

RQG – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

Content Warnings

- Mention of vomiting, interreligious conflict

BEN

Hi everyone, Ben here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our patrons; Linda Evans, Sara Siegmann, Michelle McMullin, Tim, Terence Praet, Alannah Small, Sharon Peterson, Jane Cochard, Bailey Winslow. 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 98 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today for another [0:01:53] episode, 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

Er, Sasha Racket.

ALEX

Yep!

HELEN

And Azu.

ALEX

And I'm feeling bad, Azu – I've put you in a tiny compressed space and also drugged you...

LYDIA

And she's still poisoned!

(Helen laughs)

She's [0:02:14] and phobic...

ALEX

Yeah, that's a horrible combo!

BRYN

And also given her the responsibility of bearing her religion's most sacred relic!

(Laughter)

ALEX

So, basically, what I have done...

HELEN

While being clumsy and poisoned!

ALEX

... I've completely compromised you and then put you in the highest pressure environment I possibly could.

BRYN

Welcome to the team!

ALL

Hooray!!

[everyone cheers]

ALEX

Yay! So, we are all in the vaults beneath the Tahan branch. You have picked something from a Meritocratic vault and you are now basically in chasing the Simulacrum key, which you finally come to the right place and are about to go find out what it is, unless I am mistaken.

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

And with that in mind, we'll pick up where we left off, which is...

LYDIA

Sasha's shoes are covered in vomit...

(Laughter)

ALEX

Oh, yeah...

LYDIA

... and she's crying, but you can't really see that because her face is... she looks very ill because she is mostly dead now and she's thrown up, so she's basically grey...

HELEN

Oh dear...

LYDIA

... and is just, like... [0:03:11].

ALEX

Azu, give me a Will Save.

HELEN

Yeah.

[Rolls dice]

ALEX

You're a Paladin so you should be alright.

HELEN

Oh, yeah! That's 21.

ALEX

Yeahhhhh!

LYDIA

My word!

ALEX

Yeah, you're okay. You're conquering that fear!

LYDIA

That's a lot of Will!

HELEN

Yeah. I've got a... **[she sighs]**.

ALEX

I'm gonna be coordinated by **[0:03:30]** of Will.

HELEN

Yes!

LYDIA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

You've got Will coming out of your ears!

(Helen laughs)

ALEX

No, that's more of your vomit!

[Euuurrrggghh...]

[everyone groans]

LYDIA

No, that's quite... no, honest. We all know it's blood!

ALEX

Oh, my bad, my bad! Sorry.

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Helen has a glamorous new piercing!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

And is stabbed in one ear! Erm, right. So Azu takes some deep breaths...

ALEX

Yeah, but you've got a handle on it so you don't need to worry about running off into the dark. You're good, you're good.

HELEN

Good. Not dropping the sacred objects.

ALEX (also as *second guard* and *first guard*)

Great. So, the two guards look at one another, look at you guys, see Sasha, and the professional one's, like, '*Huh*'. The unprofessional one's, like, 'Do you want a minute?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'No, I'm fine.'

ALEX (also as *first guard*)

'Are you sure?' Holds out a hanky, like, 'It happens a lot, like, a lot!'

(Helen laughs)

LYDIA

She waits for quite a while, trying to be... and then you see that, like, hand without turning to him, reaches out and takes it...

(Alex laughs)

LYDIA/SASHA (quietly)

‘Thank you.’

ALEX (as first guard)

‘Yeah, no worries.’

LYDIA

She wipes her vomit-y face.

(Laughter)

Does any skin come off ‘cos she’s nearly [0:04:35 litched] now?

ALEX

Nope, nope! You *wish* you were litched. Litches are the best – they get all these extra features!

LYDIA

It’s almost a shame!

BEN

That’s one way to look at it!

(Group laughter)

Also, there’s the whole evil soul thing, I mean, anyway...

ALEX

Ah, you weren't using it!

(Laughter)

LYDIA

To be fair, she really wasn't!

(Alex laughs)

ALEX (also as second guard)

So, the professional guard turns to Azu, 'May I have the key that we might find the vault?'

HELEN/AZU

Azu looks at the others, 'Should I trust them?'

BRYN

Nod.

HELEN/AZU

'Okay. Yessss.'

(Group laughter)

ALEX (also as second guard)

'Greeaaaaaat!'

(Group laughter)

And they just hold their hand out, kind of, looking a bit nonplussed!

HELEN

Oh, okay. Azu gives him the key.

ALEX (also as guard)

Great. She holds it up. 'Right, yeah, okay.' The guards have a hushed conversation, 'Right, this way' and they start heading off into a seemingly just random point of the compass when it comes to this big circular room, but yeah, they head off and start leading and gesture for you to follow.

BRYN

They've been pretty competent so far. We're going to keep following their lead.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

So they head through and then they, basically, start doing the same sequence, you know, going through, going through, 'Ah, there we go', insert the key, turn it, open it...

[sound of heavy doors scraping open]

... the doors open again, same style. Inside... everyone give me a Perception Check.

[Sound of dice being rolled]

BEN

Natural one.

ALEX

Good start!

HELEN [whooping]

Er, 17.

ALEX

Good.

LYDIA

20, not natural.

BRYN

19.

ALEX

19. You had 21, right?

HELEN

No, I had 17.

ALEX

17, sorry. So we...

LYDIA

I had 20.

ALEX

20. Twenty is our highest, right, okay.

LYDIA

No, didn't you have 21?

BRYN

19.

LYDIA

Oh, right! Ha, maths!!

ALEX

Numbers!

LYDIA

Hey, listeners, this is the joy of role-playing! You wonder why you'd played computer games when you could be spending all this time with your friends, telling stories together in a collaborative, imaginative experience... well!!

ALEX

We all forgot how maths works!

LYDIA

Mental maths!

BRYN

I didn't!

ALEX

So...

LYDIA

You should have taught us better!

ALEX

... looking inside, there appears to be just the messiest filing system you have ever seen. It appears to be full of filing cabinets. In terms of size, it is the size of a large, but mundane, office for a single person. So, you're talking maximum, maybe, 15 feet by 15 feet – a bit more than that, tops – and it's full of, again, seems to be mundane filing cabinets that are overflowing with paper, huge amounts. Sasha, you suspect at the very back of the room there might even be a desk, but you're looking at, like, shapes of piles of paper and going, maybe there.

LYDIA

Check for traps.

(Group laughter)

BRYN/HAMID

What a weird place to have an office!

ALEX (also as Wilde and a *guard*)

Wilde looks over, 'Yeah.' Turns to the guards, 'How often has someone, like, used this vault?' They sort of look to one another, '*We're not aware of anyone using this for a while. We would have to dig into the records to actually...*'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Well, looks like this is a dead end. We should probably move on. Where next?'

HELEN/AZU

‘Investigate this.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I think we’ve got to search through the papers, like, a lot of important things to be found on paper...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Is this your office?’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Yeah, okay, cool. How long d’you think that’ll take?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘A few hours, maybe.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘At least!’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Okay, well we should get on with it then.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘I mean, we can’t even outsource this ‘cos no one’s meant to know this is here.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Right, well, what are we looking for?’

HELEN/AZU

‘Anything of interest.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘In what way?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Magical technology, the fusion of mechanics and magical artifacts...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Right!’ And I’ll barge into...’

(Alex laughs)

BRYN/HAMID

‘... power systems...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘... I dive into a drift of paperwork.’

(Laughter)

ALEX

Is it like looking at a cartoon fight where, like, a limb occasionally flies out?!

(Laughter)

BEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah – getting right up in that paper!

ALEX

Okay, given how much we're searching, can everyone give me a separate Perception Check, please.

[Sound of dice being rolled]

And did you say you were looking for traps, Sasha?

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Okay, so I'll use yours specifically for traps, if that's okay?

LYDIA

Okay.

BEN

13.

ALEX

13 from Grizzop.

HELEN

19.

ALEX

19 from Azu.

BRYN

28.

ALEX

28 from Hamid. Sasha?

LYDIA

26.

ALEX

Perfect! Okay. So you all start...

LYDIA

Perfect – the limit for detecting traps was 27!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

All is well!

(Laughter)

So, digging through, the first thing that happens is, Grizzop, you start finding that what you're looking at are huge amounts of technical notes, but really badly filed and, basically, all done, sort of, freehand insofar as, like, this isn't, like, 'these are the finished docs', it's more like, 'maybe this over here' ***[makes sound of pencil scratching paper]***, 'no', and then they kept it. Like, it just seems huge permutations of designs, columns of figures that mean nothing to you, all you can discern from it is that whoever did it's a mess!

BEN

I just appear...

ALEX

They're just the worst!

BEN/GRIZZOP

... from on top of a pile of paper and go, 'I really don't think this is our job! Like, this is not our speciality. Surely the Meritocrats have some sort of filing team that can do this, and then communicate to us?'

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, now that we know what’s down here, yeah, you know, we can get a specialist team...’

ALEX

Azu...

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Well, lets do that instead of looking!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, we just need to see if there’s anything important quickly first.’

ALEX

... you are aware of a couple of extra features. You happen to pick an arbitrary filing cabinet which seems to be all about, like, tracking of materials and stuff like that, and part of it you see is that there seems to be records of significant amounts of traffic with Damascus and you’re aware that there’s a fairly decent Orcish community nearby there...

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

... like, distant – it’s not like your cousin lives there or anything – but, yeah, it is a pretty significant-sized Orcish community lives out there and you are spotting

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

what appears to be a couple of Orcish names in the records as well, but it isn't, like, solely, it's just, you know, they don't tend to come up in records that often outside of Orcish settlements. Sasha.

LYDIA

Mmm hmm...

ALEX

So the first thing that you do is, I reckon there was a desk over there. If I was going to put traps, they'd be in a desk.

LYDIA

Mmm. Mmm, mmm...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Is there a safe in the desk as well?

ALEX

So, you start wading through reams of paperwork and just wading through it all.

LYDIA

Papercut traps!

ALEX [laughing]

No, not so far, but you do manage to unearth a desk!

LYDIA

Yayyy!

ALEX

It is not elaborate. It is a metal desk. It has a single set of drawers on one side, that's it. Super, like, functional, but that's about it.

LYDIA

Mmm hmm...

ALEX

And you start having a glance over it for traps...

LYDIA

Mmmmm...

ALEX

... and then you notice two things.

LYDIA

Mmm hmm...

ALEX

One, all of the drawers in this desk are locked, and all of them are trapped.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

You are...

LYDIA

Bad traps.

ALEX

... able to discern that two of them are mundane traps. There's three drawers – two of them are mundane and one of them is a magical trap.

LYDIA

Start on the mundane traps.

ALEX

Sure. Give me Disable Device for drawer number one.

LYDIA

[Rolls dice]

That is 28.

ALEX

28. Yep, fine. So, top drawer first, bing, bing, bing, you open it up, ah, right, okay, that's fine. Basically, if you had reached in without checking, there's a tripwire within the drawer itself. It would have just set off a basic hand trap.

LYDIA

Oh, yeah – easy to lose a few fingers for that!

ALEX

Yeah...

LYDIA

... like, Robbie-No-Fingers can tell you all about those!

ALEX

... come on, if you're going to have it in the most expensive vault in the world, have a decent trap, mate...

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

... you know, don't cut corners at this stage.

LYDIA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

Maybe it was poisoned or something?

ALEX

Maybe, but, I mean, if it was they've let it dry out!

[0:12:01 Lydia talking over Alex]

... like, what are you doing?

LYDIA

Honestly! Yeah!

ALEX

Drawer two?

LYDIA

Yep.

[Rolls dice]

BRYN

Let's see what you could have won!

(Group laughter)

Natural!

LYDIA

That's a natural 20, plus 14.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Seems, fine... no...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Everything is fine!

ALEX

You open that one. It's the same trap! Who uses the same trap twice?!

LYDIA

It's almost an insult!

ALEX

Come on! What is going on?! Give us the last one.

LYDIA

The magical one?

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

ALEX

The magical one. You are able to disable it.

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

You don't have to, though, you can just leave it if you want.

LYDIA

Nah...

[Rolls dice]

... she's going to...

[Bryn shouts in shock and surprise]

That's another natural 20!

ALEX

Another natural 20.

LYDIA

Plus 14.

(Bryn laughs)

I'm sorry, Alex, I know that you probably have a boss monster that you spent hours on that would be triggered by me messing up one of your traps!

ALEX

That's fine, that's fine... *[sound of Alex screwing up paper!]*

(Group laughter)

... [0:12:53] not going to be in this campaign anyway, it's fine!

LYDIA

The desk would have, like, morphed into something like the Mr Ceiling monster...

(Bryn laughs)

... some enormous creature, like, *[she makes a roaring noise]*...

ALEX

I was tempted to have every single separate piece of paper be a mimic, but I'm not a monster!

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

Erm, so yeah – you open... you start to mess around with the drawer. It doesn't seem to have a mechanical trap, yeah, obviously it's magical, and then heading in, you realise someone's gone ahead and put rather a large amount of explosive runes on the inside of this chest. If you were to read them, basically, the desk would go up and probably take the rest of the room with it.

LYDIA

So you don't read them.

ALEX

Correct.

LYDIA

The trap is to make you read something?

BRYN [laughing]

Yeah, it's a really bad one!

(Group laughter)

Almost impossible to avoid!

ALEX

It's basically a thing where if you read this thing it goes off. However, you're like, if I was going to fill a room with paper, what kind of tra... ohhh, right, yep. That makes sense.

LYDIA

A fire one!

HELEN

Mmm...

ALEX

That makes a lot of sense so, yeah, there is a drawer that you don't necessarily think you're going to be able to open normally without 'BOOM'!

LYDIA

I got a natural 20!

ALEX

You do think that you'll be able to go in from underneath and basically...

[squeaking sound]

BRYN

... extract everything inside...

ALEX

... extract everything inside and leave the drawer as it is.

LYDIA

With my ice dagger, possibly.

ALEX

If you want to proceed, you will just succeed with that big a Check.

LYDIA

Okay, she's going to try and get the stuff out of it.

ALEX

Okay. You successfully manage to open it up and you extract a single vanilla, like... vanilla?

LYDIA

Oooh, vanilla pod!

ALEX

A delicious folder! It's light brown, but more importantly, it smells amazing!!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Lovely ice-cream!

ALEX

A single *manilla* folder! It's quite slim and also seems to be quite organised compared to everything else that's been going on.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I think I’ve got what we’re here for.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Great, we can leave then!’

(Laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

‘What? Do you need the toilet, Grizzop?’

(Group laughter)

‘Like, what is your problem?’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Like getting things done in a timely and efficient manner.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘I’m the one that’s on a time limit with a Heart. Like, I’ve got like...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘So let’s go do that, then!’

HELEN/AZU

‘What did you find?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘This. Look, it was in a complicated, very difficult, but I’m very good...’

(Group laughter)

BEN

Sense Motive, yeah it checks out!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

‘... magical trap drawer in the desk. I had to go in from underneath because it was gonna explode. I think the rest of the paper is just here to kill you if it sets on fire.’

ALEX

Hamid, can you remind me...

BRYN

I had 28 on my second one...

ALEX

So you’re 28... So...

BRYN

I feel like I should have found something, if I'm honest!

ALEX

Which is where I'm going to dive in now.

LYDIA

Ahh!

ALEX

So you were...

LYDIA

You literally dive into the paper!

ALEX

... you were digging through, basically, all this paperwork and cross-referencing with what you knew about the Simulacrum plans and stuff that you've read before, and you cannot shake the suspicion that this is basically camo, in that you're digging through and there's, like, no reason to keep this paperwork, this paperwork's arbitrary, this is out of date, this contradicts this one, and it becomes rapidly apparent that it might, literally, just be that someone filled this room with deliberately conflicting and arbitrary paperwork to confound anyone who didn't know what they were looking for. The more that you dig through to the point where Sasha finds this and extracts it, yeah, you reckon you could probably write off everything that you've looked at this far as nothing more than a misdirection.

LYDIA/SASHA

'Got it!'

BRYN

I explain that!

(Laughter)

ALEX

Succinctly and better than I did! Perfect.

LYDIA

Well done!

[Sound of dice being rolled]

BRYN

Yep!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA/SASHA

'Alright. I guess let's...'

BRYN/HAMID

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

‘Can I have a quick look at the Damascus papers because that’s where we were going to go next, so if there is anything serious in those, that would be useful information just... I’ll have a quick scan of those and look at the folder as well.’

HELEN/AZU

‘Sure, it’s just some stuff about some Orcs there...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘And shipping, you said?’

(Lydia laughs)

ALEX

It’s basically...

(Laughter)

... it’s just that...

LYDIA

I think we’re all going to have a very exciting time in Damascus!

(Laughter)

ALEX

It's just, like, everyone seems to be paired names with a slash between them and it just seems to be a series of short shipping notes.

LYDIA

Very strange!

BRYN

So, basically, we can save it for later, but Hamid wants a quick glance to tell whether it is like everything else here, mostly well concealed balderdash...

LYDIA

Right, if there's, like, a name...

BRYN

... or not.

ALEX

Off your previous search, like, I'll just say that you grab a bunch and I will tell you later.

BRYN/HAMID

Cool. 'Okay, let's look through the secret folder.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Maybe we should stand outside the flammable material, 'cos...'

ALEX (also as Wilde)

Wilde never walked in. From round the corner, goes, 'Yeah, I'd do that.'

HELEN/AZU

'Do you know something about this?'

ALEX (as Wilde)

'Well...'

HELEN/AZU

'You do!'

ALEX (as Wilde)

'What I'd say is, if you found a bunch of traps and we were expecting it to be run by someone who's done daft things before, spending any time around that seems a really bad idea, if I'm honest.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Okay, so let's...'

BRYN/HAMID

'It's what we came for. We can take it out.'

LYDIA/SASHA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

‘Let’s go, let’s go, and we’ll be... it’s fine. We’ll just go. We’ll read this and then there’ll be the weird medical procedure in which I am brought back to life? Or killed. Or...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘It’s gonna be fine, Sasha.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘It’s gonna be fine.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Probably, yeah.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yep, probably fine.’

HELEN/AZU

‘Absolutely fine.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘I mean, it’s been a long time since...’

BEN

I’m going to punch Wilde in the genitals.

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

ALEX

Give me an Attack Roll.

BEN

[Rolls dice]

Er...

ALEX

His AC is not high!

(Group laughter)

BEN

I'm going to use my long sword attack roll...

LYDIA

Woooooaaaaaaahhhh!!

HELEN

What?!

BEN

Long sword attack to attack a long sword!

(Group laughter)

Erm, and that's 24!

LYDIA

The flat of the blade, right?!

ALEX

Presumably... yeah, you're going for non-lethal...

BEN

No, no, no – I'm using my long sword bonus, just because it's a [0:18:31] attack.

BRYN

Yes.

BEN

I'm not stabbing him in the crotch!

ALEX

Die! Die, Wilde!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

I've waited so long, this is everything I want!

BEN/GRIZZOP

With my tiny fist, which exerts an awful lot of pressure because the area is quite low...

(Laughter)

... I will jab him in the crotch saying, 'Shut up, Wilde!'

BRYN

Damn his tiny, powerful fist!

[Sound of dice being rolled]

ALEX

Wilde crumples...

(Lydia groans)

... just down and foetal.

BEN/GRIZZOP

I just tap him on the top of the head, 'There's a good chap!'

HELEN/AZU

'What did you do that for?'

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Erm...’

HELEN/AZU

‘He’s annoying, but...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Okay, I’m really sorry about what he said, Sasha. It will be absolutely fine.’

[Wilde makes strained groaning noises]

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Alright, good. Grand, good, okay, great, yes.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘If you want to, I can hit the other one?!’

(Laughter)

[Wilde makes more strained groaning noises]

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Uh, no. It’ll be fine.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Okay.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Good work. Yeah, um, alright, yeah.’

BRYN

Hamid is reading through the folder.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, um, right, yes... remind me not to anger you, Grizzop.’

[Wilde still making strained groaning noises]

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Well, only when you’re antagonizing one of my friends who I care about and is gonna do something sca... he deserved it.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Thank you! Good. Right, remind me not to do anything that makes you think I deserve things!’

(Bryn laughs)

HELEN

Azu looks at Grizzop quite disappointedly.

BEN

I'm just going to give you a blank stare, like, uhh...!

(Lydia laughs)

HELEN

She's gonna pick Oscar Wilde up and sling him over her shoulder and walk out.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Apparently that's happening!

(Group laughter)

Hamid, can you give me a Knowledge Arcana?

BRYN

Basically, from the doorway...

ALEX

Can you give me a Knowledge Arcana?

BRYN

... the folder.

[Rolls dice]

That is...

LYDIA

So nearly a 19!

BRYN

... 22.

LYDIA

It hovered there!

ALEX

22. It doesn't seem to be a plan that is a version of anything you've seen before. It doesn't appear to be a component of the Simulacrum. It doesn't appear to be a piece of it. It doesn't appear to be, like, riffing off the stuff you've already seen. However, at a guess, what you think you might be holding are initial plans or something similar for maybe a kill-switch, or something similar. Like, a different device that might interact with it in some way to, if not turn it off, mess around with it in some way. You need careful study, a library and a team of experts to know more than that.

LYDIA

Wait, wait, wait, one second before we leave... did Sasha check what was inside the other drawers?

ALEX

DOHHHHHHHHhhh...! *DOHHHHHHHHhhh...!*

BRYN

Yes, I thought... did you just forget to say that?!

ALEX

Yeah, I skipped as well. I forgot!

BRYN

Okay.

ALEX

I wasn't being arsey, I just kind of...

BRYN

I breathe in, I breathe out!

ALEX

Yeah, yeah!

(Group laughter)

I kind of skipped past that by accident!

BRYN

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

I blink, some words they dry out!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

As everyone begins to proceed, Sasha says, 'Wait!'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'What?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'I think I might have forgotten some treasure!'

BRYN/HAMID

'That doesn't seem very likely, Sasha!'

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Sasha's eyes are doing the kind of thing that Sherlock Holmes, um...

ALEX [laughing]

You man [0:21:33 palacing]?!

LYDIA

... Cumberbatch kind of thing where there's, like...

ALEX

Loot! Loot!

LYDIA

... put everything together, something doesn't feel quite right...

BEN

Gold!

ALEX

Yeah, just a big word flashing, bright neon...

BEN

You received a text message – the treasure!

BRYN

I like to think of it more like a spreadsheet with a couple of unfilled cells!

LYDIA

Yeah, and she's...

BRYN

Definitely something missing from this total!

LYDIA

... and she's got a very complicated conditional formatting base set up so anything with a figure that looks slightly off flashes!

ALEX

So, you find a locked box. I'm not even going to get you to bother doing a Disable Device, it's very easily opened.

LYDIA

She hands it over to someone, like, 'how does this work?' and then she just presses it and it springs open.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Yeah, basically!

LYDIA

Very magic!

BEN/GRIZZOP

'What a devious combination lock!'

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Honestly, it's a bit more like, oh, it's locked – maybe we can find a... *[bang]*
smash it on the floor, it just opens! Inside, there are two pouches.

LYDIA

Ooooh...

ALEX

One seems to be just full of gold and silver...

LYDIA

... I knew it! I could smell it!

ALEX

... it's only about a hundred and fifty, total. Once you tally up the gold and silver, and so on.

LYDIA

Can barely smell it!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Hardly worth getting out of bed for!

(Laughter)

ALEX

The other one seems to be uncut diamonds.

HELEN

Oooooohhh...

LYDIA

Big ones?

BRYN

I mean, uncut, so...

BEN

Some as big as your head!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You wish!

LYDIA

Right.

BRYN

As big as Hamid's head?!

ALEX

Give me an Appraise Check.

HELEN

Big as Azu's head!

LYDIA

[Rolls dice]

18.

ALEX

Yes! That is how many thousand there is in there in uncut diamonds!

LYDIA/SASHA [making high pitched squeaking noise]

... is the noise she makes!

(Group laughter)

'What's in the other drawer?!'

ALEX

In the other drawer, you basically find travel papers, passports, ID and everything...

LYDIA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

Oooh, for who?

HELEN

For whom?

LYDIA [whispering quietly]

Is it Oscar Wilde?

ALEX

No!

BRYN and BEN

Dun, dun, daaaaaaaahhhhhhh!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Damnit! Is it Brutor?

(Group laughter)

BEN

Dun, dun, daaaaaaaahhhhhhh!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Alas, it is not!

LYDIA

Ahh...

ALEX

Tesla.

LYDIA

I can't say I'm really... oh, Tesla! Oh, right.

BRYN

It makes sense. It's kind of what we were expecting.

ALEX

What you find in there are basically everything his would need to travel basically anywhere he wanted in human-held lands, but no, like, tickets, no '*I am travelling to this place at this time*', it is more like his documentation is in there.

LYDIA

Are there stamps in the passport that tell us exactly where we should go?

ALEX

Yes!

LYDIA

Yayyyy!

ALEX

Good guess!

LYDIA

There you go, Hamid!

BRYN

Dear diary...

LYDIA

There's our plan!

ALEX

It's kind of all of the leads you've already got. There's nothing extra in there, I'm afraid.

LYDIA

Oh.

BRYN

We were totally on top of it, guy, but this confirms it!

ALEX

Yep. It's almost like I built in a get out of jail free if you, kind of, came to this and missed vast reams of information before this point!

LYDIA

Sasha practises, like, palming the diamonds, but then she actually gives them over.

ALEX

To whom?

LYDIA/SASHA

'Look, I found something.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Oh, yeah!'

BRYN/HAMID

'Oh, good work, Sasha.'

ALEX (also as Wilde)

Wilde looks up from Azu's back, 'Uh...'

LYDIA/SASHA

'I think this is probably a fee for finding this stuff, right? That's nice!'

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

ALEX (also as first guard)

The unprofessional guard pipes up, 'It's your fault, apparently!'

LYDIA/SASHA

'That's mine, then!'

(Laughter)

'Ours, ours! Ours!'

BRYN/HAMID

'Well add up the party funds and split it up when we have a moment to do so.'

LYDIA/SASHA [softly]

'Fencing it four ways? Yes! Good. Gooooood...'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Right! So, shall we go and talk to Eren?'

HELEN/AZU

'Yep.' I'm already outside...

LYDIA/SASHA

'Wait, there might be more...'

(Laughter)

‘... there might be more stuff for us to find in here, it’s fine, we should probably look...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I think we found what we need to. I’m pretty sure this was just an elaborate setup to distract people, Sasha, trying to make them waste time.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Okay. It’s fine.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Sasha, I know you’re worried...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘They talked about melting me, Grizzop!’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘I know, but look... that’s without the Heart.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘The thing is going to make it...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘It’s really powerful. It literally brings people back from the dead and you’re not there yet, so...’

ALEX

Wilde, from Azu's back, puts a really weak and shaky double thumbs up.

LYDIA/SASHA

'Melted.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'See? Even Wilde's supporting you!'

HELEN/AZU [laughing]

'It will be a miracle! You'll be a...'

BEN

... real girl!

(Group laughter)

[everyone talking over one another and shrieking with laughter]

... after you get halfway through the [0:25:32]...

ALEX [over the laughter]

We're taking a break now – we're going to fix this, we're going to fix this social interaction!

[fades out over laughter]

ALEX

And welcome back! So we're all agreed sentient creatures, no matter their current situation, count.

LYDIA

Living or dead, still need hugs!

ALEX

Yeah. Yep, yep...

LYDIA

... and legal rights, more importantly!

[quiet sniggering in background]

ALEX

Indeed!

LYDIA

Fortunately, Sasha's not that worried about property rights, either her own or other people's property!

(Bryn laughs)

BEN

Or hugs, to be honest!

LYDIA

No, they're also so...

HELEN

We've learned that she doesn't like hugs!

LYDIA

I like... she likes being warned!

(Group laughter)

I think it's valid!

ALEX

Is everyone okay with us, basically, returning to surface, etc. nice and quickly rather than walking back through all the...

LYDIA

Sounds nice.

HELEN

Yep.

ALEX

You take the same route back. Shocker! Long story short, you are all taken back. Halfway along the way Wilde starts staggering along and keeps giving Grizzop the evils. Doesn't say anything, though.

BEN

I will give him a very cheery grin every time he looks at me.

(Helen laughs)

I have a large mouth and a lot of very sharp teeth!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Yeah, your grin's terrifying! Goblins are the worst!

BEN

Oh, yeah. I know! Goblins look really quite scary!

(Group laughter)

ALEX (also as second guard)

So, yeah, you continue up. Head back into that, sort of, steel cube. It seals up behind you and all of the torches and accoutrements stop, and they open it. There is a set of guards who join these two, and then the professional guard

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

steps forward and goes, 'Whilst you remain within the bank, you will remain under our guard and our protection. Once you pass the entrance to this building, we are no longer accountable. There should be a guard waiting for you outside to accompany you to Fairhands, which is provided by the Meritocrats themselves. We only cover you as far as the bank, you need to be aware of this. Do you understand this?'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Why? Is there someone outside trying to kill us? Well, wait, aside from...'

BRYN

'The usual.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'... the usual?'

ALEX (as second guard)

'This is strictly a liability situation. You have to verbally consent to the fact that items are only under our protection while they are within the premises.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Yeah, all good.'

LYDIA/SASHA

'Yeah.'

ALEX (also as second guard)

‘Great.’ The unprofessional one’s just there, going *[makes snoring noise]...*

HELEN

Azu checks for the clam.

(Laughter)

BEN

What a sentence!

ALEX

Azu checks the clam.

(Group laughter)

The clam is still there and fine.

HELEN

Good!

BRYN

Feels a bit clammy to the touch!

BEN

Ahhhhh...

HELEN

I hope not!

ALEX

Just stop. Just... in fact – do you touch it with your bare hands?

LYDIA

Clam it!

(Laughter)

ALEX

There's a question!

HELEN

Yes... but only the clam, not the Heart.

ALEX

It feels really pleasantly warm.

HELEN

Ahhh... yeah, that's the noise she makes!

BEN

Okay, so we've said clam too many times now!

(Group laughter)

It's losing me!

ALEX

So, Wilde stands up and he is the worst for wear and just, kind of, starts walking off, and just heads out the doors. The guards all just, kind of, *[oooooooohh...]*, but the four guards are walking with you. Presumably you head to the front doors, or do you have any other business here?

LYDIA

No.

BRYN

No.

ALEX

Cool. You head out to the front doors and, yep, head past reception and so on. There's a few people who are, like, rubber-necking because, you know, it's interesting – big guards, probably something really interesting happening – but it's a fairly empty bank and you head out onto the main street.

LYDIA

Is the sandstorm over?

BEN

Oh...

ALEX

The sandstorm...

LYDIA

I'm pretty sure there was one as we went in, right?

HELEN

Yeah, I think so...

ALEX

The sandstorm is lessened. There's still so much sand on the ground and so on that there's flurries and the odd... it's not... what is it? It's not a dust-devil – a sand-devil? I dunno what you'd call it.

LYDIA

The mini-twisters?

ALEX

Yeah, mini-twisters. And there are a few guards...

LYDIA

Like an ice-cream, but with sand!

ALEX

... there are a few guards who are, sort of, waiting outside and they're all carrying, basically, halberds, you know, like, big huge reach weapons, good for keeping people away, basically.

BRYN/HAMID

'Oh good, more attention. Definitely what we want to attract!'

[sniggers]

'Pay no attention to this completely innocuous guard!'

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Thankfully, all of the sand that's still kicking around has meant that there's not much in the way of press outside anymore. It's died off a little bit and so it's a bit easier.

LYDIA

One press photographer, or the equivalent, with something made of gremlins, like, crying over his scratched lens!

(Group laughter)

'Oh, there's sand everywhere!'

ALEX

So, the two sets of guards basically do a handover – I'm not going to dive through paperwork. Long story short, you are now heading on...

LYDIA

We're all laughing because we know that Alex would LOVE to do the paperwork!

(Bryn laughs)

ALEX (quietly)

Papework's the best!

(Group laughter)

But, we all...

LYDIA

Roll for Admin!

ALEX

... so the new guards accompany you and you are led straight towards what's effectively a carriage just outside, and they gesture for you to head inside. You notice that the carriage is armoured. It's not the one that you arrived in...

LYDIA/SASHA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

‘Wait a second. Where are you taking us? Is it prison?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘No, to the hospital.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Oh.’

ALEX

One of the guards leans down and says a bunch of stuff to you that you don’t understand.

HELEN

Can I or Hamid...

BEN

What did the guard say?

(Laughter)

ALEX

Yes, so Azu and Hamid, you basically hear the equivalent of, ‘It’s fine, we’ve been basically arranged for from the Apophis office to...’

[Lydia snorts with laughter]

(Group laughter)

‘... make sure that you can get to where you’re going.’ It turns out, right, in English it sounds ridiculous!

BEN

The Apophis office is excellent branding!

(Laughter)

ALEX

But nonetheless, they appear to be from the Apophis office, and “Apophis Office” is written on the side. And they’re going to take you to Fairhands.

HELEN

Are they Officers of the Apophis Office?

ALEX [laughing]

Yes, they are!

(Group laughter)

BEN

I am an Apophis Office Officer!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Wait, wait, so we don't...

(Laughter)

... it's not mandatory that we get in the thing? So it's an offer... the officer of the Apophis Office...

ALEX

It's an offer from the officers of the office of Apophis! Yes.

(Group laughter)

Keep up!

LYDIA

It's an Apophis Office offer!

BEN

Now, *there's* a T-shirt!

(Laughter)

ALEX

Do you accept the offer from the officer of the Apophis Office?

LYDIA

Of course!

ALEX

Perfect! So you get in the carriage. The four guards basically take up position...

BRYN

I'm going to ask to sit on the top rather than inside.

ALEX

They're fine for that. There's a driver there who's in armour – all of them are in armour – and basically one of the guards takes each of the – you know the stand rails you can get?

BRYN

Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

Yep – one of them each on the four corners and then the rider.

LYDIA

Sasha will also be on the top.

[0:32:29 ??]

I'd like to be locked inside.

HELEN

How big is the carriage?

ALEX

Big.

HELEN

Okay, I'll...

ALEX

You can fit in it comfortably. This is probably for transporting more than just people.

BEN

So we get in and it's just me and Azu inside.

ALEX

And away we go!

[sound of trotting horses]

HELEN/AZU

'Very pleased we're going to save Sasha.'

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Yes, absolutely. Been a long time coming.’

HELEN/AZU

‘So... you don’t get on with Wilde, then?’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘You got that?’

(Helen laughs)

‘No, he’s awful. It’s unfortunate that he’s our handler, but that’s how it has to be. Anyway, I’m not having him try to... I don’t even know what he was doing, like, any decent being wouldn’t... she’s obviously scared stiff. He’s trying to antagonize her? Especially when she got this injury doing work for him! What’s wrong with that man?’

HELEN/AZU

‘Maybe he’s just stupid.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Maybe, but he absolutely deserved what I did to him.’

HELEN/AZU

‘Well...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Look, it’s not all about being nice. You’ve got to do what’s right. I know you Aphrodite lot are all like, ‘oh, let’s just give someone a hug and they’ll just get better.’ Well, no, you have to be cruel as well as kind.’

HELEN [laughing]

Sometimes you’ve gotta punch a groin!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Absolutely!

HELEN/AZU

‘Maybe you should try hugging...’

LYDIA

Checks hug stat!

(Group laughter)

HELEN/AZU

‘You’re very...’

ALEX

I’ll have you know, I’ve memorised these following things.

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Look, if you’re worried that maybe I’m doing the wrong thing, do you know the Tenets of Artemis?’

HELEN/AZU

‘No, I am an Aphrodite Priestess.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Yeah. Well, let me tell you. “Remember the slight so you may pay it back in kind.”’

HELEN/AZU

‘Oooh...’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘... Right? Wilde was doing a slight, and he has slighted me before and I was just paying him back. Remember, guard the pact so that you will succeed together. Sasha is part of our pact. So we will guard her. Wilde was doing... well, he’s not been very helpful. And he’s on the outside for that particular situation.’

HELEN/AZU

‘Hmmm... so did he kick you in the groin at one point?’

(Laughter)

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘No. He referred to me in such a way that, kind of, eliminated me as a person, this, it...’

HELEN/AZU

‘Oh, yeah, I’ve had some of that.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘... Mmm. So, I think really, I let him off lightly.’

HELEN/AZU

‘Well, alright.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Got some Aphroditean wisdom for me? Or is it just the word ‘hugs’ about ten times?’

[Everyone else groans in disbelief]

LYDIA

That is religious hate! That is... bad.

[horrificed groaning sounds]

BEN

It's more like denigration than hate.

[Ugh!]

We've established Aphrodite and Artemis do not like each other. Really hate each other.

HELEN

No, they genuinely don't.

BEN

They've got beef.

HELEN

Yeah, they killed each other's favourite people. Nastily.

LYDIA

This is like Mean Girls, but with weapons!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

And Goblins and Orcs, and things. [0:35:30]

(Group laughter)

HELEN/AZU

‘Well, one is not to do more harm than necessary.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘That’s very sensible. That’s good, I’ve learned something.’

LYDIA

Ideas of what’s necessary...

HELEN

Necessary are different!!

LYDIA

Ideas of what’s necessary are, er, complicated.

ALEX

Hamid and Sasha up on top. You are heading back in towards, obviously, the central strip. As we’ve discussed previously, people are out and about are starting to clean up mess again, basically, and the carriage is having to navigate these drifts in the road and so on, so it’s not a nice straight smooth, it’s, like, curve round. Stop. Right. They’ll hop down, shovel some stuff. Back up. Curve round, etc. and it’s taking way longer than it really should. It’s no one’s fault, it’s just the weather. Both of you give me a Perception Check, please.

[Sound of dice being rolled]

BRYN

Ooh.

LYDIA

I only rolled a two, but that is a 14.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

I rolled a three, which also a 14.

ALEX

Okay, cool.

LYDIA

Everything's fine!

ALEX

Everything is awesome! Er, yeah. Heading along, you are heading in the right direction for Fairhands, and you will be there momentarily.

LYDIA/SASHA

'Have you heard anything more from Barret?'

BRYN/HAMID

‘He let me know he was angry, and I told him to kindly leave us alone.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Alright.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘It’s not the exact wording I used, but I think he got the point.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Good. Any clues about how he might try and murder us all? That’s generally his reaction when someone annoys him.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘He mentioned the Cult? I can’t remember... I didn’t...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Is that, like, Mars?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I don’t think so. He seemed to imply that he’d been keeping them away from us until now. I wonder if it’s the weird people in the hoods – some sort of religious order?’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Well, he didn’t keep them away from us very well, sending one over.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, exactly, yeah.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, and we took him down easy.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yeah. Don’t worry, we’ll take care of anything else that comes our way.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Yeah, it’s fine.’

ALEX

At that point...

LYDIA

Yep...

(Bryn laughs)

... a dozen Cultists descend from the sky!

ALEX

Don’t be ridiculous! A dozen is way, way too much. A few cultists descend from the sky.

LYDIA

Seriously?

HELEN

Really?

LYDIA

Okay.

BRYN

How many? How close are they together?

(Laughter)

I've got an itchy finger, Alex, and I'm not afraid to use it!

LYDIA

A couple? A swarm? A clutch? What is the common term for cultists? A religion?

BEN

It's a cult, right?!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Yeah, but you...

BEN

It's already a collective!

LYDIA

... but you don't say a cult of cultists.

BEN

Oh, that's true!

BRYN

A delusion! A delusion of cultists!

BEN

A ritual of cultists.

BRYN

Or a conspiracy of cultists?

LYDIA

A gaggle!

ALEX

A single cowled figure...

LYDIA

Oh...

BRYN

Boring!

ALEX

... appears spontaneously...

LYDIA

It could be several of them stood on top of each other!

BRYN

Stacked!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It has been in the past!

BEN

He's already used that! Yeah!!

ALEX

A single cowled figure appears, like, appears distant in the middle of the road.

LYDIA

Sasha throws a dagger at it.

(Laughter)

ALEX

I mean, by distant, I'm talking, like, it's you know, whilst visibility's a little bit rubbish, well, well beyond throwing distance. Maybe Grizzop with his bow?

LYDIA

Speak of the possibly literal devil...

BEN/GRIZZOP

'I mean, is that one of the things? I can't really see from here.'

LYDIA

I thought that was a better line!

(Laughter)

Speak of the possibly literal devil. I never get the appreciation!

(Laughter)

ALEX

A second figure steps out from behind the first figure.

LYDIA

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

Oh, there's probably a line of them!

ALEX

And then a third figure steps out.

LYDIA

It's a carousel!

BRYN

And we're going towards them relatively slowly?

ALEX

Yes, it isn't... you're not at a charging pace because of all the sand and so on.

BRYN

Can we tell... do they look... are they the same sort? We've seen them before – is it the same outfit?

ALEX

Oh yes.

BRYN/HAMID

'Oh, looks like they're here. Right, gimme a second!' I cast Fireball.

ALEX

Go for it!

BRYN

Er, I have a range of 640 feet.

ALEX

Yes you do.

BRYN

Er, it hits all of them...

LYDIA

My word!

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

... because they're close together.

LYDIA

What fools! And they hadn't even started the dance routine yet!

(Group laughter)

BEN

I totally have the idea of them standing in a line going, 'wait for it, okay, wait for it – they can't see us yet – right, now! Go, go, go!' and bing...!

LYDIA

And then [**she sings a couple of notes**]... oh my word. That's a lot of dice.

BRYN

That's a decent roll!

HELEN

Wow!

BRYN

21, 20, so... 33 damage?

ALEX

The explosion goes off. It's a huge explosion, like, in fact, describe it – I don't think you've ever launched a full fireball before, have you?

BRYN

So Hamid points, and a streak of fire appears from his finger, and it flies in a straight line. It looks like a tiny meteor, and it hits the floor and literally, just, expands until it's covering 20 foot in each direction, and it creates a little hemisphere of fire.

ALEX

The explosion is huge and everyone immediately flees from the street.

LYDIA/SASHA

‘By the literal Gods, Hamid!’

ALEX

The explosion finishes and there’s not a trace of them left. There’s nothing there.

BRYN/HAMID

‘They can’t have been real.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Well, I think you sent a message!’

(Laughter)

HELEN

Azu will pop her head out.

BRYN

I mean, if they were really there, they could have made Reflex Saves for half-damage as well. They probably knew that.

ALEX

Give me a Perception Check.

HELEN

Okay.

[Rolls dice]

LYDIA

Just there to do an illusionary dance number!

HELEN

I think that's 17.

ALEX

17?

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

Erm, you see there's a, sort of, similar cowled figure to what you've seen before in the building. I mean, you lean out looking ahead, and then you happen to glance that in a building that you're going past there's a cowled figure in the window...

LYDIA

Oh, this is like The Gnomes!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

... sort of looking down at you as you ride past. They don't seem to be taking any action.

HELEN/AZU

'Grizzop, look out – there's... there are, there are...'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'We saw three of the cowled figures in the road in front of us but they've gone.'

HELEN/AZU

'There's one in that building, do you see it?'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Where?'

HELEN/AZU

'Up there!' She gestures with her big long arms.

ALEX

It's already gone.

HELEN

Oh.

ALEX

What are you currently doing then? I have given you the last thing that happened. There is no new information to impart at this point.

BEN/GRIZZOP

'So they're trying to mess with us, then, right?'

BRYN/HAMID

'Maybe we should just keep on, you know, looking out for it, and we just get on with getting where we need to go quickly?'

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Yep.'

ALEX

As you're riding, you see that to the left hand side there's an alleyway, and there's a figure stood in that alleyway watching you as you ride past.

LYDIA

Oh for goodness sake, this is exactly like The Gnomes!

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘So he’s just trying to spook us?’

HELEN/AZU

‘I think so.’

BEN/GRIZZOP

‘Alright, fine. Let’s not be spooked then.’

BRYN

Yeah, I mean, I’m ready to cast a spell, but I’m not going to cast a spell again unless they come at us.

LYDIA

Sasha carefully puts her ice and fire daggers back, and then takes up cheap daggers that she would be happy to throw. Obviously, she doesn’t want to lose any of them!

HELEN

How does Detect Evil work?

ALEX

It’s a cone, for a start. Lasts about 60 feet, so think of it like a torch beam almost, if you see what I mean? It does require you to concentrate, but in the first round that you’re like, hmmm, you detect if evil or not evil is around.

HELEN

Mmm.

ALEX

In the second round, you can determine how many evil auras, so, like, if it's a magical item that's evil or an evil person and, like, how many people there are, and so on. And then, if you keep concentrating, you can know, like, where each item is, where each person is. Like, how evil they are, basically.

LYDIA

Does Sasha show up? Is she dead enough? You're all looking at my alignment thing – I've never put down an alignment for her. I think we just vaguely decided that she might be chaotic neutral.

ALEX

She doesn't show up as evil. None of the party do.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

One of the guards doesn't show up as evil, but you get the impression that they're on a slippery slope!

(Group laughter)

They need to sort their life out a bit!

LYDIA

And Oscar Wilde is okay?

ALEX [talking over Ben and Bryn]

Oscar Wilde isn't there.

BEN [talking over Alex and Bryn]

He walked off, yeah.

BRYN [talking over Alex and Ben]

Yeah.

LYDIA

Looking round, there's one stallholder there that's proper evil!

(Laughter)

HELEN

Alright. I'm going to cast Detect Evil to see if I can tell if it's like a spell that someone's casting at us.

ALEX

Sure.

HELEN

Um, I would like to cast it...

ALEX

Once you activate it, it will just stay active until you basically decide it to stop or someone, like, breaks your concentration by, say, hitting you or blowing you up or something.

HELEN

Okay.

BEN

Just as two examples!

HELEN [laughing]

Okay, yeah. I'm gonna... so, if it's like a cone, I'm going to aim it in front of us since that's where they were first.

ALEX

Sure.

BRYN

It basically affects your vision. You concentrate really hard and then you can see auras around people.

ALEX

Yeah, it's sort of like night vision put over the top but instead of seeing night, you see evil!

LYDIA

Like infrared, but for evil!

ALEX

Yeah. Infraevil!

HELEN

Oh, in which case, I'm going to get on top of... she climbs out of the moving carriage.

BEN/GRIZZOP

'I think maybe you should stay inside!'

ALEX

Give me an Acrobatics Check!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Oh dear... Oh, I'm going to fall out!

[Rolls dice]

Oh, I'm almost disappointed! Er, 16.

ALEX

What armour do you have?

HELEN

I have an agile breastplate, no, a half-plate.

ALEX

Ah, boo, boo...

HELEN

Sorry.

ALEX

I want you to have full-plate – a massive armour-check penalty. You climb up on the carriage with no issues whatsoever.

BEN/GRIZZOP

'Erm, I think maybe you should stay inside, I mean, the whole carriage is here to protect... you...' he says, trying to gesture with his eyes at the thing you're carrying!

HELEN

Oh, she doesn't notice!

(Group laughter)

Erm, but she's going to try and, like...

BRYN

She probably does – quite a high-sense motive.

BEN

[0:44:56] if Helen's got it!

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

If Helen's got it, Helen's got it!

HELEN

Right now, she's concentrating on trying to see if there's an evil, I don't know who would cast... an illusionist? I don't know! So, she's just going to be looking around with...

LYDIA/SASHA [talking over Helen]

'Like, how hard is it to project images of something from far away? Like, does there need to be some kind of... ?'

BRYN/HAMID

‘It’s not that difficult, I mean, range does make things a lot more tricky, but...’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘So, it’s not like there has to be a wizard somewhere around us that’s casting spooky face spell?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I mean, it’s much more likely.’

LYDIA/SASHA

‘Right.’ Sasha starts looking around.

ALEX

You see... give me a Perception Check, then, Sasha.

LYDIA

[Rolls dice]

24.

ALEX

24? So now that you’re looking for it, there’s a bunch. Like, you pass one in an alleyway and you’re like, okay, okay, oh there’s...

LYDIA

Wait, she’s looking for the wizard that’s casting it.

ALEX

Ah! Sorry.

LYDIA

But I guess also that cultists would show up.

BRYN

So you're assuming that the cultists are illusions...

LYDIA

Yep.

BRYN

... and you think someone is projecting illusions.

ALEX

You do not see anyone projecting illusions, but you see a bunch of more cultists. One is on a rooftop, one is down an alleyway, er, one is in a window looking down at you. Thankfully, thanks to the explosion, all of the civilians seem to have fled, but you do see, in your ride, you pass, maybe, another six, just dotted around randomly on the landscape.

LYDIA

I suppose, stands up and readies her daggers.

ALEX

And then you see, like, the low-level sand that's, kind of, still kicking around clears and you see a line of them – not shoulder to shoulder, but with maybe five feet between them – stretching the entire width of the road and blocking your way. It's about eight.

LYDIA

How far away is it?

ALEX

Same distance that they were before.

LYDIA

I don't think I can throw a bomb that far.

BRYN/HAMID

'I could probably...' I cast Fireball?

ALEX

Mm hmm.

LYDIA/SASHA

'How many times can you do that a day?'

BRYN/HAMID

'Not a lot! Enough. I hope!'

[Sound of dice being rolled]

Er, if there's five foot between them I can hit, maybe, six of them, maybe seven. Probably not all eight of them.

ALEX

Mm hmm.

BRYN

Slightly less good roll this time. Er, 26.

ALEX

26?

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

The explosion goes off.

[sound of a huge explosion]

Big. Huge! This one didn't go in the same way as last time. This time, bodies appear to be there, like, a couple of them appear to... they don't catch fire, though, with Fireball. It's an explosion, but it doesn't, like, light things on fire.

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

And it seems to scatter them. A couple of them are off to one side of the road, a couple are off to the other side of the road.

BRYN

Are they making Reflex Saves for half-damage? Would you like to know the DC of that check or have you just made an assumption?

ALEX

Er, I have rolled so low...

BRYN [giggles]

Awesome!

ALEX

... on all four of them that it's basically non-applicable unless it's a single figure.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Is it a single figure?

BRYN

No.

ALEX

You're fine! So, yeah, the four that you hit are blown away and basically stop moving, are scattered on the floor.

LYDIA

Ahhh!

ALEX

The remaining four re-space themselves on the road. In that time, you have, you know, come closer to them.

LYDIA

You haven't heard Sasha's sound as impressed...

ALEX

At this stage... I want you to give me Initiative Rolls.

[Sound of dice being rolled]

Grizzop.

BEN

Er, 13.

ALEX

13. Hamid.

BRYN

20.

ALEX

20. Azu.

HELEN

Seven.

ALEX

Seven. Sasha.

LYDIA

16.

ALEX

16.

[Sound of dice being rolled]

Rusty Quill Gaming – [98] – [Hostile Accounting]

I've got everyone's Initiatives. Hamid, you're up first but, before you move, looking around you see that there are cowled figures, basically, all around you at this point – on rooftops, in windows – and they've started filing out in a line behind the carriage.

BRYN/HAMID

'I can only do that twice more!'

ALEX

And I'm going to end the episode there!

LYDIA

Okaaaaaayy....

ALEX

Everything's fine. Everything's fine!

LYDIA

I really hope these guards that are driving the carriage have high levels...

(Helen laughs)

ALEX

Do you want to ask that question again and I won't answer non-verbally!

HELEN

Did I detect any evil?

ALEX

Ho, yes!

(Group laughter)

Oh yes! Loads of evil! Just loads of evil!

HELEN

Fantastic!

ALEX

Yeah, just... phwoooooaaarrrr... !

(Group laughter)

Right, so whilst you are all surrounded by objective evil, none of this ambiguity, objective evil, we will return next week and see how that goes.

HELEN

Okay!

BRYN

I'm gonna cast Fireball, guys, and it's so much fun!

ALEX

Bye, guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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HELEN

Yeah, that's the noise she makes!

BEN

Okay, so we've said clam too many times now.

(Group laughter)

Yeah, it's losing me.

ALEX

So, Wilde sort of...

LYDIA (quietly)

No.

ALEX

Okay...

LYDIA

Oyster rhymes with...

BEN

It's really hard, isn't it?!

LYDIA

Eurgh... Oyster...

ALEX

Let's not do this!

BRYN

Come on, use your brain *mussels*!

LYDIA

There's *shallot* of options!

HELEN

No!

BEN

B-*oyster*-ous?

LYDIA

No, no wait, that's not what they're called is it? What are the little things...?

ALEX

Stop. Stop, stop. We're just going to *musse!* through this and carry on.

(Laughter)

LYDIA

Shallots are the onions!

BEN

Oh, er, scallops!

LYDIA

Scallops!

ALEX

Sooooo....

LYDIA

It's *scallop* of option... it doesn't really...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

What is going on?!

(Group laughter)

What is going on?

BRYN

Scalloptions!

LYDIA

Yeah!

(Group laughter)

I've been trying with mollusc and I think it might be easier even harder.

LYDIA

Mollusc is hard, yeah!

BRYN

Anyway, let's carry on.

BEN

I think this is getting a bit *crabby*!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Mollusc or let's...

ALEX

Let me know when we can carry on. That's fine!

LYDIA

Mollusc or less...

(Group laughter)

BRYN

[0:51:29]

(Group laughter)

BEN

Oh, Alex has paused the recording... we are officially out...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Maybe you should *shell* out for some proper...

(Group laughter)

... fun comedians!

BEN

Sorry, the audience that would find this all gold!

LYDIA

Or pearls! Pearls!

ALL

Ahhhh!

LYDIA

They're all pearls in a sea of rocks, what is it?

(Group laughter)

ALEX [laughing]

Stop!

(Group laughter)

What on earth is happening?!

(Group laughter)

What is this?

(Group laughter)

BEN

I think we finally broke him, guys!

(Group laughter)

I think we've finally done it!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It's cool. Several of them have collapsed – they've gone *limpet*!

(Group laughter)

BEN

Ed., Ed., please just preserve this, please preserve this!

ALEX

What is happening?!

BEN

I need what Alex just said as a ringtone!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

How is all... okay, right, I'm going to carry on with the campaign. You can either get on board or get left behind, but...

LYDIA

It's cool – we...

ALEX

... the train is leaving the station!

LYDIA

It's cool. I'll *kelp* you out!