

BEAN [mimicking Carver] Fairbank, Carver Fairbank. [clears throat] Short King here. Ready to blow off heads and torture turians. [as self] Uh, too soon. [mimicking Carver] And I'm part of the group with all the Ns, seven of 'em. [as self] I bet you didn't see that coming, but it's actually Bean. For more spot-on impressions of my teammates, stay tuned to *I Should Roll*.

VI: A podcast by the Intergalactic Improv Initiative.

KAYA: *Ride of the Valkyrie*, Episode 8: *Motia's Folly*. Featuring the voices of Hans Cummings, Ché Grové, Chase Hutchison, Hunter LaPaglia, JD Kelly, Leah Ryan, and creator Kaya Renwick.

Sometimes when we listen, we are led into places we do not expect and into adventures we do not always understand.

*I Should Roll*.

Last time on *Ride of the Valkyrie*: The crew of the *Valkyrie* got back together and went to visit Mordin at his clinic in Gozu District. The good doctor has just agreed to trade information for information and has sent them back to the Barrows to find out what is plaguing the poorest denizens of Omega.

VI: March 15, 2184, Terran Universal Coordinated Calendar. Omega Nebula, Sarabahrek System, Omega. Gozu District, Mordin's Clinic.

KACHE: We found the bodies in the Barrows, so I guess we got to go deeper into the Barrows.

GRATCH: The cave. We could go to the cave. Cave's gonna go boom. [LEAH laughs]

KACHE: Question is, do we meet up with your lady first, or do we go up there now?

BEAN: I don't know, the—she seemed really, like, patient and not in a hurry to talk to us. You know—I—Mordin, you know, is doing really good work, right? So we should probably help him first. That's the reason.

KACHE: What does she want to talk to you about? Is it important?

CARVER: Well, she didn't exactly say, but considering that she did kill three individuals who were trying to kill us, it'd be a bit courteous.

BEAN: We don't have to talk about that if you don't want to.

CARVER: Sure. To put it lightly, she got us out of a tough situation, I—I would like some answers.

JD: Oh, I really don't want to say split the party, but— [laughs] but we could. [CHASE and JD chuckle] I think it's better if we all stay together.

ZYN: You were in a tough situation while this one was imbibing ryncol at Afterlife? That seems so...wrong.

CARVER: Wait. Excuse me. You were doing what? [LEAH laughs] I thought you were in the Barrows. What were y'all doing?

HUNTER: Were y'all doing—y'all? Sorry, let me redo that. [giggles]

LEAH: Been hanging out with me too much. [giggles]

HUNTER: No, my— meta level, my southern came out a little bit. Hold on. [LEAH and JD laugh]

HUNTER: I'm just gonna restart that line, alright.

CARVER: Excuse me. What were you doing? I thought you were in the Barrows the whole time.

GRATCH: No!

KACHE: Well, we thought you were safe on the ship.

CARVER: Safe? [sputters] We left for an emergency alert. Why would you think it was safe? You were at the strip club while we were in a gunfight?

ZYN: Not the entire time.

GRATCH: Now, to be fair, Gratch had to work. [EVERYONE laughs]

ZYN: Yes, indeed. Watch this video.

HANS: And I play the playback of Gratch dancing for Aria.

HUNTER: Oh my God, *that's* the video? [laughs] Carver's just gonna glance down at the video, look back up at everybody, the helmet's going to go opaque, *vvt*, and he's just going to be just like, just, like, shaking his head. Just stern face like, "Really?" [chuckles] But then he's—

CHASE: [overlapping] Gratch is admiring.

GRATCH: [overlapping] Gratch has some moves. [JD laughs]

KAYA: As the video comes to an end, you notice that Mordin has come over and is watching as well [LEAH inhales all the air in the room], and as it finishes, he says,

MORDIN: Impressive form. [GRATCH chuckles]

BEAN: [overlapping] Better than I can do, for sure.

KAYA: [overlapping] And then returns to his work. [HUNTER and JD laugh]

GRATCH: Yeah, who's average now?

HUNTER: [laughing] "Who's average now?" Fuck. [laughs]

KAYA: And as he returns to his work, he says,

MORDIN: Would recommend practicing your communication skills. Important for groups of mercenary work.

GRATCH: What's wrong with communication skills?

BEAN: Yeah. We're, we're communicating. What, what? What do you mean?

KACHE: In all fairness, I think only a few of here—few of us here are actually trained mercenaries.

CHÉ: A few? Like one. [chuckles]

ZYN: This one gives tours of museums.

MORDIN: Ah, well, important distinction. Carry on. [LEAH chuckles]

KACHE: It's gonna take us a while to get up to the Barrows. Let's, let's, let's, let's, let's mosey.

GRATCH: We can have some more ryncol, and maybe I'll get more in my mouth this time.

TITOH: To be fair, it might only be an hour or two stop at Afterlife. I don't know how big of a dent that's going to make in our investigating in the Barrows. so I think we could probably stop at Afterlife and see what this woman has to say. Who knows? Maybe she can help us. She seemed pretty dang helpful, doesn't she, Carver?

CARVER: I say that remains to be seen, but, I mean clearly very capable, but not quite sure whose side she's on, so to speak. I wouldn't count on it.

ZYN: Bean seems uncomfortable with the thought of interacting with this woman again, perhaps waiting would be more preferable in this instance.

BEAN: If y'all want to go, we can. We just tear the bandaid off, I guess. I don't know.

ZYN: Are you injured?

KAYA: I love that Zyn knows what a bandaid is.

BEAN: Not that kind of bandaid, but thanks for the thought.

GRATCH: We could—we could flip a credit.

KACHE: I mean that's a good solution as any. My concern is for the people starving on the top floor of this place. This lady doesn't seem to have given you any reason to meet up with her just yet. Only curiosity's sake and maybe repaying a favor.

GRATCH: But I'm all out of varren meat. We could go back and get Blast-Ohs for the hungry people.

KAYA: There are markets on Omega. You guys could buy food on your way there.

GRATCH: But we don't have any money.

CHÉ: We've just been paid. [chuckles]

KACHE: I've got some money now.

ZYN: The salarian just paid us five thousand credits.

GRATCH: How many varren meats is that?

ZYN: [hurriedly] Two.

GRATCH: Oh. That won't be enough. [CHÉ and KAYA laugh]

HUNTER: Just portion-controlling Gratch. [LEAH laughs]

KACHE: Did you say we had to message that lady to meet up with them? Could we message them to meet us someplace else?

BEAN: We could try. I don't really know, but she seems like the type to, you know, try stuff on. But if that's what you guys want to do, I mean, we could— I'm not going to write that message, but I support y'all.

KACHE: That tells me everything I need to know. If you don't even want to send them a message to meet someplace else, they sound like slightly dangerous kind of folk.

BEAN: I would say that that's accurate.

TITOH: We're all dangerous folk, Kache. You're a mercenary.

KACHE: I *am* a mercenary.

GRATCH: But he's an *alive* mercenary.

KACHE: That's right. [chuckles] And there's people up there dying that shouldn't be dying. And that's more my concern than some strange lady I ain't never met.

GRATCH: If you're scared, Kache, it's okay. Gratch is strongest. Gratch will protect you.

KACHE: [long-suffering sigh] Thanks.

ZYN: This one knows Blasto would help the people in need. Therefore, this one will help the people in need.

TITOH: Okay. Why don't we go to the Barrows first? Do as much as we can ,and if we end up at a dead point, a dead end, we go back to Afterlife. At the very least, we can speak to Aria and see if she has anything else for us. And maybe we meet this mystery Rose Garden person.

GRATCH: Off to the Barrows then.

VI: The Barrows.

KAYA: You all trek back up to the Barrows, and you find, once again, the encampment, and—Carver and Bean, this is your first time seeing it. It is a very ramshackle slum arrangement of lean-to shelters made out of scraps. Campfires in small, in, like, small barrels and things like that. A general air of utter misery. These are the tunnels where people go when they literally have nothing left, and Omega is already the place where you go if you have nothing left. This is not a pleasant place to be by any means, although the denizens there do—they sort of—they perk up a little bit when they see you guys coming, because they recognize most of you. And it's not often that people come back to the Barrows. Now, I will ask if you guys made any stops on your way there, because as I mentioned, there are markets on the way, so you could pick things up if you so desired.

CHÉ: Probably do that. Pick up some food.

JD: Yeah. Can we pick up some cheap food that will keep? Like if there was the equivalent of, like—

KAYA: Yeah, for sure.

JD: —tinned goods that keep, that have a long shelf life, that kind of thing. Obviously, not tinned, because they don't have, I mean, they may not have access [chuckles] to a can opener, but yeah, that kind of like, you know, prepackaged, you know, something that's going to sustain them.

HANS: Like Blast-Ohs.

KAYA: You guys can quite easily pick up some, like varying medium- to low-quality food. I mean it's Omega. Nothing is particularly high quality. You probably pick up some—

HANS: [overlapping] Like Blast-Ohs.

KAYA: Yeah, you probably could find cast-off MREs from various races. There's Alliance, there's Hierarchy. There's, like, there's a little bit of everything. You can find whatever you want. And so basically, I will say that any of that will run you probably, like, twenty-five credits a serving.

GRATCH: Don't turians and quarians eat—they can't eat varren meat, can they?

KAYA: No, they cannot. That's correct. If you get turian or Hierarchy MREs—and yes, you can buy nutrient paste, quarian nutrient paste. You certainly can.

BEAN: Even if I could, I don't know that I would.

GRATCH: Bean has can openers on her fingers.

KAYA: That's true. Any turian does, as long as they haven't been de-taloned, or if they don't keep them sharp.

JD: Kache turns to the rest of you, says,

KACHE: How much? How much of these credits should we spend on food for these people?

GRATCH: We got five thousand.

KACHE: We have.

KAYA: Which is also the amount that you agreed to pay Cipher upfront, and I don't know if anybody actually marked down, who paid that, if anyone did, or if you just put it on Zyn's black card.

GRATCH: I thought we talked him down on that, or her down on that. [JD chuckles]

KAYA: You talked her down from, like, *thirty* grand.

JD: It did go on the museum's credit card, I believe.

CARVER: Spare no expense.

KAYA: Love it, okay.

HANS: A thousand credits would buy forty, basically forty meals, which is probably more than we can carry.

GRATCH: [elongated] No, Gratch is strong.

KAYA: I mean, they're MREs. They're in crates.

JD: Yeah.

KAYA: I mean, it's more than Zyn could carry.

KACHE: That sounds like good to me. Anybody else got any...reservations?

GRATCH: So one thousand... We have five thousand, like forty times five is, like, two thousand rations.

KAYA: I was gonna be like, "Wow, Gratch's math is strongest too." And then it was not.

CHÉ: Not—yeah, I was almost surprised. "Wait a minute. You actually a savant?" [Hans laughs]

JD: All the working is there, [CHÉ chuckles] but the result's still wrong. [JD and LEAH laughs] I get a thousand credits worth of uh, you know, dextro rations or, you know, multispecies rations.

KAYA: Mix thereof? Yeah. Okay,

JD: Yup.

KAYA: Okay, you guys, you pick up a thousand credits worth of mixed rations, including a reasonable number of dextro, either quarian nutrient paste or turian MREs, stuff like that. And so when you arrive in the Barrows, yes, people are actually a little bit interested to see you. You see the asari that, Titoh, you spoke with. She's still there with her quarian friend, and she looks up. And then those who notice that you have a crate, the mood kind of shifts to suspicion and sort of nervousness. Like, why are people—okay. Interesting that people are coming back. What are they bringing with them? That's a little bit off-putting.

GRATCH: Don't worry, everybody. The crate won't go boom. Gratch promise. Gratch honor.

KAYA: Funnily enough, this does not assuage anybody. [Hans laughs]

GRATCH: Oh.

BEAN: I wanna kind of lean over to Kache, who I assume is also the one carrying the crate.

JD: I would have probably asked Gratch to help me carry the crate. [LEAH laughs] But, yeah.

LEAH: [laughing] How much of the crate are you carrying? What is the—

JD: Oh, I'm guessing with all the rations inside, there's a reasonable box size thing, and there being a handle on either side of. Me and Gratch can kind of, like, take one handle each, and kind of jauntily waddle along with a—I'm thinking, like, wooden crate with rope handles on either side.

GRATCH: I'll race you.

BEAN: Um. Kache, is it smart to give out food if we think maybe this sickness is caused by something in food?

KACHE: Well, my thought is if they're eating this food, they ain't eatin' whatever's killing them.

BEAN: That's a good point. Okay. Yeah.

KACHE: Here.

JD: And I open up the crate and pull out like ten rations and give ten to Bean. And I pull out another ten and give it to Carver. Another ten for Titoh and another ten for—well, I go to hand them to Zyn and then go,

KACHE: Oh. Sorry.

JD: And, and gives Zyn, like, two. [chuckles]

ZYN: [affronted] This one has more than two tentacles. [Leah laughs]

JD: I give Zyn as many as their tentacles can carry. I... I'm guessing like six, and one for the gun. Like, I don't know. [chuckles] And, I go to give the rest out and say to Gratch.

KACHE: Gratch. Guard the box.

GRATCH: Gratch guard it with his life.

KAYA: Okay, I would like a group Persuasion roll of however you're going to convince these people that you are not trying to poison them. I'm presuming that will be Charm, but you can roll however you want.

GRATCH: Gratch is very good at Intimidate. [Hans chuckles]

KAYA: I... I bet he is. What are people getting?

CHÉ: I rolled a twenty-two.

HANS: [sheepishly] I rolled a two.

LEAH: [laughing] Oh no! Eleven.

JD: A nine. [chuckles]

GRATCH: No!

LEAH: You'd think literally giving away food would be easier. [laughs]

HUNTER: Nat twenty. Either a crit fail or crit success. I'm.... one or the other.

KAYA: Okay, I will double weight Carver's crit success, because that's usually how crit successes work, which means we end up with an average of seventeen. Congratulations! You mostly, thanks to Titoh and Carver's social skills, [chuckles] manage to distribute the rations reasonably well without people thinking you're trying to kill them. And you are soon treated to the crinkling of MRE wrappers, as people get their, you know, their little crackers out and things like that. You are—they're, they are—they're all eating. Do you guys want to talk to any of them? Alternatively, the fabled 'hum tunnel' is just across the cave.

JD: Can Kache explain to both Bean and Carver the, like, where the bodies were that we picked them up?

KAYA: Of course!

JD: And we point to, like, the far end of this section of the cave and where the bodies were. And there were other bodies there, which I presume are still there, correct?

KAYA: Yes, correct. Yeah. Yeah, nothing has changed since when you guys came.

KACHE: We think they came from this-a-way and there's a strange, like, hum in the air, and people don't like going down these tunnels. Which I'm guessing means they're kind of dangerous, but that seems to be the way to go.

KAYA: As I recall, you guys also heard from, particularly the asari that Titoh talked to, that the people who came back from there, they started acting a little strange. Anything electrical that they had on them, which is not, not a lot of people have electrical devices up here, but if anybody did have an omnitool or anything else, it tended to short out.

HANS: Is the hum only audible, or can we feel it as well?

KAYA: Well, that would be a Perception check.

LEAH: Question: is—does having subvocals make you more 'in-tuned' to hums?

KAYA: I would like you to choose whether you would like to roll a Perception at advantage or with a plus five.

LEAH: [excited shriek]

CHÉ: I rolled an eighteen.

LEAH: I rolled at advantage and I got a natural twenty, guys. [chuckles]

CHÉ: [elongated] Yes!

HUNTER: Let's go!

JD: Let's [elongated] go! [chuckles]

HUNTER: I got a dirty twenty.

KAYA: Okay, so Bean has a nat twenty, Carver had a dirty twenty, Titoh had an eighteen.

HANS: I got a dirty twenty.

LEAH: Filthy little twenty.

CHASE: Seven... uh, sixteen.

JD: Role-play-wise, Kache doesn't care if he's hearing it or feeling it. He's just going to go after it. So I'm not going to roll.

KAYA: Okay, sounds good.

GRATCH: Guys, I know what's in the cave. There's a Reaper Destroyer like I told you.  
[HANS laughs]

BEAN: No.

KAYA: As you are approaching the Hum Tunnel, Bean, you start feeling quite ill. You're—so the way turian ears and subvocal frequency, hearing those subvocal frequencies work, you essentially have extremely fine—like, even the cilia inside ears are extremely fine to begin with, but for turians it's even more so, and they are—they're conductive, they're extra conductive, they have metal in them. So you can hear things at extreme frequencies on the low end.

And, yeah, you—what you hear as you approach, and like, as you've been coming up here, it's not a nice place and you've probably been feeling kind of [unhappy sound] to begin with. But as you—as you get in line with this tunnel [BEAN groans], yeah, you feel sick to your stomach. The overwhelming feeling that you get is... Well, there's actually a lot of things going on. So, you hear—it's like, it's almost like down that tunnel, there is a huge crowd of people all communicating subvocally, and the primary...

What is primarily communicated through subvocals is emotion. Turians can communicate in full sentences subvocally, but from the time they're a few weeks old until the the time they die, the primary communication is emotion. And so, you are getting what, like, you would get from a stadium full of people, and none of the emotions are good. There's panic, there's anger, there's sorrow. There's all of—and they're all mushing together, and it's not loud, but it is constant. And, yeah, it's overwhelming and sickening to you, as you approach the mouth of this cavern, so that's what Bean's dealing with right now.

Zyn. Zyn, you feel, as you get close enough to this tunnel entrance... It reminds you of very deep currents in the ocean. Deep currents that are warm where it should be cold. And there is an energy that you feel drifting over and around your protoplasm on the air that... you're not used to... it's not a good feeling and it's not one that you're used to feeling in air. You've felt it in water before, and it is the feeling of... There is a huge electrical storm above the water, and that is the time when, if you are a smart hanar, you get down lower. You get away from that, the extra current.

Carver, your ears hurt even through the helmet. You also feel a little bit ill. You

don't hear anything, but it's almost like there's, like, a buzzing in your back teeth that feels very disquieting. Yeah, you feel a little bit dizzy for a second.

Titoh, you got an eighteen. You can hear this very faint hum, you think, maybe. It sort of reminds you of this—the sound that you hear if you go up to the very top of Cnidaria City, really, really close to where the electrical wires come through. Excuse me, from the turbines that are attached to the ocean elevator that will take you up to the surface.

Oh, Gratch, remind me what you got.

CHASE: Sixteen.

KAYA: Sixteen. For you, Gratch, it feels like there's sort of like this very slight rumbling in the ground, and it makes you think of times on Heshtok where there's been an earthquake, and it's not been close enough that you should actually do anything about it, but it was like a far enough ways away and big enough that you would probably be like, "There's going to be some shit over there from people who didn't make it through the earthquake, and I should go find it."

There's your info dump. What are you guys doing with it?

GRATCH: The Reaper's still there.

BEAN: Oh, it hurts. Oh, I think I'm gonna be sick.

CHÉ: I'm going to go over to Bean, and can I roll like Medicine or—because they seem like they're the worst off... I think... Or should I roll Perception for that to see?

KAYA: I think with Bean openly saying, "I think I'm going to be sick," I think you're good. And yes, you can absolutely do a Medicine or a First Aid check or whatever you wish.

CHÉ: Okay. I will do so... Twenty-four.

KAYA: You've been around the block often enough, you know the signs of nausea and sonic overwhelm in turians. It does happen every once in a while, you've... Does Titoh go to concerts? Would Titoh go to a concert?

CHÉ: Yeah.

KAYA: Okay, you've been to concerts with mosh pits.

CHÉ: Yeah, mosh! [chuckles]

KAYA: And you've seen turians who have been up in the—and having, like, the best time, and then there's like, a frequency that tweaks in the subwoofer, and they just turn this sickly shade of, like, aqua blue and are very, very soon puking their guts out. You've seen this before. It's not pleasant, and I don't... Like this, this is not a job for medigel. This would be a job for, like, the turian equivalent of ginger. So I have no idea, but with a twenty-four, I would think that you happen to have something on you that would do that.

CHÉ: Yeah, yeah, I say, let's say that I do. I can whip something out of my pack. Some concoction, witch's brew. And...

TITOH: Ah, Bean, uh... Sit down for a minute and put your head between your knees. [BEAN gasps] Just trust me.

CHÉ: And I'll get my water canteen-thing and mix together a couple of ingredients from my first aid kit. And try to make it taste good, adding some... Do turians like sugar or something like that?

KAYA: In the EOTA-verse, the turian equivalent of coffee is called *rylke*, and they salt it instead of sugaring it, so I would probably go with salt instead.

CHÉ: Ah, okay. I will put a little salt in it to just make it a little bit more palatable because it's a little bit gross, and...

BEAN: [groans] Thank you.

CHÉ: Hand it to you, Bean.

BEAN: Thank you, Titoh.

TITOH: Drink this. [BEAN groans] It'll probably make you feel better.

BEAN: If I haven't mentioned it already, I really don't like Omega.

TITOH: Don't mention it.

BEAN: Not my favorite place.

KACHE: What—what seems to be the problem?

ZYN: It is most unsettling here.

BEAN: You hear it too?

ZYN: This one can feel it. It is like the deep ocean underneath a terrible storm.

BEAN: Sounds like an ocean of screams. I can't, I can't explain it. It doesn't... sound good.

ZYN: Perhaps there is this mystical Reaper-thing that Gratch so fervently believes is in the tunnel.

GRATCH: I killed it once. I'll kill it again.

TITOH: You'll need to tell me that story sometime, Gratch.

HUNTER: So I know you said Carver, like, he can feel it even through the helmet, so I'm assuming the helmet is helping dampen at least a little bit. Would I be able to offer my helmet to Bean to see if that helps, like, dampen it out, or is that not going to fit now?

KAYA: No. Mm mm.

HUNTER: I figured, but yeah.

KAYA: Not a chance. Those mandibles, man, they get in the way. Even though—even though an AFAB turian doesn't have the fringe, that ain't gonna happen.

GRATCH: Do you want Gratch's wig to cover your ears?

BEAN: No, Gratch, but you look real pretty. I wouldn't take that from you. Thank you.

GRATCH: Thank you.

KACHE: Is it sound? Is it audio? Is it something that I'm not hearing?.

BEAN: It's—it's—it's sound. It's pain. I just... It's like... When you're a turian, if you, if you've ever been in a nursery with baby turians, there's a sound that they make, when they're crying, and when they're hungry, or when they they don't know where their parents are, and it's, it's like that sound. But it's so—there's so much of it. I don't—I've never heard anything like that.

TITOH: Wait, so you're saying it sounds... intelligent or emotional, rather than just electrical?

BEAN: Like, [sighs] tur... Like turians, we don't—before we can speak, we communicate with... I guess for you, it doesn't sound like anything, but for us it just sounds—you can hear what they're feeling. And this, it's like that, but it's, it's—it doesn't sound good, and it sounds... I can't. I can't tell you what it sounds like, cause I need to stop focusing on it or I'm really going to be sick. I'm so sorry.

TITOH: Just keep drinking the medicine.

JD: Based upon Bean's description...

KAYA: Yes.

JD: Like, and knowing...maybe knowing about turian biology, the subatomic frequencies and, like, versus audible sound, is this something that would... is it just... it's like sound waves, audio waves, or is there more to it than that? Can I figure that out? What do I need to roll [KAYA sighs thoughtfully] to figure that out?

KAYA: That's a really, really good question.

JD: I can give you the meta reason why [LEAH laughs], if that helps in terms of discerning.

KAYA: Sure, yep, that... that might, yep. Can't... can't... can't hurt.

JD: Kache is wondering if this... *if* he thinks this is purely audio that he is not hearing the frequencies of, that others are more equipped to hear, can we fight audio with audio by drowning out the sound of what is causing them discomfort by getting, like, some sheet of corrugated iron and... and... and smacking it loud, repeatedly, [LEAH laughs] like a war drum?

GRATCH: Or we could scream.

JD: Or we could scream. Yeah. Or we could sing.

LEAH: Be, like, holding, like, a tuning fork. [chuckles]

HANS: Well, along those lines, we could create a tone in our omnitools that would cancel out the sound.

LEAH: Vi, play ASMR. [EVERYONE chuckles]

HUNTER: But don't the omnitools short out?

LEAH: [elongated] Oh.

CHASE: So, if your descriptions are—right. You described something different to all of us, right?

KAYA: I did, yes.

CHASE: Okay, so that's what she's experiencing. But we're all experiencing something slightly different.

JD: But nobody else has told Kache that, so he doesn't know that.

CHASE: But Kache is experiencing something different.

JD: Kache is experiencing nothing.

KAYA: I, uh... History. Give me a History roll to see if you would... how likely you think this would be.

JD: I roll a fourteen. Do I have any skill in History? it seems unlikely, but you never know. I have nothing in History, so it be'd fourteen, flat fourteen.

KAYA: It seems like a good idea, but you're honestly not sure. So yes, it's anybody's guess. That might work. Like, the theory behind it makes sense. But yeah—and yes, I would think that Kache would probably know, based on his ninety-whatever-years in the galaxy, that turians do hear and communicate in subvocals.

JD: In that case, can Kache go over to one of the shanty houses that seems either no longer in use or not being currently used, and see if there's a piece of sheet steel or iron or something like that?

KAYA: Yeah, sure. I don't... I won't even make you...

JD: Go further away from the group.

KAYA: Sure, sure, sure, sure. Yeah.

JD: I'm gonna go the direction of the tunnel, but further away from everybody else, so that the crashing isn't going to deafen them by being right next to them.

KAYA: Okay.

JD: And sort of shout over,

KACHE: Does this help?

JD: And then with my hammer, start pounding that war drum. [CHÉ and BEAN chuckle]

KAYA: Now I get to decide what that does.

LEAH: [chuckles] I know.

JD: Would it potentially allow them to roll like a Resolve check or an Endurance or something like that to help fight against the effect?

KAYA: That's right, we have a Resolve skill! I forgot we had a Resolve skill! Thank you for reminding me. Yes, actually, yeah. So I will say, so the—Kache's banging does not *lessen* the effect for any of you, but it does pull your focus from it. And so yes, I will say that those of you who wish to, roll me... go ahead and roll Resolve, and that'll give you some idea of how much you are able to break your focus.

LEAH: I think it helped, because I have a nineteen.

BEAN: But thank you Kache.

LEAH: It puts a little smile, like, it's a weak smile, 'cause I'm not feeling great, but it puts a little smile on Bean's face for sure.

GRATCH: Gratch got a six.

HANS: I also rolled a nineteen.

KAYA: Okay, so Gratch and Titoh, it doesn't really affect you guys. It still bothers you about the same amount. But Zyn and Carver and Bean, you find yourselves much more able to at least, like, put it to the back of your mind. So you're still aware of it. Your perception of it has not changed, but your mental focus on it has shifted.

HANS: Zyn's body will subtly... The colors will kind of shift in the same concert with the hum. Like, there'll be like a little glow that kind of flickers or kind of not really keeping time, but...

KAYA: I will add to that with a little bit of extra world building and say that Zyn's bioluminescence as it sort of attunes to this hum, the colors become muted but more turbulent.

HANS: Can I perceive this about myself?

KAYA: That's a really good question. I would say that you feel like... you feel... So you remember how drinking or imbibing the ryncol felt? This gives you sort of the same feeling but almost like the inverse. So where the ryncol made everything overly sharp, focused, surreal, this is sort of... almost like the world is sort of like turning in on itself. And you become... Actually, roll me an Insight check.

HANS: Eight. [LEAH laughs] [KAYA whoops]

GRATCH: Oh boy.

LEAH: [through laughter] Oh, no.

KAYA: You actually... So, the longer this happens and the more you put this in the back of your mind, and the more you start to feel rigidity... type... a rigid type of discomfort that... It feels familiar but you can't yet place why.

ZYN: This one is reminded of the description this one's friend Martotuuni gave when Marto imbibed rancid drell hallucinogenic oils. They described it as "the enstiffening." It was most unpleasant.

KAYA: Are you guys staying outside of the tunnel, or are you going in?

KACHE: I'm going in.

TITOH: I'm with you, Kache.

GRATCH: I'm going in no matter how shaky the ground is.

LEAH: I hand what's left of the bottle to Titoh.

BEAN: Thanks, and you know, it didn't taste that bad, so whatever you did to it... Thanks.

TITOH: Crap-tons of salt.

BEAN: I quite like crap-tons of salt, it turns out. So thanks.

TITOH: Welcome.

HUNTER: I'm—I'll follow along with the group, but I'm going to stick kind of close to Bean to keep an eye on them.

LEAH: I lean over briefly and and I just go,

BEAN: Poncho! Poncho! [KAYA chuckles]

LEAH: And give him a thumbs up. [laughs]

HUNTER: Yeah, Carver's gonna turn and, [makes sound effect of helmet changing opacity] you know, the—the helmet's opaque now, and just going to wink and,

TITOH: [overlapping] Poncho gang.

HUNTER: [overlapping] Poncho! [laughs] [LEAH laughs]

KAYA: [whispers] Hunter, Hunter. Hunter, opaque means you *can't* see through it. Transparent means you can. [LEAH giggles]

HUNTER: Oh, I thought—Oh no. [LEAH chuckles]

KAYA: It's the other way around. [EVERYONE laughs]

HUNTER: I was thinking, like, the setting, like...Man...

KAYA: So if it *is* opaque, you can't see—

HUNTER: [overlapping] Apologies.

KAYA: —if it's not opaque, you can't. That's okay.

LEAH: [overlapping] I love the idea that Carver winks, thinking that we can see it fully.  
[EVERYONE laughs]

HUNTER: It's hilarious, but no, no. [EVERYONE laughs] I meant the other way. I'm just...

CHÉ: To be fair, I always mix up opaque and trans— like, I always think opaque sounds like it should mean transparent. Like, there's something in my brain that thinks... I always have to go, "Nope, nope." And, like, manually switch the meaning in my head.

KAYA: All the way around, yeah.

HUNTER: Because I was thinking, like, the... You know, when you're messing with something [CHÉ laughs] like Photoshop or whatever. When you're lowering the opacity.

CHÉ: [overlapping] Opacity.

HUNTER: The opacity. I was talking about the setting.

KAYA: [overlapping] Yes, yes.

HUNTER: That's where my mind was, but that...

CHASE: [overlapping] [elongated] Oh.

KAYA: [overlapping] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, fair enough. Okay. I would actually like to know what marching order is, please.

GRATCH: Gratch in front.

TITOH: I'm a bit behind him. I need to keep an eye on him. Make sure he doesn't explode anything.

GRATCH: No promises.

KACHE: Well, as I'm trying to bash this steel to keep the audio at bay, I guess I could go with Gratch and, like, side by side, and lead the battle drum first. [chuckles]

KAYA: Okay, so Gratch and Kache in front, Titoh's a little bit behind, and then Zyn and Bean and Carver? It's a pretty... Like, it's a wide tunnel. Y'all don't have to go single file. It's wide. I just kind of want a rough idea of what order you guys are going in.

ZYN: Yeah, I'll. I'll bring up the rear.

KAYA: Alright. So you are all... You are headed into the tunnel. It is quite large. Many of the tunnels that you went through to get here to the Barrows were smaller, winding, and... It is still laced with eezo. Do any of you have lights going as you're walking? Or just lights on your hardsuits? What are we walking by? Because there are no artificial light sources down here. This is just a natural rock pile.

CHASE: Does anyone have dark vision? Is that a thing in Mass Effect?

ZYN: [overlapping] I don't even have eyes, so I...[EVERYONE laughs]

CHÉ: So how do you see, or do you not see?

KAYA: Good question. BioWare didn't answer.

ZYN: [overlapping] It's space magic.

LEAH: [overlapping] Are they lubricated? BioWare, how do they see? [EVERYONE laughs]

CHÉ: Questions for BioWare. Let's go. [JD laughs]

KAYA: Hunter, you're being very patient. Yes?

HUNTER: I don't know if this works, because I don't... again limited Mass Effect game knowledge. Do the helmets like N7 Marines wear, do they have, like, headlamps on them, or no?

KAYA: You could probably get a model with headlights.

HUNTER: Cool. Can we retroactively say I did that? [chuckles]

KAYA: JD looks like he's got a thought, and JD's thoughts are always good to listen to.

JD: With the mercenary armor I would have on, there would be the hardsuit lights as running lights and things, so that I think that's fine, but I would think that with N7 that, like, he gets, they get like military hardware, right? And things like attachments on rifles and stuff typically would have, like, torches, I would guess. So I would think that whatever assault rifle, a rifle, shotgun, sniper rifle, whatever, would have, like, a light that you would activate next to the trigger, kind of thing.

LEAH: That tracks.

KAYA: Yeah, I also think that typically in the ME games, you usually have a flashlight. Like in most FPS shooters, you have a flashlight button. I think in Mass Effect, it sort of automatically comes on, and they don't really tell you what it's attached to. My bet? Probably it works on your omnitool.

JD: Ooh, yeah.

KAYA: Probably most folks would have a flashlight—or a torch for, you know, our lovely London friend—on their omnitool.

LEAH: [overlapping] It's like a Pip-Boy. [chuckles]

CHASE: Do we all have omnitools, or just biotic, or is that just a tech thing?

KAYA: Oh no, everybody, every—I mean, you don't *have* to have an omnitool, but pretty much everyone would. They're pretty ubiquitous, yeah.

CHÉ: It's like the cell phone of the galaxy.

KAYA: Yeah, you're not going to be able to do a whole lot without an omnitool in general. Yeah. So yeah, is anybody turning on their flashlights?

CHÉ: Yes, but to dim just enough to, like, see a few—Yeah, I don't want it to, like, alert any creepy things that would come in. Want to lay low.

KAYA: [overlapping] Sure. So you—

JD: [overlapping] I mean, I'm. I'm hammering a sheet of metal, like... [chuckles] I think we're gonna be—

CHÉ: [overlapping] [chuckles] So that's true. I did forget about that one slight...

JD: Subtlety's gone. [laughs]

CHÉ: Never mind.

KAYA: [overlapping] Yeah, I kind of think subtlety's gone.

CHÉ: [overlapping] Never mind visibility. First, let's go.

JD: Like, *bang!* I roll a Stealth check. *Bang!* [JD and CHÉ laugh]

KAYA: [overlapping] *Bang, bang, bang!* Yeah.

CHÉ: Oh my gosh.

ZYN: Did you know that the omnitool had a light function? This one has literally never used it. [KAYA chuckles]

TITOH: But you don't have eyes. I want to help you...

KAYA: [overlapping] Although I mean, Zyn, *you* light up.

CHÉ: True. You are your own torch.

ZYN: Can I light up enough to illuminate the entire tunnel?

KAYA: I feel like you might need to consume, like, the hanar equivalent of caffeine to do that, to that extent. But I feel like Zyn would make a good nightlight, at the very least.

HANS: I can start singing show tunes and flashing. [KAYA laughs]

KAYA: Oh, I love that.

CHÉ: So whenever Gratch wakes up from a nightmare. I'm going to wake up Zyn to go lie by him [HANS chuckles] as a nightlight.

LEAH: [overlapping] I need Zyn in the slumber party episode so badly.

CHÉ: [overlapping] Yeah, the slumber party episode.

GRATCH: [overlapping] Titoh, I told you it was a secret. Not supposed to tell anyone Gratch is afraid of the dark. [LEAH chuckles]

KAYA: [overlapping] Oh my God.

TITOH: Zyn won't tell anybody. It's okay.

GRATCH: You just did.

TITOH: Zyn won't tell anybody.

GRATCH: Oh, okay, alright.

TITOH: Yeah.

GRATCH: But thank you. Nightlight would be nice.

KAYA: Aw. After this charming bit of conversation, as you guys are walking down the creepy-ass tunnel, [chuckles] with your lights swishing around. Yeah, it's big. So I'm gonna say at least twice Kache's height, maybe a little more. And wide enough that you guys could probably walk four abreast. Don't know if you could do all of you in one row, but at least four. It's empty. Your lights flash off and flicker off the veins of element zero in the walls. And Kache's banging echoes down the tunnel. Do you guys talk about anything as you walk? Nothing's jumping out at you, nothing is changing. Yet.

CHÉ: I imagine the banging would be loud enough that if we did want to talk, we'd have to be quite loud about it, right?

KAYA: Yes, or you'd have to hang back, yes.

KACHE: I will say it's not constant banging, so there will be gaps in between. [CHÉ and HANS chuckle]

CHÉ: [overlapping] Okay. Moments so you can speak. I kind of just want to be doing the old, like, as you're walking, kind of moving around, so that I'm watching the sides and back.

LEAH: Charlie's angels posing?

CHÉ: [overlapping] Exactly. Well, yeah, sorry, this is just descriptive. [LEAH chuckles]

LEAH: No, I got you. I got you.

TITOH: But, yeah, I'm doing the round, so I'm kind of walking diagonal, looking back behind us and everything Just in case it's like—

LEAH: [overlapping] Checking your corners.

TITOH: [overlapping]—a horrifying monster comes up behind us as we're in this Inescapable tunnel.

KAYA: Have you drawn your weapon?

CHÉ: Yes.

KAYA: Has anybody else drawn their weapons?

CHASE: Yes. Gratch has the Claymore.

KAYA: Does Gratch ever not have a weapon drawn? I suppose when he's eating varre— no. Still—he probably still does.

CHÉ. Yeah. Stab it! [CHASE chuckles]

KAYA: Gun in one hand, meat in the other, yeah.

GRATCH: Other. No, I had meat in two hands earlier.

BEAN: Just don't mistake your gun for your meat, okay?

KAYA: Ooh. Yeah.

CHASE: Yes.

KAYA: Okay. Does anybody *not* have their weapon drawn?

HANS: No, if everybody else has their weapon drawn, I will—I will take out my Locust and have it ready.

JD: Can I roll a Perception check to look for any molds or funguses that could be something that people imbibe?

KAYA: Yes, yes you can. Yeah, of course.

JD: Yeah, that would be a five.

KAYA: As far as you can tell, there's just rocks. You don't see anything, but like the lights are, and they glitter off the eezo, so it's kind of hard—it's a little, it's a little bit kaleidoscope-y in here, so it's kind of hard to tell.

You guys continue for probably, like, about a kilometer, and so that's about two-thirds of a mile for the Americans in the room. [HANS chuckles] You walk for about fifteen minutes or so, ten-fifteen minutes, and the tunnel starts to slope down and then up, and the going becomes a little harder, just because—you're going up and—but as you continue upward, the gravity is getting a little bit less, and so it's easier to walk as well. You're approaching the edge of the asteroid, essentially. Those of you who breathe, there's less oxygen up here. We are reaching a point where the atmosphere barrier around Omega is getting thinner. Kache, you're fine. [KAYA and HANS chuckle] You have multiple redundant lungs. You're fine. Gratch, you're fine. Zyn, you're starting to feel a little bit dry. Titoh, this probably actually feels quite nice, actually. It's quite arid. Carver's probably feeling the worst, starting to feel a little bit lightheaded.

HUNTER: [overlapping] Oh, yay.

KAYA: [overlapping] Bean, too, but to a little bit lesser extent. Humans, man, what can you do? You finally—you make a hard right turn, and the tunnel gets smaller. Kache, how big is your piece of metal?

LEAH: Hey yo. [JD chuckles] How big it— [chuckles]

JD: [mock defensively] It's big enough! [EVERYONE chuckles] It's—I assumed it's part of like a lean-to.

LEAH: [overlapping] Some might say it's too big.

JD: [chuckles] It's, like, part of a lean-to or a shelter, so I guess, like, a meter by a meter. Kind of, like, a big square of corrugated is what I was thinking. So it's fairly big.

KAYA: Okay, so as you guys are coming into, the tunnel's getting a little smaller. You can maybe go like two by two and then almost single file. It's getting a little smaller, and there's more rubble. And it's not as even. When you guys came in, it was quite a large tunnel, but this is less even. I would like you to make me a Dexterity check, please.

JD: Seventeen.

KAYA: Okay. You just about catch the sheet of steel on a rock, but you manage—you miss it. It's a good thing too, because it looks like that rock had quite a bit of eezo in it. And who knows what striking a spark down here would do, if you might, because it's—you guys have probably never seen this much raw eezo in one place. Honestly, if you were miners, this place would be great. I would like you all to roll me another Perception check as we continue—Oh, yeah, go ahead, JD.

JD: Why would children find it great?

HUNTER: Knew it was coming. [chuckles]

LEAH: [sighs, groans]

JD: Minors, minors instead of—. [LEAH chuckles]

KAYA: [absolutely clueless] Did I say something unintentionally funny?

JD: Minors instead of miners, like minor young people instead of, like, pickax... never mind. [CHASE laughs]

LEAH: [overlapping] The children long for the mines. [chuckles]

KAYA: [overlapping; elongated; verbal facepalming] Oh. Oh, for God's sake. Oh.

CHASE: [overlapping] [makes rimshot sound]

KAYA: You have such a good serious face [JD laughs] that I thought you were literally asking. I'm like, "Did I say kid— Did I? What did I say?"

HANS: In the words of the late, great Alan Rickman, [adopts British accent] "Miners, not minors." [EVERYONE chuckles]

CHASE Fifteen on the Perception check.

HUNTER: Twenty-three.

HANS: Twenty-two, with a natural twenty.

KAYA: [overlapping; elongated] Oh!

BEAN: [overlapping; gasps] Nice.

CHASE: [overlapping; elongated] Ooh.

CHÉ: Noice.

LEAH: Ten.

JD: [sheepishly] Five. [EVERYONE laughs]

KAYA: Oh, no.

HUNTER: Twenty-three for me.

BEAN: Wow, you just had to one-up Hans. [EVERYONE chuckles]

KAYA: That's fine. Hans still got the nat twenty, and I will always honor a nat twenty. So, Zyn, you actually feel—you feel as though you've been shocked slightly. But everybody except Kache becomes aware, as you come into these smaller tunnels, that that hum is definitely audible now. With it, there's a little bit of a resurgence of the discomfort that you initially felt, but Kache is still banging away on his war drum, so it doesn't bother you guys yet. But yeah, Zyn, you in particular, you feel like you touched a sea urchin and got zapped.

ZYN: This... is a most unsettling feeling. It is...it feels electric.

GRATCH: Oh, let me touch it.

ZYN: It is in the air.

GRATCH: Gratch sticks his tongue out. [elongated] Blah.

KAYA: You taste ozone.

GRATCH: Yuck.

KAYA: I'm not sure if that's a taste that Gratch would recognize, but it's sort of tingly. Tingly like the walls are sparkly. Everything here is sparkly.

GRATCH: Gratch's tongue is sparkly. What is this place?

JD: [hoarsely] Why is it spicy?

CHÉ: [hoarsely] Why is it spicy? [LEAH laughs]

HUNTER: [hoarsely] Why is it spicy? [EVERYONE laughs]

ZYN: It feels like the time this one accidentally lubricated a light socket. [JD laughs]

HUNTER: Pardon me? [LEAH laughs]

GRATCH: Gratch would pay good money to see that.

KAYA: Bean, what did you roll?

LEAH: I have a ten.

KAYA: Carver, you had a twenty-three, correct?

HUNTER: Correct.

KAYA: Okay. Hey, I'm DMing you something.

LEAH: Was I supposed to roll at advantage again?

KAYA: Oh yeah, actually you should.

LEAH: Okay.

KAYA: I'm still gonna DM Carver something. But yes, you should roll it. Advantage cause you have the subvocal—

LEAH: Then it is a twenty-one.

KAYA: Okay, I'm going to DM both of you something. I'm going to do it on my phone. Hang on. [LEAH laughs]

LEAH: Secret, secret.

CHÉ: [whispers] Secret-y secrets.

JD: I'm kind of wondering, I'm wondering if we—well, I say if. *When* we get into combat, if I can hammer this piece of corrugated sheeting into the ground to give us a waist-high cover.

KAYA: Ha!

JD: [chuckles] It's not exactly the deployable shield, but [chuckles] it's something.

CHÉ: I can tell it's going to be good based on the length of the text. [CHASE chuckles] Something's brewing. [chuckles]

CHASE: No, she's still searching to find them. [HANS and LEAH chuckle]

HUNTER: No.

JD: Kaya's just sending them memes at this point. There's no real information, just memes. [EVERYONE laughs]

CHÉ: What if you could have an entire conversation only with memes,

KAYA: [overlapping] I love you guys.

CHÉ: [overlapping] Like no words, just memes. Be a good challenge, a good challenge.

KAYA: [overlapping] Oh, sure you can.

HUNTER: [overlapping] Oh, yeah.

KAYA: Okay.

LEAH: [elongated] Oh no. [laughs; elongated] Oh. Oh, okay. Hey.

KAYA: Okay. It is up to Carver and Bean what they want to do with that. [Hunter gasps a laugh]

HUNTER: [through laughter] Bean, I'll let you go first.

JD: Don't leave us hanging.

BEAN: [oh God] I can hear it. I, um, I can hear it and, um, whatever it is, it's, it's hungry. I— it's, it's, it's starving.

CARVER: [concerned] Is no one else hearing this?

ZYN: This one feels something.

KACHE: [puzzled] Whatever's creating this sound is a single thing, and it's hungry?

CARVER: [utter dread] I—I don't know what it is, but I am hearing a voice in my head.

BEAN: What's it saying?

CARVER: "We...We will consume you."

GRATCH: [determined] No, they won't. It's the Reaper. It's the Reaper. We're gonna kill him. We're gonna kill him. He's gonna stay dead this time. [growls]

CHASE: Gratch starts trotting off forward.

BEAN: Gratch, I don't—

JD: Kache goes with him.

GRATCH: Don't worry. Gratch'll save you!

KAYA: Kache is going with, okay. What are the rest of you doing?

HANS: I will follow after Gratch.

ZYN: This one thinks that is a bad idea, Gratch. Return, return!

LEAH: Um, can I take out—can I, can I look at my omnitool and see, just,

BEAN: Vi, Vi, can you read—are there any levels of, like, anything bad?

KAYA: I would like you to roll me Investigation please. And then I would also like you to roll me a straight d20 Luck check

LEAH: Okay, Investigation first. I have a fifteen.

KAYA: Okay.

LEAH: And then for my Luck check, it's an eight.

KAYA: Okay, you get several seconds of very high electromagnetic readings, and then your omnitool shorts out and your light goes out.

BEAN: Vi? Guys, I think—I think that thing that they said was going to happen is happening.

CHÉ: Um, I don't quite know what the check is gonna be for this, but is there any way to, like, perceive if it's kind of being channeled through the electric things that are on our bodies? Like,

KAYA: Um, I—

CHÉ: Like, as in, you're wearing metal, you're wearing metal into a bathtub, and there's an electric storm happening, and now you, you know, now you're dying. Like, I want to see if we should, I want to see if we need to remove our electronics to not die.

KAYA: Roll me Insight.

LEAH: Goddammit, the one time I wear armor. [laughs]

JD: Can I grab Gratch by the back of their armor?

KAYA: That's up to Gratch.

JD: And just and say like,

KACHE: Hold up just a second.

JD: Hearing...

CHASE: You better make a Strength check. [EVERYONE laughs]

JD: Yeah, I'm guessing it would be a contested Strength check.

LEAH: Let's go.

JD: I'm hoping that—

LEAH: [overlapping] Fight, fight.

JD: —that he won't notice, and then he'll just just tread in the dirt and wonder why he's not moving forward as I'm holding onto him. [HANS, KAYA, AND LEAH laugh]

CHASE: I'll Strength check at disadvantage. Because of the surprise.

JD: If you would like.

CHASE: I don't know.

JD: [overlapping] [gasps] Nat twenty.

LEAH: [overlapping] Ooh!

CHÉ: [overlapping] Yay! [EVERYONE laughs]

CHASE: I rolled a four for a seven total. [EVERYONE laughs]

JD: [laughs] What a waste of a nat twenty.

HUNTER: [overlapping] What is up with that happening?

LEAH: [overlapping] He just suplexes him.

KAYA: [overlapping] Oh, that's funny.

HUNTER: [overlapping] The same thing happened with beating Carver. Nat twenty on the Strength check.

CHASE: Do I even notice? 'Cause, Gratch is, like, just trotting along,

GRATCH: Gonna get the Reaper. Gonna get the Reaper. [EVERYONE laughs]]

CHASE: Yeah, I can just picture, yeah, Kache holding me up by the scruff of my armor, just walking.

GRATCH: Reaper, Reaper, Reaper...

KAYA: Does Gratch wear armor on his feet?

CHASE: Need to look at the picture. [EVERYONE giggles]

HUNTER: I don't think so in the picture. If I remember right.

KAYA: [overlapping] Okay.

CHASE: I don't think so.

KAYA: Okay. Alright.

CHASE: Yeah, I don't think so. Yeah, no.

KAYA: Okay, Titoh, what did you roll for your Insight check?

CHÉ: My Insight was seven.

KAYA: Oh, you really don't know whether that would help. I mean it seems like it m—question mark? It *might* help? You really aren't sure.

CHÉ: Okay, but I've kind of deduced that something might be happening, so would it make sense for me to—

KAYA: Something's happening. Oh, something's happening.

CHÉ: Well, yeah, but would it make sense given that roll for me to say, "Get your electronics off," or is that kind of meta?

KAYA: [overlapping] I mean, is that sure—you have no idea whether it will *work*. But it seems like a sensible, logical course of action.

CHÉ: Okay.

KAYA: Yes, Chase?

CHASE: Sorry, Gratch does wear armor on his feet.

KAYA: Okay. Okay, [CHÉ groans] that's fine. Okay.

CHÉ: Is it metal?

CHASE: Yes, it's very metal.

CHÉ: Oh.

KAYA: Okay, Kache, how high off the ground are you holding Gratch? [CHÉ and CHASE laugh]

JD: I wasn't gonna... I wasn't, like, picking him up. I'm just holding him.

KAYA: Okay.

JD: Because the only purpose is to stop forward movement, because the others have kind of, like, held up, and now they're talking and doing stuff, and it's like, "are we going? Are we staying?" But I don't want us to get too far ahead. We're a bit ahead already because, you know, Gratch was just storming off, and then Bean and Titoh now are in a conversation. So it's like, I'm guessing we've gotten, like, maybe fifteen feet away at this point-ish. I mean, that's at your discretion. So I'm kind of, like, just stopping us from getting any further separated from the party at this point.

CHASE: If I'm up off the ground, I don't notice and keep walking. If I'm still on the ground, then I definitely notice and will react differently.

JD: In that case, let's say I picked you up off the ground. Yeah, and it's, it—

CHASE: Okay. [chuckles] Alright. Oblivious. Oblivious. I think we're still going.

JD: It's like—

CHASE: Okay. [chuckles]

JD: Like half, half a foot off the ground. Like barely off.

KAYA: [overlapping] Sure, okay, okay.

JD: Yeah. The purpose is not to— because he'd notice the height change as well as my finger so...

CHÉ: I'm just loving the vision of Kache just nonchalantly, like, holding on to Gratch. He doesn't even notice. And, like, Kache is chatting to Titoh casually. [CHÉ and CHASE chuckle] No effort involved.

KAYA: Okay. Are you guys continuing any conversation?

CHÉ: Yeah, I'd like to to say to Kache,

TITOH: Hey. You know, this seems very electrical, and we're wearing a lot of conductive materials. Do you think it might be wise for us to remove as much as we can as in Gratch's metal boots, and all of our electronic devices?

KACHE: I guess. It ain't really my area, but I guess that'd make it safer for sure.

CHÉ: Who—do I know if anyone else in the group has—I know that Bean has Repair abilities, but isn't so great at Hacking. [LEAH laughs] Do I know if anyone else has any sort of, like, electrical understanding of how electronics work?

KAYA: Well, I believe Zyn has mentioned that they were an engineer.

CHÉ: Yes! I—

TITOH: Zynamondan, do you think [chuckles] it is possible that our electronics might be conducting this energy through our bodies? Do you think it's possible we should play it safe and remove these?

HANS: I do have quite a high skill in Repair. Would that be a helpful roll?

KAYA: If that's the knowledge base that you were using to consider this, then I would allow you to roll that. Sure.

HANS: Okay.

BEAN: Hell yeah. Let's go. Zyn. Let's go, Zyn.

HANS: Can I use Effort on those roles?

KAYA: Sure.

CHÉ: [overlapping] Yeah. [LEAH laughs]

KAYA: You can use Effort on whatever rolls you want. You can use them any time.

HANS: Okay. And will let me reroll it or roll with advantage?

KAYA: So I've been playing this as in: using an Effort when I am not offering it to you will allow you to basically gain Inspiration on the roll, and therefore, you can use it to do pretty much whatever you want. You could choose to give yourself advantage. You could choose to add yourself a bonus of plus two. You could choose to... I mean, re-rolling would essentially be giving yourself advantage, but yes.

HANS: Yeah. Okay. Then I will give myself advantage. Let's see. So [sighs] it's even worse. [LEAH chuckles] Okay, so then that would be a total of sixteen.

LEAH: That's pretty good.

KAYA: It makes sense, you know, in theory, the fewer conductive things you have on you, the less conductive you are. Yeah, I'll just—I'll leave it at that.

ZYN: It seems like a sensible precaution. However, this one cannot expel this one's implants.

TITOH: That is a problem.

CHÉ: Well, I'm going to remove as much as I can.

KAYA: Gratch, I'd like you to make a Dexterity saving throw.

CHASE: With double advantage?

KAYA: Unfortunately, no [chuckles]

LEAH: Oh no. [chuckles]

CHASE: [groans] Nine? Nine. Nine?

KAYA: Your boot scrapes the ground. Just that...the DC was ten.

JD: [overlapping] Oh, no!

LEAH: [overlapping; elongated] No!

CHÉ: [overlapping; gasps] Oh, no!

KAYA: Your boot scrapes the ground. Just one. Your big toe scrapes, and there's just a couple of—there's a little bit of a spark. And this is full of raw eezo. And that's just enough that all of the static you've been feeling in the air... I would like all of you to make Wisdom saving throws, please.

LEAH: [overlapping] Oh my god.

JD: [overlapping; elongated] Oh no.

CHÉ: [overlapping; chuckles]

LEAH: [overlapping; elongated] Oh. [shudders and chuckles]

CHÉ: I knew it!

CHASE: Seven.

CHÉ: Ooh! It's natty twenty.

KAYA: Okay, nice.

HUNTER: Nineteen.

KAYA: Okay.

LEAH: Oh!

CHÉ: Titoh is wisest. [HANS chuckles] [EVERYONE laughs]

LEAH: Ché, Ché, you and me, we're so dirty, we're so dirty. [laughs]

CHÉ: Dirty? [laughs]

KAYA: So, Bean, did you get a nat twenty, or, okay, so I got a seven for Gratch.

CHASE: [overlapping] Seven for me.

LEAH: It's dirty, it's filthy, it's in the garbage, but we're digging it out.

KAYA: Okay, a dirty twenty for Bean. I need Zyn. Okay, Zyn's an eleven.

JD: Thirteen.

KAYA: Okay. Gratch, your mind is very, very suddenly full of static. It's like you've been, you've been, it's the loudest sound you can imagine and it's angry. [GRATCH screams] And it blocks everything else out. [BEAN groans]

Zyn, it feels as though you've been tossed into rapids. The air around you is sparking and fizzling, and the sensations going through your mind and protoplasm are terrifying.

Kache, suddenly you feel like you understand what everybody else was talking

about. The sensation that runs through you is like the rumble underground of a really, really big thresher maw [BEAN gasps] that is, like, about to come out of the ground at your feet, and you hear that screech in the back of your mind, and she's angry.

JD: Do I need to roll to keep a hold of Gratch or?

KAYA: Yes, I would say that you do. Yeah.

JD: Resolve?

KAYA: Resolve, yeah.

JD: Twelve.

KAYA: You barely keep a hold of him. And I think it's mostly that you just, you're, you're suddenly shaken, and so you don't drop, you clench instead. I think this is what happens there.

Carver, there are so many voices now, and they are angry and scared, and they are coming for you and they want you.

HUNTER: What the fuck? [KAYA and LEAH laugh] [squeaks] Okay.

KAYA: Bean, as Kache has stopped hitting the steel, all of the noise and all of the emotions are coming back. You are still yourself. You can, you are still in control of yourself, but you can now, the nausea twists a little in your gut and you—yeah, it's like, it's screaming but now the screaming has words. "We are coming, you are here, you are ours."

BEAN: No.

KAYA: And, Titoh, you watch as arcs of electricity flicker through, that you can see, because you are used to seeing in the dark, and you see these extra, these extra bits of the spectrum. You see these arcs of electricity that shoot through the tunnel and envelop and go through your friends, and for some reason they skip over you this time, and you think you hear whispers, but they don't have words yet.

And I think we're gonna end it there.

HUNTER: [horrified] No, my God!

CHÉ: Oh my goodness.

LEAH: Oh God.

JD: What a cliffhanger.

CHASE: We're all gonna die.

LEAH: So anybody wanna go to, like, Afterlife? [laughs]

CHASE: Sure. Let me throw my grenade. [chuckles]

VI: You have been listening to *I Should Roll, Ride of the Valkyrie*, Episode 8, *Motia's Folly*. Featuring the voices of Hans Cummings as Zynamondan, Ché Grové as Titoh Raas, Chase Hutchison as Gratch, Hunter LaPaglia as Carver Fairbank, JD Kelly as Kache, Leah Ryan as Bean Gainian, and Kaya Renwick as everyone and everything else.

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Thank you for listening. Have a pleasant day.

CARVER: Corporal Carver Fairbank, reporting in. I'd appreciate it if you were to rate our podcast, so I can steel myself and make it through whatever situations my companions subject me to here. This place is a little different from Arvuna. Thanks ever so much.