

Cracked Mirror (S2, E33)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Hey, everybody. Before we get into the episode this week, I would like to take an opportunity to extend an invitation to you. On Sunday, April the 12th, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., we are going to be doing a live show of The Critshow at The District Theatre in downtown Indianapolis. Now, I realize that that is Easter, so some of you may already have plans. But if you don't have plans and you're in the area, or you feel like making the trip over, you can join us for this live show. The house will open about 1:30. The show will start at two o'clock. And we'll have a little bit of an intermission in the middle. And we imagine it will wrap up about four o'clock. We're doing the show ... Well, because they asked me what I wanted to do for my birthday. I'm kind of celebrating a milestone birthday. We won't talk about exactly how old I am. But I realize I wanted to spend that time celebrating this thing that we have made. So we found a venue, we invited some close friends, and we'd like to open up the rest of the seats to our listeners.

The tickets for this show are free. So if you'd like to come to this show, what we need you to do is RSVP. There are limited seats available, so we want to make sure that everybody who shows up can get in. If you'd like to RSVP and come to the live show on Sunday, April the 12th at 2:00 p.m., just go to thecritshowpodcast.com/birthday. On there you'll find a form that will let you reserve a ticket so that you can join us in the fun that day. We do ask that you only RSVP if you know you're going to be able to make it, because as I said before, there are limited seats. The deadline to RSVP for a ticket will be midnight on March 31st. So again, just head over to thecritshowpodcast.com/birthday to reserve a ticket for the live show and join us as we celebrate my birthday in the best way that I can think of: by rolling some dice and hanging out with some very good friends. I hope to see you there.

And it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX:

RECAP MUSIC

Jake: "After the whole thing in Florida, Damien gave us a slip of paper and he told us not to open it until we got back over there. And when we did, it said, 'Rev isn't who he seems.'"

Rev: REV: Oh, god ...

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."

Rev: REV: I'm not the Rev of your world. When you left the door open to this Rev's brain, I saw my chance.

Jake: "Where did you come from?"

Rev: REV: A world so close to this one. That night at the Halifax, you weren't able to save me. The world changed drastically from there.

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

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

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

Teej: "Sounds like fun to me."

Tass: 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: 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. And the rest of the form that you see magically is Grigori Nash.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: We are in T.J.'s subterranean lair. Tass, you have just activated your third eye, and when you look at Rev, instead of Rev, you see Grigori Nash. What's your other question?

Tass: I guess, just seeing red looking at him right now, the only thing I can think of is, what can hurt it?

Rev: So looking at this, the thing that is unusual about it is that it is not an overlay. It is in this body. If you were looking at someone possessed, it would almost be like a double image. But this is Grigori Nash, with this compressed core of the person who should be in

control of this body. And you imagine that the story he told you about how he got possession of the body must be mostly true, because this is the soul of this body right now. And so you could hurt it any of the ways that you could hurt a normal human, but it will hurt them both.

Tass: I think I turn again towards these two, just jaw set, just -- I don't think I can even hide the fury. And I mouth to them, it's Nash.

Jake: I feel like, just, my gaze shifts over to Rev, and my eyes just narrow. "Hey Rev?"

Rev: "REV": Yeah.

Jake: "You know Tass -- god, he made a good point, and I can't get it out of my head. You should have known that you didn't have to hide this from us, that we would have helped you at the drop of a hat. Like ... No, not even that you should have known. He would have known. You unbelievable sack of shit. You dumb fucking donkey."

Teej: [Laughs]

Rev: He stops inputting the data into the keyboard at the teleporter and puts both hands on the table, and he turns to face you. And there is a big grin on his face.

Rev: "REV": You know, I will admit he has some good defenses. His magical training, the wards he had around his house ... But it turns out the best security system don't mean a fucking thing if you leave the front door wide open. So what do you know?

Tass: "I see you."

Rev: "REV": You know, I wondered if your ... I don't know what to call them. Your new abilities, might reveal my true nature to you. So how does this change things?

Tass: "We want our friend back. We don't want to help you. So where do we meet in the middle?"

Rev: "REV": Well, what I told you was true. I was ejected from my body after the Soul Bat took over. But something about being bonded to the Soul Bat at the same time as Rev, it connected us. So when you opened the door to this Rev's mind, it was like someone lit a fire miles away in the darkness that I was trapped in. And I followed that light and then I found the open door. I wasn't exactly sure what would happen, but I knew it was better than floating in that void. So I went inside and I locked the door behind me. So I'm in here

to stay unless I want to leave. But I will leave. I'll give your friend his body back and I'll go back home if you clean up my home.

Teej: "What do you mean by that?"

Rev: "REV": Just what I said. Go kill that stupid Soul Bat.

Jake: Man. I feel like I just kind of give a pointed look to Tass and T.J. Like, I don't -- I'm not sold on this.

Rev: "REV": I see you're hesitant. I made a deal with your Nash to help him execute his plan, and it all went exactly as it was supposed to ... Until it didn't. If you help me, not only will I release your friend, give him his body back, I'll tell you what I know.

Teej: "How do we know we can trust you?"

Rev: "REV": You don't. But as you said, if I just wanted to kill you ... God, how many chances have I had? I could have left you stranded in that stupid medieval world. I could have stuck a syringe in your neck instead of putting an IV in your arm when I was taking care of you while you were gone. I wasn't lying about feeling like I had to prove that I was trustworthy to you before I wanted to ask for your help. Because from the moment I have gotten here, I have seen that the three of you, as the saying goes, are attracted way more by the honey than the vinegar.

Teej: "What's your world like?"

Rev: "REV": What I described before is not untrue.

Jake: "What are you trying to accomplish there?"

Rev: "REV": When I agreed to help him, there was no clause about the damnation of my world in doing so. But because things went off the rails, that's exactly what happened.

Jake: "So you just want us to go free your world out of the goodness of your heart?"

Rev: "REV": There's a lot of people there that matter to me. It's why I made the deal with ... With myself, with him, however you want to call it. And this was supposed to be something to save them. But because it went wrong at the last second, it still accomplished what he needed, but it left us in shambles.

Jake: "Grigori Nash has people he cares about?"

Rev: "REV": Of course.

Jake: "So that's it. Because you're dead, right? Like your body ... You're -- you're Soul Bat now. You're worm food, right?"

Rev: "REV": I am the core of the alpha Soul Bat. It was Rev. The one that came through the Halifax is the original, but when it got a hold of me, it turned him into one of the spawn instead. Normally, it would take people in and spit them out as spawn underlings, but I'm more powerful than him. And so it kept me, and spit him out.

Teej: "Well, how did it get you?"

Rev: He looks almost sheepish for a moment.

Rev: "REV": I was there that night at the Halifax, watching you all. And one of my abilities failed me at a crucial moment when it realized I was there and set upon me.

Jake: "Which ability?"

Rev: "REV": Well, I don't know that it mattered. It seemed like all of them, because what I drained from people was now missing from the world. And so I couldn't use it to power myself.

Jake: "So all of your abilities are driven by draining this, like, innate luck from people?"

Rev: "REV": It would seem so. Because once it was all drained from the world, it was like my battery was dead.

Tass: "He did you dirty."

Rev: "REV": I wasn't supposed to be there. I was curious.

Tass: "That might be the first truly relatable thing that you've said to me so far. So we go, we do this. This saves the people that you're worried about, and you expect us to believe that you just let yourself die?"

Rev: "REV": I don't know if I'll let myself die. I guess I might wander again. But all I can do is release myself from this host. Like, I can't force my way into the other side.

Tass: "You're asking us to drink a lot of vinegar."

Rev: "REV": Yeah, but I've been here for a long while. And it's what you just said when you agreed to help: you have no direction, and that I could give you.

Tass: "Set up the goddamn machine."

Rev: "REV": All right.

Rev: And he goes back to typing. And he steps to the center of the room once he's finished, and makes the familiar gestures. Energy pulses out and it hits each of the points along the machine, and then the portal opens.

Rev: "REV": Good luck.

Jake: "I want some information before we leave. I want something that we can use to stop him."

Rev: "REV": I know you do. And I'll have it for you.

Jake: "You'll have it now. You need us. Your world is doomed. You have nowhere to go. You have people you care about. You wouldn't be here with us if you didn't need us, if we weren't your last hope."

Rev: "REV": That's not necessarily true. I'm here because you gave me the opening. I didn't choose to be here. You invited me in.

Jake: "You give me something actionable that we can use against the you here, or we don't go through that portal and everyone you care about burns."

Rev: Roll Manipulate Someone.

Jake: Seven. Ooh.

Rev: "REV": I've been here a long time. And I don't ... Not even think that you would, I don't think the three of you could make the choice to let innocent people suffer. I've seen the decisions you've made, and I think if we all just sat on the ground here and saw who broke first -- me giving you the information you want right now to save my world or you getting to access your teleporter again to continue on your mission -- I think we'd be here

a long time. But I see your point. So I'll tell you what I know now, before you go in. But there's something else you need to do for me then, to show your side of the faith. When I release from this body -- and I will when you come back, having saved my world ...

Rev: And he pulls out a crystal.

Rev: "REV": I have this. And I want you to catch my soul in it and throw it back through the portal to my world before you close it. I don't know for a fact that it will work, but I think that if I could get my soul to disperse in my world, it might bring back a little bit of what was lost. So no keeping my soul to run some infernal machine, no trading it to any of the number of demons that you're friends with. You catch it, and you throw it through the portal.

Jake: "Deal."

Rev: "REV": Very well. It's not just one thing that Nash is taking. He's taking something different from every world that he's gone to. He came to many of us in a dream and told us about his plan, what it is he was trying to do. And we all agreed that we had all suffered long enough. That the worlds, the universes, weren't right. So he took, for lack of a better term, the luck from my world. And I know that where you just came from, I think he took the souls of three heroes. And I don't know where he's going to get them from, but I know that he's going to try to collect the souls of some villains and some weapons, because he's trying to change the scales of the universe and create The Chosen for those of us that aren't human.

Tass: "That could make some serious imbalance."

Rev: "REV": Imbalance for who?

Tass: "I guess it is all a matter of perspective. From my point of view, The Chosen exists to stop the things that hurt people from doing so. Those things still hurt people. Sometimes The Chosen wins. It just seems to keep things level. With an advantage like that, the things that hurt can hurt a lot more."

Rev: "REV": It is perspective. For us, it is being forced to hide and build, and then some figure comes from the sky and tries to strike us all down. And we're forced to retreat and suffer and rebuild, with no one to stand up for us. Grigori Nash has decided to stand up for us.

Jake: "OK. That is all I wanted." So I'm going to start making my way towards the portal.

Tass: I don't think I can stop myself from glaring at him as I walk, but eventually do turn and follow Jake.

Jake: "Before we go," I put my arm out to stop T.J., and then I turn my hand palm up and say, "I want my money back."

All: [Laugh]

Teej: "No."

Jake: [Laughs] That's good improv!

Rev: T.J. is the improv-er in us all.

Teej: Yes.

Rev: He knows that "no" is the best response to an improv situation.

Teej: That's right. Yeah.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: I just take it. I watched where he put it in his pocket. I just pluck it back out. I put a palm on his forehead and pluck my money out of his pocket and put it back in mine.

Teej: And I'm swinging my arms like a kid who just got bullied.

Jake: And I'm just gonna, like, melon drop him straight through the portal.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: And follow him through.

Rev: Oh, shit. So as this money exchanges hands and you turn and hop into the portal ... Jake, roll Luck.

Jake: OK. Boxcars.

Teej: Oh yeah!

Tass: Nice.

Rev: You all get hit with that familiar wave of vertigo again. Jake, you open your eyes, and you are mid-struggle. You have your hand on someone's wrist, and in it is a stake, and in their other hand is a mallet. And as you struggle against them, you get a brief glimpse of their face. And it is scarred and clean shaven, but you recognize it. It's Tass. And he says, "I couldn't save you, but I can stop you from having to live this cursed life."

T.J., you open your eyes, and in front of you on a set of old wooden stairs, you see Jake. But he is gaunt, with dark circles around his eyes and slicked back hair. And you see Tass standing above him, trying to force this stake into his chest.

Teej: "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. What are you doing? What are you doing?" And I'm going to try and run over and stop him.

Jake: Yeah. And as you run that way, you see the Jake on the stairs, his eyes clear, and you see that he's looking up at Tass, and he seems to be kind of startled by what's going on. Jake, what are you doing?

Jake: I'm trying to disarm Tass. I'm trying to knock this stake out of his hand, like break down his grip.

Rev: As you wrench his wrist to the side to get him to drop this stake, you see his eyes clear. Tass, you open your eyes and you are staring down at Jake. His eyes are sunken and cold, and you see sharp fangs in his mouth.

Tass: "Jake?! Oh, God ..."

Jake: "Are you cool?!"

Tass: "I -- yes! Are you cool? Are we cool?"

Jake: "Yes."

Teej: "Are you guys cool?"

Tass: "Oh, Jesus." I'll let go of the stake and try to step back.

Jake: This is like the scene in The Office where everybody's pointing finger guns at each other.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: All right, here is everybody's new playbooks. So why don't you all tell me what you all have on you and what you are in this world?

Tass: So this version of Tass has become The Wronged. I've got like an old haggard jacket on and, you know, pretty tactical kind of stuff. Like dark pants, like cargo pants for all of the little things I need and, you know, combat boots and gloves, an old, ragged beanie. And I'm just -- I'm scarred up from this. You know, I'm clean shaven here and just have a little more proof of the battle I've been doing. He actually still has the same original .38 and shotgun. They're a little more worn and scratched and beat up from fighting monsters by now. And he also has a specialist weapon, specifically for fighting Soul Bats. So the specialist weapon does 4 harm against the specific creature, or just 1 harm against anything else. And what I built was kind of like a ... Not exactly a mace, but kind of like a steel police baton. But at the end, there's a little steel cage that I can activate a light inside of it, and it puts out this very intense direct light that kind of bounces around on all the mirrors and stuff inside to make it particularly intense. So that when I hit Soul Bats with it, it hurts them a hell of a lot more.

Rev: Oh. So like I imagine there is essentially kind of one business side of this where the light is concentrated and comes out after it's bounced around inside. And then on the other side of that steel ball is an ugly looking spike. So you can rotate it in your hand and still hurt other things with it.

Tass: And the moves that we went with for this. I get I Know My Prey, so +1 ongoing when investigating, pursuing or fighting the breed of monsters that caused my loss -- which is, of course, the Soul Bat. And I have What Does Not Kill Me, if I've suffered harm in a fight, I get +1 ongoing till the fight is over. Fervor, so when I manipulate someone, I roll Tough instead of Charm. Safety First, I've jury rigged extra protection into my gear, so that bumps me up another armor. And Tools Matter, with my signature weapon, I get +1 to Kick Some Ass. The other thing that I took was a Haven, like The Expert has, with two choices. So I like the idea of a panic room with protection spells. So it's somewhere that I could stay for a good long time if I need to, and is warded.

Teej: I am the Spell-Slinger. I have to describe myself as tactical wizard, because I feel like I've learned a few things from Siobhan. And one of those things is that I need a lot of consumables. So my sort of tactical vest that I wear has all these pockets in it that I can

put all of my consumables or reagents and things. And then I have like an old timey coat, sort of a homage to wizarding, I would say. And then I have a ring on my left middle finger that is facing outward. In other words, it is turned all the way around. So that way, whenever I open my hand, the foci, which is my ring in this case, is facing, like, the enemy. So then the consumable is consumed and focused at the same time. And other than that, I look like me with a goatee.

All: [Laugh]

Teej: I'm evil me.

Rev: That's how we know it's evil T.J., yeah.

Teej: Yeah. My new moves are Combat Magic, and when you use these spells to Kick Some Ass, I roll +Weird instead of Tough. So I have a base combat magic. So it's a blast, which causes 2 harm magic, close, obvious, and loud. And then you can add all these extra effects to it if you wanted to, or if you want to grab extra bases you can. I went ahead and added the extra to the base. So I have fire, which adds +2 harm fire. I also have frost or ice, which adds +1 harm restraining to other bases. And then necromantic, which adds a life drain to a base, which if I'm injured and I need a little extra health, I can just take it away from something or someone. My other moves are Tools and Techniques, to use your combat magic effectively, you rely on a collection of tools and techniques. Cross off one, you'll need the rest. So I decided to cross off incantations so I didn't have to come up with some silly words to create my spells.

Tass: [Laughs]

Teej: But I always have to have consumables, foci, and then the last thing is gestures, so I have to use some kind of like hand gestures or movement of some sort to, you know, make a magic happen. So like a swish and flick or something. Then I have Enchanted Clothing, I pick an article of everyday clothing, it's enchanted without any change in appearance. I take -1 harm from any source that tries to get at me through the garment. And it is the vest that I'm wearing, the spells/consumables vest. I have Forensic Divination, when you successfully Investigate a Mystery, you may ask 'What magic was done here?' as a free extra question.

Rev: Nice.

Teej: So that's pretty nice. Practitioner, choose two effects available to you under Use Magic. Take +1 to Use Magic whenever you choose one of those effects. I went ahead

with heal 1 harm from an injury or cure a disease or neutralize a poison, and do one thing that is beyond human limitations. And then I have Shield Spell, when you Protect Someone, gain 2-armor against any harm that is transferred to you. This doesn't stack with your other armor, if any.

Rev: So you dipped into a couple of different kinds of magics there, whereas most people kind of focus into one. Can you tell me a little bit about why you know so many elements of magic?

Teej: I think the whole thing with the Soul Bat really put me into perspective as to what I really needed to do with my life. And so I went with Siobhan to go train, but she was just like, "Well, I know this thing and this thing." And I was like, "Well, I think to be a well-rounded wizard, I need to have more." So I think I -- she gave me the knowledge that I needed to learn things, and then I went and learned my own, like, extra stuff.

Rev: So like the same kind of thirst that you had for science before, but now for magic. That like you need to know not just physics and thermodynamics, but you need to know everything. So you're kind of taking the same approach with magic.

Teej: Right. I need to know, like, necromancy and I need to know mysticism and sorcery and all that good stuff.

Rev: OK.

Jake: And I am now The Monstrous. Specifically, I am Vampyr. So I am basically in my street clothes. I have taken the opportunity to not have to be dolled up in armor. So I'm wearing just like boots and jeans and kind of a torn up hoodie. And, you know, my hair's grown long on top, so I've got it pushed back and out of my way. Really, I kind of look like I'm trying to stay incognito, like I'm just trying to look as mundane as possible. But it's hard to pull off to some degree because I'm just kind of pale and gaunt and dark circles under my eyes. Like, I look -- I look like a vampire who's trying to hide in his clothes.

I have a curse, which is that I must feed. I think it's going to take the form of blood. That seems pretty vampiric. So I need to Act Under Pressure to resist feeding whenever a perfect opportunity presents itself. I have a natural attack that is a bite, a teeth attack which does 3 harm intimate. And I get to add an extra to it, which is that it ignores armor. And then for my remaining moves, I have Immortal, I don't age or sicken, and whenever I suffer harm I suffer one less. Unholy Strength, I roll +Weird instead of +Tough to kick ass. Mental Dominion, I can gaze into a normal human's eyes and exert my will over them, which is a Charm roll to make them do some stuff. And I can fly.

All: [Silence]

Jake: I said I can fly. Not a -- not an appropriate response.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: And I also took an additional natural attacks pick. So I took the life drain base, so that I can -- it doesn't do a lot of damage, but I take it back onto me as health.

Rev: Yeah. And I think that for our purposes, you being a vampire, that taking that means that you can do your bite, attack and drain life like in combat. That you can actually drink. Whereas if you didn't have that move, you could only kind of drink and heal yourself out of combat. So this lets you do it in combat.

Jake: OK. Yeah. And that, like, the teeth attack does 3 harm and the life drain does 1, so I imagine it is just kind of the difference between bite and tear.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Versus like bite with precision to take what I need.

Rev: Yeah. You only get 1 back because you just accidentally swallow some.

Jake: [Gags].

Teej: Life drain buddies, yay.

Jake: Yay.

Rev: And I think the other thing important to note about this world: you have no Luck points to spend in this world.

Teej: But we roll terribly.

Jake: We will -- we will surely perish.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: So here the three of you are, standing in this dark house next to a set of stairs.

Jake: "Man, you were going to kill me."

Tass: "Yes, I was."

Jake: "Like you said you couldn't save me, but you can stop me from living this way. So ... Oh boy, let's just keep an eye on that one, huh? In case that flip we're all worried about? To think you're gonna come for me hard."

Tass: "Oh, God. God, what does that mean? If everything goes well and we leave ..."

Jake: "Yep. Yep. Probably. Well, I don't know. If they remember this, maybe ... Maybe the band gets back together. Or maybe you kill me. I am a vampire. So it's not the worst."

Rev: As you're saying these things, you feel a kind of rising heat in your throat. And it's not unsimilar to when you had the vampire blood inside of you back in Hawaii, but you're able to push it down.

Jake: "Where the hell are we?"

Teej: "Are we in Ireland?"

Jake: I want to go look out one of the windows and see if it looks distinctly Irish outside.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: There's a man outside river dancing.

Jake: Are there an above average number of redheads per capita outside?

Tass: How many leprechauns are there, Rev?

Jake: Do I have a phone on me?

Rev: Yes.

Jake: I want to, like, pull it out and open the GPS app and see where it says I am right now.

Rev: You are in Chicago.

Jake: "We are not in Ireland. We are actually in Chicago. I wonder why."

Tass: "I mean, is this where this world Jake is just holed up, and we came to hunt you down? Seems most likely to me."

Jake: I want to try something. I have no idea how this would resolve, but I want to, like, sit down and close my eyes and basically try to meditate to make contact with other me.

Rev: Jake, you close your eyes and you're standing in a blank room, and there is another you standing across from you. It seems like you're both standing in little pin lights. And this version of you is looking back at you. They look gaunt and pale. They have black hair that is slicked back, and they're kind of dressed in what you would consider the Marvel disguise kit -- it is just a hoodie and jeans and sneakers. But it is you.

Jake: "Hey."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: What's happening to me?

Jake: "Well, um ... I'm you from a different world, a different universe. And someone asked us to come here to set this place right. So when we came over, we were thrust into these bodies. Because I mean, technically, essentially, we are you."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Who's we?

Jake: "The old team. Me and Tass and T.J."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: What good would the three of you do? We failed.

Jake: "At the Halifax, right?"

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Yes. That was the first place, anyway. There were many failures after that.

Jake: [Chuckles] "Boy. Same. So I think the difference between where I'm from and here is that at the Halifax in our world, we managed to stop the monster and get Rev out. And so I don't know what exactly went different here, but hopefully just from living that other perspective and from knowing that it's possible, we can make it happen here, too."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Do you still have your divinity?

Jake: "No. No, I don't. The gods died back in our world."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Shit.

Jake: "Yeah, yeah. Major, major shit."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: I'm not going to lie. Oddly, you also not having it anymore makes me feel a little better.

Jake: "Do you miss it?"

Rev: OTHER JAKE: I do.

Jake: "Me too."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: All right. You're going to have to be careful. I work on a new team now. And if what I stepped out of was correct, the last thing I saw was Tass trying to kill me. I assume you've stopped it. Because I don't know where we are now, but I was in my hotel room and there was a flash of light, and then I just appeared here and then Tass was on me. And I'm supposed to be meeting them right about now.

Jake: "Who are they?"

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Ori and Rachel.

Jake: "Oh, man. Boy, that's all real different in our world too, then."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Oh yeah?

Jake: "Yeah. Ori's like, uh ... Ori's like our dude. We got him out of some shit, he got us out of some shit. He's not part of the team, but he's an ally for sure."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: No, I failed the Trial of the Divine. And when they stripped me of my powers, the only consolation they could give me was that they would remove one of the poisons from me, and they removed one of my choosing. And so I had them remove the werewolf blood, because at least I knew a vampire. Like, I didn't know him very well, but I figured I wouldn't be alone. And when I came back, it seemed like he and I were linked, and Rachel started training us both. We were both, you know, in our 20s and had no idea how to use these powers. So she put us through boot camp.

Jake: "Well, I'll try to keep things smooth with them. I assume that's what you want, right? Do you want me to keep the peace with Ori and Rachel?"

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Yeah. I don't imagine that there's any cure for me that you're going to find in whatever it is you're here to do. And saving the world, as awesome as that would be, if you could reverse the effects that the Soul Bat has had on this world, I'm all about that. But if I lose them, I'll be alone for all of eternity.

Jake: "Did you contract vampirism from that goop in the minibar?"

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Kind of. T.J. drank it and I healed him, but I like pulled it into myself?

Jake: "No I did that too. I did get that far."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: [Laughs] God.

Jake: "Do you know who is like your master?"

Rev: OTHER JAKE: I don't have any idea. I mean, Ori was born this way.

Jake: "Yeah."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Rachel was turned by ... I honestly don't know who. And I have no idea whose blood was in that vial.

Jake: "Well because, I mean, I know that if you kill the person who turned a vampire, that's how you fix them. But as far as the drinking the stuff, I don't know how that works. But I can -- I can try to find out while I'm here."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Yeah. I mean, we've made a life for ourselves in this world. If you were to try to fix the three of us somehow, I'd have to be the last one. Like, I couldn't be first and then you left, because I don't think they would have any choice but to feed on me or turn me again. I think that you being here, I assume that your being in my -- whatever this is -- my body? My brain? Is what's stopping me from the fight I was just in.

Jake: "Yeah, I think you're right."

Rev: OTHER JAKE: So, yeah. If you could find a way to cure the three of us? That would be amazing. But I don't think you could start with me. You'd have to start with one of them, and then hide the other one from the second.

Jake: "All right, man. Well in the meantime, I am just going to try and keep everything cool. Keep them cool, keep Tass and T.J. cool, and try to ..." [Sighs] "Not fix the world, but make it better at least. Can I count on you, along the way? If there's something you know that I don't, can I ask you?"

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Yeah, I think so. As long as it doesn't put my friends in danger.

Jake: I will walk that direction and, like, hold my hand out. "Sounds like a square deal to me."

Rev: And he reaches out and shakes your hand. And for a brief moment, those two pools of light are one. And then you're back sitting on the floor in this dark room.

Jake: "Whoa. All right. I just, like, communed with other me, and I think we're cool."

Tass: "Whoa. OK, what was that? Like what happened?"

Jake: "You know, I just kind of focused down, and it was kind of like being in a blank room together. And we had a conversation and we reached an agreement, for all intents and purposes. You know, there are a couple of things that he wants me to make sure not to ruin. And other than that, we're good."

Teej: "Well, I wonder if we can do that, too." And I'm going to try.

Rev: All right. So yeah, you sit down on the ground and you cross your legs and close your eyes. And you open your eyes again, and you are standing in this void space, in a little pin light. And about twenty feet from you in another pin light is this other version of yourself. And they are wearing a long coat, they've got a couple of pieces of jewelry on, and this tactical vest underneath this coat. And they have a goatee and kind of spiky hair.

Teej: "Hi."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: What's going on?

Teej: "Well might be hard to explain, but maybe not. You're me."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Yeah.

Teej: "I'm you."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Yeah.

Teej: "I'm actually a you from a different universe."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Yeah, I think I've seen you actually.

Teej: "Really? Where?"

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: So I spent a lot of time, like, learning magic. And one of the things I had to do was try to see other times and places. And every now and then it seemed like it would go OK but, like, I'd see me, but it wasn't me. It was like the you-me?

Teej: "Really?"

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Yeah, but not like always the same one. Like I saw a bunch of different mes that weren't me, but looked like me.

Teej: "Right. Because there is a multiverse, and you're probably seeing all the different realities of us."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Oh.

Teej: "Yeah. So I ... I'm T.J. Are you still T.J., too?"

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: I'm just T.J. I'm not T.J. 2.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: They give each other finger guns. They're like, ayy.

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Why are you in my body? Our body. Collective body. Why are you in collective body?

Teej: "Because I am here to try and save your world."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Explain?

Teej: "Well ..."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: I'm here trying to save my world.

Teej: "I know. And that is very admirable. I'm so proud of us right now. Not to stroke my own ego or anything."

All: [Laugh]

Teej: "But I've been sent here by Grigori Nash."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Who's that?

Teej: "Oh, you don't know Grigori?"

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: No.

Teej: "OK. Well, do you remember the Soul Bat, and how it took Rev?"

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Yeah. The thing that like ruined my whole world and killed one of my best friends and ...

Teej: "Right."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Broke up ... Yeah, I remember that.

Teej: "Well after Rev was taken, a more powerful being called Grigori got taken by the Soul Bat. So Grigori was able to cast himself out of his body and into, of all people, Rev from my world. And he came and told us to help save his world."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: OK, how?

Teej: "Well in my world we defeated the Soul Bat, and so we're pretty sure we know how to defeat the Soul Bat here as well."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: You haven't answered my question yet. You've come and hijacked my body, to what ends? You said, we're going to defeat this thing. How are you going to defeat it?

Teej: "Well, hopefully we'll find its source and then destroy it. And then that should be the end of the Soul Bat."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: How? Like, these are a lot of explanations with no real answers. What do you mean, find the source and destroy? Destroy it how?

Teej: "Well, the Soul Bat's source in our world was based off of superstition. And in this case, it was the superstition of saying Macbeth in a theater. And so it was pouring out of a script for Macbeth, and we were able to grenade this script and it was destroyed. We know that the physical form of the Soul Bat is hurt by light as well."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: So where's this script at?

Teej: "It was in the basement of the Halifax Theatre."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Well I mean, I've been through the basement of the Halifax Theatre. I didn't see any sign of, like, power source for some epic monster.

Teej: "Well I mean, it was pretty insignificant whenever we found it. It was just a script in a locker, and it was pouring out black goo, which ended up being the Soul Bat."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Yeah, but things don't just pour out black goo. Like, I've spent years now studying magic. Magical things have a power source. I'm telling you, there's no power source there. There was nothing to create or hold the Soul Bat in that theater.

Teej: "Well, I'm a scientist, and ..."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: [Sighs] That explains it.

Teej: "What do you mean?"

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Science failed this world.

Teej: "Uh ..."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Like, that is why I have moved on from it. Magic gives you true answers. Magic describes, defines all the things that science can't answer.

Teej: "Well, I agree to disagree with you on that. I have seen some crazy things, I'll admit, but I've been able to fix things with science myself."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: You think that you destroyed a magical entity by grenading a book.

Teej: "Yeah."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: That's not how it works.

Teej: "Well, maybe not here. It worked in our world, as far as I know."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: OK, so what do you want to do? You want to just drive my body around and magically save the world?

Teej: "Well, I was hoping we could work together to save the world. Maybe I'd do a little bit of science, maybe you'd do a little bit of magic, and maybe somewhere in between we'd find a happy medium."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: What's the "work together" part in you hijacking my body?

Teej: "Look, I have seen some crazy stuff, including monsters and creatures of all kinds. I've got lots of experience under my belt. With your magic and my experience, we should be able to save your world in no time. And then I'll be out of here, and then you can get back to doing magic."

Rev: Roll Manipulate Someone.

Teej: That's a nine.

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: All right. It doesn't seem like I have much of a choice, in the sense of you being in control of my body. And I'll help you out, but you have to know why you're doing things. When you go after a creature, don't just throw shit at it. That makes it worse. You gotta know why you're doing it, and that it's going to work before you do it. This world doesn't have room for a wild card. That's how I lost my friends.

Teej: And I know he's being very serious about it.

Jake: But ...

Teej: But, it's almost like he knows that I don't plan for things all that often.

Rev: Yeah, because that's why he thinks he lost his world.

Teej: Right.

Rev: Because he used to be you and be that way.

Teej: Right.

Rev: And so now he has altered his personality.

Teej: Wow. OK. I look at him in the eyes and I say, "OK."

Rev: OTHER TEEJ: Fine. But I'll be watching, and if you start to do some dangerous shit for no reason, I will try to take this body back over and I'll figure out a way.

Teej: "I understand."

Rev: And both the lights go out, and you're back on the floor.

Teej: "Wow. That was interesting conversation. How long was I gone for?"

Jake: "An imperceptible amount of time."

Teej: "Good news, we got magic on our side."

Jake: "All right, cool. You say that like there's a bad news."

Teej: "Uh ... I don't think I'll be able to do any science. I don't think I can just make any of our machines to fix things with."

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, we went through the void into another world before and couldn't access anything that we used to do. I don't imagine why that would be any different just because we're in our own bodies."

Teej: "Yeah. Well."

Tass: "Now we know."

Teej: "Yeah."

Teej: "Oh, shit. Does this mean it's my turn?"

Teej: And we're both staring at him, waiting patiently.

Tass: "OK, is there like a leg placement thing I gotta know, here?"

Jake: "I mean just like criss cross applesauce."

Tass: "OK ..."

Jake: "I don't think this is necessary. It's just the way I sat down. But if it makes you feel better -- because it has achieved results for both of us."

Tass: "It makes me feel better." And I'm going to sit down and take a deep breath, psych myself up, and see what I can see.

Rev: You close your eyes. And you open them again, and you are standing in a small spotlight in a void. And about 20 feet away from you is this other version of you. They're wearing a beat up, heavy leather coat, torn up jeans, and they are clean shaven and there are scars on their face, and they're wearing a beat up beanie. And they're just staring at you.

Rev: OTHER TASS: How the fuck did you get in here?

Tass: "Hey, I know this has got to be awful. I can't even imagine it from the other side. I don't -- I don't know if you can sense this, but I'm you. I'm another sort of version of you."

Rev: OTHER TASS: I kind of gathered that.

Tass: "So I don't know what we do here, exactly. I can give you the spiel. I can answer questions. I don't know. How do you want to do this?"

Rev: OTHER TASS: Well I'd like you to get out of my head so I can have control of my body back. I was about to set Jake free, and you stopped me.

Tass: "Yeah, I picked up on that. Um ..."

Rev: OTHER TASS: I've been hunting him for so long to get this opportunity. You got shit timing.

Tass: [Chuckles] "Tell me about that a little bit. I mean, I see what he is now. Where I'm from, it didn't happen that way. Is he like ... Is he like a murderer over here? Is he -- is he full on like that? Or is it just principle of, you know, monster state? Or, you know, I just -- I'm just curious. Like, what's the situation?"

Rev: OTHER TASS: He works with a group that is powerful enough they could help, and instead they're taking advantage of the situation and building themselves a nice little kingdom.

Tass: "Huh. Yeah. I mean, on one level, that's pretty shitty. But I don't know, I'm going to be kind of blunt here, man. I try not to waste ammo on targets that aren't important when there's a bigger one to deal with."

Rev: OTHER TASS: He's the way he is because I failed. He's got to live that cursed life because I couldn't stop him. I can release him from it and stop him from doing anything else that he might regret.

Tass: "OK. Well, I'll level with you here, man. I'm not going to be like this with you, a part of you, for a long time. And whatever happens after that, I clearly have no say and wouldn't presume to, or to try to change your mind out of what you intend. But right now, Jake is someone that can help the greater problem. You say that, you know, these people aren't doing it, and right now he can. And it's clear that he has some influence and some abilities. And, um ..."

Rev: OTHER TASS: Wait. So there's not just you?

Tass: "Yeah. My world T.J. is here. My world Jake is here. And in our world, we took out the Soul Bat. And so, again, I'm not going to try to delve and rip information out of you, but I think -- I hope you can appreciate the analogy that you use the right tool to kill the monster or the monster won't go down. And the three of us are that tool. We've done it before. I have zero doubt that we're going to do it again. So if you help me help you, we can do this. And after that, you're back to doing ... Whatever you need to do, man."

Rev: OTHER TASS: How do you go back? Like, you just think it and you're gone?

Tass: "Not exactly. I don't just think it and I'm gone. We have to come back here. There's a thing that our T.J. built and it sort of manifested here. So it's just a matter of coming back and walking through."

Rev: OTHER TASS: What happens when you walk through? Like, do I just fall to the ground and I'm myself again? Or ...

Tass: "Yeah. Doubt you even fall to the ground."

Rev: OTHER TASS: All right. I'll help you. I'll give you the knowledge that I've got. But when you leave, before you go through your portal, you tie up Jake. So I'm right back where I was when you stepped into this story.

Tass: "I'll tell you what I can promise you. I've already talked to Jake, and he's already talked to your Jake. And there's a willingness to participate. If nothing else changes, if my version doesn't sway this other version to be a positive force in this world? Then, yeah. To me, he's a monster, too. But I know my Jake, and I have a feeling you guys will be a little closer to being able to get along by the time this is said and done. So, as is? You have my word. But I would hope that there's a little bit of a willingness on your part to see the other side of this."

Rev: OTHER TASS: I could see through my eyes, still. Like I can see what's going on, but it's ... Did you ever see that movie Being John Malkovich?

Tass: "You know I have."

Rev: OTHER TASS: It's like that. Like I kind of feel like I'm sitting in a chair, looking out my eyes like they're a windshield. So I'll sit here and I'll watch. And if somehow, miraculously, he steps away from the coven he's joined and decides to help better the world again, I'd consider it. But I don't see that happening. We've lost a lot in this world. And I can't remember the last time I saw someone take a step forward instead of a step back.

Tass: "I appreciate your willingness to at least say the words. I get that you don't believe it'll happen. And I'm not saying it absolutely will."

Rev: OTHER TASS: I need you to agree on something with me. When you look at this situation, when you're getting ready to leave, don't let your vision of your friend cloud the image of what you're really leaving this world behind to deal with. Because if you can destroy the Soul Bat and that group is still standing, you've just given them an open buffet with nothing to stop them.

Tass: "Hey, I get it. We have gone down very different paths, let me tell you. But seems like our mission statement is pretty much the same."

Rev: OTHER TASS: All right.

Rev: And he spits on his hand and holds it out.

Tass: I'll shake his hand.

Rev: And you are back in the dark house.

Tass: [Shivers] "Um, shit. All right."

Teej: "Yeah? We on board?"

Tass: "Yeah. You know, this guy's rough. I think all three of these guys are. They've been through some shit. You know, there's just a lot going on with the vampires and the Soul Bats and this power struggle, and I think it's just a lot for everybody. But I think the idea of the right tool for the job kind of got through. So let's not disappoint, yeah?"

Teej: "Yeah."

Rev: All right. I have a new move for all of you while you're in this world. This move is going to be called Against the Grain. You all now are at a point where you've talked to yourselves and you kind of know what they don't want you to do in this world. You all have kind of made an uneasy bargain with your others. So when you do something that goes against with the agreement you have just made with the other version of yourself, you're going to roll Against the Grain, and this is going to be a Cool roll. On a 10 and up, you do it no problem. On a 7 to 9, you're going to have a -1 to the next action that you do, because you're going to kind of pause, you're going to hesitate. And on a 6 and under, you're going to freeze for a moment. You're going to seize up, because they are going to put enough pressure on you to stop you from acting for a moment. And you're going to take a Dissonance Point. Once you collect 3 Dissonance Points, on that third one, I will spend them. And that other version of you, the version of you that you have taken over, is going to take back over for a moment and get to do an action. Does that all make sense?

Tass: Absolutely.

Jake: Yeah.

Tass: "So do any of us have wheels?"

Jake: I'll pat my pockets to see if there are car keys in them. "Not me."

Teej: "Yeah, me neither. I've got a bunch of crap in these pockets, though."

Tass: "Oh, I have keys with a clicker."

Jake: "All right. Well, let's figure out ..." Well, first of all, I want to look around for the portal that I expect to be here.

Rev: So you know it leaves these strange burn marks as the energy that is your essence, your soul, comes out of the portal. Tass, you've got a flashlight and start to look around. The first thing you notice is some lines carved on the floor just off of the stairs, as well as some painted symbols. And they all work together to form a pretty ornate summoning circle. I think that's something that you guys have all seen and you recognize.

Jake: "The other me told me that there was like a flash of light and then he wasn't in his hotel room anymore. He was here. So did you summon me?"

Tass: Do we know? Like is that something we can access in our heads if we did it?

Rev: Yeah, absolutely. Like, as soon as you all start to think about this, you get different pieces of the story. But you know that Tass, you brought T.J. here because he had worked up a way to summon Jake, but there had to be a little bit of proximity to it. And so you set this area up, you summoned him, so that you could kill him and release him.

Teej: "Well, now I feel real bad."

Jake: "Yeah. What a fucking cowardly move."

Tass: "Would have worked, though."

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: Uh, yeah. Let's just keep looking around.

Jake: Yeah, I'll go look down the hall.

Rev: Go down the hallway, away from the stairs, and there are those scorch marks that, you know come from your soul, your essence, your energy, whatever, coming out of the portal. There's nothing else in this place as you look around. It's pretty dusty. And you go

into the next room, which looks like it would be a formal dining room. But again, this room is entirely empty. It's hardwood floors, there's cobwebs up on the ceiling, and there are some windows along the left side of the room. In that room stands the portal.

Tass: "OK, here it is. T.J., do you still have -- like the paper came through, right?"

Teej: "Yeah, I have it right here."

Tass: "Nice. OK. I don't know where we start besides go to Indy. But I mean, this might be the opportunity to check with our guys here and see what resources that we can actually tap."

Jake: "I feel like first thing we ought to do is make sure that nobody gets to this portal. Right? That's kind of what we did last time as soon as possible. We locked it down in Yaga's house."

Teej: "I'm going to take a look out the window."

Rev: "About two and a half feet away, you see another brick wall."

Teej: "Oh, OK. So there's an alley in between these? But pretty, pretty tight alley?"

Rev: "Yeah."

Tass: "All right. Well, if we want to lock down this portal, do we board up the windows and stuff? Like just make this as nailed shut as we can?"

Jake: "I mean, yeah, I think at the very least. Does Magic T.J. have like a way to lock this down?"

Teej: "Yeah, T.J. definitely has some kind of magic that can do that. However, it's a very specific type of magic, where it'll only bar only a specific type of creature."

Jake: "Well, I mean, I guess I don't know what type of creature. There are so many we don't want going through here."

Tass: "Yeah. Well I mean, if this is where vampire Jake has been holed up, it would stand to reason that there might be more around? I don't know. Would it be worth checking the place out and see if this is just an area where there's lots of people and maybe he was hunting? Or if this is a vampire nest? Or I mean, I have no idea."

Jake: Would this be a scenario where I would want to, like, consult other me? Or do I need to get out there and, like, try and figure out where the hell I am?

Rev: No, you could just consult other you. And that they have said that they will give you information freely, so.

Jake: Yeah, I want to figure out where we are, why, and hopefully that'll give me a good idea of what I need to worry about here.

Rev: So you are in Chicago. It's kind of the dead of winter right now. And you are here for an event that is a bunch of different vampire houses getting together to, like, divide up the properties, to make sure that they're all staying in their own territories. It's kind of a diplomatic event. And with that, I think you know that Chicago is a vampire territory. There are not humans here.

Jake: "Oh, boy. Chicago is very much vamp town. So, yeah. If there's something to worry about, we want to bar vampires. I trust you can undo it? Because otherwise I can't get back to the portal, either."

Teej: "Yeah. And I kind of already know that already, which is even better."

Jake: "OK. Well then yeah, I guess bar it up. Vampires out."

Teej: "All right."

Rev: If you're going to try to bar this portal from vampires, roll Use Magic.

Teej: OK. And with that, I find the right consumable and the hand gestures and everything. And then I place the consumable inside the ring that's got like a little socket on it where you can place it. And then I do the hand gesture, and point at the portal with the ring. [Rolls]

Jake: [Laughs]

Teej: And this being my first bout of magic, it goes poorly. I got a six.

Rev: So T.J., as you lose control of this magic, you don't seem to be affected, but there's a bright flare in the room and Jake is violently thrown through the brick wall behind him

with crash. And you see him slam through the wall of the neighboring building. Then you hear impact after impact after impact as Jake's body is hurled into the night.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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