

RQG – 57 – Locksmith Lockdown

Content Warnings

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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 57 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

JAMES

James Ross

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

BEN

And Ben Meredith

ALEX

And who are you playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun Al-Tahan

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett

BEN

Zolf Smith

ALEX

God we're so slick, we're so flawless.

LYDIA

We are. It's almost like we've never made a mistake introducing ourselves with the wrong names. Introducing ourselves as each other or anything like that. That's never happened. We've got our names mixed up with our characters.

BEN

When it came round to my line, my brain was going say Sasha Rackett. I was like no, no, no!

BRYN

I always get really afraid during that bit because so much of the time James makes a really good joke and my mind goes blank and I'm like, I can't just say Hamid. Indeed a joke too. I don't have a joke!

JAMES

I'm only worried during that bit that I might accidentally blow my cover.

(laughing)

That's my big concern.

ALEX

So speaking of things going surprisingly well you got ambushed by an enormous amount of gnomes.

BEN

Gnomes in trench coats.

ALEX

It was! It was gnomes in trench coats.

LYDIA

Standing on top of each of other.

ALEX

Standing on top of each other. Acrobatic gnomes who proceeded to do really badly against you. Get quite blown up, a little bit killed. Tried going invisible and sticking you to the floor and that also didn't work. Then after Oscar Wilde, after all of the issues with Mr Ceiling and so on and you are currently in Paris which is being slowly taken over by La Gourmande. The party are in the middle of a street with a few upturned vehicles; one of which Sasha exploded wantonly and successfully.

JAMES

One of which got wobbled, just saying.

ALEX

It got wobbled.

JAMES

You are welcome.

LYDIA

With your face

BRYN

Savagely wobbled!

ALEX

The party are currently surrounded all pretty much with the exception of Bertie who's just doing his own thing as he just wants to do. The rest of them are all surrounding an Oscar Wilde who is completely unconscious having been presumably poisoned we believe. So as it stands we are at the beginning of a new round. Sasha, you're up.

LYDIA

So I'm still entangled.

ALEX

You currently have hit by a tanglefoot bag. You are not stuck to the floor but you are entangled.

LYDIA

Which means no dex bonus on anything.

ALEX

You will move at half speed. You cannot run or charge. You're at a -2 on all attack rolls, -4 penalty to dex and then you must make a concentration check of DC15 + spell level to cast spells because your fingers have gone all sticky.

BEN

Bryn why didn't you say that last week!

BRYN

Ah Alex!

ALEX

Bryn, I want you to know it's just because I hate you and also you just singlehandedly just pow, pow, pow.

LYDIA

I mean a more sensible thing would have been to throw a bomb but she's not. She's angry, she's going to stab him.

ALEX

So move up and stabbing one of the surrounding gnomes.

LYDIA

2 + 4 minus...

ALEX

That's a miss.

LYDIA

Yeah! Sticky Sasha, Sasha's used to moving really fluidly and now she's like...it's like the ball bearings have got the traces of stuff from the tape that we use to keep the mics in place. So just slightly...the glue bit when it's been pulled off. It's sticky. I don't like it.

ALEX

Hamid you're up.

BRYN

Do any of them look particularly badly hurt?

ALEX

Yes. They all look pretty badly hurt. There's not a lot in it unless you were to take extended amounts of heal check.

BRYN

Ok I target the one closest to me with magic missile. I make a concentration check to successfully cast magic missile. I probably fail. Yes I fail my concentration check and fail to cast magic missile.

ALEX

It's a little sticky. Ok, Bertie you're up.

JAMES

Bertie takes a five foot step away from the gnome who is dangling by the neck out of the window of the car up to one of the gnomes that was...

ALEX

That just threw a tanglefoot bag at your back.

JAMES

Yes. Bounce did it? And then takes a swing at that nearest gnomes.

ALEX

You will be on a -2

JAMES

Oh natural 20.

ALEX

Natural 20. Roll to confirm

JAMES

1!

(laughing)

BRYN

Crit is not confirmed.

ALEX

Crit is not confirmed.

BRYN

In time for a 1 which has no impact.

JAMES

So is that just like, that's a normal hit then?

ALEX

You hit.

JAMES

Ok and then rolling for damage. 8.

ALEX

They are down. They are not dead. They are dying.

JAMES

Bertie takes one step towards the gnomes, stares down at the gnome. Bertie swings the sword directly downwards and takes a huge slice of the side of one of the legs of the gnome as if he slicing a Christmas ham.

ALEX

Funnily enough that makes it quite hard for the gnome to dodge out of the way. That's why it's getting...

JAMES

Yeah, the hamstring just pings off

EVERYONE

Urgghhhhh!

JAMES

Against the ground. The gnome screams, passes out and falls backwards.

ALEX

Yes that happens. Ok.

BEN

James is just reminding us that even though we are playing a game, we're still doing a horrible violence on people.

JAMES

Bertie is not a nice man. Bertie hates a) people and b) gnomes

BRYN

Bertie's not the one narrating!

JAMES

Well I'm just playing the character!

ALEX

Zolf, you're up.

BEN

I will turn around, look at the one that is closest to me and shoot an icicle at him.

BRYN

It's a spell like ability isn't it. So you don't have to make a concentration check.

BEN

No, nothing happens really. Nothing. 12 on a range touch

ALEX

Nope. Close but no.

BEN

Fair enough.

ALEX

Shatters against a car. The readied action that all of the gnomes used against you doesn't actually reorder initiative. However that was in the last round. In this round everyone has held their action in order to all go now. So there's going to be an enormous amount of moves but it's because they've all basically given up their chance to move earlier to coordinate now. They all share a glance. It looks like something big's about to happen. At which point they all scatter simultaneously leaving their comrades. The two that do not provoke attacks of opportunity, one of them ducks out behind a car putting the car between him and Bertie, the other one ducks through the glass for the one of the looted buildings. The remainder provokes an attack of opportunity from Sasha. He's up out of sight.

LYDIA

Ah fricking 4.

ALEX

4? You do not. Scarpers.

BRYN

Round the corner.

ALEX

Round the corner keeping a car between him and Bertie and scarpers. As far as you can tell they have all fled. Do any of you intend to pursue?

BRYN

No. We would be incredibly ineffective at it with having been tangled.

ALEX

We will drop out of combat in that case.

LYDIA

They'll be something. They'll be a bomb. They'll be a bomb. Why would they flee. They had us right there. Let's get out of the way. Quick. Quick!

BEN

It's because we were beating them up.

(laughing)

ALEX

You're so nonchalant. I love it!

BRYN

It didn't work. They'd lost...half of them had fallen over. They knew they had to get going...

BEN

If you want to let's just move Wilde then.

ALEX

A couple of the gnomes groan slightly.

JAMES

Bertie takes a step over to the one that is outside of the car, picks him up by the scruff of the neck and then carries him back over to the group. Look I've brought one in for questioning. I'll be bad cop. No one else can play!

(laughing)

BEN

I'm going to stabilise the one that's on the floor.

ALEX

Ok

BRYN

Do you want to look after Wilde too?

BEN

Yeah I'm going to see if I can just work out what's going on.

LYDIA

Alright so one of them went into through a building through a looted kind of smashed window. So Sasha is going to duck into that building and look around?

ALEX

Ok give me a perception check.

LYDIA

18

ALEX

Ah.

LYDIA

Bad for Sasha.

ALEX

So what you see is it was clearly some kind of chocolatiers. However all of the shelves have been completely stripped bare. There is nothing in there.

JAMES

Well apart from the one's in the window because like Thorntons they only have the plastic ones in the window and in my hometown when I was growing

up somebody smashed the front window of Thorntons, only stole the ones that were in the front window to discover they were plastic. It was hilarious!

ALEX

I'm afraid even the plastic ones have been taken!

LYDIA

No!

ALEX

However you do notice there is a small trail of blood. Nothing gushing or anything. A few droplets that lead into what looks like a back room. The door is wide open.

LYDIA

Go into the back room.

ALEX

You see the trail continues to a back door which opens into an alleyway.

LYDIA

Goes in.

ALEX

Meanwhile...

BEN

Yeah I will make another heal check on Wilde like not in the heat of battle.

ALEX

Go for it.

BEN

I'll take 10 for a total of 20.

ALEX

You take 10. Obviously that takes a few minutes. Total of?

BEN

20

ALEX

Good news. Bad news. The good news is it's not doing anything particularly deleterious to Oscar Wilde insofar as his health isn't diminishing, he's not...

LYDIA

For the benefit of people like me that means it's not making it worse.

ALEX

Correct! However you also know that he's been hit hard by this poison. You don't know what poison it is but short of having some kind of antidote to do, you've just got an unconscious Oscar Wilde. There's not a lot you can do. You've just got to let him sleep it off really.

JAMES

Bertie takes the gnome that he's currently carrying, pins him to a wall with one hand and strips the gnome off clothes, weapons, equipment, they all fall to the floor. How responsive is the gnome?

ALEX

The gnome remains unconscious throughout. They're in a particularly bad way in the sense of they are stable and that's just about all they are. So they're not bleeding out on you. They have...

JAMES

Upon noticing that unceremoniously drops the gnome several feet.

ALEX

You drop the gnome onto a pile of his equipment.

JAMES

Bertie kicks the gnome aside to get to things that he's interested in.

ALEX

There doesn't appear to be an antidote in there.

JAMES

What is there?

ALEX

There does appear to be the following...are we ready?

BRYN

Whilst this is going on, I'm going to be taking the equipment from the other two gnome bodies. I take their weapons away from them, take any potions off them because I don't want them going invisible and running away again.

ALEX

Yeah so...

LYDIA

Sasha's going to come back and tie them up.

BRYN

I'm not going to take their armour or clothes but weapons and any other equipment.

ALEX

I will describe everything that they are holding upon them and be aware that unless I say otherwise they all have identical gear. They are a team unit and have been equipped as such. Characters have another tanglefoot bag each. They all are wearing studded leather armour. Similar to Sasha's but intended for gnomes so none of you will really be able to wear it effectively. Hamid might be able to get away with it.

BRYN

I could wear it but...

ALEX

It wouldn't be a particularly...yeah. They all have masterwork bucklers. They all has composite longbows. They all have 20 arrows. They each have a dagger. They each have masterwork rapiers. There are, between all of them, two invisibility potions left. They are all carrying hip flasks full of what smells like not good brandy.

BRYN

I leave it.

JAMES

Bertie takes yours!

ALEX

They each have identical money purses containing 50 gold each and then one of them has, you see, a very small knapsack. The one that Bertie held up and just tore all the stuff off had a small knapsack. Inside that you see a collection of jewels and gold. Give me the appraise roll. Sasha I'm assuming. Give me your madam appraise

LYDIA

She sees 22 of jewels.

ALEX

22 of jewels. To your eye it looks like there is between 3 and 4,000 golds worth of jewels in this bag. Call it misc booty.

LYDIA

Alright let's grab him and get out of the city.

BEN

Yeah we should probably keep one of these to question.

LYDIA

Maybe we should take one of the empty shops or buildings around here for the night.

ALEX

There are still the sounds of distant, social unrest throughout the city. But again it is very distant. It's not in this particular area. You're in a broadly deserted part.

JAMES

I suggest we take two of the gnomes because might be used as an example to encourage greater loquacity on the part of the other.

BRYN

Too hard to transport two of them, let's just...

JAMES

Wrong! Bertie picks up one gnome by the neck, picks up the other gnome by the neck.

BRYN

Making eye contact with Bertie, Hamid lifts up one arm of Oscar Wilde's

(laughing)

ALEX

Zolf you're a big guy, do you want to help?

JAMES

Bertie maintains eye contact with Hamid, pulls the papoose out from...the empty Brutor papoose out of his knapsack, shoves the unconscious gnome into the...

ALEX

The one who's completely out or the one who's stirring.

JAMES

The one who's stirring and he has it so that the gnome is directly facing up into his face so the first thing he sees when he wakes is going to be Bertie staring right down at him. He's got the unconscious gnome, the super...yeah, the complete unconscious gnome in one hand. He picks up Oscar Wilde and slings him over his shoulder.

ALEX

You have the carrying capacity for all of this. This is fine. You will be moving slightly slower than your optimal speed but unless you plan on sprinting somewhere that's not an issue.

JAMES

I'm with two people who are mechanically slower than I am anyway because they're tiny so it'll be fine.

ALEX

Correct.

JAMES

So that's what we'll do.

ALEX

This is the first time I really feel bad for Sasha because she's just got...she's capable of genuine feats of speed going do be do be do [singing]

LYDIA

She might just pop into some shops as they're walking around. Just scamper up and down. Might climb up a lamppost and come back down.

ALEX

So where are people heading?

BEN

So did Wilde mention where he was taking us?

BRYN

No

BEN

Yeah he's out. So we need to wait for him to sleep this off. I'm going to assume it's not lethal because that wouldn't be useful to them.

BRYN

We just need to find somewhere to baton down for the night I guess.

BEN

Yeah. Any of these shops?

BRYN

Yeah might as well.

JAMES

What shops are around? Because you mentioned chocolatiers. What else is there?

LYDIA

It's a fancy part of town!

ALEX

So there is a chocolatiers. Next door to the chocolatiers...

LYDIA

Is a knife sharpener and on the other side it's one with super magnets and if we just flip the switch then we're fwoom...

ALEX

Next door to the chocolatiers is a haberdashers. It looks like it's grating has been sort of torn up a little bit. People saw what was in there and then they went I do not need to loot hats. And then the looting stopped. Opposite the haberdasher's is a bakery which has also been raided and completely stripped bare and then opposite from that there is what looks to be some kind of extremely high rent studio art installation gallery type situation.

BRYN

We should go a little further away just in case they...those gnomes get some friends and come back. We don't want to be in the same place.

BEN

Right if we...

BRYN

All the food shops would've been looted but if we can find, you know, a tailor or a furniture shop or something, there might be something we can use to keep ourselves warm.

BEN

Yeah alright. Well I guess...

LYDIA

Let's walk for half an hour or so. Find...

BRYN

20 minutes maybe.

(laughing)

BEN

Alright Hamid, save 10 minutes...

BRYN

I'm tired!

BEN

We're all tired!

ALEX

Right so you...

JAMES

I'm really sleepy. Can we stop at the services? I want a boiled sweet.

ALEX

So we're having an aimless wander for somewhere to...

BRYN

Towards the outskirts

LYDIA

Towards the outskirts.

ALEX

Ok give me a knowledge local roll. I'd suggest probably Sasha as she has the best.

LYDIA

16 + 10. 26

ALEX

26. Ok yeah you make some solid journey. You know that Paris is big and 20 minutes isn't really going to get you to the edge of anywhere from where you are currently but you make some movements, you're still in some upmarket areas and eventually you come near to a place that you know there is a locksmiths.

JAMES

Ooh super secure.

ALEX

Yeah for obvious reasons super secure and interestingly as you're passing by and you scope it out and so on, you see that it appears that's there no one in. It looks like the shop doesn't have residents there as well. The shop is locked tight but you reckon you can get in. Also everyone give me perception checks.

JAMES

Critical fail.

BRYN

21

LYDIA

28

BEN

17

ALEX

Everyone apart from Bertie!

LYDIA

I'd say critical fail, I'd say he thinks he understands.

ALEX

I'm going to return to Bertie. Everyone else, as you are travelling there is the sound of an occasional sprint in the distance, you don't know what it is. There is a cry out in the distance. You don't know who it could've been. At some point you think there may have...you may have seen movement up on the rooftops but it's really hard to tell. You'll see a lot of people pull their curtains aside, see a bunch of people carrying bodies and close the curtains and make sure that they weren't seen. Bertie, as you're walking you, rather than looking around, are just maintaining eye contact with the gnome's unconscious face as it slowly stirs going, any moment, any moment.

BRYN

And walk straight into a lamppost.

ALEX

Any moment, any moment. You do not walk into a lamppost. They all stop to look at the locksmiths. You keep walking. Any moment, any moment now. Any moment. The gnome awakens to your face then proceeds to pretend really convincingly to be unconscious again

(laughing)

Sort of opens its eyes, sees you, goes urgh, closes its, so unconscious.

JAMES

In fact he actually says, oh I'm so unconscious and Bertie believes him.

(laughing)

ALEX

So that's where we are. There is a locksmiths that you could probably break into Sasha but that's because you're...

BRYN

Bertie...B...Bertie. Back here. Bertie.

JAMES

Any minute, any minute now.

ALEX

So unconscious!

(laughing)

BRYN

I cast dancing lights

ALEX

There are like twinkly things in front of you and moving around you presumably.

JAMES

Ah what, ah.

BRYN

Bertie, Bertie.

JAMES

Oh, yeah, very well alright. Any minute.

BRYN

Best use of dancing lights ever!

LYDIA

Guys, guys, the GM says that this locksmith's will be secure so we should stop here

ALEX

Don't get meta on me, you'll take psychic damage.

LYDIA

It's not a plot point at all! What else? So let's say we've stopped on the street. What else is there?

ALEX

There are a few upmarket townhouses and, you know, private residences.
There is also, what looks to be, a florists.

LYDIA

Oh maybe we could go into the florists.

ALEX

The florists hasn't been looted. It doesn't have much in the way of security but
it's all intact.

BEN

Locksmith shop seems like it might be secure. If you can unlock it and relock it
then...

LYDIA

Alright. Alright. Let's go to work on this bad boy.

JAMES

You can take 20.

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

Yeah if you're willing to take the time you can take 10 or take 20.

LYDIA

Let's take 10.

ALEX

Then you don't need to roll. So just 10 plus what your disable device is.

LYDIA

That's 21.

ALEX

So we covered it a while ago but worth reiterating, taking 10 is where you take your time to do it properly and you do an average job but you're not taking any penalties. You can also take 20 which is where you take ages and you definitely fail at least once so generally you don't want to take 20 to disarm a trap that's going to explode, stuff like that.

BRYN

But you can't take 10 if you're under time pressure or if there are penalties for failure basically.

ALEX

You unlock the front door Sasha.

LYDIA

Alright guys, in here.

BEN

Alright well we can dump the hostages and Wilde and make him comfortable so that when he comes round...

LYDIA

Sasha might nick some locks.

ALEX

So you all head inside?

EVERYONE

Uh huh

ALEX

Sasha the second that you open the door a trap goes off. Ok, one sec.

LYDIA

Should've expected that.

ALEX

What's your AC?

LYDIA

18

ALEX

18. You don't get a reflex save but it misses anyway. Two tanglefoot bags from opposite ends of the room are catapulted. You open the door, hear [throwing noise], go ok, close the door for a second. You hear a [thudding noise], the distant sound of squelching. You open it, two tanglefoot bags from opposite side of the door are catapulted immediately at one another. Entangle one another and just fall to the floor without your entangled.

LYDIA

She checks for other traps.

(laughing)

ALEX

Give me a perception check. 22? You find there are a number of non-lethal traps spread throughout the...

LYDIA

Basically any shop would've been better than a locksmith's. It's so what I'd thought.

ALEX

That said, none of them do you any damage. They're all actually really simple but also none of them really have removable components. They're quite simple and they're designed for someone who's trying their luck who might've just taken a bolt cutter to the lock or something. It's nothing particularly exciting.

LYDIA

Right, right, right, alright guys. Here's the...is there a back room?

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

LYDIA

Right let's go in here. You guys see if there's any food around.

BRYN

I'll have a look for some food and I'll get everyone some water. There's probably water at least.

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check.

BEN

Oh dear!

JAMES

5

BEN

10

BRYN

13

LYDIA

15

ALEX

Sasha, you hear the distinct sound of a gnome mumbling really quietly.

[Whispering] really unconscious. So unconscious.

(laughing)

Super unconscious. Ah zzz, zzz, zzz, zzz, zzz. The other one is still out of it.

There's clearly like permanent damage that's happened to the other one.

BEN

It's alright, I'll use magic.

ALEX

Maggiicc!

LYDIA

Alright, Sasha's going to lock the front door. One of the best locks.

ALEX

Sure. Once you're in there's a locker which I'll just allow you to take 10 on. You open it and it's the keys to all of the locks in the shop. Shocker! Including the front door. You find an outstanding lock, I believe is the technical term for it. I tell you what if you want to stock up on locks, chains and other assorted lock keeping equipment, now's your time.

LYDIA

Yes she'd like some chains and locks in her bag of holding.

ALEX

Well I didn't mention it earlier but since you're going...there is a masterwork set of thieves tools as well. Technically they're not thieves tools, they are lockpicks for a legitimate locksmith...

LYDIA

I've already got those.

ALEX

Sure. I just meant if you want them, they are amongst the things and they are quite useful.

LYDIA

Times 2

BEN

Well Sasha we probably shouldn't steal these.

LYDIA

They've already gone.

BEN

What?

LYDIA

The people...they're running. They've gone.

BEN

Well temporarily.

LYDIA

They've left.

BEN

They might come back. That's what people do when they leave their businesses, they come back to them because this one hasn't been looted so it's in perfect condition, we're using this as shelter.

BRYN

Yeah we shouldn't really steal.

LYDIA

Why do you assume that you would be able to see her...

ALEX

This is a very, very good point.

LYDIA

Yeah

BRYN

Perception.

LYDIA

Well my sleight of hand was 14 + 11.

BEN

My perception was 14 + 6

ALEX

You successfully palm a big bag of tools.

LYDIA

She won't take all the chains and things because that would be quite difficult to...

ALEX

It's clanky.

LYDIA

It's clanky.

JAMES

Now Mr Smith we have here two gnomes. I would like to question them.

LYDIA

I don't think we can let Bertie do it. I think maybe he could stand at the back as an example of a possible Bertie. But like let us do the talking.

BEN

Er, yeah.

JAMES

I strongly object to that plan. I think I would be able to extract maximum amount of information. By all means you may ask the questions. I would like to apply to the pressure.

LYDIA

You can do a lot of that by standing over there in that corner.

JAMES

I could do even more by standing closer.

BEN

You seem awfully eager to inflict pain upon these individuals.

JAMES

Correct Mr Smith they were awfully eager to inflict pain on you not moments ago.

ALEX

There is the very faint words of, it's not that bad but really muttered. In such a way that he's probably still unconscious Bertie.

BEN

Categorically not.

LYDIA

We're now in a position of power and this is the moral, winks at Zolf, moral thing to do. Heroic even.

(laughing)

JAMES

But if no one were to see me question one of them alone.

BEN

We'd know it had happened

LYDIA

Yeah we're right here.

JAMES

Look! A bee!

LYDIA

Alright gnome. Do you know how it is for us to get this guy to not chop more bits off you. Tell us what you did to Wilde. Tell us what the plan was. Shall I roll a...

ALEX

Slightly louder so that everyone can here. Oh so asleep. Ah unconscious.

LYDIA

We're not all as dumb as him.

ALEX

Kind of opens an eye. Fair cop! We'll take a break.

LYDIA

Hey, hey, you with the face, yeah I know I shouldn't be here but got in like a wet ferret slipping through the hands of a moisturiser salesman. You know me. I just needed to let you know about this deal, right? You head over to rustyquill.com and follow the links to the store, or go on redbubble.com and search for us. I've been appraising the stuff and it is good. There's all sorts of stuff in there! You want Brutor's face on a mug? You got it. You want Hamid's face on the wall? It's there. You want Bertie's face? Why? Yeah, well, I got to go now, but you just remember right, head over to rustyquill.com, follow the links. Tell them I sent you. Just, um... well—I just wondered, though, uh... are you gonna eat all that eel quiche?

ALEX

And welcome back. So the gnome sees which way the wind is blowing and just kind of slumps.

BEN

Right so first things first, what have you done to Wilde?

ALEX

Non.

BEN

Parlez-vous Anglais?

ALEX

The gnome looks to the rest of them...

LYDIA

Sasha, French...

ALEX

Where – is – the vernacular railway?

(laughing)

BEN

What?

ALEX

He just looks to the rest of the party.

BEN

What a weird sentence! What a weird sentence for someone to know?! Why do you know that sentence. He can't speak.

JAMES

Bertie just...

ALEX

He just looks at the rest of them like I don't know what I'm doing.

JAMES

Bertie steps in and interposes himself directly between Sasha and Zolf and the gnome, leans into the gnome, unsheathes his sword. He's going at this point, he's going to do a dazzling display.

(laughing)

BRYN

Sure!

ALEX

Out comes the feather boa. [singing] ba-da-da-ba. I'll tell you anything! I'll tell you anything!

JAMES

And he's pomp and pageantry-ing this.

ALEX

So give me the intimidate check with your pomp and pageantry bonus and you said that you were doing it as a dazzling display so this must include flashy swordsmanship.

JAMES

It's going to include flashy swordsmanship.

ALEX

Give me the roll.

BRYN

Carve the Macguffingham crest into his chest.

LYDIA

Into his own chest!

JAMES

With modifiers 13.

ALEX

13. He looks at you. Sees your dazzling display.

JAMES

I haven't described my dazzling display.

ALEX

Describe it.

JAMES

Ok. Is it successful or...?

ALEX

No!

(laughing)

Like you've actively hurt your cause because as you're doing it, not because your attempt wasn't good but this is a stone cold killer. You've gone ha, hoo, hoo, ha, look at me ha, ha and he's gone, I could kill you. I just got unlucky.

JAMES

Ok fair enough. So the gnome is tied up and propped up in a chair. Bertie takes the sword, makes direct eye contact with the gnome, waves the sword through the air in such a way as to perfectly trace the silhouette of the gnome before chopping out all four legs of the chair. The chair slams down to the ground and he falls off the chair to one side.

ALEX

So the gnome turns to Sasha and says in a sort of quiet French mutter, listen mate can you do me a favour? Could you...bring your hands apart and then bring them together and then apart and together again like really slowly for me. Like genuinely please.

LYDIA

Sasha looks at Bertie. Looks at the gnome.

ALEX

I'd really appreciate it.

LYDIA

Looks at Bertie. Looks at the gnome and then does it.

ALEX

Yes!

JAMES

Bertie understands...

ALEX

Slow clap via Sasha.

JAMES

...absolutely all of this.

(laughing)

ALEX

Oh yeah, he's assuming that you just don't speak proper French.

JAMES

Young man, I would advise you to be extremely careful. At this point Bertie takes his sword and cuts off his ear.

LYDIA

No, no you don't.

JAMES

Yes he does!

LYDIA

Sasha jumps in the way.

ALEX

Fair enough. Give me the combat manoeuvre then.

LYDIA

19 only + 2 so 21.

BRYN

That's going to work.

ALEX

What's your combat manoeuvre defence James?

JAMES

17

ALEX

17. You successfully trip Bertie. He wields his sword back. Not in a big hefting swing but just to try and get the angles right to lop off an ear at which point [thudding noise]. Bertie, you find yourself on your back.

JAMES

What?!

ALEX

You're not sure how it happened.

JAMES

What? [groaning noise]

LYDIA

Look he is going to kill you unless you do exactly what you say and I'm not going to stop him killing you unless you do exactly what you say. You don't look scared but we just took out six of you. I know you're trying to put on a front or whatever but he will kill you.

ALEX

It looks at you, kind of, not sarcastically, just kind of blank and goes if I leave here I'm dead anyway.

LYDIA

Well you could come with us or we could leave you here and we might manage to sort the sea out. We managed to sort out some pretty...

ALEX

Do you have any idea how much La Gourmande wants that guy? He can't point but he kind of gestures with his head towards...

LYDIA

Yeah I've got an idea. Because Barrett wants me about the same.

BEN

Just during this conversation I'll turn to Hamid and go, really would be useful if I spoke French wouldn't it.

BRYN

Oh of course. And start muttering translation.

BEN

Much obliged.

ALEX

Barrett? Oh yeah, yeah sure. Scary guy. Ooh, ooh, yeah alright.

LYDIA

She'll kick him. In the stomach.

(laughing)

JAMES

As I see it young Mr Gnome you have two choices. One of them is going outside of here and dying. The other is staying here, telling us what you know and then dying. Now there's a certain amount of discomfort that might accompany either of these choices. I advise you to choose very carefully which degree of discomfort you would like to endure.

LYDIA

Just tell us what you did to him and what the plan was.

ALEX

I told you, he's been poisoned isn't he?

LYDIA

Where are you going to take him?

BRYN

Why does Mr Gourmande want Wilde so badly? If you're going to die anyway, there's no harm in telling us.

ALEX

Fair point. I don't know.

BEN

Can you ask him what the poison is?

BRYN

Do you know exactly what the poison is.

ALEX

It's drow poison. Knock him out for a few hours. We've got a few doses.

BEN

Antidote? I'm assuming you're translating that?

BRYN

Yeah

ALEX

Bed.

LYDIA

Alright well leave him tied up and then just don't tie him up

BRYN

Coffee?

JAMES

Are we sure that we wouldn't like to be a bit more chatty. Bertie grabs him by an ankle and starts squeezing.

BRYN

Look Bertie I just don't think there's anything he can tell us that's useful.

JAMES

Well there's only one way to find out really isn't there. And Bertie slams his left hand...

BRYN

Bertie!

ALEX

Ok you successfully break a helpless gnome's leg before the others can interfere in any way. He yells, then cuts his own yell short and is biting his own lip. He still doesn't look scared by the way.

LYDIA

Leave him Bertie. There's not...there's nothing that he might tell us. We know Gourmande's plan, right. He's nicking all the food so he controls the city. He...I'm guessing he wants Wilde because Wilde's some way to the meritocrats or something.

BEN

Also, if you say you just want to do it for fun. The answer is, don't!

JAMES

It's not fun so much as sometimes matters of business and pleasure intersect.

BEN

Unacceptable.

BRYN

Bertie if you can't control yourself then frankly you can leave. We do not need this kind of action...we've been friends for a long time but I will not stand by and let you do this to someone who is helpless and defenceless. That is absolutely disgusting!

ALEX

Guys, guys, guys...

BRYN

Shut up! If we want you to speak we will ask you a direct question. Otherwise say nothing.

LYDIA

And also we genuinely don't need you. He's exploding fireman now.

BRYN

Yeah that was weird.

LYDIA

That was cool! Or hot. Yes!

(laughing)

Really like burning cool. It was great.

BEN

Anyway it seems that seven's a crowd. Get rid of the hostages we don't need them here.

LYDIA

Just leave them tied up and we'll leave them overnight.

JAMES

To starve to death. That seems like an excellent idea.

LYDIA

The locksmith will come back.

BEN

Yeah and then he's got hardened criminals...they've got two hardened criminals in their shop. The best thing we do is kill them, quickly and cleanly.

ALEX

The other gnome begins to stir. Not awaken, just stir.

LYDIA

You know what I am going to keep them tied up and then when Wilde wakes up he might have some route to some people with some resources that can either lock these folks up, can sort out Paris or can tell us what is going on and I think that will change the situation.

BEN

Alright well we can wait until...

JAMES

Very well.

BRYN

I have one more question. YOU! Where was your base of operations? Where did you get your orders? Where is La Gourmande?

ALEX

Well everyone knows that. I mean, it's Eifel innit.

BRYN

We're new in town.

ALEX

Listen. It's not my place to interfere or anything but there's a third option here. Like you've got the cash right. I mean if it was going to go as a bribe anyway, just take the cash and leave.

JAMES

A bribe to who?

ALEX

It was either an invite to Wilde or a bribe to whoever's with him to just stay away. I mean you kind of have the bribe anyway so you could just take it and

leave and then everyone leaves you alone and we keep Wilde and everyone's happy. Job done.

LYDIA

No I don't think so.

BRYN

I think in fact what we might do is kill La Gourmande.

ALEX

I think that would be very impressive. If you're able to, maybe take out a meritocrat. Ooh, I tell you what, gods, they're hard to take out.

BEN

Someone gag him.

LYDIA

Yeah going to gag him.

BRYN

I turn my hand into a claw and slap him around the face.

LYDIA

And then we're going to gag the really arrogant, mean gnome who's been really hurting our feelings.

ALEX

The other gnome wakes up.

LYDIA

Gag pre-emptively.

ALEX

And, yeah, is very still and quiet and just lets you gag him.

BEN

Right. So I think we all need to just calm down a bit.

LYDIA

I'm having a nap.

BEN

That's a good plan.

JAMES

I'll take first watch.

EVERYONE

No!

(laughing)

JAMES

I'll take second watch.

ALEX

I'm going to accelerate time....

LYDIA

Bertie gets no watches!

ALEX

Who does take first watch? Because we all know Bertie is being left alone.

BRYN

I'll take first watch.

ALEX

Ok. Who takes second?

LYDIA

Sasha will.

ALEX

Ok

BEN

This is until Wilde wakes up.

ALEX

Ok. Just for the format of it, there is a front room which is the shopfront which is full of locks. There's lots of things hanging from the ceiling and the walls and so on. There is the back room which basically had a desk for some administration. It had a safe. I'm going to skip ahead to you look in the safe, it's full of boring stuff.

LYDIA

We still haven't eaten anything.

ALEX

And upstairs there is a storage room full of crates which looks like it's raw materials for the making of locks and there is a workbench with some tools. You find a left...what looks like what's left of a packed lunch from a couple of days ago up there. The taps are working though. There's running water.

BRYN

Yeah we've got water.

JAMES

Bertie still has a couple of days of fortified iron rations from his side quest.

ALEX

Ok

JAMES

Which he will split because he's nice.

(laughing)

BRYN

For some definition of the word nice.

LYDIA

He just doesn't have that much of a concept of time so the idea of rationing things and keeping them for himself for the future doesn't really occur to him.

ALEX

So we will skip ahead to...

JAMES

One of the reasons Bertie's in massive financial problems.

ALEX

We will skip ahead to the middle of first watch so other people have been kipped down for a while.

BRYN

Zolf do you know much about magic? Do you know anything?

BEN

Not really. Poseidon kind of...

BRYN

Just kind of takes care of it for you.

BEN

Are you a bit spooked out by your...

BRYN

Something really strange is happening.

BEN

Yeah. Your face went all mouthy

BRYN

What?

BEN

Long. Kind of and you got...

BRYN

That spell I cast. I've never studied it.

BEN

Yeah and you got the scales.

BRYN

Yeah

BEN

And the claws.

BRYN

Something really strange is happening to me.

LYDIA

I wonder what!

BEN

And a snouty mouth and breathing fire.

BRYN

What! Breathing...no, no, no it's a spell.

BEN

Well I mean it's a spell that come from your mouth then.

BRYN

No, no, I aim it with my hands.

BEN

No it came out of your mouth a bit. There was a bit of mouth fire.

BRYN

What?!

BEN

Yeah

BRYN

That's not how that spell works.

BEN

Well that's how that worked in that particular instance.

BRYN

No it's a spell. It's called scorching ray but I've never studied it. I shouldn't even know what it's called. I've suddenly got this knowledge in my head and I don't know where it's come from.

BEN

Do you accidentally worship a god?

(laughing)

Did you end up doing that? Are you maybe an accidental cleric?

BRYN

No, I don't think so.

ALEX

It happens to the best of us!

(laughing)

BEN

One day you wake up and then it's like...

JAMES

You accidentally slipped and heard the good news.

ALEX

I've got watery legs and I don't know what I'm doing!

LYDIA

Thought too hard about volcanos. And then you had powers!

BRYN

Go to the volcano and it's like, deal!

(laughing)

My professors at university always told me casting spells would require hard work and memorisation. I've never needed to do any of that, the spells just happen when I want them to. I just...I don't think I'm a wizard.

BEN

Ok. I mean...I'm going...I do actually have knowledge arcana.

ALEX

Give me a roll. Give me a roll.

BEN

So I'm going to do a what a sorcerer is. 8.

(laughing)

JAMES

You think you put a teacup on it

(laughing)

ALEX

You do know what sorcerers are, the only problem is you're not...

BRYN

26 on my knowledge arcana

BEN

There you go

ALEX

The problem is you know what sorcerers are...

BEN

There's no...

ALEX

You don't tie that connection in your head.

BEN

Fine, fine, fine.

ALEX

Hamid. Here's how the thought situation goes. I cast that without studying, most likely option is I'm some kind of spontaneous caster and I can't play guitar so that makes me a sorcerer.

LYDIA

Because he's not a bard!

ALEX

That's ridiculous. That's literally the thought experiment. You're aware what sorcerers are. You're aware that this ticks a lot of the boxes. Pffttt. It's just an idle fantasy.

LYDIA

Maybe I was at chess grandmaster all along.

ALEX

I mean it's like believing that I am the best ski jumper, I've just never tried but that's the only reason I don't know.

JAMES

Should I have tried I would've been a true professional.

ALEX

Exactly. Exactly. I am going to skip time ahead to the middle of second watch.
Who is on second watch?

LYDIA

It's me.

JAMES

And Bertie? Or Bertie prevented from...

LYDIA

No!

ALEX

Give me a perception check Sasha. Everyone else I'm actually allowing you to sleep. You are tired and hungry and it's been a long day.

BEN

Also murdering gnomes aside with your perception checks there's no point in Bertie.

(laughing)

JAMES

Stares at them directly in the room. Instead Bertie is asleep and he's having this wonderful dream where he's going through a garden centre smashing up literally everything there.

(laughing)

ALEX

And it's weird the plants in this one aren't trying to get you, they're just there.

BRYN

He gets to smash both furniture and gnomes. His two favourite things.

JAMES

I hate their little pointy hats.

ALEX

So what was the perception?

LYDIA

ALEX

21. Sasha, there is someone on the street outside and they have moved close to the exterior wall. You hear the distinct sounds of more than one person outside.

LYDIA

She's going to stealthily sneak into the front room because we're all in the back and see if they are trying to get in to the building.

ALEX

Give me a stealth check. The perception check will roll over.

LYDIA

27

ALEX

27. You move up the door. There is the distinct sounds of multiple people outside, unless you were to look through a window or a keyhole or something similar, you're not going to be able to see what's going on.

LYDIA

Look through, the keyhole is too obvious, you always just expect there to be a giant glowing unblinking eye.

BEN

Or the other end of a crossbow bolt.

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah.

JAMES

Is there not going to be like a security peephole?

LYDIA

Ooh

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

She will look through the security peephole.

ALEX

You see a human on the other side right up to it. They're not putting their eye to it or anything. They don't seem particularly concerned. At which point they knock very loudly on the door. Bang, bang, bang.

LYDIA

Doesn't answer.

ALEX

He waits a little bit. You see him turn, gesture, there's a little bit of movement at the edge. You can't really see what it is. Then he turns back. Bang, bang, bang. Come on.

LYDIA

Ok she's going to sneak back to everyone, wake up.

BRYN

Have I slept enough time to recover my spells?

ALEX

You have not.

LYDIA

She is not going to wake up Bertie. I'm going to wake up these two...

ALEX

Zolf and Hamid.

LYDIA

And say, there's someone trying to get in. I need...like look for a way out the back and get Bertie out as well. Quietly.

ALEX

Bang, bang, bang. Take your time but we're not going anywhere.

BRYN

I'm going to go upstairs and see how many are out there.

LYDIA

I'll go upstairs and look out.

BRYN

Ok we'll look for a back way out.

BEN

Do you know who it is? Is it more of Gourmande's gang?

LYDIA

I don't know who it is but who else would it be?

BEN

I know. Police.

BRYN

They've got some sort of telepathy. The gnomes communicate. We shouldn't have kept them with us.

ALEX

Bang, bang, bang.

BEN

Should've killed them.

ALEX

You've got about three minutes.

LYDIA

So Sasha goes up to the window. She goes upstairs and there's a window there. What do you want?

ALEX

He looks up. Ah, hi, hi. There is a comparatively well dressed man there. He is wearing a suit. It's not super slick but it's a good enough suit.

LYDIA

Is it a dining...like is it...is he done up like a chef or like with a little...

BEN

He's like a supervillain

ALEX

He doesn't have a neon sign saying La Gourmande. No. It's...he's carrying a briefcase.

LYDIA

Full of food?

ALEX

No! From this distance perhaps. The suit is well cut but not particularly exciting. Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

28

ALEX

You pick out at least six other people on the rooftops of the buildings opposite and there are a few people covering alleyways and the street. He's there holding it...he looks quite cheerful and happy and he's just sort of going, hi, yes, I understand that you are one of the people who's holding Oscar Wilde.

LYDIA

Who?

ALEX

Very, very irritating, obnoxious, arrogant, has atrocious sense of style.

JAMES

Bertie stirs at this point. His ears are burning.

ALEX

Massive liability and frankly not really worth the amount of money that we were going to pay you to hide him anyway...

JAMES

Like on fire. On fire.

(laughing)

BEN

Nudge Hamid. So he does him then.

LYDIA

And Wilde isn't awake yet?

ALEX

Wilde's still unconscious. Like he's out.

LYDIA

I mean that sounds like quite a few people I know frankly.

ALEX

Listen I do really appreciate this conversation...

BRYN

While this is happening I'm going to gently wake up Bertie and impress upon him as quickly and efficiently as possible the need to stay quiet.

ALEX

You know what for one time just give me a diplomacy check on that one.

BRYN

Ooh. 30.

ALEX

Bertie. Even if you don't want to be quiet, he's given a very convincing argument in about two words.

(laughing)

He's said be quiet in the way that world leaders say the words, peace now and stuff like that. There's a...

JAMES

An undercurrent of threat and bombing.

ALEX

Yes! Yes there is. Sasha's in the building with her bombs and there is an undercurrent of threat yes.

JAMES

Bertie understands this and will definitely try and be quiet.

BRYN

This is very good because I always imagine Bertie probably wakes up with a merchet like rah, rah, rah. Just to start the day.

JAMES

Just opens his mouth expecting someone to pour kedgerree into it.

(laughing)

LYDIA

What is it that you want and why would you want such an obnoxious man anyway.

ALEX

Listen I'd really like to come in or if you'd be willing to come out whichever. We're ok to wait for a little while. Obviously there's a lot of people out here. You take your time but obviously if you don't let me in we might have to take you out. That's not going to be pleasant for anyone and we don't need to behave like that. We're not animals.

LYDIA

Alright we're just going to look into breakfast and then we'll see about...

ALEX

Ooh that reminds me. Sorry about that. He puts the briefcase down. Opens it and he takes out a set of croissants and he puts them on the doorstep. Closes the briefcase. Picks it up and just goes, I understand obviously food's a bit scarce. This is just a little thing. He starts walking back, turns around. Yeah take your time but obviously not too much time. He kind of laughs and goes other and stands quite casually next to one of the burlier, scarred, grizzled, shaven men.

LYDIA

Sasha comes down, without bothering to really be quiet. Alright so there isn't really much hope of getting out of here. There's like six of them out the front that I could see. There's some on the roof. They're going to be out the back if there is a back way. Is...any trapdoors into the sewers that you noticed? Anything?

BEN

Well if you have a look around. I'm going to see if I can get Wilde up.

BRYN

There's something I think we should do.

LYDIA

What?

BRYN

Kill the two gnomes.

JAMES

Seconded. Motion carried.

BEN

Yeah pretty much.

JAMES

Fancy making a sacrifice Mr Smith?

LYDIA

You could drown them.

JAMES

Perhaps we could call down a mighty thunderstorm.

BEN

I'm not going to be doing any of that thanks for the moment.

LYDIA

So you've told all these people about us. Well done.

ALEX

They look genuinely confused.

LYDIA

They've come after us. You've told us what with your telepathy.

ALEX

The gobby one kind of pulls at his gag

LYDIA

Take his gag off.

ALEX

What?

LYDIA

Well you've obviously brought these people down to get us.

ALEX

How? We were with you.

LYDIA

Yeah but you were communicating while you were invisible.

ALEX

You let three of my mates get away. Let's look at the options; number 1) telepathic gnomes. 2) someone said they're over there.

LYDIA

I've seen gnomes and then can like burn stuff into people's skin and appear out of nowhere. That's what gnomes can do.

ALEX

Well yeah but there's some humans that can fly and turn people into...I want to say rocks. Like, if I could do that do you think I'd be here. I'd be in a castle made of marshmallows with a pet uni-griffin or something. I don't know.

LYDIA

Sounds quite cool actually.

ALEX

Yeah I know right.

LYDIA

Sasha has more in common with these gnomes than anyone else in the team

(laughing)

JAMES

Very well. So the decision has been made to kill them. Mr Smith any last offer...last dibs for Poseidon?

LYDIA

If they're not telepathic just throw them out the window.

ALEX

Listen if you just take that cash right and just leave. You'll be able to leave.

BEN

Right yeah

ALEX

They don't care about you.

BRYN

Throw them out the window and tell them that's what we're doing.

BEN

So I'm going to start kicking Wilde, slapping him in the face. Doing a create water on him.

ALEX

Wilde is waking up but he is not awake yet. He is still groggy. He can open an eye.

BEN

What time of day is it? Because that's actually important for me.

ALEX

It is night now. It's not late at night. It is sort of early evening.

BEN

I meditate at dawn.

LYDIA

Oh

BEN

Right we're not getting anything out of him. Right, so our options are...

LYDIA

Sasha is desperately looking for any kind of trapdoor into an underground sewage network or catacombs that might exist.

ALEX

Give me a perception roll.

LYDIA

To see what the flooring is made of. 21.

ALEX

21. You find, underneath the locker holding the keys, there appears to be actually a trapdoor. Some kind of bolt hole.

LYDIA

Right she opens it.

ALEX

It's not a tunnel that leads anywhere. It is the equivalent of a safe room. Enough for one person to sit in which has a small amount of food, a small amount of water and a door which you can lock from the inside that would only open from the inside but it's enough for Hamid. Sasha could possibly squeeze herself in. Zolf...Bertie, no way and it would only fit one of you at a time.

JAMES

Bertie is basically sitting in a saferoom and wearing it around all the time anyway.

BEN

Right so maybe what we should do is put Hamid in with Wilde, keep it locked. Means if they open it they get a big fire blast in their eyes and we say we don't have him. Look search for him.

LYDIA

I think they know we've got him mate.

BEN

No. They're guessing that we do. I mean we killed the other gnomes but they're guessing.

LYDIA

Some of them followed us.

JAMES

If we kill the gnomes then it's obvious that we have a reason to kill the gnomes.

BEN

They're annoying.

JAMES

Well...ah, that's a point! Now if I make my displeasure of the entire existence of the gnomish race publicly known to all of them, then...and Bertie carries on

in full stream about like, and it gets really weird and awkward about how gnomes control all the world's banks. Like it's really nasty stuff.

BEN

Bertie, we met who controls the world's banks and killed it.

LYDIA

It was made of brains!

BEN

Maybe some gnomish brains but...

JAMES

Ah!! How deep does this rabbit hole go?!

LYDIA

But also human brains and dwarf brains. All brains together. Working together in a kind of way that's beautiful.

ALEX

The gobby gnome turns to the gnome that is still gagged and just gestures to them with the head going, what are these guys?!

BRYN

Whatever we do, we shouldn't discuss our plans in front of these two gnomes who may be communicating it back to the outside. Can we please get rid of them!

BEN

Fine! Stab one of them through the neck. Stab the other one through the neck.

JAMES

Oh spoil my fun Mr Smith! After all that!

ALEX

And we will end the episode there

(laughing)

You are the worst! You are the worst!

JAMES

Yes my character's the worst! Why has it taken us nearly 60 episodes to find out how "the worst" my character is.

ALEX

You're all the worst in special unique ways. Yeah we'll end the episode there.
Ok.

LYDIA

That's...ok...oh gosh, Zolf, Zolf.

ALEX

He's a complicated man.

LYDIA

He is a complicated mercenary.

BEN

Never be at the mercy of a good man.

LYDIA

Is he a good man?

BEN

Yes. I mean it is written on my character sheet.

JAMES

You are a lawful good. What's Bertie? I forget now.

ALEX

So as...

BRYN

According to the adventurer's code, we have the right to execute these people.

ALEX

So as we disappear down the rabbit hole of moral nuance that has become this podcast over the last few episodes I think we'll return again next week. Bye guys.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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