

RQG – 39 – Sleuths, Smarm and Stations

Content Warnings

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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 39 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me for another adventure, I have

BEN

Ben Meredith

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

ALEX

And playing a character who's off moping

JAMES

James Ross

ALEX

And what characters are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett

BRYN

Hamid

JAMES

Sir Bertrand “Lone Wolf” Macguffingham

(laughing)

ALEX

So picking up where we left off...

LYDIA

It’s particularly harsh to be a lone wolf when his dog’s just run off.

JAMES

Too soon, too soon.

ALEX

So, just to mention it because it's been, what, 10 episodes since I've even mentioned it, the party are investigating the Simulacrum.

BEN

Are we?

BRYN

We're now embroiled in this Parisian journalistic intrigue thing.

ALEX

Hey where you end up is all...

LYDIA

Arcs within arcs

ALEX

So, yeah, you've made it to Paris. I think at this point I'm going to have to, for the sake of not having an intro that's 50 minutes long, you've made it to Paris as part of your investigations. Have visited Francois Henri, apparently of the Ordinateur

BRYN

Who we're quickly finding out is a bit of a villain.

ALEX

Well apparently. Who knows?

BRYN

Potentially from some people's perspective.

ALEX

Certainly Sasha's memory's been modified regarding the man and...

LYDIA

I thought we had a lovely chat, it was great.

ALEX

And you made it Le Gazette Grand, which you were right to mock for a name because it's a failed newspaper. Not even failing, it's dead. It's properly dead. Much like most of the party were almost after you tried to chase an old fat man and failed.

(laughing)

LYDIA

He threw something on Sasha and then she fell. And then Bertie decided to jump on top of her.

ALEX

The case remained the elderly, overweight gentleman did manage to outmanoeuvre four highly trained mercenaries. Three highly trained mercenaries. Zolf was there. Technically you count as three quarters of a mercenary I think even...

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

Nonetheless, you've managed to have a search briefly of the offices and found wheels within wheels, a few more details to add to your list that Brock, the generous patron, who gave Sasha a sweet at...

LYDIA

Supposedly.

ALEX

Well supposedly a sweet at La Triomphe in perpetuity and you now have a few more details and Sasha, I just checked to see if she had managed to open the safe...

JAMES

And Bertie has wandered off which has not been mentioned so far in the intro.

ALEX

That's a very good point.

LYDIA

Because his dog ran off because...

BEN

Because he tried to assassinate it.

(laughing)

ALEX

But the case remains that it's addressing a good point that you should bring up because what I'm rapidly finding, speaking to fans, is that a good chunk of our base are listening to us because we're good for people who've not played before. Apparently we're really good for, I never really did an RPG so I listened to you and now I get it and quite like it. So something that's going to come up when you're running games is sometimes a character will go off.

LYDIA

Sometimes they'll die.

ALEX

Sometimes they'll die.

LYDIA

Like I nearly died.

ALEX

Sometimes they'll go off. When a character goes off rather than is dead...

LYDIA

3 points or so away from being dead.

BRYN

Lydia's traumatised by this.

LYDIA

Multiple times.

ALEX

When a character heads off as running the sessions, you end up in a bit of a scenario where do you split it, like people have remembered I split the party when it was crossing the channel. Bertie was on one side, the rest of the party on the boat. This time, who knows? But my point is, yes you can split the party so you sort of splitting attention. Another way that people do is they play the sessions as normal however that player gets their own one off session

as they're doing side adventure and come back. The other option is that character just leaves. In that kind of scenario there's a couple of ways of doing it. The way I see most often is if a character leaves, properly leaves, the GM turns them into a NPC. So a non player character for the ongoing period of the game, maybe they could return if that player goes actually I really like playing that character. It was right that I left but can I bring them back. They will have been doing things in that absence unless they explicitly go I'm going to go to a hermitage and sit in a cave.

LYDIA

I will stand here and be frozen in time.

(laughing)

ALEX

Until such time as my back up character has become boring.

BRYN

I'm just going to climb into this carbonite here.

ALEX

But as we'll see how this plays out, I know how it's playing out, no one else will know but it's a good thing to be aware of. Sometimes you will have players, as James is today, who depending on what the party do maybe, having to sit and just deal for a while.

JAMES

I'll be helping in an advisory capacity.

ALEX

But the advice I have for the players is when that happens you're going to have to take a backseat. Like it's ok to take a backseat occasionally and you'll get focus eventually but yeah. So, picking up where we left off. Sasha has just attempted to open the safe. And has failed.

LYDIA

Oh no. And I got quite a high roll. I got about an 18.

ALEX

You got about an 18 but the safe, the large safe has defeated Sasha and when it comes to disabling devices, things like safes and so on, you can't just go oh I redo it. I'll redo it straight away. You're going...I'm going to say that it takes a decent length of time. What you could do though is, we've discussed this before, take 10 or take 20 because unless you think that safe is trapped then by failing to disable it explodes or something, which of course is a possibility...

BEN

We've already learnt that it's not because it's just failed. Unless the next words out of your mouth is and it explodes.

LYDIA

And so the....

ALEX

But my point is, is...

BRYN

Safe. No it wasn't.

(groaning)

ALEX

I like it! It was good. Nonetheless you failed. If you want to take a significant amount of time.

LYDIA

Yeah I'm going to take 10. I mean Hamid...

BRYN

Take 20

LYDIA

Take 20. Hamid is reading all those letters. It took you about ten minutes to describe what he read.

ALEX

That's a fair point. That's a fair point.

BRYN

The handwriting's terrible so...

ALEX

Taking 20, it's clear that while the rest of the building has been in a pretty poor condition, that safe is tight. Really well done, top of the line. It's a bit battered so it's been there a while but short of being magical it's about as good as that safe could really have been. But taking 20 you are of a sufficient skill to finally get it open but there will have been a bit of...that moment where you realise you're losing face. You put a tool in, you pull it out, it's bent. So you put a different tool in, you give it a tweak. You've got the first two tumblers down, then the third one resets the first two. Oh for...it's very frustrating.

LYDIA

Having a lot of fun.

ALEX

But nonetheless eventually you manage to get the safe open. So you open the safe. Inside there are three shelves. The top shelf which has, sort of, loose sheets or sheaths of paper. A middle shelf which appears to have some boxes, it looks like folders, papers and so on and then there is a bottom three drawers which are closed, latched, sort of, waterproof, airproof but they're not...

LYDIA

Important proof.

ALEX

Maybe! You don't know, there's no locks. They could just be...

LYDIA

What glowy things will be inside.

(laughing)

ALEX

So there you go.

LYDIA

I am going to check for traps. 18.

ALEX

There is a trap inside one of the drawers. You have wisely detected said trap.

LYDIA

Yes! What is this trap? Do I...

ALEX

You know there is a trap. You find a trigger.

LYDIA

Disable it. Disable it. Disable it.

ALEX

Attempting to disable it you realise you've set it off. You immediately spring back with your hands up and a thin, very thin...if you look at it sideways it wouldn't even be there, stiletto blade about as long as my hand, slips out and there's a little coating of something upon it that drips off the tip. It's blisteringly, razoring sharp and it slides out from the side. It would've definitely nicked you if you weren't very on it.

LYDIA

Ah this is a well good trap guys. Look at this. Like the mechanism is super slick. It almost got me. That is excellent craftsmanship.

BRYN

Are you ok?

LYDIA

Oh yeah, well I mean I'm impressed.

BEN

Do we break it off or...I've got a stick.

LYDIA

Yeah give me a hankie.

BRYN

Ok here you go.

LYDIA

Wipe the poison off and dangle the hankie at Hamid.

BEN

I hope it's not a contact poison.

BRYN

I don't take it.

LYDIA

I put the hankie down on the floor and open the small drawers which are now trapless.

ALEX

Yes. Inside the drawers you find cash! Specifically loads of silver.

LYDIA

[disappointed noise]

(laughing)

ALEX

Loads and loads of silver. Full to the brim but silver.

LYDIA

I mean, I move a couple of coins aside to see if there's any gold underneath.

ALEX

There's no gold.

(laughing)

LYDIA

I mean, just a few months ago for Sasha this would be a big haul but it's...

ALEX

Spoilt brat!

LYDIA

She has been ruined by these days of trunkfuls of gold from Kew.

BEN

That's bribe money, this is just newspaper money!

JAMES

Chump change!

ALEX

Printed media pfftt.

LYDIA

Of the three she hands...she pulls them out, hands one to Zolf and one to Hamid and begins to pour the other one into her own purse.

BEN

We can't take that.

BRYN

That's not ours.

LYDIA

Does not compute

(laughing)

It's like you just starting talking draconic. Impressive that your human mouths can do that though but it's not helping me past the situation.

(laughing)

BEN

We've not earned this, this is somebody's money.

BRYN

It's just stealing.

LYDIA

They just left it out though

BEN

In a safe

BRYN

That was locked!

BEN

With a deadly trap on it

BRYN

And hidden.

LYDIA

Anyone could've come by

(laughing)

BEN

No, just leave it...

BRYN

Who's money even is this?

LYDIA

Did a job. Get a load of cash. Get paid.

BRYN

But that's not paying though.

BEN

Oh actually though he did try to kill us so...

LYDIA

Yeah! He threw...he threw a bag of heavy stuff. I don't know why there was a bag of bricks on the roof but he pushed it on me, tried to kill me. Smashed me into pulp

BEN

Tell you what, you keep it...

LYDIA

My back still feels kind of weird. I've got a rash or something. Weird, shaped rash.

(laughing)

BEN

No that's a scar! Anyway no you keep it, danger pay. Give some to Bertie if we find him

LYDIA

Alright. Takes your one back. Looks at you like you're insane

ALEX

It looks to be about 500 gold but obviously...

BRYN

More than I was expecting.

ALEX

But split between a lot of silver so it's an enormous amount of small change making a decent amount of money.

BRYN

Shall I look through those documents quickly?

LYDIA

Ah yeah there's this lot from the top and then there's these rolls.

BRYN

I look through the folders first rather than the sheathes

ALEX

Folders...

BRYN

It's a really hard word to say.

ALEX

Sheathes is hard! Yeah, so it appears to be archived HR records. So it is names, next of kin, addresses, things like that.

BRYN

Is Amelie Rose on the list?

ALEX

Amelie Rose is on the list.

BRYN

So we have her address and the next of kin address.

ALEX

The next of kin address is her mother. It's a suburban address but it appears to be her mother's.

BRYN

Do we have her address as well?

ALEX

You have her address as well.

BRYN

So we have two potential addresses.

BEN

What's the editor's address?

BRYN

Oh that's a good point is he...is the editor in there?

ALEX

The editor's in there. His name is Auguste Lumiere and he has an address registered to here.

BRYN

Ah. Next of kin?

ALEX

Next of kin, he has a brother, Louis Lumiere.

BRYN

That's a silly name.

LYDIA

Cruel parents. If they call me Raquel Rackett.

BRYN

Any of the other names from our list in these documents? What was the document on the top shelf?

ALEX

The sheathes on the top shelf...

BRYN

Stop saying that word!

ALEX

It was the deeds to the property, it looks to be a record of...

BRYN

If we're stealing things we would steal the deeds.

LYDIA

Yeah I hold that...do we own this place now? You could get good rental on this.

BRYN

Not without a proper legal contract.

ALEX

If only you had Bertie and his linguistic checks

(laughing)

BRYN

I can't remember any previous role playing campaign where we took buildings as spoiled...as combat encounters.

ALEX

Fail...failed combat encounters! Just to spell that out!

BRYN

He left!

BEN

None of us died.

BRYN

We chased him off successfully.

ALEX

In addition to the deeds for the property and so on, there was also a list of original benefactors. So people who've donated money for the original set up of it. There's only about 20 people, something like that, and they're donating fairly small amounts. You do notice that he's given away 150% stake rather than 100%.

BRYN

Sensible!

ALEX

But nonetheless it's just continuing to paint a picture of a very sad, failed start up that got crippled by circumstance

LYDIA

Trying to disrupt the print industry with massive newspapers

(laughing)

Imagine if you will all the things you can do with newspaper but bigger. Bigger stories

ALEX

Whale and chips!

BRYN

Are there any of the names we've been looking for on the list of investors?

ALEX

No. It is just a bunch of...

BRYN

That's boring then.

ALEX

Yeah, it's just a bunch of...

BRYN

I don't think this is a clue at all!

BEN

A load of non plot relevant idiots.

ALEX

How dare they print something that isn't directly relevant to my immediate situation.

BRYN

Yes this would never have happened in a computer game

(laughing)

He says having recently played Morrowind where they literally wrote 100 books, only 10 of which...

BEN

We haven't picked up about 15 boring ideologues yet.

BRYN

We could go and look for Amelie Rose at other address

BEN

She seems to be tying this together and...

BRYN

I mean the guy who ran off after her lives her apparently but we could look for his brother.

LYDIA

We could get some dinner back at the hotel first, maybe a...

BEN

We should probably go back and see if Bertie's back there as well.

BRYN

Yeah we should look for Bertie.

LYDIA

Maybe Brutor's run back there too.

BEN

Yeah true it's the only place he knows.

LYDIA

He knows where he gets fed.

BEN

Yeah and he's a dog who likes his comfort.

BRYN

I do have plans this evening as well so I should get back in time for those.

LYDIA

Oooh what plans?

BRYN

I arranged to meet the receptionist for dinner.

BEN

Yeah he has a date.

LYDIA

My memory just got wiped before that. I mean...

BEN

He's got a date.

LYDIA

Also I'm not very good at listening or understanding people so if he hinted I wouldn't have necessarily understood that.

BRYN

That's very candid Sasha!

(laughing)

LYDIA

She...ah can we do it again!

BRYN

Should we look for Bertie or should we just assume he'll come back to the hotel.

BEN

I don't know where he's going to be other than sulking around the corner or...

LYDIA

You're his mate!

BRYN

That's true, I mean...it's not like him to...

BEN

Is he a sad drinker?

BRYN

Normally he says something before he wanders off. I've never really seen him like that. He was very quiet. That's not like Bertie at all.

LYDIA

I think we should go back to the hotel and then have a dire lobster and then think about it.

BEN

We can have a chat. We've got everything we're going to get out of this place and to be honest from that letter you found it looks like he probably thought we were just assassins.

BRYN

Yeah he seems to think people would be coming for him.

BEN

So it's a case of mistaken identity unfortunately. We could've spoken and helped him but just not run away.

LYDIA

I even said we just want to help.

BEN

Yeah but that's what an assassin would say.

LYDIA

Is it?

BEN

A clever one yeah.

ALEX

I've got ice cream!

BEN

Now that would be an almost irresistible...

(laughing)

What flavour? Mint. I'm in. I'm willing to risk it.

BRYN

Mint and arsenic.

BEN

Zolf just went of...broke the fourth wall there.

ALEX

Get back in there.

BRYN

Oops we're both doing it!

ALEX

What's the plan?

BEN

Going back to the hotel.

BRYN

Yeah

LYDIA

We've had quite a long day and Sasha is still about 7 hit points down and would like to have a meal and a rest.

ALEX

So we'll say you head back to La Triomphe presumably. And I think it'll be a good time to take a break there and then we'll be back in a couple of minutes.

LYDIA

Bye.

ALEX

And welcome back. So we'll say that you are, as we said heading back to La Triomphe. You see still stood, still arms as if to hold a Brutor that's no longer there...

BRYN

He's a memorial to our failure.

JAMES

How poignant is that.

ALEX

A mechanical man is just stood there beside the red carpet. Perfectly stationary at the entrance.

LYDIA

I push him slightly, just enough to...

ALEX

He fails to move because he's really heavy. Like, really, really heavy.

LYDIA

I'm slightly unnerved by that so don't ask him to wake up.

BEN

Are you going to deal with that?

LYDIA

He's...I didn't ask for him.

BEN

Yeah but people are going to move him. Maybe just tell him to stand in a corner, just get himself out of the way.

ALEX

Give me a perception check everyone

BEN

Nat 20.

BRYN

26

LYDIA

18

ALEX

All of you notice that he's got a little bit dusty as the day's worn on and someone has put clean me across his shoulder blades. In French.

BRYN

I'm really glad I critted on that.

ALEX

It's important.

BRYN

You can tell what kind of person it is.

JAMES

Someone left handed did it.

BEN

Also on his butt somebody had scrawled in a clue.

ALEX

Here is everything you need to know.

BEN

Yes! I did it.

LYDIA

Alright, mechanical man like go stand in that corner.

ALEX

He starts stomping to the corner of the doorway still outside and then stands.

LYDIA

Good. Upstairs we go.

BEN

Fair enough.

ALEX

So heading in, immediately one of your many butlers, under butlers and sub under butlers, one of them comes up and heads over to Zolf. Telegram for your sir. And hands it to Zolf and then bustles off.

BEN

Why? I hate getting post.

LYDIA

Maybe it's Bertie being like...

BEN

He would've sent it to Hamid, not me.

LYDIA

Ah that's true.

BEN

Anyway let's go upstairs and I'll open this up and hope it doesn't...it's not like...

LYDIA

I can check it for traps.

BEN

Well no because it will be packed by the Post Office not...

LYDIA

Oh right. Have you done anything to the Post Office?

BEN

No! Not as far as I'm aware!

(laughing)

BRYN

Someone telegraphed you anthrax.

BEN

There was that one week that I lost...we'll just stop.

(laughing)

Anyway, no there was that one week I lost in Barcelona but I don't think I did anything. Anyway, go upstairs.

ALEX

Ok upstairs.

LYDIA

Is there more food?

ALEX

Everything is set ready to go again.

LYDIA

Sasha comfort eats.

ALEX

Aw.

BRYN

I get ready for my date. It takes me one round.

(laughing)

ALEX

You look great

LYDIA

Is there more than that? Are you choosing or do you know exactly what the right...

BRYN

I know. I always know.

BEN

What is it?

BRYN

It's a dinner suit. Classic elegance, the finest material. Perfectly tailored.

BEN

And Zolf opens his telegram.

ALEX

It just has, report, stop. Lady Starling, stop. That's it.

BEN

Brilliant, thought so. We're being chased up by the meritocracy. I mean by...the head of the secret service.

(laughing)

I can't remember what our job is!

BRYN

Our employers.

BEN

Yeah...but no genuinely Zolf was like, who was she again?

ALEX

Lady Starling was head of the meritocratic forces. The new head after the incident at...

BEN

Ah yeah.

LYDIA

Sasha looks up with a chicken leg in her mouth.

BEN

Starling. You know, the one who's given us this job. The big job.

BRYN

We don't have much to report yet. Yeah a lot isn't directly relevant.

BEN

Just been my history catching up with me.

BRYN

Just delays arriving in Paris following threads there.

LYDIA

Sasha swallows, I got squashed. Tell her that.

BEN

That's not relevant to her. Not to you.

LYDIA

Well very relevant to me. Turns back to her food and eats

BEN

I might've saved your life. So, yeah, call over a servant, a busboy.

ALEX

Yes.

BEN

Right I need a telegram sent.

ALEX

To where?

BEN

To Whitehall?

ALEX

Yeah it will be Whitehall.

BEN

Ok cool. Care of Lady Starling. Nothing much yet, stop. Delayed due to weather, stop. Following up lead in Paris, stop. Will report with more later, stop.

LYDIA

Why do you keep stopping? Like he's still writing?

BEN

No that's how you do full stops.

LYDIA

Ah!

ALEX

The butler, after the assigns, just goes ok and then just packs it up.

BEN

Where is it going?

ALEX

The front desk of Whitehall care of Lady Starling.

BEN

Yep

ALEX

Immediate attention. You're welcome sir. Runs off.

BEN

So that's that done.

LYDIA

Maybe we should leave a note for Bertie here so that if he comes back he knows that we're around.

BEN

Well we should probably stay the night. If Hamid's got to go to this date then probably best if we don't go out just the two of us.

LYDIA

Yeah my back's proper hurting.

BEN

Yeah you should take a good night's rest and we'll see if Bertie comes back and maybe we can have a chat.

LYDIA

What of this, she gestures at the piles of fruit, carcasses of animals, the truffles, the jellies...

ALEX

The jellied truffles

LYDIA

The jellied truffles

(laughing)

The jellied truffle meat carcasses, the carcasses of the giant jelly truffle of the mountains...which of these do you think is best for list broken bones?
Medicinal like?

BEN

Over a night, no. Not much.

ALEX

So everyone is resting that evening.

BRYN

I'm going on my date.

ALEX

And Hamid is going on his date.

LYDIA

Good luck Hamid, not that you need it! Good suit.

BEN

Please don't make this a massive waste of time.

ALEX

So we'll accelerate time. We'll say that Zolf and Sasha are resting and Hamid is dating. Very important.

BEN

And just for the record Zolf is looking very tired.

ALEX

You've mentioned this before, I'm under the impression that you're obviously, you're having a date, a genuine date but also hoping for some more information.

BRYN

Yes, so she works for Francois Henri and I still want to know about him but this is the first reasonably attractive woman of appropriate size that Hamid has

encountered on this adventure so he'd also enjoy a lovely evening in her company.

ALEX

I would say then give me two diplomacy rolls; one is for the quality of the actual date, the other one is for the quality of the actual sort of mining for information.

BEN

What's your date dice?

BRYN

The red die is for the romance

ALEX

A little bit of passion

BRYN

And the silver die is for the information.

ALEX

Very well

BRYN

The red die is really hard to read.

JAMES

Confusing signals Bryn

(laughing)

ALEX

I really like you but...

BRYN

They're both diplomacy rolls.

ALEX

Yes

BRYN

So 21 and 20.

ALEX

21. [clapping]

JAMES

Well done!

LYDIA

Well to be fair he has a bonus of 10 so he actually rolled really badly...

BRYN

Very average for Hamid but still sterling for anyone else.

ALEX

If it wasn't already a lot of work I would play my applause backwards to take it away from you. So first when it comes to the date you have a good time. You have less in common than you'd have liked but it becomes readily apparent that you are quite compatible and you have a good enough time. It seems like there's not much of a spark of passion or anything but it's perfectly pleasant as an evening and she's very appreciative of the company because...

BRYN

What's her name?

ALEX

Her name?

BRYN

He didn't get it yet

JAMES

Ooh that's cold. That is.

(laughing)

BRYN

We didn't get it in game terms.

ALEX

Her name's Madeline **Riar**. It's a name of no big family or anything like that. When it comes to mining for the information it becomes apparent why she is at the company. It takes a while for her to, you know, open up and get past the small talk.

BRYN

Yeah and I'm not, like, pushing hard for it.

ALEX

Of course. You've got hours and hours and hours. It comes out that everyone at L'Arc de l'Ordinateur is behaving very peculiarly. Francois Henri is in his office all the time. He's seen entering and leaving, he's refused all appointments. He's answering correspondence perfectly well but he's not meeting anyone but he is seen entering and leaving daily. A few of the ordinatists have disappeared, mostly the higher up ones. The lower down ones are continuing but they're being...it's gone from being quite a friendly and sociable atmosphere not to hostile, just to cold. People have stopped talking to her. People have stopped interacting with each other. It's becoming very, for lack of a better word, mechanical. It's becoming very, very cold as a place

to work. She's struggling and is actually considering handing in her notice because she's had enough of it and having worked here she can basically pick any of the administrative positions she wants in Paris.

BRYN

Yeah. I'm going to ask her has she noticed any personality changes in any of the ordinateurs. Is that what's changed or is it the atmosphere and the people that have left? Because what we learnt from the letters at the newspaper is that there were some really weird sudden personality changes.

ALEX

It's both. It's both. So half of them...there's been a bunch of sudden departures. None of them were due to crises, it was all suddenly someone accepting a job in...

BRYN

So partly the same phenomenon.

ALEX

Yes. It certainly is ringing the same bells to Hamid. Lots of sudden departures from nowhere with very little preparation but most of them interestingly are always after really good news. So it's not like oh there's someone really ill you have to leave. It's more like this position that you always wanted it just opened up but it is in Prague. Oh you know how you were really, really hoping for that house. That mansion's opened up but it's really out in the sticks so you're not going to be able to work in Paris. Like loads of really good fortune

but she starts laughing at herself a little bit, she's starting to find it...she says she finds it a bit creepy in that either people went cold and stopped being sociable and interacting with one another or they just left. They didn't change, they didn't behave any differently but suddenly an amazing opportunity opened up so slowly it's just whittled away any kind of personality

BRYN

I'm interested and sympathetic

ALEX

We'll say that the date rolls on and at the end of it I won't RP it but effectively she goes I've had a great time. It's been really, really fun but she's making it very clear it's not going to go anywhere but she's had a nice time.

BRYN

I will thank her for a lovely evening and pick up the bill in the restaurant.

ALEX

It was a very stylish place by the way. It wasn't very expensive. It was a little bit modest but in a really, kind of, warm inviting way. It was kind of half café, half restaurant

BRYN

It was the kind of place a local goes.

ALEX

Yeah exactly. So we will skip ahead. I'm afraid there was no good night kiss.
At best, a peck on the cheek.

BRYN

Curses!

ALEX

So presumably you head back to La Triomphe.

BRYN

Yeah

ALEX

In the lobby walking past the mechanical man still stood just beside the door perfectly still, ready to hold Brutor but isn't there. You recognise a face in the lobby. Quietly chatting, probably even attempting to chat up someone at the front desk. When you enter the person behind the front desk sees you, rapt to attention and kid of ushers the person away. They turn around. You are face to face with Oscar Wilde.

BRYN

I roll my eyes heavily. I go up to him. What are you doing here?

ALEX

How are you Hamid? How's things? Are you alright?

BRYN

Perfectly fine, thank you.

ALEX

Listen I...I'm just wondering if I can have a chat with all of you. I mean, this lovely gentleman here, gives a wink to the man behind the front desk who's completely stony faced, definitely hasn't been flirting, definitely not, that's completely inappropriate, I've just been chatting to him and well, I understand that you have the suite. I think you might want to hear what I've got to say in a bit of a private area if you know what I mean.

BRYN

I turn to the desk and go do you have a conference room?

ALEX

The person behind the front desk sort of hesitates, leans in. Wilde actually makes a point of stepping back so that he can't hear although is interested. The man behind the front desk goes, do you mean the...

BRYN

No

ALEX

Yes we do.

BRYN

Good, excellent

(laughing)

ALEX

That's fine. If you just...

BRYN

If you could prepare it for us, send a couple of bottles of wine and ask, and I say this bit a bit louder so that Wilde can overhear, ask just Mr Smith and Miss Rackett to join myself and Mr Wilde there.

ALEX

Certainly. He [clapping noise], calls for people, they hustle off. Shall we accelerate time to...

BEN

What's the message that's been given to us?

ALEX

A butler is ringing the doorbell.

BEN

Yes?

ALEX

There is someone waiting for you in the lobby with Mr Hamid and they are requesting your presence in the conference room Yourself and Miss Rackett.

BEN

Who are they?

ALEX

Mr Wilde.

BEN

Oh good. This calls for champagne. I will go get Miss Rackett. If you would let them know that we will be with them shortly.

ALEX

Of course.

BEN

Going to go and poke Sasha. Wilde's turned up.

LYDIA

Ah great, that's wonderful. I'll try and prepare some puns.

(laughter)

If you say it's good to see you, I'll be like because it wasn't good when we were on the sea.

(laughing)

BEN

He's not going to get that!

ALEX

We will cut to the conference where the whole journey you have been talking.

BEN

I have got from the room a bucket of champagne with ice and everything so I'm just carrying that down. Like a bucket.

ALEX

Sure

LYDIA

How about you say here's a bucket of champagne and I'll say because you're quite wine-y.

ALEX

The door opens to Hamid and Wilde.

BEN

Champagne for my real friends, real pain for my sham friends.

LYDIA

Sasha does not think of that.

BRYN

That's solid but unfortunately not possible right now.

ALEX

So the door is opened, you are at the entrance to the conference room. The bellhops hold the door open for you.

LYDIA

How about you say hello and I'll be like really low because of what you wrote.

BEN

Yeah, Mr Wilde. Hello.

ALEX

Mr Smith

BEN

And then look at Sasha

LYDIA

I say hi.

(laughing)

ALEX

He replies, not yet but the night is young! Ha. So.

BEN

I've brought a gift.

ALEX

Oh fantastic.

BEN

I get the champagne bottle out and offer it to him.

ALEX

Oh thank you.

BEN

Drop it.

ALEX

He doesn't catch it. he has no reflexes.

BEN

Pour out the ice, create water in the bucket and tip it over his head.

ALEX

He just stands there dripping. He takes it amazingly well despite the fact of how cold it was.

JAMES

You've just down the ice bucket challenge with Oscar Wilde

(laughing)

BEN

Imagine how many donations that would get! I've exhumed and resurrected this celebrity!

ALEX

Wilde lifts the bucket off his head quite gracefully and places it down on the table.

BEN

Next time I'll do it in reverse order. Bucket on the floor. You in the bucket.

ALEX

Yes very good.

BEN

No, no, literally I will kill you if you write another article like that again. I will straight up murder your smug little butt.

ALEX

Fair enough. He clicks his fingers and is instantly dry. He then reaches, pulls off a sleeve, pulls back and all of his clothes are completely pressed, dry and he's good to go again.

BEN

Create water

(laughing)

ALEX

I'm happy to go Wilde meets your eye and finally, finally for the first time since you've ever met the guy, there is a slight rise. Just a little in the eyes, dead eyed to you, clicks his fingers and dries himself again.

BEN

I will stare him dead eyed as well and just tighten my grip on my trident.

(laughing)

BRYN

You know what they say Mr Wilde the only thing worse than not being talked about is being drowned in a bucket by an angry Priest of Poseidon

(laughing)

ALEX

You've got something there. It might need a bit of work but something. I understand, for what it's worth it was very popular and I suspect that...

BEN

Popularity's always a measure of value as we all know

ALEX

Of course.

BEN

As he says that I just slowly raise my hand, continue.

ALEX

He makes dead eye with you and raises his and raises one eyebrow

(laughing)

BEN

I raise the other hand.

LYDIA

Sasha's not really understanding what's going on so has raised her hands.

ALEX

Oscar Wilde casts a spell. Do you intend to interrupt or interfere in any way?

BEN

How close is he to me? Have we got him quite close?

ALEX

Yes

BEN

Sweet! Give him a headbutt but because I'm a dwarf in the solar plexus.

(laughing)

ALEX

Give me the attack roll. There's no Bertie here to...

BEN

No!

(laughing)

I roll a 2. I rolled a 2 so unless he's really bad.

ALEX

It's not that bad. He steps aside and stops whatever he was about to cast. Look this is fun but honestly I'm actually here because I'm concerned. I ran into Sir Bertrand. Well I say ran into, I saw Sir Bertrand. I say saw, I was following Sir Bertrand and he appears to be making plans to leave Paris without you. I thought you'd want to know.

BRYN

Thank you Mr Wilde that might actually be considerate of you.

ALEX

You're very welcome. I'm nothing but considerate, it's just some people don't appreciate the help I give.

BEN

I laugh uproariously.

LYDIA

He's not headed to a place that's considerably higher directly above me is he?

(laughing)

Just wanted to check.

ALEX

He kind of looks puzzled briefly. I don't get that one. Looks to Zolf and Hamid.

BEN

Personal joke. Don't worry about it.

ALEX

Well nonetheless, he's making his way to the station and he appears to be attempting to purchase some kind of ticket away from Paris. I don't know the specifics, I can only get so close.

BEN

Creepy. Real creepy.

ALEX

Oh he's not that bad once you get to know him. He's quite pleasant in his own way.

LYDIA

Did he have his dog with him?

ALEX

No actually, no.

BEN

Right

LYDIA

Did you follow the dog?

ALEX

Did I...no.

LYDIA

Ah I was beginning to like that dog.

ALEX

I have to ask how are things going here?

BEN

Thanks you can sod off now.

ALEX

Are you sure?

BEN

Hand up again.

ALEX

Fine. He reaches down, picks up the champagne and starts heading towards the door. If there is any service I can be rendering, I would say for what it's worth that the popularity that Sir Bertrand garnered from that article will no doubt prove quite useful for him future and I'd be happy to offer the same kind of services in future.

BEN

I'm so happy for him.

ALEX

He leans to Hamid as he's heading out and leans to Hamid, goodness knows that a hand name could do with a bit of positive press and heads out.

BRYN

Before he leaves I tell him, thank you Mr Wilde but I'm quite certain that none us will require the "services" you provided our friend Bertie.

BEN

Does the conference room lead to the lobby?

ALEX

It leads to a corridor, the corridor leads to the lobby.

BEN

Brilliant, I'm going to wait until he's just down the end of the corridor and I've still got line of sight so like 30 foot away [clicking fingers]

ALEX

You click your fingers, immediately not looking back Oscar Wilde snaps his fingers. There is no affect from your spell and he carries on walking out of the corridor.

BEN

Cocky son of a...

ALEX

Heads down into the foyer.

BEN

That man! That man!

LYDIA

What are you into him too?

(laughing)

BEN

Definitely not after everything he's done. Also no but no. How could you find anyone that irritating attractive unless you're somebody like Bertie?!

Anyway...

BRYN

I'm going to go to the train station and try and find Bertie. Are you guys going to come?

BEN

We probably should all go.

LYDIA

Alright

BRYN

You don't have to.

LYDIA

I'll go. I'll make sure that I take the high ground.

BEN

I've got to say I think that was an accident.

LYDIA

It didn't feel...

BRYN

I head towards the train station.

ALEX

We'll cut ahead. You all head to the station. Parisian Central. It's getting on. It's late but it's a metropolis. The city, quite literally is never sleeping since a huge number of its inhabitants are mechanical and don't need sleep.

LYDIA

Sasha keeps flowing in and out of crowds, quite enjoying becoming invisible and then popping up again slightly surprising you guys.

ALEX

You see there's actually a very disproportionately large amount of street entertainers because you're still in the upmarket area. Like it's very touristy almost but nonetheless you make it to the central station and it's very easy to...

BRYN

I listen out for a large English voice complaining.

ALEX

It's very easy to trace where Bertie's been because half of the people are still referring to him as that man from the magazine, half of them are just pointing to a mopey guy in full plate which is still rare and then half of them, I'm aware there's three halves here, are honestly just keeping an eye on everything that's going by and just treating him as a punter so there's lots of stories of someone who is just man with too much money and not enough sense who wasn't giving us...nonetheless we'll cut ahead to you make it to the station. It's quieter than it was but it's still very busy and give me a perception check all of you.

BRYN

25

BEN

23

LYDIA

11

ALEX

11. Hamid and Zolf see Sasha's impeded because of all of the taller people getting in her way. Looking between people's legs you see about three

platforms distance there is final call being made on a train and you see Bertie stepping on board.

BRYN

I run towards it shouting Bertie! Bertie!

JAMES

Bertie makes a perception check. 15 – 1.

ALEX

Oh he sees. He hears. He knows.

JAMES

He hears but he doesn't turn around.

ALEX

The train starts [whistling noise]

BRYN

I try to run and at least catch Bertie's eye and give him a friendly wave as the train accelerates away from me

ALEX

Does Bertie see Hamid wave?

JAMES

No, he heard Hamid and did not turn around.

BRYN

He's trying very hard not to look.

ALEX

The train pulls out of Central Parisian Station with Bertie on it alone. Who knows for how long. And I think we'll close the episode there.

LYDIA

Oh dear! Emotions. Emotions.

BRYN

Feelings!

ALEX

I wonder if Bertie's got to leave. He needs 17 sessions to go bad, that's what I'm feeling. Bad!

(laughing)

Oh of course!

LYDIA

The fact that the dog is gone means I feel an absence.

BRYN

It's him in the street on his knees just going what's happening?

BEN

Bertie is feeling a new emotion.

ALEX

And slowly he holds up his finger and everything just swims back into...

(laughing)

BEN

Going back to my special place

ALEX

So, we'll close it there and we'll re-join again next week. Goodness me hasn't this got exciting and strange and different. But until then bye guys.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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