

RQG –24 – The Root of the Problem

Content Warnings

- X
- X

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 24 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me, just to shake things up, I have

JAMES

James Ross.

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

BEN

And Marilyn Monroe!

[Group laughter]

Rusty Quill Gaming – 24 The Root of The Problem

ALEX

And who are you all playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham

BRYN

Hamid, the Halfling Sorcerer

LYDIA

Sasha Racket

BEN

And Zolf, who is not the leader anymore!

ALL

Whoa

ALEX

So...

LYDIA

He is, he's letting Hamid have this role.

Rusty Quill Gaming – 24 The Root of The Problem

BEN

We'll see.

LYDIA

Yeah, we'll see.

ALEX

Ah, Zolf will be an 'I told you so' kind of guy.

[Over talking]

BRYN

Episode 24 of the Rusty Quill... Zolf has come into the diary room. There is a bleeding zombie in the corner.

[Group laughter]

BEN

Honestly, I don't know where they've added all these bleeding zombies around.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Yeah well...

BEN

It's a challenge. Zolf is going to have to pick all the pieces of sweetcorn from one plate using his trident and over to another plate.

[Group laughter]

BEN

And they'll be no money for milk this week.

[Group laughter]

BEN

I like that, because in the Big Brother household it's like a pretty kitchen set in the 1980's.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

So, anyway. Yeah, you're all there currently playing Big Brother. Beneath Kew Gardens in the basement where you've been found there rancid with plant based zombifications. There's a body encased in cold mould that nearly got Hamid. There were two swans that Sasha managed to annihilate. There was a third body that you only just found which was hiding in the toilets and you know have just revealed another person. Seemingly alive. In a tank.

LYDIA

Let's not assume it's attached.

Ben

There was a mime in the face.

BRYN

There was a miming.

JAMES

If there's a lot of steam in the tank it could be like that bit in Titanic in the car.

ALEX

That's the exact look I want you to take.

BEN

But not the same emotional context!

LYDIA

We don't know how Bertie is going to react.

JAMES

Take the rock away and we'll see.

LYDIA

Yeah, it turns out there's actually just a lot of people getting busy in there and I...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

That's a very different party that you've just crashed!

JAMES

It's all the tiny little mandrakes. Their in all the other pubs.

LYDIA

Yeah, they're having a great time. They're having a great time.

ALEX

So, the party has literally just ... just seen that face inside one of the tanks. The one whose been tapping...

LYDIA

Tapping.

ALEX

...and tapping with their morse code.

BRYN

Bertie, can you move that rock?

JAMES

Yes, we're sure we want it in there.

ALEX

You've seen the face, already in the window steaming up. It points at the rock and goes 'no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no, no' and then it...

LYDIA

Can we hear them do that?

ALEX

You can't hear them but I can't mime...

JAMES

[unclear: 0:02:54] message.

ALEX

What languages to you have Lydia?

LYDIA

I've got sign language and French.

ALEX

Read your languages again.

LYDIA

Sign language, French.

BRYN

Did you take lip reading?

LYDIA

I did. I didn't write it down.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

I know you took lip reading.

LYDIA

So, so...

ALEX

Yeah, he's just saying no, no, no, leave the rock there. Leave the rock there. Whatever you do leave the rock there.

LYDIA

He's saying leave the rock there.

BEN

Oh.

ALEX

You're in there with it.

LYDIA

Right, so, he's...

JAMES

No, I think you want to say it's in here with us.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

But we, and I gesture at the door.

ALEX

He's kind of looking not to where the sound was scraping before. But back up to the entrance that you came in. And he's just kind of peering and he looks really scared.

LYDIA

No, no. I killed them. I burned all the swarms.

ALEX

Hamid, how shall we...

LYDIA

Yeah, isn't it like ... for the listeners at home, I'm miming like mandrake swarms...

BRYN

Being the time through the last two episodes!

LYDIA

Yeah, glamorous. Throwing a bomb, then exploding, then like thumbs up all over the place and then "a, ok" symbols and then like do a little dance.

JAMES

As he leans in...

ALEX

Whilst these conversations are happening, can I just know the order that you guys are studying. So place yourselves on the map so that I know.

LYDIA

It's combat time everyone!

[Over talking]

ALEX

Not necessarily. But I...

BEN

There's Sasha there and Zolf has probably backed off a little.

LYDIA

Yeah, so I mime the rest ... the last couple of episodes.

ALEX

Time to test whether you guys can separate out character knowledge from player knowledge. Give me a will save. Hamid.

BRYN

I've rolled an 11 and my will is 4 so 15. But an additional 2 ... not easy to scare a Halfling. You're that scary...

ALEX

So Hamid...

BRYN

That's me!

ALEX

While Sasha is demonstrating all of this, something really, really light. You can barely feel it. It just taps the back of your head and you hear a [imitates sound] and suddenly everything around you is like bright yellow. You just see flecks of yellow all around you. And it didn't hurt. There were no effects on you, it's just a [imitates sound] at the back of your head.

BRYN

Wh..what was that?

LYDIA

What was what?

BEN

What?

BRYN

Something ... why is everything yellow?

ALEX

The guy is meanwhile looking at Sasha and he's going 'no, no, no, no, no. Just ... are you sure you got everything?

LYDIA

Well, a big expansive I don't know shrug. Like the little things yeah, and then I do like mime a giant tentacle monster and I know and then I point.

JAMES

That's easy. I kill zombies and the mime I do for that is so genuinely horrific...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Like the trident going in, the sword going in the ... like the head is rattling.

BEN

And then I mime the puppet show that I did.

BRYN

Why is everything yellow? What...

BEN

Hamid, Hamid...

BRYN

It's really weird.

LYDIA

Are you poisoned?

ALEX

There is another [imitates sound] to the back of your head. Give me a will save.

BRYN

I rolled a 4. So that's an 8.

ALEX

I'm going to write a little note for you for the first time in a podcast!

LYDIA

Ahh!

JAMES

Oh, secret notes!

LYDIA

Hamid, if everything is yellow, like come over here and let's see whether you've got yellow eyes or something.

ALEX

So he's pushed up against the glass and goes 'How many of you are there?'

LYDIA

I count 4.

ALEX

His face just drops.

LYDIA

Oh, and the dog.

BRYN

That dog is up Brutor.

LYDIA

Fine.

ALEX

You need to go and get a lot more people.

LYDIA

Why don't you come with us?

ALEX

He's genuinely petrified. He keeps looking left and right.

BRYN

What's he saying?

LYDIA

He says that we need to get out of here and Hamid preferred to stay.

BRYN

And Hamid doesn't respond.

ALEX

Give me perception checks everyone.

JAMES

4 minus 1 is 3. I love the way that my rolls are just continually backing this up.

LYDIA

12 plus 7 is 19.

BEN

23.

ALEX

You see that Hamid is face seems sort of slack and he has a fine patina of yellow across his face.

BRYN

Oh no.

ALEX

Yes! At which point almost completely silently, a creature drags itself into view.

BRYN

Right.

LYDIA

I think that you're in charge again now.

BRYN

Yep. Hamid leave. We literally grab Hamid.

ALEX

At which point I'm going to get you all into initiative order. Okay, so I've got you an initiative order. However, the creatures have managed to get a natural 1 on this initiative, so what we'll say is the creature that has the drop on you in every sense of the word, proceeds to move and as you can see...

BRYN

Tentacles.

ALEX

You see a tentacle flail out and then hit one of the glass tanks, it's already got a crack in it. It breaks. Hundreds of frogs start falling out, toppling and then steam just bellows over it. So you still actually can't see what it is. Nonetheless it clearly has no idea what's going on and is currently drowned in frogs.

LYDIA

It's some kind of frog monster!

ALEX

Sasha, you're up. What do you do?

LYDIA

I run to near it.

ALEX

Okay. So you go 5, 10, 15, 20.

LYDIA

Can I throw a fire vial flask at it?

ALEX

Yes, you can draw as part of a move action and throw it.

LYDIA

14... 18. It does have a shield of frogs.

ALEX

Yes, which is why I'm going to say can you roll me a D10 please?

JAMES

A [unclear: 0:07:57] through the frogs.

ALEX

And all of the [unclear: 0:08:03]

LYDIA

9.

ALEX

Okay, yeah, that's definitely a hit. And you threw your fire flask at the creature, whatever it is, still shrouded in mist. You get a smack in the middle, direct hit. 1D6 of fire damage.

LYDIA

Yay! 1. I tried guys.

ALEX

At which point. Bertie, you're up. There is an enormous thing shrouding in frogs...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Not full of tendrils and spooky, though shrouded in frogs!

ALEX

Shrouded in frogs! Occasionally a tendril. A plant tendril will sneak out and come back in but nonetheless, its most frogs.

BRYN

Quite child ethic.

ALEX

Here you come.

LYDIA

No, no, no. He's shouted they're panicked. But I guess that wouldn't stop Bertie.

BEN

Bertie has seen the enemy now. The charge range is the correct move.

[Unclear: 0:08:52]

ALEX

Go for it!

BEN

What odds will people give me on brutal licking up the frog during this fight?

[Group laughter]

ALEX

It's just in charge range. Go for it.

BEN

Bertie yes charges it.

ALEX

Okay.

BEN

He takes 100 QAC until your next action. Plus 2 on your attack roll.

JAMES

Okay, cool. Lovely. 17 plus 7 plus 2 is 26.

ALEX

Ooh, yes! That's a hit!

BEN

A charge is a good time to power attack because the penalty you take.

ALEX

I will assume that you would have any way. I'll allow it this time. The power attack, very well.

JAMES

That's plus 1 plus 2 for damage and I roll. That's 11.

ALEX

I'll describe this one since you're not sure what you're going with. So yeah, you charge forward, sword in one hand, shield in the other. Take a huge swing and just straight into the middle of the mist. It's probably in there. You hear a [croaking sound] at which point a single planted tentacle is sliced clean off and it flops off, lands on the ground at your feet and begins writhing. Hamid. Coming to, you do not have a standard action but you do have a move action. You have no idea what the heck happened, you just type as passed, without you having realised any of it.

LYDIA

What is happening to Hamid today?

BRYN

I look around and assess the situation.

ALEX

As you look around, you see an enormous cloud of steam and tentacles flying out, looming over Bertie with frogs everywhere.

BRYN

Yeah, I'll process this by the time...

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Just another day!

BEN

Brutor has been part of it?

ALEX

Brutor, yep, Brutor is now up. There's a [growling sound] and backs away.

BEN

Aww.

BRYN

This is why I need the post...

ALEX

That's why you need to take the time to train him. Zolf. You're up.

JAMES

Bertie, no ... oh. Hamid are you okay?

BRYN

May be.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Yes, I think, probably.

JAMES

I think I'm going to go back to him and check him. I'll do a perception check.
The stuff on his head...

ALEX

Mmhmm.

JAMES

Is that like elusory or is that a powder or...

LYDIA

You find out.

ALEX

Roll it.

JAMES

Oh yeah. Ow, 9.

ALEX

It's yellow.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

It's definitely yellow.

JAMES

Okay, thanks.

ALEX

Okay, the creature moves five feet backwards deeper into the cloud and then suddenly a tendril just snaps out like a whip, flying straight for Bertie.

JAMES

And I've got minus 2 on my armour. Yeah.

ALEX

Does a ... that won't hit. 17 hit.

JAMES

My AC is 20 minus 2 making...

ALEX

Oooh, you got very lucky there! So the tendril...

JAMES

Very lucky or very good?

[Group laughter]

ALEX

The tendril flies out and you manage to get your shield up in time and you just wang really loudly. It echo's throughout and it snaps its tendril back in something like a whip. Okay. Sasha.

LYDIA

I'll throw another fricken thingy at it. You know.

ALEX

Throw another fire flask.

LYDIA

You know those word things. Ooh, I got a 2 there.

ALEX

Not a fumble but nonetheless you hurl a fire flask. It flies and it shatters against the glass tank to it's left which breaks and nothing happens. The glass smashes against it, there's a brief spray of flames...

BRYN

And it does very little to the glass.

ALEX

And it makes a tiny little crack in the glass. Nothing really happens.

BRYN

More of a chip.

ALEX

Yeah, there's nothing...

LYDIA

Well you know you can't get it every time.

ALEX

Bertie.

JAMES

Bertie, can I charge at the...

ALEX

You are too close.

BRYN

You need more than five feet.

JAMES

Okay, well I will do whatever is required to move next to it, and yeah, get a power attack.

BRYN

A five foot step will avoid it being able to attack you while you're moving.

JAMES

Ah right, okay.

BRYN

I think whatever the condition...

JAMES

Yeah, okay. I think then we simply move close to it and attack it.

ALEX

So for future reference, five foot steps are your entire move...

JAMES

Yep.

ALEX

You just move five feet but you don't provoke...

JAMES

It's super safe.

ALEX

...anything. You've been really cautious. So it's definitely 40 feet. But you can still do it and attack.

JAMES

Right. Let's have another action after...

ALEX

You can make your five foot step and then attack.

JAMES

Oh right.

ALEX

And you can power attack.

JAMES

Power attack. Cool. 3. Attack bonus of 7 minus 1.

ALEX

Again, [imitates sound] you heard a sound of what could only be described as a frog expiring.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

But no contact is made. Hamid.

BRYN

Kill it. Croak.

ALL

Ahh. Boo, boo.

ALEX

Resign!

JAMES

I don't regret nothing.

ALEX

You're up.

BRYN

I move a couple of squares so that I have a good line of sight of the monster and I cast ... a magic missile. And I do 4 damage.

ALEX

Okay. Brutor. Brutor is further into the corner. Zolf.

BEN

Ah, right, 1, 2, double move. 1, 2.

ALEX

You are within 10 feet.

BEN

Yes.

ALEX

Okay, the creature moves five feet and then (rolls dice) okay. Bertie, give me a will save.

JAMES

Oh dear. Bertie can resist anything except information. 12 minus 1 is 11.

ALEX

Okay. That's a positive roll. Bertie. The creature moves away from you and suddenly you see something, very quick, fly towards your helmet and [puff] everything is going yellow. You are now unable to do anything for five rounds!

ALL

Ooh.

JAMES

Is that obvious?

ALEX

It was very obvious that something hit. You are directly behind it. Something smacked him in the face and [puff] cloud went everywhere and suddenly from a battle ready stance, his arms go limp beside him. He's stood there. He's still holding everything. He's just standing completely neutral, doing nothing. Sasha, you're up.

LYDIA

I am going to go 15.

ALEX

Yep.

LYDIA

And then I am going to throw a dagger at him.

ALEX

Okay. So give me the roll.

LYDIA

14.

ALEX

It's a hit.

LYDIA

Yay! I'm certainly going to give damage. 1B 4 minus 1.

ALEX

Hey, damage is damage.

LYDIA

1...

BRYN

Having checked some rules previously, you can't do zero damage if you get hit. So, even if it's a 1 minus 1...

ALEX

Oh yeah, they will with a 1.

LYDIA

Hooray.

BRYN

So you can't move to zero after rolling the damage.

LYDIA

Ah, I did that several times before. Oh well.

BRYN

[Unclear: 0:15:10]

ALEX

Well, things happen. Bertie. Your go is passed.

JAMES

Yep. I will keep the beast...

ALEX

Hamid, you're up.

BRYN

1, 2, 3, 4. I move sideways and cast my magic missile again.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

Magic missile always hits.

ALEX

Auto hit.

BRYN

I'll do five more damage.

ALEX

Okay.

LYDIA

Go Hamid!

BRYN

How many missiles have actually fell. I will get better, the higher level I get as well.

ALEX

So, I will describe this one as well. So sidestepping, you come around the side of one of the tanks, and you see the creature is moving out from the cloud...

BRYN

Cloud of frogs.

ALEX

...of frogs. From the cloud of frogs!

BRYN

That's how it was described to me.

ALEX

You see that it's an enormous plant of some kind. It's got a huge thick bolus at the bottom. A collection of roots and things that's almost a solid mass. You see a single hand protruding from that.

BRYN

Oh dear!

ALEX

It has at least six tendrils flailing wildly and a huge plant top. A huge bright red, like lotus flower opening at the top.

LYDIA

Ooh, lotus flower!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Lolling about with petals everywhere, ooh.

ALEX

However, this is me when I'm doing all my GCSE biology.

BRYN

I think you're getting a come on from this!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Flowers. That's what I saw aren't they.

ALEX

However, there's...

BEN

It's just put its pollen all over your face.

ALEX

The stamen ... look at that, stamen...

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

The stamen is pointing out over the top and it's a huge bulbous thing, covered in these little pouches of something. And it appears to be moving almost like a snake, looking around, using it somehow. And the second that you cross that, it instantly flicks around and sees you. It's incredible quick. And you fire. And it slams straight into one of the petals, tears it a bit, but ultimately the creature is more or less okay. Zolf. You're up.

BEN

Right, I'm going to take five foot step here. So I'm still prepping it.

ALEX

Mmhmm.

BEN

And then I'm going to cast water on Bertie's head.

ALEX

Okay.

JAMES

Wash his face!

ALEX

Do you need any more flower or anything?

BEN

No.

ALEX

Okay. You wash...

JAMES

Two gallons of water...

ALEX

You wash Bertie's head. It's like Flashdance but with armour!

[Group laughter]

BEN

There's a waterfall here, that's what I'm getting out of this. And I also basically try and put it in front of the grill thing so it goes in, not bounce of the helmet.

ALEX

You douse Bertie. I will not say what happened until Bertie's turn. The creature then attacks Zolf using an enormous reach tendril. [Whip sound] again like a whip.

[Dice roll]

ALEX

I believe that's a miss. Let me double check. What's your AC?

BEN

My AC is 18.

ALEX

18, yep it misses it. It slaps out like a whip.

JAMES

On my shield? It's wooden.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

But yeah, it whips out and there's a lot of force behind it. You get the impression that if it was to connect it might mess you up a bit.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

May be a couple of chunks of splinters come off it, but you're relatively ok. And ... you will also move five backwards after that attack. Sasha.

LYDIA

Zolf, do you think it's trying to move us deeper into the room?

BEN

I think it's more likely backing off. But we may well want to do that too!

LYDIA

Alright. I will throw my last fire vial at the thing.

ALEX

Okay.

[Dice roll]

LYDIA

Oh, 10.

ALEX

10, that's a miss.

LYDIA

Aw, you're rubbish Sasha! You use up all your good ... she's exhausted from all the success earlier.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Adding another like flare to everything and it's really not working! It's flicking my hands...

BEN

You're far more accurate with bombs than you are with vials.

LYDIA

True. Well, these are fire vials.

ALEX

You didn't...

LYDIA

Slightly different to the [unclear: 0:18:49]

ALEX

It's because you didn't make these.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

The grating is all off.

LYDIA

Inferior product, that's what it is.

JAMES

That's totally what it is. That's totally the problem!

LYDIA

Totally the problem.

JAMES

That's completely the problem.

LYDIA

I explain all of this.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

May be I'm a bit...

BEN

Through si...through sign language.

LYDIA

Other people are doing this ... are doing things at the same time, but I just...I have to make all of this clear.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

So, just for listeners, just to spell it out, because I realise there's been a lot of descriptions in combat. What's actually the party are doing is effectively they're hemming it in further and further across the room into a...

BRYN

I don't think Hamid is really capable of hemming something in.

ALEX

Certainly from the outside.

BRYN

Hardly capable of hemming a waistcoat!

ALEX

Okay, Bertie. You're doused in water.

JAMES

Thank you. Thank you.

LYDIA

That didn't get the credit it deserved.

BRYN

Haberdashery...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

It has no affect. Hamid, you're up.

BRYN

I'm back up because magic missile has an excellent range.

ALEX

It has a massive range doesn't it. Shall we do another.

BRYN

Yeah. I cast another magic missile. I'm now quite far away from it.

ALEX

Mmhmm.

BRYN

That's not a problem, but this time I need a 2 damage.

ALEX

Zolf, you're up.

BEN

I will take a five foot step to prod at Bertie. And I'm going to brace on my trident and bunker down.

ALEX

Okay.

BEN

Try and make...defensive stance.

ALEX

Take a defensive staff which you are sacrificing the ability to attack this round so...

BEN

You get plus 4 AC I think.

BRYN

Do I get an attack opportunity if one comes available if you give up your ability too.

ALEX

I believe you give your ability to do so in order to pay for defensive stance.

BRYN

Fine.

ALEX

Okay, that's fine. In which case then, the creature taking advantage of the momentary relapse in attacks, takes a five foot step back and another [whip sound]. Something flies at your head. Let's see if it hits.

[Dice roll]

BRYN

[Unclear: 0:20:33]

ALEX

It does not.

[Over talking]

BRYN

Oh, as I've got an extra bonus of points.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Yeah, it doesn't know these things.

BRYN

Yeah, no.

ALEX

But yeah, it just breaks on your shield. Sasha, you're up.

LYDIA

One foot. I'm still behind Zolf and throw a dagger.

ALEX

Okay.

[Dice roll]

LYDIA

I've rolled a 5. So that's a 9.

ALEX

It's another miss.

LYDIA

Well, I am frankly I'm glad I got the high rolls when I did, because I nearly died last time when this thing was running away. But it would be helpful to...

ALEX

Bertie?

JAMES

I'm only inactive for another two more turns.

ALEX

If I had to do it to anyone, I couldn't think of a better fighter to do it to.

JAMES

Yes.

Rusty Quill Gaming – 24 The Root of The Problem

ALEX

Hamid, you're up.

LYDIA

I have no desire...

BRYN

I cast a magic missile.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

I do two more damage.

BEN

I mean to be honest, we will whittle it away eventually.

BRYN

I'm going to run out of magic missiles.

LYDIA

I'm going to run out daggers in ages.

JAMES

I'm going to wake up in two turns.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

We can become quite quick.

ALEX

Zolf, you're up.

BEN

No. Actually, yeah, five steps.

ALEX

Okay. Very Roman.

[Over talking]

ALEX

More Greek!

BRYN

You going to tell us or something?

ALEX

Okay, the creature attacks Zolf.

[Dice roll]

ALEX

Would a...

BEN

22.

ALEX

22 hit.

BEN

That's equalled my 18.

ALEX

It deals seven damage to Zolf. Lands it just on the neck. Sasha, you're up.

LYDIA

I'll throw another dagger.

[Dice roll]

LYDIA

Thank goodness! Okay, 20.

ALEX

Was that a natural 20?

LYDIA

No, 16 plus 4.

ALEX

Okay, it's definitely a hit though.

LYDIA

But I don't think there will be enough damage. 1.

ALEX

1, yep.

JAMES

Chipping away.

LYDIA

Yeah!

JAMES

Chipping away.

LYDIA

I mean, so now I'm down to 13 daggers. So as long as I've got 13...

ALEX

Bertie.

JAMES

I'm still ... one more turn.

BRYN

And it's in charge range.

BEN

It is in charge range.

LYDIA

I haven't even noticed that Bertie isn't ... is affected by anything. I'm just slightly slower than you.

ALEX

Well he never pays you any attention any way! So he's just stuck there, not paying you attention.

LYDIA

The idea that I would get three ... like two fire vials and two daggers off him in the time that Bertie would take a blink doesn't save me at all!

ALEX

Hamid, you're up.

BRYN

I cast my final magic missile.

ALEX

From a great distance whilst everyone else charges it down.

[Dice roll]

BRYN

I do three damage.

ALEX

Three damage. It is looking significantly ragged. He's using the root to move it. It lifts itself up, drags it and plonk. So, that was a three. It's still going. You hit it really square, one of the roots just snaps off cleanly. Zolf.

BEN

Cool, I will convert burning disarm and cure light wounds for myself.

ALEX

Okay.

[dice roll]

BEN

Well that is a 6 heal. Plus...passed a level.

BRYN

No, plus level is fell to Bertie, so plus 1.

ALEX

Halve it.

LYDIA

Poseidon is... he does not like you!

JAMES

It's all Hamid's fault!

BRYN

What? I didn't...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Exactly. You didn't drown those people.

BEN

And I only have a move action left so I guess that is that. But I'm not in a [unclear: 0:23:51]

ALEX

Okay, the creature moves five feet backwards again.

BEN

I wonder if they try and move 10 foot at some point.

ALEX

Forgive me for this James.

[Dice roll]

LYDIA

Ooh.

ALEX

It hit ... can you give a will save?

JAMES

Nah...

ALEX

You're the power hit. He has to get you.

JAMES

2. Minus 1 is 1.

LYDIA

Oh dear!

ALEX

6.

JAMES

I'm...

ALEX

Again.

JAMES

For another six goes?

ALEX

Yeah, sorry dude.

LYDIA

Slightly slack.

ALEX

It smacks you in the face again.

JAMES

Right.

LYDIA

I like the idea that Bertie is still standing there and he like, he wakes up and he raises himself ... ahh, smash, right in the face. Like he's right in the leering, raging mouth and then there's pollen!

ALEX

Let's go with that!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

And on that, we'll take a break and we'll be back in a couple of minutes.

ALEX

And welcome back. Sasha, you're up. Bertie's been incapacitated again. Everyone is hammering down this creature but it just takes the punishment. What do you do?

LYDIA

I am going to ... I've got like my ... my only real options are step forward one and I throw another dagger.

ALEX

Go for it.

[Dice roll]

LYDIA

Okay, 20.

ALEX

It's a hit.

LYDIA

Cool. Don't get your hopes up. 1.

ALEX

That one damage...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Oh...

ALEX

Really. Genuinely that one damage is all that was required. So you launch in. describe it to me. It's a minimal amount of damage and the perfect...

LYDIA

So all of the...all the little roots and stuff like that is sort of sliming around and the flower is. But I notice that the flower is really only connected to the bulb. They're quite a thin stamen, sort of leaning and throw all the frustration. Fired up and flaring the others a little bit. Like, you know, tossing them in the air because it's like yeah, I did so well the last time. You know I am angry, I have missed. I have wasted daggers on this thing. I can see my knife stuck in. I want my baby knives back. I throw it and it ... right between the like happy go lucky flaring raggedy flowery bit.

ALEX

Happy go lucky?

JAMES

The flirty petals.

LYDIA

And the flirty petals.

ALEX

And the gross...

LYDIA

And the big gross bolus.

ALEX

Yep.

LYDIA

I sort of ... I would have preferred it if it was more like just, it's there and just hit one tiny bit off the side of the thing. One. That's the last bit it could take.

ALEX

And we'll take your first answer.

LYDIA

Yep, it's alright guys. I've sorted it again!

ALEX

At which point the huge petals just flop off. The whole thing just flops to the ground. The bolus begins to spasm and tendrils, just flashing and flapping against the glass. A couple of them. They don't break the things, but they certainly crack all of the glass and it continues to spasm until it slowly, slowly begins to subside. At which point, Bertie, after about 30 seconds, you'll be coming too.

LYDIA

Yep, it's alright guys. I've dealt with it again.

JAMES

I'm going to walk over to the plant and burn away some of the more threatening little bits with acid. Just splashes.

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

It's fine, it's sorted.

JAMES

I'll turn around with my vine mask across my face, like mmhmm.

LYDIA

The laugh isn't in character!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Currently is very happy in herself. Fine.

ALEX

So what do you do? By the way, congratulations on defeating it. That was a beast. Good job.

LYDIA

Really, it was mostly Hamid. I should say that like Sasha's smugness is not my own. I'm quite aware...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

...Hamid did the vast majority of the damage. And Zolf took all the risks.

ALEX

People under estimate magic missile until you fire it again, and again, and again...

BRYN

Just keeps on hitting that point.

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

Yeah, the thing about it hitting. That's a key point.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

It's a really useful aspect.

LYDIA

Don't want people to think that I am as smug as Sasha.

BEN

So, can we get out of this basement?

BRYN

Well we should help that guy...

LYDIA

Yeah, let's bring the guy...

BEN

That was implicit. I mean I'm just quickly...I'm going to stamp on the ground in the bit of the room we haven't explored yet. Just to make sure there are no more threats.

ALEX

Sure.

BEN

That couldn't surprise us.

LYDIA

The guy without the dark vision and with 6 hit points total. I'm just going to stamp around.

JAMES

I've got 12 hit points, I'll have you know.

LYDIA

Oh, okay.

BRYN

Whoa.

JAMES

Oh no, not more doors!

LYDIA

More doors!

BRYN

Which are being added to the battle mat.

ALEX

You expose in the opposite to where the man was, a set of double doors. Reefed all around it are more sort of funguses and groves and things like that. And there is another door off to the left which is not ... there's no growths on it or anything like that and unlike all of the other doors which appear to be large enough for frame, you know, big double doors, 10 foot across. This one is just a standard person size door.

BRYN

And there's nothing around it?

ALEX

You see nothing else. You do, on your excursions notice that the brown mould, the sord of cold mould appears to have come out from the broken tank.

BRYN

Oh, what this one.

ALEX

Yeah. In fact, looking at it, it looks like it's burst out from the tank and as you walk around just getting a glimpse of the open tank, because there's still steam pumping in...

BRYN

Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

You see almost a solid 10 foot by 10 foot mass of this mould just ... bulging and bulging and throbbing as the steam continues to [puff] down on to it, and it's very clear that it's grown out, down and up against the wall where the steam is effectively freezing.

BRYN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Right, get ... I say get the guy out of there. It doesn't matter if he wants to stay. Just move the rock, drag him out and we'll be out of here.

BEN

Yeah, I'm going to get rid of this.

LYDIA

I've only got...wait a minute, that's fine.

BEN

I'm going to roll....

LYDIA

Can you drown it?

[Group laughter]

BEN

It's a plant!

LYDIA

I'm trying to help!

BRYN

Can the two of you get that guy out of that tank now?

LYDIA

I really need Bertie.

BEN

Whilst they're occupied, I'm going to just investigate this door.

LYDIA

Trying to do a Sasha are we?

JAMES

Can I see the arm that was in the bolus of roots? I know I didn't see it.

ALEX

Yes, it's almost skeletal. It's clutching...

LYDIA

An ID? Is it clutching its ID?

ALEX

It appears to be clutching a vial, but it's almost skeletal and it looks ... it looks like its in an incredibly late stage of decomposition.

BEN

Okay. I'll try and hack this corpse out of the roots.

ALEX

Mmhmm.

BEN

And get hold of whatever it's got.

ALEX

So you begin to hack...

BEN

I'll take the vial out of his hand.

ALEX

Sure. Are you hacking with a trident?

BEN

The mace.

ALEX

The mace. So [duff, buff], still not having taken time to remove all of the door...

BEN

I'll hit it once and notice how screwed up the mace is at the end and then take the door off.

ALEX

Sure. You continue to hit and bash and bash. It's almost solid wood that you're bashing. So it takes ages.

BEN

I'll just keep going until they're ready.

ALEX

I'll leave you whacking away at that. Jump to Hamid and then jump back. So jumping to Hamid.

BRYN

Very cautiously just open the door of the...

ALEX

You see a clear staircase of stone leading upwards.

BRYN

Leading upwards? That's interesting.

ALEX

And Sasha and Bertie, what will you guys do?

LYDIA

I'm going to tap on the glass to get the guy's attention.

ALEX

Yeah, he [squeaking sounds].

LYDIA

And then I mime. Bolus, flower, shootie thing and then I slash...slap. I point at me and then I

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

To the thing.

ALEX

He gestures back to you. He does the most awful stereotypical zombie, arms out stretched, wrrrr, and then just takes the arms out.

LYDIA

And I'm just like ... and I point just like, yeah!

ALEX

Ah, so as far as he's concerned Sasha has killed everything.

LYDIA

Well to be fair ... I just ... yeah.

JAMES

That's what's been communicated I think.

LYDIA

Yeah. And so then we get tell you to push ... like bush the boulder. I don't care. I'm not miming anymore!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

He goes over and, Arrghh, pulls the boulder and single snake crawls out and down. It's a very sort of ... it's not huge or anything. It's just one. And then he starts climbing out and you see him shaking snakes out from him and one crawls out from his ... his sleeve and he comes out.

LYDIA

Ah, is he some kind of snake sorcerer?

ALEX

What? Okay, so everything's been gotten?

LYDIA

Yeah, well I think so. I mean Zolf is smashing up that flower thing...

ALEX

Who is Zolf? Who are you?

LYDIA

I'm Sasha.

ALEX

Hello.

LYDIA

I'm the one that dispensed the swarms and the giant plant monster...

ALEX

What? All of them.

LYDIA

Yeah. Me.

ALEX

Wow!

LYDIA

Yeah, I know right. This is Bertie. He's been paralysed for a while.

JAMES

Urggh.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Yeah, like, so who are you?

ALEX

Well, I'm Dr Mendeleev.

LYDIA

Ah, great. I think you're the one that we're looking for. That's what we... Zolf...

ALEX

How is everyone else?

LYDIA

Dead. Sorry. All of the ones we've met. Like one was a zombie, obvs. And

[Group laughter]

ALEX

I'm going to allow obvs in this part. Also totes should you need it.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

It's the wrong kind of East London. Right, yeah.

JAMES

You look pretty amassable.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Like I should be. I should know. Bit strapped...

ALEX

Jason?

LYDIA

No, he's a zombie mate. Yeah. Proper zombified. Well zombied. And then there's a skeleton hand inside the plant. Don't know about if he's a good friend of yours because he is...

ALEX

Ah, yes. I'm ...

LYDIA

With a name like Geoff or something. Geoff the plant.

ALEX

Oh no, if you're talking about the big thing it was there. It was already there.

LYDIA

Oh right. Well, he became a plant.

ALEX

Right, well that's probably the yellow musk and you found it. I only managed to identify it and then it kind of went a bit...

LYDIA

Well done.

ALEX

Yeah, bit late.

LYDIA

Yeah, it doesn't ... I mean there's a giant fungus. There's another body in a big freezing cold fungus. You guys do weird stuff right.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

I am from frigging ... underground places where people ... like we live on eels and we eat a lot of kind of mushroom stuff and we have a lot of blind rats, but this place is weird.

ALEX

Brown fungus. Cold. Very cold.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Is he dead?

LYDIA

Well cold. Yeah, he is out of it.

ALEX

It doesn't mean he's dead!

LYDIA

Well I don't know. he's covered in it. Alright, well we could go over ... there doesn't seem to be ... is there anything else, because if there's anything else...

ALEX

I haven't seen it. Really the whole swarms, all of them?

LYDIA

Yeah, well two. How many swarms were there?

ALEX

Yeah, there were just the two.

LYDIA

Oh great. I mean, obviously, there's a swarm so I guess it could split into multiple things.

JAMES

How many years in a swarm?

LYDIA

Yeah, how much is steam? Why is...

JAMES

When it does it slip over ... when does a hoard become a swarm?

LYDIA

Yeah, and when is a group a swarm?

ALEX

I have to say you have amazing...

JAMES

Lots, I think.

LYDIA

We've got what?

ALEX

Amazing coping skills.

LYDIA

I just ... I just ... I mean I came down and killed some stuff. That's my job mate.

JAMES

I'm very psychologically resilient. There's not very much psychology to damage.

LYDIA

None of us even got really hurt. I mean, well no, Hamid got hurt. But he's alright.

BRYN

Hello.

ALEX

Uh, ah, uh...

BRYN

Doctor, hello.

ALEX

Hello.

LYDIA

Hamid, he's alright.

JAMES

Don't be afraid, he's just a small man.

ALEX

Oh yes, right. I think ... I think...

BRYN

Have they updated you on the situation?

ALEX

Apparently, you were [unclear: 0:35:17]...were there no survivors from the swarms at all?

LYDIA

Well, there were about one or two that sort of run off.

ALEX

Okay, that's manageable.

[Unclear: 0:35:22]

ALEX

No, you're quite safe. And I see the ... I see the yellow musk.

LYDIA

Yeah, it's like over there.

BRYN

I still think we should try and get back to that corpse.

ALEX

As he's talking, a snake crawls out from amongst his clothes and he just doesn't even seem to notice it and it crawls off on the way.

LYDIA

That's five snakes.

ALEX

If I never see one again, it will be too soon! May I. He starts heading over. At which point...

LYDIA

Don't touch it.

ALEX

Hamid, knee deep in ...

BRYN

Zolf.

ALEX

Sorry, Zolf. Zolf knee deep. Dong, dong, dong. There's just massacre of vegetable all around him. Vegetation and leaves and plant. And you're slowly digging your way down. Eventually you've managed to find a skull is part of the bolus. And there's a hand out ... led out from it clutching.

LYDIA

Zolf, it's Dr Mendeleev.

ALEX

Like a skeletor. Yeah, you can just pluck it. The hand comes away with it, but it's fairly easy to just...

BEN

Shake it off.

ALEX

Yeah, pull it off.

BEN

Hey?

LYDIA

Dr Mendeleev ... Mendeleev.

ALEX

Ah, hello.

BEN

Are you the idiot responsible for bringing this in?

ALEX

I would appreciate a certain amount of candour. People are dead!

BEN

Yeah, your fault.

ALEX

My fault?!

BEN

Well you bought it in right?

ALEX

No, no. No Sir, I did not. And I do not appreciate that tone.

LYDIA

Zolf, don't we need to be friends with this guy?

BEN

Mmhmm, I could drown him!

ALEX

What?

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Wait, wait. I was suggesting

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

I was suggesting all these people you could drown, and you're like no, no, no, no. But this guy, right, fine!

ALEX

What if I stumbled?

BEN

Oh just ignore it. What do you want? What? Yeah, we've got a seed. Do you want to identify it. I can burn this can I?

ALEX

Please.

BEN

Right.

ALEX

Would someone...

LYDIA

I'm afraid your mate ... and I tried to put on an incredibly ... I mean the problem is that Sasha has remembered lots of violence and her job has generally been to go into dangerous places and do things with people that she doesn't like very much. So the idea that, you know, she's trying to be quite sensitive to the fact that someone might have a lot going on, yeah, like your mate who got ... really sadly got like well covered in fungus is over there. Do you want to like see the body and stuff?

BRYN

We should try and get him out of the fungus.

LYDIA

For respect and whatever.

JAMES

You can poke him with a stick if you like.

ALEX

It's Venezuelan Brown!

LYDIA

Okay, I mean ...

ALEX

Oh God, none of you went near it with fire did you?

LYDIA

No.

BEN

No.

ALEX

Good. Right.

BRYN

What would have happened?

ALEX

Venezuelan Brown mould flourishes under heat. The more heat you give it, the bigger it grows.

LYDIA

Ah. Good thing I didn't....

ALEX

Look, if someone can help me, I can turn off the boilers at least and that will help reduce the temperature.

BRYN

Yeah, we can come with you.

LYDIA

Which way?

ALEX

It's just in the corner there. It's the double door that Hamid discovered earlier. He leads you over and then he sees sort of plant growth around the outside. Would anyone be willing to go first? I've had a bit of a ... bit of a day.

LYDIA

You've had a day?

JAMES

Bertie steps forward.

LYDIA

Still a bit groggy from this plant.

JAMES

It was. Hang on. Yes. Breakfast. Cool.

BRYN

Bertie.

JAMES

What?

BRYN

Go through the door.

JAMES

Oh. Bertie, because he's still a bit groggy and delirious. There isn't any action or anything or like that. He just bumbles through the door.

ALEX

Attempts to bumble through the door. You reach out, try to open it and it just stops. Just dead. As if locked.

JAMES

How does it work on this door?

LYDIA

Is it blocked by plants?

ALEX

It looks like there's a huge amount of plant growing all around the outside. It looks like the door couldn't open if it wanted to.

LYDIA

Mate, I meet, Mr Mendeleev ...

BRYN

Is something in there that might have?

ALEX

I have no idea. Honestly. I mean I came to find free drink and well, the staff and...

BEN

Holton?

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

Yeah, he's dead. I put a compass in hand...

ALEX

Well, anyway I ... naturally, seeing all of this I decided to head to the boiler room and it came out from there and then I ended up getting trapped between it and ... so there ...

BEN

Could there be something else in the boiler room?

ALEX

I have no idea. I have no idea. But I do know that....

BEN

Should we break the door down?

ALEX

I think it's best. We can't leave it in there.

JAMES

Bertie starts breaking the door down.

BRYN

I will fire acid splash and the door.

ALEX

I'm not even going to get attacked. Hamid...

BRYN

[Unclear: 0:39:50]

ALEX

Hamid is wailing at it with the door, acid, acid, acid, acid, sssss. Finally you manage to just hack through and yet in there, it's like Amazonian rain forest when it comes to growth. There're just vines hanging down from pipes.

Rusty Quill Gaming – 24 The Root of The Problem

There's an algae across all of the like pressure valves and things like that. Give me a perception check all of you.

[Dice rolling]

JAMES

7.

BRYN

17.

LYDIA

23.

ALEX

23. None of you see anything.

ALL

Ooh.

ALEX

There you go!

BRYN

Is any of this dangerous doctor?

ALEX

He takes some spectacles out, puts them on his face. They're broken. He doesn't notice. Kind of looks round and goes ... [whispering]: I think we're probably going to clear this...

BRYN

Well...

LYDIA

Can we turn the boilers off?

BRYN

How do we turn the boilers off?

ALEX

Oh could you ... watch my back?

BRYN

Of course.

ALEX

And Zolf creeps in.

BEN

I'll stay very close to him.

ALEX

Looking around...

JAMES

Bertie stares very intently at his spine.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

He reaches over and starts turning some valves and then there's a groan and [croaking sound] at which point you hear 'ssss' and a faint hiss that you've barely been hearing turns off. And slowly, you start to see steam dissipating from all of the tanks that still have cracks in them. Most of them reveal dead creatures at this point. A couple of them reveal plants, and yeah, all of them, slowly begin to lose that steam and the luminousness of some of the sort of mushrooms and things, is brighter because of the steam so the room gets a bit brighter with it as well. [Whispering] Well that appears to be as much as I can do.

LYDIA

Shall we head off?

BEN

We should still try and check that last person if we can.

BRYN

What's through that door doctor. (I point to the little one in the corner that I know had a staircase).

ALEX

Fire escape! It's where I was heading before I got headed off.

BRYN

Okay. So we can head back up that way.

BEN

Yeah, honestly, we should just probably leave the mould to the professionals. We've found what we needed to.

ALEX

I feel that might actually be best.

LYDIA

Do you want us to get your mate's body?

BEN

That's what we'll leave.

ALEX

If you're able to remove him, I can certainly pronounce here.

LYDIA

Ah, well...

BRYN

Let's try and do that quickly.

BEN

Might as well pronounce there I think.

JAMES

Here, there.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Mmhmm. But Bertie looks smug.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Well done Bertie!

ALEX

That will hit Bertie a lot harder!

BRYN

Residual effects.

ALEX

You got a double dose though!

BRYN

I'll grab some rope from my kit and make a hodgepodge together of a lasso or some kind and ask Sasha to throw it over some bit of the body so I can drag it out. I'm actually entering the cold....

LYDIA

I'm looking a bit baffled and then give it to the sailor.

JAMES

Who has been just sitting down. Chilling, whilst this is all happening.

BRYN

I thought your throwing might be more accurate. I've made the lasso.

LYDIA

Right.

BRYN

It looks fine!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Alright....

JAMES

That is a rope!

LYDIA

I grab it...

BRYN

Is everything alright Bertie?

JAMES

Technically, my throwing is just as good as yours, but I don't know that.

LYDIA

Fair enough. So I'll go over there and try it and lasso something.

ALEX

Sure.

LYDIA

A bit of his body.

ALEX

We'll just say you take 10.

LYDIA

Probably, yes, or 20. Whatever.

ALEX

You manage to get it around the foot and just pull him out.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

Pulling him out, the mould stays on him and the cold appears to follow you as that is ... it seems to follow the body because the mould is actually upon it.

LYDIA

Yeah, sorry mate. Doesn't look good.

ALEX

That's fine. I appreciate...I appreciate the gesture.

BRYN

Who...who was he?

ALEX

Looks like the night guard. Him and me came down in order to find out what happened to the others. We got separate and ... he ... he ran one way and I ran the other I suppose. I got lucky.

LYDIA

Well. This is not what you expect for someone to work with. Nice cushy job. Monsters.

BEN

Let's head upstairs and everyone can have a nice cup of tea.

JAMES

I remember something about a seed.

BRYN

Yes, well we'll get to that.

LYDIA

Do you want to ... like while we're down here is there anything from the filing room that we should grab, yeah?

ALEX

Honestly, I think we're going to need to do a complete clean up.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

If ... I'm sorry. He just starts walking to the fire escape.

LYDIA

Follow him.

ALEX

Sure. Yeah. Heads up.

LYDIA

Yeah, we cleared a dungeon guys.

JAMES

We did clear a dungeon.

ALEX

You cleared your first dungeon.

ALL

Ooh.

LYDIA

Yay!

ALEX

And none of you died, although many of you were incapacitated or KO'd.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

That's a good dungeon. Right, he makes it up the stairs and reveals a door which is barred from this side. Just [imitates sound] pulls it open, steps outside and you guys are now out in bright sunshine.

LYDIA

Wow.

JAMES

Oh, that's the sky room.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Obviously it's the way out.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Very much. It's a good laugh on the side.

JAMES

It is!

ALEX

You find yourself in a light well. He just leads up. You're out at the edge of one of the buildings and he just leads you straight back round, across the gravel, and back through the front door.

LYDIA

I thought we had to go down several floors to get there.

BEN

Yeah, we've just come up the staircase.

LYDIA

Ah...

ALEX

It was a significant staircase and the elevator was really slow. You weren't in like the centre of ... Other London or anything.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

So yeah, he just leads you back in through the front door. And on the way he sees George as he is heading up to his office and George is sort of in there. Opens the door and just going 'oh my God, oh my God, you found him. Oh, wow'.

LYDIA

Yeah, I'm afraid the others are...

JAMES

Dead!

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Oh.

LYDIA

Sorry mate.

ALEX

Oh.

LYDIA

Were they your friends?

ALEX

Well Fredric was my mentor. Mendeleev sort of heads in and goes 'George. George I need you to go out. I need you to just lock it down and let everyone know that it's...we have time. We're going to need to get a full crisis team down there. These people, whoever they are, have managed to...

JAMES

Hero's. Hero's.

ALEX

...it's a good word as any.

LYDIA

Is there anyone whose at fault who breaths air?

ALEX

That would be Fredric, so no.

LYDIA

Ah.

BEN

Seemed as much.

ALEX

I'm sure willing to go to Venezuela. At which point...

LYDIA

Zolf?

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

I don't know how it works! I'm trying to be helpful.

BEN

We can find people closer.

LYDIA

Right, okay.

ALEX

He sends George out. Colgate sorts of steps up. Gives Mendeleev a nod. And then turns to Zolf and co. Good job. As always. I'm not really surprised. How is everyone? Injured? Anyone needing any medical attention?

LYDIA

Yeah. I've taken ... well we've all taken...

JAMES

Yeah.

LYDIA

...some hits.

JAMES

Not feeling very well. Non to perky!

LYDIA

I think...

BEN

I'm doing alright. I'll...

LYDIA

I think Bertie's got hay fever.

BEN

I'm going to talk to Mendeleev and George. But you guys...

BRYN

Yeah, well none of us are going to fall over and I think we can just ... recuperate with a good night's sleep.

ALEX

Right. Mendeleev obviously it's a bit of a poor time, so I might come back later. I feel like you people are useful to know.

BEN

Definitely.

ALEX

I like you.

JAMES

I like me too.

ALEX

He looks at all of you quite sternly.

JAMES

Good. Yes. Good.

BEN

It was a pleasure to make your acquaintance as well.

ALEX

And yours. And yours. He just turns round and just slides out, closing the door.

JAMES

What a strange man.

ALEX

Yes, Colgate always has been. Well, here ... Mendeleev, he gets up and he starts pouring sort of drinks and there's a tonic. Like a big snake oil tonic type flask with all like glass filigree all over it. It's lurid green and he pours out five shots. This will sort you out. And necks it.

JAMES

I take one as well.

BEN

Yep, might as well take one.

BRYN

I take one and pour the brandy from my inventory into it and then drink it.

LYDIA

I hold back, look to see how other people have reacted to it.

ALEX

It tastes...

LYDIA

Has no one died? I drink it.

ALEX

It tastes of equal parts aniseed and garlic.

LYDIA

Urgh.

BRYN

Hamid enjoys it.

JAMES

This reminds me of rag week at...

[Group laughter]

BEN

I was just thinking the same thing!

ALEX

Right well.

LYDIA

Can the seed [unclear: 0:48:21]

BEN

Yes, you've mentioned this before. Sorry, what is it?

BRYN

Well, we were hoping you might be able to tell us something about the providence of this very strange seed we have. Let me get it out. Where is it?

ALEX

Whilst he's doing that, he writes a little note on something. Wraps it, puts it in a tube and reaches out. Pulls a wall panel aside, revealing a little pneumatic tube and it [imitates sound].

LYDIA

Hey, what was that?

ALEX

I'm letting the institution know what's happening.

LYDIA

Oh, right, okay. It's not...

BRYN

Will someone be talking to the press doctor?

ALEX

Well, we'll have to.

BRYN

I'd like to, you know, them know what we accomplished as well.

ALEX

Well I wouldn't worry about that. There's not a chance that I'm going out there without some kind of accountability.

JAMES

Sorry...

LYDIA

Wait, when you say accountability, you're saying you're blaming us?

ALEX

I mean I'm going to lavish all kinds of reward on the people who quickly and effectively ended this situation that is now concluded.

LYDIA

Alright. I like that sound. How lavish.

BRYN

I was going to say, if you're going to try and bribe us, I'd do it a bit better than that.

ALEX

Mmhmm. Quite. He doesn't seem to be particularly aggressive. Just very pre-occupied. He's reaching over the safe ... about this seed.

BRYN

Yes, I show it to him. We were hoping you might know what it was or where it came from or something. We're very confused.

ALEX

He reaches out. Stops. Puts on a glove. Then reaches out and holds it up to the light. Even amongst all of the distraction that he's had, it grabs him, whatever it is. He goes over to the corner where he has a microscope and sort of examines it. Takes it back. Puts it down on the desk. I have never seen that before in my life.

BRYN

Brilliant.

ALEX

I have never heard of that before. Where did you get it? What's it from? What does it grow to? What's the incubation period.

BRYN

We don't know. We found it amongst miscellaneous research and we were hoping to find out more about it because we're not very clear on that ourselves.

ALEX

He takes it and examines it. Well what do you know about it?

LYDIA

It was like...

BRYN

What is in the research about it? I don't even remember. I mean I've read the whole notebook in character. Unlike some GM's I've known, I've noticed that you didn't actually produce a pre-written notebook that I could read out of character.

BEN

Ahh.

BRYN

I'm just saying. Some people go the whole way.

JAMES

You would have done more homework...

ALEX

I didn't want this to come up in the session, but this is where I have to share Hamid's crippling dyslexia.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Absolutely crippling! The reason that he can read magic is because the words are moving as much he moves them in his eyes. Like it all just square up for once. No ... effectively, reading through the notes, it was deliberately quite easy to take and quite officiated.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

What you noticed is that it was in the section that was dealing with effectively replicating the nervous system. It talked about basically having to find seed traders and it mentioned the fact that it took an enormous amount of effort and work and it follows it up with finally, what are the chances of finding two, blah, blah, blah, blah and that was it. That's all it was. It was very deliberately officiated.

BRYN

Does it mention where they were trading for seeds?

ALEX

On the interim. They made a trader near the coast of Norway.

BRYN

Yeah, so it couldn't have come any way.

ALEX

Well, interestingly. So it's probably not toxic. And I can't really tell you more without any kind of context.

BRYN

No. Could you recommend anywhere we could go and find out more even?

ALEX

Well, there's ...

LYDIA

It was like it was ... to do with research around this metal ... there was a metal device, it was cased in. So we wondered whether it would be something that would work in any with like metal and maybe magical metal.

ALEX

He reaches out. Would you allow me to perform a minor test? It's non-destructive but it might mark it slightly.

BRYN

I look around at everyone and sort of nods half-heartedly.

ALEX

He goes over to a bench and just starts pipetting something onto it and then ... oh, it's mostly metal for a seed which I've never heard of. I don't like doing this. Your best bet, probably going to be Svalbard. I don't enjoy referring people there frankly. No offence of course. He turns to Zolf. But, frankly...

BEN

It's the seed bank.

ALEX

Yes.

BEN

I guess that makes sense.

LYDIA

Why is it...do they wish it for Poseidon. Are they dwarves or pirates?

BRYN

We've not all got a telepathic link you know.

ALEX

So the Svalbard Seed Bank.

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

Now, Svalbard. A lot of people call it the gateway to the door of the realms.

LYDIA

Ahh.

ALEX

It's a place that you can go and its effectively it's one of the few places where there is a heavy dwarven population when you're allowed to go to be blunt, executing yourself obviously. Mr Zolf, wasn't it? Now the point being, that they have been known to trade in seeds and obscure seeds that none of the rest of us have seen. We don't like to refer people to them because frankly we

are an independent institution and we are worth our own weight frankly. We are worth funding. But, nonetheless, they will occasionally provide something interesting and they don't tend to enjoy trading. The fact that you've managed to get hold of something that's likely from there is astounded.

BRYN

Well, okay. That's something we'll follow up then, I suppose. Thank you so much, doctor.

ALEX

I'll try.

LYDIA

You got mates there Zolf?

JAMES

No, it's really ...

BEN

Well, we're supposed to all know each other?

JAMES

That's what it is. I mean they all look the same to me but, I mean...

LYDIA

I know everyone in Other London.

BEN

No, I've never been to Svalbard.

LYDIA

Ah right.

JAMES

I grew up in Herefordshire!

LYDIA

That will explain the accent!

JAMES

Yeah. That would explain the accent.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

I think I might wrap up there.

ALEX

You've at least got a lead.

JAMES

As our casual racism comes to a friendly close.

LYDIA

Sasha has never been outside of London and someone just told her that all ... that it was the Dwarven place that kept stepping around Zolf. Of course she thinks he has mates there. Yeah.

ALEX

Oh it was logical.

LYDIA

Innocent.

BEN

Not how I'm going to take it though!

BRYN

Oh, one thing before we wrap up this episode. Hamid is going to ask Sasha if she wants her deeds of heroism to appear in the papers or would she rather keep her name out of them. Because he's going to go and sought some PR afterwards. You seem so pleased I didn't want you to be left out.

LYDIA

No, I'm smug. Okay, like you mean like there was ... you know ... just a bit...

BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

...you know about how I ... when you all ran away that I took everything on on my own.

BRYN

There certainly will be an element of that.

ALEX

So, thanks for listening. And thanks for joining us on our first dungeon crawl I supposed you'd call it. And we will hope you tune in next week for yet more adventure. Hopefully without plants, and will they plant it out. Bye all.

LYDIA

Bye.

ALL

Bye.

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

Rusty Quill Gaming is a podcast distributed by rustyquill.com and licensed under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial international license. Today's episode was recorded and produced by Alexander J Newall. To comment on episodes, make donations and view links, images, videos and show notes, visit rustyquill.com. Rate and review us on I-Tunes. Visit us on

Rusty Quill Gaming – 24 The Root of The Problem

Facebook. Tweet us @therustyquill, or email us at mail@rustyquill.com.

Thanks for listening.