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

**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 to part two of our Book Week Scotland RPG event. It's part of their 2021 Digital festival and brought to you by the Scottish Book Trust. If you haven't seen part one, you should go and watch that previous video first or you might be pretty confused. Just a reminder, I'm Hari Conner, I'm your GM for today and I'm joined by heroes, Marjorie Liu who's playing Lady Vex an elfin ex–smuggler, Val McDermid, who's playing George Stevenson, an ancestor of Robert Louis Stevenson and a Bow Street runner. We've got Ram V – this is really testing my memory here – playing Whistler who's an ex–pirate and cartographer and Kieron Gillen who's playing Osbourne, one of Stevenson's toy soldiers from his war games. Right now, it's morning, you are on the ship, the ship has stopped. It's like a beautiful, clear skies. I think that we've still got George who was hiding previously in an apple barrel back in a sort of back storeroom next to the galley kitchen, which now seems to have cleared out. From your view, you can see through the crack in the door, I think that you again, we've had you hiding out there for quite a long time, so I think you've got a lot of information. I think that you have a sense, like, that there is going to be a mutiny. I think you know that the people on board are pirates, but the mutiny hasn't happened yet. I think you haven't heard anything amiss above. So far, Treasure Island seems to be going very smoothly. You've all succeeded in that. And you don't like hear a dragon or anything. But you all do know from the bookseller that the dragon is somewhere on Treasure Island. So, you need to be able to, like, navigate the island and find the dragon and then speak to the dragon before the dragon causes any chaos to the plot is the idea. Meanwhile, Whistler and Lady Vex are down below. Osbourne, I don't know if you're them where or you could be like sneaking around the ship, but he's also, he's also noticed – all of you have noticed – the ship is much quieter. It's not empty – there's probably some people moving around up on the top deck, but the coast is much clearer than it was before.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

So, I think it's time for me to get back to my core values and get out of this apple barrel and find the rest of my companions. So very cautiously I clamber out of the apple barrel and peer round the door jamb into the galley which seems to be empty apart from Osbourne, who is creeping across the galley floor. I think he's probably looking for me and he must know when the others are. "Osbourne, where are they?"

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I feel like we meet you, we are both like creeping around the corner in case each other suddenly looking...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

...you caught me – I was actually trying to hunt a rat at this moment. And that's kind of like, I think I can tame them into a steed. If I just, a mixture of like force and bribes – I'm holding a small bit of cheese – I can have my own rat steed. I'm pretty sure of this George.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

What's, what's the weapon that you're using if the, if your carrot is the cheese. What's the...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think much, I, I'm a tin soldier so I'm – sorry a lead soldier – I'm actually got a, I've got a bayonet.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Oh, you've already got a bayonet in your hand. OK.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I got it, you know I've only got one operative hand and the other one is actually got a stabby thing involved in.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Are your hands fused like a Lego man hands so you've had to just punch into the cheese to hold it?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Yeah, yeah.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay. Cool.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

It's I think it's a little bit weirdly grim this life soldiers the more I imagine it. And I said, "you're there – I was away to find you as I know they're all in, they're hiding". I sort of think, I find myself thinking like, Whistler of course is dressed as a pirate anyway. So, I bet that, I bet Whistler can go wherever he wants. We've sort of, I sort of had this realisation overnight that maybe Whistler could just go and do what he wants and just claim to be part of the crew anyway.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, I mean, that's kind of been the plan that if we, if we ever ran into pirates, I'll just be like "alright, captain's looking for you up on the deck".

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You can definitely try that if you run into people. For sure. So, I think that you can successfully, like, lead George back to the others and you're all, like, in the cargo hold and you can make your way anywhere on the ship if you want to.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I would say that while the others have been doing that, I've been scouting to see if we, if there's like an extra boat that we can take to the island to see what's happening. People have already left. How we might actually transport ourselves.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, cool. Again, you're good at sneaking around, like that's your skill you've got. And I think that, and also you know, ships so when you go you can sneak up onto the top deck and you know that there are like boats, that are suspended by, like, pulleys like over the side. One of them has definitely gone ashore. But they're still, there's another one that you could get to. And...

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I have an idea by which we could cause a distraction so that you guys can get the boat lowered and, in the water, while I distract the crew because I am not all I seem to be. And I am not actually George Stevenson. I'm Georgia – because they won't let women join the Bow Street runners. So, I have a reversible jacket. And, with a few well–judged moments, I can turn my breeches into a skirt and suddenly I am a woman. There's nothing excites a pirate crew more than the sight of a woman, so while I'm sashaying across the quarterdeck you guys can get the boat in the water.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

So, you, like down the hall is like tiny... everyone this plan I think Lady Vex, you have been scouting and you come back down. You've seen that the crew that seems to be on board the ship is, like not that many people, but there's like a little – there's like a handful of people, a cluster of people up on, like, in the fo`c’sle, like in the sort of shadow of one of the sails hiding from the sun and they're all just kind of like sitting around grumbling – they're not really patrolling or on the lookout like perhaps they should be. They're just like sitting around like drinking and you can also hear some people like talking from the direction of the, like, captain's quarters bit up on the other bit of the deck so you can come back down and report that to everyone and make your plan

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Well hearing this plan, I, I only have one question. Which is that George – Georgia – pardon me, might you distract them too well? Would you be able to actually join us on our mission?

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, how is Georgia gonna get away?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Well, I can shim down the rope after you've got the boat in the water.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Or jump in the water and we pick you up, you know.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Either way. But I'm not a very good swimmer in spite of coming from a long family of lighthouse builders.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

GM. Are there mermaids in the water?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I, I mean, I think that the in the text of Treasure Island, which is where you are no, probably no mermaids in the water. But, like, at the same time you've come through from a fantasy world where we've established that there are mermaids that were to do with, you know, in your life you've seen mermaids. I think I'm gonna get you to roll the dice. Just to see how much you're, wherever you've come from, has, like, bled into the text for Treasure Island.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

A two.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, you think that although there may be, like, mermaids in this world, you don't, like, immediately see any when you were like, doing your scouting mission, it seems like...

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Damn.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Maybe they're like shark, they're not mermaids they're shark maids.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Oh.....

**Ram V – Whistler**

That's a whole other book.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Even better.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, well, I think that you, you just don't see any like, near you. That's not to say that like, they might not be around somewhere. I think with a two you're like sneaking around. There's nothing, there's not like mermaids just chilling in the vicinity of the ship.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Gotcha. Gotcha.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Well, I mean that sounds like a good plan. And am I, have I found my pouches of gunpowder yet. Hari?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You found the two locked doors down in the hold.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm gonna use, I'm gonna ask Lady Vex if I can borrow the hammer so I can break open the locks.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

You may.

**Ram V – Whistler**

After making sure there aren't crew members within, within earshot.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, you're a couple of decks below the only people left on this ship. So, I think you're, yeah, I think that you're out of earshot. How are you using the hammer to break the lock exactly? Just totally...

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm using...no, no, I'm using the, the, the nail removing part to pry open the latch on the door. So, a lot quieter than banging on the hammer.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, cool.

**Ram V – Whistler**

And on the lock.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Would you say this is something that you've done before? Like...

**Ram V – Whistler**

Oh, absolutely.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, all the time. Okay, I'm gonna, I think I'm going to get you to roll a dice for it.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Okay.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think you, we've established that you can definitely – you can probably do it somehow. Maybe you can do it.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm a, I'm a pirate stealing, taking things that are, that are not mine has been part of my profession for a very long time.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, well, I'll take that into consideration for sure.

**Ram V – Whistler**

And I rolled a four.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, you do it and you managed to like not make such a loud like noise like pinging the different bits on the lock that... you open it and it, actually even with a four, I think that it's not even that damaged – I think the, the door handle – yeah, and one of one of the rooms absolutely does have powder and shot. It has muskets and pistols that you could...

**Ram V – Whistler**

Aha...even better. I take the pistols for myself and, and fashion a pouch of gunpowder. And then I welcome Georgina, Lady Vex and Osbourne to help themselves to, to the muskets although Osbourne seems to be very well equipped himself.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Are there machetes?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Lady Vex, you're obsessed with machete.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You have, like you have a hammer, and you have the pistols that would be there in the ship. I don't think there's like a bunch of extra stuff.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I've got a pistol, but Osbourne, fear not, one day I will tell you the long, my long, complicated relationship with a machete.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I look forward to hearing this. Georgia, can I ask a favour? Can I go with you? Put me in a pock... I presume your dress is a sensible dress with pockets?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yes, I

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Like when, you know I might be a useful distraction. I can make a lot of noise. And I'll give you a little of a chat like I may be very small, but I have a sergeant major's voice. So as a last moment to scare them away while she's jumped overboard. I'd be willing to go down with you on this brave mission.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I'd be very happy to have you with me. But could I just say one thing... I, if I'm going to jump in the water, I don't think it makes sense for me to have pistols and gunpowder so...

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I'll carry one for you...

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

...carry my pistols and gunpowder and I could help myself to a couple of knives from the galley and tuck them into the top of my garters.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think you can definitely find like, knives in the galley which is still empty. I think Lady Vex you can take an extra pistol with you. So, with your plan all ready, you all sneak up to the main deck again, there's still – you can peek your heads out of the hatch and there's still like the lookouts being kind of crap lookouts just will sing together up on this upper deck and you're on this like main bit of the ship just coming out of the hatch. So, Georgia, you're gonna like go ahead and start speaking them.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Well, hello, boys.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think that these pirates are vastly surprised, because they've been on a ship for weeks and they haven't seen you on the ship before. This is like very confusing to them. I think actively confusing. And also like these characters are not, they're not named characters in Treasure Island and I think that they are, they haven't been written, they haven't been fully fleshed out necessarily. And so, the way that they react to you is like a little stilted that almost like, like an MPC in a video game or something – that they like they only have like a set like number of lines that they can say. And so, I feel like they're trying to make conversation with you but like, it's very weird. It sort of loops after a little while. One of them is like "ahh – it'll be a fine day young miss. Where do you hail from?" And like, where do you, where do you say that you've come from? I think is the question.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I've been in the captain's quarters all trip. And now the captain has gone ashore, boys, I can come out and play.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think actually the person you're speaking to goes "captain is still in his quarters I believe" and is like, looking confused. But like, it's like, even more confusing because like, what? What, where are you? What? Like what's happening? So, everyone else, I think, are you sneaking up on – you can get over into one of these boats that's like hanging over the edge.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Oh, yeah – no, we're, we're definitely lowering it.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay. You're like, hurrying off. Again, I think like you have experience at sea, you know how to, like lower the boat. And I think that you're like round the other side, right, from where Georgia is like, speaking to these pirates who are all, I think, mostly bewildered. Like don't – in fact, I think, actually Stevenson specifically said that he like, didn't write women into Treasure Island. There's like the mum right at the beginning but he was like, it's a book for boys, and he like didn't write women into Treasure Island. So, like all of these pirates are just like, don't really know what to do. And they're like, some of them are trying to be sweet with you, and some of them, like one or two are like kind of suspicious. And after a while the first one who was speaking to you –again like kinda like loops back to the first thing that they said because that, they're just like not very advanced characters like the, the main bit of the plot is not where they are right now. But yeah. I think everyone else can like, successfully lower the boat.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

And when he says to me for the second time "where, where did you hail from fine lady?" I can just say I'm going right back where I came from – and then sashay back to the other side of the boat. The other side of the ship where the boat has been carefully lowered into the water and make my escape.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, I think a couple of them, oh, I'm gonna get you to roll a dice like, you definitely do walk over back to the other side of the ship. Yeah, I am going to get you to roll a dice – you want to tell me what you get?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Okay. Five.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool. You nail it. They are all like, so like blown away by you that they're all just kind of stunned for a while and in fact they, everyone else is like, waiting in the boat below. And I guess you, you're just like, literally climbing down the rope.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yeah.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, and I think that you gave such a convincing performance that you just like, do it. And it actually takes until all of you are safely in the boat and starting to like, row ashore, for one of them to like stand up and be like "oh" and like run, one of them runs over towards the captain's quarters and is like banging on the door at the other side and like trying to make some commotion. But like, your little boat like, successfully makes its way to shore and actually you hear on the deck the captain like, yelling being like, "What nonsense is this? There's been no one else on this ship. There's been nobody in my quarters. Why...you're supposed to be a look out at ..." there's just like a commotion and it's like fine and it's like so distracting that you get away totally fine.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I hope it wasn't too disappointing for you Osbourne.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Oh, it's like, I'm not somebody who enjoys the violence. I thought it was an expert scheme well done Georgia. I'm, I'm very pleased to be part of this adventure and a supporting actor.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I love this like. increasingly depressing character who's like. doing like, very invested in war campaigns but like doesn't like violence. I think it's very interesting.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Osbourne, did you bring the rat?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I was about to say... I was like, somehow talked to you into taking the rat for me.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Oh, good. I don't mind.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Yeah, okay, great – you're now carrying the rat and I'm, Georgia's got me...

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

The rat's on my shoulder right here.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Yeah.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, oh man...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Do you want me to roll the dice to see how well I tamed the rat?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yes, roll the dice to see if you like made that rat into your steed please.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Oh, how able is this rat now? It is. I rolled a one.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, okay. I mean, I think that you think it will work because you, you've like, listened to a lot of stories that Stevenson tells and you're kind of used to being like, a little figure in a game where like. anything could happen. So, you're like, I could tame this rat and I think you actually really believe you have tamed this rat. Lady Vex holding the rat – he has not tamed this rat. This is just a rat. It's like, desperately trying to get away. It's trying to bite you. You're trying to steer like, the boat. You're trying to take an oar and it's just like scrambling all over you.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

But can I use my, can I use my elven nature powers to build affinity with the rat?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, I think um, I am also gonna make you roll for that previously undisclosed elven nature powers from fantasy universe. A three. Yeah, you know, you do have other nature powers. But the rat like, um, I think the rat is from the normal universe and the rat is like not used to people with elven nature powers. So, the rat can understand you, but it's not fully cooperating with you. It's still like, just trying to get away a little bit. It's not your friend. But you can communicate with it.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I gave it a little cheese. Maybe it goes to the... let's see like maybe it, like just chill out for just a little bit.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, this placates the rat for now which also realises it can't get off the very small boat that you're in rowing to shore but it's, it's a liability, you know. The rat is not tame this is what's happening here. So, the three of you regular size people and also Osbourne and also the rat, I think, firstly make your way to shore this like, the boat is seems like quite busy like, up on the main ship. They're obviously like making some sort of plans and stuff and you have got like your food and supplies. You've got like, pistols from the boat. You don't have a map of the island, like, you don't have navigational equipment or anything. But you successfully made it to the shore, and I think most of the pirates are actually like a little way off, these people are pirates – but we already established this because George was listening in on it and they're all like, like, like a couple of hundred metres away they're really like a little while in the distance and in front of you, you're on like a sandy shore. It's quite bleak. There's like forests, there's a series of like big hills that you see up in front of you. You don't see any sign of the dragon and again, you haven't heard anyone yelling or like, screaming or anything, so you think that luckily you're like early enough that no one else has seen the dragon yet either. But yeah, you successfully pull the boat up on shore.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I imagined since this place is called Treasure Island there must be treasure on it. We should, I know we don't, we don't have a map for the treasure, but we might be able to track others that got here before us and I, and I bet you any crew that's coming onto an island is coming here with a map of their own, so...

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I mean, you can definitely, you'll have more cover in the forest. I think that probably like Osbourne like knows this war campaign brain, that you will have more cover there, you'll be able to see more stuff if you want to try going up a hill. You can like, move through and see if you can find any like, sign of like, people being on the island. So, I think...

Ram V – Whistler

I look, I look for birds flying above, squawking, disturbed by movement below.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think maybe like. Yeah, what's up?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Since you sort of define that I've seen the original text of Treasure Island, Treasure Island had a map in it, so I know the map.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah. Oh, okay. You think you like know what's on the map?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Yeah, I just Googled up the actual map in real life to see what we know.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, so in that case, I guess you do know the map. There's no way I can tell you that you don't.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I am, I am stunned by Osbourne's photographic memory.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think we should roll to see how well I remember it though. I could end up just being very wrong.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

No that's very good I think let's do that.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Okay, I roll a four so...

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, so you absolutely remember the shape of the island. I think that you don't remember exactly where the like crosses for the treasure were, but you have like a faint memory that maybe the treasure was like moved or something. But you know like where the biggest hills are, you know that there's like, a bunch of coves around the other side of the island and you also know that in the forest there's like a stockade somewhere where there's probably going to be like action and fighting and stuff later. Yeah, so I think that you like, you know, pretty much you could tell me where you want to go, and we can aim to do it – or you could do your best without a compass or the actual map in front of you.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think he's got the confidence of the officer class, as in a completely misplaced confidence, but it's def..., especially because... like stop me if this is going too far. The rat's now on dry land and it's going to just run off wherever it wants to. So, I just say so awesome, because Arthur's got the scent. Everyone knows that actual rats like gold. Gold is the cold cheese they say. If we follow the rat further inland, we will surely find the gold. "With me" I say, pointing forward from Val's pocket, sorry, Georgia's pocket.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

That's great. Yeah, the, the rat runs off into the forest and you confidently begin to follow the rat and I guess everyone.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, I'll go along with it for now until, until my, until my incredibly lucky sense of direction test knows.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Oh, I think that Georgia you're used to like, seeking out clues and stuff, right? And you do think that if you get a bit higher up you might be able to get a better like, sight of the whole island. Around where you are now you don't see trees that have been like, squashed or anything like, by some sort of huge mythical beast. So, you think that you might have to go further in and it's like not that crazy to follow the rat – to begin with at least. Yeah, I think that maybe like, I think you follow the rat for a while, but the rat is a rat, and after a certain point, it seems to have like stopped and paused. And then it's like burrowing, stuff like burrowing around like looking for things, like sniffing around. And then it starts like going back in the direction that it came from before, like after about an hour of walking following the rat, the rat starts like moving. It seems off course like perhaps it's not quite as like, pointed in one direction as you originally thought. Perhaps last one.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm afraid the only treasure he's looking for is cheese, captain.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I'm beginning to have like doubts with my men. I must admit this has been a sore disappointment.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

GM while we've been moving through the forest, have we heard the sounds of the other pirates, you know, as Whistler pointed out earlier – or you know are, are, are birds being disturbed from the trees?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think they you hear the other pirates like, behind you. You've gone a little further into the island now and actually I do think after a couple of hours you start hearing like musket fire and stuff. There's obviously like, again, a commotion as like the plot of Treasure Island happens back on the ship and that kind of thing. And yeah, I think after a while Georgia has begun to like, see things here and there where it looks like they're like little trails where someone might have walked through. And, in fact – wait let me just check how we are for time.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Georgia, if you, if you're climbing a tree, I'll come up there with you if we can have a look around the island and get, get our bearings, right.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think that you can climb a tree successfully.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yes. From my years of climbing masts.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

If anyone... if anyone had a kite, they can tie me to the kite if it helps.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You can try and fashion a kite. Absolutely. If you want to.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Fly a lead soldier?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Not very big. Ten centimetres tall. Not so big.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, okay. Okay.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I could just tear up some of my petticoats.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think you could do that.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I'll take some sticks, I'll lash them...you can like, we can tie the whole thing together.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, yeah.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You got...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

But we need thread. I've often feel that an air force will be useful in military battles. I know it's a fanciful idea, but this could be the start of something big.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, I'm trying to figure out who I should make roll to see how well this goes. Me, if it's like a group effort.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'll, I'll, unravel some of the rope to get us thread as well.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I reckon its Georgia's petticoats which are the main ingredient.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, okay. Georgia, if I can get you to roll for us and see how you're doing.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Uh–oh – just the one

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay. You successfully build kind of a kite. Maybe it's not fastened super tight around. It's a great idea but it's not like really fast and you don't really have the materials you need. You've got like little bits of, you know, like fibre that you've tried to like tease out from the rope and you're good at like a knot. So, the knots are great. I think that you. Yeah, okay, fine. You've claimed the mast lots of times Whistler, you climb a tree and you again, with the, with Osbourne's absolute confidence, you're like "oh, you sure about this?", and you know.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Absolutely.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

He like does a sort of swan dive, like, on the kite and the wind, it picks up a little bit and the kite is just sort of taken out of your hands that the flimsy fibres you took, I think, just sort of, slightly like pull and disintegrate and Osbourne is like flying, like aloft.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I'm gonna, I'm gonna try and – he's made out of lead – I'm gonna try and shoot the petticoat so the kite at least falls within, within range of us.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Can I see anything up here?

**Ram V – Whistler**

While you're there.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, like now you're up there you can see over on the like far, far side of the island there is like some sort of like trees that look like blackened. You see that there are like a couple of birds have come up – you don't see like any dragon, but you definitely see a sign that like the far side of the island is where you want to be. And I think that kind of lines, actually lines up with where some of the tracks that Georgia has seen are headed as well. So, you get a great view, but you are also just like in the air, in the breeze.

**Ram V – Whistler**

And the wind is taking the kite away, I will try and shoot through the...

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Are you shooting from your position on the tree? One–handed?

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yes.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay. But you think that if... Do you do a lot of fighting from the mast, or pistol fighting for the mast?

**Ram V – Whistler**

Sure.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I feel like we've kind of established that you're a coward. So, I am going to get you to roll and we'll see, see how it goes.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Hold on a second. It's so, so in, inaccurate. All right, got a four again.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Cool. You successfully shoot the kite in such a way that it begins floating down to the ground. I think you probably do also hit Osbourne. It's only like, grazed. It could have been much worse for someone who's like not used to this kind of thing, but I think that maybe Osbourne's like, leg or something. The shot has like gone, yeah go on...

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

No, go ahead.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I imagine he's also made out of lead. So that should do..

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, it may be like, be like

**Ram V – Whistler**

Not too much

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

like, blows off one of his feet, I think it...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Can I take my arm off, like lose my milit.., like lose my gun? Because I quite like the idea of being "he's now a pacifist".

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Absolutely, yeah, it's like, you know, it's the 18th century so it's just like, it's just like a whole shot and it just kind of like completely flies through the fabric and also like through your arm, just taking your arm with it. But it was a four, wasn't that bad, and you, you know, float down to the ground.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Lady Vex starts running to catch him.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, I think you can, you run in the direction that you think...

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

...yes...

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

...he's going.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Yes.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Is everyone else running with you as well?

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, I'll come back down. And given my directional sense, hopefully, we are headed in the right direction.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Sorry, was Val gonna say something?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I was just going to say that Long John Silver seems to manage without one leg. So you know, obviously Osbourne will be fine with just one arm.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You know, I think you give him this pep talk. Like when you find him, he's maybe in shock a little bit, and as you like, talk to him about this, like, I don't know, how does Osbourne feel? Does he feel a bit better? Is this a comfort at all?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

It's life. Life is so short, and you know, obviously, very short for Osbourne but in a very physical way. But in a much more metaphorical way Osbourne is grasping the shortness of life here. Like it's only got the Hemmingway Fare.., sorry, Hemingway Farewell to Arms sort of vibe I get. Literally. This kind of no, with this point, that this fighting is pointless, you know, and, uh, you know, like, we can achieve great things. I flew. To the north, I think there's the dragon. And we can save this, we can save this story from beasts such as war.

**Ram V – Whistler**

And I, I walk up to Osbourne and genuinely offer my heartfelt apologies for, for shooting him in the arm. And I say, but it would have been, it would have been terrible to lose you entirely.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

It was a, you're not a man who thinks himself brave Whistler, but that was a brave shot you took there, you know, you have my admiration. And you also took my arm. Let's call this evens then, you could carry me around now.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Will do, will do. I do, I do have a shoulder meant for carrying around small creatures.

Hari Conner – Game Master

I definitely like the idea of Whistler as someone who's like willing to take risks. As long as it's not you that's like going to suffer any consequences from the risks. I think that's a strong character choice. Yeah, so having seen all of this area, that's all like black and I think you can make your way towards that part of the island and after like, another hour of walking, I think you do see there are things that, it looks like charred trees. Things have like, come down a little bit, kind of leading in one direction towards the shore. And Georgia, I think you may be the first to notice, like looking out for stuff, you can see in the distance, a couple of hundred metres away from you, a figure who looks very, very ragged – beard and stuff – sprinting away from the direction of where it looks like this trail is leading. And he's far away enough that you, he probably won't spot you, but he's like, just yelling and screaming and like running away.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Let's go and talk to this guy. Whatever he's discovered, it's something I think we need to know about. And he's not with the pirates. He's obviously not with the pirates. He's, he's, he looks like he's been living rough. Somehow, I think he must have been left behind by a previous mission, but he must know something. Must be something that he knows that we can find out from him. Let's, let's, let's go over to him and let's not scare him. Let's be really gentle and calm and friendly and see how he responds. You know, it's, it's just, just, just put your warlike tendencies to one side Osbourne.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I reluctantly put back my pistols.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Same.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I mean, you can, have your hands on your pistols in your pockets. But yeah, you at the moment, you have your weapons stowed away. I think you do that, and I think, yeah, Georgia with your like, detective tendencies your instinct... Yeah, you go and speak to him. I will say that, like, this guy is not calm. He's definitely not calm. You're totally right. He does look like he's been there for like a long time on the island. And if you, if you, how do you try and greet him? Do you yell out to him? No. I don't, I don't yell out to him at all. I gently approach from a distance waving in a friendly manner. Then "hello, hello. We come in peace – we're your friends. We want to help you." He like shrieks he's like "more apparitions. Right. The devil, the devil has sent me these creatures. I... it’s the other...it's my cave, my cave...what am I going to do with the treasure." And he's just like totally like, unhinged, like hysterical.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

"We can help you. We can help you, because we are your friends. We are not your enemies, whatever it is that has frightened you. It's not us. We're here to help. This is what we do. We are live and we help."

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

"God... is testing me... in the past and this is another... couldn't possibly be..."

**Ram V – Whistler**

Having heard him mention treasure, given my great weakness, I come forward, I say "look at me. I'm just a pirate. I've got a ship. We'll take you off the island. Now where's that cave you were talking about?"

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

"It's... there's a beast there and I would avoid it at all costs. But if you go to the beach, and there's two hills behind, round the other side, there's the cave. But I, don't get closer, there's a thing...it's a thing...it's a creature. It's so high. Oh, it's all catching up. Oh, it's all catching up with me." I think that like you've been pretty friendly, but I don't think you've, I don't think he really trusts you as friends. He recognises you as a pirate but he's like maybe not had a great time with pirates either, like he's given.. he's been left here. And I think he's like gonna keep trying to like run away unless one stops him.

**Val McDermid –George Stevenson**

"Let me give you a token of our affection. I have, I have apples– about my person – I have apples. But apples – if you don't want apples – Lady Vex has cheese."

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

"I do have cheese."

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

He's like stopped at that and like turned around. I mean like "Yes, yes, yes...yes, yes, yes. Thank you. Thank you" and he like grabs the cheese out of your hand. And he's like, like scarfing it away like he hasn't seen cheese in like a very, very long time. And he gives you like better instructions to this cave. And he's like " there's...treasure but there's other things have... there's a creature in this... thank you" and he like kind of just like runs off in the other direction but you've got like good directions now about where you should be going to get to this cave. And you can all successfully, I think, navigate towards there. And if you get towards the beach you do see this, like two–pointed hill and around the other side of it, from a place that you can't really, you couldn't see from the other side, like a plume of smoke coming out of a cave.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Onward.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I volunteer to keep watch.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

So, are you like waiting outside on the beach? Do you think Whistler?

**Ram V – Whistler**

No, no, I'm waiting where everyone is, I'm just volunteering to stay, to stand guard outside of the cave while they...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Advance Whistler, advance.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I, I volunteer to go into the cave.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Hurray.

**Val McDermid – George**

I'll hold your jacket

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You like scouting? Are you like leading the expedition?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

You know what? This is not my first rodeo with a dragon.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

So I am, I am happy to go in. Osbourne, would you like to join me?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think I should. I think I would like to see a beast, but I can't imagine living another second without seeing a dragon. That would be shameful I say back at Whistler,

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

You will have many great stories to tell when you go home.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Excellent.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, so I think that Lady Vex advances into the cave like carrying Osbourne is, and Georgia's following, or..

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yes, yeah.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I let them all walk ahead. And then, and then a few feet behind them, I will bring up the rear.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

At a decent distance you can like, see where they're going.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Ultimately someone may have to report back.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, okay. Yeah. So, I think that like you, it's like a tunnel in this cave you follow around. And at the end of the tunnel, Lady Vex, you can see what looks like, it looks like sort of rough and red. And then after a moment you see that the, what you thought was the wall at the end of the cave starts to move and you realise that it's scales. And as it moves, it moves out of the way and you can see into a much bigger cavern where there is an enormous beast whose tail has just come out the way. And this is a huge dragon and takes up most of the space in the cave and it's sitting on a few, basically a few wooden chests – one is kind of like a little bit open. It's like spilling some gold coins out onto the ground and it's like a lot to you – but to the dragon it's like the size of one of its like fingernails. It's like the size of one of his claws. And you like sneaking in do you think? Or are you just like approaching? This can be different for each one of you if you like

**Ram V – Whistler**

Absolutely sneaking, sneaking even from these guys,

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You're sneaking right at the back.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Lady Vex, you think you're sneaking?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Well first I have a question. So, what is the disposition of the dragon?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Um, actually, it looks kind of chill.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Chill.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, maybe even glum, you might say.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

You know what, I'm just going to approach the dragon directly.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, cool. As the dragon sees you, he see, he tries to like perk up a little bit and, like throw itself up to like a bigger and more impressive height. And it's like, "my armour it's tenfold shields – my teeth swords, claws spears. I could eat you. I have burned villages. I descended on the great kingdom of Erebor in flames. I could. You're not looking very scared, but I could eat you? I am the great Smaug."

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Fabulous, fabulous.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Magnificent.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Extremely magnificent. Yes, thank you.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I have always wished to meet Smaug. This is a dream come true. Hail friend my name is Lady Vex and this is my dear friend Osbourne.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Hell and well met small, very small man and Lady Vex, and who are you? He's looking at Georgia, by the way, you've come in.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I am, I'm Georgia from the, the great family of Stevenson lighthouse builders. We have lit the oceans all over the northern hemisphere and you'd be very welcome to fly above them and, and have your way across the oceans lit for you at night by our work and, and we, we honour your presence and your magnificence. Is there anything we can do for you?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I do admit I don't know what a lighthouse is, but being, the oceans being let for me does sound very impressive I have to say. Yes, I'm very glad to find somebody who's heard of me around here.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Dear Smaug, why are you here? On this strange little island?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

My lands have been conquered long ago. I've tired of my total dominion and the weather is not that good in the grey mountains, so I was imbued with a magical power and I thought why not go on a nice holiday. Your Treasure Island of course sounds wonderful, doesn't it? Earth, my sun, sand, a whole island made of treasure. I come over here and all I've got is... (flicks one of the little boxes with his claw and it just sort of like pings across the room spilling treasure out.) Not saying it was a mistake. Great Smaug doesn't make any mistakes.

**Ram V – Whistler**

I, I will, I will choose to make my presence known at this point. By just kind of walking in closer and I'll say, "Aren't you worried that if you've got all that treasure in all those lands you've conquered, aren't you worried someone might come and take it now that you're not there and here?"

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I've got, I've got a very fearsome reputation so they probably wouldn't...

**Ram V – Whistler**

What do you think Osbourne? If you, if you saw treasure that you had heard of and there was no actual guard, dragon guarding it, wouldn't you be tempted to go and take that treasure?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Absolutely not, if it's not part of my mission.

**Ram V – Whistler**

What if it were someone's mission?

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Oh absolutely. I would follow those orders without question.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I would certainly look to make some sort of arrangement with the treasure, to my benefit.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

The dragon almost looks like, he's like frowning down at you. Now that this has been like, brought up. "No, my reputation precedes me everywhere I go. No one would dare to fight my horde although not, have been away for a while and little ants like you could be looking out for..."

**Ram V – Whistler**

I mean, that is what they said about this island. And look at it now. Ants all over the place.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

How long have you been gone?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Sorry. Are you saying this island used to have more treasure – people have taken it?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Oh, yeah. Lots more.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I am magnificent – you will, I will let you live if you light my, these oceans for me as we agreed.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Absolutely. We have a map of all our lighthouses.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

And you will tell everyone of, that these houses of light will, you will tell everyone who sees them that they light the way for Smaug the magnificent?

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

We will, we will tell the world.

**Ram V – Whistler**

Oh absolutely. There might even be books written about you by the time we're done about, done with this.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

Yup

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think that like Smaug is like, pretty well persuaded. We've established that like, Whistler is persuasive, right, and I think that Smaug successfully gets up like, like stands up on his huge legs and starts to like, worm his way out of the cave, like a sort of like Chinese dragon or something like, squishing himself into the tunnel that lets its way out. But he also like, turns around like, as you all still there in the cave, and looks as if, like, he's thinking, like, why not also kill these people? And he opens his mouth, and you see this like fire building in the back of his throat.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Well and I immediately just move forward I'm like "Smaug. I'm so glad you paused" and I pull from my pouch, a box of my dessert shop's special run truffles. I open the box and I pick one up and I move forward to his hot mouth and pop one on his tongue.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, he doesn't look like he's about to stop. I love this idea so much. I'm gonna get you to roll a dice. I think it's gonna work, we're just gonna see how it works.

Okay. Six. A six, A six..

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

It's so like, the first little taste on his tongue surprises him so much that the fire just like stops in his throat and before he's even got to start trying to burning you all to a crisp he like closes his eyes and it's like "what, what's in this, what did you make this with?"

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Rum, and I gave him another one.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I demand you give me the rest of these rum treasures and then I will let you live.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Most certainly, most certainly, and I just pop them in and I say "you know Smaug, I do need a business partner. I need someone to transport my desserts around the world."

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You think of me as some sort of delivery boy? I am Smaug the magnificent

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

No, definitely my better but... wouldn't you like, wouldn't you like a business where these are just made non–stop for your pleasure?

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

I think that Smaug is like "I shall consider it. I have many opportunities, there's opportunities you know, come to me with business opportunities all the time. And I'll, I'll see how I feel."

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Pop one more on his tongue.

Hari Conner – Game Master

Yeah, I think they're a bit like giving this is such a nice idea and we'd like so established that like that's something that you do and you could have with you that this totally persuades Smaug and he, with a beat of his enormous wings flies up into the air, and you see him like, fly off into the distance where there's a strange shimmering you see up in the sky and Smaug successfully like, disappears back through this strange shimmering air which like disappears completely and you've all succeeded. And you are all, find yourselves like, back in the bookshop, and I think maybe you can tell me, like maybe in... everything seems to be the same like, he seems to have solved it, like everything's going back to how it should be apart from like maybe, in copies of The Hobbit, the next time you sit to like re–read the hobbit or you like watch the films or something, there's like these weird little references here and there to kind of like, like a dessert business and that's like maybe there's an extra character in it. What do you think?

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Personally, I would love that.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, okay, so...

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I need a hobby.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Exciting like new character, like Lady Vex there's like just

**Ram V – Whistler**

Just like a whole chapter devoted to desserts right before we meet Smaug.

Hari Conner – Game Master

Yeah, yeah. It plays into the plot a lot, right? Like the hobbits just like love desserts and that all becomes part of it, and everyone having noticed the Hobbit for like that's the thing.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

And Bilbo is known as the winner of the Great Shire Bake Off.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah. perfect that's amazing. Does anyone have any like notes? Like what, how do your characters do like going forward? So, Lady Vex you're, you're in The Hobbit you've got like success successful like, business partnership, I think. That's good.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

I'm catering to elves, all my elfin connections.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, amazing. Georgia, you returned to your life as a Bow Street runner like successfully having averted a crisis for your ancestors.

**Val McDermid – George Stevenson**

I've put my breeches back on and I'm in the process of building the first British police force, and I will be making it my business that there are women involved in this as soon as possible.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Oh cool. We're making a better world. This is amazing. Perfect. And, Whistler, I guess that was like your like, last, one last job. Are you back to like the pawn shop?

**Ram V – Whistler**

Yeah, as I, as I leave with my share of whatever we found to sink into a failing business once again, I look at the, I look at the shimmering in the distance and go like "I wonder how much he had in that, in that hoard".

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Yeah, like maybe, maybe in character you kind have taken like a little bit of treasure but like ultimately you have to like leave the rest of the treasure...you've invested some of your stolen like, treasure and like goods from the ship into, into your failing business and that's great. And Osbourne, how do you fare? Your new like one–armed pacifist life...

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

I think Osbourne really returns the ranks of the soldiers in Stevenson's thing and that there's a battle going on and it's like, and where his side is losing and saying – obviously I'm trying to talk people around to peace but like the same, we're losing we can't find anything to defeat their dragoons and I go "wait a sec, dragoons? I think I've got something to handle a dragoon" ...and that's where I would hard cut away from there.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

Okay, amazing. Perfect. I think that's gonna do us for now. Thank you so much everyone for playing. I love everyone's characters and ideas so much. Thank you.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

Oh, thank you.

**Ram V – Whistler**

It was great.

**Marjorie Liu – Lady Vex**

This was incredible.

**Kieron Gillen – Osbourne**

Yeah, thank you.

**Hari Conner – Game Master**

You saved the world, you've done it, you've improved the world in many ways. Gone through like character arcs each of you. So, thanks everyone for watching. Again, this Book Week Scotland event has been 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've enjoyed this event please consider sharing your love of reading with others by making a donation at scottishbooktrust.com where there is also this RPG that we've been playing and you can do your own version of this game. So, thank you so much everyone.