

## Hoofprints in the Snow (S3, E21)

**SFX:** INTRO MUSIC

**Tass:** So in college, we got our buddy on this dare that he had to do, that ... We had in the green room of the theater at our college, we had these two just random, big, like trash bags full of props and things. Just some random stuff. And so he got dared to grab those up under his arms and walk across the walkway to the library that was just students going in constantly. And he'd have to stand in front of the doors, and anybody that was coming up to the doors, he'd have to tell them, "I'd help you open that, but I have these sacks."

**All:** [laugh]

**Tass:** And he had to do it for like 20 minutes.

**Rev:** This is the same game that caused TJ to sleep on the stairs outside of our apartment.

**Tass:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Rev:** I think for context, we have to explain this game.

**Tass:** We do.

**Rev:** So the game was Dare Fish. I will let Tass — he was ...

**Tass:** Oh, sure. So Dare Fish is a pretty simple game. Essentially, all you need is a pack of cards. And generally a dare should be a simple what we call a 1 out of 13 chance dare. And you know, you say something like, hey, if I pull a ten, you have to grab these sacks and stand in front of the door and tell people this stupid thing. And you shuffle up the cards and pull it. And if it is a ten, they have to do it. And if you back out of a dare, then you are excommunicated from Dare Fish forever. The other thing we added in too is we threw in the joker card. So if you issue a dare and you pull a joker, you have to do your dare.

**Jake:** [laugh]

**Tass:** Which came up a lot. We had one stretch where in the span of nine dares, seven of them were joker cards. It was amazing. We had one kid that he got this big scoop and went into the bathroom of the theater and had to scoop water out of one toilet and put it in the other until it emptied.

**All:** [laugh]

**Tass:** And he kept getting frustrated, going., "I don't understand why the water — like, it's not going down at all!"

**Rev:** Yeah. And like, the simpler the dares were, it was like, oh, if I pull a diamond.

**Tass:** Sure. Yeah.

**Rev:** And then it got more complicated. Like, if I pull a ten. Or if I pull the ace of diamonds — like, that was the highest. Like if you if you called the card and the suit.

**Tass:** Yep. I've got one guy that I still owe, because ... That was another big one. If it was something that involved like money or resources, the person issuing the dare had to provide that.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Tass:** So I issued one guy. I said, if I pull the ace of spades, you have to get a tattoo that says  $9 \times 9 = 61$ .

**Megan:** Oh my god!

**Tass:** And I pulled it. And he's like, hell yes, let's do this. And I was like, bro, I do not have the money for this right now. But I see him every once in a while and he's like, when are we going? So ...

**Megan:** This is amazing, and I love it so much. It reminds me of the garlic dare that I put on Jake earlier this year.

**Jake:** [laughs]

**Megan:** We were at event in January, and ... Gosh, I don't even remember how it started, but I had this idea that I was going to dare Jake to reverse pickpocket an avocado into somebody's pocket at this event. And he was like, I can't do that. This is gigantic.

**Jake:** An avocado was far too much, so I negotiated it down to a garlic.

**Megan:** And so, and I just that a couple of rules. Like, this is your mission. You have to reverse pickpocket this bulb of garlic into somebody's pocket by the end of the night. And you can't tell them, you can't get anybody else to help you. And I think those are the only rules that I really set out. And so periodically through the night, I'd just be like, hey, how's it going? And he'd just shake his head at me. And then everybody was standing up at one point and he looks at me and he's like, this is the time to do it, isn't it? I was like, yeah. And I just looked at him. I'm like, I'm sorry. I wish there was something I could do.

**All:** [laugh]

**Jake:** She was like, I wish there was any other way. Fuck you! You set the terms!

**Megan:** Yeah. So, you know, checked in on him here and there. But we went through the rest of the night and then I was getting ready to leave, and I put on my coat, and there was a fucking bulb of garlic in my pocket!

**All:** [laugh]

**Megan:** And it broke me and I was just like, I cannot believe I didn't set a condition to be you can do it to me.

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** Speaking of ridiculous games that we play, last night we recorded our play through of Threadbare. Which was on some level, amazing. On another level? Horrifying.

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** So if you are interested in seeing that, you can go to [Patreon.com/TheCritshow](https://Patreon.com/TheCritshow). It will be up in the next few weeks, probably. Who knows, with what the world is? Who knows?

**Megan:** Whoever has to edit that, I hope they get their shit together.

**All:** [laugh]

**Megan:** But that is a game that we played through once we hit a certain milestone, and we will be sure to do that again in the future. We gotta ... We gotta decide on that milestone. We are going to make sure that we indicate that it is one page RPGs in the future, not any old RPG. Because ... It's a lot to learn.

**Tass:** It is! It is.

**Rev:** And then lastly, we talked about this a little bit on the twitch stream, we've talked about it in the Discord. We are super close to becoming partners on Twitch, so we're gonna do kind of a series of special Twitch streams in the month of January. We are gonna do a Twitch stream on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, throughout the month of January, starting on the 2nd and ending on Thursday, the 28th. That will be, I believe, twelve streams that we're going to do. And each one is going to be different. We're gonna make them about two or three hours long. We'll make sure to let you all know what those things are as they come up. But we're gonna try to do some stuff to get interactive with the audience, play some new games, just do some shorter streams and see if we can hit that goal of becoming a partner on Twitch. So if you do not follow us on Twitch, head over to [twitch.tv/thecritshow](https://twitch.tv/thecritshow) and you can follow us there, where you will get notifications whenever we go live. But this is something we will be talking about more in detail next week, I imagine. So if you have any suggestions on things you'd like to see us do on Twitch, send us an email at [thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com](mailto:thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com) as we make our push to partner. [spooky voice] Ooh, spooky!

**Jake:** [spooky voice] It's Halloween again! Ooh!

**Rev:** I think with that ... Actually, before we let the recap roll, I think it's time to play the proper intro music for this episode.

**SFX:** HOLIDAY CRITSHOW THEME

**Jake:** Do I see the shape shifter around again?

**Rev:** Standing underneath an awning about 40 feet away on the other side of the street with an ice cream cone, is a heavysset man. But you can see that he is paying no attention to the ice cream cone, and he is watching the four of you.

**Jake:** And I'm gonna jump up and try and rip that awning down on this dude, and hope that Tass helps.

**Rev:** All right. So Tass, you see Wallace suddenly spin and jump up and hang on this awning for a second, and then it breaks free and comes down on top of a man eating an ice cream cone.

**Wallace:** All right, Jimmy. Here's the deal. We ain't gonna hurt you, OK? But you're sick. Something's wrong with you. And we need to figure out what it is so you don't make anyone else sick.

**Rev:** In the corner of this room, there is a decorative fireplace. Or at least it looks decorative, but as you get closer, you actually do feel a little bit of a draft. And you realize that the fireplaces on the top floor must all actually be real working chimneys. And you do see some scratch marks inside of it. And there are even some footprints in the soot.

**Jake:** What size of the footprints? Adult man-sized?

**Rev:** Oddly sized. They don't look exactly human.

**Jake:** What sort of creature is it?

**Rev:** So you have seen these marks before. A big part of your past is wanting to help and protect children. And maybe five, six years ago you saw marks just like this when you were helping track down the Krampus.

**SFX:**

RECAP MUSIC FADES

**Rev:** Wallace, you are standing inside of this small hotel room, and you have just noticed Krampus marks in the chimney. What are you doing?

**Wallace:** This is gonna sound wild, but these are Krampus tracks.

**Tass:** "Are you serious?"

**Wallace:** Yes. Yes, I am.

**Tass:** "This is gonna sound like a real weird question. Is there a way to know if that's like a real living Krampus track, or like a ... Like a robot version?"

**Jake:** Can I take a moderately closer look and see if there's any, like, metallic looking scratch marks or nuts and bolts that fall off, or anything?

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** Yeah. You don't see anything that would indicate that it is robotic in any way.

**Jake:** Does Wallace know about the robotic North Pole? Or would that have just been kind of an after his tenure was over thing?

**Rev:** I think that you would know about it being a base. I don't know if you'd know all of the things that were implemented there when

**Jake:** When I was hunting a Krampus, or the — was I hunting The Krampus? Like, did I believe what I was looking for was the one and only real deal Krampus?

**Rev:** You did.

**Wallace:** I don't see any clues here to indicate that this is like a robot, nor do I know why it would be. But last time I was looking for it, it was like a flesh and blood creature.

**Tass:** "OK. All right. Well, I know that's weird, but it answers a question for me. What the hell is the deal with a real Krampus?"

**Wallace:** I mean, Krampus is sort of like anti-Santa Claus. It was a half goat, half demon who would punish children that misbehaved. Kids on the naughty list, he'd abduct them and take him back to his lair. Somehow he fed on their sorrow or their torment or whatever, but the only way to take him out was an evergreen stake through the heart.

**Tass:** "Oh, OK. Certainly there are some evergreens around here. I'm sure we passed several."

**Wallace:** Yeah. I mean, it shouldn't be too hard to come up with the weapon.

**Tass:** "OK, so what the hell was one doing in here? Is Krampus a shapeshifter?"

**Wallace:** Not according to my experience or any of the mythology.

**Tass:** "Oh, Jesus. OK."

**Wallace:** I mean, maybe the shifter is posing as kids and pulling all kinds of hijinks. Maybe Krampus doesn't know that it's a shifter pretending to be kids. Maybe he came to collect.

**Tass:** "Oh! Do we think the shifter's like a hunter?"

**Wallace:** I hadn't considered that. I mean, I guess he could be putting himself out as bait on purpose. I was thinking maybe just more of an unfortunate coincidence.

**Tass:** "Huh. It's almost like a mystery we have to unravel."

**All:** [laugh]

**Wallace:** So far we know that the shifter was like ... Seems to be kind of acting with malice or forethought, so.

**Tass:** "Yeah. So it was here. So if our pal was shifted to kid form and came back here, maybe the Krampus followed or tried to get a bead on them like that. There's an or, but I don't know what it is yet."

**Wallace:** I don't know. I mean, I think we got two options from here. One, we follow up on the idea of getting that shifter to show its face so that we can talk to it. Or two, maybe we can pick up this Krampus's trail on the way out of the chimney up there and figure out where it went.

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah, we still gotta figure out exactly what he is anyway. Because this is a real guy, but we've watched him shift." OK, I mean, I think I just make another cursory glance around, to see if there's anything else important. And then, you know, otherwise pack up some of those cobblers.

**Rev:** Yeah. You don't see anything else other than the cobblers and the marks going in and out of the chimney.

**Tass:** OK. "We wanna reconvene with the rest and see if they've made any progress?"

**Wallace:** Yeah, sure. I want to see if I can spot where these tracks pick up on our way out of here. But if not, we'll just head back.

**Tass:** "Yeah. Cool."

**Jake:** Yeah. So once we go outside, I just want to look that direction, in the direction where that chimney is, and see if I can spot anything.

**Rev:** Yeah. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

**Jake:** OK. Fourteen.

**Rev:** All right. That is one of your advanced moves.

**Jake:** Oh yeah, it is! Really, I just need one of the regular Investigate a Mystery questions, though. Which is, where did it go?

**Rev:** So the first thing that you notice in being out here, looking up at that chimney and trying to get a sense of the Krampus coming in and out, is that you think you might actually have it backwards. That it started in the room, left, and came back.

**Jake:** OK.

**Rev:** So you do know where it went. It went in the room. But I think you can track where it came from. And where it came from is just a neighboring alleyway. You can follow these tracks, and it's almost like walking a patrol pattern. Down alleyways, up buildings, down alleyways, up buildings, and then returning to the room.

**Jake:** So what was it going to do?

**Rev:** You start thinking back to when you have encountered these kids. And trying to track them down, the times you've run down these alleys, and it starts to match up. It seems like what the Krampus was doing was changing shape and keeping you busy.

**Wallace:** So Krampus seems to be running some sort of route, here. Seems deliberate. And it seems like it's the thing that's changing shape on us. And for some reason, it's just been stringing me along.

**Tass:** "So we think our guy is the Krampus? Like, the thing that's hiding itself deep down is the Krampus?"

**Wallace:** Yeah. It seems that way.

**Tass:** [chuckles] "Uh, all right."

**Wallace:** So probably not a robot.

**Tass:** "Yeah, yeah. Probably not a robot. We gotta — we gotta figure this out. We gotta figure out if it's still some level of possession. Like, why does this real dude exist? Did the real dude exist and just come here to vacation and got eaten by the Krampus? Like I mean, this guy really believes it's him. Like that he is him, you know?"

**Jake:** So if Krampus has been the kids since I've been here, are the reports of children missing? Like, are those still genuine? Or do I know? Would I have a way to know? Like are actual kids missing from here, but since I've been here, it's just been Krampus doing shenanigans?

**Rev:** How do you think you'd go about figuring that out if these reports of missing children are true?

**Jake:** I think maybe I could hit up some of my contacts? One of the categories of contacts that I have are journalists. So I could reach out to somebody who, if kids had been going missing, surely somebody has been writing about it.

**Rev:** Yes. So who are you gonna reach out to?

**Jake:** Her name is Christiana Coleman.

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: Hello?

**Wallace:** Hey, Chris, it's Wallace.

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: Oh, hi Wallace. How are you?

**Wallace:** I'm not too bad. How are you?

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: Oh, not too bad. You got some good dirt for me?

**Wallace:** Actually I need some dirt from you, in this case.

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: Oh.

**Wallace:** I got wind about kids going missing out of Helen, Georgia. But now that I'm kind of on the case, it's coming up a little bit thin. Have you heard anything about this? Have you worked this beat at all?

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: Gone missing when? Like in the last couple days, or couple months, or ...

**Wallace:** Something like over the course of the last couple weeks.

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: No, we haven't heard anything.

**Wallace:** Huh.

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: I'll be honest, usually that kind of stuff comes across our desk pretty hot.

**Wallace:** Yeah. All right. Well, in that case, I definitely don't have anything for you. I'm sorry.

**Rev:** CHRISTIANA: Oh, all right. Well, let me know when you're back in this neck of the woods.

**Wallace:** Will do. Thanks.

**Jake:** I'll hang up and turn back to Tass.

**Wallace:** This is a dead lead. Nobody knows. Kids ain't going missing out of here.

**Tass:** "OK, so ... Trap. Some kind of trap. This is a lure, somehow. That's the best I got. But for whom and why?"

**Wallace:** I mean, it snatched your friend, right? It snatched Anastacia, so ...

**Tass:** "That sure seems to be the case. The Krampus didn't shape shift before? Like that wasn't a thing when you hunted it?"

**Wallace:** No, not my experience.

**Tass:** "OK. That might be part of why she's wrapped up in this. God, I hate to go down this mental rabbit hole right now. But, you know, we're mixed up in a lot of stuff where there's this spell that can take attributes from, well, magical things or strong things and give them to something else. I hate to think that she was used as like a pawn in

something like that. But I don't know. That's kind of a lot right now. We just need more. Let's go poke a big monster, huh? See if we can get the monster part out and have a chat with that."

**Wallace:** Yeah, I suppose.

**Rev:** Jake. So you are standing outside of this AirBnB. What are you doing as you wait for the pair to come back, as you're kind of guarding this door for Megan?

**Jake:** I mean, I'm trying to stay, like, out of sight. You know, any windows that look out or anything, so that Jimmy's not supposed to know that I'm here. So I'm trying to stay out of sight and stay quiet and maybe vaguely eavesdrop. Like, see if I can hear anything through the door, if they end up having a conversation. But other than that, I think I'm just keeping an eye out for suspicious behavior on the street, keeping an eye out for anybody else that seems like they're lingering and looking, or anything like that.

**Rev:** Roll Read a Bad Situation.

**Jake:** Oh, delightful. Damn! Twelve.

**Rev:** All right, you get a hold 3.

**Jake:** Are there any dangers I haven't noticed?

**Rev:** As you are standing here, kind of crouched down outside of one of the windows of the AirBnB, trying to listen in to Megan's conversation with Jimmy, you start to notice some footprints appearing in the snow.

**Jake:** From where?

**Rev:** They're just appearing. And they're headed in your direction.

**Jake:** Um ... I don't know what else to ask.

**Rev:** [laughs]

**Jake:** I don't know if this needs to count as a question in any capacity. Do they look like people footprints?

**Rev:** They don't. They kind of look like hooves.

**Jake:** OK. What's the best way to protect the victims?

**Rev:** You get a sense that you are standing right by the door. And that whatever this thing is wants to get inside, because it's making a beeline for it. And so you think that the best way to protect the victims would be to keep it from getting inside.

**Jake:** Can I save the third one for the moment?

**Rev:** Sure.

**Jake:** I think I just take a step to the side, kind of casual. But put myself in the way of the door. Without, like, acknowledging that I see a thing coming at me.

**Rev:** As you get in the way, the door, you do start to hear some [grunting noises] and you see steam coming out of nowhere. About six, six and a half feet up.

**Jake:** I don't know what it is, but I'm gonna try to Use Magic to trap it.

**Rev:** All right. Roll Use Magic.

**Jake:** Nine. Ten, if I get my +1 from using Read a Bad Situation.

**Tass:** Nice!

**Rev:** These chains of fire spring up around this invisible creature, and you can see the snow around it starting to melt. And you hear it [snarls and growls] and it's struggling against the chains, but it is not able to move.

**Jake:** "Do you understand me?"

**Rev:** You hear more just incoherent snorting and growling.

**Jake:** Can I Use Magic again to try and communicate with the thing?

**Rev:** Sure. Roll Use Magic.

**Jake:** Ten.

**Rev:** Yeah. All of a sudden these snorts and grunts don't quite sound so nonsensical. And it sounds like grunts of struggle and protest.

**Jake:** "How about now? Now do you understand me?"

**Rev:** INVISIBLE KRAMPUS: What do you want?

**Jake:** "Mostly I want to find out what you want. What are you doing? What are you? Let's start with, what are you doing?"

**Rev:** INVISIBLE KRAMPUS: I've come to free my brother.

**Jake:** "Oh, OK. So is Jimmy your brother?"

**Rev:** INVISIBLE KRAMPUS: Mhmm. Jimmy.

**Jake:** "Did your brother turn into a human man?"

**Rev:** INVISIBLE KRAMPUS: He turns into many things.

**Jake:** OK, OK. "Your brother's fine. We're just trying to figure out what's going on around here. So I'd like to just talk with you, if you're amenable to that, and then we can get you back to your brother."

**Rev:** INVISIBLE KRAMPUS: You seem naughty, trapping people against their will is naughty. [snarls]

**Jake:** "Well, trapping people who might be taking other people who aren't naughty is nice. And since we don't know what's going on, I'm trying to be nice and stop the naughty."

**Rev:** Roll Manipulate Someone.

**Jake:** OK. Three.

**Tass:** Ohh!

**Rev:** It hears you call yourself nice and the idea that it could be the naughty one, and it lets out this goat-like bleat that echoes. And you hear it repeated two, three, four times at a distance in the air around you.

**Jake:** [gasps] I thought you just meant that I was encircled and I was like, no!

**Tass:** [laughs]

**Jake:** "Oh. So you are many?"

**Rev:** Megan. Inside, you are sitting with Jimmy. And Jimmy is talking to you about cobbler.

**Megan:** I'm into it.

**Rev:** And from outside, you hear this monstrous bleat. And then you hear it repeated a couple of times. And when this happens, you see that Jimmy starts to kind of shake, and his eyes closed really tightly. And then he's, again, talking about cobbler.

**Megan:** "Did you hear that?"

**Rev:** JIMMY: Hear what? The best way to season the blackberries?

**Megan:** "No, no. It sounded like there was something outside. You didn't hear that just now?"

**Rev:** JIMMY: No.

**Megan:** "Are you good?"

**Rev:** JIMMY: Yeah. I mean, aside from the fiery chains.

**Megan:** "Right." Yeah. I reach out telepathically to Jake. [telepathically] "Jake, is everything OK?"

**Jake:** [telepathically] "I have caught what I believe to be one of a cadre of invisible Krampuses."

**Megan:** [telepathically] "Invisible what?"

**Jake:** [telepathically] "Krampuses? You know, the things, the half goats that steal naughty children?"

**Megan:** [telepathically] "Yeah, I'm familiar with the tale."

**Jake:** [telepathically] "Yeah. So there's something invisible out here that's leaving hoofprints and wanted to hurt me because I seem naughty. So I've got it in chains, and it called out to its brethren, I think."

**Megan:** [telepathically] "There's more than one?"

**Jake:** [telepathically] "It sure sounded like there was more than one."

**Megan:** [telepathically] "OK. Gosh, what does it want?"

**Jake:** [telepathically] "I think it wants Jimmy. Because it said that its looking for its brother who can shift into many things. Didn't seem to know the Jimmy persona specifically."

**Megan:** [telepathically] "Yeah. He just did some weird thing when he heard the sound from outside. He like shivered or shuddered or something and like scrunched up, and then now he's fine and he doesn't seem to notice that it happened. He seems fine. He's

just still talking about cobbler. Are you OK? You said you trapped it, but if there's more of them out there, do you need help?"

**Jake:** [telepathically] "Not right this moment, I don't. Right this moment, I think I'm OK. I'm still trying to talk to it and see what its deal is. But more of them may be coming and we might be in trouble here soon, yeah."

**Megan:** [telepathically] "OK. I'm gonna try and see if this thing inside Jimmy has switched up its plan since hearing that. I'll get back to you."

**Jake:** [telepathically] "Smart. All right."

**Megan:** And I would like to try and Tune In.

**Rev:** All right. Roll it.

**Megan:** Seven.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 1.

**Megan:** What is it planning to do right now?

**Rev:** Right now it is biding its time for the call to be answered, and its brethren to come and rescue it.

**Megan:** Yeah, I reach back out to Jake. [telepathically] "Yeah. It's biding its time. It's waiting to be rescued. It knows it's family's coming to get it."

**Jake:** [telepathically] "OK."

**Rev:** And Jake, you actually hear a car getting closer, kind of in the quiet of this area.

**Jake:** All right. I'm gonna run back inside to the room where Megan and Jimmy are. "Yeah, they're coming in force. Buckle up, because I think it's about to get rough in here." Is there a room in here that is just like one point of egress? Like just one door, or anything like that. Bathroom?

**Rev:** The bathroom would still have a window, but it only has one door.

**Jake:** OK. I think I want to herd all of us into the bathroom, and I want to Use Magic again to try and bar a portal to a specific type of creature.

**Rev:** So you're gonna let Jimmy out of the chains?

**Jake:** Yeah, I think so.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** Because last we kind of knew, it was too scared to try and take multiple of us at once. If I can stop them from getting in this one way. And worst case, it was just two on one dealing with a Krampus in a bathroom, that's better than trying to deal with seemingly infinite number of Krampuses coming from all directions, so.

**Rev:** All right. Yeah, you release Jimmy from the chains, and he looks a little wild eyed.

**Rev:** JIMMY: What's going on? Am I free? Can I go back to my room?

**Megan:** "No."

**Jake:** "It's about to get real 16 Blocks in here. Let's go in the bathroom."

**Rev:** JIMMY: What?

**Jake:** [laughs] I just toss him in the bathroom.

**Megan:** "What are we doing? What's happening?"

**Jake:** "I'm gonna try and lock us down here. I don't know where they're coming from or how many, but I'm gonna to try and bar this room and hope that we can endure until backup arrives, or we could figure out a better plan."

**Megan:** "OK. So we just watch him in here and make sure he doesn't stab us in the back."

**Jake:** "Yes. Don't present him your back."

**Megan:** "OK. Sounds good. OK, let's go. Let's do this. We're good. We're good. I'm ready. We're good."

**Rev:** All right. Jacob, roll Use Magic.

**Jake:** Ten. So if there's just a bathroom door and like maybe bathroom window, I'm going to bar the door, and hope that I can Thermopylae the window, if it comes to that.

**Rev:** OK. And you're barring it from ..."

**Jake:** Krampuses.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** I don't know that to be accurate, but that's the assumption I'm operating under.

**Rev:** All right. So this magic field goes up in front of the door, and there's like little snow globe snow falling in it.

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** I assume that the bar looks different for whatever creature it is. And Jimmy sits down in the tub and just kind of tucks his head between his legs. And as he does, you hear this car pull up and shut off, and doors opening and slamming.

Tass and Wallace, you are walking back through the town and you hear this very loud, deep goat bleat. And then you hear repeated three, four, five times. One of them very close to you.

**Tass:** "What? Was that one of them? Was that Krampus call?"

**Jake:** Would I know? Would I have heard Krampus call?

**Rev:** You've certainly heard that shout before. It was just kind of a rage frustration thing. Because I mean, there's really no Krampus call. Because as far as you know, there is a Krampus.

**Jake:** A Krampus, yeah.

**Wallace:** I mean, that was a sound that Krampus made. But again, I thought there was only like one of them.

**Tass:** "Well, I've got some compelling evidence that says otherwise right now."

**Wallace:** Oh well you know I'm a sucker for evidence, because I'm a detective. I fucking get it. Let's go.

**Tass:** "All right. All right. Do we try to find one that was closer first? Oh, shit. I feel like we need to get back. We need to go back."

**Wallace:** Don't you have comms or some shit?

**Tass:** "Well, yeah. You're right."

**Rev:** [laughs]

**Tass:** "I was gonna do that, as we're going." As I'm like starting to pick up speed, I will get on my comm. "Jake, Megan. What's going on?"

**Megan:** "Krampuses?"

**Tass:** "Oh god, yeah. We got Krampuses. Yep. We got Krampuses, too."

**Megan:** "Oh shit. Are you OK?"

**Tass:** "We're fine. What's happening there?"

**Megan:** "We're stuck in the bathroom. Jake blocked off the door. Jimmy's in the bathtub. They're here, I think."

**Tass:** "Oh, god. Yeah, we heard them. We heard them calling to each other, or something."

**Jake:** "We heard like a car roll up outside and somebody got out. So I don't know how many are on scene, but it seems like they're showing up, maybe currently in disguise."

**Tass:** "They're rolling up in cars?"

**Jake:** "Yeah, I think they might be people!"

**Tass:** "All right. We're on the way."

**Rev:** And right as Tass signs off, you see an old woman look in the bathroom window.

**Rev:** OLD WOMAN KRAMPUS: Is everything all right in there?

**Jake:** "Yeah, everything's fine in here. Thank you for your concern."

**Rev:** OLD WOMAN KRAMPUS: OK.

**Rev:** And you hear this strange creaking sound as her head gets lower, and then you see a clawed hand come up on the window, covered in fur. And you see a set of horns start to peek up, and you see the Krampus's eyes looking in the window.

**Rev:** OLD WOMAN KRAMPUS: [snarls]

**Rev:** And you hear the front door of this little place get broken in.

**Jake:** Oh god, this is going from bad to worse real fast.

**Rev:** And above you, you hear the sound of footsteps on the roof.

**Megan:** OK. So we have this portal on the doorway, and we hear something on the roof. But this thing is right outside the window?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Megan:** Does it look like it's trying to keep an eye on us? Or is it gonna break in? Does it look like it's gonna try and charge, or something?

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Read a Bad Situation.

**Megan:** Four.

**Jake:** Oh, shit.

**Rev:** You think it's just trying to keep an eye on you.

**Megan:** Yeah. Then I am trusting that Jake has done a good job on this doorway. And I'm keeping an eye on Jimmy, because I'm afraid that this thing is gonna take him over, now that it sees its opportunity. So that's where I'm paying attention.

**Rev:** Jake. So you've seen Megan size up the one outside and decided it's not a threat and turned back to Jimmy, as you hear the footsteps above you on the roof and the door being broken in.

**Jake:** I'm gonna lean over to Jimmy and be like, "Hey, don't freak out. Everything's gonna be totally cool." And then I'm gonna pull out my flaming sword and hold it to Jimmy's neck, and wait until I make eye contact with one of these things.

**Rev:** You hold this flaming sword to Jimmy's neck, and you see that his neck and face contort a little bit. And for a brief moment, there are these bulges pressing against his forehead, and he lets out a bleat. And when he does, the bathroom wall is ripped off.

**Megan:** [gasps]

**Rev:** Tass and Wallace, you have just gotten to the outside of the bed and breakfast. You see that there is a car that has been parked there. And there's a lot of tracks here. There's a lot of foot traffic.

**Wallace:** I think we might have moved a little too slow.

**Tass:** Is like the door open?

**Rev:** It is not on the hinges.

**Tass:** OK. Then as I am running for the doorway, the first thing I'm doing is I run by is slash one of the tires of the car.

**Rev:** Roll Act Under Pressure.

**Tass:** Oh OK. That's a ten.

**Rev:** Yeah. You are able to duck down and slash one of the tires on this car as you go by. And as you move through the doorway, you feel that you barely brush against something that's there, but you are past it now.

**Tass:** "Ah, son of a bitch! There's an invisible something!"

**Rev:** Wallace, what are you doing?

**Jake:** Is there an evergreen tree nearby?

**Rev:** Roll Luck.

**Jake:** Nine.

**Rev:** You do see one across the street. There is a little grove of a dozen of them.

**Jake:** I'm going to try and rush that way, so I can start ripping off some branches.

**Rev:** All right. Megan, the wall behind you has just been ripped away from the building. What are you doing?

**Megan:** Whip around to look and see what's happening.

**Rev:** The Krampus that was at the window has ripped the wood out and is starting to crawl inside the giant hole that has been made.

**Megan:** I grab my salt shaker and I want to try and cast Jinx on it.

**Rev:** All right. Roll Jinx.

**Megan:** Twelve.

**Rev:** You get a hold 2.

**Megan:** Interfere with what a monster, minion, or bystander is trying to do. I'm thinking like cause a bunch of a build up of snow on the roof to fall and trap it.

**Rev:** So this little spark of energy comes off of your hand, and it slips on the bar of soap that Jimmy had knocked off of the shower caddy. And it falls backwards outside, and you hear a rumble, and a bunch of snow falls onto it from the roof.

**Megan:** Excellent. For my second one, I'm gonna go with the target loses something that you will soon find.

**Rev:** OK. Jake, you hear some heavy pounding on the roof above you. What are you doing?

**Jake:** I am calling out to all nearby Krampuses. "Look, all I want is to find out what you did with my friend. But if you lay a hand on any of us, I'll kill yours."

**Rev:** Jake, as you are making this proclamation and looking around, roll Read a Bad Situation.

**Jake:** OK. Ten.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 3.

**Jake:** Are there any dangers we haven't noticed?

**Rev:** You hear the pounding on the roof. The wall has been ripped out. You see two people in the living room. You can also tell by the heat going out the door that there are at least two more in that room. And Tass has actually just sprinted into the middle of that room.

**Jake:** What's most vulnerable to me?

**Rev:** Jimmy, in his current form. A grotesque answer, but the correct one.

**Jake:** So can I take that to mean that, like, while they're people, they can die like people can?

**Rev:** Yeah, I think so.

**Jake:** OK. Wow, yeah. That's very good to know. What's my best way out?

**Rev:** Out the bathroom door and through the door that Tass just came through, you can see Wallace across the street, and he is breaking branches off of evergreen trees. And you're not sure why, but you feel like headed through the thick of them, they wouldn't be expecting that, and that Wallace is in a fairly safe place.

**Jake:** I'll turn to Megan, then. "It doesn't seem like this is gonna hold much longer. So if we're trying to get out of here, I think our best bet is to just rush out that front door."

**Megan:** "Are we leaving Jimmy?"

**Jake:** "I mean, I can try and carry him. God knows when he'll shift. But while they're people, I think they die like people."

**Rev:** JIMMY: What do you mean, die like people if they're people? That sounds messed up.

**Jake:** "Welcome to our world, James."

**Rev:** JIMMY: No.

**Jake:** [laughs]

**Rev:** JIMMY: I don't like it.

**Rev:** He closes the shower curtain

**Jake:** [laughs] And I rip it open and now he's a fully formed Krampus.

**Rev:** But he shrieks and covers himself.

**Jake:** He's got on the shower cap and the brush, and ...

**Tass:** How did he get lathered that fast?! How?

**Megan:** Yeah, I look at Jimmy. "Will you run with us?"

**Rev:** JIMMY: Yeah, sure.

**Megan:** "Should we try to go out the wall, then?"

**Jake:** "I don't think so. I think our best bet is to catch them off guard."

**Megan:** "OK. Well, let's go then."

**Jake:** "If Jimmy's a Krampus, he's not gonna go through this doorway."

**Megan:** "Can you drop it? Why do we need to leave it up?"

**Jake:** "I don't know. It's just a timing thing. If I drop it and they get through real fast, we're fucked."

**Megan:** "Can you drop it as we run?"

**Jake:** "Yep. Here we go. Three, two, one, go."

**Megan:** "OK!"

**Rev:** All right. Both of you, roll Act Under Pressure.

**Jake:** As we start this rush. Like, I'm gonna call out to Tass. "This is a bad spot! Out the front door! Go!"

**Tass:** "I just got here!"

**Jake:** And I'm mostly trying to make sure that the other three have a safe egress here. Rather than get myself out safely, I want to try to ensure their path.

**Rev:** All right. So why don't you roll Protect Someone, and Tass and Megan roll Act Under Pressure.

**Tass:** OK.

**Rev:** And Jake, you do get +1.

**Jake:** Thirteen.

**Tass:** Ten.

**Megan:** Thirteen.

**Rev:** All right. So Jake, what is your extra effect?

**Jake:** Hold the enemy back.

**Rev:** Yeah. So the three of you, with Jimmy in tow, start sprinting out of this little AirBnB. And you're able to check a couple of these invisible creatures that you saw through the heat difference outside, and you are able to get outside and across the street to Wallace, with Jimmy in tow.

**Tass:** For what it's worth, probably as I had come in and then literally the next moment turn around to go back out, I'm opening my Sight. Because I can just see the invisible.

**Rev:** Yeah. So as you turn to sprint out, you open up your vision, and you do see these two invisible Krampuses. And as you're watching back over your shoulder, you actually see another invisible one on the roof, as you run across the street to Wallace.

**Tass:** "Oh, shit. That went south fast, didn't it?"

**Jake:** "Yeah. They're on a rescue mission for Jimmy, man."

**Tass:** "Are they all like this? Are they all regular people?"

**Jake:** "We saw an old lady transform into one from outside the window. And first she like asked us if we were good and seem to accept the answer, before morphing horribly into a Krampus."

**Tass:** "God!"

**Megan:** "It seems like some of them are invisible and some of them shapeshift. I don't — have we seen any of them do both?"

**Jake:** "No. The only person I know that can shapeshift and turn invisible is Anastacia."

**Tass:** "Yeah, I don't like that. They're using her abilities, somehow. They're taking people and making them a three way mix between Krampuses, shapeshifters, and/or invisible ... I don't know, dude. I can see the invisible ones, though. If it comes to it, I'll take care of those."

**Jake:** "OK. What are we doing by the trees?"

**Tass:** "Wallace?"

**Wallace:** The only way to kill these things is with an evergreen stake through the heart.

**Jake:** I'm just standing there, like, rubbing various branches on the ground. I've got a bundle of four of them that I'm just rubbing on the ground all at once, to try and get them all sharp together.

**Rev:** Yeah. I think in the time that you got over here and it took for them to get over, you can have four evergreen stakes.

**Jake:** So I'll hand one out to each of us.

**Wallace:** So what's the deal here? Like these might kill them, but if we think that they're somehow actual people with Krampuses inside, like we probably don't want to stake them.

**Tass:** "Yeah. I mean, agreed. Do we even know that they're fully Krampuses? Are they some other kind of mix? Will this even work?"

**Megan:** "I don't understand how ... We keep seeing shapeshifting, but it also seems like a weird possession thing. Like it's not just taking the form of Jimmy, it's in Jimmy. How is that possible?"

**Tass:** "Yeah, his place was clear. Like, he's Jimmy. He had a cobbler bakery, or whatever. Like he's legit. You're legit. We know you're legit, bud."

**Rev:** JIMMY: Thanks.

**Jake:** Is he still Jimmy?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** "So if they're Krampuses, we can stake them through the heart. And as far as I can tell, if they're people, we can just kill them like regular. So we know how to finish them off. But we don't want to do that."

**Tass:** "We don't want to do that, Jimmy."

**Rev:** JIMMY: I hate that you keep saying if they're regular people, you can just kill them. I don't like that.

**Tass:** "Yeah,"

**Rev:** JIMMY: I don't like it.

**Tass:** "We don't either." I want to turn and look at the others that we've just sprinted away from.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Tass:** I want to try to tell, with my Sight open, if there's some sort of difference between, like, the ones that we've seen shapeshift and the ones that are invisible. Like, is there any kind of a different ... I don't know, aura or signature to them?

**Rev:** Roll Investigate a Mystery.

**Tass:** OK. Eight.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 1.

**Tass:** What's being concealed here?

**Rev:** Yeah. So the thing that is being concealed here is that no, you do not think that these different Krampuses can do different things. The shapeshifting ones can shapeshift, the invisible ones can be invisible. And the other thing that you notice all of these auras is that your suspicions are correct. It's hard to describe exactly how it is that you see it. But looking at the Krampuses, you can clearly see that part of their aura is made from the energy of Anastacia.

**SFX:** OUTRO MUSIC

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