

RQG – [65] – [Parting in Prague]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 65 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

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

BEN

Ben Meredith

ALEX

And who are you playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham.

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun El Tahan.

LYDIA

Sasha Racket.

BEN

Zolf Smith

ALEX

And it's good to be back for us cos there's been a little bit of a break for us from recording. I realise that's not for you guys listening at home but we're glad to be back at the table I think.

BEN

It's been like three months!

LYDIA

I don't know what I'm doing with my voice!

BEN

Who am I?!?

JAMES

I've had a baby, so I'm literally just pleased to be out of the house! I'm so tired!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Just a minor life detail!

Crosstalk 01:10

LYDIA

Great baby.

JAMES

Top baby, top baby – if any of you out there are parents, I just want to say that your babies are comparatively disappointing! I’ve definitely got the best baby! Yours are rubbish!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Well **unclear 01:22** there.

JAMES

Yep!

ALEX

So, recapping things that happened in the recent episodes – obviously we escaped from Paris – the Eiffel’s folly got a little bit “boom” after a certain

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Meritocrat decided to give it a shot and then you were all with Earhart on the ship, however, everything went a bit, a bit wrong didn't it.

BEN

It was fine.

ALEX

It got a bit tense.

BEN

No.

ALEX

A little bit tense.

BRYN

All I remember is reading some disappointing literature.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, let's keep this short.

LYDIA

You wound him!

ALEX

After a brief period where Harrison Campbell was thrown overboard and then brought back on board.

JAMES

Slipped!

ALEX

And then everyone had a little bit of a discussion and then you know, challenged to a duel that never really went anywhere but then the lawyers rocked up, which was you know, interesting and gave you a sword which is potentially more insufferable than Bertie – I don't know yet – we'll have to let that one play out.

JAMES

You've voice-acting it Alex so that's very much in your hands!

ALEX

I'm quite happy to submit to that. I mean it's the first annoying character I get to play that isn't a doctor!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

If there's one thing we've learned from the one-shots it's that Alex is always annoying.

ALEX

Oh yes, oh yes!

JAMES

God, is this Dr Sword?

(Group laughter)

BRYN

That's Mr Dr Sword!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, anyhow...

JAMES

My other blade's a scalpel!

BEN

Actually it would be so Mr Dr Sword Esquire I think.

ALEX

So we've come into Prague – the ship landed and you've all disembarked – I'd say that Sasha left on good terms. Zolf left on good terms after the whole...

LYDIA

Oh yeah, we were all really happy.

ALEX

The whole harlequin thing.

BEN

I flounced off like a teenager.

ALEX

But you got a free pass to come back if you wanted to. Hamid kind of was neither here nor there really. He didn't make any enemies.

BRYN

I didn't really bond but I didn't make an enemy either.

ALEX

And then Bertie had to leave.

BEN

Burned all his bridges!

ALEX

Yeah, well you know – long story short – Prague customs think you're an illegal immigrant Bertie.

JAMES

I am an ex-patriot!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Yes, it's an irregular verb!

ALEX

So nonetheless, we thought what we'd do is we'd start the episode the way that I love starting episodes which was a party completely fragmented in lots of different locations.

EVERYONE

Woo!

ALEX

So I believe that you had all briefly discussed meeting up at the university but you're all in that much huff and that much of a hurry to run off that none of you really planned or plotted anything.

JAMES

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I imagine the university is more than one single location and also, it exists throughout different time periods.

ALEX

Well it is extremely large, flying in the sky.

JAMES

Oh yeah!

ALEX

And populated by flying teleporting and otherwise mercurial individuals when it comes to magic.

LYDIA

And it spans into all sorts of different planes and dimensions.

JAMES

Yeah.

ALEX

I mean they didn't have to make it big – it could have been a basket that was big on the inside but no, it turns out you know.

Unclear crosstalk 3:59.

LYDIA

I'm paying 9k to see this basket!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It doesn't matter how lovely it is on the inside, you couldn't sell that.

BRYN

I've got an internship in a Tardis!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

As did a million other people!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

And I never see anyone, it's so lonely!

(Group laughter)

BEN

So God's got a problem!

ALEX

With that in mind, I will pick up pretty much where we left off because I don't even know where people are going to be going at this rate, so we will jump to

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you Zolf – you are currently at the aeroport – you’re digging your way through crowds and you are making your way towards what normally passes for passport control but in a world where people can teleport and stuff, it’s a bit laissez-faire – no-one’s really paying that much attention.

BEN

Okay, well I guess I’ll storm through until stopped.

ALEX

You proceed to storm through until stopped – there’s literally a barrier in the way and there is an official asking for documentation. They are speaking Czech which you do not speak.

BEN

No.

ALEX

So ...

BEN

Ancient Greek – I can do that – anyone know?

ALEX

Zolf? Zolf? Zolf? In the distance.

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BEN

So Wilde gave us some Meritocratic papers.

ALEX

Yes he did.

BEN

So I'm gonna just to slap those on the desk.

ALEX

Okay, so the official starts looking at the papers, shuffling through – goes from irritated with you to ... mmm...

BEN

Sometime this week please – let's go.

ALEX

Mmm, English.

BEN

Yes, right.

ALEX

Not often we see Meritocrats.

BEN

No that's ... yes, well I'm not one of those – they're bigger and more reptilian.

ALEX

True, true.

BRYN

Reptilian? How dare you! Unclear 05:31.

ALEX

Says Hamid.

BRYN

I'm not there yet. You can tell cos I wasn't doing my Hamid voice!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Hamid is catching up though, so...

BEN

That's very unlikely? unclear 05:39.

ALEX

Yeah, the official's looking through – they start stamping – they keep trying to get you into conversation – so you're planning to be in here long? Have you been to Prague before? Are you looking forward to it?

BEN

Travelling for work so you know.

ALEX

Oh of course.

BEN

Just got to get on, meetings and things.

BRYN

The official's speaking English now?

ALEX

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah – this is in English at this point, and they flop forms over, start doing some more. You see that they're also check-listing a bunch of other things – whilst it may be a bit laissez-faire, it turns out having Meritocratic documentation means you have to get noticed. So whilst other people are wandering through and just flashing a brief document, you'd held up, held up.

BEN

I just don't have any other documentation.

ALEX

They finally pass it back to you and say, best of luck with your mission – as it is.

BEN

Yeah, right thanks.

ALEX

At which point Hamid is definitely within sight of Zolf. You can see Zolf, even if you can't catch up with him yet.

BEN

Grump away.

ALEX

Grump away.

BRYN

If you were any other character, you might be able to outrun me.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Oh wait – your move speed is better now.

Unclear crosstalk 06:32.

BEN

Ah, I can't gain on you!

ALEX

So, as you slowly move off through the crowds, I'm gonna cut to Sasha. Now I believe last time you said that you disappeared into the crowd, but you never said where, so you're currently as well in the aeroport crowds – it's a fairly mixed lot, a mixed bag of people, races and so on and no-one's paying you any attention or seems particularly concerned with you in any way but you're sort of on the concourse which doesn't have much in the way of regulations or anything and can pick what you do.

LYDIA

She's just gonna slip through customs, because she can.

ALEX

Because she can!

JAMES

Practice!

LYDIA

Because she can and yeah, practice and like you know, you don't necessarily want people to know which country you're in? unclear 07:12.

BEN

Always better not to appear on official documentation for Sasha.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Yeah!

ALEX

What are grids for but keeping off of?

(Group laughter)

BEN

Occupation? Murderer!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So give me a stealth roll – you are getting enormous bonuses!

BEN

I listed my occupation as murderer and said I had nothing to declare but my intention to kill you!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

That was your first mistake!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

As well like they're asking her questions and she's got a policy on questions.

BRYN

Oh yes!

LYDIA

10 plus 11 is 21.

ALEX

There's a group opposed perception check which is rubbish! Yeah, you manage to easily slip through. There is a massive family of maybe eight kids with also some tired looking grandparents along with the parents who are all working their way through. You manage, just because you're not particularly tall and it's a big old bunch of people, you manage to just slip in with that crowd and

get through and the officials, like I said, they're not really paying that much attention so you manage to head out. You can see Zolf because you are able to catch and move quickly through all these crowds. If you choose to follow him or catch up with him you can.

LYDIA

She's going to basically be keeping an eye on where Zolf and Hamid are, but not engage in the conversation, or necessarily be near enough to overhear. She's interested in not being lost in a new city.

ALEX

That's absolutely fine, at which point we cut to Bertie. Now Bertie, after decided to make a scene, had to sort of nip out the back of the hangar, so you're at a much less crowded part of the aeroport – it's less to do with civilians and people walking towards flights and airships and so on and more people transporting freight, people who are doing maintenance on vehicles, things like that – you're quite out of place wearing your full plate armour with a massive magical sword at your side and your shield whilst everyone is wearing mostly overalls.

BEN

Is he in baggage handling? Can he just get on one of those little conveyer belts and just sit there?

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Yes, like do the statue thing!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Bertie's go-to situation!

JAMES

Be careful, I'm very valuable!

ALEX

No this end up! This end up!

JAMES

Right, what can Bertie see from where he is?

ALEX

So, Bertie can see behind him is obviously the hangar that you've just vacated that has some customs officials who aren't making a particularly big effort to catch up to you, it's more than they're paid for really when you've got a big sword. Off to your left are further hangars. Off to your right is what's most of the city proper and most of the, like I said, the civilians who came out the other end of the hangar, curve round towards that. Straight ahead of you is a large empty space which is full of yet more vehicles – it's mostly a taking off

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and landing area really and it's big, it's empty and there's not really many people there because it's a good way to get yourself squished.

JAMES

Right.

LYDIA

Fight a plane!

(Laughter)

ALEX

It's an inanimate object!

JAMES

Are there any fighter planes in the hangar?

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I mean you didn't look for fighter tables did you!

JAMES

Oh fight a plane! Ah!

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ALEX

Punch it on the nose, it's the only way to show it who's boss!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

Give it a little bop!

BRYN

Unclear 10:27 dominance.

JAMES

Yes! Good morning gentlemen, mmm! I am the British consular official mmm. I am the senior diplomatic attaché.

ALEX

Give me a diplomacy roll to try and convey status without language.

JAMES

Yeah.

ALEX

Or identification or paperwork.

JAMES

17 plus 4 is 21.

ALEX

You're doing quite well. Bear with me.

JAMES

Like golden armour, looking a bit flash!

ALEX

So they critically failed their "don't be bamboozled" roles.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Something that seems to happen far more often than I should let...

BEN

They gain the status bamboozled!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It's a minus one to good sense and a minus 50 to getting in your way for the things that you want to do.

JAMES

Excellent, excellent.

ALEX

So yeah, the ... let's call them luggage handlers – are looking at one and other and it becomes clear to you that they don't really know what to do cos you shouldn't be here and simultaneously, they don't really want to deal with you cos it probably matters so they're just kind of stepping away whilst nodding and "mmm-mmm".

JAMES

Bertie doesn't speak Czech but he does speak English loudly, which as far as Bertie's concerned, is Czech, so Bertie takes baggage handler one under his left arm, baggage handler two under his right arm and goes, lads, now, we find ourselves in a difficult position here don't we but I as the senior diplomatic attaché...

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

JAMES

18 minus 1 is 17.

BEN

Boo! Bad guys!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You see baggage handler one is leaning behind you and getting the attention of some other people and sort of gesturing to you like “help” and they’re nudging for other people to come and desperately help with what’s clearly a desperately drunk passenger or something similar.

JAMES

Bertie hasn’t touched a drop.

ALEX

I know.

JAMES

Apart from his normal breakfast drop.

ALEX

Possibly the first time!

JAMES

Now, now! Now, there is no need for additional assistance unless it is more helpful than you, mmm, or more important – anyone? Anyone? Hello.

ALEX

You’re getting a lot of stares mostly. This is what happens when you leave via the back entrance – people don’t kowtow.

JAMES

They've acknowledged that he's important.

ALEX

They know he is – that's not the same as helping.

JAMES

Now then – Bertie makes a gesture – can you assist me in leaving – and he makes the gesture as if fingers walking with his big clunking fingers, his fingers are the legs.

ALEX

Yeah, clank – oh sorry, sorry.

JAMES

Clank, clank, clank, clank, clank, clank – you should see this on the video – there isn't a video but this is very good! Anyway, so clanking, clanking, clanking – yes, I need to get to the British Embassy mmm – British Embassy mmm. Out – Bertie gestures to himself – me, out of the airport!

ALEX

They look to one and other, have a bit of a hushed conversation in Czech, seem to come to a conclusion – baggage handler number one looks to you and goes, “mmm-mmm” and starts gesturing for you to follow and starts moving towards the area that is populated by yeah, civilians and passport control and

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so on but he's going down the back of the hangars cos that's where you already are – there's no reason to lead you back in.

JAMES

Very well, excellent – Bertie follows.

ALEX

We will cut back to Zolf – you're in Prague proper.

BEN

Brilliant, I'm gonna go and find the first pub that I can.

ALEX

Okay. Give me a knowledge local check.

BEN

Oh dear!

ALEX

You might be taking a penalty as you've never been here before or spoken with anyone.

BEN

That's a six.

ALEX

That sounds about right.

BEN

I mean I just hope I get – it's Prague, you need to find somewhere with alcohol in it.

LYDIA

Accidentally ends up in a dentist's office.

(Group laughter)

BEN

Drinking the surgical spirit!

LYDIA

Being given a bunch of disinfectant.

JAMES

Hipster bars! You have the drinks, you have to spit them out immediately afterwards – outrageous!

LYDIA

But they're really comfortable chairs!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

What's the point of me GMing if you're gonna go ahead and jump the gun!
Those are the things I'm gonna do anyway!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I'm sorry, I'm too good at stories!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It's really hard being this talented.

ALEX

You're not here for stories – you're here to just facilitate all my wonderful stories!

LYDIA

I heard what you all said about me! I know that I'm important! *Laughs wildly*

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I can do whatever I want!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

Why are you playing with those matches?

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

That looks like polyester James!

JAMES

Table that you've constructed out of oily rags for some reason – what's going on?

ALEX

So Zolf – you have a wander and you think you've found yourself a pub insofar as there's lots of kegs of ale going in – you know – pretty obviously a pub. You manage to only get it slightly wrong – you're going direct to a brewery.

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

It's small local brewery.

BEN

Oh I can do the brewery tour, it'll be great!

ALEX

So you head in and yeah, it turns out this happens more often than you'd think and they're like, ah – they speak in broken English but invite you to sit down, have some, they're quite informal about it and you end up just sort of getting along, like they're okay to just serve you some actually really good ale just in a corner.

BEN

Cool and I will pay them with the money that I have.

ALEX

How good.

BEN

Yes, so I'm gonna just start drinking and sulking.

ALEX

It's extremely cheap because you're getting it from the brewer and they're quite chilled about it cos they don't own the place.

JAMES

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I think that might be the first good financial decision Zolf has made in the entire campaign.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Hamid give me a perception check.

BRYN

25.

ALEX

You find yourself outside the brewery that Zolf entered a few minutes ago – you know that he went in there – you got lucky seeing him amongst all these crowds but you have been to Prague before.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

And you've basically figured out where's the nearest alcohol to the airport.

BRYN

Also occasionally I asked a local in Czech "did you see the guy with the water-based legs go past?".

ALEX

It was quite easy. Sasha, give me a perception check.

BEN

It's been a while!

LYDIA

22.

ALEX

22 – you also manage to find them, however, you would have been able to find them anyway cos there's some slightly damp footprints leading straight toward the brewery anyway.

LYDIA

I thought we specifically found them.

BEN

I want to bring this – there are no damp footprints! It's magical water.

LYDIA

Mechanically no.

ALEX

Fine, it's magical water.

BEN

How dare you!

JAMES

Serious question – does Zolf’s footprints, do you actually have footprints?

BEN

No, I just have weight-based footprints.

ALEX

All joking aside, you won’t actually really have proper footprints either.

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

Like there’s a loose indentation but you don’t really have much in the way of toes and things like that, so.

BEN

The thing about the water legs, it gives me freedom of movement, **so it applies to them and makes it? unclear 16:53** all a bit a flowy and weird and they just kind of, you know.

LYDIA

Do you actually take steps, or do they sort of flow?

ALEX

He does take steps.

LYDIA

Like a kind of snail procedure, or those like—like you're on roller skates! Or, on those little shoes where they have the wheels at the back!

BEN

Well I'm not allowed to...

LYDIA

Or, on those little shoes where they have the wheels at the back!

ALEX

Heelys?! You know what, I'll rule that I'll allow you to heely along on your water legs.

LYDIA

Yes!

BEN

The thing is I don't want to flow anywhere because I don't want to muscle in on Sasha's thing.

ALEX

Yeah, fair, fair.

LYDIA

Yeah, she would cut...

BEN

You stay away from my...

She'd cut.... ?Unclear crosstalk 17:26.

ALEX

So, you also manage to keep tabs on Hamid – whether you choose to...

BRYN

Can I see Sasha?

ALEX

Not – actually, give me a fresh perception check.

BRYN

22.

ALEX

Do you want to earn a post-stealth?

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Smashes it!

LYDIA

17 plus 11.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

So that's 28.

ALEX

28.

BRYN

I do not notice Sasha.

ALEX

You do not notice Sasha.

BRYN

I'm going to go into the brewery.

ALEX

Ah you can't let alone Hamid! You can't let alone!

BRYN

I can organise anything I want in there! Even it's a word I'm not allowed to say!

ALEX

Hamid enters the brewery.

BEN

A dedicated drinking session!

JAMES

We're going to have a seminar – I want one, I want one!

(Group laughter)

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LYDIA

A lecture! A speaking engagement!

JAMES

Yes!

BEN

If Zolf is there it's more a sea-minar!

EVERYBODY

Ah!!!

JAMES

Very good! That's fine.

BEN

Could have been worse guys – I could have gone sea-min-ARGH!

ALEX

That's so much better, so much better!

JAMES

To the pure all things are pure. I think we're all fine with that.

ALEX

Anyhow Sasha, do you enter, or do you stay at back?

LYDIA

I know this sounds like a simple question, but this is deciding whether to engage in emotional fallout.

BEN

There might be for afters.

LYDIA

Oh yes!

JAMES

Oh is that a seed pun?

LYDIA

Yes!

ALEX

Nice!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Hurray! Okay, Sasha is going to – is there a way to get into the room?

ALEX

Very easily.

BRYN

It's a warehouse – it's got one of those things for loading.

ALEX

Exactly – it has a second...

LYDIA

There's one of those in my room where I actually live that's been bricked up.

ALEX

It has two second floor cranes, one of which has just finished being used to load up a cart which is pulling away – horse-drawn – and then there is the people have moved away from it so there is basically an open second floor window that is very easy to climb up.

LYDIA

But would it be more fun to climb up using the crane that isn't beginning to be on the move?

ALEX

It is surrounded by people and is being monitored by at least three people as they load and unload the kegs using it.

LYDIA

And the records show that Sasha gives the crane a sulky look.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

But isn't really in her super risk-taking mindset so decides to just climb up.

ALEX

Give me a disabled device check.

LYDIA

13.

ALEX

You do see that the crane that is currently unmanned – you reckon you could probably pop a lever on that and do a “whoom” and have it pull you up quickly.

LYDIA

Yes!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, using that disabled device check that you did, yeah, you kick a ratchet and it pulls you right up. You slightly misjudge...

BRYN

My God you totally are Batman!

ALEX

You slightly misjudge how fast you're going up and the heaviness of the kegs that they've been loading with the counterweight – give me a reflex save.

BRYN

Oh my God, I'm totally not Batman!

LYDIA

17.

ALEX

Okay. You get rocketed up and at the last moment you go, "oh this could go quite badly" – let go, manage to catch yourself, balance tippy-toes on the edge of the ledge and step forward, having not lost any more fingers to the mechanism.

LYDIA

Oh, that's nice. She's a bit low on fingers.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You're now up and amongst the now empty – you see the last person heading down some stairs – loft, which is full of basically ale, beer and other alcohol kegs and ...

LYDIA

Are any of them tapped?

ALEX

None of them are tapped.

LYDIA

Oh!

ALEX

I will cut to Bertie! So, you made it through customs and eventually a VIP English speaking agent is brought to you to help facilitate you through cos obviously there's something wrong. They are currently speaking to you at the border:

So, I understand that you're heading into Prague – do you have your documentation with you – only we wouldn't actually be allowed to let you enter the city proper without your documentation you see.

JAMES

When you say, “the city proper”?

ALEX

Well – he kind of turns and gestures to the entirety of the city that’s just beyond the borders of the aeroport that you’re in.

JAMES

Oh, I see! So, you don’t mean the sky city versus the ground city? No.

ALEX

Oh, you mean the university – ha, oh of course you’re fresh – so what’s up there, that’s the university – but down here is the city so you’re an academic, I hadn’t realised.

JAMES

Why not?!?!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

Indeed, I have extensive academic interests though I am here – and this is where we begin a pomp and pageantry powered diplomacy check.

ALEX

Give me the roll.

JAMES

Okay. Oh...

LYDIA

Did you roll a 20?

BRYN

He rolled an 18.

JAMES

18 plus diplomacy modifier of 4 plus one for pomp and pageantry would be 23.

ALEX

Okay so the VIP agent adopts the status bamboozled!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

And on that note, we'll take a break and be back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. The customs official is still looking at you, is still slightly glazed as you're making your way out of the aeroport.

JAMES

And of course, my Master's thesis was really quite ground-breaking. You know I think I have a copy of it somewhere here – no wait, it's just in my memory – let me tell you about it.

ALEX

And there we are – the entrance Sir, thank you very much for ...

JAMES

Oh thank. So very helpful.

ALEX

And he's just already walking away.

JAMES

I do enjoy Czech customs. They're rustic and simple, not like refined British customs.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I'll point out that Britain didn't have customs in this universe, but we'll leave that by the by.

BEN

But if it did, they would be the best.

ALEX

Oh of course, of course. So, you are now in Prague. Give me a knowledge local.

LYDIA

Wait – is he in the university or in the...

ALEX

No, no.

JAMES

My knowledge local is “eek” so this is my normal roll. 11.

ALEX

11. You’re in the city of Prague!

JAMES

How exotic!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

How did that happen?!

JAMES

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So, Bertie is going to – he's gonna look for somewhere to stay first of all – he's gonna find a nice hotel and check in.

ALEX

Okay and we'll cut back to Hamid and Zolf – Zolf, try as you might you are in a brewery with Hamid, whether he's stalking you is up to you but he's between you and the door.

BEN

Okay, well let's go back to when he walks in – I will be halfway down my first – oh no, we're in the continents – my first litre of beer.

EVERYONE

Ohhh!!!

JAMES

I like the way we've localised this podcast!

(Group laughter)

BEN

I would like a gallon of beer and you can hand it to me over this farthing.

(Group laughter)

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BEN

I think I was gonna say furlong!

ALEX

You were momentary.

BEN

Hamid pull up a seat if you want to get a drink, it's quite good.

BRYN

Oh okay thank you – oh no, just a small one for me.

ALEX

You get a big one.

BRYN

Oh!

BEN

I'll have the rest if you don't want it.

BRYN

Thank you.

BEN

What do you want? Can't you see I'm trying to, you know, have a bit of alone time, do a bit of brooding?

BRYN

Well I just wanted to know you were okay.

BEN

I'm as fine as I ever am Hamid.

BRYN

Okay – well what are we gonna do now Zolf?

BEN

I told you I'm not working with him again.

BRYN

No I know – that's not what I meant. Are we gonna hire someone new?

BEN

I think you might do but ... I think you might need it for my position.

BRYN

What?

BEN

Well....

LYDIA

You hear a gasp from the rafters!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Let's roll a perception check! Oh!

BRYN

I rolled 26 so I might hear a gasp from the rafters!

BEN

Actually I rolled a 13.

ALEX

I'm gonna call it – give me a stealth check to hide your gasp!

BEN

With a drama penalty!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Oh no, 15 plus 11, so that is ...

BRYN

We've both got 26.

LYDIA

26.

BRYN

I don't know, I don't think I hear.

LYDIA

I mean may be you do.

ALEX

Rock Paper Scissors! Now! On 3...

BRYN

As a rule...

EVERYBODY

1, 2, 3!

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill Gaming – [65] – [Parting in Prague]

BRYN

And again, and again!

EVERYBODY

1, 2, 3! 1, 2, 3! Yay!

BEN

Bryn hears it.

ALEX

I think you'll find Hamid hears it.

BEN

Oh yeah, all right.

ALEX

You hear a gasp from upstairs – it could have been anyone.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

How momentous.

BEN

I'm so glad **unclear 26:48.**

(Group laughter)

BRYN

I half-heartedly glance upwards without really paying attention.

ALEX

You don't see anyone because there's a separate floor.

BRYN

Yeah.

(Group laughter)

BEN

I tried to kill him or, I was going to

BRYN

What?!

BEN

Yeah! I've had it with him, he's awful...

BRYN

Well, yes, I mean he always has been, but you tried to kill him?!"

BEN

Well, look, there has been one thing, one single thing that has got me through all of this, and that's Campbell's books, right? And the one thing that is good...

BRYN

(Tries not to be disparaging and fails) Oh...really?!

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Hamid was really trying not to be disparaging! He failed!

BEN

What?

BRYN

Nothing, nothing! I mean, if that's what helped you, that's fine.

BEN

Everyone has the right to their opinion, Hamid.

BRYN

Absolutely!

BEN

Just because we couldn't get bought the best books over our childhood, and get taught by the best teachers, and go to the best universities, or have any education at all, means that some of us might like some low literature. Or is that beneath you?

BRYN

No, no.

BEN

Do you feel like Bertie does, hey? Finding me beneath you?

BRYN

No, not at all Zolf! I think you're great! That's not the issue – I was...we

BEN

There has been one thing that I have cared about – not cared about - that's kept me going right? And we meet the person who makes that thing and Bertie makes it all about him and tries to kill the man.

BRYN

I agree that he went completely too far, I think it was ridiculous, I think you should – you did and you should have fired him. That was absolutely the right thing to do.

BEN

No, but I tried to kill him right?

BRYN

That is too much in my ...

BEN

Yes, no...

[Group laughter]

BEN

That's what I'm saying – I have cracked under the pressure. I don't trust my God anymore. I saw a robot casually decide, "maybe I should be a God", and do you know what, I think it could have done it, because, our Gods, right, they're like us. That's what I feel. They're as stupid and as fallible as us, and they screw up. Because if something can casually decide, "yeah, maybe I'll be a God", and I have no way of saying that oh, it couldn't become a God, what's Poseidon? May be just Mr Ceiling mark 0.5 or whatever. I'm not up for this. I don't want to be up for this. I've had to deal with that. We have crashed the world economy and killed a huge number of people. And, you know, you all seem to be fine with that but I sure as heck aren't.

BRYN

Not fine with it, Zolf, but we did the right thing.

BEN

And it turns out my dad, and my brother apparently, were working against the Meritocrats. And now I'm working for the... I don't trust myself, and I don't trust myself around you lot. I don't think that I am going to help you. And I think that... can you imagine trying to get rid of Bertie? Do you think he's gonna go? He's gonna stick around like a limpet.

BRYN

Do you think? I mean I don't...

LYDIA

Sasha melts out of the dark - I could get rid of him.

BEN

Oh, hi Sasha.

BRYN

Oh Sasha.

LYDIA

If you need him got rid of.

BRYN

I don't...I think if he's fired, he'll be all right. I mean he went off to find Hannibal's Tomb. I'm sure he'll do something similar.

BEN

Do you want Bertie unsupervised?

[Laughter]

BRYN

I'm doing so much work with my face today guys!

[Group laughter]

BRYN

It's a pain! I'm just saying facework – it's a shame you can see it.

JAMES

The smells I'm emitting are magnificent and again, it's just, it's wasted, it's a shame this is a podcast.

LYDIA

You should see my mimes!

BEN

Given how Bertie is, I definitely want him inside being out and outside of being in. That phrase is much better when used with a stronger language!

BRYN

An interesting way to put it I suppose.

LYDIA

Do you think that about the rest of us?

BEN

No, I don't actually because none of you are a complete liability.

BRYN

Zolf, I'm not a religious person, I've never had the faith that you had – I ... I never believed in God. I believe ... but there's a lot of things I do believe in – - believe in my family. I believe in...

BEN

Don't you dare say the power of friendship.

BRYN

I believe in the meritocrats as a system and clearly, that's something that you've got to figure out now.

BEN

Exactly, I'm not sure anymore – if my... this was my family.

BRYN

I think that's absolutely fair, like I'm proud to work for them cos I think we're doing the right thing, I think we're doing good.

BEN

I thought I was.

BRYN

If you don't then that is something very serious but I do believe in...

BEN

What they did to Eiffel's Folly was not right.

BRYN

That's a complicated question.

BEN

Yes it is.

BRYN

There's one thing I do believe, Zolf, and that's you. You've shown me over the last two months, three months, just what someone can accomplish who puts their mind to it, who knows—and I know we've made mistakes as a group, but I still think we've done more good... and I think there's things we've done that wouldn't have happened if we hadn't been there to do them..

ALEX

Slam-cuts to Bertie at the end of a bar brawl in the centre of Prague. There are ... yes.

JAMES

It's been concluded.

ALEX

It has been concluded – you concluded it – there are three people on the floor and everyone's kind of looking at you a bit warily as you stand over them holding a drink.

JAMES

So I was basically just asking for directions.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

If you insist – no? Anyone? Anyone? I mean I'll settle for something three star – anyone? No?

LYDIA

Is he accidentally speaking one of his incredibly obscure languages?

ALEX

No, for once – I mean that sentence was split between French, English and Latin and you didn't notice that you'd done it but no, there was no Czech in there.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

Return back to the touching drama – I just thought it important to check.

BEN

Look, you... that's very nice of you to say. You might believe in me, I don't anymore. And I've cracked before... in the basement in Kew. If I do that again... the stakes are too high. I can't do that.

BRYN

I don't know if we can do this without you, Zolf. You've been the voice of experience, you've provided the leadership, the direction that we've needed.

BEN

Honestly, the worst experience I've had out of my experience has been the last month. So, I think you guys are fine. Almost drowning had nothing on that, and actually, we almost all drowned together, so you've got that too... well all right, you almost drowned me as well, so you've got that as well - like, that was previously the most traumatic experience of my life so hey you know, if we

want to play trauma Top Trumps, I think you guys are on the same level now. I think you'll be fine. Honestly, I am the weak link. It's not good. We will go in our boat and it was gonna be fine and it was... ah... the one chance we had to have a quiet Bertie-free – but not even that, just conflict free and yeah, Bertie's Bertie and he's awful. I started it – I'm the one acting out of character here not him.

LYDIA

But you also plucked me out of the water, which was nice.

BEN

Yes, I know – look yes, I didn't want to let you die. I'm not saying that have completely failed right? This is me ... I... I know that if something happens again, and I crack...then I might not be able to pull you out of the water... I might not be able to do anything to save you. You've saved my skin, just as much, so I wouldn't worry too much about that. It's not checks and balances, you don't have to... you're not in credit.

LYDIA

Zolf, one of the things I've liked about this team is that no-one is forced to be in it against their will using magical devices or magical rings, the threat of beatings and dungeons, or any... that actually makes it my best job so far, from that perspective. And I think that being an employee benefit, should really, I mean even if you are the boss, should extend to you. If you're choosing to go, then...you should have the choice. That should be allowed. Even if it, you know, even if the rest of us...

BRYN

If you really need to go Zolf, if you need to figure out, if you don't believe in Poseidon, if you don't believe in the Meritocrats, then we'll understand but.

BEN

I need to sort my baggage out. Yeah, I need to go and find out a bit more about this whole Harlequin lark. Secret Society.

BRYN

We've got a contract though Zolf. I mean you're the one who signed it – you're the ...

BEN

Then I'll deal with that. You're not going against that and maybe I could help in support of something, do something else that's less...

LYDIA

Admin – I've heard of admin.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Isn't that a supporting role?

BRYN

Sort of.

BEN

Look I don't want you to think that this is cos I don't want to work with you anymore but me and Bertie, we cannot work together.

BRYN

No, I know that.

BEN

And if one of us leaves, me leaving will be less damaging.

ALEX

Slam-cut back to Bertie where they've managed to clear up most of the mess and you're kind of the doorway where you're staying, where you're maybe actually go try and find out where you're going.

JAMES

Rusty Quill Gaming – [65] – [Parting in Prague]

So has anybody got any hotel recommendations? No, okay! Fine! Very well, hmm – and Bertie turns – the saloon doors slam behind him. They tap him briefly on the back – not in a way that in any way like puts him off balance or anything – but just enough so that a small paperback copy of “When Passions Collide” by Harrison Campbell falls out of his pocket.

ALEX

Very artful!

JAMES

Bounces – the camera follows it as it bounces again and it splats into a puddle – Bertie turns around – was that something? No! No, nothing of importance – and walks off.

[Group laughter]

BEN

A single tear rolls down Zolf’s face – he knows Maguire.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

I’m going to cross off my character sheet – how’s that for reincorporation? That’s 30 episodes. Something like that!

[Group laughter]

JAMES

You're welcome listeners for this depraved consistency!

ALEX

If you only you'd kept after your character sheet as well!

BRYN

Zolf, I mean I understand your reasons and if that is definitely how you feel then we'll find a way to help but there's one thing we need to first – which is sell all this stuff!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

So tactless!

BRYN

If you're going somewhere, you should have plenty of cash to work out what you're doing next and we've got this contract – we need to sort it out properly as well, but I think that we should go and get some rooms somewhere and you should sleep on it and get some food inside you before you make a decision this momentous – we've got to figure it out and if you need to leave, then we'll help with that but we've got to do it properly. You don't have to see Bertie – I'll deal with Bertie – you don't have to be in the same room as him anymore.

LYDIA

No, that won't actually help – we could totally carry on our conversation from several rooms away.

BEN

And he will reach into a bag and pull out a card - ...those are the details to the bank account. I've got enough spare change here to get myself sorted out. I'll go to the Meritocratic offices and have a chat to them, on my own. Take that. That's the loot. That's my share. I don't need it anymore.

LYDIA

Sasha begins to reach and then in a great and important character moment, does not steal the bank details!

BRYN

Okay, Zolf, but I'm gonna open an account in your name and I'm putting your share of what we've earned so far in it.

BEN

I don't want it.

BRYN

I don't care.

BEN

Payment enough was meeting you. Whatever. Something emotional. Take that. Right?

BRYN

I take it and I hug him! I hug him before he can stop me!

ALEX

[Group laughter]

Give it everything you've got, it might not happen again!

BEN

You hold it for a minute!

ALEX

Leave nothing back!

BRYN

I'm starting to cry.

LYDIA

Don't vomit!

[Group laughter]

BRYN

I'm not gonna vomit!

BEN

After a couple of seconds one hand kind of awkwardly comes out and pats you on the back. There, there, Hamid. That's... it's ok. Um... we can keep in touch if you want.

BRYN

One last meal, Zolf! Let's just have... let's get some food in us at least!

JAMES

Can I just say – that I love that this is like this is Hamid's thinking is that Zolf must be quitting the party because he's like hangry!

BRYN

I'm still a Halfling!

[Group laughter]

JAMES

May be you could keep him on board if you just kept a boiled egg around in case of emergencies!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

You haven't had your Snickers!

[Group laughter]

BRYN

That's genuinely how Halflings think! I make no apologies for playing to my racial grouping.

JAMES

Racial stereotype.

BRYN

Yeah!

LYDIA

Do they have lobsters here?

BRYN

Probably! Oh, but they've got so many better things! They do such good beef stew, oh it's lovely. I know this lovely, lovely restaurant up on the university level, I'll take you there.

BEN

I can get my own food, Hamid, please. Just let me make a clean break, okay? I'm not one for long goodbyes.

LYDIA

So I'm in charge now? Yeah? No. No.

BRYN

We'll figure something out.

BEN

You'll be fine. Like **Helena**, less full of stuff.

BRYN

Are we gonna keep working with Bertie?

ALEX

Smash-cut to Bertie! So, you have managed to find a hotel – it seems okay. I mean they speak English to a degree that you're acceptable with and you're currently having a chat with the maitre d' who's trying to explain to you that you can't just walk to the university cos it's flying in the sky.

JAMES

What?!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

I'm really sorry Sir, there's just no access – it's part of the rules of the city – we can arrange for you to be taken to a teleportation circle or something Sir, but you can't just walk there.

JAMES

But it's right there!

ALEX

But there's no ...

LYDIA

Do you know who I am!!!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

There's no transport Sir – like it's quite expensive – are you sure? I mean you will have to pay a spell caster to actually ascend.

JAMES

How expensive is quite expensive?

ALEX

I mean if you have a licence that will help otherwise, you're looking at maybe a hundred gold Sir, it's not a cheap process.

JAMES

A hundred gold! A hundred gold, my good man! My good man! Stop shilly-shallying around and bring me the wine list – and by bring me the wine list, I don't mean bring me a list of the wines – I mean bring me the wine list!

ALEX

Cut back to ...

LYDIA

It's actually really useful for me taking hits while I can go round the back – I mean tactically speaking, he's noisy, give you that, but we could oil up his joints.

BEN

I'm gonna go. You can discuss this. Go find Bertie before he starts a war, alright? It's been good working with you. And I appreciate the time we've spent together.

BRYN

If you ever need help with anything, then just get in touch with us Zolf, we'll be...

BEN

Sure, I will.

LYDIA

Get in touch with Hamid, it's not always very easy to know where I am.

BEN

Yeah, I, I get that

BRYN

Good...good luck, Zolf.

LYDIA

Yeah, cheers, Boss.

BEN

Not anymore. See you later.

LYDIA

That was a sentimental point I was ...

BEN

I walk out.

[Group laughter]

trying to....

Lydia

Bye!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Too low charasmic characters!

ALEX

Okay, so ...

Unclear 42:24.

BRYN

So Sasha, shall we get some lunch?

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah... right – they've barely spoken this entire thing, they have nothing in common at all.

[Group laughter]

JAMES

Oh you're like parents after raising a child!

LYDIA

We do both love food!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Yes, no, this is where we go right.

BRYN

If you liked lobster, I've got the best things to show you.

ALEX

Okay I am going to now accelerate time towards evening.

LYDIA

I think we should look at the goulash – no, let's also go for the stew, the dumplings, look they're interesting! How about some courgettes, that sounds very nice.

BRYN

Bring me the food list!

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

So, it's called a menu Sasha!

BRYN

I'll have one of everything and the same for you?

LYDIA

Yes!

JAMES

It's not a menu, it's a to-do list.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

So, I am gonna accelerate time a little bit cos, well, I mean let's be honest – Hamid and Sasha are gonna be doing a tour of all the various eateries in Prague.

BRYN

Oh my God – there's this patisserie – oh and the chocolatier!

ALEX

So skipping ahead to early evening – Sasha, you're full in a way that you've potentially never been before, even with all of that lobster because Hamid

Rusty Quill Gaming – [65] – [Parting in Prague]

really doesn't take no and has been telling you just how much of an offence it would cause to stop eating at any point, no matter how many times you've hit place. Hamid, you're all right – you're sated.

BRYN

Cool.

ALEX

You are an eating machine!

LYDIA

Do... I mean... could we... could we stop?

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Okay, okay we'll go to this one last place and we'll have a bit of a break, but the ambiance at this one, it's probably the best restaurant in the whole city.

LYDIA

What does ambiance taste like? Is it really filling?

BRYN

You'll love it!

ALEX

At this point, a person is bodily thrown through the window of the restaurant you were heading to - they land flat on their back and you hear a very distinctive voice from inside said restaurant.

JAMES

You call that a profiterole!!!!

BRYN

Ohhh noooo!!!

LYDIA

He's your problem now!

ALEX

I think we're gonna end the episode there!

[Group laughter]

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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