

RQG – Episode 54 – Paris is Burning

Content Warnings

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BEN

I everyone. Ben here. I just want to take a moment to thank some of our patrons. Jack Burton, Sarah Lichens, Florence, Shane **Le Gassier**, Danielle Sturgeon, David **Kilgannon**, Rachel Manley, Daniel **McCreary**, Mark Sutton, Chase T Hopper, Kate **Onyet**, Nick Crombie, Josh Harper, Alice Carroll, Lawrence Madena, Doug Warren, Chris, Kirstie Cyder, Suki Won, Aaron Tunney. Thank you all. We really appreciate your support. If you'd like to join them, go to www.patreon.com/rustyquill and take a look at our rewards.

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello. And welcome to episode 54 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM, Alex Newall and with me today I have:

JAMES

James Ross.

Rusty Quill Gaming – Episode 54 – Parks is Burning

BRYN

Bryn Monroe.

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas.

BEN

Ben Meredith.

ALEX

And who are you playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertie MacGuffingham.

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan.

LYDIA

Sasha Racket.

BEN

And Zolf Smith.

BRYN

And I got the name right. After such a long time...

(Group laughter)

BRYN

...I've still got the name right guys!

JAMES

You want a medal for remembering your own name.

BRYN

It's taken months and it's a really hard name to remember.

ALEX

So yeah, while we've been releasing a little bit of content out in the season break, for us it has been a long time. A very long time. So, are we all glad to back? Glad to be back in the studio?

All

Yes!

JAMES

And have you noticed any potholes?

BEN

Yes!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

So that doesn't seem to make sense. No. No.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Forgot all that.

ALEX

So, we're into the thrilling beginning of season 2.

JAMES

Ah, the difficult Sophomore album. Is this whole season going to be about like Travelodges and like tea and coffee making facilities and like, a second yacht!

ALEX

It's mostly going to be disillusionment with the realities of small business. It's going to be a very low key one. Mostly to do with like an absence of clients.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Cool.

ALEX

I love how Bertie is door to door salesman. Have you considered you might die!

JAMES

Double glazing! It's really good at keeping the noise out!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

And the poor! Any way. So picking up. Obviously a lot has happened. If you haven't already, now is a good time to jump in. We can do the season 1 catch up if you can't go back and listen to all of the episodes, obviously all of the episodes are there. Broadly speaking, you have been tasked with chasing down information regarding the simulacrum.

LYDIA

Mmhmm.

ALEX

Which has a few pieces of information tied to various cities around the globe.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

As part of that, you ended up in Paris, and as part of your investigation into that simulacrum, you ended up discovering that someone had built an enormous super computer...

LYDIA

Of human brain.

ALEX

Of human brains beneath Paris. And it turns out that it has been used and been running the majority of organised systems, potentially throughout all of the human world.

LYDIA

Including banks and transport systems...

ALEX

And all kinds of things.

LYDIA

Yep.

BEN

Logistics generally.

ALEX

Basically all logistics.

LYDIA

The internet is down.

ALEX

Yeah. The internet is down and the only...

BEN

Guys. We killed the internet? I was on the wrong side!

[Group laughter]

BEN

Thought more carefully.

LYDIA

Yeah.

JAMES

Just been shown at Kim Kardashian's bottom!

[Group laughter]

JAMES

It actually broke.

BEN

That was impressive.

ALEX

We are picking up timing wise, the morning after as it were. You managed to...

BEN

It's a slightly awkward conversation, breakfast and then we never see each other again!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

You did manage to debrief Oscar Wilde regarding everything that happened with Mr Ceiling.

LYDIA

Whoop, whoop.

ALEX

And so you receive the instructions to basically return to La Triomphe. Okay?

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

The next morning happens. You all wake up to an incredibly quiet Paris. The noises that you have grown to expect from Paris from your top storey apartment where you will be hearing the hawking of wares but in a kind of tasteful way because you're in a top market part of Paris. The fact that you would be hearing the movement of...

BRYN

Hawking into a napkin!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Post crockery for sale!

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Fabergé eggs! Fabergé eggs!

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Two-bob a dozen!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Yes, that.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

You've woken to a musical number of who are buying French every day until today. There is no musical number. In fact, you don't even hear anyone speaking in a raised voice.

LYDIA

Today's the day the music dies.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

So, Hamid picks up a lobster claw and cracks it, but his heart is not really in it.

ALEX

You all feel awful. Physically, absolutely spent.

JAMES

You don't say.

ALEX

Emotionally rinsed. You feel atrocious. And breakfast arrived late. It was not what you were expecting. The fact that it arrived late. Very shoddy.

LYDIA

Was there no lobster then?

ALEX

There was...there was lobster. In fact, it looks like they gave you slightly more lobster than normal.

LYDIA

Oh.

JAMES

What? Four lobsters. Sizeable stocks.

ALEX

To be blunt, one of the valets came up and while Hamid was obviously sat for breakfast mentioned that they're going to need to be eating a lot of the perishables and so on due to some ongoing issues, so you basically have free reign on anything that could go off.

BRYN

And have we ... any messages for us in the night?

ALEX

The valet takes a moment and then reaches in as if he's forgotten and passes you an envelope.

BRYN

They knew.

ALEX

It just says the rangers, we're still etc.

BRYN

Oh.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Looks like Wilde's been in contact then.

ALEX

Inside is just 'stay put'. Full stop.

JAMES

Any parcels? Any packages?

ALEX

You say in flawless French, unaware that you are doing so. Again, in what you presume is English, no nothing, nothing particular I'm afraid. Just the messages. Is there anything we can get for you?

LYDIA

Wait, wait.

JAMES

Your English really has picked up hasn't it? Well done. Good for you.

LYDIA

But Bertie, what ... when did you learn French?

JAMES

I haven't learned French. Filthy language. Horrible. Sorry.

LYDIA

But...you...yeah, sorry, you just did.

BRYN

You're literally speaking French.

JAMES

I can't understand anything you're saying.

LYDIA

You're speaking French Bertie.

ALEX

Which was an amazingly apt thing to say given the conversation you don't understand!

[Group laughter]

JAMES

But I'm speaking English, right now!

BEN

No you're not.

LYDIA

You're not. You're speaking French.

JAMES

English words.

LYDIA

No.

BEN

That's French.

ALEX

The valet sort of backs away slowly. Clearly he's stumbled onto something he just isn't paid enough to deal with. And then leaves.

BEN

I'm sorry. Am I just not in the room.

LYDIA

Bertie's speaking French.

BEN

I got that. Bertie's speaking French.

LYDIA

We're just telling him that he's...

BEN

In French! He can speak English!

JAMES

Well, je suis, really very wise. And I probably just picked it up from le streets! You know, I just soak information like a sponge!

BEN

Bertie!

LYDIA

Is he speaking ... so he has to be under control right?

ALEX

And then you swapped back to speaking to Zolf...

JAMES

Yeah.

ALEX

...whose swapped back into English.

JAMES

And I didn't prepare comprehend language today. What a day!

BEN

Can I just check Bertie, I was switched to Czech. Okay. Do you understand me when I'm speaking this language Bertie?

ALEX

What you hear is "blah, blah, blah, foreign blah, blah, foreign blah".

JAMES

What?

BEN

I'll take that as a no then. I say in English.

BRYN

So it hasn't extended to all languages. It's something ... have a permanent language spell.

JAMES

I am of course educated in classical Latin and Greek and I speak the histories noblest language, English. Pure fusion of the romantic essence of Latin with the stern tuchunism of the Germanic Saxon tribes.

BRYN

Bertie. Shut up! I'm not in the mood. I'm just going to have breakfast. You work this out.

LYDIA

Sasha has been signing, because of course she speaks sign language, insults at Bertie with questions at the end.

ALEX

Give me a perception check Bertie.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

13.

ALEX

Sasha is clearly overjoyed at your new found linguistic skill and was doing a little dance.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Thank you, yes. Bertie attempts to like follow it up and like match her movements and like yeah.

ALEX

So it's actually just a massive slagging off contest.

JAMES

Yes.

LYDIA

Bertie has just ... is just ... has accepted that he is a fool, a liar...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

...and a coward who is mean to dogs. Even horrible dogs.

JAMES

He doesn't know. He doesn't know, he has no idea!

ALEX

And all with a real bad accent as well.

JAMES

And he passes off the jam. Thank you. What does the note say?

BRYN

Stay put.

LYDIA

Sasha is continuing to sign all the different things that Bertie smells on.

JAMES

Are any of them good?

LYDIA

No1

JAMES

One of them is Lynx Africa.

LYDIA

Ah, the worst smell!

JAMES

Literally just an African Lynx is this universe. They never...they very rarely wash.

ALEX

They're quite musky.

JAMES

They are quite musky. Yeah.

ALEX

Does anyone have any plans for the rest of this day apart from just recuperating?

BRYN

I'll probably spend a lot of time staring at those legs.

ALEX

Mmhmm.

BRYN

I draft a letter to my parents. Then screw it up and burn it.

ALEX

Aha.

BRYN

But using prestidigitation notes.

JAMES

Yep.

BRYN

Like a British Gas flick of the thumb! And repeat.

ALEX

Yep.

BRYN

He can't use prestidigitation for that because that's a specific thing call spark.

JAMES

Ah, okay.

ALEX

I think you'll find ...

JAMES

Well actually I think you're correct. But as I have a lighter, I can use prestidigitation to hide it while it's in my hand and make it look...

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Yes you can!

JAMES

I'm so glad we had this little talk. Bertie has got a couple of fancy bits of treasure that he wants to fence.

ALEX

Okay, how do you go about doing so?

JAMES

He walks out into the streets of Paris with his fancy loot and he...

BRYN

Loot for sale!

JAMES

Buy it...no he doesn't! He...

BRYN

I will go with him.

JAMES

Yep, we're off shopping. So we go the fanciest quarters.

ALEX

Okay. I will return to you in a second. Sasha?

LYDIA

Sasha is not going to fence the legs. She is going to leave them where she sees Zolf staring at them and she's going to go and hang out with the gargoyles on the roof.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

Hang out with the gargoyles, yeah!

LYDIA

The ones that have eaten people!

BRYN

Yes, in a friendly way.

ALEX

I will jump to first the pair of you wandering around Paris. So heading out into Paris, it's very, very quiet. You see at least on just the street that you are on, three mechanical men pause mid-stride and at least one carriage, an automated carriage that has been pulled up badly to the side. And it looks like it's been dragged to the side of the road.

JAMES

Look at this street theatre. Now these three gentleman here are just going to stand very still. Bertie stares.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

I stare at Bertie. My eyebrows slowly raised.

JAMES

You know they're really very good.

ALEX

You see that...

JAMES

I sigh. Loudly. A good five minutes goes past. Bertie is just entranced. So ... I don't know how they do it.

ALEX

What was once a street comprising of a lot of horseless carriages, has a lot of them drawn up to the side and the only things that are currently moving are horse drawn. So you see a couple of tourist trap handsome carriages. One person has a cart and they're moving some produce. There's almost no one on the streets. And it's just eerily quiet. Presumably you head towards what you will have passed as a market at some point.

BRYN

I will suggest we head towards the district which manufactures the clockwork men. We've seen a lot of them in Paris and there will be places where you can purchase them as servants, and that will be the place which is most interested in this mechanical...

JAMES

Mechanical arm and it's adamantine.

BRYN

Which part?

JAMES

There's a scalpel.

ALEX

He has an adamantine scalpel, yeah.

JAMES

Yeah, adamantine scalpel.

ALEX

Can both of you give me knowledge local?

BRYN

Is that used on trains?

ALEX

Just roll and tell me the number.

JAMES

16.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

14.

ALEX

Okay. So, you don't get lost. But it does take you a while to find what you are looking for. Whilst you are wandering around without particular speed or impetus we will jump back to the gargoyles. Unless you open conversation, they scootch over, just a little bit to make you some space and sit there perfectly quietly. Not hostile, just comfortable silence.

LYDIA

Yep. No, we'll all sit there is silence with the gargoyles.

ALEX

Paris has a certain charm to it now that all of the noise has died down. You're hearing a lot more birdsong. From your vantage point you can see that the streets are almost empty. There are a few groups of people at basically street corners and they'll be a group of people and then one will run off and talk to

another group. It's just ... it's just quiet. It's like it's a very, very tired Sunday afternoon, even though it's currently a weekday. We're turning back to Hamid and Bertie. You eventually manage to find yourselves and the shops that sell basically luxury items. All of them are closed for business and a couple of people have said that there's been some kind of issue and that they're just not able to deal with people today and that they should probably come back tomorrow. But a lot of staff have apparently not turned up and things like that.

BRYN

I suppose that makes sense. I suggest we just do come back tomorrow or even maybe the day after Bertie. I don't think this is going to be done quickly in the current climate.

JAMES

Quite the nuisance. Perhaps we could talk to ... maybe one of the manufacturers rather than retail selling these fascinating distinctive items. Mmhmm?

BRYN

I suppose we could ask where we might find the suppliers. We could get some directions.

ALEX

Again, skipping ahead. I'll use the original knowledge work we had. You find out the majority of manufacturing is not actually done in the city. It's done outside of the city and then they are shipped in because of the amount of space required to do so. And again, they are sold as luxury items. They're not sort of churned out and churned out...

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

It's not like a terminator esc. Like manufacturing facility or anything. They're mostly bespoke items.

JAMES

Clockwork and diamond industries! Fine. Very well. Very well. We shall return to La Triomphe.

ALEX

Okay. You return. The majority of the day has gone because it's taken a bit of tramping around because there was little in the way of transport and the only handsome carriage was in high demand and not able for you to make use of. You return back, all of you. The evening rocks up. Anyone want to do anything before heading in for their bed?

BEN

I'm in the bathroom having filled the sink with water. Just kind of on the side staring at it.

ALEX

Mmhmm.

BEN

Intently.

BRYN

I'll give Zolf a reassuring friendly pat on the shoulder and leave him to it.

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

Sasha is going to write a letter to Bi Ming Gasset ... no a postcard. She is going to write a postcard and it's going to vaguely say 'work is going well. I'm very busy...

ALEX

Sure.

LYDIA

..It's interesting seeing new cities. I hope the shop is doing well'.

BEN

That is a charisma of minus one!

ALEX

I love the idea that every time you write a word it's I ... think So you head out to send it?

LYDIA

Yep, just put it in a post-box.

ALEX

Okay.

JAMES

Ooh, ooh, sorry one thing. Bertie is going to ... I've just realised that this is on my inventory. He's got a copy of When Passions Collide.

ALEX

Yes.

JAMES

So he's going to read that.

ALEX

Okay. Give me a wisdom check.

JAMES

Minus 1. No! 19 minus 1 is 18.

ALEX

It's a damn sight better than all those classics you were forced to word!

JAMES

Really boring, yeah.

ALEX

So called classics.

JAMES

Is the same author as ...

ALEX

Oh yeah.

JAMES

Yeah, yeah, okay.

ALEX

This has got pace. None of that war like lasting years. That's not all been done properly.

JAMES

Like wooden horse nonsense.

BRYN

I'll roll a perception check.

ALEX

Yeah, go for it.

BRYN

22.

ALEX

He's only got the next one and you haven't got a copy!

[Group laughter]

BEN

Sad lot! What you reading there Bertie?

JAMES

This When Passions Collide Mr Smith. Now this is truly excellent. A fabulous work of literature, strongly drawn characters, fascinating moral messages. A surprising number of fascinating legal implications. If you read between the lines...

BEN

No, no, that's fine ... would I be able to maybe borrow it after you're done?

JAMES

Oh Mr Smith. Mr Smith. Mr Smith, of course you may. This is a work of literature that should be shared widely. Such firm moral principles. So fascinating. Rich tapestry...

BEN

Hamid...

JAMES

...bared forth before the reader.

LYDIA

Is that the only thing that's bared forth?

JAMES

Well I haven't it finished it yet...

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Could Hamid not be rolling his eyes hard in the background if he tried!

ALEX

So you all head to sleep. All of you give me will saves.

BEN

Goodness!

ALEX

The best saves.

BEN

Hang on a minute. Do I ... yes, I'll go to will saves. That is a 26.

ALEX

So 26 for Zolf.

LYDIA

7 for Sasha.

ALEX

7 for Sasha.

BRYN

20.

ALEX

20 for Hamid.

JAMES

11 for Bertie.

ALEX

11 for Bertie. Sasha?

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

You have atrocious nightmares. Mostly to do with Brock and permutations of you're in the machine, he's in the machine. Brock out of the machine but it's Mr Ceiling. It's just ... it's just a hell scaping your mind.

LYDIA

Sounds perfectly normal! Given the circumstances.

ALEX

Bertie. You happen to have a dream where you are back in the reality that Mr Ceiling produced and it's definitely real. And you believe it right up until you wake up, have a look round and it takes you about 10 minutes after waking up to realise that even though you're in La Triomphe, Paris is different outside and it's not the wonderful cheering crowds outside. Everything is wonderful Bertie. So there's mostly the disappointment for you. Both Zolf and Hamid, no problems.

JAMES

What a fickle, sticky nuisance!

ALEX

What do you do?

LYDIA

Sasha gets up early. She looks to see if there is any breakfast out.

ALEX

There is not.

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

There's an apologetic valet, but...

LYDIA

She just walks out of the hotel and keeps walking. And it's just wandering in vague direction of Eiffel's Folly.

ALEX

So I will stick with you for now. Heading out. It's a very different experience from what Hamid and Bertie had. There are quite a large number of people out. The streets aren't bustling with activity. They are mostly people who are kind of moving without as much in the way of intent and direction. But you see there's quite a lot of people who are quite upset. There's a couple of people who are having arguments outside of things. at one point you see someone steal something from a street stall and then a couple of guards chase them down.

LYDIA

While they're distracted...

ALEX

Mmhmm.

LYDIA

...she takes a bun.

ALEX

Okay. Give me a stealth check.

LYDIA

Ooh, 1.

ALEX

You reach out to basically nab something whilst the guards are distracted. One of them happens to turn around to check on the stall whilst they're leaving. Yells to the other one. They think it's a coordinated thing. They both run back towards you rather than him.

LYDIA

Ooh.

ALEX

As you are processing that, someone else in the crowd moves forward and takes something. Then another person takes something. Suddenly, about 20 people are all pushing and pulling one another and just taking stuff from that stall. The stall holder is obviously very, very upset. Stop, stop it, stop it please, everyone stop it. And they're all just taking what they can and then they all ... the crowd starts dispersing.

BRYN

It's all gone a bit Kaiser Chiefs.

JAMES

You're critical fail has started a food riot.

LYDIA

Yes.

ALEX

It's only a minor one!

JAMES

Just a food ruckus really.

ALEX

Once the stall is empty, everyone disperses.

LYDIA

Sorry, do I need to roll to see if I get away?

ALEX

How would you like to escape?

LYDIA

The natural thing for Sasha, previous to this, would be for her to slip from the crowd but she's not feeling particularly hinged. Not quite unhinged but the hinge is creaking. So it will be more acrobatic scene.

ALEX

You easily escape. The guards are too occupied. They run up, see the crowd, see you, and then just ... this is more than I can deal with. I'm one guard and there's 30 people who've just robbed someone. I can't deal with this so they just let you go. Jumping back to the rest of the party, are any of you doing anything for the rest of the day?

JAMES

Bertie still has a pile of jewels from his side quest thing. He would like to...

ALEX

Are you heading out to try and hock them?

JAMES

He's going to head out and hock his jewels.

ALEX

Okay. Are you going out in full armour?

JAMES

Yes.

ALEX

Okay. As you are heading round, and looking to hock your jewels, you see the same thing that Sasha was seeing, lots of closed stalls, a lot of people. A couple of fights breaking out. A guard will run over and separate them. A lot of very upset people. And you notice again that all of the stalls that you would sell things at are closed. And also, someone you realise is tailing you. They are following you and Hamid. Give me a perception check, both of you.

JAMES

9.

ALEX

Mmhmm.

BRYN

Well I rolled a 3 so still higher than Bertie. 12.

ALEX

12. Yeah, you both see that you are being followed. Hamid, you see that there is a second person as well who is walking on the far side of the street. They don't appear well armed. They're extremely non-descript. They're just wearing standard sort of civilian casual attire. They're not particularly noticeable in any way. The only reason you have is that you've taken a few turnings and you see they're following you.

BRYN

I'm going to tap Bertie on the arm. Just to make sure I have his attention.

JAMES

Yeah.

BRYN

And then I'm going to walk confidently towards one of the people I think is following us.

ALEX

He immediately backs away and heads off. The other one who was following you, you see walks past both of you and then snatches a bag from a woman in front of you and runs off.

JAMES

Stop! Thief! Bertie runs off in pursuit. And draw his sword!

BRYN

Yeah. I cast sleep.

ALEX

What's the DC?

BRYN

15.

ALEX

15. The thief, midstride, collapses to the fall asleep. Bag in hand.

JAMES

There we are. Criminal classes. Fundamentally lazy!

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Bertie! Don't kill him and don't say that!

JAMES

Alright. I'll compromise. I won't kill him. Can't shove the words back in my mouth can I?

ALEX

A woman runs up, takes the bag from him. Gives him a good kicking.

JAMES

See she can!

ALEX

Looks to you both scared. She's worried and just flees. She just runs off.

JAMES

Well there's gratitude for you.

BRYN

He's only going to be asleep for a few minutes. Let's make sure he's not armed and let's take him back to the hotel room and find out why he's following us.

JAMES

Very well. Bertie frisks him. By frisking I mean hold him upside down and shakes him until all the bits fall out.

ALEX

So your intent is to take him back to the hotel?

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

Okay. I think we will deal with that in a couple of minutes.

[Show theme]

BYRN

Hello. I'm Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan. And I'm here to talk to you today about a wonderful investment opportunity with us, the London Rangers. We're still working on the name. Anyway, we think we do a lot of good and we hope you think so to. You wouldn't believe the amount of expenses there are for an adventuring company. I mean, Sasha just gets through tonnes of daggers and Bertie goes through armour polish like ... well, maybe he's eating it. Anyway, if you would like to send a few gold coins our way, you can do that

by going to www.patreon.com/rustyquill. Or by following the links on our website. If you donate \$2, \$5, or \$10 a month, you'll get exclusive news and behind the scenes info, early access to ad-free episodes, shout outs at the start of our shows, and bonus content for the campaign and other stuff like that. Any support you can offer will be really appreciated by the whole gang. And I'm sure we'll live long enough to spend it! Thanks, and we hope to see you again really soon.

ALEX

And welcome back. So you bring this person back. They come to on the way and immediately begin sort of begging for you to let them go. You realise that they're quite young. They're late teens and they just keep begging for you to let them go. They don't struggle. They just beg.

BRYN

I'm going to try and reassure this person. Just calm down, we're going to just talk to you and also give you some food.

JAMES

And Bertie is playing bad cop.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Yeah, he shuts up when he hears the word that you're going to give him some food.

JAMES

It won't be very good. It will be awful. You're like the soup will be thin! And there's bits in it and you won't like it. The textures is .. really...

LYDIA

It will be the wrong peanut butter.

JAMES

It will be the wrong...yeah, exactly. What Sasha's voice in my head said just then. Oh you hear it? Fine! Well, maybe I could beat some sense into you raging as I am.

ALEX

Speaking of Sasha, we'll jump back. You were heading towards Eiffel's Folly in a sort of vague...

LYDIA

Yeah, it is an interesting area. There may be people that she thinks it is an interesting area. There may be people that she's been involved in a gambling game perhaps.

ALEX

As you are approaching, you start encountering again a few more people. You start entering the lower income districts and the situation seems distinctly worse. There are a lot more people out on the street. There is a lot more unrest and you reach a point where there's just a line of guards and they refuse to let you any closer.

LYDIA

Is there a way for me to climb up the building and down the other side?

ALEX

Absolutely, yeah. Give me a general climb check.

LYDIA

20.

ALEX

20.

LYDIA

Not a natural 20.

ALEX

That's fine. You successfully find an alley, shimmy up a drainpipe, across the rooftop, back down. The guards are doing a very poor job, but you get the impression that they are stretched amazingly thin, rather than that they are incompetent as such.

LYDIA

They're only like three people on a wide street or something like that. Okay.

ALEX

On the far side of it, there are a lot less people. Mainly because the place seems to be in lockdown. Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

That's 19.

ALEX

19. To your practised eye, there is definitely something going down. It's not some pitched battle or anything like that. But you see there is the fence surrounding Eiffel's Folly. There's a lot of people near the fencing. Guards are fencing inwards and people on the other side of the fencing pointing out. However you see that a couple of guards to your practised eye are being taken away, clearly injured. And, you see, as you're looking a manhole cover come up on the far side of the fence, a couple of people come out, drop the manhole cover, go off into the city. You see something similar happening where a couple of people are hopping over the fence. It's clear that there is definitely something going on here.

LYDIA

People are trying to escape.

ALEX

People seem to be trying to bail on Eiffel's Folly and the guards are maintaining it mostly at this stage, but they ... it's all coming apart a bit.

LYDIA

She will go over the manhole covers and if she can grab one of those people she will ask them what's going on in her guttering French.

ALEX

Sure.

LYDIA

So I would...

ALEX

You manage to grab someone who literally pokes their head up after the others. Immediate to yours, they just yell down the equivalent. Again it's in French. Stop it, stop it.

LYDIA

No, no, no. I'm not trying to catch you. I'm not trying to catch you.

ALEX

Its fine ... oh God ... give me a diplomacy check.

LYDIA

Yep. Ooh. A diplomacy of minus 1 but I rolled a 16 so it's 15.

ALEX

15. Well you have succeeded so you are tactful enough...

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

...but you don't have to worry about deliberately fluffing it. Oh gosh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. It's fine, I'll go back. I'm sorry. You don't have to bring me in. it's fine honestly. Honestly, it's fine.

LYDIA

Like look, I'm over from ... I'm from Other London. Came on a job. all these things that are going down, everything has fallen apart. I don't have anyone to contact. So I was just ... you know ... if people had information. Can I help you? What's wrong?

ALEX

Just you need to leave. You need to get out now. It's all going to fall apart. La Gourmande is on the warpath. You've got to go. Okay. Just let me go. Please just let me go.

LYDIA

No, I'll let you go. Is there anyone who needs help in there? Because I would recognise that that is the head of the gang...

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

...who was supplying the brains.

ALEX

There ... it's hundreds of people. It's maybe 100 guards and hundreds and hundreds of people on the far side of the fence.

LYDIA

Trying to get out.

ALEX

Yeah, so he's just there going to be my guest, but honestly like, you just want to get out. The city is going to go up you can tell. Please just let me go.

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah, like you can...

ALEX

He starts jogging off and looking back and sort of looking back and going 'you want to get out of here' and just runs off into the city. A guard has seen you from the fence and has started yelling to the others, pointing at you and it's the equivalent of 'oi, oi, what you doing there? How did you get out there' and start jogging over to you.

LYDIA

And I say something in English. Oh no what, I'm just ... I'm a tourist ... I just ... they were ... so we were looking for information and tourist ... tourist.

ALEX

They are not believing any of this. They're just like 'alright come on, come on, come here'.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

They're running over...

LYDIA

So I'm...

ALEX

...and its very clear they're going to grab you.

LYDIA

She's going to run away. She's going to run back to La Triomphe, or at least in that direction.

ALEX

Okay. Jumping back to La Triomphe, Bertie and Hamid, you re-enter the room.

BEN

Shall I do a perception check?

ALEX

Yep, give me a perception check.

BEN

That's 20.

ALEX

You are very aware of them entering the room. So you know that they are in the apartment. You have walked past the ... the valet has tried to ... assumed that you were arresting the gentleman in question, because he was still over Bertie's shoulder. But, after you had a brief word with the head valet they just let you off and you were like okay, that's fine, that's fine. We'll see what we can send up. So yeah, you have entered the apartment.

BEN

Just sit down there and some food will be brought up for you and we're just going to have a chat, okay. Nothing to worry about.

JAMES

I hope you're slightly uncomfortable.

BEN

You're back earlier than I thought you'd be.

ALEX

Zolf give me a perception check. Hamid and Zolf. Hamid and Bertie sorry.

BRYN

11.

JAMES

18.

ALEX

18?

JAMES

Yes.

ALEX

Hamid, something is up with Zolf. Bertie, that's a face you've only ever seen on people you've just yelled at.

JAMES

Aw, Mr Smith ...

BEN

What?

JAMES

You've got some tributes to Poseidon just running down your face there.

BEN

I don't know what you mean. I've just ... who is that?

JAMES

Oh, this young man? Oh yes. He's a new friend of ours. A friend of the criminal fraternity. This mastermind villain, this criminal genius. This moriarty of crime. Purse snatching?

BEN

Why have you brought a pickpocket up?

JAMES

You've got to pick a pickpocket or two Mr Smith. Otherwise what are holidays for?

[Group laughter]

BRYN

It looked like he was follow us and I wondered why.

BEN

Maybe because you know, the big idiot in shiny armour looked like an easy mark...

BRYN

And then I thought maybe he might need some food.

BEN

Right, okay. Are you going to start a soup kitchen.

BRYN

Things are pretty bad out there.

BEN

Yeah, well.

BRYN

I know they're not great in here either.

BEN

I try and give you a subtle sympathetic look. It may or may not work.

ALEX

Jump back to Sasha. How does Sasha intend to escape?

LYDIA

She hops down the manhole cover that has been opened and runs down it.

ALEX

Okay. One sec. They don't even bother heading down after you once they see you jump down it. They have problems to deal with. They ... you see them close the manhole cover and you hear the movement of something up there.

LYDIA

Oh dear!

ALEX

You are already long gone, however. You find only say 60 feet along, another manhole cover that you can come out of and on the way you are finding yourself shoulder to shoulder with a few more people who are fleeing from...

LYDIA

Yep. I'm like, no there's guards down there. There are guards down there. You can't go down this hole.

ALEX

They give you a panic nod and run off to a different direction. It's very easy for you to find a way out because of the flow of people via the sewer and they're coming up pretty much every manhole cover that they can. So it's very easy for you to just make your way back and then come up on a manhole cover on the far side of the enclosed perimeter.

LYDIA

I'm listening in on everything that everyone is trying to say.

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

24.

ALEX

No specifics. Just La Gourmande seems to be making a move or something and you get a lot of people panic. Just asking after other people and they're just fleeing. And the second that they get up onto the city they will just head into their separate ways and disappear into the grounds very, very quickly.

LYDIA

Okay, when she comes up she will start heading towards La Triomphe.

ALEX

Okay. So heading back, you see that there are people are still lingering out. So unlike the other nights where people stayed at home, there are people on the streets. They are starting to sort of light a few fires and they've gathered around them and you head back and come into the room with Bertie, Hamid

and Zolf with an incredibly scared looking person whose quite young, sat in front of a finished plate. You've all managed to eat a plate of steaming food was bought up to you. It was good. It was really, really good quality, but it was a plate of food rather than an elaborate massive buffet brought up just for yourselves.

JAMES

Bertie is going to question the young man, who has been more than enough good cop. So Bertie is going to question properly. I suspect he will give me a sense motive check?

ALEX

Yes.

JAMES

19 minus 1 is 18.

ALEX

He thought you were an easy mark. It became apparent that you weren't so he went for the next easy mark. They needed some cash basically because things are going a bit dodgy and the price of everything has gone up by about 10 times overnight.

JAMES

Well that's enormously disappointing.

ALEX

I didn't really have much. Here. I can give you this. And he starts passing over like a wallet, but something in it.

JAMES

No, don't bother. I would let him go.

ALEX

He's really, really thankful and you enter just as Hamid is telling him that.

LYDIA

Right. What's all this? What's all this? Whose your new mate?

BRYN

Just someone we met on the streets. Things are getting pretty bad out there it seems.

LYDIA

Yeah I know. So mate, talking to the [unclear: 0:33:41], would you know a La Gourmande?

ALEX

His eyes sort of open up and goes me? Nothing.

LYDIA

No? You don't know what's going on down around Eiffel's Folly?

ALEX

I'd never go near there no, God no.

LYDIA

Never?

ALEX

It's bad news. Not that I know anything.

LYDIA

Yeah? Right well it seems like you've picked up pretty low class of criminal. He doesn't even know what's going on in the criminal districts.

JAMES

Unless this is an elaborate buff. A mastermind of deception. Look at the veils. The veils of secrecy. The mystery unpeels itself. Like an onion stripping.

BRYN

I don't think he is a criminal. I don't think its anything complicated. I think it's probably what we expected. But we have to make sure there wasn't anything else.

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check.

JAMES

14.

BRYN

15.

LYDIA

20.

BEN

22.

ALEX

Look at you all hitting your perception checks! Even Bertie!

JAMES

I'm doing so well.

ALEX

You hear the sounds of boisterous, almost aggressive cheering outside on the street.

BEN

Look outside.

ALEX

A huge crowd of people are starting to tip all of the automated carriages over. Sort of people are yelling and a few people are cheering. It's very, very clear that a lot of people are very angry and are just tipping the carriages one after another.

BRYN

The city is a powder keg, it's only going to get worse.

BEN

Yep, well you know that'll happen.

LYDIA

There are people stuck. Trapped around Eiffel's Folly and the guy that sold all the brains is hunting him down and the guards are keeping them trapped. This is ... you know this is stuff that we've done and it's our responsibility?

BRYN

What we going to do about it?

LYDIA

Well I was going to go there and try and help as many people get out as possible.

JAMES

And slay La Gourmande. A noble quest.

LYDIA

No, just rescuing people or trying to make it so the guards will let them out.

JAMES

Bleugh.

BRYN

We don't know if that's the right thing to do though.

LYDIA

What I know, that I see a lot of people running away from something where they're going to get hurt.

BRYN

But if the guards are trying to keep order ... I mean they might not be, but ...

LYDIA

They're not! They're trying to keep people that they don't like...

BRYN

How do you know?

LYDIA

...in one space. Because I was there! I went down! I went down into the tunnels and also I know what Police do right? Right, they don't ... they're not trying to protect, they're trying to keep people separate.

JAMES

It's tip their hats and salute respectfully.

LYDIA

Yeah to some people.

BRYN

No but...look...

LYDIA

And others they keep trapped.

ALEX

All of you give me another perception check.

JAMES

7.

BEN

14.

BRYN

21.

LYDIA

12.

ALEX

Hamid. You notice that there is something moving outside of the windows on multiple sides of the apartment. However, no one else has seen this so return as you were but Hamid you are aware of this.

BEN

The city's going to explode in a riot. If we change anything, we might just set it off. The last time we tried to help. This happened.

BRYN

I'm going to let our captive go.

ALEX

He immediately scarpers. He can't get out.

BRYN

I'm going to let them continue driving, but I'm going to check at the windows and look out.

ALEX

The gargoyles are climbing down the side of the building off the roof.

BRYN

I don't understand the significance of that.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

So I won't comment on it.

ALEX

That's fine.

LYDIA

Fine. I'm going back.

JAMES

What are you going do? Slay an evil doer? Are you with me young lady.

LYDIA

I'm just going to see if I can help some people not get hurt.

JAMES

I'm going to see if I can help one specific person get hurt!

BEN

By helping those people, more people get hurt.

LYDIA

Well that's...

JAMES

Well that plays right into my original plan there really doesn't it? Bertie is going to go off on his own! The thing is, everyone is talking to him but not really interacting.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Mainly I am talking.

LYDIA

Yeah, well sometimes that happens Zolf.

BEN

Yep. Sometimes that happens. Sometimes you knock out most of the world's logistics...

JAMES

Sometime Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham happens. I like that!

BEN

Sometimes you make a terrible, terrible decision. And sometimes, I don't know, millions of people might die because of what you've done.

BRYN

But that doesn't mean it was wrong Zolf.

BEN

But do you not get what we've done? Do you not get that? Do you not understand how important what we've just ... just...

BRYN

Of course I do! It doesn't mean it was wrong! It doesn't make it right!

JAMES

It's really, really important.

BRYN

It doesn't make it right, just because it was bad right now doesn't mean it's not better in the long run.

JAMES

How do we know that?

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check.

JAMES

Ooh, 19 minus 1 is 18.

ALEX

Bertie is on fire!

JAMES

What, what? Arrghh.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

I've only just noticed this!

[Group laughter]

BRYN

19 plus 9 is 28.

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

9 plus 9 is 18.

BEN

And 22.

ALEX

Whoa! Jeez.

LYDIA

We notice everything.

ALEX

There has been a distinct change in the quality of the cries coming out from the street. It's mostly changing to panic and a few yells and there is the distinct sound of some kind of conflict.

LYDIA

Right. Well. People are getting hurt. What you could be doing is healing people. What I could be doing is going around trying to find people that might be on fire or something and putting them out. Or like we could be doing useful stuff. The thing is, right, Zolf, all of this was already there, right? There was a machine that was controlling the world. It was holding people in its control. It was selling their brains. It was slaughtering people. It was slaughtering real people.

BEN

No it wasn't! It actually wasn't!

LYDIA

It was!

BEN

No. No. La Gourmande was doing that because criminals exist. Criminals like Gourmande and Barret always exist! They're always going to exist. Murder is going to happen. People are just going to die. They're just keep dying. Th...the computer wasn't actually doing that. It was just supplied brains. Were you listening to it? We spent a week with it and you didn't listen to it! It wasn't evil. It had some bad ideas but it wasn't ... it was ...

LYDIA

Yeah, it was controlled by evil people.

BEN

No it wasn't!

LYDIA

It was fed by and controlled by...

BEN

It wasn't controlled by anyone.

LYDIA

...evil people.

BRYN

Its very existence was evil wasn't it?

BEN

Brilliant. Right. So we're now in a post evil computer world. Brilliant. Let's let the riots happen. We can't stop any of this. We've done something and we can't get out of it. It's done. Shut the stable door, it's bolted, it's gone.

JAMES

Perhaps we should work together to set out a distributed system of labour in order to kind of build up the economy once again from scratch. I shall be Minister for Transport.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Because I like horses! And, what would you like? I see you as being a good Shadow Secretary of Transport, you know, because you're stealthie. I'd like that. And ...

BRYN

Bertie goes on for ever talking about transport planning.

BEN

It was a completely, a moral machine, with no understanding of what was truly best for humanity.

BRYN

And it was built on dead people! And you were the one who told me that the very energy running in its veins was necromantic and that is what made it evil!

BEN

Did we fully understand the ramifications of what we have done? Do you...look out the window. Did you know that that was going to happen? Do you...

BRYN

Is there any decision in your life you fully understood the ramifications of. That's now how people live Zolf. We did what we thought was right and I still think it was right and I will not let you change that just by looking at the outcome.

BEN

We. Us. Four people have affected the lives of probably everybody in the world. Yeah, I don't know what I'm doing most of the time. I can't see into the future but mo...usually my decisions don't affect millions of people!

LYDIA

Zolf, Zolf, Oscar Wilde sent Bertie down to us in the depths of that machine. You know what?, this decision has involved a lot more ... the system involves a lot more people than you think.

JAMES

It wasn't by the way!

LYDIA

Yeah, you're not as ... you're not as powerful as you think you are.

BEN

It's not ... I don't think I'm powerful. I think I'm powerless. I can't do anything about this. I can't fix the mistakes that I've made. I don't ... I can't walk, I can't get out, I can't get out and heal people because I need help to get down the stairs!

LYDIA

We can fix all of that Zolf. We've got money.

BEN

Can we? No! Money doesn't fix ... fine, go on. Just try and fix it. See how well you do. You. On your own. Fix it.

ALEX

There is a tentative knock at the door. A very tentative knock at the door.

LYDIA

Well it's not mine...

ALEX

It's the knock of someone who doesn't want to be heard.

BEN

What?

JAMES

Entrée vous.

ALEX

The door very hesitantly opens revealing the concierge. He is equal parts kind of regretting his decision but realising it's bad etiquette to at this point leave.

JAMES

[Speaking French 0:42:14 Ah entre to?]

ALEX

He sort of steps in and goes sorry to hear...

BEN

Spit it out!

ALEX

I just wanted to say if there is anything that we can do for you sir, and obviously we've deployed the gargoyles and I believe the crowd has dissipated. If there is anything that we can do for you, I can only apologise. We heard the raised voices and obviously it's a very stressful time and we can arrange for some entertainment or we can arrange for some...

BEN

We don't need any of that! Thank you. Just leave us alone.

JAMES

With that saying, do you know any dancing boys?

BEN

Bertie! During this time I will just wheel myself into my room and slam the door.

ALEX

The valet just apologetically closes the door.

JAMES

It's a tough time for him. His body is going through a lot of changes.

[Group laughter]

BEN

I didn't know that. He wouldn't have heard that. I was too busy being mean and angry.

ALEX

So, does anyone do anything else for the rest of the evening?

LYDIA

Yeah, Sasha heads out. She is obviously more of a weaponry type person than a helpy, bandagy, happy person. But, is going to go out and just be vaguely vigilante-esc.

JAMES

Bertie totally comes with her.

LYDIA

No. He might go after...

JAMES

He attempts to come with her.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Fighting crime. Two lone swordsmen. Yes. Out we go.

LYDIA

Mmhmm. If he's saying that while walking behind her down the corridor...

JAMES

Bold crusaders.

LYDIA

And she'll be like, yeah, alone. If you want a definition Bertie, it's ... well maybe you should look that up.

JAMES

Fighting crime and disorder. Back to back. Yes.

LYDIA

Whilst he's talking...

ALEX

We will say, that whilst you were heading through the foyer, the concierge very politely advises you to definitely not go outside because there's reports of all kinds of horribleness happening outside.

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

You see shoulder to shoulder with one another, all of the gargoyles are currently stood at the very bottom of the steps to La Triomphe.

LYDIA

Mmhmm.

ALEX

And they are much taller than you gave them credit for. Once they are down on the ground and stood. Again, perfectly stationary. They almost look like statues until one reaches up and scratches her nose, only to return it. They're like eight foot each, shoulder to shoulder. And the concierge again, obviously, tries to convince you not to go out. I assume you ignore it.

LYDIA

Yep. Ignore. And if they're backed shoulder to shoulder, so it's hard to get either way...

ALEX

Oh, they part for Sasha.

LYDIA

Yes, but the tiniest gap so that she can slide.

ALEX

They part for Sasha and immediately don't part for Bertie unless...

JAMES

You know these...these people pretending to be statues, it's really very impressive. I don't know how they do it.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Bertie sits there...

ALEX

One of the gargoyles looks to you and raises a palatial eyebrow and tilts her head incredibly slowly towards Bertie.

LYDIA

Let him out for five minutes.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

So, I think we will wrap up there with Sasha running off into the night. With Bertie waiting, watching, quote street performers, unquote. Zolf...

BEN

I'm going to play loud rock music in my room.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

And Hamid, what are you doing?

BRYN

Sitting at the door of Zolf's room. Leaning against it. With my eyeliner running down my face like tears.

[Group laughter]

[0:45:15 over talking]

LYDIA

Do you want to build a snowman.

BRYN

Zolf is definitely playing new wave.

ALL

Hey!

BRYN

Water pun!

ALEX

So that was the star season 2. An incredibly down and out opening...

JAMES

Just like the end of season 1! Listen to Rusty Quill gaming.

BEN

Sadness!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Hopefully you'll all be back for the next episode. But until then, bye guys.

ALL

Bye.

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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