# Event transcript: Top Comics Artists Play Treasure Island RPG: Part One

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

**Ram V – Whistler**

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Hello and welcome. Today we'll be playing the Book Week Scotland role playing game by

Adrian Barber. Book Week Scotland is a digital festival in national celebration of all things

reading and writing. The game and resources are available to download from the Scottish

Book Trust website and if you're watching on YouTube, there should be a link in the

description below. So, you'll be able to try it yourselves at home. My name is Hari Conner.

I'm an author and illustrator. I make LGBT graphic novels. I also work in storytelling games. I was the illustrator for the Adventure Zone Game, and I wrote a book called Into The Dungeon which is like a 'choose your own adventure' style book. Basically, I'm really

interested in storytelling games that are both fun to veterans and also really accessible to

people who are totally new to the genre – like the one that we'll be playing today. If you

don't know, a role playing game or RPG basically just means a game where you're playing as a character. You might hear people say tabletop RPG which is just to say like not a video game – it's more like a board game or like improv. The most famous one is probably

Dungeons and Dragons but there are loads of different kinds, including games like the one

we're playing today, which you don't have to remember a lot of rules for. Personally, I think

that, like, collaborative storytelling, telling stories together is a very sort of fundamental part

of human culture and can provide an opportunity for all kinds of different people like kids,

adults, people who might not work creative jobs –or get a chance to do that stuff day-to-day – to, like, invent and play in a creative space. So today, I'm joined by a selection of

wonderful authors and comic writers. And I thought I'd go around so everyone can just

introduce themselves and their work. We'll talk about your characters later; you can just

introduce your real flesh and blood corporeal forms now. I'm just going to go by the order of who's first on my screen – so first up I've got Marjorie. Hello, do you want to introduce

yourself?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Hi, everyone. My name is Marjorie Liu. I'm a novelist and comic book writer. My current

series is Monstrous with Sana Takeda, and I am so delighted to be here, and I cannot thank you Hari enough and the Scottish Book Trust.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Next up, I've got Val. Hello.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Hi, I'm Val McDermid. I'm primarily a crime novelist, but I've also done various collaborative projects involving drama telling stories in different ways – and this year, I published my first graphic novel with Kathryn, Kathryn Briggs, who is a wonderful, wonderful Illustrator and we did a graphic novel called Resistance which was about pandemic – no idea where that came from! I'm enjoying the prospect of, of making a fool of myself with other people telling stories today.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Good, Same. Perfect. And next up, I've got Ram - hello.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah. Hi, everyone. I'm Ram V. I am a writer of comics and graphic novels predominantly,

but also written a few short stories here and there. I used to be a chemical engineer until

2013 at which point I decided to drop all of that nonsense and start writing for a living

instead. I've written books like Paradiso, The Many Deaths of Laila Starr, Black Mumba, Blue in Green and I also write comics with superheroes and capes at DC and Marvel.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

And after I've got Kieron.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Hello, I'm Kieron Gillen. I am a mainly a comic writer. I'm a recovering games critic – I wrote about video games for everyone for like 15 years, and then somehow found a way to write comics instead. Which is fun. I most relevantly I do but I just finished a book called Die, which is the about... it's portal fantasy about role playing games and is basically why the hell do we play games anyway, but I've done a lot of other work. Both my own and also much like Ram for Marvel and DC.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, cool. So, before we get on to all of your character ideas, which I'm very excited to

hear about, we're going to jump right in with like an introduction. So, for now you are

yourself. But we're in an alternate world where there's no global pandemic and you're all in

Edinburgh for like a Book Week Scotland event happening tomorrow. And you've all just like met up to get a coffee, to like get to know each other. There's a bit of wind because it's

November in Edinburgh, and it's early evening, so it's basically already getting dark. A lot of shops starting to close up, and you're walking along a street near the Grassmarket and it suddenly starts to pour with rain so you're all looking around for a place to shelter. You see an alley that even those of you very familiar with Edinburgh have never noticed before in your lives, and there's a little glimmering light down at the end so you all duck down into

the alley and down at the end you see a bookshop. The sign above the door is like obscured with overgrown ivy so you can't make out the name and the shop windows were all misted up so you can't see inside but it's lit up, warm and inviting and on the door, you see a sign that says 'open'. So, you all hurry inside to get out of the rain and a little bell tinkles over the door as you shut it behind you. And you find yourselves in a room crammed full of books new and old, stacked in piles on rickety tables in front of you, walls lined with bookshelves that extend - like floor to ceiling – everywhere. You see a couple of low corridors extending off which are just lined with more books and sort of arrows pointing to like nonfiction, crime, different directions. There's not a lot of people in the shop. But sitting behind an oldfashioned counter you see a bookseller who has like round gold glasses and short green hair and they look incredibly stressed. They have this huge book. It looks kind of like an ancient tome. It's, like, bound in bad old leather. It has gilded edges - almost looks like sort of parchment pages with calligraphy. And they're like flicking through it like they desperately like looking for something. And on the other side of the shop, there's a couple of tourists who are like frowning down on an old book. And it sounds like they're having an argument. And before you guys really get a chance to get your bearings you distinctly hear one of the tourists say I really don't remember there being a dragon in Treasure Island – and the shopkeeper's head like snaps up and they hurry over – they have, they're in a wheelchair and they steer it between the piles of books to, like, not knock everything over but they're hurrying there and as soon as they arrive they're like 'oh excuse me, could I just see, can I see that for a second – it's a very important special edition and they sort of snatch the book out of the tourist's hands. And then they get 'I thought the time is, actually closing time – we're actually closed up – it's a beautiful...you should get out and enjoy the' and they like usher the tourists out into the, like, dark, rain pouring down, Edinburgh street and like slam the door behind them and they turn the sign in the door to 'closed'. Now the four of you are still standing like dripping inside the shop. You can see that the book that they've snatched from the tourist is like a beautiful cloth bound edition of Treasure Island. It has like a block printed cover and it's very like piratey looking pirate on the front with a parrot and a peg leg and there's a couple of other characters. But in the background, you notice there's like a sailing ship off in the distance that looks like it's being crushed by an enormous scaly claw. And behind the pirates, there's actually a huge gaping toothy maw, yawning wide – it actually obscures most of the title. Not what you'd expect from the cover of Treasure Island. And the bookseller, like, notices you looking and glances down and it's, like, 'oh god' and like

flicking through this book as well. Now, I think all of you have, like, Book Week Scotland,

like, lanyards or badges or something – or maybe they just recognise you because you're all very famous. Or maybe you all just look like huge, like, nerds but something they like notice in all of you, like, the capability to adventure, and they look up to you and go "I really need your help with something" – which I assume you say yes to. So, they are like bringing you through the shop into the back room. And they've picked up the, like, great big book and they're like wheeling along, and they're sort of, like, chatting to you going like, "obviously I wasn't expecting the spell book to be readable. I thought it would be like kind of a fun joke. Like read out with all my friends and as soon as I, like, finished reading it, it was all the lights went out. The shop was plunged into darkness. The book levitated into the air with an eerie glow and so all of the books in the shop start flying off the shelves and floating around and there were ribbons of text flowing out of all of the books and, you know, I was knocked out by one of the books. And when I finally came to the shop with a mess but, worst of all, something was wrong with the books and a bunch of the characters were imbued with the magical power to go into other books. And some of them were really causing like all kinds ofchaos to the plots. I found another spell that let me go into the books to try and get everything back to right. So, all week I've been, like, in and out, sorting everything out, persuading characters to go back where they belong. But my creative energies are basically all used up". And as they look at the cover of Treasure Island again, the, the dragon's enormous mouth has got closer to eating Long John Silver and they go "I really think I need a whole team for this". So, they have brought you into the back room and like cleared off books from the table and they getting, like, tea and biscuits and all of you are sat down, and they give you, like, character sheets and all of you make your characters for your my little voyage into Treasure Island. So now I'm going to go around and ask you guys about the characters that you've made. And we're, like, basing this on, again, the Book Week Scotland RPG. So, in that each character has like luck. And so, if you want to describe like your luck, or your character strength and a character weakness, and your name and stuff, that'll be amazing. So, Marjorie, do you want to start us off? Hey.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

You bet. Hi. That was a beautiful introduction. Gosh, I love this bookstore. I want to hear

about your adventures. Alright, so, so everyone, friends, friends. I am an elfin smuggler

named Lady Vex, who was betrayed by my sister and captured by the authorities. Before I

could escape, the tips of my ears were cruelly sliced off in punishment for my crimes. And

though my ears have healed, they still ache in the slightest bit of cold, so I wear, wear hats, even in the summer, yeah, to keep my ears warm. Now do I want revenge against my sister? Not anymore as that bad elf's plot to take over my business went down in flames. My sister wasn't very good at the smuggling business. And so, she crashed the ship against the rocks, and she was eaten by mermaids. Now, I must tell you, I definitely don't know these mermaids. And I definitely don't host their karaoke parties. I just want to be really clear about that, right? I have, however, given up the smuggling game, and I have invested my own stash of buried treasure in opening a small shop that specialises in rum-based desserts, such as coconut flan with rum, or Tortuga rum cake soaked in rum syrup with a vanilla glaze, or my personal favourite rum, mocha walnut layer cake. So, that said, I'm very good at sneaking into places unseen. Sneaking into places where I shouldn't be. And my luck is not being seen. But I'm terrible at fighting. So, I kind of try to avoid that at all costs.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay. Amazing. Thank you. So, I think we'll just run through all the characters first, and then I'm going to talk to you a little bit about like your goals and how we're going to play. And so, Val, hey, do you want to tell us about your character?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yeah, I'm George Stephenson, and I am a Bow Street Runner which means I am a very early policeman as it were. I catch thieves. And sometimes I hold them to ransom. And essentially say, 'give me the loot, and I'll let you off the hook'. But I have a particular personal connection to this book, because by a strange twist of time, I am an ancestor of Robert Louis Stevenson and I cannot bear what has happened to his book. And so, I regard it as my personal obligation to get this dragon out of Treasure Island. I don't care where it ends up, but it's got to get out of this book and go someplace else that it belongs. I am, I'm clever. I'm clever as a corkscrew. I have a twisted mind. My strength is that I'm good at getting people to tell me things and finding clues is my luck. But I'm also a coward, so I don't like to fight either. But the other side of that is that I can run away very fast.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, amazing. And you're like a 18th century, if you like, pregenerative kind of ancestor

of...yeah, okay, perfect. Great. Ram...hey.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Hey, so my character is a 18th century pirate – ex-pirate with his exploits largely being in the Bay of Bengal area, with trading ships coming into the sort of southeastern coast of India. He has had good times, stealing, stealing booty off of these ships. He is a well-travelled pirate and cartographer who has largely decided that his seafaring days are over, and so decided to open up his very own pawn shop in a, in a suitably seedy pirate city, if you will. But things have not gone very well. He owes far too many people far too many debts and hasn't collected nearly enough. He is slippery as an eel, so rather good at getting out of tight spots, near death escapes and... or even talking his way out of a bad situation. His luck is one of direction so he kind of always kind of knows which way to go, even, even if he's lost. But his great weakness is that he can't resist a gamble. And so, he's forever tempted by the promise of greater reward. And it has led him down some very regrettable paths. So yeah, so that's, that's my character and his name is Whistler.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Great, cool. Kieron...hello

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Hey, well, I imagined fictional Kieron Gillen sitting down with a character sheet and

immediately kind of being the slightly, being the typical writer - 'oh I've researched

something I'm gonna use something I've researched'. He remembers that, you know,

Stevenson – he was a big...he played war games, early war games in his bedroom. He was wrote about in magazines and, with his nephew, and had all these little toy soldiers. Except there's this weird thing that he..there's a wonderful bit where, like, relatives come up and they discover him playing toy soldiers with his nephew and he gets very embarrassed. So, the idea of, like, what about one of these tall, sort of toy soldiers who's just really embittered that Stevenson was ashamed of him, hence is born Osbourne, the toy soldier. A living lead toy soldier with, like, chip...the paint's coming off a bit, he's, he's been in 1000 battles – he's somehow survived them all, mostly intact while some score marks and he's come here to either set the record straight or get, get his, get his just reserves. His luck is, he, and he's, he's an expert warrior. He knows everything about winning battles, he can give orders, you know, he's, he knows everything. His major disadvantage is he's about 10 centimetres tall – so anything which involves being bigger than 10 centimetres tall is a problem for him. And that's going to have... mostly, I see people carrying me around in his, in people's pockets. He's kind of that, that sign inside.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah. Okay. Amazing. So, one thing that I would say is that you can try to do anything in this game. But if it's going to be, there is something I'm adding from the original game, because what we're playing in this in this call, as if there's something that you try and do, which is like, far-fetched or beyond the scope of what might happen in Treasure Island say, perhaps, you're from like a fantasy world and you're like an elf and you want to try and do some magic or something I'm going to make you roll, just like a regular six sided dice, to rep... which is going to represent whether the text is able to, like, smoothly incorporate your wild idea into the narrative or not. The bookseller tells you that your goals are to get to Treasure Island, find the dragon and persuade the dragon to go back home where it belongs. The dragon is still imbued with this magical power to move through books so he can do that itself. And they kind of theorised that if the dragon is left in Treasure Island for too long, it might start spilling out into reality. So, dragons begin to appear in every copy of Treasure Island, ruining countless students book reports, and eliminating the muppets from, from history, like radically changing Tim Curry's career and a kind of butterfly effect. Tolkien accused of plagiarism - maybe reality starts to unravel, who knows what will happen to the world as we know it. And the last thing they tell you is that this is a stealth mission. So, you are trying not, if possible, to disrupt the course of the story. The plot of Treasure Island you kind of want to run as smoothly as possible so if you can avoid making drastic changes or interfering with, like, central characters and the plot, that's what you're supposed to be doing. But that stuff, I think, will be, will be more easier, like, to understand, like, as we play how that stuff is gonna work out. But, again, you're very welcome to do anything and you can also like make up extra stuff from your character's past like bring in new ideas. It doesn't have to be something that you just told me just now about your character. So, the bookseller gets you all to, like, I don't know, like join hands, make...light the candle and make reading out a style from the book like a seance or something and all of you put your character sheets in the middle of the table and at first you think nothing is happening and then the room gets darker and darker and before you know what's happened, you have awakened somewhere new. You are on a very small sailboat, rising and falling on choppy waters. It is night. The moon is covered by clouds so it's pretty dark and the waves are, the boat is going really up and down on these waves that are almost taller than a person. In the distance you can see, like, huge storm clouds and I think – Marjorie is your character was a smuggler at sea, right?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Yes

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah. Cool. So, I think that Whistler and Lady Vex know that, like, there's a big storm coming and the boat that you're in, the three of you plus whoever's pocket Osbourne is in, pretty much like the size of the book is just big enough for you three. It has a sail but it's like, little – it's like a rowboat, there's oars on the bottom. And, so yeah, the characters who are experienced at sea I think yeah, you know, that is a bad place to be in a storm. There is a flash of lightning and I think probably George, like, notices that in the distance you don't see any land, you're completely in middle the ocean, but you do see a much larger ship a little way off. Like rolling and pitching in the waves.

**Ram V – Whistler**

You said there was absolutely no land?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

No, I don't see any land.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Well, it's clear then we have to make for the ship. I think, I think we're safer – obviously

safer in the bigger ship than we are here being tossed around at sea.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Did I mis-read this book? Treasure Island– isn't there meant to be an island isn't – isn't that

one of the major parts?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, so your first thing that you're getting to, is you have to get to the island. I mean...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Character of the joke. Sorry...

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, yeah, yes. No, that's good. I was gonna actually say that your character may be like

notices as you get a bit closer. You're like, this is the Hispaniola, like, this is the ship going to Treasure Island. I think that if you've been around while Stevenson was, like, writing I think you maybe have like insights into the plot in a way that the others maybe don't.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

This one's important, I think

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I vaguely remember this one. We should get aboard and away from the water. I must

explain – I'm made of lead. You have no idea how frightened I am right now.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Whistler, I would suggest that we turn the boat against the wave, and we start rowing hard.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah. Also, let's make for a part of the ship where it's easier to sneak on board – we might

not be welcomed very easily.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yeah, I think we should, we should tie Osbourne to a piece of rope and throw Osbourne

onto the deck. And Osbourne can secure the rope to the deck and then we can sneak up the rope once we get close enough.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

A boarding action

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Good idea Yes.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay,

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

That seems, that seems reasonable. I've been involved in many boarding actions in my time. So, like jumping aboard ship by myself. I'll tell you the story later.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm not volunteering to throw a rather heavy piece of lead up high onto a ship.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think that Lady Vax and Whistler successfully, we've established that you're good, but see, you successfully like navigate the boat, sort of like zigzagging through the waves to get closer to the larger ship and yeah, I think you do see like ropes hanging off the edge of the ship that you think you could probably get close enough to try and like grab onto or pull down.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I very chivalrously hold the rope and, you know, motion for anyone who wants to go up first

to do so.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Well, my luck is not being seen. And I say – Osbourne - would you like to join me?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think it's probably best - we work well together.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Sure. So, I'll put you in my little pocket and pshht, pshhht, pshhht, pshhhht, pshhht

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, great. You can climb, so the rope kind of like goes up over the lip of the ship and

onboard. I think you can see there's a lot of chaos – it seems like maybe the people on

board were like not really ready for the storm, so you just hear like people like running

about that kind of busy. Again, it's pretty dark. You can see a couple of lanterns kind of

swinging but most people on board are pretty, pretty busy. You, do you go like up over the

lip of the ship or you gonna toss? You gonna do your plan to, like, toss, Osbourne

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Well, I'm already at the top but I can't be seen yet. So, I reach into my pocket and I gently

and courteously lift Osbourne out and place Osbourne on the rail because I assume he can, he can get in also unseen and he can do a little scouting before I throw myself overboard.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Be my...absolutely be my pleasure as I sort of, I make quite a heavy noise almost as I land

and then sort of move around looking around. Making sure no one's going to come – but I'm not sure what I'm going to do if they do.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think that, like, so you have a lot of wargame military experience and I think that you decide that it's like, it's a very inefficiently run ship. Like the people are not really following the captain's orders. They're just like scrambling around. You know, I think you're like disappointed by the level of organisation here on the ship. Does, there's like people up aloft like scrambling around that's like a... there's the main deck and then there's two like a raised bit, that's like the fo`c’sle and like the quarter deck at the back. You can see kind of over the, on the other side of the deck, there is a hatch that goes down into the ship. Most of... there's like a few people clustered around a rail on the other side. There's the captain up on the quarterdeck, it seems like yelling orders aloft. But there's no one, like, directly in your way between where you are and the hatch that goes below.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I give it to... I lean back to Lady Vex. Lady Vex, I think everyone can make it up here quite

safely. What I'll...shall I go down, make a little distraction, and then you can all go down into the hole over there. I think that's probably safe to get beneath that because we're meant to be hiding. I'm not quite sure – I'd rather just charge and give him a bit of like steel or lead, as the case may be.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I understand how you feel now do you think you can cause a distraction without any risk to

yourself?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Please – there's only 30 of them and one of me. I've defeated that odds many a time.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Now I guess the worst that happens, not that you would do this because you are the most

courageous, the most – but I suppose as a last-minute ploy you could just always freeze and pretend that you're a toy.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

It's like... playing dead is certainly within my level of the skill Lady Vex. I'll see what I can do.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Right.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

And I, I think that we shouldn't all go below. In my law enforcement career, I've discovered

that often you have to hide and spy on people to get the kind of information that you need

to acquire to carry out the plans you plan to, to perform. So, I think while you guys go below I should climb into that barrel over there that looks like, I think it might have apples in it... is that apples in there Osbourne? Yeah?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Looks like apples to me.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yeah, I can climb in amongst the apples and, you know, just munch a few apples while I wait and see what's happening.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool. So, you are all making.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm going below because likely, likely where all the cargo is.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool - so you're making this plan like, I guess with Lady Vex like dangling over the side of the ship and you two are in the little boat at the bottom. As the r... waves are getting rougher, I think the boat is starting to like hit up against the hull of the much bigger ship. It's getting quite, I mean, do you think that George is like good at sea? Has he been to see before? Is this a new experience?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

No, he doesn't want to be at sea a minute longer he wants to be up that rope so, you know, Lady Vex can you get a move on? Clear the top of that rope so I can get up there and over into the barrel of apples before everybody notices what we're doing.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

You bet George. I am over that rail.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool. So, is that Lady Vex is like sneaking onto the deck, like hiding behind things making her way towards the hatch right away?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Well, I will wait to make sure that Whistler and George make it over the rail safely.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yes. Okay, cool. So, I guess George is up next if he's not keen at being at sea. It's maybe it's quite a slippery rope but if Lady Vex is there to help, I think you can probably all scramble up?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yep.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I've got Whistler pro.. prodding me from below so you know I'm, I'm going as fast as I can.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay,

**Ram V – Whistler**

I've also managed to look through various portholes to figure out where things are stored.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, so I think that Lady Vex, we've established, is like very good at not being seen you

know, like hiding stuff out the way you've like moved the rope to a place that you'd like find

some like ropes and things. I think that George maybe less experienced at being at sea but has like managed to get up and get over the railing. Yeah, Whistler does manage to look in through one of the portholes and you can see that, you're round like the back of the ship and you can see there's like a bigger room and because like you know ships, I think you know that this is, like, the captains quarters. And you can also see through, there's like

another room – it's not just one big one underneath the like quarter deck. There's another

one that looks like it is, it's got like a table with things laid out on it. There's like, sort of like

sextants and sort of navigational instruments like maps, papers and stuff and that's what

you managed to see so I think that those rooms have got little lanterns that have been

abandoned as everyone's hurried onto the ship. Yeah, so I think you make your way up and all of you are successfully aboard while the little ship is getting like hit. Slowly broken to pieces against the hull as the rain gets like harder and harder. There are people coming up and down the hatch like, now and again someone comes up and runs across the deck, but you are kind of like hidden amongst some stuff on the deck, including a barrel.

**Ram V – Whistler**

...to share the information about the captain's room and, and I say, I say to everyone

whispering, of course, it might be, it might be wise to find out which way the ship is headed. And it might be even wiser to find out what else is in the captain's room. So, I recommend making our way there as long as we're not spotted, of course.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool. And – oh no sorry. Go ahead. Did I interrupt anyone? No? Okay. So, I think that again, Osbourne like knows this ship is going to Treasure Island and you can, like, share that with everyone else, if you want to. I guess some people – some of the other characters predate Treasure Island but you can tell them, like, that you're going to the right place. And I also think that Whistler knows that. He already talked about – you want to go and hide in the – where the cargo is. Like you know that that would be a good place to, like, wait out the storm and that you will kind of be going to the right place. Yeah, so do you start sneaking across the deck? Who's like leading the way? Is George remaining in the barrel on deck is your plan?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I'm going to stay in the barrel on the deck because I want to hear what the sailors are saying

to each other. What the captain's saying to each of them about where we're going and

where, how, how close they are to the destination.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

How they figure they're going to get through the storm and get to the island - so I can

communicate this information to my colleagues who are below – spying out the lay of the

land below decks.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, cool. I think you can hide yourself in this barrel. I think you do that. Are you used to

like sneaking around and hiding where you're trying to get clues? Is that your style?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

That's how we, that's how we Bow Street Runners captured our, our villains. We hide, we

sneak we listen, we overhear and then we figure things out because we have these wee

minds like corkscrews. We are very smart, but we're twisted.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

And so, do you like, there, are you imagining, like, there are apples in the barrel – you're like putting the apples over the top of yourself?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

There are apples in the barrel. I'm pulling them over the top myself – there's quite a few

apple cores in here because obviously other people have had the same idea – hiding in the apple barrel and helping themselves. But it's, it's, it's okay in here and at least it's not in the storm.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, great. So you are, you think, successfully hidden in the barrel on deck. So, Lady Vex are you sneaking?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I am sneaking. I am trying to keep an eye on Osbourne now. Want to make sure that, you

know, because Osbourne is, is an amazing scout. I know this and so, you know, I'm looking for any warnings from him but otherwise I'm keeping to the shadows. It's a dark and stormy night but I've been through worse storms

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool - and Osbourne, are you still like scouting around on deck? Are you in someone's

pocket now?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I reckon I should probably come back after scouting around and I'm probably in Lady Vex's

pocket like, you know, crow's nest. Like that's the, that's the kind of extra looking around.

I'm doing.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, cool.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I am sneaking with them and I will stay up until, until Lady Vex and Osbourne are both down the hatch.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah. Would you say that you're experienced – sneaking around trying not to be seen?

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yes. I mean, I would certainly say I am experienced enough to do it on board a pirate ship.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, okay. So, you know the layout of the ship like you know, the mast, the sail, like you're looking at the ship and you're like "oh, this is like a two-master topsail schooner and I know how to get on here. I'll take you to the... Yeah, okay. So, I think with your knowledge of knowing where everything should be you are able to like duck behind things. I think Lady Vex has no trouble if she's very used to this and is able to like duck down the hatch when no one seems to be there. So, I think that you three have successfully made your way down. I think we'll come back to George in a little bit. The room that you find yourselves in is, again,

very dark. It's not very big. You can see – oh, I guess because, again, you guys like have been at sea and you know that the, like, big columns with like chains around the you know, that like anchor chains. There's like ropes. There are a couple of cannons that have all been, like, tied down and like closed gunports in this room. You can see in front of you, like not that far away, another hatch leading down. There's, sort of, over to your left, there is a door behind you, but you don't hear anything coming out of. Up ahead of you there's like a corridor leading off on the left as well as the hatch on the right and you can hear stuff from the corridor on the left. You think you can hear people like, kind of just like laughing and

messing around actually is what you hear. And there's more like lights, more lanterns up

that way. And you also don't hear anything from the hatch that goes further down either.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Now Whistler saw the captain's quarters to the portholes when he was coming up, scaling

the rope, correct?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

So those are on, you can get to those from the main deck. It's like the main deck has the

little extra quarter deck and if you go through the door there that'll lead you into the

captain's quarters and stuff. You are now below on the lower deck.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Got you.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Also, if we are in the place where the canons are, there must be barrels of gunpowder so

can I pack two, two tiny things of gunpowder?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

So, I think you don't find any gunpowder immediately next to the canons. There's kind of

like rain coming down and stuff. I think you also probably know that like, the, it's probably

like locked away somewhere. Maybe especially if it's like a crew that's like disorganised or,

like, not..maybe a crew that some people, like, don't trust other members of the crew it's

going to be hidden away somewhere. But you do, seeing the canons, know that there will be gunpowder like somewhere on this ship, for sure.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I imagine if we are to get to the captain's quarters at some point, we might need a

distraction or two.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, the other thing I would say is I think that like Osbourne knows that when the ship gets to Treasure Island, some people are going to go ashore. Like at some point there's going to be a lot less people on the ship. At the moment you can hear clattering at the mo... like you've only just arrived down, so there's no one coming through where you are right now. But it's kind of only a matter of time. There's quite a lot of people squeezed onto the ship at the moment.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Well, I imagine if we want to hide the best place to do would be the cargo hold.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, you think that the hatch leading down probably is the cargo hold – it's like dark and

quiet down there. So, like, I think you hear footsteps approaching and you can easily go

down that hatch if you want to.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Meanwhile, upst... up, up on the deck the weather is starting to clear a little bit and a couple of midshipmen are, are leaning against the barrel saying "now the storm's clearing off a bit, we should be able to make it to the island in the next half hour or so once we get past that reef at the mouth of the bay – we can't say because of the storm but it's... we know it's there – it's on the maps. And so that storm should start to subside now, and thankfully, we should be in harbour before too much longer goes past".

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think this, this does happen. But I think it's going to happen a little bit, like, further in.

That's like a little vision of the future. Soon we're gonna see all the storm like dying down

and I think you'll get a chance where you will be like hearing stuff going on. Right now, while the storm is still going on, I think that you guys can be making your way down into the cargo hold.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, I vote, I vote going down to the cargo hold.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Is that what Lady Vex and Osbourne are coming down as well?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Yes

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I have limited options.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Osbourne, if you wish to scout in different places, please let us know.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think it's a risk. Our mission is to get, if we can get to the island we can get off at the island. The real risk is being discovered before we get to the island. I think we need the best safety, the best hiding place, we can find. For me that's any space less than 10 centimetres. For you it's a more difficult task, but I leave in your very capable hands.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Then, then we shall go into the cargo hold.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think as you hear people approaching you guys will hurry down the ladder into this

very dark room. You can, it's not super big, but you can see barrels and crates. You can see there are stores as well of like tools, there are like ropes and sailcloth and pumps and things, like again, you guys know what this is and you see some food provisions as well. There's also another door going through to another bit of the cargo hold, so it's like dark here but you also where the trapdoor is going down.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, I'm gonna, I'm gonna root through whatever open provision crates to see what I can

take on my person without it being too, too cumbersome to carry.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

GM is there a machete or a hammer in these boxes?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think you can find a hammer among the tools and stuff. I think that, Whistler can find like a rope if you want to take rope with you – you, probably like tie it around you and you can find like ship's biscuit and like salt pork and I think probably it's, it's food that's like very far, Lady Vex would really like with your, like, tastes from your dessert shop. But there's like food, there's like fresh water. There's a certain amount that you can probably like wrap up in something and take with you.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I look, I look at Lady Vex and I say, 'bet there's rum though'.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

There's rum. So, I did good.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I feel like, for the main room you're in right now you don't find like rum and stuff. But again,

there is like, there's a door...

**Ram V – Whistler**

Right

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

...which you can head through – so you can either like hunker down here or you can like

check out.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

So whilst Whistler's clearly gonna get....get shot by firing squad if I've got anything to do but like, I still like ask Lady Vex to put me down – I'm going to go back and get George cos I reckon it's gonna be much safer to hide round here been in a barrel. Just because it's a... I realise we're gonna be here for a while so I want to go back and rescue George.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Yeah, I think...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Tell George the suggestion of joining us.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah okay. I think that like, I really like this idea that George is hiding and finds out more

information and we can do a bit of a like, fast forward if we want of you guys like looking

around in the cargo hold. I think you can definitely go back up to George and like tell him

what's going on. I think that if you guys are hunkering down, like in the cargo hold... you

can... I think

**Ram V – Whistler**

Can I encourage Lady Vex to look through the next doorway because she's particularly good at looking through things without being seen.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I am happy to do this.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

There's like, it's another really dark room. You think it might be a good place to be in

because it's just not immediately where the hatch opens up to, and there's another couple

of like locked doors. So again, Whistler you think that might become part of

somewhere...this could be.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I've got the hammer on one hand and I'm creeping up to those locked doors and putting my, my ears to them, my ear to them to listen.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You don't hear anything down here. There's like a lot of commotion above – people all

running around, but it is pretty like dark in the cargo hold. It's like pretty quiet. You can hear the ship, like creaking, the deck is really like moving around as the storm is like blowing through. But yeah, you don't hear anything down here.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Hmm. Okay. I'll wait. I'll wait till everybody's in here - into the, into the relatively unvisited

cargo area.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, cool. So, you guys are down in the relatively unvisited cargo area. I think that up on

deck, you can hear, it mostly what you hear, George, is commotion and you hear a lot of like shouting. It sounds like the captain is like, angry. And you actually hear him go like "why are the provision barrels up on deck at this time – really everything needs to be battened...get a move on please". And you actually feel the barrel being, like, lifted. I think that probably the people lifting it, like, don't, maybe don't notice how heavy it is. Maybe. I might get you to roll your dice actually. So that we see.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Hey, I'm rolling the dice. And I've... I've got a one.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, um, I think that you want to tell me, like, how good you think George is at being

completely silent and pretending to be hidden.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

George is fundamentally a coward. What it'll take what it... do what it takes to avoid being

discovered somewhere he shouldn't be. So, what I do is I stuff an apple into my mouth.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Mmm...okay.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Means I'm less likely to scream.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

So, I think that the one means that like they do notice this barrel is really heavy. They

thought people may have eaten most of the apples and as they're like pulling it over to go

down the hatch one of them opens it up, that so cowardly are you, that you're like, that the

apple is like completely in your mouth and you're completely like covered up, like hiding

right at the bottom, that the guy looking in and like the darkness and the wind and the rain,

kind of like tries to like move one of the apples. It hits, his hand like hits the one in your

mouth. but he just sees apples so he just like closes it up again, I think you're probably a

little unlucky in that they do take this barrel and move it down to the lower deck and not to

the cargo hold. They, you are taken...I think if Osbourne tries to come up, you're not in the

room that you were in before. You don't see this barrel on the deck. It's like somewhere else in the ship. But I think, yeah, you do hear... while the others are like poking around and like hiding out in the hold, I think some time passes. As you said, like the, it all like dies down a little bit. And you do hear a couple of sailors like talking, saying that, like, yeah, you're getting close to the island soon and they're expecting the storm to all blow up and over and, like by morning, it'll all be fine - like you'll have reached the island and it's all good. And you are still, you're being jostled and eventually you come to like a stop. And, and I think that you're in like a room that feels fairly quiet. And you know, again that it won't be like that long until morning when you get to the island – but you are not in the same place as everyone else.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

And I look around, I, I try to look around me because I know that there are some knot holes in the barrel because I noticed that before. So, I try and squirm around in this load of, of apples – and it's not very comfortable because although apples are round and relatively small, but still really hard, so every time I move apples stick into a different part of me, and I imagine I'm going to be bruised all over at the end of this because, you know, I'm a bit melodramatic about things like that. But eventually I do find a little knothole that I can see through and I might as well not bother because I can't really see anything at all, except an empty space – though I think I can see the edge of a door towards the outside edge of my vision. So, I think maybe... I can't see anybody, or hear anybody, I should risk standing up in the barrel and looking over the top and see what I can see. So I do that very slowly, with the strange sound of rattling apples and I peer over the top and there is a small empty room apart from a couple of other small barrels that look like they might contain beer.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think you're in, you're in a room with like other supplies and stuff. You do see one

door; I think leading out of the room. I think, I guess meanwhile like Osbourne – if you've

gone up to the deck and you found that the barrel is gone are you now like searching the

ship?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think a lot of...I probably immediately rush back to tell everybody else I'm.. not a panic...

you know this is all... recognise this information as if we've lost more of our party... you

know one member of the unit. We can't leave anyone behind. We've got to find George.

And I look at them as, I imagine, like Ram's got – sorry – Whistler's got half the ship stuffed in his pockets. You know. And like we need to find George. George is important. We need George. And then I, I immediately go start searching the ship without even thinking anyone's following me because I presume, they will be helping. Obviously because they're all good people.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I join Osbourne.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I join Osbourne immediately

**Ram V – Whistler**

I will, I will use my uncanny ability to find things. Find the direction in which things might be

to potentially guess where they've put the apple barrel?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, okay. You think that if the apples were going to be somewhere, they would maybe be by the, like, galley. Like near the kitchen and stuff. You think that probably the noises that you heard – you know ships – I think we've established you can have some sense of what's going on... is people like eating and drinking near to this. And in fact, I also think that George can see that the room that you're in is quiet, but the door opens on to a room of people who are like sitting, they just look like they're like sitting and drinking actually. Like they're just, like chilling and, like, laughing. And I think that, yeah, I think that Osbourne can also see that like, you find an area that's like eating and drinking – could be where apples are gonna be, and you also see all of these people there. It's like, it's the, it's the corr... so I think that it's the corridor that led off on the lower deck.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Right so is, is Osbourne's barrel closer to us? Or across the kitchen?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Like there's, it's a little room that goes off the galley. At the moment there are people there.

Osbourne, you've seen them, you... it's... it's quite a lot of people and I know that earlier you were talking about making a distraction you thought that like that could be a, it could be a plan. But...

**Ram V – Whistler**

I also I'm wondering if we, if anyone's really going to have apples at this time of day, so

might we be better with just keeping an eye on Osbourne's barrel and, and letting Osbourne sort of listen in on conversations potentially.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Well, I'm, I'm quite happily listening because now that they've, they've started to stop and

eat and drink

**Ram V – Whistler**

Sorry, George's barrel..Yeah, sorry.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Obviously now that they, they've taken the time out to sit and eat and drink, then the worst

of the storm must be passed. And there's a cabin boy who seems to be not very familiar

with the ways of the ship, not as familiar as the rest of the pirates. And he's basically asking people what they think is gonna happen now and, and they're talking about the winds dropping and the rain's not so heavy and really they should be able to start to, to get the telescopes out and send someone up to the crow's nest to get a better sense of how close we are to where we should be, which is apparently close to the island itself. So, the cabin boy is very excited about the prospect of making landfall after all this time of voyaging and maybe being closer to the, the treasure.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think you hear people say, like, it definitely seems like the storm will be over in a few hours, so I think that it's kind of up to George whether you're going to try and like wait in this room for a little bit longer – or if, you know, Osbourne or the rest of you are going to try and make a distraction and try and like all gather down in the hold. But it's not gonna be, like, that long before you're going to be closer to your destination.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I do look to Osbourne for, for leadership here – do we, do we create a distraction and no

man left behind... or do we, do we just bide our time?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Mmmm....night mission is always very dangerous that's the thing as and, we could have we could have, look we've lost one person already. Like, I don't think.. we're not meant to do anything like, for example, blow up the armoury which is my always my instinct. That's

probably not in the plot of Treasure Island I know.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

But maybe the distraction comes from beyond us...

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

...I think that..

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

...the roaring of the wind has died down – even from below we can hear that the roaring of

the wind has died down but there is now another roaring that's replaced the wind. There's

the sound of roaring up in the air beyond the ship – and down below we have no idea

what's going on. But the guys in the galley have an idea what's going on because they have run out of the galley, left their food and drink on the table and disappeared up onto the deck.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I feel we're gonna get to some of this stuff. I definitely like that, just, for like, for like the

pacing of how we're going to go. But yeah, I definitely think that like if you guys below –

apart from Osbourne – your instinct is to like hide you can absolutely do that. And I

definitely do think that like after a few hours, the storm is going to clear, you guys are going to be closer to the island and you can just wait and gather more information there. If you think that's going to be in character George, we can definitely do that. It's going to be like, a little, a little while before all of this stuff happens but you can just like wait it out. I think if that's what you want to do, you can do that.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, I mean I'm certainly happy with waiting either until we get to the island or until there

is an opportunity for us to create some sort of distraction.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Given, given the, the small confines of the ship. Given how few good places there are to

hide, and given the fact that our senses, you know, that we are not supposed to disrupt the

story of Treasure Island, I would be inclined to wait but keep an eye on things. You know,

keep, keep our like ears open to make sure that George is okay because of course, if George should be discovered, we will have to perform a rescue. But right now, George seems to be in a fairly safe, quiet area.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah. Okay, cool if that's what we're doing let's.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm smiling at the notion of a rescue.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool. I think that I kind of like the idea that Osbourne is like "we've already lost someone".

You know, it's too late this is a military operation. It's happened. Yeah, I definitely like the

idea that George is wanting to like find out clues and you definitely will get some, like, more information there. And if you guys are, like, you're good at hiding, and if, if Whistler is like used to being cowardly, you can leave a hide out in the bottom of the ship. That's no

problem, you can hide out in that little extra room off to the side. And so, and the ship does

– it carries you closer and closer and by the time that like morning has come, George is still being like totally quiet and this little side room and no one has come in maybe you've like got back in the apple barrel if you heard footsteps. But after a while you do hear, like,

people have started to, like, clear out. And I think you hear someone kind of shouting as,

like, the footsteps and moving overboard, George hears someone going, yelling down at

someone who's, like, still seems to be hanging out in the kitchen going "Davey, Tom says

Boots' taking the crew ashore, it's leisure time, come on lad". And you've also had like

mutterings, you've definitely had mutterings among the people who thought that they were

like out of the way of the captain who's up above talking about, like, a mutiny and stuff and

the cabin boy that you know is running around, like, excited to get to shore is seems a little

more nervous. Like, you've managed to see through this crack in the door. You see him like darting around. So, you definitely think that that there's, like, something is going to break out. But it is morning and you, the ship is much emptier – you can hear it clearing out. George, you know that a lot of the crew has gone ashore and the ship, has like ground to a halt. You hear the chains moving as they, like, put down the anchor and you hear it's like much quieter above. So, actually we're going to take a break I think it's a good place for us to break we'll be keeping on playing in like five minutes time, but I think it's a good place to wrap up part one of the video. If you're watching and you would like to see how the adventure concludes that's going to air at, I believe, 8pm UK time on Friday the 19th of

November. This has been a Book Week Scotland event brought to you by the Scottish Book Trust. The Scottish Book Trust is a national charity that believes everyone living in Scotland should have equal access to books. If you have enjoyed this event, please consider sharing your love of reading with others by making a donation at scottishbooktrust.com which is also where you can find the Book Scotland RPG by Adrian Barber which we've been basing this game off today. Thanks for watching. See you next time.