

RQG – 163 – Friend or Foe

Content Warnings

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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 163 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

I'd like to table a motion, that from now on Hamid has to introduce cause he has the leadership feat, the name of every single other character that he's also responsible for every single time, quickly and efficiently. Anyone gonna second?

BRYN

I'll start training!

ALEX

Good ... good to know. Hi, I'm Hamid Salad and this is the Dragonetts!

laughter

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan, Skraak, Draal, Natun, Tadyka, Driaak, Sassraaa and Meerk!

ALEX

Okay when you can double-time it I am gonna applaud you on air.

BRYN

Ah yeah, I'm not there yet! But I'm gonna get there if you really want that?

ALEX

Yeah.

HELEN

He will rise to your challenge!

ALEX

So, we are gonna pick up where we left off which is ... everyone making a BIG song and dance about not wanting to die on the airship ... which is flying perfectly well and was technically within tolerances from a certain point of view ... okay? So, I'm trying to give you a restful journey ... I really am.

HELEN

No you're not! That is a lie!

ALEX

That's what it looks like to me. I'm getting you there ... quicker. That's a good thing.

HELEN

No. Flames are rising!

Group laughter

ALEX

I am going to lay some ... stuff out on the table now and we're gonna have to go a little bit metta at the start of this episode and then we can dive in some fun RP and stuff like that. So ...

LYDIA

Oh no, not metta.

ALEX

This journey ... even at your accelerated speed, is gonna take a couple of weeks at least. You are making fabulous speed if this can be sustained like, really good speed however, a. it's quite far and b. you are going to be travelling across lands that have never been travelled across. And where people who have travelled across die a lot! Sometimes they freeze to death, sometimes the airship just stops working and no-one ever found out why because no-one survived to explain why. There are creatures, there are monsters, there is ... a reason that Meritocrats just ... saw this vast horizon and went ... nah, here's fine ...

LYDIA

So wait, are we passing through Russia and Siberia?

ALEX

Yes.

LYDIA

Right, cool.

ALEX

You are going to be cutting through the Northern wastes. You are also, basically gonna be cutting North of ... like the UK if you see what I mean?

LYDIA

Uh uh.

BRYN

According to Google it is exactly 6,750 kilometres!

ALEX

There you do.

LYDIA

Umm, wow.

BRYN

And yeah, it sort of crosses China, Mongolia and then ... huge tracks of Russia but ... you end up ... I mean if you take the shortest possible route, you actually end up ... cutting North over Finland and Norway and Sweden even you don't even cross Scandinavia but, I guess we may stay slightly closer to civilisation and then swing up at the last minute ... depending on ...

ALEX

But ... what I am leading to on the metta side is ... it's a big journey okay? And as it's a big journey there is a lot of downtime which means I'm gonna be accelerating time frequently? Obviously stuff is going to be happening, but at the same time, from a ... you know how you don't like the breath in breath out questions from my end? At the same end if you try to RP every single meal ... it will take us 2 weeks! So, it's gonna be an element of us, picking our moments.

HELEN

Fine, I won't do any slow burn romances.

ALEX

Oh no, they're fine, its just that what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna montage em.

laughter

LYDIA

You can't montage ...

ALEX

Yes you can.

HELEN

Probably have a slow burn. It's that its 300,000 words before they kiss!

LYDIA

Yes.

ALEX

You just do a super cut of meaningful glances and skip to the end ... okay?

laughter

HELEN

Terrible fan ficker.

LYDIA

Which is like ... click, click, click, click, click, click ... oh no, no, no, no no!

laughter

ALEX

That is an accurate summation.

BRYN

Helen is a ship Emilie and you're coming at her ... with this bottom of the barrel ... just

ALEX

You want romance, you can buy it by the litre like everyone else!

laughter

LYDIA

Oh. This is ... this is like the Tesco ... like where it says, "white cooking wine".

laughter

BEN

Yeah ... Alex is the economy bag wine of fan fiction.

Group laughter

ALEX

Great flavoured alcohol ... that's what we're all gonna be on!

HELEN

Your Vodcat!

Group laughter

ALEX

So, with that in mind, I would like to know ... at the start, before things develop and so on ... a basic statement of intent from everyone ... about what, if there's

anything that you want to be achieving ... either as a player or a character over this journey? So, I will give an example ... for Carter it will be ... don't get caught.

HELEN

Oh no.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

As a hypothetical.

BRYN

Oh yeah.

ALEX

So, with that in mind, if anyone doesn't have one I'd recommend having a bit of a mull but if anyone does have one, do go first. Having a statement of intent is gonna be useful cause it'll give me something to latch on to as I generate these things.

BEN

So, I think mine's gonna be quite short cause, you know, I've been doing a lot of conversation time, recently. I think at this point like Zolf is pretty ... chill, like there is a clear goal, we have an objective which is the kind of stuff that, tends to send him spiralling if we don't have that, so his main objective is like ... try to slowly ease Earhart out of the self-destructive behaviour like keeping an eye on her and if she goes too far, it's ... mutiny like that.

ALEX

Sure.

BEN

But would rather she backs off from ... "Sod it, you know I'm gonna turn the ship into a bomb and fire it into ... Beavser mouth, whether I'm on it or not" sort of attitude to something a little more, reasonable. But, other than that, for other people, Zolf is like, seems a lot more content and open to talk and things. Like, he's not being horribly standoffish or weirdly grumpy or anything like that.

ALEX

Understood. Anyone else?

HELEN

Azu is probably gonna join in with Zolf on keeping an eye on Earhart , because Azu thought ... Azu thought it had gone really well and then Earhart just went off the rails and now Azu's like "Oh dear, maybe we should have picked someone else out of the Squat"

BEN

Well to be fair, out of the one person that we had the option to pick, right?

HELEN

Yes. However, I don't think anyone has actually told Azu about the mutiny plan so, for her ... Azu thinks this is fine, everyone else just doesn't notice how bad this is.

BEN

That's fair actually, I ... Ben had forgotten that but I will bring Azu in to this as of. So that's maybe the one conversation that I was thinking about.

HELEN

I was thinking it would be an interesting character choice and you're like "Ah, Paladins won't be down with a mutiny!"

BEN

No, but it's like a self-care mutiny.

HELEN

It is.

Group laughter

HELEN

Oh yeah, I ...

ALEX

Its less of a mutiny and more of an intervention.

HELEN

I'd say that would be your thought process. Azu would totally mutiny.

BEN

No, no, no, like ... I think genuinely like Zolf unclear 0:06:51 trusts ...

ALEX

"Ah ah, it's an intervention!"

laughter

ALEX

"Walk the plank. We really think you've been going for that white whale, maybe a little bit too much alright."

Group laughter

ALEX

"Maybe start at a grey whale and work your way up! You know."

HELEN

Right.

BEN

But as a genuine like character thing I think, Zolf trusts Azu's judgement enough, to bring her in on this. It's not like, its not one of the Paladins that you have be like ... kid gloves ... you know, Azu is pretty pragmatic, so ...

HELEN

That means a lot.

BEN

He would be happy to bring her in.

HELEN

Yeah, so that's gonna be, number 1 looking after Earhart , number 2 ... get to know everyone! She's gonna ... obviously, hang out with Hamid lots, gonna hang out with Cel, naturally she's gonna be ... hanging out with Zolf cause they're both, sort of surreptitiously watching Earhart like, in shifts.

BEN

Is there lots of like, us sitting on a bench both reading a Campbell book and then we're both like looking over the top of it like ... mmm.

laughter

HELEN

We've cut little holes in ...

BEN

No, no you do not cut holes ... in ... do not disrespect Campbell like that, okay?

laughter

HELEN

Okay, I take it back ... I'm sorry. But yeah, and she's gonna try and get to know ... Barnes and not Carter, and also the rest of the ... crew. Maybe not the smelly old man but, Mr Big Arms and the singing lady.

BEN

Smelly old man might be nice, not a romantic interest but he might be a lovely, interesting individual?

ALEX

Azu's shallow cannon.

HELEN

No! Not fair.

laughter

HELEN

How ... dare ...

BEN

You said you didn't want to get ... you know what we've seen in texts, like the textual facts are, you know piling up here.

laughter

ALEX

I'm not making accusations; I'm just spitting truths.

HELEN

To be ... so I wrote down to give smelly old man chews tobacco.

BEN

I mean that is an accurate description, I think.

ALEX

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying it's gonna be an easy win, like he's not necessarily someone who I would ... immediately try and make a pass at, but who knows?

HELEN

Okay, I'll revise, but she will attempt to talk, to him, but we'll see if that ... if he continues being taciturn, or not.

laughter

ALEX

In which case then, I've got two more party members left to account for.

LYDIA

Cel is ... going to be extremely unsubtly, concerned about ... Earhart, like Cel is pretty convinced that this attitude will get them killed extremely quickly. This is not a wait and see situation. But, at the moment that Earhart is say, asleep or when Cel does not need to be worrying about that ... over the longer term they're extremely interested in getting to know people and hearing more of these "juicy" back stories, because - "woah" these people have been busy. **Unclear 0:09:27** they had stories but "woah" this is some "good" stuff.

ALEX

It seems like you've fit 5 years' worth of stuff in to ... in to all of 3 days?

LYDIA

There's a lot, there's a lot to hear about and, you know, they're here for it and, yeah polishing their draconic and, being very friendly with the Kobolds.

ALEX

I'm gonna tell you now, by the end of this journey, you'll be fluent.

LYDIA

I mean, they probably already are ... like mechanically.

ALEX

Mechanically - you're basically there. In which case then, that leaves Hamid.

BRYN

Hamid is gonna mostly avoid ... Earhart . He has no interest in trying to ... appease another racist in his life. He is however, going to watch for how she is treating the Kobolds and if she treats them with disrespect or, you know, cruelty he is going to step in and, you know ... he kind of has an itchy trigger finger, you know ... he might, if that kind of goes wrong he might need to be restrained cause he's on a bit of a hair trigger with the potential for her to mistreat the Kobolds.

BEN

And for somebody who can cast scorching ray ... "woof".

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Now Bryn, just to be aware, you may not have considered this but, with air travel the way it is, if someone was to, for instance, lose their temper it could be really bad for the party and it could even lead to a party split so, you know ... just, just keep an eye on that. Don't be "that guy" you know?

BEN

I don't know anything about what's going on here.

laughter

ALEX

You don't even get to blame it on Grizopp, cause it was Zolf and history, it's just gone full circle.

BEN

Oh yes, oh yes.

BRYN

Other than that, Hamid is very keen to have, some proper socialising time, in a lower stress environment with everyone involved. Given previous conversations with Barnes and Carter he's not really interested in getting to know either of them ... terribly, much better but, he is interested in getting to know all three members of the party ... better. Re-bonding with Zolf after, you know, some tense times and that ... all the time apart he wants to hear all about what happened to Zolf in the 18 months, reaffirming his bond with Azu and just getting to know each other better, cause they care about each a lot but they don't ... necessarily know each other's past, that well.

HELEN

Yeah true.

BRYN

And he is ... really wants to make better friends with Cel cause they've had an awesome time working together, and he's very excited about blowing stuff up together, basically once they're back on ...

laughter

BRYN

Back on dry land as it were. Yeah he'd like to get to know the crew, the other three members of the crew, he doesn't have any particular ... you know, he's not particularly more interested in any one of them than the others but he wants to know them and understand them a bit, especially because of the ... the risk of potential mutiny. He'd like to be able to, kind of understand, what

might happen and how they might feel about it. He's also keen to get to know the Kobolds as individuals, what he'd really like to do is if he's got multiple weeks, is to encourage each of the Kobolds to become more, of their own person ... so they don't, they're not so interchangeable so they're not necessarily, you know, like, right now we do refer to them and we probably will continue to do as just, the Kobolds is like a homogenous group but he'd like to encourage them to have, you know a bit more individuality and to express that and to ... he'd like to basically coach them to have a bit more self belief and self confidence ... in the way that Skraak does, cause Skraak is very much, his own person now and frequently disagrees with Hamid and he'd like the other Kobolds to feel confident enough to do the same.

ALEX

Okay.

LYDIA

Can I, before we, like underline, given previous rules I had about no romance for Sasha that Cel is very not held by that rule.

ALEX

Understood.

Group laughter

LYDIA

That is not ... that's just not, that's not a barrier. In fact they have very few barriers.

ALEX

Okay. Thank you for that everyone, that is a lot of things that I can now sabotage, I appreciate that.

laughter

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ALEX

Okay. With that in mind then ...

BRYN

Can I just remind you of the Alexander J Newall quote "part-time nightmare merchant, full time sweetheart".

ALEX

I know.

BRYN

I will be holding you to that or sue you for false advertising.

ALEX

I know what I wrote! In fact I ...

LYDIA

You are not part time! You are ... you are not part time anywhere ... you have a double life.

ALEX

That is, a accurate statement. That in fact ...

BRYN

Overtime nightmare mention.

ALEX

In fact that ... that when I wrote it, I was like this is a lie and then did it anyway!

Group laughter

ALEX

So, I am gonna say, a couple of things ... on the first couple of days, there is NO chance for any kind of social interaction whatsoever because, Earhart is drilling everyone into a crew and that includes the four party members.

BEN

Yeah, that makes sense.

ALEX

You DO NOT have a say, there is no capacity for passengers on this vessel. As such, all of you are being worked hard. She is not ...

BEN

Sorry, just speaking of hard work as well, I've realised, we don't necessarily have a ship's cook and I'm gonna do as much of that as I can do whilst still being an effective first mate.

ALEX

Understood.

LYDIA

Cel can ... I mean it's alchemy basically, it's like basic alchemy ... it's alchemy and sometimes your cakes explode.

ALEX

Cel what is this? It's an efficient casserole.

Group laughter

ALEX

Okay. So, what that means is ... everyone is worked hard and like, hit the hammocks, asleep for the first couple of days. What I am going to do is, something that I've never done before ... everyone gets a free skill rank.

EVERYONE

Ooo!!

ALEX

Profession ... airship crew.

BEN

Oh, I don't like that cause that implies that professional sailor is less effective cause of the existence of an alternative, oh dear.

ALEX

So, what that does mean is ... I would like people to, this is strictly for fluff, don't worry ... I'd like people to pick a proficiency in terms of like ... what is the bit that you're most responsible for, however immaterial it is, like even if Hamid is just ... you're gonna be stitching a lot of sails, I don't really care, but what is the thing that you end up being best at out of the group or at least having a ... penchant for?

BRYN

Hamid takes to navigation. He spent his first year at Cambridge University studying mathematics before he switched to magic. So, he has a background in mathematics he has the extinsual ability of understanding flight and therefore air currents and he ends up taking to both those aspects and combining them into a sort of ... like, he can't necessarily do the mechanical side of flying but he can sort of ... he can navigate a bit and he ... you know, he doesn't know how to sail the ship as such, but he can be like ... well, it's gonna be better if we, head East by an extra couple of degrees to go round the next storm or, because the air currents over the Himalayas will be ... you know, this way, it'd be better if we were a bit, you know 100 miles further North when we're going past this bit and stuff like that.

ALEX

I will skip a little bit to say Earhart does not like it, she initially grills you and second guesses you to the point where you're just gonna snap and then eventually begrudgingly has to start backing off as more than once you're

correct. So, not in the case of like, you've completely shown her up or anything but, enough that she at least backs off.

BRYN

I'm not gonna be particularly combative with her about any, aspect other than how she treats the Kobolds. So, like the first few times I'll press my point a little and then back off, cause I don't want to create a confrontation but I'm very, very much not gonna let her get away with mistreating the Kobolds. That's like ... that's the one issue we might snap over, but any other issue, Hamid is more likely to back down ... like he'll, he'll make his case clear, he'll be like, "this is what I think, this is what I've calculated, I'm pretty sure" but if you disagree that strongly, then you are the captain, if you see what I mean?

ALEX

At no point has she ever demanded ... like overruled you when you know you're right ...

BRYN

Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

But what she has done is go and check and your working and then you'll check your working, and then she'll go "check it again". When it comes to the Kobolds, if I'm honest the Kobolds are treating Skraak as basically first mate.

laughter

ALEX

To be clear Ben, Skraak is not ... creating any issues with Zolf.

BEN

Oh, I didn't expect them to listen to me. I mean, I don't actually share a language with them so it's quite difficult to ...

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ALEX

That's fine. Their Japanese is improving.

BEN

I don't speak it ... so cool.

Group laughter

ALEX

Okay, in which case then ... anyone else rolls. Zolf you've already covered obviously.

LYDIA

Cel will be chief engineer I assume?

ALEX

That's fine. I assumed as much; I just didn't want to presume?

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ALEX

And Azu?

HELEN

I've decided she'll be good at like reading the skies for like upcoming storms and weather and stuff like that.

ALEX

Okay. Give me a second to ... pars that.

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BRYN

So like provides the data that Hamid then crunches?

ALEX

I mean it sounds like a lookout to me.

LYDIA

Storm's here.

BEN

Well what's the name of the person who's in like, the Crow's Nest right ... they do ...

ALEX

Yeah lookout.

BRYN

Look out.

HELEN

What I've written is weather girl.

Group laughter

LYDIA

Wouldn't you like to know?

BRYN

Now I'm seeing you as Karen from Mean Girls and there's a ... 30% chance that it's already raining!

laughter

ALEX

Azu, what do your Hawkeyes see?

"Well there's a cold front coming in on an Eastern **unclear 0:18:14** then".

Group laughter

ALEX

Okay. I'm gonna make that lookout because, there's a common misconception that the lookout is just meant to be there to like spot land and stuff, but that was originally their goal.

HELEN

Yeah weathergirl/lookout.

BRYN

I just like the idea cause we're shipping ... you're doing the shipping forecast.

Group laughter

HELEN

Yeah. Cause to me, to me it makes sense because Azu would had to like keep an eye on the ... on the farm for like ...

ALEX

Yeah, yeah. It does scan, it's fine. Although in this situation the shipping forecast with Azu is far more likely to be "Hamid tumbling, Zolf prominent".

Group laughter

BEN

Rude. I don't read that Campbell in public alright?

Group laughter

ALEX

That's a private Campbell. Okay, in that case then I'm gonna say three days into the journey then, Earhart has been keeping herself to herself apart from giving instructions and stuff.

BRYN

I forgot one other thing.

ALEX

Oh go on.

BRYN

I wanna to get to know Wilde better, he's here too! And I want to understand what happened to him, the poor man.

ALEX

So, I am gonna say that for the first three days there is no opportunity for any of this to be clear like, you are being run ragged but, for what it's worth, despite being a problem, she's a good teacher ... Earhart . She teaches well but she doesn't suffer fools.

So, at the end of the three days Earhart summons everyone on deck to have a sort of ... partywide discussion, the presumption by the way here is that there is not an autopilot so someone's manning the helm but it's literally, everyone can hear it doesn't matter. So, with that in mind, Earhart summons everyone together and ... Zolf will have been warned about this, she's basically needing now to do a ... a mission briefing with everyone, about what to expect, problems to anticipate and so on.

"Okay everyone, thanks for coming I'll keep it brief as always. A couple of things on the manifest obviously ... please don't head into the cargo bay, I know a couple of people have been poking around, a lot of things in there will explode, please don't do that! Anyway, we're here to talk about what's gonna be coming on the horizon figuratively speaking of course, and part of that is discussing the dangers that are inevitable and the dangers that are probable.

So, you'll all know that we're travelling somewhere that people either don't go or shouldn't go ... as part of that, we are likely to encounter freak weather systems, unusual creatures and extremely high levels of magical distortion. It is a known fact that magical distortion will affect the ship's systems, there is a chance we may need to put down do repairers and set off again. I have flown in this region previously in the outskirts the fact that we have ..."

She gives a sort of ... begrudgingly appreciative nod to Zolf ...

"The fact that we have a spare elemental is gonna be a heck of a useful situation. The fact that we have three is gonna mean things are a lot more stable, but we are highly likely to encounter things, this is not going to be a straightforward journey. Does everyone understand me?"

BRYN

Oh yeah.

HELEN

Yes.

BEN

Eye eye.

ALEX

Right.

LYDIA

I mean, what ... what probable and possible dangers should be expecting from, from you Captain then if, if ... I mean for clarity?

ALEX

"I feel I've made myself clear previously. We have a primary objective and we have a secondary objective. Our primary objective is to reach Svalbard, we do not sacrifice a primary objective for the secondary objective. The secondary objective is ... we kill Gweave. To be clear, if it's possible to pursue our secondary objective and at the same time, not endanger our primary objective,

I expect you all to ... continue with the work. Rest assured I'm not going to sacrifice a primary objective for the secondary, I'm not a poor captain. Should you have any further concerns I have a first mate, that's why they're here."

BEN

Eye captain.

ALEX

"Thank you Mr Smith. So, in terms of preparations to be made - Cel, I expect you to be working with Zolf in terms of getting our systems as resilient as possible, specifically from magical interference, Azu you seem to be having a predilection towards lookout - keep an eye out for unusual weather systems ... I want to know if there any fogs ... immediately."

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

"Hamid, we are going to have to tread a fine line between an efficient navigation route and a safe navigation route. We are going to be having to take a few unusual wiggles - you need to trust my judgment when I lay these out to you, I don't need to explain myself to you as to why we are taking this route."

BRYN

Eye eye captain.

ALEX

"Good."

I will for the sake of speed says she gives out specific stuff for other crew members as well but I'm not gonna lay em all out because otherwise I'm just going on and on and on.

"At this stage, I don't think there's much more to address, as always any problems you can approach Zolf, that's all for now, your training is going to be reduced, you make take leisure time at the appointed times."

She then turns round and starts heading off to ... her significantly reduced captain's room which is basically a hammock and a desk.

"Mr Smith, I expect you in my cabin in 5."

BEN

Eye eye captain.

ALEX

She heads off, the rest of the crew ... there is a thing that has started happening, which is that everyone in the crew has a tendency after any time that Earhart 's been doing a thing like this to make eye contact with one another and go ... (**imitates sound**) ... and then go about their work. There's just a shared look with everyone on the ship and then everyone goes about their work.

HELEN

Well that wasn't reassuring.

BEN

I'd say it's an improvement.

LYDIA

Like

BRYN

Could have been a lot worse.

LYDIA

She's very much gonna get us killed if she thinks that, taking the ship to ... the edges of its tolerance to launch is, and then saying that we can't challenge her on, on these unusual "wiggles". What's to stop her taking us on a wiggle that makes us intercept ... Gweave?

BRYN

Or a collective judgment.

HELEN

I'm hoping that the launch was a ... one off.

BEN

I suspect it was. Also, when you're on a ship like this, you need to listen and there needs to be one voice of authority. This is not ... to be clear although it may be foreign to you, that kind of attitude is normal for a captain. This is not Earhart being, explicitly authoritarian or behaving strangely, this is just normal. This is how it works.

LYDIA

I, I ... I have spent time on ships Zolf. I, I, I've, I've, I've, I've travelled and I've been ... I've worked in ... in groups, I understand that ... it's about trust. When someone has behaved erratically and appears to have an overriding objective that does not fit with what would keep a group that includes people that we have responsibilities to ... safe. That is what has me concerned.

BEN

I ... that's completely fair and I have ... do you trust me?

HELEN

Yes.

LYDIA

Cel kind of pauses for a second and looks at you for a long time. Mr Smith you have occasionally been overly aggressive and occasionally curt, or even rude but, I do believe that ... the ways that you have acted have, have been ... been fair and proportionate and sensible. So ... yes I trust you on this.

BEN

That's fair enough. Well, I will ... deal with Earhart .

LYDIA

Okay.

HELEN

Well if you need backup?

BEN

Oh, I ... want backup I'm not saying I'm gonna deal with it alone but ...

HELEN

Good.

BEN

If you need somebody you can trust if I can be that person I will be. That's kind of my role as first mate. Earhart is ... is our only option but, that doesn't mean that I will follow her to our deaths.

BRYN

It feels to me like ... being back in the air is starting to mellow her out a little maybe? But she's still ... obsessed with her goal but, if what she says is true and I don't have any reason to doubt that right now I think, we should be okay and all of us have different areas of oversight. You know, if it comes to ... you know a crisis situation ... as Zolf says we're all gonna follow her orders but, you know, in the, in the grander scheme of things each of us has our own ability to contribute to ... this vessel and to the decisions made on it. And if any of us feel that she's genuinely ... endangering our lives completely then, that's, you know ... we will be forced to act but, hopefully it won't come to that, I guess but I ... I do share some of your concern Cel.

BEN

As do I, to be clear, I need to go, see her ...

LYDIA

Yes, you've got ...

BEN

But, yeah, alright and I'll go.

ALEX

Okay. So, heading to Earhart 's cabin?

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

As you head into the cabin (**imitates sound**) Earhart gestures you inside.
"Lock the door".

BEN

Oh right. (**Imitates sound**) ... I'll lock the door.

ALEX

There is enough space for you to sort of both be in there ... if not comfortably,
then at least like, sensibly, you're not in each other's grill or anything.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

"Mr Smith ..."

BEN

Captain.

ALEX

"You've proven yourself previously, I've seen you at your worst on your last journey here ... you're a lot better than you were and god knows I've got reason to trust you. I think there's gonna be a mutiny on this vessel and I need you to help me keep it down".

BEN

Right, I think I'm going to have to roll a bluff, right? Like, it's only fair.

ALEX

I ... am gonna take a break there and then we can deal with it.

BEN

Okay.

Group laughter

.....

ALEX

Welcome back. Yeah but bluffs, bluff's probably ... if there was ever a chance for it now's the time.

BEN

Rolls dice.

HELEN

Boy oh boy.

BEN

Aaah. I mean this still might not be good enough, but ... 17.

ALEX

I don't know, let's find out together.

BEN

It's about as well as I can hope to do so ... I've done everything I can.

ALEX

Deliver and you'll see if it works. You know you rolled high enough that you didn't tank it. Like you know that you didn't tank, so you don't have to be like ... "Me I'm no mutiny!".

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

Mutiny who? Me? Noooo.

Group laughter

LYDIA

Never heard of her!

HELEN

Muta what?

ALEX

So you know you haven't botched it, but I can't ... I'm gonna through RP and let them decide.

BEN

That's fine. I am giving a reasonable account, whether Earhart believes me is up to you.

ALEX

Yep.

BEN

Oh ... right, okay. Really? I mean I can't imagine it would be from ... who are your suspects?

ALEX

"Fair enough. Well, it's hard to tell. I, I know that Kiko will follow orders to the end ... there's a history there, I won't go into it. In terms of your lot I don't trust Cel, and I think that ... out of all of them, Cel is the one most likely to ... push for a pragmatic solution! And I suspect that if Cel were to try and, take command they may be able to get say ... Barnes on side, possibly Carter. As for Wilde I mean, I suspect he wouldn't miss an opportunity to be an ass."

BEN

Yeah that's fair.

LYDIA

I just have to ... of all the things that Amelia has accused Cel of ... it's finding a pragmatic solution!

Group laughter

LYDIA

The one thing they have never been guilty of in their life!

BEN

Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

"In terms of people that I trust ... that leaves you and Kiko Zolf, on the entire vessel."

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BEN

Oh right, well ... may I speak freely captain?

ALEX

"Sure, why not".

BEN

Well you haven't exactly done much to earn these people's trust have you?

ALEX

"I'm the captain I don't need to earn trust."

BEN

But then you have to worry about a mutiny. Also, hang on a minute that is not the Amelia Earhart I knew.

ALEX

"Yeah".

That lands and she ... turns and goes to the desk, pulls open a drawer (**imitates sound**), it's empty and then slams it closed again (**imitates sound**) seemingly angry.

BEN

Yeah, no drink in. Now, I understand, I understand what you're going through ... we have had this conversation before, it hurts, and it's terrible, but if you're sad about ... in your mind needlessly endangering people's lives and getting em killed, why do it again?

ALEX

"You keep saying the word needlessly."

BEN

You said that to me. About your original crew, you said that to me.

ALEX

"Yeah, what we're doing now, that ain't needless."

BEN

Do you ... really, really think that? And I say need in a wider sense than your personal vendetta. Cause that is between you and a big old dragon, that ain't with us right? You're dragging other people into your personal stuff, into your baggage, right? But we've got a bigger objective here ... I don't think ... we are literally trying to save the world and there are not many times you can say that and that is not a massive overstatement but right now it's true, okay? So, as captain you have a responsibility and a duty of care to your crew! So you need to, you know, shape up! Be a captain!

ALEX

"In what way am I falling short of your ... towering expectations Mr Smith?"

BEN

Losing the trust of your crew. You can't just rely on me to hold people together. Like, I'm gonna try, I'm the first mate and that's my job, but if a crew doesn't trust their captain, if YOU didn't trust your captain and they tried to get you killed would you mutiny?

ALEX

"You're asking the wrong person. Fun fact, I've never actually been a crew member."

BEN

Maybe you should try it sometime ... it might change your perspective.

ALEX

"So what do you propose? As fun as these abstracts are, what do you actually propose?"

BEN

What I propose, is that you work a little more on your interpersonal skills. I am going to go ahead and I'm gonna hold these people together ... I'm gonna do my job, but you've gotta do yours, that's what I need from you.

ALEX

Earhart looks you ... dead in the eye, spits in her hand and holds it out and says:

"I'll mind my Ps and Qs, and I'll be a good little captain and you are gonna make sure that when stuff hits the engines you know whose side you're on!"

BEN

I promise I'll know whose side I'm on.

ALEX

Oh you've just prompted another roll my friend.

LYDIA

Yeah that's a bluff Unclear 0:32:15 and a half.

BEN

Rolls dice. Plus 1 circumstance bonus for just, you know being full on balls out confident!

Group laughter

ALEX

Okay, what's your bluff?

BEN

9. Did she, did she ... muck it up?

ALEX

Do you take her hand and shake it?

BEN

I spit in my hand and I take it and I shake it.

ALEX

Excellent. She shakes your hand
"See to it Mr Smith."

BEN

Will do captain.

ALEX

You cannot decide whether she believes you or not.

BEN

I'm, I'm, I'm ... leave with a bit of a ... a clinchy bum time!

Group laughter

ALEX

Clinchy bum time.

BEN

Be like ... "Oh, I think I got away with it?".

ALEX

So, I am going to accelerate to that evening where that was say, late afternoon and we're heading into evening/evening where, people have got in the habit of chilling out on the decks for the simple reason that although it's cold there's not really that many places to hang out in that aren't full of weapons! Or provisions. With that in mind, people have sort of started to build what can

best be described as a sort of ... pseudo bar/ pseudo bivwack kind of like ... chill out area towards the front/towards the bow where, it's the one place that has the least amount of important stuff apart from like anchoring and things! So it's the one place that if you mill around you're not in people's way actively.

And I am gonna say that ... the night crew on work detail are ... Kiko and Skraak. Meaning that everyone else for the first time in, god knows how long actually has an element of leisure time and a ... having a chill ... Siggif breaks out an accordion and starts to play.

LYDIA

That's a, that's a ... in person (oh god) ... in character (yeah!).

BEN

Yep a salty seadog if ever I did see one.

ALEX

He does not sing, he just plays.

BEN

Thank goodness.

Laughter

ALEX

Friedrich was it?

BEN

It was.

ALEX

Yeah Friedrich is, basically passing out some ... let's call it grog and stuff like that. It's watered down because you've got a long way to go but, yeah, it's okay.

BEN

So is the question here ... do we have ... basically we've got a bunch of rubbish booze but we have none of like the captains reserve booze?

ALEX

Effectively yeah. If you want to engage with people on a social setting, now's a good time.

HELEN

Azu sets up a dart board.

BEN

Nice.

ALEX

Good shout.

laughter

HELEN

And she just sort of looks at the ... in general and she's like "Shall we have a game?"

BEN

Yeah, alright.

LYDIA

I think I'd rather just ... I'll just ... Cel is wily sipping there.

BRYN

I'll give it a go.

HELEN

Have you played before?

BRYN

Yeah, once or twice.

HELEN

Alright, okay.

LYDIA

He was clearly in the college darts team!

laughter

ALEX

Friedrich steps up and kind of, stands awkwardly, he doesn't say anything but implies that he would like to get involved.

HELEN

Excellent.

BEN

I think actually, given that Cel is ... backing out I will also back out and go sit with them and not necessarily immediately start a conversation but, with the intent to later on I think.

HELEN

Just chilling and vibing. Okay, Azu gives Friedrich the first start as a gesture of ... let's be friends.

ALEX

Okay. Is it a normal sized dart?

HELEN

I mean, they're big enough that Azu could also hold them okay.

ALEX

It still is dwarfed in his enormous hands again, pardon the unintentional pun. His hands are, to Azu's hands ... as Azu remembers like her father's hands when she was young.

BRYN

Are they mechanically large hands?

ALEX

Yes, they are ... they are massive. They are ... his hands, basically brush along the floor as he walks around.

BRYN

So he has a large creature's hands on a medium size or arms on a medium sized body?

ALEX

He has ... I didn't want to go down this route for obvious reasons but, to be clear, he has a sort of orangutan vibe in terms of like, arm length relative to body but they're not thin, they are built.

HELEN

They're like that dude from the Umbrella Academy.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

And they are covered now, in "warped" tattoos. You get the impression that they might once have been good tattoos and they have been just stretched out of shape.

BRYN

So something like an enlarged person that went wrong maybe sort of thing? Like, I'm not saying that's the reason what that could be.

LYDIA

Yeah, right. We said ... we knew that it was, it was an exposure to a magical field right?

ALEX

Yeah, yeah yeah. He starts to ... he starts to throw and ...

BRYN

Breaks the board in two.

ALEX

Is rubbish.

"Mmm yes, I never was any good at games."

HELEN

Well the point isn't winning it's ... having fun. How about we ... we have two teams? And Azu like divides everyone into teams.

Group laughter

BRYN

Is Azu loving it as much as Helen obviously is?

HELEN

Yes!

laughter

BRYN

Hamid has the opposite problem to Friedrich in that the dart is REALLY BIG! In his tiny hands.

LYDIA

Just throw it like a javelin.

Group laughter

BRYN

He's reasonably good at throwing it accurately but doesn't always embed itself into the dart board ...

BEN

Oh no.

BRYN

Cause he can't throw it with enough force!

ALEX

I'm really glad we're not filming this because it would take so much clever editing and false perspective.

laughter

HELEN

Is Wilde there Alex?

ALEX

Wilde is there and he is quietly observing ... he has a notebook in hand and is writing in it. He will not join in.

HELEN

Aah, well Azu does offer.

ALEX

He politely declines.

BRYN

Where are you from originally Friedrich? It's not a Japanese name I guess?

ALEX

"Me no." Germany originally, but times change."

BRYN

Been travelling a long time?

ALEX

"Longer than most ... further than most. How about you?"

BRYN

Well yeah. I grew up in Cairo but spent quite a long time in ... London in England and, then all over the place for a little while ... before we ended up here.

ALEX

"Done a journey like this before?"

BRYN

No. We flew with Earhart once from Paris to Prague and, I mean yeah, the longest journey before that was probably Cairo to England on a ... on a ship, nothing quite like this I mean I don't know how many people have ever done anything quite like this! What about you?

ALEX

He reaches out and ... pats you on the shoulder (**imitates sound**) with a hand that takes up most of your torso ...

"Don't lose that optimism."

And he, heads over and sits for someone else to take their turn.

HELEN

Barnes, how about you?

ALEX

"What, have I travelled?"

HELEN

No, it's your go with the darts!

ALEX

"Oh, right ... oh, right yeah."

Group laughter

LYDIA

What, you want an intimate backstory?

EVERYONE

No, never!

BRYN

Shut up Barnes!

ALEX

Barnes is pretty good. He's not showing off, in fact you get the impression he's probably holding back a little bit to generate some goodwill. He's quite good, even so.

BRYN

"This is not even 10% of my power!".

ALEX

There's an awkward moment where someone asks him a question. He turns and answers the question and still throws the dart exactly where he wanted to and then, catches himself and throws the next one slightly rubbish ... that kind of thing.

HELEN

Okay so Azu's gonna try and start a conversation with Barnes because, like they haven't really spoken since, to my memory ... since they were in the ... cell together?

ALEX

Oh yeah, they all got absolutely smashed and then basically never spoke again!

HELEN

Yeah. Like, Barnes just went to sleep on the stairs.

LYDIA

University days ... really.

Group laughter

ALEX

"I'm just saying Azu, that you're the kind of friend that you only have ... you know, when we're drinking! That's the thing we have in common!"

HELEN

Woah. Oh my god, I hope he doesn't actually say that!

ALEX

No he doesn't, no absolutely not ... no ...

HELEN

Thank god.

ALEX

No. I am, I am dealing with enough horrible, horrible demons on this journey without introducing those.

HELEN

Okay, so Azu says "So, you used to be ... a commander an admiral, something?"

ALEX

"A little difference between the two ... commander."

HELEN

What was that like?

ALEX

"It was really nice, being certain ... about everything all the time. It makes things ... easier, you know? I'm told it's a lot like faith ... I mean, I don't ... I'm not a god person, you know but, yeah there's something to be said for ... knowing that the thing you doing is right because, you know, it's ... it is right you know? It is. Cause it's built in."

HELEN

I agree, that is a very good feeling.

ALEX

"All of this cloak and dagger and .. suspicion and ... it gets a bit much. Mind you it could be worse; it smells a lot less on an airship than it does on a ... water vessel. A fun fact for you."

HELEN

Good.

laughter

HELEN

So what happened? How did you end up doing all this, apart you know, the end of the world, like ... how, you know the rest of it?

ALEX

"Well, I stuck with the Meritocratic navy a bit longer than I probably should have and, at first the orders were ... normal, then the orders were less tactical you know?"

HELEN

Yes, Wilde said something similar.

ALEX

"Then the orders were bad and then the orders were really bad. And let's put it this way, Earhart ... she seems a lot more stable than the people I was having towards the end ..."

HELEN

Oh dear.

ALEX

"Yeah. I was ordered to fire on a bunch of civilians so, I, I killed my commanding officer if you must know."

HELEN

Sounds like good for you really.

BRYN

Oh, that must have been a really, tough choice. I'm sorry you had to go through that.

ALEX

"Don't be, it was nice to be certain about something again. It just means that now I have to take my own orders to a degree but, yeah it want the navy by the time I left. It was ... what it's become. There's a reason that there int a navy anymore, lets leave it at that."

HELEN

I see.

ALEX

"But yeah, it could be worse, like I said .. the foods better."

HELEN

At least it's not smelly.

ALEX

"Exactly. Exactly."

He hands the darts over for another round with everyone.

I am going to ... wrap that socialising there unless anyone has anything additional they want to chase on the socialising side? I'm aware that I still need to do Zolf and Cel at the ... other end of things. Is there anything else to do with the darts that people want or is that just kind of initial little foray?

HELEN

Yeah, that's just a little ... what's your back story?

LYDIA

Ooo, sexy pirate.

BRYN

Breaking the ice activity wasn't it? It was nice.

HELEN

Yeah. And everyone is sad.

LYDIA

And here is my houses worth of ... marbles.

Group laughter

ALEX

Right, I am gonna jump to, round things out with Zolf and Cel. Zolf the trusted confidant who definitely will put down any kind of ... mutiny that could possibly be suggested by anyone!

Group laughter

BEN

100%. Yeah, so, as I said, like, I'm not gonna immediately try to jump into a conversation but have a drink and will do so if Cel doesn't start one and obviously if Cel leaves in a "I don't wanna have a conversation way", I won't, like, chase her down so, up to you Lyd.

LYDIA

Oh no, they're gonna kind of ... Right Zolf, should I, should I call you ... its first mate Smith?

BEN

Pssst, no Zolf is fine.

LYDIA

Sure.

BEN

As I said before if there's a crisis, listen to me if the captain ain't about but, beyond that it's nothing, I'm just looking after Earhart . By the by, she suspects that you might be likely to mutiny?

LYDIA

Well ... does she suspect other, other people?

BEN

Apparently not so that's good. But, and I ... also, sorry Alex I'm making the assumption and I feel you would have mentioned it, Earhart isn't here?

ALEX

Earhart 's in her cabin.

BEN

Fine. Yeah, although I think, I think I might have got through to her a bit, we'll see how the next couple of days goes but, she had to be reminded of some of the duties of captaincy that maybe she forgot.

LYDIA

The problem I should, I should make clear Zolf, that the ... the problem is not that she isn't polite, I ... I don't mind that, it's the, it's the burning fire of self-destruction you know? I recognise that and, I know that you know that rage turns inwards has is, can be, can be almost, infinite you know? It can, it can, excuse things and it can, it can ... can turn people into something monstrous you know? And I say that because I, I know that, and I know that it can, it can cause extraordinary damage to those that might, happen to be nearby and I ... I

believe that I could probably get out of almost any situation, that Captain Earhart gets us into! I mean I've, I've heard from, from people things about these Russian wastes but, let me tell you the ... the ... crossing America on your own is not an easy, it's not an easy path itself and I, I would have very much liked to have had an airship appoints in that time you know, it's the ... the other people and it's, it's, you know the group ... itself ... which I would like to protect.

BEN

I, look I'm not gonna pretend I know exactly what you're talking about, but I have my own version of that and I ... understand where that can come from, that is what I had a conversation with Earhart about, not about being more polite but about ... allowing other people to be consumed by your own self-destructive tendencies. So, we'll have to see how it goes, I'm not saying the problem is resolved, I doubt the problem is resolved, but, hopefully again, another incremental improvement and, I also wanna say that your assessment of me, earlier is ... is pretty bang on and I'm sorry about that.

LYDIA

I think, I think when we're when we're all under stress ... Zolf, we, we can do the, say, difficult things and, I ... I know that at ... at times I am, I'm almost too light-hearted, I understand that you know the crackle of electricity is a beautiful and wonderful thing most of the time but sometimes you can be too energetic and bright and ... that becomes a problem and so I understand that it may have been difficult for you in, in it's own way and I, I am glad that we've had this conversation ...

BEN

Me too.

LYDIA

And that ... we can move forward together. I respect you Zolf, and I'm, I'm looking froward to getting to know you more.

BEN

Yeah me too.

ALEX

And on that, I think I'm gonna end the episode there rather than with an explosion I don't know if it's the right call ...

Group laughter

ALEX

But I wanna try something new!

HELEN

It's an explosion of emotion! Woah.

ALEX

I hate it, okay. Something ... the ship, the ship explodes with everyone in it!

BEN

Maybe the real explosions were the friends we made along the way.

laughter

LYDIA

Yeah.

laughter

ALEX

Well, okay, I think, I think we have the components for a long sad and interesting journey right?

BRYN

Hopeful, very hopeful. Slow burn baby.

BEN

Yeah, yeah, slow burn.

HELEN

Yeah, gonna have a kit at the end!

Group laughter

ALEX

What's this arc, is it a sort of pseudo conspiracy arc where you don't know who to trust as mutinies are run rife and everyone's fighting for control? Nah at a full airship!

Group laughter

BEN

It's loving the time of hardship, which is a really good Campbell model actually one of his earlier ones.

Group laughter

ALEX

Well, whilst I write that into the cut ...

BEN

It's time to wright our own Campbell novel baby.

ALEX

Yeah, a little bit. Right, until then, we'll see you next week. Bye everyone.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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