

RQG – 78 – Stage Fright

Content Warnings

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ALEX

Hi everyone, Alex here with a quick apology head of today's episode. Unfortunately there was a pretty spectacular failure during the recording of this episode and long story, short we only managed to recover a single microphone track. Thankfully our amazing editing team have managed to work some magic and modify that track so that the episode can still air and you'll still be able to hear everyone but we just wanted to apologise for the one off drop in quality especially at such a dramatic moment. Thanks for your understanding. Our quality should be back up to normal from next week.

BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of patrons. Lara Taffer, Justin Banket and Arcvalena Protrutis, Alexander Kroshka, Jameson Senga, Ian Barrett, Johnny, Fabien Berenovski, Richard Maxton, Robb Kerr. Thank you all. We really appreciate your support. If you'd like to join them go to www.patreon.com/rustyquill and take a look at our rewards.

[Show Theme - Intro]

Rusty Quill Gaming – 78 – Stage Fright

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 78 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 who are you playing?

JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett who's fine, fine. We're fine. It's fine, great thanks to the healing, that felt great. Great.

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam who's really happy he's helping his friends.

ALEX

Genuinely everything's brilliant!

BRYN

For anyone who's tuning in and didn't hear the last episode by the way I should point out my character is called Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan. He's currently been reduced to a mindless beast which hence the...

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

LYDIA

Undead

ALEX

Hey! Not entirely.

LYDIA

Mild case.

ALEX

You have a mild case of undead. So we're going to pick up exactly where we left off unsurprisingly because the stakes are rather high. I'm going to start with Kafka because Bertie you've just had your turn. We're in initiative order and he's just took a massive sword to the chest. He stumbles back, looks at you and what exactly are you?

JAMES

Six seconds by the way.

ALEX

Yep. And he then raises 15 feet in the air and is just floating above the stage. However his attention is still very much clearly focused on the book which is about 20 feet to your right more or less. You are directly between him and it. He can't get to it unless he goes through you.

JAMES

Ok if he's left my combat zone, whatever it is. Do I get an attack of opportunity.

ALEX

Yes

JAMES

Ok then presumably Bertie does that.

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ALEX

You can. Do you want to?

BEN

Just roll it.

JAMES

Yeah!

ALEX

Go for it. It's fine.

JAMES

Yes I do want to!

LYDIA

Are you totally sure? Is this what you want?

JAMES

Just using a spooky voice.

ALEX

Is this a thing that you're choosing? Is that what you're doing? Are you choosing to do this?

LYDIA

Think about all your other priorities.

BEN

Is the path you're taking?

ALEX

If this was a point of no return would you say you would proceed with what you're doing?

JAMES

Yes!

BEN

Kafka will remember this.

ALEX

Alright then I suppose.

LYDIA

Consider all the other dimensions in which you didn't make this choice.

BRYN

Because we're fighting Kafka and what did he do to me?! He caused me to metamorphosise.

JAMES

Yeah! Come here Kafka you cockroach!

BRYN

I failed to conjugate that verb but the intent was there.

ALEX

Go on.

JAMES

So I'm not sure what the modifiers are but Bertie rolled 15 with attack bonus of 12

BEN

So 27

JAMES

27 total.

ALEX

Yeah you manage to get an attack off on him. Roll the damage if you want.

JAMES

Oh yes.

ALEX

I mean if you really want to...

BRYN

Can you stop questioning James's execution of the basic rules of the game!

JAMES

Oh that's 18 damage.

BEN

Yeah take that Kafka! That's grim

BRYN

That's for asking if he was sure too many times.

JAMES

On top of the 11 from last episode so that's 29 damage I think.

ALEX

So he starts rising up and you basically baseball swing it in order to get as much power behind it.

JAMES

Cricket!

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ALEX

He's a little dweeb

JAMES

Cricket swing!

ALEX

I'm so sorry...

BRYN

Full leg drive....rounders at a push

(laughing)

LYDIA

Or lacrosse sometimes.

JAMES

I'm very la-cross indeed!

(laughing)

ALEX

You lop off his left foot. Like at the ankle, the whole lot comes off. He appears not to have noticed. He is bleeding profusely and is now flying above you with just apparently gushing blood from his one severed foot.

JAMES

That is cheating!

ALEX

Grizzop you're up. You are unaware of this.

BEN

It's like a health bar! So where are we at? We've got one giant zombie on the floor with arrows in its eyes.

ALEX

Which is getting up the next round I can tell you.

BEN

We have another giant that's...I think I'm just going to, well since it worked so well last time, I'm going to shoot the other giant in the eyes.

ALEX

Ok, go for it.

BEN

Ooh that was a...

BRYN

That's going to be a miss that one.

BEN

Possibly a miss yeah, so involving everything that's a 17 and a 12.

ALEX

17 and 12. They both hit. One of them goes in the eyes.

BEN

Ok so the one that goes in the eyes does 5 fire damage and the one that doesn't does 10 fire damage.

ALEX

Did you just pooh pooh 15 fire damage with some of it being in the eye.

BEN

It wasn't in the eyes all of it!

JAMES

Some of it was in the feelings! Ben's feelings!

BEN

Yeah!

ALEX

Ok all good. Yeah it takes the hit [roaring noise] and the second one that goes in the torso just [squelching noise]. It doesn't really seem to have noticed it. It's just buried in it somewhere. It took the damage. It's not lovely. Sasha, you're up. You are no longer nauseated. Whatever that weirdness was, it's definitely passed.

LYDIA

Yeah I wonder what that was! I'm fine.

ALEX

Probably nothing.

LYDIA

Yeah. I'm going to throw my...

BRYN

Penultimate

LYDIA

Penultimate alchemist bomb.

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ALEX

Go for it.

LYDIA

Oh 8 + 7.

ALEX

You're good

LYDIA

Hurray!

ALEX

You have to roll really badly, really badly to miss.

LYDIA

And it does 5 damage.

ALEX

Funnily enough it's almost like the massive lumbering giants mean bit meta here, might be good at taking a hit but not necessarily at dodging it.

LYDIA

And remember they all have the 1s.

ALEX

Yep, yep.

LYDIA

So hopefully the little ones are getting at least slightly...

BRYN

They're really haggard yeah.

ALEX

They are. Like you have eliminated a decent number between the two of you. The only problem is there's that much going on it's hard to count them but you've certainly dealt with one and a half, maybe two waves of the smaller ones.

LYDIA

There's a lot of drawling half chopped up limbs.

BRYN

In the darkness.

LYDIA

Limbs and legs and stuff.

ALEX

It's definitely starting to get stinky.

BRYN

I mean mostly what you're doing is creating a stairway out of zombie corpses and other zombies to come.

BEN

Yeah they're going to World War Z this.

JAMES

It's a pretty heavy-handed metaphor for labour conditions under Le Capitalism but...

(Laughing)

BEN

Also worth mentioning that I'm not counting arrows because counting individual arrows is terribly boring but I'm about to run out.

ALEX

No that's fine. We use the rule of that sounds about right here. That's the Rusty Quill way. Both Grizzop and Sasha give me a perception check.

LYDIA

Ooh 20 plus my bonus of everything.

BEN

14

ALEX

14.

LYDIA

So I perceived at 30.

ALEX

So Grizzop you, over the cacophony you hear what's definitely disturbance coming from other parts of the basement at this point. Sasha...

LYDIA

You perceive all.

ALEX

You are well aware the further down the corridor...so deeper into the twisty, winding corridor rather than back towards the main auditorium there are the distinct sounds of things climbing stairs.

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LYDIA

Oh dear.

ALEX

That's their turn. Hamid is gone.

BRYN

Hamid scampers off into the wings.

ALEX

Into the darkness. I'm so sorry.

LYDIA

Starts chowing down on some...

ALEX

Civilians

LYDIA

Delicious...

ALEX

Civilians

JAMES

Waiting for a princess's kiss to restore him to his true form.

BRYN

Yes

BEN

Not that!

BRYN

He's going to go and have a mansion full of weirdly animated servants.

JAMES

That is a single round action.

LYDIA

A mask that covers up his dragon-y self and then starts playing the organ deep in the bowel of the...

ALEX

No you want one of those little emergency signs, help I've fallen and now I'm a monster. Please give me a kiss.

BRYN

His instinct by the way is to head upwards. So he's basically going to be running pretty randomly but when he...he won't go down any stairs but he might up some.

JAMES

Like a Kong defence.

ALEX

It always ends well! Bertie...

BRYN

He realise he doesn't have wings. Let's find out!

ALEX

You have successfully hacked a great wodge of Kafka off and he hasn't appeared to notice yet. What do you do? He's currently above you to the point where...

JAMES

He was 15 feet earlier.

ALEX

Yeah. Ok you can still slide to him basically.

BRYN

You can just rise up 15 feet yourself.

LYDIA

Like ha, ha, ha just watch me fly! And yep...

(laughing)

JAMES

Is that something that would require a fly check or is that literally just turning them on and then going up to his height?

ALEX

I will get you to roll a fly check, just don't get a 1. Just don't get a 1.

JAMES

Ok in that case Bertie will attempt to not roll a 1 as he soars through the air.
Can you do the Kafka cackle.

ALEX

[evil laugh] oh no, oh no.

JAMES

18 – 7 is still a technically competent 11.

ALEX

He comes straight at him. I'm not going to allow you to charge wearing these boots but you still manage to go straight for the attack.

JAMES

Yeah. Good evening. As he comes straight up to eye level. Eye to eye with Kafka. Swings the sword straight at his torso. Rolls 15.

ALEX

Miss. He just does a backwards somersault with all of the grace that Bertie normally flying lacks. It turns out that going vertically up was ok.

BRYN

Spraying at Bertie with ankle blood in the process.

BEN

My final move the blood pin wheel!

(laughing)

ALEX

It's not even my final form!

LYDIA

Spraying everywhere. All the people in the audience is like oh gosh this is great special effects. Very immersive.

BRYN

I like to think that the score of the opera is continuing underneath...

ALEX

The music is still going. It's epic. Is what it is and I use that as someone who hates that word. Ok...

BRYN

Is it awesome?

ALEX

Yeah!

JAMES

Is it totally radical?

ALEX

It's totes rad!

LYDIA

Is it cowabunga?

ALEX

It's properly bodacious, yes!

(laughing)

LYDIA

I can't top bodacious!

ALEX

Kafka begins to cast a spell and makes a concentration check in order to avoid getting absolutely annihilated. He...rolls for his concentration check and succeeds.

BRYN

No attack of op.

ALEX

No attack of opportunity. Give me a will save Bertie.

JAMES

11. Is it versus fear?

ALEX

No

JAMES

11

ALEX

You freeze in place. Your boots of flying are still flying. You however are mid swing sort of like...

LYDIA

Does he topple? Does he topple?

ALEX

You start to gently rotate off from the centre.

(laughing)

On at least two axes but you are completely frozen. Let's have some fun shall we. And with that, Grizzop you're up.

BEN

I'm going to leap down.

ALEX

Woah ok!

BEN

On top of the giant drawing my sword and land on top of it and channel positive energy to try and get as many of the small ones as possible.

ALEX

Ok. Give me an acrobatics roll to not get just...

BEN

7

ALEX

7. So you leap down in order to basically land on it. You misjudge it. It's slimy, it's slippery and you slide off its back and land in the water. Still on your feet. You're not prone or anything but you are now in the water with a basically now standing one that's been apparently blinded by your luck. The other that you've just slid down the back of that you're not sure whether it's aware of you or not and all of the little ones that are immediately swarming in towards you. You can still do your channel positive energy.

BEN

I channel positive energy.

ALEX

Go for it.

BEN

Everything within 30 feet takes 6 positive energy with a will save of 16.

ALEX

All of the small ones within your immediate area [exploding noise]. There's definitely the sounds of further, further in but they're a decent distance away and so on. The big guys have also taken the damage. Can you remind me what it was?

BEN

6

ALEX

Sasha. You are up.

LYDIA

Why did he do that? Throw a rope down for him. Can you climb out?

BEN

Yeah I'll probably be fine.

LYDIA

O-ok!

(laughing)

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Well I can't throw a bomb now.

ALEX

Six seconds up.

LYDIA

I can't see anything.

ALEX

Tough what are you doing now? No more speaking!

LYDIA

I'll throw a rope for you.

ALEX

She throws the rope. You're just dropping a rope, you don't need to give an attack roll. It's all good.

LYDIA

Dropping a rope.

ALEX

That's fine. On the zombie's turn, there are no small ones with which to move towards Grizzop. However the big guy that you slid down...

JAMES

Is that the blind one or the not blind one.

ALEX

The not...the half blind one. Did not notice because it's half blind.

JAMES

Ah in this kingdom he is now king!

ALEX

Yes! Yes he is! I'm full of allegory and metaphor and I'm really glad that you're noticing all of these.

LYDIA

It's a lot of wisdom in this room. A lot of warmth and a lot of a wisdom.

ALEX

With that...

JAMES

By wisdom we mean BO really.

BRYN

Mostly warmth...

ALEX

So with that the second giant zombie just takes a wild swing because it knows there's someone there. You are getting concealment.

BEN

Sure it has to take 21 anyway.

ALEX

Yeah that's fine. So he takes a random swing at you and we'll see if it manages to make it through the "concealment" because you're blinded. I don't believe so. So with that in mind it takes what would've been a crushing blow to your head however you're able to dodge it but it's more due to you dodging it than it not knowing where you were because the water's giving you away basically. There are no smaller ones to run towards you however from a door further down that corridor, bursts open and a load of the smaller ones start shambling towards you guys along the corridor. They are not going to make it there now but next time that they get to move they will be upon you both.

BEN

Well upon Sasha because Grizzop's down below.

ALEX

Oh yeah Grizzop's good. He's safe. Just chilling out. Maxing, relaxing, all cool. And right...

JAMES

Is the big shambling zombie thing...is he the king of Bel Air? Is that the king of...

ALEX

You're not there. You don't know.

JAMES

Oh!

ALEX

Bertie. You're up. However you are completely static and frozen in place.

JAMES

Rotating very slightly and frozen in terror.

ALEX

He has however allowed you to continue speaking.

JAMES

Ok arghhhhhhhh!

ALEX

I am going to briefly drop out of combat time for the sake of Bertie otherwise I'm going to lose my sanity a little bit because the talking in six second increments is too hard. And who pray tell are you?

JAMES

I am Sir Bertrand Macguffingham

LYDIA

As he rotates!

ALEX

Slowly eventually ending up upside down.

JAMES

Yeah. Gently I am Sir Beeeertrand Macguffingham.

ALEX

And then as he's talking he's floating quite gracefully down. He's not bothering to put his feet down obviously and going to pick up his book again. And he's turning back to you. Once he's got the book in his hand he's just floating back over to you and coming in nice and close. Macguffingham. Hmm. Interesting. And why shouldn't I immediately disintegrate you Macguffingham?

JAMES

Is Bertie touching him...sorry is Kafka touching him even slightly.

ALEX

No.

JAMES

No, ok. Well...erm...I am the hero of this narrative and without me this whole narrative world collapse. Bertie's clutching the soloistic straws.

ALEX

The hero?

JAMES

The hero of this narrative, yes.

ALEX

Fascinating.

JAMES

Literally the only protagonist I've ever met, says the voice in Bertie's ear. That sounds like a good thing to say, say it. Bertie continues saying that out loud. He literally says that to Kafka including the...

ALEX

Kafka gestures to the wings. There's a brief sort of cut off cry and then the soprano that was singing earlier is pulled out onto the stage and is lifted up. The hero are you?

JAMES

Yes I am the hero! The hero-ist hero.

ALEX

Well what a hero be without the hero's choice? Am I right?

JAMES

Hero's choice?

LYDIA

Upside down, swaying.

ALEX

Oh yeah, yeah, this is as unglamorous as possible.

JAMES

Bertie's head's about 4 o'clock. The bloods rushing to his head. He does not notice.

ALEX

At which point the woman is now coming close to you. Cutting back to Grizzop.

BEN

Right well Sasha's thrown a rope and Grizzop suddenly realises this was actually quite a bad idea!

ALEX

Funny that!

BEN

Well you know, so he's got wisdom of 8...so I'm going to try and climb...

BRYN

Ahhh!

BEN

And I do really badly. What is that?

LYDIA

An acrobatics...

ALEX

It is a climb check which is strength based.

BEN

That's a 3.

ALEX

That's a 3.

BEN

3 plus whatever the rope gives you.

ALEX

3 plus whatever the rope gives you. You start climbing it. It's too wet, it's too slippery and you slam back onto your feet. You've still got your feet, you've still got your weapons in hand and so on but you didn't manage to make it up this turn. Sasha you're up.

LYDIA

Wrap it around you and I'll pull.

BEN

Alright.

ALEX

I assume that you are just waiting to pull Grizzop up when he's ready. In the meantime the zombies shamle closer and make it up to you guys. Again

because they're zombies and zombies are rubbish they don't take any attacks because they can't but they are filling the corridor. Meanwhile cutting back to Bertie. So what I'm hearing is that if you were to say, be asked to sacrifice yourself quite nobly you'd so being such a hero.

JAMES

Bertie sort of...I mean...

ALEX

In front of all of these people. You notice at this point that while you're assuming that people were asleep or something, they weren't really moving, everyone is actually watching what's going on, on the stage. They're just not moving from their seats. It's again...you finally put two and two together. They're probably too afraid to move. That's probably what that is.

JAMES

Hello fans! Bertie says as he slowly continues to rotate.

ALEX

So here's what we'll do. If you beg...you know really beg not to die I'll kill her. She doesn't seem able to react. She appears under a similar compulsion as yourself. Of course if you don't you'll be such a hero that I'll have to dismiss you. What do you think?

JAMES

Is the soprano...is this Hamid's sister?

ALEX

Yes.

JAMES

It is Hamid's sister. Ok so Bertie is making some calculations at this point.

ALEX

Oh no!

JAMES

Yeah I know! Using very clever maths because he of course has knowledge of the contract and he knows that if he sacrifices the damsel in distress, Hamid's sister, then that is his third heroism strike and he is consigned to the eternal fiery poo dimension and erased from all history. He knows that if he begs pathetically in front of this many people then that would also be a third strike and he'd be consigned to eternal fiery poo dimension and there's not really anything else he can do.

LYDIA

He can keep him talking.

JAMES

He can keep him talking. He can stall. He can stall.

ALEX

You could in fact use pomp and pageantry to stall as a bonus.

JAMES

He's going to fall back on his pomp and pageantry and is...

ALEX

Like the heroes of old! In the precedence set. In fact let me recite all of them.

LYDIA

As someone's that read them all from the original, yeah they actually do.

ALEX

Yea, yeah that's a thing they do.

LYDIA

Before anything starts it's mostly talk. A lot of the stuff that goes on is because of drunken bets.

ALEX

So what are you doing Bertie?

JAMES

So Bertie is...he's damned if he does, literally damned if he does and literally damned if he doesn't.

ALEX

Yes. Yes he is.

JAMES

So he's going to stall for time.

ALEX

Ok

JAMES

So Bertie is going to pomp and pageantry and he...from this position is going to attempt to intimidate his way while completely...

ALEX

He's going to attempt to intimidate Kafka away.

JAMES

Yep

ALEX

Ok

LYDIA

The man that didn't notice his foot being chopped off.

ALEX

Ok so go ahead and give me the roll. Do you want to add pomp and pageantry to that? I'll let you.

JAMES

Yeah I'm going to add pomp and pageantry to it.

ALEX

Go for it. Go for it.

JAMES

That is...that is 23.

ALEX

I'll let you know whether it worked after we return from a brief break.

And welcome back. So you know how I said I'd tell you when we come back from the break.

JAMES

Will Bertie's magnificent plan work?

ALEX

No! No it won't! And with that let's cut to Grizzop. Do you want to try climbing this rope one last time?

BEN

No. I've tried it around myself and I have braced myself so like I'm abseiling. I'm sure there's an actual word for that. And I've got my bow and arrow out because I can now hear those zombies that are coming up and bearing down on Sasha so I'm going to try and if, whilst she's pulling me up try and stop her from being eaten by zombies because it's the least I could do.

ALEX

So Grizzop's super small and Sasha you're basically the only normal sized human here. Bertie being the humongous beast that he is.

LYDIA

My strength mod is -1.

ALEX

Give me a roll and don't do badly.

BEN

Well that's most of the time!

LYDIA

14 -1.

ALEX

You successfully manage to haul Grizzop up and onto the ledge with you.

LYDIA

I guess he was on the edge. That's not my strongest roll.

ALEX

Grizzop, what are you doing?

BEN

Ok so I've tied the rope around myself and I'm bracing my legs on the wall so like reverse abseiling and I'm readying an action with my bow to, as soon as I get out of the...into the doorway I'm going to shoot the closest two zombies to try and help protect us from being more damaged.

ALEX

Ok

LYDIA

Ok well remember my modifier is a -1 on strength.

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ALEX

Everything's fine! Ok good.

LYDIA

Ok 14 -1 is 13.

ALEX

You successfully haul Grizzop up into the doorway. I believe your readied action goes off Grizzop.

LYDIA

30 whole feet.

ALEX

Yeh. Like I'm getting super mushy in terms of time and mechanics here.

BEN

So I hit the first one on a 28 and I hit the second one on a 16.

ALEX

Yes you do!

BEN

Cool. The first one takes 8 fire and the second one takes 5 fire.

ALEX

These are the zombies in the corridor yeah?

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

The first one just explodes. The second one immediately is prone. Not dead but [groaning noise]

BEN

Sorry, sorry that was really stupid. Let's go

(laughing)

ALEX

The zombies take some attacks. They miss. Ooh one hits. They miss. And they miss. The one hit does a formidable 5 damage to Grizzop.

BEN

Ok 5 damage sure. I can take that.

ALEX

It's just a [roaring noise] slam. Right I am going to jump back to Bertie now. Please give your attempt.

JAMES

Well you know this might seem like a difficult situation but I've worked my way out of more difficult situations than this before. Now...

ALEX

Kafka's not listening and he's turning the pages in the book but carry on.

JAMES

Now I've not got much for your sort with your book learning.

ALEX

You talk too much. He casts a spell. Give me a will save.

JAMES

12

ALEX

You immediately begin suffocating.

JAMES

[struggling to breathe noise]

ALEX

Give me a fort save.

JAMES

That is 17.

ALEX

You are suffocating as it stands. All you need to do is just nod your head and this can all come off you and go onto her. In front of this audience right now. In front of all these special people. Because you do talk far, far too much. With that I am going to smash cut. Presumably Grizzop and Sasha, you are probably going to leave that situation I'm guessing or are you just charging the light brigading it.

LYDIA

I'm going to throw a tanglefoot bag over my shoulder to try and slow them...I'm guessing...

BRYN

They're already slow but...

ALEX

That's a good idea. Good idea.

LYDIA

Ok that...the problem is I've stacked all my dice so I can't ever find them. Oh. That's 6 but I'll assume that I'll get the same attack bonus.

ALEX

You do. You do.

LYDIA

So 7. So that's 13.

ALEX

13. Zombies aren't known for their reflex saves. Some of them make it. However only a few before one of them is stupid enough to literally walk straight into it and go [groaning noise] and then the other ones with the pressure go [groaning noise] and then the whole lot descends into a pile. But there are still a few who are...

LYDIA

I mean the hope is to bung up the corridor.

ALEX

They look quite bunged.

LYDIA

Zombies like a champagne cork.

BEN

But that implies they're going to explode!

JAMES

Only on a special occasion!

(laughing)

Like a wedding or a christening.

LYDIA

Or an opera!

JAMES

Or an opera!

ALEX

Meanwhile Grizzop. What are you up to?

BEN

I am just running and like covering us. So I've got an arrow knocked and ready.
I am going to turn off the divine bomb.

ALEX

Sure. So again accelerating time and skipping things and bringing everything back into sync because it's been a bit warped. We are smash cutting to you bursting into the auditorium. Yes Sasha's efforts did slow them down. Yes you taking the four runners with your bow did manage to buy you some time but nonetheless fairly hot on your heels are a bunch of zombies. You burst into the

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auditorium. Instinct makes you slam the door shut. Both of you give me a perception check.

BEN

Oh nat 20.

LYDIA

7 but with my pathetic bonus of 10. That's 17.

ALEX

Woah! Right so I'll go for the 17 first. Kafka's floating. He's got no leg. Bertie's floating. Sort of upside down but at a very unglamorous angle. And he's silent and still for once.

LYDIA

Something is very wrong.

ALEX

There is that soprano that Hamid kept going on and on about, is also floating up there beside them and Kafka's floating over all of this and the entire room is full of people who are being completely silent. Sasha you feel this distinct feeling of something trying to place its affect upon you. Give me a will save.

LYDIA

6 + 3. 9.

ALEX

9. Kafka looks amazing. He just looks brilliant. Not like the kind of person that you would obey orders from or anything like that but yeah, he's just...he's just awesome.

LYDIA

You know how she gets about people jumping. This guy is flying. Oh look there's a book. He's a thinker too. Oh my.

ALEX

Grizzop can you give me a will save

JAMES

Just frames...

LYDIA

Just thick, black frames. Half-moons peering over them.

BEN

8 + 6. That's 14.

ALEX

Do you get any bonuses for a fear effect?

BEN

No

ALEX

You are yourself is overwhelmed with the same kind of thing that affected Bertie. That moment of ooh. You do notice with the perception though that clearly Bertie's in some kind of trouble and you see that the entire room appear to be under the same kind of thing that is affecting you.

BRYN

With a natural 20 he probably spots from the side of the stage the bracelets Hamid normally wears.

ALEX

What I was going to say is that you do see basically the remnants of what used to be Hamid as far as you can tell, up in the wings.

BRYN

Things aren't good!

ALEX

Bertie. Tick, tock, tick, tock. I am going to have to be blunt with you. You are quite literally one round from being unconscious and another round from being dead.

JAMES

[gasps]

LYDIA

Are you using the chatty sword or the non chatty sword?

JAMES

I'm using the chatty sword. Can Bertie speak?

ALEX

You can only gasp but you can nod your head as he asked so you're still held person and for the sake of all of you keeping track of time, yeah Kafka might've cast hold person again. He's powerful enough to do that. It's no biggie. But nonetheless you are currently held up to your neck and you are [gasping]. You can't breathe. You can move your head. That's it.

JAMES

Ok if Bertie gives up Hamid's sister then he's dead anyway but dead in an eternal horrible way but if he stays here being choked he also dies but dies in a less awful way because he's a hero so he just has normal death. But that involves a supreme sacrifice.

BRYN

And Hamid is going to be super, you know...want to resurrect you.

JAMES

That's true.

ALEX

Yeah that is fair.

JAMES

That is true.

ALEX

This is a so much thinking racing through your mind in these six seconds.

JAMES

So Bertie's...Bertie looks to the sword for guidance. Like looks to the sword really intently of like tell me what to do but in his brain.

ALEX

The sword. I'm really sorry but, well, it's been fun?

JAMES

Bertie looks daggers at the sword

(laughing)

BEN

The sword goes, my babies!

LYDIA

The sword is not intimidated.

JAMES

Er yeah, that's his action at this point. He stares at the sword. He's too busy being cross at the sword to think about anything else at this point.

ALEX

Ok I am obviously now putting you all back into initiative order for the simple reason that I've managed to reconvene the party...most of them, the ones that aren't...I'm not even going to engage...

LYDIA

Spherule baby dragons.

ALEX

I'm not even going to engage with that right now. So with that in mind actually Grizzop you are up first. I'm going to keep the initiative order from last time.

BEN

Sure is there anything I can do against...

Rusty Quill Gaming – 78 – Stage Fright

ALEX

You can give me another will save.

BEN

That's a 19.

ALEX

You shake it off.

BEN

Do I get an action?

ALEX

You can have one action because I've had you do two will saves on the fly.

BEN

Sure, yeah I'm going to pop two shots off at the book.

ALEX

Ok

BEN

Because I can do that as one action.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

BEN

Right yeah so it's a cool shot on the book.

ALEX

Go for it.

BEN

Am I withing 30 foot of him?

ALEX

Yes

BEN

Ok so, one's a 15 and the other's a 22.

ALEX

The...ooh. Ooh. I'm going to give him a reflex save. That he did really badly on. They both bury into the book. Roll damage for the book.

BEN

Ok, unfortunately I...

BRYN

They're no longer flaming! Noooo!

BEN

Unless it's a bonus action I don't know how this works, I'm just going to ignore it. That's 1..2 damage sorry and 5 damage on the book.

ALEX

So the first arrow clips the binding of the book and distinctly tears it. The second one buries itself into the cover and clearly is starting to affect some of the pages. There is a weird, peculiar moment of you can feel everything suck inwards a bit and that power that was holding you frozen, gives a [thudding noise] and the whole room, everyone in this sort of wave leans in towards it and then back out again.

JAMES

Mexican wave! Wooo

ALEX

The most terrifying Mexican wave possible.

JAMES

Mexican waving not drowning! Carry on.

BEN

I'm just going to shout get the book. It's...

ALEX

Sasha, you're up.

LYDIA

Well I can run that far and probably jump that high. I think.

JAMES

Five metres.

LYDIA

Is it five metres up?

JAMES

Oh no 15 feet.

ALEX

15 feet vertically in the air. You ain't jumping 15 feet.

LYDIA

Fine!

BRYN

I'm sure there's some props or something you could jump off of.

LYDIA

So I can...

ALEX

What you could do...I mean you could be really, really cool, run up to where the rope is that holds the curtains, slash it and [sliding noise]

LYDIA

I think I'm going to do that.

(laughing)

BRYN

Just do the reverse of what Hamid did earlier.

ALEX

Yeah but you don't know so it's original and fresh.

LYDIA

Yes! I'm going to run up to the thing where there's the weighted cord...

ALEX

I am going to get you to roll, a weird one but bear with me. Roll disable device.

LYDIA

Sure. I'm very happy to do that. That's 20.

JAMES

Natural 20.

LYDIA

A nat 20 plus 12. We're on 32 right now.

ALEX

So you rush over to the mechanism that controls the curtains and so on and just as you're about to slash the one that pulls you up, you see another one and you get a little bit of a gleam in your eye. You slash both, the first one pulls you up and propels you into the air. We'll engage with that in a moment. The other one knocks a piece of the scenery plummeting downwards, hurtling downwards towards basically Kafka specifically because you managed to quickly go that goes there, that goes there, ok great. You are currently at the end of your turn in mid-air.

LYDIA

It's where she's happiest.

(laughing)

I don't think there's much dagger...are we done for daggers? That was quite a lot of running.

ALEX

You are mid-air, yeah.

BEN

Given that are you now developing a crush on yourself?

LYDIA

I am amazing!

JAMES

Sasha takes a few rounds just for a private moment!

ALEX

The zombies that were chasing behind you burst through the door behind Grizzop but don't attack him because they're zombies and zombies are so slow!

LYDIA

The nice thing is we're not...well we are doing this but if you can shoot them I can run there. My move speed is...

ALEX

I'm going to make this cannon, if we ever reach the point where Grizzop can fire arrows quick enough for Sasha to jump from one to the other to get places I'm calling it. We're done. Bertie. Give me a fort save.

JAMES

13.

ALEX

I...in my infinite kindness am going to give you one last chance. You will be unconscious either way. Are you going to nod and pass the buck or are you going to go unconscious? But genuinely you are unconscious at the end of this either way but the thing will stop if you just nod and pass the buck. Just let someone else take it. Just let someone handle it. The thing is I mean dead is dead but a poo dimension you might even be able to get out. You don't know. You can probably mess around with those contract people.

LYDIA

What's so bad about...

ALEX

I mean you can't blag being dead but you can blag a contract. I mean hmmm.

JAMES

Sir Bertrand Macguffingham.

ALEX

I mean Sir Bertrand Macguffingham.

JAMES

Bertie hears all of these voices...

BEN

Maybe the narrative focus will shift to his adventures in the poo dimension

(laughing)

ALEX

Yeah does the story end or does it just change? This is genuine you are unconscious either way. You just get to make this decision.

LYDIA

You can sell that!

JAMES

The thing is that Bertie is ultimately a terrible person and he won't have clocked the whole, well ok but then there'll be gratitude and so people will try and revive him blah, blah, blah thing. So while choking, he's put under this much stress he nods.

EVERYONE

[gasps]

JAMES

The clues have been there for over 70 episodes! What is wrong with your people!

LYDIA

It's like that thing where statistically if someone is mean and angry in office people tend to overestimate how skilled they are at their jobs. People assume everyone else is putting up with it for a reason. There's an actual...

ALEX

There's that awkward moment in the debrief after all of this where we go is it me or is Bertie actually just rubbish.

JAMES

He's only good at fighting sometimes!

LYDIA

Very good at attracting...

ALEX

Bertie nods visibly. Sasha and Grizzop obviously you're quite occupied, both give me perception checks. The whole audience, they saw.

BEN

ALEX

10

LYDIA

16

ALEX

16. Grizzop you're too busy. You didn't see it. Sasha mid air flying to the rescue, you see Bertie nod and you gained enough. Like he has had an artificially enhanced voice and so on. You've gained enough of a sense of what's going on here. Bertie falls unconscious. However the last thing that Bertie hears is from Kafka. Hmm. No.

BRYN

Oh!!

ALEX

And then! And then!

BRYN

You got out evilled in your evilness!

JAMES

I'm just playing the character authentically!

ALEX

Yes you were. Bertie falls unconscious. Hamid, again I apologise Bryn that you've been basically absolutely nerfed in this episode but Kafka's evil.

BRYN

Cut to Hamid. He has found a buttress on the roof and has curled up under a small overhang. There's gentle rain.

LYDIA

Aw! Is the setting sun lighting up his flaming scales?

ALEX

Could ego death Hamid please roll me a perception check

BRYN

Oh perception hasn't changed. 26.

ALEX

Yeah. 26. We'll never know what dragon-y Hamid makes of it but the skyline of the entirety of Prague is beginning to shift and warp as all of the clouds of the overcast city have begun to spiral around this one building.

BEN

No the giant blue laser!

ALEX

I know, right!

BEN

No the giant blue sky laser, no!

ALEX

Meanwhile there are sprouts of undead throughout the city that are starting to come up from sewers and all over the place. They seem to be everywhere. Of course to Hamid in this state it's all just noise and it's a bit cold.

BRYN

I hope they're a bit wonky because it's unbalanced.

BEN

They'll get up and be like woah!

ALEX

They all have this weird compulsion to turn only left.

BRYN

Can only turn left. It's a real thing!

ALEX

So Kafka obviously having dealt with you, turns to the woman, looks at her and he just gestures dismissively. She flies off into the wings at immense speed. Give me a perception check.

BEN

11

LYDIA

26

ALEX

Grizzop, she's flown off enough to get hurt wherever she's been thorn. Sasha you definitely clock the sound, again you're still in mid-air, all pistons are firing but you hear the distinct sound of someone smashing into stuff in the wings.

BRYN

Probably a drum kit...probably really dramatic sounding.

ALEX

Bum-tsh but in a bad way. Kafka meanwhile...

BRYN

Cymbal-ism

(slow clapping and groans)

ALEX

Wow!

BRYN

That's right I'm curled up on a rooftop without an ego mind and can still contribute.

ALEX

Wow!

LYDIA

That was such a *bass* note

(laughing)

ALEX

Don't try and draw up any more. We're done. So anyway back on to the whole tension and thing. Having used his main action, Kafka goes further up in the auditorium, he's now about 30 feet up at this point. He's approaching up towards the top quarter of the stage really. He casts a glance Grizzop's way and then turns back to the book, pulls out the arrows and quickly starts turning a page. Grizzop you're up.

BEN

Right so I'm going to reactivate my divine bombs.

ALEX

Probably a good idea.

BEN

And mutter can't get away from me that easily and fire two at the book again.

ALEX

Go for it. Roll well.

BEN

I kinda did. 21 and 19.

ALEX

21 and 19. They both hit.

BEN

Ok so that means that I get to do...so that's...is he within 30 foot still?

ALEX

No.

BEN

Ok so that's 8 fire damage and 5 fire damage on the book.

LYDIA

Holy fire damage!

ALEX

Ok.

BEN

It depends if Artemis is really annoyed at him!

ALEX

So the two arrows streak. They are both flaming again. The first one clips the binding because it's where the other was shot but literally tears the entire binding off and flames basically start licking at the edges of the paper and the book starts coming apart in his hands. Kafka is like no! No! The second one ploughs into it, clips his hand and he lets go and all of the sheathes start drifting apart and falling as separate pieces of paper. No! Sasha you're up. You're in mid-air.

LYDIA

Yeah I'm in mid air but he's about 20 foot away isn't he. Can I somersault through the air and jump on him.

ALEX

I am going to allow a really high DC acrobatics to check to land on him. How that happens is up to you but I need a high acrobatics roll.

LYDIA

Well Sasha is going to...she's swinging, she's been trying to build up momentum on this thing since Kafka moved. It's been swinging back and forth and let's see how that goes. Oh. Oh no that's a 7 not a 1 so +12. 19.

ALEX

19. So you roll...you fly through the air. You've missed him. You've missed him and then at the last second you reach out and manage to grab the exposed bone from his severed leg.

EVERYONE

[groans]

LYDIA

Urgh slimy!

BRYN

You can't hang on long, it's covered in blood.

ALEX

That is your turn just to get onto him. He's now started...there's horrible sounds, he is now starting to drift downwards going no! No! I'm going to drop out of combat time with one last fact. So, Bertie. You were unconscious. Bertie you are now dying. You are not dead but you are dying.

JAMES

I'm dying.

ALEX

You know what you're right. I don't know why I'm...

JAMES

Bertie's pretty blasé about it to be honest.

ALEX

I'm so obsessing. I mean you're completely out of it at this point. So I'm just going to skip straight to Kafka. Kafka, he may not have noticed his leg has been cut off but he does notice that there's someone hanging down there beneath him however he is doing nothing. He is paying no attention to you. He knows that you're there. He's just desperately trying...he's faffing left at one moment, faffing right at the right. He's trying to catch these sheathes of paper that are just drifting further and further apart and give me a perception check.

LYDIA

19 + 10.

ALEX

So...

BRYN

She can read the individual pages as they burn up.

ALEX

You can see physical lines of force connecting these pages that are running into him and they're all just starting to go haywire and firing off into random parts of it. It's only because you're up close you can see them. They'd be invisible to the normal eye but this close you can see that there's something going on. You haven't got the knowledge to know what's going on but it's probably not good. As he's reaching out to grab them and reaching out to grab them, he grabs one and then suddenly the entire room does that suck in again. And then all of the people in the auditorium start beginning to move, just a little bit. They clearly haven't realised that they're back in control yet. No one's screaming but there's that little bit of movement and the zombies that were literally upon Grizzop stand there. They're not attacking but they're not really doing anything.

LYDIA

Does he look hot to Sasha?

ALEX

He looks less hot. In fact, you know what? He's minging. Props minging.

LYDIA

And I'm holding his bloody bone. It's gross.

ALEX

He must...it's all the theatrical lights. It's all that make up. The second you get up close it's always the same. Anyway...

LYDIA

Never meet your heroes or your arch nemesis.

ALEX

Anyway. So, I am dropping you out of combat entirely at this point. So as Kafka reaches out he grabs the next one, the zombies give a shudder and then start collapsing and falling apart upon themselves. One scream starts in the audience, then another and another and they all start moving and Grizzop you're basically knocked to your feet by what is probably a panicked riot as people are trying to flee. And Sasha, suddenly that suction force becomes incredibly strong. Give me a reflex save.

LYDIA

6 + 8. 14

ALEX

14. So as you and Kafka suddenly begin plummeting towards the ground you can see the papers suddenly sort of slide back towards him and plaster him as if he's caught in a high wind except they don't just plaster against him, it's like they're crushing him. It's like they're incredibly heavy and they just start crushing inwards on him. Unfortunately more than one keeps catching your

hand. You take...you take 12 damage all to the hand as they're just crushing inwards. At the last second you manage to let go having taken all that damage.

LYDIA

I mean can I die of injured hand?

BRYN

No.

ALEX

And you drop onto the stage. The remaining drop that was left isn't enough to deal you any further damage. However you just hear that [groaning/roaring noise] and then just disappears and all that's left are these pieces of paper that suddenly drift towards the ground. And with that Bertie....dies.

(gasps)

LYDIA

What! Does he fall on his head?

ALEX

At the very last moment, the last ebbs of Bertie's life ebb away and just as the suffocation affect ends, Bertie's already dead.

JAMES

Bertie's final thought is this is worse than Rag Week.

(laughing)

BEN

Definitely got to end the episode there I think!

ALEX

Yeah! Yeah! So bye guys.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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