

Whispered Plans (S4, E3)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Tass: So I got some news yesterday that made me both elated and ashamed at the same time.

Rev: [chuckles]

Tass: I discovered ...

Rev: I love this mixture already.

Tass: I discovered that my oldest nephew is learning Dungeons and Dragons finally.

Megan: Aww.

Jake: Nice!

Tass: So, elated that I get to maybe go over there and start leading them through some stuff. And, you know, I get to buy him dice and stuff now. I'm ashamed that I am not the one that got to teach him the first time. An old friend from high school, actually. My nephew is friends with his kids, and he's very big into all of that. He's got all the Warhammer stuff, like thousands of minifigs, and like just everything. So he is teaching his daughters and their friends. And so I was so happy to learn that.

Megan: How old is your nephew?

Tass: Thirteen.

Megan: OK. Nice. Nice, nice.

Tass: Yeah, that's gonna be a lot of money that I'm going to spend on those boys with that stuff.

Megan: What is he ... What's his character?

Tass: You know, he said that really all they've done is like go in and make a few different characters and like just kind of workshop it and do a few little scenarios, so he doesn't really know what he wants to play for the long haul yet.

Megan: Gotcha. I would really like to hear what character he comes up with for his first one, and what the name is. Because when my brother came to stay with me a few years back — he must have been like 10, maybe 11. He made a dragonborn fighter and I asked him what he wanted the name to be. And I said it could be anything you want. And he said, "Hmm ... McFury."

All: [laugh]

Megan: And I said ... I was like, I can't — what did you say? Did you say McFlurry? And he goes, "No, McFury." And I said, like ... And I spelled it out, like M-C-F-U-R-Y, like McFury? He goes, "Yeah, like from Avengers."

All: [laugh]

Megan: I said, you mean Nick Fury? And the look he gave me was just like, I don't — I don't know what you're saying. I was like, do you think Nick Fury's name is McFury? And he's like, "Yeah." I'm like ..

Tass: Aww ...

Megan: All right, man. McFury it is. That's your dragonborn fighter. I love it. I'm here for it.

Kim: I'd like a large McFury, please.

Rev: What was everybody's first character names? Like RPG character name?

Tass: Uh, Hecate Starsteel. Was a dwarf.

Kim: Lavinia Crowley.

Tass: Good one.

Rev: Yeah. Mine is the namesake of my nickname: Revington Bellweather.

Megan: I can not remember the name. I know it was a ranger and I had a sloth that would hang on me like a backpack and hand me arrows. And every now and then, could slowly reach out and scratch someone. But I cannot remember what her name was.

Rev: Was it McFury?

Megan: No, it was actually McFlurry.

Tass: Oh.

Rev: [laughs]

Megan: If I'm remembering correctly, actually. Now that you say that ...

Rev: Because she shot arrows in a flurry of just —

Megan: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Tass: Oh.

Megan: Yeah. No, it was because she was made out of ice cream. She was just a sentient broken ice cream machine.

Jake: Was my guy in Earthdawn K'trezra? What's the lizardfolk in Earthdawn?

Rev: T'skrang.

Jake: T'skrang.

Tass: Was it K'tralla?

Jake: K'tralla Mordock. That was his name, yeah.

Tass: Yes.

Rev: Nice.

Jake: Thank you.

Tass: Which after I discovered this stuff about, you know, my nephews, I was at like a wedding reception type thing and saw an old friend who listens to the show. Hey, buddy. Love you, Hewlett. And he was talking about it, and mentioned my name. And his girlfriend was like, "Oh my gosh, this is him?" And I was like, nope, we're not doing that!

All: [laugh]

Kim: Yes!

Tass: We're not doing that. Thank you. Nice to meet you. Hello. Like ... [laughs] Oh my god ...

Jake: First real brush with fame, right there.

Tass: Yup. Something like it.

Jake: How's it feel?

Tass: Weird.

Jake: You're wearing sunglasses indoors again, so I think it took.

Megan: You look so cool.

Tass: And I'll see you guys later.

All: [laugh]

Kim: I fangirled very similarly when I met Tass for the first time, so I get it.

Tass: Oh my god ...

Rev: Well, if you would like to fangirl over anybody in the group, particularly Tass ...

Tass: I hate you guys so much.

Rev: We are gonna be at Gen Con. Saturday night, we're having a meet up over at the Indiana Repertory Theater. You can go to thecritshowpodcast.com/gencon, because there is an RSVP list. You can sign up there. It is free to get in — you do not need a ticket for Gen Con. We're gonna do our meet up and then a live show as well. It is that Saturday, September 18th, I believe at 8:00 over at the Indiana Repertory Theater. It is just right across the street from where Gen Con is. I think we've got maybe 15 or 20 seats left, so you can head over to thecritshowpodcast.com/gencon to sign up for that.

Jake: Tass will be there, tearing phonebooks in half.

Tass: [rips paper]

Jake: Oh my god, he just did it.

Rev: Oh, nice. Nice.

Kim: Tass, will you sign my arm?

Jake: He's flexing, he's breaking his sleeves. He's ripping his sleeves clean off put.

Megan: I heard you say "tearing phonebooks in half," but for some reason I thought you were saying he was gonna be there, signing phonebooks.

All: [laugh]

Jake: Right where his name is in the phonebook.

Rev: If you bring your phonebook, Tass will sign it.

Megan: [laughs]

Tass: God ...

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: LADY JENSIE: Tell me a little bit about how you failed Damien?

Tass: "He likes to make a little bit of a show, and that's where he excels. I wanted them to hurt. And so I didn't make as big of a show as he'd like."

Rev: And like lightning, you feel her thumb move around your neck.

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

Tass: "Yes."

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.

Kim: "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.

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

There is a little girl with her back to you. 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's 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: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Jake, you are standing in the Rookery Building, the main location for the Order of the Ley Line. You have just been informed that you have a ward that you'll be in charge of. The small girl with her back to you has just buzzed into the air with a pair of translucent wings and turned to face you. She is covered in brown fur, has two large black compound eyes, and a long mosquito's proboscis.

Jake: "Hey, how are you?"

Rev: She signs to you, "I'm good. How are you?"

Jake: "I'm good. It's nice to meet you." I will turn back to Lore Merchant. "And so what exactly is my responsibility with her? Am I her pseudo parent for now?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: It's more of a bodyguard position, just to make sure that she stays safe from the other faction that would be interested in her.

Jake: "Is anybody looking for her? Is she in danger?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: The answer to those questions are different. Yes, people are looking for her. No, I don't believe she's in danger?

Jake: "Am I in danger?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Oh, yes. Most certainly.

Jake: "All right."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: We would be in danger if it was found that we are the ones that have her.

Jake: "OK. Is there anywhere specific I'm supposed to, like, keep her? Does she have ... Is there a residence for her, or is she just coming with me?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Really, it could be any number of things. She could go with you. You could stay here with her. We have a number of rooms set up. We have obviously many magical wards that keep anyone from scrying on this place or entering uninvited, so this has been a very good place to have her. So you could stay here, if you prefer.

Jake: "But this is a ... Is this a 24/7 guard duty? Like, I do not leave her unattended?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: I don't think it's that explicit. I suppose it's up to your discretion.

Jake: "OK."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Just as long as she stays safe.

Jake: "All righty. Well ..." I'm just, like, in my head, like, this complicates things. Uh ... "Who's looking for her?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: So the way that I understand it is that she is a member of The Lost Ones, but that there was some connection — perhaps the way that she feeds — that there was some draw to New Canterbury. And there was a skirmish between the two of them for who would get to have her and raise her as part of their faction. And in the scuffle, we were able to get her out. So both those groups are on the lookout for her.

Jake: "Well, how about this? I'll kick it here for a little bit. And, you know, you and I can kind of hang out and get to know each other a little better, and we'll figure out what we're doing from here."

Rev: She signs to you, "That sounds good."

Jake: "All right."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Well, excellent. I will leave you to it.

Rev: And The Lore Merchant turns and heads back down the stairs.

Jake: I'll sit down and, like, grab some toys to play along. "How old are you, Dani?"

Rev: She signs to you, "Seven, but eight in three weeks."

Jake: "Nice. We'll call it eight then, huh? Let's round up."

Rev: When you say that, there is some wrinkling underneath her very large eyes, that seems like the muscles flexing — as if she were smiling, if she had a mouth. So like, you get that little bit of —

Jake: [snorts] OK.

Rev: That little bit of wrinkle under the eye when someone smiles.

Jake: All right. I'll start playing with toys with her, asking her questions, finding out like what she likes, what she doesn't like, so that we can get along.

Rev: Yeah. She tells you that, you know, she doesn't really care for the toys here. They're very old. There's not a lot of electronics here.

Jake: Oh, I just — I take the one I've got and just chuck against the wall, then.

Rev: [chuckles] That's the thing that she doesn't like about living with wizards, is that electronics don't always seem to last very long or respond very well, because of all the magic energy in the air.

Jake: All right. I'll spend the rest of the day hanging out with her. And I guess once it's time for the rendezvous ... I mean, he said that, you know, she's been safe here and she's been here without me and it's warded and everything, so I'm just gonna let her know.

Like, "All right, I've gotta go run an errand. But, you know, you stay here and I'll be back in a little while."

Rev: And I think as you leave, The Lore Merchant does not really acknowledge the fact that you're leaving. And I think that throughout that conversation with Dani, she does tell you that it seems like he's too busy to do it. That was part of the issue, that it was interrupting whatever it is he's supposed to be doing.

Jake: OK. What does it seem like he's hard at work doing, on my way out?

Rev: He is going through books. He is marking pages. He has like three computer screens open. Taking information from them, jotting them down in blank books, sending information out. Like it seems like he is a hub of shared information.

Jake: All right.

Rev: So you climb back into your car and take off towards the 606.

Tass, you step out of the Archbishop's building after your chat with Lady Jensie, and see Damien next to his car in the circle driveway.

Tass: I think as I come out and see him, first thing I do is like check for one of those imps.

Rev: Yeah, you do not see one.

Tass: OK. "Hey, is it like chill to talk for a second out here?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah. Let's ... Let's move on a little bit.

Tass: "OK. Yeah. Let's ... Let's get moving for a second and then ... Well, I don't know. I kind of ... I need filled in on a couple of things."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: OK. Step in my office.

Tass: "All right."

Rev: And he climbs into the car.

Tass: Cool. So as we get going, "So obviously you know why I'm here. You know, with the deal and stuff that we made. We're coming here to figure some stuff out and then in theory, go back."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Tass: "I have some people I'm working with, and it seems like a nice little mix of people that are working for opposing forces, so to speak."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Uh-huh.

Tass: "Obviously, I trust you. I would love to bring you along and get you in on all of this. But I also don't know exactly how this works now. What your status is, how you have to operate. So I kind of want to ask you, like, how much do you want to know? How much do you want to be able to lean into plausible deniability, here?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: The more I know, the more I can be forced to say.

Tass: "Yeah, that's what I thought."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: And I suppose that's ... [chuckles] I wonder ...

Rev: And he looks at you. And when he looks at you, his eyes glow a little bit.

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: What's your birthday?

Tass: "My — my real birthday?"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: OK. That answers that.

Tass: "Oh. Oh!"

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah. If she asks you a direct question and you see that look in her eyes, you better have a damn quick answer or she's gonna know you're not under her control.

Tass: "Shit. Yeah, OK. Good to know."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: It's all part of the new contracts.

Tass: "Fuck, man. All right. Then I think maybe I might just be asking you for a ride as close as I can get to a place, and maybe that's it for now. And as we go along and figure out exactly what the hell we're doing here, yeah, we'll revisit that."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: OK.

Tass: "Thanks, man."

Rev: DAMIEN O'DOYLE: Yeah.

Rev: Back at The Vault, Strohm and Kim, you have just finished having dinner. Is there anything else you want to do while you're here?

Kim: No, I don't think so. Once dinner is over, I think I'm gonna grab my stuff and head back out. Head to the 606.

Rev: So we find ourselves a couple hours later, as the sun is starting to set. The four of you and Grandpa Tincher have reconvened in the 606.

Megan: "Hey, you guys made it."

Kim: "Yeah. How is your drive?"

Megan: "Fine. How was yours?"

Kim: "Uh, we had a little bit of a complication, but we got here."

Megan: "Complication? What complication?"

Jake: "Dude's trying to hunt me."

Tass: "Oh ..."

Megan: "Already?"

Kim: "Well, trying to hunt Brizack."

Jake: "Yes, but I'm Brizack." And I give like a big wink to Kim.

Kim: "Good job."

Jake: "Thank you."

Kim: "That was very convincing."

Jake: "Thank you. I'm getting the hang of this espionage. Yeah. He's a big knight. Like a literal — like a knight in armor."

Megan: "What did 'you' —" I do 'you' in quotation marks. "What did you do, for this knight to be hunting you down?"

Jake: "Evidently I cheated in a magic duel, and they are not happy about that."

Tass: "Oof."

Megan: "Fair."

Jake: "Oh also, I effectively have a child now."

Tass: "What?"

Jake: "I have a ward. A child that I need to look out for."

Megan: "Where is it?"

Jake: "It's at ... It's right behind you! Boo! She's back at the Rookery, at the wizard headquarters. Tass, you remember Mosquito Dan?"

Tass: "Oh, who's that? Who's that now?"

Jake: "Mosquito Dan?"

Tass: "No, doesn't ring — yes! What?!"

Jake: "It's like a — picture a small girl Mosquito Dan."

Tass: "No, come on."

Jake: "Named Dani. I haven't — we haven't talked about it yet, but ..."

Kim: "The Ley Line ended up with Dani?"

Jake: "Yes."

Kim: "Oh. There was a whole faction fight between Canterbury and The Lost Ones, trying to find her. I'm sorry. Had I known that she ended up at the Rookery, I would have warned you about it."

Jake: "That's fine. I mean, we're getting along. But my job is to bodyguard her. So, you know, they said it's like my discretion whether I keep her with me or, you know, where I put her ... Whatever, whatever. But figured we should all know that, because now I'm going to be on the hook for this."

Tass: "All right. Well, good to know there. My end: first of all, Damien is here. And well, this is all obvious to Kim, probably, but demons are all like factioned now in these new deals. Like somebody got all of the contracts, and there's like a trickle down here of who's in charge of who. I got choked out by a blue demon lord lady."

Megan: "Nice."

Kim: [laughs]

Tass: "But ..."

Kim: "Wait, you all know Damien?"

Tass: "Oh, yeah. We go back."

Megan: "I just met him recently, but he seems cool."

Kim: "No, he's not cool. You can't trust him."

Tass: "Yes. Yes and no. We kind of already have a deal with him that we're locked into, which is why I actually have horns and stuff and I have this energy. So, yeah. Like we know that he's a demon and he works how a demon works. So I need to figure out exactly what that means now, with the way all these contracts flow. Which is why I didn't bring him here. He gave me kind of a halfway ride, and I made the rest of the way on my own. Because I wasn't sure that he should know much more."

Megan: "Kim, what's your problem with Damien?"

Kim: "He's an enemy of Strohm. I mean, he and I have had some pretty nasty run-ins over the last ten or so years."

Tass: "Yeah, that's fair. I mean, on that same note, though, we've had the same on again, off again with Strohm that we have with Damien."

Kim: "Don't tell him about me, as much as you can. If he finds out that I'm working with you all, it's going to get very complicated."

Megan: "Tass, you said we probably shouldn't tell him much anyway, right?"

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, far as I can tell, it's all based on compulsions. If he is told to give something up, he's gonna give it up. And just by nature of not actually being Raguél, I think I'm free of that. I just gotta be ready for it, when they try something."

Megan: "Were you able to find out if he's had to interfere with the IPT at all, like we kind of had set up?"

Tass: "No, I didn't ask for detail on that. I mean again, like, it seems like it worked. It's pretty obvious. So whatever he did helped."

Megan: "Awesome. I guess I don't really have much on my end. I found the cool church that's supposed to be like my headquarters, but I didn't go inside yet."

Tass: "So we all have our little things that we gotta keep in our pocket here to keep up the guise. What's the next step?"

Kim: "Well, I think, first of all, I'd like to know what all of you are doing here."

Tass: "So the idea is ..."

Jake: I think as he — like before he starts laying this out, we're just in a park, right?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Can I, like, case the situation to make sure that we're good to just start talking about this out in the open in a park?

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: We can go someplace more secure, if you prefer not to be out in the open. You seem a little jumpy.

Jake: "Yeah, I would prefer to talk about it somewhere more secure. Where? Not back to the ... Not back to the sanctum, right?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Oh, no. That's quite far.

Jake: "Yeah, that's like wicked far."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes, yes. Kim, if you would blindfold yourself, please.

Kim: [sighs] "Fine. And I slip my headband down over my eyes."

Rev: And he leads you a little distance over, and it's kind of silly to watch. Because as he walks Kim over towards an area, like he does arbitrary turns and like spins her about. You don't travel very far at all, but you get the sense that the moves he's doing have a pattern that have an effect. And then he moves over to this large circle at the top of this crest in the park where a couple of walking paths come together, and he taps the heel of his foot on it twice and then the palm of his hand on it once, and it starts to lower down, with them standing on top of it.

Jake: "Oh, should we hop on?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Ah yes, please.

Megan: "Oh, OK."

Tass: Yep.

Rev: And as the three of you step onto this as well, once it gets below the point where your head is under ground, a new plate slides over and covers it.

Tass: Nice.

Rev: And you travel down for just a couple of moments and then it opens up into a ... Kind of subterranean lair, but that's kind of what it is.

Kim: It runs in the family.

Rev: Yeah. It is a network of pipes and walkways and stuff that has been closed off at both ends, and then kind of a rudimentary frame for what a person would live in built around it. Kind of like if you find any of those really old lofts in Chicago even, where you can see that they have built parts of walls to give it the feeling of rooms.

Tass: "Nice, dude. This is cool."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Thank you.

Rev: And he lifts your headband off.

Kim: "Wait, you didn't have to get blindfolded?"

Jake: "Nah, I guess not."

Kim: "Fine. All right. So we didn't really have time to get into it when I first met all of you, but I'd really like to know why the three of you are here. What are you planning to do here?"

Tass: "Well, I suppose we're in it now. The idea is now that this has happened, the world is like it is, we're hoping to figure out where the other worlds are that Nash used to pull energy into the spell to make this happen and change the world. And then go back to our time, and stop it. Of course, now that we're here, I have no earthly idea how to start."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes, I have been thinking about that since you mentioned it on the drive to the airport.

Rev: And he rolls up his sleeve and again shows you the device that TJ had designed that is now built into his forearm, that measures all the different elements when you travel to another dimension.

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: The dimensions, they all give off a very specific energy signature. When Nash was successful and he declared Chicago to be the new capital of the United States, he had a ceremony where he declared that the three Circles would be the guardians of the three gates, each Circle responsible for one gate. Now, getting to those gates, I would not even begin to know how to do that. And I don't know the ramifications of if we were to travel through it to get a reading from it. What happens when you travel to another dimension when you're not in the right time of the timeline you belong in. That ... Hmm, it could be bad. But at this ceremony, he gifted each of the leaders of each faction an item from that world as a symbol of what it was they had accomplished together and what they were protecting. If you could get me in the room with each of those items, I could get a reading off of it. I could triangulate the dimension number.

Tass: "Oh, damn."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: If I could get it in hand, I could get a much clearer reading. I could send you closer to where it is you need to be. Like if the thing that you need to find is in Chicago of another world, I could send you to Chicago with that portal. But if it's just, uh, the residual energy, you know, energy in the same room, if I can't physically get my hand on it, let the energy feed into this, I can at least get you to the right dimension.

Tass: "Got it."

Megan: "So was this a public ceremony?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: It was not public in the sense that it was done out in front of everyone. It was a ceremony done with those nine people. Some of them have their items on display, others it is unknown what the item is or where it is kept. It's not really anything really that's of much importance, I think, as far as anyone else is concerned.

Megan: "All right. The people that have them on display, what are some of those items? Is this like a hide a book on a bookshelf, or is this a, like, display case?"

Tass: "I bet I have a guess for Strohm."

Kim: Do I know Strohm's item?

Rev: You do. And in fact, I think you know all of the ones that are known.

Kim: OK.

Rev: Because there's kind of three categories here of these artifacts. There are ones that are known and that faction leader keeps them on display, there are ones that are known and the faction has locked them away for one reason or another, and then there are ones that are unknown because those are the factions that you don't even necessarily know who the leader is or where their base of operation is. You only have a point of contact for them. So Strohm's is a very large egg inside of a case, and the case on the inside is kept at below zero, and the egg is essentially flash frozen. And she keeps it on

display down in her gallery, where she has some of her more unique items placed out. And then also in the House of Power, the other one that is known is the Order of the Ley Line. Theirs is known, but it's not on display. It's actually kept in their artifact archive. And it is a very small power cell. They have tried to study it to see what all kinds of energy it can hold, and how much of it. They have not actually been able to find its limits yet, but they do know that it is obviously a very small device, designed to hold a great amount of energy. And then in Wild, Lady Jensie has a very large flintlock pistol that hangs over her desk on the wall. And then in Night, the Monarchs, inside of their casino, the former Wrigley Building. Grayson Winters, inside of his office that looks over the casino floor, has a Remington rifle that hangs on the wall. And then Tranquil Silence, it is known that Father O'Hanna was gifted a very ornate silver cross, but it is not on display. They have locked it away, believing that it is a kind of holy or powerful relic.

And so those are the ones that are known. And Grandpa Tincher has said, if I can get my hands on it, I can get you a more exact location. If I can just get in the room with it, I can at least get the dimension. But I need to be around all three at one point, so I can triangulate the location from the energy signatures.

Megan: "OK. So there's gotta be an order that we have to figure this stuff out in, right? I mean, I imagine that Night is going to be last if we're gonna have to get to Nash's place?"

Jake: "Yeah. It probably should be, for safety. Because if we get made on that one, then yeah, that's kind of the ballgame. I mean, some of these it seems like maybe we're in good enough standing to have a reason to be where they are."

Megan: "Yeah. Like, can you get access to these archives?"

Jake: "I don't know, but I can find out. You've already been in Jensie's office, right?"

Tass: "No. No, she came down to meet us. I mean, I don't think it's unreasonable for me to be able to get into her office for something, setting up a meeting or checking in on something. But I don't know how to get you in there with us, if you need to analyze these things."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes.

Megan: "Kim, can you get your hands on this egg Strohm has?"

Kim: "I don't know." And I think as the four of you are talking, I've just been stepping a little bit away from the group, looking a little unsure about all of this.

Megan: "You OK?"

Kim: "Look, James vouches for all of you and he's helped me out a lot in the past. But I'm sorry, I'm having a little bit of difficulty ... I want to help you. But what you're describing is getting all of these things, going back to where you came from, and then I guess I stop existing."

Tass: "Shit. Yeah. Yeah, that is exactly what we're describing."

Megan: "I mean, do we know that? Do we know that you won't exist? Or that you'll just live in a different future where this isn't the power dynamic?"

Tass: "There's no way to know."

Megan: "Do you know where your visions come from?"

Kim: "No, I was just born with them. It's not like Strohm, or anything. You know, she needs the necklace. Uh, I was just born an Oracle."

Tass: "And do you trust what you have? Has it all played out the way that you see, and helped you?"

Kim: "Uh, yeah."

Tass: "All right, then. Don't stop trusting it. You knew we were coming. Something led us to you, with the desire to help out and do this. I trust in that, just by virtue of it's working. I don't think you're going to have all of this happen not for a reason."

Kim: "I do trust my visions. And I trust James, and he trusts all of you. So I'll help. But I ..."
[sighs] "This is ... This is a lot. I'm sorry."

Tass: "There is not a thing to be sorry about."

Kim: "So where do we start?"

Jake: "Well, I mean, some of these things, you know, it may not be a matter of getting him into the room with it. It may be a matter of it going missing. We could bring things to James. And then it's an issue of, OK, do they know it's been taken or not? You know, like the one in Jensie's office or in the Wrigley casino or whatever. Like those ... Those couldn't go missing without it being noticed, so. But it's an option. That's on the table. I feel like maybe we start with the one in my order's archives. Because if it's squirreled away, then probably no one's especially paying close attention to it. I can start digging around at the Rookery and try and find out who's in charge of the archives. And then maybe we could, like, get some dirt on him or get him to owe me a favor or something like that, so that we could get in there."

Kim: "I did have a vision that Strohm was going to meet someone from her past. I'm wondering if it's either of the two of you."

Tass: "Maybe."

Megan: "Is that just meet someone from her past in general? Or is that — sorry, do you have a time?"

Kim: "No, I don't."

Megan: "Oof. Well, I suppose it might be an eventuality."

Tass: "Yeah. All right. We've got a lot to think about. We've got a lot we can try."

Megan: "I suppose I should start setting up myself as this Fiona? I don't really have a connection to any of these Circles that have these artifacts. But I don't know, maybe that's a good thing? I can kind of go into this fresh, and I might be able to get close enough, quick enough?"

Tass: "Close enough for what? Like, do we want to outright enlist these people to help with whatever these errands are going to be? Distractions? Fight some monsters?"

Megan: "Yeah, I don't know. Maybe as a distraction? It seems like most of it is just kind of like setting up safe spaces for people, so they're not being hunted by like vampires and stuff. I don't know how helpful that is to infiltrate these places, but I suppose if this is my identity now, I should at least figure out what role I'm supposed to fit into that."

Tass: "Yeah, fair."

Kim: "You're all talking about a lot of different avenues when I feel like we should just pick one faction of these people and focus on that."

Tass: "We do. We need to pick one and start."

Kim: Can I have a vision?

Rev: Sure.

Kim: I would like to use my move I, All-Seeing. Mark corruption and suffer one harm to have a vision about the situation at hand. Ask the MC a question, they will answer it honestly.

Rev: OK. Yeah, mark your corruption. And mark down a point of armor-defeating harm to do this move.

Megan: I like how you said "Can I have a vision?" Like, can I have a Twizzler?

Kim: Can I, please? Vision please. Which faction's item would be the easiest and safest to acquire?

Rev: Easiest would probably be Strohm's, because you have a move that lets her provide the things you need for you for a mission.

Kim: Yeah. So my eyes flash bright white for a second and then clear. "I hate to say it, but I think we should go for Strohm's. It's the easiest. I know where it is."

Tass: "I can't imagine she's fundamentally changed since we knew her. I mean, does she still work with deals and honoring her word when she sets things up?"

Kim: "Yeah. As long as I've known her, she's always been a straight shooter and has honored her word."

Tass: "OK. Then let's start with Strohm. And now the question is, do you do this on your own? Is this something you think you can get in, actually physically acquire it, and get out? Or do we all go and have a conversation with her and open up about this?"

Kim: "Ooh, I don't know."

Megan: "I've not met Strohm, but from what you guys have said and how powerful she seems to be and in favor of working in deals, I imagine this world is working out pretty great for her, right? Especially since she's like head of a faction and all that."

Kim: "Yeah. I mean, Night's giving her a bit of a headache recently, but that's kind of all the time."

Jake: "I mean, the only thing I could see us offering her that would be superior to what she has now is come this time in whatever timeline we end up creating, she is the one in charge. As opposed to like one of the nine in charge. And I mean, I guess one of the eight. Maybe we're just like we'll make sure we kill one of these people, and you've got a little bit better stake. But like, that's hard for us to promise, and also not probably what we actually want. So what could we possibly offer her that would encourage her to help us with this?"

Tass: "I don't think we know. I don't think we know till we take the gamble and have that conversation. Because in our time, she's operating well, she's living well. And sure, she has the looming threat of the headache of Nash. But I wonder how well she thinks she could live if that threat were eliminated."

Megan: "I have no idea if this is an avenue worth exploring, but is she going to know who we are?"

Tass: "Yeah. Like anybody that knew us before. Again, like Damien could see through it. So ..."

Megan: "Aw man, that's right."

Tass: "Does she still have a necklace that lets her see the future of her day?"

Kim: "Oh, yeah."

Tass: "So you know what pisses me off?"

Kim: "What?"

Tass: "She knows already if we're gonna cruise over there right now. Like that just irritates me, that she's gonna know our decision, maybe before us. Ugh ..."

Jake: "I mean, unless she blows the vision."

Tass: "That's true."

Jake: "Yeah. Like, we don't ... We don't know."

Tass: "OK then, here's my thought. If you think this is the easiest one?"

Kim: "I do, yes."

Tass: "OK. Start with that, go have your conversation, see what you can get done. I think we keep in our pocket any other sort of scheming to open up to her, in case stuff goes wrong with other venues. And then maybe we keep that in our pocket to go to her for further help if we think we need it."

Kim: "OK."

Jake: "All right. So are the rest of us just laying low until we hear back?"

Kim: "I think so, yeah."

Jake: "All right. That's fine, because I got to go pick up dinner for the kid, so."

Tass: "What is dinner for the kid?"

Jake: "It's like, uh ..."

Rev: Get in. You'll see.

Jake: "It's ... It's gross. You sure you want to know?"

Tass: "I don't. I don't want to know."

Jake: "Imagine ... Take a Whopper."

Tass: "Stop. Never."

Jake: "And human blood, and put it in a blender."

Tass: "Jesus ..."

Megan: "A Whopper?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Rev: She likes a chunky style.

Tass: [sighs]

Kim: Blegh.

Tass: It's a medium rare Capri Sun.

All: [laugh]

Jake: "OK. How do we keep in touch then? From this point on, safely?"

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Ah, yes. Communication. I think I can solve that.

Rev: And James goes over to a little cabinet and opens it up. And you can see that there is all of these strange devices inside of them. And there's a bunch of small little cases, and he opens one of them up. And he walks around and gives each of you an earpiece.

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: This should work. I've been — I've been testing these. I remember being stuck inside of a bubble and not being able to get a message out to you, and I did not want to relive that. So I have been working very hard to come up with a frequency that could go through defenses — uh, magics and shields and things like that. So this should work. Keep the messages short, just in case.

Jake: "Perfect."

Tass: "That's awesome."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: It sits very deep inside of your ear canal. Just pull on your earlobe to send a message.

Jake: I'll put mine in.

Tass: Yeah.

Megan: I put mine in and I pull on my earlobe. "I guess this is our new chat room?"

Rev: And you all hear it. Kim seems to acknowledge it, like she already has one of these.

Jake: "Guess so."

Tass: "That's so cool."

Jake: "All right, let's roll out."

Rev: All right. So where are you all going?

Kim: I'm heading back to The Vault.

Jake: I am running through like, uh ... Somewhere to get food and stuff, and then heading back to the Rookery.

Megan: I am gonna head back to the Fourth Presbyterian Church.

Tass: And I'll start making my way back to where I left Damien, and give him a call to see if he'll pick me up.

Rev: So let's go with Jake first. When you go through a drive through, like there are clearly menus for all kinds of different creatures. Like even just a bag of blood is an option.

Jake: Perfect. Yeah. I grab one of those and like some ... Like a coffee and a tea, and whatever I want.

Rev: OK.

Kim: A second bag of blood.

Jake: [laughs] Make this one a large.

Kim: Combo.

Rev: And you make your way back to the Rookery.

Jake: Is Lore Merchant still kind of hard at work?

Rev: He is.

Jake: All right. I'm gonna walk up, and I'm gonna set a coffee cup in front of him.

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Oh, thank you.

Jake: "No problem. I didn't know if you were a coffee guy or a tea guy."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Uh, coffee on occasions. It's been particularly busy, so this is good. Thank you.

Jake: "No problem. What do you, uh, what are you working on?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Oh, any number of things. I'm sending out some information to folks who have purchased a couple of high priority details. I'm also cataloging a number of things that we have received lately.

Jake: "Oh, let me help you with that. I can help you catalog."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Oh, no thank you.

Jake: "Are you sure? I mean, you seem like you're pretty swamped. I'd be more than happy. I gotta go feed Dani, but it's bedtime. You know, I'm not tired yet. She's gonna have to go to bed soon anyway. Let me help you out."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: No, that's quite all right. This is all very privileged information. The Lore Merchant is not my name. Clearly. It's a title. Which means that I am the only one who gets access to all of the information, and then I parse it out to those who need to know.

Jake: "What is your name?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Josh.

Jake: "Oh. Hey. Nice to meet you, Josh."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Nice to meet you as well.

Jake: "Well, OK. I mean, I don't have to catalog, then. Is there anything I can — I'd love to take a load off your plate, here. I'd love to help you out somehow."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Yes. I do believe actually there is something that you could help me with. There is a book I have been trying to get my hands on. If you feel like

going out into the city and stretching your legs, getting to know it a little bit, I wouldn't mind if you could run this errand for me. There is a bookstore about five blocks over. The issue is that it only appears at dawn, and so it's only there for a very small window. And I'm usually very busy at dawn.

Jake: "OK. Yeah, I can take care of that. What do you need me to grab?"

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Excellent. It is a book on primordial magics. It has a number of different theories about how the world came to exist. It is called The Dawn of the Earth.

Jake: "Consider it done."

Rev: THE LORE MERCHANT: Thank you. The store is called Print, Reprint.

Jake: "All right." I'm gonna go take Dani her dinner and get settled into this place for the night.

Rev: All right. And as Jake heads upstairs to take Dani her dinner, we're gonna jump over to Kim. As the elevator door opens on the penthouse, Strohm is standing in the lobby.

Rev: STROHM: I didn't expect to see you again so quickly.

Kim: "Oh, really?"

Rev: STROHM: Well, it's the polite thing to say, anyway. What do you need?

Kim: Uh yeah, I would like to walk down the stairs to Strohm's gallery.

Rev: As you move towards the door that leads down to the gallery, it does unlock for you, since you are a regular here. And she joins you and walks down the stairs.

Rev: STROHM: I find your silence unnerving.

Kim: "I'm sorry. It's been a really long day. Strohm, we've always been honest with each other."

Rev: STROHM: Yes.

Kim: "And I like that about us. I need your help with something."

Rev: STROHM: All right.

Kim: And I go over to the flash frozen egg. "This is so interesting. A piece from another world."

Rev: STROHM: Yes. I've often wondered what exactly is inside of it. The design on the egg, the thickness of the skin. It looks almost reptilian, but it's far too large. And to keep it frozen. It was a very good choice of a gift. It's fascinating.

Kim: "I was wondering if I could ..." [sighs] "Strohm, I've never been super great at trying to beat around the bush with you. I was wondering if I could borrow that egg, just for an hour."

Rev: She stands for a moment, looking at the egg.

Rev: STROHM: I don't suppose I get to ask why?

Kim: "Uh ... I mean, you can ask. That's gonna be one hell of a conversation."

Rev: All right. And Kim, I believe you have a ... Not a playbook move, but a benefactor move for this.

Kim: I do.

Rev: What is that move?

Kim: So this is a move tied to my benefactor. When you go to your benefactor for help or resources, roll with your status. On a hit, they get you what you need, provided you offer prophetic insight into a problem they have right now. On a 10+, the support they give is abnormally useful. On a miss, they reveal you overlooked something that greatly injured

their status. They are determined to remind you of their power over you before they even consider your request.

Rev: All right. So roll it. And with your status, you have a one, correct?

Kim: I have a +1, yes.

Rev: OK.

Kim: That is an eight.

Rev: All right. So with a mixed success, she will give you what you need, in exchange for some prophetic help with a problem she is having. She looks at you for a long moment.

Rev: STROHM: Very well. You may take it for an hour.

Kim: "OK."

Rev: STROHM: I will not ask any further questions at this moment, though I would like to note my ability to change my mind on that fact. But as you stated earlier, trust is earned between us, and has been — both directions. But I need something from you.

Kim: "Of course. What can I do?"

Rev: STROHM: I have been vexed by who is running New Canterbury. It is the piece of information that I cannot find, and I don't know how to deal with them if I don't know who's leading them and what they want. Give me a vision. Tell me who is leading them.

Kim: My eyes go white and wind fills the room, and I would like to use I, All-Seeing.

Rev: All right. So mark another point of corruption and another point of armor-defeating harm.

Kim: Who is the leader of New Canterbury?

Rev: You start to get glimpses as you ask this question into the open air. And the person that you see in your vision is a man in his mid 20s with blond hair and green eyes. He is wearing a blue vest and matching pants with a white shirt and a red tie, and the sleeves rolled up on the white shirt. And you can see on his forearm is a tattoo that is silver and almost seems like it's moving. And the tattoo is of the atomic symbol for mercury.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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