

The Swiss Cheese Siege (S3, E34)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: I have a question for you all.

Jake: Hit me.

Rev: What's, like, the last thing you bought for yourself that wasn't, like, a necessity? Like food or clothing. Like what's the last thing you just bought yourself?

Megan: What day is it?

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: It is Sunday.

Jake: I need to look at my Amazon.

Tass: I just bought a couple of things altogether on Amazon. One of which is a box of 500 Nerf darts, because I plan on having a little reunion with some of my work buddies in a couple of weeks ...

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: And it's gonna be a little bit of a war. So I'm excited for that. And I also bought, in that same bundle, I found that they make Magic cards, which I'm not a much of a — I don't play Magic or anything. But they did a series of them that they replaced some of the popular creatures and stuff that are on the cards with Godzilla-verse Kaiju.

Rev: Oh.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: OK.

Tass: So I was like, oh, I'm getting those. So I got my favorite villain Kaiju and my favorite good guy.

Rev: I was gonna say, I wasn't sure the first one counted, because that sounds more like a work expense.

Tass: [Laughs] Yeah, that's fair. That's a good call.

Megan: I just went and got some new bath bombs the other day, and uh ... Yeah, I've spent this past year just really just getting things in any whim that comes along.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: I have a very poor impulse control, and this has not been great for just sitting in my house being like, "Hmm ... What do I want? Yeah. I want that. I'm gonna get it."

Rev: Yeah. I used to do a lot of my impulse shopping at cons. And since we haven't been to one in over a year, I haven't been spending any money. But I did buy, um ... They put out a replica of Ecto-1 from the Ghostbusters movie that comes out soon, and it came in the mail today. It is very good.

Megan: Awesome.

Jake: Nice.

Megan: Yeah, I've had to delete a few apps from my phone, just to take away the, like, ease of ...

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: Well, I'm just gonna go on here and see what's available.

Rev: Anything strike my fancy?

Megan: Most everything, unfortunately.

Jake: I think the last thing that I got for myself was dice. Which is weird. That's a pretty few and far between thing for me to buy anymore.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Yeah, same. Same.

Jake: But at some point not too long ago I was like, they had a sale going on. I was like, hey, you know what? I'll take some of these, yeah.

Tass: Nice.

Jake: I know you think it's nice. I don't — you don't need to tell me. I can assume.

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: I keep buying things for other people. Like I was just like, oh, let me go look through my Amazon orders. Because like now that I have a new job that pays me more, like I keep having money. And I'm like, oh, I'll just spend this. But it's not for me.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I've bought swords for others. I bought swords for various other people. I bought kitchen implements, I bought gifts. But I'm like, oh wow. None of this has been for me in a while, huh. So I'm gonna remedy that, and I'm gonna go buy an Oculus 2 when we leave here.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: Nice.

Jake: Go buy myself a VR headset.

Rev: Nice. Maybe then one day we can get it set up so we can watch you hunt ghosts in VR.

Jake: Fuck yeah. God.

Rev: I've got a perfectly good room right out there that has nothing in it.

Jake: Oh my god. Yes, that would kick ass.

Rev: That'd be amazing.

Jake: I know that — like I need to figure out which headsets can play Phasmophobia.

Rev: Hmm.

Jake: I know you can side load games that aren't supposed to be on some of them onto some of them, but they don't always work as well. So I might be locked into like the ... What's the Steam one? Does anybody remember what the steam VR headset is called?

Rev: Hmm ... And the Steamulus? I don't know.

Megan: [Laughs]

Jake: No. I don't remember. Well, it's like sixteen hundred dollars, so I'm probably not gonna be able to do that one.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: I always think VR stuff is gonna be really fun, and then I always get so, like, aware of the space that I'm in. And like recently I had somebody who has one that was like, "Oh, have you tried VR stuff?" And I had one of the like — the Gear VR headsets, like when I got my Samsung phone. That like, you just put your phone into the headset?

Rev: Oh. Uh-huh.

Megan: And there was some really neat stuff there. But this one was like the ... Can't remember what it's called, but it's like you're walking on a plank out of an elevator of a really tall building?

Jake: Yeah.

Megan: Yeah. So he was like, "You have to do this. Here, put this on." And like made me walk out there. And he's like, "OK, now turn around and walk back." And so I — and it's so disorienting. And I was just — like my stomach felt so heavy. And I turned around and I'm like slowly walking this plank back to this elevator, just this so, so tall of a building. At the last second I was like, he's gonna fucking push me.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: And he did.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: And I like jumped forward at the right time, to where I didn't fall. And he was like, "Damn it!" I was like, fucking knew it! Oh ...

Rev: Man, I love — what was the game that we played like last year? Was it Arizona Sun ...

Jake: Arizona Sunshine.

Rev: Sunshine. Yeah.

Tass: Oh, the whole zombie cowboy thing? Yeah. it's good.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Yep. The zombie hordes.

Megan: What?

Jake: Oh man. It's like one of the best VR games. Like it's a zombie game and it's got like a story mode. Like you can go through levels and play through the whole game. But it's also just got a horde mode, where you just start with you and maybe up to — was it capped at four people, or did it go higher than that? I think we only ever played it with four.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: But like you literally just start under a tent in like the desert. There's just like kind of rocks and, like, cliffs around you and shit. And just wave after wave of zombies come, and as you defeat a wave, new types of guns appear on your table. So now you can have like an AR in one hand and a desert eagle on the other, and try and mow them down. And they move faster or slower. It's so fucking good.

Rev: Yeah. That place closed down.

Jake: Did it?

Tass: Aww ...

Rev: Yeah. But they —

Jake: Oh, yeah. It did, because they sold my information to some other VR place that won't stop emailing me now.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: Yep.

Megan: That sounds incredible. The most I ever did was just sit with my headset and like lay on my couch and watch Netflix ...

All: [Laugh]

Megan: Without having to turn my head. [Laughs]

Jake: The American Dream.

Rev: I really feel like I'm in the Great British Bake Off!

Megan: And like the lounge in the Netflix app in there was like this huge, like, TV that took up most of a wall. But it was like this really nice, like, log cabin. And I had like a little nice lounge couch. And I'm just like laying on my back on the couch, like ... [Laughs]

Jake: Hearing yourself breathe. [Mouth breathing]

Megan: Trying to feed myself snacks without being able to see.

Rev: Really testing my ... Just hand coordination, no hand-eye.

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: You know, sometimes we get to the end of like just us talking, and there's no way out.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: There's no way out?

Rev: Like ...

Megan: Sounds like there's no way out of this conversation.

Rev: I need like a conversation parachute, but to kick off the recap.

Tass: Oh yeah, yeah.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: We need like a ... Like a That Was Easy button, you know?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Like that's it. Just when we don't have anything else, when there's a pause, you can just press the button. It goes, [Snaps] "That was easy." And then just the whoom, and we're into the show.

Megan: I feel like that is just, "K bye." [Laughs]

Rev: I mean I haven't used it in a long time, but I do have the, uh ...

Tass: I'm Rev and whatev.

Rev: I'm Rev and whatev.

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: Closest we got, baby,

Rev: [Laughs] It's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: So as you are standing in the middle of the subterranean lair, your eyes fill with that white light again, and you get a vision of something moving around underwater. 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: "Oh. Hey, hey, hey. I had a vision."

Megan: "About what?"

Tass: "About the North Pole again. I saw the creature. 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: "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."

Tass: "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." 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: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Here the three of you stand outside of where the IPT used to be. As you appeared on the sidewalk, you noticed that the entirety of the area around you was shaking. There were loud crack sounds coming from the foundation. Buildings were starting to crumble. And then an area about the size of a city block plummeted into the earth, and far down below where these buildings have disappeared, you hear the unmistakable sound of ghouls shrieking. What are you all doing?

Jake: I want to go look over the edge and see how far down this went.

Rev: Yeah. So you go over to the edge and you look down, and you can only see maybe 40, 50 feet down. You see darkness. But you do hear that sound echoing up of the ghouls.

Tass: I'm just — I'm rushing to the side of the hole, here. So it just — it's darkness that we're seeing down, not like the building collapsed in on itself. It's just like everything just went down? Is that what you mean?

Rev: Yeah. Like an elevator. And it doesn't seem like ... The darkness does not seem entirely natural. I think with your Third Eye, you can tell that. Also we just did your Destiny's Plaything, and then you guys kind of zagged and a different mission came along. I feel like you get to roll this again.

Jake: Nice.

Tass: I'll take it.

Rev: Because I got news for you: this isn't the creature in the ice.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: Seven.

Rev: So I think in the sense of a vague hint, your eyes glow with this white energy again, and you get a vision. And you see Swiss cheese. Like a big square of Swiss cheese. And that's it. [Laughs]

Jake: [Laughs]

Megan: Snack break.

Jake: I feel like I understand that hint. So I think that was a good vague hint.

Rev: Thanks. Thanks.

Tass: All right. I blink out of this one. "Swiss cheese!"

Jake: "What the fuck are you talking about?!"

Tass: "I don't know. There's like — the vision, it's something about this. Like, holes. There's like tunnels. It's like tunnels all the way down. That's why we didn't watch the building crumble in on itself. They weren't, like, destroyed. They were brought literally down."

Jake: "Like the ghoul tunnels?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "OK. Do we think we can find a not-collapsed ghoul tunnel that'll take us down?"

Tass: "Maybe."

Megan: "They're down there. Do you guys hear that?"

Tass: "Oh yeah."

Jake: "Yeah. God knows what they're doing, but there's a lot of people down there. We have to get down there and at least try to start evacuating or something."

Tass: "Yeah, absolutely. Megan, make sure to have that light gun charged."

Megan: Yeah, I get that out and make sure it's ready to go.

Jake: Um ... No. I had the thought in my head for a moment that like maybe somebody I know at IPT would have like walked out the door that I could just teleport to them. But I feel like the opposite is probably true. Everybody would probably turtle up inside, if they were in there and intact and under attack.

Megan: Can I reach out telepathically and try and connect with Margaret?

Rev: Yeah. You reach out with your mind, and it feels like it's almost at the max range that you have. But you can sense Margaret.

Megan: [Telepathically] "Margaret, are you OK?"

Rev: MARGARET: [Telepathically] Yes, I think so. My leg's broken. What happened?

Megan: [Telepathically] "Uh, we think it's the ghouls. Estin's ghouls. The whole block, the buildings, they just sunk to the ground."

Rev: MARGARET: [Telepathically] All right. We don't have any eyes yet on what's going on. What's ... What do you see? What's the plan? What should we be doing?

Megan: [Telepathically] "Uh ... Uh, hold on." I turn to the guys. "Margaret's alive. Her legs are broken, though. Should I tell her to try and get somebody to mess up the markings so that you can teleport, so we can get inside? What do we do? Do we try and fight the ghouls, or do we try and save people?"

Rev: I wish everyone could see the look on Jake and Tass's face right now as they make this decision.

Jake: "No, I don't think she should screw up any of the wards. I think in this condition, they're gonna need everything they got to stay protected down there. Just tell her that we think it's the ghouls, and they can be handled by that light gun technology, and just to notify all hands that they might be trying to storm IPT soon. We're gonna get down there as fast as possible, and we're gonna try to help."

Megan: "OK." Yeah, I reach back out again. [Telepathically] "OK, so if you can get people to get a hold of the like light gun technology that was used to fight them last time? They might be trying to get inside. So just hold them off. We're gonna try to get down there as fast as we can. Yeah, I'm sorry. I wish I had something better for you."

Rev: MARGARET: [Telepathically] That's all right. Just take a deep breath. We'll see you when you figure it out.

Megan: [Telepathically] "OK. See you soon."

Rev: MARGARET: [Telepathically] Bye bye.

Megan: [Telepathically] "Bye."

Jake: [Laughs]

Megan: Love you, bye.

Jake: [As Margaret] Bye bye. Owie, my legs.

All: [Chuckle]

Jake: I mean, is there anything around here that is akin to a very long rope? Like is there a fire truck with a hose coiled on it, or anything that we could just, like ... It seems like a waste of time to try to find a ghoulish tunnel when we've got a big hole and we could make a straight line down, as long as we weren't just gonna plummet.

Rev: I would say that there are a fair number of wires and things like that that were running underground — that were running above ground, that have been pulled down into this hole, that you could use.

Jake: I'm just gonna either try and find one long enough, or collect some and try and tie them end to end, so that we've just got a straight shot down there.

Rev: Yeah. I think it just takes a couple of moments, but you're able to find enough wire to make a long connecting wire that runs at least as far as you can see. As you lower this down, it almost seems like it just dips into darkness. Like it suddenly is not visible.

Megan: Can I try and reach out and see if I can find Estin?

Rev: Sure. Roll it.

Megan: Thirteen.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 3.

Megan: Where is the creature right now?

Rev: You get a sense of him far below, almost directly below you. But it's a good three, four hundred feet.

Megan: What is it planning to do right now?

Rev: Storm the IPT. He's trying to find something.

Megan: I'm gonna hold on to that last hold.

Jake: "Can either you see through whatever that is?"

Tass: "I mean, I can see that it's magical. I can try to focus in and figure out what's going on, but I don't know." And I will. I mean, I'll try to open my Sight, like, fully, to see if there's anything new I can glean on it.

Rev: All right. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Tass: OK. Puts me right at a six.

Rev: All right. So that does expose information about yourself.

Tass: No, that's OK.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Oh, I forgot we could just do that.

Rev: Jake and Megan, what are you up to, while Tass is trying to get a peek into this darkness?

Megan: "Yeah, Jake, you're right. They're trying to get in. Estin is ... Estin's right below us. Three, maybe four hundred feet. He's just trying to find his way in. He's looking for something in the IPT."

Tass: "If he's smart, he's gonna try to send those ghouls in first. Because if the wards maintained on that fall, he can't get in unless something breaks those up."

Megan: "Well, I told them to use the light technology stuff, so hopefully that can get done quicker. Is there anybody else I should try and reach out to? I guess maybe Anastacia, if she's still there?" I try to reach out to Anastacia.

Rev: Yeah. I think that you have got a strong enough connection now that you can connect with her. She feels actually about the same location that Margaret's at.

Megan: [Telepathically] "Anastacia, can you hear me?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: [Telepathically] Yeah.

Megan: [Telepathically] "Are you OK?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: [Telepathically] I'm definitely better than some.

Megan: [Telepathically] "Oh, man. OK, listen. Estin is down there. OK, so we got here and all the buildings were shaking and then like a bunch of them fell, just like straight down through the ground. Estin has his ghouls, and I think they made a bunch of tunnels underneath so everything would collapse down straight. But he's trying to get in. He's looking for something."

Rev: ANASTACIA: [Telepathically] Any idea what?

Megan: [Telepathically] "I don't. I'm sorry. But the guys say that the ... Like the light technology that was used last time? That is really great. And Tass thinks that he'll probably send the ghouls in first to mess up the ward, so that he can get in."

Rev: ANASTACIA: [Telepathically] Yeah, all right. I'll see what we can get together.

Megan: [Telepathically] "OK. I'll try and check in, but we're trying to make our way down there. Just hold tight, OK?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: [Telepathically] Yeah, all right.

Megan: "OK. Anastacia's OK. And I told her as well about trying to use light to fight off the ghouls, and that he'll probably send them in first."

Jake: OK. I'm gonna walk over to the edge and kind of hold my hands out over it. I just gonna say, "All right, you two get down there. I'm gonna give you a line of sight, and then I'll join you once you're on the bottom." And I'm gonna close my eyes and I'm gonna focus, and I'm gonna try to shut down this supernatural darkness.

Rev: All right. Roll Force of Will.

Jake: Eleven.

Rev: All right. So I think the question I have for you is, do you want to spend the Luck to snuff out a powerful effect, or do you want to make this temporary?

Jake: This is pretty close to home in a way that's very startling. I think I will spend the Luck.

Rev: OK. And can you remind everybody of your Luck ramification?

Jake: When you spend a point of Luck, you get word your mission requires something difficult that must be done by you urgently.

Rev: Below you, the darkness suddenly evaporates and you can see the wreckage down below. You can see broken water mains and sewage lines. You can see similar access tunnels. And far below, you can see the tops of the buildings of this city block. And in this moment, The Executioner's voice comes into your ear and tells you that inside of that building — and it's the one that you're looking at, it's the IPT — that there are monsters kept there that Nash may one day be able to use to his advantage, and they need to not make it through this day alive.

Jake: Oof.

Tass: "It took this city a month to fix a 20 foot sinkhole."

Jake: "Stop it! Get down there! Go."

Tass: "Ah, god. Yeah." And I'm gonna grab on to the wire and make my way down.

Megan: Same.

Jake: Yeah, I suppose same.

Rev: Everybody roll Act Under Pressure to safely climb down this 400 foot drop on this telephone wire. [Laughs]

Jake: Nine.

Megan: Seven.

Tass: Nine.

Rev: So I think this is gonna be a group decision. You can all get down to the bottom, but you're gonna take a point of damage because the weight of all of you is just a little too much, and about 20 feet before you get to the bottom, it gives way. Or, you're gonna draw some immediate attention from anything that might be watching for anyone to come down here. Or, some other people are going to see what you're doing and try to join in and help and start making their way down as well.

Tass: Yeah, I think attention. I think it's almost a ... Not a good thing, necessarily. But if we can take out a couple of these things just right out the gate, then we can plow through.

Jake: Yeah, I don't mind harm or attention. I would just say no bystanders. Megan, thoughts?

Megan: Yeah. Let them come.

Jake: Attention it is.

Rev: All right. So you all make it down to the bottom. And as you have climbed down, Tass, the vision that you had of Swiss cheese certainly makes sense, because you are passing dozens and dozens of holes. And you can get a pretty clear sense of the way that the buildings are still intact is that these holes are just far enough apart that once the weight of the building and the block started to break, it would fall a couple of feet, hit a barrier, that barrier crumbled. So it was a very slow ... Not slow, but it did have that momentum taken away from it as it hit down ...

Tass: Yeah, yeah. OK.

Rev: On every level.

Tass: Nice.

Rev: But you do make it to the bottom. You're almost now in front of the door to the IPT. But behind you, you do hear the hissing of ghouls and half a dozen of them emerge from a tunnel. What are you all doing?

Jake: I hold out a hand and just try to immolate one of these.

Rev: All right. Roll Use Magic.

Jake: Six.

Tass: Can I try to help by being the one to step up? Like I'm starting to spin my spear and move between the ghouls and the group to get their attention, so he has a clearer sort of a shot?

Rev: Sure. Roll Help Out.

Tass: OK.

Jake: [Whispers] Snake eyes.

Tass: How about boxcars instead?

Jake: Wow. All right.

Tass: So that's a fifteen.

Rev: All right. So Jake, that takes you up to a seven. What is your effect and what is your glitch?

Jake: So my effect is Burn Everything — 3-harm, ignore armor, magic, obvious. And my glitch is the magic draws immediate, unwelcome attention.

Rev: So you unleash this blast of fire at one of the ghouls that is approaching, and you see the fire engulf its body and it lets out a howl, but it does keep coming. And as this light flares up in this still very dark area, even though it doesn't have this magical darkness, you hear the shriek of the flaming ghoul echoed through other tunnels above you. And another half dozen ghouls start appearing in openings and climbing their way down towards all of you.

Tass: Uh-oh! I'm gonna try to hack through the closest one.

Rev: All right. Roll Kick Some Ass.

Tass: Fourteen, and I have that Advanced.

Rev: All right. What is your Advanced option?

Tass: I completely hold the advantage. All hunters involved get a +1 forward.

Jake: Ooh.

Megan: Why thank you.

Rev: All right. So what is your damage on that?

Tass: 2-harm, and it is magic.

Rev: You lash your spear out at one of the approaching ghouls, and it grabs a hold of the spear as you jab it and it rakes its hands down your arm. You do not take any damage, but you do lose hold of the spear in that one arm. So you have a -1 on your next Kick Some Ass.

Tass: OK.

Rev: Megan?

Megan: I'm gonna use that light pistol, and I'm gonna take a shot at one of them.

Rev: All right. Roll Kick Some Ass.

Megan: Eight.

Rev: You pull out this light pistol and you fire it at one of the approaching ghouls, and you notice that the light does burn it very badly, but it does keep moving at you. And it lashes out with its claws. And you take two points of damage, not armor-defeating. Jake?

Jake: Do I see Estin around anywhere?

Rev: Roll Read a Bad Situation.

Jake: Mmhmm, mmhmm. Fair enough. Ten.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 3.

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

Rev: About 50 feet up on one of the roofs of the building next to the IPT, you see Estin sitting with his legs dangling over the edge, watching.

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

Rev: The victims being just everyone down here?

Jake: I think so. I think as I look upon Estin sitting up there, I wonder, would targeting him take the pressure off of all the other people down here? Would he call his ghouls to his aid, or anything? Like, I wonder if he's the right person to attack next.

Rev: I think that in the sense of truly the best way to protect the innocent, would be to find out what he wants and give it to him.

Jake: What's the second best way to protect the innocent?

All: [Laugh]

Rev: I think the second best way would ...

Jake: No, that's fair. You don't have to answer me a second one, I don't think.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: What's the most vulnerable to me?

Rev: I think that, pulling from a move you saw used when you were all in the Cracked Mirror universe, you notice that the fire doesn't seem to be doing as much damage as, say, Megan's pistol did. And so you would think that your magic, if you could bring light, might make some of these ghouls more vulnerable to you.

Jake: I guess I'm gonna yell up to Estin and say, "What do you want?"

Rev: ESTIN: He knows.

Rev: And he tilts his head towards Tass.

Jake: I think I look confusedly at Tass, then.

Tass: "Oh, he wants the short sword."

Jake: "Why do you want the short sword? What are you gonna do with it?"

Rev: ESTIN: I'm going to do the same thing that you did.

Rev: Jake, I think since you're the one looking up at him, roll Cool.

Jake: Four.

Rev: So this hearkens very far back. I don't believe he got to use it many times. But Jake, you are now mesmerized, as you see Estin's eyes start to flutter and flash different colors.

Rev: ESTIN: I don't care which one it is. The sword, the spear, whatever. Throw it to me.

Rev: And in this moment, you are compelled to do it.

Jake: Then I go try and take the spear away from Tass.

Rev: Tass, you are fighting off this ghoul, and you see in your periphery that Jake is starting to approach you. What are you doing?

Tass: I mean, I'm still — I'm fighting what's in front of me. If he's coming up, I assume he's backing me up.

Rev: Yeah, I think that that is fair. Jake, roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: OK. Thirteen.

Rev: So there is a brief moment where Tass is striking at this ghoul. And he spins it backwards and there's a moment where his hand is a little loose on it, and Jake snatches it out of his hand, pivots, and throws it towards Estin. And Estin reaches out his hand and catches it. He stands up and looks down at the three of you, and he lets out a sharp whistle that echoes through the cave, and then he vanishes. Jake, you're clear of mind, and with that whistle echoing through the caves, the ghouls retreat back into their tunnels.

Tass: "Jake, what the fuck, man?"

Jake: [Gasps] "Oh, he ... Fuck, he like dominated me."

Tass: "Holy shit."

Jake: "No. Fuck no, no! I'm so sorry."

Tass: "Dude, stop. Stop. It's not your fault. I'm mad, I'm not mad at you."

Megan: "I'm sorry, I ... I just froze as soon as I heard his voice. I should have done something else. I should have — I should have tried to stop him from leaving. I just, I couldn't."

Tass: "No, you did what you could. You are surrounded by these things. You took a shot. That's all you could have done. If you would have stopped and tried to do anything to him, you would have gotten ripped to shreds. You did what you could. Not a one of us did anything that we probably should have there, but we did what we could, and that's all we can ever do. Holy shit, I'm so confused. They must not have the longsword or something. If he knows another one's here and he's not going for all of them. I'm so confused."

Jake: "He specifically said he didn't care if it was the short sword of the spear."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: Boy, I want to try to do a Big Magic. I want to, like, get up on the roof where he was and like, as quickly as possible, try to start setting up something that I can cast that will either ... I think opening the same basically portal that he hops, you know, like however he teleports. I think opening that same channel might be too lofty. But even something that, like, draws a line — like that we could trace a thread from the point he just departed to wherever he arrived, so that we could try and track him.

Rev: Yeah. I mean, the ghouls have retreated. So you do have time now. I think above, you hear sirens as rescue workers are starting to show up on the scene. It might take you maybe fifteen minutes to set up this Big Magic. And I think that the components that you would need would all be inside of the IPT.

Jake: "I think I can set up a ritual that can tell us where he went. Is that what I should do?"

Tass: "I don't know, man. Finding him, what does that do? I mean, if we just want to take him out to take him out? Sure. But ... But shit. He's got whatever they need to do what they're gonna do."

Jake: "So we find him and we get the spear back. That's what I'm saying. Everybody's safe down here now. He's not gonna lay siege to the IPT anymore. He got what he wanted. Let's go find him and take it back. And I guess, like, wear mirrored sunglasses or something. Because if you make eye contact with him, he can fuck your day right up."

Tass: "Yeah, OK."

Jake: "You seem significantly less panicky about having lost your Chosen weapon than I feel like I am about you having lost your weapon. Do you know something I don't know?"

Tass: "I know that this thing has to pop off the right way. If we're gonna do this and we're gonna go forward in time, it's gonna have to pop off the correct way. And if they have a weapon and they're gonna set it up right, I was gonna have to give up what I have anyway. This is just a week or two earlier than expected. I can't fight as well with it, but I still have it. I still have the energy. I still have the power. They don't have that yet."

Megan: "Can you use the short sword?"

Tass: "No, I picked up the other weapons. They just felt the same. Well, the hammer at least."

Megan: "Do we bother going after him, then?"

Jake: "I guess that's your call, Tass. It's your thing. And I lost it. So I'll do whatever I can to get it back, if that's what you say. But if you say otherwise, fine."

Tass: "This feels so wrong and weird and just dirty, but I think we let him have it. I just — I am not tactical enough to figure out how we justify all the steps. If he needed one, if he needed anything, somehow they don't have the longsword. So how do we justify going and hunting him down and killing him and taking the spear back, and also making sure they get another weapon, and then I give up the energy, and so on and so on. It's just too much. Like we sorta just failed up in our plan. And there are people hurt, and that's what I'm worried about right now."

Jake: "We still don't know with absolute certainty that Estin still works for Nash, right?"

Tass: "I mean, yeah, OK. I guess that's true."

Jake: "What if Estin's a free agent, and he's trying to do the same thing? What if Nash does have the longsword, and Estin is also going to try and beat him to the punch to create a Chosen, and that's why he needs a different weapon? That's what the Estin in Fanarin was trying to do. He'd been slighted by Nash, and he was trying to work his own

angle under his nose? This could be the same thing. He has not named Nash. And if that's the case, then we just gave him the weapon, and we could have completely tanked the future. We may go in and have no idea what we're in for, and it's not at all what we expected."

Tass: "Well, it's worth investigating."

Megan: "Yeah. If it's that much of a possibility. You said he's done it before? And ... Was this another world you guys have been to?"

Jake: "Yeah. An Estin of another world was plotting against that world's version of Nash."

Megan: "Then yeah, I guess we can't really risk going to a future we haven't worked to shape the way we need it to be when we get there. So, yeah, let's do it."

Tass: "All right."

Jake: "OK. I'm gonna get to work here, and see if I can't figure out where he went. If you want to start checking on people and trying to do some basic management here, I'll let you know when it's time to go."

Tass: I just give a nod, and I rush into the building to look for Margaret.

Megan: "Do you need help with anything?"

Jake: "I mean, I could always use an extra set of hands."

Megan: OK. I'll help with that, so we can get this done quickly."

Rev: Yeah. And I said before, I think that anything that you would need for this can be found inside the IPT. So I imagine you can give Megan a list of things to grab from inside. Tass, inside. You have run into the front door of the IPT, and instantly the carnage is visible. The first floor is shattered. It's like a foot and a half smaller than it used to be, height wise. You get the sense, just walking inside, that it would be amazing if the wards were still up, from the beating that this place took as it fell, and the cracking and the concrete and all of those things. But you do see that there are people on this first floor

tending to one another. There's a huge group when you come in the door that have the light rifles and the pistols aimed in your direction.

Tass: "Whoa, whoa, it's me."

Rev: And it's like laser tag. Like they all just light you up, but nothing happens.

Tass: "No, it's OK. It's OK. Estin's gone. The ghouls have retreated."

Rev: And they all let out kind of a collective sigh and lower these guns. And it is a lot of people who normally would not be out in the field. And so there is a deep sense of relief as they get to set these guns down.

Tass: "Where's Margaret?"

Rev: Someone indicates up to Margaret's office was the last place that they saw Margaret and Anastacia.

Tass: I'm gonna rush up there.

Rev: OK. You run over to the stairs and take them up because the elevator's not working.

Tass: I imagine.

Rev: Do you try the elevator first?

Tass: [Laughs] I don't.

Rev: Like, why is this not ...

Tass: Just pressing the button. Like, it's crumpled, but it's fine.

Rev: He's pressing the button. Like, "Come on. Come on. Well, this isn't worth it, then." And then he just leaves.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: You head up to the third floor to Margaret's office. There is a decent sized section of the bridge missing that goes from the landing at the elevator to her office where you can, like, look down and see the first floor. But it's not enough that you can't jump on your own safely.

Tass: OK. Yeah. I'll just scramble over all of that and try to get to her.

Rev: Yeah. You get inside, and Anastacia and Margaret are in there, and Anastacia is currently using some stakes to splint Margaret's legs.

Tass: "Oh, hey, that doesn't look great. How are you feeling?"

Rev: MARGARET: Not great.

Tass: "Yeah, I imagine. No more pressure. Estin and the ghouls have retreated."

Rev: MARGARET: What?

Tass: "Yeah, it's not great." Oh boy ... I think I ... I think I turn specifically to Anastacia on this one. "He got the spear."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Excuse me?

Tass: "We're gonna get it back. We have Jake and Megan working on a spell to track exactly where he's gone, and we're gonna go and we're gonna get it back right now."

Rev: She stands up and she pulls the shotgun from her back.

Rev: ANASTACIA: I'm going with you.

Rev: Margaret holds her hand up.

Rev: MARGARET: No, you're not.

Rev: ANASTACIA: What do you mean, no I'm not?

Rev: MARGARET: I'm no good here. This is going to be a long road to recovery, Anastacia. The way that this place is right now, they need someone strong sitting behind this desk, and it's not going to be me. I'm barely keeping conscious right now.

Rev: And Anastacia stands there for a moment and she looks down at Margaret, and she looks back to you and down to Margaret again. And she turns back to you.

Rev: ANASTACIA: Get it back. It's the last piece I have. Get it back.

Tass: "I promise you, if it doesn't come back with me, it's because I am not coming back."

Rev: ANASTACIA: All right. Let's see about getting people out of here.

Tass: "Yeah." And I think I want to look over Margaret, just see what else I can do to make sure everything's stabilized as good as I can.

Rev: Yeah. She's in pretty rough shape. Both of her legs are broken. You can see that they are broken in multiple areas. It seems like one of the filing cabinets fell on her at some point during the building's descent. But Anastacia has done the best she could to get her at least stabilized, so that she can be somehow brought out of here.

Tass: So after I leave Margaret, I want to go, I think, to Everett's chopper. If it's still technically in the hangar here. If that all came down with it?

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: OK. And I want to get my gun rack backpack, since I think I'm gonna need something to work with to fight.

Rev: OK. Remind us all what is on your, uh ... What is that — the Matt Damon movie where he tries to get up to the moon, or whatever?

Tass: Good Will Hunting.

Rev: Yeah. Good Will Hunting

Megan: It's the one with the zoo, right?

Rev: We Bought a Mechanical Zoo.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: Elysium? Is that where he's got the ...

Jake: No, that's the one where he's a spy where he lost his memory.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: Yeah. Yeah, that tracks.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Dogma. So anyway, I've got ... [Laughs]

Rev: That's Jake in this.

Tass: [Laughs] You're so right. So I have on this rig a sniper rifle, a submachine gun, a shotgun, and a big knife. I kept my .38, that's still been at my hip. But all the rest is on that rig.

Rev: OK. Megan, you come in the front door and the scene is pretty much the same as when Tass came in just slightly ahead of you. There are still a lot of people down here in the lobby. They don't turn and face the guns at you. But there are a lot of folks down here, trying to help one another. You head to where Jake had indicated a lot of the supplies that you would need for this ritual would be, and you're able to collect them no problem. It's pretty dim in here, but you've got the light on your phone that you can use. So I think over the course of the next twenty minutes, Tass is able to help Anastacia get Margaret outside and prepped for the rescue workers that are trying to make their way down into the sinkhole, Megan is able to collect everything and get it to Jake, and Jake has put together his summoning circle. Jake, what does this look like, since you're having

to kind of hodgepodge this together from pieces found at IPT and outside in the hole and stuff?

Jake: I am just collecting almost forensic evidence of everything that just happened down here. Like the grit from the roof where Estin was sitting, and the blood from the ghouls and whatever viscera from like us fighting them. Like I'm getting every physical, tangible piece of them and everything that they did down here — the dirt from the tunnels that they dug. And I'm using that to try and like create as many anchors to try and tie as many threads as possible, to try and track one or all of those pieces.

Rev: All right. So you are all back together again on this roof as rescue workers are starting to lift people out on cables, Jake roll Use Magic.

Jake: Five. And I level up,

Rev: Oh, what are you taking?

Jake: I am going to take a move from The Divine playbook, Cast Out Evil. So you may banish an unnatural creature from your presence. Roll +Tough. On a 10+, it is banished. On a 7 to 9, it takes a little while for the banishing to take effect. The creature has time to make one or two actions. Either way, the banished creature is unharmed and you have no control over where it goes. This move may be used on unnatural hunters, like The Monstrous. On a miss, something is keeping it here, and that's bad.

Rev: All right. So as you try to use this Big Magic and hone in on Estin, the magic fills this makeshift circle that you have put together, and it's not strong enough to contain it. The circle starts to crack and break apart. It's made from not one solid piece, and the boundary is broken and the magic engulfs this rooftop. And there's this strange sensation, as you were all ... It almost feels like covered in amber. Like you are just frozen for a moment. And this roof, with you on top of it, vanishes from this hole. And you almost get that strange sensation that you've gotten before when you step through the portal of tumbling, falling towards something. And then that stasis is broken, and the three of you and the top of this building come crashing down onto the ground. You all take two points of damage as you hit the ground. It's dark and quiet, and as you all stir and start to rise up from the rubble of this rooftop on the ground, you see far ahead of you, large open cave

mouths and metal tracks and small carts. And Jake, you see a wooden sign lit by a small light that you recognize. The sign reads Deep Valley Mine, Catlin Township, Illinois.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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