

RQG –22 – Carry on Swarming

Content Warnings

- Swarms
- Bombs & fire
- Physical violence & injury
- Comedic classism
- Emetophobia
- Mould & fungus
- Loss of consciousness
- Discussions of: animal death
- Mentions of: death, blood, alcohol
- SFX: chittering, explosions, loud vocalisations

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 22 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me again, I have

JAMES

James Ross

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

BEN

Ben Meredith

ALEX

And who are you playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham, underground gardener

(laughing)

BRYN

Hamid the Halfling Sorcerer.

LYDIA

Sasha, the stabby, burny rogue.

BEN

Zolf Smith who is in this situation useless.

(laugher)

ALEX

And we've got a big of admin before we start today's episode.

LYDIA

Yay! Admin!

JAMES

Oh admin! Oh my favourite!

BEN

I'm going to file these things.

LYDIA

File, file, file, file.

JAMES

I'm typing [typing noise]. Carriage return.

ALEX

So today is the first day that we are recording where we have our dedications coming in.

JAMES

Did you get the memo? I got the memo. Did you enjoy that memo?

BEN

I loved that memo. It was a great memo.

ALEX

So we're dedicating today's episode to...I'm going to pronounce it wrong. We're dedicating today's episode to **Joaka Betts**, boyfriend of April Nash. April, thank you for introducing your boyfriend. Apparently they guffaw on the way to work and draw stares which is excellent.

JAMES

And now you've screwed up their name.

ALEX

Well I'm a bad person. How would you say that?

JAMES

Yerka.

ALEX

Ok well then thanks to Yerka Betts and April Nash. April, for introducing Yerka and we're glad you like it. We hope you continue listening and this one's for you. So as a recap of where we are at the moment, you guys are currently in the basement of Kew Gardens after a number of disappearances including Dr Mendeleev who Colgate had tried to hook you up with to help you out with your questions...

BEN

Mysterious seed

ALEX

And your mysterious seed. So you went down to try and help out because they couldn't contact the police because they have a problem with reputation. You went down, you had a bit of a sneak around...

BRYN

You're very atmospheric I thought. Like you know, wandering through corridors with flickering lights and strange scratching noises. Much spookier than the horror podcast.

LYDIA

Yeah much.

ALEX

Thanks for that. That's fine.

(laughing)

JAMES

It's because we had...

BRYN

This is not a good time to insult Alex when my character is nearly dead.

ALEX

So please insult me whilst there are two swarms which are currently forcing you to split up.

BRYN

I walk up to the swarm and I whisper in its ear, Alex sucks.

(laughing)

LYDIA

It has many ears and you do every one individually.

ALEX

It's going to be such a shame when the party healer dies first. So...

BRYN

I'd lose the other leg.

ALEX

We are currently mid combat. Ok. With that in mind, it is the swarm's go. The swarm having had Bertie take a swipe at it moves, lunges for him and is now occupying the same space as Bertie meaning it deals his damage. 8 damage.

BRYN

Did I mention that this enemy sucks. Oh Alex sucks.

JAMES

I'm down to 7 hit points guys.

LYDIA

Wow!

BEN

You've still got more than me!

ALEX

Ok so as it's swarming over Bertie you're going to have to give me a fortitude save against being nauseated.

JAMES

What am I rolling?

ALEX

A D20 adding your fort

JAMES

ALEX

Yeah you're fine.

JAMES

25 total.

BRYN

Oh 25 total. That will save you from most things.

JAMES

Bertie manages to fight off his disgust even though being assaulted by a mound of tiny faceless identitless creatures reminds him an awful lot of his idea of what an uprising of the poor might be like.

(laughing)

ALEX

God, that is so horrible!

JAMES

Yes, yes he is. How have we not realised that. We're 20 episodes in. He's a horrible person. He's absolutely horrendous.

LYDIA

It's basically a Boris Johnson thing going on right.

JAMES

Yes, he's a lot like Boris Johnson.

BRYN

I'm pretty sure in the first episode that was part of his description.

ALEX

Ok, so Sasha.

LYDIA

James is annoyed at us for not realising...

ALEX

Oh I realised, I just love the character he deliberately wanted everyone to love to hate. Everyone just loves. Sasha, you're up.

LYDIA

I want to throw either a bomb or a vial of thing. Do I need to prep either of them. It's a 20 foot range and that's 20 foot right?

ALEX

I would recommend something with the biggest area of effect possible. Probably one of your bombs.

BRYN

The bombs have a splash.

LYDIA

I need to ready those.

ALEX

The bombs have a splash damage but if she hits directly the swarm will take that damage.

LYDIA

Ok so I'll ready a bomb and throw the bomb if I can do that both in one turn.

ALEX

Drawing the components of, creating and throwing a bomb requires a standard action that provokes an attackable opportunity. The idea is that what you're doing is you basically separate out to the agents and then you sort of move and go [shaking noise] and chuck it.

LYDIA

So definitely going for that one which unfortunately I think holds Brutor as well.

ALEX

Brutor's currently ko'd in the swarm. Here's hoping the swarm shelters him.

LYDIA

Yes, well ok. So I will move one to be in front of the door which I can potentially step out of afterwards and I throw my bomb.

ALEX

Presumably you're plonking it to hit one directly and splash onto the other. In which case can you give me an attack roll and it won't need to be that high.

LYDIA

Come on dices! 20!

BRYN

Confirmed critical. Roll again to hit.

ALEX

Ah, ah, ah. So I got...basically the iCrypt app which will allow me to substitute, instead of extra damage and affect. So for instance we're using iFumble 2 which means...

BRYN

That's why the mace went wrong.

ALEX

His mace has gone wrong and he's taking negatives.

LYDIA

In this case I think that it would be best to get more damage because I don't know how many of those would be in any effective.

ALEX

I believe that's a really good idea.

LYDIA

Cool. That's a 17.

ALEX

You definitely confirmed.

BRYN

You will do 2 D6 damage instead of one!

LYDIA

Ace!

BRYN

And the splash damage will go up from one point to two points. And splash damage is super effective against swarms.

LYDIA

8

BRYN

8 main and then 2 splash but the thing is that the splash in theory applies to every component of the swarm which are these tiny little individual

JAMES

Right, so every single creature is taking 8 and 2 in that smaller one. That's pretty great.

ALEX

Yeah. That's super effective!

(cheering)

BRYN

Well done Sasha.

ALEX

So describe it to me you've...

LYDIA

She's got a whole raft of different kinds of firey things hidden in her new studded leather jacket and so steps, after having thrown up in a corner, steps

away from the wall towards the swarm, cracks two together which she's pretty sure she knows how it's going to work together. Counts to one and throws it into, put out a little mandrakey screaming [screeching noise] [explosion noise] [screams]. Like that.

ALEX

It's really useful when you do the sound effects so I don't have to. It's great. So yeah, there's loads of screams.

JAMES

For the benefit of the listeners at home this is a very compelling mime.

LYDIA

It was like this, and it was like that and swirly thing.

ALEX

But yeah loads of them collapse to the ground. The remainder seem to have all taken some shrapnel as well. It's a good hit. A really good one. Straight on to Bertie, you're currently surrounded on all sides by swarming, biting things that are so fast you can barely see them. They're vaguely green. They stink. They make you want to vomit but you fight it down because you're so awesomely fortitudinous.

BRYN

I think without fortitude save you could probably just eat them.

(laughing)

ALEX

What do you do?

JAMES

He has nothing else...can I take a five foot step?

ALEX

I really strongly advise leaving the swarm.

JAMES

I'm going to take a step...it might be worth me running away actually, I'm only on 7.

BRYN

There are doors, there are escape routes.

LYDIA

Grab the dwarf and run away!

JAMES

Can Bertie hit and then move?

ALEX

Yes

JAMES

Bertie will hit and then move.

ALEX

Ok

JAMES

Take Sasha the swarm and then run away, past Zolf. Leaving Zolf in the path of the swarm should they decide to pursue Bertie.

ALEX

Then give me an attack roll.

JAMES

We're a team!

BEN

We are a team

ALEX

Operation Meat Shield

(laughing)

JAMES

12

ALEX

12 is not enough for a hit. So as you're stood amongst all of these creatures that are writhing around you try and build up the momentum for a swing but there's just so much resistance across your whole arm you just can't manage it but you can still take a move. What do you do?

JAMES

Cool. I'm going to move 4 squares.

ALEX

Ok so Zolf, you're up. You're no longer nauseated but you're taking a -4 to attacks because you're currently chugging around a big hunk of door attached to your waist.

BEN

Yeah this is pretty fab so what I'm going to do.

JAMES

Cast a healing spell on Bertie and then run.

ALEX

Oh a cleric.

(laughter)

BEN

I should probably do that yeah. That'd be great. So what I'm going to do...

ALEX

I'm going to use that fireball I don't have!

BEN

I'm going to...

LYDIA

Hamid shouts that in character!

ALEX

Yeah do it!

BEN

Yeah I'm looking in panic. Hamid doesn't have enough of an idea what's going on to offer characters that.

ALEX

I've just noticed on the battleplan that Hamid's still facing the corner in order to hide.

LYDIA

Vomiting.

BRYN

Terribly unattractive to vomit in front of people.

BEN

I am vaguely panicking but pull myself together just enough to convert advanced scurvy in the hope that these guys are going to be...

(Laughter)

ALEX

I feel like that might actually make them stronger.

BEN

Yeah casting that on Bertie. So I convert that into a level one cure light wounds which is a...

BRYN

D8 plus your cast level

BEN

Healing 3 damage.

JAMES

Thanks.

ALEX

You can still move. What do you do?

BEN

Take a couple of counts and move towards the door.

ALEX

Ok. Hamid you're up. You're also no longer nauseated.

BRYN

Yay!

ALEX

You also don't know fireball yet.

BRYN

No! Which is like the worst thing that's ever happened to me. If I knew fireball this would be the best.

ALEX

So what do you do?

BRYN

I turn around facing away from the corner finally and try to desperately take in stock. I see that my friends are running away so I'm pretty tempted to do that but I'm going to, before I start running, cast acid splash

ALEX

Ok

BRYN

Which despite its name does no splash damage whatsoever!

(laughing)

But I don't think I really know that. It seems like it might work.

ALEX

You're still...

BRYN

Spraying some acid over these things might help.

ALEX

Every time so yeah go for it.

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BRYN

15 on the attack roll. Oh but some bonuses too.

ALEX

It doesn't matter. It's a hit.

BRYN

Excellent. I do 1 point of acid damage.

ALEX

Presumably at that one.

BRYN

Yeah

ALEX

Ok

BRYN

I'm hoping it's at least slightly more effective than say a cross bow bolt would be.

BEN

Probably yes.

BRYN

Because it is at least a small amount of acid that will splash a little.

ALEX

Do you move?

BRYN

Yes I then move. Through the door into the next mysterious room.

ALEX

Ok heading in through those double doors, the same direction as the blood trail, you find yourself in an enormous room. Huge, almost warehouse like. Clearly it's using the majority of the space underneath the building and spread throughout it are large 10 foot by 10 foot glass, they look like cages or something. Full of steam so you can't see what's in them or anything like that and it disappears off into the gloom. Again all of the lights are still effectively torn out or broken but there are some luminescent glows coming from the varying tanks, let's call them.

BRYN

I'm not sure I like this. I'm not sure I like any of this.

ALEX

Ok. Now. One of the swarms having been hit by a bomb, it starts moving for Sasha having been a bomb thrown at it. It plonks itself on Sasha.

LYDIA

See what happens when I try and save you guys.

ALEX

It ends its turn on Sasha dealing 8 damage.

LYDIA

I am wounded.

ALEX

Are you still conscious?

LYDIA

I've got 3.

ALEX

Ok so yeah, it swarms over [gnawing noise] biting and tearing and you're completely engulfed again. You can barely see outside. Give me a Fort save against being nauseated.

LYDIA

ALEX

Yep, you're fine. You're not nauseated. You're a very hardy crew. The other swarm goes for Bertie.

BEN

Ha! You suck big man.

ALEX

5, 15 and engulfs itself on Bertie. Dealing...

JAMES

I hope it's a 3 damage

ALEX

5 damage

JAMES

I'm down to 5.

LYDIA

I've got no pity for you!

(laughing)

ALEX

So again it swarms over Bertie [gnawing noise] and Zolf you just manage to see Bertie's faceplate disappear behind a writhing mass of bodies. Sasha, you're up. You're not nauseated. You still can do everything that you would do. What do you do?

LYDIA

Can I go through the door, throw the bomb through it and then shut the door?

ALEX

This is where it matters that it's a full standard action to prepare and throw it. You can either move and throw it or throw it then move. You can't split the move.

BRYN

What you can do though is throw the bomb a little bit further away and bearing in mind that...

LYDIA

He's four squares

ALEX

It wouldn't work like that. If she's throwing it beyond the creature then it will only be the splash damage that hits it. If she wants a direct hit it has to basically, the way the game works, it has to hit a square and the splash is taken from the point of impact.

BRYN

If you go through this door here, the near door and then close that behind you then assuming it's going to follow you it has to go around the longer door which would give you a bit of time to hit it assuming it can't get through the door.

BEN

I think prioritise getting away.

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah, I'm nearly dead. I'm going through the door. I don't really have that much of an option.

ALEX

Sure. Do you close the door?

LYDIA

Yes definitely shut the door. I might try and wedge it shut.

ALEX

Give me a disable device check.

LYDIA

Oh well I rolled a 3 but I have an 8 bonus. So 11

ALEX

11 so you manage to close it, you see that the lock's way too complicated to deal with in a quick motion but you do see there's chunks of masonry from the ceiling and so on that fell from the lights and you use that to just ram the door. It won't hold for long but it'll certainly buy you at least six seconds, let's conveniently say. Ok Bertie you're up.

JAMES

I think he's just going to have to hit it and run again I think.

ALEX

I didn't get you to roll for a Fortitude save for being damaged did I.

JAMES

Ok no. Fortitude save for nausea?

ALEX

Yes

JAMES

16. 22.

ALEX

You're fine. Cool. So what do you do?

JAMES

I hit it and run. 9. 16 total

ALEX

That's a hit.

JAMES

Yeah lovely.

ALEX

A fine hit.

JAMES

D10 + 4. 7.

ALEX

7 ok. And that is on that swarm. Ok. I will tell you the swarm you just hit looks significantly messed up. Describe what you do.

JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham raising his sword in the air casts it in a downward motion diagonally across the swarm neatly dissecting a row a heads that pop off one at a time [screaming noise] they go, first in the same level of key and

then as he finds a section of a mound that is progressing gently downwards in slowly descending keys.

(laughing)

ALEX

And then what do you do?

JAMES

He then legs it out of the door. So 20 feet is my move. So that's four squares.

ALEX

You find yourself beside Hamid looking at basically an enormous warehouse and it's super creepy. Super creepy. Zolf, you're up.

BEN

Ok, I move one, I close the door.

(laughter)

ALEX

I will also allow you to make a disable device check if you'd like to try and wedge it with something.

BEN

I'm not going to do much else so I might as well.

ALEX

Go for it.

BEN

Cool. I rolled an 18. So that is 13.

ALEX

13.

(laughter)

Again...

BEN

Armour check penalty

JAMES

You try and lock a door with your leg

BEN

It's a dex based skill check.

ALEX

You can jam the door in a similar way to Sasha. How do you do it?

BEN

In a similar way to Sasha. With a rock.

(laughing)

Actually I know what I'm doing. I close it and then just smash the lock with my big wood block mace thing [clanging noise]. Yeah there you go, just kind of buckle the opening mechanism.

ALEX

That'll work. Ok, Hamid, you're up. What do you do?

BRYN

Sasha! Where's Sasha?

JAMES

No idea!

BRYN

I run.

ALEX

Ok and I'm going to chuck you a bone. The second that you cross the corner of a crate which you are beside, you reveal a rather horrible sight. Whilst there is a large set of double doors that appear to lead vaguely back in the direction that you came, there is also...

BRYN

I was running towards the next door in this room to try and get out of it and find where Sasha had gone. Apparently that's not a great plan.

ALEX

You find looking ahead of you, give me a perception check.

BRYN

Not very good. 10.

ALEX

So as you cross the corner you see in front of you an enormous, let's call it a fungus, a mould you can't tell, it's too dark and you're panicking and there's lots of things going on but it's apparently covering the entire major double doors which are directly in front of you which are easily 20 foot/30 foot across. And there appears to be what's left of a person, half engulfed by it, flat on its front at the doorway and the second that you cross the crate, a wave of cold hits you. Apparently from that direction. So you may want to quietly shift that run.

BRYN

Hamid screeches to a stop having not gone very far and casts acid blast at the fungus

ALEX

Ok

BEN

Acid splash

BRYN

Acid splash. Acid splash yes. Acid blast would be a much better spell.

ALEX

Go for it.

BRYN

Ooh not very good. 7.

ALEX

It's massive, you're fine.

BRYN

Good.

ALEX

So you can hit it.

BRYN

I hit it and I do 3 points of acid damage.

ALEX

Ok so you fire some acid damage [sizzling sound]. It currently burns away a small portion of it and exposes bare stone beneath but even as you're watching it begins to grow back in on that section that you hit. Right so the swarm that was chasing Sasha, you can't see what happens but there is an enormous [thudding noise] against the door and it rattles and it judders and clearly if you hadn't put that brace in against it, it would have already come through the door. A similar event happens at the other door with the other swarm [thudding noise]. Again if you hadn't braced the door it would already be through and on you guys. Sasha what do you do? You're currently alone in a creepy corridor with an obvious monster just on the other side of a door that could give way at any moment.

LYDIA

I'll go out here, open the door and I throw another bomb in it.

BEN

Nice!

ALEX

Go for it.

LYDIA

For the listeners there were two double doors

ALEX

Leading into the room with the broken crate...

LYDIA

With the broken crate. The swarm has gone at me through one of the doors and I've run to the other door, opened it, peeked out to throw a bomb.

ALEX

Go for it.

LYDIA

17.

ALEX

It's a hit.

LYDIA

Cool. So it's 1 D6

BRYN

Yeah

LYDIA

Then it's attack. I only do 2 damage.

ALEX

You only do 2 damage

BRYN

And the splash

ALEX

You duck out. You prepare your bomb and you throw it. It slams into the room and explodes [exploding noise]. It appears to have been critically affected. More and more of them plummet away dying and then the ones that are left slowly, slowly begin to disintegrate, bits of them fall off until there's only two or three left. Those scarpers, disappear as fast as possible right back up into the vent. There can't have been more than one or two.

(cheering)

LYDIA

Oh my gosh I nearly died and I did kill it!

JAMES

Sasha for the win!

LYDIA

I am quite relieved.

ALEX

Ok, that was your turn. You are one swarm done.

LYDIA

Yeah my heart rate's...Sasha's fine but I'm not feeling very well.

ALEX

Right Bertie, you're up. The last thing you heard was a big boom and Hamid shouting "where's Sasha".

JAMES

Right I think Bertie can head towards the door and help to secure the door better.

ALEX

Ok. How do you intend to do so?

JAMES

What is around me? What surrounds the door?

ALEX

So surrounding the door, at the door itself obviously is a mangled lock with Zolf there. There are still bits of...you see occasionally a light fitting and some broken masonry dotting the ground where things have torn them out however the room rapidly disappears into gloom the further away from that door you are. There is a blood trail leading away from the door deeper into the room and you can see that certain parts of the tanks appear cracked. Bits of steam seem to be escaping but again it's just billowing steam on the other side of these tanks so there's no way to know what's inside.

JAMES

Bertie rushes towards the door and attempts to hold it in place bodily.

ALEX

So you're bracing the door?

JAMES

I'm bracing the door using my powerful man strength

ALEX

Give me a strength check. So it's just a D20 plus your strength.

BRYN

According to the battle map it does open the right way so you're not pushing on the door!

(laughing)

JAMES

Ah critical fail!

ALEX

Ok so...

JAMES

Wait, I'm pretty sure this says pull

(laughing)

ALEX

What I will say you stride manly forward, brace yourself, thighs bulging beneath your heavy plate. You reach your hands out, slip on the blood slick and fall flat prone on the ground in front of the door. The doors do open inwards so you can't fall through the door much as I'd like do that!

JAMES

Because Bertie slips hands go through panels of the door.

ALEX

Ah you know what, I'm going to go with that as well. And your hands are through a door.

BRYN

You're going to Mummy Returns it where it's just a skeleton.

ALEX

Zolf. What do you do? Currently Bertie's arms have disappeared through a door and he's in front of you.

BRYN

Nice that he was helping!

BEN

What I'm going to do is grab him and try and just drag him back.

ALEX

Sure

BEN

So strength?

ALEX

Yeah another strength check

BEN

Just straight strength?

ALEX

Yeah just straight strength

BEN

3.

ALEX

You don't manage to fumble, you reach down to pull him back, you slip and barely manage to keep your own footing.

BEN

Oh god!

ALEX

So Hamid. Speaking of which, it's your turn. What do you do?

BRYN

Hamid doesn't know what's going on behind him. He's terrified of what's going on in front of him but what he is going to do is having seen that the huge fungus just regenerates itself from his acid blast, he's going to take a five foot step and attempt to drag the body in front of him out of the fungus.

ALEX

The second that you take a five foot step towards it, suddenly the cold completely overwhelming. It's as if there was something keeping it localised to

that area and it's just been sucking all of the heat from anything within. The second that you are within that distance of it, you receive, let me check.

LYDIA

Can we at this point remind the listeners as well...well to be fair it hasn't been as long for them as it has been for us but this place is oppressively boiling hot.

ALEX

I should reiterate it's incredibly oppressively like hot, hot rainforest. Like hot for a rainforest in here. It's steamy, it's misty. You take automatically 12 points of non-lethal damage.

BRYN

I fall unconscious.

ALEX

Yes you do.

BRYN

Shoot!

ALEX

So the last thing that you remember is seeing this brown mould near you and cold sweeping over you and your limbs just no longer obeying.

LYDIA

Oh that does not sound fun!

BRYN

This is...

JAMES

These are dire

ALEX

Interesting...interesting little nuance of the rules. I'm not sure if occupying the same square as your hands counts as dealing full damage to you. I'm going to go ahead and say that your gauntleted hands go unnoticed. There is another bang at the door [banging noise], you barely manage to keep it closed. In fact it doesn't burst open but you're clear that the lock has effectively given way and then silence.

BEN

Oh good.

ALEX

Sasha. You see the swarm through the open doorway of the opposite side of the room that you're in. You see the swarm making its way back across to the vent from which it came in. Now you're up.

LYDIA

I drink a potion. 5. I get 5 back.

ALEX

Ok so with Sasha keeping some recon going and healing herself. I think we'll take a break there and come back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. So Bertie, you're up. What do you do? You're currently prone with your hands through a door

JAMES

Jammed through the door.

ALEX

But you're not being eaten so you know, swings and roundabouts.

BEN

And you've got Zolf rather affectionately clutching at your belt trying to get you up.

JAMES

This reminds me of rag week

(laughing)

BEN

Stop reminiscing and get up!

JAMES

Ah sunny days by the cam, just with bottles of wine trailing in the punt behind.

BEN

Free action, donk him on the back of the helmet.

JAMES

This reminds me of rag week.

(laughing)

ALEX

So what does Bertie do?

JAMES

Bertie stands up and extricates his hands from the door and then attempts to listen through the door. Well no, he's going to peer through the door, there are holes that his hands...

ALEX

Nice. Very nice!

BEN

All part of the plan

JAMES

All part of the bastard plan! Always thinking. Brains Macguffingham they call me when I've invented them.

ALEX

The piano all over again. You see the swarm apparently having not noticed you swarming back towards the vent from which it came.

JAMES

Yeah that's right bugger off you slags. Go on. I'll show you.

ALEX

At which point the swarm stops having heard you.

(laughing)

Zolf you're up. You are not aware that he's just summoned a swarm upon you.

BEN

Oh thank goodness, it's leaving. I wonder where Hamid went to. Hamid are you ok? And I'll wander off there to follow Hamid.

ALEX

So the second that you cross around the crates you see two bodies; one engulfed with fungus mould. Another which is clearly Hamid face down, not engulfed in mould but with a light patina of frost upon him despite the sweltering heat of the room.

BEN

That doesn't look good.

ALEX

The swarm moves back towards the door from which Bertie is yelling.

JAMES

That's a very fast swarm.

ALEX

It's an incredibly fast swarm.

BEN

So you definitely shouldn't have run away from it.

ALEX

And it again bashes against the door [banging noise]. The lock gives way. There is now a swarm face to face with you as the door sort of sweeps you backwards a little bit and there is now an open door and a swarm facing you.

BEN

What sort of shape is the swarm in at this point? You mentioned it looked a little bit grim

ALEX

The swarm is in pretty bad shape. Pretty bad shape. Sasha.

LYDIA

I've heard you shouting haven't I?

BEN

Yeah, yeah.

LYDIA

So...

BRYN

And you've seen the swarm go back.

ALEX

Yeah you saw the swarm turn around when he goes yeah. Turn around and you see the swarm go and directly dart back.

LYDIA

Firstly a very deep sigh.

(laughing)

BEN

Yeah important, important

LYDIA

At how incompetent my colleagues seem to be and this is me sneaking, I don't want the swarm to notice me. So do I need to do a sneak check?

ALEX

You would have to do a stealth check. So for listeners when you're wanting to be stealthy you can either move half your normal speed and use stealth with no penalties whatsoever or you can attempt to move at speed greater than half but less than your normal speed and take a -5. So less than just means even if it's 25 foot instead of 30 but you'll be taking a -5 on it. But your stealth's massive so it's up to you.

LYDIA

Is it possible for me to do the equivalent of like a charge so my full action, I do that 30 but I do it super stealthy.

ALEX

You could use your entire turn to move stealthily with no penalties but you would still need to give me a stealth check which you could fumble

LYDIA

Ok that's cool. That's what I'm going to do.

ALEX

Ok give me the stealth check then

LYDIA

20

ALEX

Natural 20.

LYDIA

I don't notice myself!

(laughing)

ALEX

A natural 20. When the pressure's on, your adrenaline's going, you're amazing at it. Describe it to me. I realise being stealthy's quite hard to describe

LYDIA

I just walk casually across an empty room, I happen to make absolutely no sound. I'm almost surprised to find myself at the other side of the room, the door is open, I remember from last time and I can see the swarm but I can't do anything else. This is what I do. I just do it really well. Always.

ALEX

Bertie you're up. You're face to face with the thing that you summoned. What do you do?

(laughing)

At least you're standing!

JAMES

Which of you tiny little peasants wants to dance he says as he raises his sword over his head and swings it down and he's going to power attack with this at this point.

ALEX

Yeah go for it.

JAMES

$2 + 7 - 1$, that's 8.

ALEX

Does not hit. So again Bertie...

JAMES

Can't hit something is genuinely unmissably huge. Three times I've failed this.

ALEX

So again Bertie takes a big swing and swings at it however the swarm almost as if it's used to you now swinging wildly at it, just again parts without much difficulty and closes again ready to engulf and destroy you. Zolf. Your turn.

BEN

Ok. Turning around

(laughing)

ALEX

You see Bertie having apparently let it in!

BEN

Oh for why!

(laughing)

Drop my mace, pull out my trident and just wait on it because I'm within 10 foot.

ALEX

Yes you are.

BEN

8

ALEX

An 8. Again Bertie's still in your way, he's still doing wild extra swings to try and compensate for the first miss. You just manage to get knocked aside. You can't get a hit on it. The swarm, it can't smile because it's a swarm but you kind of the impression that it would if it could, moves five foot forward.

JAMES

It's got very smug waggle dents

ALEX

Automatically spending the rest of its turn on you dealing 7 damage.

JAMES

Ah, Bertie's down.

ALEX

Bertie is down.

JAMES

-2.

ALEX

Sasha you are up. You have just seen...just effectively Bertie's hand flop out the far side of the swarm, drop and let go of its sword which scatters to about here in the middle of the room. You know that Bertie's down. What do you do?

LYDIA

I think I probably still throw a bomb even though I know that it's also on Bertie.

ALEX

Do it! Be awesome! Accept it!

LYDIA

So I am going to throw the thing and then I want to be able to run away.

ALEX

You're still within range of it.

LYDIA

Right so let's throw in a bomb. 14 + 4. 18

ALEX

Hits

LYDIA

3 + 1 splash damage

BRYN

Bertie you take 1 splash damage from Sasha's bomb.

JAMES

What a nuisance on -3.

ALEX

I would've got you to roll for nausea but you're unconscious.

LYDIA

Then I'm going to step back.

ALEX

I'll describe what happens. You chuck the bomb, it slams into it, another explosion [explosion noise]. It whirls around you as they fly at you and begins to implode as flames lick across the bodies as more and more of them plummet and die. Again it implodes and collapses leaving only two or three which scarp across the remnants of the screaming fungus from earlier and disappear up into the vents. You've taken out both of them with your bombs.

LYDIA

Yeah so, in which case instead of running away I saunter over

(laugher)

Alright lads?

BEN

I'll give you a glare.

ALEX

If you're willing to stabilise Bertie I can drop you out of combat.

BEN

Yes. I'm not that petty!

ALEX

Then we'll drop out of combat time.

BEN

Ok, right while I'm stabilising Bertie

LYDIA

It's alright I've got the other one as well.

BEN

Yeah, great good. Hamid's over there unconscious and something's happened to him.

LYDIA

You're welcome.

BEN

Thank you Sasha. Just stay here with Bertie and make sure he doesn't wake up and do something stupid. I will go back to Hamid and having seen the patina of frost, get my trident and scrape him backwards.

ALEX

Yeah, very, very wise. You...

BEN

Wisdom 18. Come on!

LYDIA

You want me to get the dog.

BEN

Oh yeah, fine.

ALEX

You scrape Hamid back and as he moves almost perfectly the frost disappears the second that that cold clearly withdraws from the surrounding heat and you see it melting off him but even from where you are it still feels cold. Actively cold. To the point where there is a little bit of a chill in the air because the moisture's now cold and clammy instead of hot. Sasha?

LYDIA

I go off and I pick up Brutor. I mean is that a strength check for me? He's quite a big dog.

ALEX

You go over to Brutor

LYDIA

Is he dead? Is Brutor dead? Oh Brutor!

ALEX

Do you have any skills in ranks in heal?

LYDIA

I don't think...no not...oh no 2. I've got a 2. Well I get a 2 bonus because of the wisdom.

ALEX

Give me a heal check to see if he's still alive. That's a D20

LYDIA

Right. 10. So 12.

ALEX

You think he might be dead.

(gasping)

LYDIA

Don't tell Bertie I think the dog's gone.

BEN

Probably shouldn't shout that then! Just bring the body back.

ALEX

He doesn't seem to be breathing.

BRYN

I can't believe you killed a dog.

LYDIA

I'm carrying Brutor

BEN

Yeah I'm going to heft Hamid over my shoulder or just carry him and just chuck him on top of Bertie in a heap.

LYDIA

I mean maybe he just forgot to breathe, he was that thick.

BEN

If you pop him down there on top of the others.

LYDIA

Plop him on the pile

BEN

And stand close.

ALEX

You drag the dog and plonk it by Bertie.

BEN

Right, hold still and be quiet and I'll grab my holy symbol.

LYDIA

I'm quite good at being quiet. I snuck up on that other swarm. Did you see me throw the thing.

BEN

They're unconscious.

LYDIA

Yeah but you aren't!

BEN

Be quiet I need to concentrate

ALEX

Give me a perception check all of you

BRYN

I'm unconscious

ALEX

Sorry yeah everyone who's...so actually only half the party. Less than if you include Brutor.

BEN

19

LYDIA

22

ALEX

Both of you hear a rattle from the very, very far end of the gloom in the room.

Just a [small rattle noise]

LYDIA

I can't, I've run out of bombs.

BEN

Shh, right quickly. Oh Poseidon please grant us the strength to do this because these people are being really nasty and screwing everything up. Alright, it's a quick one, sorry and I'll channel energy.

(laughter)

JAMES

Good prayer, good prayer.

ALEX

What's the...

BEN

A wave of positive energy comes out of me and heals everyone in the thing for 2 D6. 7 healing to everybody.

ALEX

However. The healing is less effective than you would think. You reach out to try and heal it, to channel the energy, to power it through and you meet a resistance that you've never felt before. You manage to just about heal them for 4 instead of the 7.

BEN

I grab my holy symbol and look in its face and go look I know I didn't drown those people but I'm gonna. Brilliant. Hope Hamid's happy with himself. Get up!

BRYN

Hamid is still unconscious.

JAMES

I'm on one hit point. I'm just about awake.

BEN

Get yourself up.

ALEX

There is another rattle from the very far end of the gloom.

BEN

Drink this and get ready and I hand you a healing potion.

LYDIA

Does he get a scar?

JAMES

Do I get an olive in this?

ALEX

It will heal him but yeah he'll be getting a scar.

BEN

Just suck it down.

JAMES

I drink whatever it is that I've been given

(laughing)

Poison!

(laughing)

LYDIA

He rolls a perception check. Whisky yes!

BRYN

It's a healing potion.

JAMES

Oh right ok, lovely.

BRYN

D8 + 1. Another 6. I'm now on 7.

BEN

And I will bend down and try and get Hamid awake with a heal check.

ALEX

I don't think you can get someone conscious from a heal check.

BEN

Can I get him awake with a slap check.

ALEX

No. He's just ko'd.

BEN

I will attempt the slap check.

(laughing)

[slapping noise] wake up! Hamid, for goodness sake get up!

ALEX

There's nothing, although your hand feels slightly colder from having hit him.

BEN

We need to get ready for whatever the heck is down the other end of that room. That was a close one and Hamid's still out of it. Give him a slightly angry kick, not a hard one.

LYDIA

It wasn't that close.

ALEX

At which point, you have a scar my friend. You have been ko'd. What is the nature of your scar?

JAMES

Let me see, well I've been attacked by...well the obvious choice is something that looks powerfully masculine, something across the face perhaps. But I've been gnawed at by all of these...

ALEX

Oh hundred and hundreds of them have been going at you.

LYDIA

Little rooty type hands.

JAMES

I think they've been at my forearms so I've got lots and lots of tiny little bumps and like lots of tiny little bite marks.

LYDIA

You've got arm herpes basically.

JAMES

It basically looks like I've got arm herpes. Yeah.

LYDIA

Bertie becomes a man that will drink his whisky with his gauntlet on.

JAMES

Yes!

ALEX

Ok so what do you guys do?

JAMES

Can I perhaps suggest a tactical retreat to the other side of this door.

BEN

Yeah probably. Yeah.

LYDIA

There's no swarms left. I dealt with that.

JAMES

Well done young lady, very well done.

BEN

There's the dead body of a dog lying next to you.

LYDIA

Is it dead, don't know.

ALEX

I was going to say, given it's Bertie, give me a perception roll to notice a dog next to you.

JAMES

20

(laughing)

Not only do I notice the dead dog, I notice every dog that has ever died!
Humanity to dog! Why did we ever tame you? Noooo. Bertie sinks to his
knees, picks up Brutor, holds him to his breast place and goes no! Noooo!

BEN

Bertie, Bertie, shut up!

JAMES

Go away I'm too busy being sad!

BEN

Will you please shut up before we spend most of our time being dead.

LYDIA

We should get on top of something. Are there...

BEN

Take the dog corpse and I'll grab Hamid.

LYDIA

Right there's a box in the other room, maybe if it's another...does that sound
like a snore to you [snoring noise]

BEN

Move

JAMES

Bertie pushes Brutor into a knapsack.

(laughing)

There's a lot of folding going on.

ALEX

We'll say you're dragging or carrying. You're not fitting Brutor in a sack.

JAMES

He can try!

LYDIA

He's a big dog.

BEN

I realise he's...

BRYN

Carry him on your shield

ALEX

Brutor's bigger than Hamid

JAMES

Bertie's entirely the kind of person who would have made a little papoose for Brutor.

ALEX

I will not allow you to.

JAMES

I want a red cotton papoose.

ALEX

I am vetoing your red cotton papoose.

BEN

Terms I always hoped I would hear from a...

(laughing)

ALEX

The papoose has been vetoed move on.

JAMES

Alright fine. Bertie drags Brutor back into the room beyond.

ALEX

Right so where do you go?

LYDIA

So I lead them back the first room and point them towards a big crate.

ALEX

Oh the big broken one?

LYDIA

Yeah and I say climb up on there and I'll check if it's a swarm and then I go back and hide and look.

BEN

As Zolf was trying to close the doors, right ok, and leaves them. Picks up Hamid again.

JAMES

Bertie remains consumed with grief because like all superficially charming sociopaths he displaces much of his affection in normal people that would go on human beings onto animals.

ALEX

Do you guys climb in the crate, on the crate, go to the crate. What do you with the crate? Just so I know specifically what you're doing.

BEN

I pop Hamid on the crate.

ALEX

Ok the crate is 10 foot high. You can because Hamid, you can just basically chuck him up and over on top.

BEN

Yeah given that I'm four foot high. And I do not get on because I cannot get on.

ALEX

So you're just by the crate.

BEN

I will be by the crate.

ALEX

With Bertie and Brutor...Brutor's limp form in your arms.

LYDIA

He's put Brutor on the crate.

ALEX

We'll go ahead and say that you picked up your sword that was in the middle of the room.

BEN

Yeah Brutor is on the crate.

ALEX

Ah you didn't say. So you are at the doorway Sasha. Do you leave the doorway completely ajar? Do you close it?

LYDIA

I close it. There's just the smallest crack because I just want to be able to look through but whatever's on the other side not necessarily be aware that the door is open.

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

18 + 7.

ALEX

Ok. So looking through that tiny crack as bits of mist float across in the dark, the luminescence from the tanks, the only light that you can see and the blood trail pulling away from you towards the far end of the room...

LYDIA

Sasha's idea of a good date

(laughing)

ALEX

As if pointing towards the sound, [snoring noise]. It's not horrid.

JAMES

Wait it's a snorelax

(laughing)

ALEX

It sounds like something really heavy being dragged on the floor or something and even with that you...

LYDIA

With my 25 perception

ALEX

Even with that you cannot see what it is but you do see a large, both mechanically and in the sense of a big thing. It looks huge, maybe bulky. You can't see through the swirling mists but you see it starts heading towards, it stops and then [crunching noise] seems to drag itself back away from you.

LYDIA

Right, is that how we're ending the episode then?

ALEX

I think that's how we're going to end the episode!

LYDIA

Right!

ALEX

That was a good one. Congratulations on being there. That was a really tough one. That was a really tough one. Looking forward to the next one. Thanks again

LYDIA

I was genuinely quite stressed at points.

BEN

Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

So thanks for listening, hope you enjoyed it and we hope you tune in next week. Bye all!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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