

RQG – 145 – Triggers, Traps and Tubes

Content Warnings

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ALEX

Hi everyone. Alex here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our patrons. Daria Leigh Dennison. Grace Ann. Alex Surname. Tegan McCreary. Kieran Cotes. Chou. TA. Fitz Lett. Chrise Sterling. Evan Coley. Mandy Hoin. Small Medium Problems. Big Carl. Babé Haldestat. Azana. Nick Oliviero. Anne-Marie Windhorst. C'est. Claire Martin. Ashley Anderson. Thank you all. We really appreciate your support. If you'd like to join them, go to www.patreon.com/rustyquill and take a look at our rewards.

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

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

BEN

Ben Meredith

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

ALEX

(screams)

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom

HELEN

And a half-drowned Azu

ALEX

You're not half-drowned, you can breathe, it's fine.

HELEN

I have 28 hit points, which is more than half of my points gone!

ALEX

That's more than Hamid's total, right? Kidding.

BRYN

(laughs)

ALEX

Kidding. He's got 29, right?

HELEN

How many hit points do you have?

BRYN

46.

ALEX

Yeah, he's actually not...

BEN

Wow.

LYDIA

Hamid has more hit points than Cel does.

ALEX

You know, compared to the average commoner, he's a pretty beefy boy, is our Hamid.

BRYN

Oh, 45. 45 hit points.

ALEX

So. As a very, very, very, very cursory recap, we're all currently, er...

BRYN

Water happened. The end.

HELEN?

(laughs) Cursory being the operative word!

ALEX

We are all in an underwater base attempting to track down and get a gentleman named Shoin... most of the party are currently in a flooded room with alarms going off. And Hamid is currently with a little gentleman called Skraak and crawling through some corridors.

BRYN

Also, he's about 30 seconds or so earlier than the rest of the party?

ALEX

Which is why we're going to start with... Hamid.

BRYN

(laughs) So we heard a smash and a rattle, and then everything went calm for a second.

ALEX

And then a little bit of a groaning started, a sort of *arrgn-drug-drug-drug-drug-drug*, that kind of thing.

BRYN

Oh dear.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

The trademark.

LYDIA

Classic.

HELEN

Iconic!

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

It sort of kind to takes you, tugs you and tries to...

LYDIA

Coming down the drag race runway like...

ALEX

Skraak tugs at Hamid and tries to put his snout near, er...

BRYN

What's wrong Skraak.

ALEX

Skraak, pressure equalisation. Skraak!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

OK. Yeah, I think we just have to keep going, though, I'm not sure there's anything else we can do.

ALEX

Can you give me a sense motive, please?

BRYN

(rolls) 15.

ALEX

15. Now, when you think about it, Skraak has been starting to behave a little bit differently to how he behaved initially?

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

He seems a little bit more... with it? That's the best way I can describe it.

BRYN

The mind-controlling juice they were given is wearing off.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Yeah, it's like, basically that's, that's a logical assumption. It has gone from, he is in a world that doesn't have actual comic reliefs, behaving as if he was a comic relief character. You know like if you meet someone and they're deliberately making a prat of themselves, kind of thing.

BRYN

Mm.

ALEX

To, he seems to be normalising slightly, and that phrase just happens to have triggered the consideration. He doesn't appear to be doing anything unusual, it's just something about his manner.

BRYN

Does he seem very worried?

ALEX

Not especially.

BRYN

Yeah. So after that pause, for whatever that was, we keep crawling down the tube?

ALEX

OK. Yeah, you keep crawling down the tube. You're trying to make onwards progress, aren't you?

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

However...

BRYN

We're not in a particular rush. So we're just... going, until something else happens.

ALEX

Given, unfortunately, that this isn't a sensibly laid out place, it's all curves and domes because of pressure and so on, can you give me a survival check to make onward progress for navigation?

BRYN

(chuckles)

HELEN?

While you're rolling, I'm just thinking it's really said that if Skraak has been mind-controlled, like, the only thing he remembers is his own name.

BRYN

Mm. (rolls) 5.

ALEX

5. OK, cool. You and Skraak together, who for audience benefit rolled a 3, make really steady progress. You are certain that you are making really good progress.

LYDIA

(big groan) Oh, Alex!

BRYN

No....

ALEX

However, it has been at this point quite a while. You can't really tell how long without there being another exit door, and then you arrive at a junction of, call it another T-junction, where you're pretty certain you're more or less at the centre, and you reckon that somewhere, maybe left, maybe right, you don't know, there'll be an exit at this point somewhere.

BRYN

I go left.

ALEX

OK. You start heading left. Skraak takes a moment and goes:

Mm, no. No, I think it's right.

BRYN

I look left. I look right. I shrug. And go right!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

OK. You carry on right for a moment. It's not the most glamorous or exciting part of the adventure, but sometimes these things happen.

I'm going to jump back to the people who are trapped – er, sorry, chosen to be in a room that has large amounts of alarms going off. We're going to jump back with Cel being grabbed and alarms going off. (sounds of alarms going off in background.)

LYDIA

Aaaaaargh!

ALEX

And all kinds of mechanisms starting.

LYDIA

Keeping on screaming.

ALEX

Yep.

LYDIA

And kicking really hard.

ALEX

For the benefit of the party members with dark vision, two extremely large, solid steel doors, almost blast doors, effectively, seem to start shunting down into place at the two entrances, the entrance that you came in and a door on the far side – vvvmmmm – and starting to, like, lower themselves. They're not especially quick but you're not going to be able to dash across, really, and do much about it. Obviously from Cel's perspective it's just...

BEN?

Honking noise, isn't it?

ALEX

Noise – honking! [unclear 0:05:48] salaam. (sounds of door coming down)

LYDIA

It's a lovely day in the dungeon.

ALEX

There is a loud ka-junk, woosh!

HELEN

OK, can I push off from the floor so that my head comes out of the water, please.

ALEX

Yes.

HELEN

And like, I'm...

ALEX

What I'm going to say is that, if you'll just allow me to say you're at the edge of the room? You can just above the water.

HELEN

OK, I will do that and I will say, Cel!

LYDIA

Aaaargh!

HELEN

No, sorry, that was me. I forgot...

LYDIA

Why would you do that?

HELEN

I forgot you can't see. We need to go and probably try and get to those doors because otherwise we're going to get...

LYDIA

Is Zolf – is Mr Smith dead?

HELEN

No.

LYDIA

Oh. OK, good.

BEN

At this point, I will climb up as well and go:

Owoah, owoah. I'm fine! Don't worry about me!

LYDIA

Oh, that's good to hear!

BEN

I pulled a lever!

LYDIA

That sounds like a bad move!

BEN

Well, no, it looked like an emergency lever. I thought it might drain the room? There's blast doors coming down. I'm hopin' they're a precursor to draining the room.

?

Mmmm...

BEN

Maybe hasty but, yeah.

LYDIA

I don't know if Shoin would have built something quite so useful as a room draining...

BEN

It's an underwater base, it's got...

ALEX

You all notice the tell-tale eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee! Sort of pressure-building noise that accompanied the last break in pressure and so on.

HELEN

I think we should get out of this room.

BEN

I think we should get under the water. That'll... are we at sea?

ALEX

Yes.

BEN

OK. I'm going to make a survival check at +2, because I'm at sea!

(Group laughter)

About what is the best thing to do with a pressure differential like this. (rolls)

So, 11. Air or water?

ALEX

Water

BEN

We need to get under the water so this pressure won't...

ALEX

Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

BEN

Affect us, but this should be OK, all right? Go now!

HELEN

Are you sure?

BEN

Yes.

HELEN

Are you sure?

BEN

Yes. (Big inhale)

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Cel goes down and has taken the water breathing potion?

BEN

Yes, you both have, I haven't, but I'm confident I can...

ALEX

And Azu?

HELEN

I'm going to do what the others – I don't, I'm not functioning...

ALEX

It's slightly easier for you.

BEN

Yeah!

HELEN

Azu is not functioning very well, so...

BEN

Sure. I look over and give you, like, a thumbs up, this is fine.

ALEX

There is an extreeeeemely loud noise...

HELEN

Azu shakes her head, she's like, I'm not fine.

ALEX

...Under the water of like: eeeerrrrrrmmmm crunchlaaaar!

BEN

Even more vigorous than...

ALEX

Like, it sounds like something is tearing itself apart.

BEN

I... hesitate slightly with my vigorous thumbs-upping, I'm like, thumbs go to the side!

ALEX

The loud noise stops and then you hear a sort of (bubbling sound), you know like bubbles reaching up through the water and so on.

BEN

Thumbs go back up!

HELEN

Azu is going to try and take Cel by the arm and sort of make their way over to Zolf, because she now wants to be with everybody and not with one person on the other side of the room.

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

I'll allow this under the water. None of you notice any difference in the water level or behaviour of the water in any way.

LYDIA

Weird

BEN

Right. I've got loads of hit points. I...

LYDIA

(laughs) I don't!

BEN

I stick my head above water.

ALEX

There's nothing happening. There's no pressure differential. Everything seems fine.

BEN

What's the wheeeeeeee?

ALEX

It's gone.

BEN

I'm still holding my breath. I'm still holding the water breathing potion, which means that if I try and breath nothing, I'm going to try and take a breath.

ALEX

You take a breath completely as normal.

HELEN?

OK. Right.

BEN

I'll sink back down and point up.

HELEN

OK. Azu will go back up (giggling) taking Cel with her.

LYDIA

Cel's mouth keeps going, you can't hear what they're saying.

HELEN

No!

LYDIA

It's underwater.

HELEN

OK. I guess, do we break the surface OK?

ALEX

Yeah. Everything's fine.

LYDIA

Right. As they come above it:

So, really, what I'm thinking is that I'd, does anyone have any healing options because...

BEN

Yes.

LYDIA

I am, oh good!

BEN

Right. I mean...

CEL

I'm quite hurt.

BEN

OK. Well, gather round, and I'll sort ourselves out.

HELEN

How badly are you hurt?

To Cel.

LYDIA

Pretty badly, like, that pummelling hurt quite a lot!

BEN

Yep, I can keep going until we all feel better again.

Right, I dropped my D6 under the table, excuse me.

(Group laughter)

Right. Well, here goes the first one.

HELEN

Nice!

BEN

15 hit points back.

LYDIA

Oooh!

BEN

How we doing?

LYDIA

I've got a small amount of extra life that would be nice?

BEN

All right.

LYDIA

My inner vigours are...

ALEX

Cel is the only character that I would allow to have come up with a way of tracking their own health by hit points!

(Group laughter)

Because that's a very Cel thing to do.

LYDIA

I would assume that about, like, maybe 8 to 15% of my vital, like I call them health percentage?

(Group laughter)

Um, it's a proportion of my health. Now, that is, it's a very unique...

BEN

Right.

LYDIA

Personal assessment. Other people may have different health percentages.

BEN

Ahhh.

LYDIA

It really, it depends on other things, including I think one's constitution, also I think personality and star sign, I haven't quite worked it out.

(Group laughter)

BEN

OK. Well, whatever happens, have another go!

And you get 11 hit points back.

LYDIA

Ooh, nice!

BEN

How we doin'?

LYDIA

Back to full. My full is basically your half but it's fine!

BEN

Right. Who's still feeling under the weather?

HELEN

I would say I'd like to sit down but we're in a lot of water.

ALEX

The speakers burst into life above you.

BEN

Just before he starts talking, do the Lay On Hands yourself.

HELEN

Yeah, will do.

ALEX

I'll allow that to happen first.

LYDIA

You touch yourself!

HELEN

I do!

LYDIA

It feels good!

HELEN

Azu touches herself for comfort.

LYDIA

(laughs)

HELEN

OK. I'm at 65.

BEN

OK.

ALEX

At which point...

BEN

So we're all basically fine.

ALEX

The speakers burst into life.

Enjoy your stay at Hotel Shoin. The food is to die for. And so is the gin. Such noble heroes deserve a – shut up! Shut up! I'm doing the thing! Such noble heroes deserve a rest, don't tarry or you'll fail the test. (titters) Shut up!

BEN

(laughs) Oh good, another devious puzzle. Eurgh.

How d'you factor in the room flooding?

HELEN

I would like to leave, I would like to...

BEN

Yeah. Are the blast doors still there?

ALEX

Yep, they're still down.

BEN

I'm going to switch the switch back.

LYDIA

Are there – you said there were raised walkways?

ALEX

Mm-hm?

LYDIA

Is the water over the raised walkways?

ALEX

No, not at all. The raised walkways are – they're almost, to be honest, at the water level that you're at now. Like, the room's let's say half-flooded for the sake of ease, give or take.

LYDIA

Yep. Well, Cel can't see that so...

ALEX

Yep.

LYDIA

Just adding that as information for...

ALEX

Yep.

HELEN

OK.

LYDIA

The people that can see.

ALEX

All of the lounge parts of this room are now flooded.

LYDIA

Yeah, but there are places to sit.

ALEX

There are places to stand and not be in water, yeah.

LYDIA

Yeah!

BEN

That's a good...

LYDIA

A good thing to know. Not that Cel knows.

BEN

No. I don't know, what do you two reckon? Like, I can re-flick the switch, obviously Cel, I imagine you can't see anything, so it's not very helpful?

LYDIA

No, it's not great.

BEN

Yep, and all of our equipment is now going to be sodden, so there's no mundane torches being lit.

LYDIA

That's a good point. Who was the one who was doing all the light stuff earlier?
That was...

BEN

That would be Hamid.

LYDIA

Oh, he was really useful.

ALEX

Your torches will be fine if they are explicitly kept in a bag of holding?

LYDIA

Mm.

ALEX

Because it's an extra-dimensional space.

BEN

Ah.

ALEX

If they are not in the bag of holding, they are ruined.

LYDIA

Is there anywhere that I could, like, maybe stand, maybe half a door that has, like, been...

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

Broken off and I could lay on that? You guys can paddle around the edge.

HELEN

I think we can get you out of the water. Can I... Sorry, I realise I've been dragging you around a bit...

LYDIA

Oh no, that's fine.

HELEN

Are you sure?

LYDIA

Yeah, well, I mean it wasn't fine when you grabbed my leg and pulled me under water, that...

HELEN

I'm very sorry, I...

LYDIA

It's fine.

BEN

Right, I'm going flick the switch.

And I dive back down.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

OK. So you go down and you try and pull the lever up?

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

It resists quite a lot.

BEN

Mm-hm.

ALEX

Then (groan) you are able to manage to. The alarm starts ringing again, it's the same alarm as before, that waaaaow, what was it you described it as, a goose alarm?

LYDIA

Did he go and flick the switch? Did he do that?

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

The two blast doors begin to start trying to grind upwards. The one heading back the way you came then just stops and then re-lowers. The one that leads onwards continue to raise upwards..

HELEN

And nothing's coming through it.

ALEX

Nope.

HELEN

OK.

ALEX

It was a blast door in front of one of those sort of submarine-y type doors.

HELEN

OK.

LYDIA

So, are we, are we, did the door, what's happened?

HELEN

Um, one of the doors has opened.

LYDIA

Oh! Good, is it a door doing in, like, a friendly direction?

BEN

It's going in the direction we need to go – probably not friendly, towards Shoin. We're going forwards, not back. The back blast door stayed down, assumedly because it's all flooded.

LYDIA

That sounds like something an engineer would design in, but I don't know if I trust Shoin to...

BEN

Oh no, those doors?

LYDIA

Yep.

BEN

Well, you know, they were terrible, weren't they? They were not up to task.

LYDIA

They were use – they were really badly designed, like the weight balance was all wrong.

BEN

And you'd think a door designed to, you know, put up water pressure, if the water was there, it would make it harder. Ought to automate it.

CEL

It's real, like one thing I'm learning from all of this is that Shoin really just is not as good at maths as I thought.

HELEN

I would really like to get this over with and go back to...

BEN

So would I.

ALEX?

OK.

BRYN

And find Hamid.

BEN?

So, right, shall we...?

HELEN

Yeah, that's the only – the end of the sentence was go back to Hamid! (laughs)

BRYN

He's the only one you've got left, Helen.

HELEN

Yeah.

BRYN

And you just let him go, off by himself.

(Group laughter)

BEN

Shut up, those ripples in the room!

ALEX

Yeah, quiet! Azu was too busy letting everyone else down!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

You're such bullies!

ALEX

Oh, he's so mean.

HELEN

I'm being maltreated!

BEN

Well, completely unprompted, then! Actually, I just want to quickly say, think we dealt with that quite well, so well done everyone.

LYDIA

Right.

BEN

Could have been a...

LYDIA

Cheers, Mr Smith. Good work on the door-shutting!

BEN

And we'll hand you that, so most people would panic horribly and you didn't.

LYDIA

Good swimming!

BEN

Yep.

HELEN

Just, I'm saving my panic for later.

BEN

OK! Um, we can't...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

That's so much more...

LYDIA

That's such a great survival tactic! I mean, look, obviously it's not the healthiest way, but really like, having a bit of a panic afterwards – you know when you have like a really busy day and the end you just have a little cry?

BEN

OK, I just think, OK, I...

LYDIA

Like a tactical one.

BEN

I think maybe we need to have a discussion about coping mechanisms after we're out because I've been there.

HELEN

We've all been there.

LYDIA

Where have you been, Mr Smith? Because I've spent my whole life going through different war zones, er...?

BEN

I, er, lost my faith in a god and had an argument with that god so...

LYDIA

Oh, that's sounds nice!

BEN

No. Anyway, um... I can explain.

HELEN

Wasn't it Poseidon?

BEN

I'll ex – yes, and I'll explain later. Look, not now but later, I will, all right?
Anyway...

LYDIA

We can all have arguments.

BEN

I don't...

ALEX?

(suppressed laughter)

LYDIA

Mr Coping Mechanisms.

Splashes around.

BEN

Cel. Please.

HELEN

The point is, it's not going to help if I have a lot of feelings all over the place right now, so I'm just going to not, and...

LYDIA

Put them in a box!

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

The speakers burst into life!

(Group laughter)

Tick tock, tick tock, let's not fall to toxic shock! Ha ha ha ha!

And then the speakers go off.

LYDIA

Please can we leave this room so that the speakers can't get us any more.

BEN

Yes. Let's go.

HELEN

All right.

ALEX

I'm going to jump to Hamid. So, you continue making seemingly good progress and you find yourself at like your maybe 30th junction? And you notice a long, broad scratch has been carved into it and Skraak seems to give a bit of a sigh.

Aaaah.

LYDIA?

Oh, you've gone in a circle.

BRYN

Skraak? What's wrong?

ALEX

From behind you, Skraak taps you on the shoulder and points back the way that you've come. And you see intermittently, right at the edge of your vision, another long scratch. Presumably others.

BRYN

Oh. Darn. Should've been marking the route we've been taking. I've been...

ALEX

We may want to just open a door.

BRYN

I've done that before, and I forgot this time. We do need to orient ourselves.

ALEX

Well, we have.

BRYN

Yeah. Um, we're going to have to open a hatch and...

ALEX

Just, just at random!

BRYN

Check where we are, at the very least. We need to look very carefully, though, because remember some of the rooms in the base were flooded and could be flooding anywhere, really.

ALEX

Mm.

BRYN

Is there a good way to check before you open something? Just tap on it?

ALEX

Hmm.

Skraak considers for a moment. (rolls)

Er, yeah, yeah, probably.

BRYN

OK, then, which one looks good to you, Skraak?

ALEX

Hmm.

Skraak goes over and then pulls down a little side hatch and you see what effectively is a pressure gauge. He starts tapping it.

BRYN

Oh, that's really useful!

ALEX

Er, seems OK!

BRYN

This one then? OK, let's...

ALEX

OK!

BRYN

We've got one of the wrenches that was in the weird boxes from...

EVERYONE

Oh yeah!

BRYN

Way back at the beginning.

ALEX

You do have a propriety Shoin wrench!

BRYN

Yeah. We picked up, like, three and I think, I think I took one.

ALEX

It's how you know they're truly an evil genius...

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Is if they force you to use their proprietary tools in *addition* to buying the actual core stuff?

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Whooarr.

Skraak sort of goes to move it and goes:

Hmm. Maybe you should be ready with the ptchow-brrr-rahrr!

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

OK. Skraak begins pumping the sort of side panel. There's the tell-tale hissssss of something, of hydraulics, although it doesn't seem broken, this one, for what it's worth. And then slightly further down the corridor, maybe 15 feet or so, you hear a sort of mechanism moving. And then a peculiar green light floods into it from that opening, which is about 15 feet further down.

It becomes apparent that these corridors may have been just full, completely, of these doors and have just been going unnoticed and you have no way of knowing what was and what wasn't a door anyway!

The quality of the light is, remember I talked about those sort of rippling light quality? That, but lurid green.

?

Oh dear.

BRYN

Yeah. I'll go up to the panel that's just opened and cautiously peak round it.

ALEX

Cool! That seems like a sensible place to take a break and then we'll be back in a couple of minutes!

ALEX

And welcome back. I am going to stick with Hamid, for a change.

LYDIA

Ooh!

ALEX

Hamid. You poke your head round. Are you doing so quietly, carefully and stealthily?

BRYN

Yes!

ALEX

Could you give me the appropriate roll?

LYDIA

Still in the skin-tight catsuit.

HELEN

Oh yes! Are you wearing the... ooh!

BRYN

(rolls)

ALEX

Oh dear.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Oh dear. We should get you that on a mug.

ALEX

No more iconic [unclear 0:20:02]

(Group laughter)

BRYN

14.

ALEX

14? Cool. You poke your head in and find yourself up near the, for lack of a better word, rafters of an *enormous* room. There is a walkway immediately next to this, I keep wanting to call it a Jefferies tube! Next to this maintenance tube. It seems that you've lost all sense of verticality and you've actually managed to find yourself at the top of a very large room. To give you a quick description, it is well-lit by this lurid green light. There is a *huge* domed ceiling of glass, of which you are sort of at the edge of it. I want you to think, you know those sort of old, Victorian, like large greenhouses and so on, like those...

LYDIA

Yeah! Like the Kew Gardens.

ALEX

Yeah, like big, big...

LYDIA

Like the British Museum, the glass roof.

ALEX

Yeah, big trussed metal doming...

LYDIA

Oh, OK.

ALEX

So it's like reinforced but it is arced glass style.

BRYN

Crystal Palace.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Yeah, better, better. And these are all references that mean nothing to US listeners!

BRYN

Google it!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

And it's not the football team.

ALEX

So, it's a large glass dome with sort of metal stanchions and so on reinforcing it, built into it. The dome is probably about a hundred foot diameter and it is a perfectly circular room. There is a walkway at the rim of this large glass dome and it is perfectly sort of above, ever so slightly to the corridor that you're currently in. So it's looking down into the room. From the angle that you're at, because you're sort of looking up towards this dome, you can see the dome's a little bit worse for wear, like there's some weeds growing up across a bit of it and so on, it's a little bit grimy, you can't see the surface. The surface is way higher than where you are currently. You would have to enter the room to get anything more than a look at this large, extremely large domed ceiling.

BRYN

(whispering) Skraak! Skraak! Come here. Do you recognise this room?

ALEX

I mean, er...

BRYN

Let's be quiet. You've never been to this bit of the base before?

ALEX

I've never even been in a lift before!

BRYN

OK, OK. Stay here, stay quiet.

ALEX

I mean, I'll be honest, though. This does have Big Boss written all over it!

BEN

Genre-savvy NPCs oh-oh!

(Group laughter)

(whispering) OK.

ALEX

I mean that is a room big enough for a hundred-foot-tall man made entirely of fire and lightning.

BRYN

(whispering) I mean, I still think that might be a slight exaggeration but, you're right, it is possible. OK, um, stay here, stay quiet, I'm just going to put on this new cloak we found and I'm just going to do a quick circuit of the edge of the room.

ALEX

Yeah, OK.

BRYN

(whispering) Staying as hidden as I can.

ALEX

Do you want me to keep hold of this health potion in case you go down?

BRYN

(whispering) That's a good idea, yeah.

ALEX

Yeah, all right.

BRYN

(whispering) Also, do you have any weapons, Skraak?

ALEX

Um...

He pulls out a pair of respectable claws for a kobold of his size.

LYDIA

Awww.

BRYN

I mean, OK, those are good, but I've got something else for you.

I pull out from my bag of holding, like Mary Poppins...

LYDIA

(gasps)

BRYN

A fully loaded injection spear.

(Group laughter)

That I had earlier.

ALEX

Oh! And it'd be kobold sized as well because – yeah!

BRYN

Because I picked up one that was from one of the kobolds earlier!

(whispering) You know how to use one of these?

ALEX

I mean, pointy end goes in the other person!

BRYN

Yeah. Er, I've got some cannisters to reload it as well. Would those be useful?

ALEX

Oh yeah. Yeah, great.

BRYN

OK. I'll give you those as well.

ALEX

He stabs you in the back! Nahaah!

No, he doesn't.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Obviously, we don't want to start a fight, if we can avoid it.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah. Well...

It's a little bit awkward having a spear in a corridor, but...

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

But yeah, he's like, OK, all right, yeah. Aah. Skraak avenger!

BRYN

Remember...

ALEX

Death from above etc.!

BRYN

General Skraak, avenger!

ALEX

General Skraak, aah.

BRYN

I give him a smile. OK. Yeah, so I shrug on the cloak of Elvenkind.

ALEX

Mm-hm?

BRYN

And I step into the room.

ALEX

Mm-hm.

BRYN

Take my sleeves off, put them back on, so I'm back in my three-piece suit.

LYDIA

Obviously.

BRYN

I mean, if someone does see me, I want to look good!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Prestidigitation.

ALEX

Naturally.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

So the vocal and somatic components of prestidigitation alerts the guards – nah, it's fine. I'll allow it, but it does have a vocal component.

BRYN

I know. I do it quietly!

ALEX

(giggles)

BRYN

And yeah, I'm going to start, like...

ALEX

Cillit bang! And now you're covered!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It's the vocal components...

BRYN

That's the best version of prestidig I've ever heard! Bang! And the dirt is gone!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

That's a very UK reference.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BRYN

I'm going to go at least a little way round the...

ALEX

You don't need to before I can give you an enormous description.

BRYN

I will go a little way round the edge.

ALEX

Just, literally just peering from the edge of your walkway.

BRYN

Yep. But I'm, I'm trying to be as stealthy as possible. Cool.

ALEX

That's fine. The large circular room has at the far end to you what at first glance appears to be an enormous pipe organ. *Huge, just massive.*

BRYN

Alex. Can I just tell you. I really respect your craft!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I mean, it is...

HELEN?

I don't get it!

ALEX

Well, it's just super-evil so it's very sort of...

LYDIA

Duuuuuuun dun dun!

ALEX

Bioshock kind of mixed with Davy Jones from The Pirates of the Caribbean?

LYDIA

And Phantom of the Opera!

HELEN

Yeah, I'm just expecting a dude with a mask on.

BEN?

Well, actually, if Bill Nighy were here, that'd be...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, this enormous, enormous pipe organ. Can you give me a knowledge engineering please?

BRYN

No.

ALEX

Do you not have it or...?

BRYN

I don't have knowledge engineering.

ALEX

That's fine, then. Can you give me a knowledge arcana please?

BRYN

Yes. (rolls) 19.

ALEX

It's not really your field of expertise anyway. So this enormous pipe organ that's filling up easily the far third of this domed room...

BRYN

Goodness.

ALEX

It is *enormous*. It has all of these pipes and so on running all the way up to the dome and then out and so on...

BRYN

It might be best to let Alex draw these things!

LYDIA

We're trying to draw the battle map based on clues!

ALEX

It has either side of it two enormous cylinders, easily maybe a diameter of about 20 feet, filled with lurid green liquid which is bubbling away and it's sort of framing this pipe organ thing.

HELEN?

God, I can't understand what he...

ALEX

And then the pipes of either of them are leading into this pipe organ.

LYDIA

Hey, just because something is a bright colour and is bubbling away and is connected to a large device does not mean that it is evil, even bad!

BEN?

I reckon this is all cosmetic. It's all set dressing.

ALEX

The pipe organ is designed in such a way to look like a huge figure is stood looming over whoever is playing it.

LYDIA

(laughter)

ALEX

With a pair of large eyes looking down at them.

BEN

Oh my god it's the Wizard of Oz!

HELEN?

Oh my god it's like a circus...

BEN

If ever a weaver a wiz there was...

LYDIA

It's Shoin.

BEN

Yeah. It turns out.

HELEN

Except he's not a wizard.

ALEX

So yeah, it is...

LYDIA

Maybe he is?

BEN

Yeah, maybe, but...

HELEN

Rubbish, [unclear 0:26:48]

BEN

But this time the munchkins are here and they're out for blood!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

We're all so clearly stalling for time, before we die!

ALEX

I might steal that. I might steal that. So, other things that you become aware of from your vantage point is: there are a large number of pipe entrances to this room that just seem to be pipes that poke into the room and just stop with grating over them. It doesn't look like they're to flood the room, necessarily –

it has a very, very sort of fine mesh, more like filter paper or something than anything else. And then in the room there is what appears to be sort of different sections, OK? So you have your big pipe organ which is occupying the majority at the far end. Then on one side appears to be sort of one quadrant is designed in a very sort of lush study? I don't know how to put it, like it has like a mahogany desk, good chair, excellent, gentle lighting, a little chaise longue, filing cabinets etc.

LYDIA

[unclear 0:27:51]

ALEX

On the far side to that appears to be some kind of bedroom set-up, so on the far quadrant, and then the quadrant that's...

LYDIA

It's a studio apartment.

ALEX

The quadrant...

BEN?

Shoin is a bubble boy.

ALEX

The quadrant that is underneath you appears to be, again, you can just see through the grating, at a glance, some kind of maybe kitchen? Although there's a lot of old chemical stuff that's splayed around so, eh??

In the exact middle of the room, you see a large circular table. OK? And it has four places set.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Oh, the [unclear 0:28:24]

?

(loud groan)

ALEX

There is a larger chair between the pipe organ and the round table which is currently occupied...

LYDIA

Oh no!

ALEX

By a humanoid figure sat with steepled hands upon the desk.

BEN

Shoot him with your crossbow. Shoot him in his eyes.

Fireball him, just fireball him now!

ALEX

Thus concludes the description of the room!

BEN

(whispering) Fireball him, now!

BRYN

Right, well. That's a lot. You said the four places are laid out...

ALEX

Mm-hm.

BRYN

And Shoin's just – presumably Shoin – is just sitting there at the table.

ALEX

Because almost all of the lighting is *behind*...

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

The figure, um...

LYDIA

Oh, of course!

ALEX

It's an unnecessarily large and ornate chair, like with gnarled wood and etc. upon it. So it's, you have no sight of his, or her...

LYDIA

Everyone knows I'm faking that I love this.

BRYN

I would like to sneak all the way round the edge of the room to the end of the walkway near the big pipe organ and one of the large chemical vat cylinders, out of Shoin's eyeline, on the walkway. That's my next goal. Sneak to there.

ALEX

Give me a stealth check please? Skraak will stay where you told him stay unless you say otherwise.

LYDIA

Aww.

BEN?

You've got a good bonus.

ALEX

Nice.

BRYN

30.

BEN?

Whoar, that's almost Sasha levels. Almost.

ALEX

I will return to this.

BEN

I mean it's, below average Sasha levels.

ALEX

That's fine, that's fine.

LYDIA

Yeah, that's about, no that's a decent...

ALEX

Returning to the rest of the party.

LYDIA

(moaning sound)

ALEX

So. You were going to head through the door on the far side?

HELEN

Yes.

BEN

Yes, I think so. I mean, a cursory quick scan, just o make sure there's not like anything obviously useful in the room, but I'm not going to turn it over. Like, if there's a weapons rack in the gantries or something like that.

ALEX

There *is* the following, but bear in mind by there is what I mean is *scattered* randomly around the room...

BEN

Yeah, so...

ALEX

Most of which is broken is:

BEN

I'm genuinely not spending much time so...

ALEX

No, that's fine, that's fine. Yeah, there probably was a weapons rack in there that had a mundane axe, a mundane longsword, a mundane bow and a mundane hammer. And a brace of mundane daggers. They were all sheathed, which is why you weren't making checks against being damaged by them. There's a huge of shattered and broken bottles now around the place. Oh yeah, this is a death soup, like you're all wearing armour. If a civilian was in this they'd be coming out the worse for wear. There is maybe a couple of bottles that appear to not necessarily have spoiled. There's the furniture that's trashed. There was also a bookcase – all of the books are completely damaged beyond repair.

BEN

Well, it's all right because any of them that were worthwhile and therefore magical wouldn't have been, so that's... done the work for me.

ALEX

That is the way the game works.

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

They are all trashed.

BEN

Good! Fine, there's nothing useful in here.

ALEX

Unless you want to spend genuinely hours trawling, no.

HELEN

OK.

BEN

Well, personally no, I can't speak for the others but...

LYDIA

Can't see for nubbin.

BEN

Oh yeah!

(Group laughter)

I ain't got any nubbins, I'm sorry!

HELEN

So, shall I, you know, take your hand if you can't see, I can lead you.

LYDIA

Oh, that'd be, that'd be lovely!

HELEN

OK.

LYDIA

I would appreciate that. Thank you, Azu.

BEN

All right, I'll undo this. Be prepared for maybe as soon as it unlocks it gets pushed open, I don't know which way the door opens, is it obvious which way the...?

ALEX

Oh yeah, so it's another one of the, um, submarine doors.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

And it'll open inwards.

BEN

Oh, goodness. Right, might need some help here, Azu. We're going to be pulling against the whole water pressure.

HELEN

OK, right. Azu's going to come up to you, like holding Cel's hand, and then say to Cel, OK...

LYDIA

(makes underwater speaking sounds)

HELEN

(laughs) Are we still underwater?

BEN

We're going to have – mm, we're going to have to *go* underwater.

ALEX

The *door* is underwater, yeah.

BEN

Because the room didn't drain, so...

ALEX

I am going to allow something. Because I know what's on the other side of the door.

BEN

Mm-hm.

LYDIA

(whispers) Oh dear.

ALEX

I will allow people to basically skip past this as a skill challenge, because it will basically just deteriorate into a series of strength checks until people make it or collapse.

BEN

Yeah, take 20!

ALEX

I wouldn't say you even need to take 20.

BEN?

We gloss over that part of it and let [unclear 0:32:17]

ALEX

Here's what you do.

LYDIA

Mm-hm?

ALEX

You proceed to open the door. One of you swims down and spins the thing. Another one of you uses leverage to crack the door open. The second that the door is cracked open, water begins flowing into it at a seemingly controlled rate. Thus the water level just continues to go down until it's about...

BRYN

Solving a lot of your problems!

ALEX

Two feet off the ground. There's a reason that I'm not requiring checks – it's not actually a challenge, whatever's on the other side of the room has not complicated things, it's simplified them.

BEN

Great.

HELEN

OK, let's do that!

ALEX

The reason I was willing to gloss this over? Can I suggest you just throw open the door?

BEN

I – no. I'm going to very carefully open it.

ALEX

That's fine. On the other side of the door...

BEN

Because I'm not playing at Shoin's game.

ALEX

On the other side of the door is 15 foot of blank corridor and then – no, more – 20 foot of blank corridor and then another door exactly the same as this one.

BEN

Ah, right.

HELEN

OK.

ALEX

Thus concludes the exciting adventure of opening the door.

BEN

Right. Do you want to – shall we torch this up? Have you got any dry torches?

LYDIA

Oh! Yeah, in this nice bag that you got me, I put everything in here, that seemed sensible at the time.

BEN

All right.

LYDIA

Obviously I didn't say that to you because that'd be like saying, Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out, which would be *really* annoying over time!

(Group laughter)

BEN

No, it really – no, yeah, that, thank you because that really would be annoying.

LYDIA

Yeah, I mean, I know sometimes I can be a bit much but that would be *too* much, right? Anyway...

ALEX

I gave you all an enormous pipe organ, why all the sass?

BEN

No, you gave *yourself* an enormous pipe organ, this is for *you*!

HELEN

Yeah. Yeah, this is you!

BEN

This room is *you*!

ALEX

It's wonderful!

BEN

This is so self-indulgent and you've got away with it by making a self-indulgent villain!

ALEX

He's right, I have!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I think it's good. And also, I turn on the torch. Click!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Wait, no!

LYDIA

No?

BEN

Definitely, Cel's torches have now been retrofitted with like a tinder box that you scooch the side of it...

ALEX

Mechanically, it's exactly the same as a normal torch.

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

But you can do it going, ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch (match sounds then bursting into flame)

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Cool. You light up a seemingly straightforward corridor, without even a knowledge engineering check.

LYDIA

Oh that's really, like...

BEN

Is there two feet of water along the whole length of it though?

ALEX

Yeah, like, what it is, is, this is clearly, there's a principle for this kind of thing I'm not going to go into. You have airlocks, yes, but you also have like reset points for this kind of thing?

LYDIA

Oh yeah?

ALEX

Where it's like, in the event that this quadrant has gone under, you might even have five doors in a row, depending on what it is, which is just like, yes, but there's a hard reset on this quadrant. It looks like you're leaving a zone for another zone, that'd be your guess.

BEN

Bulkheading, right?

ALEX

Effectively. It's the same principle. Without even a check, you know you are leaving a zone for a different zone.

BEN

It's the Crystal Maze.

LYDIA

Yep! Cool.

HELEN

OK.

LYDIA

Let's have fun – oh, side thing, really good that there wasn't any like explosive gas. I wasn't sure there would be when I turned this torch on.

HELEN

Errr, but...

BEN

Oh. I hadn't considered that!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I mean, I'm often thinking about explosive gas so I – I've lost track of whether that's a realistic fear?

HELEN

Doesn't it have a smell?

BEN

Can do. I haven't been in a mine for years so, I completely forgot about that!

HELEN

Oh, you used to be a miner?

BEN

Yes. Again, I can give you the full – we'll talk later.

BRYN

(laughter)

HELEN

Yes.

LYDIA

I mean, technically we all used to be minors.

BRYN

Yes, thank you!

(Group laughter)

I was thinking that so hard!

BEN

With an e.

LYDIA

Oh! Right, ooh, what did you mine?

BEN

Tin.

ALEX

Correct!

LYDIA

Ooh! Oh, right! So, like..

BEN

I did research.

ALEX?

Look at you!

HELEN

Mm.

ALEX

That's the first time it came in four years!

BEN

Oh yeah. But I still looked!

LYDIA

I don't know much about tin, but I'm...

BEN

It was...

LYDIA

I assume it happened.

BEN

It's a fine mineral. Like, it, yeah...

LYDIA

It's a bit, yeah, common or garden...

(Group laughter)

BEN

It was a long time ago. Yeah, let's um...

LYDIA

I'm sure the tin is grateful. Right. Let's get going.

HELEN

Yes, let's.

LYDIA

(sings) Splashy splash, splash, splash.

BEN

Splash.

LYDIA

Oh, sorry, sneaky.

ALEX

Do you close behind you the door that you just opened?

LYDIA

Absolutely!

HELEN

Yes.

BEN

Seems sensible.

ALEX

OK.

LYDIA

Was going to suggest that but then thought, forgot to say it.

BEN?

One of those times where I don't want to breathe in, breathe out, but it kind of matters.

LYDIA

No, it doesn't matter.

ALEX

OK, cool. You are now in the corridor. As you close the door...

LYDIA

Yep. Does it pop?

ALEX

Thump thump thump thump thump thump. Electric lights burst on.

LYDIA

(sighs)

BEN

Dramatically.

ALEX

Big, bright ones, like chonk, chonk, chonk, chonk chonk chonk, all the way down the corridor, highlighting the door at the other end which, now that the lights are on, you can all see because you were on dark vision and so on before...

LYDIA

Mm-hm.

ALEX

Is *gold*! It's a golden bulkhead.

HELEN?

Oh, this does not look good.

ALEX

Even at a glance, it's not, you can tell it's not a solid gold bulkhead, but it looks like he genuinely might have sprung for gold plating on a bulkhead.

BEN

Right, so this will be the final room then.

LYDIA

Can you not, like, surely you would want the lights to go like this when you *open* the door, right? Not when you've *shut* the door behind you?

BEN

Mm.

LYDIA

That's just, that's not very clever!

HELEN

He's not a very intelligent person, it sounds like.

LYDIA

Whoever designed this, really, just like they're on the *edge* of genius but they fall so short. It's like, mind the gap!

HELEN

Should we go and open that door carefully – oh, we haven't been looking for traps.

LYDIA

Perception check, I guess?

ALEX

Go for it.

BEN

Yeah, scan around.

HELEN

Look, look around for traps.

LYDIA

(rolls). Ooh, 20?

HELEN

Not natural.

BEN

Also unnatural 20.

LYDIA

An unnatural 20!

HELEN

26.

LYDIA

Ooh!

ALEX

So the highest is 26?

LYDIA

Yeah.

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

What was the lowest?

BEN

20.

ALEX

Azu's the only one that spots it.

(gasps)

HELEN

This never happens!

ALEX

There is an *incredibly* fine, incredibly well-made, like probably using things like silk from an insect kind of levels of fineness...

BEN

Oh!

ALEX

Tripwire running the entire...

LYDIA

That's the only kind of tripwire.

ALEX

Width of the corridor about three feet off the ground.

HELEN

OK – wait!

BEN

What?

HELEN

There's a – look, there's a, there's a thing, there's a little tiny...

ALEX

It's almost invisible to your eyes.

BEN

I kind of move my head around it.

Oh, yeah! Right.

HELEN

So I guess we step over that, since I don't know how to – there's...

BEN

Yeah, I would have said it would be a difficulty but go go boots go! And I fly up to the ceiling and just kind of hand myself along the room.

ALEX

Yeah yeah yeah. OK.

HELEN

I carefully step over it?

BRYN?

Yeah, all the taller people...

BEN

Yeah, you guys are fine.

LYDIA

Oh yeah.

BEN

I would struggle, because I'm... four foot three.

ALEX

You would...

BEN

So that's chest height for me.

ALEX

You would have it easier to crawl underneath it.

BEN

Oh actually, no, I would...

LYDIA

Does the limbo!

BEN

Yeah, I actually wouldn't have it difficult, I could just get down and roll over from under it.

ALEX

Yep.

HELEN

(laughs)

LYDIA

Cel's going to crawl underneath.

ALEX

That's fine.

LYDIA

Because Cel knows they're clumsy.

HELEN

Aww.

ALEX

I'm, yeah, you've seen it, I don't require a reflex check.

BEN

I actually massively overcomplicated that by doing the levitation boots. I could have, I didn't, yeah...

ALEX

In which case, then, you proceed past the tripwire.

LYDIA

Mm-hm?

ALEX

To the golden door!

LYDIA

OK so, right, cool. Shall we do any prep before we go through this?

BEN

I'm prepped as I can be.

HELEN

Mm.

BEN

Do you think we're going to get into an immediate fight?

HELEN

Probably.

BEN

Mm.

LYDIA

OK, so this looks like a big end point so I just, just to let you know, don't be too alarmed by what's about to happen but, like, I just, just so you know, things might get spikey. And so Cel...

HELEN

We have been in fights before.

LYDIA

Chugs the beast morph mutagen potion and...

ALEX

Mm-hm?

BEN

Hulks out.

LYDIA

Hulks. Out!

HELEN

Ooh!

LYDIA

Bat wings! Ho! Got big bat wings, animalistic features and bulkier. I can fly 30 foot and also I get dark vision, and...

ALEX

You basically become Manbat.

LYDIA

I become Manbat – well, Personbat.

ALEX

Well, in this situation, yeah, Personbat.

LYDIA

Yeah, with...

ALEX

I was referencing the actual DC character Batman.

LYDIA

Yeah, er, canon-wise I get massive claws and huge bulky teeth and because of huge bulky teeth and because I'm swapping con for charisma my hit points go up to 55...

ALEX

Please tell me you're swapping charisma for con, because the other way round is like...

LYDIA

Yeah yeah yeah!

ALEX

You look at these fangs and like...

HELEN?

Sexy.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

No, but then their charisma, which was already minus 1, then goes down to, so becomes minus 2 but their HP is now – small, still, compared to you folks but, er...

ALEX

But you are an enormous Batperson so, you know, these things happen.

LYDIA

I am an enormous Batperson. Speaking through my teeth, like:

Thank you for putting up with that. I think I'm ready now.

And braces against the door.

BEN

All right.

HELEN

Azu lets go of your hand!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Yeah, it would be very spikey! Spikey hand.

BEN

Well, quite frankly I may or may not have spells to do, but I'm probably going to look them up in an interim thing and have cast them because...

ALEX

For flavour reasons, why don't we end with you throwing open the door and retcon in all of the preparations that are required from everyone!

BEN

That's what I was thinking, because I have many questions and need to go on the internet.

ALEX

What an excellent idea!

(Group laughter)

Because this will matter!

LYDIA

Well, I'm now a bat and I'm cool. With teeth!

ALEX

That's the coolest bit.

LYDIA

Rawwwrrrr!

HELEN

And Azu has her beard.

?

And tusks.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Do we open the golden metal door?

BEN

I believe we do.

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

Excellent, the trap goes – I'm kidding. I'm kidding! (laughs)

LYDIA

Rawrrr!

ALEX

We'll close the episode there with you throwing open the golden metal door with no idea of what's on the other side!

BEN

Aaargh!

ALEX

But prepared, but extremely prepared!

BRYN

I still don't know if my stealth roll worked, god damn it, Alex!

ALEX

Oh, that was intentional, I'm really glad it panned out that way!

BRYN

(growls)

?

See you next week, guys.

LYDIA

Oh yeah!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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