

RQG – 160 – A Fixer-Upper

Content Warnings

- X
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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 160 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

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ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom.

HELEN

And Azu.

ALEX

I mean you say that, I'm fairly certain you're playing the splattered remains of Zolf Smith.

BEN

Well that depends, how many hit points...

LYDIA

He's got loads of hit points. Loads.

BEN

Loads of hit points!

ALEX

Ok. I'm going to roll. I do exactly one more hit point than the number of hit points you've got.

BEN

Oh go on, take a guess, how many's that then Alex?

ALEX

92.

BEN

Ha! I'm on 0 not -1. Screw you.

ALEX

Oh come on that was a good guess though!

BEN

Yeah you actually guessed my hit points. That was very good!

LYDIA

That's amazing hit points!

(laughing)

ALEX

I'm well chuffed with myself. I'm abandoning the intro this episode. That was ace!

Picking up where we left off we are all in Hiroshima, the massive aeroport city and we have a, not insurmountable, conundrum. In two parts. Conundrum the first, we have a broken airship that needs fixing. Conundrum the second, we have a broken airship captain that needs fixing, apparently. And we ended the last episode with a trap going off. With that in mind, Zolf can you please give me a reflex save because that's where we're starting.

BEN

Ah. What's my reflex...it's not very good. I'm not a reflexive person. Oh no. That's a 13. So probably not the DC you need. Unless it's a really bad trap.

ALEX

Trap hits. Ok. Are you ready?

BEN

Yep.

HELEN

Oh!

BEN

Ha! You can't get Bryn to do your maths now!

ALEX

Ok, no this is acceptable. That's ok. What happens is you open the door and Zolf, from your perspective, everything goes white and then [ringing noise].

BEN

Oh.

ALEX

Azu, from your perspective...also to be clear Zolf, also lots of pain but we'll get to the pain.

BEN

Ok.

ALEX

Azu, from your perspective it's like someone fired a canon at Zolf's head from every direction on the other side of the door.

HELEN

Right, first of all quote from Alexander J Newall, "we'll get to the pain". Secondly, do you mean several cannonballs or do you mean one big...

ALEX

I'm sticking with the description that you have been given and we will cross this bridge.

HELEN

Ok

ALEX

Zolf. You take 38 damage.

BEN

Ah whatever! That's child's damage.

HELEN

That's so much!

BEN

Little kiddy damage!

ALEX

There is the distinct smell of burnt gunpowder and smoke everywhere. The noise from it was deafening and you hear cries of alarm from further down the stairs. You definitely hear at least one person yell, "oh no, not again".

HELEN

Oh dear. Azu yells – it's alright – down the corridor. And then into the room she says – Earhart?

BEN

What pain occurred by the way? Just like...

ALEX

All head pain. So to go into more detail there were multiple shotguns all pointing to the entrance that were indeed on a string as Ben correctly predicted. And they apparently went off. The thing is that you didn't get hit by all of the shrapnel from all of them but a significant chunk of the doorway is now missing and there's now a hole in the plaster which allows you to see into the room. In terms of response you hear, [mumbling noise].

BEN

[Coughing]

HELEN

Has Zolf been knocked down?

ALEX

I'm going to say that Zolf certainly might've had to take a knee before standing again. I think the thing that solved Zolf's problem, it was angled for a head that was a lot higher than his.

HELEN

I give Zolf an arm.

BEN

Thank you. Right, Earhart?

ALEX

Uhh...

BEN

Brilliant. And she's plastered. Right, Earhart where are you? I'm going to get in and have a look for her.

ALEX

So it's really difficult to make out because there's so much smoke and so on. It's definitely a garret, it's even got a sort of gabled roof going on. There's some kind of window at the opposite end however it's got newspapers and stuff plastered all up on it and some cloth as well. There is stuff everywhere. The word "nest" feels appropriate for what's going on here. It smells like someone has been staying in here far too much. Towards the window end you can just here [drunken mumbling]

HELEN

We can't.

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BEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah, your shotgun didn't work.

HELEN

I head over to the window.

ALEX

[Mumbling] leave it.

HELEN

What do I see near the window?

ALEX

There is a pile of...

BEN

Gnome

(laughing)

ALEX

Yeah. Basically. There is a makeshift bed. There is a mattress that's quite motheaten and the springs have gone and it's blown out in some places. There's a pile of blankets upon it and there is a gnome in the corner bunched

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up with those blankets all over them and they – errrrr – and then point something at you.

HELEN

Right.

ALEX

Leave me alone. Get out.

BEN

Earhart, it's Zolf. Remember me?

ALEX

You're not Zolf.

HELEN

Yes he is.

ALEX

Wait...oh – she turns and sees Zolf – hey. Get out.

BEN

No. We need you and also you're living like this, which is...

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ALEX

I don't have anything left to give. Get out.

BEN

Alright, alright. How drunk are you?

ALEX

How drunk are you?!

BEN

Not at all.

ALEX

Then we have a problem!

BEN

Right.

HELEN

Well he's an extremely sober dwarf. I am an extremely sober paladin. We're going to help.

ALEX

I don't want help.

HELEN

Too bad.

BEN

Yeah you bloody need it. Right...

ALEX

You just said that you needed my help.

BEN

Yeah well we do but you need help so that you can give us help. We need you to...

ALEX

Oh come on!

BEN

...to captain a...

ALEX

Ok you want my help, get out. Just...

BEN

No. Obviously not. Azu?

HELEN

Yes?

BEN

I'm thinking, right, as an aside, grab her.

ALEX

I'm right here.

BEN

Ok. So grab her, take her to our place, let her sober up so she can clean herself up.

ALEX

I'll shoot your knees off.

BEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You'll probably miss.

HELEN

Azu looks really sad for a minute.

ALEX

There's a loud bang again as she fires a weapon from her bed, wildly at neither of you.

BEN

Told you.

HELEN

How close am I to Earhart?

ALEX

Within five feet.

HELEN

I'm going to step over and take the weapon out of her hands or attempt to.

ALEX

She resists.

LYDIA

Better grapple check!

ALEX

Technically yes however I'm fudging it for one simple reason, Earhart's plastered. Mostly I was rolling to see if the weapon goes off. It doesn't. She is completely weak. You pluck it from her hands. It is trivial. It is doink. It's just between...in fact, you're that large and she's that undersized you could lift the

weapon between two fingers. For what it's worth you don't recognise the weapon.

HELEN

Ok

ALEX

It seems to be some kind of mechanical device that makes a big loud noise. And holes in things like Zolf.

HELEN

Cel might like this. I put it into my bag and then I say – you can get that back later. It's extremely important that you come with us right now. I understand....

ALEX

Why?

HELEN

...that something horrible happened.

ALEX

What...what can I possibly have that you need?

BEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right this is now a kidnapping and I'll pick her up and put her over my shoulder in a fireman's lift.

ALEX

You're kidnapping – Earhart is problematically light.

BEN

Ah right

ALEX

Earhart has not been eating properly for a long time. There's no oppose checks or anything. In fact they don't even really start to argue after the initial, they don't seem to have the breath in them.

HELEN

Oh dear.

BEN

Right we're getting her out of here.

HELEN

Yes.

BEN

I'm gonna have a cursory look around the room to see if there's any relevant personal effects.

HELEN

Yeah, yeah, same.

ALEX

There are. There is, what appears to be a comparatively unsoiled, like clean, set of captain's gear however you notice that it is clean insofar as it has heavy soot marks and heavy charring on one part of it but then appears to have not been worn since in any way or cleaned in any way. There is the remnants of an elaborate captain's hat, a shattered pair of goggles.

LYDIA

Not the goggles!

ALEX

There is a crate of spent ammunition and you notice that one of the walls, as you're searching around, is just pockmarked with holes all over it and there is additionally what seems to be a stash of "food", he says in bunny quotes, being mostly cans. There's maybe a couple left in there that are useable. That's it. That's her...the sum total of personal effects in the room.

BEN

Right if you pick up those clothes, I think Hamid can make himself useful and then let's get her back.

HELEN

Yes

BEN

We can't do anything until she's sober.

HELEN

No, no we can't.

ALEX

Azu, you've never met this person before have you?

HELEN

No.

ALEX

So to describe them for you they are a gnome. Female. They are very underweight. They have comparatively long hair but you get the impression that it might've been a short haircut that grew out and they are certainly...you get the impression that they've probably been injured in the past and haven't

really done much about it. I don't mean they're bleeding or anything but you know people can have a flavorful side, that kind of thing.

HELEN

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ALEX

That should be enough to be getting on with. Zolf, to your eye, yeah this is what happens if you take the person that you met and then you just try to make their life as awful as possible.

HELEN

Oh dear.

BEN

I don't know anything about that.

HELEN

I pick up anything that seems relevant.

ALEX

Not a lot. Oh I lie, there is ship's manifest that you find just laying around.

HELEN

Oh well I take that. I attempt to close the door, realise there's not much point since there's a massive hole in it.

ALEX

Do you touch the door?

HELEN

Do I touch it?

ALEX

Yeah.

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

You are now holding the door.

(laughing)

A few very concerned and comparatively similarly unfortunate people start poking their head and looking up the stairwell to have a look at what's going on.

HELEN

It's alright, we're going to help her. Do you want any money?

ALEX

Do you say it to them?

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

All of the heads disappear for a moment, there's some whispering – yes please.

HELEN

How much is a decent amount of money to give to needy people in a terrible house? Because I've got 4,000 on me.

ALEX

I used to know living costs off the top of my head. Bryn, can you remember them at all?

BRYN

I mean living costs for a year for some kind of basic level is a few gold pieces as far as I can remember. Like 10 or 12 or...I don't remember the exact figures but like a single gold coin to each of these people would be enough for them to live off for weeks, I believe.

ALEX

If you were to give 20 gold to each of the people in this building and they were in a healthy state of mind it might be enough to get them out of the rut.

BRYN

Yeah.

HELEN

Azu's gonna do that.

ALEX

Ok, ok. I am going to say that in this building there are about 60 people.

HELEN

x20...ooh...1,200 right?

ALEX

Yeah. For 1,200 gold you have...and I can't stress enough that these things are more complicated than just buying your way out of a problem obviously.

HELEN

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

ALEX

But assuming every single person in there, all they're lacking is the cash to get out, that would be enough to get your foot out of the trench as it were.

HELEN

Yeah but Azu is...she now knows that she has way more money than she feels like she could ever spend and this seems like a good thing to do and at some point in the next couple of days she is going to tell the Temple of Aphrodite that there's a house where people could use some support

BRYN

Some ministrations.

HELEN

Yes!

ALEX

People start to weep as you give them stuff. They aren't...like they aren't fawning or anything like that but it is....it's a level of generosity that I don't think any of them will ever have seen in their lives.

HELEN

Aw. Azu is acutely uncomfortable and is like – ok let's go now Zolf.

ALEX

You basically went into a poverty stricken house and went you get a housing deposit, you get a housing deposit for every, single person there. Yeah there's gonna be some crying.

BEN

As we're walking out as well I'm just continuously channelling positive energy but it's worth remembering where my positive energy comes from which is a sense of hope.

HELEN

Aw!

BEN

That might be useful for people.

ALEX

This might be the nicest thing you have done in this campaign as a pair.

BEN

Oh I dunno saving the world's pretty good.

ALEX

Uh, the world includes people that I don't like whereas you know I have decided I like everyone in this building.

BEN

Yeah so I've got seven of them, I'll spend it 5 D6, I also heal which is handy.

ALEX

You leave the building, Earhart is kind of not even really arguing at this point and is just a sack of potatoes on your shoulder. Everyone in the building looks a lot better off than when you entered, let's put it that way.

HELEN

Aw, well that's good.

ALEX

I am going to jump back to Cel and Hamid on the ship watch situation. So what was your plan, sorry, you're gonna have to remind me since seeing it.

LYDIA

I remember telling Hamid what we needed, the kind of elemental trapping thing and...

ALEX

Ah yes.

LYDIA

...asking if he could go and find and buy, potentially, that. Upping the price if necessary so that we could get it within a week. You heavily hinted that I needed to nick it from somewhere.

ALEX

I said it was an option. Hamid, can I get a diplomacy check please.

BRYN

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ALEX

You have the following options, in terms of a best option I leave you to judge; option number one is to buy a custom part for this vessel. As you understand it to be like everything that you need straight away will cost you about 2,500 gold and also will take about two and a half weeks. If you're willing to spend 1,000 gold you could probably buy one of the vessels that's nearby and impounded and then just take the bits that you need from that. If you wanted to just provide the elementals and like fix stuff up, assuming that you can find someone which you think you could, it's gonna be similar to buying one of the ships that's next door, as it were, but either way you also know that you're still gonna need to elementals but again Zolf can tick that box.

BRYN

If I take Skraak with me and Skraak is able to assess the state of other ships that we're visiting because I've decided he has the requisite knowledge to do

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that, then yeah we will spend the money that is required to buy an entire other ship and then harvest the parts we need from it basically.

ALEX

Let's say you get...you head to one of the ships that's derelict nearby. Skraak basically climbs inside and starts doing the broken table thing – no, no, Skraak, no, no. No. What even...no, no, no. And the ship starts to get a little bit smaller until finally Skraak pokes his head up going – yep this'll do.

BRYN

Then yeah I will just buy it. Did you say 1,000?

ALEX

Yeah 1,000 to buy a derelict where it won't fly but it will now have all the parts that you need assuming that Zolf can provide magical muscle as it were. You're probably gonna need to hire someone to assist the binding but you know...there are a lot of people around with those skills in this city specifically. It's their primary industry so yeah, there are people around.

LYDIA

I suppose we go hunting for that. Cel will go out and look for that person.

ALEX

Skraak approaches Cel.

LYDIA

Hiya.

ALEX

Would it...would it help if you had all of the parts ordered?

LYDIA

Oh yeah, yeah that would be great. Let's talk about the different kind of...do you have an organisation method in mind because I have two or three that I alternate between.

ALEX

Yes. I'm going to pan away from this conversation just as Skraak asks if you've ever seen locusts before.

LYDIA

That's...I was thinking more Dewey decimal system in terms of...

ALEX

I know exactly what you were getting at and that answer's exactly what I am gonna stick with. You'll see why. I'm going to jump back to team Earhart for now. So are you taking Earhart back to the hotel?

HELEN

Yes

ALEX

Ok. You do so easily and the maître de is professional enough to pretend not to be bothered and to offer medical assistance if it's needed and so on.

BEN

Nope

HELEN

We've got this in hand

ALEX

Ok so short term what's the plan? Just so that I know.

BEN

So I plonk Earhart down in my bed because we have a room for each of us so she'll take my room and then I will cast restoration on her three times and then do a heal check and I'm assuming because I think Azu's heal check is actually better than mine...no. In which case I will assist Azu with a heal check.

ALEX

So interestingly first your mercies would have already acted.

BEN

I don't have mercies, I'm a cleric.

ALEX

Oh sorry, that's...

HELEN

I have mercies. My mercies can heal poisoned. Also heals 4 D6. Should I bother to roll those?

ALEX

Zolf burnt so much channel positive energy that the healing's kind of immaterial at this point.

BEN

She's been healed by what, like 35 D6...

(laughing)

ALEX

I'm saying don't try and heal her much more or she'll pop.

BEN

Yeah. Sounds like she was undead. Oh no.

HELEN

I won't bother rolling the dice for that then but I would like her to have the benefit of the mercies which is, she is no longer deceived, enfeebled or poisoned.

ALEX

Yep excellent. I think you've dealt with almost all of the conditions that I've applied.

BEN

Well and I'm just gonna plonk on a calming touch as well which removes fatigued which has already gone, shaken and sickened.

LYDIA

And stirred.

BEN

I spend most of my time stirred!

(laughing)

ALEX

I tell you what, give me a heal check Azu at the end. You can assist Zolf if you want.

BEN

Yeah alright, that's a 16 to assist which I think is...

ALEX

That'll be sufficient.

BEN

Yeah so you get +2 to this Helen.

HELEN

Ok so that's a 34 in a heal check.

ALEX

Cor! Ok you have blown through the number of resources that you would spend on a significant chunk of a hospital in a day on a single person. On the one hand, the healer in you is like urgh I could've used those resources on more people in a way that would've been more efficient however you also know that you have given as much help as it is possible to give a person on the medical administration side, short of removing curses which they weren't under or bringing them back to life which you already know isn't on the cards. What Earhart needs now is rest and someone to talk to.

HELEN

Yeah. Whose room did we put her in?

BEN

Mine.

HELEN

Ok. Zolf do you want to put her in your bed or on a couch or...

BEN

I already plonked her on my bed. I am just fully, I am moving out of this room now. This is Earhart's room.

ALEX

Actually, interestingly because of the way the spells work as well she...although still underweight she now doesn't have that emaciated look. Genuinely you have done all of the stuff that it's not possible in the real world which is, hi shall we get all of the physical symptoms dealt with so that we can then make very quick progress. Magic.

BEN

Right I'm gonna go get her some food, if you want to do the talking. I mean I don't know if she'll remember the introduction but I guess technically she's introduced, she's here and you can stop her from leaving.

HELEN

Well she might want to sleep but we'll...

ALEX

She's already asleep.

HELEN

Oh, in which case I do the medical room thing which is I draw up a chair next to her bedside and put a blanket on her and wait.

BEN

Oh hang on a minute. And I will hand you a Campbell novel.

ALEX

Which one Ben for my record?

BEN

Which one? Er...the Heart Beats Faster.

ALEX

The Heart Beats Faster. Ah. Arguably the lowest of the Campbells.

BEN

Oh yeah.

HELEN

I've heard of this one.

BEN

It's from my secret stash.

ALEX

Someone tried to ban it in Sweden. They didn't succeed but interesting to know.

BEN

I'm also going to...I'm going to try and recall what the meal she served to us...or like the meals she served to us when we had a meal in her captain's cabin because one would assume that she was serving stuff that she likes and then I'm gonna try and order that for her.

HELEN

Aw!

LYDIA

Awww! So cute.

ALEX

I will say that although it was ship's fayre to a degree, the best way to describe it is start with a salad, ok, and then put far too much meat in it so it's not really a salad anymore.

BEN

Cool. Well I am gonna give an actual...I'm gonna do a proper like personal order so I'm to use my own knowledge of cooking to be like if I were to going to make a version of that but really nice, what would I do.

ALEX

Gotcha. In that case I am going to jump back to the Team Ship to see us out for the rest of this day.

BRYN

I'm going to refer to you guys as Team Hart.

ALEX

Team Hart, Team Ship. So jumping to the team who are working on the ship, the statement about locusts becomes readily apparent. It turns out kobolds are really good at disassembling things. It's like watching a time lapse good at disassembling things. They coordinate really well and can strip a ship down to the bone in about an hour. They are very good at it.

LYDIA

I mean that's cool but I was asking about organisational. I want my parts laid out like a Lego parts list not like a Lego bag.

(laughing)

ALEX

So here's the thing, the kobolds totally are on board with trying the systems and they're interested with the systems that you're providing although they are quicker at deconstructing things than they are systematically filing things so there is a brief bottleneck where there's a big pile where a kobold will occasionally dive in and climb out with one part in its mouth, two in their hands, run over, place into the proper order and dive back into the pile but nonetheless you make phenomenal progress in terms of the deconstruction side. You honestly are, by the end of today alone, just going to have the ideal Lego set up where you've got all your parts and it's all colour coded and everything's nice and ready. If the kobolds are as good as putting stuff together as they are at taking stuff apart you may have overestimated how long this is gonna take.

LYDIA

Different skills.

ALEX

They are very different skills. In that case then is there anything on the RP side that you want to be doing at the ship or am I ok to skip back to everyone reconvenes at the hotel and then the next morning.

LYDIA

Er no. Not really from my perspective except that Hamid might see a bit more of a kind of, Cel's energy is now going into a thing so it's not all over the place. It's actually very focused and things are moving...

BRYN

Hamid didn't have a lot to do but he's aware if he tries to wander off the kobolds will all follow him so he's just...

ALEX

That is a thing.

BRYN

So he just puts himself in the corner of the room and watches in amusement.

LYDIA

You know what you need? A Harrison Campbell novel.

BRYN

Yeah if only he could let himself.

BEN

That's the real crisis of this story!

(laughing)

ALEX

And you know what, that feels like a natural break point to me. Why don't we take a break there and then we'll be back in a couple of minutes.

And welcome back. So, I am going to start with us back at the hotel briefly. Presumably there is an exchange of information although the idea that it suddenly becomes a competition is interesting to me.

BEN

Ooh, one important thing for me actually for Hamid and Cel is that Zolf has actually perked up a little bit so...

LYDIA

All of those mercies and everything.

HELEN

Positive energy.

BEN

[Whispers] No it turns out he needs a project otherwise he gets stuck in his head in entirely not relatable content.

(laughing)

ALEX

So does anyone want to RP this evening or do I jump to the next day?

LYDIA

Cel will definitely ask the specifics of what Zolf can summon and how long that would last and what kind of bind...because Cel has quite extreme knowledge arcana.

ALEX

How extreme?

LYDIA

17

BRYN

Nice!

ALEX

Give me a roll on knowledge arcana actually. I'm going to say only Cel, Bryn because of the engineering element in this.

BRYN

Fair.

LYDIA

Only 21 because I rolled a 4.

ALEX

It sounds like the stuff that he's got will be applicable but you are going to need some assistance. You're not going to be able to do it on your own and Hamid won't count as assistance. You need expert assistance. But again in an airport...sorry in an aeroport you're probably gonna find them. There will be one on staff just to deal with situations that turn up.

BEN

Yeah and from my perspective I can summon basically any type of elemental you want because I can get to large ones which is the core, kind of the big lads and I can summon them for just under a minute. It's nine rounds so...

ALEX

How many times can you summon in one day?

BEN

Fifth level spells I can...if we want a large one specifically I can do it once.

ALEX

Ok cool. So that's a useful limiting factor to know.

BEN

If we want medium ones I can do it bunch of times.

ALEX

Now Cel I am going to give you this for your arcana check, you know the following; the normal choice would be an air elemental, earth elementals they're right out. Ship will go down. Now fire elementals interestingly will get you where you want to go faster...

LYDIA

But a one way trip.

(laughing)

ALEX

It is a one way trip. Other more obscure elementals tend to have their own complications.

LYDIA

Water we're just not into. That would just be a ship, ship and we're so over ship ships.

ALEX

Yeah that's the thing.

LYDIA

We did that last week.

ALEX

A water elemental, basically what you end up with there is a ship that won't ever float.

BEN

We could do an aether elemental if you want us to telekinetically throw the ship instead of flying it.

ALEX

All jokes aside metagame, if you want to have a more interesting cocktail of elementals beyond air I am open to this as a concept and will adjust how the ship works accordingly.

LYDIA

If Zolf raises the aether elemental thing Cel will start doing sums.

BEN

I will have a chat because there are a lot of large elementals because Pathfinder is Pathfinder so...do we want a Mihstu? I have no idea what a Mihstu is but...oh cool! It's a barbed wire elemental but made of tentacles. Great. I'm gonna get off the Mihstu page.

(laughing)

ALEX

I'm gonna go ahead and say this might now be a conversation for Zolf and Cel to have where Cel's like – what about this one? Yeah that's an elemental. What about this one? Yeah that's also an elemental.

BEN

You extremely want a tumble spark because it's both an air and electricity combined elemental.

ALEX

Ok we are going to address this off this recording because we are not at the stage to make use of it yet. Is anyone going to be dealing with anything else this evening? Azu, for your benefit, Earhart's out of it. You don't reckon Earhart's going to wake up until tomorrow. All of the healing in the world doesn't remove the need for rest. Like the thing is rest and sleep, not necessarily the same thing. Technically yes you have dealt with all of the stuff so Earhart could work for a full day but that's not the same as rest.

HELEN

Yep.

ALEX

And this is someone who has been beating themselves up for a long time.

HELEN

Yeah, aw. I think Azu's just gonna stick with her, light some incense. Do some thinking.

ALEX

In that case then I am now going to dive out of RP and into sort of a bit more metagame style which is, from my perspective, on the ship's side, thanks to the combination of money, being sensible, doing your research and so on. Thanks to Zolf being able to provide an elemental a day I think that even if Earhart is not factored in, you will be able to get something airworthy in a week. With the kobolds doing a lot of the implementation where it's like ok you see these little six sided bolts I want them on every single one of those holes. Off they go. But they're not going to be good at the strategic decision making in terms of the engineering. Zolf, with you just burning major spells on elementals that's going to be the last sort of thing removed. So I am happy to montage building a ship and just factor in a few roles and to abstract that over the week. That's fine for me. I will need though, there's going to have to be an element of RP with Earhart because I can't abstract out counselling. So...

LYDIA

I've got great diplomacy. Really high.

ALEX

With that in mind what I would quite like to do if I can is to divorce us from hard time for a little bit and just jump to a scene during Earhart's rehabilitation that is just more than Earhart either insulting you or eating.

HELEN

Ok

ALEX

Unless anyone has anything really hard that they need to do during this week, I'm going to include by the way, that you all have downtime to like...

BRYN

Shop

ALEX

Eat out if you want, go buy some equipment if you want. There's no way to make this go faster by just working all night, all day, it doesn't really work like that because you need Earhart because ultimately Cel...

LYDIA

We need at least two elementals. We need to hire a binder and we have to assume that we won't necessarily get it right first time.

ALEX

Exactly. So once you factor all these in, even if you could just work all night, it's still gonna take a week. That is an absolute.

BEN

Also one aside is that Zolf will insist that his share of the money is used to go towards any of these maintenance projects.

LYDIA

Urgh Zolf!

BEN

Yeah I know. I know.

ALEX

It's not Zolf that's the problem, it's Ben. He likes not having equipment.

BEN

It's true.

HELEN

Azu is actually gonna be ok with that because at least you're choosing what to do with the money. You have told us what to do with it therefore it is still you spending that money, therefore it's fine.

BEN

Yeah so basically, unless anyone else massively disagrees, Alex just let me know how much I spend out of my 15k.

ALEX

It'll depend on how things with Earhart go but yeah, fair enough.

BEN

Fine, cool.

ALEX

I am guessing it will end up being Azu that RPs this scene but if someone wants in, now's the time to speak up.

BEN

I will be hovering like a nervous hen. Like I will not be getting directly involved but if called upon I will be present.

BRYN

I mean, yeah Hamid probably stops in to say hello to Earhart a few times over the course of the week but isn't really going to get involved in the project.

ALEX

At the first half of the week Earhart pretty much just rolls over and stares at the wall if anyone enters the room.

HELEN

Yeah

BEN

Gives you the Zolf treatment.

(laughing)

ALEX

Also Earhart keeps asking for alcohol.

HELEN

Azu does not provide the alcohol.

ALEX

That's the only time when you ever see Earhart turn. Is that Earhart get in her head to let's have a drink and every time you say no that's where Earhart will turn and get a little bit nastier than she really needs to.

LYDIA

Is she unwell with the withdrawals? Is that something that needs to be healed? Is that something that can be healed?

ALEX

So...

HELEN

That's a good point actually.

ALEX

Basically, yeah, here's the thing with the pair of healers that you've got, interestingly the way Pathfinder works is that you cannot cure that kind of problem but what you can do is you can just constantly keep the symptoms at bay until it's not a problem anymore.

HELEN

Yeah

BEN

Yeah

ALEX

It's basically a medical patch job but you can do that and you have sufficient resources and no drains on your time for it to be feasible at least. What you're effectively doing is you're going – hi, here's all the problems that are currently overwhelming you, let's remove those off the table. Step two, let's make sure that we aren't have any withdrawals to complicate this. Now let's engage. That's effectively the way it's having to be done.

LYDIA

That sounds convenient.

ALEX

It really is.

HELEN

Isn't it lovely.

ALEX

I love a world that has magic that can be used in a good way. I'm gonna dive them to Azu and say it is late at night and for the sake of facilitating it, I'm gonna say that Earhart has not been stonewalling you but has been ignoring you and has just continued to sit there.

HELEN

That's fine. This whole time Azu is completely happy to just sit, wait, some times...there's probably gonna have been a point where Earhart has asked for a drink and Azu has given her a glass of water and that kind of thing. She is very patient.

ALEX

At some point in...it's getting late and you're just about considering calling it a night. Earhart just quietly says – hey can I have...could you pass me that manifest please.

HELEN

Of course. Azu is very pleased, this is massive progress. She hands it over.

ALEX

Earhart starts thumbing through it and starts to cry.

HELEN

Azu suddenly realises as Helen suddenly realises that the list of all the crew members is going to be in that manifest isn't it.

BEN

Oops!

ALEX

She's crying but not in a completely falling apart way says – could I have a pen please Azu?

HELEN

Yes. Azu gives her a pen.

ALEX

Earhart just very calmly starts turning pages and starts crossing names out on the manifest. Just starts going through, very systematically starts at the front, starts crossing out any names that are occurring that are not applicable, starts tallying up numbers again that from the records that are starting to fall apart a little bit. And you just see her for about 20 minutes then coming on half an hour, just working her way through the maths, getting her manifest up to date and she keeps turning and then she turns one final page and you see that the next page is a charred mess. There's no paper left and she just stops tallying up her paperwork and just stares at the charred mess at the tail end of the manifest.

HELEN

Ooh, yes Ben?

BEN

I've got a thing! Because Zolf canonically loves books. I also want to mention that did Hamid fix her captain's outfit during the thing because I kind of forgot to pass you that.

BRYN

Absolutely, yeah, yeah. Like basically Hamid has been spending so much of his time sitting in the hanger whilst Cel and the kobolds work on the ship that he needs something to do so he will go back to tailoring which is...

HELEN

Aw that's so domestic!

BRYN

Which is making more cold weather gear for everyone and fixing Earhart's clothing.

BEN

But when Earhart kind of gets to the end of the manifest and is obviously deeply upset I will, because I've been hovering in the corner of the room be like – oh I forgot – and then run out, grab something from the other room where I've been sleeping, run back in and hand Azu a new manifest which I've

Rusty Quill Gaming – 160 – A Fixer-Upper

bought as part of...when I was going on some Campbell hunts during the downtime. I've bought a fresh manifest which looks very similar to the old one and I'll just hand it to Azu to then hand to Earhart.

HELEN

Thank you Zolf.

BEN

That's alright.

HELEN

Azu puts it in a drawer for now because it seems a bit soon.

(laughing)

BEN

See this is why you put this through the high charisma characters. You use them as a buffer to...

(laughing)

HELEN

Sorry I just...

BEN

You're my foot in mouth barrier.

HELEN

I'm just imagining...now I'm thinking about Grizzop and he'd be like, right, get started!

(laughing)

Anyway Azu says – is there anything you'd like to talk about?

ALEX

I mean I don't wanna...I don't like to talk about it, no.

HELEN

Then perhaps you might need to talk about something.

ALEX

Mm. Have you ever killed someone Azu?

HELEN

Yes.

(laughing)

BEN

Loads

LYDIA

Like lots of them.

BEN

So many people!

ALEX

Have you ever killed a friend Azu?

HELEN

Not directly.

ALEX

You ever killed all your friends Azu?

HELEN

No.

ALEX

Hm. Earhart rolls over and faces the wall again.

HELEN

Azu says – it's my understanding that you may have been hit by some kind of missile.

ALEX

Hm. She blocks you out.

BEN

I've watched most of my friends just disappear if that's anything. Was that helpful? Sorry I'm...

(laughing)

That was...I was trying to help. I dunno. I can leave if...

ALEX

Earhart sort of rolls over despite herself to see Zolf – I think you might be the worst person at this that I've encountered.

BEN

Yeah I...look to...so, no, I mean what I was trying to say is like I know where you're at. I know where you're at.

ALEX

I don't think you do.

HELEN

No it's not directly comparable I don't think.

BEN

Ok. Right, ok, sure.

HELEN

But...

BEN

I've mentioned this to you but hey I killed my brother so, you know, that happened.

ALEX

How'd that go?

BEN

Well he died. So badly.

ALEX

That's not the bit I'm interested in.

BEN

You interested in the bit where I did something?

ALEX

I'm interested in the bit that comes after. How did that go?

BEN

Right...well I'm here. Still. So, you know. That happened and is continuing to happen. Like...no, it's not better. It's more distant but it's not better. It doesn't ever go away but...

HELEN

No grief's not like that.

BEN

You learn to deal with it and you just make sure that you can still do stuff, right? I dunno. Azu, you're better at this than I am. But like...

ALEX

What like a project or something?

BEN

No...I mean...

ALEX

A job? What do you mean?

BEN

Living. You keep doing it, right. You keep going. You keep trying to do something. Something you care about even if you forget you might care about it occasionally. You know, end of the world all that kind of stuff.

ALEX

Earhart rolls back over.

BEN

I'm gonna leave. I'm gonna leave. And Zolf leaves.

HELEN

Azu was about to say – you didn't too bad – but he's gone. He's gone.

ALEX

I'm gonna give you a moment. This RP is not over.

HELEN

I know! Oh I'm well aware. Azu says – I'm not sure how long ago this happened for you and I'm not going to tell you that grief gets better but like Zolf said it gets different.

ALEX

Grief I can handle. I don't care about the grief. People die, get over it.

HELEN

So what is it that you do care about?

ALEX

It's the guilt.

HELEN

Ah the guilt!

(laughing)

LYDIA

Oh yeah, that thing!

HELEN

Do you want to tell me what happened?

ALEX

You ever met a meritocrat?

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

You ever seen one angry?

HELEN

Yes. Were you...

BEN

Oh!

HELEN

You were hit by one of them?

ALEX

Oh yeah. My fault.

BRYN

Which one?

BEN

It's Guivres, it's Guivres, it's the one that's turned!

HELEN

I highly doubt that the behaviour of an enormous dragon could at all be your fault.

ALEX

I'm pretty certain it can be when someone tells you that you're done and that you need to head off and you go no, I can fit one more run in.

HELEN

That's not the same thing as things being...

ALEX

And then your first officer says either we turn back or we lock you up so then you tell them, no we're doing one more run. And then you do the run. You get pretty far and then all the sky lights up and then everyone else lights up and then you limp the rest of the way but you're on your own. When's the guilt for that go away? What's the right project there? What's the...what's the way to live that'll tackle all that and put a nice bow on it so I can get back to doing what I do because I'd really like to know. I'd really like to know.

HELEN

This is not about making things pretty. I think that it is unfair to blame yourself for consequences that you could not have seen coming.

ALEX

What about if you did see them coming and you did them anyway because you thought we'll deal. What about if you were arrogant enough to assume that you were that good, that even though every single person knows what's going to happen, they follow you anyway. What about if you spent that many years cultivating that much trust that even when they know they're gonna die they go ahead and follow you anyway.

HELEN

I'd say it sounds like it was their choice to make.

ALEX

Hm.

HELEN

We're in a war, correct? Of sorts.

ALEX

That's one word for it.

HELEN

There are always risks in war and one gets involved in such a thing knowing what could happen and that is the consequence that all of us have to live with. Each of those people could've...they could've mutinied, they could've refused. They could've turned around but it was their choice to stay with you and you cannot control other people's choices.

ALEX

And knowing all this, you still want my help.

HELEN

Oh yes. That's my choice. That's our choice.

ALEX

That's a dumb choice!

HELEN

It's the one we're making.

ALEX

You're not the sharpest bunch are you.

LYDIA

Actually!

(laughing)

ALEX

I don't think I've met you beyond a shape in the corridor.

LYDIA

That's a...

ALEX

This hounding conversation right here, this is for another time.

LYDIA

That's a meta entrance.

HELEN

Cel has been dangling from the ceiling.

BEN

I am so frustrated I removed myself from this conversation because there are so many literal parallels to Zolf's backstory and I left before they came up!

LYDIA

Oh hey, you wanna talk guilt?!

BEN

You wanna talk being the only survivor of a shipwreck?!

(laughing)

HELEN

Oh no!

ALEX

Is there anything further that you specifically want to say at that point, Azu?

HELEN

Azu is going to add – we all make mistakes and choices that don't go very well but there's always the opportunity to make better ones and there is an entire

world to save so if you would like to help with that, that would be very much appreciated.

ALEX

I'll think on it.

HELEN

That's fine, I'll be here.

ALEX

Ok. I am going to jump ahead to a little later in the week. We're not gonna get in this episode the roles for fixing the ship. There's too much to dive into but bear with me. Helen?

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

I would say maybe a day or so after that...well the next day Earhart has gone from positively taciturn to just a bit grumpy and you see that Earhart starts working, first on the sly, on the new manifest.

HELEN

Hmm

ALEX

What starts as a little bit hesitant in a screw it, why not, starts to get quite fervent.

HELEN

Azu will tell Zolf about this and be like – I think you did help actually.

BEN

Oh, really?

HELEN

Thank you for buying the ship's manifest.

BEN

Oh right, great. Thanks.

ALEX

Earhart starts to ask you for a few favours Azu.

HELEN

Oh yes?

ALEX

She asks you for any...if you would be willing to go to the library to pick up some stuff.

HELEN

Oh absolutely yes.

ALEX

She asks for a bit of an eclectic bunch of books. The titles...some are like almost fairy tales, some are some medical text books, she also asks for chemistry books. A very broad range of topics. She gives you a list, there doesn't seem to be a pattern in the titles but are you willing to go to the library to pick them up.

HELEN

For sure.

ALEX

Ok cool.

HELEN

This is, again, big step forward. Great.

ALEX

Fab. So you head to the library and you start picking these books up. Can you give me a sense motive please?

HELEN

She better not just be trying to get me out of the room.

BEN

No she's going to kill a f***ing meritocrat!

(laughing)

That's her plan!

ALEX

Give me a sense motive.

BEN

Which is excellent and exactly what I wanted to talk to her about.

HELEN

That's 18.

ALEX

That's enough. Yeah. Ben's piped me to the post three times this week. At first it seems a bit random but then you notice that one of the fairy tales specifically deals with, admittedly we're in a meritocratic land, an evil dragon slayer and another one is a lot of stuff to do with explosives and there's a whole chunk of section to do with biology of draconic species and things like...yeah, yeah, what she's doing is she's researching meritocrats. This is

obvious to you even by the time you're handing books over to her. You're not sure about the specifics but this is the reading list of someone who wants to kill a dragon.

HELEN

Yeah. Azu knows that there's one that's infected so she's like, can't hurt if we can kill an infected dragon.

(laughing)

LYDIA

Your trauma is taking quite dramatic and violent ends but that's useful to us so go for it!

(laughing)

ALEX

Her writing in the manifest grows more fervent and just when it seems like it's bordering on mania, she starts to settle. The writing becomes more measured and things seem to take a shape on whatever she's been working on in that manifest. Things seem to start taking a level of order and she starts communicating properly and she is even able of a smile of sorts towards the end of the week.

HELEN

Aw.

ALEX

As things near towards the end of this week she asks to speak with Azu and Zolf specifically.

HELEN

Ok, happy to do that.

BEN

Yeah what's up?

ALEX

So you want my help.

BEN

Yeah

HELEN

Yes please.

ALEX

You want me to get hold of an airship, whatever, fly and airship for you. Fine.

BEN

We're building you your one again so yeah, we're getting you the airship.

HELEN

Yes

ALEX

Thank you for that. This mission we're doing, it's going to be dangerous right?

BEN

Uh huh.

HELEN

I'm not sure actually. I'm not sure how dangerous the sky is.

BEN

Well we're flying from here to Svalbard so we're gonna hit some danger.

ALEX

Really?

BEN

Oh yes.

ALEX

Ok. Ok I've got a deal for you. On that ship I'll take you guys anywhere you need to go. We'll need to find a crew but it's never that difficult. The training

is the thing that takes the time. You can learn on the job. I'll take you anywhere you wanna go for as long as you need.

BEN

What's the condition?

ALEX

You're gonna help me kill a dragon.

BEN

Alright.

HELEN

Which one?

BEN

Well that'll be Guivres won't it.

ALEX

Why don't we start with Guivres. See how we go from there.

BEN

I've just got one thing, right? You thought I didn't know what your guilt was. You know being the only survivor of a shipwreck and all that. Yeah well guess what? I was. And do you know what killed all of my crew? I mean I wasn't the

captain but importantly I'd still trust that captain even though they made a mistake but it were a big robotic kraken. Do you know who I just killed? Or we just killed? Was the person who created and controlled that big kraken. And do you know what it did? It didn't help. But I'd still do it again.

(laughing)

ALEX

Yeah that's a good out. That's a good out. I know you were aiming for I'd hate to have one but it's a good out. Let's end an episode on that.

BEN

Alex begrudgingly allowed me narrative satisfaction.

ALEX

Yes fine, I guess. And then an explosion...no. Well that all got very intense.

BEN

It's one of your games Alex, were you surprised?

HELEN

You did plan this, you know that right?

LYDIA

You made this.

ALEX

People are always a more interesting challenge than mechanics.

HELEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Hey sometimes the people are the reason that you turned to mechanical Zolf.

ALEX

No Lydia, it's ok for Cel. For Cel as well like the people are the friends that you literally made along the way.

(laughing)

Right, I'm gonna wrap it up there. I'm interested where this is going to go. I'm going to have completely rewrite my campaign so that Ben doesn't have any idea what's going on but apart from that...

BEN

I can see the matrix Alex!

ALEX

Bye everyone!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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