

## RQG – 109 – Dance Off!

### 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. Cody Hinkle, Emily Wilson, I Like Big Books, Elizabeth Kia, Arthur Tucker, Dana Plane, Terry Bills, Nathan Hughes, Granham Haroney, Caitlin Catamia. Thank you all. We really appreciate your support. If you'd like to join them go to [www.patreon.com/rustyquill](http://www.patreon.com/rustyquill) and take a look at our rewards.

#### [Show Theme - Intro]

#### ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 109 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 Racket

**HELEN**

And Azu

**ALEX**

And how awkward can it get? Really awkward!

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**BRYN**

It can get more awkward than this.

**ALEX**

It can get more awkward

**LYDIA**

Yeah

**BRYN**

Do you not remember the life span conversation?

**HELEN**

Oh yeah. So you're about to die are you, Grizzop. That's interesting.

**BEN**

Yeah turns out. Great.

**HELEN**

How exotic!

**(laughing)**

**BRYN**

Wow!

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**BEN**

So what do you do? Why early. Wonderful

**(laughing)**

It's so strange.

**HELEN**

We're poor but we're happy.

**ALEX**

So...

**BEN**

There you go Alex

**ALEX**

I have the party split in a really awkward way so we'll see how this plays out. I've got Azu and Hamid dropped in the middle of...I don't know even how to describe that situation.

**HELEN**

A political...two competing political demonstrations.

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**ALEX**

Yes, let's go with that. We have Grizzop and Sasha still up top of the mountain just...

**LYDIA**

Chilling really

**ALEX**

Chilling. Little bit of illing

**LYDIA**

It's not that awkward, you know

**BEN**

It is for Grizzop

**LYDIA**

Ok

**ALEX**

So I'm just going to jump back to you two. Specifically Grizzop and Sasha. I realise that there is nothing to do. Tough. That's sort of the point. It has rolled past midday

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**LYDIA**

Do you play cards Grizzop?

**BEN**

Yeah

**LYDIA**

Alright let's...

**BEN**

What game?

**LYDIA**

Things like...we don't have anything to bet do we?

**BEN**

I've got arrows. You've got knives

**LYDIA**

You are not taking my knives!

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Well not if you win.

**LYDIA**

You're on.

**ALEX**

Ok I'm gonna jump back to Azu and...actually I'm going to jump back to...

**LYDIA**

That's not a fair trade because you have infinite arrows and she only has 12 knives

**BEN**

No I don't.

**ALEX**

He doesn't have infinite

**BEN**

I have narratively infinite but as soon Alex says, maybe because I lost them all in a game of cards...

**ALEX**

Yes! Look at him knowing how the system works. Azu, you are mid conversation with the oldest orc you've ever heard of who...yeah. Nice to meet you.

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So we'll pick up there, yeah.

**HELEN**

I'm not...

**ALEX**

You've come a long way. Why?

**HELEN**

Actually for reasons unrelated to this but this seems extremely important and I think I could help.

**ALEX**

What do you propose?

**HELEN**

I...I think...

**(coughing)**

**LYDIA**

Power coughing

**(laughing)**

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**HELEN**

I think that if you were to speak to the goblin leader and...

**(coughing)**

Are you well grandfather?

**ALEX**

Something just caught in my throat. Say again

**HELEN**

If you were to meet with the goblin...

**ALEX**

[coughing] There it goes again. Ok yep.

**HELEN**

You could both go to the meritocrats and make your complaint together because the issue is not the presence of either group, it's that there isn't enough work.

**ALEX**

Or they could just back off and let us take stuff back that was ours in the first place.

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**HELEN**

But it's the employers that have made the choice. So we should be blaming them.

**ALEX**

They're all problems

**HELEN**

I agree. Employers are all problems

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Give me a diplomacy check

**BEN**

No war but class war!

**LYDIA**

Also the gods, between the gods and dragon war.

**HELEN**

Natural 20

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**EVERYONE**

Oooh!

**HELEN**

It's so rare for me.

**ALEX**

It's only when it matters

**BEN**

Just give her this!

**ALEX**

It's only when it matters.

Alright, fine. We'll just it as an opportunity. If they show themselves up more people will be able to be on our cause won't they. When? Where? How?

**HELEN**

Well now. Let me take you there.

**ALEX**

Fine.

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Kind of starts really, *really* slowly walking his way through and all of the boisterous orcs and stuff, a couple of them don't notice that he's walking forward and all the others claps him around the head and pull him out of the way because everyone's being very kind of respectful.

**HELEN**

Yes I am also being so respectful.

**ALEX**

He makes way to the front and the goblins all kind of, and their leader hops down. Kinda quite nimbly actually. Not...might be old for a goblin but seems to handling the movement side of things a lot better. Walks to the front, chucks the megaphone far behind and stands, kind of power stancing, legs far apart, hips on shoulders...

**LYDIA**

But so tiny

**HELEN**

Hips on shoulders did you say?

**ALEX**

Hips on shoulders. Hips on shoulders

**(laughing)**

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Hips on shoulders

**LYDIA**

Painful

**ALEX**

Elbows on...

**BRYN**

Knees on toes. Hips on shoulders. Knees on toes. Knees of toes

**ALEX**

You heard. It's a terrible, terrible ageing problem

**(laughing)**

The entire torso just...

**LYDIA**

That's how goblins go.

**ALEX**

They just end up just legs and arms. That's all they are, legs and arms. Well you say the height difference but it's not that much because the orc's so small for an orc that actually they're kind of, from a big distance they're not that dissimilar.

**LYDIA**

They look from goblin to orc...

**(laughing)**

...from orc to goblin. And they could not tell

**ALEX**

And then they yell get them. So they're there about 10 foot apart and they both kind of power stance. Admittedly the goblin's having an easier time of it because the orc's sort of imploded in on himself with age but they just kind of stare at one another. All of the goblins go quiet, all of the orcs go quiet and then nothing happens. It just turns into a staring contest as the sun peaks up over the top of the clock tower.

**LYDIA**

Christ how long does it take. It's a four hour staring...I mean what we haven't said about these two species is that they very rarely blink.

**HELEN**

Right, Azu again is crouching

**ALEX**

You're gonna get sore knees with all this diplomacy

**HELEN**

Oh god. The thing they never tell you about politics is your knees, they just...

**(laughing)**

All the kneeling to the bankers and the media. Anyway so she says – I think that your grievances could be directed against the main bosses rather than at each other and if you will agree to go together to the offices more could be achieved.

**ALEX**

They both then sort of turn. It's hard to tell who turns first. It looks like one of them but then the other one kind of wants to see to turn first and they have this sort of thing where they start heading to the meritocratic offices kind of shoulder to shoulder and then occasionally will just, like nudge one another and they're clearly, whilst...it's a bit of a power struggle to see who's first.

**HELEN**

But because they're old it's very slow.

**ALEX**

And they begin the incredibly arduous...well I say incredibly arduous, arduous for the orc. The goblin's having a better time of it but seems to want to get more elbow nudges in so it all balances out and they begin making their way towards the meritocratic offices. The goblins start milling about and so do the orcs. They're not mixing but it has a school dance when everyone doesn't

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really know how to pair up kind of vibe. Where there's this big unnecessary empty space and everyone's just milling around at a loss.

**HELEN**

Oh my gosh. I'm just imagining the most unlikely romances

**ALEX**

Oh there's like 20 or 30 eyes have met across the square. You know that...

**LYDIA**

There's going to be so many medium sized children

**BRYN**

Do both groups have bands with them

**ALEX**

Yes

**LYDIA**

Dance off!

**BRYN**

Hamid starts encouraging the goblins to start playing some music.

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**ALEX**

So the goblins seem to have brought mostly brass with them. Lot of trumpets and things like that

**BEN**

The orcs probably mostly percussion Alex

**ALEX**

Funnily enough...

**BEN**

Ah

**ALEX**

Funnily enough.

**BRYN**

Hamid as the independent is going to try and get both bands to play and he's going to start dancing.

**ALEX**

Ok give me a diplomacy check

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**BRYN**

He's going to take off his jacket. He's going to roll up his shirtsleeves and bust a move.

**ALEX**

You guys should try capitalism. No? Alright. Dance off.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Hamid two arms

**BRYN**

31 on the diplomacy check

**ALEX**

I'll return to this. Sasha and Grizzop

**LYDIA**

Well Sasha cheats a lot

**(laughing)**

**HELEN**

I was thinking this was a bad decision

**LYDIA**

So she is winning. I assume

**ALEX**

Well here's the thing, normally in this kind of thing, interparty gambling, a lot of times you'll just do a simple opposed roll thing to characterise how people are playing. It's a bit difficult for you two because I'm not sure how to balance it. For Sasha, obviously sleight of hand is the sensible choice, that's how you cheat at cards. For Grizzop I'm not sure what skill you'd want to rely on to play it off against.

**BRYN**

Sense motive or perception

**BEN**

Bluff

**ALEX**

Whatever you prefer

**BEN**

Bluff

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**ALEX**

Again like we haven't even picked a card game so it's whatever, Grizzop whatever you want to...

**BEN**

I'm choosing bluff...

**BRYN**

Magic!

**BEN**

I think that's how he plays.

**ALEX**

In which case then bluff versus sleight of hand

**BEN**

17

**LYDIA**

Oh 19 + 14 so that's...

**ALEX**

I had to give you a chance

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**BEN**

That's fine. Grizzop's mainly playing for fun

**ALEX**

Now can you give me a sense motive Grizzop, completely unrelated to whether you win or not.

**BEN**

Ooh, no not really. My sense motive, pfft, 12

**LYDIA**

The thing is Sasha wouldn't look sneaky because to her the way you play cards is that you cheat. That...what is the other way...that is how you win, that's part of the rules.

**ALEX**

So Sasha is obliterating you at cards

**BEN**

I'm just happily handing over arrows. I'm having a nice time

**ALEX**

Something is happening. Anything is happening

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**BEN**

Yes

**ALEX**

Sasha, yeah you're just...to the point where...

**LYDIA**

It's almost not fun anymore.

**ALEX**

It's not fun because the whole point...

**LYDIA**

Is he even playing? Why would he play those cards? What does he have up his sleeve? Maybe something much bigger is coming later.

**BEN**

I'm just putting down hands and cackling to myself

**LYDIA**

This is probably actually disturbing her much more...

**(laughing)**

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...the conversion attempt was just like oh that's what Grizzop does but I don't wanna talk about it right now. This. This is unsettling.

**ALEX**

What did he do to the arrows?

**LYDIA**

Why would you play...like how...

**BEN**

Three 2s. Yes

**(laughing)**

**LYDIA**

Do goblins have a diff...no, don't worry.

**ALEX**

Ok I'm going to jump back

**LYDIA**

She checks the guards

**BEN**

It's three 2s.

**ALEX**

Azu are you heading to the meritocratic offices or are you sticking with the big crowd?

**HELEN**

I'm gonna go in with them

**ALEX**

Ok

**HELEN**

So that the elbow nudging does not turn into a little scrap in front of the doors.

**ALEX**

Ok I'm going to follow Azu. Azu you make it to the meritocratic offices and they reach the first step and then it does sort of deteriorate a bit into [slapping noises]

**HELEN**

I'm going to very gently just separate them a little bit and I'll be like – remember you are going to be stronger together against a common...

**ALEX**

Really elderly orc looks at you and is like – I don't like you

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**(laughing)**

**HELEN**

Whatever you feel grandfather

**ALEX**

Come on then...they both start going up the stairs grumbling next to one another.

**HELEN**

Urgh, my training in respect of my elders.

**LYDIA**

The common enemy is you.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Like I say it trans...grumpy old men transcend any other...

**HELEN**

Everything, yeah

**ALEX**

So they head up and they head to the main doors. The goblin reaches out to knock and then almost a little bit patronising goes – please – to the elderly orc who gets his stick, double wields it over his head and doesn't sort of tap, tap, tap so much as bang, bang. Start rattling on it. This tiny little clerk, barely more than a teen, opens the door – hello. What's happening?

**HELEN**

Hello. We wish to speak to whoever is the most senior manager

**ALEX**

Do you have an....yeah ok. Yeah alright. Just kind of gestures for you to come in

**HELEN**

Fantastic.

**ALEX**

I'm going to stick with Azu for reasons that will become apparent. Azu, eventually the two elders and yourself are shown into what is, by meritocratic standards, the equivalent of a mayor. They're not a military leader...

**HELEN**

Are they...

**(Laughing)**

**ALEX**

Absolute “mare”

**BRYN**

I think is the word you mean.

**ALEX**

A mayoral person...

**LYDIA**

Figure

**ALEX**

Figure, thank you. So you’re shown into the mayor’s office and it is...

**BRYN**

Mayor

**ALEX**

I’ll talk how I want.

**HELEN**

It can be both, it’s a complicated language thing

**ALEX**

And they're behind a desk. She is middle aged, she seems quite dour, quite severe?

**LYDIA**

Hooman?

**ALEX**

Human. And has rather a lot of paperwork and rather a large number of aides who are talking to her as she's signing stuff and talking to one over one shoulder and then signing some more stuff, talking to one over the other. The goblin goes – [clears throat].

Old orc goes, gets his stick and just smashes the wall beside him as hard as he can. A picture falls and shatters.

**HELEN**

Fantastic. Just what I wanted

**ALEX**

All of the aides...the older woman behind the desk – can I help either of you?  
Oh, all three of you it would seem

**HELEN**

Yes

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**ALEX**

She takes a moment. Let's find out whether she's helpful or misreading...ok

**HELEN**

Oh no, that doesn't look like a good face

**ALEX**

I'm afraid I don't actually know what this is regarding. We're actually incredibly busy right now. Unless this is to do with the water shortage I'm not really interested.

**HELEN**

It is to do with the water...well there is a potential riot outside and you should pay attention...

**ALEX**

You see her shoulders sag.

**HELEN**

You should listen to these two eminent members of the community about how to solve the problem of there not being enough work to go around

**ALEX**

She waves of the aides. The aides head off. She gestures for everyone to come in. Now I'm not going to RP incredibly dense and important discussions

**BEN**

Completely within yourself.

**ALEX**

Amongst myself. That's not ok. I agree. I'm a third party who has mixed feeling about this. Back to the first...no, let's not, let's not do that. What I am gonna do is get you to give me a diplomacy roll to see how helpful you are to the proceedings.

**HELEN**

Oh no. Oh no, oh no. I don't think I have anything in diplomacy do I

**ALEX**

You have charisma. Your charisma's good.

**LYDIA**

Raw charisma

**HELEN**

That's still on an 11

**ALEX**

An 11. Well look, you don't actively hinder. I think it starts quite well. I think it starts with we should all talk and everyone's like fine, fine. And you're like

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ok now why don't you talk and now why don't talk and things progress beyond the sort of initial into actual specifics and you're like that's a good thing, now we don't talk...we're trying to negotiate specifics. And you're like now why don't we all stop and have a break. You're like real basics...

**BRYN**

Should've got Hamid in the room

**HELEN**

Yeah well

**ALEX**

You started well and then you got a bit out of your depth as things went beyond triage diplomacy into specific negotiations. The day wears on though to the point where it passes midday for you. These talks are taking a while.

**BRYN**

We need to get back up the mountain.

**ALEX**

I am going to jump to Hamid and by jump I mean smash cut to Hamid who has somehow managed to arrange himself in a situation that he's conducting a combined orchestra where you've got the orcs on...

**LYDIA**

An "orc-estra"

**ALEX**

You've got the orcs on one side and you've got the goblins on the other.  
They're playing at one another.

**BRYN**

No, no they're mixing

**ALEX**

Let me finish.

**BRYN**

Ok

**ALEX**

They're playing at one another but it has entirely changed the character of what's going on where it's...they're sort of, they're playing a tune together but they're both sort of trying to drown one another out but it is turning into a more sportsman like...

**LYDIA**

Carnival rather than riot

**ALEX**

Yeah it's more carnival-esque so you've ended up with, come on hit those hammers harder. They're all sweating and then the goblins are similarly like...

**BRYN**

I want to get them mixing together and I want to start a massive dance party. How do I make this happen GM?

**ALEX**

So you have managed to get them as far as...

**BRYN**

I've told you Hamid is practically...

**LYDIA**

There's some dancing lights, there's some...

**ALEX**

You want to raise the stakes even higher I'm going to need another strong diplomacy check. The fact that you've got them doing what's effectively a band off is nothing short of astonishing.

**BRYN**

Hamid is leading the dancing and Hamid knows how to dance

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**ALEX**

Fair

**BRYN**

If you want to see an example then contact me on Twitter and I'll send you a gif of me doing it. That's what Hamid's doing.

**ALEX**

Ok, ok. Just give me the roll

**BRYN**

That's another 31

**ALEX**

We will jump to Sasha and Grizzop

**BEN**

Well I'm out of arrows.

**ALEX**

And you're hitting maybe mid-afternoon by this point.

**BEN**

It's been quite a while.

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**LYDIA**

Yeah I hope they're alright

**BEN**

Do you think we should...

**LYDIA**

Well now you've got to teach me how to shoot your bow. Oh wait bet your bow

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Er...erm....

**ALEX**

You hear someone teleport in.

**BEN**

Arrows, arrows

**ALEX**

Hello

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**LYDIA**

Hands over an arrow.

**BRYN**

Just one

**ALEX**

Hello

**LYDIA**

You owe me an arrow

**BEN**

Who's that?

**ALEX**

Grizzop?

**BEN**

Who are you? I go to find the source of the voice.

**ALEX**

Sure. They're literally just around a corner. It's Wilde

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**BEN**

Oh

**ALEX**

Currently...currently on his own looking around

**BEN**

Hello

**ALEX**

Hi. Where's Sasha?

**LYDIA**

Sasha emerges behind him

**ALEX**

Wait behind Grizzop or behind Wilde? They're both valid choices.

**LYDIA**

Behind Wilde

**BEN**

Right there

**LYDIA**

Hello

**ALEX**

Hello, right, we don't have much time. You need to show me what's inside these warehouses.

**LYDIA**

Alright, just come along. Takes him to one of the upper storey entrances and removes the trap which we know which trap it is and picks the lock so fast that he wasn't even sure it was locked to begin with and opens the door.

**ALEX**

Wilde pokes his head in. Ok good, good

**LYDIA**

Good? I thought it was pretty bad myself

**BEN**

I assume you've seen all the bodies and the manti...the thing

**ALEX**

We need to leave. We need to leave right now. I've arranged for this area to be removed as a problem.

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**BEN**

Oh

**LYDIA**

In what exact way?

**ALEX**

This place is going to be glassed in about a couple of hours

**LYDIA**

Oh alright. That sounds about right. Yeah. I mean they were getting...they're beginning to get quite hungry so that's probably a good...

**ALEX**

What's getting hungry?

**LYDIA**

These things

**ALEX**

He pokes his head back in. Oh ok.

**BEN**

I mean glass them too

**LYDIA**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Let's see if he knows what they are. He does not. What are they?

**BEN**

Whatever they have they have auras of pure evil so they're a problem and they need to be removed. Potentially by glassing so this sounds perfect.

**ALEX**

Ok we need to leave. We need to leave now.

**LYDIA**

Yeah well whoever is glassing the area be good to make sure that they don't accidentally glass the roof and then the roof smashes and then the things get out and those get away before the glassing. That would be...

**ALEX**

I wouldn't worry.

**LYDIA**

Alright

**ALEX**

I can't teleport us. I got someone to teleport me in, it's not a thing I can do.

**BEN**

Yeah I mean, what's the radius of the glassing because we need to make sure...

**ALEX**

We need to start walking. We need to start walking now. A carriage is on its way up

**LYDIA**

Why didn't you teleport with a horse and we could ride it down

**BEN**

Good point. Teleport with a horse.

**ALEX**

Come on. He just starts walking out the front entrance

**BEN**

I'm just saying Sasha's got a good point, teleport with a horse. Why are we walking?

**LYDIA**

And we're walking behind him. He could even do it with...could you do it maybe with...

**BEN**

Get a carriage right

**LYDIA**

Yeah get a carriage

**ALEX**

I'm going to jump to...

**LYDIA**

Or teleport with someone that has a magical beast the way Azu does.

**BEN**

Exactly

**LYDIA**

That would be great wouldn't it. Honestly.

**ALEX**

I am going to jump to Azu. So the negotiations have ground to a bit of a halt. They haven't collapsed

**HELEN**

Good

**ALEX**

What effectively is coming down on the situation is it's still just starting to revolve around this water shortage. The goblins are claiming that whilst they have water it's just because they are higher up the mountain and they aren't taking more than their fair share. That they're taking the absolute minimum as the meritocrats asked. The orcs are convinced the goblins are taking all of the water and the meritocrats, it seems to be that they're under the impression that one of those two is taking far too much water which is the reason that the others are suffering and it's hit a bit of a ground halt because all three of them are adamantly insisting that it's the others and it's getting a little bit heated. It's not necessarily like fully accusatory yet but that's grinding it to a halt that unless this is dealt with they can't really go further and they've reached a bit of an impasse. As soon as this issue's sorted you get the impression that things could fall into place and an arrangement could be made. Until it's figured out because this water shortage isn't like it's dry, the river's gone and all the other rivers are gone. So that's the situation as it stands. What do you do? They haven't reached blows so much as the conversation sort of died a bit. None of them wants to leave because the stakes are too high but no one really has any constrictive left to add.

**HELEN**

Then I interject again and I say – isn't there a spell for create water?

**ALEX**

Meritocrat pipes up – we're already using it as much as we can. The population here's quite large. It's not like every single cleric is...they're helping out where they can but it's not enough.

**HELEN**

Then you need to get clerics from outside of the city to...

**ALEX**

We're already tried. They're on their way but they're not here yet

**HELEN**

Then in that case we need to find out where the water is actually going because clearly it is none of the factions in this room. There is a fourth party.

**ALEX**

They all kind of look at one another. Give me a diplomacy check. Normally I get you to do them beforehand but it's a little bit...no for this one it's different. I'm doing it intentionally

**LYDIA**

Uh oh

**HELEN**

6

**ALEX**

6

**LYDIA**

Uh oh! Maybe you took the water

**HELEN**

Where did you come from?

**ALEX**

At which point...

**HELEN**

How come you're so hydrated?

**ALEX**

At which point the goblin stands and goes – when you find some evidence of that we will be happy to consider it but until then I don't think there's anything more we can discuss. Starts heading off. We wish none of you ill but we will not give up what we have fought so hard to get hold of at this time. Heads out. The orc stands. [Coughs]

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**(laughing)**

And then just kind of slowly, totters out

**BRYN**

I really hope our editor cuts out all the sounds of your coughing so no one understands

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

And then the dour woman behind the desk...

**BRYN**

The mayor

**ALEX**

The mayor. Sits and sags a bit. I just really hope they can just keep the peace a little longer. And I'm going to take a break there...

**HELEN**

Ok

**ALEX**

...and be back in a couple of minutes.

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And welcome back. We will jump to Hamid. Pandemonium. Utter, utter pandemonium. Of the best kind. However it is probably starting to do as much damage as a riot would

**BRYN**

But everyone's having fun

**ALEX**

The music is pumping, everybody's jumping

**BRYN**

Everybody's jumping

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

And the market is being gradually destroyed as everyone's like jumping on top of stalls. Woo, yeah. And it's all just getting a bit fulsome. In fact you've been too successful. You've been too successful at arranging this spontaneous group.

**BRYN**

The orcish moonshine is flowing

**ALEX**

Funny you should say that. There was an awkward moment where the orcs tried to share their moonshine with the goblins and two of them were unconscious after a whiff. Everything got a little bit tense and then you effectively just jumped in and went – what they are like – and everything settled down again. And by settled down I meant got even bigger and rowdier. But you have reached the point where you're seeing, near the edges of it, really, really lost looking guards. Mostly humans. A couple of halflings but we're talking 20/25 spread out amongst this crowd of maybe 1,000

**HELEN**

1,200

**ALEX**

Maybe 1,200 but they're all like...they get the impression that they feel like they should be stopping the destruction of the market and have no way of doing so without making it even worse so they're just milling

**BRYN**

I'm picking up my die and making a diplomacy roll.

**HELEN**

You going to get the guards to party

**BRYN**

The guards are gonna party to if I have anything to do with it!

**ALEX**

You need to roll really well

**BRYN**

Argh, lost the die. I'll roll a different one.

**EVERYONE**

Ohhh!

**BEN**

It's not a critical fail

**BRYN**

16

**ALEX**

It's because you rolled your good dice and then lost it. So yeah, they're all like...

**BRYN**

16. That's me rolling a 2. My diplomacy bonus is +14

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**ALEX**

So one of them who's clearly a cadet is like yeah! And immediately starts diving in and partying and you see all of the rest just look at you with a solid mix of both fear and disapproval. Not so much on that way. Azu?

**HELEN**

Yes

**ALEX**

What are you doing? Currently in the mayoral office

**HELEN**

I say to the meritocratic lady – I think you may have a lot of problems on your hands. If I were you I would set some officers to investigate the water shortage instead of just relying on other people to say so

**ALEX**

We already have

**HELEN**

Then you have to look harder because otherwise there will be bloodshed in these streets

**ALEX**

Who even are you?

**HELEN**

I'm...

**ALEX**

Give me a diplomacy roll first. Who even are you to be telling me how to run this city?

**BEN**

Player character obviously.

**ALEX**

I, madam, am a protagonist! And you would do well to listen

**BEN**

Good character levels darn it.

**HELEN**

I got 21

**ALEX**

So you can be very firm and not misstep here. As long as you don't go ridiculous with it, you can lay down the...you can lay down some Aphrodite law and it'll work

**HELEN**

Ok. Then I'm going to say...

**ALEX**

Do it again. Who even are you to tell me how to run this city?

**HELEN**

I am a Paladin of Aphrodite on my way to becoming a high priestess of Aphrodite and I can tell a dangerous situation when I see it and I will give you what help I can while I'm in the area which may not be long for I'm trying to help you with this and I think that the main issue that you may have is with the main employer. If they can be coerced or persuaded to give out equal work contracts to both groups.

**ALEX**

Look the only place that we haven't even been able to look at is Cranks and we can't because they've basically got an injunction from higher up than me. If you can find me proof that that's where the water's going...

**LYDIA**

Cranks is the one we've just...

**ALEX**

That would deal with everything

**HELEN**

You saw a burst water pipe

**LYDIA**

And the other thing is that you said earlier that Cranks was the main employer.  
The orcs say that it was the main employer but no one was working there

**BRYN**

It used to me

**ALEX**

Used to be, yes

**LYDIA**

And now they've laid everyone off

**ALEX**

Yes

**HELEN**

Ok. I hold up my hand and I'm like – I will try and find that for you if I can.

**ALEX**

Then you better hurry because it sounds like things are getting really bad out there.

**BEN**

Give it a couple of hours and that pumps gonna be glassed

**HELEN**

Before I go, I'm gonna say there was 1,000 orcs and 200 goblins. You would've had a massacre on your hands if you just stepped outside.

**ALEX**

Sounds like there is a massacre going on

**LYDIA**

Woo! Party!

**HELEN**

Let me go and check on that.

**ALEX**

I'm going to jump cut to, Azu you turn up to the market. Did I say market? I meant what's left of the pavements because it's been raised to that level and it's still going. People have started prying up cobbles and juggling them. I say about a quarter of the people are almost catatonic. The remainder are staggering around trying to dance and Hamid's kind of in the middle of it.

**BRYN**

You have never seen him look so dishevelled. His hair and his outfit are in ruins and he's still dancing his little heart out.

**ALEX**

The band is still playing but like half of...a couple of them has collapsed. One of them is playing a broken trumpet now. One of the drums broke, they're now just bashing a barrel that they found but it's still going on. There's just constant [banging noise]. You are able to easily see Azu approaching. Big, pink glow makes narrative easy

**BRYN**

Azu, Azu, Azu, oh my god I'm having so much fun. Come and dance with us. Come and dance with us Azu. Arggghhh!

**HELEN**

No

**BRYN**

Oh

**HELEN**

We should go back up the mountain

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**ALEX**

I'm going to jump back to...

**BRYN**

Oh yeah we need to help our friends. Hamid's sweating

**ALEX**

I'm going to jump back to Grizzop and Sasha. Wilde is still walking down. The carriage hasn't arrived yet

**BEN**

See if you just teleported a carriage up.

**ALEX**

I know. I know if I could teleport a carriage, I should've teleported a carriage. I couldn't do it. Time was of the essence.

**BEN**

Well if time is of the essence it would be better if we had fast transportation. It'd save time

**LYDIA**

Why don't we argue about this in the carriage

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**BEN**

Well we would but the carriage isn't here so we can't.

**LYDIA**

It has just turned up I thought you said

**ALEX**

Carriage hasn't turned up yet. He's still walking. He's...you see him occasionally prestidigitate himself and then the sweat patches return really quickly

**BEN**

Also what's the radius on this glassing because I'm not leaving until I see that place flat

**LYDIA**

Yeah or at least a slope because it is built on a mountain

**BEN**

Well yeah

**ALEX**

Wilde stops.

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**LYDIA**

About here then

**ALEX**

He turns around and he looks at both of you

**BRYN**

There's also a really good reason to watch in case that person teleports back while you're not there anymore.

**LYDIA**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Look...at which point the carriage turns up behind him. Just sort of cresting over the nearest rise.

**LYDIA**

Oh great, look. Oh yeah perfect.

**ALEX**

Get in

**LYDIA**

You'll feel much better out of the heat Wilde

**ALEX**

Get in the carriage now

**BEN**

Ok you get in the carriage too and we're gonna have a little chat.

**ALEX**

He goes over, opens the door, climbs into the carriage.

**LYDIA**

Yep follow him on checking it for murderers and traps.

**ALEX**

I mean Wilde's in there. Does he count?

**LYDIA**

Logic traps, yes

**BEN**

Were you just about to say you were having a very hard day?

**ALEX**

Just kind of sits there quietly

**BEN**

Were you just about to lecture us on the meaning of hard work and hard graft and how difficult things are? Were you just about to do that because you forgot to bring a carriage?

**ALEX**

Are you done?

**BEN**

Are you? Because I've had it right up to here with you and your terrible attitude

**ALEX**

Then leave because things have gotten way more important than – he gestures to you and him – whatever this has become. It's far more important than that no.

**BEN**

Ooh. Get you.

**ALEX**

He taps up on the carriage and it starts to roll down

**LYDIA**

I haven't had a rest in a while so I'll just be...

**BRYN**

Yeah none of us slept last night

**ALEX**

Nope

**LYDIA**

She curls up in a corner and falls asleep

**BEN**

So what's the situation then?

**ALEX**

How much has Hamid told you about what was going on?

**BEN**

We were there when he found it so all of it? You're the one being informed, not us.

**ALEX**

Great. Whatever's happened in England and France is spreading, ok and now the only support that I've had up to this point is gone. It is you, me and the rest of your group and they're pretty much the only people I think I can trust at this stage.

**BEN**

I mean you're getting something glassed so it sounds like you've got a few resources you can call on unless you're expecting us to do that too.

**ALEX**

So the only way that we can progress is very carefully and very quickly because whatever's happening is accelerating.

**BEN**

Alright

**ALEX**

Yes

**BEN**

So what do we need to do?

**ALEX**

We need to check, as you so eloquently put it, that the entire place is gone. We need to make sure of it. We need to see it and then once that's done I think we need to step up whatever's doing. I mean we don't really know what's happening yet, still.

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**BEN**

What we do know is the meritocracy is probably compromised by the Cult of Hades innit.

**ALEX**

Yes

**BEN**

So, it's obvious

**ALEX**

Is it?

**BEN**

We go rogue. Come on. Well I don't go rogue. I'm still with the Cult of Artemis, it's great

**LYDIA**

This has sounded heated enough where Sasha's like – I was trying to have a nap. It has been so long since we had any rest. Do you have a quick answer about what we're going to do?

**ALEX**

No

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**LYDIA**

Well then...

**BEN**

Go rogue. Just go rogue. Can't trust the meritocrats so just do it on our own.

**LYDIA**

Sasha gestures herself and...

**BEN**

We've got Einstein

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

What?!

I'm going to jump to Hamid and Azu. So...sorry just for the listeners so that everyone knows what happened there. Ben's like yeah, yeah, fan goes flying off into the distance.

**BEN**

It's ok, it's back.

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**ALEX**

So Azu, Hamid is, in fact give me a con save

**BRYN**

Fort?

**ALEX**

Sorry fort save. Yeah that's Fifth Ed poking its head into our game again

**BEN**

Did you manage to cock a D20

**BRYN**

Yeah pretty much. Ooh. 21

**ALEX**

Ok factoring in the penalties for orcish moonshine, Hamid's drunk

**BRYN**

Oh yeah

**ALEX**

Hamid's not catatonic but he may not want to be in charge of whatever's happening now and the day's wearing on now. You've hit mid-afternoon...

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**BRYN**

I tried to defuse the situation Azu. They're not fighting anymore

**HELEN**

So I see, well done

**ALEX**

Crunch, as a shop front collapses.

**LYDIA**

It's on fire

**ALEX**

Oh there are some fires but it's ok because what they've done is they've taken all the bits of the broken market, put them in barrels and are just lighting them so this party's just getting started

**LYDIA**

Super friendly.

**HELEN**

We should go back to the mountain. We can't solve this by ourselves. Let's just go. Let's go.

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**BRYN**

Ok. Hamid's still dancing, like half of his body

**HELEN**

I take your...not...

**BEN**

Wait, sorry, wait. Left, right or top, bottom

**BRYN**

Left

**ALEX**

Front back

**(laughing)**

**HELEN**

It's a party in the back.

**(laughing)**

Alright I sort of take your hand and tug you.

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**BRYN**

Oh I'm very easily led at this point

**HELEN**

Oh fantastic

**ALEX**

Presumably you're trying to find a carriage though as opposed to going on foot

**HELEN**

Camel.

**ALEX**

Oh camel. What is wrong with me today

**BRYN**

Heat

**ALEX**

Yeah that'll be it. Ok yeah so you set off back up

**HELEN**

Yeah

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**ALEX**

Ok

**BRYN**

Hamid falls asleep on the back of the camel. Kind of cuddled up against your back

**LYDIA**

So cute. Puppy

**(laughing)**

**HELEN**

Anything small is now a puppy

**ALEX**

Grizzop and Azu please give a perception check

**BRYN**

We're both asleep

**BEN**

Oh yeah. 22

**HELEN**

20

**ALEX**

Ok towards the lower parts o the mountain you both see a carriage approaching. Well I say both, one of you sees a carriage approaching, the other sees a camel that clearly has Azu on it.

**BEN**

I'll lean out the window – Azu.

**HELEN**

Grizzop!

**BEN**

Right Wilde stop the carriage

**ALEX**

Bang, bang

**HELEN**

I carry Hamid into the carriage

**BEN**

What happened to him? Has he been poisoned?

**HELEN**

Only with alcohol

**BEN**

What happened?

**BRYN**

You've also never seen Hamid looking so dishevelled.

**ALEX**

He looks such a mess. I'm pretty certain that he has some kind of thing around his forehead tied.

**BEN**

You were away for ages

**HELEN**

There was almost a riot but then it turned into a party

**ALEX**

That's what multiple 30s will do for you

**BEN**

Ok

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**BRYN**

He turned his cravat into a bandana

**ALEX**

Yeah that's what I'm talking

**HELEN**

There is...it's been a very long day

**BEN**

Right. We've got Wilde in here. I think we're gonna go rogue

**HELEN**

Oh!

**BEN**

We were having a conversation about Einstein

**ALEX**

Yes we were

**(laughing)**

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**HELEN**

Oh him

**BEN**

Yes

**ALEX**

So in terms of timings I am just gonna fudge it slightly which is that, yeah, you raised that just as Azu...

**BEN**

And then I got distracted by her.

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah

**BEN**

Alright yeah basically Einstein teleports us

**ALEX**

Einstein the criminal. Einstein the necromantic collaborator

**BEN**

Riddle me this Wilde. How did we get to Damascus so fast? And how did we get from Prague to Cairo so fast?

**ALEX**

You didn't.

**BEN**

We did. Bearing in mind as well as the lead investigator on that little mission, right, Einstein hasn't collaborated with anyone. He can hardly collaborate with himself

**(laughing)**

**BRYN**

Accurate. Accurate

**ALEX**

I really like that. If I gave out inspiration for that.

**BEN**

Right. So he's just a nice, strange man who teleports us around. Like Curie and the rest of them, well whatever.

**ALEX**

Tell me you haven't been working with Curie as well?

**BEN**

No. It's just Einstein. He seems to be acting on his own. He went to the beach.

**ALEX**

Because something occurs to me

**BEN**

What? Oh is it the fact that the Cult of Hades are probably behind what Kafka was doing because the whole necromantic ritual and world domination thing. Seems to sync up quite well don't it.

**ALEX**

Yeah it does

**BEN**

Yeah it's spooky Roman book, probably a Cult of Hades book innit

**ALEX**

Yeah

**BEN**

Yeah

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**LYDIA**

Sasha, who you woke up with your talking, is like...

**BRYN**

Hamid is snoring

**LYDIA**

And the computer that was...that was necromantic

**BEN**

Oh yeah, yeah, the Cult told Barret to get people for the computer so it's all connected.

**LYDIA**

Dead bodies infrastructure, civilisation as we know it was relying on brains.

**ALEX**

Have any of you run into a separatist who actually has been involved in this so far?

**BEN**

Well the university they said that they were something didn't they?

**LYDIA**

And there was that lady on the ship that didn't like you. She was cool

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

But has any of them been directly involved with the Simulacrum at all?

**BEN**

Beats me

**LYDIA**

Well maybe not

**ALEX**

Everyone give me a perception check please

**BRYN**

No

**ALEX**

Correct. Everyone who's conscious give me a perception check

**BEN**

22

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**HELEN**

Ooh. 24

**LYDIA**

Only 20

**ALEX**

Azu you spot, what appears at first to just be a bird flying over Damascus

**BRYN**

Or a plane

**ALEX**

It's bigger than a bird

**HELEN**

Superman saves the day

**ALEX**

End of campaign. It's ok

**LYDIA**

It's a crossover. Hurray

**BRYN**

It's not Superman.

**ALEX**

It's really big, massive bird. It's huge and it's...you notice then that you can sort of gauge it can't be a bird because of where the shadow...oh it's massive, huge. Something enormous is starting to head over Damascus...

**LYDIA**

Hamid

**ALEX**

And just by the angles you're the one who's able to see it. Everyone else is facing the other way

**HELEN**

Oh god

**ALEX**

Massive

**BEN**

What?

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**HELEN**

Look out the window there's a thing

**LYDIA**

Hamid it's your grandad. Hamid.

**ALEX**

It's huge. It is shining

**LYDIA**

Look it's grandpappy Tahan

**ALEX**

The sun is glinting off its metallic hide

**LYDIA**

Hamid, Hamid

**BEN**

Wait is that Apophis or is that...

**ALEX**

Vroom...

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**HELEN**

It's definitely a dragon

**ALEX**

Its wings beat. It finally starts passing over directly over Damascus. Its shadow is stretching out a decent chunk of the city. The wings beat again. Everyone give me a reflex save

**LYDIA**

Oh dear

**ALEX**

Hamid fails

**BEN**

27. paladins

**ALEX**

I know right.

**HELEN**

21

**LYDIA**

I only got 13

**ALEX**

What? Is that plus your modifiers?

**LYDIA**

Well my modifier is 10 right

**BRYN**

So you rolled a 3

**LYDIA**

I rolled a 3

**BEN**

For the record Sasha's modifier is higher than...

**BRYN**

We all have got pretty decent reflex saves. Oh actually no Azu's reflex save is not great.

**ALEX**

It suddenly stops to fly incredibly quickly towards you and you realise that's just the scales involved. What you thought was something that was smaller is just massive and suddenly it's on top of you. Another wing beat. Knocks Sasha off her feet

**LYDIA**

I'm sitting down in a carriage

**BEN**

It's true

**ALEX**

Fair enough. When the carriage tips over...

**LYDIA**

Ah

**ALEX**

Crunch. The carriage tips. You hear the driver – argh

**BEN**

Ah the carriage. We've been waiting for ages for that

**ALEX**

Hamid is knocked off the camel. Oof. The paladins manage to sort of salvage themselves.

**BRYN**

Oh what happened?

**ALEX**

A shadow streaks over the land and disappears up the mountain

**LYDIA**

That is the last time I try and have a nap not on a roof.

**BEN**

Lean over to Hamid, point at the dragon and go – there's your grandad

**BRYN**

What?

**ALEX**

You turn on what. There's a sudden sharp flash of light at the top of the mountain which is thankfully obscured by like a ridge and then the creature's already swung around and is starting to come back the way its come and then you see the heat haze and the shockwave blasting out from the top of the mountain and then a mushroom cloud of dust just...over the top. Everyone give me a reflex save. You're getting modifiers for knowing it's coming this time

**BEN**

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**HELEN**

24

**BRYN**

14

**LYDIA**

30

**ALEX**

There we go

**BRYN**

Was that natural 20?

**LYDIA**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Everyone else is ready for it. Hamid...

**LYDIA**

Sasha is riding the dragon

**ALEX**

Hamid's what – wow. Completely blown off his feet. Rattles down. The carriage shunts a little bit along. You hear the driver go – not again

**(laughing)**

And then you see the creature – whoomph – obviously Apophis. The colouring's right. The size is right. Just to be perfectly explicit. Sweeps out over Damascus and heads off back the way it came.

**BEN**

Right well we better go check its handiwork

**ALEX**

And I will end the episode there

**HELEN**

So much stuff is happening.

**ALEX**

I know. Stuff and things

**LYDIA**

Oh my word the conspiracy is coming unravelled. Stuff from episode 2. It's almost like he had a plan all along

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**HELEN**

Yeah it's as if he had pages and pages and pages of notes

**BEN**

And a folder with a calculator in it

**ALEX**

There's nothing wrong with a folder with a calculator in it. Anyway we'll wrap up there...

**LYDIA**

Alex does Santiago...

**ALEX**

We are going to end there and we will continue unravelling conspiracies next. But until then, bye guys.

**EVERYONE**

Bye!

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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## Rusty Quill Gaming – 109 – Dance Off!

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