

RQG – 133 - Sneaks and Cuddles

Content Warnings

- X
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ALEX

Hi everyone. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our patrons.

[Spooky Kate Talbot. Lisa Kaye. Jari Thorrop Parlow. Lou Harrison. Elliott. Claudia Howard. Amanda Lord. Sarah Kavanagh. Jessica Freeman. Freshcat. Dog. Elizabeth Calbacha. Aine Morgan. Corvin J. Lynn. Kit. Cody Wolf. Iris Lazuli. Spar. Carrie LeClare.] Thank you all, we really appreciate your support.

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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 133 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

BEN

Ben Meredith

Rusty Quill Gaming – 133 - Sneaks and Cuddles

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

HELEN

And Helen Gould

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom.

HELEN

And Azu.

ALEX

It's very very dark, you're all clutching onto a ponton apart from-

LYDIA

Cel is-

ALEX

Cel who's stood there alone in the dark.

LYDIA

[sings]All by myself...

ALEX

We are gonna pick up where we left off. You have made it to a cave underneath an island with a person and info that you want to claim, I think that's as brief as I can get it.

LYDIA

[still singing] Don't wanna be all by myself anymore...

HELEN

[joins in] All by myself anymore...

ALEX

[laughs]

BEN

So where are the rest of us?

LYDIA

See what I did there?

ALEX

Can everyone apart from Cel please give me a - no, you know what?

BRYN

We were hanging on, we were in a stable position.

BEN

[unclear - both speaking at once 01:35]

HELEN

We weren't drowning yet.

ALEX

Zolf gets a free climb up because he's lashed and that comes with a few extra benefits.

BEN

Yes. Also, I forgot, I don't know if it made it into the last episode, I have Boots of Levitation so I should have just been using those.

ALEX

In fact, you know what I'm gonna do? Let's get an Initiative order briefly.

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

That's probably gonna be the best way of doing this.

HELEN

That's against the-

ALEX

I was going - how I am gonna sequence a series of actions that are basically happening simulta-...ohhhh!

BEN

(ROLL) 17.

HELEN

(ROLL) Azu's on 14.

BRYN

(ROLL) 21.

ALEX

And Sasha?

ALL OTHERS

Oooohhhhhh!

LYDIA

Firstly: Cel. And secondly do I need to because am I not-

ALEX

Yeah, I-

HELEN

Yeah, you might wanna react or-

LYDIA

(laughs) I won't though.

ALEX

Hypothetically if you-

LYDIA

(ROLL) 8.

ALEX

8. OK. In which case then, Hamid, you are up first. You are currently holding onto the side. There's one benefit which is that the pontoon's always at water level. Because that's how pontoons roll.

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

Go for it.

BRYN

I want to cast Fly but spells have somatic components.

ALEX

You would need to be upon the pontoon before you could cast it.

BRYN

Yeah, so I guess I just try and-

HELEN

Upon the toon...

ALEX

You must be upon the toon, yes!

BRYN

Pull myself up. I'm not even gonna try and stand, I'm literally just gonna pull and roll onto it, like I don't need to do anything other than just be somewhere where I can even just for a single second have free use of my arms and not be immediately drowning.

ALEX

Given that you're in water and blah-blah-blah and you're not wearing armour, I'm fine for you to just get on the pontoon and as long as you accept that you are lying prone upon the pontoon-

BRYN

Yeah. I will take 10 to very gradually and safely-

ALEX

That's fine.

BRYN

Roll myself onto the pontoon, waterlogged and prone.

ALEX

That's fine. I will say that in order to do that it'll take a standard action.

BRYN

I will use my whole round, that's fine.

ALEX

You can use your whole round. You are now upon the toon, prone but you're not having to make Acrobatics check because you're prone upon the toon. Azu, you're up.

HELEN

Doesn't Zolf come next?

ALEX

Yes! Sorry. Azu begins with an A. Zolf begins with a Z.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Zolf, you're up! (laughs) You've both got Zs in your name!

BRYN

Ah, Initiative is alphabetical is it?

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as CEL)

Alphameticabetal...

ALEX

I'd like to introduce my new character - Aaron Aardvark!

(Group laughter)

BEN

A thought occurs to G- to "Golf"?!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

The concept of Golf's become-

ALEX

Just names in general are being deconstructed in this episode.

BEN (as ZOLF)

I wonder if I hit a small dimpled ball it would be ...

(Group laughter)

BEN

Zolf remembers that he has Boots of Levitation so begins to fall off the pontoon and then decides to stop.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It's basically like to activate them is effectively just like a click heels kind of job isn't it?

BEN

I tried to look up [unclear 03:50] item but it's fundamentally like there when you want.

(Group laughter)

[SFX: Whoosh!]

ALEX

Fine, yes, you have your Boots of Levitation and if I remember correctly for how it works, you still have a move action easily enough.

BEN

But levitate means I can go up and down, I cannot go - so.

ALEX

Sure. I just meant if you wanna do other stuff you can.

BEN

Right, yes.

ALEX

Everything's within arm's reach by the way.

BEN

Cool. I can see - where is everyone?

ALEX

Azu is currently held onto the pontoon with both arms, wearing full armour which means you don't get the easy climb on. Hamid is currently on his back towards the edge of the pontoon. It's only like five foot wide so you're pretty much filling it effectively, just on your back going - phew! Cel's just stood in the middle, looking around, unable to see anyone going "Hellooo...?"

LYDIA (as CEL)

Hi..hey, ee....

BEN (as ZOLF)

Hamid, stay where you are, Azu I'm coming to help!

BEN

I'll just drag myself over the top of it.

ALEX

Yeah that's fine, like-

BEN

Using my hands to-

ALEX

Everything's within reach, you can pull yourself along. And for what it's worth, on the pontoon there's a reason that you get the Reflex save. There are ropes along the side and so-on, it's just that people normally wouldn't use a pontoon in a tempest.

BEN

Sure. And I will try to help Azu get up.

ALEX

That's fine, yeah, we'll caulk that into Azu's turn.

HELEN

I attempt to get back on.

ALEX

You are gonna have to give me a roll.

HELEN

I know...

ALEX

So I'm afraid it's gonna have to be an Acrobatics one as well with Zolf's help.

HELEN

All right.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Could it be a straight Strength check?

ALEX

Not in this situation.

HELEN

Say goodbye to Azu everyone! **(ROLL)** Yeah, that's like zero.

BEN

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I rolled but I don't know if I needed to. I don't know if I'm providing a bonus on rolling.

ALEX

You're providing a flat bonus because I'm eating up your action to do so on this one.

HELEN

Yeah...

ALEX

You basically said, as in you said - I'm just taking the time to do it.

BEN

OK.

HELEN

So I got a 6, and an armour penalty is -5. And then probably just-

ALEX

Zolf's help means that you don't have to do the Reflex save. You're still holding on to the edge of the thing.

HELEN

Hooray.

ALEX

That's how that works.

HELEN

Thank you.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Cel, a little help?

LYDIA (as CEL)

I'll be a dolphin!

ALEX

Armour's the worst when you're in specific situations and it has to come up occasionally!

HELEN

Mm...

ALEX

Cel, you are up.

LYDIA

Being a dolphin again! I just want people to imagine that at the moment that he says: "Cel, a little help here!" Just like - ping!

[SFX: Transformation]

LYDIA

Dolphin - swim!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Like - [makes flipper noises]

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Wiggles off the pontoon-

[SFX: Splash]

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

And then I'm-

ALEX

[laughs] You don't even jump in the water you're just [makes struggling sounds] flopping-!

LYDIA

But Cel, I will always - Cel is intelligent but NOT wise.

ALEX

Yep, yep. Fair.

ALL

[agree]

LYDIA

So one of the annoying things that we've just spent a lot of time off-air discussing is the fact that dolphins have blind sight and not dark vision but Cel isn't-

ALEX

You're not allowed blind sight yet!

LYDIA

No, so by feel, wobbling around like-

ALEX

In fairness it's, it's-

LYDIA

It's a small area, right?

ALEX

It's in a dolphin in its natural environment the second you're in the water.

LYDIA

Yeah.

HELEN

Yeah. It's a small area and I'm a large person.

LYDIA

Basically the dolphin is underneath your feet. OK?

ALEX

Yep. I'm happy to allow that even in the dark, just-

LYDIA

And providing a bit of extra push-off.

ALEX

OK.

HELEN

OK.

[SFX: Dolphin chattering]

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Can we invent that thing where like people are riding dolphins-?

(Group laughter)

[SFX: Dolphin chattering]

BRYN

Hamid casts Fly-

[SFX: Shimmering, magical sound]

ALEX

Perfect.

BRYN

And then does a vampire rise from prone.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

In the darkness where no one can see, but just so I know.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Amazing!

LYDIA

Zolf can see!

BEN (as ZOLF)

Spooky...

LYDIA

Yeah!

HELEN

[still laughing]

ALEX

Oh so yeah - so what Zolf can see is the pontoon occasionally drops about 20 feet and Hamid's still perfectly in place -

LYDIA and BEN

Yeah!

ALEX

And the pontoon comes back up to meet Hamid.

HELEN

Amazing.

BRYN

Yeah, and actually if you look really closely he's a couple of inches above where the pontoon rises.

ALEX

But there's just so much going on, it's so good!

BEN (as ZOLF)

Great idea Hamid!

(Group laughter)

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right, come on Azu, just try and-

HELEN (as AZU)

Argh!

BEN (as ZOLF)

Come on!

ALEX

So Zolf is helping - Cel is helping Azu. This one, just give me a - you know it will have to be Acrobatics, it's gonna have to be Acrobatics.

HELEN

I know...

ALEX

Just don't be terrible!

LYDIA

But with dolphin bonuses!

[SFX: Dolphin chattering]

BRYN

I still feel like it could just be a Heft check here but...

HELEN

(ROLL) Oh! That's 19.

BEN

Boom!

HELEN

Yay!

ALEX

So, with everyone's help you manage to get back up onto the pontoon on all fours, holding on, rope on one side, rope on the other just - grrr!

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right. I know that was really rubbish.

[SFX: Dolphin chattering]

BEN (as ZOLF)

But I genuinely think it's still important that we keep the lights off, OK?

[SFX: Dolphin chattering]

BEN (as ZOLF)

We just need to - let's take it slowly and carefully, holding on to the rope.

[SFX: Dolphin chattering]

BRYN (as HAMID)

If anyone else wants to be able to fly, if they just come over to me I can cast it on you...

BEN (as ZOLF)

Probably best to just do that for Azu. I can levitate.

BRYN (as HAMID)

OK - Azu? Azu?

HELEN

Yeah I'm not, I-

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BEN (as ZOLF)

OK, wait, wait, wait, wait wait!

(Group laughter)

BEN

And will lead Hamid and Azu together!

(Group laughter)

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah, I'm just trying to make - I can see you!

BEN (as ZOLF)

No, that's my face!

(Group laughter)

HELEN (as AZU)

Thank you!

ALEX

It shows how often I use Pitch Dark in this campaign - not a lot, it slows things down!

BRYN (as HAMID)

I cast Fly on Azu.

HELEN (as AZU)

Yay!

[SFX: Shimmering magical sound]

LYDIA

Still a dolphin...

[SFX: dolphin chattering]

ALEX

So I am happy for everyone to make their way along the pontoon, Cel admittedly alongside-

LYDIA

Swimming!

ALEX

Occasionally being 20 foot below the party and then back up kind of thing.

LYDIA

[laughs]

BRYN

I will be holding hands with Azu now, because-

HELEN (as AZU)

Yay!

BRYN

I can help her fly and she can help me see. Dream team!

ALEX

You can just go along.

HELEN

Oh yeah!

BRYN

[laughs]

ALEX

You can just go along, because like I said there's ropes running along the length of it, holding it together-

BEN (as ZOLF)

We're not in a rush.

ALEX

There's no reason to - so I'm just assuming people are taking 10s etc.

LYDIA

At the point that the movement, I assume with the hinge, gets to be a point where the pontoon is not next the water, Cel's gonna jump up out of the water as a dolphin and then again like splat on to the-

BEN

As a dolphin?

LYDIA

As a dolphin. And then change.

(Group laughter)

[SFX: Transformation]

ALEX

This is all fine.

LYDIA

It is loud.

ALEX

You all make it-

BEN

D'oh!

ALEX

You all make it to-

[SFX: Dolphin chattering]

ALEX

Where the pontoon connects to the cave wall.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Sorry about all the swearing guys, just as a dolphin it kind of feels natural, you know [tails off]!

ALEX

So where the pontoon meets the cave wall there are a pair of very long metal poles. The pontoon effectively has rings into those poles so they can move about 20, 30 foot up the wall and down. There's a ladder that runs just beyond the pontoon so that if the pontoon's at its lowest level it can and up. Clearly whoever uses this place both knows that there might be storms and also it can deal with high and low tide and stuff like that.

BEN

So also, point of order, that means that this set-up is HIDEOUSLY loud, right? Good, so we don't have to worry about-

ALEX

Sorry - and not silently!

BEN

Yeah. Fine.

ALEX

Yeah, you're right it's, it's - I mean the storm's so loud anyway-

BEN

And also you've got - [imitates storm noises and crashing and banging of pontoon moving].

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. The ladder basically leads up to what appears to be a hewn tunnel into the cave wall and it looks like there's like barriers and like metal barriers and stuff up there. You've just picked the wrong time, for what it's worth it's not like you're in a natural cave, someone's clearly retrofitted this. I am not going to require everyone to give me rolls to climb up the ladder should people want because I'm assuming that you're all sensible to wait til it's at its highest point.

LYDIA

Because I'm not a dolphin any more...

ALEX

Grab on and then-

LYDIA

Helps with swimming.

ALEX

Basically-

LYDIA

I mean climbing. Actually, no, being a dolphin would help with swimming. NOT being a dolphin helps with climbing.

ALEX

If anyone would like to NOT take 10 let me know, because otherwise you just make it in.

BRYN

I fly.

ALEX

Oh that's even easier.

HELEN

I also fly.

ALEX

Oh!

BEN

I levitate. Just use the-

LYDIA

I climb!

ALEX

Thank god!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Thank god, Lydia, I put all these things on the walls, no one's using them!

BRYN

We're high level characters now Alex, we can solve simple problems like-

BEN

Ladders.

BRYN

Getting up a wall.

LYDIA

I - like I would be able to cast spells that would-

BRYN

Absolutely.

LYDIA

But.

ALEX

That's just a waste!

LYDIA

It's a ladder! Exactly!

ALEX

You make it into a hewn stone corridor, it has a metal grid grating at the bottom, sort of industrial style. Characters that have dark vision, you can see that there are brackets for torches but nothing is lit. Non-electric actually, worth mentioning.

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

Maybe 30 feet down there is an airlock style door, sort of think submarine door, you know with the spinny handle job.

BRYN

Mm hm.

HELEN

Hm, this feels familiar.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right, OK, so there's a big, loud door which kind of mucks things up.

LYDIA (as CEL)

When we get to the door I'm guessing that there will be people on the other side?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Maybe.

LYDIA (as CEL)

So hoe about we get - how far away is the door?

BEN (as ZOLF)

I mean we get - hang on a minute.

BRYN (as HAMID)

What what what what what?

BEN (as ZOLF)

We're at the door now.

(Group laughter)

BRYN (as HAMID)

Can anyone check it for traps?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Er...

HELEN (as AZU)

Oh, no.

BEN (as ZOLF)

I mean I'm not very good but I'll have a look.

BEN

(ROLL) I mean I got a natural 20 with my Perception check so 29!

HELEN

Woo!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The worst! You can discern two things with it.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yep.

ALEX

Because you've seen this kind of thing before, you've probably sailed on an ironclad before or something similar maybe.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Sailed in the Royal Navy.

ALEX

Exactly. You both recognise that the door is not trapped as far as you can discern and also at a glance it appears to be unlocked, because normally they have a sort of red/green indicator for whether it's been locked on. It's open on this side so it's on green, so presumably it's open on the other side as well.

BEN

OK.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Not that I can see, but I'll open it so that if I explode it's my fault.

LYDIA (as CEL)

All right, that sounds good to me.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah, fair's fair.

LYDIA (as CEL)

I mean though you seem quite competent so I, I would be just - I know that we're not, we're not, I, it would be nice if you weren't exploded, I'll just say... that.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Er, thanks?

LYDIA (as CEL)

And also like a nice guy, you know, so if you do explode it was nice knowing you.

BEN (as ZOLF)

OK.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Even briefly.

BEN (as ZOLF)

OK, yeah, noted this.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Just, just so you know.

BEN (as ZOLF)

All right well good luck and goodbye. Probably not.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as CEL)

Bye friend.

BEN (as ZOLF)

OK, so shall we do invisibility now, how long does it last Hamid?

BRYN (as HAMID)

A few minutes.

BEN (as ZOLF)

What's a few minutes?

BRYN (as HAMID)

Eight minutes if you want to be specific.

BEN (as ZOLF)

I could just open it, quickly check.

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah, and then maybe can-

BEN (as ZOLF)

Because I don't want to waste the invisibility for when-

LYDIA (as CEL)

Yeah that, that sounds great.

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah, once we know.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Right, I'm gonna be back here.

LYDIA

Kind of clonks backwards, not a sneaky character.

HELEN

I - Azu's going to be close enough that I can run and heal you.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

If necessary, but not close enough to get hit.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right.

ALEX

OK.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Maybe I should be a hedgehog...

BEN

Right, so I - is it a wheel or a lever?

ALEX

It's a wheel.

BEN

OK, so I'm gonna-

ALEX

The lever is to lock, the wheel is to turn.

BEN

Cool, so I'm just gonna be like, as quietly as possible, I know-

ALEX

Honestly, there's still a storm outside, like it's quieter in this tunnel but you're only like 40 feet away from [imitates storm noises].

BEN

OK well very carefully I open the door.

[SFX: Metal door squeaking and creaking as it opens]

ALEX

OK, sure sure.

BEN

And then open it the tiniest crack and just put my, like, eye to it like to see if it's [unclear 13:06]

ALEX

Give me a Perception check?

BEN

Aw! **(ROLL)** Eh, 19.

ALEX

So it's an empty corridor on the far side, 30 feet away you see what appears to be a staircase next to probably a mechanical elevator-lift set-up, something similar.

BEN

Mm hm. Is it lit?

ALEX

No.

BEN (as ZOLF)

OK. Still not lit so it looks like we're all right.

HELEN

OK.

BEN

Open the door properly.

ALEX

Mm hm.

HELEN (as AZU)

All right.

BRYN

Was this door the only feature in the corridor we first entered?

ALEX

Leading into as in from the water to here?

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Yeah.

BRYN

Cool.

ALEX

It - literally there is metal grillwork on the floor so that people don't lose their grip, it is a roughly hewn stone.

BRYN

Sure.

ALEX

You can see-

BRYN

I can't.

ALEX

Sorry, Zolf would be able to see the signs of mechanical digwork rather than like, you know, magic or whatever, and yeah, there's torch brackets along it. And the corridor is exactly the same on the other side. From your eye Zolf, it is a standard "don't want water getting in my stairwell" like.

BEN

Mm hm.

LYDIA

Mm.

ALEX

That's it.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Hey buddy just to say I, I'm really glad that our friendship gets to continue.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah, I didn't explode, it's great.

LYDIA (as CEL)

That was, that was, that was great, well done.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Er yeah, no-

LYDIA (as CEL)

Well done.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right, yeah, no, no cool. Yeah.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Did you like when I was a dolphin?

BEN (as ZOLF)

I did, yeah, no, it was er, yeah, good. Good job, nice.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Thanks, yeah, I'll do that again.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Well anyway let's, let's keep going. It looks like there's an elevator, right, I think we're gonna probably have to take the stairs.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Sure.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Because, noisy. Shall we, shall we go?

ALL

Yeah, yeah.

HELEN (as AZU)

Lead the way.

ALEX

So heading to the stairwell you can see that the lift isn't at this station, to be clear there's only one. Think: standard freight elevator, you know with the lattice metal door that you can pull across left and right and so on.

ALL

Mm hm.

ALEX

More brackets on the wall. At close inspection just because you've had a bit more time around them, they appear to be more flare-based rather than like torches, so stuff that will handle the water better. The stairwell - you know that sense that you can get of large space where it's just the sound echoes and

so on. You get the impression that the stairway goes on a decent distance downwards and upwards.

BEN (as ZOLF)

What do we reckon, up or down?

BRYN (as HAMID)

I think we should go up, I would guess that going down leads to the emergency exit tunnel?

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah. And it's worth noting-

BEN (as ZOLF)

Maybe.

BRYN (as HAMID)

And the Keep was on the top, noting for the future.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Or... evil labs. I'm thinking up for offices, down for evil labs. So I'm sure, you know.

HELEN (as AZU)

Then offices for information maybe?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah?

BRYN (as HAMID)

We can do both but let's just start by going up.

BEN (as ZOLF)

All right, up we go.

HELEN (as AZU)

All right.

ALEX

Are you all trying to go stealthily or not stealthily?

BEN

As stealthily as possible.

ALEX

That's fine, everyone give me a stealth check?

LYDIA (as CEL)

Yay!

ALEX

No helping one another!

HELEN

Are you still good at these?

LYDIA

I mean I'm still pretty good. Like I'm not ridiculous, I'm just good.

BEN

(ROLL) Oooh noo!!

ALEX

Clunk-clunk metal legs!

BEN

An unnatural 1.

ALEX

OK, good to know.

HELEN

Oooh, uncanny!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Er, 15.

HELEN

I got a Natural 20.

ALL

[all cheer]

HELEN

Yeah, but minus some stuff I'm assuming.

LYDIA

I got 23.

BEN

Yeah, minus your standard 5, so it's actually pretty decent still.

ALEX

What was yours Hamid again?

BRYN

15. I rolled a 5.

ALEX

OK.

LYDIA

Is it still complete darkness?

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

Ahh that's cool, yeah. Still 23 though.

ALEX

So to make this make sense, dead simple. I'm gonna say that Zolf's going up at the front with Azu at the back so that we've got the dark vision people on either side-

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

Making sure no one goes astray.

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

As you know I want to make you all [unclear 16:05]

BEN

Boo!

LYDIA

Ahh!

BRYN

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I assume the Fly is still going so I can basically be hovering and not tiring myself out climbing stairs.

ALEX

Just, just pulled along like a non-weighted piece of baggage!

LYDIA

Like a helium balloon.

ALEX

Yeah! [laughs]

HELEN

Well if you're, if Fly is still going then I might also be flying which is why I'm not clanking so much.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Ahh!

HELEN

Ah!

BEN

Actually I was just thinking, Levitate doesn't lock you into a column does it, it just means you can't propel yourself under its own power.

ALEX

You could - you could pull yourself along.

BEN (as ZOLF)

So I'm gonna, like I mean it might just be flavour because I still rolled that badly, but if it has an effect I'm not touching the ground.

ALEX

Mechanically I'm gonna say it's not because it's so awkward you're as likely to clang against the side as you are clonk!

BEN

That's fine, but that's what I'm trying!

ALEX

In fact you know what-

BRYN

He's trying but because he can't judge exactly where his legs are they keep battering against-

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You know what, it's as simple as that, yeah, you try and do the Levitate thing and you get a bit big for your boots at some point. Quite literally and like - yeah, OK- CLONK! Oh...

BEN (as ZOLF)

[imitates cursing under his breath]

ALEX

Nothing happens, no one comes running or anything. It becomes apparent it's gonna take a while going up these stairs and there don't appear to be any side corridors leading off from it, any other floors, and you're just heading upstairs, heading upstairs.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Great!

ALEX

At a guess, you would reckon that this is leading pretty much up through the entire rock portion that you saw-

BEN

To the fortress then.

ALEX

Straight through to like ground floor/basement kind of stuff.

BEN

Brilliant, glad we didn't waste the invisibility.

BRYN

The Fly will probably wear off.

HELEN

OK.

ALEX

It will at some point if you're going stealthy because you're like half speed and-

BRYN

So I'm just thinking a graceful descent for Hamid and a BOOM for Azu!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Yeah! Big Clunky they call me!

BRYN

Mechanically when Fly ends it gently lowers you to the ground.

HELEN

Really?

BEN

Wow, OK.

BRYN

Yeah, it's built into the mechanics.

HELEN

OK, more of a... [small voice] clunk!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So you keep going up, keep going up and then you can see sort of occasionally looking up the left shaft that you're coming to wherever the left was - is, I should say.

BEN

Mm hm.

ALEX

Heading up, eventually you can see that you are, I'm allowing you to stop one floor below, like you can see that there is a floor and it looks like there is a new floor one above you.

HELEN

What, with a trap door?

ALEX

No, no, no, so literally you've stopped sort of one curve of the stairwell around so that I haven't just said: "You walk into a room full of people, you all die."

BEN

Is it starting to become lit?

ALEX

Still no.

BEN

Hmm...

HELEN (as AZU)

If there still aren't any lights maybe it's OK to keep going?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah I, I guess so. We just keep trying to be stealthy. I know it's not ideal, but you know, best try.

LYDIA (as CEL)

I mean I can't see anything so I guess that other people can't see anything?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Me and Azu can see some stuff...

LYDIA (as CEL)

Oh right.

ALEX

I love that Cel's made it all this way up and then just been like: "I just thought you were really, you know, skilled!"

LYDIA

No, I mean, no. They would know that, they're probably thinking of other people.

BRYN

Having experimented with multiple animal forms they understand dark vision.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

That is probably - yeah, that is! No as, my inclination to play the character as enthusiastic to contribute is not necessarily matched by my understanding of the system.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

What's the plan with this floor that's upcoming, just try and sneak up?

BEN

I think continue as is, really.

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

OK, that's fine, I just wanted to give you the opportunity.

BEN

And also-

ALEX

Yeah, press on the way it was though still stealthy, I'm not gonna require another roll. You make your way round and it becomes immediately apparent what kind of a room it is. Big old storage room, the freight elevator is a freight elevator, it's currently at this level. There is, it's not a huge room, like I'm not talking enormous like temple of Indiana Jones style, it is just a middling size room with a bunch of apparently mundane looking crates up against the wall and then a metal but not a big like blast door, a metal door.

LYDIA (as CEL)

I have to say folks I've thought a lot about what's on this island and I did not think: nothing, a single time.

ALEX

It is worth mentioning the staircase continues beyond this upwards further, as does the elevator as well.

HELEN (as AZU)

Should we look in the crates for Simulacrum parts?

LYDIA (as CEL)

What parts?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh that's a good shout actually, yeah. Um, the thing we're looking for.

LYDIA (as CEL)

OK, I thought we were, we were here to stop the attacks and the, the-

BEN (as ZOLF)

No no, we are. But we also have a thing to find out what's happening here and they might be making something that's relevant so we're gonna check this, don't worry, we're still gonna be taking out Yoshida.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Yeah. Good, good. Good, good, good. OK, I'll just sit here.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Yeah, we'll just, we'll just wait I guess.

LYDIA (as CEL)

ell I don't know what a Simulacrum part is.

BEN (as ZOLF)

I mean, just have a root around, if you find anything weird.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Well we also can't see.

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah, but they can't see.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh yeah, well-

BRYN (as HAMID)

So that's more of the barrier I was thinking.

BEN (as ZOLF)

OK yeah no that, OK well, yeah we'll - we'll have a look.

ALEX

Does Azu happen to some boxes?

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah.

ALEX

That's fine.

BRYN

[unclear - speaking at same time as Alex 20:21]

LYDIA (as CEL)

Oh yeah, that's a great idea!

BRYN (as HAMID)

You can sort of do that without seeing.

LYDIA

Cel crouches.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Awww!

LYDIA

And sort of like bent down, probably their knees are about the same height.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

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So I'm not gonna bother with Strength checks, we've established this in previous warehouses. Azu makes boxes un-happen, it's all good.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

I've got a spear for [unclear 20:40]

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Aww!

ALEX

That's very nice. Crunch!

[SFX: Boxes being destroyed]

BEN

Also I'm, also I'm Strength 16, so...

HELEN (as AZU)

(smugly) I'm Strength 17...

(Group raucous laughter)

BRYN

Actually, um wait-

(Raucous laughter continuing)

ALEX

It might as well be zero so-

LYDIA

Get 'em out on the table lads! [unclear 20:54] down!

(Laughter continues)

BRYN

I'm just gonna put my glasses on and um... I think you'll find that mechanically that makes no difference.

(Group laughter)

BEN

We're both on a plus 3 bonus I'll have you know, so thank you!

ALEX

As this happens, I think we'll-

(Raucous group laughter)

ALEX

Let's take a break and calm down, let's all calm down!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I'm just sorry that wasn't filmed!

(Group laughter)

[BREAK]

ALEX

So. Inside the crates which we've all established everyone can open 'cos you're all really strong in your own ways.

BEN

We're really good...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Inside the crates are a collection of both, again to the eyes of the non-experts, mundane and slightly more exotic stuff. On the mundane we're talking one of them's got a load of onions in it.

BEN

Ooh, delicious!

BRYN (as HAMID)

Ooh, I think I can smell onions!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

One of them has bottles of - appears to be like wines and spirits, things like that. Not posh, to be clear-

LYDIA

Hamid's like - I DEFINITELY can't smell wine!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Another one of them has a pile of shiny rocks in it, not gold, might be fool's gold, it's hard to tell with dark vision because you haven't got colouring and so on-

HELEN (as AZU)

Can I-

BEN (as ZOLF)

[gasps] Wait!

HELEN

Do you have Appraise?

BEN (as ZOLF)

I'm a Dwarf!

HELEN (as AZU)

So you like rocks?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yes!

(Group raucous laughter)

BRYN

Apparently Ben's gonna get his rocks off!

(Group raucous laughter and loud cheering)

LYDIA

That's incredible!

BEN

I think actually being a saltbeard means that I only get this bonus underwater.

ALEX

I think so too.

LYDIA

You could throw them to Cel who has quite a lot-

ALEX

And can't see in the dark.

LYDIA

Yeah, but could do by feel.

ALEX

I was gonna say, you've probably tasted most rocks so that's fine.

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

There's a box of weird rocks-

LYDIA

You don't know that Cel has a ridiculous amount of skill points in Geography.

BEN

Yeah, I - yeah.

ALEX

Absolutely.

BEN

I just like rocks, yeah.

LYDIA

Yeah. Or nature.

ALEX

There is another one that's full of liquids that you probably shouldn't drink.

HELEN

Ooh, you say that...yeah, mm...

ALEX

Give 'em a sniff. Give 'em a sniff.

[SFX: Jar or bottle being uncorked]

BEN

I have Profession: Cooking...

ALEX

OK, cool.

HELEN

Zolf passes out!

ALEX

You give one of them a sniff -

BEN

Carefully!

ALEX

Give me a Fort. save regardless, but it's not gonna be - just don't fail!

BEN

(ROLL) (laughs). I rolled a 2 but I still get 12.

ALEX

You get 12, you're OK. One of them is-

BEN (as ZOLF)

[sniffs] [gags]

ALEX

One of them is like basically smelling salts or something equivalent, like blows your socks off, so it's really, really concentrated whatever it is. Everyone in the room immediately gets a wash of something vinegary.

EVERYONE

[protesting at the smell loudly]

LYDIA (as CEL)

What have you found, what have you found?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh, a bottle of something horrible. I'll keep one.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

And then that's it. The rest is like: bit of cloth, one of them has loads of bolts but they're not adamantite, they just seem to be like - bolts.

HELEN

Bolts.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Of various sizes.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Show me the weird liquid so I can just...

BEN (as ZOLF)

Er yeah.

HELEN (as AZU)

When we find some light.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Well no, hold up, hold up.

ALEX

Oh actually you do find one crate is full of those flare things that you've seen in the torch brackets around the place.

HELEN

Oh cool, OK. Do we each still have a Bag of Holding?

BRYN

Yeah.

BEN

I don't.

LYDIA (as CEL)

I don't.

HELEN (as AZU)

I do! I'm going to-

BRYN

You've probably got two, we had so many before these two showed up.

HELEN

Yeah! [laughs]

BEN

A lot of them died with Grizzop and Sasha, so.

BRYN

That's true.

ALEX

Awww!

LYDIA

Wait-

BRYN

We had - because we just had them on us and they didn't come back, we just left. You know, we -

ALEX

They - yeah.

HELEN (as AZU)

I still don't really know what happened to Sasha right now.

LYDIA

No, you don't.

HELEN

Right. I just wanted to say that I want to take some of the rocks and some of the weird liquids.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Sure. Yeah, I've taken a bottle of the horrible stuff. Because I have - let the record show that I've written down "orrible bottle" in my-

ALEX

'Orrible bottle?

BEN

'Orrible bottle.

ALEX

This is a capital O on Orrible Bottle.

BEN

It's - I've put an apostrophe there instead.

ALEX

That's all right, I'll allow it. It's a capital apostrophe then, just-

BEN

Oh yeah, I wanna make it really big.

ALEX

[laughs] So - digging around, there is one last thing that you see in there.

HELEN

Ooh.

ALEX

Right at the back, it's sort of leaning against the boxes and so on, and in fairness you wouldn't notice it at first, you had to move boxes to find it.

BRYN

Is it a Simulacrum just-

(Group laughter)

BRYN

CLUNK - against the wall?

ALEX

It is an undersized spear. It is real weird looking though, real weird looking. It's got like liquid up at the top and it's not the right size for a humanoid person, quite a thick kind of butcher knife style blade up at the top.

HELEN

Is it sized for a halfling or a goblin-

LYDIA

I know that neither mine or Bryn's characters have dark vision and so have not seen that you just found a crate of torches in the sealed...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

But I'm just thinking-

BRYN (as HAMID)

I can - I can cast Dancing Lights literally whenever-

BEN

Yeah we have, we have torches.

BRYN

The reason is, the reason we're not-

ALEX

He's being polite to Zolf.

BEN

It's that we're not, not that we can't.

BRYN

I'm gonna cast Detect Magic because then, although I won't be able to see any objects I might be able to see the auras they give off.

ALEX

It's all, it's all good.

HELEN

Oh, these might be evil rocks!

BEN

Well I was gonna just-

ALEX

Evil rocks, totally a thing.

BRYN

At the very least I'll be able to see Azu.

HELEN

Aww, do I glow pink in your Detect Magic?

BRYN

Yeah.

BEN

Oh - and me?

BRYN

I mean anyone who's wearing magical armour.

LYDIA

The glow of friendship!

ALEX

Certain bits of you, yeah.

BEN

Cleric - yeah, clerics don't have auras.

ALEX

But your - some of your stuff will.

BRYN

No like I can't see her aura because she's a Paladin, it's the aura of her magical-

ALEX

It's because she's literally encased in magic or-

(Group laughter)

BEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

So you - you can see Cel's goggles and belt.

BRYN

Yep. Yep!

ALEX

So I leave it up to the character to say what he can see of their equipment, however in terms of the room, there is nothing magical in this room.

BRYN

That isn't - that we didn't bring with us.

ALEX

Yeah. Yeah, that's a better way of phrasing it. Yeah, that'd be a real bad thing to-

(Group laughter)

BEN

I'm gonna have a look at the spear.

HELEN

All right.

ALEX

Mm hm.

BEN

Because I use long weapons. But I think, as Helen asked, is it sized for a small creature?

ALEX

To your eye it looks like it's a reach weapon for a small creature, as opposed to a, like, under-sized staff or something, it's-

BEN

Sure.

BRYN

Are you narrating what you're doing so that we can at least have some idea what's going on?

HELEN

We're probably calling back saying: "Onions. Rocks. Whatever."

ALEX

[laughs]

LYDIA (as CEL)

Can you - can you pass me the rocks?

HELEN

Azu will give you some rocks, because she starts to throw it then like - no!
Wait! [laughs]

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right, there's this kind of weird spear thing I'm gonna have a look at.

BRYN (as HAMID)

It's not magical.

BEN (as ZOLF)

All right, well it's got liquid in it so it might be poisonous.

LYDIA (as CEL)

[gasps] Could I, could I, could we maybe make some light because I could, I could probably just like check it...

BRYN (as HAMID)

Is it safe to make some light in this room?

LYDIA (as CEL)

...very excited, or interested in er...

ALEX

You can see all corners of this room.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah, I think this room's actually probably fine.

BRYN (as HAMID)

I cast Dancing Lights.

[SFX: Shimmer of magic]

LYDIA (as CEL)

Oh what a nice room!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The light disappears up the stairwell obviously, but-

BRYN

I mean I can literally send the lights to the opposite corner so it doesn't bleed too far.

ALEX

Well that's exactly what I mean so all I'm saying is that you can see the whole room, maybe a little bit's bleeding up and a little bit bleeding down.

LYDIA

OK, so can I roll Engineering to work out anything about the spear.

ALEX

Yes you can.

LYDIA

(ROLL) That is a 23.

ALEX

It's an unloaded syringe spear. So it is a spear for a small creature which would stab someone and then inject them full of something.

HELEN

[shudders]

LYDIA (as CEL)

Oh cool! So this, this, this - this is a, and fortunately it's unloaded, don't worry, this is a syringe spear, so this is for like prodding someone and filling them full of stuff. You know like something-

BRYN (as HAMID)

Oh.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh right.

HELEN (as AZU)

So that's what this weird liquid would be for.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh - have you got some 'orrible stuff that you can put in it and then we give it to Hamid so Hamid can prod people full of 'orrible stuff?

ALEX

You know that if you-

LYDIA (as CEL)

No but you do now.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh really is this - poison?

LYDIA (as CEL)

Orrible?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Well it's, I mean it smells bad, but-

LYDIA (as CEL)

[unclear 27:44]

BEN (as ZOLF)

It might kill someone if it enters their bloodstream.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Yeah, actually, give that to me, like, gonna do-

LYDIA

Can I roll Alchemy-

BRYN (as HAMID)

I wouldn't say I really know how to use a spear...

HELEN

Oh you just, you-

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh you - OK, so one end's the pointy one and you poke people with it.

Genuinely.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Is it - is it honestly just that simple?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah.

BRYN (as HAMID)

I can totally manage that.

LYDIA

For Alchemy, looking at-

ALEX

For the - by the way, for the syringe spear. Yeah, the whole thing is built so that when you stab someone it happens. Loading it, bit of a faff. But you don't need to do anything special, it's an idiot-proof weapon.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Also spears are simple weapons.

ALEX

Yeah, exactly.

BRYN

Yeah, and I know that out of character, of course I do!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Alchemy-wise I rolled 35.

BEN

Wooo! Ah - and Cel's stealth.

ALEX

So I'm going to give you a sweep of that crate rather than a separate check for each one which technically I could do, but I'd rather die.

HELEN

[laughs]

ALEX

I couldn't imagine anything more boring

LYDIA

Mm.

ALEX

So: how it works, real simple. Everything in there is interesting, comparatively hard to get hold of, not a lot that you can do with it unless you've got like industrial scales of stuff, so the 'orrible liquid is effectively a very, very potent vinegar, that's the best way to describe it.

LYDIA

To be fair you don't really want that injected in you.

ALEX

But what it is is it's an eclectic bunch-

HELEN

It's still an acid.

ALEX

-and it's like you know what, if you were gonna stock an apothecary, money was no option and you just wanted to make sure you had a bit of a sample of everything?

LYDIA

It's a decent set of reagents.

ALEX

Yeah, that's, like it's a good reagent cache. You could do some stuff with it, but ultimately you could get hold of all of this stuff yourself if you just took the time to source it.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Yeah, guys, it's just ingredients, you know?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh right, what's-?

LYDIA (as CEL)

Like none of it's really that - in fact like I mean I could, I could make a poison with it for you to put in the spear, literally could.

ALEX

Yes you could.

LYDIA (as CEL)

But that would take a little while.

BEN (as ZOLF)

What's the most dangerous single thing in there?

LYDIA (as CEL)

Er...

ALEX

Doesn't work like that. There is something in there that's - [laughs]. There is something in there that's poisonous but it's the kind of thing where you shouldn't be exposed to it, like there's a bit of mercury in there for instance. You could make a poison but it'll take you a while.

LYDIA (as CEL)

I mean there's some stuff that might make - there's some stuff that would make your hair fall out, some stuff that if you want to have kids in future you probably shouldn't drink...

BRYN (as HAMID)

And I'm really more comfortable just casting spells and using my crossbow, so maybe we just leave - like we'll just stick the spear in a Bag of Holding and deal with it later-

ALEX

Also to be clear, it's not the right size for Hamid.

LYDIA (as CEL)

[gasps] You have a Bag of Holding?! That's so cool! Where did you find it?

BRYN (as HAMID)

Oh, oh. I've got two.

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah, me too.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh right yeah, whack that in there then.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Great!

HELEN (as AZU)

Do you want one?

LYDIA (as CEL)

So, so, so-

BEN (as ZOLF)

What? Er Bag of Holding, yeah, very useful.

HELEN (as AZU)

I can't remember what I put in what, so here's one!

(Group laughter)

BEN (as ZOLF)

Er, OK...

(Group laughter)

BRYN (as HAMID)

Would you like one Cel?

LYDIA (as CEL)

Yes I would!

BRYN (as HAMID)

OK, well I'll just transfer everything into this one and then you can have that one.

BEN

I'm gonna stick my hand into Azu's Bag of Holding and just pull out the first thing I find.

ALEX

I don't know what Azu's been putting in her Bag of Holding!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as CEL)

Is it alive??

HELEN (as AZU)

Is it actually [unclear 30:19] and-

ALEX

I'll tell you what, let me see your inventory and I'll tell you what he pulls out.

BEN

[gasps] Don't you have one of Harrison Cambell's books that you haven't given me or did you... somebody did.

HELEN (as AZU)

No. All of my - all of my books-

BEN

No somebody had unpublished- no, someone had unpublished stuff but I can't remember.

LYDIA

That was Bertie and he dropped it in a puddle.

BEN

Bertie, that was it, and he destroyed it!

ALEX

It was the proof for the book that put Harrison Cambell out on top, that's the book that became the instant modern classic.

BEN

Oh that's fine, I've read it then.

HELEN

OK.

LYDIA

There was definitely one that got dropped in a puddle, I remember the-

BRYN

What I'm mostly transferring is lumps of adamantium ore from one Bag of Holding to the other.

LYDIA (as CEL)

You - that is an extremely large amount of adamantium!

BRYN (as HAMID)

Yeah, we were-

LYDIA (as CEL)

Could I just ask where you guys have been?

HELEN (as AZU)

It was in like a factory...

ALEX

Yeah, Zolf pulls out a bunch of desert weather gear.

LYDIA (as CEL)

You folks have been-

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh that ain't gonna fit me.

(Group laughter)

HELEN (as AZU)

No that's - that's, that's correct.

LYDIA (as CEL)

You folks have clearly been having an interesting time.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Yes, that's accurate!

ALEX

For free as part of your Alchemy thing - the rocks are similar. Like the ones that are at the top, it's just pyrite and a bunch of other stuff in there. It's all stuff that - yeah, you could do some stuff, but you'd need a lab, it'll take some time and frankly you can probably whip something up with the stuff you're carrying on you easier and quicker.

LYDIA (as CEL)

I mean like, so, I know that the guy that's here is an Alchemist, right, like we don't get on. So this just tells me that he's got a lot of stuff.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right, so it's useful but not special.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Some of this, some of this stuff he nicked from me probably.

BEN (as ZOLF)

All right, OK.

BRYN (as HAMID)

I mean that sort of makes sense given it's also storing you know food and drink and you know, in here.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah, sure.

ALEX

The syringe spear is a custom job for what it's worth, like they're not a mass-produced item.

BRYN (as HAMID)

You might well - you know, if you've got anything dangerous you probably wouldn't store them next to your long-term food.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah, true. Although I'd say we might not come back here so if there's anything you're gonna find useful, fill your boots. You've got a Bag of Holding now.

ALEX

Everyone give me a Perception check please.

LYDIA

Oh dear.

BEN

(ROLL) 25.

BRYN

(ROLL) 28

ALEX

24?

HELEN

(ROLL) 19.

ALEX

I really thought you said 90 then, I was like: that's fine, let's examine that!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

My eyes are a god...

ALEX

A god that answers to me! You hear the sound of approaching footsteps. Everyone rolled really high, you hear the sound of small approaching footsteps, little clickety clackety ones from the side of the metal door, not down or up the stairs.

BRYN

I run to the wall and turn off the lights.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Hide!

HELEN

Do we hear ONE set of footsteps?

ALEX

Yes.

HELEN

Maybe I can whack them.

BEN

Yeah, I've got my glaive out.

HELEN

OK, are we on either side of the door?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Yeah.

HELEN

Yes! Yes! Flanking.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Take him prisoner if we can, yes.

ALEX

OK.

LYDIA

Cel is here with ranged weapons in the dark...

(Group laughter)

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BEN (as ZOLF)

Cel! Hide! Hide!

BRYN

Yeah, Hamid is hiding, probably quite near you.

ALEX

The door starts opening.

[SFX: metallic clang and scraping]

LYDIA (as CEL)

Hides behind Hamid.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Readied action.

ALEX

Is readied action to knock unconscious or tackle them-

BEN

Actually no, don't need it. We're gonna take the surprise round.

ALEX

Yeah, I figured you would anyway.

BEN

Which is more versatile.

ALEX

But what I need to know is are you intending to knock 'em out or - what's the plan, just so I know!

LYDIA (as CEL)

Cut them in half!

HELEN

I would like to seize them and interrogate them.

BEN

Yeah. My objective is to also be part of the seizing and part of the don't be shouting about being seized, thank you very much.

ALEX

So I'm gonna have to do one thing that you're gonna hate but bear with me, it won't be as bad as you think.

BEN

I already hate you.

HELEN

That could be ANYTHING terrible.

BEN

Oh no we - no, we've initiated a grapple! Argh! Argh!

LYDIA

Is it a combat manoeuvre?

ALEX

The grappling starts!

ALL

Noooooooo!

BRYN

No, no, no. The best thing to do is to take a penalty to your attack to deal non-lethal damage.

ALEX

Leave it with me! Leave it with me.

BEN

Not if we can't one-shot them.

ALEX

Leave it with me. So. Azu and Zolf, can you both give me combat manoeuvre checks please.

HELEN

(ROLL) That's a 24 from me.

BEN

(ROLL) Ooft. That's a 9 from me - no that's a, well I mean that's a 12, but.

ALEX

Yeah. The small creature opens the door and Azu, before Zolf can even get a look-in, just-

[SFX: WOOMP!]

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

BATTLE HUG!

ALEX

Just completely battle hugs them, like their arms are pinned to their side. They are small, so you can with one arm on top of the other, just in one go, WOOMP!

LYDIA

Can I put a hand over their mouth?

BEN

So I guess - well as I say, I could follow up if Azu's already got them by walking forward and putting a hand over their mouth.

ALEX

Yeah, easy.

HELEN

OK, good.

ALEX

Like trivially easily. However. As you reach out to do that with your dark vision, you may stop. A lot of fangs in that mouth. I'm gonna allow you to do it and basically grab on, but it's a thing that you notice as you're reading over.

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

So. The creature that you're holding, for the dark vision folk, it is a small-ish creature, it appears to be reptilian maybe, it's certainly got scales. It's kind of halfway between a Komodo dragon and a small chimp.

BEN

Is it a kobold?

ALEX

It has a tail.

BRYN

Ohh!

HELEN

Aww, adorable!

BEN

I go up to it.

BEN (as ZOLF)

All right sunshine. You speak English?

ALEX (as KOBOLD)

[muffled and indeterminate response]

BEN (as ZOLF)

Nod your head if you do. Shake your head if you don't, and don't do anything if you don't because you won't have understood.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It takes a moment. Shakes its head.

(Group laughter)

BEN (as ZOLF)

So you did understand that but you're a smart aleck?

ALEX

It doesn't move at all this time.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

So Cel says in Japanese, no in English:

LYDIA (as CEL)

It seems like there may be a language problem because I think that I may be able to help?

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh I suspect it speaks English but Japanese is probably safer. Anyway just threaten it if it doesn't tell us what it's up to.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Threaten what? Could I just er-

BEN (as ZOLF)

You know - death?

BRYN (as HAMID)

Now that it knows we're here can I turn the lights back on?

LYDIA (as CEL)

But threaten who?

BEN (as ZOLF)

What? Oh wait.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Close the door.

HELEN

Yes, good. Good note. [laughs]

ALEX

Good good!

BRYN

I cast Dancing Lights.

ALEX

OK. The second the Dancing Lights starts the creature squints its eyes and is kind of giving a bit of a wiggle.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Oh no, poor little guy! They don't like light! They don't like light!

ALEX

Hamid, you recognise the thing as a kobold. Like, you get that for free.

BEN (as ZOLF)

What is it?

LYDIA (as CEL)

It's a, it's a kobold.

BRYN

I move the lights behind Azu so that it's seen as illuminated but it's not being forced to look into any of them.

ALEX

The creature kind of blinks a little bit.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Well I guess tell it that if it wants to live, I'm gonna take my hands off its mouth and it's gonna tell us everything it knows otherwise we'll just kill it.

LYDIA (as CEL)

OK.

BRYN

I would like to cast Detect Thoughts.

[SFX: Magical shimmer]

EVERYONE

Ooooh!

ALEX

Ooooooh, I don't like that!

HELEN

Good!

ALEX

That's a bad spell!

HELEN

Does that work on one person or is it just like you suddenly know like-

BEN

Ha-ha!

LYDIA

It takes time.

BRYN (as HAMID)

I have to concentrate.

ALEX

Why don't you read the description out for that?

BRYN

So it does affect a cone, it can affect an area so I can concentrate on anyone in the area to hear their surface thoughts whilst the spell is ongoing.

HELEN

Interesting.

LYDIA

It takes a few rounds, because first you hear that there ARE thoughts, and then you get a sense of vague emotions and then you get surface thoughts.

BRYN

Yeah, so you have to wait a little while before you start getting surface thoughts.

LYDIA

I will case Focused Scrutiny.

ALEX

Ooh. So yeah, you cast Detect Thoughts and you start getting thoughts from the kobold.

BRYN (as HAMID)

There's a Will save.

ALEX

Oh! I mean they're almost certainly gonna fail it, but let's give it a go. **(ROLL)**

What's the DC?

BEN

16.

ALEX

Yeah.

HELEN

[laughs] No will at all!

ALEX

Ha!

HELEN (as AZU)

Oh dear!

LYDIA (as CEL)

Oh no!

BEN

No, kobolds are horrible little cowards. Terrible at saves.

ALEX

So. You cast Detect Thoughts on the creature. Does Detect Thoughts transcend language, out of curiosity?

BRYN

No. So I will hear whatever-

ALEX

So the thoughts are in Draconic, which is a language I believe you speak.

BRYN (as HAMID)

I DO speak Draconic.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Oh my god!

HELEN (as AZU)

Woooo!

BRYN (as HAMID)

I picked it up at some point.

BEN

So kobolds are basically dragon goblins.

HELEN

That's so interesting!

BEN

Fundamentally.

LYDIA (as CEL)

[squealing incomprehensibly]

HELEN

I thought they were so much more disgusting than that!

BEN

No, they're little dragon goblins, they love trap-, they love make traps and luring people into dungeons and then murdering them that way.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Little buddy!

BRYN

I picked up Draconic during a recent level up.

ALEX

Yeah I knew, I thought you had.

HELEN

That's so clever, it makes so much sense.

ALEX

If you hadn't things were going to get more awkward but not impossible.

BRYN

[laughs]

ALEX

You get two immediate sensations from this which is yep, Detect Thought is working easily and the thoughts of the kobold are wrong. It is - you know what kobolds are, and kobolds can have like the intelligence of an average person, often.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

They're not always that way, but you know, they have some variation to it. This one: you may have found maybe like an idiot kobold or something, it's thinking very strangely. Instead of it being like: "Oh I should really do this thing" and blah blah blah it's more like: "Fetch. Fetch things. Big people fetch.

HELEN

It's mind-controlled?

ALEX

Bad. Fetch people. Hmm. Bad, bad. People hole trouble. Trouble. Big people trouble.. Hmm."

BRYN (as HAMID)

Um guys, there's something wrong with its thoughts. Does it have blue veins?

HELEN (as AZU)

Oh...

BEN (as ZOLF)

Er, I'll have a look.

HELEN

Can we - yeah, we look.

ALEX

It's trivially easy to look, like you are so outsized of it and like orders of magnitude stronger, I am not requiring any checks for this it's just not-

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

It's not worth it. You don't notice anything like what you have been trained to spot, Zolf.

BEN

Yeah.

HELEN (as AZU)

I'm just dangling it...

ALEX

Straight out of the gate. What I would say is that there are puncture marks towards the back of the neck on the kobold.

HELEN

Oh.

BEN (as ZOLF)

It's been, had something done to it. So have you got an idea?

HELEN (as AZU)

Bitten or injected or something?

LYDIA

Gonna cast Focused Scrutiny.

[SFX: Shimmer of magic]

LYDIA

Which gives me +10 Perception Sense Motive and Survival checks against a target creature.

ALEX

Mm hm.

BEN

Nice!

LYDIA

And so with my +10 Perception I'm gonna examine the holes.

ALEX

OK. Interestingly, not the way that you think it was gonna go but it's all good.
Can you roll me a Sense Motive with that modifier?

LYDIA

Yes. **(ROLL)** That is 11 plus 10. 21.

ALEX

21, OK.

HELEN

You still haven't been in the 30s!

ALEX

Interestingly no for some of the effects that are going to be kicking around here like Cel actually needs to bring their A game.

LYDIA

There's a bunch of different things, like-

ALEX

So for this specifically? You can tell that they've been injected by something multiple times. And you can tell that most likely there is some kind of drug in their system that's making them quite compliant. Beyond that you'd have to do a proper like: let's sit down, do a full physical examination, take some samples and run some tests, but at a quick glance, yeah, they've probably been drugged to be compliant maybe?

LYDIA (as CEL)

Poor little buddy's been drugged.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Oh.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Oh, right.

ALEX

You're still getting by the way: "Bad fetch hmm. Hmm. Trouble. Bad."

BRYN (as HAMID)

Yeah, it's not like thinking in full sentences.

ALEX

It's also not thinking in terms of "fight, kill", it's more stuff like "Oh I-" - the general like vague sense you get is: "Oh no, big people. I'm in such trouble."

BRYN

Yeah, yeah.

HELEN

Aww...

ALEX

But very fragmented.

BRYN (as HAMID)

It's not gonna try and hurt us but if you let it go it'll probably just try and run away.

ALEX

It does occasionally say things along the lines of like "fetch" and "help" and stuff. So there is that.

HELEN (as AZU)

Oh dear.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Well you could try asking some questions, I don't know how much use it'll be.

LYDIA

Well I have +5 Diplomacy and my Diplomacy is 10, so I would just basically have a 15 bonus so I'm gonna be like:

LYDIA (as CEL)

Hey little buddy! Little buddy! What's - what's up?

ALEX

What language are you speaking?

LYDIA

Gonna try Japanese first.

ALEX

OK.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Buddy, do you get it? Do you understand? Hey, we just wanna help.

ALEX

Looks at you and then Hamid, you get the sense of "Big person. Fetch help. Trouble." All the same stuff again.

BRYN

I'm gonna talk Draconic.

ALEX

OK.

BRYN

And I'm gonna say:

BRYN (as HAMID)

Who do you want to fetch? Who's going to help you?

ALEX

It briefly seems to surface a bit more coherently hearing Draconic. Something along the lines of: "Fetch help. Help fetch. Big people. Big people. Fetch help. Help. Help. Big people. Fetch."

BRYN (as HAMID)

Yeah it's not - I'm not getting anything very coherent.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Right, well-

ALEX

Occasionally "onion" sweeps through its mind and then disappears again.

(Group laughter)

BEN (as ZOLF)

I'm not gonna kill a drugged up victim so I say we tie it up and leave it here so it can come to its senses.

BRYN (as HAMID)

Yeah, might need to gag as well so it can't call for help.

BEN

Yeah, sure.

HELEN (as AZU)

Yeah, let's do that.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Well it's not gonna be much of a challenge and I'm good at knots, so let's go.

ALEX

I am gonna require no checks. Like won't be a newsflash for people, they're taking so many penalties on top of being an actual kobold that I don't think it's physically possible for them to make the checks required.

BRYN

Before we put the gag in I'm gonna offer it a small piece of food, probably just some bread or something.

ALEX

Mm hm.

LYDIA

Aww...

ALEX

How do I put it? You start offering it the bread and it's like...

ALEX (as KOBOLD)

[grumbles suspiciously]

BRYN

Offer it one of the onions?

ALEX (as KOBOLD)

[grumbles even more suspiciously]

BRYN

OK.

LYDIA (as CEL)

I think maybe we'll have some meat, is there any meat?

ALEX

It doesn't seem like freaked out, it's just like: ew, gross.

LYDIA

Is there any meat around?

ALEX

You gag it, presumably?

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

There's no meat in the crates, to be clear.

LYDIA

OK. Cel has just incredibly, using her +5 Diplomacy is just incredibly, incredibly gentle towards the thing.

ALEX (as KOBOLD)

[growls]

LYDIA (as CEL)

You're gonna be OK little buddy. OK? It's all gonna, it's all gonna wear off and then someone's gonna come and help you, we'll come help you if necessary.

ALEX

How long does Detect Thoughts last?

BRYN

8 minutes like most of my spells, but-

ALEX

8 minutes, OK.

BRYN

But I have to be actively concentrating to get any thoughts.

ALEX

Are you continuing to concentrate?

BRYN

Probably not at that point.

ALEX

That's fine. The last things that you get are kind of something along the lines of like: "Fetch, trouble, big person, trouble, trouble. Quite comfy. Trouble, trouble."

(Group laughter)

LYDIA (as CEL)

Awww, little buddy!

ALEX

And yeah, you just leave it bound and gagged and it's just there, and it sort of gives a little wiggle, but it's the kind of wiggle that like, something that's swaddled gives rather than something that's trying to get out. It's just like:

ALEX (as KOBOLD)

[grumbling gently]

BRYN

Is there any like spare, just, material in the crates.

ALEX

There's bolts of cloth in one of them.

BRYN

I get one of the pieces of cloth, and I fold it up to be a little pillow for the kobold.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Aww, you give him a little nest!

BRYN

I don't like force him to lie on it, I just leave it there for him to lie on.

ALEX

Yeah, it's all good. It's all good. It proceeds to sort of-

ALEX (as KOBOLD)

[grunts]

ALEX

Kind of just tip over onto it. And it just kind of lies there looking around for a while, but it's also kind of not with it so it's clearly getting a little bit sleepy.

LYDIA (as CEL)

Little dopey buddy.

BEN (as ZOLF)

Well this is good because if it does wake up and breaks it we might have instilled some sort of positive effect on it so it might help us or not dob us in, so, you know.

ALEX

And as you tuck in a little kobold, or swaddle him in and tuck him in, I'll end the episode there on the-

BEN

That was so wholesome!

BRYN

That was nice of them!

BEN

I keep expecting there to be like some sort of horrible combat, and Alex has provided us a little friend!

LYDIA

He told us that we needed to draw a battle map!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

And all we've done is cuddle!

BRYN

Let's not forget this thing has been mind-drugged so you know it's briefly wholesome.

HELEN

Yeah, that's not very wholesome.

BEN

Wholesome by Alex's standards.

BRYN

Yeah.

BEN

We're being wholesome.

ALEX

I mean it's how I got all of you in the room, what are you -?

BRYN

Ohh dark!

ALEX

Yeah, dark, very dark!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I think we should end the episode there, we will be back next week and hopefully we will find out what the heck's going on and I think I've thrown you enough!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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