

RQG – [83] – [Fatal Attraction]

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 83 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 what.. .what?! Whom are you playing?

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun Al-Tahan

LYDIA

A human if you're asking what.

ALEX

And now who?

LYDIA

Sasha Racket if you're asking who.

BEN

A goblin paladin called Grizzop Drik Acht Amsterdam.

ALEX

Thank you for covering up my gross mistakes there!

LYDIA

Yeah!

ALEX

Team! Team!

LYDIA

Team cover-up!

ALEX

Now I believe ...

LYDIA

Whoo!

ALEX

So in the sub-quest within the sub-quest, you have made it to the top of the enormous desk cos you're all tiny – you have met Isaac Newton and you're climbing into a snow globe loosely to rescue someone called Liliana.

LYDIA

What I really love about this podcast is how it allows us to reflect on very real concerns facing us...

ALEX

Grounded.

LYDIA

Yes, grounded in reality.

ALEX

That's what I try and achieve.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [83] – [Fatal Attraction]

LYDIA

We really get to reflect on current political themes, environmental issues.

BRYN

With James not here it's been a lot less satire.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Shall I say something about Tories?

LYDIA

Marxism!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Marxism – I mean will literally, I will spin some stuff for you about you know, cyborg feminism if you want, but...

ALEX

I kind of do but at the same time, I feel like that's playing into Mr Ceiling.

BRYN

That's definitely for a cyborg game I think.

ALEX

Oh yeah!

So, I'm gonna pick up where we left off which is walking into the quote/unquote snow globe.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

You encounter no resistance – you step in and you find yourself...

BRYN

Is it like Stargate till we put our faces through and there's a "zooosh" or is it just we step through?

ALEX

You can put your hand in, it'll ripple that, you can pull it out. You can put your face through but when you put your face through you're looking at a completely different space. No "whoosh-whoosh" I'm afraid.

BRYN

Oh okay.

ALEX

It's more like if the stargate was actually just you know, not a tunnel but like an actual... anyway.

BRYN

Thanks.

LYDIA

Cheers.

BEN

Helpful.

ALEX

Thank you – I'm glad I could clear that up for all of you.

LYDIA

Useful.

ALEX

Good at the words!

BRYN

If we use a picture for us or just words.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It's just so beautiful and yet so minimal.

BEN

I walk through.

ALEX

You all step through the shimmering lights that constitute the membranous outer layer of the dome.

LYDIA

Ugh I mean that sounds sticky!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Stepping inside and through, you enter into what it is clearly...

BEN

Is that the stick you were missing last time?

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, you head into what is at first glance appears to be a garden. It has loads of trees, it has loads of bushes but it's very clearly a manicured garden – there's no wild growth here and even at an immediate glance it's a bit off. Everything is right-angles or like equilateral triangles – a few birds fly by and they're flying

...

LYDIA

Are they trying to kill us as well?

ALEX

... in a square formation and everything...

LYDIA

The birds themselves, are they squares?

ALEX

No.

LYDIA

They're not like unclear 03:28.

ALEX

All of the components of this appear normal.

LYDIA

Little wings flying.

ALEX

But when you look at the whole picture, it's very clear...

LYDIA

It's low poly.

ALEX

That this is a very ...

LYDIA

It's a low poly environment.

ALEX

... particular like set-up.

BRYN

It's been assembled by someone with a proper sense of aesthetics.

ALEX

Yes, although they also seem to have a few obsessions with symmetry as well.

BRYN

Yeah, that's what I said – a proper sense of aesthetics.

BEN

I mean don't tell **Gowdo**.

ALEX

Anyway, so you're stood at the moment to – if you look back you see that you've actually walked through what's effectively just almost a trellis gate and you look behind you and you can see yet more manicured garden disappearing off into the distance and a very distant mountain range of perfectly uniform mountains that are all equidistant from one and other in a ring around wherever you are.

BEN

This is weird!

ALEX

There is a hedge...

BRYN

I like it!

ALEX

...around the outside but it's all ... it's regular to a fault in all manner. Looking past this sort of avenue of trees and so on you can see again a perfectly squared manicured – call it like a Georgian house kind of vibe but it's very, it's basically a perfect cube just with some windows and a door in the front.

BEN

So it's a child's drawing of a house?

ALEX

Yes, but with a tiny amount of styling which is kind of a nod to maybe Georgian something like that. If you're that interested but...

LYDIA

A nod!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Let's go into the house.

ALEX

Without another word, he just carries on walking straight towards the house.

BRYN

Yeah, we'll keep following.

ALEX

I've not finished on the description though!

The gravity here is beyond normal as in like you've gone through normal and out the other side you will feel light as a feather!

BEN

Oh this is great!

ALEX

It takes a moment to coordinate yourself but compared to the like double/triple G you were pulling at the office desk, it's great – you feel like you could probably jump like 20-30 feet up in the air stuff like that.

BEN

I start chuckling and start skipping around the group.

ALEX

Yeah and it's...

LYDIA

That's very annoying.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It's peculiar when you realise that there's stuff like you could balance on a hand if you wanted easily.

LYDIA

I think Sasha probably already can.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Yeah of course – I mean but it's awkward cos it almost makes these people look like they can do acrobatics, it's a bit weird but yeah.

LYDIA

But their form is terrible!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Heading down the avenue as you do, the trees lean in towards you and bud apples and fruits as you walk past – like leaning in towards you and offering themselves effectively to you as you walk down this avenue.

BRYN

They don't try and fall on our heads?

ALEX

No, no, no.

BRYN

Good – that's an apocryphal story!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

But they are all sort of leaning out and they are within grabbing reach but not in the way and that continues down this entire avenue.

BRYN

I will grab an apple and start eating it.

ALEX

It's amazing! It's really...

LYDIA

Hamid, is it poisonous?

ALEX

...good.

BRYN

No I don't think so.

BEN

Is it square? Is it a perfect sphere?

BRYN

Oh it might be actually.

ALEX

It is a perfectly spherical apple on closer inspection.

BRYN

I have a solution but it only works for spherical apples in a vacuum!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Yeah you know this was worth visiting!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So nonetheless, yeah, you continue to head down the avenue – he heads inside and then closes the door behind him, with you guys sort of still in tow. You didn't slam it, you just sort of went in, closed the door behind him.

BRYN

I knock.

BEN

Just open the door.

ALEX

There's a delay – and then eventually there's a (*creaking of opening door*) – yeah?

BRYN

Sorry we just didn't want to be rude – we'll come in if that's okay.

ALEX

Whatever.

BEN

I've already opened the door and went through.

ALEX

He also was hmm? He's now, he sounds like he's upstairs – you find yourself in a comparatively like modest given what's going around in terms of like the garden – a modest house – it's got plain wood flooring, it has ...

LYDIA

Nothing like fractals?

ALEX

No, no, no but it does... it's all very neat. Again neat to a fault, like there are some couches around a fireplace and there's a table but everything is in line.

LYDIA

It's like Simms 1?

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Yeah, yeah – that's actually a fair description of it! That sort of uncanny valley...

LYDIA

Everything fits into a box.

ALEX

Yeah. You find yourself in a Simms house basically. Simms 1.

LYDIA

Where all the behaviours sort of lock in as soon as you're in the room.

ALEX

There you go!

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

I'm glad we found a cultural touch stone.

LYDIA

Yay!

BEN

Bi-be-de-ba!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

But yeah, he appears to be upstairs and you find yourself in what appears to be a mundane residence.

BRYN

Follow him.

LYDIA

Well it's definitely not mundane!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Heading up the stairs again there is a corridor with multiple rooms – at the end there is a door – it's a perfect replica of the office that you're in.

(Group laughter)

BEN

Nice!

LYDIA

I don't trust it, so going through in the door.

BRYN

No I'm gonna go.

LYDIA

Very carefully. Do you shrink again?

ALEX

Do you open the door or do you knock or?

BRYN

I'll knock and then without waiting I'll open.

ALEX

Sure – he says “come” – okay, as you enter the room you begin to shrink – no, no.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

No recursion – that's a very key rule! Yeah, he's there and he's working at his perfect replica desk and he again pays you no mind and he's yeah, he's just sat working – he appears to be drawing some kind of design.

LYDIA

Sasha prods Hamid.

BRYN

So Professor... well I mean it's an honour to meet you. Our friend found your message in Hannibal's tomb.

ALEX

God yes! Oh!

BRYN

I mean like it's never got there but our friend made it and found your letter.

ALEX

Oh my God! Leave me, what a dweeb! Oh God – course he didn't make it that far – I'm assuming he's dead now right?

BRYN

I believe so.

ALEX

Mmm....

LYDIA

We're looking for someone.

ALEX

Oh right, yeah, sure.

BRYN

We think we're not the first people to come and try and visit you.

ALEX

Um, I know a couple of people tried – a few of made it, like this far, I know quite like...like 6 or 7 died somewhere in the floorboards.

BEN

Did you make Einstein how he is?

ALEX

How is Einstein?

BEN

Weird!

ALEX

Weird how?

BEN

Teleporting, absent-minded.

BRYN

I mean he's pretty powerful, he's one of the greatest mages since your day most people would say.

ALEX

He seemed all right you know – he did make it this far but then...

BRYN

But that was 40 years ago in our time – I don't know how long it's been here.

ALEX

He was quite an up and comer I remember. Had a lot to prove.

BEN

Well he's the head of teleportation or whatever now.

ALEX

Good for him – I mean he probably shouldn't have tried to teleport directly from a controlled demiplane without the permission of the plane holder!

Snorts as he laughs!

BRYN

I mean that's fair. Yeah.

ALEX

Like it's not really on me – *snorts as he laughs.*

BEN

His brain went weird when he tried it.

LYDIA

Oh, okay.

ALEX

Like I said, he had a lot to prove and you know...

LYDIA

We just walked here.

ALEX

Yeah. You know, I get it.

BEN

Oh, by the way – the university's gonna be locked down and disbanded.

Dunno if that's... they might knock it down and if they knock down this room I dunno what's gonna happen.

ALEX

Unclear 10:25 move it somewhere, it's not that bigger deal.

BEN

Okay fair enough – just wanted to give you fair warning.

BRYN

So some other people that might have come are Professor Kafka and one of his students.

ALEX

Kaf... oh yeah, yeah, yeah – Kafka was... they actually um, only just left. I mean give me a second – he sort of – I don't know why I'm looking for a watch – old habit. Um yeah, Kafka went and I lose track of time – I think Liliana's still around.

BRYN

She's still here?

ALEX

She's a pretty decent assistant, I mean, you know, as far as assistants go.

BEN

Right, well yeah we've been sent to find her so let's go get her.

LYDIA

Yeah, that's convenient – whereabouts?

ALEX

I'm guessing she's probably in a lab.

LYDIA

Lab, right.

BEN

Where's that?

ALEX

Just keep heading down until you can't.

BEN

In the basement, yeah, okay.

LYDIA

I mean that is where necromancers like to hang out.

BRYN

It's all right if we go down and see her then?

ALEX

I dunno, I don't care.

BRYN

There was another question – did Tesla or Edison ever come to see you?

ALEX

Edison's not ringing a bell – Telsa, Tesla, Tesla, Tesla...

BRYN

We heard you might have helped him with a certain project – I describe the simulacrum.

ALEX

Oh! Really nice guy yeah, Liliana's still doing his work.

BEN

Wait, what?!

ALEX

That's ... she's you know, doing – I dunno – she's continuing his work – I mean he was a bit – what's the word – limited – I mean it was very ... mundane you know, it's very mechanical.

LYDIA

That's just the point of robots.

BEN

Oh now hang on a minute.

LYDIA

They will take over the world.

ALEX

Yeah, you know what I mean – like she understands – kind of generic.

BEN

But wait... okay I'm getting – when you say very mechanical, is Liliana maybe making it biological?

ALEX

I'm sure I don't know.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

I mean...

BEN

Fair enough, oh by the way, that whole like not aging thing you've got going on.

ALEX

Mmm-mmm. He's still doing paperwork and kind of giving you a cursory glance.

BEN

How does that sort of work?

ALEX

I don't age.

BEN

Yeah but why?

ALEX

I'm...*sighs* – he takes a moment, leans back, pinches the bridge of his nose –
who...*sighs* – you're in a demiplane that I hold complete control of – its both
light gravity timeless self-contained **sension** with an enhanced magical ability
so that allows me to perform the majority of my experiments. I'm in direct
connection with this entire demiplane and I'm basically its God I guess. I mean
it's very basic stuff.

BEN

Okay, not a trained mage – what you're saying is I can't... you couldn't maybe do it to me so I could walk around and not age a bit?

ALEX

Yeah, probably.

BEN

Would you mind doing that?

ALEX

Why?

BEN

I'd very much appreciate it.

ALEX

No.

BEN

Anyway that I could persuade you to do that?

ALEX

Leave and I'll think about it.

BEN

Okay. How would you get in contact with me?

ALEX

I'm really trying to be hospitable here.

BRYN

We're sorry for trespassing on your time Professor. If it's okay we'll go and speak to Liliana.

ALEX

It's not my time you're trespassing on – I kind of have as much of that as I need. It's mostly my patience.

BRYN

Yes, we'll leave you alone. Would you like us to come and say goodbye before we leave or would you prefer us just to...

ALEX

Do what you want. I think I'm being rude aren't I?

BRYN

No, no.

ALEX

Some people have told me this before.

BRYN

Not at all, it's fine.

ALEX

I tell you what – help yourself to anything you find in the vault, how about that? That's a thing people like right?

BRYN

Thank you yes.

ALEX

Go nuts.

LYDIA

Okay right.

BRYN

In terms of when we do need to leave, in a few hours or however, is there a more efficient way back or would you just like us to go the way we came? Just whatever...

ALEX

Where is it you want to go? Where is it you want to go?

LYDIA

To the door!

BEN

Of your material office.

ALEX

Sure, come find me when you're done.

BRYN

Thank you so much Professor, we won't take any more of your patience.

BEN

Yeah, just bear in mind the aging thing – very much appreciate it, if you ever need a friend, someone on the outside, that'd be great, just you know, give us a... you know.

(Laughter)

ALEX

Snorts as he laughs – he just continues laughing.

LYDIA

Grizzop, I think we should go.

BEN

Okay.

BRYN

Thank you Professor.

ALEX

Right. He's still laughing as you just close the door. Clearly the idea of a friend tickled him immensely!

BEN

Interesting guy.

LYDIA

Right – well let's go see this necromancer then.

BRYN

I still don't understand – she wasn't a necromancer when I knew her.

LYDIA

She's both Tesla's assistant and Kafka's assistant – like this woman...

BRYN

It's strange isn't it.

LYDIA

... has got career goals.

BRYN

I mean she was a very talented mage, she was one of the best in my year at Cambridge.

BEN

All right, well let's go and say hi.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BRYN

Okay.

ALEX

Okay, so presumably you head "down" until you can't go down.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

So you head down the stairs and...

BRYN

I'm assuming the vault is opposite the lab cos that's where I'd put it.

ALEX

So you head down the stairs and then shocker, you know, if you head past and you can just double down and you can keep going down – it becomes rapidly apparent that Newton might have lost track of like what floors are above and below ground a bit. So you know, you head down underground to the first level of the basement but you look out the windows and you're on the ground floor and then you head down and you go up to the second floor then back down to the first floor. You know, it's very tidy and neat but he seems to have lost track of a couple of things along the way. About four or five floors down you find yourself back on a ground floor in terms of windows and yeah, you see a vault door, like it's almost like Newton created one that is what he thinks a vault should look like, so in fact give me a disable device check – give me a disable device check – to the eyes of both Hamid and Grizzop, yeah it's a big vault door you know, big wheel in the middle.

BEN

Yeah looks like a vault door.

LYDIA

20.

ALEX

That's the stupidest door you have ever seen Lydia. Like, okay, as an example, he has this big huge vault door with the thing, it also has an open window leading to the ground floor on the other end of the room. The lock itself, he has this huge mechanism on the front and then it leads to a basic door latch – you realise it doesn't actually lock, it's just a huge door – he's just done what he thinks a vault looks like.

LYDIA

Right.

BRYN

It's got the appearance rather than the substance.

ALEX

It has the appearance of a lock and he clearly doesn't really know how they work.

LYDIA

Open the door.

BRYN

But let's go there after we've had the conversation. He said we could...

LYDIA

Your conversations takes ages!

BRYN

He said we could take anything we want but I think we should do that afterwards.

LYDIA

Okay.

BRYN

And probably shouldn't take everything.

BEN

I dunno, do you want privacy?

LYDIA

Yeah, well...

BRYN

Oh... may... no, no, it'll be fine, it'll be fine, it'll be...

BEN

No, no, don't worry, we don't mind!

LYDIA

Yeah, let's ... no let's... I could just be here at the vault and you could go do whatever you need to do.

BEN

Yeah and I'll keep Sasha company.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

And you just...

BRYN

Okay, yeah.

BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

You go have fun.

BEN

It sounds like quite an emotionally charged conversation.

LYDIA

She starts opening the vault door.

ALEX

I'm gonna follow Hamid for now and then I'll return to vault McGee over here!

So,...

BRYN

I mean if they've got any cool swag that would suit Hamid that you guys will get it for him right?

ALEX

Of course, of course, of course.

So, heading down the corridor in the opposite direction – again, it's a mundane corridor, that vault door is completely out of place – it has no reason to be there and at the other end you just see an office door that appears to be a complete replica of Newton's door just with Liliana, although it has, Liliana, it has the beginnings of like letters but they're not actually letters – it's like a picture of writing underneath Liliana in terms of a second name.

BRYN

Sure.

ALEX

I'm assuming you head in.

BRYN

Sighs – Hamid takes a very deep breath, slowly reaches towards the door, opens it gradually.

ALEX

You find yourself in what appears to be the power room for Mr Ceiling – identical, carbon copy and the four big crystals in the wall, the mechanism in the middle, the whole thing – it clearly wouldn't fit in this room but you look behind you and there's a normal office door leading into a house with a weird vault at the other end but this room is just a huge cavernous...

BRYN

The one where we released the four giant elementals and they fought each other?

ALEX

Yes, that's the one, yes.

BRYN

Right.

ALEX

And yeah it's exactly the same as it was before when you first entered that room.

BRYN

Oh weird.

ALEX

Oh, the secret door that was at the opposite end that led to the study...

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Is ajar and open and you can hear music coming out.

BRYN

I walk across the giant room – I will divert my path very slightly towards the cage that held the fire elemental in the basement of the Mr Ceiling complex and just check if there's a giant fire elemental in there cos the one...

ALEX

Maybe!

BRYN

...there before really liked me.

ALEX

There is a huge fire elemental in there.

BRYN

Okay so I'm just checking it's that. I don't go and interact with it. I'm gonna go towards...

LYDIA

You want to hold that back for when you can show off in front of the lady!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

So?

BRYN

Yeah, I'll go through the not secret-secret door.

ALEX

You head down the stairs, they're carpeted, it's quite nice and then you find yourself in an actually quite modest workshop – there are some benches and tables and a plethora of tools. And you see Liliana is facing away from you leaning over her work – she appears to have – it looks to be almost a version of what you've just walked through – like smaller crystals in her hand, there are clearly elementals in them – she's taking down some notes and she's working – she's humming to herself along with whatever music's playing on what actually is like a grammar phone on the side.

BRYN

Hi Lily.

ALEX

She stops. Puts down her crystal – straightens, and I'll take a break there!

So, welcome back. I think I'm gonna abandon the heart-warming and interesting emotional vibe to follow the people...

BRYN

Shiny star!

ALEX

The big shiny thing!

BEN

Yeah!

LYDIA

I spy with my little eye! Klunk – she doesn't see anything around – something beginning with ...

ALEX

Hoard!

LYDIA

Why are you so interested in being immortal?

BEN

Okay, right, well that's um... ah... cos I've only got a limited amount of time to you know, do good work and be a good you know, Palind of Artemis and you know, I'm worried that I won't have the chance to do right by Artemis and um, you know I've ...

LYDIA

Well surely Artemis scales down or up the good works, depending on like your timescale?

BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

That would be bad project management if he was demanding...

BEN

No but...

LYDIA

More of you than you could do in the allotted hours.

BEN

No but the point is I want to do as much as I can and what I can do now is limited cos, well you know, I've only another 20 years if I'm lucky.

LYDIA

I suppose I never really look that far ahead.

BEN

Well you know, when you sort of commit yourself to a God, you end up with like ... there's a bit of long term planning.

LYDIA

That is...

BEN

And what I said to Hamid is true, like when you, you know, die, it's not the end.

LYDIA

No.

BEN

You can still do stuff, it's just not here.

LYDIA

So I've heard this thing about ghosts right, they're like, they can do stuff, but they're invisible and they can go through walls.

BEN

Yeah, that's not... ghosts aren't good though.

LYDIA

Oh.

BEN

They're like souls that get trapped here so it's not a good time for them.

LYDIA

That sounds really useful.

BEN

You know how ghosts are always really angry all the time.

LYDIA

Well I mean...

BEN

Have you ever met a chilled out ghost?

LYDIA

No but to be fair, all the ghosts I've met I've kind of come to their house with weapons.

BEN

Yeah sure but you know, they tend to be quite annoyed.

ALEX

I'm gonna cross to Hamid – I kind of anticipated shiny things and was denied shiny things!

BEN

Blindsided!

ALEX

I know, I know! So returning to Hamid – she turns around, she looks great – in fact, she looks suspiciously great as in better than you remember her really looking as a person. She's older for about the right amount of time that should have passed between the two of you but ...

LYDIA

Six months.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, yeah like again, like it's...

LYDIA

It's been a really stressful six months.

BRYN

I mean it has for Hamid! He's probably aged loads. He's Barack Obama aging!

ALEX

Let's put it another way – what kind of age range are you looking at for yourself? So like how do you appear?

BRYN

So, yeah, I mean Hamid's ... what's he... he's 25 or 26 which at half the equivalent of about 19/20.

ALEX

So she's looking about ...

BRYN

And she's the same age as him.

ALEX

So she's then in that case, she's looking a little bit older – maybe 24 something like that. But she's grown into herself and she's got a lot of like confidence to her and she's holding herself completely differently to how you remember her.

BRYN

I mean Hamid is quite different from how he was six months ago as well.

ALEX

Yeah, a gibbering wreck mostly! No, in fairness, I think you might have actually lost some...

LYDIA

He's a tough guy.

ALEX

...weight and gotten tough and stuff.

BRYN

A bit yeah.

ALEX

I mean you're beginning to.

LYDIA

Lean!

ALEX

Nonetheless, she looks quizzically at you, walks over.

BRYN

How have you been?

ALEX

And slaps Hamid across the face as hard as she can – you have a lot of nerve coming here! A lot of nerve!

BRYN

I'm not sure I deserved that!

ALEX

She slaps you again with the back hand this time.

LYDIA

That's abuse!

ALEX

After what you did, leading Gideon astray.

BRYN

Wow! Wow!

ALEX

I'm not sure you want to be here Hamid.

BRYN

How dare you!!!!

ALEX

How dare!!!! How dare!!!!

BRYN

You have no idea what I went through.

ALEX

Yes, I do!

BRYN

You abandoned me! Look yes, I did something wrong – it was awful and I felt terrible.

ALEX

People died!

BRYN

I KNOW!!!

ALEX

You killed people! You killed multiple people.

BRYN

IT WENT WRONG!!!!

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

And people died and Gideon is the one who was responsible for that!!! What lies did he spin you?!?!?

ALEX

Oh don't give me that for goodness sake – she starts striding off and you know, smashing...

BRYN

He switched the formula without telling me!

ALEX

He switched the formula as you told him to! I've been over this with him.

BRYN

He has lied!!! I never told him to switch the formula!

ALEX

You were always trouble – you were always trouble!!!! Always trouble!!! And then shocker, the second, the absolute second that you get the chance you push things too far – for God's sake, the Dean died! Students as well!! I'm not sure how exactly you thought this was going to go Hamid but frankly I think you should leave!

BRYN

I have done...nothing since that day that has not been an attempt, an attempt to make up for what I did and the fact that you have believed Gideon!!! When he's lied about ... that is... you know exactly! I admit I have done, I was never the person that I should have been.

ALEX

No, you just left!

BRYN

You... I got kicked out!!!! Where was I supposed to go???

ALEX

You didn't even contact me. You didn't even contact anyone else – you disappeared!

BRYN

You dumped me!!!!

ALEX

Oh I'm sorry, I'm sorry – I should have stuck with the multiple killing ex-student who led Gideon astray!!!

BRYN

That's not what I mean!!! I know that what I did is inexcusable and I didn't... and I thought you were better off without me but now... the fact that you would believe Gideon!!! You know how he used to be and the fact you would believe him over me!!! I stayed away because of how bad I felt.

ALEX

You stayed away because you couldn't face the situation! You were a coward then and you're a coward now and that's why I left.

BRYN

No!!! You take that ... that's fair!

ALEX

I'm gonna cut...

BRYN

It's not fair to be angry, you don't know what's happened.

ALEX

I'm gonna cut across to the two characters who have no awareness that this discussion's happening.

LYDIA

Nah, it's great! All right, yeah, well ...

BEN

So you know just generally trying to live longer – it's good.

LYDIA

I suppose.

BEN

It means I can do more good here.

LYDIA

Right.

BEN

You know, I've got to pay my dues. Like I owe Artemis and Eva a lot.

LYDIA

I don't really... I've never really seen it like that. I was just like, you know, when you're around on this planet you've got to work hard, then it's tough. I haven't really planned much. I never got much chance to plan!

BEN

You should!

LYDIA

That's nice actually.

BEN

Yeah, it's good – it gives you motivation and you know...

LYDIA

I sort of get tossed around by the fates me. You know, running from pillar to post, monster to ghost.

(Group laughter)

BEN

Well you seem like a...

ALEX

If I had inspiration points in this system I'd give what you want!

LYDIA

Just like...

BEN

Look you seem like a pretty, pretty decent and active person, so you know.

LYDIA

Definitely active.

BEN

Maybe, maybe there's room in your life for Artemis, right, you know? She, she helped me when – well you know, Eva, she...

LYDIA

How is she with ownership?

(Laughter)

ALEX

Cut back to Hamid. So Liliana's at the other end of the table. She's now holding one of the crystals and twisting over in her hand. So why are you here?

BRYN

You were working with Kafka.

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

Well, when was the last time you saw him? Two weeks ago? A bit longer maybe?

ALEX

Um... time goes a bit weird here.

BRYN

Yeah, anyway, since then, he went crazy ...

ALEX

Couple of months maybe.

BRYN

Recovered some of the lost knowledge of Rome, tried to enact a ritual ...

ALEX

Unclear 28:58 crosstalk.

BRYN

Changed the entire city of Prague into a force of undead under his command, killed my oldest friend and my sister so maybe you have some things you regret as well. Maybe you're not perfect like you pretend to be.

ALEX

I feel like you're telling me that an atrocious disaster's happened and it's my fault. I'm pretty certain I don't follow you there Hamid.

BRYN

You apparently were Kafka's assistant when he was getting into all this stuff.

ALEX

The man just took a book! You come in here and you're bringing all this stuff, you're wildly accusing my fiancé of stuff after I've ...

BRYN

FIANCE!!!!!!

ALEX

Cut back to ...

LYDIA

Right, door, vault door opening.

ALEX

Oh you've actually opened the door?!

BEN

Very quickly, shall we maybe have a perception check?

ALEX

Oh no, no sound is transferrable.

BEN

Okay fine.

BRYN

I'm on a different plane technically.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [83] – [Fatal Attraction]

BEN

Of course it is, yeah, yeah.

ALEX

Like it's a complete kind of scene.

BRYN

I hope I didn't hurt the poor mite!

ALEX

You did but we'll work with that.

BEN

You hurt the poor listeners' ears!

LYDIA

You hurt our ears!

ALEX

So you're saying that you got round to opening the massive vault door?

LYDIA

Yes – the whole time you said unclear 30:08 crosstalk.

ALEX

Oh it's full of hoard. It's a massive hoard. It's a hoard of treasure and magical items beyond the likes of which you could ever dream.

BEN

Well I mean ownership wise, you know if you're helping people, you know.

LYDIA

Helping yourself – yourself is people, all right.

BEN

I mean if you're enabling, if you're enabling yourself to help people you know, anything is necessary really.

LYDIA

I mean the more that I own, the more that I can help people.

ALEX

Can you give me an appraise check Sasha.

LYDIA

Yeah – I think she might be... stumbling for words for excitement! 9 plus 8, so 17.

ALEX

You come to on the floor stunned.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Your detect treasure just ... it's a...

BEN

Are you all right?

ALEX

The level's too high!

LYDIA

Do I regain any hit points for happiness?

ALEX

I'm gonna give you some temporary hit points yet.

LYDIA

Oh sure, cool!

ALEX

You're up to full hit points until I say otherwise.

LYDIA

Okay, right.

BEN

Yeah, so are you okay?

LYDIA

Yeah, I think we should start ... wait ... oh she doesn't know that you can't open a bag of holding in a plane of ...

ALEX

No.

BRYN

And like it doesn't cause a problem – it just literally won't open.

LYDIA

Oh right. So she's like trying desperately to open a bag of holding. Help me get this open!

ALEX

It just feels like someone's sewed your bag together!

BEN

You're bag's stuck?

LYDIA

Yeah, it just... it won't open.

BEN

Imitates sound of efforts pulling bag apart

LYDIA

Pulling it apart, tugging.

ALEX

No. No.

LYDIA

But... this is what was, this is what I was born for!

ALEX

I mean there's a pile of bags of holding over there in the vault.

LYDIA

Do they open?

ALEX

No!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Exasperated sigh!

BEN

This is what your big plan is – it's just this?

LYDIA

How do I carry the treasure?!

ALEX

Cut back to Hamid.

LYDIA

Exasperated sigh – the emotional distress!

ALEX

Cut back to Hamid.

BRYN

FIANCE!!!! You with him!!!! And you didn't... because I wasn't... but he's worse, he always been worse, he was the one who did all the ... and I was the... him... it was him!!!!

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

You know what? You know what? None of my business, it's none of my business, it's none of my business, it's not...

ALEX

Oh you have grown haven't you?

BRYN

Why I'm here, I thought maybe, maybe ... but never mind, never mind. Look, what did you help Kafka with?

ALEX

If you must know, not that you ever took an interest before, I've been working on my PhD okay? Kafka had some work with Tesla a while ago, Edison came and revived the project – Kafka had been working with me, we'd been working on the miniaturisation of basically plainer storage compartments. We've been looking at trying to generate power that people can use safely without having to rely on these ridiculous lightning rails and other nonsense and basically that's what we've working on. Kafka thought he'd probably found something useful in that book and then he jogged off with it – I've been here working since. We've been doing some pretty ground-breaking stuff but no, Hamid must be running around chasing drama all the time. All the time. I've actually been dedicating myself to something that matters, making real progress - I

mean I know Newton's nuttier than a fruitcake but at least here I can get some work done.

BRYN

You have... you have no idea what has been happening out there in the real world while you've had your head stuck here in this project and you don't even know what is being done with the research you have contributed to.

ALEX

I least I contribute to some research – what did you ever do?

BRYN

I've saved the fricking world twice!!!

ALEX

Right, sure, okay. Look why are you here? Are you literally just here to ask what work I've been working on? Here you go – she just gestures to it. Go nuts.

BRYN

Yeah, I'll have a look through it thank you. Apart from that, I think you should really think about the uses that this research has been put to – just let me tell you about what I found under the L'Arc D'Ordateur in Paris recently.

I'm gonna launch into **the next shot**.

ALEX

I'm gonna cut back to ...

LYDIA

Oh my heart.

BEN

Oh so hang on a minute.

LYDIA

Ah...

BEN

Those bags right.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Those are bags of holding yeah?

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

They're probably full of stuff, so just pick em up and take em.

LYDIA

Okay.

BEN

I mean honestly, this Newton guy seems like a bit of a... I probably shouldn't say – anyway, not a very nice man and he did say just take whatever you want in the vault, so really we can just take as much as we can.

LYDIA

Okay – she's gonna look around for special looking daggers.

BEN

Honestly – I'm just gonna add it... honestly, you know, being stuck here isn't doing much good at all, it's what I'm saying about ownership – like he's hoarding all of this stuff in his own little plane, in his own little...

LYDIA

You know what – if this is Artemis' idea of what's good.

BEN

Any means necessary.

LYDIA

I'm really down on that.

BEN

Any means necessary! We're on a hunt – you do what needs to be done.

LYDIA

Maybe I should attend one of your services sometime.

BEN

You know, for the good of the pack all right.

LYDIA

Yeah, the good of my...

BEN

If there are any strays, if you're strong you lead, if you're weak you get help! If you're a threat you're destroyed, that's how it works.

LYDIA

Well maybe some of us...

BEN

No Kafka, Kafka was a threat.

LYDIA

Oh right okay. Cos I mean I'm quite threatening. Maybe a perception check for fancy daggers.

ALEX

Yeah please.

LYDIA

14.

ALEX

14. You notice a pile of daggers in a corner of the vault. All of them are excessive, a bunch of them are garbage, like they're expensive, they've got jewels in em but they balance for nothing, the blades are completely worked wrong.

LYDIA

Can you detect magic?

BEN

What me?

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

No.

LYDIA

Oh!

BEN

I can detect undead, you know that.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

You see two that are definitely, like definitely objectively magical.

LYDIA

Grabs, adds to inventory.

ALEX

They are... I will discuss that after the recording as to what you just picked up because no-one can identify them currently.

BEN

I'm gonna sort of while talking just grab some of the bags of holding and just shove as many as I can into my bag.

ALEX

Okay, bearing in mind bags of holding are actually quite...

LYDIA

They're valuable in themselves.

ALEX

Heavy – yes, but they're also quite heavy in themselves. So, okay you grab a bagful of bag of holding.

BEN

Yeah, how many bags of holding do I get?

LYDIA

I want a few of them.

ALEX

About 4.

LYDIA

I've got 4 times bag of holding and mystery daggers.

BEN

I had a quick check for some armour or a bow.

ALEX

There's loads. There's like loads. So, digging around – things that you find that are, that you'll either recognise as being useful, so digging around, there's a lot of valuable stuff in there – it's kind of hard to gauge power levels as in the thing you trade in, but there is one thing that you objectively recognise which is on a bust – give me – do you have knowledge history?

BEN

Probably not – I don't.

ALEX

Okay.

BEN

I've got knowledge religion, nature and geography.

ALEX

So on the bust of some probably long dead geezer, there is a necklace and you recognise that you have seen a similar one worn by basically the high priest of your Artemis – I want to say club.

LYDIA

Your frat club!

ALEX

Yeah, I want to say club!

BEN

It's not a frat house!

ALEX

So the Artemis club and you recognise it is... it's basically a necklace of sanctuary so what it is, is anyone wearing it, like a certain number of times okay, it depends on the thing – you'd have to test it – literally it wards people away from attacking you but you recognise that as a thing that was worn by the leader of your sect.

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

It's a thing that you just go "oh I know what that one does".

BEN

Grab it, fine, great.

ALEX

Great.

LYDIA

I'm gonna just keep foraging around.

ALEX

You also find yourself...

LYDIA

Occasionally giggling.

ALEX

... a magical bow – short of going out and testing it, you have no idea what it does though.

BEN

Cool, I'll write down magical bow.

LYDIA

Are there any cloaks of the bat flying around?

ALEX

There is a pile of magical clothing.

BEN

Pick us something nice for Hamid.

LYDIA

All right, he'll love that. I hope he's having a nice time.

BEN

Yeah he probably is.

ALEX

Cut back to Hamid.

So go nuts and continue telling me what I should and shouldn't be doing.

BRYN

You know what? We used to talk about Newton when we were studying together.

ALEX

And then I did something about it. Look what we've, look what I've ...

BRYN

I'm not here to rehash old mistakes Lily.

ALEX

Then why are you here? You haven't actually said – you just ask questions.

BRYN

I am... on a job, trying to figure out the mess the world has been plunged into and looking at all the problems that this research has created for the world! We always said Newton, yeah, obviously, crazy – doesn't share his stuff, but you know maybe he had a point. Maybe, maybe it was better for him to keep this knowledge to himself rather than letting people run off with it.

ALEX

I'm sorry...

BRYN

Letting people create...

ALEX

The only time that any problems actually started was when you turned everything off. As far as I'm aware everything was getting pretty well.

BRYN

Oh yeah cos harvesting brains from people that's fine!

ALEX

You have no idea where they came from.

BRYN

Erasing their memories!

ALEX

You have no idea where they came from – for all you know someone found a way to recycle people that were like bodies that were going to waste, job done and suddenly you've set people back a hundred years!

BRYN

Oh great, and it just wanted to take over the world and replace all the meritocrats.

ALEX

But yeah you're right, you're right – the whole world is split into good and bad people so I guess that makes you one of the bad ones Hamid – I mean you've killed right, so maybe we should, maybe we should, what, turn you off, right? Cos that's how, you're saying that's how simple the world is.

BRYN

So you have the same explanation for the work you did with Kafka to help him kill hundreds of people then?

ALEX

Pft! Look, you're just conflating things now.

Cut back to Grizzop and Sasha.

BEN

Well my pockets are basically full.

LYDIA

Yeah, just like it's swinging around in like this pretty magic capes, like ooh!!!

Does this one look good on me?

BEN

Yeah it does actually.

ALEX

It looks brilliant on her.

BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Is it sort of sneaky looking?

ALEX

It is, it is yeah.

LYDIA

Oh I wonder if there's any cloaks of invisibility. Would you be able to see them? Are they invisible when they're just lying around?

BEN

Well they'd have to be otherwise it'd be really hard to use them.

LYDIA

Yeah but... so there might be cloaks of invisibility all over here.

BEN

Maybe.

LYDIA

We just couldn't see them.

ALEX

So do you grab a handful of like magical clothes?

BEN

Yeah!

ALEX

Okay cool.

BEN

Are we done here?

LYDIA

I guess. Let's go see ...

BEN

Have you got something nice for Hamid?

LYDIA

Yeah, a pretty hat!

BEN

Oh nice!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Yeah, cool, let's go see how he's doing.

LYDIA

He'll like that. Yeah.

ALEX

So, cut back to Hamid and Liliana.

BRYN

I don't want to stand here arguing about it. I would like to see copies of your research – I'll take them away if you've got them spare, because someone needs to prepare the world for all the possible things that could go wrong and frankly, the last thing I hope is that you don't have to go through what I went through to find out just what a horrible person Gideon is!

ALEX

Sure, there you go – there's the work – go nuts.

LYDIA

All right Hamid!

ALEX

Who are you???

LYDIA

We're...

ALEX

Who's she?

LYDIA

They're working on the name.

BRYN

Sasha, Grizzop.

BEN

Hello.

BRYN

Liliana.

BEN

Oh you're the one we're looking for, brilliant.

LYDIA

Yeah, great, oh that's wonderful.

BRYN

We're done here.

ALEX

Please invite yourselves in.

LYDIA

Yeah, don't we need to take her...

Rusty Quill Gaming – [83] – [Fatal Attraction]

BEN

Yeah, the thing that she wanted.

LYDIA

The Coat of Mars really want her.

BEN

One of the meritocrats, the Coat of Mars, all that kind of stuff.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BRYN

They can come and get her themselves.

BEN

I think they might struggle -were we not supposed to get her?

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Draw my bow – do we need to take her?

BRYN

No I don't think so – she was missing, she's not a suspect!

BEN

Are you sure? She was working with Kafka.

LYDIA

I'm pretty sure that she was a suspect mate – they were quite keen on seeing her.

BEN

Don't move.

ALEX

Shocker – Hamid falls in with some bad friends.

BEN

Hello, I'm a Paladin of Artemis, how are you?

ALEX

Are you?

BEN

Yes. Check out the symbol and the bow.

ALEX

Okay.

LYDIA

I work with him.

BEN

So...are we...

ALEX

Right, and you just helped yourself to stuff did you?

LYDIA

Yeah, Newton told us to.

ALEX

Actually, that actually sounds about right.

BEN

So are we... she should come with us.

BRYN

No, I don't think she should.

BEN

Well I thought the merit...

LYDIA

Mate...

BEN

I'm pretty sure they wanted her.

LYDIA

They were quite insistent.

BRYN

We know what we need to know – they just wanted to know what happened.
She's not complicit with Kafka's...

BEN

So what's she doing with this um... what's she doing?

BRYN

... research.

BEN

What's she doing with this sort of simulacrum?

LYDIA

Why did that thing look like the Mr Ceiling?

BRYN

It's just the power source – it's the same principles – you could use it to power almost anything. You could use it to power the lightning rails, it'd be safer.

She's doing...

ALEX

Say it!

BRYN

She's doing good work!

ALEX

Yes! I am.

BRYN

She just needs to think carefully about how it might be used by other people!

ALEX

Yes, yes, a lecture on thinking – a lecture on thinking!

BEN

Shut up!!! Shut up!!!

ALEX

From Hamid Dean Killer.

BEN

Shut up!!! Shut up!!!

LYDIA

Wait – what?!?!

ALEX

Oh, oh your new friends don't know Hamid?!

LYDIA

Oh mate, it's not that big a deal – I've killed loads of people.

ALEX

That throws her!

BRYN

Look, it's very rich...

LYDIA

They all deserved it!

BRYN

... to hear all this criticism about friends when you've been running around with literally the worst person to have existed since Rome!!!

ALEX

Look okay, what he did after he left here is none of my concern.

BEN

Sorry, just quickly, I've got really... we really haven't got time really, you know, so can we just speed this up? I'm pretty sure she's wanted.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BRYN

We know everything we need to know – she's been very upfront – I've got copies of all the research, we can take this back and show them – if they want to get her, they can get her themselves.

ALEX

You know what??? You know what??? Fine!!! She starts packing her stuff up – yeah, you're right, I probably should present my amazing world defining epoch reigning research, maybe say hello, maybe present my work and stop you copying it the way you always did with Gideon! Maybe I should actually you

Rusty Quill Gaming – [83] – [Fatal Attraction]

know, get my work out there – you’re right – maybe I haven’t **unclear 43:39**
crosstalk.

BRYN

Because Gideon was such a talented wizard! It’s the reason he got kicked out as well!!!

ALEX

We’re leaving! She’s literally talking to Grizzop and Sasha – we’re leaving! She starts just walking out with her pack of research.

LYDIA

I’ve got a bit of mixed interest and it’s going well Hamid, since they were quite keen on executing me.

BEN

Anyway, by the way, Sasha got you a really nice hat!

LYDIA

Look, here!

BRYN

Oh thanks Sasha, it’s lovely! I’ll just have a quickcheck though in case there’s anything else.

LYDIA

Oh all right.

BRYN

Just, I'll just be three minutes.

LYDIA

All right.

BEN

I'm gonna make a wisdom check but you know ... no, no, absolutely not! Yeah, right cool!

Laughter

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

She's already gone like, she's already gone up the stairs and is just walking off.

BRYN

I don't care!

BEN

I'll run after Liliana cos technically she's a prisoner.

BRYN

I'm gonna stick my head in the vault, try very hard not to have my mind blown.

LYDIA

Can you detect magic on these Hamid?

BRYN

Yes, but I'm not going to. Not until we're somewhere safer.

LYDIA

What if there's something really valuable down here and we miss it?

ALEX

It's pretty much all valuable.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Do you have knowledge history by the way?

BRYN

Almost guaranteed. No.

LYDIA

Hamid, you can't understand the pain I've been going through in the last 15 minutes or so.

BRYN

I have ...

LYDIA

It's so agonising.

BRYN

... enough knowledge of spell craft arcana to pick out a couple of things – we can sort that out later off screen.

ALEX

Yes, of course we can.

LYDIA

It was honestly so difficult for me these last few minutes.

ALEX

You've no idea Hamid, you've no idea how hard it's been.

LYDIA

You don't have a clue!

ALEX

So, yeah, I think I'm gonna go ahead and wrap up there as your prisoner wanders off and the rest of you don't understand the pain that Sasha's in – the real trauma that she's been going through.

LYDIA

I just can't take all this **unclear 45:15** crosstalk.

BRYN

Yeah, must have been really emotional for you these last few episodes, can't imagine how difficult that's been!

LYDIA

It's really hard!

ALEX

Bye guys.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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