

RQG – 110 – Cracking Up

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. Marielle Renquist, Freak O' Nature 06, Victoria Wilson, Oakley Canon, Shane Belair, Eric Carr, Eden Garrod, Jade Crous, Ennis McKelvey and Sarah McCleod. 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 110 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

BEN

Traditionally known as 110. Ben Meredith

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

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LYDIA

I can't think of the Roman numerals, Lydia Nicholas

(laughing)

HELEN

I'm just Helen Gould

ALEX

CX

LYDIA

What would the binary be as well?

BEN

Oh goodness.

ALEX

Nope, nope. Who are you playing?

BEN

Grizzop drik acht Amsterdam

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Sasha...don't, what, why do you need to know anymore? What's going on?

No.

HELEN

And Azu

ALEX

Right yes so I refuse to dive into binary. I know where that road leads

BEN

I wanna know if Azu has any other names or if she's just got a mononym or maybe...

LYDIA

It's a secret

ALEX

It's Azu Cher Prince but the others don't come up that often.

BRYN

Didn't we say at some point it was Azu T. Paladin

(laughing)

HELEN

Azu is actually short for something but you know

BEN

Ah

ALEX

So picking up where we left off. I believe that Cranks is a large flat, glassy kind of disc at this point

BEN

Yeah

LYDIA

But we don't believe that until we've seen it.

ALEX

Of course, of course. But party's back together. Party's back together

BRYN

I think I'm drunkenly unconscious on the back of a camel.

ALEX

I believe you've sort of awake, sort of not. Like oh hello

BEN

Insert on recording drunconcoisius if you will

(laughing)

ALEX

Was that got to say on recording rather than just think it

LYDIA

He said it earlier

ALEX

Oh ok

BEN

But the listeners didn't get to hear it.

LYDIA

And it was such a high quality joke that we couldn't have lived without it.

BEN

I know

ALEX

So what is happening at the moment is you've all reconvened and Wilde is there. Apophis just wiped somewhere off the face of the earth. Flew away. Hamid you...I think you've probably woken up at this stage but you're still drunk. You're not even hungover

BRYN

Oh ok

ALEX

But you're now at tired drunk rather than oh my god I did a thing and you do still have a tie around your head as a bandana. You have some face paint. I don't think it's actual face paint, it might just be what's left of some fruit or something

BEN

I didn't prepare remove poison

LYDIA

Well he probably deserves...

HELEN

Oh wait delay poison only acts when it's actually...

BEN

Yeah

HELEN

Yeah I can't unpoison you, I'm sorry.

ALEX

So we're gonna pick up where we left off which is Apophis has gone. The wave of heat finally stops rolling over you from destroying things and you're now just up a mountain. You came up with camel. Wilde just teleported in so he has no carriage and you were on your way, walk down so you're about two thirds of the way up the mountain alone on the road again

BEN

Right. Well we should probably check it's all gone then. Come on Wilde

HELEN

Yeah that seems wise

ALEX

Probably...

BRYN

Also the water.

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HELEN

Oh yes. Yes there was a situation

BEN

With the river being gone?

HELEN

Yes

BEN

How's that gonna be...sort that out?

HELEN

You never know there could be a blockage somewhere

BRYN

They were using all the water so it didn't get anywhere else

BEN

Alright. Well let's check the plumbing then

LYDIA

And he's going to need quite a lot of water when he comes out of it I think

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BRYN

Hmmm?

LYDIA

Yeah exactly

BEN

Ooh, wait I've got something for this. I'm going to create water on Hamid's head

LYDIA

Yes!

(laughing)

BRYN

He looks like he kind of enjoys it.

ALEX

I think you may have lost like 15 minutes of being drunk in game time.

BRYN

Remember we also all should be exhausted because we were up the entirety of the previous night. We haven't slept in over 36 hours.

ALEX

Yeah you're powering towards 48 hours awake, both of you

BEN

Do you want us to make fortitude checks?

BRYN

Literally all four of us. None of us have slept

ALEX

What did I say...I thought I said that.

BEN

You said both

ALEX

Oh sorry. I did mean all of you are powering towards 48 hours. I am going to call for fortitude checks when I think I want them

LYDIA

Don't give him ideas.

ALEX

Well no the thing is, you guys have gotten really good of being in the habit of just being awake forever so I mean...

BEN

Ok well if you're happy for us to just rumble on until needed

ALEX

I was just going to be really, really cruel when it came to fort saves when you hit 48 hours on the dot. That was the arbitrary time I'd set

BEN

He's a bad man

ALEX

So presumably you all head up

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

I'm assuming that none of you are running or anything

LYDIA

Let's go skate on the former factory

BRYN

No

BEN

Screw you guys. Ha ha. It's become a rink

LYDIA

Weee. Skating

ALEX

Yeah jagged glass. Yeah. So you carry on up. I'm going to say it takes you about an hour because you're all awake for ages. You're heading uphill and also the closer you're getting, it's radiating heat. You know you see the genre trop of oh they're fighting over the lava or something. It's like...

LYDIA

They'd be at least sweaty

ALEX

They would be a roast chicken if they were within even half a mile of where they are. It's not lava but by the time you're actually approaching it you can feel heat radiating from where Crank was and you sort of, come around that bluff...

BRYN

I cast endure elements four times.

BEN

Is that everyone but Wilde?

BRYN

Yep

(laughing)

LYDIA

I'm sure he can cast it on himself.

HELEN

I didn't know you had to cast endure elements, I thought you just had it.

ALEX

Nope

BEN

No, no you have to. It's a spell.

ALEX

You can have energy resistances but they tend to be really small. Ok, I'm not even going to get you to roll spell failure because I'm in a generous mood today

BRYN

I can't fail

ALEX

I mean you're very drunk and I'm a bad GM

BRYN

Yeah I should probably make concentration checks I guess.

ALEX

You know what give me...yeah, here you go, give me one and then I'll roll a D4 to decide who suffers your penalty.

HELEN

Oh my god!

BEN

He rolled a 1, he rolled a 1

LYDIA

Drunk Hamid trying to be helpful. Is anything more dangerous?

BEN

Wait he has to choose which element you're choosing to endure so he might successfully cast it but give us all cold resistance

ALEX

I'm only going to punish one of you. Ben is 1, Bryn himself is 2, Lydia is 3 and Helen is 4.

LYDIA

Ha

ALEX

I'm rolling a D8 because I lost my D4 somewhere. Halve it.

BRYN

That's a 3

LYDIA

Yes, yep, yep. I did that maths. Ok what has gone wrong? Have you turned her undead again?

HELEN

Oh god

LYDIA

That was such a...

BRYN

It can't go that wrong

BEN

So what happened?

ALEX

Apparently nothing. Everything's fine.

LYDIA

Ah that's...

BEN

But wait...

LYDIA

Apparently nothing and then he writes. Apparently nothing and then the GM writes something down and covers it up. That's never a good sign.

BEN

But does Bryn know that he's failed to cast

ALEX

He's too drunk to notice

BEN

And does Lyd know that nothing has changed?

ALEX

Lyd is...well not Lyd, Sasha is untrained in magic so would need a spell craft check to check and can't do spell craft

LYDIA

Yeah cheers maybe that...

BEN

Sod it. Can I make a spell craft check to make sure it's all happened to everyone

ALEX

Yes you can

LYDIA

But why would you?

BEN

Because...

HELEN

He's drunk

LYDIA

Ah I suppose

BEN

Because he would've screwed something up.

ALEX

Normally I would say...

BRYN

He's more of a passive one to notice...

ALEX

Yeah like normally I wouldn't bother with this but also I know that Grizzop would be like – are you fit to drive right now.

HELEN

Yeah

BEN

15

ALEX

You think it might've gone dodge with Sash, you couldn't say how.

BEN

Ok. Did you feel anything change?

ALEX

Oh no, you wouldn't feel it when it's...you only feel it when it's like...if you were in a blizzard you wouldn't feel cold.

BEN

Does it still feel warm?

LYDIA

Well yeah obviously. We're up a mountain

BEN

I cast endure elements on Sasha

BRYN

Grizzop has it as well

BEN

Yes I've got it. It's really useful

HELEN

I have it too

ALEX

Now bearing in mind with spell failure it leads to complications but you know that endure elements worked ok?

BEN

On Lyd? On Sasha

ALEX

Yeah on Sasha. Yeah, you know that your ensure elements worked. There may be complications because spells that fail tend to introduce complications but yours went off without a hitch. It didn't negate yours or anything. You would know that.

BEN

Ok

ALEX

So you all start approaching. Wilde begins to swear profusely, goes hang on a minute. Ok great and you all start approaching. There is, you know the sort of wibbly wobbly heat haze

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

You cannot see the far side of the compound when you would have been able to because the air is shimmering from the heat of it.

LYDIA

Well that looks quite destroyed folks. I would say. I mean unless manticores like heat

BEN

Yeah we should walk around just to make sure nothing's lost in the haze but yeah

ALEX

So to describe it, it hasn't technically turned into a featureless plane or anything. The molten hunks and chunks of what were the warehouse, there are lumps and bumps and maybe a girder has survived enough to vaguely exist. All of the actual dirt and sand that was between them is literally glass. It has done...have you ever seen a, it's a very specific thing but you know I have weird interests, have you ever seen the post nuclear glass plates, they're called.

LYDIA

No

ALEX

So they did nuclear tests in the desert and they took photos of it and it makes a solid sheet of glass that tends to break because of the concussions but you still

have a big wide sheet of glass. That just with these kind of molten lumps where buildings used to be. No sign of the fencing whatsoever, at all. That just went away presumably.

HELEN

Any movement?

ALEX

It's really...you know what give me a perception check everyone

BEN

18

ALEX

18

HELEN

Also 18

ALEX

18

LYDIA

29

ALEX

29. Come on. Do better.

BRYN

Also 18 but I am drunk

ALEX

Hamid you're fairly certain that you might see some movement. Everyone else...

LYDIA

Is it just that everything's spinning though

ALEX

For everyone else the heat haze is so big, it is effectively impossible to spot people because it is literally properly warping things. There is nothing obvious and Sasha, you're certain that there isn't anything to see if you see what I mean. But it is, again I can't stress enough it is just wum, wum. Endure elements doesn't mean that you're like, this is lovely, I really enjoy this. It just goes from this would be physically hurting me to it's uncomfortably hot. So I'd say it's roughly as warm, bearing in mind that it's night, as...

LYDIA

As this room

ALEX

As this room is now.

LYDIA

Right, ok, yeah. Fair, ok. That's very easy for us to...poor listeners not having access to 5D surround temperature.

(laughing)

BEN

So it looks pretty done

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Do we all do a walk round just to make sure

BRYN

Yeah, yeah there's something moving

BEN

Well let's go find some manticores bits. Moving? Where?

LYDIA

Are you sure it's not just the ground Hamid?

BRYN

It might be

LYDIA

Mm. I'm pretty sure there's nothing out there.

ALEX

Is there a reason that he's completely plastered?

BEN

I assume it's because he drank a lot.

HELEN

It's hard to explain

BRYN

I had to stop a riot

HELEN

He...

ALEX

Wilde just looks to Azu.

HELEN

There was a party while I was trying to...

ALEX

I was gone for about an hour. What did you do?

HELEN

I didn't do anything.

BRYN

I saved the city

HELEN

I saved...ok I did do one thing, I saved the city

BRYN

It's true. Azu did really well

LYDIA

I mean the city didn't look all that saved, I'll be honest. It was more like...

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BEN

What happened?

HELEN

There was...so there were a lot of orcs.

BRYN

Goblins and orcs gonna fight

HELEN

They were going to fight

ALEX

Oh no

BRYN

So we danced inside [giggling]

HELEN

He made them all dance while I went and tried to sort it out from a different angle

ALEX

Wilde looks so tired. He looks so tired even with prestidigitation.

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BEN

Same

LYDIA

Big mood

BEN

Big mood

(laughing)

HELEN

Look I did the best I could. The issue seemed to be that there wasn't enough...

BRYN

If the water comes back things will get better. Not fixed but better

HELEN

Yes it was...

LYDIA

Wait is there a lot of water around here that we could send them, I dunno

BEN

Well there's a river that dried up

HELEN

Exactly

BEN

But there's a drought

ALEX

Sasha you think you may have seen in the heat haze very difficult, this is because you got a huge perception check, a small amount of steam coming from the depths of what is now the sort of glassy crater

LYDIA

Oh great

BEN

Pump hole

(laughing)

ALEX

So this is Ben's...

BRYN

Stop saying that phrase!

ALEX

Ben's been saying that word a lot outside of recordings

BEN

We found a pump hole

ALEX

Stop saying pump hole

BEN

We're going to down the pump hole

ALEX

Stop saying!

LYDIA

In your pump hole

BEN

We're going to explore the depths of the pump hole

ALEX

Stop saying it!

HELEN

Deep inside the pump hole

BEN

I hope there aren't any...

BRYN

Guys! Family friendly podcast

BEN

Nothing that we have said is at all a problem...

ALEX

You were gonna say is at all a pump hole

(laughing)

That's how you know the joke's gone too far.

LYDIA

Sasha sees steam! Ok!

ALEX

Yes she does. Thank you

LYDIA

She sees steam and she says that she sees steam

ALEX

Ok

BEN

In a pump hole?

(laughing)

LYDIA

Possibly Grizzop yeah. I'm not all that familiar with aquaponics

(laughing)

ALEX

Ok that phrase is gorgeous.

LYDIA

Hydroponics. Yeah like I mean...

ALEX

Plumbing. The word's plumbing

LYDIA

That's the word

BEN

Yeah alright. I was just thinking it was pumping water in a hole it's a pump hole

BRYN

It's been a really long day.

BEN

Hole for a pump

LYDIA

I don't understand why that's so interesting to you Grizzop

BEN

Well I'm just saying

HELEN

Well if there's water then it might be used here to see if we can get the water running again, then we can stop a civil war happening down in Damascus

LYDIA

Oh that would be good. It is nice when we stop one instead of start one for a change

BEN

Alright let's go investigate the steam then. Actually before endure elements runs out. Probably do that

HELEN

I agree with that.

BRYN

We could...we could sleep and do it in the morning

LYDIA

It will be cooler than as well

BEN

Yeah but how riotous are we going to get if we don't get water back

BRYN

We defused it for now

BEN

Yeah for now. When's later?

BRYN

A week...

BEN

Oh

BRYN

Some days but not like the morning. We've defused it enough that it won't...

BEN

Alright well let's camp then

LYDIA

Give it a week and Hamid might be over his hangover.

BEN

Yeah, alright let's go camp

HELEN

Ok let's sleep

ALEX

So are you...in fact you have a decent campsite nearby where you holed up and observed this place. This was outside of the blast radius and you've basically set up and good to go

BEN

Yeah let's do that

BRYN

Did set a watch for the hat man...

LYDIA

Sasha's just gonna put Hamid's blanket over his head

HELEN

Like a canary

BEN

No I'll take first watch

ALEX

It is worth mentioning to all because some of you know how this works. Ensure elements lasts 24 hours. However it only protects you from hot and cold environments between...I'm going to put it in Celsius because...

BRYN

-45 degrees Celsius and +60 degrees Celsius

ALEX

+60. So yeah walking out...

HELEN

That's really hot

ALEX

But that's not...I can tell you now it's hotter than that on a freshly dragon scorched...

BEN

So we're able to get up to it but we probably couldn't go into it.

ALEX

That's exactly what I was getting at. If you had walked into it your shoes would've started melting.

BEN

Ooh. Oh dear

BRYN

You know the other thing we get to do if we split guys?

LYDIA

What's that?

BRYN

Level up!

LYDIA

Woo

ALEX

Ok spoilers. Spoilers. But yes. I maths-ed it and it turned out you were due a level

LYDIA

Maths

ALEX

You were due a level so you all go rest and you know what...

BEN

Alex. Do you mean overdue a level?

ALEX

What did I say?

BEN

Due a level?

ALEX

No you were...

BEN

That implies it was at the right time

ALEX

You were due a level and then some more.

BEN

Yeah

ALEX

Allow me to roll on my random encounters table to see how you survive the night. Oh terribly but you all survive

LYDIA

Yay

(laughing)

BEN

I can do that too. Oh it's going badly for Alex everyone. Oh I'm the GM.

LYDIA

Just start throwing dice at you. Do it directly.

ALEX

So you do all level. You do all level in the night however I will give...I will give generosity and favours to anyone who role plays it so they're not just like I woke up and I can do this now.

BRYN

No that's literally how my level ups work

ALEX

Yeah I know. That's why you won't be getting rewards but can I briefly get from everyone a very quick, what your level means just because it's been a while since we've done it and it's worth mentioning. I'll go from starting with you Ben

BEN

Yeah my base attack went up. My hit points went up because that's standard. I got 3, read them, 3...no 2, hit points.

ALEX

I was gonna say, don't get ahead of yourself.

BEN

2 skill points

LYDIA

3 read them...2

ALEX

He didn't put them into arithmetic.

BEN

Yeah and then I took the deadly aim feat which is like power attack basically if you remember from the Bertie years. I get to take a -2 to hit and +4 to damage on ranged abilities

ALEX

Yeah

BEN

And ranged attacks

ALEX

Bryn?

BRYN

I got three new spells

ALEX

Yeah big one...

BRYN

Oh, no I got four new spells.

ALEX

It is a big level for you.

BRYN

And I can now cast...

BEN

Sorry, shh, shut up. It's still Ben time.

(laughing)

I got access to second level paladin spells. Sexy Ben time

LYDIA

What! What happened while I was away?

BEN

Now over to you erotic Bryn

(laughing)

BRYN

Thank you Ben

ALEX

What's your level Bryn?

BRYN

So I know four new spells. I can now cast comprehend languages

ALEX

Ooh. I'm so glad you took that.

BRYN

Which lets me read and hear and understand but I don't get to speak or write.

So I still have to mime back

BEN

What a good level of granularity Pathfinder

ALEX

I like it. It adds hilarity

BRYN

I can now cast detect forts.

LYDIA

What?

ALEX

Ooh I hate that spell

BRYN

So it's a bit like zone of truth except instead of making them say things, I just read their mind

LYDIA

You can read minds now!

ALEX

Yep

LYDIA

Oh gosh, that's gonna be awkward

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BEN

Remember the system

LYDIA

He's such an oversensitive little...as well

BEN

Remember the system is why aren't you playing a spell caster

BRYN

I can cast hold person which is quite a good third level spell.

ALEX

It's decent.

BRYN

Freeze an opponent

LYDIA

I think what the system is at first why aren't you playing a fighter, then oh my gosh you should've been a rogue, then ah, why aren't you playing a mage

BEN

Actually if you've survived this lot...

BRYN

And I can cast fly

BEN

I rest my case

BRYN

So I can cast it on everyone. We can all fly when we really need to now. I also picked up two new feats...

ALEX

That's not true. Everyone apart from Wilde, I believe, can fly

BRYN

No I can cast five times a day.

ALEX

Aw. You won't but you can

(laughing)

BRYN

I picked up improved initiative to represent my dragon-y reflexes

ALEX

Cool

BRYN

And I picked up spell specialisation which means I cast fireball as if I was level 9 instead of level 7 so next time I cast fireball, it's going to be oopsy

ALEX

His character just went off everybody. Hamid just went off.

BEN

Careful on balancing that one Alex

ALEX

Yeah I know, right. It's fine, it's fine. There's going to be a lot of golems

LYDIA

Sasha got an extra dice

(laughing)

I mean that's basically the big thing. She get a bit more sneak attack and that also translates into her bombs. The thing is, it doesn't scale in anywhere near the same way...

ALEX

Don't forget to lord it over Ben though. You do have too many skills

LYDIA

I do. I'd still get 12...I mean, it's almost a burden

(laughing)

BRYN

You do struggle to spend all of...

ALEX

You can't give them away you know

LYDIA

I'm genuinely...just everything

ALEX

And feats?

LYDIA

Feats. I also took improved initiative just because Sasha can't be left behind. It'd be wrong and also it seemed character appropriate that she would be speedy

ALEX

Uh huh. And last but not least Azu

HELEN

Well I'm a paladin like Ben so we have quite similar things. So I have more health which is always good. My BAB, my base attack bonus is now 72 which I think means I'm better at fighting

ALEX

It does

HELEN

I got three more skills. So I now have...

ALEX

Three? Oh if only Ben could get three

HELEN

Three more skill points

ALEX

Again heady, heady heights

HELEN

I put them all in intimidate

(laughing)

LYDIA

Excellent!

ALEX

Good.

HELEN

I have a new feat which is vital strike which means...

ALEX

I don't like this feat. This is a bad feat. This is not quite as bad as mega fireballs but I don't like it.

HELEN

Which means that my damage is doubled on my first attack so if I roll a 20 I guess it becomes a...

BEN

Yes and also first attack every round

LYDIA

So does that, wait, wait, does that...if you have cleave, is each one the first attack?

ALEX

No, no

HELEN

No I would have to first attack and then cleave the rest if the first attack goes very well. Something like that.

BEN

What a miserable life

ALEX

Basically why bother

LYDIA

It's hard not being Hamid

HELEN

Yeah I also have a variety of new spells that I can apparently change if...

BEN

Yeah so you have gained access to the second level paladin list and it means that we both have one slot available to us of a second level spell which means that every single day we can choose one spell from that list that we have prepared to cast.

HELEN

Yes and I would like to have zone of truth for my first morning

ALEX

I think that's a good call.

BEN

Oh I've also taken paladin's sacrifice

ALEX

Mention that one

BEN

Alright paladin's sacrifice...

ALEX

Because it's good

BEN

...basically as a reaction I get to take all of the damage that someone else took in hit

ALEX

You basically jump in front of the bullet but without having to actually jump

LYDIA

That's actually good because Grizzop, while smaller, already has more hit points than Sasha

ALEX

Oh yeah Grizzop's actually really tanky

BEN

So yeah that's the, oh no, a killing blow. Turns out Artemis just kind of picked all that up and just dumped it on me

LYDIA

Yeah I mean that's a bit tricky since you're usually behind people, what with the...

ALEX

No but that's the good thing. It means that he's taking damage but not really taking damage from the people

BEN

I want to have the spare hit points to take the horrible hits

ALEX

Very clever. Very clever spell to take. Right. You all awake.

LYDIA

Yep

ALEX

None of you have died. Nothing turned up in the night.

HELEN

None of you have died. Real reassuring

LYDIA

Actually, for me, that is a nice change

ALEX

Everybody give me a will save

BEN

Well that's not a change to Sasha. Ah nailed it.

ALEX

Paladin making a will save. The times we live in

BEN

25

ALEX

Ok

BRYN

10

LYDIA

21

HELEN

18

ALEX

Good to know. Carry on

BRYN

Oh dear

ALEX

Everything's fine. The GM says writing something down, then covering it.

HELEN

Do not like this at all

LYDIA

I just think that we should keep Alex away from dice in principle

BEN

Also actually Alex it's ok that you can't really cover it because I cannot read your handwriting

(laughing)

ALEX

The ultimate defence

LYDIA

Nothing bad happens to us if Alex doesn't roll dice.

BEN

He just wrote down the word "lovely"

ALEX

Ok I'm going to take a break and then we're going to come back and then definitely lovely things are going to happen

LYDIA

Yay! Happy, fun times!

ALEX

And welcome back so the heat haze seems to have lessened

LYDIA

Woo

BRYN

Good

ALEX

It does seem to have still quite a decent amount of heat but yeah I will be open and say that had you gone without resting there would've been hideous punishments for you. What I will say now though is that regardless of whether any of you set watch or not, you all ended up falling asleep. I'm not gonna will saves. You nodded off and you have overslept where it's not like 7 in the morning, it's closer to midday and you woke up because it's getting a bit noon day sun hot

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BEN

So I actually wake up with my bow in my hand...

ALEX

Yeah like literally

LYDIA

Aw. Poor little Grizzop

ALEX

Immediately starts cooking breakfast. Oh late risers

(laughing)

LYDIA

Well maybe we can venture out onto the glass rink

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check

BEN

24

BRYN

23

LYDIA

16

BEN

Ooh

LYDIA

I know, right

ALEX

Grizzop and...

BEN

Wait, wait, wait.

ALEX

Sorry

HELEN

12

BEN

Alright well there you go.

ALEX

So I was gonna say Grizzop and Hamid but Hamid you're that hungover I'm penalty-ing it to the point where you don't notice. Wilde took himself off to one side, not like super distant, you can still keep an eye on him but you notice because you know taking watch and blah, blah, blah, he looks horrendous now that you can see him in daylight. Like utterly gaunt. I don't mean supernaturally so but he looks like someone who has been running a multinational corporation on like one hour's sleep for a year. They look awful.

BEN

Ey up Wilde

ALEX

He immediately turns away from you. There's a click. You see a sort of brief shimmer and then he turns back and it's just Wilde as always

BEN

You know that ain't healthy?

ALEX

So how are everyone?

BEN

Do you just wanna like sit this one out? Maybe stay at the campsite? Maybe just take a couple of hours off

ALEX

No I think that I should probably supervise as that's my job

BEN

Well you sort of maybe set us up and let us go so you could count yourself as setting us up here and you're waiting at basecamp and let us go.

LYDIA

Make us breakfast

HELEN

Or dinner

LYDIA

Yeah

BEN

Look I'm not being unkind but you look awful when you don't have your illusion on

LYDIA

Yeah speaking as someone that was recently dead, looking after yourself is great

BEN

Yeah you're gonna run yourself into the ground and then you're just gonna keel over and you could keel over in front of a manticore and then no one can save you and then you'd be dead.

ALEX

Wilde dusts himself down. I think I know my own limits, thanks. Shall we go have a look?

BEN

Ok that's what people who usually go past their limits say.

BRYN

Let's go

BEN

Just putting it out there. If it gets too much back off. It's fine. We've got this. We're professionals.

ALEX

Wilde's already started walking.

BEN

Alright fine. Try and help

HELEN

I'm going to keep an eye on him

ALEX

Ok you all approach the glass disc. It is definitely cooler. Endure elements is still active and will be for ages because you did it in the middle of the night and you slept, even if you slept like 12 hours plus, you've still got ages. I would say that given how uncomfortable it is with endure elements, good job you still have it active. Good job you still have it active.

BEN

Right well let's get going

LYDIA

Yeah, right so where's the steam?

ALEX

You can still see it and now that the heat is less...

LYDIA

There's the steam. Woo

ALEX

...it's still difficult to pick out but you knew where you were looking for it. It is coming from deep in. I'm going to give you this for free, it's where you smelled, my new word, petrichor earlier

BEN

You saw a drippy pipe

LYDIA

Oh grand, well let's...

ALEX

And you smelt water on the...

LYDIA

Ok. Great. Useful. Let's go towards the water

ALEX

Ok. As you approach the assumed pump hole, I'm not going to get perception checks from you because it's big enough to notice is, when you're...

LYDIA

Sasha's like it's there on the horizon. Hamid falls in

(laughing)

ALEX

So as you're walking and the sort of wibbly wobbly heat haze surrounds you all, you have to start having to walk past...you have to walk past the warehouses which were arranged, as we said, in a circle and so on. And the first one that you walk past, suddenly it becomes readily apparent to you that although there's sort of the molten hunk left it isn't all just lumped together and what you realise there's a huge, just lump of what's mostly adamantine is what's kind of melted and is beneath this layer of glass and all the other stuff has sort of trickled away and is just making the glass kind of dirty. So what's left of the warehouse is almost certainly, pretty much just, now slightly impure, the adamantine that was making up their stock

LYDIA

Are there any lumps lying around?

ALEX

It's all underneath this...

LYDIA

Sasha's wearing gloves so even if...

ALEX

...comparatively thick layer of glass

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BEN

Is it we basically almost need to mine it again

ALEX

Yeah like you would effectively have to start mining

LYDIA

A new resource for the work shortage town. Employment

ALEX

Tell you what, mining adamantine takes ages. Lots of specialist equipment, lot of skilled labour to mine adamantine.

BEN

Pop that one in the later pile

LYDIA

I wonder if this land would be worth much right now because I suppose I could buy it as an investment opportunity

ALEX

If you buy it before people find out it's full of adamantine you might get a really good deal

BEN

Other question actually, are there any manticores remains? I have no idea what they're made of because they're magical beasts so they could be made of...

LYDIA

Valuable things

BEN

Or just weird stuff

LYDIA

Valuable weird stuff

ALEX

High or low

BEN

High

ALEX

You see nothing

BEN

Ok what I was really looking for, it wasn't loot. I was looking for evidence that the manticores had died

ALEX

Let's put it this way there is no space within what's left of the compound to hide a manticore unless it's deep underground because it's a huge, flat...

BEN

They could burrow. I mean I don't know what they do. I want a manticore smear. I meant a glassy manticore smear. That's what I need

ALEX

You find no glassy manticore smear. The glass isn't perfectly clear. It's made of dirt. It's mucky and not good.

BEN

They're not here but they're not confirmed dead.

BRYN

We haven't seen the bodies

ALEX

You can't see all of the bodies...

BEN

Yeah they Disney died.

ALEX

Yeah you can't see them gently deres-ing on top of the glass or anything. Ok so you approach the steam

LYDIA

Ooh steam hole

ALEX

And you finally make it there and there appears to be a very narrow crack in the dirty mucky glass that steam is coming out of. It's not pouring out in plumes or anything but everywhere else has the sort of heat haze. This is the only bit that has actual steam coming out.

BEN

It's more of a crevice than a hole

LYDIA

Yeah well I mean I don't have a huge amount of drilling equipment on me right now so can we just report back to these...

BRYN

I mean it's mostly glass, we could probably break the layer of glass

HELEN

How thick is the glass?

ALEX

There's no way to tell. It's not even translucent.

BEN

Hey Azu

HELEN

Yes

BEN

Hit it with your big sword

ALEX

Can I suggest that if you do that everyone else backs away. You don't know how big it might actually be underneath

BRYN

That's a good idea, yeah

LYDIA

Sure

ALEX

Wilde says that having not actually approached that close

BEN

I mean sure if you're gonna be...

LYDIA

So I shouldn't jump up and down on it down

BEN

Ooh. Jump, jump, jump

LYDIA

I mean Sasha was about to say it won't that make difference if you do and then she decides not to say that.

ALEX

Ah. Aw. So what are you doing? What's the plan here guys?

BRYN

I'm going to back off a bit, yeah

HELEN

I'm happy to hit it with my big axe

LYDIA

Maybe get Topaz to come and jump and down on it because he's big and heavy and if he gets in trouble you can just summon him to a new place

HELEN

I'm quite big and heavy as well

BEN

I'm gonna back off

LYDIA

But we don't want you to get hurt. You're useful

BRYN

We don't want Topaz to get hurt either

HELEN

We don't want you to get hurt, you're useful

LYDIA

Sasha covered for herself

ALEX

Yeah nice

LYDIA

I mean yeah, for fighting and stuff. You know. You're good at that stuff

BEN

So I'm gonna back off but not quite enough because Wilde told me to

ALEX

Yeah I get it. Ok you automatically hit so I'm not gonna get an attack roll. Can you just give me a damage roll for how much damage you can deal

LYDIA

You miss the ground

BEN

Is this the first attack of a round

ALEX

It is yes

(cheering)

So you don't need to roll the D20, you're skipping straight to damage is what I'm saying. It's going to be really hard for you to miss the ground

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HELEN

What do I roll?

BEN

2 D12 +6

HELEN

Ok.

BEN

Solid

HELEN

7 + 8 is 15 + 12 is 27

BEN

+6

ALEX

+6

HELEN

+6 is 21...

(cheering)

LYDIA

Simple maths with Rusty Quill. Take out your exercise books

ALEX

Note this down

LYDIA

Turn to the answers at the back of your book

HELEN

Give yourself a gold star

LYDIA

You deserve it

ALEX

I was gonna say maths with Azu is just you're good, you're good

BEN

Well done

ALEX

So you plant your feet apart and really go for it. Of course you're not throwing your axe so you're going to have attack the ground beneath your feet

HELEN

That's fine

ALEX

That's fine.

HELEN

Wait

ALEX

There's a huge shattering crash, Azu immediately disappears. Grizzop can you give me a reflex save for not backing away far enough to potentially get caught

BEN

Yes however...

LYDIA

You're going to take the damage?

BEN

So I'm gonna spin that as like I go in but I go in well

ALEX

Ok

HELEN

Do you slide...

ALEX

I want RP for that

BEN

Basically I'm like – I was gonna do this anyway. Don't need your advice Wilde, thank you very much

ALEX

And another thing...

BEN

I know my limits

(laughing)

ALEX

So yeah Azu plummets into darkness.

HELEN

How far?

ALEX

It's a good question

LYDIA

How boiling?

HELEN

Argh

(laughing)

BEN

Also falling is like real deadly in this system

ALEX

So it...

HELEN

You have all killed me. I am so angry

BEN

For the record you're the one who attacked the ground

ALEX

Bryn, I suspect you know this off the top of your head. Can you remember falling damage for the Pathfinder system?

BRYN

A D6 for every 10 foot after the first

ALEX

Yes

LYDIA

I suggested we use the camel

BRYN

It does top out at some point.

ALEX

There is a max but it's so high that you're already dead by the time it tops out.

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BEN

Not necessarily rolling max damage, it might be all good

LYDIA

Oh that's a lot of rolls. 3 is quite a few.

BEN

It's a 40 foot drop

ALEX

Only 5 damage

BEN

Oh there you go. You fell 40 foot, that was a piece of cake

ALEX

Yeah. So it turns out...

LYDIA

And then Grizzop lands on your shoulders.

ALEX

You have the sort of dark...do you have dark vision or low light, I forget?

HELEN

I have dark vision

ALEX

So you have dark vision so I can just describe for you unlike everyone else and obviously Grizzop as well, so that's fine. So you drop, whoomph and it becomes apparent that you aren't falling down a pipe. You see a pipe flash past your face as you fall past the pipe into a...the closest description I can give you is almost like a sinkhole...

LYDIA

That's been pumped

ALEX

You drop downwards into what's left of this sinkhole

LYDIA

With a pump

ALEX

And it's dirt, it doesn't appear to be worked stone or anything like that. It is just wet down there. It's kind of moist and it doesn't....

BRYN

Moist

ALEX

...smell good. It isn't fresh water that's...

BEN

It's a moist pump hole

(laughing)

ALEX

It's a moist sunken pump hole

BRYN

It's a moist, dirty, sunken pump hole

LYDIA

You broke Ben!

(laughing)

HELEN

It's a dirty, moist, gaping, sunken pump hole

(laughing)

LYDIA

And you're deep inside it.

ALEX

Well it's because you tore it athunder

(laughing)

BEN

With your big weapon!

BRYN

Wow!

ALEX

None of this is...

(laughing)

LYDIA

After dark special

BEN

This...this is genuinely like Mary Whitehouse 50s, BBC Radio 4 skirting...this is pretty much, this is what a lot of ay, oh, right

ALEX

So the reason that you're hurt is that you drop. Your armour takes most of it and you find the remnants of a lot of piping down there with you. So possibly there was piping that's running through. It's...you've fallen into what was left of where the piping was running through or something like that. Grizzop you manage, because of your reflex save, to slide down the edges. So it's more of a slide than a fall so you're not taking any fall damage. You're not even taking half. Everyone else, Azu takes out that little chunk and it goes crunch, crunch, crunch. Azu and Grizzop fall and then it goes [cracking noise] expands quite a lot. You're both far enough away as is Wilde.

BRYN

Azu, Azu, are you ok? Grizzop are you ok?

BEN

Yeah. For the record, nailed it

HELEN

So you said I only take 5 damage

BRYN

You nailed the pump hole

ALEX

You only took 5 damage. I rolled almost minimum on every single dice.

(laughing)

What I would say is that could've been really painful

HELEN

I know

ALEX

And I have known games in the past where people have said that fall damage is the average rather than rolling so you don't end up like falling 400 feet and going – oof. Oh I'm ok

BEN

Or fall 10 foot and just go...

ALEX

Yeah exactly

LYDIA

Hi, yes, I remember that.

(laughing)

ALEX

So yeah you both find yourselves at the bottom amongst the detritus of a bunch of broken pipes and you see multiple pipes are leading into here. Most likely it was a junction of pipes, the dragon-ing plus bad maintenance and so on has just destroyed the complex of pipes that were here so you've just got a bunch of random pipes pouring in and steam is just, you know, it's still hot

BEN

How big are the pipes?

ALEX

Some are small. Some are big. Some are certainly big enough to go down

LYDIA

Are they Grizzop crawlable?

ALEX

One of them is big enough for Azu, in armour, to get down. There's a couple that are small enough for Grizzop specifically, you know, because he's smaller. There's some for obviously Hamid as well. There's multiple options here. It's not just a case of big one, small one.

LYDIA

Basically there's one for each of us.

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ALEX

Let's all split up down a different pipe

LYDIA

Yay! Mini game

BEN

This is Mario Party. It's the one where we randomly die

ALEX

So Wilde's just – does anyone have any rope up here?

LYDIA

Oh yeah tonnes, loads

BEN

Does he think we're amateurs?

ALEX

How much have we got? By the way he's being very uncharacteristically just, let's just do the thing. Let's just do the thing.

LYDIA

I mean we could use rope or Hamid could cast fly

BRYN

You don't know in character that Hamid can do that.

LYDIA

I know

BEN

I mean Hamid doesn't even know that he can do that

ALEX

Hamid's tend to come out when it's most appropriate story I believe. Wilde's just kind of holds a hand out for someone to pass him some rope. He's not even pretending to not be tired now. Like he looks fresh as a daisy but he's very much behaving like someone who's done

LYDIA

Sasha ties the rope to a bit of glass stuff that looks solid enough potentially to... like a girder maybe that is melted into the ground.

ALEX

Yeah I'm not requiring checks. It's not hot enough to burn the rope. We can just skip to, there is rope, and I'm fine for people to take 10 because, like I said, it's sloped. The only reason that Azu dropped is because middle of a cone, you know what I mean. Wilde immediately starts climbing down. He doesn't even gesture for other people to go first

LYDIA

Why does he climb down? We've found what we need to. There's a lot of pipes.

ALEX

Wilde immediately climbs down

LYDIA

Ok

BRYN

Does water look like it's coming out of any of the pipes?

ALEX

Yes

BRYN

Which one?

ALEX

More than one

BRYN

Ok

ALEX

The big one...

BRYN

We want to trace the water to its source. Clearly not very much water?

ALEX

So no that's the thing, the big one...you know what, are you going down or not? I don't want to give you huge descriptions if you're staying up top

BRYN

Well I'm going to take stock of what's down there from up top first

ALEX

For you there's not much water. I have to split this info unless people are being specific.

BRYN

We should trace the source of the water. Can you tell which pipe it's coming through?

BEN

That's the plan. That's why I'm down here.

ALEX

Sure. Give me a perception check

BEN

18

ALEX

18. So what you see is the big one that was big enough for Azu clearly has signs of really high amounts of, I want to say, liquid rather than water in it. You know like on the sides. It's very polluted. It's very oily. It's very...it has a certain smell. It's not sewage. It smells more industrial wastey. There isn't much coming out of that. There's like the odd drip. You get the impression that there used to be a lot and now there's not much. Some of the smaller ones that would be...

BEN

If...basically I'm looking for clean water

ALEX

That's fine. So a pipe that would be a squeeze for the normal human sized people but still possible, Azu would have to take off her armour and pull it behind kind of deal. There is fresh water, I don't want to say gushing because that implies you know plumes and plumes but there is a decent amount of fresh water coming out and just pouring into this sinkhole.

BEN

That one looks like it's the source but might be a bit small for you Azu

ALEX

There's the odd drip of water from others as well which is clean. Some are dirty but those seem to be the two big ones worth mentioning

BRYN

Shall we try tracing that one. I mean we don't all have to go down it. I mean I think I'd fit it quite easily

HELEN

I'd rather not go down the pipe please

BRYN

Yeah that's fair enough

BEN

Yeah alright. Well I mean I can see in the dark so...

HELEN

Yes take Grizzop. That seems...

BRYN

Well I'm just going to – I cast dancing lights. Yeah so I'll set up a second piece of rope that lets me specifically climb to that one. I'm not very good at climbing

ALEX

No so that ones right near the low. You don't even need to climb. It's readily accessible.

BRYN

Sure so we can head down that one.

BEN

Right so just quick thing, if it suddenly fills up with water you need to relax and let the float take you. Don't fight it or you'll drown, ok. Just make sure you take as big a breath as you can and just be calm, alright

BRYN

Ok that makes sense, thank you

BEN

Yeah I'll down

ALEX

So it's not so much heading down as heading along.

BEN

Relevant to my backstory

ALEX

Yep. It is...Ben's so happy with himself.

BEN

It's because Helen loves gossip so I've been making ah faces to Helen

LYDIA

When did you make another character that was obsessed with drowning...

BEN

Well...

HELEN

Obsessed with not drowning maybe

BEN

Water has appeared in his backstory

ALEX

There's a Facebook status that says "it's complicated"

(laughing)

And Grizzop may be in a relationship with water.

So you start heading down the pipe. It isn't steeply sloping down because how could it water, it's similarly not deeply sloping up. It's very much clearly just going along. How far are you willing to go out on a limb on this one? Not because it goes on forever, I'm just trying to gauge

BRYN

I mean a fair way. We need to know where it's coming from

ALEX

Ok. So you start going along and it becomes clear quickly that the light starts disappearing behind you, no signs of light up ahead, the water doesn't seem to be increasing.

BRYN

So I can control the dancing lights so I can send them a bit ahead of us as well

ALEX

Yeah, yeah. What becomes clear is that it's less sort of an internal plumbing kind of thing and it's more like an aqueduct. This is transporting water over potentially quite a decent distance. So you keep going, keep going...

BRYN

I need to recast dancing lights every so often

ALEX

How long's the duration?

BRYN

It's apparently only a minute but I can cast it an infinite number of times

ALEX

So you know what I'm going to jump ahead to you get to go at least half a mile along this pipe and it is just...again I'm talking, you know, Roman aqueduct style where it has a tiny little gradient to keep the water fresh but it is just running and running and running and running. Keep going? Turn back?

BRYN

Half a mile's not that far

BEN

Yeah. What do you reckon? Could be one of us carries on down here...

ALEX

To be clear it isn't perfectly fresh. It's not been laid in the last two weeks or something. It's not atrocious. It's not corroded. You're not worried it's going to cave in. Honestly it's just a really boring walk eventually.

BRYN

If it takes much longer we should...

BEN

Well I reckon one of us should keep going because it's an aqueduct, right. It's going to go to the water source, it's going to go to the rover and there might be a blockage

BRYN

Well yeah absolutely

BEN

Have you got any magic that can let us talk to each other? Actually have you got another mobile stone?

BRYN

No. I mean I do have...I do have a spell that lets you talk to each other but it doesn't have a very long range.

BEN

Well that's not very useful

BRYN

No

(laughing)

BEN

Alright well..

BRYN

Let's just keep going. They'll be fine without us for a bit longer

BEN

Sure but if we split up we can have a rendezvous point, maybe Temple of Artemis

BRYN

Well it's a single pipe. Let's just keep going.

ALEX

Obviously you're having this conversation while still walking

BEN

Yeah still walking

ALEX

I'm going to jump ahead if everyone who isn't in a pipe can bear with me. You jump ahead and you cover, very difficult to judge distances because it's a featureless pipes.

BEN

I've actually got one of those wheels on sticks

ALEX

You just hear Grizzop to himself. Click, click, click. You reckon you've covered a couple of miles and you start hearing a sound up ahead. It is very difficult to make out specifics because there's so much reverberation and so on. It's definitely the sound of water but it's kind of boomy and echoey, it could be a little bit, it could be a torrent. It's really difficult to gauge but it's definitely up ahead and you reckon that you're basically at decision time to there's definitely water ahead, head back or press on and see what it is

BRYN

Go and see what it is

ALEX

Ok you press on, you press on and again there's still no light at all and you come to, what is clearly, you can tell by the audio of the...

BEN

The acoustics

ALEX

The acoustics, thank you.

LYDIA

The sound design

(laughing)

ALEX

You can tell by the excellent sound design that the space ahead is clearly larger. It's more open and as you get there, Grizzop you see that first despite the dancing lights but dancing lights ahead is fine. You see that the pipe basically comes to an end and you get there and then as it gets to the end you see that you are entering into, what can best be described as...

LYDIA

A hole?

(laughing)

With a pump

(laughing)

ALEX

A modified water course. As in there's a lot of water. It's not a water tank or anything and it becomes apparent that the reason that there's water not coming down this pipe is more by good luck. It hasn't stopped just because it's been **embashed**, it's because it's slightly above the level of the water. There's a lot of water going past but it isn't an underground river or something. You're looking around and there are signs of...you know, there's a couple of walkways disappearing off into the distance along the sides. The ceiling is comparatively low, it appears, neither of you really have training like archaeology, architecture, engineering. None of them

BEN

Yeah no I don't have them

ALEX

You can tell that people have been here. You can tell that people have been doing stuff around here.

BEN

Er actually knowledge...it might be knowledge geography but knowledge nature to know if what this is doing...is it a spring, are they diverted?

ALEX

That would be knowledge geography

BEN

That's fair

ALEX

But yeah you find effectively there's definitely water here.

BEN

I've got a 1 in it

ALEX

Have you got a 1?

BEN

I've got a 1 which means I can roll it

ALEX

If you've got a 1 in knowledge geography go for it

BEN

I might as well give it a go. Oh there's another 1

ALEX

Another 1

BEN

2

LYDIA

So you may be very confident in your answer

ALEX

You're very confident that they have made use of an existing underground river

BEN

Oh well you see what's going on here, they've redirected an underground river. So they've probably redirected it so this is why the river's dried up because it's been moved away

BRYN

Yeah makes sense. This looks like an even bigger facility but we're a couple of miles away from the original facility here. Do you think we should bring the whole party?

ALEX

Cut back to Sasha and Azu and Wilde just in a hole

LYDIA

Well no haven't we got out of the hole

ALEX

You never said. That's fine. Tell me now

LYDIA

I think we should get out of this hole and have a barbecue. I mean the little ones are going to be gone for a while. We could just...

ALEX

Wilde just takes a moment, gives an uncharacteristic look and goes – that's a really good idea

LYDIA

Yeah I mean, you know, it's not going to be a short while. I've spent a long time in pipes so I think they'll probably be gone

ALEX

That's not a bad idea

LYDIA

Yeah anyone got...I mean I've only got these travel rations but we could add some spices or something, just fry them up

ALEX

I'm going to end the episode on setting up a barbie in the middle of this scorched, completely obliterated, radiating heat...

BEN

The whole thing's a grill

ALEX

Yeah you could cook egg on the ground.

LYDIA

If there are particularly hot bits under...at the time, try...

ALEX

I personally am well onboard for a dragon cooked egg

LYDIA

Yeah try cooking an egg on the hot glass.

ALEX

Yeah we'll end it there and then we'll see if you ever make it back down the pipe

BRYN

Bye!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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