

## RQG – Episode 33 – Bon Voyage!

### Content Warnings

- X
- X

### [Show Theme - Intro]

**ALEX**

Hello and welcome to episode 33 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have, in reverse order:

**BEN**

Ben Meredith

**LYDIA**

Lydia Nicholas

**BRYN**

Bryn Monroe

**JAMES**

James Ross

**ALEX**

And who are you playing?

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**BEN**

Zolf Smith

**LYDIA**

Sasha, Sasha

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

I knew one of you would fall!

**LYDIA**

Sasha Rashets

**ALEX**

(laughs)

**LYDIA**

Sasha Racket.

(Applause)

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**BRYN**

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

**JAMES**

Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham

**ALEX**

I admit I thought it was going to be you, Bryn. I really thought it was going to be you.

**LYDIA**

You people with your words and your tongues and your faces and your meat flaps all in the right places!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Not many listeners know, Lydia's forehead – it's just mouth.

**?**

Yep.

**ALEX**

So. Picking up where we left off, we finally made it across to France. Or, what we vaguely...

**EVERYONE**

(Excited talking over each other)

**ALEX**

What we presume is France. There was a coastline involved.

?

Yep.

**JAMES**

France has coasts, I've heard that.

**ALEX**

Admittedly, Bertie got very lost, but getting lost in a train tunnel that has only an entrance and an exit is...

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

A formidable, formidable...

**LYDIA**

It's like a very simple labyrinth.

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**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So, nonetheless, everyone's made it somewhere.

**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

And it's time to pick up where we left off and...

**BEN?**

It'll turn out we're in Jersey, won't it?

**?**

Oh no!

**ALEX**

And got...

**?**

Isle of Wight!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

God forbid, but we might actually get back onto the main quest at some point. We'll see how it goes, anyway. So with that in mind, let's start with the party, i.e. the majority.

**?**

All right.

**ALEX**

You've been on the beach. You managed to get...

**LYDIA**

Yeah, minority voices don't count.

**ALEX**

(laughs) Yeah!

**LYDIA**

They're not worth listening to...

**ALEX**

I like to think Bertie will agree with my choice...

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**JAMES**

Sir Bertie MacGuffingham will endorse that option!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So you manage to get a fire going and bivouac.

**BEN**

Well I walk back with my trident!

**ALEX**

Actually, yeah. Let's go from there.

**BEN**

Oh, you're, you're past there.

**LYDIA**

I'm just passed out under a, like this...

**ALEX**

Wait, didn't you...?

**BEN**

I did.

**ALEX**

Cool!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN**

Looks like I did something right.

**LYDIA**

Snore.

**?**

Well done.

**BEN**

Well, and also, I mean, Sasha's out but, thank you for coming with me. It means a lot.

**LYDIA**

Aw.

**BEN**

You know. (sniffles)

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**BEN**

I don't know how much I helped but that's arguably not the point. OK. Thank you. Anyway, I've got some driftwood for the fire.

**BRYN**

Well, let's start the fire then.

**BEN**

Sure. If you want to do that, I need to deal with the boat.

**BRYN**

Sure.

**BEN**

So I shall take the boat.

**BRYN**

Mm-hm.

**BEN**

And I shall push it reverentially out to sea.

**BRYN**

Mm-hm.

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**BEN**

And just let it float away.

**ALEX**

It appears to get caught in a rip-current of some kind and yeah, it starts pulling back out to sea at, not a particularly hurried pace but, just bobbing out, back out, straight towards the storm, in fairness, but nonetheless it's heading out.

**BEN**

See how we go – oops!

**(Group laughter)**

**?**

Row, row!

**LYDIA**

If we find out that we are in Jersey and we're now trapped...

**?**

Oh, no!

**(Group laughter)**

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**JAMES**

Oh, please let that happen!

**BRYN?**

You know, we get over the beach and there's just more sea and we're on some tiny, undiscovered island!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN?**

If they are on Jersey or the Isle of Wight, that would be amazing. Just, just...

**ALEX**

Don't encourage him!

**?**

It's all right.

**LYDIA**

Or the thing begins to sort of shift and move and it's just one of those giant turtles.

**BEN?**

Aw, nice!

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**JAMES?**

I'd take that, that'd be great!

**ALEX**

And then you find metallic tentacles underneath (screeching sound).

**?**

Oh boy.

**LYDIA**

Aaah!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

It's just, Lydia's face!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So anyway.

**JAMES**

It's not turtles all the way down, it's just Lydia's face.

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**(Group laughter)**

**JAMES**

Again and again. A huge stack!

**LYDIA**

Yeah, fan arts can be delivered on giant postcards!

**ALEX**

So anyway.

**LYDIA**

Soggy ones will be particularly well-appreciated.

**ALEX**

Anyway! We'll skip ahead. You guys spend the night and given the fatigue involved you sleep well despite all of the terribleness. Do any of you set a watch or anything similar?

**EVERYONE**

No!

**LYDIA**

I'm passed out.

**ALEX**

You wake up having not set a watch, with nothing bad happening to you, because you're not in the middle of nowhere, you're still in vaguely the civilised world.

**BEN?**

Well, I think more usefully we *are* in the middle of nowhere where there's no-one around to do something bad to us!

**ALEX**

So nonetheless you wake up.

**BEN?**

What about zombies.

**ALEX**

What do you do?

**BRYN?**

I pack up the bivouac.

**BEN?**

Yeah. Yeah, and put the bits back together.

**LYDIA**

You got your...

**BEN**

I did? Oh, I said it to Hamid last night but you'd passed out. Thank you for coming with me.

**LYDIA**

That's all right. Thanks for diving after me. That was pretty nice, even if I did have to swim after you.

**BEN**

It's the thought that counts.

**LYDIA**

Yeah. And the hovering stepping stone thing that saved our lives that counts as well.

**?**

Also handy, yeah.

**LYDIA**

Ah, does that mean that your god is all right with you now?

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**BEN**

Er, yes. Well.

**BRYN**

He got his trident back, that's probably a good sign.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, these are a lot of good signs.

**BRYN**

Is that your trident or a different trident?

**ALEX?**

How would you tell?

**LYDIA**

A better trident?

**BEN**

It's my trident, right? Or is it a different trident?

**ALEX**

How do you tell?

**BEN**

I'm assuming I'd know my favourite weapon by the bumps and scratches and nicks and sort of like...

**ALEX**

(giggles) There won't be like 'Zolf's trident'!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

But like it's something else...

**BEN**

'Zolf woz 'ere'.

**ALEX**

Yeah! (laughs)

**EVERYONE**

(talking over each other)

**JAMES**

Is the bar code the same?

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**BEN**

Yes!

**JAMES**

The serial number.

**LYDIA**

The second, the one in the middle, it's slightly...

**ALEX?**

It's just 'Zolf 4 Poseidon' and a big heart.

**?**

Ooooooh!

**LYDIA**

It wasn't there before!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN?**

Zolf and Poseidon, sitting in a tree.

**P R A Y I N G!**

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?

That was very clever, well done.

**BEN?**

Thank you.

**ALEX**

Yeah. It's yours. It is clearly yours.

**BEN**

OK, yeah. Yeah, yeah, same one, so...

**LYDIA**

Oh, so [unclear 0:05:32]

**ALEX?**

It did [unclear 0:05:33]. Do you think it won the bet?

**BRYN**

Well, we're not technically in Calais yet.

**ALEX**

We're not in Calais.

**BRYN**

That's a point, actually. We need to find out where we are, and also food.

?

Yes.

**BRYN**

I really need some food. I don't have any in my supplies. Did you guys have food?

**BEN**

I probably will have, it's probably brilliant!

**LYDIA**

Er...

**BEN**

I'll check through my pack, and...

**BRYN**

Anything'd be better than nothing, even if it's a bit soggy.

**BEN**

You'll hear a tirade of swearing and I'll pull out a compass.

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(laughter)

In all the confusion, I forgot I had one of these.

**LYDIA**

Well, like, we wouldn't have been able to steer different anyway, Zolf.

**BEN**

I suppose so. What this does mean, though, is – oh, we'd have to know where Calais was. I look up – is it still at all dark?

**ALEX**

It is morning, as in dawn has broken, you've slept all night. Give me a perception roll? Actually, no.

**?**

Can you see the sun?

**ALEX**

Sorry, give me a...

**BEN**

Survival?

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**ALEX**

Survival roll.

**BEN**

Yep. 17.

**ALEX**

You are likely south of Calais by an indeterminate distance.

**BEN**

All right. So I – looking around – reckon we're south. So if we head north by this, along the coast, we should be able to find it.

**BRYN**

OK.

**BEN**

Might be a walk. I don't know how far we deviated.

**BRYN**

Are you any good at foraging? I'm not much for wilderness skills.

**BEN**

Let's skip breakfast for now, because we might just be next to a village.

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**BRYN**

OK.

**BEN**

So if we walk and then by lunchtime...

**BRYN**

Sure.

**BEN**

You know, if we haven't found anything we'll..

**ALEX**

OK. Cut to: Bertie.

**JAMES**

Bertie is...

**ALEX**

You are currently...

**JAMES**

Bedraggled.

**ALEX**

On the inside of a closed metal gate, having come from the depths of the subway, covered in filth and grime and your armour misshaping your body as a huge hunch. Beside you is what looks like a sailor who's crawling around on all fours, and you've just announced yourself to a place, one presumes Calais, where all of the crowd have screamed and run and the station master has proceeded to scream in your face. We'll pick up at the exact moment that the station master faints.

**LYDIA**

(laughs)

**JAMES**

OK. Are there any other station officials on my side of the barrier?

**ALEX**

No.

**JAMES**

In that case, Bertie searches the station master for keys.

**ALEX**

There are more screams, people running away, and there's...

**(A scream)**

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**LYDIA**

Looks like the undead has come here...

**ALEX**

Yeah!

**LYDIA**

Bedraggled poor man back through...

**BRYN?**

To be fair, in a system where the undead exist, that's not a bad assumption!

**ALEX**

There are screams, there's running, there's people calling out in alarm in the distance, and you're pawing away. Give me a perception check.

**BEN?**

Not one of those!

**JAMES**

19 minus 1 is 18 so...

**ALEX**

You manage to find a key on a chain round his neck. It's the key – it appears to be a master key of some kind.

**JAMES**

Yeah, take it and unlock the gates.

**ALEX**

Once people see that you have opened the gates and are stepping through, open panic starts spreading out in to the station. (more screams) People flee in all directions.

**JAMES**

Steady on. Does anybody here speak English? Anyone? English?

**ALEX**

No-one can hear you over the furore and the noise. There's plenty of people...

**JAMES**

I'll shout louder! Does anybody here speak English? Like, genuinely as loud as I possibly can in order to...

**ALEX**

OK. So, to describe the setting, and then we'll go into what happens?

**JAMES**

Mm-hm. OK.

**ALEX**

It makes the Dover station look like a dump. Huge, vaulted ceilings with frescoes, even though it's sort of industrialised with steel and so on.

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

There's frescoes all over the place. There's gilt edging and so on. There are enormous amounts of what look to be mechanical men. How much travelling has Bertie done?

**JAMES**

A bit. He'll have done like, the grand tour – oh no, he won't have done the grand tour because...

**ALEX**

Yeah, obviously.

**JAMES**

Rome is a crater.

**(Group laughter)**

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**JAMES**

He'll have done a bit but not an enormous amount.

**ALEX**

You'll be seeing a lot of mechanical men who you'll be aware of are a thing in Paris now.

**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

The people panicking and fleeing are – it's an incredibly cosmopolitan lot.

**JAMES**

Mm.

**ALEX**

Every race, every creed, all fleeing in all directions!

**JAMES**

All running in fear. Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham is loving that!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

The only ones who don't seem to be fleeing are the mechanical men, who proceed to continue about their tasks, mutely doing exactly what they always do, carrying luggage and loading it on...

**JAMES**

Can the mechanical men understand language – language instructions?

**ALEX**

I'd say that you haven't looked into it enough to know.

**LYDIA**

They're all oiks.

**JAMES**

Mechanical oiks!

**ALEX**

The thing is though, sometimes they check it isn't...

**LYDIA?**

Do they understand any more than a peasant? Who knows? Who cares?  
Should loud enough and it has the same effect.

**JAMES**

OK.

**ALEX**

So, yeah, you, people are still fleeing and a couple of people hear the yelling and so on but there's just too much confusion.

**JAMES**

Fair enough. In that case, I think as people are fleeing and they're fleeing away from him, I think Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham is going to don his armour once again because, like, he looks an absolute mess, so...

**ALEX**

OK.

**JAMES**

So in order to make himself look a bit fancier and more presentable.

**ALEX**

You don your armour and squelch it on and squelch your shoes on, squelch your boots on, squelch your arms in.

**LYDIA**

Ah, so you're all muddy inside.

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**ALEX**

The gauntlets...

**JAMES**

He's taken his normal clothes that he was wearing a moment ago, it's like day clothes, off, and put the armour on.

**ALEX**

You were still wading through water up to your waste and it was on your back.

**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Yeah, it's vile. (laughs)

**JAMES**

OK.

**ALEX**

It's squelching when you walk.

**LYDIA**

Stripping in the middle of Paris station.

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**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

Finally...

**JAMES**

Calais.

**LYDIA**

Calais.

**ALEX**

Finally, once you have all of your armour donned, you see in the time that it's taken a police force has arrived at the entrances to the station and they've begun cordoning it off. They're fully kitted out, the equivalent of riot shields...

**JAMES**

Yes.

**ALEX**

Short swords...

**JAMES**

I.e. shields.

**ALEX**

Well, yeah.

**(Group laughter)**

*Power shields*

**JAMES**

OK.

**ALEX**

There you go. So they've built a, like a shield barricade, there's also like, what look like automatic crossbows, the whole nine yards.

**JAMES**

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**ALEX**

They're all there ready to go. The response is fairly quick. Genuinely impressive. But nonetheless you are optionless...

**JAMES**

Right, maybe *you* speak English!

**ALEX**

There's a moment of hesitation. A man, again in full armour and so on, steps forward and goes:

Hello, yes?

**JAMES**

Hello, I – hello.

**ALEX**

Hello.

**JAMES**

Hello.

**ALEX**

Who are you?

**JAMES**

I am Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham. Now, the train has broken down. I took it upon myself to heroically send for help and here I am, asking for help. Now, down there in the tunnel are stranded passengers, hm? Yes.

**ALEX**

He nods.

**JAMES**

Are you the appropriate authority?

**ALEX**

Let's say yes.

**JAMES**

Very well.

**ALEX**

He's just looking at you, still confused.

**JAMES**

There is a broken down train lodged partway through that tunnel. I would ask you to send help, send the appropriate engineers.

**ALEX**

He takes a moment, confers with someone, comes back.

You will wait here.

And then he strides off. The cordon remains, although a lot of the support, so archers and so on...

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**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Kind of head off and you're just left with, I don't know, 20 guards, let's say.

Time...

**BEN?**

You can take them!

**ALEX**

Time passes.

**JAMES**

How much time passes?

**ALEX**

About half an hour.

**LYDIA**

In your squelchy, muddy gear.

**JAMES**

Yeah, getting quite irritated with this.

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Excuse me. Do any of *you* speak English?

**ALEX**

There's a lot of frowning looks and then eventually one of them pipes up:

Yes. But we're probably not meant to be speaking to you so...

**JAMES**

I'm in rather a hurry, you know.

**ALEX**

So, yeah.

**JAMES**

Got business to attend to. Now, I've done my best, coming here to report that you have a broken down train. Now I would say that it's very much your responsibility to resolve that matter.

**ALEX**

He looks a bit out of his depth. Turns to the others and then they just, he just clams up.

**JAMES**

Hello?

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**ALEX**

Just nothing.

**JAMES**

You were the one who was speaking a moment ago, hm?

**ALEX**

He's just still sitting there...

**JAMES**

I can tell it was you! It was definitely you!

**ALEX**

He looks really uncomfortable, and that's about it.

**JAMES**

Youuuuuuuuuuuuu!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Cut to: the rest of the party. You have managed to walk enough along the coast. Yeah, you encounter a small village.

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**BRYN**

Ah, thank goodness, we can get like, a sausage or something!

**ALEX**

What's more is, having a look at it, it appears to be fairly opulent. It's not big but there's probably, it looks like there's a farm estate nearby. Who speaks French?

**BRYN**

Yep.

**LYDIA**

Oui, bonjour, I speak like trash French.

**(Group laughter)**

Like, inner city, I speak *gang* signs basically.

**ALEX**

Tell you what...

**BEN?**

Parlez-vous trash Francais?

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**ALEX**

In English, what would you say in French as a hello in your trash French.

**LYDIA**

All right, mate?

**ALEX**

Yeah, sure.

**LYDIA**

Eh, guv?

**(Group laughter)**

Have you got any nice nibbles for us? Like, I sound more Cockney.

**BRYN**

We're looking for a pleasant meal, if that's a thing you could possibly arrange for us?

**ALEX**

So...

**LYDIA**

We can't actually understand each other!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So, skipping ahead, we'll say...

**LYDIA**

If there's any urchins, they look from one to the other and then depending on the social classes...

**ALEX**

We'll say there's a grocer's open, it's early but yeah, they're open and they have a much easier time dealing with Hamid than dealing with Sasha!

**LYDIA**

All right, guv! We've just come up the apples and pears – I don't know much rhyming slang...

**(Group laughter)**

But essentially the French equivalent of rhyming slang.

**ALEX**

Sure. Deduct what you deem an appropriate amount. We're skipping ahead a bit here.

**BEN?**

A few silvers, would that be...

**ALEX**

Yeah, sure. They'll provide you with some food. Furthermore, there is an inn in the middle and what's really interesting is, this'll be, it'd be really rare for Sasha in London, there are a number of what can only be called sort of automobiles.

**?**

Ohhh!

**ALEX**

So, they appear to be electrically run, same as the train, same principle, but nonetheless there appear to be two *very* flash-looking cars out front. Think Chitty Chitty Bang Bang on steroids.

**LYDIA**

What's, so, like is that why, where's the horse? What's going on?

**BRYN**

It's an automatic vehicle. It powers itself.

**LYDIA**

Where's... So there's a small horse, inside?

**BRYN**

No. Magic.

**LYDIA**

A magic horse?

**BEN**

But I have heard that it has the power of 15 horses.

**BRYN**

Some of them as many as 20 or 30!

**BEN**

Oh!

**LYDIA**

But small horses. So like 20 tiny...

**BEN**

No, I think that they, like, they were talking about with the train, it's the lightning elemental?

**BRYN**

Yeah, they harness...

**ALEX**

I love that Bertie's killing himself to win this bet and you guys are just, like, oh it's nice here, isn't it, yeah. What's that, it's really interesting, let's discuss the nuances of that!

**BEN?**

Yes, let's all discuss about this!

**JAMES?**

Tomorrow's World!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

Oh, I forgot, did you ask where Calais was?

**BEN**

Yes!

**BRYN**

Where is it?

**BEN**

That way.

**ALEX**

There's a quite obvious sign that says Calais.

**BEN**

Even I can read that!

**BRYN**

I don't know if we should walk, or hire horses, or...

**BEN**

Is there...

**BRYN**

Maybe someone in one of these vehicles could give us a...

**LYDIA**

Can take the tiny horse car?

**BRYN**

Well, is there one of those distance markers?

**ALEX**

So there's a distance stone.

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**BRYN**

Ah, OK.

**ALEX**

Down beside it and it's Calais is...

**BRYN**

And it's in kilometres!

**EVERYONE**

Nooooooooo!

**BRYN**

We've no idea what...

**JAMES?**

You speak French so presumably you know what a kilometre is.

**BRYN**

So, I...

**LYDIA**

You don't necessarily know – I wouldn't know the measurements.

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**BRYN**

I studied mathematics at university!

?

Ah, yes!

**BRYN**

For most of a year.

?

Before you got bored.

**BRYN**

Not with very much effort but, you know.

**ALEX**

It is 20 kilometres.

**BRYN**

That's actually not too far.

**LYDIA**

Right, can we hire the sparky tiny horse car then?

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**BEN**

We can ask in probably some rich person's personal...

**BRYN**

Yeah, probably a private vehicle, I would think, but we can see...

**BEN**

Yeah?

**BRYN**

What the, we can ask in the tavern and...

**LYDIA**

I can deal with that. If that's the obstacle.

**BRYN**

I don't think that would be a good way to make a first impression in a new country, Sasha.

**LYDIA**

Whether they know, is whether it makes an impression.

**BEN**

I was in custody yesterday. So, let's not steal the shiny very expensive car.

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**LYDIA**

Fine.

**BEN**

But if we can hire it for not too much money, we could do that.

**BRYN**

Well then let's ask, let's ask in the tavern.

**LYDIA**

The sulkiest face.

**BRYN**

Say we're trying to get to Calais.

**LYDIA**

I look like Brutor right now. Ooh, grrr.

**BRYN**

And ask what the quickest way is. If anyone has any...

**BEN**

There might be a train!

**BRYN**

Horses to hire or anything like that.

**ALEX**

So. What do you do?

**BRYN**

Go into the tavern and ask, say you know, hello, we're travellers trying to get to Calais. We'd like to hire transportation if that's possible, what would be the quickest way, if anyone could...

**LYDIA**

It's a good thing that I'm so sulky that I don't ask, because if they heard my French...

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**LYDIA**

They would not want to put anything expensive my way.

**ALEX**

Sure.

**LYDIA**

Like, this is just what we use trading in the underground.

**ALEX**

So we will cut to Bertie, a bit of time has passed, we'll say that you are inside effectively a customs consultation room.

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

Sat with the station master. They've already sent some engineers down but at this point a couple of hours have passed, again. So for *you*, you're looking at, it's early morning as well.

**JAMES**

Right.

**ALEX**

Because you've been going through the night, crawling through filth, you haven't slept, you've been going through water, you're just in the worst state.

**JAMES**

Bertie will be grumpy!

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**BRYN**

How did we end up better off at the other end of this trip than Bertie? How did that happen!

**BEN**

Mm, we were just wet!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

We just got wet! I was thinking about...

**JAMES**

I'm wet and soiled.

**?**

Yeah, very soiled.

**ALEX**

So the station master going over and over and over, and he actually speaks very good English and so on, so it's not, there's no translation problems.

So you're telling me that you re-routed the train?

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**JAMES**

Yes, I re-routed the train!

**ALEX**

Who gave you permission to re-route a train?

**JAMES**

Destiny gave me the permission, young man, and that is all the permission that I require!

**ALEX**

And who is Destiny, who's she?

**JAMES**

Destiny? Destiny is the engine that drives history forward! The powerful spirit, hm?

**ALEX**

So you're saying that you, you redirected the train with no permission?

**JAMES**

Correct!

**ALEX**

OK, that's, right.

**JAMES**

It was a survival situation. Comprises had to be made, hm?

**ALEX**

So where are the rest of the passengers?

**JAMES**

They are with the train?

**ALEX**

So why did you redirect the train?

**JAMES**

The train remains in the same place.

**ALEX**

OK.

He's just taking some notes.

What capacity are you here in?

**JAMES**

Hero.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

The customs officer looks utterly confused and exasperated in equal measures.

**JAMES**

I was sending for help. I have now done that, I believe my duty here has been discharged. Now if you wish to waste any more of my time, I charge very sensible hourly rates as a mercenary, if I can issue with a rate card...

**ALEX**

Well, given that you have arrived here with no prior knowledge, we have no way to guarantee that what you've said is actually the truth, we have to send some people to verify, you're going to have to wait here, there's not a lot we can do, I mean do you even have a ticket?

**JAMES**

I paid for first class passage along..

And then at this point I'm going to start with a combination, I think probably intimidate to try and get me out of this, because I'm going to be playing the angry customer.

**ALEX**

Sure.

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**JAMES**

Because I was promised a first class trip.

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

And that has not happened.

**JAMES**

No. I am not pleased. Shall I roll first?

**ALEX**

Go for it.

**JAMES**

Pomp and pageantry.

**ALEX**

Yeah, sure, sure.

**JAMES**

I'm furious! 20.

**(Group uproar)**

**ALEX?**

Every time!

**BRYN?**

Every time Bertie wants something.

**ALEX!**

Every time!

**LYDIA**

The story wants him to not notice which way is up and to shout his way through.

**BEN?**

Do you have dice privilege?

**JAMES**

Maybe. Maybe I do.

**ALEX**

Question: is Pathfinder right-wing? Let us know!

**(Group laughter)**

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Go for it, bully your way through the situation.

### **JAMES**

Now. I, Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham, of the House MacGuffingham, a name whose name echoes down the ages with the coruscating fire of British indomitability, have been held up – I have paid for a first class ticket and that comes with certain expectations for levels of service. Firstly, a train that works. Secondly, elements that bend to the will of man!

**(Group laughter)**

Thirdly, politeness at all times and fourthly, egress from this infuriatingly bijou little cubby-hole which you deem a station! I must say that if this is in any way representative of the quality of France then I have been much disappointed. I would annex yourselves to Belgium in humble submission. You pathetic little worm.

**(Group laughter)**

I will be leaving now, sir! Good day!

And Bertie leaves, taking the station master's hat from the hat stand, putting it on his head and walking out.

### **ALEX**

You can take the hat stand. The door is currently locked. The station master:

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I do apologise, I'm so sorry...

**LYDIA**

He rams into the door.

**ALEX**

So he's just rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr, and then passes it off as a:

You will open this for me.

**JAMES**

You will open this door for me or I will open this door for myself, and I shall not be using the handle!

**ALEX**

He, er...

**JAMES**

You see this hat? This is only the first thing that is associated with you in any way that will be violently leaving this room.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So the station master faffing with his key, he's coming over and opening the door.

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I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. If you can just pass me the ticket, we'll take that as verification and we'll reimburse you the difference!

And he's opening the lock. There's obviously a couple of guards outside.

**JAMES**

I was not given a ticket at the...

**ALEX**

No you were not, you bribed your way onto that train.

**(Group laughter)**

**JAMES**

And a natural 20 doesn't like...

**ALEX**

There are limits.

**LYDIA**

Very convinced.

**ALEX**

He's willing to pay you back your money, you can walk out without having to deal with any of the actual legal rigmarole, all you have to do is provide a ticket.

**JAMES**

Sir, I have no idea how things run in France but in Britain, hmm? The greatest nation the world has ever seen! A gentleman's word is his bond. I have given you my word, sir, and I would dare you to countermand it!

At this point he is literally one inch from his face. He is furious, Bertie is red in the face, that little bit of him that can be seen underneath the filth. Brutor is growling, grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr, while wearing a lopsided wig...

**LYDIA**

That looks more like tentacles.

**JAMES**

It looks more like tentacles. It's got the added element, not only is he physically intimidating but Brutor's kind of like gender-flipping, he's really disquieting, this like extremely cis-gendered station master.

**ALEX**

As the station master...

**(Group laughter)**

**JAMES**

He's got a bit of gender panic is what I'm saying, that's what Brutor's adding to proceedings.

**ALEX**

So as the station master just openly panics, we'll take a break there and come back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. I think we'll jump across to the party in the village. Currently, you entered the inn looking for...

**BRYN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

It's immediately apparent who owns the cars. There are two extremely elderly women dressed up to the nines – furs, hats, the whole lot, racing goggles, big flappy caps, and they're being incredibly loud and boisterous by the car – by the bar, sorry, in English.

I tell you, I'm going to beat you on the next leg!

No, you won't, Doris, I've got your number!

Oh, you're so funny!

They're sloshed. They are completely annihilated on alcohol. They can barely stand.

**LYDIA**

Sort of seems like Bertie's remit.

**BEN**

Well, I don't know, Hamid can be a very charming young man sometimes.

**LYDIA**

Do you think you'd get them to let us come on their road...?

**BRYN**

Well, if you really think that's the best option, rather than just hiring a horse...

**(Group laughter)**

Let's get two drunk old women to drive us!

**LYDIA**

I want tiny sparky horse car!

**?**

I am, I'm indifferent but...

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**LYDIA**

It'll get us there faster so Zolf can win his bet and then Bertie'll shut up.

**BEN?**

(sniggers) And is that not ultimately the most important thing.

**JAMES**

This is like Bertie level of prioritisation!

**(Group laughter)**

It's a possible worse. Anyway.

**LYDIA**

I want the sparky horse car!

**BRYN**

I'll see what I can do!

**ALEX?**

She's been learning from you!

**BRYN**

Ladies, it's so wonderful to hear a friendly voice!

**ALEX**

Hello lovelies!

At which point they reach out and grab you and pull you straight in.

Oh, he's nice, isn't he? I know! Ooh, look at his little cheeks, he's very well dressed, ooh, I know, where did you get that!

**BRYN**

I flirt. I roll a 24.

**ALEX**

Oh. You didn't need to roll!

**(Group laughter)**

You really didn't need to roll. They are all over Hamid in a heartbeat.

Oh, he's very nice, isn't he? Oh, what are you doing here? You speak very good English. Why are you here? Did you see our cars outside? Bet you'd like a ride in that, eh, everyone wants a ride...

And they just go on, and on...

**LYDIA**

Are they human?

**ALEX**

They are probably human. They are so tiny with it, there's a moment of...

**LYDIA**

They could be half-halflings.

**ALEX**

See, they're that dressed up, probably like there's a good chance they might be half-halfling.

**LYDIA**

They might be gnomes.

**ALEX**

They're so – they're definitely not gnomish. But they're...

**LYDIA**

Oh.

**ALEX**

Quite possibly half-halfling. It kind of all starts to blur.

**LYDIA**

Can that happen?

**ALEX**

Yeah.

**LYDIA**

Like in a range of heights.

**BEN?**

Allegedly in Pathfinder any two races can be combined.

**LYDIA**

You could have halfling-auk.

**BEN?**

Mm-hm. Hawkling.

**?**

Mm!

**BEN?**

It's quite rare. Yep.

**ALEX**

It's incredibly rare, but yeah. Anyway. So yeah, they're all over you in a heartbeat.

**BRYN**

Yeah, I will gently work into the conversation that myself and my two travelling companions are looking to get to Calais swiftly.

**ALEX**

So they go, ooh, you've only just missed us, we actually just came from Calais, we're on an ongoing race, leg 16, you're winning aren't you Doris? Only by a little bit but I'll get you soon. Oh, honestly, Sandra's been beating me in the race the rest of the way from here last year but I think we've got it this year.

And she's going on, and on, and on..

**LYDIA**

When I hear the bit that they've left Calais, like my little face falls. And I and Zolf have not been prestidigitated, our clothes, so we still look...

**BEN**

Sodden.

**LYDIA**

Sodden, and...

**BEN**

We're probably dried off.

**LYDIA**

Well, like rat-tail hair, sort of dripping on and everything is just... Because I was in *leather*.

**(Group aww and squeaking sounds)**

Yeah. I'm not having fun.

?

Quite chafing

**BRYN**

I will play on their desire for competition.

**LYDIA**

I wasn't in *tight* leather, though, it was practical.

**BRYN**

And try and persuade them that they could have much more fun racing each other back to Calais. And I will drop into the conversation that we're meeting a friend there who is a...

**LYDIA**

Knight.

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**BRYN**

Very eligible young man and a Knight of the Realm.

**ALEX**

Give it a roll? Just diplomacy.

**LYDIA**

Ooh.

**BRYN**

15.

**ALEX**

15, it's – they're certainly interested, going ooh, it's a good point, he's got a good point, ooh, I do like a round, but honestly, I mean, it's just not got quite the sense of adventure, I mean, as it is, the two in one car and one in the other, I'm not quite sure, I mean, you're doing a good job, son...

They're quite aware of what you're trying to do at this point. They're quite happy to play along, they're just going to make you work for it!

**LYDIA**

We're talking about, like...

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**BRYN**

Saucer eyes.

**LYDIA**

Big saucer dish eyes that I'm looking up at them.

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN**

I have ordered a drink.

**LYDIA**

Just, quivering. I mean, maybe you've ordered me a drink, but I've just...

**BEN**

That's a point actually. Could I...?

**LYDIA**

Got my hand around it but I'm looking at them and I haven't sipped any of it.

**BEN**

By the bye, can I buy either of you ladies a drink?

**ALEX**

Ooooooh, look at him, he's as good as the first one, isn't he!

They pull you in (pulling sound).

**BEN**

He's sodden and disgusting. Is that...

**ALEX**

Oh yeah.

**BEN**

OK. They're not fussy.

**BRYN**

OK. Weather happens!

**ALEX**

They are so far gone.

**BEN**

I will look at you and my face just drops, it's like Ohh, no!

**ALEX**

Oh, look at him what's with this beard, ooh, look at that, how do you learn to plait that, honestly, I've never seen a plaited beard like – you're a Poseidon

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one, aren't you? Oh, I've seen them, haven't I? Did you hear that Poseidon one from Carl A?

**BEN**

Er...

**ALEX**

And they just go on.

**BEN**

Drink?

**ALEX**

Oooh! And then, yeah. In fact, I think they end up buying it for you.

**BEN**

OK. I can...

**ALEX**

They're so loaded and just in every sense of the word actually, now I think about it, and...

**BRYN?**

Alcohol, money and vim!

**ALEX**

Just, they're full of life, these girls. So, we will cut back to Bertie with the station master just wetting himself, going:

I don't know what to tell you sir. Er, I'd actually be breaking the law. I mean, do you have anyone who could vouch for you? This is more than my job, I'd get locked up!

**JAMES**

The station master who allowed me egress is currently in Dover.

**ALEX**

OK. Would you be willing to wait just the ten minutes it takes to send a message to the other side?

**JAMES**

Ten minutes. Ten minutes, oooh. Um...

**ALEX**

We'd already be almost done! (nervous laugh).

**JAMES**

Very well. You may remain in this office while you send that message.

**ALEX**

I – OK.

He sort of talks with one of the guards, gives them a word and he sort of gives a frown, passes them a note and then the station master closes the door, locks it and sits incredibly awkwardly at the table with you.

**JAMES**

I also require the name of the best hotel in Calais.

**ALEX**

Most expensive or sort of most hip and happening?

**JAMES**

Most expensive.

**ALEX**

Oh, that'd be, it's a bit of a stupid name, they call it 'C'est', as in 'C'est le train'.

**JAMES**

As in – ah, right, very well.

**ALEX**

Er, it's very new. It's all the range with all of the people doing the European trip.

**JAMES**

Mm. Very well. I wish to send a telegram to both that hotel and the other hotel which you're about to mention – blah, blah, blah, essentially Bertie now takes time to send telegrams to make reservations for the best suite in the two respective hotels.

**ALEX**

Sure. OK, you, the telegrams are getting sent. Cut back to: the party with the old biddies, who are having a whale of a time. They've now pulled Sasha and are just trying to get her to wear spurs and stuff. They're not really listening, the subject's starting to veer away a little bit.

**LYDIA**

So like does it, do they go fast, how many horses do you have inside?

**ALEX**

Oh, you don't put horses in them, dear, but I tell you what you do have. You do have elementals, ooh, elementals, oh it's been a long time, do you remember when we didn't have elementals? I do...

And they start dressing you up, basically, in their clothes, going, ooh, you do look good in that!

**BEN**

But Hamid, if we don't leave soon we'll lose the bet.

**ALEX**

Utter silence.

What? He said a bet. Yeah, did he Sandra? He did, Doris.

**BEN**

One of us was...

**BRYN**

We made a bet to race our friend, the one I mentioned, Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham.

**ALEX**

Oh, yeah, I remember him, ooh!

**BRYN**

We're racing to Calais.

**BEN**

So he took the train and we took the boat.

**ALEX**

So it's a...

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**BRYN**

The boat didn't go very well.

**ALEX**

An underdog?

**BRYN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

Oooh.

**LYDIA**

Very much so. Like totally underdog, the lowest dog.

**BEN**

Some might even say hangdog.

**ALEX**

Mm. Well, who are we to leave good fellow countrymen in the need when they have a bet!

And they start standing up and putting their furs on, pulling their goggles down, just...

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**BRYN**

Also they are *wasted*.

**ALEX**

Well, yeah!

**BEN**

Oh yeah, but the drink-driving in this time...

**LYDIA**

There's no-one else on the road!

**BEN**

Because usually the horse does it for them!

**BRYN**

Drink-driving limits aren't just for the protection of other road – it's not just arbitrary limit that's set...

**BEN**

No, what I mean is...

**LYDIA**

Yeah but this is...

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**BEN**

If you're drunk-driving a carriage, the horse still is a horse so if this is really new technology...

**LYDIA**

And also like they didn't...

**ALEX**

All right!

**LYDIA**

They didn't have driving lessons for the first few decades of there being cars.

**ALEX**

Yep.

**LYDIA**

And even though they were really, really slow, people died in *droves*.

**BEN**

Oh I'm not, I'm not...

**?**

All ours were made of wood for a start!

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**(All talking over each other)**

**?**

Hydrogen!

**BEN?**

I agree it's a terrible idea...

**JAMES?**

Yep.

**BEN?**

But it may not necessarily occur to the carriages

**LYDIA**

I'd like to...

**BRYN**

All I'm saying is that I think if these guys succeed without any crashes that's sending a very poor message about drink-driving to our listeners.

**JAMES**

Are you just doing this to win the bet?

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**BRYN**

No!

**ALEX**

So, they start...

**JAMES**

Yeah!

**BRYN**

Well, that's that bluff checked!

**JAMES**

I... believe you.

**ALEX**

So, the two old women start staggering out and one's helping the other up, going:

Oh, honestly, you're never going to win like that!

And then they're going and as they start climbing out towards the cars and pulling you in, they're arguing over who gets...

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**BRYN**

Do you have a pure poison spell, or anything like that?

**BEN**

I may do? I won't have prepared it.

**BRYN**

Ah, never mind then.

**ALEX**

They are arguing over who gets to keep Hamid and who gets to keep Zolf. I'm afraid they're not arguing so much over Sasha.

**LYDIA**

Ohhhhh.

**ALEX**

But nonetheless, they're happy to have you, but they're, basically they agree that one of them can have Hamid and one of them can have Zolf. And Sasha gets to go where she likes.

**BRYN**

I try and persuade them to let me go in the less inebriated...

**ALEX**

There's not a lot in it. As it is, they've started talking, they've forgotten that they're meant to be setting off and they're now arguing the terms of their own sub-bet for who's going to make it to Calais.

**BRYN**

Shouldn't we be off?

**ALEX**

Off! Yes!

At which point, they pull the stopper and it's like, oh, right, neutral, oh, hang on, stall, oh hang on, (vroom vroom)...

**LYDIA**

This is amazing!

**(Car screeching sounds)**

**ALEX**

And they just go like zero to sixty as fast as they can, kind of speed. Obviously, you're not getting that kind of speed, you're getting a bit, like they're peaking out at about 30 miles an hour, something like that.

**BRYN**

They're peaking out at very fast.

**ALEX**

Oh, the acceleration's incredible!

**LYDIA**

Oh wow, and this is all tiny horses!

**ALEX**

And they just, they're off and they're screeching...

**BRYN**

I've slipped my things so I'm now perfectly attired for driving, wearing a miniature version of basically the driving outfit that the two old women are wearing.

**JAMES?**

You're not now dressed like a crash test dummy?

**ALEX**

Foolish, foolish. You're driving with Doris. Doris sees you, takes her hands off the wheel, turns to you and goes:

Ooooh! (patting sounds)

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And you begin to careen wildly. She manages to just pull it under control. You are hitting wheels occasionally, scraping one another, one of you's up against the wall (screeching sounds), and then back down onto the road.

?

It's Gumball Rally!

**BRYN**

But with old British women.

**LYDIA**

(sings)

?

There's a...

**LYDIA**

I think I've got the tune for this.

?

But that's just the circuses.

**LYDIA**

That's...

**BRYN**

Do you just suppose they really want to go to the circus?

**LYDIA**

Subconsciously.

**ALEX**

But nonetheless, it's a nightmare. There's a brief period where you both go over like a small little rustic stone bridge, you're getting air, it's like parts of the car are getting left behind on the way, the women aren't noticing.

Cut back to: Bertie. So, the guardsmen come in and the station master comes back and goes:

Um, so yes, the station master has confirmed that he did let you on the train. Given this, we'll accept that what you're saying is probably true, OK? So, we'll let you go and that's fine and we will – do you have a contact number, maybe, that we could chase this up to give you... thanks! For your services.

**JAMES**

A contact number?

**ALEX**

Sort of, an address for instance.

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**JAMES**

Oh! Blah blah blah, gives the address of **old boden**.

**ALEX**

OK. Anything in-country at all?

**JAMES**

No!

**ALEX**

(pause) OK! Right.

At which point he opens the door. The guards look very questioning and the station master looks incredibly shamefaced as he proceeds to let you out of the customs room.

**JAMES**

Now, I require a cab to the best hotel.

**ALEX**

The – yep, the cab rank is just outside if you, I'll send someone.

And yeah, he sends one of the guards, who raises his eyebrows, he's a burly muscular guy who thinks he can take you. He's not very happy with the situation but he goes, there's another wait.

**JAMES**

Bertie stares him down, because he's furious. Like, at this point he's just doing, if there was a bollard standing there, then Bertie would attempt to intimidate it, he is that angry.

**ALEX**

Well, the guard heads off. He takes a while. He's clearly deliberately taking his time just to rile you up. He comes back maybe 15 minutes later, for what was a two-minute walk. Sort of speaks in French to his station master.

He apologises for the wait, it's just very busy, what with everyone trying to leave the station at once.

**JAMES**

(grinding sound)

**ALEX**

Beetroot red.

**JAMES**

Like little puffs of steam.

**(Group laughter)**

I'm still like damp and soiled.

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OK. So do I now have a cab?

**ALEX**

You can now head out to the station and yeah, there will be a cab waiting for you.

**JAMES**

I take the cab and once I have arrived at the hotel that I am arriving at, at the front desk I shall send a telegram.

**ALEX**

Heading to the cab?

**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

It is an automated cab.

**JAMES**

Right.

**ALEX**

You don't have them in London.

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**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

There is a sort of nominal cabbie in the front.

**JAMES**

Mm-mm.

**ALEX**

Again, it is effectively robotic. It is a large brass affair, the cab, there are no horses attached to it, but there is the sort of simulation of a cabbie but the whole thing, reins that don't really go to anything.

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

And as you step in there's a speaker which just has sort of a grill into it where you can speak your destination. It has a bit of trouble with you given the fact that you have a heavy English accent whenever you're trying to say anything in French...

**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

But it sets off!

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

And you start heading off. We'll cut back to everyone racing in the cars.

**LYDIA**

Wheeeeeeee!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN**

I'm just keeping my head down and trying not to die.

**ALEX**

Yeah, you're powering ahead.

**LYDIA**

[unclear 0:36:14] over 20 and still can and Hamid's seasickness. So are we really doing it?

**ALEX**

So there's groaning and banging and they're pulling on the sides and then finally you crest another blind hill right into a horse and carriage which is coming in the opposite direction. The car which has Sasha and Zolf in, which is driven by Sandra, suddenly:

Ooh!!

She does a wild steer and (rolls dice) ooh, you got lucky. She manages to twist off to the right, off onto the grass verge on the far side of this blind hill and just spins out completely. You hear snaps of various pieces of mechanics breaking...

**LYDIA**

Amazing! This is amazing!

**ALEX**

And it just pulls to a stop on a sort of gravel spit and bumps up against the road.

**LYDIA**

Again! Again!

**BRYN**

Er...

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**LYDIA**

Do it again. Do it again.

**BRYN**

That wasn't supposed to happen, was it?

**ALEX**

Oh! If I had words – oh!

Doris is like, oh-oh! Looks like someone's going to lose!

And then drives off. Just...

**BRYN**

That's Doris with Hamid.

**ALEX**

Doris with Hamid, just, just guns it off.

**BEN**

Win the bet for us!

**ALEX**

And yeah, still careering wildly all over the place. Your car, there is crackles of lighting coming from the front, at which point she goes...

**LYDIA**

Oh, is that the horses?

**ALEX**

I think we should probably...

**BEN**

Yep.

**ALEX**

Step back.

Grabs you and sort of starts stumbling away.

Do you like fireworks?

**LYDIA**

Yes!

**ALEX**

You'll love this!

At which point she backs over the hill and just kind of pokes her head over.

**LYDIA**

Three...

**ALEX**

At which point there's a (big fizzing crash). The front of the car just bursts open.

**LYDIA**

Wow!

**ALEX**

There's a brief flash for a moment of what looks like a furious, furious creature made of sort of light and lightning and smoke and it's about the size of, about the size of Sasha, so it's not huge, but it looks furious. Utterly furious. Sparks of lightning fly out, it scorches some of the stone work, one of the trees bursts into flame. And then it just dissipates instantly.

**LYDIA**

Ah, that's amazing, do you have another one?

**ALEX**

(tiredly) No. No.

**LYDIA**

Oh.

**ALEX**

That would be another car!

**LYDIA**

Oh, sorry about that.

**ALEX**

Ah well, these things happen.

She reaches in and gets her hip flask.

Nip?

**LYDIA**

Oh yeah, cheers!

**ALEX**

And she just proceeds to sit on the hill with you and drink.

**BEN**

Right, er, I guess we're hitchhiking our way to Calais then!

**ALEX**

Eh, could be worse!

**BEN**

Well, yes, it was!

**(Group laughter)**

It was.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Cut back to Bertie. The carriage has been going for a while. There's a lot of traffic slowing you down. And finally you pull up at what looks like quite a run-down hotel and outside it appears to be called The Chest or something similar.

**JAMES**

So not C'est like I asked for?

**(Group laughter)**

Modern technology, they say!

**ALEX**

It just goes, and there is a voice from the speaker going:

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You've arrived. You've arrived. You've arrived.

**JAMES**

Bertie gets out...

**ALEX**

You've arrived.

**JAMES**

Bertie gets out of the cab.

**ALEX**

The cabbie – the sort of automated cabbie just turns out and holds out a sort of automated hand.

**JAMES**

Is currency universal in this? I mean, if I paid him in gold that would work?

**ALEX**

Currency is universal for the sake of my sanity.

**JAMES**

Fair enough. OK, in that case I pay whatever was the appropriate amount, let's say one gold, is that...?

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**ALEX**

Yeah, that's enough. He sort of takes it. (snaffling sounds) Pulls away. You're now in a fairly run-down part of Calais.

**JAMES**

Right, I go up to the front desk.

**ALEX**

There is a overweight halfling man sat behind the desk, bored and reading a book.

**JAMES**

Excuse me.

**ALEX**

Non.

**JAMES**

Hello?

**ALEX**

Non.

Carries on reading his book.

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**JAMES**

Bertie pounds the desk. Very hard.

**ALEX**

Give me a strength check?

**JAMES**

17 + 3 is 20.

**ALEX**

You snap the desk. Not completely in train but (cracking sound) there is a crack running down. Now he's listening.

**JAMES**

In exactly the same tone and volume as before and the level of eye contact has not changed. Bertie has not broken eye contact with the person not looking at him...

**ALEX**

Sure.

**JAMES**

While doing this, he's punched the desk, it's collapsed.

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**ALEX**

He's looking now.

**JAMES**

Excuse me.

**ALEX**

Where?

**JAMES**

Is the Hotel C'est?

**ALEX**

Non.

**JAMES**

Where is the Hotel C'est?

**ALEX**

He kind of just takes a moment, considers and then points sort of directly behind him, so just up the street presumably but...

**JAMES**

Bertie picks up the man...

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**(Group laughter)**

Hotel C'est.

And then walks out of the door and...

**(Group laughter)**

Adjusting the halfling man's arm to point where he should be going.

**ALEX**

The halfling man hanging, knowing better than to argue with someone who's clearly insane, points up the street.

**JAMES**

Bertie marches in that direction, continuing to hold the halfling man under his arm.

**ALEX**

Again, he's sort of plodding along. He gives a few protestations in French which presumably fall on literally deaf ears...

**JAMES**

Yep.

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**ALEX**

Since you don't speak the language.

**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

And presumably you'll be giving him a shake any time he doesn't point the right turning.

**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

You begin marching through Calais carrying a incredibly overweight halfling, which you can carry at least...

**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

But he's heavy with it. Give me a perception check?

**JAMES**

19 minus 1 is 18.

**ALEX**

Enormous amounts of laughter are following you through the city as more and more people notice, point and laugh. And there's whispering, in fact you hear some people mentioning your name.

**JAMES**

Bertie is getting crosser and crosser.

**ALEX**

You hear, blah blah blah blah blah, Bertrand, oh it's the nutter! And they're all laughing and pointing and some kids were sort of keeping next to you and any time you look they're running on.

**JAMES**

Is there, are there any, what is around me in terms of street furniture?

**ALEX**

There's the occasional sort of fairly downtrodden café some beaten up chairs.

**JAMES**

Any – ah, OK, fair enough. Basically, is there anything in terms of like road signs or like bins and things like that knocking around?

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah.

**JAMES**

OK. At one point when the laughter of the children has got to him too much, even Bertie isn't going to bisect a child because he's cross.

**(Group laughter)**

He's getting that way. Sir Bertrand withdraws – a road sign, you said?

**ALEX**

You find yourself at a corner which is pointing towards Due D'Avignon.

**JAMES**

At that point, because a crowd is beginning to gather and there's a bit of pointing and laughter, Sir Bertrand withdraws his sword from its scabbard and power attacks that sign.

**(Group laughter)**

Just to shut people up. He's getting very annoyed.

**ALEX**

I'll just, I'll just, it's a stationary sign, you're taking the time to do the job well.

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**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

You manage to...

**LYDIA**

He does have a halfling under the other arm.

**ALEX**

We'll say it takes him longer. Hacking at this sign, slowly, pouring sparks away from it and damaging your sword in the process, it's getting nicks and scrapes.

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

Eventually you manage to hack it down into a stump. The laughter's just louder. People are further *away*...

**(Group laughter)**

But they're laughing louder.

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**JAMES**

Sir Bertrand waves the sword menacingly at them.

YES! Right, you keep your distance!

And continues going in the direction as pointed by the...

**ALEX**

He's pointing faster.

**JAMES**

Yep.

**ALEX**

He's pointing better.

**JAMES**

Good.

**ALEX**

Right, cut back to Hamid. (bdlum, bdlum, bdlum, bdlum, be-duh duh duh duh duh)

**BRYN**

Hanging on.

**ALEX**

You're now starting to swerve in between more and more traffic as there are more, there are more motor cars, nothing going anywhere near as fast as yours, if it's – yours probably is actually a racing model now that you've had a bit of time to look at it in between the terror. And you're swerving wildly between various types of vehicles on the road. People, the pavement...

**BRYN**

Are we going to be OK!

**ALEX**

Probably! (dum bdlum be-duh duh duh) In fact you start hearing her going (trumpet sounds – Ride of the Valkyries) She's singing to herself, it's all very elaborate and exciting for her. Finally, you whizz past the sign which, Calais is like two kilometres or something.

Where are we going in the town?

**BRYN**

Um. The nicest hotel that you know of.

**ALEX**

Right-ho. (vroom) Over another bump.

Cut back to the blind hill where...

**LYDIA**

We've got all our thumbs stuck out.

**BEN**

Yeah, I've also got my thumb out.

**LYDIA**

Sticking out. And I'm guessing if the woman is smaller than Zolf or...

**ALEX**

She's smaller than Zolf.

**LYDIA**

Right so, we're sort of, just in stepped up height, sticking out thumbs.

**ALEX**

Finally, a horse and cart which is carrying what appears to be just root vegetables in a cart slows down and pulls over and is willing to give you a lift.

**BEN**

Calais, s'il-vous plat! (cod French)

**LYDIA**

Calais, s'il-vous plait (better accent)

**BRYN**

Oh, right.

**ALEX**

He looks to...

**LYDIA**

Well, my version sounded like: Cheers, guv'nor!

**(Group laughter)**

All right, m'lads! Down the alleyway! Going to Paris, Paris, Calais general direction, innit?

**ALEX**

He just about manages to...

**LYDIA**

M'lady!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

He just about manages to decode Sasha. Meanwhile the, so Doris climbs up on the back with you and you're just sat having a nice little sedate ride off.

**LYDIA**

So how's the, how's the trip around France going for you?

**ALEX**

Oh, we do it every year! Every year, gor, me and, me and Doris – er, me and Sandra, we've been round. Ah, tell you what, first year we did it was on horseback. Second year we actually rented out airships, that wasn't that interesting, actually, bit slow. And then the third year...

Off she goes.

**LYDIA**

Think it's all stuff that I haven't heard before and I'm very excited.

**ALEX**

So, finally, cut back to: you've been walking for the best part of an hour.

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

Finally it starts getting a bit upmarket. The number of mechanical men is vastly increasing. The quality of clothing and so on, again vastly increasing. You've got shop fronts which you look like you'd be willing to shop at now. The last was...

**LYDIA**

But they wouldn't have you inside.

**JAMES**

Yeah!

**ALEX**

The, basically a lot of people have fallen away due to the frowns of guards and so on.

**JAMES**

Mm-hm.

**ALEX**

Nonetheless, the laughter has taken on a certain sniggering, superior air rather than just downright hilarity, lots of people mocking behind fans and so on.

**JAMES**

Bertie's on a hair trigger at this point.

**ALEX**

Roll me a perception check.

**JAMES**

7 minus 1 is 6.

**ALEX**

6. OK. You see large crowds gathered round sort of magazine stands and, you know the old style tobacconist where it's on the street?

**JAMES**

Mm.

**ALEX**

Actually on the street and it's just a tiny little stand.

**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

There's large groups of them all leading with one thing. You don't know what, but they're all laughing as well. It's... not great. But you're, you seem to be making progress, and the guy who's muttering and who's gibbering in French that you can't understand, so he clearly seems agitated in a positive way, like it might finally be over.

**JAMES**

Yep. OK. I think Bertie at this point, it's worth noting that he's still so focussed on the, he's come this far and it's taken him this much to do it, he is getting to that hotel so he continues to walk.

**BEN?**

It could be the hardest he's ever worked for a bet?

**JAMES**

Pretty much.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So. We'll cut back to Hamid. You're within Calais city limits, you're swerving round, swerving round, finally inevitably she takes one corner too quickly (crunch), right up against a lamppost.

Give me a reflex save?

**BRYN**

9 + 4, 13.

**ALEX**

13. You take (rolls dice) 3 damage. As you are immediately shunted forward and bashing your head on the...

**BRYN**

Yep.

**ALEX**

Dashboard. Sandra seems OK and is just going:

Wowwww! Wow. Ooof. Ah well, I mean it's just up that street, you might still make it, it's called C'est.

**BRYN**

Thank you! I hope the rest of your trip goes well!

**ALEX**

So do I!

**BRYN**

I gently stroll up the street towards the hotel.

**ALEX**

You're having a hard time because there's quite a lot of crowds. Like a lot of them in the way and there seems to be like, it's not boisterous or anything, but everyone seems to be in very good spirits, it's like maybe it's a parade or something.

Cut back to...

**BRYN**

I changed my outfit again.

**ALEX**

Nice. Cut back to Zolf and Sasha and Doris on the car. You've still got a good hour to go.

**LYDIA**

I slip the driver of the cart a silver and am munching on some carrots.

**BEN**

I'm just sitting here letting Doris wash over me.

**(Group laughter)**

Like a **spewly** wave.

**LYDIA**

So like if you were going to go to Egypt next or like, you know...

**ALEX**

I'll tell you what...

**LYDIA**

How would you do it? Or if we're going to Norway, where was it, Zolf?  
Norway?

**BEN**

Svalbard.

**LYDIA**

Svalbard. How do you get to Svalbard?

**ALEX**

Svalbard. Ooh, gor, tell you what, that's an interesting one. I mean, I'd probably go by ship, a bit more interesting than the airships but honestly the airships are pretty good, I mean if you're going to go by ship though you're going to probably want to go from someone up north.

Then she's like, oh well, I mean, obviously you can catch the airships from one of the major inland cities but you're probably wanting to go by a port or something like that. Just because it's more interesting, I mean it's a lot slower going by boat but honestly, it's a bit more exciting! Tell you what though...

**LYDIA**

All right. I think we've had enough boat excitement.

**ALEX**

Ah, tell you what then, I mean, you could probably, you could probably get yourself on an airship, pretty expensive though, I mean, not very interesting, it's a very boring ship. Also Svalbard tend to close down to airships, they tend not to like them, I mean it sort of depends. I mean, if you got a trading right thing, that'd be great. I've never been, actually.

**LYDIA**

Great.

**ALEX**

(laughs) And finally we will cut back to Bertie, trudging through the filth, wading through people, people like, it's crowded anyway and there's lots of people getting in your way. And there is a crowd outside the entrance to C'est and they're all stood on the front steps looking at you, and as they see you they all start cheering and laughing. And they're all, again they all seem to know your name and are all pointing and laughing and again cheering your arrival.

At which point, Hamid, we'll say that you *just*, strolling quite gently up, manage to arrive at the exact same time that Bertie does on the front steps, looking at everyone laughing and...

**BRYN**

I, in a glance, take in Bertie's current condition.

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**(Group laughter)**

?

Just all of it.

**JAMES**

He's psychotic.

**BRYN**

And gesture to him. In a 'after you' manner.

**(Group laughter)**

**JAMES**

My thanks.

At this point Bertie drops the halfling on the floor, tips him, gives him a gold.

**(Group laughter)**

Sends him on his way.

**BEN**

That's actually pretty good payment.

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**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

He's confused and sort of walks off and he's just shellshocked, that's the word.

**JAMES**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Completely shellshocked.

**JAMES**

Did I win?

**(Group laughter)**

And then Bertie walks into the hotel.

**BRYN**

Once Bertie's crossed the threshold first, I will cast prestidigitation and clean him up!

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**ALEX**

So, Bertie, the crowds part for him initially for the smell but eventually because he's just a big scary man.

**JAMES**

He *would* have punched anybody in his way.

**ALEX**

Oh yeah.

**JAMES**

He's basically *purple*, you know.

**ALEX**

You get prestidigitated on the way and you step in to the lobby of C'est to announce yourself to the receptionist.

**JAMES**

I am Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham and I require the best, and I require it now.

**ALEX**

That'll be fine.

And we'll close there.

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**(Group laughter)**

Ooh, it's all a bit much, all a bit much.

**LYDIA**

Yes, as I lazily crunch a carrot.

**(Group laughter)**

And hear about the spectacular woman's travels around a continent I've never visited. It's a great end to the day over here!

**ALEX**

In the car that's almost certain death for everyone else involved.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Well, anyway, I think we'll close it there and we will see everyone next week. So until then, we hope that if you're doing any intercontinental races and such, you're not getting in with drunken drivers!

**JAMES**

Don't drink and drive!

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**LYDIA**

Yeah!

**BRYN**

Don't drink and drive, er...

**LYDIA**

Don't get in a carriage with a drunk woman wearing goggles.

**BRYN?**

Don't try and sail over the English Channel during a terrifying storm in a small boat.

**LYDIA**

And don't force the electricity from the front of a train to the back of the train!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

All important lessons.

**EVERYONE**

Mmm.

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**ALEX**

Anyway. Thanks for listening and we'll tune in next week with you.

**EVERYONE**

Bye!

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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