

A Beast in the Bay (S5, E28)

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

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Jake: I have recently — I say recently, it's been over quite a stretch — encountered just a series of health related maladies back to back to back. But my body won't let me have more than one thing wrong at any given time.

Rev: Well that's good, at least.

Jake: It is. But it's very ... It's very odd. And now I feel like I'm waiting on whatever the next thing is. Because, like, I busted my leg and, like, might have fractured it. I don't know. I couldn't really walk on it for a couple of days. It was really bad. It hurt a lot. And then about a week after that happened, I suddenly got Bell's palsy, and half of my face was just paralyzed. But then my leg was fine.

Kim: [Laughs]

Rev: So like, it moved.

Jake: Yes. It just transferred. And then a while after that, finally, at long last, COVID got me. And then my face was fine.

Megan: [Laughs] Oh, my goodness.

Rev: Do we need to bleed you? Do we need some leeches? Do we need to bleed out the evil?

Jake: Maybe. Yeah. Let's get medieval on this.

Rev: Okay.

Kim: I've got a leech guy.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: So I'm ... I'm just curious. Something else is going to come, and I will give 50 American dollars to whichever one of you can call it correctly.

Rev: Oh!

Jake: What's the next malady? What's the next thing that's going to hit me that's going to replace this? Because I'm getting over COVID, now. Like I'm at the end of it. I've tested negative. I'm good. What's about to hit me?

Kim: Um ... I don't want to say anything too bad, because you're my friend.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: How right do you want to be?

Jake: Will it into existence.

Megan: I don't love this, but I'm gonna go with the Benjamin Button thing. Where then you get super young.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: I'm going to say, because this happened to me recently, one of your old fillings is going to fall out.

Rev: Hmm.

Tass: Oh ...

Jake: I don't ...

Megan: [Laughs]

Jake: I forgot about — I don't have any fillings.

Kim: [Gasps] Fucking bless you.

Jake: I had a lot of fillings in baby teeth, and all my baby teeth fell out. But I did go to the dentist three days before I got Bell's palsy and found out I've got three cavities. So that's another fun one.

Tass: I'm going to go spontaneous combustion.

Jake: Rev, you've got an opportunity here to make a genuine guess. [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Megan: An opportunity to potentially win 50 bucks.

Rev: Here we go.

Kim: And doom Jake.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: I've been watching The Blacklist. I just started it. And so, like, I'm trying to think about what I know about Jake's life. Hemorrhoid.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I was gonna say something like related to not exercising. [Laughs] We went to IKEA today and we ended up, oh, being like we wanted to go to the wardrobes. And so it was like, oh, well, let's take the shortcuts. Because, you know, you gotta go through the labyrinth that is IKEA. Every now and then they give you a secret sneaky door to slip through to make you feel like you found something — a secret passage — but it's just part of it. And we skipped over exactly the place we needed to go.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: And made it, like, all the way to the other side. And Jake was like, oh, we should have just went through the exit. It's like, right there. And I was like, well, yeah, but it's not taking us long. And, you know, we're getting exercise. And he's like, yeah. And I was like, you're the one always telling me that I need to take better care of my body. And he goes, yeah, but not when I'm around.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: That's on your own time.

Rev: Do this on your own time.

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: Well, I do have the update for our march towards 420. [Chuckles] Is that ...?

Tass: Yeah!

Rev: That sounds ...

Kim: Are we going with that?

Jake: Sounds weirdly militant.

Tass: We're rolling towards it.

Rev: There we go. Thank you. Rolling ...

Megan: That's much better.

Rev: Towards 420. So right now we are at 407.

Tass: Oh!

Rev: That is our February update. So we are dangerously close to Devil, Aim For Me. So if you are interested in joining our Patreon, if you are not yet a member, you can go over to Patreon.com/TheCritshow. And regardless of what tier you join at, you will count towards that patron goal that will lead us to Devil, Aim For Me.

Megan: And we'll release that one, but we haven't actually recorded it yet. So maybe we'll say what new, terrible illness Jake ends up with at that point.

Tass: [Laughs]

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Kim: "Jake, what the fuck?"

Jake: "I don't know!"

Kim: "Oh, good. You can talk. Thank god."

Landara: "Well, it's got his voice. How do we know it's got his brain? His thoughts?"

Jake: "Uh... Uh..."

Megan: "It's him!"

All: [Laugh]

Tass: And as you're all taking each other in, it becomes evident to you all that there is a ship moving towards you on the horizon.

Tass: COTTON: Hello, travelers. Are you them?

Megan: "Are we who?" And I think I'm just holding on to, like, the railing on the ship and trying to, like, steady myself as we're moving.

Tass: COTTON: Those that oppose Nash.

Kim: "Oh. Yeah, we're them."

Tass: COTTON: My world is under attack from an old god, a malevolent force that's sweeping over the world. I've spent countless lives trying to reach across the veils of our worlds for assistance. One such answer came in the form of Grigori Nash. He made a promise of power, if we could swap energies. He came here and asked for assistance in locating beings of great power. Of course, I am well versed in this, for I've been collecting them myself to assist in our battle. Upon completion of the spell that he needed assistance with from me, he promised great power in fighting back this old god that plagues us. But some months ago, I discovered that he'd changed things. He's now strengthening the old god.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Tass: He takes a messenger tube off of his belt and holds it out.

Tass: COTTON: This is a map. I have a few locations marked that would be prudent for you to check. And I've brought a crew for you. They are well-paid and can be trusted.

Tass: And he nods over at the other two. One of them whistles, and a few other sailors start spilling over the plank and onto your ship.

Jake: Do any of the rest of them look familiar?

Tass: They do not.

Jake: Okay.

Megan: I'll take the map.

Kim: Is there like a vibe check that we can get from this guy? Because he just ... He gave us a whole lot of information, including I used to sit on Nash's council. And like, Nash already knew that we were fucking up his plans in one dimension. Like, is this a ruse? Are we about to get stabbed in the back?

Tass: You know, as much as I would love to show off some of the moves already, this guy seems genuine. Like, there's no bad vibes coming off of him. He seems earnest to the point of near panic.

Kim: Okay.

Tass: COTTON: This is Jeffrey. He will be your boatswain. And Edwin, who will act as your first mate.

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: COTTON: These are hardy sailors, and they will be able to get you where you need to go. And even teach you along the way, if you'd like to learn how to operate a ship on this side. Are you familiar with the magic circles that Nash uses for his spells?

Rev: I think it's funny, because I think what happens in the game is exactly what just happened at the table. Everyone looks at the monkey.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: All look at Jake, the mightiest sorcerer we know.

Jake: [Laughs] I look at everybody else, and I sigh. And I go, "Yeah. Yeah, we're familiar."

Tass: COTTON: By your aura, I thought you would have known as well. You're not as tall as I saw in my vision.

Jake: "Yeah, I'm still working out what happened on that one."

Tass: COTTON: Magic between worlds is faulty at best. The closest location that you'll want to explore is called Last Bay. It's on the southern edge of the continent. It'll take at least a week to sail there. The location that I was in charge of is closest next to that. Unfortunately, one of the three locations that encircle a fourth has entirely disappeared. I went to check on it and found it gone. This is when I understood that Nash had made changes. An entire island, simply blighted from existence. I know not what he's done with this third circle. I then went to Last Bay to discover something had changed there as well.

My magic is blocked there. There's something happening that I cannot see through, and my vision bade that you all might be able to do more than I could and discover what was changed and why. The city that I protect, I shall be heading back to it after we part. I hope that it is still intact as it was when I left, but I know not. It has been months since I've been there.

Kim: "What's the name of this city? In case we need to contact you?"

Tass: He smiles again and like rolls his eyes a little bit at just something in his head about this, and sighs.

Tass: COTTON: It's less of a city, really, than a stronghold of like minded folk. It's thousands of ships all planked together. It had no name until some of the denizens simply started calling it Plankton.

Jake: [Snorts]

Megan: "I love it."

Kim: "I now understand the eye roll."

Tass: COTTON: Yes. I left my most trusted lieutenant there, so I hope that it is still safe.

Jake: "And what's going on in Last Bay?"

Tass: He shudders a little.

Tass: COTTON: I know not exactly, except that something is affecting the minds of those there. It is upriver from the sea into the continent. The last stop along the river until you make it to the ocean. It used to be a vast city. Hundreds of thousands of people lived there. Now only a few mere thousand are trying to eke out their lives as the great beasts and horrors from the West spread over the continent. But when I entered, I didn't trust my eyes or my ears. And I barely remember my time there, only that my magic did not work correctly.

Tass: He glances over you all again.

Tass: COTTON: None of you have the same aura as mine, so any magics or abilities I believe will be able to see through whatever's happening. I remember only this very specifically: whatever you do, do not turn down Copeland Road.

Landara: "You mentioned sitting on Nash's counsel."

Tass: COTTON: Yes.

Landara: "Do you know the name Estin?"

Tass: COTTON: Oh, yes. He was the one in charge of Last Bay.

Landara: "Is that the last place he was seen?"

Tass: COTTON: Yes, as far as I know.

Jake: I look at Landara, from her shoulder still. "How did you know about Estin?"

Landara: "I don't know how to describe it. I don't know if it's our dealings with him before, or having recently heard the stories about the things that he did. But I could just sense that he's here."

Megan: I think at the mention of Estin being here again, like I look just a little bit sicker than I already did. "How many people were on this council?"

Tass: COTTON: Including Nash, four. Though I've only met Estin. And Nash, of course. The fourth, I know not who he was, only the location of the island that he protected.

Jake: "Well, I guess we should head that direction, then. If it's the closest, and Estin has a tendency to be the biggest pain in the ass anywhere we go. So it might be nice to get the drop on him and get him out of the way quick."

Tass: COTTON: If he is at the bottom of it, be careful. He is a powerful sorcerer, and maybe has information about what happened to the third location.

Landara: "What's the name of the third place?"

Tass: COTTON: It didn't have a name. It was a tiny island, barely on the map at all, let alone something that would be named an oasis. But it wasn't there. Not even under the ocean. I checked extensively. Whatever happened to the third circle, I cannot explain. This might be a question for Estin.

Megan: "The Estin of this world. Is there anything you're aware of that he is afraid of or dislikes, even?"

Jake: "Does he employ golems?"

Tass: COTTON: I know little about his particular brand of sorcery, only that I believe it's natural. Something that he's always been able to do. He was very much a loner, a hermit. So little is known about him. He certainly likes tricks of the mind. So whatever is happening there, I would certainly bet he's still at the core of it and still in Nash's counsel.

Jake: "Okay. Any broad strokes you think we should know about this world before we head out?"

Tass: COTTON: My vision would lead me to believe that your goal is to destroy these circles of magic and what he's trying to accomplish, yes?

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: COTTON: Again, I'm not entirely sure what all was changed, but one thing is very important. Do not go to the center circle until the other three are destroyed. They are not just siphoning power to them, but also powering the protector there.

Kim: "Oh. Does the name Dorva mean anything to you?"

Tass: COTTON: No. I'm sorry, it doesn't.

Jake: I think I look at Kim confusedly too. Like Landara, and then Kim. Like, what the — where's all this fucking information coming from?

Megan: Yeah. I think I also kind of give her a quizzical look, like I haven't heard this name before, so ...

Kim: "Yeah, when I was coming through here, I had a vision of another me who was already living here."

Jake: "What?"

Kim: "Well, you know how, like, I'm kind of, like, aware of, like, all the other Kims spread out through space and time?"

Jake: "Yeah. I just figured the odds of us actually, like, running into one had to be astronomical."

Kim: "Well, I don't know if we're gonna be able to run into her, because I'm pretty sure I may have just saw her die."

Jake: "Oh, my god."

Kim: "Yeah, she was ... She wasn't like mermaid, but she was like a fish person. She had like scales and stuff. And there was another fish person named Dorva who was like, fucking over Kim and like, a whole bunch of other fish people. Yeah. And that's like, the last thing that I saw. I don't know if that was a vision of the past. I don't know if that was like happening right as we showed up, but ..."

Tass: Cotton brightens up at this and actually gestures for the map.

Megan: I'll hand it back over.

Tass: He unrolls it and you all see this coastline of the bottom half of what seems like a massive continent and all of these islands along the southern coast. He points at a spot.

Tass: COTTON: We are here.

Tass: And he shows you a spot far to the southeast and just kind of circles it with his fingers. A big collection of islands.

Tass: COTTON: This is a vast swath of the ocean, but this is where the Seaborn have their kingdom.

Kim: "Seaborn. Okay, gotcha."

Tass: COTTON: Yes. I wish I could give you more specifics than that, but it could be tied to this third location that has disappeared.

Megan: Add it to the list.

Tass: He nods and hands the map back.

Tass: COTTON: In the case that we do not meet again. The final circle, the one at the center that powers what he's trying to do. If you can find any weapons along your way that can destroy a very large creature, collect everything that you can. The protector is strong. Something no one in this world has ever been able to defeat.

Megan: "What is it?"

Tass: COTTON: A great beast. The father of all evil serpents. The father Goroga.

Jake: "Oh, boy." I look around at everybody. "I feel like there's gonna be a big learning curve on this one."

Kim: "Yeah."

Tass: COTTON: If you've nothing else for me, I've tarried too long away from home. I must return and check on my lieutenant and the peoples there.

Kim: "Wait, what are our auras? You did Jake and Landara's. Sorry, I'm so curious."

Tass: COTTON: Yours is more directly surrounding your eyes — a bright white. And yours, a mist of purple.

Megan: "Purple."

Kim: "Okay, cool. Cool. Sorry. Yeah. Thank you."

Megan: "Well, hopefully everything is okay in your city. And when we have to head to that circle, maybe we'll see you again."

Tass: COTTON: I very much hope so.

Jake: "Thank you so much."

Tass: COTTON: It is quite selfish, these acts that you are thanking me for. Because if you complete what you're doing, it helps my world. Otherwise, I would not be here.

Jake: "Okay. Never mind then, I guess."

Tass: COTTON: I just like to operate in the spirit of honesty.

Tass: And he gives a little bow and crosses the plank back to The Desecration's Smile. And then first mate Eddie starts shouting to the crew.

Tass: EDWIN: All right, let's get out of here. Let's get it up, get it moving. It's a real piece of shit.

Jake: "We didn't ..."

Kim: "It's a company car. Ship."

All: [Laugh]

Tass: EDWIN: Oh. I understand. It's all right. We'll take good care of it.

Tass: And he whistles for the crew to spring into action as they get the IPTCruz moving. They take the map, plot their course, and off you go towards the continent and Last Bay. Over the course of about a week, your new crew is ferrying you all towards Last Bay. Usually over the course of about a week or so, you would have a chance to do some downtime moves, which are some fun things that you have some options to do like a lot

of different stuff, like working on gear and enhancing it or going out to gamble and making friends and things. There's a bunch of cool stuff. But I think this is a pretty critical week of you all coming into this world and literally being taught the ropes. You are learning how to sail a ship, you are learning how to function in this world with this crew. So Jeffrey and Edwin are very good about taking each of you aside and kind of seeing what you might be good at, or like doing on the ship. And, you know, they take this week to show you what's going on there. Like, what do you think you guys would be doing? Like, what do you think is your forte here as you all go?

Jake: I want to do like the ropes and the sails and stuff, but I don't think I weigh enough.

Tass: [Laughs] Oh, yeah. Oops.

Landara: You get that wild monkey strength.

Jake: If I could — yeah, if I can get ... I get a rope and I get my feet on like the outside of the hull and just, like, put all my monkey strength into it. Pull a rope.

Tass: Yeah. There you go.

Megan: We'll make a little harness for you, and attach some cannonballs to it to weigh you down.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Yeah, I'm learning about cannons.

Tass: Oh, nice.

Megan: I'm in the kitchen.

Tass: Nice. Okay.

Megan: I'm using all my sugars and spices and setting up some delicious meals. [Laughs]

Kim: [Laughs]

Tass: Hell, yeah.

Kim: You know, I ... I'm not familiar with, like, the rigging of a ship, but I've done trapeze. I've done various aerial arts. I'll go ahead and swing around on some ropes and hope that it actually is beneficial in some way.

Tass: [Laughs] All right.

Rev: I guess, like, story-wise ... Because mechanically, we'll have to roll for this ship, like when we want to do stuff.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: So I guess I'll have them show me how to steer, even though I'm going to be very bad at it.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: But I feel like someone, one of the four of us, has to be learning how to steer the ship.

Jake: You're the only one big enough to turn the wheel.

Rev: [Laughs] I'm the only one tall enough!

Kim: We could get you like a little booster. We could get you like a little stool.

Jake: I'd have to, like, get on the spokes and be, like, running on it like the outside of a hamster wheel, to get it to turn. I actually am very into that, too. I want to do that also.

Megan: I like how Landara is the only one big enough to turn the wheel, and Jake's the only one that, like, turned into a monkey. Kim and I are just still too small normally.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: If you want to ... If you want us to get you a captain's stool to steer the ship, I will happily learn about cannons.

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: All right. So on this jaunt, I won't make you roll anything. Because as you get up towards the southern edge of this continent, you realize how not very dangerous this area is. How kind of welcoming Last Bay is, as you start to make this approach. You come up to this very wide, slow flowing river that leads north into this massive canyon. I mean, like a Grand Canyon sized canyon. You even pass a couple of ships going out toward sea that look like some sort of merchant ships that give you some friendly waves as they go along. It's less than a day after you've left the ocean and are making your way up this huge river that you start to notice in the walls of the canyons, these small towns are carved. And your crew lets you know that this is, yeah, this is normal up here. That these little tiny towns have been carved out originally for a safe haven for those trying to stay safe from pirates and things like that. But then they just got really popular on the southern edge of the continent, in all of these bluffs that criss cross. And that up ahead, it's gonna be quite a wonder as you guys approach Last Bay. That is a city like this, built into the canyons, made for hundreds of thousands of people. But as you start getting closer, Edwin actually whistles the crew down for everyone to gather.

Tass: EDWIN: Do you all hear that?

Tass: And almost immediately, it's pretty evident that there's some what seems like gunfire echoing through the canyon.

Tass: EDWIN: Up around the bend here's the harbor for Last Bay. Sounds like some sort of action's going on.

Landara: "You have a lot of fighting here?"

Tass: EDWIN: No, not really. This was a fairly tranquil city, at least for one that size. And now there's only a few thousand people left, if that. I can't imagine.

Tass: And the closer you get, you even start to hear some yelling and a few screams echoing through the canyons.

Kim: Oh, shit.

Jake: How high up around us do the walls of this canyon go?

Tass: I mean, huge. I mean, it is — it's like you're at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

Jake: I guess just keep sailing until we can see what's going on, then. It doesn't seem like we have any other choice.

Tass: Okay. As you make your way around the bend, the great scope of Last Bay becomes evident to you. You see this massive harbor carved into the side of the canyon, and the whole city is sectioned out almost like a layered cake. Every 50 feet or so seems to be like the next section of the city that goes in fairly deep and then up again and up again. But the real sight to see: there are a couple of ships docked in the harbor. Not many. But they seem to be under siege by what looks like some sort of spindly giant octopus. The tentacles are much thinner than what you might expect for something of this size. It's roughly the size of your own ship. And it has a weird see-through quality to it, like you might see in fish that live so far below the surface that they just don't need color, right? They're just kind of see-through. You can see the, uh ... Like the veins and the innards and stuff that move around these tentacles that are lashing up towards one of these ships, ripping pieces off of it. You see some sailors running back and forth on the docks with rifles, shooting at it to very little effect.

Jake: "Do you guys know what that is?"

Tass: EDWIN: I've certainly heard of different types of krakens, but I've never seen anything gross like that.

Kim: Does this seem like a wild animal attack, or is there some thought and planning being put into this?

Tass: That is a fantastic question. Let's roll a Size Up.

Kim: Oh, no. I shouldn't have asked this. I have a -2 to this roll. [Laughs]

Tass: Oh, I wouldn't worry about it. So for Size Up. When you size up a suspicious situation, roll +Vinegar. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7 to 9, hold 1. You may hold an additional one if you stick your nose somewhere you shouldn't. While you're in the situation, spend one hold to ask the following questions, and we have a little list.

Kim: Well, it was an eight. And now it's a six.

Tass: Well, the good news is you get to mark experience.

Kim: Yeah ... That's good, I guess.

Tass: But yeah, it's pretty obvious what's going on. Like, it looks like this thing is searching for something to eat. It's pulling pieces down into the water. But if it's like a piece of ship or whatever, it just floats back up after a few seconds. But you see a person or two get tangled up and they do not come back up.

Jake: Do we have an angle that we could hit this thing with a cannon?

Tass: At this moment? Yeah, I think you could probably get in and get a shot off before it realizes that you're there. But I'll give you for free that if you engage it, it's very quickly gonna turn its attention towards you.

Jake: Yeah, but it's killing people.

Tass: Yeah.

Jake: I feel like this is our job.

Rev: You know, we've seen all of these parts of it coming out and it's this weird, translucent thing. I think Landara digs around inside of her pack and pulls out a piece of her kit. I'm gonna take one of the small kegs of gunpowder and try to make a bright flash underwater. Because I do know that things that live that deep can't handle light.

Tass: Okay. Yeah, I definitely think that could work. That could lean into the move Use a Dirty Trick. What exactly are you trying to accomplish with blinding it or distracting it in this way right now?

Rev: I don't know how this crew operates. And there's this like moment of, what do we do? So I'm trying to give us a window to decide what to do, and to stop it from eating people while we decide.

Tass: I love it. Okay, let's roll Use a Dirty Trick.

Rev: Okay.

Tass: So when you use one against the opposition, roll +Vinegar. On a hit, your trick works, but there's a catch. The Fates will tell you what it costs to follow through. On a 10+, do it with no catch, or take the ante — which is a whole other thing we'll talk about.

Rev: Okay. Eight.

Tass: Okay. Yeah. You definitely can do this. I think it's just gonna be a little bit of collateral damage on your ship. Like it's not gonna have its attention on you. It's not gonna be focused on you aggressively. But just the mix of the explosion going off and the thing reacting is gonna do a little damage.

Rev: I mean, that makes sense. You can never tell, going from universe to universe, how pure the gunpowder is.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: This was just a little stronger than I was expecting.

Jake: You gotta taste it.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: All right. So what does this look like? What do you do?

Rev: I think that in this moment of us all seeing this and kind of stopping, and I think we are all, like, looking at the cannons and looking at the people. And there's this moment of, uh, what do we do? It's pulling out, taking the cork out of it, and striking a match on

her boot heel, dropping it inside, and just chucking it as far as she can towards those ships so that it will sink and hopefully go off in its face.

Tass: Okay. So this explosion goes off in the water and, you all hear this beast shriek, and watch the tentacles disappear into the water. But the blast sends your ship tilting to the side and you hear a little crack of wood. This is gonna be 1-wreck for your ship. Or, you know, wreck is what we consider the ship's damage. And I do believe with the kit we have that you have four wreck total before you start to sink.

Kim: That's not very much.

Rev: Oh, no. I just 1/4th sank our ship trying to help us.

Kim: Yeah. [Laughs]

Rev: A stellar start as my part on the team.

Kim: Tass, would you say that we have entered into a fight at this point?

Tass: Yeah.

Kim: Okay. So I have a move that I need to roll.

Tass: Okay. Tell us about it.

Kim: Theatrics! When you enter a fight, roll +Polish. On a hit, take 1 hold. On a 10+, take an additional hold. And then throughout the fight, I can then spend that whole to do cool stuff.

Tass: Okay.

Kim: A ten! So I get 2 hold.

Tass: So as the ship is sort of settling again in the bay, you can all clearly see this beast in the water. The bay is not that particularly deep here. And you can see it kind of writhing in place, seemingly, you know, disoriented, dizzied.

Megan: I think after our ship takes that hit, I go up to the edge with my *A Pinch of Salt and Other Superstitions* book. And I want to try to use the book on it.

Tass: Okay. So what are we doing here? This is all kind of new to all of us, too. This playbook is one that we have hardly touched. So how does this work exactly, when you start reading a book?

Megan: Sure. So to use a book of power, I have to fulfill its conditions. Each book has a different condition you have to use. I read the book aloud and unleash its power. And for this specific book, the condition is that I have to invoke knowledge about the target, and then that can cause mishaps to befall.

Tass: Okay, so then what knowledge are you using here?

Megan: I flip to a page in the book that talks about the superstitions behind removing rocks from the place that they belong, and how that can cause bad luck. And seeing this thing have these long spindly legs and it being translucent, like I know that deep in the ocean, these things kind of stretch out their limbs very far to catch anything that might be passing by since there's no light down there. And so I think as this thing is reaching up into the cliffs and its legs are going in a lot of different places to catch people and destroy parts of this town, some of the rocks from the cliff face fall and pin part of it to a side of the cliff, so it can't like come and attack us.

Tass: So for using a book, I do believe what we have to use here is *Unleash a Mysterious Power*. So you're channeling this power through the book with what the book can do. *Unleash a Mysterious Power* is a fun move in this game, because anybody can do a lot of different things with it, but only if it really makes sense for what the playbook is and what the character's been through. So it might come up a lot on different playbooks that give an excuse to use it. And *The Chronicler* is a great example of that. These books are built for this, and this is kind of the channel with which you activate them. So when you *Unleash a Mysterious Power* you possess, roll +Spitfire. On a hit, it does what you want, but exacts a personal cost or surges out of your control — your choice. On a 7 to 9, both happen. Or on a miss, I tell you what terrible force you've unleashed.

Megan: Eight.

Tass: All right. So it does both. It surges out of control, and exacts a personal cost.

Rev: Oh, the best of both worlds.

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Kim: Yay!

Tass: As far as it's surging out of control, I think there's just a little bit of damage to the town. Luckily, there aren't that many people around, so I don't —

Megan: Luckily, there's not that many people around.

Tass: Yeah.

Megan: Cause they've all been eaten. [Laughs]

Rev: I thought you were going to say to the ship. The ship just slowly sinks in our first episode here.

Kim: We're the worst thing that's ever happened to this world.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: And Nash is here!

All: [Laugh]

Tass: So yeah, some buildings get crushed, but it doesn't look like any people were around that area. I think for the personal cost, it would make sense to just mark your Vice. Book Fever, I believe? And will you read that for us again?

Megan: When in Book Fever, you can be compelled by the Fates to retreat into your books instead of facing your problems. When you willingly abandon a crewmate in doing so, mark one experience and gain one bond with the book you've retreated to. This book

begins to manifest a will of its own, and a powerful genie rises from its pages that cannot stray far from its book. You may spend one bond with this genie to use the book's power freely, without rolling consequences or conditions. If you wish to use the book otherwise, you must Parley with the genie instead of unleashing its power.

Jake: That's so wild.

Kim: I just love the idea of like, we're in a fight and we're like, "Megan, we need your help." She's like, "Hold on. One more chapter. Sorry, this is really — this is getting really good."

Jake: "One more chapter," and there's a genie coming out of the book, also looking over her shoulder and reading the book it's coming out of. It's like, "This is a really good part."

Tass: But otherwise, yes, these boulders crash down from the canyon walls, and you hear another shriek from under the water and see this thing is struggling to get free.

Jake: I look at Landara and I say, "We've gotta evacuate the people off that other ship before it ends up underwater." And I start climbing into a cannon. I say, "Shoot me over there."

Landara: "Yeah, all right."

Megan: Yes!

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: I saw this on Sea of Thieves. It'll be fine.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I don't think I'm gonna make you roll anything for this. The creature that is the danger is both disoriented and pinned. While this is otherwise a dangerous maneuver, it's dope as fuck, and there's nothing really standing in your way. So I think you have the time to do this.

Rev: You know, and I think this is worth mentioning, too. When we talked to the creator of this game ... Years ago, now.

Tass: Eons, yeah.

Rev: Yeah. That was one of the standing things like, oh, you'll notice in this that there's no, like, Act Under Pressure kind of move. Because if you want to do dope pirate shit, you just can do it.

Tass: Yeah, exactly. So yeah, we see Jake climb into this empty cannon, and Landara set up the shot and fire. And Jake, you go flipping end over end into the ...

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: Into the ropes of this ...

Jake: Not like a cool, Evel Knievel, head first ...

Tass: No.

Kim: [Panicked monkey screech]

Rev: There is no spiral.

Tass: Yeah. The screaming monkey toys. You just toss it, and it Frisbees through the air.

Megan: It's like when a squirrel jumps, but they lock their head in position, and then they spiral their tails around like a helicopter to land.

Rev: Yes.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: I look like a star knife that has been thrown.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Yeah. I want to, like, reach out a hand and hook on to some of the rigging of this ship to stop myself, and yell down to the crew that's still on board. "Abandon ship. That thing's gonna come back soon. And if you're on here, it's gonna eat you!"

Tass: One lady looks up and just slow blinks at this monkey screaming down at her, and just gives a slow nod.

Tass: WOMAN: All right.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: And helps up one of her sailors, her crewmates, and starts dragging people off of the ship. They start making tracks.

Jake: Yeah. I'm just like holding on to the ropes and, like, using my monkey strength to, like, take a hand of somebody and just, like, swing them past the gangplank from the ship to the dock,. Just one after another, trying to get people off here.

Tass: Incredible. You're able to make short work of that.

Kim: While this kraken is still pinned, I'm gonna aim our cannon at it and try to shoot it.

Tass: Yeah. I mean, it's a fairly shallow bay. You can see it clearly enough. You could probably get a hit in. So roll Get Into a Scrap. And Get Into a Scrap reads as when you get into a scrap, roll +Blood. On a hit, your strikes land true, trade blows with your opposition. On a 10+, you can take the ante or avoid your enemy's harm — your choice. On a 7 to 9, your enemy presses their advantage or reveals a complication.

Kim: Boxcars.

Tass: Kay. So on a 10+, do you want to take the ante — which is essentially a temporary bond that you can use to either trip up your opponent or to find a weakness or weak spot — or you can avoid harm.

Kim: I want the ante.

Tass: All right. So I think you get a solid hit. You see some blood rising out of the water from where this cannon went through its ... Just, its middle. Like just the main portion of its body. But that has broken up quite a few of the boulders that were holding it, and so it is reaching up and is starting to get a hold of the hull of your ship.

Rev: Yeah, I think I'm going to draw the large gun off my back and start firing at these tentacles, try to get them to let go.

Tass: Absolutely. Let's see Get Into a Scrap.

Rev: Seven.

Tass: And how much damage does your gun do again?

Rev: It is 2-harm, but it is piercing and spray, so it can hit a couple if they're near each other.

Tass: All right. So you're able to spray these bullets. And the tentacles that were closest crawling up the side of the hull, it seemed like they were the ones trying to get a hold on it to maybe pull, maybe start breaking something. Nothing that would come up to engage you all yet, but at least certainly try to do something to the ship. They retreat very quickly. But I think Landara's sharp eyes notice that that bloody spot that was the main portion of its body that Kim hit, it's like it gets a more clearly defined white color. Like you get this sense that it is tensing up and maybe armoring itself, at least at its core.

Landara: "I don't know what it's doing. It's changing color down there."

Kim: I would like to use a hold for my Theatrics. I grab onto one of the ropes from our ship. I turn to Jeffrey and I say, "I really hope that this wasn't tied to anything important." And I cut it. And I'm gonna use a hold for my Theatrics to swing from something and land exactly where you need to be. So I'm going to swing out on this rope and then beautifully dive into the water, to land very close to this kraken. And I'm going to spend my ante to invoke the stun option on my magic rapier, to maybe help counteract this armoring effect that the kraken is trying to do.

Tass: You splash down, your sword drives deep and you feel this whole thing like quiver underneath you. And you see a massive eye seem to form out as it shifts to look at you in some kind of terror as it loses that more opaque quality and stretches out a little more.

Kim: And stun, for the record, I spend bond with the target to give it the stunned tag for a few seconds.

Tass: Outstanding. And that ante counts as that bond.

Jake: As I'm evacuating the people off this other ship, I want to ask them, like, "Where did this thing come from? Why is it attacking you?"

Tass: That sailor lady that had been stunned at you speaking earlier, she just shakes her head again at you in disbelief.

Tass: WOMAN: I won't lie. I don't know anything about things like this. I've never seen anything like this.

Tass: And she, like, coughs a little bit.

Tass: WOMAN: We were just unloading our her ship here, unloading our wares, and it just came up and started attacking people.

Jake: "What are your wares?"

Tass: WOMAN: Pickles.

Jake: "So you didn't, like, take anything that it might want back?"

Tass: WOMAN: Well, it sure hasn't attacked the pickles yet, as far as I know. Unless it's trying to sink the ship to get the pickles.

Kim: [Snorts]

Tass: WOMAN: All of us have been eating pickles. Maybe that's why it took some of the crew.

Jake: You're all so briny.

Kim: Kraken's like, "Mmm. A nice pickle treat."

Rev: We found Tass in this world.

Kim: Yeah.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: He's the pickle treat kraken.

Jake: Does there seem to be any pattern to the damage or anything? Like does it look, from an observer standpoint, like there's any particular part of this that it's targeting? Or any particular area of the ship that it's targeting, or anything?

Tass: Give me a Size Up.

Jake: Okay. Ten.

Tass: All right. You get a hold 2.

Jake: What strange secrets lie just beneath the surface?

Tass: As you're looking the ship over as you're helping everyone get to safety, nothing as far as like what was attacked seems to have any particular pattern. None of that really stands out. But I think just some basic training that you got from Jeffrey and Edwin over the last week suddenly shows you something that strikes you as odd, here. And it's that like the hull and down along the waterline where some of the wood is broken ... Like this ship seems like it's already in pretty bad shape. Like there's a lot of barnacles along this side, the wood's in bad shape. There's some stuff that looks like it was broken already. And it just seems odd that this sailor is telling you that they've just docked, when it just seems like this ship has been sitting here, not quite rotting, but like degrading in a small way over time.

Jake: Where's the true danger lurking?

Tass: It suddenly strikes you that when you had asked her a question, she started to give you an answer and immediately like had a physical reaction to her own answer. Like she coughed a little bit, and seemed uncomfortable. And thinking about that moment, there's this idea of her eyes sort of clearing as she was trying to speak. It seems very much like there is something directly affecting the minds of the people around here. So I think what Cotton had told you crystallizes. That even right down here at the docks, people's minds are being affected in some way.

Jake: Does it seem like what she said isn't true, then? Like she — somewhere in her brain, she knows more than she's able to say, or than she realizes she knows?

Tass: I think without any more hold, it's hard to know for sure. But I'll give you that it seems like when she was speaking to you, she believed what she said. And whether there's anything else around that or not is hard to tell from that quick interaction.

Jake: God. And I have absolutely no idea what could be causing — I don't know if they've inhaled something or if there's a magic spell actively on them, and I wouldn't know what the fuck to do about it. Oh, man ... Okay. I want to start, like, running among the people that are around here and looking for someone with, like, clear eyes. Like somebody who looks like they're not out of it, even if it's for a moment. Like just watching people and trying to find some opening where someone's lucid so I can figure out what's going on.

Tass: All right. So I think we're gonna flash back into the harbor as Jake hops his way off of this ship and starts looking amongst the crowd. Under the water, this great beast is still like trying to get its bearings. It is stunned. Its tentacles are digging into the bottom of the bay, trying to push itself up, but it just can't seem to orient itself correctly.

Megan: Oof. I think I want to use the book again.

Tass: Okay. Excellent. What are you invoking here to try to accomplish something?

Megan: I'm invoking the knowledge that it is trying to push its way up from the bottom. It is actively trying to rise back up to the surface. And I think I want it to succeed unexpectedly, and get hit by some of the debris from the ship that it started destroying.

Tass: Kay. First, though, I think as you get this book open, like there's just a lot of good avenues of things that might really work well in this book. So I think I'm gonna have to compel you to try to retreat into your book. Do you want to stand against that and roll a Stand Your Ground, or do you want to give in?

Megan: I'll try to stand against it.

Tass: Okay. Then we get to hit another one of the core moves, which is Stand Your Ground. When you stand your ground in the face of a compel, spend a bond with someone, explain how they're inspiring you to overcome yourself, and just roll blank. You have no stat on this. And if the person inspiring you is right there, you get a +1. And if you spend an additional bond with them to see it through, you get a +1. If you are facing your Vice, you do unfortunately take a -1. So who do you want to use here? Everyone's technically in view.

Megan: I think it's gotta be Kim. I know she's down kind of engaging with it under the water. So I'm hoping that I can cause some damage to it before it can cause damage to her.

Tass: Okay. Well you do technically even out here, because you are facing your Vice. But she is right here. Do you want to spend an additional bond?

Megan: No. I'll hold on to my other one.

Tass: All right, then. Roll blank.

Megan: Seven.

Kim: Oh, boy.

Tass: On a 7 to 9, you mark a trouble, or just give in to the compel. Your choice.

Megan: I'll take a trouble.

Tass: So troubles in this game are kind of its own health track. You all have four troubles, and if you fill that up and take another, it gets into some rough territory. Many of them can be fixed very easily. Some of them cannot. Really just sort of depends on what we give you that's appropriate for this situation. What's springing to my mind right now is something like Worried. Like this is a very odd situation that you're all trying to figure out what exactly is going on. You've got your friends all split up. Your crew on the ship are still relatively ... They're strangers. So yeah, I'm gonna call this Worried. And you will be able to clear that essentially when the dust settles. So during this time that you're Worried, I think you have a -1 to Blood, if you're gonna try to Get Into a Scrap in any way.

Megan: Fair.

Tass: All right. Now that you've stood against that, let's Unleash a Mysterious Power.

Megan: Seven.

Tass: This exacts a personal cost and surges out of control.

Megan: Oof!

Tass: The good news is, as it rises up from its position, that it does exactly what you hope. It scrapes against the hull of the ship that it was breaking and writhes around again, twisting out towards your ship, and crashes into that hull. It's not trying to do damage. It's trying to get away. And you see more and more blood filling the bay, off of the wounds you've created from this thing. But in its lashing, you hear another solid crack from the hull of your ship, as you take another wreck. And as you look over the side, Megan, to see how much damage was done, one of the tentacles lashes up, grabs you around the ankle, and pulls you into the bay.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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