

Lying Through the Radio Waves (S5, E21)

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

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Megan: I got to go to the ballet last night!

Kim: [Gasps]

Rev: How were you?

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I was honestly very tired from running and jumping. I don't know how to do ballet.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: It was really hard getting past security and getting on the stage.

Kim: Was it The Nutcracker?

Megan: Yeah. We went to go see The Nutcracker. It was so, so nice.

Kim: Nice.

Megan: I really, really love going to ballets in the wintertime. Specifically The Nutcracker, because that's the only one I've seen. [Laughs]

Rev: How many times have you seen The Nutcracker?

Megan: I think like four times now.

Rev: Oh, wow.

Kim: Do you know the plot at this point? Because it's incomprehensible.

Megan: Well, I had the book when I was little, and I read it — like I really wanted to be a ballerina when I was really little. Like ... Like second grade.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: I was like, this is what I want more than anything. It was absolutely not an option for me. I lived like 2 hours away from the nearest city. Had no avenues to actually learn how to dance. But before that, I was like, "This is it. Want to be a ballerina."

Rev: Real quick. I have to know. All of a sudden, I can't not know. Megan, ballerina. What was everybody's first job they wanted to do? Like the first thing you can remember?

Kim: I wanted to be what I called a dolphin girl, which is one of those girls — which is one of those people who does the dolphin shows at SeaWorld? I wanted to be a dolphin girl.

Jake: She wanted to be just a horrible Dr. Moreau ...

All: [Laugh]

Kim: I wanted to be the people that get to like train and like ride the dolphins.

Rev: That was absolutely what mine was to.

Tass: Nice!

Kim: Really?

Rev: Yeah. But Jake's version.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: I called it at the time, Dinosaur Hunter, because I didn't know the word archeologist.

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: Oh, I see. Yeah, yeah.

Tass: Yeah.

Jake: You know, it's funny. An actor. [Laughs] That was the first one that I remember.

Rev: He's like, "It's funny. A podcaster."

All: [Laugh]

Rev: I was so far ahead of the curve.

Jake: Before the term had ever been uttered.

Rev: Go on. So, Nutcracker.

Megan: Yes. So we got to go. This really, really beautiful theater. It had been, you know, a few years since I actually got to go see it, so it was really nice to, like, see just the experience again.

Rev: Mmhmm.

Megan: And I was saying this earlier, but it's really funny how I just, like, instantly turn into a seven year old again when I'm at a ballet. Because, you know, I see the Sugar Plum Fairy up on stage, and there was a point where I went, [Gasps] "Her tiara so sparkly!" And like my eyes started watering and I was tearing up, and I was just like, "It's so beautiful." [Laughs] It was really cool because like they did a bunch of neat things. Like when the rats were on stage and they're running around and like the toy soldiers come out and like shoot one. And then one would be like injured and its leg would like stick out, and another one would help like carry it. [Laughs]

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: We're showing the horrors of war.

Rev: [Laugh]

Megan: Yeah. Like pulling like injured soldiers off the stage. [Laughs] But the really wild part of the night was at intermission when I went to the bathroom.

Tass: Oh, god. What did you eat?

Kim: Oh, god. No, where is this going?

Rev: You have to phrase that differently.

Megan: Nope. I went to the bathroom. It was a very long line.

Rev: Yeah. '

Megan: So we were on the balcony, so there was a couple of floors of stairs to climb. And there was like, a restroom way at the bottom of the staircase, and then one just like one level down from where we were. So I was in line and the woman in front of me turned around and looked at me and she said, "Why didn't we have the same options as the full bar here?" And I said, "What?" [Laughs]

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Understandable.

Megan: Yeah. And she goes, "Like, why does the other bar not have like full bar options like the one here?" And I like looked around and in my head I was like, "Do you know we're in a bathroom?"

All: [Laugh]

Tass: What in the world?

Megan: And I was like, is she drunk? Like is she just kind of impaired right now? But like totally coherent, looking at me. And she, like, was really expecting an answer. And then it hit me of like, am I supposed to know the answer to this? Like, is this a test? [Laughs] And I was so confused. And I was like, "Oh, I don't ... I don't know. Do you mean like downstairs?" Because there was a full bar at like the entry level, and then another smaller one up where we were. So I was like, "Do you mean between like the bar downstairs and up here?" And she goes, "No. At the other event. Like across the hall." And I was like, "I ... I ... What are you asking?" And she goes, "Aren't you the bartender over there?"

All: [Laugh]

Megan: And I said, "No?" And she goes, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry!"

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: "I thought you were the bartender!" And I like look down, and I'm wearing, like ...

Rev: A Bud Light shirt?

All: [Laugh]

Megan: What I thought was a nice outfit! So then I was like, "Oh, no, I've never been here before." And she goes, "There's a bartender over there that looks just like you." And I go, "Really?" She goes, "Yeah. Like blue hair, buzzcut ..." Which, I've never described my hair as a buzzcut. But I was like, "Oh, really?" She goes, "Yeah, you look exactly like her." And I don't know why I was defending like, her position on this, but I was like, "I guess I kind of have bartender vibes tonight."

Jake: [Laughs]

Megan: I don't even know what that means, but I was just trying to make her feel better because she looked so embarrassed.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: And I was like, "Oh yeah, I've never been here before. I have no idea." She goes, "Oh, never mind, I'm sorry." And then she went in the bathroom stall and I never saw her again.

Rev: She was like, "Come with me. I want you to meet this woman."

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: Well, when I left, I went over there. [Laughs]

Rev: And?

Megan: Because I was like, I know that I'm starting to miss the show, but I have to see who this is. There was nobody over there. [Laughs]

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: I ... Actually, I didn't tell you, but when I went to the bathroom, I saw this person.

Megan: What?

Jake: Like you had not told me the story yet, but I saw leaning over the bar with the other bartenders was a woman with a blue buzzcut. [Laughs] Didn't look like you at all!

All: [Laugh]

Jake: But I can't imagine there was another one. There couldn't have been a third woman with a blue buzzcut there.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: But other than that, it was really great. I loved the actor who was playing Drosselmeyer.

Jake: Yeah, OK ...

Megan: [Laughs]

Jake: On the subject of like, did you understand the plot? Yeah, at some point after the show, she goes, "I loved how extra the guy playing Drosselmeyer was." I was like, "Who is that?"

Rev: They have names?

Jake: And she — yes!

Kim: He's Clara's uncle who gives her the nutcracker.

Jake: She goes, "He was the guy in like the cape in the top hat." I was like, "They've got names? Was I supposed to know that? Were they indicated at any point?" She's like, "No, they're in the book." I was like, "There's a book?"

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I'm like, it's her godfather. And I was like, I love the energy he had, though, because it really reminded me of one of my old tattoo artists. [Laughs] Like he kept ... Jake kept calling him ... He kept leaning over and going, "It's Wizard Grandpa."

All: [Laugh]

Megan: Wizard Grandpa's back! Because he just had the big cape and the top hat. And I was like, "Yeah, I know. He reminds me of one of my old tattoo artists. I just want to climb up on stage and invite him to play DnD and give me a tattoo." [Laughs]

Rev: Jake, you did not realize that this Christmas tradition had prerequisite reading beforehand.

Jake: No, nobody gave me the homework. I wouldn't have done it, but ...

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Well, just to let you all know, the calendar is actually gonna be off by a week. Next week is not going to be the Starhold Q&A. We actually are gonna have another episode. So the Starhold Q&A will be the first week of January. And at the end of that Q&A, I'm gonna tack on all of the outtakes from Starhold, so ...

Tass: Nice.

Rev: Next week you will have a regular episode. It just kind of made sense to wrap up the current story with episode 22, instead of doing the Q&A in the midst of it. So with that, it's time to get into the episode.

Megan: Oh! And Kim, I did let the Rat King know that you loved him, because I know how much you love a rat king.

Kim: [gasps] I love a rat king! Thank you.

Jake: He was, shortly thereafter, brutally murdered. I'm sorry to tell you.

Rev: Aww.

Megan: I gave him your regards as I stabbed the sword into his back.

All: [Laugh]

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Jake: "Did you guys know that part of NOEL is here?"

Megan: "Yeah."

Kim: "Yes, yes."

Megan: "We need to finish getting her. What? What? What do you mean?"

Jake: "She picked up, like, an incoming transmission, and it sounded like Nash basically being like, 'Oh, something weird is going on there. Initiate this protocol.' And then there was a countdown timer for when the room with the battery is gonna open."

Kim: [Gasps]

Megan: "No! No, no, no!"

Jake: "Which is in probably a little over half hour at this point?"

Megan: "Oh my god."

Jake: "Thirty five?"

Rev: You all move into the cockpit of the ship. And as you arrive, you see the back of someone walking away. And they stop and they turn, and it's Dion. And then just behind them is another Dion. That one smiles and turns off the lights.

Kim: "He's on the ship. He's on the ship. He's on the ship. Everybody get in. Jake, drive this thing out of here."

Rev: And you fly the ship out into the void of space, and you can hear the scuttling on the hull get slower and slower and then stop.

Tass: I'm gonna get out and crawl up on top to see the state of the frozen Dion.

Rev: It is exactly that. He is in his scorpion form, and the stinger is embedded in the ship, and his legs are also kind of dug in. But he is entirely iced over.

Tass: Nice. I'm gonna point blank just obliterate this thing.

Rev: Yeah. You shoot it and he shatters into dozens of little pieces. And as you do, your watch vibrates, letting you know that your timer is up in 5 minutes.

SFX:

RECAP MUSIC FADES

Tass: I'm checking my watch, with that five minute timer going off. "Y'all, we have exactly no time. We gotta go. We have to go. 5 minutes. That's it."

Megan: "Shit. Yeah, let's get over there."

Rev: All right, so remind me. Who's got what, and where are you going?

Tass: So Megan is going to set the comms, correct? And ...

Megan: Yeah. I'm gonna tell her that, you know, I'm letting her out in a couple of minutes. The door is gonna open, but to give me a second to get back to my ship. And then to go check out the cloning room, because that's where the intruders are.

Kim: And I'll have the bomb and I will set it in the cloning room.

Tass: Yeah. I mean, I was only really going in case the things we just killed might show up, but I'm just — I'm still gonna run along in case either of them needs an extra pair of hands.

Rev: All right, so the three of you head out of the ship. Jake, what are you and Carrington gonna do?

Jake: I'm patching whatever the flaws are in the ship, and just listening to her life story with rapt interest.

Rev: OK. All right, so the three of you exit the ship and start heading into the facility. You pass through the ... You pass through the immunization chamber, come around the corner, and there's a Tass.

Tass: I shoot him in the head.

Jake: Oh my god!

Megan: Oh my god!

Kim: Oh my god!

Tass: We don't have time for this. [Laughs] I shoot it. It's gonna be obliterated if we take it. I shoot it.

Rev: [Laughs] Roll Inflict Harm.

Kim: This is horrible. What have you done to us, Rev?

Tass: Eight. Intuition. I'm shooting him directly in the head. I'm spending an Intuition.

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

Tass: Extra harm.

Rev: All right. And how much health do you have?

Tass: Seven.

Rev: You fire off this shot, and it clips the Tass in the sight of the head, pinwheeling him backwards. He hits the ground and raises his gun towards you.

Tass: "I'm so sorry, dude." The Old One, Two.

Rev: Roll Inflict Harm.

Tass: Twelve.

Rev: What's your extra effect?

Tass: Extra harm.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Describe this to me.

Tass: As a tear spills down my face ...

Rev: Which you?

Jake: And his.

Tass: Yes, yes. I just go for what I think will be the cleanest, most painless, like, way to obliterate his head.

Rev: Kim and Megan, you see a Tass. And then there is a brief moment of shots fired, and then there is a melting puddle of goo.

Megan: "Oh, I hate this place. Let's go."

Kim: Yeah. Running.

Rev: You get into the circle, you spiral it around, you get into the second circle, you spiral it around, come out into the hallway with the four way intersection, and there is a Jake there.

Tass: [Groans]

Kim: I hate this! I hate this!

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: "Jake, come with me!" And I'll grab him by the arm and pull him with me. "Kim, get it set up."

Kim: "OK."

Jake: "What's going on? Where have you guys been?"

Megan: "I can't explain right now. We have a couple of minutes to live if we don't get this setup right."

Jake: "Oh my god."

Megan: "You've missed a lot. Be quick. Just arm it. And whatever you do, don't go back in after you've said it."

Kim: "Yep, yep, yep. Like a bunny."

Rev: All right, So inside of the cloning center.

Tass: Yeah. I think I've run along with Kim, since Megan has Jake to help now. "All right. Which corner? Back here?"

Kim: "Yeah. Yeah, this is the one that Jake indicated."

Rev: All right, so you take the bomb that Megan had set up, and you set it in the back corner. I don't think there is a roll here. That would only be a roll if you were trying to come back into the room. So yeah, you get it set. What are you doing now?

Tass: I'm just running back down into the hallway to look the opposite way, to see if I can see Megan and the other Jake still setting that stuff up.

Rev: So inside of the comms room, Megan, you have started to put together this makeshift communicator.

Megan: Before I get it set up, as I'm putting all the components together, I'm looking at what I know to be clone Jake. "OK, I know this is all really confusing, but I need you to listen to me. I'm gonna set this microphone up and I'm gonna talk to somebody. It is incredibly important that you not make a sound. OK?"

Jake: I give a wordless thumbs up.

Rev: It takes a couple of moments, but you are able to get it set up. You flip the switch, and the speaker crackles to life.

Megan: [Pained] "Allison? Allison, are you in there?"

Rev: ALLISON: Yes. What's going on?

Megan: [Pained] "OK. The people that messed with all the power circles, I think down on the planet, they're up here. And I got hurt pretty bad, but I was able to trap them in the ... The cloning room, I think? The one right next to where you are. I am gonna let you out in just a couple of minutes. I'm gonna get to the control room, flip your door, and then if you can give me just a couple of minutes to get to my ship and get to safety, you can head in there, and ... And I don't know what it is that you do, but take them out."

Rev: All right, Megan. Roll Influence Someone.

Megan: Eight. I think this is too important. I'm gonna use Intuition.

Rev: Um ... How do I ask this? What is the thing that comes to you in this moment, to kind of tweak this story?

Megan: I think I add on to the end. "How long do I need to wait until I know that I can come back and I can talk with you more about everything that's happening?" Just to give this extra push that, like, I'm not just leaving. I'm planning on sticking around.

Rev: Yep. Yep, that'll do it. There's a moment of silence on the other end.

Rev: ALLISON: I'll come to the hangar when I'm finished. Be in a place where you can see the hangar, and I'll wave, and then give it 5 minutes, and I'll come back into the room and you can close the door after that.

Megan: "All right. I'll talk to you soon."

Rev: ALLISON: Be careful.

Megan: And I'll cut the microphone.

Rev: Yeah. And it powers down, and sparks and smokes a bit.

Megan: "OK, let's go. We have to go now."

Tass: "Bomb's set."

Jake: "What the fuck is going on?"

Tass: "We'll explain when we go."

Kim: "Oh, god ... Yeah, let's go."

Rev: The four of you start heading back towards the hangar. You go into the second circle, get it to rotate around, go into the first circle, come out into the hallway, and there is a Tass.

Jake: [Screams]

Tass: "It's OK. There are clones. We don't have any time to explain. We'll figure out which one of us is a clone when we go. But we all have to get out of here right now, or we're all gonna die."

Tass: "What the fuck?"

Tass: And I hop to spin the thing.

Rev: You see the clone Tass panic, jump, and spin away from you all, going deeper into the facility.

Megan: [Laughs]

Kim: "Oh, god ..."

Jake: "No! What? We lost a guy!"

Tass: "It's OK."

Jake: I go after him.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: Oh my gosh.

Rev: Yeah. The three of you see Jake move towards the hallway that has appeared and jumps on the pressure plate and rotates away from you.

Tass: "Well that wrapped itself up nicely."

Kim: "At least we don't have to watch them Raiders of the Lost Ark inside of our ship."

Megan: "I mean, as long as they don't end up back there and mess up the plan before it actually goes off."

Tass: "There is no way."

Megan: "We don't have time. Anyway. All right, back to the ship."

Rev: The three of you head back to the hangar and into the waiting ship.

Megan: I know that we've all stuck together so far. But just real quick, I want to scan everyone to make sure none of us are clones.

Rev: You have no clones aboard.

Megan: "All right, let's get out of here. This place is gonna blow any second."

Jake: Yeah, I am already in the pilot seat. As soon as they're on board, getting this thing up and out the hangar.

Rev: You pull the ship from the hangar and begin to move away from the station and out of the slight pull of this dying sun. As you clear the field where you felt that slight bit of dizziness, through the monitor you can see a small explosion on the station. A crack appears in the hull of the station, and this glowing woman launches out into the void. She's holding by the neck in one hand a clone Tass, and in one hand a clone Jake, who both seem very surprised by the events happening. But then all three of them pass through the field, and the two of them turn to goo. And the glowing woman fades further and further away into the void of space.

SFX:

CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: And that brings us to end of Crisis questions. Did anyone's connection with another spacer change?

Kim: I think mine went up with Jake for sure. We spent a lot of this crisis together, me and Jake Prime, and I think just the moment alone of us discovering Nash's coffin and making the decision to open it was a pretty bonding experience.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: Yeah, same. Am I allowed to do more than one person?

Rev: Yeah, sure.

Jake: I think my connection with Megan goes up too. Because somewhere subconsciously, I know that Tass gunned down the clone him, and Megan saved the clone me at least for a moment.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: [Laughs] I think mine would go up with Tass and Kim. Because similar to what Kim had said with Jake, they spent a lot of time together. I spent a lot of time with a Tass.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: Right?

Megan: My connection with Tass as a person, I think, increased.

Rev: Uh-huh. Because you still experienced those things, those moments, even though it wasn't necessarily with Tass Prime.

Megan: Yeah, and I worked real hard to save him this time. [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah. So I think that goes up. And then some form of Kim and I like became a single entity, so I feel like that put us in kind of a headspace to be like, "Where are our clones?" Like, what would we do in this situation? And just kind of like watching each other's back more closely.

Tass: I'm good.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah, I think Tass' connection with himself goes down by one. [Laughs]

Tass: Yeah. Yup.

Kim: [Laughs]

Rev: What was the most tense moment of this game?

Tass: Shut up! Come on!

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: Where to begin?

Tass: Good Lord.

Kim: I think it was when Tass high fived Meggington and then got absorbed into Meggington.

Rev: Yeah. You were all pretty confident that the clones were dealt with at that point.

Tass: Yup.

Kim: Yeah. And that was terrible.

Megan: Is this just in game, or out of character as well?

Kim: Both.

Rev: Yeah, either.

Megan: OK. For me, the most stressful part was knowing that Jake knew that there was a timer.

Rev: Oh.

Megan: And the rest of us didn't have that information.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: And him not knowing what the importance was, so he didn't think to mention it right away. And I had to try and forget that there was like a countdown for this, which is always so stressful for me.

Rev: What was the best moment?

Jake: I think best from an out of character perspective is still the moment that Tass high fived, and then we realized...

All: [Laugh]

Kim: It was an incredible moment. I think for the sake of tying up loose ends, one of the best moments was finding NOEL, and trying — and getting to recover her.

Rev: Yeah, that was cool.

Megan: I think just the concept of there being clones, and like running into them and not knowing who was who. But then also having to play those versions of ourselves was just really neat.

Kim: I also loved Megan using her familial connection to a Nash in order to help save the situation. I thought was a very cool character moment.

Rev: I really liked, um ... This is kind of an out of character reaction, but Jake convincing everybody to wait and see.

Megan: Yes! [Laughs]

Rev: What the Carrington might be.

Kim: The cocoon!

Tass: Oh, I was hoping nobody would even say it.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: That's one of my favorite teasers that I've put out, is just you being so mad at us.

Tass: Yeah. Like genuinely though, that ... That was amazing. That's so funny. Like, I can't even pretend I was ever actually mad at that. Because in character, yes, but sitting here at the table? Bless you, sir. That's so funny.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: What would anyone change, if anything?

Tass: My pants, several times.

Rev: [Laughs] Less Dion.

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: I would have loved the opportunity to meet clone me, when she wasn't a monster. That would have been nice. Um ... I wish I'd had an opportunity to use the move that I got on my most recent level up, where I can immediately escape a dangerous situation unharmed.

Rev: Mmm.

Kim: I thought I was gonna have to pull that out of my back pocket with the bomb stuff. But then, you know, everything worked out. It was surprisingly chill.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Yeah.

Megan: We had the plan that we had because it was the safest path. Like we could have gone other directions, but there were way too many variables that this just made the most sense.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: But man, I would have loved to get to talk to Allison.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: And see what she was about, and like what she knew. So ...

Rev: Yeah, I remember ... And I can't remember if this is something that was cut from the episode ultimately, or if it stayed in. But an early plan that you all started to go down the path of was taking that spacesuit and reinforcing it so someone could go in and talk to Allison. I thought that would have been a very cool experience to see, like, how was she living? What is her deal? Why is she following Nash? Kind of stuff.

Kim: Yeah, that's a loose end we're just probably never going to get to know, but ...

Jake: Now that we're talking about this, though. I've got the space — I could go in now. And like, at least check out what her place looked like and see if there's anything in there.

Rev: Yeah, that's true.

Jake: That hasn't been sucked out into space.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Add that to the to do list when we come back from end of session, here.

Rev: OK, OK.

Kim: [Chuckles]

Rev: And then lastly, what is everyone looking forward to next?

Kim: Going home!

Jake: Getting out of this nightmare hellhole. Fabulous game. Can't overstate how wonderful the game is.

Kim: No.

Jake: It sucks though, for the brain and the heart, to be in the space.

Rev: This is not my jam, genre-wise. But writing-wise, like story-wise, I do really enjoy it. More than I enjoy, like, being in it or watching it as a medium.

Tass: Well, like it always feels really dangerous when we get into these ... I don't know. I don't know what this is for you. Like if it's just a subconscious thing or like, whatever it is. Because I know, you know, you're not — you don't like watch a ton of deep horror and things like that. But like, I almost think that is good in this situation, because you get to hit it with a completely fresh outlook, knowing us and knowing what scares us without hitting things that make us uncomfortable.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: But you know, that aside, even just as far as tackling like deep space horror genre, you have like this outlook for it that lets you not fall into any of the cliches that people would just go like, "Well, yeah. Like that's usually scary, but we've seen it a thousand times." You get to hit us fresh and it's ... It's great. Like ...

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: No part of this, even when it felt like a little silly for us — you know, like we're sprinting across the frickin' surface, you know ...

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: Like really, like that comes off kind of silly in the moment and like, a funny moment. But like, we're scared, man.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Like we don't know what the fuck is about to happen. So that's just — it's just really fun. It's really cool.

Rev: It was very fun to get to play in a system that was kind of unintentionally the format that the first Eye of Horus was in.

Tass: Yeah. Yeah, for sure.

Rev: You know what I mean? Like, I was trying to hit these notes, using Monster of the Week rules. It's very cool that this game hits all of those moves and those notes.

Tass: Definitely.

Rev: All right. So everybody mark two experience, and take two gear points. Does anybody level up?

Megan: I do.

Tass: Me too.

Kim: I do.

Jake: Yup.

Rev: Doesn't matter.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: Because you're going home. Unless, of course, you don't want to. Are you guys gonna do something else here?

Jake: I like it here now. It's feels safe.

Rev: Yeah?

Jake: I'm comfortable. We've got this big base. All we need to do is put back up a wall and we got a new house.

Rev: You guys wanna join the Striders? You want to be, like ...

Jake: A little bit. I want to be a Green Lantern. Yeah.

Rev: Yeah. OK.

Megan: It seems like too much responsibility. I've got enough of that already.

Kim: I want to play video games with Arkie.

Tass: I'm just gonna go wherever the bigger crowd goes.

Rev: Yeah, fair. So what's everybody gonna take for their level up?

Tass: Oh, I might as well stat boost to get a +3 Hand, just in case I need to throw them.

Rev: Nice. So you grow an extra.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: Where?

Tass: Forehead.

Rev: Nice.

Megan: I'm taking another move. It's called Science the Shit Out of This. You feel a certain kind of glee when facing a tough challenge. Remove a Stress when you roll a 10+ while Acting Under Fire.

Rev: Oh, nice.

Kim: I'm going to take another Stowaway keepsake.

Rev: Oh. What are you gonna take?

Kim: So from The Criminal variant, they have a keepsake that is a charm. You might be superstitious. You might not be. All you know is that when you have your charm on you, things tend to go better. Pick two tags from the list below and add your charm to your year list. Once per Crisis, as long as you have your charm with you, you can use it like an Intuition point.

Rev: Oh, nice.

Kim: Boy. I'm trying to think of like what in this hellish experience has been lucky, and the answer is not a whole lot. But I think what could be cool, considering that we've dealt with this thing multiple times. I want to go ahead and pry Dion's stinger out of the hull of our ship and keep it as a keepsake.

Rev: OK. So it's almost like a ... Like a big shark's tooth.

Kim: Yeah.

Jake: A huge shark's tooth necklace.

Rev: Yeah. But it's just made out of combined toenail.

Kim: Blegh.

Tass: Oh, come on.

Rev: What? His stinger's a backwards foot.

Tass: I know. [Laughs]

Megan: I love the term Stowaway keepsake. It's just a really nice way to say I stole this from someone.

Rev: Yeah.

Kim: [Laughs]

Rev: But, yeah. We'll say it's made out of, like, cartilage and stuff. So it's not meat that then freezes once it's not in space anymore.

Kim: I like that. Yeah. Some sort of like cartilage or bone situation.

Jake: Cartilage is sort of meat adjacent.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Yeah. Like, well, like a keratin or chitin.

Rev: Yeah, there we go.

Jake: Yeah.

Kim: OK. Yeah, I like that. So I think the tags for it are gonna be "obvious."

Rev: Mmhmm.

Kim: And "gross." [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Yep.

Rev: Absolutely. No one will disagree with you.

Tass: Nail on the toe.

Jake: I'm just going to take +1 Head.

Tass: [Chuckles] So you got two heads now.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: So before you head home, is there anything you all want to do? I know Jake talked about going in the spacesuit to check out Allison's lair. Is there anything else?

Megan: I feel like we need to check back in with the Striders, and kind of see what they're gonna be up to. Warn them about what was happening, and that Nash very well may be coming back, and to be on the lookout for that. And in that same vein, maybe warn Mari about that as well.

Rev: So do you want to do this by ... Get on the radio? Or are you gonna go back to the planet? Are you gonna go back to the Strider base? What does this look like?

Tass: I mean, if we have the connections from our ship, we could probably just radio both of them, right?

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: So yeah, while Jake's checking that out, we can hop on the radio and have some conversations?

Kim: Yeah.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: You use the code to patch in directly to Mari in the comm station down on the planet.

Rev: MARI: I was wondering if I would hear from you all again.

Kim: "Hey. Yeah. This might be the last time you hear from us, though. I think we sorted out everything that we came here to do. And we're gonna get out of your hair, figuratively speaking."

Rev: MARI: Well, good luck on your travels.

Kim: "Thank you. Important thing: the guy who came to Hydarnes and messed up a lot of the planet — Nash. There is a strong chance that he might come back, and that he might have questions about us specifically. It would behoove you to say as little about us or your interactions with us as possible."

Rev: MARI: All right. Is this something that he's gonna make a show of arriving, or would it be a surprise?

Kim: "Ooh, that's a really, really good question. It could be a surprise."

Megan: "Mari, are you and Arkie able to leave?"

Rev: MARI: Uh... In the sense of... Like I don't have a — you know, they brought us here. I don't have another job or a ship.

Megan: "Well, the people who are up on the spaceship that was in the storm, they might be able to help you with transportation. But this guy is real bad. And if he gets angry, you and Arkie could be in danger."

Rev: MARI: Oh. You guys got any money?

Jake: "Maybe we talk this over with the Striders, and see if they've got any kind of witness protection or something like that."

Megan: "Yeah, they at least have a lot of connections in a lot of places, so maybe they could set you up in a safe place."

Rev: MARI: All right. Let me know what they say, I guess.

Tass: "Absolutely. We'll be able to work something out." And then I suppose we switch over to call the Striders' base?

Megan: Yeah.

Rev: RILEY: Hello?

Tass: "Riley?"

Rev: RILEY: Oh yeah, man. What's going on?

Tass: "Oh, we just blew up a whole mess of stuff."

Rev: RILEY: Oh.

Tass: "Yeah. So about that, the guy that set it all up and the one we sort of mentioned that, like, put you all in that weird stasis, and..."

Rev: RILEY: Oh, yeah.

Tass: "He's probably not gonna be happy about that. And there is a chance he will come back here to look around and address it. So we just wanted to kind of give you a heads up, and let you know that he's very dangerous. Again, we don't know. He might be more trying to deal with us then worry about coming back here, because we really good messed up his situation. But yeah, we thought it was worth a heads up on that. And also we have some friends on the surface who might need help, and..."

Rev: RILEY: Well, like employees of the Alkali Corporation?

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "Yeah, it's her and her son. They were brought here to live and work, and they don't really have means to be anywhere else. But if this guy Nash shows back up, everyone who's here could be in a lot of danger. So are you able to help them relocate?"

Rev: RILEY: Oh, shoot. You think she got any good information about the things they've been doing?

Kim: "I mean, she runs the communications, so she would at least know who's been to the planet. Now, I'm not gonna speak for her and say that she will offer up that information, but it is information that she has."

Rev: RILEY: Well yeah, you get her to make up a copy of all things she's got access to, we can definitely pay her for that as well as relocate her. We're trying to keep all kinds of tabs on this place, and knowing for certain who's buying from them would be a big help. Right now, we just get the scan codes of the ships, and sometimes people fudge those or bring a different ship. We actually got the information on that ship that Nash brought in. We got it set to the sensor, so it will go off if it comes within any of our satellites throughout the galaxy, so...

Tass: "That's huge. Awesome."

Megan: "Maybe we can just give you her communication code, and you guys can see what you can work out."

Rev: RILEY: Oh yeah, not a problem. She's not gonna get startled by a strange voice coming over intercom?

Tass: "No, we mentioned that we would talk to you all, so that should be good."

Rev: RILEY: All right.

Jake: "Oh also, I don't remember if I mentioned this. Some pirates did come and take some of the things off world. I'll upload you a description of the ship and the people on board, in case you want to track that down."

Rev: RILEY: Oh. Yeah, that'd be good. We don't want any of these just wandering around.

Jake: "Yeah. Unavoidable, really. You know."

Rev: RILEY: Pirates?

Jake: "Yeah. Those ones getting ..." [Clears throat]

Rev: RILEY: I don't know you all that well. I feel like I can feel you lying through the radio waves.

Jake: [Laughs] Can Lying Through the Radio Waves be the name of this episode?

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Yeah. So he tells you that he will be in contact with Mari, and we'll get them off planet and get them some funds in exchange for some information about what has been going on at the facility on Hydarnes. And we jump ahead a little bit to Jake in the spacesuit, floating through the now depowered station. And you move down this hallway into the room that had been locked off this entire time, and you shine your light around and it looks like a replica of a two story home inside of this sphere. There is grass and a tree, steps leading up to a door. And then inside a living room and a dining room, a bedroom. It all has a very strange texture to it, but it has the proper colors. And you think back to the readout on NOEL, knowing that the bulk of that heat resistant metal was used here. And it seems like it was mixed with other elements to try to create different kinds of texture, but still create things that were this heat resistant. And you can see the lines on the top of this dome where there's a grid of lights and screens. It seems like this entire place was built to make it feel like you were in an actual home with a sky. Little knobs throughout the ceiling and stuff to create effects like wind and rain. And you imagine that a lot of this was done so that someone would not feel the effects as strongly of being this isolated.

Jake: Mmhmm.

Rev: But throughout the house, you find a couple of trunks with clothing in them. You find the bedroom that she uses. You find just kind of a whole bunch of everyday stuff. Is there anything in particular that you're looking for?

Jake: Anything more related to her role as part of Nash's organization. Like anything about how they met, anything about what her duties were before this, if there was anything she was going to be doing theoretically after this. Like, her piece in the overall plot of things.

Rev: You don't find a whole lot, you know, about her involvement with the organization. There's a journal that has some stories in it about her and her fiance, Greg, and him taking ill and her being kind of lost as to a purpose — what to do with her life once she lost him. And she found something to believe in. And it doesn't really say specifically, but just that Nash gave her something to believe in with her whole heart again. You don't get a real strong sense of what it was he told her he was doing, but her devotion to his idea was entire and whole. It doesn't seem like she had any job other than this one, but it is one that she volunteered for. Because whoever took it, this was permanent and irreversible. So it was seen as a very large sacrifice, but one that was necessary to make his plan come to fruition. And there is an excerpt in the diary about the day that she volunteered, and it talks about how she had never doubted anything less in her life than when she was sleeping and had a vision with Greg in it, calling to her from the other side of this dim and dying star. And she knew that it was the one that Nash had talked about in this kind of job description, and that was what caused her to volunteer. I think the only other thing worth noting in the journal is that she has an entry that's not more than two or three weeks old, and it just talks about how Nash came, had dinner with her, but said he was working on some things, and that he would be on the base for a little while. In the journal, she's kind of voicing confusion because she thought everything here was already set up. She's not sure what exactly he'd be working on. And that something about him seemed just slightly different. And that maybe he was just preoccupied, but he seemed a little distant. But that's really all there is to it. Just, you know, "I thought this was done. I wonder why he was here making adjustments." And that he seemed a little off during their dinner.

Jake: Is there mention of the last time before that, that she had seen him?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Is it before he killed TJ?

Rev: Yes.

Jake: Do I have comms inside the spacesuit?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Then I want to like radio to the rest of the squad on the ship. "There's not a lot in here that I'm finding so far. Except I did find her journal. I mean, confirmed. She was like a zealot of Nash. She also said that she saw him a few weeks ago when he was here, and could tell a difference in him. Seems like it lines up with before Death kind of took him over. But he was here making changes. And she didn't know why, because this place seemed to be all set up. Any thoughts on what those might be?"

Tass: "I mean, I think now that we know what we know, it just makes sense that, you know, the future we saw — Kim's reality — was set up around him being the avatar of Death, right? And so the plan before that was probably different because he didn't have that. So I assume he had to come out here to make the adjustments that were eventually going to lead to the future that we ended up in."

Jake: "Hmm. All right. Well, I'm not finding anything else useful here, so I'm gonna head back."

Megan: "While you're in there, Jake, do you see any of the runes or anything that was set up?"

Jake: Do I?

Rev: Roll Survey the Scene.

Jake: Eleven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 2.

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

Rev: Yeah. You start to look around, and they're very well hidden throughout this landscape here around the house. But you do see the location of the different runes engraved in the metal. And I think the important thing that you're missing here is that you have seen the schematics of the spell, and I think your magical knowledge carries over. Like magic is not a thing here, but, you know magic. You've studied it. One of the runes in the circle inside of Allison's habitat does not match the blueprint on the spell that you found inside of the library.

Jake: Would I know anything that's related to this?

Rev: Yes. You know that in the future, Nash was creating this spell to pump energy into someone to make them The Chosen. You saw Estin do the same thing with his bastardized version of the spell. That's the rune that's different here. You can tell by the way that the lines are drawn and have been changed that what it does now, instead of a rune that is pushing energy into all available sources, all life that it comes in contact with, which is what you would expect from having seen everybody become more magical, more powerful in Urban Shadows. That's there. But the tail end of that part of the spell then does the opposite. It pulls all of that energy and more out of everyone it has connected to.

Tass: Oh my god. So is this like doing the same thing, but he has to reverse the polarity because he's Death? Is it like instead of siphoning that energy to make something stronger, to be the monstrous Chosen, he's Death. And so he has to sap their energy to become stronger?

Rev: It definitely seems like some element of this is using the positive flow to connect into a lot of people, and then draining from them.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: It's like fattening up a pig before you slaughter it.

Rev: Yes.

Tass: Oof.

Jake: OK. Well, I'll relay this back to the squad, too.

Rev: [Chuckles]

Jake: "Good... Good news."

Kim: "What? What'd you find?"

Jake: "I found the runes. I found the changes that were made to the runes."

Tass: "OK, you're doing that thing where this is clearly not good news."

Jake: "It's bad news."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "The modification now is rather than pumping energy into things affected by the spell, there's like a cap on the end here that will then take everything back away. As if he has got to ... He's gotta put the right nutrients into what he intends to harvest."

Kim: "Whoa. Did you have any indication as to the time frame on that harvest? Like 100 years?"

Rev: Jake, I think looking at this spell — and this takes a little bit of time. Like I imagine you having this conversation as you're kind of space walking back to the ship, getting the books out, looking at the images you've taken. With everybody's kind of collected memory of your time in Urban Shadows, Kim's experiences having lived through that, that seems about right. That the harvest of this would have been the visit that you left just before it happened.

Kim: "Fuck. Well, thanks for taking me back through the portal, I guess."

Jake: "Yeah. Wow, that was a close call."

Megan: "So if this harvest is one event. He came back to town and he was gonna take all the energy back. What then? He's just all powerful forever, but everyone's dead?"

Tass: "Great question for him."

Jake: "Maybe he was just gonna sacrifice everybody outright because he had his sights set somewhere else that he needed the power to take. Different world, even."

Megan: "Oof. OK. We gotta get to the next world. We've got to shut this down."

Jake: "Well time to head home, I suppose."

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: Jake hits the thruster on the ship, and you start to move back towards the small portal that leads back to your world. As you pass through, you get that strange flux feeling again as energy flows through you — some leaving you, some rejoining you, some energy that feels familiar. There is the brief flash of white light, and the car comes spilling out of the portal back into the subterranean lair. Grandpa Tincher and Geoffrey look up from a device they're working on as the car comes through, and Grandpa Tincher runs over to the computer and starts flipping switches as Geoffrey places a hand on the dome of energy with Rev inside of it. The dome pops out of existence, releasing Rev from the time altering field, as the portal snaps closed behind you. As the car comes to a stop, Landara rises from the chair she was sitting in, facing the now closed portal, and she raises her very large gun, aiming it near but not at the car.

Rev: LANDARA: Who's your friend?

Rev: And as the last of the residual energy from this other world leaves you and the power of The Empath rolls back into Megan, you all become acutely aware that Carrington, the person now sitting in the back seat between Kim and Megan, has lost control of the mental snare that she had previously caught all of you in.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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