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D&D: Cannonball Contest

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Elyssa Bowman
Provo, Utah
11/6/18

D&D: Cannonball Contest Tale

Informant: Elyssa Bowman is one of my best friends. She is 20 years old and is currently a student at BYU. Elyssa is an avid Dungeons and Dragons player, and has played since she was old enough to understand the rules and roll the dice. She introduced me to the game in high school.

Context: Elyssa chatted me on Google Hangouts out of the blue to share a couple stories from Critical Role she was excited about. Critical Role is a popular Dungeons and Dragons podcast where all the players are professional voice actors, and while I haven't personally listened to it, I know many of my D&D friends have and they find it very entertaining. Elyssa shared this particular story after making some commentary on another specific player and his play style. It should be noted here that as I do not listen to Critical Role, I have no idea who these characters are or even what Vox Machina is. I didn't recognize any of the names at all, but what I *do* recognize is the magic and skills the individuals use. That's where the humor comes from in this story, more than who the characters actually are. An experienced D&D player can understand in more detail what the characters use and do, but anyone can understand based on context what is roughly going on. I apologize for the confusion, as I was confused too.

Text:

(Continuing from telling a different D&D story. She is talking about the Critical Role players.)

[Elyssa:] THEY HAD A CANNONBALL CONTEST I'M SO DEAD IT WAS SO EXTRA

The tiny gnome Pike put on her gauntlets of ogre strength and just plunged in

Vex flew to the top of the room and then dropped, releasing her bear from her pokeball locket
as she fell

Scanlan jumped in and as he hit he cast a level two thunderwave

Keyleth jumped in and as she hit she transformed into an earth elemental

But PERCY

You gotta understand

He's like the quiet scientist tinkerer type

But so, so subtly extra

The moment they start competing he runs upstairs and grabs

A bag of raw sodium

He runs back to the room

Leaps into the pool

There's a pause

And then it EXPLODES sending water and shrapnel flying EVERYWHERE and he takes 23 points of damage and emerges, bloody, from the pool to claim his prize

I can't get over this

[Me:] That is AMAZING LOLOL

[Elyssa:] It was GLORIOUS I love Vox Machina so much

Texture: Elyssa was definitely in story telling mode when she sent me this. Clearly her excitement is shown with the caps lock she starts with, before she jumps in to quickly telling me what happened. The rapid shorter chats when discussing the character Percy helped draw out the scene, conveying the dramatic atmosphere very well. Concluding it all in her last larger paragraph shows that she wanted the climax to impact me a lot- which it did. This is a typical storytelling style for her, rapid short chats to draw out intense scenes and larger paragraphs to show a cohesive detailed image. Her use of caps lock when not actively telling the story tells me that she was *very* amused with the story and hyped to share it with me. I chose not to interrupt

her because of this, waiting until the end to comment so I wouldn't derail her story, despite my confusion at who all the characters actually are.

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