

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

Content Warnings

- Hostage situation
- Physical violence & injury
- Robbery
- Mentions of: poison, spiders
- SFX: clanging & clattering, glass smashing, sirens

[Show Theme - Intro]

[SFX: Interdimensional Tavern Ambience]

THE ETERNAL TAVERN KEEPER

Welcome back, my friend. It's always a delight to see you, of course. Your usual seat is ready for you. And I haven't forgotten that you wanted to hear more about our young superheroes, either. Last we saw them, they had made their way into the Castle Hill Mall to try and rescue some hostages from the clutches of the Green Needle and his poorly-equipped minions. Just a few more lackeys stood between them and their goal...

[SFX: Portal Whoosh]

MADDY

Hello and welcome 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 campaign of Masks: A New Generation, which is designed by Brendan

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

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 Pip.

PIP

Hi there I'm Pip Gladwin and I will be playing today Joseph Teller aka Zenith err and we are both He/Him.

MADDY

Sweet and Lowri.

LOWRI

Hello I am Lowri Ann Davies She/Her and I am playing Blodeuwedd Morgan ... goes by Morgan whose super hero name is Syphon, also She/Her.

MADDY

Sweet, and Ahmed.

AHMED

Hi, I'm Ahmed Aljabry, and I'm stoked to be here! I'll be playing Adeeb Bin Yeslam aka The Turban, pronouns He/Him.

MADDY

Sweet, and Lydia.

LYDIA

Hi, Lydia Nicholas She/They and I am playing Mini Smithson err ... totally human person that just happens to have the hero name Solartrix like, but no reason cause they're like a normal human, that's fine, yeah.

(Laughter)

MADDY

Alright and so, the last time we left our heroes they were attempting to rescue five hostages from a VHM entertainment store at the Castle Hill Mall, these hostages had been taken by the Green Needle's minions, a Cactus themed superhero and the minions dressed in haphazard green outfits and have unconventional weapons at their disposal. You managed to take down six of the minions who stood between you and the entertainment store, but three minions who guard the hostages remain inside the store and, also, err Joseph has just disappeared into the ceiling! Err **[laughter]** in a cloud of smoke from the newly acquired smoke bombs err leaving Adeeb, Mini and Morgan on the first floor balcony. So as we begin, I think the minions are remaining inside the store to guard the hostages but, Joseph is in the ceiling and you're all poised to continue your campaign so, what do you wanna do?

[SFX: Unpowered Mall, wind droning, cars outside]

LOWRI

Do the minions in the store know that we're here?

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LYDIA

We've been pretty loud!

(Laughter)

MADDY

Yes, they will have seen the ... they'll have seen their friends run away and then not come back!

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

That's a standard guard procedure isn't it? So there's two, no three minions ... we can see three minions in the store and they are aware of us?

MADDY

Yes. Erm there is to be ... to be detailed about it, there's a woman with a meat cleaver ...

LOWRI

Oh no!

LYDIA

Goodness!

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

(Laughter)

MADDY

And there's a woman with erm darts from a dartboard that, she has like put poison on!

(Group laughter)

MADDY

And there's a man with a spade.

LYDIA

I mean he's just digging; he is just ...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

He's just fine, just ...

MADDY

Yeah. He's just digging it.

LOWRI

Oh my gosh!

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LYDIA

Not terrifying at all!

LOWRI

Aah they've got ... she's got a meat cleaver! **[Laughter]** I don't want to run at that!

(Group laughter)

AHMED

And I have threads, that's gonna slash through it!

LOWRI

That's gonna slice through your ... your ribbon, oh no.

[Music: Battle Ambience]

AHMED

No, okay what I want to do is, keep them distracted while Zenith do his thing cause, I've seen Zenith do ... like, he's very clever at finding things to do so, I'm just gonna buy him time ... what can I do with that? So, I guess directly engage?

MADDY

Yeah feel free.

LOWRI

Can I, can I ask, would you say that to us? Would you tell us if that is your plan?

AHMED

Yes I would look at you and say, “Zenith is coming up with something so, let's keep them distracted!”

LOWRI

“Good plan.”

AHMED

“Piling the pressure on him!”

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Mini's going to try and do something with the light, going through the ... the shop window, to dazzle the ... I'm gonna make it a cool prism somehow, because physics err and like essentially ... you know when light goes through a sun catcher, and makes the fancy reflective things? Mini's gonna do something which is, totally human and not Specmarkalon thing err and ...

PIP

Lydia it's episode 5 ...

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LYDIA

Yeah.

PIP

Lydia, it's okay.

(Group Laughter)

LYDIA

What?

(Group Laughter)

LYDIA

Erm, Mini's got an arc, and that arc has not resolved! Mini is totally human.

Err ...

(Group Laughter)

LOWRI

Joseph shouts through the vent - Mini!

LYDIA

HUMAN!!!

(Group Laughter)

LYDIA

And err, yeah, so that's, that's the attempt, so that's an unleash your powers I think? Erm to try and just make ...

MADDY

Yes.

LYDIA

Essentially, the light go through the window and essentially look like a kind of "jazzy disco ball!", we're having hostages and there's moving glittery colourful lights everywhere! It's a party.

MADDY

Nice yeah, please give me a roll plus freak!

LYDIA

So that is an 8. **[SFX: Light Power's ethereal chimes]**

MADDY

So, you have done it, but you either have to mark a condition or, err tell me how the condition is unstable or temporary?

LYDIA

Probably gonna be temporary or unstable and I will say that ... Mini has to put loads of concentration into it so like, it's that ... you know in a Marvel film where they're like ... "Oh, I can't hold it much longer!" and it's like I don't understand what ways your powers are or are not strong, why is this is not or, working ... just nothing has been established. But in this case ... "Err, can't hold it much longer!" so like, if her concentration is interrupted in any way, it's going to immediately collapse!

MADDY

Fair, yeah, that makes total sense.

LYDIA

Arrrrgh ... but there's like a twinkly disco ball ... aaaargh.

(Group Laughter)

MADDY

Yeah, there's such ... such intense effort and, it's ... it just looks really cool and rad! **[SFX: Twinkles]**

(Laughter)

LOWRI

Just to check are they blinded then?

LYDIA

They're very distracted! It's pretty. Its like trying to see or do anything in like, a roller disco.

[SFX: Electronic dance music]

PIP

I assume there's music playing in the store, like ...?

(Laughter)

LOWRI

Yeah.

LYDIA

We are ...

AHMED

Oh god, my brain has been playing RickRoll ...

(Laughter)

AHMED

Oh no, disco there!

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LYDIA

And now it's playing in all our heads! Thank you.

PIP

Yes, that's ...

LOWRI

Thank you.

MADDY

Its such a shame that we can't ...

PIP

We can't licence that

MADDY

Get the rights to ...

LYDIA

We don't need to; it lives in all of our hearts.

PIP

Yep.

LOWRI

Now everyone listening to this is also singing ...

MADDY

We've Rickrolled everyone listening to this!

(Laughter)

LYDIA

But that is actually the perfect kind of ... de, de, de, de, de, de ... with the lights, perfect.

MADDY

Perfect. Adeeb and Morgan ... this is your chance to, strike if you want to?
What do you wanna do?

AHMED

So I will try to engage hoping to create an opportunity to either Zenith or Morgan (**rolls dice**) I got a 10.

MADDY

10 perfect. That is a full success. Err you get to erm, create an opportunity for your allies and possibly one of the other benefits, but you also get to, just take a good old fashioned hit at one of them!

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

AHMED

Okay, so I will create an opportunity to either of them just to go in and, take the ... the sharp (what was it? What was it, a machete or a knife?).

LOWRI

A meat cleaver.

AHMED

A meat cleaver? Okay, and I will take the meat cleaver from the guy.

PIP

Oh nice .

AHMED

'Be careful with that, it's very sharp!' **[SFX: Powers resonance, fabric noises, metallic clatter]**

(Group Laughter)

AHMED

And then I ... and then I throw it on the ground! **[SFX: Metallic clatter]**

LYDIA

And she's like ... ugh that's so mean!

MADDY

Erm, so are you standing outside the shop and like sending your ... ribbons inside, or have you entered the shop at this point?

AHMED

I am right in front of the door from the outside, cause I can reach ...

PIP

Yeah nice.

MADDY

Sweet, okay. Yeah Morgan and err Zenith ... what are your plans at this point?

[SFX: Vents, echoing metal sounds of Joseph moving through]

PIP

Morgan's turn, I'm in the vent! If it's me, I'm basically, trying to get like, above these guys, that's my objective, I would like ... I would like to be above them if possible.

MADDY

For sure.

PIP

And maybe do ... do a little assess on these guys now that ... if I can get above them obviously!

MADDY

Yes. I'm gonna say that, with your ... a) highly trained senses and b) whatever gadgets you have at your disposal, you can probably hear below you where ... the most people are ...

PIP

Oh perfect.

MADDY

And position yourself and, yeah, absolutely you can assess the situation.

PIP

(Rolls dice). Oh boy, that's 14.

LYDIA

Woo!

MADDY

Woah.

PIP

Rolled a 6 and a 5 plus 3.

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LYDIA

Killing it! Not killing it, we're not that kind of Super ...

LOWRI

No.

LYDIA

Hero yet with the, you know, not ... not killing.

MADDY

Yeah.

LYDIA

Good.

MADDY

Sweet, so yeah you can ask two questions and I think you have an ability where you can ask another one as well?

PIP

I get three! Fantastic.

MADDY

And feel free to ask not on the list as well if you want!

PIP

Obviously which one of the three, cause I think there's three that's still up ... is the most vulnerable to me right now!

MADDY

The one who has the darts is the least strong of those three.

PIP

Okay.

MADDY

She's more of a stealthy kind of ... agile person who, would not stand up in a ... hand to hand fight.

PIP

Fantastic, my favourite people. How could we best end this quickly, I think is my second question? And I do ... I think I think, at this moment Joseph is, having seen these guys like, deal with some of the, the people outside, like I think Joseph is thinking that, as are we in this moment, it's like okay, what could the others do cause we are still like all linked up communicator wise so, if there's anything that gives me like a "Oh is there is something that, you know one of the others could do to help end this quickly not just me".

AHMED

I did create an opportunity, which no-one has used.

PIP

That is true.

MADDY

You would be aware that they are distracted ... you can probably hear them being like ... "What is this disco going on?"

(Group Laughter)

LOWRI

Aah I've been Rickrolled!

PIP

Give me my knife back! And finally, what can I use in the sort of ... the the surroundings of, you know these three minions, the hostages and and, my teammates ... and what can I use to my advantage?

MADDY

I would say that there are tall kind of cases of DVDs and electronic equipment that, if you tip them over you could, potentially like crush them or like trap them under ... under a shelf!

PIP

Alright fantastic.

MADDY

They're quite hefty metal ... metal things.

PIP

Cool okay. I think what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna just kick downwards and I think sort of kick the bo ... the like the floor out from underneath me in this vent and what I would like to do is drop and err well, you know what, let's roll it and see what happens! **[SFX: Kick out vent floor]**

LYDIA

Powerful legs!

LOWRI

Yes.

PIP

But I think ... I think I'm directly engaging a threat!

LOWRI

Joseph's been squatting!

LYDIA

Yeah.

(Laughter)

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

PIP

Yeah.

LYDIA

A lot of twerk training, building up those ...

PIP

Absolutely.

LYDIA

Core muscles.

PIP

Just, just constantly since I was a child!

(Group Laughter)

LOWRI

Gosh.

MADDY

Yeah, Aquilla put on those jazzercise videos for you!

(Laughter)

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

PIP

Yup, yup, yup. (**Rolls dice**) that is a 5.

LYDIA

Shouldn't have skipped leg day!

PIP

I did.

MADDY

Presumably you just kind of, land right in the middle of these ... [**SFX: Whoosh**]

[**SFX: Unpowered VHM store, electronic dance music**]

PIP

Yeah I think ...

MADDY

Minions.

PIP

I think I've missed ... even though I was successful on my sort of assessment of the situation, I think I've miscalculated where I've landed! Yeah I've just landed in the middle of them, I was gonna try and do something cool but, it didn't work!

MADDY

And so, I think at this point, in my infinite wisdom as the GM I'm going to ask Joseph to "Take a powerful blow!".

PIP

Hell yeah. Err am I being hit with a dart or a shovel?

MADDY

I think the, the man with the shovel is just like (**imitates sound**) [**SFX: Ding**] and is ... like when ... when you unexpectedly see a spider or something he's just like "Go away!"

LOWRI

Swat him.

(Group Laughter)

PIP

Can I just point out that, that, in this err music store, that has suddenly become a disco, playing a song we do not have the licence for ... a ninja who looks like a guy out of Daft Punk has just landed!

(Group Laughter)

PIP

So there's all the lights kind of reflecting off ...

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LYDIA

It's a good time ...

PIP

Joseph's helmet ...

MADDY

It's a good time ...

LOWRI

We should get the CCTV footage of this cause ...

PIP

It's a good time ...

LOWRI

We're creating a great music video right now!

LYDIA

We are.

PIP

We are.

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

MADDY

Oh yeah.

PIP

Okay ...

MADDY

You need to create a sizzle reel for this!

PIP

So, when I take a powerful blow, roll plus conditions marked, I don't have any conditions marked right now (**rolls dice**) there we go ... that is an 8!

MADDY

An 8, so you choose one of the list for 7 to 9.

PIP

I have give ground and my opposition gets an opportunity against me I think is the best one there ... like I've landed right in front of them and, left myself completely open! This was a ... this was a rookie move!

AHMED

Can I jump in and defend?

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

MADDY

That makes sense yeah, feel free to roll to defend plus saviour.

AHMED

(Rolls dice) ... so that's a 6.

MADDY

I think it just doesn't work unfortunately. What does it look like as you ... as you attempt?

AHMED

So I jump inside **[SFX: Land]** and try to ... take my red shawl and just to help ... err protect everyone, and then I just trip with all the furniture ... **[SFX: Trip over cloth and furniture]**

LOWRI

Slide on a CD!

AHMED

Slide on a CD!

LOWRI

So Morgan is, as established very amped up! Is not going to be thinking very advancedly! Err is just gonna hurl herself at ... I guess the spade guy? If the

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

spade guy is attacking Zenith, that's who she's going to ... basically rugby tackle him into one of the ... DVD shelves.

MADDY

Nice.

LOWRI

So I guess that's directly engage a threats! As direct as you can get really isn't it?

MADDY

Yeah go for it!

LOWRI

So that's an 8 total.

LYDIA

Oooh!

MADDY

Nice. So erm, you hit and you get to take one of the advantages if you so desire?

LOWRI

I think I would like to impress surprise or frighten the opposition; cause I am very strong ... I probably hurt him quite a lot actually, cause I am ... by rugby tackling him into ... oh such a Welsh takedown as well! That wasn't on purpose ...

(Group Laughter)

LOWRI

Err rugby tackling him into one of the DVD shelves and **[SFX: Tackle into heavy metal shelf]**, I'm just gonna take out this huge metal shelf. I've probably got my arm round his back so, I don't break his back, but ... so its my shoulder going into the shelf **[SFX: Shoulder shelf]** and I just knock it down and the stacks just go down like dominos. **[SFX: Shelves falling like dominoes with loud thuds, DVDs cascading]**

LYDIA

Woo.

LOWRI

So they are terrified cause I'm very strong!

LYDIA

And all of the falling down as well on the beats to the music?

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LOWRI

Absolutely yeah ...

MADDY

Oh yeah this is an Edgar Wright sequence.

LOWRI

The DVDs are coming out of the ... the cases [**SFX: DVDs cascading and clattering**] and like all the light that Mini's creating is reflecting off the, the, the back of the DVDs. [**SFX: Sparkles**]

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Incredible.

LOWRI

Very impressive!

PIP

That's a ... that's a really ... that's a really nice ... so I'm just, I'm just fan boying out! But like that's a really nice acknowledgement of, Morgan's training ...

LOWRI

Yeah.

PIP

Of just like ... you are, you are, you are super strong if you tackle somebody into a wall you will break their back! So you put your own arm in the way ...

LOWRI

That's true.

PIP

And like, you know brace, that's just super cool.

LOWRI

That's love ... yeah there we are, that's nice cause she has trained a fair amount about ... around strengths so ... yes.

LYDIA

Yay!

MADDY

Is your intention to just kind of ... push the man with the spade out the way or is ... or is you ... are you trying to knock him out as, as part of this?

LOWRI

My intention, I didn't think beyond ... get him away from Zenith, erm if I've impressed surprised or frightened him ... if an outcome of that could be ... he is

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

now too afraid or ... knocked out if you want or just too afraid to re-join the fight? Maybe he could run away?

MADDY

Oh yeah, I think absolutely! Yeah that makes a lot of sense I think ... he just kind of clutches his spade to his chest and is just sort of like **(imitates scared sound)**...

LOWRI

I'm going back and taking and planting Cacti!

(Group Laughter)

LOWRI

I don't wanna be a cactus minion anymore!

MADDY

He just sort of goes off to cower in a corner. Alright so we've still got ... meat cleaver woman and we've got dart woman.

LOWRI

Or meat cleaver-less woman now! Thanks to ...

MADDY

Yeah meat cleaver-less woman is ... gonna try and make a run for Adeeb and is going to do a punch ... just do an old fashioned punch!

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LOWRI

It worked for Mini.

MADDY

Yeah, so can Adeeb take a powerful blow for me please?

AHMED

(Rolls dice) 5.

MADDY

So, on a miss you stand strong, this is ... one of the cases where rolling low is good!

LYDIA

Yay!

PIP

But you do ... you still get to mark potential?

MADDY

Yep, you still get to mark potential and, so yeah, do you ... do you completely dodge it or do you just take it on the chin and just weather it? How do you deal with this?

AHMED

Erm my red shawl is just gonna be in between us and she's gonna be ... hitting on the ... like this fabric just standing between us. **[SFX: Fabric noises]**

LOWRI

Such a lovely visual it delights me so much!

PIP

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AHMED

She's just gonna punch some fabric. **[SFX: Punch fabric]**

MADDY

Amazing so yes. Anyone of you can take this opportunity to, do something if you want to?

LYDIA

I mean Mini's still **(strained sound)**, there's the like strange, you're beginning to kind of hear and see strange echoes of like a world that you have never visited err through the, through the disco lights **[SFX: Unearthly shimmering]** but, you know it's ... you're just ... you're not concentrating on, on ... on that so that's fine. Amidst the Rickrolling there's just like ... unearthly voices! Beginning to ... to leak through cause, you know, she's **(strained sound)** focussing on sparkles so hard!

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LOWRI

That's so cool!

(Laughter)

LOWRI

If no-one else is going again, Morgan completely amped up is just gonna turn and just fix a stare on dart woman and is going to ... run directly at her ...

LYDIA

Cool.

LOWRI

To do the same, basically.

MADDY

Great yeah. Plus danger for that please.

LOWRI

Aah ... 12! Good night dart woman!

PIP

Oh boy.

MADDY

Ooo spicy ... yeah.

MADDY

What do you do, what does this look like?

LOWRI

Well I guess ... she has projectile poison tip darts so, I guess one of the things I do is ... resist and avoid her blows cause presumably, she's throwing darts at me as I run to her?

PIP

Yep, yep.

LOWRI

Maybe someone can now get to the hostages cause they're ... all of the minions are now down or engaged?

MADDY

No yeah, that makes absolute sense I feel like ... yeah, she will have been standing in the way of one of the aisles which is between you and the hostages so, that opens up the opportunity for you to kind of get to them and make sure they're okay. So what does it look like as you ... is this another rugby tackle?

LOWRI

It's another rugby tackle for sure ... just throwing my body at people right now, that's all Morgan is really ... that's the level she's operating at!

AHMED

I'm imaging like, she's putting her hands in front of her face as she's running towards the darts ...

LOWRI

Oh!

AHMED

To shield herself from them, and once she's there she's just ... opens up and ...

LOWRI

I'm big so like kinda like the ... the cross hands like Wonder ...

AHMED

Yeah.

LOWRI

Woman. Ooo is it too late to rack on that she has like ... what do you call those like wrist ...?

MADDY

Bracers.

LOWRI

I love it! Yeah, she's got bracers on yeah, yeah ... and as Ahmed said .. big bear hug take her down! **[SFX: Bear Hug, fabric noises]**

PIP

Nice.

MADDY

Perfect. Do you wanna crash her into another set of shelves or ... do you wanna just ... or just onto the ground?

LOWRI

Through the window.

MADDY

Yeah, just amazing yeah. Through the window, crash of glass shards flying everywhere ... **[SFX: Glass shatters]** yeah this woman is now completely incapacitated and the only one left is meat cleaver less woman!

(Laughter)

AHMED

Alright, can I err just fight back? She's punching my ... shawl.

MADDY

Absolutely yeah. It's like, it's like bull fighting, Spanish bull fighting happening right now.

AHMED

(Rolls dice) so that's a 10.

MADDY

Amazing.

AHMED

So, I will ... I wanna take her out, so I will just err, whilst she's busy punching my erm, my red shawl, my white ribbon just sneak around her and just starts wrapping her mummy mode until she's ... she's stuck between the wraps and falls down. **[SFX: Power noises, cloth wrapping]**

MADDY

Incredible yes. So she's just like ... punch, punch, punch, punch, punch ... **[SFX: Punching cloth, suddenly wrap tight and fall]**

AHMED

'Well that's a wrap!'

(Group Laughter)

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LOWRI

Oh!

LYDIA

Oh ...

MADDY

Yes.

LYDIA

Oh that's good, that's good.

MADDY

Super Hero puns!

AHMED

I have warned you; I am planning these things!

LOWRI

I'm delighted.

MADDY

Excellent yes so, now ... you are free to go and check on the hostages, make sure they're okay and get them to safety but, before we do that, let's just take a very short break.

.....
[SFX: VHM Store, electronic dance music playing]

MADDY

And we're back so, you have successfully taken out all the minions on the first floor British style of this Mall, you can now find the hostages kind of cowering in a corner of this ... entertainment store you can see that there is a ... a pair of middle aged men and, a teenage kid with erm, looks like they're a family and, there is also a 27 something woman with chunky headphones and someone in a ... uniform that looks like it's the ... it's the uniform of the store itself so its kind of got a little VHM logo on it ... there's just these ... these five people, just sort of cuddled in a little corner, what would you like to do?

LYDIA

Well Mini's still going arrrgh ... err cause err she's concentrating so hard that she hasn't realised that everyone's err left so ... you might wanna tap her on the shoulder.

LOWRI

I mean, Morgan's gonna be like "Mini, Mini ..."

LYDIA

"What".

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LOWRI

"You can stop Mini".

LYDIA

'Ahhh' ... disco ends .. it sort of **(imitates power down sound)** **[SFX: Power down]** ... it's remarkedly grey now.

LOWRI

The music gets quieter weirdly!

[SFX: Music quietens]

LYDIA

Yeah.

PIP

Zenith's gonna ... gonna pick himself up off the floor **[SFX: Stands, fabric noises]**, erm and is just seething underneath his mask knowing that Aquilla is watching that whole thing through his ... through his, his helmet and ...

LYDIA

Aww.

LOWRI

Aww.

PIP

Just like, yeah, yeah ... not doing good, not doing good, that was ... that was a poor showing.

LOWRI

Oh my gosh Lowri wants to hug him so much! "It'll be okay darling".

(Laughter)

LYDIA

But like, there's just the Daft Punk face, you know ... well not Daft Punk I know ... you like the helmet.

PIP

Again like yeah, yeah, yeah ... less Daft Punk now after Morgan commented that the helmet looked like a Daft Punk helmet!

LYDIA

Yeah. It's, it's now just ... I don't know, Deft Punk! I don't ... like knock off erm ...

PIP

I love that.

LYDIA

But we ... we can't see the seething?

PIP

No, no.

LYDIA

So we're ... at least Mini thinks you're very cool.

PIP

Well you were too busy making a disco to see me fall out of the ceiling and get hit with a shovel so ...

LYDIA

With the power of disco! Mini "Oh, okay" err and run over, erm like wants to comfort the hostages? "Oh erm, err that must have been so distracting err, and you are ... are you okay? Err this erm, is this your home? Erm did they invade your err house, err can I get you some tea?"

(Laughter)

LYDIA

"Err, or possibly a coffee erm, or a snack, or a present?"

AHMED

That's a long list!

(Group Laughter)

MADDY

I think the ... the little teenage kid is like "This isn't ... this isn't our house; this is a shop!".

LYDIA

"Okay" ... Mini gets out her notepad ... **[SFX: Flip notepad]** "So what happened? Err can ... can we help you get err do you need tea or ... or a present?".

LOWRI

"Well I ... my, my, my dads were gonna buy me like a special Minecraft controller, so if you could get me that, that would be amazing!"

(Laughter)

LYDIA

"Great!" Err Mini looks around and picks up an empty case **[SFX: Open case]** ...

"What does it look like?"

(Laughter)

LOWRI

"It's you know a game controller?"

LYDIA

"Ah ah ... no."

LOWRI

"Okay". And then he just gets up and like goes and grabs one off the shelf and is like "I guess this is mine now?" **[SFX: Stands, grabs controller off the shelf]**

LYDIA

"Oh that, no that ... that I think would be looting! I'll go erm and buy it!" Mini goes and queues up at the empty ...

(Laughter)

LYDIA

The empty desk.

LOWRI

The one who is err an employee looks from side to side and then slowly and awkwardly like goes towards the ... the cash desk. He's like "I'm not sure if I'm allowed to be doing this but, sure, yeah erm ... £40 please".

LYDIA

Mini takes out her ... card [**SFX: Taking out card**] because, err she does operate in the world, err and it's quite easy when you manipulate light and err matter as say, her boss Benson McDichael does at a much more superior level than Mini does to just like maybe change some signals in a database and then, the numbers change in the bank account err, so yes ... err Mini without much understanding kind of taps on it and buys the special [**SFX: Tap card, beep**] ... "Thank you, I hope you have a really good day!" to the sales person.

PIP

Did you just give yourself infinite money?

(Group Laughter)

MADDY

I'm I'm ... I'll allow it.

PIP

Oh I love it!

MADDY

Yeah.

LYDIA

It's the sort of thing where she doesn't always remember how to pay err so, it doesn't solve all the problems so ... yeah ...

MADDY

Fair.

PIP

Yeah, while this abject insanity is happening ...

(Group Laughter)

LYDIA

It's not insanity! It's very normal! What would you do to comfort a child?
Minecraft and other, other block games are available.

(Laughter)

PIP

Zenith is gonna try and shake off the embarrassment, we got some concept of the layout earlier didn't we? And we know where the Green Needle is and, we knew where his minions were ... or at least some of them were here. I'm thinking about the best route out for the hostages and we're a floor up right? We're one floor up?

MADDY

Yeah, you're a floor up, there are definitely gonna be minions on the ground floor ...

PIP

Right.

MADDY

And so you think that probably going back to where you started from with the office spaces ... there are probably gonna be stairs down out of the fire exit, into that same alleyway ... you think that's probably the best way to get them out.

PIP

Great, okay. While I'm doing that, yeah whatever Adeeb and Morgan are doing.

LOWRI

Morgan is too afraid to approach the hostages and she's a bit juddery because she's still ... I think she's probably coming down a bit from, all the powers she absorbed, but she's afraid she'll hurt them basically, cause she doesn't know how strong she is really right now! Cause it's a bit of a ... you know, untested taking power from humans and ... or not often tested taking powers from humans and, there's always that element of "Where in my strength am I right now?". So she is just going to, even ... maybe not even back in the store kind of thinking maybe the best place for her to be is on the outside aware that there are still bad people around, kind of keeping an eye out. Well done her, I'm proud of her!

(Laughter)

MADDY

Erm What's Adeeb doing?

AHMED

I am pulling out my first aid kit and just checking if anyone needs some help.

[SFX: Taking out kit]

LYDIA

So much more practical than any of us.

AHMED

I'm really good with the mundane!

LOWRI

Yeah!

MADDY

Cool. The young woman with the chunky headphones has, a few scrapes from where she like fell onto her knees and was like ... erm her jeans are all messed up so you manage to clean that up, get a couple of bandages on there, there's nothing more major than a few scrapes and bruises but, just ... the fact of you being there seems to make people feel comforted. **[SFX: Bandage]**

PIP

“We should get them out before we head upstairs.”

LYDIA

“How?”

PIP

“Back the way we came.”

LOWRI

“Yes, yeah ... good idea. Do you wanna lead them and I'll ... take up the rear! Is that a thing and I can make sure no-one attacks us from behind?”

PIP

“Yeah sure.”

LYDIA

Mini's gonna try again at that reflecting light thing so that we're kind of weirdly, despite walking through the middle of the foyer kind of thing [**SFX: Light Powers**] ... to get back ... we're in shadow! Like even though there's direct sunlight streaming from above.

[SFX: Office space, sounds of city street from outside]

PIP

Nice.

MADDY

Under the cover of err Mini's darkness you manage to get back into the office space ... the corridors and, you follow the very handy fire exit signs ... well unsightly are, actually useful in this case!

(Laughter)

MADDY

Err, and you manage to get them out from the fire exit into the alleyway where you first arrived. **[SFX: Open door]**

[SFX: Alleyway, sirens]

PIP

And the place is surrounded isn't it? So ...

MADDY

Yeah.

PIP

We'll just be running straight out into ... you know help basically?

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

MADDY

Yes, yeah. The ... yeah the police are ... are surrounding it making sure no-one goes in, there's press everywhere ...

LYDIA

Mini shouts after "Enjoy your Roblox!"

(Group laughter)

MADDY

The kid just kind of ... looks at you with a sort of confused, but sort of affectionate way and just like "Thanks".

LYDIA

"Lego is the best!"

MADDY

"You just said two different things" ... and then just runs away!

LYDIA

"Aren't they synonyms?"

PIP

Seven things that aren't Lego!

(Group laughter)

PIP

One that you wouldn't believe!

LYDIA

Yeah.

PIP

And we ... we sort of head back inside I guess, back to ... where we got to?

LOWRI

If part of our mission is to stop the Cactus Man ... yes I suppose.

PIP

I mean were ... were those the only hostages, I mean that we know of?

MADDY

Yeah, those are the only hostages that you know of. Your main objective is complete, you have got the hostages to safety, you can see that they are ... being kind of given those shock blankets by the police off in the distance and, being popped in the back of police cars and ambulances.

PIP

Yeah, so while the hostages are ... are sort of heading out and being ushered out of the fire escape and ... and towards the ... the waiting authorities I am going to send a message to err Aquilla .. **[SFX: Comms connection chime]** “do we engage the main threat?”

MADDY

“If there's a super villain, you take them down.”

PIP

“Understood.” **[SFX: Comms disconnection chime]** “Erm I'm heading back in”.

LOWRI

"Okay. The Cactus Man, he's on the second floor, right?"

PIP

"Yep, second floor up."

LOWRI

"Okay".

PIP

"You all in?"

LOWRI

"Yeah".

LYDIA

"Yep".

LOWRI

Morgan is very noticeably like, not getting too close to any of you right now.

[SFX: Office space ambience]

MADDY

Cool, alright, so yes. You can make your way up through the office space area of the Mall, find some stairs that lead up to the second floor and **[SFX: Door opens into corridor]**, find a similarly bland corridor from which you can look out and see ... **[Music: Tense Ambience]** another U shaped balcony in the centre of the U this time you can see that the Green Needle himself and three other minions are, smashing glass cases and just taking bracelets, necklaces, watches, anything of value that they can from this jewellery store. **[SFX: Muffled smashing glass case]** And the Green Needle himself is in this very tight fitting green suit with sort of 3D yellow spikes and clearly he thinks it looks "so cool" but, it inevitably brings to mind sort of children's party type outfit! Or like children's tv!

LYDIA

Does it sag in occasional places like its just clearly a bit baggy around the knees
...

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

(Laughter)

LYDIA

And ...

MADDY

Oh yeah ...

LYDIA

And so the things wobble around!

MADDY

Yeah, some of the spikes just sort of droop a bit, like they're not ...

(Laughter)

MADDY

They're not fully stuffed!

PIP

I would love to make a been reading the files ... roll on this guy!

MADDY

For sure yeah.

PIP

Err if there even is a file on this guy?

(Laughter)

PIP

Erm ...

LYDIA

It's a sticky note.

PIP

(Rolls dice) Ooh it's not a good roll. I have made it to a 7.

MADDY

Nice, so what do you wanna get out of that?

PIP

So I wanna hit ... I just, err I tell the team one important detail that I've learned from my studies about this guy. I think from Zenith's studies about the, about the, the super human community that he has been, you know, doing for ... for quite a long time, the Green Needle doesn't come up a lot, err, I mean correct me if I'm wrong Maddy but I'm not getting the vibe that this guy is a particularly dangerous or ... or like notorious super villain?

MADDY

Yeah definitely not prolific or well regarded in any sense!

PIP

I think the thing that Zenith gets is like in all the ... all the sort of reports about his fairly, unsuccessful or at least low level crimes that, that he has committed erm, are that he is like, susceptible to provocation of ... of various ... of various kind. Like any ... anything said against like him, his costume, his whole deal, like he's very ...

LYDIA

Are you saying he's a bit prickly?

(Laughter)

MADDY

Yes ... yes.

PIP

“This guy's not great at erm, keeping it together if that makes sense? If any of you could provoke him or or erm ...”

AHMED

“Yes, yes.”

PIP

“Keep him off balance emotionally.”

AHMED

“I have a great idea.”

PIP

“Great.”

AHMED

“I am pretty sure I have a good chance of tripping you off, but I don't know what to do next. So I ... I've been thinking about picking err, a fight with him, you know ... textiles, pins and needles! There is some natural chemistry going on here, so I wanna piss him off but I don't know what to do after that!”

PIP

“If he's angry then he's stupid, we can take advantage of that.”

LYDIA

“Yeah, I can just punch him!”

LOWRI

“Yeah or erm, I could. Your punch was great Mini, your punch ... actually Mini great punch earlier. Sorry, now's not the time!”

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

LYDIA

"I mean your punches were really cool as well, excellent punches".

LOWRI

"I think I actually missed with the only ..."

LYDIA

"High five!"

LOWRI

"Erm", Morgan will just put her hand static and not put any pressure behind it!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Err, like Mini will slap the hand, very briefly. **[SFX: Slap]**

LOWRI

"Go team".

LYDIA

"Go team".

AHMED

Okay so GM, first I'm gonna err use my mask move ...

MADDY

Uh uh.

AHMED

Which allows me to switch from err, mundane to another label. So I get plus 3 on that.

MADDY

Great.

AHMED

Okay. So, for me to do that I'm gonna wrap my err turban **[SFX: Powers, Fabric noises]**... it's the blue one so I'm gonna change the colours to make it darker blue and wrap it around my face so only my eyes are seeing. So I'm mimicking the style of err a North African Amazigh Turbans ... I love it cause it just makes me feel like superior ... like I'm strong I can do this, nothing can get me, nothing, even ... not the desert even can get me. So I, I get into this mentality before I start provoking him.

MADDY

Amazing, fantastic. Feel free to do a "provoke roll" for sure ... go or it.

[SFX: Top Floor Mall, Music: Battle Ambience]

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

AHMED

Yeah I'm gonna go out in the hallway, so I'm just gonna yell at him ... you know, just come ... come pick a fight with me! (**Rolls dice**) plus 3 that's a 10.

LYDIA

Whoop.

MADDY

He will rise to the bait and do what you want. So what do ... do you say to him?

AHMED

Alright, I'm gonna yell as loud as I can ... "Hey pin cushion ..."

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Ah ah ah love it!

AHMED

"I think you lost your way! The arts and craft is on the first floor!"

LYDIA

Oooo ...

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

PIP

Oh damn.

LYDIA

Burn!!

PIP

Oh damn.

MADDY

Are you just trying to get him distracted and up in your grill or erm ...

AHMED

I'm err just pulling him just to come down to us like, getting angry and just come right at us ... as stupidly as possible.

LYDIA

Look mate if you can make him feel insecure that is a condition marked! So, like ... just keep, mocking his craft skills, that's how we'll win this!

AHMED

Yeah I just want him to jump in, getting angry not notice his surroundings so that would give err support and advantage to everyone around me.

MADDY

Amazing yes. He's gonna turn and look at you and ... just storm forward and be like ... "What you saying about me, where did you come from? What the f heck is this? Why are you, what just come on. Like if you wanna do this if you wanna come at me come at me!"

LYDIA

"Give it another go if you think you're hard enough!"

AHMED

"Hey if you're sharp enough come down and face me!"

LYDIA

Ooo.

MADDY

Just absolutely fuming!

LOWRI

Morgan is going to see this as ... opportunity to maybe try and, tackle him from the side, err but will also try and provoke him ... Morgan is not good at this kind of thing! So Morgan is going to run at him ... shouting "Err I've got loads of cacti and that's not even what one looks like!"

(Group laughter)

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

PIP

Incredible!

MADDY

Nice.

LOWRI

I've got minus 1 superior so ...

MADDY

Give it a go.

LOWRI

Oh my gosh the dice knows ... I got 5 minus 1 that's 4.

PIP

Uh oh.

MADDY

The Green Needle is so focussed on Adeeb and so up in his grill that, just completely ignores your comment and, yeah you ... you just yeah, you get this deep feeling of insecurity kind of take root and you ...

LOWRI

Oh no.

MADDY

And you mark an insecure condition.

PIP

Aw.

LOWRI

Morgan's like ... "Oh, but he doesn't look like a cactus!"

(Group laughter)

MADDY

The three minions had been looting the jewellery store and are looking over, being like ... "What's our boss doing now, what kind of silly thing is he doing there?" and are starting to walk towards this commotion. So, there is one woman with a broken bottle, there's a person with a lasso and there is a man with a cast iron frying pan.

LYDIA

Goodness.

LOWRI

He really kept the best with him!

MADDY

Yeah. So we've just had a look at the team mechanics and it looks like we're going into this particular battle with five team in the pool and, as a reminder you can use it to give plus 1 to a team mate on their roll, or you can spend it to act selfishly and shift one label up and one label down. As the Green Needle has been drawn into this ... combat err it is now open for Zenith or anyone else to take a hit!

LYDIA

Mini is gonna, having seen how cool Morgan looked just like, punching everyone err Mini's gonna give it a shot and so, tiny brightly hair coloured human lady running down to cactus person, but of course she does have powers of density shifting and so, when she runs towards and attempts to just like punch him in the face, her hand and fist surprisingly like concrete! Or at least that is the aim, I suppose we will roll to see if that works. Now GM, is there an unleash your powers because I'm using powers to make fist hard, or is that a directly engaged threat?

MADDY

I believe it's a directly engaged threat cause it's pretty ... punchy! Pretty, pretty direct, cool.

LYDIA

Okay so that's plus 0, but I rolled a 6 and a 2 so that is 8, so I think punchy mcpunch lands ...

MADDY

So yes you have landed at an absolutely impressive punch on this ... on this cactus man ... **[SFX: Solid punch]**

LYDIA

Thunk, right on the noggin!

MADDY

Right on the noggin yeah, and he turns around and he's like ... "What, where did that come from?"

(Laughter)

MADDY

"Frickin heck!" he can't even swear properly, he's such a bad super villain. Err and so what do we want to happen next? I will definitely say that the Green Needle is insecure at this point, so ...

LYDIA

Ooo.

LOWRI

I mean so is Morgan!

(Group laughter)

LOWRI

Morgan's not feeling great right now. She tried something new and it didn't work!

PIP

Err what's going on with these other three minions?

MADDY

They are ... now having seen their leader be punched they are dashing up towards you ...

PIP

Cool.

MADDY

With their various weapons.

PIP

Zenith's kind of seeing err like ... all three of the other ... of his other team mates kind of converge on this guy, I know Adeeb hasn't actually attacked him yet but, came out and drew him in so I'm kind of imagining the three of them like, kind of around him a little bit at the moment so that's gonna again kind of tear his focus away from the sort of super villain and kinda like ... and then resign himself to going for the minions ...

LYDIA/LOWRI

Aww.

PIP

Again there is this thing in his head of just like, “I was meant to take out the super villain that's what you do, okay.” I will kinda rush pass these guys and leave them with err dealing with the big bad and I will, from my non-trademark breaking utility belt erm I will take my kusarigama **[SFX: Chain rattling]** so the sort of sickle hook with the long chain and the weight on the other end and I'm gonna spin that out and go for like, less kind of directly attacking one of these three people but I'm, I'm effectively trying to start swinging it in like ... out in arc so that they can't get past me to, to, to deal with the other guys. That's my plan. **[SFX: Whooshing as he swings]**

LOWRI

Nice.

PIP

So I will roll plus freak ... see how we do. **(Rolls dice)** that's a 7 just.

MADDY

Nice.

PIP

Ooof that was very close.

MADDY

Yes so you can either mark and condition or, the effect is unstable or temporary so ...

PIP

Erm yeah then I will now that I'm angry, this is, this is ... I'm taking the angry condition now like I've fell out of a ceiling, I've been hit with a shovel and now I'm, I'm the guy who has to deal with the, the mooks and I'm like I'm ... my whole life has been training to do this and my first, my first time out in like a team with other people and this is ... this is what I am so, so yeah ... Joseph's upset. Erm so I ...

LOWRI

No.

PIP

So, so it works but I'm pissed.

MADDY

Fair, cool. So yeah, these minions are being held back by this swinging chain with the ... **[SFX: Whooshing as he swings]** weight at the end of it, leaving Adeeb, Mini and Morgan to deal with the Green Needle who is just angrily barking at you all ...

(Laughter)

MADDY

In a, in a ... it's like ... it's very much a, a small dog thinking it's a big dog situation with this guy.

AHMED

Err I am going to roll my ribbons into err ... gloves and, start punching him.

[SFX: Powers, rolling ribbons]

MADDY

Excellent yeah. Please directly engage.

AHMED

(Rolls dice) 6 total.

MADDY

You, unfortunately that's a miss so, I'm gonna say that as you swing to punch him he gives you a right hook right back so please take the afraid condition.

[SFX: Whoosh as Adeeb swings] [SFX: Punch]

AHMED

Okay.

LOWRI

Can I after the roll give Adeeb a plus 1, to try to punch? Because, if I gave him a team point he would succeed right?

CHAP Masks 5 – Poke the Cactus

AHMED

Yes.

MADDY

Yes that is correct.

LOWRI

Can I, can I do that after he's rolled, is that allowed?

AHMED

According to the description ... yes.

LOWRI

Cause what I have in mind is Morgan might just like, try and hold the cactus man in place so that Adeeb's punches land.

MADDY

Amazing yeah.

LOWRI

And she won't be sapping powers because he's got that ... awful outfit on so she won't be touching skin.

(Group laughter)

MADDY

Amazing yeah, you can absolutely do that. So, yeah take away that condition Adeeb you're, you're not afraid anymore, you're totally punching this guy!

LOWRI

[SFX: Punch] You're being backed up by your team mate!

LYDIA

You're safe in the arms of your team.

LOWRI

She's really strong! Morgan's gonna try again at a pun ... like just shouting ... "Cactuses don't move!".

(Group laughter)

MADDY

Yeah, or can you please be holding his arms out like ... a cactus!

LOWRI

"This is how they stand!"

(Group Laughter)

AHMED

Alright, so that means that I succeed so I will use my ... to choose err create an opportunity to err, for Mini to get in her ... her punch.

LYDIA

Mini is going to ... well he's already angry isn't he? Erm ...

MADDY

Yes.

LYDIA

So ... I've also just realised that Mini can fly erm, cause that's just written there, it says you can fly and, you get two of the following, so that's cool ... I had just been playing with the levity ... levitation stuff erm, but anyway, Mini is going to like hover in front of him [**SFX: Hover Powers**], of cactus man like, hyped up, heckin hyped, so hyped that the, hair is changing colour a bit, the eyes are beginning to glow and say [**SFX: Deep ethereal chimes**] ... "You need to stop being MEAN!!" and shoots lights in his [**SFX: Power shot**], in his face erm, quite scary is the, is the intention so that's a, that's an unleash powers ... is in the intention.

MADDY

Perfect yeah, yeah. Please give me an unleash your powers role plus freak.

LYDIA

I rolled a 9 and then that's plus 1, so that's a 10.

MADDY

Perfect, yeah it works perfectly. This dude is now completely and utterly terrified, he's still being held by Morgan who's just like "Right okay, okay, fine, I'll, I'll stop being mean okay!"

(Group Laughter)

MADDY

"You've done it, you've caught me alright, I'll tell you whatever you want", and he tries to gesture to the minions but, Morgan's holding his arm really tightly ... he's just like "Yeah just stand down alright, everyone stand down, they've got us".

LYDIA

"It's a fair cop".

MADDY

It's a fair cop gov." And on this fair cop I'm gonna say that we're ending the episode there, thank you so much for listening ...

LOWRI

Hey!

MADDY

To Chapter and Multiverse and I would now like to ask our fabulous players where we can find them on the internet, starting with Lowri.

LOWRI

You can find me @LowriTweets err where I sometimes tweet.

(Laughter)

MADDY

And Ahmed.

AHMED

Hi, you can find me everywhere @mr_aljabry.

MADDY

Fabulous and Lydia.

LYDIA

Erm I am @LydNicholas and at urbanhooks on Twitter and, other places.

MADDY

Nice, and Pip.

PIP

Err hello, I don't know why I always say hello, erm err you can ...

LYDIA

Goodbye.

PIP

Goodbye, you can find me err at Pip_Gladwin on Twitter and err, yeah that's pretty much the only place ... you will not find me anywhere else; you will never find me!

(Laughter)

MADDY

Much like Zenith you will never find Pip! And you can find me on Twitter and Instagram at maddy_abstract and you can find 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 ... goodbye.

EVERYONE

Goodbye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

THE ETERNAL TAVERN KEEPER

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