

## RQG – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

### Content Warnings

- Intrusive telepathy.
- Darkness.
- Impalement.
- Blood.
- Paralysis.

Rusty Quill presents:

### BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our Patreons; Daniel Dietcher, CMS Hex, Wilfred Las Marias, Pager 3.14, Robert Lite, Stu Pollock, Daniel, Camille, Kelsey Wolff, Sarah Neishaw. Thank you all, we really appreciate your support. If you'd like to join them, got to [www.patreon.com/rustyquill](http://www.patreon.com/rustyquill) and take a look at our rewards.

### [Show Theme - Intro]

### ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 96 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have...

**BEN**

Ben Meredith.

**BRYN**

Bryn Monroe.

**LYDIA**

Lydia Nicholas.

**HELEN**

And Helen Gould.

**ALEX**

And who are you playing?

**HELEN**

Azu.

**LYDIA**

Sasha Racket.

**BRYN**

Hamid Saleh Haroun al Tahan.

**BEN**

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam.

**ALEX**

Super proud of you, you guys got these intros dowwwwwn!

**LYDIA**

Yeah!!

**ALEX**

That means when it goes wrong it's 'cos you're actively sabotaging!

**LYDIA**

Yep!

**BRYN**

Pretty much!

**LYDIA**

That's the case, yeah, we come out an plan all the interjections before!

**BEN**

It's the only way we can get you back for a percentage of the pain you have inflicted on us. You notice how we were perfect that time? It's because last episode you gave us a nice thing!

**ALEX**

I gave you a nice thing...

**BEN**

... you let something nice happen. And look what the benefits are...

**ALEX**

... it's going to be so brilliant when you all suffer because of the 'nice thing'!

**BEN**

So basically, every time you're going to do a bad thing, just think about us looking at you saying, 'nice podcast you have here!'...

**(Group laughter)**

... shame if it were derailed!!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Which leads us seamlessly into nice things that have happened! I believe you had a conversation with, basically, one of the heads of the world, and it went pretty well!

**HELEN and BRYN**

Yes!

**LYDIA**

Seemed like a nice bloke!

**HELEN**

So sarky!

**ALEX**

Like, it could have gone worse! Could have gone worse!

**HELEN**

So much worse!

**ALEX**

So, for once...

**BEN**

... we could have been eaten!

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

Literally!

**BEN**

Not a single one of us got eaten!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So, for once, I'm going to let you all choose where we re-join the action. Where would you all like to re-join the action?

**LYDIA/SASHA**

Sasha's going to really enjoy putting all her knives back!

**(Group laughter)**

She'll definitely have flashed to that and, just, you can see her visibly relax!

**(Laughter)**

'Uh, alright, that! As about the eight-hundredth knife... that went alright!'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'Yeah, that could have gone a lot worse!'

**HELEN/AZU**

‘I am so pleased for you!’ Azu looks dangerously like she’s going to hug you, and then she just gives you a... she remembers from last time.

**LYDIA**

Sasha is just holding two knives.

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yeah! She notices the knives and remembers what happened last time she tried to hug you and just gives you thumbs up.

**ALEX**

The mage behind the desk, by the way, is just like all smiles. His face is just a mass of wrinkles with a big grin, and he’s just double thumbs up like, ‘Yeahhhh, nice!’

**HELEN**

I’m gonna hug him instead.

**LYDIA**

Sasha gestures back with her two knives, as if they were thumbs up.

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘So, Oscar. Indispensable, eh? Singular talent, eh?’

**ALEX (also as Wilde)**

Wilde, deadpan, ‘You’d be amazed what kind of miscommunications can happen.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Whatever, mate! Saira, so we’ve got permission to get the Heart of Aphrodite and use it, so, erm, how do we go about doing that?’

**ALEX (also as Saira)**

‘It’ll be complicated. Erm, the Tahan branch is obviously locked down at the moment because of all the trouble, but obviously this is going to supersede that...’

*[low gasps and mutterings]*

‘... is tomorrow okay? I can make that happen.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Yeah!’ Looking at Sasha.

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Er...’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘I guess we should take it to Eren Fairhands if he would be the...’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘What’s actually...’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘... best person to actually perform the required healing, I guess?’

**ALEX (also as Saira)**

‘From what I hear, yeah, that would be my guess as well, although I suspect he might be a bit grabby?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Clingy.’

**ALEX (also as Saira)**

‘That’s a better word!’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Please make sure it’s known.’

**ALEX (also as Saira)**

‘Let’s make sure it’s in a highly visible space, but not necessarily a public affair, if you see what I mean!’

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**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Yes.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘I might have to kill him afterwards, is that what you’re saying?’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘No!’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘No, no, no!’

**ALEX (also as Saira)**

‘No! Wow, no!’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Although, actually, you know, Azu, if you say you kind of help...’

**ALEX**

Wrinkly mage behind the desk hearing, ‘we’re going to have to kill him...’

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Yeah!!’

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**BRYN**

Everyone's facing the other way except Sasha!

**ALEX**

Double thumbs up!

**BEN**

Oh, okay!

**LYDIA**

Double knives up!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

He's just miming like, *[pchowww, pchowww, pchowww]*...

**LYDIA**

Sasha mimes a 'stab, stab, stab'!

**BEN**

What a murderous old man!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

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That dude can cast Maximised Fireball! I mean, if I could cast Maximised Fireball I'd be a lot more murderous than I am!

**(Laughter)**

**ALEX (also as Saira and Wilde)**

So, Saira's there, going, 'Right, well I'm going to have to head back to the house and, you know, fill in paperwork! That's my life! Is there anything else that you'll need? You're happy to... obviously you're welcome to come in the carriage with me. Wilde, do you need anything?' Wilde's there going, '*I'm sure everything's fine.*'

**HELEN/AZU**

'So the Heart of Aphrodite's in the Meritocrats'...'

**ALEX (as Saira)**

'As far as I'm aware it is in the Meritocratic vaults of the Tahan branch, specifically the...'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'So... so are you getting it or do we need to get it?'

**ALEX (as Saira)**

'I'll get back to you tomorrow if that's okay?'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

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‘Er, sure.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Alright? Um, yeah, that’s done then, I guess.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Well done. He clearly liked you, by the way.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Cool!’

**LYDIA/SASHA [quietly]**

‘That’s good.’

**ALEX (also as Wilde)**

‘I told you we would solve this!’ Saira just, sort of, gives a nod, goes over to Hamid, taps him on the shoulder a bit, and then heads out through the main doors.

**BRYN**

I’ll give her a hug goodbye.

**ALEX**

Wilde starts heading off through the main doors as well, back into the court. He doesn’t wait for you, he just does so.

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**HELEN/AZU**

‘They’re how we got here, so we should probably...’

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Let’s go in the same carriage, I guess. Back to the house!’

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘And now that we’ve said bye it’s going to be really awkward!’

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Smash cuts, to...

**HELEN**

Yeah, when you walk in the same direction...

**ALEX**

Smash cut to interior of the carriage... it is awkward!

**(Helen laughs)**

**BRYN**

Hamid is doing the awkward turtle with his hands!

**HELEN**

Wow, that is an old reference!

**ALEX**

Smash cut from awkwardness in the carriage to back to the Tahan household.

**HELEN**

Hmmm...

**ALEX**

What is your plan as a group? Saira has, sort of, awkwardly said a semi-goodbye again and then headed to the office. Wilde has, sort of, made himself scarce and made a point of not making eye contact with any of you.

**HELEN**

Oh. Azu wants to have a party!

**(Laughter)**

**BRYN/HAMID**

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‘We still have this key that we’re supposed investigate which might be to another box within the vault, so it would be quite good if we could get in there to get the... but it might be for somewhere else.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Let’s go find out! We’ve got a day free, right?’

**LYDIA/SASHA and BRYN/HAMID**

‘Yeah!’

**ALEX**

For, potentially, the first time in, about, I mean in real terms, like, three years’ worth of playing, you have a small amount of down time...

**LYDIA**

Yeah!

**ALEX**

... and all of you, apart from Azu, have managed to spend, I believe. Who’s buying what, ‘cos I’m assuming you want to buy things?

**BRYN**

I am buying a Belt of Dexterity.

**ALEX**

Yep, makes sense. Could you walk the audience through what it does?

**BRYN**

Er, it give me plus two Dex...

**ALEX**

And it's a belt.

**BRYN**

Yep, basically it!

**LYDIA**

Wait...

**BRYN**

And it's really useful!

**LYDIA**

How much does it cost?

**BRYN**

Four thousand.

**LYDIA**

Right. Sasha sees Hamid buying that...

**(Group laughter)**

... and then buys one, too.

**ALEX**

Very nice, very nice!

**BRYN**

Hamid's is stylish, Sasha's is subtle!

**ALEX**

You don't tell Sasha. Maybe Sasha's finally decided that neon is the way to go.  
You don't know!

**BRYN**

Ah, neon black – yes, a good look!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Grizzop, are you getting anything?

**LYDIA**

You don't want a pure glowing black...

**(Bryn laughs)**

Has reading...

**BRYN**

... Discworld...

**LYDIA**

... Discworld taught you nothing?!

**(Alex laughs)**

**BRYN**

Yeah!

**ALEX**

Anything for Grizzop?

**BEN**

Yeah, I'll just buy some potions.

**ALEX**

Sure, sure.

**BEN**

Erm, Cure Moderates?

**ALEX**

Yep.

**BEN**

Yeah, how much?

**BRYN**

300 each, Cure Moderates.

**BEN**

Sod that!

**(Group laughter)**

I'm not buying anything!

**ALEX**

As a Paladin, of all the things it's going to have the least use! Anything else for anyone else?

**LYDIA**

Oh yeah, I also bought... because Sasha doesn't really know if she'll have to go adventuring while living or dead... two Cure Light Wounds and two Cause Light Wounds.

**ALEX**

Sasha would make an excellent Scout! Always prepared.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, she's kind of aware! So where do I put this... where do I put my debt?

**ALEX**

And Azu?

**HELEN**

Azu goes and has a nap.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

You know what, in terms of this, like, yeah, fill your boots!

**(Helen laughs)**

In a campaign that I'm running, taking some time to go to sleep is never a bad call!

**HELEN**

Yeah!

**ALEX**

Okay, cool!

**BRYN**

Er...

**HELEN**

And sleep is free!

**BRYN**

... I do two other things.

**ALEX**

Okay?

**BRYN**

I go to the normal branch of the Tahan Bank where I have my personal account. I ask to access my safe deposit box. I go and look in it, it's got some mementos from my childhood which I leave in there, and I use the opportunity alone in that room to just check whether the key I have that I found in the original Tesla notebook fits the correctly numbered box in that room. I am assuming it doesn't.

**ALEX**

It does not.

**BRYN**

Cool.

**ALEX**

Erm, also – I won't RP it – you run into small amounts of trouble as your actions at the bank are now under heavy scrutiny because of all the faff with your dad and your brother, which are still up in the air, so...

**BRYN**

Yeah, totally fair.

**ALEX**

... so you're very much under scrutiny. They don't objectively stop you because you are technically innocent, but it is very much every eye is on you while you're there.

**BRYN**

I'll get them to stop looking at me for a while by just crying over the childhood mementos.

**HELEN**

Ahhhh...

**ALEX**

Ah, standard, standard.

**LYDIA**

Crying as a weapon. Like it!

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**BRYN**

Yep!

**ALEX [laughing]**

Grizzop, anything you're filling your day with?

**BEN**

Yes, I am writing a report back to Eva.

**ALEX**

Good! Bonus points for good RP and remembering things!

**BRYN**

The other thing Hamid's doing, probably not until the evening, is writing a letter to Zolf.

**[everyone gasps]**

**ALEX**

Feelings! I'm sure it's terrible. I'm sure...

**BRYN**

And will be available as bonus patreon content!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

... it's awful!

**BEN**

Now you have to write it before this episode comes out!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

Yep! Giving myself a deadline!

**ALEX**

Sasha, anything else you're doing apart from sh, sh, sh, sh, shopping?

**LYDIA**

Oh my gosh, I've got so many stats to modify because everything that I rely on is Dex!

**ALEX**

Yep! Basically, everything that's Dex related goes up by one.

**LYDIA**

So basically, I am now one better!

**ALEX**

Yep!

**BRYN**

Yep, that is how that works!

**ALEX**

And Azu, you have your nap, anything else that you want to do or just nap hard?

**HELEN**

Yes.

**BRYN**

Nap Hard 2, Nap Harder!

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

She does some press ups and stuff, using the staff again as, like, weights!

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Um, Sasha's gonna throw daggers at a tree... for ages.

**ALEX [laughing]**

Okay!

**HELEN**

Are we, like, sort of the same...

**LYDIA**

No!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah...

**LYDIA**

If you want to...

**BRYN**

It's a training montage, guys!

**LYDIA**

... if you want to find her then you'd have to actively seek her out. She's staring into space a little shellshocked... Yet still hitting every time!

**BRYN [whispering]**

Montaaaaaaage!

**ALEX**

Last chance. Anyone have anything else they want to do or do I accelerate time... *[bdl-ldl-ldler]*-style? Last chance? Last chance! Going once. Going twice. Anyone getting into trouble? Anyone picking a fight? No? Sold! Right. Everyone please, and by everyone I mean Hamid specifically...

**(Laughter)**

**BEN**

So not everyone!

**ALEX [talking over Bryn]**

Yeah, I realised my mistake after I started that sentence.

**BRYN**

... definition of everyone there, Alex!

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Now we know where we stand!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

All the people that I care about... Bryn!

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Ahhhhh...

**ALEX**

Could you please...

**BRYN**

I mean, it's [0:12:29] that he hates you, but it's the first time he's said it about the other two!

**ALEX**

... so, it is late at night, let's say...

**BRYN**

I've just finished my letter to Zolf and my eyeliner is really running.

**HELEN**

Aww...

**ALEX**

Yes, and it's really awkward because then your finger starts to grow hot.

**(Helen gasps)**

**BRYN**

Cool. Cool... cool, cool, cool, cool, cool...

**(Group laughter)**

... cool...

**ALEX (as Barret)**

‘What did you do?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Good evening! How are you?’

**ALEX (as Barret)**

‘Oh, I’m fantastic, Hamid. Great! And how are you?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Yeah, also pretty good!’

**ALEX (as Barret)**

‘How’s the family? Doing well?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Doing just great.’

**ALEX (as Barret)**

‘Yeah, I heard.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘I imagine you did.’

**ALEX (as Barret)**

‘How exactly do you plan on making this right, Hamid?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Erm... making this right. Making this right... Well...’

**(Helen laughs)**

‘... I thought I might start by ignoring you. That seems right to me!’

**ALEX (as Barret)**

‘You have no idea how badly you have turned this situation, do you?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘You don’t seem to realise just how little I care about what you think. I have walked through the fire. If you think you can scare me anymore, you could not be more wrong.’

**ALEX (as Barret)**

‘Oh, I don’t think I can scare you anymore. Let’s just say that I’m not going to be able to run interference for you anymore. If you fetch me the heart...’

**(Hamid laughs)**

‘... they’ll leave you alone. If you don’t, I’m not giving them the orders. Just remember that when things escalate.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Er, just so you know, today I met a Meritocrat. And he basically did everything we wanted him to do. And if there’s a person who should be worried here, it’s you. Because I can basically come and find you whenever I want and, trust me, I’ve grown a lot since we last met. Ta ta for now!’

**ALEX (also as Barret)**

‘Have fun with the cult, Hamid.’ The ring no longer is hot. It did cool into a nice normal ring.

**HELEN**

I’m so proud of you!

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Yayy! Go, Hamid!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

I'm just going to test it and see if it's still stuck on. I'm assuming it is, but it's possible he's realised it's not going to anything for him anymore.

**ALEX**

Still stuck on.

**BRYN**

Let's get metal – chop your finger off! Come on!

**HELEN**

Mmmm...

**LYDIA**

I mean, that's literally what Sasha did!

**BEN**

There you go. Well, your metal is Hamid!

**LYDIA**

Ahhh!

**ALEX**

The next day...

**BEN**

Well, not, not yet!

**ALEX**

... dawn has a, like...

**BEN**

Slam cut to Hamid going 'Ah, ah, ah!!!'

**(Group laughter)**

'I didn't think this through, I didn't think this through! Where's the Paladins?  
Where's the Paladins?'

**BRYN**

To be honest, if he decides that the best thing to do is cut off his finger, the person he'll run to is Sasha.

**ALEX**

Oh yeah.

**BRYN**

After it's been cut off he'll go to the Paladins!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Sasha. Could you please give me a Fort Save.

**LYDIA**

... a Fort Save!

**[Rolls dice]**

Please be good. No! That was a two!

**BRYN**

Oooooohh...

**ALEX**

A two?

**BRYN**

Total?

**LYDIA**

Wait, wha... five.

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

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I'm not very Fort-y!

**ALEX**

Four further damage. However...

**LYDIA**

What are you on now?

**ALEX**

... I will draw attention because you all ignore the good things – no one makes a Will Save this evening!

**LYDIA**

Hooray?

**BEN**

Gosh, you're so gracious!

**ALEX**

Morning breaks and we've done your Saves and I'm going to set the tone with breakfast again. You are circumnavigating breakfast and...

**(Group laughter)**

... Saira comes in and...

**BEN**

Just punting around in a pot of gravy...

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX (also as Saira)**

Saira comes in and is looking a little bit better than last time she crashed breakfast. ‘Okay, cool, erm, paperwork’s done. They’ve agreed to let us fetch it from the Meritocratic vaults under supervision. It’s a bit distressing that we have to have permission to do so in this way, but they’re happy for us to transport it to Fairhands under watch. Fairhands is permitted to use it, and then we return it back to the Meritocratic vaults. They were very clear though that the only thing we can really make us of is the Heart. That said, I’ve been meaning to talk to all of you.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Sure.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘I currently appear to have a tomb underneath the bank.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Yeah, wondered what you were going to do about that!’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Someone’s going to have to go. This is an offer. It is not a request. If you would be willing to explore the tomb, basically we need to know entrances and exits, that’s it. If it’s full of horrible... ’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Also make it safe, I guess?’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Honestly? Mostly, I just need to know entrances and exits. Then we can arrange to send people down to clear the thing out. If you want to clear it out, go nuts, but right now I could really do with someone just letting me know how bad the situation is. You don’t have to do this. I can find other people to do it, but the Bank has a rather large fund set aside for, basically, emergency security measures which I’d be willing to use.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘We’ve got a mission, though.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Oh! Right. Sorry, I didn’t know.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘I mean, we’ve done other things before while we’re there, I mean, you know our broader mission is to help in general. Like, when we were in Prague it wasn’t part of our mission to fight those zombies, but we did it.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Yeah, but they were actively attacking and no one else could help, like, don’t we have a time-critical thing about?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘I don’t know that it is time-critical to be honest. That was never what was said to us by Wilde.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Right. If Wilde doesn’t care then, whatever.’

**ALEX**

Wilde is not here, by the way. I realise that I now actively need to spell it out. Is someone having a private conversation? Wilde’s not here!

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘I think, you know, the idea was always that we’d, you know, take other jobs partly as cover and partly just to help people out while we were going round...’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘It’s a job just the same, with a hunt, the more time you wait, the more time your enemy has to get away and bed down and set up defences.’

[0:18:29 talking over one another]

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Sorry, I don’t...’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘... so much doing a...’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘... am I treading on...?’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘... it was more of an information gathering thing – looking for information.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘... so Wilde...’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Yeah, but...’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Wilde didn’t really go into any detail – do I need to what this is?’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘No, I don’t think we need to share the details really.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘This isn’t going to affect anything else because it’s been a heck of a week.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘No, it shouldn't do, it shouldn't do.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Okay, alright. Well let me know what you decide. It’s an offer, like I said, but apart from that I am not going to be heading with you today. I have got things to be doing...’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Of course.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘... and as long as you report at the entrance, they’re happy to walk you through the set up.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘We’ll try and let you know this evening.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘Yes, best of luck. And best of luck, Sasha.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Thank you for that.’

**ALEX (as Saira)**

‘That’s alright. I didn’t really do anything. I just didn’t get in the way!’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Yeah.’

**ALEX (also as Saira)**

‘Well, best of luck and, yeah, if you have any problems you can come to me, but I’m... I’ve got a lot to do.’ She, sort of, gives a curt nod in a friendly way, but rushes off quite quickly to get on with her business.

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘So the last thing before we head over to the vaults, I do think it would be best if one of you,’ looking at the two Paladins, ‘took this key and, you know, I think that clearly the people are not going to trust me, but we need to know if this key opens something in that vault and we need to know what is inside. We’re not intending to take it, and the two of you, obviously, as Paladins, you know, are not going to steal something and people know that you’re not going to steal something, whereas, right now, I’m going to be under heavy scrutiny so it’s probably best if it’s not me that checks. Is that fair? Is that okay?’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘Of course!’

**ALEX**

In fact, there's something worth spelling something out which I've never really spelled out in this campaign, which is there's a certain assumption when it comes to Paladins which is, it's similar to police in some ways, but what it really comes down to is when it comes to Paladins it is... there are literally gods going, 'yeah, you meet the cut'. It isn't can you run fast, did you give the right answers in an exam – there is a divine element to this and part of it is there is a presumption that Paladins are right about moral matters. Sometimes that creates problems! But, you know, if a Paladin says, listen this isn't okay, people will listen. And if a Paladin says it is, people will also listen. They have a decent amount of status in that regard.

**BRYN**

And also if they break their own ethics they lose their magic powers, so it's quite easy to tell if they've done something wrong!

**ALEX [laughing]**

Look at me, Paladin! Ooh that's tinfoil! Quiet, quiet Paladin tells only the truth! Tin?!

**(Laughter)**

But in all seriousness, yeah, it is a major aspect of this world which hasn't necessarily come up much, but I feel with two Paladins it's probably going to start coming up a bit more!

**LYDIA**

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

Mmm hmm!

**HELEN**

Yeah, useful to know!

**ALEX**

So. Heading to...

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘So, who wants to take the key... ?’

**ALEX**

Ah, yes!

**HELEN/AZU**

‘I’m happy to take it, yeah.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Cool.’

**ALEX**

In which case, then, heading off to the Meritocratic offices... or the Meritocratic vault...

**LYDIA/SASHA [muttering under her breath]**

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

Yeah, Sasha's a bit like, 'Don't offer it to me, why don't you. I wouldn't need a key!'

**(Group laughter)**

'Fine...'

**ALEX (also as the Guard)**

You head over to the bank – I say bank, you know what I mean; the large, modified pyramid – and there is a guard sort of waiting for you just inside the entrance. Obviously, there's large crowds at the front, but no one seems to really be paying you attention, it's very much just ambient reporting!

**(Laughter)**

But, within the actual main foyer you are provided with, basically, a small guard of two actual, like, armoured fighters and two, they seem to be Casters, they are, like, maybe lightly armoured, but in a way that is clear. They are there for the magics and not much else! And they lead you through the main foyer. Hamid, you head past the side stairs that would have taken you to the VIP area and then they lead you to a set of double doors at the opposite end. And the lead guard, she turns to you, waves her hand across the double doors and the doors unlock, open, and she turns to all of you and goes, 'You have permission to fetch the Heart of Aphrodite and that is all. Please do not stray. We are permitted to use lethal force if people do so.'

**LYDIA**

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

Sasha keeps her fingers interlocked with one another.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN/AZU**

‘Can I, can I use this key on something?’

**ALEX (as the Guard)**

‘No one told us anything about a key. For what?’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘Then forget it.’

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

I’m going to roll...

**[Hysterical laughter from all]**

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

We’ll see what that means when we get back!

**(Group laughter)**

So, returning in, I know the result of the Sense Motive.

**LYDIA**

I think the rest of us have a pretty good idea!

**ALEX**

The guards all stop.

**(Laughter)**

The main guard passes her hand across the door, which you hear lock itself and turns to you.

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Azu!’

**ALEX (as the Guard)**

‘I feel like there’s something you should probably be telling us.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘It’s associated with a Meritocratic mission.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘It’s classified at the highest levels. We can’t say any more, but there’s a reason that this mission’s being undertaken by Paladins.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘If you want us to do it separately without him here...’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Totally fine with that!’

**ALEX (as the Guard)**

‘If you have any paperwork for that key, we would be happy to let you do so. Forgive me, Sir, in the absence of Mr Tahan.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘A very, very important part of the classification level of this mission that it is not in the paperwork.’

**ALEX (as the Guard)**

‘We’re not able to do that for you, then. If you can’t prove that the key is your own, everyone who comes in and accesses those vault either proves it’s their own, or proves they’re on Meritocratic work. If you can’t prove it, there’s not a lot that we can do.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘We just saw the dragon.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Literally yesterday.’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘It was a Meritocrat himself.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Look, just get in contact with Oscar Wilde, and do it quickly.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Very big!’

**ALEX (as the Guard)**

‘Alright. In the meantime...’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘We’ll wait here.’

**ALEX (also as the Guard)**

‘Thank you.’ They gesture you to, basically, the VIP room that you just left, Hamid... sorry, the one that you had a moment of heart to heart with your father.

**BRYN**

That seems like weeks ago! Maybe a month!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Eventually, and by eventually...

**BRYN**

In the pause, I'm going to try and gently explain to Azu what classified means!

**(Group laughter)**

That it all has been approved at the highest levels, but we also can't tell people about it!

**HELEN/AZU**

'Ohhhhhh!'

**(Laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'To be fair, when you're in somewhere and they say if you stray from this we are allowed to use lethal force...'

**BRYN/HAMID**

'I totally understand, absolutely. Yep!'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'I mean, you'd have thought it would be something Wilde would clear, but as it happens, he doesn't seem to be up to much!'

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Well, as I said, it’s supposed to be off the... completely off the books. I imagine one of the reasons we’re in here is so that we have...’

**HELEN/AZU [angrily]**

‘You didn’t say that! You said could I...’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘It’s my... I should have explained that better. I absolutely accept that.’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘I need things to be absolutely clear.’

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘I’ll do better next time.’

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN/AZU**

‘I am not an ambiguous person.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Totally fair, totally fair. So, as I said...’

**(Helen and Lydia laughing)**

‘... the mission we are on...’

**(Group laughter)**

‘... you know, we, we... is very much not public knowledge and it is very important that it stays classified ‘cos we don’t want to worry anyone and, you know, we don’t want there to be panic or speculation about it. That’s one of the reasons we take other jobs while we’re in places – so that we appear to be just a normal travelling mercenary group, but it has been approved by the Meritocrats, it has been approved at high levels...’

**ALEX**

Everyone, give me a Perception Check.

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

**BRYN**

Ooh.

**HELEN**

Oooh...

**BRYN**

16. That’s not very good.’

**BEN**

17.

**HELEN**

That's 20. I never know what to add to it!

**BRYN**

Your perception skill!

**BRYN**

Natural? Was that a natural 20, though?

**HELEN**

That was a natural 20.

**BRYN**

If it's a natural 20 you go...

**HELEN**

26.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Yep.

**LYDIA**

24, but not natural.

**ALEX**

Azu and Sasha...

**LYDIA**

Yayy!

**ALEX**

... so you're in currently this, sort of, boardroom. You came in, the door is one side. It's just a blank wall on the other. There's a large table and there's, sort of, a set of cabinets including, like, a drinks cabinet at one end, and then another blank wall that is backing onto the corridor. The large flat blank wall that doesn't lead to anything, you hear the distinct sounds of footsteps behind it. But they have the wrong sound quality for that wall – they shouldn't be there.

**HELEN**

Hmm. Azu walks over and immediately just presses her entire...

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'What are you doing... what?'

**HELEN/AZU**

‘There’s someone behind here.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘What?’

**ALEX**

Can you give me a Will Save?

**HELEN**

Okay.

**[Rolls dice]**

That’s 19.

**BRYN**

Plus a lot.

**HELEN**

That’s 29!

**(Group laughter)**

**[Incredulous ‘what?’s]**

**BRYN**

Paladins!

**ALEX**

Welcome to Paladins! You reach out and you feel a faint tingle, and then you compare what you're touching with the actual, like, what you're seeing, and you realise there's an illusion on that wall!

**(Helen gasps)**

That wall isn't that wall. There is an illusion on that wall.

**LYDIA**

Sasha is right behind her with daggers out.

**ALEX**

Give me a Will Save as well.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

Er, 13 plus four is 17.

**ALEX**

17. you know what, I'd say with the knowledge that, like, if Azu, I assume that you make it known what you've discovered?

**HELEN/AZU**

‘There is an illusion on this wall!’

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘What?!’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘There’s something wrong with it.’

**ALEX**

It doesn’t disappear or anything, but it’s a good illusion, but, yeah, like the bit that you’re touching doesn’t match up. The wall quality is not the same as what you’re looking at.

**BRYN**

I take a coin out of my pocket and throw it at the wall.

**ALEX**

It bounces off and appears to be normal...

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘High level illusion.’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘Extremely high.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Can you push through it, or...?’

**HELEN**

Azu attempts to push the wall.

**ALEX**

Give me a Strength Check.

**HELEN [laughing]**

**[Rolls dice]**

Okay, that’s ten. Somehow.

**ALEX**

Nope!

***[makes sound of someone straining to push something really heavy!]***

That’s a wall, that’s what that is!!

**LYDIA**

Sasha’s going to feel around for a door handle.

**ALEX**

Give me a Reflex Save.

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

**BRYN**

Natural 20.

**LYDIA**

That's a natural 20, plus ten.

**ALEX**

So, you're feeling along the wall, you're reaching for some kind of door handle. Your hand then falls right through...

**LYDIA**

Yay!

**ALEX**

... like, you basically almost fall through this illusion, and then catch yourself...

**BRYN**

She turns it into a roll and comes up in perfect combat mode. She just rolled a natural 20!

**(Helen laughs)**

**ALEX**

You catch yourself, but on this side of the room. You didn't plunge through into whatever's on the other side, but you did go, 'Ah, there's no wall there!'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Ah!'

**HELEN/AZU**

'Hmmm!'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'That sounds better than...

**ALEX**

It is at the opposite side, so you have the whole length of the wall – one half is the bit that Azu was desperately trying to, like, *[nrrrrrrggggghhh]*, the other half is basically seems to be a hole covered by an illusion.

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'There's a... there's a doorway here, guys.' Azu, I'm guessing, is, like, *[nrrrrggggghhh... nrrrrggggghhh]!!*

**(Group laughter)**

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

And Sasha's just so...

**BRYN/HAMID**

'Jackpot's on the other side!'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Yeah, here!'

**HELEN/AZU**

'Okay, that side. Okay, alright. Let's go!'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'I mean, I'll go first.'

**BRYN/HAMID**

'If you heard movement, we need to know who's there and if they're watching us.'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'Yeah! Do it now!'

**ALEX**

The sound of the footsteps has become a quick run and they are receding quickly.

**HELEN**

Oh!

**LYDIA**

She dashes through.

**HELEN**

And Azu follows.

**ALEX**

Okay. You dash through and find yourself in darkness. Who has Dark Vision here? I believe Azu, you have Dark Vision? You know what, I'm gonna just... you do!

**HELEN**

Okay!

**ALEX [laughing]**

You do!

**HELEN**

Fan-tastic!

**ALEX**

Sasha, you find yourself going from this into a very dim corridor. The only light that is coming in is through what turns out to be a hole in the wall behind you. It looks like someone has bashed a hole in the wall, and you find yourself in a stone corridor. Down one side it is just gloom, and down the other you see a receding figure with a torch that has just disappeared down the corridor and...

**HELEN**

Yes! Let us give chase!

**LYDIA**

Run, run... runs... yep, runs!

**BRYN**

Do you want us to enter combat time?

**ALEX**

I don't need to enter combat time, but I do need to know, Hamid and Grizzop, both of them have disappeared and you hear the sound of them running away.

**(Helen laughs)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

Er...

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX [frustratedly]**

That doesn't translate on podcast, guys!

**BRYN**

We make eye contact!

**HELEN**

They slowly turn to each other...

**LYDIA**

Take up a side-quest...

**BRYN**

... and I go, 'Well, what if we...?'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'We'll leave a note!'

**(Group laughter)**

'We're getting the Heart of Aphrodite. It can't be something you can just leave!'

**BRYN/HAMID**

'We can't abandon our friends!'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘They can handle themselves!’

**ALEX [quietly under his breath]**

Split the party, split the party...

**(Helen laughs)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘You go. I’m gonna stay here. We can’t just go away! We’re already doing something!’

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Plot hook, though, plot hook!

**BRYN**

I’m going to stick my head through the wall.

**ALEX**

It’s a stone dark corridor. Because you’re not immediately leaping into the fray, give me a Perception Check.

**HELEN**

Oh, maybe we should have done that!

**BRYN**

**[Rolls dice]**

Er, 17.

**ALEX**

... covered in hieroglyphics!

**LYDIA and HELEN**

Ohhhhhhhhh...

**BRYN/HAMID**

'I think the...' I pop back out, 'I think the tomb is just down here.'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'We're doing that later!'

**(Group laughter)**

'There is someone watching us!'

**BRYN/HAMID**

'They're escaping.'

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘No, because Sasha and Azu were chasing them!’

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX [laughing]**

I love your fundamental disagreements on, like, the real basic stuff! It’s really pleasing me...

**(Group laughter)**

... ‘cos neither of you are against one another it’s just...

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Can you move faster than Sasha?’

**LYDIA**

It’s a good point!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

I come back in!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'I'm wearing armour, I can't move fast enough!'

**ALEX**

Right, so. immediately it becomes apparent that Sasha is a lot quicker than you are!

**HELEN**

Mmmm...

**LYDIA**

What speed are you?

**BRYN**

You're probably in heavy enough armour for it to be 20...

**HELEN**

20.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**LYDIA**

I'm 40.

**ALEX**

She's double your speed!

**HELEN**

Hey!

**LYDIA**

Sasha zooms along...

**ALEX**

Do you slow down for Azu?

**LYDIA**

No.

**ALEX**

Okay, give me a Reflex Save.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

26.

**ALEX**

26? You run, there's a **[grating noise]** you feel one of the stones underneath give way...

**(Lydia gasps)**

... immediately, reflexes kick in. You do a triple fit and there's the distinct sound of **[mechanical whirring noise]** as some kind of trap goes off. Azu – give me a Reflex Save.

**HELEN**

Oh dear!

**LYDIA**

Oh no, no, no...

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

No...

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

11.

**LYDIA**

How heavy your dice are compared to mine...

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

**ALEX**

Clunk, clunk, clunk, clunk, clunk...

**HELEN**

Yeah!

**LYDIA**

It makes plot sense!

**ALEX**

You feel the stone underneath give way, like... Hmmmm – ow, ow, ow, ow-ow-ow, ow, ow, ow, OW-OW-OW-OW, OW, OW, OW... OW...

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

That's absolutely what would happen! Oh, bless her!

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

**LYDIA**

Does your ominous [0:34:26] just start howling?!

**(Helen laughs and makes tuneful singing/howling noises)**

**ALEX**

You take 13 damage!

**LYDIA**

Wha...?!

**ALEX**

Give me a Fort Save.

**HELEN**

**[Rolls dice]**

13.

**ALEX**

13? I'm sure everything's fine.

**LYDIA**

We're going to need another relic to keep her alive!

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

... I'm poisoned!

**ALEX**

I'm sure...

**(Laughter)**

... I'm sure everything is fine!

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

Slam cut to back in the room. 'If we went down there blindly we might trigger two traps! You know, Sasha's the kind of person who's built to do that!'

**BRYN/HAMID**

'Alright, I take your point. I'm just worried they might need our help!'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'Sasha will be fine.'

**ALEX**

Cut back to Azu...

**BRYN/HAMID**

'But Azu's there, too!'

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

In the dark you see you are peppered with some kind of darts and they're just in you, all over, and it hurt. A lot. 'Cos there were loads of them.

**HELEN**

Ohhhh, oh no.

**ALEX**

Sasha?

**LYDIA**

Yep.

**ALEX**

You are now running, having left Azu behind, and the corridor entrance, just in pitch black.

**LYDIA**

If she can't hear the other person...

**ALEX**

You can. You are gaining on them. They are ahead of you.

**BRYN**

They've got a torch – they're going to be, like, highlighters.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, I can see them then.

**BEN**

Can you see the glow?

**LYDIA**

So are they round a corner? But how can... ?

**BEN**

But, wait... but...

**ALEX**

Don't question the GM! She cannot see the person, trust me on this.

**BRYN**

Magical darkness, we were told there was magical darkness down there.

**HELEN**

Yeah...

**LYDIA**

If I can hear them, I'm going to throw a dagger.

**ALEX**

Okay. Give me an Attack Roll.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

Oof, two.

**ALEX**

Two?

**LYDIA**

Um, there'll be plus something, but it's not going to be much. If there's a thrown dagger it's plus ten...

**ALEX**

No, you're fine. It isn't going to be enough.

**BRYN**

Yeah, given that you can't see your target, you have to roll concealment as well...

**ALEX**

Yeah, I'm not even going to bother. Like, even without concealment it's like, ***[makes whipping sound of someone moving quickly]***. He just disappears into the darkness...

**LYDIA**

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

But that, in fact, teaches me something about the...

**ALEX [talking over Lydia]**

You hear the footsteps stop and then continue more slowly...

**(Group laughter)**

Azu, what are you doing?

**HELEN**

Azu tries to pull the darts out.

**ALEX**

Okay. You are able to do so. They're quite large, that helps!

**LYDIA**

Ow!

**HELEN**

Okay, so she's, 'Oh, ow, oo, ah, eee...'

**ALEX**

They're almost arrows, if I'm honest!

**(Helen laughs)**

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

Jumping to Hamid and Grizzop.

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Should I maybe go and get Azu?’

**HELEN**

What, can you hear me going ‘ah, oo...’!

**BEN**

No, but we’ve just had this discussion about Sasha is perfectly suited...

**(Group laughter)**

... Azu is really not in respect!

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘I remember we were told there was a lot of darkness down there. I don’t know how well Sasha functions in complete magical darkness, I mean, not that I can do much better! I’m just... I’m worried about our friends, is all.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘What...? You could just stick your head down there and check that they’re okay.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Right, okay.’

**BEN**

I'll start jogging down the...

**BRYN**

Be careful of tomb-traps!

**ALEX**

That's fine. You rapidly catch up with Azu extracting herself from bits of tomb...

**LYDIA**

This is *exactly* as I expected!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'Going well?!'

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN/AZU**

'There was a trap!'

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'Yeah. Hmmm!'

**ALEX**

‘See, what Azu thinks she saying is there was a trap. What comes out is, *[muffled, barely intelligible]*, ‘there’s a trap!’

**(Laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘You should come... I think you’ve been poisoned.’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘Noooo!!!’

**ALL**

Nooooo...

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Yesss... Yes, you definitely have. Come back and we’ll sort you out, but...’

**(Azu speaks, but it is muffled and barely intelligible)**

... I don’t know. I gonna guess, if you’re concerned for Sasha she’s very suited to this kind of thing – she’s very competent so I’m sure she can handle herself.

**HELEN/AZU [muffled and barely intelligible]**

‘What about me?’

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Okay, I can’t understand anything you’re saying...’

**(Group laughter)**

‘... because you’ve really obviously been poisoned...’

**(Group laughter)**

‘... you’re probably going to fall over in about ten seconds, so, I can’t carry you so, really, come with me before...’

**ALEX**

Azu collapses!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN**

On me or...?

**ALEX**

No...

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

**LYDIA**

Just falls backwards, just... Reflex Save!

**BRYN**

Yeah, Reflex Save – go on!

**ALEX**

You know what, yeah, gimme a Reflex Save – that's fair.

**(Laughter)**

**BEN**

15.

**ALEX**

Almost on you!

**(Group laughter)**

Around you! You find yourself in the midst of an Azu!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN**

Okay. Right! Spit on my hands! I'm going to cast Lesser Restoration.

**ALEX**

I'm going to jump to Sasha and then come back to this...

**BEN**

Sure...

**ALEX**

... so Sasha, are you still proceeding?

**LYDIA**

Yeah, carefully.

**ALEX**

Okay.

**LYDIA/SASHA [shouts]**

'Oi!'

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

Stealth!

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

No, he's heard me! I threw a dagger at him!

**BRYN**

True!

**ALEX**

Carry on.

**LYDIA**

Throws a dagger...

*[sound of a dagger whistling past]*

**ALEX**

Give me another Attack Roll.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

It's only six, so whatever I add to it...

**ALEX**

Nope!

*[sound of the dagger whistling past, followed by a ping as it misses]*

The slow steps become quick steps again.

**LYDIA**

It's now complete darkness, isn't it?

**ALEX**

There's suddenly an, 'Ohhh!'

**[Clunk]**

**(Laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Ahead of me?

**ALEX**

Mmm hmm.

**BRYN**

Do the footsteps stop?

**ALEX**

They do!

**(Laughter)**

Rusty Quill Gaming – [96] – [Behind Closed Doors]

Give me a Perception Check.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

I mean, that's only a nine, but it's plus 12, so 21.

**ALEX**

21? You hear a very, very faint sound of *[thunk]* a little while after the 'ohhhh'!

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Alright, mate? Are you... is that a trap? Are you...?'

**(Laughter)**

'... Hey! Look, I just want to know what you were listening for. It's alright – I'll pull you out of the hole – is it a hole?'

**ALEX (also as Carter)**

There's this distant, 'Hey, bar lady. How are you doing?'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Uggghhhh!'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘I’d really appreciate a little help. I might have made a mistake. Again.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Really?’

**(Helen laughs)**

‘Really! Right.’

**HELEN**

Oooh, punishing!

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘This one really is your fault.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘I mean, yeah. No, yeah, yeah, this one’s me. There’s no one else here.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Can you see in the dark?’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘I’ll give you some treasure.’

**(Helen laughs)**

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'I've got plenty of treasure, but... what treasure?'

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

I'm going to cut back to Hamid alone in the boardroom.

**(Laughter)**

**BRYN**

Hamid walks over to the fake wall and then turns back and paces round the room...

**(Group laughter)**

... and then walks over, and then turns back and paces the room.

**ALEX**

Jumping back to Grizzop with Azu. Azu, you are conscious. You are... you're basically... your dexterity has effectively temporarily become zero. You are just 'uhhhh'!

**LYDIA**

So floppy!

**HELEN**

Oh, so I am conscious?

**ALEX**

Yep.

**BEN**

Economically, that's paralysation if here dexterity is zero.

**ALEX**

Yes.

**HELEN**

Oh my gosh, Ben!

**BEN**

Yeah, I cast Lesser Restoration, which I didn't know if it was going to be effective, but it absolutely is.

**ALEX**

Yes it is! Lesser Restoration goes off. Unless, do you choose not to, like, 'No! None of this!'

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

Noooo!

**BEN**

None of this flim-flammery!

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Okay...

**HELEN**

She's not that... she's not...

**ALEX**

So this is a poison effect, but it has dealt temporary ability damage so you will heal one D4 ability damage. Can you roll me one D4.

**HELEN**

Oh gosh! Remember that guy's legs.

**BEN**

Four.

**ALEX**

Four?

**BRYN**

Nice!

**ALEX**

You go from paralysed to just *really* clumsy – just all of the clumsy, but you can, like, stand and move around.

**BRYN**

You're like, super stiff. You can move now, but you're at the lowest level of human capable of...

**ALEX**

The best description is imagine you are catatonically drunk, but physically. Mentally, you're fine, it's just, like, whoa! Whoa! Might be slower in words because use a lot of points...

**LYDIA**

Your tongue's also a muscle...

**ALEX**

Yeah, you know what, my face is very big, bigger than I thought it was. Like, you're mentally completely fine, just a bit all over the show!

**HELEN/AZU**

‘There was... there was a person.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Yes, and Sasha ran after...’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘... running... yes...’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘You got trapped...’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘She can’t see!’

**BEN/GRIZZOP [splutters momentarily]**

**(Group laughter)**

‘So? She’ll deal with it.’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘She’ll... but, the trap...’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘She’s capable! Okay, look, you can see and what happened to you!’

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

If anything, it's a distraction!

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN/AZU [meekly]**

'It was hidden!'

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'Yes! Traps usually are!'

**LYDIA**

[0:42:29] from Azu a continual hug!

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

Yep, now come with me and we'll get you back out!

**LYDIA**

She's so good, and the world should be good for her!

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

It will not be!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘You could have a nice sit down and we might be able to get you a cup of tea or something.’

**HELEN/AZU [despondent]**

‘Okay.’

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

My heart!

**BEN**

I was, instinctually...

**LYDIA**

Everyone take three Heart Damage!

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN**

I was instinctively going to say I help Azu back, but I've just remembered that she's literally three times my size. I wave my hands vaguely at Azu, like of helping her psychically!

**LYDIA**

Possibly tapping the elbow from below.

**BEN**

Yeah, just reaching up!

**ALEX**

I'm going to skip ahead to Hamid. What is Hamid doing? You've still heard or saw nothing.

**BRYN**

Still pacing!

**ALEX**

Suddenly, Azu stumbles through, followed by Grizzop. Stumble being the operative word!

**BRYN/HAMID**

'Are you guys okay?'

**HELEN/AZU [muffled and unintelligible]**

‘No.’

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘What happened?’

**ALEX**

I’m gonna then cut back to Sasha.

**LYDIA**

Well, her intention would be to find where Howard Carter is, grab him, pull him up and drag him kicking and screaming back.

**ALEX**

Okay. So, before you proceed...

**LYDIA**

Yep.

**ALEX (also as Carter)**

He’s there, ‘Erm, listen, er... if you’re gonna help, you might want to be careful in the darkness.

**LYDIA/SASHA [sarcastically]**

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‘Really...’

**(Laughter)**

‘Might there be... traps?!’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Yep. Yep, there might.’

**(Laughter)**

‘Erm, I mean, it’s an educated guess, but probably, like, pit traps in this specific section.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Right.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Erm, just as and FYI.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Any spikes down there?’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘You know what...’

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**LYDIA/SASHA [sounding bored]**

‘Yeah.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘... Yes! Yes there are...’

**(Group laughter)**

‘... really sharp ones!’

**BEN**

I am amazed this man has adventuring levels!

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Alright. Well, I’m going to throw a rope to you.’

**ALEX (also as Carter)**

‘Um, okay. One sec. Gimme a second.’ And I’m going to have to give a Concentration Check for him!

**LYDIA**

Pull something out of himself?

**HELEN**

Yeah!

**LYDIA**

What! I didn't say it!

**BEN**

Does he scream 'fate and die'?!

**(Laughter)**

**ALEX**

So, you hear him start muttering some kind of spell that slowly starts increasing in volume...

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Hey – what are you... Oi!'

**ALEX (also as Carter)**

It kind of falters, and then dies. 'It's only dark there because of the magic. I can make it go away if you let me.'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Okay.'

**[Carter mutters a spell]**

**ALEX**

And then the darkness falls. You are still in a dim corridor, but there is clearly a massive pit, like, ten foot by ten foot wide, directly in front of you covering the whole corridor...

**LYDIA**

Mmm...

**ALEX**

... and there is torchlight shining out from the bottom of it and up towards you. Now you can see in the corridor properly.

**LYDIA**

Alright. Still, because while the ground may now be vaguely illuminated, it could still be covered in other traps, she throws the rope that she's got – she definitely has rope...

**ALEX**

She does!

**LYDIA/SASHA**

... across the remaining gap and into the pit that holds him. 'Is that long enough?'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Yep. Yeah, that’s good.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Can you climb up or do I need to pull you?’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Um, I mean, if you’re offering to pull, I’d really appreciate it.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Alright, tie it around under your arms.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Yeah, just be gentle please.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘That’s not gonna happen.’

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘I know, I know.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘I mean, however gentle it is, is however much you weigh.’ So then she pulls him out.

**ALEX**

Give me a Strength Check.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**[Rolls dice]**

Seven.

**ALEX**

There's... 'aaauuuugggghh'. Everyone who is in the office, give me a Perception Check.

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

**BEN**

19.

**ALEX**

Screams in the corridor for Grizzop.

**BRYN**

22.

**ALEX**

And Hamid.

**HELEN**

Yep...

**ALEX**

And Azu...

**HELEN**

Um, 23.

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah. You all hear the distinct sounds of male screams from way down the corridor.

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Well, that should definitely help! I think she found him!’

**(Laughter)**

**ALEX**

Grizzop makes...

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

'It seems likely!'

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX (also as Carter)**

Jump to, are you going to try again? 'That really hurt, I'm not gonna lie. That hurt a lot.'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Well...'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

'I'll give you more treasure if you make it not hurt next time.'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'There's quite a lot of you is the problem.'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

'It's quite a lot of treasure, sorry.'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Wait, you weigh that much because you're carrying treasure?'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

'Tell you what, give it a go again.'

**[Sound of dice being rolled]**

**LYDIA**

13.

**ALEX**

Total?

**LYDIA**

Yep.

**ALEX**

He's very heavy. He's very, very heavy. Far more heavy than he has any right to be.

**LYDIA**

Right, Sasha wiggles the rope around. I'm going to check for traps between her and the pit, like a proper...

**ALEX**

Give me a Disable Div... no, it's a Perception Check, sorry.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

23.

**ALEX**

Yes. There is.

**LYDIA**

Lots of traps?

**ALEX**

There's one really formidable one. Describe how you search for this trap – you've succeeded so you don't need to worry about your description setting it off or anything.

**LYDIA**

She is just looking really hard...

**ALEX [laughing]**

Oh, yeah! There it is!!

**LYDIA**

... yeah, that look! And then very gently wiggling the rope across as though it's, like, a snake type, but very gently. And not just waiting for it set anything off, but wanting to feel for resistance.

**ALEX**

So, as you do it...

**LYDIA**

Or changes in light or anything like that.

**ALEX**

... you feel like one of the flagstones shifts to the right, and then stops as you catch it. You nudge it again and it has a little bit of wiggle and it's the only one that does. You're pretty certain that flagstone will set off a trap.

**LYDIA**

So I walk to it... go around the flagstone. Yep, to the edge of the pit, so look straight down at him.

**BRYN**

You could also use Disable Device to, like, jam something in the mechanism and prevent it going off. That's something you can do.

**ALEX**

In the pit, you might see Howard. You do, you see Howard Carter. He's impaled a little bit through the leg. He doesn't appear to be bleeding out or anything, but he's at the bottom of a pit that's full of spikes and treasure!

**LYDIA**

Could have been worse!

**ALEX**

He has a big... like, there seems to be gold items strewn around the bottom beside an open bag of his, and he's kind of looking at you a little bit sheepishly.

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Alright, mate.'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

'Hey...'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'So, how about you throw that gold bag up here?'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

'Oh, I see, this isn't... I know what happens when I do that.'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Right, well, look, I've got a lot of Paladins waiting outside. So, if I come back with the treasure and not you, I'm gonna get an earful.'

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Give me a Diplomacy Check.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

That's seven minus one. Six.

**ALEX (as Carter)**

'You know what, Paladins you say, I think I'm alright. I think I've got it.'

**(Group laughter)**

'... if you could just leave me that rope, I reckon I've got this covered. I appreciate it though, honestly.'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'Nah, mate, that's not happening. And also, you ain't climbing up this.'

**(Bryn laughs)**

'Right, I'm gonna go get my Paladin mates... who are big.'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

'Or don't. Or, or, or, I throw you some treasure to not get the Paladins.'

**LYDIA/SASHA**

'That's not gonna happen.'

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Loads of treasure to not get the Paladins.’

**LYDIA**

Appraise the treasure.

**ALEX [laughing]**

Give me Appraise Check.

**LYDIA**

**[Rolls dice]**

19.

**ALEX**

That’s a lot of treasure.

**(Group laughter)**

A lot of unique items down there. You reckon you could probably fence them as well. Historical artifacts? *Big*, big money for historical artifacts! Especially in Cairo!

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Look mate, look, look, alright. Right now, I’m not really in a great position to annoy the Paladins.’

**(Laughter)**

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Listen, listen, I won’t say anything.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘They’ve got quite a hold over me right now.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘You help me out and we can clean this place out. You and me.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘I don’t think that’s...’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘50/50.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

Like, literally, there’s the twinkle on one side, but then there’s also the fact that she doesn’t want to be a zombie!

**ALEX [laughing]**

Ahhh, tough!!

**HELEN**

Yeah!

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Right, okay, I am gonna get the Paladins.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Okay, I mean, you don’t have to.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘I mean, I do.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘Or...’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘... I mean, nice offer mate, but right now I’ve got bigger fish to cook. And, like, honestly, I think I’ve got quite a good... I mean they’re... they’re good guys.’

**ALEX (as Carter)**

‘50,000 gold.’

**LYDIA/SASHA**

‘Okay, but I mean, it’s um...’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘So, do you think Sasha’s okay? Should we go and check on her.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Nah, she’ll be fine.’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘I trust her to, you know, take care of herself.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Absolutely. ‘Cos she’s, you know, she’s really learning. You know, she’s like you. Like, you know, she’s doing well.’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘We can’t leave her!’

**BRYN/HAMID**

‘Well, we’re not... She’ll come back when she needs some help.’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Otherwise, we’ll all end up like you.’

**HELEN/AZU**

‘She might end up like me!’

**BEN/GRIZZOP**

‘Okay, you’ve met Sasha, right? She ain’t gonna end up like you.’

**[Ohhhh....]**

**[Ahhhh...]**

**ALEX**

Ohhhh... and I'm gonna end on that really cruel, unnecessarily cruel note. I'm gonna end just beating Azu down for being nothing but lovely.

**LYDIA**

She's just so kind.

**ALEX**

Join me on this side of the fence, Ben, it's great.

**[dramatic crying in background]**

'We've got cake!

**BEN**

No, this is perfectly artemisian!

**(Laughter)**

**LYDIA**

He is very practical a school!

**HELEN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

So, I mean, technically, this doesn't count as bad things happening to all of you...

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

They happen to someone else!

**ALEX**

They happen to someone else!

**BEN**

And one of your NPCs, which just makes it so much sweeter! I'm so tempted to be like, 'No mate, I'm just going to leave you there to die.'

**ALEX**

I think I've got this figured! I got this figured. You all actually do enjoy the suffering, it's just not your suffering that you like!

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

Well that's because you make all your NPCs unlikeable!

**ALEX**

Welcome to a brave new world!

**(Group laughter)**

Bye, guys!

**EVERYONE**

Bye!

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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**ALEX**

So let's cut to interior of the carriage. It is awkward!

**(Helen laughs)**

**BRYN**

Hamid is doing the awkward turtle with his hands.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Wow! That is an old reference!

**(Bryn laughs)**

**LYDIA**

What? What, like that... ?

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Awkward turtle.

**BRYN**

Awkward turtle.

**BEN**

One hand on top of the other hand, twirling both thumbs to either side!

**ALEX**

Audio description – thank you Ben!

**LYDIA**

Ohhh, okay. With the interlocked fingers.

**BRYN**

You don't necessarily...

**LYDIA**

Is it a sex thing?

**(Laughter)**

**[No, no, no...]**

**BRYN**

No, it's a motion you make when things are really awkward.

**ALEX**

It's the awkward turtle.

**BEN**

It's like a really, really early meme!

**ALEX**

*Really* awkward turtle is something very different! You have awkward turtle, which is what we're doing, and then you have really awkward turtle which is on its back with no legs and it's just there...

**BRYN**

Me and my friends also used to do awkward giraffe and awkward whale.

**ALEX**

Nice. I feel we've gone off topic a little bit.

**BRYN**

Yeah, a little bit!

**HELEN**

Yes!

**ALEX**

Bring this one back!

**LYDIA**

I don't get that awkward with most of my friends.

**ALEX**

Let's put it this way, if you're resorting to awkward turtle, things are probably awkward enough for awkward turtle.

**LYDIA**

Right.

**(Laughter)**

**BRYN**

It's when you see an awkward situation from a small distance...

**LYDIA**

Ahhhh...

**BRYN**

... and you want to share with your friends that it's really awkward.

**LYDIA**

And you think a giraffe is...

**(Helen laughs)**

**BEN**

If you want to do it subtly, you do an awkward turtle. If you...

**HELEN**

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**BEN**

... needed something you'd do the awkward **[BEEP]**.

**LYDIA**

Oh right, gosh! Oh, that's amazing!

**BRYN**

The awkward whale, though...

**HELEN [laughing]**

Oh my god!!

**BRYN**

... you throw yourself onto the table...

**LYDIA**

Right.

**BRYN**

... lie there like a whale flapping your arms going ***[makes strangled whale noises]***...

**(Group laughter)**