

RQG – 89 – We Hardly Knew Ye

Content Warnings

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BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of patrons. Rob Sheridan, Andrew Bushell, Quinten Walker, Dylan Parkhurst, Linda Jean, Neon Grey, Holly Aitchison, Andrea Rourke, Bat Momar, John Dondoro. 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 89 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

Rusty Quill Gaming – 89 – We Hardly Knew Ye

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

HELEN

And Helen Gould

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Sasha “Who’s Asking” Racket.

HELEN

And Azu

ALEX

And we’re all agreed, ok, no more...

BRYN

No more emotional trauma Alex!

BEN

Time for the funeral!

HELEN

I cannot guarantee there'll be no more.

BRYN

Guys, maybe it'll be fine. Maybe the funeral will be attacked.

LYDIA

Yay!

BRYN

And we can have fun beating something to death.

ALEX

Venting. Venting, I believe the word is. So, I'm going to take this and make it very, very straightforward. Hamid's sister died. You are all attending the funeral in Cairo. I believe that's basically the entire campaign to this point.

BEN

There were some feelings flying around but that's pretty much it.

ALEX

Ok cool. With that in mind then...

LYDIA

It's a feel storm.

ALEX

If it's ok with everyone, I'd like to do something we haven't done before which is basically a sort of montage-y intro. Because jumping in at first thing in the morning. 9am...10am...like can't be doing with that. So what I am going to do is I am going to say that the funeral's in the afternoon and I am going to go around each of you and I just want a snapshot of what you are up to and we'll just go around a couple of times and then it's the funeral. Alright. With that in mind I'd like to open with Hamid. Give me a snapshot of what you are doing in the run up to the funeral.

BRYN

I am helping everyone else with their outfits because I am bringing three people to my funeral and I want to make sure that they are all appropriately dressed. Now the good news is that I am in my own house where I grew up and I probably have a decent suit for myself so I can lend my magical sleeves to one of them. I can probably lend a set of clothing to Grizzop. We're not that different in size or I can find something in the house. And we also picked up in Newton's vault a version of...another magical piece of clothing that can look like basically anything you want.

ALEX

Hat of disguise.

BRYN

No I was thinking of the robes of any something. I've got them written down.

LYDIA

I mean Sasha's got a lot of disguise so she could disguise as a posh-o.

ALEX

A pair of curtains go disappearing. Suddenly Sasha looks really well dressed.

BRYN

We've got living garments.

ALEX

Ah, you have living garments, I apologise.

BRYN

Yes so we've got the living garments. We've got the sleeves of many something...

ALEX

Many garments probably.

BRYN

Sleeves of many garments.

BEN

And the hat of disguise.

BRYN

And the hat of disguise. Which...so that can't change your clothing, the hat of disguise. And we've got, you know, lots of options in terms of small...as in the official...

ALEX

So you are helping people with their outfits. Ok. Grizzop?

BEN

So I woke up early and polished everything and completely sorted my outfit out and I walk out feeling very, very like, I'm trying, I'm very well turned out and then Hamid tries to redress me and I immediately deflate.

(laughing)

BRYN

Well no, if you're already wearing something appropriate.

BEN

Oh no, I'm wearing my outdoor clothes but I've cleaned them and sewn them up, like done a bit of tailoring.

ALEX

He's wearing shiny huntsman's garb instead of mucky huntsman's garb.

BEN

And it's all properly straightened and stuff. It's probably more care than normally.

LYDIA

The effort probably is not appreciated because Hamid has spent his whole life doing prestidigitation or having servants.

BRYN

No, no, no he's only been able to do prestidigitation for about a year. Before that he just had to do it the hard way.

ALEX

Yeah get a servant to do it for him!

LYDIA

Before that he had so many servants that they probably fixed things before he noticed.

BRYN

Well maybe.

ALEX

Yeah there's this weird trend where the more magical ability he got, the more mucky everything was. Like until then things were just clean anyway. It must be a side effect of learning magic, dirt. Sasha what are you up to?

LYDIA

I assume that I have to roll a fort thing to see whether I wake up covered in blood.

ALEX

Yes you do. Yes you do.

LYDIA

So she is going...I assume that she would want to wake up early because that's what she's been doing often to...

ALEX

You do not get that option.

LYDIA

But she's still hungover

ALEX

You've never had orcish liquor before.

HELEN

Yeah and you're hungover.

LYDIA

No that was it. So she'd intended to but she...see jumping the gun as well

ALEX

Innit, innit. Really annoying.

BEN

Bunch of gun jumpers.

LYDIA

It's really nice that we all think not necessarily similarly but we can understand each other's intentions enough to do away...fine, anyway, is she bloody? Ok. So she got a 6 + 3 so she's only got a 9 in fort.

ALEX

A 9 in fort. You wake up bloodied.

LYDIA

But also late I assume?

ALEX

Yes. You wake up to, you know what I'm going to jump in. You wake up to Hamid gently and tastefully knocking on the door because he really probably does need to check that you're not going to go out wearing 17 knives visibly.

LYDIA

They wouldn't be visible.

(laughing)

ALEX

My bad. That's a faux pas on my part.

LYDIA

So this is genuinely quite...she would try and hide it but this would be one of the first times that she has been caught unaware by anyone in the party. So she'd opened the door and you would see for the first time what she looks like, like blood...

ALEX

First thing in the morning...

LYDIA

She'd be in a light shirt...

ALEX

...she looks clearly undead.

LYDIA

Ooh.

ALEX

Not like zombie. She has a gaunt aspect to her which has been developing over recent times. She has...her clothing is bloodied. She looks like she's been injured slightly in the night, it's actually just old cuts and things. She looks...

LYDIA

I mean she's got the mortuary scar down her chest.

ALEX

She looks tangibly awful.

LYDIA

And you can see...basically there's a blood hawk on the back of her because there's all those scars are opening up.

BEN

Blood falcon.

BRYN

Oh Sasha. How are you feeling? What can I do to help? Awkward smile.

LYDIA

I don't know anymore do I. I suppose just wait for me to pass away quietly. I'll wash the blood off, don't worry I won't bother anyone. Turns around and shuts the door.

ALEX

Ah!

LYDIA

I assume there's an en suite?

ALEX

Of course. Which one?

LYDIA

So gently tries to daub all the blood.

ALEX

Azu, you're up.

HELEN

Well before Hamid comes to try and clothe my 6 foot 6 frame, she got up early and she's been doing her...what's the proper word, calisthenics?

ALEX

Hu ho, hu ho, 1, 2, 3, 4

HELEN

But I want to be doing it with those two servants we made friends with. So I've got one on each ankle while I'm doing my sit ups

(laughing)

And I'm lifting them.

ALEX

Yeah! They're all over this. Even Captain Uptight is so...

BEN

They're so hungover as well!

ALEX

They're just like, yeah, you know what...

LYDIA

Even though they didn't drink a bit there was so much alcohol in the air.

ALEX

It's just the fumes

HELEN

But they're being hospitable to their guest.

ALEX

You know what, you said it would make you comfortable.

HELEN

It did.

LYDIA

Is there anything we can do to help? Well actually...

ALEX

How heavy are you? Ok Hamid, back around to you, this is your last montage appearance as in control of yourselves before we skip to the funeral.

BRYN

So yeah once I'm satisfied everyone is at least semi appropriately dressed, I will probably spend the morning going through some mementoes of my sister and

you know, just reminding myself of some of the memories of the good times. I probably have a programme of like an appearance she made at an opera in London which I got down to while I was at university or something like that and yeah, just...

ALEX

Give me a perception check mid montage.

BRYN

Er, loads. Specifically 25.

ALEX

Saira is there and you notice her quietly and deftly put aside for a flyer for the show that she died in, in a drawer so that no one else can see it. She thinks she got away with it and that you didn't see.

BRYN

I will not draw attention to it.

ALEX

Grizzop you're up.

BEN

Yeah so I've been dressed now. I'm going to go and see if I can find Sasha.

ALEX

Ok that leads very easily into Sasha, your montage. It has to involve Grizzop in some way.

LYDIA

Yeah well I suppose she's come out of the room and now she'd actually need to find...what I would assume is that she'd go and clean up and then realise all her clothes are still bloodied or...and so then wrapped in the cloak she asks her servant to get her Hamid and then I assume gets the sleeves or the...

BRYN

Probably the robe of many garments.

LYDIA

Ok, yeah so would get that and have that and maybe it would something that had a hat which covered her face.

ALEX

So the living garment?

BRYN

Yeah so you get the...

LYDIA

Is the fact that it's living and I'm not going to be a problem.

BRYN

No it's not literally living.

LYDIA

Yeah...well, not all of us are.

ALEX

The living garments is something that I think you might take a bit of a shine to. It doesn't just magically change into any garment that you wants. What it does is it...it basically reads the user and what the user kind of needs are and adjusts itself accordingly.

LYDIA

Oh my word! Sasha's needs are deep and complex. Does it provide a stable family? Sight of the open sky before she's 15?

ALEX

It certainly gives the impression that you had both of these things. You'd be amazed what this suit can manage.

LYDIA

Yeah she suddenly feels that she has a life expectancy of more than three weeks.

ALEX

Grizzop you come to Sasha looking extremely well dressed. Probably the best well...from a standard eye, the best dressed that she's looked maybe since you've met her.

BEN

Oh, hey Sasha, do you mind if we have a quick chat?

LYDIA

Yeah, what's up?

BEN

I'm sorry about what I said yesterday. It's a bit of a sore subject for me and Azu got my hackles up with, you know, but yes you've been through something really shocking and yeah I've had a long time to come to terms with this, you've had all of yesterday.

LYDIA

Look...I never really expected to live that long. It's not really traditional in my line of work but a month is pretty short. Yeah well...

BEN

But look you've got people who want to keep you alive so we'll do our best.

LYDIA

[laughing] I mean that is where there would be...that would be the most bitter laugh. A person that has been used as a tool for so...

ALEX

Is now a valued tool.

LYDIA

Yeah! People want to keep you alive. It would not be....but she'd be too awkward to say anything.

ALEX

I'm going to jump from that. This is just snapshots and nothing more, to Azu. This is the last montage-y thing before we just jump to funeral.

HELEN

Have you managed to find me Hamid? Because I'm just in the garden.

BRYN

Yeah, yeah. There's servants everywhere. I'll ask a servant where you are.

HELEN

Ok. Have you brought me clothes?

BRYN

So I'm...

HELEN

Because I am still pink!

BRYN

I'm going to lend you my sleeve of many garments. My sleeves of many garments which you basically put on and some clothing that you want appears on you. Now the two paladins can wear...it's a funeral and much like if you're in a military organisation...

ALEX

Dress armour and...

BRYN

Dress armour. Like it's fine. So we don't have to obscure your armour but it's about what you wear...

BEN

Pretty handy the Artemis armour is also your dress armour. Just whenever.

BRYN

Yeah exactly.

ALEX

For Artemis there's literally no difference.

BRYN

But it's what you're wearing under it. I've adjusted slightly basically. And for you because the colour is so garish we'd probably find a way...

HELEN

How dare you!

BRYN

We'd probably find a way to mute it.

ALEX

Or like a black vestment that can go in addition. Like a black tabard or something.

BRYN

Well like a black...or even just a black chiffon so you can see through it enough but it no longer glows.

HELEN

Do I have a veil?

BRYN

If you want one.

ALEX

Oh he doesn't get to pick what you look like that. With these garments you pick what you look like.

BRYN

But I am...

HELEN

You are discussing it with me what's appropriate

BRYN

And I'm saying...

LYDIA

Trying not to say things like "garish"

(laughing)

BRYN

Yeah, yeah I'll say your armour is very bright and it wouldn't be completely appropriate so if we can put something...even something see through over it, that just...just mutes...

HELEN

You want me to wear something see through?

BRYN

...mutes the colour. Over the armour! And then...but...it's totally your choice, you know, black is the most appropriate colour and it...the pink is just very bright. Just for today if that's ok.

HELEN

Alright. Let me have a try...

BRYN

And then I'll hand you the sleeves.

ALEX

What does your try look like? This is you closing on your montage.

HELEN

I think there is a veil but because she has a shaved head it just looks weird.

BEN

You look like a ghost

(laughing)

HELEN

I look like the Woman in Black.

(laughing)

ALEX

And with that we jump to the funeral. So...

BEN

A duvet ghost

(laughing)

HELEN

And I'm so big...

(laughing)

ALEX

So you all find yourselves at a rise. You can't really go so far as to say a major hill or anything but it is a rise and it is overlooking the river and the close friends and family are in an arc. A wrapped and veiled presumably Hamid's sister is upon a raised plinth that will lower into the ground. And it's actually in a field of flowers and it becomes clear that actually like there are tasteful little tombstones but it's very much a...it's not a demarcated thing. It's a little

more...little bit more informal which may not gel necessarily with the structure of Hamid's life that you've seen up to this point. And whilst the close friends and family are very much up close at a significant distance, so outside but very much looking in are a very huge crowd of the public and sort of down at almost street level looking in. It's...at no point does it go into ogling. It's not completely crass but they were a major personality in their own field plus there's so much public attention on the family that it isn't really going to go unnoticed.

BRYN

And probably a break from the usual funeral traditions, there will be music.

ALEX

Of course.

BRYN

There might be some of her close colleagues singing some of her favourite pieces.

ALEX

In fact, I'd say that Saira sings her favourite song. It's not...

BRYN

She's not professional level but...

ALEX

She's not professional level...

BRYN

Good.

ALEX

She's good. She's alright. The funeral progresses. I'm not going to run through the whole thing. Obviously it will take ages and I'm going to be honest, I don't think I could handle it tastefully enough because it's not my forte. However can I please get a perception check from everyone.

HELEN

Alright let's have a look.

ALEX

And before Ben complains this is one where if no one notices it's completely fine.

BEN

Natural 20.

(laughing)

ALEX

I hate you!

BRYN

I'm clearly not paying much attention because I rolled a 4. So 15.

ALEX

All is as it should be.

LYDIA

So I can do the maths. I honestly can. Because it's a 10. So that's easy. $10 + 12$ is 22.

HELEN

I got a 6 + 6 is 12

BRYN

Do you want the raw score? Is it useful?

ALEX

Uh no. So Grizzop and Sasha, so the actual ceremony's continuing. The body has begun to be lowered in and the family are having a few quiet words and so on but you both cannot help noticing, there's the friends and the family that are right up close and you are amongst them and then there is the public who are very, very far away. And there are a few trees in this area. It's not just a

meadow and nothing else but you do notice there is a single figure who is sort of, halfway between the two beside one of the trees rather than either with the public or with the family and they're very much paying no attention towards the ceremony. They are cowled and that's basically all it is. There's enough long grass and the occasional tree that...

LYDIA

Halfling height or human height or orc height?

ALEX

Tall, human height. But they don't have the heftiness that you'd expect for it to be an orc. And they are very much observing and it's very clear that they're trying to appear unnoticed shall we say. And Grizzop from you specifically, you would go out on a limb and say if they are human they are extremely unusual, their build is wrong even with a cowl.

BEN

Although not the...not in the character's knowledge, do they perhaps look like some sort of...

LYDIA

Creature.

BEN

Dementor looking...

ALEX

We might've seen. I mean here's the thing...

LYDIA

In a house. Underground.

ALEX

The world's made up of all kinds of...it's definitely a person Sasha. It's definitely whatever or whoever that was.

BEN

Do we...and this is a question actually, are weapons like appropriate, permitted, specifically not permitted.

BRYN

No they are not permitted but we all have bags of holding and a bag of holding can be sitting, you know...

BEN

On a belt.

BRYN

Yeah and can be incorporated tastefully into an outfit.

ALEX

I mean you'll be having type II so it's more like a sack but you could put that into a backpack or something similar and make it look like a satchel or something.

LYDIA

Sasha, out of respect has only brought, say four knives and hidden them really...

ALEX

Tastefully

LYDIA

Tastefully around the body.

BEN

Well I've got my stuff but it's in like a bag it looks like.

ALEX

Sure, sure. They don't appear to be doing anything. Just watching but they are very much clearly removed from everything else.

BEN

While the ceremony is going on I'm going to look around, notice you looking at the thing as well...

LYDIA

Like Sasha has...it's hard to tell that she's gone paler because gradually without you really noticing she's got paler and paler and paler every day but somehow she seems even paler.

BEN

I nudge you and go, do you know that guy?

LYDIA

It's not...that's not...that's really not good news. That's not good news. We should get away from here.

BEN

Shall we go deal with it.

ALEX

Just Grizzop and Sasha...

LYDIA

I don't know if we can.

ALEX

...can you give me a secondary perception check. I know I'm doing a lot of these.

BEN

I got a nat 20!

ALEX

Grizzop's on it today!

LYDIA

4 but with 12 that is 16.

ALEX

Sasha doesn't notice. Grizzop you do. Hamid's older brother's noticed this and starts to go to pieces and basically tries to pass it off as if it's to do with the funeral and then is very much not looking at the person. And no one else noticed that.

BEN

It looks like Hamid's brother's noticed. He's got...because he was the Barret thing right.

LYDIA

Alright...ok, right ok. So there's some bad news. So...

BEN

Is that to do with Barret and...

LYDIA

So I think that has got even worse...ok...

HELEN

What are you two talking about?

LYDIA

So...so there's a...an underground criminal network that I always knew was far too...

ALEX

Hamid give me a perception check.

LYDIA

...and they've reached even here. They've reached us here.

BRYN

18.

ALEX

Your friends are talking during the service.

BRYN

I will turn around and just go, later please.

BEN

Sorry.

ALEX

Ok.

BEN

[whispers] let's keep an eye on it and then we'll...

BRYN

An eye on what?!

BEN

Just don't worry about it.

ALEX

The ceremony continues and Hamid's sister, Aziza is laid to rest. The ceremony involves everyone putting a small amount of dirt on the grave if you knew her and then a number of flowers are the last thing. So rather than just them being popped in, they're actually...the closest family plant a single flower that will sprawl over the time and then everyone starts heading their separate ways. The public start moving on. Your father, Saleh, immediately turns and heads off. He's been completely stone-faced the entire time. Your mother lingers and then is eventually led away by Saira. Saleh leaves with your father, basically at the soonest opportunity. And your two brothers Ismail and Ishaq,

both of whom were brought up in the morning, are effectively with their mother so the majority of the family head over as a sort of...

LYDIA

How old are they? Just everyone's been referring to them as children.

BRYN

So they're actually teenagers. They're 14 or 15 but halflings mature slower so they probably look to your eyes like they're preteen, like 11 or 12ish.

ALEX

Yeah but...think of them as a mature 12 or an immature 16. It kind of like falls between those two really.

BEN

So halflings reach adulthood at 30?

ALEX

They....they don't match up properly so they tend to hit adulthood at a similar time to humans but they stay in it a really, really long time.

BRYN

You're considered of age at 30 but that's more like the human equivalent of 21/25 kind of.

ALEX

So everyone starts heading off and you all find yourselves, for whatever reason, clumped together.

BEN

What's going on with the dementor looking chap?

ALEX

The ceremony finished and...

LYDIA

Sasha did not take her eyes off him for a second...

BEN

Grizzop neither.

LYDIA

To the point that it would have looked weird where if she was expected to put soil there she would have been craning around and freaking out if someone got between her and...

ALEX

Once Saleh headed off, the figure stepped behind a tree hidden from, all of your view. It's very clear that they haven't walked off they have gone...

LYDIA

Sasha runs towards the tree.

BEN

I'll kind of sidle after her going, like come on, to Azu.

HELEN

Yeah, yeah Azu still doesn't really know what's going on but you are her new friends so she will follow.

ALEX

Everyone's running off in a random direction.

BEN

Is this the point of the...I mean everyone's going...

BRYN

The rest of the service has dispersed so I'm...I trust my friends to assume there is a good reason for this. I just didn't want it to interrupt the ceremony.

ALEX

Of course.

BRYN

So I will...I will linger slightly just to make sure everyone else who was at the funeral has started to disperse and then follow them.

ALEX

Sure.

LYDIA

I've sort of realised how nice it is to have a set of characters that while there may be awkward misunderstanding, there's not the guarantee of awfulness where Bertie's smashing through and making everyone...

BRYN

Yeah

LYDIA

Just pleasant people!

ALEX

Ok so you head over to the tree and...

LYDIA

Predictably...

ALEX

Yes. A pair of footprints are there but not a figure.

BEN

If only I were better at survival.

LYDIA

Huh?

BEN

Tracking

LYDIA

So you can track then vertically? I mean Sasha literally looks in the tree

ALEX

There's nothing in the tree.

LYDIA

She's fought enough people that can splay out on ceilings.

ALEX

The footprints are weird. They are...it's not like a very clear six footed...six footed footprint. It's not like that. But it is...it has more of a depression, like a bowl to it almost rather than a flat pair of footprints.

BEN

It's like the thing didn't have legs. It just kind of ended.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah that's the best way of putting it.

HELEN

These are extremely strange tracks.

BEN

Yeah what on earth was that?!

LYDIA

Well it is...

ALEX

Hamid rocks up obviously.

BRYN

What did you see? I'm sorry I had to interrupt you earlier. What's going on?

LYDIA

Barret...Barret seems to have sent people here.

BEN

There was a spooky hooded figure.

BRYN

Is it the same one we met Sasha?

LYDIA

Well I mean I don't know. He might have hundreds of them.

BRYN

Oh god!

BEN

Also your brother noticed and it disappeared when your brother left so you know you've got the whole ring delivery thing, we might want to go and see if he's ok.

BRYN

I think we need to. And even if he is we need to have a pretty frank conversation with him at the very least but the first thing is to make sure he's safe.

BEN

Yeah, oh and also, how are you doing?

BRYN

I feel....better if anything. In the end seeing my family, seeing my sister, seeing the twins and the ceremony it was lovely. It has really helped. I feel better than I have since it first happened if anything. So yeah.

BEN

Good, alright, so let's go.

BRYN

Best to keep busy though so...

BEN

Let's go sort out your brother.

BRYN

...let's make sure he's safe.

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

And we'll take a break there and be back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. So if everyone's ok I'm going to skim past some stuff because it's only moving parts here and so on suffice it say Saleh is fine. He

returned to a mundane carriage with Hamid's father. The rest of the family came in. Hamid was invited to join. It was very clear that to your eyes, yeah, Saleh clearly had been spooked but he seemed fine. No one appears to be loitering or anything like that. So if you have any extra investigations you want to do, that's fine. Otherwise I will proceed to the wake.

BRYN

Yeah we'll just follow their carriage to the wake in our own and we can just take him aside at some point if he's still compos mentis. Oh I don't say compos mentis! That's Latin. Latin is bad.

ALEX

Urgh! Latin bad!

BRYN

We'll just take him aside if he's still coherent.

LYDIA

Has Barret said anything else to you?

BRYN

No.

LYDIA

Do you have any idea what this is Hamid? Do you know what he's planning?

BRYN

Well my sister has said that Saleh has fallen in with a bad crowd and has possibly racked up some gambling debts and I imagine that's related.

LYDIA

Ok, ok.

BRYN

Something our family is a bit prone to, I'm afraid to say. It wouldn't be the first scion of the Tahan branch to...

LYDIA

But don't you...I mean you've got that house. Could you not pay off the debts? What kind of debt could he have that you couldn't pay off?

BRYN

That's a good question. I don't know how much my parents have helped him. I mean he's not lacking in resources but much like me he doesn't exactly have access to the wealth of the entire family.

LYDIA

I suppose I don't understand how it works. Right...we just...I suppose we just need to be aware he might see the opportunity to make an example.

BRYN

We'll keep an eye on Saleh and we'll see what he knows about the situation if we can.

BEN

Well we've got to make sure that he's safe but...

BRYN

Yes absolutely.

HELEN

Yes we must protect him.

BEN

But we have other matters as well. I say, looking at Sasha.

BRYN

Several yes. Don't worry.

BEN

Probably might want to go and see a Meritocrat at some point.

BRYN

So Saira's still the best avenue we have there but I think even if we talk to her tomorrow morning that will be soon enough I hope.

LYDIA

Yeah sure 28 days. 29, 30. I don't know what she meant by about a month.

BEN

Yeah we're working as quick as we can.

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

So is everyone ok for me to skip ahead a little bit.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Ok so 28 days later.

(laughing)

BEN

You're in the same cemetery

BRYN

But we respect his craft!

LYDIA

Zombie stats. Is less fast now.

ALEX

You know Sasha's finally got all of that charisma she was denied in life. It's Thriller. Everyone's just having a great time. So we are going to skip ahead to the wake. You all returned home and went to your...your...allowed to head off to your separate bedrooms. Saleh immediately disappeared. If you'd like to engage with him now, that's fine. Otherwise I will just accelerate to the wake. It's up to you.

BRYN

I say to everyone else that I'd like one of us to be near him at all times but feel free to change if you want. There's no conventions about what to wear to the wake. You can...

HELEN

I would love to follow your brother everywhere

BRYN

At a discrete distance...Hamid says.

LYDIA

How discrete is that possible with the...

BRYN

Well I think it would be more discrete if we took turns though.

HELEN

Oh well I...

BEN

You could go first

BRYN

I mean, I'll need my sleeves back as well if that's ok. Now that we've had the ceremony.

HELEN

Azu removes the sleeves and immediately...it is like a second sun! A pink second sun

ALEX

Look you'll go down well at the wake. That's all I'm saying. Ok, so who...are you looking out for Saleh first?

HELEN

I would like to yeah.

BRYN

Sure.

HELEN

Just because I think it'll be funny if he's still drinking.

ALEX

Are you...so he immediately returns to his room.

HELEN

Ok

ALEX

And slams the door. Are you going to linger outside, are you going to try and go in? That's what I need to know.

BEN

How farcical do you want this to be?

ALEX

Bom, bom, bom. Corridor full of doors. Azu goes past. Then the camel's just going past in the other direction.

HELEN

So Azu is tactless but she is not stupid. So she's going to linger at the end of the corridor I guess and try be unobtrusive and fail at that.

ALEX

He doesn't head out at any point but you do hear him crying. However like...shocker, beyond that nothing of note really happens.

HELEN

Hm ok.

ALEX

The rest of take watches unless you actively say no.

LYDIA

So there's a specific...

BRYN

I mean there's only a couple of hours before the wake starts.

LYDIA

Sasha would wait outside to cover the window. She'd ask Hamid what the outside window is and hide wherever the...

BRYN

Nice

LYDIA

So she would be hidden in whatever foliage although she is not expert at hiding in non-urban...

BRYN

Are you still wearing the living garments because they can become camouflage!

ALEX

No. No they can't. They explicitly only magnify style. They do not modify themselves in that way.

LYDIA

So she looks like a gardener.

ALEX

That you could do. You could get it kind of looking vaguely overall-y.

BRYN

Technically the only skill they can boost is diplomacy, not disguise but you could have the hat of disguise as well.

LYDIA

In which case she would probably take the cloak off and move in the stuff that she's used to.

ALEX

Sure, sure. In which case then you are outside and we will skip ahead to...obviously the ceremony happened afternoon, around midday, something like that. It's turning into the equivalent of a summer's evening more or less and you're around as the preparations are being set up. For all intents and purposes it looks like they've really gone to town in terms of the actual wake itself is huge. It's also very bright. It's no lots of black. It's very bright. They do lots of like paper, like magic lanterns but they aren't strung up. They just move around magically. And it's very bright and lots of food.

BRYN

Very different to the ceremony.

ALEX

And there are...

BRYN

Food plays a big role.

ALEX

There are quite a lot of portraits of Hamid's sister but they're all of her brightly shining, really, really happy and it's very...has a very different vibe to everything up to this point. Give me a perception check

BRYN

All of us?

ALEX

No just Sasha.

LYDIA

9 + 12

BRYN

21

LYDIA

Yes thank you.

ALEX

You do, at the edge of the preparations see the same figure is loitering near, it looks to be some kind of crates or something have been deposited and are being slowly distributed and containing ice sculptures and that kind of thing.

LYDIA

She grabs the team and goes towards him.

ALEX

So the team...

LYDIA

Whoever she can actually access.

ALEX

So you can definitely grab Grizzop and Azu who are...yeah like you said patrolling outside or that kind of thing and if Hamid's inside you're probably not going to be able to run, grab him and run back out in time.

LYDIA

She will...I assume, maybe grab Grizzop but this will be incredibly discrete. She wants to run around the back of the guy and stab him in the back.

ALEX

Give me a stealth check.

LYDIA

18 + 13 + 5

ALEX

That's fine.

BRYN

36.

LYDIA

36

ALEX

Grizzop also give me a stealth check. Are you grabbing Azu as well or just Grizzop?

LYDIA

Just Grizzop because he's the one I can easily find.

BEN

26

ALEX

26. Ok give me a second. Ok. In which case then, you manage to get hold of Grizzop and you manage to coordinate yourselves in such a way that you can act as you see fit.

BEN

Go out and discrete for me and knocked, I'm trying to keep it down so people aren't like he's got a gun or a bow.

LYDIA

I mean her motto is stab first and ask questions later so that's literally what she's going to do.

BEN

I'm covering her approach and if the thing like tries to make any move or run away I'm going to shoot it in the head.

LYDIA

Yeah that's what she's going to do.

ALEX

So you make your approach.

LYDIA

This is the first time in her life she's had a chance to directly attack something of Barret's. She's probably going to take penalties for being stressed as...heck

(laughing)

BEN

Good save!

ALEX

Yeah. You make your approach and the figure is very much looking straight at Saleh's window, not yourself. Sasha, you're making the approach. Grizzop I'm assuming you're maintaining a bit more of a distance for the...

BEN

I've got them covered basically.

ALEX

You've got her back Jack! In which case then, Sasha give me a will save.

LYDIA

ALEX

Good! Good. You approach. You reckon you've got the drop on him. You reckon you've properly got the drop on them. They haven't reacted. Their attention's 100% up towards Saleh's window, not you. You manage to get immediately behind them with weapons drawn.

LYDIA

But?

ALEX

No, that's it. You're there.

LYDIA

Ok I'm going to sneak attack and...

ALEX

Grizzop she's definitely got the drop on something or someone.

BEN

Ok so I'm going to tighten the bow string and actually ready myself.

LYDIA

Sneak attack. If it's flat footed with a fire dagger.

ALEX

Would you like to use both daggers or just the one?

LYDIA

Both obvs.

ALEX

Then do it.

(nervous laughing)

See this is the first time that Helen's see this. What this is, is people who've clearly had an excellent GM and have learnt caution and have learnt the benefits of withdrawing.

BRYN

It's going to be some random servant. That's the twist.

LYDIA

So 5 + 8 + 3

ALEX

I've already done the illicit lover thing.

LYDIA

So 16

ALEX

So 16 attack.

LYDIA

16 on the first dagger

ALEX

And the second?

LYDIA

25

ALEX

The first one misses. There is an immediate [screeching noise] as the thing turns and looks towards you. Your second attack hits. Roll me the damage.

LYDIA

That's...where's my D6s. I need several of them. Is it flat footed at that point?

ALEX

It is still flat footed yes. So you get all of the D6s immediately out of the...

BRYN

So you get a D4 from the knife, 3 D6 sneak attack and 1 D6...

LYDIA

The fire damage.

BRYN

Yeah. Do you have everything you need?

LYDIA

So 16

BRYN

Normal. And then some fire.

LYDIA

And then...

BRYN

Roll the D6 for fire

LYDIA

And then 1 D6 of...4 of...is that compared to the sort of the damage that Bertie or I assume Azu would do in one thing. It's not good but it's something.

BRYN

No it's pretty good. No that is plenty of damage.

BEN

That is really a lot.

BRYN

That is 20 total. That's good.

ALEX

Yeah so unless I'm mistaken, that is a total of 20 catching it flat footed. You say that you did less bearing in mind you could have done that twice.

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

Like you rolled quite low on the first attack. You could've got a flat 40 which no one else could physically manage.

LYDIA

I suppose yeah.

ALEX

So you...

BEN

Sorry I realise I've kind of done this out of theme but since I'm readied once she connects and it makes a horrible screamy noise can I then also just shoot it in the head. I know I technically didn't ready an action but...

ALEX

Yeah go on but I will punish you again later!

(laughing)

BEN

Weird!

ALEX

I know. I know it's fine.

BRYN

Keep that to your private time boys.

BEN

Yeah, right so I'm going to...yeah, just do my bow. Just do a full attack. Ok. So one was a natural 20 so that gives me a total of 32. And the other one so it's 8 + 12 so that's a 20.

ALEX

Those are both hits.

BEN

Ok cool and roll to confirm?

ALEX

Yep, yep, yep.

BEN

Ok so I rolled a 5 + 12 so 17.

ALEX

That's a confirmed crit.

BEN

Ok cool. So I just do the dice right?

BRYN

No it's everything.

BEN

So plus my strength bonus each time.

ALEX

Yeah it's just the worst. From my perspective it's just the worst.

BEN

So that is 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 on the critical and then another 3 on the other attack.

ALEX

That's a 15 total

BEN

Yeah

LYDIA

Is this going to be your poor Byron's sister where you made this beautiful character and then it was dead before it could react?

ALEX

No, no. You see not learning from your mistakes that's an unforgivable sin.

LYDIA

Oh right ok.

ALEX

So the first attack you sink it in and it just hits where there should've been human there wasn't. There's the echoing absence of human on one of your daggers. However the second dagger you bury right between the shoulder blades. If this thing is wearing a really cloak there's got to be something there and you bury it right in. The dagger goes right up to the hilt and you see flame beginning to catch on the actual cloak itself. The creature gives another eldritch cry. It reaches, it can't actually reach towards you. It's right there.

LYDIA

It's an itchy spot right there where its weirdly shaped arms can't reach.

ALEX

But it does twist its head around...

LYDIA

Urgh the whole way? Urgh!

ALEX

...at that exact moment. No, not the whole way. You know what, yes.

LYDIA

Ok

ALEX

The whole way!

LYDIA

[screaming]

ALEX

The cowl turns around.

LYDIA

Genuinely afraid.

ALEX

And before you can see what is under the cowl an arrow buries itself and throws the entire head backwards and it gives another cry. It then is your turn. Can everyone please give me initiative because everyone will have heard the cry no matter where you are.

BEN

Ha! Ha! Another natural 20.

HELEN

I got 19.

BEN

I'm on fire today.

ALEX

Ok so that's a 19 from Azu.

BRYN

Is that total? You're adding your bonuses and stuff?

HELEN

Oh! Where's my bonus? Oh. 18.

(laughing)

ALEX

Good!

HELEN

I got -1. I don't know why. Why?

BRYN

It's based on your dexterity.

ALEX

It's based on how quick the speed and how dextrous you are and how quickly you can get yourself together and you're a massive pink, glowing battle axe machine. It makes sense. Grizzop?

BEN

24

ALEX

Ok. Sasha?

LYDIA

15

ALEX

Ok. And Hamid?

BRYN

20.

ALEX

Ok if you bear with me then I'm going to write this out. Grizzop you are up. Your arrow buried itself. This thing can apparently be harmed.

BEN

Cool. I'm going to do the same again. Take another full attack.

ALEX

Go for it.

BEN

Ok so I rolled a 4 and a 1 so let's see. 14

ALEX

14. Miss.

BEN

Ok and then 28.

ALEX

28. That's unsurprisingly a hit.

BEN

That's 3 damage.

ALEX

Ok. In which case Hamid you are up. You are in a building.

BRYN

Ok so I've just wandered in to Saleh's bedroom because I wanted to have this difficult conversation with him so I'm like...

ALEX

He looks up from where he's over the table, looks up, tear stained, red rimmed eyes.

BRYN

Saleh I think there's something we need to...

[screaming noise]

ALEX

Echoing across the party.

BRYN

I run to the window and lift it up leaning out to see what's going on.

ALEX

You lift it up, lean it out. You are...basically have a clear shot of Sasha's buried her knife in someone, some cowled figure. Oh no! You know who that is. Grizzop has already been drawing and firing a second bow. The rest of the party seems to be dropping to a still. No one has reacted yet. It's mostly just what is going on. Even the...the perimeter guards haven't reacted yet.

BRYN

How far...

ALEX

I'll say you've used a move action.

BRYN

Yeah how far away is the creature?

ALEX

I mean if you were to leap from the window I guess a move action.

BRYN

No, no how far away is the creature in feet from where I am?

ALEX

I'd say it's 60 foot. What are you thinking?

BRYN

Magic missile.

ALEX

You have a glint, I don't like it!

BRYN

I have the range of all my spells written on my sheet. Some of them work at very small ranges, some of them work at much bigger ranges. I cast magic missile.

ALEX

Magic missile! How many do you get bearing in mind your level.

BRYN

I believe I get 3.

ALEX

Pew, pew, pew.

BRYN

Pew, pew, pew.

HELEN

Oh it's like in Hearthstone.

ALEX

Yes, yes it is!

BRYN

I cast magic missile and from the window...

ALEX

Pew, pew, pew.

BRYN

...my three bolts of purple energy curve out and all unerringly hit for 2, 3 and 4 damage respectively.

ALEX

That's 9. That's a total of 9.

LYDIA

Thank you because I was still struggling with that.

ALEX

It's alright. I then have to factor that into the damage that's already been done which makes this even more complicated. Ok you do so. You hit it squarely three times over Sasha's shoulder. You may have picked this fight but you're getting all of the support this time. It's lovely. People are doing what they should be.

LYDIA

It's probably quite an emotional meaningful one.

(laughing)

ALEX

And I believe that's you done unless you want to send anything else that you have kicking around.

BRYN

No, no that's my full action.

ALEX

Azu? There's stuff afoot. Give me a perception check to figure out where the stuff is afoot.

HELEN

Ok...I've not done very well on these so far and I am still not doing very well. That's a 7 I believe.

BRYN

But you've got your bonuses.

HELEN

That's only a 13.

ALEX

Still a lot better than 7. You have an idea of the general direction of where the stuff is afoot.

HELEN

Well of course I run towards it because that was...that was definitely...

BEN

That's how paladins act.

HELEN

That was definitely an evil scream.

ALEX

And you drew your great axe I think you said, didn't you right?

HELEN

Yeah!

ALEX

Yeah!

(laughing)

God, you're good at this Helen.

BEN

Well I mean is there a window in the way that you can heroically leap through.

HELEN

I'm outside.

ALEX

I would be happy for you to vault loads of tables on the way.

LYDIA

I duck tables.

HELEN

Again if they're halfling size I can just jump.

BRYN

Or go through them.

(laughing)

Crunch, crunch, crunch.

HELEN

I'll be considerate and just soar over the heads of the assembled...

ALEX

So you charge towards...and not even going to get acrobatics check because it's not really a vault so much as and step. But you manage to rush over to the correct area of the gardens. You do see that that is the foot that is afoot. However you are 30 feet away.

HELEN

Darn! I...oh no! My throwing axe is only 10 foot.

BRYN

So you've taken one move action right.

ALEX

Yep. You do...

BRYN

And it's a straight line?

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

So there is an action you can do which is charge which is you move your move speed in a straight line and make an attack at the end of it.

ALEX

Up to its maximum and you get one attack instead of your heffing great things but it's good. However it isn't applicable because there are tables and detritus in the way. You can't just get the speed up I'm afraid.

BRYN

Strength check to just go through the tables.

ALEX

I'd allow that.

LYDIA

We can't have another furniture attacker!

ALEX

I would allow you, if you want, to charge and if you give a strength check, plough through everything in between.

BRYN

It's a moral quandary.

BEN

You can attack but then you could do criminal damage.

BRYN

You could just get there without attacking. Those are your two options.

ALEX

Would you like to get there attacking and trash the party and just roll a check to see how badly or would you like to get there without trashing the party but not get your attack in.

LYDIA

And how would your character react very quickly in the moment.

HELEN

She's just going straight through the tables.

BEN

Hooray!

ALEX

Ok give me the strength check. High is bad for you on this one.

HELEN

Oh no!

BEN

Nat 20! Nat 20!

ALEX

What's your total?

HELEN

That is 10 + this one?

ALEX

Yep

HELEN

13

ALEX

13. Ok you don't completely destroy the party.

EVERYONE

Hurray!

ALEX

So you charge through and you just trash a bunch of tables but you don't trash them so hard that they fly into other tables and set of a cascade.

HELEN

So a minor route of damages.

ALEX

Yeah you just beeline straight towards the creature. You find yourself beside Sasha. Would you like to roll your mahousive attack?

HELEN

Yes I would like to use my ominous great axe to hit it in what I think is its head.

ALEX

I will for everyone's benefit also read out the ominous quality.

HELEN

Yes!

LYDIA

Oh it's mechanically ominous

(laughing)

HELEN

With a capital O!

LYDIA

There's a lot of things in this where, like particularly Bryn would describe something and it would obviously mean something and he's like oh no...oh you mean mechanically sleepy.

ALEX

Are you ready for the best weapon description ever?

BEN

Yes!

ALEX

Bearing in mind this is glowing pink and the word pink can be applied to basically every sentence. An ominous weapon trails a shadowy pink haze behind every stroke and manes and moans a menacing pink dirge in battle

(laughing)

It adds its enhancement bonus on intimidate checks made by the wielder and when it confirms a critical hit the target is automatically shaken for a minute unless they succeed a will save.

LYDIA

Question. This is Aphrodite what kind of moan is being emitted?

BEN

Is it the thing from the Hercules cartoon show which is [singing] Aphrodite, Aphrodite, Aphrodite. The Goddess of Love!

(laughing)

ALEX

This is entirely Helen's decision.

HELEN

I would like that but like a moan...

LYDIA

Sexy moan. Scary moan. Sad moan.

BEN

I mean why not all three of them?

LYDIA

Whingy moan.

HELEN

There's so many kinds of moans. I don't know but it's also supposed to be for battle so I'd like it to...it's going to have to be an ominous but beautiful moan. So it's sort of like [sings]

ALEX

Bang!

(laughing)

BRYN

Outstanding!

ALEX

There's a bunch more. If you get a critical, that shaken, completely awfully is even worse. So long story short it's brilliant.

HELEN

Ok, alright.

BEN

Mate we had the fun bit of the description. We don't want to worry about the mechanics.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LYDIA

That's your job.

HELEN

So now...

ALEX

All you've got to do is hit the thing.

HELEN

Ok.

LYDIA

No pressure!

HELEN

First D20 right?

ALEX

Yep

BRYN

You're only getting and single attack.

HELEN

That's fine. 12.

ALEX

Plus your attack bonus.

BEN

So you find your weapon and then you apply that number there.

HELEN

Ok so that is 22

BRYN

And +2 for charging.

ALEX

Yep

HELEN

So that is 24.

ALEX

So what we have added there for your benefit Helen, is you rolled your D20. You added your attack bonus which is nice and high because it's a magical weapon and you added your strength to hit and then because you charged straight at the thing you get a bonus. You get a hit.

HELEN

Ok so now I need to roll 1 D12 + 6

BEN

Yep

ALEX

And I'm going to find out whether the incredibly horrifying, terrifying creature is more scared of you than you are of it!

(laughing)

HELEN

Oh no is it a spider! 12

BRYN

18 damage

ALEX

I have to find out quickly whether it's also completely terrified of you.

(laughing)

This isn't how this was meant to go! I learnt the lesson and I didn't learn it enough!

(laughing)

BEN

This one they'll never be able to take down!

(laughing)

LYDIA

Woahhhhh

BEN

So bearing in mind a round is six seconds, in the last ten or so seconds, it's been shot by three arrows, stabbed by fire, hit by three magical bolts and then whacked by a screaming great sword.

ALEX

How much did your screaming, singing, great axe do?

BEN

Oh great axe!

HELEN

18 damage

ALEX

Oh come on!

(laughing)

LYDIA

Right wait, listen, listen...I think that was...did he only scribble a single figure?

BEN

He's counting up.

LYDIA

Oh right.

BEN

It's a good trick so the players don't know how much hit points.

LYDIA

I just count the number of figures that he's writing. I think that's fair.

HELEN

Yeah I was waiting for a while because I was like, wait is it getting better the more we hit it or...

BRYN

No!

BEN

That would be a bit spooky.

HELEN

Yeah!

ALEX

The creature's still alive.

LYDIA

Is it terrified?

ALEX

It's not terrified.

HELEN

Ah damn!

ALEX

So let's say for flavour you come at this completely overhanded straight down.

HELEN

Oh yes.

ALEX

You plough it down into where the head should split like a melon. The cloak sort of caves in on itself but it doesn't collapse. You definitely cut through a bunch of the cloak and it caves in on itself and rather large number of tentacles flail out from every single orifice.

BEN

That was unexpected!

LYDIA

Sasha screams at it, why has Barret sent you? Why are you always here?

ALEX

Would you like to attack?

LYDIA

Then stabs it again!

ALEX

Go for it!

(laughing)

Remember to use both of your attacks.

BEN

Yes! And because...because Azu charged in, you're flanking again

BRYN

Yeah

ALEX

Correct. You still got all of your...

BEN

Because Hamid and I weren't letting you flank.

ALEX

This is painful!

HELEN

I think this is going to be a bonding moment.

BEN

We're working well as a team!

ALEX

Stop bonding against me!

BEN

This is like a team exercise. This is like paintball.

LYDIA

So I did...I got a natural 1.

BRYN

Ohhhh

ALEX

Ok

LYDIA

And the other one is...it's 22.

ALEX

One of them hits. It will be the final one that hits again. However the miss, you stab at the entire thing warps in a completely impossible shape and it may not even have a central body to it. It may actually just be a mass of tentacles.

LYDIA

Always with the tentacles!

ALEX

The cloak flails around...

BEN

Is everything make based on an Otyugh?

ALEX

No interestingly enough. I just roll with what I find.

LYDIA

It might be the loudest that you've ever heard Sasha yell because she doesn't usually....

ALEX

It successfully, for flavour, because I have to have something, manages to disarm the knife that you missed with on a natural 1.

LYDIA

No my magic knife!

BRYN

It's just on the floor. You can pick it up later after this thing is dead.

LYDIA

It's even more distressing!

ALEX

It just flings it away from you but roll the attack remembering your sneak attack damage as well...why did I let you have sneak attack damage!

BEN

Because rogues...

LYDIA

There's not much point without them.

ALEX

It is very much within your power to kill this thing before it has acted.

LYDIA

Ok.

BEN

That's some good rolls.

LYDIA

So that's 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16...

BRYN

16 normal damage.

BEN

And then. And then!

LYDIA

16 normal damage and 1 fire damage.

BEN

Alex has closed the laptop.

ALEX

I'll just put that away.

LYDIA

So that's 16 damage + 1 fire.

ALEX

So that's a total of?

LYDIA

17

ALEX

Which I'll just add to this total...

BEN

Screw you Barret!

ALEX

Ok...so what you're saying is that the creature took 82 total damage before it was able to act

(laughing)

That's what you're telling me.

BRYN

Yes

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Should've been better on its initiative roll mate.

ALEX

I'll allow you have the flavour for the final objectively killing, not unconscious-ing blow.

LYDIA

Just keeps hacking at it

(laughing)

Why?! Why?! Everywhere I go! This isn't about you! Stab! Stab!

BRYN

This party is now serving deep fried squid.

LYDIA

You tell him how little he matters!

ALEX

And we'll end the episode there

BRYN

Good teamwork everybody!

HELEN

I'm so pleased.

LYDIA

Does it fold into an alternate dimension.

ALEX

I hate all of you!

BEN

[singing] hello darkness, his old friend.

(laughing)

ALEX

Right well we'll end the episode then and I will make another boss and it will be brilliant.

BEN

And then we'll kill it one round!

ALEX

And it will kill you all! Bye guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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