

RQG – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 74 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

Ben Meredith

ALEX

And we're coming to you not live from our brand new super shiny recording studio.

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BRYN

It's episode 74 though Alex – I mean you've been known to get it wrong I mean quite a lot really – I mean this numbers thing seems to be hard for you – did you bring a calculator?

LYDIA

No we arranged a gun fight!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

What did you bring? A knife?!

BRYN

We're literally 30 seconds into the episode and we've already had two in-jokes to things that most of the audience will have no idea what we're talking about!

BEN

That's just forcing them to put them in as **unclear 01:14** context.

LYDIA

But it's been so long since we all convened again that James' child is in school now!

(Group laughter)

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JAMES

It's not actually that long, he's just very gifted.

(Group laughter)

JAMES

It's only been about 20 minutes!

ALEX

But I do want to take a moment and thank...

JAMES

Actually, pull back and reveal – he's the teacher!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

But I do want to take a moment and thank all of the incredibly generous Patrimon donors who have basically made what is now our recording studio possible.

BRYN

You're welcome.

BEN

You are the reason that this exists, otherwise we'd be doing it outside talking into a grapefruit on a stick!

LYDIA

That's what I'm doing right now! What are you talking about?!

ALEX

We just get really expensive grapefruits – that's where the money goes.

JAMES

Grapefruit's called Wilson, we look weird!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I'm just here on my own talking to a grapefruit, people have told me they'll edit it in later and make it make sense, but grapefruit I love you.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

You are my only friend grapefruit!

BRYN

I love you too Lydia!

ALEX

Spot everyone now playing with their brand new shiny mics!

BRYN

I'm close now ... I'm far away now!

LYDIA

Oh grapefruit!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

That's such a train wreck already!

LYDIA

It's so complicated loving you!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

I'm back again!

LYDIA

Oh good!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, where we left off, which for us was a while ago, for listeners not so much – you are all currently in a haunted house in Prague – you are aware that Kafka ...

LYDIA

It's not haunted anymore – we killed the ghost.

ALEX

Well, here's a question – do zombies count as haunted?

EVERYBODY

No.

ALEX

Well there you go then – you've un-haunted a house.

JAMES

We're an infested house, yeah.

BEN

Yeah, they don't haunt the place – they just shuffle in and out – they don't care about the house!

ALEX

Fair, fair.

JAMES

Just going to throw there that it was mostly – I seem to remember – Bertie who killed the ghost.

ALEX

It was mostly Bertie who killed the ghost but he also was the one who was most messed up by the ghost.

LYDIA

And Hamid shot him with...

ALEX

Yeah.

BEN

Can we make a standing apology for any continuity errors – it's been literally months so if we get anything wrong...

JAMES

Yeah.

BEN

Tough!

JAMES

Have I got married?

BRYN

And then tell us on the forum.

JAMES

Yeah – at length – tell us on the forum why we’re wrong!

BYRN

That’s what forums are for.

ALEX

So where we left off, you are all in a post-haunted house having killed a wraith that also had serious effects on Bertie’s health. Meanwhile, Grizzop, the newest member of the party, has been in the basement trying to dig up zombies. They then started digging up so with you all in the haunted house where Bertie has been seriously messed up but has also done some serious messing up so the house is sort of post-haunted now, we also have the treasure chest that you found which was full of basically money and jewels and stuff, and in the basement we’ve had Grizzop digging up some zombies who

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then proceeded to kind of get up and start going “agh”, however, as far as I’m aware you basically set fire to a big bunch of them in the basement.

BEN

Yeah, I dug a hole and then some zombies were at the bottom of it and then I threw the alchemist fire into the hole and hopefully, the zombies are gonna burn.

ALEX

Let’s assume that that happens. Meanwhile...

BEN

Brilliant! I’m done!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You know honestly that’s for the rest of the campaign – I assume it happens – thanks for listening!

But as a weird break in format because I forgot to do it, who are you all playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertrand MacGuffingham.

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BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun El-Tahan.

LYDIA

Sasha Racket

BEN

Grizzop Drik Acht Amsterdam.

ALEX

Wow, it turns out as long as you warm up to it, you guys are all actually pretty good at like ...

BEN

I said my name right!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, we are gonna pick up exactly where we left off which is Hamid has an extremely meta-hunch that there is stuff going on in the basement and Grizzop needs some help, so we will start with Hamid, Bertie and Sasha up at the top of the house with Bertie feeling terrible.

JAMES

Agghhh.

LYDIA

That's what I feel like when I'm near you as well.

JAMES

Yes!

BRYN

We've got the gold and the jewels now – can we just go downstairs and see if Grizzop's all right?

LYDIA

There might be more gold and jewels.

BRYN

There might be more monsters!

LYDIA

Yeah, so I'll stay with the gold and jewels.

BRYN

We get them after the monsters are dealt with.

JAMES

But we've not known him for very long – I'm not that attached yet.

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BEN

From very far away you hear – “oh no, loads of monsters”.

BRYN

Role perception!

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check!

BEN

4.

ALEX

True to form there! 4 – what do we have there Bryn?

LYDIA

17.

ALEX

Oh.

BRYN

I smacked my mic as I was rolling the dice so that’s a good sign! But I did roll

24.

ALEX

24.

BEN

Things never change.

ALEX

So everyone apart from Bertie – you hear the distinct sounds of Grizzop calling for help in the basement.

BEN

I didn't call for help – I said "oh no, loads of monsters."

ALEX

Oh I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry! You heard Grizzop clearly implying that there was lots of help!

JAMES

You hear the fragility of Grizzop's masculinity!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

What do you all do? You are still currently at the top of the house.

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LYDIA

All right, fine! Fine! So how big a chest of jewels have I got?

ALEX

You haven't take the chest – there was a small bag in it.

LYDIA

Oh right, fine.

ALEX

You haven't even had chance to check in it – Hamid's just been going on about all of like this help that Grizzop's supposedly has.

LYDIA

As we walk down the stairs I'm gonna check...

ALEX

Walk down the stairs, okay.

LYDIA

Walk – yeah, as we walk down them the bag of stairs, I'm gonna...

BEN

Jog, jog down.

LYDIA

... look in the bag.

BEN

Jog down the stairs.

LYDIA

Hamid can jog and Sasha's speed is such that she is walking and is able to check in the bag.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

She wants to keep pace with both Hamid and the exhausted Bertie.

JAMES

That's true.

LYDIA

So yeah, she's gonna dawdle and check the bag of jewels.

ALEX

So inside it's not actually a bag of jewels – it's a bag of cash – there was someone wearing sort of jewellery whose jewellery you did nab – the sort of corpse that was still there, the skeleton. The bag of coinage you recognise it as defunct coinage – it's like pretty old.

LYDIA

Oh appraise!

ALEX

It's not pre-Meritocrat.

LYDIA

Oh – 16 plus 8 – 24.

ALEX

Well, I've got good news and bad news. The good news is you will get the cost of the gold. The bad news is ain't no-one gonna convert extinct currency basically into modern currency.

LYDIA

And you just sell...

JAMES

The gold.

LYDIA

The valuable...

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So when it comes to the coinage, you will have to chuck basically anything that isn't gold and silver cos no-one's gonna – like the copper is only worth its weight in copper, so once you've sort of sorted through you get the impression that you've probably got about 1,000 goldsworth there but some of that is in silver and some of that is in gold, so blah-blah-blah.

Let's jump cut to the basement.

BEN

Oh no! Loads of zombies!

ALEX

There are loads of zombies.

BEN

I know!

ALEX

They're all on fire.

BEN

Great!

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ALEX

You are at the base of the stairs.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

And there is more zombies than you can count - they are all on fire but they are not all instantly dead.

BEN

That's lucky – I can only count to three!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

There are more than three zombies.

BEN

Oh no!

JAMES

Many zombies, ah!

LYDIA

Does it look like the fire is going down like when you have, when you set fire to a seam of coal in the soil, the fire goes all the way ...

ALEX

Give me a perception check – give me a perception – not you, you’re not in the room! Grizzop, give me a perception check.

BEN

Thanks Sasha! That is – oh my stats! That is a 22.

ALEX

You can see clearly no, the exact opposite is happening – the heat is going up – the lower zombies have not caught because there’s been so many the ones who were on the top are flaming zombies going “arrghhh” which presumably is zombie for “I’m on fire, help” but what is happening is that you can see the old timber of the floor on the ground floor is blackening with soot and so on as the heat – they do seem to be catching one and other but it clearly hasn’t like just gotten them all and they’re all lumbering towards you. You are now in combat time.

BEN

Okay, so do I have another alchemist fire?

ALEX

Yes, I believe you do.

BEN

Cool, so am I in melley combat then?

ALEX

You have one turn's worth because zombies are automatically staggered and can either move or attack – they can't rush at you.

BEN

Okay, I'll give them my speed **unclear 09:17** and then back up the stairs and I'm gonna throw the alchemist fire down the stairs – at the base of the stairs thus creating a barrier for the zombies trying to get up the stairs.

ALEX

Fair enough – give me an attack role.

BEN

Range attack?

ALEX

Yeah.

BEN

Cool – that is a 25.

ALEX

25 – so you un-stopper the alchemist fire – you chuck it down at the base of the stairs – it is a very easy throw (*sound of smashing glass and fire “whoosh”*) and you actually manage to splash and catch a bunch of the – you do catch the base of the stairs but let’s be honest, they were gonna start burning anyway.

BEN

That was the point.

ALEX

Yeah. It was an excellent attack – they don’t react in any way – they just seem to be getting more hurt on the way.

Jumping to the rest of the party – there is the distinct sounds of fire and smoke is starting to pour out from the basement. You have made it down to the ground floor and can see the basement doorway, smokes, plumes of smoke coming out.

BRYN

Grizzop, Grizzop, are you okay?

BEN

Yeah I’m absolutely fine.

LYDIA

See why did we rush?

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Well he shouted “oh no lots of monsters”.

BEN

No that was a declamatory statement, not a request!

(Group laughter)

BEN

I was merely commenting on the fact there were lots of zombies.

JAMES

Ah, may be the monsters are us!

BEN

What? No they’re definitely down there.

JAMES

Are we the real monsters really?

ALEX

There’s creaking coming from the basement stairs – Grizzop, give me a reflex save.

BEN

I moved up the stairs.

ALEX

Give me a reflex save.

BEN

How long are these stairs Alex?

ALEX

Long enough to request a reflex save!

BEN

Are they more than 20 feet?

ALEX

Every sentence is costing minus one!

BEN

I take umbrage with your GMing style and if I die, I die fingers up!

JAMES

If I die I think I'm going to do this is as me – "neh-neh-neh-neh".

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BEN

Ah! Critical fail.

ALEX

Critical fail, okay.

LYDIA

As you're saying, I'm absolutely fine.

BEN

I'm absolutely fine!

ALEX

So you know what we'll do – you are stood...

BEN

Oh no! Burning staircase!

ALEX

You are stood in the doorway technically on the top step of the stairs.

BEN

I'm like have you just...

ALEX

Looking ...

BEN

On a technicality!

ALEX

Looking at the rest of the party, you know, having this conversation – there's a
(sound of knocking)

BEN

If any players thinks – any players, I don't play – I don't think this is fair,
absolutely, I'm very angry.

BRYN

I'm not, it's fine.

BEN

But if any audience members think this is, tell Alex so at the forums.

LYDIA

And on Twitter!

BEN

Yeah, Twitter as well.

LYDIA

And also on Facebook.

ALEX

Yeah, I'm all over the place! So nonetheless, the last thing you see of Grizzop is a shocked face as he drops vertically out of sight into a burning inferno.

BEN

Whoop!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So thankfully given the distance it is only 5 damage in terms of fall damage.

BEN

5 damage okay.

JAMES

What is the distance to the bottom of the basement?

ALEX

It is a mere 15 foot but I have rounded it down because I'm kind like that.

JAMES

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Bertie takes a deep weary sigh.

ALEX

Oh bear with me!

JAMES

Oh.

ALEX

And 2 fire damage and ... you don't catch fire! Good for you.

BEN

Wouldn't that be a deck save?

ALEX

You are surrounded on all sides by fire – the deck save ain't gonna get you out of that. You were saying Bertie?

JAMES

Bertie sighs so long and weary it started all through that rolling!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

Gives long sigh he steps slowly over trudging cos he's just exhausted – pulls the rope out of his adventuring kit and lowers it down the 3 metre...

BRYN

3 metre?

JAMES

No 5 metre.

ALEX

Or conversion...

JAMES

He said 15 feet-ish.

ALEX

Sure.

JAMES

He lowers it down the distance and gets ready to pull out Grizzop.

ALEX

That's fine. I'm playing loose and fast with the combat time here – Hamid, are you doing anything or are you just ready?

BRYN

Yeah.

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ALEX

Great, Sasha?

LYDIA

Sasha helps with the rope.

ALEX

Great. Grizzop?

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

You see all the zombies because they are staggered – make it to you as you're like amongst all of the rubble.

BEN

I'll load my crossbow and start aiming at the zombies.

ALEX

Fair. You are amongst the rubble and so on – they make it to you and do not begin to attack because they can't because they're zombies and they're that slow. A rope dangles directly over your head at your face and you can just reach it and grab it without any effort whatsoever.

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BEN

Oh, good choice!

(Group laughter)

BEN

I do so.

ALEX

Shocker! Give me – and I normally wouldn't request this – but because you're feeling so naff and so not used to it, give me a strength check – Sasha you can aid, so just roll your D20.

JAMES

Oh dear ...

BRYN

Sasha aids successfully.

ALEX

Okay.

JAMES

4 plus strength modifier of 3 is 7.

ALEX

7, so you successfully aided. You start hauling – Bertie. This is far more work than you remember it being!

JAMES

Bertie is very slightly sick!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

It's just "bluh", and it's not a great deal – it doesn't project in any way but it's just a little bit just sat on his chin now – he feels very queasy.

ALEX

Just enough to cause you to lose hold of the rope.

JAMES

Yeah.

ALEX

And Sasha, you are briefly tugged along but I'm not gonna get you to do a reflex – you are quick enough to let go so you don't get the burn from Grizzop but Grizzop.

BEN

Oh it's fine, I'm all right down here then.

(Laughter)

ALEX

In which case then back round – Bertie, you're up.

JAMES

Takes another attempt to pull up the rope, see if he can get Grizzop as ...

BEN

I'm still on it, yeah.

JAMES

You're still on it.

ALEX

Basically I'm assuming that everyone is kind of in a holding pattern until this pull up happens.

BEN

It's all right, take 20, it'll be fine.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So give me another strength check.

LYDIA

Oh 8 again.

JAMES

Oh that's much better. 18 plus 3 is 21.

LYDIA

16 minus 1 is 15.

BEN

Successful aid still.

ALEX

Yeah, you very much, you very much succeed.

BRYN

I shoot a zombie with my crossbow.

ALEX

Because you want to.

(Group laughter)

JAMES

Do you know...

LYDIA

He's rolled a 1.

BRYN

I rolled a 1!

ALEX

So, Bertie, you know, gets his act together – he's like right, okay, I've got this, come on, come on.

JAMES

Calm down MacGuffingham, heave!!!! Heave!!!!

ALEX

You haul – Grizzop is yanked vertically upwards – there is a brief moment where it looks like you're gonna get him out. Hamid helping arrow – it was a one in a 100 shot!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

One in 20.

BRYN

More like one in 20! One in 20 I reckon!

ALEX

Yeah about that.

BEN

Can I ask for a reflex save to try and grab the bit of the rope.

ALEX

Yes, you can. The rope is currently falling down into the zombies as Hamid has successfully done a proper like Robin Hood Prince of Thieves!

BEN

Hey keep the rope straight!

That is a 23!

ALEX

Yeah, so ...

BEN

Agh!

ALEX

You manage to grab hold.

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BEN

Being a fifth level Paladin is great!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It's even better having stuff instead of just being a dwarf with a shirt!

BEN

I'll get my charisma bonus for my reflex which doesn't make any sense but God said so!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

You charmed the rope?

BEN

Basically, yeah, charisma, it's sort of my thing.

ALEX

So you successfully manage to haul yourself up and are now with the rest of the party overlooking a ...

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BEN

Oh that was exciting!

ALEX

Overlooking a doorway that is now belching smoke, and lots of “argh” and it is getting really hot!

BRYN

Should we get out of this house?

BEN

Yeah the house will burn down on top of em, it'll be fine.

JAMES

Will that be sufficiently comprehensive, I suppose so.

BEN

We'll just have to wait and see.

LYDIA

I'll throw a bomb in after em.

ALEX

Okay, cool.

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BRYN

Yeah good plan.

LYDIA

You all get out and I'll throw it through the door from the other door.

BEN

All right.

ALEX

I'm not even gonna do any roles for this – rule of cool is supreme. You all head out – Sasha...

BEN

Can we save to look at the explosion or not?

ALEX

You know what, yes, that is fair.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I need a will save from everyone to be a cool person.

JAMES

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What am I rolling?

ALEX

D20 plus your will save.

JAMES

17.

BEN

I've got a 16.

LYDIA

I got 17 plus 3.

ALEX

The DC is 15.

BRYN

I roll another natural one!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

I go "Oh my God you guys, it's working!!!!"

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ALEX

So let's play this out – let's play this out.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, Grizzop, Hamid, Bertie – you're all heading down, you know, running out into the grounds. Sasha turns, throws the bomb, runs and catches up with the rest of you.

JAMES

Stroll, stride it out, three abreast.

ALEX

Yeah, you all manage to slow down when you're out of the thing and there's the distinct (*imitate sounds of explosion*)

BEN

Guys, look at that! It's really cool!

ALEX

It starts falling inwards, down on itself, flames...

JAMES

Bertie just wipes the vomit from his chin and flicks it aside.

BRYN

I fall over a tree stump as I go.

BEN

You guys, you've got these, oh my God!

ALEX

Hamid facing the wrong way and walking backwards trips up and lands on his back just by virtue of not concentrating cos there's so much explosion going on!

BEN

Oh look at that piece fly really high!

LYDIA

Does he have smoke on his face?

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The rest of you are fine because it's all been getting you on the back – he's dirt streaked and soot blackened at the front.

BEN

He's like a cartoon alchemist.

ALEX

Lying on the back yeah – looking up – his hair’s all over the place and the rest of you are fine as the house just ... it looks like it’s imploding – there’s the explosion, you hear a key timber or something and it just collapses into a flaming pit. You see not a hide nor hair of any kind of zombie – they’re burning, they’re groaning.

BEN

Well there goes the neighbourhood!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

We really brought the house down!

EVERYONE

Yay! Hurray!

BEN

High five Bertie!

LYDIA

It went down a bomb!

EVERYONE

Yay!!!!

BEN

High five Sasha!

LYDIA

I did it!

JAMES

Not an edit!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

Both in and out of character!

LYDIA

Although that will now need to be!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Sorry – there we go!

BEN

Where are we?!?! What's happening?!?!

BRYN

God we are the worst!

Hamid slowly brings himself to his feet and casts prestidigitation.

ALEX

Well it succeeds – shocker – I’m going to go ahead and say that you have all managed to find yourself now at the main gate with a flaming pit behind you.

BRYN

I had to scamper to catch up with the rest of them.

BEN

Oh you did that kind of awkward like crawl/run thing, no?

BRYN

What?

BEN

You know when you’re like trying to... oh just forget about it.

JAMES

Bertie turns to Grizzop and goes, “I’m feeling rather under the weather at the moment, I don’t suppose that after this I’d be implicated into ...”

BRYN

He got hit by a wraith, he'll need proper medical attention.

JAMES

It's one of those things – sometimes you'll stand on a wraith and it will just stand up and smack you right in the face.

ALEX

Grizzop, give me a knowledge religion – you weren't there when they say the wraith.

BEN

Sure, knowledge religion – that is a 23 – oh 22 sorry.

ALEX

You ready to know about wraiths Ben?

BEN

I already knew!

ALEX

So, wraiths – they are effectively spirits from people who've died not well and normally have unfinished and nefarious business often – just their touch is enough to literally drain the life force out of you, however, it is not a permanent thing but you will only gain meta one combat per day of like you've had a rest of sleep and it hasn't been interrupted and things like that.

BEN

Is Bertie fatigued?

ALEX

Bertie is currently now fatigued I believe as well as the con damage yes.

BEN

Oh all right.

JAMES

That hasn't been explained to me.

ALEX

It's automatic.

BEN

I can't immediately help you – you'll get better over a couple of days but you're gonna be a bit under the weather, but give me a sec – rub my hands together, lay on hands, and I've got mercy so you heal – and you have sick points?

JAMES

Yes.

Unclear 20:23 crosstalk.

ALEX

You've got sick points as well as losing those hit points.

BEN

So I need to **unclear 20:27** 6. You get 8 hit points back and you lose your fatigue.

BRYN

Have mercy.

JAMES

Okay, cool.

ALEX

So from your perspective, cos it's an issue, you gain 8 hit points – the fatigue thing is mostly you were taking penalties on dice rolls.

JAMES

Yeah.

ALEX

Just by virtue of being knackered. Those have been removed but bearing in mind that you are still taking a penalty just by virtue of being literally ...

JAMES

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

Having a much lower constitution.

ALEX

Yeah, but that is already all sort of ... we'll calculate that in so you don't need to worry about that.

JAMES

Sure, right.

ALEX

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

Hello and welcome back, so you successfully imploded a house belonging to someone that you have no idea who in the once upper...

LYDIA

Absent property owners - down with them!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Absent landlords – Grr grr!

ALEX

So with that in mind, what do you do now?

JAMES

I'd say that if it's an absentee landlord, the only person who's living in that house was a ghost so it's Rent-a-Ghost situation!

ALEX

Ah!

JAMES

Carry on!

ALEX

So what are you ...

LYDIA

Well Sasha says as always, the real horror is always the ruling classes.

ALEX

Well benefit for Sasha, which she knows from her knowledge...

JAMES

Bertie does not notice that!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The benefit for Sasha from her knowledge local is that these are defunct ruling class houses that have since fallen into disrepair – you're in a sort of a formerly rich but they did kind of just get subsumed.

JAMES

That's why Bertie found it so scary on the way in.

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

Oh yeah!

JAMES

Yeah.

ALEX

He was all freaked out!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It was a fallen line.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So what you are doing?

BEN

So that's one ley line down – we've got to make sure that the zombies don't climb out of here, but if they're dealt with we should move on.

LYDIA

Get the map out again then and let's look at the next one.

ALEX

I believe I can you get out of this small garden! What do you do next?

Crosstalk 22:58.

BRYN

Well first I walk across the grass.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Then I walk across the flowerbed through some bushes, then I hop across the gravel path and open the gate slowly.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

BEN

But then, then he closes it again. Oils it and opens it again!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Stop picking a fight with the editors!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

They literally control what you say!

BRYN

I'm Bryn and I like...

JAMES

Unclear 23:24 edited that with that would have made this un-broadcastable!

BRYN

That's why I stopped!

JAMES

Eight things! All right, let's carry on.

LYDIA

Sasha is actually looking at this map trying to work out where the next place that might have zombies is.

ALEX

Okay, so the map that you all originally had was obviously modified with ...

BRYN

We drew on all the ley lines.

ALEX

Yeah, you overlaid the ley lines and so on.

BRYN

And we've been marking known plague pits and so we know which ones are on ley lines and we know where the ley line convergent is.

ALEX

Yes, so there were sort of six spokes on this wheel with the opera house in the middle. You noticed originally...

BRYN

We crossed off two plague pits.

ALEX

... that one was effectively the teleportation circle for the university was where you first ran into a plague pit and there was this house.

JAMES

Tick!

ALEX

And there is another one that is down near the docks. Also, everyone who can give me a knowledge arcana. I believe that is only Hamid now.

BRYN

I rolled a 2 – that means I have 14.

ALEX

14. You're probably gonna need to hit up all of them, yeah. You have no further insights at this time.

LYDIA

Right, well down to the docks then.

BEN

All right, sounds good.

ALEX

The remaining ones, in case anyone was interesting...in case anyone was interesting?!?!

JAMES

Everyone's interesting! You're all interesting to us – tell us about your day!
What you been up to lately?

LYDIA

That sounds really tough for you, but you got through it, that's really amazing!

JAMES

Tell me more about – I'm just gonna listen and sympathise – I'm not trying to solve the problem – just carry on!

BRYN

Welcome to our new podcast – careful listener!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The three remaining spokes are one looks to have, like converges with a plague pit at what used to be the walled entrance to Prague – this is years and years and years ago, those walls have since gone, they're kind of defunct cos society has moved along since then – there is another one which is in the middle of large gardens effectively – they are now kept for public use – once upon a time

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

it was one massive estate from a landowner that has since again also fallen away and then...

JAMES

Sorry, so those gardens are now ... are they like ornamental public gardens?

ALEX

Yes.

JAMES

Okay.

ALEX

Yes and...

LYDIA

Large gardens like giant plants?

JAMES

My huge garden, yes!!!! A shrubbery so large it looks like a normal forest!!!

Whoa!!!!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Everyone thinks it's fine but there's one botanist going, this is all wrong!!!!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The final spoke is in the depths of the industrial district, however, there's a lot of ambiguity as to where the plague pit would be, like the ground has been built/demolished/built/demolished/changed so much that you just know...

BRYN

Well it sounds to me like he's probably already got Folly queued up for us at the docks, so let's go there.

LYDIA

My thoughts though right, my thought is that dockhands are tough right, they're hard down there so if a bunch of zombies come out they'll punch em down. We should go where there's soft people and zombies gonna come – like those botanical gardens – there might be like families there with their kids – they don't what to do when a zombie comes up.

ALEX

You have now ...

BRYN

That seems like quite good logic to me.

JAMES

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

Throw the second sons to the zombies – ugh!

ALEX

You now have about five hours before – if you're gonna go to the opera, you will need to start prepping and making your way.

LYDIA

Right well, quick, quick times it is.

BRYN

Okay, let's rush over to the gardens.

BEN

Public park – sounds good.

LYDIA

Which one's the nearest?

ALEX

Nearest is the docks – botanical gardens are the far side of the city – industry is about the same distance. The wall is kind of halfway between those two. You can make it to the gardens but you are gonna have to run it or get transport there and hope there's no traffic, deal with the problem and then immediately make it back if you're gonna get to the opera in time.

JAMES

Is there a way that the party can do all of these and get to the opera?

ALEX

Absolutely not, no way.

JAMES

How many in an absolute best case scenario can the party do while still getting to the opera?

ALEX

Assuming that you turned up at the docks and everything was fine and you immediately ran on to the next spoke, which would be the wall, possibly but you would be “oh cool everything’s fine, next one, everything’s fine, right let’s move on”. Time is of the essence.

BEN

You’re a magical top right – so what do you reckon? If we disrupt one end of each of the spokes or remove a spoke entirely we’re going to both ends. We think we’ll do more to the ritual.

BRYN

Well, I haven’t really studied magical rituals that ...

BEN

Give it a go. Go on – time’s of the essence! Let’s go.

BRYN

Probably removing spokes.

ALEX

Give me a knowledge arcana – I'm gonna give you another one because he's fed you something.

BRYN

Well this time I rolled 16 so 28!

ALEX

So....

JAMES

Come on Hamid, answer the question! No pressure! No pressure!

LYDIA

Quick Hamid. What are you doing?

JAMES

Don't fluff it Hamid!!

BEN

Come on Hamid!

JAMES

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

Time is of the essence Hamid!

LYDIA

Come on!

BRYN

Hamid's eyes sort of unfocus for a second, and ...

BEN

Does he go into a Sherlock Holmes mind Hamid?

BRYN

No! They flash briefly a different colour.

BEN

Oh.

ALEX

Sure so during this period you needed...

JAMES

It's all about context and hot topic.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You basically needed this kick up the proverbial brain bum in order to make the leap, yeah, because of the way the spokes are organised – all you have to do is unbalance it. If you had broken two spokes at opposing ends it'd probably still hold together – if you can break three from one side, the whole lot will probably topple. It's more about unbalancing rather than wiping the whole lot out.

LYDIA

He really wants us to go to the docks.

BEN

So what do you reckon?

BRYN

I think we should take out the...yes, no, we definitely need to unbalance it by taking out the sides of one spoke and leave the other sides of the spoke stronger. No, that's much better so that means we have to go to the docks.

BEN

All right.

ALEX

Correct! Yes. To the docks then!

BEN

All right, let's go.

LYDIA

Yay! All right, oh I wonder if there's a franchise of the Soggy Admiral and the Soggy Captain and the Soggy First Mate and may be the Soggy Second Mate and the Soggy ...

ALEX

Everyone who can give me a knowledge local.

JAMES

Do we remember that Prague is like in the middle of the Czech Republic and therefore like landlocked?

ALEX

But there is a river.

JAMES

Okay, fair enough.

LYDIA

I got a natural 20.

ALEX

Course you did.

BRYN

I don't think you have knowledge local.

BEN

Oh you're right, I don't.

ALEX

Anyone else?

JAMES

I've got ignorance local of more or less everywhere!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So you got an 18 on ignorance local – you continue speaking French despite the fact it's not the language! Please stop!

JAMES

Bertie speaks Czech without really acknowledging that he's speaking Czech, he has no idea!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I like to think that you're finally gaining acceptance of the fact that you have this language and are actively choosing the wrong one like cos you can!

Meanwhile, Sasha, yeah, shocker – you're natural 20 on the knowledge local,

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

Sasha knows where she's going. You originally are all gonna, you know, pile into a cab and get them to get there. It very quickly becomes apparent that there is a better route than this, than whatever the cabbie's doing and you just like... you know some people, tourists, am I right?! And you can basically lead everyone, circumnavigate all the delays and get there much quicker.

JAMES

That's the problem with a magical city is that the cab riders are too dependent on GPS, just use their instincts!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check.

JAMES

3.

BRYN

27.

LYDIA

I only rolled a nine so I only get 19.

(Group laughter)

BEN

19.

ALEX

Okay. Bertie you notice nothing – all of these foreigners are in the way again as always!

JAMES

Foreigners in the way of knowledge – I'll just think about this song I've just written! *Sings* I know a song that'll get on your nerves, get on your nerves, get on your nerves!

ALEX

Grizzop and Sasha, you hear the distinct sounds at the docks of a large disturbance going on.

LYDIA

That sounds like the zombies.

ALEX

Yeah, it has a distinct zombie vibe to it. Hamid, you get an extra element of it which is that it sounds very much like it's going south but it's more like a fluke gust of wind has given you a bit of a better insight to it, but clearly the wrong side is winning as far as you can tell.

BEN

Weapons out you lot.

JAMES

What?!

BRYN

Get ready Bertie, we've got to kill more zombies.

JAMES

Ah, somebody's been getting on my nerves!!! Bertie withdraws the sword instantly!

BRYN

Hello!

JAMES

Ah you, yes, I remember you from minutes ago! Good!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Slicing and dicing.

JAMES

Yes, yes!!! On shall we?

ALEX

Everyone give me an initiative check.

JAMES

1... oh hang, it's modified isn't it?

ALEX

Yeah.

JAMES

So 3.

ALEX

Oh big numbers from Bertie!

JAMES

Yeah!

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

BEN

I've changed character but my initiative rolls have not! 11.

LYDIA

I got 14.

ALEX

And Bryn?

BRYN

Natural 20, so 23! Natural 20 has no effect on initiative!

BEN

I mean it means you get 20.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

I have played systems before where if you get a natural 20 you get a free action before but it breaks it really quickly because all you need is a monster that can like devour you whole so that's the first thing that they do! So, you arrive at the docks.

BEN

Oh wait, so sorry – just before we kick off the fight, I've just had a realisation because I'm a Paladin and I can do things – I can easily like use lay on hand uses to help everyone get unclear 32:27...

ALEX

Paladins?

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

BEN

Yeah I know.

ALEX

Helping?!?

JAMES

Oh, oh – can we do as like everybody puts their hand in the middle of the circle and it's a go-team!

ALEX

Yes, I'll allow it!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Mechanically no but who cares?

ALEX

I tell you what – you could take one lay of hands and go-team it and split it between everyone for like one heal.

BEN

That's a lot of hands.

ALEX

Or you could burn ...

BEN

I'll just use multiple things.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

ALEX

Yeah, that's fine. Nonetheless, yes, go-team.

BEN

Oh everyone, get in – three, two, one – go-team! Whoop!

LYDIA

Sasha's ought to be like ... but I don't, I'm not hurt!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Go Sasha then, well done!

BRYN

Hamid also isn't hurt but he participates nonetheless!

BEN

Okay, well I'll spend something on it.

LYDIA

I don't like touching people when I don't need to.

BRYN

No, I'll save first.

BEN

Oh right, fair enough.

BRYN

Anyway, so...

ALEX

Can I still touch people but not drain our resources?

JAMES

It's just Bertie that was hurt so.

BEN

I've also got **unclear 33:20**.

ALEX

And by hurt, you mean really, really messed up.

BEN

So Bertie gets 4 hit points back which is something and I get ... so your current match is 35.

JAMES

Yeah, so but I was at that anyway.

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

Okay, so you all arrive at the docks.

BEN

Oh I've just realised – cos I'm a Paladin and I can boo things, I'm gonna lay on hands myself.

ALEX

You're so down on clerics – clerics can do things too!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Yeah they can spend all their time trying to prepare their spells!

LYDIA

All right, hurry up and touch yourself!

(Group laughter)

BEN

I touch myself and it feels ... great!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

How great! It feels 11...

BEN

Almost maximally great!

ALEX

Okay, so at the docks there is absolute chaos. You see all of the zombies appear to be clawing their way out of the river up on to pontoons and so on and then working their way inland. There are a pair of guards – one at the two pontoons that are nearest to you, who are trying to hold some form of a line but given that one of them is facing off against four zombies, another is facing off against three, and they ain't paid to deal with this kind of thing, you suspect they're going to be overwhelmed amazingly quickly. Thankfully, there don't appear to be any civilians – it appears to have already been cleared of people – these are the only two people there other than yourselves and loads of zombies.

JAMES

It's really just a line if there's only two guards isn't it? Just holding between two points.

LYDIA

That's a line.

JAMES

Yeah, so if one of them goes down...

Crosstalk 34:47.

ALEX

So one could say that but currently the guards are holding the line.

BRYN

If they both go down, it becomes pointless.

JAMES

Hey!

ALEX

So, with that in mind, up first – Hamid.

BRYN

Hamid will...

ALEX

Oh, to clarify for listeners, the rest of the party are currently at warehouses and other things like that which are slightly away from the docks proper but they are one and the same.

BRYN

Also not standardised on size cos we're not yet in the era of standardised shipping containers.

ALEX

Correct.

BRYN

Hamid notices to himself.

ALEX

As he takes his turn and goes first.

BRYN

As he takes his turn – so I will take a move action – I move up to behind one of the warehouses so I'm peeking round the corner and still partially in cover and I will cast magic missile at a zombie – whoo! Two missiles shoot out from Hamid's hand and hit the first zombie nearest the guard that is near him to try and help him and I do six damage.

ALEX

Right good start! All of the zombies take turn at the same time because I ain't rolling separate initiatives for all of them. All of the zombies immediately swarm down the docks towards those two guards who are holding the line. One of them is already sort of facing off and manages to take an attack and they hit a deal – 9 damage to the guard who's there – the guard looks like they are already on their last legs as in they weren't a particularly robust individual but it jumps on them and immediately just sinks its teeth right into their neck. These zombies are moving faster than the ones that you have faced off previously. All of the remaining zombies use their staggered move, cos they can only either move or attack, to all move right up to the beginning of the docks. Sasha?

BRYN

Are these pontoons or piers?

ALEX

They are very stable pontoons.

BRYN

I have the best vantage point on the situation – I rolled amazingly on my perception earlier so I'm just gonna call out to the rest of the party – there's three zombies coming down this pontoon and there's four on the other so someone get over to the left and help on that pontoon.

ALEX

Sasha, you're up.

BEN

You only get six seconds, that was all.

ALEX

He talks really quick – in fact, it's probably difficult for you to make out anything he said!

LYDIA

Sasha has very little that is useful cos she's used up her bombs and the daggers did nothing!

BEN

That was to the wraith not the zombies.

LYDIA

No, no – no the daggers did nothing.

ALEX

The daggers – she gets no crits on zombies.

BEN

Oh yeah.

ALEX

She gets no sneak attacks either.

BEN

You're right, you're right.

LYDIA

So Sasha runs round the back of a small building that was between her and the person and is now with the dock hand who seems to nearly be dead.

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

And she is too far away to stab properly but she will throw a dagger at ...

ALEX

Give me the attack roll.

LYDIA

6 plus 8 so...

ALEX

14.

LYDIA

That's the one yes.

ALEX

The one that comes after 13 but before 15! It is a hit.

LYDIA

Yay!

ALEX

It turns out zombies are very easy to hit.

LYDIA

Grand, so all it does is one unclear 38:00 minus one so...

ALEX

Give us the roll.

LYDIA

Oh 4 minus 1 so 3.

ALEX

3, okay – with that in mind then – Grizzop you are up.

BEN

Since I'm a long way away and getting close is – well, being able to see is good, I'm gonna move, 10, 20, 30 and I'm not gonna move in closer.

ALEX

Okay cool.

LYDIA

Unclear 38:22.

BEN

I just used unclear 38:26.

ALEX

Okay and then the guards each... basically the one who was almost messed up sees you and very quickly just goes “I can’t take anymore, ahh...”

LYDIA

So tragic!

ALEX

And then looking very apologetic, takes a five foot step to get away from the zombies and then tries to flee behind the remaining guard at the other pontoon and the whole way they’re just going, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry!” and they kind of stagger leaving a bloody trail as they stagger away.

LYDIA

Is that as far away as it gets?

ALEX

Mmm-mmm. The other guard holds his ground, but fails to hit a zombie so with the pontoons now – at least one of them overrun, the other one being held by a single guard, I’m gonna end the episode there and we will come back again next week!

LYDIA

Sasha’s like please! Actually, you know what, I would do that – she’s like I can handle it! There’s only four of them and one of me and I’m ill-equipped for this!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It really is nothing, it's fine!

ALEX

For once it's may be fair for them.

LYDIA

Yeah, right, like this is a challenge! That's good.

JAMES

Bertie has a preparatory tiny little bit of sick on his chin!

(Group laughter)

JAMES

He's not feeling very well.

ALEX

So yeah, I'm gonna be honest – I got you out of that house and I thought we'd just be wandering around the garden the whole time so I'm counting this as a win!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Yeah, seems like a win from this pontoon!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

A win very soon I'm sure even though the zombies don't respond to daggers.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [74] – [Upstairs Downstairs]

BRYN

We're playing pontoon so what you really need to do is like "hit me!".

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Argh!!! I'm gonna end on that, bye guys!

LYDIA

She's only got 13 daggers left!

(Group laughter)

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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