

## RQG – 129 – Brave New World

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**ALEX**

Hi, everybody, Alex here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our patrons. Jennifer Painton, Camilla Sutton, Charles Craig, Egor Nikolski, Brianna, Cara Martin, Lauren Coleman, Whim, Shauna Bracken, Callie Shera, Zalia Khimra, Christopher Nyez, Max Scrockey, Phillip Platt, Aura B, Johnnie Dangerously, Aveena Fraid, Lice Rohas, Iris, Kim Cubertson. 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 awards.

**[Show Theme - Intro]**

**ALEX**

Hello and welcome to 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

Rusty Quill Gaming – 129 – Brave New World

**HELEN**

And Helen Gould

**ALEX**

And who are you playing?

**HELEN**

Azu

**BRYN**

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

**BEN**

Zolf Smith

**ALEX**

Yay!!! We were discussing how long it's been. Really long time.

**BRYN**

Two years?

**ALEX**

Yeah.

**BRYN**

Since interactions

**BEN**

Although as Helen pointed out like two weeks.

**(everyone laughs)**

**ALEX**

Well, no. No, no, it depends. Two weeks or two years, they both actually kind of check out.

**HELEN**

Oh my gosh, yes.

**BRYN**

Sorry, how much lived experience?

**BEN**

About two weeks.

**ALEX**

I have genuinely tried to more or less sync it up so that for Zolf about as much time has passed as the recording. So, everything is fine, everything squared up, everyone who accuses me of, “Aw, this whole campaign is crushed into a tiny amount of time”. I’m like, “No, it’s not. It’s actually really long running”.

**BRYN**

“You are the ones who are wrong”.

**BEN**

And also you did that time skipping at up-time not down-time. So, you still don't give these characters any chance.

**ALEX**

Oh, you want down-time. Alright. That's fine.

**HELEN**

Why did you have to say that?

**BRYN**

Keep us locked in a cell for a week.

**BEN**

This was already planned.

**HELEN**

Alright.

**BRYN**

What an episode.

**ALEX**

So, we are picking up where we left off. As a brief run down because we probably do have some new listeners. It's been a fresh season and this is the first like couple of episodes of the brand new timeline I suppose.

**HELEN**

How exciting.

**BEN**

Hey, guys.

**BRYN**

Should have started last episode.

**BEN**

Or the one before which is the actual beginning of the season.

**ALEX**

So, I'm not keeping track. What remains of the party...

**HELEN**

Do you have phrase it like that?

**ALEX**

...were teleported to Japan where they immediately went to an inn of some kind and were treated to some lovely drinks. Basically passed out...

**HELEN**

We treated ourselves to them.

**ALEX**

Fell through the floor and woke up in a cage...

**BRYN**

The worst.

**ALEX**

...with basically an old friend. I think that's fine. He's not my friend. We are now going to pick up pretty much where we left off, which is Hamid obviously you just put the request in for a bunch of stuff. I'm going to leave it to you guys. Do you want to pick up exactly where you left off or do you want a little bit of time, a little bit of cool down time? It's all good.

**BRYN**

03:00 ?? receive your gifts.

**ALEX**

You know what, I got time to kill. You want some down-time, he's some down-time. You tell me what do you want?

**BRYN**

"Tell me what you want, I'll lock you up. I'll lock you up real good. I'll hook you up real good. Do you want that juicy dryer?"

**BEN**

I really really really wanna zig a zig ar.

**BRYN**

I'm not going to be your lover, okay? You've told people Zolf haven't you Ben...? Yeah, how does Zolf respond to my demands?

**ALEX**

Yeah, okay.

**BEN**

"Well, I can get you that stuff, I'm surprised you need a mirror and everything. And your magic field, that's why.

**BRYN**

"Alright, yeah, sure".

**BEN**

“I’ll go get you that stuff. Nice to see you again, Hamid”. And I go get that stuff.

**ALEX**

So, Zolf leaves.

**HELEN**

“What is happening?”

**BRYN**

“I don’t know. It’s so ... Zolf... do we tell you about Zolf? He used to be part of the mercenary group before...”

**HELEN**

“Ummmm”.

**BRYN**

“I guess he’s working with Wilde now”.

**HELEN**

“Poseidon person”.

**BRYN**

“Yeah, he was a Cleric of Poseidon.”

**HELEN**

“Mmm. Right. Well...”.

**BRYN**

“I’m a bit surprise he’s working with Wilde again. They never seemed to get on. But, I guess while we were gone, Wilde needed some reliable people and they’d worked together before”.

**BEN**

“Right, okay. Here we go”. I pass some collapsible chairs and a collapsible like picnic table through the bars. “There you go, make yourself a little bit more comfortable”.

**BRYN**

“Thank you. I’m still a bit put out that you’ve decided to keep us in a cage”.

**BEN**

“Well, I mean, you know...you know the situation, right?”

**BRYN**

“Yes, I understand the situation. We could have been left in quarantine with our families back in Cairo. We were told we were needed here urgently and we’ve had to leave them behind in a cage just to turn up here and be locked in a cage”.

**HELEN**

“I thought we were being useful, not mistrusted”.

**BEN**

“Okay. On the timelines... okay, this is not... this is not a world in which you can just afford to trust people. Now, I am going to be honest, I’m pretty certain Hamid ain’t turned”.

**BRYN**

“05:09 ??”.

**BEN**

“Okay. And Hamid, this... Azu, she’s not left here... you know can you vouch for her?”

**BRYN**

“I mean, as far as I understand it, we’ve been gone over 18 months and she’s been in my presence the entire time. So, yes”.

**BEN**

“Okay. So, I still can’t let you out but this is why I can talk to you. You know and that is.. that is trust in all of itself, I’m not giving information to people who could use it against us. But, I’ve got to say Wilde, being Wilde, had that sort of attitude you know the, “Hey, no, it’ll be fine” attitude. He’s already

been burnt by it once. So, we're sticking by the rules and those are rules. You know... you know what's at stake, right? Like I..."

**BRYN**

"I understand that, I'm just saying I would have liked to have spent this time with my little brother who's lost and alone in a different world, if we were going to be in a cage regardless".

**BEN**

Wilde and I didn't know that. Nor can we know that you're not lying that that's where you were. We don't actually know exactly where you came from. Messages can be sent but messages can't be verified beyond all reasonable doubt, right? This is the problem".

**BRYN**

"Fine. Fine".

**BEN**

"This is the problem. This is the problem".

**BRYN**

"So, tell us... look, it's been a long time, Zolf. How about we start with what happened to you after we parted ways in Prague?"

**HELEN**

Azu starts to work out quietly in the corner.

**(everyone laughs)**

**BRYN**

“I’m doing sit ups”.

**BEN**

“06:42 ?? bicep curl again, yeah?”

**HELEN**

Mm mm.

**ALEX**

I’m getting ... I’m real getting prison intimidation vibes already from Azu.

**BRYN**

“I’m in a cell for five minutes and you’re already like., “Well, time’s up, bunk up”.

**BEN**

“I’ve got to cut to a guard you know, I’ve got to establish my dominance”.

**ALEX**

Where’s your ship come on.

**HELEN**

I've got tusks 07:03 ?? my way out.

**BRYN**

And an axe

**BEN**

We've still got our weapons.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

How big is the cell by the way?

**ALEX**

It is about ten feet by ten feet.

**BRYN**

So, not big. That's four squares.

**HELEN**

Okay, that's small enough for Azu to be ?? 07:09.

**ALEX**

Honestly, it's close enough to the room that you're in right now.

**HELEN**

Yeah. No, not good. Right. Yep, she is genuinely going to be like doing push ups and stuff.

**BRYN**

Holding eye contact or trying to hold eye contact or ignoring?

**BEN**

She should ask Hamid to sit on her back to make it harder.

**HELEN**

I'll lift you up 07:38??.

**BRYN**

While she's doing bicep curls with Hamid while Hamid has a conversation with himself.

**BEN**

I mean, knowing Hamid he'd be lolling to sleep so...

**HELEN**

Yeah, that's true.

**BEN**

“Look, I’m sorry I left you in Prague. I’m not proud of that”.

**BRYN**

“I understand it was the right decision at the time, unfortunately”.

**BRYN**

“Yeah. Well...”.

**BRYN**

“We could have used your help but that’s the way of things”.

**BEN**

“Yeah, well, at that stage, I wouldn’t have been much help. So...”

**BRYN**

“You’re not that much help now either.”

**BEN**

“Look, I get that you’re obviously angry and I understand that”.

**BRYN**

“I’m more than angry”.

**BEN**

“Furious? Incandescent with rage?”

**BRYN**

“I am not going to talk to you about it”.

**ALEX**

Oh, it is worth mentioning, Azu is not glowing.

**HELEN**

Really?

**ALEX**

Yeah.

**BRYN**

Wearing anti-magic field.

**ALEX**

Oh. You made it through Rome glowing, not here. You know why that might be? I mean, it could just be because everything's your fault, maybe that's why the glow **08:44??**.

**BRYN**

Oh, come on.

**HELEN**

Stop it Alex. Boooo.

**BRYN**

Boooo.

**ALEX**

Look, I just think that...

**BRYN**

Who's this guy.

**ALEX**

I think I need a bit more direct control of Azu's internal monologue, that's all I'm saying.

**HELEN**

No.

**BRYN**

Talk about paladins being fascists.

**BEN**

“So, I had a bit of sole searching to do, and I did, and I’ve... my and Poseidon are not on speaking terms anymore. But, that’s fine”.

**BRYN**

“Oh, you’ve the church?”

**BEN**

“I mean, not officially, I just haven’t spoken to them and reject it... stuff has just but, look, I have spent some time wandering around the cities of Central Europe before everything kicked off and had some thinking and found out a little more about what my dad did with the Harlequins and you know he was like a logistical freelance before...gave him a hand but wasn’t a full member so I decided, well, since I didn’t have anything to... no direction, then that would be as good as anything to keep my mind off of stuff so...”

**BRYN**

“You started working with the Harlequins?”

**BEN**

Sort of, yeah. Well, look, honestly, Meritocrats aren’t much better so it’s much of a muchness in’t

**BRYN**

“Well, I mean, only one of those two factions allowed a Necromasa to rise in a city leading to the deaths of hundreds of people but, sure...”

**HELEN**

“And possibly is the cause of all of this from what were told”.

**BEN**

“Really?”

**BRYN**

“What? I don’t... that man, Kafka, he was looking into the robot things. The Simulacrum. I mean, not exactly. That wasn’t the point I was making really”.

**BEN**

“He’s more apart from that whole thing, which obviously it’s not good but, from what **Curie** says he was corrupted by a bad book, a Roman book. So, that whole...”

**BRYN**

“So, it’s seems connected to me. That’s all I’m saying”.

**BEN**

“Okay But, Kafka probably connected to Simulacrum stuff in that Henri was connected to the Simulacrum stuff”.

**BRYN**

“Well, whatever”.

**BEN**

“I was helping them out looking into the weather stuff, remember?”

**BRYN**

“Yeah”.

**BEN**

“Obviously, it’s been getting worse but, I kind of hit a bit of a dead end. There was something doing it. It was localised around coastlines, not open seas. So, it seemed targeted to try and keep people, restrict communication”.

**BRYN**

“Restrict movement”.

**BEN**

“Yeah, isolate people, isolate regions but that hit a bit of a dead end so, then we were contacted by Wilde, he asked for me because he knew what I was up to and then I’ve been helping him, along with... do you remember Barnes?”

**BRYN**

“Yeah, yeah”.

**BEN**

“Yeah. So, he’s helping out and this guy called Howard Carter”.

**BRYN**

“Carter?”

**HELEN**

“Are you joking?”

**BRYN**

“Carter is a petty criminal, an idiot”.

**BEN**

“I mean, he’s a quite a good sneak thief”.

**BRYN**

“11:34 ?? any ability at all when we met him”.

**HELEN**

“Then he tried to bribe his way out of it”.

**BEN**

“I mean, I don’t know what he was doing before then but you know he seemed like a bit of a Sasha. How is she by the way?”

**HELEN**

“We lost her”.

**BRYN**

Hamid just looks really sad. He doesn't...

**BEN**

"Right, okay, fair enough. Dangerous business, and all that"

**HELEN**

"No, not fair enough. Very very unfair. Extremely not good".

**BEN**

"And Bertie..."

**BRYN**

"How much has Wilde told you about what happened to us?"

**BEN**

"You went AWOL. You disappeared".

**BRYN**

"I mean, yeah, but before that".

**BEN**

"Not a huge amount".

**BRYN**

“I mean, you heard... you surely must have heard what happened in Prague”.

**BEN**

“What, with Kafka? Yeah. Well, bits”.

**BRYN**

“And Bertie dying?”

**BEN**

“That I didn’t know”.

**BRYN**

“What? It was literally in the papers”.

**BEN**

“I was not... as I said, I was not in the headspace where I was keeping up with... anyway. Right, well, it couldn’t have happened to a nicer guy”.

**BRYN**

“And my sister”.

**BEN**

“Right, sorry about that. I am sorry I couldn’t...”

**BRYN**

“I assumed Wilde would have filled you in. So, yeah, after Prague...”

**BEN**

“It’s the relevant bits, not, you know...”

**BRYN**

“We met Newton. We found someone who’d been working with Kafka and Tesla on miniaturising the power source, the same one we found under the ordnateurs in Paris. We went to Cairo. We found a bunch of ciphered papers in the bank vaults and handed them over to Wilde. We went to Damascus and traced the Adamanteen to the plant where we found a bunch of Simulacrum ready to be shipped and we got Apophis to burn that to the ground. Then we found a factory underneath it and we flooded that. And then, the Cult of Hades told us they’d kidnapped our family and taken... Einstein told us they’d taken them to Rome so we went to Rome to try and rescue them and then we went into some sort of pocket dimension where time was running differently that might have been linked to Hades or something and...”

**HELEN**

“Almost certainly linked to Hades”.

**BEN**

“How long is it?”

**HELEN**

“We were there for about ten minutes”.

**BRYN**

“A few minutes and when we came back, Einstein told us 18 months had passed”.

**BEN**

“Wait, so, you’re telling me that basically, as far as you’re concerned, I left about two weeks ago?”

**BRYN**

“I mean... or like a month, maybe. But, that sort of scale, yeah. It’s a very fresh and recent. And it was travelling back after we’d found our family, travelling back from the other dimension that we lost Sasha and Grizzop and we don’t know what happened. The magic might have gone wrong, we might still have a way to find but we don’t... we need the help of people and the world is too messed up for anyone to help us with that right now so we’ve got to get on with it and we can’t spend time with our family, we can’t help because we’re trapped in this cage. Sorry... sorry, it’s just... it’s a lot, it’s been a lot”.

**BEN**

“I know it’s a lot. Look, I didn’t realise you hadn’t had that long to come to terms with everything. We’ve had 18 months to kind of know what’s... I’m a lot more used to this than you two are so maybe... I’ll sit quietly for a bit, got to keep watch just in case...”

**HELEN**

“In case of what exactly? Are you... are we going to explode?”

**BRYN**

“In case we start developing blue lines on our face and turn evil”.

**BEN**

“Yeah, basically, that. Yeah, pretty much that”.

**HELEN**

“Right”.

**ALEX**

Azu moves over to Hamid, does a little pat.

**BRYN**

Hamid grabs your hand, just squeezes it.

**BEN**

“Tell you what, I will sit quietly away and read my book, you two...”

**BRYN**

“Did you have the food and some water”.

**BEN**

“Yes... no... of course. Yeah, I’ll go get that. I’ll give you two some space. I don’t, you know... yeah, I’m going to go”.

**HELEN**

“Bye”. How faraway are you? Are you faraway that you would hear us if we were talking?”

**BEN**

“I will be leaving the room for now while I get food but then I will come back”.

**HELEN**

“Okay”.

**BEN**

“I don’t know. I don’t know how faraway the food place is”.

**ALEX**

It’s extremely close. “You have prepped for this eventually and also you’re in an inn.

**BRYN**

That’s actually it.

**BEN**

Yeah, that's true. I suppose then, as you know, I've gone out of the room".

**ALEX**

You're stocked for long term stuff.

**BEN**

Yes, I will be reluctantly listening what they say because they could be spooky corrupt involved".

**ALEX**

You're doing your job, good. Well, while you're gone...

**HELEN**

So, Azu says to Hamid, "Do you really think that we can get them back?"

**BRYN**

"There's a chance. They were lost during the travelling spell. They could be somewhere else or they could be stuck a bit like they others were. But, they were actually in the other plane and they could be stuck between planes. Or they could be on a different plane".

**HELEN**

"What would that mean?"

**BRYN**

It could mean anything. If they were stuck on a plane where time runs faster and everything's trying kill them they're probably... but, they could be stuck on a plane where nothing much happens and time is slow and we can find them".

**HELEN**

"Right, it's magic so there's a chance".

**BRYN**

"I think so. Curie said it was likely but it's not possible".

**HELEN**

"Isn't it ironic because we went to Rome to recover people and then we lost them anyway? So, there's different ones".

**BEN**

"Right. So, there you go. Some stuff. I'll just be in a corner reading my..."

**HELEN**

"Yes, bye".

**BEN**

"Okay. Yeah, bye. Well, not bye, I'm still in... yeah, okay, bye".

**BRYN**

“I mean, it’s different though, isn’t it? Like the others were hostages and wherever Grizzop and Sasha are at least they’ve got a chance. I hope they’re together. I hope they look after each other, they’re both survivors”.

**HELEN**

“Yeah, well. I hope we find out”.

**BRYN**

“Too much else going on but time probably isn’t of the essence in a way. Either so much will have happened it won’t matter or not enough will have happened that it won’t matter either way, I guess”.

**ALEX**

It’s a brave new world.

**BRYN**

The dramatic irony is very strong with this scene.

**ALEX**

It’s everything I wanted it to be and more. I’m so happy.

**BEN**

Zolf kind of looks over his book and says, “Look, for what it’s worth, you two being here, as long as this whole trial period, you know, as long as you pass

your probation, as it were, you'll help getting stuff moving here. We've been at a bit of impasse. So, this is good that you're here. As I said, if you're not actually secretly..."

**HELEN**

"Fine".

**BEN**

"I'll go back to my book".

**BRYN**

"You said you were doing logistics and investigating the weather".

**BEN**

"Oh, the weather, yeah".

**BRYN**

"What else... when did everything go really wrong and what... how did you end up in Japan?"

**BEN**

"Well, the... look, I'm not going to talk about the mission. I'll talk about 19:42 ?? stuff but..."

**BRYN**

“Sure, okay”.

**BEN**

“But, Wilde has something to do here and that’s I’ve been brought in along with Barnes and Carter to do.

**HELEN**

“Is it a heist?”

**BEN**

“Again, I’m not going to talk about the mission because the veins and all that stuff. But, yeah, yeah, sorry, that’s... that’s one”.

**BRYN**

“Can you tell us about the past then? You said Wilde had been burned by trusting people. Like, this is the kind of thing that would be helpful to know is we don’t stumble into a situation and make everyone us feel bad by asking questions when we haven’t been adequately prepared”.

**BEN**

“Hamid, I’m sorry. I’ve already grieved. I thought you were all dead and the fact that you’ve turned up again is a surprise and gave me some hope and... you know, Sasha’s still gone and none of know what’s happened to her but I’ve already... it’s been 18 months, I’ve already been through this. I knew... I’ve had time and I’m sorry you haven’t but, it’s what I’m trying to give you...”

**BRYN**

“I don’t want to get used to losing people. It’s been constant. I can’t...”

**HELEN**

“Hug?” Azu hugs Hamid.

**BRYN**

Hamid hugs back.

**HELEN**

Yeah, I think I would like to continue just holding you for the rest of the scene.

**(everyone laughs)**

**ALEX**

You’ll make that happen.

**BRYN**

Go back to the bicep crunches.

**HELEN**

Oh, yeah, but like just holding 21:04??.

**(everyone laughs)**

**BRYN**

“But I understand that this new world we’ve found ourself in that everything’s gone terrible and everyone seems to have hardened themselves to this constant loss and betrayal and I’m not... I just want to understand what people have been going through. Cause it’s so different”.

**HELEN**

“We were trying to stop something like this from happening and...”

**BEN**

“Well, I don’t know... don’t know if anyone could have stopped it, it might have been too big for individuals to be able to influence but it might not be too big for an individuals to undo and that’s... you know, that’s what we’re trying to do and we... people haven’t... people are all guarded but they haven’t hardened up. Like it just... it has become that there is a default expectation of betrayal and loss but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t hurt.

**BRYN**

So, we it told it started in London with riots”.

**HELEN**

“That was happening while we were in Damascus I think. So, it must have started to...”

**BRYN**

“It was starting to, yeah.”

**HELEN**

“22:18 ??”.

**BRYN**

“Is that where it started? What happened next? I still want to get a sense of how things got so out of hand. Curie filled us on a bit. She said, you know, that... started there and spread to Paris and that Greave 22:35 ?? got taken and...” And, yes, you describe what was described last episode...

**BRYN**

Yeah, yeah.

**BEN**

And I confirm that that is what I know and I think probably you can't add much more detail.

**BRYN**

No, basically.

**ALEX**

Why don't we take a break there and we'll... we'll all catch up on info that you all already know.

**BEN**

I need more Alex, you need someone to give me more information.

**BEN**

“I’m not 22:56 ??, I can’t come back into your life and you just try and use me”.

**Break**

**ALEX**

And, welcome back. So, I am going to jump in a little bit here with Zolf unfortunately is not exactly a mind of information because unfortunately a lot the things that you want answers to he either doesn’t have or no one does. What I am going to suggest is because you’ve got at least a bit of time ahead of you, I might accelerate time at that point a little bit, it seems a sensible place. But I want to take my lead from you all. Where would you like to accelerate time to? If you want to skip to the end of seven days I can do that.

**BRYN**

Shall we do a halfway point?

**HELEN**

Yeah. So, we do a bit where like we’re halfway through and then one at the end.

**ALEX**

Okay, cool. So, what I'll do then, as brief overview of what happened like that might affect you in those days. So, you know, day one passes. Day two, I'm not going to tell your characters what your characters do. Every day Wilde will come in, have a look, have a talk with Zolf and then leave. It won't say a word to either of you. He will look if you speak to him he will blank face ignore you.

**HELEN**

Wow.

**ALEX**

Just stonewall, nothing at all. Actually, both give me a sense motive check.

**HELEN**

Yeah, okay.

**BRYN**

Natural 20.

**ALEX**

Good.

**HELEN**

Ooh, now wait.

**ALEX**

That makes sense, you actually know Wilde a lot more so that makes sense.

**HELEN**

14.

**ALEX**

14, okay.

**HELEN**

But only because I've 11 sense motive.

**BRYN**

Yeah, my sense motive is only 3 but I did roll an extra 20.

**ALEX**

Hamid, you notice that whenever he's looking at both of you, he's picked up a new mannerism that he didn't have before, which is he sort of gently strokes the scar, the fresh... the new one on his face, when he looks at you both, just a little bit and then he leaves. But, yeah, nothing. If you let me know if you yell at him or scream at him, it doesn't matter, you're getting stonewalled the whole time.

**HELEN**

What are the bars between us and the corridor made of again? Are they adamantine?

**ALEX**

You'll have had the time to check. They are soot black in adamantine.. So, it's adamantine that someone has sooted up so they don't have any shine to them and then there is mesh between the bars as well. There is one that doesn't have mesh, which is for Zolf to pass things through but you aren't going to be able to throw things through there unless it's like a bit of water maybe.

**BRYN**

Hamid is pretty annoyed at the whole situation.

**ALEX**

Yeah.

**BRYN**

But kind of also understands. He thinks that the other people are probably being reasonable so he's not going to be angry at anyone, he's just going to be frustrated.

**ALEX**

In which case I will jump to the halfway point.

**BEN**

“Right. Nine letters, 32 down. It’s a word meaning extreme ability often in sort of physical stuff. Anyone?”

**BRYN**

“Athletics?”

**BEN**

“No. So, second letter is L and last letter is Y”.

**BRYN**

“I’m so bored of this. It’s... I just want to understand...”

**BEN**

“I’m trying to make it as entertaining as possible”.

**BRYN**

“I understand you have to keep us locked up. I mean... and we can’t even just read the newspapers ourselves. That seems excessive”.

**BEN**

“I was doing the crossword, I was just...”

**BRYN**

“I want to understand what’s going on. I’d like...”

**HELEN**

“Are we not getting newspapers?”

**BEN**

“It’s a little book I brought. I’m almost done now. They’re almost all gone, I need a new one but I can’t get a new one unless it’s in Japanese but then I can’t speak Japanese or read it so that’s basically it. So, I was just trying to involve you in... you know, I was trying to give you something. I know what you think about Campbell books so I’m not going to read one out loud or anything”.

**HELEN**

“What’s a Campbell book?”

**BEN**

“Harrison Campbell. He’s a pretty good romantic novelist. I could lend you one if you want.”

**ALEX**

I’m going to give Ben a bit of an info dump. Despite everything that has been happening and everything, bizarrely he absolutely hit the mainstream within sort of just when... just when things started to get really he was just exploding because he had a real prolific period and wrote basically what was considered his greatest work, which was about an incredibly arrogant non-chivalrous knight, sort of sweeping through the land and imposing himself on people and

everyone said it was a breakthrough piece. So, bizarrely, he's now actually quite a well known name but, unfortunately, he was hitting it just as more important things came. So, it's really difficult to get of his stuff but a lot of people have now heard of him.

**BEN**

"I'll give you the first book in the Hearts of Fire sequence".

**HELEN**

"What are they about?"

**BEN**

"About an unchivalrous knight who's held to a code against his will and has to act... it's Bertie basically his encounter with Bertie and sparks something really good. So, you know..."

**HELEN**

"Oh".

**BEN**

"But anyway. Ignore that bit but, the actual story is really good like all the... I'll tell you what, I don't want to spoil it for you for so you can read it..." and he rifles around his bag and pulls out like this thick **27:56 ??**.

**ALEX**

It is unnecessarily thick. Like when I say prolific...

**BRYN**

Hamid is trying really hard to show no reaction to any of this.

**ALEX**

When I say prolific by the way I mean like George R R Martin took a load of cocaine and wrote the entirety of Game of Thrones a week.

**BRYN**

Oh, so, Stephen King.

**(everyone laughs)**

**HELEN**

Ah, yes, good. Appreciate that... Azu will take it as if you are handing her snake but she will still take it because she is... she's a doer and she's not doing anything.

**BEN**

Alacrity, it was alacrity. That was it, right.

**ALEX**

I'm going to jump ahead. So, unless anyone objects I think it might make sense to jump to the end of the wait period.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

“How many of those Harrison Campbell’s books do you have?”

**BEN**

“Oh, there’s about 23”.

**BRYN**

Not all

28:45 ??.

**ALEX**

I need to know what’s Azu’s taste in literature.

**HELEN**

Oh gosh.

**BRYN**

Trashy. This is trashy.

**HELEN**

Well...

**BRYN**

Real trash.

**ALEX**

Here's the thing, he hit the mainstream and bizarrely he found a new voice and he took all of the bits that made his trashy novels successful but added just a whole... he had a complete like epiphany.

**BEN**

It's really good trash.

**ALEX**

It's trash but amazing trash. It's really... it depends on your taste but if you can get into that kind of vibe. It's a bit up itself but if you get into it.

**BRYN**

Is it... is it a little bit Phillipa Gregory?

**ALEX**

I need a bit more.

**BEN**

She writes historical novels. The Other Boleyn Girl, all that kind of stuff.

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah.

**BEN**

Which is like super soap operay dramery trashy but also well researched and...

**ALEX**

She's totally into that because she... there wasn't much conflict or drama in her laugh so she likes to... well, until now...

**BRYN**

Yeah, I was going to say...

**ALEX**

But I mean like when she was growing up people all tended to get on and now she's really trying to get of the... like in terms of like the pre-empts, you will notice the words "modern classic".

**BRYN**

"Unput downable".

**BEN**

“Indicative of our times”, and it’s.. basically, it is a.. it’s a send up, or it’s kind of almost like a satire but it’s a send up of the sort of coming of age knight journey thing and it is sort of a comment on that and blah blah blah. It’s actually really good. It’s very very, yeah, readable. There’s a reason he was getting successful.

**ALEX**

Okay, yes, she reads as many of the as would be feasible.

**BEN**

I’ve got all of them.

**ALEX**

Okay. They’re hard to get hold of but he’s got them all.

**BEN**

No, he’s got them. I got them.

**BRYN**

Can we just get a tape of Helen reacting to one of the earlier books that Harrison Campbell wrote when Jennifer makes a terrible decision?

**ALEX**

Well, it depends, it depends. When you finish the new series, do you go back to his earlier works or do you want to stick with his best?

**HELEN**

Yeah, she'll try something earlier, yeah.

**BEN**

I really excitedly hand you... "I can't remember what the name of that is but... oh god. So, long ago".

**ALEX**

When Passions Collide and things like that?

**BEN**

I think it was when Passions Collide. Real Mills & Boon stuff.

**ALEX**

These are real trashy kind of saucy mostly trashy. Like, this guy had some kind of like of life changing moment like some near death experience or something.

**(everyone laughs)**

**ALEX**

Fundamentally changed him for the better.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**ALEX**

Like someone went through fire, came out the other side a writer.

**(everyone laughs)**

**HELEN**

I wish this was how it works.

**ALEX**

31:08 ??.

**HELEN**

She likes the earlier stuff more.

**(everyone laughs)**

**BEN**

So, yeah, Zolf will just excitedly talk to you about all of the plots 31:21 ??, what did you think about this and that kind of stuff.

**ALEX**

It's a safe topic that you could talk about for hours.

**BRYN**

Yes. Hamid gets worse and worse, hiding his feelings as the week drags on.

**ALEX**

So, I am going to jump to time is up. Zolf, you are not aware of the time for the sake of ease, Wilde comes in, closes the door, leaves it unbarred, something he's never done before. Right, time's up.

**BEN**

"Oh, right, brilliant".

**BRYN**

"Finally. Oh my god, can we please get out of here now?"

**HELEN**

"Let us out".

**BRYN**

"I need a proper wash".

**BEN**

“We’ve got baths run for you, come on”. I walk in... well, walk up, turn the key, throw the door open and give Hamid a massive hug. Oh, I’ve been waiting for so long to do that. “It’s good to see you again, really”.

**BRYN**

“It’s good to see you too, Zolf”. Hamid is a little bit hesitant about the hug if anything.

**ALEX**

I’m not going to RP this but just because it’s an important detail, if you were unwilling people will have been pushing to sort of show skin and so on throughout that like everyday to check for signs and things blah blah blah, just to be clear. Like that will if that’s what’s happened.

**HELEN**

We would have to like strip completely at some point each day or...?

**ALEX**

Pretty much. That’s the thing is, I don’t want to RP it but it is a thing where like I’m really sorry those are the rules.

**BRYN**

Hamid doesn’t really care about to be honest.

**ALEX**

That's fine.

**HELEN**

Okay, Azu now has really mixed feelings. If you talk to her about anything other than Harrison Campbell she is not going to know what to...

**ALEX**

And here is the one, there's a reason why I didn't want to RP this but it's a tactical thing, Wilde will have been there for those bits. He won't have said anything, he won't have reacted to anything but he'll have just impassively waited until Zolf could convince you to go along and just... even if it took three hours, he would just stand there and give you nothing for three hours.

**BEN**

Also, Zolf is obviously super uncomfortable with it.

**ALEX**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Azu's probably more angry at Wilde than you than you then.

**ALEX**

The door is thrown open and Wilde gestures for you to leave. He then heads towards the door, holds it open. I'm expecting you probably want a bit of space from me, when you're ready.

**HELEN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

I'm happy to answer any questions you've got.

**BRYN**

"You can finally tell us everything we've been waiting for. But, yes, a bath first, please. Thank you".

**BEN**

"I'll show them through".

**BRYN**

"Perfect".

**ALEX**

Wilde heads out. You get to leave your small, tiny room.

**HELEN**

Right. Almost every vertebra that Azu... just... I don't know how to make a cracking noise with my mouth but they all crack.

**ALEX**

I could do it with my neck but I'm not going to because it's gross.

**BEN**

We've got sound editors for that, we could put it in if we want to.

**BRYN**

As soon as they have any semblance of privacy, Hamid even before taking a bath is going to take Azu aside and just go, "Are you okay?"

**BEN**

Yes, that's a good point actually.

**BRYN**

Because he wouldn't have asked while they were in the cage and potentially being watched.

**BEN**

Yeah, so, Zolf will also be like, "Look, I'm going to actually give you some space now. You're trustworthy. That's it, fine, I'm going to go the other side of the building".

**BRYN**

“Thank you”.

**BEN**

“Yeah”, and I’ll leave.

**BRYN**

“Bye”. “Are you okay? I know that whole week must have been really hard for you. I’m sorry, I wanted to be more comforting but I felt like everything we did was being watched and it was horrible”.

**HELEN**

“We were being, that’s because we were being watched”.

**BRYN**

“Yeah”.

**HELEN**

“Yeah. I am coping, I suppose”.

**BRYN**

“Okay”.

**HELEN**

“Would you like to talk about anything?”

**BRYN**

“I feel like everything has been said. We’ve got a job to do and then we’ve been promised some help afterwards finding our friends and hopefully that happens”.

**HELEN**

“Hopefully.”

**BRYN**

“But I just... I hope we get to stick together, Azu. Your friendship means a lot to me and we’ve come through so much and I want to just... let’s stay a team, you and me”.

**HELEN**

“I’m not letting go of you anytime soon”.

**BRYN**

“Okay. Bath”.

**ALEX**

You both stink by the way.

**HELEN**

Oh, absolutely.

### **ALEX**

Whilst like a bucket and some rags has been through for you to like keep yourselves cleanly and so on, no washing facilities in the room. So, heading up, yeah, I will just give you a broad description rather than, you know, bit by bit. You have the run of the inn for the start. There is no one there. You notice that like you can just take stairs up to the main set of the room before. You actually out behind a sort of hidden shelf behind the bar of all places. But, once you are up there, the innkeeper is there and he is sort of happy to show you around and so on and he is being super polite and respectful. There's the room that you were in before, obviously but, in addition to that out back are some sort of exterior sort of washing basins. Turns out there's a stream nearby that they sort of take feed from. There is a sort of paper divider between the two and there's two pools where one for men, one for women. Additionally, there are sort of rooms upstairs if you want them for like proper beds. It seems a decent place, actually, not huge but given that you thought you were in quite a rural area this must be like the biggest place for a decent distance. There's a sort of dining room and so on. And then down a corridor at the end is a sort of storage and at the very very end there is a door ajar and you can see Wilde is there sort of sat at a desk doing some paperwork. His door is open. When he looks up and sees you he sort of gestures to show that the door's open and then just stays behind the desk and stays working.

### **BEN**

Also, Zolf's in the kitchen cooking.

**ALEX**

Oh yeah, the kitchen by the way, innkeeper is out showing you around and then in a second he basically just gestures to the kitchen and sort of... again, he doesn't seem to speak English but he gestures that, yeah, if you need food he'll whip up something for you if you want.

**HELEN**

Azu has re-shaved her head.

**BEN**

I'm whipping up something for them, thank you.

**ALEX**

He's not funnier in his kitchen.

**BEN**

Well, we bought his in so...

**ALEX**

He kind of is, that's why he's not a fan of you in the kitchen. Make the rules wrong.

**HELEN**

You don't crimp correctly.

**BEN**

Oh, in which case, you may be coming to an argument which is happening, in different languages.

**HELEN**

If that happens then Azu's just going to like to open it like, "Aaaaah".

**ALEX**

In Japanese it's, "It's a ten crimp recipe 37:51 ??. It's madness. What are you doing?" All hushed, obviously, because they want it quiet and nice for you.

**BRYN**

Hamid take some time in the bath to actually decompress a bit, like he's not going to rush. He needs to just... yeah, now they're finally out of the fishbowl.

**ALEX**

Because of the region that you're in it's not hot springs or anything like that.

**BRYN**

Yeah, yeah.

**ALEX**

But they are happy to sort of bring out hot water if you want it to sort of warm the place. It is hot and steamy when you are presented to it. It's a steamy bath, what Helen? It's a hot steamy bath, with paper thin walls.

**HELEN**

Are there bubbles?

**ALEX**

There are not but there are a series of sort of salts and ointments out of the side for both of you.

**HELEN**

Ah lovely. Yeah, Azu has like a freshly shaven head.

**BRYN**

Yeah, Hamid finally gets to redress himself properly and...

**BEN**

Do basic magic again.

**BRYN**

Yeah, he can **38:39 ??** his makeup and... yeah...you know what, he's going to actually spend some time working on a new look. Like, you know, the same general pieces, you know, still a three piece suit kind of guy but he thinks it's time for a slight change in colour scheme.

**ALEX**

You do notice that a couple of... oh, I've forgot what they're proper name is, not posh like basic kimono style wrap. Kind of half dressing gown, half clothing. It is not... it is intended for like use of 39:08 ??, it's not external stuff but it is again provided if you want it. They actually have something in your size, Azu.

**BRYN**

Also, in the anti-magic field, the purple robes will have... family tree on the back will have faded and Hamid will have looked less dragony during that week and that will be coming back.

**BEN**

Once they're out.

**ALEX**

It's got a healthy brass glow.

**BEN**

While you guys are bathing, from outside the room, it's like, "I brought you some food, I'm just going to leave it outside. I'm going to wash your clothes, if that's okay?"

**ALEX**

I would leave it alone.

**HELEN**

“Do what you want”.

**BEN**

“Is that yeah? I’ll leave alone if you don’t want me to but I’m going to... but, I can wash your clothes”.

**BRYN**

“That’s fine, thank you, Zolf”

**BEN**

“Yeah, and Azu, can I...?”

**HELEN**

Azu has put her head under the water.

**BEN**

“Right, I’m going to take that as a no. I’m going to... the food is... alright, bye.”

**ALEX**

Okay, I’m going to jump time ahead to... give me in broad strokes what it is you want to do but, again, the timetable for the things that happened now are on you two. Everyone’s very much, “We have learned from experience. People like to be hands off once they’ve been locked in a room for seven days. Sometimes for more than a day and that’s fine”. So, it is on you how you want

to proceed and Wilde will not make the first opportunity. He is behind that door with the door open and if he ever like goes out to say go to the loo or something, like he is very clear like... stays away from you, times it and so on.

**BEN**

And I'm doing my absolute level best to be a good but unobtrusive host. I am very good at being a host. I am very bad at being unobtrusive.

**ALEX**

The innkeeper is getting increasingly annoyed with Zolf as time goes by. So, the longer you leave this the more arguments you're going to run into.

**HELEN**

Lovely.

**BRYN**

I'll probably take a moment, you know, when we've got one to just sort of tell Azu that Zolf did used to be a good friend and I do trust him and I know that what we've just been through is pretty horrible but his heart's in the right place and I hope... I imagine we're going to end up working with him and that's probably going to be okay if... if that's okay.

**HELEN**

She's going to remain civil.

**BRYN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

So, how do you want to proceed?

**BRYN**

Yeah, I mean, Hamid's not going to need a whole day, you know, with decompression bath, have some food, have a bit of chat with Azu, he'll probably be ready after in a few hours to go and see Wilde and the actual lowdown.. He wants... he really badly wants to know what's going on.

**HELEN**

Yeah, Azu will have washed her clothes and like polished her armour and then she'll be ready.

**ALEX**

Okay. Do you approach him, I'm guessing?

**BRYN**

Yeah, I mean, we'll probably go together again yeah.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Okay. Heading down that corridor you find he's actually in a small reading room. So, there are a few... it's 41:46 ?? but there a few chairs around the room, books on the walls and so on. It's not huge but it is comfy if you know what I mean. Like there's a writing desk, it's not splayed in papers, it's very clear that like this is space that he is temporarily occupying, he doesn't have an office here or anything. When you come in he stands and that sort of blank impassivity is gone. Zolf, are you wanting to be in out? It doesn't matter either way, it's kind of up to you and up to everyone else.

**BEN**

Yes, I was actually going to say that as they approach, I was already in the room, I might be talking to Wilde.

**ALEX**

Yeah, sure, go for it. Why don't we pick up there then?

**BEN**

Yeah, okay. So, basically, sort of as you approach you hear like 42:25 ??, "You can trust them, right? Look, they've passed the test just maybe be a bit more civil. You're still being very standoffish and they... I get it but also..."

**ALEX**

"They're going to want space. You know that?"

**BEN**

“Yeah, but... I know they need space but, when they come to us just try and be a little warmer, right?”

**ALEX**

“They don’t like it when I’m warm”.

**BEN**

“Well, Wilde, like...”

**ALEX**

Maybe you should hope Azu and Hamid turn up. Wilde stands, gestures for you to come in. He puts on a smile of sorts and...

**BRYN**

Creaking.

**ALEX**

And rather awkwardly he smiles and you can see that whatever scar has done he’s lost some of the movement on one side of his face so it’s more of a kind of a wonky smirk. That kind of big bright salesman’s smile, it’s not really possible anymore.

**HELEN**

Aw.

**ALEX**

But, he gestures and if you're ready...?

**BRYN**

Yeah. "Seems like we've got a job to do and I'd really like to understand what's going on".

**ALEX**

43:25 ??. "Please, take a seat". He comes over and offers his hand to Hamid first. It is not a like big hug, it's just a hand.

**BRYN**

Hamid will shake it pretty enthusiastically. He's goes, "I'm not going to say the last week's been pleasant, obviously, but I do understand the need for it and I'm not holding any of that against you or you, Zolf, I just..."

**BEN**

"Thank you".

**BRYN**

"We'll move forward".

**ALEX**

He buries Hamid's hand in both of his and he's just like, "I'm incredibly grateful to have you back". Then turns to Azu, offers her the same sort of hand to shake.

**HELEN**

Okay. She shakes Wilde's hand but like...

**44:09 ??**

**ALEX**

Her hands are like twice the size of his.

**HELEN**

That's true.

**ALEX**

And he's twice the size of Hamid.

**BRYN**

Yeah, I mean, every that Hamid and Azu have been holding hands it looks to... it's just is totally ridiculous to be honest.

**ALEX**

Absolutely, yes. Wilde shakes Azu's hand. "I understand it's been hard. You've all done amazingly and we're so glad to have you back, genuinely". And then he pulls away and then leans against the desk.

**BEN**

"You see that's warm".

**ALEX**

"I am trying".

**BEN**

"I know. Good. Well done, that was great".

**BRYN**

"Oscar, did you hear what happened to Grizzop and Sasha?"

**ALEX**

"Yes, Zolf filled me in".

**BRYN**

"Curie said she would help us find out if we could... let's just say, we've got a nice incentive if it wasn't just about saving the world again".

**ALEX**

“We’ll find out. We’ll find them regardless of how things go. I promise you that”.

**HELEN**

“Tell us what we need to do and then...”

**BRYN**

“It’s good to see you again, Oscar, even if it’s only been a week for us”.

**ALEX**

“Brave new world”. And I’ll end the episode there.

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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Rusty Quill Gaming – 129 – Brave New World

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