

RQG – 103 – Everybody Out!

Content Warnings

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ALEX

Hi everyone, Alex here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our patrons. Danielle Moyer, Steven Oglesby, Not An Alien, Judika, Sarah "Nice Skin You Got There" Clary, Evan Thorn, Rebecca Swain, Jace Rose, Patara, Chantay Osborne. 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 103 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

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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...

HELEN

And Azu

ALEX

Ok and put your hands up if you're dead. Put your hands up if you're in crippling agony almost all the time. Put your hands up if I had to get you to do a will save this morning.

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LYDIA

Woo. Yay. Look everyone's alive!

ALEX

I know, right!

LYDIA

We're fully alive if only for a short while as I believe we're careening along a street, chasm, river. It's been a while guys

ALEX

You're definitely careening.

LYDIA

Just careening

ALEX

Just careening in general. Just having a careen around. So yes you are...it's so early...

LYDIA

Early morning careen

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ALEX

It's so early in the Damascus section I can just go you're in Damascus investigating the, it's so easy...investigating the Simulacrum

BEN

How many funerals have we attended?

ALEX

You've attended no funerals

BEN

How many awkward conversations have we had?

ALEX

Well none so far

LYDIA

Ehhh, every conversation Sasha's in to a different degree

BEN

That's fair

HELEN

I can always roll more ones in diplomacy

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ALEX

Having researched with rachets, you're now careening away in a limo carriage driven by Sasha.

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

I'm going to take the handle animal you did last episode which was terrible

LYDIA

Yay! I mean it had to be. She's mechanically both awkward and bad with both humans and animals.

ALEX

If your goal was to optimise being bad at driving a carriage, go you! I'm going to pick up exactly where we left off, there's no reason not to. So for everyone else in the carriage, inside, oh it's dead nice, there's a little almost bar thing. It's just a nice bucket. Oh it's got soft seats. Whoomph.

LYDIA

What?

ALEX

Crunch! Ice is everywhere!

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HELEN

What's happening?

LYDIA

Weeeee

ALEX

Meanwhile...turn right at the next exit. Turn around where possible.

LYDIA

Just pulls the horse's...

ALEX

So you are just...the horses are effectively galloping away from the loud noise as hard as they can. Your steering is sort of immaterial to what's happening.

LYDIA

This is great

ALEX

Thankfully though...

LYDIA

We're going so fast

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BEN

Reminds me of those old ladies in Paris

LYDIA

It's the only stat that matters.

ALEX

They are heading immediately out of the industrial complex that you are in so whoomph, you're straight out. You see a couple of guards go oh, oh, oh. They manage to lift up the barrier just before you crunch underneath it. Scraps across the top of it.

LYDIA

Thank goodness it was goblins.

ALEX

So you have come out of an industrial complex and now that you aren't hemmed in by warehouses and things I can give you a bit of a description of a landscape before we follow on how you die in it.

LYDIA

Woo

ALEX

So it turns out you are actually quite high up. You are in, comparatively, mountainous terrain. It looks like they put all this industrial stuff not in the middle of a city. It's further up and further out. It's not cold. It's a middling temperature. You're high up but also this is a hot area. It's kind of balancing out. So it's sort of scrubland things like that. Quite rocky and off, as your horses careen, I'm going to keep saying that, around a corner and start heading downhill you see spread out ahead of you is the city of Damascus. You're the nearest mountain to the city and you are heading down from that towards the city proper. Has anyone been here before? I don't think anyone has.

BRYN

No

ALEX

Can all of you give me a perception check

BEN

14

BRYN

24

HELEN

20

LYDIA

29

ALEX

Oh ok. Ok. Grizzop I'm afraid not so much. It's a big city

BEN

It's going too fast.

ALEX

It is. Well also you're inside a carriage and you're currently wearing a wine bottle at this stage I think so it's difficult to concentrate. Sasha, I'm going to give you a little penalty because you're "wahhhhh" at the moment.

LYDIA

It's too much fun to see.

ALEX

You are over the speed limit. You are over the speed limit

LYDIA

A little...it wouldn't be a gremlin because I assume a gremlin would...

ALEX

It's alright I'll navigate.

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LYDIA

Just keeps repeating “alert. Alert. Seatbelt unbuckled. Alert”

(laughing)

ALEX

Well in fairness it goes “seatbelt unbuckled weeyyy”

BRYN

So irresponsible satnav

HELEN

The best kind of satnav

ALEX

Turn around in a really sick way leaving tyre marks

BEN

Drive into the river. Go on. Do it.

(laughing)

LYDIA

I think that’s patreon content. Rusty Quill voices your journey.

ALEX

We could do that an' all. Right Hamid and Azu what you see is a city that appears to match what you'd expect apart from the fact that it also, at a very cursory glance, looks quite desiccated insofar as Damascus as a city, you both will know this. You'll know it even if you haven't been here before. It was built originally in an oasis and it was meant to have greenery surrounding it. That is very much not the case and maybe there has been sandstorms here or something

BRYN

Yeah weather problems

ALEX

Either way the oasis that is meant to be surrounding the city as it's sort of grown out into it appears to be quite manky, is the best word to describe from a distance

HELEN

Urgh

LYDIA

Lots of brown palm trees

ALEX

It looks a bit parched but you can't be more specific than that. You can see from up here there is quite a clear demarcation between the old town which is right in the middle and even from this distance you can see it's old build, it still has the city walls around the outside but then you can see this much more sprawling and informal thing coming around the rest of it and it is much larger than the old town. Can I get a knowledge local from Sasha, you might have picked something up on the go. Hamid and Azu can I get you to roll, on the off chance you might hit a 10, I can give you some info to add it because you have lived relevantly close.

BRYN

I rolled an 18

ALEX

Sure

HELEN

My...like episodic number 1.

(laughing)

ALEX

You spent that very early

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LYDIA

That's good in a way

HELEN

It'll just come back.

LYDIA

I got a total of 15. She barely picked up anything.

ALEX

So I'm not going to dive too much into culture with it. You'll have to get there as you go. There is the old legend which is that the city walls for Damascus were solid adamantine around the whole city. Exaggeration but most people know that it did have actual adamantine plating around the outside but cities grow. It's still there and it's still standing because adamantine helped it survive a long time but it's been stripped. Kind of like the colosseum in modern times. It's been stripped for materials way since then but you can clearly see the city is huge. It's not the kind of concentrated madness that was Cairo. It's a little bit more normal almost. But you are powering down this mountain and you start accelerating because you are riding downhill in an uncontrolled carriage

LYDIA

Weeeeeee! I'm alive!

(laughing)

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BEN

Not for long!

HELEN

Is there any way for me to get out of the carriage?

ALEX

Oh you can try. Would you like to give me an acrobatics to climb out of a moving limo...

BRYN

No!

ALEX

...and up onto the roof.

HELEN

It's just that I've got handle animal and if...

ALEX

Oh if you were driving you'd probably be really good but getting from here to there...

BEN

And you've got your armour penalties as well.

LYDIA

Hey, let her make her silly decisions. They're the best decisions

BEN

I was just mentioning it so Helen knew what she was getting into

ALEX

So that means when you...sorry *if* you fall it won't hurt probably.

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

That's a really worrying face Helen and...

BEN

That was a face of yeah good point.

LYDIA

No one should ever have that expression

HELEN

Or I could just get out of the carriage and summon my camel and keep pace with the carriage

ALEX

You need quick decisions. What are you doing?

HELEN

I'm gonna try and get out of the carriage

ALEX

Ok give me an acrobatics check

BEN

Azu what are you doing?

BRYN

It's too dangerous

BEN

It's a terrible idea

LYDIA

Yeaahhhhhhhh

BEN

You're wearing plates

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ALEX

Give me an acrobatics check. Have you remembered to factor in your penalties on armour check

BEN

So what's your acrobatics? You haven't got any skill in it. What's your dex

BRYN & BEN

-1

HELEN

So that's...

BEN

And then your armour...

ALEX

Armour check is -6

BEN

Is about -6 so you've probably just rolled a zero.

ALEX

I think you might've rolled a zero

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HELEN

Wow really

BEN

Yeah

ALEX

So Azu opens the door...

BEN

Azu no!

ALEX

Clank, clank, clank, bang, bang, bang. It's just you rolling behind as the carriage just streams away.

LYDIA

What was that?

BEN

I'm going to jump out and try and help her because that was awful.

ALEX

I'm not going to allow a reflex. She rolled that badly, I'm not going to allow a reflex save to catch her.

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BEN

No, I'm jumping out.

LYDIA

You couldn't catch her if you tried!

ALEX

Little goblin arms

BEN

I will just be crushed by her.

ALEX

Give me an acrobatics check

BEN

Yeah, ok so my bonus is 3. 9.

ALEX

[Crashing noise]

BEN

That's bad. That's bad.

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ALEX

Both of the paladins have fallen out of the moving limo

BRYN

It's like the time we all jumped off a roof except there's no reason for this one!

(laughing)

BEN

I don't remember that happening.

LYDIA

Sasha can't hear you saying that. She just sees...oh right

LYDIA

So Sasha's got a 16.

ALEX

Ok you notice you are haemorrhaging paladins.

LYDIA

Ok so Sasha passes the reins to the goblin next to her.

ALEX

Autopilot

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LYDIA

And then she jumps off.

(laughing)

BRYN

Why!

ALEX

I haven't even rolled damage for them. Give me the acrobatics.

LYDIA

I mean Sasha's bonus is 14.

(laughing)

20

ALEX

Bang.

LYDIA

Not a natural 20.

ALEX

You do have a skidding stop because you are moving at like high speed. You're now alone in the limo Hamid. I'm going to deal with other people's damage once you decide what you're doing. Everyone, for no reason, just leapt out of a moving limo.

BEN

Come along, the water's lovely

(laughing)

BRYN

How has this happened Alex? Like ten minutes into a new episode we've left the emotional problems behind us and half the party just jumped out for literally no reason whatsoever.

BEN

We need physical...

BRYN

Can we replace the rest of these people with people who are competent. I cannot work under these conditions.

(laughing)

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LYDIA

I imagine that Hamid's internal monologue would be relatively similar.

BRYN

Yeah pretty much.

ALEX

The happy, happy Damascus arc actually has a title. It's "Be Careful What You Wish For". I've removed all external obstacles and look what's happening.

BRYN

Jesus wept.

ALEX

What's Hamid doing?

BEN

Look I was just trying to help my good friend Azu.

LYDIA

I was perfectly qualified for the jump

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BRYN

Hamid closes the door behind the paladins, pulls the blind down, reaches into the fridge for the second bottle of wine, uncorks and swigs straight from the bottle.

(laughing)

ALEX

Ok cool, let's roll some damage.

BEN

It's alright we got loads of hit points.

LYDIA

Yeah falling damage actually really hurts.

ALEX

And this will be counting as falling damage but with a bit knocked off because it's like...

BEN

We're only falling probably 1 D6 worth

ALEX

Yeah but I'm factoring in additional speed.

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BEN

Oh sure. But as long as it's not vertical because then it gets real deadly.

ALEX

Well what I did do is roll almost max for Azu

BRYN

That is what you deserve!

ALEX

So you've taken...

HELEN

Azu panicked as did I.

ALEX

You've taken 17 damage.

BRYN

If I was GM'ing this scene I would now roll a reflex save to stop you from falling off the mountain.

ALEX

There are no cliffs.

BEN

Also look...

ALEX

It's a gentle slope

BEN

...Helen, Helen, Helen 17 is child's play. Look at the amount of hit points you've got. You are fine. That's like...you've got a light bump on the head.

BRYN

That's literally half Hamid's HP.

ALEX

Grizzop...unfortunately for me, Grizzop only takes 7 damage.

BEN

I have 53 hit points. I don't care!

ALEX

I know. I know you don't.

BEN

I could've taken 17.

ALEX

I know.

HELEN

Don't tell him!

ALEX

Sasha takes nothing because she's competent.

LYDIA

Yep

BEN

So I'm gonna say I bounce a couple of times and then sort of land on my feet.

ALEX

Honestly when goblins land on their head they tend to not feel it. Hamid, I'm going to deal with you later.

BRYN

Just leave me out of this. I'll go and have a drink downstairs while the rest of you sort *this* out.

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ALEX

You're maybe half a kilometre outside of the industrial complex that you just left. At the top of a gentle slope looking down at Damascus.

BEN

So I'm running up to Azu and being like - are you alright? Are you alright? Did you survive?

HELEN

Yes

BEN

Weyyy. Good. Alright. Good. So don't do that again.

HELEN

I don't like being in small spaces that are rolling everywhere.

BEN

At least take your armour off first.

HELEN

That takes time.

BEN

Yeah but...

HELEN

I didn't like it. I didn't like it Grizzop. Not a good experience for me.

LYDIA

Suddenly Sasha is just there.

BEN

Oh hi

LYDIA

I can roll a sneak if you need me to.

BEN

Hang on a minute, where's Hamid?

LYDIA

Er...he's just...I think he's probably...

BEN

What is wrong with Hamid. He's got to stay with the party. I cannot believe he's been so irresponsible!

(laughing)

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BRYN

If he could hear you he would fire you!

(laughing)

ALEX

So what I very sadly have to call “the party” at this stage because Hamid’s off.
What does “the party” do?

HELEN

I’m summoning my camel.

BEN

Oh brilliant. Recommendation, why don’t you drive it. Let’s not let Sasha drive it.

LYDIA

What was that? That was amazing!

BEN

I am covered in wine

LYDIA

That’s fantastic!

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BEN

I wanted the wine to be inside me not on me.

ALEX

So what are people doing?

HELEN

I'm getting on the camel and I'm going to be like – I'm following the carriage as long as I'm not in it. Are you coming?

BEN & LYDIA

Yes

LYDIA

I think Sasha might try to ride the camel then very much not enjoy the wobbliness and just walk alongside.

BEN

I'm gonna get on Azu's shoulders again

HELEN

Yay!

ALEX

Use the standard...

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BEN

Yeah the paladin totem pole

HELEN

Pala pals

BEN

Yes the pala pals

ALEX

I'm going to jump to Hamid. Ok you have a comparatively uneventful ride. The horses slow down. The goblin, still holding the reins, opens the top hatch and – whatcha. You alright?

BRYN

I'm fine thank you.

ALEX

Alright then. Anything I can do for you?

BRYN

No. We'll meet them there I suppose.

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ALEX

Alright – opens it again – probably take them ages, they ain't got a carriage.

BRYN

I imagine so.

ALEX

Alright. Closes the hatch. Heads off. You enter Damascus. You enter the northern mercantile quarter first. That's the way that you're coming in. You're coming in from north...

LYDIA

[Laughing] I'm sorry I can't...I can't suppress the laughter at Helen's suppressed laughter. She's gone purple. It's amazing. Bryn has just stopped being purple. Oh no, there it is. There's the frustration again.

HELEN

I'm just...we jumped out...

BEN

See that was a really important character moment Bryn.

ALEX

So Hamid, I'm going to stay with Hamid. You enter the mercantile quarter and it seems to be doing well. At a cursory glance business seems to be moving

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along quite nicely, it doesn't look like everyone's depressed in the streets and it doesn't have quite the same resignation to it that Cairo did in terms of the sand but there has clearly been a sandstorm here as well. There is a lot of litter in the streets that people are cleaning up and so on.

BRYN

Are there people in the streets?

ALEX

Yeah it's busy. It's busy in a way that Cairo didn't...

BRYN

Species? Mix?

ALEX

It's a broad mix but I would say there is a high population of goblins and a higher population of orcs than you would expect however the...

BRYN

Orcs normally have...

ALEX

Orcs normally have almost no presence in these kind of cities. They don't tend to mix that much. So the fact that there are some moving around, yeah, it's more than you would've expected. Can you give me another perception check please

BRYN

18

ALEX

18. You do notice there seems to be a certain element of tension between the orcs and the goblins specifically.

BRYN

Oh weird

ALEX

That is also quite weird. Heading through the merchant district you eventually head closer towards the old town. You're not in the old town but you're starting to get near the walls and you are dropped off outside the restaurant that you've been taken to which, I'll give first dibs to anyone to name as long as it's not insanely ridiculous. Go.

BEN

The Really Dry Admiral.

(laughing)

ALEX

The Dry Admiral. Ok canon.

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BRYN

No

LYDIA

No

ALEX

Oh you are outvoted. Sensible. I like it.

LYDIA

The Desiccated Corporal

BEN

Yes! That's more like it.

ALEX

That's actually quite a cool name. yeah, the Desiccated Corporal. I'll allow that. So you are...

BRYN

It's no Griddle of the Sphinx you guys.

(laughing)

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LYDIA

That was genius!

ALEX

So the goblin pulls over, knocks on the thing, opens the door. I think that's everything.

BRYN

Thank you so much.

ALEX

No, no worries. He holds a...

BRYN

Yeah I give him a tip. I already had a tip ready. I was not brought up in a barn.

ALEX

He then goes – oh thanks very much. Pro tip. Don't ask for water. Taps his enormous nose, hops back up on the carriage – do you want me to pick them up on the way or...

BRYN

I mean I suppose you could offer them that, yeah

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ALEX

I'm on the clock till the end of the day mate, whatever you say.

BRYN

Sure, yeah. Just let them know where I am.

ALEX

Yeah alright. He gallops off back to the party.

BEN

Sorry I was just thinking about restaurant names and the name Griddle of the Sphinx. I've got to Finest Damascun Meal...

BRYN

That's good. That's very good

ALEX

You're stuck with Desiccated Corporal but there are plenty of restaurants in this large city. Who knows. Rest of the party, are you doing anything other than just carrying on towards the town?

BEN

We're on a camel, it's absolutely fine.

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LYDIA

In fact, no, wait. After a while Sasha's going to get up on the camel as well. She doesn't like it but then...

ALEX

Neither does the camel

LYDIA

...she's going to get up, try and climb on Azu's shoulders as well and start doing knife tricks.

HELEN

But Grizzop's already on my shoulders.

BEN

On Grizzop's shoulders.

BRYN

We are a mercenary company. Not a circus troupe.

LYDIA

It's going to get extreme.

BRYN

Poor, poor Topaz.

LYDIA

Topaz is an angel

HELEN

Literally

LYDIA

Topaz is fine.

ALEX

I am going to accelerate time a little bit. You start seeing the carriage working its way back up towards you. You have made it maybe half way to the city in this time. Do you flag it down or let it go past? It's definitely the same one.

HELEN

Flag it down and see if Hamid's still in there. Maybe Hamid came back for us.

ALEX

So carriage pulls over – you alright?

BEN

Whatcha

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ALEX

I didn't know you had a camel. Where'd you fit that?

HELEN

In the celestial plane

(laughing)

ALEX

That's not as funny as I was hoping it would be. Want a lift or am I alright to head back?

LYDIA

Nah you're alright mate but do you know where our mate went?

ALEX

Ah well he went to the restaurant. He's waiting for you

LYDIA

Which restaurant?

ALEX

Well it was the one that he...the – he pulls out a little notepad – the Desiccated Colo...I can't read my handwriting. The Desiccated Colonial. The Desiccated Colonial.

LYDIA

Sounds about right

BEN

Alex. Alex.

ALEX

So am I giving you a lift or what?

LYDIA

No we're fine on the camel.

BEN

No you've given us directions so now we'll definitely go straight to the restaurant and there won't be any problems or dawdling and it completely won't be the GM's fault. Off we go.

ALEX

No worries. That was a really weird thing to say.

BEN

I know. Something just overtook me.

(laughing)

ALEX

I'm really worried about them. He sets off back up towards the complex. I'm going to accelerate time. Hamid.

BRYN

Yep

ALEX

Are you willing to wait until they turn up because I can just accelerate time.

BRYN

I order an aperitif and a starter.

ALEX

Ok you work your way through an aperitif, a starter, a main, a dessert, a second dessert because you deserve it.

LYDIA

How slow is Topaz?

HELEN

No Topaz isn't...

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ALEX

Oh the goblin was still going at breakneck speed even afterwards and Topaz is loaded.

HELEN

We made the right decision.

ALEX

And yeah you've just finished your brandy after the dinner and you're in the mint...little chocolate mint phase of the dining when everyone comes up, dust covered, mucky and you'll have spent at least an hour, maybe an hour and a half just looking for the wrong restaurant. But you are there and it's just clunk, clunk and you are very much...

LYDIA

Have we been thrown any tips for doing knife tricks stacked four high

(laughing)

ALEX

A few people have given you a few coppers but you distinctly heard them say that it was some form of charity.

BEN

Corporal. Says Corporal on the sign. Corporal. Not Colonist or Colonial or whatever he said. Anyway I'm starving now.

ALEX

The whole of the restaurant is a little bit shifty looking because dust travelled.
People have come into a comparatively upmarket area.

LYDIA

Sasha shakes like a wet puppy

ALEX

Sand and dust everywhere

LYDIA

Just so happy to be alive.

ALEX

A maître de runs up – can I help you?

BEN

Yeah, no we're joining a table. Hamid. Hamid. Heya

BRYN

Hello

ALEX

Hamid is surrounded by empty plates.

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BRYN

No it's a good restaurant, they've been taken away when I've finished them.

ALEX

Yeah you know what, that's fair. I redact that. That was foolish of me.

BRYN

So dinnertime?

BEN

Yeah absolutely.

BRYN

I can recommend the scallops

BEN

Ooh lovely.

HELEN

I don't know what those are but yes

BEN

They call them seafood but they're basically just little discs of meat

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HELEN

Ah

ALEX

So the meat discs sir?

(laughing)

Post dinner. You all have finished a lovely meal and you're all now kicking back in quite a nice area. Nice bit of the city. Nice restaurant.

LYDIA

Ah the free lords' lifestyle isn't that bad sometimes.

HELEN

What do we do now?

BRYN

Well I suggest we find the hotel for the evening and head to...was it Clank Industries tomorrow

BEN

Crank Industries apparently.

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BRYN

Crank Industries.

ALEX

We definitely didn't have a discussion off audio and confirm it was Crank and people just heard what they wanted to hear, yes.

BEN

I heard what would've been better.

LYDIA

It would've been much better in my head

ALEX

If you're going to mutter, mutter into the microphone.

LYDIA

Fine Alex I will

ALEX

So you are all heading to a hotel?

LYDIA

Thank you for your feedback

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BEN

Yep

ALEX

Any bright ideas for yet more place names? It's my new thing I'm trialling, letting players name their own restaurants and hotels.

BRYN

The Oasis

ALEX

Uhhh. Last chance. Any other takers?

HELEN

There's probably a place called The Oasis. That would make sense.

LYDIA

No that just sounds like a failing on tape. Now we've got to take a break and think for ten minutes.

(laughing)

ALEX

Yeah you know what, ok, I'm going to take a break and in this break you can come up with a hotel name.

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LYDIA

The Dessert...

(laughing)

Desert...

ALEX

And welcome back. So you had time. And the grand hotel is known as Hot Tropics

LYDIA

Yes!

(laughing)

We're not on the best form guys. It's very hot in here and...

HELEN

Even though there's a frozen leg of lamb in here

(laughing)

ALEX

You're ruining the illusion and professionalism.

BRYN

I'm beginning to understand Alex why you inflict misery on us all the time.

ALEX

You all deserve it! So you enter Hot Tropics and you see that it's sort of a theme hotel. It's not very well thought out.

LYDIA

In the manner of having heard a lot of, what's the word...we've heard about this place but none of us are American so we have only encountered the original of this through Tumblr memes

BEN

Hot Tropics to me is a mix of Claire's Accessories and Topshop like rammed together. That's what I...

ALEX

So how it actually is, is it appears to be quite an old hotel. It's in...although there hasn't been that colonial movement it is in the French style for that...

LYDIA

Just because they like it.

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ALEX

Yes. Like honestly, yes. It is just in that style. It is likely themed as a hotel. They've gone for a sort of European on holiday vibe.

BEN

Oh brilliant. How different to what we're used to.

ALEX

You could've had anywhere. What you do notice is it's full of fountains, all of which are dry. And there is sand piled up in a central courtyard and so on. That said, I'm not going to dive into huge amounts of detail and specific NPC stuff unless you want. I'm happy to just accelerate to the next day after a night's sleep.

LYDIA

Sure, yeah

HELEN

Can we heal?

ALEX

Yes. You can all heal. All of you, even Sasha.

LYDIA

Yay!

BRYN

You get twice your hit points back for sleeping a full night...twice your level in hit points back sleeping a full night.

ALEX

Yep. Next morning rolls by. Can everyone give me a will save please?

LYDIA

Wha-?

BEN

I thought we said we weren't doing will saves every morning Alex.

ALEX

I said you hadn't yesterday.

BEN

22

ALEX

Ok

HELEN

20

BRYN

12

LYDIA

13

ALEX

Ok cool. So you all wake up fine. Everything's fine. No worries.

BEN

I mean some worries because you made us do will saves.

ALEX

Sometimes I do it just for the fun.

(laughing)

BRYN

He's just gonna do it even when nothing's happening just to make sure we don't know for certain when something is.

ALEX

Oh Bryn. Oh you know me. So you are now in...you are having a breakfast buffet.

LYDIA

What's the word for when you can see something double when you're in the desert

BEN

A mirage

LYDIA

Mirage yeah

ALEX

Oh that's a really good name for a hotel, that.

LYDIA

Yeah

BRYN

The Miriagio!

ALEX

Ah! It could've been that but it's not, is it? I'm going to put that on the next place you stop.

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HELEN

Azu has the most loaded plate you've ever seen.

ALEX

Good, good.

HELEN

There's eggs and pancakes and bacon and sausages and waffles and syrup and all of the cereals and yoghurt and...

BRYN

Why are they serving us a full English American breakfast in Damascus.

HELEN

I dunno. I don't know what...

LYDIA

I suppose if we're in a world with very different religions then you would be able to get pork products there.

HELEN

Also they said it was like...

ALEX

You have gone to a European themed hotel.

HELEN

Yep

ALEX

I'm sorry that's where you ended up.

HELEN

I'm not being forgetful.

BEN

Then my plate is full of seven croissants.

ALEX

Oh yeah totally. Totally

LYDIA

Sasha's got just a roast chicken.

(laughing)

Just eating it.

HELEN

Did you get it from the hotel?

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(laughing)

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Just stabbed a chicken with a flame dagger and it just happened.

LYDIA

Oh wow, that's actually a great idea

(laughing)

ALEX

Survival tips with Lyd. Now you're going to want to stab the chicken for three, maybe four minutes.

(laughing)

(bird noises)

LYDIA

The ice dagger will take the feathers off just fine.

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BEN

It's really interesting that they kill it at the table actually. That's a really interesting service. Get to choose your chicken and they just...

LYDIA

Skrak...

ALEX

I believe in you Hamid. I can't get this moving on my own but with your help...

BEN

So Crank Industries

LYDIA

And Ratchet Industries.

BEN

We've been to Ratchet I think, yeah Ratchet was the one we just went to.

ALEX

Yeah Ratchet is the one that you "inspected"

BEN

We did inspect it very thoroughly.

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BRYN

So are we going to pose as inspectors again?

BEN

I mean it worked the first time

BRYN

I mean they might not buy it this time. They were very happy to assume we were inspectors.

BEN

Well how else are we gonna do it?

BRYN

Well I still think investors is a more convincing cover.

BEN

Do we look like investors?

BRYN

I look down at myself. I definitely look like an investor.

ALEX

You do look like a foreign investor.

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BEN

No, no, I said do we look like investors.

BRYN

I mean I could've hired you as bodyguards. That's quite believable.

LYDIA

Yeah. My rates as bodyguard are quite affordable.

ALEX

Paladins, given they're wearing religious regalia, wouldn't be having that kind of work.

BRYN

No you're probably right. It's not terribly appropriate...

ALEX

I mean you could cover your religious insignia to pass off but then you're...

LYDIA

Blasphemy. Blasphe-you. Blasphe-everyone

ALEX

...so I'm assuming that's a hard no.

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LYDIA

Sorry

(laughing)

BRYN

I mean it doesn't make sense for paladins to be working as random site inspectors for an industrial company either but...

BEN

We're working for the meritocrats

HELEN

We have the element of surprise

ALEX

You'll be amazed what a natural 1 on a sense motive will do

BEN

We're working for the meritocrats to root out corruption which is actually technically still true.

HELEN

I would like to tell the truth as much as possible. If possible.

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BEN

Are you a truth-y one? Does Aphrodite really like truth and stuff?

HELEN

Yes

BEN

Oh. Alright, fair enough.

LYDIA

Is Artemis more like what works

BEN

Well yeah, you're on a hunt right.

LYDIA

I'm right here!

BEN

Yeah you're not gonna stand up and say excuse me, just so you know I'm going to shoot you soon so just giving you a heads up.

HELEN

Well that's not the same thing

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BEN

Well I dunno. Basically seems like it to me.

HELEN

Well the problem with lies is that you can get caught out.

BEN

Not if you're good at it.

LYDIA

He's got a good point there

HELEN

I'm not good at lying.

BEN

Fair enough. Alright, well then we have a good reason for you not to lie.

LYDIA

Well we could be inspectors and I could inspect the quality of all of their daggers. I might need an extensive testing period.

BEN

I think we will believe that Sasha is a dagger enthusiast.

BRYN

I mean the problem is if we introduce ourselves as meritocratic agents, they're more likely to participate in a cover up rather than tell us exactly what's going on.

BEN

Yeah. Then we sneak in? I mean I'm a goblin so I could probably blend in

LYDIA

I can sneak in most places

BEN

I don't speak the local language whatever that is

BRYN

I mean the investor's strategy could still work. The church...the church could be the ones considering investing and I could be an agent working for you rather than the other way around.

BEN

That's true, could be weapons

HELEN

But we're two different churches

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BRYN

Maybe it's a joint venture. I mean it's not unheard of.

BEN

You want love sticks or something? I dunno what...big swords?

HELEN

Swords will work

BEN

Loving, healing swords yeah.

HELEN

Azu makes a face that I've just made in the podcast

(laughing)

BEN

The sucking the teeth like hmmm

HELEN

The "I am not about to shout"

ALEX

It's formally known as "this is me not yelling"

BEN

I am just grinning ear to ear, bearing in mind my mouth is actually ear to ear.

BRYN

Adamantine is useful for weapon and armour and building materials.

There's...both churches could want those things. I don't think it's terribly...

BEN

That's true

LYDIA

And I can inspect all of the weapons.

BEN

Ooh you could be getting Eren Fairhands a lovely ceremonial set of armour

HELEN

Sasha you can be our expert

BEN

Yes

LYDIA

Grins

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ALEX

So is that our actual plan?

HELEN

Yeah

BEN

So an investor, two paladins and the knife enthusiast

(laughing)

HELEN

Walk into a bar...

(laughing)

BEN

Oh and they have a bar brawl that happened already

LYDIA

100 hours later.

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ALEX

So I'm going to guess for the sake of moving things along that you're happy to just ask information at the hotel as to where you can get hold of Crank Industries.

BRYN

Yeah we'll book a cab to get there.

ALEX

Sure that's fine. The...just as a side flavour note, the price of the food was roughly three times what it should otherwise be. The price of water...if you asked for a glass of water, closer to ten times what it should be.

BEN

Ooh that's no good. Wait, really?

ALEX

Yeah

BEN

In a world where create water exists.

ALEX

Yeah

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BEN

Ok cool, actually that's a really good point. I get to redo one of my spells.

Turns out I've got endure elements because it's hot and create water because it's dry.

ALEX

Those are both really good ideas.

BRYN

I can also cast endure elements and I'm a spontaneous caster so you can save your slot for something else if you like. If we decide we need it, I can just cast it.

BEN

Yeah but then I have to look in the book and sod that

(laughing)

Honestly...

LYDIA

Welcome to the real way of playing role playing games.

ALEX

I'm Ben. I like RPGs but hate books. Discuss.

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BEN

I like RPGs but dislike the way that D&D and Pathfinder handle the spell system

ALEX

We're not diving down this rabbit hole again

BRYN

I've asked for a set of Fifth Ed books for my birthday

ALEX

Wise. Anyway, so you arrange for a cab and they start taking you. It becomes readily apparent that you're going exactly back the way that you came. You are heading back out through the mercantile district, back up the same mountain. It obviously takes a while

LYDIA

Uh, slow because we're going uphill

ALEX

It is slow. Slow is better. It's not even a goblin that's driving. It's a human and they're rubbish

BEN

To be fair Sasha, no one's jumped out yet so it's going a bit better.

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ALEX

You could jump out, walk around the carriage three times and get back in if you want.

HELEN

I'm not going to do that.

ALEX

It takes a lot longer to get back. Both because it's not a million miles an hour and also just it is uphill etc. You head past Ratchets. You head past, you see it's as it was before, four warehouses beating down noon day sun and the occasional goblin will run between the warehouses. But they don't recognise you as you head past. Keep going...

BEN

Go past the abandoned spiro site.

ALEX

Oh yeah. Actually it's not abandoned.

LYDIA

It's coming back. There's activity

ALEX

It looks like someone might've bought out the grounds and is trying to do something with it. You don't know.

BEN

Coming 4 18 90 something

(laughing)

ALEX

But heading past the almost, but not entirely abandoned, spiro complex you keep heading up and you are heading into more rugged territory. It was more sensible whoever was building those industrial complexes lower down because it was a bit more gentle, fairly easy to level blah, blah, blah. It's a bit rocky up here so whoever's been building here has been going to some effort because you're building a factory at the top of a mountain instead of at a flat bit.

LYDIA

That seems unusual.

ALEX

It is. Heading up further and eventually you start seeing in the distance, round a rocky bluff, one of the warehouses similar to, I'm going to have to get these right, I keep wanting to swap them around...similar to Rachets. And then as you turn the corner you see a vast complex that dwarves Rachets. It is easily maybe 12 warehouse I would say, each of which is probably, if not double,

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then almost every single warehouse that Rachets had. And there is a perimeter fence. It is iron. It is not an adamantine fence but it does stretch and you are going past these huge featureless warehouses that are just like number 1, number 2, number 3 and you are heading along. You see no staff. There is no one inside. Eventually you see someone...

BRYN

This one seems a lot more sinister than the previous one.

ALEX

Eventually you see someone patrolling the outside with a pair of guard dogs. They look at you with narrowed eyes and then they start walking parallel to the carriage

HELEN

Easily keeping pace

ALEX

Easily keeping pace. But, yeah, eventually you make it past about warehouse 7 and then you start seeing that there's a checkpoint coming up. Although the warehouses are fairly "close" to the fence, it's still like a sprint's distance if you know what I mean. It's not just right up against it or anything and yeah, your carriage eventually pulls over in front of a very basic guard's station. It doesn't have branding or anything, it's very plain but it does have four people manning it which is, it's a two person station with four people manning it and a fifth is now coming up parallel to the carriage

LYDIA

What species are the people?

ALEX

They all appear to be human

LYDIA

Ah. Interesting. Interesting.

BRYN

Good morning gentlemen.

ALEX

Presumably do you send the cab back or do you ask for them to wait. It matters because you're quite far out of the city, that's why we ask.

BRYN

Why would we send the cab back at all? We're at a checkpoint. I'm going to get out of the cab solo and suggest the rest of you wait inside.

ALEX

Ok

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BRYN

Good morning gentlemen.

ALEX

Of course. In Arabic – hello.

BRYN

We're hoping to meet with your sales representative please

ALEX

No

BRYN

What do you mean no?

ALEX

It's like yes but the exact opposite. No.

BRYN

Excuse me this is completely unacceptable.

ALEX

He turns to the rest of his...the rest of the guards. Turns back – no, no it's not.
Get out. This is private land. Go away

BRYN

I will not be spoken to like this. We've set up an appointment in Paris almost a month ago

ALEX

No you didn't. Just deadpans you – no you didn't. Turn around, go home. And just deadpan. The others aren't actively like threatening or anything but there are...there's another guy who had two dogs so there's the first one who was walking there. So you've got two people, each of whom is with two guard dogs and then there are an additional two people, one who's in a booth with the, what's it called, the lever lift-y barrier thing

BEN

It's called a barrier.

ALEX

Yeah the barrier. And then there's one who's just off to the side currently smoking something. And they're all just blanking you. Not urg, we're gonna get you, just no.

BRYN

This is completely unacceptable. I have never been so insulted in my life. I demand to speak to your superiors.

ALEX

They all look to one another. No.

BRYN

I cannot believe this is happening. I'm going to turn around and get back in the carriage and I'll speak to the driver and just say – please drive back to the city.

ALEX

The driver just, as you're saying that, leans in and goes – it's not just you. I've seen that with other people.

BRYN

I'm going to continue my insulted ranting from inside the carriage.

ALEX

The carriage turns around and starts heading back

BRYN

And as we're a little further I'm going to – ok that is suspicious as hell

(laughing)

I suggest we get just far enough away out of sight, sneak back, watch out, stake out the compound, get a lay of the land and sneak in at night time

HELEN

That sounds very sensible.

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LYDIA

Sounds great, yeah

ALEX

Everything's coming up Sasha these days.

(laughing)

You're breaking into potentially a weapons factory.

HELEN

I thought you were going to say breaking into song.

ALEX

Give it time. Give it time. She needs to see the layout first

BEN

Also any knives you pick up now, we're not like oh...

LYDIA

Booty!

BEN

Yeah

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ALEX

Oh no, what have I done?

BEN

Yeah you have. Everyone's got adamantite weapons from now on.

LYDIA

Stumbles out with a coat dragging along the ground. I've got no knives on me at all.

BRYN

This is literally what bags of holding are for. You could fit thousands of knives in a single bag of holding.

LYDIA

Only thousands

ALEX

And how many bags of holding do you have between you now?

BEN

Four or five

LYDIA

Like a dozen

BRYN

I had one, we got four new ones and I had one already and the party had two already so I've got...

BEN

I've got four written down here...

LYDIA

I had one.

BRYN

So I think we've got six between us.

ALEX

Carrying capacity is a different party's problem now. I have to make sure now I don't introduce you to any hoards because with those you can now take the whole hoard

LYDIA

Yay hoards.

ALEX

So yes you head off and how much further away, round the...

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BRYN

Probably a mile or so. We want to be fully out of sight and then I'll bang on the roof of the cab and say – just stop here please.

ALEX

So the guard who was walking with you walks to the end of the complex, walks past until he's just at the outcropping and then waits there.

BRYN

Yeah we will go far enough that we're out of sight

LYDIA

Which I assume would be a long way if it's down the mountain.

ALEX

Because it's rugged up here there's actually a line of approach just with rocky outcrops and there is the odd tree and so on but it is doable. It doesn't have a clear miles and miles of straight road or anything. He pulls over. You sure? You're quite far out.

BEN

Just doing a bit of sightseeing.

LYDIA

We've got a camel.

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HELEN

We can handle this

ALEX

He kind of looks around – alright

BEN

Clonk, clonk.

HELEN

Oh also clonk, clonk.

BRYN

Yeah we had a bit of an incident travelling down the hill yesterday...

ALEX

None of my business sir. None of my business sir.

BRYN

The two paladins are going to travel on the camel and they'll probably fall behind. We're going to stay in the cab though. We just wanted to take in the view.

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LYDIA

Are we? Ok?

ALEX

So out of character are you asking to stay in the carriage and...

BRYN

So we're getting out to see the...so what we're going to do is fake, so we want the driver to believe that we are travelling back to the city.

ALEX

That's fine, that's fine.

BRYN

He is bribeable?

ALEX

Yeah absolutely

BRYN

And we can't change his memories

ALEX

Driver's there and he's just like – ok cool. He just sits there.

BRYN

So just give us a minute. So we'll go a little way and I'll explain this to you. Basically the two of you pretend to travel until he's out of sight. We're going to get back in the carriage and almost immediately try and sneak out before it gets to any speed because I reckon that if I cast invisibility the two of us can accomplish that.

LYDIA

Ok. I mean surely he'd remember two people disappearing from his cab more than he'd remember...

BEN

Because he will get back to Damascus and be like there's no one in my cab anymore

BRYN

Ah, yeah.

(laughing)

ALEX

This right here is the most beautiful moment of Hamid going, right I've got a plan and then Sasha going that's a terrible plan

HELEN

Does that happen a lot?

LYDIA

She's done more sneaking around.

ALEX

So what is the plan? Currently you have a cabbie who's just sat reading a paper at the top of a mountain.

LYDIA

Mate we're just gonna ride the camel back if that's alright. My mate wants to show off her camel. Look show off the camel Azu.

HELEN

Tada.

LYDIA

And look what we can do. We've got to practice you see, that's the thing

BEN

Alright yeah. Up you get

LYDIA

Get on the tower and start doing knife tricks

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BEN

[Singing circus music]

ALEX

All of you give me perform check apparently. This is where we've got to.

BRYN

I cast prestidigitation to add special effects

BEN

14 of raw charisma

ALEX

14

LYDIA

She just rolled a 3.

ALEX

Ah

HELEN

I got 16

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ALEX

Tell you what, the paladins, proper naturals at this

BEN

You got 19

BRYN

6

HELEN

Oh 19 is what I got.

ALEX

So you two, you've got this down, you've been practicing. Like you have been, you've been looking for Sasha, that's practice enough. Sasha you're like actually really unstable.

LYDIA

The knife tricks are going fine, she just looks like she's not enjoying it. Her charisma element is...

ALEX

She has this weird, focused face and even though she's juggling knives she kind of looks like she's juggling them at you.

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BRYN

The thing is it's really difficult but you wouldn't know that unless you're also an expert because it's not showy. You're making it look super easy and not dangerous at all even though it actually is.

ALEX

So the guy's there like – oh that's alright yeah. You're not gonna get any work up here but yeah, good luck

LYDIA

I've got to practice out of sight mate otherwise...

ALEX

Yeah fair enough. That's on me. That's on me.

LYDIA

Alright well cheers for your help

ALEX

No worries

BEN

Thanks for the feedback as well.

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ALEX

Oh yeah no worries

BRYN

Again I'll give him a tip

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, good. As you're handing the tip over he goes – I mean if you wanted a prearranged time for me to come pick you up as well that would be...

BRYN

I think we're gonna enjoy the walk back down the mountain and get some views over the city

ALEX

Yeah alright. He heads off. Clip clop, clip clop

BRYN

That was a lot simpler than my plan guys

(laughing)

LYDIA

Sasha is still focused on juggling knives

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BEN

Sasha I wanna get out from under...

LYDIA

Fine

ALEX

So everyone comes off of the camel presumably.

HELEN

Yes

ALEX

He's looking just dead eyed...

BEN

She

ALEX

Yeah it is a she I apologise

HELEN

Yeah. What's the word, not ameliorate, not commiserate...

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BEN

Mollify

ALEX

Exterminate. We gave very different answers

(laughing)

HELEN

I mollify the camel yes. Give it some stroking's. Give it, what do camels eat?

LYDIA

Soft velvety nose

ALEX

Tourists

(laughing)

HELEN

I find a passer by

ALEX

Great

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LYDIA

Azu with a very soft welcoming face tears the...

ALEX

Topaz is mollified. So you are now up at the mountain, it's a little bit past midday. It's hot

BRYN

I assume there are some ridges around the complex

ALEX

It is a rugged...you can easily, if you want to get...

BRYN

We're going to have to take a long way around, get behind a ridge, climb up a ridge, peek over the top of the ridge and watch the complex

BEN

Is this take something-able. Is this a take 10 or take 20 situation?

ALEX

I'm going to allow it as a take 10 in sneak. I can't have a take 20 because that means at least once you have to fail

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BEN

Oh you have to fail, yeah. That's the rule, sorry I couldn't remember

ALEX

But yeah you could take 10 on sneaking. They aren't actively hunting you

BRYN

Yeah it'll take us a couple of hours to get into position and we're going to spend the afternoon scoping out the compound because it's heist time

BEN

And we want to do it in the dead of night. Remember people who can't see in the dark you need light sources.

LYDIA

Speak for yourself. Sasha's pretty good at just navigating by sound alone

ALEX

And smell

BRYN

I mean moonlight

BEN

Unless it's cloudy yeah

LYDIA

And dancing

ALEX

You know what, whilst we figure out...

BRYN

It's not cloudy, look at the sky

BEN

Or we're inside

BRYN

I've got dancing lights. I can summon them at will.

ALEX

You know what as an anticlimactic end I'm going to end there with you staking out the complex.

BEN

Arguing about lighting situation

ALEX

Arguing about lighting situations

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LYDIA

I can just throw a bomb, that lights a lot up

BEN

I thought the point was that people didn't know we were here.

ALEX

Yeah this is exactly why I'm ending the episode!

BRYN

Remember not to adopt any dogs from the guards guys!

ALEX

I'll see you next week guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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