

# Blood in the Water (S5, E32)

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

**SFX:** INTRO MUSIC

**Jake:** Yesterday, I reached the culmination of a lifelong dream.

**Rev:** Go on.

**Jake:** And I became a car guy.

**Rev:** That explains the emblem on your forehead and the transforming sound.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** Yeah, no, it was a long surgery, but I think the results speak for themselves.

**Jake:** It's been life long. A lot of the parts, they don't make any more. So I'm really — I'm quite Frankensteinian. Parts of me are diesel ...

**Rev:** Vin? Or ...

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Uh, no, I got — I got under my car yesterday. And I feel like that's, like ... I feel like that's a line, right?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Like lots of people know how to do some stuff on their car. But I feel like once you, like, jack up your car and get under it to do some stuff? Feel good.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Kim:** Were you worried it was going to fall and crush you?

**Jake:** Oh, my god.

**Megan:** Yes, oh my god.

**Jake:** Extremely.

**Kim:** [Laughs]

**Jake:** Also probably confronted one of my worst fears by doing that. Like that — Yes, I was so scared. I got — I bought jack stands and everything. And like I'm messing with the jack stands to like lock them into place, and I'm just like, "This can't possibly be sufficient." Like ...

**Rev:** This car weighs a ton.

**Jake:** [Laughs] Yeah. These ... If I can move these this easily, these can't stop a car. There's no way. But nothing fell and killed me.

**Rev:** What were you doing? Were you changing your oil?

**Jake:** No. No, it wasn't — nothing quite so technical, unfortunately.

**Rev:** Oh, okay.

**Jake:** My, uh, splash shield? The piece of plastic that protects the bottom of your engine?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Had started dragging on the road. And so I got under there a while ago, and, like, zip-tied some parts until I could deal with it. And then it started dragging on the road again, because somehow all of those zip ties just disintegrated. So I looked under there, and it's held in place by like six screws and four plastic pluggy things. And there was one of each remaining, somehow. Don't know where all the fucking rest of them went, but

they were all gone. So I had to like buy — I had to research. I had to buy the new parts. I had to get under the car. I had to put everything back where it belonged. And I'm a changed man. I do want to learn how to change my oil, though.

**Rev:** I think we're gonna set that as just a future goal to declare car guy. I think being able to change your own oil.

**Jake:** So I'm not a car guy yet?

**Rev:** I don't know if I'm qualified to make this call.

**Megan:** You're a car boy.

**Kim:** Yeah. Rev, tell us about this.

**Rev:** Was I was like, "Oh, did you change your oil?" You're like, "Nothing that complicated." I was like, car guy?

**Jake:** I said nothing that technical, thank you. Have you been underneath your car?

**Rev:** Oh, yeah.

**Jake:** Well, then ... Then you're definitely qualified.

**Rev:** My dad's a mechanic, so.

**Jake:** Then you're definitely qualified to say that I'm not a car guy. Yeah. What am I? I've heard car boy.

**Rev:** Uh ...

**Kim:** An apprentice car guy?

**Rev:** Maybe. Or a car initiate.

**Jake:** I like car initiate.

**Rev:** Okay.

**Jake:** Okay.

**Megan:** When he said parts of him are diesel, and you ask Vin. For a second, I thought you were asking for his VIN number. And then now I just realized how much of a car name Vin Diesel is.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Oh, my god. Yeah, I've never realized that before.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Tass:** You should capitalize that. Do something like vehicle related with his career.

**Megan:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** Oh ... Yeah. So join us as we track Jake's journey from car initiate to car guy.

**Jake:** I'm going to start live streaming every time I go under the car. Do you know Vin Diesel's real name?

**Kim:** Mark Sinclair.

**Jake:** Not nearly as automotive. I see why he changed it.

**Rev:** It sounds like a name from an NPC generator.

**Jake:** What's the shop keep's name? Uh ... Mark. Uh ... Sinclair. Anyway, here's a posh British accent.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** Well, we do want to take a moment to thank everybody who jumped in the BackerKit for Codex of Worlds. It met all of the goals it set, including ours, which is going to result in us here at the table making a let's play using Bone Spear, which is a different setting for Monster of the Week that has altered playbooks, additional basic moves, and new types of mysteries. So we're very excited to do that. I've been writing a little bit of stuff, because the way the mysteries work and how you fix them is different in this. And I think it's gonna be a lot of fun. So I think with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

**SFX:** RECAP MUSIC

**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]

**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]

**Kim:** 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.

**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:** 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 Estin pinned to this wall. 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 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:** RECAP MUSIC FADES

**Tass:** Landara. You've watched Jake try to escape, and then suddenly get ripped off the wall and fall down with the girls.

**Rev:** And Estin is pinned to the wall directly below the alcove?

**Tass:** Yep.

**Rev:** I'm gonna shoot down at him.

**Tass:** All right. Roll Get Into a Scrap. He is no longer prone. I mean, he's, like, kind of stuck, but he's got some fight in him now.

**Rev:** Eight.

**Tass:** All right. What is your damage?

**Rev:** Two, area, piercing.

**Tass:** All right. You shred through more of his chest and even part of his shoulder. He kind of drops a little bit as the part of his shoulder that's pinned by the dagger is shredded by your blast. And you realize that, like, you're looking down, making eye contact with him, his head is bent that far back that he's glaring up at you. And that tongue lashes up like a frog tongue and wraps around your ankle. It doesn't pull you from the alcove. It just rips you enough that it kicks you backwards, and you also smack your head against the stonework here and take two points of harm. I think by now Kim has landed back on the trampoline here. And you also notice that these tentacles are starting to lash towards you all. They're not very focused, like one or two of them whip out like a whip, like trying to hit something, but just sort of miss. But they're getting closer to you. And then Jake lands next to you, and there's a horrible little wet ghoul that's a couple of feet tall that is facing off with him.

**Kim:** Well, I'm not sure what to do with the kraken yet because we still don't know if we really want to kill this thing or try to redeem it somehow. So I'm gonna deal with the little ghoul in front of me.

**Tass:** Okay. What do you want to do?

**Kim:** I'm just gonna try to stab it with my sword.

**Tass:** Roll Get Into a Scrap.

**Kim:** Four.

**Tass:** So you lunge in to get a hit, and couldn't possibly anticipate for how fast this little thing is. As you're moving forward, it coils and leaps and just latches onto your face.

**Kim:** [Yelps]

**Tass:** Whole body, arms and legs, wrapped around like your shoulders and your head. And he's just biting the top of your head.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** You take one point of damage. Megan, you see this thing leap, and a couple more of these tentacles make whip-like attacks towards you, but are still unfocused enough that they're not really making too much headway, probably until they get closer.

**Megan:** I'm gonna try to use my superstitions book against this kraken.

**Tass:** Okay. And so we are invoking knowledge of some kind, yes?

**Megan:** Yes.

**Tass:** Okay.

**Megan:** My knowledge of this kraken is that it is drunk as hell.

**Tass:** [Laughs] And that would be very accurate. Okay.

**Megan:** So the mishap that I want to befall it is it's lashing out with these tentacles and trying to attack whatever is nearest is it just can't get purchased because it's so dazed. So its tentacles are going through some of the holes in the wall by accident.

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** Or like some of them are braiding themselves together, so it can't ... It's getting knotted up and it can't actually focus and attack.

**Tass:** All right. So let's see this Unleash a Mysterious Power.

**Megan:** Six.

**Jake:** God.

**Tass:** Okay. So I get to tell you what terrible force you've unleashed. I think I'm going to leave this up to you as you watch the base of the ... Of the Kraken here start to, like, shake and writhe, knocking you all a little off kilter. You can tell that it's steeling itself, but you also get the sense that it's like heavily breathing, which is just pumping that alcohol into it faster. And so it's really starting to lose control. The tentacles are lashing at high speed all over. This thing is near panic. So because of all of these tentacles just lashing in every direction, all the way up and down this well, you either get to pick one of your teammates that takes 2-harm, or all three of them take 1.

**Megan:** Oh ... Man, I think ... I think it's gotta be Landara. I think Kim has a ghoul on her face and I would not put my soulmate in danger like that.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Megan:** And like I said, I took an extra bond with Jake because I can't have a monkey getting hurt. I can't ... I can't have an animal come to harm. I think Landara's gotta take it.

**Tass:** As you watch this thing lash out like this, there's a sense that it's still trying to complete its duty, that it's trying to block that alcove and keep Estin safe. Like it just has



no concept of what's really going on. But because it's so out of control, those tentacles just get into the alcove and just blender it, twisting Landara, knocking you up against the stonework again and again and again. And you take those two more points of harm.

**Rev:** Okay.

**Tass:** Jake, these tentacles are lashing all over. There is a ghoul on Kim's face. Estin is still dangling and shrieking, his body shredded, but he still has fight in him. What do you want to do?

**Jake:** Man. I mean, again, I'm unarmed. I don't have a way to really do anything meaningful to Estin. So I'm just gonna try and help one of the people who can. I'm gonna try to get this ghoul off of Kim. So I'm going to take off my colorful hand-me-down cloak and try and bag it over this thing's head, like while it's reeling back to take another bite. And like, I mean, basically like plastic bag suffocate it. But just trying ...

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Jake:** Trying to get it off of her long enough that she can fight it or Estin or whoever needs fighting.

**Tass:** Okay. So the goal is to remove it, not necessarily to hurt it.

**Jake:** Correct.

**Tass:** All right. I think that's a Dirty Trick.

**Jake:** Eight.

**Tass:** All right. You can do this, but one of the treasures that you grabbed from above is going to get destroyed.

**Kim:** Oh ...

**Jake:** Aww ...

**Kim:** My goodies, not my goodies.

**Jake:** Not my goodies.

**Tass:** Or I mean, you can ... You can just say it's still on there. You can just leave it on her.

**Jake:** Okay. Here's my thought process. I don't not want to give the thing up just because I want stuff. I don't want to give the thing up, because it could provide invaluable information. And we frequently lose things that contain irreplaceable information.

**Tass:** Would it help or hurt if I told you you get to roll for which thing is destroyed?

**Jake:** I don't think it ... I don't think it makes a difference.

**Tass:** Okay.

**Jake:** Um ... Does this thing seem like a fatal threat? Or a nuisance right now?

**Rev:** Did you die, though?

**Jake:** Yeah. Did you die, though?

**Kim:** Do you think you're gonna die?

**Jake:** Is she gonna die, though?

**Tass:** I mean, that's just ... It depends. Like it could be. It absolutely could shred through somebody. But it just depends on if that person has help or not, I guess.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Man. I ... I will let the thing be destroyed. I think like this problem goes through my head in character, but ultimately I'm just like, I can't let somebody come — even if we have to go in with incomplete information, I can't let somebody fucking die for it.

**Rev:** I think that would have been the first time in five years anyone had chosen the, or you can choose to not do the thing happen, happen.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** Yeah, right? All right. Roll 1d6 for me. There are technically three items of value here, so I've got it marked which one's gonna be one and two, which one's gonna be three and four, which one's gonna be five and six.

**Rev:** Will you show me, where Jake can't see it yet, which number is the best one?

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** Just so I can be sad with the knowledge?

**Megan:** I'd love that. Can you please just help me be sad?

**Rev:** I just like it.

**Tass:** Maybe. I mean, you'll know which one it'll be.

**Rev:** It's the only way I know I'm alive.

**Tass:** What'd you get?

**Jake:** A four.

**Tass:** Okay —

**Kim:** Oh, no! That was the best one!

**Jake:** Oh, not the four!

**Tass:** I'll tell you what you see here. There's a couple of boxes and a scroll case. And so as you rip this thing off of her and it topples back against you, and those items were just there on the top of this bouncy castle beast that you're fighting upon. And the ghoul

crushes one of the boxes. And you see inside what had been some sort of small, crystalline statue that is now shattered to tiny little bits of dust. But it is free. Kim, you can breathe a little easier and there's nothing biting your head.

**Kim:** Oh, thank god. Yeah, I want to just stab this thing again, but better this time.

**Tass:** Hey, but better. Sure. Let's see you Get Into a Scrap.

**Kim:** I'm gonna spend a point of luck. I hate this thing.

**Tass:** [Laughs] Okay.

**Kim:** There we go. That's the thirteen.

**Tass:** Would you like to take the ante or avoid harm?

**Kim:** Boy, I don't think just one stab from my rapier is gonna undo this thing. So I think I'm gonna take the ante.

**Tass:** All right. You run this thing through, and it shrieks and its claws reach up to grab the blade as it's trying to, like, wriggle off and backs off, its hands cut, a hole through its chest. But it has some fight left in it. And you have the ante.

**Kim:** I want to immediately spend that ante by pulling the rapier out and then rapping the side of its head with the flat side of my rapier and invoking my stun option.

**Tass:** Awesome.

**Kim:** I hate this thing.

**Tass:** And it topples into the water, stunned, and you see the blood bubbling up and it just sinks like a stone.

**Kim:** Good.

**Tass:** Landara, you've just gotten blendered in this alcove and you can hear this horrific laughter coming from over the side from Estin.

**Rev:** Yeah, I'm gonna try to push my way through the tentacles and look back down at him. Is he's still looking up?

**Tass:** Uh ... Yes, like intermittently. Like he's looking up, looking down at the action, glancing back up again. Like he's really struggling. Like you can see he's almost pulled his whole shoulder through the dagger. The dagger is still embedded, but he's just ripping himself off of it.

**Landara:** "Hey Estin, eyes up here."

**Tass:** ESTIN: [Growls]

**Rev:** And I'm gonna shoot him. And I'm gonna use my other move, Called Shot. When you Get Into a Scrap, you can make a called shot. If you hit, take the ante and choose a tag from the following options. Your target takes the tag, in addition to the harm. On a 7 to 9, take a vice or a black mark, your choice.

**Tass:** All right.

**Rev:** I've been doing this the whole time. I didn't realize.

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** Eleven.

**Tass:** All right. So from your attack, do you want to take the ante or avoid harm?

**Rev:** I'm gonna avoid harm.

**Tass:** Okay.

**Rev:** And the ante that I get from Called Shot and the tag that I'm gonna take, since he's looking up at me, is blinded. For a minute, they cannot see anything.

**Tass:** Yeah. The blood is dripping down into his face. I'm gonna say part of his face is just kind of blown off. And you watch him shriek and rip himself off of the wall. He stays right where he was, in that spider-like grip. But he is free of the dagger.

**Landara:** "Jake."

**Jake:** "What?"

**Rev:** I'm gonna flip him one of the pistols from my belt.

**Jake:** I catch it. I'm like, "Are you fucking kidding me? These things go off for, like, no reason!" I'm like, holding it out and away from myself in a panic.

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Jake:** "Black powder, it's so ... It's so dangerous. Oh, god."

**Landara:** "Oh, was the other one the gun guy? I thought you were a gun guy."

**Jake:** "I mean, modern guns are, like, way safer than these. These things — I've seen ... I've seen documentaries. These are — who do I — who do you want me to shoot with it? Him?" Point at Estin.

**Landara:** "Oh, man. Take your pick. It's a target rich environment."

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** She's like, just give it back. Throw it back up here.

**Landara:** "Never mind."

**Jake:** Never mind. You don't appreciate this. I'm gonna hold it with two hands and try and blast Estin.

**Kim:** [Laughs] I immediately take a step back at how, like, unsure Jake looks with this gun.

**Jake:** I'm so small. It is so dangerous.

**Tass:** He's blinded in this moment, but he's skittering up the wall. I think you're still gonna need to roll Get Into a Scrap, but take a +1 on that.

**Jake:** Okay. That gets me a seven. Thank you.

**Kim:** Woo!

**Tass:** All right, so you take this shot and clip him in the chest. And it jars him back against the wall, and he, like, loses grip. He slides down several feet, but seems to get purchase again with that spider-like grip. He can't see, but he does at least know the general direction of where the shot came. So he just reaches a hand out with his fingers pointed in that direction, and his fingernails fly off at bullet speed.

**Jake:** Oh.

**Kim:** [Gags]

**Megan:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** And so you get clipped by this buckshot of enamel and take one point of harm.

**Kim:** Ugh ...

**Jake:** I go done for.

**Rev:** It was the cuticles that done him in.

**Tass:** All right. So here we get to potentially roll Stand Your Ground against the compulsion to essentially pass out, take a little nap here from the amount of pain you're in. Or you can just go with it and take your little nap.

**Jake:** No, I would love to stay upright.

**Tass:** All right. So you're gonna roll blank here, and use someone for inspiration. So you do have to spend a bond to do this. If the person that is inspiring you is here, you get a +1, and you can spend an additional bond with them to take an extra +1.

**Jake:** Well, I've spent all of my bond with Landara, convincing her to do stupid shit.

**Kim:** [Laughs]

**Megan:** Worth it.

**Jake:** So which of the two of you is inspiring me to not pass out? Doesn't really matter. I've only got one bond with each of you. I can't spend the extra anyway.

**Rev:** [Chuckles]

**Jake:** I'm going to spend bond with Kim. I think because she has been such a worthy combatant so far in this world, that it is inspiring me to stay upright in the middle of a fight.

**Tass:** Nice. Yeah. Go ahead and spend that bond.

**Jake:** Okay.

**Tass:** And this doesn't seem like you're facing your vice, so I don't think we have to worry about you taking a -1.

**Jake:** Eight.

**Tass:** Okay. So you will either just give in to the compel, or you can mark a trouble.

**Jake:** I will take a trouble.

**Tass:** All right. Let's call this trouble Bleeding Out.



**Jake:** Oh.

**Kim:** [Laughs nervously]

**Tass:** So until you get some proper rest, I think you have a -1 to Blood.

**Jake:** Okay.

**Kim:** Get it. Because you've less blood than you started with?

**Tass:** Yeah.

**Jake:** [Laughs weakly]

**Megan:** That's funny.

**Tass:** I'm here to make jokes. That's it. Nothing else.

**Megan:** [Laughs] It's the only reason I'm here.

**Tass:** Megan, you've just watched this horror show as Estin is still clinging to the wall with his hand outstretched. But half of his face is blown off, and the one good eye he has left is blinking heavily, covered in blood. What do you want to do?

**Megan:** I'm gonna try to use the book again, on Estin this time.

**Tass:** Okay. What information doth ye have to invoke?

**Megan:** I am going to invoke my knowledge of Estin not wanting to work alone. He enlisted the ghouls to help kidnap me in the first place. Here, he has taken over this kraken. He keeps having these other ghouls show up. He likes to utilize other creatures to help do his bidding. So I'm gonna turn that against him. And I think as the ghoul that Kim stunned falls, one of its claws, like, digs into the kraken. And in fury, it lashes out and hits Estin.

**Tass:** All right. Unleash a Mysterious Power.

**Megan:** I'm gonna spend a point of luck.

**Tass:** Okay.

**Megan:** Nine.

**Kim:** I want to spend my bond with Megan to bump that up to a ten.

**Tass:** Thanks.

**Kim:** I think it makes sense now that I can see, and see, like, the battlefield, that I'm just protecting her to make sure that no stray tentacles are interrupting her reading.

**Tass:** Full success here. Do you want this to exact a personal cost or surge out of control?

**Megan:** I think it's gonna surge out of control. I have such strong contempt for Estin still. Even though that this is a different world and it's a different version, even looking at him in this form, all I can still see is the person that put me in that prison for six months.

**Tass:** Yeah, absolutely. So the first thing that happens for sure is as these tentacles lash out from the pain with this ghoul clawing it as it sinks, the tentacle smacks Estin clean in the chest, cracking his ribs. His hand lashes up to the alcove, and he weakly pulls himself in. Landara, he's next to you, just breathing heavily, spitting up blood, barely able to move. Megan, it isn't just one tentacle that lashes out, but several in pain. You have two points of harm that you get to divvy up to anyone in the team, and that includes yourself.

**Megan:** I think they're gonna get split between me and Kim, because we're right next to each other.

**Tass:** Yeah, absolutely. Landara, Estin has pushed himself over onto his back, looking up at you, staring daggers. His tongue lashes, and he starts to chuckle that broken jawed sound again.

**Rev:** I don't think there is a moment of like introspection or pondering. Like I think it is just, here he is. Instantaneous shoot him in the face.

**Tass:** The moment you do, you're in this space again, with this massive skull with tentacles made of human skeletons. Even though it doesn't move, you get this feeling of it nodding.

**Tass:** DEATH: Good work. Your next name is Tass Allgood.

**Rev:** Tass. You open your eyes, and you're looking up at a blue sky with thin clouds running through it. You hear a slight breeze, and you see the top of a tree. And as you tilt your head around, you find yourself in a very familiar setting. You're laying in the lawn outside of your childhood home.

**Tass:** "Oh, god. Not this shit again." I'm gonna just try to sit up and look around and see if there's anything out of place.

**Rev:** Everything looks exactly as you remember. In fact, I think it looks perfect. There are details here that when you were here prior, were maybe fuzzy or missing. But this is like a clear memory of this place, as opposed to the space that your brain recreated from those memories.

**Tass:** Okay. I think I'm a little apprehensive about that, right out the gate. All right. "Uh ... This is either worrisome, or good news. Wait a minute. Why am I here? Where ... Where was I?" Do I have any, like, memory of what has happened recently?

**Rev:** You do. And as you have this thought, you are standing inside of the subterranean lair, and you are watching yourself start to get into the car as Megan and Kim and Jake pile in. And then you say, just a second, I'll be right back. And you run out of the room. And as you come back in, the portal opens, and you see yourself get hit by this energy. And then you're back lying on your back, staring up at the sky with the slight breeze.

**Tass:** "Oh, god. Oh, god. Okay." [Shudders] "Okay. That was ... Jarring. Okay, so. All right. All right, all right, all right, all right. Okay, okay, okay. Something happened. I got zapped. I got zapped, so I'm asleep. They just knocked me out. Mmhmm. Have I tried pinching

myself in this place? I don't think I've ever done that." I'm gonna pinch the shit out of myself.

**Rev:** You pinch yourself as hard as you can, and everything around you goes staticky for a moment. And then you're sitting on the couch wrestling over the remote, and it's your sister who has a chunk of your arm and she is twisting it and pinching it.

**Tass:** [Laughs nervously] "Hahaha, what is happening?!" I'm gonna wrestle away from her and, again, just like look around and take stock.

**Rev:** Yeah. And as soon as you break away from her, she's gone. And you remember this moment very distinctly. It was the same time that she wanted to watch something on MTV when you wanted to watch Power Rangers. And like you were just back in that memory, but now you're in the house again. The house is filled with all of the things, but none of the people. And the television kind of settles back from the older version into the one that you had in your head.

**Tass:** "Oh, God. Okay. What the fuck? Zoe?" [Whistles]

**Rev:** As soon as you let out that whistle, you're shunted backwards about 20ft, and you are pushing your way through the door with a backpack on your shoulder, calling her name as you walk in from school, and she comes running down the stairs and over to you.

**Tass:** Okay. Um, I take a knee and pet my beautiful little husky.

**Rev:** Yeah. And as you pet her, she licks you on the face. And then again, she is gone, and the room starts to resettle. And once more, it's a very distinct memory. You remember that specific afternoon walking in from school, having just read *Where the Red Fern Grows* and really wanting to get home and see your dog.

**Tass:** Aww. Um, okay. Okay. Okay. So I think I'm just trying to hold very still. "Oh, god. Oh, god. Okay. Every time I think of something, I'm shunted into a memory. Do I need to not think of anything, or do I need to think of something? I can't not think of anything. This is the don't think of a purple giraffe situation all over again. Oh, my god." And I think I'm just,

like, spiraling on just every little thing that I see in the house. And like, well, there's the PlayStation. And I think of, like, the Christmas morning that we got it.

**Rev:** I think that as you look around the room and all of these memories start to snap back into your mind, we see Tass moved around the room very quickly, almost like he's teleporting. He is suddenly in Christmas morning clothes, opening wrapping. And then there's the smell of cocoa in this memory, and suddenly he's at the kitchen with his stepfather, drinking cocoa. And memory after memory triggered one after another, shifting him around the house. I think you're kind of trapped in this for a moment. Why don't you roll Act Under Pressure to still your mind?

**Tass:** Okay. A nine.

**Rev:** All right. So you are able to clear your mind and get back to a what is going on in the moment. But you're not free yet from possibly going into that spiral again, if that makes sense.

**Tass:** Yeah, absolutely. I think that I'm just ... I realize this is probably a mess up, but like the knee jerk reaction I have is to like, imagine myself with that image I saw of getting zapped with something outside of the car. And I'm like trying to center myself on that moment and think, like, "That's probably where I am. Wake up. That's probably where I am. Wake up. Guys, guys, guys, wake me up. Oh, my god."

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Act Under Pressure again?

**Tass:** Okay. Ten.

**Rev:** This whole house fades away, and you get that sensation again of lying on your back, looking up at the sky. But the sky fades away as well. And what you see above you is strange, because there are almost phantom things moving. But after lying there for maybe ten, fifteen minutes, you realize that what you're looking at is the ceiling of the subterranean lair. That's the one thing you can make out because it is stationary.

**Tass:** Okay. All right. And so I try to sit up.

**Rev:** Nothing happens.

**Tass:** Oh, no. I try to cry out for Jake or Megan or Kim.

**Rev:** Before when I said nothing happened, you Tass laying on the ground, sat up, you scream out. But the view that you see in the sky doesn't change. You don't hear any sound coming from outside, we'll call it.

**Tass:** Okay. Does this feel like a different take on that liminal space I was in when I was in the crystal, when I was just a soul and dead? Or do I, like, feel present at what I'm looking at? I'm not sure if that question makes sense.

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Investigate a Mystery?

**Tass:** Okay. Ooh, seven.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 1.

**Tass:** What happened here?

**Rev:** That energy blast hit you, and you found yourself inside of your mind palace, as we've come to call them. And it's different than before, though, because you're actively calling up a memories and reliving them, even if just for a brief moment. But when you focus, you're able to access your eyes. Like you are able to look out of your own eyes, and the sky above you has turned into your field of vision. So it's different from the times you've been here, and it's different from that liminal space, because what it is instead is you trapped inside of your own mind. You can still reach out and use the things that the brain is processing, but you don't seem to have any motor control function over it.

**Tass:** Oh no. Would that realization of my state trigger Destiny's Plaything?

**Rev:** Yeah. Why don't you roll that? You still have access to your mind, your thoughts, your feelings. Absolutely.

**Tass:** Okay. Five.

**Rev:** The vision appears in the sky like you're watching a movie. You see yourself lying on a table. And you recognize the table, it is the workstation that James and Geoffrey use. And I think that as you see that, you realize that is actually the section of ceiling that you're looking at here as you look through your eyes. But you see yourself lying on that table. And you're motionless, staring up, but your hand starts to move — your right hand — and it crosses over your body and lays itself on your left bicep. And then it very slowly just pulls away, and there is a huge gash that's bleeding. And you feel like no one's noticing this blood that is just running out of you as you lay here catatonic.

**Tass:** Oh, no. I think I snap out of that and think, "Okay, correct. Yeah. Okay. That's not good. That's not ideal, but it's a good idea." I think there's a thought of, yep, this is gonna happen to me. Because even if they don't notice that? Like they might notice later on the beeping of a heart monitor go flat or something like that. And it's not ideal, but I try to activate my motor function to start lifting my arm over to my bicep.

**Rev:** Yeah. Again, nothing happens.

**Tass:** [Laughs] I think there's this level of, like, I focus on that for a while, trying to will my arm to move, trying to get that started. And then it's me, so my mind is gonna wander. And I don't know if this affects anything, now that I have like achieved being able to see the real space here. But I'm certain I'm thinking about like, oh god, like I have a scar on my hand from a time I cut it on a door while I was on stage. And I think about when I fell off of my bike, and the little nick I have out of my shoulder. And little things like that that are like noticeable.

**Rev:** So the thing that does change as you are having these thoughts is you feel those cuts. You feel that hurt. But you feel it like it's in the next room.

**Tass:** Oh, man. Okay. Interesting. Oh, this is kind of rough. But again, I'm just trying anything I can think of. And that occurs to me like, okay, I'm still sort of feeling that. I'm feeling that sort of next door sensation of the memory. I want to think about like the worst kidney stone I've ever had, and that unimaginable pain where I just would rather have somebody rip it out of my body, in any sort of attempt to jar myself into movement or wakefulness.

**Rev:** Yeah, it's really the same thing.

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** Like you have the memory of it, you can feel it coursing through your body. But again, it's in the next room.

**Tass:** Sure, sure. Yeah. All right. I'm sort of at the end of my rope on this, of just trying different theories to understand the state I'm in. So I think I just want to do my best to calm down and relax, and just let my awareness completely float, like meditation drift. And essentially hope inspiration comes to me, here. I want to try to Trust My Gut.

**Rev:** Oh, yeah, roll it.

**Tass:** I rolled a four, so I have to spend a point of luck on this.

**Rev:** Yeah. So mark that point of luck, and I will mark down ramification for later.

**Tass:** Oh, don't worry about it.

**Rev:** Yeah. In this moment, the idea that you have is that you've been trying to activate your body, which is a lot of muscle control and nerve impulses, but you have been able to feel things and you've been able to see things. Your senses still seem to be active if the channel is open, so your gut is telling you to try another sense.

**Tass:** Okay. I want to try to listen. I want to gauge if anyone is still around. Like if, you know, Jake is panicking off to the side about what state I'm in or something. Just any clues at all.

**Rev:** All right. So you were able to access your other senses. You did get a full success on that. And so I think you know what you're doing now. So I don't think there's a roll to access this next sense.

**Tass:** Okay.

**Rev:** So as you focus on hearing what's around you, the sound of the wind changes. And it's like listening to enormous speakers outside, like you can hear what you're hearing.



But again, it's not directly at your ear. It is the sound all around you in this outside space. And there's a while where it's unintelligible. It sounds like high pitched squeaks and zips — chittering, almost. And then after 15, 20 minutes of focusing in on this, trying to get a sense of what's going on, you hear this muffle sound, this sound of something being covered. And then you hear a voice.

**Rev:** JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Tass this is James. Hopefully this recording is set to the right speed for you to be able to process it. First, you're okay. Well, relatively speaking. You see, you're trapped in some kind of a time distillation spell. Things are moving very slowly for you while the outside world moves on at normal speed. How slow? We haven't been able to calculate yet, but Geoffrey and I are working on it. Our guess is you're experiencing an hour for every week that goes by out here. The team has gone already. They've been gone for nine days. And they went through the portal and they took Landara in your stead. We didn't dare close the portal, because whatever is affecting you came from that other world. I know how frustrating it is to be captured and locked in a situation where all you can do is wait, but you still have your mind. And while you're in there with your thoughts and your memories, keep an eye out. Our current theory is that this spell has two major components. Whatever the source is on the other side of the portal is number one, and the team will deal with that once they're able to find it. But the other ... We we've been able to rewatch the moment you were hit. Slow it down. It's, uh ... It's hard to make out, because it was moving so fast. But that blast that hit you, there was something in it. And there's no sign of it out here, which means it's in there with you.

**Rev:** And then the message begins to loop and play again.

**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](http://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](https://Patreon.com/TheCritshow).