

Deviating Passages (S5, E14)

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

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Jake: I went to a Renaissance fair for the first time this weekend.

Kim: [Gasps]

Rev: Did you defeat the knight?

Jake: I was not allowed to fight the knight, unfortunately. Me and Megan went with some of our other friends. And when we were there, or when we got there, people were like, "All right, so what do you want to see?" And I was like, there's nothing that I want to see. There's a bunch of stuff that I want to participate in, but they won't allow it.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: Like, it's like, oh yeah, there's a whole ass MMA fight, but like in full plate with swords and shields. But like, anything goes. I was like, I want to do that. I don't want to watch it. That's — I mean, that would be fine. But I want to do it. I'll be disappointed in watching it.

Rev: It sounds like someone dies in that.

Jake: Ultimately, yeah.

Megan: One day.

Jake: So one day I'll get to participate, because they'll run out of other options.

Kim: It sounds like you should start performing on the Renaissance fair circuit. A lot of people do that as just like their job, they travel from fair to fair.

Jake: Yeah. I mean, a lot of the stuff that people were doing, I was like, I could do that. That looks fun.

Kim: [Laughs]

Megan: Yeah. We walked past a sign that said Pirate Stunt Show, and Jake said, "Nothing has ever called to me more in my life."

All: [Laugh]

Megan: So we're walking around, and then there are some people that are like yelling to the crowd about the show about to be starting. And so I go up to this lady and I ask her, I said, "Where is this gonna be?" And she's like, "Right over here, on the big pirate ship." And I'm like, OK, that makes sense.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: So we walk over there and Jake's like, "Oh, did you want to see this?" And I go, "Oh, did you not?" And he's like, "Oh, I don't ... I don't know. I don't care." I was like, "Oh, I just like, yeah, I'd like to see it. But you said, you know, nothing has ever called to me more." He's like, "Oh, no, no, no, I want to do it."

All: [Laugh]

Megan: He's like, "I don't care about watching it. I want to do a pirate stunt show."

Jake: But also watching it was very cool.

Tass: I still just imagine your scenario for not being able to participate in the fights as them just watching you slowly walk up, and just very quickly starting to close the door.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: Like, "No, close it. No, no, no, we're done. We're done. Sorry. Too many participants."

Rev: The guy from our LARP that we did at Gen Con was there and he's like, "No, no, no, no, no. Close the door."

All: [Laugh]

Megan: "He's back. He found me."

Jake: I'm confident I would get absolutely schooled. Like, that's not ... You know, I always want to make clear. I always want to participate in these things. I do not think that I'll win. Like I don't —

Kim: Greatest fighter alive, Jake Pierle.

Jake: Yeah, exactly.

Rev: Now accepting all challengers.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: If you can hear my voice ...

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Meet me in the schoolyard at noon tomorrow. Let's do this. No, I always — I would be happy to get my ass kicked. It just sounds like fun to do.

Tass: I had years of that. I didn't enjoy it.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: Do not recommend.

Rev: Yeah, but enough about high school.

Tass: Yeah.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: So I promised last week we would have some Halloween treats. It was not a lie.

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Jake: And we don't.

Rev: There is a treat. No tricks. These are from Alex. "I picked these up on a drive back to Austin, and thought they'd be fun for you all. There's two of everything, so you can repurpose the box and send part of it to Kim." Which I have done. Kim ...

Kim: Yay!

Rev: All across the country. Not all — Kim is not all across the country. Kim on the other side of the country has her stash. So I'm gonna ask everybody. We have five flavors.

Jake: Is this the same item in five different flavors?

Rev: Uh ...

Jake: Or are these five different products?

Rev: Two products, four of them are different flavors.

Jake: OK.

Rev: We have sea salted caramel Beaver Nuggets.

Tass: [Laughs] I beg your pardon?

Rev: And then everything else is Cosmic Pops. We have lemon lime, orange cream, cherry cola, and cotton candy.

Tass: Oh, man.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Well, anything cherry speaks to me.

Rev: OK.

Tass: So that sounds awesome. But also, Beaver Nuggets.

Jake: Yeah. What is a Beaver Nugget? That's from ... This sounds like Bucky's. I'm familiar.

Rev: It is from Bucky's.

Tass: Oh!

Rev: This is from Bucky's.

Megan: Oh, I heard of that.

Jake: But I don't remember what a Beaver Nugget actually is. Is it pure sugar? Or is it like a ... Is it like a pretzel covered in something or what? What is this?

Rev: It looks like a popcorn shrimp, but I'm sure it's not.

Megan: Oh, god.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: It looks like a cashew.

Jake: Salted caramel popcorn shrimp.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I want to try the Beaver Nuggets, because sugar in my belly sounds like a death sentence.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Yeah, I'm gonna go to the cherry cola.

Rev: OK.

Megan: Lemon lime.

Kim: Orange for me.

Rev: OK. I will do cotton candy.

Jake: These are, it says, uniquely delicious light and crispy corn puffs.

Megan: Oh.

Jake: Everybody get your crinkles out of the way all at once.

Kim: Yeah. [Laughs]

Jake: This is like caramel corn. This is delicious.

Kim: That is wild. This does taste like a creamsicle. Yeah, it's wild.

Megan: Oh, it's good.

Rev: They're like nerds, but covered in icing.

Tass: Yeah.

Megan: Yeah, it's like a ... It's like a creamy pop rocks.

Rev: [Shudders]

Tass: God.

Megan: No, it's good.

Tass: Creamy Pop Rocks is our new band name, for sure.

Kim: But in, like, a good way. These are good.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: In a great way.

Kim: Thank you, Alex.

Tass: Yeah.

Megan: Thank you so much.

Tass: This is wild. What an interesting treat.

Rev: And since we are at the beginning of the new month, I do want to take the opportunity, as we finish up these treats, to thank our new patrons: Silver Knight, Pi, Lisa Beasley, and SciFiDragonfly. If you are interested in joining our Patreon, you can head over to Patreon.com/TheCritshow. \$1 a month get you access to the most aggressively welcoming Discord on the Internet, and \$5 and above gets you hundreds of hours of content. So with that —

Kim: No, hold on. I am stepping all over your transition. Hey, everyone. You have two more days to enter the Crit or Treat Halloween costume contest. So please send your photos to us. You can email them to us at thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com, or you can post them on Twitter and tag us @TheCritshow. Do that by Friday, November 4th, to be entered to win one of our prizes.

Rev: And you can hashtag something, right? I remember that moment last week is that.

Kim: No.

Jake: Yeah, you willed that into existence.

Megan: Yeah. Last week you said you could do that.

Rev: You ...

Megan: Don't do that.

Rev: Oh.

Megan: I mean, you can do that, again, if you want.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: But to make sure we see it, you have to tag us.

Rev: I see.

Kim: Yeah.

Tass: The only one we're following is #BeaverNuggets.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: Oh, boy ...

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: As you have all moved through the energy of this planetary nebula, there is a brief moment where you feel a little dizzy, your vision swims, and you feel like you're starting to black out. But then you get through that energy, and your senses come back to you. And you see this base slightly below you. It is floating just above the surface of this sun, and it is positioned on a large panel of this black metal that Tass has now seen a couple

of times. You can see that there is an energy field on one of the buildings that is very clearly the docking bay.

Jake: Are the ship computers registering any danger or anything, or does it seem like we're clear to land?

Rev: Yeah, it seems like you are clear to dock.

Jake: Then in we go.

Rev: All right. You head the ship into the docking bay, and it is fairly large. There's room in here for quite a number of ships. But you are the only ship in here at the moment. And on the wall directly in front of you is a sealed door. But the only thing in here right now is your ship, and then the energy field behind you. This place is warm. You can even feel it inside of the ship. It's not to the point where it becomes excessively uncomfortable, but the black metal that this whole thing is stationed on seems to be deflecting a bulk of the heat back down towards the star.

Kim: As we're in this hangar, is there any kind of like insignia or signage? Like I'm so curious if this is something that Nash built, or just like took over?

Rev: Yeah, there isn't. You know, compared to the other places you've been where there is very clear marking about who owns this, what it is, there is nothing here to indicate who it belongs to. But you do know that it was kind of hidden by a large illusion.

Tass: "I don't know why. I just have this irrational fear that Nash is here. Like he's in there, and we're gonna step out and just get eaten. I don't — I don't know why this is — this whole place just freaks me out."

Kim: "He wouldn't know, right? Like, assuming that he is in our dimension, would he know yet that we're fucking up his plans? Or would he not know until we mar this circle?"

Tass: "I mean, yeah, I can't imagine this. I recognize this is irrational, but I don't know. I just got a bad feeling. I've got the Star Wars bad feeling."

Rev: And as you get out of the ship, again, Carrington takes up position in her bunk.

Rev: CARRINGTON: Good luck.

Jake: "Thanks. Love you. I'll be back soon."

Megan: [Laughs] Does it look like there's anyone here presently? Like, is there dust on the floor? Are there lights on?

Rev: There is not dust on the floor, and there is lighting. It kicked on automatically as the ship was docking.

Jake: I look at Kim and Tass. "It feels weirdly warm here. You guys described the same thing at the crater. Is it possible that there wasn't a heat monster like we were afraid of, and that maybe the metal was just reflecting the heat or something?"

Kim: Does it?

Rev: Yeah. You know, the first circle that Tass encountered that had this black metal did not have the element of heat. You know, the second spot that you found was stuck in that fire rain for literally years. And this one is now positioned above this dying star. So it does seem like it is either retaining or at least reflecting a good portion of the heat that hits it.

Tass: "Are you insinuating that I sprinted for a half hour for nothing?"

Kim: "I don't think we sprinted for a half hour for nothing. We just maybe didn't sprint from a fire monster. We maybe just sprinted from something different, possibly worse."

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah, that one. Yeah. OK. All right."

Jake: "You didn't sprint for nothing. You sprinted for the sake of cardiovascular health."
[Laughs]

Kim: [Laughs] "That's true. I'm training for a 5k."

Jake: "That would make sense, though. That whatever the runes are on, if he knows it's in a hot place, the metal needs to not be damaged. So it makes sense that this is some kind of metal to withstand the heat he has put them in."

Tass: "Yeah, absolutely fair."

Megan: "And the runes were carved into the same metal both times, right?"

Tass: "Yep."

Megan: I want to look around. Do I see, like, carvings? I know Kim looked for an insignia, but is there ... But is there something that's more, like, hidden in the environment we're in?

Rev: No, not really. And the metal that Tass found — that black metal — is kind of the disk that this whole base is sitting on top of. The base itself is not made of that metal.

Jake: We'd have to exit the hangar again to maybe see what we're looking for on the metal plate?

Rev: Yeah. Mmhmm.

Kim: "So what exactly are we looking for here? Another magic circle?"

Tass: "Well, no. I mean, I don't know how this place received it, so I think technically, yes, there's something here to receive what the needle below is like blasting up to this, right? But like at this point, that doesn't matter. What we gotta find here is, like, what stored all of that energy. Or maybe not even storing. Whatever is sending it through to Nash, right? So this is like the compiled everything it was sucking from the circles below."

Jake: "Like a battery."

Tass: "The battery. Yes. Perfect."

Jake: "OK. Well, there's no way to begin, but by beginning. So let's go through this one menacing door that will lead us into the rest of the station."

Rev: [Chuckles]

Megan: Is there anything on this door? Like a scan pad or access panel or something?

Rev: There's not. And as you were examining the door, far in the distance, you hear the sound of grinding. You feel it like in the floor, and then it stops.

Jake: During that 30 seconds, is there like any indication of which way it's coming from? Like hand on one wall, feel lots of vibration, a hand on another wall, not much vibration?

Rev: Yeah. So where you are right now, you're at the edge of this base. You know, space behind you. It's definitely coming from ahead of you and to the left.

Jake: All right. How does this door seem to open? Is there a handle on it? Or, I'll just walk up to it.

Rev: You approach it and it slides open.

Kim: "I guess they were assuming that if someone was able to find this place, they were ..."

Jake: "Allowed to be here. Yeah. If you got this far, you earned this." Well, what's on the other side?

Rev: There is a hallway that goes down maybe 15 feet, and then there's a large Plexiglas door that leads into another room.

Jake: OK. I proceed with caution. Looking around, looking for traps or critters.

Rev: Yeah. You head down this hallway and you get close to that plexiglass door, and it slides open. And it leads into a big square room that is white tiled with white floors. And then on the far left side of this is another door.

Megan: Have we heard any more of this grinding noise?

Rev: You haven't.

Kim: Is there anything in this room? It's just all white and plexiglass?

Rev: Yeah, that's all you see.

Kim: "Freaky. I don't like it."

Tass: I'm gonna head to that other door.

Rev: Yeah. As you all start to move across this room, panels drop from the ceiling and divide you into four different quadrants.

Kim: No!

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: You hear this computerized voice say ...

Rev: COMPUTER: Shut down initiated. Quarantine sequence engaged.

Rev: And from the ceiling, four long arms drop, with thick needles hanging off of the end. And each one eyes you each.

Kim: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no. No, no, no.

Rev: And then they raise back into the ceiling, and the walls recede.

Rev: COMPUTER: Scan clear. Proceed.

Kim: "The fuck was that?"

Tass: "I don't know, but I just had an unauthorized biosignature."

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: In my pants. There was, like, 50% of me that was like, I think they go through this again.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: Oh, yeah.

Rev: Yeah. So you go through the door on the left wall of this room, and it's a small hallway. And it dead ends at a wall that is slightly curved out towards you.

Jake: Is it the same kind of metal that the disk is made of? The heat metal?

Rev: It is not. It is the same kind of metal that the rest of the building has been made of.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: I don't know, like a nice accent wall.

Rev: And as you're all standing there looking at this wall, you see that it starts to slide and you hear this grinding sound again. And as this wall slides, you see for a brief moment a hallway pass, and then it's wall again. And then another hallway passes, and it's wall again. And then it stops, and there is about two feet of hallway inside of this rotating area that doesn't go anywhere. But there's enough room for one person to stand in it.

Megan: As we flew in this facility, did it look like it was more circular or angular? Or ...

Rev: It is in sections. So kind of like if you were looking down on a space colony. There are some areas that are large domes, and other areas that are square rooms. But it's all connected by hallways.

Tass: "Do we have enough time for all of us to get through one of those, do we think?"

Kim: "Oh, god ..."

Rev: As those went by, they were very quick flashes. Like you could try to make it through one, but it would be bad if you did not.

Kim: But we could for sure get into the one that's just like the one pocket for somebody?

Rev: Yes. Because it is currently standing there.

Kim: OK.

Tass: "All right. Well, cheers. And I'm gonna step forward.

Rev: Tass steps forward into this little hallway, and you feel just a little bit of pressure give underneath your feet, Tass, and the whole thing starts to rotate.

Tass: "Oh, god."

Rev: For a brief second, Tass, you see a hallway pass you by after you leave the group. And then the whole thing stops shifting. The group back in the hallway, the three of you see in front of you again, just a curved wall. Tass, in front of you is the same thing. So you are just in a little two foot square of metal with a wall in front of you.

Kim: [Snorts] Jesus Christ ...

Tass: With essentially nowhere to go?

Rev: Correct.

Tass: Cool. Cool, cool, cool, cool, cool, cool. I'm just scanning my little square with my big gun. I hop up and down.

Rev: It rotates again and it stops. And you are facing the group standing in the hallway.

Tass: "Hey."

Kim: "Oh, thank goodness. I was worried that you were not gonna come back, or was gonna be like a red mist or something."

Tass: "Oh, god."

Kim: "Sorry. Listen, it's been real scary in this world."

Tass: "So I was just in a little tiny room. Just a little — couldn't move, go anywhere — room. And I hopped. So I'm afraid to even take a step. I'm afraid to be breathing heavily right now."

Jake: "Let's test this. Hop again, see if it does the same thing."

Tass: "No problem. I love this." I hop.

Rev: I think you all notice this time that when Tass hops and this section starts to rotate, it doesn't rotate the direction you saw it rotate away the first time. It continues to rotate the way as it rotated back. So when Tass left you, it went counterclockwise, and then he came back clockwise. This time it continues to move around clockwise. As it stops, Tass, in front of you is a metal wall. In front of the group in the hallway is a hallway that continues to another of those sliding doors.

Kim: "Do we go for this?"

Jake: "I feel like no, because then what if we can't get back and he's lost in his own little square and he doesn't know where we went? Or maybe we split into teams of two again, and someone waits here while two of us check this room out? Because if we wait too long, he's gonna hop again and this will all go away."

Megan: "Yeah. Someone stay behind, but we should probably take this opportunity."

Kim: "OK. Who's going?"

Jake: "I can go."

Kim: I look at Megan. "Megan, I think you have a better chance of understanding how this thing works than I do. I'm gonna go with Jake."

Jake: "OK." Try and get into this next section of hallway before it rotates.

Tass: I jump.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: All right. So Jake and Kim head into this hallway. As you step into the hallway, you feel that the floor gives just a little bit underneath you. Tass, you have felt this start to move again without you jumping to get it to move. And when everything comes to a stop, Kim and Jake, behind you is that bit of rounded wall. There's nothing behind you, but there is still the room in front of you. Megan, there is a hallway in front of you. Tass, there's a hallway in front of you.

Kim: Oh, no.

Tass: "Uh, hello? Shit." I'm gonna go down this hallway.

Rev: You head down this hallway. It's a pretty long hallway. And as you get towards the end of it, there is another of those sliding doors.

Tass: Yep. Gun's still leveled, but I'm gonna move towards it.

Rev: You make your way down the last little chunk of this hallway, and you feel the floor give a little bit underneath you again. And you feel the whole thing start to rotate.

Kim: [Chuckles]

Tass: Dammit, dammit.

Rev: So there is a curved wall behind you, but there is still the room that you were looking at in front of you.

Tass: I'm gonna very slowly try to move into it.

Rev: Yeah, you step inside, and Jake is there. He seems lost.

Tass: "Oh, shit. Hey."

Jake: "Where did you come from?"

Tass: "I don't know. Everything keeps shifting. Did you guys move in?"

Jake: "Yeah, And then we got separated. I don't know how I ended up where I am."

Tass: "Great. Lovely. Absolutely stunning."

Jake: "Yeah. I cannot figure out this pattern."

Rev: And inside of this room, what the two of you are seeing is a couple of metal chairs and like a grate at the middle of the room. There are chains and manacles on the wall, and then another wall has a chest against it.

Tass: "What in the Jigsaw fuck is this? Wanna play a game?"

Jake: "I don't."

Kim: "Lieutenant Jigsaw wheels out on his tricycle."

All: [Laugh]

Jake: I'm gonna go look at that chest.

Rev: Yeah. You go over and you open up the chest. And inside there are some shock batons, some blades. Like, it definitely seems like an interrogation or a torture room.

Jake: "Yeah, this sucks. Can we make this thing spin and go somewhere else?"

Tass: "Yeah, please." Can we fit?

Rev: Yeah. In this hallway, you both could fit.

Tass: All right.

Rev: As Jake and Tass step onto the panel. Back at Megan. What are you doing about the hallway in front of you? You staying where you are, or are you headed in?

Megan: The entire idea was for me to wait here for Tass so he doesn't get lost. So I think I'm just in the hallway yelling, "Tass! Tass, can you hear me? Jake? Kim?"

Rev: As you are yelling that, you hear a door open further down this hallway, and Tass peeks around the corner.

Megan: "Oh, thank god. There you are."

Tass: "Where's everybody else?"

Megan: "They went through a different hallway that appeared. But I didn't want you to get lost or come back and not find anyone. So I stayed here until you came back."

Tass: "I thought you went ... But Kim went ... No, but then I shifted over. I don't know. This sucks."

Megan: "Yeah." And I step into the hallway towards task. "OK. So at least now we're two and two."

Rev: And as you step into the hallway to meet up with Tass, you feel that pressure plate underneath your foot drop down a bit. Jake and Kim, you are at a place where behind you is just that rounded bit of metal wall. But there is a room in front of you. There's just enough room in this hallway for the two of you to stand.

Jake: I mean, the idea was to break off on our own and move on. So I feel like we move forward into this room?

Kim: Yeah.

Rev: You head into this room and it looks oddly familiar. It is 12 feet by 14 feet. And you have to step up into the room because the first, like, three feet of it are dirt.

Jake: "Oh, no."

Kim: "What? What is this?"

Jake: "This might be Nash's bedroom."

Kim: [Gasps] "Oh!"

Jake: I want to look around for, like, a coffin hidden here.

Rev: Yeah. Roll Survey the Scene.

Kim: Oh, no. Oh, no!

Jake: Ten.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 2.

Jake: What can help me? I'm looking for a thing. So I didn't know if there was any indication of the thing. Like disturbed earth, something to help me track what I'm looking for ...

Rev: Yeah. So you don't see any clear indication that the earth is heavily disturbed here. It's actually been patted down pretty heavy in some areas. And so I think that's kind of what helps you, is that if there is something buried under here, it is in the back far corner where the dirt seems to be packed down pretty heavily.

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

Rev: Your footsteps into here are the only footsteps. And if this is kind of a important, powerful place like you think it is, that, you know, from what you know, that he has to rest here. It's very important. That it's probably very well taken care of. So either he's in there sleeping, and a servant has cleared out the footsteps so that when he wakes his are the first. Or, he has come and gone, and it has been cleaned out and the footsteps removed since he left.

Jake: "Uh, we got kind of a coin toss situation, here."

Kim: "OK."

Jake: "It's all clear, except for our footprints into here. So either he's in there sleeping and someone cleaned this up for him, or he's come and gone and someone cleaned him after he left. And I don't know. I don't know how to know."

Kim: "Uh, you don't know what hurts this guy, do you?"

Jake: "Not to any meaningful degree, no."

Kim: "Yeah. OK. OK."

Rev: And you feel the floor underneath you start to rumble as the whole column shifts.

Jake: I think I shit my pants instantly.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I panic so hard, I probably yelp. Like I probably scream.

Rev: As Megan has stepped on this, getting to Tass, the whole section rotates behind Megan and Tass's this a little bit of curved wall. But there is still the hallway in front of you, and the room that Tass came out of to find you, Megan. And Kim and Jake, you can see that behind you now leads out into a hallway as well.

Kim: "Do we leave? Do we see if he's here?"

Jake: "I don't know if it matters that he's here. If he is, there's nothing we can do about it. We're going to die. And if he's not, does it matter? Oh, man. I might have to know, though. I don't know if I'll be able to sleep if I don't."

Kim: "I feel like I need to."

Jake: At a glance, what's in the hallway that opened up behind us?

Rev: A rounded wall. There is, like, a lot of space you could go down to, but it ends in a very similar fashion to when you first came down a hallway.

Jake: Yeah. If nothing down there is immediately drawing my attention, like we've already disturbed this earth. We've already made footprints. So I'm inclined to go scoop around in that corner and see what's up.

Kim: Man, I'll help you. If you're gonna die, I'll die with you.

Jake: I got my power glove ready, so I could shock this man and run away and hope the hallway spins in my favor.

Rev: Yeah. You head into this room, into the far corner, and you start to clear away this packed earth.

Kim: [Groans]

Rev: And after about half a foot is the lid of a hand-carved casket.

Kim: "Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, no."

Jake: I'm gonna crack the lid.

Rev: You crack open the coffin, and inside is a very ornate spacesuit. It has a long, flourishing cape. It isn't bulky enough to look like a spacesuit, but you can tell that right around the collar, there are places where you could tap it and it would generate a helmet over it.

Jake: I think, again, there's a moment where I almost piss my pants at seeing a figure in this casket. And then I'm like, "Oh, sick."

Kim: "This is really cute."

Jake: "This is awesome."

Kim: "Do we take it?"

Jake: Does it seem like anything bad is going to happen if I take this? Like, can I get the lid open a little more and see if they're like any traps, or if anything is weighted?

Rev: Yeah, you don't see anything. It just seems like it was stored here.

Jake: "Well, clearly he's gonna know we were here, so I think we take this." Yeah, I want to take the suit.

Kim: Might as well take a souvenir. Add it to your spacesuit collection.

Rev: Yeah. And again, you pick this up and it feels like a heavy wool or a tweed suit in the sense of how thick it is, how easily it moves — especially compared to the spacesuits that you've been in before. But there are just little signs that give it away. The way that the cuffs come down and actually attach to the undershirt, and the way the undershirts wrist closings are very, very tight. It seems like it could make the whole body airtight against the pressure outside, but it doesn't have the bulk that you've experienced with other spacesuits.

Kim: Would it fit either of us?

Rev: Yeah, it seems like it has a good deal of give to it. So you think that Jake could fit into it.

Kim: Damn it.

Jake: [Laughs]

Kim: He already has a spacesuit, Rev! He has this — he has Neil Armstrong's spacesuit.

Rev: He gave that back.

Jake: Can I put this on?

Rev: Yeah. You'd have to shed what you're currently wearing.

Jake: I think I'll bring it along, just in case someone else needs it in a pinch.

Rev: So back in the interrogation room. Tass and Jake, you have just stepped on the panel to get this to slide around. And as it comes to a stop, Tass, you see at the end of the hallway a door slide open, and Jake and Kim step out of it.

Tass: I think I just turn to Jake, and I look down the hallway, and I turn to Jake, and I look down the hallway, and I turn to Jake. And I take a few steps back with the gun sort of out, just leveled in the general direction of past me.

Rev: And as you take a few steps back, you feel the pressure plate.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: No!

Rev: And when it comes to a rest, Jake is still there with you, obviously, because he had not moved. But it is just a rounded wall in front of him, and it's you and he in this place again. Jake and Kim, you've just seen Tass and Jake rotate the wall and run from you.

Kim: "No. What? No. No."

Jake: "What was that?"

Kim: I am now rapidly trying to wrack my brain. This Jake, who is next to me, has not left my sight since we stepped off the ship, right?

Rev: Correct.

Kim: "OK. So what — what was — was that an illusion?"

Jake: "I don't know."

Kim: "No, but magic's not ... Or maybe like, a hologram? Or ... I don't ... What is going on here?"

Rev: Tass and Megan.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: You are standing in this hallway. In front of you, again, is just the rounded wall. But there is the hallway that Tass just came out of.

Megan: "So what did you find?"

Tass: "There are Immortals up here. They're eggs, actually. The eggs — the unattached eggs — are right back that way. I considered shooting them, but I was afraid if I shot one, that the rest would, like pop open or something, and then I'd be overwhelmed. And so I was like, yeah, no. No, no, no. I'll just sneaky sneak through."

Megan: "How many eggs?"

Tass: "Six."

Megan: "Should we go do something about them?"

Tass: "I mean, if anything, taking them out is one less problem with things skittering around in here that are gonna trigger these damn pressure plates that spin the whole place."

Megan: "Yeah. Let's see what we can do about them."

Tass: "Yeah. All right." And I'll turn back and head in with her. Show her the way over.

Rev: Inside of this room are six of these enormous eggs. There are cords and wires coming down from the ceiling that seem to be pumping things into them. And there are a series of monitors on the back wall that list each one of them on it.

Megan: Looking at these panels, can I tell, like, if they're close to hatching?

Rev: Yeah. You don't see any clear indication of like how far they have to go until they might be ready. It almost seems like it's actually more so keeping them in stasis. Like that they might be ready, and right now they're just locked down.

Megan: My bowgun has an area of effect. How many of these could I hit at the same time?

Rev: The way these are laid out, it'd probably be half of them.

Tass: Is there an angle from this that we could be sort of near the door and get good shots, in case we need to run back and jump on a pressure plate?

Rev: For one of you, yes. Think about the way that you came into this room. You walk into the door, and you instantly turn right and there are three eggs down that wall, and then three eggs down the opposite wall.

Tass: Gotcha.

Rev: So if you were standing by the door, you would have — you basically would have line of sight on four, because two are blocked by the others on the same wall.

Tass: "OK. I think you can get a good spread. So if you stay near the door, I'll move in a little closer. That way, if we do get overwhelmed, I at least have some solid armor. You could probably get back out, jump on a plate, and I can hold them off until everything shifts and then maybe I can get out, bad comes to worse."

Megan: "I mean, I also have armor. I'm not just gonna leave you to deal with these on your own. Let's just do it and see how it goes."

Tass: "Yeah. All right."

Rev: And Tass, your weapon is not area, correct?

Tass: Correct.

Rev: Why don't you both give me an Act Under Fire?

Tass: And I got a thirteen.

Megan: Four.

Tass: Can I help by, like, doing a 3, 2, 1 count as like I'm setting us up for both of us to shoot, but I actually shoot on like 1, before 0. Like I want to take the initial shot, so that if these things do start to pop out, like, I am the focus.

Rev: Sure.

Tass: Seven.

Megan: Not gonna get me there.

Rev: So Tass, you open up and shoot one of these, and the egg is instantly obliterated. The creature inside comes flopping out onto the ground. It seems because its entry into the world was kind of unnatural compared to maybe how it's supposed to be let out, that it's not doing well in the environment. Megan, you fire off your arrows, and they pierce the top of the three eggs that you were aiming at. You see the bodies inside start to shift and move as this little bit of oxygen is let into the egg. They start to thrash about, clawing the egg open and spilling onto the ground.

Megan: "Oh, I messed up! I messed up!"

Tass: "This is gonna be a lot of 'em! Backpedal. Go, go, go!" And I just — I want to try to take a shot at the closest one.

Rev: Yeah. Roll Inflict Harm.

Tass: Eleven.

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

Tass: I want to give Megan a +1 forward. I want to be able to be, like, covering her on this.

Rev: All right. So mark one Stress and take three harm, as all three of these leap onto you and begin to slam at you with their scorpion tails. So Megan, that is what you see. You see these three rip open their eggs, and Tass gestures for you to start moving back down the hallway. He opens fire, and three of them launch onto him. He fires off his plasma cannon, and one of them has an enormous hole in the center of it that most of its insides are running out of and it falls to the ground. What are you doing?

Megan: Yeah, I'm not gonna leave him behind. So I take a deep breath and I'm gonna try to fire at them again, and see if I can help kill these.

Rev: Roll Inflict Harm.

Megan: Nine.

Rev: All right. So mark one Stress and two harm, as one of these that you hit turns to you and it opens up its mouth and spits an enormous globule of acid in your direction. Tass?

Tass: I'm just — I'm shooting at these things as they're swarming me.

Rev: All right. Roll Inflict Harm.

Tass: Eleven.

Rev: What's your extra effect?

Tass: I think I want to impress, intimidate, or frighten my enemy. And this also puts me over, so that I get to mark off a Stress for the amount of damage I've done in a fight.

Rev: OK. As you remove that one, mark a new point.

Tass: Yup.

Rev: And take two points of damage. This is not armor-defeating, because one of these scorpion creatures slashes out at you with its claw. The one remaining still up sees you do this, and there's a brief moment where you see its stocky eyes kind of look down at the two corpses, and it scuttles to the back of the room near the other two eggs.

Tass: I'm scrambling backwards to get back up on my feet and ready to run. "What do you think? One on its feet, two in the eggs. Do we want to go?"

Megan: "It's out now. It's out. We can't let it be loose and running around."

Tass: "All right." I mean, I want to try to shoot. I'm not sure if I can see it through the egg.

Rev: Yeah, you can't. You would have to go further into the room. It has moved to the back corner, where it is obscured by two of the eggs.

Tass: Yeah. I'm running in, then. I'm just going for it.

Rev: OK. Yeah. As you run in, you see that this has moved to the ceiling, and it lunges down at you.

Tass: I'm gonna take a shot.

Rev: Roll Inflict Harm.

Tass: That's an eight.

Rev: All right, Tass, you mark one Stress. Take two harm — this one is armor defeating, as its tail pierces into your chest as it falls from the ceiling. But you are able to blast it, and it turns into so much goo in the air.

Tass: I fall down. I'm in bad shape. "Yeah, maybe we don't fuck with the other eggs."

Megan: Can I, like, go over to the readouts for these last two eggs and try to mess with their settings? Like make it so they can't hatch?

Rev: Yeah. Use or Repair an Advanced Item.

Megan: Five. I want to use Whack It.

Rev: And what does that do, again?

Megan: That's once per Crisis, I can reroll an important Tech roll that I fail. And then on a 10+ it magically fixes the problem. On a 7 to 9, I barely succeed. And on a miss, it's even worse than before.

Rev: All right, roll it.

Megan: Eight.

Rev: All right. Since you were using this to kind of override your roll on Use or Repair an Advanced Item, on a mixed success on that, you have to pick two issues. With this move, you barely succeed, but you do succeed. So I'm still gonna have you pick one issue.

Megan: Yeah, fair. I'm going to go with, it doesn't work for as long as you need it to.

Rev: Yeah. So you aren't able to overdose them in some way that would kill them before they hatch. But you do get the sense that whatever it's been put into them has put them into a very long rest cycle. So they would be very hard to wake up for at least a couple of hours.

Megan: Well, that's good enough for now.

Rev: Jake and Kim, I kind of left mid-reaction. How's it going now?

Kim: [Groans]

Jake: "Oh, my god. Oh, my god. Oh, my god. What was that? Was it an illusion or technology? Have we been drugged?"

Kim: "I don't know!"

Jake: "OK. So that me was with Tass, and he looked like we expect him to look. But so do I."

Kim: "Yeah. Yeah. So you're ... You're you, though, right?"

Jake: "To my understanding."

Kim: "OK. OK. Do you have like a Sharpie or something? Can I put like an X on your hand or something?"

Jake: Yeah. I don't know. Can I tear off some piece of clothing, to ... Oh! Can I wear the — can I wear the cape from the spacesuit?

Rev: Ah, sorry. It's all one piece.

Jake: [Laughs] Damn it.

Rev: But it does match your armor rating.

Jake: "Boy, that would make this simple, huh?"

Kim: "Yeah, that would make it very easy to tell the two of you apart."

Jake: OK. Yeah, I put it on.

Rev: Yeah, so it takes just a couple of moments, but you've got this very dapper spacesuit on.

Kim: "It looks really nice on you."

Jake: "Thank you." OK, I want to go down to the other end of this hallway and see, like, are there any projectors or anything that could have rendered a fake me?

Rev: Yeah. You head down to the end of this hallway that ends in the rounded wall, and there isn't anything here that you can find.

Jake: "Oh, man. So if that was real, do you think that was a fake Tass, too?"

Kim: "I don't know. The two of them looked perfectly chummy together. Like, didn't seem to be in any distress."

Jake: "Yeah."

Kim: "So what do we do? Do we just hop and rotate this thing again, and hope that we end up somewhere better than Nash's bedroom?"

Jake: "Yeah. It doesn't seem like there's anything left in here. Maybe we can rotate back around to them and, like, ask some questions?"

Kim: "What would we possibly ask them, to prove that it's them?"

Jake: "I think we have to play that one by ear. We'll just have to start throwing spaghetti at the wall when we see them."

Kim: "That sounds exactly correct for us." And I'll jump up and down.

Rev: Yeah. And just so you know — I want to make sure this is clear. So, so far, you've encountered two rotating circles. You've arrived in one, and then you saw Tass and Jake leave in a different one. You can only move the one you arrived in, because the pressure plate at the other end of the hallway doesn't exist, because it's just a wall right now.

Jake: So when he moved and they rotated away, we did not also move?

Rev: Correct.

Jake: So we're not on opposite sides of a ring that when one moves, the other moves?

Rev: Correct.

Jake: These are two different mechanisms turning.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Ah, OK. Can I examine this and try to understand how it works?

Rev: Yeah. Roll Survey the Scene.

Jake: Seven.

Kim: May I help?

Rev: Yeah. How so?

Kim: Well, just by assisting him with trying to keep track of, like, where we have been and how we have seen these things move. Like, trying to sketch it out on like a wall or something?

Rev: Yeah. And I have actually made a map that rotates.

Kim: Yeah. I'm like, I can't wait to see this map someday. [Sighs] It's only an eight.

Rev: All right, Jake, you get a hold 1.

Jake: Thinking about how these work, what happened here?

Rev: So every time you've seen someone step onto this pressure plate, it seems to be random. It moves either clockwise or counterclockwise. And now that you're thinking back, you think that it traveled shorter distances on some trips and longer distances on other trips. So it's making more of a full rotation. Sometimes it's moving 25% of the circle, sometimes it's moving 75% of the circle. You saw this Tass and Jake step back into their hallway and hit a pressure plate, and that circle rotated away. So it seems that they are on independent systems. You would imagine that some place, there might be a place where you can control this or set it so that it's not random, but you certainly haven't seen anything like that yet. And I think the other piece that you get is that, kind of on a timer, they will also just move themselves at random. So it can be triggered, but pathways can open at some set increment of time.

Jake: "Well, there's gotta be some way to set these. And it seems that if untouched, they'll eventually move on their own. I don't know how or why. But we aren't gonna be able to make theirs spin. So I'm inclined to make ours spin, and see if we can't find the control center for this."

Kim: "Yeah, that sounds like as good of a plan as any. That's all we can do from this side."

Rev: Tass and Megan, you feel the room start to shake and shift again as Megan has gotten these last two remaining Immortals into a very deep sleep. Outside in the hallway, you can see that it leads into another longer hallway that does come to an end at a rounded wall.

Megan: I'm gonna get under Tass's arm and help move him into the hallway. But on the way, I want to write on the wall by this door, "Immortal Eggs," and draw an arrow pointing that way.

Rev: OK. Kim and Jake, in front of you is a rounded wall.

Jake: "Ah, beans."

Kim: "Fuck."

Rev: Tass and Jake.

Tass: I don't exactly have the gun leveled at him, but it's certainly up in front of me. "OK. You saw that, right?"

Jake: I am standing like stock still, almost catatonic. "Uh, yeah."

Tass: "Where is the first place, out of Indianapolis, that IPT sent us?"

Jake: "Uh, Hawaii."

Tass: "Yeah. OK. What's my sister's name?"

Jake: "I don't know. You just call her Sister a lot."

Tass: "OK. OK. OK." I lower my gun.

Jake: "Was that real?"

Tass: "I mean, it has to be. I mean, something. I mean, it's real — like, we saw it. So what the fuck does that mean?"

Jake: "What's happened to you since you got here?"

Tass: "We landed. We waved at Carrington. We came into a room where panels came down. Some things popped out of the ceiling and looked at us for a second, went back up in the ceiling. We came into the hallway. We saw this short, stunted room ..."

Jake: "No. No, no. No, no, no, no."

Tass: "What do you mean, no, no, no?" The gun's back up.

Jake: "We were flying here and, like, passed out and woke up in a glass room, and had to figure out who was infected. And we all decided to end the quarantine. We walked out and got separated, and Carrington was there." The power glove is back up.

Tass: "No, man. We landed. We were in rooms. Needles looked at us, went up in the ceiling. We came into a hallway. I volunteered to test it."

Jake: "I mean, that all sounds fairly accurate, except none of us remember landing."

Tass: Can I, like, be taking him in here, to see if he's trying to give me a story on this?

Rev: Yeah. Tass, why don't you roll Get a Feeling?

Tass: Why don't you get a feeling?

Rev: I'm not allowed to roll in these games. Except for when it comes to the random mechanics of the rooms turning. I am rolling for that.

Tass: Oh, that's fair. Against all odds, nine.

Rev: OK, you get a hold 1.

Tass: Are they being honest?

Jake: I am.

Tass: I lower the gun again. "But I don't know what this is. Like, what do you remember? Do you remember the facility below?"

Jake: "Yeah. Dion And the circles and the Striders. Carrington running the place. The like techno-organic virus thing, and the storm below. And then this place appeared and we head it up. The only thing I don't remember is landing and getting into the quarantine room."

Tass: "We flew up and we felt a little woozy, but then we landed. We had conversations, we looked around, and then we got split up. There's none of this locked in cells and yelling at each other and trying to figure it out. Carrington stayed in the ship. She wasn't in some thing, passed out. We have two different timelines here from the moment we got here, which makes me think that you are something with our memories. A robot, a clone, an Immortal, something. And I know that sounds absolutely wild, but I don't know what else could be happening here. You're the one that's missing time."

Jake: "How would I not know I'm an Immortal? I don't have scorpion parts."

Tass: "Neither did Dion until he did."

Rev: And I think as you're having this conversation, Jake, you take one point of damage. And it occurs to you that, like, maybe he's the clone. He's awfully convincing you right away that it's you who is the one who is off, and sidestepping all of the possible blame.

Jake: "Maybe it's you. You seem to be awfully certain for someone who doesn't have answers to a lot of stuff."

Tass: "I'm just trying to figure it out, man. I'm trying to figure it out. And that's what it looks like. Hell, like I said, we got woozy coming in on that ship. Maybe something else happened in that time. Maybe we all lost time and there was a switch."

Jake: "What if, like, I passed out? And that's why I don't have those memories. And there's some other you that's the real you, and that's my you. And he's missing time too."

Tass: "Inexplicably, I know exactly what you're saying. Look, let's just keep going. Because either way, like, you're still you. You remember shit. If it's you, if it's me, we both remember our damn history, right? We still want to go beat Nash's ass?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: "OK. Then I don't think there's much of a problem."

Jake: "Yeah, for now."

Tass: "You said it was — it was everybody, right? It was the whole team?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: "OK, so then let's think about this positively. Maybe we just doubled our efforts to go kick some ass."

Jake: "Yeah, I guess that's accurate."

Tass: "Yeah. I'm just gonna ask you to do the same thing that I'm gonna blatantly tell you I'm gonna be doing, and that's keep a close eye on me, to see if I do anything unusual?"

Jake: "OK."

Tass: "Okay. So, uh ..." And I just look back up and down the hall.

Jake: All right. I step on the pressure plate.

Rev: Jake and Kim, in front of you is just a piece of the rounded wall. What are you both doing?

Kim: Remind me. We are staring at a curved wall.

Rev: Yep.

Kim: What is behind us? Still Nash's room?

Rev: Yep.

Kim: Great. I hop again.

Rev: Tass and Megan, you hear from both sides of you these giant circles start to rotate. They both stop. And Megan, as you stand there supporting Tass, you see at one end of the hallway, Jake and Kim, and at the other end of the hall, you see Jake and Tass.

All: [Laugh]

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

Carolyn: The Critshow is a Critshow Studios production, edited and produced by Brandon Wentz, with music by Jake Pierle. You can find more information about us at thecritshowpodcast.com. To keep up to date with upcoming live shows, contests, and other special events, follow us at The Critshow on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. For even more weekly content, join us at Patreon.com/TheCritshow.