

Izar messages Hrothulf saying, "Nevermind!", having failed to throw a rope to him and. Ego, having just lost her goggles into the water, "My goggles! Oh no. Not my goggles. Izar, please. Get my goggles. Get one of them to get my goggles. I *need* my goggles." Izar messages Hrothulf again, "Change of plans. Could you retrieve Ego's goggles?" Hrothulf descends to the bottom, where the heavy goggles have sunk, and looks for them. Hrothulf, having been a chef, used to boiling, looking at water currents, and also as a former driver for organized crime having a pretty good sense for how things work, like say he's driving a boss around in a boat, and boss drops his keys in the water, he's gotta be pretty prepared. He's gotta have a pretty good idea about where they are. So he goes there and picks them up, he inhales all of his air, he turns off his forcefield, and using his non-nightvision-goggle-holding hand, he fills various pouches with air that comes out of his hands (because he's steaming and all, as we know), and he starts swimming up, shooting to the top like a champagne cork.

Darnit swims to the top with the clew. He notices a solid 50-60% of the fish have started floating and drifting by.

Dorinda, still by the (dead) squid, watches fish turning sideways and floating away. She takes note and, distancing herself from the squid, propels herself toward the rest of the party.

Darnit is holding the slimy clew but doesn't want to. He kneels by the water, keeping the clew *far* from the water, and cups water to rub the clew down. He also takes out Oshuut and lights it on fire to dry the clew off.

Hrothulf draws Watermelon's Wail, seeing that there is now a bright light source. He swings at the bat already diving at Oshuut, and stuns the bat, which drops to the ground. Darnit hastily unlights Oshuut, realizing his mistake. Hrothulf goes to mercy kill the bat, but Ego protests. Izar does too, once his player returns. They both want to nurse it back to help and Stockholm syndrome it into being their familiar. Darnit is uninterested, but asks Izar to take the clew back, not wanting a hand occupied.

The left arm of the bat is broken and distorted, and there is a hole in one of its wings. But it seems to be breathing fine.

Ego finds a suitably sized stalag-right. She tries to remove it. Darnit removes it. She uses it and some rope to bind up its wing and applies some antitoxin to the bat's wounds to stave off infection. She speaks to the unconscious bat with her mindlink circlet, comforting it. "It's going to be alright. It's a very dark time. But like, in the good way. The shadow is coming over you, but like, the shadow of life, that is." she says, drawing on her experience with Izar.

Darnit hears a sound in the hallway, like the sound of broken glass. He draws Barkamena. Hrothulf draws a weapon and puts up his shields.

It's water scorpions! About half a narwhal's girth long. They are marching out of the sphincter of the cave. Ego stays near the bat, wanting to protect it, and gathers up some rocks, loading her gun.

Darnit swings and smashes a water scorpion. He swings at another with Oshuut, opting *not* to activate the fire this time.

Seeing the scorpions pouring out the hole, he pulls out two socks and lights them on fire as he releases them, throwing them at the scorpions and yelling, "Hey Ego, why don't you cover your gaslit victim's eyeballs?", concerned that the fire might rouse the bat from consciousness and cause it to fly to the fire. There are now two streams of scorpions coming around the sockpile. Sockpyre? A couple bats come down from the heights with alacrity, picking off protein-filled treats. They have clearly done this before.

A couple take exploratory nips at Dorinda as they go around her, marching toward the fallen bat. They do the same to Ego, who is looking rough at this point.

Dorinda pulls Ego away from the dying bat, everyone encouraging Ego to let the bat go. Ego resists, wanting to rub her shell, summon her giant octopus friend, Freedieedi, not on the bat or Ego, but on as many scorpions around them as possible, having the octopus stop the flow of scorpions out of the hole, and her grabbing the bat (which she will call Dmitri when Ego and Batista when Carlos) and flying it far off with her jetpack. She rubs the shell. Hrothulf searches for a stalagright of such size and girth as can stop up the hole. Darnit says it would take quite some time to get something like that off.

Freedieedi is looking for instructions. Ego tells it to hold off the scorpions and clog the hole, with things other than itself if it has them, or by whatever means. "It's dark and it hurts, but ok," says Freedieedi.

Darnit has the idea to have Freedieedi spray ink at the hole which Darnit can then freeze with Barkamena, stopping up the hole.

Izar thinks we should get out of here. He thinks we should throw the bat the scorpions and get out of here. He shadily runs away.

Ego scoops up Dmitri and, with a short burst of the jetpack, flies away. Though it lights, the sockpile has more light and the bats that remain are focused on that.

Darnit runs with the others, and gruffly apologizes to Freedieedi, in his way.

Hrothulf follows along and keeps an eye on Ego in case there are other shenanigans.

A very very few number of the scorpions make it past the efforts of Freedieedi. They are ineffective against Darnit's armor, but scrape Hrothulf a small amount. Hrothulf takes three pairs of socks, lights them, and drops them in a perimeter line to stop the scorpion flow with a fire wall of socks. Darnit turns and attacks with Barkamena, and obliterated scorpion pieces fly everywhere. He moves to hit another, but before he finishes swinging another giant bat swoops down and scoops it up. There are only about four or five still coming after, out of the hundred plus that Freedieedi is taking care of right now.

Dorinda is running alongside in the midst of the pack. She fires her weapon, picking off a couple scorpions, but then her gun jams.

A cold sense of doom descends upon Ego. Ego dismisses Freedieedi. As Freedieedi disappears, Izar sees, happily munching on dozens of scorpions, a giant water bear.

Izar says, "Ego, mate, are you really going to haul a dying bat around forever?"

“Well it’s not going to be dying forever.”

“Right. So eventually when it dies, we’ll have to leave it to the scorpions anyway.”

"It isn't dying. It's stabilized."

“Okay, well, I’m just saying. Friend to friend here.”

Darnit stomps on the last scorpion coming after us and we appear out of harm's way, while the water bear feasts on scorpions and bats dive bomb them.

Hrothulf shudders at the appearance of another cave hallway.

