

The Shadowed Wood (S3, E40)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Jake: I am the third at this table, I believe, to have gotten my vaccine.

Rev: I thought I could feel the magnetic waves coming off of you when you walked in the room.

Jake: Yeah. I got that J&J. I got that one-hitter.

Rev: Oh, did you?

Jake: Yeah. I didn't know if I was going to be allowed to. There was like a possible, you know, the possible recall.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: And then I got a text the same day that was like, no, we're gonna do this one. [Laughs] They're like —

Megan: No, it's probably fine. [Laughs]

Jake: Yeah, basically! The text was like, "Hey, you are going to get that one that you signed up for originally. There is this thing going on, but we're pretty sure it's fine."

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: And I was like, whatever, that's — I guess that's OK.

Rev: Why not?

Jake: Yeah. So I don't know. You know, I don't know exactly what everybody else's side effect situations have been. But I got it at like 6:00 p.m.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I went to bed at like 3:00 a.m. I was good. I was fit as a fiddle. Everything was just fine. Woke up at some point in the middle of the night, colder than I've ever been in my life. A very cold body. It was Arctic in there. Managed to fall back asleep. Woke up another time, I guess I gotten very hot because I was just — the bed was drenched. I had soaked through everything. So I'm just in cold wet. Just cold wet, was the rest of my night. I was like a human gazpacho, like just ...

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Cold wet meat in the bed, and I managed to fall back asleep —

Megan: Is there meat in gazpacho?

Jake: Yeah. Isn't like shrimp in gazpacho, or am I thinking of something different?

Megan: I don't know. Am I thinking of something different? I thought gazpacho was like ...

Jake: Cold — I thought it was a cold tomato shrimp soup.

Megan: I don't know. I —

Tass: I thought that was Pinocchio's dad.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I thought it was like vegetarian. But I don't know. I might be totally wrong.

Rev: Is it possible there are many kinds of gazpacho?

Megan: I suppose.

Jake: There possibly could be. I'm gonna level with you: a cold soup draws no appeal for me. So I've never really investigated the nature of gazpacho.

Rev: Have you tried like the cold fruit ones?

Jake: That doesn't sound like a soup. What are you talking about?

Megan: That's a smoothie, Rev.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Cold fruit soup? It's delightful. They serve it to me on the cruise.

Rev: It's like a bisque, and it's got like a sour cream base. It's very good.

Tass: That does sound good.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: But now, like, I'm mostly OK. My arm hurts very badly. Actually, my whole body hurts pretty bad. And I'm just kind of waiting for the other shoe to drop, here. So I do feel warm. It's weird. I felt warm, like I was like, oh, it's kind of cold out today. I'll put on shorts, because I know it's going to be hot upstairs.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: And I'm hot. And then by the time I got here, I was very cold again. And I was like, oh fuck, I miscalculated. And now I'm very hot again. So ...

Tass: Megan has been laughing this whole time.

Jake: At the smoothie thing.

Tass: The whole time!

Megan: [Laughs] I'm still — I'm so caught up on cold fruit soup!

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: I can't breathe. Oh, fuck.

Jake: I've got nothing to bring us back from that. I don't think it gets any better than that.

Megan: I'm sorry, I was trying so hard not to distract. I didn't hear a word you said —

All: [Laugh]

Rev: All right, Megan. Bring us back from this. [Laughs]

Jake: I think —

Rev: This is all you.

Jake: I think it's your obligation to get us into the episode.

Megan: [Laughs] Just do the thing. I can't breathe.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: Megan, you climbed out into another carved room, and you see Jake is there and he is helping people out of shackles.

Megan: I run over to help.

Jake: "I don't know where Tass is, but I think we need to find that out before we put them in the water and try to get them out of here."

Megan: "What do you mean you don't know where Tass is? Did he not make it all the way through?"

Jake: "No." And I gesture to the room we're in.

Megan: "Fuck! Yeah, OK. Let's get him!"

Jake: If Tass is visibly floating, unconscious, I think I've gotta prioritize getting him out fast.

Megan: Is this something I could assist with, in the sense of like what I was thinking is if he can get a hold of Tass, I can use like telekinesis to pull the rope?

Rev: All right. So as you sense Jake grabbing hold of this rope, you start using your telekinesis to pull the rope back. And it's only a matter of moments before you have drug Jake and Tass into this room.

Jake: Well, I guess I'll just rappel down and chop a hole in the floor, I guess, until I can get access to these.

Rev: OK. As you cut through these boards and are able to get down into the chests, the wood planks give way. And when they fall, you hear these two loud click sounds come from the wall. And you can see now that you fall into the room with a chest, that two of the pieces of wood have chains that go off of them and connect into the wall. Megan and Tass, looking down. You see Jake look up as this click sound happens. And then your view of him is obscured as from the two holes in the side of this pit, the ocean starts flooding in.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Jake, you are standing at the bottom of this pit, you hear two clicks, and then hundreds of gallons of water start to pour down towards you out of these two openings at the top of the pit. What are you doing?

Jake: I put on the ring.

Rev: [Laughs] Yes!

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah. So you slip this ring on as the water hits you, and it just bumps you to the top of the water and you ride it all the way to the top.

Jake: "I think this was a trap."

Rev: And as you ride this up, you get to the top where those holes are. The water is rushing in, and it stops.

Megan: "That was pretty rad, not gonna lie."

Tass: "How did you just ... How are you OK?"

Megan: "Oh, he found a ring when he was supposed to be saving you."

Jake: "I thought the ring would save you. I thought that maybe it was gonna be like a water breathing ring, and I'd be able to get to you and put it on and then you'd be OK. I was wrong."

Tass: "It's cool, man. It's cool."

Jake: "Do you want to try the ring, though? It feels pretty weird."

Tass: "I'm all right."

Megan: "Can I — can I try it?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Megan: Yeah, I wanna try it.

Rev: Yeah, you switch it over and yeah, it's just like walking on top of solid land.

Megan: "Oh this is weird."

Jake: "Yeah."

Megan: Can I — I take it off.

Rev: You fall in the water.

Megan: [Laughs] Yeah.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: The ring slips out of your hand, sinks to the bottom.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: "How are we gonna get these out of here, now?"

Jake: "I mean I think I could just do a dive and grab onto a chest and put the ring back on and probably just kind of elevator these up and down. Or can you just move them with your mind?"

Megan: "Yeah, I mean, I could probably — I could probably pull some of them up. I wonder if it would — I wonder if you could pull one of these up just with, you know, the force of the ring. Or if the weight of the metal would be enough to resist it?"

Jake: "I don't know. That is curious, but I'd like to do it the easiest way possible first. So if you could just do with your head?"

Megan: "Fine. Fine."

Tass: "Yeah. How fast would you go if you put that ring on? Because that's like three hundred feet."

Jake: "I mean, it slammed me pretty good into the top of the chamber, so pretty fucking fast."

Tass: "Yeah. Maybe ... Maybe don't do the grab it and put the ring on thing, so you don't explode or whatever?"

Jake: "OK."

Rev: Yeah. I don't think there's a roll for this. There's no imminent danger going on. So you are able to bring these three chests out of the pit and set them into this room. Jake, while this is going on, why don't you roll Discern Realities for the ring, now that you've taken a moment to look at it, not underwater?

Jake: OK. Eight.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Jake: What here is not what it appears to be?

Rev: So the thing here that is not what it appears to be is that it seems like it's just a ring of water walking, but it actually allows the wearer to walk over any liquid as if it were firm ground. Mud, oil, sand, quicksand, snow, running water, ice, even lava. It doesn't protect you from the effects of the heat, for example, but you can traverse over it as if you were walking.

Jake: Nice. OK.

Rev: All right. And so I think by this time, Megan, you have gotten these chests up and everyone starts to open them. Inside one of them is gold. Two thousand coins. Inside of one of the others is a golden shark idol, a scroll case, a large azure gem, another ring, and then in the third chest are four healing potions.

Megan: Can I look at this ring?

Rev: Sure. Roll Discern Realities.

Megan: Nine.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Megan: What here is not what it appears to be?

Rev: This is the Ring of Triton. When worn, it allows the character to gain the aquatic tag, by transforming them into a merman or mermaid when immersed in water,

Tass: Megan's whole body just literally turned colors.

Megan: [Laughs] I don't even waste a second. I put it on and I jump in the water.

Rev: Yeah, so the two of you see Megan slide this ring on and she jumps into the water pit. And as soon as her hands hit the water, you see that the back end of her turns into a giant fish tail.

Jake: "What the fuck?"

Megan: "I'm a mermaid!" [Laughs] "Finally! Finally. I'm not leaving, sorry."

Tass: "Boy, that would have been handy. Um ..."

All: [Laugh]

Jake: "That's more what I was hoping the ring I found was gonna be, so ..."

Tass: "Wow, that is just ... Look at you. That's so cool."

Jake: "What does it feel like, to not have legs?"

Megan: "I feel like I'll trip a lot less. I move real, real good in the water. I mean it's weird, but it feels ... It feels right, Jake."

Jake: "The implications of this are horrifying."

All: [Laugh]

Megan: "Hold on. I want to do that ..." And I'll like scoot myself up to the edge and I'll do the, like, tail flip thing.

Rev: As soon as you scoop yourself up to the edge, you are not a merperson anymore.

Megan: [Gasps] "I'm still wearing the ring, but it only happens when I'm in the water."

Jake: "Oh, that's nice."

Megan: "I'm just gonna wear this all the time."

Jake: "Yeah, that's a lot more handy."

Megan: "What does it look like?"

Rev: It is a ring that looks like it is covered in hundreds of tiny scales that reflect the light differently. So they kind of have like a rainbow effect.

Tass: Megan is literally squirming.

Megan: [Laughs] I'm so excited, and then I keep remembering that it's not real.

Tass: Yes, it is.

Jake: Can I just broadly look over the rest of the loot here?

Rev: Yeah. And I — you know, I had you all roll Discern Realities, but there's no danger here. I think you can just take the time to figure out what these all are.

Tass: Yeah. Like what's this azure gem?

Rev: So the azure gem is the Mermaid's Eye. It is a large gem that allows the bearer to summon and control the sea serpent.

Tass: Whoa! OK.

Jake: And what's in the scroll case?

Rev: Inside the scroll case is an arcane map. It is a blank map. But after you spend a few minutes concentrating on it, the map will show a route to your greatest desire.

Jake: Fuck yeah, dude. It's like Trust Your Gut, the item.

Rev: And the important thing to note is that after three uses, it crumbles.

Jake: Fuck no, dude.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Hate that part of it. Take it back.

Rev: I wish I could. But I simply ... I have no control, here.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: What's the deal with the shark idol?

Rev: The idol is just a solid gold statue that is also worth two thousand gold coins.

Jake: And did I determine anything about the shark dagger? Did I even look at it, like to see if there's anything fancy about it?

Rev: There isn't anything fancy about it.

Jake: All right. Other than it —

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Being sharky.

Rev: Yeah, other than it's a cool-ass dagger.

Jake: "Well, I think we could keep these magic things. I think these would all come in pretty handy here. And if not here, somewhere else. I really don't feel like we need the money that much. Do you guys?"

Megan: "No. I think we could hold on to some of it in case we need it, but I don't want to carry all of this around."

Tass: "Yeah, good call."

Jake: Yeah, I'll look at the rest of the people who were gonna be sacrificed. Just, "3500 gold seems square to you guys?"

Rev: BEVERLY: Yeah.

Jake: All right. So we can keep five hundred of the coin, and then give them the rest of the coin and the big shark statue and then we can hold onto the rest of it.

Tass: Yeah. Works for me.

Megan: OK, well I'm gonna get the doorknob and start setting up through the side door to get to the tavern.

Rev: OK. Yeah, so you all head back to the room that has the door in it. You put the doorknob in place and you open it up, and it leads in to the Inn that Wanders.

Megan: "Smells so good in here. Well I'm hungry and I'm not feeling great, so I think we should probably heal up."

Jake: "I mean, if it knocks me out again, who knows how long I'm gonna be out. I'm not good right now. So if it hurts me on the way out again, I'm gonna be fucked."

Tass: "Yeah, we can't do this and if somebody goes under, we can't carry them out a door. That could kill us."

Jake: "So are we cool with spending the however long, or the other members of the party moving on and clearing some ground without them or something? Because pulling us out's not gonna be an option."

Megan: "Yeah, I guess we don't have a whole lot of an option."

Jake: "All right. Well, we should probably eat one at a time, just in case."

Megan: "I was thinking that, yeah."

Jake: "Who's hurt the worst?" I like slightly raise my hand. "I'm not good, but I don't know who is worse than me."

Megan: "I don't feel great. I could probably be OK to push on, but I would ... I'm very hungry."

Jake: OK, let's give Megan a snack.

Rev: All right. Megan, roll Wisdom.

Megan: Seven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1, and your options are you recover is if you have rested for three days, you eat and drink your fill and collect four rations, you experience a vision, you do not collapse into mystical sleep.

Megan: So if we end up with the like, magic sleep thing, do we get to heal?

Rev: Yeah, I think so.

Megan: OK, cool. Then I'm taking the vision.

Rev: OK, so the two of you see Megan finish her snack, and she passes out on the bar.

Jake: "Well what do we do now, then? Do we also risk eating and falling asleep, or does one or more of us go scout ahead?"

Tass: "I don't like the scouting ahead. I don't like the idea of splitting up."

Jake: "I mean, we could always just, like, you know, whoever went ahead, like we've got the doorknob. We could always find a new door and come back to the inn if we had to. Go like do some recon and then hide away here still."

Tass: "I think if she's gonna be asleep, I would rather just give it a try and see what happens."

Jake: "OK. Well, you go first." [Laughs]

Tass: "OK."

Rev: All right. Tass, roll Wisdom.

Jake: [Laughs]

Megan: Oh boy!

Tass: Four.

Rev: All right. So Jake, you see Tass finish his snack, and he also passes out on the bar.

Jake: Fantastic. Um ... Oh, I'm really tempted to act out here. I'm really tempted to just pop a health potion and go see what I can find anyway.

Rev: TROG: Oh, uh ... Huh. Well, what can I get for you?

Jake: "No, I think I'll pass. Um ..."

Rev: TROG: Oh, yeah? You look pretty rough. You want, uh ... You want some healing potions, or something? We sell a couple.

Jake: "Why didn't you mention that sooner, Trog?" [Laughs]

Rev: TROG: I don't know. It didn't come up. Did you have money before?

Jake: "I mean I do now. I'm kind of insulted that you wouldn't like take it on faith, with all the things we've been through. But ..."

Rev: TROG: Listen, I'm just trying to run a business, here.

Jake: "I — That's — OK. Yeah. You know, I know. Support your friends."

Rev: TROG: Yeah, exactly.

Jake: "How much?"

Rev: TROG: Fifty coin.

Jake: "How many do you have?"

Rev: TROG: Uh, let me see here ...

Rev: And he rummages around behind the bar.

Rev: TROG: Uh got three. One ... Eh, it's probably still fine. A little dingy.

Jake: [Laughs] Oh no. Uh ... Do I know if healing potions, like, expire or go bad?

Rev: You wouldn't think so.

Jake: OK. "Man, I'll take them all."

Rev: TROG: Oh, yeah. All right.

Rev: And he slides them up on the bar and slides them over to you.

Jake: Slide him a hundred and fifty coin.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Well, I'll pop one of them right now.

Rev: All right. Yeah, so that heals you for ten points.

Jake: And that is exactly back to my max. "Man, I think I'm going to go scout ahead. Can we like put them to bed somewhere first?"

Rev: TROG: Yeah.

Jake: "OK."

Rev: TROG: Yeah, no problem.

Rev: And he picks them up one by one and takes them off to rooms.

Jake: OK. Yeah I will help, because I'm also going to collect the magic items [Laughs] that I might need to survive.

Megan: [Laughs]

Jake: Off of their sleeping bodies.

Megan: I'm just gonna go loot my friend's sleeping bodies.

Rev: So what are you taking?

Jake: I mean, I'm definitely taking the Ring of Triton, because I have some more ocean to navigate here to get to the other side.

Megan: I'm sleeping. My hand is in a death grip. [Laughs]

Jake: [Laughs] She put it in like a hand chastity belt before she went to sleep.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Uh, Tass what ... Do you have anything good, other than your gun? I can't make ammo for your gun, so I'm not going to take that.

Tass: I have some throwing daggers you could steal, and one bandage.

Jake: Nah, I don't think I need any of that.

Tass: What am I a joke to you?

Jake: [Laughs] Yeah.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Yeah, I think I'll just take the Ring of Triton then, and I'll leave the Mermaid's Eye, because we're not gonna encounter the sea serpent I don't think, and I'm not gonna need to barter with it. I will take the map, and I will take ... I'll take two of the healing potions with me.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Just in case something does happen, I don't want there to be none left. So I'll take the other two that I just bought, and I'll leave the four we looted.

Rev: OK.

Jake: So I guess I'll go back through the door into Sharkton. Sharkville.

Rev: Yeah, so you open the door and it leads you back into the same chamber that you left out of. You grab the silver doorknob and the door closes behind you.

Jake: I'll get back out of this cave, and I will throw on the ring of Triton and start swimming for the other side. To try and breach through into the ... Shadow world?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: All right.

Rev: Yeah. You are able to jump into the water and using this ring, you are able to easily navigate out of the cave, down the beach, and then back into the water and swim towards the other side where that blue barrier is. As you pass through the blue barrier, you feel again that strange falling, shifting feeling in your mind, and you stumble out onto solid ground. There is darkness floating all about you in tendrils. The sky is red and black,

and purple lightning occasionally strikes and streaks across it. Trees seem to be made of ash, and like the ash crumbling off of them just drifts up into the sky.

Jake: I mean, I want to kind of scrutinize my surroundings, here. I want to take a little bit of a closer look around and see if I can glean anything useful from here.

Rev: All right. Roll Discern Realities.

Jake: Five. But I still get, what here is magical?

Rev: So as you look around, you get a sense that this darkness, this fog moving around is a little magical, that it could try to confuse you, make you lost. But I think even more than that, off in the distance, standing about 30 feet high, you see these two large heads, reptilian skin, and no sockets for eyes. The mouth almost opens like the Predator as it breathes, separating in the middle and on the sides. And a long lizard-like tongue droops out and whips in the air, collecting scents. Like they're trying to find something.

Jake: Is there ... So is there like a path ahead of me or anything? Or is this just kind of wilderness, and I see those things in the distance?

Rev: It's hard to say what the surroundings are. It almost seems to shift and change. Like at one point it looks like, you know, you see trees and they're turning to ash and you turn away, and it just becomes that fog again. So there is not a clear path. And through this darkness, you're having a hard time seeing the blue glow in the distance of the other side of this barrier.

Jake: Do I know what these things are? These eyeless, tongued creatures?

Rev: Roll Spout Lore.

Jake: Twelve.

Rev: This is a Demogorgon. And the thing that you know about it is that the two heads have distinct personalities, and one of their main drives is to destroy the other one so they can have total control.

Jake: So it's one creature, two heads.

Rev: Mmhmm.

Jake: Clear eyes.

Rev: Can't lose.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: I think this is good enough, then. I think I'm gonna go back through.

Rev: OK. So you turn around and walk back through, and you fall for five, six feet again and splash down into water and turn into a merman.

Jake: Yeah. I'll go back into the cave, find the door and head back to the inn.

Rev: OK.

Rev: TROG: Oh, back already?

Jake: "Yeah. I mean, I learned something. I learned a couple of things, and that's better than nothing. But I don't think .. I don't think I'm in a position to pursue that alone. I don't suppose you know anything about Demogorgons, do you?"

Rev: TROG: No.

Jake: "I'm gonna head home I think, and do a little bit of research while they sleep. So I'll be back. I mean, for me it'll be a couple hours. But for you, I'll be back in a couple of days."

Rev: TROG: All right.

Rev: And as you step away from the bar, Landara actually comes out of one of the small rooms and walks towards you. And she is dressed with like a jetpack and leathers, and she's got a large energy rifle.

Jake: "Hey. Nice kit."

Rev: LANDARA: Oh, shit. Is that you?

Jake: "Yeah. Yeah, long time no see. How you been?"

Rev: LANDARA: Not too bad. Stuck here for a while, got kind of antsy, and someone needed some help, so I decided to go through the door."

Jake: "Yeah? Where'd you get all this fancy stuff?"

Rev: LANDARA: Yeah, this is the folks that needed help. Some kind of ancient evil insect cult that was living under the crust of their planet or something?

Jake: "Sure, yeah. The usual."

Rev: LANDARA: I'll be honest, it was a new place to see and something new to kill.

Jake: "Well yeah, it looks like you got some neat goodies out of it. I'm very jealous."

Rev: LANDARA: Yeah. Say, Trog mentioned to me that TJ wasn't here with you. He was kind of afraid to ask what happened. What happened?

Jake: "He died. He died in a very permanent and heroic way, saving our world from kind of the god of Death?"

Rev: LANDARA: Hmm. So it was a good death.

Jake: "As far as deaths go, yeah."

Rev: LANDARA: At the end of the day, that's all any of us can ask for.

Jake: "Sort of macabre, but I guess you're right."

Rev: LANDARA: I guess I'd take it. If I could die saving my friends? Better than going in my sleep.

Jake: "Yeah, I agree."

Rev: LANDARA: You headed out?

Jake: "Yeah. I gotta head back to home base, do some research."

Rev: And she walks ahead of you a little bit and gets to the door and gestures to it.

Rev: LANDARA: After you.

Jake: "Thanks. It's good to see you. I hope I'll see you around here again soon."

Rev: LANDARA: Yeah, you too. You look good in that body.

Jake: "Thanks."

All: [Laugh]

Jake: [Through laughter] I go through the door.

Rev: See you appear back inside of the shark's grotto. You make it through the maze, back out into the ocean, and through the barrier. And you appear back on the snowy mountainside. About one hundred yards ahead of you is the ice bridge that leads back across to the mountain top.

Jake: I want to spend one of my magic to teleport somewhere I can see, and get as far as I can back towards the entry to this world.

Rev: You go to cut the air open and step through, and you notice that your rift appears right at the edge of the chasm on this side. It seems like the magic cannot cross that chasm.

Jake: Well, I mean, I guess I'll cover ... I spent the magic, so I guess I'll cover that ground.

Rev: Yeah. And as you appear, you hear the rumbling again from deep below in the chasm and the large dragon head with the clear blue eyes rises up and peers down at you.

Rev: BABACLOOK: Oh, back again already?

Jake: "Yeah. I was gonna just pass back through real quick. I wanted to go read a book."

Rev: BABACLOOK: I cannot wait to see what you have prepared for passing this time, since you knew it was custom.

Jake: "Yeah, one thing — I had a question, a curiosity."

Rev: BABACLOOK: Hmm.

Jake: "What's like the coin value? Like, if I didn't — if I don't have a cool item, but I have just cash. What's like the, uh ... What's like the toll?"

Rev: BABACLOOK: What is cash?

Jake: "Coin. Money."

Rev: BABACLOOK: Hmm.

Jake: "Physical currency."

Rev: BABACLOOK: Hmm. I see. Well the coin that you gave me last time was unique and magical. If you're talking about standard coin, it would have to be much more.

Jake: "Like 50?"

Rev: BABACLOOK: [Grumbles]

Jake: "No insult meant. I just don't know. 100?"

Rev: BABACLOOK: This is not a bargain. This is you offering me something, and I decide if it's acceptable.

Jake: "What happens if it's not acceptable, though?"

Rev: He grins.

Jake: "I offer you 200 coin."

Rev: He lowers his hand down and you fill it full of coin and he raises it up and examines it. And he lets out a short burst of blue fire, and you can see that all the coins melt in his hand and form into a single large gold nugget.

Rev: BBACLOOK: Acceptable.

Rev: And he slowly lowers down into the chasm.

Jake: OK, I will proceed across the bridge.

Rev: Yeah. So after you pay the toll, you are able to use your magic, getting across as far as you can see. You are able to get up back towards the top, where Raylor's hut is.

Jake: Well, I will stop in for a momentary visit with him while I recharge my magic.

Rev: RAYLOR: Oh, hello. Are you back already?

Jake: "I'm passing back through. We got ... We got out of this bubble and into the next one, and then they succumbed to a magical sleep. So I dipped into the one after that to have a look around. And now I'm gonna go home, do some research for a little bit, and then head back."

Rev: RAYLOR: Oh, terrifying.

Jake: "Yeah. I don't suppose you know anything about Demogorgons?"

Rev: RAYLOR: Oh, a bit. What do you want to know?

Jake: "Any tips?" [Laughs] "Any tips or tricks on dealing with them? I know two heads, very different, want to destroy each other to assume power. Is there like a ... Like a riddle of the Sphinx type situation? Just an answer? One thing you can ask him. You know, one guard always tells the truth and one guard always lies, like anything like that?"

Rev: RAYLOR: No, not that I'm aware of. I do know that they have control over the things — I believe that's the Shadowveil. They have control over these little almost demonic children ...

Jake: [Gasps]

Rev: RAYLOR: That that haunt the area. They have them under their power.

Jake: "OK, like possessed but otherwise, like, just children?"

Rev: RAYLOR: No, I think they just look like children, because that's what would mess with you most.

Jake: "Oh. Yeah. Well, that's not incorrect. OK. So — but they are like demons. They've got like demon ability things?"

Rev: RAYLOR: Yeah. I believe — Let's see here ...

Rev: And he goes over to a bookshelf and starts flipping through things.

Rev: RAYLOR: Ah, yes. They're undead shapeshifters.

Jake: "Tight. All right. Well that is good stuff, Raylor. Thank you."

Rev: RAYLOR: Yes, no problem.

Jake: "I appreciate your academic mind."

Rev: RAYLOR: Yes. I have spent not much time there because, no shit. But, you know, it was a little peek in and getting some accounts from other folks who had been there.

Jake: All right. Well, I'm gonna gather my magic again.

Rev: OK.

Jake: There's my boxcars, when I don't really need it at all. Fifteen.

Rev: Yeah. You are able to get down to where those little huts were and then back through the magical barrier, and you are spit out into the cave. The headache that you get from this is immense. You feel all of this energy being ripped out of you, being sucked out of you, and you collapse into the tunnel inside of the mining facility. It never really occurred to you while you were in this other world, but you felt so much more powerful and connected there. Something about all of that magic flowing into you. Everything here feels a little muted. The colors are a little less bright. And you feel exhausted. Not from exertion, but from no longer having access to all of that.

Jake: OK. I take a second to try and steady myself and take a few deep breaths, and then I'm gonna try to teleport back to IPT, which is still underground.

Rev: Yeah. You appear outside of the IPT. It is a bad scene down here. You can see that all the people that you had seen previously have been evacuated. But there's no light down here. There's no power. But the building is in front of you. And you can see that it has shifted a couple more feet since you were here last, like it's crumbling, just not having a sturdy support structure underneath it anymore.

Jake: I'm gonna head inside and go see what I can find as far as research on a Demogorgon goes. You know, it seems like a lot of the stuff in Fanarin and its adjacent worlds like resemble fantasy things in our world. So it's possible that our intel could actually be relevant.

Rev: Yeah. You head down into the research area, and it's difficult because it was one of the basement levels. And so it has been broken apart pretty badly. And you can actually see that a lot of the stuff here, it seems like people have been doing some removal of items and books and just whatever they could get. Roll Investigate a Mystery to try to do some research on this.

Jake: Seven.

Rev: All right, you get a hold 1.

Jake: I think probably, what can hurt it?

Rev: The thing that you're able to discover as you search around through the remaining books in the basement of the IPT is that it seems to be immune to most magics.

Jake: OK. Is there anything that can hurt it that I discover? Or is it just things that aren't magic?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: OK.

Rev: And I think the other thing that you find as you go through these books is that it does have a gaze attack that it can do that could possibly charm someone or drive them mad.

Jake: OK. Well, I think that's all I got. And everybody's evacuated from down here, yeah?

Tass: They have. But I think that after you've been down here for a while, going through the books that are left, you see the shine of a flashlight coming in your direction.

Rev: ANASTACIA: Hey, who's down here?

Jake: "It's Jake."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Oh. Where the hell did you guys go?

Jake: "We went after Estin and have been on a multi-dimensional chase trying to find him."

Rev: ANASTACIA: That sounds about right.

Jake: "So what all has happened? I can see that everybody's out of here, you're collecting stuff. But anything important that we missed or that we need to start running down?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: I mean really, the only big thing is that all the creatures we had captured here, some of them like died during the collapse. Some of them got loose, and we were able to catch them. But there's a couple that are just missing.

Jake: "Oh fuck. OK. Well, that's probably gonna be my problem anyway, so ..."

Rev: ANASTACIA: All right. Well, when you get back, we weren't sure exactly where to go. We've just set up in one of the shared workspaces across the street until we can figure out a better place to set up. Because boy, we sure got no place to operate out of.

Jake: "I mean, if you and a select few want to utilize the lair, by all means. I'd keep it a little bit hush if you can, just because, you know, we've had these issues with moles and whatnot, but ... There's not a ton of space down there, but there's enough. Or if you need to store something specific."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah, I guess I could go set up down there. Margaret's in the hospital. She's gonna be there for a while. But if we could set up in there and I guess get Jingles ... You know, the network's still up and operational. We just need a place to monitor it from.

Jake: "I mean yeah, there's plenty of tech down there. You're welcome to it."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah, all right. Can you ... I don't exactly know how to get down there.

Jake: "Do you just want me to take you? You can find your way out, I'm sure."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Uh, yeah.

Jake: OK. I'll teleport her there.

Rev: So I think you spend the next little chunk of time as you're waiting for their enchanted sleep to pass, taking Anastacia to the subterranean lair. Leading her out, showing her the way up onto the street. She goes and gets Jingles and starts to bring

some equipment down and set up. But I think by the time they have gotten enough equipment down there and set up a little space to work in that doesn't get in the way of what Rev is doing, you think you're about at the time where you could probably head back.

Jake: OK. Yeah, I will kind of sneak away somewhere. I'll let them know that I have to get back to it, and then I'll kind of sneak away somewhere where I'm unseen and use the door knob to go back to the inn.

Rev: OK. Megan and Tass, you wake up in these plush feather beds and you feel phenomenal. You're full and warm. Megan, as you stir from this sleep, you're reminded of a vision that you had in your sleep. And the dream that you had was of you as a child out in the dark, playing hide and go seek. But you weren't just staying in one place. As people would come to find you, you'd run to the next location and hide again. You constantly moved. And it was so frustrating to the person who was it because they could never find you, because you would change your hiding place. And you feel like that's important as you wake up. What are you both doing?

Tass: [Yawning] "Oh, shit."

Megan: "Five more minutes." I'm rolling over and putting the blankets back up.

Tass: "No, no, no. Megan, we did it."

Megan: "Nuh-uh."

Tass: "We fell asleep."

Megan: "No, it's not enough. It's never enough."

Tass: "It's never enough. That's the point. That's why we have to get up."

Rev: Megan, you notice your ring is gone.

Megan: "Son of a bitch!"

Tass: "What?"

Megan: "The ring! The mermaid ring!" And I'm like, I'm moving all of the blankets, everything. Pillows, checking my pockets.

Rev: Yeah. As you start to tear the bed apart, you hear Jake chuckling in the doorway, and he's just standing there.

Megan: "What?"

Jake: "How you guys feel?"

Tass: "Embarrassed."

Megan: "Sleepy. Where's my ring?"

Jake: I flick her the ring.

Megan: "You're just taking shit from me while I'm sleeping?"

Jake: "I had to borrow it."

Megan: "For what?"

Jake: "To trek this sea. I went on. I moved on to the next world to see what we were gonna be dealing with."

Megan: "Oh."

Tass: "I'm very relieved you're OK. What happened?"

Jake: "I just — I just stepped through and got a look around, and came back and did some research. It is very shadowy. Things are kind of always shifting. And there are trees that are kind of like ... Looks like ash is flowing off of them and into the sky. And there is a Demogorgon. Kind of seems like the first thing we'll have to deal with. So I was trying to figure out how to deal with it."

Megan: "Oof. OK. So what does that — what does that mean?"

Jake: "I mean, it's a big thing. It's got two heads, no eyes in the sockets, Predator mouths, whippy tongues. The two heads are very different from each other. They don't like each other. They want to destroy each other, so that they will be the only head in control. I've learned that it can control little demon shapeshifter things that look like creepy children."

Tass: "OK ..."

Jake: "I've learned that it is largely immune to magics."

Megan: "Uh-oh."

Tass: "Oh ..."

Megan: "That's not good."

Jake: "Yeah. I mean, it seems like a real motherfucker if we get on its bad side."

Megan: "Could you see the other portal?"

Jake: "No, it's all obstructed in there. I don't know how far it went, even really like what direction."

Megan: "OK. Well kind of from the view that I had? Tass, if you remember the globes from the outside, how they like got smaller and smaller?"

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah, yeah."

Megan: "The last one wasn't that far across, really. I mean, we could see it. So I would assume that this one's even closer. So maybe if our view wasn't obstructed, we could see that it was actually pretty close. So that's good at least."

Tass: "Yeah. OK."

Jake: "OK. I mean so I guess it could literally just be the Demogorgon, then. That could be the only thing we need to deal with in this place."

Tass: "OK. Well if it's immune to magic, I can do literally nothing to help."

Jake: "I mean, I can still fight it with a sword without magic attached to it. I'm just not gonna do as good of a job."

Megan: "What was the rest of the environment like? I mean, I could use telekinesis to throw things at it."

Jake: "It's just like a — I mean, it's like a shadow plane. Like it's just swirling darkness and ever shifting. It's hard to explain. Also, I'm down another two hundred coin."

Megan: "What?"

Jake: "Well, I'm down more than that. You guys weren't awake when I bought the health potions either. We have one hundred and fifty left."

Tass: "Oh, OK."

Jake: "Because Trog had some health potions. I bought them. I took one. And then I had to bribe the dragon again to get back across the bridge."

Megan: "Oh, yep."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "Yeah. Speaking of which, on the earth side, back at home base. Everybody's evacuated. They're starting to clean out IPT and I let Anastacia and Jingles set up in the lair, so ..."

Tass: "Oh, OK."

Megan: "Well, that's smart. All right." [Sighs] "Well ..."

Jake: "And I want you guys to remember that for me this was like three hours. For you — all these things I achieved, so little time. I am a force of nature. I am hugely efficient."

Megan: "It feels like it's been like five seconds to me, so."

Jake: "I will take your congratulations any time you're ready."

Megan: "You can teleport."

Jake: "Any time you're ready, I'll take your —"

Megan: "We have to walk places, Jake."

Jake: "Just whenever you're ready, I'll accept your compliments."

Tass: "I appreciate all of the things that you have done while I fucked up and fell asleep."

Jake: "Thank you."

Megan: "I will not apologize for falling asleep."

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: "All right. Well, I might try something as we make our way there. I've had this feeling about this gun the whole time. Like it's magic, right? It pulls from me? I don't know how else to say this. I think I might be able to make the gun a part of me instead. And it'll lose the magic, but it'll be real gross."

Megan: [Laughs] "Wait. I don't see the benefit."

All: [Laugh]

Megan: "You're like, 'I will lose the magic that I have to fight things, but it'll be really gross.'"

Tass: "Yeah, but I mean, but it'll be a thing that can actually hurt it. Because all I'm shooting now is literal magic."

Megan: "Gotcha."

Tass: "Yeah. So instead I think I'm gonna be shooting ... I don't know, bone or something?"

Jake: "Ugh."

Tass: "I'm not certain I can do it, but I'm gonna try. And even if it doesn't work by the time we get there, I wouldn't have been able to hurt the thing anyway, so ..."

Megan: "Hey, did you guys ever play hide and seek when you were a kid?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "So like, I don't know, I had like a ... I guess a dream? I'm thinking now it might have been like a vision, kind of like how the last time we were here. But I just remember this feeling of like something looking for me and having to hide, and like switching my hiding spot. Like, I don't know if that's a ... I guess, some sort of idea of what to do when we get to this plane? I mean, you said this thing doesn't have eyes, right?"

Jake: "I mean, no. But it's like ... It can still sense pretty well, I think, via smell and taste."

Megan: "Yeah, well, it's got like a long ... You said like a long tongue that flicks about, or whatever?"

Jake: "Yes."

Megan: "Like that's kind of like a snake thing, right? And like that's how they find prey in their environment. They get a sense of what is around them by using that as an indicator. So maybe if it's — if it's looking for us and its weird demonic children? The shapeshifters, you said?"

Jake: "Yep."

Megan: "OK, so maybe that's something we have to keep in mind as we go into this world. Find a hiding spot and then find another hiding spot, so it can't zero in on us?"

Tass: "Yeah. If you feel that instinct is right. Like was this kind of like last time, was seeing it through that sort of lens while you were asleep?"

Megan: "Yeah. But I didn't, like ... I didn't like fall asleep, fall asleep last time."

Tass: "Oh, that's true."

Megan: "It could have just been a dream. I have weird dreams. But I don't — I kind of have the feeling that it was similar."

Tass: "OK. I like it. I would rather avoid the thing anyway if we can."

Jake: "All right, well ... Yeah. I mean, I don't really know what else to describe to you. I think you'll just have to see it and we'll have to do it when we get there."

Tass: "All right. Let's go. Oh, where did you, uh ... Where did you come back here from?"

Jake: "The lair."

Tass: "OK, so one of us will need to open the door when we leave."

Megan: "Yeah."

Tass: "All right."

Megan: I go stay by the Trog first.

Rev: TROG: You heading out again?

Megan: "Yes. Thank you for the food and for the very comfortable bed. It was very nice. It's a very nice establishment you've got going here."

Rev: TROG: Thank you.

Megan: "Just wanna let you know that."

Rev: TROG: I hope to see you all, uh ... I hope I'll see you all again soon.

Jake: "Oh yeah, man. Now that we got the doorknob? Absolutely."

Rev: TROG: Yeah, all right. Be careful.

Megan: "Bye!"

Rev: TROG: Goodbye.

Tass: "Um, let me work on this for a minute. I'm gonna see if I can make this thing work for sure before we head out. Because if so, I think any advantage we can get, right?"

Megan: "Sure."

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: And yeah, I try to start focusing down to absorb this thing into my arm.

Rev: All right. So yeah, it says on your playbook that given enough time, that you can change the type of gun that you have. I don't think it'll take very long here, because you're not trying to do anything else. You're not traversing, you're just hanging out for a moment. So it'll take maybe 20 minutes. So tell us what happens when you absorb this magical, arcane gun and turn it into a different type of gun?

Tass: I think it's this flow of that magic energy that it's already made of starts kind of conducting back and forth between the gun in my hand and my body, and just my literal flesh touching it. And this flow picks up and starts creating more of me? It's like it's not pulling off of my body exactly, but it's just making actual skin and bone grow up around the gun, and like replacing some of the parts with it. Like it ends up looking kind of half mechanical and half skin and bone. And when I hold it, it really connects. Like the flesh and everything becomes one solid piece. But then it is still a gun that I can holster and

put away. Mechanically, the difference here is that I switch what I use to manufacture. And I can hurt myself to add ammo to it whenever I want.

Rev: OK.

Tass: So I think when I actually pick it up and I'm ready to fire, it's like I'm really actually fueling it with more of me.

Rev: And how does your damage change?

Tass: I just — I no longer have the advantage over creatures that are susceptible to magic. It doesn't have the magic specific tag, but all of the actual gun tags stay the same.

Rev: All right. So yeah, the two of you see this transformation take place over the course of twenty minutes, where Tass makes a flesh gun.

Jake: "What the fuck?"

Tass: "I don't know, man."

Megan: "I hate this. I hate this. I hate this."

Tass: "Do we want to have the — look, I'm not taking shit for this. We need — it needed to happen."

Jake: [Groans] "I hate looking at it."

Tass: I lift it up like I'm gonna wipe it across his face.

Jake: Oh my god.

Megan: So gross.

Jake: I fucking — I just thrust kick him backwards.

Megan: I fucking leave the room.

Jake: Yeah.

Megan: This is a lot.

Rev: I just — I know it's sweaty for some reason.

Megan: Ah! No!

Tass: Well yeah, it's me. It's... It's sweaty. And hairy.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: And balding? How has it done all of this? It shoots kidney stones ...

Rev: [Laughs] There it is.

Jake: There we go.

Rev: There it is.

Jake: You brought me back around.

Rev: All right. I'm back on board.

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah. So you head over and you open the door, and it leads you back into the Grotto of the Shark God. And did you give any instructions to the five people that you brought here?

Tass: Oh, yeah. I think we probably just let them know that once we've done what we need to do, that we'll pop back in and let them know that their world has reconnected. I'm sure after a little bit of that time, we kind of explained the basic situation and that we'll let them know.

Rev: OK. Describe to me, between the two rings and the three people, how are you all traversing the ocean?

Megan: Oh, I'm swimming. I'm mermaid swimming.

Rev: Yeah, fair.

Jake: I think maybe I'm giving Tass a piggyback ride.

Rev: I was gonna say, is this Jake, walking on water, giving Tass the bodyguard carry? Just ...

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Yeah, probably. I'm probably carrying him.

Megan: Ok, I'm splashing them, for sure.

Rev: [Laughs] I would say that it like throws them off balance, but even if Jake falls, he just falls onto solid ground. So the three of you head towards the barrier and pass through, and you all see what Jake saw previously: this dark, shadowy landscape with a black and red sky, purple lightning randomly streaking across it. As you look around, there are parts of trees and buildings, but they're not necessarily in focus. And ash seems to drift off of them, towards the sky. And off in the distance, you can see the two heads, with its Predator-like jaws opening, licking the air.

Tass: "Whoa ..."

Megan: [Gasps] "Oh, my god. That's so much scarier than I thought it was gonna be, from what you said. OK. Oh, boy."

Tass: "All right. So what do we think? We want to go with your hide and seek tactics?"

Megan: "I think being out in the open is probably not a good idea, yeah."

Rev: OK. So what I'm gonna ask you all is, describe to me how you try to navigate the veil of shadows? How you describe it will determine the stat that you use, and it'll be individual for each of you.

Jake: I think I'm watching the behavior of the Demogorgon, trying to figure out — like security camera scans. Like when's it look this way, when's it look that way? What's its tongue do when it blinks? Like all that. And trying to figure out, OK, when are my best openings to go from this thing to this thing? OK, now when's my next best opening to go from this thing to this thing? To try and stay out of its awareness.

Rev: All right. I think that's Intelligence.

Tass: I think I'm going quick and quiet. I'm trying to stay low, use cover, and just dart as quickly through open spaces as I can.

Rev: All right. I think that's Dexterity.

Megan: Yeah. I think I'm looking for things to hide behind. I'm looking specifically for things that I know that I can make myself kind of small that would maybe give me a good range of cover, and then I can move to something else quickly. But I'm trying to look far enough ahead to plan out a couple of different things to jump through quickly.

Rev: OK. I think that's Intelligence, too.

Megan: OK.

Rev: All right. So everybody roll the stat that you picked.

Jake: Twelve.

Megan: Seven.

Tass: Nine.

Rev: All right. Jake, you get a hold 2 for your twelve. Megan and Tass, you both get a hold 1, but you're gonna encounter something as you go. So the thing that I will let you

know about this move is that you can spend 1 hold to find a location in the Shadowveil, and you can describe what it is. Or you can spend 3 hold at any time to find the exit to this dimension. And your hold can be pooled as a group. So you have a collective 4 hold right now.

Jake: So we only need three collectively, to find the exit?

Rev: That's correct.

Megan: Yeah. Then I think we would definitely do that.

Jake: Boy. Narratively, I can't think of a reason why I wouldn't just get out.

Rev: OK.

Jake: You have my curiosity, but character motive, I think, outweighs it.

Megan: Especially since we just spent like a bunch of time sleeping.

Rev: So as the three of you start making your way across the Shadowveil, you do see the dull blue glow that lets you know the exit is close by. And as you start to sneak towards it, you hear the sound of two children humming. And directly in front of you on this street, out of the shadows appear these two children very slowly spinning a jump rope, humming to one another. They turn and they look at you and they smile, and you can see that half of their faces are melted down, dripping onto the road.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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