

RQG – 8 – Londons All The Way Down

Content Warnings

- Underground & tunnels
- Discussions of: rot & sewage, violence
- Mentions of: bombs & explosions, floods, food, smoking, blades, alcohol
- SFX: continuous running water, dripping, background chatter, ticking

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello again and welcome to episode 8 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and wiz me... wiz me? Wizard me, with me as ever I have:

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas.

BEN

Ben Meredith.

BRYN

Bryn Monroe.

JAMES

James Ross.

ALEX

And who are you playing?

LYDIA

I'm playing an awkward rogue, stab first ask questions never.

ALEX

Called?

LYDIA

Sasha Racket. Sorry I told you she was awkward! It's not autobiographical at all.

BEN

Zolf Smith, smelly cleric.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Hamid the halfling sorcerer.

JAMES

Sir Bertrand "Bertie" MacGuffingham, the nemesis of all tables.

ALEX

Cool and the last thing that happened is you guys had managed to basically head down into the sewers having followed the bombers we'll call them, you

found yourself a chunk of simulacrum in a big basin of excrement and Zolf in a fit of foolhardy bravery decided to fetch another one.

BEN

From a Wisdom 18 character! Really roleplaying my stats.

ALEX

Yeah yeah, went for a quick swim, went for a longer swim than he anticipated, ended up in a brief lake of yep and then got hauled back up by everyone with the help of Hamid so last thing that happened is you guys dumped a lump of something on the side of the sewer.

BEN

Yes the last thing that happened is I want to be cleaned

BRYN

The first thing I do is cast prestidigitation, I used it to clean Zolf.

BEN

Oh thank goodness.

BRYN

To clean myself and to clean the strange device.

ALEX

Well you know we have another blizzard of hankies, that's got to be a spell.

BRYN

A blizzard of hankies.

ALEX

A blizzard of hankies and none the less you finish with your blizzard and expose the head (gasp) oh the simulacrum it appears to have been torn from the neck.

LYDIA

Can I do a perception check to see if it would react and maybe...

BEN

Poke it in the eye.

JAMES

I'm going to try talking to it before anybody sees whether it's alive or not because I think that's the sort of thing that my character would do.

ALEX

Alright.

JAMES

Hello metal person, hello, I'll tap it on the head, knock, knock, anyone in, anyone in, and I'll open, try and open an eye and go, hello, hello.

ALEX

The eye looks like it has been shattered like the actual eye it looks like it's made of glass or some kind of gem or something I mean you're no expert but it

certainly looks like it has cracked and been punched or hit or something it's basically imploded, the eye that you lift up.

JAMES

Oh right well, sorry about that, close that one, open the other one. Hello, hello.

ALEX

There's an eye that is dull and unmoving.

BRYN

I think the most important question at this point is are there going to be any other pieces of it down in that big lake in the vault?

BEN

I didn't notice any more but to be honest I wasn't really paying attention.

BRYN

It's quite big, do you think we can ascertain?

LYDIA

I think that sounds more like say if we took to the City Guard they could drain the lake because you need a lot of people who are gross to do that.

JAMES

Yes delegating I think it's the first task of leadership is learning when to delegate.

BEN

Well I actually think the bigger question is why did they do that? Now they obviously weren't trying to steal the simulacrum for being a simulacrum so was there some kind of maybe magical engine, or did they just want to destroy it?

BRYN

Well it's full of precious materials...

BEN

But why throw bits away?

BRYN

To travel more easily I mean we're going to struggle to carry these, aren't we? Do we need to keep following a trail and remember just around that corner there was a...

LYDIA

There was a massive door.

BRYN

Big bolted door.

LYDIA

How about?

BEN

Shall we?

LYDIA

I can look in at the door?

BEN

Probably scout see what's going on.

BRYN

Check if the traps, remember that man hole was a trap.

LYDIA

Yeah I'll do that.

BRYN

You probably knew that, sorry.

BEN

Do what you do.

LYDIA

OK I'll awkwardly go to the door.

ALEX

You get to the end and you get to that door that looks like it has been sheared or something?

LYDIA

Checking it for traps.

ALEX

Give me a perception roll.

BEN

That was nine.

ALEX

Nine plus your perception.

LYDIA

Is six.

ALEX

Fifteen. You see another trip wire, the door is slightly ajar, and this trip wire is very, very narrow but this seems to be a similar set up as the first one.

JAMES

We're all behind you at this point along the corridor and I'm carrying the head presumably because nobody else is.

LYDIA

I gesture to stay back silently, assuming that you understand the downward sort of...

JAMES

I'm carrying the head, I'm thinking I'm going to have a go at a bit of a ventriloquist's act.

(Group laughter)

BEN

And I'm going to put my clothes back on.

JAMES

Yeah.

BEN

I was in my undercrackers and my dolphin, and that was all I was wearing so.

JAMES

Bottle of beer, bottle of beer, babababababa.

BEN

What are you doing Bertie?

JAMES

Can any of you chaps get the head talking?

BRYN

No we'll deal with that later.

LYDIA

I am going to disable device.

ALEX

Yeah sure, give me the roll.

LYDIA

So eight plus seven so fifteen.

ALEX

Fifteen, again yeah you have a bit more trouble with this one but as before same it's ultimately it's the same mechanism it's just a bit more fiddly because it's a much narrower space for you to reach and sort it but yeah you managed to hold the trip wire, snip the wire, reach in and unfortunately you don't manage to sort of salvage the whole thing. You make a slight error and basically it starts to, you hear a little **(imitates click)** as it's trying to ignite and you're like oh no you start you know plucking a couple of components out so it can't go off but you can't really salvage it.

BEN

It's not going to be usable.

LYDIA

I don't retrieve my lovely second thunderstone and vial.

ALEX

No basically the oil vial breaks as part of it, the way that you stop it going off in your face is you break your oil it dribbles on the floor, the thunderstone sort of sparks but doesn't go off and then nothing happens.

JAMES

So you can't make a pair of incredibly dangerous earrings.

LYDIA

No. OK so can I listen to the door, can the door have woes?

BEN

What does the door have to say? "Hello."

ALEX

The door is so sad.

BRYN

At this point I assume you'll carry the gauntlet, Zolf?

BEN

Yeah no, no I'm happy carrying it in my backpack.

BRYN

I'll sneak up next to Sasha now that the trap has gone to help her just scout a bit but obviously again letting her take the lead.

LYDIA

Sure. Listening.

ALEX

Would you rather take two perception rolls, no give me two perception rolls.

LYDIA

Nineteen plus so twenty five.

BRYN

Yeah much better than me, eighteen total.

ALEX

Both of you hear distant voices and you cannot make any words and you cannot make even the genders of the voices, they seem quite low but you can't really make out much more than that, there's that much echoing and re-echoing and so on and the doorway, you haven't opened it, the door is still just ajar as it was, it seems to lead to a metal staircase.

BRYN

Stay here, I think it may be better if we go just a little way ahead.

LYDIA

Yeah this...

BRYN

There's some voices.

LYDIA

There's people and there's a clanging like it's made of metal so Bertie stay.

BEN

I understand. And me.

BRYN

We'll shout if we need you.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Tap my leg not going to happen but I will get my trident out and just basically ready just yell if you need us and we'll come down.

JAMES

You do that brain walkie talkie spell thing.

BRYN

It doesn't have a very long range but I guess I could give it a go. I cast message.

ALEX

OK what's the range on it?

BRYN

110ft

ALEX

OK. Who'd you cast it on?

BRYN

I'll cast it on both of them it's a cantrip so I can cast it.

ALEX

OK.

BRYN

As many times as I like.

ALEX

OK Sure. So currently Bertie and Zolf are connected now to you.

BRYN

I'll cast it on Sasha as well.

ALEX

They don't connect to each other.

BRYN

No.

ALEX

Basically you're holding a conference call but you're the only one that can hear.

BEN

It's not like we've set up a chat room it's just like.

BRYN

OK yeah.

LYDIA

So we go down the stairs, I flow like a spilled bottle of extra virgin olive oil. It's not as good.

BEN

Extra virgin?

LYDIA

Over the back of a silken seal yeah.

ALEX

We'll get there, collectively we will get you there in a sufficiently flowy fashion.

LYDIA

The seal quivers in delight, give it a massage.

ALEX

And the door is just jealous.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Stealth checks from both of us?

ALEX

I think that will be wise.

BRYN

Come on dice.

LYDIA

So that's...

BEN

The dice is with you.

LYDIA

Twelve plus seven.

ALEX

Twelve and seven is nineteen.

LYDIA

Nineteen.

BRYN

Eighteen plus six, twenty four.

LYDIA

Oooh.

BEN

So yeah Sasha is flowing like an oily seal.

LYDIA

An oiled seal and he's just a better oiled seal.

ALEX

And then Hamid is exactly the same but quieter, which has got to be galling, but yeah you guys are basically making your way down this metal staircase, it's quite old, on the flip side of the door that you passed you see that there is, there is no bolts on this side so it's very clear that it was meant to be locked from the upper level against the lower level rather than the people in the stairway closing it from people coming in from where you have.

JAMES

So they were meant to keep people like that out originally?

ALEX

No they were meant to stop people from coming up the stairs rather than people going down the stairs.

LYDIA

Gotcha.

JAMES

OK.

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

So sneaking down the stairs, sneaky, sneaky, sneaky a little bit of a more sneaky, sneaky, sneaky. There's a brief moment where you go quiet was there someone there, you hear voices, a little bit more sneaky. You get down until you're at a range of your message and the voices are discernibly louder, you hear multiple and they don't seem to be hushed and you can make out women's voices as well but yeah it's as far as you can go without dropping out of range.

BRYN

I'll just whisper through the message we're going out of range but we'll shout just stay vigilant.

BEN

We're ready.

ALEX

You go down a couple more staircases and come up against another door like at a lower level and the staircase continues lower as well.

LYDIA

Goodness.

ALEX

You can see the bottom maybe another five floors down, it's a pretty deep stairwell.

BRYN

I'll whisper, could this be a path into Other London, how deep do you have to go?

LYDIA

Ah I don't know but Sasha would so Alex...?

ALEX

It's certainly deep enough I mean ultimately certain parts of other London would be coming up to almost like just below that sewer that you first entered. You're certainly deep enough to be drawing near to Other London. Impossible to know whether like this is connecting you to that but just sort of how far you've come and your experience of it yeah certainly.

BEN

To clarify then with Upper London and Other London is Upper London effectively on stilts or is Other London completely underground and it has basically been subsumed a bit like for example Ankh-Morpork's undercity.

ALEX

Upper London is built on London, basically the London got built up over the top and you know that there were the floods which if anyone is interested in this stuff I'm deliberately being a bit esoteric because it's all there on the website.

BEN

Ah.

ALEX

You just go into, if you go into Rusty Quill gaming and then across to story-world I've got a bunch of things explaining the story-world in greater detail but following the floods from the initial lightning rail experiments, Under London or Other London was subsumed and it was just much easier to just effectively turn what was a second story into a basement and just build across the top.

BEN

Right.

ALEX

Start again, do it better.

BEN

Fair enough.

ALEX

That's certainly all that your character would know, no more.

BEN

Yeah fine,

BRYN

So what can we hear, the voices?

LYDIA

So I would then answer in character I'm guessing saying, it's entirely possible, there's places much less deep than this but...

BRYN

Sure OK.

LYDIA

But it might even go straight past Other London to like maybe there's another London before that and then another one before that?

BEN

Is it Londons All The Way Down?

BRYN

OK.

ALEX

Do you continue to go down or you're currently near...

BRYN

We're listening on this level.

LYDIA

Let's listen.

ALEX

It certainly sounds like the voices are coming from this floor rather than the lower floor and basically there's a corridor leading away from the stairwell that just takes an immediate left turn, another 90 degree so you can't necessarily see a door but it's, the noises seem to be coming from round the corner.

LYDIA

Take a listen.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Sure you make out a babble of multiple voices, ten maybe twelve that you can hear discernibly.

BRYN

But not so not possible to pick out a conversation because there's so many.

ALEX

You make out a very, very faint conversation and you occasionally catch the word “bread” and the word “ridiculous”.

BEN

What ridiculous bread we have!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

What you get for setting up a clown bakery.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Do you think we can?

LYDIA

Well it sounds like.

BRYN

Have a look without being spotted?

LYDIA

Yeah I mean you’re small or like I’ll do it, I’ll, it’s fine I’ll do, I’ll, fine so I, very in character there.

BEN

The world's most reluctant rogue.

LYDIA

OK so yeah I'll go pop my head round the corner.

ALEX

You see another door almost identical to the one that is at the top of the staircase, the bolts have been sheared and the bolts were designed to be opened this time from inside the stairwell.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

Rather than from outside the stairwell and the bolts have been sheared and it's slightly ajar.

LYDIA

OK, I mean am I now hearing lots of clear conversation?

ALEX

The voices are definitely coming from the other side of the door and there is what looks like firelight sort of occasionally glimmering on the wall.

LYDIA

Can I now hear what these people are talking about?

ALEX

You hear an equivalent to:

“This is ridiculous, this is absolutely ridiculous, I’m not paying that for bread.”

“Well you can pay for it somewhere else or you know you can pay for it here?”

“It’s ridiculous, who pays that for bread? I could eat a rat for that, two maybe.”

LYDIA

Do I recognise these voices?

ALEX

You recognise the tone and the accent as Other London.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

But the specifics, no.

LYDIA

OK so still not particularly sure if these guys are enemies but it doesn’t sound that much like it but then why would we come down the corridor out of the...

OK I’ll just open the door.

ALEX

Just brazenly?

LYDIA

Very sneakily I want to take a tiny peek through the crack.

ALEX

It explodes in your face, no it doesn't, it doesn't.

LYDIA

Oh.

ALEX

You open the door and you're looking into a large industrial under-complex as it were so lots of steel walkways up high, you're coming out onto a very high steel walkway and it's almost like someone drained the vaults that Zolf landed in.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

It isn't actually designed for the holding of liquid or anything but the scale, the kind of architecture, there are pipes that run in and then flow but they flow past this, a lot of metal grillwork, multiple levels and you appear to be above what looks like some kind of market that has been set up across the metal grilling and just across the various levels of the complex.

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

It's very familiar to you as it's one of the bazaars, there's a few.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

You know that you recognise it and you realise that you've never seen this door that you're looking in through, you've never seen that open before to be honest there's so many doors that are just locked and bolted that you don't really notice them eventually.

LYDIA

OK, is a, like is it going to be a hugely obvious thing if I walk out of this, like am I visible to the entire market because I'm coming from such a high place?

ALEX

I'd say that if the market was looking up yes, you are like you know 30ft above all of the stall tops and stuff which also actually have awnings.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

As if they were going to be rained on but it ain't rain that they are protecting themselves from.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

But yeah you, you would be visible but it's not like anyone's looking up there you know.

LYDIA

Bringing Bertie is going to be difficult. Yeah so I go back to you, to Hamid and say, go back and send them a message, it's just a market, it's just like we can, we can go in, we can ask people if they've seen anyone come past, it's like, it's just normal people.

BRYN

Well shall we head back up and the four of us can work out what to do next I mean at this point the trail has probably gone cold and maybe we just need to start asking around in Other London anyway.

LYDIA

And you want your sleep.

BRYN

Well yes.

LYDIA

Alright I mean maybe when we get them I bet there will be like an inn or somewhere we can get down there, I mean it won't be what Bertie is used to or you.

BRYN

Well let's go and talk to them.

LYDIA

Right.

BRYN

We'll just head back up to the main...

ALEX

OK sure we'll cut to Zolf and Bertie mid-conversation.

BEN

So the aroma I would say is probably... **(group laughter)** ...had a certain sort of indescribable really like nothing I've been in some pretty grim bilges in my time but this was grim, extraordinary.

JAMES

Grim. Grimmer, grimmest.

BEN

Not quite grimmest but I'd say...

JAMES

Somewhere between grimmer and grimmest.

BEN

One of my top three grim moments.

JAMES

Top three grims.

ALEX

At which point Hamid and Sasha rock up.

BRYN

So down that staircase there's a doorway into a bazaar.

LYDIA

Yeah like it's one of the other London markets. It will be you know it's just...

BRYN

It's quite crowded.

ALEX

If you give me a knowledge local Sasha I can see how much information you have.

LYDIA

Oh ten, I thought that was a two.

ALEX

Ten and what's your modifier?

LYDIA

Seven, seventeen.

ALEX

OK yeah.

LYDIA

I know stuff about local things, local knowledge from local people.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

One of the things that they fixed I think in Pathfinder was knowledge local refers universally so if you were in Paris you would still have better knowledge local than everyone else because the idea is that you are good at just figuring it out. It's very much I find myself in Budapest. I know how cities work, and then you know an hour later you're in a hashish bar making all of the friends.

LYDIA

In my case, annoying all of the people.

ALEX

All of the people.

JAMES

To you Budapest is barely a Buda-nuisance.

LYDIA

Ayyyyyy!

ALEX

Oh, James!

JAMES

Ah that was great. Come on.

ALEX

That's your worst one for the day.

JAMES

I enjoyed that, I enjoyed that enough for everybody.

ALEX

So you know it is a bazaar, it is a bazaar that specialises in food products, it's near enough to the sewage pipes that there is, think of it as a hydroponics garden that has actually been set up, where a few enterprising folks have been using it as manure effectively and there's a part connected to that which is for the cleaning of them to remove all of the stray sewage blah, blah, blah. It's mostly for the buying of food, it's also mostly for the buying of food sort of

wholesale so people would be coming up here to buy like thirteen cabbages to then take it to their inn and make cabbage soup for forty people or whatever. It's not so much oh I'd like to buy a cup of a coffee here kind of deal.

LYDIA

I don't know, like there's nowhere around there you could sell...

BEN

I don't think we're going to pick up that trail by following it, we'll have to ask around.

BRYN

We've got these big...

BEN

Actually good point not really that keen to go into Other London with something that's probably worth the amount that Other London is.

BRYN

I mean shall we take these back, we should take these back to the site, to Haringay and then we can try and pick up the trail tomorrow morning?

LYDIA

After a sleep.

BEN

Either that or if he pays us, jobs a good un.

JAMES

Job done.

LYDIA

Job done.

JAMES

This simulacrum looks pretty dead to me.

BEN

That's what he wanted.

JAMES

That was basically the fulfilment of most of the conditions.

BRYN

Well he might want us to find the people that did it as well when.

BEN

Then he can pay us some more. We are after all mercenaries.

BRYN

Indeed.

BEN

If you're not comfortable with this whole kind of...

JAMES

Very comfortable I'm extremely comfortable.

BEN

...Commerce you know focused then...

JAMES

Just not used to it is all.

BEN

Right OK.

JAMES

I am intensely relaxed about being filthy, filthy rich.

BEN

And if anyone has got any concerns don't worry, if we see people being mugged or anything like that I'm not going to ask them to pay me before I help.

LYDIA

Oh you're not?

BEN

Well you know we can assess the situation but...

BRYN

I mean the other thing is it would be quite nice to prepare before you know... I was literally just on my way home, I didn't bring you know everything I would have needed with me and then we were in a fight with some people and...

JAMES

Hamid road trip.

BRYN

Fight with some people and then we came down to the sewers and it would be nice to have everything I needed.

BEN

Someone who has gone for a swim in lots of poo I can't agree more with going back and having about fifteen baths so...

LYDIA

And we could like have a bed in a hotel like one that's paid for and everything.

JAMES

We could rest using all of this money that we've just picked up that looks a lot like a head and an arm.

BEN

The mercenary guild will gut us.

BRYN

I have an apartment in town.

LYDIA

Wow.

BEN

Fair enough, to Hamid's apartment.

LYDIA

Hooray!

JAMES

All back to Hamid's.

BEN

Well we'll have to go, my accent went a little weird there. We go pass the Sergeant and...

BRYN

...deliver this and see what he says and what he wants us to do next.

ALEX

So spell out your plan specifically.

JAMES

We go all the way back up to the surface, we go and see Sergeant Haringay.

LYDIA

Is there, does the, does the metal staircase keep going up, further up than the door that we came through so maybe straight to the ground level?

ALEX

It did head further up, it didn't disappear into the distance, it only looked like it went up a few more levels.

BEN

We're not that far down.

LYDIA

I think we should try that, yeah.

BEN

That's probably a good route back yeah. But yes our plan is get out, find the Sergeant and give him the head, hopefully collect our payment, see if he wants to pay us to do anything more and then go Hamid's for parties and ablutions.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

End of campaign.

LYDIA

Yay!

BRYN

No I'm not a dragon yet.

JAMES

Cut to the four of us just sat in a hot tub, ah.

BEN

Yeah we'll just sell this on the black market and retire to Sweden.

(Group laughter).

JAMES

That's the first time I've ever heard the phrase retire Sweden as if it's a happy ending.

ALEX

To be honest the way Pathfinder works you could totally sell it and head off to Sweden I can make that work.

BEN

Yeah that's fine but...

LYDIA

That sounds like less trouble than sticking around in London.

BEN

I'm an honest mercenary. You may not be but... I've got the arm.

JAMES

We're going up there, up the spiral staircase.

LYDIA

I'd check for traps on the door.

BRYN

Where does it come out?

ALEX

So you head up, you head up the stairs, it takes a while, clang, clang, clang because Bertie's with them and you make it to the level that you came out in originally, sorry, then up a few more rounds of the stair case and you get to just a door it is bolted and it appears to be bolted like the one that you came in through so that people from the stairwell can't get out.

LYDIA

Agh OK.

ALEX

You might be able to...

LYDIA

Lock picking.

ALEX

Yeah so having a quick look yeah there is a lock that you can pick.

LYDIA

So I have just basic thieves tools and my lock...

ALEX

So you're not taking any penalties but you're not getting any bonuses?

LYDIA

No.

ALEX

Disable device.

LYDIA

Yeah that's right.

ALEX

So for listeners because this is the first time, disable devices for lock picking, if you have thieves tools you take no penalties, if you're doing it without thieves tools you take a -3 I think or -4 most rogues will go for a master work set as soon as possible because they are comparatively cheap and get you just a +3 which is why you know they're useful.

LYDIA

That was fifteen.

ALEX

Fifteen total?

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

OK fifteen total and it takes a decent amount of time just as Bertie is starting to get a bit grumbly and impatient.

JAMES

Hungry!

ALEX

You manage to get the sort of clank and then pull down the lever and you feel the bolts (**imitates unbolting of door**) and you can pull the door open.

JAMES

Are there any biscuits in there?

LYDIA

Are there any biscuits in there, Alex?

ALEX

There are no biscuits in there.

BEN

It's a biscuit factory!

JAMES

Perception check for biscuits! Kidding, carry on.

ALEX

It appears to be a service tunnel that runs for at least 100 feet, and just has a lot of pipes sort of in the walls and in the ceiling, it's just a long straight service tunnel.

LYDIA

What do we want, down here or...?

BEN

This is a service tunnel, it's got to have an exit because someone's got to get in, so... And it's not covered in poo! So that's a win in my book.

ALEX

You guys make it down the corridor without any encounters with anything to do with the human digestive system and make it to another manhole cover, ladder's leading up to it. It's a bit of a longer ladder, it's like a 25 foot ladder or so, and there's a manhole cover at the top, which is covered, and it looks like there's sort of light dark light dark, same as the one in the other direction. Who leads the way? Give me an order.

JAMES

Sasha, and then probably me.

LYDIA

I flow like...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Something that flows uphill, up a ladder!

BEN

Like cheddar gratings out of a grater.

JAMES

Grated at speed!

LYDIA

Like a weasel through a Hamster City toy set.

ALEX

Like really cramped and quite difficult?

LYDIA

No, weasels are really small!

BEN

Is that some product placement? Are Hamster City paying you?

ALEX

I wish they were.

LYDIA

Or like a stoat, they're the smaller ones, right? So even smaller, like tiny. And deadly.

ALEX

So you go up a ladder like a stoat, that's what I'm hearing. You get up to the manhole cover. There doesn't seem to be anything attached to it, at least from this side. Do you try and lift it?

BEN

Mind your head!

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

Give me a strength check?

LYDIA

I can't do this, probably.

JAMES

2.

LYDIA

I do not manage it.

ALEX

No, not even a little bit. And on that failure I think we're going to take a brief break, and be back here in a couple of minutes!

[AD BREAK]

ALEX

And welcome back. So, yeah, you've successfully failed at lifting a manhole cover.

JAMES

Stand aside, young lady! Bertie... Clang clang clang.

ALEX

Clang clang clang!

JAMES

Clang clang clang clang clang, how long's the ladder?

ALEX

It was what? 25-30 feet.

JAMES

Clang clang clang clang clang. There's a montage.

BEN

Bertie!

JAMES

Montage concluded. I'm at the top of the ladder.

BEN

Make sure you don't get your head knocked off by a cart!

JAMES

Very well!

ALEX

I'd recommend taking ten.

JAMES

OK.

ALEX

You eventually manage to (imitates lifting manhole cover). It's clearly night, not like 2am or anything, it's coming up to... I mean you're not a survival expert. The streetlamps are on. There you go, Bertie, it's night and the lights are on. There's not much traffic. You're coming up right in the middle of a street. It's an upmarket area. You're not too far from Edison's to be honest. You're only, like, maybe a block away. Something like that.

LYDIA

So where's this, like, fancy apartment that was going to be all, like, wine...

BEN

We're finding the Sergeant's first.

LYDIA

Aww.

ALEX

Right so you're presumably heading to Central, I'm guessing?

JAMES

City of London, presumably?

ALEX

Yeah. Zolf knows his way there. You head through. You head out of the upmarket back into, if you remember, where Zolf was doing his interview. Kind of a bit more merchant-y. And there's a large official-looking building, some faux columns out front. Central Precinct. And it has like a badge and an emblem which is... Oh I think it's a rose and a baton, crossed. And heading up there's a wooden counter with someone behind the desk, behind some glass.

[SFX typing, office chatter]

ALEX

“Can I help you?”

BEN

We’re here to see Sergeant Haringay.

ALEX

“Alright. Name?”

BEN

Zolf Smith.

ALEX

“And...?”

BEN

Oh, sorry.

JAMES

Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham. And guest! Holds up the head, does a little ventriloquism. “Hello! I’m a metal person!”

ALEX

The guy behind the counter is clearly aware of what happened today.

JAMES

“Bottle of beer, bottle of beer.”

BEN

That's why we're here to see him.

ALEX

Alright, I'll be back in a second.

JAMES

"In your own time." Done in a ventriloquist voice with the metal head.

LYDIA

(imitates ventriloquism)

ALEX

He goes and he heads back. In a couple of minutes, out from down a corridor, steps Haringay. "So, that was fast. Any news, anything like that?"

BEN

Bertie, show him your trick.

JAMES

We just flew in from Other London and, boy, are our arms tired! Through ventriloquism, though the big metal head. Why not give him a wave?

ALEX

You guys are way too whimsical! "My office, now."

JAMES

Very well, on we go. Again, ventriloquism, all the way through.

[SFX ticking clock]

ALEX

You head into, it's a small-ish office. He's clearly high up enough but by no means is he running the precinct.

BRYN

Higher up than he used to be!

ALEX

Oh, yeah! Basically, you see huge mounds of paperwork on his desk. A significant portion of it looks like it's been done in a hurry and probably relates to what's today. There's a bookcase on the side which covers some legal documentation, things like that. There's two chairs for people on the other side of the desk. There's a coat rack which has basically got his helmet and his steel cuirass attached to it. There's a window behind him which looks out onto the street, and a gas lamp on his desk and a gas lamp in the ceiling, both of which are at a sensible level. It's modest but by no means is it ramshackle.

JAMES

I'm going to put the head on top of one of the piles of papers like it's a massive paperweight.

ALEX

Half of the papers slide immediately onto the floor. He doesn't really seem to care, to be honest.

JAMES

Whoops!

ALEX

He sits down. "Right. And the rest of it?"

BEN

Couldn't locate it. We tracked them into the sewers. Found these two pieces discarded, just down a drain.

ALEX

"Down a drain?"

BEN

Yeah. I had to swim in and get it, so thank you.

JAMES

You're welcome.

LYDIA

It was a good team effort.

JAMES

Team effort. Team! Team! I put my hand out for the sort of team American football bonding thing.

LYDIA

I try and react in the wrong way, like go for it as if a shaking hand. Move around...

BRYN

We can give you a possible location for more pieces. We weren't able to ascertain whether they were there, because it was a rather large vault filled mostly with water and excrement. It might take a team to drain it to discover if the rest is there.

ALEX

“So basically, they've destroyed it?”

BRYN

As far as we can tell. We recovered these two pieces.

JAMES

At this point Bertie shakes the big head, and turns it up and says, all signs point to yes!

ALEX

As you're saying that like a bit more of the sewage drops out onto Haringay's floor just from the inside, just a little bit of a deposit. “Do me a favour Hamid is it? Close the door.”

BRYN

I shall do so.

ALEX

“Good.” Picks it up, looks at it, “Bad news, don’t want it. You’re saying it’s at the bottom of some big old vat of?”

BEN

We can’t confirm that. We followed the trail to a bazaar in Other London at that point.

ALEX

He reacts to that.

LYDIA

We don’t know though like because they could have gone up, the people that we were following.

BEN

What to the service hatch?

LYDIA

Yeah they could have gone up.

BEN

And back into Upper London?

LYDIA

Yeah they could have gone back into Upper London at the street.

BEN

But from that branding, the way they were dressed, they were from Other London where else would you go?

LYDIA

Why do you assume it's Other London people it could have been people from Above London.

ALEX

“Right, right, right.”

LYDIA

Just picked up some tricks.

ALEX

“As fun as this is where would the, if they had gone up where would the service hatch have come out?”

LYDIA

It was just like a block away from that Edison place.

ALEX

“A block away.”

BEN

It makes no sense. It makes absolutely no sense.

BRYN

They'd be seen...

ALEX

"I'm going to be honest I've had, the second that this happened I've had most of the officers that I have running the area, I mean..."

LYDIA

There were other doors coming out of that, out of the staircase at different levels or maybe they put it, maybe it all went into the, there was the other man hole right, the other man hole out in the other direction.

BEN

It seemed most likely that...

LYDIA

I think it's unlikely.

BEN

Can I just if you don't mind do you want to just can you step outside with me please. Please, as your employer.

LYDIA

Yes.

BEN

Thank you. Give us a moment. Open the door.

ALEX

You'll head out, we'll follow you and then we'll cut back into the office.

BEN

What is this about? Why are you so?

LYDIA

I just don't think that there's any need for us to go down there. There doesn't seem like there's enough evidence.

BEN

Right just because you're scared of Other London because of whatever has gone on, don't, right, jeopardise our reputation. Do you know what you just told him? There were loads of other avenues that we could have explored and we didn't, alright do you know that looks, he's paying us. Just because you're scared to go back there, you're supposed to be a mercenary.

LYDIA

If they came out of that door they would have had to carry like probably most of the like the thing.

BEN

What is your problem with going back to Other London?

LYDIA

It's just not a good place.

BEN

It's our job to go to not good places.

LYDIA

There's not good places and there's not good places, you know, some...

BEN

I'm assuming by the way we met you have some sort of history with people in Other London. As part of the team we will protect you from those people. Like as a team we'll work as a team, keep each other safe. But we have to be able to do our job, or we can't do our job. Now I said we will try and find somewhere outside of the city but we have to do the job at hand first. Then we'll move from the city, deal?

LYDIA

My face coils up like an angry teenager's.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

And I nod as if there was a sour sweet stuffed into both of my cheeks.

BEN

Look I'll buy you a drink as well, alright?

LYDIA

Alright.

BEN

Fine, go back in.

ALEX

Haringay meanwhile has in the meantime cleared his desk, he has literally just swept all of the stuff onto the floor, with distaste put the simulacrum on sort of a side coffee table thing and has been spreading out a map of the area, which has a couple of things for sewers. It doesn't go as deep as you guys have it just has that top layer and then it doesn't get as far as the staircase and you guys have like effectively he's pointing out the staircase and he just says staircase and he's going so here.

BRYN

Well, I'll walk him through everything that happened to us. So the two you know it's very possibly they dismantled it and chucked it all down there but we can't be certain so if there's possible to get people who can check into that, into the big lake and see if there are other bits at the bottom that would be good.

ALEX

"Trawl it."

BRYN

Obviously we didn't know if you wanted us to try and track these people beyond just the device but we felt...

ALEX

"No that's fair."

BRYN

This was enough to bring back to you to at least confirm that it's a...

LYDIA

It's a dangerous thing to be carrying around you know we wanted to get it to you.

BRYN

No longer functioning.

ALEX

"No it's fair, you did right, good job. I have enough officers for up here, what I don't have is any officers to go down, I don't, as it is I'm looking at about fifteen other people who are all trying to take command and none of them actually know what they are doing. I can cover up here, what I can't do is I can't send people down there. It's as simple as that. You've done a good job so far, you've done better than I thought, to be honest, I figured it would take you a while to at least find the stuff. The fact that you brought it back in pieces is only making me happier. It seems like you deserve to be paid and maybe we can discuss maybe furthering this investigation, everyone alright with that?"

LYDIA

Yeah.

BRYN

I think so, we did think of some other leads that could be pursued I mean they have clearly, this outfit has clearly equipped themselves quite well and you know if we can track down any merchants that they bought these devices from as well.

ALEX

He just turns to Sasha and gives a calculating look. “Hypothetically would you happen to know someone who would happen to know Other London well enough to maybe show these guys around and effectively where they could buy some things like that?”

LYDIA

Yes.

ALEX

“Good.” He reaches down into his desk pulls open a drawer, you see him pluck out a key from under his neck, open a strong box, plucks out what looks like a heavy bag.

LYDIA

It looks like the sour sweets have been extracted.

ALEX

Do they flow away?

LYDIA

They flow into non-existence and are replaced by lovely marshmallows.

JAMES

Bertie and the money's eyes lock.

(Group laughter)

BEN

I will grab the bag and stick it in my bag.

ALEX

“Well, Zolf, your two friends here they've done a fairly decent job explaining how much trouble it was. You'll find 400 in there, that will cover expenses as well, I expect that to cover the expenses for the beginning of the next investigation.”

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

“They'll be more where that comes, at least that much if you can return to me and get me who they are, something like that.”

BEN

Excellent.

ALEX

“I want people, not names, if you have to drag a body in here I want people, not names.”

LYDIA

As well we was wondering if there was like any more information about the tin man? Because like so Hamid said earlier that what if there was, like, an engine in it that they was after and they don't care about these bits despite all the gold and everything, like, what is there like any clues there?

ALEX

“I'm going to be honest, I shouldn't be sending anyone to Other London at all as it is this payment I'm going to have to be disappearing under some kind of pension fund which I'm not OK with by the way. On top of that I have the fact that this thing may be, may be in pieces, maybe it's just missing an arm and a head, I don't know if that thing can run without them, who knows but I currently have...”

BRYN

It does seem very unlikely Sergeant I wouldn't worry too much about it.

ALEX

“No you wouldn’t, I would, my job. What I’m looking at is the fact that if not the machine itself then the people who know where parts of it are, are currently in Other London.”

LYDIA

We don’t know that, we’re just assuming.

ALEX

“Fair but they are out there and my point is, is that people can be taking this thing apart right now, I don’t know what it runs on, it could run on bottled fireballs I don’t know. My point is I don’t want that out in the city, or Other London or anywhere else and if I’m frank if anyone was going to weaponize something that was left, it’s going to be Other London. It’s not a criticism of the people that’s down there.”

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

“But we all know who ends up down there because of the way the city works.”

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

That’s fine, we will...

ALEX

“If you find any pieces I need them back here under lock and key. If you find plans bring them back here. If you find out that someone has been making more of these things, if you can, destroy them all. If you can't, you bring the info back to me and I will find someone who can. I do not want these things in my city.”

BRYN

Thank you Sergeant we'll get on it.

BEN

We'll prep and we'll set out in the morning, we'll get something to you as soon as we can.

ALEX

“Get some rest you look like...”

JAMES

Handsome, I look like handsome.

ALEX

“Yeah, that.”

LYDIA

I look like black paint on the wall, slightly smeared.

ALEX

“Well, don’t let me keep you.” He just opens a folder and begins, he’s not sure whether it’s a power play or whether he’s actually doing some paperwork but he opens a folder and begins marking it down.

JAMES

It’s upside down, Sergeant.

BRYN

Yes, well, let’s head there.

BEN

Excellent.

ALEX

Fair enough.

BEN

And we can divvy up the takings.

LYDIA

Hooray.

BRYN

So I think the other thing is do we need anything to prepare if we’re going to venture down into Other London, I certainly understand that some healing potions are often useful.

ALEX

Well most of the shops are closed so...

BEN

Ah well we can get these tomorrow morning.

ALEX

Oh actually I should spell out there was a clock at the precinct at the front desk it's about, it's coming up to midnight it's like 11:50pm.

LYDIA

So it's still early then.

BEN

Yeah we'll bed down for the night, rest up.

BRYN

There's the guest bed and there's the sofa but only really enough for three.

BEN

That's fine I'll go on the floor.

JAMES

Well, of course, I'll have yours and that's very generous of you to offer, Hamid, thank you so much.

BRYN

You won't fit Bertie.

JAMES

Oh, that's a point well.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I love the idea not even bothering to take his armour off it's just like Snow White and the dwarfs.

BRYN

The guest bed is big enough for a human but I'm afraid that the master bedroom is not.

ALEX

Keep going but we'll say you're having this conversation as you're walking.

BRYN

There's a very nice bath so we can all have a bath.

BEN

Good.

BRYN

Or three.

BEN

Good. We'll prep in the morning, head down when we can.

LYDIA

I need to stock up on daggers I threw a few too many.

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

OK well.

JAMES

This chap, pointing at the falcon, needs at least a monocle.

(Group laughter)

BEN

I still reckon an eye patch would look very dashing.

ALEX

You guys carry on heading to Hamid's. He lives in a relatively upmarket part of the city, you get there, there is a locked gate and what looks like a sort of central courtyard. Presumably you head straight in, Hamid?

BRYN

Yeah just head straight in.

ALEX

Open the gate, you head up the stairs and you head into what looks like a pretty upmarket actually bachelor pad. It's a...

LYDIA

How many people do you share with then? Do we need to be worried about them?

BRYN

No it's just me.

LYDIA

Oh, OK.

JAMES

A bit pokey really isn't it, a bit small, I suppose for you though.

ALEX

In fact describe your apartment for us.

BRYN

So it's very nice, it's not opulent, there's nothing flashy about it, it's just you know it has got everything it needs. There's a couple of, there's a sofa, there's a couple of very nice chairs, there's a table, there's a little kitchen area, you

know the carpet is pristine and very welcoming to one's feet. The curtains are heavy and you can keep it dark, there's you know, you can control the lighting level, you know it's just...

LYDIA

It's a seduction pad.

BRYN

It... basically, yeah.

BEN

Not showy but all the mod cons.

BRYN

Yeah you know there's no flash, there's no pomp or ceremony to it all but it's everything is very welcoming and comfy and...

ALEX

And presumably very clean and orderly?

BRYN

Yes absolutely.

BEN

So when he lets us in I'll say, son of a banker.

ALEX

You know what I think I'm going to leave, I'm going to end, I'm going to end on son of a banker.

BEN

Son of a banker.

ALEX

You guys are hunkering down for the night.

JAMES

Yep perception check to find the drinks cabinet. Sorry, carry on.

ALEX

I'm going to say that with pomp and circumstance and taking twenty you managed to find it.

JAMES

Hello. I'm going to drink you and gain your courage!

BRYN

I'll pour you a brandy.

BEN

"Hello, alcohol, my old friend!"

JAMES

La la la, I see myself inside you, sorry go on.

BRYN

I offer Zolf the first bath.

BEN

Very kind of you, much appreciated.

ALEX

Right we'll close on that then.

BEN

Ah yes.

ALEX

So thanks for listening as ever be sure to leave reviews if you like what we're doing and we hope that you join us again next week. So bye everyone.

EVERYONE

Bye!

LYDIA

I can't help waving even though I know they can't see.

BRYN

Yeah I do it too, wave, we're waving, we're all waving.

JAMES

Wave.

LYDIA

Appreciate our futile waves.

BEN

Bye.

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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[OUTTAKES]

LYDIA

(Singing) Oh I do like to be an awkward rogue!

-

BEN

Do I know this person? It's your reflection. Me!

JAMES

Gosh we're handsome.

ALEX

OK, so...

JAMES

Do you come here often, beautiful?

[END]