

RQG – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

Content Warnings

- X
- X

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 35 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM, Alex Newall, and with me today, again, as ever I have

BEN

Ben Meredith

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

JAMES

James Ross

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith.

LYDIA

... Sasha Racket.

BRYN

Ohhhhh...

LYDIA

I can remember who I am!

BRYN

Nearly caught you out there!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Yeah! Nah, that's just what she's like, she's really quiet, she wants to know of the situation before...

BRYN

Yeah...

[0:00:38 talking over one another]

ALEX

Who are you playing... in a good way!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Who wants to know?!

BRYN

We had to find where she was before she cared to answer the question!

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Yeah! They found me crumpled up under a piece of dark velvet in a closed room that no one had opened since that spooky rustling...

(Group laughter)

... many years ago...

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ALEX

And the award for longest intro goes to... Sasha Racket!

LYDIA

For once!

(Ben laughs)

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan.

JAMES

Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham, who is now going to win the award for longest intro...

[No! Nooooo!]

(Group laughter)

... let me begin by recounting my family history – now...

ALEX

I will dock your pay!

JAMES

Sir Everard MacGuffingham...

(Laughter)

... SO...

LYDIA

Wait, wait, you might have left listeners with the idea that we get paid!

ALEX

Oh, sorry, no! Woah, woah now!

(Group laughter)

Not what I meant to do!

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

But...

BRYN

We don't even get, like...

LYDIA

Travel...

BRYN

... food and board or travel...

LYDIA

I put your party...

BRYN

Alex just chews and spits in our mouths – it's the closest we get to craft services!

ALEX

Hey, I put all of you up in the most expensive fictional hotel, okay...

[Yeah...!]

... in this entire universe in which you frequent, but no, noooo...

BRYN

Paying us in dreams! Thanks, Alex!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

He describes things to us, but pays us in adjectives!

(Laughter)

BEN

Here is an invoicing form...

(Laughter)

... on it is all of your train tickets...

(Group laughter)

... now I'm signing it!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

... with a flourish and dream like a Goblin, not quite [0:02:06] which is a thick...
yeah. It goes on!

ALEX

So, anyway. We will pick up from where we left off. You have made it via
Dover, via Calais finally to Paris...

LYDIA

Uh huh...

ALEX

... immediately running into some automated peoples who are, who know Sasha and are providing her with...

LYDIA

... scary...

ALEX

... a Presidential suite in the most expensive hotel probably in the world with the Presidential suite held in perpetuity and a note that just says it was a present, apparently, from Brock.

BRYN

What if the President had turned up?!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Hashtag shower-thoughts!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

Where this point in this particular republic, it is a largely ceremonial room.

ALEX

So. We will pick up exactly the moment you left after you have just opened the envelope and an army of...

BEN

Zeros!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

... I was going to say workers for the hotel, but yes, an army of zeros... it's that moment when you hold up the receipt and it unfolds, then unfolds four more times, and then unravels the rest of the way.

LYDIA/SASHA

That's totally happened to me outside of [0:03:15]

(Group laughter)

'I don't understand though. If he was doing alright he would have come back for me. It doesn't make any sense. I, he was just another slum kid like me. In fact, he had less... he wasn't as good at, at my professional services.'

BEN

Maybe he's very busy.

ALEX

At this point, the mechanical man who sort of shows you in and so on, the carriage appears to have left, comes in through the front door and just places himself discreetly, he actually moves very quietly – he’s probably got cushioned feet or something – but he moves very, very softly and then just takes position about two feet behind Sasha, stood perfectly ready.

BRYN

I think you might have a butler!

LYDIA

Alright. Um, I don’t have anything I want it to hold. I mean, it’s not like I’m over encumbered by daggers at all! None of them are spare nor need carrying! Maybe, like, I pick up Brutor and...

(Group laughter)

... give him to the butler.

JAMES

How does Brutor react to the butler?

LYDIA

Brutor...

BRYN

Can he do a roll or something?

ALEX

Give me a bluff check on Brutor's behalf.

BRYN

Okay.

[rolls dice]

18.

ALEX

Now, because you've spending so much time with Brutor, you know that Brutor's a little bit scared of this big scary mechanical man, but Brutor is a dog of society now...

(Group laughter)

... dog... a dog who wouldn't let such petty concerns get in the way of good grace, good manners and seeming well in such a high establishment. And so, despite being scared of the mechanical man, nonetheless adopts a certain peremptory air and just sort of tilts...

(Laughter)

... cocks his head and acknowledges the robot as a necessity and merely...

LYDIA

... at which point...

ALEX

... a helping hand to be [0:04:50]

LYDIA

... I stick my hand under his belly, like, lifting...

[arrff, woof, woof...]

(Laughter)

... him up and dump him in the butler's hands!

[arrff, arurururr...]

... here – that'll keep you busy!

ALEX

Brutor endeavours to make the best of the situation and look haughty, despite the fact that he is being held very poorly...

LYDIA

... and his legs are dangling...

ALEX

... and his legs are scrabbling around...

(Laughter)

BRYN

Trying to make himself comfortable on a solid metal bosom.

LYDIA

I should ask, what costume is he wearing currently?

BRYN

Oohh, probably still wearing... he hasn't changed out of the smoking jacket...

ALEX

... he hasn't really had much time...

BRYN

He hasn't had much time. He's still wearing the Noel Coward-style smoking jacket with the head harness and a cigarette holder!

(Laughter)

LYDIA

While being held by a golden metal butler!

(Group laughter)

... fan art is welcome!!

JAMES

While he's doing this, while he's scrabbling around, the cigarette holder's going all which way and all around the place...

[arrff, arurururrr...]

LYDIA/SASHA

'Right. Alright, where's this suite then? This is the only note that was left? There was no explanation? Is he up there?'

ALEX (as concierge)

'I apologise, this was all arranged remotely via a series of messengers, and so on. It has been paid for. This isn't speculative. Congratulations, and if there is anything we can do we are so, so honoured to have such an esteemed patron...'

BRYN/HAMID

'Lobster!'

ALEX (as concierge)

'Lobster? Oh, of course. We prepared a small banquet in the hopes that you would be arriving soon and it is already prepared there for you.'

BRYN/HAMID

‘Wonderful!’

ALEX (as concierge)

‘Oh, you are very welcome.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Wait, right, how did you know we were arriving soon?’

ALEX (as concierge)

‘Er, we received a missive from the person who purchased the Presidential suite letting us know you that you would be arriving soon.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Shall we go upstairs... let’s go upstairs...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Brock, it’s Barret – he’s listening to your ring... will there be traps up there? There might be a... [0:06:25]’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Let’s go upstairs and we’ll talk in private.’

JAMES

Bertie hasn’t understood anything that’s been going on...

ALEX

Not a word! Not a word!

[0:06:31 talking over one another]

BRYN

Oh, he's just like, this is where I belong!

LYDIA/SASHA

'I don't understand, we don't get to have any words in private anymore while Hamid's around, until he chops that ring off.'

BEN/ZOLF

'Right, well more private then.'

ALEX (also as concierge)

Oh, again, the person behind the desk clearly understanding English, but sticking to French out of principle, 'If you do require anything we actually have a lot of highly important political figures so we are more than able to provide you a magically protected room to have private conversations. There can be no eavesdropping and you would have the only key once you are in there. If that would be amenable to you? You have full use of our facilities, of course, in perpetuity.'

LYDIA/SACHA

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I reply back in French, 'Alright, China mate, that's a good bubble bath. I'll, er, just so long as you can spell it up so that you make sure that we don't end up brown bread, that's, like, well good, innit?! We'll head up...'

[0:07:23 talking over one another]

(Group laughter)

BRYN

You're destroying the magic of the performance!

LYDIA

You're destroying the illusion, James! You're ruining it!

JAMES

I'm sorry!

LYDIA

I head up the apples and pears!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Now, naturally, of course, they wouldn't allow you to head up the stairs when they have the elevators with the bell hops, and the second they see you heading to the stairs, it's, 'Wouldn't you rather use our elevator, of course – we fitted it with a chair for you' blah, blah, blah...

LYDIA

That would be well Army... [0:07:55] short for Army and Navy with gravy...

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Gravy means good!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

For our American listeners!

ALEX

I was going to say, there's a lot of layers you've got to dig through. Doors open, and the lift is huge. Just in and of itself, it's about the size of a sitting room.

LYDIA

It's a good room, yeah!

ALEX

It's set up like there's a coffee table, there are chairs for people, god knows why, I mean, it's not that long a journey, but...

ALEX (as concierge)

‘This is the Presidential suite...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, this is alright!’

BRYN

Oh no...

[choonk, choonk, choonk, choonk noise in background]

ALEX

There’s a ‘ping’ and...

BEN

It’s going to open straight into the room anyway...

ALEX

... the door opens, at which point it is...

LYDIA

All of these adjectives...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

... it is a huge, sweeping room that has a glass-domed ceiling, pristine, probably crystal for the, like, how clear and, like, transparent it is. It has bay windows opening onto a balcony, which has a direct view of L'Arc D'Ordinateurs and over the entire area. It is very fresh and very clean, obviously, but more than that it's huge. The entire, just a sitting room is the size of Hamid's whole flat. It is well-stocked with everything. There is a drinks cabinet. It looks like some of the things are hundreds of years old, yet still in pristine condition. You see at least three, maybe four, corridors leading off from this main salon, and in the salon in front of the bay windows, which are held open and there's a gentle breeze coming in, there's a buffet set up. It could probably feed about 20 people. There's seafood, there's turkey, lamb, all the veg. There's some fruit and veg that probably, certainly Sasha and probably everyone apart from Zolf, won't have seen before because it's just that out there and obscure. Like, they've really pulled out...

BEN

Kumquats.

ALEX

I'm going to go ahead and say fictional...

LYDIA

... which are actually made of dragons!

ALEX

... fictional fruits that I haven't even named yet because I've not taken you to somewhere exotic enough is here! Yeah... let's go high fruit...

BRYN

It's like a high fruit and it just multiplies...

ALEX

... multiplies!!

[Group laughter]

BEN

[0:09:52] hunger!

BRYN

Yeah! There you go!

BEN

Absolutely. Lovely!

JAMES

They're really tasty fried, but it does defeat the...

[Group laughter]

[sings: 'Greek mythology jokes!']

(Laughter)

ALEX

And there is a central table. It's large, round, will probably sit about 12 people. It appears to be mahogany. It's inlaid with all kinds of designs and so on, and there is an envelope propped up in the middle of the table. It is, again, it's very expensive vellum. It's ludicrous. It's so ludicrously over the top that it's nothing that any of you, including Hamid, I'm afraid, will have really seen. Like, you'll have had clients that have this, but this isn't something that you... you may have maybe stayed somewhere like this once or twice for a couple of days. It's literally as high as you can go for luxury and opulence.

LYDIA

Sasha emerges from the lift, sees this space and immediately sticks to a wall like she's been superglued to it, sort of, back against it. You know, possibly even, you know, edges straight so that to try and get in the shadow of an extraordinary large and overbearing filigree cabinet.

ALEX

It's probably good that you've done so because at that moment, all of the servants who had been travelling in the lift with you quietly, immediately move off into the area and they start prepping things – one of them's preparing food...

JAMES

I go and sit at the table and start eating.

ALEX

Yep! They begin...

JAMES/BERTIE

I'd be like, 'Aha! I'm still a halfling!'

(Group laughter)

ALEX

But, yeah, there's an army. They just, if you look at any of them they immediately come over and ask, 'Is there anything that I can do for you?' If you're not looking at them, they're just going round...

LYDIA

Sasha doesn't look at them!!

ALEX

... doing everything they... um, they're opening wardrobe doors in various rooms so that it's all ready for you. They come over and bring indoor shoes – not slippers – like moccasins for everyone if they want. It's ludicrous. The mechanical man sort of steps forward, takes a sidestep left into an alcove that perfectly fits him...

LYDIA

Still holding Brutor?

ALEX

... and then stands there, still holding Brutor. He is, his hands are slowly... like, the man's clearly figured out how to hold Brutor correctly and he is holding him, not like a baby, but just very comfortably. Takes a moment, reaches down, picks up a cushion, places Brutor upon the cushion and then stands there and he is effectively a shelf just with Brutor on it. Brutor starts looking down at everyone. This is right!

(Group laughter)

This is as it should be. It turns out the mechanical man is... yes, yes, good!

BEN/ZOLF

I will sidle over to Sasha and say, 'Do you want to get that magically deaf room so that we can have a chat about this?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Right, yeah. That sounds great. Maybe we should do that.'

BRYN

I order a different vintage of wine...

[0:12:27 talking over one another]

ALEX

They, they have, you know, as a side note, the vintages they have available is the best in the world. Like, their list... there's no pricing, obviously, but it's just the best in the world.

JAMES/BERTIE

'Hamid, er, Hamid – would you mind asking him for the wine list, and by the wine list I don't mean a list of the wines, I mean the wines on the list.'

BRYN/HAMID

'There's already 12 bottles on the table. I think that'll be enough to be getting on with. Decide which one you like the best and we'll order more of it. I just prefer a slightly fruitier one, it's not technically as good, they've already got, really got the best vintages, but my palate tends to be... anyway...'

ALEX

I'll point out, just for a bit of flavour for Hamid – flavour, as it were – one of the types of grape used in one of these wines is now extinct. This is the level we're talking about.

LYDIA

I don't get it at all...

BRYN/HAMID

My father's been wanting a bottle of this for decades...

JAMES/BERTIE

I'll have a glass of that with a slice of lemon in it!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Bish, bash, bosh – straight away...

BEN

Nothing Bertie has yet done has managed to offend Hamid as much as that!

(Group laughter)

BEN/ZOLF

'I think we should probably better wait to see if these people start foaming at their mouths and clutching their throats, and if not, enjoy the meal.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'It seems like such an inefficient way to kill people, I mean, Barret likes playing games, right? He likes letting you feel that you're safe and then you find out a day later or a year later that he has been watching the whole time, like, the trap's been set that you jumped into without even knowing it and you've set up home in that trap, and then, you know, you've got a mortgage on that trap, and you installed nice curtains and all, and then it shuts, and that's what he does. That's what he enjoys doing.'

BEN/ZOLF

‘Right, well, let’s enjoy the meal, we’ll go to this magically protected room so that we can no longer be overheard, and then we will discuss.

JAMES

Bertie hasn’t heard any of this conversation over the sound of his own chewing because he’s picked up a whole roast chicken and is eating it, just the side of it, like it’s an apple.

(Laughter)

ALEX

At this point, the staff seeing which way the wind is blowing... there are two dedicated members of staff now who are stood over the left and right shoulders of Hamid and Bertie respectively because clearly you guys are already just tucking in.

LYDIA

Sasha’s going to watch you eat for a while and then when they bring in the lobster that got ordered...

[ping]

... which wasn’t part of the original buffet because I’m guessing it’s a bit passé!

ALEX

Honestly, yes!

BEN

It has to be cooked fresh!

LYDIA

Yeah. When she sees the lobster coming in, like, her eyes...

BRYN/HAMID

I meant one for each of us...

ALEX

The lift opens. As you start saying that, the gentleman coming out holding a [0:15:01] lobster on a tray with two other people stops and goes, 'Oh, we're so sorry', goes back into the lift...

LYDIA/SASHA

No, no, no! That's fine, that's good.

BEN/ZOLF

Just bring the next three!

LYDIA/SASHA

I think that's...

(Bryn laughs)

ALEX

There's a genuine...

LYDIA/SASHA

... the dialogue...

ALEX

... it's the smallest hesitation. It's the smallest hesitation from the head butler of the group who then goes, 'Yes, of course', places the [0:15:23] lobster on its own dedicated side table which they've set up. It's the size of Hamid, easily, and then disappear downstairs.

[ping]

Off they go.

LYDIA/SASHA

I mean, I... like...

BRYN/HAMID

You're going to love this, Sasha, you have to try some!

LYDIA/SASHA

I might as well while we're waiting...

BEN/ZOLF

Is there not enough?

ALEX

As you're speaking, the mechanical man comes over and, just with his, holding Brutor on one arm, begins cracking the lobster whose shell is so thick you couldn't have done it yourself.

[lobster cracking noises]

Just giving you a bit of sound whilst you're having the conversation.

LYDIA/SASHA

... it's a bit much, isn't it?

BEN/ZOLF

Yeah.

JAMES

Bertie goes up to the lobster, shakes it by the foot and goes, 'I am Sir Bertram MacGuffingham and I am going to be eating your insides today'.

BEN/ZOLF

There's a lot less meat on the inside of these things than you think, because it's mostly shell, I mean, this would probably only feed two of me.

(Laughter)

And there's four of us!

ALEX

You're remembering a time, Zolf, when you captured one of these and it fed a lot of people for a long time.

BEN/ZOLF

I mean, whatever, it's been laid on. I am sure the waste will not be this.

LYDIA/SASHA

Do you think that they've been putting out a buffet every day?

BRYN

I hope not!

JAMES/BERTIE

'I say, I wonder if I ordered Oscar Wilde's head on a silver platter whether they'd deliver it.'

BEN

[0:16:39] probably.

JAMES/BERTIE

'I say there, waiter...'

ALEX

We'll skip ahead!

(Group laughter)

So presumably you're all wanting to head down to the protected room, blah, blah, blah...

LYDIA

Yeah, Sasha's eaten quite a lot of lobster...

ALEX

Sure...

LYDIA

... nothing else, though, but it's almost as if the stuff that was there before could have been poisoned, but she's justified in her head because Hamid picked it, the lobster is probably fine.

ALEX

The lobster's amazing.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

... it's stunningly made. We'll skip ahead and say the meal was, by everyone's standard, not just by, erm, Sasha or Zolf or anything, it was stunning. Like, absolutely stunning. They've probably got a couple of, like, the equivalent of Michelin stars gourmet chefs working at it – was it three or two lobsters?

ALL

Four!

ALEX

Sorry three more [0:17:25] lobsters are delivered. We'll skip ahead to the point where, obviously...

LYDIA

[0:17:39 whispering – inaudible]

(Group laughter)

ALEX

... they eventually set up a plate and once they understand the situation for Brutor now, has his own room and eventually they take you down through the lift again, they actually take you...

LYDIA

I'm clutching the vellum letter...

ALEX

Sure, sure. They take you all the way down through to, like, a third level basement...

[ping]

... and the doors open – it's still plush and velvet, but obviously there's windows at all, just a straight corridor leading to a pair of open double doors, and there are two, sort of, mechanical men on the outside. They see you coming in, open it...

LYDIA/SASHA

'And you're saying that once we go in, even if we've got stuff that sends messages, it's a two-way thing... that it's cut off?'

ALEX (as concierge)

'So... does anybody here have any kind of, I mean no offence, any kind of magical understanding at all?'

BEN/ZOLF

Yes.

ALEX (also as concierge)

Making sure with Sasha that it's okay to explain it to Hamid... so, like, being quite deferential about it, 'the room has been completely warded against teleportation, divination, in fact all the schools have been warded. It is a close

unit. These two gentlemen, he gestures to the mechanical men, are all perfectly capable of defending you and yourselves.'

BRYN/HAMID

'Wouldn't a private pocket plane be more secure?'

ALEX (as concierge)

'True. Yes, we are able to provide that should you wish. However...'

BRYN/HAMID

'It seems a bit excessive...'

ALEX (as concierge)

'... we do, we do have a number of patrons who have requested not because apparently it is easier to interfere with the planer process than it is with something on a material plane.'

BRYN/HAMID

'And it would, of course, prevent, no I see there'd be other issue and you couldn't take any bags with you and if you... No, I understand.'

ALEX (as concierge)

'Yes, this was found to be the best way. Let me assure you that the level of employment here, we've employed the finest nadirs from across the world. This is arguably the safest spot in the whole world.'

JAMES/BERTIE

‘So it’s absolutely and utterly impervious to any form or magical observation of any kind whatsoever?’

ALEX (as concierge)

‘Absolutely, yes.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Excellent! All in!

(Laughter)

Quickly now!’

Bertie’s actually put down the lobster claw that he had before and, just to clarify on this, he was going, guzzling at that with great enthusiasm. His face, it’s like he’s got a goatee made of butter, and that is...

ALL

Ugh...

Oh...

Oh, no...

Urrrrggggh...

ALEX

So presumably you head inside?

JAMES

Yeah.

LYDIA

I'm, like, Sasha's a little bit confused because Bertie suddenly seems to have noticed that she wants to be inside this room and that's about the most concern he's ever shown to anyone apart from Brutor.

ALEX (also as concierge)

So the concierge ushers you inside and then he pulls out a key. It's large. It's gilded, but it's not huge. And he hands it to Sasha, making sure that he sort of makes eye contact with Hamid as well. 'Now this is the focal point for all of the enchantments, so take this with you – that's the only copy. If you lock it from the inside it will be sealed. Even we would not be able to fetch you. obviously, I have to let you know that in the event of an emergency, we have no way of contacting you or letting you know. You'll be safe, but we have no way of letting you know the situation.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Alright. Well, I don't think we'll be that long.'

ALEX (also as concierge)

'Take as long as you need.' And then he heads off, and the mechanical men, rather than standing at the door, then proceed and guard the lift so there's a good 30 foot just from the oaken doors.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Right. In we go then. I guess...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I mean, I could cast a test magic, but it would probably give me a headache.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘We can probably take their word on it.’

ALEX

The doors close and there is a visible sheen across the door. Hamid give me a knowledge arcana.

BRYN

[Rolls dice]

[Ooh]

[Oh dear...]

BEN

Can I get in on this actually because I am a spellcaster?

ALEX

Yes, you could actually – there are a couple of divine ones there.

BEN

Er, 20.

ALEX

20. Okay.

BRYN

I rolled 2, so 11.

ALEX

You're a bit overwhelmed. There's that many things at play.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

I won't go into specific spells because it will take a long time to list, but you recognise massively high-powered...

BEN

Do I get cut off from the influence of my gods? Do I feel a bit weird?

ALEX

You don't because there are some castings from Priests of Poseidon...

BEN

Aahhh, okay...

ALEX

... upon this room. What you do get is both of you being in tune with arcana and with [0:21:18 deithic] powers similarly. It's almost a little bit queasy for a bit, because the amount of power pumping around the walls, floor and ceiling is insane.

BEN

My hair is no longer immaculately, coiffed because some of it is standing on end!

ALEX

I mean, it will start to interfere slightly with your basic levelling challenge you've got, so clothing might be a little bit less than you'd hope and things like that. Like, I can't stress this enough, basically the most powerful people who are in the public sphere have been used to make this room.

BEN

Right, well.

JAMES

And the doors slowly closes behind us...

ALEX

The door closes, it is locked. There is a brief sheen of rainbow colours across it, and then utter silence apart from yourselves.

LYDIA

I look at Zolf and begin to open the envelope.

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Right, before that happens. Now, er, I am under a curse. I am under a curse. It’s a massive curse.’

(Laughter)

‘It’s a curse full of lawyers. It’s a real problem.’

(Group laughter)

‘It’s been quite the nuisance and I can’t talk about it if I’m out there. I can definitely talk about it when I’m in here. Then it’s fine. Then the lawyer gnomes won’t be watching me all the time!’

(Laughter)

‘If I talk about the curse, it’s triggers the curse more. If I break the curse in any way, basically, I have to be a Knight, I have to be [0:22:23] I don’t want to do any of this! I’m sick of this, it’s horrible! I want to be at home coated in honey the whole time, being gently licked by nice young men, and here I am, haring

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all over the country and I'm bloody stuck with it! I'm sick of it! I hate all of you apart from Hamid. And you're alright.' (Looking at Sasha...)

(Group laughter)

BEN/ZOLF

'Bertie, I'm hurt.'

JAMES/BERTIE

'You're hurt? You're hurt?! I am mortgaged beyond my eyeballs. Everywhere. I am in a colossal amount of debt, very little of it of my own creating. You know the massive inheritance of the House of MacGuffingham? You know the soaring falcon crest? Do you know what would happen if the soaring falcon came along and just pecked your eyes out and then went [caw, caw] and just defecated debt into the sockets? That is very much my situation. I was living a wonderfully happy life until my parents had the great misfortune, the great carelessness, the great selfishness of dying. Dying in a horrible accident at sea. And here I am, saddled with their colossal debt that's made of falcon poo, and here I am stuck under the weight of Harkness, Harkness, Darkness & Sphinx, the most evil law firm you could possibly imagine. Gnomes! Gnomes for goodness sake!'

BEN/ZOLF

'How big is this debt?'

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Huge!’

BEN/ZOLF

‘No, what’s the actual number?’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘I genuinely do not know. Less than it costs to hire this hotel room, but that says very little!’

(Group laughter)

BEN/ZOLF

Right, well. Thank you for that!

(Laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

‘But, like, when we go out again, you’re going to have to be a Knight again?’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Yes!’

(Laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Oh, right – that’s fine, then!’

BEN

‘Wait, so all of this being Bertie stuff, that’s just an act?’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Well, yes and no.’

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Hamid is quietly shaking his head, unnoticed by Bertie.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘So, like, are you... do you have to be, like, horrid to poor people because that’s part of being a Knight?’

JAMES/BERTIE

No, no, that’s just fine... it’s a little better than they deserve! No, it’s the great family of MacGuffingham was founded by Sir Everard MacGuffingham, a bold and courageous Knight, and I must fulfil his legacy by being a bold and courageous Knight. And every time I am not gallant and all of this, blah, blah, blah, noblesse oblige, etc. etc. etc. – saving damsels in distress, going up to dragons and going, woooooooo, etc. – then the curse of MacGuffingham, the Will as it is laid out will be violated, the terms will be violated and I will be crushed even further under debt. Hmmm?!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘It’s not all that bad being broke. You just have to learn other ways to get around things.

JAMES/BERTIE

Also, there is a death clause. I will die, and die horribly. Can you imagine being banished to another plane where, instead of air, everything is perhaps poo that is on fire, like that for all eternity, ever and undying, and the name of MacGuffingham will be stripped from history entirely, my entire line edited out completely, myself... although on balance I am mostly terrified by the screaming, burning poo fire dimension which I will be eternally exiled to.’

ALEX

And I think we’ll take a break there and come back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back.

BEN/ZOLF

‘So, Bertie, do you want us to do something about this. I don’t really see how we can help other than to keep helping you with the quests?’

JAMES/BERTIE

I must continue on my noble, bold and heroic quest, and if at some stage I am able to require sufficient legal wisdom and knowledge and perhaps some magical means to take down Harkness, Harkness, Darkness & Sphinx, then so

much the better, but they are a functionally invincible interdimensional law firm with the power of a god so, on balance, probably not!’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Right, well, I feel very sorry for the fact that...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘This is why I ordered the wine list.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Right, so all this time you, like, when I was in that alleyway, and people were, like, trying to kill me, and you came along and stabbed some people, and I didn’t die – although I could totally have looked after myself, like totally - you weren’t doing that to be, like, friendly or whatever? You were just doing it because if you didn’t, you’d get killed.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Well, I mean, I enjoyed it, if that helps. But, well doesn’t this ask some fundamental questions about the nature of altruism? So...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘I think it asks a fundamental question about the nature of you.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Yes, well, on balance, yes.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Also ‘cos I was paying him.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘It’s good to know that the first friends I ever had were doing it under duress.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Whoa, whoa, whoa. Don’t lump... me, us, in.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I haven’t done anything under duress.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Any curses you need to... right.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘So you’re not gonna suddenly say that the only reason that... we’ve been...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Oh, eternal exile to a screaming poo fire dimension isn’t enough for you?

That’s not, that’s not figuring in the motives here?’

BEN/ZOLF

‘That’s, kind of, very much based around you, and just you. It’s a little problem...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘It’s not all about you, Mr. Smith!’

(Laughter)

BEN/ZOLF

‘No.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Not everything is, you know!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘But, like, so when we get out of this room, you’re going to have to go back to being gallant, and everything?’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Yep.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Have you been... Do you actually know what gallant means, then?’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Ish.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘What? Leaving those people...

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yes... very much theoretical knowledge there.’

(Laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

‘The people in the tunnel, the, you know, like, women and children and frail men that are stuck in that tunnel...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘I told them to stay in the cabins.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Alright, but, like...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘What, what matters for the purposes of the Will is the public image of the House of MacGuffingham is maintained.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Basically, you need to live your life like a cheap Polk novel.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Yup!’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Right. That’s not a liability at all!’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Nope!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah! It’s good to know.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Did you know about this, Hamid?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘No.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘No, I’m assuming not from the...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘If he had known, we would know that he had known because his head would have exploded!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Wait, what, so when we go out of this room, are our heads going to explode?’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Well, only if you say anything that I’ve said to you out loud to anyone at all under any circumstances.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Actually, thinking about it, no, because anything we do in here will not be affected under the rules of the curse. So us going in with no knowledge and coming out with knowledge won’t interact with the curse because we’ve been severed... am I right in thinking?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Will it depend upon the exact nature of the curse? I mean, it shouldn't affect us, but he might be right that if we repeat anything we heard in this room, it would still come under the effects of the... it’s hard to say...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Well, erm, thank you for sharing. And I, you know, I feel bad that obviously this debt and this situation is not your fault. I am shocked at the lack of perspective it has given you.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Screaming fire poo dimension for all eternity, Mr. Smith.’

(Group laughter)

BEN/ZOLF

‘Yep, that’s fine.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, that sounds pretty much like what you might deserve.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Steady!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘You lying... I thought you were my friend!’

BRYN

Hamid looks genuinely shocked!

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Didn’t have any friends before. (To Zolf and Hamid) What curses are you guys under?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘No! Sasha, you are my friend.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Yeah, I did it ‘cos, well... I stuck around with you ‘cos I liked you.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Oh. Alright.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Same.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Yeah. Not everyone’s purely motivated by themselves.’

BRYN

‘I mean, I still like Bertie and I think, Bertie, that you should see this as an opportunity to learn and grow...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Yes well we’ve all shared and learned and grown. Let’s all hug. Screaming poo fire dimension for all eternity. Just rubbing that out there!’

LYDIA

Sasha awkwardly reaches out and does give Zolf and Hamid a hug.

BRYN

Awwww...

BEN

Right, this is going to be equally awkward. I will accept the hug.

LYDIA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

Incredibly, everyone slightly regrets it!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Hamid's a hugger!

BEN

It's okay, what happens in the room stays in the room!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

'Alright. Well, is anyone interested in what's in this envelope?!'

BRYN

'Well, let's quicky just look.'

BEN/ZOLF

'We'll keep working together. And, yes, I feel very sorry that you've been placed under this and the potentially terrible things that will happen to you if you break this curse, however, apart from that curse and you being a gallant Knight, you're a terrible human being. Stop it.'

(Laughter)

If you can be forced to be a gallant Knight against your wishes, stop being a terrible human being, at least around us. Once we break this curse and get rid of you, then you can go back to being it. I'm not going to condemn you to dying or your flaming poo dimension, 'cos I'm not that kind of person. But, just... try being less awful! Honestly!

LYDIA/SASHA

'And I'm not a damsel in distress.'

JAMES/BERTIE

'Well, obviously not, but it was necessary to pretend that you were for the purposes of the lawyers. Screaming poo fire dimension versus being a bit undignified for a couple of minutes.'

BEN/ZOLF

'My heart bleeds for you.'

JAMES/BERTIE

'Imagine if it was on fire and made of slurry and screaming at you all the time!'

BEN/ZOLF

'Right, really on this point, I care on an ethical and moral level? Not on a personal level.'

JAMES/BERTIE

'Fine, not a problem. And your beard looks rubbish!'

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, I will do what...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘I will accept that when you grow one properly!’

ALL

Oooohhhhhh... !!!

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Challenge accepted, Mr Smith, would you care to make another wager on it?’

BEN/ZOLF

‘I don’t think you can really afford to lose anything more.’

ALL

[Raucous laughter and shrieking!]

ALEX

Anyway!

LYDIA

The mike – don’t drop the mike!

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, Bertie, I’ll try and help you if I can.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Thank you.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘I’ll still going to try and help you, just since we’re sharing...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, ‘cos we’re not horrible people and we don’t anyone trapped in a hell dimension, so even though we *aren’t* under a curse, and we *don’t* like you, we will help you out.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Thank you, young lady.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Right. Now that little revelation’s over and done with... Sasha, you had a...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Anyone want to solve this mystery?’

BEN

So, we’ve got a couple of things so maybe...

BRYN

Well maybe we should see what the letter says...

BEN

Oh, we haven't read the letter yet!

LYDIA

I take out a different dagger than the one I used for the other letter and slice open the envelope.

ALEX

So, there is a list of names on it.

LYDIA

What? I had a list of names from the other thing!

ALEX

It's not the same names!

LYDIA/SASHA

This is Sasha in character, 'It's just a list of names!'

BEN/ZOLF

'What names?'

ALEX

In no particular order...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Sasha reads...

ALEX

Dr Jean-Luc Bolieau, and then there's just a dash, Ordinatist. Miss Amélie Rose – Investigative reporter. Dr Paulette Loup – Archaeologist. Sélène Souchet – Church groundswoman. Jacques Piaget – Delivery driver. Vivianne Messier – Hydraulics engineer, and François Henri – Director of l'Académie d'Ordinateur. And it's got written at the bottom just, Brock. Again, it's the same typeface, the whole lot.

BEN/ZOLF

'Sounds like the cast for a murder mystery novel!'

(Group laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

'Yeah, you've been reading a lot of novels recently, Zolf!'

BEN/ZOLF

'I had a bit of time on my hands! What of it?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Fine!'

BRYN/HAMID

François Henri, the name at the bottom of the list, is the same name as the notebook mentions.

LYDIA/SASHA

Right.

BRYN/HAMID

Did everyone notice that?

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Do you think that...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Well done, Hamid.’

(Group laughter)

‘Full points.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Are all these people... they sound like people that have got skills that might be useful for making the Simulacrum work with the...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Do you think Brock is trying to help us with this?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Maybe. I don’t understand it at all. Maybe we should just go ask all these people all about their lives and find out what they’ve got in common. Maybe they’re all mates. Maybe they meet at the same club. Maybe immediately one of them will just be, like, yeah, actually we meet Arthur at the plot in Sasha’s Downfall Club...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Well, we...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... that meets every Thursday at the church hall that’s why the lady who runs the church grounds is involved. She makes us a little set of cakes each time, it’s really delicious. They’ve got little bits of different Sasha’s daggers in her face...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Sasha, Sasha...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... and they eat them...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘... Sasha...’

LYDIA/SASHA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

‘... ‘cos it’s delicious just destroying my life over and over and over again.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘On the plus side, cake!’

(Laughter)

BEN/ZOLF

‘Right’.

LYDIA

We’ve all got quite a lot of stuff to wear out!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Any background things, Hamid?

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, what’s your tragic backstory?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Me, no, nothing like that.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Clean as a whistle, sharp as a thistle! Best thing always, Mister!’

ALEX

Do you need to make a bluff check?

BRYN

Probably!

(Bryn laughs)

[rolls dice]

Oh dear!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I think, even with your... that was a roll of five, by the way... even with your formidable modifiers, I think you're still... that's okay!

BEN

[0:35:30 14 or 40?] yeah.

BRYN/HAMID

You can tell something's wrong.

BEN/ZOLF

‘Are you sure? Is there anything you need to get off your chest?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘No. No, no thank you.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘okay.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Zolf, any more secrets to tell us, just in case the Police come along again?’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Nothing that will get me arrested!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Alright. There’s a lot I can’t tell you that would get me arrested!’

BEN/ZOLF

‘We’re probably aware of most of that!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, that’s true, I’m not good at secrets!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I was hoping that note might be more useful. It still doesn’t feel like we have any way to track Brock down.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Yes, we’ve got Barret pretending to be Brock, Brock working with Barret, Brock working independently having made good and become an incredibly rich individual...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Barret’s just using Brock’s name as a way to get me into places.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Yeah.’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Well, one thought. We could perhaps outsource some of this process. I mean, most hotels have something approaching a concierge service. I imagine a hotel as fine as this one would have an army of runners and investigators who they might be able to send out for these people.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘That’s true. We could bring them all together in a room and then ask them what they did that means that they’re all connected, and, and...’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Oooh, let’s have it on a spooky island!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, and, like, we can serve them a buffet and then ask them what’s going on with this Simulacrum stuff.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘That would be a bit unsubtle.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I suppose the Meritocrats did say to keep it quiet.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Yeah’.

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, we need to go to the Ordinateurs’ college or academy, even...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘And we think we know who François Henri is now, as well.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yeah, we could, um...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘How about we get someone from this hotel to go and send them a message so that he responds, because he seems quite post and, like, the people in the

Rusty Quill Gaming – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

British Museum didn't really want to know us, but if we send someone from this hotel then they'll know it's something important.'

BEN/ZOLF

'That's a good point, actually. Send the car and say we're going to visit him.'

BRYN/HAMID

'Telling him what time we're planning to call, I mean, it's polite as well as anything else!'

BEN/ZOLF

'Mmm. Yep.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Threatening.'

(Group laughter)

'That's what it is when you tell people where you're going to be in advance. That's what it is!'

BRYN/HAMID

'Why would that be threatening?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Well, if it's your mates you just drop in, but if you're going to beat them up...'

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, no. I mean, if it’s...’

(Laughter)

‘... it’s polite to let people know so they expect you and they can prepare.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘This is a genuine point of cultural miscommunication.’

BRYN

We’re both staring at each other, like... what?!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

‘If you know... you’re letting someone know that you know where they live, right? So...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I mean, yes, obviously you know where they live so you that can call on them!’

(Laughter)

‘I mean... What if they need to, you know, buy some food or something to host you?’

Rusty Quill Gaming – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Buy. Some. Food. To...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Anyway, yes...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘I think that’s a good idea, I think it’s the kind of thing...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘You bring your own eels!’

(Laughter)

BEN/ZOLF

‘... it’s the kind of thing a man like François Henri would expect.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Right, alright. Let’s do that.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yep, and we can let him know that we’ve got a delivery from the British Museum as well...’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Yes, that’s a good conceit and then we can get into conversation about whatever the heck’s going on here.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah. Maybe he’ll have all the answers. I expected them in this envelope.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Just more questions.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Let’s go up and eat some more lobster. Unless anyone’s got any more secrets?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Oh, I’m quite full, I don’t know if I can eat more right now. Maybe in an hour or two.’

(Group laughter)

BEN

Hamid literally has a distended belly!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Oh, totally, yeah!

BEN

It's cool. It looks cute on a halfling!

(Bryn laughs)

ALEX

So, are we to assume that you are heading upstairs, perhaps swinging by the concierge to send out people after these people on the way?

BEN

I think we're just going to send one note.

ALEX

Okay.

BEN

So I'll pen a quick note to François and re... saying we'll, you know...

BRYN

... have a delivery for you...

BEN

Introducing myself saying that if he needs to contact us, where we can be found...

ALEX

Sure...

BEN

... and saying we're planning to call on him the next morning at around 10.30.

ALEX

I understand. So presumably you open the door and step out.

LYDIA

Mmm hmm...

ALEX

Okay. What order to you leave?

BEN

Er... a random one I would guess. Well, I definitely wasn't thinking about that!
Was anyone thinking about that?

BRYN

I tend to go last in this kind of situation because I'm polite enough to gesture everyone else through the door first!

(Laughter)

JAMES

I think I'm probably second last.

ALEX

Okay.

LYDIA

Yep, so me and Zolf wander out chatting.

ALEX

So, wandering out there is a brief... shiver... for you it's extremely pronounced, Zolf. It feels like, this is going to be a weird description so bear with me...

BEN

Okay...

LYDIA

He's playing us in adjectives, guys!

[Group laughter]

BEN

I'll brace myself!

ALEX

... It's like moving from being in a current of water to suddenly just stepping out of it. That was what it was like in the room. You were aware that that sort of divination, the divine powers around, but it's like you were in this sort of weird sheltered space, and the second you step out of it you're back into that corridor, so...

BEN

Yeah...

ALEX

... it's... you're surrounded by motion, which is the motion that you are used to, it was the stillness of the room which was quite off-putting. In fact, for all of you, it was slightly off-putting just being in there because, like, sound died the second it left your mouths and things like that. Bertie...

JAMES

Mmm hmm...

ALEX

... the second you step out of that door, there is a searing pain on your left forearm...

JAMES/BERTIE

'Aaaaaaauuuuuuggggghhhh...'

ALEX

... absolutely searing, like dropping you to your knees agony. It makes you want to cry out, 'mother', the most pain you have ever experienced, just above the wrist beneath your gauntlet...

JAMES

... Mmm hmm...

ALEX

... which presumably you're still wearing.

JAMES

... he pulls the gauntlet off to look at what is causing the pain.

ALEX

So, dropping down, still screaming, bearing in mind, it's absolute agony. The rest of you can see searing into the flesh like, still a bit of smoke coming off, what looks to be a symbol of some kind. However the flesh is so blistered and so on, it is not even particularly clear. That said, it appears to be a pair of interlocked rings surrounded by a square, which you recognise even in your agony as the symbol of Harkness, Harkness, Darkness & Sphinx.

JAMES

Yep.

ALEX

And it's burned, like, ssssssssss..., the smoke's still coming off from your arm, and then the pain begins to subside. It's like someone just pressed a piping hot brand to your flesh.

BRYN

As when he drops and is screaming on the floor, I will convert a spell into a... cure my wounds.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

And just slam it into him so hopefully try and dull the pain.

ALEX

I'm not even going to get you to roll it. Basically, through the application the immediate blistering and stuff is gone and you're just left with... it's a brand. It's not even a tattoo. It looks like, however, it was almost both done at the same time so it's raised, it is a brand, but also coloured black...

JAMES

Right.

ALEX

Just matt black shapes.

JAMES

Bertie makes eye contact with all three of the others and does the gesture of zipping your mouth shut, locking it with a key and then throwing away the key while making very meaningful eye contact with all three of them in turn, and then waving the brand... can I wave it under the nose of all three of them so that they can smell the burning flesh?

ALEX

You can.

JAMES

... just to emphasise that...

BEN

I nod at you when you make eye contact.

BRYN

I put my hand reassuringly on your shoulder. I can reach it for once because you...

[0:42:36 talking over one another]

JAMES

... having been screaming in agony...

BRYN

Bertie also pats Hamid on the shoulder.

ALEX (also as concierge)

In the time it's taken you to stand and everything, one of the automated men steps into the lift, the other one has already come up and is stood there in readiness. The concierge, the lift servant, also comes running up... 'I'm so sorry, what has happened? Is there anything we can do to help you?' This is in French so naturally for Bertie it's, [incoherent mumbo jumbo noises].

JAMES

Yeah.

ALEX (also as concierge)

... to the rest of you, 'Oh my god, is there anything we can do?'

BRYN

What, I'm meant to be French?

ALEX (also as concierge)

'What happened? Is there some kind of problem? Is there anything we can do?' Just rattling it out very, very quickly.

BRYN

I grab him and walk hastily to the lift so he's not even facing, giving Bertie time to ready himself, and I just start babbling a bit like, 'Oh no, it's absolutely fine,

please don't worry about it'. I'm going to try and fill his head with so much information that he doesn't even remember exactly what it's for...

ALEX

Give me a diplomacy roll.

BRYN

Is this diplomacy or bluff? I mean...

ALEX

It depends. Are you trying to...

BRYN

My diplomacy roll is better...

ALEX

... actually, no, give me bluff. Give me bluff.

BRYN

... to be bluff, it's like fast-talking, it's like babbling distracting babble.

ALEX

I understand. Give me a bluff check.

BRYN

[Rolls dice]

Er, 18, so 27.

ALEX (also as concierge)

He looks at you and is aware, even with that check, that something's up. He has no idea what. He just leans in very quietly and goes, 'It's not a problem, Sir, at all. Obviously, a place of our stature, certain things happen within these walls which people would best were not shared. Not a word of this will be bred. These people are...' he's gesturing to the mechanical men... 'are incapable of passing this on, even if someone asked them to, we have absolute discretion and I do myself not want to know what just occurred.'

BRYN/HAMID

I'll drop the act and just thank him, and say, 'That would be best for all involved'.

ALEX (also as concierge)

He gives a nod, doesn't even look back. Steps in, and with the door closing, facing the wall goes, 'If there's anything else, please let us know'. And the doors close.

LYDIA/SASHA

'The babbling was well good – you totally showed him! He was...'

BRYN/HAMID

'Well, maybe. It should be alright. Back to the room then.'

LYDIA

Cut to lobster!

ALEX

Okay. Yeah, we'll cut to another lobster dinner!

BRYN

I'm on dessert now.

ALEX

Sure. And on the way we'll say...

LYDIA

I'm going to eat another of the three... 'cos the lobster's gone cold now, but I have my face, [stuffing face noises]... I sound like Brutor!

(Bryn laughs)

ALEX

One question. Did you request François Henri to come to the hotel to meet you or did you say you would meet him?

BRYN

No we said we would call on him.

ALEX

Okay, that's fine.

BRYN

But I also gave the hotel, if he needed to reply.

ALEX

That's fine.

[0:45:08 talking over one another]

LYDIA

... day, right, because it will be evening. We've had a busy day.

BEN

Is it evening or... like we got the train to Paris so that would have been a couple of hours...

JAMES

I think we're now into evening.

ALEX

I think you're into early evening.

BRYN

Okay. Well, we could do a...

ALEX

You have sufficient time to go out on the razz if you want!

(Laughter)

JAMES

I think stay in on the razz!! I don't think going out is going to be any improvement on what we've got already in!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Almost certainly not!

JAMES

Yeah!

LYDIA

I begin to almost absentmindedly begin to pick at the buffet that I hadn't any interest in before, seeing as neither of you have fallen down dead!

BEN/ZOLF

'It might be nice to, you know, go out, maybe depressurise? See a bit of Paris, you know, we are here?!'

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, you know, I’ve seen it and I’m rather enjoying this wine and food.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Fair enough!’

LYDIA

I’m going to grab a lobster claw and head out onto the balcony and, sort of, chew it absentmindedly.

ALEX

The second that you head outside the room, the mechanical man who is holding Brutor – still holding Brutor – immediately...

[choonk choonk choonk choonk noise]

... steps over to stand directly, sort of, a couple of feet behind you on the balcony with you.

LYDIA

What, to catch me if I fall? Or, like, the idea that someone’s following me is, like, oh, come on – I begin to look at the roof and see how scalable it is!

ALEX

It reacts not at all.

LYDIA

Peer down – maybe that’s a...

ALEX

And the roof you could quite easily get to. You are in the penthouse and, like I said, there is a domed glass ceiling immediately above you. You could go from the balcony onto the roof. You could drop down and go along various drainpipes... that said, Hamid, you will be aware that there will be a number of magical protections on a place of this stature anyway.

JAMES

Brutor is looking out over Paris with an expression that looks like he’s thinking, ‘It’s good to wear a man!’

(Group laughter)

BRYN

He’s got that expression like somebody in a portrait!

JAMES

Yeah!!

ALEX

As evening sets in, lights are going to come up around Paris. For Sasha, you won’t necessarily have seen this before – there’s a certain neon element to it, lots of very bright lights, most of it will be done magically. So there’s lots of...

Rusty Quill Gaming – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

you start seeing billboards coming to life in the far distance in the more garish areas. It's almost like looking at a video screen – full moving adverts for things and...

JAMES

Visit the off-World colonies... !

(Group laughter)

ALEX

That's the kind of thing we're talking, yeah! And there's advertisements for lectures and culture, and...

LYDIA

... flying ships?

ALEX

... you hear the strains of, like, orchestral music.

JAMES

It's a scene from Blade Runner.

ALEX

Oh yeah, totally. And off in the very, very distance, if you sort of crane yourself and look out maybe having to tilt round the balcony a bit...

LYDIA

Mmm hmm...

ALEX

... you can see the Eiffel Tower or Eiffel's Folly, in this case, and whilst all of the rest of the lights in the city are quite garish, you see tiny little pinpricks. It looks like natural light coming from what used to be a monument and it's a very different quality. It's very much more subdued compared to the garishness of Paris. There is a knock at the door.

[Knocking noise]

BEN/ZOLF

'Right, er, shall I get it?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'You get it.'

ALEX

One of the servants has already gone to the door. He hasn't opened it, he is stood there holding it ready to open and looking at Sasha as to whether to open it or not.

LYDIA/SASHA

'Oh, wait, no – he can get it. They probably won't stab him.'

BEN/ZOLF

‘Also, right...’ looking around the room, ‘none of what happened, right, will affect our working relationship, yeah? For any of us?’

JAMES/BERTIE

‘Mmm hmm.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘No.’

BEN/ZOLF

‘Good.’

ALEX

He opens the door and stood there are two very severely dressed gnomes. It looks like Bertie’s lawyers have turned up.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘So, what... what... Hi. Are you lawyers for, like, is this your room? That seems like it’s more appropriate. We’re sorry we ate your food. Do you want the room? Would you like a lobster? We ordered more lobster than we need, not more than we want, um, I mean, you can have half of a lobster!’

ALEX

Splitting the sentence between them they say, ‘It’s time... we talked.’

Rusty Quill Gaming – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

And I'll close the episode there!

ALL

[Cheering]

[Da da da daaaaaa]

LYDIA

Da da, da-da-da-da, da da, daaa-dah [like you'd hear in the circus], oh wait...

(Group laughter)

... wrong tune!!

ALEX

I realise that what I accidentally did in this episode was give you a magical hears back story-box that any time you need to, you can just express more back story! (Laughs)

JAMES

A special chamber for talking about your feelings. It sounds awful!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It's [0:49:22] – oh, god, I can't do the accent!

[0:49:25 talking over one another]

[... in the Big Brother household...]

[... in the Diary Room...]

[0:49:28 talking over one another]

[Sir Bertram MacGuffingham has come to the Diary Room]

LYDIA

He's in the magically shielded Diary Room...

(Group laughter)

[... He's having trouble with this week's challenge!]

BRYN

Hamid...

[... Being a competent human being...!]

[... Stealing bits of sweetcorn and putting them onto another plate...]

BRYN

... Hamid's under much stronger per gaius which is personal shame...

ALL

Yeah... !

Ohhh, you've got to love it!

ALEX

So, we'll end it there and we look forward to doing another one next week!

See you later, guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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JAMES

Genuinely, historically, there were occasions in the Thirties where they just, like, they changed so frequently the president claimed to be the president two some train god or something, and just got arrested because they thought, you're lying!

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill Gaming – [35] – [The Exposition Box]

It's not happening! I hope I'm in the Twenties and Thirties! I might be confusing the republics, but... yeah!

BEN

That's not the period we're in or the historical timeline we're in!

JAMES

Ahhh, I think the third republic ran... never mind... Yes! It's a different...

ALEX

A conversation for another time!

BRYN/JAMES

... another time!!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Both literally and figuratively.

LYDIA

And you want to be our friend! This is what happens all the time...

[James coughs]

... so is that!!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I love that the second... the second I give you a chance...

[clearing throat noises]

LYDIA

While I was delivering it I go quietly begin... and look and start assembling and the [0:51:40] open the envelope.

ALEX

I'm not going to do this – the idea that you then also forget everything that happened in the room as part of its warnings it's hilarious to me!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

It's just like, let's talk about some back story! If you missed the last episode, don't worry, it's fine!!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It appears to be a, oh, what's it called... ?

LYDIA

A law print. Lawyers have been here...

(Bryn laughs)

... I can track them by their spore...

(Group laughter)