

Crit or Treat 2021 (S4, E13)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Hey, everybody. Rev here. Just a couple of quick reminders, before we get into today's episode. Make sure to enter our annual Crit or Treat Costume Contest. You can submit your entry through our email at thecast@thecritshowpodcast.com, or tag us on Twitter, @TheCritshow. And if you are not caught up on our Twitch series, the Omniverse Chronicles, where right now they are playing *Afterlife: Wandering Souls*, you can always head over to our YouTube page, [YouTube.com/TheCritshow](https://www.youtube.com/TheCritshow), to catch all of the past episodes of the current show, as well as all of the archived shows that we've done. And with that, it's time to get into the episode.

SFX:

CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: We see Jake's car pulling up to The Vault and screeching to a stop. Who all is inside of the car?

Jake: [Laughs] As opposed to on the top? As opposed to skitching?

Megan: I'm skitching.

Kim: Megan is skitching behind.

Rev: We've already established that Megan skitches everywhere.

Megan: Yeah. [Laughs]

Jake: I imagine just our four, right? I don't think we would have nabbed anybody.

Tass: Yeah. If we were in a hurry, I probably would have just ridden along with you, so that we were all together.

Kim: Yeah. And Grandpa Tincher is so important to the rest of what we're trying to do here, I would be nervous about bringing him into a dangerous situation.

Tass: Same.

Rev: Al is at the door when you all arrive, and you can tell that he seems very surprised to see Tass and Jake.

Tass: "She expecting us?"

Rev: He shrugs, and you can hear just people running around and kind of shouting inside the building, and just gestures inside.

Tass: Yep. And running in.

Kim: Yeah, heading to the elevator.

Rev: You all head into the elevator and take it up to the top floor, and Strohm is there waiting. She looks a little frazzled, but she's still very well put together.

Kim: "Hey, what's going on?"

Rev: STROHM: Tiresias. He's been shrieking for the last 20 minutes. Just whatever it is, it's coming.

Rev: And then her eyes settle on the three of you.

Rev: STROHM: I was expecting to have an opportunity to talk with all of you. I didn't think it would be like this, but ... Well, any port in a storm, right?

Tass: "Yeah."

Megan: "Hi, I'm Megan. And I'm really scared of you, but I'm excited to meet you. I've heard a lot about you. What's happening? This is a lot."

Rev: STROHM: Nice to meet you. Follow me.

Rev: And she turns and leads you down the stairs to her gala space. At the center of the gala space, there is a table with a man sitting at it. He has dark skin and dark hair, and is wearing a set of blue robes. Kim, you recognize Kester. His eyes are glossed over, and he is kind of quietly muttering to himself, and he doesn't acknowledge you all when you come in. And in the distance, you can hear Tiresias's voice. For the three of you who have not heard Tiresias, it's just this echoing voice that fills the place, but you can tell that it's at least behind a few doors. Strohm indicates for you all to take a seat at the table. A number of you have been in this room before. The gala space is lined on all sides by windows, and you can see up to the ceiling, which is also enhanced glass, and you can see the clear night sky all around you. Out of this clear night sky comes a blinding strike of lightning, directly at the ceiling above Strohm. It's followed closely by a crack of thunder, and the brightness from the bolt fades away. But in its place remains a sickly green and yellow glow, which begins to pulse and then spread through the air, forming a barrier. This barrier spreads down and around The Vault. You see that a winged creature flying by is cut in half as the barrier passes through it. You rush to the windows, and far below you can see trees, power lines, sidewalks all severed as the barrier slices its way into the ground, forming a complete seal around the building. As it seals shut, three of you can feel that you have been cut off from much of your power, that this barrier is keeping certain energies out. And at this moment, you have this strange meta knowledge that when you try to take an action while inside this barrier, your dice, they won't work. But you know, what will? This Jenga tower.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: Yes!

Kim: That's why you wanted to wait until I was here in person ...

SFX: CRIT OR TREAT MUSIC

Rev: All right, so welcome to Crit or Treat 2021. In front of the players, they've all got their own individual Jenga tower. This is what we'll be using instead of rolling dice. We played Jenga once for the Patreon and had so much fun with it, I thought it was time to bring it back.

Kim: You saying "we played Jenga" ... We had a fun game night.

Rev: We played Dread. I apologize.

Kim: We played Monopoly, we played Jenga ...

Rev: They have about the same level of anxiety.

Tass: Oh yeah.

Jake: Yeah. We played Dread, and we had so much fun that he thought it was time to bring it back for a full scale disaster. Four towers, one table, eight shaky hands.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: Clear eyes. Can't lose.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: We played last time, and Rev's like, this is so much fun, but I want it four times as dangerous.

Jake: This is so much fun, because I didn't have to pull any of the pieces.

Rev: Well, this is too safe. We need falling hazards everywhere.

Kim: The last time we played this, every time the tower knocked over, one of our characters died. So Rev, do you have some like special announcement that you are going to do at the end of this?

Rev: Yes. Everyone has taken a job teaching.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: No. Actually, one of the nice things about Dread is that there are so many Dread scenarios out there, and when the tower falls, different things happen in those different

scenarios. So I'm gonna read through for you this Dread scenario that we're gonna play through tonight.

So, there are two phases in this particular story for Dread. First is the planning phase. The planning phase is 20 minutes, real time, no pauses. A window to come up with a plan, gather equipment, et cetera. The timer continues for all actions, including any talking and making pulls from the towers. No pausing the timer for anything. If a tower falls during the planning phase, then the planning phase immediately ends and that action has failed. Play will advance to the operations phase. If the tower hasn't fallen, and the timer ticks down to zero on the planning phase, it ends immediately. Any player midway through a pull, that action fails, and play will advance to the operation phase. And then once you get into the operation phase, the countdown timer returns and the GM will now tell players how many block pulls an action will take, and then say how long they have to make all of the required block pools. And if the timer runs out before the player has pulled all of the required blocks, then the action has failed and the action should escalate accordingly. And lastly, a player can choose to back out of an action before the timer runs out, but the GM will impose an extra barrier to the action the player just attempted.

So yes, there are two kinds of timers that will be going on, once we start. One timer will be constantly running, and events will happen as those numbers are hit. And then the other one is your pull timer, which will adjust based off of kind of the dangerousness of the situation. Any questions?

Tass: I don't think so.

Kim: What happens if the tower falls?

Rev: You know, it really depends on the game of Dread that you're playing. Sometimes characters die. Sometimes they're removed from the scene. Who knows?

Tass: I have like a side question.

Rev: Uh-huh?

Tass: So like ... Like what version of Dread do you think it is that we're ...

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: I have another question, related to that. In the previous version of Dread that we played, if you or someone else was trying to make a pull, you could knock over your own tower or reach up and knock the tower before they pulled anything, to kind of auto success at the expense of your character. Is that still something that is in this version?

Rev: I've been thinking about that. It was not in this version, but not everything in the rules that I've read to you was in this version. What do you all think? Do you want the option to knock over your own tower to rescue someone from an event that is happening to them and remove yourself from the story?

Tass: I mean, I want someone to have that option. Yeah.

Megan: [Laughs] I would love for somebody to have the opportunity to sacrifice themselves for me.

Tass: Yeah.

Jake: So, yes.

Rev: As I said, you have kind of been cut off from the magics, here. So you do have access to just a little of what you had before, almost like someone wasn't expecting you all to be here. Like, you were not necessarily accounted for in the creation of whatever has happened here. And so now I'm going to give you all your Dredd style playbooks. On these playbooks, you have your wounds, you also have your skills, and your initiative. This initiative was picked by 10 of the folks in the Patreon. I sent them a message asking, with the four of you at the table, if an action was to occur, who would react first? And I took the average of those responses and gave you each an initiative, 9 through 3, going 3, 5, 7, and 9. So I'll give them out in initiative order. Jake.

Jake: Booyah.

Rev: Megan.

Megan: Hell yeah.

Kim: What?

Rev: Tass.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: And Kim.

Kim: I'm gonna need the names and addresses of everyone that you asked this poll.

Jake: It's just the little legs. They just ... They can't carry you as far in an action.

Tass: Here's what I think it is, is that they were assuming that you would be the most contemplative, in making the most correct decision with the most planning.

Kim: Or maybe, they thought it was because you three are all in Indianapolis, and I would be from LA, trying to get to wherever the action is.

Tass: Yeah, there we go.

Megan: Just distance, it makes sense that it would take you the longest to get into the situation.

Kim: It does. At least a four hour plane flight.

Rev: Yeah. Ultimately, it's whatever lets you sleep at night.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: All right. So what are your skills that you still have access to? As I mentioned before, something about this is off. This magic shield has come around the building, and you feel cut off from part of, but not all, of your powers. Almost like whatever created this was not necessarily expecting you all to be here, so you were not accounted for in the building of this event.

Jake: I'll go first, what with being the top of the initiative order and all.

Kim: Ugh.

Jake: I have Shielding — pull 1 to create a personal shield that will negate one wound. Pull 3 to create the same shield for yourself and any other player within close range. This pull cannot be performed retroactively. And, The Dark Arts — after defeating an enemy or finding a dying NPC, you may gather its life force and mark 1 hold, max hold of 3 at any time. This hold may be spent 1 for 1 to increase a pull timer by one step.

Rev: And as I mentioned before, there is a pull timer in the sense of you may only have two minutes, 30 seconds, who knows to pull your number of blocks. So Jake can increase for whoever is making a pull.

Tass: OK.

Megan: I have Slayer — advance the event clock by one minute as you prepare the correct weapon or technique for the job. Your next attack pulls are reduced by 1, and do bonus damage as long as they are against the same type of creature. And This Way! — when escaping a dangerous situation, 2 or more pulls, you reduce the number of pulls your teammates must make to escape that same situation by 1, for every additional pull you make.

Tass: Oh right, we're an initiative order. That's me, then. I have Tough as Nails — pull 1 to negate one wound as it is taken. This pull always takes place in the highest available pull timer. And Demonic Movement — take one wound, and your next movement speed-related pull is reduced by 2, and your pull timer increased by two levels.

Kim: Last and least.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: I have I, All-Seeing — pull 3 to hold 1. This hold may be used to negate a single pull event declared by the GM for all players involved. This pull cannot be performed retroactively. And then I have Soothsayer — when you take time to consult the tarot to get a glimpse of what is to come, advance the event timer by two minutes. Name yourself

or another player, and hold 2. This hold may be used to reduce future pulls, 1 to 1, for the named player. You may possess hold for more than one player at a time.

Rev: Excellent. Any questions about how this works so far?

Jake: So could I pull 1 like first thing, to have the shield on me and it's just with me until a wound comes up?

Rev: Correct.

Jake: OK.

Kim: So like for like my Soothsayer. In a hypothetical situation, say I wanted to do Soothsayer for all of us. That would reduce our planning phase by eight minutes.

Rev: Correct.

Kim: OK.

Megan: With Slayer, advance the event clock by one minute as you prepare the correct weapon or technique for the job. Is that in the first phase, like the planning phase? Since I'm preparing something? Or is that at any point in the game?

Rev: That's at any point in the game?

Kim: So we've got wounds listed here. I know at least Jake and myself were going into this already quite wounded. Are we marking all of those right now?

Rev: That's a very good question. See, Dread often starts with some pulls already made from the tower. Normally it is one pull for every player in the game. But I think what we're gonna do, instead of doing four pulls from the tower, is that everyone's going to take pulls equal to the number of wounds they have on their Urban Shadows playbook at the moment. And then you'll all start off at nothing.

Jake: Should we make those pulls right this second?

Rev: Yeah, go for it. How many pulls are you each starting with?

Tass: One.

Megan: Also one.

Jake: Three.

Kim: Also three.

Rev: All right.

Jake: What if I knock it over now?

Rev: [Laughs] I think this is the one time you're safe, that if you knock it over. The gameplay hasn't started yet.

Jake: Oh boy, I packed a tight tower. Oh, fuck me.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I instantly can't find one to pull!

Tass: [Laughs] First one I touched moved instantly.

Jake: So many of these were moving freely when I had it in the fucking cardboard. The squishiness of the table has allowed them to settle together.

Tass: If we could get some tiny little Lazy Susans, that would actually really help me out.

Rev: You know, I actually considered trying to find some. But I felt like those were gonna be super unstable, in and of themselves.

Tass: Yeah, that's probably fair.

Rev: All right. So before we jump into the story, I do want to take a moment to give you each a little card with the weapons that you have on them. Because these are things that you have, things that you can lose. And there are also things that you can find throughout this game that will help you. Whether it's a person who will do a thing for you, whether it's an item that can do a thing, and those will be represented by these Post-it notes that I hand out to you. So what weapons do you all have on your Post-it notes?

Tass: I have my pump shotgun and my hell chains.

Rev: OK.

Jake: I got a Glock.

Rev: Nice.

Megan: I have my repeating crossbow, my hand axes, and my whip.

Kim: I have my censer.

Rev: OK. On your character sheet, you also have wounds. From the initial pulls that you have done from your tower, in-story none of you right now are harmed. Something about the dome coming over this place has healed you. You're all nice and fresh as a daisy.

Kim: That's very considerate of the magic bubble.

Rev: Yeah. But, the bubble giveth and the bubble taketh away.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: That comes later. But you do have a wound tracker. You have one faint, two serious, and two critical. So when you have checked off your faint wound, there's no effect. When you're in the serious wounds, you may have less time to pull, or you may have to take an additional pull if it is something that would be difficult for you to do, based off of the kind of wound that you have. And then in critical, you really can't get around by yourself. Like, you will need aid to get places and possibly to accomplish things.

Kim: Are there opportunities to heal in this game, if you find those opportunities?

Rev: Yeah, perhaps if you find something there could very well be an opportunity to heal, if you don't have a move that allows it. So before we get started, before I start this timer, would anybody like to take a little break?

Kim: I think we — yeah. Yeah, definitely.

Megan: Yeah, I gotta go throw up from the nerves, quick.

Rev: [Laughs]

SFX: CRIT OR TREAT STINGER

Rev: Well hey there, listeners. Rev here from the future, with a few things for you all to know that the players do not know. So we mentioned this event timer. Well, I have a list of things here, things that are going to happen after a certain amount of time passes, unless steps are taken to prevent them. Also, this event will last two hours, but as this is an audio medium, the episode probably won't be two hours long, because I won't keep in every silent moment of them pulling from the tower. So if some pulls seem fast, it's because that silence was truncated, because they had no issue with the pull they were making. And I think that is it. So the timer starts now.

SFX: CRIT OR TREAT STINGER

Rev: As this dome comes down around the building, Strohm turns, and you can see that she rapidly ages. Like, beetles start to pour out of her mouth.

Tass: Oh!

Rev: Hit the ground, and crawl away.

Rev: STROHM: Magic, it's ... I've been cut off from it.

Tass: "Yeah, I can feel it. Is that what this is? It's just some sort of dampener?"

Rev: STROHM: I can't see anything out the windows past the barrier. I'm not even sure that we're on the same plane anymore.

Tass: "Oh god."

Kim: "What faction could be capable of something like this?"

Rev: STROHM: Anyone, given enough time and enough research.

Tass: "OK, well, how do we bring it down, then?"

Jake: "I don't know. I mean, do we need to like actually get out there and get to the edges so we can investigate this thing? Or I mean, maybe ... God. I mean, it came down a dome. Maybe we get to the roof, and see what's directly above us."

Tass: "Yeah, OK."

Jake: OK, I'm gonna start making my way back to the elevator, or maybe just a staircase up from here, to try and get to the roof and get a better sight on this.

Rev: I'm gonna follow.

Rev: Yeah. You say this, and Strohm leads you back up to the 44th floor, which is the floor that the elevator arrives on, where her living area is located. And she leads you into her private quarters. And in the far corner of the room is a ladder with a hatch that goes up to the roof.

Jake: I'm gonna head up.

Rev: All right. So as you climb out onto the glass roof of this building, why don't you give me a pull?

Jake: OK.

Rev: I think for this one, you've got five minutes.

Jake: All right, I'm gonna need it.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Wait, so are we in it now?

Rev: Yeah, uh-huh.

Jake: OK, I'm gonna need you to describe everything in far less vivid detail.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: 20 minutes, Rev. 20 minutes.

Jake: Done.

Rev: All right. You get out onto the roof and look around, and it is almost like you're just inside of a green and yellow egg. You can see that, like, the ground below is cracked and broken, where you can see that this dome is actually a sphere that goes underneath the building.

Jake: And is there anything like at the apex of this?

Rev: There is not.

Jake: I guess I'll call back down the ladder. "I don't see like an origination point of this thing. I don't know where this is coming from, but it goes all the way underground and under us."

Megan: "How close is it to the actual building?"

Rev: As you look, you can see that it's getting ever so slowly closer.

Jake: "It's shrinking."

Megan: "Oh, no. Don't touch it. I saw it, like, cut somebody in half as it came down."

Jake: Do I have ... This is going to sound meta. But in the game, could I infer a time limit? Like, do I know what kind of clock I'm working against before this thing gets to us?

Rev: Why don't you make a pull to try to figure that out?

Jake: I should let somebody else describe actions.

Kim: Nah, man. You go. You're doing great.

Megan: First in initiative.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: I'd climb up this ladder, but I'm so slow.

Rev: That's what would be on the Jake license plate. "First in initiative."

Tass: "Last in intention."

Jake: Oh boy, this is an unyielding tower.

Kim: Jake, trying to go for one that's on the bottom, on the felt.

Jake: Done.

Rev: You get a sense that at least within two hours, this is going to be close enough and tight enough to crush the building.

Jake: "All right, we got a couple hours, here."

Tass: "All right. Strohm, what do we have in here? You have a menagerie of just crap. What is something magic that could stop this, negate it, hold it off for a while?"

Rev: STROHM: If magic is cut off, I have no idea what of my things might still work? The only thing I can think of is I do have an orb that dispels magic, but it's ...

Rev: And she kind of hesitates for a moment.

Rev: STROHM: It's in my secret vault in the subbasement.

Kim: "Sounds like we're going there."

Tass: "Why did you seem hesitant about that?"

Megan: "How deep is your subbasement?"

Rev: STROHM: It's only a few floors below. But if the magic is cut off, that means the elevator doesn't work properly. I have a spell on the elevator. No one can get up to my penthouse. It passes through a magical portal to get here. So you'll have to find a way onto the 40th floor, and work your way down.

Tass: "Awesome."

Kim: Is there no stair access in this penthouse?

Rev: She has made it so no one can get here, except for by her designs.

Kim: Excellent, OK.

Tass: "All right. Where's the closest access to that?"

Rev: STROHM: She shrugs her shoulders.

Tass: Neat ...

Rev: And like, that's not an answer. She does not have one. You have to figure out how to get onto the 40th floor

Megan: And we're on the 44th?

Rev: Correct.

Jake: "Can we go down the elevator shaft? Like, not in the elevator, but ..."

Rev: STROHM: Yes I suppose, if you could figure out a way to break through the floor.

Jake: "I guess it sounds like we're either breaking in from outside or breaking in from inside. One of them ... You know, there's wind and stuff, so I don't love that as much."

Tass: "Yeah. All right. Let's get over there, then."

Rev: As you head towards the elevator, she stops you.

Rev: STROHM: Be aware that as you make your way down, every tenth level is a series of defenses, in case someone was to try to get up through here to get to us.

Tass: "Yeah, that makes sense."

Jake: "Are those defenses gonna still be active?"

Rev: STROHM: They're creatures that I captured very long ago.

Jake: [Chuckles] "Oh, OK. Neato."

Kim: "Strohm, you didn't tell me about this. What kind of creatures?"

Rev: STROHM: On the 40th floor is Apep, the Enemy of Light.

Jake: [Laughs] They're named enemies!

Rev: STROHM: They're all what people would consider mythological creatures from my era that were real, and I captured. On the 30th floor is Ammit, Devourer of the Dead.

Kim: [Laughs] Oh my god.

Rev: STROHM: On the 20th floor is El Naddaha, Siren of the Nile. And then on the 10th floor is the Sphinx.

Tass: "God!"

Megan: "Well, as long as we stay alive, the Devourer of the Dead should be fine, right?"

Tass: "Oh yeah, I'm certain that there's a guardian that's just super chill with living people going up and down at their leisure."

Megan: "Well, it eats the dead."

Tass: "Yeah, but it has to kill them to eat the dead."

Jake: OK. So this is a situation where we can't, like, send the elevator down and then go down the shaft. Like, we have to break through the elevator.

Rev: Correct. The elevator goes through a portal on the 39th or 40th floor, and then comes out into the shaft on the 42nd floor and then stops at the 44th floor.

Jake: OK.

Rev: STROHM: Yes. Once you get through to the 40th floor, there are stairs that will lead you down every 10 levels. There are floors in between. There may be people there who could help you or things that could help you, but that's up to you if you want to explore them.

Megan: "Is there anything that you have access to, not in your subbasement, that might help us, like get through the floor of this elevator or pass some barriers we might encounter?"

Rev: STROHM: You would have to take a look around in the vault and see what is still working.

Megan: "Yeah, that sounds great."

Rev: All right. So you're on floor 44. Do you want to go to 43, which is the gala level? Or 42, where you know her main vault is?

Kim: I imagine that I would have some familiarity, at least with the items that Strohm has on display, like on the second floor. Does anything come to mind as being expressly useful with breaking through an elevator floor?

Rev: No, not really. A lot of the things that she has on display are kind of for show. There are more things on the beautiful side of the scale.

Kim: They're trophies.

Rev: Yeah.

Kim: "OK. I think we got to go to the vault."

Megan: "Yeah, let's go."

Rev: As the two of you are heading down the stairs and Jake and Tass are standing up by the elevator, you all hear the sound of glass shattering on the second floor.

Jake: Well, I'm gonna go check that out then instead.

Tass: Yep, following immediately

Rev: And as you head down there, the power blinks a couple of times, then goes out.

Tass: I'm gonna get out my chains and light them up with fire, to get a little illumination.

Rev: As you illuminate the second floor, looking around for the sound of the shattered glass, you see a very familiar container broken open, with the husk of a strange egg inside of it.

Kim: No!

Tass: Oh, come on!

Jake: Do I ... Is my phone working? Like, do I have a light source, here?

Rev: Yes.

Jake: OK. Then I'm just also, like back to back with Tass, trying to wash light over this place to figure out what it is and where it's gone.

Rev: Yeah, why don't you do a search here? Give me a pull, and ... This is a little hectic. You've got a minute.

Jake: Why is it always me?

Rev: Because you say it.

Jake: Done. You do spot the creature in the far corner of the room. It is covered in a thick slime. And it has completely blank features and pale eyes, six legs, and a large tail. It's much larger than it should be, for having just come out of the egg. And as its featureless face swings in your direction, you can see that its mouth is smeared with blood, and the shin, ankle and foot of a human leg is protruding from its mouth. And then it very quickly chokes that whole thing down, and then lurches in your direction.

Megan: Oh shit.

Tass: "Oh, nope!" And I'm gonna leap at this thing and bring the chain down on it.

Rev: All right. Why don't you give me two pulls to attack this creature?

Tass: OK.

Kim: Good thing we already got a reading off of this thing.

Rev: [Chuckles]

Kim: Oh god, oh god ...

Tass: God!

Megan: Well ...

Kim: Oh ...

Jake: Cool. All right.

Kim: It's taking most of the tower with it.

Tass: The whole top is just shifting.

Kim: Oh, honey ...

Megan: Ayy!

Tass: Done.

Rev: All right. How much damage do you do?

Tass: Three.

Rev: You bring this flaming chain down on this creature, and it whips its tail at you. You take 1-harm.

Tass: I'm gonna try to eat this hit. I want to do another pull.

Rev: All right. I think you have got a minute on this one.

Tass: OK. Done.

Rev: Jake, you have just seen Tass leap at this creature with his flaming chain. What are you doing?

Jake: I'm gonna open this fool up. I'm shooting it.

Rev: I think this is just one pull, since you're not getting close to it.

Jake: OK.

Rev: And I think you've got a minute and a half for this one.

Kim: Oh my god, this tower is not moving.

Jake: Rock solid.

Megan: Everything in the top, like, two thirds, is like glued together. And the bottom, he's already made a bunch of pulls from. So it is just ...

Rev: I did not realize the center of your tower was already just a single Jenga block.

Tass: I also didn't realize that you didn't notice me sprinkling in some glue on your blocks as you were jumbling them up.

Jake: Done.

Rev: All right. How much damage do you do?

Jake: Two.

Rev: The creature lets out a roar as the bullet hits it. It thrashes a few times, and then is moving no longer.

Jake: "Strohm, was that thing magically locked down?"

Rev: STROHM: Maybe.

Jake: "Oh, god. OK. So things inside might start waking up also."

Rev: And as this creature goes down, you can see a trail of blood leading away from it. And you move your flashlight up in that direction, and you see Kester laying in the corner, missing most of his hand and one full leg.

Jake: I'm gonna use The Dark Arts on the creature. After defeating an enemy, I can gather its life force and mark a hold.

Rev: All right.

Jake: And then I want to go check on Kester.

Rev: Megan and Kim, you have headed down into the vault proper. What are you looking for in here? You know, the first location is all of the almost like postage boxes. Then there are other items further in.

Kim: Did the lights go down in here as well?

Rev: Yes.

Kim: I think the minute that they do that, I'm gonna use, I, All-Seeing.

Rev: All right. Make your pulls.

Tass: Oh, handily. Handily.

Kim: Got this microphone in the way. Can't see what I'm doing.

Rev: Yeah, right?

Kim: I think that was it.

Rev: All right. Mark your hold.

Kim: OK.

Rev: Megan, what are you up to?

Megan: The lights just went out in here in the vault, so I guess I'm just pulling out my phone and turning the flashlight on and yelling out for Kim. "What happened?"

Kim: "Come on. There has to be something in here that's still magical or still usable." And yeah, I'm just gonna keep going towards where I know the good stuff is.

Rev: OK.

Megan: And I use my phone flashlight to try and keep track of her and follow.

Rev: All right. Yeah. So you open up the door between all of these lock boxes and the larger items, and there are quite a few things in here. I think you're familiar with a handful of them. What exactly are you looking for?

Kim: I'm looking for anything that I think would be strong enough to, like, cut a hole out of the bottom of the elevator.

Rev: All right. Give me a pull here to investigate the area real quick.

Kim: Sure.

Rev: You've got a minute and, it's going to be one.

Kim: OK. There we go.

Rev: All right, you do find a vial of some very strange liquid that is bubbling, that you know can eat through matter.

Kim: "Here we go. This thing will definitely eat through the elevator floor."

Megan: "OK. Great. What do we do when we get through?"

Kim: "Do you still have the rope with you from the grappling hook?"

Megan: "Yeah, I still have the grappling hook on me. I guess we can use that to try and lower ourselves down to the next floor."

Kim: Yeah, I don't see anything in here that would maybe assist us with doing that, do I?

Rev: No.

Kim: OK. "I think that's our best shot. We should go back upstairs."

Megan: "Yeah, let's meet up with everyone."

Kim: "OK." And then we're gonna head back up to the main level.

Rev: All right. Jake, up with Kester. He is in rough shape. He is missing a leg and the bulk of his hand.

Jake: I mean, I don't think I've got any magical healing implements or anything. So I'm trying to do like regular-ass first aid, here. I'm trying to tourniquet him and keep him from bleeding out.

Rev: All right. Give me two pulls here, to stabilize him. You've got a minute and a half.

Jake: Oh my god.

Megan: Oh my gosh.

Jake: It's locked in so tight that I held onto the piece and it didn't fall over.

Megan: Yeah, it was like a spring.

Jake: Done.

Megan: [Exhales]

Rev: All right. You are able to get Kester stabilized. And in the room where Strohm's Cerberus was the last time you visited, you can hear this muffled echoing voice.

Jake: I'm gonna open the door and see what's in there.

Rev: Inside is the floating head in a jar that is Tiresias. His eyes are dimly glowing.

Jake: Well, I'm gonna grab him and take him with.

Rev: OK. Up above, on the glass ceiling of Strohm's building, there is the sound of a heavy, wet impact.

Tass: Can we see through enough to see what that was?

Rev: You can. You look up, and there is a gelatinous ooze on top. And it just starts to eat through the glass very slowly. It is covering the entirety of the ceiling. It is a deep blue, and you can see the glass just melting under its touch.

Jake: "OK, I guess we're going down." Oh my god, we've got to get everybody from every floor down, or else this thing is just gonna melt them. I'm gonna gather up Strohm and fucking Kester and Tiresias's stupid head in a jar.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: "Everybody get to the elevator immediately!"

Kim: Do I live in Strohm's penthouse?

Rev: No, you live on one of the floors below.

Kim: OK. OK.

Rev: Your stuff is safe.

Kim: All of my musical instruments are still OK for now.

Rev: Jake, here's a Post-it note to mark down that you have Tiresias's head in a jar. At some point, you can declare that he will see something for you. It does not necessarily have to be related to this. He's got a lot of visions bouncing around in his head. But you can use him to gain a ... Essentially, a question to me that I will answer truthfully.

Jake: OK.

Rev: And I think actually, you get another one for saving Kester. Kester's works differently. Instead of seeing all things at all times, Kester has the ability to stop time and perceive all of the things around him and make the choice that is best in that moment. So Kester will also owe you a piece of advice. He will tell you what he thinks is the best way to deal with the situation when you turn that in.

Jake: Nice.

Rev: Tass, what are you up to?

Tass: As they come up with this like jar of acid or whatever, I think I'm just looking at this elevator situation. "We've got to get everybody down. So let's start burning a hole."

Kim: Yeah, I'll hand Tass the vial of acid.

Rev: All right.

Tass: Yeah, I'm just kind of looking for the best spot that I think that we can burn this and get a hook in near it, so that we can start bringing people down safely and quickly.

Rev: So I think give me a pull to determine where is the safest place to hook this. It's just gonna be one. You've got a minute.

Tass: OK.

Rev: And I say you have a minute, because you notice that all of the glass on the ceiling is now gone. The goo is not dripping through. It seems that it stays in one big piece, so it is moving slowly down the walls

Tass: And done. [Exhales]

Rev: You are able to find a spot on the corner on the outside, where she has got some stone statues, that you think you can hook it and it will stay secure long enough for you to get down to the 40th.

Tass: All right, getting that hooked up. "Strohm, how are you feeling?"

Rev: STROHM: Certainly felt better.

Tass: "Do you think if you, like, grabbed around my neck and shoulders, you could hold on?"

Rev: STROHM: I think that this is best done a different way.

Rev: And she tenses up and screams. And as she does, all of the beetles pour out of her mouth and her whole body deflates, leaving behind just a skin sack. And they start swarming around your feet.

Tass: Oh, god!

Kim: This is a phrase I never thought I would say before. I'm gonna go ahead and pick up my pseudo-mother's skin.

Rev: [Laughs] Yeah. Why don't you mark that down, actually?

Kim: OK. She might want that later.

Rev: Yeah, you have Strohm's skin suit.

Kim: Oh god.

Jake: There's a hot after market for that.

Rev: And Tass, you have the swarm of beetles. And they can be used to reach something that you cannot.

Tass: [Laughs] OK.

Kim: "I usually only see her do this when she gets very drunk, so ..."

Jake: [As Strohm] This is my favorite party trick. [Spits out beetles]

Kim: [Laughs]

Tass: All right, and I'm gonna pour the acid.

Rev: All right. You pour this goo from inside of the vial, and it spreads out over the floor in about a five foot circle and just instantly eats away through everything. And you hear it fall, and then the sound of it eating through something else.

Tass: "Damn. All right. That works fast." I'm gonna grab that rope and get everything set.

Rev: All right.

Tass: Slide down.

Rev: Is everybody heading down the rope to the 40th floor?

Kim: Yes.

Megan: Yep.

Jake: I'm gonna bring up the rear. I'm gonna try to make sure everybody else gets out of here first.

Rev: All right. Everybody give me a pull. I think this is going to be 2, to get down safely to the 40th floor and land at a location that you're not certain what it is.

Kim: Nah, man. I've seen all of this before. I'm gonna use my hold from I, All-Seeing.

Rev: All right. And you have seen down into the lair of Apep, the Enemy of Light. It is an enormous 50 foot snake. And as it moves, it causes the ground underneath it to shift, almost rumble. And it's odd that you can't feel it up here. So you know that the environment that it is kept in must be very magical. And that magic doesn't seem to be affected by whatever is happening here. But it is very dry and sandy, and you're able to tell everyone when to go, so that they drop down after the enemy of light has passed by. So you all drop into this dark location. It is hot and humid. You could feel the sand

beneath your boots. And far off to the side, you can hear the sound of something large, slithering.

Tass: "Oh my god."

Kim: [Exhales] "Is everyone OK?"

Jake: "Yeah. So, what? We've gotta get to the opposite side of this floor to hit the stairs?"

Kim: "I think so, yeah."

Rev: One of the beetles moves up by your head, Tass. And you hear ...

Rev: BEETLE STROHM: Yes, the far corner. A door, leading up into a stairwell.

Tass: "Yeah. All right. Oh, that's itchy. Yeah. Let's go. Move, move, move."

Rev: All right. So you're all going to try to sneak across the layer of Apep, the Enemy of Light. Everyone give me a pull. I think this is going to be 2. But, you've got five minutes. It's a large area. You can do this very slowly.

Kim: OK.

Jake: All right.

Rev: I'll be honest, I thought each of you having your own individual towers would make it a much longer time before any one tower fell. Because it took forever in Dread for the first tower fall. But Jake constantly seems like he is a hiccup away from death.

Jake: [Laughs] This is the most unyielding Jenga tower I've ever messed with in my life. I stacked it. And I swear that while it was on the cardboard, everything was wiggly.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: And I'm pretty sure that being able to sit on the squishy surface, everything has gotten to settle and nothing will move.

Tass: I have a theory, too, about the felt of the table.

Rev: Mmhmm.

Tass: I feel like it really locks up the bottom enough that everything else, once you kind of pull or wobble it at all, it really pulls that a lot easier.

Kim: So that's two for me, I'm good.

Megan: Yeah, I'm good too.

Jake: Done.

Rev: All right. So you are all able to sneak across the lair of this large snake, and I think you're able to do it without even ever seeing it. And on the far side of the room is a door that leads to a set of stairs. And as you all make it to the stairwell, somewhere below you, you can hear the sound of explosions. It's very far away. But you feel just a little shake rumble in the building. This set of stairs goes down 10 floors. You know that the floors between 40 and 30, that there is part of like the training area. A gym, a pool, a spa, some courts and gun ranges, and an arena. She said that there might be things there to help you, or you can skip past them and move on to the next defense layer.

Kim: What floor do I live on?

Rev: Those are much lower. You would live on the 19th floor.

Kim: Nice.

Megan: Is there anything within these floors that we think might be able to be a good source of light for us, in case we lose that again? Or is there light here? Is the light out in the entire building, or ...

Rev: Correct. Yeah, the light is out in the entire building.

Megan: Cool. So yeah, some light would be great.

Rev: Yeah, why don't you give me a pull to see if any of the areas that you know are located between 39 and 31 might have some things to help you with light sources.

Megan: OK. OK.

Rev: You would imagine that at the gun range, there are probably quite a few lights. Maybe even some night vision goggles and things like that.

Megan: Can I use my Slayer move to advance the event clock, so I can prepare for the next floor that we are going to be hitting?

Rev: Yeah, absolutely.

Kim: So if I do my Soothsayer at the exact same time, is that a thing that we can do? Can we pile up moves like that?

Rev: Yeah. Because these moves that you take aren't really taking real time, but do advance the event clock as if you had taken that time somewhere along the way. So you'll advance the clock three minutes still, not just two, if you double up.

Kim: All right, great. And I'm going to give myself the hold 2.

Rev: All right.

Megan: Do I have to pull for this or anything? Or is this just ...

Rev: Nope. You just have advanced the clock.

Megan: OK. Wonderful. Yeah, so I'll let everyone know, "If we make it to the gun range, we can maybe get some like night vision goggles or something to help us see through out here. I'm not sure, Kim, do you know which exact floor that's at?"

Kim: "That's on the floor 35."

Tass: "Are there people up here do we think, right now?"

Kim: "Probably. I mean, the last time that I was here, it seemed like everyone from the House of Strohm was all kind of consolidating inside of The Vault."

Tass: "Oh god. Well, there's explosions downstairs, and this thing eating its way through the top. Should we have them moving with us, if there are?"

Kim: "Probably. I don't want any of them to be hurt."

Tass: "All right. Y'all, go for the night vision stuff and see what's on 35, and I'll just move like hell through these floors and see if I can find anybody."

Jake: I also want to, while we're going to the gun range, get some ear protection for everybody. I know that we're gonna be fighting a siren pretty soon, so I'd love to get everybody unable to hear when we get there.

Rev: All right. So Tass, I think this is your Demonic Movement, yes?

Tass: Yeah, I think I'm gonna take this wound.

Rev: All right. So yeah, take a wound. And you move very quickly. Your next action is reduced by two pulls, and your pull timer moves up two levels, so you get a longer period of time. So I think Tass, for you to search these floors — 39, 38, 37, and 36 — this is gonna be three pulls to do this. But it's only gonna be one, because you are moving so quickly.

Tass: Awesome. Oh, that was the smoothest one yet.

Kim: Nicely done.

Tass: Oh, I feel good about that.

Rev: All right. So you have gathered some of Strohm's forces. You have found seven. Which brings us to another mechanic of this particular Dread. Whoever would like to keep track of these seven minions of Strohm, know that at any point, you can sacrifice one of them to remove a pull from the number of pulls you have to do.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: And this is not meta knowledge. This is something your character is aware of. You are stepping aside, letting them take a hit for you. You are leaving them behind. But you can sacrifice these underlings to lessen the number of pulls you have to take.

Tass: I'll keep track of it.

Rev: OK.

Kim: A little pop up, every time you use that, is going to pop up above my head that says, "Kim disliked that."

Tass: Yeah, I bet.

Rev: Down on the 35th floor, you enter into the gun range and you hear sounds of movement coming from the darkness.

Kim: Do I see anything?

Rev: Not at this range, you don't.

Megan: OK. Where in this room am I going to find a light or night vision goggles?

Rev: You can head over to the drawers on the far side of the range.

Megan: Yeah, I think I'm gonna stick to the wall and have my phone light out as well.

Rev: OK. So are you ... Paint a picture for me, here. Are you kind of watching the area? Are you just heading straight for the drawers and searching for the things?

Megan: If I hear something in here, I'm definitely keeping an eye out around me. But I'm moving, because I know how we're on a time limit here, so ...

Rev: Yeah, so you do see, as you get closer, half a dozen figures moving around right at the edges of your light,

Megan: "OK, there's like something in here. There's a few of them, but they don't want to come into the light. They're right on me, here. Do you see this?"

Kim: Do we?

Rev: Not with just the power of your phone light, you don't.

Jake: "All right. Let's just go back to back to back here, so we can cast light out around us, make a field that they can't penetrate. Whatever they are, it seems like they don't want to move through that, right?"

Kim: "Yeah."

Megan: "Agreed."

Rev: So as you all head over towards the area where the lights are and the night vision goggles, how many would you like to find?

Megan: At least four would be great, so we can each see well.

Rev: OK. Give me two pulls, and you've got a minute.

Megan: OK.

Tass: Oh, that was smooth.

Jake: Could I feasibly be looking for that hearing protection at the same time?

Rev: Sure.

Jake: Is it far enough away that I'd have to be breaking our, like, light field though, to do it at the same time?

Rev: Yeah, you definitely wouldn't be able to be back to back.

Jake: OK. Then I will wait until hers is done, so we can all move as a unit still.

Megan: And done.

Rev: Yeah, you do find four sets of night vision goggles, and four flashlights. And as you pivot around to make it so Jake can hunt for the ear protection. Jake, give me one pull. You've got a minute and a half. But Megan, the things at the edge of your vision do get closer. They move in, hissing at you, and you can see long canines in their mouth, pale skin, and black eyes. Two of them break from the group and charge into the light at you.

Megan: I want to hit it with my crossbow.

Jake: Done.

Rev: All right. Give me two pulls to hit one, three to hit both.

Megan: OK. Do I have to decide first which one I'm trying to do?

Rev: You don't.

Megan: OK. How much time do I have to do this?

Rev: This is quick. You've got a minute.

Megan: OK.

Rev: Because they are on top of you.

Tass: Oh, you got it! Oh, the pro status. My god, I'm sweating.

Megan: All three done.

Rev: All right. You fire off this crossbow, and it pierces into the hearts of these two vampires and they turn to ash. And Jake, you are able to find four sets of hearing protection on this range.

Jake: OK. Let's get the fuck out of here.

Rev: Tass. As you are coming down to the 35th floor to meet up with everyone with these seven minions of Strohm in tow, above you, you hear something large clumping down the stairs.

Tass: "There's something coming after us, guys. We gotta go. We gotta go."

Jake: OK. I'll start leading us the rest of the way down.

Rev: OK. You know that there are vampires behind you. Megan has killed a few. And there's something else on the stairs. This is a pretty dangerous situation, so I'm gonna ask everyone to give me two pulls in a minute to get out of here and onto the 30th floor, where Ammit the Devourer of the Dead lives.

Megan: I'm gonna try to use my move This Way! So for every additional pull I make, that's one less pull you all have to make.

Rev: All right.

Tass: Ooh.

Kim: OK. She did her two.

Tass: Oh, handily done.

Megan: Three pulls.

Rev: All right. So everyone else give me one pull.

Tass: Uh ... Got it.

Kim: There's my one.

Jake: Done.

Rev: All right, so you are all able to make it down the stairs. The sounds of the vampires and whatever that large thing clumping down the stairs was, falling away behind you. You enter onto the 30th floor, which is the layer of Ammit, Devourer of the Dead. It almost is like a jungle in here. It's very humid. There's a lot of greenery. And in front of you runs a river. This room actually is lit. There seems to be a fake sun here. And in the water, just barely, you can see the top of an enormous crocodile head in this river.

Megan: So since I used my Slayer movie earlier to prepare for this upcoming floor where we knew this creature was going to be, do I know the proper technique for getting through this floor?

Rev: This will let you do more damage and have less pulls against this creature, if you would like to fight it.

Megan: "OK everyone, are we attacking this thing? Are we gonna try to get around it?"

Tass: "Yeah, I mean, if that's the fastest way, it sort of just peeking up out of the water there at us, isn't it? Is that it? That has to be it, right? Oh god ..."

Kim: "Yeah, that's it."

Jake: Quick move clarification.

Rev: Mmhmm?

Jake: I can pull 3 to create the Shield for yourself and any other player within close range. Does that mean I pick one other person, or does that mean anybody in range gets the shield?

Rev: Anybody in range.

Jake: Ooh. I'm gonna try that. I'm gonna try to do three pulls for Shielding.

Rev: OK.

Kim: Oh, Jake.

Jake: I don't know that I've got three pulls left on this tower.

Megan: Oh, yikes.

Rev: I think you've got a minute and a half for this.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: And as Jake is making those pulls, Ammit, the Devourer of the Dead, stands up out of the water, and you can see that it has the head of a crocodile, the four limbs of a lion, and the hind limbs of a hippopotamus. It is enormous. And it lets out a roar, and starts to sink back into the water and swim very quickly in the direction of all of you.

Kim: Could I, All-Seeing?

Rev: Sure.

Kim: Great.

Tass: I am so stressed right now, you guys.

Jake: Got my three done.

Tass: Oh my god.

Megan: Oh awesome, Jake.

Rev: All right. So everyone, mark down that you have a shield that will negate one wound.

Kim: So I got my hold back for I all seeing all right,

Rev: As the Devourer of the Dead rushes towards you all in the water, what is everyone doing?

Megan: I'm gonna take a shot at it with my crossbow.

Jake: I'm gonna take a shot at it with a gun.

Tass: I'm gonna sprint at it, swinging that chain around over my head, ready to bring it down over its head.

Kim: What are, like ... I find it funny saying the minions of Strohm, because I'm also a minion of Strohm. What are — what are they all doing?

Rev: They're just hanging back, waiting to be told what to do.

Kim: Fantastic. So I don't have to, like, protect them? They're probably OK?

Rev: Right, yeah.

Kim: Will my censer reach that far? It's on a chain.

Rev: Reach that far? You could join Tass in the rush towards it.

Kim: No, I really don't want to do that.

Rev: [Laughs]

Kim: Do I see anything else in this room?

Rev: It is basically a giant jungle. So think of it as a jungle, and not like a room. So there are trees, there are rocks, there's water, there's sun.

Megan: This sounds nice. Let's stay here.

Kim: Yeah, this sounds actually kind of dope. Then I guess I will join Tass in trying to hit this thing with my censer.

Rev: All right. Before you all give me a pull, you hear cracking sounds all around you. You see gaps appear in the sky, in the river, and water starts to pour out. You can see the foundations of the building. It seems like something has happened that is causing the foundation of the building to crack, and parts of the building to fall off. But this has not deterred the creature from its intended task. So everyone give me two pulls to try and attack this creature without getting caught in its giant crocodile maw.

Megan: And I do one less pull, since I've prepared for this floor.

Rev: Correct, and do one extra damage. And you've got a minute and a half for these pulls.

Megan: Done.

Tass: Oh my god.

Megan: Oh my gosh, Jake.

Jake: Done.

Tass: Done.

Rev: All right. How much damage have you all done collectively?

Megan: Four.

Tass: Three.

Jake: Two.

Kim: One.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: Yay!

Jake: Dead crocodile!

Rev: That is enough to knock it unconscious. Unless, of course, you're trying to kill it.

Megan: No.

Rev: OK. You leave it unconscious, floating in the water. And you notice again that a lot of the water is just pouring out of a hole in the side of the building, and into the abyss. But on the far side of this room, you do find the stairs that lead down to the 20th floor. Between the 29th and the 21st floor, you have two lounges, a kitchen, three layers of library, and a very large movie theatre. Would you like to stop anywhere, or are you headed down to the 20th floor?

Kim: We got about 90 minutes. We could probably watch something really fast do.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: We're definitely getting popcorn, at the very least.

Kim: [Laughs]

Jake: "Does anybody remember, like, the best way to make a chump out of a Sphinx? Because now would be a unique opportunity to check the books, and see if we can figure out a good riddle or something."

Megan: "Well usually you have to answer their riddles, right?"

Jake: "Oh, fuck. OK. We could go grab a book of riddles, so we've got all the answers."

Megan: [Laughs] I love this, like, three floors of library, somewhere there's a children's section in there, where it's just like a book of riddles.

Kim: "I mean, that's not a bad idea. If Strohm brought these from her time, then it's possible that there's a book in her library that would maybe detail, like ... I don't know. All of the riddles that, like, a Sphinx has said ever."

Megan: "Definitely worth a shot, if we have the time."

Rev: I think that as you're discussing the idea of searching the library for a book that will have the answers to the riddles this Sphinx would say, I think one of the Strohm beetles moves up next to Tass's ear.

Rev: BEETLE STROHM: There is no book of answers for the Sphinx in the library. That would make it far too easy for anyone, including my underlings, to breach my security.

Tass: [Shuddering] "OK." Yeah, I'll tell them that, and then head out.

Rev: All right.

Tass: Can I try to make another pull to negate the harm from doing this Demonic Speed?

Rev: Yes, that's what it's there for.

Tass: Oh boy, OK.

Rev: So give me a pull. But it's super fast. You got 30 seconds. Go.

Tass: Oh shit.

Megan: Oh boy.

Rev: Twenty five ...

Megan: Oh, Rev ...

Kim: Rev, I'm gonna need you to leave.

Tass: Oh my god! Done.

Kim: You did it.

Megan: Atta boy!

Rev: You are able to super speed through these layers again, looking for more minions of Strohm. You do find an additional 11, here. You are now up to 18.

Jake: I'm going to dole out hearing protection to our folk.

Megan: Can I use my Slayer skill to prepare for this floor?

Rev: Yeah. So you want to prepare for the Siren?

Megan: Yeah. So if I could advance the event clock by one minute, I'll figure out what the best way to handle this upcoming floor is going to be with the Siren.

Rev: All right.

Kim: All right. Then I think if Tass is gonna grab everyone else that's on these next ten floors, then I think we just head down.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: OK. So you all head down. As I said before, the foundation seems to have been damaged. Parts of the building are starting to crack and crumble away. Everybody give me just one pull. It's not too bad yet, but the stairs are starting to become uneven. Some of them are missing, as more and more of the building starts to crumble away. And you've got a minute and a half for this.

Jake: Done.

Megan: [Gasps] Oh nope, we're going this way ...

Kim: Done.

Tass: It is physically painful to watch this,

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: Done.

Rev: So you are all able to make it down to the Siren of the Nile on floor 20. This whole level is an ocean, and you can see a rock at the middle of it. And there is a beautiful woman on the rock, and she is pointing in your direction. You hear this beautiful song filling the air.

Kim: I'm going to put my headphones on.

Tass: Same.

Kim: My headphones. Yes. Yes, that's the right word for them.

Jake: Earmuffs.

Kim: Earmuffs.

Rev: All right. So you all put these on, and instantly the song is drowned out. None of you seem to be affected, but a huge chunk of Strohm's minions start to dive into the water and swim towards her.

Megan: I mean, I still have my mermaid ring on. Can I just jump into the water?

Rev: Sure.

Megan: Then I will jump right into the water, and use my brand new fancy mermaid tail to stop her minions from going into the water. Kind of hold them back, and keep them from swimming towards her.

Rev: OK. So you're going to try to gather up all of these minions and like, swim them to the other side? What exactly are you doing?

Megan: I think create a barrier from the water side of where we are, to just work with my teammates here to help corral these people for the moment, until we figure out how to get them safely across.

Rev: OK. I think this is gonna be ... This is gonna be a big pull, because there are a lot of them. I think this is gonna be three. And you have got a minute and a half before some of them start to make their way past you.

Megan: OK.

Rev: As half of these minions have dove into the water, and started swimming towards the beautiful siren song.

Jake: While she makes these pulls, can I give my Ring of Water Walking to Tass, because he's the melee man?

Rev: You can.

Tass: I'll take it.

Rev: What are you gonna do with it?

Megan: Done.

Tass: Nice. I mean, I think I'm just staying on top of the water in case things break bad, and this siren starts moving towards us. Or like, moving off the rock.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Then I will move towards her in earnest.

Rev: Yeah. So right now, Megan is swimming rapidly back and forth, keeping these nine minions at bay as they try to swim towards the siren. She is able to stop them. What are you all doing to kind of move them on to the next area?

Megan: I mean, I have my grappling hook with the rope. I'm using that — throwing it kind of back and forth up to Tass, while he's on the water to get all of these minions kind of tied together.

Rev: Like tie them all in a clump?

Tass: Yeah, I'm just running across. Just dragging people.

Rev: All right. So Tass, give me a pull to literally pull all of these minions. I think this is gonna be two, and it's gonna be a minute.

Tass: OK.

Rev: They, you know, it is a single rope. There are nine of them. So you can have to move quickly to get them all to the other side and out the door.

Tass: Oh my god, I am like that third little piggy. I have built the most solid ... Oh my god. Oh, no! You bastard.

Jake: Are we allowed ... Can I? Are we allowed to share Jenga strats, as we go?

Rev: Hot tips? Strats?

Megan: Yeah.

Rev: He's like, if you hold on to it at the top ...

All: [Laugh]

Rev: And just press down.

Jake: No. Keep in mind — like, when you're trying to pull a piece out, keep in mind which way the tower is trying to wobble and slide it counter to that.

Tass: [Cries out]

Kim: I feel like you guys are giving advice and it's going to make Tass drop the tower.

Megan: Yeah. This is all conditional with if it goes wrong, it's not my fault.

Tass: Done. Oh, Jesus.

Rev: All right. So you are able to pull all of these minions. You just sprint across the water, holding them. And you drag them to the far corner of this room to the other door. What is everyone else doing?

Jake: Swimming it.

Rev: OK.

Kim: Yeah.

Rev: All right. So I don't think Megan has to do a pull for this, because she has a tail. Kim and Jake, give me just one pull to swim across this safely. And you've got two minutes for this.

Kim: There we go.

Megan: Oh, man. Nice one.

Tass: Nice.

Jake: Done.

Rev: All right. So you are able to get everyone to the stairwell, and you are now to the stairs that lead down to the 10th floor. You know that between the 19th and 11th floor is living quarters of all of the minions of Strohm, including Kim, who lives on the 19th floor.

Tass: "Got anything you can't live without?"

Kim: "Oh man. Like a bunch of like, very rare, very expensive musical instruments."

Tass: "Well, that's — I'm not helping you with that."

Kim: [Laughs]

Tass: I think I'm doing the same thing, here. I'm gonna scout for people.

Rev: All right. Take your wound.

Tass: All right. I'm gonna ... I think I'm going to try a pull.

Rev: OK.

Tass: [Sighs] Oh my god. OK. Got it.

Rev: All right. You are able to zoom through these floors again, all of these living quarters, and you do find 22 more minions of Strohm throughout these various floors.

Tass: All right. Ushering them downward, towards the group.

Rev: All right. What is the rest of the group doing while Tass is speed running the living quarters?

Jake: Fucking nothing.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: I'm not taking action.

Kim: In light of that, could I use Soothsayer and advance the clock by two minutes to give Jake 2 hold?

Rev: Absolutely.

Jake: Oh, neat. What does that do?

Kim: That means that at any point I can spend, on your behalf, to reduce your pulls up to two.

Jake: Nice.

Kim: Yeah.

Jake: Making my way down to where we're gonna have to approach the Sphinx next.

Rev: OK. I think everybody's gotta give me a pull. This one's gonna be a little faster. This one's gonna be a minute. It's a single pull. Because again, these stairs are becoming very dangerous.

Megan: I would like to use This Way! and do an additional pull to reduce the amount of pulls that everyone else has to do to zero.

Rev: That won't work yet, because I believe This Way! says a dangerous escape — two or more pulls.

Megan: Oh wait, yeah.

Kim: Jake, you got this? Or do you want me to spend your hold?

Jake: Let me tap a couple of blocks.

Kim: OK. Let me know.

Jake: [Chuckles] See what ... See what shakes out.

Rev: And a reminder: you've got a minute.

Megan: Done.

Jake: Done.

Kim: Done.

Rev: All right. You are all able to meet Tass down on the 10th floor. This door opens up to the Sphinx lair. Again, it is another sandy area, covered in dunes and a large sun again. And in the middle of the room sits the Sphinx. It nods at you as you enter the room.

SFX: SPHINX: If you would like to pass, you must each answer a riddle.

Tass: "Each?!"

Rev: SPHINX: Bitch, did I stutter?

Megan: [Laughs]

Jake: I would like to call in a vision from Tiresias, here.

Rev: To answer your riddle?

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: All right. So Jake, you turn in this vision from Tiresias. His eyes open, and he screams at you ...

Rev: TIRESIAS: A dice, a dice!

Rev: And the Sphinx, at the same time, says ...

Rev: SPHINX: I have six faces, but wear no makeup. Twenty one eyes, but cannot see. What am I?

Jake: "A die!"

Rev: SPHINX: You may pass.

Tass: "Dang it!"

Megan: I step up.

Rev: SPHINX: I contain 26 letters, but only three syllables. What am I?

Megan: "Alphabet."

Rev: SPHINX: You may pass.

Tass: I'll step up.

Rev: SPHINX: You saw me where I never was, and where I could not be. And yet within that very place, my face you often see. What am I?

Rev: And as the time ticks away in the silence, you notice that its claws are extending out of its paws.

Tass: "Time?"

Rev: SPHINX: You may not pass.

Tass: [Groans]

Kim: I step up.

Rev: SPHINX: There is a green house. Inside the green house, there is a white house. Inside the white house, there is a red house. And inside the red house, there are lots of babies. What am I?

Rev: As you stand here, contemplating your riddle, from inside the cracks around the building, green gas starts to slowly drift in.

Kim: Fucking hell.

Rev: Tass, this green gas looks very familiar to you.

Tass: "Holy shit, it's a vrykolakas."

Rev: Sphinx is like, incorrect. [Laughs]

Megan: [Laughs]

Kim: "Yeah, we saw vampires on a higher floor."

Megan: Is there any way for us to help, or is this their riddles — they have to give the answer?

Rev: Yeah, it is their riddle. Unless you can think of a way to ... Do you want to, like, try to subtly sneak them the answer or something?

Megan: Yeah, I wanna — I wanna charade.

Rev: All right. Give me a pull. It's gonna be 2, to try to do this out of the sight of this super intelligent cat.

Megan: OK. Two?

Rev: Yeah. And you've got a minute and a half, but this gas is getting closer.

Megan: Two.

Rev: All right. You are able to indicate the answer to Kim, over the Sphinx's shoulder. What is the answer?

Megan: I bring both my hands up in front of my face and I move my mouth back and forth, like I'm eating a watermelon.

Kim: [Laughs] "A watermelon."

Rev: SPHINX: You may pass.

Megan: Yeah! Fuck yeah!

Kim: I mouth to Megan, "Thank you."

Megan: I want to try to do it to Tass as well, but I'm not as confident at his.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: And I'm terrified that if I try this move again and it's wrong, he's gonna get murdered.

Tass: "Hey Sphinx, how about we make a deal? There are vampires, the buildings falling apart, and you're gonna go down with it unless you come with us. So how about we just hang out and fucking go, please?"

Rev: SPHINX: My future is already decided. I stay here, and I guard.

Jake: How exactly does the Kester time stop manifest? Can I use that to get us the fuck out of here and away from the vrykolakas that's filtering in?

Rev: So the Kester time stop is that you can use it, and he will tell you the best way to deal with the situation. Like he will freeze time, walk around, examine the situation, and say, "Hey, here's how I think you can do this."

Jake: So not really applicable right here.

Rev: No. Like he can't like freeze time and then unfreeze it and you're all gone.

Jake: OK.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: Can I do this again? Can I charade to Tass, to give him what I think is the answer?

Rev: I think it's gonna be the same thing.

Megan: So you said two?

Rev: So give me two more pulls, with a minute and a half.

Megan: OK.

Tass: Oh my god.

Megan: Two pulls, done.

Rev: All right. What do you pantomime to Tass?

Megan: I look at Tass and I kind of shrug my shoulders. And then I take out my hand axe and I turn it, so that the shiny side is facing me like I'm holding a hand mirror. And I like, look at myself in the reflection.

Tass: I think I just barely don't say it. Like, I'm asking Megan. "Reflection?"

Rev: SPHINX: Hmm. You may pass.

Megan: Yes! Oh my gosh! Yes.

Rev: SPHINX: With a cost.

Megan: Oh, no.

Kim: Oh.

Rev: And it holds out its paw towards you, with one of those long fingernails extended.

Rev: SPHINX: Some of your blood.

Kim: [Gasps]

Rev: SPHINX: For sacrifice.

Tass: "Fuck, all right."

Rev: And you take a wound as it drags this long fingernail down your chest.

Tass: Uh, I would love to make a pull.

Rev: I will tell you: if you do, it will think it didn't do it and try again.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: Does the Shield spell that Jake used, will that ...

Rev: I mean, this is him giving up something.

Kim: OK.

Tass: Yeah, that it's willing. So yeah, all right.

Rev: It's just — it's like, "Well, let me try again."

Megan: That's weird. I must have missed.

Rev: [Laughs] I must have missed.

Tass: [Groans]

Rev: All right. And with that, you are able to get past the Sphinx. Yourself, Kester, the collection of Strohm beetles, the head in the jar, and the 40 minions of Strohm that you have collected throughout the building.

Megan: And the Sphinx is like, no, no, no hold up. They each have to do a riddle.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: Each of the minions, every one of the beetles.

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: Stops the vrykolakas from chasing after us.

Jake: No, no, no. Riddle, riddle, riddle.

Rev: [Chuckles] On floors 9 through 4, it is all maintenance stuff here. There is a large cooking galley, a cleaning galley, a maintenance area, the AC and heating units, the water heaters, as well as some floors of storage. Are you stopping at any of these for any reason?

Tass: I think I gotta keep looking for people.

Rev: All right. Mark your wound.

Tass: I'm gonna try to negate it.

Rev: OK. I think you've got 30 seconds for this one. Because that gas ...

Tass: Oh crap.

Rev: Seems to be moving very quickly after you.

Tass: Oh, I'm so glad I have tiny, little mousy hands.

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: Done.

Rev: All right. You are able to move around all of the different facilities here on 9 through 4, and you find an additional 10 people. What are the rest of you doing?

Megan: I don't know. I feel like we're at the bottom here, so we just need to keep going. So I don't particularly have anything to prepare for.

Jake: Yeah, I think just heading on down.

Kim: I agree.

Rev: All right. So all of you give me a pull again. Just one, to make it down these ever-collapsing stairs.

Jake: Can you Soothsay me, please?

Kim: I would love to. I'm gonna spend one of my hold for Jake.

Rev: All right. No pull for Jake.

Kim: I'm gonna spend one of the hold for me as well.

Rev: All right.

Megan: Done.

Tass: "Hey guys, I got 10 more people down here."

Megan: "Let's get moving."

Rev: As you step out onto the lobby floor, the first thing you notice is there are bodies everywhere. The doors have been blasted in. You see the body of Al the doorman —

Kim: No!

Rev: Torn to pieces. But there are half a dozen dead vampires around him. It seems that he went out fighting. But at the front door, as you all come into the lobby, the green mist coalesces into a form. And it is a young man with blond hair, a blue suit, a red tie, and a white shirt. Kim, you recognize this from your vision.

Kim: "Mercury."

Rev: MERCURY: Ah. Most people don't call me by that name. Usually they use my first name. Maybe my last name. Or "Sir." How did you know?

Kim: "I have a gift for seeing things. Who are you, actually?"

Rev: MERCURY: Where is your boss? She's the one I came here to see today.

Kim: "She's not at home right now."

Rev: MERCURY: Hmm. It's unfortunate. By the looks of it, home won't be home for long.

Kim: "Yeah, it looks like I'm going to have to start apartment hunting. What's your name?"

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: My name is Aidan Chambers.

Megan: [Laughs in surprise] Oh my god!

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: And I am the leader of New Canterbury. Strohm has been causing me no end of trouble, so we've just had to remove her.

Rev: Behind him, another half dozen vampires step into the doorway.

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: We're only here for her. You're all free to go.

Tass: "That's a nice, crisp blue suit. That looks like that's ... That's just about my size. I think I'll take it."

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: Well, I'd love to see you try.

Tass: I'm gonna rush him.

Rev: I don't think there is a pull here. Because you rush at him, and he turns into green mist. And you charge through the form, into the waiting six vampires. What are the rest of you doing?

Megan: I want to use my Slayer move to advance the event clock by a minute, so I can prepare myself to fight vampires.

Rev: All right.

Jake: I want to call in the time stop from Kester, to figure out the best way to break from this situation and start getting downstairs towards that item.

Rev: All right. So you put a hand on Kester's shoulder. He has been hobbling along with the aid of some of the minions. And for you, almost nothing happens. But for him, time around him freezes, and he moves through the space, examining everything that he can find. What is the exact question you'd like to ask him?

Jake: How can I break from this situation unscathed to continue downstairs?

Rev: Just you, or everybody?

Jake: How could Kim break from this situation unscathed to get downstairs?

Rev: There's a gold glow in Kester's eyes, and he turns to you and says ...

Rev: KESTER: This crowd is dense in the lobby. And though Aiden spoke to Kim, he is preoccupied. She can move through the crowd and to the passage. But beware, there are more in the subbasement, and they have a bomb. I think they're trying to crack open the vault.

Jake: All right, I will share that with Megan and Kim. "Kester says they're downstairs with a bomb. They're trying to blow the vault. We could maybe sneak away from this, but we'd be leaving Tass in the wind and just heading into a whole different problem."

Megan: "I can do some serious damage to these vampires. So I can either help Tass here, or deter the ones downstairs."

Jake: "A vrykolakas is no fucking joke, so if you think you can put a dent in it, then you stay here. And me and Kim can move on."

Megan: "OK."

Jake: All right. I'm gonna try and take an opening here, so that Kim and I can continue on.

Rev: All right. Each of you give me a single pull, to sneak away from this group. You've got one minute.

Kim: Done.

Jake: Done.

Rev: All right. Is it just the two of you?

Jake: You mean like NPCs?

Rev: Mmhmm.

Kim: Tass has got the beetles all over him still right?

Rev: Yeah. They've all kind of snuck into one of his pockets.

Megan: Excellent.

Jake: I mean, I know mechanically I spent my favor from Kester here. But like, I think he's been leaning on me, and I'm literally carrying Tiresias. So I think I've got those two, still.

Rev: So as the two of you start to sneak away from the group, one of the beetles appears by your foot. You can see that it has scuttled through the crowd, and it moves over to the far corner of the room where there is a large sculpture of Adonis. And it brushes up against the side of it, indicating that that needs to be moved.

Jake: I'll go move it.

Rev: OK. I think this is part of your sneaking away from this group. You are able to move this statue out of the way and reveal a hidden staircase.

Kim: Can I scoop up that single beetle?

Rev: Yes.

Kim: OK.

Rev: And you take it with you.

Kim: Yeah. It's my little mom pet.

Rev: Tass, outside, there is a green mist just kind of flowing around the group of these six vampires that have encircled you. What are you doing?

Tass: I'm trying to take out vampires.

Rev: All right. So how are you trying to do this? Are you striking at one with the chain? Are you ... What are you trying to do?

Tass: Yeah. I mean, I really think I'm going Ghost Rider here, by taking the full length of this chain to lash out and lop off some heads.

Rev: All right. So give me two pulls, and then one pull for every additional vampire you want to hit.

Tass: Oh boy.

Rev: You've got a minute and a half for this one.

Tass: Oh, god.

Rev: You're halfway there.

Jake: You're halfway to a single vampire.

Tass: Oh ... Come on, baby. No, oh my god.

Megan: Oh my god.

Tass: Oh my God.

Megan: Tass ...

Tass: Hey. I know, I know, I know.

Jake: Oh! [Hopeful] Oh, oh ...

Megan: Yes!

Tass: Easy as lying. OK. Yeah, I'm gonna stop at one. I got one.

Rev: All right. So how much damage do you do, with your hell chain at far range?

Tass: Two.

Rev: That's not enough damage to cut its head off. But you do have it kind of in a chokehold. It is pulling at those fiery chains. Megan, what are you up to?

Megan: I'm taking out vampires with my crossbow.

Rev: All right. I think the same thing. Give me two pulls, and then one additional pull for every vampire you want to hit.

Megan: How many are there?

Rev: Six. And then the mist of the vrykolakas that's just shifting around and watching.

Tass: Whoa! OK, now you're just showing off.

Kim: Megan's done three. She's working on a fourth.

Tass: Oh, my back is gonna hurt so much tomorrow from this tension. Oh my god!

Megan: OK. I think — I think ... Well.

Kim: Oh my god.

Tass: You're getting cocky, Mario.

Kim: She's working on a fifth right now.

Tass: Oh my god.

Jake: How much time does she have?

Rev: Oh god, I forgot — just ... OK. Just keep going. I'm too invested now. I have to see how many you get.

Kim: You're on pull number six, here.

Megan: OK, I'm done.

Rev: All right. So that was six pulls.

Megan: [Buries face in hands]

Kim: It was the most amazing thing I've ever seen.

Rev: Megan, you fire off this repeating crossbow six times. And six times, vampire chests are hit and they turn to ash.

Megan: Cool.

Rev: Jake and Kim. Headed down the stairs. You come out after three flights of stairs, and you see that there are four vampires down here, setting charges up around a very large door.

Jake: [Laughs] I didn't think this far ahead.

Rev: [Laughs]

Jake: I don't have anything to kill a vampire with.

Kim: I know vampires are weak to silver, right?

Jake: "I can keep their attention and start doing some damage, if you can finish them off. Or, one of us can make a distraction and lead them out so that the other one can go try and deal with the fucking bomb."

Kim: "I don't know. You're the monster hunter. I've like — I've, like, never killed anything ever."

Jake: "OK. Hide." Is there a pipe or a railing, or like a ... Like an anything spear-esque, like that I could start trying to leverage as an improvised weapon for myself?

Rev: Sure. Give me a pull, to try to find something down here to use as a weapon.

Jake: OK. Done.

Rev: Yeah. So you have found a metal railing on the stairs that you are able to rip off. So mark that for yourself. It does 2-harm.

Jake: OK. I want to shoot one, and be prepared to sprint back up the stairs. This worked out real well for me in the casino, so I figure I'll give it another shot.

Rev: Uh-huh.

Jake: No, I take that back. I want to shoot one, and see how many plan to peel away to follow me.

Rev: I think this is just going to be a single pull to fire off a shot at one of these vampires.

Jake: OK.

Rev: And you've got as long as you need, because they're not paying attention to you.

Jake: [Laughs] Done.

Rev: All right. You pop off one of the shots at the vampires, and it hits in the shoulder. And it turns and it looks at you, and they start to kind of like, talk to each other. But it's not in a language that you recognize. And one of them starts sprinting towards you, and the other three set back to work.

Jake: What does the bomb look like? Is this like C-4, like a putty situation? Or ...

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Hmm. I don't think I can leave Kim to deal with three vampires, so ...

Rev: All right. So Jake, you've got one lunging at you. What are you doing?

Jake: I want to try to stake it through the heart.

Rev: OK. Boy, give me ... I think this is gonna be 3, to jam this blunt railing through this creature's chest as it dives onto you, trying to attack you. And I think you've got a minute for this one, because it is on you.

Jake: [Laughs] Great.

Kim: I'm going to spend one of my Soothsayers to reduce it to two.

Jake: [Gasps]

SFX: JENGA TOWER FALLS

Tass: [Gasps]

Jake: Did not kill Megan's tower.

Megan: Oh man. It almost did, though.

Rev: All right. Kim, you see this vampire leap onto Jake as he tries to jam the pipe through its chest, and it knocks the pipe to the side and drags him into the stairwell. What are you doing?

Kim: Do the other vampires seem to give a shit about me?

Rev: They have not noticed you, since you kind of were hiding. It's very clear they have a task to do, and they are not being deterred from it.

Kim: OK. Out of character, explain to me. Is Jake ... Is he out of the game, like out of the scenario? Is there merit to trying to go after him?

Rev: There is. You could try to go and find him, but you heard this thing, like, running up the stairs with him.

Kim: I think if he's being carried upstairs, then I am gonna hope that Megan and Tass can do something about it. I am going to try to garrote one of these vampires with my sencer.

Rev: All right. Give me a pull of 2, to sneak up behind one of these and get it around its neck.

Kim: I'm going to use one of my Soothsayer holds to reduce that by 1.

Rev: OK.

Kim: Done.

Rev: All right. You are able to sneak up behind one of these working vampires and get the chain around its neck and pull backwards. The silver burns through the skin as you lop its head off, and its body turns to ash in your lap. As you release the chain to look at the other two, you see that they have finished putting the bomb in place. One of them pushes a button. What would you like to do?

Kim: Like pushes the button as if to, like, set off the bomb?

Rev: Yes.

Kim: Is there anywhere that I can hide in here?

Rev: Yeah. You could try to make it to the stairwell. Like, you see this red light blink twice and then start blinking rapidly as the explosion is about to go off. If you want to try to, like, dive into the stairwell, away from this explosion ... Boy, I think give me three pulls.

Kim: Yeah, I'm not going to do that. Because I saw this all happen.

Rev: [Laughs] Good, good. So yeah, you see this happen right before they finish connecting it, and are able to get into the stairwell before this bomb goes off. Back upstairs, Megan and Tass. The vrykolakas, the gas from it, is just flowing around outside, watching. You have dispatched the six minions that were with it. What are you up to?

Tass: I don't — I'm trying anything to get him to coalesce. I know it's probably a long shot. I'm just trying to see if he has anything that will talk him into it, just to get him to come down to my level.

Rev: Yeah. If you could sense smugness in the air, that's the response that you're getting.

Tass: OK.

Rev: And from underneath you, you hear an explosion. The cement around the building cracks, the foundation shatters, and all the oracles, except for two who have been huddled in the lobby, come running outside.

Megan: "They're both down there!" I'm running for the entrance.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: So you both head inside over to the corner stairwell and head down. On your way down, you see that there is a vampire draining Jake.

Megan: I shoot it.

Rev: Give me, I think, just one. It's occupied.

Tass: Oh, nice.

Megan: Done.

Rev: You shoot this vampire, and it turns to ash. Jake is alive but unresponsive.

Megan: "OK. He's not dead, but I don't think he's gonna wake up."

Rev: And just a little bit further down the stairs, huddled in the corner next to some burning debris, is Kim, as well as Kester — holding Tiresias's jar under one arm.

Kim: "They've got the vault open."

Tass: "Let's go."

Megan: "Yeah, let's get in there. How many are there?"

Kim: "Two more."

Megan: "All right. Heading straight in."

Rev: All right. So you all head into this room. It is destroyed. There are huge pieces of the vault door that have been blown away. The whole room is charred. And inside, you can see that there are two vampires just rummaging through the vault, picking up items.

Tass: I want to wrap the chains around my fists, and just sprint up to one to garrote him.

Rev: All right. I think give me ... I think, give me three pulls, to come up behind this vampire. It is aware of the danger of the situation. Two of its friends have been killed.

Tass: OK. [Nervous laughter] My god.

Megan: Nice one.

Tass: Feel that you want to come with me. Come on, little buddy. Come on, buddy. Yeah, you're my little buddy.

Rev: I've stopped giving you timers, because I just — I can't anymore. I just have to watch.

Tass: Oh my god.

Megan: Time stops.

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: [Exhales] God.

Megan: [Laughs]

Tass: Oh, my back is going to hurt for a week, from just ... Oh my God. [Painful laughter]

Megan: You got this. Yes!

Tass: Three, baby.

Megan: Yes!

Tass: Oh my god.

Rev: All right. You get up behind this vampire as it is looting things, get this around its neck, and pull. How much damage do you do to it?

Tass: Three.

Rev: All right. So that is not quite enough yet to kill it. And this weapon is not silver, but you do have it captured. Tass, all the beetles swarm out of your pockets and join up with the one Kim has, and they move deeper into the vault and flow into a suit of armor that starts to move. All around you, you all hear the rending of metal and the crumbling of stone. Megan, what are you doing?

Rev: I am also shooting with my crossbow.

Rev: All right. I think this is also going to be three — just two for you, assuming that you're shooting at the one that Tass does not have grappled. This vampire has turned its attention towards you.

Megan: I am running out of options.

Tass: [Groans]

Megan: [Nervous laughter]

Tass: Oh my god! [Painfully] No!

Megan: [Shakily] Done.

Tass: Oh my god.

Rev: All right. You fire off the crossbow at this other vampire, and the stake hits it in the heart and it turns to ash. The pair of oracles that didn't rush out of the lobby after the explosion come into the vault — one helping Kester and holding Tiresias, the other carrying Jake. And they look to Strohm for instructions. Kim, what are you doing?

Kim: I want to try to find the orb that Strohm talked about.

Rev: Kim, as you search and as Megan finishes off the vampire held by Tass's chain, Strohm reaches into a nearby lockbox, pulls out a small pink orb, and somewhere above you is the sound of another explosion.

SFX: EXPLOSION

Rev: Strohm turns and pushes you backwards towards the others, and throws the orb at the ground beneath you. A portal appears and you all fall through and appear on the street across from The Vault. And as you do, the green and yellow field around the building dissipates, and the air is filled with the cacophonous sound ...

SFX: COLLAPSING BUILDING

Rev: Of the building's collapse. Free from the dome, oracles run in your direction, screaming. Dust and debris rained down over the entire neighborhood.

SFX: DISTANT SCREAMS

Rev: And a fine, green tendril of mist floats away into the night.

SFX: RUBBLE CRUMBLES

Rev: So falls The House of Strohm.

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.