

# Planning for the Future (S3, E33)

**SFX:**

INTRO MUSIC

**Rev:** So lately, when I can't sleep, I have been playing through Assassin's Creed: Valhalla. And that game is actually a lot larger than games that I'd like to play, lately. Just when I see that open world, it's like this is ... This is too much.

**Jake:** It's daunting, yeah.

**Rev:** But I was on a mission this morning where it was like, "Hey, escort this guy back to his homestead. There are people who don't want him alive." I was like, "Oh OK, so you gotta, like, take back roads." And I'm going through a field, and there are like 50 people in this field all spaced out — like 10, 15 feet apart — all staring the same direction and not moving.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** What?

**Rev:** And so, like ... I was like, what is going on? And I kind of start to spin around. And as I spin around, in the time that I have passed, more people have generated. So just as far as I can see, every direction are people — just like farmers — all staring the same direction, not moving.

**Tass:** Terrifying.

**Megan:** That's ... That's awful.

**Rev:** And I was like, I ... Well, huh. But there's been enough bugs in the game that I assumed, like, this surely is not gonna turn ugly all of a sudden. But it got me thinking about, like, a lot of those ... "Oh yeah, there's a ghost in this game." Or like ...

**Megan:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

**Megan:** For sure.

**Rev:** What are some moments that you've had in a game that's like ... Either ones that are intentionally in the game, or ones that are like creepypasta, this is subreddit kind of stuff.

**Jake:** I mean, the one that immediately jumps to mind, not like my personal experience, is the haunted Majora's Mask.

**Megan:** Yep.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Ben Drowned is so fucking spooky. I'm trying to think of one I saw ... Oh, I saw a ghost in a game last night. It was Phasmophobia.

**Megan:** We were playing Phasmophobia.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Megan:** Did you actually see the ghost? Oh no, you did. You saw one of them.

**Jake:** I got fucking murdered in like the first two rounds, yeah.

**Megan:** That's right. [Laughs]

**Jake:** I super saw the ghost.

**Tass:** There's a bug in Dead By Daylight. It doesn't happen a ton, but when it does, it's extremely jarring. Where you'll sort of be attached to animations of other players. So you might be running along, and if one of the other people on the team has been like picked up or put on a hook or something, you also do the animation of like ...

**Rev:** You start to float.

**Tass:** Yep. Like you're just kind of floating like you're over his shoulder. Or you just launch yourself like you've been thrown onto a hook. And it's terrifying.

**Jake:** There's a bug in Warzone every now and then where if you kill somebody in a doorway and then you shut the door, their body clips through the door, and then just starts aggressively shaking all over the place. So all you can hear is just like the footsteps sound constantly. Just [Rapid footstep sound] until you, like, open the door and figure out how to fling their body out of there so you have to deal with it anymore.

**Tass:** There's also a bug in Warzone where people are better than me.

**Jake:** And I hate that one.

**Rev:** That's the scariest one.

**Tass:** Yeah.

**Jake:** It's game breaking. Can we fix that, please? Devs?

**Tass:** It happens a lot, too.

**Rev:** I think the one ... Like a moment that's actually intentionally in a game? Is in the first Arkham Asylum game. There's a point where you go down like into the subsewer and it's Killer Croc's jail cell. And it's just floating wood platforms on top of sewer water. And you know that he's under there somewhere, and he randomly will jump up and destroy one of the things you're standing on. And I can't remember the last time in a game I was so, like ... [Nervous noises] Because there's no way to go up. It's just water, and Killer Croc.

**Tass:** Ugh.

**Jake:** God, I haven't played a new fucking video game in so long.

**Rev:** [Chuckles]

**Jake:** I started playing Cooking Simulator yesterday. That was scary. Does that count?

**Megan:** Oh, how was that?

**Jake:** Bad.

**Megan:** Bad? Is it bad because you don't like to cook, or is it bad because it's not a great game?

**Jake:** No. So it was a dollar \$1.99 on the Switch store yesterday. It was 90% off. And I was like, yeah, fuck it. I want to play a new game. So I got it. And it's like the controls are kind of a pain in the ass because it's a two joystick, like, look scheme. Except it doesn't just like stop right when you let go of the joystick, there's a little bit of like carry over on your vision. So that's annoying. But mostly it's like, "OK, get in the system, buy these things. You need two pots, a cutting board, blah blah blah. And to set things down you can either just drop it, in which case it doesn't land on the counter in front of you, it just falls at your feet. Or you hold the button for a second and you toss it a variable distance, depending on how long you hold it. So the fucking counters in the middle of this kitchen make a square. And in the middle of it is an inaccessible area where my cutting board lives now, because I tried to set it down and it slid off the far side, into the middle. No way to crouch, no way to grab it. No way to fucking get it back. The game made me buy it, and then I had to buy it again because there's absolutely no way, as far as I can tell, to recover the stupid cutting board. It's like real cooking.

**Megan:** Yeah, this is pretty ... This is pretty realistic. I'm into it. I might have to pick that up.

**Tass:** I'm starting to think that my general being bad at video games is actually just karma or something, from all of the times I had to willingly sacrifice Yoshi in Super Mario World.

**Jake:** [Laughs] He has placed a curse upon you.

**Tass:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Oh, a curse upon your household. I found a website recently that was like human ... Something. Oh god, what's the word for like ...

**Rev:** Centipede.

**Jake:** Benchmark.

**Megan:** No!

**Jake:** Benchmark is the word. A website called Human Benchmark. And it like tests you — it has little tests for a bunch of different things. But one of them is an aim trainer. So like you start it, and you' gotta click on all the little targets like as fast as you can. And I, like ... Boy, I play a lot of first person shooters. I play a lot of video games where aiming is really important, and clicking fast is important. Evidently, well below average on the bell curve of how well I do this aim training.

**Rev:** Really?

**Jake:** And that was disappointing.

**Megan:** Hmm. I would like to try that. I'm curious. I'd either be like surprisingly good, or just like expect — like as awful as I expect.

**Jake:** There were — like there's all the different kinds of tests on there. And I was surprised by the ones I was good at. Like I was surprised at like, OK, I can remember this many numbers in a row and I'm in like the 96th percentile. I can remember like seventeen digits or something. But then like the Simon game, like the matching the pattern after they — after they disappear? I'm like in the 15 percentile.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** And I was like whoa, this is weird. These are — these must have been flaws in my childhood. These are things I never picked up, I guess.

**Megan:** It's always interesting playing a new kind of puzzle game, and like realizing the kind of puzzles that I'm pretty good at from all the Nancy Drew games that I play on Mystery Detectives. So like when Tass and I were playing Call of the Sea the other day, it was like some of the puzzles, I was like, "Oh, OK. No, I know this. Nancy has taught me."

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Nancy, guide me.

**Megan:** Nancy trained me for this.

**Tass:** I get like three words into, "I think ..." And she's done. And I go, oh, OK.

**Rev:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** And then there's some puzzles where they come up and I go, OK, I know what needs to happen and I know that there's a strategy and I will not be able to figure out what it is. I'm just going to randomly click on something until it happens to work. And lo and behold ...

**Tass:** And one of them worked so fast!

**Megan:** That one was me counting. That one ... That one I knew how to do it and I knew how to get through it. But the one that I was like, I'm just going to randomly click on things. And it was a ... It was a series of like circles that you would click to turn other ones on and off.

**Rev:** Uh-huh.

**Megan:** And so it's like, oh, you have to click this one. And then I knew it was like, oh, move over two to like offset the pattern, or whatever. And I said, I'm going to figure it out, but I'm gonna do it in the wrong direction so that they're all off instead of on. And then that's exactly what happened.

**Rev:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** Yep.

**Rev:** Well, speaking of finding out where we are on the bell curve of things, I did get an email from someone. Once it's safe to go outside and for us all to be together and for Kim to be here, they have a location for us to play our Jake hunting us game.

**Jake:** Yes! Yes! Yes, yes, yes.

**Megan:** Oh, yes. OK.

**Tass:** Yes!

**Rev:** It is a place that has like a institute on it and a power plant and a bunch of open fields.

**Megan:** Ugh! So good.

**Rev:** Yeah, I got that email the other day. So we have a location, and I know Tass is working on the variations of the game. Hopefully everyone will get their shots, and we can do that soon.

**Jake:** It's wild because some number of months back, I sent everybody a link to this place. Like when this place went on the market, like I with my ... With my super cool realtor's license, like I get emails about shit that goes on the market. And I was like, "Hey you guys, there's a fucking sanatorium in the state that's for sale. Do we want to go like a do a tour of it?" And then we just never did. And now supercool, someone in our circle, someone in our sphere of influence, owns it.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Megan:** Meant to be.

**Rev:** Yeah. And I think lastly, before we get into this episode, you can head over to [YouTube.com/TheCritshow](https://www.youtube.com/TheCritshow). We are slowly populating that with some of the things that we do on Twitch. You will always be able to find The Omniverse Chronicles there the Thursday after we have played it live on Monday. We also have some of our Let's Plays and our play throughs of video games there. So you can find that, in case you happen to miss some of those streams. And we have had a decent number of people asking if the Monday night streams are going to be converted into audio and play some place where people can find them. The answer is yes. We just have to figure out what is the best way to do that. We can rip the audio from the video. And I'm not sure if dropping a three hour audio file onto the RSS feed is the best way to do it, or if maybe we'll make a home for

them on the website, but we will make those available for those of you who partake mostly in just audio. Most likely it'll probably happen when that story is over, then we'll put all of them out between stories. So I think with that, it's time to get to the episode.

**SFX:** CRITSHOW STINGER

**Rev:** So a two hour car ride, a couple of burritos, and a teleport later, we find ourselves back in the subterranean lair. What are y'all doing?

**Megan:** Yeah, I think when we get back, I just sit down. "OK, so I've had some time to process this, and I, um ... I didn't want to ask before, because I felt like it wasn't any of my business. And so I'm sorry, but I just — I need to talk to you guys, and I need you to tell me everything Nash has done. I've heard bits and pieces and kind of got the gist of some of it. But I really need to know the things that he has put everyone through."

**Rev:** Rev is eating remains of one of the burritos that you brought him.

**Rev:** REV: He took over my body. Although that wasn't this Nash. It was a different Nash. But like he lived in my body for a long time.

**Tass:** "Yeah, that's ... That's one of the big ones."

**Jake:** "I mean, you know that broadly he has like a hierarchy of vampires that kind of do nefarious things. And he adds to that organization by turning people into new vampires. So there are an assortment of people that he has converted."

**Tass:** "And the long and short on what he is doing feeds into all the steps that we've watched. He had Estin working on this spell, how to take attributes from one thing and put it into another, how to sort of charge something. I don't know exactly what all else he's done to put that together, but obviously that has something to do with this Chosen situation. So along the way, he's gone through to other worlds and done things to manipulate whatever these pieces are, to be able to put this together. It involves killing a lot of people, including TJ. It was like he stopped Jake from being able to help. He just took that Luck, that energy that could drive him forward and let TJ die in front of all of us. Well, I wasn't there." [Sighs] "But that's a whole other thing."

**Jake:** "He also killed Tass."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "Well, he created a special type of vampire whose sole purpose was to kill Tass. And then also another time, he made an explosive trap that nearly killed Tass."

**Tass:** "It's weird, but it's like ... It's hard to take any of this personally, at this point. Like in this weird way, I'm more mad, but I understand more. He's literally killed me. But like, I knew what I signed up for. I thought it was gonna be kicking open coffins in basements and staking vampires and stuff. I didn't think it was gonna be any of this. But I knew what I signed up for. There are monsters out there trying to hurt people. But I'm just so mad now, because they aren't just animals. They aren't just these rabid horror things that I'm supposed to put down. They're just people. Can't even imagine how you see this, and how you feel right now. Not even remotely. Because this has gotta be personal for you on a level that I'll never understand. So I'm ... I'm sorry. I don't know what else to say about it."

**Rev:** REV: Why is this personal for you?

**Megan:** "Oh, yeah. Nash is my grandfather, apparently."

**Rev:** REV: Oh.

**Megan:** "Yeah. Man, I am so sorry. Like I knew he was a bad guy, in that he was head of this organization and you guys had been fighting to stop him. But I didn't ... I didn't realize just how much he'd done to you. I'm so sorry."

**Jake:** "I mean, that's the thing, is he's not just doing stuff to us. He's not even just doing stuff to our world. He is attacking the multiverse. He did something, some ritual in a world that boy we fucked up in, that killed at least three other people on some kind of colossal scale."

**Tass:** "TJ was personal, though. He made that pretty clear. We meddled. He stopped us from saving him. That wasn't part of any grand design. He just wanted to stick it to us. And he sure did."

**Megan:** "I ... I think I need a second. I'll be right back." I think I just go to the bathroom.

**Rev:** REV: Wow.

**Tass:** "Yeah. Big wow."

**Rev:** REV: What is this? Is this like a rally her against him thing, now? Is this like ... Are you trying to, I don't know, make it so the more information doesn't hurt, or ... Like he also — like he hijacked me, but it was so that you all would go save his world.

**Jake:** "I mean, like you said, that's a different him. We all just found this out about their relationship, because we just encountered a future state time traveler version of him who's currently here, or now, here at this point in the timeline. So that's also a different him. But the one that we're fighting against, that's kind of what I would consider Nash Prime, here."

**Rev:** REV: Why is this other one here?

**Jake:** "I guess originally he was here to try and make what Nash Prime is doing go smoother, so that he wouldn't suffer as much in the future. And has now had a change of heart to some degree, and instead wants to help us prevent those plans from going off."

**Rev:** REV: Which one's her grandfather?

**Jake:** "Future version."

**Rev:** REV: That's not as bad, at least.

**Jake:** "I mean, the reason that future version came back is because he turned her into a weapon in his timeline, and then she died and he couldn't handle it. So he came back to make sure that she wouldn't die in one way, and has now decided to make sure of it in a different way. But he's still committed all the same atrocities. So we're going down a rabbit hole of do people change? And if they do, does the motive for that change matter? And I'm too fucking tired and full of burritos to get into that right now."

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah, the important thing that I have to say in my mind over and over and over again is that Megan looked into this one, this future guy, and she believes what he's saying. And I trust her. So I have to think of this guy as a tool that we are gonna use to win this thing. And if I start going down my rabbit hole, it's what is he doing to manipulate everything, so it comes out to his perfect monster world? I can't. I can't do that."

**Rev:** REV: Yeah. I mean, we trusted one Nash before.

**Tass:** "Yeah, we sure did."

**Jake:** "And so far, it seems like that's gone OK."

**Rev:** REV: Yeah.

**Megan:** I walk back in the room. I think I'd, you know, splashed some water in my face and kind of composed myself. "OK. So, we've got a lot to figure out. My grandfather's done some terrible things. I don't feel better, knowing what they are, but I like to make decisions with as much information as I can get. So at least I'm a little more informed now. He's done a lot of bad. But take my word for it, he's done a lot of good too. Maybe not on the same scale as he's done bad, but with just as much importance to me. And I'm so angry and I feel so betrayed and confused, but that's also something I can't dismiss. And I do believe that he thinks that this is going to have the outcome he said he did."

**Rev:** REV: What outcome? Like, what is ... What did he tell you all?

**Tass:** "You know, it's super simple, but it tracks. If we can jump into the future, to whatever Nash is making now, the idea is it's already done. It's happening. The pieces are out there, and it's not any sort of big secret anymore. So it will be vastly easier for us to find those pieces, come back here, and wreck them as they're being built."

**Rev:** REV: Can you go and come back?

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "He said it's just like a portal. The way we open a portal. It'll stay there. It'll persist. It's just a portal through time instead of space."

**Rev:** REV: Where?

**Tass:** "That's ... Wow. Yep. Uh huh. That's a question. Um, Chicago is apparently the hub, or at least it was in his version. I don't know why that would change much, here. It seems like a solid, you know, central spot."

**Rev:** REV: Wasn't that the place that everyone in the last world you went to too? Or, not the last world. Two, three places ago?

**Tass:** "Oh god, who knows? Yeah. Yeah, you're right, though. Absolutely."

**Jake:** "Is there some kind of like magical hot springs underneath Chicago that we don't know about? Is it drawing all of this stuff there?"

**Rev:** REV: Um ... Huh.

**Rev:** And he gets up and goes over and sits down with the computer and opens up a few images of North American maps. And there are highlighted areas all over them.

**Rev:** REV: I haven't thought about this stuff in so long.

**Rev:** And he zooms in to Illinois.

**Rev:** REV: Uh ... Yeah, there's a lot of ley line activity there.

**Jake:** "It could explain part of his big globe-spanning plan here, because that's what we did. We used the ley lines to basically inject a Soul Bat cure into the whole world. Maybe he's using the ley lines to inject a monster poison into the whole world."

**Rev:** REV: So are we just talking like open portal through time, just hanging out someplace?

**Tass:** "Yep."

**Jake:** "So as far as I understand it, we go through, we do whatever. However long we're there, that's how much time has passed when we come back."

**Rev:** REV: Well, can you use the paper?

**Jake:** "No, I don't think so."

**Tass:** "Yeah, no. Just because it's keyed in to be dimensional, or something."

**Rev:** REV: Oh because this is the same dimension, it's ...

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Megan:** "Is there a way to rewrite it?"

**Jake:** "I mean, surely there is."

**Megan:** "Well I'm just thinking, you know, the way you switched up your barrier magic to lock something in as opposed to keeping it out. Could you do that similarly with your ... It's like a spell, right? On your paper?"

**Jake:** "Maybe. I mean, I'd have to do a lot of research. God knows how long it would take, or if anybody else has even cracked that code before."

**Tass:** "Yeah. I guess the talk there would be we could look into that real quick and see what is best for our time management right now. Because if that works and it's gonna take less time than it takes to make the portal? Great. But if not, then we might as well get back on to doing whatever we can that slows this Nash down without ruining the steps in the spell. Because we want that to still go off correctly. We just don't want it to happen soon. So that for me is take out Estin, somebody that's helping him do this. Maybe he'll still have the steps, though, and so on. You know what I mean?"

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Megan:** "Is that something we can even do anymore? I mean, if our plan now is to let all of Nash's plans go off without a hitch, taking out his main guy that he wanted to bring back from the dead, would that not throw too much of a wrench?"

**Tass:** "I mean, yeah, I guess that is a solid question. I ... I don't know. This is just a gamble on my end. But it seems to me that taking out Estin wouldn't necessarily ruin the steps. It would just slow him down a lot."

**Megan:** "Because he could just bring him back again."

**Tass:** "Well, I mean, not if we do it right."

**Megan:** "How would you do it different this time?"

**Tass:** "Clean up the remains."

**Jake:** "Assuming that he got whatever information he needed out of Estin when he brought him back and has just kind of had Estin on tasks ever since, like working the ghouls and hunting people down and trapping them. Like, it seems like we could remove Estin from the equation, and he's probably gotten what he needs out of him at this point."

**Tass:** "Yeah. I mean, that's the hope. Because it was a close thing. He had a very serious moment there that if Estin did know something he didn't, he almost lost that. So I can't imagine him bringing him back and being like, 'Uh, don't tell me yet.'"

**Jake:** "I also would be kind of surprised by Nash's behavior if he brought back a lieutenant that three scrappy upstarts were able to best, and then continued to entrust him with important duties."

**Tass:** "Sure."

**Jake:** "Nash seems like the kind of guy who would go, 'Tell me what you know. Good. You're useless to me now. Get out of here.' Or, 'Here's an errand. Stay busy and out of my way.'"

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Megan:** "We can still talk to Kimi and Fritz and Ellis and find out more about the, I guess, training process that Nash had set up? Maybe those people will be folks we need to watch out for in the future? Or at least a place to start tracking?"

**Jake:** "Also, I feel like if we talk to them and we get the wheel turning on the plan of like creating a kind of a monster support group, help them live and thrive thing? We might have some more allies left when we get to the future. If we have created a world where, yeah, everybody's transformed into monsters, but we had already gotten the ball rolling on humans and monsters working together, there might be a little bit less hostility."

**Tass:** "Maybe. I think we ought to be really careful with that though, too. Because with the idea that Nash does come to power and this all goes off correctly, if anybody's onto the fact that we're coming through and he gets that information before we get there, he might just be ready for us. All it takes is one wrong word that one of these people doesn't like that they just sit on until it's useful to them. But I think you're right. I think it is worth having that conversation and getting that ball rolling, so that there is kind of a back and forth. But just without the, 'Hey, see ya in two hundred years.'"

**Megan:** "Yeah. I just keep thinking back to ... Say we go to the future. Where do we start? We'll have an idea, you know, of how the world is set up, but we won't really know much."

**Rev:** REV: Who do you trust that would still be alive at that point?

**Tass:** "Trust? Ooh boy, I don't know. Unless ... Call in our major favor with Damien. We still have a coin, right?"

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Tass:** "That's the only thing I can think of. I mean sure, we've got a loose situation with Strohm, but she seems very much like she's gonna ride whatever wave is gonna keep her on top."

**Megan:** "Who's Damien?"

**Rev:** REV: He's a dick.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** REV: He clubbed me and threw me in the trunk of a car!

**Tass:** "He did. He did."

**Megan:** "Rev, you've been through some shit."

**Rev:** REV: It's ... It's been a lot.

**Megan:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** It's a hard knock life for an NPC.

**Rev:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** Is that why they lock you down here?

**Jake:** Yeah!

**Rev:** REV: Yeah. Because I'll just wander away, like any NPC in a video game.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** REV: I just get lost and wander away.

**Tass:** "So Damien's a speed demon. An actual speed demon. And we are friends with him?"

**Jake:** "I think we can safely say we're friends with him at this point."

**Megan:** "What's his deal?"

**Tass:** "Well, a lot of it's pretty standard demon stuff. Like if you make deals with him, it's almost like a compulsion. Like he sticks to the deal. And part of that is we have a favor

ready from him. So we can call that in. You know, he's not all powerful or anything, but he got some cool stuff that he can do."

**Megan:** "Wait, so you're friends, but you need to have a favor to call in?"

**Tass:** "You know ..."

**Jake:** "There's a system with demons."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "Like they're not allowed to ... They don't have the power, but by the bureaucracy of demon work."

**Megan:** "Interesting."

**Jake:** "Like, I think we wouldn't have to cut a deal for him to, like, hand us a pen that was on the desk next to him. But to manifest some kind of unique event or anything. Like major circumstances, like I just think he literally can't do unless a deal is cut. Because he's pretty, like, loose about what constitutes a deal with us at this point."

**Megan:** "Yeah. I was gonna ask, what deals have you made? What have you given up?"

**Jake:** "Well, so like we made a deal where he helped us with, like, the crowd protection during a thing on the Circle in exchange for saving him in an encounter with some demon dogs. We agreed to help him get a special item in exchange for helping us break into the place that had that item where we needed something else. He collected Tass's soul when he died? But that wasn't a deal with us. That was a deal with somebody else long ago. And right now he owes us one for something that TJ did for him before he died. So yeah, I mean, we could try and call him in. We could even, like ... I hate to say, like, bind him now. Because I'm sure he'd be up for it. But like, you know, the bylaws of demonology or whatever, like we could cut a deal with him that would make him have to, like, fight against Nash, so to speak. You know, like, 'OK, like we're gonna cut this deal. You have to be there. You have to be on our side.' Like something like that. So that, you know, even though that's what he would want to do anyway, like now it's law. Now it's contract. There's no way around it."

**Tass:** "That's true. Man, and besides him, I don't know who else we could actually trust that would live that long. Like Strohm is just gonna go with the tide. Wherever she's gonna thrive, that's what she's gonna do. I mean, barring some attack, Baba Yaga would probably still be alive. But I mean, she stays out in the woods. I can't imagine that she's gonna know, like, Chicago's landscape by then."

**Megan:** "Baba Yaga?"

**Tass:** [Sighs]

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "The Baba Yaga of folklore, yes. We have had our dealings with her as well."

**Megan:** "Huh. Wait. Strohm's in Chicago, right?"

**Jake:** "Yes."

**Megan:** "OK, so you've made deals with her too, right?"

**Jake:** "Yes."

**Megan:** "But you seem to not trust her the way you trust this Damien guy?"

**Jake:** "No."

**Megan:** "So can you do this thing that you just said you could do with Damien, with her? Like make a deal that she has to be an ally, come time?"

**Rev:** REV: You don't make a deal with Strohm. You make a trade with Strohm.

**Jake:** "Yeah. Like she'll ... She can make an agreement, but she's not like bound in any way, other than like remaining in your good graces and continuing to do business."

**Rev:** REV: Yeah. Like I made a deal with her to get all of the material you see here for the ring that powers a lot of this stuff. And she got real upset that someone knew how to use it all. So after the fact, she kind of started putting feelers out to find me, so she could catch me.

**Megan:** "Ah."

**Rev:** REV: Yeah.

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Megan:** "Gotcha."

**Jake:** "Strohm's gonna be a problem when we go to the future, huh?"

**Tass:** "Probably."

**Jake:** "Like she's just all about like, hey, man, however the world serves me, that's what I'm going to do. And yeah, when it's monster world, she's gonna have no love for us, I don't think."

**Rev:** REV: God, especially if it's in Chicago.

**Jake:** "Yeah. Her domain. She's gonna be president of Chicago when we go to the future."

**Megan:** "Could it be a possibility that she has more competition at the time?"

**Jake:** "I mean, I suppose it could be. It will also probably be more of like an open market. Like she kind of runs a black market deal for supernatural stuff, because it's all hush hush under the radar. And at that point, it ... Hell, yeah, I guess she might just be kind of out of business, if what she does well is trade in secrets and it's not a secret anymore."

**Tass:** "That, or she's just Wal-Mart now."

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** "Welcome to Strohm-Mart."

**Rev:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** "Hmm. I wonder if she has anything right now that would be useful for us to get, while she's open to trading."

**Jake:** "I mean, I've got her front-facing inventory sheet. Like I've got her catalog. I know she's got some better stuff than this that she doesn't put on the list. But I mean, yeah, everything she's got is pretty dope and most of it would probably be helpful. The question is, do we have anything worth it to her to trade?"

**Tass:** "And again, if we have a reason, if we look at a list and go, this is a thing we need? Let's look into it and spend that time. Otherwise, I think we gotta make very careful use of the time we have, so that we can get the most done. I mean, that's a thought, though. We could always try going back as a group up to the north, and see if we can find those other weapons that I couldn't get. If they're still there, that might be something she'd want. And maybe just maybe, we find something there that helps us track Estin. Cause that is his most recent confirmed location, though it's been ... Most of a day."

**Jake:** "I mean, we can definitely go back up there and try to find those things and try to pick up a trail on Estin. I don't particularly like the idea of finding them as a trade for Strohm. Because again, I think no matter what, Strohm's not gonna be on our side in the future, and I don't want to give her more things that we think might be relevant and important to the bad guy."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "Speaking of like worth the time, though. So he was saying that like if we could fetch NOEL from Canterbury, that that would greatly accelerate the plan or whatever. I didn't want to bring it up in front of him, but do we think that Jingles will be ... Could be a sufficient substitute? Because Jingles is basically hosting NOEL at this point. He's like running the firmware or whatever."

**Tass:** "I mean, maybe. But when Jingles took over, he just sort of took the operating system, right? Like, isn't the ... Isn't the portal stuff just wholesale gone?"

**Jake:** "I mean, yeah. Like the physical parts of the portal stuff are gone. I didn't know if NOEL posted some information about how it worked or anything that might be what he needs."

**Tass:** "Oh, fair. I guess that's a question to ask. I feel like TJ couldn't find anything that he could use, which is why his stuff is wonky. But I mean, if there's anything that speeds it up by an hour, a day, whatever, we can use it."

**Jake:** "Because alternatively then, do we bother to go try and retrieve it from the castle? That seems like a big opportunity for Nash to know what we're doing, or have an idea of what's going to happen here."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "Or just kill us early, and everything becomes irrelevant."

**Tass:** "Fair. Yeah, I think it's ... I think it's a big chance, but it would expedite this whole thing."

**Jake:** "Well, let's revisit that after we check some other stuff off our list. Because he's doing his research right now. So that part needs to get done regardless, and we'll take the same amount of time regardless. I guess let's head back up north first, and figure out what we can find about Estin and about the weapons, and at least know some stuff."

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah, I just ... I couldn't see much down there, and was under a little pressure." [Laughs] "Get it? Because ..."

**Megan:** [Laughs] "Yeah."

**Tass:** "Sorry. But yeah, I just — I couldn't figure out what might have happened to everything. Maybe with your magic, we could see what happened."

**Jake:** "Yeah that's fine. Do you think — I'm a little beat up from my time in Elnore, still. Do we think we could kick it for any amount of time and rest some? You said you fought like a translucent water beast that wanted to eat your magic and stuff, right?"

**Tass:** "Yeah, my knee's in some rough shape, and ... Yeah. Well, yeah, I'm a little beat up."

**Jake:** "I mean, I guess we could at least go and try to pick up the trail on Estin before it gets any colder, and then maybe spend some time, if we have it, getting better."

**Tass:** "I mean, that's not a bad thought. But that creature that was, like, inhaling the magic? Was in the ice, under my feet. You know, I don't think it's a super safe thing to go look at imminently, if we feel like we need to rest up a bit."

**Jake:** "Yeah. I mean, if it seems like there's a decent chance that a fight comes to us right there where we need to watch Estin's thing, then I would greatly prefer to spend some time and get up and running a little better, here."

**Tass:** "Yeah, I think that's safe. I know we're losing a little time, but with the amount of magic we would suddenly be packing right there, that just seems like exactly what this thing would want to try to track down."

**Jake:** "That's a fantastic point, and it had not occurred to me for a moment. See, this is why ... You're the brains of the operation."

**Tass:** "Oh god."

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** "That's terrible news."

**Rev:** REV: Megan, there's an opening for the brains of the operation, if you're interested.

**Tass:** "I will pass, thank you."

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** "All right. Let's kick it tonight, I guess, and we can head out in the morning."

**Tass:** "Sounds good."

**Megan:** "Let's do it."

**Rev:** All right. So for the first time in a very long time, I think you all head to a full night's sleep. I think for the purposes of what we're doing now, everybody can heal up from the damage that you have experienced over the last couple of days. Is there anything you want to do in the morning before you head to the North Pole?

**Jake:** I want to look around here before we go and see if TJ had squirreled away the key fob for the Undersea Gobbler, somewhere in the lair.

**Rev:** Oh, yeah. I'm sure that it is on a hook next to the computer, next to one of his lab coats.

**Jake:** OK. Well, I'll grab those. Seems like it could come in handy.

**Rev:** OK.

**Tass:** Um ... No, I don't think so. Unless this is a situation that's intense enough that Destiny's Plaything pops off.

**Rev:** Yeah, I think it does.

**Tass:** OK.

**Rev:** Roll it.

**Tass:** Ten.

**Rev:** So as you were standing in the middle of the subterranean lair, your eyes filled with that white light again and you get a vision. And it's very similar to the vision you got last time, of something moving around underwater. But as it gets close to the bottom of the

ocean, you see that it heads inside of a very large crack in the earth, and ice forms up behind it after it goes in. Like it's sealing up behind itself.

**Tass:** OK. I think I blink out of that. "Oh. Hey, hey, hey. I had a vision."

**Megan:** "About what?"

**Tass:** "About the North Pole again. I saw the creature. The thing that, like, attacked me and was feeding off of the magic items. I think I might be able to find where it is. It went into this crack in the earth, and then just sealed it up behind it with ice."

**Jake:** "Perfect. So if we think it might have taken the weapons, we at least know where we could follow it to find them?"

**Tass:** "Hopefully."

**Jake:** "All right. Well, I got the keys to the Undersea Gobbler, so ..."

**Megan:** [Laughs] "The what?"

**Jake:** "A submarine craft that TJ devised out of a land vehicle that TJ devised ..."

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** "Out of a Jeep and a swan boat."

**Rev:** If I remember right, I believe the Undersea Gobbler's engine is the Sea Gobbler on a treadmill.

**Tass:** Pretty much.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** I think that was how he gave it more power.

**Megan:** Yeah, that tracks. I'm not — I'm not a scientist.

**Jake:** "But anyway, if we can still raise that, then at least we won't need dive suits."

**Tass:** "Yeah, in theory. I don't know what that's going to mean for going into this crack." Because it was pretty much just person-sized, right? It wasn't like a huge, massive thing?

**Rev:** Correct. It was about the size of the creature, so ... It would be big enough actually that, you know, a couple of you could fit in at the same time, but not, like, the submarine.

**Tass:** "So maybe it's worth getting a couple of dive suits, just in case?"

**Jake:** "Sure."

**Megan:** "Where is this ..." [Laughs] "Sorry. Undersea Gobbler?"

**Jake:** "I think he just put it into, like, low power mode, right under the ice. Right by where the submarine used to be."

**Tass:** "Yeah, it had to have been close. I mean, we put down — Everett and I, we were pretty close to where we had had gone in. I didn't see it on the way down. But I mean, I didn't think I needed it, since it was just me. So I didn't really look. So yeah, it might be worth going over to IPT and at least grabbing that suit that I used out of Mother Hen."

**Jake:** "OK." Well, we'll head to IPT first, then.

**Rev:** So you all head out of the subterranean lair and teleport over to IPT. As you appear, you instantly feel that the ground is shaking, and you hear a deep rumble as well as the cracking of wood and the breaking of concrete and brick. The buildings in front of you begin to shift, and huge gashes appear in the sidewalks and the streets, and the air is filled with the sound of shattering glass, crumbling stone, and shrieking voices as, in front of you, the IPT and the other buildings on this city block plummet into the ground.

**SFX:** OUTRO MUSIC

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