

RQG – 49 – Bringing Down the House

Content Warnings

- X
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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 49 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

BEN

Ben Meredith

JAMES

James Ross

BRYN

And Bryn Monroe

ALEX

And who are you playing?

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett

BEN

Zolf Smith

JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

ALEX

Are you all still alive?

LYDIA

Just about!

ALEX

Then I'm doing my job!

BRYN

For a little while at least

JAMES

Bertie's completely fine.

BRYN

I'm not home yet but we are in a building that's exploding.

ALEX

Of course Bertie's fine. He's hacking away at an inanimate object.

JAMES

Yeah

ALEX

[singing] I've been working on this keyboard with my massive sword.

JAMES

He's all over that keyboard like a kitten. That's what he's doing.

LYDIA

Is it a magical sword because otherwise surely it's getting dulled.

ALEX

Oh it's getting completely trashed.

BRYN

It is a magical sword.

LYDIA

Oh it is a magic sword. So it's fine.

ALEX

So where we left you all off...

BEN

We're playing Uncharted basically. We're running out of an exploding building...

ALEX

Maybe! How many Uncharted levels have you played with flying brains?

BEN

None!

ALEX

Ah! Technically original. That's all that matters.

(laughing)

I took a series of unoriginal parts and assembled them in a way they've not been assembled before.

BEN

Like the super computer.

(laughing)

BRYN

The best kind!

LYDIA

Technically just adding brains is art as we learned...

(laughing)

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies. I mean that's a whole frigging series now. We can't stop it and I can't deny that it's art even though I want to.

ALEX

So where we left off, everything was exploding. Brains everywhere. Huge chunks of glass, ceilings are caving in. A voice that's been speaking to you the whole time has stopped. With that in mind, Hamid, you're up. What do you do?

BRYN

I walk over to Bertie and...because it's hard to get his attention when he's in a killing rage.

LYDIA

With furniture in particular.

BRYN

Tap him forcefully and say Bertie. We need to go.

JAMES

What?

BRYN

We need to go! The whole place is coming down around us.

JAMES

[Groans] Fine. Spoil my fun.

BRYN

And I cast shield on myself to help protect me from flying debris and bits of explosion as we go.

ALEX

Zolf, you're up.

BEN

I am going to lean back, tap Sasha on the hand again and cast shield of faith.

ALEX

Ok

BEN

Ok so...no it's pretty good. I'll create a shimmering magical field around the target, avert and deflect attacks so they get a +2 deflection bonus.

ALEX

Very nice.

LYDIA

Does it cover you as well?

BEN

No

LYDIA

So selfless!

ALEX

At the moment quite, yeah...there's nothing going on.

BEN

You're also my way out because if I get knocked unconscious I still go because you'll wheeling me.

ALEX

See, see, technically correct. The best. Bertie you're up.

JAMES

Oh Bertie.

ALEX

It was a quick round!

JAMES

Yeah that's why...in that case, he's like the child that's being dragged away from Legoland. Fine [sighing noise]. Stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp.

LYDIA

Run, stomp, run, stomp, run, stomp.

ALEX

The second that you're outside this room it looks like someone invisible with two hammers 50 foot tall is just trashing the place in a way that you only wish you could.

BRYN

Way to make him feel unman.

ALEX

Sasha you're up.

LYDIA

I continue running towards wherever the exit is, which I would know having spent a week there.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah. You have a very clear layout. You weren't prevented from going anywhere, just not out. Zolf and Sasha, both of you reflex save.

BEN

No. I'm sat in a wheelchair. Ok, I'll roll it.

BRYN

Duck

BEN

I guess so. 3.

BRYN

An appropriate roll for the situation.

JAMES

You need to have guidance active.

LYDIA

Oh great, ok. So, 14.

ALEX

Ok a piece of shrapnel blows out and hits you for 3 damage. You get clipped in the shoulder again and tears your jacket which immediately knits itself as you're running. So...

BRYN

She took some damage in the fight so you might want to cast a heal spell on her at some point.

ALEX

Meanwhile Zolf you take 3 damage as well from a different piece. It's just flying glass. Which as we know does no harm during an action film. This is not that film.

LYDIA

Smashy, smashy.

ALEX

Hamid, you're up.

LYDIA

Are brains also now falling down and flopping about?

BRYN

Like beached fish.

ALEX

There are brains going [splatting noise] however some of them appear to just be splashing, as in they're not in a fit constitutional state to bounce anywhere.

BRYN

I take the run action which is a full round action and allows me to move four times my normal movement speed.

ALEX

You overtake Sasha.

BRYN

I presume everyone else has been doing the same thing.

LYDIA

Withdraw, run, duck, dodge, like set up a small shop.

BRYN

Tasteful exhibit. A small art gallery in south London.

LYDIA

Set up a limited liability company to manage my assets.

JAMES

You probably use tax minimisation action.

ALEX

Zolf you're up.

BEN

Cool I will convert...

ALEX

I love that you're like a reverse tank at this point. You're something that gets wheeled through the situation going heal, heal, pew, pew, pew.

BEN

Yeah a little bit. Yeah I will convert divine favour into a cure light wounds.

ALEX

Presumably on Sasha.

BEN

Yes, sorry. 9

ALEX

9 ok. That's a lot actually. Good. Ok

BRYN

Have 9 hit points back.

ALEX

It's not 10 is it.

LYDIA

Yeah I mean I'm still not full.

BEN

Could've tried harder.

BRYN

Remember I start with 18. If you have more than 18 you don't get to complain.

LYDIA

Yeah if you end up basically throwing your fragile little body at whatever the monster is.

ALEX

Bertie give me a reflex save.

JAMES

I think you do get to complain providing that you direct eye contact with Bryn while you're doing it and do it in sarcastic voice.

ALEX

Or get two reflex saves.

JAMES

That is 11 with my modifier.

ALEX

You take 3 damage.

JAMES

From what?

ALEX

From a piece of glass which has a part of brain on it. It slams into your helmet which takes most of the force, denting significantly and covering the outside with brains. This is now the most amount of brains your helmet has ever seen!

(laughing)

BRYN

Bertie would you need a cure light wounds for that burn?

(laughing)

ALEX

Sasha you're up.

JAMES

Have you converted that from a Jinks goodwill spell?

ALEX

Yes we're all very proud of ourselves including me! Let's move in.

LYDIA

When we're running for the door, I do gasp at Zolf, where are the legs? Do you want to get the legs?

BEN

Leave them! Just get us out of here. Just get us out of here.

LYDIA

Ok, keep running towards the door. I don't know where he's stashed them.

ALEX

Hamid you are one action away from being out into the corridor with Zolf and Sasha.

BRYN

And I'm probably for the first time ever travelling faster than Sasha since she's also having to push a wheelchair.

ALEX

Well the thing is though because she has...you're not travelling at full speed because you're having to push someone but you travelling with your accelerated speed slower, is pretty much Hamid's...

BRYN

So I probably haven't made any ground on you.

ALEX

No not really.

BRYN

Right ok. I'm just getting the head out of dodge.

ALEX

Give me a reflex save.

BRYN

13

ALEX

You take 4 damage.

BRYN

Yeah see. Fewest hit points, most damage. That's the system!

BEN

Sucks to be you, great to be me.

ALEX

Speaking of which, Zolf. You're currently being pushed along.

BEN

Sweet, I am going to cast guidance upon Sasha. I'm going to sit there and be pushed.

ALEX

And Bertie, you're still in a large chamber with flying glass and brains everywhere. Are you running for it as well?

JAMES

I think so. I think Bertie would like to retrieve the legs because the legs were very expensive.

(laughing)

ALEX

Ok, in which case give me a reflex save first.

BEN

That's inarguably correct.

JAMES

16

ALEX

Ok you don't take damage. There is a very loud clear [swinging noise] as something glances off the back of your armour. It's already buried into the wall before you can see what it was. A huge chunk of ceiling falls down immediately behind where you just were...

LYDIA

The ceiling is also probably very expensive as well.

JAMES

Ah Mr Ceiling! You've missed once again!

(laughing)

Not just Mr Ceiling but a missed ceiling. I'll carry on.

ALEX

The ceiling knows nothing.

(laughing)

You are in the corridor with these guys however there will be a branching point where you have to go in opposite directions. You made it out of the exploding cavern. Parts of the building are falling. I'm going to drop you out of initiative order. The building is still coming down around you so I'm going to keep you moving quickly but not in initiative order. What are people doing?

LYDIA

Zolf, come on, look this could be the opportunity to mean that you can run again.

BEN

No, it doesn't matter. I'm not putting anything on that that thing...

JAMES

Well even if you don't want them, perhaps we could sell them and give the money to charity.

BEN

Fine, if you want to go find the legs and die in the...

ALEX

A chunk of ceiling falls.

JAMES

Seriously, where are the legs Mr Smith?

BEN

Fine they're back in my room. You can die with an expensive pair of legs and I'll live without them.

JAMES

Miss Rackett I'm going in. I'll go halves with you.

LYDIA

No! They're Zolf's.

BEN

And funds are being...just get the legs and we'll talk about it later. I'm your boss. Get on with it.

JAMES

Done! Sold! Excellent. Move on.

ALEX

There is a gout of flame as you speaking, presumably...

BRYN

I cast on Zolf this time the spell I declared multiple times and accidentally called shield when actually the name of it is mage armour.

ALEX

Shield is actually a spell.

BRYN

Shield is actually spell. They do pretty much similar things so it's not that big a deal.

ALEX

It hasn't actually come up since you cast it so it's ok but nonetheless...

BRYN

So it gives you +4 AC.

BEN

Brilliant, I'll need that. Actually as an aside I will continue to be casting guidance on Sasha.

ALEX

Sure. So I'm going to accelerate things a bit because it's a large building, huge things are going on. So I'm going to cut to Bertie first. So you get to the main stairwell, you all start heading up together, you duck out at a much lower level than they do.

LYDIA

Zolf, I'll give you a piggy back and I stand in front of him and grab his arms and put them around my shoulders.

BRYN

I will grab the wheelchair and drag it up the stairs.

ALEX

Sure, in fairness it's actually closer to your size than not because dwarves are technically medium, kind of halfway between medium and small as a creature. Meanwhile...

JAMES

So Bertie's on his own?

ALEX

So everyone has started going up this stairwell together to enter into the building above. The second that you are into buildings and maybe normal cellars rather than subterranean levels, the rest carry on up. You have to take a side door effectively and now enter into what is effectively the basement of the building rather than a subterranean complex.

JAMES

Ok so what does the level of collapse look like?

ALEX

There are chunks of floor missing. As you're running you see a...like running past an open doorway what was once a canteen or something. You see the whole thing just [explosion noise] and fall away. There was no one in there or anything but you just see the majority of the room fall away.

JAMES

What is below?

ALEX

You are now running back over, admittedly with a number of levels between you, what was the cavern.

JAMES

Ok Bertie proceeds to run in the direction of the subterranean which is where the legs are.

ALEX

Ok give me a reflex save.

JAMES

15

ALEX

15. A section of floor collapses beneath you. You manage to leap and throw yourself forward. It is still possible to go back the way you come although you will be sort of, shimmying along a much narrower piece of corridor. It descends into a mixture of fluids and flame so there are gouts of flame beneath but also, very unhealthy looking fluids are being sprayed randomly beneath. It's chaos. You can't...you don't have the time to look. You eventually make it to Zolf's room. You head inside. Zolf, describe how you would've had your room. You'll have had your pick of...there's multiple places to have slept and you could have done anything to it you wanted. Mr Ceiling was more than helpful.

BEN

Yeah it would be quite a small room with a simple bed and there'll be a basin full of water on the side, built into the wall and the legs are just kind of thrown up against a corner in the room and that's pretty much it.

JAMES

Bertie grabs the legs.

ALEX

Ok. Heading back the way you came presumably?

JAMES

Yeah. He has got Brutor in the papoose by the way.

ALEX

That's fine. Brutor's still happy. [dog panting noise]

LYDIA

He's having a lovely time!

JAMES

Yeah Brutor's tongue is just hanging.

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

JAMES

15 -1 is 14.

ALEX

Ok so you're running through. Give me a reflex save.

JAMES

15.

ALEX

Again a chunk of ceiling this time slams down and you manage to duck out of the way while wielding legs. You reach the point where you have to shimmy across. Give me an acrobatics check.

LYDIA

Do you want to throw the dog across to save him?

ALEX

Or you could just go back and give a running jump which is still an acrobatics check.

JAMES

Right.

ALEX

You could try and find an alternate route. Whether it's still there. There are many alternate routes you could take.

JAMES

Bertie's going to try an alternate route because his acrobatics check while wearing full armour is minus 8.

ALEX

Potentially wise. Give me a reflex save.

JAMES

Ooh 1. Critical fail.

ALEX

1. So you're running along, running along...

LYDIA

He trips up his own feet!

ALEX

You look to your right, there's another gout of flame, you run past a burst pipe and then suddenly an entire section of the corridor on your left hand side explodes inwards. You are instantly thrown against the side of the wall taking a large amount of detritus straight to the chest and face and so on.

JAMES

Brutor's on my chest!

ALEX

Yes he is.

LYDIA

Going to have to make him forget again.

(laughing)

ALEX

You take 4 detritus damage and 2 fire damage. Brutor takes 1 detritus damage and 6 fire damage. You don't know how many hit points he's got.

JAMES

No I don't.

ALEX

I do!

LYDIA

Has he levelled up at all over the...

(laughing)

BRYN

When you say levelling was it dog again?

BEN

Cross classing can really, really cause problems.

ALEX

In fairness he was going to take a level in house cap but I told him it was OP. Ok so you're not buried or anything but it's a lot of impact damage and flames which you have to bat out briefly.

JAMES

Ok so Bertie continues to look for an alternative exit, a route upwards.

ALEX

Ok you are running through. It takes you a little while, longer than you'd like. This bit's caved in. You make it to another stairwell. However as you make it to the stairwell huge amounts of liquid are welling up through the stairwell. As you come towards the stairwell you start splashing through it. Give me a fort save.

JAMES

DC + 6 is 24

LYDIA

Ok!

ALEX

So you splash through and you're running through it.

JAMES

It's like the seaside!

ALEX

It smells awful. It is sort of...it smells almost putrescent. It's black and purple and it also has the sheen of petrol or something.

JAMES

Reminds me of Skegness.

BEN

How high is it on his body?

ALEX

It's up to about his ankles but as you get to the stairwell it is powering up at a lot of speed. Like something's gone very rapidly wrong and the stairwell...the levels below you at least for this part of the stairwell you can see are actually flooded. But you are free to go up the stairs.

JAMES

I go up the stairwell.

ALEX

Ok. Cut back to everyone else.

LYDIA

Sasha is walking up with Zolf as a piggy back.

ALEX

You make it to the top of the stairwell and enter into the ground floor of the building proper. The second you step through, chaos, panicked people. Everyone's running, people are evacuating. There's lots of people in white coats. You're into the face of the organisation and it actually seems like they're doing a very good evacuation. There's people on each corner going go, go, go, left, go, go. There's alarms ringing and it seems really organised and no one seems to be reacting. They just seem to think some kind of industrial problem's happened. One of the people evacuating sees you and is instantly come on, come on, go, go, go.

BRYN

We put Zolf back in the wheelchair.

LYDIA

Yep

BEN

Yeah I acquiesce for that.

ALEX

Do you follow the instructions?

LYDIA

Yeah we want to get out of the building.

ALEX

Ok

LYDIA

That's how I push Zolf out.

ALEX

You follow the directions. There's someone on the corner. Go left, go left.

BRYN

I'll start helping the evacuation. I'm going to just join in.

JAMES

For flavour can you have fire marshals that are wearing high vis jackets and they're actually illuminated magically.

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

Little glow sticks but with electric...

ALEX

So yeah, it's very easy for you to exit.

LYDIA

The fire drill is great.

ALEX

It's very...

LYDIA

Stuff is falling down at a regular kind of pace.

JAMES

It's glitter now.

ALEX

You are one sentence from a freak reflex save with more detritus damage.

LYDIA

Oh ok.

ALEX

You manage to make it outside with Zolf easily. It is a clear path. Parts of the building are actually caving inwards however they have a very clear handle of what's going on. There doesn't even seem to be anyone injured. It seems to be going very well.

LYDIA

I'm going to run back in to help Bertie.

ALEX

Sure. So cutting to Bertie you make it to the top of the stairwell. You also find yourself in a similar situation.

JAMES

Is it like the office level now?

ALEX

Yeah you have left all of the liquid behind. It's going up but it's not flooding all of those levels at the speed that you can run upstairs. So yeah, you've made it up on to the ground level as well. You see the same similar situation. The area that you're in is significantly more damaged so there's no one there but once you start making your way through the main entrances there's lots of people there.

JAMES

Bertie follows the well-lit fire exit signs.

LYDIA

Sasha's going to go back to the door that she came out of and look down the staircase.

ALEX

As you are looking the stairwell gives a groan and then the lower levels fall away. There's a splash and a gout of flame as you look.

LYDIA

That's kind of a good thing because if it hadn't been so obvious she probably would've gone down to look for Bertie.

ALEX

No one's coming up that way. Not even with rope.

LYDIA

Sasha thinks about how sad she's going to have to make her face look

(laughing)

When she tells Hamid that Bertie isn't coming back up and she thinks he's a genuinely good, tactical advantage in a fight. He's...

BRYN

He's really useful to have on the other side of an enemy.

LYDIA

Yeah he's a really useful focus for the enemy's blows and yeah, we've shared stressful situations together. We've shared the odd joke although we don't have very many shared references and so, you know, she manages to adopt a mask of genuine contrition...sadness. Is contrition the right word?

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

27

ALEX

You see Brock run down a side corridor of the level that you're on.

LYDIA

The sad becomes genuine and she runs the heck towards him.

ALEX

Ok give me a perception check.

LYDIA

Oh. 11

ALEX

You poke your head around the corridor, there's no one there.

LYDIA

She runs along the direction she thinks he's running.

ALEX

You start running. As you do so give me a reflex save

LYDIA

24

ALEX

As you're running down the corridor there's a rumble. You stop. The corridor in front of you immediately a crack appears where your feet are and falls downwards and inwards. A huge chunk of the building collapses down into the chaos below.

LYDIA

She screams his name.

ALEX

There's no answer.

LYDIA

Then I suppose running back the way she came and just looking around frantically.

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

Ooh 11.

ALEX

11. You don't see any Brock, what you do see is coming up from a different stairwell, Bertie. His ankles and feet are covered in putrescence. Even with the smoke and everything you can smell whatever is upon them. He is carrying the legs, he is soot blackened. His helmet has a massive dent in it from earlier, he clearly hasn't noticed and his armour's in a beaten up really bad way.

LYDIA

How's Brutor?

ALEX

Brutor looks happy.

(laughing)

He has a burn on the side of his head but looks happy.

LYDIA

So Sasha's genuine horror at the appearance of what she's beginning to assume was a ghost or her own traumatic memory, turns to Bertie. Oh! You're back! With a really upset face. You made it.

JAMES

Surprise! You know the times when your mouth is just too full of caviar.

ALEX

The stairwell that you have just come up collapses. You are in the doorway to the ground level, the stairwell behind you collapses downwards. You'll have been going up and down the stairs.

LYDIA

I guess we better leave here and she points to a way that she knows isn't actually quite the direct way out but is a way out. It allows her a little bit more scouting time. And begins to run down that corridor.

ALEX

You both make it through, it's very easy because you're heading away from the most damaged areas. You see no more Brock. What you do, is you step out to join Hamid and Zolf. What you see is a huge crowd of people. There are a ring of paladins holding everyone back, apparently from the Temple of Apollo.

JAMES

Does it include Steve, Dave...

ALEX

Yes they are. They are keeping the crowd at bay. You also see Oscar Wilde is there. The crowd see you and break into a eruption of cheering and whooping etc. There are a crowd of clerics tending to the people off to one side who were inside the building, sort of ordinatists and so on. They look in really good nick, there's basically bumps and scrapes and...

BRYN

Hamid basks. Hamid thinks this is an entirely appropriate reaction.

JAMES

Sir Bertrand starts waving his hand. You are welcome people of France. You are welcome.

ALEX

You know what, give me a perception check all of you.

JAMES

15

BEN

9

BRYN

18

LYDIA

15

ALEX

Hamid, you see a huge crack starting to run up the arc. So you are at the entrance, sort of out from beneath the arc. A huge crack is snaking up the side of the building. There is a rumbling from where you are. The paladins are keeping everyone about 200 feet away from where you currently are. Everyone's cheering and you can just see Oscar Wilde and what looks like a very high up cleric gesturing for you to come over.

BRYN

Yeah I saunter. Come on everyone. And start walking towards Wilde.

LYDIA

I'm just going to look for survivors.

BRYN

Sasha! No!

ALEX

Reflex save me Sasha.

LYDIA

Ooh 1.

ALEX

Natural 1?

LYDIA

That's a natural 1.

ALEX

Ok one second.

(laughing)

BRYN

Yeah you've learnt to switch die

BEN

It's because it's the bad one. I don't care it's not how dice work.

LYDIA

Maybe this is Sasha going to join her friends under the ground.

ALEX

So almost instantaneously a crack appears in the ground and snakes around the building, almost forming a perfect circle around it. Sasha is well over the crack. The rest of you, Bertie, unless you tell me otherwise are just stood with it dancing around the back of your heels.

JAMES

Yes, thank you, yes

ALEX

Nonetheless the crack spreads and the building, parts of the ceiling start...

JAMES

Bertie's on the safe side of the crack?

ALEX

You are on the safe side by about an inch. You don't hear anything until the first piece of masonry falls from about two feet behind you. The entire arch is caving in.

BEN

I'm going to cast a stepping stone under her feet.

BRYN

Yes!

ALEX

Ok do it.

BRYN

Brilliant.

BEN

I've done it.

ALEX

Ok!

BEN

It's as simple as that. It's like a floating check and the range is 25 foot + 5 per 2 levels so it's 30 foot.

ALEX

So stepping stone is the one, it doesn't actually hover...

BEN

No but it will...

ALEX

It kills impact speed and stuff.

BEN

Yeah it kills impact speed and might delay it enough for her to jump.

ALEX

Sure. So things start falling away. It is a huge crater that is appearing. Parts of the building are already dropping away and Sasha feels the entire ground give way beneath you to be immediately replaced by Zolf's magical substitution. I'll allow you another reflex save because you've landed onto something solid.

LYDIA

What! No! No! It's not gone. Wait, why did...Zolf I need to get down there. Then I suppose come to her senses and try and run away but that is a 12.

ALEX

12. You do not manage to leap to safety however you similarly don't manage to fall off the stepping stone.

LYDIA

Hurray!

ALEX

But we'll say as you prep to jump the ground gives way beneath the stepping stone, Sasha drops out of sight, still up on the stepping stone.

LYDIA

That so slowly drops.

ALEX

You drop at normal speed however it decelerates when it comes down. So we'll cut to you. You drop...

BEN

It is actually trying to get back to me. It makes 5 foot unless otherwise directed so it's trying.

ALEX

It's not going to be happening. So you drop, you feel the stepping stone break a fall and you land taking just a 4. 4 damage.

LYDIA

Just 4

ALEX

You've actually managed to land yourself in just one floor lower at the very edge of the crater however immediately behind you the entire mass of the

building is just disappearing into the depths of, presumably all the way down into the catacombs, a huge chasm has opened and you are right on the edge of it. You got off very, very lightly.

LYDIA

So I took 4 damage?

ALEX

Just the 4. Like you have fallen down onto an extruding part of a service tunnel which is hanging out over this huge crater. You've only actually fallen two floors; one of which was stopped by the stepping stone. You are in a service tunnel that leads away from the crater.

BRYN

Well I'm at the edge of the crater and I'm going to toss a piece of rope down to Sasha and she might be able to climb up potentially.

ALEX

Go for it. As you are tossing the rope a whole load of the paladins are running forward to try and help. A rope dangles down in front of you.

LYDIA

It doesn't seem like there's any rush now. I think she's going to stare sadly at the building and possibly whisper, I'm sorry and then climb up the rope.

JAMES

Steve. Dave. Pull. And do it with your shirts off.

(laughing)

ALEX

As you start climbing up the rope, the rest of the paladins have already got there. There's about 6 and they go very sort of gung ho at it so they're all heaving in perfect time with one another so whilst you're climbing up a little bit, you are up like a shot and up over the lip again.

BEN

So are they this universe's version of improbably sexy firemen? You're like...oh hose stuck in the tap again!

JAMES

Yes!

BRYN

But it's not improbable, paladins need a high charisma score. They are probably sexy firemen.

JAMES

Ah so it's like air hostesses on the early airline. You've got to be this pretty to be a paladin.

BRYN

Yeah literally.

JAMES

Ah that's awful.

ALEX

You land upon the side of the crater. The paladins, without asking, began hoisting all of you upon their shoulders and cheering.

BEN

I don't think this is particularly....

BRYN

I wave.

ALEX

Bertie you recognise a song.

JAMES

[Singing] Apollo! Apollo!

BEN

Poseidon! I bang on the helmet of the one who's holding me. Take me over to Wilde.

ALEX

They are cheering and pulling you over.

LYDIA

Sasha is slumped very sadly on the paladin's shoulders. She would usually flow through his grasp like the ghost of ball bearings past.

(laughing)

BEN

Or maybe the ghost of a dead friend.

JAMES

Oooh!

LYDIA

Too soon!

BEN

Classic Zolf bedside manner!

ALEX

So you're all brought back to Oscar Wilde. He's stood there. There is no wry look upon his face. For once he actually seems serious, composed, pristine but still serious. How are you all?

BEN

We need to make a full report straight away.

ALEX

Yeah I figured as much.

JAMES

I am great but then everyone already knew that.

ALEX

It's fine I made arrangements. We need a chassle. He looks, notes the leg and looks back up. He doesn't make any kind of quips or anything.

BEN

Only Bertie's horrible enough to do that! Actually no, I've got the wheelchair.

ALEX

So he heads off and starts talking to the head cleric. Then a bunch of orders are carried out. The paladins begin trying to keep people back. Again it looks like there are cheers for the ordonatists and so on. It looks like everyone got off scot-free. The crater's huge but it's completely localised around just the Ordinateur building. And then Wilde gestures, a cab pulls up. It's just a normal one, a mechanised one.

LYDIA

Are we still on the paladin's shoulders at this point?

ALEX

The paladins have put you down.

JAMES

Bertie has insisted that they put them back up again.

ALEX

They are quite happy to oblige.

JAMES

Yes, this is how I travel now.

BEN

Now take me to the shower room!

ALEX

The automated cab door opens, Wilde ushers you inside and calls another one for himself because obviously there's quite a lot of you.

BEN

I'm going to wait for them to put the ramp on.

ALEX

They offer to help you inside. The cab sets off and begins tracing its route.

LYDIA

Oh 20.

ALEX

You are absolutely sure that you are heading back to La Triomphe.

LYDIA

Ah that's really useful.

ALEX

Also...

LYDIA

You see a clue etched into the window!

ALEX

People are cheering in the streets as your carriage goes past. Not like everyone but there are people cheering in the streets and applauding and so on. Wilde's in the cab behind you. You keep going. You pull up to La Triomphe.

LYDIA

Are they clearly cheering at our carriage. Looking in?

ALEX

Yes

LYDIA

Right, gosh.

ALEX

Absolutely, absolutely. And you pull up to La Triomphe. A footman comes and opens the door. The red carpet's there. Your mechanical man is still stood there. Still just inside the foyer ready to hold Brutor perfectly stationary. Oscar Wilde and the people he was with, a couple of the paladins...

LYDIA

But they corrected the ownership of...

BRYN

I turn to Zolf and Sasha and go didn't they say that we didn't have this suite anymore?

LYDIA

Yeah the machine said it had corrected that error. Obviously me having that kind of flat is an error.

JAMES

We're getting simply what we deserve.

BEN

We're going to a briefing, not a sit down.

ALEX

Oscar Wilde immediately gets them to help Zolf up and goes up to the desk and has a chat. They lead you to the lift and it takes you down. Clearly taking you to the super, super secret room. The door opens, they lead you down the corridor.

LYDIA

Wait! If Bertie goes in there, when he comes out...

JAMES

That'll be the third strike so Bertie stays just outside.

ALEX

The door opens, Oscar Wilde tries to usher you all in. Looks at Bertie. Is there a problem?

JAMES

I'm staying here. Breath of fresh air you know.

BEN

He's got legitimate reasons.

ALEX

You're vouching for him?

BEN

Yeah

ALEX

That's good enough. He closes the door. So Bertie you are not in the room. You hear absolutely nothing. There are just a pair of mechanical men at the other end of the corridor stood perfectly impassively looking at you.

LYDIA

Sorry this has happened again!

BEN

Right, leave, go on.

LYDIA

Get outta here!

ALEX

Wilde sits across the table. Can I get any of you anything to eat or drink or anything? I realise you've been through a lot.

BEN

No.

LYDIA

Healing potion would be good.

BRYN

What do you know about what we've been through Mr Wilde?

ALEX

How much has Bertie told you?

BEN

About what?

ALEX

About what he's been up to whilst you weren't around.

BEN

Oh going to find the Circlet of Hannibals.

BRYN

He told us everything in detail

ALEX

Right well then I suppose you know that I'm your handler.

BEN

Oh that, yeah.

ALEX

Yes. Now I'm meant to be keeping things at a bit of a distance. You're not the only team that I handle. Although I have to say you're certainly now the highest profile.

BRYN

I smile.

BEN

That will not be helpful.

ALEX

Well for what it's worth, I am quite proficient at...he looks to Hamid, scrying, divination. A lot of people overlook them as a school. Frankly I find them quite useful. I was able to discern effectively where you were going and then I lost track. I lost track. I actually called Bertie back once I found out how deep trouble you were in, in the catacombs.

BEN

I think technically at least two of us died.

ALEX

Yeah well...hmmm. The last thing I knew was you entered into the Ordinateurs so then I approached the paladins who I had already spoken to with Bertie regarding getting him down there and retrieving you. Every paladin they sent suddenly decided that what they really wanted to do was not be at the Ordinateur's and that's about it. So we sent more. Eventually they all started wearing off the ability to walk away. About 50 yards. We're not idiots. So we had to wait. There wasn't a lot we could do. I made arrangements, pulled some strings. I think you'd be quite happy with how popular you all are. It realise it wasn't something you were seeking but I think it might open some doors for you. Nonetheless everyone was well aware that something was up and then the last thing that happened is, as far as everyone else is concerned, a large amount of people were suddenly alerted to a machinal failing in the Ordinateur's and were evacuated safely. All thanks to yourselves. What actually happened in there?

BEN

Right. Well.

BRYN

The Ordinateurs are a lie.

BEN

Yeah giant super brain.

LYDIA

It's made of people.

BEN

So Francois Henri created a giant, aggregate, basically Ordinateur machine out of brains.

BRYN

The machines weren't really mechanical, he used...

BEN

It's a combination of necromancy and...

BRYN

Necromancy and the brains from actual people.

LYDIA

And they're connected to the London gangs. They're getting bodies from the gangs.

BEN

Henri has been using the underground to collect brains.

BRYN

We had a name.

BEN

Yeah we did have the Parisian version of Barrett.

ALEX

La Gourmande.

BEN

Yeah La Gourmande has been acquiring brains. So it's been controlling most of the financial systems of the world. Lot of logistical stuff, it's moving stuff around all the time so we don't know what systems are going to fall apart now that it's stopped.

LYDIA

It gave me this hotel room, it turned out.

ALEX

Is there anything else I need to know?

BEN

There is a...it's started building other versions of itself. One particularly in Cairo but I would suggest under any bit computational, logistical or financial centres check. Just check.

BRYN

It had the absolutely to, as you noticed, affect people's minds and their memories. It had been doing that a lot. It seems to want to trust us. It seemed to want to be our friend. It had enough of a distinct personality to do that and we were able to gain its trust but it revealed to us that it was planning to essentially take over the world.

ALEX

I understand

BRYN

It wanted to seize control from the meritocrats become responsible for running all human affairs. Now in some ways it did want to accomplish good things.

BEN

Basically Henri gave it a set of instructions, did it badly. Left lots of loopholes. It thought it was doing good but it was doing bad.

BRYN

It was destroying people's minds and their memories and it was absorbing brains at a prodigious rate.

BEN

We wrote Henri so much he lost his mind so we killed him.

ALEX

I'm about to go for a while because I have a lot of things to sort out. Is there anything else I need to know. This is time sensitive.

BEN

Check for other things of itself. Any high levels of murder. People getting brains for it but find out where else they're getting the organic material from.

ALEX

Thank you for all your service. All of you head up to the presidential suite. You're going to be taken care of from here.

BRYN

Could we just have one second alone in this room as well.

ALEX

Take any time you need. Anything is covered by the meritocrats. Don't fret about the price. He steps out. Closes the door. Bertie, I've just spoken to your comrades, is there anything else that I need to know?

JAMES

Oh one of the meritocrats is dead.

ALEX

He kind of stops for a moment. Ok. Thank you Bertie. Is there anything else?

JAMES

When this is all over I'm still going to murder you.

ALEX

You're going to try. He then heads out the corridor. Gets in the lift. Heads up.

BEN

We heard that right because the door was open?

ALEX

He closed the door.

BEN

Oh he closed it behind him.

BRYN

Back inside the room I say do you think we should tell him about Bolla Smok?

BEN

Oh that completely slipped my mind! There's been so much going on. Oh, we should've told him!

BRYN

Do you think?

BEN

Yes! Do you think that we know because obviously they would know!

BRYN

Yeah they must know already and they might not want it to be knowledge and, I mean...

BEN

Well we know now. We know that what that means is that makes more valuable to them. They can't let us...

BRYN

So do you think we should tell him?

BEN

Yeah well we might as well be honest. If it slips out in a way that isn't like that then suddenly...

BRYN

Ok then I just didn't...

BEN

Why did you mention it now!? I'd completely forgotten!

BRYN

It just didn't seem like the kind of thing we should blurt out if it...

ALEX

Cut back to Bertie outside the room.

JAMES

Bertie's just sort of examining his nails.

ALEX

Looking at his finger again!

(laughing)

LYDIA

Scrunching Brutor's little ears.

JAMES

Yes. [dog talking noises]

BEN

Singing his favourite song.

JAMES

[singing] Daisy, Daisy...

ALEX

Back to the interior.

LYDIA

Do you think anyone might've survived in there? The building falling down.

BEN

Wheel over to you. Hand on shoulder. Brock's dead Sasha. Like dead, dead.
Proper dead.

LYDIA

Yeah right. He's...yeah, it gets quite strange when things are falling down around you doesn't it. It's all...you think you're seeing stuff and it's just smoke and...

BEN

Trauma does strange things to people.

BRYN

I go over to Sasha and give her a hug. At least you got to say goodbye.

BEN

That's more than most people get the chance to do.

BRYN

I'm sorry.

LYDIA

Sasha has a very frustrated and patronised expression but doesn't say anything. It's fine. That's what her eyebrows do. Dancing over her face.

BEN

What's the whole discerning people kind of...

ALEX

Sense motive.

BEN

That is...

LYDIA

She's just upset!

BEN

Oh I'm really good at this! I've got an 8 modifier.

ALEX

You're really good at spotting when people are lying.

BEN

25. Look people don't usually get a chance to say goodbye. God knows most of us haven't. So he still cared about you and he's gone. And he knew you were still alive and doing well and that is so much more than most people will get a chance to do with their loved ones. Alright. So, yes I know it's hard and yes, I know it must be frustrating being that close again but that's it. Draw a line under it. Don't let it consume you otherwise you'll become useless. Alright?

LYDIA

Alright it's a bit overkill. Right, yeah, ok. I get it. I won't complain to you again. Don't worry.

BEN

No, it's not...

LYDIA

No it's fine, I won't mention it again. Let's go have some dinner

BRYN

I just look awkward at that point.

LYDIA

Dire lobster anyone? Yeah let's do that.

BEN

If you think you're the only person who hasn't had tragedy happen at every turn of their lives then I've got to tell you...no, you deal with it. Right. Take it in your stride...

BRYN

Give her some time Zolf! I mean...

LYDIA

I just asked if anyone could survive it. What's up with you Zolf? Did you lose someone in there? Did you find someone...I'm sorry I didn't realise.

BEN

No but the person that I've lost I will never get that chance that you had. Ever.

LYDIA

Right

BEN

They're gone. They're done. That's it. Alright.

LYDIA

Right. Ok Zolf.

BRYN

She's going to be ok. Just give her some time. Let's move on and have some food or something.

ALEX

Let's go and open this door so Bertie can help the situation.

JAMES

Bertie's just outside. He's playing with the two mechanical men so it looks like they're kissing.

ALEX

This heartfelt moment in a sealed room is the best idea you have ever had.

LYDIA

Sasha is going to open the door and be like, hi Bertie how are you.

JAMES

As Sasha opens the door she catches him and he's just positioning the two mechanical man's faces so it looks like they're kissing.

LYDIA

Alright that's hilarious. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Well done you Bertie. She goes over and starts scrunching Brutor's ears. Yeah what a nice dog. What a nice dog. He doesn't start shouting at you for asking a question.

JAMES

Bertie doesn't get the subject at all. No he never does that at all.

BRYN

Leave as well.

ALEX

Ok back in the presidential suite.

BEN

Bit of an awkward silence going on between Zolf and Sasha I would imagine.

ALEX

Well it's exactly as was. Nice big spread. If anything bigger than ever. All of your footmen are there etc. It's nice. It's quiet. It's calm. Everyone give me a perception check.

JAMES

13

LYDIA

It's calm, it won't be soon!

BRYN

18

BEN

22

LYDIA

17

ALEX

Everyone apart from Bertie

(laughing)

That's another t shirt right there! You're hearing something coming from the balcony outside. Sounds like voices or something. But lots of them and far away.

BEN

Oh no! I don't want to have to do an interview for another dumb paper.

BRYN

I'll do it! I go out onto the balcony.

ALEX

You head out onto the balcony and there is another echoing cheer. Having looked around it becomes apparent that a number of people have been climbing up onto the rooftops in order to get a better look. A cheer starts echoing through the city which is just Rangers! Rangers! Rangers!

JAMES

We're still working on a name!

(laughing)

ALEX

So everything's fine and they'll be no ramifications.

BEN

It's all good.

BRYN

It's a happy ending guys!

BEN

We've only taken down the computer behind most of the world's financial systems and that will be alright.

BRYN

It's just like the ending of Star Wars Episode 6. It's a big party...

BEN

It's actually closer to Fight Club.

LYDIA

Much closer, yeah.

BEN

And we're seeing...

LYDIA

Seeing ghosts!

BEN

...ghostly things!

ALEX

So everything's fine with no emotional ramifications. So I think we'll wrap that up there and come back next week and who knows what direction this could be taking next week.

BRYN

Wait, wait that was episode 49, next week is episode 50.

LYDIA

I wonder if we've got a party planned.

ALEX

I mean not including all of the other numerous bonuses which are excellent to listen to.

BRYN

We've had lots of extra bits too. But 50 of the main...

JAMES

I'm going to bring cheddar cheese and pineapple on sticks because it's not a party if you don't have cheddar cheese and pineapple on sticks.

LYDIA

Tiny sausages. Like the tiniest you can imagine.

BRYN

I'm going to wear a hat.

ALEX

I'm going to take everything that James brought and cover it in chocolate just because he won't like it then.

JAMES

That's true

LYDIA

And allergic, that's cruel to me.

ALEX

It will be chocolate that you can eat.

LYDIA

White chocolate.

BEN

I can bring some tiny scotch eggs.

JAMES

Yes!

ALEX

Cover them in chocolate too!

BRYN

So we'll see you all next week for the party guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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