

RQG – 12 – Keeeeeeesh

Content Warnings

- Food & alcohol
- Underground & tunnels
- Discussions of: physical violence
- Mentions of: blood, stabbing
- SFX: continuous background chatter, dripping, water, occasional screaming

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 12 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast with me your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

JAMES

James Ross

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

BEN

Ben Meredith

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

ALEX

And who are you all playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertrand “Bertie” Macguffingham, half man, half man.

(laughing)

ALEX

A helpful introduction there, James!

BRYN

Hamid the halfling sorcerer, slightly more distraught than usual.

BEN

Zolf Smith, dwarven cleric. Three quarters dwarf, one quarter peg leg.

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett. Human and very sulky right now.

ALEX

Yes. Err -

LYDIA

Sulky. Sad?

ALEX

Sad, err...

LYDIA

Quiet

ALEX

Quiet...

BEN

Terrified?

LYDIA

Wait, well, yeah

BEN

Shocked, anxious, stressed out...

ALEX

ALEX

There's a whole gamut of emotions.

LYDIA

I've got a lot of emotions going...

BEN

Just generally not doing ok guys.

LYDIA

You can't tell though. Unexpressive face.

(laughter)

ALEX

So just to recap what was happening from last week. Obviously the party were working their way through Other London in search of details to do with the Simulacrum of which you found some pieces. And then whilst under there you got a little bit ambushed.

BRYN

We got beaten. We had our buttocks handed to us I would say.

BEN

Terribly. Absolutely terribly.

ALEX

You may have got a little bit rinsed.

LYDIA

So many critical fails.

ALEX

It's ok because they got critical hits against you.

BEN

It's true, it really was buttock after buttock after buttock. I can't hold all of these buttocks!

JAMES

So many buttocks! D'argh!

ALEX

So yeah, luckily it turned out that they weren't quite there just to kill you or anything. Led you away to a...

LYDIA

I don't think they would've been upset if that happened.

ALEX

Not really

BEN

Cause they're not very nice people.

ALEX

And you guys made your way to a building that Sasha recognised and didn't like. Namely the sort of, headquarters of Barrett Rackett.

BRYN

Yeah does everyone else notice they have the same surname guys.

JAMES

It's probably a coincidence.

BEN

I mean, Rackett, Smith you're...

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JAMES

It's a pretty common name. Smith it would like the British blacksmith, Rackett would be the village tennis professional.

BEN

Tennis coach...

JAMES

So it's perfectly logical.

ALEX

So anyway you made your way up into his office. Had a nice little chat. Made some friends.

LYDIA

Bertie had a brandy.

BRYN

Had a nice little cry.

ALEX

And Barrett gave Hamid, obviously, a ring of something...

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BRYN

Mmm! A mysterious ring.

BEN

Which he was all too keen to put on.

LYDIA

[singing to tune 'mysterious girl'] Ooh-ooh-ooh, mysterious ring

(laughing)

You don't know what it does.

BEN

Is this just the rest of the podcast now. It just us in silence...

(laughter)

ALEX

Oh don't forget, Bertie's got himself some brandy.

JAMES

Brandy yeah! Brandy, an eel in a bun. Basically I need to collect the ingredients for a whole picnic by the end of the campaign.

BEN

That is a very good point. I remembered I had detect poison. I did intend to use it on the brandy when we got...

BRYN

Yeah I didn't see if it was magical or not.

ALEX

So yeah, you guys made it out of the compound, got all of your equipment back and were effectively just about to discuss what happens next. Obviously you've got the map as well. Don't forget that. Sasha's been able to read...

BEN

Which I'll be handing over to Sasha. Well I understand that it's another London map but...

LYDIA

I feel very trusted.

BEN

Darned if I can read it.

ALEX

So I think that's everything. So you can just pick up where you left off.

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BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Guys I can show you to an inn but nothing is going to happen to us now that Barrett's got his eyes on us.

BEN

We need some... yeah we need time to recoup.

LYDIA

Just down that alley, a few floors down.

JAMES

Still bleeding quite a lot really.

BRYN

Yes I'm quite badly hurt too.

BEN

Actually how many potions have we got left?

LYDIA

I've got one.

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BRYN

I've got one as well.

BEN

I've got one as well

JAMES

If brandy is a potion I have two.

BRYN

Brandy's not a potion.

ALEX

Everyone had one.

BEN

Yes.

BRYN

I had two. I drank one.

ALEX

So now everyone has one.

BEN

Yeah I had two as well, so now I'm down to one. So I need to rub that out... oh no, I used a cure... oh no I used a spell...

ALEX

You used a spell.

LYDIA

Hurray!

BEN

Yeah I think so. If I didn't people can shout at me on the forum. And tell me I'm wrong.

ALEX

Ok, so you've got potions what's the plan?

LYDIA

Let's just go to an inn. Can you get a few floors down?

BRYN

Yeah

LYDIA

Alright. I lead them down an alley to the side and then further down...which is deeper, I know, into Barrett's territory but it is thus more lived in. This is... Barrett's home is on the edge of looking out on a no mans' land that no one wants to cross whereas, yeah, it's a bit more lively down there. I begin, I'm guessing, to see faces that I recognise.

ALEX

Yeah

LYDIA

I might put up a mild disguise.

ALEX

Give me the roll then and go for it.

LYDIA

I mean it's just putting on my hat with different coloured hair. (dice roll) 3.

ALEX

You fail!

LYDIA

It is the same hair.

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BEN

You've got a wig that looks exactly like your hair!

ALEX

You're so terrible at disguises!

JAMES

You've got a hat that looks like no hat!

BEN

It's just a hat with "Sasha Rackett" on it.

BRYN

You try to make a disguise and you just put on makeup.

LYDIA

Yeah, I look alright.

ALEX

So yeah you try to disguise yourself but as you're walking around a lot of people start, you know, nodding acknowledging Sasha.

LYDIA

Alright! Goddamit

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ALEX

A couple of people say hi quite (misspeaks) friendri... friendly...

JAMES

Friendril-ly.

ALEX

Friendrilyness-ness-ity.

JAMES

In a friendly fashion.

ALEX

That's the one.

LYDIA

Would they? Yeah, I guess maybe some of them.

ALEX

A couple of them were friendly. I mean don't get me wrong there are some people who aren't happy to see you but there's just as many who are and this deep into sort of Rackett territory, things seem a bit more stable. It seems a bit closer to the markets up top to all of the people who aren't from Other London except a bit closer to that balance between domestic and market.

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Whereas the upper levels were pretty much just market really, these lower levels seem to be a bit more balanced between market and stall.

LYDIA

I take them to an inn.

ALEX

What's the name of the inn? Go.

LYDIA

It's the Bloody Bulldog.

ALEX

The Bloody Bulldog. Ok, cool, it's a good one.

JAMES

(as Bertie) "Ooh, dogs!"

LYDIA

The, the, the sign is a taxidermy bulldog head swinging on a stand. It's homely.

BEN

Are you sure this is the kind of pub that we want to be...

LYDIA

This is the nicest pub round here.

(laughing)

BEN

I'll take your word for it I guess.

LYDIA

This is the posh one.

ALEX

Heading inside it's posh by Other London standards. It's, it's sort of, there's still rushes on the floor and stuff but there's tables. There's even glasses, not like metal tankard jugs, actual glasses. The person behind the bar doesn't seem particularly aggressive or anything. They're huge. Like enormous, enormous person to the point where you're wondering if part of them isn't human because they're...

JAMES

Bertie sized.

ALEX

No they're a step above Bertie. They are massive as a person.

LYDIA

Alright Gragg.

ALEX

(in an extremely deep and rumbly voice) Alright. How's things Sasha?

LYDIA

It's complex right now.

ALEX

Is it ever not?

LYDIA

Yeah, tell me about it.

BEN

So what are you drinking? I'll get the round in since I got us into this mess so it's the least I can do.

LYDIA

Nice, er Gragg the alcohol.

ALEX

He reaches past...

BEN

Four of the alcohol.

ALEX

He walks past four casks all of which are just numbered 1, 2, 3. Goes to 4, pulls out...puts some drinks in some glasses, actual like pint glasses, puts them on the side for you. (in Graggs voice) It's good to see you Sasha.

LYDIA

How's it been?

ALEX

Call it 4.

LYDIA

4. Here's 4.

ALEX

It aint free. He's gesturing cash.

BEN

Copper right.

LYDIA

Yeah 4 coppers?

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BEN

I'll push 6.

ALEX

Thank you very much.

BEN

Pleasure.

LYDIA

I thought he was talking about the number of...

BEN

Makes 4! Well done! And take one away and now how many are there?

(laughing)

ALEX

So yeah he gives the glasses. Gives a nod to Sasha and then just stomps off, the one foot that he can along the bar.

BEN

Right well here's to progress

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LYDIA

To surviving.

JAMES

Cheers!

BRYN

I guess we can use the luck.

LYDIA

Yep

BEN

Yeah definitely could.

[clanking noises]

ALEX

Sasha is fine, it's exactly what you'd expect. Zolf, it's vaguely reminiscent of fire water that you probably shouldn't have but did have as a kid.

BEN

Well I mean on a boat as well we're heavy drinkers.

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ALEX

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I just mean it brings up some old memories.

BRYN

Hamid wretches [coughing noise]

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

JAMES

I've got a constitution of 16.

ALEX

Bertie, with you, so you've gone from a very, very fine brandy to what happens to very fine brandy if you sort of pour into a puddle and then pick it up with a cocktail shaker, shake it a bit and then try and drink it.

JAMES

Yeah (makes mouth noises)

LYDIA

It's good innit.

BRYN

S...strong.

BEN

Might need another then?

BRYN

No, thank you.

LYDIA

Put hair on your back.

BEN

Does he want hair there?

LYDIA

It's what they always told me.

JAMES

Bet this tastes the same on the way out as it does on the way in.

BEN

Well if you drink enough you'll find out.

BRYN

I hate to be the one to ask everyone but I know we've been hired to go after these people but are we ready? I mean that was like the first real fight we had and we... we lost quite badly.

BEN

We got caught unaware.

BRYN

Well we didn't though. We saw them me and Sasha.

BEN

Yeah but how many of them were there? Like, did we clock them all? Maybe we were just overconfident. We've got a measure of what we can do now.

LYDIA

I told you not to come down.

BEN

We've been to worse... well, I've been to worse places.

JAMES

I definitely haven't. This is terrible. Look at this.

LYDIA

I mean Gragg's bar is pretty great.

ALEX

Cheers Sasha

LYDIA

It's alright Gragg

BEN

I've also got to say we're mercenaries. We're going...we are paid to go into dangerous situations. We can't shy away from something just because it's going to be unpleasant. We've got to power on through and we'll see how we can do. Now the pay for this one is significant. Right? I think it's a difficult job but we're going to be rewarded well. You can buy you 100 falcons on your hat.

BRYN

But can we, can we, I mean can we do it though? There were four of them and two dogs and, you know, they took us all out. I just feel like...

BEN

We made a silly decision. We grouped up. We knew that they had bombs. We grouped up and that cast us. Next time let's not do that...

BRYN

So you think next fight we don't stick together because that sounds...

BEN

No but we assess the situation, I've got to say I dropped the ball on that one. I should've been ready. I'm the one with the shield. I should've deflected it. I didn't. I made a mistake. Next time we're going to learn, we'll get stronger and we'll keep going ok. Yeah.

JAMES

Now Hamid, in your darkest hours when you feel the fear creeping up behind you like a man who is perhaps maybe four foot tall and you think no, no, maybe, maybe death's icy finger is working its way up my spine one vertebrae at a time and is just about to stick itself in, in my ear, just think of the money. Of the massive amount of money you know and I often find that thought very comforting, you know. I will just think...I'll put myself in my happy place if I'm there on a beach made of money and the money is gently lapping at my feet.

BRYN

Ok, I'll try and keep the money in mind.

JAMES

Money.

BRYN

I mean they seemed much better at ganging up on us than we were at ganging up on them. We have got to do more of that.

BEN

Yeah exactly. We haven't known each other very much. We don't know how each other fights. We will learn. And we've been thrust into this. A bit ad hoc I'm going to say, but when we get through this we can do a bit of training, do a bit of development, we'll be able to, you know...honestly I've been reading about it. There are some manuals...

BRYN

I'd certainly like to learn more about how to fight people. I don't think I'm very good at it yet.

BEN

Anyway how we progress now. So I can sort you two out, I need to sort myself out, I need to sort you out a bit. You alright?

LYDIA

I could do with a little bit of healing.

BEN

Ok. Well I'll see what I can do on the limited resources we've got. Tomorrow fresh and fit. Take a more cautious approach.

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LYDIA

Eels are good for fixing people. Gragg? Could we order in some eels?

ALEX

That'll cost you at least 2 each.

BEN

Yup.

LYDIA

Eels all round? Eels?

JAMES

Eels are good. Eels are good.

LYDIA

Right I think that's...

BRYN

Maybe in a nice pie or a quiche?

BEN

I don't think they can stretch to a quiche

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ALEX

Sasha what's a keesh?

LYDIA

I'm not sure.

BEN

It's a pie.

JAMES

If you imagine a pie but it doesn't have a hat.

ALEX

Oh yes that sounds well easy.

(laughing)

Yeah, alright. I'll give you an eel keeeeeesh.

BEN

Right lovely.

BRYN

Or just a pie. A pie would be fine.

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ALEX

No, keeeeeesh.

BEN

Eel quiche, thank you very much.

ALEX

He just heads out for a bit.

BEN

Yeah I don't need to super go through it but I will start off, I think with Hamid.

Just take you over to a quiet corner of the bar.

BRYN

Well. before...I just have one other question.

BEN

Yeah

BRYN

Did any of you see what happened to my hands?

LYDIA

No, I was on the other side of the...what...

BEN

That bloke talking about the dragon hands.

LYDIA

Did you get blood on them or something? It's fine. You get used to it.

BRYN

Just...just...Hamid closes his eyes and concentrates really hard and you can see emotions flashing across his face as he's trying to remember how he felt. And it seems like a bit of a struggle and he's just flexing his fingers and then suddenly his hands turn into claws again.

LYDIA

[screaming noise]

BEN

That is...

JAMES

That is messed up, that is!

LYDIA

That is so useful!

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BRYN

This is not a spell I've ever studied. I don't understand what this is.

LYDIA

Can you...can you slash...?

BRYN

It doesn't feel like a spell.

LYDIA

It's silent as well!

BEN

Woah, woah, woah, woah, woah!

JAMES

Steady!

BRYN

He closes his eyes and tries to wave them, not at anyone, just to try and shake off the claws...

ALEX

Waving his own hands away

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BRYN

Yes and they turn back into normal hands again.

LYDIA

It's like 10 daggers.

BEN

I've got to say that's a skill that I'm glad we now have.

BRYN

But why can I do it.

LYDIA

It's like those magic things.

BEN

Yeah, you're the wizard.

BRYN

But this isn't a spell I've ever studied. It's not a spell I know. I don't even... I haven't heard of this spell.

JAMES

Can you do anything else? Can you turn them into opera gloves or something?

(laughing)

BRYN

Yes! I cast prestidigitation...but that's different. That is a spell. You heard my sounds and my movements. That's a spell. The claws are different.

LYDIA

I learned to pick locks and get a blade in under a window and then that meant it was pretty easy to stab.

ALEX

Eel keesh. He just dunks down on to the table four plates, each of which is clearly an eel pie and he's just ripped the top off.

LYDIA

Cheers Gragg

BEN

I push 10 copper over.

ALEX

No worries.

BEN

Look, maybe you've earned the favour of a god.

LYDIA

The stabbing god. Which god is that?

BRYN

What?!

JAMES

The god of very firm handshakes?

BEN

Maybe Aries?

JAMES

Little bit lizardy for Aries.

BEN

Maybe

LYDIA

Have you got any enemies that might do it to you?

BRYN

Make my hands weird?

LYDIA

Yeah. Enemies are weird.

BEN

What we should probably take from this is you can do that now. Great. You now know it. Use it to your advantage. Take it, roll with it.

BRYN

Ok.

BEN

You're out of your comfort zone, that's good. So look let's get you healed up. We'll have a night to reflect on it and then in the morning we can get going and...

BRYN

Ok we'll deal with it later.

BEN

Deal with as it comes.

LYDIA

Maybe the ring did it.

BRYN

I mean I was wearing the ring just now when my hands changed and the ring stays on.

ALEX

Yeah it changes size to fit whatever shape his hands take and then changes back.

BRYN

Because it's a magical item

ALEX

Yeah all magical items...oh yeah I should point out for listeners. Magical items in this world, part of their magic is that they fit you. As long as you're buying in the right sort of category. Obviously if you're buying something for a tail and you don't have a tail that's not going to work but otherwise...

BRYN

They adjust size.

ALEX

...stuff automatically fits you.

LYDIA

Maybe that's what the ring does. Maybe the ring did it to you. The ring is causing your hands to go...

BRYN

No, it happened in the fight before I got the ring.

BEN

Who knows?

BRYN

It's just a bit strange....

BEN

We can find out when we're not in a pub in Other London.

BRYN

I think maybe I'll look into it another time.

LYDIA

You can trust Gragg.

BRYN

Thanks guys.

ALEX

Cheers Sasha.

JAMES

You know what they say about halflings with big lizard hands?

ALEX

They're freaks.

JAMES

Well thank you for your constructive input there Gragg.

BRYN

Was there an end to that or....

JAMES

Oh big lizardy feet. I mean can you do anything else? I mean, can you do a flip?

BRYN

What?!

JAMES

Right, so you've got these big lizardy hands. Can you change anything else lizardy?

BRYN

I don't think so.

LYDIA

Well that's that.

BEN

We'll have a think about it. Just come with me, I'll get you sorted out and then we'll look at you two in the morning ok?

BRYN

Ok

BEN

I will use my obscuring mist and convert it into a cure like wounds.

ALEX

As opposed to filling the pub with mist

BEN

I could do that if you want! (rolls dice)

LYDIA

Good keesh innit, Bertie? Good keesh.

BEN

Lovely, so 7. I think that's all I have to...

JAMES

It's none of the words that you've just used.

BRYN

Can you do it with level 0 spells as well.

LYDIA

Gragg worked real hard on this!

BEN

I don't think I can, can I?

JAMES

What with his hands?!

BEN

Can I...

BRYN

You should be able to channel the positive energy on any spell to turn it...to spontaneously convert it into a healing spell of the same level.

BEN

Ah ok brilliant. That makes my healing much better than I thought. I thought it was only level 1 spells.

ALEX

No, no, no.

BEN

So, brilliant I will...are you sorted Hamid?

BRYN

Yes

BEN

Brilliant, you're all done.

BRYN

That's all my hit points.

BEN

Bertie, come on.

LYDIA

Are you finished with the keesh Bertie?

JAMES

I am entirely finished with *this*.

BRYN

The eel pie's actually quite nice I think.

JAMES

Incorrect!

LYDIA

Yeah, see

ALEX

Not pie...

BRYN

A little bit salty

ALEX

...Keeeeesh

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BRYN

The quiche. The eel quiche is nice.

LYDIA

Bertie you should appreciate the effort Gragg put into this.

ALEX

And onto the spell...I've just to keep things moving!

BEN

Yes so, I will convert a detect poison. You get 8 hit points back.

JAMES

Lovely I'm now up to 9 hit points so I've got 4 more.

ALEX

Don't forget you've got your +1

BEN

No because it...I'm casting it on 0.

ALEX

Yeah you can't convert a 0 into a number 1. You have to convert a level 1 into a level 1 and then 2 into a level 2.

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BEN

3 level 0s into 3 hit points for you.

JAMES

That's it?

ALEX

Give him a day, god!

JAMES

Right fine, so in that case I'm up to 4 hit points from my original one.

ALEX

Yeah

JAMES

Ok, cool.

ALEX

So presumably you guys...

LYDIA

I look expectedly at Zolf.

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BEN

I'm sorry, I'm out for the day but morning.

ALEX

So presumably you are now all going to go hit the sack.

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

You get shown to your rooms. They're on an upper floor. The stairs creak ominously as your gracious innkeeper shows you to your rooms but, yeah you guys go and have a decent night's sleep. Hamid give me a will save?

BRYN

(rolls dice) 11

ALEX

11. You have some slightly disquieting nightmares about your hands turning into independent things and coming for you and your friends but nothing...you still manage to get a night's sleep.

BRYN

Ok

LYDIA

So how many hit points do we go up overnight? If at all?

ALEX

You're looking at about your level. Your level in hit points really so...

LYDIA

1

ALEX

It's not a huge amount but the point is, is that it's meant to take you a few days to recover from a beating. But you've got a cleric on board!

(cheering)

Walking hospital with a trident.

LYDIA

We love you Zolf!

ALEX

So you guys all wake up, come down and you get some more eel quiche. Complimentary breakfast quiche.

BEN

Oh very nice, the service here.

ALEX

And you notice that a few other people are staring at quiche a little bit worryingly. And just from behind the bar you get, "keesh"

LYDIA

Cheers Gragg

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ALEX

I like keesh

BEN

Appreciate it Gragg.

ALEX

Yeah, keeeesh.

BEN

Anyway let's get you lot fixed up a bit more. So Bertie, come with me. (rolls dice) Hey brilliant, you get 2 and you're worse than I thought so hold your breath. (rolls dice) 7 hit points back.

JAMES

I'm now back up to full hit points.

BEN

Good and Sasha?

LYDIA

I'm only a little bit, I mean don't...don't...

BEN

You're not too bad?

LYDIA

I'm not too bad.

BEN

Alright, we've all got potions. I need one myself. Give me a second. (rolls dice)
Way over so I'm back on full, which is good!

ALEX

Cool. It's worth asking as this time actually what spells you prepared and what have you...have you converted any into a heal already?

BEN

Yeah. All three of those. So obscuring mist, sanctuary and summon monster 1.
Yeah, those are what I prepared and those are what I've converted and then I've got my level zero spells which are detect poison, stabilise and create water.

ALEX

Sure ok.

BRYN

Create water, yay!

BEN

I've learnt!

ALEX

Well he has to have some excuse to use his stepping stones.

BEN

Right.

BRYN

So, so shall, shall we start following the map then?

BEN

Yeah I guess so. I think ultimately they probably think we've been taken out by...

LYDIA

Barrett's group.

BEN

Barrett's lot. So they probably won't be expecting us and if we...I mean I assume you're comfortable with going in ahead...well us two, not the most unobtrusive lot.

LYDIA

Yeah I can look it all up. So this map, it'll take us a while to get there. It's three floors up, a couple of heights around the back of some...yeah, and then down

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again. Right so we'll end up on roughly the same level just have to go up and down, wiggle around a couple of tunnels but there's nothing I see that's a big problem.

ALEX

You do notice that everything that you've said is true but you will also be drawing near the Thames which obviously in Upper London isn't really a presence that people take into account anymore. But it looks like the place will be backing on to the Thames.

LYDIA

You'll like this though, near the river.

BEN

Good I can use that.

LYDIA

Yeah, it might be an idea to stock up because stuff's cheap down here. I don't know if potions are worth their salt or money I don't...

BRYN

Let's just head on.

LYDIA

Right off we go.

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BEN

See what we can pick up on the way.

ALEX

Ok so presumably you head out and start...

LYDIA

Bye Gragg!

ALEX

Bye.

BRYN

It was nice to meet you Gragg

ALEX

Keeeeeeesh

BRYN

I hand him a silver piece.

ALEX

He kind of looks at it, looks up and goes...puts his giant bulbous finger up, one second. Goes in the back, comes out and then he disappears for a couple of

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minutes. You hear a clatter and a bang and then he holds out four, like, hankies that are wrapped up.

ALEX

Keeesh.

LYDIA

Oh cheers Gragg!

BEN

Thank you very much Gragg. Appreciate it.

JAMES

Thank you, hmmm

ALEX

Bye Sasha

LYDIA

Bye Gragg. Good seeing you.

ALEX

And yeah, you guys head out into Other London again. So...

BEN

Everyone add eel quiche to their inventory.

ALEX

Oh yeah for goodness sake, you can't forget your eel quiche.

JAMES

Eel in a bun, eel quiche...

BEN

Just eels, eels, eels down here.

LYDIA

Well that and the white cabbage.

ALEX

So I'll tell you what then, why don't you describe the journey to us Lydia?

LYDIA

Right ok so we wander for about 10 minutes through the more flourishing sort of Rackett territory. You notice it might look a bit more friendly towards the centre of these large spaces because it's all, sort of, courtyards with stuff built over but I am sticking to the wall. And you find yourself in quieter alleys. Even though sometimes you're doing three sides of a square, er, we're, but no one bothers you.

BRYN

I am keeping my eyes out a bit more aggressively than I was before to avoid more pick pocketing incidents.

LYDIA

I am, if anything, as careless as you've ever seen me. I know that the protection of Barrett means everything in these territories. So it's about 10 minutes of that through these...these small alleyways. Then there is a hike up about three gruelling floors of slimy stairs. Like, horrendously drippy, mould on the walls. Up those.

JAMES

Bertie probably carries Hamid for that bit.

LYDIA

It's not fun for you guys but I'm guessing that Zolf is just like, oh yes, bilge water.

BEN

I mean just because I was a sailor doesn't mean I like bilge water.

LYDIA

So there's up, there's across. There's down again. There's one point where there's another of those massive gates that we came across the first few times and I tell you guys to kind of like, we're out of Rackett territory. There's an

alliance here. So they should just let us through. Wouldn't be surprised if he's even told us that we're coming but from now on, stuff can go wrong and round here what can go wrong, will go wrong.

ALEX

To chip in at this point, a couple of guards at one of those large doors, again which has the bolts like you were saying, it's aside and the couple of guys there are clearly Barrett guys. They show you through and they gesture for you to go talk to the guards on the other side who appear much scruffier, much less well off and so on and without a word they sort of flank you guys and just start walking. At that point I'm going to take a break there and we'll re-join it in a couple of minutes.

[BREAK]

ALEX

And welcome back. So yeah, just picking up from where we left off. You guys were getting shown through an opposition territory which is obviously much harder done by and I'll tell you what, Lydia, you were doing a good job, keep going.

LYDIA

Right, this place is scruffy. I notice that the eels hanging from the stands are thin, wispy things without any good slime on them at all.

BEN

Substandard eels.

LYDIA

Substandard eels. There are a lot of very pale rats and frogs. It's getting wetter. And water rolls if anything, like sliding through puddles. There's even rushes, like very pale rushes under some of the lights...some stuff is growing which sort of disgusts me. Yeah, we're moving through it. I keep looking out for pick pocketers at this point because we're not under protection now. I'm guessing these guys lead us to the opposite, like straight through and then...

ALEX

Sure and so they lead you through their territory and then eventually you make it. The buildings start petering away and it becomes very, very clear that no one's lived in this area any more and they lead you basically towards a part where it's...there's still discolouring on the walls and things like that and it's...it's very clear that you're beneath where the floodwaters once were. Like very visibly beneath. And they eventually...

LYDIA

Is it marshy?

ALEX

It's starting to get that way. There's not much unpaved stone but most of the stone that you can see is buckled upwards. It looks like it wasn't made to deal with this kind of environment.

BRYN

The loose ones squelch when you step on them.

ALEX

Yeah it has that...there's an awkward moment which is always the case where, let's say, Bertie walking along puts his foot on one of those slightly flaggy stones and it tips up, sprays mud up and...

BEN

And he kicks it.

ALEX

Yeah but they stop and they just gesture for you to carry on and you see that it starts to slope down precipitously and there's a couple of buildings, but it looks like a bunch of buildings have tumbled down. So there's lots of strewn stone and it goes downhill for a while and you're looking out over what is now the Thames and there is...

LYDIA

Is there still a roof over our head?

ALEX

There's still a roof but it's very high up. Like you've been heading down and the roof has been more or less level and in the distance you can see enormous, enormous buttresses holding it up. Like really huge steel constructions and

girders and so on and heading down you are looking out over this fetid Thames. It's barely moving and there's still pieces of rubble in the middle of it where they've fallen and been left to lie and it's very clear that all of London, both Londons are probably dumping into this. Certainly no one's using the water for anything. If you can call it water.

LYDIA

Ah, childhood swimming

(laughing)

ALEX

And most of the buildings on both sides of the banks are gone. You see a similar slope on the opposite side but on this nearest side you are looking down at, what looks like a makeshift compound. Someone has sort of set up shop in a couple of buildings that are still remaining. It looks like they've made fencing out of corrugated iron, things like that. You see a couple of guys with dogs are walking the perimeter of it and there's a large makeshift gate. You notice that the walls are, on the three sides, bordering up to the Thames but not as high across the Thames. There's a nominal, sort of like, barrier, like a railing but the Thames being so low, it's mostly like mud. Like mudlark territory if you know what I'm talking about.

LYDIA

Is it on stilts or is it...

ALEX

Yeah it's raised, it's, the buildings that are still there are still built in but most of the...you see a couple of wooden structures in there are raised upon stilts. Not really, really high or anything, just enough to get them out of the muck.

LYDIA

But we're not...so we can just about see them but they haven't seen us.

ALEX

No, you're a good like, say 800 metres or something like that. A decent distance away where just through the haze you're looking down upon them.

LYDIA

I hold a hand up and get everyone to crouch down. Right so that looks like it's...I mean Zolf did you, did you have a plan or do you just want me to go in?

BEN

We need to do proper reconnaissance so we know exactly what we're going up against.

LYDIA

Uh-huh, alright I'll go down I guess. You guys have a lovely time back here with your quiche

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BEN

Take this as well. I'll give you the healing potion that I've got just in case.

BRYN

I cast message so that you can still talk to us.

LYDIA

Ah, clever, cheers. And I...I guess I sneak my little sneaky heart out.

BRYN

Just shout and we'll come running

BEN

Good luck

ALEX

Give me a stealth roll to approach the compound first?

LYDIA

(rolls dice) 14 + 7. 21

ALEX

21 yeah. So you start approaching and like you said, this is kind of old territory for you as you said. As a kid you used to spend a bit of time around here. It's certainly not how you remember it, the compound's fairly recent but

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nonetheless you know how to navigate the area and you know bogs to avoid, the bits that are quite shallow.

LYDIA

All of them!

ALEX

Pretty much! Pretty much.

LYDIA

I melt into the stonelike mould on a cake.

ALEX

You sort of...at first everyone else can follow Sasha heading to a pile of the rubble and then linger for a bit and then quickly move across, trotting across to another pile of rubble but quite soon you lose her in sort of the haze and things.

LYDIA

There's a haze as well.

BRYN

I've just checked the spell message and it doesn't have a long enough range to actually accomplish this.

ALEX

I was about to say...

BRYN

So unless we move a bit of closer...

ALEX

She's going to drop out of range incredibly quickly.

BRYN

But I don't think we're going to be able to get a range where it's actually going to work. So I'll say, as you're moving out of the edge of range I'll whisper that to you through the spell so you know.

LYDIA

I'll say, that's alright, I'm not going all the way in.

ALEX

Sure. You approach the compound, as close within reason as you'd like to with that stealth check.

LYDIA

Yeah so I think with that I am still maybe like 10/15 metres away. I just want to see how many guards they've got on. There's no way I'm going to be actually listening to their conversation.

ALEX

Sure. You see basically those two guards are on patrol and they just seem to run a path from up to the river on one wall side with their dog. Up, across the gate, back down, around to the other side. It's just a square compound. They cross each other at the gate, occasionally linger. Maybe share a bite or something.

LYDIA

Of quiche! No, we've invented quiche!

ALEX

You see in one of the still remaining actually old build buildings in the compound, lights are on and it becomes clear that the older buildings, people are only in the upper floors. So there is a shed which is on sort of stilts and then there is a...two buildings in there. One of which has the lights on, on the second floor, one of which doesn't and there are people moving in the one with the little windows.

LYDIA

I want to get right around it and see if there is any possibility of us swimming in on the Thames side, possibly using some of Zolf's mists and magic.

ALEX

Give me an extra stealth check.

LYDIA

(rolls dice) 8 + 7. So only 15.

ALEX

Well it's at least possible for them to discern you this time so I'll give you an opposed roll. (rolls dice) Ok, as you start to do so, one of the dogs just sort of, the ears prick up, like the squirrel thing and then the guy who's with the dog just, he stops. He doesn't seem concerned. He clearly hasn't seen or heard anything but nonetheless the dog sort of pricks its ears up and is looking in your general direction. You made it, say, halfway to the river at that point. From there you can see that mud runs more or less right up to that compound and it's clear that they've kind of got a bit lazy when it comes to the fencing but you couldn't get any closer any that without, obviously, the dog reacting.

LYDIA

Yeah it's not even going to be easy to stab anyone at this point is it.

(laughing)

I mean, I can't...with the dogs and everything, I can't go right up to them and even throw something. Right, so I'm going to...

BRYN

Hide one of the fire flasks inside an eel pie.

LYDIA

Mmm. Oh that's brutal! Yeah. Right I can't see any easy way for me to sneak in if the dog is already aware of me. I'm not going to slip under that water and get in so I'm going to come back and report to you guys. Or get within message range and tell you.

ALEX

You may as well go the whole hog and just do the conversation and role play it.

LYDIA

Alright. Right so it's...they've got guards with dogs. I know how you feel about dogs now. But tell them that the thing's built right up against the river and I think it's possible we could maybe sneak in maybe under the river, like maybe swimming or like if we....

BRYN

Is there a fence on the river side?

LYDIA

Yeah but like a small one. A small one and we could maybe, like the guys and the dogs are like they're, they're not aware. We could shoot down one.

ALEX

There were big chunks where like I said, they loitered at the gate to share food so there were good chunks of time.

LYDIA

We could swim down and at the times where they're away from the river, we could come down on the river side.

BRYN

I don't know easy it would be to swim but Zolf might be able to...why don't you come back and we'll plan with Zolf and Bertie.

ALEX

Ok yeah we'll accelerate time. [make time-acceleration noises] You sneak across.... [sings Benny Hill theme]

LYDIA

Astonishingly they don't notice me with a brass band, I'm very good.

BRYN

What do you think we should do? What's the best way? Should we break into the compound? Should we take out the guards?

BEN

Hmm. Yeah I'm not sure. After that last fight I'm not too keen to get straight up into another brawl.

JAMES

I recommend a daring frontal assault.

LYDIA

What I could do, I could throw...we could throw the last thunder stone in, see if can knock them all out and then go in and we stab 'em up.

BEN

Do you know...was it only the guards who was in there...do you know how many other people there are inside or...?

LYDIA

There were lights on. There's people around.

BEN

The only thing with the thunder stone is it would alert everybody. If we can take out those guards nice and quick...

BRYN

Do you think we could lure them away from the fence somehow and take them out slightly further from the compound where their friends can't come and help.

BEN

Yeah were there are point that they might call for reinforcements...

LYDIA

So we could totally sneak down the river. Like how fast are your...

BEN

Could we not just sneak through the gate.

LYDIA

Through the gate?

BEN

Well if they both leave...

LYDIA

They'll notice the gate opening from the inside

JAMES

Well perhaps, if I might suggest, if someone...someone tall, charming, a very engaging personality were to talk to the two guards when they are clustered at the front, at the gate thereby providing a distraction for people, who are better suited to swimming through filth, to approach the compound from the rear.

BEN

We can get through...I mean swimming through the river. You're more...familiar with it.

LYDIA

I've got -1 swim. I don't swim.

BEN

I can't swim too well. I'm assuming that Bertie can't. We can't afford to have him take off his armour and put it back on again.

BRYN

I'm not very good at swimming either.

BEN

So the riverbank. Can we traverse that or does it back straight on to the water?

ALEX

The, there is a bit of a gap between the water and the compound. Not much. Like I said it goes sort of muddy and then after a small period of mud you get to the actual water. So you could, I mean, it looks like it would be tough work, like wading through mud.

LYDIA

Do you spell people have anything like sleep that can knock out those guards?
Nothing?

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BEN

No. Not like that.

BRYN

I still think our best way might be to just lure them away and see if we can...

LYDIA

I like it but how?

BRYN

I mean I can try and make friends with one of them. I mean that's a bit like Bertie's plan but I have spell that can do it.

LYDIA

Really?

JAMES

Are you saying my charm would be insufficient?

BRYN

No!

JAMES

Good! Then we're agreed. I'm very charming.

BEN

Alright, no, yes. If you've got something in your arsenal that can do that then let's do it.

LYDIA

Are you sure Hamid? There's two men and two dogs. If it goes wrong...

BRYN

We'll just have to fight them I guess.

LYDIA

Right well I'll be right by you. You won't see me but I'll be right there.

BEN

Myself and Bertie will be waiting close by.

ALEX

Ok so out of character I want you to spell out to me what your plan is before I can start running it through.

BRYN

I'll wait until the guards are not next to each other. I'm going to approach one of them and cast charm on him and because I'll be a trusted friend, I'll be asking him to come...just come over here and see this cool thing I've found.

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ALEX

At which point...

BRYN

Everyone else is going to jump out at him and...

BEN

Yeah lead him over to us.

JAMES

Quick question how long does this charm person last?

ALEX

Pretty decent length of time actually.

JAMES

Can't we just send him to go off for a hike somewhere and like take the dog with him.

ALEX

He'll get a bonus to the save, a little bonus to the save not to disobey an order that he's been previously given by someone but it's certainly doable.

JAMES

If we could just send him off somewhere, like he's off an errand. Like you've got to go and get dog biscuits. Something like that.

ALEX

Is your plan to get into the compound by telling someone to go buy some headlight fluid.

JAMES

Something like that.

ALEX

Maybe some polka dot paint.

JAMES

Yep. Left handed hammer.

BRYN

Should I try and do it to both of them? Should I try and cast a spell on both of them...

BEN

Do you think you can?

LYDIA

You're the one who knows how it works.

BRYN

I can try. I mean not while they're next to each other but I can do it one and then get the...the two of us could get the other one.

BEN

Getting rid of them yeah.

ALEX

The casting of two charms simultaneously is fine. They won't interfere with one another.

BRYN

Separate combat rounds technically but...

ALEX

Sure, sure but all I meant though is that if you were isolating one of them and then got away with it so that the other person has come back and there's no one there, yeah, I mean there's no problems. This is mostly for listeners, if you charm a person and then use another spell to charm another person, you could hypothetically use all of your spells to charm all of the people but obviously then you wouldn't have any other spells.

BEN

Oh also...

LYDIA

You'd have a lot of people on your side

BEN

For people at home I have actually been...I did actually double check and I've been slightly misusing the way that cleric's work. I've got channel energy which I can do a certain number of times per day which is my healing thing. At the moment I've been using spontaneous casting which is actually better for the situation but if anyone's going why hasn't he used the channel energy, it's because I forgot I had it but now I'm going to use it. So that's good.

(cheering)

Just for people that are like this person doesn't know how to play the cleric and it's like, yes. I do not, but I'm learning!

ALEX

So that's your plan then?

BRYN

Yeah

ALEX

So presumably then everyone who isn't Hamid is going to be positioning themselves in such a way to get the jump on someone.

LYDIA

Bertie's quite a long way away.

JAMES

Yeah, my falcon's covered.

BEN

Did you notice anywhere close by that we could...

LYDIA

Well you won't like it.

ALEX

I'm going to cut to Bertie knee deep in a quagmire. Just knee.

BEN

Submerged

ALEX

Drowning in a...

BEN

With a little reed snorkel. From within you can hear “I don’t like this”

(laughing)

JAMES

Rackett!

ALEX

So he’s knee deep in a quagmire with everyone else positioned, sort of, we’ll call it a little sort of hollow and with Zolf off to one side and with Hamid suitably ready to head off with Sasha obviously at the hollow as well. In which case then how do you want to approach, Hamid?

BRYN

Um, well not stealthy because I’m going to present myself as a friend so I’ll be sort of smiling and wavy and being like, “coo-ey over here!”

(laughing)

And when I’m sure he’s spotted me, I’ll cast charm.

ALEX

So we’ll role play the conversation because you’ve got to get close enough because of the range of that spell.

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BRYN

Yes, yes.

JAMES

Do you need it timed?

ALEX

Nah! (as guard) Who's that?

BRYN

Coo-ey. Hi, hi, it's good to see you again. Do you remember me? Oh my god you have to see...

ALEX

Don't come any closer.

BRYN

No, no no, you have to see what's just around this corner. There's this weird statue.

(talking over each other)

ALEX

Listen stay away!

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BRYN

Have you seen the statue? It's of a falcon

ALEX

Listen right...

BRYN

It's exciting.

ALEX

Now cast your spell.

(laughing)

Great by the way

BRYN

I cast the spell

ALEX

Oh yeah, it's just a will save isn't it. Ooh. Ooh. (rolls dice) What's the DC that he has to hit?

BRYN

I think it's only 14.

ALEX

Oh he's just rolled a 14.

LYDIA

Ooh, not charming enough.

ALEX

You could do another one but you'll be taking a penalty for doing it immediately afterwards. The guy looks at you a bit confused and goes, look, look right. This is your last warning. You come any closer and I will let the dog off.

BRYN

Look just come follow me and see. I'm going to turn and start like jogging back where I was coming anyway.

ALEX

Ok

BRYN

And just try and tempt him into following that way.

ALEX

Sure. The guy...

BRYN

But I'm not moving very fast.

ALEX

I get you. I get you. The guy doesn't follow and then you hear him calling to the other guard. At which point the other guard comes jogging around. The two of them have a muttered conversation you can't hear, just keeping an eye on you as you're heading off and then both of them head off following you with their dogs. So they are now approaching the hollow.

LYDIA

Great!

BEN

When do you get back to us?

ALEX

You've got a decent lead because he had to call his friend, wait for him to come back, you'll have had to have presumably pretended that you fell down a bit. Buy yourself some time but you've got a decent lead on them. Like a couple of minutes for you to prepare if you need.

BEN

Well we're not aware.

ALEX

No, no, I mean once he gets back you'll still have a couple of minutes. They're not loosening the dogs.

LYDIA

I want to be hidden behind the rock at a point where as they go past me I can stab them in the back.

ALEX

That's totally the right thing to do.

BEN

I want to make a slight mechanical point, wait until we've engaged. Because if you start, they turn around you and engage you and you lose all of your rogue benefits after that first hit.

ALEX

But if you sneak up on them, they're already being flanked so you get the bonuses and then you can still sustain.

LYDIA

I'm not quite in the hollow. I'm actually a little bit ahead but like hidden around the corner so that as you approach the hollow I am behind you.

ALEX

Sure

BRYN

Learning from previous incidents, I'm going to prepare myself holding two eel quiches to try and tempt some dogs

BEN

Just shaving cream pies but instead of shaving cream...

(laughing)

JAMES

Zolf and I are both carrying a large pane of glass across the road

BEN

To me, to you!

ALEX

So Zolf what's your preparation?

BEN

I am actually, sort of, right behind the rock so that if they come around I'm really close to them with my trident.

ALEX

Sure and Bertie?

JAMES

I'm standing knee deep in a pool of waste at this point in my life.

ALEX

And Hamid's been calling out that "there's a giant falcony statue. Oh my goodness. Look at the falcony statue."

JAMES

Ok I start thinking about how I can bluff myself as a magic talking statue to quite stupid guards...who I assume are quite stupid guards because my character is a massive snob. So can I prep that in any way?

ALEX

Err, hmm...

LYDIA

A disguise...what is your disguise...

ALEX

I tell you what, you could disguise yourself as a statue.

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BRYN

Disguise yourself as a statue. It has to happen.

ALEX

If Sasha does it and if she hurries, yeah you can do it.

LYDIA

I'm afraid I'm already a few...

ALEX

She's already....

BRYN

Just toss him the disguise kit

BEN

No Bertie's going to have to rely on his own ingenuity.

ALEX

Go on then

JAMES

Yeah, alright fine. Ok a disguise, I've got a +1 to this because it's a charisma based stat... (rolls dice)

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ALEX

Ooh go on!

JAMES

(rolls dice) Twenty!

(laughing)

LYDIA

Yes!

BRYN

Best natural 20 ever!

ALEX

Oh wow! Oh wow! I've got to close on that. I have to close on that.

BRYN

We're going to draw up this battle map and we'll see you next week!

ALEX

Ah...you! Right so bye everyone.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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[Show Theme Outro Ends]

(First clip fades in)

BRYN

(with an American accent) Previously on Rusty Quill...

JAMES

(with an American accent) Previously on Bryn's introduction...

BEN

Meat golems!

(First clip fades out)

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(Second clip fades in)

LYDIA

Maybe we could just leave some eel pies, for the dogs and that'll distract them.

BEN

Yeah, but then they'll probably wonder where the eel pies came from.

LYDIA

Round here you get a lot of eel pie.

(laughter)

BEN

Just growing spontaneously out of the river bank?

ALEX

It's not pie, (in Gragg's voice) Keeeesh.

LYDIA

I did not say that in character.

(Second clip fades out)

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(Third clip fades in)

LYDIA

Did you ever use you eel?

JAMES

No.

LYDIA

Cause he threw his eel, you've still got your eel.

JAMES

I've still got my eel, my eel remains unthrown.

ALEX

It's significantly the worst for wear.

BEN

Is it an untossed eel?

JAMES

It is an untossed eel. It's a holstered eel. I've got it, I've got it -

BEN

(laughing) A holstered eel!

JAMES

I've got it tucked into my, my bandelier

(laughter)

BEN

Just floppin' around.

JAMES

That's what it's doing, it's there wiggling to distract my opponents.

LYDIA

The mustard has got everywhere.

(laughter)

BEN

I think I'm gonna have to play an eel-based character next time and we'll have to wait while Bryn explodes!

(laughter)

LYDIA

For listeners at home, Bryn has turned purple!

BRYN

(weak with laughter) It was the floppy eel getting mustard everywhere.