

RQG – 86 – Clerical Errors

Content Warnings

- X
- X

BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of patrons. Garrett Monroe, Chris Maine, John W Thompson, Gavin Taylor Black, Eliza Margaret, MJ Stokish, Dawn A Visenberger, Mark Young, Andrew Copin, Douglas Lewis. 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 86 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

BEN

Ben Meredith

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

HELEN

Helen Gould

(cheering)

BRYN

Helen's first appearance in the opening credits!

HELEN

Yeah it is!

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam

BRYN

Hamid Salah Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Er like Sasha Racket

HELEN

Azu. No second name.

ALEX

Now you've finished your first opening credits. How do you feel? Do you feel good?

HELEN

I am feeling pretty, pretty good yeah.

ALEX

Got a bunch of friends, bunch of pals.

LYDIA

Buddies? Yay!

HELEN

You are all my friends.

BRYN

Contractually obligated acquaintances.

BEN

Are you like Bjork?

(laughing)

HELEN

I don't understand that reference

BRYN

Or Madonna

BEN

Mononym

ALEX

Cher?

HELEN

Ohhhh!

BEN

Sting

BRYN

The pope

ALEX

Lenny and Carl

HELEN

God!

BEN

God! Oh god, just aiming high. I guess Aphrodite's a mononym. She's not called Aphrodite Zeus

HELEN

Zeus's daughter.

ALEX

I mean in fairness Azu's entrance was, hi, cool what's your thing? I want to be the best person there is at what I do.

BRYN

Welcome aboard!

BEN

Nailed it!

ALEX

So picking up very, very quickly...

LYDIA

All these people that expect to live a long time they have very strange aims

BRYN

Oh you gave a little cliff hanger didn't you, you...

ALEX

I did. I did.

BEN

Sasha, I'm not going to live a long time and it's a bit of a sore point.

LYDIA

Sasha never expected to live a long time either.

BEN

I just can't. I can't expect. I'll live to 30 and that's it.

LYDIA

I've been exploded twice!

BEN

You have been. One and a half times.

LYDIA

Statistically...yeah. I've actually already died. I am partly dead now.

ALEX

Yeah mostly dead now. I think.

LYDIA

Yeah! That's one thing, like oh I'm not going to live very long. What's it like being alive mate?!

ALEX

Party's in Cairo. Sandstorm. In hospital. We will start at the next morning.

BEN

There was a recall.

ALEX

Hang on. Ignore me. I did a cliff hanger and then just left it.

BRYN

My hand got hot.

ALEX

That was it.

BEN

Just really hot hands!

ALEX

Hot hands! Hot hands. We will pick up exactly where we left off actually.

BRYN

Which was Hamid going, ohhh.

ALEX

So how are you Hamid?

BRYN

Well not great to be honest. I mean did you see...hear...I don't know how this works. Are you aware of all the death?

ALEX

You might need to be a tad more specific there Hamid old friend.

BRYN

Well my friend Bertie died and my sister died. So it's not been a great week actually.

ALEX

Ah fair enough.

BRYN

You gonna pile on?

ALEX

Well I...

BRYN

Might as well do it now! You've started haven't you!

ALEX

Ooh, you got feisty!

BRYN

Yes!

ALEX

Well that ring that you're carrying...

BRYN

The one I'm wearing?

ALEX

Would you like to finish with it now?

BRYN

I suppose.

ALEX

Excellent. I'd like you to deliver it to Saleh please.

BRYN

Well...I mean...I'm not going to make him put it on. I'm going to tell him what it is.

ALEX

Did I tell you to tell him? I'm fairly certain I just said deliver it. We did have an arrangement. It would be a shame to have to chase up the ramifications of you not following through.

BRYN

What exactly...what exactly are you implying? I'm very tired. This is not a good time for vague threats. How about you just make an explicit one?

ALEX

It's fine. You have a good night's rest Hamid.

BRYN

Yeah that'll definitely happen now. Thanks.

BEN

What Barret doesn't know is we've levelled up five times...

(laughing)

So we'll wreck him!

BRYN

I'm on level 2. Are you?!

LYDIA

Has he been training his henchmen like really hard since then.

BEN

I've got to catch up with them, they're protagonists, this is awful.

ALEX

I need you to find me 6000 boar. And yeah that hot feeling in the ring seems to go away. For all the rest of you, Hamid just started to talking to himself

BEN

Oh that was audible right.

ALEX

Oh yeah.

HELEN

Ooh! Interesting.

BEN

Er Hamid?

BRYN

Yeah

BEN

We were just playing cards and then you started talking to nobody about...this isn't his voice...explicit threats. There you go.

LYDIA

Wait, wait, wait, if we were playing cards while you're looking away, Sasha moves some of the chips.

ALEX

Give me a sleight of hand.

LYDIA

Yes finally!

BRYN

And a perception to contest!

LYDIA

7 + 13. 20 but not natural

BEN

Natural 20. 27. Oi, leave it.

LYDIA

Oh!

BRYN

So I have this magic ring that was given to me by Other London's premier crime lord and now he can talk to me sometimes and I can't take it off because it's cursed.

LYDIA

How many times has he spoken to you?

BRYN

Just now. That would be the first time.

LYDIA

That's the first time.

HELEN

A crime lord?

BEN

Yeah this is...why?

LYDIA

He had something that we needed early on.

BRYN

Well he kind of captured us.

LYDIA

He did that as well.

BRYN

And I was forced to accept it in order to be let go.

HELEN

This sounds like someone who deserves some justice reaped upon him.

LYDIA

Yeah...

BRYN

Yeah...

LYDIA

He needs quite a bit of that, yeah.

BRYN

He's got quite a solid powerbase, we didn't want to...

HELEN

We can destroy that with the power of Aphrodite behind me...

BEN

Wait.

HELEN

By the power of the gods!

BEN

Alright, yeah I'll take it.

BRYN

I mean it's not really a priority. I agree it would be the right thing to do in the long run.

HELEN

Well then of course we must do the right thing.

LYDIA

There's a lot of right things to choose from though right.

HELEN

Isn't it wonderful?

(laughing)

BRYN

Yeah...

BEN

Isn't it halfway across the world?

LYDIA

Yeah

BRYN

But I mean...

LYDIA

And we found out since then that he's probably got connections with other crime lords who are feeding brains to ceiling monsters...

HELEN

What?!

LYDIA

...and it all seems like quite a network of awful.

BEN

We might want to get...Azu caught up.

HELEN

This sounds like you've been on some very interesting adventures.

LYDIA

Oh you haven't heard...

BRYN

Pretty much, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

LYDIA

I think we should sleep now though.

(laughing)

BEN

How about you guys sleep and I'll fill Azu in because you've told me so...

ALEX

Like a game of broken telephone.

BEN

Yeah so I'll get it right.

LYDIA

So by the time Azu hears it, the Kew Gardens monster was 12 Berties and we built a museum out of ogres and the dog is a wolf.

HELEN

Lovely

BEN

Right so if you guys just get some sleep and I'll do it. I'm not that...

ALEX

Just go to sleep Hamid! Just rest your head. Just have a good night.

HELEN

Tell me the strange tales.

BEN

Right so basically as far as I understand it they started off in London right and there was a robot...like a...well I dunno, it's a new thing....well no they got them in...yeah it's a robot. Robot's fine. And then it got blown up and bits of got nicked but the problem is the robot could make more of itself so that means infinite robots which obviously is quite bad.

HELEN

A plague!

BEN

Yeah exactly. Exactly. So infinite robots doing infinite things. And then they went to underneath London and then that chap got 'em and did some stuff and there was a ring. I dunno. They didn't tell me that bit really but you know, whatever. And then they left right and then they tried to go to Paris but first they had to get in a little tiny boat and then they almost drowned and then they had a car chase and they almost died...

HELEN

In the sea?

BEN

No. In the land. After the sea on the way to Paris I think.

ALEX

Worst story ever! Keep going.

BEN

Yep and then...look there's a lot here ok. Do you mind? This is a private room!

(laughing)

ALEX

Sorry!

BEN

Thank you.

ALEX

The caretaker goes out. I'll come back in the morning.

BEN

Everybody has a real problem with privacy. Is that...anyway, and then when they get to Paris they got stolen by a ceiling monster who was made of brains

that they nicked and then they killed him but actually they didn't but then they did.

(laughing)

ALEX

I hope you're keeping track of all this!

BEN

And then because they killed the ceiling monster all the banks fell over. Oh yeah that was them.

HELEN

What? All of...all of our technology.

BEN

Yeah turns out the ceiling monster was secretly running everything. Didn't know. But the ceiling monster wanted to build ore of itself so that means like again, we're getting into robots wanting to make...

HELEN

But what happened to the first plague of robots?

BEN

No...no that hasn't happened yet. That's what we're looking for. So they stole the robots. They stole the plans for the robots so if somebody builds the

robot, then once the robot is built then the robot can build more of the robot. Then you've got a problem because that means lots of robots. But this other robot, the ceiling robot, wanted to build more of itself but its made out of brains, not robots...

ALEX

Grizzop's actually picked up a really, really solid amount of info here. I'm really impressed.

BEN

Yes. What a good amount of info I've picked up that I didn't absolutely already know! That's been told off camera.

ALEX

Keep going.

BEN

Right so but then it wanted to make itself using more brains and it wanted to build itself under Cairo but it didn't or maybe it did. I don't know. But the banks still fell over so I assume it didn't. And then they came to Prague. And then Frans Kafka who is a professor of necromancy at the University of Prague wanted to create a plague of zombies. I don't think that's related to the robots but it was just bad and I was supposed to be chasing after Frans Kafka, I bumped into them when zombies attacked and the rest as they say is...you don't know that!

(laughing)

Ok so...right so...then we chased down Frans Kafka to the opera where Hamid's sister was singing and Frans Kafka cast a spell to scare everybody and then we were trying to stop it in the basement with some big zombies and then he picked up Hamid's sister and Bertie and strangled them both and threw her against the wall and then Bertie died.

HELEN

We must kill Frans Kafka.

BEN

He's dead.

HELEN

Oh! Wonderful work.

BEN

We already killed him, yeah. Which is the point but unfortunately Hamid's sister...

HELEN

A truly great quest group I have joined.

BEN

Well you know, I'm pretty good. I think these guys are fine too. That's unfair. They've been very competent. Well Sasha has. Yeah because Hamid turned into like a weird animal thing. Like a little lizard boy.

(laughing)

ALEX

That's exactly as glamorous as I remember it!

BRYN

Accurate!

BEN

Yeah I had to go and catch him. He was hiding on a roof. It was really annoying but I shouldn't really be...it's not a time for levity because he was a lizard boy. But then we went back to the...the university and then the Mars lot got involved. You know about the...just authoritarian. Stomping all over the place. You know...

HELEN

We hate them!

BEN

Good. Great! Something we can agree on because they're just awful honestly. And then someone shouted at me in a room for ages but they were rubbish at it.

(laughing)

Then we went into Isaac Newton's office and we walked across his floor for three days and we found his second office which was really small.

(laughing)

And then we went and found this horrible woman that Hamid was sleeping with at some point and then...but she was awful as well but she helped build the power source I think for the ceiling robot...I didn't really catch that bit. There was a vault, there was lots of stuff in it so we were just having fun there.

HELEN

Was Hamid still a lizard while she was sleeping...

BEN

Oh no he stopped being a lizard. Kafka made him a lizard for a bit...

HELEN

He got better?

BEN

Yeah he got better.

(laughing)

Yeah.

BRYN

Well when you say it like that, it sounds ridiculous!

(laughing)

HELEN

It's literally the first time I'm hearing any of this!

ALEX

For the audience's benefit, this is Helen actually being caught up. What you're hearing is exactly what she has...

BEN

This is all the information...

LYDIA

Helen signed up for this on very little evidence or grounds really.

BEN

But we met this very strange German guy I think, called Einstein. He's very good at teleportation and he agreed to teleport us out to Cairo and then he teleported us to Cairo which is where you found us which is why we were very confused because he went we're going to Cairo which is a city and then boom. Sandstorm. Which isn't very city like. But it was. And now as they say, the rest is tonight.

(laughing)

(applause)

ALEX

I'm really impressed!

HELEN

This is a lot to take in.

BEN

Yeah. Yeah it is.

LYDIA

Sasha leans up. There was also a dog.

(laughing)

HELEN

A dog you say?

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Yeah but Bertie's dead so it's not really relevant.

ALEX

Ooh cold.

LYDIA

You never met the dog.

BEN

No. You told me about a dog but it was Bertie's dog and now he's gone so...

LYDIA

Yeah it was...

BEN

A dog's a dog.

LYDIA

It was a very snobbish dog.

BEN

Really?

LYDIA

Yeah

HELEN

Camels are better than dogs.

BEN

Fair enough. Anyway that's the story so far.

HELEN

Wonderful.

BEN

Yeah we should probably get some sleep now.

HELEN

Yes, let's.

BEN

Alright.

ALEX

Cut to the next morning.

LYDIA

Sasha's going to get up super early.

ALEX

Sure

LYDIA

And go downstairs and look for some healing.

ALEX

Have a wander?

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Ok then. Give me a...

BRYN

Knowledge local.

ALEX

Yeah give me a knowledge local.

LYDIA

Oh natural 1. Makes sense!

BRYN

The dice know! It's just wonderful

ALEX

You head down the stairs and you sort of are having a wander around. Almost everyone's asleep and it's really kind of annoying and then you keep going around, keep going around and then finally you see some people who are up

and about and you're talking to them and you have that thing where you're having a conversation and then you're following them and then long story short, you find yourself in a room where every, single person in the beds looks awful and all of the attendant priests are staring at you wearing masks, gloves and full overalls and they're just looking at you going, what are you doing in here. You just kind of lost track of where you were and you found yourself in that ward.

LYDIA

Are any of you familiar with deadness?

(laughing)

ALEX

I'm going to return to that. Meanwhile the rest of the party awake. You may have heard Sasha get up but it was like a...

LYDIA

You never. No.

ALEX

Actually, you know what, give me a stealth check if you're trying to keep quiet.

LYDIA

18 + 17.

BRYN

+ 17! Wow! Oh yeah you've got the Cloak of Elven kind now don't you.

LYDIA

Oh, I hadn't even added that!

BRYN

Oh my god!

LYDIA

So that's...my misc mod is 3, my rank is 6, and then...oh no that's 13. I just can't do maths!

ALEX

So basically it's...

LYDIA

Lots

ALEX

Loads. 36. Yeah ok. You all awake. Sasha has gone.

HELEN

Where is our companion?

BRYN

Oh she tends to get up earlier than the rest of us. She'll be along for breakfast I'm sure.

BEN

Well let's...

BRYN

She's very good at finding her way around.

BEN

Well we should check outside.

LYDIA

You think!

BRYN

Open the shutters.

ALEX

There is no sandstorm!

(cheering)

What you do see is...the best parallel I can give you, is a very, very distressed Las Vegas.

(laughing)

So you are...you are looking at very, very glitzy, very, very glamourous...

LYDIA

Like Fall Out Las Vegas?

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, like almost Fall Out New Vegas but not rebuilt. More like the old Vegas and no one's got around to cleaning it up. So there's sand piled up in random places. There's a few people out who are sweeping but they kind of feel like this is a little bit superfluous. Much like in Paris there are some vehicles that have pulled up that have clearly been pulled up for a while now. It looks like there is a lot of leisure buildings. There are things that, even to your eye, look like casinos, hotels that kind of things. In the distance off to the right hand side you can see in extremely bright glint some kind of pyramid structure. I'm going to go ahead and say it's a pyramid.

BEN

Oh!

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, yeah but it's had hard times. It's like the desert has decided to reclaim Cairo and there's not a lot of people out and the people that are look kind of a little bit of a loss of what to do. Meanwhile Hamid, your hand gets hot. Morning Hamid

BRYN

Good morning!

BEN

Oh morning.

ALEX

How are we doing Hamid?

BRYN

Well the sandstorm's stopped so that's an improvement.

BEN

It has. We can see.

ALEX

Good to hear.

BRYN

I point at my finger.

BEN

Ohhhh!

ALEX

So are we feeling ready to chat now Hamid?

BRYN

I suppose so.

ALEX

So I repeat it would be a great help to me if you would deliver the ring to your older brother.

BRYN

Oh I thought you meant my father. You really should be clearer. Like I mean they've got the same name. It's important to distinguish.

ALEX

I'm going to be honest, I kind of liked you better when you were terrified. I'd like you to deliver the ring to your brother. If you don't I'll be *very* disappointed.

BRYN

I mean I can finally take it off.

ALEX

Oh yes.

HELEN

Can I cast detect evil on Bryn?

ALEX

Er yes.

HELEN

Wait, what do I need to do?

BEN

You don't have to roll.

HELEN

Oh! Is the ring evil?

BRYN

No.

ALEX

The ring is technically not evil. It does not register...

BRYN

It's the person on the other end of the ring that's evil!

HELEN

Damn!

LYDIA

Does his evil not leak through?

ALEX

No

HELEN

That's what I would've thought.

LYDIA

Like a bad smell!

HELEN

That's how I thought magic rings worked.

ALEX

If you fart down the phone does it smell at the other end?

(laughing)

LYDIA

Hey! You don't know how bad!

HELEN

You've got to test that.

BRYN

Yeah to be fair I've never farted down the phone so how do I know?!

(laughing)

ALEX

What did you do with your childhood?! How did you learn these important...

LYDIA

Not that!

ALEX

You've got to learn this stuff. Come on!

BRYN

So what's your interest in my brother?

ALEX

I believe it is none of your business.

BRYN

Well it is sort of my business since you're making me an intermediary. That does involve me in the situation. Almost the definition. You've employed me to do this job. I mean not by paying me money but...

ALEX

I repeat I'm not entirely sure what I owe you there Hamid. You know what fine, you want to know my business with your brother.

BRYN

Yes!

ALEX

There's an item which is to be delivered to your brother. That item is a ring that you're wearing. This is the business that I have with your brother. Nice and clear?

BRYN

I mean if that's all the instructions you have then sure, let's go with that.

ALEX

There we go. Please do so quickly and give my best to Sasha.

BRYN

No! I absolutely will not! Bye!

ALEX

Your ring ceases to be hot.

BEN

Sounded like it went well.

BRYN

We'll see.

HELEN

This is the crime lord.

BRYN

Unfortunately so.

BEN

Are you going to do what he asks?

HELEN

I recommend you do not.

BEN

Yeah

BRYN

I mean if it gives me an opportunity to finally take the ring off, I'm going to take the ring off.

BEN

It's your brother!

BRYN

I'm not going to force anyone to put it on.

HELEN

Why can't you take it off right now? Is it...

BRYN

I reach over and show you. It doesn't move.

BEN

You should try

HELEN

Yes I shall! I'm going to attempt to remove the ring from your finger.

BRYN

Arrgghhhh. Is anyone familiar with the term degloving?

(groaning)

ALEX

That doesn't happen!

LYDIA

No! Just dislocate it maybe.

ALEX

Non cannon. Non cannon.

HELEN

I try gently.

LYDIA

No! Bad!

HELEN

And my hands are way bigger than your hands

BRYN

Yeah you can't even really get a good purchase on it. You can't get much at all.

ALEX

Absolutely tiny!

HELEN

I'm basically just holding your hand.

BRYN

Pawing at the top of the ring!

ALEX

So that happens. Cutting back to Sasha. Having been quietly but incredibly firmly escorted out of the highly contagious ward...

BRYN

You're probably immune because you're undead.

LYDIA

Yeah there's probably not a problem mate.

ALEX

And have basically been brought back to the extremely, extremely snooty elven person who was at the front desk and is in an office this time. Quietly looking slightly wearily at you.

LYDIA

Alright, so I've got a problem for you.

ALEX

Everyone always does.

LYDIA

I mean you are...I mean this is your...this is your job.

ALEX

Calling. Sure.

LYDIA

Right, so I got a bit dead and then I got a bit fixed.

ALEX

I can see that.

LYDIA

And rearranged a bit. And now that's a problem. So I wondered if you could help me with my problem.

ALEX

What is the problem exactly?

LYDIA

Well I keep waking up covered in blood. I assume she...did she wake up covered in blood today? Did I roll for it?

ALEX

Give me a con save please.

LYDIA

15.

ALEX

Not really, no. You woke up in decent enough shape today.

LYDIA

So I wouldn't complain usually if it was this bad but it's usually worse. Right...so just a bit...I think I've got a mild case of dead.

ALEX

I mean would you say it's affecting your quality of life?

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Ok. Alright let's have a look shall we? Would you lie down for me please?

LYDIA

On my front I assume?

ALEX

It's all the same to me.

LYDIA

I mean her back's all covered in blood but also I suppose her chest does open up where she got sliced open.

ALEX

Yeah there's stuff all over.

BEN

The dissection scar.

ALEX

Long story short, there's a...there's some glowing and there's some tingling. Eventually a...oh right. I see. Oh now that is interesting. Oh right, well, tell you what, sit back up.

LYDIA

Ow. Yeah.

ALEX

Are you aware...

LYDIA

No.

ALEX

That to all intents and purposes it's not so much that you're a little bit dead as you are dead.

LYDIA

Well now I am aware of that, yes.

ALEX

Right so...I think it's time we probably have a little bit of a chat about how we...

LYDIA

I've got money.

ALEX

That's not...right. I'm going to take a break there and be back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. So sticking with Sasha.

LYDIA

As a proportion of dead.

ALEX

There's...

LYDIA

Because I'm obviously not what dead people usually do. I am aware of the exceptions to the dead rule. I have seen zombies. I have sliced zombies open. Skeletons. Skeletons are not my friend. Can't stab them in the kidneys because they ain't got none. Right. I have kidneys. At least I assume. Zolf would've seen them.

ALEX

You're just getting a blank stare.

LYDIA

I mean you could ask him but he's gone now. Not because I killed him or anything but he's just gone. So right, like, can you fix it? I thought you were good at your job?!

ALEX

I'm the best at my job

LYDIA

Well then you should be able to fix it.

(laughing)

HELEN

She's got a point!

BRYN

Sasha, making friends and influencing people.

LYDIA

She's intelligent. She sees to the point but she's very unwise. Oh no, no, she's wise as well. She just can't express herself in any way that people would like.

ALEX

Let me break it down.

LYDIA

Right

ALEX

There is one way I know which...well I suppose there's two but the main way that I know that I could have you fit and healthy walking around would be...probably to destroy you, then...

LYDIA

Right, I'm listening.

ALEX

...resurrect you but Aphrodite, we're not really into the whole resurrection thing so we'd probably need to get another party involved there.

LYDIA

Who would that be?

ALEX

Hmm...the Zeus lot tend to play around a lot. I mean...

LYDIA

Right where's Zeus based then?

ALEX

All over the place

LYDIA

Oh right, cool. Near here?

ALEX

The Meritocrats tend to step in a little bit on that.

LYDIA

Don't worry about them!

ALEX

But that would require us to destroy you and there's no guarantee that that would work.

LYDIA

Right. What's the other way? Let me see the menu again!

ALEX

Well let's go over your treatment options shall we. I mean have you considered just pain management?

LYDIA

I mean it doesn't hurt that much.

ALEX

There you go then! Look I could destroy you and we could try and resurrect you. Frankly it's extremely high risk and I wouldn't recommend it. Also, I'm going to be honest. There's a solid chance that you might just end up bits but not actually dead. And then what happens if say we try to burn you and you don't die. It's an inelegant solution to the problem.

LYDIA

Inelegant?

ALEX

Yes

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

Lacking in elegance.

LYDIA

I understand what the word means.

(laughing)

I was just...

ALEX

Repeating my words.

LYDIA

I was questioning your choice of words.

ALEX

Oh ok. It is both inefficient and distasteful for everyone involved.

LYDIA

Yeah that sounds better, yeah. What was the other option? So pain management but now it's getting all confusing, do I get healed by healing or do I get healed by....

ALEX

Oh goodness no. Goodness no that would hurt all so much. You probably need to find some kind of necromancer. A lot of wall magics would probably heal you.

LYDIA

Buddy up with a necromancer.

ALEX

Yeah that would work. I suppose I wouldn't recommend it. They tend to, you know, command the undead so take that with a pinch of salt. There is...look we did used to have an artifact that would be able to actually help you.

LYDIA

Right that sounds like a...

ALEX

Unfortunately it was...

LYDIA

Stolen by somebody just within my powers of defeating?

BRYN

Ah genre savvy the best ability of all.

ALEX

What a peculiar statement. No. Not at all. It was confiscated by the Meritocrats. They have...they're a big fan of keeping tabs on items and people of power, shall we say.

LYDIA

Oh right, grand. So I just need to ask them for it.

ALEX

Sure.

LYDIA

Great, because they're my mates.

ALEX

You know what? All the best to...what I would ask is if you are able to fetch the Heart of Aphrodite and then arrange for it to be returned to us, that would be immensely helpful.

LYDIA

Yeah I'm sure it would but it sounds like it would be quite helpful to me as well.

ALEX

I mean it's not like a one use thing. I feel like we're talking at cross purposes here.

LYDIA

I'd like to...I mean do you wear it? Is it pretty? I don't like pretty things.

(laughing)

ALEX

I'm going to cross cut back to the rest of the party. You have eaten.

LYDIA

It sounds a bit dainty.

ALEX

Sasha is still not around. You have eaten and you are ready for the day ahead. What that day entails is entirely up to you but nonetheless.

HELEN

We must find Sasha. We cannot go on an adventure without the full complement of our party.

BRYN

She'll be around here somewhere, I'm sure. She normally turns up for breakfast.

HELEN

Then we must mount a search party.

BEN

You could ask that Adrian guy.

HELEN

Who?

BEN

You know the...the elf. The rude one.

HELEN

Eren?

BEN

Yeah.

HELEN

He's far too busy.

BRYN

We can ask if anyone's seen her.

BEN

Why is he busy? He was taking enough time earwiggling on us. He obviously didn't have too much going on in his day.

HELEN

Well you were strangers in the hospital.

BEN

The hospital's full of strangers. That's the point.

(laughing)

If you only healed your family it wouldn't be good.

ALEX

That was far too quick!

BEN

I've got charisma, not wisdom!

HELEN

You were new strangers and also I had brought you in and he is...

BEN

Well you could ask him then. With your mates.

HELEN

If you...yes. Very well. If you think that would be...

BEN

Yeah, no, it would be really helpful to...

BRYN

I walk up to a random person in the cafeteria and ask them if they've seen our friend Sasha and start to describe her.

ALEX

The extremely elderly woman that you're talking to goes, no.

BRYN

Thank you. Go to the next person and repeat.

ALEX

I'm going to skip ahead for the sake of my sanity mainly! To describe what everyone else is doing, Hamid is questioning literally every, single person in sight one at a time.

BRYN

Well one of them's going to have seen her.

ALEX

Presumably Grizzop's head is in his hands?

BEN

No I'm talking to...

HELEN

Yeah you're...

BEN

Ignoring what this joker is up to.

ALEX

All I was going to say is are you going to ask Eren or not?

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

So that's the bit that I will skip to.

BEN

On our way I'll be like, Hamid, come on. We're going to do something useful.

BRYN

Ok.

ALEX

Sasha back to you.

LYDIA

Yeah. So is there like an anti-heal, like the equivalent of a heal potions.

ALEX

Yes, it's called inflict wounds.

LYDIA

So that...and if I just get a subscription to that...

ALEX

Find a cleric...It's not...

LYDIA

If I could just pay by a convenient monthly payment and they send it to my address.

(laughing)

Subscribe and then just...annual subscription

ALEX

You're going to just have to bear with me. Look I'm trying to keep track of just how many of our rules you're breaking, just in this conversation whilst I talk to you.

LYDIA

Rules aren't useful.

ALEX

Clearly! Clearly. So, he takes a moment, composes himself, straightens himself, swoops back the hair.

BRYN

Of course.

ALEX

So, in order to aid you my child we either can provide you with an extremely risky procedure I would not recommend. You could make your own arrangements with clerics of disreputable nature etc. or if you could somehow convince your superiors to release an extremely powerful magical artifact back into the hands of Aphrodite we would be able to use it to heal you entirely.

LYDIA

Or I could just buy a bunch of inflict wounds and have one every morning.

ALEX

Yes that would last a while. Yes.

LYDIA

Last a while? What do you mean "last a while"?

ALEX

Well how long has it taken for the situation to progress from effectively full vitality to your situation now?

LYDIA

Oh, like months.

ALEX

Months?

LYDIA

It's been like a month or two right? Since Paris.

BEN

It's been like three weeks hasn't it.

ALEX

It's been a fortnight tops.

LYDIA

Oh right ok, so like a fortnight.

ALEX

Ok well considering like a non linear progression, yes that would probably extend it to maybe a month and a half.

LYDIA

A month and a half! You're saying I'll be dead in a month?

ALEX

No! You are dead.

LYDIA

Oh right.

ALEX

I'm saying you'll be something else.

LYDIA

Oh right, oh ok. Ah well, that takes a lot of worries off the table. No retirement plans here.

ALEX

What an incredibly positive attitude. You know the first step towards healing...

LYDIA

Well I don't want to get healed do I?!

(laughing)

ALEX

At which point the door opens and...well Azu, do you knock? What do you do?

HELEN

I...Azu knocks very politely. I don't know what a polite knock sounds like. Timid perhaps.

ALEX

Come Azu.

LYDIA

Hi, so Grizzop I'm going to need you to call up Wilde...

HELEN

You're here Sasha, I was just looking for you.

LYDIA

Yeah. Good. Right so yeah Grizzop I'm going to need you...

ALEX

So this is just going to happen in my office then?

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Yeah looks like it.

HELEN

My apologies High Priest.

LYDIA

So I'm going to die in a month but like reverse.

HELEN

What?! But you cannot die.

LYDIA

Well technically no I can't.

ALEX

Azu, two things. One, death is the natural culmination of life.

LYDIA

Not for me!

ALEX

Two, why is everybody in my office.

HELEN

Because we came to look for our new friend

LYDIA

You brought me here.

BEN

Yeah we came to look for Sasha.

HELEN

And we found her!

ALEX

Excellent. Well I'm very glad that we've been able to aid you in whatever way we could and I'm sure that Azu will take great pleasure in continuing to provide aid to this person and helping them free up space in the hospital for other more needy patrons.

HELEN

But I already offered you help.

BEN

Hang on a minute! More needy?!

LYDIA

Yeah I'm pretty needy! I have got terminal.

BEN

I'm pretty sure she's undead. That's pretty needy.

LYDIA

Yeah all these other people you can just heal with a magic spell. I'm more needy!

BEN

Oh, sorry Azu. Sasha might be undead.

LYDIA

I thought you only had an illness. Undead?!

BEN

Well I mean that is the illness.

LYDIA

Yeah.

HELEN

No! Oh no!

BEN

Yeah I mean it's not great.

LYDIA

Yeah so...

HELEN

But we must stop this.

LYDIA

Yeah and there is a way. So Grizzop I'm going to need you to contact Einstein so he contacts Wilde...

BRYN

That's not a good idea.

LYDIA

Through the...

BRYN

I say from outside the room.

LYDIA

Through the mobile stone.

BEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Because I need to talk directly to the Meritocrats really fast.

BEN

Ok

LYDIA

Because they've got a thing that can heal me.

BEN

Wait, why are you going to be gone in a...

LYDIA

Apparently this person has worked out that I'm going to be dead soon.

BEN

Have you now?

ALEX

Well that's not...

LYDIA

A month she said.

ALEX

My child, that's not what I said.

LYDIA

You did!

ALEX

No I said...what I said...

LYDIA

Literally was what you said.

ALEX

No I...again it's not the case...

LYDIA

Word by word.

ALEX

What I said...*What I said was* at the culmination of your condition...

HELEN

You must respect...

ALEX

Azu, shut up! At the culmination of your condition you will become something else as you are already.

LYDIA

Oh right. Something good?

BEN

So what do you reckon then? A vampire or some sort of werewolf?

BRYN

A lich?

LYDIA

Yeah, oh I heard they're powerful.

ALEX

I strongly suspect, yes actually I think lich is probably the closest comparison although it begs the question where...

BRYN

Won't exactly be a lich. Lich normally have the ability to cast magical spells and Sasha hasn't had any training as a wizard and hasn't displayed any signs of being a sorcerer.

ALEX

You're starting to see the problem but physiologically yes.

HELEN

And liches are evil and Sasha is not evil.

LYDIA

Well....

ALEX

Azu there is...you're very young in your training. There is a very broad spectrum between neutral and evil.

BEN

Well no that's not how that works. There is...

HELEN

It's...there is a very firm line.

BEN

You know that thing we do? You're a paladin right?

(laughing)

You're a paladin right?

ALEX

The high priestess of Aphrodite starts twitching a little bit

BEN

Aphrodite does it. You're a paladin yeah?

ALEX

That's not entirely correct but carry on.

BEN

Oh right. Are you a cleric?

ALEX

Sure.

BEN

Ok. Whatever you are, a "cleradin"

(laughing)

Or a “paric”?

BRYN

I mean there’s literally a spell that can detect evil.

BEN

So basically what you do is...ok I dunno...basically you say dear Aphrodite, is this person evil? And then Aphrodite...

ALEX

Goodness me, you have such an eclectic group of friends Azu. I’m so pleased that you’re all here and broadening our horizons.

LYDIA

I don’t know if I should trust this person’s diagnosis if they don’t know...

BEN

See I got told that Aphrodite...I got told...

LYDIA

Who should I bring here?

BEN

Because honestly the Church of Artemis looked and said, oh, well Aphrodite will sort it out but it looks like my boss is wrong. I'll just have to...

ALEX

That's not entirely true. We are able to fix the problem.

BEN

Are you? Well do it then!

ALEX

Our hands are tied by Meritocratic forces.

BEN

Does that mean you're not?

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Can you fix the problem?

ALEX

I've said, yes I could...

BEN

Alright well do it!

ALEX

...given the right tools.

BEN

Ok well use the tools.

LYDIA

That's what we need to ask the Meritocrats for.

ALEX

My child, you misunderstand the nature of the situation.

BEN

No I don't. I think what has happened is you are not able to do it but you're making up excuses because if I had a wish spell I'd be able to do it as well.

HELEN

That cannot be correct. Priest Fairhands does not lie. Perhaps we should discuss this elsewhere.

ALEX

What an excellent suggestion Azu.

LYDIA

Yeah a proper healer. That know what they're doing.

BEN

Oh I dunno, high priestess of Aphrodite I guess. It's the best they've got.
Anyway, yeah let's go.

ALEX

Farewell and travel safe.

BEN

Smell ya later.

ALEX

Children of the light.

BEN

Er right...

ALEX

Cupids of hope.

BEN

Ok. What's with this whole motivational speaker schtick?!

ALEX

Adorable children of tomorrow.

BEN

Oh you're just trying to annoy us. Ok bye.

HELEN

I think towards the end of the that Azu starts to pull you.

BRYN

Not pull

HELEN

Just pick up!

ALEX

What a productive conversation that was!

LYDIA

Well I mean yes it was for me!

BRYN

So what did she say about this item that could heal you?

HELEN

Yes we must be able to help you somehow.

LYDIA

It's not going to work is it.

BEN

Well what's...no, yeah, what's the thing?

BRYN

So we have to ask the Meritocrats for it?

LYDIA

Yeah

BRYN

Well my sister works for Apophis. She might be able to get us an appointment.

BEN

Oh perfect.

LYDIA

Wait. Which sister?

BRYN

Well not the dead one obviously!

BEN

It's ok Hamid.

HELEN

Would you like another hug Hamid?

BRYN

Yes!

HELEN

Do I have to roll for a good hug?

ALEX

Take 10. It's still more of a hug than he can handle.

LYDIA

Well...yeah, so she said I'll degenerate into something weird in like a month I guess and that the only options are only either to destroy me into bits and resurrect me but...

BRYN

No that sounds like a terrible idea!

LYDIA

Yeah sounds grim.

BEN

Destroy you?

LYDIA

Yeah she didn't even say kill

BEN

That's a really weird choice of words

LYDIA

Yeah she was like explode and then burn.

BEN

I thought you guys were supposed to have a good bedside manner.

BRYN

Oh dear!

HELEN

We do.

BEN

Well apparently your high priest doesn't.

HELEN

Well to give...

(laughing)

LYDIA

The other option is some object called the Heart of Artemis that the Meritocrats have.

HELEN

The Heart of Artemis

BEN

Do you not mean Heart of Aphrodite?

HELEN

Yes!

BEN

Because I'm pretty sure we don't have a heart. They'll be a bow...

HELEN

That's why I was so surprised!

(laughing)

BEN

Maybe even a stag's head.

BRYN

Could it not mean hart as in the type of deer?

BEN

Oh it could be. Actually that would work. Yeah it could be the Hart of Artemis.

BRYN

The Golden Hart. That was an Artemis thing wasn't it?

BEN

Yeah

LYDIA

I think she meant of her god.

HELEN

No.

LYDIA

It's not that I can't tell the difference, it's that it's all quite new to me.

HELEN

Well I do know there is a Heart of Aphrodite.

LYDIA

Well that's probably it.

BEN

And they both begin with "A" so...

ALEX

In fact give me a knowledge religion Azu.

HELEN

Yeah I will.

ALEX

Grizzop you can as well but Azu will be getting bonuses.

BEN

I only got 10 so...it's not my church.

HELEN

15

ALEX

15. So the Heart of Aphrodite said to be the most powerful healing relic that there is. Using it you can heal pretty much anything if you have sufficient power because one of the benefits that it does do is...wishes have a tendency to sort of go awry often. Where you'll wish for one thing and you kind of get something that literally is what you asked for. You know like I'd like loads of gold and you're buried under Fort Knox.

BRYN

I'd like to not be undead anymore. Congratulations you are now dead.

ALEX

Yeah you're starting to spot the logic there. The Heart of Artemis is basically the most powerful healing amplifier there is. And the reason it's so wonderful is it's basically fail free but the flip side is you also know that the Meritocrats in part of their agreement with all of the various religions, I suppose you'd call them, is that they can have their own rules within their own areas on the condition that they basically don't overstep the line and anything of enough power to properly tip the balance that could, say, be stolen and then misused and so on has to be left in Meritocratic care. That was a condition for free operation across the whole country.

LYDIA

Do we know...and this is just an out of character thing, whether these objects have been used before in specific Meritocratic work stuff?

ALEX

As far as you are aware...give me a knowledge history.

LYDIA

Sasha wouldn't know this.

ALEX

Well there you go then. Well then unless someone is...has knowledge history I will not be answering that question.

LYDIA

Fair enough.

ALEX

Well there you go then. This is what you know of the Heart of Aphrodite.

HELEN

Ok. So like it would throw everything out of balance.

ALEX

Honestly it's quite useable. The impression that the Aphrodite lot give is that frankly the Meritocrats are getting very worried about a thing that almost literally cannot do harm. So they're not really that onboard with the Meritocrats taking the most powerful healing artifact in the world and not letting them use it.

HELEN

The Heart of Aphrodite is one of the most powerful healing items in the universe.

LYDIA

That doesn't sound like something that a bunch of dragons would make an exception to let someone like me use.

BRYN

We've done them a great deal of service. I mean we've literally saved the world twice Sasha.

BEN

Tell you what...

LYDIA

We also broke everything.

BEN

What if, right, we can find the Simulacrum in a month and then as a reward they'll bust it out.

LYDIA

I mean by that time I'd already mostly be a lich.

BEN

Well not if we do it within a month. It was only reckoning and honestly I'm not that convinced they know what they're talking about.

LYDIA

I just...yeah...

BEN

Look buck up, there's no...look honestly even if you are going to cark it, you might as well try and do as much with your life as you've got. That's my philosophy.

LYDIA

Yeah it's a slightly different scale Grizzop.

BEN

I know. I know. But it still applies. You can mope around and then die and not have done anything or you can do as much as you possibly can and then die having done something.

HELEN

Do not give up hope Sasha.

LYDIA

Right

BEN

Also I've got to remind you death literally isn't the end. We know where they go!

LYDIA

I don't know. I mean are liches good at anything?

BEN

Yeah great at stuff. Being evil unfortunately seems to be kind of high on that list.

BRYN

Just because there's never been an non-evil lich doesn't mean there couldn't be one.

HELEN

That's a good point.

BEN

Yeah, yeah. Yeah! Why not!

BRYN

Maybe there has. I'm not an expert in history.

BEN

Yeah, first good lich.

HELEN

But the better option is to find the Heart of Aphrodite...

BRYN

Like I said my sister can probably get us an appointment with Apophis. We can at least ask.

BEN

Yeah, give it a go.

LYDIA

Who's Apophis?

BRYN

Apophis is the local Meritocrat.

LYDIA

Ah right, grand.

BRYN

He lives in Cairo.

LYDIA

Let's try that then. I'm sure that will work.

BEN

Yeah!

LYDIA

I'm sure we'll defeat Barret and that we'll get this rare artifact and everything will be fine.

HELEN & BEN

That's the spirit!

(laughing)

ALEX

And I think I'll close the episode there!

BRYN

Ah man!

HELEN

Paladins!

BEN

Faith in higher power!

ALEX

I don't have an out for this. This is so awful!

BEN

I mean you did it!

ALEX

Yeah I know. I'm bad on the inside.

BEN

Could've not done it.

ALEX

Yeah I know but I did.

BEN

Could've just been resurrected by Mr Ceiling.

ALEX

No.

BEN

No, well live with it then.

LYDIA

Sasha's going to sit there and play with her new shiny daggers.

BRYN

Oh look Alex found an opportunity to insert additional sadness and emotional torture into a situation and he took it. What a shock!

ALEX

Tune in next week to find out what new misery...

BRYN

Oh! I'm going to meet my family! I'm sure that will go fine!

ALEX

Bye guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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