

RQG – 169 – Airships and Ground Rules

Content Warnings

- X
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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 169 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

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom

HELEN

And Azu

(Group laughter)

LYDIA

Helen, don't deny that you are loving this.

HELEN

I am, but my poor girl. My poor little lady.

[laughter]

BEN

At least she's in the hands of Bryn and not Alex, so you know...

ALEX

This is fair. This is very fair. With that in mind then, I am actually going to have to pick us up pretty much where we left off. Which is with everyone just starting to wake up. I am going to lay out the following "stage direction" in

inverted commas... and then leave people to deal with it. OK? cacophony ensues.

[Laughter]

ALEX

Oh no, what's happening...

BRYN

Stay calm... everybody stay calm. Please... please... please, everyone calm...

ALEX

[unclear: 1:12] everyone.

BRYN

Everyone... please... please...

ALEX

I am now going to have to accelerate to after initial cacophony wears off.

BEN

Well as an aside, while Zolf is upstairs and can hear that. He just goes... "I'm so glad I'm not down there" ...

[Group Laughter]

ALEX

It is a box of mess, is how it sounds to you. it's just like... and every single person is freaking out but... a couple of people are saying calm down, so It's probably fine... you know...

HELEN

What is it with us and boxes an exposition of box, a chatter box and now... messy box... cursed box...

[Laughter]

ALEX

Sound scaping... it's a nightmare. I'll put you in any box I can find.

[Group laughter]

BRYN

Soundproof box... Soundproof box.

ALEX

In fact, I might just get you all to have your next meeting in one of the bags of holding. It's just easier.

BEN

Get us in an anechoic chamber, and just have a complete mind melt, as you try and soundscape absolute silence.

ALEX

It's surprisingly hard, when you're all in different rooms.

LYDIA

I assumed as they would be static, they would just like... this is the creeping psychic presence...

ALEX

I'd resort to narration, that's what I would do. So, I will say that the initial cacophony has worn off. Everyone has converted from loud panic to quiet panic.

LYDIA

Cel puts a name tag on everyone. It's in both English and Japanese.

ALEX

It takes a little while as there's more than one person who gets confused, assuming that you're labelling the bodies... or gets confused like... at some point one person's like... "who am I... wait... who am I... err... like..." it's all a bit much.

BRYN

It's very important that we know the mapping, Alex. Would you like to lay out for us, at this point, the mapping?

ALEX

Would you like your mapping now?

LYDIA

Yes please. I've got a pen, I've got paper.

ALEX

This comes with the caveat that I will pull back the curtain on. Alex generated a large way of randomising this process which was elaborate, interesting and would have been fun. It generated a result I didn't like, so I scrapped it and did it again.

[Laughter]

ALEX

Here's where we're at. Are you ready?

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

Have you got your pens, you've got your papers?

HELEN

I've got my notepad open...

ALEX

Zolf, is inside Zolf's body.

LYDIA

Oh god Alex...

ALEX

Cel is in Cel.

LYDIA

Ahh...

ALEX

Hamid is in Axu...

[Laughter]

ALEX

Siggif is in Hamid. Wilde is in Wilde.

BEN

Very appropriate for 169.

ALEX

Hey... Meerk is in Barnes. Natun is in Carter, Sassraa is in Earhart, Draal is in Siggif, Skraak is in Kiko...

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

Kiko is in Friedrich...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

I'm not sure of the pronunciation on this one. Tradyka is it?

BEN

Tadyka...

ALEX

Tadyka... there's a typo there on my end, sorry. Tadyka is inside Skraak. Driaak is inside Draal. Carter is inside Natun...

[Laughter]

HELEN

Oh no, he can be extra sneaky...

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

Earhart is inside Tadyka.

LYDIA

Good.

ALEX

Friedrich is inside Driaak. Barnes is inside Sassraa, and Azu, as we all know... is inside Merk.

LYDIA

Is it Merk... or Meerk? I thought, Bryn keeps saying Meerk...

ALEX

I'm pronouncing it incorrectly.

BRYN

I mean it's in draconic and it's a transliteration.

LYDIA

OK.

BRYN

So, we're doing our best... It is...

ALEX

I get the impression it's more... Meerk isn't it... [unclear: 4:27]

BRYN

Yeah, it's like a **cobble'ish**, **draconic'ish** sound. I've spelt it Meerk...

LYDIA

So basically, all of our attempts to say it are mispronunciations...

BRYN

Yes.

LYDIA

At different levels of irritation.

BRYN

Because none of us can actually speak draconic.

ALEX

Interestingly, thinking on it, I think I northernised it for me - Meerk - I actually think I northernised it... OK. That is your layout. People are now quietly freaking out and processing and what keeps happening, is that people are naturally gravitating towards the sort of pairings and groups that they have historically.

HELEN

Umm...

ALEX

And then realising that they're not pairing with the people they think they're pairing with, and they're starting conversations with the wrong person. Until eventually everyone's...

LYDIA

They have name tags... They've all got name tags.

ALEX

True. True, but nonetheless people broadly end up just sitting in a circle, because it feels weird...

EVERYONE

Umm...

BEN

This is going to be. This is some kind of really, really odd team building exercise. It's a literal walk a mile in someone else's shoes.

HELEN

Azu is absolutely clinging to Hamid's side. Not just because... you know... she sees Hamid as one of her closest friends, but because she's like... maybe, if I stay near my body long enough...

[Laughter]

HELEN

It will osmosis my way back inside.

LYDIA

Like... Cel's... while everyone's sat down, they're going to try and take a bit of... you know... a bit of space... and it's like... "OK, err... buddies... umm... just... I

think it's really good... now if we're in... well not me, obviously... I'm me... umm... I mean you're all you but you get it... umm... if we have some ground rules, so no one feels... upset or worried about what might happen to their body, during this time. Right? So... umm... maybe some rules... maybe... maybe... not getting drunk... err... maybe... maybe... you know... hold off on the romance. Maybe don't throw yourself into an unwinnable battle... err... like just think of your... you're holding someone else's property and it's good to be kind to it, and to yourself.

BRYN

I absolutely with Cel. I think it's very important that we, each try and return the bodies in the state in which we found them. Err...

ALEX

Carter, Carter... where are you Carter?

BRYN

I'm sure that we can... accomplish that...

ALEX

Carter... Carter.. where are...

BRYN

And we will be able to return to our bodies...

ALEX

Don't you dare...

BRYN

... I'm confident that that is a thing that we can accomplish...

ALEX

Don't you... where are... where are... umm... "Barnes" immediately plants himself next to Carter, just dead-eying him...

BEN

For the sake of clarity, and because the audience can't see the bunny fingers you're doing, if you refer to like... minds...

ALEX

From now on I will refer to character names as Minds... yes... Barnes ends up sat next to Carter, and just dead-eye staring him the whole time.

LYDIA

And that's... Meerk and Natun...

HELEN

Kobolds...

LYDIA

Yeah, that's Meerk and Natun's bodies... So you've got two kobolds looking at each other, with complete hate.

ALEX

No, no... no... Barnes... Barnes...

[Laughter]

HELEN

Barnes is Sassraa and Carter is Natun... so... the bodies of Natun and Sassraa are now staring at each other...

LYDIA

OK. I've got that wrong. I was reading it the wrong way round. This is... why did you do this Alex...

ALEX

This pleases me...

LYDIA

... it's hard to read...

[Laughter]

ALEX

Barnes is dead-eye staring Carter... Carter however looks like Christmas came early.

[Laughter]

LYDIA

Carter... I feel like it's important for me to say this, and that you understand completely what I'm saying, when I just say... No.

[Laughter]

ALEX

Carter is currently not listening and playing with his tail.

LYDIA

Oi... Carter... Carter...

ALEX

He loves it. He thinks it's the best.

LYDIA

That is not your tail.... Umm... you had better not hurt it. No... Are you... Barnes... Barnes... you know how to deal with him... umm...

ALEX

Zolf, I am going to cut to you.

BEN

OK.

ALEX

By this point, for the sake of ease, things took a little while. I would say that the borealis is behind you, at this point. It's been a couple of minutes since the last sweep passed over the ship.

ALEX

I detect magic.

ALEX

OK. You detect... the best way to describe it, is a little bit of static in the background. But given that before it knocked you on your ass... there was that much, it has returned to what you knew is a high level of background anyway in the frozen north, but not actually like... harmful.

BEN

I think it's gone now. You're safe to come out.

BRYN

Do we think that's a good idea? Do we think it's a good idea to all come out of this... err...

ALEX

Yep... Carter immediately scarpers for the door.

LYDIA

Someone keep an eye on him.

BRYN

I'm going to try and grab him.

ALEX

Everyone does...

[Group Laughter]

ALEX

Carter skips to the restrained and helpless condition.

LYDIA

You know... I think that it is possible that you... you know once you go out, you might be stuck, or you might flip back to your body... I... maybe the pairs of people... no wait... nobody's in a strict pair are they? No one has just swapped.

HELEN

I don't want to be stuck like this... There's nothing wrong with being a kobold, but I am just... I'm not a kobold.

BRYN

No. No one's saying it's bad to be the way they are now. But obviously we would all rather be ourselves. I think that's clear. And that's not an insult to say... one would rather be oneself than someone else. Even if that other person is someone you greatly admire and have a lot of affection for, and... anyway... and has really big biceps...

[Group laughter]

BEN

I just really want like... bloody Hamid doing like pullups on a door string... like extraordinary...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

I'd say that's certainly the vibe that Kiko's giving off.

BEN

Kiko is in who's body?

ALEX/BRYN

Friedrich.

ALEX

Kiko is mostly looking at the enormous arms, with a certain element of appreciation.

LYDIA

Well... well... OK. I'm going to roll another knowledge arcana to see if there's anything that I know about how one might fix this. So...

HELEN

Would this count as a heal check or?

ALEX

You can try, but you'll have to roll high.

BRYN

Hamid would also like to roll knowledge arcana. Does he roll with his own stat or someone else's?

ALEX

You roll with your own stat, because it's in your mind.

BRYN

Yes.

ALEX

This is a strict duellist mechanic and I'll here none to contrary it.

LYDIA

OK. I've got 20 non-natural. That's just the total.

ALEX

OK cool.

BRYN

25 total on arcana.

ALEX

OK.

HELEN

I only got a 23 on a heal.

ALEX

OK. 23 on a heal? I'll deal with a heal, and then I'll deal with a collaborative arcana check and suggest that you've had a sort of talk amongst yourselves a little bit, to help each other out. On the heal check, there is a principle that you know, which you learned at seminary, which is... at some point, something becomes a god's problem.

[Laughter]

ALEX

This might very well constitute a god's problem, where it's more a... come on... please... I don't really have much more I can bring to bear than please. He's the thing. You are aware that there are certain curses that could cause similar effects. However, mass effects aren't a thing. And normally they're extremely high level **dealy's**... remove curse, might work. However, you don't hold out much hope. For the arcanas in the group, there is a specific spell that they seems to be a vaguely reminiscent of, which is called Magic jar. Magic jar is an openly evil necromantic spell, that allows you to steal someone's soul from their body, put their soul in a jar and then gives you the ability to put your soul in their body. However, it's not a direct swap. That is meant to imprison a soul and you can do as you will with their body. This isn't a spell. That is the closest spell that you are all aware of and it's worth pointing out that necromantic does not automatically mean evil.

BRYN

Yes.

ALEX

Necromantic means using magic to mess around with life forces that are normally messed around with by like divine energy. That's the best description of it. So Magic jar may not necessarily be inherently evil, but it normally is, because very few people are actively giving their bodies up to people, if you see what I mean?

BRYN

Yes.

ALEX

But that is... that is... there is a direct parallel which is that. That's all you've got. Magic jar is a really high level, difficult expensive spell, that will have probably been known to be performed one or two times, basically in history. It is not a common thing, and historically has only ever been used for evil.

LYDIA

Cel's going to leave the room and check if Zolf's OK.

ALEX

Cool. In which case, then I am going to keep everyone in the box until a figure of authority says otherwise, in which case Zolf, you see Cel coming up on deck, apparently, completely unphased in any way.

BEN

Hello. Alright. So what magical nonsense has occurred?

LYDIA

Everyone's... everyone except Wilde's minds and bodies have swapped around, seemingly randomly... there's quite a lot of uncomfortableness. Carter is in someone else's body, but we're making sure that...

BEN

Yeah, I can see that as a problem...

LYDIA

Yeah... that's kept hold of. You know... some people are not happy about it, some people are coping, but not great. I just wondered if you... if you were OK? And if you needed someone to relieve you up here, because you have been here for hours.

BEN

Err... no. I am broadly OK, and also given people will have gone through some stress, I am more than happy to stay up here. Do we know what's... how to fix it, because one of the problems is, if you're in unfamiliar bodies, you're not going to be able to do your job, and we could crash out of the sky, err... which is immediately very bad for everyone here. So we should probably resolve it.

LYDIA

That is... that is... that is a problem. Do you have any spells that might... or magic powers in general?

BEN

Well...

LYDIA

Because none of my potions would do that?

BEN

Do you know what's happened? You're better at the research side of this than I am.

LYDIA

It's a soul thing, as far as I can tell. There is a very cool... you know... background... you know... evil... but like there is an interesting... umm...

BEN

Right...

LYDIA

err... spell that it reminds me of, that I heard about, it's called Magic jar. I [unclear: 14:44] there are a few.

ALEX

You would have been made aware of that in your basic seminary stuff Zolf, as a... someone's doing this, they're evil, and they're trying to live forever.

LYDIA

I will assume that as Cel has learned about it... that kind of thing, they would have learned from like... some of the different cultures that they've encountered, that may have done it in a different way, and so would be...

ALEX

There are other ways of achieving it... yes.

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah... there would be ways of like in the **Elvin** civilisations in the jungles... that just wouldn't necessarily use the same model of thinking... Like so you take the soul, and you put it into the ritualistic jar, which is made out of...

BEN

Great, great, no fine.

LYDIA

OK. No...

BEN

But skip to the bit where... how do they reverse it?

BRYN

You've just discussed this with Hamid. Because we both made arcana checks with each other.

LYDIA

Oh right... sorry yes.

BRYN

As well, and Hamid will mention the spell, as he understands it, can be removed, with a powerful enough dispel magic.

ALEX

Correct.

BRYN

But obviously neither of us will know whether that will work in this situation, because it's not exactly the same as the spell.

LYDIA

My concern would be Mr Smith... is if we dispel it, we'd have to dispel as a group, because if you dispel it for one, and then their soul is hovering around, because someone else is maybe attached... the soul is attached to the body, and then you could end up with a soul that is just drifting around, and that's really not very... [unclear: 15:56].

BEN

Well I can't do that.

LYDIA

OK. That's useful to know.

BEN

Right, I can... I can do that for individuals, but as you say, that's potentially the problem is... unless I get [unclear: 16:08].

LYDIA

Do you have a soul jar maybe, around... so someone... you know... as a buffer... you know...

BEN

You know... I do...

LYDIA

I call it random access soul memory...

BEN

Right...

LYDIA

So the soul can just go there, while it's being used, but not...

BEN

No. and also that sort of knowledge... well at least from my broad education, is frowned upon... so... they are not...

ALEX

At the risk of cross-contamination of genres, from your perspective Zolf, we're basically talking [unclear: 16:35]. Like that's... that's the only situation that this really comes up, in terms of your education.

BEN

Say... **phylacteries**, that's in-universe.

ALEX

Yeah, there you go. **Phylacteries**. Like you're looking at **phylacteries**, like... no one has ever used this for good, as far as you're concerned. Like it's big. It's kind of a red flag.

BEN

Yeah. So, yeah it's been frowned upon. I don't know how to make one. You'd have to try and find somebody around 'ere who would probably self-identify as a wrong 'un...

[Group laughter].

BEN

Or... err... or broadly an undead monstrosity known as a Mitch, which I'm assuming you're aware of, but they're not looked at very kindly, and they usually don't have people's best [unclear: 17:12]. Anyway that side... no I don't have a soul jar. Now the question is, is it... yeah... is it like one effect, so it's like... has a link been forged, and if you break the link, they'll swap. It's not like two effects or not doing one half of it. It's like, if you dispel it, you're doing both and they go "whoop".

LYDIA

But they're not in direct swaps. So...

BEN

Damn... Alright. Yeah... no... fair enough. I can also remove curses?

LYDIA

That might work.

BEN

Curses are more sort of... spiritual right? they're less...

LYDIA

Is this a spiritual thing here?

BEN

I don't know...

LYDIA

It seems more a magic thing. [unclear: 17:50].

BEN

Yeah... but curses are sort of both. What I mean is there a bit more... the spirit of the instruction, not the letter. Whereas stuff like... you know... dispelling magic is more about the letter of the spell, not the spirit. So it's like... the curse is a bit more intent based.

ALEX

I'm going to jump back to literally everyone else involved OK.

LYDIA

Yeah...

ALEX

So everyone starts to realise, that it isn't as simple as "oh... new body... wow wow!". Everyone is really struggling with coordination. I am going to explain this mechanically for people. Everyone has currently taken 4 dexterity damage.

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

So what that means is that your dexterity score of your body is currently 4 lower than it should be. So everyone has taken 4 dex damage. Your physical scores, until told otherwise, are going to be the physical scores of your body...

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

Your mental scores are going to be the mental scores of your mind.

HELEN

I'm so squishy...

ALEX

Everyone is starting to realise that the question of... are people going to be able to do their duties, currently no... No one will be able to do their duties... until this is dealt with.

LYDIA

Untrue. Just about everyone in a kobold body, will be better in their job, than they were before...

ALEX

[Laughter] this, I suppose, might be fair.

LYDIA

Except the kobolds that have swapped.

BRYN

Yes, some of the kobolds haven't changed that much.

[Laughter]

ALEX

So, in terms of the room, Wilde comes over to Hamid and Azu. So... unless we have a way of dealing with this, we're going to be looking at a lot of busy people, who are still in their original bodies. Azu, do you know a way of healing this at all?

HELEN

No, I mean obviously Aphrodite could if she wanted but... I... I can ask her, but umm... she's a bit busy lately...

ALEX

OK. You ask Aphrodite Hamid.

BRYN

Well... I mean... the only possibility... as I was saying to Cel, it is at least very slightly reminiscent of a spell that exists, and that spell can be ended with a dispelling effect...

ALEX

You're thinking of the magic jar aren't you?

BRYN

Exactly. But it's different enough and the fact that its affected multiple people, simultaneously and it hasn't swapped individual pairs, it's... it's mixed up a whole group of people. I think that does mean that it is... you know... it would... if it was going to be fixed with a dispel, it would have to be a very powerful one. And it may be that invoking directly the power of a god, is the only way to accomplish that in a powerful enough way. I'm not really sure, I'm afraid.

ALEX

Alright. I'll go and talk to Zolf and Cel. See if they have any solutions.

BRYN

I mean if...

ALEX

Try and keep everyone calm and... occupied.

BRYN

We'll do our best. I mean if you're talking about you know only letting the people who are currently in... you know... have remained themselves... that is only three of you... that is... that is not enough, even in a skeleton crew situation, to keep the ship going very long at all... err...

ALEX

I am aware of this. Keep that fact to yourself for now. Just don't draw attention.

BRYN

Of course. Of course.

ALEX

Try to keep everyone busy. And he opens the door and then more loudly... just turns around, gives a little smile and goes “do you know under different circumstances, this could have been receipt for a very good time but... here we are... We’ll make the best of it”. Closes the door and heads up to Zolf and Cel and we’ll follow that perspective, because I can do with finishing up the Zolf and Cel conversation as well.

LYDIA

As he comes up... I think Cel would say “spoiler... no... we have no solution”.

ALEX

Wilde stops. Wilde turns around... Wilde goes back below deck.

BEN

Wilde...

ALEX

Uh hm...

BEN

Where’s Earhart?

LYDIA

He’s in Tadyka.

ALEX

That’s an interesting question. Yes umm...

BEN

She’s still captain.

HELEN

Yes she's in a kobold body.

ALEX

I'll go fetch her. This will be interesting.

BEN

Don't you dare...

ALEX

I wouldn't dream of it. The situation's pretty much sorting itself out, as far as I'm concerned...

BEN

Wilde...

ALEX

Yes, alright. Wilde heads downstairs and tries to gently lead Earhart out of the box.

BRYN

I do think it's probably going to be safe to leave the box. I mean if this was an immediately temporary effect, it would have ended already, when we passed through the aroura. It is probably not a permanent effect. I mean, as I have said... there are spells similar, and there are ways to end those spells. So we must assume there are ways to end this effect and I don't think leaving the box here will effect that. so I think everyone should feel free to do that, but also we should make an effort, as Cel very rightly said, to be respectful to the bodies we're in, and umm... yes... umm...

ALEX

Can you give me a diplomacy check? I will be making penalties at my end.

BRYN

OK. I'll use Hamid's normal diplomacy score.

ALEX

Yes.

BRYN

Well, I rolled a 3, so 20.

[Laughter]

ALEX

Wow - people aren't buying what you're selling.

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

Wilde fetches Earhart and then takes Earhart up... well I say takes... sort of opens the door for Earhart, gestures... Earhart stands astonishingly shakenly and starts like rattling out of the room. Wilde doesn't like offer any physical assistance but stands close enough, that if a tumble is about to happen, he can intervene. As Earhart attempts to climb the ladder, he does have to intervene. He's actually comparatively gracious about it and just... you know... helps as Earhart literally stumbles and then re-asserts and Earhart very shakily, comes over to Zolf and Cel.

ALEX

OK, so this is new...

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

Who do we have? Who's able bodied? Is it just you two? I wouldn't count Wilde as able bodied at the best of times".

BRYN

He knows how to fly the ship, I taught him. He's not too bad at it.

ALEX

Fine. Realistically we need to get people up and going. Do we have any way of doing that? You're a... Earhart gestures at Cel, you're good at the potions, is there anything you can do for this? Even just to mitigate the damage?

LYDIA

I'm afraid it doesn't really work like that. the kinds of... the ways that I make potions, is really only safe if I... if I take them.

ALEX

OK.

BEN

What damage?

ALEX

People are having a real hard time like coordinating themselves... also, tails are awful.

BEN

Right.

ALEX

It's... it does what it wants to and it's really difficult to kind of... do we have anything that could at least help on the... the physical side effects... let's leave it at that?

BEN

Right, just go with me on this. Going to do a reflex test on you. And I'm going to do a heal check on Earhart to try and diagnose the problem. Obviously, we out of character know it's the damage, but [unclear: 24:31]...

ALEX

That's fine. Give me a heal check, and I might... sneak you some extra info if you do well?

BEN

Err... 28.

ALEX

Yeah, I'll sneak you some extra info. It's dex damage, mechanically. You know that it is not any kind of actual physical harm. This is most likely people are just really struggling because some of them have body parts that they didn't originally have. Some of them have extra limbs. This is just a very big case of... like tails count as limbs...

HELEN

Oh OK. Wait do the tails umm... prehensile...

BEN

Yes.

LYDIA

Are they?

BEN

Well not fully prehensile, but...

ALEX

Semi...

BEN

They have enough control to use them as weapons, for example.

ALEX

So, as it stands, yeah... they're in a situation where they'll all just really... really struggling with basic hand-eye coordination. But you do think that given enough adjustment time, and given a little helping hand in the meantime, they will probably be OK.

BEN

So what time of day is it?

ALEX

It feels to you, Zolf, since you have like continuous consciousness... you get... and so does Cel in fairness, you guess it should be maybe late morning. However, passage of time to read below decks is difficult, and there were certain [unclear: 25:44] effects and so on. Zolf, similar situation. You definitely phased out a few times, and then brought yourself back to. And the light quality is starting to be quite difficult to read because you're out of your area of expertise in terms of like the World, and you're reaching the point where the day/night cycles are a little bit squiffy to your eyes so...

BEN

That's grand and all... But I...

LYDIA

How dark is it?

ALEX

Like I said, late morning is how it feels.

BEN

No, that's grand and all. I have a time of day that my spells refresh when I meditate. So I need to know... like I guess I have a spiritual knowledge of the right time?

ALEX

You need to mediate.

BEN

OK. I need to go check. I think it's an hour. I will double check that. Right, I reckon... Right... I should be able to sort this out. Give me just one second.

ALEX

As you're having that conversation, I'm going to jump back to the box, Carter, now trussed up

[Laughter]

ALEX

And with Barnes actively holding down his tail, is... is just like... Argh... come on this is fine, I can make this work, this is absolutely fine. There's no problems here. Everyone... oh come on, I can make this work. Meanwhile, Friedrich starts to cry... just starts crying quietly.

LYDIA

Little crying kobold...

ALEX

And Skraak in Kiko's body, calls the kobolds to him, and starts having a conversation, which I won't detail but for anyone who does speak draconic, pretty much boils down to a pep talk which is "we knew when we started this that we were going to end up in weird, awful, terrible situations. We've been in worse. At least some of us are bigger. We can probably punch harder". And as all of this starts to play out, I think I'll take a break there, and when we come back, we can see what we can do about the situation. How about that?

HELEN

OK.

LYDIA

Yeah...

ALEX

And welcome back. So, Zolf, you have some plans in terms... well I say Zolf, Ben, you had some plans in terms of... things that you can do that might help.

BEN

Yes. So if I get an hour to sit down and mediate, because I'm overdue for my calming down session... I can least deal with the ability damage, so I can prepare lesser restoration 5 times and normal restoration 3 times, so I can hit 8 people, which isn't everyone, but potentially it's like not the kobolds because the kobolds have absurd dex so, they're probably in less of a problem.

ALEX

Actually yeah, it's worth mentioning that Earhart... I'm going to have to skip ahead of time a little bit.

BEN

Like it's whether or not people want to do something in the hour that I've gone away.

ALEX

What I would say is just everyone would have noticed this. Anyone who is in a kobold body is obviously handling it better, apart from apparently Earhart.

BRYN

Well, the other thing to mention is that Hamid's body has a normal dex of 18. So, that person has also... you know even with ability damage, is a pretty decent dex. I mean Hamid has probably punched the wall several times, because Hamid's natural state, is to be quite gestury... and his dex currently 4.

ALEX

We're all going to be fine.

BRYN

Hamid's got like a quarter of his normal dex...

LYDIA

I'm surprised he can walk.

BRYN

And double, more than double his normal strength... so... he is incredibly uncoordinated, and...

LYDIA

He's going to be moving like an astronaut on the moon [laughter].

BRYN

Yeah... I mean it's terrible. Like he can barely control his limbs, because he sort of... he makes a small movement, he misjudges the movement and it has more power, so he's probably... and he's probably now trying to sit really still, because he's punched the walls and probably smacked people a fair few times as well.

ALEX

So, I'm going to stick with Zolf, and just be... OK. So we've got 5 people that you can lesson the issues with.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

And you've got 3 people that you can just deal with the problem. And you can do this once a day. That's good.

BEN

And I've got...

ALEX

I need to ask then...

BEN

Well, I've got.

ALEX

Oh sorry, carry on.

BEN

I've got 4 uses of the spell magic, in case we want to try it, but as Cel brought up, that could cause problems with souls with nowhere to go.

ALEX

Problems - in that case then I am going to need to ask... who you are choosing to help out from our enormous matrix of characters?

BEN

I am going to do an assessment on everybody and define the people who need it most, to the people that need it least. So I would like an itemised list please and thank you.

ALEX

Are you factoring in rolls on the ship, or is this just based on who is in the worst situation?

BEN

Who is in the worst situation.

BRYN

I would be very surprised if Hamid doesn't have the biggest drop in dex. He's gone to normal 18, all the way down to 4.

ALEX

Hamid is suffering the worst.

BEN

Yes.

ALEX

Is he getting any... I need to know whether he's being fixed or semi-fixed [unclear: 30:36].

BEN

OK... OK...

ALEX

Hamid is the worst, categorically...

BEN

The worst, the second worst and the third worst are getting fixed.

ALEX

OK. Hamid...

BEN

5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th are getting probably fixed.

ALEX

OK. Hamid is fixed. Earhart is fixed... and...

BEN

Oh... and if you're fatigued or exhausted then you're also not. That's nice.

BRYN

It's probably one of the kobolds who is in like... Siggif or Fried... oh no Kiko is in Friedrich...

ALEX

I'm going to say... Skraak is your third.

BEN

Cool. So I do it on them...

ALEX

So to be clear, that is Earhart, who is in Tadyka's body. That is Hamid, who is in Azu's body and Skraak, who is in Kiko's body.

BEN

So, all penalties on dex are gone.

ALEX

Good.

BRYN

Hamid is now able to move around, without accidentally hitting people [laughter].

LYDIA

I mean with a dex of 8, like that's still a drop of...

BRYN

He's still clumsy, compared to his normal...

LYDIA

That's a drop of like 10 right... so...

BEN

But Azu can get around without...

BRYN

Yeah...

LYDIA

Yeah, but Azu is used to Azu's body, right? So it's... it's going to be an amusing comedy, rather than... deliberately...

ALEX

Azu is like the taller person problems of... “don’t get excited... you’ll probably hit your head on something”...

BRYN

Yeah... Hamid is still going to be clumsy, but he’s not longer going to be dangerously clumsy...

LYDIA

Every doorway.

BEN

Well, he’s no longer mechanically clumsy.

ALEX

In terms of your secondary layer of people, realistically, with the exception of Sassraa, who is in Earhart’s body and apparently struggling a lot, they’re all more or less of a similar situation, like pick and choose.

BEN

No. Give me a list of names?

ALEX

I can do them in alphabetic order if you want.

BEN

That’s fine. If the choice is arbitrary, give me an arbitrary choice.

ALEX

OK. Cool. In that case then, Sassraa would be your top.

BEN

Right stop. Heals 2.

ALEX

OK. In that case then I would say Natun.

BEN

Heals 1.

ALEX

Meerk.

BEN

Heals 1.

ALEX

Draal.

BEN

Heals 2.

ALEX

And then... how many have you got left? 2? 1?

BRYN

1 by my count. You just used 4.

ALEX

I would say... let's go with Friedrich.

BEN

4.

ALEX

OK. Cool.

BEN

Right, so I can't do that again until tomorrow.

LYDIA

I like the idea of in character, he's doing the stretches as well.

BEN

Oh sorry... yeah... I kind of was.

LYDIA

... yeah... oh... lots of magic...oh...

BRYN

I mean its definitely some help at least. I certainly feel more able to err... hopefully move around, without hurting anyone. I think it is safe for us all to leave this box and we... you know... we do need to re-learn our roles in the ship, while we figure out a... a way to solve this problem in a more permanent way... I think.

BEN

Right yeah... well... Earhart, with your permission, I'm going to stay on the helm, 'cause I am probably best placed at this point. And also, I can dispel magic a bunch of times, Cel raised some pretty valid concerns but if you research types can put your heads together and work out what we can do, then I will help in any way I can.

ALEX

Earhart chimes in that point. Right, OK, so... umm... err... I want to prioritise everyone who's already been fixed. We're going to be looking at a skeleton crew situation, until Zolf can continue fixing people up.

LYDIA

I would assume most people are OK now, right? everyone that's left is in a kobold body that went from 16 to 12 dex. So no one is incapacitated.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah... Earhart seems to be slightly overstating the issue.

LYDIA

Right. OK...

ALEX

And I want to remove everyone from any active maintenance that is potentially risky. We are on... keep the thing moving, and nothing more. Zolf, my cabin.

BEN

Err... I guess Wilde to take the helm?

ALEX

Earhart hesitates... I guess so. Wilde does a sort of little head bob... like a... and it's just followed by a... aye aye Captain, of course.

BEN

When we walk passed, I'll tap him on the shoulder and say "just don't push your luck, alright"...

ALEX

He basically starts whistling... I'm not going to do it down the mike... it's row, row row your boat, as a... as he starts steering...

[Laughter]

BEN

Actually... as he does that I will turn, grab him by the collar, pull him down close, saying it's nice to see you've cheered up...

LYDIA

Ahh...

ALEX

Wilde is affronted and doesn't know what to say...

BEN

Yep, and then I'll just let him go, and go off to the Captain's cabin.

ALEX

Worth saying, by the way, for all of the chaos that's happening, Wilde genuinely does seem quite chipper. It might be the chipper of someone who's staring into the void, a little bit, tactically speaking but nonetheless, he has seen the funny side of it.

BEN

He loves a little bit of mayhem.

ALEX

He does, he does. Earhart had entered her cabin and immediately is clearly annoyed because she is slightly shorter than she used to be. So, it's not completely unworkable, but every table... like the table, the desk is a little bit too high. The bed is a little bit too high. Everything's a bit too far away. She reaches into the drawer that's empty, slams the drawer shut again.

BEN

So... what did you want Captain?

ALEX

Right, everyone is going to be a little distracted, but I'm actually not worried in the short term. People are going to be... it's a novel situation. OK?

BEN

OK, yeah...

ALEX

The longer this runs, the more likely we're going to have problems.

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

Reality is going to start to dawn on people. Probably one at a time. they're going to take it hard, and when they do, they're probably going to need to be removed from active duty.

BEN

Well Azu, Hamid and Cel are on the case, so... I'm sure they'll be able to find some sort of solution.

ALEX

I need you to keep an eye on Friedrich...

BEN

Yep.

ALEX

And I need you to keep an eye on Kiko.

BEN

Right. Who are they in again?

ALEX

Oh god... Ask Cel, they wrote all the name tags.

BEN

Yeah, alright.

LYDIA

Kiko conveniently is in Friedrich. And Friedrich is in Driaak...

ALEX

I shall check. That sounds correct to me, yep.

LYDIA

And I can't remember who the third one is, that you wanted.

BEN

No that was it.

ALEX

Just three different people.

LYDIA

Oh yeah... no... Friedrich is in there... and... yeah...

ALEX

As much as I despise the man, I think Wilde might have a point. I think it might be worth... err... finding the... if we can push the novelty, it will buy us more time.

BEN

Alright. I mean... look at the best of times I'm not exactly a party starter, so... maybe...

[Laughter]

ALEX

I mean as opposed to myself, who of course is renowned for my... err...

BEN

I'm just saying maybe as Captain, delegate it to... I don't know... Hamid and Azu?

ALEX

I'm delegating it to you. if you want to delegate it to them, fine.

BEN

Alright. I'll delegate away.

ALEX

Earhart - give me a sense motive actually...

BEN

It is... 28...

ALEX

Oh... A ha...

BEN

Roll of 19, so...

ALEX

Oh my... umm... Earhart has none of the real fire that has come to characterise Earhart. Both original Earhart... like Earhart classic, which was kind of a bit punchy... in a fun way... and then new improved Earhart, who is... kind of punchy... in a bad way. This is someone who is going through the motions, in terms of being a bit of an arse, but in honesty, you get the impression that their fires gone out again. They are starting to echo Earhart when you found them in the hostile a bit. They're very down. I don't know how else to put it.

BEN

When I realise that I'm like... Earhart... look... that went... all things considered, pretty well. No one's dead. Everybody is in a functioning body.

ALEX

At least the ship's OK. That was the bit I was worried about. If something would have happened to the ship, I don't know what I would have done.

BEN

Wrong way round Earhart. Crew first, then ship.

ALEX

Yeah fine...

BEN

But look... they need you right now. You're the Captain. So, do what you do well. You are good at this. You can be good at this. You have been good at this. Don't let... look... right... if you... lose your passion now, all you've done is let Guivres win. You may have lost this battle but don't lose this...

ALEX

The tail starts whipping back and forth of its own accord...

[Laughter]

BEN

You may have lost that battle, but don't lose...

ALEX

The rug tears underneath her feet...

BEN

Don't lose this war. Right?

ALEX

It's a fair point, Mr Smith. Leave this with me.

BEN

Look, don't coop yourself up in here, when Hamid and Azu and people arrange some fun... you know... keeping your morale up and stuff... make use of it, because your morale could do with some keeping up.

ALEX

Go and look after our crew, Mr Smith.

BEN

Yes Captain.

ALEX

Thank you very much, Mr Smith.

BEN

And I'll leave and then go find Cel, and be like... so who's in who?

[Laughter]

LYDIA

While you're in there Cel was conversing with Wilde like so who... like quietly and subtly... like if you could be... if you got body swap, who would you have chosen to be? Like you know...

ALEX

Sorry... who's that with? Is that with Zolf or Wilde?

LYDIA

With Wilde... with Wilde...

ALEX

With Wilde?

LYDIA

Just thinking...

ALEX

Good question.

LYDIA

It would be very interesting to be short for a while. I mean the kobolds are extremely good at... you know... small tasks with their hands. And that would be interesting but...

ALEX

Azu.

LYDIA

Azu?

ALEX

Azu.

LYDIA

Oh right... umm...

ALEX

There are a lot of people that I grew up with, that I would love to be able to pick up and throw around and maybe punish... just a little bit... for treating me the way I did when I was younger. That could be fun. I could have fun with that. not in a terrible way, you know... just sort of looming. It's very difficult to loom...

LYDIA

I know...

ALEX

I'm not a looming type of person.

LYDIA

I know right...

ALEX

And I think Azu underuses that. I really think Azu could get a good loom on. And she just never does, you know...

LYDIA

Yes, but you don't really...

ALEX

It's like a wasted opportunity...

LYDIA

She's so gentle...

ALEX

You know, the door opens and they're like... oh my goodness, who is that? and then you're there, and your shadow stretches out over them engulfing...

LYDIA

Definitely... yep...

ALEX

It's so dramatic, and I just feel like it's not potentially... there's an option there, that's just not been explored, you know?

LYDIA

Yeah. I can absolutely see that.

ALEX

Wilde seems very both into this conversation, and has clearly has already considered this option.

LYDIA

Yeah, it's the natural thing to think isn't it. I mean, who would I be... you know... it would be... I don't... if I turned into Hamid would I be able to do the dragon breath... I'm very excited about the dragon breath, that would be extremely cool. There's like an explosion but in a direction... I've always struggled with those. Often in the face instead of in the... in the other person's face. That's my experience.

ALEX

All I would say with Hamid, is that if you aren't gaining his magical abilities, the amount of upkeep required for that as a look... it's just not feasible Cel.

[laughter].

LYDIA

That's another [unclear: 41:48]. You'd need the magic don't you. You'd need the magic.

ALEX

Do you have any idea how much product you'd burn through?

LYDIA

True.

ALEX

There's no ship big enough in the world...

LYDIA

You manage to keep to keep your hair in... in [unclear: 42:00] without magic. Do you... is that a... oh sorry, I shouldn't have...

ALEX

Wilde... looks left, looks right... makes sure no one's listening in. I've gotten in the habit of sticking my head out of the porthole, first thing in the morning. Gives it a bit of body...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Cel is a little awkward because of the whole... I shouldn't have said about the magic...

ALEX

That's fine.

LYDIA

I was thinking... if you... I mean if you're interested, like... I just... I could perhaps show you how I make potions, because that... it isn't magical, so it shouldn't interact with your medical thing, but it has a lot of the same effects.

ALEX

Umm... that is a very interesting offer, Cel. A very... yep... umm... I would like to talk to you more about that, Cel, when I'm not currently steering someone else's vessel.

LYDIA

Sure, you come and chat with me whenever you like...

ALEX

Umm, yes. I think I will. Good. Yes. Well, if you'll excuse me, I'm quite...

LYDIA

All our lives lie in your hands... yeah... I should sorry... step away.

ALEX

Very much so, you know... Quite the position of authority, as the old air hand that I am. Grizzled air hand Oscar Wilde Esq...

LYDIA

Cel's eyebrow dance somewhat. Umm.... yes...

ALEX

Buccaneer extraordinaire...

LYDIA

I see... I see... very interesting. I...

ALEX

Squash buckling debutant Oscar Wilde...

LYDIA

I mean, I don't know if I'd go... my... I'm not familiar with those words, but I... I'm sure that they describe you aptly. You should... the finger guns are walked backwards...

ALEX

Terror of the skies... Oscar Wilde... master of the sheets... Oscar Wilde...

LYDIA

Do you mean, the ship... the sails sheets? Are you... doing finger guns... and backing away...

ALEX

And on that, I think I'm going to gently let this episode fade its way out, as you are slowly forced to engage with Wilde's back unfortunately in... to a degree, an element of glory...

[Laughter]

ALEX

Yeah... that feels a sensible way to round it out... How are we feeling? We ready to accept our new situation?

HELEN

Never.

[Group laughter]

HELEN

I could do with getting my big girl back.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Well I feel like we can explore the ramifications and the ways of doing that next week.

BRYN

I hope you've prepared an out, Alex. Because I'm out of ideas. And While I'm enjoying being a giant buff lady orc, I feel like I'm the one with the best end of this deal, if I'm honest...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

What are you? I'm just saying that now I'm a physical specimen and I'm pretty charming to boot...

[Group laughter]

BEN

That's true actually. You have too many stats right now...

HELEN

Umm...

ALEX

Take heart. When have I ever given Hamid... when have I ever given Bryn nice things?

[Laughter]

ALEX

Yeah, that's what I thought. See you next week everyone.

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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