

## RQG – 178 – Frost and Fire

### Content Warnings

- X
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[Show Theme - Intro]

**ALEX**

Hello and welcome to episode 178 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**

And I have a confession, I've been doing so much editing recently, like listening to episodes to try and get ahead and so on that it now feels actively weird to me because we're speaking and there's no music. Nothing's exploding in the background. It's just odd. It's odd the real world.

**LYDIA**

All the explosions in my house currently are silent.

**ALEX**

I need to hire someone to follow me around with a foley kit just to feel more at home.

**(laughing)**

**LYDIA**

I mean Alex you basically live in several rooms which are equipped with a foley kit and...

**ALEX**

Yeah but it's so much effort, you've got to kind of like...auto foley, that's what I need.

**BEN**

My advice is just keep them inside and then if you ever want to punctuate a point just fart really loudly.

**(laughing)**

**HELEN**

The Zolf method.

**ALEX**

So as people can tell from my very sketchy intro, been a little while for us so I apologise. In terms of picking up where we left off, bit of a tonal whiplash here

so I believe that everyone had finished basically reaching out and trying to bring people back from, we don't even have a word for it yet, we haven't been discussing it...limbo, an afterlife. I don't know what it is.

**HELEN**

Back from the dead is what I was thinking.

**ALEX**

Basically. Yeah basically. With that in mind...

**LYDIA**

I think carefully we were very much trying not to like try and bring them back but offer them the option of coming back. That was...while there may have been an underscoring of wanting our friends around it was trying very much to be about them I think.

**ALEX**

At no point did any of you pick someone up and drag them and goodness knows Azu could've done so with that size difference.

**(laughing)**

**HELEN**

You will come back to life!

**BRYN**

I mean I think I was kneeling reverently with a gradually spreading patch of frost.

**ALEX**

You are the person that I would like to start with Brynicus Maximus by which I mean Hamid.

**(laughing)**

So yes, I'm going to pick up with you because obviously Hamid is unaware of any of these events that have been happening in some other plain, some other estate of being. You've mostly, again, yes been kneeling reverently in an ever expanding patch of frost surrounded by an increasing crowd of apparently awakened creatures, both plant and animal.

**BRYN**

Yeah so the kobolds and I were relatively knit so there was a round building that you said was reminiscent of the Globe Theatre.

**ALEX**

For architectural shape, yes.

**BRYN**

Yeah and it was in a sort of empty-ish square and we were kneeling outside it but not like right outside and the frost patch was spreading out from the

building and at the edge of the square, a pretty big distance away from us there had been these awakened animals and plants but mimicking our same attitude of this sort of slightly reverent slightly basically.

**ALEX**

Yeah more or less. What I am going to choose to pick up from them is, it has now become apparent to you that you all going to have to move because the frost is expanding. It's not seemingly damaging anything or anything like that but even with, you currently have endure elements, so I believe that technically you could stay where you are but it is like frost is going to start forming upon your clothes. You're going to start finding it hard to move because your equipment is freezing in place type situation. Again there's no difficulty in moving currently but it's just, you're approaching the point of if we don't move we're kind of making a point.

**BRYN**

I will give a polite little cough and then say – Natun, Tadyka, Draal, Driak I think we should just move perhaps another 10/15 towards the edge of the square.

**ALEX**

The kobold team appear to have been more or less engrossed and not to have noticed what was going on.

**BRYN**

Yeah I was the only one who opened my eyes in the last bit.

**ALEX**

Yeah. Natun specifically is the first to notice that you've now seemingly been surrounded by a large and elaborate array of creatures. What's going on?

**BRYN**

Well they just seem to have...I've kept an eye on it and they seem to have come to watch and to bear witness as well. They haven't moved and are just standing respectfully at the edge of the square but I just meant with the frost it would be best to move you out of the path. The frost has been spreading out from the building.

**ALEX**

Mm Yeah.

**BRYN**

Probably a side effect of whatever magic is happening I would guess.

**ALEX**

Everyone stands and starts heading away from the frost. It's clear that the actual building itself must be blisteringly cold. Like there are minor weather eddies happening around it because the temperature difference. I mean bear in mind you're not in a warm part of the world. You are quite high up in a very cold part of the world. The majority of clothing that you've seen that has not been the sort of smock based stuff has been furs, that kind of thing or at the very least big, big jackets and that kind of thing. But yeah, it's clear that there is something extreme to do with temperature happening where that building is

because you're seeing flurries of snow appearing at that dividing line between the warmer and colder temperatures and things like that and there are mists stepping up. The rest of your party back up a little bit to the surrounding group because it becomes apparent that you're going to need to. The frost is continuing to expand at a steady rate. As you all draw near you do all hear that there is a gentle humming coming from all of the creatures who are surrounding the area. There doesn't appear to be a discernible tune but it does appear to be harmonised.

**BRYN**

I'm taking my lead from the kobolds basically. I'm assuming we'll all kneel down again but just at a safer distance from the active frost.

**ALEX**

Yeah they basically set up shop. Yeah just right at the edge of the square.

**BRYN**

Again I will probably keep my eyes open just because I can help keep an eye on the situation but other than that I'll be adopting the same pose they are.

**ALEX**

I would say that a couple of party members seem a little bit wary just because some of the creatures surrounding are like full blown awakened trees that are quite large and things like that. It doesn't appear unsympathetic but it's still quite intimidating in it's both variety and frankly scale.

**BRYN**

Yeah I will offer a little reassuring smile and a nod to any of the kobolds and just try and impart the impression that I got this. And that they are free to do as they need.

**ALEX**

Out of everyone...in fact give me a sense motive.

**BRYN**

Oh but I'm bad at sense motive Alex!

**ALEX**

It's almost like occasionally I make sure you have a roll that you're not the best at.

**BRYN**

I hate it! I hate it! Can we abolish that.

**ALEX**

Why do you think I keep separating you all, it's so that you can occasionally fail a roll.

**BRYN**

**ALEX**

Yeah that's fine. They're reassured by your presence and maybe you make contact with one of the surrounding creatures. They basically give a benevolent smile but they don't stop their humming or anything like that. There's really nothing threatening there which is a very big difference to what's happening now towards the centre of the square. A small vortex of wind seems to be spinning up in the exact centre of the building and it's almost like if you've ever seen, and I don't mean in like a cartoony sense. Have you ever seen a real waterspout whether on video or otherwise. How it initially snakes up and then thickens. It doesn't all just go in one go. That seems to be happening. It's not a full like whirlwind or anything like that but whatever has been happening seems to be coming to a fairly elaborate finish. But just as it seems like this, again I'm going to call it a waterspout, it's mostly like snow and steam and that kind of thing. Just as it starts to thicken the point it looks like it's reaching the bounds of the building, suddenly diminishes very quickly and settles. And the frost doesn't suddenly disappear but it ceases to advance and you start seeing it start to recede as the temperature starts to normalise and so on. The odd thing is, is there's no actual atmospheric sounds coming from all of this. It's a silent display where the only noise has been the humming which then peters to a stop. It doesn't all stop simultaneously or anything like that. It's just various people start to quieten down until eventually everyone has and without a word, everyone just heads back into the town and backs away from the square.

**BRYN**

Hamid doesn't move but he's tense. Like he's tensed up because he feels like whatever magic has been enacted has concluded.

**ALEX**

Yeah. At which point then I am going to jump to the rest of the party if that's ok. All of you simultaneously come to in your respective poses. I know that some of you were sort of sat, some of you were kneeling and things like that. And the first thing that you notice, as you recede back into the world as it were, is that those...you remember that there were those quite pungent smells as you were disappearing off. Those seem to have entirely dissipated. I believe all of you are also under the effects of endure elements, correct?

**HELEN**

Yes

**BRYN**

I cast it on literally everyone.

**ALEX**

Literally every, single person. You just spent the entire spell slots on it. As far as I can tell, I believe that none of you would feel anything other than kind of comfortable because that's how endure elements works. Looking around, if any of you open your eyes, there is a thick layer of frost over everything and everyone in this building. Like if you move there will be the [cracking noise] crunch of ice as it's moving away but you're all perfectly comfortable. I'm going to hand over at this point because I realise that you might want to be handling this in different ways but, yeah, you have all come to simultaneously.

**BEN**

I guess one important question, what about corpses? What are they up to?

**BRYN**

And endure elements would not have been cast on them just in case that's relevant.

**ALEX**

I'm going to describe them all at once then in that case rather than separating it out.

**HELEN**

Ok.

**ALEX**

Carter is lay still with a shock of pure white hair now. For a moment it looks like it might have somehow failed in some way and then a very, very small amount of steam, like breath steam, pops out of their mouth and the chest is moving. As far as you can tell Carter just appears to be asleep. His demeanour appears quite washed out and there is a thick layer of frost upon his body however as he breathes it starts to crack and fall away a little bit. Jumping to Wilde, similar situation. A shock of pure white hair now instead of anything else. Same layer of frost and again there's a delay and then the breathing again. Sassraa's horns specifically appear to have bleached.

**LYDIA**

Aw

**ALEX**

So they have gone a like pure...not even bone white, we're talking like it's quite striking. It almost looks artificially coloured.

**LYDIA**

Ooh funky!

**ALEX**

The scales themselves don't appear to have changed colour however there is a moment again where it takes a while for the ice to crack and so on.

**LYDIA**

Are the kobolds cold blooded?

**ALEX**

Yes. Although these are creatures where some of them have magical potential and things like that which can mess around with that a little bit. In principle yes but again they're at the larger end of the cold blooded things so basking is not a very large part of their day.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, yeah. Like for larger cold blooded animals it's often actually an issue of overheating because...yeah. So crocodiles can die if they're out of the water for too long from getting too hot.

**ALEX**

They're kind of more the way I was looking at this, rather than like anything smaller where it's the opposite problem. Speaking of, Meerk appears unchanged.

**(gasps)**

**HELEN**

Aw.

**BRYN**

Oh no!

**LYDIA**

Without possibly noticing Meerk, Cel will have realised that Sassraa is kind of coming to and is aware that Sassraa may not enjoy the cold and so immediately pulls them up and wraps them up in, presumably, the furs. Did Cel ever get made the fluffy furs by Hamid?

**ALEX**

All of...I checked my notes, all of you had cold weather gear so it's fine for you to just go cold weather stuff.

**LYDIA**

So just wrapping Sassraa up in fluff.

**ALEX**

As you do so Sassraa seems to start struggling away from the furs a little bit.

**LYDIA**

Ah ok. Well Cel's not gonna force it. It's just a very immediate concern with temperature and potential uncomfortableness.

**ALEX**

Sassraa doesn't appear conscious. Interestingly Sassraa only starts to look uncomfortable once you start trying to warm her.

**LYDIA**

Ah. Cel is confused.

**BEN**

So I was just wondering, I guess Zolf is going to look around at everybody else and then are the attendants still there? We were kind of escorted in.

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**ALEX**

Yeah the attendants are still there.

**BEN**

Sure

**ALEX**

They're all stood very still and with heads respectfully bowed.

**BEN**

I will address one of them and say – ay, what do we do now? Can we move them? Touch them? Like what's the procedure? I think like...I dunno.

**ALEX**

The attendant that you speak to looks up, leans forward and very quietly – they will improve regardless. Whatever you feel is appropriate is appropriate. We have no rules here for that.

**BEN**

Right so we just...

**ALEX**

We'll help.

**LYDIA**

Do we wake them up? Is that appropriate? Cel is taking off their furs and putting them on Sassraa so that Sassraa doesn't need to be held to be warm.

**ALEX**

It will do no harm though often people are more calm when they wake on their own.

**LYDIA**

Ok, ok. Ok.

**BEN**

We'll just wait here then.

**HELEN**

I'm gonna say that Azu hasn't heard any of this and Azu is going to immediately lean down and start smacking Carter gently in the face

**(laughing)**

And be like – wake up, wake up now. Hello! Hi! Hello!

**ALEX**

Hi Azu.

**HELEN**

Oh you're back. Azu's going to start crying directly onto Carter's face.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Does that mean the tears are going to start freezing mid-air and just plonking on him.

**ALEX**

Ow, ow, ow. No.

**HELEN**

Sorry!

**ALEX**

Not quite. Back from...

**HELEN**

Hello.

**ALEX**

Back from where?

**HELEN**

Oh....dear!

**ALEX**

Carter just starts looking around.

**HELEN**

Errr....ok Azu is going to try and...

**ALEX**

Did we teleport? Is this an Einstein thing? This feels like an Einstein thing.

**HELEN**

Ok. Carter I think you should stay...no...er...er you died.

**LYDIA**

Subtle. I like it.

**ALEX**

Ok. Hmm.

**HELEN**

I got you back.

**ALEX**

Oh so this isn't...

**HELEN**

Oh! No! No!

**ALEX**

Thank goodness.

**HELEN**

Sorry. You're not still dead.

**(laughing)**

Oh! Oh! Er...are you...erm...do you remember anything?

**ALEX**

Yeah there was the crash and then...Carter goes very, very still and very, very quiet and appears to just mentally phase out.

**HELEN**

Azu's going to panic and smack a little bit in the face again.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

What?!

**HELEN**

Sorry I thought you were going to die again!

**ALEX**

What?!

**BEN**

How is your bedside manner worse than Zolf's!

**ALEX**

No I...hmmm...I remember...it's fine, it's fine. I think I'm just going to need a bit of time to...hmm.

**HELEN**

Yeah I'm very sorry.

**ALEX**

This is odd. It's nice to be warm again.

**HELEN**

Oh do you want my coat? I can give you – Azu is taking her coat off already.

**ALEX**

No, too much. Too much.

**HELEN**

Ok she puts it back on.

**ALEX**

God. Oh ok. Azu can I have a quick little word – at which point Carter just turns around and sees everyone else – ok so this is like a whole thing huh?

**HELEN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

So is everyone undead?

**HELEN**

No, no, you're not undead. You're properly alive I think. Oh. Can I detect undead? Do I have that? No I only have detect evil. Dammit.

**BEN**

I've got turn undead. I could just try and turn him.

**HELEN**

Don't!

**ALEX**

Carter just legs it!

**BEN**

Also I think that might do damage as well so I might just kill him again. I'm not gonna...

**BRYN**

The quickest way to check for undead Helen is just to heal him and see what happens.

**HELEN**

Ok I don't think that Azu's going to make that connection.

**ALEX**

Fair. Carter's like asking again – are they ok? Is it... am I the only one...

**HELEN**

I don't actually...Zolf?

**ALEX**

Who's that? Where am I?

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**BEN**

Yeah what's up?

**ALEX**

Hey Zolf.

**BEN**

Hey Carter.

**HELEN**

How are...how's Wilde?

**BEN**

Er I think...I think good. I think it went well. The attendant said maybe let them wake up on their own.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Carter stands. Slightly shakily.

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**BEN**

He's not died again so, you know...

**ALEX**

Oh so is everyone ok then?

**BEN & HELEN**

Errrr

**BEN**

Look around.

**ALEX**

Oi Wilde!

**BEN**

No Carter. Carter!

**ALEX**

Wilde!

**BEN**

Leave it. Just please. Please.

**BRYN**

What is Skraak doing?

**ALEX**

Nothing. Skraak doesn't appear to have awoken, never mind taken any actions.

**HELEN**

Oh. Oh.

**BEN**

Carter please just calm down. I get...no maybe not. Just don't...please don't disturb Wilde. Let him come out in his own time.

**ALEX**

So I'm...look this is my calm face. Look at my calm face.

**BEN**

Yeah, no.

**ALEX**

What's. Going. On? Where are we? Who's this geezer?

**BEN**

We're on the back of a giant bear in a city which is on the back of that bear and a big eagle person sort of invited us to happen and they told us we had a way to get you all back if you wanted and then that's what we've just done I guess. And it looked like it worked for you so congratulations on not being dead anymore.

**ALEX**

Carter sits back down, lies back down in the original position he was in and just says – ok, I'm obviously still not well and that's ok.

**HELEN**

No I think you're...I can...ooh I can heal you. Azu casts lay on hands, I guess, and is going to attempt heal Carter just in case. 16...for 16 points.

**ALEX**

It's as you're doing so, which by the way does not harm Carter in any way...

**BRYN**

Yay!

**HELEN**

Thank god.

**ALEX**

You've all been far too wrapped up in things to notice, you've known Carter a long time.

**HELEN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Like once we factor in the journey and blah, blah, you actually have and part of that is you learn to stop noticing what makes up the person's physical identity. Like a minor pockmark here, a birthmark there, a scar there, whatever. As you're healing you notice two things; one, Carter doesn't need healing. Carter's at full health. Also you notice that the majority...well I say the majority, you notice that all of the blemishes, minor scars, nicks, anything like that appear to be gone.

**HELEN**

Ooh. Like the opposite of scurvy.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Anti-scurvy!

**LYDIA**

It's just high dose vitamin C. This whole thing.

**BEN**

Oh. Like your hair by the way Carter. Think it's a good choice.

**ALEX**

Hm, what?

**HELEN**

Oh.

**ALEX**

Carter tries to look at his hair but he keeps it short so he can't.

**HELEN**

Azu produces a mirror.

**ALEX**

Woah!

**BEN**

Yeah. Just for the record I'm pretty confident I ain't died before. I don't know...I'm guessing...

**HELEN**

Oh did you not always have white hair?

**BEN**

No I'm thinking it's maybe it's kind of related to spiritual trauma I guess.

**HELEN**

Wow

**BEN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

I don't feel trauma-ed.

**BEN**

No I mean...yeah, well, no nor do I but a connection being broken or something.

**ALEX**

Hm

**BEN**

You know I used to be a cleric of Poseidon and then stopped and then this kind of happened. So you died and you've come back and that kind of happened so...

**ALEX**

What do we think distinguished or kind of...

**BEN**

No it looks good. Striking. Might make you stand out in a crowd though so maybe wear some hats if you're trying to be a sneak.

**ALEX**

Well you know what there are worse things than being noticed, right.

**BEN**

I definitely would agree.

**HELEN**

I think you look great. Azu says. And then she starts crying again.

**BRYN**

Aw!

**BEN**

Well, yeah, I guess what Azu's trying to say is, glad you're back.

**ALEX**

Carter sits and doesn't appear to have noticed that he catches in towards Azu. Like it's an automatic reaction that he doesn't seem to have noticed but he just

kind of sits and sits comfortably next to Azu like ok. At which point one of the attendants steps forward towards Zolf again since you were the one who started talking going – we can move you towards maybe a different space if you'd prefer. If you'd rather stay here there's no other use for this building.

**BEN**

I dunno, do I...

**HELEN**

What about Skraak and...oh Cel, how's Sassraa?

**LYDIA**

Oh they're fine. They seem to want to lie there. Cel's like perched on their haunches and kind of arms on knees and has put the fluffy winter clothes over Sassraa.

**ALEX**

Every time you try Sassraa unconsciously apparently seems to be just kicking them off and pushing them off.

**LYDIA**

Oh ok well then Cel is just sitting there not processing really. Just, you know, it's been an emotionally tiring day and so just making sure that Sassraa's breathing. That's ticked. That box is ticked.

**BEN**

Cel they said...the attendant said they can kind of wake up on their own if...like I'm...

**LYDIA**

Yeah I heard. That's why I'm just, you know, there doesn't...I'm not gonna do anything more.

**BEN**

No what I mean is, I think we've done our jobs we can...

**LYDIA**

Yeah but I'm not gonna like leave.

**BEN**

No, no I'm not saying. I just mean...

**LYDIA**

I'm just gonna sit.

**BEN**

Yeah, yeah I'm also – I point at Wilde and go – yeah I'm sort of...yeah. I mean how...is Skraak ok? Looks like he's still under. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing.

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**LYDIA**

Cel only notices this now.

**ALEX**

Everyone give me perception checks.

**BEN**

A roll!

**LYDIA**

Ooh

**BEN**

19

**HELEN**

I got 25

**ALEX**

25

**LYDIA**

Ooh wow because Cel only got 22.

**ALEX**

So it's just Azu this time. That's a rarity! I don't know, you always just seem to roll poorly when it comes to perception. What first appears to be complete stillness from Skraak, on closer inspection, once you actually start paying attention. This is someone who seems to have every single muscle straining whilst at the same time being perfectly still. This is not someone sat comfortably still. This is someone going grrr, sitting comfortably still.

**HELEN**

Ok. Azu's going to go across to him then and be like – Skraak.

**ALEX**

I'm going to give it you for free. Skraak clearly heard you. Like a slight ear twitch and a slight shuffle.

**HELEN**

I think it's over Skraak.

**ALEX**

It's not over.

**HELEN**

Ooh.

**HELEN**

Oh no!

**BEN**

Sorry Alex, important context, I think we're all assuming, we can remember...

**ALEX**

100%

**HELEN**

That's a good question.

**ALEX**

100%. 100%. Like straight out the gate 100%. It feels like you went to a different room, did some stuff and then came back. There might be some time dilation affects based on the spaces that you were in but you have complete memories of the event.

**LYDIA**

And is Meerk clearly cold and still?

**ALEX**

Yeah. Like now that you're looking, yeah.

**BRYN**

Oh.

**ALEX**

Meerk isn't...

**HELEN**

Skraak I don't...

**ALEX**

Shh. Concentrating.

**HELEN**

Ok. Azu's going to back off.

**ALEX**

I am going to be saying now if you want to leave Wilde and Sassraa to wake up normally it's not going to be happening in like a couple of minutes. We're talking hours so I just need to gauge what it is that people intend to do so that I can gauge where to go with this one.

**LYDIA**

Cel will just be sitting there. If people leave, they will ask if they can have a hot drink.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

I think Zolf will sit vaguely uncomfortably for about five minutes and then go over to Skraak again if Skraak is like still just like tensing and...

**ALEX**

That's exactly what Skraak is doing yeah.

**BEN**

Hey Skraak. I think...I think it's like properly over. I'm sorry but I dunno what yours was like. I had a chat and it was a choice for them to come back and I don't know what...did you...you went under right?

**ALEX**

We can do it again. We can do it again. Just do it again.

**BEN**

Skraak did you give them a choice?

**ALEX**

Well yeah obviously.

**BEN**

And what did they choose?

**ALEX**

Wrong. Do it again.

**BEN**

Skraak you gotta...they made a choice. You gotta let them go. That's...we can't...

**ALEX**

They made the wrong choice. So we can do it again. We're just gonna sit here and we're gonna do it again and they'll make the right choice and it'll be fine.

**BEN**

They made the choice that was right for them. You've gotta...I know it's hard but you've...

**ALEX**

It's selfish.

**BEN**

It's...think about that, I don't want that to haunt you. Is it really selfish or are you just a bit angry?

**ALEX**

Skraak suddenly leaps up. Stomps over, past one of the pots that was holding some of the pungent incenses and stuff like that. Bashes past it. It doesn't shatter but it does fall and then just stomps out the front of the building. Just bang. Just stomps off.

**HELEN**

Oh er...should I...should one of us...

**BEN**

I don't know. I don't think I did that right.

**HELEN**

Actually maybe there isn't any way to do that right.

**ALEX**

I'm going to jump to Hamid temporarily. Hamid, a short while after all of the elaborate fireworks and so on, the frost has been continually receding. It has been, not accelerating or anything but it's clear that the ambient temperature is significantly warmer than whatever was happening and seems to be returning to normal. Just as the frost seems to be nearing the actual building itself, the door suddenly slams open and out stomps Skraak. Stomps out, looks around, blinks briefly at the light and then sees you and stomps around apparently to the back of the building. Just stomps off.

**BRYN**

Hamid sort of, the second he sees the doors open, leaps to his feet and as he sees Skraak emerge, he'll sort of...he'll take a couple of steps forward without conscious thought but then once he sort of sees Skraak's attitude he'll probably just freeze in place and doesn't know what to do with himself basically.

**ALEX**

This feels like a sensible place for a bit of a downer break and then we can come back in and pick this up I think.

And welcome back. So...

**LYDIA**

So if Skraak is gonna run off then I will go back and revise what Cel would've done with no other prompts is just sit there. But now having seen that they will get to their feet and take their winter furs and put them back on and say – could one of you ask the woken kobolds what the respectful thing is to do for Meerk.

**BEN**

Yes

**LYDIA**

I didn't get to that bit of kobold customs.

**BEN**

Should I carry them out or...

**LYDIA**

Well if you just...I don't want to put my coat over him because maybe that is something that is offensive to them. I don't know. But if you could ask, I will just – Cel's going to go follow Skraak.

**BEN**

Ok so do I just take him out or...

**LYDIA**

No. Just ask the kobolds. Right. Go out, ask them what to do. I'm just...I just need to check that Skraak is ok and then I'll be back.

**BEN**

Ok. I will turn to an attendant and go – can they come in or...is it ok now? Can other people come in if they...we need to do...

**ALEX**

It's fine. This is not a holy spot. That's not how this works. It's a useful place. It's not a hallowed place.

**HELEN**

Ok

**BEN**

Fine, ok. I will go and talk to the kobolds.

**HELEN**

Do you want me...should we take...should we take the other two out? I can carry...

**LYDIA**

Folks. Buddies. I do not think – and Cel just looks very tired – I don't think there's a rush. Ok. There isn't a rush anymore. It's ok. You got the adrenaline, right, that's what they call it. The...you've got that spike. You've got a rush but you don't need to anymore. The people who are back are back. They are safe. The people who are not back, are not and we're gonna process that and it's gonna take time. Ok.

**BEN**

Yeah I just...

**LYDIA**

It's ok, right.

**BEN**

I just worry I might've mucked that up with Skraak so.

**LYDIA**

You're ok. And that...people say things at these times and I'm sure that he'll regret and you'll regret and he'll also treasure and you'll also treasure and there's all this stuff. It comes out in the processing but I'm just gonna see he's ok. You ask the others, see if we can take these people to some beds and then maybe we'll even have some sleep. Who even knows.

**BEN**

Thanks Cel.

**LYDIA**

Sad laugh. Goes out the door.

**BEN**

And maybe Carter wants a drink – I will shout at the sleeping form of Carter.

**ALEX**

Carter, yeah...

**HELEN**

No he's awake.

**ALEX**

No Carter laid back down. His eyes are open but he's just kind of lying there like, there's no way I'm on the back of a bear! So...something's wrong. I

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should probably lie still. Upon hearing that, Carter goes – I'm actually ok but you know, thanks.

**BEN**

Ok

**LYDIA**

That's probably the most profoundly troubling thing he could've said.

**(laughing)**

**BEN**

Ok I'll go talk to the kobolds then.

**HELEN**

Ok. So Carter...

**ALEX**

Hey Azu.

**HELEN**

How are you feeling?

**ALEX**

I'm waiting to feel bad. That's the best way I can describe it.

**HELEN**

Oh apparently you're fully healed and things.

**ALEX**

Carter kind of leans up again, sits over. You have a momentary vision of child Carter sat underneath the bench as he just sits there in the sand looking up at you. Certainly just by virtue of all of the blemishes and minor dinks and scrapes being removed he does give the impression of being younger.

**HELEN**

Aw

**ALEX**

His skin has taken a younger hue almost. It's just a bit weird innit.

**HELEN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

Sorry if I scared you.

**HELEN**

No. No I'm not scared. I don't get...oh. You wouldn't scare me except for when you died.

**(laughing)**

**LYDIA**

Except just now with the thing you're referring to correctly. Yeah, that.

**ALEX**

Oh no that's because you're dead brave and stuff though so that makes sense.

**HELEN**

Oh! Azu starts crying again.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

I didn't do anything!

**HELEN**

No it's ok. I...[crying noise]

**ALEX**

Happy crying? Carter just kind of reaches out but not awkwardly, just kind of pats you on the back but says awkwardly – there, there.

**BRYN**

Help him. Just give him a huge hug.

**HELEN**

Azu shoves her entire face in Carter's shoulder and just like – it's so good to see you and you were dead and you were small and [crying]

**ALEX**

Ok, yeah I thought you were the cool one. It's fine. It's ok. Good. I'm fine. Everything's fine.

**HELEN**

[Crying]

**LYDIA**

Oh god!

**ALEX**

I am going to use this opportunity to jump to the outside of things. Cel did you head to...did you already head out to chase down Skraak?

**LYDIA**

Yeah, yeah.

**ALEX**

That's fine. I'm going to follow you. It's very obvious where Skraak went because there are still claw marks in the frost.

**BRYN**

Once Cel emerges, Hamid will run up to them and be like – Cel, what happened?

**LYDIA**

Er right ok. So just quickly...

**ALEX**

You hear distant weeping Bryn.

**BRYN**

Oh dear.

**LYDIA**

That's happy crying. Some of it, it's going to be...

**BRYN**

Oh good.

**LYDIA**

Cel...I just can't underestimate how exhausted Cel looks. Right ok so some people came back and Meerk didn't and obviously Skraak is having an immediate reaction to that which will need to be managed before the longer term of everyone and of we all processing and dealing. At the moment I think we can say with the urgency of the last day or two days or three...that has ended so we just need to know. Maybe you already know. We need to know how to respectfully deal with the body. We need to know how to take the others to a comfortable place to sleep it off. It [laughing] slightly hysterical death. They just gotta sleep death off. It's always strange when this happens, right. Like resurrection is so weird. Cel just trails off and goes to follow Skraak.

**BEN**

So I think during this conversation Zolf will have walked past you to the kobolds.

**BRYN**

Once Cel heads off after Skraak, Hamid will do a slight double take and then follow and then go over to the rest of the kobolds with Zolf.

**HELEN**

Hamid's just spinning in circles.

**BRYN**

Yeah

**ALEX**

I am gonna follow Cel.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, sure.

**ALEX**

You easily find Skraak round the back of the building kicking it. Not hard. Just kind of [kicking noise]

**LYDIA**

Hey...hey buddy.

**ALEX**

Hey

**LYDIA**

Hey I don't know if you wanna be alone but I just want you to know you don't need to be.

**ALEX**

It's fine. It's fine.

**LYDIA**

I don't think...I mean...you'll be thinking a lot of things but I know if where you were chatting to Meerk was anything like where I was chatting to Sassraa it was nice. Right. And it was a good place and so it's...it's not...it's not that they're in a bad place but I also know that that doesn't mean that you're not frustrated and you're not missing.

**ALEX**

I'm not annoyed at Meerk. I'm annoyed at me.

**LYDIA**

You know I...I kinda wanna say I get it but I also know that it's always unique and I'm not gonna say stupid things like it's not your fault or it's not like...it's not about that or all the things you could say because I know it never feels like that. It's the...you know, you're not alone with it and the decisions are made, right. I think whatever you said it's not about the specifics. I hope you don't become obsessed with the little things that might've been different because actually...

**ALEX**

No it's not. It's not that either.

**LYDIA**

Yeah?

**ALEX**

I'm annoyed because I wanted Meerk back.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, yeah.

**ALEX**

Even when Meerk didn't want to come back, I still wanted Meerk to come back and that's just me being stupid and selfish and [sighs].

**LYDIA**

I know buddy. I know. I'm sorry.

**ALEX**

Meerk's fine. Meerk's...I've never seen Meerk so happy.

**LYDIA**

Was it loud? How did he hear you?

**ALEX**

We didn't.

**LYDIA**

Ah, I'm glad it was loud.

**ALEX**

Skraak gives a sad smile. It was...yeah loud is the word.

**LYDIA**

Yeah I...

**ALEX**

And shiny. Loud and shiny. And spikey. Loud, shiny and spikey with fire.

**(laughing)**

Loud, shiny...Meerk was happy.

**BRYN**

Was he that guy from Mad Max, you know playing electric guitar...building size speakers and the fire and the spikes

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

I'm gonna be honest, that's basically the direction that I'm going with this, yeah.

**LYDIA**

That's cool. I think Cel would just sit and be like – it's...yeah. It's...that...you know words – Cel is saying in draconic so is stumbling over them slightly.

**ALEX**

So with everyone's permission I'm going to jump time ahead a little bit. In terms of Zolf giving the news to the kobolds, they seem to take it very stoically and I don't mean that in a sort of, suppressing stuff. There doesn't really seem to be much in the way of tears. It's more like a, ok. That could've gone either way. Ok. Next steps then. And there was definitely a private conversation between Skraak and the rest of the kobolds but I would quite like to jump ahead to basically end this episode on an image if I may.

**HELEN**

Ok

**ALEX**

Which is night falling with the, I keep calling it a city, technically it's not big enough, the town. Night falling on the town and as the sun is setting a pyre has been set up in the square. The kobolds requested it needs to be a pyre. It needs to be this big, blah, blah, blah and effectively they have told everyone, we just ask that everyone observe and be quiet. And then the kobolds, Meerk is laid out. The kobolds each take a corner of the pyre and invite Hamid to be involved if Hamid is willing.

**BRYN**

Very. Very.

**ALEX**

There's no pressure there. And they begin to very gently light the pyre themselves using their own breaths. It's not much. It is a [blowing noise]. The way that you would blow on a flame as if it's already lit, they make a flame appear just by blowing upon it.

**BRYN**

Sure

**ALEX**

Everyone give me a perception check.

**BEN**

19

**BRYN**

Natural 20

**LYDIA**

17

**HELEN**

21

**ALEX**

Enough of you notice that basically as the pyre starts to catch and starts to accelerate its burn, the closer to Meerk's form that the fire gets, the brighter and hotter it becomes. And the rest of the kobolds step back and then just stand watching. They don't appear to be to attention or anything, it's just observing. And the pyre where Meerk is, burns brighter and brighter and hotter and hotter. It isn't to the point where people can't stand close because of the heat but it is reaching the point where it's difficult to look at it. It is lighting up the rest of the square as if there is a bright light, like almost like a daylight is coming towards in terms of the brightness. It gets brighter, it gets brighter and then very rapidly diminishes into a normal flame.

**LYDIA**

The kobolds are made of magnesium.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

Basically that's the kind of look that I'm going for here. It leaves after images but by that point the flames are so large that there's nothing really to be seen but you do notice, everyone who hit the twenties, that at no point did the kobolds blink. They just stared the whole time.

**BRYN**

Hamid did the same.

**HELEN**

Yeah Azu will have tried to do the same as well because she was in Meerk's body.

**ALEX**

I won't give rolls for stuff. I'll say it's difficult but doable and leave it at that. I'll end the episode on that image and as a point of clarification, the remaining people, so we're talking Wilde and Sassraa are basically laid out on a nearby bed but not actually like taking part in the ceremony. They appear to be sleeping normally but I would like to end the episode on this one as a bit of a comer. But I would say that at no point have the kobolds cried or anything. It doesn't appear like they're restraining themselves. It feels more like a send off than a big outpouring of grief. That's the best way to describe it. And that's that. How are we feeling?

**LYDIA**

I hope that the bear didn't get burned.

**(laughing)**

**ALEX**

I can confirm for you outside of our RP that the bear did not get burned. You see, that's why they did it in the square. Always thinking Lyd.

**LYDIA**

I see, it's got a nice stone floor. Like a nice thick saddle so he doesn't get hurt or she.

**ALEX**

I've got you covered.

**LYDIA**

Ok. Bear is ok is confirm.

**HELEN**

Yeah it's very important.

**ALEX**

Then I guess we will pick this up next week where we'll take our next steps but I can confirm everyone will have time to sleep which occasionally I grant you.

**BRYN**

Hooray!

**ALEX**

But until that time, it's bye from me. So bye everyone.

**EVERYONE**

Bye!

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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