

Laughter from the Dark (S5, E7)

Jake: The Critshow contains elements of horror, fantasy violence, and adult language. Content warnings can be found in the episode description.

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: I was here like an hour and a half early for recording today, because I was doing an interview and it was very short compared to what we thought it was gonna be.

Jake: Mmhmm.

Rev: And so I sat down to play some more PowerWash Simulator.

Tass: Nice.

Rev: You know what my favorite fantasy thing about PowerWash Simulator is?

Kim: How clean everything gets?

Jake: Owning appliances and tools?

Rev: Yeah. Owning and having the mental capacity and time and will to clean things spotless. It's that I love that there's like rust on this car, and you blast it with high pressure water. And what is underneath that rust is clean metal.

Jake: Beautiful.

Rev: As opposed to a hole.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: As opposed to nothing.

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: That is pretty good.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I just — I watched a video the other day, about ... Do you guys get those, like, old shitty thing restoration videos?

Megan: Oh, yeah.

Jake: Like on your social media feeds?

Kim: No.

Jake: I watched a video, some dude breaking down — really?

Kim: No!

Jake: Like somebody finding an old sword and, like, restoring it?

Kim: Mine's mostly just cat videos.

Jake: That's — yeah. Finding an old cat and restoring it?

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I've seen a good one, where —

Rev: How did you know the hook of the next mystery?

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I've seen one that's like an old toy truck, and it just is completely dismantled and cleaned and repainted and put together. It's so good.

Jake: But I saw a dude breaking down that, like, tons of people fake these now.

Rev: Hmm.

Jake: So ...

Megan: What? No! People lie on the Internet? Unacceptable.

Jake: Exactly. Because it gets a million views. And breaking down like the two different ways to fake it. Which are like, one, they like paint a thing up. Like they literally, you know, Hollywood-style make it look damaged, so that they can then remove the damage. Or two, they take a perfectly good version of it and they just put it in the conditions that will make it shitty a lot faster, so that it gets shitty and then they can restore it. As opposed to like the real version, where you find something on the bottom of a river that's been there for 100 years and fix it. But I thought it was really interesting. Because like talking about like forcing the parts that rust, and like how you can tell. If the insides aren't rusted, they probably just did this suddenly. Because like, water didn't have time to get there and stuff.

Rev: Yeah. I saw one where someone used a whole bottle of Elmer's glue to clean their keyboard, which took a lot of time and didn't seem to get it very clean compared to like a canister of compressed air.

Jake: Yeah. They make like a putty for ...

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: You just Silly Putty that. Seems like a waste.

Rev: And it was like a three part video. Like it was a lot of glue time.

Jake: Step one: buy the glue. See you next episode.

Rev: It was just in between all the keys, and it was... Yeah.

Kim: Well I think that video was a success, because you watched all three parts of it.

Rev: I didn't, no. I refused.

Megan: So you don't know how it ends.

Rev: I watched the beginning.

Jake: You —

Rev: Jumped to episode three, saw the end.

Megan: Everything's on fire.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: All the keys come out.

Megan: [Laughs] They're fighting a bear. It's a complicated process.

Kim: Well, because you missed all the story. That happened in episode two.

Rev: That's fair. That's on me.

Jake: Episode two, they went to the Feywild.

Megan: That's when they get into the lore. [Laughs]

Rev: I didn't realize that the glue in the keyboard was episodic.

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Rev: Huh. So Halloween is upon us soon.

Megan: Woo!

Kim: Yay!

Rev: So we were going to have our — spooky! — our annual Halloween costume contest. So you can submit your photos of your Halloween costume to us by Friday, November the 4th. You can submit those either on Twitter and tag us @TheCritshow, or you can send them to the cast at thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com. And we will enter your name into a drawing for one of three spooky boxes.

All: Ooh!

Kim: Now what makes these boxes spooky?

Megan: They're full of ghosts!

Rev: Something evil was buried in one of them. The stuff that we — we're gonna do ... It's, uh ... You know, it's a prize box. We're all gonna add to it. But it's gonna be spooky.

Kim: Nice.

Megan: It's Halloween-y.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I'm gonna put in —

Jake: You're a Halloweenie.

Megan: Hey! Be nice!

Rev: I'm gonna curse one of them.

Tass: Oh, nice.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I'm gonna put Gwyneth Paltrow's head in it.

Jake: Jesus Christ!

All: [Laugh]

Jake: You know, Gwyneth Paltrow strikes me as the litigious type. So maybe ... Maybe we just immediately rescind that particular threat.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Kim: Big fan of the show, Ms. Paltrow.

Rev: We will take your name, put it into a drawing. We'll draw three winners at random. And if your costume is related to the show or you get like the logo in there someplace? Man, we'll put your dang ol' name in twice.

Megan: Woo!

Rev: And as we are into this month of September, we want to take a moment that I didn't get to take last week to thank our new patrons: Andrew, Captain Bowlegs, Allan Young, Nicholas Durbin, Dorkybuttz, Addy Aerylin, Pairimaiti, and Rachelle Bisson. So thank you to all of the new patrons who joined us, and thank you to all of the patrons who join us every month. You can find everything about our Patreon over at Patreon.com/TheCritshow. And just as a reminder, this is the month, if you would like to get in on the t-shirt or swag cycle, to sign up for those to make sure that you get yours in the mail come December.

And then lastly, on Wednesday, September 21st. For those of you who have joined us on streams on Wednesday, Tass has been doing Dead by Daylight and some other games. And we have been joined by our buddy Jgame_Z, who is a streamer. And he hates scary things, but he plays with us. He's a good sport about it. You can join the stream and hear him screaming non-stop, really, as we play these games. And he had mentioned that he had never been to a haunted house. And everyone in chat was like, "You should go. We would love to see you go to a haunted house." And he jokingly said, "Oh yeah. You guys do a sub-a-thon. And if we hit a certain goal, you can take me to a haunted house."

Tass: Oh, he messed up so bad.

Rev: He did! Because we got invited to a haunted house — The Critshow — to review it and talk about it. And so we're gonna do a sub-a-thon on Wednesday, September the 21st. It's going to be from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 pm Eastern. We're gonna be playing spooky games all day. Joe is gonna join us towards the end of the stream to see if we pass the sub goal. And if we do, we're gonna take him with us to this haunted house, put a GoPro on him, and have it facing him so you can see his reactions.

Kim: [Laughs]

Tass: So beautiful.

Rev: Yeah. And it's also in conjunction with Subtember, which means that all of the subs on Twitch are at a discount this month, so ...

Jake: Sexy.

Kim: My mind went in a different place for Subtember.

Rev: Subtember.

Jake: And Domtober.

Megan: I love the holiday season.

All: [Laugh]

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Rev: Tass. You have been walking in relative darkness for a while. You finally come to a very nice, polished piece of metal. On it are etched ten runes.

Tass: I think I take out my thermal knife and just start cutting through all of those symbols.

Rev: And as you do, there's just a faint shift in the quality of the air. Like, you know what it feels like when magic breaks.

Jake: "All right. Well, we know where Tass was last spotted. So the bad news is that now we know Dion ... He went back through the vents, presumably, Kim, back towards the Radio Room?"

Kim: "Yeah."

Jake: Is the hallway Dion-free? [Laughs]

Rev: How are you going to find out?

Jake: I'm gonna take a step off the elevator, and I feel like I'll learn pretty quickly whether or not the hallway's Dion-free.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: I think we don't know if he can see in the dark, and we know that we can't.

Jake: So a rush.

Megan: So a rush.

Kim: I think so.

Rev: Tass, you come out of the passage hidden behind the bed inside of the living quarters, and make your way back into the break room and peek around into the hallway. Kim comes bursting through the door, and you see all dozen of the workers stop in unison, turn and face her, and start moving in her direction.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Tass, you have just seen Kim bust into The Forge, and seen all of the workers of The Forge turn in unison and begin to move towards her.

Tass: OK. I think I'm gonna pull out my thermal knife again and try to, as quickly and stealthily as I can, run up on this group and start hacking off that stinger-like appendage.

Jake: I beg your unbelieving pardon.

Kim: What?

Rev: So by this group, you mean like one at a time?

Tass: Yes. Yes, of course. Yeah. I know I have to take this on one at a time, but ...

Rev: All right.

Kim: No. All twelve, one roll.

Rev: That's what it sounded like.

Megan: He's gonna throw the knife.

Rev: A boomerang.

Megan: But he's gonna throw it in an angle, so that boomerangs around. Yep.

Kim: Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping.

Rev: So I think this is gonna be an Act Under Fire. You're gonna get in, you're gonna pull down the back of their shirt to show where the stinger is, and carve it out.

Tass: Yep. Ten.

Rev: You are able to run in and grab the first one and jam this blade underneath the stinger, and you're able to cut it away from the base of the neck. This worker stops moving and collapses to the ground on their hands and knees and is simulating breathing, but they are not moving in unison with the rest of the group anymore. Kim, you have just come out of this room, and you see Tass leap out from around the corner and

seemingly stab one of these workers in the back of the neck to take them down. Megan and Jake have not come through the darkness with you. What are you doing?

Kim: They are coming towards me, like they are in between me and Tass.

Rev: Correct.

Kim: And also in between me and the armory.

Rev: Correct.

Kim: OK. Throwing a smoke bomb!

All: [Laugh]

Megan: Yes!

Kim: [Laughs] I have a weapon that does 0-harm, but it's useful.

Rev: And where are you gonna go?

Kim: I love the question. Let me refer to the map.

Jake: Just hit the deck. Just throw the smoke bomb, lay flat. Hope they all go past you.

Megan: Just crawl under the desk.

Kim: So I think my goal, here. I want to throw a smoke bomb and start kind of running to one of the perimeters of The Forge. I saw Tass do something to one of these thing's necks, and I don't know what it was because I wasn't really at a good angle to see it. But I think my goal here is to use the smoke bomb to see if I can sneak up on another one of these, and pull its head off with my garrote. I don't know if that'll do the same thing that Tass was trying to do, but it could.

Rev: Yeah. Roll Inflict Harm.

Kim: OK. That is a seven.

Rev: All right, so you take one Stress, and you are able to get around behind one of these workers and slip the garrote around their neck and give it a tug. It does not take the head clean off like it did with Dion. It gets stuck about halfway through. And electricity shoots through the garrote, and you take one point of electric damage.

Kim: OK, I'm gonna roll for my Keepsake. That's a seven.

Rev: I'm gonna use my last hold to turn that into a six.

Kim: OK.

Jake: Ooh!

Rev: So you take that one point of damage. And in the struggle, you feel the necklace come off and clatter to the ground.

Kim: All right.

Rev: Back inside the darkness. Megan and Jake, you have been stuck into your spot by whatever it is that is running out of Dion's sides. He's on the ceiling still, and has turned to see where Kim has gone, but has now turned his attention back towards both of you. He looks down and titters again.

Rev: DION: [Titters]

Rev: And starts crawling over to the wall, down the wall, and onto the floor. What are you both doing?

Megan: If I can see him, I'm taking a shot with my bow gun.

Rev: Yeah. Roll Inflict Harm.

Megan: Ten.

Rev: All right, so you can choose one additional effect.

Megan: Oof. Boy, I think I'm gonna give an ally a +1 forward on their next roll. I think I am taking a shot at this thing and giving Jake a chance to not be in its crosshairs.

Rev: All right. And what damage does your bow do?

Megan: 1-harm.

Rev: OK, and you take one Stress.

Jake: I'm also gonna try to shoot Dion with my gamma gun.

Rev: Yeah. Roll Inflict Harm.

Jake: Eleven.

Rev: All right, choose your extra effect.

Jake: I will do extra harm.

Rev: All right. How much harm does your gamma gun do?

Jake: Normally it does one. So 2-harm, organic, burning.

Rev: You fire this gamma gun off at Dion, and it singes one of his legs. And he becomes transparent on reflex, but you can still see like the corrosive burn on the skin. So you can see like bubbling and smoke.

Jake: [Gags]

Rev: So you still know where he is, but he has just kind of done this out of reflex.

Megan: Oh, no! He's got the invisibility cloak!

Rev: Tass?

Tass: So I'm kind of in a smoke cloud now too, right? [Laughs]

Rev: Correct.

Tass: Good. Good, good, good.

Kim: Sorry.

Tass: I think I'm yelling out to her. "Kim! There's like a stinger thing at the base of their neck! You've gotta remove that!" And I want to try to move towards another one and do the same thing.

Rev: Yeah. Act Under Fire. I think with a -1, from the smoke.

Tass: Yeah.

Kim: I'm like an octopus. When I get afraid, I just ... [Laughs]

Jake: She inks.

Tass: Yeah. Oh, that brought me down to a ten.

Megan: Hah.

Rev: Nice. You are able to cut another one out, and this one kind of lays back into your arms.

Megan: Adorable.

Rev: Right?

Tass: And I'll just sort of lightly set it down.

Rev: Kim.

Kim: So my garrote has the tag "quick." Am I able to sort of tug this fully through this thing's neck?

Rev: Yeah. I think this would be an Act Under Fire to pull it the rest of the way through and decommission this one.

Kim: OK. That's a six. Hey Rev, take two more hold, and I'll bump that up to a mixed.

Rev: OK. So you can pull the garrote through this one, decommissioning it. But it's gonna pin you for a minute as it falls backwards, so you're gonna be stuck for a moment. Or you're gonna take a little bit of harm from the impact of falling. Or the smoke is going to dissipate, and everyone in this room will kind of be in clear sight.

Kim: It seems the most realistic, considering my size, that I'm probably pinned by this thing for a bit.

Rev: Yeah. OK. It's just like having a really heavy body pillow. Like you're just on the ground.

Megan: That sounds great.

Rev: Right? Megan.

Megan: How far away is Dion? Or the charred parts of Dion's side.

Rev: [Whispers] He's very close. [At normal volume] No, um ...

Megan: We can feel his breath.

Rev: Yeah. He's only a few feet away.

Megan: Oh, I think I want to ... I want to get myself out of this goop.

Rev: All right. Act Under Fire to free yourself from this sticky trap that he has laid.

Megan: Eight.

Rev: So you'll be able to get out. But some of the workers are gonna filter into this room to start helping him. Or you're gonna leave your shoes behind, so it's gonna give you like a -1 on kind of movement based things until you can get them back.

Kim: Not her Converse!

Jake: Space Converse, no!

Rev: Or you gonna take some damage from like using your hands to push yourself out, and just kind of ripping ... Ripping skin a little bit.

Jake: Palms.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: Oh, gross. I love the idea of just running through this complex barefoot, and like trying to take out a bunch of, like, scorpion monsters and robots with just my shoes hanging back in some goo till I can get them again.

Rev: And where are you going? Are you — you get out. Are you going backwards towards the elevator, or forward towards the robot dance party?

Jake: Now that you phrase it that way ...

Megan: Yeah. I don't think I have a choice anymore.

Kim: There's smoke, there's lasers.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: I mean, I don't — I'm not leaving yet, because I know that Jake's still, like, stuck.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: But I want to get out of stinger range.

Rev: Yeah. I just need to know which side of the trap you're on.

Megan: Oh. Gotcha, gotcha.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: I'm just trying to unstick myself, and I think I'm staying closer towards the door where Kim went.

Rev: OK. Jake?

Jake: I'm gonna try to shoot him again.

Rev: OK. Roll Inflict Harm.

Jake: Boxcars.

Kim: Nice.

Rev: What's your extra effect?

Jake: I'm gonna not take the Stress this time. I'm getting up there.

Rev: Yeah. You hit Dion with this gamma gun again, and he flickers back into full visibility. Part of his chin has melted away, and you can see that two of the legs are hanging limp at his side. But he makes a lunge at you, thrusting the stinger out.

Jake: I mean, my feet are glued to the ground — ooh! My feet are glued to the ground! I'm gonna use this opportunity to, like, Michael Jackson ...

Megan: Oh my gosh!

Kim: Yes!

Jake: Like lean forward, out of the way of the stinger.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: Just Matrix your way completely backwards at the knees.

Jake: Yep.

Rev: Roll Act Under Fire.

Kim: Just really tighten that core.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: So you can avoid this damage. It seems like that's your main goal, here.

Jake: [Laughs] No, it's just to look fucking rad.

Rev: OK. You can look rad ...

Megan: It's so dark in here. Nobody can see.

Jake: Nobody will ever know this happened but me.

Rev: OK. So you will look rad, but ...

Jake: But you're gonna take full damage.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: He lands on you, as you've made yourself essentially a table.

Rev: Yeah. So you can avoid the damage from this stinger, but you're gonna kind of sit backwards into the trap, so that now your butt is stuck. Or he's going to knock your weapon out of your hand. Or he's gonna turn his attention towards someone else.

Megan: Who could that be? [Laughs]

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Maybe towards himself. Just a little self care. You know, I need to focus on me, Dion thinks.

Kim: Take some time for yourself.

Jake: I will be disarmed.

Rev: Yeah. You are able to lean back. You don't get yourself any more caught in the trap, but he is still focused on you. And that lashing tail knocks the gamma gun out of your hand. Tass?

Tass: I assume, like, we're not far enough away that I can't hear him blasting and stuff, right?

Rev: Correct. It's dark.

Tass: Sure.

Rev: Like, you just know that there is sound coming from a dark hallway, and every great once in a while there's a burst of light.

Tass: I think I'm — like I realize that I am doing this the opposite way of taking the head off of the snake. Like, I'm doing this the long way. So I'm gonna run towards the flashes of light.

Rev: I think roll Act Under Fire to get through this room.

Tass: Sure. Eleven.

Rev: Yeah. You are able to duck and weave around all of the workers and sprint into the darkness of the hallway. You almost collide directly into Megan. You can barely see her, from the light that she has.

Tass: "Oh, thank god. Are you okay?"

Megan: "Oh, my gosh! Tass! You're OK!"

Tass: "Yeah. Where's Jake?"

Megan: "Somewhere over here. There's like — Dion is a scorpion thing, and—"

Tass: "Yeah, he sure fucking is!" And I want to try to scan for him.

Rev: Roll Survey the Scene.

Tass: OK. This might be my third eight in a row on Survey the Scene.

Rev: All right, you get a hold 1.

Tass: Is there something important that I'm missing?

Rev: You start to move your light around, trying to get a sense of where Dion is. And it's actually your sense of smell at first that catches him. There is this caustic smell filling the area. And as you move your light over and move towards one of the walls, it gets stronger. He actually has his back to you. He is moving away from you all, towards the elevator. But he is not aware that you have seen him yet.

Tass: "Oh, hell no!" And I want to take a shot.

Rev: All right. Roll Inflict Harm.

Tass: That's a five. But I don't want him to get away. I think I'm gonna use an Intuition.

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

Tass: I'm gonna go +1 harm. Which brings me up to four, with the blast cannon.

Jake: Whoa!

Megan: Holy cow.

Rev: You fire this blast cannon at Dion as he is moving down the hallway. Jake, you take one point of damage as Dion explodes, and a bunch of acidic blood rains down on you. The good news is it eats away at this organic trap.

Jake: I assume that defeats my armor.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Ah, beans.

Megan: Can I get my shoes back? [Laughs] Are they free?

Rev: The acidic goo raining down destroys the trap holding your shoes as well. Kim, inside of The Forge all of the workers stop moving, and they all start to look around, confused.

Kim: I want to push the one that's on top of me, off of me, roll out from under, and stand up and look at them. Do they see me? Do they care?

Rev: They see you, and they're confused.

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Is there something we can help you with?

Kim: "No, thank you. Not right now. Excuse me." And I want to leave and try to find my friends.

Rev: One of them actually stops you.

Rev: FORGE FORBOT: Pardon? Pardon?

Kim: "Yes?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Request to do group system diagnostics.

Kim: "Request denied."

Rev: All right, so you head into the hallway.

Tass: I'm rushing over to help Jake up.

Jake: "Did you get him?"

Tass: "Yeah, I think we got him, bud."

Jake: "OK, good."

Tass: "Holy shit. What — what have I missed?"

Megan: "Missed a lot. I'm assuming we missed a lot with you, huh?"

Kim: "Yeah Tass, what happened? I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have let them put you in that thing."

Tass: "You guys put me in that thing? I woke up in a sack of goo that tasted like pork rinds, and —"

Megan: "Ugh!"

Tass: "I had to, like, wiggle around — oh shit. I gotta back up. There's a telepath here."

Megan: [Gasps] "What?"

Kim: "What?"

Tass: "There's like an alien sort of species. And they're ... Yeah, it was like this nice little, little fella that kept talking about Mom that's running the comm room, and is monitoring everything. Like, they actually do have a living thing. They're like, sort of running shit from wherever comms are. And this is — it was like her little son that, like, fell asleep or passed out or something. And because I was passed out, was in my freaking mind palace. And he was very kind."

Jake: "OK."

Kim: "I don't even know how to process that right now."

Tass: "Yeah. But I don't know what's up with Mom. The last Mama we dealt with didn't go great, so who knows with this? But yeah, there's somebody there. Just him chillin. Mom is they're running stuff — which again, no clue if that's good for us, bad for us, or what. Anyway, so I — like I tried to follow him out of my dreamscape, I guess, and got launched into wakefulness in that sack, came out of the room, and here was old boy turned into this shit. I watched him put his head on upside down and backwards and creep around."

Kim: "Oh yeah, that was me. I cut his head off the first time."

Tass: "Cool. And made my way through back, past all the stuff that we tried to get into earlier, the little break room. And there's just abandoned barracks back there. Completely — it's filled with dust. But there is a hidden room. And I found one of the circles. I took it out."

Megan: "Oh, shit. So did we!"

Tass: "Oh, hell yeah. OK. Where?"

Megan: "In the Product Testing. They had those, uh ... The pods that we saw, from the tram?"

Tass: "Yeah, yeah."

Megan: "The pods were set up in the circle, and the scorpion creatures inside, like, had symbols on their chest, like they were the components. And I guess Jake made friends with a smuggler, and they took one of them — essentially fucking it up, so ..."

Tass: "Oh, so we — so we did give some pirates some aliens."

Jake: "We did. He assured me that they were for self defense."

Tass: "Uh-huh."

Jake: "And I told him we'd be back if he did anything wrong. If he did anything bad. But then Kim was about to die, so we really kind of had to get out of there before I could put a lid on that whole thing."

Tass: "OK. Well, other point of interest: what did the other workers do? Did they chill once Dion went down?"

Kim: "Yeah. Yeah, they all just all stood up and seemed confused. And then they asked me if they could run group system diagnostics, and I told them no. So they didn't."

Tass: "OK. I mean, I can give you that. They have some like thing attached to their spines, that I think Dion was using to like influence them."

Kim: "Oh."

Jake: "Maybe we should let them run their diagnostics, so they can figure out more about that and tell us how it works. Or if we need to worry about it again, or whatever."

Kim: "Oh. OK, sure. I just — I wasn't sure, because these things were trying to kill me earlier. So I didn't know if they just were going to, like, heal themselves and then start being all mean again."

Megan: "Yeah. I mean, Kim's right. They were being controlled by Dion, but they still work here."

Tass: "Yeah, I think what we're figuring out, though, is that the people that just work here, just work here. You know? I don't think they're exactly Nash troops."

Kim: "OK. Well, now I feel bad. Hold on one second." And I want to run back into The Forge.

Tass: Yeah. I mean, I think I follow. [Laughs]

Rev: You come in, and all of the workers are collapsed on the ground. There is the smell of burning electronics. You see that the stingers have all melted into that same acidic goo and burned through their spinal columns. And as you come into the room, you see, Tass, where you have knocked those two to the ground, that there's burnt spots on the ground. It seems like this is ... Whatever this creature was, it was a fail safe to kill whoever it attacked, if it were to die.

Kim: "Whoops."

Megan: What about the ones that Tass cut it out of?

Rev: They're both on the ground, but unharmed except for the wound on their neck from where Tass had taken the stingers out.

Megan: I want to go over to the ones that don't have the burned spot in their neck.

Rev: Mmhmm.

Megan: If these are robots, they're tech. Can I try and bring it back online?

Rev: Yeah. Do you want to try to work on it here, or are you gonna try to take it back to the ship? Like, where do you want to try and repair this worker?

Megan: I guess here. I mean, we'd have to take it all the way back, and we don't really know what benefit we're gonna get from this anyway. And if I mess this up, I'll take the other one back to the ship.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: I got two shots here, right?

Rev: All right. Use or Repair an Advanced Item.

Megan: Thirteen.

Rev: Yeah. You are able to get it back online and awake. It sits up on the table.

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Is there anything I can assist you with?

Megan: "Can you tell me where the Communications Room is?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Negative.

Kim: "Can you turn the oxygen back on?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Affirmative.

Kim: "Thank you."

Megan: "Good call."

Rev: And you hear all the air start to cycle up again.

Jake: "Do you have contact with any of your fellow workers?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: All workers offline.

Jake: "Seems like this one can only track what's going on, like inside The Forge. I mean, not to say that there are definitely more workers elsewhere in the facility, but it doesn't have communications, and it's only reading the offline ones in here."

Megan: "It seems that way."

Jake: Is there like another terminal in here? Is there a place in here that we can see, like, kind of the layout of this place again?

Megan: Oh, yeah. "Is there a map of the facility?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Blueprints of each location can be found on the central computer in each location. A master blueprint can be found on the computer in the lobby.

Kim: [Snorts] Good.

Jake: "Can you list the locations that have their own maps within them?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Product Testing, The Forge, the Welcome Center, the Data Center.

Megan: "Where is the nearest access to the Data Center?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: In the Welcome Center.

Jake: "Is there a way to access the maintenance shaft, without using the terminal in the Welcome Center?"

Rev: FORGE ROBOT: Finding the quick release near the door.

Jake: "OK."

Megan: "Do you have a name?"

Rev: NUMBER 5: Number 5. No disassemble Number 5.

Jake: Aww.

Megan: "Who runs the data center?"

Rev: NUMBER 5: It has been quite a while since I have been updated on the information in the larger network. At my last backup, Mari was in charge of the Data Center."

Jake: "When was your last backup?"

Rev: NUMBER 5: Three years, seven days, eleven hours.

Jake: "Oh, damn."

Kim: "When was the last order placed for Immortals?"

Rev: NUMBER 5: I do not know when the last order was placed, but I do know that we have been working on prototypes. My assumption would be that orders are continuing to come in.

Kim: "Hmm. OK."

Rev: NUMBER 5: I don't know if it's weird for a robot to say assumption.

All: [Chuckle]

Jake: "All right. Well, it seems like the third circle's probably in the Data Center? If we had one in Product Testing, and one in The Forge?"

Kim: "Is that where you were, Tass? Were you in The Forge?"

Tass: "Oh. Wow. Yeah." So I guess I would kind of ... I think I just would lead them back there, to show them that room. "So like it's just sort of through this. Like this lifts. There's like a hinged hatch, and it just goes that direction. I walked ... God, maybe a half hour, I think? I mean, I wasn't sprinting, or — I mean, I wasn't running it or anything, but ..."

Jake: "I mean, the walk back from — well, the jog back from Product Testing to the Welcome Center was about a half hour, as well."

Tass: "OK. I mean, yeah, if you guys were moving, then ... You know, this probably isn't as far as that, you know what I mean?"

Rev: But you do know, too, that the path you had to take to Product Testing was rounded, instead of a straight line.

Megan: We had to go further, but we're moving faster, so it evens out?

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: "I mean, it's the only place we haven't been. And even if it's not in the Data Center, just like this, maybe there's some access point to finding it."

Jake: "I mean, if I was a betting man, I'd say that there's some way to get to it from the Welcome Center, and that it's about a half hour away from it."

Kim: [Chuckles]

Jake: "The Welcome Center might be the middle, here. The Welcome Center might have that central circle in it. We might have been on top of it."

Kim: "Maybe."

Megan: "It is the hub of this place, so ..."

Tass: "God, I hate to think we might have to go outside. I mean, the energy field is like a circular area around this, right?"

Jake: "Oh, god."

Tass: "I mean, I don't know. I don't know. It could — it could correlate. It might not."

Kim: "Outside kind of sucks. It didn't kill me, though. It was just very hot."

Tass: "Oof. Yeah. OK."

Megan: "OK. Well, I say ... This is like a break room around here, right? Let's get something to eat, and just take a second. I'm not feeling great. And it's been a lot. But we know that there's some access point from the Welcome Center, so we can try and make our way to the Data Center from there. But right now I need to sit."

Jake: "Yeah." Well, I'll go get some of those bland, tasteless ...

Megan: Delicious protein carb bars.

Jake: Yep.

Rev: So as you all settle into the break room to have a snack, I think that brings us to the end of this Crisis.

SFX:

CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: All right. Well, welcome to the end of your first Crisis!

Megan: Thanks for having me. I love it here.

Kim: Thank you.

Rev: [Laughs] All right. So first thing is, everybody gets two points of experience. You also get two Gear Points. You also clear all Stress. And then we have some questions. Did your connection with another spacer change? You can move it up or down by one, based off of the experiences that you had with them.

Tass: You know, even though it sort of went south in its own way, I think mine with Kim would go up by one, for the fact that she went in alone with all of those people while I was unconscious to ... You know, obviously to try to get more information. But just that she was kind of soloing that while I was out, I think learning that would have increased my opinion of her mettle.

Kim: Yeah, I'm also going to increase my stat with Tass by one. More so out of guilt I think, for leaving him alone in a situation that I realized was much more dire than I initially thought.

Jake: I don't feel like any of mine would change that ... Honestly, like that felt pretty par for the course as far as our missions go. [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah. I don't think you have to change anything. And if you do change anything, I think we have to like really reflect on the things that happened to us, and is it good or bad. So yeah, I don't think you have to be forced to change it at all.

Megan: I think my connection with Tass is gonna go down.

Rev: Oh, how come?

Megan: Well, because I made the direct decision to not accompany him to the Med Bay. Like, obviously it was only gonna be one of us. But I specifically said I don't think it should be me. I thought I would have been of more use elsewhere, thinking that he was going to a Med Bay. And maybe if I had been around some of the tech stuff, it would have been more obvious. I don't know if I would have been more help, but I won't know.

Rev: Yeah, no, I think that's good. And then there are some other questions. And we'll go through these. You know what? Let's have some — let's have some chatter around the table.

Tass: Yeah. Let's show this shit off.

Rev: Let's show it off. And this is a question for each of you. What was the most tense moment of the game?

Tass: For me, it was that near-miss of talking about the robot thing, and having them all ready to freak out.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Like that was a scary moment for me sitting here at the table of, oh, I almost messed up.

Megan: Oh yeah, that was super stressful, of just all of them freezing and being like, "Oh no, no, no." And then Tass backtracking. I think for me it was failing the roll when we were in Product Testing, and being on the battlefield and hearing one of the pods open.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Oof.

Kim: For me, making the decision to go out onto the surface of the planet. Because like Rev paused and looked at me and was like, "You don't know what's out there." And I'm like, "No, but I know what I'm running from."

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: You're like, [Sighs] "Do I open it?" And you look back and you see the Dion scorpion, and you're just like, "Gotta get away from that!" And you open it, and you're instantly sucked into the vacuum of space. But you're like, [Fading into the distance] "Still a better choice!"

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I think my most tense moment was pretending to be a robot. Was just like, all right, well, I've gotta gamble on how these people are gonna react to this thing. And like watching your face.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Waiting for the reaction from that person.

Rev: Yeah, I agree. That was — that was a good moment. What was the best moment?

Jake: The horrible description of Dion. Of transformed Dion.

Kim: Jesus.

Rev: You all didn't even get to hear the description of Dion transforming.

Tass: Ugh.

Rev: Tass got that solo show.

Tass: Yeah, it was ... It was something. It was really something. I mean, I think hands down, it was that I got to hug my dog Zoe again.

Megan: Aww!

Kim: Aww.

Jake: Aww.

Megan: I can't wait to listen to that episode.

Jake: I think Tass boomsticking Dion before he could escape.

Rev: Yeah. I can talk about this now. Dion's dead. I don't know if you guys are ...

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: He was gonna skitter away and get in the elevator and essentially, like, lay an egg clone.

Jake: Oh, god.

Kim: Gross.

Megan: Get in our spaceship and fly it away. [Laughs]

Jake: Back through the portal. [Laughs] The PT Cruiser reappears in the underground lair, and that thing fucking comes out of it.

Kim: I think my favorite moment was how seemingly effortlessly Jake figured out like an easy way to mar the circle in Product Testing, by just having the smugglers just take this egg. And like, you still get what you want, and I get what I want. And it's like, well, OK, sorted.

Rev: What would anyone change, if anything?

Megan: I'd stop failing my rolls as much.

Rev: That's a common one that I hear.

Megan: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I wish that the timeline in dealing with the pirates would have — I would have had a little bit more grace in that.

Rev: Hmm.

Jake: I wish I would have had a little bit longer to, like, make sure or have time to convince them, like, nothing terrible is going to happen off this. Because now, I frankly don't know.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I think I would want the tram to have at least one loop or maybe a corkscrew.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: This is just like a general one. I think I just wish that I was a bit more genre-savvy as to like this setting and the tropes that it's playing upon. Because like there are — there are a lot of things that like are mentioned or that I am asked by characters, and I just simply don't know what it means.

Rev: What is everyone looking forward to next?

Jake: Finding the next circle!

Tass: I want to hang out with Arkie again.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: I'm looking forward to meeting Arkie.

Jake: Yeah, I would like to meet Arkie.

Kim: I'm looking forward to maybe meeting a nice NPC in this world.

Megan: Also, like ... I mean, it seems like maybe their mom is running stuff, and that might be bad. But if like Number 5 doesn't seem just inherently bad or programmed to be bad,

that maybe the mom's cool too. And honestly, being in another world where I have again lost all my abilities that I'm used to, meeting another telepath would be really cool.

Rev: Does anybody level up, from their experience?

Jake: I do.

Rev: Ooh. What are you gonna take?

Megan: I also leveled up.

Rev: What are you gonna take?

Megan: I'm gonna take one of the other moves from my Technician playbook.

Rev: Which one?

Megan: It's called, I Could Have Done That. You're competitive, and nothing drives you like wanting to be the best. If another spacer gets a 10+ on a Tech roll in your presence, you gain a +1 forward on your next Tech roll.

Kim: Nice.

Jake: I am going to take a field kit from one of the Scientist variants. So I'm going to take the field kit for the Medic, and I get to pick three options for the field kit. I'm going with an advanced first aid kit — which is +1 Tech when using First Aid, a medcorder — +1 Head when trying to Survey the Scene, and a small flask, full — which is +1 Heart when going through a stressful situation.

Rev: All right. And in the way of Gear Points, we have Megan's workshop, we also have the armory that Tass placed in The Forge. So I think the way you can use your Gear Points is anything on that list you can purchase, or you can use the workshop to do upgrades to things that you currently have. For some reason, the armory has just turned into a giant vending machine. [Laughs]

Tass: We gotta put in our quarters to get anything off the wall.

Rev: Exactly.

Tass: Yeah. I think I would want to spend my points ... Like I imagine it's like a whole bunch of pieces, you know? There's just little bits and pieces of this and that that they have to manipulate when they're putting them on the Immortals, right?

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: So I'm just taking a couple of pieces and attaching them to my blast cannon, so that it does an extra harm.

Rev: Good lord.

Tass: Yep.

Rev: That's a lot of harm.

Tass: It is.

Jake: That's a lot of harm!

Tass: Well I got a taste for doing that 4-harm. I just want to be able to do that, static.

Rev: Anybody else gonna use some Gear Points?

Jake: So I know you can only buy weapons that are within your +Hand bonus, but does that mean that I ... Can I upgrade beyond like my +Hand bonus? Like I bought my gamma gun, it's within my +Hand stat. Can I add a harm to it? Or would that be like, OK, now you can't use it anymore?

Rev: Yeah, I don't see why not.

Jake: I'm gonna add 1-harm to my gamma gun, so it'd be 2-harm now.

Rev: OK.

Kim: You know, I love my garotte. I love my smoke bombs. I don't have a way to attack anyone if I'm not right in their face. So I'm going to spend my gear points to pick up a plasma pistol, which is 1-harm, versatile, quick. And the "versatile" tag means that it can be used at both close and far distances.

Rev: All right.

Jake: Also combines perfectly with a battle rifle.

Rev: Noob special. [Laughs]

Jake: [Laughs]

Megan: I'm going to add a tag to my bow gun.

Rev: OK.

Megan: I'm going to do "area of effect." I think this is like getting a ... Like essentially the way that I have multiple bolts for a crossbow. It just shoots out, in an area.

Rev: OK.

Megan: It's not just a one hit. So the area of effect tag: targets an area or radius, and affects everything within that area.

Jake: It's like the Hunter in WoW. Like she's just turning rapidly as she pulls the trigger, and just ... [Arrow sounds] Fires several that she arcs.

Rev: Every shot is a clip that you have to put in of crossbow bolts.

Jake: Yeah. Feeds several projectiles.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: So we find all of you back inside of the ship. You have collected the things that were dropped along the way — shoes and necklaces. You have disposed of the body of Dion. Some of you are in very rough shape, but you do have the Med Bay. The Med Bay doesn't exactly say what that does. I think what we can talk about as a group that, you know, you have the First Aid roll. First Aid can be used on light and moderate things. I think with the addition of the Med Bay, you can either put yourself in the Med Bay and just know you're gonna be there for a while and heal up fully. Or you can roll First Aid with a bonus, and be able to heal additional with the help of the Med Bay.

Kim: Do we know how much additionally?

Rev: Probably three on a full success, two on a mixed.

Kim: OK.

Megan: And we have to heal each other, right?

Rev: I think the Med Bay can also remove that. If you want to do it yourself, you can use the Med Bay to heal yourself. Or if you feel more comfortable with someone else trying it, then that's OK too.

Kim: I have a -2 Tech. These are not a surgeon's hands. I want someone else to do that for me.

Megan: These are smoke bomb throwing hands.

Kim: Yep.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I'm happy to heal up anybody who needs it. And now with my medic kit, I've got a +3 to that roll, so ...

Kim: OK.

Megan: Yeah, I'm at a +2, so I can help out as well if people need.

Rev: Should we take care of you first, so that you can then help other people? Because aren't you in pretty rough shape?

Jake: I'm at 4-harm. Yeah. If somebody wants to patch me up.

Megan: Sure. Eleven.

Rev: All right. So that'll bump you up by three, with the use of the Med Bay.

Jake: All right, I'm back to where I was when we landed. 1-harm. [Laughs]

Rev: Perfect.

Jake: I had one before we ever touched down planetside.

Rev: Set food on this world.

Tass: I'm not in too bad of shape. I essentially just need somebody to, like, squeegee my lungs, and I'll be all right.

Kim: I'm hurt pretty badly.

Jake: All right, I'll do Kim first. Boxcars.

Kim: Thank you.

Rev: All right. So that bumps you up by three as well.

Kim: That brings me back up to full.

Jake: Tass ... [Laughs] Snake eyes.

Kim: No!

Jake: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. [Laughs]

Kim: [Laughs]

Megan: It's like, how many times do I have to make Tass pass out before you just let him go?

Rev: I mean, on the plus side, on a miss, you only cause him grave harm.

Tass: I assume I can't assist him in this?

Jake: In first aiding yourself?

Tass: Yeah.

Jake: Like, "No, no! Here! Cut here!" [Laughs]

Tass: Why are you cutting?

Megan: Can I assist this?

Rev: Yeah, you can try to assist this.

Jake: I've gotta cut open your lungs to get the goop out.

Megan: I've gotta get the squeegee in there somehow. You said. Seven.

Jake: OK, that gets me to a seven.

Rev: All right. So Tass, you heal two.

Jake: All right now let's see what happens for Megan, when she can't help me. Ten.

Megan: Cool. I only had the one harm, so.

Jake: Booyah. Thank you, medic kit. Thank you, Med Bay.

Rev: It probably takes two hours to do all of this healing. What are you doing after you've taken the time to heal everyone in the Med Bay?

Jake: "Well, I mean, we definitely need to make our way to the Data Center at some point."

Tass: "Yeah. Can we, like ... Do we have chalk or something? Can we, like, draw a little map here on the floor or something of this whole situation, and try to like look spatially where we're going to this Data Center? Because it occurs to me there's at least one thing out there that might be a problem that we haven't seen yet."

Kim: "What do you mean?"

Megan: Yeah, I go grab some chalk from my workroom.

Tass: "OK. So if here is where you all got rid of that egg or whatever, right? That was a big ... Like the main big circle made out of these pods, yes?"

Jake: "Yeah. That was like the whole battle ground, Product Testing, gladiator arena."

Megan: "And like all of the creatures, Immortals, whatever, in those pods had like the symbol thing in their chest."

Tass: "OK. So over here, we got The Forge. We have these little rooms past it. And where there are these old barracks where I found this hole literally, like dug out by hand, end of the earth. I was walking maybe a half hour, right? And all I found was ... Well Jake, it was kind of like the base circle that was siphoning energy from the ley line, under the Halifax?"

Jake: "OK."

Tass: "So that was just the little one. That wasn't the big connector. You know, like the ones on the roofs that all connected all three of Anastacia's circles to power the whole thing or connect the whole thing. Like I never found that. I never found what the big thing that would match the pod circle could be. I have to assume that was above it somewhere."

Kim: "I see. So we don't know what creature or what aspect Nash was using for that third of the spell."

Tass: "Exactly."

Jake: "But we have at least still ruined that, right? We don't have to ruin the pair. As long as we mess up one of them, the relay, so to speak, that whole segment is down?"

Tass: "Right. Right. Exactly. Yeah. This very clearly went down."

Jake: "OK."

Tass: "But that doesn't mean whatever was in there to, you know, fuel the triangle isn't still out and about."

Jake: "Yeah. I don't know why it had sort of slipped my mind that like each of these was gonna have a nightmare within it, because ... I think I got so hung up on the fact that this is a planet with a factory for making nightmares, that I was just like, well, surely that's the one. That's the only one."

Kim: "So when you say that this thing might be loose, does that mean that while this circle was intact, the creature or whatever it was, was like sealed inside of that circle? And now that we marred that rune, it's loose?"

Tass: "Yes. For example, if you've read the files about our Soul Bat friend."

Kim: "Oh, yeah."

Tass: "You know, that thing was contained in the Halifax. You know, it didn't make its way out even at night. And we had to kind of assume and do a little research to construe that yes, that's kind of how it works."

Megan: "So when we go to the Data Center, that's probably where our third circle's gonna be, right?"

Tass: "Sure hope so."

Megan: "So are we gonna be looking for a big circle with a nightmare in it, or a small circle with a nightmare in it? Or maybe not a nightmare? Because you've said, like, they don't necessarily have to have a thing in them, right? Like a creature. Just something that's giving it power?"

Jake: "I mean, this ritual is to rip powers from creatures. So one of the circles in each corner is gonna have a thing in it. And if we can assume that the one that we took out in Product Testing was the one that had a creature in it, then we can also assume that the one on the same level as that wherever Tass was also does."

Megan: "OK. So big circle with another creature in it. That's what we gotta look out for."

Jake: "Yeah. God, that's terrible. Because the one we took out was big enough to house many, many, many, many, many creatures all at once. So I wonder if this other one has something enormous in it."

Megan: "Well that creature you talked to Tass, you said had telepathy?"

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "And its mom works in the data collections with like communications and stuff. Maybe she has telepathy too? That seems like an ability that Nash might try to rip from something, right?"

Tass: "I mean, it's possible. Yeah. I don't know if it's like a trait of these aliens and they all have it, or if this is just a thing that Arkie had, or what."

Rev: There is a loud noise, and the whole ship rocks to its side.

Tass: "Oh, shit!"

Megan: "Whoa!"

Jake: Is there like a ... Do we have viewing windows on the sides of the ship? Like, can I go see what just hit the side that would have rocked us?

Rev: From the side, you don't see anything.

Jake: "What the fuck was that?" I want to look at, like, the readouts on the ship and see, like, if it says anything.

Rev: It just shows that there has been a physical impact on the ship.

Tass: I'm gonna grab my blast cannon and head up to the cockpit.

Rev: Yeah. As you make your way to the front of the ship and into the cockpit, the giant picture window in front of you is filled with a large, six legged gray creature. It kind of looks like a bulldog on some level. It's 20 feet high and it has multiple eyes and it is drooling. It slams its paw down on the ground again, and the ship shudders. In your head, you all hear ...

Rev: ALIEN MONSTER: Get out!

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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