

A Week Before the Future (S3, E44)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Hey, everybody. Rev here. I would like to ask you all to stay tuned after the episode for a few announcements, including the winners of our cosplay contest. It's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: The place that we're gonna go is the Eastern State Penitentiary. There's an item there that I've heard is almost like a holy relic.

Jake: "So it looks like they do daytime tours and nighttime tours. So I say we hop in on a daytime tour so we can walk around, look at the place, figure out a plan, and also I can cover some ground to get us back to."

Rev: So the tour guide, who is like a scrawny redheaded 19 year old kid, got a backpack full of earbuds that he's handing out. He indicates up to these two large black gargoyles.

Rev: RORY: These are Frank and Carson. They were placed here a long time after the prison closed. It is believed that they were here to keep all of the ghost prisoners of some of the most deadly people that were kept in this prison, who died in the prison or were executed here, to keep those ghosts in check.

Tass: "All right. Here I go. I'll hit you on mic when I am close to the chapel."

Jake: "OK."

Tass: I'm gonna try to climb this fence.

Rev: So Tass, you leap over the fence and start making your way towards the chapel. As you come around the corner to Cell Block Five, the door in this cell block bursts open and an invisible force knocks you to the ground. And as you hit, you hear this loud screech coming from high above you. And then there is this flash of light. And in this

burst, you can see the silhouette of a winged creature holding a humanoid figure by the neck, and throwing it back inside the open cell block door.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: So Tass, you have just snuck around the corner of Cell Block Five. And as you did, one of the exits of the cell block was knocked open, and some invisible force knocked you to the side. And then there was a brief flash of light as you heard this scream from the air. And in the flash of light, you saw the silhouette of a gargoyle grabbing a humanoid figure by the neck and throwing it back in that open door. What are you doing?

Tass: I'm sort of mouthing, "That was so metal." And I'm staying down on the ground and just crawl-creeping past this area to try to stay on my course.

Rev: Yeah. So with your mixed success, you are able to get to the chapel, but you have seen activity going on on the grounds already.

Tass: OK. So yeah, I'm just literally crawling around to like the far side of the chapel from where those doors are, that ... You know, I don't know. I'm thinking if they're gonna still be patrolling, if I can stay low and get on that side, at least for the moment, maybe they won't spot me even if they're circling around. I'm hoping that their attention is on the door and things trying to get in and out of that. And then I will try to sort of think to Megan. [Telepathically] "Be advised, the gargoyles are out. They are invisible. I sort of saw flashes of them. But it attacked a spirit that was trying to get out. So they are ... They're loose. Uh, before you come, open the chat room?"

Megan: [Telepathically] "Oh, yup!" And I link Jake in.

Tass: [Telepathically] "They're loose. The gargoyles are out. I saw them manhandle one of the spirits trying to get out of Five, and they're sort of patrolling. So be advised."

Jake: [Telepathically] "OK."

Megan: [Telepathically] "Sounds good."

Jake: I will try to take us to Tass. \

Rev: All right. Roll Angel Wings.

Jake: Six.

Rev: So there is a burst of magic as you vanish from this location and appear next to Tass. As you appear, you hear what Tass heard: something screeching, diving from the air in your direction. And you take three points of damage, not armor-defeating, as this heavy weight pounces onto your chest and knocks you to the ground.

Jake: Are both of us here, though?

Rev: Yes.

Jake: Well, that's good.

Rev: So Tass and Megan, you see Jake knocked to the ground by an invisible force. But in the wind, you can hear wings flapping and something snarling.

Tass: I mean first thing is snapping my Sight open, to see if that makes it visible?

Rev: It does.

Tass: OK. I'm assuming I'm seeing the gargoyle.

Rev: Yeah. And there's a strange moment — when that vision powers on, it turns and looks at you, as if it can sense that you're seeing it.

Tass: "Oh, god."

Rev: It's like that moment in Justice League with Superman and the Flash.

Tass: Oh, Jesus. Yep. I guess I'm gonna try to knock this thing off of Jake.

Rev: How?

Tass: Just full turn, spin, and swing like the haft of the spear into its midsection.

Rev: I think as you start to do this, you can see that Jake is starting to be lifted up off of the ground. Roll Protect Someone.

Tass: OK. Against all odds, ten.

Rev: All right. What's your extra effect?

Tass: I think I want to hold the enemy back.

Rev: Yeah, you swipe the butt-end of the spear at the gargoyle, and it drops Jake and moves backwards and flies up a little bit, trying to figure out how to get around your reach. But for the moment, it is held kind of in a stalemate with you. Megan?

Megan: Having that conversation we had earlier about not really wanting to fight these things if we don't have to, I'm gonna try to Tune In.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Megan: Ten.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 3.

Megan: Where is the creature right now?

Rev: Yeah, I think opening up your mind to it, you know, you can't physically see it right now, but you do instinctively know where it is because of how loud you're picking up its thoughts. And so I think you can — you know, we've done this before. You've used people's thoughts kind of as a homing device. And so I think you can do that with this invisible creature. So you get a sense of where it is, in front of Tass in the air.

Megan: What is it planning to do right now?

Rev: It needs to get Jake back inside, because it believes that he came out. There was a flash of magic, and magic only happens when inmates break out of the cell block.

Megan: Who does it regard as its biggest threat?

Rev: As of this moment? It doesn't. And I don't think that that is a dig at what anyone has done. You're not sure that this thing perceives threat versus job. Like there is not threat, there is just the job.

Megan: Yeah. Then I just yell out to everyone. "It responds to magic. It saw Jake use magic, and so it thinks that he needs to get back inside. It is not — it doesn't want to fight us. It doesn't think to fight anyone. It just is doing its job."

Tass: "Oh shit. OK. Maybe Jake just run inside. And then once it has calmed down, teleport back to us."

Jake: "Isn't inside full of the ghosts of a lot of homicidal inmates?"

Tass: "I don't know what else to do to get this thing off. Or I —"

Jake: "Can we go in the chapel?"

Tass: "Yeah. We could try."

Megan: "Yeah. I mean, let's try it. I don't know if that counts as being like inside, or if it's gonna try to fight to get you back. But it's better than nothing. Let's go!"

Jake: I'm gonna — Yeah, I'm gonna run to the doors of the chapel and try to get inside.

Rev: All right. Um, roll Act Under Pressure.

Megan: Can I try and Jinx, to help him out?

Rev: Sure. Roll Jinx.

Megan: That's a nine.

Rev: All right, you get a hold 1. OK, so Megan, what are you doing to help Jake out?

Megan: Yeah. If this thing is distracted by magic, I think I'm just kind of bringing up some of that energy that I use, and the kind of pink-purple energy that swirls around me, to try and distract it. Draw its attention with magic in a different way.

Rev: All right. So Jake, you get a +1. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: Grand total of a nine.

Tass: Ooh, can I try to help out?

Rev: Sure.

Tass: I think if this thing is trying to take its opportunity, even distracted by Megan, you know, if it's still focusing on Jake at all, I'm still using the butt of the spear to just try to knock it off course. Like just hit it in the shoulder, hit it in the wing. Whatever I can.

Rev: All right. Roll Help Out.

Tass: Eleven.

Rev: All right. So Jake, that gets you up to a ten. So the three of you are able to get inside of the chapel and close the door behind you. As you close the door, you do feel the door starting to shake as something pounds against it.

Jake: Is this a situation where I could, like, take something and slide it through the door handles or whatever to block it?

Rev: Sure.

Jake: I'll grab like a candelabra or something from the chapel, and ...

Rev: Yeah, no problem.

Jake: Perfect.

Megan: "Oh, yep. Definitely looks like it's still knows you're in here. Let's try to find what we need. Hopefully it's here."

Tass: "Yeah, let's go."

Rev: So you all run inside of the chapel and begin to look around. From outside, you hear that screech of the gargoyle again, and you hear it answered. And when you hear it answered, you hear something thud onto the roof, and there's heavy footsteps on the roof. What are you all doing?

Tass: I mean, I'm just looking around to see if anything sticks out as an important item, or even a clue to what that item might be. If it's something in the chapel at all. I think I'm also shouting to Jake, "Can you do your chain off the doors thing, or whatever? So that stuff can't get in?"

Jake: Yeah. I want to start kind of moving around, following along the walls, and starting to do an incantation here in this building.

Rev: All right. Jake, roll Use Magic.

Jake: Five.

Rev: So Jake, as you move over to one of the windows and start placing salt there, the glass shatters, and you are grabbed and pulled outside. Megan and Tass, like a horror movie, the window shatters and Jake is pulled out. What are you both doing?

Megan: "Holy shit!" I look at Tass. "What do we do? Do we go save him, or do we keep looking for Damien's thing? I don't know!"

Tass: "Quick. Let's see if we can see anything obvious, and then we'll run in after him."

Rev: All right. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Tass: OK. Eleven.

Megan: Nice.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 2.

Tass: What's being concealed here?

Rev: So the thing that's being concealed here as you look around, you open up your magical vision and there is not any magical energy inside of this chapel. You do see a portrait of Michael Cassidy, and it is dated 1888. And in it he is holding a Bible, and wearing a very ornate silver cross outside of his suit and tie.

Tass: "I'm not seeing anything, Megan. But like, look at this portrait. This is the guy that changed everything up, right? And has the murals?"

Megan: "Uh, Michael Cassidy ... Yeah. Yeah, yeah, that was the warden."

Tass: "OK. Maybe the necklace — the cross — or the Bible he's holding. Or maybe it's hidden in the Bible, or ... I don't know."

Megan: "Well, shit. I feel like if ... If any of that's here, it would be in his old office maybe. But I didn't — I didn't see that because I wasn't looking for it. I was looking at the murals."

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "Uh ... Yeah. That's all I can think of."

Tass: I don't know that any of these apply. What happened here?

Rev: I think that, um, what Megan said about like if there were things of this old warden left, they would be in his office. [Chuckles] I think that's the closest thing to an answer I can give you.

Tass: I mean, yeah. Fair. I mean, I guess that's confirming context, as opposed to just assuming.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: OK. "All right. Let's go, let's go, let's go."

Megan: "Ok."

Rev: Jake, you are flown through the air for 30, 40 feet, and then a door is kicked open and you are thrown onto the ground. And you skid inside in the darkness, and the door slams. And all around you, you can hear the sounds of like rattling chains, and people laughing, people crying. What are you doing?

Jake: I will produce the sword, so that I can light this place up a little bit.

Rev: Yeah. So you pull the sword out, and the room is illuminated. Roll Read a Bad Situation.

Jake: OK. Nine.

Rev: All right, you get a hold 1.

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

Rev: Yes. There is quite a lot of noise and movement in here, and it's very wispy. Like as soon as you think you kind of see a shape, you turn and look towards it and it's gone. But further ahead in the area that you think must be the observation hub, you can see a dull green glow coming from it. And you can hear the sound of someone just ...

Rev: SINISTER VOICE: [Laughs menacingly]

Jake: Goodie. I want to try to just teleport back to Tass.

Rev: You vanish from here and you appear behind Tass, who is sprinting away from you, towards the door that you just thrown into.

Jake: "What are we doing?"

Megan: "Oh god!"

Tass: "Oh my god!"

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

Jake: "Yeah. They threw me in there and it's very ghostly. And I think ... You talked about the warden who like took too much pleasure in this? I can hear somebody just cackling in the hub, so I think he might be in there."

Megan: "Oh, no. No, no, no. It was a guard. It was a guard that took too much pleasure — it was the tower that, like, magically appeared and stuff. He said maybe that was a guard who took too much pleasure. But you're right. You're right. The warden. The warden's where we need to go."

Jake: "OK. Do you want me to try and just get us there, or should we run? Should we walk? I think every time I teleport, I'm a magical flare for gargoyles." And I'm looking around, and listening for more wings and screeches.

Tass: "Yeah, I think if we can run through, let's try."

Jake: "OK."

Rev: All right. Everybody, roll Act Under Pressure to sprint your way through the haunted residents of Cell Block Five.

Jake: Boxcars.

Megan: Seven.

Tass: Also a seven.

Rev: All right. So you can all get through to the warden's office. But Megan and Tass, you are either going to draw some unwanted attention, you're going to take a little damage from things lashing out at you as you run by, or you're gonna have a -1 ongoing to your Cool because of what these taunts and yells and laughter kind of do to your resolve.

Megan: Yeah, that one sounds like that's me.

Rev: OK.

Tass: I think I'm gonna take the hit.

Rev: OK. So Tass, you'll take one point of damage that is armor-defeating, as you get swiped at by these ghosts. Megan, you are on edge. These things are much closer. You didn't experience the same thing that Jake and Tass did on your tour. And so hearing the laughter, hearing the baby crying, hearing the sound of the handles being jiggled as you run past really unnerves you. But you all three make it into Warden Cassidy's office.

Tass: Yeah, I'm not wasting any time. "There is a Bible and a cross. I don't know if one or the other seemed more important, or both of them together, or what. But scour the place."

Jake: "Does your magic vision turn anything up in here?"

Tass: "I mean, I'm sure gonna try." And I mean, I would — I would wanna open my Sight.

Rev: All right. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Tass: OK. Seven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Tass: What's being concealed here?

Rev: As you open up your magical sight, in the center of this room, underneath one of the floorboards, you can see a magic glow.

Tass: I'm gonna rip up that board instantly.

Rev: Yeah. And underneath it, you find a fine silver cross on a necklace.

Tass: Oh my god. So yeah, I'm gonna pick that up, I'm gonna take Damien's necklace and hold them close, and see if I can snap it.

Rev: Yeah. You break the necklace as you hold it to the center gem on Damien's necklace, and this energy flows out of it into the center. And then it pulses, and moves over to one of the side gems. And you can see that three of them are now glowing.

Tass: "Yes, we did it."

Megan: "Cool. Let's get out of here."

Rev: All right. Jake, roll Angel Wings.

Jake: Oh, buddy. That's a ten.

Rev: Yeah. The three of you appear back at Damien's car.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: So, how'd it go?

Tass: I hold up the necklace for him.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Oh, not bad. So what was it?

Tass: "It was a cross."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: All right. Well, three down, one to go.

Rev: And he takes it back and puts it in his pocket.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Suppose I should get you folks home. You got some planning to do.

Tass: "Absolutely."

Jake: And as we're driving back, I go, "Hey, you don't suppose that cross was like the only thing holding the truly evil at bay in that prison or anything, right? Like, we're probably fine ..."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: No, no. I'm sure it's fine.

Rev: As you see like green flames rising from the penitentiary in the background.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: The mysterious guard tower appears on the grounds, and then appears outside of the grounds, and then appears somewhere else.

Rev: Just follows you.

Jake: Yep.

Tass: Oh, god.

Megan: I'm sure it's fine. [Laughs] With all of my knowledge and expertise.

Rev: Jake, on the drive back, you start to blink your eyes, getting tired. First blink, second blink, third blink. When you open up again, you're standing in front of The Executioner.

Rev: THE EXECUTIONER: You disobeyed my direct order to end those creatures at the IPT. You have just broken a holy relic. You are my Divine. You are my weapon to wield as I see fit. As long as you use my power, you will do as I say.

Rev: And then you open your eyes again, and you are sitting in the back of the car.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: And now it's time for end of session experience.

Tass: Oh, yes.

Rev: So did you conclude the current mystery?

Tass: Yeah, seems we did.

Rev: What was it?

Tass: It would seem that this old warden had a highly magical item, so we found where it was.

Rev: And did you save someone from certain death or worse?

Jake: Hmm, I don't think so.

Rev: Agree.

Tass: I mean, I did restrain myself with that groundskeeper.

Rev: That's true. But she also did the same.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: And she had hedge clippers. You had nothing. Did we learn something new and important about the world?

Jake: I mean, we proved the legitimacy of the hauntings of this penitentiary.

Rev: And did we learn something new and important about one of the hunters?

Jake: I don't think so.

Rev: So everybody gets one point of experience.

Jake: I level up.

Tass: Nice.

Rev: All right. What are you gonna take?

Jake: Man, I qualify for advanced improvements now. And I am going to take change this hunter to a new type.

Rev: Oh, like you're gonna do a playbook shift?

Jake: I'm gonna do a playbook shift on purpose, of my own design. I think ... I'm tired. I'm not a good executioner. I mean, he knows that. I know that. I'm not a good ward of The Executioner. But also I'm just — I don't like ultimatums very much.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: So I think that I kinda ... When I get the chance, I will take the moment to like "officially" — in air quotes — give up the sword in the armor. Like set them aside in a way that it is clear that I'm giving that life up. And I'm going to switch to The Spell-Slinger. I will go full into the wizard magics.

Rev: You know, we have not had this happen on the show yet, where someone changed their playbook through picking a level up move.

Jake: Mmhmm.

Rev: And so we talked with Michael Sands about this, actually. So when you change playbooks, in his mind, you would keep any moves that you had picked on level up that are like pick another move from a different playbook. You would keep those.

Jake: Theoretically, you keep anything that, you know, that were existing improvements that you took that still makes sense in the narrative.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Like it doesn't — if there's no reason why you wouldn't have it anymore, then you still have it.

Rev: Yeah. So how many — you have, what, two moves from another playbook?

Jake: Yes, I — currently on The Divine sheet?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I have two moves from another playbook.

Rev: So I'm gonna say you can take two moves from your Divine playbook, and it doesn't even have to necessarily be the ones that you took outside of your playbook. It can be any two you can justify magically.

Jake: OK. That's good. That makes sense, I think. Because the ... I can't see a way that I don't have the pocket dimension anymore. I feel like it would be weird — it would be narrative gymnastics to explain why somehow in losing my divine power, the favor that Ferguson has done for me in Elnore would also vanish.

Rev: Yeah, that's fair.

Jake: So I'll keep that one, and I'll keep Force of Will. The rest of my Divine stuff, I don't — ooh, I'm not gonna have Angel Wings anymore.

Megan: Oh no.

Jake: Oh no. I know. We rely on that so hard.

Rev: You guys are gonna have a long drive to see Baba Yaga next time.

Jake: Oh god.

Tass: Oof.

Megan: It's OK. I have a moped.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I mean, I could probably ... Maybe in the future, I can justify that via magic.

Rev: And what are the moves that you get from The Spell-Slinger?

Jake: Well I get Combat Magic, which is nice. So when I use spells to Kick Some Ass, so I get to pick three options from that one. They're broken into bases and effects. I will take the blast base, which is 2-harm, magic, close, obvious, loud. For the effects I'm gonna take fire, which is add "2-harm, fire" to a base. If you get a 10+ on a Combat Magic roll, the fire won't spread. And I will take lightning. It says lightning or entropy. I don't know if that's just like a choice I make right now, or if that's like anytime I do it, it's either lightning or entropy. But it's a "+1 harm, messy" to a base. I feel like the theme of this will be like figuring out how magically to do things that are kind of — have been in my blood for a while, here.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: So I'm still kind of harnessing fire and lightning, because those are things I've harnessed in the past. It comes with Tools and Techniques — so the things I need to use Combat Magic. I'm gonna go with ... I gotta pick three of them. So I'm going to get rid of consumables. I don't want to use like powders and oils and stuff. So foci, gestures, and incantations. And then for the ones I get to pick three, I will do Enchanted Clothing, so I get a little armor. It's not technically armor, it's just -1 harm from anything that tries to get through that. I will do Shield Spell, so I'll have to focus on the Protect Someone move a little bit more, now. And I will do Could Have Been Worse. So if I miss a Use Magic, I can either have it fizzle out, or I can still have it work but I'm gonna take all the glitches but one of my choice.

Rev: OK. What is your ... What is your foci?

Jake: I don't know yet.

Rev: OK.

Jake: I think maybe in the ... Like maybe when I get rid of the Divine stuff, maybe something will come to me, of like what I use as a focus now.

Rev: Yeah. OK.

SFX:

CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: All right. So we find the three of you on the top side of the subterranean lair. Damien has just stopped the car to drop you off.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Let me know when it's time for the ... [Grumbles indistinctly] And I'll be there. Because, you know, I got a bit of an exchange to do.

Tass: "Yeah, it'll be pretty soon, here. Maybe a week."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: All right.

Tass: "Thanks again, man. Really."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: No, thank you. I'll see y'all later.

Rev: And he pulls off down the alley and drives away. So what are you all doing now? What's the plan?

Jake: "We go inside and I guess we're gonna tell everybody the story? Are we gonna tell everybody, like, "OK, we're going through a portal. That's all we can tell you. Rev, come with us." [Laughs]

Megan: "Yeah. What are we gonna do about Rev, as far as we need him somewhere safe, because he knows. But if we suddenly disappear, it's explainable because we went through this portal, you know, and just didn't come back. But Rev also kind of has to disappear."

Tass: "Well, if the plan is to make sure that the castle is fortified and hidden, we see if he wants to come with us down there, maybe even help grandpa with all the preparations. And then he has a safe place to be away from the chaos that's gonna ensue. Hell, I don't really know how this works, but I could even make sure he has the spear, too, if he has to go anywhere. I don't know that if I let this energy loose that the spear will still hide him? But it might. I mean, it's better than nothing."

Jake: "Yeah, I feel like because we've just moved headquarters into what was his house, I feel like, you know, now would be a decent time to just be like, 'Hey. We can move you again. Like you don't have to just live here now with all of the headquarters people.' And

then it could be not necessarily that he disappeared, it's just that he's kind of hermetic. So we moved him somewhere else, and they don't know where that is. And if he doesn't come out, that's not our problem and not their business."

Megan: "We just upgrade him to a castle."

Jake: "I guess the castle could be it. Or like ... I don't know where we want to actually put him, but I feel like the guise of moving him so that he's not living in the headquarters works. It could be the castle."

Megan: "I feel like that's pretty safe and out of the way."

Jake: "Yeah. I mean, the alternative is like another dimension. But then he would really be stuck there. Also, I can't take him anywhere. Well, we've got a doorknob. We could like go put them in the tavern for the rest of eternity."

Megan: "Stay at the inn!"

Tass: "I mean, that is certainly the best option so far."

Jake: "The question then becomes who has the doorknob once he's in there? Do we just open the door and put him in there and keep the doorknob for ourselves?"

Tass: "Oh, good call. I mean, Trog did say that they ... I mean, I don't know if they have a bunch, like, behind the bar."

Megan: They're in a box behind the bar. [Laughs]

Tass: Next to the glassware.

Megan: Next to the lost and found.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: "I mean, we could always at least take him there and ask and see what the situation is, before we make a decision on that."

Jake: "Yeah. All right. Let's do that."

Tass: OK. Let's go have this talk with everybody, then.

Rev: All right. So you all head down into the subterranean lair. As before, Rev is there with Jingles and Anastacia and Lana.

Tass: "Hey, everybody. So we've been out getting some errands done and we think we have a lead, but we can't really talk about it. So we're going through another portal, and hopefully we're gonna get some stuff done. I think we're gonna need Rev for this one, though, if you're up for it."

Rev: You see that there's a brief moment where Rev almost, like, "Well, the portals ..." But then he remembers what you said to him.

Rev: REV: Oh. Yeah, no problem. Let me ... Pack a bag?

Tass: "Yeah, might as well grab all of your stuff. Like you might be moving out of here, actually. You know, this really is a great place for their HQ anyway. And with what we've got going, maybe it's time to get you out and working more freely anyway."

Rev: REV: Uh ... Is Strohm still alive?

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: REV: I don't know about not being in here while she's still out there.

Tass: "OK. Well, let me put it this way. Grab a bunch of your stuff. We're gonna at least go hash through what we're gonna do, and then you kind of have the option."

Rev: REV: OK.

Tass: "Yeah?"

Rev: REV: Yeah.

Tass: "Cool."

Rev: Yeah. So he goes and puts a couple of duffel bags together and a backpack. As he's doing that, Jingles comes over.

Rev: JINGLES: Is there anything you guys need for ... I don't know, whatever this secret mission is? Like is there anything I can do for you? Or ...

Tass: "Man, I don't know what. Just keep everybody safe. That's ... You know, that's I think the ultimate thing, is we don't know what exactly is gonna happen when we go through these things. So just when it comes down to it, just keep you all safe. Priority one. You know?"

Rev: JINGLES: Yeah. Did you, like ... I mean the portal's, like, here. Did you find another one? Like another machine?

Tass: "You know, I don't ... I don't really want to talk about it. It ... You know, what I can tell you is that it's something that works differently than what we have, and that's kind of what we need. So that's what we're gonna go with."

Rev: JINGLES: Oh shit. All right, man.

Tass: "Yeah. You know, I mean, it's one of those things where if things go wrong, like we don't want to leave leads behind on what's going on. Since you guys can't really help us with it in the immediate, we might as well do plausible deniability, right?"

Rev: JINGLES: Yeah, all right.

Megan: "Definitely look forward to talking it all over when we get back."

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: JINGLES: Yeah, OK.

Rev: And he goes back over the computer and sits down.

Jake: While everybody's kind of making arrangements and getting ready to go, I think I am going to step away into, like, I don't know, one of the back rooms or like one of the storage areas in here. And I'm going to ... I'm going to try to communicate a message in a non-reverent way that I'm giving up the Divine power.

Rev: So I think that because you are essentially trying to resign this position, you instinctively know how to give them that message. Because early on, it was such a big deal about the sword and the armor. Their symbols, they're important. You know that the way to communicate this message to The Executioner would be to plunge the blade through the armor.

Jake: Then I will do that.

Rev: So you stab this blade down into The Executioner's armor and the whole thing melts into a pile of slag, and you feel all of this power rushing out of your body. It's very draining. And this pile of slag continues to burn and burn. And when it's done, all that is left is your original prop cosplay Thor hammer.

Jake: [Laughs] Yeah, I think I pick that up and kind of turn it over in my hands.

Rev: Yeah. The head of it's pretty melty.

Jake: I'm gonna try and snap the handle off at the head. I think that's gonna be my focus. I think I will keep the handle of the hammer — like the wood — kind of like as a button. You know, not quite a staff and not quite a wand, but somewhere in between. That that'll be the focus that I used to channel my magic through.

Rev: OK. What does this look like? Is it like wrapped in leather? Does it have like a thing that goes round your wrist?

Jake: I mean, it looks like ... Kind of like the handle of Mjölnir. It's like a foot long. It's ... I think it was probably like a hardwood dowel that is wrapped in leather and kind of detailed to make it look a little bit fancier. I think — you know, I mean the one end probably does just kind of look broken now. The end of that was the base still looks nice, but the end that was attached to the head probably looks kind of shitty. And that's OK.

Rev: So after you finish this up, Rev actually comes back into this room and grabs a few things.

Rev: REV: Everything all right?

Jake: "Yeah, I think everything's pretty good."

Rev: REV: All right. You ready?

Jake: "Yep." And I guess I'll grab some clothes that I have here that I've left behind here, and get changed out into a street-appropriate look.

Rev: Yeah. So Megan and Tass, as you are hanging out in the main room of the subterranean lair, Jake and Rev come out, and Jake is very dressed down.

Tass: I think I track it, but I don't want to ask in front of everybody, so ... "All right, boys. You ready?"

Jake: "Yeah. Where are my keys?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: Oh, um ... Here you go.

Rev: And Anastacia reaches into her leather jacket and throws them to you.

Jake: "Why ... Why did you ... Never mind. I'm not worried about it. Is it in good shape?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah.

Jake: "OK."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Good luck?

Tass: "Thanks. You too."

Megan: "Thanks for all your help with all this. And just, like, with everything. Thanks."

Rev: ANASTACIA: This is bad, isn't it?

Megan: ["I don't know"] "Hmm-mm."

All: [Laugh]

Tass: "You're living in the same world we are. You know it's all bad."

Rev: And she looks over Lana.

Rev: ANASTACIA: Turns out, things can get better.

Tass: "Yeah. So good luck."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah, you too.

Tass: And I — as much as I want to say a billion other things, I think I just head for the door.

Rev: All right. So where are you headed to?

Tass: I think as we're starting to go, I also shoot a quick text to Margaret. And it says just that we're on our way to something. And when things get a little safer, I look forward to visiting her.

Rev: OK.

Jake: So I guess start making our way towards the mine. And along the way, we need to talk to Rev. Like, "All right. So here's our ... Here's our thought. Because you know where we're going, which means you're also, you know, kind of in danger by nature of having privileged information. We don't just want to leave you with everybody else who could try to get answers out of you. We don't want to leave you out in the world with Strohm. So we had a thought. We got a cool thing in another dimension that takes you to a ... Sort of like an extra-planar tavern where a friend of ours lives. Is that somewhere you think you might be interested in kicking it for a while?"

Rev: REV: Uh ... Can you explain extra-planar in ... Because, like, you say "extra-planar," and I think like Cthulhu stuff, or like creatures on the edge of the Abyss.

Tass: "Yeah, it's kind of like a pocket dimension, that its sole existence is this inn."

Rev: REV: Oh like a like an inn, like a hotel?

Tass: "Yeah. More, you know, fantasy-style so to speak, but very comfortable and with very good food."

Rev: REV: How do you get there?

Megan: Uh, and I grab the doorknob. "You put this in a door, and then you open it and it goes there. And then if you take it with you and you leave, you can always get back."

Rev: REV: I guess, what's the other option?

Megan: "You live in a castle with my grandpa who is a vampire, and also Nash."

Jake: "Underground."

Rev: REV: So does the inn have comfy beds?

Jake: "Oh yeah. The comfiest."

Megan: "We slept for ... days?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "We slept for days."

Rev: REV: Yeah. I don't — I don't think — I know that, like, it could be a short time that you're gone, but it will also ... Like for me, I will — I will live my whole life, I assume. But then the memories of that will be erased. But I'll still have lived that life. And I don't think I want to do it with Grandpire.

Megan: "That's fair."

Rev: "Yep."

Megan: "Also, this tavern has, like, really good food."

Rev: REV: OK.

Jake: "And a lot of interesting characters."

Rev: REV: Oh, OK.

Megan: "And the guy who runs it like is really nice. I don't know him that well as — like these guys know him better, I think. But from what I've met of him, he's really cool."

Rev: REV: Who is it?

Jake: "Trog."

Rev: REV: Oh, the big ... Uh ... He was a goblin?

Jake: "Yeah. Big old goblin."

Rev: REV: OK, well ... Might as well take a peek, at least.

Jake: "All right. So now the question is just where do we want to deliver you from? What door do we want to ... Do we get all the way to the castle and do it from a door there, so that's where he comes back out?"

Tass: "I mean, I think that's doubling down on safety. Yeah."

Megan: "Agreed."

Jake: "OK."

Rev: All right. So you all continue your drive to the castle. It takes you a couple of hours. But you do arrive there. What are you doing with the car, now that you're at the mine?

Jake: Yeah ... Can we, like, ease it down the mine?

Rev: Not all the way to the castle, no. Because you know there was like some ladders going down, and stuff.

Tass: I mean, I think we could get it down there.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: You ever play the first Halo? Trying to get that Warthog into the ...

Tass: Oh, god ...

Megan: Is there, like, one of the offshoot ghouls tunnels that we could stash it in?

Rev: I think with some work, that you could make a tunnel big enough to back it into ... You know those tunnels, obviously, go on to wherever they connect to. But you could also, with the proper know-how or assistance, probably close the tunnel off at the backside.

Jake: Yeah, that would be nice. I feel like we should load the car with some stuff. Like, I don't know, weapons or whatever we think we might need in the future. Like speedy on the go, we could just put some stuff in the trunk in the car, and then back it into one of the tunnels and throw a tarp over it or whatever.

Tass: Yeah, I think I'd just throw in my extra ammunition. Just stuff like that, that I wouldn't want to try to carry through a portal.

Jake: Throw in the grenade launcher.

Rev: Is there anything that you don't already possess, that you're like stopping to buy to put in the car?

Jake: I feel like we could stop at like an outdoor store or something. Because we don't know what exactly the future will be like. So maybe we get like some thermal blankets and a lantern or, you know, some safety matches. I don't know.

Megan: Yeah, a little emergency kit. Just so we're set.

Jake: I'm also gonna ... I'll grab myself a pocket knife.

Rev: OK.

Jake: The Spell-Slinger has a knife, so I buy a knife.

Rev: Like I said, I think that you can get one of these tunnels closed off, get the car inside of it, hide it. It'll take some time and some labor, honestly. Because it's just a matter of collapsing part of the tunnel safely. So yeah, that's something that you could do over the course of the next week, while Jake fortifies the castle with magic and Nash continues to finish up the space for the spell to go off. Um, so you all head down into the cavern, towards the castle.

Rev: REV: How did this get down here?

Megan: "No idea. Seems like he used his own magics, kind of the same way he scooped out stuff from other dimensions. But this one stayed here."

Rev: And I think that as you are all standing outside of the castle, Rev is staring up at it. And in one of the top windows, you see Nash move past, and he sees you all out there and he kind of gives a nod and goes back to work. And Rev notices it.

Rev: REV: Yeah, I don't think I ... That's ominous. Look, I'm sure it's fine. Like I — you know, your grandfather. I'm sure it's fine. I just don't ...

Megan: "Yeah, no. I totally understand where you're coming from."

Rev: REV: Yeah.

Megan: "Like you told me, like, the stuff that you've been through. It's ..."

Rev: REV: Yeah.

Megan: "That's a lot. I don't — I don't blame you. Trust me."

Rev: Are you just using the door right away to take Rev in? Are you giving him a tour of the castle? What's the plan?

Megan: I'll take him on a castle tour, if he wants a castle tour.

Rev: REV: Yeah, absolutely.

Rev: So you give him a quick tour of the castle. When you get up to the third floor, inside of the room hidden behind the bookshelf, you see that this painting that was there of all of the energy flowing from one sphere into another with the blast has all been kind of whitewashed away. And this huge long spell is written on this wall. And you can see that there are parts painted over and scratched out and redone. This is the spell that he has been working on, and it circles around the room. But you can hear him in the other room where the ring is, putting various objects into their location. And he looks up when you all come in.

Tass: "How is it coming?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: It was quite a feat to bring myself back. Even larger one to send multiple people forward and keep it open.

Tass: "How much longer we thinking?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: I would say about six days.

Tass: "All right. We're gonna get to work preparing the rest of what we need, and let us know if you need anything.

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: I will. Thank you.

Tass: "Rev? You ready to punch your monster hunter card for dimension hopping?"

Rev: REV: Yes.

Tass: "Nice." And I'll lead him down out of this area, and find just one of the kind of basic doors and get the handle off.

Rev: OK. Yeah, you take the handle off and you put the magic silver doorknob in, and it swings open. Again, you have that familiar sound of music, the smell of cooking chicken, and a fair number of voices inside. It's normally pretty quiet, but there's a lot of raucous activity going on.

Megan: "Ooh. Rambunctious today, huh?"

Tass: "Seems that way. Let's go take a look."

Megan: "Yeah."

Rev: Yeah. So the four of you enter. And Rev kind of hesitates as he passes through, and feels no ill effect, and continues to follow you. As you all come around the corner into the tavern proper, you see that Landara is there, and she is standing on top of a table, and she is holding a very large head in one hand. It has two mouths and six eyes and long antennas coming out of the top, and its skin is this puckered red. And there is just green goo dripping from its mouth. And she is in the midst of telling a story to the surrounding people.

Rev: LANDARA: And they said that the queen was gonna be the hardest one to kill. She wasn't the hardest one to kill, but she was the hardest one to find.

Rev: And everybody kind of cheers and laughs and applauds. And she steps down off of the table and drops this head onto the tavern floor.

Megan: "Oh, man."

Rev: LANDARA: Oh hey, how are you?

Megan: "Hi."

Rev: LANDARA: Trog mentioned you. Blue hair. You're, uh ... You're their friend.

Megan: "Yep. You are ..."

Rev: LANDARA: Landara.

Megan: "Landara. Right. That was super cool."

Rev: LANDARA: Yeah, it was a lot of fun.

Jake: "What is it?"

Rev: LANDARA: Remember that I told you about that planet that was having the issue with like the underground insect people?

Jake: "Yeah."

Rev: LANDARA: This was their queen.

Jake: "Cool. So, you tied that bow?"

Rev: LANDARA: Yeah.

Jake: "Nice."

Rev: LANDARA: Solved that problem. Made a little money. Got to stretch my legs for a while. Who's your friend?

Jake: "This is Rev. Rev, this is Landara."

Rev: REV: Hi.

Rev: And you can see that like Rev is looking around. There's Trog standing behind the bar, this seven foot tall, green ... Looks like a troll, is a goblin. There are a couple of

dwarves running around. There is Landara, who is undead. And he's just kind of taking it all in.

Jake: I kinda, like, pat him on the shoulder. And I'm like, "At your own pace. Breathe it in."

Rev: REV: Mmhmm.

Jake: "Let me know if you need to ..."

Rev: REV: Mmhmm. OK. OK.

Jake: "It's all good."

Tass: "Trog. Weird question for you, but do you have more of the doorknobs that get you in here?"

Rev: TROG: Oh, yeah.

Tass: "Could I maybe ask you for one? I just — we don't want to leave him here without the option of being able to kind of come and go at his leisure if he needs to, but we would love to have one for just in case."

Rev: TROG: Yeah, of course.

Tass: "That's awesome. Thank you so much."

Megan: I think I look at Rev. "You feeling better about this?"

Rev: REV: I feel like I'm either in a video game, or a book, or Tales from the Floating Vagabond.

Tass: "Oh, good one. Good pull."

Rev: REV: Oh, this is like Tales from the ... OK. Yeah. Yeah. I think I'm — I think I'm OK.

Tass: "Awesome."

Megan: "Good."

Rev: REV: So I will either see you all ... Well no, I'll never see you again. Until I do.

Jake: "Yeah. You will — you will both never see us again, and also see us again in probably like a couple of weeks or something."

Rev: REV: Yeah ...

Tass: "Wow. I probably should have mentioned this in the first place, but time does work a little differently here, too. I think it's about an hour to a day ratio. Which means that you'll be here a little longer than we'll be gone. So we're gonna try to keep our stuff tight over there. But, you know, I just don't know exactly how long we'll be gone."

Rev: REV: Oh, so is this like the place where Jake was stuck, when Teej and I were building?

Jake: "It's not exactly. It's kind of like ... Adjacent to. But the time seems to work the same way."

Rev: REV: OK. So if you guys think you're gonna be gone a couple weeks, I'll be here a couple years.

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "As long as you're here. You could always pop back to the castle."

Rev: REV: Oh, right.

Megan: "And be back in our same time. But like, then you're not safe here."

Rev: REV: Yeah.

Jake: "You could even maybe like follow other people through their doors?"

Rev: REV: Uh-huh.

Jake: "As they go places, and like check some stuff out, and then use your doorknob to get back here?"

Rev: REV: Really?

Jake: "Maybe. I don't know. You might have to ask Trog exactly how that works. I'm kinda spitballing."

Megan: "Yeah. Don't know how time works in other places, necessarily. So you might end up with all kinds of weird timelines."

Tass: "Yeah. I'd say maybe don't do a ton of that, though? Because remember what we talked about with Grandpa Tincher, is the more he jumped around, he started to kind of lose himself a little bit."

Rev: REV: Hmm ...

Tass: "So I think a place like this to ours and back isn't really gonna do anything for you. But jumpin' and jumpin' and jumpin', again, probably isn't a good idea."

Rev: REV: Yeah.

Jake: "Forget what I said."

Rev: REV: All right. Well let me set my stuff down. Do you want some help, like setting up the stuff at the castle? If I'm gonna pop back in and check on the castle every now and then, I guess I should at least have a conversation with Grandpire. So it's not like just, "Oh, I didn't wanna ... Wanna see you. I was just seeing if they're back. OK, bye."

Tass: "Yeah, man. I mean, even at the very least, now that you're acquainted here, I know you'll be coming, like ... Hang out with us for the week, so that however many hours doesn't translate to a big stretch of time, you know what I mean?"

Rev: REV: Oh, right. Because I'd be here like four months while you got ready to leave.

Megan: "Also, like, we never get to hang out. So like, this is like a time that's safe. We got shit we gotta do, but we could all hang out."

Rev: REV: OK. Where should I put my stuff?

Rev: And Trog gestures behind him.

Rev: TROG: We've got a couple of rooms here for workers in the back. That way, you're not sharing a room with folks.

Rev: REV: OK.

Rev: So Rev goes and unpacks his stuff and follows you all back through the portal to the castle. So I think now we are kind of in a bit of an overview time. You've got six days till he says he's gonna be finished with this spell. I know there was talk of working with the tunnels to hide the car. Jake wants to put up some wards and magical defenses. Is there anything else you all want to be doing during this time?

Tass: I don't think so.

Rev: So Jake, as you and Rev go around the castle, setting up these wards, it takes the bulk of that time that is left. But you're able to put up the same kind of wards that are in the IPT, to make it so that folks cannot teleport directly inside of the castle. Things that are on your list of ... Well, not vampires, but other kinds of creatures cannot pass through the barrier. Is there anything else you're wanting to set up?

Jake: I want to, like, set up some kind of cloaking, similar to what Tass's spear seems to do. I want to take some time to kind of examine it, and see if I can in any way replicate its effect. So that, like, this place is just harder to find, harder to keep track of.

Rev: Roll Investigate a Mystery, I think, to try and see if you can parse together how that works.

Jake: OK. Seven. So I'll go with, what can it do?

Rev: Yeah. So you can spend some time and figure out exactly how this works, and it essentially will do what the spear does. It will mask the presence of anyone inside of the castle from someone trying to scry on them.

Jake: Cool.

Rev: As you are going around into the other room, setting up all these wards ... As you know with the IPT, that you have to put them in all of the various rooms. Nash is pretty specific about where it's OK to put them upstairs when it comes to the magic that he's putting together, and the spell that is all over this wall. But you notice at one point that he essentially seems to have finished the spell, because you come in and he is like putting a clear coat paint on. Like something so that it won't smudge away.

Jake: "All done, then?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes, I believe so. At least with this part of it. There's a couple of days worth of work to do still on the actual ring, and the requirements for it. But the spell is finished.

Jake: "So how exactly does this, like, work, it being like painted on the wall? It seems like you're just making sure that it doesn't get smudged or dirty or something?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes. This room will essentially become a place where the spell is continually cast, like a loop, so that that portal stays open.

Jake: "OK. Is there anything else you want me to do in or for this room specifically then, to kind of keep it preserved or safe?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes. I know that they were talking about working with some demolition tools to deal with the tunnels. Actually, if you could knock the wall out from the study into the actual room where the spell will happen? That way, no one has to pass through here once the spell is activated. I'm not sure the ramifications of that.

Jake: "Yeah, I'll throw that on the task list."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes, I appreciate it.

Jake: I mean, as I'm in here, kind of looking at what he's done on these walls, like what this spell is. Can I understand it? Like I still have the nagging fear that he might try to get one over on us. So before we like entrust ourselves to this, if I'm kind of standing in the core, I want to look it over and see if it all seems square to me.

Rev: Yeah. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Jake: I guess, what is being concealed here?

Rev: So as you're looking over the spell ... You have cast quite a number of spells, whether they are directly from books or using Use Magic, and you know the ramification, the cost of the spells. I think the thing that's being concealed here is that the cost of this spell. Like you know that it takes life to cast this spell. The way that that part of the spell is amplified and modified on this wall? You cannot imagine whoever casts this survives.

Jake: Oh. Is he still, like, in here with me?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I think I turn to him and I'm like, "And you're the one planning to, like, cast this, right? I don't have to cast it to go through. Like, you cast it and we go through?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Correct. It takes quite a lot of energy. I'm not sure anyone but me could cast it.

Jake: I think I kind of like point to the — whatever part led me to believe that. And I'm like, "Quite a lot of energy."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes. I ...

Rev: He smiles.

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: I was quite serious about my statement of coming back here to make sure that things turn out better, no matter the cost.

Jake: "I mean, that's noble and all, but I think everybody's got a right to know that before we go."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Megan won't talk to me. Tass wants me dead. I can't imagine why I would tell anyone. I'm simply, in Tass's own words, helping him skip a step.

Jake: Man, I think that still, in the back of my head, I think this might somehow also be a trick. You know, dying and letting your energy go and like all that shit, like that's ... We've seen that be a way to, like, power a different thing, or whatever. I think, uh ... I think I just kind of play that one close to the vest for now.

Rev: Megan and Tass, you spend a couple of days working on getting this car hidden, collapsing one of the tunnels at the backside of it. And you are able to get everything positioned, get a tarp over it, kind of put some dust and rocks on top of the car so that it looks like it's just a caved-in tunnel. And then you get a request to take down the wall between the room where the spell will go off and the study.

Megan: Yeah. And I think while we're working on this and Jake is like doing stuff around the castle, I think I'm gonna take this opportunity to bring up his new look. "Hey ... Hey, Jake."

Jake: "Hmm?"

Megan: "So like, I can't help but notice you're less armored."

Jake: "I am, yes."

Megan: "Is that a fashion choice? Or, uh ..."

Jake: "It is a lifestyle choice. I have given up the god power."

Megan: "Oh."

Jake: "Yeah. I know. I didn't want to kind of worry anyone or, like, make things more complicated right before we go. But ... You know, I wasn't a very good vengeance agent. And I guess I kinda ... Kinda pissed in The Executioner's cereal one too many times. And he kind of threatened me, and I don't really cotton to that. So I just figured I'd do magic instead."

Megan: "Yeah, that's fair. I mean, you shouldn't do something just because people tell you to. You should do it because you know that it's right. But does that mean you can't do all the things that you could do before? Or can you just do them differently? I guess I don't know how this works."

Jake: "I mean, some of the stuff I can still do. You know, the things I could do before that were magic. Like, I know magic. I can do those. And I think I can kind of use magic to bridge the gap between some of my old abilities and now? But I'm sure there's some stuff I can't do. I can't teleport anymore."

Megan: "Oh, OK."

Jake: "Yeah."

Megan: "Yeah."

Jake: "That's why it was kind of imperative that the car be in good shape."

Megan: "Do you feel better?"

Jake: "Yeah. Yeah. It's kinda like ... I don't know, I feel maybe a little bit less, like, powerful? But it's like, uh .. Like it was also kind of making me sick, and I don't really feel that anymore?"

Megan: "Well, that sounds like a win."

Jake: "I think it's a net win."

Megan: "All right."

Jake: "You know, I actually kind of went over your grandpa's work. I feel like you have the right to know that I don't think he's gonna survive this."

Megan: "Uh, what do you mean? Like I get that he's old, but like, he's done a lot. I feel like he's got the ability. Seems like he knows what he's doing. I think he's got this."

Jake: "Yeah. No, I think ... I don't know. Like everything seems like it's gonna work, but magic doesn't just come from nowhere. You know? It requires an expenditure of energy, or an expenditure of life force. And the level of this ... You know, if anybody could survive, I guess it might be a very powerful vampire. But even so, I think this is gonna take too much from him. And I think that he thinks the same."

Megan: "Why do you think he thinks the same? He would have — he would have said something. Like that would have been part of the discussion."

Jake: "He doesn't ... I mean, he doesn't think you care about him, and ..."

Megan: "What?!"

Jake: "We want him dead. So, yeah."

Megan: "Why would he think that? I mean, yeah, a lot has happened, but he's still my grandpa."

Jake: "Uh ..."

Megan: And I think I'm just rounding. I'm looking for him.

Rev: Yeah. He is in the other room, working on the circle.

Megan: I go right over to him. "What is this about you dying to do this spell?"

Jake: [Laughs] I'm just in other room, like, hiding my face. Uh, uh, oops. Oh no. I didn't tell her.

Rev: He freezes when you say that, and he looks over his shoulder up at you. He's bent down, adding some marks onto the ring.

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes. It took quite a lot of my ... Of my force of will, my life, I don't know what you want to call it — to get back here. And to create something that can send you all forward and be sustained for as long as you need it to be sustained, it comes at quite a cost.

Megan: "Why didn't you start with that? I would never have agreed to this. We can't — I can't sacrifice you to do this."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: If you come back successful, do you think your friends let me live?

Megan: "They wouldn't do anything. Not — not to you."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Do you believe that? I've seen the hatred in both of their eyes, and I saw it reflected in yours for a brief moment. And I have one thing left to give to this world to try to make it better.

Megan: "Don't you see how I could never be OK with this? Yeah, I was angry and I hated you. And I hated ... I hated what you did, and I hated the position that you put me in. But — but I get it. I know what you're trying to do, and I see what you're trying to give up for it. I don't hate you. There has got to be another way. There's gotta be something else we can do. Anything. Anything else."

Rev: He smiles at this outpouring of words.

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: I'm so used to living in a world of absolutes that when I saw you look at me the way that they looked at me, I thought that was it. If you truly believe that when this is over and you come home, that my life doesn't end at the end of his spear, I've still got a few days left. I'll figure something out.

Megan: "Nothing is gonna happen to you, I promise."

Rev: He leans in and hugs you.

Megan: I hug him back. Yeah, then I think I leave to go back to Jake and find out where Tass is at.

Rev: Yeah, you find Jake, I assume still kind of awkwardly standing in the room with the spell.

Jake: Yeah, just pretending this didn't happen.

Rev: Yeah. And Tass is in the other room, still working on the study.

Megan: "Hey, I need to talk to you guys."

Tass: "Yeah. What do you got?"

Megan: "So before we do this, apparently the power that it was gonna take to fuel this trip was apparently going to be too much for my grandpa to survive. And he seemed to be OK with that, but I'm not. And he said he's going to figure it out, so that that doesn't happen. But he doesn't believe that if we make it back, you're going to let him live anyway. And I'd like to think that that's not true, but I need to know that from you as well."

Tass: "Wow. Yeah. Look, it's not exactly a secret, well, how I feel about it anyway. I'm not gonna speak for Jake. But this guy, this isn't the one that we're after. I don't trust him entirely, but I trust him enough. Everything that he said tracks. He genuinely wants to make a difference. I don't love it. I don't love the circumstance. But if nothing else, my respect for you 100 percent would stop me from doing something like that. I'm not gonna lie about it, I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop. But I think that's more just how I think now in everything that we've had to deal with, with Nash. I'll ... I'll admit it. I have thought it, and I haven't said it out loud. And it's even going to feel icky saying. But I genuinely don't think he's gonna betray us."

Jake: "Man, I don't think I agree with you. I think ... I cannot shake the notion that he's going to betray us. Maybe not at this step. Maybe at the next, one maybe way down the line. I don't know. But I don't think there will ever be a time that I trust him. I don't think that coming back and changing things because he lost and he lost someone he cared

about makes him a good person, or makes it OK. I think he will perpetually be on thin ice with me. But as long as he doesn't break it, I won't do anything about it."

Tass: "I guess I'll just say it this way: if he does make that leap, if there is some other hidden thing, if he's going to betray us, I'm waiting for you to give me the nod before I do anything."

Megan: "If — if he betrays us, I wouldn't blame you for making a move, but I honestly can't guarantee that I would ... I can't guarantee that I wouldn't try to stop you. I would understand, completely. I just don't know if I could say that I was OK with it. I don't know. He's my grandpa. And I know what he's done, but I just can't completely let go of everything else that I've lived through. I'd like to think that I would give you that nod, that I would understand and be OK with it. I just don't know."

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah, I get it. But hey, let's look at it clinically for a second, and then hopefully move on. I think he knows how we feel, and he knows he's on thin ice. If he actually did betray us, I don't think it would be in a way that we would have a chance to retaliate anyway. So ..."

Megan: [Laughs] "Yeah, that's a ... That's a good point. That's a good point."

Tass: "Uh-huh. So either it's not an issue, or it's not an issue."

Rev: All right. The last few days pass, and your preparations are complete. And we find you all standing next to a door, Rev examining a silver doorknob.

Rev: REV: All right. Well, uh, good luck. I'll see you a couple months? Years? I mean, I will never see you again, but I will see you again, hopefully.

Tass: "Yeah. Ooh, that was some mental cartwheels. Good luck, man. I ... You know, I don't know what else to say besides, shit I love you, brother. And I can't thank you enough for everything that you've done for us."

Megan: "I hope you have some fun adventures." And I give him a hug.

Rev: REV: Thanks. I, uh ... Well, I think I might kind of live out the life I always dreamed of.

Jake: "You earned it."

Rev: REV: Thanks.

Rev: And he sticks the silver doorknob into the door, opens it, and steps in to the Inn that Wanders.

Jake: All right. Let's go upstairs

Rev: Nash has the spell all set up, and he has the room ready, as well as the ring.

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: All right. If there's anything else that you want to get done, now's the time.

Tass: "Just one last thing." And I call Damien.

Rev: You hear outside the screech of tires, and then the loud rev of an engine. And a car is turned off, and you hear someone approaching the castle, and then you hear a smack sound.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Oh, the hell is that?

Jake: "Sorry."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Fucking forcefield or something?

Jake: "Yeah. Be right out. He can't get in. You'll have to go."

Tass: "Oh, right."

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass:

"OK, I'll be right back. I want to make this as quick of a transition as possible. So once I'm up here, let's be walking through, OK?"

Jake: "OK."

Tass: And I'll go down.

Rev: Yeah. You go down, and Damien is there waiting.

Tass: "Hey, sorry. It's a whole protection thing." And I'll step outside of it with him. "So I'm gonna do something real quick, and I don't know what that's gonna look like. And then hit me with it."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah, all right.

Tass: And I think I'm not even 100 percent sure how this works, but I just want to focus on that energy, that Chosen magic, and release it.

Rev: What you're expecting is something large and explosive, because of the sheer amount of energy you know is contained within this and what it can do. But it feels like lowering into a warm bath. You just feel this warmth radiate up your body, and you feel that warmth travel all through your body and then coalesce in the palm of your hand. And you see this glowing white pulse of energy in the palm of your hand.

Tass: And I release it.

Rev: As you do, it darts out of this cavern and away.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Huh. I was expecting something a little more showy than that.

Tass: "You know, I wasn't really sure what to expect."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: All right. Well, here we go.

Rev: And Damien reaches into his leather jacket and pulls out a long metal chain that looks familiar. It is the chain that he got from Strohm's.

Tass: Oh! OK. And I take it.

Rev: As you reach out to grab it, you see that the links start to glow molten. And as you touch it for a moment, it burns your hand, but then you feel all of that skin toughen up. And your skin kind of shifts for a moment slightly gray, and then back to its normal hue. But you do feel pressure at the top of your head, as two small horns protrude from your forehead.

Tass: "Whoa."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Welcome to the club.

Tass: "Thanks. This feels weird."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah.

Tass: "I, uh ... I know it's technically a deal, but thanks."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah. Good luck, man.

Tass: "You too. I really want this to work out, so that we can come back and finish the deal."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Me too.

Tass: "All right. Good luck." And I'm gonna turn to start walking back in.

Rev: You pass through the barrier into the castle. And for a brief moment, you feel resistance, and then it becomes a headache. Like it feels bad being in here.

Tass: "Oh, the barrier! God!" I press through. If it just feels like resistance and not full stop, I want to keep moving.

Rev: You push your way through, back to the third floor. And as you arrive, Nash nods.

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: We all set?

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: Nash indicates for you all to step into the ring, and then he moves to the far side of the room and begins to recite the spell. As he does, energy flows out of the adjoining room and into him. And you can hear the sound of his voice repeating from the other room. As the number of his repeating voices double, then triple, his words become more labored, as you can see all the lines in his aged face deepening and the color of his skin becoming paler and paler. Without breaking his recitation, he reaches a hand down into his coat pocket and pulls out a small hypodermic needle, the contents red and shimmering. He looks at you, Megan, and gives you a reassuring smile, then injects himself in the arm with the contents of the needle. The vitality flows back into him as his hair darkens and his skin flushes. The chorus of chants grows more numerous and louder as you watch this tug of war between the spell's life draining cost and the werewolf serum's regenerative properties.

With one final movement, Nesh opens his hand towards the room filled with a cacophony of voices, and bends down and lays the other hand on the metal ring inlaid into the floor. And then you are gone.

SFX: FUTURISTIC MUSIC STARTS

Rev: You've all traveled through portals before. That feeling of falling. But this is different. It feels like you're being pushed, rocketed forward as if tied to the front of a bullet train. Waves of energy bombard you, and you can feel it flowing into you, changing you, breaking you apart and rebuilding you. There's a flash of light, and then you tumble to the cold stone floor. You fight to regain your breath, and as you do, the lights of the room kick on. And in the entrance from the study stands a petite young woman with long silver-blond hair, shuffling a deck of tarot cards with a practiced hand. She's wearing a short black dress with long sleeves and a high neckline. Stars and other celestial bodies decorate the silver belt at her waist, and around her neck is a long crystal necklace, showing the seven phases of the moon.

Kim: "Hmm. Off by 30 seconds or so. I hope I'm not getting rusty."

Rev: She calls over her shoulder.

Kim: "Hey, they're here."

Rev: There's a brief pause, and then a man in his late 80s walks into the room with the assistance of a cane. He's dressed in dark pants and a long, gray coat. He has thick glasses, a ring of wild white hair, and a metal clockwork hand. James Francis Tincher gives you all a savage grin.

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Welcome to the resistance.

SFX: FUTURISTIC MUSIC CONTINUES

Rev: End of Season Three.

SFX: FUTURISTIC MUSIC FADES

Rev: Well hi, everybody. Welcome to the end of the episode. I have got a few different things to tell you about. The first, of course, is the winners of the cosplay contest to celebrate our third anniversary. As always, the winners were drawn at random, and ... Well, I'm glad. Because it would have been impossible to decide. We had a dress that was the burning Halifax Theater, we had Ferguson from Elnore, we even had Jeff and Eddie make an appearance. With all that said, the winner of the pile of goodies from my swag hoard is Amanda as Baba Yaga's hut. The winner of the gift certificate to our merch store is Joe Riley as Trog, our favorite goblin chef. And the winner of the game of Monster of the Week run by me for them and three of their friends is Susan as Anastacia, the current head of the IPT. Thank you again to everyone who entered and helped us celebrate our three years.

And an interesting side note: today's episode is not only the end of Season Three, it is not only on the date that marks our three year anniversary, but it's also our 150th episode. All three at once, same episode. I couldn't have planned that if I tried. [Laughs]

So a few things going forward. There is a lot going on here. Scheduling for conventions, people moving, taking time to finally see friends and family now that we're all vaccinated. So we are going to take a break between Seasons Three and Four. Season Four of Other Side of the Coin will start on Wednesday, August 4th. But I mean, come on, you know we're not gonna leave the feed silent for June and July.

So for the next four episodes, we are doing a D&D one shot run by me, featuring Jake, Kim, Megan, and Tass playing as characters decided by the poll I posted earlier this month, using the Ancestry and Culture mechanics by Arcanist Press. Over 150 of you saw my Twitter post and voted to decide their classes, their ancestry, and their culture. And there are some very fun things going on there. So I have built their characters for them based off of your votes, and they will be handed their characters on-mic. And that one shot will take us to June 30th, where for the next four weeks we'll be bringing you a new one page RPG a week, each run by a different member of the cast. And then that last week of July, July 28th, will be a Season Three Q&A, with a little teaser at the end for Season Four, which will begin the next week.

So if you have any questions about Season Three you'd like to ask myself or the cast, please submit those through the website — thecritshowpodcast.com — or email them to us at thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com by Friday, July 2nd. And we will answer those for you on the Q&A episode that'll come out on July 28th.

OK, that was a lot of dates. [Laughs] Really, the takeaway here is that Season Four in the far flung future, adding a new character at the table, begins on August 4th. And between now and then, we have got a lot of fun things in store for you.

As always, thank you all so much for being here. It means the world to us, and we wouldn't be where we are if it wasn't for every one of you. Thank you for listening every week, for sharing your love of the show with us and with others, and for being one of the most welcoming communities on the Web. Thanks for being here. And we will see you next week.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

Carolyn: The Critshow is a Critshow Studios production, edited and produced by Brandon Wentz, with music by Jake Pierle. You can find more information about us at thecritshowpodcast.com. To keep up to date with upcoming live shows, contests, and other special events. Follow us at The Critshow on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. For even more weekly content, join us at Patreon.com/TheCritshow.