

Aggressive Negotiations (S4, E25)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: I'm sitting here in a bit of a stunned silence, because we just finished our bake sale stream. We streamed for just a little over 10 hours and it was just mind blowing, the way that you all showed up. We had more people in our stream than we've ever had before. And people there all throughout the day. People were so generous with their donations and their words and their time that at the end, you left all of us speechless. So thank you to everyone who showed up today for the bake sale stream. And thank you to everyone who shows up here every week. You show us, time and time again, what a wonderful community you are. Not just to us, but to each other. So thank you.

The AMA for Urban Shadows was a little longer than expected, because a lot of people had really good questions. And so the AMA is going to be two weeks for Urban Shadows, and then we will pick up with episode 26 the following week. I know sometimes people don't necessarily listen to the episodes that aren't the main show, but I would highly recommend listening to the AMA. We recorded it last weekend, and there was a lot of good conversation that came from it and a lot of little interesting details that came out. As well as at the end of the second episode of the AMA, I have strung together all of the outtakes from Urban Shadows, so ...

Thank you again. I think with that, it is time to get into the episode.

SFX:

CRITSHOW STINGER

Rev: Jake and Kim, you have arrived at the front door and are being escorted into the lobby of Nash Tower for your meeting. It is about 9:50. As you are led through the entrance, you pass underneath a couple of scanners. A set of guards give you both a pat down. Jake, one comes across your Glock.

Jake: Yeah. Which I, calmly, I'm like, "Yep, sorry. Everyday carry. But by all means, take it."

Rev: They do. And they hand you a t.

Rev: SECURITY GUARD: You'll get this back at the end of the meeting.

Jake: "Thank you."

Rev: SECURITY GUARD: Right this way to the elevator.

Kim: "Thank you."

Rev: And they lead you over to an elevator on the far side of the room, scan a key, and it opens.

Jake: Step inside.

Kim: Yep.

Rev: The elevator door closes, and you slowly start to rise to the top floor.

Down south in Texas. Megan and Tass, outside of a big old barn with a very large double gray door. Standing with a pegasus, a nightmare, and Selina. What are you two up to?

Tass: I think I'm just ... I'm watching the clock here, and I know that they're at least close to going up and going in. So I would like to roll my Devil Inside, please.

Rev: All right.

Tass: That's a twelve.

Rev: All right. So what are your three?

Tass: I'm gonna have my demonic weapon, gain 1-armor, and I think a +1 forward.

Megan: I'm gonna try and prepare some smoke bombs to have on hand when I go in here, so I'd like to Let It Out.

Rev: All right, roll it.

Megan: Now would you consider right now being part of a hunt?

Rev: Yes.

Megan: Cool. So I get to roll with Blood instead of Spirit, then.

Rev: OK.

Megan: Thirteen.

Rev: All right. So do you want to ignore the complications, or not take the point of Corruption?

Megan: I'll take the Corruption.

Rev: OK. Selina is waiting at the door. She has got her silver doorknob inserted into this double door. What is the ... How do I wanna ask this? When this door opens, what's the plan going through? Like is somebody riding a horse? Is Selina hopping on to something? Like, what's ... What is your breach, here?

Tass: I think I'm leading the charge. I don't think I'm riding either of the horses. Because I'm trying to lead the way, lead the distraction. While Megan is nearer the back, maybe on or between one of the horses, ready to mow anybody down. Selina, probably with you?

Megan: Yeah, I think we could be on the Pegasus, behind. At least at first, just to kind of get in and get moving and get our bearings.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Both of you on the pegasus?

Megan: Oh yeah.

Jake: There's one unriden horse and one double ridden horse. The pegasus is like, "Why did I agree to this?"

Rev: The nightmare feels lonely. It's like, "Aww ..."

Megan: We're actually sitting on each of the wings.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: God, that would be tiring.

Kim: Oof ...

Rev: The Pegasus cannot fly.

Megan: It's so strong.

Rev: All right. So back at Nash Tower, the elevator doors open into a long nicely decorated hallway. There are six guards in this hallway, positioned about 20 feet apart. And it leads down to a dark double door with a silver, simple plaque on it that reads Aiden Chambers.

Jake: I allow Kim to lead the way, as the higher authority of the two of us.

Kim: Yeah. As the elevator doors open, I will take a deep breath and squeeze the pieces of amber that I have in my pocket, and walk towards the office.

Rev: As you both move down the hallway, the guards don't seem to acknowledge your presence. You get to the double door, and it very quietly opens. The room in front of you has a large skylight at the top, picture windows all around, and there is a granite desk sitting in the middle of the room. It is flanked by two gargoyle statues. At the table, sitting in a white suit with a white tie and a black shirt, is Aiden Chambers.

Kim: I tug on my earlobe as I'm walking in. "You're gonna have to let me know who decorated this place, Aiden. I'm about to have to furnish an office of my own."

Rev: Megan and Tass, you both to hear this clearly. Aiden smiles and stands, buttoning the second button of his jacket and moving around the table with his hand extended.

Kim: I will shake it.

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: I have to say when Benson told me that you had requested this meeting, it made me very glad. I think trying to set things right before Nash arrives is really best for all involved.

Kim: "There's been enough bad blood and infighting amongst the factions, but that was Strohm's business. I think it's better if we try to move forward in a more harmonious relationship."

Rev: Jake, what are you doing while this exchange is happening?

Jake: I think I'm probably just like meandering around a little bit. Like, does he have ... I mean, I know it's very well furnished, but if there's stuff that like I could reasonably be looking at, you know? Like admiring the things he's got on the credenza or whatever, and just trying to get a read on this place overall.

Rev: Yeah, why don't you Study a Place of Power?

Jake: OK. Oh, eight.

Rev: All right. And with that, you can mark Night. And the thing that you notice as you look around Aiden's office is those dark spots in the north and south corner. They're fairly large, but it's set up to look like the lights in the room are creating those shadows. But you can tell that it's something a little more than that. But I think the main thing that you notice is that this granite desk at the middle of the room looks like a solid piece, but you can see very small scratches on part of the desk that makes you think that in an emergency, someone could duck underneath it and the top would close around it, making a solid granite container. Like a panic room.

Jake: Does it seem like those are like runes? Like this is a magic effect? Or is this like something engineered?

Rev: It seems like it's something engineered. Like the scratches are not necessarily what do it, but a result of it having happened before.

Jake: OK. Well, if the opportunity seems to present itself as we're just kind of like talking, if he is moving around the office and stuff, I will try to kind of get between him and that desk and hold that position until things start popping off. In case he does, like, dive for it.

Rev: So what you're trying to do, keep between him and his desk and make it not noticeable, I think this could either be a Mislead, Distract, or Trick, or Keep Your Cool. Like, is this a pressure situation where you're watching very carefully where he moves, and adapting to it? Or are you initiating things to make it so that, you know, like you step a little too close so that he steps away, and ...

Jake: So, OK. Looking at the options for Mislead, Distract, or Trick, I don't feel like any of them quite cover it. Because I'm not creating an opportunity. I'm like trying to take away an opportunity, almost.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: So I feel like this is more a Keep Your Cool.

Rev: OK.

Jake: I'm trying to position with caution and go unnoticed in the process.

Rev: All right. So what is the situation you want to avoid?

Jake: I'm trying to take the best position to interfere with him getting there. This dude can already turn into smoke. I don't ... I don't want to give him any additional opportunities to get away with it.

Rev: All right, so roll Keep Your Cool.

Jake: Ten.

Rev: All right. So you are able, as Kim and Aiden are having this conversation, to very casually move around the room, staying between him and the desk. Or, being in a

position where you could very quickly get there, if it seems awkward to step between him and the desk in that moment.

Jake: Cool.

Tass: So I think from the moment that Kim tipped us off that they're in, I've given it like a 25 second, maybe 30 second count, and then nodded at Selina.

Rev: OK. Selina opens the double door, and in front of you is a long hallway that leads down to an elevator. At this elevator are two guards, and they are surprised as shit to see you, as you come spilling into this hallway. Selina has pulled the door closed behind you, and you see that there is a sign pointing back the other direction that says "freight elevator". What are you both doing?

Tass: Charging these guys.

Rev: All right, Turn to Violence.

Tass: With my +1 forward, that's a 10.

Jake: Feels so good to get the most out of a +1 forward.

Rev: All right. So you get to choose one. You inflict terrible harm, you take something from them, you create an opportunity for an ally.

Tass: I'm gonna create an opportunity for an ally.

Rev: OK. How much harm do you do?

Tass: I do 3-harm, but I'm going to activate one of my armor-defeating fire horse gift hairs.

Rev: As your chain whips out at them, Tass, they grab a hold of it. And you can see the fire pouring off of it onto them. They give it a tug and it actually comes loose from your hand for the moment. So they have put you in a bad spot. But you notice that as they fall to the ground and the chain kind of collects on them, they start to burn into ash. The ash

on the ground, the other vampire takes a step forward and starts to raise their assault rifle, and you can see that their boot slips in that ash a little bit, throwing them off guard. So Megan, you can see that they are off balance a little bit. What would you like to do?

Megan: I'm taking a shot with my crossbow.

Rev: All right, Turn to Violence.

Megan: Gladly. Eleven.

Rev: Megan, as you fire off this crossbow bolt, the second guard starts to spray the assault rifle into the hallway. He is going to inflict harm on you. But on a 10+, you do get that additional choice. What would you like to choose?

Megan: I would like to inflict terrible harm.

Rev: All right. And how much harm do you do?

Megan: Four.

Rev: So as the bullets fly down this hallway and your stake heads towards him, the stake hits him in the chest and he turns to ash. You see that it very clearly goes through the armor that he is wearing and penetrates. But you take 2-harm as well, as these assault rifle bullets hit you.

Megan: OK. And with my armor, I'll knock that down to 1-harm.

Rev: OK. Both of these guards in the hallway have turned to ash, and the group of you have arrived at the elevator door. What are you doing?

Tass: I'm probably still tripping over myself, trying to get my chain back.

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: And then checking the elevator. Like, trying to see if it needs a key card or like anything specific.

Rev: Yeah. You do see that there is a scan pad. There are no buttons or anything.

Tass: OK. Then I'm gonna go through the ashly pockets and see what else is left from these two guards.

Rev: Yeah, you do find a scan card on each of them.

Tass: "All right. Everybody cram in."

Megan: Yeah, I get down from the pegasus and I just help nudge everyone to get squished into this elevator.

Rev: OK. You get inside and you scan the key card and it starts to move you towards the top floor.

Tass: As we're going up. I'm tugging on my ear. "The second that we're up, I'm gonna be bursting through this door. Everybody scatter for these things in the darkness, do whatever other distractions, but I'm going straight for Aiden. So be ready, Kim."

Rev: Up in Aiden's office. Aiden has started to pour you and himself a drink, Kim.

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: So what would your proposed change be? How can we set this right between us?

Kim: "Well, you are obviously a very smart and very prepared man, but sometimes having a little advanced knowledge of what's to come can't hurt. And that's something that I'd be willing to do for you."

Rev: His eyes grow a little brighter at that.

Kim: "In exchange for the safety of myself and the members of my faction, of course."

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: Yes, of course. We actually have a number of deals with other heads of factions. Exchanging ... Well really, exchanging gifts for gifts. I have provided any number of things to other factions, and they have provided me with things that are a

specialty of theirs. How exactly would you see this working out? Are you looking for protection? Would you like some of our forces to stand with yours on guard at various locations? What exactly would the terms be? What would the quid of this pro quo be?

All: [Laugh]

Rev: He does not say that.

Jake: He says, with absolute confidence.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: Is this where we're finding out that Aiden Chambers is just Michael Scott?

Jake: Aiden Chambers has been getting, like, Cyrano-ed the whole time.

Rev: But yes, he wants to know what would the — essentially, the exchange rate be? What would you give to him, and what would he need to give back to you?

Kim: "Well, as you know, the House of Strome is weaker right now than it has ever been, and we need the time and the safety to grow and re-establish ourselves as one of the premier factions. If you could offer up some of your people as protection, while we do that. Perhaps guarding our building or assisting us with defenses while the House of Strohm strengthens and re-establishes ourself, I think that would be fair."

Rev: Kim, I'm going to ask you to Mislead, Distract, or Trick.

Kim: Seven.

Rev: All right. So you pick two.

Kim: Definitely, "you confuse them for some time."

Rev: I think he is fully engaged in this conversation and this idea.

Kim: Fantastic. And I think knowing that Megan and Tass are about to come in, I would like to create an opportunity for them.

Rev: OK. And what do we think this opportunity looks like? You know, you know that they are getting ready to come up into an elevator that has six guards in it. What's the opportunity that you're trying to create for them in the room here?

Kim: Hmm ...

Jake: Aiden says, "I love it. Let's talk about it, without any of my personnel." And then he sends them all off, out the window.

Rev: [Laughs] Out the window.

Megan: Get out here. But you know what? Take the stairs.

Kim: I mean, gosh, could it just be taking my drink, and — I assume he has some sort of little sitting area in this office — sitting down with him so that he is maybe not facing the door, or it's gonna take him just a little bit longer to react if someone runs in?

Rev: I think you already get that with your confused.

Kim: OK.

Jake: What if, like he calls all the hallway guards over to be like a demonstration of like, "Yeah, if you need protection, this is what I could offer." And kind of calls them from their posts so that they are not actively guarding and ready to respond when the elevator opens.

Rev: Yeah, I think that the opportunity created here is that he could pull two guards into the room who are kind of at parade rest as he walks around them, describing their training and what they can do and the types of threats that they have faced down. Yeah. So as you make this suggestion to Aiden, he's listening and nodding.

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: Yes. I think that that's more than fair.

Rev: And he walks over to his desk and reaches underneath it, and you hear a slight click sound. And then a moment later, the double door opens. And when it opens, two of the guards step in and close the door behind them.

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: Gentlemen, please step over here. At ease.

Rev: And the two vampires lower their assault rifles and turn and face Aiden.

Rev: AIDEN CHAMBERS: They are trained to peak performance. We have specialists all over the world who are able to hone in on what a vampire's specific strength will be, whether they are something that is fast or accurate. Perhaps both. You know, vampires ... There are a number of different skill sets, power sets, abilities that we share between us. And so no two guards on my elite squad are the same, because they come from different branches. That's kind of the key little secret, is that you expect one kind of thing, and I don't delineate a different look between the specialists. They look just like all the other guards. So then all of a sudden one is moving faster than your eye can see, or turning into smoke and passing through a wall, or splitting himself into three. When you thought you were just dealing with a group of thugs.

Rev: Outside in the hallway, the elevator door opens.

Tass: The second those doors split, full sprint towards the closest guard.

Rev: These guards see you. And they are dressed exactly like the guards below, but you notice that their rifles come up lightning fast. And the two closest to you drop down to a knee.

Tass: OK. As I charge out, could I attempt to Let It Out?

Rev: Sure.

Tass: Excellent. I'm gonna ... I'm gonna give this a quick try.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Well, never mind. Six.

Megan: Oh, I'll spend one of my charges from The Best Laid Plans to give a +1 to that roll.

Rev: OK.

Tass: Oh my god!

Rev: So Tass, what are you doing with your mixed success?

Tass: So what I'm going for as I'm like sprinting down this hallway with the horses galloping behind me and my teammates. I'm, you know, on fire. Literally.

Rev: Not even two teammates, because what these guards see are two other faction leaders.

Tass: That's true.

Rev: Well, mechanically.

Megan: They see some lady. [Laughs]

Rev: I, the GM, see two faction leaders.

Tass: So as I'm attacking the closest one, I'm hoping to frighten the ever-loving shit out of one of them.

Rev: OK. All right. Turn to Violence.

Tass: OK. Eight.

Rev: And this is with your chain again?

Tass: Yes, this is with the chain, and I'm using my second tick of horsehair.

Rev: OK. And so that is three damage, then?

Tass: Yep.

Rev: Armor-defeating.

Tass: And fire.

Rev: Yes. As you throw your chain, it passes over the head of one of the kneeling guards. It is radiating this heat from the nightmare. And you can see that they look up, like as it passes over inches from their face. And their eyes get wide at the feeling of the heat pouring off of this thing and they drop their gun and kind of squat, trying to get out from underneath it. The guard behind them fires off their rifle as the bullets from it hit you center mass. You take three points of damage from this, but you do see that that guard goes down. He is not out, but he does drop his weapon and fall to the ground.

Tass: OK. And I'm a Fucking Demon, so I don't take any of that.

Rev: OK. This is your ... This is your use?

Tass: Yeah, it has to be. It is the first time that I take harm. And I have 2-armor, so that third puts me into taking harm.

Rev: OK. Megan?

Megan: I'd like to use my Corruption move Hard to Kill, which gives me an extra +1 armor until the end of the scene.

Rev: OK, yeah. Mark Corruption, and add that point of armor.

Megan: Cool. And then I'm taking a shot at one of these other guards with my crossbow.

Rev: So you've got the one kneeling down. You've got another standing behind them. Tass has just knocked one to the ground, and there is the one that is trying to escape from Tass's fiery chains. They seem to be frightened by the heat coming off of them.

Megan: I want to hit the one who is free and ready to act.

Rev: Roll Turn to Violence.

Megan: Thirteen.

Rev: This is the other kneeled guard with the assault rifle raised, so they are going to fire off their assault rifle down the hallway towards you. But you get to choose one as well, with your 10+.

Megan: I think I'm gonna have to go with inflict terrible harm again.

Rev: And normally without that, you do 4?

Megan: Correct.

Rev: OK. So you take three points of harm, as this assault rifle fires off at you down the hallway. But you do see that your crossbow bolt hits them square in the chest. They also go down, but you can tell that they are still alive, if just barely. It seems that the armor they are wearing protected from a little bit of that. Selina runs up to the one that is trying to scramble away from Tass's fiery chain, and she pulls her mask back and latches her mouth onto his face, and you see him shrivel instantly into just a dry sack.

Jake: Oh!

Kim: Queen!

Rev: Princess Soufflé seems to not be comfortable with the sounds of the gunfire, and she backs up a little bit in the hallway. But Sweet Vendetta continues to charge forward. And Megan, the one that you shot that was knocked backwards? Sweet Vendetta rears up on their back legs and comes slamming down with their front two hooves on that one, and it bursts into ash. Tass?

Tass: I think the one that has not been hit yet, I am standing to take a swing at now.

Rev: All right, roll Turn to Violence.

Tass: OK. That's a ten.

Rev: All right. And this is once again with the chain. Are you using the final horsehair, or are you holding that back?

Tass: I think I'm gonna go ahead and use it

Rev: As they are hit with this chain, you can see very quickly that they gauge the temperature of the room and they start to sprint towards you. As they do, they turn into mist and you can see that they are making their way towards the elevator shaft. You do get an additional choice because of your 10+.

Tass: I am struggling to think of how, but I think I want to create an opportunity for an ally. Like maybe turning up the heat as I see him start to mist, like maybe hurts a little more? Like he almost stutters out of the mist form for a moment on his progress?

Rev: Um ... All right, how about this? Because I don't want to negate his choice of the opening to flee.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: But you could create an opportunity for an ally. Princess Soufflé has backed up into the hallway, and this vampire is turning to mist. She just starts to flap her wings, making it so that he can't get into the elevator shaft and away unless she stops flapping.

Tass: OK. I like it.

Rev: OK. So Princess Soufflé, at the moment, will be stuck here. And if she moves on, this one will be able to escape down the elevator shaft.

Tass: All right.

Rev: Megan?

Megan: I'm pulling out my hand axes, and I'm going to take out this last one that's on the ground still.

Rev: All right, Turn to Violence.

Megan: Eight. And that's 3-harm and holy.

Rev: All right. As the axes land in their chest and you can see the glow starting to pour through them, they look you dead in the eye and breathe out this blue viscous material that splatters you in the face. You take one point of damage — it is armor-defeating — as this poison gets like around your eyes and mouth. But the hallway is now clear. We have Princess Soufflé in the back flapping her wings, keeping this mist vampire stuck in this tiny little cyclone. Sweet Vendetta, Selina, Megan, and Tass, all by the office door.

Tass: I tug on my ear. "We're in the hallway. I'm about to crack this door. Vendetta, Soufflé, get ready to crash in. You can let that one go. Here we go!" As I sprint down to this door, like, is it ... Is it key locked and stuff too? Or do I think I can just rip this thing open?

Rev: You think you can rip it open.

Tass: All right. I rip the doors open, and step out of the way for a pegasus and a nightmare.

Rev: Inside the room, Jake, you have been maneuvering around, trying to stay between Aiden and his desk. Kim, you have been talking with Aiden, keeping his attention focused on the things that he could gain from a relationship with the House of Strohm.

Kim: And drinking a 10 a.m. bourbon.

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: As he displays for you some of the skills of his guards, the double door of the office is pulled open. And there's a brief moment as Aiden becomes aware that the door is opening, not really sure what's happening. In through the door rushes a flaming horse and a pegasus, just charging through the room. As they do, the two gargoyles glow, and there is almost an invisible shimmer that starts moving towards the two of them. They are followed closely by Megan and Tass and Selina. What is everybody doing in this moment?

Megan: I am looking for the shadowed corners and I'm throwing a smoke bomb into one of them.

Rev: All right. Roll Study a Place of Power.

Megan: Two.

Rev: Megan, you start to look around the room, trying to figure out how these corners of darkness work and you pitch a smoke bomb in the direction of one of them.

Tass: I have waited for Megan to run in and make her throw, and so I have followed in immediately after. I just want to try to rush straight towards the middle of the room and just with a full scream, just with rage, screaming Aiden's name, I want to activate Just Below the Surface.

Rev: All right, spend your point of Corruption. His awareness snaps back, and his eyes glow this very strange silver. And you feel what you're starting to charge yourself with leave you, and flow towards him.

Kim: In that moment, I would like to spring up from where I am seated and try to lock eyes with Aiden.

Rev: All right. Kim, roll Keep Your Cool. What is the situation you want to avoid?

Kim: Not making eye contact in time.

Rev: All right, roll it.

Jake: That's a good one.

Kim: That is a six.

Megan: I'll use another charge to make that a seven.

Kim: OK.

Rev: All right. So you are able to step up in front of Aiden and make eye contact with him. What it's going to cost you is positioning. You are not in a great spot. Like ideally you would be off to one of the far sides of the room, because of the two remaining guards and the two Gatling guns. But right now you are midway between where he poured the drinks and his desk, so you're still kind of stuck in the middle of the action. Meaning that something could happen, something could hit you, could hit him, might have the chance to break this connection. But for the moment, spend your point of Corruption, and he is snagged.

Kim: OK. And I would like to flood his mind with visions of Nash Tower falling the exact same way that The Vault did.

Rev: His eyes break from that silver as the energy settles into him, and then fill with this glow that comes with your visions. Jake, you have seen Megan hurl a smoke bomb into one of the corners. Tass gets this energy sapped from him. Kim has just stepped in front of Aiden and seems to have him under her spell. What are you doing?

Jake: I would also like to Let it Out.

Rev: All right, roll it.

Jake: Thirteen.

Kim: Hell yeah. And because I have Conduit as one of my moves, this move is advanced for Jake.

Rev: Oh! What does that mean?

Jake: On a 12+, your powers or abilities manifest in an unexpectedly useful way. Mark Corruption to make that manifestation a new ability.

Rev: What exactly are you doing, first off?

Jake: I am performing a feat of telekinetic strength or precision. I am taking that granite desk and I'm just throwing it at the other shadowed corner.

Rev: Yeah. You do.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: So I think the way that this manifests in an interesting way that's helpful is that you can do a couple of different things here. It is like you have kind of mastered this telekinetic magic. I think that you can either make it a feat of precision and strength, or you can do two of one. So it can be two things of precision or two things of strength. So you could throw this desk twice. You could throw it once and have it go in a very precise spot. Maybe not the best option, because we aren't quite sure exactly where those guards are. Or you could make it go to a location and like ... Like just slam it around a bunch.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Yeah! I think that's what I'm going to do, because we don't know exactly where in the shadowy alcove this guy is. That the desk gets hurled in there, and then just like blenders once it's in there. Like just ricocheting off every surface, to try and smash this guy up.

Rev: Yeah. So you reach out and you throw this desk. It makes a loud cracking sound as it breaks away from the floor, and you can see that it is — that it was connected, and something about the floor seems off, like there might be a drop away underneath it. But it goes sailing into this darkness that you previously had the sense of like this might be a little more than just normal darkness. And is kind of confirmed in this moment, because the desk goes from being seen to being invisible to you as it passes this line of darkness. You hear the sound of glass shattering, and what sounds like a small engine starting to spin up. And then there are these loud slamming sounds as this granite bounces around inside of a confined space, and that corner becomes silent.

Jake: And just because I'm fresh on a new Corruption level, I will mark Corruption to make that manifestation a new ability.

Rev: OK. From the corner of the room where Megan has thrown the smoke bomb, smoke starts to roil out across the floor towards all of you, and you hear this other Gatling gun start to spin up and bullets start to spray out into the room. What is everybody doing?

Jake: I'm going to dive for Aiden's ankle. I'm going to try to get the knife.

Rev: All right.

Tass: As Jake is diving for the knife, I'm diving to get myself between the gun and Kim so that she can keep eye contact.

Rev: OK.

Kim: Yeah, I'm not moving. I need to maintain eye contact with him.

Rev: OK.

Megan: I am gonna put on the goggles that I got from Kit and aim my crossbow into the corner where the bullets are coming from. And I think I'm going to spend my last charge from The Best Laid Plans, with "ensure your people have the exact gear they need on hand." And I think before we put all this into motion, I worked with Jake and made it so these goggles would also let me be able to see through magical darkness.

Tass: Hell yeah!

Rev: All right. So spend your point. Megan, roll Turn to Violence. And Jake, what situation are you trying to avoid?

Jake: I am trying to avoid ... I don't know how exactly to phrase it. I'm trying to get the knife before anything can break Kim's hold on him.

Rev: Yeah. So you're trying not to jostle him, or ...

Jake: Or let the bullets jostle him, even. Like if this guy just starts shooting wild. Or let the bullets jostle Kim — like, yeah, I'm trying to get there before bullets jostle anybody!

Megan: [Laughs]

Rev: I see. So you're trying to do it as fast as possible?

Jake: Yes!

Megan: [Laughs] You know, before the bullets jostle Kim. It's such a nice way to put it.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: And Tass, what are you trying to avoid?

Tass: I mean, I think we have to essentially double up on this whole premise. So I'm just trying to avoid Kim getting hit at all.

Rev: OK.

Kim: Aww, thank you.

Tass: You're welcome.

Rev: Tass and Jake, roll Keep Your Cool. These are all kind of happened at the same time.

Tass: OK.

Jake: Seven.

Megan: Seven

Tass: Tass.

Rev: So at this point, as you all start to act in this moment, Sweet Vendetta and Princess Soufflé shatter out of the window, and you can see these two invisible things chasing

after them. Sweet Vendetta, you can just barely see that he turns like a 90 degree angle and starts running down the building.

Kim: Amazing.

Rev: While ...

Megan: What?!

Rev: While Princess Soufflé soars off into the air, and you can see these two spectral things chasing them.

Megan: Awesome.

Rev: Selina has stepped up next to the two guards who were kind of slack jawed and displaying what they could do, and then they were confused again in the moment by what Tass and Kim had done to Aiden. And she has drained them both, like Capri Suns.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Megan, you have turned on the goggles that you and Jake had worked on to pierce this darkness and fire your crossbow towards the gunner of the Gatling gun. As I said before, this gun was starting to spin up and bullets are flying out of this space. You do see that the crossbow bolt passes through the darkness, and you can see him sitting on a little stool in a box behind some glass. And there is a square cut out in the glass where the muzzle of the Gatling gun pokes through. And the crossbow goes right through the corner of that square, into his chest, and he bursts into ash. But as he does, the bullets pepper this room. Everyone in the room: Selina, Tass, Megan, and Jake get hit by this. Aiden and Kim do not, because Tass absorbs these hits for them. Everybody takes four points of damage, not armor-defeating.

Jake: Whoa.

Rev: As this Gatling gun peppers the room with bullets before winding down.

Jake: As an unarmored individual, thank you for the clarification that it's not armor-defeating.

Rev: I don't remember. I looked it up a long time ago. But one of the largest, fastest Gatling guns that was used during Vietnam, Puff the Magic Dragon, could fill every square inch of a football field with bullets in like one minute. And so I just think about that —

Tass: In a room.

Rev: In a room.

Tass: Ugh.

Megan: Oh boy. Even with my 2-armor, that would kill me. I have ... I have two points left that I can take. So I'm gonna do something I don't think we've done yet, but I'm going to take a scar instead.

Rev: Oh yeah, why don't you let everybody know what this does?

Megan: Sure. So with scars, when you suffer harm, you may always ignore that harm by marking a scar. Scars represent your character pushing through the immediate situation at some permanent cost, ignoring harm suffered by immediately reducing one of your main stats. So in other words, you get to decide when your character dies from massive trauma by choosing or not choosing to negate lethal injuries before they happen at a steep price. So there's four that you can choose from that take away one of each of your stats, and I'm going to go with Shattered, which is -1 Blood. I think that makes the most sense, with being riddled with bullets.

Rev: Yeah. What does this look like? You know, what does the scar look like?

Tass: Yeah. It's interesting because it's like you don't technically take the hit, but you're scarred from whatever you've done to not. So is it like bullets ripping up your armor and your stuff to like, twist? Like, yeah, I don't know. I'm so intrigued.

Megan: We can totally flavor it that way. What it says in like the actual game: Shattered means frightened, weakened, and overly cautious. Shattered characters hesitate when they should move, and their attempts to Turn to Violence or Escape a Situation often come up short.

Tass: Intriguing.

Jake: Yeah. These seem like psychological scars.

Rev: Yeah, OK.

Jake: Because like, even though they all sound kind of physical, the stats — I assume they relate to the stat they modify. So like, Fractured isn't like a broken leg. That's minus -1 Mind. That's like your mind is broken from this thing.

Megan: Yep. Confused, disoriented, and disjointed.

Tass: Oof.

Rev: And which one did you say you were taking?

Megan: I'm taking Shattered.

Rev: So and that means hesitant to act.

Kim: Like frightened.

Megan: Like frightened and overly cautious, yeah.

Rev: I think that you see the other members of your team getting hit with these bullets, and knowing that your job was to take out the two gunners. And it suddenly makes you feel a little more hesitant about, you know, those kinds of decisions of, "Oh, let me take care of this. Let me — I will do this." You feel that kind of weight on you, but you don't take that damage. How are the two of you sitting?

Tass: Not bad. I could definitely be worse.

Jake: I could take one more before I perish. I am at four harm.

Rev: OK. But as a result of this, Tass has protected Aiden and Kim. Jake has gotten the knife off of Aiden's ankle.

Tass: As soon as I see this and like the room is actually relatively still, I'm sprinting over to the door and ripping the door handle off, and I'm pulling out the Trog door handle and trying to attach it.

Rev: And I think as you run over to the door and start to fiddle with the handle, you do notice that the elevator at the end of the hallway is no longer sitting on this floor, and it's moving up towards this floor. And that vampire that was left behind by Princess Soufflé is no longer here.

Tass: "They're on the way up. We gotta go."

Jake: I am going to use one of my Corruption abilities. Now that we have the knife, I'm going to call out, "Do we need anything else with Aiden or anybody in here?"

Kim: "I don't think so. Do we have the knife?"

Jake: I hold it up.

Rev: She looks at it.

All: [Laugh]

Kim: Can I get a verbal yes or no here?

Tass: [Laughs]

Megan: I love this top energy right now. Just like, I can't look. Please describe to me what's happening.

Jake: "Yeah, I got it."

Tass: "All right, let's go!"

Jake: All right. I am going to hold both of my hands up above my head and then kind of throw them out in like a wash motion. And I'm going to use one of my Corruption abilities, Warding. Mark Corruption to create a magical ward the size of a small room. The ward lasts for a month and a day or until you release it. I want to ward this room against vampires.

Rev: As this spell ripples out from you, Aiden is blasted away from you.

Kim: As that is happening, can I spend another Corruption point to make Aiden forget this experience?

Rev: Yes. Kim, you spend another point of Corruption, and Aiden's eyes flash white as he is blown backwards through the wall. And the memory of this moment is removed from him. The room is warded. Tass has gotten the doorknob onto the door. What is everybody doing?

Jake: I've gotta Channel.

Rev: OK, roll it.

Tass: I am slapping some batteries into an orbital strike, and I'm gonna hand it to Jake.

Jake: Oh, that is an eight. That is 2 hold. "All right. Go through. Get to the end. I'll take the doorknob. I'll set this place to blow, and then I'll pull you through to the castle in a minute."

Tass: "Oh my god. Good job, everybody."

Jake: "Yeah. Good job. Go teams and high fives when we're not being —"

Tass: "Yep."

Jake: "Yeah."

Kim: "Right."

Tass: "Let's go."

Kim: "Yes."

Rev: Out in the hallway, the elevator dings.

Tass: I go, "All right," and I shut the door and I open it again.

Rev: And it opens into the Inn that Wanders.

Megan: "See you soon." Step through.

Kim: Run in.

Tass: Same.

Rev: So the three of you enter the door, and Selina follows.

Jake: I shut it and I pop the doorknob right back off. And I'm going to pull my hair tie out of my ponytail and wrap it around the trigger on the target designator and just toss it on the floor in the middle of this room. And give a just a cathartic two middle fingers to every piece of this room before I spend my two charges to teleport to the Sanctum.

Rev: Outside in the street next to Nash Tower, a falling Aiden Chambers comes to his senses and feels the wind all around him, and very quickly turns into a green mist and settles down onto the sidewalk and solidifies. He looks at his hands and at the ground, confused. And looks at his building across the street as a large orange blast of fire rains down from the sky, tearing through the middle of the building and exploding outwards in a cacophony. Jake, you appear outside of the castle, holding the knife in one hand and the silver doorknob in the other. You just huck to the doorknob away.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: This is The Jake Show now.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Just leave them in the future in the Inn that Wanders.

Jake: They're just slowing me down! I'm going to sprint inside and up to where James and Vampa are.

Rev: James is there with the panel already open, holding his hand out,

Jake: I hand off the knife. And then I run right over to the door to that room, pull it shut and swap out doorknobs, and open it back up.

Rev: For those of you in the Inn, you are there for maybe 10 minutes, and then the door opens and you see the hallway on the second floor of the castle.

Jake: Once they're through, I'll pop the doorknob back off and pocket it.

Rev: OK.

Tass: "Oh my god. We did it. Is everybody OK?"

Jake: "Yeah, we're good. That building is toasted."

Megan: "I mean, OK enough. I think I got hit pretty bad in my arm. It's bleeding pretty good and I'm not feeling great, but I think I'm OK. I saw the bullets hit everywhere. Are you guys all right?"

Tass: "Little dinged up."

Kim: "Jake, are you OK?"

Jake: "Positively riddled. But the adrenaline and the, just, taste of victory is really keeping me going, here."

Kim: I look at Tass. "Thank you. If you hadn't stood in front of that gun, then I would have ... Yeah, I probably wouldn't be here."

Tass: "This is what we do."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: All right. It's complete. Just one moment.

Rev: And James pulls out a notepad and writes down three series of three digit numbers. You notice that most of them go down to the second or third decimal point. One of them does not. And you know that that is the one that you were only able to get him close to. It's not quite as precise. And he holds it out.

Tass: I'll take it.

Megan: I run over and hug my grandpa. "We did it."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Congratulations.

Megan: "Thanks. Is everything ready?"

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes.

Kim: I want to hug James. "Thank you for all of your help."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: Yes, of course. My pleasure.

Kim: "I think we'll be seeing each other soon again."

Rev: JAMES FRANCIS TINCHER: That's very good to hear.

Jake: Yeah, I point at James. I'm like, "Yeah, we'll catch you soon." I point at Selina. "We'll catch you soon." And I point at Grandpa. "We'll catch you extremely, very, on the other side of this, soon."

Rev: GEOFFREY NASH: Yes. Well, get the hell out of here.

Tass: "Seconded." And I literally just go over to these three. Like, I'm just grabbing their hands all together in mine, and just pulling them to the portal.

Rev: So you are all headed back to the teleportation room. You have got the box of Trog memories, as well as the collection of papers and schematics and notes from Grandpa Nash and Grandpa Tincher.

Kim: "I'm terrified."

Jake: I put a hand on Kim's shoulder. "Hey, we've done the homework. This is gonna work, and everything's gonna work out better for you too, because of it. All right? Trust us." And then I push her through the portal.

All: [Laugh]

Megan: I follow her.

Rev: All right.

Tass: Goddamn it. And I'll go through.

Rev: And as the four of you pass through this portal, Kim and Jake and Tass, you all feel a very similar sensation. Energy is pulled from you. You feel this draining sensation. For Tass and Jake it's not as uncomfortable, because you feel normal again, because here you were amplified. Kim, for you, it feels weird because you can feel things shutting down, shifting, becoming quieter. Megan, for you, something inside of you wakes up again. You feel this energy flow through you, and you become aware of everyone around you as you are falling back towards the present. You all come tumbling out of the portal onto the stone floor of the castle. In the other room, you can hear Grandpa Nash chanting still. And he looks ahead, and he sees all of you having stepped out. There's sweat running down his head. And you can see this constantly fluctuating aging, healing, aging, healing as he is doing the spell. And he takes a very strained step forward, and the energy breaks around him and the portal behind you powers down, closing off your gateway to the future you're all hoping to prevent.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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