

RQG – Episode 159 – Hiroshima

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 159 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have:

BEN

Ben Meredith.

BRYN

Bryn Monroe.

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas.

HELEN

And Helen Gould.

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith.

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan.

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom.

HELEN

And Azu.

ALEX

And everything's still technically fine...

LYDIA

In real life.

ALEX

Featuring special guest... far too many NPC's, I've just realised, I'm playing like 12 NPC's

(Group laughter)

ALEX

D-a-m-n, D-a-m-n. No wonder it's getting stilted and the conversations have a lot of awkward silences. It's just me running back and forth between different hats.

(laughter)

LYDIA ?

That's your life, Alex, that's the job, that's what you built for yourself.

ALEX

It's true, it's true.

LYDIA

That's Rusty Quill ! He he he he he he he.

ALEX

I, I literally did a recording today where I was up here, down here, up here, down here – talking to myself. It all got very weird. So, we are at the sort of overlook, overlooking down towards Hiroshima, a city that seems to be a combined factory sort of hyper-industrial space combined with high culture. The best way I described it is high culture cathedrals and that kind of architecture, with all of the mod cons laid over the top. I've been thinking of a better way to described it. Have you ever seen those custom cars, where like it's a classic car but they take out everything apart from the shell, and then they put all of the like modern stuff inside? So it, it still feels like a classic – that, but a city almost. So, in terms then of what's going to be happening, is you are all coming in towards the outskirts of the city. And a couple of extra things to bear in mind is – can I please get, anyone who has knowledge history – for the city? And anyone who does not, let me know if you have any knowledges that are relevant.

LYDIA ?

I've got knowledge history.

ALEX

Yeah huh. Anyone got knowledge geography? I'd allow that as a major thing, obviously?

BEN ?

I've got knowledge history, but is that applicable for a city I've probably never been to?

ALEX

Yeah because it could have come up as – like it is a – it has become a major trade hub.

BEN ?

Okay.

ALEX

Although not a port specifically any more. So as a result it is...

BEN ?

Sure.

ALEX

...relevant.

(rolling dice)

BEN

13.

LYDIA

12.

ALEX

12, 13. Any other takers? Yeah, it is a major trade hub and in the last 15 or so years it went from being a kind of middling trade hub to really heavily embracing the sort of air travel thing. Because they were like, “This is the thing of the future. We’re going to back it regardless of whether it works or not.” And it did. So as a result they have become basically an international – what’s, a transit – like a transatlantic hub style where they’ve basically become like the, the major air site for this region of the world.

LYDIA

But transpacific?

ALEX

Yes. So as a result there’s – as you’re sort of travelling towards the city you can see – even now despite everything that’s going on, there’s a decent amount of air traffic. It primarily seems to be dirigibles though.

HELEN ?

What's a dirigible?

ALEX

Like a, a powered airship.

HELEN

Like with the, the poufy, is a floaty one?

ALEX

Yeah. The Mummy – you know the Mummy 2 – the ship that they fly around in?

HELEN ?

Yes.

BEN

The Mummy Returns, Alex.

ALEX

Sorry , The Mummy Returns. Ben, you're right. I apologise. I am ashamed. I'd like to pause the episode, end all content and apologise – I should have got that right.

BEN

Featuring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson as the Scorpion King. It's a classic.

(laughter)

ALEX

His first appearance as the Scorpion King to be specific.

BRYN

It's true.

BEN

That actual, that actual film is not garbage. It is very average...

ALEX

(laughs)

BEN

...but not offensive.

ALEX

But, yeah the airship in that.

LYDIA ?

A Rusty Quill Sunday watch, yes?

ALEX

Yes. The airship in that is a dirigible. As you start approaching a city Wilde takes a moment and sort of like addresses all of you as you're, as you're riding in. You are not drawing the attention you did whilst out in the sticks. The

clientele is varied. I will repeat that it's extremely gnome-heavy, but at the same time there are sig bit – like large amounts of sapient races kicking around. There are all creeds and all colours and no one really pays any of you any heed. And it's because as you start getting closer you start to realise that compared to some of the stuff that's going on, you are tame by comparison. At least one gnome is walking around in what might be a homemade mech.

HELEN ?

Wow.

ALEX

In terms of the briefing – well I was like – okay, it's going to take me a little bit of time to chase down Earharts. There's quite a few places that she may have ended up holing up in. In the meantime I'd suggest you all stock up with provisions if possible, and if there's anything that you need to chase down, now is the time. Because once we leave here, if all goes well, we're not going to be coming back to civilisation for a long time.

BRYN ?

That makes sense. If we're going to be here a few days are we going to get a set of hotel rooms that are all kind of next to each other or something?

ALEX

Wilde reaches into his bag, pulls out basically a bag of coins and chucks them over to Hamid. You reckon there's a couple of hundred in there, something like that. He's like, that should cover everyone for their needs. If you've got

any other, like sources of income I'd suggest you use them. Barnes you're familiar with the city, right?

BRYN ?

Yeah.

(laughter)

ALEX

Okay Barnes so where, where would you suggest we meet? He takes a moment, there's a fairly significant park I guess, but honestly you're best bet would be the aeroport. Just near the entrance to the aeroport. It's big, it's flashy, you can't miss it. And that way we can coordinate.

BRYN ?

That makes sense, yeah.

ALEX

I mean, that's the first port of call I'm going to be doing anyway. I'd say get yourself somewhere to stay for a couple of days and then we'll meet at the entrance in what, 24 hours' time?

BRYN ?

Sure. Wilde, if you're going to be busy do you want us to pick you up anything.

ALEX

He takes a moment. Yeah, actually. Would you be willing to pick me up – you know what – he, he writes out a list of equipment and then hands it to you. At a glance it's just a lot of – it's a combination of cold weather-like explorer gear and convenience items for like, ship travel. So it's, it's things like – he's like – a full wash kit and shave kit. And a full...

HELEN ?

You've just been playing a lot of 80 days, Alex.

ALEX

Honestly yeah. Like that's the vibe that I'm going for with what, how Wilde travels. Where he's like, "Hmmm."

LYDIA ?

Right.

ALEX

It's the space for six cases.

LYDIA ?

A full gentleman's...

ALEX

Yes, I will have the full gentleman's travel gear, the full polar gear and maybe a sousaphone just in case, like...

LYDIA ?

Ha !

ALEX

The list has two side; one side is yeah that's a very sensible list, good call; and the other one is really, really? And he just gives you like a pouch of cash going, "Deduct from that, keep the rest."

BRYN

Alright.

ALEX

I'll be at the entrance to the aeroport this time tomorrow.

BRYN

Alright.

LYDIA ?

Okay.

BEN ?

Could, could like Wilde do, let us know if you do need any help with anything.

ALEX

I probably will. Earhart is still not a fan of me.

HELEN ?

Oh is she not?

LYDIA

Well that's a shame, you seem like a perfectly nice gentleman.

ALEX

I know, right.

HELEN

Yeah.

BRYN

Regardless needs must when the apocalypse drives, hey?

ALEX

Wilde gives a begrudging nod from one pithy quote generator to another, and then starts riding off a bit quicker. Barnes is sticking with the cart and carter and all of the cobbles in the cart. In which case then I hand the reins over to you all. You have a large city to deal with and you have at least 24 hours before you meet up. What are you doing?

BEN ?

Right, let's get the room sorted first so we've got a base of operations.

BRYN

Agreed.

HELEN ?

Yes good idea.

ALEX

So, rather than do a bunch of rolls for it because it is a hyperconnected city, if you all tell me the kind of thing you're looking for, I will tell you what options are available.

LYDIA

In terms of hotel, or...

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

...more general?

ALEX

As in like, are you looking for something out of the way even if it's a bit dingy? Are you looking for the poshes thing you can find? Like, give me some criteria, I'll tell you where in the city you are, what the hotel is, blah, blah, blah. Rather than just doing a roll and then saying, because you're not on, under time pressure here.

BEN

Unfortunately Hamid has the money.

(Group laughter)

BEN

So we can all have as many opinions as we want.

(laughter)

BRYN

Hamid will not push for the poshest one possible, even though that is of course his natural instinct.

HELEN ?

Character growth.

BEN

Yeah.

BRYN

But he also will not stay somewhere horrible and dingy. I think that to Hamid the most important thing will be location, like it should be near the airport, but with good ways to get, to access the rest of the city and have enough space for, potentially for them to have suites. Because that means that we can have some private space which isn't just a bedroom, where we can potentially all meet.

LYDIA ?

Mmm.

ALEX

The only complication is you, you have to look at a couple because the city's quite full at the moment. It is not over full...

BRYN

Sure.

ALEX

...there is no rationing or anything like that. It's just it is quite full because this is a major transport hub that is still open when huge chunks of the planet aren't. So trade has shifted here. So, there's a lot of like, "Sorry, no vacancies" kind of thing. However you find somewhere overlooking the river. It's quite nice, it has a bakery on the ground floor, and it has suites – they still have suites available for all humanoid sizes as well. So....

HELEN

I was about to ask like I, Azu will definitely have said, "Just make sure I can fit."

BEN

No Gandalf in the Hobbit hole?

ALEX

You, you ended up picking it because it was one of the only ones that has a large suite. So we are talking for people who literally are like a 10 foot by 10 foot cube miniature, like.

(laughter)

HELEN

Wait till you see some of those like walking down the street, like, “Haaa Galatas cue”.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Just on holiday with a jaunty hat.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

But keeps sinking in, and it’s got to push it back out again.

(Group laughter)

BEN

I was about to make that same joke, good work.

ALEX

I will ask then Azu, I need to know one thing.

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

They offer you the large room, which might actually be a little too big for you. Do you take it or do you go for a standard normal midrange room?

HELEN

She goes for the large room because she is not paying for it. (laughs)

ALEX

Understood.

HELEN

And it'll be nice to starfish on a bed for the first time since she left home.

ALEX

So two things. For everyone else, you are all in – unless you tell me otherwise – a standard room that's appropriate for your size. It's comfy, it's well appointed and it is well maintained. The place is well looked after. Azu specifically, it immediately evokes loads of childhood memories, because it's scale is as if you are about 12/13.

BRYN

Aaaaaaaahhhhhh.

HELEN

That's adorable.

ALEX

So it, it has it's own like cutlery and cups and blah, blah, blah and it's all just that little bit too big for Azu despite Azu being big.

HELEN

He he he.

BRYN ?

A question. Do you mean more 6 or 7? Because you were – were you referring to all [unclear 10:36]...

HELEN

Oh that's true because I am actually 13 right now.

BRYN

...years?

ALEX

Oh no, yeah that's there actually.

(laughter)

ALEX

No that, no that's a really good clarifying point. Orcish 6 let's say.

HELEN

Yeah.

BRYN ?

But I, I do forget that Grizzop was 10 and Azu's only 13...

(laughter)

ALEX

Yeah, absolutely

BRYN

...which is absolutely ridiculous.

ALEX

But yeah, it is immediately like, "Oh, I'm a kid again." In fact like, not to a huge inconvenience level, but it is things like, "Oh, I'll leave the room." There we go, there's the door handle king of thing.

HELEN

Ha ha ha ha ha.

ALEX

It's...

HELEN

Azu is enjoying the novelty.

ALEX

I know right.

HELEN

She, she sits on a chair and sees if she can swing her legs.

ALEX

You can.

HELEN

And sort of, just does a little experiment, like you do when you go to a hotel that's quite nice and you know, you just like do a little bounce on the bed, or at least I do.

ALEX

You open the bottom drawer of the wardrobe, and for a moment you think, "I reckon Hamid could sleep in there if he needed" and then close it.

HELEN

(laughs)

ALEX

That's, that's the kind of scale you're at.

HELEN

Yeah, okay.

ALEX

So yeah, you're in the hotel, it's well appointed. It has all of the mod cons. And by all of the mod cons I mean, Hamid – I don't think you'd necessarily ever want to admit it – but it does put a lot of the other cities you've stayed at to shame. Where it's stuff like, they have electric lights, not gas. They have like hot running water on demand, like high pressure. They have all of the mod cons in a way that is quite rare unless you're at the real top end anywhere else. But here you've picked just kind of, upper mid.

BRYN

I delight in showing the kobolds the finer side of life.

ALEX

Do you allow the kobolds a room to themselves? Are you, how, how are you arranging the...?

BRYN

Yeah that, that, to me that's one of the points of having a suite, is that I, I have a room and I can offer them a room. Or, I mean I will talk to them about even having separate rooms, but I'm imagining from the behaviours you've assigned to them so far, that they will all stay in the same room.

ALEX

After you've been settled in a little while, Hamid I would say that the maître d' does come knocking at the door. I'm assuming that you answer the door?

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Yeah, you answer the door and then he apologises but he's not here to talk to you. A Skraak then pipes up, "It's for me." Heads over and then in very broken Japanese – because the things that are being discussed are quite complicated – Skraak lists his security concerns with the maître d' on the measures that the hotel needs to make in order to protect you as a VIP.

BRYN

Oh God !

HELEN

Amazing.

BRYN

Hamid is simultaneously delighted and embarrassed.

ALEX

It's basically Skraak laying down the law to a, a gentleman who is very politely listening, but also quite tall, so having to stoop quite low going, "All room service will be passed through me. In the event that there is anything I don't

recognise, the person who delivered it is to be held.” But, and he’s just listing like VIP – basically, without your knowledge Skraak has developed a rider for you.

BRYN

Is Hamid doing the classic like, “Oh no, don’t. Oh go one.”

ALEX

Yeah.

(Group laughter)

ALEX ?

I don’t know if I can, oh go on.

BRYN

Hamid is, is face farming and also grinning.

(laughter)

BRYN

It’s like he hates that the likes it.

(laughter)

ALEX

Okay. In this 24 hours, are you wanting to do anything apart from just chill in some actual like nice spacious quality for a little bit?

BRYN

Oh yes.

ALEX

You can go shopping now if you want but I will, I will tip my hat a bit and sorry, tip my cards a little bit and say there will be opportunity still.

BRYN

I will be going shopping for Wilde's stuff because I have the money for that and I don't want to break that promise.

ALEX

That's fine. One thing to note is Wilde made it very easy because he also listed the suppliers that he wanted them from.

BRYN

Ah, that was handy.

ALEX

It's...

BRYN

There's, there's the Wilde we know.

ALEX

It's very much like a Burton's shaving kit, number 16 with additional polish. Like that's the kind of list that he's given you.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Anyone else wanting to do anything specific other than just have a bit of alone time for the first time in like a month?

BRYN

Well Hamid is going to take this opportunity to sell the 80% of a bag of holdings worth of Adamantine ore that he picked up in Damascus...

ALEX

This is going to be really expensive.

BRYN

...over 18 months ago.

ALEX

Yeah, that makes sense. Okay. I am going to ask for – I have, okay – confession time. Alex has played three different systems between the break, none of which were Pathfinder. So you're going to have to give him a moment

for him to remember which skill is going to be most relevant for finding something.

BRYN

Finding something is probably knowledge local unfortunately.

ALEX

Which...

LYDIA

Hello.

ALEX

..you don't have ranks in, do you? So you're going to max out at 10.

BRYN

No. Hamid will ask Cel...

LYDIA

Heeeeyyy !

BRYN

...and he will, he will find a way. So Hamid's probably best idea is to find the local branch of the Alterham Banking Corporation.

ALEX

You know what? That's actually a really astute solution, which means I'm not going to need a roll. Clever.

BRYN

But he'll, he'll probably ask Cel as well. He might ask Cel to come along as well as, to help him with translation and understanding local market if, if Cel thinks they would be able to do that at all?

LYDIA

Oh, yeah. That sounds like a lot of fun.

ALEX

Can you give me a perception check, Bryn, please?

(rolling dice)

ALEX

And is Cel accompanying you?

LYDIA

Mm hmm.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

30

ALEX

30?

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

You had to sort of – what’s obviously a financial district even to your, like your unfamiliar eye – you struggle at first to find a Tahan branch. And then you find something that kind of stops you in your tracks a little bit.

LYDIA

Oh no.

ALEX

You think it’s a Tahan branch but the artwork and the lettering over the front says Tahan and Zalias.

LYDIA

Oooooooooooooohhhhh.

BRYN

Zalias?

ALEX

You know, just for free, that Zalia has historically been a key competitor of the Tahans for a while.

BRYN

Interesting.

LYDIA ?

Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

BRYN

There was some sort of merger...

LYDIA

Or takeover.

ALEX

But which way?

LYDIA

Aaaawwwwww.

BRYN

Maybe they also had an eligible daughter as head of operation and she and Saira got married, I don't know.

ALEX

So here's the thing is, to your practised eye it has the trappings of a Tahan branch, but it keeps throwing you because the lettering's off, and the signs aren't what you're used to and so on. But nonetheless you're, you're, you are certain that it is a Tahan branch of some kind.

BRYN

Sure, I'll head in.

ALEX

Heading in, what's your game plan on the RP side? Is it just to literally...

BRYN

Basically just to ask for a – it's a big enough bank to be like – to do personal banking but also to do business banking.

ALEX

Yeah.

BRYN

I want a appointment with a local trade adviser.

ALEX

Okay.

BRYN

You know? I imagine that's the kind of thing they will do. But you know, if foreign people are here and they bank with this bank and they want to take meetings to organise trades, this will be a first, a common first step.

ALEX

There's about an hour's wait. No one clocks you as you go in, by the way, in any way.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

And you're eventually shown through to, yeah effectively what is a business adviser. Unless you actively want to RP it I can just skip to the results?

BRYN

We can skip, yeah.

ALEX

Yeah, can you give me a diplomacy check please?

ALEX

Cel, you can assist if you want.

(rolling dice)

LYDIA

He hum, oh actually yeah, they have really great – no they have great bluff – not great dip....

ALEX

Yeah, you're good at the tech...

LYDIA

Oh no, they do have great diplomacy, I forgot. I have that thing where I switch intelligence with charisma.

ALEX

Yeah.

(rolling dice)

BRYN

Oh nice.

LYDIA

Yeah, ah but I rolled low so only 14.

ALEX

And I don't think that will be enough to aid.

BRYN

32 total.

ALEX

Yeah that's fine. Shut up.

LYDIA

Don't need it !

ALEX

Here's the thing is, I have to offer it, but it, it might have been a little bit of an exercise in futility.

BRYN

My diplomacy is literally the highest skill on my character sheet, like...

LYDIA

I could have rolled nearly that high.

ALEX

But what makes me laugh though, is that if he gets 33 and you aid, the most I can do is go, "Well congratulations, it's 34, gamechanger." So skipping to the end, initially you are being given the generic treatment. Welcome to the city, you should open a trade account with Tahan and Zalias so that we can help facilitate your needs, blah, blah, blah. When it becomes apparent that not only are you familiar with the inner workings of banking, but also that you have a ludicrously huge amount of high demand item to sell, specifically Adamantine ore.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

It very much changes to, “Okay yeah, no we can make this work. Great, okay. We’ll hook you up...” blah, blah, blah. Long story short, they are offering to act and if they’re allowed a finder’s fee, to take the entire lot off your hand and distribute it at their end. They are effectively saying, “Listen, for a nominal percentage we can, we can offer you...” blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The percentage for the service they’re offering seems reasonable, and they realistically you think that at the other end of it you’re likely to get about 60,000 gold for the ore.

BRYN

Wooooo hooo hooo hooo hooo. I mean yeah, Hamid is happy to agree to that.

ALEX

Okay.

HELEN ?

Is that the noise that Hamid makes?

BRYN

Yeah, probably.

ALEX

To, to be clear, you reckon that if you were to spend a couple of weeks and do it all yourself you might get as high as 100,000. But it would take...

LYDIA

Did you really...

ALEX

...it would take weeks of work, you would be doing it all. You would be...

BRYN

We're not here for complex trade negotiations.

ALEX

You would be spinning up a small business...

BRYN

...that's not the point of this campaign.

ALEX

...just to shift stock, to then wrap it up. Like it, it's not really an option. They are pretty much happy to go into the paperwork. Cel, from your perspective it's all very unnecessarily involved because surely they're like, the systems required to handle this should be straightforward.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

Like nothings' even powered, it's all just paperwork, come on.

LYDIA

Just, like just give them money for the thing.

ALEX

Yeah, exactly.

LYDIA

(laughs)

ALEX

What I would say is it will take your entire day, but you reckon you might be able to leave with 60k sat in an account ready to use.

BRYN

Sounds good to me.

ALEX

Then bish, bash, bosh – that is your day spent. Cel, if you're assisting I must send you [unclear 19:53].

BRYN

I mean Cel doesn't have to stay with me. Once, once the initial you know, I wanted to have a potential help in the form of a translator if things were going

to get complex. But once it, once you know, both parties have relaxed and agreed to the, the outline of the deal I can probably cope, and I can...

ALEX

Yeah that's fine.

BRYN

I'll tell Cel that if they, if they want to – they're welcome to stay – but if they would rather go off and do something more interesting, they should do that.

LYDIA

I think what probably happens is Cel, like wants to stay to be friendly, but then assuming that these are very detailed buildings that have this kind of high tech stuff, they start just kind of fiddling with what is the equivalent of an ATM.

(laughter)

HELEN ?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LYDIA

Thing, and just sort of – the red panda which kind of zaps now – occasionally just cracks [unclear 20:38]...

(laughter)

LYDIA

And is very unclear how that happened. It's like they're sort of using them to kind of fill in the ATM and they're asked gently to leave at the point where the, the ATM itself starts sparking and juddering.

ALEX

The ATM is very very large. You can see that they're trialling it at this branch. And you also see it's ludicrously easy to exploit if you know what you're doing. That's your take away. So, anyone else doing anything else with this day or can I jump to meeting at the aeroport?

HELEN

Azu's going to see if she can find a Temple of Aphrodite.

ALEX

You can.

HELEN

Ooh.

ALEX

It is a little bit more corporate looking than you're used to...

HELEN

Buuh.

ALEX

...insofar as it is, it's in a comparatively upmarket chunk of the city which doesn't seem to have a religious district as such. It's a bit more – what's the word?

HELEN

Secular?

ALEX

Sure, it's secular in terms of layout. Distributed, that's what I'm going for rather. It doesn't have like a trade quarter and a religious quarter, it's a bit more smeared around the place as it were. And yeah, so it's a little bit blank compared to the way Aphrodite temples normally look, but yeah, they're in there and they seem to be operating perfectly normally. It, it's set up as most of them are as a hospital.

HELEN

Okay. Azu's going to walk in and ask after, if anyone knows how Eren Fairhands has been and if he's okay.

ALEX

I will skip to the end of the RP as Eren Fairhands is leading efforts on the front.

HELEN

Gosh! She's very impressed, and she's like "I knew it."

(Group laughter)

HELEN

How brave. She also goes and finds the Aphrodite Shrine and lights a couple of candles there because there was a Shinto Shrine back at the inn I think, but...

ALEX

Yeah.

HELEN

An Aphrodite Shrine is you know, what she's really looking for, so...

ALEX

There is one detail in here which – going into the city so far, it's been a bit of a refreshing change – everyone else has been everywhere. I know you've only really been Cairo and Japan and so on, but it's all been quite dour. Everything's been a bit down, whereas the city seems to be almost booming due to the redirected trade.

HELEN

Mmm.

ALEX

However, the Temple of Aphrodite is almost awash with light with the number of candles that people are lighting for people they are concerned about, and stuff like that.

HELEN

Gosh.

ALEX

So from the outside looking in, it's normal, like the hospital itself is not overwhelmed, anything like that. As a city its doing fine, but behind closed doors there's a lot of worried people, I think.

HELEN

Yes. Well Azu adds two more candles to the big pile of candles, and has some quiet meditation, contemplation and then I don't know, maybe has a nice little wander around the city since she doesn't get to see them very often. It's nice to be in a big place.

ALEX

I am going to jump to the entrance of the aeroport unless anyone has anything additional they want to do today.

BRYN

Yes. That evening, basically I'd like to have a conversation with the four of us, rather than a bigger one including all the people that, who will be at the aeroport.

ALEX

Okay I'll tell you what then. As everyone filters in to the hotel restaurant, which is actually a decent business in its own right. I'll take a break here, and then we'll, we'll come back for the RP. How about that?

HELEN

Okie dokie.

ALEX

And welcome back. So, you are all in the restaurant. It is one of the best boulangeries in the city. But it does serve full meals as well. But the bakery is the sort of big tourist draw.

HELEN

Azu's trying all of the different cakes.

ALEX

They're really good, they're really good.

BRYN

Hey guys, so I know we're not like a formal mercenary group or anything. We haven't you know, signed contracts, the four of us. But you know, we've been operating as, the same way that we used to operate when we were a formal mercenary group and there were contracts, and you know, to me one of the things that comes as part of that is you know, when money is made as part of adventures it should be sort of split evenly. And therefore, well I mean it turns out that some stuff I picked up like a while back – well Cel knows already – I was able to sell it for quite a substantial amount. And I just, to me I think it's really important that, that we split that you know, between the four of us. Because that's you know, it, well it was made as part of you know, a mercenary adventure mission thing and we, we've been doing that now and we sold it. And, well anyway – I just, I hope that's not too weird, even though we don't

have that arrangement, or that contract. But I think we should each take an even split of that money. To me that, that's the logical thing to do.

BEN

When did you get this?

BRYN

Well, I mean from my perspective, a few weeks ago. I guess from your guys perspective, a bit longer.

BEN

Right. Well I can't accept any of that then. I wasn't, you know, I wasn't involved. That was something different, and hey, I left.

LYDIA

I, I wasn't there either, but I'm absolutely fine with using the...

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

...group's resources to resource myself for a group mission just because it [unclear 25:32]...

BRYN

Yes. I mean that, that's, that's more important part Zolf. I mean if – I'm not saying it's a reward for, for what was done – but to me it's you know, it's funds that can help us be ready for what happens next. And if the four us continue

to act as you know, a pseudo, a mercenary group then to me those funds should be communal in a sense that we can all use them to, to be prepared and be ready.

BEN

Right, yeah. I suppose that makes sense. In which case you three you know, buy what you want. If you want to, give me whatever is left, but if you can use it to find more useful stuff for you, do it.

HELEN

I think, no I think the equal split is the best solution.

LYDIA

What's useful to me Mr Smith is knowing that I have a group here that is resourceful and has good things themselves, you know. I would rather if we get to another set like with **Choween**, with all the fighting. You know, you were incredible there. And that, like to have someone else have my back. I would prefer to get through the fight, and, and be able to congratulate...

BRYN

I mean we might, for example, Zolf, we might be able to upgrade your boots of levitation into boots of flying. So that you have a lot more freedom to move around. And, you know, things like that. Like there's lots of – I mean it's quite a substantial amount of money – it's 15,000 gold each. You know, we don't need to scrimp and save it to, to make sure we've all got some stuff that's quite helpful.

ALEX

To put this in context. This is a ludicrous amount of money. Obviously like the reason that you can spend it is specialist equipment is a thing in this world, and there is an enormous discrepancy between what high end magic items can be vs what day to day life can be out in the sticks. I would say, Azu I'm going to make a point of it for you specifically. This would be – like based on like your original like home village and so on...

HELEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ALEX

...like – I cannot stress enough how ludicrous an amount of money this is.

HELEN

Yeah, when Hamid said, “Oh I've got quite a lot of money.” She was like, “Wow, a whole 1000 gold, that could...” [unclear 27:31]

ALEX

Yeah that's the kind of, like this is, this is a s-t-u-p-i-d amount of money. This is more money than you probably really encountered from anyone you know certainly.

HELEN

Yeah. And of course being in the priesthood, you don't really – like apart from the material things that you, you....

ALEX

Yeah.

HELEN

Okay. So, she's going to say to Hamid, "How much?"

BRYN

15,000 gold each.

HELEN

1 5 0 0 0?

BRYN

Yes.

LYDIA

It's, it's 60,000 divided by 4.

HELEN

Cel, that's the problem.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Which, which things did you sell?

BRYN

The Adamantine ore.

HELEN ?

Oh.

ALEX

Piece of context for you, Bryn. For reasons that people we're really able to go into there is one shortage – genuinely – there is a shortage of Adamantine because the Demasian supply lines broke down. You reckon the timelines line up pretty much exactly with when a dragon came in and started exploding primary supply lines. But long story short, there has been a supply line breakdown on Adamantine specifically. That wasn't a thing I deliberately introduced for you, you just got real lucky with it. And it's played out quite nicely.

BRYN

I mean you can look at it that way, Alex or you could consider Hamid to be a war propheteer.

ALEX

Good God, what do you mean 'consider'?

(laughter)

BRYN

I mean, I'm just, I'm just saying. I'm just saying. What, what is the effect of what Hamid's doing? I, Bryn have a different perspective than he does.

ALEX

I, I can't hear you over the personal bodyguard you have from, yeah let's not even dive into this.

BRYN

(laughs)

ALEX

We're going to have to Red Son Hamid at some point, and it's going to be horrible.

BRYN

(laughs)

ALEX

Anyway.

HELEN

Azu takes a large bite of cake while she thinks about the amount of money she now has.

ALEX

It occurs to you, you could probably buy about 120 000 cakes.

(laughter)

HELEN

Gosh! And she does have a bag of holding to keep them all in.

(Group laughter)

BRYN

Helen, they don't stay fresh, it's not worth it.

HELEN

But you can swim in them.

BRYN

Like Scrooge Mc Cake.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Okay, I'm aware I'm now an episode and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through, and so far I, we have a coat and a hotel.

HELEN

Yeah. And some cake!

ALEX

So I'm going to, I'm going to keep starting to gently pressure us to move forward.

HELEN

So there, there are some, there are some things with that that I could do that, I mean like explosions that you know, they're like that but bigger, and like that Cel trails off and is talking at one point directly to the wall, and like explosions?

BEN

Just buy what you want, and give me the rest.

HELEN

Excellent...

BEN

I don't, need it, want it. Just you do what you need with it.

HELEN

But it's not fair if, if we only give you the leftovers.

BEN

Well it is if I say that's what I want you to do.

HELEN

That's not how fair works.

BEN

One minute.

HELEN

Fair is not “Do what I want you to do”.

BEN

Alright aaw, it’s unfair on me, I’m so sad. Now just do it.

(laughter)

BRYN

Well I’m, I’m going to spend my allocation Zolf, but I’m not going to spend any of, any of yours. So that’s, that’s how much that’s going to be there for you.

HELEN

Yes, let’s all agree that.

BEN

Aaawfff. Fine, fine. I’ll take your bloody money.

HELEN

(laughs). Azu gives Hamid like a smug look like, “Yeah, that showed him.”

(laughter)

HELEN

He'll take our money and be happy with it.

BRYN

Hamid tries not to giggle but Azu's...

HELEN

(laughs)

ALEX

He'll take the small fortune that makes him independently wealthy for the entirety of his life, and he'll like it!

HELEN

(laughs)

ALEX

Okay. In that case then, you're not going to be able to fit any more of use in this day.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

So I am now going to jump ahead to the entrance to the aeroport, okay?

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

So, next day, another day in paradise in terms of good weather, etc. It's clearly every single drop of moisture that's been squeezed from the sky and is catching up now. The airport itself is a hub of activity, it is very busy. In terms of layout it's actually quite similar to the one in Paris way back when. However, it's significantly larger. Truth be told it actually puts the Paris one a bit to shame because they just did it roughly twice the size. And at the entrance there is a huge swathe of people and then you can just see a wild hopping up and down, waving when he, when he sees you because there are so many people.

HELEN

Hmm mm.

ALEX

Think like departure lounge at Christmas, rammed.

HELEN

Ooh. Azu also jumps up and down and waves. As if it would be hard to see her.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

I mean you still glow pink, right?

HELEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

If that's, even with a range of creature sizes. That's...

ALEX

Actually Azu, could you give me a will save please?

HELEN

That's a D20, isn't it? Where's my... Okay. That's 22.

ALEX

22, okay. It's only been a day, but already you're kind of missing the room that made you feel small.

HELEN

Yeeeaahhh. That's probably true.

(laughter)

BEN ?

Because the, the demographic is mainly gnomes as well, right?

HELEN

Yeah.

BEN

So it's going to be absurd.

ALEX

Yeah, so you, you leave your large room like, "You know what, this is fine. I'm okay with this." And then it's knee high people as far as the eye can see.

HELEN

Yeah, but she is more used to that. It's just the novelty.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

HELEN

It's like, it's like thinking about a rollercoaster you were on once or something. Just like...

ALEX

Yeah.

HELEN

...that was fun.

(laughter)

ALEX

So, you [unclear 33:00] Wilde and Barnes their carter is not. Wilde's is, okay if you do a...

BRYN

Oh, he hasn't got himself in trouble has he?

ALEX

I mean it's sort of his job at this point.

HELEN

Mmm.

BEN ?

What's he up to?

HELEN

What does that mean?

LYDIA

That sounds like an interesting job.

ALEX

If you'll come with me there's a little place round the corner that seems to be alright, we can eat there and have a chat.

BRYN ?

Right. Oh, here's your stuff by the way.

ALEX

It will – you know what, I'd say – it will have to be in a bag of holding for how much it is.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Are you offering Wilde a bag of holding?

BRYN

I don't know if mechanically I can hold out.

ALEX

Then that's fine. What then, Wilde will just reply, "You may need to hold on to that for me a little while longer."

BRYN

Oh? Oh, yeah, no right, okay. Fine.

ALEX

Sorry, once we're on board it'll be fine.

BRYN

Yeah, well it's all here. So, you know.

ALEX

Okay. Heading round the corner, you head into a small eatery. Someone pick a genre of food.

BEN

Noodles.

ALEX

Noodles it is. So it's a noodle house. It's a small little family affair. It's, it's mostly populated by...

LYDIA

It's the flying noodle monster. That's what it's called. Because it's, it's a noodle house in the airport. Like.

ALEX

I would say that is an imperfect but not necessarily inaccurate translation, yeah.

(laughter)

LYDIA

Cel explains, "It's more like spaghetti?"

ALEX

So whilst, whilst you're all in there, it's people on business travel just grabbing a quick bite or whatever. So, I found Earhart's – what's left of Earhart's ship.

HELEN

Oh dear.

BRYN

How bad is it?

ALEX

It would seem that she got caught up in the conflict, and it's not airworthy.

BRYN

Okay. So, how long is it going to take to fix? Otherwise we've got to look for something else.

ALEX

Wilde looks to Cel. I was hoping you might be able to help in that regard.

LYDIA

Oh, yes. I haven't built any airships myself recently, but often it's more of a problem to keep things on the ground really, if I lose concentration. So yeah! I, I, I'm am perfectly happy to have a look, give a hand, and the kobolds here will probably have a lovely time having it, giving it a shot.

ALEX

There's a second element that might need addressing as well, right?

BRYN ?

What's that?

ALEX

Earhart, might need fixing a bit as well.

BEN ?

Okay. Oh well you've got – yes fine. What, how? Just be clear, don't talk in riddles.

HELEN

Zolf and I can help. Just tell us what needs to be done.

ALEX

Earhart's in quite a bad way.

BEN

What does that mean? Have her limbs been blown off, what?

LYDIA

Is he always like this, Alex?

ALEX

Yes. Wilde is fidgeting in a way that you are familiar with now, Zolf. Which just means the subject might be approaching – God forbid – emotions and/or being touchy/feely in some way.

BEN

Right.

ALEX

She is emotionally compromised by what has happened, and might need guiding in a way that I can't necessarily help.

HELEN

So she's lost someone?

ALEX

I think she lost a lot more than a single person.

HELEN

Oh no.

ALEX

I get the impression she may have lost the majority of her crew in some kind of major accident. And even if we can get the vessel airworthy, someone is going to need to help her out.

BEN

Yeah, I ain't going to be good for that, so...

ALEX

I agree Zolf.

(laughter)

HELEN

These two definitely [unclear 36:19]

ALEX

We all have our skills.

BEN

No.

ALEX

So. As it, as it stands Cel, I've managed to use a couple or bribes. I used a couple of bribes in order for us to be able to get access to Earhart's ship, which is currently impounded. And I would appreciate you taking a look at the vessel. Meanwhile I would appreciate maybe Hamid and Azu, I'm not sure, taking the time – I've managed to track down the flop house, for lack of a better word – that Earhart is populating. And Zolf, I may need you to assist Cel if the thing is airworthy.

BEN

What?

ALEX

I mean a ship's a ship, right?

BEN

Yes, but I ain't built a ship have I?

BRYN

You and Barnes between you might be able to help out, making sure it's ship-shape.

ALEX

Barnes looks as equally kind of perturbed as Zolf. At the – specifically at the statement 'a ship's a ship', right?

BEN

Yeah, right. I'm, I'm, I have sailed. I'm not an expert in building ships. I can tie a good rope.

LYDIA

The air currents are actually extremely different a few hundred feet off the ground than they are at sea level. Just, it's a...

ALEX

Wilde's ridiculous way of going about things aside, I genuinely think he might just mean like, tying knots. Which, as demeaning as it is, is that what you were getting at? Yeah that, that's exactly what I was, yeah I mean, there's rope.

BEN

Well I might assist Cel initially, just because – not that I'll be much help but – the kobolds will want to stay with me. But if we can get them started on the project I think they'd be a lot of, of, of good. And well, you know, it's not exactly like Earhart and I got on terribly well the last time. And she didn't exactly have a very fun journey with us and make awkward eye contact with Zolf. So, it may be better if Azu talks to her alone. And I'll certainly help Azu. Like after you've made initially contact, if you think you know, I could help you out with that? But I think just, just to start with maybe I'd be better you know, making sure the kobolds are assisting Cel with, with, with the ship?

BRYN

Yeah, no I might actually go with Azu and say, "Hey" at least, because I might be an awkward emotional wreckage, as everyone here is very well aware. But actually I did get on with her, reasonably well. So I'm going to go say, "Hi". So, fine.

ALEX

Useful to know, alright. What shall we say? Meet back here, 24 hours?

HELEN

Yes, fine. Where's the ship? Where's Earhart?

ALEX

(Barnes sort of picks his hand up), “I can get you through to the ship, don’t worry about that.”

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

And as for Earhart, Wilde can you...

ALEX

Yes, although I might stay out of sight. Me and Earhart...

BRYN ?

You said, yeah.

BEN

Yeah, cool. Alright, well if on the way I need to tie any knots for you, just let me know.

ALEX

As fun as marriage would be at this time Zolf, I’m really not in the mood. There’s a minor smirk of old Wilde, peeking around briefly.

(laughter)

LYDIA

Cel, Cel giggles. Yeah.

BRYN

A time and a place, Wilde. A time and a place.

LYDIA

This is the perfect place...

HELEN

Azu grins at that.

LYDIA

That was a retort.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

You don't – that – when you, when you say something as a reaction it has to be in that time and place. That's...

BEN

Oh great, no. As, as long as we all understand that that was, yeah very funny and not at all inappropriate. No great. Please, fine. Anyway, where is this...

HELEN

Zolf, why don't you and I go and find Earhart?

BEN

Yeah, yeah. Maybe we should.

HELEN

Alright.

ALEX

Okay. I am going to follow then the people heading to the ship first.

HELEN ?

Mmm.

ALEX

So, Barnes starts leading the way. So is that Cel and Hamid?

LYDIA

Yeah and, and...

BRYN

Yeah.

LYDIA

...Cel's going to ask Hamid. Like is, I mean Mr, Mr Smith has been, has been – let's wait for him – I realise from the beginning of, of meeting him. And I just, I just wondered if he's, if he's ever different, or if there's anything that you

know, that happened, or maybe that I could do? Or is there something I'm doing wrong? I just, he doesn't seem to want to be here.

BEN

Obviously I met him, you know, well over 18 months ago, and we travelled together for quite a while. And, he's – look Zolf – he certainly gets into his own head on occasions. And he can you know, he, he has, he has his doubts and he has his frustrations with the world. But, fundamentally he's always managed to power through and keep doing good. And even when you know, he was losing his faith, he was still you know, and he had felt the need to leave. There were a lot of reasons for that. And...

LYDIA

I'm sorry.

BEN

He clearly went on and kept doing good. And since I've come back, the change in him is clear. He – but that doesn't mean that his entire personality is different – I just think it's how he is. But, it's not a bad thing. As much as sometimes it's frustrating to be his friend, you know. It's...

LYDIA ?

Mmm.

BEN

He always manages to get done what needs to be done, and he's – I mean he's Zolf – he's, he's one of the greatest men I've ever known.

LYDIA

I mean, okay. So that – I hope that, that you're okay? Is, I, I can – if you respect the man – I'll, I'll respect the man. And..

BEN

I, I, I know he's frustrating. But very, very much so, yes, definitely.

LYDIA

Okay.

BEN

I'm really glad we're getting to work together though. I, it's been such...

LYDIA

Yeah! It's going to be wonderful little buddy.

BEN

...it's been fun getting to meet you and work with you. And I'm just, I'm really glad you're still sticking with us and everything.

LYDIA

Aah!

BEN

So thank, thank you for that. I don't know if we could do this bit, that's coming next, without your help either.

ALEX

Oh, here we are. At which point – over the course of this conversation you’ve headed through the concourse, which was populated obviously, by the public and so on. There was a moment of quiet conversation with Barnes and what appears to be sort of a guard of some kind. A packet changed hands and then you were into the back end of the aeroport.

LYDIA ?

Ooooh.

ALEX

Less shiny, less gilded, less bright. And you continue heading through all those corridors and you ended up heading out onto the actual, what’s it called? Not runways as such, but you know, like the...

BRYN

The hangars?

ALEX

...I’ve forgotten the. Yeah, like you know, basically you don’t need runways with dirigibles and so on, but you do need huge amounts of open and flat land.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

So you head out onto the exterior and then over towards yeah, the hangars. As that conversation concludes, Barnes starts pulling open the hangar revealing what can best be described as a deconstructed ship.

HELEN

Oh dear.

ALEX

The best way I can describe it is, imagine a sailing vessel? Primarily wooden, and then imagine that you decided whilst sailing, to brew your own whiskey. And then you got shot by a torpedo.

BEN ?

Ah.

ALEX

It is – the front half comparatively okay – it event still has like some semblance of like the, the, the paintwork and so on. The further back you get, the more messed up it is. The captain's quarter chunk and like the helm and so on, is effectively annihilated. The best way you could say, that certainly a lot of the bits that appear to be missing, are in the hangar...

HELEN ?

Mm hmm.

ALEX

...laid out in a semi-organised way. Have you ever seen, like when there's been say a commercial airliner crash where they lay everything out so they can see what's going on? Similar to that, although they aren't doing anything forensic like you know, labelling stuff. It is just, there is an element of organisation here. And it is currently – you notice the other hangars had similarly derelict vehicles around. There's a, a deflated dirigible in the hangar that was opened the other side, and some kind of aerocopter perhaps? But it had not blades. You're kind of in the chunk of the airport where – when someone lands and they can't get back up from landing. Stuff ends up here.

HELEN

Mmm.

BRYN ?

Oh dear. It looks like the engine exploded or something. This is pretty bad. I did travel on it before. Let me see if I can explain what it looked like. I mean, I don't know how it was constructed internally, but to give you an impression.

LYDIA

Ah, okay, okay.

BRYN

Hamid will start to sort of lay out what Earhart's ship used to look like. Which, if I recall correctly, Alex, is basically a sailing ship with two big jet engines stuck on, and then wings on the side.

(laughter)

ALEX

More or less. More or less.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

The wings were less wing-gey...

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

...and more like fins almost. It had two massive engines and, from your limited understanding of it, you know that elementals were used.

BRYN

Yeah. Hamid will recall what he can and explain it as best he can.

ALEX

Exactly. It'd be a knowledge arcana.

BRYN

Yeah. He's not useless thanks to his, his arcana.

(rolling dice)

BRYN

25.

ALEX

Entrapped air elementals kept it aloft. Engines towards the back kept it moving...

HELEN ?

Mm hmm.

ALEX

...meaning that you didn't need to get much out of the elementals, beyond lift.

HELEN ?

Mm hmm.

ALEX

And the thrust was mostly like redirected from a main engine. From the way that Hamid's talking about it – even if he doesn't have an accurate understanding – it's a well-thought out vessel. A lot of specialist parts, probably prone to breaking down a lot because it is complex, almost wilfully so.

LYDIA

Cel appreciates that.

ALEX

Looking around there isn't enough left in this hangar to reconstruct the vessel. There's just not. You need more parts. However, you do think that structurally speaking a lot of it looks worse than it is. As in like, yes all of the deck is almost completely gone. Yes, most of the side, like has blown out and so on. But the actual core structure was primarily metal with like a wood housing around the outside. So the best way to describe it is like the chassis is more or less there...

HELEN ?

Mm hmm.

ALEX

...huge chunks of the infrastructure are in there. You reckon if, if you had unlimited tools and unlimited parts, you could probably get it up in a couple of days. As in like functional. In a week you could probably get it properly airworthy for a long journey.

LYDIA

Cel explains this. And like, do we, do we still have the elementals?

ALEX

That's the rub. You're going to need a couple of elementals.

LYDIA ?

Mmm.

ALEX

And you can buy elementals on the market...

LYDIA ?

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

However, you're in a buyers' market when it comes to air equipment, because everyone's – this is a major airport – so as a result, although they, it will be available...

LYDIA

You mean a sellers, market?

ALEX

Yes, sorry. You're in a, you're in a sellers' market.

LYDIA ?

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

So as a result, you can probably source it, but that, that is the one where you're like. The easiest way would be just using someone else's basically.

BEN

I can summon elementals. The ability to permanently summon elementals is absurdly powerful, and I'm assuming we don't have loads of people who do

that. So, I don't know how elemental capturing, but I have mentioned that I can summon things. So, if it's a process where like somebody does a temporary summoning and then rams the elemental into like a, summoning grids...

ALEX

It's that. You don't need a permanent summoning.

BEN

...which, so since I've mentioned – and we all live in this world and have knowledge – just to throw out there that, that I can create elementals. It would be the perma-gridding of them that's the problem. Just to provide context to this scene.

HELEN ?

Cool.

ALEX

Sure. I, I'll chuck in as well that Barnes pretty much has, actually decent insight in, in the, how the vessel's working. Not at the like super technical side, but in terms of the principles of it. And he's the one that warns you that, yeah elementals are a bit of a racket. Because everyone needs them to fly. There's a, there's an artificial kind of price hike going on there which would make things a bit more awkward.

LYDIA

So the key bits of information are then are how much it costs to create or buy elemental trapping gear? Because I assume that you know, if Zolf can summon elementals temporarily, then quite a few people, like there will be priests of that sort of level, in various things, can do so. Clerics rather, so that might be the limiting thing in the market. Like, are they very expensive?

ALEX

If, if you were providing the elementals, and you just like, “Can you please put them in this commonly used...

LYDIA

Yip.

ALEX

...housing?” It will cost you a couple thousand, but the catch is...

LYDIA ?

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

...waiting lists. Basically it's, it's a specialist thing, so you're not going to be able to just rock up and go, “Hi, I'd like a flying machine please.” And they'd be like, “Yeah, if you come back in an hour I'll get that sorted for you.”

BEN

Well, I mean part of this ship must have been you know, the elemental containment apparatus? I don't think if that's...

LYDIA

Well if that would explode it, then that's the thing. What do I need to roll to – I assume check out – (a) whether the elemental holding things are there; and (b) how much of the engine is there? Essentially I want to know what I need to buy.

ALEX

Because Pathfinder is a bit weird in its labelling, disable the vice, even though you're not trying to disable it. I'd also allow knowledge engineering.

LYDIA

Yeah. I've got lots of that. Yeah.

ALEX

I would say, go with whichever's higher in this instance.

LYDIA

Okay.

BRYN

Can I request Skraak assists, because he has points in those abilities as well?

ALEX

Yes, that's actually a good suggestion.

(dice rolling)

BEN

And just another context throughout, I've just double checked, and I can summon large elementals. So...

BRYN

Nice.

BEN

...we can do as...

ALEX

Excellent. Then, you have solved the major scarcity challenge in this situation, which is useful. Cool.

LYDIA

I only rolled a 3, so that is 19, in disabled device.

ALEX

You believe...

BRYN

Do you want me to roll for Skraak, or do you want to Alex?

ALEX

I, I've rolled for Skraak. I'm afraid he failed.

BRYN

Okay, cool.

ALEX

In future I'll get you to roll for him.

BRYN

Okay.

ALEX

Unfortunately you reckon that you're not necessarily going to be able to salvage the elemental housing.

LYDIA ?

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

However, you do reckon you're options are as follows. (1) go through the proper legitimate channels and try and get hold of it...

LYDIA ?

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

Or (2) you reckon you could, because it's so deconstructed. If you can just get hold of a piece by any means necessary...

LYDIA ?

Mmm.

ALEX

...even if it wasn't for this specific vessel, you can retro fit.

LYDIA

Cel is not a thief. So they would, well there's a particular thing that I need. It may exist in some of these other decommissioned airships? So, if we can kind of, if we're allowed to, to ask? Some of those might be useful? It could be interesting I think to, I mean we've got a lot of money now, right? I don't know...

BRYN

Yeah, I mean...

LYDIA

...we could, we could double the price you know. And so...

BRYN

The funds definitely don't have to be used to outfit us, if they're going to help to get this thing back in the air then that's a better use for them.

LYDIA

You know it's probably a good thing. Maybe you could go? I'll, I'll write you a list of the things we need and if you go now, then I can start work on the other stuff that needs doing. And if it takes about a week, then that's fine.

BRYN

Yeah. I mean, this is still our best option, even if it takes a while to get it in the air. So let's take a week and do it right and make sure you've got everything you need.

LYDIA

I mean I don't really know if I could do it wrong.

(laughter)

ALEX

I'm going to use that note to jump across to the other half of the party if that's okay? But you are going to have to head off with Wilde in order for him to show you where Earhart is. And Wilde effectively takes you to a bit of weird city architecture-y thing here. It's a lovely city. It has lots of fine architecture and good transport, but in any city of sufficient size you end up with those sort of in between spaces. You know, you build a big building. You build another big building. The building between is demolished. At some point someone puts a wall up there. Technically now that's an interior space, that kind of thing.

LYDIA ?

Yeah.

ALEX

Those weird in between-y not really official spaces. Wilds leads you to an area that has a few more of these, and then points to one where it genuinely looks like someone threw up a exterior wall on what's probably just the other exterior walls. Like they didn't do a proper job. And it has the really grimiest looking kind of hotel, I'd put in inverted commas. It's more it, basically it, it looks more like it is a glorified squat, if I'm honest.

LYDIA ?

Mmm.

ALEX

It is filthy and it appear to have sort of no one at the front door or anything like that. It gives off a very strong vibe, especially to you, Zolf. You've seen this kind of thing where – I don't know – if a sailor comes into port and then manages to get themselves robbed, and they can't get themselves back on their feet. This is the kind of place you end up, you know?

BEN

Sure.

ALEX

It's, it is a last resort place for people who can't do better, normally.

BEN

Mmm hmm.

HELEN

Oh dear.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

And yeah its, it, the fronting is there. There isn't a lock on the door or anything, and Wilde goes, "She's in there."

BEN

Right. Okay. Cool, you can hop it then.

ALEX

Wilde sort of gives a nod, "I'll see you tomorrow, let me know how it goes."

BEN

Will do.

LYDIA

Fine, bye Wilde.

HELEN

Zolf, before we go in there...

BEN

Yeah, what?

HELEN

What do you know about Earhart?

BEN

Swaggering pirate captain harlequin.

HELEN

Okay.

BEN

Confident, jovial, loves an adventure. Loved it when I threw Bertie over the side, well I tried to. Yeah.

HELEN

Oh, Bertie was the one we don't like?

BEN

Yeah, yeah the dead one. So...

HELEN

Hamid liked him I think, but anyway.

BEN

Yeah, Hamid were school friends, they were – I don't know – joined by privilege I suppose. Yeah, I'll make the introductions because I know her. I'll just try and get you talking to her as quickly as possible because – yes as everyone pointed out, despite me having pointed it out before them – I am not, probably the best person to help them deal with that kind of thing. But at least I can you know, provide some empathy, as it were.

HELEN

Yes. Zolf?

BEN

Yeah?

HELEN

Mmm. Never mind. Let's go in.

BEN

Alright. And go in.

HELEN

He he he.

ALEX

Okay. So you go head in...

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

...and it is overcrowded in a way that doesn't necessarily make sense at first for the city that you're in. In the sense of like – it's been obvious walking around – there is not a housing shortage.

BEN

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

This is not a place where people are raising families. This is not a place where people are you know, settled. This is for people who have fallen through the cracks, and it is very obvious.

HELEN ?

Mmm.

ALEX

There are a few people actively sleeping in the corridors as you head through.

HELEN

Oh dear.

ALEX

I'll, I'll retro fit that Wilde pointed out that Earhart's taken the highest room that she could get. And yeah, heading up a narrow stairway, there's a lot of missing doors. There seems to be basic plumbing still. It's one of the only buildings that you've seen that is still using like gas lighting and so on. Not that it's lit, but it's got all the pipework and so on. And then you keep heading up, keep heading up to what you realise is going to be effectively a garret space.

BEN

Mmm hmm.

HELEN

Is it cramped in here?

ALEX

Yes, but not claustrophobic.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

What this will have once been, a long, long time ago, is a townhouse. And then someone went, "That's a big room, I can make that three rooms. That's a big room, I can make that four rooms." So it's still got the stairwells and so on.

HELEN

Mmm.

ALEX

...but ultimately it is a building that has been converted due to necessity, not desire.

HELEN

Yeah.

BEN

It's got proper Victorian London sort of slum vibes?

ALEX

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

HELEN

A nice big house converted into teeny tiny flats, okay.

ALEX

Absolutely.

BEN

Oh well that's just modern London isn't it, so?

(laughter)

ALEX

You reach the very top floor where there is one of the only rooms that still has a door, and then you see that hammered into the front is Zolf, something that you recognise, which was a label that was on the door of Earhart's ship.

BEN

Ah ha.

ALEX

And it just says, "Captain" and then the rest is scorched away and scratched out. It looks like it wasn't just damaged, but wilfully scratched out as well.

BEN

Sure. Just, when I open this door, I might be shot? Don't worry about it.

HELEN

Well shall, should we knock first?

(laughter)

BEN

Well I mean I'm going to knock and then open the door, because all she's going to say is, "Go away." But she then might shoot me, but that's probably going to be, that will be fine.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Delight, it points.

BEN

Got a load.

ALEX

Got loads of hit points.

BEN

I mean look, mechanically she cannot one shot me, so we're all good.

HELEN

He he he. You said that in your Zolf voice.

BEN

Yeah, I know.

(laughter)

HELEN

Okay.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

All, alright then.

BEN

Alright? “Earhart, we’re coming in.” I’ll open the door and walk inside.

ALEX

The trap goes off and we’ll end the episode there.

(Group laughter)

BEN

Nice.

HELEN ?

Yay!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA ?

I love the idea right that, that Zolf actually has achieved this kind of, this level of emotional disengagement from things, because he has actually absorbed a meta-analysis of the game. Like, Zolf’s like, “I hate, I hate Pathfinder.”

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

...all the time. Mechanically, they...

BRYN

So many bloody rules.

(laughter)

BEN

I just yeah, I go, I go shopping and I'm like, "Why?"

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

"Why have you set this up like this?"

LYDIA

I, I don't understand why I need to write down my spells.

BEN

Yeah he does, every, every morning meditating like, "Oh for goodness sake!"

(laughter)

ALEX

His hand hovers over the door. Azu how many days has it been since there has been a trap? Three. Oh right. Okay, right.

(Group laughter)

BEN

Is this the third encounter for today, or what do we reckon?

(Group laughter)

BEN

I might get a long rest after this, so I'll spend my spells.

(laughter)

ALEX

Right, well. While I start researching ways I can give Zolf psychic damage for exterior reality knowledge. We'll come back next week, but thanks for now and talk to you all later.

ALL

Bye !

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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