

RQG – 93 – The Curse!!!!

Content Warnings

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BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of patrons. I Am Alive Now, Matthew Fisher, Emily T, Ark of Ornelis, Robertson Whitney, Hegardy Kennedy, Abe Kenmore, Kier C, Matthew Endecott, Halmon Creef. 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 93 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM and with me today, I have

HELEN

Helen Gould

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

Rusty Quill Gaming – 93 – The Curse!!!!

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

BEN

And Ben Meredith

ALEX

And who are you playing?

LYDIA

Sasha Racket, who's asking?

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun Al-Tahan

HELEN

Azu

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam

ALEX

Super impressed!

BRYN

That was amazing apart from the fact that you forgot to say your own name at the top of the episode

LYDIA

Yeah you didn't say your own name.

ALEX

Oh!

BEN

Who are you?

ALEX

Oh I'm a failure. I failed to intro the show.

BEN

What is this failure's name?

ALEX

Alexander J Newall also known as Alex Newall.

BEN

Ok, cool. There we go.

ALEX

Well I feel awkward. We were basically doing an amazing job.

LYDIA

Wait, I've never cracked that pseudonym before.

ALEX

Yeah I know right!

LYDIA

Oh my word!

BEN

Dastardly!

LYDIA

All this time! Wow, you've been basically doing two people's jobs.

ALEX

I mean I tried to do I Am Lord Voldemort but the letters they don't...

BRYN

So convenient that he had a name that anagrammed to that!

ALEX

Some people have all the luck! Anyway, ok we're getting better. I've at least managed to split the party from three to two and you're all alive.

HELEN

Hooray!

ALEX

Ish. In Sasha's case. But you know...

BEN

Hey don't rub it in alright.

ALEX

It's almost a win.

HELEN

Sensitive topic.

ALEX

I'm going to pick up pretty much where we left off which is we have the majority of the party in a pub with Howard Carter who's convinced he's ruined the world. Hamid you have returned to the family domicile after the Tahan equivalent of "the talk" almost with your dad. Like you know.

BRYN

Wait, he told me about sex!

LYDIA

It's not about sex. It's about the fact that you're incredibly rich and corrupt and will never face responsibility.

ALEX

That's what I said the Tahan talk. It's just been passed from father to son for as long as...anyway. So I'm going to actually pick up with the pub first for the simple reason that I feel that Hamid needs some down time if nothing else. He has just announced himself before reaching for the nearest bottle and collapsing again.

BEN

And then got confused about brain machines.

ALEX

Yes, brain ma...what?

BEN

Oh sorry I thought I'd actually caught up but looks like maybe not.

LYDIA

No, the machines were made of brains but he might not know that if he's been drunk.

ALEX

The machines are made of brains?!

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

How?! How can a curse reach so far and so wide?!

BEN

Are you just mainly worried about the weather?

ALEX

What no! I mean that's a good chunk of it of course. I caused that. But suddenly all the machines are full of brains. Doesn't that scream curse to you!

LYDIA

Mate, I just...I've got...I've got a thought it's possible that not all this is about you.

(laughing)

ALEX

A comforting thought but can you prove it? No!

LYDIA

It's...

BEN

Wait, no but you can, right?

LYDIA

Well I mean not really. It's possible that my mate got killed and his brain taken out.

ALEX

I'm so sorry my curse caused your mate to get killed and have his brain taken out.

BEN

Wait, hang on a minute.

LYDIA

All the gangs of London and France and it seems even here are all connected and that all developed over hundreds of years due to this guy's curse. It's possible.

ALEX

I never even considered it would work backwards in time!

(laughing)

Oh no! Oh god!

BEN

I think I've worked it out...

LYDIA

It's possible that Hamid's brother murdered someone because of this curse.

ALEX

I'm so sorry!

HELEN

Sasha stop! Stop!

BEN

You! Looking at Howard. Stand up straight.

ALEX

I am! He's not.

LYDIA

It's possible that all the tentacle monsters they're...

ALEX

Oh no they've definitely got me written all over them.

BEN

I'll walk up...

LYDIA

Many tentacle monsters!

ALEX

I know right.

BEN

I'll walk up to him and just kick him in the shins repeatedly.

ALEX

Ow! I deserve this!

BEN

It's not always about you! Stop it!

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ALEX

I deserve this!

BEN

Not everything's your fault! Sober up!

BRYN

We've finally met a protagonist and you're kicking him in the shins!

(laughing)

HELEN

How...ok what can I do to calm this...

ALEX

You tell me, you're the player character.

LYDIA

We broke her!

ALEX

This is the correct response. I feel like you've got your first like Pokémon gym badge. Exasperation.

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HELEN

Is diplomacy a thing that could...

ALEX

Yeah. Just give me the roll.

LYDIA

Ooohhhh

BRYN

Every time! Every time!

HELEN

So that's 5.

ALEX

5?

HELEN

Yes

ALEX

So try and help. Try and help.

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BEN

I'm kicking still.

HELEN

You know what...

ALEX

Harder! Do it better!

(laughing)

HELEN

Azu begins to...

ALEX

I deserve this.

HELEN

...smack him a bit as well. Snap out of it! Stop...

ALEX

Harder. Really, really lay it to me.

BEN

Ok, no I think this is now a bit of a sex thing.

ALEX

What is wrong with you?!

BEN

No what's wrong with you!

ALEX

The whole world is cursed. How could you even think about that kind of thing?!

BEN

For Artemis' sake! Grab him the collar, drag him down to my level which is probably quite painful and I'll use my diplomacy check to try and snap him out of it. 23

ALEX

Alright, do a good job.

BEN

Look, not everything is about you ok? So sober up, get your act together and work on sorting it out, ok?!

ALEX

You're right. No, yeah you're right. He sort of stands, goes across to reach a bottle.

BEN

No!

ALEX

Reaches past it for a glass of water, splashes it in his face. You're right. We need to fix this. To the Tahan branch. All of us. Let's go. We're going to solve this.

BEN

Wait! Yes! But maybe quickly we just go to the Tahan house.

ALEX

To the Tahan house!

BEN

Good.

ALEX

Where is it?

HELEN

We know the way.

ALEX

Brilliant.

HELEN

High ho Topaz

(laughing)

ALEX

A camel appears in the middle of the pub. It has low ceilings. The camel is squeezed in order to fit.

HELEN

Oops!

ALEX

Argh! That's camel for this room is not of sufficient size for me to stand up in.

LYDIA

[singing] my humps, my lumps

(laughing)

BRYN

And scene!

ALEX

That makes me so happy. That makes me so happy. So I am...

LYDIA

Is Topaz a lady camel? My lovely lady humps.

HELEN

I was thinking of Topaz as a female.

ALEX

Then Topaz is not a female.

LYDIA

With lovely lady humps.

ALEX

So we are going to accelerate time. Presumably you are heading to the Tahan house or did you just say you were and you're going to drop him in the river or something.

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BEN

We were holding the plot Alex.

HELEN

I would like to go back to the house and not to a river.

ALEX

I'm going to accelerate time to you made it to the compound and found absolutely chaos. Just quickly, rather than RPing it, how do you intend to enter the house without driving through the whole crowd or do you do so?

HELEN

Azu...

ALEX

Think the paparazzi at their worst.

HELEN

The paparazzi

ALEX

Like at their worst. All reporters and crowds all up at the front. All pressed in.

LYDIA

Ok we've got a delivery. Is there a delivery entrance? We've got a very urgent delivery.

HELEN

Of a person.

LYDIA

Of a person. This camel is carrying a delivery.

ALEX

So one of the gate guards that originally let you in, sees you and he's just gesturing for you to go around the side. Loudly Howard is yelling out at them all. I'm sorry. You're right to be upset. He's standing.

BEN

Argh!

BRYN

Knock him out until he sobers up!

BEN

Of course. It's an important NPC because Alex has made him incredibly irritating.

ALEX

Together we'll bring justice! Justice!

BEN

Only Francois Henri was not annoying and that's because his brain had fallen out!

(laughing)

HELEN

Oh my gosh. Ok I drive...I ride...I don't drive the camel!

ALEX

[car noise] Flintstone style!

HELEN

Yes

ALEX

So heading around the side of the building, yes there is a less obtrusive service entrance. There's a couple of reporters there who are trying their luck. You occasionally see them as you're going, one of them's trying to climb up and get quietly booped on the head. They fall. They're not getting in. The side entrance let you in. They've obviously dealt with you. They saw you killing a hooded figure that was an assassin so you know. They're all on your side. I'm going to accelerate to we're all in the house. Hamid where would you be?

BRYN

I don't know...

ALEX

So we can be synced up perfectly.

BRYN

In the dining room. It's a mealtime right?

ALEX

Standard.

BEN

Probably.

ALEX

You're all shown...

BEN

Odds are

ALEX

You're all shown into the dining room to find Hamid there. Howard Carter is there and he sits. Highs or lows?

BRYN

Highs

ALEX

Quietly.

BEN

Thank goodness.

ALEX

Starts dozing again.

HELEN

Hello Hamid

BRYN

Hey guys. Where did you go?

HELEN

Out and about. We found a new friend.

BRYN

Ok.

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BEN

He reckons he's behind the sand.

HELEN

Yes he seems important.

BRYN

Wait what?

LYDIA

He says he has business to fix with your family.

BRYN

Ok

HELEN

Some kind of curse

BRYN

What?

HELEN

Is there a family curse?

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BRYN

No!

HELEN

Tombs?

BRYN

No not really

BEN

Dragon tombs?

BRYN

No I don't think so.

BEN

Oh. Maybe it's different. Well he said he had to go to a Tahan branch so we thought, you know.

ALEX

I feel like he ought to stand and say, I'm sorry I thought I was the plot and leaves.

(laughing)

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LYDIA

Well Hamid how are you?

BRYN

Well it's been difficult as you might imagine. Father's been arrested.

LYDIA

Why?

BEN

What? Ay?

BRYN

He has turned himself in for Saleh's crimes.

BEN

Wait...

LYDIA

Ah that explains a lot.

BEN

Wait Saleh did crimes?

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BRYN

Yep.

BEN

What kind of crimes?

HELEN

How bad?

BRYN

Really bad.

LYDIA

Saleh's...wait...so wait are these two different people because they've got the...

BRYN

So yes my father is also called Saleh. It's tradition for the eldest son to be named after the father.

BEN

Wait, so your dad's been arrested for your brother's really bad crimes. Why wasn't...I'm not following.

LYDIA

That's not how...

BEN

Yeah why didn't your brother get arrested?

HE: LEN

That is not justice.

BRYN

So...families are complicated guys.

BEN

No

LYDIA

No, not really.

HELEN

Justice is not complicated.

BEN

If someone does a bad crime they...

HELEN

You turn them out into the wilderness

BRYN

What?!

(laughing)

BEN

They...alright...

BRYN

That seems very extreme.

BEN

They have to face the consequences of what they've done.

HELEN

Yes wilderness!

BEN

You said it was...what did Saleh do?

BRYN

He got involved in some pretty...with a gang basically. A criminal gang.

BEN

And what did he do? Because actually getting involved with naughty people is not a crime is it.

LYDIA

I mean you're all involved with me.

HELEN

You're not a criminal. Are you?

BRYN

I mean we've all got a past Azu. Like we've all done things that we're not particularly proud off.

LYDIA

Grizzop just cut off a man's legs.

(laughing)

BEN

No!

BRYN

Wait, what?

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BEN

Hey!

BRYN

You cut off someone's legs?

BEN

No!

BRYN

Why?!

BEN

No!

LYDIA

Sasha takes a drink from the drink she has carried.

ALEX

It wasn't his fault!

LYDIA

Picked up another one and was like, yeah it was great.

BEN

Don't change the subject, ok. Look I shot his legs off accidentally. It was supposed to be a warning alright and I put them back on I think.

BRYN

You think! You think you put someone's...

ALEX

It's not his fault. Howard Carter stands.

BEN

You shut up!

BRYN

What has this got to do with anything?

BEN

Ok look, no, don't change the damn subject alright. What did your brother do?

BRYN

He killed someone.

BEN

And he's getting away with it?

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BRYN

No!

BEN

Ok so what...

HELEN

Murderer

BEN

Ok so what's he doing then?

LYDIA

What...you're sending him to prison?

BRYN

No.

BEN

He's been arrested? People know that he's a murderer

BRYN

No!

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BEN

So wait sorry...just run the whole like...

LYDIA

Oh Grizzop, Grizzop, Hamid's rich.

BEN

Ohhh! So you've covered it up.

LYDIA

It now makes sense.

BRYN

Not entirely.

BEN

Wait hang on a minute...

LYDIA

Nah that's how it works.

HELEN

I thought better of you Hamid.

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BEN

Wait, how do you...

BRYN

It wasn't really my decision guys.

BEN

Ok, well you could go out there and say my brother did it, not my dad.

HELEN

Is that why all the paparazzi are there?

BRYN

Yes! My dad's quite a famous successful person and he's just confessed to a crime.

HELEN

Oh I don't keep up with the gossip.

LYDIA

Which he didn't do.

BRYN

No

BEN

That your brother did.

BRYN

Has this never happened to any of you? Have none of you ever lied to cover for someone that you cared about? Is this really such a strange concept that a man want to protect his family.

BEN

Sorry, I'll just stop you there. Not if they're a murderer.

BRYN

It was an accident!

BEN

Sorry murders aren't accidental. That's manslaughter.

BRYN

You just shot someone's legs off accidentally. That seems more or less the same thing to me.

BEN

Well no because then I put their legs back on and they're still alive.

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BRYN

And if that person had died before you'd got to them.

ALEX

It would be the curse!

BRYN

Shut up!

ALEX

He sits back down.

BEN

He broke a chair over my head.

LYDIA

Yeah he did start it. It'd be self-defence.

HELEN

Yeah we were in a very rough situation.

LYDIA

I mean did Saleh kill this person when...as part of a job for the meritocrats

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BEN

Yeah maybe...

LYDIA

Yeah!

BEN

Or in self-defence.

LYDIA

Or like...

HELEN

Yes self-defence is...

BRYN

I mean technically it was self-defence in a way.

BEN

Ok, no that's not a good way to say that. What was the context?

BRYN

He was in the middle of committing a crime and this person tried to stop him.

HELEN

That's not good context

BRYN

I know! I'm not defending this!

BEN

Well no you are. You are because you're covering it up. You're covering it up. He's not paying for his crime of doing a murder while doing another crime!

(laughing)

How do you not see that this maybe a bad thing!

HELEN

I agree with Grizzop.

BRYN

My father has just been arrested! My family is falling apart!

BEN

That's not the point. The point is that he's getting away with it.

BRYN

What would you like to happen to him them?

HELEN

Arrest him!

BRYN

Someone's already been arrested. You can't arrest two people for the crime that one person committed.

BEN

Then arrest the...Ooh that went deep! This is my real voice!

ALEX

This is the sound of justice Grizzop!

BEN

I am actually Batm...sorry. But the wrong person got arrested.

HELEN

That's adding another crime.

BRYN

There are other ways to pay for a crime other than being arrested. You know what, like...

LYDIA

So you 're going to send him to a flaming poo dimension or something?

BEN

A what?!

HELEN

That sounds appropriate.

BRYN

That was a thing with Bertie. No! I was hoping that you guys might help me figure out a different way.

BEN

Put him in prison for doing a murder.

BRYN

How does being in prison help?

BEN

I mean it's a consequence.

LYDIA

He wouldn't be able to kill other people except other people in prison and they're probably as hard as him frankly given what I've seen.

HELEN

It will be penance.

BEN

Yeah like you know when you do a bad thing...

HELEN

Making up for.

BRYN

You do a bad thing and you make up for it. Being in prison doesn't give the opportunity to do that. It's not a penance. It's a punishment. That's different.

BEN

Hang on a minute. Just a quick thing. Throughout this whole thing you're thinking entirely about you and your family, right? Did the person who died have a family?

BRYN

Yes

BEN

And how are they going to see justice?

BRYN

Well someone's going to prison for that and also they're being paid three times that man's salary for the rest of their lives.

BEN

Do you think that they care about money!? One of their family members have died.

LYDIA

I probably do care about money. I mean they're probably not rich like Hamid.

BEN

Yeah but not in that context.

LYDIA

They want to eat.

BEN

Yeah but like what, sorry we killed your...

BRYN

We can't bring him back to life Grizzop.

BEN

Someone's got to pay for the crimes!

BRYN

Someone is!

LYDIA

Hamid, that's...

HELEN

This is not how it works.

LYDIA

It's fine guys. He was a friend of Bertie's. He's a rich guy. It just works out for them, right. They get to choose who suffers.

HELEN

That is not how the world works either.

LYDIA

That is how the world works!

HELEN

Where is your brother?

BRYN

Upstairs

LYDIA

Sasha grabs a bottle of something from the table and wanders out.

HELEN

Very well. Yeah Azu walks out to go and find...

BRYN

No! Stay here! Look, if you cannot accept that sometimes there are different pars to punishment to penance then we are just going to disband this company right now because frankly if this is your attitude to my brother then clearly none of you want to work with me either so let's just go our separate ways and I will defend my family! I literally raise my finger and point at you.

LYDIA

Ooh ok. Sure.

BEN

I step pointlessly but step in front of Azu and draw my bow.

HELEN

Ooh. Azu looks down at you very sadly.

BRYN

I thought we were friends. If you can't at least stay in this room and help me figure something out. Calmly. Without rushing off to do something about it.

BEN

I am not going to be held complicit in this horrific miscarriage of justice. I get the point of helping the people you love. But sometimes they need to pay for what they've done. Properly. You are in the incredibly lucky position of, as Sasha says, being able to choose who goes down. So you make the right choice. I thought better of you than this!

BRYN

The choice has been taken out of my hands.

BEN

No it hasn't! Because you can tell the truth!

BRYN

I will not go back on my father's sacrifice for this family.

HELEN

He shouldn't have to make the sacrifice. What is the point of a sacrifice if it does no good. Your brother will not learn.

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BEN

And what's he protecting? The company? Your money? Your bank?

BRYN

He is protecting this son!

BEN

Who murdered somebody!

BRYN

And so have I!

LYDIA

You murdered someone. Yeah I mean we've all killed people Hamid. I mean it was part of your work right? You're talking about part of the meritocratic work?

BRYN

No, I am talking about the reason I got kicked out of university.

LYDIA

Oh you're a murderer too? Oh ok. Rich people man! Just laughs and takes a swig of her drink.

BEN

So how long were you in for?

BRYN

I wasn't.

BEN

Oh.

HELEN

So that is why you think this is alright.

BRYN

Nothing about this is alright.

HELEN

But you're letting it continue.

BRYN

I am trying to do what is best for my family. I am trying to find other ways to make up...my father is going to prison. I don't understand why you...why the rest of you don't seem to understand that that is worse than my brother going to prison.

LYDIA

So why is he doing it? Like mate, you...I don't know what you...

BRYN

Is this concept really so alien? This idea of sacrifice.

BEN

Hamid! Look around. You're currently the only person in this room who thinks it's ok. What's different about you than to us?

LYDIA

I mean, no I think that is...that's how it works innit. It's always how it works.

BEN

But that's not what we're in the game for. We're in it to change things for the better. Why do you think we're paladins?

LYDIA

That is fair.

HELEN

Did your brother agree to this?

BRYN

He doesn't even know.

HELEN

We should tell him.

BEN

Yeah maybe give him the choice.

BRYN

Yes I was going to talk to him about it, after I'd talked to my friends to try and figure out what to do next. Because I'm lost in this situation and you just want to rush off and make it worse.

BEN

Well let's go give him the choice.

BRYN

No!

BEN

Oh I thought you said we were gonna do that.

BRYN

No! Because I don't trust you right now.

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BEN

[laughing] you don't trust us.

BRYN

No!

BEN

Alright.

BRYN

Because you can't see any route to a solution other than to just throw him away for making one mistake.

BEN

He murdered somebody! That's not a mistake!

BRYN

I murdered someone and it was a mistake.

BEN

[laughing] it's not!

LYDIA

I thought...

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BRYN

You have no idea about what the situation was? How can you possibly know.

LYDIA

Wait, wait, wait...

HELEN

Inform us.

LYDIA

He said...you said he got...I mean he's involved with Barret, Hamid. That doesn't happen.

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check.

BEN

18

HELEN

What do I add to that again?

BRYN

Perception which is on the list.

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HELEN

Ok. Oh! That's 22.

LYDIA

25

BRYN

Oh sorry. Natural 20!

ALEX

So everyone notices then, Howard looks up at that one and looks to all of you.

What? Why are you...what?

LYDIA

Ah Barret ah.

ALEX

You with them.

BEN

No

ALEX

You have brought this on everyone's heads! Ok!

HELEN

That's a change!

ALEX

Ok! If it weren't for you and all your things...

BEN

I thought it was your fault?

ALEX

It is! Because I was with you but if I wasn't with you then it wouldn't have been a problem!

BEN

We're not with Barret. We just know about Barret. Knowing about something doesn't make you with the thing. I know of a lot of people. It doesn't make me a meritocrat.

HELEN

We're against Barret. Are you?

ALEX

Good! To the Tahan branch.

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LYDIA

We're in the...can you make him sleep Hamid?

BRYN

Oh maybe. I cast sleep.

ALEX

How many hit dice is it for?

BRYN

It's only a 4 hit dice so if he's got more than a 4 hit dice, it just does nothing.

[clicking sound]

That's what I assumed yeah. No!

LYDIA

He's got 4 hit...

BEN

Well we all have...

BRYN

We have 6.

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BEN

Because your level is like...

BRYN

So if he has 5 or more. If it's 4 it can still work.

LYDIA

I have no idea what that means.

ALEX

You're finally. It's basically how many levels has he got.

LYDIA

Ah ok.

ALEX

Look, ok. I have a job to do. I'm going to find the Tahans and I'm going to give them a seeing to. It's all their fault.

BRYN

I'm right here!

HELEN

Yes.

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ALEX

Who are you?

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan. Pleased to meet your acquaintance.

ALEX

You! Destroyer!

BRYN

Maybe.

ALEX

He sort of staggers towards you and starts fumbling around. He finds a spoon and brandishes it at you. You! You're the reason it's all wrong!

BRYN

So it would appear!

LYDIA

It's that thing right, you assume the nice posh ones are all nice. It turns out they've done so much stuff.

ALEX

I know! We told them. We told them there was a tomb right there and they just go ahead and use it anyway and this is what happens.

BRYN

Who have...what now? What tomb? Where?

ALEX

Where do you think?

BRYN

I literally have no idea what you are doing in this room. In this conversation. Or anything you're saying has any relation to.

ALEX

Still brandishing the spoon. I have something to tell you!

BRYN

Please say it.

ALEX

And I'll take a break and then tell you afterwards.

And welcome back. So I believe I was accusing you of all the world's ills.

BRYN

No you were going to tell us something.

ALEX

Ah was that it. Was that it.

BRYN

With a spoon.

ALEX

With a spoon! You...on your watch, even after we warned you that there were problems ok. I wouldn't have had to break in, ok. I wouldn't have had to break in to that place if you'd all listened in the first place but no! No! the big Tahans they know everything and they know where they can build their things. Well look! It's all wrong isn't it and I have to fall in with bad crowds and curses and oh, it's all my fault except for the bits that are your fault.

BEN

What happened?

BRYN

It doesn't make any sense.

HELEN

What bad crowd?

LYDIA

Oh he meant Barret.

ALEX

Yeah!

BEN

No, but what did...

HELEN

What did he do?

ALEX

You should leave. He gestures the spoon to Sasha. The only innocent here.
The only one who isn't culpable in this whole sordid mess!

LYDIA

Alright.

(laughing)

Grabs a bottle off the table and walks out.

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ALEX

Free yourself! Person...

HELEN

Sasha, no. Come back. We just found you again.

LYDIA

I'm going to have a nap.

BEN

Ok

HELEN

Ok stay in the building please.

ALEX

Sleep well alcoholic friend! Escape the tribulations of our existence.

LYDIA

Are their gargoyles on the roof?

ALEX

Highs or lows?

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BEN

Ooh security ay?

ALEX

Highs or lows?

LYDIA

Er highs.

ALEX

Loads.

LYDIA

Yeah! Gonna go hang out with them.

(laughing)

HELEN

Right so...

ALEX

I'm hungry.

BRYN

There's food right there. There's loads on the table. Just eat some.

ALEX

Ah thanks. He starts to eat.

BRYN

I didn't understand any of that.

HELEN

No but he does seem to have a connection with you and what are the recent buildings...

BRYN

None that I am aware of. I've been away from the family for quite a while.

HELEN

Howard?

ALEX

What?

HELEN

What do you...be specific...

ALEX

Like specific. What do you specifically want to know?

HELEN

What building? What happened? What tomb? When? Why? And how?

ALEX

So...right, there was...there was me, there was the inside guy, there was the outside girl and then...and then there was the muscle. Ok.

HELEN

Any names?

ALEX

Those were their names.

BEN

Wait

ALEX

They called me brains.

BEN

The inside guy, what did he look like?

ALEX

Kind of looks at Hamid, pretty similar to him if I'm honest.

BEN

I think we've found the context.

BRYN

Yeah! Are you talking about a raid on the Tahan vaults and...

ALEX

Yes!

BRYN

And you were involved in that too?

ALEX

I didn't want to be did I?! No! I just wanted to study my tombs but no! Build a big, bank on top of it because that's fine!

BRYN

Are you saying that the Central al-Tahan Bank where the meritocratic offices lie is built on top of a tomb?

ALEX

Yes!

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BRYN

You could've made that clearer!

(laughing)

ALEX

I think I just did!

HELEN

Who's tomb?

LYDIA

Ok from the shouting, Sasha's going to climb in the window.

(laughing)

ALEX

If I knew that I wouldn't have had to have go in to find out, would I?!

HELEN

Did you go in?

ALEX

Sort of.

BRYN

My understanding is you got interrupted halfway through trying to get in?

ALEX

Yes a curse went off. Massive one and it's all my fault. Huge! Like bit, throbbing curse. It was awful.

HELEN

Curses aren't physical. What do you mean?

ALEX

Oh do you know about curses do you? Do you?! Do you know about curses? Do you know about storms sweeping Cairo.

LYDIA

Can roll knowledge arcana.

(laughing)

ALEX

Feel free everyone to give me knowledge arcana, or even knowledge religion I'll allow.

HE: LEN

I'll roll knowledge religion.

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BEN

I'm also going to join in on this one.

HELEN

Another 1!

ALEX

Helen's my favourite!

LYDIA

Wait if it's local.

BRYN

19 on knowledge arcana.

HELEN

7

BEN

20 on knowledge religion.

ALEX

So knowledge arcana that's basically not how curses work.

BRYN

Yeah I know. I didn't need to roll that.

ALEX

In terms of knowledge religion, you do know that anyone who'd have that kind of magical protection was probably really important given how it interacts with history etc. Sasha I'm afraid you have no insight on this one.

LYDIA

I have no idea!

ALEX

Helen, in fairness, curses are quite bad and maybe that is how curses work. It's not like you've ever actually run into one before.

HELEN

True.

ALEX

So it's like, that's ridic...actually if I was going to make something that makes everything go wrong. That's how I'd do it. It holds together. It holds water.

LYDIA

Or sand.

ALEX

Or sand! So yeah we all go in. It's all going great. And then the curse goes wrong and I doom all of Cairo. All of it!

HELEN

But it's not...

ALEX

All the world

HELEN

If you didn't put the curse there then it's not your fault.

ALEX

No but I led them there and it's my job! And I was meant to get past the...

BRYN

I'd really like to hear this whole story from the beginning from someone sober.

ALEX

Then get the insider. The muscle.

BEN

I think we've got the insider.

ALEX

The outsider.

HELEN

Another reason to go and fetch your brother.

LYDIA

I'm pretty sure he isn't...Sasha slams the drink down. He isn't sober and he hasn't been in a long time!

BEN

You – pointing at Howard.

ALEX

Yeah

BEN

Lie down, sober up and we'll deal with this later.

ALEX

Friends! He kind of reaches out to both Grizzop and Azu. He can't reach Sasha because she's gone in the window, she's at the other end now.

LYDIA

Both psychologically and physically.

ALEX

I don't deserve you and I'm sorry of the fates that await you for helping me but I will accept your help.

BEN

Just get on the sofa.

ALEX

To the sofa! He stumbles out the room and...

BEN

No! The sofa's here.

ALEX

To the sofa! He stumbles back in and then upon the sofa.

HELEN

Good night. Right well...

BEN

Now we need to go talk to your brother.

BRYN

I agree. He may also not be in the best state. He hasn't been in the best state for a while.

BEN

Let's check

BRYN

My friends I have...I understand that we disagree fundamentally on what should happen next. And I absolutely understand that my brother should face consequences for what he's done.

HELEN

Good start.

BRYN

But...my father has already taken these steps and they are difficult to reverse.

HELEN

But not impossible.

BEN

And if your father's made a mistake then he should also reap the consequences. As should you Hamid.

LYDIA

Yeah there's actually a crime for misinforming the police. So it's...it's fun because it means that if you try and get people off that gets you on. Who knew? I mean some...not that I would know.

BEN

And it looks like your father has previous. He just couldn't find a way out this time could he? A clean one. One that could be solved with money.

BRYN

If we are going to continue to work together we need to find a compromise.

BEN

No. This is not a compromise situation. We have a divine mandate to make sure that justice is done. So if you want to argue, take it upstairs.

HELEN

Justice cannot be done without the truth.

BRYN

Will you at least agree to find out the full circumstances of what happened before taking further steps? That is all I would like to ask you to do at this point.

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HELEN

Very well. More information cannot hurt

BEN

Yeah, we'll listen to him.

HELEN

And then perhaps we can track down the rest.

BEN

Yeah but right now the pack just aint your family. It's your community and it's society alright. And honestly I'm starting to think of your family as a threat.

LYDIA

Here mate, him and Barret, it turns out...

BEN

Not so different.

LYDIA

All along! All along! I shouldn't be surprised really. I thought I'd escaped but I was with him all along. That's why he gave you the ring isn't it.

BRYN

What?

LYDIA

All along!

BRYN

No, Sasha, no!

LYDIA

Hmmm

BEN

Looks like you're reaping what you sow. So let's go talk to your brother and find out the truth.

HELEN

Azu goes to the door and opens it and says, shall we?

BRYN

I'm just asking...

BEN

Move

BRYN

Fine.

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ALEX

So the party heads upstairs to Saleh.

BEN

I think so.

HELEN

Yeah, is Sasha coming?

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah. Stumbling along.

(laughing)

BEN

So the audience is here

LYDIA

Yeah!

BEN

From the peanut gallery.

ALEX

So you all head up to Saleh's room presumably. Give me a perception check.
All of you.

LYDIA

Oh dear!

BEN

Ooh natural 20.

HELEN

I wonder what I'll get. A natural 20!

(cheering)

ALEX

It's because you moaned, I thought I'd give you the natural 20.

LYDIA

I only rolled an 8 but that works out as a 20!

HELEN

So that's 26 in total for me.

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BRYN

27 in total.

BEN

And 27 in total.

ALEX

And what did you get Sasha?

LYDIA

I got 20 in total. Drunken Sasha can only perceive more than Bertie would ever see.

ALEX

Drunken Sasha doesn't hear but everyone else does hear. Saleh's in his room. And you hear him really quietly just muttering to himself. [Whispering] it's all my fault, it's all my fault. It's all my fault.

HELEN

Can someone be cursed to think everything in the world is their fault?

BEN

No I think he's just realised it is his fault.

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LYDIA

But then the other guy...maybe it's his fault.

BEN

I think it's probably both of their faults.

HELEN

And the other two

BEN

Yeah and Barret.

LYDIA

Yeah it's often his fault.

BEN

And apparently the Tahans building in a tomb.

LYDIA

I wonder if it's my fault! I mean I didn't do anything I wasn't supposed to but...

ALEX

Saleh opens the door having heard you and is basically facing all of you in the corridor.

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LYDIA

Grizzop is it your fault?

BEN

Erm no.

LYDIA

Alright, that's good to know.

BRYN

Saleh, would you join us in the dining room please?

ALEX

Sure, sure. He basically steps out and starts heading to the dining room. Arms down. In fact let's give him a sense motive. He is moderately ok at reading the room. He goes quietly and down to the dining room.

BEN

Is he aware of the two individuals with divine symbology plastered all over them?

ALEX

He's aware. He's aware.

LYDIA

There's one guy unconscious in the corner. A lady giggling to herself over a bottle of wine in the corner.

ALEX

Saleh enters the dining room. Sees Howard asleep on the sofa facing the wall. Who's he?

BEN

The brain

HELEN

A friend of yours?

ALEX

What? What? Are you serious?!

BEN

Yes

ALEX

He goes over and pulls Howard over.

BEN

We've just got him to sleep!

ALEX

Howard sees him the eye. You! You!

(laughing)

LYDIA

Oh my word!

ALEX

Howard then like grabs him and goes what did you do? It's all our fault. It's all our fault! And then bizarrely they just start...I'm not going to RP this because it's NPCs talking to one another. They just start...

LYDIA

What in sync?

ALEX

Yes. That's the best way of describing it. They just start riffing off one another how it's their fault. However they're almost fighting for it to be one of theirs fault.

BRYN

I cast detect magic.

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HELEN

Yes! Good idea!

ALEX

There is a magical aura around both of them.

HELEN

Hmmm

BRYN

Guys I think there is some sort of curse on them.

ALEX

It's an enchantment.

BEN

Hmm

BRYN

Like genuinely it looks like they've been...

ALEX

From a necromantic school.

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BRYN

They've probably been cursed in some way.

BEN

Can't you lift it.

BRYN

I don't know how to do that.

BEN

Right. I've got this. And I'll cast lesser restoration which only does attribute damage healing. So I mutter something, bang my breastplate at Saleh.

ALEX

He sort of staggers for a moment. He seems to almost sober up for a moment and then it just drops right back down again to where he was before.

BEN

Ah no luck.

HELEN

Well if they're under an enchantment then of course we must find...

ALEX

Of course it's an enchantment. This is Howard. We're all under an enchantment. It's the curse. I told you, it's the curse!

BRYN

In fairness maybe we should've given his talk about the curse more...

ALEX

It's destroying the very fabric of your life. Look at it tearing you apart. Saleh's more just quietly going...

BEN

So what we need is a really strong magic user, right? We were planning to go and see Apophis weren't we? So let's go do that.

BRYN

I mean I don't think...

BEN

Two birds, one stone right.

BRYN

...bothering Apophis with this is going to end well.

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BEN

Well we also need to visit them about Sasha.

BRYN

Yes absolutely

BEN

So we've got a lot of business with Apophis. Maybe through your sister. You know, the connection of the rich and powerful.

BRYN

Yes I don't agree we should be going to see Apophis. I don't think Apophis is going to react well to us going can you remove a curse off these two people. We can just go into town and buy a wand of remove curse.

BEN

I suppose if we have the money.

LYDIA

Yeah we've got that.

HELEN

Do you have the money?

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BRYN

Probably. I don't know how much one costs.

ALEX

Well Azu you know for a fact that the Temple of Aphrodite, they'd remove curse without charging because it's an affliction that could spread throughout the population.

HELEN

I know who can help!

BEN

Oh yeah?

HELEN

Eren Fairhands!

BEN

Oh good.

LYDIA

Oh great.

(laughing)

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BRYN

I mean that's a better option than bothering Apophis.

BEN

Well then let's go there immediately.

HELEN

I'd forgotten! It's so long ago!

ALEX

I thought I'd let it hang as long as I could! Oh you think that's long ago? I'm punishing these guys with backstory from 2015.

LYDIA

Yeah!

BEN

Which is monstrous because he's the one taking notes!

ALEX

So in that case I'm happy to just skip to Temple of Apoph...Aphrodite sorry.

Yeah.

LYDIA

I assume that we put maybe like...we still hold up the delivery...

ALEX

Delivery! Delivery!

LYDIA

But put a blanket over Saleh and Hamid. Delivery again. Delivery, delivery. No paparazzi here.

ALEX

You'll all be freed from the curse one day though we do not know when that is!

BRYN

Would it be morally wrong to gag him?

ALEX

It's all I deserve! Hamid gives a hooded nod

BEN

Fine! I'll just get a rag and stuff it in his mouth.

ALEX

You don't need to. He snatches it off, stuffs it in his own mouth.

BEN

This might be the curse! Just pushing on his butt, being like...

ALEX

I'm going to skip ahead to Temple of Aphrodite.

HELEN

Ok

ALEX

You enter and Eren Fairhands...you know what let's open this with a scene. So you enter and you head through into the main hall which is used for mass healings. They're not often done but they are done sometimes and you're able to show people straight through obviously. You're with the...

HELEN

Yeah glowing and pink.

ALEX

Yeah like it's obvious. So you go in, no problems and effectively you're told that he's finishing a mass healing. You enter into the main hall just as he finishes and there's about...about 50 people in there. His hands are raised and you're just seeing the end of a massive healing spell over all of them and then he lowers his hands and goes, children of Aphrodite you may get out into your lives safe in the knowledge that you have been healed.

HELEN

High Priest! High Priest! It is I. Azu.

ALEX

The twitch returns

(laughing)

Just slightly

HELEN

Your favourite...

(laughing)

ALEX

Come on, you've got to say it with a straight face!

HELEN

Gosh what is she? She's not a novice anymore.

BEN

Disciple.

HELEN

Yes! Your favourite disciple. I have found afflicted people who need your expert healing hands.

BEN

Whatcha.

ALEX

Hello again

HELEN

Yes and my friends are here too.

ALEX

He steps down from the stage as everyone's sort of milling around and everyone's reaching out to touch him and thank him for his healing. It's quite fawning but he sort of comes over. I'm afraid I've already spoken to your companion. There's nothing that I can do short of an extremely risky procedure or...

HELEN

Oh no, no, no. And she pulls the blanket off the other two. They are under some kind of enchantment.

ALEX

Do you have any evidence?

Of course there's no evidence!

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BRYN

He's still gagged!

ALEX

Oh! [muffled noises]

BRYN

Well I cast detect magic on them and so yes I saw the enchantment they're under.

ALEX

He sort of closes his eyes, reaches out, mutters some arcane words and...oh. Yes.

BEN

Divine words Alex? He's a divine cast not...

ALEX

That's very true and actually quite accurate.

HELEN

Oh my god!

BEN

Just saying!

BRYN

Do you even D&D bro

ALEX

It's really awkward because I wasn't going to reveal he's a mystic theurge this early but...

BEN

Ooohh!

HELEN

What on earth is going on?

ALEX

That's a super, super like unnecessarily obscure reference that frankly isn't even funny when you get it! It's a mechanics joke that isn't worth the joke! One person out there's gone ha! And that's the best I'm getting.

BRYN

No I mean I got it but I didn't find it funny.

ALEX

That's what I mean. Like maybe one person in the entire...

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LYDIA

They got a mild swell of satisfaction.

ALEX

Yeah. Recognition.

LYDIA

That's what we live for Alex. That's what we live for.

BEN

And they closed their Pathfinder supplement and went, very good.

(laughing)

ALEX

So Fairhands leads you to a...basically a quiet treatment room. Sits them down. Has a look at Howard first. I see.

BRYN

So if we could cast neutralise poison on them at the same time to sober them up that would be amazing, thank you.

ALEX

Could you please remove his vocal impediment.

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BEN

Oh!

LYDIA

He stuffed it in his own mouth! So...

HELEN

I pull it out. Azu pulls it out.

ALEX

It's gross.

HELEN

She doesn't notice.

ALEX

What is your name?

Howard.

And tell me about this curse.

The curse! I'll tell you about the curse!

Ok he starts talking for about a minute. At which point...

BRYN

That's why we put the gag in.

ALEX

At which...Fairhands, hats off to him. Just goes very calm and is listening and the most attentive listener ever regarding this curse. I thank you. That curse must be so atrocious for you to bear and knowing that you have caused all of these problems for the entire world, please wait for me whilst I try and make arrangements. He...

BEN

Grizzop starts making gagging mimes.

ALEX

He quietly gestures for all of you to come over to the other side of the room.

LYDIA

Ok I'll go yeah.

ALEX

You were right to bring him to me. I've heard of things similar to this. I'm going to attempt something. If it goes well I should be able to help both of them. It would seem that they're both under the same affliction as far as I can tell.

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BRYN

Do you know what it is? What is does? Have you seen it before?

ALEX

I'll answer that question if the treatment works.

BRYN

Sure

ALEX

He heads in.

HELEN

But what if it goes wrong.

ALEX

The worst that can happen is nothing happens.

BEN

Ah fantastic

HELEN

Alright very well.

ALEX

When I was talking about high risk, that's not what we're dealing with. This is, basically, I've got nothing to lose.

BEN

Skip to the end.

ALEX

Artemis. They're always the same. Goes into the room. Reaches out, places...

BEN

Butter wouldn't melt mate.

ALEX

...one hand on Howard and one hand on Saleh. I would wish to commiserate with both of you regarding this horrible curse. They all sort of lean in. Fairhands begins chanting. Again in *divine* speak.

BEN

Good

ALEX

Celestial for those of you that can speak it. But begins chanting and performing this spell. The room fills with white light. It's quite flashy but it is

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also really high level. Like Azu you know this so it's not so much someone doing it for effect as actually this is how it functions.

HELEN

Azu's super impressed by the way.

ALEX

Of course.

HELEN

It's like watching a musician that you really like.

LYDIA

Skills crush!

(laughing)

HELEN

Oh absolutely.

BEN

Grizzop is arm crossed, foot tapping. Urgh.

ALEX

Anyway the spell takes about 60 seconds total. Then Fairhands removes their hands. Stands there, arms clasped. And both Saleh and Howard sort of sit up straight. It's like they've gone from drunk to sober. Never mind anything else. Howard's gone quiet. And that kind of ridiculous, ludicrous mannerisms that he'd been adopting are gone. And they just sort of look to one another and look back.

So tell me about this curse, Fairhands say.

Howard pipes up first. Erm...oh wow, l...l...I thought it was my fault.

Saleh kind of brightens up as well. What do you mean? Yeah!

Fairhands just turns around and goes, you have the room. I think you'll find them both significantly more conducive and probably in far greater command of the facts. This is not my concern.

BRYN

Thank you so much.

ALEX

Don't thank me. This is what the Temple is for.

BEN

And I'm going to try and push my way forward. I'm very small. So I'll weave through. Point at Saleh and go, you did a murder. Your dad's taking the fall for it. What are you going to do?

ALEX

Saleh who's had that moment of brightness, it kind of drops again and he goes oh! That's...no, I didn't. I really, really didn't.

And I'm going to end the episode there!

(groaning)

HELEN

Wow! We nearly broke up for nothing!

BEN

No, no, no because we thought it was true.

LYDIA

We're still learning things about Hamid.

BEN

The fact that it's not true does not change the way that Hamid was trying to deal with it.

ALEX

I'm going to be honest, there was a solid chance you'd never have figured any of this out and that would've been really awkward for me! I would've made it work but it would've been really awkward for me! Thank goodness for Howard. And you were all like, oh he's a drunken fool!

HELEN

I wasn't!

ALEX

Well no...

HELEN

I saw his inherent worth!

ALEX

What that big glowing sign that said "plot" above his head!

(laughing)

Well thanks for following me through this awfulness and hopefully we can start looking at some bright side

BRYN

Why can't we have nice things Alex!

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ALEX

You have to earn them!

BRYN

Why!?

ALEX

Bye guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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