

## RQG – 183 – Strength in Numbers

Content Warnings **leave as shown unless dictated otherwise**

- X
- X

**[Show Theme - Intro]**

**ALEX Use Heading 1 style for these headings**

Hello and welcome to episode 183 of 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

**LYDIA**

Cel Sidebottom

**HELEN**

And Azu

**ALEX**

Guys, guys, I'm looking at my... I've got my multi-screen, I've my stat blocks.

**LYDIA**

God.

**ALEX**

I've got my secondary stat blocks. Got my tertiary stat blocks. I've got my status trackers over.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, but I've got chickens so...

**ALEX**

It's true, it's true. You are delegating out. How much of your calculations and maths for this game are being delegated to the chickens?

**LYDIA**

I genuinely am keeping an eye through the window over the rug that is suspended on a clothes horse to absorb sound in case the cat from next door looks to hungrily at them.

**ALEX**

Well, then, what we'll do is we'll leave a soft edit note of if at any point Lydia goes, "Oy!" and runs off, you might leave oy and then just hard cut back into the episode once it's...

**LYDIA**

I am genuinely nervous because this will be like the longest time that they've been in the run and no one can get out and check that they're okay.

**HELEN**

Aw.

**ALEX**

Well, you have permission to flee to chickens. Speaking of fleeing, we're entering combat.

**LYDIA**

Woo.

**ALEX**

So, been a while for everyone, we've already got our initiative order set up, I'm going to run through it for everyone so that you all have an update. So, as a reminder for listeners we are in The Garden of Yerlick. We're quite deep in The Garden of Yerlick actually. We are accompanied by Sumutnyrel and we are accompanied by Wilde. We have left...

**BRYN**

And Skraak.

**ALEX**

And Skraal, of course. And we have left Sorar 01:52 ?? at the entrance to the garden. You've had a lovely walk through a park and now you're at the sort of Pilates section of your day out where we're going to work up a sweat, get some exercise and they'll probably zero ramifications that you know... I'm sure nothing will echo down the ages. As a reminder for everyone, your initiative order is Hamid, Zolf, Cel, Skraak, Sumutnyerl, Azu, Wilde for all the things you're aware of.

**HELEN**

Fine.

**ALEX**

With that in mind, I'm just going to jump straight into combat. Hamid, you're up.

**BRYN**

Hamid is currently shaken but still hasn't actually seen an enemy as I recall.

**ALEX**

No one has the best kind of combat because Zach is not here to sneak up on the people doing the sneaking.

**LYDIA**

Ha ha ha ha.

**BRYN**

Hamid casts fly upon himself.

**ALEX**

You die! No, you're fine. Yeah, okay, cool.

**BEN**

You fly! You fly! You fly! You fly!

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

Niche reference for some but, yeah. Bang on.

**LYDIA**

That's not niche. That is not niche, not amongst our followers.

**ALEX**

So, yeah, that's fine. Cast no problem. To be clear for everyone, just to be absolutely clear for everyone, none of you have any indicator of an enemy beyond the weird things that have been happening. There has been no visual, no like auditory like way to place it. It's all been sort of the head type stuff.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**BRYN**

With my move action I begin to hover a few foot off the ground so that all the tall people around me no longer block my view.

**ALEX**

Do you hover more than five feet off the ground?

**BRYN**

Probably five feet, given I have to do it in increments of five feet for rules reasons.

**ALEX**

Okay, good. Just checking.

**LYDIA**

Oh man, now my theatre of the mind needs to be in three dimensions. Thanks, Hamid.

**BRYN**

That's easier than tracking it on a grid.

**ALEX**

Also, all combat is going to be temporarily focused so I need at least five. Okay, yeah, that's fine. Anything else that you want to do on your turn? I realise it's... because of initiative, I've basically gone, "You know somethings happening but you don't know what. Ha ha." Anything else?

**BRYN**

No.

**ALEX**

Okay, cool. In that case then, I'm going to jump to you, Zolf. You are next up in initiative. I'm afraid you also have no additional info unless you've tried to gain it.

**BEN**

So, I am going to use calming touch because I've been given a little heads up by Alex that leaving characters shaken is bad.

**ALEX**

It's been a gentle heads up of you are in a garden that has made the barrier between life and death weak. Shaken leads to frightened. Frightened leads to running away in a random directions.

**LYDIA**

That leads to the dark side.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

It just leads to a bad time, if I'm honest. If you get shaken you're going to have a bad time.

**HELEN**

Oh, dear. Megalomania plays distantly.

**BEN**

Yeah. Cause Hamid hasn't flown up too far so I'm going to use calming touch and Hamid heals 1D6 points of non-lethal damage but you are not fatigued, shaken or sickened, they are removed from you.

**BRYN**

Yay!

**BEN**

And that's me.

**ALEX**

Sensible. Cel, you are...

**BEN**

I mean, guess, sorry, I ready my trident. I don't have a trident anymore, I ready my glaive.

**ALEX**

Oh, yeah, I will say that for anyone who uses weapons, I have worked under the presumption that like you've had a big healthy like... you knew something was coming. You had multiple chances to be like, "Mmm, this is sketch." You're all armed and ready.

**BEN**

Actually, I flame on on the trident because that is the bonus action which I can use now.

**BRYN**

Hey, Ben, Ben, I think you made a glaive mistake.

**LYDIA**

Oh, my god.

**BEN**

Oh, now, look, that's not necessarily relevant to the situation that we're in here, Bryn. That was a pun for a pun sake, wasn't it?

**BRYN**

Look, you literally just called it a trident again.

**ALEX**

You called it a trident and it's not a glaive.

**BEN**

I'm sorry, yeah.

**ALEX**

I'm sorry, I'm going to defend, you know... as much as I hate it, I will defend Bryn's right to that joke because it is both pertinent and excellent.

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

Okay, okay, yeah. you flamed on your not trident.

**BEN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

Okay. Cel, you are up.

**LYDIA**

Cel's going to do a perception check if that's something I can do in an attack round.

**ALEX**

Okay, yes. So, that will be basically use up what you would normally use for an attack. I'm over-simplifying a lot but that's fine. Give me a perception check.

**LYDIA**

Cel's just going to look around. What is around? Cel rolls a four. So, that's 18. Remember, Cel has scent so if there's of the weird like memory scents around, they've got I suppose bonuses on that.

**ALEX**

You take the time when everyone else is sort of doing other stuff to have a little look around right at the edge of your vision and bearing in mind this isn't like on the horizon cause you're, you know, amongst dead trees and blah blah blah. But like far off, I would say you were walking sort of due the. let's call it the blight. So, at the edge of your vision towards the blight, you think you see one or two non-moving like silver things behind a bunch of brunches. Could be people stood like... it could be a stationary simulacrum, it could just be a statue or whatever but it could be a person, I don't know.

**LYDIA**

It could be Bertie.

**ALEX**

It could be Bertie.

**LYDIA**

Oh, god.

**ALEX**

All I'm saying is, explicitly silver...

**LYDIA**

Okay, so not Bertie.

**ALEX**

And explicitly they are not moving. You can make an educated guess that...

**LYDIA**

I know they weren't there before, maybe.

**ALEX**

Not sure on that one but you are... you can make an educated guess that there's at least two.

**LYDIA**

"There's two silvery things over there. Is that... is that...should those be there?"

**ALEX**

They to appear for size reference about your size. Like, they're not like epic enormous giant things... like just person sized-ish.

**LYDIA**

For visual reference as well, Cel pointed used... used their six seconds efficiently.

**ALEX**

Yeah, that's fine. Everyone's Pathfinder eyestalks immediately circle, spot the problem, register it and then return to their general radar twirl. At which point then, I am saying that you are all basically bunched together. You haven't been told to spread out, you're all within range of one another's like aura and affects, it's a sensible place to be. So, as a result I'm basically playing to that until someone tells me they're moving away from there, okay? With that in mind, all of you suddenly get a sort of growing sense of unease immediately overhead. To be clear, this is not a fear effect I'm going to require a will save for, anything like that, but this is perception of a level beyond the basic primary senses. You just know that there is something really really bad immediately on top of you all. Like, immediately overhead.

**BRYN**

We're all at least a little bit magic.

**LYDIA**

That's true.

**ALEX**

Yeah, basically, yeah, this. I am just going to rule that all look up because it's not going to kill you so I think it's fair, and looking up you effectively see, "Oh, who would this trigger for?"

**HELEN**

Oh, no.

**ALEX**

Azu and Hamid...

**HELEN**

Oh, no.

**ALEX**

... it feels...

**BRYN**

Big hat. Big hat. Big hat.

**ALEX**

It feels vaguely reminiscent of the hounds that were bouncing around in Rome.

**LYDIA**

No, they were awful.

**ALEX**

The air itself starts to ripple as if it was water and you start seeing images behind that ripple. You can't make out what they are but it's okay because they're coming through the portal for you. Specifically...

**LYDIA**

Puppy.

**ALEX**

...a mass of large tentacles just plunge out from the portal immediately upon the party.

**HELEN**

Alex, I don't like this.

**BEN**

That was an escalation.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

They are immediately followed by an enormous maw that pops out from the portal. It's okay, it isn't followed by the rest of the creature because the maw itself is on the end of a large extended stalk.

**BEN**

When we say maw, are we talking like snashing wolf jaws, like a squid beak, some sort of like rotaty, that shark from James and the Giant Peach dealy?

**ALEX**

Think mechanically large in terms of category like would be the guess of the shape of size of this creature give or take.

**BEN**

That's not very big.

**ALEX**

And think sarlak configuration.

**LYDIA**

What's a sarlak?

**ALEX**

It's a bit more like "aar ooh" with like teeth on all sides and it looks like something that uses lots of strong of peristalsis to like drag things in.

**BRYN**

Sandworm style maw.

**ALEX**

Yeah, that kind of thing.

**LYDIA**

Oh, cool, cool, cool.

**HELEN**

So, a big round rotaty thing.

**BEN**

Your sci-fi bastard of choice.

**LYDIA**

Okay.

**ALEX**

Exactly, yes.

**BRYN**

And it's got tentacles too. Everyone loves tentacles.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

So, yeah, it is a mass of tentacles, you can't discern the form behind the shape of this portal. In terms of the portal itself, it appears, yeah, ten feet by ten feet mechanically speaking like this is a portal for a large thing, let's leave it at that. A big number of tentacles. This isn't like a "Ooh, one person", like (flubber noise) lots.

**(laughter)**

**HELEN**

Eeerrr.

**ALEX**

With a big old mouth amongst.

**HELEN**

That's a terrible noise.

**ALEX**

That feeling of sort of dread is almost like dropping out of it like someone was pouring a bucket of water on you. It seems to be coming from there to here rather than from here ambiently, if you see what I mean.

**HELEN**

You said a big kind of mouth, I'm going to need specifics. So, are we talking like an octopus beak? Are we talking like a wolf jaw?

**ALEX**

This is fair, this is fair.

**HELEN**

Are we talking like big singing human lips? Ah aaah.

**ALEX**

Let me be specific for you. Okay, take a great white shark...

**HELEN**

Or as Ben is doing a great impression of a goldfish.

**ALEX**

Okay, take a great white shark, okay, and then roll it out like dough so you've got a good shark sausage going on.

**HELEN**

Cool, cool. Got ya, got, ya.

**ALEX**

With all of their teeth on the inside pointing inwards.

**HELEN**

Got it, yeah.

**ALEX**

But still in those rows.

**HELEN**

Nice.

**ALEX**

Now half your shark sausage, okay, and put that on the end of a stalk. That's the mouth.

**HELEN**

Okay, cool.

**BRYN**

Why didn't get a recipe. Why didn't we get a recipe?

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

You asked for specifics...

**HELEN**

11:55 ??.

**ALEX**

What a good, useful way to break it down into a 12:01 ??.

**HELEN**

So, just like a long shark.

**BRYN**

Worm mouth.

**ALEX**

I mean, yeah, if you want to be generic.

**BEN**

It's the robot shark from the James and the Giant Peach film.

**HELEN**

That was terrifying.

**BEN**

But with an up to date reference.

**ALEX**

But in a really meaty way.

**BEN**

Okay.

**HELEN**

Oh, thank you for specifying that it's meaty. Wonderful..

**ALEX**

There is an odd sheen to it as well, almost metallic. It seems to have the colouring of like rainbows on slick a little bit but in a metallic sense over the tenacles or something.

**HELEN**

(sings) "Rainbows on slick skin and tenacles coming out the sky". Yep, sorry?

**BEN**

I have knowledge planes.

**ALEX**

Woooo. Yes, you do.

**HELEN**

Is it a Boeing 747?

**(laughter)**

**BRYN**

Of course, and with air con. It's very nice, very nice.

**ALEX**

Okay. Yes, you do. None of you are patient, you need to learn patience. Just because things are coming to kill you doesn't mean we have to rush. Gosh. Does anyone else have any relevant knowledges?

**LYDIA**

Cel knows everything.

**BRYN**

I mean, Arcana, I think planes is the appropriate one.

**LYDIA**

Arcana.

**ALEX**

Arcana would not apply in this one.

**BRYN**

Yeah, that's right.

**HELEN**

Would religion apply?

**ALEX**

I would allow knowledge religion but you'll have to roll higher.

**HELEN**

Okay. I also have noise nobility. Is it a member of the British Royal Family.

**ALEX**

You'd have to roll to find out. Lydia, for your knowledge nature you know it's not natural, you get that free.

**LYDIA**

Okay, cool.

**ALEX**

Yeah, can I get a knowledge planes from Zolf and can I get a knowledge religion from Azu but you've got to roll real high on that one, if I'm honest.

**BEN**

That's an 18 on knowledge plans.

**ALEX**

Okay.

**LYDIA**

I've got a 21 on religion.

**ALEX**

Okay. Knowledge region, I mean, it doesn't look like it's a demon but it looks like it could be a really good contender. For knowledge planes, you think that whatever this thing... you can't place what it is, there's not enough info, you think that whatever this thing is it's probably poking itself in from the Ethereal plane. The Ethereal plane should not be giving off that kind of a dread vibe normally. I can't give you more with that roll. Basically, you think Ethereal plane and you think something's actively wrong on the level of the Ethereal plane.

**HELEN**

Oh, no, what if Mr Ceiling went up there?

**BEN**

Oh, he actually apotheosis.

**HELEN**

Yeah. Apotheosis of 14:15 ??.

**ALEX**

Now, I have to keep this combat moving. Interesting enough, the creature doesn't attack because apparently it takes a significant amount of time for all of those tentacles and fear to fall out. So, weirdly enough, it actually moves onto Skraak.

**BRYN**

I'm just kind of hoping at some point I have to fly a nuke through... back through the portal personally.

**ALEX**

You see, this is... this is the kind of thing I'd be okay with.

**BEN**

The temptation is to use plane shift rising.

**ALEX**

Oh, Ben, you do you, mate. You do you.

**BEN**

Alright, I will. I've got a plane shift resource and Ethereal plane. Good luck with your campaign, Alex, we'll see you later.

**(laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Unclear 14:57 has just left there like, “They were not useful”.

**ALEX**

We’re not getting any combat done but could you imagine, I cast plane of shift. Cool, right. I’m going to continue with the rest of the party. We finish the session. “Alex, you didn’t return to me. Yeah, you’re gone. Watch, you’re gone, mate.”

**BEN**

Oh, no, you misunderstand. I will take the party through with me. I can do up to like ten people I think.

**ALEX**

Yeah, you can. So, I’m going to reiterate for both listeners’ benefit and for Bryn’s benefit, for the sake of me keeping tabs on things, when we enter combat situations unless I explicitly say otherwise, Skraak defaults to Bryn’s control under the leadership fee, as long as Bryn isn’t do something that I think Skraak would actively never do. I’m fine with that but occasionally I might take over if there’s an element that I think is relevant that Bryn, you know, can’t know, like Skraak sees something that Bryn couldn’t know about for the game or whatever.

**BRYN**

Sure. Were we told to avoid the trees at any point, last session? This is an out of character because it’s been two weeks for us.

**ALEX**

You were told once you entered the blight two things. One, don't try to learn any lessons here, you're going to hear horrible things and this isn't a... I wonder what that was cluing... don't try to learn lessons here, and if stuff comes for you, it doesn't matter what it is, hit back.

**BRYN**

Okay.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**BRYN**

I think Skraak's move is going to be to climb the nearest tree. He likes to be up high and it will give him some cover and an advantage.

**ALEX**

Doing so will provoke an attack of opportunity from an enormous amount of tentacles.

**BRYN**

Okay, I can make an acrobatics roll to avoid that.

**ALEX**

Yes, please.

**BRYN**

Skraak has a climb speed, like he can just...

**ALEX**

Oh, yeah. Skraak can just be in the tree, don't worry about that.

**BRYN**

Ooh, only 15 on the acrobatics check.

**ALEX**

So, unfortunately with that roll, I don't need to roll stuff to just get the attack of opportunity.

**BRYN**

It was not a great roll.

**ALEX**

So, as a result, I'm to... I say I, it's going to take the attack.

**BEN**

This is where Skraak gets one shotted.

**ALEX**

What's Skraak's AC?

**BRYN**

22.

**ALEX**

Oooh, with a 23. Oh..

**LYDIA**

Oh, no.

**ALEX**

The mouth snaps out and immediately sinks into Skraak's shoulder. You're going to have to track the damage too, Skraak. Interestingly, it doesn't seem to be doing too much damage, oddly enough, only does seven damage.

**BEN**

But...?

**ALEX**

Oh, Ben. Oh, Ben. Stop getting ahead of me.

**BEN**

Your tone is saying everything we need to know. All I'm saying is what we're all thinking.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

The glee. The glee in your voice is telling me how bad this must be.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**BEN**

And how pleased with yourself you are.

**ALEX**

Can I get a will save, please?

**BRYN**

Yes. Is this a fear effect?

**ALEX**

This is not a fear effect.

**BRYN**

Okay.

**HELEN**

And it's not a charm effect either? You never know.

**LYDIA**

You know, the rolled out shark was just very convincing.

**BEN**

Pop out of that portal with your come hither tentacles.

**ALEX**

This is not a charm effect. The reason that I'm saying this is it's really important to say these are all relevant questions within this combat, this specifically is not, no.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**BRYN**

25 total.

**ALEX**

Oooh, good, okay. Cool. So, in that case then, the teeth sink into Skraak's shoulder as Skraak tries to scaper up the tree and for a briefest of moments Skraak turns and projects at Hamid the look of the most intense hatred, vicious loathing, like real animalistic hatred of Hamid and then it's immediately snapped gone as if like, "Oh, I don't know what that was." Skraak, basically, yeah, makes it up the nearest tree and thanks to the climb speed would end up at the same level as the portal but in a tree to the side, if you see what I mean.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

At which point then, anything else that Skraak is doing?

**BRYN**

No. Skraak will activate the ability of the stalking dagger.

**ALEX**

Oooh. Understood. In which case then, the sound of the surrounding bells seem to grow louder and seem to move closer. They do not seem to be emanating from the portal in anyway. There does not seem to be a discernible pattern and it does not seem to be coming from a specific direction, it just seems to be growing a bit more present but just around. At which point, Sumutunyerl, who is currently shaken but still holding it together, turns into a bear.

**HELEN**

Good for them.

**ALEX**

Just, “Aaargh, I am bear now.” A large, mechanically large creature this one, specifically, for anyone who’s interested, a dire polar bear because she can.

**BRYN**

Woo hoo.

**HELEN**

That’s very cool.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, that is extremely cool.

**ALEX**

There's now a just horrendously vicious looking polar bear.

**LYDIA**

As a like throwaway action, Cel's just going go, "Aaah." Cel knows exactly what level of casting that requires and Cel isn't 19:46 ??.

**HELEN**

Yeah. Polar bears are the most dangerous bears as well so that's very useful.

**ALEX**

The bear immediately tries to basically snap and attack at all of the tentacles. Doesn't succeed but also doesn't appear to suddenly like... I mean, you know what my monsters are like... doesn't appear to catch fire, doesn't suddenly turn into a frog or something but doesn't make a successful attack, I'll leave it that.

**HELEN**

At which point, Azu, you are up. Tentacles everywhere and a big toothy maw, a big shark sausage. "Arg arg arg."

**HELEN**

Right, detect evil it is.

**ALEX**

Could you imagine if it was, “Oh, this is good...” and it just, “I was just startled. Hello.”

**(laughter)**

**HELEN**

Like a lot has happened to Ed in the intervening time.

**(laughter)**

**BEN**

I would say, Helen, this is also useful because if it is evil, you can then cast smite evil.

**HELEN**

I know. I was just thinking that.

**BEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

This thing, you know what I’m like with my detect alignment things, I like to do the spectrum thing. This is the most evil thing you’ve ever encountered.

**HELEN**

Ooooh, worse than Shoin which is saying something.

**ALEX**

Like off the chart, off the chart evil. This is something that you can categorically state, thanks to this spell, given the power this thing would wilfully kill everything in existence just because it could.

**HELEN**

My evil-ometer is just exploding.

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

If it wasn't mechanically rude, I would stun you for how evil this is but it doesn't work like that. Detect magic though does but not detect evil.

**HELEN**

Okay. Now that it is evil...

**ALEX**

Now that you've made it evil. (laughs)

**HELEN**

Now that I have confirmed it is evil, in terms of the communal then, I can only touch the people who are like next to me then?

**ALEX**

Yes, which would exclude, technically I'm going to say it only excludes Skraak, currently because you were that bunched together it's fine.

**HELEN**

Okay, then I do it. I do... I cast protection from evil, communal, on everyone around me apart from Skraak because I can't reach him.

**ALEX**

Okay. So, you provoke an attack opportunity...

**HELEN**

That's okay.

**ALEX**

In which case then, basically, and Bryn can correct me, I've been playing too many systems so as deputy Bryn now has the power to basically just tell me I'm wrong. As far as I'm remembering for this, it's a case of I am rolling my attack of opportunity and if it hits then the concentration check **21:56 ??**.

**BRYN**

No, you roll concentration check first.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**ALEX**

So, roll your D20.

**HELEN**

Okay. Oh, god, be good to me today. Be good to me gods of dice.

**ALEX**

No, it will be bad, there's so many mechanics we can play with today. What's the score? What's the score?

**HELEN**

Okay, okay. So, it's... well, the dice said plus my level plus my ability modifier...

**ALEX**

Which for you will be charisma.

**HELEN**

Okay. So, that's ten, plus nine, plus three is 22.

**ALEX**

Okay, cool. In which case then you have successfully cast... that's a sentence, you have successfully cast defensively.

**HELEN**

Yay!

**ALEX**

So, as a result, you don't provoke an attack opportunity and your spell goes off. Gosh, I'd forgot how completed this can get.

**HELEN**

Everybody, you now have a plus two deflection bonus to your AC, plus two resistance to saves if the evil thing tries to do anything to you. You also get an extra saving throw if something tries to control your mind.

**LYDIA**

Oooh, that will definitely be useful, 23:01 ?? Skraak.

**ALEX**

What does it say specifically on that?

**HELEN**

It specifically says, "The subject immediately receives another saving throw, if one was allowed to begin with, against any spells or effects that possess or exercise mental control over the creature, including enchantment charm effects and enchantment compulsion effects, such as charm person command and dominate person. This saving throw is made with a plus two morale bonus using the same DC as the original effect." There is another five lines.

**ALEX**

No, that's fine, you've given me more than enough.. Great, fabulous. Gosh, I forgot how good you are at certain things. Good.

**HELEN**

Yes, one more thing, if an evil creature is summoned, this spell prevents any bodily contact by like the natural weapon attacks of summoned evil creatures will fail.

**ALEX**

Yeah, I will tell you now, this doesn't count as summoned.

**HELEN**

That's fine. Just wanted to...

**ALEX**

And like, you would know this doesn't count as was summoned already. So, yeah.

**HELEN**

That's okay.

**ALEX**

Okay. You've got some good first stuff out in which case then, Wilde will just sustain the bardic inspiration and that's probably the highest benefit to cost that Wilde can really do in this situation.

**HELEN**

God, imagine the sound scaping for this. It's like a hum and tentacles and a mouth and bells.

**ALEX**

Oh, it's going to be a mess, I'm so sorry. Can you tell that I'm not the primary editor anymore? And then a thousand children start singing but they each have an indistinctly different voice, it's just hard to place. No, not quite. But what I will say is, that seems a sensible point for a break and we'll come in on a new initiative round.

**HELEN**

Woo.

**LYDIA**

Okay.

**Break**

**ALEX**

And welcome back. So, top of the initiative, we have all the pieces in place. Hamid, you're up. Look, an enemy. "Oh, an enemy. Ah, ooh, aah."

**BRYN**

Hamid takes a five footstep backwards through the air to avoid breaking out an attack of opportunity with movement but just wants to be slightly further away than most other people.

**ALEX**

When you say away, do you mean...? Okay, because this is a flat portal that's open directly above your head, are you talking five foot down or sideways?

**BRYN**

Well, sideways, effectively, yeah. Five foot back to the way we came.

**ALEX**

That's fine. Basically, on the X or Y axis is fine, Z I would advise against.

**BRYN**

This thing is not very far above us, is it?

**ALEX**

Oh, it is immediately on top of you. It is as close as it could get.

**BRYN**

I feel like fireball would not be a good choice here.

**ALEX**

Booo. Booo, come on.

**BRYN**

I cast scorching ray. Is this thing in mellay in combat with people?

**ALEX**

Yes, yes.

**BRYN**

Okay. This is a range touch attack...

**ALEX**

Yes.

**BRYN**

There are two rays produced. One is at a 23 to hit and one is at an 18 to hit.

**ALEX**

23 and an 18 both hit.

**BRYN**

Good, good.

**ALEX**

25:49 ??.

**LYDIA**

Alex's face shows real pain.

**HELEN**

Good.

**BRYN**

23 damage on the first one and 23 damage on the second one..

**ALEX**

Oh, wow. Yeah, it does, “Waaa.”” I’d love to give you... I’d love to give you the noise but I feel like the human larynx isn’t necessarily designed for the noise that it will make. But, yeah, I guess something closer more to like, “Waaa, waah waah.” Something like that but, you know. Work with what you’ve got, you know.””

**BRYN**

Sure. That’s a fair chunk of damage, I’m okay with that.

**ALEX**

Yeah. Ow. I really don’t have a response yet, other things haven’t gone off. Anything else that you’d to do?

**BRYN**

That is my turn.

**ALEX**

Zolf, you are up.

**BEN**

Yeah. So, just based on my knowledge planes, I don’t know if this will give me the answer but is this creature alive, like is it living? Like it’s not construct. It’s undead, is it...?

**ALEX**

Educated guess, it should be alive, it should be killable.

**BEN**

Grand.

**ALEX**

It will be killable the same way a ghost is killable.

**BEN**

No, no, what I asked is if this creature living?

**ALEX**

Okay, okay. Yes, it is... it is living but it is complicated living.

**BEN**

That's all I need. All I needed was that. Right. So, I activate freedom's call. What this means is I omit a 30 foot aura of freedom for... well, up to nine rounds. I can turn this on and off when I want to. Allies within this aura are not affected by confused grackles, frightened panics, paralysed, pinned or shaken conditions. Of note, still get those conditions because this aura only suppresses the effects, it doesn't get rid of them. So, if you become like frightened, as soon as you leave the aura, you are frightened and will do frightened things.

**ALEX**

Is that a spell?

**BEN**

It's a spell like ability I guess.

**ALEX**

Basically, are you casting because it will promote an attack of opportunity with this thing.

**BEN**

Oh, no, no, absolutely not, no. It doesn't even cost me an action according to the rules, which are...

**ALEX**

Technically it should have taken an attack of opportunity on Hamid but I'm feeling generous but I'm feeling generous so it didn't.

**BRYN**

Oh, yeah. It didn't.

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

You stunner, I love it.

**BRYN**

I have combat casting, which gives me plus four to those checks so I have to roll pretty badly.

**ALEX**

It's not built for that. So, yeah, I...

**BEN**

Yeah. So, I'm going to slay living on it. I'm making a touch attack so that is... what is my **28:03 ??**, five. So, 14, okay. That's odds on. Rolled a 19, nailed it.

**ALEX**

Yeah, great, no attack of opportunity then.

**BEN**

Right...

**ALEX**

This is going to hurt, isn't it? This is really going to hurt.

**BEN**

So, I grab a tentacle and it says here...

**ALEX**

You get your hands off my beautiful baby.

**BEN**

I grab a tentacle and my hand seethes with eerie dark fire. So, the target needs to roll fortitude saving throw or take twelve D6 plus nine damage.

**LYDIA**

Holy...

**HELEN**

My lord!

**ALEX**

How dare you get saving throws from my creatures. How very dare you.

**LYDIA**

That's so many D6.

**ALEX**

What's the...

**BEN**

Oh my spell save DC, 20. It's quite high.

**ALEX**

That's quite high.

**BEN**

You only take three plus six plus nine.

**ALEX**

What have you done?

**LYDIA**

I'm so tense.

**ALEX**

No.

**BEN**

Level five spells, Alex. Level five spells.

**ALEX**

You leave her alone. She was just a nice tentacle monster with a shark sausage for a mouth. You leave my baby alone.

**HELEN**

Just destroy it. Throw it into the fire.

**BRYN**

Alex made a boss monster.

**ALEX**

Fails the fort save, come on. Why does this always happen to me? Right, roll the damage.

**BEN**

I don't own enough D6 so I've got dice roller up here.

**(laughter)**

**BEN**

Okay, it takes 45 damage.

**HELEN**

Nice.

**LYDIA**

My lord.

**BEN**

I rolled a 36 but I actually rolled garbage.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

That's still lots though.

**ALEX**

Yeah, that's quite a low roll given how much you could have got.

**BEN**

1 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 5 6 6.

**HELEN**

Wow.

**BRYN**

Me and Ben have now done combined 91 damage to it.

**HELEN**

Nice.

**BRYN**

Come on, team between us...

**ALEX**

In how many rounds? One and a bit

**BRYN**

Technically... technically one round. The first round...

**ALEX**

That's horrendous. You are horrendous nightmare, 29:52 ??.

**BRYN**

Never mind critter characters.

**ALEX**

Okay, anything that you want to do to my beak.

**BEN**

No, I'm not moving it, it will get an attack of opportunity, I don't want that.

**ALEX**

Cel, you're up. You have a new friend and it's all up in your grill and it's not respecting your personal space at all.

**LYDIA**

So, like one of the drawbacks of alchemists is they require set up and that have made more choices in that prep moment that we had, stupid perception check. I will chug a targeted bomb admixture.

**ALEX**

That's fine.

**LYDIA**

Because if I have Cel throw bombs now, we will get hit by the splash damage.

**ALEX**

Which is bad.

**LYDIA**

While I know that Ben's characters have all of the hit points, Skraak probably wouldn't want four times splash damage.

**BEN**

Yeah, probably not.

**ALEX**

Is this drinking a potion?

**LYDIA**

Yep.

**ALEX**

That will promote an attack of opportunity.

**LYDIA**

Chug, chug, chug.

**HELEN**

Good luck.

**LYDIA**

Would I have to roll

**BEN**

Yeah, can you drink... don't drink defensively?

**ALEX**

I don't think you can drink defensively. I think this is one that you just kind of have to take on the chin.

**LYDIA**

That's one of the things. Oh, come on.

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

The creature manages to fumble its mouth.

**(laughter)**

**LYDIA**

I mean, to be fair, I would fumble my mouth if it was a long shark.

**ALEX**

The large two toothy maw reaches out to bite your face. The portal's clearly with depth perception. It misses, goes past your head and just kind of goes (sounds like splash) and then just hits you on the side of the tube instead of the...

**BEN**

What does its skin feel like?

**ALEX**

Ooooh.

**LYDIA**

Is it like shark skin?

**ALEX**

Oh, that's actually a good question.

**BRYN**

Totally smooth.

**HELEN**

Completely smooth. The smoothest thing.

**BEN**

Yeah, it's so smooth.

**HELEN**

Like oil.

**ALEX**

I would say it is actually quite gristly. It looks like it should feel smooth but actually it's extremely gristly.

**BEN**

Is it like a meat beanbag?

**HELEN**

Like a pork scratching?

**LYDIA**

I mean, Ben, in a way, aren't we all meat beanbags?

**BEN**

True.

**HELEN**

Just meat beanbags with dreams.

**ALEX**

I guess it feels... I guess it feels at first like a meaty beanbag. I can't believe that's a sentence I've had to say but there we are. Are you doing anything else?

**LYDIA**

Well, I assume that they can't. Chugged a thing. Can't throw a bomb.

**ALEX**

You could move.

**LYDIA**

I don't want to move.

**ALEX**

I wouldn't.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Good. Okay, cool.

**LYDIA**

Ooh, though I could have hasted myself and then I could do both next time.

**ALEX**

Oh, I'm going to say that you've already drunk your potion...

**LYDIA**

Okay, okay. Cel thinks, "Blimming heck."

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

In which case then I am going to jump onto the creatures thing. Hamid?

**BRYN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

You are going to be giving me your AC.

**BRYN**

23.

**ALEX**

Good, okay. Don't mind me.

**BEN**

We're minding, we are actively minding.

**LYDIA**

I genuinely thought there would be a lot more dice rolling sounds.

**BEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Right, I'm rolling on a soft mat so we... I'm rolling loads but you're hearing nothing. It's a bit odd.

**BEN**

Glances at his charts.

**HELEN**

Oh, no.

**ALEX**

Bryn, you get hit twice. To be clear, all... all of the tentacles go "Aaargh", all for Hamid. You get hit twice. All of them. Do not underestimate how many there. I'm getting quite frustrated here.

**BRYN**

I don't like that.

**HELEN**

No, don't like that at all. Get back down here, young man.

**ALEX**

It's nonsense.

**BRYN**

I mean, I'm floating five foot above the ground, Helen, and your character is tall enough to just still be... I'm actually closer to you than normal. I just put a hand over your head, just like, "No."

**ALEX**

This is getting actively frustrating to me now. This is a very carefully crafted encounter with a ridiculous number of tentacles. You have taken eight damage with no complicating effects.

**HELEN**

Yeah, Hamid.

**BRYN**

Should have a run a D20 system there, mate.

**ALEX**

Why... why is it that you keep all getting imperilled by mooks? And every time I give you something shiny and nice, it's garbage?

**BEN**

Hey, look, I could have rolled a lot better on my twelve D6. So, you know, swings and roundabout, alright?

**ALEX**

That won't go off now. Yeah, great, brilliant. Alex is really annoyed.

**BEN**

Alex's damp fart of a turn ends.

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

I tell you now, I rolled three times either a one or a two, in a row.

**HELEN**

Nice.

**BRYN**

Nice, nice.

**ALEX**

God's sake, Skraak, you're up. Put me out my misery, just...

**LYDIA**

Skraak 34:13 ??, throws a nuke in his face. “It’s over.”

**ALEX**

I put so much effort in. I put so much effort in.

**LYDIA**

Oh, Alex, we believe in you. We have faith.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**BRYN**

If Skraak attacks one of the tentacles that is close to Azu, will it count as being threatened by Azu and therefore activate flanking?

**ALEX**

Yes. Oh, no, no, no. It wouldn’t because it has to be a line drawn through the entire creature from one end to the other, it wouldn’t. It physically can’t because it’s larger than Azu. Azu would have to move to trigger that.

**BRYN**

Skraak delays his turn in the initiative order until after Azu.

**ALEX**

Okay, yeah, I see what you're doing there. That makes sense. In which case then, the sound of the bells move distinctly closer.

**HELEN**

I don't like that at all. I really don't. I feel...

**LYDIA**

It could be friend.

**BRYN/HELEN**

(singing) Sleigh bells, are you listening?

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

I'm not going to ask for a perception check because you're all engaged in combat, there's no way that I can do that. They move distinctly closer to the point where they sound like they are drawing near to being on top of you. None of you see anything that could be causing this currently.

**LYDIA**

Can Cel smell anything?

**ALEX**

No.

**LYDIA**

Oh. Damn.

**ALEX**

Sorry.

**LYDIA**

If only they were stinky bells.

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

You leave my stinky bells alone.

**(laughter)**

**BEN**

Not going there. Not going there.

**ALEX**

At which point, you also hear, from a distant corner, the sound of something slightly more mundane, just a bit of a monstrous raw.

**HELEN**

Oh, okay, that's fine.

**ALEX**

To be specific, this one is more of a “Eeerrr.”

**LYDIA**

So, a frustrated and exhausted monster?

**ALEX**

Exactly, that, yes. To be clear, it is coming from a direction... if you are heading towards the blight, it's coming off from the left and it seems independent of the bells, has nothing to do with the portals and, to clear, it seems to be something that is like, I hesitate to use the phrase, like normal sized. The reason I have to spell this out is for sound scaping and stuff like that. This is not a giant creature that's like 3,000 foot about to step on you, it's just a thing.

**BEN**

It might be another druid doing something completely different but just having a crap day. It's not part of the story, they're just a bit miserable.

**ALEX**

But that is... that is currently a noise that you all hear. At which point, Sumutnyerl, in fairness, I don't get to complain because Sumutnyerl also rolled garbage against my baby. So, as result, like I'm at least getting that in my favour, thank goodness. Right, let's try again. Another nature one, okay. You're going in dice jail.

**HELEN**

Ah that's when you know it's serious.

**ALEX**

Okay, right. A hit, fine, good. The bear just tears a tenacle.

**LYDIA**

Lovely.

**ALEX**

Just bites and just tears it a sunder. What come out of it, it appears to have no innards and seems to be full entirely of black ichor.

**HELEN**

Gross.

**BRYN**

Uuuurgh, nice.

**ALEX**

Like, it doesn't seem to... it feels gristly on the outside but there's not actually anything moving it inside and it just gushes everywhere. It's just like (sounds like fllluuur).

**LYDIA**

Does the rest of it deflate when it's done?

**ALEX**

The damaged tentacle basically does sort of start to go a bit like deflated and then it snaps itself back into that portal. But, yeah, it's just like... for the look of the thing, it's like tar but it doesn't have that sticky kind of quality to it, if you see what I mean.

**HELEN**

Gross.

**BEN**

But for Cel's benefit, how does it smell?

**ALEX**

Oh, you know, it's fair point.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

No scent at all.

**LYDIA**

Cel is frustrated by this.

**ALEX**

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, like it has no smell at all.

**BEN**

Just going up and rubbing their nose in it like, “Smell damn it!”

**LYDIA**

Like, we had all those memory scents, it seemed like that was going to be, you know...

**HELEN**

**ALEX**

You did, didn't you, and this thing doesn't smell at all.

**BEN**

Aaah.

**ALEX**

At which point then...

**BEN**

We're connecting the dots.

**ALEX**

Azu, you're up.

**HELEN**

I have a question to ask about swift actions.

**ALEX**

Yes.

**ALEX**

If I do a swift action, do I still have a standard action?

**BRYN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

Yes.

**HELEN**

As a swift action, my activate smite evil.

**BRYN**

Yeeees.

**ALEX**

Yes. This is going to really hurt but that's fine. This is what...

**HELEN**

I really hope it does. I really hope it does.

**ALEX**

I have done nothing to you. Have I done... I've done eight damage I think so far.

**BEN**

Just because it's been so long since we've don't combat, you've got your... on your first attack each turn you like, what double your damage, don't you?

**ALEX**

Basically, yeah.

**BRYN**

38:49 ?? twelve, yeah.

**ALEX**

Aaaaah.

**ALEX**

You can't however cleave tentacles, they all count as the same creature.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**ALEX**

This was the way for me to hit you with multiple things simultaneously without you just cleaving everything into powder.

**HELEN**

Okay, well, my smite evil goes off. As my standard action I'm going to hit it with massive axe. So, prayer circle for this dice, please.

**ALEX**

Come on, natural ones.

**HELEN**

You're kidding me. That's only a five, that's only 24.

**BEN**

No, no. But that's a 19 plus 5.

**ALEX**

Yeah, it's still enough.

**(laughter)**

**HELEN**

My first attack then... Bryn said it was 30 and I believe Bryn.

**ALEX**

Excellent. In which case then, Helen, I would like to ask you, there is a large portal based tentacle shark tooth monster reaching down on top of everyone.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

How would you like to kill it, because it didn't really get a chance to do anything else?

**BEN**

Helen, you didn't even need your second attack, you had another attack in the bank. Your turn wasn't over.

**HELEN**

I want to slice its mouth off.

**ALEX**

Oh, yeah., absolutely. Fine. So, you wind it back and you just slice cleanly the extended sort of mandible part of it.

**HELEN**

Yes. It got demouthitated.

**ALEX**

Basically, you cut its entire mouth off. Ichor just gushes, just sprays from it in an absolute torrent. It's like someone tried to pour a swimming pool of ichor through a hose. It goes absolutely everywhere and all of you, it doesn't have mechanical effects or whatever so I don't have to ask for a will save. So, "Aaargh." All of you who are sprayed, which basically is everyone apart from Skraak, even you Hamid, even you, find alien emotions sort of temporarily cropping up so it splashes over you and it's like some of you have a sudden

wave of adoration for that bush. Some of you have like absolute reprehensible hate for your party member or whatever. There's no pattern to it, it is utterly random but all of you have a brief flash and then it goes away and what starts to happen is the tentacles as it's gushing this ichor starts to deflate, that's the best way to describe it, and they try and retract but fail and then it looks like the main body of the thing is starting to slip through this portal.

**HELEN**

Uuurgh.

**ALEX**

It starts to sag outwards and you start seeing it... it doesn't seem to have a torso as such. It appears to have some kind of weird like... these tentacles appear to be coming from say a single limb of the thing. I don't know how else to describe it, and it's falling through and then the portal just snaps shut severing whatever has fallen through and this mass of deflated flesh slowly recedes down into an astonishingly small sort of almost jellyfish like thing with all of this ichor just awash everywhere.

**HELEN**

I'm imaging it with the sounds of like a balloon deflating. Like (sounds like weeee).

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

I don't know, to my ear it feels a lot more like, "Wah wah ha ha ha Alex, wah wah." You know, but each to their own.

**BEN**

Stop bringing us bosses.

**ALEX**

It's fine. I didn't say combat was over.

**BRYN**

Yeah, but you look like it is.

**(laughter)**

**ALEX**

I'm annoyed because that didn't even do anything.

**BRYN**

Hey, I took eight damage.

**BEN**

42:09 ??.

**HELEN**

I took no damage whatsoever.

**ALEX**

It took 130 in the time it took me to deal eight damage.

**BRYN**

No, you did seven to Shraak as well.

**ALEX**

Oh, yeah. No, you're right. You know what, I'm being petulant. I apologise.

Azu, you still have the rest of your turn to go. What do you want to do?

You've got all of your turn, go for it.

**LYDIA**

Dance party. Dance party.

**HELEN**

Are we out of initiative?

**ALEX**

No, no, no, you still have the rest of your turn, you are still in initiative.

**HELEN**

Oh, my turn or...?

**BRYN**

You have a second attack, if you would like to take it, Azu, but there's nothing to attack.

**ALEX**

Would you like to attack any of your party members? You'd be doing me a favour.

**HELEN**

No, no, thank you. No, thank you. Azu would like to love and care for all of her party members.

**ALEX**

In which case then, I will jump to Wilde who is sustained the bardic inspiration but for flavour, I'll say momentarily stops and says, "That was very easy." At which point, you hear a sound that you didn't necessarily notice the last time which is that slight tearing of the world coming apart. And I'm going to end the episode there.

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

Rusty Quill Gaming is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial share alike 4.0 international license. Today's episode was directed by Alexander J Newall and produced by Hannah Preisinger. To subscribe, buy merchandise, or join our Patron, visit [rustyquill.com](http://rustyquill.com). Rate and review us online. Tweet us @therustyquill, visit us on Facebook, or email us at [mail@rustyquill.com](mailto:mail@rustyquill.com). Join our community on Discord, or via Reddit at [r/rustyquill](https://www.reddit.com/r/rustyquill). Thanks for listening.