

RQG – 27 – In The Navy!

Content Warnings

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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 27 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today in any order is,

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

JAMES

James Ross

BEN

Ben Meredith

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

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ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett

JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

ALEX

Ah look at you!

BRYN

Bam!

JAMES

I fear changed that.

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ALEX

You should just intimidate it down.

JAMES

That's just me doing an intimidate check against...

(laughing)

ALEX

The sands of time. No! No!

BEN

Lovely you have +1 versus fear

ALEX

+1 versus jingoism. Still be able to make a way through.

JAMES

Massive penalty

BRYN

Confronting jingoism as a concept. I don't think we're equipped to deal with.

ALEX

So obviously you guys have...quite recap, you are chasing up a bunch of different leads, we mentioned them in the last session and we are...you've been through Kew Gardens, you're heading on to Dover and basically a lot of people are getting very annoyed at the Cult of Poseidon in Dover. A lot of people getting a bit shirty with it. In fact to the point where you find yours; eves in a bit of a riot but it's ok because Bertie shouted loudest so that's that problem solved.

JAMES

How you solve all arguments by being as loud and obnoxious and threatening as possible.

ALEX

The squeaky wheel might get the oil but the screaming oil gets anything it wants.

(laughing)

BRYN

That is the appropriate attitude for a member of the British upper classes. So well role played there.

ALEX

So last thing that happened was basically everyone was getting led back out gently, being deweaponed etc. and you've been invited to dinner at the

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officer's mess by a currently unnamed commander who recognised you as the rangers. London Rangers, we're still working on a name yet.

LYDIA

We're working on the name

ALEX

Ok so we are on our way walking through a storm, admittedly, to the officer's mess. Go. I'm pretty impressed to meet you guys and figures you would impress me if I ever met you and I have to say I've not been disappointed.

BEN

All in a day's work I guess, you know.

LYDIA

Like so why were they rioting and stuff?

ALEX

These storms, they've...

LYDIA

Is this not normal weather for outside of London?

ALEX

When was the last time that you heard of a storm that lasted almost four days?

LYDIA

I grew up underground.

ALEX

Yes. Right, well I mean honestly it's...it's peculiar. As he's walking by the way he's leading the way, the naval men are dealing with the situation. He's striding off. I should give you a physical description whilst we're going. He is of a slight build, he's not a bulky man. Very, very tight in uniform. Like very well fit. Little bit of brocade but it's more what he's required to identify rank rather than the kind of Bertie, ostentation.

BEN

He's not a pompous man.

ALEX

No not at all. Very, very cleanly clipped. Like crew cuts, the whole nine yards. Give me a perception check. Everyone.

JAMES

BEN

9

BRYN

11

LYDIA

26

ALEX

26! All of you can recognise that he seems to be carrying an unusual sword. Certainly professional sailor it's not a normal officer's sword by any stretch. You recognise it as, from the time you spent with Gusset, it's probably an antique and you suspect it's probably even adamantine.

LYDIA

Can I appraise it?

ALEX

Yeah you can.

LYDIA

That's not the best roll for my appraise but I suppose we are walking down the street

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ALEX

In a storm where it keeps occasionally gusting you.

LYDIA

7 + 8. 15. I appraise his sword.

ALEX

15 is of a significantly higher value than an officer would be able to afford. It would feed a normal family for maybe a year.

LYDIA

Golly

ALEX

It is anomalous for someone in his position to have a weapon like that. It is unusual. It doesn't mean like he's got a big, magic sword or anything but it's peculiar. It's a weird...

BEN

We might think he's an ex-adventurer.

ALEX

Exactly. There's something to it.

BEN

What species is he?

ALEX

Human. And he appears to be young. Certainly professional sailor. Young for a commander. Very, very much so. And he's walking very clipped. Very strideful, purposeful. He seems very with it. Like very on it. Despite that accent like he might not have that in his voice but certainly in his manner, very efficient. I've got to say on the...it's not often that we have anything like this and we've been having a lot of the storms recently but until that it's been a bit strange.

LYDIA

What's been strange?

ALEX

Well I mean, the weather near the coast it's obviously very tempestuous but I've never known it to be this consistently poor.

BRYN

It seems a bit unusual to me commander that people would blame the Cult of Poseidon. I mean obviously responsible for the sea and potentially weather but not exactly the god of storms.

ALEX

Well the problem they've got is that the Cult got themselves involved a couple of years ago. They decided that what they wanted to do was encourage some positive feelings in the community and they actually managed to overt more than one for the sake of trade which of course set precedent so now every time there's a storm, suddenly who's fault is it because they could be stopping it.

BEN

Not the best political play I've got

ALEX

Well a lot of people were getting very, very upset and I don't mean in an unjustified way if I can be frank. There were a lot of people who were losing a lot of money and it wasn't their fault. They were trying to help out the people but these things happen. How about yourselves? What are you doing in Dover?

BEN

Just passing through but got held up like anyone by the storm.

ALEX

You ought to try the tunnel.

LYDIA

Where's this tunnel?

JAMES

I mean we could do that now really and not bother with dinner or solving the storm.

ALEX

Well you're not really going to be able to until tomorrow. They only run the service in the morning. It's going to be way too late today but you ought to check it out. I don't see this going any time soon.

BEN

Yeah I do want to pay a visit to the temple.

BRYN

I think that would be a good idea.

JAMES

Oh yes

LYDIA

It's alright it happens to everyone.

JAMES

Look at some screenshots for a while and see if a few shandies get you in the mood.

BEN

Thanks for the...yeah.

BRYN

If we can help, do you know commander, has the cult tried to do anything about the current storm or are they trying to break the precedent or...

ALEX

Well I mean honestly I'm no priest. Here we are, he sort of takes a turning and you're effectively entering a naval academy. Big walls, big gates, gravel drive and he leads you off to the left. Large, well lit building. Very well maintained. Clearly it's probably meritocratic funded. A naval academy. It ticks a lot of description boxes. He leads you up and there's a gentleman at the door. The door opens and the gentleman takes the commander's overcoat and puts it on the side. Offers to take your coats and things like that if you want.

BRYN

I look surprisingly dry.

BEN

I'll keep mine on.

LYDIA

I'm going to keep my leather studded jacket on.

ALEX

Oh well if you will just join me, we'll get some dinner on the go. It's just this lot today Gerald. At which point the man heads off and the commander leads you into a little lounge with upholstered...there's a fire burning, good warm fire. Lots of very, dry, tactical volumes on the walls.

JAMES

Bertie pops Brutor out of the papoose and lays him down next to the fire.

ALEX

I do like to see a man who knows his dogs.

JAMES

Brutor, this is the commander. Shake Brutor.

LYDIA

Does he shake?

BRYN

Roll handle animal

ALEX

Roll handle animal

JAMES

1

(laughing)

Natural 1

ALEX

So the commander reaches his hand out and Brutor, not aggressively, reaches over, clamps his hand in his mouth and proceeds to [growling noise], wrestling left and right, left and right and shaking him. The commander is like, oh, oh.

JAMES

Now down, stop Brutor. You've been demonstrating surprising aptitude for linguists. I genuinely thought beyond you.

(laughing)

ALEX

At which point the commander manages to get his hand back. Right, is he going to be safe with the staff and that.

JAMES

Safe, yes. Stupid, also yes.

ALEX

Well we'll get some food for him. Someone comes along and basically puts a big bowl of, what looks like, leftover steak by the fireplace and Brutor just [eating noise] straight in front of the fireplace. The commander sits back clearly at his ease. You're asking about the storms, the Poseidon lot. I don't know. They refuse. They refused this time. It's not my place to ask. It would be very helpful, be very appreciated, no offence but nonetheless

BRYN

Well as you say maybe they're trying to break the precedent if it's been a problem for them but maybe there's a better way to handle it rather than adversarially.

ALEX

As the commander's talking he's sort of taking his jacket off, putting his sword on the side. Very, very at ease, laying back. Breaks out a cigar box and offers it to you lot if you're interested.

BEN

I slip off the sleeves from my arms. Put them back on and suddenly I am suitably attired for a casual evening in a gentleman's club.

ALEX

Please tell me smoking jacket.

BEN

Smoking jacket

ALEX

Yes!

BEN

I accept a cigar.

JAMES

Bertie takes a cigar. He jams it into the falcon's eye in order to light it and starts smoking it while gradually taking off the rest of his armour and he's now in appropriate attire.

ALEX

Oh my goodness, Bertie's out of his full plate!

JAMES

Bertie's out of his full plate.

BRYN

What does he look like underneath?

ALEX

Bearing in mind it does take about ten minutes because it's like...I would say that if you're getting out of your full plate, a gentleman can come along to help you.

JAMES

A gentleman is coming along to help me

ALEX

What do you wear underneath it? This has never come up.

LYDIA

Anything at all.

(laughing)

BRYN

I was going to say completely nude.

ALEX

I was going to say well-appointed for the situation, a gentlemen's club. Free as the wind.

JAMES

Smoking a cigar only. Wearing a wreath of smoke.

ALEX

What are you wearing? I'm wearing entitlement and confidence. That's all a real man needs!

(laughing)

JAMES

Bertie is wearing underneath shirtsleeves and trousers and a sort of vest top underneath.

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ALEX

Sure, sure.

BRYN

So actually appropriate.

ALEX

I presume billowy. I don't know why billowy in the sleeves or something. I just always imagined...

BRYN

He would be having to wear a gambeson.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

JAMES

I'm not exactly dressed for dinner but I'm not wearing full plate armour which would be more inappropriate.

BRYN

Trying to sit down in an armchair in full plate armour.

ALEX

It wouldn't be the first time that he's been at a formal event or even an informal dinner wearing full plate though.

JAMES

That is true but I'm taking it off for this one because it's a military occasion.

ALEX

It's just peculiar to see Bertie at ease finally.

LYDIA

Has he been sleeping in the full plate? We hadn't talked about it when we were at Hamid's flat

BRYN

No because there are mechanical penalties for sleeping in full plate.

JAMES

He's still got his...

BRYN

I will accept a cigar and light it with a spark because I can do magic.

LYDIA

Sasha slumps into the squishiest chair that she's ever known in her studded leather jacket looking like the younger rebellious child of overly boiling parents. With a cigarette, elbows are higher than her head she's slumped so deeply in the chair. Oh this is alright.

ALEX

I know.

BEN

You entertain much? You said it was only us tonight....usually?

ALEX

I'm here in an official capacity whilst the ship's in dry dock. There's not a lot I can do.

BEN

So you guys are just on leave, you're not held up by the storm at all.

ALEX

Well we can't leave, obviously but it's a coincidence, there happens to be a massive storm, my ship is in dry dock. I am bored. I am so very bored and I am not surprised that people are trying to cause trouble because they're bored. Because there's a lot of people sat around due to a storm that will not leave and it's the fourth one this month. We've spent more times with storms that we haven't this month. I do not know what's going on.

BRYN

That does seem a bit out of the ordinary.

BEN

Anyone tried asking the meritocracy what's going on?

ALEX

I was going to say you know what it's like but I don't actually know, I mean have you served? I get the impression you have, I don't know why.

BEN

I've been on board boats.

ALEX

Right. Yeah.

(laughing)

JAMES

I've also been on board boats.

LYDIA

I haven't!

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BEN

I mean in a professional capacity.

ALEX

You'll like it, it's good.

LYDIA

Does it move?

ALEX

Yeah

LYDIA

Oh right.

ALEX

Imagine a carriage except a lot faster and full of men.

LYDIA

Oh alright.

JAMES

Sounds brilliant!

(laughing)

BRYN

[singing] In the navy

ALEX

But honestly, yeah, it's...ultimately it's an inconvenience. We've not lost anyone. There was a...there's been obviously a couple of drownings every year. I mean, it's water, what are you going to do but....

JAMES

They've always been my watch words. Sir Bertrand Macguffingham sees some water, it's oh I better not drown in that

(laughing)

I always think it's best to remind myself of that just in case, you know.

BRYN

Your first verbalised thought when you see water, Bertie, is where's the whisky to go in it.

JAMES

Yes! Even if it is in puddle form.

ALEX

You'll fit in right here. I'll go down very well.

BEN

So what are you sailing? What are you commanding?

ALEX

Oh it's not big. It's a 30 gunner which is fast, probably fastest in this part of the country. I'm not really sailing anything at the moment am I. I'm just sat here.

BEN

How quickly can you do the Hellenic run?

ALEX

Well honestly she's not what she once was. That's why we're in dry dock. I'm basically...I'm babysitter here. He looks weary. Not in a, he's been worked hard.

BEN

Demonstrably not

ALEX

He's been sat around with nothing to do.

BRYN

I don't mean to be rude commander but I'm afraid I didn't catch your name.

ALEX

Oh I'm sorry about that. Barnes. Reaches his hand out.

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

ALEX

That's a mouthful.

BRYN

Is it?

(laughing)

ALEX

And the rest of you? You've already mentioned Sir Bertrand

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JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham yes.

BEN

Zolf Smith. Don't worry if you struggle with the pronunciation.

ALEX

Zolf Smith.

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett.

ALEX

Sasha Rackett

LYDIA

The T is silent

(laughing)

ALEX

Well as you've said that the doors open and Gerald sort of ushers you through into a room. It looks like there has been a big dinner...like a big, long table.

BEN

Didn't we already have dinner?

BRYN

This is our second dinner today.

LYDIA

We had lunch

BEN

I'm pretty sure that was dinner

ALEX

Hey, hey what does Barnes know. He offered to take you for dinner. You said yes.

BRYN

It's a dunch.

ALEX

But they've set something up. It's clear that all the officers would be in there at the same time and they've just rustled you up something extra.

BRYN

Late supper

ALEX

Yeah it's basically a supper.

JAMES

It's the second elevenses in a 24 hour clock. Twenty thirdsies.

(laughing)

ALEX

So yeah sit down, begin eating. It's good fair. It's not particularly elaborate or anything.

LYDIA

So like these quibbly things that are inside the...like, it's like a dish but...

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BEN

Oysters. Oysters

LYDIA

So what do I do with them?

BEN

Slurp them out.

LYDIA

Slurp? What how?

ALEX

As you're saying that the officer sort of [slurping noise]

BEN

Slurp them [slurping noise]

LYDIA

Right

BRYN

I eat them daintily with the oyster knife

LYDIA

I put so much...I see the guy put the spicy sauce in and I put so much in that when it goes down the wrong way I just start sneezing spicy sauce everywhere.

BEN

Ah your oyster is going to look like horrible, stringy snot coming out of your nose. Spicy snot

LYDIA

No, no, it's not snotty. It's just spice. I'm in a lot of pain.

ALEX

While speaking without paying attention he begins pouring water and passes you a glass.

LYDIA

[coughing noise] like why are you...why, where are my eels? I just some eels. Eels don't attack you.

ALEX

So you said you've sailed, where have you been sailing?

BEN

No, it was a while ago. Here and then. Just a jobbing sailor. Just freelance merchant, that kind of stuff. Nothing military. Nothing like that. So just...you know, learn the trade.

JAMES

Lot of nonspecific sailing basically with no background or suspicion about it at all. That's my understanding and I see nobody's going to look into it any further.

ALEX

Well don't get me wrong. We just don't get many dwarves. I mean...it's a comment, you make great sailors, we just don't tend to see that many.

BEN

Well you know, just around. I don't know what to say. Sorry about my people's lack of seafaring enthusiasm.

ALEX

No, no fair enough. So what's bringing you anyway to Dover? You said you were passing through but...

BRYN

We're on the way to Paris

LYDIA

Yeah and then around the world then.

BRYN

Potentially

LYDIA

Yeah Damascus and stuff

ALEX

Big trip

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Going on a grand tour for the...looking for adventure

JAMES

The only tour I'm on is a grand tour of course.

LYDIA

I'm just...I'm going to go to another country. Like I'm very excited. I hear that they don't even have, like, Londoners in Paris

(laughing)

ALEX

He seems to smirk and take it as a perfectly legitimate interesting comment.

It's good to see people getting from where they started and getting themselves

somewhere. I don't have time for people who just land themselves in the best position. You've got to work for what you want you know.

JAMES

Disagree!

LYDIA

There's catacombs there and they're just like other London but with skeletons.

ALEX

It's becoming very clear, by the way, as the conversation goes on that he's slowly beginning just tilt the conversation towards Sasha and Zolf and not really bothering with Bertie or Hamid. He's not being overtly rude, he's way more subtle than that but nevertheless the conversation slowly, gradually continues and continues until he's been spending the best part of an hour talking to Sasha about various interesting things in London and keeps going on at Zolf about sailing because he's just...it's very obvious

BEN

A question of what have you been driving lately.

ALEX

Yeah, except he won't let it go. He's not being obsessive about it but he knows you've been sailing and you're dodging the question and he's smart enough to notice and just keeps bringing it up.

LYDIA

At the point where Sasha's had a couple of glasses of wine do you ask about the interesting sword because it is stuff. It is shiny stuff and she didn't want to ask anything because she was nervous but now she's had three glasses a wine.

BRYN

It's gone up from a couple to three glasses.

LYDIA

While she was describing it she was chugging another way.

ALEX

And there was the chaser which you asked them to whisky up.

LYDIA

So that sword, right, that looks like a nice piece of work you've got there. Like, I've been in the antiques trade in various roles and yeah, looks like a nice piece of kit.

ALEX

Ok carry on.

BEN

I'm actually going to roll not to smirk.

ALEX

I'll tell you what he gestures you back into the lounge, you've finished the meal anyway. He pulls it out and places it on the table and draws it.

BRYN

I will hang back as we're moving between rooms, hopefully without any noticing, cast magic.

ALEX

Go for it. On anything in particular?

BRYN

Well it essentially gives me magic.

ALEX

I'm just curious, in general, is there anything you're particularly interested in?

BRYN

The sword.

ALEX

The sword does...

BRYN

But I'll look at the rest of him and around as well.

ALEX

The sword does not have any magical properties however he's giving off two middling ones. He appears to be wearing some kind of magical item, clothing or something, faint conjuration from his torso. Probably clothing, something similar and he's wearing a magical ring of some kind but it's not formidably powerful. It's a couple of items that you would be surprised to see that in that scenario but nonetheless they are magical but the sword's completely special materials only.

BRYN

Fair enough.

ALEX

However from your check earlier, we'll just say that you clued into it. It's probably old adamantine. You know how way back when Gusset was mentioned the patterning gets more complex. This one is the most complex thing you've ever seen. It's very, very elaborate, like the actual blade is like fractals and fractals and very, very elaborate. It's a single blade with a single sharp edge and a pointed edge and it's similar to a katana but without the two handed handle to it.

JAMES

Is it like a dualling sword?

ALEX

Yeah, yeah basically it's a dualling sword. Actually I rescued a merchant vessel a long time and the man who was running it dealing in old adamantine, he insisted I take that as a prize.

LYDIA

Wow!

JAMES

It's quite the blade. Do you dual much? Do you fence?

ALEX

I've been known to. I find the bastard sword a very slow weapon.

JAMES

Well sometimes slow and steady cuts the race to ribbons, then it falls to bits in front of you and then everyone cheers.

ALEX

Quite. At which point he picks up a poker from the fire, pokes it for a second and goes very interesting material. Makes direct eye contact with Bertie and slices the poker clean in two without even so much as a vague effort and returns it. I find speed tends to be more beneficial in these kinds of things but of course you'd know growing up as you did, I presume Sir Bertrand.

JAMES

Oh yes of course. My experience is wide and diverse. I wonder perhaps whether you would be willing to part with that sword.

ALEX

I find it unlikely that you would be able to offer me a price that I would accept.

JAMES

Well perhaps something of a non-monetary value. Perhaps if we were to investigate the matter of the storms with the Cult of Poseidon and look into that.

ALEX

And what exactly would you lot be able to offer that anyone else couldn't/

JAMES

Well...

BRYN

I'm not sure a simple service like that would be worth the price of a sword of that nature Bertie.

ALEX

He places it back on its little stand at the coffee table. Gives Sasha a wink and goes, it's almost like some things can't be bought am I right?

LYDIA

Oh yeah a lot of things...there's other ways that you've got to get hold of.

(laughing)

ALEX

He looks at you and there's a brief quizzical thing, like he may have overestimated your ability when it came to the social bants a little bit and just a sort of, ok.

BEN

So this merchant, you said they dealt in old adamantine. Like where were they coming from? Where's the centre of old adamantine

ALEX

Well I mean, ultimately his name was Croesus but he deals around Turkey, that kind of thing but honestly if you're after some I wouldn't bother. I looked into this stuff but ultimately you're not going to be able to get any.

LYDIA

Got to like hang around merchants and rescue them or something like that.

JAMES

Wait until people are in danger and then resolve matters for them and be rewarded with a sword. Oh I'm thinking out loud again aren't I?

(laughing)

BEN

Well to be fair that's what we do with money so...

ALEX

Well anyway as fun as this is, you're welcome to stay here tonight. I'm presuming you haven't got anywhere set up if you were hoping to catch the tunnel.

BRYN

Well we were planning to get a boat but we were going to find a hotel but if you're happy to host that would be lovely. Thank you.

ALEX

You're welcome.

JAMES

Most gracious of you, yes.

ALEX

We've got guest rooms. It's the least I could do obviously. As a reward, again making direct eye contact with Bertie, as a reward that is suitable for the level of service that was very graciously rendered. He certainly seems to be getting on with you better.

BRYN

I'm trying to put a social bufferness between him and Bertie at this point.

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BEN

And I need to pop into at the temple anyway

ALEX

Sure no worries. I find you interesting Zolf, something tickles me. I can't think what it is.

JAMES

It's not me I promise!

(laughing)

BEN

Right, thank you.

LYDIA

He's a good boss.

ALEX

That's good to know.

JAMES

What a weird thing to say.

ALEX

He stands anyway and goes well I have to do my rounds before I sleep. You're welcome to stay as long as you like. I'll see you in the morning I guess. He heads out and measures each of you with a glance and then heads off.

LYDIA

I give him an open smile.

ALEX

He seems to quite like you.

LYDIA

Alright cheers for the wine and for the food even if it was dangerous food. I don't know how you guys survive on it.

BEN

Usually you don't put so much spice on it.

ALEX

Try the pork it settles the stomach. And closes the door.

BEN

Right well that was...

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LYDIA

He was nice wasn't he. I liked him. I liked his sword as well

JAMES

Yeah so do I.

ALEX

Which is still there by the way.

LYDIA

I'm going to look at it. I'm going to go over and...

ALEX

Go for it.

LYDIA

And I'm just going to admire and appraise it. I don't even know if I need to check. I just want to enjoy appraising it.

ALEX

Sure

LYDIA

Look it is pretty isn't it. I would give this an auction market...

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JAMES

For insurance purposes of course.

ALEX

Give me a roll

LYDIA

18 + my appraiser of 8

ALEX

Well I'll give you the answer in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. So it's probably worth a few grand certainly.

LYDIA

I thought you would be more exact than that. How many grand?

JAMES

For 26 you've got to give her a number.

ALEX

Very well.

LYDIA

2 and point 176 grands.

ALEX

3,120

LYDIA

That's within our limit. We could all chip in.

ALEX

Mainly...there's probably a bit of a markup because of the history on it and things like that but you can tell from it that it's incredibly well balance, as in, like it's basically the idea base weapon before you get into magical. It's perfect in every sense of the word in design. It is an adamantite dualling sword.

JAMES

Ok what would that work like, is it...

ALEX

What knowledge does Bertie have regarding weaponry specifically?

JAMES

I mean if it's...

ALEX

You're proficient in marshal weapons correct?

JAMES

Yes

ALEX

Ok it's an exotic weapon of which you are familiar but not trained.

BRYN

It's not as good as a bastard sword.

ALEX

It's not as good as a bastard sword but contains lots of benefits for anyone who is very, very dexterous and it lets you do lots of very shiny, flashy, flourish moves that aren't just looking good, they're actually mechanically very useful.

LYDIA

I am going to take the sword, swing it around a bit in slight flourishes because I have all the dexterity.

BRYN

I don't think...

ALEX

Give me a dexterity roll. Just the dexterity roll.

LYDIA

Just in case I 0 it. Ok 11.

ALEX

So [sword swiping noise]. You manage not to slice anyone. You come perilously close to taking the top off a lampshade.

BRYN

I really don't think you should do that, maybe you should just put it back.

LYDIA

And then I look at Hamid, I swirl it a little bit more and then I put it back in the thing very carefully and put it exactly where it was.

BRYN

I withdraw a handkerchief from my sleeve and go I'm just polishing it.

LYDIA

I then, because, he's making it more polished than it was, which is suspicious

(laughing)

JAMES

Well played, well played

ALEX

Well let's put it this way if he actually knows how to use it, he's probably formidable with a sword.

BRYN

I don't know about the rest of you but I'm quite tired, I might go to bed.

LYDIA

Yeah I might try some of that port first but yeah.

BEN

Yeah sure

JAMES

I'll teach you the technique. I shall as well. Now here is, this is a port.

BEN

Sorry can I show you my technique?

BRYN

I go to bed

BEN

Pour in a glass and drink it.

ALEX

And we can just skip past to the morning. Just let me know one thing, how bad are people expecting to be before I ask for fort saves on hangovers.

LYDIA

Sasha has had three glasses of wine and then a couple of ports.

ALEX

Give me a fort save

BEN

I'm the right side of trashed. Is what I'm aiming for.

LYDIA

Oh 3. And then my fortitude is only 2

ALEX

Excellent. Give me a fort save Zolf.

BEN

Rolled a 2 so that's 8.

ALEX

Excellent, anyone else on the...

JAMES

I'm drinking port but I think Bertie's a) tolerance is quite high and b) this is a polite evening in.

ALEX

All I'm asking is are you doing an excessive amount for you?

BEN

Are you keeping up with us?

JAMES

I'm not consuming...

ALEX

Anyhoo you all have your own rooms. They are not four posters but as close as you can get before it becomes that. Very well made, big, well appointed. Again it's an academy and you're in guest rooms.

BRYN

Any bed designed for a medium sized creature feels palatial to me.

ALEX

Oh it's huge. Huge. Almost problematically so but not quite. You wake up. Sasha, you feel awful. Rancidly terrible. Zolf, despite your big blustery it's fine I'm a sailor, we know how to do the thing, you feel terrible.

BEN

I feel terrible.

ALEX

Bertie you're as fresh as a daisy. Hamid, you wake up and feel itchy. Extremely itchy on your forearms and on your legs.

BEN

Oh my!

BRYN

Er what?

JAMES

Scratch presumably.

ALEX

Just letting you know before you pull the covers down, that's what wakes you up.

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BEN

Have we got an en suite?

ALEX

Yes

BEN

And is there a bathtub?

ALEX

Yes

BEN

I shuffle over to the bathtub and cast conjure water over my head. Just ice cold water.

ALEX

Ok. Well you're awake now at least.

BEN

Until I feel a little bit like...

BRYN

I mean I'll probably take a bath as well if I'm itching.

ALEX

As you strip down you see that you are having a very unhealthy sheen to your skin which appears to be flaking.

BRYN

Urgh horrible rash.

ALEX

In fact it seems to be all over.

BRYN

I'll take a bath and hope it goes away.

ALEX

It stops the itching but the discoloration is there and still you're peeling.

BRYN

What colour's the discoloration?

ALEX

Metallic.

JAMES

Metallica colour he notes.

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BRYN

A very specific type of metal I believe actually.

ALEX

So what do you guys do? You've awoken?

BEN

Shuffle down for breakfast.

LYDIA

Fill the sink with warm water and I dunk my head in it.

ALEX

You feel slightly better.

LYDIA

That is all I do.

JAMES

Brutor has been sleeping at Bertie's feet all night and it's been an adorable tableau particularly because Bertie is having that dream where he's chasing cats.

ALEX

I love the idea that Brutor's perfectly still and it's Bertie [dog noise]

JAMES

Brutor is having that dream where he wakes up naked and it's an exam

(laughing)

I'm a dog!

ALEX

But I didn't revise! Argh

JAMES

Because I'm a dog. It's fine. My verbal reasoning is surprisingly acute and yet I am a dog.

ALEX

Zolf you open the door to head downstairs, there are two naval police outside your door.

BEN

Morning?

ALEX

Morning sir, we'd greatly appreciate it if you could just stay inside for now.

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BEN

What's going on?

ALEX

Probably nothing to be concerned but we'd greatly appreciate it if you could just stay inside for now.

LYDIA

Is there anyone outside our doors?

ALEX

Open the door and find out.

LYDIA

I open the door with wet hair

ALEX

No but you do see down the corridor Zolf having a chat with two very, very burly naval boys.

LYDIA

Alright Zolf.

BEN

Hi Sasha. So I've got some...what's going on? Bearing in mind yesterday we diffused the riot and we are the guests of Commander Barnes.

ALEX

I am aware of that sir.

BEN

So if you wouldn't mind...

ALEX

I'm very sorry if you could just...

BEN

We are free agents, we can leave

ALEX

I am...all of your friends perfectly have the run of the place. We're very happy to have them here. If you could just stay inside for a moment, someone will be with you momentarily sir.

BEN

What's going on?

ALEX

If you could just stay inside sir.

BEN

Like could you please just explain yourselves. I do not like the tone that's being taken here. I am not...I was invited here as a guest.

ALEX

I apologise sir. We're not trying to take a tone with you. If you could just wait inside, we'll be with you in a sec.

BEN

I'm going to start to walk out.

ALEX

They reach out and bar your way. Not aggressively at all but it's just very clear, like two arms come out. I'm afraid if you can just stay sir.

BEN

No look, explain yourselves immediately.

ALEX

I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to do that sir, I'm under direct orders. If you can just stay inside sir, someone will be with you momentarily.

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BEN

Duck under their arms.

ALEX

Again they're just reaching out to grab you but you can go for a check if you want.

BRYN

I merge out into the corridor.

ALEX

You come out to Zolf having a spat.

BRYN

What's going on?

BEN

I'm being kept in my room for no particular reason and may I remind you, I am a guest here.

LYDIA

I'll get the captain...the commander, the officer man.

ALEX

He'll be along momentarily ma'am don't worry about it.

JAMES

Come on Brutor, walkies! And Bertie emerges, like towelling himself down dragging Brutor along on an improvised lead made from a dressing gown rope.

ALEX

I'm waiting for you to just go making from every single complimentary item in the hotel room tied together.

BRYN

He has some tiny shampoo bottles in his face.

JAMES

Brutor himself has got a tiny papoose carrying complimentary soaps.

(laughing)

Come on Brutor, walkies. Down the corridor, come on, who's a good boy.

BEN

On hearing that Commander Barnes is going to be along soon. So this is his doing then?

ALEX

I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to say so. Someone will be along with you momentarily. If you can just wait inside.

LYDIA

Well Zolf's our boss.

BRYN

He's not a prisoner.

BEN

Go for breakfast or something. Let's not make a scene.

ALEX

I'd very much appreciate that sir. We'll have breakfast brought to you. It will only take a moment I'm sure sir.

BEN

Much appreciated. Don't worry about it. Just keep an ear out. It's best if we don't rock the boat. This will only go worse if we, you know...

BRYN

I stomp off to find the commander.

ALEX

Ok. After about 15 minutes you run into the commander, he seems to be heading your way. He's holding a piece of paper and he has two more men.

BRYN

Commander, what is going on.

ALEX

I'm very sorry, I just received a bit of information. Do feel free to help yourselves to breakfast.

BRYN

No, no, no I must insist you tell me why Zolf is being confined to his room. This is completely unacceptable.

ALEX

I understand you're upset and if you'll bear with me I'm afraid, that I'm fairly certain that Mr Zolf would rather that I had this conversation with him. Feel free to wait outside but nonetheless I feel that I have to have this conversation with Zolf himself.

LYDIA

Sasha stayed for five minutes watching the people.

ALEX

They're thoroughly boring

LYDIA

And then the thought of breakfast which is really posh

ALEX

Oh it's a posh breakfast

LYDIA

With all these weird fish things in, I go down and I have that. Come back with some food...

ALEX

Bear with me on that one. And Bertie?

JAMES

Bertie doesn't stick for any minutes because he's been told things are find by an authority figure so he goes down for breakfast.

ALEX

Both of you heading into breakfast, it's full of officers, so they have a sort of like self-service canteen thing set up and you're welcome to join. They're quite boisterous, a bit of a boys club.

JAMES

Bertie is totally find with that. He sits down with the officers, he brings Brutor up to the table, gets some kedgerree, scrapes it into a bowl, bit of bacon something like that on top of it as well and feeds Brutor from the bowl.

LYDIA

I'm going to fill a plate and then just see how crowded it is and then go and find a quiet room and eat it there.

ALEX

It's very easy, it's a very large building.

BRYN

They'll be a lounge somewhere.

ALEX

You can go into the secondary lounge for the smoking of post cigar cigarillos.

JAMES

And then there's a third one for cigarettes.

ALEX

Oh that's second cigarettes. And then there's afternoon tea.

BEN

And a last one for vaping

(laughing)

BRYN

I'm on the commander's heels back to the room with Zolf.

ALEX

Sure, so Barnes comes down the corridor, he's still reading the paperwork. He's being perfectly civil and polite with Hamid. Ah Mr Smith would you allow me inside we can just have a quiet talk. I apologise for the inconvenience here.

BEN

Of course commander.

ALEX

Very well.

BRYN

Do you want me to come?

ALEX

He's welcome to sit in if you'd like.

BEN

What's this about first?

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ALEX

He hands you a piece of paper.

BEN

Oh I'm getting noted. Does it just say I really like apples

(laughing)

ALEX

He's welcome to join obviously if you'd like a witness and so on, that's fine.

BEN

Yeah sure, come in. Come in, fine.

ALEX

Heading inside the two navy boys, just says it's fine you can wait outside. And he just closes the door so it's just Barnes, yourself and Hamid.

BEN

Yeah I thought you were asking a lot of questions.

ALEX

I do apologise but I can recognise a navy when I see one.

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BEN

I was declared MIA.

ALEX

But you're not are you? You're here.

BEN

Yes. And if you want to take it up with the Church of Poseidon I found a different calling.

ALEX

I do apologise but I'm afraid you're under my jurisdiction currently. Do not get me wrong this is not bringing me any pleasure but nonetheless you are AWOL and you know you are.

BEN

Right, what do you intend to do about it?

ALEX

What I have to do Zolf. I'm afraid that these gentlemen are going to escort you down. You're going to be held in a temporary cell and be taken before a court martial.

BEN

Just court martial me now.

ALEX

I'm not able to give you a court martial, you have to be court-martialled between...

BEN

Actually, look, right, brass tax on omission for the larger organisation so actually I think they kind of outrank you. So...

ALEX

Do you have any paperwork to confirm that?

BEN

Did we?

BRYN

I don't think we did, you know. I don't remember.

BEN

No we didn't because we were supposed to keep it on the downlow. Good point Zolf! No. Right ok, so fine I'll buy my commission off of myself.

ALEX

Fair enough, if you could just...I'm afraid you'll have to wait in the cells. You know how this works.

BEN

I don't have the time!

ALEX

Well I'm very sorry that I'm inconveniencing you but nonetheless the case remains that you are AWOL. You are absent without leave.

BEN

That was six years ago.

ALEX

That's worse. That's not better. I don't understand how that's meant to ease the situation.

BRYN

What exactly is his legal status commander? My understanding is that a designation of MIA or AWOL would be cancelled to presume dead within a three year window. Is that not correct?

ALEX

However it's very evident and given the fact that I've had to make enquiries over the communications network that this is nonetheless Zolf Smith that I'm afraid yes he would've been declared missing in action as he says but nonetheless he's here standing and ultimately I can't let him go on a technicality. I don't know what to tell you.

BEN

You can. That's usually how people get out of things.

BRYN

It seems to me Commander that if his legal status is in fact dead then there is very little that can still be done. The case would already have been closed and sealed.

ALEX

Nonetheless I don't know what to tell you. I'm standing in front of a man who apparently...

BEN

Has this been reopened by the larger organisation or is this...

ALEX

He hands you a piece of paperwork saying for the man suspected as Zolf Smith please detain for confirmation and potential court martial. It's a direct meritocratic order from his superiors.

BEN

I don't think I'm getting out of this one.

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BRYN

How much is the commission Zolf? To buy it off.

BEN

It's more we've just to wait to be court martialled. I don't care if he...

ALEX

Even if he pays his commission he's going to be looking at a week wait for someone to come.

BEN

A week

ALEX

At least

BEN

At least

ALEX

Look he'll probably avoid a court martial. He probably won't get deported. Ultimately he's got his...

BEN

Where are they going to deport me to?

ALEX

Australia. It wouldn't be the first time someone's been deported for being AWOL. But nonetheless the case remains that I can't bend this for you. He'll probably buy his commission, besides the Poseidon lot do have some pull but nonetheless you're not under their jurisdiction here. You're under mine. Look you've got five minutes, this isn't meant as a personal thing but nonetheless you will be taken downstairs. Feel free to pack your things. He heads out.

BEN

Do you want to grab the others and bring back here quickly? I'll start packing up.

BRYN

Sure

ALEX

It takes a little bit longer to find Sasha for the simple reason that she's found a little nook somewhere.

LYDIA

I've found a cubby hole. It was lovely. Ate a lot of herring. Kippers.

ALEX

Was it Gerald the...

LYDIA

Gerald the kipper

ALEX

Gerald the butler guy I mean. I can't remember his name. Was it Clive?

Gerald? I've forgotten.

LYDIA

Clive Gerald.

ALEX

Clive Gerald. It's a hyphen name. Clive-Gerald finds you, he's an elderly man and then he just proceeds to sequester loads of the breakfast foods so you have a whole little buffet in this little cubby hole.

LYDIA

I'm incredibly happy.

ALEX

There's still quite a lot of fish.

BRYN

You're wrenched away from your fish nest.

LYDIA

Hamid wrenches me from my fish net

ALEX

He takes a long time to finally extricate Bertie from the...

JAMES

I was busy carousing. It's important for the constitution.

ALEX

Well skip ahead to you are all in Zolf's room.

LYDIA

Right so if they're like...right I can bust you out of jail.

BEN

Not if jail's Australia

LYDIA

At that Sasha looks quizzical, thinks. But how far away is Australia?

JAMES

Australia is the biggest jail of all.

LYDIA

Ah right

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BEN

Yeah so we might have to cut our trip to the temple short and just make a run for the train.

LYDIA

Can't you claim religious freedom and be free to do the religion.

BEN

No, tried that.

LYDIA

Right

JAMES

I have a certain amount of legal knowledge Mr Smith which I will be happy to employ in your service. I would regard myself as one of the finest advocates in this room.

LYDIA

He's got ghost lawyers following him.

BRYN

He does.

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LYDIA

Can they help us.

BRYN

We really should make a move if we're going to make a move.

LYDIA

Alright out the window.

ALEX

There's a knock, knock, knock. Mr Smith if you're ready?

BEN

Is there a window?

ALEX

Yes there is.

LYDIA

I am going to grab Zolf, I guess, and climb out onto a ledge on the window if that's a thing.

JAMES

Mr Smith is just...

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ALEX

Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

16 + every time I need to check it. Why can't I remember this. 8. So 24

ALEX

Give me a...whatever you were going to say.

JAMES

Mr Smith is just dressing himself into decency and essentially it's a bluff check for the guards behind the door.

ALEX

Give me the bluff.

JAMES

Bluff. 10 + 1 is 11.

ALEX

You've got one minute. Sorry about this. Opening the window and looking outside you see three men waiting at the base. He's not an intelligent man.

LYDIA

I look around the room for places to hide a dwarf

(laughing)

I'm good at hiding stuff!

BEN

Sasha I appreciate, I don't...

LYDIA

I can get you...over the bed, I could hide you there.

BEN

Even if we get out I'm not going anywhere with this, pointing at my peg leg.
I'm not...we're not...

LYDIA

I can put you in a drawer

BRYN

We're going to have to deal with it another way.

BEN

We're going to have to deal with it another way.

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JAMES

Well there is...

BRYN

It's just a delay. There's no...we won't let you get sent to Australia.

JAMES

Do we have a bag of holding?

ALEX

The only one who knows about it currently is Sasha because she never shared it with the rest of you.

BRYN

You can't put something that's alive in a bag of holding.

BEN

To stop exactly this

JAMES

Ok

BEN

Otherwise you could be like I'll keep my army

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ALEX

And it's full of squid and octopus

LYDIA

You can have dead squid. Take that. You open it and they just flop down.

JAMES

This is the thing with suggestion so there's no way of one of just like breathing into the bag the whole time.

LYDIA

Can we hide him in your papoose?

JAMES

I was thinking about the papoose but it's not a hiding...

ALEX

Mr Zolf.

BEN

I think, no I'll just...I open the door.

ALEX

I apologise for this, we'll hopefully get it done as soon as possible.

BEN

Just stop apologising for goodness sake.

ALEX

He takes the pack of cards which he was about to pass to you, puts it back in his pocket and gestures for you to follow the two men.

JAMES

So there are three guards in total?

ALEX

There are three guards down at the, outside the window looking up. And there were two guards who were by the door and Barnes is going around with two. So ultimately there are two who are heading off, Barnes, two behind him currently in the corridor.

LYDIA

And a breakfast room full of navy people and officers between us.

ALEX

You can intimidate them all!

JAMES

I could! Ok so in terms of the layout of the complex, if we got past this cluster of guards who are immediately here would we then be more or less...

BRYN

I don't think this is a situation that's going to be possible. I don't know. Also Hamid might well not help. Naval officers who are just trying to do their job.

BEN

I'll stomp after Barnes.

LYDIA

I slip playing cards which I have pointedly to Zolf seeing that the other guy...

ALEX

How does one slip something pointedly?

(laughing)

LYDIA

I'm standing next to him, I'm looking directly in Barnes' face and hand them to Zolf. So it's a small gesture but Barnes can see that I gave him...

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check.

BEN

JAMES

Natural 20

LYDIA

Golly I've got a low one! I'm only on 17 as well.

ALEX

Some would say this 20 was unnatural

JAMES

Hamid and Bertie both 20s on this perception roll.

BRYN

The high score is 28 and yours is 19.

JAMES

That is true.

ALEX

As you are walking along, Bertie you notice there's something very strange going on with Hamid. There is something up with him hidden behind a collar and behind cuffs and so on but there is something very off happening with Hamid.

JAMES

Hamid, Hamid, is your body going through some unexpected changes?

ALEX

And we'll close there. Ok cool.

JAMES

Next week on a very special episode of Rusty Quill

(laughing)

BEN

Everybody moults.

BRYN

I hate you guys! You're not my real dad!

ALEX

Right I think we'll close there with administrative peril for the first time.

BEN

Having to deal with the justice system after being serial murders.

LYDIA

I haven't murdered anyone. The only one that's murdered anyone is Bertie.

BEN

I mean we've definitely murdered people. Maybe in self-defence but we've definitely murdered people.

ALEX

So much blood!

LYDIA

They got better.

BRYN

I suppose actually yeah it was Byron's sister.

ALEX

So while we discuss the nuances of murder, we'll be back again next week and thanks for listening.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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