

This transcript is colour coded for ease of use. Please download the PDF.

Tobe as played by Liz

Myx as played by Nina

Mhurren as played by Vinny

Erbak as played by Tom

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

[Audio Description]

{Tone Guide/Sarcasm etc}

[music]

Ray: Hello, and welcome to Episode 13 of Tails from the Dark Dragons Inn, Caught Off Guard. It's been a hectic week and we have a lot of things in the pipeline at the moment. Follow us on Twitter for announcements about upcoming content. If you enjoy our show, check out The Talent Agency, the shadowrun anarchy podcast on iTunes, in which I also feature. There's also an upcoming charity event on April 14th run by Roll4Change. It's a Tabletop RPG Livestream and you should definitely check it out.

This week we have all the usual crew. So, without further ado, on with the show.

Host: "You're late. But, don't worry. I saved a seat. I knew you'd make it."

Timothy: "The Scales of Justice heading ever onwards towards their destiny. What awaits them as they pursue the evil cult of Tiamat? Our heroes, at the behest of Leosin Erlanthar, rush headlong into danger.

GM: The camp pretty much without incident and the journey goes by very quickly. You come to the outskirts of the camp and it is much the way you remember it, except for the fact that even from a distance, you can see there are significantly fewer tents than there were before. And, in fact, whereas Myx reported that none of the colorful tents were gone, as you guys get closer you guys see that in actual fact, the vast majority of the tents are gone.

And even from the very entrance of the area, you can see there's really not much signs of life here at the moment. I'd say it's taken you the best part of two hours, going on three.

Myx: So what time is it right now?

GM: It's 7:00 PM, because it was 4:00 PM when Darconius was attacked.

Erbak: "Hmm, they could be lying in wait."

Myx: "We should definitely go in, but maybe carefully."

Erbak: "So, Tobe, you mentioned you had an invisibility spell."

Myx: "Should we really use it now though? I mean, what if {laughs}, what if there's a more pressing time when that might be useful?"

Tobe: "Well, I believe it's-."

Scraw: Scraw kind of is like, "Why should we rely on magic? These animals can go looking for us."

Tobe: "Well, I was also going to suggest that I could send Oz over, fly over to see the situation from above."

Scraw: "Precisely. I mean, we have two of them. They can scout out the entire thing and we can sit here and wait and be bored. I think we should go in."

Myx: "I, I, I'm with Scraw on this one. I still think we should be careful, but, it seems like there's a lot less here and we can handle ourselves, right?"

Scraw: He's looking at you and nods excitedly. Like, "Yeah, let's do that."

Erbak: "It's an excellent idea. I will be behind you."

Tobe: {laughs} Tobe just sends Oz on ahead with instructions to report back what he sees.

Oz: So you send Oz off and you hear him thinking in your head. He's, "None over here. Nothing there. Nope. Nothing. Op, there's food over there. And ... Nope, nope. Focus. {hums} There really doesn't appear to be a lot out here. Uhhh, oh, there's some people over here. At the back. There's, there's some people at the back."

Tobe: "Are they near the cave?"

Oz: "They're mostly near a campfire. There's not many of them. There's more of you. Uhhh."

Tobe: "There's more of us?"

Oz: "Yeah, not many of them. Bye!" And he comes back and plants himself on your shoulder. "There's not much to see."

Tobe: "Not much?"

Oz: "I ... Lots of burned bits."

Tobe: Tobe turns to the rest of the group and relays that Oz couldn't see anything particularly of significance, because he mentioned that there was less people inside the camp than there are of the party.

Myx: "Shoot. That means ... Oh, god. It means that there's probably no progeny here anymore. Ugh. We would have lost it."

Scraw: "We don't know that! We don't know anything."

Tobe: "I think we should still investigate."

Scraw: "Maybe they're all in the cave. I think they're all in the cave. We should go in there."

Myx: "Okay, let's go to the cave, now."

{laughs}

Mhurren: "Definitely should."

Erbak: "I say we check the tents first, though. We don't want to be caught from behind."

Tobe: "Are we stealthing in there or are we just barging in there?" {laughs}

Scraw: {blustering } "Well, he said there were less then, of them then there are of us. So, we've got this, we're fine."

Myx: "stealthy barging?"

Scraw: "I'm not sure how that works. Can I take lessons? Do we have time for that?"

Myx: "Okay. I, I will teach you." {laughs}

GM: There is no such thing as stealthy barging. {laughs}

Myx: Dang it.

Mhurren: Rub a little mud on his face. He'll be fine.

{laughs}

Tobe: Oh ... [crosstalk 04:35]

GM: As he runs at them going, "Ahhhhhhh!"

{laughs}

Myx: I was kind of imagining if a ballerina had to run daintily through a camp, that would be stealthy.

GM: Naruto running.

Erbak: I'm imagining Arnold Schwarzenegger with mud on his face running like a ballerina.

GM: I'm now imagining Arnold Schwarzenegger running like Naruto {laughs} with mud on his face. So, yeah, what are you guys actually going to do now?

Myx: Go into the camp.

Tobe: Uh, Tobe is gonna stealth as he goes into the camp, because even though Oz has says there aren't many people there, there are still some tents and there could be people that Oz didn't see.

GM: So, you guys start making your way into the camp and you start heading towards tents. Scraw hangs back a bit and watches as Myx and Mhurren split off and sneak along either side of the camp, dug in walls and watches as Tobe and Erbak do this weird crouchy walk straight down the middle. And he's like, "I think I'm going to do what they're doing." He starts crouch walking behind you. Despite your best efforts, you guys manage to sneak your way towards various tents.

You can all see one another from where you are because despite how incredibly stealthy you all are, you obviously saw where each other went, and you individually make your way to various tents. The few that are remaining are mostly kobold in size. There is one slightly larger one which Mhurren is standing nearby.

Mhurren: I would like to peek inside.

{laughs}

GM: {laughs} Can you repeat that for me because it broke up and it made you sound like you were saying you'd like to pee inside.

Myx: That's what I heard.

Mhurren: {laughs} Oh! No, no, no, no, no. I'd like to -peek- inside.

GM: Okay, yeah, so you sneak over and you crack the tent door as it were and you can see that this is a makeshift barracks. There's beds of various sizes in various states of disrepair. You gather that whoever was being kept here for sleeping purposes got up and left in a hurry. There are trunks at the ends of various beds. Most of them are thrown open. Various bits and pieces. You can see that things have been grabbed and then left with. There's bits and pieces dotted around, indicating that a trail to the exit.

There doesn't appear to be anyone in this tent. It looks like it's been evacuated.

Mhurren: Hmm.

GM: What about the rest of you? What are you guys doing?

Myx: I want to go to the cave.

GM: You're creeping along the left wall. You see your various party members stop at tents and peek in. And as you get closer towards where you remember the entrance of the cave being, you near what you see is a campfire. And around this campfire there are three figures.

Myx: Shoot.

Tobe: Tobe's peeking into a couple.

GM: Mhurren, with what you've found, are you going to investigate further or are you happy to just leave it at that glance?

Mhurren: Yeah, I would like to investigate further. Maybe trying to find documents of any kind.

GM: Both of you check the various tents that you pass by. Again, mostly what you're finding is kobold in size. And mostly what you find or what you see is the

remnants of a hurried evac. You see dropped bits and pieces of food, half eaten meals. You see rifled through belongings. In one tent you actually see a completely sealed case. Tobe sees that one.

You glance into one of the small tents and there does appear to be a trunk of some sort, but it is not open and there is not a trail of belongings from it unlike with some of the others, but you don't see any signs of any people at all. Um ...

Tobe: Tobe's going to investigate the trunk, because he's nosy.

GM: Mhurren, you are going through the various trunks and bits and pieces. You don't find much of interest. You find a couple of pouches, coin pouch looking things, but you don't find much in the way of things like documents. I think you'd probably find one or two letters written in Draconic. And you look at it and you open it and at first, you know, the letter you come across, you're like, "Oh, it looks like he's writing to his family." He goes, "Dear Mom." And you're like, "Aw, isn't that nice." And it's just like, "I fucking hate you. I can't wait until Tiamat eats your face. You never believed in me, but now I'm part of something greater. Something, " and it just gets more and more ranty and rambly and the writing gets really erratic and at the end it just says, "From TIM! (exclamation mark)."

Mhurren: Endearing.

GM: So, you find a few different pouches. Most of them are made out of a really simple tan sacking. But you find one of them is an odd rust color, borderline velvet material.

Mhurren: I grab them and just head back out.

GM: So you take all three and you just leave.

Mhurren: I'll take a quick peek inside. I'll look in the rusty velvet one.

GM: You open up the rusty velvet one and you look inside and as far as you can tell it's completely empty. But when you hold it in your hand, it feels like, you know, you give it a squeeze and it feels like there's something in there. Feels like there's something soft and round in there. But when you open the bag, it's definitely empty.

Mhurren: Hmm.

GM: The other two contain four or five copper between them.

Mhurren: Yeah, I'll head back out.

GM: Tobe, you were investigating the trunk. The trunk is locked. It's very pretty, though. It's got a fine gold band around the lock and there's an ornately carved phrase that surrounds the lock in gold. It's written in Infernal around the lock and it says, "Keep your fucking hands off."

Tobe: {laughs} He just squints at it and he's tempted to try and force it open, but considering it just says, "Keep your fucking hands off," that's possibly trapped and not a good idea. I make a mental note of where it was, though. Tobe goes to join Myx at the cave.

GM: So, you guys start heading towards the cave, but while they were investigating would be when Myx was approaching this campfire. So, Myx, you are approaching a campfire surrounded by three individuals, which, from a distance, appear to vary in height between five and six foot. One of them's of quite broad build, but the rest are fairly narrow, but they're very oddly shaped. They have very broad shoulders in proportion to the rest of their body. They seem to slim down.

Myx: Using better judgement. Is there anywhere around them where I could hide? Some bushes or a tree or anything?

GM: You look around and you see that there isn't really isn't much in the way to hide by, because most of the tents in this area have been removed. However, you do see that there is a ladder propped up against the wall, running around the rim towards the cliff edge above you.

Myx: Hmm, interesting.

GM: And you see that the ladder leads up to what appears to be a watch post, which you guys never noticed were there before, but you get the impression probably were.

Myx: Going to go towards the cave, then, keep on sneaking. Stealthy, stealthy, stealthy.

GM: You start creeping towards the cave. "All right, I'm just going to get past these guys and they won't notice me." And you hear, [caws].

Myx: Oz?

GM: Much louder than Oz. It's much deeper?

Myx: A big Oz?

GM: You're just looking around like, "Where is the crow?"

{laughs}

GM: And you just hear, [caws a lot]

Myx: Is it laughing at me?

GM: [caw laughs]

{laughs}

Myx: Is Darconius with me? I assume Darconius is with me.

GM: Yeah, Darconius is with you.

Myx: "Darconius, can ... Do you know where that laughing crowing is coming from?"

Darconius: He looks at ... "Um, I think it's them."

GM: And as you look up, see where he's gesturing, the three figures around the campfire have now stood up and they are facing you and they are wearing hoods. The hoods that they're wearing are not like the cultist cloaks you've seen previously. These are more like hunting cloaks. And, you are looking into three pairs of six black orb-like eyes that are very focused on you, but they sit atop three very large, pointed beaks that are simply laughing at you trying to sneak past them.

Myx: I'm going to laugh at myself, "{forced laughter} Hi."

Kenku: The tallest one does a strange body shrug and you hear it call across. It goes, "Greetings!"

Myx: "You guys aren't with the cultists are you?"

Kenku: "[laughing caws] No."

Myx: "Oh, that makes me feel better." Myx gets up, brushes herself off, because, undoubtedly, she's gotten mud on herself. What else is new? And she approaches them, but in a, as non-threateningly as possible, because she doesn't ...

GM: You head over towards these guys and you see one of them has like a longsword slung in it to his side. The other two appear to be wielding a shortbow and a longbow between them and they don't appear to make any hostile reaction to you as you come closer.

Myx: "Uh, so, what brings you guys here? Uh, I might have been here a couple days ago. And, this place was swarming with people."

Kenku: The tallest one tilts his head at you.

Myx: Myx tilts her head back. Myx tilts her head the other way in case she did it wrong.

Kenku: They all just [caw laughs]. "Not the brightest bunch, are you?"

Myx: "Well, that's very rude."

Kenku: [caw laughs]

Myx: "What think, what makes you think you're so high and mighty?"

Kenku: Shrug shrug.

Myx: Myx shrug shrugs at them.

{laughs}

Kenku: These birds don't have eyebrows, but the area above their eyes narrows as it furrows in annoyance at you.

Myx: Uh, I'll tone it down a little bit. But, can I see if I recognize what species these ...

GM: Uh, yeah, so, just do a nature check.

Myx: {grunts} It's a one, but a three, but a one.

GM: It's still a one. You, you lived with your grandma for a long time. There's not a huge realm of experience that you have with people, but you've never, I don't think you've ever even encountered someone like this.

You may have seen them in the market from time to time, but this is very obviously a sentient being. This is not an animal. This is a person, but not someone you've encountered before, and what you've noticed, strangely, is even though you've

understood everything that they were saying, for example when they said, "Not the brightest are you?" The first part of the sentence was in common. The second part of the sentence was in Draconic.

Myx: I'm going to try and address them again. This time I'm going to sit down by the fire and ask them, "Do you guys know what happened here? I'm desperately trying to find someone I know and I thought they'd be here."

Kenku: So, in Draconic, one of the birds turns and as you sit yourself down by the fire, takes a step back and bends a wing, does a slight bow to say go ahead and in Draconic he turns and, "Spread to the four winds."

Myx: "So, they all just left?"

Kenku: He nods.

Myx: "Were you guys here when they left?"

Kenku: They nod.

Myx: "Do you know if anything happened before they all went away? Was there a big sound or? Um ..."

Kenku: "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!"

Myx: "Was the camp burning?"

Kenku: Nods, shrugs. Nods between them.

Myx: "Okay. Now ..."

Kenku: "WHERE IS HE? I don't know, he's gone. SPREAD TO THE FOUR WINDS!"

Myx: "So, someone was taken from here and then everyone else ..."

Kenku: Shrug. He tilts his head, shrugs, shakes his head.

Myx: "Do you know if there's anyone left in this camp besides your group that they know of?"

Kenku: The smallest one, "They're too close to hatching to move. You, stay with them."

Myx: "So there's still someone here."

Kenku: "Vermin."

Myx: "Perfect. Right, because that's ... That's been ..."

GM: The rest of you are making your way towards the cave and as you do so, you catch sight of Myx sitting down by a campfire with three hooded figures, jovially chatting away.

Tobe: Tobe goes over there, of course.

Erbak: I, of course, also go over."

Mhurren: Same.

Tobe: Tobe is fairly confident that if Myx is not in trouble then it's probably fine.

GM: One of them startles as you guys approach, but the other two don't seem phased even though they weren't looking at you. They were totally facing away from you.

Myx: I can see them approaching, right?

GM: Yeah.

Myx: "Oh, {stammers} don't worry. Th-these, these wonderful people are with me. They are my friends. They are my party."

Kenku: "Wonderful people are with me! Oooh! [caws]."

{laughs}

Myx: "What?"

Kenku: You notice that, "[caws]."

Erbak: Can I do do a test to see if I know what they are? Because I think Erbak may.

GM: You haven't met that many of them because they are not particularly common in lawful society but these are kenku and you do know of them, and you are essentially familiar with their ailment, shall we say. And, in fact, I believe at some

point, you probably tried to work out how to fix it, but found yourself frustrated at being unable to do so.

And, that is essentially that they do not have any power of communication outside of stringing together sentences from things they've heard. They absolutely understand what they're saying and they are doing their best to communicate what they mean, but sometimes it gets lost in translation, especially with Erbak, because they will often rely on emotional metaphor or direct quotes and without context, Erbak often struggles, probably finds communicating with them extremely frustrating.

Erbak: Sounds about right.

Myx: Myx realizes she's been incredibly rude. "Um, I meant to ask, what are your names?"

Kenku: "[caws] Mmmm!" {laughs} "[beeps]"

Myx: Can ... If I give them my quill and some ink could I get them to write their names down? So I know how to pronounce them, of course.

GM: You offer them the quill and ink and one of them takes it from you and starts scrawling on a piece of paper and he hands you back the piece of paper. To the best of your ability, it looks like what he's written is [caw]-mmm-[beeps].

Myx: "Okay, well thank you. I'm Myx, by the way. And, yeah-."

Kenku: "Myx!"

Myx: "Yes. These are my friends." And one by one, Myx introduces Erbak.

Kenku: "Erbak!"

Myx: Tobe.

Kenku: "Tobe!"

Myx: And Mhurren.

Kenku: "Mhurren."

Myx: "Um ..."

Kenku: "[caws]-mmm-[beeps]"

Myx: "Nice, people, just helped give us some intel."

Kenku: Shrugs. Shrug between them. If you've ever seen a crow do it's little shrug shuffle, that's exactly what's happening. They're just shrugging at each other and going, "[caw laughs]."

Erbak: "So, what happened here then?"

Myx: "Well, I ..."

Kenku: "SPREAD TO THE FOUR WINDS!" {laughs}

Myx: "All of the cultists left. They're not here anymore. Well ..."

Tobe: "I can see that."

Kenku: [caws]

Myx: "Sorry, almost all. There might still be some in the cave."

Kenku: The kenku are nodding backwards and forwards at one another.

Tobe: Oh, god.

Erbak: "Who are these gentlemen with?"

Myx: "Um, I think they're their own group, with the cultists, and they don't seem to be, seem to-"

Kenku: "In exchange for payment, you will provide sustenance." And one of them says this whilst waving its bow at you and just looking at you with blank, dark eyes.

Myx: "Wait, so you guys, you guys were here to get food?"

Kenku: It slumps back in its chair and just starts bashing its head backwards, just like, "Ugggh." It holds up its bow and goes, "In exchange for payment, you will provide sustenance," and it demonstratively pulls back its bow.

Erbak: "I believe they may have been paid to investigate the area or hired to do so."

Kenku: They all just shrug at each other. They're done with this.

Tobe: "That or they're asking for us to give them something to eat in exchange for informat-- ."

Kenku: [frustrated caw]

{laughs}

Erbak: Can I pull out three rations, maybe? {laughs}

Kenku: They all just start ignoring you. They just turn away and they start to rearrange themselves around the camp, Myx and you realize that they're making increasingly less room between the three of them.

Myx: What if I give them a piece of gold?

Kenku: He turns, "You require sustenance? GET OUT OF HERE. Vermin."

Myx: "{stammers}" Myx doesn't know how to respond to this situation. She was trying to understand, so bad. {laughs}

Kenku: "Get out of here!"

Myx: "Okay, okay. W-we'll go. But thank you ..."

Kenku: "Stupid vermin."

Myx: "We are not vermin!"

Kenku: [angry caw]

Myx: "Blah to you too!"

Erbak: Erbak's slinking up to the cave. "Talking to kenku is a fruitless endeavor."

{laughs}

Myx: It was kind of good. Myx thinks that someone was taken from this camp, that basically the camp left to go find him/her/it? We don't know.

Erbak: "Myx."

Myx: "Yes?"

Erbak: "What if Doomsinger burnt down this camp? And surely if they were to captured, they would make great display of vengeance. What if Doomsinger took something and managed to escape?"

Myx: "What could he have taken?"

Erbak: "Where is the progeny?"

Myx: "Cave. Unless, oh no, unless, he, no. It should be in the cave. But if he took something and it happened to be the progeny, then w-we gotta go to the cave." And Myx just starts walking towards the cave.

Erbak: Yeah, Erbak's slinking up that way.

GM: You guys all sneak up to the edges of the cave entrance. So, Tobe and Erbak, you do see that the inside of the cave is lined with torches casting a dim light across the entire area. You don't see anyone immediately inside. However, Erbak, from your vantage, you do see that there has been a recent disturbance in this area in that you get the impression that someone was here, but with a very recent interrogation outside that took place loudly between some kenku and wandering adventurers, that someone who was in here was alerted to an oncoming presence and whilst they are not able to be seen from where you currently are, you definitely get the impression there is someone nearby.

Erbak: "We're not alone going in here. Be on your guard."

GM: So, you would have said that to Scraw and Mhurren, but as Tobe and Myx are on the other side, they probably didn't hear that. You guys have seperated to either side of the cave entrance.

Erbak, looking down into the cave, you do see a number of stone columns that support the ceilings, but other than that, there doesn't appear to be anything of note, just your regular run of a mill, stone cave lined with torches in sconces.

Erbak: I am going to begin advancing slowly with Scraw and Mhurren. I'm going to try and gently beckon Tobe and Myx as well. Even though, I don't know if they can see me very well or not, but it's worth a shot.

GM: They should be able to see you fine from where you are. You guys are still currently outside in relatively light daylight.

Tobe: Seeing that Erbak is gesturing, Tobe also goes in but sticks to the side of the cave that he's on.

Myx: Myx, pouring over whether or not down the side she's already on. Nevermind, staying with Tobe. We're good.

GM: So, you get about 50 or 60 feet into the cave. Everybody roll yourselves into initiative. Erbak, you hear footsteps in the distance and you see that there are two cultists further down the cave.

Erbak: How far away are the cultists?

GM: They are very far and this guy is going to start his turn and he is going to throw a dagger at Tobe.

Tobe: Yay.

GM: That's a natural 20.

Tobe: Lovely.

Erbak: Yeah, oh fuck. Oh.

GM: So you are sneaking along the side of the tunnels as you suddenly get a dagger in the leg. It is now your turn Erbak.

Erbak: I'm going to give this fellow a quick slap upside the face with a Spectral hand.

GM: You summon up your spectral energies and you manifest a skeletal hand. I assume you're attacking the one that just threw the dagger at Tobe.

Erbak: Yeah, the first guy.

GM: You peek around the stone wall that you are hiding behind and it doesn't just pass gently through him. It manifests in front of him and launches forwards, slamming through his face, and he reels backwards as he cries out in pain and suddenly everyone is very aware of his presence, as he is loudly yelping.

And now it's this guy's go. And he's going to move behind the stone column for full cover. He is going to, and he is actually going to step out, throw a dagger at you, Erbak, and then he is going to move back into cover.

And then we're going to back to the top of the round, and dragonclaw number one going to run over here and square up with you, Erbak, and he is going to draw his scimitar. So he runs over and slashes down with his scimitar and you

nimbly dodge to one side and there's a great flashing of sparks as his blade careens down the wall.

He has a multiattack, I think I'm just going to say he's wielding two scimitars, because that's much cooler than attacking with the same one twice. So, he brings them both down. It's slash, slash and they just careen off the stone. Sparks are flying everywhere and with your limited darkvision this is actually kind of blinding, but he does not manage to land a blow on you.

Mhurren, you are seeing flying blinding sparks shooting around as this cultist is trying to stab the shit out of Erbak.

Mhurren: I'm going to make my way up to his face and I'm hitting him in the face.

GM: Hitting him in the face with the mace. You swing it at him and he manages to parry it away with one of his scimitars as, I assume, you follow up with ...

Mhurren: Unarmed strike. That was a one.

GM: You bring up your mace and as he ...

Mhurren: {laughs}

GM: He parries, you go to go in and smash him in the side of the head with your fist and he brings up the other scimitar and you pull your hand back at the last second to avoid him burying the blade deep into your fist. Erbak?

Erbak: I'm going to clap my hands together and toll the dead.

GM: So you slap your hands together to try and generate the ringing sound, and you find that the echoes in this cave throw off the auditory nature of your spell and it just doesn't quite hit home.

Tobe: Tobe is gonna cast sacred flame on the guy who threw a dagger into his leg.

GM: I think that was the one in front of Mhurren and Erbak. You, in pain, reach out, and you manifest this new spell that you've come up with and unexpectedly, the flame that manifests in your hand is a deep, dark purple and you launch it at him and it, rather than catching on anything, simply seems to scorch the skin as it impacts and he wails in agony. Screams, "Tiamat take you," as he turns.

Tobe: In Draconic, Tobe shoots, "Payback's a bitch!"

GM: He is looking very unstable as he spits this venomous curse at you.

Tobe: Tobe's having none of this.

GM: This cultist is gonna run over here and with dual scimitars is going to strike at you, Mhurren. And then the second attack is going to be against you, Erbak. As he sees his comrade being burned alive, he rushes over and drives a scimitar through your shoulder. As he swings the other round at Erbak who deftly steps back, the scimitar slamming into the wall, he rips the sword free from his shoulder and leaves a pretty solid gash.

Myx.

Myx: I'm going to move first and I am going to cast poison spray. {laughs}

GM: I assume you're attacking the one directly in front of you and the one directly in front of Mhurren who's on his last legs.

Myx: Yeah, exactly.

GM: You rush over and you see there are two cultists, both with dual scimitars, wildly swinging at Mhurren and Erbak. You can hear Tobe behind you gritting his teeth in pain and you see one of them drive his sword through Mhurren's shoulder. You raise your hand and you focus as a cool, green mist oozes from your hands and sprays over the face of the cultist directly in front of you, who begins to cough and retch until he is on the floor, unable to breathe.

Myx: Yes!

GM: And he dies really grimly.

Myx: Can I move back a bit?

GM: Yeah, that's fine.

Scraw: Scraw is gonna run over directly behind Erbak and is just gonna whip his glaive over Erbak's head, into the face of that cultist. Scraw don't like it when y'all hit his friends. So, he is gonna go ahead and ...

Tobe: Murder that bitch.

Scraw: Yeah, I mean, he's gonna try. He's gonna do his best. "FOR THE SCALES OF JUSTICE!" And he slams the blade of his glaive into the side of the cultist's face, who then cries out, clutching his head and starts to reel backwards.

GM: He is going to take the disengage action and he is gonna try running.

Mhurren: Oh.

GM: Clutching at his face, he drops one of his scimitars and starts backing away, bleeding and just waving his scimitar wildly behind him to deflect any potential oncoming blows. Mhurren, what do you do?

Mhurren: I'm going to chase right after him. I'm going to mace in the face with the mace.

GM: So you run up to him behind the stone pillar where he is trying to back away and hide and he's wildly waving his scimitar. And you bring up your mace. You're holding the mace in the shoulder, which was attacked by his sword, and you bring it down and he just, even without looking, parries it away, totally deflecting all of the momentum of your mace and it just gets brushed to one side.

Mhurren: I go for an unarmed strike.

GM: This time, you try and kick out at his knee with your foot and he just steps back out of the way, dodging your blow.
Erbak.

Erbak: I am gonna slink around the wall a little bit, just so I can get a clearer view at this fellow. I'm gonna clap my hands together again, toll the dead.

GM: Okay, so, this time you've taken into account the auditory affection of the nature of the cave. You slam your hands together and an almighty chime rings out from your hands. And as he was already clutching his head, he actually drops the other scimitar now and he's clutching his head with both hands as he cries out. "{screams}" At the peak of his scream, his cry becomes an unearthly wail, as his body loses its ability to maintain consciousness and he dies at Mhurren's feet.

Myx: Woo!

Erbak: Quickly going to scan around to see if anyone else heard that. {laughs}

GM: At a glance, you don't see anything nearby. You don't hear any stirrings. It looks like there are two exits to the corridor that you're currently in. One of them appears to be just a regular tunnel on the same level and the other one appears to be a set of stairs that leads down into a lower area, but you do not notice any movement and you don't see any particular reaction to these cultists.

Erbak: "Hmm. Need to regroup and move quickly."

Tobe: "I'm still good. I mean, I'm in pain, but I'm still good." I want to investigate the corpses to see if they have any instructions on them or if there's any information we can gain from them?

GM: So Myx wanders over to everyone who's reconvening around the corpses asking if anyone needs healing.

Erbak: "The monk may need it more, but I won't say no."

Mhurren: "Yeah," I just kind of poke my hand up a bit.

GM: Mhurren raises his arm that's partially attached. "I may need some help."

{laughs}

Mhurren: Just dripping. {laughs}

GM: He raises his arm and the blood drips backwards off his hand.

Myx: Well in that case, I would like to use healing hands on Mhurren. It's not a lot, but ... So, I want to put my hands on his shoulder and do some glowy beautifulness and hopefully mend up his arm and restore three HP.

GM: You find the wound on your shoulder closes up and you recover three health, Mhurren.

Mhurren: I kind of flinch a bit. "That's warm." Thank you.

GM: Yeah, you see Myx glowing up and you shy away from the light briefly, but you feel the light pulse through you and it feels comforting and the pain subsides. It's still not completely gone, but it's better than it was.

Myx: "Yeah. Just rest up and take it easy."

Scraw: "No time for that! Let's go kill some things!"

{laughs}

Myx: "We just did."

Tobe: Scraw's in the mood now.

{laughs}

Scraw: "And it was great!"

Myx: I don't like that sentence.

Scraw: "{singing} Let's get down to business."

GM: You search the bodies, Tobe, for any kind of information or instructions. You get the impression that this cult isn't particularly big on writing things down.

Tobe: He holds out hope, just in case someone's stupid enough to write it.

GM: But you do notice one of them is wearing an odd looking hat. Imagine a chimney sweep's cap. It's not an item of fashion you see particularly commonly and it doesn't really fit the rest of anything else he's wearing. It's super MMORPG mismatched armor. He's got the cultist mask on. He's got a cultist robe on and then he's just randomly wearing this cap.

Tobe: Hmm.

GM: That's the only thing that stands out upon his person.

Tobe: Tobe's inspecting it and I don't know if this is significant or not but it seems like he just has bad fashion, shrug and leave the hat to the side, "Yeah he just has bad taste in fashion."

GM: This is just plain, ordinary looking, completely out of place, chimney sweep cap.

{laughs}

GM: Okay, so you see Tobe just toss aside an ugly hat and you go over and you pick it up and it's a hat.

Myx: Looks kind of cool. Might not be my style, but it might come in handy at some point.

GM: It might, never know. There is an exit that is just a tunnel out of the room and there is a 10 foot drop off. To the right of this area there are broad steps that are cut out of the stone. It looks like there was a ramp here and it's just been shaped into rough steps. Looking down into this area the whole floor appears to be

carpeted with fungus. Some it's no more than a few inches tall. There are some mushrooms in there that are as tall as a fully adult half-orc. You see two paths that lead through the fungus, one on the right, and one on the left. The one on the left meets up where the wall drops off and the one on the right starts from the stairs.

Tobe: Tobe's going to investigate the one that starts from the stairs. What is going on? Clearly people have been traveling through here if there's a path.

GM: So you go down the stairs to investigate the path?

Tobe: Yeah.

GM: All right. So you sneak over to the stairs. You get to the third stair and they collapse from underneath you and they turn into the ramp that they were constructed out of. You slide down to the bottom. And granted, you know, this is only a 10 foot drop. You're not dropping down, you're sliding down.

Tobe: Tobe's having a great time. {laughs}

GM: {laughs} Yeah. You find yourself sliding down a slope of stone and you collide head first with what looks like ...

Tobe: {groans}

GM: ... a giant purple fungus and then you and you alone need to roll initiative.

Tobe: Oh no! {laughs} Bad.

Myx: {whispers} You got this.

Tobe: {still laughing}

Mhurren: You're gonna fight some mushrooms.

Tobe: Motherfucker. I'm gonna assume that Oz did the smart thing and started flying?

GM: Yeah, as the steps collapsed from underneath you, Oz flew into the air and was ... You hear a little snickering in your head. As you collide with this mushroom, small tendrils appear to stick to you

Tobe: Ugh!

GM: ... as you try to pull away from it. And then as you do so, the tendrils rip back to the mushroom-like creature and you are wracked with agony.

Tobe: Oof, fuck. {laughs}

GM: It has multiattack. The second attack missed you. The first attack was a critical. You are not having a good day {laughs}. This is the second critical against you. {laughs}

Tobe: {groans} {laughs} I am not doing well. {laughs}

GM: You guys watch as Tobe has slid down into the crevice and slammed into a giant mushroom. And it looks kind of funny up until he starts crying out in pain.

Myx: I want to save Tobe. {laughs}

GM: Tobe.

Tobe: I'm going to attack it with my sickle. Yes, I am doing a physical attack. {laughs} Probably not a great idea, but ... {laughs}

GM: Yeah. {stammers}.

Myx: {whispers} Kill it with fire.

GM: You whip out your sickle and you swing it down at the creature and it does not seem particularly phased by your attack, unsurprisingly. You whip out your sickle in reaction to this fungus attack and you don't know if it's had any effect at all. It doesn't react to your attack. The blade slices across its surface and it does appear to penetrate it and scratch it, but you're not sure really how much it's done. And you see in reaction to this, the area where your blade broke the surface, the tendrils begin to grow out of that and then they lash out at you.

These various tendrils lash out and swish at you. Erbak, you can hear Tobe's cries of pain. You probably have no idea what's going on from where you are right now.

Erbak: I'm going to pootle over as far as I can walk. Okay, now that I've walked over here, can I see anything?

GM: Right now? No. You can't. You get over there and nothing's moving. You don't see anything that's unusual.

Erbak: Hmm. I suppose I'll just ready a cantrip in case there's anything down there.

GM: What are you going to set your trigger as?

Erbak: Anything that doesn't look like Tobe used to.

GM: And Mhurren.

Mhurren: I'm going to ... So I saw him walk over. I hear something.

GM: You can get to the top of those stairs without a problem.

Tobe: Oh.

GM: You don't see anything to attack, no. Tobe is kind of just writhing in pain. You don't seem him getting attacked, no. All you see is him writhing in pain and being like, "Argh, this sucks."

{laughs}

GM: Because he didn't cry out. "Hey! There's a giant fucking mushroom attacking my face. What's going on?"

Tobe: I think he was pretty fucking stunned that there's a mushroom attacking his face right now. He's ...

{laughs}

GM: You have no idea what's wrong. You know something is wrong, but nothing is ...

Mhurren: "Tobe are you alright?" Use my action to dash then. I'm gonna try and jump down.

GM: Oh, from the wall? Okay, cool.

Mhurren: Yeah.

GM: You walk over to the edge of the cliff that's a 10 foot drop. You don't want to go down the slope so you put one hand down and hop down off the wall, and you find yourself landing in an area carpeted in fungus and various little mushrooms and algae and stuff. It's a little bit slimy but other than that, nothing stands out. You aren't attacked in any way.

Myx.

Myx: I have no idea what the hell is happening. So, I am going to move as much as I can, which ... And then, if I move again, then I'm down.

GM: You rush over to try and work out what's going on with Tobe. You jump down off the walls, next to Mhurren and Erbak, go ahead and roll your attack. So, you successfully hit the mushroom that you noticed starts moving in the distance. There's a large mushroom and it starts wandering in the direction of Myx and Mhurren. You summon your spectral energies that you were holding in the form of a skeletal hand, which then lashes out at the violet fungus which you see across the way. You lash out and the creature doesn't make any noise, but it reels and you see it flail around a bit on the spot. And you all now watch as another large mushroom starts staggering towards Tobe.

Tobe: Oh. Gah! {laughs}

Erbak: Crikey.

GM: You notice that these are moving very slowly. The staggering zombie slowness pace. Tobe, it is your turn.

Tobe: Realizing that his sickle did nothing, either because he's shit at using or...

GM: He's a tiny, puny little tiefling man. {laughs}

Tobe: Well, I wouldn't say he was tiny. {laughs} Tobe's going to disengage and get the fuck out of dodge. I think he's decided this was a bad idea {laughs} and he needs to get out of here.

GM: You pull yourself, putting your sickle to one side and half crawl your way up this slope, making it to the top and taking a moment to breathe.

Tobe: Does he know that Mhurren and Myx were down there?

GM: I think he would be pretty absorbed in his situation.

Tobe: When he gets to the top he's just like, "{sighs}". He's just like ...

GM: You turn and you look around. You're like, "Aw, f-."

Tobe: "Oh fuck. Um, guys!? Get out of there!" {laughs}

Scraw: Yeah, so these fungus just continue to shamle and Scraw goes, "NO! No! Stay there."

Tobe: Why's he shouting at the fungus and not at Tobe? {laughs}

Scraw: And he runs over to the edge of the 10 foot drop, jumps down, lands with two feet on the ground and swinging his glaive as he goes, slams it into the violet fungus that is nearest to the collapsed stairs. He swings his glaive and it doesn't do quite as much damage as he was expecting, considering he put the full weight of his body behind it, jumping down. And he feels a little bit embarrassed, but he sees that he managed to take a chunk off the fungus. "We can do this!" And he looks at Mhurren and Myx. He says, "We can take them!"

Tobe: Everyone looks at him like he's a crazy person.

Erbak: I calmly walk over to the edge.

GM: So you walk over to the area on the cliff above Myx and Mhurren and scraw.

Erbak: He's looking over at these little shambling horrors and I'm just gonna clap my hands together, focusing on it. See if it's got any ears. Call this an experiment.

GM: It wouldn't have ears, but as you slam your hands together, you remember that soundwaves are about more than what you can hear, and you feel the sensation pulsing through your hands as the energy reverberates around the cave and you do see this creature reeling in response.

Erbak: Not that much, sadly.

GM: Mhurren.

Mhurren: {laughs} I will heed Tobe's advice and book it. I'm gonna throw a dart at the one at the bottom here.

GM: So you throw a dart at the one at the bottom of the collapsed stairs that has been attacked repeatedly already. You throw a dart down the collapsed stairs at the fungus creature. As you throw the dart, it connects with the creature and it just stops moving. It still looks like a giant fungus, but it doesn't look like it is animated anymore. It doesn't look like it's moving at all.

Mhurren: And can I just shout real quick, "Get out of there!"

GM: Yeah.

Mhurren: Just down to uh ...

GM: Yeah, Myx what do you want to do?

Myx: I'm going to heed the warning of my friends and get the fudge out. What I'm going to do is, Scraw proceeds to want to fight them, can I ready my crossbow in case one of them approaches him?

GM: So, you watch as the fungus slowly, five foot at a time, shambles towards the stairwell and towards all of you. Tobe.

Tobe: Tobe's going to hold his action, 'cause he doesn't see the point in just aggravating the situation even more. I mean, they're not very fast. His opinion is that they should just move on because they probably won't catch up {laughs} but Scraw's still down there, so he's just gonna hold on to sacred flame in case any of them do manage to get ...

GM: Okay, close enough.

Tobe: Although, I imagine that Scraw is going to get closer, most probably. So, yeah, he's just going to hold on to his sacred flame until one of them's attacking Scraw.

Scraw: Okay. You notice that they're heading in Scraw's direction. But Scraw looks up at you and he's like, "Fine." As he climbs up the walls, scowling at you and he says, "They're barely even moving."

Tobe: "Then they're not a challenge for you, are they?"

{laughs}

Scraw: "Well, but what if there's something down there that we need. What if that's where the progeny are? Maybe the progeny are hiding inside some mushrooms."

Myx: Myx spits.

Tobe: "Well, if they're down there, then we'll be coming back and you can have your ..."

Scraw: {Sarcasm} "Well, look at, think about all the time we will have wasted. Won't that be fun."

Tobe: Tobe's scowling. "I'm prepared to risk it."

Scraw: As you wish.

Tobe: He doesn't look like he's in good shape . "Fuck you, Scraw." {laughs} "I'm dying."

Erbak: "They are very slow. We could pick it off before we go down next time."

Tobe: "I'm sure they'll still be there if you have to come back."

GM: As you guys move away from the cliff edge, you notice that once you get a certain distance from the things, they actually stop moving all together.

Myx: "Maybe they're just protective of their home."

Tobe: "Well, yeah. I can imagine they probably weren't too happy to have me slip down and headbutt one of them in the body."

Myx: "Territorial. Territorial they are."

Scraw: "We going this way then?" Scraw just starts walking towards the other tunnel exit from this cave entrance area.

Erbak: We've no doubt worked out what this cave was about.

Tobe: "Yeah."

Mhurren: "Let's move on."

GM: What is the marching order other than Scraw goes first? {laughs}

Tobe: Tobe's not going first. He's staying at the back. {laughs}

Myx: Myx is going to stick with Tobe, so that if something happens she can be there to defend him. {laughs}

Mhurren: I'll be right behind him.

Myx: "Where's a tabaxi when you need them?"

{laughs}

Erbak: "Well, I'm a doctor, in case you repeatedly forget?"

Tobe: Tobe's a little bit dubious, but at the same time, he's got less than half his HP, so he's just like, "Yes, please. If you can do something, that would be much appreciated."

Erbak: So, I'm going to grab one of the tabaxi medical kits and take a look at it.

GM: Tobe, Erbak has you sit down as he takes out this little pouch and he starts going through it. Go ahead and roll a D8 for me. So, you guys watch as Erbak ministers to Tobe using the kit of medicinal treatments. And it takes a minute or so, but you guys stand around.

Scraw: And Scraw taps his food, Sonic style impatient. But despite your apprehension, Tobe, you begin to feel better. Quite reasonably better, actually. Scraw says, "Look, if you can't handle the mushrooms, stay out of the kitchen. Hah. You should be more careful."

Tobe: If Tobe had pupil and irises, everyone would just see he rolled his eyes, but his eyes are literally a solid purple, so it's really hard to tell when he did. "Thanks."

Erbak: "My pleasure. Now come on before anything else comes in here and tears us apart."

Tobe: "Agreed, although I'm pretty sure there's probably plenty up ahead."

Scraw: One can hope.

Mhurren: "Hopefully this will be a safer path."

Scraw: "That seems unfortunately likely."

{laughs}

Scraw: "Come on then. Let's go this way."

Erbak: I just pat him gently on the back, "You'll get yours."

Scraw: "Damn right." Scraw turns to you, Mhurren. He says, "I'm not in the right frame of mind. Perhaps you should be leading."

Mhurren: "Who? Me?"

Scraw: "I'll just follow on and do whatever you're going to do."

Mhurren: "Sure. I'll take lead."

Tobe: Tobe is still sneaking.

Erbak: Yeah, might as well be cautious.

Mhurren: Sneaking, yep.

Myx: Sneaking.

GM: Mhurren takes the lead and Scraw hunkers down behind him as they both begin to sneak forward. Natural 20. Scraw dabs into space and turns blind.

{laughs}

GM: He dabs and blinds himself and despite all probability, that does mean no one can see him.

Tobe: Gone into some serious Hitchhiker's shit here.

{laughs}

GM: Myx and Tobe are taking up the back. Erbak did you want to roll in the middle then?

Erbak: Yeah.

GM: Okay, so you guys stealth forwards. You sneak down a long, dark tunnel. And, Mhurren, you find yourself quickly come upon a fork in the road. There literally is a y-shaped fork. So, you have a passage to the left and to the right. You can't see a lot. Standing at the corner of one fork, you briefly catch a glimpse of what appears to be a humanoid form, briefly walking past the destination of one of the tunnels. You didn't catch any detail. You can't hear or see much down there. You don't hear anything from the other room.

Mhurren: Did I see which path lay toward?

GM: Yeah, so there's a tunnel to the left and to the right. And you saw someone moving in the tunnel down and to the left.

Mhurren: I'll follow the dude down the left.

GM: Okay, so you start moving down the tunnel to the left.

Tobe: Tobe's too preoccupied with the fact that he almost died.

GM: Myx, from ahead of you, you hear casual conversation. You don't pick up any of the words, but you do hear voices. You guys continue down the corridor down the long stone tunnel towards the sound of voices. And as you get closer, you find that the corridor, once you turn the corner, leads into what appears to be a very well lit area. As you get closer, you begin to hear the sound of a lot more voices.

Myx: "Should we continue getting closer to the voices?"

Erbak: "If we can spot him; spy ahead...Don't you have a way we can peek around the corner?"

Myx: "Oh, good idea. Um, Darconius?"

Darconius: "Uh-huh?"

Myx: "How would you feel about, very quietly, if you can, just scouting ahead and see, um, see if you can find the people that are talking."

Darconius: "I can do that."

Myx: "Thank you. Just want to know what we're up against."

Darconius: "Do you want to ..."

Myx: "Um, if you could just tell us how many people were there for now."

Darconius: "I can do that..." Now you don't feel him leave your shoulder. You don't see him see your shoulder, but when you turn, he's no longer there.

Myx: {whispering} Stealthy stealthy baby.

GM: You hunker down and you wait and he's like ...

Darconius: "What am I looking for again?"

Myx: "How many people are talking together?"

Darconius: "Um, how many would be a lot of people?"

Myx: "More than five."

Darconius: "They're not all talking."

Myx: "Well, okay, how many people are sat together or standing. Which ... They don't have to be talking, but how many people or creatures are there?"

Darconius: "I don't have enough fingers for this."

Myx: "So there's a lot of them then."

Darconius: "There's a f- ...Yeah, I think so. How many is a lot?"

Myx: "More than 10, which, although ... How many fingers do you have as a pseudodragon?" {laughs}

Darconius: "I think there's a lot."

{laughs}

Myx: "Okay, so, forget about the numbers. Are they well equipped? So, do you see a lot of weapons?"

Darconius: "Uh, that guy is sleeping. And those guys are playing cards, but they have swords and those stupid masks."

Myx: "Oh, no. Can you see anything else in this room other than people? Like are, are, are they trying? Is, is there something in the room other than them?"

Darconius: "Just beds and tables and things I think."

Myx: "Is there another room beyond them? Can you tell?"

Darconius: "Um, there's another tunnel."

Myx: "Okay. Uh, you did good Darconius. You can come back now." I relay all of that information to the party. "Um, guys. I-I think, we're not in trouble, but I think trouble is up ahead."

Scraw: Scraw grins. "So, are we going this way or are we avoiding the mushrooms?"

{laughs}

Erbak: "I'll be honest, here. The mushrooms are slow enough as to pick them off quickly enough that they'll probably be the least of a threat "

Tobe: "Well, the problem is that if people are this way, then it's more likely than that what we're looking for is this way." {laughs}

Myx: "Are we prepared to fight that many people?"

Scraw: "I'm starting to feel like we should have prepared slightly better for this. I mean, I'm fine. I don't need anything. But, you're all very squishy."

Myx: "We are very squishy. I don't think we're equipped to go down this way. {laughs} I do think if we can ... I don't know if there's another way around. I don't know if it is worth going back to the mushrooms and picking them off slowly? But that seems like less of a risk than going this way right now."

Tobe: "Well, we would ... We did come to a junction. Why don't we just investigate the other tunnel first?"

Myx: "Alternative idea, other than investigating, is that we could always try and cause a distraction."

Tobe: "{disapproving groan}"

Mhurren: "How about a fire?"

{laughs}

Erbak: "Mushrooms do burn well."

Tobe: "Would they notice from here that there is a fire down there?"

Erbak: "They know it's a giant bed of mushrooms, I suppose."

Mhurren: "Might smoke them out."

Scraw: "What if, I go down there, and I get a mushroom and I pick it up and then you set it on fire and then we can throw it at them."

[music]

Myx: "How are you going to stop the mushroom from hurting you as you try to pick it up?"

Erbak: "You can just keep poking it and luring it out."

Scraw: "{I don't know noise}"

Erbak: "You could throw a rope around it and pull it out."

Myx: Okay, Myx is in favor of Tobe's idea for now of investigating the other way if we can.

Scraw: "Well, there might be a better way to make a distraction in there. Who knows? Maybe it's a room full of explody things."

Myx: "That would be ..."

Tobe: "That would be very convenient."

Erbak: "Only one way to find out."

Ray: And that's all we had time for this week. Thank you so much for your patience. Join us next time for Episode 14: What Lies in the Dark. The track that you heard at the beginning of this episode was Extravaganza by TRG Banks and the track you are now hearing is While You Are Here by Ending Satellites. Until next time, travel safe, and remember, The Scales of Justice are here for you, always.