

## RQG – 29 – The Scrimshaw Redemption

### Content Warnings

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### [Show Theme - Intro]

#### ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 29 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM and with me for another excitingly and admittedly really wet, by this point, adventure

#### JAMES

James Ross

#### BRYN

Bryn Monroe

#### LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

#### BEN

Ben Meredith

**ALEX**

And what characters are you playing?

**JAMES**

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham, the finest legal mind of his generation

**BRYN**

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan, single female lawyer!!

**(laughing)**

**LYDIA**

Sasha Rackett, dagger enthusiast in the face of all challenges legal, linguistic, diplomatic, problem solving puzzles, solving riddles, dagger enthusiast.

**BEN**

Zolf Smith, romance enthusiast

**ALEX**

So where we left off Zolf was having to see out some of his time in jail awaiting a court martial in now six days.

**BEN**

I started a book club

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Jail is just happy for some company. Hamid had requested some legal books and Sasha had effectively helped out early in the archive and then been doing some daggering and Bertie had some downtime with Brutor.

**JAMES**

It's important to have some me time.

**ALEX**

And now Brutor really does think he's people.

**(laughing)**

So, we'll pick up where we left off the morning after starting with Hamid, Bertie and Sasha waking up in, by far to this date, the nicest accommodation you've had yet.

**BRYN**

It's really exciting, I've been in so many role playing campaigns, I've never played a rich character before. It's nice being like yes, I get the best hotel room available.

**ALEX**

We'll say you're at breakfast.

**JAMES**

If anything those sheets were too silk and I almost slipped straight off but I didn't. Well done me. I'm going to reward myself with a massive breakfast [dog talking noise]. So is Brutor. Here boy. At this point Bertie holds up a kipper and dangles it over Brutor's...

**ALEX**

Brutor looks disdainfully at the kipper and proceeds to climb up onto a chair at the table and await a serving.

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

Well done Brutor.

**(laughing)**

Bertie puts down the kipper and then presents a knife and fork to Brutor.

**ALEX**

Brutor proceeds to pick up the fork and just kind of [pushing noise] at the kipper, gives up and admittedly eats from the plate but in a really dignified way.

**LYDIA**

Sasha's hair is all poufy. She's used things that were shampoo. The sort of thing that turns your hair into feathers. Everything is like...maybe she's born with it, maybe it's extremely expensive chemical products.

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

From how you've described it, you are sort of describing Sasha as looking a little bit like David Bowie in Labyrinth at this point.

**(laughing)**

**LYDIA**

She looks shocked by her own head.

**BRYN**

I think the crotch boulder is actually just another dagger though.

**JAMES**

A hysterical dagger. Still draws the eye.

**LYDIA**

Good food. Do you think Zolf's getting good food in the prison where we left him?

**BRYN**

Well I think that the jailer man seemed really nice actually and so I think he'll...it won't be this good obviously but I think actually he'll get something decent.

**ALEX**

We'll cut to the jail. The jailer at this point has set up a little, almost sort of, TV dinner up against the bars and got you to push your table against the bars if you wish and is sharing a full cooked breakfast with you and is effectively just discussing romance novels. Honestly I mean, did you see it coming. I didn't. Honestly Jeramiah is the wrong woman. She is the wrong woman but it's just so readable.

**BEN**

I know. Look, honestly just at the start with Richard's, you know, the way that he's initially presented to you, you know, the meeting in the arcade. Just, he comes off so badly but throughout books 2 and 3 you really get to know him. You see inside his soul. He's a really genuine...it's incredible, I've got to say thank you for putting me on to these. These are...

**ALEX**

Oh it's alright, honestly. I mean, if you ever get out, you come find me and I reckon we ought to go see him because he's a great author. I think you'd really, really enjoy meeting him.

**BEN**

Yeah but you've got that problem when you're meeting your heroes they don't really live up to...

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Oh yeah, that's a really good point, actually. Maybe it's best leaving it as a mystery.

**BEN**

Maybe but if I do ever come across him. We seem to have a knack for meeting famous people so if we ever do come across him I'll get him to sign something for you.

**ALEX**

Oh thanks. Can you do it to like my bestest pal or something. Or is that a bit much? Bit much?

**BEN**

It might be a bit much.

**ALEX**

So we'll go ahead and say that Hamid makes it to the post office and picks up a whole load of legal documentation.

**BRYN**

Time for legal montage.

**JAMES**

Legal montage, legal montage, legal montage.

**BRYN**

Single female lawyer!

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

We'll say that you closet yourself up what in a library, the hotel rooms where would you like to be?

**BRYN**

The hotel room.

**ALEX**

Sure the hotel rooms. And legal montage, legal montage.

**(singing)**

**ALEX**

So can I get...

**BRYN**

Reading, writing, reading more! Debating at a blackboard. Where did the blackboard come from?!

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

Brutor's there going hmmm.

**BRYN**

Just pan to a Brutor in a tiny Judge's wig in a mock court room. Sasha's playing Zolf. She's got her hair trying to pull it down as a beard.

**LYDIA**

Pulling it down.

**JAMES**

And Bertie's playing Hamid and Hamid's playing Bertie.

**BRYN**

Wait, so you've got Hamid in Bertie's armour. Just the breast plate sitting on the floor.

**JAMES**

Bertie's just pretending to cast prestidigitation but he's only wearing his pants because he's given his armour

**ALEX**

You know what, I'm going to say comical but moving on. Can I get from each of you to represent the different aspects of it, a flat intelligence check for the

sake of how to build the argument, a linguistics check to cover the assembling of that into a coherent legal narrative as it were and a diplomacy check for how do we effectively write this and present this as something that would be legally acceptable.

**BRYN**

Can we use cooperatively? Can people help each other?

**ALEX**

I want three separate rolls.

**JAMES**

So why don't you guys do the int check, I suspect the thing that I am least incapable at is the linguistics which I've got a modifier of 3 for.

**LYDIA**

No that's...

**BRYN**

I've also got 3.

**LYDIA**

I've got 3.

**JAMES**

Cool, well I may as do that if I have to do one of the things and then if...

**BRYN**

My diplomacy is my best skill of all.

**ALEX**

So who's doing linguistics?

**JAMES**

Me. Bertie is.

**ALEX**

Who's doing intelligence?

**LYDIA**

Me.

**ALEX**

And who's doing diplomacy?

**BRYN**

I'll be doing the diplomacy.

**ALEX**

Can I start with the intelligence first.

**LYDIA**

It's determined that Sasha, for the benefit of the tape, dice kept falling off the table and going into weird places on the twos and fives and now we've finally got one and it's a seven. It's like the dice knows Sasha is not a legal mind.

**ALEX**

So is that a total of 10?

**LYDIA**

Yeah it's a total of 10.

**ALEX**

We'll say that most of your arguments tend to boil down to, now Zolf could've gotten away with it if he had done this as opposed to defending him as it stands.

**BEN**

Pointing out problems with my plan.

**ALEX**

Yeah basically. Can I get the linguistics next.

**JAMES**

So Bertie rolls the linguistics and gets 8 + 3 is 11.

**ALEX**

And can I get the diplomacy check.

**BRYN**

I'm going to switch dice. I feel the need for some extra luck. No. Natural 20.  
Plus my modifier of 10. That is a 30.

**JAMES**

That is basically rewriting the law and going admiralty why bother.

**BRYN**

I'm going to choose the Chewbacca defence.

**LYDIA**

What's Chewbacca defence?

**ALEX**

It's a Southpark reference isn't it?

**BRYN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Basically the Chewbacca defence for...

**BRYN**

I'm so confident that my client will be acquitted that I can talk about Chewbacca.

**ALEX**

It's just like my client is so innocent I'm going to spend the rest of my defence talking about Chewbacca. He's from Endor. This is how confident I am. This is the whole defence. It's just that. What we'll do is that say whilst being slightly florin nonetheless, your diplomacy aspect of it is effectively starting to say but let's examine the broader picture here and starts critiquing actual legal framework and arguing that if the legal framework is broken, working within it is itself wrong.

**BRYN**

I'm also going to build up Zolf's recent services to the crown as counting in his favour because he has in fact served his country in other and even more crucial ways recently.

**ALEX**

Sure. Well we've managed to build something at least. So we'll say that all of this took place over the course of a couple of days and the research and the building and the figuring it out and so on, over those couple of days, again you've ended up being sat in a cell but...

**BEN**

Voraciously devouring Harrison Campbell novels.

**ALEX**

Yeah, you're becoming quite the aficionado and I'd say that at this point your discussions are starting to head more into really, really in depth readings of each of them. Probably inappropriately deep, let's be honest but nonetheless very, very good. They are vapid. They are vapid but nonetheless a couple days have passed. You've presented your legal arguments and we'll say for the sake of argument that you are visiting Zolf to coordinate with him and get the last touches together because someone's due within the next couple of days. They never went more specific than that.

**LYDIA**

So we, presuming then read the conflicting survivors' accounts.

**ALEX**

Yeah sure. So the conflicting survivors' accounts. So the account from Jonah effectively discussing a freak storm hit a rock and then was sunk as a result of that. That appears to be the sort of party line that was taken. That seems to be what the official documentation is. We believe that this is probably what happened. Tellulah gives an account of a large storm and claims that as navigation officer there were no rocky outcroppings or anything for them to crash upon and is adamant that they came under some kind of fire at some point but it was masked by the storm. Captain Samael abjectly refused to give

any kind of statement whatsoever. They offered him an out which was retirement and he took it rather than give an account of what actually happened.

**BEN**

Very suspicious.

**BRYN**

So what's your memory of what happened Zolf?

**BEN**

Well I mean it's...the problem was I below the decks at the time that it happened. There was a storm blowing up that we hadn't predicted. Obviously Norway can be quite ferocious. Being tossed about. Things were going badly from the off so we were just running around trying to stop the ship from coming apart then all of a sudden there was an almighty crash and suddenly water was flowing in and just everything broke down at that point.

**LYDIA**

How did you make it out?

**BEN**

I just legged it.

**LYDIA**

Did you have both your legs at that point?

**BEN**

Yeah that was later. I only lost this about three years ago.

**JAMES**

So if anything he legs it rather than legged it.

**LYDIA**

Yeah

**JAMES**

I'm helping!

**BEN**

So back to the time that I almost drowned. Yeah so...

**LYDIA**

So how did you get out but no one else, well almost no one else did.

**BEN**

I've got...

**LYDIA**

Were you just better at swimming?

**BEN**

I've got no idea. I made it out. At that point it was everyone for themselves. As I said it had just broken down. The lifeboats were gone. I don't know if the captain had taken it.

**BRYN**

You didn't have time to abandon ship formally, I mean it must have just been everyone thrown into the ocean I imagine.

**BEN**

It was pretty much that. A lot of people got dragged down with the wreck and I lost consciousness and the next thing I know I'd woken up on some driftwood and another ship was there to pick me up.

**ALEX**

There is a small commotion from outside of your...again you're in that interrogation, the closed discussion room. There is a small commotion from outside that room. You hear the distinct sound of the jailer. Are you sure. I mean honestly I don't really know what's happening. And there's just a deep sultry voice. You can't make out the words that it is saying. It's not travelling through the way the higher pitched of the jailer is but clearly there is something happening outside.

**BRYN**

I open the door and see what's going on.

**ALEX**

You open the door to reveal the jailer looking worried. Hat in hand wringing it. Very genuinely distressed, facing in full religious paraphernalia a very, very large. Very, very tall Priest of Poseidon. Trident in hand, big, long beard which is plaited and elaborate. It's an ostentation that you haven't seen Zolf display at any point. Very tall with it and they are mid conversation with him. Do you know who this man is. Do you understand the nature of this situation. You do not have the right. You do not have the ability to restrain my man and you will not do so. You will let my man go at this moment and he will accompany less this situation escalate. Do you understand. He turns to see you. Can I help you sir?

**BRYN**

What would be the correct form of address for a Priest of this rank?

**ALEX**

Do you have any knowledge religion?

**BRYN**

I really, really don't. I have no idea do I?!

**ALEX**

I'm going to let you pick between Sir and Ma'am.

**BEN**

Actually if I see do you hesitate before you say the thing or do you just go straight into it?

**BRYN**

I probably do hesitate because I don't know the correct thing.

**BEN**

In which case I will whisper the appropriate...

**ALEX**

All of the orders are based upon basically rankings on a ship. You have Captain, Navigator and so on. Unless you get up from your chair poke your head out and say I want to see who it is, you will just have to pick something high ranking. Sir would be appropriate. It wouldn't be hugely inappropriate but titles are very much effectively ranks on a ship.

**BRYN**

Yeah sure

**BEN**

[whispers] just go with sir.

**BRYN**

I'm terribly sorry sir but it's really not this man's...under this man's authority to release Mr Smith from imprisonment but we're his legal team and we're conferencing with him. If you'd like to speak to him we can do that and perhaps this can be resolved with someone who actually has the authority to fix the situation rather than this poor man who's just doing his job. I'm sure you understand sir.

**ALEX**

Very well. He strides forth and steps into the room.

**BEN**

What rank is he?

**ALEX**

Navigator which is wildly high. Wildly high. He'll normally be in charge of a local chapter and when you're heading into captain, there are multiple captains at the religious level but they're more like dictating policy. So he's as high as he can get short of being in a very high council.

**BEN**

So he's like a bishop?

**ALEX**

At the very least. I'd say a high ranking bishop. That's a good way of putting it.

**BEN**

Ok. I will spring out my chair, go down on one knee, bow my head and say it's an honour to...sorry what...

**ALEX**

Let's not stand on ceremony. He gestures for you to stand up.

**BEN**

I get up.

**ALEX**

This is an unacceptable situation. It is a besmirchment of your order and I cannot believe that it has been allowed to happen.

**BEN**

Unfortunately they have a valid reason and this was something that occurred before the joined the order.

**ALEX**

No I will not accept this. I will overrule this. You will be accompanying me to the local chapter house. If they want to cause a fight over it, we'll see what they can do because frankly this is unacceptable.

**BRYN**

I'm terribly sorry sir but given the tensions already in this town between the municipal authorities and your own order, perhaps it would be best not to inflame things further. We really do think we'll be able to take care of this situation within a day or two at most.

**ALEX**

Can I get a diplomacy check.

**BRYN**

I roll some diplomacy. I roll a 12. 22.

**ALEX**

Ok yeah

**BRYN**

I do think we'll be able to resolve this situation within a day or two at most. We're very confident in the defence we've prepared and I really don't think that this will lead to any consequences or any poor reflection on your order whatsoever sir.

**ALEX**

I mean no offence to anyone in this room. Who are you people? I am given to understand Zolf Smith and the nature of his relationship to me. I do not understand your relationship to him.

**LYDIA**

He's our boss.

**BRYN**

I allow Zolf to introduce us.

**BEN**

As Sasha said I employ them. I'm their boss.

**JAMES**

Bertie interrupts. I am Sir Bertrand Macguffingham. Pleased to meet you and offers a hand for a handshake. Doesn't receive the hand for a handshake, seizes the hand and shakes it heartily anyway.

**ALEX**

Again there's a bit of a clinking and clanking as he is wearing regalia. He then turns to Zolf and goes, so I'm given to understand that not only have you found yourselves with responsibilities to the meritocracy but also an independent venture in addition to your position as a cult member.

**BEN**

Yes Navigator that is correct.

**ALEX**

Well I feel at least partially at ease by the nature of your halfling friends.

**BEN**

Sorry it's Hamid.

**ALEX**

Hamid

**BRYN**

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan. And I emphasise the al-Tahan just a little more than I normally might.

**ALEX**

He twigs it. When can this be resolved by?

**BRYN**

Two days at the most we believe, yes.

**JAMES**

Five days I believe the hearing is in.

**BRYN**

We weren't given an exact date.

**JAMES**

It was a week ish. Right.

**ALEX**

He takes a moment. He considers the situation. He turns to Zolf. If I do not have you in my chapter house whether legitimately or otherwise by the end of five days I will take this matter into my own hands and whilst you may not end up under meritocratic authority you will wish that you had been. Do you understand me?

**BEN**

Yes Navigator.

**ALEX**

He strides out.

**BRYN**

Thank you sir. I call after him.

**ALEX**

He gives a minor off cuff wave of the hand. Strides past the jailer. I hope for your sake that this goes well and just leaves.

**JAMES**

Was he helping? I genuinely couldn't tell.

**(laughing)**

**BRYN**

I think he was helping in a rather Bertie like fashion perhaps.

**JAMES**

Ah you mean effectively and with complete confidence in everyone around him. Good that's that settled then.

**BRYN**

Almost exactly like that.

**BEN**

I rush to the kitchen of the jail, pour a little dram of brandy and go back and give it to the jailer.

**ALEX**

Oh sure. He's sat down. Oh this is bad. This is very bad. This is extremely bad.

**BRYN**

It's going to be ok, don't worry.

**ALEX**

In fact I'd say that he leaves the front and goes and joins all you in that room. Leaving no one in the front and just sits with the door open with you guys nursing that tiny, little dram.

**LYDIA**

Why is it bad? It sounded like he had Zolf's back, I think. Was he that kind of boss, you know the sort of boss who is worse than the other people.

**BRYN**

Well I think we can't really afford any more disagreements between the Cult of Poseidon and the rest of this town.

**ALEX**

There's...

**LYDIA**

Ah it's a people thing.

**ALEX**

It's a bit of a powder keg and they'll likely get all of us out to make sure everyone's staying calm. That...I wouldn't like that.

**BRYN**

We don't want another riot.

**ALEX**

No we don't, no.

**JAMES**

The last one went perfectly fine!

**BEN**

I have no idea why a Navigator is taking interest in this. That's...I don't know him personally but he's Bertie-esque.

**JAMES**

Well there are some advantages of course to having a member of nobility in your party. Perhaps he has taken notice of the newly elevated company you're keeping and deemed you worthy of his personal attentions. That would seem like the most logical answer to me.

**BEN**

He didn't know who you were.

**JAMES**

Well then maybe he was drunk or tired or sad or...

**BRYN**

Hungry

**JAMES**

Hungry or...

**LYDIA**

Hungover

**JAMES**

Or hungover or...

**LYDIA**

Sleepy

**JAMES**

Or sleepy. He could've been sleepy. Maybe he was in an attempt to wink at me and maybe something just went...a minor aneurism perhaps that is why he didn't immediately recognise me but I felt a certain bond with him immediately. I felt that, you know, should we meet socially we'd have really got on, you know.

**BEN**

Yeah. Yes, no, right, ok. Sorry just a bit rattled by that.

**LYDIA**

Zolf do you need us to bust you out? Oh wait, no, no I don't...don't say that because the jailer is there. I say it quietly.

**(laughing)**

[whispers] do you need us to bust you out?

**BEN**

No

**(laughing)**

No that would actually make it worse.

**LYDIA**

Alright just keep me in the loop on that.

**BEN**

Yeah, sure I will do. Thanks for the offer I guess.

**ALEX**

I think this is getting a bit out of hand. If you'll excuse me I'm going to see what I can do. He stands up and heads to the office.

**BRYN**

The best thing to happen would be for the court martial to take place as soon as possible.

**ALEX**

Yes I think that would be a very good idea as well.

**BRYN**

Don't do anything out of procedure but if we could just perhaps accelerate things a touch it might be for the best.

**JAMES**

It seems that there are two potential causes of action here that might ameliorate the situation. First we take whatever steps are possible to expedite the legal proceedings. Secondly we might consider something that might diffuse tensions somewhat between the Cult of Poseidon and the people of the town.

**ALEX**

I'm so tempted to smash cut to a massive party.

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

80s music. Lot of boomboxes

**BEN**

1880s

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Right we'll say that the jailer steps out to sort a few things and as you consider your situation we'll take a break and we'll come back in a few minutes.

And welcome back. So we'll say that you spent the rest of the afternoon in the jail going over your legal arguments a bit more.

**BRYN**

Polishing up. Letting Zolf know the plan.

**ALEX**

As evening rocks up, not late evening, we'll say about 5pm, Commander Barnes turns up. The jailer has a brief word with him and shows Commander Barnes in. He steps in and has a full, you know, oiled coat for the weather. Pulls it off, drapes it down. Right, well you're in luck. They've managed to make good time. Are you ready?

**BEN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Hopefully we can get this all done as soon as possible. Just don't go over the top with it yeah. Just keep it simple. Right he...

**BRYN**

I make no promises!

**ALEX**

He swings the oil coat over and then leads you back out. We say that you head towards the Academy. It's rapidly apparent that we're powering towards genuine flooding and he's taking side roads. The police have shut down certain roads because they're just awash. Certain properties towards the entrance of the sea and the cliffs have been emptied and things like that. There's water like rivulets running down the street and so on and Barnes seems genuinely concerned by the whole thing. It's less a case of, you don't see anyone outside causing trouble. Let's put it that way. He leads you through and leads you to the Academy and steps in. You're all absolutely sopping. It's effectively raining horizontally.

**BRYN**

I slip my magical sleeves over the end of my wrists and suddenly I'm wearing a completely dry, perfectly coiffured set of lawyer's robes including wig.

**(laughing)**

**LYDIA**

Sasha is looking away when you do that and then you do that and she looks and that's the closest she's ever been to a legal representative and it does make her happy. You may hear a squeal.

**BRYN**

I want to whisper, magic but I refrain.

**ALEX**

So you're not immune to fear are you Sasha?

**LYDIA**

No clearly not. Totally not, no.

**ALEX**

So you're led through and again there are a couple of token naval police with you but they're not really doing anything. You're marched through. The jailer basically gave your possessions to the other members of the party because Barnes was with them so all your stuff's with you. They lead you to a last set of double doors and before you go in, Barnes just takes a moment and goes, again, this is straightforward stuff. I wish you the best of luck.

**BEN**

Right

**ALEX**

Opens the doors.

**BRYN**

Don't you have a spell which can give people bonuses to diplomacy?

**BEN**

What you mean enhance diplomacy which I prepared.

**BRYN**

Just mentioned it off the cuff.

**ALEX**

I will allow this retroactive casting.

**BEN**

It's a standard action and it's range touch so I just have to tap him on the shoulder. It does only last a minute so you have to get into it.

**ALEX**

Talk quickly!

**JAMES**

Can we arrange the court room that you're spending most of the...just like sticking his finger in his ear.

**BEN**

Just going to rest here and lean on my friend. Ok there we go.

**BRYN**

Unlike me, he can only cast a spell as many times as he prepared it which I presume is once.

**BEN**

It's a level zero so I can do it infinitely.

**ALEX**

So you enter the room...

**LYDIA**

Just walk in hand in hand.

**BEN**

Just skip in.

**ALEX**

Don't ask. Don't tell.

**BRYN**

[singing] In the Navy!

**ALEX**

You enter the large room and it's clearly used for formal situations however it's dwarfed by the level of the proceedings that are actually happening. There is a

simple table set up, backed up against a very large fireplace which is lit. There are three people sat there; two women and one man. The two women on the left, the man on the right. They're all wearing formal regalia. Two of them, the man and one of the women look bookish. The remaining woman looks far more military. Crew cut. Very, very stern looking. There is a chair in the middle of the large, empty hall and then there is a small table about 20 feet to the left of it for seats for the remainder of you and there is seating available at the back. There's no one there. The storm is drumming against the windows at the far end, big stained glass like depiction of a ship at sea with no more sailors and all that kind of jazz. And yeah there's a storm raging and the stern woman looks up. Take a seat and we'll get through this as quickly as possible.

**BEN**

Take a seat.

**ALEX**

Now Zolf Smith, correct?

**BEN**

Correct.

**ALEX**

We understand that you are here due to missing in action, failing to return to duty upon the presumption of your position on the shore. I understand that you have presented a legal defence.

**BEN**

My associate here will be...

**BRYN**

I'll be acting as counsel.

**ALEX**

In that case before we begin the defence how will you be pleading? Will you be pleading guilty to the charge of becoming AWOL after resuming your safety on the shore. Guilty or innocent? Your plea.

**BEN**

Innocent Your Honour.

**ALEX**

Very well. Given the fact that following this proceeding will be, irrespective of the finding of that charge, assuming you are not incarcerated, will you be intending to purchase your commission we presume.

**BEN**

Yes Your Honour.

**ALEX**

Very well. They gesture to Hamid. Proceed. The other woman who's looking, again bookishly, up just goes do try to keep it quickly as you can. We have others to see today.

**LYDIA**

I give him a little shoulder squeeze, a little pat on the head.

**BEN**

I just tap him on the shoulder. I also have to hold my driftwood dolphin and mutter a couple of words but...

**BRYN**

I launch into the defence we prepared, that I've spent many hours practicing in the mirror

**ALEX**

Before you do so, I am factoring in previous checks. Can you give me a diplomacy check to make your case.

**BEN**

What bonus did you get?

**BRYN**

A +2 competence bonus.

**ALEX**

No one else may aid because no one else is allowed to be speaking.

**BRYN**

I roll a 19.

**ALEX**

Nice!

**JAMES**

+ 10 + 2 is 31

**BRYN**

31!

**JAMES**

If anything it's even better than...

**BRYN**

Well it wasn't a natural 20 so I think according to the rules a natural 20 is better than, even if your actual score is...

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah. It's natural 20...

**BRYN**

31 is fricking awesome!

**ALEX**

Natural 20's bells and whistles. This is just being really good. What we'll do is we'll skip all of the argument for the sake of my sanity.

**BRYN**

And I don't keep it to under a minute

**LYDIA**

Montage, montage. It's like soft panning while Hamid's gesturing with pleading eyes. Like the cut to the audience. Some of them are in tears.

**BEN**

I'm in tears, they're in tears.

**JAMES**

Bertie's holding up Brutor, he's wearing a little wig. Brutor's in tears. There's this amount of weird prop comedy going to because it's an Ally McBeal style court.

**ALEX**

Can we cut to...can you give me...can you RP a closing statement for me of any kind that you wish.

**BRYN**

If this man has not served his country then who can say they have! Thank you.

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

Bertie pats Hamid on the shoulder, well done and just passes him a small pastry.

**[round of applause]**

And stands up and starts a standing ovation for his own lawyer.

**ALEX**

I'm going to allow a standing ovation for the four people in the massive empty hall.

**BRYN**

So can we just see how that's going to sound.

**[round of applause]**

**LYDIA**

No one else joins in. Or do they? Surely because Bertie...

**ALEX**

You know what, we'll say one of the women. The woman that said they should hurry up, also stands and starts clapping. Then sits down and realises that's wildly inappropriate. The stern woman again, if you'll give us a moment we will confer. They little just heads in [whispering noise]. Very well, given the nature of your defence which was eloquent although slightly overwrought nonetheless, we do indeed find that you are innocent of any illegal activity. We would've appreciated you to approach yourself, nonetheless case remains that you do still need to buy your commission as you are still under meritocratic law.

**BEN**

Right

**ALEX**

However given, again via your defence, your recent activities for the public good, again in service of the meritocratic aims we would like to reduce your commission to the cost of 3,000 gold payable within 12 months. Is this acceptable to yourselves?

**BEN**

Yes, yes it is. Thank you.

**LYDIA**

Can't you negotiate it down a bit Hamid? That's a lot of money.

**BRYN**

We'll find a way Sasha. It'll be ok.

**ALEX**

Very well. Are you able to give us a permanent residence that we can send communications to?

**BEN**

I will give them Hamid's address.

**BRYN**

In London

**BEN**

Yeah like his flat.

**ALEX**

Very well. Again paperwork, paperwork, paperwork. In that case you are free to go. We apologise for any inconvenience but we do remind you that should payment not be received to ourselves within a 12 month period you will be subject to incarceration and deportation.

**BEN**

How do I make that payment? Who do I contact?

**ALEX**

You may contact any naval academy that you are nearby. You could pay yourselves or you are able to wire the money by a bank transfer.

**BEN**

Of course. Thank you.

**ALEX**

Next! They just gesture you to leave via the double doors and you see a very, very, very nervous new looking new recruit being walked in as you walk out.

**BEN**

Good luck!

**BRYN**

Well let's go back to the hotel. I think we've had enough for tonight or do you want to go to the Cult now.

**BEN**

First things first I'm going to put on my clothes.

**ALEX**

You're still wearing jail gear.

**BEN**

Yeah so I'm going to...

**BRYN**

Of course, yes.

**BEN**

I'll go into a side room and come out wearing my normal clothes. Sasha have you got my trident?

**LYDIA**

I get my bag of holding which was tucked around the back of my leather jacket. One second. I sort of step behind a pillar, pull it out quickly and then come around. So they couldn't see. Give him the trident and say, magic!

**JAMES**

I say that's very good. Do you know what card I'm thinking of?

**BEN**

Is it the eight of spades?

**JAMES**

Yes! You're very good!

**BEN**

Magic! Also did you two...is this is a thing? Have I missed a thing?

**LYDIA**

I look at Hamid and I'm like...

**BEN**

Right anyway I'm going to go pay two and a half grand of that because that's the money I've got just to make sure...

**BRYN**

I'll give you another 500.

**BEN**

No this is my fault.

**BRYN**

But you can pay me back. It's better to have the debt to the navy just cleared and you can owe me.

**BEN**

Thank you.

**JAMES**

And may I make a recommendation Mr Smith? As a man of the aristocracy who's not been unburdened by debt over the years might I suggest that it is reasonable to keep a certain amount of cash in hand. You do after all have 12 months and it must be said that the reach of the law is not infinite.

**LYDIA**

I can lend you some cash Zolf. I've got...

**BRYN**

We'll still have enough to see for our daily needs.

**BEN**

Well a) Bertie we're in a naval academy so let's, none of that and thanks to the both of you.

**BRYN**

How much do you need?

**BEN**

500

**BRYN**

Ok I'll give you 500.

**BEN**

Ok I owe you big time.

**ALEX**

So we will skip ahead of the paperwork of you signing it off.

**LYDIA**

Scribble, scribble, scribble.

**BRYN**

Financial montage!

**JAMES**

Bertie's just furiously muttering. That's effectively an interest free loan for 12 months.

**(laughing)**

0% APR! What a cretin!

**(laughing)**

Put down the glue bag. For goodness sake!

**ALEX**

We'll skip ahead.

**JAMES**

In character Bertie's opinion of Zolf has gone a little, quite substantial notches.

**ALEX**

Funnily enough filling in paperwork and legal battles don't make for great roleplay listening so we might just skip ahead.

**LYDIA**

Speak for yourself! Half of my podcasts are subscriptions to legal roleplay.

**ALEX**

So as you're leaving the naval academy, again, Gerald manages to collar Sasha and pass her another finger food.

**LYDIA**

Alright Gerald, cheers

**ALEX**

I'm so glad everything worked out for you.

**LYDIA**

I've bought a small bottle of spirits to give to Gerald.

**ALEX**

Thanks so much.

**LYDIA**

Thanks for making me so welcome Gerald

**ALEX**

You're very welcome

**LYDIA**

And look at Barnes, unlike a lot of this town.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Do you have a cloak, do you just throw it and [whooshing noise]

**LYDIA**

Not yet. I really want one.

**JAMES**

I love the way you've clearly been keeping a supply of sick burns in your bag of holding as well. Throwing them out wherever.

**ALEX**

Barnes takes the slap [slap noise], as it were. Well that's fair enough. I advise you if you're heading to the continent that you may want to move faster rather than slower. You'll see the nature of the problem we have here in Dover. I wish you nothing...

**BRYN**

It's not like we can take a ship while the storm's still going through it.

**BEN**

We'll take the train.

**BRYN**

Oh yes.

**LYDIA**

Is the train not flooded or anything?

**ALEX**

I'd hurry.

**BEN**

Right I think we need to do a flying visit to the cult before I get flayed alive.

**BRYN**

There won't be another train leaving tonight. We'll have to leave on the morning train.

**BEN**

Cool. Also I wasn't joking about flaying alive. That's a thing that happens.

**BRYN**

Oh

**ALEX**

Safe travels. He closes the door.

**JAMES**

They just call it exfoliation from where I'm from.

**ALEX**

So what's the plan? It is getting on to about 7pm by this point.

**LYDIA**

Celebratory meal, celebratory meal. Lobsters. Lobsters. Lobsters. I know a place, I've met a guy called the Soggy Figurehead. Like usually it's not on the main street, it's round a corner. They serve all the sort of speciality dishes that they don't do for the normal land lovers.

**BRYN**

I'm certainly intrigued but I don't know if Zolf needs to go and see the Navigator now.

**BEN**

Definitely take you up on the meal. I'm impressed that you...

**LYDIA**

Knowledge local. Massive, massive knowledge local. 9 knowledge local.

**BEN**

Yeah for someone who's never left London you've taken to...

**LYDIA**

Yeah I've started meeting people like Gerald and the jailer and everyone's my buddy.

**BEN**

But no I think we should get there. We'll be just in time for the end of the evening ritual so should be a good time to...

**LYDIA**

Ah so we'll get to see some rituals.

**BEN**

Possibly.

**LYDIA**

It's like sightseeing. I've heard about this.

**ALEX**

So heading...heading to the Cult's temple.

**BEN**

Playhouse!

**JAMES**

Just to clarify this, Brutor is in his papoose and as we're going to see the Cult of Poseidon he's wearing his little sailor outfit, not his judge's costume.

**ALEX**

Are you sure you don't want to have some tailored Cult of Poseidon costume for him? I mean that would be the least appropriate I'm sure.

**BRYN**

Incredibly offensive, perfect.

**JAMES**

Yeah that wouldn't...

**BRYN**

Or does Brutor cosplay as Zolf.

**JAMES**

Ooh.

**BRYN**

Apparently he only has two outfits. You have to declare ahead of time if you want others.

**JAMES**

You're right. We've got to take this seriously. You can't just recon new outfits for this pug rottweiler hybrid.

**ALEX**

This is a joke otherwise...otherwise we end up with papooses all over the place. Am I right?

**JAMES**

Yeah

**BRYN**

It is a breed I like to call the progweiller.

**ALEX**

Yeah. So we'll say that you head onwards towards the cliffs. You will know, well it was mentioned previously but the entrance is at the head of the cliffs. There are alternate entrances via sea but for obvious reasons you're probably not going to be going for that one. So you head along and are heading up the cliffs basically through a long slow climb.

**LYDIA**

This rock is so cool, it's like they forgot to colour it in.

**BEN**

It's chalk.

**LYDIA**

Right I didn't know they dug it out of the ground. Is pencils also dug out of the crowd.

**ALEX**

To have this conversation it's so loud and blustery.

**LYDIA**

[Shouting] and what about pens?

**BEN**

The nearest pen mine is miles away.

**LYDIA**

What about paint? Do they dig that out of lakes?

**BEN**

Technically some colours.

**LYDIA**

Oh right, cool.

**ALEX**

As you're heading along you are heading closer and closer and what was once just something in the distance, you maybe got a glimpse is thrown into sharp relief with bolts of lightening and so on. So the cliffs are obviously huge, to anyone who doesn't know by the way. We have listeners who are abroad. The White Cliffs of Dover are really big and white.

**BRYN**

And carved into faces in this world.

**ALEX**

Yeah so in this world there is a huge, huge, almost like a carved mural into the side of one of the cliffs of Dover. Massive sprawling thing. It shows Poseidon in all of his glory, wielding a trident above tempestuous seas with him rescuing with his bare hands some sailors from the ocean.

**BEN**

His trident has bear hands.

**BRYN**

It's basically cross the Colossus of Rhodes with Mount Rushmore.

**ALEX**

Yes exactly. And it is...I cannot stress this enough, massive. Incredibly detailed. It was...there's no possible way it was made not magically. Obviously they had to use magic to do it. In fact they've probably got magic keeping it uneroded and keeping it up.

**BEN**

Yeah chalk's not the best building material.

**LYDIA**

Does the path sort of slightly follow the sculpture so you end up walking up his arm and then into his mouth or something like that?

**ALEX**

Yes! Let's say it does because that's way cooler.

**JAMES**

Ooh. A molehill.

**BRYN**

So I kind of don't ask if Poseidon is compensating for something. I restrain myself from asking that question.

**ALEX**

As you're heading up the path, behind the main thing, you see there are loads of depicted scenes carved even deeper. So from a distance you just see this huge thing and that huge thing is...it's like those images where it's one image made of loads of little images and as you're walking along you're walking past shrine after shrine after shrine after shrine, each of which is depicting Poseidon in his various roles and...

**BEN**

So gaining confidence as we get to the top. Stride right up to the great double doors built into Poseidon's mouth and slam my trident on the gates. The tides part for the faithful.

**ALEX**

At which point [door opening noise] whilst it's chalk it seems unnaturally robust and as it parts you see it's about two foot thick. Slowly swing open.

**LYDIA**

His mouth going to [roaring noise] like James Ross' face.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

And you step into the gaping maw of Poseidon.

**BEN**

As it's opening...

**LYDIA**

Like that tea towel that you have, that image with your...

**JAMES**

Tea towels are available.

**LYDIA**

But just with Poseidon.

**BEN**

It's his cast profile picture on the site so everyone can go and check out your massive mouth.

**LYDIA**

Visual aid

**ALEX**

Your Poseidon looks like James Ross' face on the website.

**JAMES**

If anybody listening would like a tea towel of the Cult of Poseidon...

**(laughing)**

**LYDIA**

Quickly paint over it with a bit of fabric paint.

**BEN**

As the doors open I turn around these guys with a grin on my face like, how cool was that and walk in.

**ALEX**

So stepping in it is very dimly lit with flaming torches and there are two guards, again with tridents, one of which is a dwarf, one of which is a halfling actually. Just because I can see one here for the Poseidon group. Either side of the main door and they effectively cross the tridents until they see yourselves and gesture for you to head in. As you head down it is effectively a tunnel. It's large enough for you to walk all abreast of one another but the natural acoustics of the cave are such that you can hear, as if close but quiet, the sound of the waves crash against the base of the cliffs and there is definite sounds of chanting and incantations and stuff like that. As you head further down, deeper and deeper into the cliff until eventually you reach another pair of doors which appear to be...actually give me an appraise check, Sasha.

**LYDIA**

11 + 8 is 19.

**ALEX**

19. Incredibly expensive and strong. It looks like mithril inlaid with gems, pearls things like that. Again it's the same size as the outer doors. The tunnel widens and you see this huge, what would effectively be almost impenetrable gate which you can see through. It is a filigree gate.

**LYDIA**

Zolf just out of like idle curiosity, is there a curse on all this stuff if it was to be like, you know, taken to other places. I wondered in case of magical powers and stuff. I'm just intrigued really about how spells get...

**BEN**

Sasha. Sasha, this is like still my religion.

**LYDIA**

I'm just interested Zolf. I'm just interested.

**BEN**

Poseidon will mess you up.

**ALEX**

At which points the doors...the gates swing open and the sound of the sea grows slightly louder. I would say that you step forward into the darkness and we'll close the episode there.

**EVERYONE**

Ooh!

**BEN**

Just a man with a wave maker!

**ALEX**

Bit of variety in this one, going from...from single female lawyer to James Ross' face but we're nothing if not...

**JAMES**

Those two things are polar opposites.

**BEN**

Gantran chalk and James Ross

**LYDIA**

But with like a little trident like crown

**JAMES**

Yeah this all sounds good

**LYDIA**

A massive white beard

**JAMES**

Oh I do need a shave.

**ALEX**

On that note. I think we'll close it there. So thanks for listening, we hope you tune in next week. Bye all.

**EVERYONE**

Bye!

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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