

A Novel Secret (S5, E17)

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: Hey, everybody. Rev here. I am coming to you from my home recording setup. Not my good one, but the easily accessible one. Because I'm sick. So I'm here by myself this week. We didn't record this week, because as we go into the holiday week, I didn't want to expose everybody to whatever sickness I am down with, so ... But I did have a couple of things that I wanted to share with you all before we get into this week's episode.

The first is some information about our Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales. So this is coming up this weekend. This runs Friday through Monday. And the deals that Nyx has set up on the website — and you'll also get these in the dispatch if you are signed up for that — is there is 5% off of most everything in the store: swag, mugs, prints, leggings, aprons, hats, etc. T-shirts are 10% off, 15% off if you buy two or more. If you buy a hoodie at regular price, it unlocks 15% off of t-shirts. And as always, there is free domestic shipping on everything. And we're also debuting some new merchandise this week. One of them is a very cool print of the Season Five art. I think only people on Discord have seen this, but it is a wide print of the entire cast in front of a background of shifting worlds. It's something that I had commissioned a while ago that's very cool. And then there's also stickers of each individual cast member from the Season Five artwork. And then also, we are releasing one of our Patreon shirts. We talked about this in the past, that every now and then we would start letting out some of those to the public. And we going to be selling one of my favorites: the Strohm Antiques and Antiquities shirt.

So yeah, you can find all of that over at thecritshowpodcast.com. And again, those sales are Friday through Monday. And if you are part of the Dispatch, you'll get to see some of the stuff in advance.

And then the second thing I wanted to mention is that we're not quite there yet, but we are coming up on the end of our time in Starhold. And as we have taken to doing, we're gonna do a midseason Q&A. Because if the rest of our listeners are anything like our

Discord, there are a lot of questions people have about Starhold. Starhold has been so much fun to run, a very different style for me that I've really enjoyed. If you can submit your questions to us by Saturday, December 17th, we will add them to the list and run through them as we do our breakdown of the first half of Season Five. If you've got questions, you can send them to us either through the Contact Us form on the website — thecritshowpodcast.com — or you can email them to us at thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com. Or if you're in our Discord, you can post them in the spoiler chat, or just message them to me personally. And we will run through all of those for the Q&A. So I hope you're all doing well and that as we head into this long stretch of holiday that you're all taking care of yourselves. And speaking of, I'm gonna go take a nap with Harvey now.

SFX:

RECAP MUSIC

Megan: "So it looks like we can turn on a microphone and speaker between this room the, like, power cell room."

Jake: "Does that mean there's somebody to communicate with currently in there?"

Megan: "I don't know. I was looking for maybe like a camera, or some way to get more information of what's in there. So I guess I'll flip it on."

Rev: You hear this very low, dull crackle filling this room, coming from a speaker in the far corner.

Rev: ALLISON: Hello?

Megan: "Who is this?"

Rev: ALLISON: Who is this? You're not Nash.

Megan: "No, I'm not Nash. I'm his granddaughter."

Rev: ALLISON: His granddaughter? Nash doesn't have family.

Megan: "Excuse me. For the third time. Who are you?"

Rev: ALLISON: I'm fascinated how you could be here, activate the system, and not know who I am if you claim to be Nash's granddaughter.

Megan: "Things are not going according to plan back home, and he sent me through here to find out what was happening. There was some kind of disruptions with the power sources. I didn't get to get a lot of information coming in here. I didn't know there would be anyone else up here."

Rev: ALLISON: Yes, I felt a disturbance in the flow of energy. It's not quite as strong as it was. Fascinating that he didn't tell you what to expect here. But I suppose that makes sense, if he's kept you in the dark about some of these things. My name is Allison.

Megan: "And what is your purpose up here?"

Rev: ALLISON: I am the power.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Megan: "What do you mean, you're the power?"

Rev: ALLISON: I am the host for the power. I was given gifts so that I could contain it, amplify it, and pass it on.

Megan: "I'm sorry, I didn't expect a living being. Are ... Are you living?"

Rev: ALLISON: Yes.

Megan: "Sorry. I just — you know, space. I didn't know if I was speaking to a computer of sorts."

Rev: ALLISON: No, I'm living quite comfortably.

Megan: Boy, I think I'm just looking around at everyone. I don't really know where to go from here. Uh ...

Kim: And I'm afraid to speak while this mic is live.

Megan: Yeah. I've opened this dialog, and I can't just cut it off now.

Rev: And over the sound of this crackle of the microphone, you do start to hear this dry crunch coming from the cocoon.

Kim: Oh ...

Megan: Oh, no.

Tass: Oh, boy. I am motioning, like, cut. Cut it. Cut mic.

Megan: "Allison, are you able to see anything that's going on out here?"

Rev: ALLISON: No.

Megan: "All right. I think there's something going on. Like I said, something's cutting through the power sources. And I think I heard something coming from the cloning room, maybe. So I'm gonna try and take care of that, and I'll be back if I'm able to.

Rev: ALLISON: Very well. If you need assistance, open the door, but get to your ship.

Megan: "Why? What are you gonna do?"

Rev: ALLISON: Well, if I come out there, you won't survive.

Megan: "Why not?"

Rev: ALLISON: The sheer amount of energy that I'm containing. This room was specifically designed to withstand it. I was told specifically not to be in the facility if anyone else alive was walking the halls.

Megan: "Oh, OK. Good to know. OK, I'll be back. You hang tight."

Rev: ALLISON: Very well.

Megan: "Bye." I cut off the microphone. I just cut everything. "Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh. This is bad."

Kim: "Oh, my god."

Rev: Large pieces of this cocoon are starting to crack off and fall to the ground. And you can see something inside starting to stretch and push against the sides.

Jake: I'm holding everybody back. Like, "Let's just wait. Let's just wait. Let's see if it's cool. Let's see what comes out of there."

Rev: The bottom of the cocoon cracks open, and six feet hit the ground.

Kim: Tass is so mad at us.

Megan: [Laughs] I love how Jake has committed to believing wholeheartedly that this is going to be a good thing.

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: We have been through a lot of frustrating moments.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: I have never been more mad at this table.

Kim: He wanted to shoot this thing when we walked in!

All: [Laugh]

Kim: We were like, "No, no, no. Let's see how this plays out."

Megan: Yeah. Jake was like, "I can't pass up the opportunity to role play this dumb decision."

All: [Laugh]

Tass: We'll be back with the rest of this episode after I take a cold shower.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Oh, god ...

Rev: Standing before you almost is reminiscent of what Tass and Jake you have seen with the arachnid people. There's a form with six legs on the bottom of their torso, four arms, and two heads that are kind of slightly conjoined at the side. You very clearly recognize one as Megan and one as Carrington.

Tass: "I told you it was the legs."

Kim: Yeah. Do I recognize one of the pairs of legs as being my own?

Rev: You do.

Jake: They're just hanging off the ground, compared to the rest.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: When I say that the two heads are conjoined, they look around at you with three eyes, because they share a center eye. And right now, that center eye is open. And the eye that is on the part of face that you clearly recognize as Carrington is open. But the one on Megan's side is closed. The mouth is too long, like these two mouths have been joined right at the corner. She looks around.

Rev: MEGGINGTON: Well, what are you all looking at?

Jake: "A very good friend, right?"

Rev: MEGGINGTON: Yes. Why are you acting strange?

Tass: "Uh, we just found out that there is an energy monster thing across the hall, and we don't know how to fight it."

Rev: MEGGINGTON: Well, I suppose I'll go wait in the ship.

Rev: And all six legs start to move towards the door.

Megan: "Uh, the ship's not safe!"

Rev: She stops and turns back.

Megan: "Something happened when we ... When we landed. And we were going back to the ship, and it's like ... There's sparks. There's sparks. There's lots of sparks. I've got to work on fixing it before we can get out of here."

Rev: Megan, roll Influence Someone.

Megan: OK.

Jake: Now, is it a bonus to the roll or a penalty to the roll that Megan's trying to convince Megan, who knows exactly Megan's bullshit.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: But would also know how to bypass Megan knowing Megan's bullshit?

Rev: I think it's an even toss.

Jake: You're right. It comes out to net zero.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: [Sighs]

Kim: Influence yourself.

Megan: Ten.

Kim: Yes!

Rev: MEGGINGTON: Oh. Where should I go then?

Megan: "It is gonna be safest if we all stick together, right?"

Tass: I do not look like I agree. [Laughs]

Jake: Let me ask you.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Do I love this creature the way that I love Carrington?

Rev: You don't.

Jake: I frown.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: There's too much Megan.

Kim: Because there's also Megan there.

Jake: [Laughs]

Kim: Messing up the formula.

Megan: Megan is messing up what you love about Carrington.

Rev: Yeah. So you know, when you saw the Jake and the Tass show, where they combined.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: It turned into kind of a rampage. And you know that Carrington has this ability to get everyone around her to kind of have what's best for her at heart.

Jake: Now, wait. In character, we don't know that.

Rev: No, no, This is — I'm just talking to the table.

Jake: Cool.

Kim: OK.

Rev: So it kind of seems like that must be how they didn't turn into that kind of same raging thing. So no, you don't love this Carrington the same way, because these two and a half bodies merged together. So I don't think her brain is structured the same way anymore. So I don't think she has that ability.

Jake: OK. And so, like, in character, I don't know that that's why. I just know that —

Rev: Yeah. You just — the pull isn't as strong. But I think, as a table, I think that's just an interesting thing to talk about.

Tass: Yeah. And so I mean, I think that's a great point then, that we are of our sound mind, knowing this is a clone. So we could, if we needed to defend ourselves ...

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: To defend Carrington.

Rev: Correct. Yeah, yeah.

Jake: I feel like this is just our teammate now. Like, I feel like we're not gonna hurt this Carrington-Megan hybrid, right?

Kim: No. I mean, she seems nice and reasonable and is not hostile to us in the moment. I wouldn't feel comfortable firing upon her, you know?

Tass: Yeah. I guess the only thing that I would worry about at this point isn't an issue, if there aren't any more clones out there to be injured, to, like, set off that rage mode that we saw happen before. And if she has enough control to like veto that anyway ...

Rev: She probably doesn't have the ability to veto that mode anymore, since you don't feel that coming from her.

Tass: Oh, that's a good point.

Rev: Since the two brains have kind of melded a bit.

Kim: Is there a reality where we bring Meggington back to the ship, and then Meggington meets Carrington, and then Carrington just gets Meggington under her control?

Megan: [Laughs]

Kim: And then, like, problem solved, right? New teammate.

Rev: Yeah. It depends on the roll, I guess. [Laughs] Let me introduce you to the player for Meggington.

Jake: Oh.

Kim: We're gonna have to update our art for the next season.

Jake: Oh, god.

Megan: [Laughs]

Jake: Season over season, more of us just kind of get absorbed into this singular mass.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: And so the banner art just becomes, like, longer as ...

Tass: Oh ...

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Yeah. I mean, I imagine this will ... Like when we get back to the ship, we'll have to have a conversation with Meggington about what she actually is. Because it seems like she may — I don't know. It kind of seems like she doesn't even recognize that she's like a monstrosity now. But for now, yeah, it seems like we just keep her with us. Like Megan said, we all stick together, and she's just part of the team until we get back.

Tass: And then we leave her in Elnore, where we leave ...

Rev: Island of ...

Megan: Misfit Toys.

Jake: Misfit Monsters.

Kim: Please don't talk about Ori like that.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: Island of Misfit and incredibly fit monsters.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: I'm just imagining that Meggington is wearing overalls with six pant holes in them.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: That's what the cocoon was for.

Kim: Building the overalls.

Jake: And like, a little shorter pair of straps that goes under the lower set of arms, and then longer pair of straps that goes over the higher set of arms.

Megan: I'm a trendsetter. What can I say?

Kim: [Laughs]

Tass: I think I'm addressing the room here. Like, "OK, so we're gonna have to deal with ... What was the name? Allison?"

Megan: "Yeah."

Kim: "Yeah."

Tass: "OK. What are we thinking here? Like, this is somebody that is higher up with Nash. Do we just find a way to detonate this place and run, or are we trying to keep her alive? What do we do with something we can't be in a room with?"

Jake: "I mean, again, like, we don't really know anything about her. We don't know if she's also evil or, like, conscripted, or doesn't actually understand the plan. Like, I would feel very bad about just trying to eliminate her and run without knowing."

Megan: "I mean, she was very confident in believing that Nash does not have any family, which seems very much like she would have to be very close to him. It seems like a very bold claim for someone who is just in his employ."

Kim: "Or she's just been a captor for so long that she's gotten to know the person keeping her in captivity."

Tass: Can I scroll through and see if there are any files about this name in NOEL?

Rev: Yeah. You start to scroll through the different files in the computer, and you do find a file on Allison. And inside it gives actually pretty detailed descriptions of the powers that are going to be given to her and the construction of her home.

Tass: "OK, look at all of this. We at least have an idea of how this is all affecting her and that room."

Megan: "What powers did she get?"

Rev: So the one that you all knew was from the Immortals. It seems that it pulled that regenerative ability from them into her, so that her body could survive controlling all of this energy. The other one is literally the power of the storm that was raining down on the planet. That that energy was constantly being fed into her body, and that the power of that firestorm is what is charging her. And then the other one is the one that Tass found that seemed blank. It talks about a specific kind of amoeba that lives on this planet that has a very powerful mitochondria that can store huge amounts of power.

Megan: It is the powerhouse of the cell.

Rev: Yeah. And this one's can contain so much more power than its size should allow it to.

Kim: So Rev, just to confirm. Now that we know this information. Tass and I fleeing in a panic from the crater.

Rev: Mmhmm.

Kim: We were hella running from nothing.

Rev: Correct. Yes.

Kim: Cool. Good. For 20 minutes.

Rev: Yes.

Tass: I am glad that we erred on the side of safety.

Kim: No, absolutely.

Jake: So does it seem like since we've shut down the circles and the storm and everything, like eventually she'll gas out, because nothing is feeding into her anymore?

Rev: Yes, but — and this is something I think you got when this place first revealed itself — that the battery must have already stored an amazing amount of power.

Jake: Got it. It could be centuries before she gasses out.

Rev: Yes. And I think the other thing you find in this file is where she came from. And it is another dimension. She was brought here for this purpose, even volunteered for the position.

Tass: "OK ... Uh, she's a volunteer."

Kim: "Well, that kills my captive idea."

Tass: "Yeah. Maybe that's something that we need to talk with her about. If, Megan, if you can ... I mean, ultimately, we have to open this door to do something. Whether that's siphon this power, whatever. Maybe talking to her, you can, I don't know, glean her level of loyalty to Nash? Like, did she volunteer because it pays well or, you know, does she worship the man. Like, you know, is she one of his cronies?"

Megan: "Yeah. She seemed very suspicious of giving me any information when she thought I wasn't Nash. Maybe she's got the potential to be on our side, but ... Boy, I'm very nervous about this. I feel like our best bet is going to be able to not stop her, but stop her from sending power back. And I think to do that, we're gonna need to get into that room. But that's not gonna be possible if she's this powerful. I wonder how Nash spent time with her. Like if it was through here, or if he's not affected or, like, maybe that weird spacesuit that Jake has?"

Kim: "That Jake is currently wearing."

Megan: "Yeah. Maybe that stops the, like, deadly energy from getting through to him or something. I don't know."

Jake: I gesture like a like a, "Oh, me?" And sort of like strike a pose in the suit. Like three of them, one after the other. Just to, like, show off all its angles.

Megan: "It's like — it's very fancy. Like it seems like clothing and not just, you know ... He's gotta jump outside for a spacewalk, right? Like, maybe that would help."

Jake: Is that something I could either investigate of the suit itself, or consult NOEL about, or maybe a combination to determine like if this suit would help protect somebody going into that room?

Rev: Why don't you give me just a straight Tech role?

Jake: OK. Eleven.

Rev: Yeah. You start to look over this suit, and it does seem like it's designed to block out a number of things. I mean, it is very fine in the sense of its thickness. It's very thin, but you know that it can survive in space. So it's already getting rid of some radiation. That is amplified. I don't think that you believe that this by itself would be enough to survive the kind of power that she is talking about radiating. Maybe with some adjustments, you might be able to amplify that or add something to it. But you know that Nash has some regenerative abilities of his own. So that, layered with this, is probably what would allow him to be with her in the same room.

Jake: OK. Yeah, I will explain that to everybody. "We might be able to mod this suit a little bit so that you could still go in and talk to her and do whatever we need to do in that room. I mean, are we thinking, like ... That's probably just like another rune circle in there, right? Like that whole room? Because it's gotta be sending her energy off to somewhere. And frankly, I'm just suspicious of circles at this point. So everything here being round kind of seems like might be related."

Megan: "OK. Well, what about this? This is just a wild idea that I had. And maybe it'll work and maybe it won't. But we fix the spacesuit so that I can withstand some of that energy. And I tell her, hey, yeah, I got here. Cloning rooms busted. I don't know what's going on. I'm gonna let you out and I have the spacesuit. I'm gonna stay in the control room while you do a sweep. And then you guys get to the ship and leave, and I will watch. And when she is out of her room looking at like, I don't know, the hangar or something, I'll head into her room, mess up her runes, get back to the control room, she doesn't find anyone. She goes back to her room. I close the door, I get back to the hangar, you pick me up, we go home. Everything's peachy. Poke holes in this, please."

Tass: "I mean, the only hole isn't really a hole. It's just that this is putting almost everything on you."

Megan: "Yeah, but if you guys are involved at any point now, it's gonna seem suspicious."

Tass: "Not necessarily. You can say you're here with your team."

Megan: "There's only one spacesuit, Tass."

Tass: "Yeah."

Kim: "Also, if we are ... And I - I - I don't relish saying this. If we are planning to leave Allison alive, which I, let me say, I much prefer that than the alternative. Because I don't ... I don't love that. But anyway, Nash already knows that someone or something is fucking up his plans. There is no reality in which he does not visit and talk to Allison and know deeply what it is that we were doing and who was involved. I mean, I'm pretty sure he'll have a good idea that we were all involved regardless. But still, he's gonna question her. Every piece of information that we give her is information that she will give Nash."

Jake: "I think partly that's also gonna come back down to we kind of want to talk to her and determine where she falls in all this. Like we know now that she's not a captive. But again, is she just heavily brainwashed? Does she think that she's supporting a completely other cause because Nash is a good liar?"

Tass: "Yeah. We've been lucky in a way so far that we found people that don't want to be working for him, or actively dissent. But we also have to face the facts that eventually we're gonna come across somebody that wants what he wants and will kill us and everyone to make it happen. I'm not saying that's her, but I'm saying we need to find out."

Megan: "I told her I was gonna look around and that I was gonna come back. So I'm gonna have to come back with some sort of information."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "If we let her out, what do we do about NOEL? Because we need to — we gotta take NOEL back with us."

Megan: "Get her out first."

Kim: "Yeah, we take her out before we even think about opening that door."

Tass: "Hell, I can start that right now. of there's nothing else we want to try to glean."

Megan: Rev, can I continue to use a speaker and microphone without NOEL?

Rev: You would have to put together like, another system maybe, from the other pieces of computers you've seen around this facility.

Megan: Right, right, right. Yeah. OK. Yeah. Because there's that room that was sending information back to Nash that maybe I could try and gut.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I have another question. And again, I'm not sure whether this would be something that I could get from NOEL or something that I might have to investigate elsewhere for.

Rev: Hmm.

Jake: It seems to me like Nash would have a contingency plan to, like, shut her down if necessary. And I want to figure out if that's the case, and if so, what it is. In case we do need it.

Rev: Yeah. Going through her file, you don't see anything like that. Which I think is telling to you. Like you don't see a, "What do I do if she turns on me?" plan. You don't see any systems designed to deal with her, any programs set to go off if X, then Y.

Jake: And in what way is that telling to me? In which direction?

Tass: Sounds to me like if the thing is loyal, there's no reason to set up a contingency plan.

Kim: At least as far as Nash is concerned, Allison's rock solid.

Jake: Yeah. I didn't know if that was ... It's telling that she's ironclad, or it's telling that he doesn't want that information, like, loose. Or, like, here.

Kim: Hmm.

Rev: Yeah, that's up for you to decide.

Kim: [Chuckles]

Jake: Neat.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: This might be farfetched, but I don't want to forget about it. Putting those letters and numbers into NOEL, does NOEL know what they mean?

Rev: She does.

Kim: What? OK. What are they?

Rev: You put in the first number, and on your screen is a copy of Dante's Inferno.

Kim: Oh, wonderful. OK, what about the next set?

Rev: You know, looking through the index of Dante's Inferno, it is broken up by chapter and verse.

Megan: Ooh, C and V! Chapter, verse!

Kim: All right, Chapter 34, verses 8-9. "How frozen I became and powerless, then. Ask it not, Reader, for I write it not, because all language would be insufficient. I did not die and I alive remained not; Think for thyself now, hast thou aught of wit, what I became, being of both deprived."

Megan: Can I get like a SparkNotes translation on this for me, please?

Kim: [Laughs]

Rev: "I'm neither dead nor alive. Imagine how horrified I became when I made that realization, and what have I become?"

Megan: "What the fuck?"

Tass: "So ..."

Megan: "Who scratched this into the table?"

Tass: "That's my question. I mean besides, you know, being smart enough to really, really dig in here. Why ... Oh, god."

Megan: Is there any way to try and, like, take in this verse, this information, and try and take a step back and figure out if I can think of who this could have been?

Rev: Why don't you give me just a straight Head roll?

Megan: Ten.

Kim: Nice.

Rev: So the first thing that Allison said to you was, you're not Nash. Which means that's the only person she expects to be on this computer. And if this was the message that was left, and you did see that whoever did this was working and was able to scratch it in with the fingernail of their pinky as they did this. I think what you can take from this is that on some level, Nash is aware what has happened to him.

Megan: Oh, boy. OK. Wow. So he's still in there. I think — yeah, I think I say that to everyone. "Nash is still in there. Through all of the battling that must be going on in his head with Koschei, he's aware. He's aware."

Jake: "So? What does that matter?"

Tass: "It might matter a lot, when it comes to us having to deal with the aspect of Death. If there's anything we can appeal to, even if it is our enemy, we might need to bank on that to deal with the greater of the two threats. But Nash is still gonna pay too. But if there's this awareness to him that this thing needs to be stopped, I mean, I think we can all agree that Nash is a stubborn old guy. If we can appeal to that, we might get that help. Even in the form of, well, I don't know. I don't know what the form of that would be."

Megan: "It's good to know, at the very least."

Kim: "Yeah."

Megan: "OK. So if we're trying to get information out of Allison, I don't really have wiggle room here to have a pleasant conversation with her before I ask her to roam these halls, if that's what we're doing. So I think I'm gonna have a very small window to get whatever information I'm wanting before I say, 'I'm gonna be in the control room and let you out. I'll meet you back there once you're done with your sweep.'"

Kim: "Would marring the rune, assuming that there's a rune, be enough? I don't know magic or these rituals the way that you all do. Is there a realm in which Nash could go back, fix that rune, and then immediately get Allison back online?"

Jake: "Yeah, absolutely. If all we do is mar the rune, all we are doing is slowing things down."

Megan: "I can set a bomb in the room." [Chuckles] "Mar all the fucking runes. Set it on a delay, and try and get out before it goes off. So even if she's not in there, even if it doesn't destroy her, it destroys the conduit in which she's sending energy back."

Tass: "I think you need to talk to her again. I think this is two very different possibilities. I think talking to her and understanding what she wants will answer whether you do exactly that. I think whatever the case, we have the conversation. We tell her what you're going to do. Let's say exactly the plan you suggested: we get done with that conversation, we take NOEL apart, get all of that back to the ship, and then let you run through how you need when you let her out. Let her know that it'll be a little time,

because you want to make sure that it's worth letting her out. And if that room swivels, that it's go time for her. And then you make your move. But if it seems like she is whole-ass ready to do whatever Nash wants her to do, then we talk about how we take her out. Because ultimately, you're right. I don't want to hurt anyone ever. But if she is on his team, all he has to do is come reset everything. She is the battery, and she will keep funneling that energy."

Jake: "I don't even know how we would begin to stop her. She's got the regenerative abilities of the Immortals, and a lot more power to her. Like, seems like all we could maybe do is, like, jettison her or something. We could lose track of her, and make Nash also lose track of her. But I can't imagine how we destroy her."

Megan: "Yeah, that's what I keep thinking. The focus has to be on destroying the means of getting him her power. If we can, yeah, get her thrown out into space where she has power, but nowhere to put it? Great. But I don't know how to do that."

Tass: "Yeah, there's just a lot we don't know. Just because she has all of this power doesn't mean she's invincible. We don't know that. Not being able to get close doesn't mean can't be hurt."

Jake: "No, but she's got the regenerative abilities of the Immortals, who are aptly named."

Tass: "Right. But there's always somehow some way to put on enough hurt to get past that."

Jake: I mean, we've got a super computer right here that has a file on her. Can I, like, look up, or can NOEL run a calculation to estimate what she can and cannot survive?

Rev: Oh like to use the knowledge that you have on that file to like run a test?

Jake: Yes. To at least make an educated guess.

Rev: OK. To like see ... What? Like, what she can survive? What she was built to survive?

Jake: Yes. Both of those.

Rev: OK. Yeah. So you ask NOEL what it is that she believes Allison could survive, given the regenerative abilities and given this ability to absorb this huge amount of energy. It seems like she was specifically given these abilities so that if the station failed, she could survive. She would not need oxygen, food ... Like she doesn't need anything to sustain herself. She probably doesn't even need atmosphere. So there is a good deal that she could survive. Tass is right. At some point, there's certainly gotta be some damage output that is too much. You know, even Wolverine, with the right ...

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: [Laughs] But yeah, there's a lot she could survive.

Jake: OK. So what she's got in her room is more like luxuries than necessities. She could feasibly do without.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Cool.

Megan: "I'm just not very confident in my ability to maintain this ruse without her getting suspicious. Like, I have an idea for a way to maybe get in there and mess stuff up and get out. But I don't think I can just keep popping up on the speaker and probing her for information and then being like, hey, do this thing I want you to do. I'm just — I'm really scared, here. This seems dangerous in a really new way that doesn't feel like we can all be shielded from."

Jake: "Yeah, I think you're right. This is next level dangerous."

Kim: "I'm sorry, Megan. I don't mean to put pressure on you. I really don't. I recognize how terrible of a situation this is. I do think that you are the only one that can talk to her, the way that the situation is, without introducing a million more questions and more distrust from Allison."

Megan: "No, I agree. I think we just kind of fell into it this way. And I think it's lucky that I said what I did. I feel like I had some sort of evidence to back it up. And I mean,

technically, I'm not lying. And I can continue to not lie technically, and skirt my way around this."

Jake: "But the instant she sniffs something out, that could go as south as south goes."

Megan: "Yeah."

Jake: "I mean ... Fuck."

Tass: "OK, you're right. Terrifying. Dangerous. Talking to her is the problem. But going to break the rune isn't. That doesn't have to be you. So we can use that. If you talk to her, and she decides she's gonna come on some sort of rampage to hunt you down, she doesn't know we're here. Leave me the suit. And we either do your plan the way that you hope, and it all goes great. But it doesn't have to be you. That can be me. I open the door, I run back, mar the runes, and leave. If it comes to a fight, I can fight."

Megan: "How are you gonna fight her?"

Tass: "I don't know. But if it comes to a fight, I have a chance. I mean, that's my ... That's my purpose, isn't it? Because even if I die here, The Chosen leaves me and goes to somebody else. And you still have what you need to accomplish what you need in our world."

Megan: "Same thing could be said for me. I die, The Empath goes to Aiden or something."

Kim: "Listen, there is no guarantee that either of those things happen. If any of you die on a dimension that isn't our own, those energies, both of yours, could just be lost."

Jake: "Yeah. If we're talking about hedging our bets, then we're talking about nobody dying, which I was kind of hoping for from the beginning."

Kim: "Yeah."

Megan: "That would be preferable, honestly. But I feel like I am the only person that has a chance of talking my way out of a situation."

Jake: "Yeah. So I mean, OK, we don't necessarily need to talk to her. We can accept that we are not going to learn some stuff. And in accepting that, also greatly increase the odds that nobody dies. And that's a ... Not a bad trade, I think. We can just send her on the goose chase, fuck up the runes, lock her back in her cage, get out of here. Know that we have bought some time, and that may be all we know, but it's something."

Kim: "But if we are only delaying the ritual and not stopping it, that doesn't fix things. Even if what we're trying to do in the other two dimensions goes absolutely perfectly, we're still fucked."

Jake: "Well, then again, another option is to somehow lure her out into the void of space. Where, you know, as somebody who has watched movies and read comic books, I suspect that she will get sucked into the nebula and absorb all of its power, and then come back for us or something. But that's like a different problem for later. And it will do the job of like pretty cleanly fucking up Nash's process."

Megan: "So OK, what? We try and set some explosives in a certain room and lure her there and then set it off?"

Jake: "Yes. If we can lure her to an exterior wall and blow that room? Then sure, she should just — shoop! — get yanked out to God knows where."

Rev: Yeah. And I think the only caveat there is if that wall or that room was made out of that black metal that Tass has encountered that you all saw, like as the base of this. It seems to be ... He couldn't mar it, and it absorbed all of the damage that it was taking from the storm, even.

Tass: Which seems like something that they would probably use to be able to contain someone very powerful that destroys things when they walk around.

Jake: Yeah.

Megan: So marring the runes in her room probably isn't even an option.

Tass: I guess I'm like, flipping through the files in NOEL again, because there was at least that one layout thing. Does it say what anything's made of?

Rev: Yeah. Actually, everything in that room is made of the same material. It is an element that you do not recognize the name of, but it seems like it is used in everything in that room, from the walls to the furniture. And it would probably be why there is no camera in there or anything, because there would not be the possibility of making detailed electronics or transparent elements out of this metal.

Tass: Yeah. I just like, maximize that and turn back to the room. "Yep. You ... Yeah, you're right."

Kim: But it's just in abundance in her room, right? Like if we blew one of the exterior walls, that would, in theory, work? Like in another room?

Megan: Are we able to see any blueprint details about the structure of this facility?

Rev: Yeah. I think that with enough time going through here, and you don't see that there are any other areas that have an abundance of that metal. It obviously is a very rare and expensive resource, and it seemed like the lion's share of it was used to make the platform sitting above the sun, and then also to build the room to contain the power that she's holding.

Megan: OK. "So yeah, if we can get her out of that room — say this room even, it's right next. And we get NOEL out of here. I can tell her that I'm gonna be opening up the room, that I had to fight off some people who came up here. They must be the ones that were disrupting everything on the surface of the planet. I'm gonna open her door and head to my ship, and that I locked them in this room. She comes in this room, we blow it. She gets sucked out to the space. Right?"

Jake: "Yes. And then we just hope that she gets sucked out into space in an advantageous direction for us. And not, say ..."

Kim: "Directly through our portal?"

Jake: [Laughs] "Oh, yeah. Through the portal. Oh, no."

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: Here's a thought. Which room is closest to the damn sun?

Rev: The bottom.

Tass: Oh ...

Rev: Yeah. The base is what's facing the sun, because it's reflecting the power. So, the floor. The floor room.

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: Mmm, I love a nice heated floor.

Jake: "But, you know, she gets yanked out into space. Eventually, she's gonna sort of crest the event horizon of the floor, and then the sun's gonna kind of do its thing and just drag her in, ultimately."

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: "Yeah. This might ... That might just answer itself, there."

Jake: "Except again, I'm afraid she's gonna absorb the whole fucking sun, here. She's gonna absorb the power of a star."

Tass: "I mean, the Immortals could heal themselves, but like ... Versus the sun? I don't know about that."

Megan: "We killed Dion."

Jake: "Yeah, but she's not just an Immortal. She's an Immortal who is specifically designed to absorb and contain extraordinary amounts of power."

Tass: "Yeah. But like, of a storm. If he wanted to use the power of a sun, and could do it ..."

Jake: "They'd probably be doing it?"

Tass: "They'd probably be doing it."

Jake: "That's a great point. Yeah. OK. We can't take her with us, because we don't have a way to contain her. The only way to contain her is also what allows her to send off the energy. Talking to her? As soon as it goes wrong, is an absolute death sentence for somebody. So it seems like it's not a good option, but it is the option to just shoot her into space and hope." Unless ... Can I have a breakthrough about this? Can I use my move Breakthrough? When you're stuck on a problem you can't solve?

Rev: Yes, absolutely.

Jake: Oh! Fuck yeah. That is a thirteen.

Megan: Nice.

Kim: Tell us the answer, Rev.

Jake: So on a 10+, the Speaker must answer one question to help you.

Rev: Ooh.

Jake: What is the best way to handle her?

Rev: So I think you've got the groundwork already. The idea of basically venting her out into space. I think that with the use of this move, you can like go back to your ship, scan the surrounding space, now that you have repaired that part, and then determine where to set the explosive so you can aim her.

Jake: OK.

Rev: So that it's not like, oh, she's just in orbit around this sun. Or oh, she fell to Hydarnes, or she went to Scar and is now Gladiator King.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: You know, you can aim her this way.

Jake: OK. Yeah, you guys just see the light bulb go off above my head. "If we can go back to the ship and do a little bit of math here, we can decide where to eject her from, and significantly increase the chances that she is not found immediately."

Tass: "OK, so I was close, just not directly into the sun, maybe. OK."

Jake: "I don't know. Maybe. I'll have to run some calculations here and see what seems like it's going to be the hardest to find her, or at least take the longest."

Tass: "I mean, that's a good point. If she just goes venturing off into deep space? Gone. Just gone."

Megan: "OK. So I say somebody does that, somebody starts hauling NOEL back to the hangar. I am gonna go back to the computer room and try and set up a makeshift microphone-speaker situation, so that I can tell Alison what's happening before we do it. Uh ... Yeah. Right? Anything else?"

Tass: "Yeah. There also, I think, is a conversation that should probably happen on the way back to the ship." And I just turn ...

Megan: Oh, right.

Tass: Towards our ...

Megan: Meggington.

Tass: Gangle-limbed friend.

Megan: Hey, don't call me that.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: And then I look at Meggington.

All: [Chuckle]

Jake: "We do also need to create a bomb. We've really been kind of just glossing over that in all these conversations. I don't just have one."

Megan: "Shit, no. I've got a workbench. I've got a work room. I can ... I can put something together."

Jake: "All right. So first make the bomb, then make the radio?"

Megan: "How about I make the radio, Tass and Kim start taking NOEL back, you fly the ship out, and then you come back. And while we're loading NOEL onto the ship, I'll make the bomb."

Tass: "I like it. Hell, I can even give you, like, you know, this is obviously my gun from home. But, like, ammo's just ammo. I could take this cartridge that creates the blasts. You could use that as the base for something."

Megan: "Yeah, whatever we have. Just put it in my work room on the ship, and I will throw everything together. If there's anything in any of the rooms on the way back that you think might be good to utilize? Grab that, too."

Tass: "We got ourselves a stew going."

Jake: "All right."

Tass: And I look again towards Meggington and put my finger quickly to my nose, and then I start taking apart NOEL.

Jake: I'll ... I can handle this.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: All right. So you all start to take apart NOEL. She is about five or six towers of computer, and then some random components. So it'll be a couple of trips. The room that Megan is going to is on the way. You don't have to, like, move that room at all to currently do what it is everybody wants to do.

Megan: "OK, I'm gonna stay here and get to work on this. I'll see you later."

Jake: Yeah, I will step on the panel.

Rev: You step on the panel, and the room begins to rotate. And as it does, Meggington looks a little uneasy on their feet, and she leans back against the wall and the center eye and Carrington's eye both close. And then the center eye reopens, but this time it's Megan's eye that opens with it.

Megan: MEGGINGTON: Wait, what's going on?

Jake: "Uh, what do you mean?"

Megan: MEGGINGTON: I didn't know where the rest of you were. We all got separated, and I ... Oh, my gosh. Kim, you're OK!"

Kim: "Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine."

Megan: MEGGINGTON: I thought you didn't make it through the vent!

Kim: "Well ..." [Sighs] "This is kind of a long story, and is gonna sound very upsetting. I'm fine. But a clone of me, that's the one that you ... That got hurt."

Megan: MEGGINGTON: A clone?

Kim: "Yep. Clones are real."

Jake: "And you are one of them."

Kim: "Yeah."

Jake: "Arguably, two of them. Arguably two and one half of them."

Megan: MEGGINGTON: That doesn't make any sense, Jake.

Jake: "Have you looked down?" [Laughs]

Rev: As you say this, Meggington slowly looks down, lifts their arms out to examine their body. But there are too many.

Megan: MEGGINGTON: What? What is this? What? Why? Why? What's wrong with me?

Tass: "It's OK. Don't panic. You are, more or less, like, OK. Again ..."

Megan: MEGGINGTON: OK? OK? What do you mean, OK?! My legs and my arms, and —
[Sputters in panic]

Megan: And I think I'm, like, feeling like my shoulders and I feel like the other like part of my head that doesn't feel right. And I am backing up against the wall.

Tass: "It's OK. I need you to breathe deeply. Stay with me here, and we'll explain it. It's wild. It's a wild situation. The original Megan got cloned, and you have all of her memories. For all intents and purposes, you are her. Like we know you. You remember us, right? Everything?"

Megan: MEGGINGTON: Yeah.

Tass: "Yeah. OK. Keep ... Keep talking through that. What do you remember right before you woke up in a cell here?"

Megan: MEGGINGTON: You mean when we were all in the ... The quarantine room?

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. OK, so we weren't. But ..."

Megan: MEGGINGTON: Yes. Yes, you were.

Tass: "Right. But those were clones, and you are one as well. But that's OK. You're still fundamentally Megan, mostly. What we found out is that if any of you get hurt and then touch each other, this happens. You sort of kind of attach to each other, trying to heal each other. But that happened with the other Kim."

Kim: "Well, half of me."

Tass: "Half of her. And the clone of Carrington. And now you, our great friend, are with us and we are grateful."

Rev: Tass, I'm gonna ask you to Influence Someone.

Tass: Oh, no. [Laughs] OK. Nine.

Rev: So Megan, I'm gonna ask you. In this situation, what is the price to be paid here? Tass is trying to get you to come with them to be able to talk about this. What do you feel like you would need in this moment to be able to do that?

Megan: Boy, I think having this like complete existential crisis, like I'm seeing that my body is wrong and I'm having like it logically explained to me. But I think what I would need is just that complete reassurance that I am being cared for and taken care of. And like, these are still my friends. So I don't know if that's like a hug, like an embrace, or if it's more words, some affirmations. But, yeah.

Rev: Yeah. So I think that observing this, Tass. You've known Megan for a while, you see that she is on the precipice, but she needs more reassurance.

Tass: Definitely. I mean, I think seeing how she's reacting, I would hold my arms out and slowly step forward. "I know this is so jarring and odd, and I'm so sorry. But we're gonna get you out of here, and we're here for you. You're still on the team." And I'm literally just like, slowly moving up, like, to try to hug her.

Rev: As Tass walks over and hugs Meggington, Jake and Kim, you see a look of surprise on Tass's face, quickly replaced by fear as his skin and clothing and equipment is all pulled into Meggington, and the two of them begin to merge into one.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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