

Empty Kegs (S5, E31)

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

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So I feel like I should mention this now, because we have had a couple of people ask about it already and it made me realize it's March already. And March? Well, that's just two months away from our five year anniversary.

Tass: What?

Kim: Wow.

Jake: Well that's just two months from May?

Rev: I know.

Jake: And May, why that's only a month away from June. And June —

Rev: You've gone too far.

Jake: Oh.

Rev: Just May. That's where we want to stop.

Megan: Get back here.

Rev: Yeah, get back here. So I was like, oh, you know, what do we do for our five year anniversary? Well, people have told us what they want to do already, because I've had folks asking if we're going to do the CritCrew Creations contest again. So, yes. Again, just like last year, this is ... What's your thing? Do you like to bake? Do you like to sew? Do you like to art?

Jake: What's your deal?

Kim: What's your deal?

Rev: Yeah, what's your deal?

Megan: What are you about?

Rev: Do you want to paint minis? Anything it is that you want to do, you can send us pictures of it at thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com. Or if you want us to physically have it, you can send it to us at Critshow Studios — 1111 East 54th Street Suite 162 Indianapolis, Indiana 46220.

Kim: Or you can take a picture of it and post it on Twitter and tag us @TheCritshow. You know, if Twitter is still around in two months.

Rev: Yes. Absolutely.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: Last year we had paintings, we had baked goods, we had paper mâché craft projects, we had some knitted things, some crocheted things, whatever it is that you're into.

Megan: I love this, because it covers all crafting mediums. [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah. And I guess in accordance to what we did last year, since this is our fifth anniversary, we'll pick five winners again. Not again, but ...

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: Because it went up. Like last year.

Tass: Like last year, but with a different —

Rev: But with a different number, based off the number of the anniversary.

Megan: So not the same as last year, but ...

Rev: Yeah.

Kim: One more.

Rev: The same concept as last year, plus one.

Megan: You heard it here. Ten winners.

Rev: Just like our age.

Jake: Where's the line? When does this become unsustainable?

Rev: Probably at five.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Next year? Still five.

Rev: Next year? Back to one.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: Oh, yeah. That's good.

Megan: The year after, it's all the previous winners. [Laughs]

Rev: To the death.

Kim: That will compete in a Hunger Games-esque craft off.

Tass: The Critshow Quarter Quell.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: When do we want these by?

Rev: The deadline for those submissions will be Friday, May 26th, and then we will announce the winners on Wednesday, May 31st. Which is technically the day after our anniversary — it's the 30th — but it's kind of by the Wednesdays.

Kim: The last Wednesday of May.

Jake: By the Wednesdays is a great name for something.

Megan: We only exist on Wednesdays.

Rev: It's true.

Megan: The show is only an entity on a Wednesday.

Rev: It's like a ... It's like a leap year baby.

Megan: Oh we're so tiny, then.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: We're a little ... Little five days old. Not five days old. Five years old.

Jake: We are a five years old.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: Wait. How does that work, then?

Rev: Um ...

Megan: No, we're not five years old. It's less than that, because it's ...

Jake: I can't do this with you guys. Why don't we get into the episode?

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: No, no!

Kim: No, we have more we have to announce! God.

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: We can't drink for 16 more years.

Rev: [Laughs] Now I'm stuck in this math.

Megan: Yeah, because —

Rev: Like, one Wednesday ... What you're saying is, like, 52 ...

Megan: Times five.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: I can't math. [Laughs]

Rev: So not — yeah, so not yet a year old.

Megan: Jake, what is it? [Laughs]

Rev: So one winner, because we're not a year old yet.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Uh, we'll talk about this again in the future in a more coherent way. But just, you know, start making stuff. Um, the other thing I want to announce is our roll towards 420. We are at 409.

Megan: Ooh.

Rev: We are super close.

Kim: Woo!

Rev: We actually have a handful of people who are patrons. But um, Patreon sometimes is like, I don't want to accept your payment. Then you have to go in and like, fix it by hand. So we might be slightly higher than that, because there are a few folks floating in limbo. But right now the number is 409. So we are very close to Devil, Aim For Me. And then once we hit that, we will announce what our next number is and what the next game is gonna be. So if you are interested in joining our Patreon, you can head over to Patreon.com/TheCritshow and join the most aggressively welcoming Discord on the Internet. And with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Tass: Each page that you see, this information shows the map going from west to east, like pieces of the map darkening. And then finally that dark aura settles over the map over Last Bay. And the next page shows this being at the bottom of the well darkening as well, having this like ink run through its body. And the pages show people seeming confused as they drink, people hallucinating, just this absolute madness setting in. And I think this is more of a flurry of images. The thought that, again, this thing can do what it can do because the water is kept pure.

Megan: "What's something that we can use to make the water not be clear, but also isn't gonna kill this thing?"

Landara: "Alcohol."

Megan: Oh, that's good.

Tass: You notice the kids moving around. Like the first vibe you get is that since there are more people here, it seems like a steadier eye needs to be on things. But what really sticks out to you that while absolutely yes, you've seen a form of Estin using his illusions, what's actually happening here is when you can really focus, you realize that they aren't kids, and they aren't Estin's illusions at all. They are the tentacles.

SFX:

RECAP MUSIC FADES

Tass: Megan, you have seen through these illusions to realize that these children that are filtering through the town, keeping an eye on everything, are in fact the tentacles of the beast in the well, stretching out from windows or cracks in buildings or pipes. And wherever the tip of that tentacle goes, the illusion of a child is what is keeping tabs on everything going on.

Megan: "Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man. Those kids aren't kids."

Landara: "What do you mean?"

Megan: "It's ... It's more illusions. They're like the tips of the tentacles of that creature. They're winding all through these doorways and window ways and stuff and just making it look like they're kids. But they're — they're watching. Somehow, they're watching what's going on."

Jake: "Okay, so the tentacles that came at me out of a building weren't just, like, illusory. It was the actual tentacles?"

Megan: "Yeah, They're just using illusory magics to make it look like they're kids."

Jake: "Damn, that thing's got some reach."

Landara: "I mean, it makes sense. Like if something's tentacles are X times its body. Its body in that well is enormous."

Jake: "Yeah."

Megan: "And they're much, like, skinnier than I would normally think for something that size. But I guess it makes sense if it's filtering through all the like pipe ways and stuff."

Jake: "So is this like every kid? Is this a town without kids and every kid is a tentacle?"

Kim: "I think we need to operate under that assumption. Just assume every kid you see is probably a tentacle."

Megan: "I mean, I've been studying all these kids that have come out here, and none of them seem to be actual children. So maybe if there are kids here, they're just being hidden away? Or ... I don't know. But they're not out and about. They're not mingling in with the rest of these pretend kids."

Jake: "Maybe they're all underground planning a revolution."

Megan: "You could lead them."

Jake: [Laughs] I put on my mask.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: It seems wild to me that a whole place could have literally no children. Uh ...

Rev: It does seem like they're stuck in some kind of weird magic loop too, though. Because didn't we see that, like, the boat was really old and decrepit, but they were like, "Oh, no, we just docked and we're unloading stuff today."

Jake: And I mean, like the building I climbed up was also like weirdly old and falling apart, despite not looking like it.

Rev: Yeah. I wonder if, like, this whole place is just populated with adults because the kids grew up into adults and then any other adults it gets are just people like our characters who come in to visit and drink the water.

Kim: Did Cotton say anything about for how long this place has been, like, under Eastin's control? Or that weird stuff has been going on here? Has it been, like, years?

Tass: Uh, no. I don't think he really did talk timelines, aside from that he's been gone from his own place that he protects for a couple of months or thereabouts. And that they've been doing this for a while, whatever that means.

Kim: Okay.

Rev: Yeah. I mean, if you like, track it back to when this all started and connect it to like, oh, Nash came here and did a thing, then there's simply no way to answer it because time is weird over there.

Kim: It's true. Yeah. We have no idea of how long.

Megan: "I mean, we pollute the water supply, and maybe that gets rid of the effect on everyone's minds. And then we can get some real answers."

Landara: "I don't want to rush things, but is this it? Is this the plan? Should we, like, rest and then move? Because the longer we're here, the more likely we are to get found out."

Jake: "Yeah. And it doesn't seem like we're going to get anything new until we do this."

Kim: "Doing this in the morning seems like a good idea."

Tass: So I think you all get back down to the ship, kind of set a rotating watch, and get some rest.

Jake: Warn our crewmen to not drink the water here.

Tass: That is a great call. Very good call. And you get back and they're just ...

Jake: They're so hydrated.

Tass: Yeah, they were in the pub. They're ... It's bad. No, no, no, no. Yeah. They're duly warned. And you are all able to get some rest.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Tass: Now we're going to talk about something that we haven't been doing, because I have such a hard time with remembering it. We're gonna talk about giving out Luck for cool moments.

Rev: Mmm.

Tass: So this is something that we can absolutely be doing in the moment when we notice something kind of amazing, when one of you guys pulls off something cool, is that pretty much any of us can nominate that person for a point of luck for doing a cool thing or a good job. So I want to give out a few of these. Some of these we just talked about off-mic and some of you making sure to nominate and you know, the rest of us just agreeing.

Rev: It's hard, because we don't want to interrupt the flow of like what's going on and be like, I want to nominate you for luck!

Tass: Yeah. Yeah. Like it absolutely is one of those things that it's just hard to break out of what's going on there.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: So definitely want to give one to Kim for just diving at the underwater creature in its element and stabbing it in the face. [Chuckles]

Kim: [Laughs] Thank you.

Tass: Like, yeah, that was a critical moment of it, you know, getting armored up and about to unleash more of its powers, and you essentially snapping it out of being able to do that. Definitely for Megan, for ... I think any GM can say this that when it's just something you could not have fathomed as being an option happening is the coolest shit. And so like using the literal terrain to like avalanche this creature and pin it down and do it damage is so fucking cool. God, the option to get this kraken drunk. Like you guys haven't done it yet, necessarily. But even just that suggestion and that path of like setting this up as the plan is so good. So Landara, please mark one. And Jake, you did the Sea of Thieves move.

Jake: I did.

Rev: [Chuckles]

Tass: I mean, my god. You shot out of a cannon to save people into the rigging of a ship. That's so good. And they nailed the shot. Like it's all great.

Jake: I have a question.

Tass: Sure.

Jake: Because I'm still ... I'm not sure that I'm understanding correctly, and I'm not sure if I'm supposed to.

Tass: Okay.

Jake: So the children are the physical tentacles?

Tass: Yep.

Jake: But they're just, like — they're like walking up and down the docks and stuff.

Tass: Right.

Jake: So, like, is there a stretch of tentacle from wherever they're originating that's illusory? Invisible?

Tass: Yes, pretty much that. Like ...

Jake: So you could trip over — you could be walking down the dock and cross paths with a child and trip on nothing.

Tass: Possibly. That, I don't think you've all tested out exactly what the lengths of that magic is or how it works. But like, that is a thought. Yeah.

Jake: Okay.

Rev: What am I thinking of where there is like an invisibility spell that also just has the effect of it makes people want to step around you.

Tass: Right. Like just that avoidance in general.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: I'm not saying this is how it works too, but if you're spitballing, there's also the thought that obviously these things are very long. They could possibly even just stretch up and get out of your way if they want. Like there's a lot of different ways that this could be happening.

Rev: Oof.

Megan: It's like they're playing with dolls in a dollhouse.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: Or like if they all suddenly became visible, we would just see a net of tentacles. Like in the air.

Jake: Yeah. Like they could be coming down from above marionette-style, rather than up from below finger puppet style.

Rev: Yeah.

Kim: Oh ...

Tass: I will say though, what you've focused on and taken the time that Megan was able to see through, it did very much look like they were coming out of the woodwork on that very busy street. Because there's a lot of people walking up and down.

Jake: Okay.

Tass: Another one I think that was brought up. Like this ... It's so hard to gauge, when we're recording these episodes, like what is a session? Because every episode isn't necessarily where we're like right in the middle of things. Um ... But this feels kind of like we're at the end of a session, right?

Rev: Yeah. Like we've accomplished some stuff, we're gonna go to sleep now. This would be the time we'd be like, all right, let's go get dinner, or ...

Tass: Yeah. Let's meet again in six months ...

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: And finish this out. So I think this is a spot where you can refresh luck, for those that will get it with your Spitfire scores. Kim, you have a little something special on that, right?

Kim: Yes, because I have the Startouched oddity, at the beginning of every session, I can mark an additional luck, so I get to mark two luck every session.

Tass: Wow. Smell you, Nancy Drew. All right. Um, Jake recoiled at that.

Megan: [Laughs]

Jake: I've never heard it. And it doesn't make sense to me.

Rev: Oh, yeah.

Tass: You never heard that?

Rev: My mom used to say it all the time.

Tass: Yeah.

Kim: I've never heard it either. But I will never turn up my nose at a Nancy Drew reference.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: It's often when you've done some, like, actual, genuine discovery. But in my growing up, it was always like, "Yeah, you found it, idiot. Great job." So I try to not use it for that, because it makes me feel bad. So I try to use the positive side of it.

Rev: Yeah. It's like, look at the big brain on Brad.

Tass: [Laughs] Yeah.

Megan: And I've heard it as, "Look at you, Nancy Drew."

Jake: That makes far more sense.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: It just doesn't have as good of a cadence. I don't like it. I'm gonna smell her.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: Tass, why are you getting closer to my monitor? Why are you getting so close?

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: Just ... Just sit still for a second. It's fine.

SFX: CRITSHOW STINGER

Tass: You go through the evening. And some of you on the watch, I don't think this is like cause for alarm. You don't see any overt movements made, but you certainly notice a few times of these children walking by on the docks and stopping, staring at the ship for a minute or two, and then moving on. It's just like this constant patrol of these tentacles keeping an eye on the city.

Kim: Do any of them try to get onto the ship?

Tass: Nope.

Kim: Okay.

Tass: I would say the vibe you all get is that they're sort of waiting for something? Not necessarily overt action, but I mean, I'll give it to you. I think you've pieced together enough that this water is what's doing it. You know that for a fact. You know that that's part of this sort of control, and this odd way that any of the people you've spoken to are like unable to communicate the truth of what's going on. So it just seems like they're waiting for anybody that might not have done so yet to have a ... Have a little sip. So they're just patrolling that in every capacity. Anyone that might be coming into or out of town, though it seems like there's not very much of that going on. Certainly not much in the way of anyone leaving. But, you know, over the night, even like a small ship comes from up river and they stop to sleep. And just little things like that. Morning comes, what's the plan?

Rev: So we have to, like, know when this takes effect. Can Jake sneak back to his position where he was watching Estin before and wait?

Jake: And wait? I can go, uh ... I can go watch the kraken and wait until it gets sloppy.

Rev: And then some kind of signal and we can all wait where we like snagged those people. Because really, as soon as it gets drunk, we just got to jump in that hole and fucking kill this guy.

Jake: Yeah. And I mean, it's a hole straight up to the sky. So if I can get something akin to a flare, or anything that I can — I can fire a gun.

Kim: I mean, you could also just shout.

Rev: You could do your capuchin shout.

Jake: Oh, yeah, that's right.

Megan: Howl!

Rev: Yeah.

Kim: Yeah. As long as we're within a couple of miles, which I hope we would be.

Jake: I don't know how deep that well is, but I don't think there's a couple miles. I feel like that's some earth's crust level ...

Tass: [Laughs] Yeah, no. Like ...

Jake: I was in the magma.

Tass: You know, from the top, what Megan saw from that angle? Like, it's a survivable drop. You know, you're into water and or onto a big, squishy monster.

Jake: A survivable drop.

Tass: Yeah.

Kim: I don't love the odds of that. I'm just gonna grab a length of rope on the ship while we're here.

Tass: That's fair. Like, think ... You know those videos of the ... Like, the high divers at a theme park kind of thing where it's just like, oh, fuck that. But like, they do it and they're fine.

Kim: That's a matter of like, how you land. Like, I don't want to take that risk.

Tass: It is. You're right.

Kim: Let's rappel.

Megan: I wanna do it. Seems like a bouncy house.

Rev: Landara I think is gonna join Kim and like take a boarding axe from the ship and tie a rope to it, so that we can rappel down instead, of ...

Kim: Yeah, yeah.

Rev: Diving down.

Tass: Okay. So then my important question though, that's sort of step two. Who all is dumping alcohol into these ducts? Like how many people are doing that, from where? Like are you going — taking it down to the ... Like the fourth level to get it so that it's a short, shorter kind of drop down to that third level where the well is? You know, if only one person is doing it in one, that's gonna take a hell of a lot longer. Like you have options, but like one person doing it is gonna draw less attention than three people at several locations moving the alcohol, and so on. So like, what does step one overall look like?

Kim: Putting the alcohol on the lowest level so that it takes effect quicker is a good idea. But also I don't want to do it on a level where there's a bunch of people, and thus probably a lot of tentacles watching.

Tass: Sure. So you want to rule out the third level, which would be the shortest pour.

Kim: Probably. Yeah.

Rev: And level five is where we found all of the alcohol.

Tass: Yes.

Kim: Yeah.

Tass: So if you do it from there, a little longer to take effect. But almost no eyes watching if you want to move it around and have more spots.

Rev: Yeah. Like the three of us doing it on level five, then we gotta wait for it to get down there. But that gives us time to then finish and get to level three.

Megan: Yeah, that's what I was thinking too. Like, it gives us time to travel before everything takes effect. And we want to make sure that we're in place when Jake gives us a signal.

Rev: Yeah.

Kim: Yeah.

Megan: So yeah, I think level five is the way to go.

Tass: Okay.

Jake: And the plan is get the kraken drunk. Once it stops protecting Estin, we breach and we go for Estin? Right? Because we're not trying to fight the kraken, right? We think that thing is good, if not corrupted by what's going on in the world.

Kim: Yeah.

Rev: Sounds right. Like the thing we don't know yet is how malevolent it is without Estin's control over it. Or if it's just, like, not good anymore, but maybe not mean.

Jake: Yeah. What is what does corruption look like for this thing?

Tass: Sure.

Rev: Like without direction.

Jake: And the only way to know that is take Estin out first and then figure it out, I guess.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: And then maybe figure out what to do about that part.

Tass: So. We've got Jake shimmying his way up to that spot again. You've done this once. I'm not gonna make you roll that again, because you know the path. You know what to be ready for.

Jake: Thank you.

Tass: You're staying on the fifth level and you're moving around some of this alcohol to get to three separate spots. So you have maximum ... Drainage, here?

Rev: Maximum drip.

Tass: Yeah. Okay. So which of you are sort of organizing this? Like who's sort of calling the shots with, you know, timing, and just all of it. Getting stuff moved discreetly, et cetera.

Megan: I can.

Tass: Okay. So you're getting everything set up. Since you have stayed in what is arguably the safest tier and you have three of you working on this together, you're also going to get a +1 on Use A Dirty Trick.

Megan: Can I take a +1 from my Size Up? Because I had used Size Up to look at the tentacles and figure out what was going on. And so I've kind of been keeping an eye on that as I'm strategizing where the best place to do this was.

Tass: Yeah. I mean, that's fundamentally why you guys picked the fifth level, right?

Megan: Yeah.

Tass: Yeah. So you're using that information. That absolutely gives you that +1.

Megan: Okay, great. So six.

Tass: So six.

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: Um ... So yeah, if somebody still has any bond.

Rev: I do. I have one. Let's use this.

Tass: All right. So that brings you up to a mixed. So that means that there is a catch. So this is what it will cost, if you want to follow through here. The spots that you've found, that you're certain, like you have to take these paths to get to other of the openings for the ducts to get everybody safe. You know, you had to get them to sort of discrete parts of town where you know nobody has come by in these couple of days. But they are

pretty remote. They're at the sort of furthest corners of this fifth level. So it's gonna take a pretty damn long time for all of this alcohol to trickle in enough that you will have used enough to affect this large beast. So what you realize that that's gonna mean: there's a real good chance Estin could notice this new influx of water as he's in between patrolling with his own construct.

Megan: Oof.

Tass: So Megan gives the signal, and you all start pouring in all of this various alcohol. Jake, after a little while, you start to see it happening. From these three separate ducts, little waterfalls of alcohol start trickling in and splashing down onto this kraken in the well. You notice it sort of rumble around a little bit. The tentacles, some of them like switch spots. One of them even reaches up to one of those alcohol spilling holes and starts like climbing up it for a second, but then recoils quickly and like shakes itself off, and it like winds down into the water to try to, like, clean itself, but then lashes back up again as if the water is also not to its taste. After a little while, like all of the tentacles kind of start doing this. Like they're getting more slack, or they're writhing around in their ducts, trying to make heads or tails of what's going on. The whole thing, this bubble at the bottom of its body is undulating a little bit and getting like a darker, almost a bluish color. And after about a half hour of this and seeing that this thing is really affected, you also notice Estin's eyes start to blink rapidly as his head starts to kind of flit back and forth.

Jake: How are the tentacles guarding him looking?

Tass: The ones in front of him are still like waving in front of him, but they're really dipping pretty far and like coming back up and trying to stay up, but then loll closer to the water again. Like they're losing strength and focus.

Jake: This reaction from Estin, does it seem like just he's becoming aware that the thing under his thrall is being affected? Like is that — like they've got a connection, and that connection goes both ways, and so it seems like it's starting to get to him slower than it's getting to the thing?

Tass: Give me a Size Up as you watch him.

Jake: Ten.

Tass: You get 2.

Jake: I suppose, where's the true danger lurking?

Tass: Yeah. I think the vibe you're getting is that he just comes out of it every once in a while to just take stock of everything. So this doesn't look like a triggered moment. He's just kind of slowly coming out of his trance because it's been a while. So that, like, the truest danger here is if and when he notices something the way it shouldn't be, he's gonna take steps.

Jake: Okay. How can I safely keep him under?

Tass: You know that he's making use of this creature's magic, and it's mind affecting in several ways. So you get the idea that if you could get the tentacles that are guarding him to touch him, skin to skin, that something about that residue and the fact that he's already utilizing it in some way will dull his senses and keep him under.

Jake: Okay. I want to start climbing, making my way around the inside of the well to get to a point where I could hop down and swing on one of the tentacles guarding him with enough momentum to touch it to him.

Tass: Oh my god.

Kim: Does that mean you're also gonna touch a tentacle?

Jake: Yes, it does.

Kim: Okay.

Jake: Monkey gonna be inhibited, probably. You know, I'm wearing a lot of cloths and leathers, so honestly, I might not make skin to skin contact. And I'm very fuzzy, so I'll just use, like, the back of my hand or something.

Rev: Mmm.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Oh! I've got a tail. I've got a prehensile tail. It's covered in fur. Does that count? Can I — will that keep me away from skin to skin?

Tass: I think that'll depend on how you roll and what the repercussion from a Break In or Out will be.

Jake: Oh, okay.

Tass: This is like sort of a strong hold that you're trying to break into. So I think the Break In or Out roll will cover this whole maneuver.

Jake: Okay. I'm going to spend my only luck.

Tass: Okay.

Jake: God. Seven.

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: Oh my god.

Tass: So you get to pick one from the list, and so do I.

Jake: I will lose track of something important.

Tass: Oh. Do you have anything in mind there?

Jake: No.

Rev: I don't have anything important.

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: I'm gonna lose this tail, I guess.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I lose track of. I'm just like, where'd that thing get off to?

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: I can tell you what I ... What I do have on me.

Tass: Okay.

Jake: I have three tasseled devil sticks, my thin soled shoes, my colorful hand-me-down cloak, my decorated mask, some rope, a faded cloak — I just realized I have two cloaks — my fancy ring, and my unopened cask of deep whiskey.

Tass: I think the devil sticks go, in the middle of this maneuver.

Megan: [Gasps]

Jake: All three of them?

Tass: Yeah.

Jake: What am I supposed to juggle now?

Tass: Well, you can — they're just fallen down into a well. You can probably go get them later.

Jake: Okay.

Tass: Climb out, leap to one of these tentacles, and use it like a vine swinging towards the alcove. And I think you've got it in your little monkey hands and feet stretched out in front of you so that as you swing in, you're directly touching that tentacle just to his face. But you're up a little higher, because you're trying to make sure you get this tentacle-to-face action, and your head hits the top of the alcove.

Jake: Oh.

Kim: Oh, no.

Tass: So you get clipped and, like, sort of backflip into the alcove, smacking against the wall behind Estin. You watch him loll forward, dizzied, and his eyes closing again. But you have two points of harm from smacking your head and then cracking into the back of this stone area.

Kim: Oof.

Jake: All right.

Tass: After that little maneuver, I think mark a luck.

Jake: Thank you.

Rev: Yeah, that was good.

Jake: Spend a luck, earn a luck.

Tass: So the rest of you had, I'd say, equivalent sized and amount of barrels so that once you have these emptied, you're ready to go. What happens here?

Megan: As soon as I meet up with Kim and Landara, I'm like moving very quickly and I'm like, "Come on, we gotta go. We gotta go really, really fast."

Kim: "Why? What happened?"

Megan: "I just realized that with how long this was actually taking, Estin's gonna notice that something's up. And I don't know if he's gonna leave to figure out what's going on or try to interfere, but Jake's down there, so we gotta go."

Landara: "All right."

Tass: All right. You all sprint down to Copeland Road. And as you break on onto the street, I think it's pretty instantly obvious that this maneuver is working. Because there's the usual merriment going on up and down the street, but the people there don't seem to notice as like one little kid is just walking against the wall face first.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: And another kid is holding on to someone's ankle, just being dragged along the street.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: Everyone looks like a glitching video game NPC.

Tass: Yeah. One of the kids pokes his head up out of a potato sack and just waves at you all with a big grin and then pops back down again. It's clearly working.

Rev: As we're running ... We had so much conversation about like Copeland Road. I think Landara thought about it again all night. As we're running, like ...

Landara: "I wonder if what he meant was like when you go on to assault Estin, don't take Copeland Road because of like all the tentacles."

Megan: "That makes sense. I hope that that's it, and there's not some spooky hidden thing that we haven't noticed."

Landara: "Yeah."

Tass: And you make it to the well, no problem, and look down. Megan, you know that that sort of veil that you were able to pierce before, this illusion, is just gone. And you can see below this now kind of bluish beast is sort of wriggling and writhing, and these tentacles are flailing around and like dipping into the water and then lashing back up quickly. This thing is freaking out a little bit.

Jake: I'm just waiting until those tentacles are slack enough that I'm confident they can all get through before I make the call.

Tass: I mean, it takes a minute or two, probably in the time that they were running down. Estin is now fully like lolled over, almost head in his lap, and these tentacles have dipped down below the alcove line.

Megan: Uh, I look over the edge of the well, and I think I'm just gonna jump in.

Kim: "Megan! We brought stuff to rappel!"

Megan: "There's no time! And there's water at the bottom. I'll be fine."

Tass: Yeah. If you're just going for the jump, in the state that this thing is in? You have a nice cushy landing as you land on this rubbery beast.

Megan: Stuntwoman!

Tass: I can't even imagine the smell down here as you hit and some of this alcohol filled water is just splashing up onto the beast. And it rolls and roils a little bit as part of you touches it at all, your hands and such. It's not much, but you start to feel this kind of odd confusion for a second.

Megan: As I hit the bouncy castle here, can I see Estin?

Tass: Yeah. He's not far up on this alcove, for sure.

Megan: What condition does he seem to be in?

Tass: He's, like, sort of bent over. Like he's still sitting bent at the waist, and he's swaying a little bit, kind of drunkenly.

Megan: While he seems to be somewhat incapacitated. I'd like to use my oddity, which is Foxeyed. You're the most dangerous of chroniclers: a poet. You may spend one luck to see the secret thoughts and feelings of the people around you. If you are surrounded by strangers when you do this, you are overwhelmed with these hallucinations and are compelled to react to those hallucinations in a dangerous or foolish way. I guess I don't know if this Estin counts as a stranger.

Tass: I mean, yeah, but you're not really, like, surrounded by strangers. You know, you're not doing this in a crowd, so that probably wouldn't be much of a problem, I don't think.

Megan: Okay, cool. So, yeah, I'll spend a luck to see what's going on in that brain.

Tass: Okay. Spend that luck. And the thoughts that you're getting from him are these sleepy thoughts of concern. It's completely driven on the fact that there are new people in town, and he wants to gain control of them as well. There are just these thoughts of, these are clearly powerful. You get the idea that he's excited that they destroyed his construct in the bay, because that means that they'll be strong allies to take control of. But he hasn't had a chance to get them under his control yet. So that is his drive as he's drunkenly weaving a little bit and trying to snap himself out of it and get under control.

Megan: Oh, so the one in the bay was a construct! Good. I was feeling really guilty that we might have killed one that was trying to save his friend. [Laughs]

Tass: What are the other two doing up top?

Kim: My soulmate just jumped into a well, so I'm compelled to jump after her.

Tass: All right, you do. You can just land right on this big cushy bounce house.

Rev: I'm gonna hook my boarding axe onto the side of the wall and try to swing down into the alcove.

Jake: Try to go down like a responsible person.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: And I think there's this moment, like as Kim is holding out the axe, Landara is like ...

Landara: "All right, on the count of three —"

Rev: And she's just — Kim just dive off.

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: "Megan!"

Rev: And like in Landara's mind, she saw this like moment of the two of them swinging down into the alcove and striking at the same time. And then Kim's just gone.

Tass: Amazing. So Kim lands near Megan. And Kim, you also feel this little bit of a daze as you land and try to get to your feet. Just you touching this thing's skin makes you a little ... A little dizzy. Landara, you have no problem hooking in and just sliding down to this alcove. In the short amount of time too, Jake, as you're behind Estin. It's a small little thing, but there are some like kind of ... It's not shelves, exactly. Just some of the brick work has been worked out. And you notice that there are a few little like strong boxes and scroll tubes and such that are behind him.

Jake: Ooh. How many of them can I carry?

Tass: They're all pretty small. Like you could probably grab everything.

Jake: Yeah, I just — I'm just using an arm and a tail to scoop all these things under another arm.

Tass: I never imagined y'all finding stuff like that, with him just sitting there.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: I know. It feels a little mean just to kind of dispatch him right now.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: Nah, fuck this guy.

Jake: I mean, I'm kicking myself that I didn't just, like, grab a knife. Like, this man's just sitting unconscious in front of me. This didn't have to be a strike team, it seems like. Could have just been a poke him once. But I'm like, agh. Well, I'll just steal all his shit instead.

Tass: So Landara, you're able to slide down, and you see Estin sitting there. Still out, but kind of weaving. He's fighting this daze and trying to come out of it.

Rev: And do I see Jake as well?

Tass: Yeah. I mean ...

Jake: You see a pile of goodies.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: And a little monkey boy face poking out of it.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah. I'm gonna slide down into the alcove.

Landara: "You all right?"

Jake: "Yeah. I took a pretty nasty hit trying to make sure he stayed under. But look at all the stuff!"

Landara: "Grab it!"

Jake: "I got it!"

Rev: I'm gonna yell ...

Landara: "Incoming!"

Rev: And I'm gonna shoot Estin in the back with this shotgun so that he goes over towards Kim and Megan.

Tass: [Laughs] And what damage does your gun do?

Rev: Boy, this is my death target.

Tass: Sure is.

Rev: So I'm gonna take a black mark.

Tass: Okay.

Rev: Just to do some extra.

Tass: All right.

Rev: Because Death wants him dead. So that is an eleven. So the thing in parentheses does not happen this time.

Tass: Okay.

Rev: So that is five damage, piercing.

Tass: You all see this spray of blood as a hole is shot out of Estin's chest. And his eyes snap open as he tips forward and falls. And he's screaming in pain and fury as he topples.

Megan: When I hear incoming and I can see that Landara is gonna knock him off the edge, I want to double jump on this kraken to bounce Kim up there.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: Yeah, you do that. You whole-ass just do that. Kim, you're launched.

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: Point of luck for Megan.

Tass: Yep. Yep. Mark that shit.

Jake: I feel like a point of luck for each of them.

Tass: Yeah, for sure.

Kim: So good.

Tass: Kim, what are you doing with this opportunity?

Kim: Oh, first thing I wanna do is I wanna roll Theatrics.

Tass: Yep.

Kim: That's a twelve. So I have a hold 2. So I'm going to immediately spend both points of hold for my Theatrics while I am in the air. I am going to reveal that despite everything, you have yet another weapon up your sleeve.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: I am going to ... [Laughs] In the air, I leap into a Russian split and grab a dagger that's hidden in my boot. And then I'm going to spend another hold from Theatrics to pin an enemy to the wall by throwing something.

Tass: [Laughs]

Kim: And chuck it at Estin.

Tass: And thus it happens, with the hold spent. That this dagger goes through his shoulder and pins him to the wall. He is wide awake now, and his feet and hands lash up to cling to the wall in that spider-like fashion. And he's trying to rip himself free. That tongue is just lolling down from the roof of his mouth where his missing jaw should be, and he's looking around for enemies. Megan, you also notice that these tentacles around you, these drunken lolling things, are starting to lash towards whatever is still on it. Which is you. Jake, what are you doing after you see Estin topple?

Jake: I am unarmed, so I think I'm just trying to get out of this alcove and get up and out of the well with all the goodies before anything can happen to them or they can be taken back.

Tass: Nice. I think this is gonna be a Break Out.

Jake: Damn it, snake eyes.

Kim: [Gasps]

Jake: My goodies!

Megan: [Laughs]

Kim: My goodies, not my goodies.

Megan: Not my goodies!

All: [Laugh]

Tass: So only Kim and Megan get to see the start of this, as Jake is beginning to crawl out and try to find purchase to climb out of here. What you two see is Estin pinned to this wall. He's having trouble, obviously, getting unpinned because it's just ripping through his shoulder. So he bends his head backwards at an unnatural angle so that it's almost snapped straight up. And you watch his chest start to bulge, and then the bulge moves up into his neck, and then that empty jaw seems to widen like a snake. And this small, almost monkey-sized ghoul erupts from his open mouth and leaps straight up, grabbing onto Jake's ankle. It rips him from the wall and they topple to the kraken below.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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