

RQG – 172 – Back in the Box!

Content Warnings

- X
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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 172 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me today, I have

BEN

Ben Meredith

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

HELEN

And Helen Gould

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ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom

HELEN

And Azu

ALEX

I missed their voices now! It's got to the point where the novelty is gone and I'm just like no.

HELEN

It's not gone for them, he's laughed every time.

BEN

No but it's just when Bryn started I had a sudden moment of why is Bryn doing the wrong voice, what is going...oh yeah.

LYDIA

Every time. Every time.

BRYN

I have to think really hard. I mean you remember last episode when I kept accidentally slipping into the normal Hamid voice.

ALEX

I just quite like the idea that in Azu's body even, even with that situation when Hamid gets excited his sheer force of personality starts pushing the register up here.

(laughing)

HELEN

Aw.

ALEX

So we are going to be picking up...I'm not going to pick up exactly where we left off because it felt like a minor chapter close which was we had our fancy dress party where everyone decided that what we needed to do was just mime late 80s, early 90s sci fi as a solution to all of our problems.

LYDIA

Er no, I was a penguin.

(laughing)

ALEX

So with all of this in mind we have, what I'm going to call a plan. This is for ease of use not because that's what it is yet.

BRYN

I mean I rolled a natural 20 on the check to see whether this was a good plan so I'm afraid the dice have decided it is Alex. You can't argue with the dice.

ALEX

The thing that stresses me is that we're all fairly certain that this is going to work. It shouldn't. But apparently it might.

BEN

The story's working against your logic.

ALEX

Yeah a little bit. So with that in mind I am going to ask you as a group where do you feel is sensible for you to come back in. I am not about to go, rar, dragon. This is more like you are continuing at the pace that you are all deciding to continue so where do you think is a sensible point for us to re-join?

LYDIA

Probably where we're convincing the rest of the crew. Giving a bit of an announcement.

BRYN

Yeah like lunchtime the next day after we've all had some sleep post party and then Cel and Hamid have had a chance to actually sit down and do some of the working out.

ALEX

Understood. Cool. In that case then...

BEN

I did a special but well calculated post party hangover breakfast for people.

BRYN

Nice.

HELEN

Ooh.

BRYN

Yeah very good.

ALEX

In other cases there is one piece of note I would like to make from the party because he's not had much screen time, bless him. But here's a point I'd like to make which is Siggif, inside Hamid's small and swanky body was absolutely tearing it up like a demon the entire time from start to finish. Like we're talking backflips, like, wow, I didn't know Hamid's body had that in it. He really, really tore up the dancefloor. You never would've thought he had it in him but wow, Siggif is a dancer.

BRYN

That's cool. I mean we know Hamid is also a good dancer but I'm glad that someone else enjoyed that experience.

ALEX

Yeah this isn't a thing where he was doing anything particularly dangerous or anything like that but it just turns out that once you give Siggif a younger body, he's quite the mover.

HELEN

Aw.

ALEX

So with that in mind I am then going to jump ahead to you all deciding, yeah, that you're going to be doing this. I'm assuming that you will just go through the standard of the crew are on deck and I'm assuming that you'll have done the courtesy to tell Captain Earhart, we're going to be saying that we think we

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have a plan rather than Earhart just standing there going – I don't know what's happening!

LYDIA

Yes I forgot her.

BEN

I will just act as a conduit of information especially because Earhart appears to be improving somewhat. I definitely don't wanna like shut that down.

ALEX

Cool. In that case then I am going to jump ahead to Earhart with all of the crew assembled, just like, oh gosh I forgot who's body Earhart's in. Let's have a quick check of my enormous table!

BEN

Sassraa?

HELEN

Yeah she's in one of the kobold bodies.

ALEX

Earhart is in Tadika.

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BEN

Oh yeah.

BRYN

Sassraa is in Earhart.

BEN

Oh right ok. God this is very confusing.

ALEX

Yes it is. That's it's entire point. I don't know why I did it but I don't regret it even slightly.

LYDIA

Cel stayed relatively sober in order to make sure that Carter did nothing at all.

HELEN

I was being rolled like a bowling ball into him.

LYDIA

Just keeping an eye on Sassraa's body.

ALEX

You know what here's a thing, can I get a sense motive from Azu and from Cel please. Since you're the two most likely to have interacted with this.

BEN

Glad you didn't ask me because I don't have my dice.

ALEX

Dice have no place in modern RPGs Ben

HELEN

30

ALEX

30 from Azu, you know just shaking things up with Azu being good at reading people, you know, for a change.

LYDIA

19

ALEX

Oh yes, ok great. Two things, is one these are both things that you have noticed about Carter just through that evening. One is that you are both at this point able to extrapolate that you genuinely are starting to think that 90% of Carter's problem might be that he really does not know how to entertain himself. The second that there's a party he stops trying to cause trouble and just starts partying.

LYDIA

Ah ok.

ALEX

It seems a little bit more like where you now have enough evidence where it's like, what Carter needs, he's the reverse of Zolf's coin which is Carter needs a project but the project has to be like...it doesn't have to be something useful but it has to be something that he can throw his silly amounts of enthusiasm behind.

HELEN

He wants to be busy.

ALEX

Basically yeah. He wants to be busy, he just doesn't want to necessarily be useful. That's not the same thing. The second thing that you notice is...

LYDIA

Relatable.

ALEX

...that he seems in general to be starting to mellow out just by virtue of there's stuff happening and you get the impression that for all of his bluster if things continue to just happen that might be enough to make him behave. It might just be the most over the top version of cabin fever that you've ever seen.

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LYDIA

I don't think we're really suggesting that Carter would do something deeply problematic on purpose. I can just imagine him taking an absurd risk that...

HELEN

Or trying to invent something and falling off.

LYDIA

Yeah or getting incredibly drunk and giving them a three day hangover.

BEN

No manners, just irresponsibility.

LYDIA

Exactly like this isn't like he's being deliberately cruel or deliberately horrible. He's just got a very different sense of risk.

ALEX

I'll give you this then which is an insight mainly for Azu but I think Cel's getting a glimpse of this as well which is you're starting to think that what...oh my goodness his name

BEN

Carter

ALEX

Carter, thank you. I just went Wilde, no. Barnes, no. Hamid, wait what?

BEN

You are going to have to start killing off some of these NPCs Alex honestly.

ALEX

Ah! I'm going to crank this so hard and it's gonna be fine. So yeah you are definitely getting the feeling, especially you Azu, that Carter's risk taking is a tactic to bring people in.

HELEN

Ohhh. Ok.

ALEX

And that the more Carter is wanting people brought in, the larger a spectacle Carter is going to make in order to do so but I can't stress enough this isn't you sort of going, oh look he's doing a thing, I understand it. This is more like you've now been in his, comparatively close, proximity for weeks. This is a pattern of behaviour that you are now consciously aware of. Cel you're just kind of coming to this conclusion. Azu you are certain that's what it is. Just something to...

HELEN

Yeah I shall mull it over. It's also just occurred to me before you go on, I can't remember if we canonised it last session but I do definitely give some of my marbles to Sassraa, the one who we told to just play some games.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah. You didn't tell me how many thousand.

LYDIA

Up to their waist? Up to their neck?

(laughing)

BEN

How many handfuls?

ALEX

Again, I've been running the maths, you could start to force this ship to descend I believe if you were to tip up your bags of holding just by virtue of the amount that would suddenly be released onto the vessel.

BEN

Got some ballast. Love it.

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ALEX

Just as an FYI you actually have a significant amount of weight in your extradimensional bag. Don't forget this.

HELEN

I shan't. I certainly shan't.

ALEX

Shall we say sufficient marbles for literally any possible use Sassraa could have.

HELEN

Yeah we'll say like two or three big handfuls.

ALEX

Sure, sure. Ok cool. In that case then Earhart having everyone assembled, having forgotten that her hat has a flamingo upon it is now more or less back to her normal self of dour and a bit severe and is – right, so everyone apparently we have an option to explore so I'm not sure who's going to take the floor but brainboxes if you will please.

LYDIA

Cel will begin to explain and it will not actually transfer information in any useful way to the group. I don't know if you want me to roleplay to the point where you cut them off but...

ALEX

I would start roleplaying and see if anyone...who on our cast breaks and inevitably tries to help you out.

LYDIA

Well all of you I'm sure will be completely aware about the balance of throngs that are in the air...well it's not really air, it's more about the matter within which we swim although swimming is a metaphor that I understand is itself in a way made up of magical throngs. It's really complex how language, in a way, seems to have evolved and that kind of entanglement...

BRYN

Erm Cel...

LYDIA

...of thought but anyway...

BRYN

Cel, sorry I don't think they necessarily need to know the technical details, more just the outcome.

LYDIA

We're going to go fast, there will be a lot of energy and then bang, back to your bodies.

BRYN

Hopefully. I mean I think it is important to stress that the wild magic remains a **probalistic** process and we think we're giving ourselves the highest change to reverse what has happened but we can't necessarily be certain because, I mean, as Cel was beginning to explain there are a lot of factors at play and...

BEN

It's our best option.

BRYN

Yes I think that's the key point really.

ALEX

I'm mostly concerned about associated risk. What are the likelihood of this making things a lot worse.

BRYN

Small but...

ALEX

I can answer that for you now.

BRYN

...not insignificantly small.

ALEX

Yeah bang on. Yeah.

Ok I don't think this is something that I get to make the decision for people – so Earhart just kind of steps back and then everyone looks at one another in that way where no one actually really wants to be the one to speak even though everyone has stuff to say.

BRYN

I mean last time we took a vote about whether to plough through the aurora or to take the very, very long alternative route around it and add a lot of time to our journey and increasing danger in other ways. Well we face a similar choice now. Either we again...we detour a little, this time not quite so big but we accept that this situation we find ourselves in will continue indefinitely or we plough into danger and we give ourselves a significant...a significant and good chance of reversing what has happened to everyone but we take on additional risks. So you know, we do believe that the chances of a reversal are high but they're not certain and the chance of nothing happening is also there and the chance of things getting worse is also there. We have to accept that. That is the calculation we are playing with. Is that a...Cel would you say that's a fair assessment of the different options?

LYDIA

Yes and I think those of us who are not in swapped bodies should probably maybe not get a vote because the affect will probably not impact us so much

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but this is the...I mean it's going to be ok. We're going to do this and it will almost definitely be ok. We'll fix this. It's going to work this time.

ALEX

Meerk inside Barnes' body raises Barnes' arm, a little bit waverly.

LYDIA

Yes?

ALEX

Meerk takes a moment and looks to Skraak who gives a sort of little nod. What extra things need fixing to make happen?

LYDIA

Should I roll for that?

ALEX

Yes please. This is literally just a...ooh knowledge engineering for that changes need to be made to actually make your plan happen?

LYDIA

Oh my gosh, everything associated with this box. So I rolled a 4 which is a 16.

ALEX

16?

LYDIA

Uh huh.

ALEX

Here's what that's giving you, in principle actually very straightforward. Like bordering on the trivial, it's the equivalent of positive to negative, negative to positive instead of negative to negative. Like it really is all of the kit's here, I just need to move it around. However with that check you're also aware that you understood the principles when you made the stuff the first time and things went wrong so you understand that in broad principles it should be very straightforward however you're coming up dry in ways to improve the margin of error if you see what I mean.

LYDIA

Hooray, nagging uncertainty about whether they will hurt everyone around them. Woo!

ALEX

This is correct. This is a correct analysis of what the situation is.

LYDIA

Cel gives Meerk a very confident smile and says – like we actually don't want to change too much because what we want to do is to reverse the affect that happened previously so it's not really much work, I just need to make sure that

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things are reversed. If we add any new gadgets and wazmos, all sorts of things might happen.

BRYN

We might channel different affects in that case.

LYDIA

You might be in your body but with tentacles and while I think that would actually be extremely useful, other people might not be so keen so it's not too much work. It'll be fine.

ALEX

Meerk gives a sort of especially sage looking nod in Barnes' face which obviously can come across a little bit severe and all you hear is – mm, ok, no wazmos.

BEN

I would like to make a sense motive on Cel to see if I can identify that nagging self-doubt because...

ALEX

Ok I'm going to reiterate because again this comes up occasionally, whenever we're doing oppose rolls between players, I will never call them. It can only ever be a plyer and another player agreeing to it so just me reiterating that house rule.

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LYDIA

Yeah sure.

BEN

Well is it even worth me rolling?

LYDIA

I mean there's...Cel is projecting great confidence and enthusiasm. There is a moment of hesitation occasionally which you might pick up on.

BEN

Are they actively trying to hide it?

LYDIA

No they're not...well yes they're trying to hide the uncertainty.

BEN

Cool in which case I think I probably should roll because it seems unfair if Cel's trying to hide and I'm just like...

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah

BEN

Well whatever it was I got a 27.

LYDIA

Yeah well you know that...well Hamid has been saying, we don't know, it's uncertain. Cel has been trying to explain the details. Cel is clearly worried about what's going to happen.

BEN

Well once this conversation is over and I don't know if it is over yet but I will try and grab Cel for a quick chat.

ALEX

I need to ask one clarifying question which hasn't come up before now because I didn't want to make it happen but I now need to know because it will affect how characters behave. Zolf and Cel, I don't believe on audio either of you have acknowledged at any point that for a temporary period the ship came alive and started saying hello to other characters. Now I need to know, because I would be happy for the joke to just say it hasn't come up however I actually need to open this door for both of you. Is this a thing you would've told people about? Is this a thing that you have to kept to yourselves? I just need to know.

LYDIA

Cel has not told other people.

BEN

Yeah I don't think Zolf...

LYDIA

Enough has been going on.

BEN

It's that. Like it's not worth mentioning. Some weird magic stuff happened in the weird magic cloud. Whatever.

LYDIA

People are like, oh no, I don't know how to move around, I don't know who I am. I have a hangover that I don't understand. Oh, there's the traces of addiction. This is all so confusing. By the way I made friends with a bottle.

(laughing)

You know, it's comfort in, dump out. You don't tell other people...

HELEN

Yeah

LYDIA

People are struggling, you don't give them more.

ALEX

This means that my read of the situation was accurate and I can proceed as is. Great. At which point Earhart again steps in – well with this in mind I think at

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this point it's worth casting vote. I also think, for what it's worth, it's a sensible decision and if I can I'd like to ask anyone who hasn't swapped to abstain. If anyone objects, speak now. No one does. Wilde gives a very big sort of like kick back, heels back, arms behind my head. I ain't voting nothing. Nope. It's all good.

In that case, ays? Every single one of the NPCs, apart from Siggif, raises their hands. Siggif looks around and goes [sighs] and then really kind of, err, raises his hand.

BRYN

Hamid frowns slightly. But kind of understands to be honest. He likes that body too.

(laughing)

HELEN

Azu has not noticed. She's giving a thumbs up to Kiko.

ALEX

Kiko is giving an enormous...like Kiko's trying to give a subtle thumbs up but has a hand the size of most of the NPCs. They're kind of little thump is like whoomph. But yeah at which point Earhart – and the nays? No one speaks up. Finally things seem to be coming together. I'm going to expect a report from you Cel in order to let me know any changes that are going to be made to the ship in case there's any complications. Mr Smith this is your project I'd like you

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to be overseeing. As the rest of you please maintain your basic watches and so on. Mr Tahan I would actually like a conversation with you in my cabin.

BRYN

Oh of course, yes. To Zolf just quickly, might be worth heading a couple of degrees further north for a little while just increase the chance of encountering a similar level of aurora than...

ALEX

This is exactly what I'd like to talk with you about Mr Tahan

BRYN

Sure, very well. Then...

BEN

Good idea, I'll hold off until you've had that conversation.

BRYN

Belay that...that's the phrase isn't it? Belay that.

BEN

That is belayed. Yes very belayed Hamid.

BRYN

Thank you Zolf.

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ALEX

Very belayed is the best response I've ever heard!

(laughing)

In which case then am I ok to jump to the interior of Cel's cabin?

BRYN

Do you mean Earhart's?

ALEX

Oh god yes, sorry. The interior of...well Cel built it!

(laughing)

BEN

It's all Cel the ship

ALEX

To the interior of Earhart's cabin sorry. Mr Tahan, if you'd take a seat.

BRYN

Oh yes of course captain.

ALEX

I've brought you in here for a couple of reasons. I would ask that everything that is said within these walls is held in the strictest confidence.

BRYN

Oh of course captain if that's...yes.

ALEX

Very well. I believe I owe you specifically an apology. I've been unprofessional in my conduct in dealing with my navigator and as a result I owe you an apology for that.

BRYN

Oh, erm well thank you captain but you've had an extraordinarily traumatic experience and let's just say I understand how such experiences can affect a person in ways they didn't anticipate or wish them to and...well thank you, yes.

ALEX

Excellent. In that case then I'm going to jump ahead to the business at hand which is that I believe you're correct in that we are going to need to a degree hunt towards the borealis in order to make this happen. There is one additional thing I would like you to assist me in.

BRYN

Of course captain.

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ALEX

We both know that we are moving beyond the edges of the map.

BRYN

Oh yes, very much so.

ALEX

I would greatly appreciate it if you could project an air of confidence about what is to come even if that might be exaggerated.

BRYN

If you think that will help the crew captain then I suppose I will do my best to.

ALEX

I think if we can get everyone back into their bodies we can start crossing the bridge of let's make sure we're where we think we are. I think hey, we're all about to change bodies again and also we don't know where we are, is a bit much.

BRYN

Yes you're probably right captain. Good point

ALEX

And you'll forgive me but in our time together I've come to notice you can be quite forthcoming which is why I would like to speak to you on this matter and ensure your discretion in this matter.

BRYN

I see your point captain. Yes I do know what you mean and I'll follow your lead in this matter. You're right that I tend towards the open communication and perhaps not always the best plan in a volatile situation, I suppose, yes.

ALEX

Excellent. In which case please go about your business. I will probably have to consult with you after these events to see that we are on track.

BRYN

Yes, yes. I'm doing my best. I mean the good news is we have a very accurate representation of the air speed and therefore when the...as long as our weather measurements remain more or less accurate we do have a relatively accurate idea of our own position even if we don't know what else is under us.

ALEX

Ok, enough. Enough.

BRYN

Yes sorry.

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ALEX

Currently you're giving me a four. I need a nine.

BRYN

Oh ok.

ALEX

Just think on that, right ok.

BRYN

Yes

ALEX

Little bit of authority in the voice is going to go a long way over the next day or so.

BRYN

Very well captain.

ALEX

Off you go. Also actually could you send Sassraa in if you see them.

BRYN

Yes, will do. I believe the healers did place Sassraa on bed rest but obviously they were at the meeting.

ALEX

Thank you, I wasn't aware...ok. Belay that order.

BRYN

Yes very well captain.

(laughing)

ALEX

Off you go.

BEN

Things are being belayed left, right and centre.

ALEX

Ah! I love a good belaying. And on that I think what we're going to do is we're going to take a moment and figure out, in the specifics, how exactly we're going to rebuild this ship and then when we come back we'll be in montage time. Montage time.

EVERYONE

Ooh!

ALEX

I love a good montage.

And welcome back. So in terms of montaging I'm not going to go into the level of detail that we have done previously because frankly we've been decadent with our montages. We have been ludicrous with our montages so I'm implementing a strict minimum viable montage mentality from here on in.

(laughing)

Minimum viable montage.

BRYN

Well before the montage though...before the montage...

ALEX

And this right here is the exact scope creak that I'm warning against

(laughing)

Tread lightly Mr Tahan!

BRYN

So very quickly, straight after the conversation with Earhart, Hamid will go and find Zolf and be like ok I have discussed it with the captain and we should head

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a little bit more northward to increase our chances of encountering the aurora again.

BEN

Consider that unbelayed.

ALEX

Re unbelayed.

BRYN

Unbelayed. Is that a phrase? I hadn't heard that one before.

BEN

Nope, I'm just having fun right now.

BRYN

Ok, ok. Also the captain wanted to see Sassraa and I know that you and Azu were looking after her yesterday and I just wanted to make sure that you think that would be ok for me to ask Sassraa to see Earhart.

BEN

Yeah well I mean that...depends what the captain's intent is. They probably shouldn't like wrestle them or anything but as long as it's like a chat.

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BRYN

I presumed a conversation, yes.

BEN

Yeah but why does Earhart want to talk to Sassraa?

BRYN

I don't know.

BEN

That's the one thing I'm concerned about, right. She seems to be getting better but I want to talk to Sassraa on my own. It could go a number of different ways, right.

BRYN

Yes I mean you might have the authority to request to be there I suppose. I'm not sure I do.

BEN

Who's sneaky? We could get somebody to eavesdrop and bust in if it goes wrong.

BRYN

Well...

ALEX

Zolf you're such a specific type of manager! And one I've encountered in the real world and I'm just not even going to engage.

BRYN

I mean no one is especially sneaky right now because of everyone dealing with...well and I gesture to myself.

BEN

I was not thinking of you.

BRYN

Well no exactly but I mean everyone is struggling a bit Zolf. It's very difficult to access one's full normal abilities.

BEN

I mean Carter.

BRYN

I suppose so, yes. I feel like if Earhart's intentions are good it would be better to...I don't know.

BEN

Do you think Earhart's intentions are good.

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BRYN

Probably.

ALEX

Give me a sense motive.

BRYN

Oh that's a good point, yeah. It's not something I'm very good at either.

BEN

The game! The game!

BRYN

Yes. Dice. Rules. I remember these. I like them.

HELEN

The wrong opinion.

ALEX

I miss the crunch.

BRYN

I rolled a 13 total.

ALEX

13 total. Nah, no idea. Earhart's inscrutable at the best of time. Add to that official structure that makes it even harder for you to read. No.

BEN

Alright well look, they're both adults. I don't know...this ain't my scene right. This is your scene. So I dunno...

BRYN

Well I don't know if it is Zolf. I mean I had quite an interesting conversation with Skraak yesterday and the kobolds haven't been entirely honest about their motivations for being here and actually...

BEN

What?

BRYN

Well no it's a good thing. It's a good thing I think.

BEN

Follow that up with an explanation.

BRYN

Sorry, well I'm trying to think how to explain. They're not here to follow me. That was a pretence. They're more of a reconnaissance, intelligence gathering

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but also looking for...they realise that the world is a larger and more dangerous place and looking for who might be a threat and who might be an ally and the following me was a cover story and I think that's that...the fact that they trust me enough to tell me that I think is a really good sign that they do see us as allies so I'm...I have to say Zolf it's a big weight off my shoulders and I feel much better after that conversation.

BEN

Good, grand. I think I made it pretty clear that I was not on board with God King Hamid so this is brilliant.

BRYN

Well same, yes. Well I didn't make it very clear I mean but I also didn't enjoy that experience.

BEN

Well in which case that sounds like problem solved because at this point why are you talking to me, you should go talk to Skraak shouldn't you.

BRYN

Yes I just meant from the medical perspective...if Sassraa was bed rest.

BEN

Yeah, oh right, no, no, no, Sassraa's fine. No hard manual labour but other than that he can have a conversation.

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BRYN

Brilliant, brilliant yes. Ok good.

BEN

Well thanks for letting me know about that because that's great and honestly at this point I'll be much more willing to trust Skraak.

BRYN

Well that's good too.

BEN

I'm not very into people blindly following things for no particular logical reason.

BRYN

Yes I see, hmm, hmm, hmm.

ALEX

God!

BRYN

Hamid is just awkward.

BEN

But good, alright, so nice one. Keep up the good work and next time somebody might think you're a God King just make it more explicit that you're not into that because honestly that's been a whole thing that I really didn't need so great. Alright.

BRYN

Sure, yes I'll do that. Thank you Zolf. I appreciate that.

BEN

And I appreciate you telling me.

BRYN

Yeah Hamid will go off to see Skraak and Sassraa and say that Earhart asked to see Sassraa and just make sure that Skraak is aware because Skraak is the kobolds leader.

ALEX

If it's ok I'm going to skip past the RP side of that and sufficient to say that basically Sassraa is fine with that so as a result Skraak is like alright. It's left at that. It was a bunch of do you know what it's about – no. Alright. There's not really much more that they can do. Sassraa, for what it's worth, is looking alright insofar as, well I was going to say Ben, like Zolf was saying rest and non hard labour has been enough to take the edge off enough for her to be getting by.

BEN

Yeah they've had a couple of days haven't they so...

ALEX

Yeah so in which case I'll say that Skraak walks Sassraa to the cabin and then I'm going to jump away on other things because there are other things that people are doing.

BRYN

If none of the party know what happens there then why should you tell the listeners Alex. I'm sure they won't be disappointed at all...

ALEX

This is correct

BRYN

...that you're concealing the contents of that conversation.

ALEX

This is correct. I've come to realise that if I can't kill all of the NPCs immediately I can just have them all having increasingly heartfelt, meaningful and frankly fluffy conversations that none of you will ever be privy to.

(laughing)

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HELEN

Well thanks.

ALEX

I have to devise these ways of punishing people for being lovely and this will work I think. I am going to need a, because it's Pathfinder, disable device please to disable and reinvent your own device Cel.

LYDIA

Ok

BRYN

Assistance from Skraak?

ALEX

I would like you, Hamid, I would like you to take an arcana check and I will allow...no it wouldn't be Skraak would it, it would be...would it, hang on let me check.

BRYN

On a technical level Skraak is the next most proficient person in disable device.

ALEX

Yeah. Let's make it Skraak. It would be Skraak.

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BRYN

So Hamid arcana and Skraak disable device assisting Cel.

LYDIA

And Cel's doing disable device?

ALEX

Yes

LYDIA

Ok

ALEX

I am factoring in the fact that you smashed a couple of knowledge engineerings in order to come up with the initial plan. This is mostly to find out if you drop a hammer and don't realise, stuff like that.

LYDIA

Ok these glittery dice are quite hard to read so I thought for a second that I'd rolled a 1 but I did not! I did not!

BEN

Boo!

LYDIA

I rolled a 6 which means 22.

BRYN

Hamid gets 33 on arcana and Skraak gets 22 on disable device.

ALEX

So that's an assist as well. Excellent. Ok cool.

LYDIA

We might get through this people. We might get through it!

ALEX

I'm not going to go full, full montage because it won't be necessary. Cel you have a moment of awkward doubt because it's really straightforward. This is a case of did I just get my maths wrong the first time. I think I just got a decimal place wrong. I'm going to check again. You check again. Cool. I'm going to check again. It's fine. It's very deceptively straightforward. Hamid, from your knowledge arcana as well on the theoretical side you're like sometimes you can get like 99% of the way to...you can all of the working right and still get the wrong answer type thing. You're just like you were clearly this close the first time around and you just managed to scuff around it. And I realise that the goals are different but I would say both of you are way more confident that you have an idea of what's going to happen this time than you were going in last time. Last time was a bit of a scramble, this...

BRYN

I mean last time was a series of terrible rolls and this has been mostly ok rolls.

ALEX

This is quite a sensible one.

BRYN

If not a few good ones.

ALEX

So with that in mind then I am fine to basically just say that this work proceeds easily with whatever resources from other NPCs that you need doing your work and so on and I would say at that point if anyone wishes to insert any scenes prior to me basically jumping ahead to giving this a run people need to let me know. I obviously when we get to the giving this thing a run stage, I'm gonna be like cool, so who's driving again, who's the backup, blah, blah, blah. But before that are there are any other scenes? Last chance for anything short, tight interesting.

BEN

After the works does Cel seem a lot more confident and happy?

LYDIA

Yes I would say.

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BEN

Fine then that conversation isn't necessary.

HELEN

I would like Azu to approach Carter now that she's figured out his deal.

ALEX

Ok Carter you find is down in the hold because he has very little to contribute currently and is off shift. He appears to be messing around with the cubbyhole which has been built for gambling, which by this point I'll just say is just common knowledge. You can't keep a secret that long on a boat. You just can't. You really just can't.

HELEN

The gambling hole.

ALEX

So he's in there faffing around. In fact give me a perception check.

HELEN

Ok right, oh 15.

ALEX

15. Nah that's enough. He's setting up a cheat

HELEN

A cheat?

ALEX

As in he's alone in there and he's like lifting some felt that's been laid down and slipping some cards under and he's setting up as in to cheat.

HELEN

Ah you're not making this easy! Ok alright, Azu says – knock, knock.

ALEX

Alex has to remember which body Carter's in.

HELEN

Nessa?

ALEX

No

BRYN

Natan.

ALEX

Yes. Natan and Carter are the only direct swap I think. Yeah so Carter's there, gives a big jump and is like – argh, oh, argh, hello. Hey Azu. Hello.

HELEN

I thought maybe you would be interested in a new hobby or something because...

ALEX

Right. Carter is just looking at you utterly blank. Carter has no idea where you're going with this. Right.

HELEN

That's fine.

ALEX

Is it like, wait, no, no, hang on. Is this like I think you should have a new hobby like sitting quietly in the corner wearing these handcuffs because I can just skip to the no and I reckon I can outrun you.

HELEN

Well you...if I was in my old...maybe.

ALEX

Carter's backing away deeper into the gambling hole ready to bolt.

HELEN

Ok no I don't even have my manacles with me.

ALEX

So you do have manacles then?

LYDIA

Suggesting that usually Azu would have.

HELEN

It's in her paladin's kit! Azu realises the danger and Azu goes – look, look, I just, I found...I got these in Hiroshima and I thought maybe you would like to look. And she's going to hand him a pack of fortune telling cards.

ALEX

Right what are they? Oh hang on

HELEN

Something to do with the future. I thought it would be...I think there's a little explainer in it. I just...I...you have a lot of...

ALEX

His shoulders slump. What? What do I have a lot of?

HELEN

Let me...we haven't always gotten on...

ALEX

You keep treading on my mouth.

(laughing)

Like in it. Like properly in it. I know what the grooves in your boots taste like

(laughing)

Just laying that out there.

BRYN

Tread carefully because you tread on my teeth.

(laughing)

HELEN

Ok that's fair. Sorry yeah. I just...so I think that ...what I was going to say but I understand why you interrupted me, what I was going to say was that you have a lot of brains and I think that, you know, you like to use your brains and I thought it would be a fun thing for you to apply your brains to so that there's no...

ALEX

Thanks. He just kind of holds them like, ok.

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HELEN

Well look this one's the moon.

ALEX

Yeah you can tell because it's got a picture of the moon on it.

HELEN

Yeah but...

ALEX

So does that mean it's night time.

HELEN

It could be lots of things.

ALEX

Sure, alright. I'll give it a go. See what I can find out.

HELEN

It might be fun. Just...ok, never mind. Bye.

(laughing)

ALEX

Bye.

HELEN

She stomps out.

ALEX

That is so lost. That did not land at all. Carter has no idea where you were going with that.

HELEN

That's fine. She has put her foot in his mouth. I mean they've not had a good...she's just trying to patch it up now she's realised that maybe he's not deliberately trying to get on everyone's tits.

ALEX

Right and on that incredibly...

LYDIA

Can we say that?

HELEN

Oh surely we can say tits. That's a kind of bird.

LYDIA

Do you think we can say...yeah that's what Helen meant, yeah

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(laughing)

HELEN

A common phrase in England.

LYDIA

Common garden birds.

ALEX

You're getting all up in his nesting songbirds.

(laughing)

BEN

If I want to balance two birds on my chest and somebody get on top of them that's...

ALEX

That is your prerogative.

BEN

Exactly.

BRYN

There's also the blue booby. That's a type of bird as well.

HELEN

Ah of course. Who could forget the booby.

ALEX

I'm going to bring us away from...oh god I forgot, I was going to say horticulture.

LYDIA

The natural history of boobies.

ALEX

That's not birds.

HELEN

Ornithology.

ALEX

Ornithology. Yes. So with that in mind are people ok with me leaping ahead to [singing] we're all going in an aurora to find out what happens.

HELEN

Yes

LYDIA

Yes

ALEX

So this time around we are going to jump ahead to it approaches dusk and Hamid between your navigation, Zolf your steering, Azu with you keeping an eye on and Cel finishing up the work, you reckon there we are. There's some borealis on the horizon. It does mean that you're going to hit it late and by late I mean, like last time it was kind of broadly daylight. We're talking like in the depths of the night. It is quickly becoming obvious to everyone that yeah, you're going to hitting borealis by all your calculations etc. by like 3am/4am wee hours of the morning. And because of the way that shift patterns fall there is a little bit of a lull where, unlike last time where it was a bit of a pile in to fit, people are taking the time where it's like ok cool. What if we put a water barrel here. They're basically doing it in a comfy way and everyone's accepting the fact that what's realistically going to happen this time is that if they can, they're going to go to sleep normally and all going well, fingers crossed, wake up where they should. And you get the impression, Zolf specifically, that Earhart is trying to push that narrative, that we're all just gonna go to bed and we're going to wake up and this is going to be a problem that's solved. Great. Int that good. And for what it's worth, some people are buying into it, some people aren't but everyone's going along with that because it's a way of just keeping everyone calm and chill and let's set this up properly. And again the kobolds are taking a little bit of effort and it turns out that they are doing something similar to what Hamid originally proposed where they're laying out some blankets and stuff so at least there's some version of sleep privacy and so on. So as a result if nothing else it's going to be

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a lot less panicked time and a lot more like a, forgive me for the reference, it's more like people heading to an air raid shelter in an orderly fashion where probably nothing's going to happen as opposed to the oh gosh let's all run if you see what I mean. It's a very different feeling this time around.

BRYN

If no one else does, Hamid will probably suggest that Zolf gets some hours of sleep in, in advance because he is going to be the one who needs to be well rested when we actually get there.

ALEX

Wilde pipes in at that point and is like, I could do with brushing up a little bit if I'm going to be your emergency back up with my clanky little anklets.

BEN

Yeah, no, that's a good point. Alright, yes, fair point. Wilde take over, I'll go get some rest.

ALEX

Wilde does so although there is, as with Wilde, the moment of this isn't a thing I'm amazingly perfect at therefore I'm a little bit hesitant before I do so because it's important to me that I look amazing at all times. Hamid, to your eye, this is Wilde going yeah I've got this, I've got this, everything's fine, of course I've got this. His hands haven't yet actually made contact with the wheel.

BRYN

Hamid will just give him a big wink and a thumbs up because he'll understand what Wilde is going through and want to help him.

ALEX

The fact that Wilde knows he's being watched is enough to force him to engage.

(laughing)

So I'm going to say that Zolf you're able to get a bit of shut eye ahead of time and I'm going to say that unless anyone actively objects people are going to take...

BEN

Yeah just very quickly Alex this is a sleep in your campaign. Am I going to have to roll when I wake up to make sure that I actually got a good sleep or that there were any terrible anxieties or terrors or did I actually get...

ALEX

Well you're getting ahead of yourself. You're currently asleep.

BEN

Ah! We shall see. We shall see. Fair enough.

ALEX

I do want to end this episode. Zolf, you're awake. Cool. I need a will save, a fort save, a reflex save, an AC check. No. So, yeah everyone basically...

LYDIA

And just remind me what your fly is.

(laughing)

Do you have anything in knowledge plants?

ALEX

How about knowledge plummet?

BEN

Look I've prepared feather fall, I'm actually fine.

ALEX

So all of the NPCs, for the sake of ease, are all just heading in and setting up shop where they should be. It's going to be a replication of last time insofar as Wilde's ready to take the wheel but he's keeping it going until Zolf wakes up. Zolf you proceed to sleep and you proceed to wake up. It's almost like without Poseidon actively getting all up in your grill life gets easier over time.

(laughing)

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At which point then everyone is basically ready to go. Last chance if anyone wants to do anything before we hit the frontier.

LYDIA

Cel will...like as everyone else is in the room and Zolf is preparing to go upstairs, Cel will go up to catch them...to catch Zolf basically as he's about to go up the steps and just be like – good luck Zolf. See you on the other side. And just gives him a big hug and it's quite a trembly one.

HELEN

Aw

BEN

I will return the hug with a pat on the back. Like a pat on the back.

ALEX

Check your heights are...but yeah that works.

BEN

Yeah, no, no, look Cel it'll be fine. We've got the best possible chance with the people that we've got. We've done everything we can so it's good.

LYDIA

Yeah and it's...what we've gone is probably enough.

BEN

Yeah and I'll...after the hug breaks reach up to your bicep and just give it a squeeze and say – I'm sorry you've had to bear the weight here so thank you.

LYDIA

Thank you Zolf. Thank you. Just gotta – puts on a cheery face – just gonna see you tomorrow.

BEN

See you on the other side.

LYDIA

Yeah

ALEX

And that feels like a sensible place to end an episode. I'm sure everything's fine.

HELEN

Yes

ALEX

I want you to know I did briefly explore the option of adding the ship as an option for people to body swap into and decided no, enough is enough.

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(laughing)

But I want you to know that for a brief period that was on the cards.

LYDIA

Your cards are horrific!

(laughing)

ALEX

Yeah they're awful.

LYDIA

It's just a deck of horror.

ALEX

This is the lovely fluffy sanitised version, god. Yeah so we shall wrap this up there and we will find out next week how it goes...I mean if it goes wrong.

HELEN

Right

ALEX

Bye everyone

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EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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