

Before the Storm (S4, E24)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: I have in my possession the key to our new place.

Tass: Oh, shoot!

Rev: Right?

Kim: I'm so happy for you all.

Rev: I'm gonna try to build a silver doorknob, so you can utilize it as well.

Kim: Oh, amazing.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Nice.

Jake: Do not let it tarnish. You do not want to know where it takes you when it tarnishes.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: The way you said, "I have the key to our new place." I imagined it as like a fantasy key. Like it was like made out of like twisted branches that held, like, these stones. And then I realized it's probably just like a metal key for an office, like ...

Rev: Yes. [Laughs]

Jake: I thought it was gonna be much more metaphysical. Like I thought he was gonna be like, "I have the key to eternal happiness." And it's like, no you don't.

Rev: And I've forgotten it.

Tass: Oh, no!

Jake: And I've destroyed it.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Well this Sunday, four days from now if you're listening the day this comes out, we've got our bake sale. We've got our long stream day over at Twitch.tv/TheCritshow. We talked about it just briefly two weeks ago, but we've got the schedule laid out for it now. Kim, why don't you let us know what the schedule of events are?

Kim: So everything starts at 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time. That's 9:00 a.m., if you're on the West Coast like me. And all of these games are going to be for one hour. So starting at 12:00, we're gonna be doing Mario Kart, with all of us. From 1:00-2:00 will be Left 4 Dead with myself, Megan, Rev, and Tass. From 2:00-3:00 will be The Long Dark with Jake. From 3:00-4:00 we are returning to Sea of Thieves with Jake, myself, Rev, and Tass.

Rev: It's been a long time since we've played Sea of Thieves.

Tass: It has.

Kim: Yeah. I don't think we've done it since Talk like a Pirate Day. From 4:00-5:00, Megan and I will try again with Cuphead. [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah!

Megan: This is our time. That Candy Queen is going down. We're gonna beat her. I think we beat her, actually.

Kim: I think we beat Candy Queen, yeah. From 5:00-6:00, the boys will be playing Call of Duty: Warzone. From 6:00-7:00, Jake, myself, Megan, and Rev will all be playing something called BBQ Simulator: The Squad.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: Yes!

Kim: No idea what it is. Very excited about it. Love barbecues. From 7:00-8:00, Megan and I will be playing Overcooked 2. From 8:00-9:00, Jake and I will be doing some Red Dead Redemption Online. A nice cowboy hour.

Tass: Nice.

Kim: Excited about it. And from 9:00-10:00, we are closing out our bake sale with all of us playing Jackbox.

Rev: Excellent. And at the beginning of every hour, we're gonna be doing a giveaway. We have got a handful of prizes — a few digital, a few physical — and we'll be picking those winners from the Twitch chat. So if you're coming in and out, you don't have to be there all day for the opportunity to win something. So come hang out as we celebrate this moving into our new space and try to raise a little funds to furnish it and make it a kind of a kick ass space.

Megan: I'm so excited to decorate this office.

Rev: Yeah.

Megan: Lava lamps everywhere.

Jake: Yeah, she's going full Spencer's Gifts.

Megan: [Laughs] I'm getting beanbag chairs. It's gonna be ... It's gonna be great.

Jake: There's gonna be a blow up doll in the corner, always.

Rev: Our office is actually a empty Spencer's Gifts!

Kim: Oh, that's so convenient! The entire budget is going to lava lamps.

Rev: We're gonna have all of our T-shirts hung up on one side, all of the vibrators on the other wall ...

Kim: [Laughs]

Rev: And it's gonna vaguely smell like pot, but not like enough pot to get us in trouble.

Megan: No, that's the difference. It's not just going to be vaguely.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Spencer's Gifts smells like nobody's actively using it in the store. But everybody in the store was a minute ago, and this is going to be pretty active.

Megan: And is trying to cover it up with incense.

Tass: I can't wait to figure out all of the posters we're gonna have on that, like, flip-through rack at the very back corner.

Rev: Oh, and the black light ones.

Tass: Yeah! Not on the walls. Just in the flip-through rack.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: A nice black light vrykolakas.

Tass: Oh yes!

Rev: A real trippy Trog poster.

Megan: [Laughs] I like the idea that we take a break from working and we just go stand at the wall of posters and just flip through them.

Tass: And I do just want to make sure that everyone was listening at the beginning of this, when Rev started. You know, what we said was, "Come hang out with us." That isn't a request.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: We will see you there.

Tass: Yes.

Kim: We will be taking attendance.

Jake: I've been studying my technomancy, and I will manipulate your devices, no matter where you are and what you are doing. They will show our Twitch.

Rev: And as this is the beginning of the month ... Not the true beginning of the month. Last week's intro was kind of long, and so this got left out. But I do want to take a moment to thank all of the people who joined our Patreon in the month of December. Jeffrey Byrne, Rasmus de la Rue, Firecop890, Aaron Bowman, Logan More, Keeper Dace, Ed Johnson, Chandler Ingram, Kristen Cross, Asterios Kokkinos, Beth Crane, Keith Keffer, Ravenheart, Aelora, Richard Lyons-Alvarez, Hawk Bory, Jade, Amanda Neff, and Todd Ransom. I wonder how much it is to get him back.

Tass: He paid us the Todd Ransom.

Rev: [Laughs] So thank you to everyone who joined us in the month of December, and thank you to everyone who joins us every month. If you are interested in getting in on the T-shirt cycle or the swag cycle, just a reminder that that is going to be digital for this first ... Not quarter. Trimester?

Kim: [Laughs]

Tass: Yeah, that'll do.

Jake: In the incubation of the swag cycle ...

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Just a reminder that that's going to be digital in this first chunk of time.

Kim: There we go.

Rev: So yeah, if you would like to get in on either of those, this is the month to sign up to make sure you receive that when they release at the end of the cycle. I think with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

Tass: Woo!

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Jake: "Doctor, I need a favor from you."

Rev: DR. VANCE BENSON: A part in the movie, once I get funding?

Jake: "No. I need you to set up a meeting for myself and Kim, the leader of the House of Strohm, with your boss, Aiden. And I would just love if that could happen first thing tomorrow morning.

Rev: DR. VANCE BENSON: Oh. I see, I see ...

Jake: "Yeah. And as you're looking over that schedule, do keep in mind the secret I keep for you that keeps you out of hot water with the very two people we're referring to."

Rev: DR. VANCE BENSON: What do you know? Something just opened up. We'll see both of you tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

Megan: I'd like to go back to the church and talk to Kit and see if I can find something useful.

Rev: Definitely want to call Damien at some point during the day and see if he has time to meet up and talk.

Rev: You dial his number and there is no answer. And after three rings, it goes to that "this number is no longer in service" sound.

Tass: Oh, shit. OK. One of my Let It Out is to summon my dark patron's attention directly to my location.

Rev: As you try to draw Damien's attention here, there is a burst of brimstone. And clattering to the ground comes the steering wheel and the broken axle of Damien's car, as well as his tattered jacket and broken sunglasses.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Tass: "What the fuck?!"

Kim: "What did you just try to do?"

Tass: "I have a connection to him. He's my, like, patron. He gave me my ability, so I have a way to force him to be here. And oh god ..." I pick up his jacket and keys.

Rev: The jacket and the keys are both a little misshapen. And you can tell that it is from, oddly enough, fire damage. That they seem to have been melted a little bit.

Tass: "I don't know what this means. I don't know what to do."

Kim: "I could look into it for you. I think it's best that we know, right?"

Tass: "I guess. If ... God, if there's any way that he ... I don't know. Maybe."

Kim: "Again. Oracles and uncertainty." And my eyes go white, and I would like to use I, All-Seeing.

Rev: All right. Mark Corruption and take your harm.

Kim: What happened to Damien?

Rev: As you ask this question into the air, you get a very clear vision of Damien driving down a Chicago street. The music is playing in his car, the window is down, and he's singing along to the song playing on the radio. And as he turns a corner, there is a shadowy figure standing in the road, hovering maybe two feet above the ground. And as he drives towards it, it flies in his direction with a single outstretched hand. It passes through the hood and the windshield, and the car is unaffected as if the figure isn't really

there. Its outstretched hand touches Damien's chest, and the light in his eyes goes out. The car swerves off the road into a building and bursts into flames.

Kim: "Tass, I'm so sorry. Damien is dead."

Tass: "How?"

Kim: "The Wraith. The thing that Father O'Hanna can turn into, that can kill with a single touch? It found him."

Tass: "Oh god ..."

Kim: "I'm so sorry."

Tass: "We'll just have to fix it."

Kim: "We're gonna fix a lot of stuff."

Tass: "Yes, we are." I put on his coat and stalk towards the door.

Kim: "Where are you going?"

Tass: "I've gotta go talk to a horse."

Rev: As Tass exits the subterranean lair, we cut over to Jake, having arrived at the castle with James in tow.

Jake: I want us to rendezvous with Granpire.

Tass: Vampa.

Jake: Thank you. "All right. Our whole plan's popping off in the morning. So in all likelihood, we will be making a very hasty retreat out through here. So James, we'll hand the item off to you to get it scanned real quick, and then we'll be out the door. Is there anything kind of last minute? I know you guys in the past have brainstormed and come

up with some stuff. I think we talked about all that. But is there anything you guys have got in mind still?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: No. I think everything that we have to offer will be of benefit where you're going, not necessarily with what you're doing with your remaining time here. Do you have any sense of what time you might be here? I just — I want to make sure that I'm up and ready if hell is chasing you.

Jake: "Well our meeting is set for 10:00 a.m., and if we're not here by 2:00 p.m., everything has gone terribly, terribly terribly wrong. So could be 10:05, could be 11:00?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Gone wrong, how?

Jake: "Well this world's Nash is coming into town tomorrow afternoon, which is why we've got to get this done before that."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Is there any kind of contingency if things go poorly? Should I ... I mean, my arrival in town would make quite a distraction, if something was going wrong on your end. And I don't just mean my appearance, but the metaphysical effect on the world that would occur. Maybe 3:00, if you're not here by then, come flying up to Chicago and let all hell rain loose?

Jake: "Yeah, that's certainly not a bad idea. Well, I mean, actually it's a pretty bad idea. But a less bad idea than just dying outright."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: All right. So James will be here, ready to scan the last artifact a few minutes after 10:00. And if it gets 3:00 and we haven't heard from you, I will make a trip to Chicago. And perhaps the world-destroying effects of my presence around myself will aid you in some way, help you escape from whatever situation you may have gotten into.

Jake: "And if it does, it will never have happened."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Mhmm.

Jake: "And if it doesn't, well we're all dead anyway, so ..."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: I believe that's what they call a Hail Mary.

Jake: "I knew you were a religious man."

All: [Laugh]

Jake: "All right. Well, I'm gonna go say goodbye to the kid, and then I'm gonna head back. So I'll see you guys in the morning."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: All right.

Jake: All right. I'm gonna head up to Dani's room.

Rev: All right. You head over to Dani's room. She is sitting on the ground, reading a book.

Jake: "Hey, kid."

Rev: She looks up and her eyes grow big, and she flutters over to you and hugs you.

Jake: "How's it been going here?"

Rev: She signs, "Good."

Jake: "Good. Me and some of my friends — you met some of them — we'll probably be passing by here in a rush in the morning, but that'll probably be the last that you and I see of each other. So I just wanted to take a minute to say bye. And let you know that it's been real fun. I had a lot of fun getting to look after you and getting to know you. And I'm glad that we could reunite you with Mother, and everything."

Rev: She looks at the ground for a moment and then signs, "Where are you going?"

Jake: "Back home. It's kind of hard to explain, but that's the simplest way I can put it."

Rev: She signs, "Mother has doorways that lead everywhere. Can I come? I'll miss you."

Jake: "Yeah. Yeah, I'll miss you too. You can't ... You can't come. I'm sorry. I wish you could. But that's not really how this works. But hopefully we'll be able to see Mother again, and maybe I can pass along a message that you can get a little bit later."

Rev: Again, she looks at the ground, thinking. And then she signs, "Is it a dangerous place?"

Jake: "Yeah. Yeah, it's a super dangerous place."

Rev: She slowly nods in acceptance and then reaches into the pocket of her gingham dress, and she holds her hand out to you, with it closed.

Jake: I'll hold out a hand, palm up.

Rev: She opens it, and into your hand folds a single jack.

Jake: "What's this for?"

Rev: She holds her left hand up to her forehead in a fist with a thumb out, and touches her thumb to her forehead. And then raises her right hand with a thumb extended in a fist as well, and touches the front of the left thumb to the back of the right thumb, and then touches the thumb to her chest. "To remember me."

Kim: [Exhale]

Jake: "Uh, thanks. I'm not ... I'm not planning on forgetting you."

Rev: And she hugs you again.

Jake: I give her a big squeeze, and then I head back to the 606.

Megan: It's so hard not to cry.

Kim: I know.

Rev: As Jake releases the teleportation spell and snaps back to Grandpa Tincher's subterranean lair, we find Megan —

Megan: Crying! [Laughs]

Kim: Yeah!

Rev: As Jake snaps back to reality. Oh! There goes gravity.

Kim: [Laughs]

Rev: We find Megan walking into the Fourth Presbyterian Church.

Megan: Yeah, I'm heading inside and I'm looking for Kit.

Rev: As you walk in, you notice that this place is very crowded. Again, you had moved everybody from all of the other safe houses to these three locations. But you can see Kit in the far corner near the shooting range, as he watches a group of people taking shots with various rifles.

Megan: "Hey, Kit. Can I talk to you real quick, in the back?"

Rev: KIT: Oh, sure.

Megan: And I'll head back to Fiona's office.

Rev: Yeah. He joins you.

Megan: "I'm gearing up for kind of an important mission that I have to do here, and I think there's a good chance that I might have to utilize some smoke bombs or something. Do we have anything on hand in our equipment that might help me see through that?"

Rev: KIT: Yeah, just give me a second, here.

Rev: And he heads back out into the main room and starts digging through some shelves. And you can kind of hear him call out over the din of the people talking, and the

firearms going off. And you can't make out what he says, and he holds up a hand and flashes, like, 5? 2? 1? Trying to get a sense of how many you need.

Megan: I hold up four fingers.

Rev: He comes back a couple of moments later, and he's got four sets of goggles bundled in a little knapsack.

Megan: "Thanks so much. I really appreciate it. It seems to be going well here."

Rev: KIT: Yeah, it's actually kind of nice. I thought it was good having everyone spread out over the city. Made us safer. But having everyone in these three spaces, the camaraderie it's built has been really nice. People training each other on things that we didn't necessarily know that they were good at, and seems like it's strengthening a lot of our weaknesses.

Megan: "Yeah. I mean, I guess when you're the last of humanity, that's a pretty good incentive to stick together and learn from each other."

Rev: KIT: Yeah.

Megan: "Well, I need to get going, but I just wanted to say thanks. You really ... You really have done something amazing here. And I know I'm supposed to be in charge, but I'm so thankful to have had you here through all of this, to help all of these people and to help me. It's really been something amazing, Kit. And you should be proud."

Rev: KIT: This isn't one of those "you're not planning to come back from it" missions, is it?

Megan: "I mean, I'm always planning on coming back, you know? But this time? We'll see."

Rev: KIT: You need back up?

Megan: "I think I've got all the backup I can have in this one, unfortunately."

Rev: KIT: Well, good luck.

Megan: "Thanks. You, too."

Rev: And as Megan makes her way through the crowd of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, we find Tass, staring at a horse. [Laughs]

Kim: Can't wait for this dialogue.

Tass: So are there people around? Like, is this a situation where I ... Like I'm in after the show, kind of thing? And able to kind of get close, like I had originally?

Rev: Yeah, I think it's like the last time that you were here. That you, you know, you come in basically between performances. And it comes up near the gate, when it sees you. But like, you're still inside of the performance ring. But it makes its way over to you the way that it did prior.

Tass: "Hey, good to see you again. I figured you'd have scrambled by now." And I'm just kind of glancing at the gates, and around the place in general.

Rev: As you say this to Sweet Vendetta. You know, previously when you talked to Sweet Vendetta, tried to get ideas across to him, it was sending memories. And you know that he was seeing those memories, or at least getting the feelings from them. This is the first time you get something in return. You get that childlike glee of having snuck out and made it back in multiple times.

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: That foal-like glee.

Tass: That's awesome. I think I'm kind of doing a little mix, here. Of like I'm talking my thoughts out, but I'm still trying to send the emotion and the idea behind what I'm hoping for, the way that I had before. And I think it's ... I think it's pretty raw right now, with what I've just learned. There's kind of an urgency that I might not even be intending exactly.

Rev: Hmm.

Tass: Because just images of that wreckage keep flashing in my head, whether I mean it to or not. "So I was hoping maybe I could get your help with something. It is a little dangerous, but hopefully it would be quick. There's something we want to do. I would love help distracting some guards." [Chuckles] "And it's the sort of thing where I fully expect that if you say yes, that if you feel like you're in danger, you can just get out of there and go. But it would help good people with something important."

Rev: You get a memory of a sun rising, going across the sky, and then setting. And when you look at Sweet Vendetta, his head is just kind of cocked slightly to the side, inquisitively.

Tass: "It would be early tomorrow. I would hope that you would meet us somewhere and we could make use of some portals to get to where we're going. It's urgent. So yeah, it would be first thing tomorrow."

Rev: Sweet Vendetta snorts and stamps its hoof a single time. And you get another image in your head of a park that you drove past to get here. Maybe half a mile. And there is a deep cluster of trees next to a very large pile of rocks.

Tass: "Yeah, OK, good spot. Thank you. It means a lot."

Rev: As you are saying this to Sweet Vendetta and your voice is kind of shaking with these words, you feel something nudge your elbow.

Tass: I think I'm startled, and look.

Rev: It is the pegasus, Princess Soufflé. And she is nuzzling at your arm. And as you turn and look at her, one of the wings folds out and comes across your back almost in a hug.

Tass: "Oh. Hi, yeah. Thank you." I think I stick around for a little bit. I've brought a pocketful of sugar cubes. And just kind of try to relax and keep vibing with these magic horses for a bit.

Rev: All right. So I think we find all four of you back in the subterranean lair. It's about 3:00 in the afternoon. Is there anything else you all want to do today?

Jake: At some point, when I can steal a moment, I want to pocket the device that activates the orbital strike.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Just in case. It seems like somebody should have it on their person, and at least I can just kind of vanish from where I am. So ...

Rev: OK. So are you taking the case? Are you taking the gun and the batteries? Are you taking the gun with the batteries in it?

Jake: I'm taking the gun and the batteries.

Rev: OK.

Jake: In two different pockets.

Rev: Fair.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I like the idea of if you put them in the same pocket, it might somehow arm itself with the batteries.

Jake: The way I roll?

All: [Laugh]

Rev: It just falls just right, and it pushes the batteries ...

Kim: It somehow pushes the batteries in and then also flips the switch to "armed."

Jake: Also depresses the trigger.

Megan: If a pair of headphones can get tangled the way they do in a pocket, I suppose it's not out of the realm of possibility?

Rev: That's fair.

Megan: I will hand out the goggles I got from Kit to everyone. "I'm not sure if I'm gonna actually utilize smoke bombs at any time. But just in case, I want to make sure that everybody is able to see. So put these in your pockets."

Jake: "All right."

Tass: "Yeah, that might come in handy while we're riding in, maybe?"

Megan: "Yeah. I think if anyone's gonna need them, it's going to be you and me, for sure. But just in case, I wanted everyone to have a pair."

Kim: "Yeah. Considering a key component of this plan hinges upon me being able to maintain uninterrupted eye contact, goggles might be a good idea."

Tass: "Yeah. Hopefully once we get that far in, it won't be an issue. But God knows."

Rev: As you're all having this conversation, the new door that Jake has hung on the hinges for the bathroom door opens and Selina steps through.

Rev: SELINA: I think we're all set.

Jake: "Oh, yeah? You pick a good set?"

Rev: SELINA: Yeah. I took those pictures and I was able to find matching one. An old barn down in South Texas. It'll take us maybe hour door-hopping to get there. It's not anything close, but it'll get us there.

Tass: "That's awesome. Thank you so much."

Rev: SELINA: So what time is this shindig all kicking off?

Tass: "Our meeting starts at 10:00?"

Kim: "Yeah."

Tass: "So we should make sure we're getting there right at the top of that, so that you're present but don't have to bullshit for too long."

Kim: "Yeah."

Tass: "Can I ask a question that I can't believe hasn't occurred to me until now? Kim, you might know this. I don't know. But like Grandpa Nash stopped his timeline from happening. So Megan's with us, and didn't turn into this champion, right? Who the hell did?"

Kim: "This Nash didn't choose someone else to imbue all that power into. He chose himself."

Tass: "Oh. So the most dangerous person that we had ever met is now more of that. God, this had better go well tomorrow."

Kim: "Well, on the plus side, he is now no longer gifted powers by a god. But unfortunately he then gave it to Aiden, so ..." \

Tass: "Hmm. Yeah, but we're ready for that."

Kim: [Sighs] "Yup."

Jake: "So Selina, they'll probably head out with you 8:30-ish? And then, um ... When you're going through the doorways and stuff, or when you're in like the space between, can you communicate in or out? Will we be able to communicate in or out?"

Rev: SELINA: Oh yeah, there's no really space between. It's just hoofing it through, you know, the various buildings to get from one door to another, outside into, you know, this part of town, and down these stairs to another door, et cetera.

Jake: [Snorts] "Hoofing it. Ha ha."

Megan: "How are we getting this horse to Texas?" [Laughs]

Rev: I've been to Texas. There's already a lot there. I don't think you ...

Megan: There's already horses. We don't need to bring them.

Rev: Tons of horses.

Kim: You don't need to BYOH.

Megan: Yeah.

Rev: [Laughs]

Megan: Just like this idea of having to go through this building, and down this flight of stairs into this building, to get to Texas, to get to the door, so that he can sprint through. Does he have to make it the whole way with us?

Rev: No. I think that's what you all were describing, at least for me, was that the arrival into Nash Tower was, you know, the nightmare and everybody kind of at a sprint. And so that's why Selina needed a double door, so you had room. But to, you know, just have it walk to the location to then get into the sprint and burst that last door? It can all be normal sized doors.

Tass: So we could have used a normal sized door if we wanted to like open it and like, have everybody kind of step back a little bit and like, usher in the horse, have it duck?

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: You know, like shoulder through. Like, "Oh, excuse me, sir. Please step back a little more."

Rev: Yeah. Slide in, kind of scraping its sides.

Tass: Yeah. [Laughs]

Rev: Yeah. It would not have been nearly as impressive of an entrance.

Tass: Everybody hold on. Everybody hold on. Just hold on.

Kim: Just give us a minute. Can you all close your eyes? Hold on. This might be better if you all leave the room for a minute and then come back in?

Jake: If our tactic were bafflement, this would have worked.

Tass: "Well, one last future pizza?"

Jake: "Pepperoni Magnifico? Pepperoni Magnifico? Pepperoni Magnifico?"

Tass: "You know it, baby."

Megan: "Sure."

Kim: "Sounds great."

Rev: So I think we roll forward time to the next morning. You've all had a good night's sleep. If you have any minor harm, you can heal it.

Kim: Yes!

Rev: And we find Tass in the park. It's about 7:30 in the morning, at the location that he saw in the vision from Sweet Vendetta. And when you arrive, Sweet Vendetta is not alone. Princess Soufflé is standing next to him.

Megan: Awww!

Tass: "Oh my god. Thank you. Thank you so much." And I will lead them to our meeting spot with Selina.

Rev: All right. So we find all of you back at the subterranean lair, with the addition of a pegasus and a nightmare.

Kim: Very crowded in here.

Megan: I duck under a wing. "When did the plan change?"

Tass: "It didn't change. We just kind of upgraded our distraction."

Megan: "All right."

Jake: I'm like ... I'm like standing far off to the side, looking at the nightmare, holding as still as possible, and seeing how we are nowadays.

Tass: I am sending out those vibes again, of just like thoughts of all of the things that I've been through with these people, and just trying to convey that, like, these are people you can trust.

Rev: Tass, roll Persuade an NPC.

Tass: Oh no!

Rev: This will have a mechanical ramification in the sense of, like, you asked them, you cashed in a favor. They will help you. I think this is to see if they will help others if they see they are in danger, as opposed to only paying off the debt to you.

Tass: OK. Seven.

Rev: So to win them over, you know, to get it so that they will help the others if there's an issue, not just necessarily help you. They demand food. They don't want pepperoni pizza. They are not against the idea of pizza, but they want — they want vegetables or fruits on it.

Tass: No problem.

Rev: And they want it from Jake.

Tass: [Laughs]

Rev: We're building a bridge.

Jake: [Laughs]

Megan: I love pineapple on pizza. Like a pineapple pepperoni pizza. So I love the idea that Jake just brings them this pineapple-loaded pizza. And I just sit with these two horses and we just eat pizza together. [Laughs]

Rev: So Selina arrives at 8:30 to see the group of you sitting around, eating with horses. [Laughs] Selina opens up the doorway that will lead the group of you on your hour long walk to get to those double doors.

Kim: [Exhales] I want to look at Kester and Tiresias. "I just want to thank the both of you for all that you've done for us. Your help has been ... Well, we wouldn't have been able to do any of this without the two of you. I'm sorry that my tenure as the leader of this faction was so brief, and that I'm leaving, and gonna leave such a mess for the two of you."

Rev: Kester smiles and puts a hand on your shoulder.

Rev: KESTER: Good luck today.

Kim: "Thank you. If you do see Strohm or Ozymandias again, will you let them know that I love them?"

Rev: KESTER: Oh, I think they already know, but I'll be happy to relay the message.

Kim: "Thank you." And I want to look at the rest of the group. "It's a new day. Do we have anything else that we want to know before we go into this?"

Tass: "I don't know what, unless there's a way to find out exactly where those hidden vampires are."

Megan: "Maybe if Nash shows up sooner than we expect him to, if there's a way out of that? It's the only thing I can think of that we haven't planned for."

Kim: "OK. Are those the two questions that we want to go with?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Kim: "All right. Tiresias, where are the hidden vampire guards located in Aiden Chambers's office?"

Rev: His eyes glow white, and his voice booms out in this room.

Rev: TIRESIAS: In the north and south corner of the office, there are deep shadows. Those shadows lead into smaller rooms. The whole floor of that office is a killing floor for those guards positioned behind the Gatling guns.

Kim: "OK. And Kester, in the event that Nash arrives sooner than expected, what is our best way out of that situation?"

Rev: Kester's eyes glow gold, and he is shifted again just slightly, once the glow goes away.

Rev: KESTER: Whatever you do, if he knows you, don't let him see your face. If he recognizes you, knows you're here and not dead, you won't escape.

Kim: "Thank you."

Rev: Selina calls out to the room.

Rev: SELINA: All right. All aboard.

Megan: Yeah. As Tass and I and the horses, I guess too, are getting ready to go, I turn to Kim and I give her a hug.

Kim: I hug her back.

Megan: "It's gonna be all right. We've got a plan. Just go in being the leader of the House of Strohm that you are. And don't forget that we've got your back. We're gonna show up. We're gonna do this. You're gonna be great, and we're gonna make it out. All right?"

Kim: "I'm usually the one talking about future events with that level of certainty."

Megan: "Yeah. But like, it's gonna work out."

Kim: "Yeah."

Megan: "We'll see you soon."

Kim: "OK."

Megan: I give Jake a hug. "Be smart. Be safe. We'll see you soon, and we'll all get out of here." And I would like to roll The Best Laid Plans.

Rev: All right. Remind us once more what that move does.

Megan: OK. So when you work out a plan with someone, roll with Mind. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9 hold 2. You can spend your hold one for one regardless of distance while the plan is being carried out to ... Add +1 to someone's roll — and I can choose after rolling. Dismiss all harm someone suffers from a single hit, and ensure your people have the exact gear they need on hand. On a miss, hold 1, but your plan encounters some disastrous opposition from the start. Nine.

Kim: Can I try to help out?

Rev: Sure. How so?

Kim: So I'm realizing that there is one thing that I forgot to do this morning. I forgot to do a daily card pull for myself. And so as Megan is laying out this plan, I want to draw a card for myself, and it is the ace of wands. Which is the ultimate "yes" card, of pursuing opportunities and ideas.

Rev: All right, so give a roll with Mortalis.

Kim: So that is a nine.

Rev: Yeah. So I think that this counts. This bumps Megan up to a 10,=. But on your mixed success, you expose yourself to danger or entanglement or a cost. And I think your cost

is that you have a -1 ongoing to Blood. Because as you draw this card, right before you flip it, you get this very quick vision of a person standing in the middle of Aiden's office and being riddled by bullets from both sides. And you can't lock in on who it is. Like the person changes and changes and changes and changes, and it just kind of unsettles you in a way.

Kim: Cool.

Rev: All right. So Megan, you get a hold 3.

Megan: Excellent. Another question.

Rev: Yes.

Megan: Would you consider this moment an intimacy move between Kim and I?

Rev: I would. If you'd like to ask a question of her, and I know that Kim gets something different.

Kim: Hell yeah.

Megan: Yeah. I think I just give her a hug and say, "I know you're kind of preoccupied with outcomes of the future. What are you most afraid of happening today?"

Kim: "I'm afraid that the three of you aren't gonna get back to where you need to be. I'm afraid that everything that we've done here is gonna not have mattered, if you don't make it back."

Megan: "Then let that be a reminder to make every move you make be with intention. We're gonna make it out."

Rev: Kim, your eyes glow white for a brief moment as you and Megan embrace, and you get this vision of her standing in Aiden Chambers office. There is a fight going on, and something grabs her and shatters through the glass of the skyscraper and carries her out into the sky.

Kim: I'm going to spend Corruption to ask some questions about that vision.

Rev: OK, OK.

Kim: How can Megan avoid being carried away out of the skyscraper?

Rev: By trying not to appear as the most dangerous threat, especially with Aiden having seen her kill many of his men. '

Kim: Hmm. OK. What was it that carried her away?

Rev: From context clues, you imagine it was the gargoyle, because it seemed like an invisible force.

Kim: Gotcha. "Megan, one quick thing."

Megan: "Yeah?"

Kim: "I got another vision of you in Aiden's office, getting carried out of the building by an invisible gargoyle. Aiden has seen what you can do. He has seen you kill all of those vampires in The Vault. If he gets clear eyes on you and recognizes you as the biggest threat in the room, then those gargoyles are gonna take you out of the situation."

Megan: "Oh, no. I thought they only went after magical things. Good to know, I guess, that that's not necessarily the case."

Kim: "Yeah."

Megan: "Well, thanks for the heads up."

Kim: "You're welcome."

Megan: Since Kim is both Power and Mortalis, I can mark Mortalis from that, and it actually levels me up.

Rev: Oh, nice. What are you gonna take?

Megan: I am gonna take the move Chess, Not Checkers from The Sworn playbook. And that is when you Turn to Violence with any kind of advantage — numbers position, surprise, et cetera — add the following option to the list you can choose from on a 10+: you force your target to choose a different option from their list.

Rev: All right.

Jake: What do we know security to be like? In, uh ... Why can't I think of anything but Stark Tower?

Kim: Nash Tower.

Jake: Nash Tower, thank you. Are we gonna get patted down? Are there metal detectors? Is it more occult than that?

Rev: Are you asking me?

Jake: I don't know who else would know.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Megan did scope the place out.

Jake: Yes.

Kim: Yeah, she did see the building.

Megan: Oh, that's right.

Jake: Megan, you tell me. Right now. What did you learn about the security?

Megan: Um ...

Tass: There is none!

Kim: It's fine.

Rev: I just — I passed the buck, so that I could then have to give the answer anyway.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: You have to take everything off.

Tass: Everything! Oh no.

Megan: They're searching everywhere.

Rev: Everywhere.

Jake: It's the worst-case TSA scenario.

Rev: Yes, there is absolutely security. Like you saw people going through machines, getting patted down, and stuff like that.

Megan: "Yeah, they're going to search you."

Jake: "OK. Then I need to hand some things off to those of you who are not going to pass through security."

Tass: "Why? You don't want them to find an orbital strike on you?"

Jake: "I'd prefer ... I could hope that they don't know what it is, but I'd rather not."

Kim: I mean, it definitely looks like a gun, so ...

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Hopefully they won't take this plastic gun the wrong way.

Jake: This is my laser pointer for the cats. Why is it shape like a gun? It's not. I don't know what you're talking about. Um ...

Megan: What's a gun?

Jake: What's a gun? [Laughs] Actually, I also carry a gun.

Tass: Oh, yeah.

Rev: Are you keeping that gun?

Jake: OK, yeah. I will hand off the orbital strike designator and the doorknob to Tass and Megan. But I'll keep the gun, because I want them ... They're probably worried about us. Or, you know, wondering what's up. And I want them to feel like they accomplish something. So I'll let them take the gun, because I don't ... I forgot I had it. I'm not going to use it.

Rev: What about you, Kim? Is there anything you want to pass off?

Kim: Yeah, it makes sense that I should probably unwrap the censer from around my belt and give it to Megan. It's pretty concealable, but it's also silver, and I don't want to actively go into this meeting with a weapon.

Rev: Yeah. I think that they probably just at a glance wouldn't notice. But if one of them, like, picked it up and started burning their hands, they'd probably have an idea of what it's made of.

Megan: Yeah, and just to be just to be safe. Like if there's anything that you don't want to chance not taking back with you.

Kim: Yeah, that's a really good idea. Like, I don't want the vampires to confiscate my censer.

Tass: OK. I'll actually just take all of them to have them in one place, and I'll tuck them away.

Kim: Yeah, I'll give Tass a hug. "Stay safe."

Tass: "That's not the job today."

Kim: "Be a big fucking distraction."

Tass: "That, I promise I will do."

Jake: Yeah, I think I like put both my hands on Tass's shoulders and look at him. "This has been a long time coming. I think we got this. What about you?"

Tass: "Yeah, I think so."

Jake: I'll give him a big hug.

Tass: "Love you, buddy."

Jake: "Love you too, man."

Tass: "We lost somebody today. We're not losing anymore. Let's get it done."

Jake: "We lost somebody?"

Tass: I look down at the burnt jacket I'm wearing, and look back up to him.

Jake: "How?"

Tass: "Doesn't matter. We're about to fix it." And I give him another squeeze in the hug, and turn. Head for the door.

Megan: I give a wave to Kim and Jake, and I step through as well.

Rev: So Tass and Megan, Sweet Vendetta, Princess Soufflé, and Selina all leave through the door as we watch Kim and Jake head out of the subterranean lair and into Jake's car, headed for Nash Tower.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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