

The Monster's Capitol (S4, E2)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: We're only on the second episode of the new season, and I ... I have nothing for the intro.

Jake: Nothing has happened.

Rev: This is the closest thing to an event that has happened to me in the last week.

Jake: [laughs] Just period.

Megan: [laughs]

Jake: This is it. So ... But it was so strange. It was kind of disconcerting. It's well-established I have a sweet tooth. And so I like baby carrots because they're a little sweeter than normal carrots. And so I buy like the little packs of baby carrots.

Tass: Hell yeah.

Rev: Bought a pack of four of them and I opened the last one today. And instead of baby carrots, it was — someone had just taken regular carrots and cut them shorter.

Jake: Isn't that what baby carrots are?

Kim: Yeah.

Jake: I thought baby carrots were just what couldn't be like salvaged of whole carrots, shaved down to be smaller.

Rev: No, I think they're, like, premature.

Kim: Oh, I don't know about that.

Jake: I think we might have to enter a research phase here, to learn about baby carrots.

Megan: Yes.

Jake: OK. Interesting. A baby carrot is a carrot harvested before reaching maturity and sold at the smaller size. A baby-cut carrot is a small piece cut from a larger carrot. Baby-cut carrots are often marketed as baby carrots.

Rev: Interesting.

Megan: Oh, they're imposters!

Rev: Yeah. So like, I've never had that happen before, in all the years I've been buying them. And then I opened that bag today, and it was just ... I was like, did someone just, "Oh, we don't have enough today. Get me a regular carrot. I'll make do."

Tass: And hack it up.

Jake: I'll make it babies.

Megan: But it was ...

Kim: [snorts]

Megan: But it was, like, just chopped up? Like a carrot but like just cut? Or was it like shaped to look like baby carrots?

Rev: No, it was not shaped to look like baby carrots.

Megan: But it was the same — it was the same package.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: They hadn't got 'em on a lathe yet.

Rev: Yeah. It was —

Megan: [laughs] Yeah, right?

Rev: It was like a pack of four that came bundled together, and just one of them was carrot sticks.

Megan: Was the imposter.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: [laughs]

Jake: Was it ...

Rev: A Willy Wonka-esque contest? I kinda thought so.

All: [laugh]

Jake: Congratulations! You found the shitty ones. Welcome to the carrot factory, idiot.

Megan: That sounds pretty cool, actually. All I'm imagining is that one scene from The Simpsons where they cut down a full sized tree and then like, basically put it on a lathe and like shave it down into a bowling pin.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: [laughs]

Tass: My god ...

Jake: Were these packaged, like ... At like — by the grocery store? Or was this something that was like packaged elsewhere and delivered to the grocery store?

Rev: Packaged by the company. They had a sticker that connected all four packets together.

Jake: See, OK, that's wild. Like I could see like a grocery store employee, like if they were just bundling things in the produce section to screw that up, or be like, "Oh no, I messed up. Oh well." I can't believe it. I can't believe that made it through quality control. You should tweet at them.

Rev: I should. I can't believe this intro made it through quality control.

Megan: Did it taste different from the other carrots?

Rev: Oh, yeah. More bitter. They weren't as sweet. They just tasted like regular carrots.

Jake: Are you sure that you weren't just bitter because you got the wrong carrots?

Rev: I mean, now I'm not so sure. I'm trying to think. I feel like there's some good carrot pun.

Jake: To take us out on?

Megan: Come on, Tass. Come on, Tass.

Kim: Come on, Tass.

Rev: This is the moment you were born for, after a year of ...

Tass: No. No, I remember. I made a carrot pun and it was so universally shit upon that I ...

Jake: [laughs]

Jake: I don't recall.

Megan: I'm gonna need a refresher here. I'm not sure if I remember this.

Kim: Yeah, OK, you said it, but that was before Megan and I were at the table.

Rev: That's true.

Kim: We really appreciate your puns.

Megan: If you had heard me listening to the intros of Hero Salad, and how hard I laughed and sometimes had to stop driving because I was laughing so hard. I think it's time for a revisit.

Tass: OK. I don't remember exactly what the setup was, but it was something about a ring being 24 carrot gold. And they were just like, "OK." I was like, yeah, all right, let's go. [chuckles] Time to move on.

Jake: You know, there might have been potential for that one, but the delivery this time.

Megan: Yeah.

Tass: Yeah.

Jake: I've got — how about this? I've got a related story.

Rev: OK.

Jake: So it's well established that I've got a comedy tooth, right? I like funny things. So I ...

All: [laugh]

Jake: I tried to purchase a humorous intro, and instead what I got was this.

Tass: You should tweet at them.

All: [laugh]

Rev: Yeah, please tweet at them to let them know.

Kim: Please don't tweet at us.

Rev: Please flood Kim with your responses to this intro this week. That's @TheCritshow on Twitter. It's time to let the recap roll.

Megan: [laughs]

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Tass: "James?"

Jake: I want to run over and give him a hug. "I can't believe this worked!"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: You getting here or me getting here? Because both of them were a bit tricky.

Jake: "Both, yeah."

Tass: "Yeah, for sure."

Megan: I think I am very, very much trying to open a chat room with the boys.

Rev: You don't hear anything.

Megan: "So what did you guys do to make it a possibility that we can become these people? I mean, you said that this Fiona is the leader of The Red Line? Obviously, people are going to know what she looks like. But they won't think that I'm not her, right?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: It's a mix of technology and magic in perfect harmony. Hacking the Internet and the brain and the memory at the same time.

Kim: "I had a vision about you. Or really, about Brizack. There's this person named Zui. They're part of the Court of the Silver Wings. I guess once upon a time, Brizack and Zui, the two of you had this like battle of magical powers. You had a magical artifact that you weren't forthcoming about, and so you won under false pretenses. And Zui found out about that and held a grudge. And now Zui knows that you're coming into Chicago, and they have not forgotten about what Brizack did."

Rev: And Kim, as you explain this to Jake, you turn your head a little bit and look out the window. And you see a mile marker and have the sudden realization that the mile marker you saw in the vision is just five miles ahead.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Kim, you are riding in the car with Jake and you have just had this vision of Zui, the knight of the Court of the Silver Wing, flying down the highway to intercept him. And as you turn to tell Jake the vision that you had more specifically, you glance at the mile marker outside of the window and realize the one you saw Zui fly by is only five miles up ahead.

Kim: "Oh my gosh, they're coming right now. We have five miles before Zui's gonna get us. He's flying right towards us in this big suit of armor and he's got this scary sword."

Jake: "Are your visions like gonna happen no matter what, or is this something we can do something about?"

Kim: "Uh, I mean, we can get into the details of the exact — certain visions and uncertain visions — but if we don't act right now to change it, this will 100 percent happen. And this is 100 percent gonna happen in five miles. Unless we, like, I don't know, drive off the road?"

Jake: Is there an exit between here and there?

Rev: There are. You can see both in one mile and in two miles, there are exits.

Jake: "Do you know how they're tracking me? Like if we turn off here, are they just gonna know where we've gone?"

Kim: "I have no idea. You're the one that's got the magical powers!"

Jake: "You see the future!"

Kim: "I have no idea, Jake! Brizack. I don't know what I'm supposed to call you."

Jake: "Jake's fine."

Kim: "OK."

Jake: I just cut hard for the nearest exit, I guess.

Rev: Then what?

Jake: I think I want to take the exit and like, screech to a halt like in an alley or something where we've got line of sight on the highway, to see what he does when he hits that spot. Like if he keeps going because we're not where he expected, or do they, like, bank hard in our direction like somehow he's got a magnet on me?

Rev: All right. I think this is gonna be Escape a Situation. When you take advantage of an opening to escape a situation, roll with Blood. On a hit, you get away and choose one. On a 7 to 9, the MC chooses one as well.

Jake: OK. Eight.

Rev: All right. So you choose one and I choose one. And the options are ... You suffer harm during your escape, you end up in another dangerous situation, you leave something important behind, you owe an NPC a debt for their aid, you give into your base nature and mark corruption.

Jake: You end up in another dangerous situation.

Rev: All right. And I'm going to pick you leave something important behind. What we see here is you screech the tires and you turn off of the highway and you peel down onto the main street that goes underneath it, and you pull the car around into an alley so that you can watch. 20, 30, 40 seconds go by. And up on the highway, you do see Zui fly past, and then they circle right where you turned off and they lower. And they are dressed in this fine silver armor. They have large gossamer wings and long green hair, and this huge shimmering blade. And you see them come back up into the air. And in their other hand, they're holding your license plate. It seems to have come off when you took that hard turn. And you can see that they study the information, and then throw it back down on the road and take back off towards Chicago.

Kim: "Who was that car registered to?"

Jake: "Oh, probably the IPT."

Kim: "Huh, OK. That's ... That's gonna maybe raise some interesting questions as to why you, part of the Order of the Ley Line, is driving a car ... Um ... [exhales] I should have talked to James about that before we hooked that up for you. I just thought you'd be so happy to see it. It was in your file that you were, like, really into this car."

Jake: [laughs] All right. So Zui just dumped the license plate there on the road?

Rev: Yep. And as you are having this conversation in the alley, there is a pound on your back window.

Kim: [gasps]

Jake: I want to look and see what it is.

Rev: There's a very large werewolf wearing jeans and a flannel shirt, hands on his hips, staring at your back window.

Jake: "Sorry. Are we in your way?"

Rev: WEREWOLF PARKING ATTENDANT: Twenty dollars an hour to park here.

Jake: "Oh, I didn't realize. Sorry. We're getting out of here."

Rev: WEREWOLF PARKING ATTENDANT: But you've already parked.

Jake: "I don't ..." I turn to Kim again. "Do you have twenty dollars?"

Kim: "Yes, of course I do."

Jake: "Sorry. I'm just not really liquid right now."

Kim: I'll reach into my purse and pull out twenty dollars and hand it to him.

Jake: I'll hand it to this werewolf out the window.

Rev: WEREWOLF PARKING ATTENDANT: Pleasure doing business with you.

Jake: "Yeah, likewise."

Rev: WEREWOLF PARKING ATTENDANT: Still got 57 more minutes.

Jake: [laughs]

Rev: And he chuckles and walks back into the alley.

Jake: OK. I want to use some wizard moves here.

Rev: All right. What do you want to do?

Jake: Well first I want to Channel, to get some hold to use my magical effects.

Rev: OK. And so Channeling is just you gathering up your magic.

Jake: Yep. I channel and collect my magics and I roll with Spirit.

Rev: All right.

Jake: That is a ten. So I hold 3. No caveats. And my hold lasts until I spend it or until the scene ends.

Rev: What does it look like when you harness your power here? Like, what does your magic look like?

Jake: I think the air around me ... It's almost like a heat mirage on the highway? That like as I am kind of channeling, as I am taking this magic energy, it is coming from that tangible surrounding magic. And so you can just see, like, not a void, but, you know, like

something's funky about the air around me while I take this energy from it, until it is within me to be utilized.

Rev: Almost like if you played the video of a pebble dropping into calm water in reverse. Like ripples coming towards you.

Jake: Yes.

Rev: OK.

Jake: So I'm going to use a hold to teleport myself a short distance within the scene I'm in. I want to go recover the license plate.

Rev: Yeah. I think that this is something you're familiar with, as well. So there is no, like, risk of teleporting in front of a car. You know.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: You're not playing Frogger, here.

Jake: Yeah. I feel like this is — I mean, as you described it — like I can just kind of feel ... The magical energy's, like, tangible.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: So I think this is just ... Especially this being an effect that I'm real comfortable with, that this is just kind of an intuitive thing. That I'm like, I need to go get that. Seems like I'm gonna get spotted if I go just run over there on foot. I've got a thought. And just kind of feeling this out.

Rev: And then is there any specific, like, color to your teleportation, to your magic when it's expelled?

Jake: The teleport, I don't think so. I don't think there's like a color to that. There's probably a similar kind of shimmer. Like you know, kind of a disruption of the air around

me, and maybe like where I just was for like a moment after I'm gone. We'll see about the other things I can do.

Rev: Yeah. So you teleport over and you're able to pick up the license plate.

Jake: And then a second hold to get back to the car.

Jake: OK.

Kim: "That was amazing."

Jake: "Thanks. I've never done that that way before."

Kim: "That way. What do you — what do you mean?"

Jake: "Well, I've been able to teleport."

Kim: "Yeah."

Jake: "But not like, uh ... I don't know. Usually it's like from within. Does that make sense?"

Kim: "Yeah, I think so."

Jake: "Yeah. And this was like from without. I kinda ... I kinda harnessed that one."

Rev: So what are you doing now? You've got your license plate.

Jake: I was gonna say I put it in the glove compartment, but I know I'm gonna get pulled over if I don't put it back on the car.

Rev: [chuckles]

Jake: So ... Guess I'm gonna get out and reaffix it. And then if Zui flew off like a couple minutes ago and I haven't seen a sign of them again, I'm gonna get back on the highway and start booking it, speeding a little bit.

Rev: So as the two of you continue your journey back to Chicago ... Tass, you have landed in Chicago and collected luggage. There was luggage for you at the carousel.

Tass: "Huh, weird." I think maybe pop it open and see what's in there.

Rev: There's clothing and some notebooks. Just kind of all the stuff that you feel like you would need if you were moving somewhere pretty suddenly.

Jake: OK. I'm gonna walk out and look for whoever's supposed to pick me up.

Rev: As you walk out, there is a familiar black muscle car. The windows are very darkly tinted. But as you step out, there is a beep of the horn.

Tass: "I'll be damned." I'm gonna walk up and open the passenger door.

Rev: And inside is Damien O'Doyle, and his eyes widen as the surprise of seeing you hits him.

Tass: "Well I'll be damned."

Rev: As you lean in to talk to him, lightning fast he backhands you and gives you an almost imperceptible headshake 'no.' And then he leans back into his seat.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Shut up and get moving.

Rev: And he pops the trunk for you to put your luggage in.

Tass: "Yep." And I do.

Rev: You throw your luggage into the trunk and then climb into the passenger seat. And as you do, movement in the back seat catches your eye. And just over your shoulder, you see a small blue-skinned imp sitting on the rear deck. And it's just watching you, and its eyes are going back and forth between you and Damien.

Tass: OK. Then yeah, I am going into the mode of like I'm caressing my jaw and just going into subservience, here.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: We'll see if Lady Jencie can whip you back into shape. Seems like you've fallen apart a bit, and I can't quite keep the reins on you. So I'll still be in charge of you, but ... Well, we all know we answer up to her, so. You got any questions while we go?

Rev: And he pulls the car out into the flow of traffic.

Tass: "Sorry, sir. Will I be working with you closely here, or will I be out on my own?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: It'll be a little bit of both. Depends what the good lady requests.

Tass: "All right." And I shut up because I'm terrified to say anything.

Rev: Yeah. Damien also give us a quick glance into the rear view mirror, and you can see that he's tracking the little thing that's walking back and forth on the seat, just watching you two. And he nods and turns the music up. And it's a very short and uneventful ride. And the car pulls up in front of this large, beautiful house in the middle of Chicago. You would recognize it as the Archbishop's Residence. He pulls up to the front of it and turns the car off. He opens the door and gets out, and you see that little creature jumps out of his car door and sprints into the building ahead of him.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Holy shit, man. It's good to see you.

Tass: "It's good to see you, too."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: How the hell did you pull this off? Like this whole identity thing? Like, I know that you're who you are, but my brain is telling me that, like, you're also Raguel.

Tass: "Yeah, it's kind of a whole thing. We had help when we got here, and they knew we were coming and they hooked us up with these identities, I guess."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: But like in my ... In my head.

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah, it's Tincher magic, let me put it that way. There's some technology, there's some magic. There's stuff that they did to have this ready for us."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Oh, gotcha. Gotcha.

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Well, sorry about the warm welcome. She makes me take one of those little imp things with me for some of the jobs from time to time. And they're like her eyes and ears.

Tass: "Seems like a lot's changed."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah. Man, as these powers, as they grew ... Like I used to kind of be my own thing. But this family. It was like they ... I don't know how, but they got ... The best way I can describe it is they got all of our contracts. Like we all are with them, now.

Tass: "Holy shit."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah.

Tass: "Man. We had a run-in with them a while back, actually. It was Viribus and Infortuni? But it was quick. It wasn't anything super intense."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Oh. Yeah, I don't know Viribus, but I remember hearing about Infortuni. Apparently he'd bent the truth about the success on a couple of his jobs to the higher ups, and they found out and he got himself exorcised.

Tass: "Oh ... OK."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah. Well, we better get inside.

Tass: "Yeah. All right. Oh god, I have so many questions, but no time for that."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yep.

Tass: And I'll follow him in.

Rev: You walk through the front door of this house, and it is beautifully decorated. There is a large silver tea set that is set out. And from down a double staircase walks the leader of this group, Lady Jensie. She is dressed in a very ornate silver southern gown. She has blue skin, and large horns that curl back, and slick black hair that goes down her back and turns into curls.

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Well, hello there. I believe that you are our new man for the street, is that correct?

Tass: "That's correct." And I'm like kind of glancing, like side-eyeing Damien and anybody else that might be in here, to see if they bow or do anything in deference.

Rev: You don't notice that they do.

Tass: OK.

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Well, that is just wonderful. My understanding from our good friend Damien here is that you could be beneficial to us. And you were giving him just a wee bit of trouble keeping the reins on, so he had to bring you up north, is that right?

Tass: "That seems to be the case, yes. But it is an honor to be here and to have the chance to prove myself. To you, in particular."

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Well, I like the sound of that. Why don't you sit down and have some tea? Damien, you're excused.

Rev: Damien takes a breath as if he's about to say something, and then he turns and exits back outside. Lady Jensie glides over to a very ornate couch, sits, and pats the spot next to her.

Tass: And I will sit.

Rev: She pours you a cup of tea, pours one for herself, and takes a finger sandwich from one of the trays.

Rev: LADY JENSIE: So tell me, what exactly is the kind of thing that you specialize in? What exactly can you offer to our fair establishment?

Tass: "Put simply, I'm good in a fight. I'm good at tracking people down and bringing them back, if that's what's needed. And if they don't need brought back? That too."

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Oh, a bit of a ruffian and a bit of a bloodhound, is that right?

Tass: "I suppose so."

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Well good, good. There are many things on these streets that need to be done and need to be done quietly. Some of them, perhaps not so quietly.

Tass: "I'm a little better at not quietly, but I can accommodate either way."

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Well, that's very good to hear. Now, tell me a little bit about how you failed Damien. What exactly was it he wanted you to do that you couldn't quite carry out? I understand that when someone fails at a job, that could be an issue with the management, not the worker.

Tass: "Ah, I see. I'll take the blame on this one. If you know Damien half as well as I do, he likes to make a little bit of a show and that's where he excels. And this was a moment where I was supposed to also make a show and make a statement. But who he sent me after, it was a little personal. I wanted them to hurt. I wanted to have that to myself. And so I didn't make as big of a show as he'd like. Didn't really send the message that he was trying to send. But I got the gist of the job done."

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Oh, I see. Well, strong and not so silent ...

Rev: And she starts moving her hand across the couch, onto your elbow and up to your shoulder, and then she places her hand on your collarbone.

Rev: LADY JENSIE: That's very interesting. It seems like you don't follow the exact orders you are given.

Rev: And like lightning, you feel her thumb move around your neck and she starts to stand, raising you as she does.

Rev: LADY JENSIE: But in this house, we obey the orders we are given. Do you understand me?

Tass: "Yes, my lady. I completely understand. And from what I understand, I think we'll agree on most anything anyway."

Rev: She hears that last part, and the smile comes back to her face. She lowers you gently down onto the couch.

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Well, that's good to hear. Now don't let me down, or there will be severe ramifications.

Tass: [clears throat] "No, my lady. I will not."

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Well. Perhaps go out, get your bearings. Of course, you're more than welcome to stay here for the time being. We will find you a place for yourself in the city proper. Perhaps a nice apartment. But for at least tonight, you can stay here. Enjoy the tea.

Rev: And she turns without another word and walks back upstairs.

Tass: [exhales] "Hoped I wouldn't be into that."

Jake: Roll for how horny this made you.

All: [laugh]

Rev: Back with Grandpa Tincher and Megan. You have made the drive to Chicago. And as you drive through Chicago with him, he does make a stop at the Fourth Presbyterian

Church. It is covered with large Gothic towers, and ivy spills down the walls and the towers on it. He pulls into a small parking lot across the street and indicates over to it.

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Once we get everything set up, that will be your spot, where you will work with and train the other hunters. It's the meeting location.

Megan: "Wow, that's really beauti ... Sorry. Did you just say I'm supposed to train people?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Well, yes. You are taking the place of Fiona, and she is the faction leader. But Kit is here. He was Fiona's second and he is ... Would have been moved up to the first, if you had not arrived. But it was the perfect identity, so.

Megan: "OK, but this person doesn't know anything about me. They think I'm Fiona."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Correct.

Megan: "OK. OK, cool. Um ... Right. I'm in charge of these hunters. I'm gonna lead them and help train them. So what do I — what do I need to do in there ... Kim said to lay low?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: You don't have to go in now. You can come back with me to my place, since we're going to meet them all later tonight.

Megan: "OK. Yeah, that sounds good. That sounds good, to not have to do this yet. Sure."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: OK. Are you OK? Is there anything you'd like to ... To talk about?

Rev: And as he asks this, he pulls the car out of the parking lot.

Megan: "Oh, I don't know if I need to talk through anything, really. Just ... We didn't really know what we were getting into, coming to the future. We knew that Nash was going to be successful and that we had to track down, you know, the batteries. But I don't know. I guess I just expected to be able to do what I could do, play to my strengths. And this is something that's been kind of like a secondary training, you know, with Anastacia, of like

learning to fight vampires and monsters and stuff. But like ... But like my first mission with her, like, I didn't do that. I just made friends with them and we went and had a pizza party, like ... I don't — I don't know how I'm supposed to give up everything I've been able to do, all of my powers, all of my abilities, and still do the mission — still do what we're supposed to do — but lead, like, a pack of fighters."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Well, if it makes you feel any better, the hunters ... I think hunter's a little bit of an aggressive name? Um, a big part of what they do is just protecting other humans. It's more reactionary? Because if we were to simply go out and hunt, it would draw a lot of attention to us. Um, it's more about setting up safe spaces and creating locations where people can go, and hunters will be there to protect you from whatever might be pursuing.

Megan: "Yeah, I guess that makes sense, that monsters would be a little more forward in their aggression towards humans now."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes. And at current, it is rare. I don't know if you've noticed as we've driven through the town, a lot of people look human. They're not. But you can't tell until they do whatever it is they can do.

Megan: "Do I lead like a multipurpose monster hunting group? I mean, I saw some stuff in the file mentioned vampires a little more prominently."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes. It's ... You know, I said that you can't really tell whether someone is a monster or a monstrous or a human. You know, except a ghost. You can tell a ghost by looking at a ghost, because you only see them partially there. But with humans, you can't really tell, except some vampires seem to be able to. Vampires are the bulk of what we fight. I don't know if it's because they try to feed off of people who just look human, because obviously they don't have like a very showy power, maybe? But then that's the danger of maybe you sink your teeth into a wizard, or something. But it's mostly vampires. We don't get a lot of run-ins with other types of things that are chasing down humans.

Megan: "So is that why the church, then? Is that like a defense mechanism, location kind of thing?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: It was not initially, but it is certainly a wonderful bonus.

Megan: "Cool. Um ..."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: It is, in fact, consecrated ground.

Megan: "Cool. Do you have any idea of why I lost my powers?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: When you and Tass were talking earlier, he had mentioned the idea of perhaps whatever gave you power being destroyed or being dead, or just simply not around in this time. That's a very viable option. The other option would be that if it was something that was sentient, that it knew that it had given its powers to someone, perhaps your absence made it choose a new host.

Megan: "OK. All right. That makes sense."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: I could at some point put some time into researching it, I suppose. I mean, now that I have met you, and if you could tell me a little bit more specifically about what it was that you did, and I could look back through the various databases to see if other people appeared that seemed to have that kind of power, maybe around the time that you left. Um, or ... I mean, so many things were lost during the war, that who knows. Any number of creatures could have been giving you your powers and you didn't know it, or maybe they didn't know it and perhaps they died in the war. It's hard to guess, but there is a decent amount of research that I could do, at least.

Megan: "That be great. I was gonna say I have no idea how to even go about beginning to figure out what that could have been, in hindsight. I mean, I did research for like a really long time trying to figure out, like, why I could do this stuff. And, you know, meeting the guys and the IPT, and everything. Nobody seemed to recognize my abilities as like, "Oh, you're a this thing," you know? But yeah. So I used to be able to kind of open up a mental link and talk to people telepathically. I could also move things with my mind. I could also kind of use that ability with telepathy to like get kind of a gauge on where monsters would be, or what they were thinking or planning. It was a lot of vibes kind of situation. But also I had this thing where, I don't know, I could kind of just manipulate a situation so that coincidentally, things would go in my favor."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Ah, so much more along the lines of telepathy or telekinesis than, say, powers like magic. Like shooting a fireball, or something like that.

Megan: "Oh, yeah. Like all this stuff that Jake does? No, I can't — I don't understand any of it."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: No, I don't know many monsters that have, like, brain powers. You know, a lot of them are powers from their blood or other abilities. But simply things that allow you to use your mind to manipulate others or project things out, or ... When you would manipulate things, was it like seeing a moment in the future and changing it? Or was it seeing something in the moment and just nudging it a bit, so that something would go differently?

Megan: "Yeah, definitely not like a visions thing, or like seeing the future or anything like that. Nothing, like, occurred in that moment. It was just I would see a situation and it'd be like, 'Oh man, it'd be really cool if that icicle fell right now,' and then it did."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Interesting. I wonder ... I wonder if you were subconsciously using your telekinesis to manipulate your environment.

Megan: "Yeah. I guess it could maybe be like a subconscious way of using my telekinesis?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Fascinating. Definitely gives me a much different area to research through, and it certainly rules out a great many things.

Megan: "That's good, I guess. Do you think that if this thing, or whatever — being, entity, item? I don't know, whatever it is that has given me this power. You know, if they're not dead, if they're still around, if there's still a possibility ... If I wasn't there anymore and they chose somebody else for this to go to, I don't know. Can I get it back?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: I don't know. I suppose it depends on who or what it is, and if you want it to know you're back.

Megan: "Oh. Yeah. I mean, I've never been contacted by anything, but it didn't really seem like I was being controlled by something, either. Like I would think that if it was bad

it would try and make me do bad stuff, but I don't know. I guess ... I guess one step at a time."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes. We'll see what we can possibly narrow it down to, first. And maybe if it's like the ... Oh, what was that, in the comic books? The Crimson Gem of Cyttorak, where there was a being inside of it and it gave Cain Marko powers. And then a new host came along, but he wanted them back. And so he went and fought them, and ... [clears throat] Got them back.

Megan: "I'm not familiar, but I do want to hear all about this, actually."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Oh, it's very good.

Megan: "OK, cool. Also hey, how's my grandpa doing?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Good, I think. As I said before, it was quite a surprise for both of us to find the other in that place. But after a few visits, he accepted who I was and opened up to me. He seemed to be very happy to have someone to talk to.

Megan: "Yeah, that sounds about right. Thanks for, I guess, going to him and helping him out."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes, of course.

Rev: And the two of you continue your drive towards the 606.

Inside of Jake's car, we have pulled up in front of The Vault.

Kim: "Well, this is me."

Jake: "Cool. And remind me, where am I going?"

Kim: "You are going to the Rookery Building."

Jake: "Got it." I check my phone to see if the GPS still works.

Rev: Your phone says it has 793 updates waiting.

Jake: OK.

Kim: Yeah, actually in all of the envelopes that I gave all three of you, there would have been phones with them.

Tass: Nice.

Jake: Perfect.

Rev: Pre-programmed.

Jake: Perfect. Burners. Then I will type Rookery in the GPS and head that way.

Rev: So Kim, you head towards the front door of The Vault, and a man in a very nice suit looks at you, nods, and opens the door.

Kim: "Hey, Al."

Rev: He nods.

Kim: I walk into the elevator.

Rev: The elevator opens on the top floor. And as it opens, standing in the lobby, is Strohm.

Rev: STROHM: Ah, right on time.

Kim: "As always."

Rev: STROHM: How has your day been?

Kim: [sighs] "It was pretty good. How are you?"

Rev: STROHM: Well enough, I suppose. There is a little trouble with Night, but when isn't there?

Kim: "Oof. Is there anything I can help with?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes, actually. It's been a few days. I think I would like to do a reading, if you don't mind.

Kim: "No, of course."

Rev: And she moves over to the door on the left and opens it up, which leads you both back into her private living quarters. And she goes into the living room and sits down on a very plush chair, with a table between you and her.

Kim: I pull out a small cone of incense out of my pocket and light it and place it in a incense burner that I actually have wrapped on a chain around my waist. I've got a little censer that just kind of is on my person at all times. And I take out my deck of tarot cards and I hand them to Strohm. "Could you shuffle these?"

Rev: STROHM: Yes, of course.

Rev: And she shuffles them for a moment and then sets them back on the table.

Kim: Great. I will pick them up and knock twice on top of the deck of tarot cards and blow very quickly across the top of them, and start a reading.

Rev: All right. So roll Soothsayer, and remind us all what this does.

Kim: Sure. When you turn to your prophetic tools to read someone's future, roll with Spirit. On a hit, the MC will tell you something new and interesting about their destiny. On a 10+, you may ask a follow up question; the MC will answer honestly. On a miss, you see vague shapes of what is to come, but something is obscuring your prophetic powers. The future you try to read is beyond your sight until you resolve the interference. Eleven.

Rev: All right. So with that, you get something new and interesting about Strohm's future, is that right?

Kim: Mmhmm.

Rev: And then you get to ask me a question.

Kim: I do. And you have to tell me the truth.

Rev: So the thing interesting about Strohm's future, when you lay out these cards and do the reading, is that the cards tell you that she is going to be reunited with an old acquaintance.

Kim: Do I get any indication as to who this acquaintance is?

Rev: Is that the question you'd like to ask me?

Kim: No, because I'm afraid that there's a better question I should ask you.

Rev: [laughs] Yeah, it just says ... The cards at this moment just tell you that it is an old acquaintance from the past.

Kim: OK. If I'm there when she meets this new person, what can I do to make sure that my dual loyalty to Mortalis is not discovered?

Rev: The thing that you can do when she reconnects with this old acquaintance that will allow you to keep your dual loyalty hidden is as much as possible, stand back and listen and try not to interject. Because I think the card that you turn up — again, you discussed earlier that your tarot deck is much larger and has additional things put inside of it. The card that you flip over is the image from old movie theaters, with the sketch of the person's face and their finger pressed up against their lips with the "Shhh!" And so you get the impression that the thing you can do to safeguard your secret is to be seen and not heard in that moment.

Rev: STROHM: Oh! Old acquaintance. That's interesting. Some new but old faces. That'll be nice.

Kim: "Yeah. I don't suppose that you saw that happening today?"

Rev: STROHM: No, not today. I did not.

Kim: "Hmm. Well gosh, who do you think it might be?"

Rev: STROHM: When you've lived a life as long as I have, most faces are old faces.

Kim: [chuckles]

Rev: STROHM: Except mine, of course.

Rev: And she looks at herself in a mirror and smiles.

Kim: [laughs]

"Do you mind if I hang around? I'm so curious as to who this might be."

Rev: STROHM: Oh, will this be today?

Kim: Ooh, did I get a timeline?

Rev: You did not.

Kim: "I don't know. I didn't see a specific time."

Rev: STROHM: Hmm. Well regardless, stay for dinner at least.

Kim: "OK."

Rev: Jake, you pull up outside of the Rookery. There are a few spots out in front of it that have reserved parking tags. And you do notice that one of the numbers matches a tag hanging from your rearview mirror.

Jake: Perfect. I will pull into that spot. Look up at the building, I'm like, "Oh, I know this place. They use this as the police headquarters in The Untouchables movie."

Rev: And as you're sitting there looking up at it, a man in dark robes and thin glasses steps out of the building and bends down a little bit and looks inside of your window.

Rev: WIZARD: Hello.

Jake: "Hello."

Rev: WIZARD: Are you Brizack?

Jake: "Yes sir, I am."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Ah, nice to meet you. I am The Lore Merchant. Would you like to come inside?

Jake: "Please."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Excellent. This building was acquired by us quite a number of years ago, and we have turned it into a beautiful place of knowledge and study. Of course, the Council of the Three do not stay here, but this is where we do the bulk of our business. How was your trip up?

Jake: "Mercifully uneventful."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Good to hear.

Rev: And he opens the double doors and leads you inside of the Rookery and starts to take you up a set of large marble stairs.

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: So as you are aware, because of the incident in Colorado before you arrived here, you are being sent here to prove that you can be given tasks and make up for past faults. So you have been assigned a ward to take care of while you are here. If you'll follow me, just right inside this room ...

Jake: I do. And I'm just, like, containing a panic at this idea of being responsible for another person. Yeah, I follow him.

Rev: He opens a door, and there is a playroom in front of you and there is a little girl with her back to you. She is in a pink gingham dress. It looks like she has a long, translucent cape on.

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Now, it should be known that this is a very important task. This ward comes from a different circle and a different faction. There was a little bit of scuffling over who would be the one to claim her, and we were able to sneak her out. And so this is a great, great tool for the Council of the Three to have in the future.

Rev: And the translucent cape on her back flips up and starts to flutter very quickly, and you realize it's a pair of translucent wings.

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Dani, your new guardian is here.

Rev: And she raises into the air and she turns towards you. She is covered in short brown hairs, and the top of her face is filled with two large, black compound eyes, and just below them extends a long, sharp mosquito's proboscis.

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.