the world after glancing through, because it's going to be way different than what you have experienced here, I think. It's ... It's gotten pretty ugly.

Tass: "So where are we supposed to find this thing?"

Rev: REV: As far as I know, it's still at the Halifax. Like, it is many other places, too. But I think that the original one is still in the Halifax, that it is somehow linked to that place.

Tass: "So this thing is clearly going to be stronger than when it started."

Rev: REV: Yeah, and it's got others, like it's taken others. And so there are not just the little piles of goo that you fought before, but there are other people engulfed by the Soul Bats -- that they have multiplied.

Tass: "God. Like ... I just can't imagine figuring out a way to fight this. Like what happened? What went wrong to make it be something that we couldn't take out?"

Rev: REV: I don't really know how to describe it. You know when you have that feeling that something isn't going to go your way and then just suddenly it does? Like, OK. OK, so those necklaces that we all have, the Willem's Fortune? You know, when something goes wrong, something about that activates and it makes it go right.

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: REV: Our world used to be that way. And then in the midst of dealing with the Soul Bat, it wasn't. Like that force just didn't exist anymore. And it was hours after you came in to try to rescue me.

Tass: "Shit. We go through, what then? Like if we're going to be waking up in these other versions of ourselves, where are they? Where will we be? Anything, anything you can give me here, man."

Rev: REV: It's hard to say exactly where you'll be. I've looked back at the world to see what happened next. And the events of that night, it changed all of you.

Rev: And he stops working and looks at you, Tass.

Rev: REV: That night after you lost Rev, it changed you and you broke away from the group, Tass. You are out just killing any Soul Bat you can find, in the hopes that at some point you'll kill enough of them to make up for what was lost.

Tass: "Oof."

Rev: REV: And Jake and T.J., they tried to go on without you. But without everybody there, Jake, you didn't pass the Trial of the Divine, and you were stripped of your powers and you became a vampire. That's what was left. And so the last I saw of you, you were in Hawaii and you'd formed a kind of trio with Ori and Rachel. And T.J., you were trying to make up for the loss of that magical knowledge that I had. And so you went -- this sounds ridiculous -- but you are in Ireland, in this ramshackle house, learning magic from Siobhan. And so I don't know where you'll be exactly, but I don't think this is going to be like what you just experienced. I think you're going to go into these bodies. Just be careful -- there could be pushback. Like you are in there with you, but it's very different yours.

Tass: "All right." [Sighs] "That makes it tough, because we're going to have to find each other or somehow figure out a way just to communicate, you know. Meet up back in Indy, if we have to hit the Halifax anyway."

Rev: REV: Oh, yeah. If you, like ... Even if you don't find each other, if you just pick a time and a day to meet up.

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "So you said it's taken over. What do you mean? Is it like everywhere?"

Rev: REV: It has not spread past the United States yet, but it is a significant chunk of the United States. There are small pockets of people who can fight it off.

Tass: "So what does that look like? Like are they literally all Soul Bat covered? Just -- just like what we saw here?"

Rev: REV: No. Once it is bonded to you, once that initial twenty four hours pass, you can kind of, I guess, camouflage it. Make it transparent, so you just look like you.

Tass: "God ..."

Jake: "Do we think our plan here is to storm the Halifax, right? If that's where the Alpha is, then that's the one we probably need to shut down -- at the very least, first. And maybe it's like The Avengers. You know, where all the minions just go down the instant that the brain goes down."

Tass: "Also, maybe not."

Jake: "But regardless, we want to take out the power supply."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "We want to take out the core first, even if we then have to go after the little ones."

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah. One hundred percent agree."

Jake: "So what does it look like -- The Halifax? Did we burn it to the ground in your world? Like is it -- is it rubble but still able to be gone inside of? Or is it just a fully intact, healthy building?"

Rev: REV: Oh yeah, it's just a building.

Jake: "Well burning it to the ground did some stuff last time, so maybe we burn it to the ground."

Tass: "Well, we technically I think did that after we destroyed the Soul Bat."

Jake: "Fair."

Tass: "One way or another, we have to find that tether. Which I assume is the same thing, but I bet he doesn't just have it tossed in a locker. We know what hurts it. We know that light sucks, if it's bright enough. We know we have to find this tether, which isn't going to be just in a locker somewhere."

Teej: "Especially now that it is Legion."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "But probably still close."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "Because it would want to guard its heart."

Tass: [Chuckles] "Yeah. So what do they say? The most fortified spot usually is the one holding the things you want."

Jake: "Is that what they say?"

Tass: "They do, they say that. Exactly like that."

Teej: "Who says these things?"

Tass: "Them."

Jake: "Sun Tzu."

All: [Chuckle]

Tass: "I mean, there's only so much planning we can do on this side. We don't know the landscape of what all has changed, who has been taken. I mean, allies here could be anything there. So, what? I mean, we jump back through, we have to figure out how to find each other. We check our Rolodexes, see if that's even possible to kind of talk with ourselves and see who can help and what we can do?"

Jake: "Yeah. I mean, I guess if we could remember things from the bodies of Fanarin, then hopefully we can remember things from ourselves over there."

Rev: REV: And I think that's where it might get dangerous. If you try to access the memories, that's when that other personality, if it doesn't like what you're doing, may try to fight back. Like if you're digging around in the brain ...

Jake: "Oh. We're opening the door."

Rev: REV: Yeah.

Jake: "OK, so we'll go over there. Step one, meet up so that we can kind of hold each other accountable in case we do lose control to the other us?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "You know? It would suck if we got there and I tried to remember something and immediately lost control, and other me knew what was up and took a plane to the Arctic or something, like just to get away from it."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "We gotta get together so that we can hold each other responsible. What condition is IPT in?"

Rev: REV: Scattered. Like the few groups of resistance that are still in the United States, there's most likely a former IPT member running that little hideout.

Jake: "What condition is the building itself in?"

Rev: REV: You know, I don't know. I imagine not good. I saw that IPT has been scattered, and I assume that you would have to storm that building to get that to happen, or else that's where they'd be holed up.

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "OK, so maybe we don't try to rendezvous there. Or maybe we -- well, I want to know what happened to it, but I don't want to count on being able to meet up there and finding out that it's not an option, you know?"

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, I think us would know." [Laughs]

Jake: "But we still don't want to try to access that before we're together."

Tass: "Sure."

Jake: "Maybe we should meet up in the sewer. I know it won't actually be T.J.'s lair, but we know where it is. It's a place we could all find."

Tass: "That's a good point."

Teej: "Yeah, that'd be good. Though it will be dark. Might be just the kind of place the Soul Bat wants to be."

Jake: "I mean, that's a good point. But I feel like the odds of it being in the only patch of sewer that we happen to want to go to are hopefully pretty slim. Because in that world, this patch of sewer," I'll like gesture around us, "has no significance to anyone. So maybe that -- maybe this is what we aim for? We come here?"

Tass: "With what we know? Good a plan as any."

Teej: "And Plan B, the Steak n Shake by Rev's place."

Jake: "All right. Plan B is the Steak n Shake by Rev's house."

Rev: REV: Yeah, there's probably not a lot of fast food workers in the Soul Bat nation.

Jake: I'm in the kitchen firing up the flat top, just cooking my own burgers as we talk. "I guess the last kind of big question here is who takes the paper that'll get us back in no time? Not me I think, for sure. I feel like it should go to whoever's other self is going to be the most on board with this plan. And if I'm a vampire over there, it's sure not going to be me."

Tass: "Damn. I'm split, here. From this little bit of an explanation of me, it sounds like his opinion would be, 'Hell yeah, let's do the thing.' But it sounds like some serious Frank Castle vibes. I feel like if I'm going to have to shut him down, it's going to be letting him shoot through everybody taken by a Soul Bat to get to the goal, which I assume we want to try to avoid if we possibly can. So I don't -- I still think there's going to be some strugglebus-ing, with me."

Jake: "What about T.J., then?"

Teej: "Yeah, it seems like I'm still on the path of trying to set things right."

Jake: "Yeah. Other T.J. is still out there, like, trying to fix this. And it sounds like other me is out there hiding from it, and other Tass is out there just wrecking house."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "But other T.J.'s still out there trying to save the day."

Tass: I guess I will hand it over to T.J. "When do we leave?"

Rev: REV: Let me get to work on it.

Rev: And I think now that you have all decided to go on this, if anybody has any beginning of mystery moves, you can use those now.

Tass: Oh, yeah, I absolutely do. Ten.

Rev: So as this vision washes over you, the evening at the Halifax plays out before you. You get glimpses of you and T.J. and Jake in the darkness fighting against the Soul Bat's

minions, and you hear shattering glass and breaking bulbs. And then you see the Soul Bat itself, and it is just savaging the three of you. And at one point you see yourself break away from the fight and run behind a counter in the lobby, and you drag a body out from behind it. And Jake and T.J. are covering you so you can make it out of the building. And they follow very close behind you. And you all run across the street and you get into your car and start to speed away. And we see in the fourth seat is Rev. His eyes are blank, and blood is coming from his nose and his ears. And you look back in the rearview mirror, and standing in the doorway of the Halifax is the Soul Bat, watching you drive away.

Tass: I think this vision clears. You know, while Rev is doing all this stuff I'm not sure if he's paying attention, but I think these two can clearly see me very concerned. Can I try to look at him and open up my sight?

Rev: Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Tass: I'm using Luck. I just -- I just rolled snake eyes, and I can not fail this.

Rev: All right. So mark off your point of Luck and you get a hold 2.

Tass: What is being concealed here?

Rev: So as you look at Rev, and you open your third eye, you can see him on a magical level. Like seeing a photo negative layered over your vision, you can see the magical outline. Like when you look at Jake, you see Jake, but in swirling colors. When you look at T.J., you see T.J., but in swirling colors. When you look at Rev, you can see that Rev is there, but he's very small, almost compressed. And the rest of the form that you see magically is Grigori Nash.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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