

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

Content Warnings

- Physical violence & injury
- Electrocutation
- Self-recrimination & guilt
- Intrusive telepathy
- Imprisonment
- Loss of consciousness
- Discussions of: electrocutation, betrayal
- Mentions of: prison, hearing loss
- SFX: background chatter, distorted voice, electricity, vocalised pain, whirring

[Show Theme - Intro]

THE ETERNAL TAVERN KEEPER

Rusty Quill presents Chapter and Multiverse.

[SFX: Interdimensional Tavern Ambience]

Ah, I'm so sorry my friend, I didn't see you come in! I was somewhat lost in thought. I just wish sometimes that there was more I could do to help. Hm? Ignore me, I'm being silly. Anyway. I should tell you about what happened next

to our young superheroes shouldn't I? Last we spoke I told you about their contretemps in Poltergeist's apartment, as Adeeb behaved rather recklessly, and his friends attempted to intervene.

[SFX: Portal Woosh]

MADDY

Hello and welcome back to Chapter and Multiverse, the actual play podcast where we explore the same city across multiple parallel universes. I am your game master Maddy Searle, my pronouns are she/her, and today we are continuing our drama-filled campaign of Masks: A New Generation, which is designed by Brendan Conway and allows players to take on the role of young superheroes. But before we go any further, I must introduce our wonderful and talented players. Could you please let me know your name and pronouns and your character's name and pronouns, starting with Lydia.

LYDIA

Hi! I am Lydia Nicholas, I go by they/she and I am playing Mini Smithson who uses she/her. And we're gonna have a lovely time, it's gonna be lovely and chill and cool and friendly.

MADDY

Yeah! Wholesome times.

LYDIA

Wholesome!

MADDY

Yeah! And Ahmed?

AHMED

Hello, I'm Ahmed Aljbray but unlike always I am stirred up and fired up!

(Group laughter)

AHMED

I am playing Adeb bin Yeslam, aka The Turban. Adeb's pronouns are he and him.

MADDY

Nice. And Lowri?

LOWRI

Hello! I am Lowri Ann Davies and I am playing Blodeuwedd Morgan aka Syphon, and we're both she/her and also pretty riled up actually! Ooh, gosh!

MADDY

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

Yeah, understandable. And Pip?

PIP

Hello there, I'm Pip Gladwin, I will be playing Joseph Teller aka Zenith, who is very uncomfortable at this moment-

LYDIA

[laughs]

PIP

Not because of anything else that's going on, just because I'm not in a vent.

(Group laughter)

MADDY

Yeah.

LYDIA

Mm, I crave the close comfort of the vent wall!

PIP

I crave the comforting womb-like nature of a vent. No, I've gone weird, I'm sorry.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Are we learning something about Jacob's, like, construction?

PIP

No, shh! Cut that out!

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

I will not!

(Group laughter)

MADDY

So, last we left off you had set off to try and find Poltergeist, Adeeb's old friend turned enemy, before he could do a hit on the Chapter Central Hospital tonight at 10.30 and you did manage after a few failed attempts to find his dingy apartment in a run-down area of the city, and without consulting his fellow heroes Adeeb just burst in and started yelling at his former friend Lucas Castillo, aka Poltergeist, but soon his friends were behind him and tried to,

tried to calm things down/ -

LYDIA

[laughs]

MADDY

- /put Poltergeist to sleep/and yell/not really be sure what to do. So in this moment we have Mini hovering [SFX: Alien hovering tones, fabric rustling about] outside the window, we have Adeeb and Morgan in a standoff and um Zenith, what - yeah, where is Zenith in all this?

[SFX: Apartment/night time street ambience]

[Ominous Music]

PIP

I think just after Morgan entered Zenith would have effectively sort of leapt up [SFX: Leap, landing] through the hole that Morgan put in the wall. [laughs] So is just kind of just come through the, the wall, taken this in and, and Mini's just off to the side outside.

LYDIA

Mini's given her ineffective speech-

PIP

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

Yeah.

LYDIA

About how you should all just be more emotionally intelligent.

PIP

Yeah.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

And... yeah.

LOWRI

I mean that's actually what Morgan wants, she just doesn't know how to articulate that!

LYDIA, PIP and MADDY

Yeah.

LYDIA

It's the stand-off that everyone's interested in, right? That's the-

MADDY

[laughs] Yeah. Unless there's anything that Zenith wants to do I think we're gonna go back to Adeeb, because Adeeb hasn't acted for a while, so.

AHMED

Yeah. All right so, quick question. At this point either Adeeb would have developed a condition for angry or it's switched from guilty to angry. Because he's frustra- he thinks: I'm trying to help everybody and everybody's getting in my way. So is he shifting into anger or is he adding anger?

MADDY

I would think that adding anger is probably appropriate in this moment if that's OK with you?

AHMED

Yeah, absolutely. So: angry with everybody getting in his way, he wants to take Poltergeist from Morgan so that would be engage threat.

MADDY

Ooft. All right, yeah.

LOWRI

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

Uh-oh.

MADDY

Roll + danger please.

AHMED

OK. **(ROLL)** So that's a 7 total.

MADDY

7 total, OK. Yeah, you can um, how do you do this, do you use your many octopus-like tendrils to grab him off Morgan?

AHMED

Yeah, I would send them between um, these er [SFX: Fabric rustles, fabric tightens] ribbons between the two of them and push them apart and grab Lucas from them.

MADDY

Mm hm

AHMED

And just head back to the open window.

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

MADDY

Mm. OK.

AHMED

Because this is not gonna go well.

PIP

OK, I gotta jump in there then.

MADDY

OK.

PIP

If he looks like he's trying to leave.

MADDY

And you are probably between him and the window at this point.

PIP

Yeah, I think I'm gonna put my hand out and through the helmet I'm gonna say:

PIP (as ZENITH)

[SFX: Venith's vocoder] Turban, stand down.

PIP

I'm not making a roll, I'm just asking him to.

AHMED

He sees you all that, just trying to stop him from doing the right thing. So he's gonna try and push through you.

PIP

All right, then I think I will flick off the little isolation thing on Morgan's headpiece- [SFX: Electronic clicks/beeps]

LOWRI

[gasps]

PIP

So I will deselect that, and then I'm gonna activate the little failsafe surprise in that earpiece and you're gonna get electrocuted my dude.

AHMED

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

All right!

PIP

The design of this is to render him unconscious, like that's the - that's the whole point here.

LYDIA

Oww!

LOWRI

Oh my goodness!

MADDY

Yeah.

LYDIA

That is so messed up dude.

AHMED

All right, so I'm assuming I have to take a powerful blow, or-?

MADDY

Yeah, Adeeb can you please take a powerful blow for me to see if you can withstand the electrocution! [laughs]

LOWRI

[laughs] Through the ear! Oh my god!

AHMED

All right so +condition, so +2, I have two conditions. OK. **(ROLL)** OK, so I have a 7 +2.

LOWRI

Oh no!

LYDIA

Oh ho ho!

MADDY

Oh... yeah. You um, so you have to choose one of the following list. You lash out verbally, provoke a teammate to foolhardy action or take advantage of your influence to inflict a condition or you give ground, your opposition gets an opportunity or you struggle past the pain and mark two conditions.

AHMED

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

I already *have* two conditions!

PIP

Get two more! Get two more!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Collect the lot! Collect the lot!

AHMED

God, if I - if I get any more this episode is gonna get censored.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

What happens if you collect all the conditions?

PIP

I think you're - I think you are "out", I think? Isn't that it? You're like-

MADDY

Yeah - if-

LYDIA

Being a hero isn't so great.

AHMED

I would - hm. It's kind of hard to choose from.

PIP

Mm hm.

MADDY

Yeah. Because if you took the two conditions you still have one left.

PIP

Yep.

MADDY

So you'd still be up.

AHMED

Yeah.

MADDY

Or you can, or you can lash out-

LYDIA

Lashing out is super valid.

MADDY

Or we can interpret "give ground" as you do fall unconscious.

LOWRI

Mm!

AHMED

Yeah I, I would give ground so any one of them has a chance to do something now.

MADDY

Yeah.

AHMED

So with this electricity exploding [SFX: Electrical screech] from Adeeb's ear he's jolted down, he drops on the ground, he's no longer floating on his cloth

tendrils. [laughs] And he's just in agony from his ears.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Arrrgghhhh!

MADDY

Have you dropped Lucas or are you still grabbing on to him?

AHMED

No, I dropped him. [SFX: Person tumbles to ground]

MADDY

Yeah, all right. So, yeah. What do you wanna do in this moment where Adeeb has, has stumbled for a moment?

LOWRI

I mean if he's in pain from no obvious reason Morgan, even though she's angry, would be like:

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

What - what's wrong? Are you OK?

LYDIA (as MINI)

Who's - who's hurt you? Adeeb, who hurt you? We'll - we'll get them!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as MINI)

What's going on?

PIP

OK, I'll step forward, I will - I will, the, I think the actual, the burst of electricity is quite brief, like it's not like a consistent, you know, you're being - it's enough to drop you.

AHMED

So you get an opportunity but that's it?

MADDY

Yeah.

PIP

OK. I'm gonna get all up in, in Adeeb's face because he's sort of dropped to his knees, and I'm gonna like right up to him, as I, like I'm gonna storm towards

him a little bit, I grab like the side of the helmet and I just pull it off [SFX: Helmet removal, metal helmet bounces off floor] and throw it sideways, just throw it away from me and I, [SFX: Hands clasp shoulders] I'll drop down in front of him and er, I'll put both hands on his shoulders and just be like:

PIP (as ZENITH)

Adeeb. Snap out of it. This isn't you. What are you doing? How are you any different from him right now? [sighs]

PIP

I'm doing a, a, I think this is - is this closer to a-?

MADDY

I feel like it's a support?

AHMED

This is a team move.

PIP

Yeah.

AHMED

I mean it's an opportunity to use a team move here.

PIP

Yeah. Yeah.

AHMED

So you give over influence and you get one team but you have to share a vulnerability or a weakness.

PIP

I say exactly the same, I say exactly what I just said and, you know, I'm guessing he's, Adeeb is a little bit like disorientated at this moment because he's just had his head electrocuted, and yeah. I will say:

PIP (as ZENITH)

This is - this, this isn't you. You've got a family, you've got people relying on you, you've got people who care about you. You've got people who care about what you do. How would they feel if they saw you right now?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

[sighs] I cared about him. I cared about him, that's why. I've been trying to talk to him. Care just - care doesn't always work. Some people need a different way, and it seems I have to do it.

PIP (as ZENITH)

Trust me on this. You're wrong. You have to keep caring, because if - you can't give up on him if, if, if - if you stop caring about him then... I don't know, he'll end up like me. I don't have anybody Adeeb. You do, he doesn't have anybody it looks like except you.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Life is not fair but you're right. I'm doing exactly what he's doing. I'm lashing at other people for my own issues.

PIP

Maddy, would you like me to actually roll? [laughs] Before-

MADDY

Yeah!

PIP

Before this seems like it's worked out-

LOWRI

But that was really good!

PIP

And then I roll like really badly! [laughs]

AHMED

Adeeb just slumps down, he's, he's lost all will to fight over.

MADDY

Yeah. Um, I think you've definitely taken the wind out of Adeeb's sails but we can roll to see if you take a condition away or get one of the benefits of the roll.

PIP

OK, come on.

AHMED

True.

MADDY

So yeah. So you've succ- you've succeeded but we'll just see what mechanical benefits if any come out of this.

PIP

A good roll please. **(ROLL)** OK. One of those is bad but the other one is good and I do have a +2 so that's... that's an 8.

MADDY

Nice! Yes, Adeeb can mark potential, clear condition or shift labels because it seems like he has opened up to, up to Zenith, so that's up to you.

AHMED

Yeah. Anger is no longer there but he still carries the guilt inside.

PIP

Yeah, that's fair.

LOWRI

Aw!

PIP

So we'll - we'll clear the anger?

AHMED

Yeah.

MADDY

That sounds perfect.

PIP

Nice.

LOWRI

You need to get rid of his guilt!

PIP

I know!

LYDIA

Mini's gonna like slowly hover in, like a, like a kind of colourful disco blimp.

[SFX: Alien hover tones]

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

And like-

PIP

Sorry - "Colourful Disco Blimp" is the name of my 70s psychodelia band, just so you know.

(Group laughter)

MADDY and LYDIA

Yeah!

LYDIA

Human-shaped disco blimp. And will kind of settle down calmly next to Adeeb and er - like-

LYDIA (as MINI)

Look I'm, I'm sorry that I said that you should be more like people on Specmarkalon, because ac- actually I think that the, the way that you do things is, is just the best thing about humans which like I-

LYDIA

(Slightly wimpily, like)

LYDIA (as MINI)

I, I am a human, um...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as MINI)

Is that they don't always do the right thing the first time but that's because they care so much and sometimes it's hard to make decisions when you care so much but stopping caring and just acting sensible perfectly and not getting caught up with friends and hopes and dreams and, and, and wishing for better - that's, that's rubbish as well. I, I think that you're great the way that you are.

LYDIA

And I'm gonna roll The Best of Them - that's when you comfort or support someone by telling them how they exemplify the best parts of Earth?

AHMED

[laughs] All right!

MADDY

Nice!

LYDIA

Which means it's just a comfort and support but I get +1 because I'm rolling with freak instead of mundane.

MADDY

Excellent.

LYDIA

So it's not particularly - like, it could still very much go wrong!

MADDY

Every little helps!

LYDIA

(ROLL) Ooh! 4 plus 5 plus 1. I would have been fine even just saying: I'm a human, you're good. But anyway. We're cool.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

You've learned a little about us. So that is a 10. That's a, a chunky 10.

MADDY

So yeah, if you want to you can clear your guilty, or you can take-

LYDIA

Oh! And, and because it's a 10+ I get to clear a condition myself.

PIP

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

Heyyyy!

MADDY

Ooooh!

AHMED

Yeah!

PIP

Nice work!

MADDY

Beautiful.

LOWRI

And now it's just Morgan angry in the corner...

(Group laughter)

MADDY

So yeah, Adeeb what benefit do you wanna take from that roll, do you wanna clear your guilty or do you wanna do something else?

AHMED

Yeah yeah, I would er - it just, it resonates really well because nobody's perfect. And you can't do everything by yourself.

LYDIA

No.

AHMED

Which Adeeb has been trying to do, had it all on his shoulders.

LYDIA

Mini still has vague can't quite control her telepathy so gets that, even if he didn't say it out loud, like gets that vibe so strongly that she's like-

LYDIA (as MINI)

Well we're here to help with whatever. You don't have to shoulder anything alone.

LYDIA

And it's not like quite the same wording but it's pretty much reflecting back what you were saying, it's just her, hasn't quite got the telepathy under control yet and is still trying to help.

PIP

I think seeing these, seeing these two kind of like actually clear the, the tension between - not necessarily between them but like I can see that Adeeb is like actually maybe feeling, starting to feel better now and that Mini is also like calmer. I'm - I'm very aware of like Morgan in the corner with like, glowing eyes like I dunno, just breaking things, I dunno, whatever it is that Morgan is doing!

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

No I think she's like - fists clenched-

PIP

Yeah.

LOWRI

Like, she's still angry but does realise that - also the wind has been taken out of her sails as well, so she's like-

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Look I - that's what I - that's what I meant, that we were supposed to do things together. We're better together like, together we can help each other 'cos we

need each other and alone you're vulnerable.

AHMED

Er, Adeeb would get up [SFX: Stand up] and take a glance at Joseph and itching his ears-

LOWRI and PIP

[laugh]

AHMED

He says:

AHMED (as ADEEB)

We're gonna have to talk about this later.

AHMED

And then goes to Morgan and then just hugs her, [SFX: Hug] and says:

AHMED (as ADEEB)

I'm sorry.

ALL

Aww! Yay!

LOWRI

And Morgan hugs - well puts her arms around you but doesn't squeeze at all because she's quite strong right now! And just says:

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

I'm sorry. Let's - maybe we can take him -

LOWRI

(Pointing at Poltergeist.)

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

-somewhere and talk to him?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

He'll probably wake up in about, well, maybe 20 minutes.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yep.

LYDIA (as MINI)

Er, but he'll - he'll probably feel a bit dizzy afterwards.

LYDIA

Interjects Mini, as somebody that was drained just this morning!

(Group laughter)

PIP

Lest we forget!

LOWRI

Morgan says:

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

I'm sorry again Mini!

PIP

Oh guilt! There's the-

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh no it's fine, it was a really good sleep actually!

PIP

There's the guilty condition, it's back!

(Group laughter)

PIP

I mean look, let's face it. If, if this game really, truly reflected real life then literally any time anyone, even your own brain reminded you of something that you don't feel great about you'd just get the guilty condition, all the time!

LOWRI

Yeah! Just constantly!

PIP

You'd clear it, it'd come back, you'd clear it, it'd come back! Sorry.

LYDIA

Pip, we're learning about you in this.

(Group laughter)

PIP

Yes! That's what we're doing!

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Listen, I'm sorry. I know what you were trying to do, I was just so out of it. And I really see you as a friend and I want to be a better friend to you.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Me too.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

And I hope I can be.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Yes, I - Adeeb, I understand, like, when someone, when people you care about do bad things you'd do anything to stop them and get them back.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Thanks again.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Thanks.

MADDY

Adeeb, do you wanna take this as an opportunity to comfort or support Morgan as you kind of apologise and-

AHMED

Yes!

LOWRI

You have influence on me, all of you have influence on me because as I said before you are her first friends, so I dunno if that helps.

AHMED

(ROLL) That is, er, 9, 10, 11. So that's 11.

LOWRI

Oh!

MADDY

Amazing! Yeah.

LOWRI

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

I'm not angry any more!

AHMED

[laughs]

MADDY

Do you have any conditions left sorry?

AHMED

For me I'm cleared.

MADDY

Nice, so yeah.

AHMED

So for Morgan she can do whatever she wants, you can either mark potential, clear condition or shift labels.

LOWRI

I will clear angry, I think that makes sense.

MADDY

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

Yeah.

AHMED

Right.

LOWRI

Because she was angry because we weren't communicating and now we are.

AHMED

And we get a team to the pool.

MADDY

Nice.

LYDIA

Ooh!

LOWRI

Ooh, yay!

PIP

Nice.

AHMED

I'm gonna try and keep better track of these.

LYDIA

I like the, the friendship is mechanically advantageous sort of system.

LOWRI

Yeah.

PIP

Yep, yep.

LYDIA

Yeah, it's just-

AHMED

We have defeated evil with our power of friendship!

LYDIA

The power of friendship!

LOWRI

Yeah!

MADDY

Yeah! And so - do you wanna gather up Poltergeist and take him into the, the jet or is there some other method of transportation you wanna go for?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

We need to take him to TARGE. I don't care how, but-

PIP (as ZENITH)

Is that what we're gonna do?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Vera promised that she would help, so.

PIP

From a meta standpoint um, er, going back to TARGE is very much on mission for me so er-

LOWRI

Yeah?

PIP

Yeah. I think, actually and whether that's something that any of you pick up on I think when Adeeb suggests we take him to TARGE rather than-

LYDIA

To say that Mini distrusts Zenith because of the vibes and the hints is not quite accurate but like on the verge of not, not taking the unconscious like, but clearly vulnerable mini villain to the place where things disappear and loyalties are uncertain sounds very valid. So if you - if like Joseph had said to the grey box, like, Mini would have got like so, so suspicious.

LOWRI

Mm.

LYDIA

But now it seems it's totally back to yeah, prioritising TARGE, that's great.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Very good, that makes sense in her logic. Yeah, to TARGE.

PIP

Yeah we'll take - take the jet. [SFX: Boarding jet, engines powering up]

[SFX: Jet interior ambience]

[End ominous music, curious music for jet sequence]

MADDY

Nice, amazing.

LOWRI

As we're going into the jet Morgan's gonna turn to Mini and say:

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

What's Specmarkalon?

LYDIA (as MINI)

[stutters] Um...

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah!

PIP

[laughing]

LYDIA (as MINI)

Um, it's like the, the publication I, I work for, it's where I get my powers. Um...

LOWRI

I think Morgan has kind of, I've been wondering if Morgan, how suspicious she is of your alien status, and like your powers, like she's used to people having powers.

LYDIA

Yeah.

LOWRI

I think maybe now she is like:

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Huh...

LOWRI

Yeah. OK, so at this point Mini's gonna be like:

LYDIA (as MINI)

[sighs] I mean, you're so clever. Because I dunno how you worked it out but

clearly um, yeah so I'm, I'm not actually a human. Um, I'm, I'm from there. You know I'm from Spec- Specmarkalon and it's, it's quite different. Most of the people are very er, like sensible. Um, and also they can like bend light and matter and psychic waves, but mostly the problem is that everyone is just like, they don't really do like emotions. Um, I like that humans do.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

[pause] Cool!

(Group laughter)

PIP

I was fully expecting her to be like: but you said you were a human!

(Group laughter)

MADDY

So many times!

PIP

So like a lot!

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Wow! So you're like - an alien!

LYDIA (as MINI)

I, I guess - I mean so that, technically that is a term that we could use, yeah.

Um, I kind of prefer long-distance embedded reporter but I, yeah. I, I suppose

I'm an alien. Er, but I think I'm getting better at the being a human... thing.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

I think you're doing great!

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh thank you.

LYDIA

Like Mini just like glows [SFX: Alien glow hum] both literally and metaphorically, like:

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh, you think I'm good at it? [sighs happily] Thank you!

LYDIA

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

And gives Morgan a, a squeeze hug. [SFX: Hug]

MADDY

Yeah!

LOWRI

Which she accepts and does not return for safety reasons.

(Group laughter)

MADDY

And on that adorable hug we're gonna take a short break and be right back.

[BREAK]

MADDY

And we're back. So now our heroes are carting Poltergeist through the skies in the stealth jet towards TARGE and I think about ten minutes or so into your journey you hear the stirring of Poltergeist as he starts to wake up.

LYDIA

Wait wait, before that.

MADDY

Mm hm?

LYDIA

So Mini had had the little heart-to-heart with Morgan-

LOWRI

Mm.

LYDIA

About the fact that she is a [whispers] alien.

MADDY

Mm - oh yeah yeah, of course.

LYDIA

And she's like spent a couple of minutes and reflected on the fact that it's not fair that the person here that she is the best friends with and has known for the longest doesn't know, so she kind of goes over to Adeeb with like a really kind of reflective, kind of serious face on and sort of - would you be like sitting down or just chilling out or something?

AHMED

Er, sitting down.

LYDIA

Yeah, I just kind of imagine Mini coming over and getting on your level and like:

LYDIA (as MINI)

Adeeb, I have something, I just, I need to talk to you about something really serious. And I mean it might - it might surprise you but I, I just hope that our friendship can survive it and that we'll be OK, but I, I just needed, er, I just needed to let you know something is, is that OK? Can I-?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Er - yeah, yeah. Absolutely. What's on your mind?

LYDIA (as MINI)

I - [sighs] I'm an alien. I, I know that it hasn't been very, there's no way anyone could have been able to tell, but-

AHMED (as ADEEB)

I mean it's OK, I have, I have relatives from outside, you know, they come here and - alien is such a, a derogative term, but-

LYDIA (as MINI)

You, you have friends from other planets?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Other whatnow?

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh um yeah, so I, I know that in human, like, human languages don't tend to have er the right words to specify but I, I suppose the simplest, the easiest way er so, you know how like, I can do a few things that humans don't often do like um hover and er, bend light and er become really heavy and like read minds-

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Well, I mean-

LYDIA (as MINI)

And it's just, it's just no big deal but it's because I'm an alien.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

So you don't mean from another, it's another planet not another country.

LYDIA (as MINI)

Yes, yes. A planet. A planet.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

OK. That explains-

LYDIA (as MINI)

They don't really actually do countries there it's just like one planet. There are like, there are like districts and, and there's a lot of admin and bureaucracy but it's not, it's not really arranged - there's a lot about human things I don't understand still but er yeah. We're um, we're, we're a different planet. A different sun actually. Same galaxy but it's a different, different arm. Yeah, like see? It's a nice arm! [laughs]

AHMED (as ADEEB)

I mean not - people don't normally have powers, so I'm from here.

LYDIA (as MINI)

I mean but you do!

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah I do, and I don't know many other people except like, you, me and Morgan.

LYDIA (as MINI)

And those really annoying people at TARGE.

LOWRI

[laughs]

AHMED (as ADEEB)

True, but still like we're, we're really rare.

LYDIA (as MINI)

In fact a significant amount of the people that I have met on this planet have powers.

LOWRI

[laughs]

LYDIA (as MINI)

So I can see how you wouldn't-

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Really?

LYDIA (as MINI)

-assume that I'm an alien. Yeah.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Like, I come from a really big family so like, the way you behave is - and for someone from outside to come into the big city it's-

LYDIA (as MINI)

Yeah.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

They're trying to experience new things so I kind of winged it-

LYDIA (as MINI)

I mean that's all true.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Like yeah, but like you know-

LYDIA (as MINI)

A little bit further.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Er, visiting from a far away country with a different culture not like across the border of the whole planet.

LYDIA (as MINI)

Yeah well, yeah but my planet has a very different culture than this country and, and I do wanna visit other countries on this planet. There's such a variety of, of places and foods and, and, and people. And languages. And hats!

AHMED (as ADEEB)

So wait wait, so your, your hair colour, your skin colour, all of it - this is not a costume, not-?

LYDIA (as MINI)

What? No, no. I, it's just my hair.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Oh. I thought like like-

LYDIA (as MINI)

And I thought I dressed like a human.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Kind of... a brave human.

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Like, I...

LYDIA (as MINI)

I'll take that as a compliment, I suppose?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

It is, it is!

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh, OK.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Like a trend - a trend ma-, er, starter.

LOWRI

Aww!

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh, oh dear. I'm not supposed to like significantly influence human culture.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as MINI)

I'll have to take some tips from Joseph about how to be more average. He's really good at being average!

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Actually that's a good idea.

LYDIA (as MINI)

It's incredible.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

But wait wait, so what - what is your mission like, what are you supposed to do here?

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh, I'm supposed to write articles about human interest stories.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Like good stuff, bad stuff or what kind of stuff?

LYDIA (as MINI)

I mean just about everything here is interesting for people that don't know much about humans. So um, sometimes I write about sauce packet sizes um, and sometimes I write about how many times you're supposed to say sorry if you bump into someone.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as MINI)

And sometimes I write about the prison industrial complex.

PIP

[laughs]

LYDIA (as MINI)

There's just so many quirky things that we cannot work out.

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Oh there's, there's, there's a lot. Even for us, we can't navigate within our own stuff. Like I - the other day er, one of my cousins came over and we were supposed like you know, kiss the cheek, like one-two and that's it, you know?

LYDIA (as MINI)

Mm hm.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

And then he kept, kept going on kissing my cheek again and again!

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

It was normal for him and it was very uncomfortable for me!

LYDIA (as MINI)

[laughs] How many did it go up to in the end?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Er, I don't remember, my dad broke us up!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as MINI)

Well I'm, I'm - thank you. That makes me feel more at home.

LOWRI

Aww!

LYDIA (as MINI)

Knowing that not everyone feels at home all the time even when they are at home.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

That's true. But listen - you're really awesome and I enjoyed getting to know you so far! And I - how did I not see this, like, how did I not notice?

LYDIA (as MINI)

Well I - I mean to be honest I, firstly I'm really good at hiding it and not bringing it out very much.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

You're really good.

LYDIA (as MINI)

Um and secondly don't feel too bad, I just thought you got through a lot of shoes, I didn't realise that you used fabric for your powers. So [laughs] Yeah we really both could have noticed things-

AHMED (as ADEEB)

And er oh-!

AHMED

And I point out my shoes.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

I'm using the Kevlar so I don't need to try new ones.

LYDIA (as MINI)

[gasps] Incredible.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

It's less comfortable but it's more handy so I, I have to like pad it up with stuff but it's really good.

LYDIA (as MINI)

That's such a great idea.

LYDIA

If at any point Maddy you wanna be like: "And during this lovely bonding session your prisoner starts awake..." Like whatever!

AHMED

Because we'd go on for ever!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

We're just like - this is, this is friends chatting about, you know you're an alien, you've got powers, we're buddies, we've got fashion, like - we're having a good time!

MADDY

Excellent, yeah, I think, I think um as charming and wonderful as this is I think you do hear some, some mild groaning from like a, a shelf on the side of the, of the stealth jet where Poltergeist has been carefully laid down and starts to go:

MADDY (as POLTERGEIST)

[groggily] Where - where am I? [SFX: Fabric rustles]

LOWRI

Morgan will be next to him and will say to Adeeb:

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Er, Adeeb, I can put him back to sleep, I mean - or do you wanna talk to him before we get to TARGE?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Do we have anything to dampen his power or stop him or anything? I don't know.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Yeah. I mean holding him isn't gonna work right, he's, he's tele- telekinesis.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

No, so I, I would agree, like he should sleep until we get there and have somebody-

LOWRI

Morgan is just - any time he wakes up is just gonna - [SFX: Light energy drian] a little bit-

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

Not too much! [boop] and sleep!

MADDY

I, just, yeah, I know that you probably don't do this but I'm just imagining you like, you booping him on the nose!

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

Oh no no, not wake time yet! No no no no! Naughty naughty!

MADDY

Um yep, yeah, you can absolutely keep him, keep him docile until you arrive at your destination.

LOWRI

Good!

[Music fades out]

MADDY

And so you, yeah you land on the roof [SFX: Jet landing sequence] of the TARGE HQ, of course they have all the facilities to accept flying vehicles.

LOWRI

Mm hm.

PIP

I will have called ahead while-

MADDY

Nice.

PIP

-while flying the jet to just let them know that we were coming because there was a whole thing last time we just showed up.

MADDY

Yeah. [laughs]

PIP

I will have 100% sent a message to Vera Constantine just saying, you know, we're on our way back, landing on the pad at the top of the building, we have Poltergeist in custody.

MADDY

Cool, OK. Yes, as you land you can see that you're kind of being waved in by, by some attendants on top of the roof and you can also see that Vera is coming up onto the roof as well with a few TARGE security guards with her carrying like manacles and restraining type things to, in case Poltergeist is, is needed to, to be restrained in any way.

PIP

I'm gonna help him, I'm gonna like, I guess he's like - well he's unconscious again. I'm gonna make a little, not a little show but I'm guessing Morgan will be the one to pick him up given that she's the strongest.

LOWRI

Yeah, unless Adeeb wants to be, Morgan will carry him, yeah.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

No, it's fine.

LOWRI

Cool.

PIP

There's like a sort of moment where I, where you look like you're gonna pick him up and I'll sort of come over and look like I'm helping you pick him up even though there's really no reason for me to being that because you are fantastically strong, especially after booping him on the nose repeatedly on the way here.

(Group laughter)

PIP

Like as I do that I'm gonna plant a tracker [SFX: Tracker placed] on him.

ALL

[gasp] Ohh!

LYDIA

It looked like a friendly pat...nice.

LOWRI

That actually could turn out to be a friendly thing.

PIP

Yep.

ALL

Mm.

PIP

I mean if, if Aquila's suspicions are - I wanna know where they take him, that's all.

ALL

Mm.

PIP

Yeah, I'll plant a tracker on him.

LOWRI

Cool. Morgan will be like -

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Er...

LOWRI

I mean obviously she just thinks you're helping,

PIP (as ZENITH)

Yep.

LOWRI

-she's like-

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Um-

PIP (as ZENITH)

Oh yeah, sorry.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

I, I got this. Thanks.

PIP (as ZENITH)

You got this.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

No, it's OK. You can help if you like though.

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

And just carries him-

LYDIA

Basically on one finger.

(Group laughter)

PIP

Just spinning him like a basketball.

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

No, I will respect his unconscious form and take him to Vera. [SFX: Jet door]

MADDY

Nice. She will say:

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Oh um, yeah, after your message I was very concerned and then you didn't reply, I was worried that something had happened, but it looks like you've, you've accomplished like part of your mission - like this is one of the people who's in - so, sorry. I'm, there's a lot going on.

MADDY

And she gestures to the security guards and they, they take hold of him and start to like pre-emptively manacle him up. [SFX: Manacles click closed]

LYDIA (as MINI)

What, what are you gonna do-do with him?

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

That kind of depends on you. Like how - what's his involvement in all this? I need a debrief if that's all right, because...

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Yeah.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah, but can, can I see a medic first? Ah - my ears.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Oh.

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Yeah of course, er, no problem. Let's head over to first aid and talk on the way.

[SFX: Targe interior ambience, stark and quiet]

MADDY

So yeah, she leads you down into the building and along some corridors and as, as you're going she says:

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

So er I, I heard of er, a jet crashing into a, a window of a tall building, the UTBC - last I heard you were investigating Clearvision Trading, right?

PIP

That's right.

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

How did that, how did that lead from that to this? Without any input from us? I'm just, I'm not, I'm not angry I'm just, I'm just trying to figure out what's going on.

PIP (as ZENITH)

UTBC own Clearvision Trading.

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Right, OK.

PIP (as ZENITH)

It wasn't our intention to cause any collateral damage but um-

LYDIA (as MINI)

Yeah I, I tried to infiltrate by getting an internship with er CTO [pronounced Cu-too].

(Group laughter)

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Ca-too, sorry, what?

LYDIA (as MINI)

Oh um the CTO?

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Oh right, Chief Technical Officer, OK, yeah, yeah.

LYDIA (as MINI)

Yeah, and she um, she knew who we were-

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Right.

LYDIA (as MINI)

And wasn't amenable to my request for an internship. And - but, but I genuinely think I would have been good at that job. Um - you know, I, I'm qualified.

PIP (as ZENITH)

She tried to take Mini hostage, we had to get out fast.

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

OK. Sounds like - yeah. Sounds like the kind of situation where drastic action was needed. OK, yeah, I'm gonna have to fill in quite a few forms for this but that's - that's my job, that's not your job, you don't worry about it. You, you did your best. It's fine. Ugh, so many forms. OK. So what's the deal with Poltergeist, you've caught one of the villains who's been really causing problems recently. How is he involved in all this?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Er he was er trying -

AHMED

I'm shouting because my ear is still...

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

He was trying to attack er, what was it, like a hospital?

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Mm.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Yeah, yeah.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

And we tried to get it, to intervene ahead before they do any damage to people, and I'm sorry for the loud voice.

(Group laughter)

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Oh that's all right, yeah yeah.

MADDY

And as you say that you come up to the first aid station, she opens the door [SFX: Door swings] and the, a nurse starts to give you the once over and like, use one of those little probes to look in your ear and shines a little light in your ear. And she says:

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

All right. That is, that is interesting. I know that we're gonna have some questions for him, and yeah, I'm gonna have to speak to some higher-ups about this but as far as I'm concerned it sounds like you're making headway

with this investigation and it would make sense for you to keep going and find out more.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Oh there's still other, other people out there so we don't know if they will continue the thing or not. So maybe have more security with the er-

PIP (as ZENITH)

Don't know.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

With the hospital?

PIP (as ZENITH)

I'm sure he - we don't know yet but if he was in contact-

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Yeah.

PIP (as ZENITH)

With these people they might know he's not checked in, they might come after him, they might assign someone else to whatever this hospital job is?

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

All right yes, that's a very good point.

MADDY

And she goes onto her comms and she says:

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

Can we dispatch the Astrologer's Arrows to Chapter Central Hospital please?

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Er, we could go.

LYDIA (as MINI)

We, we've got that party to go to remember?

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Ohhh yeah.

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah, they should send a whole party to handle this not like one or two people.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Brilliant.

PIP

[laughing]

LYDIA

Awww! I like the idea that Adeeb's been mishearing the whole time and that their talk about being an alien was just at complete cross purposes.

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

Nooooo!

LYDIA

But - no, no. Then we were right up close and personal with nothing else around.

LOWRI

You were on the side of the ear that didn't get electrocuted.

ALL

Yes!

PIP

Exactly, exactly.

LYDIA

Yes, there you go, that's the explanation. Perfect.

MADDY

Nice.

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

So my colleagues are taking Poltergeist down into our er containment facility right now. He's gonna be, he's gonna be comfortable, there's gonna be plenty of facilities there but if you want to question him I'll need to get approval for that, but if you come back tomorrow you can come in, do a little - not interrogation but just some questioning to see if you can find out anything more. He might listen to you considering you were the ones who took him down.

PIP (as ZENITH)

Good.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Yeah, I think that sounds good.

LYDIA (as MINI)

Yeah.

LOWRI

Morgan doesn't feel comfortable like speaking for the team, but.

LYDIA (as MINI)

I think that's good, I think that there's some questions-

LYDIA

(looking at Adeeb)

LYDIA (as MINI)

-some, some answers that, and closure that people might want and, and also he might talk to us and listen to us more than um, some people he doesn't know. I mean maybe not us because we just turned up and um knocked him unconscious. But Adeeb.

MADDY (as VERA CONSTANTINE)

All right, um, if that sounds like a plan I'll get that all sorted, I'll start putting in requests. Is there anything else I can help you with, I assume you might wanna take, take the night off and rest up after your, your mission.

MADDY

So yeah, knowing that the Astrologer's Arrows are gonna take care of the potential hospital hit that maybe Drake and Hollow, Poltergeist's allies could be continuing without him, you have the rest of the evening free.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

[gasps]

MADDY

And if you have, er yeah I think there is enough time for you to get to the bar where Amal is performing with her band on time if you want to.

[Tense music]

AHMED

OK so once the medic just leaves and everybody else I, I call in Joseph to-

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Can I try and talk to you?

PIP (as ZENITH)

Uh yeah. Yeah, I owe you an explanation.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah. But speak to this ear, not the other one.

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

Are Morgan and Mini overhearing this or are you doing it in private?

PIP

I'd be willing to actually do it for everybody I think.

AHMED

Yeah I, I wasn't bringing him privately just don't leave, wait til we've talked.

PIP

Yeah I think if Adeeb's like: hey, can we talk? I might be like: I think actually all of us should probably, should probably talk.

LOWRI and LYDIA

Mm hm.

LOWRI

OK.

PIP (as ZENITH)

Yeah, um.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah?

PIP (as ZENITH)

Um, I'm sorry. I didn't know how else to stop you.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Um... what's going on?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah, you might wanna take off the earpieces.

PIP (as ZENITH)

Mm hm.

LYDIA

Mini does. [SFX: Earpiece removed]

PIP

Yeah.

LOWRI

And Morgan does. [SFX: Earpiece removed]

PIP (as ZENITH)

So they're - they're fine, they're normal communicators, I mean pretty advanced like they won't show up on scanners, er they don't set off metal detectors, they're... there's a failsafe. Um, they can deliver a non-lethal electric shock.

PIP

And I'll like tap the helmet's: [SFX; Finger rapps against metal]

PIP (as ZENITH)

Controlled through this.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Oh.

LYDIA (as MINI)

And you - you didn't tell us? Um, you didn't trust us? You - oh my, you?

PIP (as ZENITH)

Like this has been my whole - this is what I - this is what I was trained to do.
And I haven't worked with a team before and I'm, I'm working this out as we
go and I'm, I'm sorry.

LYDIA (as MINI)

[sighs] You - what else is there?

AHMED (as ADEEB)

That's a very good question I've been thinking about. Is there anything else we should know about?

LYDIA (as MINI)

Yeah, how you have a whole flat and a jet and, and-

PIP (as ZENITH)

I have a - I have a mentor. I have a mentor. I have someone who, the person who trained me, the person who bankrolls all of this stuff.

LYDIA (as MINI)

And what do they want?

PIP (as ZENITH)

They wanna help people. They protect the city, they've been doing it for years.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah, and teach you to plant something explosive in their ears whenever you meet someone?

PIP (as ZENITH)

Hey, it's not one of the explosive, I mean it's not -

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Well it sure hurt like one!

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

There are explosive ones!

(Group laughter)

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Wait, what? No, no, no. You - we trusted you with so much. I... I trusted you with so much, I looked up to you. You are THE good guy that I-

PIP (as ZENITH)

I never-

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Whenever - you were my role model when I started doing this.

PIP (as ZENITH)

I didn't ask you to do that.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

Yeah.

PIP (as ZENITH)

I never, I never presented myself as a, as a role model for, for anyone. You were never even supposed to see me.

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Then why are you here?

PIP (as ZENITH)

Because this is the job. This is the mission. This whole TARGE thing.

LYDIA (as MINI)

So we're just for you to spy on, you're just, your mission is to spy on us and TARGE and you're not actually-

PIP (as ZENITH)

No, I'm not-

LYDIA (as MINI)

I mean to be fair I'm writing articles about this all the time but like-

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as MINI)

It's, they're, it's not the same because that's just for, that's just for people back home to laugh...

LOWRI (as MORGAN)

Who - who, who is telling you what to do, who - are they watching us now?

PIP

I don't say anything which I think probably tells you everything you need to know.

AHMED (as ADEEB)

OK, OK. I have, I have one thing I need to know. This person, the person that we trusted and then planted OK, shocking collars into our ears, whatever you wanna call it. Is this who you are? Because this is not the person I ever wanna walk with ever again.

PIP (as ZENITH)

Truth is I don't know who I am. I'm sorry I lied to you. Have fun tonight.

PIP

And I'll put the helmet on [SFX: Helmet on, buckles click] and I'll leave. I'll walk away.

LOWRI

Ooh!

LYDIA

Are you taking a condition, are you taking like ooh, I mean-

PIP

Oh hell yeah I'm taking a condition. Guilty. Guilty guilty guilty guilty. All the guilty please. Double guilt with chips.

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

Ooooh

LYDIA

And assess the situation is like your thing. Oh dang.

MADDY

Ohh. And I hate to say it but on that note we have to wrap up that episode for today.

ALL

[protesting]

LYDIA

But emotions!

AHMED

Oh man!

MADDY

Oh god damn!

LOWRI

Oh we just had a breakthrough of friendship-

CHAP Masks 13 - Slow Down

PIP

Hell yeah!

MADDY

And it call came falling down again!

LYDIA

And then a break apart!

AHMED

Building them up and breaking them down, all in the same episode.

ALL

[sighs]

LYDIA

Oh dang!

LOWRI

Noo!

PIP

What a rollercoaster.

MADDY

Ahh! All right so thank you so much for listening to this absolute rollercoaster as we say of an episode!

(Group laughter)

MADDY

And as always I would like to ask our wonderful and emotionally devastating players to let me know where we can find them on the internet, starting with Lowri.

LOWRI

Hello, you can find me @LowriTweets, it's just as much of a rollercoaster over there so if you want some calming down time I'll probably be tweeting some dogs or something, I don't know.

MADDY

Yeah, dogs!

PIP

Yeah!

MADDY

And Lydia?

LYDIA

I'm on Twitter under @LydNicholas and, and if I'm honest the threads can be a bit like - my tweets can be a bit of a rollercoaster. It's like hey, chickens, fiction, the destruction of public services. You know that's, it's a wild ride.

AHMED

All right!

MADDY

And Ahmed?

AHMED

Hello! You can find me everywhere @mr_aljbray, mostly on Twitter where I am keeping my mouth shut because I don't wanna spoil all this awesomeness even though I am itching every time and now should I talk about this now? No, I

should wait.

(Group laughter)

AHMED

Ah, that was such a good moment!

(Group laughter)

MADDY

I feel you, I feel you buddy. And Pip?

PIP

Hello there, I'm Pip Gladwin and I'm not sorry-

(Group laughter)

PIP

-you can find me @Pip_Gladwin on Twitter. I don't like to think of my Twitter feed as a rollercoaster, I prefer to think of it more as a petting zoo.

LOWRI

Oooh!

MADDY

Aww, nice.

LOWRI

I'm interested!

PIP

I don't know why but yeah. There you go. Find out.

MADDY

It's so good! All right. You can find me on Twitter and Instagram @maddy_abstract where there are links to all the various things that I do. And we hope to see you next time on Chapter and Multiverse but until then, from all of us here in the space between worlds who are full of angst, we say: goodbye!

EVERYONE

Goodbye!

[Show theme – Outro]

THE ETERNAL TAVERN KEEPER

Chapter and Multiverse is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a Creative Commons attribution non-commercial sharealike 4.0 licence. It is directed by Maddy Searle and produced by M Lindeman, with executive producers Alexander J Newall and April Sumner. The Eternal Tavern Keeper was played by Karim Kronfli. This episode was edited by Lowri Ann Davies, Tessa Vroom and Maddy Searle, with music by Nico Vettese. Thank you for listening.