

Lost Shaker of Salt (S3, E13)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Hey, everybody. Rev here. Just a few things before we get into this week's episode.

Just a reminder that you have got about a week left to fill out your Monster Mash bracket at thecritshowpodcast.com/monstermash, where if your bracket is correct, you will have the opportunity to win a signed 1st Edition copy of *Monster of the Week* by Michael Sands.

Also over on our Reddit, you've got about a week and a half more to get in your Damien O'Doodles. So submit those on Reddit for the Damien O'Doyle Artpocalypse contest, where we will be giving away a copy of *Monster of the Week* as well as some additional swag.

Just a reminder that September is the beginning of our new cycle for swag and for T-shirts on our Patreon. So if you are interested in getting into one of those tiers that gets you some pretty cool swag or a fresh new shirt every few months, just head over to Patreon.com/TheCritshow and you can find all the information there about our tiers. And they start at just one dollar, which gets you into our wonderful Discord community. I believe it was deemed the other day "aggressively welcoming." And once you step into our Discord, it is like the beginning of a zombie movie, as all the people charge at you to greet you, welcome you, and show you around. So join us there at Patreon.com, become part of our Discord community, get access to hours and hours of bonus content, get some swag or some shirts every couple of months, or even have a game run for you once a month by a member of the cast.

And lastly, I just want to say to Jacqueline, who is right now at the National Institute of Health, recovering from a very, very major surgery, that when you hear this, I hope you're doing well, and that Harvey and I will be here when you get home. And now, it's time to let the recap roll.

RECAP MUSIC

Jake: I actually want to look through the capsule and make sure that I managed to get what I hope that I got, after I dropped it on the way out.

Rev: As you go through the capsule, you are missing one of the pills.

You both step through, and the portal snaps closed behind you. You are standing in a small, open area in a ring of trees. And just to your north, you can see the red brick of a building.

Jake: "You may have heard. I scared a number of schoolchildren, and somebody pulled an alarm of some sort."

Rev: As you are directing, Jake, through these tunnels, you've got light from Jake's sword, as well as light from your helmet. And you notice just a very small purple shimmer at one point, as Jake lifts his boot out and takes another step. Jake lifts his boot out of the water, and you see a fairly fat inch and a half long purple leech attached to his boot.

Jake: I want to try an old reliable trick. Because you said I've got like three of them on me? I want to shock myself with the stun knuckles. I've done this before to get rid of several small things that were biting me.

Rev: You go to thrust your fists into the water with the stun knuckles, and a voice speaks up from a little further down the tunnel.

Rev: VOICE: I wouldn't do that if I were you. It won't end well for anybody standing in this water.

Tass: "Who's that? Who's there?"

Rev: And as they step towards you, you see that they have this deep purple skin, black eyes, and a round mouth filled with sharp, needle-like teeth.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Here you both are, standing inside of this sewer tunnel, small shrieks from leeches as you have killed them. And from behind you in the tunnel has stepped up this person:

six feet tall, wearing stained overalls and work boots, purple skin, black eyes, and a round mouth filled with needle-like teeth.

Jake: "Who are you?"

Rev: SELINA: I'm Selina. Who're you? You're probably not supposed to be down here.

Jake: "I think you're correct. Do you run this?"

Rev: SELINA: Kind of. I'd sure get back above ground level if I were you. Sounds like you're hurting the kids. If mama comes, you gon' be in trouble.

Jake: "You're not Mama?"

Rev: SELINA: No, no. I'm just her oldest.

Tass: [quietly] Why was that so much more terrifying? What?!

Jake: I want to look closely at one of the leeches that's on me and see if it's got [laughs] tiny arms and legs?

All: [laugh]

Tass: Be careful of your answer, because I might quit. I might quit, right here.

Rev: Little vestigial ...

Jake: They're not useful yet. But once their overall start coming in ...

All: [laugh]

Rev: No, you do not see anything that indicates to you that these tiny leeches will become humanoid.

Jake: "How come you're giving us a warning? Not that I don't appreciate it. I super do. But if Mama gon' be mad, why aren't you mad?"

Rev: SELINA: I assume you're new. Sometimes people come down here by mistake. I just givin' you a heads up.

Jake: "Oh, people come in — like new people arrive here?"

Rev: SELINA: Yeah, yeah.

Jake: "Where are we?"

Rev: SELINA: What do ya mean?

Jake: "What's the name of this, like, town?"

Rev: SELINA: Oh, I don't know.

Jake: "How ... Well I guess you — I know how you got here. You were born here, right? Born of Mama?"

Rev: SELINA: You ask a lot of questions.

Jake: "I'm sorry. It's in my nature. I'm a naturally inquisitive person."

Rev: SELINA: What's that sword? What you got there? That's a big old shiny ... Hey now, wait a minute. I don't think you're like the other folks who normally get lost down in here. You better go on. Get out of here. I'll call Mama.

Tass: "There's no need for that." [whispers] "Wait, that might skip some steps."

Jake: [laughs] Leech dungeon speed run tactics.

Rev: If we just train everything to the entrance.

Jake: If you aggro the boss ...

Tass: "OK, hey, there's no need for like a fight, here. We can go. We just — we were getting attacked by the things and we were freaking out, you know? Because, you know, I don't want to get — you don't want to get attacked. I don't want to get attacked. I mean, right? We don't want to be getting attacked, right?"

Rev: SELINA: Who are you?

Tass: "Hi. I am a newcomer to the town. This is my associate, who is also a newcomer to the town. We sort of walked through like a portal or something, and found ourselves in woods. And then we were walking through the woods and then we couldn't get out — like it was like a wall. There's an invisible wall."

Rev: And when you say that you came through a portal, you see her eyes get big. And she starts to take some steps backwards, and then turns and starts sprinting away.

Jake: [sighs] I'm gonna Use Magic.

Rev: Roll it.

Jake: Nine.

Rev: All right. What's your effect?

Jake: Trap a specific person, minion, or monster. And I think the effect is weakened.

Rev: OK. So this crimson spear appears over her, and she pretty instantly slams her mouth against it. And you can see her mouth working on it and the tongue lashing up and down. And as she's doing this, the red is starting to slowly fade away. It seems like she is eating this magic. It's gonna take a moment, but it seems like she could eat her way through this.

Tass: "Hey, we're not here to hurt you. We are not. We're not here to hurt you. We just, we're ... Look. Yeah, we came through. We're here to find somebody or something in a specific place, and that's it. And get out. But up there, there's like people looking for us or something. And down here, there's these things trying to eat us. We don't want to cause anybody any trouble in the town. We just want to find the place and go. That's it. That's

all we want. If you just ... If you even help us, like, find the right spot, whatever we can do to help you out — what do you want? We'll help you. Come up with us and hang out not down here."

Rev: Roll Manipulate Someone with a -1.

Tass: Ooh, OK.

Rev: You have already entrapped them in a magic case.

Tass: That's fair. Oh, seven.

Rev: She stops and pulls away from the surface of the dome.

Rev: SELINA: I suppose I could not tell anybody I saw you down here, but I can't go against Mama. I can't really go up above. People will be scared. But if you tell me where you trying to get to, maybe I could lead you there through here. But you got to take me with you when you go. I don't — I just don't want to live here anymore. You're the first person I've seen in a long time who's talked about the portal, and that's how I came here. I'd much rather not be any more.

Tass: "I think that's amenable. I think we could do that."

Rev: SELINA: Well put your money where my mouth is.

Jake: I dropped the magic.

Rev: She licks the air one last time

Jake: Just as it disappears. No! [licks] It's delicious. It tastes like Red Hots.

All: [laugh]

Rev: SELINA: So where you trying to get to?

Tass: "We know it's a green house with a number 743?"

Rev: SELINA: OK. Well, yeah. I mean, it's a simple number grid system. So I could lead you, I think, to that.

Tass: "We would very much appreciate that."

Rev: SELINA: Now, be careful where you walk. Because when you're with me, the little ones, they won't bother you none. But if you step on one, or ...

Tass: "Sure."

Rev: SELINA: Yeah. I can't be held responsible. Now, we got to be quiet. Because like I said, I can't go against Mama. If she gives me command, I gotta do it.

Tass: "Sure. Yeah. Nope. We gotcha. We're with you."

Rev: SELINA: OK, so follow me. Both of you roll Act Under Pressure. See if we can sneak through here together.

Tass: [laughs] OK.

Rev: But you do get a +1, for her leading you.

Tass: It's an eight for me.

Jake: With my bonus, it's a six.

Tass: Can I help him out by kind of going first and staying low with the headlamps so it's at water level? You know, so that we can see if they're the shadows of the things in the water.

Rev: The headlamp at water level just made me assume that you're walking on your hands and feet. Just sploosh, sploosh, sploosh.

Tass: Closer to water level. [laughs] I don't want to be neck deep in this stuff again.

Rev: Yeah, roll Help Out.

Tass: OK. That's a ten.

Rev: So you both are able to get through these tunnels, with Selina aiding you. But she does have to stop a couple of times and peel some of the little ones off of you. You both take an additional point of mental exhaustion.

Tass: OK.

Rev: But she ultimately does get you to a ladder and points at it.

Rev: SELINA: If you go up there and go to your right, just maybe 20, 30 feet down, that should be the front door for 743.

Tass: "Selina, that is awesome. Once we figure everything out, how do we find you?"

Rev: SELINA: Well, you want me to just wait here? Are you gonna come back down here?

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, I think that's the easiest if you're not comfortable coming up, if you don't want to startle anyone that might see you."

Rev: SELINA: I mean, that's up to you. You guys are kind of startling looking, yourself. I could come with you.

Tass: "Yeah, I mean, that's a good point. But maybe just for your safety, stay here. We'll go check out exactly what's going on with this house first. And once we get all that sorted and we get an exit strategy, we'll come get you, OK?"

Rev: SELINA: All right.

Jake: "Now that we're cool, can I ask you some more questions?"

Rev: SELINA: Oh, sure.

Jake: "Just like, you know, you say you can't go up there, people will be startled. So people don't know you're down here?"

Rev: SELINA: No, no.

Jake: "So what — what do you do down here?"

Rev: SELINA: I just make sure everybody's fed and happy.

Jake: "All the little ones?"

Rev: SELINA: Yeah.

Jake: "So you don't have anything to do with the people up top?"

Rev: SELINA: No, no.

Jake: "But you came here through a portal?"

Rev: SELINA: Yeah.

Jake: "So did Mama also come here through a portal?"

Rev: SELINA: Yeah. Yeah, they brought her first so she could set up shop.

Jake: "So did she like agree to it? Like she wanted to come here?"

Rev: SELINA: Yeah. Yeah. She, uh ... She owed a favor. So she's paying a debt.

Jake: "How long you been here?"

Rev: SELINA: Oh I don't know. What time is it?

Jake: I check my watch.

Rev: It's not working.

Jake: "I have no idea."

Rev: SELINA: Oh.

Jake: "But wait, so we're talking in terms of like minutes or hours? Not like months or years?"

Rev: SELINA: Yeah, I'm not quite sure. I don't think I experience time the same way. It passes weird down here, and I think it was ... Oh I don't know, the late '90s, I think, when we left and came here.

Tass: "Oh."

Jake: "You'll be happy to know that overalls have come back into style."

Rev: SELINA: Oh yeah?

Jake: "Yeah. Well, lay low. We'll come back for you. Should we have a plan B, in case we can't come back down this entrance?" I'll describe to her, like, the one we came in.

Rev: SELINA: Oh, like right where I found you? Just the one like behind you?

Jake: "Pretty much just the one right behind us. Yeah. We didn't get far."

Rev: SELINA: You made a lot of noise.

Jake: "Yeah. If you hear us make a lot of noise up top of this one and then not come down here, rendezvous with us at that one."

Rev: SELINA: OK.

Jake: "At least that way we know where to find her."

Tass: "I like it."

Rev: SELINA: I never been into the school. Maybe I'll sneak in, if I go that way.

Jake: "I wouldn't. They are touchy."

Rev: SELINA: Oh, yeah?

Jake: "Especially right now. I did cause a lockdown."

Rev: SELINA: Well, I'll wait here. I'll see if I hear some fussin' and a feudin'. And then if I hear something, I'll just head the other way.

Tass: "All right." And I'll head up.

Jake: I want to let him peek first.

Rev: So Tass, you climb up this manhole cover and peek out. There is a pretty calm street. There are a couple of people mowing their lawns. But almost directly in front of you is a little green house.

Tass: I'm gonna give a thumbs up and hop up out of there as quick as I can.

Jake: "Am I good?"

Tass: "Yep. Come on, come on, come on."

Jake: OK, I go fast.

Rev: All right. So here you both stand in the middle of the street in this small, small town. What are you doing?

Tass: God, I guess just walking right up to the door.

Jake: I at least need to get to cover, so that more people don't see the flaming sword and panic. So is there like a large tree in the yard or anything?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I'll go kind of duck behind that, where I'm largely out of view from the rest of the street.

Rev: OK.

Jake: And I'll wait. If he's going to the front door, I'll wait for him to make his move.

Tass: "Oh, Jake, give me the salt shaker."

Jake: I'll hand him the salt shaker.

Tass: And I'll pocket it for the moment. And I'm just ... I'm gonna go up to the door and knock.

Jake: And as he does, I kind of ... I'm sidling around the other side of the tree, but like with the sword in front of me so that I'm body blocking it from the view of the street, so I can kind of peek around the tree and watch — watch what happens.

Rev: OK. So you are in view of the street?

Jake: Yes, but the sword, hopefully, is not.

Rev: Yeah. So Tass, you knock on the door and after a moment, the door opens. Megan, describe to Tass who he sees open the door.

Megan: You see a woman in her late 20s. I'm wearing a black and white half-sleeved striped shirt and overalls and knee high Converse. I've got short brown hair that's dyed blue on the top, and I am looking very questioning of who is knocking on my door.

Tass: "Hi, I'm Tass. How are you?"

Megan: "I'm good, and late for work. What can I do for you?"

Tass: "Yeah, I just — I found something. And long story short, I was led to believe this is where I should return it." And I'm going to fish in my pocket and pull out the salt shaker.

Rev: So in front of you, Tass holds up a white salt shaker with a red cap and a small painting of a basket with some red flowers inside of it.

Megan: Do I recognize it?

Rev: Megan, I'm gonna have you roll a custom move. This move is called Clear the Cobwebs. So this move triggers when you are trying to remember something by pushing aside the cobwebs in your mind. Roll Sharp. On a 10 to 12, hold 3. On a 7 to 9, hold 1. Spend hold, one for one, to remember one of the following: Who am I? Where am I? What can I do? What happened right before my memory faltered? What is my first memory of this person, place, or thing? What is my most important memory of this person, place or thing? Now I know what you're thinking. You already know who and where you are, so I wouldn't worry about that. So roll +Sharp.

Megan: That's a six.

Megan: On a six and under, mark one mental exhaustion. Once receiving five mental exhaustion, your memory resets and the knowledge you've gained is lost. So somewhere on your character sheet, make a spot for mental exhaustion, and mark one mental exhaustion. Yeah. So you do not recognize this salt shaker that he's holding up.

Megan: "That looks really neat. It's not mine."

Rev: And actually, as he holds the salt shaker up at you, just past him behind a tree, you see a larger man with a dark beard peering around the tree, looking at you.

Megan: "Actually, I forgot something inside." And I close the door and I lock it.

Rev: So Tass, you hear the door click and lock.

Tass: "But ma'am, look on the table. Look on the table! There's the napkins, and there's like a little space, and then there's the pepper. Ma'am?"

Jake: [whispers] "What the fuck are you doing?"

Tass: "I thought she might recognize it!"

Jake: "It doesn't seem like it went well."

Tass: "It did not go well."

Jake: "What do we do now?"

Tass: "I don't know. She's probably caught up in the same loop that everybody else is."

Jake: "It's a loop?"

Tass: "Well, I mean, you know what I mean. Just the whole 'living your lives, doing your own thing,' thing."

Jake: "I mean, we've got a pill for that, but I sure don't think she's going to accept it."

Tass: "Well, no!" I'm gonna lightly knock again. "Miss? I'm sorry to be a bother. I just ... You know, we're not trying to cause any trouble. If you just give us the opportunity to explain a couple of things, I just, I think it would really help you out right now. Because it's really weird that I have this, and it's really weird how we came to find you as the place we should return it. And I just think it would really explain a lot of things for everybody if we could walk you through that."

Rev: So Tass, roll Manipulate Someone.

Tass: Oh, god. OK. That's a four.

Megan: [laughs]

Tass: So for another hunter, on a miss from me, it's up to you to decide how badly you are offended or annoyed. You can mark experience, if you decide not to do what I've asked.

Rev: So Megan, outside your door, you hear this voice again after you have shut and locked it. And you hear some muttering between the two men, and then you hear this speech through the door. What are you doing while he's talking to you through the door?

Megan: I'm probably texting my boss.

Rev: What are you texting them?

Megan: I'm letting her know that I'm not at work yet because there's two creepy guys outside of my house and I don't feel comfortable leaving yet. So I'll be in as soon as I get them away.

Rev: They text you back and ask if you want them to call the cops.

Megan: I let her know, "Maybe? But just hold off for now." We'll see if they, uh ... If they leave.

Rev: And she responds, saying that she'll have '91' dialed.

Megan: Yeah, that sounds like her. I think I would yell back through the door as well, and just say, "Oh what, open the door so your creepy friend behind the tree can pull me into a van? No, thank you. Can you please just leave?"

Rev: All right, mark experience.

Jake: "What did she say?" [laughs].

Rev: [laughs]

Tass: "She said the right thing. This is not good." I'm just ... Pocket the salt again and walk back over to the tree. "I don't know. I don't know."

Jake: "I mean, she might just be in the house where the thing that we need to do is."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "Let's just wait. She said she's going to work, right?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "OK, let's just wait until she goes to work, and then go investigate the house and see if we can find the shaker ourselves."

Tass: "Yeah, let's just go hide, I guess. Let's just go back."

Jake: "This was a secret Census Bureau test. You passed!" Then we just leave.

Rev: So where are you both going?

Jake: Back into the sewer, I guess!

Rev: So the two of you head back over to the manhole and take it off and climb back down into the sewer. And Selina is there.

Rev: SELINA: It seemed like it go OK?

Tass: "It did not."

All: [laugh]

Rev: SELINA: Oh.

Tass: "But it's OK. We're gonna ... We're just going to post up here for a little bit and relax for a little bit, and wait for the person that's in the house to leave. And then we're gonna try again to find what we need to find in there."

Rev: SELINA: OK.

Tass: "Yeah ..."

Rev: SELINA: So we just stand here for a while? Anything you wanna tell me about? Any interesting things happen on Earth since I left?

Tass: "No ..."

Jake: "Trust me, it's for your benefit."

Rev: SELINA: All right.

Tass: I'm actually really thinking about how much I like the look at this town.

Jake: "What do you think like the housing market's like here? How much of a down payment do you think we need?"

Rev: SELINA: Me?

Jake: "Yeah, you. You look like you're an appraiser."

Rev: SELINA: Nah, I told ya, I don't go above.

Jake: "Oh, that's right. That's right."

Rev: SEELNA: Yeah. You can get space down here for free, but you're gonna get hop-ons.

Jake: Ugh.

Tass: Oh, god ... Yeah. I think it's just more of that kind of shooting the shit for a little bit.

Rev: All right. So Megan, how long would you wait before you would feel comfortable and leave for work, seeing that they are not there anymore?

Megan: I think I'd probably give it about fifteen minutes or so, and then I would probably go out the back door and grab my moped and start it up while I was already, like, off the side of my house. And then just take off as fast as I could.

Rev: So the two of you down in the sewer, after fifteen, twenty minutes you hear a moped start up and zoom by overhead pretty quick.

Tass: "You think?"

Jake: "I mean, it just — it sounded like it started right up there, so yeah."

Tass: "All right. Here I go again." And I'll creep back up and Ninja Turtles poster this road, to see what I see.

Rev: Yeah. It's a pretty similar scene. Some of the people who were mowing their lawns have finished, others have started up, and there is a mail truck about seven houses away.

Tass: OK. I'll look back down. "Yeah, I'll just get around to the back door and yeah, give me like a thirty count and then just teleport to me?"

Jake: "Deal."

Tass: "OK." And I will do just that.

Rev: Yeah. So you climb out and you sneak your way around to the back. You see that there is indeed a back door and a small patio there that's got a little bit of an oil stain on it, like something was parked there.

Tass: Oh, nice. OK, I will wait for Jake.

Jake: "29, 30." I teleport.

Tass: "Oh that looks so cool with the fire, by the way."

Jake: "Yeah. It's a lot more visible now, unfortunately."

Tass: "Yeah but, you know, it's cool." I'm gonna try the door first.

Rev: It is locked.

Tass: And I'm gonna I guess try to use the spear and try to break that lock.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure to use the spear ... [laughs] As a device to break the lock.

Tass: OK. It's an eight.

Rev: All right, so you are going to be able to break this lock and get inside. But you're gonna draw some unwanted attention, you're not gonna have a whole lot of time once you get inside, or it's gonna be broken in a visible way. Like, you will not be able to put it back together when you leave.

Tass: I think I have in my head that one way or another, we're not gonna be around here that long anyway. So I think it's just broken.

Rev: All right. And the door swings open.

Tass: "All right. It was like a table, right? Where the thing was?"

Jake: "Yeah, it was like a kitchen table, or a dining room table."

Tass: All right. I'm gonna move in.

Rev: You head up three or four stairs, and it actually leads into the back of a kitchen, and there is a small table in the kitchen.

Tass: Aha! Do I see the pepper and everything?

Rev: You do.

Tass: I'm gonna get out the salt. And I'm very gingerly and reverently, you know, walk over and set it down in its place, next to the pepper.

Rev: You wait a few moments, and nothing happens.

Tass: "Son of a bitch!"

Jake: "Shh!"

Tass: "Sorry."

Jake: "It's not doing anything?"

Tass: "I don't think so." I want to look at it, with my sight open.

Rev: It still is magical, but you don't see it affecting anything in the area. It's not, like, bleeding over onto the pepper shaker or anything.

Tass: And does the pepper shaker look like the salt, magically?

Rev: It does not. It looks completely normal.

Tass: Oh. "It looks normal, dude. Like, it doesn't look like the salt at all."

Jake: "So it's like from here? And the salt is from Earth?"

Tass: Oh, that's a good question. Would looking at it with sight open tell me anything about this world? Like is this ... How do I ask that? Was any of this stuff, like, bought at a store and brought into this pocket dimension, or is this stuff that was like created here?

Rev: I don't think there's a roll here. You do see some very finite amounts of magic on the pepper shaker, on the table, on everything in this house, actually. But it's very different than what you see on the salt shaker, and it's in way less quantity.

Jake: But they are at least, like ... Actually, they go together.

Rev: Yeah, it is very clearly the same set. It is a kind of an antique piece. So you don't think you could just go in and buy this nowadays.

Jake: "OK, so it's not about completing the set. It was just like a waypoint. Like it was just supposed to point us here."

Tass: "I guess. So while we have time, let's scour the place. Let's see if there's anything else here important."

Jake: "Yeah. Secret rooms, magical totems, whatever."

Tass: "All right, break." And I want to start searching the house.

Jake: Same.

Rev: All right, who's leading this charge?

Tass: I suppose I am.

Rev: All right. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Tass: All right. Eight.

Jake: You get a hold 1.

Tass: What's being concealed here?

Rev: So as you look around the house, the thing that catches your attention is in the bedroom next to the headboard. There is a small, maybe three inch pipe. And you get just a very faint smell that you are very familiar with. It is the smell coming from the sewer. And you can see just barely, maybe an inch down, is one of those leeches. Just in this pipe, next to the bed.

Tass: "Oh, Jake, come here."

Jake: "What is — oh, no!"

Tass: "Yeah. Like when I had the vision, I could sort of see that all the houses and stuff were connected. But I, I guess I kind of forgot about that. I forgot the context. So, yeah. Mama down in the sewers is definitely doing something to these people."

Jake: "How are they not bothered by this?"

Tass: "I mean if whatever it is has its hooks in, if it has an effect, that's it. That's why."

Jake: "Ok." I scoot him away from the pipe. We go in a room that doesn't have the pipe.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: "So it seems that if Mama's pulling the strings, eliminating Mama would maybe take care of this whole problem where she doesn't want to talk to us or know what we're talking about. And it seems like she must be the person. Like she must be the target here, because the shakers aren't and nothing in the house is."

Tass: "Right."

Jake: "I so hoped there was a way around having to fight a giant leech mother."

Tass: "Especially because Selina at least sounds, you know, just kind of nice and helpful."

Jake: "I mean, we can bargain with Selina. It's possible that we can bargain with Mama. If Mama's paying off a debt and she, like, came here of her own accord and shit. Like, she's clearly, you know, she's not just a beast. She's intelligent, so ..."

Tass: "Yeah, but she's also apparently paying off a debt to Nash."

Jake: "Is there anything we could offer her that's greater than what Nash can threaten her with?"

Tass: "Yeah, I don't think we're going to be able to reason with Mama. I like to think that we can talk our way out of a lot of things, but I don't think we're doing that." I think this is one of those moments where I feel a little lost and I have a little bit better gauge of it. So I want to buckle down and try to get a direction. I want to try to think, you know, what is the best path to be able to take care of this thing?

Rev: All right. Roll Trust Your Gut.

Tass: OK. Fifteen.

Jake: Damn!

Rev: So the thought that you have in this moment is twofold. One, you think you should plug the hole next to the bed. And two, you think you should simply leave the salt shaker on the table and just give it some time. You think that you pursuing this hastily is exacerbating the situation and making it worse.

Tass: OK.

Jake: [laughs] Well, that doesn't sound like us at all. OK?

Tass: "Jake, help me find something to plug this up. I don't know, a bunch of paper towel or something. But something to just jam down into that pipe so that nothing can get back up through." And I'll try to look around for something that, you know, wouldn't be noticeable that is like missing, that I could jam down in there.

Rev: Yeah, that's no problem. I think you could even find like a pair of socks or something that is in the dirty hamper and you can plug it up, no problem.

Tass: OK.

Megan: That's where all my socks go ...

Rev: You take the ones from the ceiling fan, and the ones by the front door, and the ones underneath the fridge.

Tass: "Literally none of these match."

All: [laugh]

Tass: "All right, Jake, let's just go. I'm gonna leave the salt shaker here. I just think ... I don't know. I think she needs to see it or have it. Or maybe she just needed to hold it."

Jake: "Go where? Like, leave this town? Or just like go wait back in the sewer?"

Tass: "Back to the sewer, or like out to a spot in the woods that we can actually hole up for a little bit. Just something, I think, to give her time. That's just what feels right."

Jake: "OK. I mean, we should go tell Selina that we got to wait a little bit, and then I can take us back to the woods and we can just chill."

Tass: "Yeah, I think so."

Jake: "What's up?"

Tass: "I'm just ... Like this feels right, but man, she's gonna know somebody was in here. So do we just own up to that? Do we leave a note saying, I'm sorry about the door?"

Jake: "It was urgent that we return this to you?"

Tass: "Yeah, no, I don't think so. I don't think we leave anything. I think she'll know that nothing is missing besides a sock. Yeah, never mind. Let's just go."

Jake: "OK." I'll pop back down to the sewer real quick and let Selina know that —.

Rev: SELINA: [gasps]

Jake: "Oh!"

Rev: SELINA: How the hell did you do that?

Jake: "It's just a thing I can do."

Rev: "That was scary and hot and bright."

Jake: "Uh, thank you."

Rev: SELINA: No, hot cause it's fire.

Jake: "Oh! Oh ..."

Rev: [laughs]

Jake: "We have to kill some time. So we'll still be around, but we're not getting out just yet."

Rev: SELINA: Yeah. I mean if you're just looking for a place to hide out, there is just a little bit of sewer that we don't use. You can hide away in there.

Jake: "Is it close?"

Rev: SELINA: No, no. It's the far end, and it's kind of like ... I mean, like it's been a long time since I came through the portal, but that portal was kinda — kinda sticking out. And so it was kinda like that. It's on the other side of town. It's a part of the sewer that seems like it's sticking out too far. But we just don't use it because it's not underneath the town.

Jake: "Let me convene with my associate." Blink! "Selina offered us a part of the sewer that is unoccupied and unused. If we want to lay low there, as opposed to above ground."

Tass: "Yeah, whatever works."

Jake: "It's a sewer, though."

Tass: "Yeah, but the town's already ... Well, at least part of the town is sort of on alert. They might be combing the woods."

Jake: "Ok, well let's go." I hold out my hands. "Take my hands. Let's travel."

Tass: I will take it.

Rev: Yeah. There's no pressure here. You both vanish. Megan?

Megan: Yes?

Rev: Where did your moped take you? What is your job?

Megan: So I think here I work as a assistant manager at a pet grooming salon. So I spend my day giving puppies baths and getting them ready for haircuts.

Rev: Your manager asks if everything is OK when you first arrive.

Megan: "Yeah, just two randos that we're outside my house talking about salt. Which I mean fair, but I didn't recognize them, so. I just wanted to make sure they were clear of my house before I came in today.

Rev: MANAGER: Oh yeah, that's weird. We don't get a whole lot of strangers passing through here.

Megan: "Yeah, I guess ... I guess not."

Rev: MANAGER: Well, you wanna take that poodle. I'll get the golden doodle.

Megan: "Yep. Sounds good. I'll get started."

Rev: And I think we find you again a couple hours later outside of your house, parking your moped on the back stoop. And you see that the back door is broken.

Megan: Yeah. I love horror movies. So seeing the lock broken on my back door, I am not going inside. And I think I would call 911 and leave the area immediately.

Rev: Yeah. So you call 911 and you head over to the neighbor's house. A couple more hours pass. As the cops come over, they inspect your house. They don't find anything unusual. The locksmith comes, fixes the door, as well as changes the front and back locks. And the officer tells you that they will leave someone parked out front if you feel like staying at your house tonight — or you're obviously welcome to stay somewhere else.

Megan: No, I think I would ... I would stay at home.

Rev: So Jake and Tass, Selina has led you to the far side of town in the sewers, to the place that she says it will be safe for you to camp.

Rev: SELINA: Yeah, I'll help you out here, but I gotta get back to Mama. You want me check in on you in the morning or anything?

Tass: "Yeah, that would be awesome."

Rev: SELINA: All right. What time do you boys rise and shine?

Jake: "Uh ... Morning-ish. Ten? Ten?"

Tass: "Probably earlier than that. We should probably get moving earlier than that."

Jake: "Nine? Eight? I don't know, tell me."

Tass: "Yeah. Like eight. Eight's good."

Rev: SELINA: All right. Well, I'll head back here around 8:00 then. You boys sleep well and whatever you do, don't go too far past that second turn we took, because that's going to be back in their territory. And if I'm not here to keep off of you? Oh boy, they'll be on you.

Tass: "Noted. Thank you."

Rev: So what are you two doing to get ready to go to sleep down here? What do you ... You don't really have anything on you. Um ...

Jake: Peacoats.

Rev: That's true.

Jake: I've got a peacoat and a scarf, so I wad the scarf up into a ball to serve as my pillow, and I use the coat as a blanket.

Tass: I will follow those steps as well.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Booyah. That's the most competent thing I've ever done in this game, was figure out how to go to sleep in a sewer with my winter gear.

Megan: I have done that literal exact same situation. Not in a sewer, in a computer lab. But the peacoat and scarf, all of that. Exactly the same, very realistic. Good job.

Rev: So I think we see the sun set on this tiny little town, with Jake and Tass huddled in a sewer at the far end of town and Megan laying in her bed inside of the small house on Main Street. Megan, while lying in your bed, and Tass and Jake, even down in the sewers, you all hear the bell on the clock tower signal midnight, and you find yourselves fast asleep before the 12th toll of the bell.

Megan, you wake up and it's a very strange sensation. Because you wake up, and your first thoughts are about the two people who showed up and the salt shaker. And it's not weird because of the events of yesterday. It's weird because you can't remember the last time you woke up and remembered what happened the day before. What are you doing?

Megan: I think I'm just laying in bed and going over as many details as I can. Trying to figure out did that really happen? It was it a dream?

Megan: It was not a dream. You remember very vividly this man coming to your door, with another man peeking from behind a tree. They had a salt shaker, saying that they needed to return it to you. You came home from work after sneaking away from them, finding your door broken open, getting the locks repaired. It's all crystal clear in your head.

Megan: I get up and I get dressed and I just start moving about my house, seeing if there's anything else that's off, or something that I maybe missed yesterday.

Rev: As you start to go around the house and take stock of it, the first thing you notice is that the cop is not out in front of the house. Who said they would be there, over the course of the night. You don't notice any damage to the door, and the locks and your keychain have the same locks and keys that they had the previous day. But sitting on your dinner table is a salt shaker — white with a red cap, with a little basket of red flowers.

Megan: I immediately look over my shoulder and turn around, and just take stock of the room and make sure that there's nobody around. And once I feel like I'm not being watched or nobody is waiting in the shadows, I'd go look at it and check it out.

Rev: Yeah. And as you sit down at the dinner table to look at this salt shaker, what do you normally have for breakfast?

Megan: Waffles.

Rev: Like frozen waffles? Or do you make it from scratch? Or ...

Megan: I make it from scratch. I'll do matcha powder and some raspberry syrup.

Rev: So as you go to sit down at the dinner table, I think the thing that you notice is that all of your ingredients on the shelf, you remember making this breakfast yesterday, and you remember the levels that they were at. It's like you didn't use any yesterday. All the levels were right where you remember them being yesterday morning.

Megan: I think I go check the raspberry syrup, because that would be an easier indicator of how much I would have used.

Rev: It is exactly where you remember it being when you used it the previous morning.

Megan: "What the hell?" I'm looking out the windows, seeing is this a trick or a prank or something?

Rev: As you look out the window, you see the neighbor, Stu. He waves and starts his lawnmower and starts to mow the lawn that you saw him mow yesterday.

Megan: I grab my phone. I check the date.

Rev: It hasn't changed.

Megan: Meaning it's what I perceive as yesterday's date?

Rev: Correct.

Megan: I look out front and I don't see any strange men hiding behind trees? Or ...

Rev: You do not.

Megan: Yeah, I think if the only thing that is there that wasn't there the day before is the salt shaker? And I recognize it as the salt shaker that this guy tried to offer me? Yeah. I would just pick it up and look at it and see if I could figure out where it came from, who left it, if there's a note around it?

Rev: So roll Clear the Cobwebs again, and this time you get a +1.

Megan: Boxcars. Fourteen.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 3. So you can ask three of the questions on that list.

Megan: I think I would start with, what happened just before my memory faltered?

Rev: Fear jolts through your body, as you recall running down an empty alleyway and coming to a dead end as half a dozen of these pale-skinned creatures burrow out from under the asphalt, and a lank long-haired man steps into the alley's mouth.

Rev: ESTIN: You can run as far as you want. My babies will find you. Oh, come out. Come out wherever you are.

Megan: What is my most important memory of this thing?

Rev: You sit on a hardwood floor, your eyes closed, the salt shaker in your hand, with the red cap removed sitting next to you. And in a flash you flick your wrist, scattering hundreds of grains of salt into the air in a wide arc. And your eyes open, and they are filled with this swirling pink and purple light. Your other hand comes up and points in the direction of the falling salt, and it freezes in mid-air. And as your eyes narrow, the grains of salt begin to float back towards your hand, holding the littlest salt shaker. And it takes a few moments, but you're able to get all the grains back into the shaker without a single one falling to the ground. You feel exhausted but accomplished. And as you clutch the full shaker in your hand, you feel like for the first time in a long time, you have control.

Megan: What can I do?

Rev: As you have this thought, the swirling pink and purple energy from your last memory fills your eyes, and it ripples down your arm to your hand and into your fingertips. And instinctively, before you can stop it, you snap your fingers, and the built up glow ripples out in a wave. And as it touches the walls of your home, they vanish. And the energy continues rolling out and it touches the trees and the grass, which also vanish. But as it passes over your neighbor Stu, who just waved at you as he started to mow his lawn, you see his skin turn waxy and pale. His eyes bulge from their sockets as they turn milky white, and his smile fills with jagged, yellow teeth.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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