

RQG – 190 – Mind the Gap

Content Warnings

- Injury
- Memory Loss & Loss of Time
- Tunnels & Underground
- Mentions: falling, the void & space, fire, drowning, intrusive telepathy

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 190 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

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom, I don't think they're unconscious, so or maybe they're not, I don't know. For continuity today, I'm not sure. So ah yeah

ALEX

What even is consciousness

LYDIA

What is it?

HELEN

And also Azu!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

How we feeling? Technically you are not actively taking damage.

LYDIA

Woo.

HELEN

See, I don't, I don't like that. I don't like that you've had to ...

ALEX

I can give you damage if you want! I mean, it's very early in the episode to request this, but I will always oblige!

(laughter)

So I believe if I remember correctly, you are tumbling through eternity. However, you are no longer grappled by a creature that is emulating your worst memory or attempting in various ways to emulate your worst memories and relationships in order to hurt you and are bouncing around through various shards of harmful reality. Is that an accurate summation of the situation?

LYDIA

I thought that I had just fallen into the element of surprise. Am I incorrect? Genuinely, is my memory of that incorrect because ...

ALEX

You have not fallen into the element of surprise. The fact that you are asking if something has already happened, would negate automatically the element of surprise.

LYDIA

No, but there was fire, earth, wind, water and screaming. So like I remember saying that the first, I mean, you all laughed like it was a joke and I had genuinely assumed that ...

BRYN

That was really funny as well.

LYDIA

Often my ability to understand the universe is. But yeah, so ...

ALEX

I can confirm that surprise is not actually an element in this system and has no atomic weight.

LYDIA

Oh, interesting.

BRYN

One very important detail that I remember from last episode is that Hamid and Azu, due to some excellent reflex saves were holding hands while tumbling through a weird void with portals to unknown realms.

ALEX

This is accurate and upsetting to me, and has thus drawn my ire. So I am going to be rolling for you two first.

BRYN

If I thought your memory, slash note taking was worse, I'd claim that we were also holding other people's hands too, but I don't think I'll get away with it.

ALEX

I'm going to give you a number Bryn.

BRYN

Okay.

ALEX

And Azu, well I say Bryn and Azu, Bryn and Helen, I would like you to remember this number. Your number is three.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

What is the number?

BRYN + HELEN

Three.

BRYN

No more, no less. Five is right out...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

All right, then Benjamin. Ooh, your number is five. Five is your number.

BEN

Sure thing.

LYDIA

Your number is four. Four is your number.

LYDIA

Terrible number. Oh no!

ALEX

Wilde's number is one. You don't know if that's a good number or a bad number yet.

And Skraak's number is ...

LYDIA

High?

ALEX

Six.

HELEN

Maybe this is the order that we're going to wake up in.

BRYN

I think this is the locations we're being flung into.

LYDIA

Alex is like, oh, you know, it's going to be an interesting, kind of there's all these portals. They will have like different effects on how things get to the end. But you know, we're going for an efficient kind of game. Now split the party.

ALEX

Into pieces! End of campaign. That's efficient. That is an efficient end to a campaign.

So, let me just get the old D6's out. There we go. Good dice D6. So we're going to start with Azu and Hamid.

You are flung away from "it" and out in towards the void and immediately, you know what? I'm not going to say immediately. Give me a perception check before we even get any further.

HELEN

Fine

BRYN

24.

HELEN

Oh,

ALEX

I'm not sure that's a number, but I'm willing to roll with it.

HELEN

17.

ALEX

17. I'm afraid, only Hamid gets a slight glimpse of, I'm going to say, Cel smashing into one of those shards we were talking about, before both of you smashing into a shard of your own.

The shard that you smash into is quite hot. By very hot. I mean, as hot realistically as I can get it, because what you do is as you're plunging and you're falling through the void, at first almost looks like a crystal, but it seems to have sort of space and flames moving within it. And you both together smash into this. However, instead of a shatter, what you do is you have a sudden searing pain of heat that applies to both of you. And as soon as you have felt that pain, you have immediately bounced out the far side of it. You both, and I am aware that Bryn is going to bring additional mechanics into play. You both take 14 fire damage. It's an instantaneous smash and fire, and then you're out the other side.

BRYN

I strongly disagree. I believe I take four fire damage.

ALEX

I believe that is an accurate summation of your situation, yes. Could you please take the numbers that you have and take a number off? So you had three. You now have two.

Cel, meanwhile, you thankfully smash straight through a...

LYDIA

Oh I really hope it's a poisoned reality.

ALEX

I'm afraid it is not a poison reality. Though it is an exciting reality.

LYDIA

Oooh!

ALEX

As you're drawing near to this thing, tumbling end over end, you see it appears to be full of clockwork. Very, very full of clockwork. Clockwork you're about to hit very, very quickly.

HELEN

Oh God.

LYDIA AS CEL

Oh no, the gears.

ALEX

As with Azu and Hamid, you smashed through this shard and are immediately subjected to large amounts of sort of bludgeoning and or shredding as you smash up against a bunch of gears and then tumble out the other side.

LYDIA

Not resistant to that.

ALEX

You take ...ooh, very lucky. You only take four damage for that one. Your number goes down. In which case, then Zolf, you're up.

So you are tumbling end over end, and this is before any of you gets taken action by the way, you will be able to take an action after this round with these things. As you are tumbling, end over end, you are thrown straight into a very lightning looking place.

Lightning is the order of the day. It's quite bright. You might have to close your eyes. I know you like to keep them open during planar events that can kill everyone, but I'm afraid instinct might take over, depending on your resistances, obviously make deductions, but you will be taking nine lightning damage as you plunge through this thing, and then out the other side.

BEN

Cool.

ALEX

At this stage, I am going to be not doing a full initiative order, but I am going to be treating you all as sort of units, if that makes sense. So starting with unit one, you are now going to be able to act, if you want me to go into full initiative order, I can. However, it's going to be easier for you to just declare an intent of what you want to do, whether that is hold on and hope, whether that's fly around, anyone have any actions they wish to take.

HELEN

By unit one, who do you mean?

ALEX

Sorry, apologies. Unit one, that would be Azu and Hamid - unit one.

BRYN

I'm worried about the NPCs. Because some of them were also quite badly hurt. Are we tracking HP for them? Because currently I have Skraak's sheet in front of me, and I don't know if you have the previous damage the Skraak have taken.

ALEX

I will be answering that question at a later time.

BRYN

Alright.

ALEX

Now is not the time for questions. Now is the time for action. Specifically, is there anything that you are going to be trying to do.

BRYN

Hamid is going to attempt to cast fly.

ALEX

Okay. Your attempt to cast fly, I'm afraid automatically fails in this instance.

BRYN

Fair enough.

ALEX

I am not requiring a reflex save for you to maintain holding onto each other's hand though. Azu, is there anything else that you are going to be intending to do.

HELEN

Azu is going to hug Hamid more fully. In terms of like, in the way that you would try and protect a child from an explosion.

(laughter)

ALEX

That is fine. As you do so, you pull Hamid close and wrap your large pink armour around him. Just as you fly straight into another shard. This one seemingly full of interacting boulders of some kind.

HELEN

Oh, God.

ALEX

Taking a further, each of you, 13 bludgeoning. Feel free to make any deductions as required.

HELEN

Alex, this isn't good. I don't like, I don't ... this is... you're being very, you're a very bad, man. Okay.

BRYN

I mean, since you have the opportunity, Helen, it might be wise for Azu to use some lay on hands on Hamid at this point, because he was carrying some damage ...

ALEX

I'd be happy for you to do so at this point.

BRYN

I think he can afford to wait until the next time we get to act.

HELEN

Yeah, that's what I'm going to do next time. I'm just thinking what she's instinctively going to do, and that is protect the small being.

ALEX

So I believe that your number has dropped to one. Is that correct?

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

Fabulous. Cel, what was your number?

LYDIA

It's three now.

ALEX

Three now. Fabulous.

(humming)

Okay. I'll give you good news bad news. The bad news is the next shard that you are coming into, you can only identify by the fact that it is a pure darkness, far, far deeper than the surrounding void.

HELEN

Oh God.

ALEX

Is there any action that you'd like to take prior to plunging in? I'm going to limit it to a standard action.

LYDIA

Cast Cure Light Wounds.

ALEX

Sure.

LYDIA

Okay, yeah. So that's one D8 plus my caster level is ...

BRYN

Probably 10

LYDIA

Yeah, so it's plus five then.

ALEX

Yep, that's good.

LYDIA

So, I cure 11 damage, which is actually quite important.

ALEX

Then immediately take eight necromantic damage.

LYDIA

Okay, that's cool. I am just glad that I did that.

ALEX

Just sustain, just sustain. Your number is now down to two, yes?

LYDIA

Okay, it is now down to two.

ALEX

I'm going to go with you one more time.

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

You may take one more standard action, should you wish?

LYDIA

No, that's it.

ALEX

The next shard that you plough through appears to be some kind of blizzard, but again, by the time you smash through it, you're out the other side. You take a further 12 cold damage.

LYDIA

Oh I didn't cast ... Like literally, as I said, no, I was like, I should cast some endure elements. That's what I should do, but no. Okay.

ALEX

Your number is now down to one, yes?

LYDIA

Yes, it is now down to one.

BEN

As a consolation endure elements probably wouldn't do something against the plane of cold itself.

LYDIA

Fair enough.

BEN

Because it won't protect you from like a fireball, you can't endure elements to reduce the damage on that.

LYDIA

Ah yeah, yeah. True. You're wise. Your consolation, I accept and I appreciate.

BEN

It's more that I'm staring at the spell that does do that.

LYDIA

Ah it's probably a higher level...

BEN

Hey Alex, which plane am I going to smash into?

ALEX

So I am going to say now that I know you've been pouring ranks into the planes. I'm going to go ahead and give you a free knowledge check to recognise the plane that you are approaching before you have your standard action.

BEN

24.

ALEX

24. You are certain that this is one of the outer planes that you're powering towards. Very difficult to determine which one specifically. Most likely it's going to have some kind of force effect upon you.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

Would you like to take a standard action?

BEN

Yeah, I'll cast, I don't know, Protection from Energy (sonic). You can't really protect from false energy, so ...

ALEX

Protection from Energy (sonic). That is a divine cast, correct?

BEN

Well, yes. Yes, everything I cast is divine.

ALEX

Yep, it goes off. Could you please remind me of the description, just so I can lock that away in my head.

BEN

Temporary immunity to the type of energy I specify, when cast, it absorbs 12 points per caster level. So 120 points of sonic.

ALEX

I doubt I'm going to be able to deal 120 damage of this thing to you.

I am afraid you take 12 force damage on this one. What's your number down to?

BEN

Three now.

ALEX

Cel's numbers is now one to match Azu and Hamid, correct?

LYDIA

Mm-hmm

ALEX

Okay. You look like you are next ploughing towards another dark void. One like what Cel went through. Not that you saw Cel go through one. You have a standard action, should you wish to take it?

BEN

Nothing I can do against that.

ALEX

Only six damage. You've gotten quite lucky on the damage rolls. That's good. Your numbers should be down to two by my maths now.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

Okay, and then the last one you seem to be falling towards one that is emitting a blinding light. Bright, bright, white.

BEN

Nothing I can do against that.

ALEX

I wouldn't even give you a knowledge planes because it's too bright to look out to discern anything useful.

BEN

Probably the plane of light then, isn't it?

ALEX

You heal six damage. There's the tiniest moment of a choir of beautiful voices before you plunge out the other side with your number now at one as well. Can I now get the total number of hit points that Skraak had kicking around?

BRYN

He has a total of 50 and he had already lost 25.

ALEX

So he was down to 25.

BRYN

Yeah. He does have some healing potions, and I don't know if it's standard action to drink a healing potion between flying through all these damaging things, is something he would be able to accomplish.

ALEX

It is. So yes, I'm not going to be telling you what's happening with Skraak beyond what's required for tracking because you don't know. So he's mine to command and control. He uses both his healing potions, so wipe them off your stats.

HELEN

Good

BRYN

Very sensible.

ALEX

Okay, at which point, Azu and Hamid, you come-to in a tunnel, it appears to be semi-industrial in nature. Dark -pitch black, in fact, with some faint water noises and a, maybe very, very distant sound of like mechanism or something similar. And by come-to, I mean, face down with no memory of how you got there. The last memory you had was plunging through the last thing that you took damage from.

HELEN

Okay. Hmm. This sounds like an underground tunnel. Like the tube.

BRYN

I mean, you said it's completely pitch black right?

ALEX

Pitch black, pitch black.

HELEN

Well, I can see.

ALEX

Industrial because you can feel metal grating that you are lying on currently.

BRYN

Yeah. I mean, Hamid is going to do his best to just feel around, because he can't see. Does he even know Azu's right next to him? Like ...

ALEX

You can still feel Azu's hand in yours. Well, your hand in Azu's, let's be honest.

LYDIA

(Gasp) so you know the hand is there!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Ah, the Jurassic park play, I'm very approving

ALEX

No, because one extra thing does happen just as you start to come together, you have just enough time to realise what's happening, and then a camel is summoned moments, like barely, like right next to you. And suddenly the place is washed in bright dancing lights and Hamid starts to fly. *All simultaneously*
Just: Whoa, camel, lights, flying!

BRYN AS HAMID

Azu? What? Oh, whoa.

HELEN AS AZU

Topaz!

ALEX

Topaz seems fine.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

Though it is a squeeze for a camel in here.

HELEN AS AZU

Oh...um

ALEX

I'd even say, I'm going to go ahead and say that Topaz has a light glow that even augments the dancing lights. You're definitely in some kind of industrial-

esque tunnel though. It appears to be non-functioning. Don't think ... like, it's not got steam and moving parts. It just seems kind of obscure service tunnel.

BRYN

I guess I take stock of our surroundings, now that I can see.

ALEX

You're in a long, straight service tunnel that disappears into darkness on either side. Though one side is mostly obscured by camel.

HELEN

Azu is going to get up and give Topaz a big hug and then send her back to the celestial plane because this is no place for a camel.

ALEX

This is indeed no place for a camel, Topaz is happy to oblige. Maybe with a nuzzle before doing so, but yes, this dark service tunnel is not a place for a celestial camel.

HELEN

Yeah

BRYN AS HAMID

Azu, where are we?

HELEN AS AZU

I don't know. But are you, are you all right? Are you hurt?

BRYN AS HAMID

A little, a little bit, but I'm okay.

Where's everyone else?

HELEN AS AZU

I don't know. Should we call for them or?

HELEN

Ooh, ooh Azu is going to take out a mobile stone.

ALEX

Okay.

HELEN

Because she still doesn't really know how they work, she's just going to say Zolf into it.

BRYN

Zolf doesn't have one.

ALEX

Who in the party currently does have a mobile stone?

BRYN

Just Hamid and Azu.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I am absolutely fine with this. I would like this to stay canonical. You pull it out and say Zolf into the mobile stone.

BRYN AS HAMID

Azu, you and I are the only ones who have them.

HELEN AS AZU

Oh.

BRYN AS HAMID

Well apart from like Einstein and Vessek and Emeka and ...

HELEN AS AZU

Okay, well you probably don't need to get them involved. Okay.

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

Hello?

BRYN AS HAMID

Oh Professor hello!

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

Hamid? Hello?

BRYN AS HAMID

This is unexpected, we didn't- how- how are you?

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

I thought we weren't meant to be talking, hello.

BRYN AS HAMID

Probably not ...

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

Glad to hear you're alive, we all thought you were dead!

BRYN AS HAMID

We're alive, probably!

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

How are the others?

BRYN AS HAMID

We don't know... How are you? You're alive too?

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

Um, it's kinda complicated. Can I call you back? I'm in the middle of something.....

BRYN AS HAMID

Well we probably shouldn't be talking anyway. I'm just glad to still hear your voice, thanks Professor.

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

Wait wait wait wait! Are you all evil and veiny yet?

BRYN AS HAMID

No...

HELEN AS AZU

No, are you?

ALEX AS EINSTEIN

Good to know! Ok, bye!

BRYN AS HAMID

I guess we should head in one direction and see if we can ... I mean, I was, I don't know if I should keep the lights on so I can see...or if we're gonna, we don't know if there's anyone, you know, anything that's going to try and hurt us in these tunnels.

ALEX

Could you give me a perception check?

BRYN AS HAMID

But I guess you'll make a lot of noise. So maybe it won't matter very much...

BRYN

Natural 1.

ALEX

Good.

HELEN

And I only got 19.

ALEX

Good.

HELEN

Cause I rolled an 8.

ALEX

Very happy with this as a scenario. I couldn't wish you better.

HELEN

Well tell you what, you're injured. I'm also a bit injured, so let me just um...

HELEN AS AZU

And Azu is going to cast lay on hands on Hamid and on herself.

ALEX

As you do so, at the distant end of one end of this tunnel, you don't know where north, south, east, east or west is. You hear a very, very distant

(Chittering Sound Effect)

HELEN

Is that applause or is that feet?

ALEX

It's that exact sound.

BRYN

I mean, it sounded like mandibles to me.

BEN

Yeah, it's an insectile clicking.

ALEX

But your healing goes off without a hitch. So please roll that first.

BRYN

Okay, so Hamid is going to get ...

HELEN

Nice! Hamid gets ...

BEN

69 hit points back.

(Group Laughter)

ALEX

Wow!

HELEN

No, Hamid gets 17 hit points back.

BRYN

Nice, nice.

HELEN

And Azu gets, also nice, Azu gets 15 hit points back.

ALEX

Fair play. In which case then, I'm going to jump to a different party member.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

Cel, you come-to, stood inside what appears to be a derelict inn of some kind.

LYIDA

Okay.

ALEX

And you appear to be in the middle of a task. You appear to be like taking an inventory of your equipment or something. It's all laid out. It must have taken you a while to do so, and you have done this kind of a thing before. Think of it

more like alchemist prep kind of thing. You seem to have been like finishing up your prep. You have no memory of how you got here beyond the last pain that you took when we were rolling for the damages.

LYDIA

What is the architectural style of this derelict inn? Is it say Japanese?

ALEX

No. It seems to be to your eye - Western European.

LYDIA

Okay, right.

ALEX

It has no windows ...

LYDIA

Interesting.

ALEX

... which is odd. It appears that it was vacated in a hurry. Lots of like overturned tables and so on. It looks like if someone wanted to make something look homely, with very little in the way of quality materials and had an aversion to light. You are in something that broadly speaking could generously be called a two-storey space with surrounding balcony. However, one of the balconies has collapsed and the other one is shut up.

LYDIA

Hmm.

ALEX

There are to your eye, two doorways from the room. One which appears to be behind you currently and appears to have a rudimentary trap setup on your side of the doorway. And there appears to be another door, which you would guess leads into the kitchen or something similar that is currently boarded. No, which is currently barricaded. That is a different descriptor.

LYDIA

Okay, interesting. Now I would expect that Cel's father would have told them about the existence of Other London, but they would not be familiar. They would not have thought it through enough to think in London, no light, poor materials, probably underground.

ALEX

You do have light. There is a lit torch within the inn with you.

LYDIA

No natural light?

ALEX

No natural light whatsoever.

LYDIA AS CEL

So hello? Hamid? Azu? Zolf? Skraak? Skraak? Wilde? Wilde? Anyone.

LYDIA

Oh, okay. If I look at my inventory, is it accurate? According to what I know?

ALEX

I'm going to give a slightly fluffy description for obvious reasons.

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

You appear to have used a bunch of reagents more than you thought for the manufacturing of bombs. Not in a way that is mechanically - you are running short - but you appear to have made and used a decent number of bombs.

LYDIA

Right. So I may have been in some fights that I do not remember.

ALEX

Yes. And how many bombs per day do you have?

LYDIA

16 per day.

ALEX

You can deduct six.

LYDIA

Oh, okay. I actually had fewer than that left before. So ...

ALEX

You will have lost up to six bombs.

LYDIA

Right, yeah. I had six bombs. So I now have no bombs. I had carefully saved those bombs in case I needed them.

ALEX

Sorry!

LYDIA

Perhaps I did. Right, so this place does not look bombed. Let us see if outside looks bombed. Okay.

ALEX

I am going to jump to Zolf. Who plunges into very cold, very dark muck of some kind.

BEN

Cool.

ALEX

Sploosh!

LYDIA

It's full circle, man! It's sewer time!

HELEN

(Cheering) Back in the poo...

ALEX

I must confess, it does have a reminiscent smell, now you think on it...

BEN

Surprisingly, my first instinct is to not drown. So I, you know, swim to the surface, find a place. I'm not like taking in my surroundings. I want to not drown.

ALEX

You pick an arbitrary direction, swim till you find like a wall and then use that to navigate.

BEN

Right, I have dark vision so I can see something but like, you know, I'm not asking.

ALEX

Can you give me a single swim check please?

BEN

OH! Okay, good. 20.

ALEX

Yeah, you're fine. Basically. It's actually comparatively easy to stay buoyant, and there seems to be detritus in here that like you very quickly find something you can hold to float on. And then you pull your way to the side, find yourself facing a wall.

At one point, there's definitely a current that seems to be pulling you to like a grate, but it is covered with a grate, so you can navigate past that, and eventually you find your way to some kind of metal ladder or similar and can pull yourself up onto a platform.

BEN

Okay. Am I in a sewer?

ALEX

You are certainly in something akin to a sewer. Your guess is, yeah, you seem to be in a sewer. You are in what appears to be a, something akin to a silo in design that seems to have multiple pipes leading in with some and seems to then have a larger single grated pipe leading out. And that is crisscrossed with a number of walkways you see to your eye, only one exit though from the room that is like a formal doorway that you could probably fit through multiple of the intake pipes.

BEN AS ZOLF

Oh bloody hell, I wonder if this is real. All right.

BEN

Well, I'll look around. I obviously don't see anybody else and leave through the door.

ALEX

And at that point I'm going to take a break and then you can all figure out what's happening in the break, and then we'll just magically reconvene afterwards, okay?

BEN

Cool.

HELEN

Cool, lovely.

LYDIA

Nice.

ALEX

See you in a sec.

[00:25:00 Mid show break]

ALEX

So I'm going to be joining Azu and Hamid in a tunnel with a distant clicking.

BRYN AS HAMID

Should we move away from that? What'd you think lights on or lights off?

HELEN AS AZU

Let's leave them on for you?

BRYN AS HAMID

Probably best. Yeah. Okay...

HELEN AS AZU

You sometimes make better decisions than me, so let's ...

BRYN AS HAMID

I don't know if that's true Azu, I think we do best together. Anyway, let's head this way.

HELEN AS AZU

Awh! (faintly) Okay.

HELEN

Azu gets the axe out.

BRYN

Start walking.

ALEX

The opposite direction, presumably.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

I guess Hamid is not walking actually. Hamid is just floating gently along. So the fly spell.

ALEX

Obviously by the way, please do deduct those spells from, like you have cast those spells, they are not free...

BRYN

I marked it off when I cast it earlier, even though it had no effect.

ALEX

Perfect, thank you. Yeah, okay in that case then could you please give me first, both of you, are you trying to be stealthy or just plodding along?

HELEN

I'm just plodding. I can't be stealthy.

BRYN

Yeah. I mean, Hamid is naturally quite stealthy, but the fact that they've got light means ...Yeah, and the fact that he's right next to Azu means that no, I guess?

ALEX

Understood, that's fine. So you continue down the tunnel for a little ways.

BRYN

I keep glancing behind us too, to see if the clicking approaches ...

ALEX

And it's definitely following you. It doesn't seem to be approaching, but it's definitely following you, and as you continue down it, you reach a door which appears to have like a service door, you know, with a turn handle.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

It is slightly ajar, but not enough that you can just see into what's ever beyond.

HELEN

I open it.

BRYN

I'll dismiss the dancing lights just before we push it open.

ALEX

Okay, so to be clear, you now have no light sources as you're opening the door, yes?

HELEN

Yes, but I have dark vision. So I should be able to have a peek in.

BRYN

Hamid is going to basically, just before he dismisses dancing lights, he's going to settle into a, like, hands on Azu's shoulders position.

Have you seen that really famous halfling backpack picture?

AZU

Yeah!

BRYN

That position, but he doesn't have the backpack because he didn't need it, because he just flies.

ALEX

Understood.

ALEX

But the hands on the shoulders means he doesn't need to be able to see and he can just kind of let Azu's movement guide him potentially.

ALEX

Yup, Clever. Give me a perception check, please Azu.

HELEN

That's 18.

ALEX

Actually, Hamid, can you give me a perception check please as well.

BRYN

33.

ALEX

For the 18, I will answer you, Azu, first. Within the range of your dark vision, you see what appear to be a few trampled market stalls in a large open space. It appears to be an underground space. It appears to be a retrofitted industrial space, potentially of some kind. You see sort of brick work arches, some exposed plumbing and so on. There's the occasional drip here and there, and within range of it, you see two to three trampled stalls. As you're looking at that, I'm going to say that you're distracted. Hamid with yours you see...

BRYN

I don't see anything.

ALEX

Obviously you don't see any of this, but you feel like you were in a large space and you see a very, very distant blue glow at the far end of the space. Very, very like it isn't like a very clear point of light or anything like that. It's quite dim and it's a decent distance away. You've sort of opened a door and gone - ooh, big cavernous space.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Maybe blue?

BRYN AS HAMID

Is it, is it safe to put the lights back on?

HELEN AS AZU

Yes, it seems. It doesn't seem like anyone's in here. It's just um...

BRYN AS HAMID

Okay.

HELEN AS AZU

It's like a market, but underground.

BRYN

I will recast. I mean, and dancing lights only lasts a minute as well, so like when I say dismiss it, we can literally just wait 10 seconds and it will have gone off.

ALEX

Yeah

BRYN

But so I will cast out some lights again.

It does have a range of 200 foot. So I'm literally going to summon the torches at the edge of that range. So they're not like right in front of us and I get to

move them as I want. So I can't, I don't think I can move them further away than that, but I can sort of move them around.

So, you know, I'm going to start moving them around to light up as much and I'll sort of zigzag, so they're a bit closer to us, and then a bit further away again.

ALEX

You recognise where you are. This is where you were jumped by a bunch of people in the Other London market.

BRYN

That is what I thought.

ALEX

It appears to have been vacated, but not necessarily in a panic. Most of the stalls seem to have either been left or sort of like knocked, like struck, if you know what I mean by like striking a stall, but there doesn't appear to be much in the way of like leftover stock or like things left out.

It looks more like people moved out of here en masse, than people fled here en masse.

BRYN AS HAMID

Oh, oh, well I know where we are.

HELEN AS AZU

Oh, that's good.

BRYN AS HAMID

I don't know if it is, we're... we're in London.

HELEN AS AZU

Oh.

BRYN AS HAMID

Other London specifically.

HELEN AS AZU

Right.

ALEX

I am going to jump to Zolf. You have headed through that corridor, correct?

BEN

Yes.

ALEX

Okay, heading through that corridor, you find yourself in, I'm going to go a little bit broader than just the exact situation ring, because I kind of have to. It's very clear quickly that you're in a series of service tunnels, most likely for sewage plumbing, et cetera.

I'm not going to bother with "you see a left turn and a mid turn and a right turn ..." I haven't written an entire maze. You are in a set of service tunnels that you do not recognise. What's the plan?

BEN

I try and get out.

ALEX

Okay, are you looking to go up? Are you looking to go around to find features or down?

BEN

Uh, what presents itself?

ALEX

Okay, sure. In that case then give me a general percep ... or no, give me a survival check please?

BEN

21.

ALEX

21. You're able to make sure that you don't get turned around at any point. It helps that they are intentional service tunnels. They're not natural winding cave pathways and so on. Very clear to you very quickly that you think - well, whether you think it, but it's very reminiscent of Other London.

BEN

I mean, given we were going to London, it makes sense.

ALEX

As you continue, you start to notice...

- a) large amounts of movements of water, and then
- b) you start to discern sort of two major points of interest, which you're going to be able to use to make decision-making.

One is that there's a couple of turnings where there is a dim, static blue glow coming from. You can choose whether to go down them or not, after I've given a second factor.

The other one is that you find yourself in... do you remember there's a couple of stairways up and down into Other London?

BEN

I do

ALEX

You basically manage to find one of those as well. Not *the* main thoroughfare, but certainly a stairwell where you're like, well, this is going to go all the way up and all the way down, if I need it to. Takes a while to find maybe like, you know, an hour or so of careful...

because you're not being random and you don't, you're not just sort of charging through... But those are the two salient points really.

BEN

Is the blue the same shade of blue as the blue we know and love.

ALEX

Yes.

BEN

Then I will not be going to those places.

ALEX

I presumed as much, but didn't want to assume.

BEN

I'm going to try and find a way into Other London proper, because I think, you know, the surface is going to be horrible and the blue glow is the blue glow.

ALEX

That's yeah, that's fine. In which case, then I am going to jump to Cel. So Cel, you were going to be heading outside of the inn, yes?

LYDIA

Yep. They're going to listen at that front door first, before going out, for sound of a fight.

ALEX

Can you give me a perception check please?

LYDIA

I can, I can do that. Ooh, natural one. So I'm not going to like, I mean, obviously they add quite a bit to that, but irrelevant presumably, because natural one.

ALEX

Natural one, understood. There's an additional detail that I have tracked and I forgot to mention, but I figured you'd connect the dots anyway. You're no longer in beast form.

LYDIA

Ah right. Yes, no, that is useful.

ALEX

It's mechanically salient, but I realised I didn't explicitly state that.

LYDIA

No. Yes, I had assumed I wasn't in, but it is good to be clear, and I also then thought you were going to say like, there's a lot of trays around that looked like they would be perfect for the storing of a quiche, but ...

ALEX

You hear nothing outside, nothing discerned. The trap itself appears to have an alchemical element that you recognise. It appears to be a suspended alchemist fire over the doorway that will be tripped if someone were to head through the door without paying attention.

LYDIA

Hmm. Do I need to deactivate it in order to go through the door?

ALEX

No. The trap is designed entirely to
a) go unnoticed and

b) to be easily managed on this side of the door, and to be very difficult to detect from the other side of the doorway.

LYDIA

Cool. Can I open the door then? Exciting times.

ALEX

Yeah. You open the doorway and you find yourself in, I don't know if Cel would have ever seen anything like this. I want you to imagine almost like a large subway tunnel, but it appears to have like buildings built into it. They appear comparatively ramshackle and abandoned. Not abandoned in the sense of like ruinous, but I mean more in the sense of empty with very little signs of things being left behind.

LYDIA

Yeah, probably the closest thing would be between the towns that we visited in Japan and Shoin Institute. So there's a slight suspicion that we might be under water because ...

ALEX

That would scan. That would absolutely scan. There's definitely the sounds of distant running water, the odd drip and so on again. Occasional steam from pipes and so on. Yeah reminiscent of Shoin is not a terrible ...

LYDIA

Building on that natural one, I will say that Cel is becoming increasingly confident in their theory that they are underwater and an even more

ramshackled underwater base and is gathering lots of evidence for this. They're going to go back and grab that lit torch, if it's a carriable one. You said it was a lit torch. So they're going to grab that and then just walk out and walk down the tunnel, I guess.

ALEX

Yeah, so heading down the corridor tunnel, it's very densely packed, assuming that people would have been living here - over densely packed. It feels more reminiscent of like a close to a slum maybe. And as you're walking down this tunnel, you can see that it has a very slight gradient, some that heads very slightly down, and some that heads very slightly up. It only goes in those two directions. I'll need you to pick one.

LYDIA

Uh, up?

ALEX

Okay, cool. You continue ...

LYDIA

Because we want to get above the water level.

ALEX

Ah, I see. You continue heading up there and then back near, I'd say you're walking for maybe five minutes, 10 minutes. And then back towards where the inn was, you hear a clanging like a 'tong t-tong tong tong,' and then a couple of beats, and then a 'tong t-tong tong.'

LYDIA

Cel whacks on some metal nearby?

LYDIA AS CEL

Tong, tong, t-tong, tong.

ALEX

Tong, t-tong, tong. Tong, t-tong, tong.

LYDIA

Is this in morse code? I don't know Morse code, but Cel probably would.

ALEX

Cel would know Morse code. This is not in Morse code. It appears to just be like, I mean, it could be, but if it is, it's jibberish.

LYDIA

It's not in the Morse code that they know. I don't know, there could be dialects! But anyway, so we'll just ...

LYDIA AS CEL

Hello, anyone there? Anyone, anyone at all? You know, even if you attacked me, that would give me information.

(Group Laughter)

LYDIA AS CEL

So ... hello?

ALEX

It takes a little while, there's no response, and then after just when you think, okay, nothing's going to happen, we're talking like, you know, a minute solid, two minutes or whatever, you hear a 'tong 't-tong tong' a little bit closer, seems to be from slightly different direction.

LYDIA AS CEL

Yeah, okay. Tong t-t-tong tong.

ALEX

Tong tong.

LYDIA AS CEL

Ah, I see, I see.

I don't see. I don't see at all. But you know, it's lovely to meet you. Could you, could you kind of two taps ... can, can you understand me?

One tap for yes, two taps for no.

Wait, yea... can you, can you understand me?

One... one tap for yes? I suppose no taps for no?

ALEX

There's no response.

LYDIA AS CEL

Okay. Well, so you did dig that for yourself... “Two taps for no. I can't understand you”. (grumbling) Okay, I don't know any more tunes. I really should have learned more tunes. I didn't know it'd be so useful in survival situations...

ALEX

You suddenly realise you've been so busy berating yourself, you haven't noticed the enormous hulking figure that is stalking closer towards the rim of your torchlight.

LYDIA AS CEL

Oh, hello? Hello? Hello. What are you?

UNKOWN BEING

Ssshhhhh!

LYDIA AS CEL

Friendly? Huh?

ALEX

A massive filthy hand pokes into the torchlight and kind of puts up like a finger and then taps like down, down like sshhh.

LYDIA AS CEL

Quiet friendly!

ALEX

I'm going to jump to Hamid and Azu.

HELEN

Okay...

BRYN

I'm thinking about the process of time passing, given that it's been a factor for other people. Fly has probably worn off because that only lasts 10 minutes.

ALEX

Fly seemed to trigger the second that you arrived. It was not pre triggered. That's an important fact.

HELEN

Yeah, we've not been walking around for 10 minutes.

BRYN

Way back in the midst of time, I cast mage armor, which lasts 10 hours.

HELEN

Haha, he did.

ALEX

No, that's still extant.

BRYN

Cool.

BRYN AS HAMID

Okay, shall we look around, I guess?

HELEN AS AZU

Yes.

BRYN AS HAMID

Still don't...

ALEX

The thing in the tunnel is definitely moving closer.

BRYN AS HAMID

Let's ...

HELEN AS AZU

Yes, um... Should we, should we go and look at that? Because ...

BRYN AS HAMID

I don't know, let's find something to sort of...

ALEX

There is a second thing in the marketplace, somewhere at a distant corner. It has a lower tone.

BRYN AS HAMID

Oh, um... let's find a defensible position and see if we can see them.

LYDIA

Azu is a defensible position.

ALEX

(laughter) Quick plant your flag on her!

HELEN

(laughter) All right, where would be good? Azu looks around for like raised platforms or anything in this space.

BRYN

Or the nearest overturned market stall?

HELEN

Yeah, that too.

ALEX

There's plenty to choose from.

HELEN

Azu is was going to pick one at random and be like that one.

ALEX

They're not especially robust. They are mostly like cloth and poles and so on, and it'll provide some initial cover, but it's not like a barricade that you can ...

BRYN

No, it more like just reduces the number of directions we can be attacked from simultaneously.

ALEX

It can reduce the number of directions you can be *seen* from simultaneously, which is almost the same thing.

BRYN

Yeah, close enough. Okay, so once we've found that, I'm going to send the dancing lights back to the tunnel entrance and like, illuminate it. The exit we came out of.

ALEX

Are you hiding?

BRYN

Yeah?

ALEX

Could both of you give me a stealth check, please?

BRYN

I mean, this is going to be potentially pointless...

ALEX

I am going to be applying bonuses though, because you have actually prepped, you're not just, kind of doing the game thing of crouching and then seeing the little eyeball symbol.

HELEN

14.

BRYN

I rolled a three. So 21. So almost the same values.

HELEN

(laughs)

BRYN

Hamid's not trying very hard, because he feels like he's not going to be the less stealthy one, no matter what.

HELEN

(laughter) Well, he's not wrong.

ALEX

As you are sort of waiting, you start to see an approaching blue glow from that corridor.

HELEN AS AZU

Hamid, Hamid, there's a blue thing. It's bad blue. We should, should we go?

BRYN AS HAMID

Go where? We heard something else similar nearby. We didn't, I couldn't tell from where ...

HELEN AS AZU

But it's *blue*.

ALEX

The second one is still very, very far off. It doesn't appear to be approaching, but it's definitely in this big space somewhere.

HELEN AS AZU

What if it's a veiny thing?

BRYN AS HAMID

Um. Okay, okay. I think I remember this place well enough. I don't know where we should go. I mean, we could head to the surface, but if we're in London, the whole city might be overrun. I don't... I don't know where else to go though.

ALEX

As you are saying this, you receive a telepathic message.

(Group ooh)

ALEX

Give me a knowledge arcana?

BRYN

24.

ALEX

It is ascending.

Let me get the voice, right.

HELEN

Oh God.

MYSTERY VOICE

Avoid the tunnel, head away from the lights.

BRYN AS HAMID

Oh, okay. Thank you.

HELEN AS AZU

Well I didn't do anything.

BRYN AS HAMID

Who are you?

HELEN AS AZU

I'm Azu.

BRYN AS HAMID

I got a message Azu.

HELEN AS AZU

Oh, that's weird.

BRYN AS HAMID

They may not be able to reply. They said to hide from the lights. So, I guess we should do that.

HELEN AS AZU

That's what I was saying.

BRYN AS HAMID

Yes!

BRYN

I dismiss the dancing lights, and grab on to Azu's shoulders quite tightly.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN AS HAMID

I don't think any direction is going to be better than any other, but if we can hear those clicks, let's stay away from them too.

HELEN AS AZU

All right.

BRYN AS HAMID

And just avoid the lights if we can. I can't see now ...

HELEN AS AZU

I can see.

ALEX

As you say that, you can start to see, because a large blue, glowing ... I say large, large for a medium sized creature, clawed blue glowing hand reaches out from the tunnel and grasps the side of the doorway. It has thick, bulging blue veins running through it. And as it reaches and digs into the doorway, large chunks of wood tear away from its claws.

ALEX

And I'll end episode there.

(Everyone Exclaims)

HELEN

Azu can't see anything! Well she can see but argh!

BRYN

Rusty Quill has a horror podcast, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Respect his craft, blah, blah, blah.

ALEX

Okay, if you're going to skip huge numbers of monsters and go straight to London, I'm going to have to just, just cram a lot of death into very, very small spaces and that's okay.

HELEN

Oh dear.

ALEX

At least we have the luxury of returning immediately whilst everyone else has to wait. Right?

LYDIA

Yay.

ALEX

Let's do that then.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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