

RQG – 81 – Breakfast with Desert

Content Warnings

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BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of patrons. Joshua Wilson, Rhianna Noel, Cynthia Jay Stewart, Morgan, Julian Plumidore, Zenia McAllister, Chris Schnidmiller, Ryan Frasier, Dan Pratt, Shaun. 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]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 81 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

Rusty Quill Gaming – 81 – Breakfast with Desert

BEN

Ben Meredith

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam

ALEX

And the nightmare that is my campaign continues.

LYDIA

It would be a nightmare expect you don't let us sleep!

(laughing)

BEN

It's a horrifying waking dream.

Grinding half awake exhaustion. You're making us live through your night job!

ALEX

Look, I'm better for it and you will be too.

LYDIA

Yeah, we're going to become pale and eat only butter and salt.

ALEX

Speaking of which how's the undead thing going for you?

LYDIA

Loving that!

BEN

Greasy!

ALEX

So, yes, long story short, you're in Prague, you managed to defeat Kafka the evil necromancer. Meritocratic forces in league with the Cult of Mars are apparently...

BRYN

Not nice people.

ALEX

No they're not but they are sort of disbanding the university sort of. But after your conversation with Oscar Wilde you were allowed to head of and go to sleep.

BRYN

Yay!

ALEX

As long as you don't leave the university grounds but there are plenty of halls.
There are lots of empty rooms.

BEN

Let's go visit the Olivers and have a sleepover party. No?

BRYN

Hamid does not do that!

BEN

Alright fair enough.

LYDIA

It's going to be...try and sleep. Sasha tries to go out the window and find a high point to rest which is what she's done before but at the point where she realises opening the window, hanging up, is a mile above the surface...

ALEX

Hundreds and hundreds of feet.

LYDIA

And there's all these spinning things and the geography of where she was thinking of climbing seems to continue to shift.

ALEX

Well the awkward thing is you'll climb to the highest point you can and then somehow you're actually at quite a low point as it cycles through and ends up at the bottom of the university.

LYDIA

She peaks out of the window, takes it all in and back in and shuts the window.

ALEX

So yes, you're given free rein to choose where you want to sleep. There's plenty of places that people can point you to but you are explicitly sort of forbidden from leaving the grounds. Not by Wilde, the Mars people are a bit pushy still.

BEN

Well I'm going to raid the kitchen and taken it all back to room.

ALEX

It's easily done.

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BEN

Good.

ALEX

Everyone is...

BRYN

Hamid sleeps first. He'll eat later.

ALEX

You all sleep. Everybody give me will save.

BEN

Will save!

BEN

Oh no!

BRYN

Aren't you a Paladin?

BEN

Yeah I have a big modifier. I still rolled a 4. 10.

ALEX

10 from Grizzop.

BRYN

13

ALEX

13.

LYDIA

15

ALEX

15. All of you actually sleep ok.

LYDIA

Yay!

BRYN

Why would you try and disrupt the one thing!! The one thing!

ALEX

You sleep ok.

BRYN

Can't even give us that!

LYDIA

Do I need to give another one for whether I erupt in horrible zombie sores?

ALEX

You know what...

BEN

Those necromancers were rubbish!

ALEX

I'd complain that you're jumping the gun but actually I'm a little bit proud of you at seeing the plot pattern here. Eventually you're going to be the only party that has 40 saves at the start of the day before you can even get going.

LYDIA

We'll actually get to a point where we dread sleeping. It will be like my real life!

BEN

So I get out of bed!

ALEX

You wake up dead!

BEN

No. No I don't!

ALEX

So you can give me a save.

LYDIA

What kind of save do you want?

ALEX

That would be a fortitude save.

LYDIA

14

ALEX

14. Your wounds open a little bit but you've only taken maybe the equivalent of say D6 damage. So let's say, 1. You get 1 damage.

BEN

Oh yeah how much do we heal?

ALEX

You were all healed back to full by...

BRYN

Yeah we get super healed by...

ALEX

By all of the nice Paladins before the mean Paladins turned up.

BEN

Big, mean Paladins.

ALEX

Big, mean Paladins. But yeah you wake up and you've...in the time that you've had this condition you have woken up in a lot worse state than this. That's a perfectly manageable oh. It's a little bit of blood plus I slept funny. That's what you've got.

LYDIA

My bones ache.

ALEX

Eventually a fresh as a daisy looking Oscar Wilde rocks up and comes to your doors.

LYDIA

I know he's knackered and he's just prestidigitating. We all know that.

(laughing)

Probably underneath it all he looks like the portrait of Dorian Grey. Not Dorian Grey itself we're all aware.

(laughing)

ALEX

If you want to judge give me a sense motive.

LYDIA

No this is just something that Sasha assumes.

ALEX

You don't have to.

LYDIA

25.

ALEX

Bang on. There's not a chance that this guy went to sleep. He has been awake all night and you are very experienced in people who are pretending not to live

a double life and stuff like that. He looks fresh as a daisy but there's also make up under those eyes.

LYDIA

It shimmers. The glamour shimmers.

BRYN

Hamid finally looks put together properly but his colouring is a lot more sombre than it normally is.

ALEX

Lots of blacks and greys?

BRYN

Navies and very dark greens.

ALEX

Ok nice.

BRYN

He doesn't wear monochrome. Still colour just more sombre.

ALEX

It's more autumnal.

BRYN

Yeah. He prefers...normally prefers bright greens and purples but...

ALEX

We've got 20 minutes till the break so I can keep...we can keep leading into this a bit more.

LYDIA

He looks like a sad swamp!

(laughing)

Not a happy moonlit pool or a lovely shining lake in the mountains.

ALEX

So Grizzop what are you sporting this season?

BEN

So Grizzop is looking a lot more cheerful and is still wearing his breast plate and leather duster.

ALEX

Very in at the moment.

BEN

Yeah but they are shined and they are darned and they are patched and two shaken legs in each hand and he is happily...

LYDIA

The judges will be looking for uniqueness, nerve...

BEN

And this is why I want to be Miss Prague.

(laughing)

I want to save...

ALEX

In the voice

LYDIA

And talent.

ALEX

So yeah, Wilde invites you basically for some breakfast in what looks to be a hall canteen, there are actually students now milling around but there are Mars Paladins everywhere and lots of plain suited...

BRYN

Bring me all the bacon and eggs you have. No, no, wait come back. I think what you heard was bring me a lot of bacon and eggs. What I said was bring me *all* the bacon and eggs you have.

BEN

Ooh and 15 sausages.

ALEX

So you are all sat in a canteen with other students eating huge amounts of food. Oscar Wilde is sat there with a coffee, just a coffee, kind of lounging. How are we all feeling?

BEN

Do you want a sausage?

ALEX

I'm actually...oh I can never turn it down.

BEN

There you go.

ALEX

So...

LYDIA

Oh my god. Both in character!

ALEX

Yeah I know. I know. I told you I like this one he's alright.

BEN

Will you please stop talking about me like I'm not here.

LYDIA

He won't.

ALEX

But you are here. You're adorable.

BRYN

You will quickly find that the worse part about working with Oscar Wilde is just how annoying he is.

BEN

I'm going to lean into him and say, look mate.

ALEX

Yes

BEN

Don't muck me around. Don't talk to me like a child and don't you dare treat me like anything other than a Paladin of Artemis. Are we clear?

ALEX

I'm pretty certain this is how I treat all of the Paladins of Artemis.

LYDIA

Like the best thing about working with Oscar Wilde is...

BRYN

He's not there very much!

LYDIA

And he makes all of the violence, loss and trauma actually seem pretty mild in comparison.

BEN

I'm going to look and Wilde and go, I like these ones. They're funny.

BRYN

He does pay us quite well and we are doing good things.

ALEX

Oh that reminds me. He literally reaches under the table, picks out a nice, heavy looking and sounding bag.

LYDIA

Appraise check. Appraise check.

ALEX

Puts it in the middle of the table...

LYDIA

Appraise with ooh she only got a 2 but on top of that is an 8 so 10.

ALEX

10. Ok.

LYDIA

It's a lot of gold.

ALEX

You know that...

LYDIA

She can only get it to the first decimal point.

ALEX

Again he's playing in platinum rather than gold. You know that it's more than say about 6,000 but you would have to see it because there are some jewels in there and you know, breakfast, there's things going on and you can't make sure that other people can't see in the bag.

LYDIA

In this racket, she can't tell the sound of an emerald from a ruby within a sack of a dozen other kinds of...

ALEX

Yeah the exact figure is 6,500 but of course you'll find that out later. You've got a decent idea of what's in there. Consider that expenses. Of course factor in our good Paladin here.

BRYN

Yes we'll divide it three ways as standard operating procedure.

LYDIA

Do we owe any of it to Brutor since...

BRYN

No.

ALEX

Why would you owe anything to the dog?

BRYN

Brutor is officially Bertie's heir. There was a Will.

ALEX

Right.

LYDIA

Yeah so I just wonder if labour...is that...no...

ALEX

I mean if you...it's your money to...

LYDIA

No it's fine.

BRYN

His contract ceases on death and...

LYDIA

Oh ok alright. Brilliant.

BRYN

Brutor is still entitled to all the current property of the state but he doesn't accrue any more after the death.

ALEX

Wow ok!

LYDIA

That dog's got a lot of debt.

ALEX

Ooh I may have dodged a bolt there.

LYDIA

I don't think you were actually that close to being named as heir.

ALEX

You'd be surprised.

LYDIA

You'd be surprised!

ALEX

I'm pretty certain I...

BEN

So what's going on?

LYDIA

Right can we get out the place where everyone is looking at me through their massive metal faces like they want to kill me.

BRYN

We can't really talk about the mission in public.

ALEX

Of course. If you'll follow me. He wanders back to the office that originally he sort of lounged in. He seems to be setting up shop. You notice there is sort of like a cupboard to the side that's populated by his wardrobe and sets of shoes and stuff. He's very much making himself at home.

LYDIA

I really hope you don't expect us to stay here long.

BEN

I do need to go and make a report to Captain Van Dyke.

ALEX

She has been notified of your current situation.

BEN

I need to make a report.

ALEX

Right yeah. I'm pretty certain that's not going to happen for a while.

BEN

Why?

ALEX

I mean you can try.

BEN

No just tell me why!

ALEX

The university's in lockdown until they've completed all of their investigations and you know what the Mars lot are like.

BEN

So we're trapped here.

ALEX

Yes basically. Realistically it's going to be a couple of days. They're extremely...

BEN

Couple of days!

ALEX

Well they're very thorough.

BEN

They're slow is what you mean.

LYDIA

Every time I'm out of the sight of the three of you I think they're moving towards me for some executing. They're really out for executing.

ALEX

Now in fairness that's a pretty valid fear actually. We should probably keep you out of circulation.

LYDIA

They definitely want to execute me.

ALEX

Oh absolutely.

LYDIA

And I mean I am...I would be fine with that except it's quite like...the geography of here is a bit...it's quite hard to sneak around.

ALEX

Well also I mean they all have...I mean most of them have detect undead at will so they can basically see you through walls.

LYDIA

Wait! What? No! Am I detectable as undead? Do I...goes also like she's got bad breath. Do I...do I have an undead like aura?

BEN

No but using magic yes.

LYDIA

What?

BEN

Well because you are...

LYDIA

I am not a zombie!

BRYN

Can we get that fixed? Is there a way to...

ALEX

You know what? I have no idea.

BEN

I could talk to Captain Van Dyke about it.

ALEX

Give me a knowledge religion check as well.

BEN

That is a 13.

ALEX

Let me double check the name. Well fun story actually, Clive the Paladin did actually spend some time undead and you know that he was cured.

BEN

Oh Clive yes.

ALEX

He's the one that has no arms, no hands, no feet and was dead for a while. You know that he was undead for a while.

BEN

So they did something with Clive because he was undead for a bit but look, I just want to be clear. Artemis doesn't like undead but we're not like Mars, if you're doing good work and you're not horrible then basically fine. Generally undead tend to be...

LYDIA

Right ok, so I'm an exception am I? To the rule.

ALEX

Yeah that sounds about right as my understanding of the Artemis lot.

LYDIA

I really regret all that saving the world stuff I've been doing.

ALEX

I mean I appreciate you.

BEN

No, look I...

LYDIA

It's been a lot of hassle.

BEN

I'm just warning you because...

ALEX

Oh Paladins very black and white in the way they see the world.

BEN

Absolutely not true. Not Artemis.

LYDIA

Is there like a school of healing in this university of magic where there might be some expert that can fix what got done to me by Mr Ceiling.

BEN

Probably not that hasn't had their teeth kicked in by a Mars person.

ALEX

Yeah that sounds about right actually.

LYDIA

Well if their teeth have been kicked in and they can't heal it then they're probably not good enough to...

BRYN

Arcane magic doesn't tend to deal with the healing arts. You're really looking at celestial religion.

BEN

If I can talk to Captain Van Dyke. He can sort Clive out so he can sort you out.

BRYN

I mean the Church of Aphrodite or the Church of Apollo are quite good at the healing arts.

ALEX

As you've started talking, Oscar Wilde's slowly started to tune out and he's just doing paperwork on the desk for a bit.

BRYN

So, Newton's rooms, why is there anything to do with the Simulacrum in Newton's rooms. We thought we were looking for Tesla's rooms.

ALEX

Well whilst you were running around and getting yourself involved in yet more high jinks and by the way thanks for that again.

LYDIA

He's always like this.

BEN

That was my job alright.

ALEX

I'm very happy for you. Anyway...so yes, basically whilst that was happening I did manage to arrive and start doing a bit of digging. It would seem that Kafka and Tesla were working on something a while ago.

LYDIA

Thanks for the specificity of that.

ALEX

And as part of that work they were doing a lot of work where basically Eddison appears to have been sniffing around after the fact and to put the cherry on the cake it would seem that the work continued after Eddison departed with the assistance of Lilia who I believe was turning into quite the prodigy in her field.

BRYN

She was always very talented. I can't believe she'd be involved in this though. She wouldn't hurt a fly!

ALEX

Well I have little knowledge about the research beyond the fact that an interested Tesla and Eddison was hot on his heels and that Liliansa to all intents and purposes is still inside the study which of course...

LYDIA

Well let's go to Newton's study. There's probably whole mazes and labyrinths and monsters in there...

BRYN

How many pocket dimensions I'd guess really.

ALEX

Well as far as I'm aware the only person who returned in the last 50 years from Newton's study was actually Einstein. Obviously we can't talk to him so yeah.

BEN

Let's go and just be the next people to come out.

LYDIA

Yeah it doesn't seem like there's very much left for me in this dimension.

ALEX

I really like...

BEN

Don't you...

ALEX

...you Grizzop. He's great.

BEN

You just did it.

ALEX

Anyway...

LYDIA

Let's go before we kill Oscar Wilde. It's a great actual motivating factor for this party, Grizzop, you'll learn is basically getting away from this guy.

BEN

Yeah right, cool. Shall we leave?

ALEX

Oscar Wilde proceeds to lead you back towards the residence that you were in...

BEN

Oh he's coming with us.

ALEX

...where the deans and so on and he proceeds to give you...break out a briefing that he's prepared at some point and has begun reading to you. The brief notes being that Newton, known as the master of plainer works, plainer travel, plainer manipulation etc. who walked in...the story goes walked into a study 200 years ago and just didn't ever walk out. From the outside looking in everything looks normal but a team of researchers, about 40 years ago, went in and the only one that made it out was Einstein and he was a bit funny when he came out the other end. As far as the documents of interviews with Einstein after the fact were, he kept going on about a desert and he kept going on about an oasis and that was basically it. He was made a bit funny.

BRYN

Should we make sure we're carrying plenty of supplies before we go in?

BEN

Yeah desert and oasis sounds like it.

LYDIA

You know it would've been really useful having someone that could create water coming around with us right now.

BEN

Oh I could do that.

LYDIA

Oh really?

BEN

Yeah

LYDIA

Oh! Can they all do that? Paladin...

BRYN

Sort of.

LYDIA

People that worship gods.

BEN

If we choose to yeah.

ALEX

It's a very basic ability.

LYDIA

Oh I thought it's because he was all ocean-y.

BRYN

No.

ALEX

Honestly I mean it's dime a dozen. It's a little better than basically fetching it yourself really.

BEN

Well in the desert it's quite handy.

ALEX

So anyway...

LYDIA

It's fine. We've just forgotten all the people we lost like that. It's fine. Let's just keep going.

ALEX

That's the attitude! He then makes it and leads you towards Newton's study. Eventually you find yourselves on the top floor of that residence where obviously all of the other offices and Kafka's were right in the basement was. Not the tower which was obviously Einstein's but the top floor and you find yourself staring the most mundane office door possible. You know, wood slightly chipped. It has that kind of frosted glass with "Newton" on it in chipped black lettering on the door. And you can even see through the frosted sort of glass to what appears to be a mundane study on the other side.

LYDIA

Right.

BRYN

I have actually genuinely stopped on the way to just buy a bunch of food to stick in my bag of holding.

ALEX

Oh yeah that's fine.

LYDIA

Is it all like student take away?

ALEX

It's just a load of menus and numbers to call.

BRYN

It's stuff that will actually keep.

ALEX

Lots of salted meats I'm guessing.

BRYN

Yeah and travel bread.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah. Don't go dwarven.

BRYN

Elven travel bread. Lembas.

ALEX

Better. Better. But yeah, you find yourselves at the door to Newton's study and Wilde's just kind of next to you. Obviously I'm going to be honest, my priority here is that you can find out whatever research was being...

BRYN

We'll see you back in your new office when we're done.

ALEX

Great, well thanks a lot. It's been a pleasure, Grizzop.

BEN

See you, wouldn't want to be ya.

ALEX

Oh he's so sassy.

LYDIA

No I think you're right. I think he really hates being himself. Look at him. Look at him go. That frozen smile.

ALEX

You know what? Yeah he does have a certain frozen smile quality and he sort off jaunts off down the corrido and then down the stairs leaving you alone.

BRYN

Get some sleep Oscar.

ALEX

He just leans back, knew you cared, and then heads down the stairs.

BEN

He's just awful isn't he.

BRYN

Very, very irritating.

LYDIA

You don't even know the half.

BEN

Right, anyway let's go in the scary door...study.

LYDIA

Before we go in, Hamid, if I grab you and throw you to safety again please don't stop and try and do diplomacy on people. Like would speak...stay safe. We keep losing people and I just...if I throw you to safety run. Run! Hamid run! When I shout run, it's the thing you do, you run. That's what you should do. You should run.

BRYN

I'm sorry Sasha. I think...you do have a good point. Like the thing is I'm not actually very fast and I worry that running away from things isn't going to be very effective most of the time and I do think in that specific situation those people could've been reasoned with. I mean, I know they're not the most reasonable people but I will try...

LYDIA

Their priority seems to be executing me.

BRYN

I agree and if I had realised that ahead of time I would've been much more keen on the running plan. I will try to be more sensible in future.

LYDIA

Right.

BEN

Cool, let's...

BRYN

Thank you for the feedback.

ALEX

Such managing.

BEN

I'll open the door.

ALEX

Ok and I will take a break there and be back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. So you open the door. The door is opened and you find yourself looking into a mundane, actually fairly small office compared to the

others that you've seen. At the very far end of the room which is 10 feet, maybe 12, there's a very large desk, very mahogany really well made. It appears to have some knickknacks on it, like a paperweight and like a snow globe kind of thing. Crystal ball we'll call it.

LYDIA

Is it a snow globe with a desert inside so when you shake it the sand moves.

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

LYDIA

26

ALEX

No. It appears to just be a glass bauble of some kind. On the left hand side there's a fairly large bookshelf...

LYDIA

Are there any books that are slightly differently coloured than the rest sticking out a slight angle to be pulled?

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

BRYN

We should be really careful in here guys. I mean much like Einstein, Newton was a master of teleportation. It's possible that anything in here is secretly an item to transport you to somewhere...

ALEX

And to the right hand side you can see a door ajar which looks like it leads to maybe some kind of bedroom but...

BRYN

Let's just search this room thoroughly first.

BEN

Can you detect magic?

BRYN

I mean yeah. But it's not...some of it might be hidden as well. I do indeed cast detect magic.

ALEX

Ok cool. So you focus on the study and you spot...you wake up on the floor. You have quite the headache.

BEN

You alright?

BRYN

Yeah there's definitely some magic here.

BEN

Ok cool. Right well that's not going to be very useful then. Ok. Let's do this the old fashioned way.

ALEX

You did definitely get the sense that it was a benign school so it wasn't anything like necromancy kicking around. But that's pretty much all you got before you were like [exploding noise] mind blown.

BRYN

Bear with me a second. I step out of the room, I take out my food supplies from my bag of holding because you can't open a bag of holding in a pocket plan and move them to a normal bag.

ALEX

Yes! Yes.

BRYN

And step back into the room.

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ALEX

You step into the room. Oh!.

BRYN

And say, shall we?

BEN

Yes, right. Sure.

BRYN

Search through everything to find out anything that's out of place.

ALEX

Ok give me perception checks.

LYDIA

28

BEN

18

BRYN

15

ALEX

Everyone give me a fort save.

LYDIA

So many saves!

BEN

15

LYDIA

15

BRYN

11

ALEX

You're all ok, alright. So you enter the room and yeah you begin going your separate ways to have a search. And then things get very weird, very quickly. With each step that you take away from the front door the distance between you and the rest of the room starts to increase.

BEN

Oh so it's like one of those dreams where you can never get to the door.

ALEX

Yeah that kind of thing. So like you take a step, you take a step. The fort save is there's a moment of proper nausea because you take a step and then it's like you've halved your height and then you take another step and you've halved your height again and basically the room...the further that you walk into that room the more it seems to just stretch away from you.

BEN

Is it also getting bigger then?

ALEX

Yes

BEN

Oh wow.

LYDIA

So let's stick together here.

BEN

Yep.

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

There is an awkward moment though where let's say, just for flavour, you all step in a different direction as you go through the door. The distance that you cover in that first step, it looks like it's going to take you about five minutes...no that's a big exaggeration. It looks like it's going to take you a bit of a walk to then meet up with one another but one step, woah. And you're all back together.

BEN

Ok, all step in the same direction at the same speed.

LYDIA

I suppose it's time to sing a little marching song.

BEN

Right, I don't know any little marching songs.

LYDIA

Let's do [singing] do, do, do, do. Do, do, do, do.

EVERYONE

[singing] do, do, do, do. Do, do, do, do

(laughing)

Do, do, do, do.

BRYN

I don't know this one! Who's it from?

ALEX

So what is your direction that you're picking because obviously entering into the room might be slightly more complicated than entering the room. So where in the room are you aiming for?

LYDIA

Forwards!

BRYN

Shall we head for the desk?

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Yes.

ALEX

Ok great. You start walking towards the desk and again there's that weird moment of like nausea as your perspectives are all warping but you are all together with one another and it seems that the most severe part of it is in the

initial stages but nonetheless you find yourself walking, you're walking along and the room's slowly growing bigger. The room continues to expand. The room continues to expand. The room continues to expand. You find yourself shifting from medium to small, small, to tiny and as you're going this room is becoming effectively a cavern. Just a vast, vast cavern.

LYDIA

Until eventually we are walking through the carpet in a lovely...

BEN

I've read this book!

LYDIA

Yeah exactly! It's a complicated fibrous forest.

ALEX

However it's not a carpet.

LYDIA

Oh is it not. Is it wooden?

ALEX

It's floorboards. As you walk you find yourself starting what was, as things keep going the way they are, the floorboards which were varnished smooth seem to have a bit more texture to them. Eventually the slight ups and downs until eventually the edges of the room start disappearing to your vision and

you find yourself surprise, surprise, on a huge effectively flat plain that's almost disappearing off into the distance. You can see in what appears to be, to your eyes what you would assume was the haze of normal distance. The desk at the far end, the walls on either side and the door behind you and you are just on a huge, barren flat plain.

BEN

Wait. Hang on a minute. Let's walk back and I'll start drawing a chalk line so we don't get lost once we lost our landmarks. I can hardly see the walls from here so I don't know...yep so let's go back and mark our way.

LYDIA

Ok.

BEN

Turn around and walk back.

ALEX

Ok that's fine. Everything shrinks and returns. It doesn't appear to be a trap. It doesn't appear to be any kind of like...it's not trying to get you.

LYDIA

Ok

BEN

I guess he did say that he's a teleporter so probably he can traverse it very quickly. People who can't teleport it's like a mission. Also makes sense how people got lost in there.

LYDIA

Yep well here we go.

BEN

Chalk out dragging it behind me and the chalk get smaller with me so the line will relatively stay the same size. Great.

LYDIA

On we go.

ALEX

To accelerate time you continue to walk. You reach the same period that you were at before and it more or less then seems to stabilise. The room doesn't continue to shrink. So right at the edge of your vision desk. Right of the edge of your vision doors and the door behind. And then it seems to sort of normalise, just massive instead of infinitely big or anything. However you obviously, if you keep going until you run out of chalk you do manage to do so because once it normalises, the distance seems to be fixed.

LYDIA

Ok we keep going.

ALEX

Ok cool so you spend the rest of the morning walking across the floor of the office which is now this featureless plain. And you hit...you hit about lunchtime and you do appear to be making some kind of movement across but you're looking at like maybe two/three days of travel before you're going to make it to the desk. How you're going to scale the desk?

LYDIA

I wonder if we could get a horse up here?

(laughing)

BEN

I mean it's basically...how long do we want to go in this for?

BRYN

Well we're going to be in lockdown in the university for at least two days anyway but I don't really want to spend a whole week. I mean I've got to get back to my parents and the funeral.

BEN

Yeah I mean is this super important? We could go and do something else.

BRYN

Well I'd like to find Liliana if we can.

BEN

Are we sure that she's in here?

BRYN

She came in and didn't leave.

LYDIA

I mean there might be, around the corner or round somewhere...when we get to the desk there could be a whole like happy little civilisation inside the chest of drawers. She could have a whole palace made out of paperclips. We don't know.

BRYN

Let's stop for lunch and then keep going. I don't think a horse would cope with this. We don't really have any faster ways to travel.

BEN

Yeah I mean honestly I'm out of ideas apart from explore this weird thing. Like I'm not...this is arcane stuff. It's not, you know...

LYDIA

We're all knackered. There's nothing to do but walk unless you can detect anything.

BEN

Not unless it's undead!

LYDIA

Hey!

BRYN

I don't really want to try.

BEN

Literally that's all I can do.

LYDIA

I mean to be fair maybe there's another undead person here.

BEN

It's not that wide reaching honestly.

BRYN

What would happen if...

BEN

Wait, hang on a minute...

BRYN

...if you fired an arrow?

BEN

What back at the door?

BRYN

Well like upwards. Oh I don't know.

BEN

I'll give it a go. Not straight up.

ALEX

Oh you know me Ben!

BEN

Yes I aim it an 80 degree angle.

ALEX

An 80 degree angle Ben?

BEN

Yes. In front of us.

ALEX

Sure it looses from your arrow and it appears at first to just be flying through the air but then there's a very definite sense of it warping a bit in terms of its size. Like it will swell and shrink and swell and shrink and then it lands what seems to be an appropriate distance from you.

BEN

Ok.

ALEX

But when it was at the top of its height it started to go a bit wibbly wobbly but it did return. It does seem like this plain appears to be...you're past the transitional stage basically. Give or take.

LYDIA

Well seeing as we can't fly.

BRYN

But it does look like the affect might end as we get to the other end of the room.

BEN

Yeah why is it...

BRYN

Just give it another few hours.

LYDIA

If anyone were to listen on this it would make for spectacularly thrilling...

BRYN

I mean sometimes we have to deal with a puzzle.

LYDIA

Let's go forward.

ALEX

I mean it has been, what, 80 episodes and I've given you one puzzle.

BRYN

I think this doesn't immediately turn boring.

ALEX

I'm sorry there is nothing for you to hit yet.

LYDIA

I want to hit things! I want to do a perception check.

ALEX

Ok for things to hit?

LYDIA

Yeah. Sasha is stressed, bored and exhausted.

ALEX

And acrophobic let's not forget.

LYDIA

Oh yes, gosh I had actually forgotten that. She has nothing to hide against except for two small people.

ALEX

It is a huge flat, empty plain. The nearest thing is the chair of the desk and that's maybe a day's walk away.

LYDIA

I'd actually forgotten this would be like her hell because she doesn't even have a tank to flank against.

ALEX

It makes sense. She's been quite tetchy up to this point.

LYDIA

She's very grumpy! Oh gosh, ok. Her perception is 16. Is there anything to hit?

ALEX

Your perception is 16. Everyone else give me a perception check.

BRYN

Natural 20.

BEN

Er no.

BRYN

So 30 total.

ALEX

So Sasha as you're casting about looking for something you see there's a weird...right at the edge of your vision, between you and the desk there's a weird slight shimmer to the air. It's like a heat haze and Hamid when you spot that she's noticed something, you turn and yeah haze seems to be the best description of it. It's that wibbly wobbly that you get like when you're looking at a road in a hot summer's day. That kind of thing. It looks a few hours walk away.

BRYN

Yeah if we stay at the same scale it would be a couple of hours walk away maybe.

ALEX

Yeah about that. About that.

LYDIA

Alright look there's something over there. Let's walk towards it. Maybe we'll find some beautiful civilisation...

BRYN

Well someone talked about a desert and an oasis. Maybe that's the oasis.

BEN

And this is the desert. That makes sense.

BRYN

I think we've got...

LYDIA

It is deserted at least.

BEN

Alright, let's go.

LYDIA

Eat as we walk.

ALEX

So a few hours pass and you are making decent headway. It looks like the desk is about another day's direct, no veering, no digressions. Another day you'd be at the desk. However as you're drawing nearer to that shimmer it becomes apparent that is like a localised phenomenon. I don't know how else to describe it. To your warped perceptions it looks like it is the equivalent of say about 30 feet across and it's coming from a specific point in this featureless landscape and as you're approaching it gets bigger and actually it looks like it's fanning out from the gaps between the floorboards which obviously you're having to make a running jump to get past these. But it looks like it's coming out from between the cracks of one of them. It's fanning out and then it just seems to dissipate.

BEN

Go over to it.

LYDIA

I'd shoot an arrow in mate before we stick our head in.

BEN

Alright.

ALEX

It passes through the shimmer and it ends up on the other side. It still has that wibbly wobbly vibe to it but it doesn't appear to be damaged in any way.

Everyone give me a perception check.

BEN

22

BRYN

16

LYDIA

21

ALEX

Actually ok. Everyone apart from Hamid can tell from here as you get a bit closer there is a distinct smell. And it is the smell...basically it smells like a massive amount of gas from say an unlit lamp or something like that.

BEN

Right so a pipe's burst or something.

ALEX

To give you a sense of the scale though, if, let's say that this was a leak in real terms it's a tiny, tiny little leak but scale it up and suddenly it looks like you're facing some kind of leak.

LYDIA

So if there's pressure in that could we use it? Could we create some sort of parachute, hot air balloon situation, float up above it and then be carried along.

BRYN

I think the more difficult problem is going to be breathing.

ALEX

I also love that that's Sasha's solution to this. That's the most Sasha solution to a problem I've ever heard. I love it.

LYDIA

She's in very terrible danger of becoming Batman.

BEN

I mean I've got a tent.

BRYN

I don't think we could create the appropriate lift though really.

BEN

I don't know how that works.

BRYN

Yeah I'm more worried about being able to breathe if we're passing through a cloud of gas.

BEN

Hold your breath.

BRYN

I mean but if it takes us 20 minutes to walk across it.

BEN

Well it's only passing up through a floorboard. If it's a gas leak it'll only be coming up through the floors right. So we're on the other side, even if it's in front of you, there'll be a pocket with the floorboard.

ALEX

Everyone give me a wisdom...just a straight wisdom check.

LYDIA

I would not understand.

BEN

1. Unnatural 1

ALEX

That's fine.

BRYN

8

LYDIA

3. Oh no $12 + 3$ is 15.

ALEX

Oh I love you guys! So a 1, a 15 and an 8. Ok. The 1 sounds about right. The 8, yeah if we ran probably be ok. The 15 will give you one extra thing. Let's not forget it's a massive gas pocket of flammable gas where even the smallest spark would cause the equivalent of a Hindenburg disaster for you. It's just...people are too busy focusing on how to get by without breathing and it's just like kind of [explosion noise].

LYDIA

We could make it explode.

BRYN

Yeah I mean I could set it alight or you could use one of your bombs but I don't see how that helps us.

LYDIA

It would be a massive explosion!

(laughing)

BRYN

I mean only to our scale. It'd be like a small flame on the room.

BEN

If you burnt the room down would it break the enchantment?

BRYN

I don't think it is going to burn the room down. I mean it's...

BEN

Well if it's not then let's give it a go.

BRYN

Dangerous to us.

BEN

And it'll burn off all the gas so your worry about...

BRYN

We should be a very safe distance first.

BEN

I can fly an arrow very, very far and it can be on fire.

LYDIA

I like that idea.

BEN

Let's do that!

BRYN

It doesn't sound safe but...

BEN

Well no but...I mean we're in Newton's study and no one else has come out for 40 years it's not safe.

BRYN

Once it's burnt away the excess it will just create a small flame.

BEN

Yeah which we can walk around.

BRYN

We can probably walk around. It would be like a bonfire.

ALEX

Yeah...yeah...

BEN

This sounds perfect and pretty fool proof. Good suggestion Sasha.

LYDIA

I think we're quite far away now aren't we.

BRYN

No, further than this. I think we should be further than this.

BEN

Oh yeah I mean I can fire this arrow quite far. 110 feet I think. Give or take no feet.

(laughing)

BRYN

I think we should be further away. I reckon if you choose the right angle you can probably get it further because it doesn't need to be very accurate. It just needs to pass through the pocket of gas.

BEN

Alright, ok, yeah...I know how to fire an arrow!

LYDIA

Let's back up until we're about...

ALEX

Slam cut. You are an appropriate distance from the gas.

BEN

I reckon I can fire this far...

ALEX

An arrow and bow in hand and is ready for the shot.

LYDIA

Do it. It'll attract attention right.

BEN

Light it.

LYDIA

Light it Hamid.

BRYN

I cast prestidigitation concealing the lighter I carry with me at all times.

ALEX

Yes you do!

BRYN

To make it look like I'm lighting it with my thumb.

ALEX

It is lit.

BEN

Fancy.

ALEX

A massive bomb. Have you ever seen a gasoline explosion? You know that really mucky, huge plume.

BRYN

We can feel the heat.

ALEX

Oh yeah. Like it isn't pushing you backwards. It hasn't got a concussion wave but it is just a fireball. It is huge.

BEN

If I didn't know that that was probably actually tiny that would be quite impressive.

ALEX

Yeah, again if you were it doing it to scale it's like you've blown up multiple buildings huge. However...

LYDIA

I hope that Liliana...Luc...yeah Liliana, that she likes fire. Maybe she'll come to us.

BRYN

It's a good signal if she is around.

ALEX

A plume of smoke starts going up as the flame burns itself down and reduces itself to a small wall of fire.

LYDIA

Well that's nice.

BRYN

No, how long's the wall.

ALEX

Leapable.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

So in terms of width, yeah it's, you know, a five minute walk that way. A five minute walk that way or you could just do a running jump over it. It's...

BRYN

I'm going to go round.

BEN

I'm going to go round.

LYDIA

Sasha's going to jump over it.

ALEX

Oh you're gonna not go in a straight line towards the desk. Ok.

BRYN

Look at his eyes! Look at his little face!

BEN

Alex I don't want to be a killjoy but we have this landmark and it's a wall of fire that goes in a straight line across the room.

ALEX

Sure that's how it seems yeah.

LYDIA

Sasha is going to be like, I'll see you on the other side and jumps straight across. Acrobatics check?

ALEX

Yes please.

LYDIA

That's 8 + 12 so 20.

ALEX

She sticks the landing. The judges are impressed.

BEN

Yeah alright, see you in a bit. We go right.

ALEX

Sure. You successfully circumnavigate very easily...

BEN

So while we're walking...

BRYN

I don't know. I feel like I'm still in shock really.

BEN

Ok well keep focussing on the job.

BRYN

Yeah that's what I'm trying to do.

BEN

Yeah there'll be time for stuff later.

BRYN

Yeah well we've got to get back for the funeral.

BEN

Don't worry, it gets easy. You get used to it in my line of work. Apart from Clive he seems to stick around but...

ALEX

He's like a bad stain, Clive.

BRYN

Thank you.

BEN

It's alright. Give him a pat on the back and then keep on walking. Ha, ha playing an actual character with bedside manner.

ALEX

What's it like having charisma Ben?

BEN

Ah it's great!

ALEX

So yes you manage to circumnavigate and re-join with Sasha. What have you been doing in that time? You've had like 15 minutes to kill. They took ages. They could've just run and jumped it.

LYDIA

Juggling knives.

ALEX

Of course. Standard. Anything to pass the time really.

BEN

Alright.

LYDIA

Alright.

BEN

Oh that's good.

BRYN

Do you have any chalk left?

BEN

Er no. Well hang on a minute...

LYDIA

We've now got a nice...

BRYN

No, I just meant if anyone comes to the fire looking for us we could leave an arrow pointing which way we've gone.

BEN

I've got a crayon.

BRYN

Might as well.

ALEX

Go for it.

BEN

Right I'll start drawing with a red crayon.

BRYN

Just an arrow saying "we went this way"

BEN

Oh right, I was going to...yeah sure.

ALEX

You'd be amazed if you drew a constant line over days of travel how quickly they run out. Sure. I presume that you start walking towards the desk again.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Each floorboard an arrow.

ALEX

Yeah that makes sense. So I'm going to skip ahead the jumping across floorboards and stuff just for the sake of keeping things moving otherwise it's a chasm check every time. So you keep going, you've come to realise something which is you think you've done a day's decent march. You've marched across this, you've made it past the gas thing and then...

BEN

Oh god, there's no day and night cycle.

ALEX

And you've kept going and the sun appears to be a fixed point shining in through the window. No time has passed.

BEN

Ohh! Brilliant!

BRYN

Means we won't be late.

BEN

Wait, hang on a minute is this actually taking time off my life? Is our time working?

BRYN

I mean I feel hungry.

BEN

Oh no! What! No I can't have that. I'm ageing. This is awful.

LYDIA

What are you immortal?

BEN

No I'm just ageing. We're not doing anything. This isn't actually...like there's no time passing. That means that there's...it's removing time from our lives. We're going to live fewer days in the normal time.

LYDIA

Mate, none of my life is normal time.

BRYN

I mean probably but not that many fewer.

BEN

Enough! That's enough! No, this is terrible!

LYDIA

Oh they have really short lives don't they goblins?

BRYN

Yes well I know!

LYDIA

Well Sasha doesn't I don't think.

BRYN

I don't think Hamid does either. It might be a couple of days at most.

BEN

No...alright let's go. Let's make it quick. Yeah let's make it quick.

LYDIA

Do you have something to get back to because that is...

BEN

Generally life's work, you know, Paladin of Artemis.

LYDIA

We are working!

BEN

I don't have that...

LYDIA

We're working right now!

BEN

Let's go. Let's go. Let's work quick.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Ok so you've done a full day's march. Are you just going to march through the "night" or are you going to have a nice rest and a...

BRYN

We'll probably have to rest for a few hours just because of sheer tiredness.

ALEX

Yeah absolutely.

BEN

But without the day and night cycles basically we stop when we're too tired?

BRYN

So that might mean just sitting down for two hours rather than sleeping.

ALEX

Let's put it this way, if you don't take an eight hour rest every 24 hours you are going to be taking penalties.

BEN

So genuine question does anybody have a way of telling the time?

LYDIA

No

BEN

Because sundials don't work. There's no sunlight. Or there is just sunlight. So we will actually just lose track of time. There's nothing that says like...

BRYN

We know.

ALEX

There are no markers or any way for you to tell how much time is passing now.

LYDIA

I mean it could be for all the people that left 50 years ago, for them, it's just been an afternoon.

BEN

That's true. Wait no the other way round.

BRYN

Yeah more likely the other way around.

BEN

They probably died here.

BRYN

I mean how long's Liliana been here? Oh dear.

ALEX

I think I'll end on the episode on that incredibly sombre depressing note.

BRYN

Yeah that sounds pretty normal with our episodes. Happy, fun season 2, Hamid's one true love has died of old age.

ALEX

I might be reverting to the mean here.

BRYN

Yeah, yeah. When you say reverting to meanness....

BEN

Wait reverting?

LYDIA

When were you ever away from the mean?

ALEX

Bye guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

LYDIA

We did have fun that time we were doing puns about sea creatures!

(laughing)

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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