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Zilpip as played by Dean

Tobe as played by Liz

Myx as played by Nina

Doomsinger as played by Thomas (Guest)

Erbak as played by Tom

Mhurren as played by Vinny

Narrator/Scraw/GM/Everything else as played by Ray

Ray/GM: Hello listeners, and welcome to "Tails From the Dark Dragons Inn" episode four, "Infestation." First, allow me to offer my sincerest apologies. Erbak's audio in this particular episode is especially poor. Unfortunately, there's simply nothing I can do about this in post. That said, moving forward, I promise that things improve significantly. If you stick with us, you won't regret it.

Before we get started, I'd like to give a quick shoutout to our friends over at The Talent Agency, a Shadowrun Anarchy podcast. If you're ever looking for shows produced by queer content creators, look no further! The Talent Agency features a slew of cyberpunk infused heists driven by art, high fashion, music, theatre, and the entertainment industry. With a rotating group of diverse actors, Nathan Blades, the host and DM of this show, has put together something altogether unique and exciting. You can find it now on iTunes. I hope you'll give it a shot.

I'd also like to take a moment to talk about RPGcasts.com. This site is working to create a comprehensive directory of RPG driven podcasts, including ourselves. It's a great way to find new content that aligns with your interests. Get over there and take a look.

This week, we have the whole crew. Vinny as Mhurren, the half-orc monk, Nina as Myx, the aasimar warlock of the fey, Tom as Erbak, the lizardman wizard, Liz as Tobe, a tiefling warlock of the Raven Queen, Dean as Zilpip, a gnome arcanist, Tom as Doomsinger the bard, and last, but hopefully not least, I'm Ray, I play Scraw, the bugbear barbarian. I'm also your host, gamemaster, and well, just about everyone else.

Now, find yourself a table. Vistirion will send someone over shortly. Get comfortable, settle in. The show is about to start.

Doomsinger: Though their journey thus far has shown great peril, the Scales of Justice will see no rest. Having learned what they were able from the captive cultist, our heroes set forth to do what they can. Many dangers await. Both within and without. Though the greatest risk of all may just be their own incompetence.

GM: Myx, after you left the party with Oz on your shoulder, you were lead away by one of the guards and you were seen to by a tabaxi medic who did their best to take care of your wounds. They have bandaged the wound itself, it is no longer bleeding, however, you haven't recovered too much health. The predominant method of healing that the tabaxi employ is primarily for internal injury and things like muscle soreness. It essentially involves... It's essentially Thai massage but with purring.

Myx: {laughing} That sounds so wonderful!

GM: At this point, the prisoner has been lead away. Nighthill has begun to leave his room and well.. You are now all together, except for Myx, obviously. Doomsinger, predominantly, you haven't really understood the vast majority of what's been going on. Everyone's been speaking Common, but all the responses from the Cultists came in Draconic, so.. You and Zilpip have essentially been relatively clueless.

Doomsinger: I'm sat here strumming quietly.

Erbak: What time is it?

GM: Approximately... between 9 and 10 o'clock. The attack is still ongoing on the city.

Erbak: AM or PM?

GM: PM. It was getting towards nighttime as you entered the city.

Doomsinger: "Now that you've all finished flemming on each other, have we actually found out anything?"

Erbak: "There's some religious madmen who think that running round slaughtering everybody and taking their money is enough to placate their god. It's always the

way with these cults.”

Tobe: I turn to the Doomsinger and say, “Uhm, well, he was up front after we scared the shit out of him, I suppose. Basically, their intention is to try and rise Tiamat and for that they’re going from town to town amassing a horde to offer to her. He doesn’t actually know how they’re going to bring her back. He seems rather low down the rung. They do have a camp that they’ve taken people to. Twelve miles south of the town.”

Doomsinger: “Okay, well, I suppose it’s nice to have a hobby, isn’t it? I suppose if you’re going to do anything, why not raise an elder dragon? ”

Zilpip: Ray, can I speak to Tarbaw in Gnomic?

GM: He has already left the room, but you can pursue him if you wish. He has matters to attend.

Zilpip: Yeah, I’ll do that.

GM: Yeah, so you leave the room to pursue Tarbaw. You find yourself in the main, central room with various other townsfolk. He seems to just be heading out of the tower.

Zilpip: I’m going to have to try and convince him, as convincingly as I can be. Well, I don’t know, really. Just that it’s very suspicious that there’s a group of dragonborn people showing up.

GM: So, you’re following him out of the room. How do you get his attention? Cause at the moment he seems like he has a destination to go to.

Zilpip: I’m just going to run up to him really quick, get up to speed and then walk beside him. At fast pace.

Tarbaw: “Oh. Did you.. Did you need something?”

Zilpip: “Do you find it suspicious that there’s a group of dragonborn speaking people who show up, start bringing through a prisoner from a so-called Tiamat cult who’s attacking your city?”

Tarbaw: “It’s strange that there’s a cult attacking the city to begin with, to be totally honest with you, but people speaking Draconic is not entirely unusual.”

Zilpip: "Do you speak Draconic?"

Tarbaw: "Not personally, but I know many friends of mine speak Draconic quite fluently."

Zilpip: "Do you know what they were discussing in there? Behind the scenes?"

Tarbaw: "I can't say that I do, but most --."

Zilpip: "And you've let them into your citadel."

Tarbaw: "Well, they rescued several townsfolk and they were vouched for by a number of people who rescued several other townsfolk. It seemed like it would have been rather unusual for them to have done that now that we have one of their Cultists captured in chains. He's down in the dungeon. I'm not particularly concerned about their presence, but perhaps we can put them to good use outside of the keep."

Zilpip: "I would keep them at an arm's length, especially regarding any information you get from them. Any intelligence could be somewhat.. Hmm, counter-intelligence?"

Tarbaw: "Well.. what say you to.. Staying with them? If you are concerned for their whereabouts, their activities.. Keep close. You monitor their activities. If there's anything unusual, report back to me. And.. keep all of this between us."

Zilpip: "I'll let you know if anything goes awry. I'll keep a tether to the truth, so to speak."

Tarbaw: "Please do, certainly. I was hoping that you would, uh, stay with them in any case. As they seem to be quite forthright and fairly gung-ho about doing something about the situation that we're in. I thought your skills may assist.. " And he sort of looks at you and he says, "Please refrain from torturing people, if it comes up, it's really not necessary. I apologize that that's the impression that you've got.. When I said that's where I thought your skills would come in handy. It wasn't quite what I meant. It was very effective, don't get me wrong, but.. Please, avoid torturing."

Zilpip: "While operating under your banner, so to speak, I shall refrain from many things that would do you or your reputation harm."

Tarbaw: "I appreciate it. Is there anything else?"

Zilpip: "No, I'll go back to them and get working on this"

Tarbaw: "Watch them closely. Hopefully, they'll spend most of their time talking in the common tongue."

Zilpip: "Sneaky, sneaky."

GM: And he kind of taps his nose at you, nods.

Doomsinger: "Ah, but what's the point of dying if not for something brave?"

Myx: "You keep that to yourself."

Scraw: "Ah ha! I like that thinking, yes! Dying for glory is truly worthy!"

Myx: "Not when we're trying to save innocent people, man."

Scraw: "I mean, surely laying down your life in the line of saving innocent people is precisely the best cause to do so."

Myx: "Not in the context Mr. Doomsinger is speaking of."

Doomsinger: "In an unusual turn of events, I actually agree with the bugbear."

Myx: I would stick my tongue out if I was in the same room, but I'm still not.

GM: You guys are having this conversation amongst yourselves as Zilpip re-enters the room.

Doomsinger: "Well, we're clearly going to stop this cult, aren't we? It's something to do."

Tobe: "I think it'd be the more prudent thing to do before they, you know, pillage the entire country-side."

Doomsinger: "That old priest over hererather likes getting rid of naughty dragons because he follows a nice dragon, isn't th at right?"

Mhurren: "Every word of that is true, yes."

Erbak: "I'd just like to point out that we are in the center of the battlefield right now. Getting to where we need to get to will be much more difficult than anticipated."

Doomsinger: "Ah, small issue."

Scraw: Scraw looks around like he hasn't been paying attention. "Um. Where exactly are we going.. ? Ah, sorry, I may have mis.. um."

Doomsinger: "I have no bloody idea. You're all speaking jibber-jabber and flim-flam."

Erbak: "I'm speaking Common."

Doomsinger: "Well, you weren't when we were finding out where we're going, cause I can't speak Draconic."

Erbak: "About twelve miles south from here?"

Tobe: "About twelve miles south of the town we're currently located in."

Doomsinger: "Well, there. Twelve mile camp."

Scraw: "Well, the doctor does raise a good point. Getting through the town while it's under attack is probably not going to be too easy."

Doomsinger: "Why don't we attack the attack? They won't expect that."

Tobe: "We need to end the attack, if that is within our power, first. I don't exactly feel great about leaving these townspeople behind to deal with this crap. They probably won't be here by the time we're finished with whatever we're doing assuming we're still alive at the end of it. "

GM: As you guys are having this conversation, Myx is brought into the room by a Tabaxi medic. It is the same medic as before. "You see.. Your friends. They are here, they are well, they are whole. Mostly. Except for him. I have done. I must go and help them. Now. Please, continue. Leave me be." And she just wanders out of the room. Oz is sitting there, kind of, happily playing with Myx's hair and he's like pulling on one of the strands.

Myx: "Hey, that hurts. Stop that, naughty bird."

Tobe: I just take him [Oz Caws]

Myx: "To be fair, he was lovely company and he only started doing that when I felt better.

GM: He was just cleaning you.

Myx: "Hello, friends. I have returned." I'm feeling much more relaxed and refreshed after the cat Thai massage which I'm still very fond of.

Tobe: I briefly fill her in on what's going on and the fact that they're currently discussing their next course of action.

GM: I will let you guys know because of the nature of the way the beginning of this game works, basically there is going to be two ways for you to heal. Obviously, you can have a standard short rest, obviously you can also have a standard long rest. If you are in the keep, it's possible for you to visit a medic. What visiting a medic will allow you to do is take a short rest, they will roll a single d8 and they will do their best to heal you or help you feel recovered. It is also possible for you to do what I'm going to refer to as a rough-shod short rest. You can take a short rest and in a period of five minutes, you can take a short rest and you can use your hit die to heal yourself as you would normally during your short rest. However, as this is a rough-shod short rest, so that you are not wasting time, as in in-game, real world time, you will have a single point of exhaustion for every rough-shod short rest you take until you have a long rest to recover.

Doomsinger: I would like to visit a Tabaxi medic to get my health up, please.

Erbak: I would like to do the same.

GM: Does anyone else need to see a doctor?

Tobe: I'm pretty sure I'm fine. I didn't take any damage at all.

GM: Myx, you know where the medics are. Do you want to take them there?

Myx: Uh, sure. They can follow me.

Erbak: I'll go with.

GM: So, you guys are following Myx. She is leading you out of the tower. You make your way through out into the courtyard. You bypass the various townsfolk and walk

through the main courtyard where you see the guards that are still guarding the doorway. You hear now a lot more activity outside of the walls. The bell of the keep is no longer ringing to tell people to come to the keep. Zilpip, are you sticking with these guys?

Zilpip: Yep! I'm gonna tag along with them.

GM: The bell in the keep is no longer ringing and you're walking past the guards that are by the door to the keep. There's a lot more commotion outside and as you are heading towards the area where the medics are, you encounter Escobert, who is the dwarf that you met previously. He is the captain of the guard. He is in discussions with a very distraught looking dwarf. All of you go ahead and roll a perception check. You guys overhear this dwarf saying to Escobert in a very panicked voice, "They.. they, she took them. She got them into the sanctuary, everybody is safe there, but I don't know how long it's going to last. Please, you've got to help. You've got to send someone."

Escobert: "Look, I'm sorry. We just don't have the men to send. We don't have enough people. Your daughter is going to have to hope that they don't get in there."

Dwarf:{Panicked} "That's not good enough! For god's sakes, there are children and families in there! You've got to send somebody to help!"

GM: Escobert looks up and he sees you guys coming towards the medics. And you see a thought passing through his eyes as he sees you.

Escobert: looks up and shouts, "You lot!" And he's specifically looking directly at you, Doomsinger, who directly behind you is Edric shadowing you. He is the guard who is a young gnome who has been assigned to keep watch over you in the keep. "Over here, you are needed."

Doomsinger: "Yes? What?"

Escobert: "This man here is.. Uh, having a problem. Mr. Falconstone, if you could elaborate."

Falconstone: "My daughter, she's the priest. She is in the sanctuary of Chauntea. And a lot of the townsfolk in the area, they ran there for safety when the attack began because the keep was far too far away. I managed to escape, but they're barricaded in and I'm just.. I'm afraid, I'm afraid that if somebody doesn't go there and help them.. They're not going to make it out. The cultist people there, they were trying to break in and please. You must help them."

GM: And Escobert turns to you all and says, "Yes, yes you must."

Doomsinger: "Oh, must we?"

Tobe: I'm kind of scowling at the guy, considering the trouble he gave us earlier.

GM: The reason you are being allowed to stay is that should you be called upon, you would answer. Cause you seem very capable and very uninjured.

Tobe: It's just his manner of speech, really, like 'You must do this!' and [noise of displeasure].

Doomsinger: Exactly, I'm in a similar boat. "Where is this sanctuary and who on earth is Chauntea and what does Chauntea do? Priest, do you know anything about Chauntea?"

Mhurren: "Unfortunately, not."

Doomsinger: "Ugh. Obviously not one of the big gods, then."

Tobe: "How would you suggest we get out of the keep without letting them into it?"

Escobert: "That is the question. We have.. The building is old." He's tapping his foot, and he's thinking cause obviously getting in and out of the keep is something that they try to keep under wraps. "There's an old delivery way - access point we used to use for times of siege. It may still be accessible but I think it's probably got a lot of stuff that needs moving. Follow me." And he starts leading you all towards the tower. When he gets through he take you down the steps into a cellar where there is a large pile of crates, and various sort of flotsam and jetsam piled up against the wall. And he sort of looks at you and says, "Ah, exit's out there."

Tobe: {sarcastically} "Amazing."

Escobert: This is going to be the most safe way to get people in and out of the keep. If you're going to be returning townsfolk, the only safe way that I can think of at this point is to get them in through here. The sanctuary is to the southwest from here. You can't miss it. You'll see it."

Tobe: "Just a suggestion, if we're leaving through here, you might want to get some people -- some guards down here in case anyone sees us leaving and especially in case people notice us coming back."

Escobert: "I will do my best to do that. We're stretched pretty thin at the moment, but I'm sure we can send someone else to the main door. Have someone keeping watch." He kind of looks around and he goes, "Ah, so you're gonna need to move those." Turns to you, Mhurren, "You look trustworthy. Here." And he gives you an iron key. "Behind those crates, there is a door. Make sure you lock it behind you. This is the only key. I have things I need to attend to. If there's anything you need, send someone to find one of the guards. They'll send word."

Mhurren: "We will. Thank you."

Zilpip: "Do we need to be stealthy when we leave this? Is there going to be people around there? Cause we don't want people to know it's an entrance, right? Otherwise we can't use it."

GM: Are you saying this in-character?

Zilpip: Uh, yes, in character.

Escobert: "As far as I know, the back of the keep is not currently being assaulted. It's on a much steeper cliff. You should find at the end of the tunnel here, it comes out by the river. It should actually be quite clear as far as I'm aware. Oh. Before you go!" And he takes something out of his armor, and he hands you two small vials, Mhurren. "Some of you look like you may need these." He handed you two simple healing potions.

Mhurren: "Ooh, what a gentleman."

Myx: "That was nice."

Tobe: Okay, so there's stuff in the way, so I'm going to start moving it out the way. So they can all get through.

Mhurren: I'll go help with the boxes.

GM: It takes you a few minutes. You manage to move a majority of the crates and barrels and you quickly clear and find that there is a large heavy looking oak door with a big iron knocker and apparent keyhole.

Mhurren: "Before we head on out, do we go find that medic? I believe some of us required healing?"

Doomsinger: "I rather got the impression that we're a bit time critical."

Mhurren: "Well, I do have some healing potions here. Captain?"

Erbak: "I'm a medic. I hope we haven't forgotten."

GM: You're the wrong kind of medic.

Mhurren: "Well, I shall be taking one of these potions. Who else might need the other?" I hold it up.

Myx: "Do we hold onto it in case something really bad happens?"

Doomsinger: "Yeah, keep it."

Mhurren: "Then we're good to go."

GM: What is the marching order here? I know that Mhurren has the key, so Mhurren then Tobe.

Myx: I'll be behind Tobe.

Doomsinger: I'm in the back.

GM: Scraw will take the lead as well with Mhurren. Is Erbak at the back?

Erbak: Erbak is at the back.

GM: What is Zilpip doing?

Zilpip: I'll take up the rear.

GM: So the three of you are marching in the back.

Erbak: I am very aware of the awkwardness of this

GM: Mhurren, you just open the door, correct?

Mhurren: Yes.

GM: You take the key and you put it in the lock. It seems that even though it fits, you have some difficulty turning it, but eventually you hear a click and the door

opens fairly easily. You find yourself moving into a long stone tunnel. It is very dark in here. This place is pretty musty. Do you just move on straight ahead?

Tobe: I do remind Mhurren to lock the door.

Mhurren: {embarrassed} "Right! Good idea." I turn back.

GM: You go back and go behind you and lock it. So you are out in a pitch black tunnel after Mhurren shuts the door and closes it behind him. What do you do?

Erbak: I'm going to grab on to the nearest person and walk with them.

Zilpip: I grab Erbak by the back of the neck.

GM: He's a giant lizardman and you're a gnome.

Zilpip: Can I hop on his back?

Erbak: No.

Zilpip: Think of this as that transformers thing where the humans climb inside the robots for some reason. Mad head robots. "I'll guide you!"

Erbak: "No. Any light?"

Zilpip: "I'll guide you."

Erbak: "Any kind of light? Anyone?"

Zilpip: "I can see in the dark, mate."

Erbak: "Well, I can't see you. Can you take my hand?"

Zilpip: I'm going to start just crawling up his back.

Myx: is there any danger of lighting a torch?

GM: Is there a danger of what?

Myx: Lighting a torch to make everyone's life a little bit easier for those that don't have darkvision?

Erbak: I'm going to try and shake off the gnome.

Doomsinger: Ignoring all of you, can I just do a little bit of a cantrip? Dancing Lights.

Zilpip: Everyone sees me halfway up the lizard's back.

GM: Well, first off, you haven't done any-- if you want to do that, you're going to have to roll a contested grapple, so you can start. Erbak, roll a grapple, which is just a strength check versus a strength check.

Zilpip: Watch out, i'm fuckin' huge mate.

Erbak: {Dramatically} No!

GM: Erbak, you are blind and suddenly you feel small gnomish hands pulling their way up your spine.

Erbak: {Angrily} "Get off me! What is this?!" I'm going to flail a lot.

Myx: I'm shaking my head at all of this. "We have better things to do, guys."

GM: Doomsinger cast Dancing Lights, so suddenly everything is illuminated. You may make an attack roll without disadvantage. So you fail to attack or throw this gnome off, however the tunnel is now lit. Mhurren, as you're at the front of the party, roll a perception check for me, please. You see in the not too far distance, two swarms of rats charging towards you. You guys can hear them at a distance. You begin to hear the scuttling of small feet and shrieking squeaks as this tunnel is lit up.

Mhurren: How far ahead are they?

GM: 70 or so feet. They are rushing towards you.

Mhurren: I shout, "We've got rats!"

Myx: How filthy looking are the rats?

GM: This is not an ordinary swarm of rats. This is a raging, foaming swarm of creatures that look rabid and there's something very sinister about this group. These don't look like particularly friendly rats and they are charging at you in two swarms. As you look at these rats, Myx, you look further down the tunnel and you

see that they are leaving behind some very old, very worn looking bones. You're all just kind of staring at them dumbstruck. Go ahead and roll initiative.

Erbak: Well, I'm very occupied.

GM: Yes, you are very occupied. Scraw; rather than attacking them, he's just going to prepare an attack for when they come in range. Mhurren, what do you do?

Mhurren: I see that Scraw is preparing. I'm going to try and shoot a dart at this one here.

GM: So, you throw one of your darts into the oncoming horde. A [squeak] but they don't seem to slow at all. They just keep charging towards you.

Erbak: Okay, I'm just trying to get this damn gnome off my back. I'm very angry and confused and probably haven't even noticed the rats.

GM: Are you resisting at this point? Are you trying to continue climbing him Zilpip or are you just going to let him remove you?

Zilpip: I see the rats, so I'm going to jump off.

GM: You spend your turn trying to flap at Zilpip, but he just dislodges himself.

Erbak: In that case, i'm just going to growl.

GM: You suddenly realize there are two swarms of rampaging rats running towards you. Doomsinger?

Doomsinger: I am going to viciously shout insults at the nearest rats. Psychic rat punching. And they're also devastatingly insulted.

GM: What exactly do you say?

Doomsinger: Well, as they're rats, they don't need to understand me, apparently. They just need to know they're insulted. "This is bloody pathetic, we've fought far more impressive things than that in the last three weeks."

GM: You catch just a glimpse of one of the rats looking really sad.

Doomsinger: To which, I'll slowly raise one middle finger at that one rat.

GM: It squeaks at it's comrades and they all suddenly bristle and get very angry. They change direction. They were sort of charging towards Mhurren after he managed to take out one of the group, but now they seem like they're heading straight diagonally towards you, Doomsinger. Myx?

Myx: I'm just going to use my crossbow and aim at the closest rat to me.

Doomsinger: {muttering} Go for the sad one. Yeah, exactly. End its sadness.

Myx: No, actually, I know that they're kind of in hell mode but is there any way of reasoning with them?

GM: How are you going to do that?

Doomsinger: Do you speak rat?

Myx: Well, no. Can I try and stop them? I don't wanna hurt them. I'm gonna try and engage with one of the rats. I'm going to try and pick it up.

GM: Where are you moving to, to do that?

Myx: Closer to the rats, I guess.

GM: You can't move close enough, cause you know, you have to be next to them to pick them up. You are not. So you're holding a grapple check. Now that you are the closest target, this swarm of rats runs over. Go ahead and roll your grapple check with disadvantage, which is going to be strength.

Myx: Oh, that's not good. Why does it have to be disadvantage?

GM: Because there is a swarm of rats at your feet trying to bite your face off.

Myx: Yeah but they came to me. **They** came to **my** face.

[All laughing]

GM: You're trying to stick your hands into a swarm of rats, to grab one of them, unsurprisingly, that doesn't work. And now the swarm of rats attacks you.

Myx: Why have you betrayed me, furry friends? Why?

Doomsinger: Come to me, animal friends. Not like that, ahh!

Myx: Yeah, that hits.

GM: Okay, so that's 2d6 because it's a swarm of rats and they are vicious.

Erbak: That's not good.

Myx: Uh oh.

GM: Luckily, you take three points of damage as you stick your hands into the swarm of rats and they bite them.

Myx: Stupid rats. Last time I trust those things.

Zilpip: Alright, I'm going to move here and throw tanglefoot in there, which covers an area of 5 by 5, a 5 foot radius, with sticky goo.

GM: You guys see Zilpip reach into his bag, pull something out, and he lobs it in Myx's direction and Myx your feet are covered in this writhing sticky goo. But the rats are also covered in it. They screech in dismay because it is icky.

Myx: I screech, too, because it's icky.

Zilpip: "Watch out!"

[All laughing]

GM: Tobe?

Tobe: Myx's whole misadventure here i've kind of, I've been facepalming like 'This isn't happening.' After watching Zilpip throw, yeah, I'm just a bit perturbed and like hey there's this area on the ground where things are like, stuck now. So, I'm going to get closer and use Eldritch Blast on this horde of rats.

GM: You try to summon up your Eldritch Blast and you cast it, but what happens is, the blast comes down and as it hits the rats, the rats disperse in that area and it just misses them completely. Despite the slowing, sticky sludge, they manage to simply move out of the way of the blast harmlessly.

Tobe: I also call over to Myx, "These aren't friendly woodland creatures! They're not your friends."

Myx: "I think I understand that now!"

GM: [Rat squeaking] The rat horde descends upon you, Myx.

Myx: That misses okay, ugh. [Sigh of relief]

GM: You see them gnawing on your boots, but they aren't causing damage. Scraw, seeing you in peril, rushes over here and he shouts at you, "Duck!"

Myx: I duck.

GM: As he whips his glaive around at a downward angle, over your head and attacks the swarm of rats on the opposite side that he saw Mhurren throwing darts at. So, as the glaive comes down into the crowd here, the rats shriek and start to disperse. Mhurren, what do you do?

Mhurren: Did you say one of the swarms scattered?

GM: They haven't run off but there are far fewer of them in the horde.

Mhurren: Do the same thing again, the dart on the one up here.

GM: You manage to take out one of the rats, but the horde does not seem particularly phased by your attack. Erbak?

Erbak: I'm going to stare down this rat here, rub my hands together and cast toll the dead on it.

GM: Your tolls fall on deaf ears. You summon your energy to Toll the Dead and you don't see the rats react in any way whatsoever. Doomsinger?

Doomsinger: I am going to raise my hand and I will chuck a firebolt at the rats I previously insulted, while singing, "Baby, you're a firebolt!"

GM: Myx?

Myx: I'm going to use my crossbow and shoot some rats.

GM: Uh, no you're not. You frustratedly look down and try and shoot the rats that are at your feet, but the crossbow bolt just bounces off the ground. Clatters away harmlessly. This swarm of rats over here attacks you.

Myx: Of course they do. Why wouldn't they? If Myx dies via rat, she's going to be very unhappy in the afterlife.

GM: You're getting extremely lucky here. You're going to take two points of damage.

Myx: Lucky. Yeah. I'm still standing but just barely. I've probably sunk to my knees at this point.

GM: Yeah, these rats are ripping into your leg and it hurts. Zilpip?

Zilpip: I'm going to throw acid on the rat swarm.

GM: You pick up, pull out a vial and you give it a whack and instead of hitting the mark, it actually hits the ground right next to it. Only a few splashes of acid from the vial actually land on any of the rats and they do react badly to it. They don't like being splashed with acid. Myx is looking extremely fucked. She is looking like she is in serious pain and she is surrounded by a swarm of rats, what is Tobe doing?

Tobe: I'm going to try, once again, to destroy the ones directly in front of me with Eldritch Blast cause there's not much I can do about Myx's health. I can't heal her, the best I can do is try and get rid of the problem.

GM: Sadly, once more you fire another Eldritch Blast at the rats and they scatter and then reform, completely unperturbed at your attempts at violence towards them. The few remaining rats now in the small swarm here try once more to attack Myx. Scraw's going to, again, try and attack the rats and does so successfully. He brings his glaive down once more and kills the remaining rats in the swarm. As this happens, the rats by Myx shriek and they start darting in different directions and instead of being a concentrated force, they scatter. Mhurren?

Mhurren: I'll go to these rats here and wail upon this rat with mace.

GM: You manage to capture a couple of the rats underneath your mace, and even though it feels like a really hefty blow, you notice that the rats that are near the mace sort of dodge to the side and you don't catch as many of them as you think.

Mhurren: Can I go for an unarmed strike?

GM: You slam your fist into one of these rats and what actually happens is your hand connects, and the rat, you feel like, as your fist connects with the rat, it's almost like the rat is kind of flowing with the movement of your fist. And so the

impact from your fist ends up being significantly less than it should have been, had the rat sort of just been standing like normal.

Erbak: Well, i've calmed down a little bit. I've seen the way that the rats react to toll the dead and I'm going to try instead with my chill touch.

Oh damn it.

GM: You try to summon a skeletal hand and you find that it passes through them and it seems to not be as substantial as is required to have any effect on real matter. And the rats simply shrug off the effects of your magic.

Tobe: We suck at magic today.

GM: Or these are magical rats. Doomsinger?

Doomsinger: I'm going to go slightly forward and go, {singing} "These rats are on fire!" and throw another firebolt at them.

GM: You summon the firebolt and you launch it forwards and the screeches as the creatures dissipating do get their fur singed.

Doomsinger: Delicately warmed.

Tobe: {laughing} We're all so bad at this.

GM: Myx?

Myx: I really want to stomp them with my feet but the idea of squishing rat guts is gross, so I'm going to try throwing daggers at them.

GM: You don't have to throw the daggers, you can just stab them because you're within five feet.

Myx: I will just stab them.

GM: You bring out your dagger {screaming} and just start stabbing rapidly at this little swarm of rats. You manage to catch one of them, but despite your repeated attacks against the swarm, the dagger doesn't do nearly as much damage as you expect. You now have rat guts on your dagger. The rat swarm is dispersing so it is not going to attack you. It is going to run it's full movement speed twice. You would get an attack of opportunity. In fact, all three of you would. Scraw rolled a natural

one. Myx, Do you wish make an attack of opportunity as these rats flee?

Myx: Yes.

GM: So you guys wail on the rats. Scraw kind of tries, but with you both so close, he really struggles to get in there with his glaive. His blade just kind of scrapes on the ground and makes an awful screeching sound. The rats run down the hall and they run into the stone and disappear into the walls.

Mhurren: Damned rats. Myx, are you okay?

Tobe: I rush over to Myx to make sure she's fine.

Myx: Fine is relative.

Mhurren: I hold out the healing potion if she wants to take it.

GM: Scraw kind of looks at you and says, "Whilst I admire your bravery friend, perhaps you should leave front lines to some of the rest of us." He gestures towards himself and Mhurren. "Whilst I hope you don't mind me saying this, but you're not exactly built for taking punishment."

Myx: I occasionally forget this.

Doomsinger: I shall turn to Erbak and say, "Uh, lizard.. There's teeth over there. I hear you're interested in such things."

Erbak: I'm ignoring Doomsinger and going straight up to the gnome and smack him upside the head, angrily.

Doomsinger: "No, no, no! Not his teeth!"

GM: Just go ahead and roll an improv attack. D4.

Erbak: A d4? it's just a quick tap!

GM: Yeah! It's a D4! If you're going to assault someone, you're gonna assault them! You said 'I angrily run over and smack the gnome.'

Erbak: Alright, Mr literal!

GM: So Zilpip, you take 4 points of damage as the giant lizardman assaults you.

Erbak: "If you do anything like that again, I will feed you to the rats myself!"

Zilpip: "Next time I will leave you in the dark. I will leave you in this cave." I want to pull out a healing draught out of my bag and I'm going to drink it.

Doomsinger: I'm going to trot over to the priest.

GM: You pull out a healing draught and you feel rejuvenated.

Zilpip: The back of my head pops back out.

GM: Oh, no, he didn't cave your skull in. He just gave you a smack, but it hurt. Myx is very heavily wounded right and has been given the only healing potion.

Myx: Bottoms up.

GM: Doomsinger, you were approaching Mhurren, was there anything you wanted to say?

Doomsinger: I was just going to check up and make light conversation while everything else is going on. Nothing particularly important.

Mhurren: "We all good here?"

Doomsinger: "Shall we carry on? I know it's charming here, but the dead rats are rather spoiling my shoes."

Myx: "Yeah, I think I'm ready to get away from the... yeah."

Doomsinger: "Lead on, priest. I'll go back to the lizard chap."

Mhurren: "His name is Erbak."

Doomsinger: "That's lovely."

Tobe: I put a hand on Myx's shoulder and I'm like, "I love you, but please don't do that again."

Myx: I sort of look a little guilty and, "I just didn't want to kill them, you know?"

Tobe: "I think they very much wanted to kill us."

Myx: "Well.. I was hoping I could persuade them and I was wrong, so in the future, I promise I will use better caution with rabid animals."

GM: Scraw turns to you and says, "You're a warlock! Can you not speak with animals?" He gestures towards Tobe who has the raven, "I assume this one can."

Tobe: "Uhh, This is a very particular case. It's just this particular bird that I can speak to."

Scraw: "Ah! So the bird speaks."

Tobe: "Uhh.. no. It's a bit more complicated than that. It's more like telepathy, but very simple telepathy."

Scraw: "Does it understand what I'm saying?"

Tobe: "Uhh.."

Mhurren: "I speak bird!" [pigeon noises]

Doomsinger: "Ca-caw, ca-caw!"

GM: Tobe, you feel mildly perturbed. That's not Tobe, that's Oz, just radiating that sensation of 'Are these guys for fucking real?'

Tobe: "Oz thinks you're all idiots, can we get going?"

GM: You just hear in your brain, "Uuuuugh."

Scraw: "Well! I think birds aren't all that smart, either. Yeah."

Tobe: I don't say it, but I'm thinking that my bird is smarter than all of you.

Scraw: {muttering} "Stupid dragons, stupid birds."

Tobe: At that muttering, my tail is flicking with slight irritation like I want to say something but I'm thinking better of it.

GM: You guys continue to make your way down the corridor?

Myx: I'm just going to stay closer to Tobe and be smarter about my decisions.

Tobe: I will be smarter about your decisions for you.

GM: You guys make your way down the stone corridor and it takes you a few minutes of walking around in the dark. You do have the light from the dim lights that Doomsinger has generated.

Doomsinger: You're welcome.

GM: Do you continue to generate those as you go down the corridor or.

Doomsinger: I'll continue to generate them. I'm bold as brass.

GM: You find your way towards a large iron gate. It appears to be driven directly into the stone.

Doomsinger: When you say iron gate, is there any light pouring through it at all?

GM: Very low light. It's a moonlit night, but there is cloud cover so it's not light out. It is very late at night but there is light to you because it is dim light, but it certainly seems lighter, yes.

Mhurren: Can I check if the gate's open?

GM: It's a heavy iron gate.

Doomsinger: Do I see any levers on the wall?

GM: Mhurren, how are you checking the gate?

Mhurren: Grab hold of the bottom.

GM: You grab hold of the bottom and you try and give it a shove, give it a pull, there's no give in at all. The gate will not move. Doomsinger looks around in the corridor, you do not see any sort of levers or any kind of mechanisms. It doesn't look like there's any chains attached to the gate in any way. It doesn't look like this is a mechanism operated door. However, you do see there is a keyhole.

Mhurren: I'm going to try the key.

GM: You try the key in the door and it seems kind of like it wants to move, but the lock is so rusted and decayed that it's not moving. I need you to roll a dexterity

check. You're very careful, and you manage to click the door open. You push the gate open and as you do so, you notice that in the area outside of the gate.. It leads towards a riverbed, however there appear to be a few cultists prowling the area at the moment. They don't appear to have noticed you just yet.

Mhurren: But they're between us and the river, and I can I see these?

GM: You can see them at the moment, yes. At the moment, you're a bit ahead of everyone else. They don't notice you, and they don't appear to have noticed the entrance right now.

Mhurren: I turn back and say, "Might have more company outside. Shall we try and sneak past them?"

Tobe: "Can you see any clear way to get past them unnoticed? It might be best if we try to keep our encounters to a minimum from here on out."

GM: Roll a perception check, if you want to go back and check? You are not particularly certain. It seems like a quite broadly open area. And it seems like there's a lot of, sort of shrub cover and the like. You didn't really see any specific pathways. That doesn't mean it can't be done, you just didn't notice anything yourself.

Erbak: "There are quite a few of them. Maybe we can take care of them as we sneak out?"

Tobe: "We'll have to be very careful. I don't want them seeing us before we attack them."

Myx: "Can we camouflage ourselves at all? I mean, I know it's nighttime, but still."

Mhurren: "If we kill the lights, we'd have a better chance."

Myx: "At this point, yes, I think killing the light would be a good idea before we move anywhere."

Zilpip: "Before we open this giant squeaky rusty gate right next to the Kobolds."

Erbak: "The gnome has a point. It is a rusty looking gate."

GM: The lock looked rusty, the gate itself isn't.

Erbak: "My vote is that we jump them all. We take them out as quickly as we can"

Myx: Is there anyway.. Is one of us small enough to get through the gate without opening it? Like through the gaps.

GM: Nope.

Myx: Oh.

Erbak: "I do have a sleep spell. I'm not convinced it could work on that many people, but sure, I have it. It's just whether I can affect all of them. The more there are the harder it is to do. We could probably knock down a few and then finish off the last ones."

Scraw: "How long does it last?"

Erbak: "Well, long enough for us to run perhaps."

Scraw: "Surely that would be making them aware that there's something here. Escobert and the guards said that this entrance was a secret. Surely we must ensure that nobody finds it. Otherwise when we return with the townsfolk it will simply be.. Sieged the same way the rest of the keep is. "

Doomsinger: "Could kill everybody."

Erbak: "There is that."

Tobe: "Please. We don't know if there's more out there than what can be seen."

Doomsinger: "Oh, we'll kill them, too."

Zilpip: "Leave no survivors!"

Tobe: "I still think we should get the jump on them, rather than you know, charging out there."

Erbak: "Are they looping?"

GM: "They are searching the area."

Erbak: "Maybe it's worth waiting for them to simply pass on by."

Scraw: "Seems a cowardly option if you ask me."

Erbak: "If you want the deaths of everyone in the keep to be on your head, then be brave."

Scraw: "If we were brave, surely we would take out these filthy ruffians."

Tobe: I give Scraw a dubious look, but I am kind of like "If we stay here and wait, they could notice the gate and come in our direction anyways, so we probably want to take them out before that. We need to make a decision. I vote that we try to leave as quietly as possible and get the jump on them, but I firmly believe we should be taking them out."

Erbak: "Can anyone lure them here in Draconic? We can speak it, we can lure them here. We can speak the language. We can convince them that we're one of them, say that we've found a gate, lure them in here. Get the jump on them."

Scraw: "Didn't somebody take one of the masks?"

Tobe: I look very uncomfortable, suddenly. "I have one of the masks."

Scraw: "Well, then, that sounds great! We could do that."

Tobe: I dig through my inventory to find the mask.

Scraw: I turn to Doomsinger and go, "You're wearing a cloak just like one of theirs, you should do it!"

Tobe: I visibly relax a bit.

Doomsinger: "I suppose a bit of acting would be quite good fun. Gets me away from you lot."

Scraw: "You'll have to change your mask in front of us!"

Doomsinger: "Pardon?"

Scraw: "You'll have to change your mask right here. No time for dilly-dallying. Quick! Change your mask!"

Doomsinger: "I can turn around and go do it in the shadows thank you very much."

Scraw: "Curses!"

Tobe: "I'd also like to point out the problem with this plan is also that he can't speak Draconic."

Erbak: "The priest can tell him what to say, the priest knows about the gods."

Tobe: I am very dubious about this plan of action.

Scraw: "Perhaps the priest could pretend to be your prisoner!"

Doomsinger: "How do you say, 'Quick, brothers! This way!' in Draconic?"

Erbak: "You could have the priest speak. Like throwing the voice. Is that what you call it?"

Mhurren: "I'd just like to point out...Screw this, I think we should just get the jump on them." And I am opening the door. I'm going to try and do it stealthily.

GM: Yeah, sure, go ahead and roll a stealth check. So, you quietly open the door.

Mhurren: Can I open it wide enough so that we can all get out single file?

GM: Yep.

Mhurren: I turn around and motion my head.

Tobe: I'd like to follow as stealthily as possible.

Myx: I'm going to follow, but as stealthily as I can to kind of avoid being seen.

Zilpip: "I suggest someone swallows the key in case we're captured. After we lock the door."

Tobe: "Let's not do that. That sounds like it's going to be more trouble later."

Doomsinger: I'm going to quickly shore into the shadows, to the side and swap me masks. I'm now wearing a dragoncult mask.

GM: I need you to make a sleight of hand check. You definitely sneakily switch your masks trying to.. It's almost like if you were looking directly at him, you put your hand on the mask, pull the mask away and the dragon mask is already underneath

it. So are you going to take the lead, then?

Doomsinger: Oh no, you go on ahead, I was just swapping masks anyway.

GM: You're now just going to wear a cultist mask?

Doomsinger: For the time being, yeah. You guys can carry on your sneaky things.

GM: So, Zilpip, you notice that as these guys are making their way out of the building, the Doomsinger puts on the cultist mask and Mhurren, are you leading? Anybody who's sneaking out make a stealth check.

Tobe: I'll say that I'm behind Mhurren.

GM: Myx, you said that you were hanging back.

Myx: Yeah.

Erbak: I think I'll be the last one out, since you said that I see the Doomsinger. So, I'm right at the end.

Zilpip: We're all in the line. Sneaky sneaky congo line.

Doomsinger: I'm just sitting there watching you go for now. I'll dim my lights, actually, as well. I'll blink it down to only one light remaining.

Mhurren: I'm going to step out of the gate. I want to move along this wall here. And then, quickly, I want to try and gauge roughly how many there are.

GM: Oh, you already know how many there are. There are two cultists and six kobolds. You guys all successfully sneak out of the gate and as you do so, you suddenly hear an almighty CLANG as Scraw's glaive hits the stonework above the gate and generates an almighty smashing noise. And you hear in Draconic, small scritch voices going, "Did you hear that? Where? Where? Quick over here!"

Myx: "Guys, get ready." I kinda wanna go back and hide. I'm going to go back and try and stay hidden.

Tobe: I am already out of the gate, so I hold my ground.

GM: Scraw charges out, embarrassed and flustered, apologizes and presses himself against a wall.

Tobe: I'm assuming there's going to be a fight regardless.

GM: Myx, where are you hiding?

Myx: Quick question, could I theoretically fit an arrow through the slots on the door?

GM: Possibly, but you'll have limited range of vision, because it's not solid but the gaps are not broad.

Doomsinger: I'm going to lean against this wall behind me picking my nails with my dagger.

GM: Everyone roll initiative.

Erbak: I'm giving Scraw a look like, 'really'?

GM: Oh, you mean with his slamming the glaive into the ceiling. Well, you guys spent a whole bunch of time talking and he spaced out and as he was sneaking, his glaive hit the ceiling. Everyone makes mistakes. Mhurren, you're up.

Mhurren: Do I see any of them where I'm at?

GM: Probably see this cultist over here. And the kobold behind him.

Mhurren: I'm going to just edge along the wall.

GM: Alright, you move along the wall.

Mhurren: I'm going to shoot a dart.

GM: You're going to try to throw a dart at someone's face from like 45 feet. The cultist there cries out in pain as you throw a dart and it hits him in the side of the neck. He grabs at it, clutching, and trying to work out where that came from. This kobold reacts to the noise and comes rushing over, looks around, and sees Scraw. Scraw is going to rush here and just attack the kobold. He cuts down the kobold with one swoop of the glaive. This Kobold sees Scraw cutting down his compatriot and whips out a sling and fires it at him. You hear Scraw growl in pain as a stone hits him in the eye. Myx, you're up.

Myx: You said that I can't shoot diagonally if I'm behind the..

GM: Yep, you can only shoot in a straight line unless you come out of the gate.

Myx: I am going to come out of the gate, and then I am going to shoot a crossbow.

GM: You notice this kobold has wings, and unfortunately the arrow doesn't hit, it just swooshes past him. He is slightly more agile than the unwinged version.

Myx: I am slightly annoyed.

GM: Zilpip?

Zilpip: I am gonna throw that stuff on the ground again. Will they be able to see me if I throw stuff out?

GM: I mean, you're not hidden. You pull out your tanglefoot bag and you whack it out there and that spreads the area. This guy rushes over here and he is actually flying now. He pulls out a dagger and braces, ready to attack. Doomsinger, what are you doing?

Doomsinger: I am going to casually lean against the rock and bardically inspire Myx as she's the nearest. I'll just have a little strum, sing, "You can do it! Yeah!" and hide my lute back in my robes again.

GM: Erbak?

Erbak: I am going to gently creep over to the edge of the gate, probably around here. Do I see anything?

GM: No. There is a big iron door in front of you.

Erbak: In which case, I am going to hold Chill Touch.

GM: For what trigger?

Erbak: An enemy.

GM: Those of you who speak Draconic hear, "Spread out! There may be more of them!" And this one flies over, over your head and it drops a rock on you, Mhurren. Eight points of damage as the large rock bludgeons you in the head, dropped by the wicked winged kobold. So you guys see this kobold drop a stone on Mhurren's head and he is really badly injured by it. Tobe?

Tobe: Yeah, I'm gonna go for that kobold and hope that shooting it won't bring it down on Mhurren's head as well.

GM: It's currently not holding anything, so it's probably going to be alright.

Tobe: I imagine a kobold landing on you is probably not pleasant. I'm going to use Eldritch Blast and hope it hits.

GM: You just blast this thing out of the sky. It gets blasted backwards and goes, [kobold death noise] and lands on the ground, dead as a doornail in front of it's compatriots.

Tobe: I'm assuming because of the wall, their compatriots don't know what happened.

GM: He rushed over there and suddenly [kobold death noise] and he goes flying backwards and lands onto the ground dead. This kobold sees the muck on the ground and is going to try and walk around it. He is going to fire a slingshot at Zilpip. Mhurren, it is your turn.

Mhurren: Right. This point here. If I stood here, will that keep me.. Will I still be..

GM: You would have half cover.

Mhurren: Can I shoot this guy from here? I'll take a shot at this guy.

GM: You throw a dart and it just dodges out of the way. The blood from the rock that hit you in the head dripping down into your eyes, obscuring your vision just makes it difficult to aim. Scraw he sees you trying to target that kobold and swings at him with his glaive. That's a natural 20. Obviously feeling guilty, he channels that into the face of this kobold because he knows this fight wouldn't even be happening if it wasn't for him. And the kobold gets split in two. Very, very dead kobold. Seeing Scraw having assaulted his comrade, he's going to shoot him with a slingshot. Myx, what are you doing?

Myx: I'm going to try the crossbow again.

GM: The winged kobold that is flying..

Myx: Yeah, that one.

GM: ..toward the group, holding a big rock. You shoot the arrow and it penetrates both wings and the creature plummets to the ground, hitting its head into the dirt where it falls unconscious. Zilpip?

Zilpip: Can you say acid time? I want to try my light crossbow on this bad boy.

GM: Yeah, so, you shoot him with your light crossbow and it takes him out. Doomsinger?

Doomsinger: Hearing noise of battle from outside, I'll casually walk forward a bit. Just in the doorway. In my casual saunter over to the doorway, I can't still see anything so I'm just going to stand there casually. Can I ready a cantrip?

GM: What's the trigger?

Doomsinger: An enemy walking in 30 feet of me.

GM: Within line of sight and 30 feet? Erbak?

Doomsinger: It'll be a firebolt.

Erbak: I'm going to move to here. Everything's kind of dead isn't it really? I've gotten this far and there's no one out there so, I'm going to view the area and prep my cantrip up? I'm going to look for anything that looks like a kobold or cultist, anything like that. I'm going to carefully give it a quick Chill Touch.

GM: Tobe?

Tobe: Yeah, I'm going to Eldritch Blast that dude.

GM: This guy was already looking extremely rough, so you blast him to the ground, and the cultist over here sees his compatriot's body fly backwards and now knows that there is something specifically on this side of the wall that is doing that. Mhurren?

Mhurren: I'm going to step here and keep chucking darts.

GM: So you drop that kobold and there is only the remaining cultist. Scraw is just going to charge and swing his glaive with force at the cultist. It's an extremely heavy hit, he is looking very rough, but he is still standing. Myx?

Myx: I'm going to move here. I'm going to keep up with the crossbow because I don't want to be hit again. Nah, let's try Eldritch Blast on the thing.

GM: Myx rushes over and blasts the cultist with an Eldritch Blast, dropping it to the ground and killing it dead.

Myx: Wee!

GM: And it's on that fatal blow which we leave you this week. New episodes are every Sunday. You can find us on iTunes as well as most android podcast providers. If you find somewhere we're not listed, drop us a message at DarkDragonsInn on twitter. And we'll do what we can. If you've left us a rating or a review, let us know where via twitter or you can e-mail us at [contact\(at\)tailsfromthedarkdragonsinn\(dot\)co\(dot\)uk](mailto:contact@tailsfromthedarkdragonsinn.co.uk) and we'll give you a shoutout in our next episode. The song at the beginning of this episode was Extravaganza by TRG Banks. The song you are now hearing is While You Are Here by Ending Satellites.