

RQG – [80] – [What Now]

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 80 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

BEN

Ben Meredith

ALEX

And the cavernous echoing absence.

LYDIA

It's so quiet!

BEN

Yeah, it's quite quiet.

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BRYN

It's really nice!

LYDIA

It's so much less smelly!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I mean he can still like hear that... it's like just...

BEN

He's not gonna listen to this!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

He's not gonna listen mate – he has no interest!

BEN

He's like I'm not in it, no I don't think so!

LYDIA

I don't think he listened to it when he was in it.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Oh I think he listened to the highlights – he’s got children and commitments now.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

So anyway, as a very, very quick recap – yeah, James’ character is a little bit dead.

LYDIA

I really miss him.

BRYN

Don’t miss Bertie – do you miss James?

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

I do miss James.

ALEX

So, the most recent events – condensed – you all managed to defeat the evil necromancer Kafka in the opera at the centre of Prague, admittedly losing Bertie in a fairly ignominious way and ...

LYDIA

Oh!

ALEX

And

BRYN

Long (very long) scream!

BEN

Never do that again!

ALEX

That was awful.

BEN

That was horrifying.

LYDIA

That's clipped!

ALEX

That's clipped the whole way, that's the whole...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

And along the way of course Hamid got converted into basically a beast.

BRYN

Oh yeah, I forgot about that bit.

ALEX

And got returned. That happened.

LYDIA

Have we changed him back yet?

BEN

Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

Yes, I mean of course don't forget as well that Sasha is now being healed by negative energy instead of harmed. That's a thing that's happened.

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BRYN

We've both got exciting health conditions to deal with!

BEN

I made tea!

ALEX

I believe that the very last thing that happened was Bertie's magical Will was read and Brutor was named the heir to the MacGuffingham Estate.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Unclear 2:31 of the sword of Sir Everard MacGuffingham and basically is Sir Brutor MacGuffinham to all intents and purposes. So...

BEN

I think you mean intents and "pup-orses"!

ALEX

Very nice! Very nice.

BEN

I'm trying to fill in!

LYDIA

Oh you are, you are!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

There's no space to relax now and there's no like if a pun, you know, it used to be if there was a pun there James would find it. Now we have hunt inside ourselves.

ALEX

Oh!

BRYN

I like it.

ALEX

This isn't a hole that needs filling – this is just a thing that we can now leave by the wayside and move on in to grand vistas or stories.

LYDIA

Live to heir out!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Luckily there is a definitely a Pomel-ranian pommel pun somewhere but I just can't be bothered to find it.

ALEX

A “pommel-ranian”.

BEN

Pommel-ranian yeah.

ALEX

Yeah, that'd work.

LYDIA

Heir – wire-heired terrier!

ALEX

Anyhow...

LYDIA

Dalmatian!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Red setter – I don't know! I'm just putting dog names out and you can infer the incredibly clever joke.

BRYN

Pug.

LYDIA

You listener, cos I believe in you!

ALEX

So we're gonna pick up ...

BEN

This is like a junior adventure game but with puns!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

We're very sorry!

ALEX

We're gonna pick up where we left off.

BYRN

Screaming!

BEN

Oh no I told you to never do that again!

ALEX

So as it stands, currently in the room with you is of course Marie Curie, Sigmund Freud, Einstein's rocking around and they are currently just giving you a little bit of space.

BRYN

Oh Hamid's on a ball in the floor.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

You know what I mean.

LYDIA

In a ball on the floor!

BEN

This grieving process is pretty extreme!

BRYN

In a ball on the floor making the noise that I've been ordered not to make!

LYDIA

Hamid, like I'm ... sorry mate. I mean... she went doing what she loved right, being in opera and then thrown across a room. Sorry mate. Oh gosh.

BEN

Look, okay, okay.

LYDIA

Does anyone know what to do with a crying person?

BRYN

The screaming sort of starts to turn into whimpering as he has to pause for breath occasionally.

BEN

Yes, so look – and I'm gonna walk up to Hamid and sit down next to him – look, I know I haven't known you for that long, um, but generally death isn't the end okay. So your sister, she's gone somewhere else but she's not gone right.

BRYN

Sobbing

BEN

And obviously yes, no, it's horrible and she died in really you know tragic circumstances, but ...

BRYN

She's... you say... she's, she's in the afterlife?

BEN

Yeah, yeah. She is – like who, what, what did she worship?

BRYN

My family's never...been... very religious. (sobbing)

BEN

No, no sure but like you know, there are other you know, law, justice, artistic integrity – anything like that because ...

BRYN

Sobbing I mean she loved...music above...everything else really.

BEN

Okay, right, so you know, there is a God of music and art and do you think she was a good person?

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BRYN

Sobbing Yes.. she was...*sobbing*.

BEN

She will be... she has gone to that heaven okay.

BRYN

Sobbing

LYDIA

Hamid – ah... pats on shoulder awkwardly.

ALEX

There's a very, very tentative knock at the door.

BEN

Ignore that.

LYDIA

Gonna desperately go to – that sounds like a distraction right!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I'll get that! Look, yeah, oh God strangers, all right.

(Group laughter)

BEN

It's a rock and a hard place!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Hello door.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Do you open the door?

LYDIA

Yes.

ALEX

Okay. As you open the door, stood in the doorway is an extremely tatty and panicked looking young man that you remember is the one who was called Gideon – he was here, he was the assistant to Einstein, he was helping Einstein back up at the tower.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BEN

Alex you're a monster!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Oh, um right.

ALEX

I'm really sorry – I've, I've got to deliver a message, I'm really sorry.

LYDIA

Magic, okay, what's the message?

ALEX

Well I, I...

LYDIA

Who's it for?

ALEX

He's kind of waving to Curie and kind of mouthing and ...

LYDIA

All right, well there they are.

ALEX

He has totally not noticed Hamid in a ball on the other side of the Dean's table.

LYDIA

Okay, I mean I can take the message for you. It's all right.

ALEX

Okay – Curie is just stood there kind of unconcernedly going, yeah – giving a sort of wave of the hand – go nuts, whatever. Gideon is... well um, it's... they're, they're locking down the university ... the Cult of Mars and, and, and the uh, the, the Meritocrat forces are...

LYDIA

All right – maybe you should give the message.

ALEX

Ah, okay, mmm....

LYDIA

Cos I can't hear a word you're saying over the muttering.

ALEX

Yeah, no sure um...

LYDIA

Elocution!

ALEX

Mmm-mmm.

LYDIA

El-o-cution!

ALEX

Yes, right.

He heads into the room towards Curie and has still not actually pegged Hamid on the far side of the table.

BRYN

Hamid pulls himself just about together enough to stand up and he gives Grizzop a huge hug and kind of sobs into his shoulder a bit.

BEN

I hug back and I'm gonna say, yeah, so – look, death is hard, and it's painful. And I'm not gonna pretend it's not a horrible thing...

ALEX

There's a squeak from Gideon. It's a (*imitates squeaking sound*)

BEN

But it happens and you've gotta move on with it, you know, with your lives. You can't let it shut you down. You've got to keep you know ... she was going after her dream and or what she wanted to do and you need to keep doing that, for, you know, for her sake.

ALEX

Curie pipes up – I'm genuinely sorry that this has to happen right now but we need to make some very quick plans. As it stands the Meritocratic forces are locking down the university because as far as I am aware – is this correct Gideon? Gideon's sort of now blanking her and staring just wide-eyed at Hamid with no kind of ...

BRYN

Hamid hasn't looked in his direction yet.

ALEX

Curie continues – it would seem that the city are less than impressed with the fact that an age has ...

LYDIA

I wonder why that is yeah.

ALEX

Insert a fear effect upon apparently the entire city as opposed to the opera as we presumed. There is not a lot of time.

BEN

Okay.

LYDIA

Is that our problem now? I mean we did what you wanted.

ALEX

Have any you dealt with the Cult of Mars before?

LYDIA

No.

ALEX

Actually give me a knowledge religion Grizzop.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

You are gonna get a circumstance bonus for the simple reason that you know a bit anyway.

BEN

Okay so that is a 16 plus the circumstances.

ALEX

16 plus your circumstance bonus, okay. The Cult of Mars are generally considered bad news – not bad people, but bad for everyone around them – their main mission is effectively establishing a perimeter around what used to be sort of the Mediterranean and Rome and all of the nastiness that is there. They have one sworn mission which is anything that is in there does not leave and anything that's undead and out there is quelled, however, unlike the Artemis lot where they kind of balance that with you know maybe helping the community a little bit, you know, occasionally making sure there's some kind of bad ... no, no, the Mars people have a very specific task – they are sort of hyper militaristic.

LYDIA

So they don't like the undead.

ALEX

And they hate, like problematically so, they're kind of the trolley problem you know, if you could steer the trolley and it would hit one zombie but would also hit 30 babies, yes, they'd try – yeah, no hit that zombie – they're kind of a little bit ...

LYDIA

Sasha doesn't know this.

ALEX

You have no knowledge of this.

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

Grizzop you do.

BEN

Cos Artemis also hates undead but

ALEX

A bit like...

BEN

Throw other people under the bus.

ALEX

Artemis is the kind of person who's like I don't really like undead and then like watches Mars go off on one and is like, mmm, yeah but there's limits, like you know reign it in, calm down and again Curie is sort of piping up – I believe that it probably will affect your... I would strongly suggest that you all make yourselves scare before you get caught into this situation.

BRYN

Hamid turns round, wipes off his eyes, looks round the room blearily and just suddenly, his face completely changes as he finally captures sight of Gideon – he goes, you!!!! What are you doing here?!?!?!?

ALEX

Gideon just freezes – he’s ashen and just freezes. There are the sounds of loud cries and sort of banging from within the building but outside of this room. Lots of like calls and cries and all that kind of thing.

LYDIA

I think we should...

BRYN

What’s going on?

LYDIA

I think we need to go. I think...

ALEX

Einstein and Freud are sort of sharing a look with Curie and they’re all just sort of giving one and other nods and are starting to make preparations.

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BRYN

What are you doing?!?

ALEX

Packing things up and things. It's time that we leave.

BRYN

Why???

ALEX

Because if the entirety of Prague has decided that the university is at fault, how do you think this going to go down?

BRYN

You know what – maybe you are!!!! You let one of your own try and enact one of the lost rituals of Rome for God sake!!!!

ALEX

At which point, everyone roll me initiative.

BEN

Ha-ha – 7.

ALEX

Big 7 from Grizzop there.

BEN

Yeah with my initiative bonus of 4.

ALEX

Wow!

BEN

It's a big one!

ALEX

Nice! How are we doing over there Sasha?

LYDIA

15.

ALEX

15.

BRYN

19.

ALEX

Ooh!! Okay in that case then, Hamid, the doors, the main doors that you came in and that Gideon has just come in burst open and stood in the doorway

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

are three full plate-wearing what are presumably Cult of Mars followers. Their armour is dull, it does not shine, it has a sort of dusty red finish to it but it looks more if anything like it's just covered in a red dust rather than you know, painted filigree. They have no markings.

LYDIA

Sort of like planet.

ALEX

You cannot see faces and each of them are wielding mahoosive weapons – they're the kind of people that Bertie would get along with you know – there's a great sword in there, there's a great axe, and ...

LYDIA

But would they get along cos if they're not shiny it's not his thing.

ALEX

Let's put it this way – unless...

LYDIA

He'd be disappointed in them.

ALEX

Unless their armour, you know is built to exaggerate, I feel like Bertie would be on board with these people.

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BEN

Well he's definitely Apollo, not us right.

ALEX

Oh yeah.

BEN

He's the Apollo.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

BEN

Shiny and big.

ALEX

Let's put it this way – do you like a bad boy cos if so, you're set with these armour plated.

BEN

Bertie might like them.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

But they are all stood in the doorway and basically the one in the front just yells “everybody hold” and the answer initiative.

BEN

Okay.

LYDIA

Hold what? Hold what? What?

ALEX

Hamid, you are up. The men look like they are ready for a fight – a big fighty fight!

BRYN

Hamid is completely out of spells and doesn't even know what side he wants to be on and I hold my action.

ALEX

Okay. One of the guards holds himself in the doorway and braces to stop anyone leaving. The other two immediately approach Curie and Freud – they make it up to them and then they are having a scuffle – they are attempting to grapple them or something similar. Sasha, you are up – the two that came in the room paid you, none of you any mind – the one who's in the doorway though is very much keeping an eye on everyone else.

LYDIA

Heads over to stand by Grizzop and Hamid and readies herself – doesn't get the daggers out but yeah, just readies.

ALEX

And Grizzop?

BEN

Yeah, so I'm gonna point to the symbol on my shield and go, "yeah you're right lads, ah, I'm an Artemis so bear with me".

ALEX

Again, you have gone largely ignored. It doesn't help that like it's very hard to make out facial expressions for someone who has a helm where there's only a tiny slit.

BEN

So this is mainly to the guy in the ...

ALEX

In the doorway.

BEN

In the doorway.

ALEX

Sure.

BEN

And I'm gonna start trying to walk past him and say, come on.

ALEX

He immediately bars your way.

BEN

Ey look! What's the problem here?

ALEX

That'll be your six seconds, okay. On to the, the members of faculty – all three of them act simultaneously at least like in you know, mechanically they act simultaneously. The first thing that you see is a “argh” and then Einstein teleports out of the room immediately. Freud manages before the person has approached him to begin casting some kind of spell – if you have knowledge arcana I'll let you figure out what he's doing.

BRYN

Yeah – oh, that's a bad roll – 12.

ALEX

Some kind of enchantment.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Specifically some kind of mind altering effect – you don't know more than that. He is backing away from the guard that is trying to grapple him and the guard does not look like they are falling for it. It's very much, you know, no, points at the guard, who then just kind of approaches and looks ready to just clock him in the jaw. Curie meanwhile goes very, very still – everyone give me a perception check.

BEN

Oh for goodness sake!

LYDIA

I got a 1! Critical fail!

ALEX

Critical fail.

BRYN

20.

ALEX

20.

BRYN

That's not natural.

ALEX

Yeah.

BEN

12.

ALEX

12. Okay.

Sasha – Curie and Freud disappear – every single guard is on their back.

LYDIA

Whoa!

ALEX

Grizzop, you think you saw something move. Possibly but faster than you could have ever seen.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BEN

What do you mean, “something move”?

ALEX

A feint blur in the air as every single person is on their back.

BEN

Oh okay, sure.

ALEX

Hamid – give me a knowledge arcana to go with your perception check.

BRYN

30.

ALEX

What you just witnessed and you are certain of this....

BRYN

Yeah, with a roll of 30 I am!

ALEX

Is a maximised effectively time stop cast by Curie.

BRYN

Yeah – that’s what Bryn figured as well.

ALEX

So all of the guards are on their back, all of the faculty are gone, Gideon is exactly where you left and all of the guards’ weapons are in a neat pile on the table in the middle of the room.

BEN

Right.

LYDIA

Right we’re out guys – like drags them towards the... like over the guy that’s now on the floor, I’ve seen the guy on the floor.

ALEX

The guards are beginning to get up. The guy on the door was also on his back.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

And yeah, you could step over them – they are all getting to their feet but they’re going through that moment of “what just happened?”.

BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Pick up Hamid and step over the guard.

ALEX

Okay. I'm going to stick you in initiative order for now. Hamid, it's your turn – things are moving very quickly!

BRYN

Yeah – I can't think quick enough – Hamid does nothing.

ALEX

Okay, in which case then the guards, all of them, their move is getting to their feet and making ... the guy in the doorway manages to get to his feet and is sort of vaguely trying to block but he has no weapons so he's literally just casting his arms wide.

LYDIA

Unclear 17:06.

ALEX

Yeah, he looks like ...

LYDIA

Like a goalie!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You know what – there's a weird psychic interference moment where, yeah, that's the perfect reference and Sasha somehow knows that. Meanwhile the other guards are making their way to the middle of the table to get their weapons – they grab them and then turn outwards. All of their attention is now very much focused on you three remaining and Sasha, you are now up. There is a guard doing a poor job of defending a double doorway on his own.

LYDIA

Okay – I grab Hamid.

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

And try and acrobatic through that.

ALEX

It could work – give me the roll and then we'll see how it plays out.

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LYDIA

I mean yeah, I have a very high acrobatic...

ALEX

You might be taking a penalty by pulling a...

LYDIA

I'm assume I'm taking a penalty but I also have...

ALEX

You do have ridiculous acrobatics.

LYDIA

Okay, so that was 25.

ALEX

25. That was counter roll of a hot 3!

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

Hot 3 – so it's still fairly close – Hamid is giving you nothing – he is a sack of potatoes that you are pulling. Eventually you resort to – in fact, how do you

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manage to get past? The guard is just slow on the uptake – that's how you get past him.

LYDIA

I just grab him, like hands under the armpits and like leap forward and it's a double doorway.

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

So the guy is trying to... but she jumps up and basically bounces off...

ALEX

Ah!

LYDIA

... the doorway.

ALEX

You fake him out.

LYDIA

Like hinge and then like jumps past.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

ALEX

You make it past successfully. Grizzop.

LYDIA

Bouncing off the wall. Grizzop, come on!

ALEX

You are up.

BEN

Okay, I'm gonna try and use diplomacy to basically talk my way out of this as
unclear 18:45 Artemis.

ALEX

Okay.

BEN

So I roll a 14.

ALEX

I am afraid that the chances at passing are slim but I am giving you a fair try.
That's a no!

BEN

Okay – you’ve got to deal with those majors. Look, I’m with Artemis – you’re with Mars, we’re both on the same side all right so just let me get through – you can deal with this properly and you know, I’ll just be here, I’ll be completely out of your hair okay – and I’m just gonna try and walk forward.

ALEX

So, Hamid, you’re up.

BRYN

Look, we don’t need to do this – we’re not your enemies!

I kind of wiggle my way free of Sasha and just empty handed hands out and walk towards the other empty handed guy and goes, “we don’t need to fight each other!”

LYDIA

Come on Hamid!

ALEX

He never learns!

LYDIA

We’ve just managed to escape and these two talky McTalk faces with their talky faces.

BEN

I hadn't escaped.

LYDIA

And their faces are talking like that's ever wise.

ALEX

Grizzop, what is your combat manoeuvre defence Ben?

BEN

17.

ALEX

17 – the guard successfully grapples you. He reaches round – it's not an easy one cos you're very small and he's quite cumbersome – he resorts to just full on bearhugging you with his armour – whoomph – right round you and lifts you bodily from the floor.

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

Meanwhile, the other two guards having fetched their weapons from the table immediately set off pursuing Hamid and Sasha and with time like the way that

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

the distances work out, they are upon you but still not able to attack – there's too much distance for them.

BEN

Are they passing through...

ALEX

They are passing Grizzop who is currently grappled.

BRYN

They're running from the centre of the room to the doorway where we are.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

Sasha, you are up – Grizzop is grappled and you're now facing off against the one with a mahoosive axe – Hamid is vaguely facing off against the one with...

BRYN

I was trying to talk to the one who was grappling but yeah, now there's another one nearer, I guess I'm...

ALEX

By facing off – they’re facing off against you – you can face off against whoever you so choose.

LYDIA

What, trying your massively successful talky skills. Charming!

ALEX

Sasha, you’re up – what you doing?

LYDIA

Just run Hamid! And like throws him away and then gets her daggers and I suppose somersaults through one of their squares and stabs them in the back of the neck.

ALEX

Go for it – give me the acrobatics check using your ridiculously OP feet!

LYDIA

Yeah but I got a 4 plus 12, so 16.

BEN

As I see Sasha go to do this, I’m just gonna shout “Sasha, no!”.

ALEX

You succeed – they are very, very like armoured – not such much on the quick – not how they're rolling, so yeah.

LYDIA

So I'm basically standing on the guy's shoulders and stabbing him in the neck.

ALEX

I'll allow that.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

I'll allow that – you manage to acrobat yourself on top of their extremely broad shoulders and go stabby-stab.

LYDIA

D4 I think.

ALEX

But you'll get your sneak attack.

LYDIA

Oh right, oh okay, that's nice. Oh I've rolled at 2.

ALEX

A 2 – I have good news ...

BEN

Plus 8.

LYDIA

Oh plus 8 – 10.

ALEX

I have good news and bad news – there is satisfying resistance as you stab downwards on to solid plate metal – bing! It does not penetrate – their armour's good! Grizzop, you are currently grappled, you can make either yeah, an opposed check or tell me what you want to do and I can just make the maths happen.

BEN

Yeah, yeah sure – yeah, so I am going to try and – so with plate armour, there's a gap between the crotch and the leg.

ALEX

Yes.

BEN

Yeah, I'm gonna basically kick this guy in his hip joint and say Look you don't have to do this – stop being awful! And then make an escape.

ALEX

Meanwhile the soldier's yelling SILENCE MONSTER!

BEN

Start make an escape artist's check.

ALEX

Yeah.

BEN

18.

ALEX

18 – oh! Yeah, you succeed! Bang, ah, he drops you!

BEN

Come on Sasha, Hamid – and start running.

ALEX

Okay so Hamid, you're up.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BRYN

I'm making a diplomacy roll.

LYDIA

Oh my gosh!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Stop it! No!

BRYN

30.

ALEX

30?

BRYN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Still, still disagree with it as a decision! Both as a person and a character!

ALEX

Give me your absolute best and I will let you know whether you've succeeded once you've finished!

BRYN

We are the people who just took down the necromancers starting the ritual – we are not part of the university! We want to help you! Stop attacking us!

Hamid's quite highly strung at the moment!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The one who's facing off against Hamid does, as far as you can see, appear to hesitate. You have no idea whether anyone else is reacting but the one who was there sort of you know, winding up for a big, big, big hit – you know, arms right up behind the head, just kind of hesitates a little bit as unsure as a big plate metal person can look. Everyone kind of goes still and then the doors open at the opposite end of the corridor.

BRYN

What now?!?!

ALEX

And I'll take a break there.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

And welcome back. The doors have opened and there's a figure stood at the other end – they approach slowly.

LYDIA

It's Oscar Wilde, I swear to God!

ALEX

And ...

Unclear 24:10.

ALEX

They put their hands up – it's not Oscar Wilde! All of the guards however stand to and arrange themselves at the corridor and you see – again they're in full plate armour – they do not however appear to have quite the same hulking stature of the other people – they're a little bit more...

BEN

Are they wearing the same symbology?

ALEX

Yes, by which I mean no symbology apart from dusky red very serviceable armour.

BEN

Yeah, sure, whatever.

ALEX

They approach but they're a shorter person and their helm is up.

LYDIA

Mmm.

ALEX

You see a late middle-aged man is you know on the other side of the visor – he has greying hair, he has an incredibly severe expression and he approaches...

BEN

What historical figure will this be?!?! Place bets now!!!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

He places...

LYDIA

Caesar!

ALEX

You think Caesar! Okay, we have Caesar on the board, Caesar on the board!
Who else have we got on the board?!

BRYN

Abraham Lincoln.

ALEX

Abraham Lincoln!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

There's no America – some famous 19th century general – I don't know my history well enough.

LYDIA

It'll be Wellington. Wellington.

BRYN

Oh it could be Wellington – that's a good shout!

BEN

No but he's British.

ALEX

And so we have last but not least, what's your bets?

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BEN

I've got no idea.

ALEX

Okay.

LYDIA

Is it Napoleon?

BRYN

It could be Napoleon.

LYDIA

It could be.

BRYN

Could be Napoleon.

LYDIA

I think it's not quite important enough to be Napoleon.

ALEX

So, the figure approaches and ...

LYDIA

It would be really unoriginal of Alex for it to be Napoleon.

ALEX

And so the figure approaches.

BRYN

He did say he was quite sure.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Oh my goodness!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Napoleon says start!

ALEX

The guards beginning drawing their weapons and kill the entire party! I don't know how it happened but I don't regret it!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, the figure approaches and they are not Napoleon, by which I mean they are you know...

LYDIA

You've written it as Napoleon but now he's gotta to change.

ALEX

I'd be tempted to go with Napoleon cos he was actually not that short.

LYDIA

No.

ALEX

But no, it's no Napoleon – in fact none of you recognise the figure and they approach – they come close, and then they just stand reviewing you all for a moment.

LYDIA

3 stars!

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

LYDIA

It reads like a form!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Is this person a scotsman?

BEN

Thanks James!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The Cult of Mars would appreciate your cooperation as we take control of the university.

BEN

Yeah, right.

ALEX

I can guarantee no harm to yourselves if you will merely cooperate.

BEN

Fine! Could have opened with that!

LYDIA

Well what are we being asked to cooperate with?

BEN

And the Cult of Artemis will be hearing about this!

ALEX

Sasha says, from still atop the shoulders of the guard who's stood to...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

What we are cooperating with?

ALEX

Our investigations as to the events that have just transpired.

BEN

Well good news, we can tell everything that happened – we were there!!!

ALEX

Excellent. Is everyone okay with me doing a quick time jump to a new location?

BEN

Yeah fine.

LYDIA

I can't believe that you've let us get locked up in ...

ALEX

The guards escort all of you to what appear to be some kind of retro-fitted like seminar rooms or something similar.

LYDIA

Retro-fitted as prison cells?

ALEX

It's basically a small classroom where yeah, there's a table in the middle of the room and there's a chair on either side and each of you – no-one is hurting – like the Supervisor whoever it was is very clear.

LYDIA

My pride has been hurt!

ALEX

The guards have been kind of posturing but again, it doesn't seem to be carrying any water.

BEN

I'll keep reminding the one that I kicked whether his leg hurts or not!

ALEX

He's disciplined enough not to take it out on you but not enough to not show it.

BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Like we could have been miles away by now but you two with your talking ...

ALEX

So all of you...

BEN

Was that in character?

LYDIA

Yeah.

BRYN

What do you mean with my talking?

LYDIA

Well you just were trying to talk to them about getting out.

BRYN

Because I can't just barge past – have you seen me?!

LYDIA

You just get past even slowly.

BRYN

Not everyone's you, all right.

ALEX

Slam cut to you are all in separate rooms. Okay. You have all been put into these rooms – you're not tied down, you're not chained or anything – there is a guard outside the door.

LYDIA

Well that's fine then.

ALEX

And I will lead with Hamid – you find yourself sat opposite the gentleman who told everyone to back off basically. Hamid I believe, yes?

BRYN

Correct.

ALEX

I believe you were present at the opera, correct?

BRYN

Yes, I was.

ALEX

I believe – unless I am mistaken – that you were transformed into some kind of monster?

BRYN

The necromancer cast some sort of spell on me and it had... and ah, some sort of strange interaction but it wore off once he was dead.

ALEX

The Supervisor, let's call him, fails his sense motive fabulously.

A likely story.

BRYN

Excuse me, what do you mean a likely story?!

ALEX

I feel like you're under the impression that I'm going to be answering your questions – I'm not.

BRYN

Yeah but the least you could do is extend some professional courtesy and not make sarcastic comments when I'm telling you the truth.

ALEX

This isn't the first time that you've been associated with a potential set of murderers.

BRYN

No I've had to save the world twice, despite the fact that I'm the least qualified person there could be! If people like you did your job properly it wouldn't be necessary.

ALEX

So just to be perfectly candid, you were seen in the form of a monster in the company of a known necromancer with a history of shall we say violent tendencies.

BRYN

What the necromancer?!

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

ALEX

Yourself.

BRYN

Violent tendencies? Oh for God sake.

ALEX

And a known link to a currently missing member of the student body.

BRYN

What?

ALEX

So I repeat – what do you know? Why were you there?

BRYN

A currently missing member of the student body – who are you talking about?

ALEX

And how are you involved in the disappearance of Liliana Beekos?

BRYN

Disappearance? I didn't realise she was missing! She broke up with me six months ago. I haven't seen her since.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

ALEX

I'm gonna cut to ...

BRYN

What's that got to do with anything?!?!?

ALEX

Grizzop – you are currently being interviewed.

BEN

I am pacing unless I'm forced into the chair.

ALEX

Oh you're not forced into the chair but you are being interviewed by a huge woman, just massive and the second that she walked into the room she has shown you nothing but disgust.

So...creature?

BEN

Grizzop.

ALEX

I didn't know we were naming you now – so can you please explain to me what you can regarding the actions of your master, the necromancer Kafka at the opera.

BEN

Could I see your manager please?

ALEX

No.

BEN

I really have to complain about the customer service.

ALEX

I'm fairly certain that as a lesser minion you're not owed any rights.

BEN

I am a paladin of Artemis. Okay? So maybe you can go and get my superiors, and they can talk to your superiors, and you can get out of my face.

ALEX

She leans into your face.

BEN

I'm pacing so she's gonna have to twirl!

ALEX

She is doing so, she is attempting to get in your face, she's not very good.

BEN

I will start laughing at her.

You're trying to be intimidating to me! Are you supposed to be big and scary?

ALEX

She's not taking this very well!

BEN

Oh, no, me, just a lesser little creature!

ALEX

She physically picks up the entire heavily made desk.

BEN

Oh yeah, come on, bring it!

ALEX

Breaks it against a wall, but it's very clear that she has not laid a finger or touched you or put you in any actual harm.

BEN

Am I still supposed to be scared?

ALEX

Cut to Sasha – you are sat opposite a guard who is still wearing their full plate. From inside the armour a very measured tone – do you understand that you are likely to be killed soon. As an undead minion it is our responsibility and our oath to eliminate your kind. Do you have anything to say?

LYDIA

No she doesn't, no.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

That silence, just for the sake of listeners cos we don't have all day, stretches – like a long time.

LYDIA

You can keep asking questions.

ALEX

Cut back to Hamid with the Supervisor.

BRYN

Look do I know everything?! I'll tell you everything! I'll start the beginning.
So I got kicked down at Cambridge.

ALEX

Yes, you did.

BRYN

Great, you know about that, fantastic! It was awful, it was the worst moment of my life! I became a mercenary. Okay, I joined a mercenary company – we got a job, we got a job from the meritocrats, we're trying to help, we're trying to be on the right side of these things – we were sent to Paris, we investigated the situation in Paris – the situation in Paris was so completely screwed up beyond belief that nothing good could come of it and we made the best of it. Okay and you probably know what happened there so I won't go into more detail but oh my God it was ridiculous and yes, some bad stuff happened but we did the right thing. Then we came here and things went from bad to worse. We found out there was a rogue mage running around trying to enact the lost rituals of Rome! So we got involved. We tried to stop him. We ended up in the opera house where he was conducting his ritual. And I lost, not only my oldest friend, but also my sister! Trying to defeat him. And he is now dead! Thanks to me and my team. So why don't you show me some goddamn respect for once!

ALEX

This entire tirade happens and you are completely stone-walled. So to repeat the question – how are you linked to the disappearance of Liliana Beekos?

Skip to Grizzop.

The woman at this point is just yelling at you and it's all just idle threats – like whoever is interrogating you is just the worst – I am going to crush you! I'm gonna crush you.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

Into a ball and I'm gonna ram you up yourself.

BEN

What you are going to do with the ball? I'm gonna be rammed up myself?

ALEX

And then I'm gonna...

BEN

Okay – where are you gonna put the ball after that? Unclear 34:47.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

ALEX

I'll tell you what I'll do – I'll throw...

(Group laughter)

BEN

You're gonna invent a new game? You're gonna invent a new sport? Goblin ball are you? You're gonna invent a new sport?

ALEX

It just keeps going and going and she just bites just every time.

Cut to Sasha – after maybe ten minutes since we last saw you...

LYDIA

Is he still asking questions?

ALEX

The guard reaches up, adjusts their helmet and puts their hands back waiting for a response from you.

LYDIA

Her foot occasionally taps the floor.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, I am going to accelerate time a little bit – I believe that you can all see which direction all three of these conversations is going.

LYDIA

She yawns and stretches.

ALEX

Oh right, I'll take that down, sorry.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Can you give me a yawn and stretch check and I'll counter it with a sense notice.

BEN

You're not tired!

ALEX

You're not tired!!!

LYDIA

It's been a long day mate! But she doesn't say that!

ALEX

Of course, of course. Give em nothing! This can't be the first time that Sasha's been interrogated by someone.

LYDIA

I mean I don't think she's been caught by the police before. Oh maybe, maybe.

ALEX

Probably when other people dropped the ball.

LYDIA

Other people did yeah, but I'm just waiting for the ones that have been bought to turn up.

ALEX

So, I'm gonna accelerate the interrogation mainly with Hamid cos that's where there's some actual back and forth happening.

BRYN

I mean there's a lot of back and forth happening!

ALEX

Yeah, but you know what I mean!

So Hamid.

BRYN

Hamid collapses into the chair – he is utterly exhausted and you can see it on his face – he goes, it has been a long day. I know nothing about the disappearance of Liliana, I didn't know she was missing. We were in a relationship for quite a while – we broke up six months ago. I haven't seen her since then.

He starts crying again but in a much calmer way than he was crying a couple of hour ago.

ALEX

The supervisor gives Hamid some time to cry – takes a few notes then leaves the room.

All of your interrogators eventually leave the rooms – the one with Sasha gives what might have been actually an appreciative nod and then heads out, having not said anything beyond that first sentence. The one with Grizzop is eventually dragged literally foaming from the mouth by the guard who was outside.

BEN

Unclear 37:19.

ALEX

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

I'll get you!!!!

BEN

High score!!! High score!

ALEX

Just frothing at the mouth is physically dragged from the room. Eventually a lot of time passes.

LYDIA

Did they take my master work thieves' tools?

ALEX

You are all in the rooms with all of your equipment – your equipment wasn't taken.

LYDIA

Pick the fucking lock mate!

ALEX

Okay, give me a sense...

LYDIA

Well wait until night time.

ALEX

Okay, so after a decent length of time, it must be at this point what like three in the morning, something like that.

LYDIA

No, definitely pick the locks then.

ALEX

Give me a disable device check.

LYDIA

23.

ALEX

Give me a stealth check.

LYDIA

24.

ALEX

You successfully pick the lock.

LYDIA

Listen at the door.

ALEX

You hear the distinct sound of a set of keys being put into the lock and the door being relocked and then someone quietly through the door goes “stop it!”

(Group laughter)

BRYN

That’s such a good response!

LYDIA

Kick the door!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The door is now kicked. That’ll show him!

BEN

That’s like the prison guard, like the no-no cans!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I mean why do they leave a lock on that side?

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Who can you say? It's almost like they're just making use of rooms that are already there.

LYDIA

Yeah, foolish.

ALEX

So eventually, again at around about 4 in the morning, the doors are all opened by just generic guards in faceless armour – it be different people, it might be the same, you don't know – but they are all opened at the same time, you're all on the same corridor and you are all gestured out into the corridor simultaneously.

BEN

Finally! I've been waiting here for ages!

And like walk really quickly past the guard.

ALEX

Sure – they don't interfere.

BRYN

Hamid trudges – he looks dishevelled.

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

Sasha is completely silent.

ALEX

You make it to the end of the corridor – there's a figure at the end of the corridor.

BEN

Oscar Wilde!

Who's this?!?!

LYDIA

7, the number 7!

BEN

What's in the box?

LYDIA

It's a drawing from a patent! Figure 1!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It's an academic diagram! It's a pie chart – is that a pie chart? Is that a pie chart?

ALEX

It is not a pie chart!

LYDIA

Aw!

ALEX

There is however a very well dressed familiar looking individual at the end of the corridor.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Trouble does seem to follow you all around doesn't it.

BEN

Who are you?

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

ALEX

Oh you've got another one – hello!

BEN

Err, yeah, what?

BRYN

This the current employer of the London and Other London Outstanding Mercenary Group.

ALEX

You've got a new name!

BRYN

It's on the paperwork – did you not read your memo?

ALEX

I'm a very busy man! I like it though – it's punchy.

BEN

Who are you?

BRYN

Oscar Wilde – Grizzop.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BEN

Grizzop Drik Acht Amsterdam please.

BRYN

Hamid says it right.

ALEX

I know!

BRYN

Bryn says it wrong!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I know.

BYRN

It's important that Hamid says it right.

ALEX

Let's try that again!

BRYN

Oscar Wilde – Grizzop Drik Acht Amsterdam.

BEN

Yeah, that's it.

BRYN

Grizzop – Oscar.

BEN

Hello.

ALEX

You all right?

BEN

Yeah – well ... looking at the masked guards – sort of.

ALEX

Where's the big one?

BYRN

Come on you probably already know – he's dead – thanks!

ALEX

He gives a kind of shoulder shrug. Shall we go do this then?

BEN

What are we doing?

BRYN

Sorting it out I assume. Come on then.

ALEX

As always.

BRYN

The one thing you can do right is not condescend to us Oscar – we have done all the hard work – I've lost two of the most important people to me!!! And we had to save the world again while you were nowhere to be seen! So yes I appreciate your help, I appreciate you're here and I am grateful that you're about to help sort this out but you can leave out the condescension right now - thank you!!!

BEN

If you want a management course, the Temple of Artemis actually does quite a good one.

ALEX

I like the new one – he's funny.

Right, if you'll join me.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

He walks and then gestures to another seemingly empty room – there are no guards here – he’s walked you a decent enough distance that like the Mars madness seems to have been largely put aside.

LYDIA

I take it...

ALEX

He just finds an absent like empty looking office – it’s quite a nice office but it’s clear that it’s just taken his fancy so he’s gone in.

LYDIA

I take it that we’re not on the way to my execution.

BEN

What?!

ALEX

No, you would be amazed at how keen the Mars lot are to kill you.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

It is ...

BEN

Oh, yeah!

ALEX

It's just one of those things honestly. One track minds.

He sort of lounges on the desk – so, I probably should start that again – I do apologise that ...

LYDIA

Which bit do you apologise for Mr Wilde?

ALEX

The detention by people who weren't me – I could have probably taken a better tone – I think that's largely it.

LYDIA

Oh – the whole not telling us what was going on in Paris and then keeping on saying oh, I'll explain it when we get there and then putting us on a ship that you, you... how did you get out of Paris even? Then you turn up so late that it's not even helpful.

ALEX

Do you have any idea how hard it is getting from Paris to ... anyway... so it would seem you've got yourselves mixed up in something again. With the

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

exception of yourself Grizzop, have you considered mercenary work – it's very lucrative.

BEN

Yeah, they've already offered.

ALEX

Oh fantastic, that does make things easier.

BEN

Right.

ALEX

He's sassy! I like him.

BEN

Can you stop talking about me in the third person please?

LYDIA

He won't stop.

BEN

Right.

ALEX

So as it stands, what are you aware of the situation in Prague at the moment?

LYDIA

Like there's a bunch of people here that are angry we got rid of some zombies. Hamid is like in quite a bad way for good reason and we're down a tank. If you can find me someone to flank that'd be very useful.

ALEX

Things are fractionally more complicated than that Sasha, as is normally the case when we have these conversations. I'm afraid that it would appear that the entirety of Prague was subjected to what I believe were – he checks some paperwork – the fear effects from the necromancer known as Kafka. I'm also afraid that they haven't taken kindly to it and the meritocratic forces in conjunction with the Cult of Mars have taken matters into their own hands.

LYDIA

So what, we're in trouble...

BRYN

Did the rest of the council escape?

ALEX

Oh no, not at all...

BRYN

Or did you manage to catch them?

ALEX

Oh that one lands! Oh that one lands with Wilde – I'm not even gonna get a sense motive for that one – that one, that one hit!

The three surviving members of the university faculty are at large, shall we say, for now.

BEN

That's what happens when powerful wizards get out of hand.

ALEX

Yes it is, which is why the meritocratic forces and the Cult of Mars have stepped in to make sure that doesn't happen anymore.

Apologies by the way for the way that you were treated – I realise that the Cult of Mars are a little bit...

BEN

I mean it's classic them.

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

A bit killy.

ALEX

They – yes – that...

BEN

They're just idiots.

ALEX

And I mean it's not the word I'd have chosen but it has a certain ring to it – a bit "killy", yes, well nonetheless, it would seem that the situation is quite bad and what's more we do also – I don't know if you've been made aware Hamid – a previous contact of yours is a bit wrapped up in all of this as well.

BYRN

Sighs Who? How?

ALEX

So it would appear that um...Liliana, I don't know if I'm saying that right – I've only ever seen it written.

BRYN

Yes.

ALEX

May have been working with Kafka as part of her PhD.

BRYN

Work??? I mean studying under him maybe.

ALEX

As far as we're able to trace the timeline, a couple of weeks ago her and Kafka, who had been working rather extensively together on some kind of research project I'm not familiar with were seen and it's believed that they entered Newton's Study – Kafka returned, she did not – and Kafka's...

BRYN

Newton's Study?!? What's Newton got to do with any of this?

ALEX

I was hoping that you might know if I'm honest.

BRYN

Didn't Bertie say something about Newton's Study?

ALEX

Well..

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BEN

I dunno.

ALEX

All I can say is that we're, we're really trying to settle this situation because ...

BRYN

Did you say she didn't emerge again from Newton's Study?

ALEX

Yes, that's all I said.

BRYN

We'd better go there then.

BEN

Yeah.

BRYN

I mean not right now, dear God, not right now!!!

ALEX

Probably not, I believe we should probably continue to converse.

BRYN

Where is my sister's body? Is it ... I need to take it back to my parents.

ALEX

Her husband is currently in possession of the remains.

BRYN

Oh he's here? Oh good, I didn't know if he'd been travelling with her.

ALEX

He'd actually...

BRYN

I should probably see him.

ALEX

Yes, he'd actually come to see the opera, not this evening thank goodness but nonetheless, he is currently in communication with your family I believe. I don't know more than that. Not a lot of time's passed if I'm honest.

BRYN

No well... I mean hours at most.

ALEX

But unfortunately now is not the time for us to dwell because things are still afoot.

LYDIA

Another city to flee? Another world to save.

BEN

And I need to report back.

ALEX

Well, as it stands, the entirety of the city of Prague is very much of the opinion that Bolla Smok should most likely raise the university much the way that Eiffel's Folly was.

BRYN

That's ridiculous! You can't... the head of the organisation went back and should be removed and new leadership should be put in place but the...student body is not responsible for the mistakes of their superiors.

ALEX

I agree.

BRYN

You can't run a world like that.

ALEX

I agree.

BRYN

Clean house!

ALEX

I agree, which is why we're here – a part of this is putting all of this stuff to bed and as it stands, things are getting quite bad just all over and so...

BRYN

I imagine so.

LYDIA

So what do you want from us Oscar? Like we have had a very long day. There were ghosts...

BRYN

Zombies.

LYDIA

There were zombies – there were pits of zombies - there was fighting giant monsters in the pitch dark.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BRYN

A super powerful necromancer.

LYDIA

I can't see in the dark!

ALEX

Well done on that by the way – great job on that one.

LYDIA

Yeah! Right he was a monster for a while.

ALEX

Very impressed with that one.

LYDIA

I still am a monster apparently and everyone's been like those mean old Mars people calling Grizzop a monster – we, we...

ALEX

He's lovely – look at him!

LYDIA

We want to sleep! We want a nap! We want... we want... to know where to go next.

BEN

Yeah, could you get to the point.

ALEX

I'm fairly certain that the research that Liliانا and Kafka were working on is directly tied to the Simulacrum – I need you to fetch Liliانا.

BEN

The simulacrum? Oh you mentioned it.

BRYN

I did tell you.

BEN

Yes, sorry.

BRYN

That's what we've ...

LYDIA

Okay – how about we discuss all of this over ...

BRYN

Breakfast in the morning!

LYDIA

I was gonna say a whisky but yeah, that works too!

BEN

Breakfast whisky is fine.

LYDIA

Yeah!

ALEX

And I think I'll end the episode there.

As always, thanks for listening and I'm pretty certain things might improve eventually – like this is still the pulpy fun season! Pulpy fun season, guys!

BRYN

Yeah, I'm having so much fun!

LYDIA

Intrepid explorers!

Rusty Quill Gaming – [80] – [What Now]

BEN

I helped invent a new game, so!

LYDIA

I'm a zombie now!

BRYN

If you could just stop working up my character so much that I feel the intense need to swear, that'd be great? Can we just get down to that level?

LYDIA

Please don't get him to the point where he actually throws up in reality.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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