

Siege of the Halifax Theatre (S2, E45)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Hey, everybody. Rev here. Before we get into this week's episode, there are just a couple of things to mention. First, we want to thank all of our new patrons who joined us in the month of April. Dan Stefanich, Jacob Smith, Christopher Holloway, Joseph Fitzsimons, Erica, Blazetrain FGT, Scott the Herald, Pascal G, Thies Heider, AtheK, Justin Smith, and Eric Neustadter. So thank you to those of you who joined us in April, and those of you who join us every month over on the Patreon. You can see a full list of our patrons on our website, thecritshowpodcast.com.

Just last week, we put out the newest session of Tales from the Omniverse, which is our series of one shots, where we have a special guest on as we play through a one shot. For the month of May, we played through Earthdawn, which is one of my favorite games. It is the game that all of us learned to play on, actually. It is the game that I have been playing for ... A long time. Longer than I want to say. That was a scary realization. And we were fortunate enough to have Josh Harrison, the line developer for Earthdawn, on to run us through a one shot. So if you are interested in hearing things like Tales from the Omniverse, Tass's Hero Salad game, which is an actual play of Worlds in Peril, or Carolyn's show, Investigate the History, where she takes me through a deep dive on the lore and legends involved on the monsters and places of The Critshow, you can find all of that at Patreon.com/TheCritshow, starting at the five dollar tier. If you're someone who likes to collect swag and shirts, the month of May is the beginning of the cycle for our next swag and our next t-shirt tier. So if you saw the Trog shirt and you want to get in on that action, you can join up on that tier now to make sure that you are on the list to get the next shirt we develop when it comes out. We also have two spots left in the Founders tier, which is our top tier that allows you to play a monthly game. And the two slots that we have open are for Tass's game. So again, you can head over to Patreon.com/TheCritshow, see all of the tiers and all the goodies that come with those. And the tiers start at just one dollar.

We will make some announcements pretty soon about the next Patreon game that we will be playing. And at the end of this episode, you can stay tuned for a special interview with Megan, one of our newest cast members.

I hope you are all doing well. And with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Tass: We let you slip out of the chopper and get into position, while we're making some noise and breaking in through the back?

Jake: Yeah, I'll land on the roof and I'll keep an eye out until you guys are disembarking. And then I'll go in, draw the heat, and then you can come in.

Rev: Alex fires up the chopper and starts heading towards Indianapolis. You do notice that across the street from the Halifax, on the back side, is a condemned building that has been completely flattened. And it seems like it's stable enough that she should be able to land there and let everyone out. The two of you don't notice anything out of the ordinary. And you rush across the street with the group following you, and you get up to the back door.

You crash through the glass, and you zip by two armed guards who are standing on the ledge of the dome, looking down. You see movement inside of the theatre of the Soul Bat that you know is the alpha that you saw moving around through the chairs. And you land at the center of the stage. And you're taken aback for a moment, because laying at the center of a stage is a medical bed with an IV and a breathing apparatus. All of these machines hooked up, it seems like, to keep someone alive. In their hand is the hammer. And the hammer is pulsing and glowing. And as you look up, you see that the person being kept alive, powering the hammer, is Margaret.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Jake, you have crashed through the glass dome at the Halifax Theatre, tearing past two armed guards, tearing past the alpha Soul Bat, and landing center stage to find Margaret hooked up to life support, clutching the hammer, which is causing the energy to pulse out at random intervals. What are you doing?

Jake: Is everything still being held at bay?

Rev: For this moment. You have the element of surprise, here.

Jake: I'm gonna see if I can take the hammer.

Rev: You reach out and you pull the hammer from her hand, and a jolt of energy runs up your arm, and you feel it in your head for a second. And you have unlocked a new move.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Read it aloud.

Jake: Thunderstruck. You channel the primal energy of your divine weapon through yourself at an enemy. Roll +Weird. This deals 3-harm, close, bright, loud, ignore armor. On a 7 to 9, the lightning strikes true. On a 6 and under, the lightning still strikes true but you suffer an elemental backlash. On a 10 to 12, pick one of the following extra effects: the target is temporarily stunned, the target is thrown backwards, the attack arcs to multiple enemies within range, or you do severe harm.

Tass: Damn!

Teej: Sweet!

Rev: And you feel in the back of your head the recognition of this. Like this is what that other you had trained to do. This is how he wielded the power of The Defender.

Jake: OK. Is it still pulsing in my hand?

Rev: It is not.

Jake: What's the room look like now? [Laughs]

Rev: Roll Read a Bad Situation.

Jake: Seven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Jake: What's the best way to protect the victim?

Rev: Who is the victim, in your mind?

Jake: Margaret. Because I'm looking around and I see that this isn't pulsing out. I don't think it's going to keep anybody off her anymore. So my first concern is how do I get her out of here?

Rev: As you take a quick glance around the room, you see the hole that you have created in the glass dome. Off to your left and right side, there are bars blocking the stage from getting out into the wings. There are bars along the windows inside of the theatre, as well as the two doors leading into the theatre from the front. And so I think part of the best way to protect the victim is that you get a glance at Margaret, as well. She is hooked to a lot of machinery. And I want to re-emphasize that this is life support. And it's very clear that she is being kept alive to cause this pulse. That this machinery is keeping her alive, and it is doing it barely. It almost seems like the pulse that's happening is her rising consciousness, then it falling away again. So the best way to protect her might be to try to wake her up fully and give her back the hammer.

Jake: Do I think that I can wake her up? If she's just barely hanging on by a thread when she's attached all these things that are supposed to be keeping her alive, what do I think I can do about it?

Rev: You would have to try to look at these different machines and these different IVs and see if you could figure out what they're doing.

Jake: I'll do that, then. Figure out what the hell these do, see if I can rouse her.

Rev: All right. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Jake: Six.

Rev: As you start to look over her, trying to figure out what these different IVs are doing, what they're filled with, you hear a shout go up from the guards above. Like they have had this moment now to get their bearing, and they realize that someone is on the stage.

And they yell that there is an intruder, and you can hear sounds on both sides of the stage as people start to move around.

Tass and TJ, you hear, very faintly, the sound of shattering glass as you approach the door. What are you doing?

Tass: I'm gonna try to open the door.

Rev: As you reach your hand out to the door, everybody takes two points of damage.

Teej: I want to use my hold.

Rev: Oh, yes. Go on.

Tass: Oh!

Teej: I want to retroactively warn of an impending attack.

Rev: All right. So you get this vision in your head, right as Tass reaches for the door, of two Soul Bats on the other side, setting up a charge to blast the door out. And you grab his hand right as he reaches the doorknob, and you pull it backwards.

Teej: "Don't."

Tass: "Why?"

Teej: "There are two Soul Bats on the other side. They're gonna explode this door."

Tass: "I'll take your word for it." And I'll press everybody back on the sides of the doors.

Rev: And sure enough, as soon as you step to the side, there is a small explosion and the door blasts out.

Tass: "TJ, I love you so much."

Teej: Ayy.

Tass: I'm gonna run in.

Rev: All right. So you sprint around the corner, and there are two Soul Bats who are hunkered down behind riot shields. And they just look at you as you charge in. They are caught off guard for this moment, because they were expecting the people on the other side to have been affected by this.

Tass: I guess I'm gonna let the Soul Bat roll over my body.

Rev: OK.

Tass: "Hi. Are you guys OK?"

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Roll Manipulate Someone.

Tass: I was hoping you wouldn't say it, but I knew what I'm in for. Ten!

Jake: Oh my god.

Teej: Oh yeah!

Rev: SOUTHERN SOUL BAT: Yeah. What going on? We heard a helicopter outside and we thought someone was coming in.

Tass: "I think they are, but it's a feint. Something's going on way further down. We've got to get -- we gotta get in. We got to go!"

Rev: SOUTHERN SOUL BAT: The hammer in danger?

Tass: "Maybe!"

Rev: SOUTHERN SOUL BAT: Ok, let's go. Come on.

Rev: And so these two Soul Bats turn and they run to the end of the hallway, and they duck around some curtains and start ... Looks like they're trying to deal with something on the stage.

Tass: I'm gonna cuss myself a little bit for just sending more at Jake, but I'm going to wave everybody else in. "TJ, you think you can break this wall?"

Teej: "If I can't, then I owe you a popsicle."

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: "Weird, but do it."

All: [Laugh]

Teej: And I want to do something that a normal human couldn't do. I want to punch through this wall and break it down.

Rev: Oh, fair. OK. Roll Use Magic.

Teej: And this is my Practitioned. That's a nine.

Rev: What's your glitch?

Teej: It has a problematic side effect.

Rev: So you rear back and you punch this wall that you know the door is hidden behind, and the whole building shakes. Cracks appear in the wall and start to run down towards the stage. It seems like that whole wall that hides this door and also wraps around the theatre where the cage is connected starts to crack and crumble. But the wall is broken, and the door is visible.

Teej: Nice. I want to go towards it with the rest of the people.

Rev: So Sherri and Susannah follow you, TJ. Tass, that leaves you with Alex and Scott and Eric. What are the three of them doing?

Tass: I'm telling them, "Stay right here, guard the entrance. If anything tries to get in, fight it back. I'm gonna check at the end of the hallway, check on Jake, and then get back. We're at guard time. TJ, make sure to put up this barrier for Soul Bats."

Teej: "Yep."

Tass: And I'm sprinting down the hall.

Rev: All right. So TJ, you have got Susannah and Sherri inside the door. Roll Use Magic to put up the barrier.

Teej: You got it. That's a ten.

Rev: All right. Again, this thin film appears over the door and starts to glow. Jake, all around you, you are starting to hear weapons being cocked and orders being shouted. What are you doing?

Tass: Sorry, I sent more.

Jake: Yeah.

Tass: I'm sorry.

Jake: It's fine.

Tass: It was the mission.

Jake: What's two more?

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: What's two more in a hundred?

Rev: [Chuckles]

Jake: Where's the big one?

Rev: Roll Read a Bad Situation.

Jake: Seven.

Rev: OK. You get a hold 1.

Jake: What's the biggest threat?

Rev: Yeah. About six rows back on the far left side, you can see it hiding down in the shadows, and it is rearing back like it's getting ready to leap.

Jake: I want to shoot a lightning bolt at it.

Rev: Roll Thunderstruck.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: You hold the hammer up and then point it directly at the Soul Bat, as it gets ready to leap. And this bolt of energy comes flying out of it, and you feel this energy crackle through your body. And the room lights up a little bit. It gets hit by this energy and lets out a roar as it scrabbles backwards, knocking over chairs and trying to get behind cover.

Tass, you come around the corner that the two guards at the back door had rounded, and there are the two guards that you had followed, as well as two other guards. And they are training their weapons on Jake, who is at the middle of the stage. And behind him, in a hospital bed, hooked up to a bunch of life support machinery, is Margaret.

Tass: And I can see them like lowering weapons to fire or something?

Rev: Yes, not even or something.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Just coconuts these fools.

Tass: I mean, kinda. So do I think I have the ability to knock them out? Like, to use the light to open up the Soul Bat on each of them to, I don't know, just club them down, as opposed to outright kill them?

Rev: You think so. The dangerous part there that I think you know yourself now, being in the situation and having seen it and heard it with Mosquito Dan, is that there will be another will inside of it. So like, knocking the human unconscious would put the Soul Bat in total control.

Tass: Oh, god. I think I'm gonna try. I think I want to try to hit them with the light of the mace, but not with the spike end. I want to just see if I can put them down for a moment, and see what time that gives me.

Rev: Roll Act Under Pressure.

Tass: OK. Ten.

Teej: [Gasps]

Rev: You are able to shine the light on the two in the back ... [Laughs]

Teej: [Laughs] I'm sorry! That was ...

Jake: I tried to move past TJ's noise, but I simply could not.

Teej: I apologize.

Rev: So you are able to wash the light over the two Soul Bats in the back before they can react, and you put one hand on either side of their head and knock them together, and they both fall unconscious. You can see that the Soul Bat on them is stirring and moving, but it's not active yet.

Tass: OK. I'm just gonna yell, "Jake! The wings! They've got guns!"

Jake: And I get shot.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: They all got guns, man. They got guns in every direction.

Tass: And they're aiming them at you!

Jake: They're all aiming them at me! I'm gonna ... Boy, I'm going to kind of zip straight up. Not for the dome, but just quick and out of the way. Because I know -- I can hear all these guns cocking. They're training on the position I'm in right now. I want to get out of that position.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Tass: [Sighs]

Rev: So you can dodge up into the air and not get hit with the barrage of bullets that is incoming ... [Laughs] You can see where this is going, can't you?

Jake: [Laughs] Yeah, I can.

Teej: I know where this is going.

Jake: I didn't think about this.

Rev: But some machinery on stage is going to get hit, you're going to disorient yourself as you fly up into the air and try some sick aerial maneuvers and you're going to have a -1 forward, or because you have removed yourself from the immediate vicinity that they can see, they're gonna turn their attention towards other problems.

Jake: I will take the disorientation.

Rev: So you zip into the air, and a hail of bullets comes from three different directions. In fact, the two opposite sides of the stage just light each other up in the crossfire.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Tass, you take two points of damage, armor defeating.

Tass: [Laughs] Oh, no.

Rev: But no, there are -- splinters are torn into the stage as the bullets riddle the floor. TJ, you and Susannah and Sherri are downstairs. And it is there -- you see the ley line.

Teej: Awesome. And it's glowing with magic, and everything?

Rev: It is.

Teej: Awesome. I will start setting up the circle around it.

Rev: All right. The two of them join you and get everything set up. Tass, you have just watched Jake zip into the air and a bunch of bullets riddle the stage.

Tass: So these bars. Like, what exactly is the situation, here? Is there any way through? A door? Anything?

Rev: Yes, there is a keyhole. It looks like someone repurposed jail cells.

Tass: Are these Soul Bats moving yet, that I had just put down?

Rev: No, but the two in front of them are starting to turn around, after you have yelled to Jake on stage.

Tass: Oh, gotcha. I'm gonna keep it simple. I think I wanna try the same thing. I wanna blast open their defenses and see if I can knock them out.

Rev: Roll Act Under Pressure.

Tass: Nine.

Rev: So you can do the same thing to these two and knock them unconscious for a moment. But as they fall to the ground, one of them is going to set off an alarm. So it

won't be just the shouts that have been raised -- the rest of the building will become aware that something's going on inside the theatre. Or, the Soul Bats are going to take over all of the unconscious humans and start to act on their own behalf. Or the previously crumbled wall is going to give way and create an opening on this side onto the stage that cannot be closed.

Tass: Those are good. Those are too damn good. If I let them all go Soul Bat, I think I'm gonna have to kill one of them, at least. If the whole building gets alerted, most of them are probably gonna come in and have to deal with Jake, but we still have a hallway we can defend. So I think it's gonna be the wall breaking.

Rev: After you have painted these two with the light, you grab them and slam their heads together. And as their limp bodies fall backward, they slam into the wall. And the already cracked wall begins to crumble, and the pins holding the bar into the wall come out. And part of that cage wall swings open, and there's a large opening onto the stage now.

Jake, you are in the air. You're feeling a little dizzy.

Jake: I'm just going to keep lighting the alpha up. Shoot him with lightning again.

Rev: All right. Roll Thunderstruck.

Jake: Nine.

Rev: You again let out a blast of energy. And it tears through the alpha, and it tumbles across the ground and lets out a roar. And you're starting to see patches of skin and hair underneath all of the Soul Bat goo. As you let off this electric blast, bullets start to fly through the air again in your direction.

Jake: I just want to zig and zag about in the air. Try and dodge 'em.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: Ten.

Rev: Yeah. You glide through this theatre, ducking and weaving in perfect time. I imagine that you're using some of the light coming in through the windows and things like that to make it hard for them to pinpoint exactly where you are.

Tass, you've got this opening onto the stage, and four unconscious Soul Bats. Two of them are starting to shift and move around. The first two that you knocked out.

Tass: I'm gonna yell back down the hallway, towards those that are defending the opening. "I've got some of the guys knocked out, but the Soul Bats are rousing their bodies. They might be down soon. Just get back behind the barrier if they get in. Just don't let them through, no matter what. I'm gonna go try to deal with a few more."

Rev: ALEX: So, go downstairs?

Tass: "Yeah, at least get back behind the barrier."

Rev: ALEX: OK.

Tass: "That way, if somehow they do break through or break through a section of wall, you're there."

Rev: And you hear the sound of them, like, shuffling around.

Tass: And I am going to see if I can search one of the ones that isn't moving and get a key, if they have any. With the idea that I want to have a key for the bars on the opposite side.

Rev: Yeah, they all have a key.

Tass: OK, I'm gonna grab it and rush through, towards the stage.

Rev: All right. So are you running across the stage to the other door?

Tass: Yeah, I think I am.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure to get across the stage. You know, they have heard you shouting, there's a little bit of light up here ...

Tass: Eleven.

Rev: Yeah. You are able to run and leap over the broken parts of the stage, and you get to the other side. And you are in front of the gate. There are two guards behind it. They're aiming up higher into the theatre, but as you start to approach, their focus turns toward you.

Tass: I guess I'm gonna try again. Like, you know, with the Soul Bat form on. Just like, "There's chaos! There's something going on over there. Let me in! Let me in!"

Rev: Roll Manipulate Someone, I think with a -1.

Tass: Yeah ...

Rev: Cause the shout came from that side of the stage. And you are unfamiliar.

Tass: Yeah, fair. Gotta try.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: So, an eight.

Rev: HALIFAX SOUL BAT: Yeah well, it's dangerous out there. You gotta get the asset off the stage.

Tass: "Oh, shit. Yeah. Cause it'll hurt her!" And I'll run up and start wheeling her over.

Rev: And I think that they open the gate, and one of them runs out and helps because there's so much equipment.

Teej: [Chuckles]

Tass: Awesome.

Rev: You can't see it, but I'm just shaking my head in disgust at this Soul Bat. But it is absolutely what he would do. Yeah. So you pull Margaret and all the life support equipment off the stage with the help of this Soul Bat, and behind the other gated door.

Jake, you've got the Soul Bat pinned in the back of the theatre. You have hit it with two of these blasts. You are easily dodging the bullets being fired at you. What are you doing?

Jake: Man, I just want to keep lighting up the alpha. I think I'm gonna kind of zip to be, like, in the dome. Because I'm hoping that the next volley of gunfire shatters all the glass up here, if I get out of the way. So I want to position myself in the dome before I cast this next lightning bolt down onto the alpha.

Rev: You dodge up between the two armed guards who have been shooting down at you. And the alpha Soul Bat has now been hit by this twice, so it is starting to duck and weave. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: That is an eleven.

Rev: Yeah. You lift the hammer again, and outside you hear a crack of lightning. And it actually comes down through the dome and channels through you, straight into the alpha Soul Bat that is directly under you. And for the moment it stops moving, as the Soul Bat, the goo, is spread out all over its body as the black goo of the Soul Bat sloughs off in pieces all around. And underneath is this older, pale body with long white hair.

Jake: The old, pale body. Does it look like old, pale, long haired Grigori Nash?

Rev: Yeah, I think that you have seen him enough to recognize a slightly different version of him.

Jake: Then I'm gonna plunge down and levy lightning bolt into him. I don't think it'll kill him, but I'm hoping that I can just -- I mean, I'm spreading this thing out, and we are playing a game of minutes.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: So I am just trying to ... You know, I've knocked him down. I'm trying to keep him knocked down. I'm trying to char the body up or drive more Soul Bat off of it. Whatever I can do to buy some time, here.

Rev: So when you plunge down, where are you going to? Like are you landing on the ground next to him and trying to summon the lightning from the sky onto him?

Jake: I'm just diving down so that I'm not directly between the guards in the dome.

Rev: Hmm.

Jake: So I'm not trying to go all the way down to the ground.

Rev: OK. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: Nine.

Rev: So you can get off another bolt of lightning on this body. But you're gonna take some damage from the guards who have just trained on you from the dome. Or, the Soul Bat is going to retreat from the body and try to find something else to get onto. Or, the lightning, when it strikes, is going to result in a fire.

Jake: [Laughs] That's poetic, but I will take the damage.

Rev: OK. So you take two points of damage, armor-defeating, as you get lit up with bullets as you dive down.

Tass, you have just pulled Margaret off of the stage with the help of one of the Soul Bat guards, and they have the door open now and they are moving her further down the hallway. What are you doing?

Tass: Oh, I'm gonna try to club 'em. Put them down.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Tass: Cool.

Jake: That old chestnut.

Tass: Eight.

Rev: All right. So you can get this hat trick of the third group and knock them both unconscious. But you're going to draw unwanted attention, the cord that Margaret is on is not going to be long enough to get her any further down the hallway, or the resulting cord unplugging is gonna start a fire -- no, I'm kidding.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Every single --

Rev: Everything leads to fire. Or, both of these Soul Bats, when they go down, are going to go into that primal instinct mode right away.

Tass: I think ... I think the cord's not long enough. So she's just, you know, that little ways down.

Rev: OK. You paint the light over both of them and knock them unconscious. And you have Margaret about halfway down the hallway, but the cord that all of this is connected to is taut.

Tass: OK. Then as fast as I can, I'm gonna get their keys, if they have any on their persons.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: And their guns, and chuck those into the auditorium. And then shut and lock that door, with me in the auditorium, so that they don't have a way to shoot in or get out.

Rev: So Jake, you have come halfway down and you have blasted the Soul Bat again. And then two assault rifles come tumbling on to the stage in a clatter, and you notice that Margaret is not there anymore.

Jake: I'm just gonna keep zipping around this room and keeping an eye on the alpha. And as it starts to like reform or anything, hitting it with another bolt. Like, I don't have a particular ... I know if I hit any one of the regular ones, if this damage is affecting Soul Bats, then it's going to kill them. But I don't need to just keep -- laying into Nash anymore is going to do nothing, except maybe drive it further away where I have it less contained. So I'm just kind of flying around, avoiding. And if it starts to recongeal on Nash, hit it again to deter it. And then flying around and dodging. Like, that's just kind of my M.O. for now, until the spell goes off.

Rev: OK. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: Seven.

Tass: Oh ...

Jake: Woof.

Rev: So you can dodge and weave around this space still. But the Soul Bat is going to grow wise to what you're doing and try to find something else to grab onto. Or, all of the chaos going on in here is going to bring the rest of the people in this building. Or, more of the walls of the theatre are going to start crumbling and breaking from all of the thunder and lightning strikes.

Jake: I think the walls crumble some more.

Rev: TJ, down inside of the room with the ley line, cracks start to appear on the walls. And you hear gunshots above, coming from the group of three trying to protect you as they are shooting out the door. And you're starting to see light coming in through those cracks. It seems like the wall at the back of the theatre is crumbling, and that back wall is the wall that is the side of this room.

Teej: "Alex, I need you to keep an eye on those cracks. If anything gets through those, you're my line of defense. Scott, same with you. Eric, keep an eye on the door."

Rev: And they all fan out. Scott and Alex come down the stairs and start to watch these ever growing cracks. And you can see, like, things moving around on the other side. As

you glance up, Eric is shooting out the door at ... It looks like two or three Soul Bats that are just slashing at the barrier.

Teej: "Eric, I think we'll be fine right there at the moment. Can you help out Alex and Scott?"

Rev: ERIC: OK.

Rev: And so he turns and runs down the stairs. TJ, roll Read a Bad Situation.

Teej: That's a nine.

Rev: You get a hold 1.

Teej: Are there any dangers we haven't noticed?

Rev: As Eric turns and runs down the stairs, you've seen the light coming in a little bit on the walls. You're also starting to see it around the frames of the door. Like it seems like the Soul Bats outside are starting to attack the wall and go around the barrier you have put up.

Teej: Oh, OK. "Eric, never mind. Go back to the door."

Rev: Yeah, he stops.

Rev: ERIC: What?

Teej: "Never mind. Keep your eye on that door. Make sure that they don't get past it. They're trying to go in around the barrier."

Rev: ERIC: All right.

Rev: So Tass, you have thrown these guns through onto the stage, stepped through, and locked the door behind you. You see that Jake is hovering in the midst of the room. The wall behind you is starting to crumble and crack. The far wall, the gate has completely

fallen down. And you can hear the sounds of Soul Bats slashing and scratching on that side of the stage.

Tass: I think I'm gonna haul ass that way. "I'm gonna check on TJ, Jake."

Jake: "Sounds good."

Tass: And I'm gonna sprint around and down into that hall.

Rev: Yeah. You come around the corner, and you see those four Soul Bats, digging and ripping at the wall, trying to get around the protective barrier.

Tass: I wanna try to knock them off of it. Like, you know, I'm not aiming to kill, here. But I definitely just want to be taking swings to knock them the hell off of the wall, so they can't do what they're trying.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Tass: OK. Ten.

Rev: Yeah. You are able to spin this light mace around and knock each of them to the ground and get this door clear.

TJ, the spell components are all in place. Sherri and Susannah have taken up their positions. Roll Use Magic.

Teej: Here it comes. That's a twelve.

Rev: OK!

Tass: Yeah!

Jake: Yes!

Rev: So in the basement of the Halifax Theatre, the spell setup is complete. Sherri and TJ and Susannah all begin to do the magical gestures that they have practiced. The energy

builds up and starts to flow into the ley line. Sherri and Susannah go over and they pick up the book, and they hold it out in front of TJ. And we see a magical blade appear in his hand, and he plunges it through the book. And there is a ripple of energy that rushes through the Halifax. And we pan out and see it ripple through Indianapolis, through Indiana, through the United States, and over the entire world.

Tass, as this hits, you see the energy from the spell rippling up the stairs towards you.

Tass: Oh, I think I'm going to think to the Soul Bat. "It's time. Hide."

Rev: And it does.

There's a moment of chaos as Soul Bats are ripped from bodies and drawn down this hallway, into the ley line. And this is happening all over the world. Soul Bats, flying off of people, drawn to the closest ley line, sucked inside, and sent back to their home dimension.

Jake, floating in the middle of the Halifax Theatre, you see the alpha Soul Bat fluctuate and burst into a bright light, and then ash. The body on the ground gasps, and then slowly stands up.

Jake: "Nash?"

Rev: The body turns and looks at you.

Rev: REV: No. This was his body. But I took it from him, when I realized it was more powerful than mine.

Jake: "Rev?"

Rev: REV: Yes. Who are you?

Jake: I wanna, like, land in front of him. And be like, "I'm Jake. I'm your friend. Do you remember?"

Rev: REV: Jake, you look so different.

Jake: "Well, in fairness, so do you."

Rev: REV: Why did you stop this? This was going to work.

Jake: "What do you mean?"

Rev: REV: This was the way to unite people, to get them all under the same flag. The Soul Bat promised me unity. There's so much hatred of one another.

Jake: Do I really think this is Rev?

Rev: I mean, you don't have any reason not to.

Jake: Can I use Sensitive?

Rev: Yes.

Jake: Fifteen.

Rev: You get a very clear vision of all of you fighting off the Soul Bat, and having Rev's body, but not realizing there was another body inside of it -- this body of Nash. But you see a moment before this happens. You see the moment that the three of you are standing outside, planning to come inside. And the Soul Bat is talking in Rev's head about this exact idea: that we can only unify as a group if we have the same voice, if we have the same desires. And you can hear him trying to fight it. "This doesn't make sense. There's no need for that. There's goodness in people, and free will is important." And in your vision, a small tendril from the Soul Bat comes off of the body, and you see it weave into his ear. And for a moment in the vision, you are with it as it goes into his brain and starts cutting out little sections, and connecting inside of it and feeding this idea, this belief, into him. And it coaxes him. That he'll need more power to succeed, and that it senses there's a greater power nearby. And that with its help, he can move into its body so that he'll have the perfect body, the perfect ally, and the perfect mind to accomplish this.

Jake: "Hey man, listen to me. I know what the Soul Bat told you, and I know what it did to you. It literally rewired your brain. But you don't have that brain anymore, all right? I know you still got this thought, but that's all it is now. It's just a thought, which means you can shake it. This isn't hard wired into you anymore. Snap out of it. You know this isn't the way."

Rev: As you're saying this to him, you see this tiny tendril come out of his ear and then go back inside. It seems like something is still in there and connected into this thought.

Jake: I want to Jinx it.

Rev: Roll Jinx.

Jake: Thirteen.

Teej: [Chuckles]

Rev: This small burst of energy happens right next to his ear, and what looks like a tiny black worm falls out to the ground and sizzles and turns to ash. His eyes clear, and he looks at you and there's more recognition than before. Before it was like seeing someone that you have passed every day at work, and now he's looking at you like someone that he has missed. And he collapses forward, wrapping his arms around your shoulder.

Jake: "Hey, it's OK, man. It's all right. We did it. We did it. The Soul Bats are gone."

Rev: REV: Thank god. I can't ... Oh god, how do I make up for everything that I've done?

Jake: "Man, you're Nash now. You're in Nash's body. There still has to be potential for that."

Rev: REV: I guess. The other Soul Bats, they ... They were executing it so well, but they ran into some kind of resistance. I can't really tell what it was. It was so strange. The plan -- I had the plan and we implemented it, and then I became an asset in it. I had to survive. I had to stay under control, and create more. I was the only one that could create more.

But I would try to lash out and run, and that part of me would take over -- the feral part. And so they set this prison up, once they had the ... That.

Rev: And he nods at the hammer.

Jake: "Well, you're not imprisoned anymore. We flushed these things out across the globe. Soul Bats are gone. The one that could reproduce is gone. They're not a threat anymore. Unfortunately, human society is kind of in shambles. But everybody's still alive, so it can be rebuilt. That might be something you can help with."

Rev: And about that time, Tass and TJ and the rest of the remaining IPT come out onto the stage. And you see Jake standing and talking to Nash.

Tass: Um ... "Hey, boys." And I'm just -- I'm scrutinizing Nash.

Rev: He turns to face you, and there is a broad grin on his face.

Rev: REV: God. You all look like hell.

Jake: [Laughs] "It's Rev. He has possessed this otherwise empty body, and is in his right mind again."

Tass: "Oh, son of a bitch. Awesome!"

Teej: "Nice job. Did you see me do some sweet magic?"

Rev: REV: Me?

Teej: "Yeah."

Rev: REV: No, I was out here in the theatre.

Teej: "Oh. I did some sweet magic."

Rev: REV: Yeah, the Soul Bats are gone.

Teej: "Yeah, that was me. And Sherri and Susannah."

Rev: REV: Good god. When did you learn magic?

Teej: [Laughs]

Tass: "It's been a hell of a couple of years, man."

Teej: "Yeah."

Rev: REV: Wait, Margaret was here. Where is she?

Tass: "She's in the hallway. She's safe."

Rev: REV: We need to make sure that she's OK. The machines that she was hooked up to ... We should check on her.

Rev: And he walks down through the center of the aisle and hops back up onto the stage.

Jake: Yeah, I'll go with him.

Rev: And as you pass underneath the shattered dome, a bolt of lightning comes streaking down from the sky and hits you. And you are in this familiar white space again. And while you don't see anyone, you do hear a voice.

Rev: THE DEFENDER: Jacob Pierle, you are worthy once again.

Jake: And as your eyes clear and the flash fades from the room, Tass and TJ, you see that standing in the middle of the room, underneath the dome, is Jake in his human form.

Tass: "Oh!"

Teej: "Dude, you're you again!"

Jake: I want to lick my teeth.

Rev: Yeah, neither of them are any pointier than normal.

Jake: "I'm ... Well, cured? Not really cured. Reset, I guess."

Tass: "Wow."

Teej: "Can you transport? Transport to me."

Jake: I want to try.

Rev: You appear next to TJ. And you hear, like, in the back of your head.

Rev: OTHER JAKE: Oh, god. Oh, yes. Awesome.

Jake: Yeah. I am Divine once more. All right. This can work. And I'll keep following Rev.

Rev: You all head down the hallway to where Margaret lays in the hospital bed, and Rev starts to check her vitals.

Rev: REV: This was set up to keep her going in and out of consciousness. To keep her awake long enough that the hammer would flare up, but not long enough that she could focus and use it.

Rev: And he starts removing IVs and turning off machines. And after a few moments, her eyes start to flutter open. And I think we fade out on this scene.

So what is your plan now? You have gotten rid of the Soul Bat, you've done what this world's Nash has requested. What are you going to do?

Jake: So here's my thought. There's not exactly a power vacuum now, because we didn't just kill everyone. But humans are still like super weak and in a really bad place, that the vampires could trample if they wanted to. But I think with Rev as Nash and with me as no longer a vampire, that we could go negotiate a coexistence with the vampires now. Like that Rev has his foot in both worlds. And, you know, he's kind of a bridge. And that I'm not anymore. I'm totally human. But that if I go back and I say, "Hey, I don't even have a

stake in your world anymore, but I still want to save it." That we might be able to kind of create a peace in this world.

Rev: Yeah. I think that with you, and with Rev inside of this vampire body, with Ori and Rachel having seen what you accomplished. That we see a few flashes of the four of you standing in front of the council in Chicago, talking. And that this process takes a couple of days, but that we see the four of you talking to groups, and meetings being had at first over the phone and then in person, and humans and vampires meeting. And there's a little bit of that threat of the Divine and this very powerful magician to keep the peace. But it seems like something's going to be worked out. We won't go through the minutia of writing up the accords, here.

Teej: One: humans are friends, not food.

Rev: Yes.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: But we'll say about a week passes before you all feel safe to go home, that things are changing and that this place will be all right. And really, the other Jake in your head now is going to pick right up where you left off. So almost nothing will be noticed, once you step away.

Jake: And just as a point of order: at some point in this week, deal with the nuke in a more certain manner, please. [Laughs] Like, while we're discussing accords. Disarming the nuke.

Rev: Sure, sure.

Jake: Yes.

Rev: I think that's one of the first things you bring up at the first meeting. You're like, "And the nuke." And some vampire's like, "Oh, right."

Jake: Huh? What? Me? No?

Rev: "I ... I've never heard of such a thing."

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Is there anything that I'm missing throughout the course of this montage of the things that you all want to do before you head back?

Tass: Yeah. I mean, one thing has occurred to me that pretty much has to be a conversation. Because I told them that this Tass was fried out of the body, that this task was dead. So eventually when we leave, he's not gonna be. So I feel like there has to be a conversation about, hey, the Soul Bat's still here, but it's not exactly a Soul Bat anymore, etc..

Rev: Yeah. I think it's like the morning before you all plan to leave. And you're sitting around the table in a hotel in Chicago, and Tass brings this up.

Teej: "Well, I remember talking with the Soul Bat, and everything. I thought it maybe had gotten sucked away with the rest."

Jake: "Yeah. How did it not get burned out by the 'Kill All Soul Bats' spell?"

Teej: "Yeah."

Tass: "So it's not really a Soul Bat. It used to be, but whatever the vampires did to make it work with Mosquiot Dan made it something else. Like it still had the properties, but it can't reproduce. It can't take over someone. It can't force them to do all of the things. Like, almost none of the negative effects are in play. It's just a thing that wants to live. And I guess I can just try and ask, but I'm not even sure it killed Tass. I think it is more like it didn't have anywhere else to go."

Teej: "I can see what you're saying. Kind of like whenever I saw that Nash was in Rev, and that it was almost like a smaller version of Rev. Like, he was over encompassing Rev."

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "So maybe this thing is just over encompassing Other Tass."

Tass: "I mean, kind of. I mean like if it could just rip someone's mind out and eat it, it would have done that to me. But it literally can't."

Rev: SOUL BAT: Yes. This is the case. I have only silenced the other one. It was a gamble. I was trying to appear strong. But I cannot do these things. We've discussed that I can't take over anything. He's -- he's down there, but silenced.

Tass: "Oh, really?"

Rev: SOUL BAT: Yes. I apologize for my bluff.

Jake: [Laughs] What?!

Tass: "Whoa."

Teej: "Oh really, what? Whoa, what?"

Tass: "I guess Tass is still alive."

Jake: "Oh. Well so what does happen, then? Is the Soul Bat strong enough to maintain power?"

Tass: "That's a good question. What does happen, if he's still in there?"

Rev: SOUL BAT: He has been watching and listening. This world is far different from the one that he has grown accustomed to. I thought in this moment that when you left, he would rise up, and I and he would have to have a similar conversation. But he seems to not be sure he wants to come out. He's not sure he fits this world anymore. And he is unsure of how to move forward with some of the things that he has done in the passing years.

Tass: "Yeah, I get that. He killed a lot of people, not understanding that they could be saved. I know what that would do to me. I know what it has done to me, in some cases. And not even close to on the same level."

Rev: SOUL BAT: I will do what I can in the coming years to show him the world changing, perhaps heal him or coax him out. But right now, he wishes to be alone.

Tass: "OK. So there it is." I think I lay that all out for them. Like, "He's there. He's in there. You know, we can't do much about it anyway. So I think they kind of have an agreement."

Jake: "Well, I suppose I can't ask for more than that."

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "I guess this is sort of his penance."

Tass: "Oof."

Rev: And so we find ourselves in a run down building on the outskirts of Chicago. The three of you are standing before a portal. Margaret and Sheri and Rev and Ori and Rachel are all there.

Tass: "Well, almost none of this went the way that we were expecting, but I'm glad things are a little more peaceful now. And for what it's worth, I'm sorry. Everett is a friend, where we're from."

Rev: MARGARET: I'd like to tell you to go home and take it easy, but it sounds like you've got work to do.

Jake: I'll just say my goodbyes and give my hugs to everybody that is here, but I don't really have anything else that needs doing before I go. Other me is in here, and he is exactly as capable, and he won't miss a step when I'm gone.

Teej: I think I'll save my hugs for when we get back, and I'm a hairy man again.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Fair. So the three of you turn, and TJ reaches into his pocket and pulls out the piece of paper, throws it through the portal, and you all step through. And as we fade out on

this world, Margaret turns and looks at the assembled group. Rachel and Ori, with their supernatural auras and menacing fangs. Rev, inside this ancient and powerful body. Jake, with his enhanced hammer crackling with electricity. TJ, with his sharp, clear eyes, magic rippling around his fingertips. Tass, housing the last Soul Bat. And her daughter Sherri, her late father's pistol hanging at her hip. Margaret gives a slight smile and nods.

Rev: MARGARET: Let's get back to work.

Rev: CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: It's time for something we have not had in forever. It's time for end of session experience.

Tass: Oh, my god.

Teej: Woohoo!

Jake: Now, who gets it? Which world person?

Rev: You get to pull this with you. This goes on to your home world character sheet.

Jake: Yes. My permanent record.

Tass: Oh my goodness.

Rev: So did you conclude the current mystery?

Jake: Yes.

Rev: What was it?

Jake: It was to go and stop the Soul Bat invasion of the world and come back. And we did that. And also we stopped a nuke, and also we negotiated peace among the vampires, and also we saved humanity. So like pretty yeah.

Rev: And you did it ... I have to say, you did it in ... You know, we jokingly called it the darkest timeline. But this was, from a mechanical standpoint ...

Tass: A nightmare!

Rev: Yeah, a game operating under the Doomed conditions. You know, I kind of briefly touched on it during one episode, but any time that Luck was in play, or, "Oh, what's the situation?" This story was designed for it to always be the rough one. Oh yeah, there is a Soul Bat in the helicopter. Of course, because that's not what you want. Yes, there is a monster inside of the cabin, and it's got a Soul Bat on it. You know, if you had gone back to check the museum, it was rubble. You know, any time something could go wrong that you weren't directly affecting, it was going wrong off-screen.

Tass: Like not staying for some talks about peace and what to do, and a nuke getting sent.

Rev: Yes. Yeah.

Tass: Love it. I love it so much, though.

Rev: It was rough, but you all did very well. Did you save someone from certain death or worse?

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Rev: Yeah. Did we learn something new and important about the world? This is kind of a no brainer. Like, you learned so much stuff. The Soul Bat has the ability to, like, lobotomize essentially someone.

Teej: Mmhmm.

Rev: And link to it, in a way.

Jake: The way that the Divine powers manifest with the same person and by the same God is different.

Rev: And did we learn something new and important about one of the hunters?

Jake: We all know each other so well at this point.

Teej: Mmhmm.

Jake: We definitely learned what would have become of you if pivotal moments had been different. Like, I don't think that anybody here was on a path mentally with their character that you couldn't see playing out in the story that we already run.

Tass: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I can only speak for myself, but I look at that and go, that's right. Think that makes a lot of sense.

Rev: All right. So you all get two points of experience, and you also get eight gear points. Does anybody level up?

Tass: I do.

Jake: I also do.

Rev: All right. So what are you two taking?

Tass: I think that I am going to just do a stat boost. I'm going to do +1 to Weird. I think especially after all the last chunk of that stretch, and literally dealing with a monster being a part of me and it's magic enhancing me, that that just gave me a little more insight into that realm.

Rev: Cool.

Jake: I'm just taking +1 Cool. I faced the darkest timeline and I succeeded. So I am a little bit more cool under pressure on the way back.

SFX:

CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: So we are back in TJ's subterranean lair, and the three of you are suddenly back in your bodies, right in the moment that you stepped through the portal. Rev looks up from the console.

Rev: "REV": Are you guys gonna go?

Tass: [Laughs] "Well, that will always be weird. We're back, bub."

Rev: "REV": How'd it go?

Tass: "Well, we're back, so."

Rev: "REV": That's fair.

Tass: "Yeah."

Rev: "REV": Awesome.

Teej: "Well, we did as you asked."

Rev: "REV": Excellent. Excellent. All right. Let me get the gem and get the spell ready. And I'll go home, and you'll have your Rev back. Great.

Rev: And he turns and starts rummaging through the desk, and he pulls out the gem. Tass, as you see this gem, one of your visions washes over you. I don't know if you remember this or not, but weeks and weeks and weeks ago, right before you stepped through this portal, you spent a point of Luck, which brings you a vision. In this vision, you see yourself holding this gem, and you can tell that it is full and charged. And you see yourself throwing it through the portal. And on the other side, things do get a little better, a little brighter. Something is brought back. And then you're brought back to that same moment of holding the gem, and you turn and you walk away from the portal and you place it down into a summoning circle. And what is summoned with the power of this gem is a gaunt, hollow faced man covered in scars. And in this moment, you realize that because his soul is old and powerful and rare, due to it coming from another world, it is the bait you would need to lure in Koschei the Deathless.

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.

Rev: So I am here today with Megan, one of our newest cast members for The Critshow. Hi, how are you doing?

Megan: Hi, I'm pretty good. How are you?

Rev: Good, I'm good. So tell us a little bit about yourself.

Megan: So I live in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. And I am originally from Kyle, South Dakota, on the other side of the state. I'm a member of the Oglala Lakota Sioux tribe, and I grew up on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Rev: So how did you get into playing tabletop role playing games?

Megan: So my husband and I, Dan, heard our roommate talking about playing DnD with our neighbors, and it sounded really interesting, but we had never really had the opportunity to try it out. I know I had some friends in college who played, but I was always nervous about jumping into their sessions, because I had no idea what any of it was about. So I was really anxious about disrupting anything. Or like, I don't want to slow anyone down or make them take the time to explain it to me. So I never really pursued it, even though I thought it sounded really neat. So we went over to play this one shot. It was about this shipment of beer that was supposed to make it to this tavern for the winter and never showed up. And so we were hired to go track it down. And it was so much fun. And I played a ranger, and I had a sloth that would hang on my back like a backpack and hand me arrows.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: And I was hooked from, like, that moment forward. So I started playing DnD with some other friends. We did Curse of Strahd, and then started our own campaign with another group of friends. And then we got really involved in our local game store -- Game Chest. And they're just the most amazing people and this wonderful community. And one day there was a Facebook post promoting a GM support group. And it said, you know, GMs who have been doing this long time, let's get together and talk. Or, people that want to learn to GM, get together and we'll talk to you about what it takes to get started. And that was something that we had talked about but had no idea where to start. So we went, and it ended up being the guy who put it on, and then me and my husband. And that was -- that was the only people that showed up for it. So we got to meet this guy, Jeff. And we just sat for hours and talked about gaming, and he started talking about different systems. And we just got really excited about this possibility of opening this world of tabletop role playing games, instead of just DnD. Which, still love DnD. But from there, we would meet once a month, like the first Wednesday of every month. And over the months it went from being just the three of us. A handful of months later, it was, I think, thirty.

Rev: Oh, wow.

Megan: People. Yeah, it just -- it blew up. It became incredible. And I started playing these sessions of all of these different games like Torg Eternity, and we did Fate, and then my friend John ran Monster of the Week. Because I got to meet all of these amazing people and we got to know each other. And he's like, "Oh, I think you're going to love Monster of the Week. Let's get together." And so we sat down and he ran us through a mystery. And it was about this this ghost of this disco.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: There were like ashes in a disco ball that we had ... It was insane. It was just completely mental. And it was incredible, and I fell in love immediately. And I went and I bought the book.

Rev: I'm over here, making notes. Ashes in a disco ball ...

Megan: [Laughs] And so then I had been listening to The Adventure Zone. Because when I was first getting into DnD and they started playing Monster the week in their second season, which I loved that season, but it's not great for learning how to actually

play the game. So then I started looking for recommendations for other podcasts, and somebody on Reddit mentioned The Critshow. And so I started listening to this weird little show that kind of taught me how to play, and changed my life.

Rev: So it's interesting that you say the idea of like you wanted to get in and play, but you were afraid of, like, doing it wrong or taking up people's time. Because I hear that so often, that people are like, oh yeah, I want to play. But I I'm afraid that I'm going to get with that group and I'm going to do it wrong. And it's going to be like a hassle for the people that I'm playing with. I think that's the thing that I've really enjoyed lately, going to cons and running this game for people. Because in that environment, there is no expectation of like, oh yeah, I should know how to play this already. And so I think that's such a cool thing that we get from running these one shots at conventions, is there's not that fear of having to know the game or joining into a game already in progress. You don't feel like, oh gosh, I'm not going to know what I'm doing. I'm not going to -- I'm going waste everybody's time. Because we're there to teach it.

Megan: Oh, absolutely. Just the episodic nature of the game in general. It's meant to be Monster of the Week -- it's a new monster every week. So it's so easy to play as a one shot, and being able to ... Yeah, I've ran several sessions at different cons, and been able to be that person that can kind of set the table, you know? Set expectations and say, you don't need to know anything. You need two dice. I have everything else. I will walk you through everything. You needn't have ever even played an RPG before.

Rev: So you have the ranger with a sloth who is handing you arrows. I imagine that's going to be hard to beat. But what is your favorite character you've ever roleplayed?

Megan: Oof.

Rev: Yeah, it's a hard question. I ask the hard hitting questions here, after the credits on The Critshow.

Megan: Yeah, that's a tricky one. Because I'm trying to think of like other characters I play. I feel like I've been running Monster of the Week for so long.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: Actually, in our Chosen game, I think is is my favorite character. I play Henry. She is the The Flake, which is essentially a conspiracy theorist. But the way that I wanted to make her was I wanted to go between legitimate journalist and conspiracy theorist, and I wanted to hit in the middle and take a hard left. So she works for BuzzFeed. And the way that I use my moves is ... Like Net Friends, I roll to take a BuzzFeed quiz.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: To see if I can ... Like so if we go into a room and there's like all this occult symbols around, I'll look up a BuzzFeed quiz. Like, pick occult symbols and we'll tell you which cult you belong to.

Rev: [Laughs] Which cult you belong to.

Megan: [Laughs] Yeah. So all of the playbooks play into a certain type of trope, but to be able to take that and then completely kind of turn it on its head and take it from a different angle? Yeah, she's definitely, I think, at the top of the list.

Rev: So what non gaming related hobbies do you have that people might find interesting? And I ask this question, it's fully loaded, because I know a handful of things that you've done. Because we have had the opportunity to meet, where you have brought tons of baked goods and things that you have cross stitched. And I believe I've seen you going around in roller skates for your derby.

Megan: Yeah. I mean, that's why I need like a list. Because I'm sitting here like, what do I do? I'm going to forget something important. I forgot I do roller derby.

Rev: You kind of collect hobbies the way that Tass collects dice.

Megan: I do. I like to be moderately good at a lot of things. I don't ever really feel the need to master anything in particular. But I want to be able to just do everything.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: Yeah. I bake and I love baking. I love cooking. Actually, I just made an Atlantic Beach Pie last night, and I'm going to try making macaroons for the first time today. So

that's ... it's a busy -- it's a busy day, but I'm excited about that. I really love hiking and camping. My husband and I do a lot of outdoor stuff. I ride vintage mopeds. I have a 1977 Puch Maxi Sport. Her name is Mabel and she's beautiful, and I'm trying to do an engine rebuild on her. And it hasn't been warm enough, but now it is. But now I can't get together with my friends who are supposed to help me with it. So ... We'll see how that goes. And yeah, I do a lot of crafting. Oh gosh. I cross stitch and embroider and I knit and I crochet and I sew ... Pretty much any type of needle craft, I've messed with at the very least. And then yeah, I recently started doing roller derby in January. It was something that I had always thought was so cool, but I was like, oh, there's no way I can do that. I got these hollow bird bones and I'll just get murdered.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: Yeah. And then my friend was like, no, my wife used to do it and she's your size. And I was like, wait, what? I can actually do this? And it was like fate, because like a week later I saw that our local league had posted that January was their recruitment month. And so I just walked in and I was like, hey, I know absolutely zero about roller derby. I have never been on skates before. Teach me your ways.

Rev: [Chuckles]

Megan: And they got me on skates. And yeah, twice a week ever since. It's been incredible. It's it's been awful not being able to go right now. But I did just order outdoor skates, so that I can keep practicing.

Rev: Do you have a ... Like a most memorable or your favorite critical fail or critical success that you've had at the table?

Megan: My most memorable fail was in DnD. And I play a druid, and we were hiding from the storm. And I had to dig us, like, a burrow as like a badger so we could hide in it from the storm. Because it was, you know, it's a magic storm because it's DnD. But we couldn't bring in our horse, you know, so he was outside. So the next morning we go outside and I go, "Oh, I'm going to go check on Franklin." And my DM said roll an Animal Handling check. And I Nat 1. And he's like, oh yeah, that horse is dead.

Rev: [Laughs] No ...

Megan: And I ... I burst into tears. And I just -- head in my face, just crying and crying and crying. And I play with the four other guys, and they're all sitting there watching me. And my DM, Cody, he goes, are you crying? And I just, like, nodded my head yes. Still face in my hands, just bawling. And he goes, are you also laughing? And I nod again, still crying. And he goes, are you laughing because you're crying? And I just like, yeah, I'm so sorry. And I just -- they just sat there and let me get it out, and let me go get some water and pull myself together. And that's stuck with me ever since.

Rev: Yeah. That's fair.

Megan: And I think just the coolest visual I have from a critical success. We were fighting a fire elemental, this giant fire elemental. And it was just a cool scene where I cast water wall and it crashed over the top of it. And it was the last hit before it died. So just the way it was described in this great visual of this big wall of water coming up at this big lava monster, and then taking them out.

Rev: And the last question I have actually comes from our Discord. It's a would you rather. Are you ready?

Megan: Oh, boy. OK.

Rev: Would you rather spend a week in Europe, all expenses paid, or one hour on the moon?

Megan: Moon. One hundred percent, moon.

Rev: [Laughs] All right. Well, thank you for joining us, Megan. We look forward to hearing more from you very soon.

Megan: Yeah, same. Thank you.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC