

## RQG – 45 – Mr Ceiling

### Content Warnings

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**[Show Theme - Intro]**

**ALEX**

Hello and welcome to episode 45 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and everyone's here

**(cheering)**

What are your names?

**JAMES**

James Ross

**ALEX**

Say that again, I just like hearing it!

**JAMES**

James Ross

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**ALEX**

One more time!

**JAMES**

James Ross!

**ALEX**

With?

**BEN**

Ben Meredith

**ALEX**

Because you're here too!

**(cheering)**

**BRYN**

Bryn Monroe

**(cheering)**

**LYDIA**

Lydia Nicholas

**ALEX**

The only person who was here the whole time!

**(cheering)**

**ALEX**

So everyone's back together. Not in the best of shape.

**JAMES**

When you say everyone's back together like...

**ALEX**

All of the bits are here just necessarily in the right order. And who are you playing?

**JAMES**

Sir Bertrand "Hero of the Hour" Macguffingham.

**BRYN**

I don't know, I'm still unconscious I could be anyone! I don't know who's brain is in that body on that table, Alex.

**JAMES**

It's Hitler's shark brain.

**ALEX**

What is it with you guys and just skipping right to the good bit!

**LYDIA**

Sasha Rackett, presumably mostly Sasha Rackett.

**BEN**

Zolf “any port in an arm” Smith

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

So yeah, if you haven’t listened to the previous episode before this one...

**LYDIA**

That will make no sense!

**ALEX**

You really should. To be honest it’s not going to make a lot of sense skipping ahead anyway but especially those last ones.

**BRYN**

I’m heavy on pop culture references but the pop culture is entirely me so...

**ALEX**

So in big, broad strokes Paris, investigating...

**BRYN**

Question mark, question mark, question mark

**ALEX**

Underground lab. And the last thing that happened, Zolf managed to put Sasha back together again and I think as far as Sasha's concerned there was never anything wrong in the first place.

**LYDIA**

We're all fine. I mean like my pulse is a bit strange. It seems to be a bit out of sync.

**ALEX**

It's funny that you say that...we'll return to that as a thing a bit later.

**LYDIA**

Oh god! Ok, he's a psychopath but we respect his craft. Calm.

**ALEX**

So the last thing that happened is Sasha woke up, a big scary metallic man was coming. And it was Bertie. Bertie stood in the doorway, Hamid is still

unconscious and the two of you are looking at him standing in the doorway as he's made a tasteless joke as a way of saying hello.

**LYDIA**

Sasha is lying down and peering up through an eyebrow. So she's seeing all of this, like over the top of her head. Like looking up from a prone position.

**ALEX**

Go for it.

**JAMES**

Hello young lady. Sleeping well are we?

**LYDIA**

Shut the eye.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Pretend he's not real!

**JAMES**

The hero of the hour has arrived. You must all be delighted to see me. I know I would be in your position. Mr Smith, you are...yes, shorter than I remember you.

**BEN**

Who are you?

**JAMES**

I am Sir Bertrand “Hero of the Hour” Macguffingham and you, Mr Smith are Zolf “Short Nautical Minute” Smith.

**BEN**

No because we’re in a lab and if you’d actually done your research you would know that Bertie probably wouldn’t even know what a lab was. So drop the act...

**JAMES**

So how would I know that this was a lab if I was me and you’d asked me whether this was a lab or not. Ha! Quod erat demonstrandum Mr Smith. It would appear that you are as short on sense as you are on legs. So...

**LYDIA**

Sasha does mumble, that does sound like him.

**BEN**

Definitely a good act

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

Young lady it is a pleasure and a delight to see you once again. Have you seen Hamid anywhere?

**BEN**

Oh wait a minute, Bertie? Brutor doesn't care where you are.

**JAMES**

A single tear rolls down his cheek.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Good to have you back Bertie! Good to have you back.

**JAMES**

Well you still owe me money! Now where is Hamid?

**BEN**

Hamid is over there.

**JAMES**

Bertie turns to look at Hamid. What condition is Hamid in?

**LYDIA**

Sasha's going to sit up and look over as well.

**JAMES**

I'd also like to know are these guys wearing their armour, did they have...

**ALEX**

Yes

**LYDIA**

Am I wearing any clothes at all?

**BRYN**

Were we lying naked on these tables.

**ALEX**

So, all of you are in the clothes that you wearing, the last thing that you remember. With a bit more context however, Zolf you were just effectively shirt, no armour or anything like that. For Sasha, your magical leather armour is beside the table but everything else is exactly the same. It's just...there was a clean cut to reach through to the body beneath.

**BRYN**

A classic autopsy cut.

**ALEX**

And it's the same of Hamid's clothing. So his magical sleeves are placed just beside the bed. There's been a cut through the shirt to expose the chest beneath and for Hamid specifically, his arm where there was that spiral scar, the spiral has been opened. It doesn't look like it's infected or anything like that. It looks like it's been opened but could quite easily be healed by Zolf or someone similar.

**BEN**

Sure and he's had the cut in his clothes in the autopsy section.

**ALEX**

So he has had no cuts on his body whatsoever but the shirt has been cut as if to begin the process of whatever.

**BRYN**

Am I wearing both my rings? I've got a magical ring on each hand.

**ALEX**

Your rings haven't been removed.

**LYDIA**

I'm going to put the leather jacket and stuff on before coming over to join you all.

**ALEX**

Sure.

**BEN**

Right. Hamid are you awake?

**JAMES**

Bertie strides over to Hamid. Hamid! Hamid! Hamid!

**BEN**

Wait, wait, wait. I'll put his arm back first. I'm going to convert divine favour into a level 1 for cure light wounds. That was rubbish and that is 4 hit points.

**ALEX**

4?

**BEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

You are conscious but at the very bottom minimum level.

**BRYN**

So I'm on 1 hit point.

**ALEX**

You are on 1 hit point but again like Sasha you don't feel atrocious however his arm is sealed up and it appears to have been sealed completely fine again. It was very easy, there was no complications.

**BEN**

He looks in good condition.

**ALEX**

He looks in good condition. Sasha.

**LYDIA**

Putting on my leather jacket.

**ALEX**

As you're putting on your leather jacket, you do actually feel like you're palpitating.

**LYDIA**

I'm feeling something soft.

**ALEX**

You feel like your heartbeat is irregular and you're shaking a little bit. You don't feel like you're going to collapse. It's not dizzy like that but you feel like you've

had about 50 cups of coffee. It's quite peculiar. Again you're still tired. It's as if you've pulled an all-nighter and were fuelled entirely by coffee. Twice.

**LYDIA**

Yeah she just puts her leather jacket and puts her hands in her pockets, which whilst people not notice is something that she would never have done before. It's a way of making her hands not ready to grasp things.

**ALEX**

Yeah what's with that!

**LYDIA**

The hands are going to be sitting in her pockets.

**ALEX**

So you know, everything in your pockets and the bandolier it's all there. No one has removed it.

**LYDIA**

Oh she counts the daggers. So I think I'm not on 13 daggers.

**ALEX**

Basically yeah and anything you had when you went into the water is still there. Nothing appears to have been lost.

**BRYN**

What happened? Am I dead? Are you all dead too?

**BEN**

Demonstrably not. Well you appear to be....

**JAMES**

Although I have been mistaken for the face of an angel you are not dead Hamid.

**BEN**

Bertie actually, where on earth are we?

**BRYN**

It's good to see you Bertie.

**JAMES**

It's good to see you too Hamid.

**BEN**

And what are you doing here and what are we doing here and what the hell is going on with everything, pointing at the sockets in my legs.

**JAMES**

Well I was in the Alps and I was hunting for the lost Tomb of Hannibal.

**BEN**

Skip to the end.

**JAMES**

I succeeded. It was brilliant!

**BRYN**

Oh well done you! That's quite a thing.

**BEN**

Congratulations. Claps all around. WHY!

**BRYN**

You have to tell me the whole story but later maybe.

**JAMES**

I will. I found the Serpent of Command.

**BRYN**

Amazing!

**BEN**

Hamid! Time and place!

**BRYN**

Sorry, I got distracted.

**JAMES**

So I sent him back to Trinity.

**BRYN**

Well we'll finish...

**BEN**

Legs! Sockets! Her organs weren't in her body when I found her!

**LYDIA**

What? WHAT!

**BEN**

I put them all back! Yes exactly!

**LYDIA**

But you put them back in the right place, right? You put them back. Hands come out the pockets. Feeling, I don't really know where organs are supposed to go but I've sliced a lot of people up.

**JAMES**

You've never had to put them back in!

**LYDIA**

Just sort of patting different bits...

**ALEX**

You know the important bits but you don't know...

**LYDIA**

Where is my kidney?!

**BEN**

Yes, alright because I woke up in that tank with a thing down my throat and I had to climb out and I don't have any legs anymore and they put sockets in my leg and I've been trying to keep really calm for a very long time because I can't walk anymore and right now I'm really at the end of my tether. So if you wouldn't mind concentrating and telling me where we are that would be really nice. Thank you.

**LYDIA**

What does a kidney even feel like?

**JAMES**

Waking up legless in a tank sounds like a pretty good night out to me but there you go.

**BEN**

Bertie! Not in the mood. Please.

**JAMES**

So turns out that Oscar Wilde is our contact with the meritocrats which is an awful nuisance because it means I need to wait until we finish this mission because I fillet him like a chicken and then press him onto a grill like a chicken and then discard bits of him like a chicken. And then battery farm him like a chicken.

**BRYN**

So where are we? And how did you find us?

**JAMES**

We're deep underground. Beyond that I can't tell you very much. I was sent a message by Mr Wilde to head in this direction. I was escorted via...from Notre Dame under the surface accompanied by a series of remarkably dim paladins. Dave and Steve are outside.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Dave and Steve...he said it so it's true.

**BRYN**

Presumably it's Davide and Stefan.

**JAMES**

No! It's Dave and Steve!

**BEN**

He's anglicised it because he's Bertie.

**JAMES**

So anyway they're outside trying to learn how to count fingers. It's hilarious. But throughout this complex it appears to be completely uninhabited.

**BRYN**

Well someone must have done this to us. I can't....are you ok Sasha?

**LYDIA**

I don't know what a kidney feels like and I don't know if I've got enough!

**BEN**

Yeah you do. I can personally attest to all of your organs being in the right place.

**BRYN**

Zolf! You've lost your other leg!

**BEN**

Yes. Thank you for that Hamid.

**BRYN**

I'm sorry!

**BEN**

Yes

**JAMES**

Why did you do it? Oh that's a statement of regret, not an apology.

**ALEX**

For listeners, the face that it is etched onto Hamid/Bryn's face at this point...

**BEN**

Bertie little bit of column a, little bit of column b. How's your arm?

**ALEX**

Your arm is functioning perfectly. No problems. In fact the only reference to the fact that there's been anything at all. There is still the spiral scar. You notice that the skin at the exact edges of all of the spiral scar has a certain metallic quality to it. It's almost like there was an inflammation but shiny. But beyond that your hand seems completely functional.

**BRYN**

Oh! Oh! Oh! I pat it thoroughly. Yes, yes it seems ok. Oh Zolf, I'm so sorry. I rush over to Zolf and hug him and cry into his strong manly shoulders.

**BEN**

Yeah ok just not...

**JAMES**

Now, now Hamid. Stiff upper lip. Everything's going to be fine.

**BEN**

We've had enough emotion.

**JAMES**

No point crying over spilt limbs.

**LYDIA**

Do the rest of us have ports in bits of us as well?

**ALEX**

No.

**LYDIA**

Oh so only Zolf.

**BEN**

Aren't I lucky. So right shall we get out.

**BRYN**

Yes, oh dear.

**LYDIA**

Do you want to cast your disc thing and I can push you along until we find you some peg legs.

**BRYN**

We'll get you better legs. We'll get you some proper...some really good ones this time Zolf.

**JAMES**

Well I've got a papoose with a vacancy.

**LYDIA**

You can cast your disc.

**BEN**

I would rather die!

**JAMES**

Very well!

**ALEX**

I haven't worked this hard to bring you all back together to have one of you die as a result! I'm just throwing that out there.

**BRYN**

Hamid goes over to his stuff. Casts prestidigitation, neatens himself up. Reapplies his eyeliner from where he cried it all over this face. You are finally the same height as me! Out of character joke, out of character joke. Hamid feels awful.

**ALEX**

Trauma guys, trauma.

**BRYN**

I cast prestidigitation, pretty myself up again and slip my sleeves back on that I'm wearing. My normal clothes but in much more muted colours than just the normal.

**ALEX**

Everything is as it should be.

**LYDIA**

Zolf we can have you moved by your magic. So just cast your disc and we'll get out of here.

**BEN**

I'm going to look around for a stick or some crutches.

**ALEX**

So you do see, which was hidden behind some more of the machinery that was plugged into all of you, there appears to be some kind of lockers or something similar. They look appropriate. It's not like something extra was placed in there.

**BEN**

Well let's have a look in there. I'd rather not float out.

**BRYN**

We should search the whole place. Tear it apart for anything useful

**JAMES**

On our way in we've gone through several levels and the place appears to be uninhabited as far as we can tell. Granted Dave and Steve would not be the brightest, most perceptive of people. I don't know how I'm supposed to put up with somebody who sees so little and says so many stupid things. It really is quite draining you know.

**(laughing)**

It's really quite wearing.

**LYDIA**

Yeah so you're saying that you didn't notice anyone so basically it's a thrumming hive of activity out there.

**BRYN**

I make eye contact with Zolf and try really hard not to sigh.

**BEN**

I just raise an eyebrow and shake my head. Considering the fact that there are at least...this room was inhabited by at least four people, not including yourself because somebody did have to do the whole tank arm whole torso thing...

**LYDIA**

Unless that was you Bertie.

**JAMES**

No, no, I've been busy.

**LYDIA**

Good so my organs probably are likely to be in the right place then.

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**BEN**

Yeah they were. They were all there. Ok.

**LYDIA**

Did you count?

**BEN**

I did!

**LYDIA**

How long is my intestine?

**BEN**

As long as a normal intestine.

**ALEX**

As just like a little metagame note. Zolf, I'll tell you because you're the only one that will know and appreciate this. You did an amazing job putting Sasha back together and they will never know but real masterful work.

**BEN**

I'll know!

**ALEX**

You'll know.

**BRYN**

Let's search this room.

**JAMES**

Yes we have time. As I say Dave and Steve are outside.

**LYDIA**

Have you shown them your "look at my finger" trick which you use to calm down.

**JAMES**

Yes it's basic object permanence is the first lesson. They seem to be grasping it.

**ALEX**

So shall we say that you search the room. I would say that either you each search for different things and you give me separate rolls or you give me one roll and all of you aid one person as just a general.

**BEN**

I sit down and say find me some crutches or a walking stick.

**LYDIA**

I look for things that could be crutches or a walking stick.

**ALEX**

Ok. Anyone else searching for anything?

**JAMES**

Bertie's looking for anything that looks expensive or fun or dangerous.

**ALEX**

Ok.

**BRYN**

I'm looking for clues as to who or what the thing that did this to us might be.

**ALEX**

Clues! Ok all of you give me your rolls respectively. Obviously Zolf maybe not, you're occupied.

**JAMES**

Are we modifying these at all?

**ALEX**

You will be giving these, they are a perception check.

**LYDIA**

**ALEX**

24 for Sasha.

**BRYN**

22

**JAMES**

6

**ALEX**

So Sasha going round...

**LYDIA**

Nothing here is dangerous at all. It's like there's nothing alive here! Why am I talking!

**BRYN**

It's the Bertie classic model.

**ALEX**

So Sasha searching around, obviously you beeline for lockers. Cupboards where people place things probably have things in them. So the first one that you open contain large amounts of surgical equipment however it doesn't

appear to have been used recently or anything like that. So it's all very carefully itemised and so on. In other locker you see a pair of mechanical legs.

**LYDIA**

Yay!

**ALEX**

They appear in a good condition however they also look incredibly complex, as in, I know that Sasha's into her mechanisms. This is proper field day mechanisms.

**LYDIA**

Ok so what she might do is look at them and enjoy the complexity and be appraising them for a while before maybe telling Zolf what she's found.

**ALEX**

Give me an appraise check.

**LYDIA**

14 + 8 because I know where to put my skills. Appraising is important. So 22.

**ALEX**

22. So with 22, this isn't your area of expertise because it's quite niche. But nonetheless there's a good chance that each of them are probably worth more than about 20,000. They are, like, real top of the line astonishing...you're not aware that people have been doing work this good. This isn't just like...you've

heard of clockwork mechanism where you sort of wind them up and they're good for a while

**LYDIA**

I mean are there other mechanical limbs around or does it seem like it was really lucky that we fell into the exact lab where they were looking for someone with two...and also are they at the right joint so are they full legs...

**BEN**

Oh god I'll have like three knees

**LYDIA**

Because as it is, all you really need is a mechanical ankle and then a socket.

**ALEX**

So they look fit for a dwarf.

**BEN**

I mean you can argue they may have been intending, because they put the sockets in my legs...

**LYDIA**

Maybe they made them

**ALEX**

And there appears also to be a left arm which also appears fit for a dwarf however it is unusual. It doesn't have a normal hand on the other end of it. The configuration is very different. It looks like it's capable of holding things and manipulating things but it looks like someone went, hmm you know what's better than one opposable thumb, four opposable thumbs and no fingers. So it's quite alien in its design. Hamid, searching around for just the generic clues. You find very little of interest to be honest. You do see that the room is kept in mint condition, clean. There don't appear to be anything like footprints, clothing for anyone nearby. What you do notice though is as you're looking around, you start examining the items in the ceiling a bit more and you start noticing that there appear to be mechanical, but not replicating organic limbs in the ceiling. In fact it looks like they would be capable of reaching down and then back up and you notice, once you start examining a bit more, that they seem to have a wide array of equipment; both surgical and things that frankly you don't have the expertise to recognise.

**BRYN**

So for reference are we thinking like car factory style.

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah.

**BRYN**

I'm going to cast detect magic as well while I go.

**ALEX**

Go for it. So...

**BRYN**

I don't have to roll it cast it!

**LYDIA**

Two hands

**BRYN**

Two working arms!

**ALEX**

So looking around there's nothing on ground level but looking up at the equipment you see there's equal parts divine magic and necromantic magic. It doesn't appear to be...it's very complex so some bits are necromantic, some bits are divine. However unusual for those two schools which tend to oppose, they seem to be coherently holding together.

**BRYN**

That's not that unusual. I mean if it's evil divine power it goes quite well with necromantic.

**ALEX**

But, yeah, effectively it appears to be a combination of the two.

**BRYN**

And what did Bertie find?

**JAMES**

And what did Bertie find?

**ALEX**

Bertie...

**JAMES**

On a 6.

**ALEX**

On a 6.

**JAMES**

Looking for stuff that is worth a lot.

**LYDIA**

You found a penny

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

You find, digging around, you get really, really, really bored. There's nothing here. Eventually you just open arbitrarily a box that you find attached to a wall. A bunch of surgical equipment come out. You recognise, from previous experience, an adamantine scalpel. So it's a scalpel with an adamantine blade head. That's the most interesting thing that you find in the whole lot.

**JAMES**

Yay cutlery. Takes it.

**BRYN**

Adamantane's worth quite a lot. It's probably still 1000 gold piece.

**JAMES**

Cool done.

**LYDIA**

On a 6! I...

**BRYN**

You found like 50,000 worth of mechanical items.

**LYDIA**

Yeah and the arm which I might sell. Zolf! Zolf! How heavy are they?

**ALEX**

They are heavy but not too heavy for you to lift at all.

**LYDIA**

I think you might like this and I waggle them above my head so the feet flop everywhere.

**ALEX**

Zolf to your eyes they look very bespoke for you.

**LYDIA**

Look what I've got!

**BEN**

What...why? What?

**LYDIA**

Yeah like there's a whole load of limbs over there. There's...well I say a whole load, there's just these really.

**BRYN**

There's lots more on the ceiling.

**LYDIA**

Oh my gosh!

**BRYN**

But not human limbs.

**LYDIA**

Oh that's alright. Anyone want an upgrade? Oh that one with the all the delicate long fingers, that would be proper good for...

**JAMES**

Bertie reaches up and shakes the hand of the delicate long fingered...

**ALEX**

It's too high for you to reach unless you stood on a table.

**BRYN**

And there is a table!

**LYDIA**

Would you like to attack the table!

**JAMES**

Oooh! Bertie stands on the table and...

**BRYN**

I lift a lever to see if it goes any higher.

**ALEX**

It does.

**JAMES**

Bertie shakes it. Hello. Yes. Very friendly. Sir Bertrand Macguffingham.  
Delighted to meet you.

**ALEX**

One of them moves. It then angles itself towards Bertie. What looks like some kind of mechanical lens or something rotates and it just holds what seemingly is eye contact with Bertie for a moment.

**JAMES**

Bertie grabs it with his left hand.

**ALEX**

You're holding it. Yeah it didn't try to evade you.

**JAMES**

Hello there Mr Ceiling I am Sir Bertrand Macguffingham and who has the pleasure of making my acquaintance? You know this level of silent treatment is really quite rude. How is it connected to the ceiling?

**ALEX**

Effectively it is a double hinged joint so it sort of zig zags up and there are cabling and things running down it and the lens appears to be struggling to focus because you're holding it way too close to your face. So it isn't struggling against you but the lens is [vrooming noise]

**JAMES**

Ahhh! Bertie puts it straight over his mouth and goes ahhhh right into it.

**ALEX**

It continues doing that.

**JAMES**

Bertie pokes it.

**LYDIA**

Leave the ceiling along.

**ALEX**

Another one comes down. It appears to be of a similar but not identical construction and is now examining Bertie from a different angle.

**JAMES**

Can Bertie see that?

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah it's not being stealthy in any way.

**BRYN**

Zolf do you think that whoever did this is watching us through those?

**LYDIA**

Do you think the ceiling did this itself? Like Mr Ceiling might be our most dangerous foe yet.

**JAMES**

Bertie grabs the other one that's come down behind it in his right hand and puts them together. Mr Ceiling meet Mr Ceiling.

**ALEX**

A third arm starts coming down. This one has a needle on the end.

**LYDIA**

Bertie!

**ALEX**

Again it is moving slowly and it's not being stealthy but it does appear to me moving directly at it.

**BRYN**

I cast acid splash. Range touch attack.

**ALEX**

Please do so.

**BRYN**

I probably miss because I rolled a 3 which gives me an attack of 7.

**ALEX**

You miss. But you do hit a bunch of apparatus in the ceiling. It stops, retracts, another thing comes down. It appears to be something akin to a microscope given that the two wider angles appear to be occupied and it comes down and begins examining Hamid. It's just approaching slowly.

**LYDIA**

Guys I think maybe we could...what we could do is get out of here and be not in this place. I've got Zolf's legs.

**BEN**

Sasha do you want to give me...yeah I'll see if.

**LYDIA**

You want to try them now or should we like get out of here and then we can get out of here.

**BEN**

Legs might be useful for me getting out of here.

**LYDIA**

Right, ok. Just be quick. Look that whole ceiling is looking at us.

**BRYN**

I make eye contact with the thing that's pointing at me and I say, what you did. I don't normally approve of this sort of thing but we're going to drown you in a bucket.

**LYDIA**

I mean he might've saved your life Hamid!

**BEN**

It probably don't drink or breathe or you know. It's a robot.

**JAMES**

Go rusty maybe.

**BEN**

I'm going to try to put these legs on. I don't know if I'm going to understand that but I'm just going to poke them at the sockets.

**ALEX**

Nothing happens. It isn't a case of there's a male socket, female socket. Just plug them in, done. There's a large amount of what look to be like, quite delicate points of contact between the two. It's very complex. It doesn't look like something you can smash together. It looks like it would take a lot of work to put together.

**BEN**

Alright carrying might be an option.

**LYDIA**

Zolf, cast your disc and we can push you out of here.

**BEN**

How long did it take you to get down here Bertie?

**JAMES**

Five or ten minutes so we can get out in that sort of time.

**BEN**

Alright, probably got enough then, you might have to carry me the last bit of the way and I'll cast a disc and climb onto it.

**LYDIA**

Sasha will push you out.

**ALEX**

Sasha, the second that you move, suddenly you just lose all coordination and fall prone. So you were alright moving at a very gentle searching pace but the second that you were like, right I'm going to move, you're prone and it's just like, your legs went straight out from under you and your heartrate spikes.

**LYDIA**

Zolf. Zolf. You didn't put my organs back right.

**BEN**

Yeah I did.

**LYDIA**

Zolf, I'm in the wrong order. I'm in the wrong order.

**BEN**

Calm down. Get hold of stepping stone.

**LYDIA**

What?!

**BEN**

And I grab her and try and heft her up.

**ALEX**

You can stand quite easily.

**LYDIA**

I stand up then.

**BEN**

Just get on here and someone else push us.

**LYDIA**

Stand next to the stone and try pushing it again.

**JAMES**

Bertie says Dave! Steve! Get in here. I've got some heavy lifting for you. It's really heroic heavy lifting.

**ALEX**

Moving slowly Sasha you seem alright again. You seem to be having no trouble. Bertie there is no reply to your call.

**JAMES**

What. Steve? Oh they're probably just laying hands on each other again.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

There's been a big, big storing up of jokes in you haven't there James. It's like a dam bursting!

**JAMES**

They sometimes do that. They'll go blind. Steve! Dave! The paladins fix it again by putting their hands over their eyes and then they think they don't exist anymore. They think it's night. They fall asleep like a falcon.

**(laughing)**

Steve! Dave! What are you doing? What? There's nothing.

**ALEX**

All of you give me perception checks.

**JAMES**

Oh a natural 20 for Bertie on a perception check.

**LYDIA**

What! 14 for Sasha.

**ALEX**

Bertie's still in hero mode isn't he.

**BRYN**

22 for me.

**BEN**

And 23 for me.

**ALEX**

What did you get Sasha?

**LYDIA**

17.

**ALEX**

Everyone apart from Sasha hear the sound of receding metal footsteps. Two of them.

**BEN**

Two sets or...

**ALEX**

Two sets, sorry.

**BRYN**

I'll go to the door and just stick my head out.

**ALEX**

You can't see anyone but it looks like the sound is coming from just around a corner of a corridor.

**BRYN**

Hello? Is anyone there.

**ALEX**

There's no response. Looking out into the corridor for the first time you see that like the interior, there are bulbs as opposed to strip lighting and they are very regularly set out and the walls appear mostly metallic with a white finish. Occasionally you'll see a little bit of what looks like worked stone has been worked in together.

**JAMES**

Does Hamid have detect magic still active and would that be helpful for tracking down the paladins who are probably a bit magicy.

**BRYN**

It only lasts three minutes so I'm assuming not.

**ALEX**

And also can't see through a certain amount of substances so it...it's not like x ray vision which is a thing but not at this level.

**LYDIA**

Slowly pushing Zolf out the door.

**ALEX**

Ok going slowly Sasha you're alright. So moving slowly it seems alright. It's just when you were trying to move at full pace you just completely lost your balance but at a walking pace you're fine.

**BEN**

They were pumping chemicals into you, I imagine it'll take a while for them to work out.

**LYDIA**

Who's they? Who's they?

**BEN**

I don't know. Mr Ceiling.

**LYDIA**

What? Ah alright.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

That's a legitimate explanation!

**JAMES**

That's the name now, it's been established.

**ALEX**

So Dave, Steve and Mr Ceiling.

**BRYN**

Mr Ceiling our old nemesis. We meet again!

**ALEX**

It took quite some time to track you down!

**BEN**

Now we're in space where all of the walls are a ceiling

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

See what happens? See how much easier it is when you delegate naming to somebody who's got a real gift for it.

**ALEX**

Well I did that and I ended up with Figgis last time.

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**BRYN**

I loved Figgis. Figgis is my favourite!

**ALEX**

Everyone loved Figgis! Right.

**BRYN**

I'm still on a single hit point so I'm going to drink a healing potion.

**ALEX**

Go for it.

**BRYN**

Oh. Great. Thanks for that. I rolled a 1.

**ALEX**

You heal Mr Ceiling!

**BRYN**

He's got a drinking problem now.

**LYDIA**

It splashes on the floor and the ceiling shivers.

**BRYN**

So to be fair I've tripled my number of hit points. I was on 1, now I'm on 3.

**ALEX**

300% increase in hit points...

**BRYN**

200% increase.

**ALEX**

That's good maths.

**JAMES**

Right chaps well it appears the paladins have scarpered. Presumably there was someone down the corridor who needed to hear the good news of their lord Apollo.

**BEN**

As stupid as they may be we are still in the catacombs and as you said we're very deep underground, right?

**JAMES**

We are very deep underground.

**BEN**

So it's still potentially dangerous so we should probably...

**JAMES**

Yes let's get moving. Let's get moving now shall we.

**LYDIA**

Sasha is going to be pushing Zolf as far as she can behind with Bertie up front.

**ALEX**

As a speed thing, the second that you're moving faster than a walk you just lose all balance again.

**LYDIA**

So just keeps walking very slowly.

**ALEX**

Ok so you proceed.

**JAMES**

Following behind Bertie who is leading the way.

**ALEX**

Yeah. You encounter no problems. You head down the corridor, take a right, it's empty. There's the distant sound of machinery at the very, very far end of

that corridor but it's quite long. It looks like, by the way, that someone has done an enormous amount of construction work on the catacombs and rendered them into something useable. Something functional and efficient. Taking a right, a left, it's vaguely complex but very coherent.

**BRYN**

Bertie...how did you know...you said Oscar Wilde? How did Oscar Wilde know where we are?

**JAMES**

Oscar Wilde. Well you'd have to ask him. I'd very much like to see him in person and pump him thoroughly on this matter. He guided me along the corridors. It was like a voice stuck in my helmet. Take one step forward, one step left, sidestep left. It was a real nightmare!

**BRYN**

Sounds like a nightmare!

**(laughing)**

**JAMES**

I wonder if I had my helmet on the wrong way around. It was very difficult.

**ALEX**

You hear that the footsteps that you were hearing earlier are clearly heading in the exact direction that you are. Eventually you reach a stairwell but the floating disc is ok with the stairwell.

**BEN**

Well I'll have to recast it a couple of times because I haven't had a chance to meditate or pray so I don't have any of my...actually no this is a supernatural ability that happens, like once a day. So have I been refreshed, I don't know.

**ALEX**

Yes.

**BEN**

Yeah cool because it's been more than a day. In which case I have enough

**BRYN**

Have my spells refreshed?

**ALEX**

Yes

**JAMES**

Might I suggest Mr Smith as we progress in an orderly fashion towards the exit that you do your best to heal these nice young people.

**BEN**

Right, sure. Good plan.

**ALEX**

As you are heading to the stairwell...

**JAMES**

And we're following the sound of the paladins...

**ALEX**

Following the sound of the footsteps, presumably the paladins. As you reach the stairwell, you see in the stairwell heading down below you, the two paladins walking side by side. At a gentle pace, just walking away downwards.

**JAMES**

Steve! Dave!

**ALEX**

There's no response.

**BEN**

As Bertie asked I will...do I still have my holy symbol?

**ALEX**

Yes

**BEN**

Good! I will grab hold of that, whisper something and channel positive energy and I will heal everyone for 9 points of damage.

**ALEX**

In addition to that, suddenly there is some sparking from the wall beside you and it appears like some sort of cable or something has overloaded on the wall on your left hand side. Right next to you. It just [fizzing noise]. You notice that it burns out for the exact range of your channel positive energy.

**BEN**

Ah right. You meant in necromancy didn't you.

**BRYN**

Yes I saw some...

**BEN**

Right this place is running on negative energy.

**BRYN**

By the way where are the paladins going?

**JAMES**

Good question. Steve. Dave. And Bertie jumps to catch up with them.

**ALEX**

You catch up quite easily.

**JAMES**

And taps, let's say Steve, taps Steve on the shoulder.

**ALEX**

Stefan he keeps walking.

**JAMES**

Steve! Fine Stefan.

**ALEX**

He just keeps walking.

**JAMES**

I'm sorry for not calling you by your stupid name.

**ALEX**

They eventually reach a new floor and start opening a door to leave

**BRYN**

I trot after and cast detect magic again.

**ALEX**

Ok you see that there is...presumably you're concentrate on it to detect as much as you can?

**BRYN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Yeah. It's of the enchantment school. A compulsion affect. Probably mind affecting, just throw that out there.

**BRYN**

Bertie, someone's done something to their thoughts. They're under a spell.

**JAMES**

Bertie grabs Steve by the shoulder and just shakes him bodily.

**ALEX**

He stops as he's being shaken. The other one carries on walking and he just stands there staring straight ahead. He has a faint smile.

**LYDIA**

Like their normal expression.

**ALEX**

He's really, really handsome but you know, it's a good smile.

**JAMES**

Ok fair enough. Bertie does, you know that thing where you put...so you're facing somebody, you put your leg like around their legs so it's then like a tripping thing. You can then push them back over. Bertie does that with Steve.

**ALEX**

He falls over onto this back. Takes a moment. He doesn't fall heavily. Like he is wearing armour so there's a clang. He then carefully just gets up, still with a smile and starts stepping around you to carry on in the direction.

**BRYN**

Which way are they heading?

**JAMES**

Yeah which way are they heading?

**ALEX**

Still heading in the direction which you came in Bertie so heading down those stairs and you've already head down a couple of levels to catch up with them and they are now heading out through a set of double doors at the stairwell.

**JAMES**

So Bertie continues to follow the paladins and just takes the opportunity to just flick the back of their ears, give them a bit of a shove.

**BRYN**

I'll walk back to the two behind and be like, that's really weird right? Why has someone cast a spell on the paladins.

**BEN**

They wanted to get us alone.

**LYDIA**

What's the last few hours or days or however long it's been has not been weird.

**BEN**

Yeah I don't know what's happened.

**LYDIA**

If something normal happened then I'd get freaked out.

**BEN**

I'm currently done with investigating. Alright. I'm going to get out, I'm going to have a night's sleep, try and find a way to get mobility back at all.

**JAMES**

Bertie's slightly out of hearing range of this conversation I think. Dave gets a slap on the bottom just to encourage him along. There's a clang.

**ALEX**

They don't react at all. You're finally on the same level that you entered in. The corridors start being more stone than steel. A voice, as if from nowhere, appears. Equally loudly to all of you. Please don't leave.

**JAMES**

What?

**BRYN**

Leave

**LYDIA**

Yeah. Like what was that? Did you hear that? Did you...

**BRYN**

I say leave

**LYDIA**

Alright ok, let's be doing that.

**ALEX**

I mean you no harm.

**LYDIA**

Well what about my organs?

**BEN**

Leave!

**LYDIA**

Continue pushing Zolf out.

**JAMES**

Bertie continues to jostle the paladins forward.

**ALEX**

I can still fix you.

**BRYN**

We'll come back.

**LYDIA**

What are you promising to fix? The fact that I'm falling over!

**BRYN**

With fire

**JAMES**

Is this a male or female voice?

**ALEX**

Very hard to tell.

**JAMES**

Who are you?

**ALEX**

I'm not sure you're ready to hear that yet.

**BEN**

Right bye!

**JAMES**

Ah well I think on balance I'll probably be fine. Go on, try me.

**ALEX**

I'm not sure you're ready to hear that yet.

**JAMES**

I think on balance I'm probably going to be fine. Why not try me?

**ALEX**

Hold on, I'll show you.

**JAMES**

See I won

**BRYN**

Let's keep moving towards the exit shall we.

**LYDIA**

Yeah we're probably...so me pushing Zolf very slowly behind you and the paladins by quite a way...

**JAMES**

We're still moving along. Like Bertie's...yeah that's a bit creepy so push, push, push. How close are we to the actual exit, exit?

**ALEX**

Couple of hundred feet. The voice calls out again. I fixed Sasha. If you wait a moment I can fix your legs too Zolf.

**LYDIA**

How does it know what our names are? How does it know that? How does it know what our names are? Did it read our minds?

**ALEX**

I mean you no harm.

**BEN**

Yeah. I saw how you left Sasha. I don't believe you.

**ALEX**

The work wasn't finished but you did an excellent job Zolf.

**BEN**

Do you have...no, no, no, no! We're leaving!

**LYDIA**

I mean if they could give you nice, good legs, those are proper...I appraised those legs.

**BEN**

I know what your power network is running off of.

**ALEX**

You're very lucky to have a friend like Zolf, Sasha.

**BEN**

Oh shut up! Leave.

**LYDIA**

Ok, right. You know us best but I mean if they could make your legs that might be...

**BEN**

I don't care! I don't want anything from whatever this is.

**LYDIA**

Mr Ceiling.

**BEN**

Yeah

**LYDIA**

Alright I'll just push you out a bit. I try and speed up during which I assume I lose my balance.

**JAMES**

What is your real name?

**ALEX**

I suppose it's Mr Ceiling.

**JAMES**

Good, you see I was correct!

**(laughing)**

There we are. Excellent. What have you done to these paladins. What have you done to Steve and Dave?

**ALEX**

I've asked them to leave. Don't worry, they'll be very happy.

**JAMES**

They're very happy anyway. I'm not sure they understand sad. It's a long, tricky word for them.

**ALEX**

Please don't leave I'd like to talk.

**JAMES**

What's this. Is it a conversation or a steam locomotive. Come on.

**LYDIA**

Bertie's got snappy while he's been away.

**ALEX**

Why are you people down here?

**JAMES**

Well I was sent in to rescue these three. On a noble, heroic quest. You know the idea maybe, it'll be written down some elevated tone.

**ALEX**

Zolf, hi...

**JAMES**

Bertie continues with all of this...

**ALEX**

Yeah. Zolf, you're very lucky to have a friend like Bertie.

**JAMES**

Bronze is an excellent material for a statue. You know, I'm thinking of something, maybe I'm in a chariot. Maybe the chariot is in a chariot.

**ALEX**

Bronze has a weak tensile strength. It would be unsuitable for a chariot.

**JAMES**

You're right, titanium. I could have a titanium statue.

**ALEX**

So you eventually make it, presumably the conversation carries on.

**LYDIA**

Sasha has fallen down because she was trying to go faster. Does that still continue after I've been healed?

**ALEX**

Yes, although it's not like you're in pain. The best description I can say is that your legs just get away from you.

**LYDIA**

Why have you made it so I can't do anything. What have you done to me? Is it the wrong kidneys?

**ALEX**

I'm sorry Sasha, there'll be an adjustment period. You were dead.

**LYDIA**

What?!

**BEN**

What?!

**JAMES**

Hang on.

**LYDIA**

Wait, what, no! I wasn't. I woke up. See clearly.

**ALEX**

I mean you no harm. There will be an adjustment period.

**BRYN**

What did you do?

**LYDIA**

Why did you kill me?

**ALEX**

You're fixed. But there will be an adjustment period.

**BEN**

Just shut up! Just...

**ALEX**

Sorry Zolf

**BRYN**

We're going. Maybe we'll come back if you're nice to us.

**LYDIA**

What did you say it was running on Zolf?

**BEN**

Negative energy.

**LYDIA**

Is that a bad thing?

**BEN**

Yes!

**ALEX**

If you leave I might have to change your memories. I don't want to change your memories.

**LYDIA**

I don't want that happening again.

**BEN**

Let's talk

**ALEX**

They will be good memories.

**BEN**

Shut up! Don't shut up. Just...

**ALEX**

What would you like me to do Zolf?

**BEN**

What do you want?

**ALEX**

I would like to talk.

**BEN**

Who are you?

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**ALEX**

Mr Ceiling I suppose.

**BEN**

What's your...

**JAMES**

Come on Mr Smith, pay attention.

**(laughing)**

**BRYN**

Why don't you show yourself.

**ALEX**

I think it would be best if you have a moment to adjust.

**BEN**

No...we, look, we've been through a lot, alright. We're prepared to put up with whatever weird stuff you're going to reveal. Whatever's going to happen.

Fine. Just get it over with. None of this suspense rubbish.

**JAMES**

One moment Mr Smith. I have an idea. And at this point are we by the doorway?

**ALEX**

Yeah you're maybe 50 feet from the entrance.

**JAMES**

Ok so Bertie's plan is to go up the doorway and shove one of the paladins through it and to then talk to the paladin on the other side.

**ALEX**

You can see from here that the two paladins who were on the other side of that doorway, who were sort of stood there, they're apparently gone.

**JAMES**

Right. Now I had two more of these, Graham and John

**ALEX**

Oh for god's sake James!

**BRYN**

Wait, what's Graham, the anglicisation of?

**BEN**

It might just be something that he couldn't pronounce.

**BRYN**

Yeah Jean obviously but what is Graham? What's the Frenchest name you can think of?

**BEN**

Guillere

**LYDIA**

Guillere

**BRYN**

Yes!

**ALEX**

I'm afraid that Graham and John have apparently left. Again the voice, I'll make sure they get to the top ok.

**LYDIA**

I mean it sounds quite nice.

**BEN**

No, look, alright. Huddle. Alright.

**LYDIA**

I'm already standing right next to you.

**JAMES**

Bertie leans down.

**BEN**

Memory editing...

**ALEX**

It's where you sort of change the memories of a person.

**BEN**

I thought that might happen but you know, the things what happened.

**BRYN**

Yeah seems logical.

**BEN**

Yeah so...

**LYDIA**

Do you think we really encountered a tentacle monster or that was just a nightmare? I'd like to think it was just a nightmare.

**JAMES**

I mean I have no memory of encountering a tentacle monster whatsoever.

**BRYN**

You weren't there.

**JAMES**

Oh that'd be why then.

**ALEX**

If you would like to see it, I can show you the way.

**BRYN**

No, no thank you! No. That'd be fine.

**ALEX**

Ok Hamid.

**BEN**

Right...

**LYDIA**

How does it know our names?

**BEN**

Mind control. Come on. Memory editing.

**BRYN**

My name's monogrammed into all of my clothing.

**BEN**

Or that maybe.

**ALEX**

I'm sorry about your shirt Hamid.

**BRYN**

That's ok.

**BEN**

Maybe it's stitched into Bertie's underpants.

**JAMES**

What's wrong with you at the moment?!

**BEN**

Obviously I'm having a bit of trouble adjusting.

**BRYN**

I'm ok but what you did to Zolf is not ok. And what have you done to Sasha?

Why don't you explain this enhancement?

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**BEN**

Are you aware of the idea of consent?

**ALEX**

What is consent?

**BEN**

Yeah I didn't think so. Did I ask you to take my other leg off?

**ALEX**

No.

**BEN**

Did Sasha ask you to remove her organs?

**ALEX**

She could not. She was dead.

**LYDIA**

I was what!

**ALEX**

Are you in pain Sasha?

**LYDIA**

Am I? No!

**ALEX**

Good, please let me know if that changes.

**LYDIA**

Is it likely to?

**ALEX**

No but I just don't want you in pain.

**JAMES**

Right decision time. So Bertie now he picks up Steve by the scruff of the neck

**ALEX**

Unless you have been holding them back they will have just walked out.

**JAMES**

I've been holding on to them.

**ALEX**

That's fine. They've been not forcefully just trying to remove your hand the whole time.

**JAMES**

Yes that's fine. Bertie is angled by the door. He is holding Dave by the arm so that he's secured on the correct side, the same side of the door as we all are. And Steve, he's just literally shoved Steve through the door but he's still holding him. Bertie's arm is still holding Steve over the threshold.

**ALEX**

Sure. Steve stumbles, rights and then tries to remove your arm.

**JAMES**

And then Bertie turns Steve's head to him and says Steve? Steve? Are you paying attention? Does he get any answer?

**ALEX**

Nothing.

**BEN**

Knowledge arcana. 13. It's...

**ALEX**

You know that if they are under the affect that you believe they are under, yes it will continue until the affect is complete and then it will cease.

**BEN**

Yeah that's not how it works. They'll carry out the instruction.

**ALEX**

Or it can time out depending on how strong the affect was.

**BEN**

Or it can time out depending on how strong...

**(laughing)**

I'm going to imagine because of all of this, gesturing at myself, pretty powerful.

**JAMES**

So shall I bother hanging on to them or shall we just let them go?

**BEN**

Do you know the way back?

**JAMES**

Yes

**BEN**

Well right fine, yeah

**ALEX**

If you like, I can show you now. I think you've had some adjustment time.

**BEN**

Right

**BRYN**

Show us what?

**BEN**

Who he is.

**LYDIA**

Guys you do not want to see this is this is the tentacled monster.

**ALEX**

At the other end of the corridor a sphere moves into view. It is about the size of a football.

**LYDIA**

Oh it's not the tentacle monster!

**ALEX**

It moves at walking pace towards you at a completely fixed flight. Its manoeuvrability is presumably perfect because it's moving as if on rails.

**BRYN**

I slowly raise my hands and curl three of my fingers, pointing at it in readiness.

**ALEX**

Making what I'd like to call the pew pew

**BRYN**

Pew, pew, pew, pew, pew

**LYDIA**

Actually looks a lot less terrifying than I was expecting.

**ALEX**

It approaches and continues to do so unless anyone does anything otherwise.

**JAMES**

Bertie lets go of the paladins and he draws his sword.

**ALEX**

The paladins just start walking off through the cave system.

**LYDIA**

Alright Mr Ceiling.

**ALEX**

The orb comes close. I like having a name. If you'd like to follow me I can introduce you to me.

**BEN**

Yeah go on then

**ALEX**

And I think we'll end the episode there! I'm a terrible person!

**LYDIA**

But we admire his craft.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

So anyone have any ideas? Any clues? Any thoughts?

**JAMES**

This is portal really isn't it.

**BEN**

Yeah I was getting portal vibes. I hope not.

**ALEX**

If I could get the rights to the cake song. If I could get the rights I would.

**BEN**

Jonathan Coulton might be a bit chilled out.

**ALEX**

Maybe he's a listener, we'll have to find out. Well tune in next week and hopefully we'll find out a bit more about what's going on. Bye guys!

**EVERYONE**

Bye!

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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