

RQG – 82 – Hostile Work Environment

Content Warnings

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BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of patrons. Lara Wheelan, Eleanora Childs, Danny, Beth Biel, Beck Savage, Dave Agnew, Alma Vivaconty, Paul Gregory, Alex Smith, Samantha Henderson. 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 82 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 – 82 – Hostile Work Environment

BEN

Ben Meredith

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam

ALEX

Join us as our characters continue to walk across a floor.

LYDIA

Floor quest. Avoid the splinters. They may kill you.

BEN

Oh could you imagine getting a splinter.

LYDIA

It's the size of a javelin.

BEN

Can't even get the tweezers because the tweezers are huge too!

LYDIA

You know why Terry Pratchett called them the carpet people, because he knew that walking across a wooden floor would be incredibly dull.

(laughing)

That was the reason that he put them in a carpet. That's artistry Alex! That's artistry.

ALEX

I never claimed to be an artist!

BEN

Come on Alex, it's not hard.

BRYN

We're stuck in a featureless plain where time is not moving. It's making for really evicting dynamic...

BEN

Wait, are we stuck in Milton Keynes?

ALEX

The benefit is, in terms of prep this session's going to be the easiest I have ever generated! You're in a vast featureless plain. What happens? Nothing!

BEN

I want you to turn the page and it's just a massive floor...just all over...

LYDIA

Just a grid.

ALEX

There's no features on the grid.

LYDIA

Nothing on grid, extends in every direction.

ALEX

So what I didn't tell you all is that I genuinely have drawn a battle map and this is it. A huge blank table.

LYDIA

Ok we keep walking.

ALEX

You keep walking. Sub quest within sub quest, you are trying to make it across a room.

BEN

I spy with my little eye something beginning with...

ALEX

Give me a perception check.

BEN

No. L.

LYDIA

L ok.

BRYN

22

ALEX

Anyone else? Or are you too busy?

LYDIA

They're playing I spy.

BRYN

No I'm assuming Alex is asking us for a genuine perception check.

ALEX

Oh yeah I am!

LYDIA

21

BEN

17

ALEX

Carry on.

LYDIA

Right you spy...is it lapels?

BEN

No.

LYDIA

Ok. Right is it long ropes...

ALEX

Hamid, you see...you have been approaching...

BEN

No.

LYDIA

Right. Is it little Hamid?

ALEX

You have been approaching the desk over the last...let's say it's been roughly a day and a half

LYDIA

Oh is it longbow? Is it a longbow?

ALEX

So you can see that obviously the desk you've been approaching over the last sort of half day so you're at lunchtime the following day. There is definitely movement at the top of the office desk and not sort of a regular movement. It seems to be life. Something is moving around.

LYDIA

You can keep that one. I've got 14.

BEN

Oh right, thank you.

BRYN

I am going to cast dancing light.

LYDIA

It's my 13th favourite.

BRYN

And wave them in a manner of a person guiding a plane into land.

ALEX

Ok.

BRYN

Just to indicate where we are as a sort of hello beacon.

ALEX

The movement stops. And then moves back from the edge of the desk and you don't see what happens.

BRYN

Keep walking.

LYDIA

Wait...

BEN

What are you waving your arms around for?

LYDIA

Yeah why aren't you playing the game Hamid?

BRYN

There's something up there.

BEN

It is up there yes. It is up...

LYDIA

Oh right.

BRYN

Was it lifeform?

BEN

No

BRYN

Because there's someone...

LYDIA

Was it Liliana?

BEN

No. Wait there is someone?

BRYN

There was someone up there I think. Moving around.

BEN

Well I really hope they have a...

LYDIA

Something beginning with L.

BEN

Well a lift built in the table leg.

BRYN

We've got climbing gear but it's pretty high.

ALEX

This would be a vast cliff. This would probably bigger than any naturally forming cliff in the world.

BEN

Although one would hope...

LYDIA

Ok, right so. To begin with I have been to Brazil where it's the second highest waterfall in Brazil and you would be surprised Alex how tall cliffs can be.

(laughing)

ALEX

In terms of the distances involved would they take...

LYDIA

It was like a kilometre

ALEX

Yeah but it wouldn't take you the best part of a day to walk up.

LYDIA

It took me most of the day to walk up the other side.

ALEX

No, no I mean if you flattened it, would you take a day-ish to walk up it.

LYDIA

Alright. But it was very tall.

ALEX

To put it in perspective, you're looking at something that's like seven miles high. In perspective.

LYDIA

That is quite high.

BEN

I mean one would hope that because of our smaller stature the grain of the wood is actually quite rough and we might actually just be able to walk up it like a pathway.

BRYN

It's certainly possible.

ALEX

So presumably you continue walking. All you give me...

LYDIA

Wait did I get the L? No. Ok so is it long way away?

BEN

No it's not long.

ALEX

All of you give me yet more perception checks. I'm accelerating time again because it's a featureless barren wasteland.

LYDIA

13

BRYN

15

BEN

What do you want again? I just rolled a dice.

ALEX

Perception check.

BEN

Oh cool. So that's a 15.

ALEX

13 and two 15s. Ok. It takes you a while so let's say...

LYDIA

Is it leather jacket? Is it my leather jacket?

ALEX

You make it to the end of the...

BEN

If you wouldn't mind, we're playing I spy!

LYDIA

Is it lamp?

BEN

Yes!

LYDIA

Yay! Oh I love lamp!

(laughing)

It's a good one. That's really good. I love that. I love lamp.

ALEX

After another full “day” travel you are approaching the base of the desk. You could either push on again into “night” and tire yourselves out to get there now or you could have a break and start fresh tomorrow and be there in an hour or two.

BRYN

Let’s get to the base and camp at the base.

BEN

Yeah set up some kind of base camp.

LYDIA

Yeah. I spy with my little eye something beginning with B.

BEN

Erm....back.

ALEX

Slam cut to the next “morning”

BRYN

So how are we going to get up there?

ALEX

Are you...I assume you're setting straight off for the office desk?

BRYN

We're camping at the base. We're by a leg.

ALEX

Sure. You are currently by a leg.

LYDIA

I can climb up that but as high as I can see.

ALEX

That's a day's...yeah it just disappears. It's like a day's walk vertically.

LYDIA

It's quite a rough surface so it's easily climbable but just not for a day.

ALEX

God no! You do however, throwing you all a bone here, it's been a while since I did that. If you can make it up about 50 feet or 100 feet you notice that the desk...the leg of the desk is a wood turned spiral. So the issue is you've got to make it up...

LYDIA

It basically becomes a spiral staircase.

ALEX

Yeah but you would have to make it up the 100 feet or so which is the bottom stopper.

LYDIA

Ok well Sasha gets the rope over her shoulder. I will throw it down to you when I'm up there.

BEN

Ok

ALEX

So you have a climbing gear right. So what I'm going to say is...part of the climbing gear I do know is things like pitons and stuff like that. So that as you're climbing if you've got enough rope you can actually hammer in safety points so that if you fall you're not going to plummet and the benefit being this is wood.

LYDIA

Ah yeah they go in.

ALEX

Should go in quite nicely assuming that the properties haven't gone weird with magic. So I will need a...

LYDIA

Climb check.

ALEX

I will need more than one because you're climbing a decent distance.

LYDIA

Right so that's 21 for my first one.

ALEX

Ok. Again.

LYDIA

That's 19.

ALEX

Again.

LYDIA

Ooh 11.

ALEX

Again.

LYDIA

That's 23.

ALEX

And last one.

LYDIA

11 again.

ALEX

Ok so she makes impressive progress. Even taking the time to sort of hammer pitons in and make sure that things are secure and stuff so that she doesn't fall to her death. You know, the basic stuff. She made really good progress. There were a couple of tricky bits which slowed her down.

LYDIA

Some overhangs, you don't like them.

ALEX

She made really good progress and yeah, within let's say less than an hour of careful, careful climbing, you're at the top of...yeah you see that it's close to, as you are obviously being small, it's actually quite pitted so it's a bit of a

scramble because it's full of dust and bits and it's a wood turn so it's not perfectly smooth but you can...you could certainly ascend this and you're looking down the hundred feet or so to the other pair.

LYDIA

Alright. Time to follow up.

BEN

Ok. Yeah using the rope and the...

ALEX

I am going to allow you because the pitons are done and so on to take 10 because otherwise we'll be here all day. Yeah you sent the right person up first.

BRYN

The one with actual climbing ability!

LYDIA

Because she's got a minus strength thing it's not particularly a great ability compared to...I mean if it was sleight of hand.

BRYN

Yeah I mean we've all got...

LYDIA

Because my bonus would be 12.

BEN

Yeah but comparatively mine is 0.

ALEX

Yeah let's take a look at the rest of the party.

BRYN

Mine is 1.

ALEX

You're the strapping young buck now!

LYDIA

Because previously we would've sent Bertie up.

BRYN

That -8 climb.

ALEX

He might've had to have lost the armour at that point.

BRYN

Like he would!

ALEX

He'd have just thrown the dog up or something awful! Anyway you all find yourselves...

LYDIA

Have you guessed what is it yet though? It's B.

BEN

Er...

BRYN

You guys have been playing this since yesterday afternoon. If he hasn't guessed by now he's not going to.

BEN

It's a hard one. Maybe you should guess!

LYDIA

Yeah!

BEN

What about bookcase?

LYDIA

No.

BEN

Book?

ALEX

I'm going to assume that you guys are ascending the desk at this point?

LYDIA

Yeah we're walking around

BEN

Erm...

LYDIA

I'll give you a clue. Do you want a clue?

BEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LYDIA

Alright like so even though we've changed perspective and we can't...I can still
it. So it's...

ALEX

This is just the worst. This is the worst thing! It takes you a long full day's march. So more than eight, it's like 10 hours and something weird starts happening as you start nearing the top. So you've made decent time...

LYDIA

Are we going to get bigger? We can't quite fit on the...

ALEX

Ah I should've done that because then if you'd fall off you'd fall really far but all of you have to fit on a single desk. Ah that's so much better than what I've got. Anyway as you're climbing you realise you find yourself getting way more tired than you should do. All of you give me...what would this be...

BRYN

If it's to save against altitude sickness, it's fortitude.

ALEX

No, give me...give me wisdom checks. Again just blanket wisdom one.

BEN

Oh 17.

BRYN

19

LYDIA

9

ALEX

Ok. So you're all...you're making decent progress and at first yeah you'd think, god it might be altitude sickness or something because you've been climbing a long time, it's fairly like...steady going.

BRYN

If you went this many miles up in the real world the air would get super thin.

BEN

Yeah but that is rubbish.

ALEX

But it's not and everyone apart from Sasha, you suddenly realise what it is. And it takes a while. Like you're going it can't be that. Do a little test. Can't be that. Keep going. No. Gravity is getting stronger the higher up you get. It's been very gradual but it seems to be in the last hour or so walk, it's reached the point where it's like ok I'm feeling pretty heavy now. You can proceed, like you're not pinned to the floor or anything. Eventually you can make it to the top of that leg but you are [heavy breathing], like maybe double earth gravity,

like you are feeling heavy and there is a small overhang that you have to climb to make it up onto the desk.

BEN

Why am I so heavy?

LYDIA

I know B. The second letter is A.

BRYN

Something's messing with gravity. I mean that's pretty weird.

ALEX

The air isn't thinner by the way or anything like that. You just feel really heavy and you are at the end of your day. Like you have been marching up this spiral staircase for an extended full march and gravity's harder. You are all knackered. Give me fort saves.

LYDIA

Oh it's right here!

BRYN

LYDIA

Weak gesture at waistband.

BEN

21

LYDIA

Fort save is 8.

ALEX

8. Grizzop...

BEN

Bandelier

LYDIA

It's a bag of holding!

BEN

Right ok!

ALEX

Grizzop you're holding together Sasha and Hamid, you are knackered. You are absolutely spent. Even if you wanted to carry on today I don't think you could.

BRYN

Do you think we should stop here for a rest before we try and tackle the overhang?

LYDIA

Sure.

BEN

Yeah

LYDIA

I'll rope us in so we don't slide off the...

ALEX

Thankfully the actual spiral is so wide you're actually fine.

BRYN

It's not the most comfortable camping spot but it'll do.

BEN

Oh ok.

ALEX

It's like 50 feet say to the edge of the spiral. It's a very wide spiral so you've just been circling upwards slowly. You're not on a ledge or anything like that. Ok so you all sleep. And you all awake the next "day".

BEN

Yeah I'm going to be checking my spells.

ALEX

Like a good paladin.

BEN

Urgh prepare spellcaster.

ALEX

You keep picking them and then complaining.

BEN

That's because there's a lot of classes with them, other people are playing the classes that aren't prepared spell casters.

ALEX

That's on you. I'm just saying.

BEN

I just want to have party diversity Alex.

LYDIA

We need healers.

BEN

I suffer for the game!

ALEX

No I suffer for the game!

BEN

Screw you!

ALEX

So you awake...you all awake feeling like still heavy but you can continue...

LYDIA

Do I heal my 1 hit point?

ALEX

Ah that's a good point. Can you give me two will saves for the previous times that you've slept?

LYDIA

No! I got a 2.

ALEX

And again.

LYDIA

Oh no wait, that's 5 because...the other one is 6.

ALEX

By my calculations you will be on -1 hit points still because you'll have healed as much as you hurt yourself every day.

LYDIA

Ok.

ALEX

So you are facing an overhang to get to the top of the desk in a heavy gravity and unless you deconstructed all of your rope to get up that 100 foot thing...

LYDIA

I did

BRYN

We pulled it. We will have pulled it back after us.

ALEX

Right then.

BRYN

You don't just leave rope lying around.

BEN

I breathe in, I breathe out. I breathe in, I breathe out.

ALEX

Alright then!

BEN

At which point are you going to tell me that I die?!

ALEX

Well you're hyperventilating. So you're at the top. What do you do?

LYDIA

Well I could try and blow it up. I'm very tired.

BEN

What blow the overhang up?

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

I mean I could fire an arrow with a rope on it.

LYDIA

What round? Oh I see a swing...I'll put it with some weight on it and I'll swing it around and over.

BEN

We've got a grappling hook?

BRYN

Yeah

BEN

Use a grappling hook. That's what they're for.

BRYN

Give it a go. I mean if it latches on to something up on top.

BEN

Yeah

LYDIA

Right well let's give it a go then.

ALEX

Ok.

BRYN

We should also attach a safety rope that connects here so anyone who's going over has got a second point of connection.

ALEX

You've got enough rope and equipment to do all this. That's fine. Who's throwing the thing?

LYDIA

Me.

ALEX

Give me an attack roll first.

BRYN

Natural 20.

LYDIA

Natural 20!

ALEX

Very nice. So you start spinning it and the weight of this feels all wrong. Like you've done this a lot. You are very well practiced at this obviously. And it feels all wrong. And you actually...

LYDIA

This exact angle I've done. Like I'm trying to get into one of the lower rent banks in South Upper London and so the angle feels very familiar. We managed to break in three times before they upgraded their security systems but the way that the thing is...it feels heavier when it's at the bottom of the swing.

ALEX

At the top it feels heavier and then at the...it's really peculiar. Long story short, you realise that if you throw this any way that you have before that thing is going to drop so hard and so fast that you'll probably just lose the whole thing. You manage to effectively start...you take extra time to figure out how the heck this momentum work and then [throwing noise], chink and it seems to latch. You now have grappled over the overhang.

BEN

Nice one.

LYDIA

Well I guess I'll...

BRYN

We've got the second safety rope attached. I mean just take it easy.

BEN

And then drop the rope back down and we'll tie it to the next one.

ALEX

Give me a climb check maybe. If you are going to be first.

LYDIA

Well it's got to be Sasha really even though she is the heaviest.

ALEX

Give me the climb check then.

LYDIA

Please don't fail.

BRYN

You've got the safety rope.

LYDIA

Oh that's a...she got a natural 1. Oh dear! Is Sasha very dead? I thought she'd go in an explosion honestly.

ALEX

But no, crushed under a desk.

LYDIA

Falling...

ALEX

Falling off a desk awkwardly.

LYDIA

And then if she dies does she revert to normal size and...

BEN

Oh no that would be really weird!

ALEX

That would be the worst!

LYDIA

You'd see this looming body beneath you.

BEN

Yeah that's horrible.

ALEX

So you climb up, Sasha makes really good progress. She makes really good progress. Gets right to the top, gets right on the lip. She stands. She has succeeded in the check. She turns around and as she reaches out to call down to you, foot slips, she falls and she falls fast. She's still tied on with that safety line but she falls far faster than she has any right to.

BEN

I'm going to grab hold of the safety line to like brace it so it doesn't...

BRYN

Hamid does the same and as he does so, his hands turn into claws.

ALEX

Of course.

BRYN

They give much better grip.

LYDIA

Do they then cut the rope?

BRYN

No.

ALEX

Sasha give me a reflex save for half damage. Do well.

LYDIA

That's 13 + 8.

ALEX

You do do well. Good.

LYDIA

Basically sliced in half.

ALEX

You take 12 damage as you fall. You fall at a slight angle which actually probably saves your life because falling with it tied around your waist, something might actually have broken your spine. Instead you swing down and you slam into the side of the...basically the wooden leg.

LYDIA

A few storeys down.

ALEX

And all the rest of you, she feels really heavy but because she's tied off you can just take the 10 to haul her back in.

BEN

You alright?

LYDIA

No!

BEN

Ok give me a hand. Give me a sec. No I catch myself just before I do it.

ALEX

Do you though!

BEN

I mean he literally went...he almost physically did it. He started to reach out to Lydia and then pulled his hands back.

ALEX

Let's spell this out because you did not make any physical contact so what's the point of issue here for listeners just in case they're...

BEN

Well she is healed by negative damage and I do positive damage so that would actually hurt her.

ALEX

I really thought I'd get you with that one.

LYDIA

It begins to sting and tingle.

BEN

Oh no, sorry, sorry, sorry. That's going to be bad.

LYDIA

Look I'm livingly challenged right now.

BRYN

Do normal potions work I can't remember?

BEN

No, no it's positive.

BRYN

Are they positive energy as well? Oh dear.

BEN

Yeah you need a potion of inflicting wounds and that will heal her.

BRYN

I didn't...I didn't get any of them.

BEN

No. Me neither. Sorry.

BRYN

We can get that next time though. We'll definitely get some of them.

BEN

I've usually got it sorted.

ALEX

You guys are like the opposite of woke.

LYDIA

Yeah like for someone with a lot of allergies in the real world this feels like oh I've just forgot to get the...can you just get the bit from within the sandwich or just take the bread off.

ALEX

No, no apparently...apparently no one caters to your new...

BEN

I'm just used to be able to...

ALEX

Yeah you're right it's Sasha's fault.

BEN

Shut up sky ghost! You're not helping!

LYDIA

Is that what you say to your god as well?

BEN

No!

ALEX

So what's the plan?

LYDIA

Artemis frowned.

ALEX

What's the plan guys?

LYDIA

I'll throw it again and maybe we'll...

BEN

Do it as like a harness because that can really...

LYDIA

I'll do it again.

BRYN

Let's just take our time. I mean there's no rush. There's no rush.

ALEX

Ok so here's what we'll do. We'll take a break and in those couple of minutes you can generate a new and better plan.

And welcome back. So what's your big, new plan?

LYDIA

The same plan as before.

BEN

But we've made a harness instead of a belt.

BRYN

Yeah so it's safer. And also this time we're not going to roll a 1.

ALEX

That's a good plan!

LYDIA

Yeah that was my plan.

BRYN

Switch dice.

LYDIA

Right. This is for the spinny. Was that a climb check or a...

BRYN

That was a climb check.

ALEX

A climb check.

LYDIA

Ok so that's 15 + 7.

ALEX

Did you use my...yeah you used the white dice. They're mine. That's why the enemies always hit extra hard.

BRYN

That's why I get really annoyed at Alex because he rolls dice that he can't see.

ALEX

But they're the best ones.

LYDIA

22

ALEX

Yes so you make it...you make it to the top and you don't manage to injure yourself. You're fine. You are atop the desk. Would you like to know what's there?

LYDIA

Yep. Perception check or...

ALEX

You feel even heavier up top here. Like it's hard work just moving around.

LYDIA

She's on all fours.

ALEX

You can see at the far end of the desk is that huge lamp. And there appears to be some paperwork on the desk which still has a quill and some ink left and a blotter and so on.

LYDIA

About five storeys high.

ALEX

There is a paperweight which is sort of between you and that and then there is that sphere, that globe is actually at the nearside and it's just at the back of the desk. So you're at the front edge, the front face of the desk and at the back edge of the desk is...

LYDIA

So the movement that we saw, we don't...before...

ALEX

Must've been more or less where you are now.

BEN

Do you want to go next or shall I?

BRYN

I'll give it a try I guess.

BEN

Ok take your time.

BRYN

Yep. Can I take 10 on this?

ALEX

No.

LYDIA

No because if you fail, you fail.

ALEX

Are you sure that's the dice you want to use Bryn? Has that served you well in the past?

BRYN

Come on!

ALEX

Has it served you too well? Has it run out of 20s?

BEN

He has 5 D20s.

BRYN

I rolled a 7.

ALEX

Oh I thought that was a 1. Oh I was going to bully you.

BRYN

Which means it's a total of 8.

BEN

Plus rope benefits.

BRYN

Yeah circumstance bonus.

ALEX

So your new harness plan means you do not fall as catastrophically as Sasha. Nonetheless as you're climbing you can feel yourself getting physically heavier. You are literally not up to the physical task of this and you end up bailing and having to...you manage to control your fall but yeah, you end up back with Grizzop. That is hard work.

BRYN

I don't know if I can do this with the weird extra heaviness. I just don't think I can...

BEN

You can do it. Just...well you've got to do it. Do you want a bit of a pep up?
Yeah go on!

BRYN

Do you mean a spell? I mean yeah.

BEN

I'll lay on hands. It's got mercy so it removes fatigue. I know he's not fatigued but, you know.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

BRYN

I do feel better.

BEN

Go on, go on.

BRYN

Switching dice!

BEN

Can I give him an assistance by yelling encouragement to him?

BRYN

Emotional assistance.

ALEX

Yeah alright. You have to roll to see if you're actually encouraging though.

BEN

Is that diplomacy?

ALEX

Yeah give me a diplomacy check.

LYDIA

God there's so many dice in this episode.

BEN

11.

ALEX

You're ok. You're not great.

BRYN

Nope I rolled a 5 so total still 6.

ALEX

You are not able to make this and also it's a good job that he used that mercy otherwise you'd be spent because you are trying the equivalent of hauling yourself and maybe another person up because of the gravity effect.

BRYN

Hamid is just not a very physical character.

BEN

You went further that time alright. One more go and you'll have it.

LYDIA

Look I can try and pull you up.

BRYN

If you're both up there and you're both pulling maybe that extra assistance would be enough.

BEN

Alright I'll give that a go.

ALEX

In fairness Grizzop, to your eye, like might genuinely be his physical limit. It's just...he's not a big or strong person.

BEN

Ok, yeah. Do that. So when we get up there, tie yourself to the grappling hook rope and we'll pull you up. Ok.

ALEX

Give yourself the climb check.

BEN

Ok no. So what I am going to do is...so the grappling hook rope, is that hanging loose or have we tied it to...

BRYN

No we tied it.

BEN

Yeah, yeah cool. So what I'm going to do is instead of making a...I'm going to say instead of making a pure strength check by hauling myself up, I'm going to

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wrap myself around it and then scoot along and basically turn it into an acrobatics check. I'm not doing it on purely physically pushing myself up.

ALEX

Not in this situation. The extra gravity means it's strength.

BEN

Fine! Well then I'll just roll on a zero and the adventure ends but whatever.
Oh I got a natural 20.

(laughing)

BRYN

Yes!

ALEX

You can try and...

LYDIA

Your adventure continues with no escape ever!

ALEX

You can try and fight me but you have to learn these lessons.

LYDIA

You do it super easy. Get to the top and be like Hamid what did you mean?

ALEX

You get to the top and yeah, you have learnt from the others and you're like, ah I see, ok. Also I'll take this route because that splinter that'll take your head off. But yeah you make it up and you're up on top and yeah, ooh you're heavy.

BEN

Right well that was...this is all great. You can tie yourself on to the grappling hook now Hamid.

BRYN

Yeah I'll try again but if you both haul on it maybe it'll be enough to get me up there.

LYDIA

Let's do it.

BRYN

Not taking the grappling hook bit out of the table.

ALEX

Of course.

LYDIA

Am I assisting? Yeah. I hope that you didn't want me to assist because I got a natural 1.

BEN

I got a natural 1.

ALEX

Ok great. Hamid what did you roll?

LYDIA

Do we drop Hamid? Oh my god!

BRYN

I haven't rolled yet. I was waiting to see how much assistance I got. What I got...just so everyone's aware, both the people assisting me rolled natural 1s. Both of them! And I don't know this in character so I'm still going to have to make this roll and attempt this climb.

BEN

What a 1 in 400 chance that was!

ALEX

You know what would really help mitigate this and still not guarantee success? Natural 20. You should do that.

BRYN

If there was ever a time to roll a natural 20. Yes, no...

BEN

You rolled a natural 1 and I will get you back for getting rid of my other leg.

(laughing)

BRYN

Or I'll be bound for a third natural 1 in a row. I rolled an 11. That's not dramatic at all

BEN

Two natural 1s!

BRYN

That's not two 1s!

BEN

How many 1s are on the dice?!

LYDIA

Did we together throw an 11?

BRYN

That's a total of 12.

ALEX

So you originally said that you had the grappling rope and the safety rope. Are you still tied to your safety rope?

BRYN

Yeah. There is no reason to not be.

ALEX

I'll just pick up this D6 here. Fun fact, full damage calculated in D6s. Fun fact, it gets bigger the higher the gravity is. So Hamid starts climbing. You are knackered. You aren't going to manage this and you get halfway and you know. You know that you are not up to this challenge. Sasha and Grizzop you are trying to haul him up.

LYDIA

So heavy!

ALEX

He's so heavy and just by fluke Grizzop you step back and you clip the actual grappling hook because you're holding it so close. It uncatches. It immediately clips your leg as it flies with ridiculous speed. You take from the grappling hook 8 damage. Sasha, it flies past you. You have the change for a reflex save but you are taking penalties because of the gravity.

LYDIA

I rolled a...it's 14.

ALEX

No. You also take 8. Hamid. Your strength gives out and you release knowing that your friends have you.

BRYN

Oh god!

BEN

No! You're a monster!

ALEX

They don't have you. You fall hard. You fall...

BRYN

That's a lot of dice Alex!

LYDIA

He's only weak!

BRYN

Come on!

ALEX

You take 20 damage as you plummet and you fall the way that Sasha managed to avoid. It hits you entirely on your back...

BEN

Harness. Harness.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, so you're not snapped in two. It is agony and the entire harness is cutting into you and you are hanging just all limbs down, both exhausted and hanging over the edge only by the safety line.

LYDIA

And we now don't have any rope that's going over the edge for us to go...

BEN

No. Hamid! Hamid!

LYDIA

Is he alive?

BEN

Hamid!

BRYN

Owwwww

LYDIA

He's alive.

BRYN

So I am attached to the second rope that is secured at the under hang. That is...I'm hanging off that so I am...because that is...

ALEX

You are free hanging.

BRYN

Well no because that one is on the edge and so I will be hanging right next to the wall whereas if I was hanging from the grappling hook rope I'd be quite far away from the wall.

ALEX

Yes that's true, that's true.

LYDIA

So he can probably just about...

ALEX

You can reach but neither Sasha nor Grizzop can help you.

BEN

I still have rope in my pack.

BRYN

And the grappling hook rope is still attached to me.

ALEX

Uh huh.

BRYN

I am going to crawl back onto the ledge. I'll be half a dozen storeys below.

ALEX

I'll let you take...I'll just let you take that. You don't need to check.

BRYN

I'm just going to very slowly crawl and I'm going to pull the grappling hook rope back up to me and just there for a while.

ALEX

You are now fatigued.

BRYN

Just sit there for a while.

BEN

Ok right I've still got rope.

BRYN

I'm ok.

BEN

Good. We're just going to work something out. Just sit tight.

LYDIA

If you can climb back up to the top.

ALEX

Give me perception checks Sasha and Grizzop.

LYDIA

BEN

25

ALEX

21. 25. Both of you, someone is on the desk. A decent distance from you between you and the orb, let's call it. They are lingering near the edge of a ledger sort of looking around this, admittedly like four storeys tall ledger. And they are...they are definitely watching you. You can't discern any distinguishing features. They are wearing a big coat and something around their head.

LYDIA

Hey! Hey! We need help.

ALEX

The figure kind of ducks back.

BRYN

I drink a healing potion. I get five hit points back.

ALEX

So like a boss.

BEN

I'm going to take the dagger that Sasha gave me. Thanks for this. Hammer it in to the desk, tie my rope around it, tie the end of that rope to an arrow and then, hold my legs. And scoot so that I'm not hanging off the ledge but so I can get my arms over it and fire, accounting for the gravity, or trying to, and fire it so that the arrow goes near Hamid.

ALEX

Ok roll me a natural 1.

BEN

You're a monster! Ha, ha! I rolled you a 2! Take that! So that is a 13.

ALEX

You have angered your god...

BEN

No...no, what? Hold on a minute.

ALEX

You fired the arrow, the rope catches its...

BEN

Look I've got history with this. Have I actually?

ALEX

What fired the arrow?

BEN

Angered Artemis?

ALEX

No, no you've angered me and ultimately...

BEN

No you're my games master.

ALEX

Close enough.

BEN

Come on let's not...

LYDIA

More powerful.

ALEX

So you fire the arrow, the rope catches on it and it just explodes into splinters and it hits the limit of its rope and it just [exploding noise] and shards of arrow

go everywhere. You are speckled with sharp pieces of wood but you are not taking damage from them Hamid.

BEN

Sorry that didn't go quite as planned.

BRYN

It's ok, it was worth trying but it didn't really work.

BEN

How short was it to getting there? Basically can I get the dagger back out and redo it so that it gets there.

ALEX

Maybe. I mean it's going to be a tricky shot anyway.

BEN

I'll try it because you know...

BRYN

I need a rest. I'm just going to come back up to the top level but it's going to take me a while.

BEN

Ok yeah, no that's fine.

BRYN

Just don't worry about that now. We'll try again later.

BEN

Yeah we'll get something sorted out.

ALEX

All of you give me a perception check.

BRYN

All of us?

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

Ok.

LYDIA

Oh I got a natural 20.

ALEX

Good.

BRYN

Sure now you roll a natural 20.

LYDIA

Which means 30.

ALEX

Well that's an important one.

BRYN

14

BEN

11

ALEX

Sasha you feel the beginnings of some kind of tremor. Some kind of earthquake or something. The closest parallel you have is say like heavy goods vehicle when you're in the sewer underneath or something but you have the beginnings of a tremor before these guys have any clue but you can definitely feel a tremor coming on. Some kind of earthquake or something similar.

LYDIA

I think someone normal sized might be coming in.

BEN

Why are you saying that?

LYDIA

Because the ground is shaking mate.

BEN

Oh! Oh yeah.

ALEX

You begin to feel it. It's just growing steadily. It's not got a rhythm to it. It's not a [thudding noise].

BEN

Hold tight Hamid.

BRYN

Definitely doing that.

BEN

I'll back away from the edge and grab hold of the dagger.

ALEX

Hamid. You feel the tremor worse than Sasha and Grizzop. Both of your are floored by it. The combination of the shaking and the gravity...

BRYN

I pre-floored myself.

ALEX

Yeah you're pretty much pinned.

BRYN

I mean I've been crawling up the steps. So I've already been on my hands and knees.

ALEX

Funny you should say that. The steps begin to move. Specifically they begin to rotate. In fact they kind of act like an escalator.

BRYN

I hold on and stop moving.

ALEX

Pulling you up towards the top of the desk.

LYDIA

What?! That was an option!

ALEX

It's got a lot of vibration to it but it hasn't got the feeling of a mechanism. The wood itself is warping underneath you. It starts powering you up and then a hole opens in the actual desktop right next to Grizzop and Sasha.

LYDIA

I'm glad he got through but I am slightly resenting...

ALEX

And you are plopped vertically out, just [sucking noise], you are popped straight up onto the level of the desk and it's like the hole was never there. The tremor finishes.

BEN

What?!

LYDIA

That was an option?

BRYN

How did that work?

LYDIA

Did anyone ex machina with a diocese recently?

BEN

No I would've known.

LYDIA

Really?

BEN

I'm pretty sure.

ALEX

Hamid, they are both looking at you. You are looking at them and past them towards the globe...

LYDIA

Did you do that magically?

BRYN

No!

ALEX

The figure that they saw earlier is now there and approaching from the...

BRYN

Who's that?

BEN

Ah?

ALEX

A figure is loping towards you. They seem quite coordinated given the heavy gravity and all the rest. They're wearing even quite heavy clothes. Like, let's put it this way, they must be having a hard time. Same as you have your armour and it's not the choice you would have made.

BEN

It's agile armour so it's...

ALEX

True but they are approaching and as they approach you see that they are...they're very tall. They're wearing some kind of grey coat with plates. A chest plate. They are wearing leather...like hard wearing leather trousers. The coat's brilliant by the way. Like really good cut.

LYDIA

Great coat.

ALEX

Really nicely done. And they appear to be wearing some kind of, you know, head scarf or whatever and they approach.

LYDIA

Is that when it was fashionable like 50 years ago?

ALEX

They have a very kind of like Fall Out, road warrior kind of vibe to them.

BEN

They're dressed like it's a real desert but it's a desk.

ALEX

They approach and then...

LYDIA

Wait are we talking Mad Max, the kind of bondage gear-y type...

ALEX

It's too distant to tell.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

He gets closer. No. Sorry. I mean he might be up for it you don't know.

(laughing)

You shouldn't judge.

BEN

You don't know what's under the grey coat.

ALEX

Yeah you don't know. The figure approaches...

LYDIA

It's Napoleon!

BRYN

I mean it's not Liliana because Liliana's a halfling and you described this person as tall.

ALEX

The figure approaches and stands before all of you.

LYDIA

My name's Max and I'm mad.

(laughing)

BEN

It's crazy Kevin.

ALEX

How are you all? Alright? Any injuries?

BEN & BRYN

Yes!

LYDIA

Quite a lot.

BEN

Hang on a minute. I'll lay on hands.

ALEX

Who's that too?

BEN

That's Hamid. Excuse me...just poke a stranger. So you heal 4 hit points and you are no longer fatigued.

BRYN

Yay!

ALEX

I tell you what those mercies, they stack once you need.

BEN

They're real good.

ALEX

Yeah. So the figure sort of gestures for you to follow. Getting the impression that you might be having a hard time. Do you need some hand.

BRYN

It was pretty tricky getting up here.

ALEX

I wish I'd have known you were coming.

BEN

Also Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam, very nice to meet you.

ALEX

Pleasure. He reaches out. Newton.

BEN

Oh...

BRYN

Wait what?

LYDIA

What!

BEN

Newton, Newton.

BRYN

The Newton? Isaac Newton.

LYDIA

That Newton.

ALEX

Yeah that's me.

BEN

Hundreds of years ago Newton.

ALEX

What? Probably I guess.

BEN

Did you trap yourself in your own office?

BRYN

By accident or on purpose.

LYDIA

It's only about a day's walk out the door.

BRYN

Well it's more like three days.

ALEX

I feel like you might have the wrong end of the stick here.

BEN

Well I'm currently standing on a gargantuan desk so I've really not...

LYDIA

I'm out of sticks mate. I am dead out of sticks.

ALEX

Oh come on then.

BEN

Alright.

BRYN

Alex is doing an excellent walking mime whilst sitting in his chair on this audio format so the listeners know.

BEN

Be quiet everyone just mime walking, let's see [tapping noise]

ALEX

There you go. He begins walking towards, shocker, that big globe thing.

LYDIA

Could somebody...I hope no one wants me to start a small fire because I am stickless right now. I need something to...

BRYN

Let's go there and I'm sure he'll explain.

BEN

Oh no, I'll run back and get the dagger out.

LYDIA

I've got 13 daggers!

BEN

Yeah but I've only got 1! I'll "run" back.

ALEX

So yeah he's just marching.

BRYN

We'll follow him.

ALEX

He has again like, whoever this person is must be rugged as because they seem to be wearing the gravity quite well and they just start walking back towards the sphere. They don't open a conversation, they're happy to just keep loping along.

BRYN

Your name is Newton.

ALEX

Last time I checked.

BRYN

Is that your first name or your surname?

ALEX

Well that's what everyone calls me. Isaac sorry.

BRYN

You are *the* Isaac Newton?

ALEX

He kind of looks at Hamid. Yes. Anyway.

BRYN

I'm just a really big fan. Your writings are brilliant.

ALEX

It's fine I get that a lot.

BRYN

Sorry, sorry, sorry.

BEN

Personally I've barely heard of you so nice to meet you.

BRYN

I can't believe you're alive. Well I can believe you're alive. You're the world's most powerful wizard ever basically but still...

ALEX

He pulls down the headscarf and you can see rugged as. Really chiselled jaw.

BEN

Wait hang on a minute. Are you ageing here?

ALEX

I mean no.

BEN

Yes! Yes! You good thing!

ALEX

I mean technically we're ageing now but we won't be once we get to the destination.

BEN

Ok brilliant!

BRYN

But Newton is several hundred years old. I mean he was immortal because of the powerful wizards...

BEN

Yeah

BRYN

So that may not be relevant to the time situation.

BEN

Oh wait so if I go in there am I not going to age?

ALEX

Look...

BEN

Yes or no?

ALEX

I'm starting to remember why I put myself in here.

BEN

Yes or no?

ALEX

What's the question?

BEN

Am I going to stop ageing if I get in your orb thing?

ALEX

Sort of. Would you like to?

BEN

I'm going to start running.

ALEX

Great ok. He maintains that sort of loping stride and it's clear he's sort of accounting for it but yeah, you...it takes you a few hours to make that distance.

BEN

I stop running

BRYN

I apologise professor, it's been a long week.

ALEX

Ok.

BRYN

We'll try and be less irritating.

LYDIA

Wait, speak for yourself! I spy with my little eye something beginning with G.

ALEX

Do you genuinely have that?

LYDIA

Yeah to Grizzop.

BEN

I'm running ahead.

ALEX

Give me a perception check Hamid.

BRYN

24.

ALEX

He's developed a facial tic by the time you make it to the globe. You approach the globe and you see that actually whilst it may look like a snow globe it has steps leading up to it and he just walks up and then just doesn't even check on you guys, he just walks through the apparent glass of it and inside and disappears into...

BRYN

I pause briefly, turn to the other two party members, shrug and attempt to walk through.

LYDIA

It's a platform 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$ kind of situation.

ALEX

You all...enter the globe.

LYDIA

Ooh! Enter the globe!

ALEX

And I think....

BRYN

Thunder dome!

LYDIA

It's Richard Ayoade being sarcastic about how many tokens we're going to grab.

ALEX

And I think I'll end the episode there. I wonder...I wonder how many tokens you're going to get. [crystal maze theme tune]

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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