

# At The Pond's Edge (S4, E32)

**SFX:** INTRO MUSIC

**Jake:** I know what you're all thinking. You're all thinking, "Damn, Jake's arms look toned. What's he been doing?"

**Kim:** I was thinking that, yes.

**Rev:** Most of the time.

**Tass:** Yeah. Like, it doesn't really count.

**Jake:** I went to Costco on Monday for a quarter pound all beef hot dog and a medium soda for \$1.50. If you don't all know that, that's a Costco deal and it's wonderful.

**Rev:** Have you ever tried the ... The chicken thing? I just was reading about this the other day.

**Jake:** The \$5 rotisserie chicken?

**Rev:** No, like the chicken wrap thing.

**Jake:** Oh, yeah! Yeah. They've got like a chicken Caesar —

**Megan:** What are you doing with your hands, Rev? He said a chicken wrap, and then he put his hands out like talons, like, in opposite directions!

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** He picks up a wrap like an eagle getting a fish out of the water.

**Rev:** I was giving it a friction burn.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Yes, I've had that. And it is good. But nothing is as much bang for your buck as the \$1.50 hot dog and drink.

**Rev:** OK.

**Megan:** Are they heavy? How is this ... Like, how is this making your arms toned?

**Jake:** No, no, I'm getting there.

**Megan:** OK.

**Jake:** Because while I was there ...

**Rev:** Cause he raised so many of them.

**Megan:** [Laughs] How many did you get?

**Jake:** I was ... [Laughs] Look ...

**Rev:** It's not about weight, it's about reps.

**Jake:** It's a \$1.50 per hotdog and drink, and I've got a lot of dollars fifties in my bank account.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** Or did.

**Jake:** Or did, anyway. No, I was — but I was out of Coca-Cola at home. And so I was like, oh, I'll get that while I'm here. I'd never gotten it there. Costco sells Cokes in a 35 pack.

**Kim:** What?

**Jake:** It's like a whole cardboard pallet.

**Rev:** Mmhmm.

**Jake:** So I grabbed me one of those. And I hadn't gotten a cart, because I was just there for the \$1.50 hot dog and soda. So I spent a little bit of time at the Aluminum Church here, like carrying these underneath each arm. [Laughs]

**Tass:** I wondered why our apartment looks like a loading dock now.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** I don't know exactly what they weigh, but if I had to estimate, it's about 115 pounds each. And I just had one under each arm, struggling, farmers carrying 35 packs of Coke, and then having to stand in the line and wait for my register. And just getting bemused looks from people who know I didn't have the foresight to grab a cart.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Tass:** Well, those looks were because you had people bringing over the hot dog and drink to set on top of that while they waited.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Megan:** I don't think I could lift one of those, even if I had gotten a cart. I would have to ask an employee for help. [Laughs]

**Kim:** Ask someone to push it for you?

**Jake:** They are heavy.

**Megan:** Yeah. [Laughs] I'll ride on top. Might as well.

**Jake:** I was concerned, because I usually just put like the case of drinks on top of our cabinets. And I was like, this is gonna take our cabinets off the walls. Like, this is too much weight to put on top of the already full of stuff cabinets.

**Kim:** You're never going to get that security deposit back.

**Jake:** No. God, no.

**Megan:** How long do you think it's gonna take you guys to get through all of that Coke?

**Jake:** Oh, not as long as ... Not as long as you might hope.

**Tass:** And I don't drink caffeine, so.

**Jake:** No, it's all me. And they go — they go kinda quick.

**Rev:** I mean, 35 Cokes ... We'll assume you have a guest every now and then.

**Jake:** Fool.

**Rev:** 15 days. Is that generous, or too lean?

**Jake:** I probably drink at least two a day, so maybe thereabouts, yeah.

**Rev:** Yeah. Five for a guest, six for a guest.

**Jake:** I don't have guests. What are you talking about?

**Megan:** I'm definitely, like, interested in what is the end point going to be. Like what day are you like, this is the last Coke.

**Jake:** I'll try to keep track. I'll try to remember to send you all — to ping you all, "Hey, FYI, here's the last one." And then I'll go back to Costco and I'll get my gains again.

**Rev:** Nice.

**Megan:** No carts allowed.

**Rev:** No carts. This is our new challenge, every month, is ...

**Jake:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. So I got — I got you all Costco memberships, and we're all gonna go work out together.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** Speaking of people who are jacked, our buddy Jgame\_Z ...

**Jake:** Oh, yeah.

**Rev:** He asked me the other day, he ... So Tass is going to, on Wednesday night for the month of April, switch to Tiny Tina's Wonderland. Wonderland? Adventureland?

**Kim:** I think it's Wonderland-s.

**Rev:** Oh, that makes sense it's not Tiny Tina and Peter Pan.

**Megan:** That's Neverland.

**Rev:** Yeah. Oh!

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** I ran a story about that. You'd think I'd know. But he asked the other day if he could join us on Wednesdays to play that game. And so I guess he's finding out right now as he listens to this intro that, yes, he's going to join us on Wednesday nights. Do you have a thought about what you're going to play, Tass?

**Jake:** That's tonight! He's got ...

**Rev:** Next week. Next week, it's fine. He's got a whole week.

**Megan:** It's really gonna suck if he's behind, listening to the show.

**Kim:** And he's like, "Oh, no."

**Tass:** I'm sort of purposefully, besides like watching a little bit of gameplay and stuff, I haven't really looked into like what all the options and stuff are. So I don't — I don't know what I'm gonna play yet.

**Rev:** OK.

**Tass:** I'm sure I'll have one for when I'm playing by myself, and then one specifically for us when we stream, so that it's ...

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Tass:** You know, always starting from that same spot.

**Rev:** I'm probably only going to play, at least for now, when we stream. Because I've been sucked into Elden Ring.

**Tass:** Ah yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, that's fair.

**Kim:** Oh god, me too.

**Rev:** Man, I am enjoying that game way more than I thought I would, for it being a Souls game.

**Megan:** That's great. I'm really enjoying all of the out-of-context memes, because I don't know anything about it. But everything I've seen so far is really ... Just confusing as hell.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Megan:** I like it.

**Rev:** Kim and I did a stream the other day where we played at the exact same time. And I made Rev — I made a little spell caster. And I have stuck on that character, and I have abandoned my main character to keep playing that spell caster, because magic is awesome.

**Kim:** It was very fun. Rev and I played like two different archetypes. Like I played more of a traditional melee fighter with like a big two handed weapon, and he was a spell caster. And we ... I could see his screen and we tried to like coordinate to like sort of tackle the same dungeons at the same times, to see like how the different approaches went, regarding the bosses. It was a lot of fun.

**Rev:** So it was either ... She could look at my screen and either see that I had already defeated the boss, or that I was running. That's really two modes for a mage, is running away or the thing's dead already.

And then lastly, just a reminder that we have our monthly AMA coming up next Monday, if you'd like to join us over at [Twitch.tv/TheCritshow](https://www.twitch.tv/TheCritshow). With that, it's time to get into the episode.

**SFX:** CRITSHOW STINGER

**Rev:** We are outside of the Walden Preserve in Salem, Connecticut, and we see a black Range Rover tearing down the road. A large helicopter lands a little further down the road, and the black Range Rover swerves to give it a wide berth, continues forward, and then busts through the gate that is guarding the entrance to the Walden Preserve. Wallace, what are you doing?

**Jake:** I'm still following my little improvised rangefinder. I hope that whatever they're doing pays off. But if these things are still moving, then I'm still following, just in case.

**Rev:** All right. So you are able to continue to follow. And the driving becomes a little difficult, because there are pretty quickly driving paths that do not match up with where this detector is trying to tell you to go.

**Jake:** Well, I shift the Range Rover into four wheel drive, and I'm off-roading. I'm driving through trees. I mean, I can't go as fast, clearly, but I am diligently following that trail.

**Rev:** I think this is gonna be an Act Under Pressure.

**Jake:** Stop it!

**Rev:** You stop being so dangerous!

**Jake:** No, I'm talking to me!

**Rev:** Oh, OK.

**Jake:** Seven.

**Rev:** So you can continue to follow this tracker off road, but you're eventually going to come to a place where you're not gonna be able to get through any more. Or, you're gonna draw some unwanted attention as you follow them through this terrain. Or, the car is going to get so muddied and bogged down that it's not going to work right, when you do decide to stop.

**Jake:** I think I'll reach a point where I have to proceed on foot.

**Rev:** So you follow after this signal. And about a minute and a half goes by as you're going through what starts to become some pretty swampy areas. But then it does lead directly over a very large pond. And if you try to go around it on either side, it's very thick, dense marshland.

**Jake:** OK. I'll back it up a little bit, so that it's parked somewhere, like, that I'll be able to go when I need it again. And then I'll grab my gear and grab my tape recorder and start trying to follow this path on foot.

**Rev:** So which way do you want to go? Do you want to try to wade through the water? Do you want to go around into the marshy area? How do you want to traverse in the direction it's telling you to go?

**Jake:** Is this like a ... Like a wading depth of pond, or is this like a swimming depth of pond?

**Rev:** Hard to tell from here, because it is very algae covered.

**Jake:** Man. I think I toss the trench coat and the fedora in the car, and I go swimming. I can't let this trail go cold.

**Rev:** OK. So you're gonna go swimming. You've got obviously the recorder up in one hand, so that it doesn't get dunked under. Is there anything else you're gonna try to keep out of the water?

**Jake:** I mean, I'm not taking the laptop. I think I gotta leave the camera behind. I know that I told Chester I'd get a photo, but hopefully I can get a photo of a corpse, because it will be destroyed on this swim anyway. I'm keeping my gun with me. I'll try to swim. You know, it's in like an under the shoulder holster. I'll try to kind of keep that arm being the one supporting the tape recorder and, like, kind of swimming with the other arm, to keep it not totally submerged the whole time.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** But I just hope it'll still shoot OK, despite this.

**Rev:** Yeah. And what kind of gun is it?

**Jake:** It's a Magnum.

**Rev:** All right. So a revolver, actually, from the research that we did here in a pause, can still be fired OK when it is wet. But the bullets, when submerged for a long period of time, could have the powder wet, in which case they won't fire. So I think what we're gonna do here is a Luck roll, to see how your bullets turn out.

**Jake:** OK. Eleven.

**Rev:** All right. Meta knowledge, your bullets will be OK. And probably somewhere, someone is furious with the decision and the conversation I've just had with you.

**Both:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Well, you know ... It's a fictional world. It exists parallel to ours, but it's not the same, so.

**Rev:** Yeah. And that's the one difference.

**Jake:** And that's the only difference, is how guns, water, and bullets work.

**Rev:** All right. So you start to wade into this pond. And as with a lot of nature preserves, it's very thick algae, lots of lily pads and stuff. So it's getting on your clothes. Like, you can see where the algae and stuff is just clinging to you. But you are able to make it through. You get out to about the center. And as you continue further on, the signal starts to get weaker.

**Wallace:** Oh, no.

**Jake:** Yeah. I mean, I want to swim around a little bit to confirm that this thing is honing in on the center of this pond.

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Investigate a Mystery?

**Jake:** OK. Eight.

**Rev:** You get a hold 1.

**Jake:** Where did it go?

**Rev:** You do get the sense that it is directly in the center of the pond. But as you're swimming around, trying to get a reading around the pond, you do notice that by one of the trees there is a large opening made by the roots of the tree that is right by the edge of the water. So it makes a little opening. And it seems like it's big enough for someone to fit in.

**Jake:** I think I'm just shaking my head, knowing what I'm about to do. I'm gonna swim over towards that opening, and try and get a look inside, listen close, see if it seems like anything is going on down there before I just dive in.

**Rev:** Yeah. So the opening is actually above the water. It's right on the water's line. But you can see that it does continue on into the earth, directly in front of you, and then slowly start to turn away as it starts to angle down. So there is no water that is going into this entrance and down.

**Jake:** Are my senses picking anything up from the entrance? Can I hear anything? Can I smell anything?

**Rev:** It smells very earthy, and it smells of decomposition. The air is very still and stagnant. You don't see any light. And I think that when you try and listen, it's hard to tell. The water is lapping around behind you. So it's a little difficult to try to hear if there's anything down there.

**Jake:** OK. I'm gonna break off a branch and like plant it in the ground nearby here to leave a trail. And then, again, I'm just going to shake my head in fury at myself, and proceed into this tunnel.

**Rev:** As you proceed into the tunnel, it's very dark, very muddy. How are you proceeding? Are you trying to light something to show your way, or are you using your hands along the wall?

**Jake:** I've got the gun in my right hand, and my left hand on the wall. And I am just slowly and carefully stepping foot over foot, and keeping a hand on the wall to feel where I'm going. And I'm still — I'm just listening and smelling, trying to get an idea of when I'm approaching something.

**Rev:** It takes you a few minutes. It's a very gradual decline down into this tunnel. And it goes out wide, before it starts to come back in. You feel like that you have walked the entire diameter of this pond before it starts to move towards the middle. As it starts to move towards the middle, there's a sharp 90 degree turn in the mud. And up ahead, you can see little flicks of light.

**Jake:** I'm gonna creep that direction, see if I can get eyes on something.

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Read a Bad Situation?

**Jake:** I think I should. Eleven.

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

**Jake:** I think for starters, what's my best way in?

**Rev:** You know that these creatures move through the earth. So whatever was moving through here was not them. So it seems like this would be an okay way to enter, because it's not a way that they would be thinking about.

**Jake:** OK. Then I'll keep scooting forward here, until I can survey wherever this light source is.

**Rev:** Yeah. You move a little further up, and you can see that there are a half dozen torches inlaid into the wall around this stone room underneath this pond. And I will say that it is a stone room in the sense that it is stonework — it is laid floors and walls. And from where you're at, you can see a patch of the ceiling that is still dirt and not stoned over.

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

**Rev:** In the far corner of the room is the white draugr. It is currently closing its rib cage, and shrinking back down to its normal size. Aiden is cowering in the corner in front of it, having just been ejected from the rib cage. But as you see this playing out in front of you, you can just barely hear the sound of liquid dripping onto stone. And you remember seeing the three draugrs as they appeared, and one of them was dripping this black bile. And it's just out of your sight, like directly to your left if you were to enter the room. So it is there doing something, but can't be seen by you at the moment.

**Jake:** I think I've gotta ask again, what's the best way to protect the victims?

**Rev:** The best way to protect the victim would be to create some kind of distraction. Because now that Aiden is here and underground in a place that they feel is safe and secure, they're probably not as attentive. And so if you could create some kind of distraction that drew their attention away, it might give Aiden an opening. And as you're sitting in this tunnel watching, from the corner where you can't see, one of the draugrs speaks up.

**Rev:** KALLISTA: Aldrixy, where is Hawken? You should check on him. He should be here.

**Rev:** And the white draugr, Aldrixy, turns.

**Rev:** ALDRIXY: Kallista, he will be drawn here when the time is right. Give him time. Hawkens knows how to deal with problems.

**Rev:** KALLISTA: Very well. Let us prepare our work.

**Jake:** Damn. I was kind of hoping that Aldrixy would go, "Good call. I'm gonna leave."

**Both:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** OK. I'm gonna sneak back out of here. I'm gonna head back for the car.

**Rev:** OK. Are you taking as much care and time to get out as you did to get in?

**Jake:** No. Because I think worst case, I'm a distraction. And that might give Aiden an opening in and of itself.

**Rev:** All right. So you are able to make your way back up this gradually ascending ramp, back out into the pond, and across the pond to your newly acquired Range Rover.

**Jake:** I'm gonna start looking around in this thing, just to see if there's anything, like, handy. Anything that jumps out at me as like could be useful in this scenario. I don't know what a vampire lady would need as far as effects in her Range Rover go, but I hadn't looked it over yet, so I should.

**Rev:** Yeah. I think that as you look through the Range Rover, the first thing that happens is you hear in the distance some roars and the sound of a helicopter blades starting up. But that's someone else's problem.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** You look through this Range Rover and you find some road flares, some orange cones, one of those compressed things of like Flat Fix that really just ruin the rim and the tire, because it injects it with that sticky foam.

**Jake:** [Chuckles] OK.

**Rev:** Maybe a little box of snacks, and a packet of blood inside of the glove compartment.

**Jake:** All right. I am going to pocket that can of Fix-a-Flat and the snacks. Does the blood seem ... Is it like an IV bag, like human blood?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** I put that back. [Laughs]

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** And I'm gonna grab one of the flares, and I'm gonna take my tie off and put that in my pocket for a moment.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** And then I'm going to get in the driver's seat, and I'm going to start inching my way toward the pond. I know this is going to damage the vehicle, and it's probably not going to work anymore. But that's OK, because I don't think it's gonna work anymore either way.

**Rev:** OK. Yeah. What are you trying to do here? Like describe to me what's happening as you're inching this car into the pond.

**Jake:** Do you want me to tell you the plan? You just want me to hit you with the plan here?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** All right, so there's that — that patch of un-stoneworked ceiling, right?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Right at the middle of the pond. So what I'm gonna do is I'm going to drive the Range Rover into the pond. And I'm gonna kind of feel out how deep that's gonna get. I'll — I might just swim back in there real quick, to see exactly how deep it's gonna get.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** In fact, let's say I do that. I'm gonna get the Range to the edge, and I want to swim down and just see if it seems like this thing is gonna be totally submerged ...

**Rev:** Uh-huh.

**Jake:** Or if like part of it's still gonna be exposed if I drive it into the pond.

**Rev:** Yeah. So it's about eight or nine feet deep. So depending on how exactly you did it, I think like the back end of it could still be out of the water, if it went in fast enough that it went nose down. If you gradually drive in, you probably could get the whole thing submerged.

**Jake:** OK. Then I'm gonna try and rush it in there. I want this thing to go in nose down. I need the gas tank exposed, is what I'm going for.

**Rev:** OK. Yeah. So why don't you give me ... Because you're trying to get this in a particular spot, so why don't you give me an Act Under Pressure?

**Jake:** [Laughs] Always!

**Rev:** But I think you do get the +1 ongoing from your previous Read a Bad Situation.

**Jake:** OK.

**Rev:** Of having spotted that area in the mud.

**Jake:** Twelve. And that is one of my advanced moves that I literally don't think has ever come up for Wallace.

**Rev:** All right. So what do you get with that?

**Jake:** On a 12+, you may choose to either do what you wanted and something extra, or to do what you wanted to absolute perfection. And I would like to do this to absolute perfection.

**Rev:** All right. So you are able to get this Range Rover into the water. You see a downed log, and kind of use it to launch yourself just a little bit so that the nose goes up and then the butt goes up and it plunges head first, down into the water.

**Jake:** OK. I'm gonna climb back up towards the hatch of the trunk and pop it open, and I am going to pull my tie out of my pocket and I'm going to open up the gas tank. And I'm going to dip one end of my tie in there and get it nice and soaked, and then flip it around and get the other end of my tie in there and get it nice and soaked. And then I'm gonna leave it hanging out like a wick. And what I'm gonna do is I'm going to pop one of those road flares and light this, and fuck back off out of the water because I want to blow up the Range Rover on that patch of dirt at the bottom of the pond. And I mean, maybe totally flood. I'm not sure exactly how flooded this will be. And I'm really, really hoping that I can get to Aiden before this goes bad for him.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** But I can't think of a bigger distraction that I can do with the tools at my disposal.

**Rev:** All right, so you light this. How exactly are you getting away? Are you trying to swim away? If so, where?

**Jake:** Yeah. So that's — I wanted — rather than just dumping a road flare in the gas tank, this is why I needed the tie.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** To give me time. So I think I like light the end of the tie, and then I jump as far as I can. Like, off of the end of the Range Rover here. And hurry back towards the edge of the shore, where that tunnel is.

**Rev:** So you are able to get over to that tunnel as the tie is burning. What do you want to do once you're over here?

**Jake:** I'm moving down the tunnel quick. I don't know how long it's gonna be before this thing goes off, but I need to be down there when it does.

**Rev:** OK. So you are making your way down the tunnel. I think up above, we see the fire on the tie burning into the car, and then it vanishes. You get to the bottom of this tunnel, and nothing quite happens right away. Then all of a sudden, there is this explosion underneath the water. The sound that you hear isn't the explosion, but it's the shrieking of the metal as it is torn apart. And instantly, that dirt floor caves in and water starts to fill the chamber. The two draugrs look up at the explosion and the water pouring in, and Kallista moves over to it and grows as she goes, and starts holding her hands up in front of the water, trying to hold it in place. Aldrixy comes over behind her and is trying to get a sense of what happened, as these pieces of metal and burning plastic start to also come in the hole, as the remains of the Range Rover are forced in from the pressure of the water.

**Jake:** I am sprinting over towards Aiden.

**Rev:** All right. I think this is Act Under Pressure.

**Jake:** That's an eight, but I'm still gonna spend a point of Luck to make sure that this goes according to plan.

**Rev:** All right, mark your Luck. And you are able to move across this room. Aiden in the corner looks up and sees you, and he doesn't recognize you. But at the determination that you're showing, you feel a familiar probing in the back of your mind that you have not felt in a very long time. You know that it's Aiden, reaching out to see what your intent is, what your emotions are. And it's like he recognizes it. It's like he suddenly does recognize you. And this smile spreads across his face, and he gets up and starts moving towards you. You are able to scoop him up and start moving out of the tunnel as this chamber continues to fill with water.

**Jake:** Yeah, I'm running flat out. And I think once we're in the tunnel and out of earshot of the draugrs, I just — I'm tearing up. I'm trying to hold it back and keep it together in the situation. But like I say ...

**Wallace:** Aiden, it's ... It's been a long time, kid. Don't worry. I'm going to get you out of here, OK?

**Rev:** AIDEN CHAMBERS: Wallace, is that you?

**Wallace:** Yeah. Yeah buddy, it's me.

**Rev:** AIDEN CHAMBERS: What happened? You got so old.

**Wallace:** Well, that's what happens, you know? When time goes by, and I don't ... Look, I don't know what's going on with you, and right this second, we don't have time to figure it out, OK? So we're gonna get out of here. And if I say run, you just run. OK?

**Rev:** AIDEN CHAMBERS: OK.

**Rev:** And as you make it to the top of the tunnel, the first thing you notice is that the pond is completely drained. From the hole emerges Aldrixy. And they look around, trying to figure out where this came from. And then in the distance you hear the sound of gunshots, and another draugr roaring. And Aldrixy grows 15 feet high again, and starts to move in the direction of who you know is Hawkens, roaring.

**Jake:** My first instinct is to head back in the direction of the rest of the team, but that's where this thing is clearly going. And frankly, keeping Aiden safe is more important to me than literally anyone else in this place right now. I think I set him down and I tell him to run. I gesture. And we're just gonna start running, like, perpendicular to the line between here and where that fight is going on. And I'm trying to get us to an intersecting road. And I'm just listening and watching, and watching the sky through the trees when I get a view. Just trying to keep an eye out, and keep us out of sight.

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Read a Bad Situation?

**Jake:** OK. That is a twelve, and this is another of my advanced moves.

**Rev:** Oh, what do you get on an advanced Read a Bad Situation?

**Jake:** You may ask the Keeper any question you want about the situation, not just the listed ones.

**Rev:** Oh. So like once, or three times? Or ...

**Jake:** I think three times?

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** I mean, cause it's hold 3, and spend them to ask questions, and on a 12+ you can ask any question.

**Rev:** Oh, yeah. What do you wanna know?

**Jake:** Where's the best place for me to go to keep us safe, and be able to let the team know that we're safe?

**Rev:** Probably some place highly populated. Like some place with buildings and roads. Like the exact opposite of where they brought him. So that one, you have technology to contact them. And two, you know that the draugrs can't just pop up out of the ground.

**Jake:** What's gonna be my quickest path to a ride or a form of transport to get me somewhere populated?

**Rev:** You saw a couple of roads leading around, like you could drive through this nature reserve and see certain areas of it. And when you came in, you did see someone working in that front office, but you didn't see a vehicle there. So you imagine if you follow one of the main roads, that it probably leads to a place where people who either work here, or have come here to like look around or take photos, park.

**Jake:** I'm gonna beeline it in that direction. And I think I'm gonna hold my last hold, for the moment.

**Rev:** All right. So yeah, you are able to make it around to a main road. And you start traveling down it, because you imagine that it probably dead ends at a place where people would park. And when you get there, you do find a Jeep that is forest green with a black canopy, and it is parked there in the ranger spot.

**Jake:** Is said ranger nearby? Visible?

**Rev:** Yeah, you don't see anybody.

**Jake:** Does it seem like this is far enough away from the action that whoever this is, they'll be OK?

**Rev:** Um ...

**Jake:** I think that might be my last hold.

**Rev:** Oh! I see, I see.

**Jake:** I want to know if I need to find this person and evacuate them with me, or if I can just take their car and know that they'll survive this situation.

**Rev:** I think that you could assume whoever this person is, is the person that was up there, close to your team. So either your team is taking care of them, or maybe there's no saving them.

**Jake:** OK. Then yeah, I'm gonna put Aiden in the passenger seat and buckle him in, and I'm gonna get in the driver's seat and hotwire this car.

**Rev:** And as you get yourself and Aiden buckled into this Jeep and get it hotwired, the air is filled with sirens. And in the distance, you can hear Mother Hen's propellers getting louder as she climbs into the air.

**Jake:** I'm gonna reach over and pop open the glove compartment as I drive, and rifle around in there to see if there's, like, an emergency phone. Or like a sat phone, or something.

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Luck?

**Jake:** Eight.

**Rev:** So there is one in here, but it's one of those ... Instead of a sat phone, it's like a walkie talkie phone? Where you can still use it to make calls, but it also acts as a short range radio. And you don't see any reception, but the radio seems like it would still work.

**Jake:** I'm gonna bloop it, and see if anybody's on the other end.

**Rev:** Back on Mother Hen, ranger Dave Garmesan is looking at all of you as the helicopter takes off. And on his belt, a little radio makes the bloop bloop sound, and he looks down at it and picks it up.

**Rev:** DAVE GARMESAN: Hello?

**Wallace:** Hey, is this the ranger?

**Rev:** And you all hear Wallace's voice coming out of this walkie talkie.

**Rev:** DAVE GARMESAN: Yeah. How did you get that? That's in my car.

**Jake:** Yeah, I'm also in your car. I don't suppose you're on a helicopter with a bunch of folks right now, are you?

**Rev:** DAVE GARMESAN: I am.

**Wallace:** Could you put one of them on the line for me, please?

**Rev:** DAVE GARMESAN: OK.

**Rev:** And Dave just holds it out.

**Tass:** Jake, get that.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Kim:** Yeah. Jake, can you get that?

**Megan:** Hey, my hands are full. Do you mind?

**Tass:** I'll grab it.

**Rev:** OK.

**Tass:** "Wallace, you're OK!"

**Wallace:** Yeah, I'm good. What became of all of you? I mean, it seems like you're making your exit, but what happened?

**Tass:** "Uh, we had to do a tactical retreat. Those things were messing us up. What's happening? What can we do?"

**Wallace:** Well, you can meet me somewhere far away from this place, because I got Aiden and we're on our way out of here.

**Kim:** "Wait, you already got him?"

**Wallace:** Yeah. What do you mean, already? It took a while.

**Tass:** "Holy shit! Okay. Yeah. Where? Anywhere."

**Wallace:** Somewhere well-populated, where we're not gonna be overlooked or overheard, because nobody cares. Right now, I'm just off-roading my way back out of this nature preserve. But we need to go somewhere with a lot of people. So there's a Costco like 15 minutes south of here. You guys wanna meet me over there?

**Tass:** "Yeah, absolutely. Do you want us to get eyes and just follow you in, in case ... Are you in any danger? Is anything following you?"

**Wallace:** Not as far as I know, but yeah, I sure wouldn't mind an eye in the sky.

**Tass:** "All right."

**Kim:** "How's Aiden doing? Is he okay?"

**Wallace:** He's all right. He's a little shell shocked, I think. And we got some stuff to talk about. But he's good. He's alive.

**Tass:** "You are an absolute rock star, dude."

**Wallace:** ... OK.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Tass:** "All right. We'll see you soon."

**Megan:** Yeah. When Wallace says that he is cool with us getting eyes on him, I think I would head up to Everett.

**Rev:** Yeah. You go up to Everett and he is starting to turn the chopper around, as you see all of the folks from the fire department arriving, starting to deal with the flames.

**Megan:** Ooh, yikes. Looking across the nature preserve, do I see the vehicle at all?

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Read a Bad Situation?

**Megan:** Eight.

**Rev:** You get a hold 1.

**Megan:** OK. I'm gonna go with, are there any dangers we haven't noticed? Because I am looking for the vehicle, but I am also worried that he's being followed.

**Rev:** Yeah. As you watch out over the preserve, you saw the large blue and white draugr starting to head back in, and you can still see the tops of their heads just above some of the trees. And you notice that they're no longer heading straight. They have turned. They're starting to move east. And your eyes start to follow the direction that these two

draugrs have turned. And in the distance, you see this green Jeep bouncing through the field, as it off-roads towards the nearest road. The white and blue draugr start to drift apart as they run in that direction, and from between them rises the black draugr, and it is massive compared to the other two. It's standing 25 feet high, moving very slowly, but covering a lot of ground with each step. And as you look on, out of Mother Hen, you see the three of them starting to close on Wallace and Aiden.

**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).