

Is this where it all goes downhill?

Soundtrack: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUYpsOcLxLA>

"Oww my ears..." Lisa complained.

"I don't know...I didn't see him following...that was not...ack", she said meekly to Noah and she was also at a loss for words. Her ears still ringing from Noah's yell.

"Uh..." Daniil muttered, feeling quite awkward, "Sorry?"

Noah looked at the two girls, eyes wide, his shoulders heaving as he panted heavily. He raised a hand fingers half curled, a half strangled sound in this throat, then he dropped it to chest level, pointing at them, then finally gave up and just beat his forehead against the wall a few times.

"Not my fault." Lisa said, defensively and knowing that he was going to blame her for everything lately, even his breakfast going soggy, for all she knew.

"We didn't know we were followed.", Miyuki said to Noah.

"Da hell's going on?" Daniil asked in confusion

"You don't want to know." Lisa said.

"I don't even care anymore," Noah said, tossing his hands up in exasperation. "It's like you people don't get what's going on. It's like I'm babysitting my little cousins again."

[i]Weren't YOU the one ordering me to be careful and not say anything ever to anyone for any reason?[/i] Lisa thought. [i]idiot.[/i]

"Shut up, do you want the whole camp to know.", Miyuki said to Noah, "We have this under control."

[i]Only took about five minutes or less. This fell apart faster than I expected.[/i] Lisa mused.

"Daniil... why are you here?" Noah said, gently massaging his temple.

"I... Um... Followed people? Only familiar faces over here? No one told me I can't go," Daniil replied.

"And you," Noah said to Yuki. "What did you tell him?"

"Nothing at all, promise.", Miyuki said to Noah.

Noah glared at her. And it was an impressive one at that.

Greykit rolled a die with 20 sides for intimidate. The die showed: 18+3

"Seriously, nothing.", Miyuki said softly. Her little talk about the skrull invasion might have rattled the boy, but that and this yeerk thing are two completely different situations.

"...people?" Daniil muttered.

"Like I said, you don't want to know. Some things, once you see, you can't unsee. Or forget. Turn around now, forget everything you saw here." Lisa said. "You won't get anything from us."

"Ignore Lisa, she's being melodramatic.", Miyuki said to Daniil.

Lisa facepalmed at Yuki's words.

Daniil rose his eyebrow, "Really now? Sounds like a Cosmic Horror story premise to me."

"Nothing', huh?" Noah scowled.

"Well I shared my opinion of the Skrull Invasion from Marvel Comics.", Miyuki whispered to Noah and Lisa sheepishly. She honestly thought it was harmless speculation.

"I'll keep my eyes out for any other unexpected guests." Lisa said, not wanting to be around when Noah exploded.

"They could return at any minute, why are we still talking about this.", Miyuki said quickly.

"They?" Daniil asked

Miyuki cursed under her breath for forgetting.

Noah tossed his hands up and just stalked off back towards the place they vanished.

"Hey wait.", Miyuki said to Noah as she followed behind him.

This is gonna suck... Horrendously. Lisa thought but followed.

"I thought Lisa said that only Noah was incomprehensible, not everyone of you" Daniil replied, following the people anyway* "Are you spying on someone or something?"

"Nah it's just Noah I'm worried about.", Miyuki said to him.

We are all gonna die, we are all gonna die, we are all so gonna die, played over and over in Noah's mind. *Maybe the best thing to do was... change schools. Yeah. Switch schools and avoid all further contact with those two. That way, when they do finally succeed with their suicide pact, he wouldn't be collateral damage. Would suck for Daniil though. Maybe I could get him out too... maybe. Lord, there are so many maybes in this...*

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"Hey Noah, can we talk.", Miyuki said to him. Miyuki was worried Noah running off on his own would get him killed or infested. Sure Daniil may be a leak, but it wasn't as bad as Noah kept imagining.

"You could at least try to work together, you know, in whatever you are up to," Daniil suggested.

"If only to find out what's going on, I will." Lisa said.

"Information and to keep him from getting himself killed, I will have to help.", Miyuki said to Daniil.

"Killed....?" Daniil asked, "What the hell are you planning?!"

"I think he has trust issues or something.", Miyuki suggested, "And I have no idea what he's planning...that's what worries me."

Noah whirled on them. It took a lot of will power not to yell, but he managed. If his tone was a bit strained, so be it. "Really? Is this how you keep a secret? Because I would *love* to see how you go about telling someone something if this is how you keep a secret. If I have 'trust issues'," he gave the phrase air quotes, "I sure as hell know who's causing it."

Miyuki was at a loss for words. She just stared at him speechless. She composed herself and considered what to say next.

"People..." Daniil muttered again, "...really now? If this is going to keep you from killing each other, I am going to be grave silent about whatever was, is, and would be here. And no hints from me to anyone too" Daniil glared at the "hinter"

Miyuki remained slack jawed. This was getting out of control. It was partly her fault but still. Did Noah have to blurt out stuff like that. Alas, she knew not to agitate him further. She said nothing.

"Just be quiet," Noah muttered. "We are there." He leaned close to the listened to see if he could hear anything. Still nothing. Swallowing nervously, he carefully pushed the pen-rigged door open, just in case there was someone in there he didn't hear.

Greykit rolled a die with 20 sides for notice. The die showed: *11+4*

Greykit rolled a die with 20 sides for steth. The die showed: *16+3*

Lisa followed in silence, taking up the rear and staying out of everything exactly like she promised to do. Say nothing, shoo away the civilians.

Stealth: <http://orokos.com/roll/180592> 18

Notice: <http://orokos.com/roll/180593> 13

Miyuki followed in silence remaining in the middle of the formation. Well the semblance of a formation they had.

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Stealth: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $14 + 3 = 17$

Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $18 + 3 = 21$

Daniil nodded and became as silent as he could, following and listening.

Notice Irbynx (Android) rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $2 + 2 = 4$

Stealth Irbynx (Android) rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $8 + 1 = 9$

Daniil... wasn't quite as cautious as the rest and was noisy. Noah flinched and shot him a glare. At least the room was still empty. Creepy and empty. It wasn't even big. All those pioneers? They would be crammed in. "Still empty... but this is it..."

"What should be there?" Daniil whispered.

"People, to start with," Noah said, cautiously entering the room. Yep. Empty-empty. "Unless houdini is a pioneer... I have no idea how they did this..."

Daniil walked after him, "Maybe they are not here to begin with? Or they have a secret mechanism?"

Irbynx (Android) rolled a die with 20 sides know. transportation. The die showed: 2

Irbynx (Android) rolled a die with 20 sides for search. The die showed: 1 2:43 AM

"Elevator maybe?" Lisa whispered. "Or beaming stuff?"

"Lisa's a..." Noah started. "You know what... never mind."

"Are you sure anyone was supposed to be here?" Daniil asked after he skimmed through the room.

"This is my pen in the door, so this is the room they came into," Noah said, wagging the implement in question in the air. He sighed and closed the door behind them and started going across the room, checking the walls for anything odd.

Greykit rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 18

"This makes no sense," Daniil muttered, "Who are you tracking down anyway?"

"Don't ask questions you're not sure you want to know the answers to." Lisa said.

"This is not a Kthulhu mythos, going mad from revelation is not much of a possibility here," Daniil countered.

Noah didn't say anything. Sure it wasn't, sure it wasn't. He keep checking the walls and poked them.

Miyuki wanted to counter Daniil but couldn't without letting the cat out of the bag so to speak. So she continued just scanning the room.

Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $6 + 3 = 9$

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Noah was still going along the wall when he noticed something weird. The clock. It was... attached to the wall. And set pretty low on the wall as well. Weird... "Yeah, Yuki, check this out."

"It's a clock, Noah.", she said inspecting

"It's a clock set flush with the wall," Noah said. "You can't tell me that's not weird."

True enough, it was pretty much flush with the wall. And its hands were exposed, not behind any glass.

"Yeah... that is strange..." Lisa said and had a sinking feeling. "Is it ticking, by any chance?"

"It *is* a clock, Lisa," Noah said. "They tick."

"Or it could be a password entry, like on safes but with the hands instead of buttons or other things on safes," Daniil replied, "Really, I dunno what could else be a secret entrance lock if not the weirdest clock in the room"

"That's not why I'm asking." Lisa said. "What time is it? Without looking at the clock there."

Daniil pulled out a phone out of his bag to check the time.

"9:37," Noah said, glancing at a watch faster than fishing out a phone.

"Close enough then within the usual margin of error..." Lisa said, shrugging, one of her ideas proven wrong.

Daniil closed his bag before he could even get the phone out, "Someone still uses watches, huh?"

Noah looked at Daniil and rolled his eyes. "Of course, you'd be one *those* people."

"What? I am not saying it's bad or something," Daniil replied calmly, "It's not cost-efficient in my opinion, but there are other things that I consider cost-inefficient that other people consider essential, so really not the best source of information on that."

"Is this one of those hidden switch type deals?", MIyuki asked.

"This watch cost me twenty dollars, and has lasted me two years. And means I can have the time in two seconds. Unlike some people digging into pockets and bags to find a phone. It's a watch. It tells time, has an alarm, has backlight and hasn't needed to be charged since I got it." Noah really got annoyed with people who loved to act as if cell phones replaced the need for everything else.

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Daniil made a slight facepalm, "Okay, I got it, weren't you just on a killer mission out here? I doubt you have the time to be proudly telling the functions of your watch for no other reason than to prove me that phones are not superior in time checking department." He was disappointed with himself for getting into this pointless confrontation and really not doing good at ending it to save time, instead of just probably provoking Noah to talk more.

"Can we get back on track here guys?" Lisa said. "There;s something off with that clock. Try setting the time for... noon or something."

"We can try to rotate the hands and see if something clicks," Daniil said, "And pray that the system is mechanical and not digital because digital stuff (at least modern one) doesn't click"

"They beep instead. Everything always beeps," Noah commented.

"They beep if they are programmed to do so," Daniil replied, "I am just going with worst case scenario and not underestimating the guy who created them. Then again, pioneers are teens... They'd probably need a beep to know whenever the door's open." he said and then suddenly shook his head, "Why are we talking and not acting anyway? Anyone's gotta spin the clock or I'd go for it?"

"I think we're overthinking this.", Miyuki said, "You can try it...I doubt there's even a secret code."

"Try noon first. One of the easier things to do." Lisa suggested.

Daniil shrugged. 2 out of 3 voted for. He walked over to the clock and tried to set the arrows to noon. Nothing happened. After nothing happened, and he looked around for that, Daniil set off to move the arrows around to see whenever they make some weird sounds, move awkwardly, or something like that.

[Do I need to roll something for that?]

[The hands all moved hesitantly, making soft whirring as Daniil moved it against it's movements]

Daniil tried to move the hands in the opposite direction to see if they'd react differently.

"You are going to break it..." Noah said.

[Are they acting any differently?]

[Like they want to break.]

"What are we looking for again?" Lisa asked, not sure what they were supposed to be doing.

"Secrets I think.", Miyuki said.

"Would you just fix the time, already," Noah said, moving on check other parts of the wall.

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Daniil hummed and stopped moving the arrows. Seems like it was the only direction they took, "Maybe that was a red herring..." Daniil muttered and went on to set the arrows to 9:37. "Hey, what's new time by the way?" he asked Noah.

"9:39," Noah said, sparing a glance at his watch.

Daniil moved arrows to the new time, not expecting anything to happen anymore and wondering what else could the secret locking stuff be, if it was here at all.

About ten seconds after Daniil set the clock, it shifted back to being five minutes slow, and with a soft sound, swung inwards on hidden hinges.

"That's why it was five minutes behind..." Lisa said.

"... whoa," Noah said simply.

"Whelp... Might as well go for it. Ladies first after all." Lisa said, taking point.

Noah grabbed her arm and pulled her back. "Yeah... no."

"You'd probably want to be stealthy..." Daniil suggested, "But really, who are you going after?"

Miyuki almost facepalmed at the simplicity of this secret door. "Wait, you want to go first?", Miyuki asked Noah.

"Before we go any further... let me ask one more time..." Noah said with a pleasant smile, that quickly turned into pure exasperation as he waved a hand at (and almost hitting) Daniil. "Why is he here getting deeper into this?"

"It's not like I am going to sleep well after that already," Daniil replied, shrugging.

"Like I said, he followed us." Lisa said. "I didn't invite him along for this little picnic."

"Yes. This is a very terrifying door," Noah said.

Which... it somewhat was. It was little more than a stone passageway with a slightly less than pleasant air was coming up from it. There were no lights in the immediate area, probably to keep the deceptive lights from spilling out.

"Okay... it's not a very terrifying door. Just... a mildly intimidating one," Noah amended.

"They'd need better ventilations in that place for sure," Daniil said, peeking in.

Noah gave an encore performance of dragging someone from the doorway, only this time with more aggression. "Is this how you don't get involved?"

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"Involved in what? What the hell are you always silent about this even when your cover is blown?" Daniil replied, "After all of the stuff that happened before? Are you doing something that'd get you killed or something?"

"And this is how you 'Don't Get Involved' in something?" Noah demanded. "This is the complete opposite of 'Don't get involved!' You don't ask more questions in a case like this!"

Daniil grumbled and turned around for a moment, "It's not like I am not going to recall this stuff all the time after I just quit, nope," Daniil replied in a sarcastic manner, "Secret entrances, yelling people, mhm."

Miyuki decided not to get into it, she was in hot water enough as it was. She simply followed close behind observing.

Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $13 + 3 = 16$

[I've spent hours wondering how to phrase this, so I'mma just say it. Loud talking and heavy footsteps taken people are approaching the room (from the outside, the hallway side). What do you do?]

"Ah, hell..." Daniil muttered and looked around to see if there's anything to hide at over here. "I think waiting at the door isn't going to work now." he said, motioning towards the entrance and staring at the room's official exit.

"Oh you have got to be..." Noah said, eyes darting around the room rapidly. *Hey Panic. Nice to see you again. It's been what? Four, five minutes? How's the family? Anxiety doing all right? Would you please ask her not to visit? Or the kids? Please?* "Dammit... into dark scary tunnel everyone!" Yep. Tonight was a wonderful night... *Ah... Anxiety. Would you like some tea? Ah, you brought your own? Marvelous.*

Miyuki had little time to react when she heard voices and quickly followed Noah towards the open secret door and into the dark tunnel. "Ladies's first.", she said softly dragging Lisa with her. She motioned for Daniil and Noah to follow. She stumbled a little in her panic..

Stealth: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $4 + 3 = 7$

Daniil let the ladies go first and then went into the tunnel, trying not to glance back too much. This... isn't as fun as he expected it to be, because he could clearly feel his spine filling with that nasty feeling that happens when he's kinda scared.

Noah closed the door behind them, bringing in the darkness, only slightly alleviated by the line of small lights set a little above regular eye level. Which made the darkness only near darkness. So, somewhat of an improvement. On this side, there was a simple panel softly glowing with blue light set in the wall. Noah hoped that it was the open button. It took him a while to find a word. "Well..."

Lisa's breathing was the only sound that came from her. Picking up. Shallow breaths. *And this is where the young, stupid idiot teens discover the portal to hell, stumble upon some Zombie*

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Redneck Torture Family's diary or some other artifact of doom that the 'heros' invariably trigger and let loose a killer robot or something to kill them all. Well i'm the virgin, Noah is the scholar...What's that make yuki and Daniil? The whore and the Hunter...? No... I'll watch that movie again. If we make it out of here.

"Well, any last words before they find us?", Miyuki said softly to Noah.

"How about 'step into my parlour'?" Noah said, nodding to the tunnel behind them. Their might have been a better, more apt quote related to tunnels or secret passages, but none came to mind

"More like step into my dungeon.", Miyuki tried to find a bright side to this, there wasn't any. Regardless she took Noah's hand and motioned for him to move on, if they kept moving maybe they wouldn't get caught...

"Uh... That's button? Would they follow us?" Daniil asked, "Maybe press it?"

"We are so gonna die..." Lisa muttered under her breath.

"You see a mysterious button, the proper action is not to press it," Noah said dismissively, starting down the tunnel, because that was such a great idea.

"You know, it's not to late to turn back." Lisa chimed in.

"Sadly it kinda is.", Miyuki said referring to the sounds of people outside earlier. She offered to hold hands with Lisa too.

"How is it to late? We could literally just turn around and leave." Lisa insisted. "The other door's right over there. Just a few steps back, and we're gone."

"And then run into people wondering where we went.", Miyuki said to her.

"This is really starting to look creepier..." Daniil muttered, going on forwards after Noah

"All the more reason to abort now and not run into some satanic altar doing things to--" Lisa stopped herself. "I am so going to have nightmares with that mental image i just gave myself. Yay me!"

"Quit spreading panic and calm down," Daniil said calmly (albeit not feeling calm at all) to everyone.

Diplomacy: Irbynx (Android) rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 20

"Less talking in the unknown passage, please," Noah said, thinking about how far sound might travel in places like this.

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Lisa went back to her rapid, scared breathing. Obviously, the voice of reason failed and now she had to follow along otherwise Noah would yell at her for ditching him in his hour of need. *Well world, it's been a nice trip. See you in the afterlife.*

Miyuki agreed with the wisdom, but still felt Noah had dragged them into something way beyond them. Still she found these high risk dates interesting.

The journey was in more or less silence, though it didn't stay that way the whole time. Not when it started dragging on for five minutes. It was a long walk down the every descending ramp.

"Just how far do these tunnels go.", Miyuki thought as she walked on. Somehow she wasn't surprised that Noah had just stumbled upon such an odd place.

This was really a bad idea. Really. Noah voiced his thoughts. "Um... I've got a feeling this leads to the pool..."

"Not the best time to tell jokes Noah.", Miyuki whispered, she knew exactly what Noah was talking about and really didn't want him to say any further. Mostly she just worried he was right.

Lisa on the other hand knew exactly what he was talking about and shuddered.

"Pool?" Daniil asked, "What is so bad about the pool? Waterpumps?"

"Ah... maybe we should just call this a night? Come back when we are better prepared?" Noah said, slowing.

"Perhaps we should...", Miyuki agreed with Noah.

"Yes. Let's leave. Like I said before." Lisa said. "I'll see you guys up there." She took some steps backwards to get out of here.

"But we have people behind us..." Daniil reminded.

"Ah crap.", Miyuki muttered.

"Right... Um..." Noah swallowed. He kept his ears open. "I think we are near the end... I think... Alright, alright... Keep moving..."

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for Notice. The die showed: 19+4

"How do you know it? You haven't been here before, have you?" Daniil asked with suspicion.

"Are you sure there's people following us?" Lisa asked, whimpering a little from fear.

"Shhh! If you'd listen you would hear sounds," Noah said. "From both directions!"

Lisa strained her ears to hear. "Shit..." Lisa muttered.

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<http://orokos.com/roll/180942> 15 [she hears noises from both directions]

"Now let's get moving before things get really bad," Noah said.

It didn't take much longer for the tunnel they were in to open out into a larger room. It was still cavern-like, with the two walls branching from the tunnel and the roof quickly sloping higher being reinforced earth, but the opposite walls, the ones that made it a room, were more common materials. Was that drywall, maybe?

[forgot to mention it was about ten feet wide by ten tall.]

Oh, and there were a couple boxes in the room, and a few people milling around, two, in fact, heading towards the tunnel.

"Is this a spytech base?" Daniil asked with a confusion and then noticed the people heading towards the tunnel, "Oh great, we are going to get sandwiched. Um... These are not spies, right?"

"Daniil. Don't. Talk. None of you," Noah said sharply and softly. The chances of a this random underground base bridging from the room Mrs Graceland vanished not being connected were pretty much slim. Anorexic even. Which would make these controllers. Human-controllers. These were Human Controllers... They walked right into the one place they seriously shouldn't have. Oh God...

Only, they walked right past the group with only a cursory nod at them as they passed.

Daniil followed the group with his eyes and then glanced back at Noah. After a while of awkward staring he mouthed, "What" without a sound. Seriously.

Noah waited till they left, then he broke down, shuddering and taking desperate gulping breathes as he used one of the crates for a support. "Oh God, Oh God, Oh God..."

I wanna go home. Lisa thought, trembling with fear. *Wanna go home, wanna go home, wanna go home now!*

Daniil looked around at the people and gulped. Okay, they were acting, right? "What are the people you are afraid of?" Daniil whispered, hearing his voice trembling. Panic is contagious. Dangerously so.

"I see yer thinking what i'm thinking....", Miyuki said with a dash of fear. She then broke down, "By all the spirits what the fuck did we get ourselves into." Thoughts of returning home and leaving all this alien stuff behind them circled in her mind along with the growing urge to scream. She somehow managed to hold that in.

"We... we shouldn't stand around here. We still have the other group coming down," Noah said, distancing himself from his fear and panick. "Yuki. Watch the tunnel so they don't get a jump on us." He himself headed over the door the two men had come from.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for composure/sanity. The die showed: 19

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Miyuki nodded and tried to swallow her fear. She remained near the back of their mock marching order and kept an eye on the tunnel behind them.

Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $9 + 3 = 12$

[from what Yuki could tell, they still had some time before whoever it was arrived.]

"We have a moment before they catch up, all of you let's go.", Miyuki quietly reported back, "We shouldn't be here."

"Oh... we don't want to be out here either..." Noah said slowly. It was like a small town out there. Small buildings, sheds really, scattered about the place. The roof was set with several small light fixtures, though there was one source that cast the brightest light in the cavern, though Noah couldn't see what the source itself was. The sheds blocked much of the view, but it seemed like it was even bigger than the building they came from. And, just to make sure they realized this just wasn't any other groups secret underground facility, there were more than a healthy serving of Hork bajor in all their saurin-meets-blade-convention glory and taxxons roaming (and crawling, as the case may be) around.

Greykit rolled a die with 20 sides for notice. The die showed: 12

[audible factor: there are sounds in the air. Voices, clearly heavy with emotion, but hard to disguise. (DC twenty to pin down the emotion as fear, sadness and rage. Possibly.)]

Screw You Chatzy, or the story how switching alleignances is sometimes fun.

<http://invisiblecastle.com/roller/view/4462583/> - Daniil Notice: 20

"Why we stopping, whatcha see over there?", Miyuki asked.

notice for later: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $12 + 3 = 15$ to check behind them. [You've got like, a minute or so. The conversation of the people is starting to get clear.]

Miyuki noticed certain other sounds, were they voices or what?

"As soon as we see the other group, we're gone, right?" Lisa asked softly.

Daniil's eyes widened as he saw and heard the stuff, "Oh... Aliens. Good to know you were actually worrying for my safety, people." Daniil deadpanned, feeling like the biggest coward out here, but trying to recollect himself, "So, um, you are planning to fight them?"

"We TRIED getting you out of here. YOU didn't listen." Lisa countered.

"Tsssh, no need to be noisy..." Daniil told Lisa, "Knowledge is power, because I'd rather die knowing of invasion and doing something about it than dying not knowing and stuff and why the hell you snuck up here?"

"You wouldn't even be here is SOME people could keep a lid on things," Noah hissed back.

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"But this is a friggin alien invasion! People ought to know! They are doing this recruitment drive already like nazis in the occupied countries... And these goddamn blades... Jeez..." Daniil muttered.

"Guys we have about a minute before the guys back there find us...and woah...oh my....gods...no....I can't beleive what I'm seeing here.", Miyuki said as the full extent of what Noah and Daniil have seen dawned on her. "What, what....what....", she blubbered out before she fell silent, she wanted to scream so bad now. Regardless she hid behind some crates and contemplated morphing to mouse form.

Will: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 8 +1

Stealth: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 11 +3 = 14

Lisa looked for any form of cover or anything where she could hide and wait it out for the group in the rear to pass. Finding one of the crates, she took cover behind it, curling up into a ball again.

Stealth: <http://orokos.com/roll/181034> 13

Coincidentally Miyuki noticed a trembling Lisa next to her as she herself was curled up nearby watching the tunnel.

Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 7 +3

Daniil grumbled, "Oh look, at least they'd manage a quick rush on us with this spirit half of us show and spare us with quick deaths,"

"Daniil, move!" Noah insisted, shoving the grumbling fellowing behind the crates.

Greykit rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 1

Daniil did move on behind the crates. "Ow..."

Daniil rolled a die for stealth with 20 sides. The die showed: 15+1=16

It was a good thing that he got Daniil moving when he did. No more than a few seconds later the people they were hiding from came in.

"The Vissor has been pleased since his success at slaying the andalite prince. It would be in your best interest that you do not do anything to ruin his current mood," a female voice said, just proceeding the people themselves.

Lisa's blood ran cold. *No... not that voice. Anything but that one!*

"Yes, sub-vissor," a male responded, stepping into the room ahead of the person he was being addressed by, his countenance humbled and somewhat groveling.

She was on the opposite end end of the scale from the man. Arrogant and self possessed to a fault, almost. And she was Lisa's mother. He froze up. Deep set panic had taken root. True, he had understood that one of the girls parents was one of them, but... to be faced by it... he froze up.

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Noah rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 1. **Noah** is sad.

Miyuki stared, frozen in fear for a moment by the sight of her friend's mom leading the evil aliens. She tapped Lisa and through just hand gestures urged Lisa to observe cause something just went wrong. Fortunately Yuki didn't scream but was very concerned when Noah froze up. *Get out of there Noah*, she repeated in her mind.

Miyuki Composure: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $14 + 2 = 16$

Sub-Vissor aka mommy rolled a die with 20 sides for recognition. The die showed: 12
"You..." she said, her eyes narrowing. Noah swallowed. "Yes... your host is a... companion of my host's daughter. Recent effects are most suspect."

Noah was stumped for a while, but then the pieces kinda clicked. The same way the two before nodded at them. They assumed they were one of *them*. Which... meant everything might not be lost. What did they call her? Um... "Apologies, sup-vissor. Sub-vissor, I mean."

Her eyes narrowed with a hint of scorn. "You forget your place. It would be good for you to be reminded of it. Follow."

Sub-Vissor rolled a die with 20 sides for sense motive. The die showed: $20 + 2$

And... what could he do but follow? Really? Noah cast a last panicked glance at where the others were hiding and followed the example of the true horror of the situation out into the other example of the true horror of the situation. Oh, he was so so screwed.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for composure. The die showed: 12+3 5:18 PM

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for bluff. The die showed: 12+7 5:18 PM

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for INT check. The die showed: $13 + 2$

Lisa meanwhile was next to useless by this point. Part of her wanted to shut down completely, another part was horrified that she had acted that way towards Noah when he was right all along. Still another wanted to run up and smack her mother, to get her to snap out of it like this was some cruel, but very, VERY elaborate practical joke, another wanted to run away; leave town and never look back. perhaps live with her father in Fort McMurry where he went to his job in the oil sands... All of these parts just kept conflicting with each other and effectively paralyzing her. Stability: <http://orokos.com/roll/181237> 12

Noah left with his Momma Lisa and her man minion, leaving the others in hiding in the room.

"What..." Daniil muttered, feeling the situation being so wrong. They are underground, among the creepy aliens and bunch of human alien sympathisers, Noah, the only sensible person is now screwed and he is left with two panic wrecked girls. *Awesome*. And he had no idea what to do now...

"What can we do now, We can't just abandon Noah", miyuKi mUttered Softly to lisa.

Is this where it all goes downhill?

Lisa didn't reply, her emotions flooding and overpowering her. "Mommy...?" She whispered pitifully.

"Come on," Daniil said quietly in frustration and looked around hastily. Trapped...

"Ladies, we need to bail Noah out," Daniil said with trembling voice. Is that a hammer or heart pounding? "Anyone up to quitting crying and getting to follow Noah so we can at least figure out how to bail him out?"

"I... My mommy...? How did... When did...?" Lisa was sort of recovering. She was using sentences again, at least. She was also moving, unfurling from her near-fetal position and instead to all fours.

Daniil sighed, "Feeling less scared? Good. Get up. Yuki, ditto. We need to act." Daniel said, keeping himself from sounding too scared, "We need to get to Noah and get him out of this mess. If we would keep calm, we can do it. After that we are leaving this place." He looked around again, "Human-traitors are indistinguishable from humans. Yuki, you've said you are an actor? We need to get a play done. Keep your looks inconspicuous, but don't try too hard. Visser seems to be name of their local leader, sub visser is his human subordinate. We need to follow them and get the opening to save him." 2:51 AM

"Nah I got all that...just trying to work out what to say...", Miyuki whispered, "Hey Lisa, perhaps we're here to transfer Noah to somewhere else..."

Lisa nodded. "Sure... sure..." She said and slowly got to her feet. Unsteady, slow and shaking like a leaf, but she was starting to compartmentalize her mind. Noah first. Mother second. Then she would deal with everything else. Taking some deep breaths, she gave one final shudder and nodded. "All right... All right. I'm ready."

Daniil peeked out of cover and went on, "Okay, now that we got target sorted out..." Daniil clenched his hand in the air, "This means 'Stop'", he said and then patted his hip with the same hand, "This means 'Go'". Nothing too elaborate. Okay..." he peeked out again and breathed in and out, "Let's go." he said and went out in general direction of Noah.

//Roll stability at the sight of the alein monsters.

<http://invisiblecastle.com/roller/view/4464311/> -2 on checks

Lisa isa nodded oce and followed Daniil's lead.

<http://orokos.com/roll/181505> 10

The place was huge. It only expanded from the entrance they came through. The room was less a room and more... an impact. The roof was a dozen or two meters over their heads. And there were easily a hundred people in just the area they could see. It didn't help that they had buildings scattered around the place that complicated the matter. And the numerous amounts of hork bajor and taxxon around the place.

Is this where it all goes downhill?

Despite it's already current achievement in vastness, they were apparently unsatisfied with it. There were a line of earth movers, a few of them working, human controllers at the wheels, digging into the wall and adding to a pile of earth nearby. Amidst the same cries they had been hearing, there was also some laughter of people coming from one of the larger buildings, open sides, looking like a cafeteria of some sort.

Lisa shuddered, and kept her eyes open, frantically looking for her mother. She had to talk some sense into her... How could she betray everyone and everything like this? Of course, in her present state she seemed to have overlooked the whole 'infested' angle, but that was besides the point. She had to talk some sense... Her mother was hypnotized or something. She could talk her out of this. Bring her back to reality... She had to.

Notice: **Yellow 13** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $20 + 4 = 2 = 22$

Bluff: **Yellow 13** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $5 - 2 = 3$

[Nat 20 or not, she's not in sight. Giant room, no clue which way they went, head start]

[The most I'll give is you get a hint at which way they went. You people are rather dismissive of the whole 'Small Town Underground' part of this description]

[You also see the earthmovers, probably notice the light from the Kandora, hear the laughter and the horror/sorrow, might glimpse the pool here or there.)

Mew77tablet: Miyuki followed close behind Daniil and kept a close eye on Lisa. She didn't like to admit it but Lisa's mom was yeerked which led to far worse problems than just a yeerk invasion. It was one of Miyuki's worst fears. She hoped Lisa was alright. 1:44 AM

Mew77tablet: Notice check 1:44 AM

Mew77tablet rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 5

Irbynx (Android): <http://invisiblecastle.com/roller/view/4464356/> Search

[you see evidence of the sub-visser's trail. Subdued people and such. See notice above too.]

Irbynx (Android): <http://invisiblecastle.com/roller/view/4...> bluff 1:51 AM

Irbynx (Android): A giant city underground. If not the whole situation, Daniil would have been amazed by the scope and ingenuity of whole construction. But it wasn't time for that. He felt terror creeping up everywhere and shoved some of it somewhere. No time for it. Not when he has another trouble - he was responsible for two, no, three people now... He spotted the trails. Creepy. But he has to follow... 1:56 AM

Lisa shuddered as she looked around rapidly. Her brain was overloading. Some new part of her that she discovered was trying to keep her mind compartmentalized, but it was only doing so much. Still, better than being a gibbering, unmoving wreck. She was shaking like a leaf and shivering lightly.

[insert mental reasoning that leads to the idea :p]

Daniil glanced around. Oh yay, seems like Lisa's going to get another of these panic attacks soon. Nope, rushing head in after Noah won't work. He didn't even know what to say to these defectors! Of course he knew he was capable of some improvisation, but better not test it. He needed a distraction (and a better one than "throw stone to point x to send y enemies over there because they are dumb.") He needed something more awesome.

Is this where it all goes downhill?

It just so happened that there was a pool of some creepy damn bullshit (Daniil assumed these were food for these creepy alien blademasters) and a bulldozer nearby in a good condition and even better guarding (read: no OSHA compliance from workers and no workers to look at it.) If you need a distracting stone, a better thing than a train off rails won't be... Except this isn't exactly a train, whatever. Daniil grinned slightly, even though he felt scary. Maybe it's because he felt scared. "Okay, I think I have an idea," he said and glanced at the dozer again... [is it safe to move there?]

<http://invisiblecastle.com/roller/view/4464635/> - Daniil's INT check to determine safety of the operation "Yeerkmover": 20

//Damnit, I wish Daniil could actually call it operation "Yeerkmover".

[Wouldn't exactly call it 'nearby', but it was within a two hundred meters or so. Since it was a work area, there weren't an exceptional amount of people in the area, just a few humans and hork-bajir assisting. Aside from the ones still working, there were three others earthmovers parked relatively nearby the active ones.]

Lisa looked to Daniil, wondering what he was thinking of. "What's up?"

"I hope we survive this idea, we're in the middle of enemy territory.", Miyuki whispered. They had to save Noah, though whether they could survive Lisa's mom was still in question.

"Gotta try something outrageous," Daniil said and started moving onwards towards the unused earthmovers, trying not to be in the lines of sight too much (without trying too hard though), "It involves bulldozers," Daniil clarified.

"Go on..." Lisa prompted.

"Explain.", Miyuki said simply.

"No time, no safety," Daniil replied, still moving onwards, "It'll be a distraction."

Miyuki followed, wondering what Daniil planned, "So do I need to try driving one of those things? I barely have my learner's permit.", she wondered as she noticed what Daniil was moving towards.

"Saea!" a coarse voice called out from off to the side. A hork-bajir came over to them, his taloned feet making slight divots in the packed earth ground, the reptilian eyes set in his head focused on them, mostly the erratic manner in which the girls were carrying themselves. He lowered his snake like head and neck to glare at them. "What kerras doing?"

[Hork-bajir:

http://img4.wikia.nocookie.net/_cb20070221025351/animorphs/images/thumb/d/da/Hork-Bajir.png/250px-Hork-Bajir.png]

[This does call for a stability save, yeah?]

[Probably ^^]

[Wow, just nearly wrote /rolldie 20 in chatzy. Forgot how it hated me]

[now watch castle screw you.]

Is this where it all goes downhill?

[...screw castle...]<http://invisiblecastle.com/roller/view/4466201/> - 8

[See?]

[How much of penalties does it give now? ...]

[-5] And stunned for this round likely. Roll will.

Irbynx rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 4

Stunned.

Lisa; **Yellow 13** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 8- *penalties*

Daniil felt the shivering come down his spine. This thing just talked to him and he didn't expect that at all. Maybe he did, but he didn't want it to happen. This stuff just left him stunned for a while, just staring into abyss with shock.

All in all, Miyuki was taking this underground alien city thing a little too well. Then the alien spoke to her. What kerras doing? Is that like what are you doing? Miyuki looked confused. Here was where acting class was going to keep her alive. She twitched when it stared at her. She as calmly as possible walked up to see the alien up close. "We are pressed for time with this construction site, if you want to explain to the Visser why you are delaying us further, be my guest.", she acted cross and impatient. Her teachers would have called that act as lacking conviction in her words, though she hoped the alien would buy it.

Perform Acting: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $2 + 8 = 10 - 2$

Stability: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 17

"Dapsen. Ha'met Visser would have Kawatnoj do!" he hissed at her.

"Wait....oh...really...", Miyuki blinked repeatedly as she held her hand to her face. And with a look of sheer horror she began flexing each finger. "Hands working, So small....so delicate...". She paced in a circle then began running in place. "Legs good, Tiny legs...slow, inefficient", she turned her neck up and down. "Short neck...argh this human is so weak and tiny, Hork Bajir better." She had to ham up her acting, though strayed maybe a little close to melodrama. Still it was better than Act 1.

Miyuki Intimidate: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $10 + 2 - 2$

Acting: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $19 + 8 = 27 - 2$

"You gin hork-bajir? Po'saa," he said. "Haff girl help." And he stalked off.

"What the actual..." Daniil muttered, looking with terror at the creature as it walked away and then at Yuki, taking a step away from her.

Miyuki saw that he was gone and turned to Daniil. "Plan?", she reminded him with a whisper.

"P-plan? What the hell that just was?" Daniil replied, "Are you even human?"

"Acting Daniil, that's all.", she whispered her voice more fearful. "We have stay safe."

Daniil scowled at Yuki and then glanced in the direction of the free earthmover.

Is this where it all goes downhill?

[Distance, population?][maybe 40ms. The parked earthmovers are relatively free of people. Just passerbys. No people actually there.]

"I can live with that.", Miyuki muttered to herself, and Daniil's reaction was realistic which was good for the plan.

Lisa remained silent. The weak girl was crying inside a corner of her mind while the woman she wanted to be, brave, fearless, confident, took control for now.

Instant Drama! Add the shrill cry of an alert. Naturally, you would all whirl, because that's what people do when alerts and or alarms go off, especially when you are intruders. "Visser Three arrives!"

It was like there was collective fires lit under collective asses. Everything was suddenly moving and busy and the tension in the air jumped about 4 and three quarter levels.

[notice check] He fell from a glass shaft in his blue furred, blade tipped tail, centurian built, stalk eyed glory. Though 'fell' was something of a misnomer, as his fall slowed the moment he cleared the hole and he was falling almost leisurely before he vanished behind the buildings.

Daniil rolled a die for notice with 20 sides. The die showed: $17 + 2 - 5 = 14$

Daniil felt even more shivers down his spine. This isn't any good. This is not. At least this thing went past... Okay, at least there were no one around the bulldozers. "You two, stay on guard," Daniil said, "Say "Titanic" if someone would be coming over to these machines, I am going in. When this thing moves, get out quick, to some safe place."

Daniil breathed in, out, and with shaking hands walked over to one of the earthmovers, trying not to attract attention and choosing the opening where no passerbys went by.

Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $5 + 3$

Miyuki heard the shouting. Visser three was here. The angry one who ate Elf was nearby. They were so dead meat now. She merely rushed to and fro looking as busy as possible while keeping watch.

Perform Acting: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $7 + 8 - 5 = 10$

Daniil managed to make his way over to the earthmover without attracting too much attention and even climbing it. The key was hanging from the roof. Because this is the secret base. They isn't any need to hide it.

Daniil looked around and checked if the dozer was in the right direction (the pool) and, after ensuring no one could spot him in the act, used the key to start the thing up and pulled the lever(s) to make it go full speed ahead right into destiny, while climbing out of it as it started. Assuming he pushed the throttle to full, started moving, but stopped when the 'gas' lever was released. He would have to find somewhat of holding it in position!

[Do I need to roll search to find stuff heavy enough? Or wait, is that a pedal or a "lever" that goes back into position? Does it have a lock button?]

[It's a lever on the hand rest. No lock button. That would be ridiculously unsafe.]

Is this where it all goes downhill?

[Any rubberbands? Can he just jam it?]
[[http://forestryfirst.com/dbimages/D6R%20\(7\).jpg](http://forestryfirst.com/dbimages/D6R%20(7).jpg)]
[Why would he have rubber bands?]
[Dunno. Can he use safety belt for the purpose of holding this thing?]
[Work it out in character!]
[Consider this looking around :P]

Daniil grumbled and looked around once again. Might try something with safety belt... He tried to lock the lever in the proper position using the said belt.
[with the belt coming from behind, the think it could do was hold the lever back, and forward was, well, forward.][No convoluted ways to keep it in the proper position? D: Does it go on reverse?][Lo! He studies the lever! <http://i1.ytimg.com/vi/YG4gNmi-Klc/maxresdefault.jpg>][This is gas lever you spoke about?][Ye][So, just to verify, this basically means that pulling it back causes the machine to go backwards?][If that's what you assume from the picture]

Miyuki continued to keep watch while Daniil tried his idea.
Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 11

Daniil tried to pull the lever backwards to see if the belt would manage to be of use here
[pull it back how?] It's only pushable forward? [with his hand? Yes, he's checking it to act the proper way]

"What's going on over there!" someone, a human voice, yelled out. A randomly moving then stopping earthmover? it attracted the man who had been helping out over at the active machines.

The mover jerkily started moving backwards again, which... got the guy even more suspicious.
[And I seriously don't know were Yuki is during all this. Last temporally set thing she was doing was acting busy, which would be moving back and forth over a pretty decent area...]

Daniil was oblivious to the sound. He heard it, yes, but didn't pay attention to it, going on with his plan. He figured that he could use the seatbelt to jam it in the reverse, so all he did need to do was to rotate the truck to be facing the opposite direction of the pool, and so he did.
[[roll notice. Earthmover excatly quiet. You have to yell when you are right beside them.
Irbynx rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 15 + 2 - 5

Miyuki noticed a man looking at the earthmover that Daniil tried to use. She hoped she could warn him, but the sound around them made it hard to just speak it, and shouting it would lead to her being found out.

Lisa stayed with Yuki, still being eerily silent.

"Act busy Lisa, we don't want more surprises.", Miyuki whispered to Lisa while she worked, still attempting to keep watch.

[rolldex Daniil]

Is this where it all goes downhill?

Daniil rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 4+1-5=0

He couldn't quite get the earthmover going the way he wanted, but it was still going. The knotted belt and its tension was holding the throttle back, and it was steadily picking up speed. Which... led to the issue of getting off a moving tractor.

The man started running towards the earthmover. But considering he wasn't exactly next to it, being some 100 or more meters away...

Also, want do the girls think about all this?

lisa looked to see Daniil in trouble and made a fist. "We have to go save him. And then we are getting out of here." She said to Yuki.

Whoopsies. Okay, maybe it'd be decent enough. Food stocks aren't much better for distraction than a loud building crash. Daniil opened up the door and tried to jump out of the dozer in a way not to break his legs and not to get under the moving mass of death and destruction.

Daniil's attempt at tucking at rolling was... less than successful. It wasn't actually clear if he was tucking and rolling or just attempting to leap off. Eitherway, his landing wasn't the best picture - 3 acrobatics roll), and he might have felt something crunch when his dominant leg hit the ground, and it definately did twist sharply when it hit... Oh, and there was pain. There was a lot of pain. [Stunned, bruised, speed halved, injured]

Now that hurts! Daniil yelled out from the dash of pain and groaned, grabbing it with both of his hands, dazed by pain and unable to move for a while. Damnit... He needs to get out, not to lie down like a toddler!

"Come on!" Lisa said and punched Yuki in the shoulder. Hard. Hopefully that would get her moving. She left her to her fte to help Daniil. Somehow. She was still working on that.

MIyuki was rushing to get to Daniil so she could get him out of here. Lisa's punch had knocked some sense into her and she rushed by to see what she could do.

Daniil growled from the pain and tried to get up, stumbling and leaning over nearest building, "Uhhh... Suka...." he muttered. Now they "just" need to get Noah out, what an easy task!

MIyuki joined him near that building. "What happened?", she asked.

[a little voice in your head tells you its a ridiculously bad idea to stick around.]
[Daniil does know that, but he got a bit of a problem with his leg]

"There. We're safe. Let's find Noah and leave." Lisa said, leaving no room for discussion.

As they wasted time discussing, the earthmover collided with a building with a crash that echoed in the chamber, and apparently kept going... plowing through it stubbornly and determinedly.

Earthmover rolled a die with 20 sides for knot. The die showed: 15 4:40 PM

Is this where it all goes downhill?

Building rolled a die with 20 sides for toughness. The die showed: 7

"Anyone mind giving me a shoulder, please?" Daniil asked, limping over to the couple, "'I am a lady" excuse won't work." He glanced back at the dramatic house destruction and grinned, "Good job there, komrade traktor," he muttered.

Miyuki moved to help Daniil walk allowing him to lean on her shoulder. "As Lisa said, we best find Noah and get outta here.", Miyuki said in Daniil's ear.

<What is going on here!?!> Visser Three's enraged thoughtspeech projected to everyone in range. There was a pause, maybe someone responding to his indiscriminate projection. <You! Solve this or it will be your head I remove next!>

Oh, and a notice of 10 will get you the lovely news that people are gathering. Do try to not walk out in the open where you'll look suspicious.

mew77 rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 5 +3 = dang it

"Since when were these aliens telepathic!?" Daniil muttered, moving onwards to the exit, nearly pulling Yuki with him instead of relying too much on her as support, "You think Noah would be chained up somewhere or he can use this to run?"

"He'd run, hmm try to stay within the crowd of people, hmm where's the crowd?", Miyuki said helping him along.

"Did anyone see where Noah went?" Lisa asked.

"The Visser is more of a concern Lisa.", Miyuki said, "Hopefully Noah ran in the distraction." She was very concerned about Visser 3's voice right now.

There was a swell in sound and almost tactile tremble in the air as the volume of people increased, then gathering around the earthmover that was still in motion, making it's way through a second building. On the other hand, they just thought he was an unfortunate victim. Woot! They ignored them for the most part, because really, only Yeerk are down here.

"And if Noah got infested, where does that leave us? But fine, let's see what we can do here." She sighed quietly.

"We can get out of here without getting caught...hopefully finding Noah on the way.", MIyuki said while she helped Daniil limp along.

"If he can use Rachel's rampage to sneak out, we are golden," Daniil said moving on, "Hope he'd be smart enough to get back to where we started at..."

Is this where it all goes downhill?

"We're calling it Rachel now?", Miyuki asked, "And I hope he is Dan." Miyuki moved alongside Daniil. She wondered if she really needed to help support him here.

For the sake of progress. LO! The entrance way they used! Post about reaching it than move all the way to the end.

With the help of Yuki and (probably) support of Lisa, along with great RoAR in the background, Daniil and the ladies made it to the entrance, "Argh... Okay, we are safer now..."

Lisa followed slightly behind everyone else, mostly so she wouldn't draw attention, hopefully. When they made it to the entrance, Lisa sighed with relief. "Oh thank god that's over with... For now."

"But Oh....Noah's still in there somewhere...", Miyuki said to them, trying to hide the fear in her voice.

"Odds are, he's no longer our friend..." Lisa shuddered. "I really hate to say it, but we have to leave. go to the forests or something. Noah knows us all and if we don't, we'll wake up with those things in our heads."

"What things? Is there something MORE I don't know about?" Daniil asked.

"Please Lisa, don't scare the poor boy.", Miyuki said, "And I believe Noah is still down there."

"To late for that. He's already seen everything. He knows about everything."

"Are they going to torture him? What are the things they are going to put in our heads?" Daniil asked again. This is really looking a lot more awful now.

[down to the bottom please]

[For you, anywhere ;3]

The Pool

Noah could only follow as Momma Lisa asked. To do anything else would be... be risking everything. Down Panic. You are seriously not needed here. Instead, he used his experience in actin to keep his game face on, using the same stage fright control skills to keep his actual fright down. It didn't help that he had to be so close to taxxons, countless legs and clawed limbs clicking across the ground, beady ruby eyes glittering on their soft squishy bodies, their mouths and jagged teeth trailing drool...

Greykit rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 17

He blocked it out. Same for the Hork Bajor, pebbly skin, jaww filled with teeth, blades sprouting from knees, ankles, eblows, wrists, foreheads. More sharp edges than one being should have to it's name.

Is this where it all goes downhill?

That insight he had about how this place was huge? It was wrong. The place wasn't huge. It was gigantic. It was like looking over a town, when he knew what you saw wasn't the end. Sheds, shacks and small buildings were prevalent over the cave floor. There were also a lot of construction gear such as earth movers. Some were even in use, digging out more room. As if they needed it.

Then... there was the pool itself. Grey... fluid. Slimey looking, ever rippling and agitated as if thousands of... somethings were constantly moving about. Oddly, there were... docks in it. Hell... the cries they'd been hearing? He suddenly found out where they came from. The docks had people in it.

The knowledge Elf gave them kicked in. Hosts. Involuntary hosts. Prisoners in their own minds. That's what was waiting for him... He started hyperventilating, feeling his throat close up on him. Uncontrollable shakes took him. Why the hell did he come down here? Why did he let curiosity take first place to reason? He drew his arms around himself, hugging himself tightly, fingers digging into his arms and sleeves.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 1 *sigh* Finish in the morning...

The Sub-vissor watched it with cruel eyes, a cold smile on her face. "Hork Bajir," she commanded the closet of those in question. "Take him. It seems we have some lessons to administer."

Subvissor rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 16

Hork-Bajir were not the gentlest of people, and his pretty much just dragged him to the building the Sub-Visser was heading to. It was more ornate than the rest, apparently befitting of her status.

The Hork-Bajir forced him to his knees before the Sub-Visser. he hadn't interacted with Lisa's mother much before this. In fact, the meeting about the suspension was pretty much it. So the image of her as she was now, haughty in bearing, cruel in expression, and looking at him as if he were something she stepped in. Even rattled to the core as he was, he managed to keep his silence as her demands.

"Child... I know you. Graceland brought you up as one who might have been present that night. And now here you are... Tell me, what brought you here?"

Sub-Visser rolled a die with 20 sides for intimidate. The die showed: 7

Noah was still near the verge of panic, and if he thought too hard about it, he likely would panic, but he couldn't afford that. "I-I-I followed her here."

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for Will. The die showed: 18+2-5

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for Stability. The die showed: 14+2-5

The sub-Visser scowled. "Careless." She didn't seem to be talking about Noah in that sense. Her aid and the Hork-bajir shifted cautiously. "Now I will either have to kill you, or make you a host."

Is this where it all goes downhill?

Both of those terrified him, but Noah did his best not to let that actually show and more or less manage to keep a relatively straight face. It wasn't quite enough.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for bluff. The die showed: 14+7-5

"You seem to know a curious amount," the sub-visser said. "I would love to know how you found out. Hork Bajir, go to the docks and get them ready for an insertion."

Sub-Visser rolled a die with 20 sides for Sense Motive. The die showed: 13+4

Sub-Visser rolled a die with 20 sides for insight. The die showed: 9+2

Noah didn't even have time to panic over that one before someone knocked on the door. The Sub-visser paused, then murmured a swear of some sort before motioning her aide to open it.

"Sub-Visser Four, ma'am. Visser Three has appeared for a surprise inspection!"

This time he Noah did freak out. Seriously. Two of these in a couple minutes. It was relatively unnoticed by the others though. They were too busy having a collective apoplexy over the news.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for stability. The die showed: 4

"What? My sources placed him at the Jenc Pool! Dapsen!" She whirled and paced the room, only then noticing Noah's reaction. "Both of you, leave us."

Sub-Visser rolled a die with 20 sides for Sense motive. The die showed: 10+4

"Sub-Visser?"

"I said leave!" She snapped, and they did, rather than face her wrath. Alone she faced Noah.

"Tell me, child, what is it that scares you so?"

Still shellshocked, flashing back to the night when the Visser killed Elfangor, the andalite dying almost literally in their minds, Noah couldn't even meet her eyes, much less respond.

She grabbed him by the chin roughly tilted his head, forcing him to look at her. "I asked you a question child! What terrifies you to this extent! Is it the idea of being caught? No... The Insertion...? The Visser?"

There was a definite reaction to that one. "The Visser? But how could a child... do you know what he is? My host has a daughter, child. I know when you human whelps are hiding things. I believe you call it, a mother's instinct?" Her smirk was more slasher instinct than motherly. "But for you to know so much... I can make use of this..."

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for bluff. The die showed: 1

She let his head drop, leaving Noah to look up at her absolutely baffled as to why and what she was thinking.

"To know so much about the Visser... he must have a leak in his apparent iron hold on security. Yes, I can make use of this... if the council knew... Very well, boy. Do this thing for me. Aside from my aides, none has seen you. If you manage to get out of this before... It might be for the best to let you live as you are." She chuckled and headed for the door and opening it.

Is this where it all goes downhill?

"You two!" she said apparently to some people outside. "We will be going to see to the Visser." And then she was gone, the door closing behind her.

Calm down... Calm down... calming down wasn't working... Still, he needed to get out. He would wonder about what was going on later. Much later. Breath in... breath out... oh god he was going to die. She was just toying with him.

Φαιόγαλῆ rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 7

His cyclic thoughts were interrupted with a massive crash. He didn't know what it was, but it broke the cycle. A bit anyway. At least the sudden increase in yells and panicking let him know it wasn't natural. There was a swell of pounding feet. After a while, he mustered up the courage to try the door.

Φαιόγαλῆ rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 13

It actually opened. Huh... He peeked out. People were running past, yellign things from protect the Sub-Visser and Visser, to go check out what was going on, and there was a comumn of smoke raising off somewhere. No one was watching the building. So... he ran out too. Didn't even both with trying to hide or anything. There were enough people running around in and acting to the confusion, so he just joined in the throngs and ran for the exit, letting his panic carry him.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for notice. The die showed: 20 I see the universe... it's dazzling...

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for bluff. The die showed: $12+7-5$

Panic took him back to the room they started in, and he made for a corner and curled up in it. Jeeze... this was horrible. That was Visser Three in his head. Again. Jeeze... he was actually starting to cry, tears leaking out of the corner of his eyes.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides stealth. The die showed: 12

Φαιόγαλῆ rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 13

=====

Dodge. Get the Hell Out of It

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUYpsOcLxLA>

"Can we discuss this after we get Noah?", Miyuki asked.

"Do we really have a chance at finding him down there?" Daniil asked, limping out and feeling really awful about this all.

"No, but are we really going to just leave him down there?", Miyuki asked.

"If we managed to do something for him, we did it already," Daniil stated, "We are not military to do stuff like that and survive..."

Notice: **mew77** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: $6+3=9$

Is this where it all goes downhill?

Miyuki looked around hoping to find Noah. "True, hmm look around here, maybe he made it out.", Miyuki said.

Noah sniffed and hastily whipped away tears. "Guys?"

"Noah, is that you, where are you?", Miyuki said softly at the surrounding air, she almost wanted to cry.

"Noah!" Daniil exclaimed, feeling a stone fall down from his heart at the moment and looking around, "Нихрена себе, you are alive!"

[Read: Nichrena Sebye]

"How can we be sure you are who you say you are?" Lisa said, glaring at him.

Noah half climbed over the crates he'd taken refuge behind. "You a- what happened?"

Miyuki was overjoyed to see Noah well and good and she rushed to give him a big happy hug/squeeze. "So glad to see you're alright! Dan sent Rachel into a wall, I think it busted maybe a building or two and we all ran out....So glad to see you're safe!", she finished and finally she released him.

Daniil leaned against one of the walls as Yuki ran away, giving Noah hug (he considered doing that too, but was ninjad, meh), "I called a bulldozer Rachel and yea, made a bit of distraction with her. Why did we stop? We have a giant path up to walk through!"

||The climb was... interesting. It took twice, maybe three times as long with his injured leg. At least there weren't many people using it. But it was somewhat late when they managed to reach the top.

As soon as they were out, Lisa turned and looked to Noah, still not trusting that he was himself. The usual thing of 'say something only Noah would know' wouldn't work because the yeerk would know exactly what that was. "You realize there's no way we can trust Noah, right now? He's probably one of them now. They'd have to be idiots to pass up a chance like this."

"Are you actually implying that we are dealing with a mind-controlling thing?" Daniil said

"Short version? slug that burrows into your ear and completely takes over your body, rendering you incapable of doing anything while said slug walks around pretending to be you down to the last, most minisulce detail." Lisa said before leveling her gaze at Noah.

"WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT BEFORE?" Daniil snapped, "And you of course have no freaking way to determine whenever someone is a host or not?"

Is this where it all goes downhill?

"Not without forcibly confining them for three days to starve the yeerk out. And we wanted to get you... you know, out of this situation before we had to tell you anything or you saw anything? Remember that part?" Lisa asked.

"Little extreme don't you think Lisa...but if we follow that, we all need to run away now.", Miyuki said trying her best to help Daniil up.

"Can we not yell while we are still in the building?" Noah said. Noah wanted to get out. All the way out. Not just at the top of the stairs. He didn't think he could relax until then. Or think straight.

"I second this sentiment," Daniil said, "There are people from my host family there though, so I'd have to leave alone and explain the leg somehow..." Daniil groaned, "I'll just man up and pretend nothing happened to it. You guys have any emails or something so I could contact you later?"

"Fine." Lisa said, but still stared at Noah. "But don't think that I trust you right now."

Miyuki gave Daniil her phone number. "We can worry about that later Lisa.", Miyuki said.

"I'm taking the rear. I don't want a knife in my back when we're leaving." Lisa said and slipped to take the rear.

"I don't think any of us carry knives...still if you want.", Miyuki said.

Lisa was the third, no, fourth thing on Noah's mind at the moment. Why did he get out, What was he to do, How did this happen, then Lisa. And 1.5 was what was going on at the moment. The evening was winding down, and most people had left. And a lot had gone down apparently. Either way, there were not a lot of people between them and the side exit.

"Keep moving. Down a block maybe," Noah said, taking over supporting Daniil from Yuki.

Lisa tried keeping her eyes and ears open for any sign of a tail, but with everything that had happened, she was understandably distracted.

Notice: **Yellow 13** rolled a die with 20 sides. The die showed: 1 +4-penalties

Noah succumbed in an alley, deciding it was the best place to crash. Out of sight, dark, secluded. He pressed the knob on his watch, lighting up the luminous dial. 10:50. Over an hour since they headed down in the first place. More than enough time for things to go horribly wrong. "What happened to your leg?"

[Twenty mins or so down, thirty mins or so up, ten mins or so with stuff in the pool]

Miyuki was grateful that Noah was helping Daniil out. It was hard enough to run in a dress without worrying that the skirt would snag on a branch. "What happened to you? I don't mean to be a buzzkill, but Lisa may be right here...Noah...how can we trust you after you went missing so close to where they infest you."

Is this where it all goes downhill?

"I... Needed to make a distraction. Used an bulldozer for that. Jumped off from it while it was speeding, landed crappily," Daniil replied, "Doubt it's the worst that could have happen though," he smirked.

"You're lucky you weren't crushed Dan.", Miyuki said to him.

Noah slumped against alley wall, slowly dropping to the ground, pressing his hands to his head. "Never got taken to the pool. I saw it and froze... then got... quality time with Lisa's wonderful mom."

"So how DO we know you aren't infested?", Miyuki asked, "Especially when you had that quality time with Lisa's mom."

"Because you aren't stupid," Noah said shortly.

"This is really paranoia inducing at this point..." Daniil said, "How much time does it take for this parasite to get into a host? And they are telepathic, aren't they?"

"It's only me, you, Lisa and now Daniil. We were all down there. If they got me, there wouldn't be any reason for us to get out. Lisa's mom let me go for some reason I don't fully get," Noah said, his voice soft. "And I don't know. I've never seen one before. This is the first time I even saw the pool. "

Miyuki gave Lisa a glare, Noah's logic was right, "Good enough for me, Just wanted to allay Lisa's suspicions.", she said finally. "What is clear though is that we are hopelessly outnumbered, hilariously unprepared for this whole mess." She didn't want to mention Elfie and the tesseract until they were back home.

"And... and it's something we can't ignore," Noah said, the cries of the people in those cages and the way they looked locked up in there. It was burned in his memory. "At least, I can't ignore it."

"We need at least some strategy to deal with that," Daniil said, "If telling authorities is apparently not an option"

"Of course we can't ignore it...hmm...what to do...what to do...", Miyuki thought. She spoke up, "We should wait till we're in private to discuss a possible strategy."

"Lisa's mom is the deputy mayor. And she's apparently some important person in the invasion force, who apparently wants to take over Visser Three's rank," Noah said. "It's why she let me go. She said she could use me."

"We have a problem either way, there's quite a few things to discuss I think. Your place Noah, perhaps.", Miyuki said to him.

"NO," Noah said sharply. "Are you even listening?"

Is this where it all goes downhill?

"She just let you go like that?" Daniil asked, skeptically rising his eyebrow

"Then what...we can't just do nothing.", Miyuki said to him, trying not to consider what had to be done.

"She knows who I am," Noah repeated. "If she doesn't already know where I live, she can find out from Mrs. Graceland, who works for her. She thinks I'm 'useful' because I know about them and they don't know how. I think... I think she wants to use me against Visser Three... like politics. I don't even know what I should do..." His voice was starting to break again.

"If she knew you, then likely she knows who I am and definitely keeps tabs on Lisa.", Miyuki said to him, "We need firepower and fast"

"What does me getting caught have to do with you?" Noah scowled. "Unlike some people I don't sell out friends if I get in trouble."

"It has nothing to do with that, it has to do with the fact that I've gone to Lisa's house to play before.", Miyuki said.

"And you never knew her mom was anything but normal," Noah countered.

"Yes, not like I knew about the alien thing years ago after all.", Miyuki said, "These things have blended in well or something."

"That's my point. Why would knowing me get you in trouble? They only caught me, and I never mentioned anything about anyone else. Not even the tagalong here," Noah said, referring to Daniil.

"You should probably go underground. Hell, maybe fake your own death," Daniil suggested

"I was thinking the same thing, and I never insinuated anything geez.", Miyuki said after Daniil finished.

Noah buried his head in his hands again, his entire bearing tense and strained. "But my folks... I don't want to make them suffer..."

"I don't know what to say.", Miyuki said to him placing a hand on his shoulder.

"Just keep in mind that they might as well be infested too," Daniil said

"Your folks, my folks, just about anyone could be.", Miyuki said sadly. "We can save them by taking action."

"Alright..." Noah wiped at his eyes. "Alright... Do you have any thing like camping stuff at your place?"

"Just enough for me and my mom...we tend to bring it out when visiting Aunt Setsuna.", Miyuki said to him, "Hey, we could go visit Aunt Setsuna well when there's a long break but still it's a thought."

Noah tried to think about what he could do. This one stupid thing derailed all his thoughts about the future, about what he thought would happen. Even the simple thought about going to bed and waking up in the morning... He drew his knees close to his chest. They were right though. Staying would put his parents at risk. He didn't know what Lisa's mom had in mind when she said useful. It could mean she would have him poke at the hornet's nest, or send her people to raid the house and prove he knew things...

No... he could risk staying long... He'd have to leave... He'd have to leave home...He didn't know where he could go, but he'd have to leave... that's why he was asking Yuki about camping gear he could borrow. He'd need money... food... shelter... at least it wasn't winter... oh man... what if it lasted until winter? No... keep focus... He'd have to go home and pack some stuff... packing light... just some clothes... his computer and stuff... He buried his head between his knees.

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for intuition. The die showed: 11+2

Noah rolled a die with 20 sides for stability. The die showed: 13+3

"You okay Noah?", Miyuki asked patting him on the back.

"No... I'm not..." Noah said softly. He'd insisted. If he hadn't insisted on following them, he wouldn't have gone down there... Or if he didn't go spy on my Graceland he wouldn't have reason to panic at the meeting... Hell, if he'd kept Yuki back at the park, he would be ignorant, blissfully ignorant... None of this would have happened in the first place and everything would have been the same...

//my Graceland?" Ohhhh my. He's got a thing for older woman doesn't he? :P

"Hmm, maybe...we could....you could...", Miyuki began putting together a thought. "You could stay with my Aunt Setsuna at the nature reserve...I could put in a good word for you", Miyuki continued the thought, she too was worried, but Noah was face to face with Lisa's mom, "Hmm...I haven't seen ol Setsuna in a while...would be nice to visit her again.." She tried to distract herself from the alien thing with the good times she had on the reserve.

Lisa rubbed her head. "I might as well go with you, Noah. I can't trust that my mom won't infest me to get to you. It can't be any worse for her the what she's been through already." She looked to Noah. "I'm going to say this now... I'm going to save her. Somehow. If it's unavoidable... I'll... I'll..." Lisa couldn't finish her thought, choked out by tears. If the time came, she'd be the one to put teeth to the throat... or whatever she'd need.

"No. You are aren't," Noah said firmly.

"N--not what?" Lisa managed to sob out.

Is this where it all goes downhill?

"You are going home, and you'll act like nothing happened, like nothing changed, because nothing did," Noah said slowly and carefully. "Nothing changed because I barely know you, which is true. We're just classmates, you're a friend of a friend."

"My mother has a bug in her head! And she can put one in me at any time she wants!" Lisa exploded. "And I bet she will. She didn't infest you for some reason, but that won't stop her from putting one in me to find out how much you know."

"Because a week away we hardly talked more than polite greetings in the hall." Noah was getting his passion back. Some. He was still terrified, but... You can stand in the face of terror. Gurren Lagann taught him that. So he stood. Slowly, sure, but at least he wasn't a curled up wreck in an alley anymore. "Your mom's a big shot. One of the bosses. If she wanted to get you, she would have already. It sucks, but do you want to damn every person I know?"

Lisa bit the inside of her lip and sighed. "Fine... Fine. But no one attack her." Closing her eyes tightly to block the tears that would come, she shuddered. "I'll do it myself. If I have to."

Daniil glanced around. This might call for a topic change, "Anyone knows how can we get a load of explosives?" he asked after a while.

"... attack her?" Noah said, sorta ignoring Daniil (it hadn't processed yet). "Who said anything about attacking her?"

"How should I know what you're planning?" Lisa asked. "For all I know, you could just use her until you don't need her anymore."

"Wasn't it her using him until he isn't useful anymore?", Miyuki asked, "Anyway, yeah, Noah, I can help you get away...And Lisa, he has enough on his mind."

"What? And put your family at risk too?" Noah asked. "No."

"You already asked to borrow camping gear, what can I say?", Miyuki said.

"You'll say you'll leave your shed unlocked," Noah said.

"Sure I can leave the shed unlocked, but I can't let my parents know...", Miyuki said to him.

"You don't have wireless communications with you?" Daniil asked, "Why are we still standing around here anyway?"

"Because I don't want to go back yet...and didn't you get my number before?", Miyuki asked.

Daniil sighed, "Whatever... I just don't think you should be talking about that in an alley. I mean... It elevated from a secret tunnel into an underground city to a city for telepathic aliens to the fact that there are mind controlling aliens... Ugh... I wonder if it can get any more convoluted"

Is this where it all goes downhill?

"Noah, we should probably explain everything to Dan in private I think...should we go to the shed then?", Miyuki whispered to Noah.

Some people just didn't get it. And he was feeling bad enough without having to spend time to dwell on explaining it all again. "Do what you want, Yuki," Noah said, shaking his head. "I'm going to go to see if I can work something out. Just remember to leave the shed open for me. I'll... I'll work something out..."

He stuck his hands in his pocket and walked away.

"Is it really the time to split up the party?" Daniil grumbled, "Noah, do you really want to leave and be alone in situation like that?"

No, it's not. But it's the only idea I have at the moment, Noah thought to himself. *And I don't have time to come up with more.* All he did was raise one hand in salutation and keep walking.

Daniil followed Noah with his eyes and sighed. "We are so going to die..."

"In which case, Daniil, follow me...there's stuff to explain.", Miyuki said.