

TOTAL PARTY KILL

FADE IN:

INT. CRIME SCENE BASEMENT - NIGHT

We open inside a dimly-lit basement. What used to be a warm and inviting room for playing games now contains the remnants of brutal killings.

Various weapons are strewn about, all smeared in blood: A hunting knife. A baseball bat. A pair of tongs. Several crossbow bolts are embedded in the walls.

This gruesome scene is intercut with several news broadcasts from across the Nation.

INT. NEWS DESK #1

NEWSCASTER #1 sits solemnly at her desk. A graphic in the upper right corner has three dice, each with six pips facing outward, to give the impression the dice are displaying "666."

NEWSCASTER #1

More news from Oregon tonight, in a case that's already being called one of the most violent in the State's history...

INT. CRIME SCENE BASEMENT - NIGHT

We see a large table with books, dice and figurines scattered across the top - all covered in blood.

INT. DINING ROOM

HANDHELD CAMERA P.O.V.

NEWSCASTER #2 narrates footage of a group of teens sitting around a table, smiling and laughing, while playing a tabletop RPG.

NEWSCASTER #2 (V.O.)

It's called "Deepest Dungeon," a Role-Playing Game - or RPG - where players pretend to be wizards and warriors, then act out their fantastical adventures. Each game is organized by another person, called, The Dungeon Master, and consequences are often decided by the rolling of special dice.

INT. CRIME SCENE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Four wooden chairs are positioned around the table. They have leather straps - which are also smeared with blood - attached to the arms and legs.

INT. POLICE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

A UNIFORMED POLICE CAPTAIN stands at a podium. Dozens of microphones are positioned in front of him, and his face is constantly peppered with camera flashes.

RANDOM REPORTER

...And how do you respond to growing speculation that this isn't a homicide? That the victims were willing participants?

POLICE CAPTAIN

We're still in the process of conducting our investigation. All I can tell you is that it does appear they were playing the game at the time of the incident.

INT. CRIME SCENE BASEMENT - NIGHT

A fifth chair - much more comfortable-looking than the others - sits at the head of the table. A hooded robe that is caked with dried blood is draped across the back.

INT. NEWS INTERVIEW DESK

A FEMALE INTERVIEWER sits across from a WELL-DRESSED MAN IN HIS 60s, GIDEON FLAGSTAFF.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER

The debate over whether these types of games should be considered "evil" or "dangerous" goes all the way back to the late-eighties, early-nineties, but it never gained any real traction with the public. Now, almost overnight, it's the hottest topic in the country.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Gideon Flagstaff - Founder, Second Sunrise" appears below the well-dressed man.

GIDEON

Yes, and look at what had to happen for us to restart the conversation.
(MORE)

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Also, I'd like to point out that my organization has been teaching people about the dangers of Deepest Dungeon for well over thirty years, so I'm sad to say that we've been expecting a tragedy like this for quite some time.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER

And why is that?

GIDEON

Well, you need only look at the material. Games such as Deepest Dungeon are a celebration of violence and hedonism. But, even worse, they thrive on randomness - on chaos - which is an insult to our Heavenly Father and his orderly world.

(beat)

I believe there's a divine plan for all of us, Miss. Just imagine if your entire life was decided by a simple roll of the dice...

TITLE: TOTAL PARTY KILL

TITLE CARD: FOUR WEEKS EARLIER

INT. BEN'S BASEMENT

FIVE TEENS sit around a table inside a cozy basement. Books, dice, figurines, snacks, and papers cover every available surface.

The Dungeon Master, BEN (18), sits at the head.

BEN

...But just before you reach the crystal, a deafening roar echoes throughout the keep.

Ben reaches underneath his chair and reveals A LARGE, RED DRAGON FIGURINE. He places it in the center of the table, and the other players gasp.

WILL (17) - GLASSES, SERIOUS-LOOKING - begins leafing through a thick manual.

WILL

Okay... let's think about this. My sphere of protection can give us all plus two defense, so if we just position ourselves-

THOMAS (17) - A CHUBBY, ETERNALLY HAPPY JOKESTER - interjects.

THOMAS
I charge forward and attack.

Thomas rolls a die and moves his character figurine - a fierce-looking Warrior armed with a broadsword - toward the dragon.

WILL
Damn it, you're going to get us all killed.

THOMAS
Dude, my intelligence is four. I don't know any better.

WILL
Are we talking about the character or you personally?

OLIVIA (17) - CUTE, BUT WITH A "ONE OF THE GUYS" KIND OF FLAIR - speaks up.

BEN
Come on, let him play how he wants. At least he's quick.

CLARK (17) - FRESH-FACED, GOOD-LOOKING - eagerly builds upon Olivia's comment.

CLARK
Yeah, there are tectonic plates that move faster than you do.

Everyone except Will laughs. Clark and Olivia smile at each other and make a brief moment of eye contact - clearly there's some romantic tension here.

Will glares at him - whether because he can't take a joke or holds genuine resentment toward Clark, it's hard to say.

BEN
Speaking of which, Will, you're up.

Will takes his game piece, a Wizard, and turns it toward the group.

WILL
Fine. Whatever. I use my Sphere of Protection on everyone smart enough to stay in range.

Will rolls a 20-sided die. Ben glances at the result.

BEN

Okay, looks good. The shield protects everyone except Thomas. And, since he's so close, the Dragon slashes at him with its claws and deals...

(rolls die)

Twenty-two points of damage. You're bleeding pretty bad.

THOMAS

Pfft, I don't even feel the pain, that's how bad-ass I am.

BEN

Olivia, it's on you.

OLIVIA

Okay, I turn to the party and say, "There's no way we'll defeat this beast head-on. I'll try to attack it from behind!"

Olivia rolls her die and moves her figure - a sneaky-looking Rogue - to the back of the Dragon.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Ben, what would I need to roll to climb onto the dragon's back?

BEN

Hmmm... I'd want a nineteen or higher.

WILL

Hold on. She has a Talisman of the Spider, which gives her a bonus to climbing unstable terrain.

BEN

That only counts for walls and mountains and stuff.

WILL

It's open to interpretation. You don't think a Dragon's back would be unstable? Let me look it up-

BEN

Fine, fine. Christ, we almost made it ten minutes without the Rules Lawyer showing up.

Will gives Olivia a satisfied smirk, as though this is proof of his worth.