

RQG – [97] – [Vaults, Villains and Virtue]

Content Warnings

- Paralysis, darkness, arrest, motion sickness, vomiting.
- Mention: drugs (methadone)

BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our Patrons; Cloven Sunfish, Brandon Hamilton, Marco Monteiro, Logan Richman, Wes Adams, Gabrielle LaPlace, Fiona Howat, Allison Greene, Erin Rosa, Christopher Sievers. 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 97 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?

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam.

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al Tahan.

LYDIA

Sasha Racket. Who's asking?!

HELEN

And Azu.

ALEX

And as far as I am aware, the only really bad thing that is happening, is
[muffled and unintelligible] Azu's finding it quite hard to talk at the moment!

HELEN [muffled and unintelligible]

Yeah, you're right there...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Sell poison...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, skipping past vast tracts of things at this point – we need a recap. Long story short, you are all now in the, sort of, entering the Meritocrats'...

BEN

That was ages ago, though. That would have been, like, 12 episodes with the recap.

ALEX

Yeah, but I'm not going to...

BEN

... that's going to be, like, three months in real time.

ALEX

... I'm not going two seasons back! It's madness.

LYDIA

Er... I think we should!

BRYN and BEN

Nope, nope!!

ALEX

No more recaps. People have a jumping on point! You are currently all in the Tahan major bank in Cairo, and you were all set to head into the Meritocratic vaults to pick up a certain magical item...

LYDIA

And there was a hole in the wall!

BEN

No, well, first we got taken to a side room because we told them something we weren't supposed to tell them.

ALEX

You keep saying we.

LYDIA

Yep.

(Laughter)

BEN

I agree. I thought there was a group responsibility.

BRYN

Absolutely not!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

I think I did the right thing!

BEN

Azu absolutely did the right thing!

(Laughter)

ALEX

Sure.

HELEN

I stand by that decision!

BEN

Absolutely. We're very sensible! Much better than being murdered for lying to people who said they would murder us if we lied to them!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

There's a difference between lying and simply not telling someone...

[0:02:25 talking over one another]

BEN

... At this point...

[everyone talking over each other and Alex trying to regain control!]

ALEX

Moving on! Moving on!

BEN

I'm a bit wobbly, okay, so...

BRYN

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Says the man constantly threatening to shoot off everyone's knees!

ALEX

Misery over! Misery over! So, as far as we are aware, you were all in a waiting room, discovered a parallel dungeon where someone was running through. Azu and Sasha ran off. Sasha, excellently; Azu, terribly...

(Helen laughs)

... Azu has been returned to the perfectly safe waiting room...

BEN

By Grizzop.

ALEX [talking over Lydia and Bryn]

... by Grizzop, yes, which is frankly a sight I would love to have seen!

BEN

Oh come on, like, I got Azu to walk again...

(Group laughter)

... she got herself back. I wasn't carrying her!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

He moral-supported me!

BEN

Yes!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

We already established your breastplate's, like, a third of your body weight, anyway.

BRYN

Very much so!

ALEX

But yes, Sasha managed to, long story short, find Howard Carter at the bottom of a spike pit...

(Lydia giggles)

BEN [laughing]

Sorry, I've just checked – it's two-thirds of my body weight!

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill Gaming – [97] – [Vaults, Villains and Virtue]

I am 36lb, my breastplate is 25lb!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Wow! Wow!

HELEN

The worst!

BRYN

I feel like we should have paid some attention to encumbrance rules at some point!

BEN

I am a very, very sinewy goblin!

BRYN

Oh no, actually, also, my strength is ten!

LYDIA

He's still within encumbrance...

BEN

Remember... remember – simulationist games make no sense!

ALEX

Get off of the podium, we've got a game to play!

BEN

A game that makes no sense!

(Laughter)

ALEX

So...

LYDIA

I think Sasha's still with Howard at the spike pit.

ALEX

You are at the top of a spike pit looking down at him.

BEN

Wasn't he trying to bribe you?

LYDIA

Yes. Ah, yes!

HELEN

Yes!

ALEX

He offered you 75,000 gold **[Typist note: it was actually 50,000 gold!]** to just...

BEN

That's a lot!

ALEX

... to just help him carry on with the thing.

BEN

The problem you have with a thief is that they just murder you and take your stuff!

ALL

Yeah!

LYDIA

Yeah, they do!

ALEX

We're going to pick up where we left off. So, Sasha, you're at the top of a pit looking down at Howard Carter...

LYDIA

Hyperventilating!

(Group laughter)

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I mean, I’m just throwing it out there, you know.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Practically speaking, no.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I mean...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘How? Where is it?’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Okay, I... like, I can go as far as, like 50/50, but I can’t go higher than that.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Well, I don’t think you’re in much of a place to negotiate, mate!’

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘I mean...’ He kind of looks around at himself...

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Where is it? What are you offering me... us... people...?’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I’m just saying that if you help pull me, I mean, if you can just get me off this spike – that’s really the only thing that’s keeping me down here right now. I mean, I can just hook you up?’

LYDIA/SASHA

Sasha remembers that there is a dragon that she needs to get hold of a bit of equipment that is going to keep her alive. This is fine. ‘Right. You know what, I think we should take you to face justice.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Or, or...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yep...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘... I sort myself out and I don’t drag you into this. You know what, like, I get it, you know.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘You’re doing really well at that, mate!’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Yep, yep, I am.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Look, mate. I’m going to go and get my colleagues, and then you’re going to give us all a lot of money and then you’ll probably also go in prison, but you’ll be alive, so that’s great, right?!’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Or two out of three. Like, all of it’s good!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘You don’t want to be alive?!’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Okay, one out of three!’

(Bryn laughs)

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Which? You’ll give me money?’

(Bryn laughs)

BEN

Then die and go to prison!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Cut to Grizzop, Hamid and Azu in the boardroom. You're all there.

HELEN

Azu is gesturing frantically and clearly wants to run off again.

BEN/GRIZZOP

'What? No! We know what happened last time you did that!'

(Azu replies, but her speech is muffled and unintelligible)

'You can't even speak right now! You need to just sit down and get better!'

(Azu speaks again, but cannot be understood)

(Laughter)

'I think Sasha's fine.'

[Hamid and Grizzop 0:06:14 talking over one another]

BRYN/HAMID

'Sasha will be okay.'

HELEN/AZU

Azu reaches down to Hamid and doesn't quite shake him, but sobs, she's like,

'Need to with the dark...'

BEN

You think you're reaching down, but you're actually horizontal!

(Group laughter)

HELEN [laughing]

Okay!

ALEX

So she's actually on her back, looking up at everyone!

BEN

Actually, because you're such a big person, are you, like, as thick as Hamid is high?

BRYN

Noooooo!

ALEX

No, but her leg is as thick as Hamid's shoulders.

BRYN

What?!

BEN

Okay!

ALEX

Well, if you think about it, you're only, like, up to here – you're basically... if Azu's sturdy in the legs, you're, kind of, about one-Azu's leg-worth!

BEN

Right, sure.

LYDIA

But think about how a wrestler's thigh would be as wide as, like, a small child's torso.

BRYN

Yeah. No, I see your point.

HELEN

Yes, I feel Azu to be as like me as possible...

(Group laughter)

... and man-killing thighs!!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Covered in spikes!!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Yeah, out of the four of us, the one that could cosplay as their character most convincingly is definitely you!

HELEN [laughing]

Because you're really tall!

(Group laughter)

[to Lydia] You'd do well.

LYDIA

Yeah, I don't know if I'd handle the quietness very well!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Anyway, you need to... you probably need to... Azu is starting to drag herself over to the wall...

BEN/GRIZZOP

Oh, okay!

(Group laughter)

‘You are in no position, okay? You can hardly walk. All that will happen is that you’ll get in a worse position, okay? Look, if you really want to... look, shall I go check? Would that make you feel better?’

ALEX [as an aside for the benefit of the listeners]

Nodding silently on a podcast doesn’t work!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Azu makes a motion with her head that looks like nodding.

BEN

So it looks more like a wobble, but an affirmative wobble!

(Laughter)

HELEN

Yeah...

ALEX

She goes full bobble-head!

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Okay, alright, fine. I mean, are you alright to hold the fort?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yeah, yeah – it’ll be fine!’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Okay. Right!’ I’ll go through the illusion.

ALEX

So you find yourself in the dark tunnel. It takes a moment for your lights to adjust to the dark vision instead of normal. Obviously, there’s a bit of light coming through the illusion behind you.

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

To your left is tunnel disappearing off into the distance. To your right is tunnel disappearing off into darkness.

LYDIA

Can they hear me talking?

BEN

Well, also, which way did, well, no... Which way did Azu go down?

ALEX

The right.

BEN

I go down that way.

ALEX

I figured as much, but I...

BEN

Not taking a check, it's real easy.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah – that's fine.

(Helen giggles)

So, you head down there, and give me a Perception Check, please.

BEN

Er, yep!

[Rolls dice]

That is a, er... 14.

ALEX

14?

BEN

That's not correct! 16.

ALEX

16.

BEN [laughing]

Literally seven plus nine. Ohhhhhh!

ALEX

So you head down that corridor successfully, from my perspective unfortunately, hearing Sasha at the end of the corridor...

[Lydia squawks]

BEN

Just because we're not miserable right now doesn't mean you have to resent us!

ALEX [screeching]

I'm jonesing, Ben, I'm jonesing!

BEN [also screeching]

It's been, like, five minutes!

ALEX [still screeching]

I know!!

HELEN

I'm quite miserable.

(Group laughter)

BEN

Oh, there you go. Does that make you feel better now? Is that the methadone?!

(Group laughter)

ALEX [sighing]

Ah, it'll see me through, it'll see me through! Erm, but, yeah, heading down the corridor you also successfully spot immediately what Azu stepped on to trigger a trap, and a couple of other triggers in the same space.

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

Until eventually, yeah, you head around a kink in the corridor and find yourself beside Sasha looking down into a pit.

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Alright?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Alright. This guy wants me to kill him and get his money...’

(Group laughter)

ALEX (as Carter)

‘No, no...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Oh!’

(Group laughter)

‘Oh, it’s you!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Which I’m pretty okay with!’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘I mean, jury’s out for me.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘But, I mean...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘And me! Yeah, they’re gone...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Shut up!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘We should get him out probably.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Yeah. What’s he...’ Er, is he surrounded by treasure?

ALEX

So, he’s at the bottom of this pit. There are no other skeletons and stuff in this pit, by the way, it’s just him...

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

... and he's got a spike through his thigh. He doesn't seem to be bleeding out or anything.

LYDIA

He's been very cogent for someone who's got a spike through his thigh!

ALEX

It's currently through his thigh.

BRYN

It only gets bad when you pull it out again.

ALEX

He was carrying, it seems, like, two big backpacks. One of them is just beside him and the other one is... seems to be torn open from the spike, and it's just full of, like, gold and jewels and stuff.

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Oh. What d'you got there, mate?'

ALEX (as Carter)

'It's a backpack. Mostly just for looking at finds, really.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'What you got in it?'

LYDIA/SASHA

‘They’re very shiny finds.’

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘Oh, this one?’ He opens the one that is not torn open. ‘Well, we’ve got a pickaxe, crowbar...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Okay, look... I’m actually amazed. I’ve never met anybody...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I get that a lot!’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘... so ridiculous...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I get that a lot...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘... ignorant, conniving, weasly...’

ALEX (as Carter) [stage-whispering to Sasha]

‘... I think he’s talking to you...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘No. I’m talking to you. What is wrong with you? Like, seriously, what is wrong with you?!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, so I was trying to get him out, but he keeps insisting on complicating matters.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Honestly, I don’t! Er, if someone could just help lift me off this spike I could even get myself out of the pit on my own. Honestly.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘You can’t. We tried that.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Well, I think actually... so he’s behind a wall, and he’s got himself into this situation, and he’s a thief.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Archaeologist.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘I think we just leave him here.’

ALEX (as Carter)

'[0:11:17 Anatologist] extraordinaire.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'We have absolutely no reason to help him. He doesn't deserve it...

ALEX (as Carter)

'Master of translation.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'He absolutely deserves to die in this situation.'

ALEX (as Carter)

'Expert locksmith, but that's on the side.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'I... well... I just... that's quite a thing.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Look into his eyes, think about what he's done.'

ALEX

He closes his eyes.

(Group laughter)

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Look at what he’s just done... Genuinely...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘He just took some stuff. Let’s just get him out.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Not even good stuff.’

LYDIA/SASHA [quietly]

‘I mean, it looks quite shiny.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Oh, if you want the really good stuff, if you get me out I can take you there...’

BEN/GRIZZOP [talking over Carter]

‘So here’s the problem...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I don’t need you to take me to the tomb now...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Also, think about what he did do. He managed to get someone else killed.
Was trying to...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘They got themselves killed. I was just here.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘I rest my case.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I just...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Do what you want. I’ve no interest. You...’ pointing straight at Carter, ‘You deserve to die. You do not deserve to live.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Wow, wow!’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘What... wait, mate, like, that’s quite... uh, that’s quite...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Hurtful.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah!’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Like a spike through my heart.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘He’d know.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Yeah. Cause there’s a spike in my leg and no one helps.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘He is completely... like, a drain, worthless, we need... you should... okay...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Okay, mate, well...’

ALEX

He closes his eyes and seems to be casting a spell.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I’m going to help this guy out...’

[Carter mutters his spell in the background]

‘... because he seems like, just a guy...’

ALEX

You hear the sound of a violin at the bottom of the pit.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... you seem to...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Leave me all alone.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... have a logical...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘... at the bottom of a pit.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... idea of... Look, mate! This isn’t helping that you’re so annoying!’

(Group laughter)

‘Look, you’ve got your rules and you obviously thinks some people deserve to live and some to... die... and maybe I think it’s a bit more squishy and grey than that, but I’m not gonna...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Speaking of squishy and grey...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... leave him...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘... my leg’s really quite bad, I mean...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Then you get him up. I’ll meet you back there, but time’s a wastin’.’ And I walk back again.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Right...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘I only came here to check that you were alright, I don’t give a darn about him.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I mean, uh, I... would you care if I was alive if you knew I’d nicked stuff?’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Well, you actually have redeeming qualities and are helpful and bring something to society.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I’m really good at translating, okay, I’ve helped loads of people, you know? I looked after undergrads for a while. They were really grateful.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Look, Howa... Carter... guy in the pit – take your backpack off. Take anything heavy off and we’ll try one more time.’

[violin stops playing abruptly]

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘Alright. Okay, yep, yep.’ He does so. He leaves everything, and he’s just there holding onto a rope and bracing himself to be in pain.

BEN

I’ve just walked off. I’m going back.

ALEX (as Carter)

That’s fine.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Wow.’

ALEX

Give me a Strength Check.

LYDIA

[Rolls dice]

16.

ALEX

16? You brace, yank... you hear a *[sslleuppch]* as he gets pulled off the spike...

BRYN

Oooohh...

ALEX (also as Carter)

... and there's a, 'ha, ha, ha, ha, hmmm, ho ho, ooh, hooo, hooo, ha ha...
thank you. I'm good.'

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Does that pull him out of the pit?

ALEX

No, you've just managed to *[sslleuppch]* pull him off the spike.

LYDIA

Oh, right, so he's still stuck down the pit.

ALEX (as Carter)

‘You know what, I’m good. I got this. This is fine.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Is there another way out of the pit?’

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘Er, give me a second.’ He’s reaching into the bag that had, like, the pick and stuff. He pulls out a potion and necks it. ‘Hwwrrrrrrhhh... haaa. Hmm, haa... Er, thanks for that. Really appreciate it. Gimme a sec, er...’ He picks up a gold coin and, sort of, throws it up. ‘Might take a while, erm...’

LYDIA

Does he have a potion of Fly or something to get out?

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I’ll tell you what, if you could just leave me like an address, I can have everything sent to you. This is going to be really heavy and you’re not going to want to carry it the whole way...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘No, no, no. I’m gonna take you to, I dunno, prison or something.’

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘Okay, fair enough. Fair enough. Erm, bear with me one second.’ I’m going to cut to Grizzop returning to the conference room with Hamid and Azu.

BRYN/HAMID

‘Is she okay? What’s going on?’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Yeah, she’s fine. Howard Carter’s down a spike pit...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Oh! What?!’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Yeah...’

[Azu makes an awful strangled noise, trying to speak]

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Exactly. Sasha’s kind of thinking about getting him out, but honestly I don’t think we need to care. What she wants to do, fine, but...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘But how did he get out of prison. Shouldn't we return him to the authorities?’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘He’s a horrible little weasel and what happens to him, whatever happens to him, he deserves it, so...’

HELEN

Can I Lay on Hands on myself, so that I can talk?

(Laughter)

BEN

No.

HELEN

Really?

ALEX

Doesn't work like that.

BRYN

I had to use a spell which got your attributes back, but your Lay on Hands can heal hit points, but it can't heal attribute damage.

ALEX

You could punch yourself in the face and then stop yourself from feeling like you've been punched in the face, but this one is a... let's put it this way, it's not an accident that in a party with two Paladins you happen to have encountered something that can't be fixed with Lay on Hands.

(Laughter)

BRYN

How long does it last?

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

You'll know when it's done!

(Laughter)

HELEN [sighing]

Can you tell me the limits of my movement.

ALEX

So you are physically capable of moving at normal speed, and so on, but you are effectively, because your dexterity is still lower than normal, mechanically that plays out as you are more likely to fail Reflex Saves, if someone tries to hit you, you're easier to hit, you're just, kinda, clumsy and messy and...

HELEN

I'm conscious though...

ALEX

Yeah, like, you don't need to worry about you're now trapped in this room, but it is stuff like, if you going to get...

BRYN

It's like being very drunk. Like, you're unsteady on your feet, you're pretty uncoordinated, and you could probably go to just slurring words rather than being completely...

ALEX

Exactly, yeah.

HELEN

Okay, I will do that.

ALEX [laughing]

Helen's never give me a look...

(Group laughter)

... I don't like it! You used to be my favourite!

HELEN [laughing]

Oh no! Bad things are going to happen to Azu now!

ALEX

No, no, no, bad things are going to happen to all the people your character cares about, that's not the same thing!

(Laughter)

BEN

So how is that going to be different from what was going to happen?

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Oh no, I was going to make, like, Helen's punishment was going to be that I was going to give her everything she ever wanted and all of her backstory's going to be great, so that you'll all punish her for me! That was the... that was the move!

HELEN

I believe in my party members much more than that!

ALEX

Again, you're rapidly falling out of grace! What's happening?!

(Laughter)

What's happening in the conference room?

HELEN

Azu's going to try and stagger to her feet.

ALEX

Yep.

HELEN/AZU [slurring]

'We should get to that man.' So yeah, Azu stumbles off.

ALEX

Back towards Sasha again?

HELEN

Yeah, well, okay... So in Azu's kit are manacles...

[Ha!]

... so she's, like, I'm gonna get this guy!

ALEX

Okay, give me a Perception Check!

HELEN [laughing]

Oh no!!

LYDIA

Oh dear. It's great for mental maths!

HELEN

Ooh! 20!

ALEX

20?

HELEN

Yeah!

ALEX

Aww...

BRYN

I mean, if she's wandering down the corridor, Hamid's going to follow her because he's worried about her in her state as well.

ALEX

I will take Azu's Perception Check as a disappointed, you see? You see the trigger you set off last time, you're not falling for that one again!

HELEN

Mmm...

ALEX

You manage to get through without poisoning yourself more...

(Helen laughs)

... and find yourself beside Sasha. Meanwhile, Howard Carter at the bottom of the pit had necked another potion and has been putting coins back into the second backpack.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘He doesn’t seem particularly concerned about being stuck down a pit, but we sort of need to capture him and send him somewhere. I think he knows what went on in the robbery, you know?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, he did escape from prison, that’s where we previously... we handed him to the authorities and he’s clearly gotten out...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘They let me go.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘We should...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Did they?’

HELEN/AZU [slurring]

‘Why?’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Well, you know what, with the stand-storm they couldn't get a jury together and the case just fell apart.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Definitely take him back to prison.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I mean, there’s absolutely no way he didn’t just pick the lock in the prison, and we should probably make sure they put him in a better-locked cell next time.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘That sounds good.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘I mean, you know what, I think your friend was right, I think you should leave me hear at the bottom of the pit. I think that is the right punishment. I think I should stay here, you know, really learn my lesson. Ah... die alone in a tomb. I think that’s right.’

HELEN/AZU [slurring]

‘I... I chain you up... and leave you in the bank.’

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘Erm, hi. Or... or, you know what...’ I cast Sleep.’

(Group laughter)

BRYN

If he has more than four Hit dice it doesn't work straight out, which he probably does because...

ALEX

I'm afraid not!

BRYN

Yeah...

HELEN

Aww...

BRYN

But it would have been an amazing thing to happen at that dramatic moment!

ALEX

Yes. Yes, it would!

LYDIA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [97] – [Vaults, Villains and Virtue]

Does he have a moment of, like, ‘Ohhhh...’?!

(Bryn laughs)

ALEX

Perhaps, perhaps!

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Rude!’

ALEX

But yeah, mechanically impossible, I’m afraid!

BRYN/HAMID

‘We’re not interested in hearing what you’ve got to say, thank you, Mr Carter.’

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘You know what, fair enough. I apologise.’ He starts casting something...

LYDIA

Sasha jumps on his head and kicks him!

(Group laughter)

Jumps down... He’s annoying her!

ALEX

Okay, I'm going to need two rolls from you, because you are jumping into a spike pit!

(Group laughter)

Can I get an Acrobatic Roll first?

LYDIA

Yeah.

[Rolls dice]

Ooh, and that's only 17.

ALEX

Only 17. Shocker!

BRYN

She rolled a three!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

This character's so broken in specific ways!

LYDIA

Yep!

ALEX

Can you then roll an Attack Roll for me?

LYDIA

[Rolls dice]

That's nine plus four, so only 13.

ALEX

13?

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

You don't hit him in the face...

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX (also as Carter)

... but he does muck up his spell-casting. He's sort of, like, 'hrumppph, ah...!

Okay, hello.'

LYDIA

So basically, she's jumped down on his shoulders.

ALEX

Yeah. Effectively, yeah. You haven't landed on spikes, but neither have you actually injured him, you're just there beside him.

LYDIA/SASHA

'Er, right mate. No. Chuck me down the manacles.'

HELEN

Azu does that.

ALEX

Oh, come on now!

LYDIA

And gonna try and chain him up...

ALEX (also as Carter)

'Fine, fine.' He holds his hands out.

LYDIA

Locks him up... it feels weird to be on this side!

(Group laughter)

BRYN/HAMID

‘Check him for, like, lock picks and stuff, so he can’t just open them again!’

LYDIA

Sasha does so, skillfully!

(Laughter)

ALEX

Give me a Perception Check.

LYDIA

[Rolls dice]

Oooh, only a four, but plus 12. And I assume there are some bonuses in that she knows where lock picks are kept, so that is... so 16.

ALEX

He seems clean...

LYDIA

Ohhhhhh!!

ALEX

... but also, like, I am giving you this as an in-character piece of knowledge, no one's that clean! Like, he seems clean to the point of, like, doesn't have a wallet? Yeah, whatever! Whatever!

HELEN and LYDIA

Yeah!!

ALEX

But yeah, like, you searched his as well as you could, but the guys seems on the level! And lovely, let me... you know... he's just great! He's the best!!

(Group laughter)

BEN

No!!

LYDIA/SASHA

Just takes his coat off and, no... just... 'No, alright. Azu – can you pull him up?'

HELEN

How deep is the pit?

ALEX

About ten, 15 feet. Like, it's around that.

BRYN/HAMID

‘But if you tie the rope to the manacles we could drag him up by them.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘It’s pretty grim – I like it!’

HELEN/AZU

‘Yessss!!

BRYN/HAMID

‘What, is that... is there a better way?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Well, I was going to give him a little harness, or something...

BRYN/HAMID

‘Oh, okay. Yeah, then. Well do that, then...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... but dragging up his shoulders... dislocating his shoulders as you pull him up...’

HELEN/AZU

‘Then let’s not do that then!’

(Laughter)

ALEX

I'm going to take a break there and we'll skip what awfulness happens at the other end!

And welcome back. So, right. Give me the Strength Roll, Azu.

HELEN

Yep.

ALEX

If anyone wants to aid...

BRYN

I will assist!

LYDIA [laughing]

What, cheering?!!

[Sound of dice being rolled]

BRYN

I got eight.

HELEN

I got 19.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Totally helping you guys!!

HELEN

Yeah!

LYDIA

Yeah, like pulling at her ankle!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Yeah, he's just wrapped around her leg!!

BRYN

Emotional support would have been more effective!

ALEX

You successfully and, quite easily, haul him up. He grabs the rope with his hands as well so he's not, like, being annihilated by this...

LYDIA

Falling apart!

ALEX

... yeah...

BRYN

Do we end up giving him a harness?

ALEX

Of course, yeah, yeah!

BRYN

Like, Hamid was being ignorant, not cruel!

(Laughter)

ALEX (also as Carter)

He's at the top of the pit with you guys. 'You know what, it's a fair cop. Let's go.'

HELEN/AZU

'Good.' Azu begins to march him back.

BRYN

What happened to the two backpacks? Are they still in the pit?

ALEX

Still in the pit.

BRYN

Okay, we leave them there.

LYDIA

Sasha's still in the pit.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Good point. Good point well made!

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Sasha fills up a backpack!

(Laughter)

ALEX

Oh, he already did, you see. While he was talking to you he filled one, so you've got a backpack of treasure currently.

LYDIA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [97] – [Vaults, Villains and Virtue]

Alright. Sasha puts on the backpack of treasure and climbs out of the pit.

What do I need to roll?

ALEX

Give me a...

BRYN

Climb Check.

ALEX

... Climb Check, yeah. It's a heavy bag!

LYDIA

[Rolls dice]

13 plus eight is 21.

ALEX

Yeah, you're fine!

LYDIA/SASHA

'Alright, guys!'

BRYN/HAMID

'Oh, good work, Sasha!'

LYDIA/SASHA

'I'm coming along with you!'

BRYN/HAMID

'You know, if we take up the contract to explore this tomb later, it's totally legal for us to claim that treasure.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'That's cool, but I guess we should give this back to the bank, or should I just leave it here, and they can pick it up later?'

ALEX (as Carter)

'Or, or... Or... I think the Halfling's right, I think if you leave it here you can pick it up later. No one's going to be coming along, I mean, I'm the only person who knows about this place apart from you guys!'

BRYN/HAMID

I mean, we definitely shouldn't leave it anywhere that *he* knows about!'

LYDIA/SASHA

'That's true. Whose is it?'

BRYN/HAMID

'Well, if it's part of the tomb, as I said, a standard mercenary contract to explore the tomb, it would be the right of salvage for the mercenaries that did it.'

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Right of salvage. Right of salvage.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘This person – he hasn’t had an official contract, but we’ve been offered one so we could take it and then it could...’

ALEX (as Carter) [talking over Hamid]

‘No, I have. I left it at home!’

BRYN/HAMID [to Carter]

‘Did I not explain how we’re not interested in listening to anything you have to say?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I might wrap something around his...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Didn’t we gag him last time?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘That sounds like a great idea.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Oh, come on!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘If you would just shut up, we wouldn't have to.’

ALEX

He mimes, sort of, zipping his lips.

BRYN/HAMID

‘Thank you.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Welcome.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Wait, no – that’s not how zips work!’

(Group laughter)

‘You take him out and I’ll hide the treasure, and then we’ll come back.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘No, no, we should declare it because it will be legal. As I said, we’ve got the offer of a contract. Perfectly legal for us to...’

ALEX (also as Wilde) [talking over Bryn]

And we cut to Grizzop. You are alone in the conference room. The door opens and one of the guards that was about to show you into the vault comes in with Oscar Wilde beside him, and Oscar Wilde's there going, 'Grizzop?'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Yep.'

ALEX

And, kind of, looks around. The guard, sort of...

BEN/GRIZZOP

'They're dealing with Howard Carter through an illusory wall here, because he's trying to steal stuff from the tomb underneath the bank.'

ALEX (also as Wilde and the *guard*)

'Yeah, that sounds about right.' And the guard's like, '*WHAT?! Oh my... er...*'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Don't go down there, there are traps. They are dealing with it.'

ALEX (also as the *guard* and Wilde)

'*Right, okay. Erm, thank you.*' He runs out of the room leaving just you and Wilde. 'It does get tiring, doesn't it, after a while.'

BEN

I just look at him.

ALEX (also as Wilde)

Yeah. He wanders over to a cabinet, opens it, finds a fancy pen, puts it in his pocket.

(Helen laughs)

‘So, Grizzop. Realize, we haven’t actually... we’ve not really spent any real time together, have we? Now that I think about it.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘No. You’ve spent most of your time referring to me as this, or it.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Pretty certain I used he at some point. I mean, how’s things? You good?’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘I have absolutely nothing to say to you to you in a personal context. We will sit here in silence until you can continue to be our handler.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘You are so much better than Zolf ever was.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Shut up.’

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Cut back to the rest of the party, presumably...

LYDIA

Coming out through the illusionary door.

ALEX

.. yeah, coming out through the illusionary wall to join Grizzop and Wilde just there.

LYDIA/SASHA (unenthusiastically)

‘Hello Wilde.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘You alright?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah. Well, no, actually, but getting better.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Well, good to hear. So, Howard Carter.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘We’ve caught him again.’

ALEX

He really strenuously and over the top mimes ‘oh, I would talk, but my lips are sealed, you see, there’s nothing I can do’...

LYDIA/SASHA

‘How are they this annoying?’

(Helen laughs)

‘How do they have so much in common? It’s bizarre really... in character, as Sasha who, of course, I’m not a character, I’m a person! ‘How are these two, these two creatures... these people that come from such different backgrounds and interests... well, I suppose they’re not, they’re both posh men...’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘So what’s wrong with him?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘They’re just too similar. I wonder what could be the reason.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘He’s very irritating, Oscar.’

ALEX (also as Wilde)

He can't stifle a little bit of a grin. 'I see.'

HELEN/AZU

'You take him.' Azu pushes his hand towards Oscar Wilde.

ALEX (as Wilde) [looks Howard up, down, then back up again]

'Yeah, alright.'

BRYN/HAMID

'No. Oscar!'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Imprison!'

BRYN/HAMID

'Yes, he needs to go back to prison and this time it needs to be a more secure cell that he can't just escape whenever he feels like it.'

ALEX (as Wilde)

'Talented as well! Quite the package.'

HELEN/AZU

'No!'

(Laughter)

ALEX (also as Wilde)

The multiple guards burst into the room and immediately start *[hup, hup, hup, hup...]* you know, heading over to the wall, setting up, like, a temporary steel fencing they've got as they find out where it is, and basically, they're all bustling around. 'Apparently I have to give you permission for this key thing.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Yep.'

HELEN/AZU

'Yes. This one.' She produces the key.

ALEX (as Wilde)

'Okay, cool. Shall we just head in? I'm pretty certain the guards can handle this Howard fella.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Er, yeah. Guards! Be careful, he's tricky. Right, okay.' Doesn't look at the guards.

ALEX

For what it's worth, the guards have immediately, sort of, grabbed hold of Howard. There is one person holding his right shoulder, one person holding his left shoulder, and a spell-caster behind him, and they start marching him out and he just, kind of, looks back at you, like... [sighs].

BRYN/HAMID

‘He’s been trying to cast spells so, yep, good idea to have him!’

ALEX

And the spell-caster goes, ‘Oh, thanks so much.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I mean, this time don’t put him in such a simple-to-escape cell!’

ALEX (as the spell-caster)

‘Yeah, those public cells are just... Don’t worry, I mean, Sir, you know that we’ve got this covered!’

HELEN/AZU

‘Good, good.’

ALEX

The spell-caster reaches in, brings out a massive, basically, gag, wraps it around his head. It’s not aggressive, it is just no talking! Puts, like, starts putting finger-manacles on him...

ALL

Ohhhh!!

ALEX

... as they start heading out.

LYDIA

Oh! I mean, those could be quite cool, couldn't they?!

(Alex laughs)

HELEN

It's like those Chinese finger traps.

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Oh... that isn't cool! I was thinking of those little rings with chains between them...

ALEX

No, I'm afraid... I'm afraid canon it's basically just five finger traps.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Aww...

[quietly] How do you wipe your bum?!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

You've got to get a guard to do it!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Have a magic toilet!

LYDIA

Oh yeah!

ALEX

There is a spell called [0:31:05], calm down!

BEN

But they can't cast it!

(Group laughter)

[Oh no, it's the worst!]

ALEX

Right, so...

LYDIA/SASHA

'Okay, let's go into this bank with permission and unlock...' Sasha breaks down laughing...

(Group laughter)

[laughing] ‘... he had to [0:31:22] with a key!’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Shall we go?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Er, yeah. sure.’

ALEX (also as Wilde)

Wilde, sort of, gestures to the door. The guards step in beside you and you head back out, back around, and then you find yourself back at the vault entrance. They give you the same spiel again. However, Wilde’s there gesturing, ‘Yes, yes, come on, come on, come on’ and also goes, ‘I give you permission to access the Meritocratic vault using the key that you are in possession of. I verify you as a rightful owner for this key, blah, blah, blah. Blah, blah, blah. Let’s go.’

HELEN/AZU

Azu looks really pleased with herself!

(Laughter)

‘Yes, the proper way to do things!’

ALEX

So this huge, apparently steel-looking, door has a semi-circle in the middle of it with a line, and it begins, basically... the caster heads up, places their hand on it and then that semi-circle begins to turn and rotate until the lines match up.

LYDIA

Sasha watches...

ALEX

And then the doors creak open...

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Ohhhh...’ a couple of different points.

ALEX

... and they slide backwards...

LYDIA/SASHA

‘... so that’s how!’

ALEX

... and it has multiple... it would have been a nightmare in fairness – if you were going to break in, you’d probably find an alternate entrance because they put a lot of effort into the door.

LYDIA/SASHA [still muttering about the door mechanism]

‘... there’s a lot of layers to that mechanism...’

ALEX (also as the first guard)

And the guards step in and you find yourself in a steel-lined room. It is steel floor, steel ceiling, and it is a perfect cube. There are four crystals in each corner, sort of, held behind metal grating, and there are four actual flaming torches that are on the side of the walls. They’re not lit, they’re ready to. And there’s a little basin, kind of like a font that’s full of oil. The guard sort of dips the torches in, lights them. The door automatically starts closing behind you. Re-rotates. There’s an exact identical copy of that one ahead of you on the other side of this cube.

[The door creaks and clanks shut]

The guards turn to you. ‘Apologies for going over what you already know, Sir. There are creatures in this vault whose sole job is to attack people who are attempting to enter. As long as you stay with us and you stay within the firelight, everything will be fine. Do not wander off. If you do, we will not fetch you, but you probably won’t survive. Everyone understand?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘What kind of creatures?’

BRYN/HAMID and HELEN/AZU

Yep.

ALEX

They then, obviously, dip the other and hand two torches out to whoever wants them.

HELEN

I'll take one since I'm tall.

BEN

I'll take one since I'm short! What's your point?!

(Group laughter)

ALEX (also as the first guard)

'Right, everyone ready?'

[Sasha squeaks assent]

'Okay, great.' The caster walks up, places their hand on the door. It begins to rotate, opens the same way... and it opens into what first looks to be just emptiness. As they step forward into the firelight, you see that at a quite sharp angle downwards is a narrow walkway with no railings or anything like that, and it appears to be completely smooth stone, but with cross-hatching on it so you can grip. And it just seems to be heading down into darkness. It's beyond the distance of the dark vision for Grizzop and Azu as well. One guard takes the front. The other guard implies that they'll take the back, and then they say, 'If everyone will follow us.'

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yep.’

ALEX

So, you head out...

BRYN/HAMID

There’s just six of us going down?

ALEX

It is. Two guards, the four of you and Wilde, so it’s seven.

LYDIA

Seven.

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Why is he here?’ I thought we’d left him outside.

ALEX

I’m afraid not. Could all of you give me a Perception check, please.

[Sound of dice being rolled]

[Bryn squeaks]

ALEX

It sounded like Hamid dropped his character sheets there!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

He did!

(Alex laughs)

BEN

Bryn was in total control the whole time!

HELEN

16.

ALEX

16.

BEN

17.

ALEX

17.

BRYN

22.

ALEX

22.

LYDIA

21.

ALEX

21. Neither of the Paladins, as far as you are aware, you are basically just walking out into nothingness. In fact, even at a quick glance you're like, this probably isn't actually naturally a cavern. Like, it's scale's wrong.

LYDIA

Well, we're in a pyramid, right?

ALEX

Er, you're sort of towards the base of it, yeah. Sasha and...

LYDIA

It's not a natural cavern!

ALEX

Sasha and Hamid, you hear sounds distant that are... Hamid, some of them have a sort of vaguely, like, they make vague memories of magic back when you were at university, sort of, hums, maybe the occasional sound of a distant

buzz or things like that. Sasha, you can hear similar things, but don't have experience. What you aren't hearing is anything in the way of footfalls. You're not hearing anything sort of making contact with walls or anything like that.

LYDIA

No big, like, scorpion-tailed tentacled thing padding around?

ALEX

There's no slithering, no padding, no footsteps.

BEN

Mostly wings!

ALEX

No wings.

BEN

Oh. Okay.

ALEX

To be clear...

BRYN

Even the buzzing doesn't sound like insect wings?

ALEX

No, no. It's almost like electrical buzzing. So, heading down this narrow walkway, eventually you keep going and...

LYDIA/SASHA

'So, how does one get a job in, you know, vault-guarding, then?'

ALEX (also as the first guard)

'Well, you see, it's a bit of a weird...' This is the lead guard, and they're going quite slowly just to make sure everyone's alright, blah, blah, blah. 'It's quite a weird job really because in order to get, you know, the vault gig, you've kind of got to be the best of the best, but once you've got the vault gig, it's kind of boring...'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Right.'

ALEX (also as the guards)

'... like, basically, all we do is we just ferry rich people back down and up again. It's not all that, really.' At the back, the other guard's like, '*Speak for yourself! I find it fulfilling and interesting.*' The first one sort of turns to you...

LYDIA/SASHA

'At the application process – there weren't a lot of interviews?'

ALEX (as the first guard)

‘Oh, loads, loads, but that’s just to get in. Like, as a guard on the bank. A couple of people tried it a while ago, you know, try and join up, and then get to the vault so they can then rob it.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘What fools!’

(Group laughter)

ALEX (as the first guard)

‘I know, right?! We’ll be going past them so I’ll point them out when we go.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Oh, okay!’

ALEX

So they keep going, and they find... eventually you find yourself on a stone platform that has two paths leading off from it. Again, downwards, and again in the same vein, you still seem to be...

BRYN/HAMID

‘We take the path less travelled?’

ALEX (also as the first guard) [laughing]

Maybe! I can’t! The lead guard goes, ‘I wouldn’t. I really, really wouldn’t.’

(Group laughter)

‘I wouldn't go down the least... no.’ But, yeah, you're still in just this big cavernous void. Looking up, there's not even a ceiling where there should have been a ceiling based on how far you've walked.

LYDIA

Sasha tries to open her Bag of Holding. She has learned.

ALEX

It opens.

LYDIA

Ooooh!

BRYN

It's good. It's good experimentation! I like that!

ALEX

Yeah! I'm really happy with character learning!

BRYN

Quick test – are we on a private pocket playing?

ALEX

Excellent! Basically, is it a magic dimension? No. Good test. I am super happy with you doing that. That's pleased me! Right, so, they head down...

LYDIA

She would have done that quietly and subtly because she doesn't know if it's an actual, but Grizzop did definitely tell her that in an episode I've recently...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

The lead guard...

LYDIA [quietly]

In fact, do they know this? There was a whole thing about being frustrated!

[Sound of dice being rolled]

ALEX

Those guards are really bad at Perception. That's a bad quality in a guard! So they head down and you keep heading, and you come to another platform. This time with three paths. They pick an arbitrary path as far as you're concerned...

BRYN

I ask which one of them, what the other one would say if we asked that one...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So as you're heading down the correct path...

LYDIA

I mean, does it... it seems quite like... so, like, does it change which is the right path?

ALEX

Oh, yeah. Yeah, it does, yeah.

LYDIA

Ah, that's what I'd do!

ALEX

So they keep heading down. You find yourself at a platform that has five leading off of it...

BRYN

I'm now seeing a future for Sasha as, like, a white hat hacker...

(Group laughter)

... who comes in and advises people on how to make it more secure...

LYDIA

Oh, nice!

BRYN

... by saying how she would rob it!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

That would involve a long and personal skill!

ALEX

She'll have an agent, she'll Banksy it. There'll be a faceless white hat hacker!
On this platform, it has five paths leading off from it, all still leading down, and
three statues...

BRYN

Oh, ask them... oh no, I've probably done that!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Are these the old guards?

ALEX

One of them seems to be some kind of caster who's in abject terror looking up, and then...

BRYN/HAMID

'Oooh, do you have a gorgon?!'

ALEX

... the last one appears to be basically a statue of a dead person, like, lying prone. No, gorgons do not handle this...

BRYN

[0:39:46]?

ALEX

... well...

BRYN/HAMID

'Sorry, just professional curiosity, you understand!'

ALEX (also as the first guard)

'No, it's fine. Sir, if you could come over.' The guard pulls Hamid over and, sort of, leans into him, 'We actually have a few beholders on this level. It's really, really hard to set up, but actually they're quite good about it as long as we leave them alone.'

BRYN/HAMID

‘Oh. Oh!’ Hamid starts to look slightly more nervous!

BEN

But only slightly!

HELEN/AZU

‘What’s with the holder?’

ALEX

Magical security guards!

BRYN/HAMID

‘It’s a creature.’

ALEX (also as the first guard)

‘They’re dangerous... don’t, don’t, don’t wander off... it’s not worth getting into the details!’ So they head down another final path off that last five, and then they place themselves and eventually the arc heads down and starts to level out smoothly. It’s more like a curve than, you know, ramps, if that makes sense, and it curves out into a completely flat stone base. And then they go, ‘Right, would we like to go to the Meritocratics first or the... er... well... would you like the Heart first or would you like the key first?’

LYDIA/SASHA [quietly]

‘I’d like the Heart.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yep. Let’s go to the Heart first.’

ALEX (also as a guard)

Okay, right. The two guards, sort of, converse for a moment. One of them’s, like, they pull out a set of keys, rotate, rotate – hold one of them up... ‘Right, okay. If you’ll follow us?’ And they start setting off along this, seemingly, featureless stone layer. However, quite quickly you find that you are approaching a wall. However, it is the same material of this flat grey stone, and it appears to stretch off and curve slightly all the way left, all the way right, and all the way up – almost like you are at the base of dome, if you know what I mean, a hemisphere. And they go up right to the dome and then they have a look and you see, basically, this dome is covered with keyholes at standard keyhole level running off into the distance to the right, and running off into the distance on the left, and running off upwards in rows. So the first layer is at standard key height, and then they’re equidistant all the way up.

BRYN

Can I see a join where it joins the floor? Does it look like this thing could rotate?

ALEX

Give me a Perception Check.

BRYN

[Rolls dice]

Er, 17.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, it probably can. It's not completely slick. There is a, sort of, black line, where the two... although, again, workmanship-wise, like, you couldn't put a knife in there or anything...

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

... it's very well done. And then they take a moment and go, 'Okay, what day is it, Tuesday?' 'Right, yeah' 'What time is it?' 'Where's the moon right now?' Just goes on like that... Okay, they start walking along the side and eventually they find themselves at what, to all the rest of you, seems like a completely normal, just standardised block. They place the key in, rotate it, and then the stone just parts. It doesn't look like a door, it looks like it's some equivalent of a magic door. The stone just parts, like parting water almost... and on the other side you see there is a darkened room with a pedestal on the middle of it, and what appears to be a, like, bright pink...

HELEN

Azu smiles!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

... it appears to be like a ruby, but with rose gold, like, chains and so on, and it is on a pedestal at the far end, and it is just in a standard, like, let's be honest, it's the trope, it's in a pillar of light!

ALL

[Ohhhhh... Ahhhhhh....]

(Group laughter)

BRYN

When Azu picks it up, will there be a little, *[duh, duh, duh, duh, da-daaaaaa]*?

(Group laughter)

[doo, dooo, dooo, dooooo!]

HELEN

Oh, it's so pink!

ALEX (also as the guards)

The guards place themselves on either side and then just say, 'Please head in, we are actually not allowed in. It's clients only from this point onwards.'

BRYN/HAMID

'Probably best if you carry it, Azu, as the holy to your Order?'

HELEN/AZU

Azu looks, like, incredibly at home!

(Laughter)

This is, like, the biggest, like... she's being asked to shake the hand of God!

(Laughter)

But also, she turns to Sasha and is like, 'Should you touch it?'

BRYN/HAMID

'Are we going to take it to Erin Fairhands for some sort of healing ritual, I think?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'I don't know. I don't know.'

BRYN/HAMID

'I mean, I just think it's safer if we use it under expert advice.'

HELEN/AZU

'Okay.'

BRYN/HAMID

'Don't you think?'

LYDIA

Sasha looks terrified.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, stepping up, basically, there's a slight up-slope and then there's this plinth.

LYDIA

Uh huh...

ALEX

Heading closer, you see that it is a 'shocker' it appears to be there is a rose gold clam and in the centre of it is a huge ruby, however, it's got that many cuts, it hasn't been cut to, you know, give maximum glitter... ?

LYDIA

Mmm...

ALEX

... it's almost like looking it it's perfectly smooth, but you see it is chiselled by just tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny numbers of chips, and it is giving off a slight pale pink pulsing, a little bit. And it appears to be just... it's quite simplistic apart from the clam design, really.

HELEN

Hmm...

ALEX

You pick it up? Wear it?

BRYN/HAMID

‘Oscar, are there any other security measures that we should be prepared for in here?’

ALEX (also as Wilde)

He just looks at all the rest of you and goes, ‘I don’t work here!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I just thought you might have had more information than we did from head office?’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘I’ve never been here before...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘No, fair enough!’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Like, I mean, I’m surprised that you don’t know. It’s your bank!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘My apologies for expecting you to be of any use whatsoever!’

(Helen laughs)

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘You know what, that’s fair. That is on you!’

HELEN

So the Heart is in a clam?

ALEX

So, the bottom half of a clam. That half of a clam is, sort of opened a little bit over the top, and then the centre of it, what would be a pearl, is actually a big fat ruby.

HELEN

Okay, Azu’s going to close the clam...

ALEX

Yep.

HELEN

... and then take the clam...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Er, the chain's still attached, but yeah, it's...

(Helen laughs)

... it isn't chained to the plinth. It is a necklace. It's not like it's... there's a ruby that's chained to the plinth. I may have been... I may have misdescribed.

There is a chain necklace with the...

LYDIA

Oh, right...

BEN

... the Heart of Aphrodite is a pendant.

ALEX

Yes!

HELEN

Okay. So...

ALEX

Okay, can you do me a favour from now on, whenever I say something, could you just translate it into English?!

(Group laughter)

It would be really helpful for me!

HELEN

Okay, Azu is going to be very careful not to actually touch the thing. Out of reverence, rather than fear.

ALEX

Sure. So, how are you doing that?

HELEN

Well she's not going to touch the Heart itself, but she can touch the clam.

ALEX

Okay, sure, sure.

HELEN

It's a closing shell thing. So she closes it, and then she waits.

ALEX

Nothing happens.

HELEN

Then she picks it up and waits.

ALEX

One of the guards turns around and sees you and goes, ‘Oh my god, no... wait...’ Nah, I’m messing with you!

(Helen laughs nervously)

(Laughter)

HELEN

Azu’s like... [Helen makes hyperventilating sound]...

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Hamid was already three words into a spell.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Obviously, it’s the unprofessional guard and he’s just like, ‘aaugggh’...

(Group laughter)

The other one’s not impressed! Erm, yeah, they basically gesture, like, there’s nothing else in here.

HELEN

She puts it in her pack?

ALEX

Sure. Nothing seems to have happened, you don't explode or anything. You will head out.

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Shall we go to that locker?'

BRYN/HAMID

'Yep.'

ALEX

Great.

HELEN

Next task.

ALEX (also as a guard)

Okay, in that case, then, they head out. The guards, sort of turn round, wait; the doors automatically close. They insert the key, rotate it, it reseals and they take the key and place it back on their keys and put it within their clothing as opposed to on a conveniently hung belt – they've already had people come in and advise them before.

(Helen laughs)

And they start walking back towards what you guess is the middle, based on the wall and so on. And, yeah, they head towards the middle and once you're on that middle platform they stand there, take a moment, reach down and dust some dust off that middle platform and basically place their hands on it. And then they say, 'Okay, you're all going to want to face inwards rather than outwards – it might be a bit disorientating. Just bear with it, okay?'

LYDIA

Sasha looks outwards!

(Helen laughs)

ALEX

They face inwards.

BRYN

Hamid turns to face inwards, but mostly looks outwards.

(Helen laughs)

ALEX

Okay. Anyone else?

BEN

I do what they say.

ALEX

Yeah, good call!

HELEN [laughing]

So does Azu!

ALEX

Yeah! Really good idea!

(Helen laughs)

BRYN

Stupid Paladins!

HELEN

Proper Paladins, you will find!

ALEX

Hamid, Hamid – give me a Fort Save.

BRYN

Oh no...

(Group laughter)

... my no-vomit streak!

ALEX

Don't do this thing!

BEN

There's going to be a streak of vomit!

BRYN

I've been vomit-free since episode 43!

(Group laughter)

I made that up. I wanted to rhyme.

[Rolls dice]

Ooh, ooh, oooh! Er, loads!

LYDIA

Nooooooooo!

BRYN

23!

BEN

Nooooo!

ALEX

Nooooo!

BRYN

Hamid's vomiting days are over!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Suddenly the DC's 25 – I don't how that happened!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Wait, is it a fear effect?

ALEX

It is not.

BRYN

Ah.

ALEX

So, what happens is, everyone else is looking in...

LYDIA

I'm not!

ALEX

... oh, you're looking out as well? I misheard...

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

... Fort Save for you as well.

LYDIA

Yep.

[Rolls dice]

Er, that is only 11.

BRYN

Looks like the vomit's on the other foot now!

ALEX

Good, goooooood!!

BEN

Vomit might be on all our feet!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

So, the guards are there and they also have closed their eyes. There's a deep rumble and, obviously, this little platform which was slightly higher up, everything was quite far out. There's a kind of deep rumble that starts shaking, and it starts building, but it isn't earthquake style, it's the volume, do you know what I mean? So there's a slight shake to the platform, but it's just this deep, deep rumble which gets louder and louder and louder. And then you start seeing that the sides of the cavern are shrinking closer and closer...

(Helen gasps)

... and closer, and they keep shrinking and they keep shrinking, and anywhere where you see the ramp leading down to where you were, that's basically just getting absorbed into it as it shrinks down. And it shrinks down until it is basically as wide as this platform, and then starts to spin. Slowly at first...

[spinning sound]

LYDIA

Euuugggghh...

ALEX

... but quicker, and it also isn't spinning on one plane, it's spinning on multiple.

HELEN

Oh my god.

BEN

We're in the middle of a gyroscope!

ALEX

Yeah, basically. It seems to be okay, and then suddenly, Sasha, you're like, I don't know where up is anymore! Oh, no, this is awful. This is really... and, yeah, you just...

LYDIA

Throw up everywhere?

ALEX

Little bit!

Bleed everywhere as well?

ALEX

No, no, no!

LYDIA

Fall over?

ALEX

Just the vom this time, just the vom!

LYDIA

Alright.

ALEX

It's spinning, it's spinning, and then it suddenly just hard stops...

[spinning sound comes to an abrupt halt with a thunk]

BRYN/HAMID

'That was coooool!'

ALEX

Yeah. Not finished yet! And then suddenly, explosively spans outwards so it just rockets off into the distance again, ridiculously quickly...

[sound of an explosion]

... there's a moment of, like, breathlessness as that huge empty space is suddenly being created, it's like, *[Alex makes a gulping sound and then a second later breathes in]*, the air seems to, like, normalise and so on.

HELEN

Were we all aware that everything shrank?

ALEX

You could see the far side if you were looking in, but it seemed to be easier to have, like, that fixed point to be looking at...

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

... so, yeah, you felt it shrink right up close.

HELEN

Yeah, Azu's not happy about that.

ALEX

Spin. Power out. And before we head into the next vault, I think we'll end the episode there, with Sasha covered in vom instead of Hamid for a change!

(Helen laughs)

LYDIA

Sasha's thrown up and probably crying as well. It's quite emotional.

(Alex laughs)

HELEN

Character development!

BRYN

Welcome to my world!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I'm not sure how I feel that I've made a game where vomiting and crying is what constitutes character development!

(Group laughter)

I feel like I might have made a mis-step a couple of seasons ago and just kept running with it!

BRYN

But we respect his craft!

(Group laughter)

ALL

[make vomiting sounds]

(Group laughter)

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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ALEX (as Carter)

‘You can only nick from someone who’s living.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘No, it’s called tomb-raiding!’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘No, I’ve liberated treasures for the furtherment of the archaeological...’

BRYN

Tomb-raiding is basically half the world’s economy and...

(Group laughter)

... like, you know, adventuring is just another form of tomb-raiding.

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Yep, okay. We’ve actually not done this...’

(Group laughter)

‘... this is set in the real world. Maybe in Eberon it might be, but not here!’

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

There’s definitely a mercenary’s code...

ALEX [talking over Bryn]

Oh, I can... yep, I can feel the psychic damage building as well...

BRYN

... I'm talking out of character here, because Hamid's not there.

BEN/GRIZZOP

'I'm not!'

ALEX

Oh my goodness, this is D10 in psychic damage, or are we going to behave?!

BEN/GRIZZOP

'I've got 53 hit points, I'll be fine!'

HELEN

Ohhh, okay... You carry on, you carry on!