

Watchers in the Throng (S5, E29)

Tass: 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. Before we get into this episode, I just wanted to let you all know, in case there are any interested parties. Not this Wednesday — not today, the day you might be hearing this — but next week, Wednesday, March 1st, I'm gonna open up a new Founders tier on our Patreon, and I'm going to lead four players through a game of Dungeon World. I have a couple of different ideas for how we're gonna start this game off, but as always, it kind of comes down to what the players want to bring into it. But one of the possibilities is playing a game of For the Queen and using that as our world building. So if you're interested in one of those spots, you can go over to Patreon.com/TheCritshow. And again, that is a slot where once a month we will sit down and play some Dungeon World. With that, it's time to get into the episode.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Tass: There are a couple of ships docked in the harbor, 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.

Megan: I want it to succeed unexpectedly and get hit by some of the debris from the ship that it started destroying.

Tass: It scrapes against the hull of the ship that it was breaking 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. 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: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Tass: Megan, you've been pulled into the bay by one of the tentacles of this weird, translucent kraken. You're in the water with this debris, the splinters of the ships, this inky redness of the blood from the kraken spilling up around you. Kim, you're not too far off underwater, and you're able to see Megan splash down into the water. Landara, I have to assume you have a real good view of this as well.

Kim: Seeing this, I would like to use another hold for my Theatrics. I would like to disarm a mook with a single flick of the hand. I assume a mook for a giant squid would be a tentacle, and disarming it would make it release Megan.

Tass: Yes, that absolutely works in this situation. And you see this weird, spindly tentacle release Megan's form in this cloudy, bloody water. Megan, remind us what we see now that you're in the water.

Megan: Yeah. As this thing pulls me down under the water, as soon as I hit it, I'm still wearing the Triton ring that I have.

Kim: [Laughs]

Megan: So immediately I just have a long, silvery mermaid tail.

Tass: Silvery. I hadn't — I didn't remember that for some reason.

Megan: Yeah, it was kind of like a, I think like blue-green. But I think here it's like silvery, to match the skirt that I was wearing.

Tass: So you've been dragged in, you hit the water, you take this form, but then suddenly you're released. And you're realizing like how quick that was, that these suckers of that tentacle had been wrapped around your mermaid fin, and it started to hurt. Like this had

the potential — those suckers on this tentacle had the potential — to really start ripping into you. But Kim was too quick, and it has released you.

Megan: I don't have any weapons or anything to like try and attack it right now. So I think I'm trying to get back to the ship. Get out of the water.

Tass: Oh, excellent. We get to highlight another move. I think since you're just in the midst of all of this, this is a great opportunity for a Break In or Out. So when you break in or out, state what you're opening is and roll +Blood. On a hit, you've gotten in or out and you choose one. On a 7 to 9, I will also choose one from this list. The list is you suffer harm or mark a trouble, you run into an obstacle you didn't expect, you lose track of something important, or you bring something nasty with you.

Megan: Six.

Kim: Can I spend a bond with Megan to push her up to a mixed success?

Tass: Of course, you absolutely can. So that will bump you up to a seven. So you get to choose one from the list, and so do I.

Megan: You run into an obstacle you didn't expect.

Tass: Okay. So as you make a break for it in between all of these tentacles that are lashing and reaching for you, one of them does get a hold of you for just a second, and it hurts. You're gonna take one point of harm. There's this feeling to it. It gets around, again, like your scaly bottom half, and you realize like how these suckers on the tentacles are built to rend scales. Like this is made to take out things that are natural to the water. But you're able to slide out of its grasp again and make your way towards the surface. But suddenly a form is in the way. Clearly, whatever had been jostled in one of these nearby ships had knocked a few sailors into the water as well. And there is this sailor like floundering in the water, in panic, reaching for you.

Megan: Oh, boy. I think I'm reaching out for them and trying to use my mermaid tail to have enough strength to pull back to the ship.

Tass: So I think this does just slow you down a little bit. You are out of danger. You've been able to get away from the initial attacks of the tentacles. But you're still in close proximity, helping this person along. Jake, over at the docks as you're like scanning for people, as you're trying to watch for those that might have a little more lucidity than others. You're noticing that many of them are running towards the buildings and some of them are coming out again with these rusty rifles and pistols. They're looking around. It's clear they're trying to figure out how to help. But if you're really narrowing in, trying to pick people out, let's see a Size Up.

Jake: Okay. Eleven.

Tass: You get a hold 2.

Jake: What strange secrets lie just beneath the surface?

Tass: After taking a moment, it is very clear that most people here seem to be going through the motions. They have this little bit of a glaze in their eyes as they're doing anything that they're doing. But you do spot a few people that seem to be watching with more interest, with clarity. They seem to be calm and very quick about their checking in with the situation. You see maybe three or four of them. They are all children, and they are the only children that you see.

Jake: Where's the true danger lurking?

Rev: One of them in particular, he seems to be around eight years old. He has dark brown hair, kind of long, down to his shoulders. It seems to you that the rest of them are taking their cues from him. He'll pop out first, and then the others will. He'll give them little nods and duck away. He'll reappear a little further down the block, closer to the action, and then the others will appear as well, and then they disappear again. So this particular kid seems to be directing the flow of action.

Jake: Okay. I want to try to question that kid, the one that seems like the leader. So I want to try and get the drop on him, but not like I'm physically attacking him, but like catch him out on his own and in a way that like running away isn't an option. So that I can, like, corner him and try to ask him what the fuck is going on.

Tass: Let's do ... I think this is gonna be a Use a Dirty Trick. You're kind of flanking him, here.

Jake: Okay. Eight.

Tass: Okay. I think you can do this where you have this kid cornered, but you'll know that to do it, a couple of the others might be flanking you as well.

Jake: Okay. I'm gonna put on my spooky little boy opera mask as I go, before I get to this kid.

Tass: All right. So I imagine you ducking into one of these dirty alleys between some of these buildings right there on the docks. And you see this kid running down from the entryway towards one of the doors, but you're able to beat him to it, with you between his escape back down that way or through the door.

Tass: KID: Oh, hello. Aren't you one of those heroes on the ship?

Jake: "No, I'm just a kid like you. What are we doing?"

Megan: [Laughs]

Kim: Cop! Cop! Cop!

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: KID: You legally have to tell me if you're a cop.

Jake: "I'm not a cop. I'm mischievous! What's ... What ..."

Megan: [Laughs]

Kim: How do you do, fellow kids?

Megan: Yeah!

Jake: "Tell me about the mischief we're causing."

Tass: KID: We're not causing anything. We're just watching the fight. There's a monster.

Jake: "What ..." [Chuckles]

All: [Laugh]

Jake: "What started all this?"

Tass: KID: I'm pretty sure when the monster came up out of the water.

Jake: "I think we both know that you know more than you're telling me. So why don't you explain to me what's going on and what your role is in it, or else I'm gonna grab you and I'm going to throw you in the water with the kraken." And I just, like, wiggle my fingers and my prehensile tail also, like, flits about. I'm like, "I'm very grabby."

Tass: When you just drop the act, he smiles. And his mouth widens far too wide.

Megan: Oh, no!

Kim: What? No, no, no!

Tass: And his mouth starts to open, and you watch his bottom jaw seem to rot to a skeletal jaw and drop away.

Kim: [Gasps]

Tass: Leaving his mouth open and his tongue lolling from the top of his mouth. His body starts to stretch, he gets taller, his skin starts to wrinkle, and his long brown hair turns ragged and gray. Besides the missing jaw, Estin is unmistakable.

Megan: Oh no!

Tass: And he starts to laugh this sickening ...

Tass: ESTIN: [Laughs raggedly]

Tass: And he steps back towards the wall, putting his hands on it, still facing you. And starts to crawl up the wall.

Megan: Oh, no!

Jake: Does he seem like he's coming at me, or trying to get away from me?

Tass: Looks like he's trying to get away.

Jake: I am going to start shrieking in a howler monkey way to try and get the attention of somebody on the team. I'm gonna start climbing up. I'm going to try and get high up, where I can get line of sight back to all of the shit that's going on in the bay. And I don't want to lose Estin, but I need ... I need somebody else here.

Tass: All right. Then I think as you start to move here, from the building surrounding you, from some of the broken windows, translucent tentacles start to lash out to grab you. Roll a Break Out.

Jake: Oh, man ... Ooh! Eleven!

Tass: Then you only have to pick one from the list.

Kim: [Laughs]

Jake: Okay. You run into an obstacle you didn't expect.

Tass: Okay. So as you're dodging these tentacles that are reaching for you and making your way up the buildings to try to keep track of Estin, you're realizing that despite these buildings looking like they're in fairly good shape, like as you're touching them and climbing, you realize that they are very rickety. They are falling apart. So sections of the wall that you're clinging to, windowsills and so on, are just snapping like they're dried and decayed and mostly sawdust at this point. So it's just taking you a little longer. But you're watching as he makes progress up this back wall and up to the next level. Landara, you

see Megan with a sailor in her arms break the surface. Kim is still underwater as this kraken seems to be bleeding and thrashing.

Rev: Do we hear Jake's howl?

Tass: Yeah, it's not far away. I think you absolutely do.

Kim: I'm just looking up. Red howler monkeys? Their vocalizations can be heard clearly for three miles.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: I'm gonna try to reach down and pull that sailor up that Megan has brought.

Landara: "You hear that? That's Jake. I think he's in trouble."

Megan: "Yeah, I hear it. Where's it coming from?"

Landara: "I think it's coming from deeper into town, down that alley."

Megan: "Take this guy. I'll swim over that way."

Landara: "Yeah. Can you grab Kim?"

Megan: "Yeah."

Rev: And I want to shoot this kraken again, and try to, like, clear a path for Megan, because I know that Kim is tangled up in there as well.

Tass: Absolutely. I still think this just qualifies as a Get Into a Scrap.

Rev: And I'm going to use one of my moves, The Black Mark. When you use vengeance to fuel your action, choose an effect and roll +Blood. On a hit, it happens. On a 7 to 9, the thing in parentheses happens as well.

Tass: Okay. And real quick, let's talk about black marks, actually. So black marks come into play when you have to roll Last Words. So we'll talk about both, essentially. So Last Words, when your harm tally is full or you mark trouble but you don't have a box left for it, you say your Last Words and you roll blank. So you get no bonuses. And you take a -1 for every black mark that you have. So then on a 10+, you're still kicking and take a black mark. You're done for, but stable. On a 7 to 9, I will offer you a bargain and you can take it or take the miss result. And on a miss you choose your Last Words, which are part of the playbook. So Landara's a badass because you willingly take black marks through battle and through these moves. Meaning that if you happen to be in the middle of a battle and you have to hit Last Words, the more of those you've done, that's gonna maybe be a rough time.

Rev: Yeah. And it's ... I think this playbook is unique in that once my black mark tally fills up, it resets back to zero.

Tass: Yeah. So it's like incentive.

Rev: Yeah. It's kind of like that, uh ... It's like the Jason Statham movie where he has to keep his adrenaline up.

Tass: Oh, god. Yes.

Megan: Crank? Yeah.

Tass: Yeah. God, that's intense. All right, do your thing.

Rev: Okay. So I'm going to pick Shoot to Thrill. Take a black mark to hit your next target dead in the chest for +3 harm, forceful, piercing.

Tass: [Chuckles]

Rev: So I'm gonna try to mess this guy up. Seven. So on a mixed success, the thing in parentheses also happens. The thing that happens is my weapon's curse takes effect.

Tass: Tell us about that.

Rev: So the curse on my gun is that, as I described it before, it's made of bone and brass and the bone has pores in it that seem to have blood in them. And when the curse enacts, the gun is thirsty. And so the bone shifts around my hands and makes me keep firing until the gun is empty.

Kim: [Laughs]

Tass: Oh, that's delightful.

Rev: So hopefully this thing has a little more to take?

Tass: I'll tell ya, it doesn't.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: You shoot, and you watch it sort of bubble up and start floating towards the surface. And this curse takes over. The gun grabs your hand and starts pulling the trigger, shredding every tentacle, every piece of it. It is just chum in the water now. A few bullets probably ping around you, Kim, but you're a little ways off. So Landara is standing there. Finally, the gun is emptied. As just this goo is floating in the surface still.

Megan: And I'm swimming through it, apparently.

Rev: Do you also get gills? Cause that's gonna be unfortunate.

Megan: Did not, I don't think. No, I think just the tail. I don't know. You made the ring.
[Laughs]

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: Yeah. I'm just swimming as fast as I can towards Kim to grab her hand and take her to the dock where Jake is.

Tass: Jake. You have made your way to the top of this building. And at this area, you've seen the wall that Estin was spider climbing up backwards. And this isn't quite up to, like, the whole next level of the city. There's about five of these very large sections. So this is kind of like a subsection into some housing and such on this main bottom dock level. But he's just crouched up at the top of the wall. Even without his bottom jaw, the tops of his lips are curled up in this rictus smile. And his head tilts completely horizontally as he watches you, waiting to see what you're going to do.

Jake: Can I see my teammates? Are they within shouting distance? Of words, not monkey shrieks.

Tass: Not howls? Yeah. You can see Megan dragging Kim through the water right up to the dock, and climbing up. They're just right down at the end of that alley and across the road.

Jake: Then I point and I'm like, "Estin! There's a Estin here!"

Megan: I'm wringing the water out of my skirt as we climb up onto the dock. And as soon as I hear him say that, my head is just snapping up to where he's yelling from.

Kim: Yeah, same.

Tass: Yeah. You can clearly see Jake pointing that direction. And from this distance, you see a humanoid form at the top of this wall stand up and start moving backwards into the city.

Jake: I throw a devil stick at him.

Tass: Roll Get Into a Scrap.

Jake: Seven.

Tass: All right. What's your damage?

Jake: They are considered clubs, so it is 1-harm, close, poor, forceful, commonplace.

Rev: Are they slightly less commonplace because they are devil sticks and not just clubs? Like are they a little fancy at least?

Jake: I mean, they're tasseled.

Rev: Okay. Yeah.

Kim: Oh, cute.

Megan: Ooh.

Tass: Does that add, like, tangling, or anything?

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: No, they just look pretty when you spin them.

Jake: [Laughs]

Megan: They're worth more, if you try to sell them.

Tass: Okay. So you fwip this stick at him, and it hits him in the chest and he lets out this guttural [grunts] and falls onto his back. And the second he makes impact, he bursts into five of his children form that starts scattering into the city.

Jake: "Fuck! Now he's five kids!"

Megan: "What? What did he say?"

Kim: "He said that he's ... That Estin is now five children."

Megan: "What is this world?"

Kim: I've seen this happen in like video games. Where like the enemy turns into like five smaller entities, but only one of them is like the true enemy. Is that a situation like this? Is there a way to discern these five children to determine the true Estin?

Tass: Sure. Give me a size up.

Kim: Oh, no. Why do I roll this? I have a terrible Vinegar.

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: So I rolled a ten, but it's an eight.

Tass: Well, you do get a hold 1. And if you want to stick your nose somewhere you shouldn't, you can get an extra.

Kim: In relation to what I was just talking about, where is the true danger lurking?

Tass: So you're able to watch as these kids scatter. And with your keen eye, you watch as four of them seem to just disappear through walls or like through a gate. Like they just disappear through it as if they are not real. But one of the kids has to open a door and walk into that building.

Kim: Yeah, I am gesticulating with my rapier. "That kid! That kid! The only one that's obeying the laws of physics!" Would you say that we are in another fight?

Tass: Yeah. I mean, Jake sure opened up with an attack, so yeah.

Jake: You're welcome.

Kim: Absolutely. Then for my last thing, I'm just gonna roll Theatrics and see what I get.

Tass: All right.

Kim: That's a ten. So I got another hold 2.

Tass: Outstanding.

Megan: Does this count as a new land, creature, or phenomenon?

Tass: Yeah, I'd say so.

Megan: Okay. So with my move Lorekeeper, when I encounter a new land, creature, or phenomenon, I roll +Vinegar. On a hit, the Fates will tell you a story about it. On a 10+, choose whether the story reveals something you can spin to your advantage, its hidden weakness, or the thing controlling or driving. It on a miss, the Fates tell you a fanciful tale. The tale has a grain of truth to it. Take Book Fever to know what it is.

Tass: Okay.

Megan: Ten.

Tass: What's your pick?

Megan: I'm gonna go with its hidden weakness.

Tass: So as you put these pieces together with what Jake has told you, shouted out, and you have seen for yourself. This brings up the knowledge of what is called in this world a mentalist. And what a mentalist will do is essentially make illusions to scatter people, to deflect from the truest dangers. So these mystical beings will travel around with some sort of trick up their sleeve. It could be anything from trying to rob people, to do a heckin' murder, maybe even be helpful to the lands it's traveling to, and imbue its magic to draw attention. But to use this intense magic, they actually have to essentially meditate. They have to hole up somewhere, be still, be aware of their surroundings, tap into those, and then imbue their magic. So what you're seeing here is a construct that can be manipulated, can be hurt, can be destroyed, but it's not him. The weakness that you need to exploit here is finding his true body while he can't defend himself.

Megan: Oof. Okay. I think as Kim is pointing her rapier at the kid that went through the door, I run up and I grab her arm. "Wait, stop. That's not him."

Kim: "What do you mean?"

Megan: "In this world, he's like, uh ... Like an illusionist, almost. And he's putting these visions, I guess, out to distract us from what's really going on. But he has to be somewhere and, like, focus down and meditate. And he's vulnerable in that state, so he's

hidden somewhere. But all of these things, like we can hurt them, we can fight them, but it's not really him."

Kim: "Do you know how we might be able to find the true Estin?"

Megan: "I don't really have that ability here, but I know that he is not running around."

Kim: "Okay, well, there's still only one of these kid Estins that is actually corporeal. So I'd say we just follow that one. Maybe he's going back to the real guy."

Megan: "Yeah, that's a good point. The rest of them aren't really acting the same way, but just be aware that that's not really him."

Kim: "Okay. Gotcha."

Megan: Where's Jake, in this moment?

Jake: I'm still at the highest point of this building scoping out these children, with the last two devil sticks ready to hurl.

Megan: "Get over here."

Jake: I scowl at the children, but I climb down. "What?"

Megan: And yeah, I just fill him in on everything we just learned, and let him know that we're looking for Estin hiding away somewhere.

Tass: Okay. Landara. The bay is calm now. What have you been doing while they were gathering?

Rev: I think the first thing is kind of recoiling at the gun having grabbed on to me. And like, once it ... Once this curse lets go, the instinct is to drop the gun onto the deck, but I don't think Landara drops weapons. And so she resists that impulse and puts it back into the holster on her back. But I think that in this kind of surprise, she does not think to reload it in the moment.

Tass: Okay.

Rev: And then I will try to pull the ship into the dock.

Tass: No problem. As you're putting the gun away, I think you almost feel a satisfied sigh. But the crew hops to it and gets the ship docked. I think you're kind of pulling in and can easily jump off onto the dock right as Jake is rejoining Kim and Megan.

Landara: "I heard you howling. What's going on?"

Jake: "Estin is here, and he orchestrated whatever this was. And I guess a lot of this isn't real, even though we can fight it. And now he turned into some children. But I guess that he's not technically the children, but one of the children is, like, corporeal and might be running back to him."

Landara: "The fuck you just say to me?"

Jake: "I know. It's a — this is a weird place. Like, this is an all-time weird place."

Tass: Speaking of, as you're saying that. You know, you had come down off the front of the building where you had gone up in the alley before, and you do notice that those tentacles that had tried to lash at you while you were in the alley have retreated into the building.

Rev: I'm gonna look up. Are there any street signs?

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: What street are we on?

Tass: The main street here along the dock is Dockside Road, and the alleys do not have any signs. They are just like in between buildings, you know, for trash and stuff.

Landara: "Remember he said, don't go down a certain road while we're here? Like, think how messed up this is right now. Like, what's going on on that street? I'm just saying, next time you run down a road, look for a second."

Jake: "Oh, yes. That's ... Your wisdom is appreciated. I didn't think about that. But we gotta follow this kid, right? Where did he go?"

Kim: "He went this way," and I'll just head in that direction.

Jake: I'll keep a weathered eye for street signs as we go, so we don't accidentally go down Copeland Road.

Rev: Yeah, and I'm gonna draw my two pistols.

Tass: No problem. You're able to safely make your way kind of up and around. There are some switchback wooden stairs in these smaller sections to get you up to that building. And once you get up there, the building that he had gone into is just like a small pub.

Kim: Yeah. Follow the boy.

Tass: All right. You go in the front doors, there. It is kind of dingy, not very well lit, but there are maybe half a dozen people total just sitting around in little booths. There's this big burly guy at the bar with, like, an admiral mustache, just dirty apron, and he's cleaning some mugs with a dirty rag, and just gives a small nod towards the door as you all come in.

Kim: "Hey, guy, did you see a kid just run in here?"

Tass: ADMIRAL MUSTACHE: I don't allow kids in here.

Jake: "I don't know that they're gonna have any answers for us. The kids seem to be the only people with clear minds in this whole zone, so they might all be under his thrall."

Kim: "Cool. Yeah. Cool, cool. Forgot about that. Cool."

Tass: The bartender coughs a little bit and just gives you all a big smile.

Jake: Is there anywhere ... I don't know how to ask this, other than to ask this. Is there any kid-sized openings around here? Is there like a hole in a wall or like a couple of barrels that are fairly close together that an adult couldn't get through but a child could?

Tass: Yeah, there is what seems like some sort of chute at the back.

Jake: I will point that out to the rest of them. "Maybe he went through there. Maybe that's why he's got to be kid sized, so that he can sneak through openings at the rest of you can't."

Megan: "It would keep a lot of adults from reaching wherever he is."

Jake: "I can try and go scout ahead, and if I figure out where he is, I can either come back and report or at least start screaming so you know where in the building he's holed up."

Landara: "Oh god, you're gonna try to go down there by yourself?"

Jake: "If you could follow me, I'd love it. But I don't think you can get through that. Definitely not you. Look at how tall you are. Towering."

Landara: "Yeah. But I mean, you going in there by yourself with just sticks ... Like I could give you a gun. Or we could go see if there's a downstairs."

Jake: "How about this? Two pronged attack. I'll go through the chute. You get up on the roof. These two can stay in here. So whenever you hear me screaming, you can come in, death from above. These two can bust in from whatever the main level is. I can come in from the chute. We get 'em from all sides."

Rev: "Death from above? How am I supposed to get through the ceiling to the basement?"

Jake: "I don't know. We don't know where this goes. It doesn't necessarily go to the basement. You could blast a hole in the roof. You got a big gun." I would like ... I would like to spend a bond to compel Landara to do something dumb.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: You spend the bond. Landara, do you want to go with it or try to stand against this compulsion?

Rev: Uh, I ... [Sighs]

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Um ...

Megan: Death from above, death from above!

Rev: Yeah, I ... Well, how ... What exactly ... Standing against compulsion, how does that work again?

Tass: You will roll the move Stand Your Ground. And if you do so, then you don't have to do what you're being compelled. If you fail it, you do have to do what you're being compelled to do.

Rev: I know that in at least Dungeon World, like where I met them, it seemed like Jake kind of ran the show.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: So I don't know that that's how it works here, that he's like the leader of the team. But I'm ... This time I will go along with it, assuming that he knows the group's tactics best. So yeah, I will go along with it this time. I'm gonna ...

Landara: "All right."

Rev: And I'm gonna go outside and reload my big gun and climb up onto the roof.

Tass: Amazing.

Kim: I know very little of Jake and Landara's activities in Fanarin. I barely know Landara. But just like this small instance that I've seen of the two of them kind of bickering reminds

me of when you go on a vacation with your family and then your parents start arguing in front of you.

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: Except in this time it's like Landara and a monkey that are doing it.

All: [Chuckle]

Kim: I'm just sort of like awkwardly also in the room.

Megan: I also love how, like, Jake might legitimately have a good plan, but the fact that it's coming from a monkey just makes it seem comical.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Yeah!

Jake: Okay. I want to go squeeze into that hatch. So I would like to use my move Good for Thievin'. When you squeeze into somewhere others can't, roll +Blood. On a hit, tell the Fates where you get to. On a 10+, tell the Fates if you want to find a secret that you didn't expect. On a miss, someone or something else is in there with you.

Tass: Okay, let's see that roll +Blood.

Jake: Ten.

Tass: Oh, my god.

Jake: [Sighs in relief] So I get to tell you if I want to find a secret that I didn't expect.

Tass: Okay.

Jake: And the answer is of course I do.

Tass: Yeah, I assume.

Jake: I also get to tell you where I get to.

Tass: Yeah, where's that?

Jake: The room where Real Estin is meditating. I don't necessarily want to get in the room, but I want to get to the room.

Tass: So you open this little hinge in the wall, and I think you hear the bartender start to be like ...

Tass: ADMIRAL MUSTACHE: Well, what in the world is going on?

Tass: And then you just —you're gone. And you realize what this is, is like an old broken down ... Like a water duct. Because it's all stone work in here, but it's dried out, dusty. It's like a ramp that is going up towards the middle of the city. And it's tight in here, even for you. And you're able to make your way up and up. It, you know, flattens out for a little while. You start to see a couple of other exits, little vent doors and things that you can see are like these same little systems to other buildings that are built along the stonework that has been cut out to make the sections of this city. And I think you know enough — like you saw the scale of this city. You judge that you're probably at the third of the five tiers of the city. And you come across this large metal grate that's mostly rusted, except for the hinge on the right side that seems like it has been used recently. The rust has kind of been brushed away there from how this grate has opened. And you're looking down into a watery pit. There's sunlight spilling into this pit from above. There's deep, dark water below in this pit. But the sunlight is highlighting another kraken — one triple the size easily of the thing that was in the bay. It's bulging up from what — from the bottom of what you now realize is this huge well. There are tentacles reaching up into dozens of other holes in this well that lead through the stonework of this city. It has way too many tentacles, dozens and dozens of these spindly things reaching out. And across from you, in another little divot in the stonework of this well, you see Estin sitting with his legs crossed, his eyes closed, his hands on his knees, and with his missing jaw, that same brutal, rictus smile.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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