



**CW: Foul Language, Racism, Sounds of War**



**Witchever Path Narrator**

After a surprise meeting with Kaylee's surviving family, you are convinced that the person stalking your family is connected to another disappearance. But before you can decide what to do next, your son came home with a black eye. As he cleans himself up, his phone is buzzing nonstop. You are conflicted between betraying his trust and taking him out to the one place you could always find peace, the gun range.

You made your decision.

Witchever Path presents SENTRY PART FOUR: Trigger Discipline

[Gun shop, with Nickelback-sounding rock on the PA]

**YOU**

[narrate]

Smiley's Shooting Outpost has been in Rowe since you were a kid. Your grandfather started taking you here when your dad left. Grandpa was a good teacher. He was everything your dad wasn't. Calm. Patient. Being like him is all you want to be. But you have twelve years of rage and paranoid abuse from your old man to contend with. So whenever you raise your voice to your spouse or kid, you curse your dad for being such a shit, and hope to god your grandfather can't see you when you do that.

The stuffed black bear looks as ferocious as it did the first time you walked into Smiley's. Cole looks at its bared teeth and aggressive stance for a second. Then he shakes his head.

**COLE**

[sizing it up]

It's just a little bigger than me. How old was this thing when they shot it?



**YOU**

[surprised by his son knowing it's not a full grown bear]

Maybe two or three years old.

**Smiley Worker**

[being a little shitty]

Hands where we can see 'em, or we'll sic him on you.

[laughs at his own dumb joke]

**COLE**

[annoyed]

Who shot the bear?

**Smiley Worker**

[proud]

I think Smiley shot him way back.

Bet you don't see many of those in the city.

**YOU**

[ narrate]

You're about five feet from the counter, so you're right in front of him before Cole can even register what the guy said. You put your gun case on the glass and make eye contact. He's confused, but he knows you're pissed. Over his shoulder, you see a white, vinyl banner. In big, black letters it reads, REMEMBER THREADING. The words are blocked in by a Blue Lives Matter Flag and a red Crusader Cross. And then you feel like an idiot. Because while the dog whistles are right there, you had forgotten what *used* to be hanging in that banner's place. A fucking battle flag. There are plenty of ranges that aren't stereotypically this bad. You weren't thinking. This is on you.





You buy 100 rounds for target practice, and 100 more for the house. He tells you how much,  
and you hand him your credit card.

**SMILEY GUY**

Can I see an ID, there, boss? Back isn't signed.

**YOU**

[narrate]

You show him your ID and his mood calms from suspicious to more reverential. It's the veteran  
indicator on your license. It's got to be.

Here's the thing about racist people in NH who don't know they're racist: They think everybody  
with a badge or a rank may be on the level... a part of the "club," which means your son must  
be "one of the good ones." Then again, maybe this guy is unused to Black people and is just  
being weird. Harmless, but weird.

He rings you up, and you take the bag from him.

**Smiley Guy**

Stay outta trouble you two.

**YOU**

[realizing the guy sucks]

Tell it not to come our way.

**YOU**

[narrate]

You're halfway to your cousin's sandpit before you notice your son's been staring at you.

**YOU**

[to Cole]



I'm sorry I brought you there.

I forgot.

**COLE**

[concerned for his dad]

Are you okay?

**YOU**

[surprised with that, and a little surprised]

Am I okay? Jesus, Cole. I was worried about *you*.

**YOU**

**[narrate]**

You set up the targets, some cheap plastic liquor bottles and cans that your cousin had left out here for this purpose. The invitation to use the land to shoot was always open to you, but you texted him after setting everything up to make sure he could field any complaints.

You walk back to Cole and open up your gun bag. You explain to him all the right information.

Treat every gun like it's loaded and the safety's off. Don't wave it around, don't point it at anyone. You even run him through trigger discipline for the fiftieth time in his life. He's paying attention, but he looks bored. That's good. He's heard this a lot. He even repeats a bunch of it back to you. He puts on his ear protection and glasses without you asking him. You're proud. You hand him the gun, correct his stance and have him take aim. The gun's barrel is as wide as Cole's wrist. But it's long, and the recoil is minimal. The first two shots are too low, but the third finds its mark in the fat vodka bottle, thirty feet away.



He hits the whiskey bottle next. Cole is a natural. You hoot, and he smiles. His laugh rings in the air even through your headphones. He empties the clip. You watch his smile fade a bit and he looks down at the bottles.

**COLE**

[sad]

I couldn't do what you did.

**YOU**

[confused]

How's that?

**COLE**

Shoot at people.

**YOU**

[narrate]

You follow the trail of his gaze to the pulverized bottles. There are things you still don't picture.

You were grateful that the visions and memories from over there don't reappear day to day.

That you don't think about the faces or the major losses, especially if you can help it.

Sometimes the brain does the right thing when it closes its doors. But Cole, saying this, looking at what you were doing together, you're embarrassed.

**YOU**

[contrite]

Oh, buddy, no. I'm... we're just out here. I'm worried about you.

Something, something isn't right, okay? And after seeing you get off the bus with ...that, well I needed to get us out. Because.



Ok.

Cole.

There's not a good way to talk about this.

Somebody is watching our house. And there was a phone they dropped in our yard.

It was [let's have you summarize up until he came home]

**YOU**

You tell him everything as you reload. He looks scared and concerned, but unsurprised.

**YOU**

[calmly]

Your phone was blowing up while you went to the bathroom, dude.

Is there something going on I should know about?

**COLE**

It's my friend, Autumn. I met her on a discord chat for queer kids in NH who like DnD.

**YOU**

Where did you hear about it?

**COLE**

Therapy. Mom knows.

**YOU**

Okay. Anybody asking you to do anything strange or creepy?

**COLE**

Dad. I'm not dumb.

**YOU**

I know you're not, Cole. But my big job in life is keeping you safe. The way you can help is to just let me know what's going on with you, and if you notice anything crazy.



**COLE**

Okay. Do I have to keep shooting?

**YOU**

No, bud. You mind if I do?

**COLE**

Go nuts.

[gun shots and then it fades out]

**YOU**

[narrate]

You arrive home before Jaime and convince Cole to help you make dinner. You don't know how to make much that they like, but your mom's meatloaf recipe is a winner. Cole is really involved. He mixes the ingredients under your instructions and even has a good time doing it. You cut the onions, because his eye's gone through enough for one day. By the time Jaime's home, the house smells fucking great. You're finishing up the mashed potatoes. She's really excited until she sees your son's face and is immediately furious. The two of you work to calm her down. Cole tells her you went for a ride to talk about it, but he leaves out the gun. And you let him do it, because the important thing is that she gets that you two talked about it. Her getting hung up on the fact you took your bullied son shooting after a fight won't help anything. You feel guilty.

Jaime wants the name of the girl. Cole gives it to her, Katie Proulx. Jaime wants to talk to the principal and the girl's parents, but Cole is begging her not to make it a thing. While they argue, you take the meatloaf out of the oven, and look out the window. Over the fence, the trees sway in the breeze. You stop Cole from fighting with his Mom by agreeing that the principal should be made aware of what happened. You don't think it'll help it die down, but a paper trail will make it easier to shame the school district if it escalates. You don't trust the system to help you. You do trust it to protect itself from criticism and liability.





Over dinner, Jaime dictates her email to the principal to the two of you. Cole rakes at his potatoes with his fork and doesn't say anything. You nod at her when she's finished reading. She snaps a picture of Cole's face when he's not paying attention and attaches it to the email. You stare at her and want to protest, but you also don't want to call attention to what she did.

He's humiliated enough. He starts looking at his phone at the table. He quietly laughs at something.

**YOU**

[to Cole]

What's got you giggling?

**COLE**

[amused at a girl flirting with him]

Nothing.

**JAIME**

[grateful for the relief of tension]

If it's good, share it. Let's lighten the mood, huh?

**COLE**

[embarrassed]

Guys.. come on.

**YOU**

Dog meme?

**COLE**



You know that DnD Discord? There's a roleplay server part I really like, and there's a girl who goes to Concord High who's got an elf ranger and... we've been adventuring together on the freeplay channel for about a week and [ALL TOGETHER, AS IF IN ONE BREATH] "she asked if I could hang out this weekend."

**JAIME**

[PAUSE]What's her name?

**COLE**

Dina. She's pretty cool.

**JAIME**

I think it would be okay. Can we talk to her parents?

**COLE**

I'll ask.

[texts]

Yeah, she'll send the number in a minute.

**YOU**

[narrate]

You're nearly drunk on the feelings of normalcy for a few minutes. Jaime leaves the room with Cole to go talk to this girl's parents and you set to washing the dishes. You get the ones out of the living room as Jaime comes back downstairs to talk with you.

**JAIME**

All right, I'll drop off Cole in Concord and meet with his Mom on Saturday.

She seemed pretty nice.

**YOU**

Wait. He's going to leave the house? Why can't the kid come here?

**JAIME**



They preferred to have him come over there, and he wanted that, too.

**YOU**

With all the shit going on, I don't want him out of our sight unless he's going to school.

Especially after talking to Myron and Tasha.

**JAIME**

Dina's mom reads the news. She knows about what happened out back with the guy you saw in the woods. And with everything being the way it is, I thought it might be a good thing for Cole to go be a kid with his friend.

[pauses]

Who the fuck are Myron and Tasha?

**YOU**

[narrate]

You fill her in on the visit to your house. The context about the phone, the missing kid. And the way Kaylee made it her mission to find the boy only for her to disappear, too. And you tell her about Karl Holt being the cop that dealt with Myron after Kaylee went missing.

**JAIME**

Jesus, you didn't think to tell me about this when I got home?

**YOU**

I thought Cole's eye was the more pressing conversation. But you see what I mean, right? Cole can't go. He's got to stay home where we can keep him safe. Between you and me, we can keep watch and work with Myron and Tasha to figure out who took Kaylee and this kid.



**JAIME**

Baby.

**YOU**

Look, the kid knows about the missing lady and the boy. He'll get it.

**JAIME**

You told him?!

What the fuck.

**YOU**

Jaime, we have no backup here. Cops might be involved, he's got kids fucking with him, and there's somebody stalking our house. I'm not going to keep him in the dark. He's got to know what's out there.

**JAIME**

You gonna try to get him to carry a gun, too?

Well?

[pausing and looking at his face]

You didn't. What the fuck?! Tell me you didn't take my baby to -

**YOU**

He doesn't want to use a gun and I am not going to force him. But that leaves his safety up to us. You don't know what -

**JAIME**



I don't know what? Grew up in Baltimore, what don't I know?

Tell me. This should be good.

**YOU**

Okay! You're right. You're fucking right. But aren't you fucking scared? This could be something bigger than we thought. And with Karl involved somehow, I don't know who to fucking go to.

**JAIME**

[SIGHING] Maybe we can talk to Tom, and see who he recommends we reach out to. Baby, I hate seeing you like this.

**YOU**

[narrate]

With that, you know that she's right. You're reacting. Over and over. Nothing has been making sense. She's still mad, you know she is. But she's more worried and afraid. You can see her shaking. You breathe in, feel the air filling your chest. Then you breathe out. You're here. In this kitchen, with your wife. This is now. Not the world of what if, or what might happen. This is now.

**YOU**

I'm out of my depth here, baby. I know this isn't over. But the hits keep fucking coming. They keep coming. And I just feel like- it's like the whole town has set its sights on us and it's doing whatever it can to drive me fucking crazy. We should have never moved here.

**JAIME**

I know, baby. I know. But we got each other, and we gotta keep it together for Cole. I think we should talk to Tom, maybe get more information from Myron and Tasha, and just think before we do anything. Does that sound okay to you?

**YOU**

Yeah.



## YOU

[narrate]

You meant it. You did. It's still the truth when you hold her in your arms. It becomes less true when you excuse yourself to go to the bathroom and use that time to put your guns away. Anxiety is creeping within you. You fight the urge to watch the cameras, to patrol the backyard before going to bed.

The greasy haired trespasser is in your mind as you reach for the shampoo, their big, stupid jeans scraping across the tracks as they get away. Something's got to be done, but not tonight. Your brain replays sounds of screaming and gunfire. Of violence and horror that the "big black dot" as you call it thankfully keeps out of your brain. But right now that dot is more of a dark gray, with the shadows that terrify you moving behind it. You breathe in. Your therapist says when in doubt, resolve to do one proactive action. And you decide what to do next.

## Witchever Path Narrator

### YOUR CHOICES

Call Tom, follow all of his instructions before committing to any action.

Reach out to the missing boy's family.

Handle the things you can control, let Jaime take the lead.

Vote now at [WitcheverPath.com/vote](https://WitcheverPath.com/vote). You have until Wednesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>.





This episode was written by Steven and produced by Journee and Steven.

It stars Tyler Bell of the Westside Fairytales as YOU

Mars LaFond as Cole

Journee as Jaime

Steven as the gun store cashier

Foley by Witchever Path and Audio Hero.

The Witchever Path Theme was by RYDR

Additional music for this episode is:

My Last Transmission by Gavin Luke

Surveillance Camera by Alan Carlson Green

Turnaround by Tiger Blood Jewel

Innocent Games by David Celeste

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That's it for this week. Stick up for each other, speak truth and sleep with a clear consequence.

Choose the Path.