

# The Grove of the Silver Wing (S4, E21)

**SFX:**

INTRO MUSIC

**Rev:** Hey, everybody. Rev here. We had recorded an intro for this week's episode, and I was editing it, and I walked away, and my computer restarted, and it did not save the file. And like a dummy, I had already deleted the master file. So we lost the intro. I lost the intro, OK? Are you happy? I admit it. I lost the intro. It's unfortunate because Jake had a story about when he went to see Spider-Man this last week and an interaction he had with someone in the bathroom. That sounds stranger than the story was. And I could try to tell the story, but I don't think I'll do it justice. So next time — not even next time, because there's going to be a couple intros it's just gonna be me because it's the holidays and we're not together. We have recorded ahead some episodes. So the next few intros, it's just ... Just gonna be little old me. So I am gonna try to touch on the things that we talked about in the intro, Jake's Spider-Man story aside. And actually one that that I shared, but it won't make sense ... [Sighs] Without the context. So here we are.

Just a couple of things to keep on your radar. January the 5th, which is Wednesday, at 12:01, when the episode for that week drops, we are going to be doing our yearly Patreon ... Kind of spruce up. Our upgrade. We've taken surveys from our patrons and change some of the tiers a little bit, added some new things, removed some old things, made some adjustments. We have quite a few things that people had asked for, things that we'd been trying to work on for a while that we've been able to figure out how to do. So that will be on the intro that week, where ... Not just in the intro, actually. It'll probably be one of the little drop-ins so that no matter what episode you're listening to, you'll hear it that week. But it will let you know about all the new and interesting things that are coming up on the Patreon.

Also during the course of Black Friday, we talked about the sales that we were having, but we didn't talk about some of the new stuff in the store. If you're listening to this episode, I assume you're caught up. Unless you're listening to them out of order, for some reason. We have an awesome new game mat that is the end of, I believe, episode 16 of Season 3, where Jake is kidnapped by the mimic car. We had some art made of that and turned into a game mat. We also have some IPT staff shirts. We have a new CritCrew logo that is on shirts and also on beanies. So yeah, there was a whole new slew of merch

dropped during Black Friday and the course of that weekend. So if you haven't seen it, head over to [thecritshowpodcast.com](http://thecritshowpodcast.com) to find that.

We have made it into the finals for the 2021 Audio Verse Awards. Voting is happening right now over at [audioverseawards.net/vote](http://audioverseawards.net/vote), and voting is open until January 1st. We really appreciate all of the votes that got us into the finals. We are up against ... [Laughs] Some very heavy hitters. We are perhaps fighting out of our weight class, but it is awesome to be in the finals. Tass and Megan and Jake have all been nominated for Best Performer, and I have been nominated for Best Player Direction. So if you would like to head over and give us your support, that is [audioverseawards.net/vote](http://audioverseawards.net/vote), and see if Jake can beat Jeff Goldblum for this award. [Laughs] It's wild to see some of the people our names are up there with. So again, we are nominated in two different categories — the cast nominated for one, myself in another. So you can find that over there.

And lastly, keep an eye out on your inbox, if you are signed up for our newsletter. One of the things that we found out during the course of those surveys for our Patreon is that one of the things that folks are looking for is a monthly calendar that lets you know what episodes are releasing on what days, what shows, what streams we're doing. And so we have made one of those, and we're gonna send it out on the newsletter. It'll be on the website, and it'll also be posted in the Discord and the Patreon. It'll have everything that we have planned for the month on there, so keep an eye out for that if you are signed up for the mailing list. And if you are not, you can head over to [thecritshowpodcast.com/dispatch](http://thecritshowpodcast.com/dispatch).

All right, that is everything off of my checklist. I hope that you all have a safe and happy holidays, and we will see you right back here one more time before the new year.

**SFX:**

CRITSHOW STINGER

**Rev:** Kim, you have just had this vision of Megan standing on the outskirts of a circle with seven other indistinguishable figures, three more standing off to the side, and a dark pulse at the center of the circle. Would you like to spend Corruption to ask some questions about this vision you've had?

**Kim:** Oh hell, I'm too nosy not to, yeah.

**Rev:** I assumed.

**Kim:** Which does max out my Corruption track, again.

**Rev:** Oh, what are you gonna take?

**Kim:** I am going to take a Corruption move from another archetype.

**Rev:** All right, what one?

**Kim:** I'm going to take one from The Veteran playbook, called Catch You Fuckers at a Bad Time? Mark Corruption to arrive in a scene. Mark an additional Corruption to bring someone with you.

**Tass:** Nice.

**Kim:** Might be important.

**Megan:** [Laughs] That so goes along with Kim's like, "Why am I not included in this?"

**Kim:** Yeah! I figured that I could sort of reasonably justify having this ability of just, like, I see the future and I'm there.

**Rev:** Yeah. All right. So that nets you two questions. What would you like to ask?

**Kim:** So I saw Megan clearly, but everyone else was indistinguishable. And that is not a phenomenon that I have ever experienced in any of my visions. I see things kind of like a photograph, really. So why could I not make out the other people in this vision?

**Rev:** So as you think about this, you think that if you were to really put some effort into it, you might be able to get some of these others to come into focus. But the reason that they are blurry, unintelligible in this moment, is because they're not set in this scene. And Megan is the only one that is an absolute.

**Kim:** Hmm. OK.

**Rev:** And so I think with that knowledge, you could spend your other hold to focus someone else into view.

**Kim:** Sure. Yeah, I'll do that.

**Rev:** And so I think the way this is going to work is ... Like I could either have you pick a number between one and ten.

**Kim:** Uh-huh.

**Rev:** Or the vision could focus down to the next person in this group that statistically is most likely to be in place, if that makes sense. Like that it would take the most to jar them out of this.

**Kim:** Sure. Yeah, I'll go for the most likely.

**Rev:** So as you pull this vision back into your head for a moment, it moves from this point of view of you looking at Megan, and it swings around to the three forms standing off to the side. And two of them actually come into focus. The one in the middle is you, and the one on your right is Jake.

**Kim:** Am I wearing the necklace?

**Rev:** You are.

**Kim:** So Jake's there, where I saw Baba Yaga in my previous vision?

**Rev:** Correct.

**Kim:** I realize I just weaseled four questions out of two. Thanks, Rev. [Laughs]

**Rev:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** Nice. Jake's the new Baba Yaga. Cannot wait to see how that happens.

**Kim:** Start practicing the voice, bud.

**Jake:** [Baba Yaga impression] OK ...

**Rev:** It's really weird. You just have to eat the old Baba Yaga to become the new Baba Yaga.

**Megan:** Oh ...

**Jake:** Oh. And it's hard, because the teeth are metallic.

**Rev:** Well, teeth first. That way you can then eat the rest.

**Tass:** Oh yeah. Because that's like ... That whole taffy body thing.

**Megan:** Yeah, it's definitely, like ... Depending on how far she spread out her body, this could take a long time.

**Kim:** [Laughs]

**Jake:** I just have to — I gotta rip those teeth out of her head, put them in mine, and then just become like a chain chomp.

**Rev:** It's ...

**Megan:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** It's like eating a three mile long Fruit by the Foot.

**Megan:** Oh ...

**Tass:** The dream!

**Rev:** Except it's swamp flavored.

**Megan:** Yeah. I was really excited about that, and then I remembered what we were talking about.

**Rev:** And your vision is clear, Kim.

**Kim:** [Inhales] "Oh man."

**Megan:** "Are you OK?"

**Kim:** "Yeah, I'm fine. Sometimes this happens when I'm around people. Similar thing happened when I first met Jake, and we were ..."

**Megan:** "I mean, you don't have to live with me. Like —"

**Kim:** "No! No, no ..."

**Megan:** "I'm sorry. I didn't know if you thought I'd have more space, but ..."

**Kim:** "No, I would — I would love to. I don't ... I don't cook, or do any ... That's, you know, I've lived — I've lived in a penthouse for the last 12 years. I haven't had to do any sort of life skill thing for ever. Yeah, no."

**Megan:** "This sounds great for me."

**Kim:** "Sorry."

**Rev:** You've just gotten a really expensive pet.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Kim:** I prefer the term "kept woman."

**Rev:** [Laughs]

**Kim:** "No, sorry. It wasn't about that, but I did have a vision about you, Megan."

**Megan:** "Oh."

**Kim:** "Well I guess also about me, and also about Jake. I saw you standing in a circle with seven other people, and this dark shape in the middle of it. And then standing off to the side was Jake holding a spell book, and me in the middle wearing this necklace, and then another figure next to us. But those were the only three people that I could make out. It's almost like the other roles haven't been set yet. It was similar to the vision that I saw of when they first sealed Death away."

**Megan:** "But those were gods last time, right?"

**Kim:** "Well, the eight in the circle were. Yeah. But I mean, you have the essence of a god. Or you did, in your own timeline. So it could be the gods that still exist in your world, plus the other three that have been given that gift."

**Megan:** "But they were trying to like, stop Death or whatever, right?"

**Kim:** "Yeah. And as far as I know, you all stopped Death permanently."

**Megan:** "I didn't have anything to do with that."

**Kim:** "Yeah. And this wasn't a vision of the past. This is a vision of something that has yet to come. I couldn't see what was in the middle of it, but something bad is coming or is already there, and you're going to be a part of putting it away. We all are. Well, myself and Jake."

**Megan:** "Where was Tass?"

**Jake:** "Probably the orb in the middle." I chime in, having been silent for a very long time.

**Kim:** "Oh, sorry! Forgot you were here!" [Laughs] Jake and James have just been off to the side, while Megan and I have had this very intimate conversation.

**Jake:** I've been eating pizza leftovers and just kind of observing. So yeah, let me take that again, then. [Mouth full] "Probably the orb in the middle."

**Kim:** "Why would he be the orb in the middle?"

**Jake:** [Mouth full] "I'm just joking."

**Kim:** "OK. Yeah, I didn't ... I didn't see Tass. That doesn't mean that he's not involved. That just means that ..."

**Megan:** "Something might happen to him."

**Kim:** "Or that his role isn't set yet. Or that, you know, maybe I just — I didn't ... I didn't find him. It doesn't mean he wasn't there."

**Megan:** "OK. Well, that's a problem for future Megan."

**Kim:** "Yeah."

**Megan:** "I guess. All right. So where are we at now?"

**Kim:** "Uh ... James, we gotta ... We gotta go meet with the fae."

**Rev:** JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Oh, yes. Of course.

**Rev:** And he sets down his piece of leftover pizza and puts on a sports coat.

**Megan:** Nice.

**Rev:** JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Is this how Ozymandias dresses?

**Megan:** "No, but it's exactly how Topher Grace dresses. So you've got it."

**Rev:** And he's got like his cargo pants and big boots that are like, covered in grease, and his buttoned up shirt, and his very heavy apron, and his goggles. And then he just puts the sports coat over.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Kim:** "Uh ..."

**Rev:** JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: I'm in disguise.

**Megan:** "So fancy."

**Kim:** I want to just, like, start looking through the rest of his clothes. "Do we have anything better?"

**Megan:** We just Fab Five this.

**Kim:** [Laughs] Yeah.

**Megan:** "Great. While you guys are gone, I'm gonna try to see if I can figure out where we go from here with Night. Because as soon as you're done, we just got one left."

**Kim:** "Wow. I got to start saying goodbye to some people. Well, maybe I don't, I guess. Because I don't want people to know. Or maybe, you know, it doesn't — it doesn't matter what I say, because it doesn't ... Wow. A lot — a lot of thoughts. So many thoughts. Um ..."

**Megan:** "Yeah, that's a lot. One step at a time, huh?"

**Kim:** "Yep."

**Rev:** And I think as you are having this conversation and Grandpa Tincher is getting dressed, just because it hasn't happened in so long: the door starts lowering again and Tass is here. All four of you are in the same room for a brief moment.

**Megan:** "Oh, you're OK!"

**Tass:** She says that as I like come into the full light, and the blue suit is just covered in dust, and like torn. And I'm just bedraggled.

**Megan:** "You're kind of OK."

**Kim:** "How was your day?"

**Tass:** "There were some problems. There were some victories. It was a, uh ... It was a fairly matched scrum, but we got through. Everything's chill. How did the gun thing go?"

**Megan:** "Flawless."

**Tass:** "Thank God something did."

**Megan:** "We're ... A lot has happened actually since you last were here. Kim is caught up on Grandpa."

**Tass:** "Ah, yes. Good. Good?"

**Kim:** "Uh, yeah."

**Megan:** "Good? Yeah. Good."

**Tass:** "Good."

**Megan:** "And I talked to him, and we can take Kim back. No problem."

**Tass:** "OK, cool."

**Megan:** "Yep. And we have to figure out a way to get James back with us. We're gonna need him. And they are about to leave to go meet with the fae."

**Tass:** "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. OK."

**Megan:** "And then we just have New Canterbury."

**Tass:** "Holy shit. OK. We got this? We got this."

**Kim:** "Yeah."

**Tass:** "Good luck."

**Kim:** "Thank you. Don't take the item while the three of us are gone. Let's — let's try to, you know, just ... You all have had a really busy day. Just relax, maybe."

**Megan:** "Well I mean, I'm still going to work on like getting information, but we won't make a move until we're all back together."

**Kim:** "Cool. Sounds good. Are you ready, James?"

**Rev:** JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes, I believe so. As he is straightening up his tie.

**Kim:** We'll get on the elevator.

**Rev:** And the two of them head out. Is there anything else the three of you are doing at this moment?

**Megan:** I think I'm telling Tass about Kim's vision. "Yeah, so me and Kim and Jake were there, but she said she didn't see you because you're not set to be there yet."

**Tass:** "I feel like I should be scared or confused or something, but I am just too fundamentally tired right now to process that."

**Megan:** "Fair."

**Tass:** "Yeah, OK. We don't even know what this is, right? Like, what — they're around and a glow, and like a ... We have no idea what the content is."

**Megan:** "I mean, it seems to be similar to whatever they did last time to lock Death away. But we shouldn't be doing that again, right?"

**Jake:** "I mean, maybe we're just using that same concept to lock somebody else away. Maybe it's what we finally do with Nash or something."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "Bad Nash. Not Grandpa Nash."

**Megan:** "Yeah."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Megan:** "Cool."

**Jake:** "It's a whole other can of worms, and I simply can't yet."

**Megan:** "Yep, cool. I'm going to try ... I'm gonna try not to worry about it." I'm going to go find Kester.

**Rev:** Yeah, he is over in the little corner that he has set up for himself and Tiresias. He is flipping through a book from James's shelf.

**Jake:** I'm picturing the corner he's set up for himself. It's just like a blanket fort. He's just taken all the chairs ...

**Megan:** Oh, I love that.

**Jake:** And he's got cardboard...

**Megan:** No, he used the ray gun to carve himself out a little cave.

**Rev:** Like a stone chair.

**Megan:** Yeah.

**Rev:** A pedestal for Tiresias.

**Jake:** Bad ass.

**Megan:** "Settling in, I see."

**Rev:** KESTER: Yes. It's quite fascinating, really, going through the things that James has done and just getting to hear some of the stories from his travels.

**Megan:** "Yeah, he is a very interesting person."

**Rev:** KESTER: Yes.

**Megan:** "I was wondering if I could cash in that favor from you."

**Rev:** KESTER: Yes, of course. What is it you would like to know about?

**Megan:** "Well, we are making a lot of headway, but we've got one last thing we have to figure out how to get. So if you wouldn't mind, I would like to know what is the best plan of action to get New Canterbury's item."

**Rev:** There is that brief flash of gold. And again, he is just sitting slightly different in the chair. Like he wasn't exactly where he was a moment ago. And he nods.

**Rev:** KESTER: Aiden. He wears it strapped around his ankle. It's a large knife in a sheath, almost like a buck knife or a Bowie knife. He takes it off when he sleeps, when he showers, when he has sex. Other than that, it's on his person at all times.

**Megan:** "Great. So we either have to get it while he's compromised, or try and take him down."

**Rev:** KESTER: Yes.

**Megan:** "This should be easy. This is fine. Oh man, how are we going to do this? Well, thank you."

**Rev:** KESTER: Yes, of course.

**Megan:** Yeah. And I'll head back over to Jake and Tass. "Your boy Aiden's got the item strapped to his ankle. It's a knife."

**Tass:** "Oh. So one way or another, we got to get close to him."

**Megan:** "Yeah. I mean, he takes it off when he takes his clothes off. Other than that, it's ... It's strapped to his ankle. So we either got to get him compromised, or sneak in and steal it while he's compromised, or try and just fuckin' take him down and get it off of him."

**Tass:** "Oof. For a type of vampire that can literally turn into mist, that's a tough one."

**Megan:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "I mean, Benson owes me a favor. I've been saving that. So maybe he could get us closer or get us some kind of access or help us stage a big whoopsie where we just like, you know, spill spaghetti sauce all over him and he's got to go take a shower. And then, you know, we sneak into the room and steal the knife or something."

**Tass:** "I vote for the spaghetti sauce maneuver."

**Jake:** "I'm honestly kind of feel like that could work. Like he's got a ... Surely he goes to important things, right? He's a very important man. Maybe we get him to, like, ruin his tux or something. He's got to go change, and then we can snatch the knife."

**Megan:** "Yeah, I guess getting into his quarters is probably gonna be the trickiest part, if we're going a stealth route."

**Jake:** "That's why maybe we get him when he's not in his quarters. Maybe we get him when he's at a function."

**Megan:** "Well, yeah. But then he's going to take his clothes off at home, probably."

**Jake:** "You don't think he like, goes and stays in a hotel or anything to like, attend any important ..."

**Megan:** "I don't know. I've never been that fancy. So maybe."

**Jake:** "I haven't either."

**Megan:** "I don't know how rich vampires do it. I'm living in a church."

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** "I don't know ..."

**Jake:** That seemed like such a non sequitur.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Megan:** "I don't know how, uh ... I don't know how these higher ups handle fancy business. But I would imagine he puts a lot of precautions in place if he's willing to just set it aside. Unfortunately, he's seen me, so I can't just seduce him. That would have been the easy route."

**Tass:** "Hmm."

**Megan:** "And up to this point, people not knowing who I am or recognizing my face has been a really big benefit, and that's lost here. It was so difficult to even get near him last time, especially if he brings a bunch of other vampires to fight for him. Getting to his ankle, getting this knife free, and getting it to James. It feels really insurmountable, I guess, compared to the other things we've been trying. But I don't know."

**Tass:** "I just think we need to take a little time, think on it, gather some more information, see what favors we can call in, and of course, make sure that Kim and James get back safely with what they need anyway."

**Megan:** "Yeah, let's not get too far ahead, I suppose."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "Who wants pepperoni magnifico?"

**Tass:** "You know I do."

**Rev:** So over at the lily pool in Lincoln Park, we find James and Ozymandias and Kim walking towards the dock where Zui is standing.

**Rev:** ZUI: Do you have an appointment?

**Rev:** Ozymandias nods and holds out a very delicate flower, and hands it to Zui. Zui nods and holds it up, and the flower starts to glow. And all around the lily pond, you see mushrooms that start to glow, one after another, creating a fairy ring around the pool. The center of the pool starts to glow and spin, and he gestures for you to step in.

**Kim:** Man, I wish Megan was here. She would love this. [Laughs] Yeah, I'll go in.

**Rev:** You and Ozymandias and James all step off of the dock, into the water. And as you pass through the water, it's almost like being in a gyroscope. You are right side up, upside down, right side up, upside down, somehow upside down again, but in a different way. Like it feels like you're just fluctuating where the ground should be. And then you land on the ground. You're surrounded by wildflowers. The air above you is this silvery pond. There are large trees all around this grove, and there are two stunningly beautiful fae women, lounging on a dual throne at the far end.

**Megan:** I'm so jealous.

**Kim:** [Laughs] I know. I'm so sorry I couldn't take you.

**Megan:** This is my dream.

**Kim:** Megan just comes. She's like, "No, no. I am Topher Grace."

**Megan:** Yeah. Yeah, I'll think James's place. Give me this thing in your arm. How does it work?

**Kim:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** And when they speak, they speak in unison.

**Rev:** IHMBRYK AND BONNIBEL: [In unison] Welcome to the Court of the Silver Wing. How may we be of assistance to you, Ozymandias?

**Rev:** Ozymandias steps forward and gives a small bow.

**Rev:** OZYMANDIAS: Queen Ihmbryk. Queen Bonnibel. Thank you so much for gracing us with your presence this day.

**Rev:** When Ozymandias acknowledges Queen Ihmbryk, the fae with softer features, red hair, yellow skin, and orange blossoms all over her clothing, smiles and nods. And when he acknowledges Queen Bonnibel, the one with lavender skin, black hair, and white blossoms all over their clothing gives a nod.

**Rev:** IHMBRYK AND BONNIBEL: What exactly is it that brings you to us today?

**Rev:** And they begin to have a conversation about this property that Ozymandias would like to get a hold of, that sits inside of the territory of the Court of the Silver Wing. At this point, James looks around and then turns to you and shrugs, not quite sure what to try to get a read on here.

**Kim:** Oh, yeah. Can I help him out to try to look for anything, like, suspicious? I mean, I've been around a few of these items.

**Rev:** Yeah, why don't you roll Study a Place of Power?

**Kim:** Cool. Seven. That levels me up.

**Rev:** What are you gonna take?

**Kim:** I'm going to take a move from another archetype — The Spectre. And it is called Conduit. And I advance Let it Out for all characters in my presence, including myself.

**Tass:** Wow.

**Rev:** Oh, so when you use Let it Out, everyone can do the advanced version?

**Kim:** The advanced version.

**Rev:** Oh my.

**Kim:** On a 12+, your powers or abilities manifest in an unexpectedly useful way. Mark Corruption to make this manifestation a new ability.

**Rev:** Nice. So the thing that you notice here that is unusual is that almost everything here is made of the green. It is trees, it is grass, it is flowers. The thrones they sit on are stone. But Queen Ihmbryk, in her left hand, is twirling a small golden rod. And as it flips end over end, you can see that it's got glass on both sides. It's actually a spyglass that is closed.

**Kim:** So I will just nudge James and gesture in a very low key way towards the item that Queen Ihmbryk is holding.

**Rev:** He nods and turns his body slightly to the side, and you can see that he opens up the panel on his arm and starts tapping it a few times. The conversation continues between the three of them, and after two or three minutes, James quietly closes the compartment on his arm and gives you a nod.

**Kim:** I squeeze his shoulder.

**Rev:** OZYMANDIAS: Yes, I think that would be a very amenable solution. We will redraw that small portion of the border, and I will grant you lands on the far northeast side in exchange for this land on the southern border. The land will encompass twice as much as I am earning because it is something that I desire, and so my payment shall reflect that.

**Rev:** The two queens give a nod and a smile.

**Rev:** IHMBRYK AND BONNIBEL: It will be done.

**Rev:** Ozymandias bows once more and turns and starts to walk back towards the part of this grotto that has the silver sky. And as the three of you step underneath it, you are sucked back up into the whirlpool. And I think we jump ahead to James and Kim arriving back at the subterranean lair.

**Megan:** "Hey, how'd it go?"

**Kim:** "Good. Unfortunately, we couldn't actually hold the item, so the information is not as exact as it otherwise could have been. But we definitely got a reading off of it."

**Tass:** "That's OK. That's awesome. As long as you're both safe and you got something, that's huge."

**Rev:** JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes, it was very interesting. We stepped through a silver pool and fell, and then it was the sky.

**Kim:** "Oh yeah, and everything looked so beautiful, and the fairy queens were gorgeous. And gosh, I wish that you all had been there just to see it, or that I could have filmed it and not been, like, really conspicuous about it. They probably would have known, had I tried to take pictures. But oh, it was so beautiful."

**Megan:** "That sounds amazing. Ugh."

**Tass:** "So ... My God, is that it? We have one left?"

**Kim:** "Yeah. What all did you find out?"

**Megan:** "Well, we figured out what New Canterbury's item is."

**Kim:** "Awesome. What is it?"

**Megan:** "It's like a knife, and Aiden has it strapped to his ankle pretty much all the time."

**Kim:** "OK. Well if he keeps it on his person, then I could try the same thing that I did on that werewolf at the Wrigley Casino. If I can lock eyes with Aiden, I can render him completely immobilized. And then I could also just make him forget that it ever happened. Of course, that's only successful if we're doing it in a place where he doesn't have a bunch of bodyguards who then immediately try to kill me once Aiden is frozen to the spot."

**Tass:** "Yeah, exactly. OK, so what does that look like? Is that something to do with getting into where he lives discreetly? Is that inviting him somewhere, or finding somewhere that he'll be?"

**Jake:** "I mean, Benson owes me a favor. So I could get us a meeting with him. So if we wanted to go where he was and then freeze him, we could take the thing. But still no way of knowing who is gonna be with him."

**Megan:** "That would be great if we could get a meeting set up, but can we do that on our terms? Like our ground? Do we get to choose the meeting place? Are we going to have to go to like Nash's tower?"

**Jake:** "I don't think we'll get to choose the meeting place. Because it's like, I don't know, that seems like too much of a favor to get out of Benson. Or frankly, to get out of Aiden. It doesn't seem like they'd give me that much."

**Kim:** "But I mean, there have been times where Aiden has met outside of Nash Tower. I mean, Tass, he went to see Lady Jencie."

**Tass:** "Yeah, he did."

**Rev:** Yeah. I was about to chime in that the only time you have seen the faction leaders meet outside of their place of power is when they are meeting other faction leaders.

**Kim:** Well hell, I'm a faction leader.

**Jake:** Yeah, it's a good thing we got one of those.

**Kim:** "I mean ... I hate to say it. We could even try to spin it as some sort of trying to make peace with New Canterbury. Now that I am part of that faction. Trying to start fresh."

**Megan:** "Keep what they did to The Vault from happening again."

**Kim:** "Yeah."

**Tass:** "That's solid. We go with the angle that you're ready to play ball."

**Kim:** "Exactly."

**Jake:** "How unbelievable do we think that will seem to Aiden? Like how well do you think we could sell that angle? Because I imagine that the more believable the setup, maybe the less unexpected resistance we'll have to put up with? But do you think he'd buy that you were just willing to kind of roll over and make peace, all things considered?"

**Kim:** "I think that I would do almost anything to guarantee that what happened to The Vault and what happened to the oracles didn't happen again."

**Megan:** "I guess I haven't met him outside of trying to stop him in the attack, but he seems kind of full of himself. So yeah, if you play up this idea that his attack was this great display of power and it scared you and you were willing to do whatever it takes to not let it happen again? It seems like he might buy that."

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah, he's certainly at least a little bit of a prideful guy. This was probably something I wouldn't suggest if we didn't know what we already know about Strohm. But even the angle of, 'Hey buddy, you did me a favor. You bumped me up a notch.'"

**Kim:** [Sighs] "Well, let's try to set up a meet, and I'll see exactly how much lying I have to do to make nice with Aiden."

**Megan:** "OK. Well, let's say he is willing to meet on your terms. Where do we take him to? I mean, I assume he's not gonna travel alone. But I mean, then again, Tass, when he met with Jencie, did he have anyone with him?"

**Tass:** "Not in the office. But that doesn't mean there weren't who knows how many people, or ... Yeah, I mean, I honestly don't know."

**Jake:** "Kim, you got a couple of hirelings here who, give it a few more hours, we could ask them some of this stuff and they'd be able to give us a definite answer."

**Kim:** "You're exactly right."

**Jake:** "They'd probably be able to tell us both how to best bait him out into a meeting and, like, who comes with."

**Megan:** "Yeah. It really seems like that's the information we need before we can even begin to plan any further."

**Jake:** "All right. So regardless, though. What do we know, regardless of where we meet him? So we're gonna ... We're gonna get Benson to set us up a meeting. You're gonna freeze him solid probably, wherever we go."

**Kim:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "So we can take the thing. We might have to fight people. We don't know where that's gonna happen yet. How are we gonna get out? Because if he is alone and frozen, then that seems fairly easy. But if he's not ..." [Laughs] "If it's in his tower or anywhere that we decide for ourselves, how do we escape the situation unscathed?"

**Kim:** "OK. So we take this dagger. Are we thinking of bringing James to this meeting? Or are we trying to take the dagger with us back here?"

**Megan:** "It seems like if you have to hold him in a, like, gaze and keep him frozen? Trying to read it there's not gonna be smart. I think we're going to need to make a really fast exit."

**Jake:** "Yeah, and you know, you've talked about it too, but I don't especially want to put James out in that kind of danger. That's the most dangerous danger we could put him in."

**Kim:** "OK. So I lock eyes with Aiden. We grab the dagger. You all deal with whatever interference Aiden might have brought with him, and then we take the dagger with us. So circling back, how do we get out of that situation?"

**Tass:** "Yeah. Because hold on, if we're taking it and leaving, even if you make him forget, he's gonna know it's gone and he's gonna know, at least from context or his people telling him, who was the last people he was talking to before it disappeared. So if we're doing that, we're leaving. This isn't get out of the building, this is get out."

**Megan:** "Is there anyone who we can have on our side that it can be, like, ready to help us get out of there? Like do you think Selina would be willing to do something?"

**Jake:** "Probably. She had a real hatred going for Nash, and said she'd do like anything to shut him down."

**Megan:** "OK."

**Jake:** "I would imagine this is a direct enough correlation to shutting Nash down. I don't know that for sure. Like how? Like door us somewhere?"

**Megan:** "Yeah. I mean, you said she was able to get wherever she wanted to go. She could just, I don't know, be ready? Get us through, and then we can go through another door to get back to James, and then back to the castle somehow?"

**Tass:** "Yeah. In a similar vein ... It's just a different kind of setup, whether we want to try to get Selina on our side or whether we want to use what we already have. If we're somewhere that we can set up ripping a doorknob off of a door in the room and have our doorknob ready to take us to the Inn that Wanders?"

**Jake:** "Oh yeah. Yeah, we could open a door and get everybody to the inn. But then we've got to come back out the door."

**Tass:** "Uh, you don't."

**Jake:** "Oh. OK. OK wait, so I could like ... We could open the door and put all the you guys through it?"

**Tass:** "Yeah. Of course, that leaves you in a room with ..."

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Tass:** "Aiden."

**Jake:** "Wherever we go. But I could ... OK, but then I could teleport to the castle and then I could use the doorknob again."

**Megan:** "Oh yeah, you could just put the doorknob in and then let us through to the castle."

**Jake:** "Yeah, and that would just give you guys egress right into the castle."

**Kim:** "Jake, can you take anyone with you when you teleport?"

**Jake:** "I can take one person if I do everything just right. So you might have to stay with me to keep the gaze on, is that what you're thinking?"

**Kim:** "That is what I'm thinking. Yeah."

**Jake:** "All right. So we could crack open a door, send Megan and Tass through, shut it. Then me and Kim teleport out, thus able to hold the gaze for the maximum amount of time, and then open the door and let them back in."

**Tass:** "Sure. Again, we got to figure some stuff out first. If we're gonna be embattled while he's held still and somebody grabbing the boot off of his leg. I mean, yeah, we've got to figure some stuff out. But that is a very solid baseline, right?"

**Megan:** "Yeah. Everything goes right, then it's pretty solid."

**All:** [Laugh]

**Megan:** "As long as these factors ... I mean, there's a lot of, 'if I do everything just right, I'll be able to do this.'"

**Jake:** "Yeah. I mean, that's always kind of what it's gonna come down to, unfortunately. Just ... We've got a good idea. Does anything interfere? Do we screw anything up along the way?"

**Megan:** "I don't think we can really have it any more solid until we get some answers. I think we got to wait for Kim to be able to ask some questions and get some facts, and think of anything else along the way. I mean, we should probably get James to the castle, right? Or get him to the inn?"

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Megan:** "Before we go?"

**Jake:** "Yeah, we should get him there early. I do want to ... I want to check the inn before we do this. Because Selina had mentioned that it is ... It has been affected in the long, long stretch of time. That it's not exactly what it used to be, so."

**Megan:** "What do you mean, affected? Like it's been abandoned, like nobody took it over? Or something happened to it?"

**Jake:** "I don't know. I would like to go find out. I mean, it's been like two millennia, the inn-time. So ..."

**Tass:** "Oh, well, yeah. OK, that's a fair point."

**Kim:** "Hearing you all talk about this so casually is kind of blowing my mind right now. Other worlds, time differences between those two worlds, magic doorknobs ..."

**Tass:** "I wish this was the weirdest shit we've seen. I desperately wish that were true."

**Megan:** "Yeah, I have a hard time keeping my mind wrapped around it as well. I don't fully understand how long it's been in one place versus another all the time, but you kind of get used to it."

**Jake:** "I find that the best way to make the extraordinary feel mundane is to experience it. Would you like to go through the door to the Inn that Wanders?"

**Tass:** "That's a good point. If you follow along with our trajectory: space first, then dimension hop, and then time hop. And then you're just right on board with us."

**Kim:** "Well gosh, then I might as well. Because it looks like I'm gonna be time hopping in a few days. Oh, my goodness ... Yeah, let's do this first."

**Megan:** "Let's go!"

**Jake:** Tass, that was fucking poetic. Wow, I had not thought about that.

**Tass:** Thank you.

**Jake:** What a parallel. Who's writing this shit? That's good.

**Kim:** The writer's excellent.

**Rev:** The Season 4 writers ...

**Jake:** [Laughs] Are really, really killing it.

**Rev:** You can tell that they, uh ... That they really poach from other shows.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Yeah. "Do we think there are any precautions we need to take here before we do this? Like, I don't know what's over there. It didn't sound dangerous."

**Tass:** "Is there air? You don't know!"

**Kim:** "I was just about to ask that. I genuinely don't know."

**Jake:** "I don't ... I don't know. Because it's like a pocket dimension, sort of. So ..."

**Kim:** "OK."

**Jake:** "I mean, if the walls are still there, it seems OK. If the walls aren't there, I don't know how it works."

**Megan:** "Is Selina still utilizing the inn in some fashion?"

**Jake:** "No."

**Megan:** "Hmm. I wonder how long it's been since she went there."

**Jake:** "Like 20, 30 years ago."

**Megan:** "I mean, that seems like nothing in comparison to the multiple millennia we were just discussing, so hopefully it's in whatever condition she was able to be there in."

**Tass:** "Did she mention Trog?"

**Jake:** "When she went there the first time, when she got the doorknob to get out. That was like 60 years after we left or something. So that was like ... That was like 40 years ago."

**Tass:** "Wow."

**Jake:** "And it was still operational. And then when she went back to 15, 20 years after that, it was not."

**Tass:** "OK. I'm just galaxy branding here. But like I'm wondering if that place did something to keep Trog alive longer? Or his, like, species is long lived? Or, you know, I don't know. It's all wild. I'm just curious."

**Jake:** "I don't know, man. I mean, time was weird there. If we go, I can try and get a read on the place and see like ..."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "If that was the case, if there is some sort of like a life sustaining magic or something."

**Kim:** "Well, if you get me in there, I could always try to do a reading, if there's an important object there, and figure out what happened to that place."

**Tass:** "Sure."

**Jake:** "All right." Where's the nearest door of which I could replace the knob in here? The bathroom?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Perfect. Yeah. I'm going to go affix the knob for the Inn that Wanders. And I'm like, "All right, just ... Just in case, kind of hang back a little bit here while I crack this thing open. I don't want everybody to get kind of sucked into the vacuum of extra planar space."

**Kim:** I hold my breath.

**Tass:** I like loop my arm through something, to hold on to.

**Jake:** Yeah. I'm gonna crack the door here, and ... Find out if there's a disaster when I do.

**Rev:** Yeah. So you attached the magical silver door knob and crack it open to look inside. And just as before, it opens into what used to be Estin's lab. Which, you know, was then kind of turned into essentially the mud room for the tavern, where people could hang coats, lay their boots, and hang their weapons and things like that. It's quiet, and the light is very dim. And there's just dust motes in all the light you can see, and there is a thick layer of dust over everything as far as you can see.

**Jake:** Does it seem sufficiently habitable to just, like, walk in here, though?

**Rev:** It does.

**Jake:** "All right. I mean, yeah, it is clearly not lived in, but I think we can go through and be OK."

**Megan:** I follow through.

**Tass:** Same.

**Kim:** Yeah.

**Rev:** As you all step through this doorway into the Inn that Wanders, there's a very brief shimmer that rolls over you as you pass through the doorway. The air here is dense, mildewy. The silence is pervasive. The only thing you can hear are your own footsteps and each other breathing. It almost kind of feels like a mausoleum. The dust on the

ground is half an inch thick. It seems like no one has been in here in at least several hundred years.

**Tass:** "Whoa, this is dismal."

**Megan:** "Look at this place."

**Kim:** The shimmer. Did it do anything? Do they look different?

**Rev:** No, it was just almost like a membrane as you stepped through the doorway.

**Kim:** Huh.

**Jake:** I just want to take a look around the place. Like, see if I can gain any insight on what happened here.

**Rev:** So I'm going to have you Study a Place of Power. But there's no bonus. No one controls this space in the factions that you are used to dealing with.

**Jake:** All right. Seven.

**Rev:** As you all walk through the Inn that Wanders, you head into that initial mud room and then take the hallway to the left that leads into the bar proper. And there is a faint glow in here of these light quartzes that are on the ceiling. Almost seems like they're out of power. Like they're lighting the room just enough that you can still make your way through, but it's nothing like what you saw when you were here previously. Jake, you notice as you scan around this room that the hidden entrance where you initially found the armor that you then became a part of for a while is behind a very large set of bookshelves. It seems like it has been hidden away. In fact, if you had not been here previously and gone down that hallway? The last time you were here, you don't remember seeing that hallway here. You remember these bookshelves. But in this moment, you do remember that hidden hallway behind the bar.

**Jake:** I want to check out those bookshelves and see if I can find a way to access the hallway again.

**Rev:** Yeah. You're able to go over there and dig around a little bit, and it's just a matter of really unloading the bookshelves and then everybody kind of pitching in. They're very large and heavy, very dense oak. And you move them to the side and it leads back into that little corner room where you found the armor. As you go back to this hallway and turn the corner, where the armor once stood is a small wooden table. And there is a wall covered in photos and letters, newspaper clippings. And as you start to scan over them, you realize that it's stories, events from all of these other worlds. It seems like Trog was keeping kind of a memory book of the things that he had seen, the people he had encountered. And along with all of these things, there are names and dates all over this wall. Sometimes there are even little arrows drawn on the wall in like chalk or marker, pointing to a certain picture or letter or article that you think must be related to that person.

**Jake:** "Well, I guess this was Trog's, like, little secluded spot for himself. Does anything on these walls give you guys an idea of, like, where he's ended up? I'm having a hard time following this."

**Megan:** Yeah, I definitely want to start looking over it.

**Kim:** I want to start looking around this room to see if there are any, like, personal effects left behind by Trog.

**Rev:** Yeah. I think as Megan starts to go over these photos and these names and these dates, Kim, you see that on the right wall, next to this table, is a very old stained apron hanging on a hook.

**Kim:** I would like to pick up that apron and hold it in my hands and try to use Psychometry.

**Rev:** All right. Roll +Spirit.

**Kim:** Twelve.

**Rev:** All right, you get a hold 3.

**Kim:** What is the history of this object?

**Rev:** As you clutch this old apron in your hands, you get flashes of this desert. Of this enormous green humanoid sitting next to a fire, and he is cooking what looks like antennas inside of a frying pan. And across from him is this large metal man, and they're having ... It seems like some kind of philosophical conversation about what is and isn't OK to eat.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** And then the scene shifts and you see this large green humanoid behind the bar that you just walked through. And he is greeting people, making meals, hugging old friends, making new friends. There is a lot of stains and memories built into this, and you get a little glimpse of all of the lives that this person nourished — not just with food, but with friendship.

**Kim:** What secrets or mysteries has this object been privy to?

**Rev:** It was mentioned earlier that Trog seemed to have lived a very long time. And there is residual magic on this apron that feels very similar to what you felt when you passed through the doorway. That there's something about this place that needed someone to run it while it was active. And so whatever it was that was feeding this place kept Trog alive, kept him young, until it was closed.

**Kim:** OK. Last question. What strong emotions have most recently been near this object?

**Rev:** It's a mix of emotions. You get this overwhelming feeling of love. And a little sorrow, but not a lot. And a sense of accomplishment. That feeling that you get when you have completed a long, seemingly impossible task, and can finally rest.

Megan, as you pore through these photos and these dates and these articles and these letters, you do see a couple of familiar names. You see, written very close together, Trog. It's not really connected to any of the letters or the articles, but there are a few photos of him standing behind the bar with various people around him. You also see Landara, and that name does have a date. And doing kind of the rough math, you imagine that at some point Landara left and didn't come back, because it's a date that's much earlier than what Trog has under his name. And there are all these photos of her wearing various kinds of

battle armor from different eras. And in one of the photos, she's actually with Rev. They're both wearing this space marine armor and holding very large guns. And just below that is Rev's name, and it also has a date below it that is just before Landara's date. And you can see that there are a couple more pictures tacked just below his name. There's another photo of Landara and he in that space armor. There is a photo that looks strangely like Rev, but he's a dog, and he's sitting on a log with a bow over his back next to two other dogs. Seems like they're out camping. And then there's another one where he is dressed in leather armor with a very thin blade at his hip, and he's sitting on the hood of a Mustang that seems like it's driving amongst a bunch of horses. As you look through here, there's no indication that whatever befell this place was a threat from the outside. All of the names as you scan over them have various dates, and the latest one is Trog's. And you can see that all of those names, all of those dates are in his handwriting. And tucked just in the corner, as you have kind of examined this whole menagerie of photos and letters, is a small note that's in that same handwriting that you have seen all over. In a very simple scrawl, it says, "I no longer wandered, because this was home."

**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](http://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](https://Patreon.com/TheCritshow).