

RQG – [167] – [Fun and Games]

Content Warnings

- Anxiety
- Panic Attack

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 167 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.

Rusty Quill Gaming – [167] – [Fun and Games]

HELEN

And Helen Gould.

ALEX

And who and/or what are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith.

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al Tahan.

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom.

HELEN

Azu.

ALEX

I mean, that's very presumptuous of all of you...

LYDIA

It's just the... or what? Wait, what are we gonna become over the course of this episode?

HELEN

Are you swapping our characters without telling us?

BEN

A tree! I'm gonna become a tree!

BRYN

Look, for the beginning of this episode, Alex, we are still as hearty and hale as we were at the end of the last episode.

BEN

Ah, Bryn, don't speak... he does have the benefit of the slam-cut!

(Group laughter)

We have no control over our timelines!

ALEX

The year is 20... bleah blah, blah, again!

BRYN

We don't have to listen to him. If he just slam-cuts too far we keep role-playing the previous scene. What's he going to do?!

(Laughter)

ALEX

Bryn, are you telling me that if I slam-cut so far in the future that every single one of you had a badass samurai sword and identical black leather jackets, I feel like you'd go with it, if I'm honest!

BRYN

We'll have to find out!

ALEX [laughing]

Right, so we are picking up where we left off, but a little bit more nuance, which is: we are on a sky boat in the sky and, technically, everything is brightly coloured, but still fine, currently. That feels like a summation of the events, right?

BRYN

The crew of The Vengeance find themselves flying directly into the heart of a magical storm. First Mate, Zolf Smith, stands alone on the bridge, ready to pilot while the rest of the crew hide in the safe-box constructed by Cel and Skraak. Will they survive? Find out, now with Rusty Quill Gaming.

LYDIA

All of this sounds like the beginning of a secret cinema episode.

ALEX

Yeah, a little bit.

BRYN

Coming to Netflix 2021...

[Group laughter]

... in a world...

ALEX

I also very much, off that intro, want to force Zolf to immediately redirect power from life support, which isn't even a thing!

BEN

Life support in this ship is known as the floor, so he just deletes the floor and we all fall...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

No, I re-route power from the floor and it slowly gets smaller, but quicker!

HELEN

Like moving the ladders of a swimming pool!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

It's been a while since I've done this and I'm very, very glad that I have got us back to where I feel comfortable. I'd like to start this episode with everyone giving me a Will Save, please.

ALL

Yaaayyyy!!

[Sound of dice being rolled]

BEN

It's fine, I've got loads of Will points!

(Laughter)

ALEX

I need people to know I am not going to be able to roll for every single character unless Bryn helps me on the Kobolds! So, what did you get, Zolf?

BEN

I rolled a five, so 20.

ALEX

Okay. Azu?

HELEN

21.

ALEX

Yep.

BRYN

Hamid gets ten...

[someone gasps]

ALEX

Good.

BRYN

Skraak gets, oh dear. Skraak gets seven.

ALEX

And I need you to know now that all of the Kobolds are getting the same score so whichever rolled first, they all get that!

BRYN

The remaining Kobolds get 11.

ALEX

Okay, good to know. Thank you.

LYDIA

Cel has 22.

BEN

Nice.

LYDIA

Because Cel rolled a 19, so they lucked out and I really hope I'm not using up my high number allocation early on, because my assumption is things will get worse!

BRYN

It was one Will Save and we're fine. We're in Svalbard now and it's brilliant.

LYDIA

Yeah, it's cool. It's all good. It's cool.

BRYN

But Hamid's a tulip now!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

But we don't talk about it because he's very sensitive about it!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

It's a very magical tulip!

BRYN

It's a fire-flower from Mairead, just point it at people and fireballs pop out!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Okay, fabulous. In that case, then, I am going to start with everyone apart from Zolf portion of the party, which is in a dark featureless box... I need you to know, I didn't steer us into the dark featureless box as an option, I was fine for everyone to just mutate freely with abandon, but here we are! Time starts ticking along. What I would say is this is not going to be a short haul, but also you all know for free that this isn't gonna be, like, multiple people in the box know that aurora borealis doesn't work in such a way that you're just gonna be in a box for the next five weeks. It doesn't work like that. The ambient magic, as it works, is mostly like localised pockets as opposed to just a complete ambiance of everywhere north of a certain latitude is just gas. It just doesn't work like that. So, as a result, you know it's probably gonna be a matter of hours at the shortest, days at the longest. Not weeks.

BRYN

Yep, we're hoping for hours, not days, basically.

ALEX

Yeah, exactly. Does anyone in said box want to do anything apart from just see what happens?

HELEN

Is it actually, like, properly dark in here?

ALEX

Currently, I would say there is no reason for it to be actively dark. Like, there are non-magical lanterns all over the ship...

HELEN

Okay...

ALEX

... and there are probably a couple of basic magical lights, but I will tell you now that Earhart will have insisted that all magical lights get stowed because you're asking for trouble if you're using magic for trivial stuff.

HELEN

In which case, all I'm gonna do is go and sit next to Kiko.

ALEX

That's fine. Kiko continues to be sat next to. Can you give me a Perception Check?

HELEN

[Rolls dice]

That's 16.

ALEX

And, can you give me a Sense Motive, please?

HELEN

[Rolls dice]

That's 15.

ALEX

Your hands are definitely touching and you're fairly certain it might be intentional, but you don't categorically know.

HELEN

No, I wanna do that thing where I just put my little finger on top of her little finger, because I'm, like...

ALEX

Awwww...

HELEN

... I could explain this away...

ALEX

Yeah, clever, clever. No, it seems to be reciprocated. There's a little pinky-swear going on!

HELEN

Yay!!

ALEX

There's an unspoken pinky-swear that everything's going to be okay!

HELEN

Ohhhhhh... You're gonna take her away from me, Alex, I know it!

BEN

Yeah, 100%, a thousand, a million percent!

LYDIA

Yeah. I mean, if anything, this was your fault, Helen.

(Group laughter)

You created a relationship when we know what happens when that happens!

ALEX

You expressed a basic human need. Of course I'm going to punish you for that!

(Helen laughs)

Well, basic Orkish need, I should say! Anyone else want to be pursuing anything in the meantime?

BRYN

Hamid just wants to make eye contact with Azu, quickly, and do a little, 'you okay?' face because he knows about her claustrophobia.

ALEX

Bryn, can you please give me a Sense Motive?

BRYN

[Rolls dice]

ALEX

Although, interestingly, not to do with Azu.

BRYN

Not very high. Only eight.

ALEX

Eight? Cool. Thanks for rolling!

BRYN

Yep.

(Group laughter)

ALEX

Hope you had fun!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Goodbye!

(Group laughter)

BRYN

My dice have not yet been kind to me today!

ALEX

The thousand demons that surround you remain unno... no, you're fine! And I'm going to ask, as a check in on Cel, is there anything you're wanting to do in the immediate?

LYDIA

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Yeah, Cel wants to try to make the box better. Whether there is actually capacity to do that is, sort of, irrelevant really, they will be fiddling with the details of settings, trying to make sure that solderings are, kind of, stronger, just...

ALEX

Give me Disable Device.

LYDIA

Okay.

[Rolls dice]

Oh gosh! It's like everything to do with this box is cursed!

ALEX

This is why I pushed for real dice!

LYDIA

Yeah! I rolled for... I rolled a three so that is 19.

ALEX

You're fairly certain that what you are able to do is do busy work in such a way that the others are convinced that you are touching up the box...

LYDIA

That is absolutely not the point...

ALEX

... you can make any... No, I know...

LYDIA

... that would not be their motivation in any way...

ALEX

... what I'm saying is, you don't believe that there is any substantive improvement that you can make at this stage.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

So, if you did, it would be busy work, actual busy work.

LYDIA

Right, in which case, like, they will be attempting this stuff in case there is something that they have missed that is not busy work, you know?

ALEX

Sure. You are in a situation where it isn't a case of, like, there's an error that you find. You've gone through and gone, 'I haven't found any errors – the

problem here is there are material limitations and I can't make more materials'.

LYDIA

Yeah, it's like, if there was a Faraday cage going around and, kind of, you know, if this bit was a bit straighter that might mean that the whole was a better wavelength...

(Laughter)

... and reflective, like, go through... are there any soldering bits that have come apart? Are there any screws loose? Is there anything sticking out that might catch on someone and hurt them? It's...

ALEX

I'll say you might be able to make, like, a very minor quality of life improvement where it's, like, oh, it's a little bit spiky in that corner, but that's kind of at the limits you are at.

LYDIA

That's cool. That's what they're doing, and it matters in so far as where their attention is.

ALEX

That's good to know. Thank you. I'm just going to check through my enormous list of MPCs in case there's anything I'm missing!

BRYN

Well, given you interrupted me with a dice roll when I asked to communicate with Azu, I would like to know if Hamid gets the facial expression response from Azu?

ALEX

Aaahhh, fair!

HELEN

Oh, yeah, absolutely! She is gonna do a shy smile that, if her face could speak, which it can, but can't right now...

(Laughter)

... because she's being secret, erm...

(Laughter)

... her face would say, 'I am alright, thank you for checking'!

BRYN

Yeah, I feel like, 'You okay' and, 'I am alright' are both acceptable facial expressions!

(Group laughter)

BEN

If faces could speak!

ALEX

What I'm finding interesting here is that I've managed to compress this many characters and MPCs that want social interactions into so small a space, this might be the first conversation I have to do in Initiative order!

(Group laughter)

We'll see how that pans out! I'm gonna jump to Zolf, amid-decks...

BEN

Mmm hmm...

ALEX

... you continue sailing. I am going to give you a big broad question now, and I'm going to give you a moment to think on it, okay?

BEN

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

Which is, I've been thinking a lot about navigation, and your skill-set and how that works, and so on, given that you're currently steering?

BEN

Mmm hmm.

ALEX

I am going to give you a repeated choice the longer that this goes on, depending on how things pan out, which is you will have the option of a Survival Check when I ask you to navigate, you can have either a Survival Check, which is continuing to plot a course as you go, based on what you're seeing, or a Profession Sailor Check, which is...

BEN

That one!

ALEX

... to maintain course based on where you've been told to go, but it means that you can't read the land with the Profession Sailor. I'm spinning it out a little bit just to make it a bit more interesting.

BEN

I'll go for the one that's a ten and not a five!

ALEX

Er, which is Profession Sailor, my guess?

BEN

Yeah.

ALEX

Can you please give me your first Profession Sailor?

LYDIA

Oh, good luck!

BEN

28.

ALEX

I hate how smug he is!

(Laughter)

BEN

What are you talking about?!

BRYN

That wasn't even smug...

LYDIA

Yeah!

... that was just a factual, here you go!

LYDIA

That was just his neutral non-annoyed voice!

ALEX

No, that was a smug fact. I was...

BRYN

No, you're hearing smug when he's really happy with himself!

LYDIA

Yeah!

HELEN

We know what smug sounds like, and also we can see his face!

BEN

Er, not if I hide!

(Group laughter)

ALEX

You continue sailing ahead and you know you are gonna head pretty much smack into the borealis at this point. You also know there's no point even trying to do a minor path alteration because it's the entire horizon – what

would be the point? All you're doing is adding variable. Screw it. Go straight through!

BEN

What I can do is not crash into a mountain or a big bone, and...

ALEX

Yeah, exactly!

BEN

... try not to die!

ALEX

Exactly. So that's effectively what you're doing. I would say this, actually, certainly the cloud cover starts to ease a little bit as you're sailing, and it is now obvious to you that, yes, not only is this an enormous modified elephant graveyard, they genuinely have seemed to climb to the highest points that they can to die, which is odd. Which means that you genuinely are having to keep that elevation in order not to hit anything. But it is very easy for you to do – the cloud cover's easing up so you can navigate quite easily.

BEN

Cool.

ALEX

Unfortunately, that does mean that you can start to see when you're drawing near the borealis. A couple of things that you do notice is it actively seems to alter the light around it in some way, where things start to, almost like a heat-haze, but more...

LYDIA

Is it wibbly?

ALEX

... Yes, but I would say in intensity and how weirdness it is, it's closer to how cartoons make a mirage appear wibbly wobbly, as opposed to actual heat-haze, which is just a little bit, you know, above a surface. This is very much more, like, you're about to... it's like I'm going to cue you in on a flashback, but the flashback just doesn't come!

(Group laughter)

But as you continue sailing, eventually, unlike the real borealis in our world, there are tangible lines of colour which draw nearer and eventually the ship makes contact with one of the.

BEN

[Lydia whistles 'What shall we do with the Drunken Sailor?' in the background]

Sure. First of all, while we're drawing in, I am nervously whistling to myself because it's going to be really, really creepy and quiet.

ALEX

Oh, it's pure silence for you, oh, apart from the wind.

BEN

Cool, but before it makes contact with me, I am going to cast Resistance on myself. It lasts for a minute, but it gives me plus one on Resistance and Saves so... Will Checks get slightly better!

BRYN

You still have Heroism active from the end of last session as well.

ALEX

Yes, you do.

BEN

Ooh, I do! Thank you!

HELEN

Good thought!

ALEX

And I believe those stack as well – we established that last time.

BRYN

Yes, because they're different types of bonus.

BEN

Yeah. Heroism is a how much morale bonus?

BRYN

Two. It's two to basically everything, just in case.

HELEN

Yeah.

ALEX

I love that you have the spell which is 'be better at a thing'. Why? Because you believe in yourself!

BRYN

Yeah!

ALEX

But magically, so it works!

HELEN

God, I wish magic were real!

ALEX

If only life was that easy! Hahaha!

BEN

Oh cool. Well that actually means that I rolled 22 last time, I forgot about that.

ALEX

Good to know, thank you. The prow makes contact with the borealis. Once it makes contact, you see that the wibbly-wobbliness seems to be, like, it seems to be emitting a heat haze itself – that’s the best description of it, and it starts to move down the ship. It doesn’t seem to completely engulf the ship – bits of it seem to trail along it and then the best way I can describe it is it’s like someone smearing a painting a little bit, and then it returns itself. Like, have you ever seen a watercolour where a stray bit of water kind of takes it astray, but then it does return back.

BEN

Oh, actually, as this happens I suddenly realise and I tie myself to the wheel again.

(Laughter)

ALEX

That’s fine. Everyone within the box, this is a detail – I am not diving into the RP side, within the box there’s a musical chiming starts to happen all around you, and you realise that the metal that is worked into the box is resonating in

some way. It's quite a pleasant sound. It isn't grating or anything. It's best described as, you know, like, when you run a finger round a crystal glass, almost?

HELEN

Mmm.

ALEX

You know, that resonant tone. It's more like that. But on the other side of the box, because it's not like a sealed big metal thing – it's more like a cage almost, on the far side of it you see the same thing where the interior of the ship seems to get smeared a little bit and then reasserts itself, and then smear a bit and reassert itself. It finally reaches up to you, Zolf, and the smearing starts to affect your own body. It does not hurt.

BEN

Cool. Yep, fine!

ALEX

It's a very odd feeling where you can see the smearing and if you were to, say, run your hand through where it smeared, it kind of gives a little bit of an eddy and then returns to you...

BEN

But I wouldn't do that.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, that's fine. But all I'm...

BEN

I'm not experimenting!

(Laughter)

ALEX

... all I am getting is, you start seeing bits of your body responding slightly to the wind, as it were.

BEN

Cool.

HELEN

What I'm imagining is the bit in Jumanji where the hands start to get...

ALEX [gasps]

Yessss!

HELEN

... which is terrifying.

BEN

I was going with Guardians of the Galaxy 2 when they do too many, like, jumps...

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I'd say probably closer to the latter, but maybe a little less extreme!

(Laughter)

The best way to describe it is a non-painful drift. I don't believe in any of your adventures you have specifically come across anything similar?

BEN

Nope.

ALEX

So we will leave it at that and, as you continue, you start hearing the gently chiming noise as well, and it seems to be emanating very faintly from the actual bands of colour themselves as they move throughout the ship, and so on. The other thing that starts to happen, though, is that you start noticing that the ambient noise starts to drop, you know the gently creak of the rigging, the wind and so on. It starts to recede. It's still there, but the chiming comes to the forefront a bit more. From the perspective of everyone inside the box, it initially is a bit difficult to even discern that that's happened because,

obviously, it's a lot more... closer ambient noises but, similarly, they start to die out until eventually it's much, much quieter and it's mostly that chiming that's permeating through everything.

BRYN/HAMID

'We could play two truths and a lie? That would pass the time. All get to know each other a bit better?'

HELEN/AZU

'Oh, how do you play that?'

BRYN/HAMID

'Oh, so you say two facts about yourself and then you say a lie about yourself, but it has to be plausible, and everyone else has to guess which of the three statements is the lie, and then after people have guessed one you tell them which one was the lie.'

ALEX (also as Carter)

Er, Carter pipes up at that point, 'Oh, yeah, I'll go, I'll go! I've got a plan. Okay, two facts, yep?'

BRYN/HAMID

'So, two *truths*, and...'

HELEN/AZU

'... and one lie.'

BRYN/HAMID

‘... and, and a lie. That’s...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘But they’ve got to be about me, yeah?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yeah, and don’t be, like, two facts first and then the lie, necessarily, you have to mix the lie in so that we can’t...’

ALEX (as Carter) [talking impatiently over Hamid]

‘Okay. Alright, yeah. Okay, okay, okay. Fine. Yeah, yeah... yeah, yeah. I got it, I got it, I got it. Okay, okay. Number one, I am a respected academic.’

[someone groans]

‘Okay, okay... Number two, I was once *really* rich. Number three, I am competent and everyone needs to get off my back! What do you think?’

HELEN/AZU

‘That sounds like two lies and a truth to me!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Erm, I guess you know him best, James, what do you think?’

ALEX

Barnes takes a moment, frowns a little at the use of the first name, but he'll allow it...

(Helen chuckles)

ALEX (as Barnes)

'Erm, well, I mean... let's put it this way, I'm not an academic so I couldn't testify to that. Er, in terms of the money thing, you've got expensive taste, I suppose...'

BRYN/HAMID

'I mean, he didn't say how *long* he was rich for, and there was one time we encountered him and he did, technically, have quite a lot of gold on him, just very briefly!'

ALEX

Carter gives a big waggly eyebrow and starts tapping his nose and pointing to Hamid.

ALEX (as Barnes)

'... and as for the competency thing, it depends, I mean, at certain aspects, you know, locks. That's pretty much it.'

ALEX (as Carter)

'Like I said. Two truths and a lie. I am all over this.'

BRYN/HAMID

‘So you think the academic one is the lie, James?’

ALEX (as Barnes)

‘Well, I don’t know.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘What do you reckon, Azu?’

HELEN/AZU

‘I think the academic one is a lie as well. Or, I think that it’s a trick question and he’s going to say that they’re all lies or all truths!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I mean, that’s not really in the spirit of the game!’

ALEX (also as Carter)

Carter pipes up, ‘What do I get if I win, though? That’s what I want to know now at this point’.

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, it’s just for fun and to get to know each other better. It’s not really about keeping score.’

ALEX (also as Carter)

‘The joke’s on all of you, I was rich and I am still a respected academic, so... ha haaaaa!’ And then he sits down.

ALEX (as Barnes)

‘Oh, so the last one was a lie. Oh.’

HELEN/AZU

‘So he’s not competent. Well...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘Are there, um, are there, maybe some academics that just haven’t heard about what you’ve been getting up to?’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Oh yeah, yeah – news really, really, really broke down the second that the Paris stuff went dark. Yeah, I’m pretty much in the clear for everything that happened since then, really.’

HELEN/AZU

‘Are you the only one left in your field?’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Ooh, I’d like to change my truth to I am the world expert in Egyptology.’

[Azu sighs heavily]

BRYN/HAMID

‘Erm, there’s plenty of Egyptologist in... er... Egypt.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Oh, well. I wanna change my truth to I am the best Egyptologist in Europe, even though I’m now somewhere else.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I mean, that could probably be accurate, I guess.’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘No, wait! No, no – I want to change my truth to...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘And don’t people keep their memories after their turn? So there could be some people that are... you could be the best uninfected Egyptologist...’

(Alex laughs)

BRYN/HAMID

‘European Egyptologist.’

LYDIA/CEL

‘... from Europe, who...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Yeah...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘... is on this ship right now! Although I have done some reading and I am quick learner, so...!’

(Group laughter)

ALEX

I am going to jump to Zolf back on ship again. So, Zolf, a second effect starts to be taking place as you are sailing along.

BEN

Cool, good and cool. Yeah, great.

ALEX

To be clear, it still remains peaceful and the tones haven’t changed, you’re not in any pain in any way, and the drifting is still there. It’s tolerable, it’s fine. However, you do start feeling a very, very strong and powerful urge to sleep.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

You manage to, sort of, fend it off, but it is a case of, at first it's really subtle and it's more day-dreamy. You know, like, the warnings of don't drive when you're tired because you, sort of, phase out and micro-sleep, and blah, blah, blah? You will end up having to resort to things like slapping your face, and so on...

(Laughter)

... because the longer it goes on, the more powerful and clearly exterior this is. It's not just that you're staring at a featureless landscape. Something exterior is actively making you want to fall asleep.

BEN

I mean, I assume a minute's already up so the Resistance has fallen off?

ALEX

Resistance has now fallen off, yeah. I'm not gonna get a fresh Will Save from you or anything, but just so that you're aware, that is a thing, but you are confident that you are keeping it at bay, but you are also fairly confident that if the cage isn't working, a few of them will be falling asleep right now because this is taking willpower that you know you have, that you know other people don't. Let's leave it at that. Jumping within the box, things continue. Barnes and Carter are now having a bit of an argument that it doesn't matter if he's the world's best Egyptologist, it's still bloody irrelevant!

(Group laughter)

ALEX (as both Carter)

‘Look, look, look...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Let someone else have a turn!’

ALEX (as Barnes)

‘... it doesn’t matter – I’m tired of...’

ALEX (as Carter)

‘Fine! Fine.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Let. Someone. Else. Have. A. Turn! Would anyone else like to take a go?’

HELEN/AZU

‘What about you, Wilde?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Er, Mick? Mick, or, or Oscar – yeah!’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Interesting! A truth, truth and a lie, yes? And who defines what a truth is?’

(Group laughter)

HELEN/AZU

‘I don’t have a head for philosophy, Mr Wilde!’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Oh, I’d never consider myself a philosopher. At best, I considered myself a scientist of the written word, but I would never go so far as natural laws, laws have always been my enemy, ha!’

HELEN/AZU

‘Oh, you’re right!’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Truth, the first...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘No, no – you don’t tell... you tell the three facts, and...’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Oh, okay.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘... and then we guess which one the lie is.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Okay, fair enough.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Am I the only person who’s played this game before? I assume...’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Mostly, it tends to be Never Have I Ever in situations like this. This is new territory for me, it’s fine. Okay, first point... first point. I had genuine feelings for Bertie when he was around.’

HELEN/AZU

‘That *must* be a lie! He sounds awful!’

ALEX

I didn’t specify if they were positive or negative!

[Helen howls with laughter]

BRYN

Hamid doesn’t say anything in response, but his face tells a whole story!

(Lydia and Helen laugh)

HELEN

Very eloquent faces, this episode!

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Great for podcasts!

BEN

If only they could speak!

(Group laughter)

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘The second point...’

LYDIA

There’s a delightful audio format!

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Second point. I was cripplingly shy as a child, and took to wearing disguises to avoid my peers...’

HELEN

Awww...

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘Third point. I bloody love Harrison Campbell novels.’

(Bryn laughs)

BRYN/HAMID

‘Ooh, I mean, those are good, Oscar.’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘I’m basically paid to talk. It makes sense that I can play games like this!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I can’t see any of them being the lie.’

HELEN/AZU

‘What’s your favourite Harrison Campbell novel?’

ALEX (also as Wilde)

‘Well, I’m not going to give you hints, Azu. That feels very much not in the spirit of the game.’ Can everyone give me a Perception Check, please?’

[Sound of dice being rolled]

BRYN

25.

HELEN

25.

LYDIA

26.

ALEX

All of the Kobolds appear to have drifted off into a comfortable sleep, but it does genuinely appear to be a semi-natural sleep insofar as they haven't been whining or moaning, they've just, kind of, dozed off.

BRYN

Do we have any blankets in this room with us? We must, right?

ALEX

Just categorically, yes.

BRYN

One of the things you mentioned last time was that the Kobolds have a bit of a social taboo about people knowing where they sleep?

ALEX

Yes, yes.

BRYN

I would like to ask Cel's help to, like, hang up a sheet in front of the corner that the Kobold's have occupied so that we don't see them sleeping.

ALEX

Sure. Yeah, yeah. That's fine to do. I would say, then, yeah – I'll give you that for free. It is interesting that they... you know categorically that they have that hang up, so it is interesting that they have piled up and gone to sleep when surrounded by other people. But they weren't behaving oddly beyond that.

LYDIA/CEL

Yeah. Cel will actually respond, like, 'While I understand why you want to do that, I would rather be able to keep my eyes on everyone in the room because if behind the sheet some magical effects were to take place on them, we would not notice and we wouldn't be able to help them.'

BRYN/HAMID

'Oh.'

LYDIA/CEL

'So, er...'

BRYN/HAMID

'No, that's a good point.'

LYDIA/CEL

If it turns out that there's, say, a weakness – not that there are any weaknesses, ha, it's all fine – if it turned out that something were to go wrong, or that an eddy of magic would somehow get in, I would rather...'

BRYN/HAMID

‘No, I see what you mean, that’s a really good point. Sorry, I just... yeah.’

LYDIA/CEL

‘No, no – I understand why you’re... in an ideal world...’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I just thought they might like it, but it’s...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘... it would be nice to respect that, but I would be concerned that we’d pull it down and they’d all have turned into forget-me-not flowers or a nice plate of soup!’

BRYN/HAMID

‘And it’s really only a gesture anyway because it seems more like it’s about knowing where they sleep, so maybe I’m just misinterpreting... Anyway, yeah. That’s a good point. Er, okay, um... Wilde, I think that you were never shy as a child, and I think that you had feelings for Bertie, but the feelings were negative, and that’s why you phrased that sentence that way!’

HELEN/AZU

‘Oooh, clever...’

ALEX (also as Wilde)

Wilde takes a moment, and then frowns as if slightly concerned. ‘We’ve been spending too much time together, Hamid!’

(Group laughter)

HELEN/AZU

‘Hamid’s right!’

ALEX

I’m going to jump to Zolf. Hey Zolf! Can you give me a Perception Check, please?

BEN

Okay! Er, 18, Perception.

ALEX

18. Okay. So you are actively having to fight off the urge to sleep constantly, and it is a thing that you are wilfully doing.

BEN

In which case, like, if I ever get the sense that an effect is becoming more intense, because I didn’t want to waste this. Basically, I’ve got Owl’s Wisdom, which will give me a further plus two to my Wisdom rolls.

ALEX

It feels like a constant pressure as opposed to an increasing pressure.

BEN

If I feel any change, I'm going to cast Owl's Wisdom on myself.

ALEX

I absolutely understand that. I think, if I'm... I'm going to be metagame-y a little bit, if this kept going for 20 hours, you're going to end up having to do stuff to just deal with actual fatigue on top of it, but we're nowhere near that yet.

BEN

That's alright. I've got loads of stuff that gets rid of fatigue.

ALEX

Yeah, we're nowhere near that yet.' In which case, then, at some point you realise you don't think the engines are running. There's normally a minor vibration in the, sort of, housing near where you are, which indicates that the engines are running, however, you feel like the engines aren't running anymore.

BEN

Great, cool. We're be-calmed. Brilliant! Okay.

ALEX

You still feel like you're moving, you can still see the landscape moving beneath you a little bit.

BEN

Oh, okay.

ALEX

And, yeah, you're not sure how you didn't notice it 'cos, obviously, the chime was probably playing on your mind, but the engines don't seem to be on.

BEN

Have we slowed down?

ALEX

No.

BEN

Are we slowing down?

ALEX

No.

BEN

Then I don't care!

ALEX

Okay!

BEN

I will check when we're not in an aurora borealis because I'm not summoning more bloody elementals now so there's nothing I can do about it!

ALEX [laughing]

'Hey, buddy...'

BEN

Yeah, I also haven't prepped it, so...!

ALEX

Okay, in which case, then, I'm going to return to the box and, just before the break, I am going to just let people know that at some point I would say Barnes, Carter and Earhart all start to similarly start to doze off. I'm getting a bit mushy with my time periods. I'd say it's been a couple of hours by this point, but you notice that those three also start to doze off. You are now all aware that you are feeling a little bit tired. I will leave it to your good judgement as to whether it feels supernatural or not, because it has been now a couple of hours in a comparatively warm and cosy box. Wilde has not gone to sleep, but Barnes, Carter and Earhart are actively asleep.

BRYN/HAMID

'I guess people weren't enjoying the game very much.'

(Lydia laughs)

HELEN/AZU

‘I’m enjoying it.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Thank you.’

HELEN/AZU

‘What about you? What’s your two truths and a lie?’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Oh, yes, I suppose I should take a turn, too! Er, better do that after the break!’

ALEX

Oh, nice! Beaten me to my own one! Brilliant!

(Bryn laughs)

And welcome back! Yeah, go on then, go on!

BRYN/HAMID

‘Okay, so two truths and a lie. Um...’

HELEN/AZU [yawning]

‘And make them good ones, Hamid, because between you and me I feel like I’ve got a fairly good insight into your operations at this point.’ Azu leans forward eagerly.

BRYN/HAMID

‘Oh! I mean, yeah. Oscar, you probably researched all our backgrounds and stuff before you hired us the very first time! That seems like a bit of an advantage in this game!’

ALEX (as Wilde)

‘I promise that if I *know* the answers I shan’t take part.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘I’ve never lived in mainland Europe. I’ve never visited sub-Saharan Africa, and I’ve never won an academic prize.’

HELEN/AZU [yawning again]

‘Yeah, I’ll... I think I’ll have to sit this one out!’

ALEX

Wilde settles back, closes his eyes for a bit.

HELEN/AZU

‘So that’s interesting because you were at school in England which is technically not part of the mainland.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Yes, exactly, so I knew everyone would know I lived in England and, obviously, I lived in Cairo.’

HELEN/AZU

‘Hmmm. Yes.’

BRYN/HAMID

‘Well, not everyone, necessarily, because some of you we haven’t known very long, but...’

ALEX

Hamid, as this conversation continues, you start feeling very weary. Not necessarily in a way that makes you feel suspicious, but in a way that you’re in a room full of people either actively asleep, yawning, and it’s starting to feel a bit like the later stages of a sleepover, if I’m honest.

BRYN

Yeah, I mean, Hamid is probably not fighting a yawn, either, like, it’s probably quite obvious he’s going to yawn.

ALEX [yawning]

Yeah.

HELEN/AZU

‘I think that you were probably quite good at school with academic achievements and things.’

ALEX

By the time you finish speaking, Azu, Hamid’s already dropped off.

HELEN/AZU

‘Oh, oh. There he goes!’

ALEX [laughing]

Zolf, I am gonna jump back to you.

BEN

Uh huh.

ALEX

Can you give me a Perception Check, please?

BEN

That’s 22.

ALEX

22. Similarly, this is after, like, probably I’d say another hour of really... whrrrr, come on, c’mon, keep it together, just keep focussed... it’s fine. Nothing hurts,

you've done worse than this, it's fine... At some point, you realise that you're not steering the ship actively. To be clear, it's not going wildly off course, or anything. What you find is that the ship... you focus in again and realise that the ship has begun gently anticipating your turns before you do them. So if you were going to adjust left, it adjusts left just before you actually manage to make the turn yourself.

BEN

Is this the resistance on the wheel, like, is the mechanism still functioning?

ALEX

It feels like it, yeah, and it feels like if you fight it you can still take over but, interestingly, it actively seems to be working with you and anticipating your turns rather than... and your adjustments for elevation and so on, rather than you having to fight against it. See what I mean?

BEN

Yeah. I am going to mentally start trying to fight against that, because I'm worried about... it's this way round at the moment, but what if it flips?

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.

BEN

I don't want to lean too far into this little telepathic, apparent link that I have with the ship.

ALEX

Sure, that's fine. I would say that as you fight it, it doesn't stop leaning, but you are having to... like, the way that you are doing this is you are objectively going, I'm going to deliberately turn us the wrong way a little bit.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

It doesn't anticipate the incorrect movements. It always seems to be trying, for however reason, to plot what you actually consider yourself to be the correct course.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

But you are still able to make adjustments and overrule when you want. Jumping back to the box, at this point, I would say everyone apart from Cel and, of all people, Siggif are now asleep.

BEN

Nightmare!

ALEX

To be clear, again, everyone has dropped off apparently naturally and just, kind of, had a bit of a sit and a rest, and in fairness it has been a while now, but it is eventually just Siggif who, by all accounts to you, Cel, looks quite tense still. He's... I'm not going to do sound effects for it, but he's definitely got some chewing tobacco that he's working over in the corner alone!

HELEN

I've just realised that I've been holding hands with Kiko in front of him!

(Laughter)

LYDIA

But very subtly!

ALEX

You've also fallen asleep gently in each other's arms!

(Lydia squeals)

BRYN

Aww...

HELEN

Yeah! I'd like to think that I've just, like, got my head on her shoulder.

ALEX

Yeah, Siggif does keep looking over in the Azu direction, but still seems quite agitated. I would say as well, though, Cel, although you have yourself felt a little bit drowsy, you're not in the situation where you are feeling an urge to sleep.

LYDIA

Probably the highest Will Save of their life! Cel is so distracted fixing things that they barely notice this all happens. They, kind of, look up from their work and look around quite startled, I would say, unless you think that you want me to do a Perception Check to notice everyone is asleep?

ALEX

No. No, that's fine. It's, kind of, when you're past the halfway point, it becomes noticeable.

LYDIA

Yeah. I mean, they'll just be so focussed. They're in anxiety mode, which, you know...

ALEX

Yeah.

LYDIA

... but then turn around, sort of, grasp the situation...

ALEX

Siggif is actively muttering to himself.

LYDIA/CEL

‘Hey, buddy. Are you okay? Are you okay?’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Oh, yeah, yeah. No. Yeah, yeah. Ohh...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘Did I...? Yeah?’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘I just, er... you know, you don’t want to... you don’t want, er, bad dreams, you know. I’ve always been a bit edgy when it comes to sleeping, so...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘Is that a borealis thing or is that a you thing?’

ALEX (also as Siggif)

‘Oh, no – terrible nightmares, no! Er... oh no, I’ve just, er, seen a bit more than I’d like to, so... But it’s fine, I’ve got my baccy, that’ll keep me awake, and got me crossword...’ He holds up the most tattered crossword you’ve ever seen that appears to have been used multiple time in pencil, rubbed out, used again. It has tears and everything...

HELEN and BRYN

Aww...

ALEX (as Siggif)

'I never quite got six down. It gives me something to do.'

LYDIA/CEL

Ahhhh... 'Hey buddy, if you, if you, like, what's the clue? What's the clue?'

ALEX (as Siggif)

'Oh, yeah, er... sure. Alright...'

LYDIA/CEL

'What was the clue?'

ALEX (as Siggif)

'Oh, er yeah, so it was seven letters down. Er... pertaining to events in a way that bodes ill... er, and it's starting with an 'O' and it's got a second 'O' in it er, three letters from the end.'

LYDIA/CEL

'Would you like me to tell you or is this word your white whale? Not that the word is 'white whale' – it isn't – but would you like... I don't want to tell you what it is if you don't want to know what it is.'

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘No, it’s not whale, no, it’s the wrong number of letters.’

(Helen laughs)

LYDIA/CEL

‘No, but do you want to know what the word is?’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Why? Do you know?’

LYDIA/CEL

‘I mean, yes, I know that my English isn’t my first, well... it was my first language, I suppose, but I...’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘You know what, tell me, it’s going to eat me alive! Tell me, tell me...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘... speaking for many years...’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Tell me – what is it?’

LYDIA/CEL

‘I may, have, but, I think...’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Just spit it out. Go on, I need to know. It’s been driving me...’

LYDIA/CEL

‘I think it could be ‘ominous’.’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Oh yeah! Thanks for that. Cheers.’

LYDIA/CEL

‘Yeah, it’s a weird coincidence, I suppose!’

(Bryn laughs)

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘In what way?’

LYDIA/CEL

‘Given the circumstances!’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Oh, yeah, but you said the cell was safe, right? So, I mean, it’s not so bad...’

LYDIA/CEL

Rusty Quill Gaming – [167] – [Fun and Games]

‘Yeah, well, I mean, it’s safer than outside, it is. I don’t want everyone to fall asleep. Do you think this could have happened to Zolf? Do you think he could be asleep upstairs? Um, okay...?’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Now that... that’s ominous!’

(Group laughter)

LYDIA/CEL

‘Okay, you know what. I think I shouldn't leave everyone in the room asleep in case of anything happening to them.’ Cel starts to shake Azu.

ALEX

Azu stays asleep, but happily so, with a gentle smile on her face.

LYDIA/CEL

‘Azu, Azu! Azu, come on, I need someone reliable! Er, Azu...’

ALEX (also as Siggif)

‘Hey, I’m reliable, but...’ Siggif starts trying to wake up the other crew members, like Kiko and so on.

LYDIA/CEL

‘This is increasingly not okay. Azu? A... Azu?’

ALEX (as Siggif)

‘Oh no, oh no. This is exactly what I... oh no...’

LYDIA

Cel is flicking her face gently, beginning to shake her quite violently...

ALEX

Nope. Nothing. I am going to jump to Zolf.

LYDIA

Okay.

BEN

Yes.

ALEX

I’d say a few hours go past. You are still in a stable situation...

BEN

Er, sorry, then. Question. Hamid, what’s the time limit on Heroism?

BRYN

Er, 90 minutes!

ALEX

Heroism has now expired! I am going to request from you, please, another Will Save.

BEN

24.

ALEX

I would say that you are well into it and you, at this point it feels to you like an all-nighter. That's the best way to describe it. You've been on the ship alone at the end of night and I don't... I mean, just in general, like, the night shift is a thing. It starts to feel like, for all the weirdness, it starts to feel like a normal night shift, which is don't fall asleep, sometimes there's the odd weird current that you have to work against, and it starts to feel almost familiar. And then at some point you notice that, on the deck ahead of you, the ship has started to tack itself. You notice that the rigging is making minor adjustments of itself and that pieces of the deck are starting to, basically, actively maintain themselves.

BRYN

Alex! ALEX!!

ALEX

And on that, I think I'm going to end the episode!

HELEN

It's a friendly ship. Oh, I like that!

BRYN

The ship is alive!

BEN

Awesome!

HELEN

Helpful ship!

ALEX

Well, better that than the ship is a lie because it's still a long way down!

BEN

This could be great – we have a super-ship. Or it could be terrible – there is a super-ship.

BRYN

So what you're saying is, the outcome really depends on how generous Alex is feeling towards us!

BEN

We are all doomed!

Rusty Quill Gaming – [167] – [Fun and Games]

(Group laughter)

BRYN

See you next week, I guess.

ALEX

MCPs like pennies! Bye, guys!

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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BRYN/HAMID

'I guess you know him best, James, what do you think?'

[silence]

James is Barnes' first name!

ALEX

'No, I know. I'm literally writing a note because I blanked and went, I have no memory of who... that it is Barnes. It is Barnes.

BRYN

I have no memory of this MCP. Who are you? Why are you here?

ALEX

I don't know! Tell me!!

LYDIA

You punished yourself, Alex.

ALEX [fading out]

It's fine, it's fine. They'll all be dead soon, I mean, er...

BEN

God, I'm really tense. This is very tense, Alex.

HELEN

Awww...

LYDIA

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I hope that you get tentacles.

BEN

Rude! I don't!

ALEX

Tentacles or frentacles?!

LYDIA

Frentacles.

HELEN

Tenstacles.

ALEX

Tentativacles.

HELEN

Temptacles.

(Group laughter)

LYDIA [fading out]

Wink!

ALEX

Hi everyone, Alex here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our patrons; Chris Paulis, Hope Landers, Natasha Lamonte, Brad Bradley, Lindsay Mayer, India Jane Boach, Anna Williams, Ruk Mogavero, Stephane, Andrea Hernandez, Ashley Martinez, Chekov, Figg, Moriteachze, Tess, Sumi Cole, Samantha Robbie, Molly Young, Jamie Draw, Gabby, Rebecca Compton, Elkwoods, Ursula Brimsone, Sorcha, Gabrielle Caffey, Eleanor Carroll, Sasha Oretti, Yehan Kesia, Bevin Roth, Caitlin, C, Emma Schindler, Clara Boz, Rowan Monk, Elliott, Victoria Tumagian, Madeline Knight, Maya, Jess McLean, Woven Willows, Emily Moyer, Vicky Guitier, Elijah Tomshak, Kate Hossack, Siobhan, Aus, Emery Kielsberg, Ali, Krista Golbey and Catherine Rose. Thank you all, we really appreciate your support. If you'd like to join them, go to www.patreon.com/rustyquill and take a look at our rewards.