

Fire and Wine (S3, E22)

SFX: CRITSHOW HOLIDAY MUSIC

Rev: OK. When you sneeze, does it come mostly out of your mouth or your nose or both?

Jake: Is this the episode?

All: [laugh]

Rev: Listen, you're defeating the whole purpose of me getting a rolling start if you ask me that every time.

Jake: I just ... Sometimes I'm like, maybe this thought just struck him, like in the moment. Or maybe this is a setup.

Rev: No, it's not a setup. This is just the first thought I had.

Tass: I think mouth for me, because mine sound like I'm coughing and dying at the same time. Though, when I try to stifle it instead, it comes out of my eyes.

Megan: Holy shit! What?

Tass: Yeah, it's this horrible thing. I try — I get pretty close to stifling the sneeze, and like hunker down, and it's bad.

Rev: Do they like bulge?

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Megan: I ... Oh, I don't know. I have a terrible thing that I do that's just instinctual. Somehow. I don't know how this became like the thing that I do when I sneeze. But if I have to sneeze — like I know it's going to be a big one — I always like lift my shirt over my nose. And it comes out of my mouth, so I just end up with, like, my sneeze all over my

boobs. And I have to, like ... I have to, like, get a Kleenex and like clean off my fucking chest. It's awful.

Rev: [laughs]

Megan: But, it doesn't go into the world, so ...

Jake: So you're a hero, I guess.

Megan: It's preferable.

Jake: I sneeze out of my mouth. I think people sometimes think that my sneezes are coughs, because I don't sneeze with like a "choo" sound as much.

Megan: We were just having this conversation that yesterday I sneezed and I covered my mouth when I did it, like I just cover the whole region. But Jacqueline was like, did you just cover your mouth? I was like, yeah. She was like, do you sneeze out of your mouth? I said, yeah, where do you sneeze from? She's like, well, you're supposed to sneeze from your nose. Because if you're sneezing out of your mouth, you're defeating the purpose. I said, I know, but I'm also not just blowing —

Jake: Yeah! Just shooting snot out of your nose!

Megan: Yeah. I remember watching that episode of the Magic School Bus and being like, is something wrong with me?

Jake: This seems like the do you wipe sitting down or standing up conversation?

Megan: [laughs]

Rev: I beg your pardon?

Jake: Yeah, right? There are two populations of people, and neither one knows the other exists. I'm a sit down person.

Tass: OK, yeah.

Rev: You can wipe standing up?

Jake: Yeah. Some people like stand up some so they can reach better, like have better access.

Rev: Oh, like not like just straight up and down.

Jake: No, I don't think it's like straight vertical, but I think some people get their butt up off the toilet seat to be like ... Probably like a 45 ... I don't, I'm not one of them, and I haven't really like done the research. So I'm just speculating, here.

Tass: We're going to need some listeners in the stand up camp to send in a diagram.

Megan: We are already going to get enough weigh-in on this, I'm sure.

Rev: Boy, this took a turn.

All: [laugh]

Jake: I'm doing the research now.

Rev: OK. We'll come back to you in just a second.

So, and the worst segue ever, we do have some new swag in the swag store. We have got new stuff. We mentioned we were gonna put some new stuff up there around the holidays. We have stuff up there now for Mystery Detectives, which includes both a shirt of some of the popular names in Mystery Detectives, as well as their new logo for Mystery Detectives. We also have The Magnificent Eight shirt from Coin, with all of the people's names who went onto Nash's submarine and who possess the necklaces, with a Jingles tag on the back.

Tass: Yeah, you'd better hurry to get those Mystery Detective shirts, so that you can sneeze into Megan and Kim's chibi faces.

Megan: Snoop Duds!

Rev: Also, I had mentioned before that in January we are going to be doing a push for partner on Patreon. So each week we're gonna announce what we are doing on those Saturdays, Mondays, and Thursdays. So first up, on January 2nd at 6:00 p.m., we're gonna be playing a one shot of the one page RPG, The Witch is Dead. I will be running that. And all the players are familiars of a witch who has been killed, and they are trying to get revenge on the witch hunter that killed them. On January 4th at 8:00 p.m., we're gonna be playing some Left 4 Dead with the jumpscare on and some mods, I believe. Tass is researching some mods.

Tass: [sinister laugh]

Rev: For the zombies to be strange things, or possibly for us to be strange things. Who knows. And then on January the 7th, Kim and Megan are going to be playing Who's Your daddy? If you're unfamiliar with this game, it's one person plays a hapless parent, the other person plays a baby, and they struggle for dominance over whether the baby lives or dies.

Megan: Just like in real life.

Rev: Yeah. Except the baby's actively trying to get themselves killed.

Megan: Is that not like real life?

Rev: Yeah, I guess maybe just like real life.

Megan: That seems like primarily what they try and do.

Rev: Yes. And during that, I will be moderating the chat and we'll be giving out a prize to someone in the audience for best Dad Joke. We'll be collecting those throughout the evening. So again, if you do not follow us on Twitch, you can head over to [Twitch.tv/TheCritshow](https://www.twitch.tv/TheCritshow). And again, our first week is gonna be January 2nd at 6:00 p.m., The Witch is Dead. January 4th at 8:00 p.m., Left 4 Dead. And January 7th at 8:00 p.m., Who's Your Daddy? Jake, what have you found?

Jake: An entirely new rabbit hole. About back to front, or front to back?

Megan: [laughs]

Rev: All right. Well, I think that we will just let this simmer, and let the recap roll.

Tass: Standing up back to front is the worst thing I've ever ...

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Wallace: I got wind about kids going missing out of Helen, Georgia. Now that I'm kind of on the case, it's coming up a little bit thin. Have you heard anything about this? Have you worked this beat at all?

Rev: CHRISTIANA: Gone missing when? Like in the last couple days, or couple months, or ...

Wallace: Something like over the course of the last couple weeks.

Rev: CHRISTIANA: No, we haven't heard anything.

Tass: As I'm like starting to pick up speed, I will get on my comm. "Jake, Megan. What's going on?"

Megan: "Krampuses?"

Tass: "Oh god, yeah. We got Krampuses. Yep, we got Krampuses too."

Rev: You hold this flaming sword to Jimmy's neck, and you see that his neck and face contort a little bit. And for a brief moment, there are these bulges pressing against his forehead, and he lets out a bleat. And when he does, the bathroom wall is ripped off.

Megan: [gasps]

Jake: "It doesn't seem like this is gonna hold much longer. So if we're trying to get out of here, I think our best bet is to just rush out that front door."

Megan: "I don't understand how ... We keep saying shapeshifting, but it also seems like a weird possession thing. Like it's not just taking the form of Jimmy, it's in Jimmy. How is that possible?"

Rev: No, you do not think that these different Krampuses can do different things. The shapeshifting ones can shapeshift, the invisible ones can be invisible. And the other thing that you notice of these auras is that your suspicions are correct. It's hard to describe exactly how it is that you see it. But looking at the Krampuses, you can clearly see that part of their aura is made from the energy of Anastacia.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Tass, you have just opened up your Sight and looked at the Krampuses across the street, and discovered that the abilities they possess — the shapeshifting and the invisibility — have the aura of Anastacia on them. The rest of you are in the middle of this small grove of evergreens, as the Krampuses from across the street all gather together and then start sprinting in your direction. What are you all doing?

Megan: I would like to take the crossbow out of my backpack and start reassembling it. And I would like to load the evergreen stake I was given into it as a bolt.

Tass: [chuckles]

Jake: I imagine that I'm just like pointing the grenade launcher at them and trying to kind of put myself between them and the rest of the team, because I don't know what else to do.

Rev: What about Wallace?

Jake: Wallace is getting like real West Side story with an evergreen stake. Wallace is like throwing it back and forth between his hands, and getting low. He's ready for a knife fight.

Tass: God, I don't know. Like, we have the idea that these could be real people and I don't want to just hurt them. But we have to figure out what is causing Anastacia's aura to

be around them. So I literally do — I think this is kind of a panic moment, trying to Trust My Gut and see what the best path here is.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Tass: OK. Ten.

Rev: So in this moment of seeing all of the Krampuses run across the street, you still have your Sight open. And you glance back at your group, and in doing this, you catch sight of Jimmy. And for a brief moment, you make the connection of the aura around Jimmy and the aura around the other shapeshifters is exactly the same. And the same thing with all of the invisible ones. Despite the fact they have different abilities, all of their auras look exactly the same. And so you get the feeling that your best way out is actually through. Because whatever these are, they're not human.

Tass: OK. OK. Shit. Then I think I just turn, do a hard spin, and lop Jimmy's head off.

Rev: So you both see Tass spin around and bring the blade of the spear across Jimmy's neck, and his head topples off. And as soon as it hits the ground, the head and the body both start to bubble and roil and turn into this green, vicious fluid that spreads out on the ground.

Megan: "Oh my god! Tass, what are you doing?"

Tass: "They're not real! I can see their auras. They match. I don't know exactly what they're doing, but they're using Anastacia's energy or something. They're all identical. They are not real people."

Megan: "No! No. He was a person. I was in his head. I know. I heard him."

Tass: "I don't know. I don't know how. They're stealing their memories, somehow? They're copying? I don't know how. But look."

Jake: Jake fires a grenade launcher.

All: [laugh]

Rev: Act Under Pressure. These things are not far away.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: All right. So you can fire this grenade launcher into the group of approaching Krampuses, but there's gonna be some backlash that's going to hit everyone involved in this, because it is a big explosion and they are very close. Or it's going to scatter all of the Krampuses, and so you won't necessarily know where they all are. And they're going to be able to come at you from different directions, as opposed to head on. Or, it's going to draw some unwanted attention from town. This explosion is not going to go unnoticed.

Jake: I think there's some backlash for the group.

Rev: All right. So everybody takes one point of armor-defeating damage as this grenade catches the front shapeshifting Krampus and explodes. This Krampus falls to the ground and is on fire, rolling around. What are you all doing?

Megan: I pull myself up off the ground and just, "Ugh." [coughs] "OK. Um ..." And I pick up my crossbow and I aim it at one of the Krampuses and fire this evergreen bolt.

Rev: Yeah, I don't think there's a roll for this. You have a crossbow, you have some range on it. So you fire the bolt out, and it hits the Krampus in the chest. And it also turns into a pile of bubbling, roiling fluid.

Tass: I'm gonna grab my stake and get up off the ground, groaning, and sprint towards one of the invisible ones, and try to take a swing.

Rev: All right. Roll Kick Some Ass.

Tass: That's a seven.

Rev: All right. So you jam the stake into the heart of the Krampus. As you do, it gets its claws in you and starts to rake at your body. And you take two points of damage as it takes its claws down your body, not armor-defeating.

Tass: OK. I kind of tense and shrug through it.

Rev: Wallace?

Jake: I don't know what else to do, but go try to stake one of them in the heart.

Rev: All right. Roll Kick Some Ass.

Jake: Ten.

Rev: All right. What's your extra effect?

Jake: Suffer less harm.

Rev: All right. So this Krampus sprints at you and rams you with its horns for one point of damage, not armor-defeating. But you are able to jam the stake through its back into its heart, and it turns into a pile of goo. Tass, in this moment of Wallace getting charged, you see that there are the two invisible ones that are also charging at him as well.

Tass: "Wallace, the invisible ones are charging you! Duck! Get out of there!"

Jake: I think I just pick a direction and try to, like, dive away from where I am right now.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: Oh, no. Five. I'm actually gonna use The Postman Always Rings Twice. Twice per mystery, as long as you follow your code, you may reroll a roll.

Literally a five again!

Tass: [laughs]

Megan: You said twice per mystery!

Jake: No, I can't burn both of them on this.

Megan: I'll save it for when I'm actually dying.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: Speaking of, Wallace, you take four points of damage.

Jake: Oh, Christ.

Rev: As these two Krampuses ... It's almost like watching a very, very dangerous play in football. Just helmets down, these two Krampuses hit you from opposite sides.

Tass: Oh, I think I made that worse.

Jake: I am highly unstable.

Rev: Megan, you have just seen Wallace crumple and cough blood and fall to the ground.

Jake: From seemingly nothing!

Rev: Yeah. Out of nowhere. It just seems like time finally caught up with him.

Jake: [laughs]

Megan: I want to try and Jinx them.

Rev: All right. Roll Jinx.

Megan: Nine.

Rev: OK, you get a hold 1.

Megan: I would like to interfere with what a monster is trying to do. And I think that it just makes one of them slip on the ice after he's done this hit, and he's kind of re-centering himself.

Rev: Yeah. One of these invisible Krampuses slips on a patch of ice and falls to the ground for the moment. Jake?

Jake: "Do we still need one of these things alive so we can figure out what we're doing and where we're going?"

Megan: I think I don't say anything. I don't trust any of the information that I had already got that I thought was real.

Tass: "Sure. If you think we can get anything out of it that we haven't already."

Jake: "Maybe. These ones at least aren't shapeshifters. So they don't have the option of just cocooning and cold shouldering us."

Tass: "OK. You take care of that. I'll keep working on these." And I want to jump forward and stab the invisible one that isn't currently on the ground.

Rev: All right. Roll Kick Some Ass.

Tass: Eleven.

Rev: What's your extra effect?

Megan: I want to give a +1 forward to another hunter. I think I want to give that to Jake by, like, kicking snow onto the invisible one as I pass. So he knows where that is if he wants to try to trap it, or whatever he's gonna do.

Rev: So you leap forward and you jam the stake into the invisible one. And I think everyone else around sees this goo just materialize Tass's hands as it starts to plop to the ground.

Jake: [gags] All right. I want to Use Magic to trap the invisible one that's on the ground.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Jake: With that +1 forward, that's a ten.

Rev: These magical chains of fire spring up and it just screams. Why not? Of course, this is happening too.

Wallace, you are in a bad way. You are lying on the ground. What are you doing?

Jake: I genuinely think that I'm just trying to crawl away. Like, I think Wallace is just trying to stay low and out of harm's way and crawl towards some form of cover.

Rev: OK. Yeah, I don't think there's any roll for that. Megan?

Megan: I think I would go over and try and help him get away quicker.

Rev: Yeah, you're able to go over and help him. No problem. Scoot him away. Tass?

Tass: I'm going to attack the one that was on fire, with the stake.

Rev: Roll kick some ass

Tass: Nine.

Rev: You jam this stake into its chest and it turns into a pile of goo. And save for the one that Jake has trapped in chains, you are all now Krampus-free.

Jake: They make a special shampoo for that.

Rev: [chuckles] I'm so glad I didn't have to shave this time for it.

Tass: I'm first gonna rush over to Wallace and see if I can help him out a little bit, seal up these wounds.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Wallace: [weakly] I am severely injured.

Tass: "Try not to move, buddy. Let's see what we can do here. And if I fail this, I'm going to have to use a Luck, or I'm gonna kill you."

Jake: [laughs]

Tass: We are in luck, for that is a ten.

Jake: So what does that do?

Tass: That heals you 2, and stabilizes.

Jake: Awesome. And I have Asphalt Jungle, so any time my harm gets healed, I heal an extra point.

Tass: Nice.

Megan: Nice.

Wallace: I am marginally less injured.

Jake: I'm gonna go over to where there are chains floating in the air.

Megan: I will go over next to Jake and I look at this Krampus caught in these chains, and I would like to Tune In to it.

Rev: Roll it.

Megan: Twelve.

Rev: You get a hold 3.

Megan: What is it planning to do right now?

Rev: It's going to call for backup.

Megan: Who is it going to attack next?

Rev: Oh, if it could get out of its chains, probably Jake.

Megan: [laughs] OK. And then I'm guessing if I ask what does it regard as its biggest threat, gonna probably be a pretty similar answer?

Rev: No, actually. Tass.

Megan: Oh.

Rev: Because it has seen Tass somehow spot its brothers that are invisible, like it is.

Megan: "It's gonna call for backup, and it knows that Tass can see the invisible ones. It's the same thing. That means there's more of them. We're not done."

Tass: "Jake, speak now."

Jake: "Go for it."

Tass: I'm gonna stake it.

Rev: OK. It is defenseless. You monster.

Jake: Who's the real monster?

Rev: Yeah. Not a problem. You stick the steak into its chest, and it turns into the pile of green, bubbling goo.

Tass: "I could see it. Like the ones that would shapeshift — like they could all shapeshift, but they couldn't go invisible. Obviously, you saw that. But like, instinctively I know they were all the same. Like if the shapeshifting ones would have done that turtling thing, we would have had more Jimmys. I don't know how they have his memories or his identity or whatever. Hell, maybe they're channeling real Jimmy that's out there captured somewhere. I don't know."

Jake: "Yeah. Maybe they can somehow, like, pull elements from people that they have. Maybe that's why they're reading as Anastacia's aura because maybe they're like siphoning off of her. Or maybe they turn into Jimmy because they're like siphoning off of him, or something."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "Whatever they are."

Megan: "How did they find us?"

Tass: "I mean, these ones just converged on one bleeding that you tried to duke it out with or something, right Jake? Like we heard that from blocks away."

Megan: "But that one showed up to the house where we had Jimmy. So unless it followed us there ..."

Jake: "Huh, it was beelining for the door, too. Like it knew exactly where it was going."

Tass: "Great question. Unless we just weren't that subtle with grabbing him and this one followed or something, I don't know."

Megan: "We weren't that subtle with carrying a person wrapped in an awning into an AirBnB."

Rev: "Through downtown, yeah."

Jake: I think Wallace is sitting there just like racking his brain, trying to put the pieces together here, and there's something missing. And I think that without really understanding exactly what he's doing, Wallace is going to use his Weird move, Illuminated.

Rev: All right, roll it.

Jake: That's a six. I'm going to spend a point of Luck.

Tass: Wow.

Megan: Wow, OK.

Rev: What is Wallace's Luck ramification?

Jake: My next regular case will actually be a mystery for your hunter group, not a regular case at all. And the monster will focus its attention on you. So good luck, Wallace, next time you're off-camera.

All: [laugh]

Tass: Oh, no!

Jake: I've gotten Wallace killed, off-camera.

Rev: Smash cut to Wallace's gravestone.

Jake: Yep.

Rev: All right. So read to us Illuminated. What is it? How does it work? What does it do?

Jake: So I think I had mentioned this like briefly in the Founders arc when setting up Wallace. But Illuminated says that when you telepathically ask the Secret Masters — capital S capital M — for aid, roll +Weird. On a 10 or more, the Secret Masters reveal a key fact, clue, or technique that will help you. On a 7 to 9, they need you to do something for them, and then they'll reveal it. On a miss, their reply is terrible or dangerous, or something. And the way I imagine this is that like Wallace always — he has this gut feeling. Like he thinks he's got Trust Your Gut, basically. He thinks that, like, if he bears down, he just kind of puts the pieces together on his own. But in reality, there is some outside influence that when he's, like, really trying to think of, like, "God, what is this? I'm missing a piece. What is it?" He either figures it out or he figures out like, I feel like if I did this, that would put me on the right track. And this is how he gets that information.

Rev: OK. Do you have any sense of who his Secret Masters are?

Tass: Margaret with an earpiece.

Jake: [laughs]

Rev: Someone's just recorded enough of your voice that they play your own voice back to you. So you think you're hearing your own inner monologue.

Jake: I ... I don't have a specific idea. Like, it's gotta be something magic or creature or deity-adjacent. Because, like, it literally just telepathically puts thoughts into his head.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: And it can do it from anywhere, evidently. But I don't have a — I don't have like a concrete idea of what it is. I would leave that to you.

Megan: It's Jingles. Can you imagine how pissed off you would be if you learned that, though?

Jake: There's just like a cathode in my brain and Jingles has a special frequency.

Rev: So Wallace, as you are laying on the ground, really focusing down on what it is you're supposed to do here, you get this incredible urge to drink. And it's not something you often do. You really want some red wine. And you remember passing a vineyard on your way into town. And you feel like if you went to the vineyard and had a drink, things would become clear.

Jake: I think I achingly sit up and just look at the rest of the group and go ...

Wallace: I could go for a pinot. Does anybody else think they could go for a pinot? Something peppery? Sounds like I would hit the spot just right. I think we need to go to the vineyard.

Megan: "Vineyard?"

Tass: "What?"

Wallace: Yeah, the vineyard. There's a vineyard in town, and I feel like the next step is there.

Tass: I think for a second I start to like scoff at this, but I genuinely think I know that look on his face, because I get that too sometimes. I just did. That idea of everything is in focus, and that's important and shouldn't be ignored. So I think I push that urge down and kind of nod. "Yeah. OK, man."

Rev: And Megan, as you're standing there, you notice that on the street there's a little bit of a glint in the sun.

Megan: Yeah, I go over and I check it out.

Rev: There is a key laying in the road, that has a little tiny keychain of a barrel.

Megan: Does it say anything on the barrel?

Rev: It does. Burned into the wood of this little barrel, it says CeNita. C-E-N-I-T-A. And the C and the N are capitalized.

Megan: "Hey, Wallace."

Wallace: Hmm?

Megan: "You remember what that vineyard was called?"

Wallace: CeNita.

Megan: "Yeah. Maybe we should go for some wine." And I just hold up the key chain. "I think our friends dropped this."

Tass: "Jake, I don't even think they need us."

Jake: [laughs]

Tass: "They've got this."

Jake: I'm in the background, trying to figure out how to load a new grenade into my grenade launcher this entire time.

Megan: I am backing away, not slowly.

Rev: Backwards, upside down ...

Megan: Staring into it.

Rev: Cut back, he's just covered in soot.

Jake: [laughs] Or! Or ... "I don't think they need us." And then there's an explosion and they turn and just ... I am just a pair of legs.

All: [laugh]

Rev: All right. So you all head out to the CeNita vineyard. It's about six o'clock by the time you get there, the sun is just starting to set. It's a very lovely scene. There are colorful lights strewn about. You can see that there are big tarps over many of the plants, and there are just a few lights on inside of it. It's a very modern looking building, in the sense of architecture. It's got two large glass double doors, and glass panes that line the front, and a hand carved a sign that says CeNita Vineyard in front of the door.

Jake: Is there anybody visible, inside or around here?

Rev: There's not.

Megan: Can I try to Tune In and see if I can tell if there are any more of these things here?

Rev: Yeah, you open up your mind to try to Tune In, and you don't get any sense of anything being here.

Megan: "Well, I don't think there are any more Krampus ... es? What are we going with?"

Jake: "I think Krampuses sounds the least weird."

Tass: "Krampanadas."

Jake: "That sounds delicious."

Tass: "Right?"

Jake: "I'll have a fried apple Krampanada."

Megan: "Yeah. I'm hungry. Did we bring any of that cobbler?"

Jake: "Did you bring me a schnitzel?"

Tass: "No, we were on the way to the schnitzel, and then there were goats screaming."

Jake: "We're hungry."

Megan: "Priorities, Tass."

Tass: "Listen, we could have had this conversation on the way out of town."

All: [laugh]

Rev: Why did we ride in silence for ten minutes?

Tass: I'm no longer at fault here, thank you.

Rev: I imagine that a Krampanada is like when Ninja Turtles put out Hostess fruit pies, and they were ... The icing was green. And so I assume it's just a normal empanada, but with green frosting.

Megan: Man. Yeah, I could go for one of those right now. Sounds amazing.

Jake: "All right. Well, it doesn't look like anybody's in here. And if you don't think there's any monsters in here, then should we let ourselves in and go have a look around?"

Megan: Yeah, I pull out the key and I try to unlock the door.

Rev: It unlocks.

Megan: "This isn't breaking and entering, because we didn't break anything." And I open the doorknob and walk inside.

Jake: "It seems wild to me that they locked up after themselves. What are these things?"

Megan: "I don't think they run the vineyard, Jake."

Jake: "No! But ..."

Rev: [laughs]

Jake: "That seems like even more reason that they wouldn't have a key and be locking up after themselves."

Tass: "Well, we don't know that they are ever even here. Just we've got the sense that we should be here and that there's something important here. This could still just be run by regular-ass people."

Megan: "I know one of them had the key, but like they also shapeshifted into other ... It's not like they all just turned into Jimmy. Like there were other people. There was the old — maybe the old lady runs this place.

Jake: Do we have any way to check that? Could like ... As we walk into this lobby, is there like a sign on the wall? Like founder: old woman.

Megan: That old woman that ripped the wall off your bathroom.

Rev: One hundred percent. Like I know you're all kind of joking, but as soon as you come in, there is a picture on the wall, and it is the old woman who transformed and ripped the wall off the bathroom.

Tass: Nice.

Megan: Called it.

Jake: OK. "Oh, look, there she is. Wow."

Megan: "Yeah, like that."

Jake: "God. Wow. God rest her soul."

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Or whatever. She wasn't real, I guess. Anita CeNita.

Rev: She married into it. She cried on her wedding day. "I'm going to be Anita CeNita ..."

Jake: I think Wallace starts looking for a bottle. Like just ... He thinks he needs to drink some wine, so he's just trying to find some wine around here.

Rev: Yeah. So you all walk into the front, and it's mostly displays and little doodads and shirts and things that you can buy. But off to the right, you see a tasting area. And Wallace walks down that direction to grab a bottle. And as he walks into that room, to your left, you see that there is a set of stairs that go down, and you can see some green flickering lights coming from the bottom of these stairs.

Jake: I think he pops the cork on this bottle and pours a glass and kind of like swirls it around and sniffs it, and then offers it to Tass.

Megan: "No, thank you."

Jake: And then offers it to Megan.

Megan: "Yeah, I'll try it."

Jake: And then starts drinking directly from the bottle. But I will gesture down the stairs.

Wallace: I don't know about the rest of you, but in my experience, flickering green lights in the basement typically indicate something sinister.

Tass: "Oh, yeah. OK."

Megan: "Do we think your friend is here?"

Wallace: One way to find out.

Tass: "Yeah. If you're confident the monster isn't here, Megan, then, you know, we don't have those things coming at us, so."

Megan: "Yeah."

Tass: "Yeah, OK. I mean, might as well go take a look. Maybe ... You know, they had a key. They were here for some reason. Maybe if any of the people that we know are connected are still alive, hopefully they're down here, or somewhere here." So I will shoulder the spear instead of the stake, and start heading down.

Jake: Yeah, I think I'm just going down with a hand on the hilt of the sword, ready to draw.

Megan: Hold my salt shaker, and I'm following behind.

Rev: What about Wallace?

Jake: He's got a bottle of red in his left hand and a 357 Magnum in his right.

Rev: [chuckles]

Megan: Love it.

Jake: A gentleman's gentleman.

Rev: So you all head down the stairs. And it goes down about 20 steps, turns, and goes down again. And it seems like this must be the wine cellar. And as you turn the corner,

that green light intensifies. And as you step down towards the bottom of the steps, you can see, in the far corner of the room, there are four rings, three acting as the points of a triangle, and the other one set in the middle. Anastasia is bound in one, Jimmy is bound in another, and the other two are empty. What are you all doing?

Tass: "Oh, shit!" I'm gonna run that way.

Jake: I think Wallace is looking around the room, like to see if there's something that's not a monster here. Is there a person with these machinations, or something?

Rev: Wallace, roll Read a Bad Situation.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: So Wallace, you get a hold 1. But you don't even need to ask, is there anything that's a threat here? Because as Tass sprints across the room, a bunch of these barrels move, and a large — like ten foot tall — Krampus emerges from inside of them, and slashes at Tass with its long metal blade. Tass, you take two points of damage, armor-defeating, as you get cut as you charge towards Anastasia and Jimmy in the corner. It starts to lick the blood off of the knife.

Wallace, you've got a hold 1.

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

Rev: The best way to protect the victims would be to disrupt the circles they are in and remove them from them.

Jake: Do I think that a Magnum round into the ground would be enough to disrupt that circle?

Rev: Yeah, with a crack shot, you could absolutely disrupt the ring.

Jake: I think that would just be his first instinct, without trying to close the gap on this Krampus. I think he'd take one shot to try and break a ring.

Rev: All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

Jake: Ten.

Rev: You raise the gun in your right hand, put the bottle up to your lips, and fire.

Jake: [laughs]

Rev: And the bullet strikes true on the ring that Anastacia is in. And you see a spark, as some of the metal is kicked up. And her circle is broken, and some of that green light in the room dies down. And as it does, she then starts to move and struggle against the bonds that she is in. Jake and Megan, what are you doing?

Jake: Jake yells out, "Hey Krampus, are you a robot?"

Rev: ROBOT KRAMPUS: 42, 42, 42 ...

Jake: [laughs] Yes!

Megan: Nice!

Rev: And it sparks and freezes up for a moment. Megan?

Megan: "What the fuck is going on?!"

Jake: Fuck. She doesn't know what this is about. [laughs] I think I'm sprinting towards it, drawing the sword, as I explain, "It's a big fuck off Krampus robot. And when it has to think about it, it starts to malfunction." And I'd like to try and stab it.

Rev: Yeah. What damage does your sword do?

Jake: 3-harm, hand, fire, holy.

Rev: Yeah. So you jam this sword into the Krampus as you get close to it, and you notice that this robotic Krampus seems bigger and beefier than the one you encountered before.

Jake: Yeah, I figured. From the description, I took that to be true.

Rev: So, yeah. You notice that the sword does not do a ton of damage to it.

Jake: OK.

Rev: Megan?

Megan: I'm gonna try to Jinx it.

Rev: Roll Jinx.

Megan: Nine.

Rev: All right, you get a hold 1.

Megan: I think I'm gonna hold on to that hold, until I see an opportunity where a coincidence could really come in clutch. And I'm going to run over and try and help Anastacia and Jimmy.

Rev: All right. So you run over to Anastacia, who is already struggling against her bonds. She's not tied very tightly. And she curses when you remove the gag from her mouth.

Rev: ANASTACIA: Son of a bitch. Oh, thank god. Who the hell are you?

Megan: "I'm Megan. Who the hell are you?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: I'm Anastacia.

Megan: "Well, good. That's who I thought you were."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Oh, I see you're with them, so ... Good enough.

Rev: And she gets up and starts looking around the room.

Megan: "OK."

Jake: [laughs]

Megan: "You're fucking welcome." And I go over and I help Jimmy.

Rev: Jimmy says the same thing.

All: [laugh]

Rev: Yeah. So you get over to Jimmy, and you notice that there is an energy around him. Like, he is inside of this ring.

Megan: Did I see Wallace break that? Like, did I make that kind of connection?

Rev: Yeah, absolutely.

Megan: Yeah. I use the athame, the magic athame that I have. And I try and wedge it underneath this magic ring, and pry it up and break this connection.

Rev: Yeah, no problem. It takes just a moment, but you are able to get this magical blade underneath it and bend it out of shape. Tass, you have just been cut very badly and knocked aside as this Krampus emerged from all of these barrels. What are you doing?

Tass: "Come on! Every Krampus ever ..." And I'm just rolling up to my feet, pulling out the spear, and I want to run, jump, spear this thing.

Megan: I'll give him a +1.

Rev: All right. Roll Kick Some Ass.

Tass: OK. Fourteen.

Rev: All right. What is your advanced extra effect? Because this is one of your advanced moves.

Tass: Yeah, I'd better go ahead and inflict double the normal harm.

Rev: And so how much harm is that, total?

Tass: That is 4.

Rev: All right. So you leap into the air and spear this giant Krampus robot. And again, you notice the same thing as Jake. That this is a dense metal on this creature. Your spear does go in, but it doesn't seem to affect it as much as you imagined it would have.

Tass: OK.

Rev: Wallace?

Jake: With the two people freed, Wallace finds some cover to shoot from behind, and tries to blast this thing.

Rev: Yeah, I don't think you have to roll Kick Some Ass. It is engaged in hand-to-hand combat with a couple of people. What is your damage on that gun?

Jake: 3-harm.

Rev: All right. You fire some shots at the Krampus. And again, you see a lot of them ricocheting off, but a couple of them do find some spots with fur and wires. Jake, you and Tass are right up in front of it. What are you doing?

Jake: I am gonna Use Magic to burninate this thing.

Rev: All right. Roll Use Magic

Jake: Eleven.

Rev: All right. How much damage is that?

Jake: 3-harm, ignore armor, magic, obvious.

Rev: This robot Krampus bursts into flames, and sparks shoot all over the room as it collapses to the ground, the light in its eyes going out.

Tass: "God! Didn't think about that shit when you're scanning with your mind, I suppose. That is not your fault. That's not your fault. Sorry, that sounded bad. That's not your fault."

Megan: "Yeah. I didn't expect there to — OK, you seem to have fucking like encountered this before! We've been fighting Krampuses all fucking day and you didn't think to tell me that you've seen this before in robot form?!"

Tass: "I'm frustrated because it's a robot, not — you did — you're amazing."

Megan: "Uh-huh."

Tass: "But we couldn't have thought to ..."

Megan: "Yeah, no. Because no one told me. So I could have thought to do it."

Tass: "Well, of course."

Megan: "Uh-huh."

Tass: "I'm sorry. I'm frustrated. There's been so many Kramp ... Kramp ..."

Megan: "Oh, jeez. OK."

Jake: [laughs]

"How's everybody doing? Are we all OK?"

Tass: "I mean, I'm not great."

Rev: JIMMY: I've been better. This is ... What's going on?

Jake: "Jimmy, my man."

Rev: JIMMY: Hey, I know you. I saw you on TV a while ago. I like the new look.

Jake: "Thank you."

Rev: JIMMY: Very sharp.

Jake: "Thanks. Was that a sword joke?"

Rev: JIMMY: No, I wish. Yes.

Jake: "Now it was."

Rev: JIMMY: Yeah. Totally was.

Jake: "Always take credit. Yeah. Jimmy, things have been weird. Don't worry. We're gonna get you out of here just fine. Anastacia, how are you doing?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: Pissed off.

Jake: "What happened?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: Some files came to me from IPT that some kids had been missing here. So I came down here, couldn't find anything, called Wallace — thank you for showing up. I assume you got these three involved?

Wallace: No. Actually, I was here working the case on my own and they kind of, well, tackled me.

Rev: ANASTACIA: Oh.

Tass: "Yeah. Something's fishy about all of that, because there aren't kids going missing. I think everyone here is aware."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah.

Tass: "And even when we talked to Jingles, it seemed like a surprise that you are missing. Like he was looking through files to see, like what we could do, what we could help with once we got back. And he just thought it was odd that you hadn't checked in."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah, because I usually check in every 24 hours, and I was kind of stuck here.

Jake: "Do you know who sent you the dossier?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: No, it was just on my desk.

Megan: "Well what happened when you got here?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: I got here, I was looking around, I came to the vineyard, and I got jumped by that stupid thing. It knocked me unconscious, I woke up inside of this ring.

Megan: Yeah, I go over to the third circle that's empty. "What was here?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: That thing kept stepping into it.

Tass: "Huh."

Jake: "So he was somehow giving, like, just being Krampus."

Rev: ANASTACIA: I think it was just the persona, I guess? Just the mental space? I don't know.

Tass: "And Jimmy here was the ... Well, the shell?"

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah. He was basically a body for it to be in. And then it was taking something from me. I can't quite tell what. It felt different, every now and then.

Tass: "Yeah. We had a few of them, and I don't know how many are left. There were invisible ones. They were shapeshifters."

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah, that sounds right. Those are things I can do. Fuck.

Tass: "What about the middle one? Like, what was it putting into all this?"

Rev: She actually walks over to a closed door on the side of this room, and she opens it up and she indicates inside. And you can see that it is just filled with mannequins.

Rev: ANASTACIA: Yeah. You said Jimmy here was the shell. I guess really, this was the shell. So it was pulling like a human form from Jimmy, power from me, and a persona or memories from the big robot?

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, that matches up with what we saw." I'm gonna get out my phone and start taking pictures of these circles.

Jake: "This seems ... I mean, maybe I'm wrong, but this seems like sort of a big task for robot Krampus to have taken on itself."

Tass: "Oh, it didn't. There's no way. Like, come on, this is, even though it was malfunctioning, the first time that we had to deal with it, it was still IPT property. IPT put a dossier on her desk. Somebody in there is doing this on purpose. It's official. One hundred percent. We know for sure we have a mole."

Megan: "Where did you encounter this robot Krampus before?"

Jake: "The North Pole."

Megan: "Fair. OK."

Jake: "The North Pole was a big ... Staged to look like a tourist trap like this, but actually an IPT research facility. And these were some of the animatronics, and Krampus was Krampus and disappeared."

Megan: "But this isn't the same one."

Jake: "It seems like it's the same one, just modified. It's definitely beefier than last time we saw it. But I'm pretty sure this is it."

Tass: "I mean, this whole place, like you said, this is a tourist trap, too. Is there some other facility here? Something that ... I mean, I feel like Margaret would have told us, but ..."

Jake: "Yeah, surely we would have been told on the way out that we were going to another IPT staging ground."

Tass: "Yeah." Can I go look at the dead robot and just see if there's anything familiar or, I don't know, different? Like something that would indicate whether this is the same one that had been modified, like he said, or like just a whole different model?

Rev: Yeah. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

Tass: OK. Seven. Whew.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Tass: What's being concealed here?

Rev: So as you poke through the remains of this charred robot Krampus, it's hard to tell if this is the same one you encountered before or not. I think the thing that you'd probably be looking for are the char marks on the head. But since you all just killed it with fire a second time, it's kind of hard to discern if that head had been in a fireplace before. But the thing that you do spot, on the spine of this Krampus underneath all of the fur, is a Wi-Fi card that you've seen before on the back of the golem in the Eye of Horus.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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