

RQG – 201 – A Colourful Encounter

Content Warnings

- X
- X

[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 201 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?

Rusty Quill Gaming – 201 – A Colourful Encounter

BEN

Zolf Smith

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Cel Sidebottom

HELEN

And Azu

ALEX

And now let us continue our adventure in the dungeon of a thousand bosses.

Oh Alex, do you ever get tired of them beating all of your bosses... Yes... there will now be only bosses all the way down...

[Group Laughter]

HELEN

And we're going down the stairs as well. There's going to be one on every landing.

BEN

Yeah, we're literally flushing ourselves down a drain right now...

LYDIA

No...

[Laughter]

ALEX

You're in that bit of the game where you're in the sort of... new game plus, where you're in the tower, working your way up all of increasing levels of boss. Until one of them hits you...

HELEN

I don't like it...

ALEX

It's fine.

BRYN

I was distressingly close to death last episode, thank you. I don't know if it was obvious, when listening to it, but... oh... it was scary for me.

ALEX

So you were mechanically, but you don't look beaten up, so I need to hit you again...

BRYN

Yeah...

HELEN

On the plus side, thanks to various fans, especially White Wolfos, I think their name was, I have realised that I've been healing for less heal than I should have been. So now I have 5 D6 healing, for everybody, if that's... I hope that matters...

[Laughter]

ALEX

It probably will. And an additional piece of bookkeeping, before we get started, which is... in my infinite benevolence... I have concluded that anyone who's spent more than one channel positive energy against the hoard, shall receive one of those back... Put simply, I ran the numbers, I think that hoards in this system are treated as a single creature. I think they should be treated as multiples so channel positive energy like have a bigger effect. I accounted for it, but I ran the numbers after the fact, and was like... err... I think I was a little bit mean there. So... I've granted one of those back as a fair cop... I didn't run the numbers as well as I thought.

BEN

Just for people keeping track, I think that means that both Zolf and Azu have one channel positive energy back.

ALEX

Perfect.

HELEN

Does that also mean I get two lay on hands back?

LYDIA

I don't get any bombs...

ALEX

No. No fresh bombs. The bombs were awful. I hate them. They can stay used. And no other lay on hands'... unless you're using the channel positive energy interaction thing.

HELEN

That's how I work.

BRYN

So by giving her one channel positive back, you're giving...

ALEX

I didn't know if you were asking for extra. I thought you might be driving a hard bargain.

HELEN

I couldn't drive a hard bargain to save my goddam life...

[Group Laughter]

HELEN

I just rollover. I'm like... I guess you would know...

LYDIA

Oh no I was trying to drive a hard bargain, and swung off and accidentally took a short cut through... you can have whatever you want...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

In terms of where we're at, we're underneath now the plant based Jurassic Park, underneath the dwarven led city, underneath Svalbard. Basically that's pretty much where we're at.

LYDIA

We haven't really gone downhill that much.

ALEX

Yeah, that's a fair point. In fact, speaking of that, can I get a will save from everyone?

LYDIA

Sure...

BEN

Oh, we haven't gone down enough. Everyone panic.

HELEN

OK, OK, alright...

BEN

Ahh...

BRYN

Good dice. Well done.

BEN

Natural 20. 37.

ALEX

Oh no...

HELEN

Wow...

ALEX

No, God, no. Anything but that... please... God...

BRYN

29 for Hamid and 23 for Skraak.

ALEX

Skraak's keeping his own on these will saves.

LYDIA

Do we have any bonuses from anything anyone's cast... no... because otherwise there's just a 50.

BRYN

Nothing active right now I don't think.

LYDIA

That's cool.

ALEX

You are still a beasty, because you were flying over the hoard, but I don't think that has any bonuses that are relevant.

LYDIA

Yep, yeah, yeah, yeah... no, I am definitely, definitely, recently a beasty, and remembered also from the levelling up that they've got that for 100 minutes, not 90. I'm going to be a beasty for a while... but unfortunately the beasty does not have great will.

HELEN

I need to check whether prayer is still active, because that would give everyone a +1.

Rusty Quill Gaming – 201 – A Colourful Encounter

BEN

Oh yeah...

ALEX

How long does prayer last?

HELEN

I think 10 rounds, but I don't know whether that means that it goes away once you're out of combat?

BRYN

Well, effectively, sort of... because...

ALEX

10 rounds because of the nature of this save, I'm going to say prayer doesn't count on this one.

HELEN

OK. In which case...

LYDIA

No bonus.

HELEN

Yeah... so I got... unusually low 13.

LYDIA

Oh...

ALEX

13. Understood, and what did Cel get?

LYDIA

15.

ALEX

15. understood.

HELEN

Oh no...

ALEX

Thank you all.

HELEN

Don't like this...

BEN

Umm... He sounds happy.

ALEX

I appreciate your time. So, you're all at the top of that comparatively dense looking spiral staircase having made it through, passed the hoard, effectively. You haven't actually, weirdly enough had to hurry, because you actually destroyed the hoard, you didn't even sort of circumnavigate um... So, this circular stairway, it has water runoff from... you know you were in that room that was a sort of weird combination of the water systems and what looked to be molten magna running through pipes and so on.

EVERYONE

Umm...

ALEX

What seems to be here is, the circular stairway seems to be circling around what is the water runoff from that system, effectively. So it's running down through the middle, and you are circling around it, although it does not appear to be a service corridor, it appears to be comparatively plush, so if you are in a staff only area, it's a... you know... management only area... or something. So, yeah... you've got guard rails and all that kind of thing, but it disappears further than you can see downwards.

BEN

One audio question then, is the drain... is the runoff like enclosed in a pipe? Or is it just freefalling? Because like... is this stairway incredibly loud?

LYDIA

And are we circling a waterfall?

ALEX

So, good question. It is an enclosed runoff, but it is piping that alternates between sort of steel bands and then transparent. So you can see the stuff running through. It's still quite loud, because you can hear that sort of drumming against the tubing, but you can also see that what's running through that now is quite polluted with... zombie bits...

HELEN

Err... ohh...

BRYN

[Laughter]

BEN

Fair enough.

ALEX

Flushed from the system and down.

LYDIA

We did do that, yeah...

ALEX

What I would say though, is it's not as bad as it could be. There is so much water running through this system, that like it's going to get flushed within like a few moments. I'm giving you a snapshot because you have just closed the door. But yeah, it disappears downwards, beyond where you can see, and it appears to be a thoroughfare. The stairway is wide. It is not a narrow spiral staircase. You could walk easily two abreast. And it has a very gentle slope, but that's why you can't see much further is because you loop round under yourself too quickly.

HELEN

Alright. I guess we go down it.

BEN

I guess so.

ALEX

So, as all of you are hiking downwards, and so on, it's a gentle walk, and you seem to have left behind a lot of those tourist fripperies that we were talking about. Don't expect any more expositional murals, let's put it that way.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

There is a pretty much unfaded red carpet, running down the middle of the stairway, and like I say, they are narrow steps, and as you're heading along... but first it seems to be nothing more than... oh, I've had a fight, and I'm just on the comedown a little bit. But as both Azu and Cel press on, you start feeling increasingly weary...

HELEN

Oh oi...

ALEX

... and it's a very, very slow effect. Very gradual. And unless anyone says otherwise, I'm going to assume that you're continuing down this spiral staircase at not a sprint, effectively. As you continue doing these circles, it feels more like you're climbing upstairs than downstairs, but it doesn't have with it, that out of breath. You're not... [sound effect]... you're not panting or anything like that, but you just... your arm is starting to feel heavier, that crossbow... it's all... it's just a little bit heavier than you thought it was, and as you keep heading down, it starts to be a point where... it is visibly obvious to Hamid... well basically to the whole group, that you are starting to drag your feet, in a way that... no perception checks are needed. It's just... it's like you're entering almost a higher gravity or something because it's just wearying you and so much.

HELEN

OK.

LYDIA

I'd like the visual of like... Cel is basically a kind of bat creature at the moment, with long claws, and of course is on -2 charisma, so is just like bumping into things... and occasionally their claws... like catch on the red carpet, and leave like a gash in it... like... I'm sorry... sorry... around their fangs... and like... oh... I'm sorry... I'm just getting the way...

BEN

Hang on a minute... Right... let me have a look at you? Give us a sec...

HELEN

OK.

BEN

I want to do a heal check on Azu and Cel, to try and find if they're under the influence of any status effects, or like what's going on, but that's specifically what I'm looking for.

ALEX

That's fine. Give me a medicine check?

BRYN

Yes... I would like to cast to detect magic... While that's happening as well.

ALEX

Yes. I'll do the medicine check first.

BEN

Yep. 26.

ALEX

They are under some kind of magical effect, but you've not seen this before, and you're pretty good at medicine. This is rare, whatever it is. Like you are recognising symptoms of a magical effect, but you're not able to pinpoint what

it is. It's... it's odd... beyond that, you didn't get a decent roll... you don't believe that it has been a sudden trigger. You don't think someone's like trodden on a trap that's triggered it or something. It feels to be more like... they are responding to an emanation that seems to be affecting them and not you or Hamid, but you don't know whether it's going to get stronger, as they carry on, whether it will get less, but it feels like it's something environmental, rather than something targeted, but that's as far as you can really get. And that's really... you're heading into sort of like a supposition at that point, rather than actually diagnosis... if you see what I mean?

BEN

Yeah, sure. OK.

ALEX

You detect magic. There is an ambient magic in the air. By in the air, I mean in the environment, not literally like... in the gas. You... give me a knowledge arcana?

BRYN

24.

ALEX

It's not wild magic, but you do not discern a specific school.

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

Something hinky is going on. Something weird's going on. It is... again same as with Zolf, you're not really able to tell if it's getting worse, the deeper you get, or whether it's getting better, or whatever, but there's something definitely hinky, but definitely not wild magic.

BRYN

Yep.

BEN

Have you got any ideas?

BRYN

No, I think we seem to be in... the arura of something, but... it's big and faint enough that I can't tell much more than that.

BEN

Right...

BRYN

I couldn't even tell you where it's originating from.

BEN

Let me try something. Cel...

LYDIA

Yes. I mean yes... yes... [yawn] yep.

BEN

I'll use... calming touch, so that heals 1 D6points of non-lethal damage, which I don't think we've taken any of, but it also removes fatigued, shaken and sickened conditions.

ALEX

Understood.

BEN

So... I don't know if Cel feels any better, but that's what it would do.

ALEX

It doesn't seem to have any effect. You don't feel worse, but it just... you know what, between the two of Hamid and Zolf, I would say, whatever magical effect this is, it doesn't seem to be a physical drain on the body. That is something you would, between the two of you, be able to spot.

BRYN

Oh... so it's not causing the fatigued condition, even though... it is...

ALEX

It very much has the appearances of it, and you can conclude that, only after having gone... well I'll just remove that fatigue... ahh... ahh... right... so that's what's going on there.

BEN

Alright. Hang on a minute.

HELEN

I'm very sorry. I don't really...

BEN

Right I've got... no actually... look, stop thinking like that. Right... umm... both of you... Buck up, and I'm going to use two uses...

[Group laughter]

BEN

... of Liberty's blessing...

HELEN

Oh...

BEN

Which grants a swift action save against a spell or effect, that it is suffering from, that grants a save. So, because they failed the save, and the save DC is equal to... basically you just to reroll... have another go on the save. You get no bonuses. It's the same DC, but you just get to roll again.

ALEX

Yeah, go for it again.

LYDIA

I mean... Cel roll high on that one. Cel has a will of 4 so... like...

BEN

Unfortunately I've also... I would use it with unity, but I only get one of those a day, because then you'd be using my will save.

LYDIA

No, no, that's fair... that's fair.

ALEX

So, what do I get for Cel?

LYDIA

10.

ALEX

Oh... it doesn't make it worse. That's not how that works...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

Phew...

ALEX

How about you Azu?

HELEN

Azu now gets 18.

ALEX

18? No effect.

HELEN

Oh...

BEN

Right... sorry about that.

HELEN

I could try... Azu is going to lay on hands herself. Because you said it's not... it's not fatigued... but she has enfeebled.

ALEX

I will give you some help here and go Zolf would just be like... that's not going to work. This is a... this is more of a malady of the spirit than it is a malady of the body.

LYDIA

Oh... I mean... Cel could cast haste on themselves and just be tired, but fast...

[Group Laughter]

LYDIA

Which is, you know, all of us who work multiple jobs know how productive that state can be... Umm... caffeine... we'll get this work done...

BRYN

And if we continue, we might find the source of it, but I can't be certain that we're going towards it...

BEN

I... I'm stumped. If that didn't work, I haven't got anything more for this, so you know, it's either keep going or turn back, and we can't really turn back...

HELEN

Well, we need to keep going.

BEN

Yeah...

HELEN

So I'm going... I will... come on Cel, we'll...

LYDIA

Yep. Cel attempts to wholeheartedly agree, but halfway through starts yawning and like gets a bit lost on their own teeth.

HELEN

Azu is going to like offer her arm to Cel. Even though Azu like... don't worry... I know that Azu is also extremely fatigued, but she's going to try real hard...

LYDIA

But she's Azu... Yeah...

BEN

Just keep us updated if it gets worse or changes... and let us know... we'll find... we'll be able to sort this out...

BRYN

Yeah... it's definitely a magical effect... so...

HELEN

Right... OK. We'll be alright. OK.

ALEX

Okey doke...

BRYN

I'm going to periodically recast detect magic, as we head downwards, because hopefully it might become clear if the aura is getting stronger or not, at least?

ALEX

Sure, sure. In that case then, am I right in saying that you start to continue going down that staircase.

BRYN

Yep.

LYDIA

Yeah, just keep on going. I think at one point, probably Cel, being beast shaped will probably move on to being all fours and is kind of...

ALEX

Yeah, that kind of...

LYDIA

Then you know, to the point then that the wings... like the way a bat walks with them, six legged.

HELEN

Well, at that point, Azu will unlink arms with Cel... **[Laughter]**.

LYDIA

Yeah, yeah yeah...

ALEX

So, heading down the stairway, I'd say... it takes maybe another ten minutes or so to start reaching the bottom. It's... because the stairway is shallow, it's not as far as it could have been, but it is... you know... it's decent length. Over the course of that time, you don't notice the strengthening of the magical aura, Hamid, and neither Azu nor Cel have any stronger reaction to what is going on. Whatever seems to be happening has happened... if you know what I mean. Like it doesn't seem to be worsening, it just is. Eventually, you all make it to the base of the stairway, at which point I get to bounce you across to the NEW MAP... [sound effects]... which much like the old map, should be entirely shrouded in blackness...

BRYN

I've slightly lost track of time, compared to a couple of episodes ago. I'm going to recast heroism, on Skraak.

ALEX

Sure.

BRYN

It might be a bit soon for that, but it feels sensible to do it now, before we enter this new level.

ALEX

Yep, that's fine.

LYDIA

Yeah, I am keeping track of beast shape. It seems like mutagens...

ALEX

You're fine.

LYDIA

[Unclear: 16:19]

ALEX

You're fine.

LYDIA

Ten minutes so...

BRYN

Yeah....

LYDIA

... they're on about 88 minutes still to go.

ALEX

Yeah, you've got ages. You've got ages. Don't worry about that.

LYDIA

I've got it written down... look at your new ring...

ALEX

So, you should all... flawlessly, with no faffing behind the scenes, be at the top of a stairway, looking down to what looks like a set of double doors.

LYDIA

Wow...

BEN

It's like magic Alex.

LYDIA

... that was instantaneous. Yes.

BEN

It worked.

LYDIA

My tea is the same temperature now as it was the last time we spoke.

[Group laughter].

ALEX

So, you find yourself, shocker... at the top of the staircase, as much as I said. It's about 15 foot across and leads towards a set of double doors. The double doors are, broadly speaking, as ornate as the touristy ones were. So, think like they have an inlay of mithril and things like that. They are currently closed. There is a... everyone give me a perception check.

HELEN

Right.

LYDIA

Oh... Cel got 15, which is as low as Cel can get, other than a natural 1.

ALEX

You get nothing.

HELEN

I got 13.

ALEX

You get nothing.

Rusty Quill Gaming – 201 – A Colourful Encounter

BRYN

Skraak got 23. Hamid got 33.

ALEX

Damn it...

BEN

Zolf has 28.

LYDIA

But maybe Cel just has a nap on Azu.

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Hamid, with your 33, there is a very, very faint magical tone, tone... with an N emanating from the other side of those double doors.

BRYN

I cast magical again

HELEN

I am just imagining a toe sticking through the...

[Group laughter]

BEN

That's a wizards toe...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

You detect no magic beyond what we've already been discussing. Oh no, I lie... you will detect a faint, faint amount of magic on the doorway, but for free, you can tell that that's because magic was used in its construction. It doesn't appear to be a trap, or anything like that.

BRYN

OK, so... but there's... basically what you're saying is, the second we open the doors, there's magic on the other side?

ALEX

You hear the sound of something magical happening, not immediately on the side of the other doors...

BRYN

Right...

ALEX

But... I know that, that is a magic sound. It's right on the edge of hearing though.

BRYN

I can hear something very faintly on the other side of the doors. It sounds... I don't... I can't quite place it... it feels really familiar from... like university... like... when they were doing like... experimenting and you could just about hear it, but I can't place it more specifically...

LYDIA

Cel wakes up at the word "experiment".

BRYN

Something's going on...

BEN

Do you think it's... I mean... stupid question... do you think it's dangerous?

BRYN

Hard to tell...

ALEX

Impossible to tell, yeah...

BRYN

... yeah, we should probably just carry on, but I guess just... yeah... we're all ready, weary... I don't know... sorry...

LYDIA

Would any kind of knowledge arcana be helpful?

ALEX

Not really.

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

Not at this stage.

HELEN

On we go, on we go.

BRYN

Well, I'm going to suggest that I don't have the responsibility to play Skraak at this point, but he may well want to check the door for traps, and then open it in a rogue sense.

ALEX

Since we're dungeon crawling, I'm OK for you to still have control of Skraak as...

BRYN

OK.

ALEX

... as you're not playing Skraak counter to normal.

BRYN

Sure, so I'm going to suggest that Skraak basically checks the door first and then opens it.

ALEX

Skraak checks. There are no traps. Skraak carefully opens the door, revealing more corridor, on the other side. However, it is in a different character. There is laid flagstones, and there are a pair of lit, very, very large, braziers fit to the walls. They appear to have, sort of glowing embers rather than big-huge flames, but they are still lit. There is a big-lush carpet, leading off to the left, so you've clearly come into a T-junction of some kind. Because at the far end, are a similar set of ornate doors and there is a streak of purple light, coming out from the end that the carpet is rolling out from.

BRYN

Is that the source of the sound?

ALEX

It seems to be, yes. It seems to be coming from the same direction, rather than coming from the light itself.

BRYN

Right.

ALEX

Now the doors open, everyone will be able to hear it, as well.

HELEN

Right.

BRYN

Well I guess at least it wasn't pointed at us.

BEN

Don't sound good though.

BRYN

No.

BEN

But I guess we should probably head towards [unclear: 20:31] don't sound good.

BRYN

I cast detect magic again, hoping that I might get a chance to use knowledge arcana I guess to recognise what it is... potentially.

ALEX

The light itself is not magical. However, assuming Skraak peeps round the corner...

BRYN

Yeah...

ALEX

Hold on to your butts...

HELEN

Uh-oh...

ALEX

That's the wrong button, I just drew all over the map.

[Group laughter]

BEN

Hold on to your buttons.

ALEX

Hold on to your butts again...

HELEN

Oh...

BEN

Oh...

LYDIA

Another corridor....

BEN

But look up!

HELEN

Oh goodness...

LYDIA

Oh no...

[Group laughter]

LYDIA

I see that is actually quite a thing. That's a thing...

ALEX

What I'm going to do is I'm going to reveal a lot more than I should be able to...

LYDIA

Oh wow...

ALEX

Because of the angles... what I'm saying at this point is... that is Skraak just peeking through the doorway. I will RP the Skraak reporting back. Ah... it's a lot...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

There's a large-massive big dead-ish plant in the middle of a big huge room... but the room's lit, like a Council Chamber or something... and there's a lot of err...

BEN

Right...

ALEX

There's a lot of bodies... sort of in with the plant...

BEN

Yeah...

Rusty Quill Gaming – 201 – A Colourful Encounter

HELEN

Oh...

BRYN

Does it look like the plant from the Garden of Yerlik?

ALEX

I mean... maybe... it's hard to tell... it's very [unclear: 21:57].

BEN

I know we're going for an assumption, but yes absolutely, if this is Svalbard's Council's Chamber, we found the Council dwarfs on the other end...

BRYN

Yeah...

ALEX

Err... I think that's where the light's coming from, as well. It's definitely where the sounds coming from.

BEN

Oh, we're going to have to check that out, aren't we?

HELEN

Yeah... Yes. And there's no really... I mean we could look at the other side of this door?

ALEX

I saw a few of the umm... those watcher plants in there as well.

HELEN

Oh...

BEN

Right.

BRYN

Yeah... Azu's right though, Skraak it might be a good idea if you check the other door, just to make sure we're not going to be... you know... snuck up or...

ALEX

Skraak checks and sees a similar set of stairs that lead up and out in a cemeterial way to what you've come down from.

BEN

Right.

HELEN

OK.

BRYN

Probably... leads back to a different point on the... zoo menagerie level.

BEN

Yeah, I'm also guessing that if there some kind of very important device, that they were maybe all discussing, at this point...

BRYN

Yeah...

HELEN

Right... OK... onwards I suppose.

ALEX

Everyone give me a perception check please.

BEN

26.

HELEN

Wow. 12 with a natural 1 there.

BEN

Blimey...

LYDIA

20 from Cel. Not natural.

BRYN

28 from Hamid, and 24 from Skraak.

ALEX

It is worth mentioning, that there is the smell of rotting vegetation... it seems to be coming from in there. And with the exception of that magical tone, the only other sound is that of some other sort of burning braziers, within that Council Chamber. It is a large space, so as a result it is very quiet, once you remove those away. Do you know what I mean? I'm basically laying it out that you don't hear the sounds of movement. You have had a fair like... listen and check. The only extra thing is... yeah... rotting vegetation is what you can smell.

LYDIA

Slightly strange one, but from a kind of mechanics point of view, can Cel tell anything about how like... sentient a creature might need to be around, to keep the braziers burning? Because that doesn't sound like something that the plant creatures could do, but I'm guessing that Cel, looking at those things would know if they were like automatic?

ALEX

Having a look at it, it appears like you can just get this free. I don't need a check. For the sake of [unclear: 24:23] and making life easier, it appears to be a very minor magical effect that is being done.

LYDIA

OK.

ALEX

And I just haven't mentioned it to you, Bryn, that was a mistake on my part. You should have detected magic that. it's effectively an ever-burning flame.

LYDIA

Cool.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

It's quite common, in areas that have a bit of money to spend that are going to need light.

LYDIA

It's just that that would have been a clue that there was [unclear: 24:45]...

ALEX

No, you're right to ask. To be clear, the thing with ever burning flame is it burns... forever...

LYDIA

Err... umm...

ALEX

So...

BEN

And it can't burn stuff down, it's actually quite handy.

ALEX

It can't. it's very useful.

HELEN

Umm... nice.

ALEX

I'm going to go ahead and say, for the sake of my own ease of mind, that Skraak has opened the door to the point where you can see the entire Chamber. So I shall reveal it to you.

LYDIA

Oh dear...

BEN

Oh...

ALEX

It is a large circular Chamber...

LYDIA

Such a big plant...

ALEX

... which has... at the very, very far end, another set of double doors. There appear to be a set of... sort of elaborate seats all around the very outside of the highest level. And there appears to be what might be thrones or something, at the very, very far end, immediately over... well immediately above and behind... the largest brazier of the lot, which is also still burning. The set of double doors behind them, and there is sort of tiered mundane sort of seating. Think more bench style, which drops down almost amphitheatre style into the mass of just dead plant. It looks like there may have been a large stone table in there, amongst all of that. Certainly, there are the remnants of some dwarfs in amongst that plant matter. And there are some watchers dotted around the hall. But, for the most part, and you can get this for free, you see lots of signs of people fleeing a space. Lots of dropped items, you know, maybe a discarded shoe... unlike the rest of the city where a lot of that wasn't happening. Here there is. Here there is signs of people you know... fleeing... things like that. And on that, I think I'm going to take a break. We can come back in a couple of minutes and see what happens now... with a big grin on my face...

LYDIA

Hurray... gardening...

HELEN

Oh...

ALEX

And welcome back, as we... if you look on your left, you will see a large Council Chamber, filled with lurid purple light from an Eldredge plant, that seems to

have died a long time ago. To your right, you will see a brick wall because that's the map.

HELEN

Lovely. Thank you. Right [sound effect]

BEN

Right.

BRYN

Umm... should be attempt to get to the doors behind the thrones.

BEN

Yep. If anything's important, it's going to be behind the big chairs.

HELEN

OK. It looks like the left-hand side is the clearest way. I suppose - if we stick to the side.

BEN

Just take our time, be careful.

HELEN

OK.

ALEX

So you also... as you start heading into the room, note that there are a pair of large entrances and exits to either side of this amphitheatre, to the left and to the right. They appear to be corridors though, not doors. Like they are open to what's going on. I would appreciate it if you could move yourselves on the map and describe... I don't need you in initiative order, but I do need to know where you are because sight is a thing.

BRYN

I feel like... we have in previous episodes established the sort of the range on these watcher plants, that you've got scattered around.

HELEN

I think it's like 2 squares?

BRYN

10 foot.

BEN

10 foot yeah.

ALEX

Two things. One you are all currently on a wall.

BRYN

Oh is the...

ALEX

You see that circle...

BRYN

The wall is the circle...

ALEX

It is a circular Chamber, yeah. So, Zolf is right now, stood immediately next to one of the vacant...

BEN

OK. Basically Alex like obviously we're going to try and wend our way through a void on the watcher plants... kind of carefully picking our way around the horrible bits.

ALEX

The options are, do you want to go to the middle? Do you want to go to the left? Do you want to go to the right, or do you want to do something that I am not expecting?

BEN

Last stated intent was the doors at the back. That is what Zolf is thinking of doing... but that's...

ALEX

Understood. Perfect.

BEN

... you know... not what everyone...

ALEX

No, that's fine. That's fine.

BRYN

And I think we're going to... we're going to circle the big plant in the middle... on the left...

HELEN

Yeah...

BEN

I aint walking through that [laughter]

ALEX

Understood.

BEN

Just charge through it...

ALEX

RUNNN!!! In that case then, I will reveal you can see that the corridors take an immediate left turn, and right turn respectively, leading in the same kind of direction as those double doors. Everyone give me a perception check please.

HELEN

Let's see how this one goes...

BEN

22.

HELEN

Finally... 28.

LYDIA

30.

BRYN

21 for Hamid and 21 for Skraak.

BEN

A full reversal of fortunes.

ALEX

Azu and Cel... there appears to be large amount of mechanical and scientific equipment mashed in with the dead plant. Most likely it was upon the table at some time. Cel, you recognise there is some pretty advanced stuff there. We're not talking like there was a smithy. We're talking like, someone was probably displaying a large amount of... like extremely complex equipment.

HELEN

Oh no...

ALEX

And in terms of the plant as an extra thing, this plant is almost like... even dead, it's still filling maybe half the height of this Chamber. It looks like... now that you've all had a bit more of a range around it, have you ever seen what happens with a plant, where it tries and germinate, and there's no light.

HELEN

Umm...

ALEX

How it grows super, super, super quick, but it sort of ends up weak, because it's using up all its resources, and winds around the place and doesn't do much.

LYDIA

Yeah, and like... the white and yellow kind of... yeah...

ALEX

That. It looks like this thing... and again I'm giving you a lot for free here, it looks like it tried to grow very, very quickly... and then like failed basically. And then has died, or something similar.

BEN

That makes a lot of sense.

BRYN

It looks like it... if you see where that watcher is almost on the throne... it's going to be quite difficult to squeeze passed it to those doors, without getting quite close to it. We could try this side corridor instead, if it's going in the same direction?

BEN

Can't hurt to look.

HELEN

Yeah, let's at least look, 'cause... we don't want more surprises.

LYDIA

I don't know about can't help to look... it could be anything really.

ALEX

So, you can see that there's a staircase that leads... seems to lead up and circle round, towards where the double doors were, although there is a watcher on one side. You recon, if you were pushed up against the opposite wall, you would be able to make it up that staircase, without being in its range.

BEN

Sounds like a plan.

HELEN

Alright. Alright.

ALEX

In which case then, give me a second...

LYDIA

Oh dear... no... whatever you're going to do... no...

BEN

No seconds...

HELEN

No seconds for you.

ALEX

Stop it. It completely changes the game... I wish you let me know no first...

BRYN

You may have six seconds...

ALEX

I have used it up, perfect. Thank you.

[Laughter]

ALEX

In which case, everyone can stop moving for one second, whilst I do some more GM stuff...

HELEN

Not the GM stuff...

LYDIA

Gross... Shouldn't be allowed.

HELEN

No...

ALEX

It's the best bit... So, you are continuing up that circular stairway, and as you do, I'm going to help you out a little bit. You see there's maybe one other watcher there, but in terms of what its actually doing, you can also navigate around that one. I'm going to reveal bosh... it doesn't appear to lead to anywhere, other than the other side of the double doors.

BEN

You word...

LYDIA

You GM you...

BEN

You absolute word...

ALEX

At which point, [sound effects]

LYDIA

The GM stuff happens...

HELEN

No...

ALEX

Please everyone stop where you are. I'm going to assume that you have spaced yourselves out accordingly.

BEN

[unclear: 31:54] Bryn...

[Laughter]

HELEN

Oh no...

BEN

Imagine if some of our characters are killed, because we enjoyed moving ourselves around the map too much. Don't move yourself back, you cheeky...

HELEN

We saw that Bryn...

BRYN

That was just... that's just convenience. I had to move two tokens, so it's convenient for them to be very close together, but Skraak is not going to let someone get that close to him.

ALEX

Now Bryn, I'm going to give you an ultimatum here Bryn. You can choose to be where you are, or where you were. Don't assume you know which is the right answer.

BRYN

Well no, absolutely. I think, in general, we're going to be at least a little bit spaced out here, and Hamid, you know, doesn't want to be... like... he's worried about Skraak and... but is not going to be overbearing, and he's also worried about Azu, so he's not going to be like going to be like going away from Azu. Like... I may well have put myself in a more dangerous position, but I think that's the more realistic one. Like I was the... where I was before, was just for like ease of moving people.

ALEX

That's fine. So Cel...

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

You, notice, as you're passing, there seems to be a slight purple glow coming from the wall, next to you, that you're sort of hugging up against. A Very, very tiny purple glow. You're not really sure where it's coming from. And just as it catches your eye, and grows a little bit lighter, it seems to almost move slightly

closer towards you and touches ever so slightly your arm. At which point, what is your AC?

LYDIA

21.

ALEX

What's your touch AC?

LYDIA

14.

ALEX

14? Perfect. Can you give me a **fort** save please?

LYDIA

Ha, ha, ha ha ha... err... Cel doesn't really do saves.

[Laughter]

LYDIA

14.

ALEX

14? OK. Cool. As the colour brushes against your... let's say like... what do you wear on your forearms?

LYDIA

So, Cel is usually dressed like a mix of... Kate McKinnon's character in Ghostbusters and Gambit...

HELEN

Yeah...

LYDIA

So it's that kind of... long jackety thing... but when they beast shape in, fluffy fur gets... comes out through some of the gaps...

ALEX

The leather, as it is brushed by this light, suddenly starts to tighten, and warps slightly...

LYDIA

Beasty noises...

ALEX

Lose its colour... and then you start feeling a searing pain on the other side of that leather... as this light, presumably is touching your skin. Dealing you... let me check... only 13 damage, as you snatch your hand away quickly. And it is... it feels both hot and cold simultaneously. It's a very odd sensation. Like your skin is almost like trying to constrict in on itself.

HELEN

Is it like liquid nitrogen?

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then... the colour disappears again. Can everyone please give me an initiative roll?

BRYN

Oh...

ALEX

... and I've got me tracker... I've got me tracker... I'm going to track so much initiative, it's going to be like... what is all this... and I'm going to be like... it's initiative... that's what it is.

[Laughter]

BRYN

We never did heal that damage, from our previous fight, did we?

HELEN

No we didn't.

ALEX

I'd allow you to have, because you were going down those stairs, for a while. I don't mind that. that's OK.

BRYN

We might well have done it, just before we entered that door, because I felt... I think we all felt that that was the moment of renewed danger.

ALEX

OK. Can I please get everyone's initiative scores?

BEN

11.

ALEX

Yep.

LYDIA

11.

ALEX

Yep.

BRYN

10, and 10.

HELEN

And 13.

ALEX

And presumably, right, that means that you go first, right? I mean that would be the sensible conclusion there right?

BEN

Well it's the only initiative you've told us. Apparently we're not fighting anything with an initiative yet. Based on the information we've been given.

HELEN

I do not allow any sensible assumptions, around you, Alex.

ALEX

You know what's really odd? I can understand how you would think that, but weirdly enough, something materialises...

HELEN

Uh-oh...

ALEX

... Beneath Cel, and starts coming up through the floor...

HELEN

Oh no...

BEN

Oh dear...

ALEX

And thus, I will now reveal to you...

LYDIA

Not good...

ALEX

MY SURPRISE!!! Didn't work... wait... wait... wait... wait... wait... I've got this...

[Group laughter]

ALEX

Wait... I've got this... wait... wait... wait... wait... I've got this...

HELEN

Laughter....

LYDIA

Helen is relaxed enough to laugh!

ALEX

I've got this... wait... wait... OK. MY SURPRISE....

BRYN

Oh my God...

BEN

Oh, it's the void...

HELEN

Oh no...

LYDIA

It's the galaxy...

BRYN

Yeah...

LYDIA

Cool...

HELEN

No it's a void...

LYDIA

A void... oh...

BRYN

It looks like a star nursery nebula to me...

BEN

Yeah, and I'm calling it a void, because we should definitely avoid it...

EVERYONE

[cheering]

ALEX

So, coming up from underneath... like literally through the stone, honestly the first thing that leaps to mind, for anyone who was there, is Rome portal vibes.

BRYN

Uh-oh...

HELEN

Oh no...

ALEX

The colouring is purple, it doesn't appear to have something on the other side of it, but it has that vibe. It is a distortion in space, that is... it has a bright lurid colour, but ultimately it is... paining your eyes to try and really see it. It's almost like someone decided to mess around with negative space, and then make it purple, you know?

LYDIA

Does it look like a migraine?

ALEX

It looks like a purple migraine.

LYDIA

Right.

ALEX

Yes, that's a good way of describing it actually. In fact, you know that sort of spot on your vision, thing, it has that effect to look at directly.

LYDIA

Err...

ALEX

It immediately sort of, reshapes itself, and then just reaches out a tendril just tries to brush across Cel's face.

LYDIA

Do I get a reflex save?

ALEX

No. What again is your touch AC, sorry?

LYDIA

It's lower than my reflex. Oh no it's higher. 14.

ALEX

It gently brushes across your face, and you again feel the extreme heat and cold pain. Give me a **fort** save.

LYDIA

Oh dear... As I said... they don't really do... saves... 17.

ALEX

OK. You take 16 damage again.

LYDIA

Ow... what!

ALEX

Do you have anything on your face that is like a piercing or, isn't magical?

LYDIA

No.

ALEX

It brushes across your face, and hurts... like really, really hurts... it may have dealt only a certain amount of damage, but the pain is very, very potent.

LYDIA

Cool.

ALEX

However, rather interestingly, it immediately disappears beneath the stone of the floor again.

HELEN

Oh no. I think it's attracted to magic.

ALEX

In which case, Azu... you are up.

HELEN

Well I can't see it, can I?

ALEX

Nope.

HELEN

Right, so if I can't see it...

ALEX

To be clear, it receded back to the ground. It didn't suddenly go invisible, it [sound effect]

HELEN

Yeah, but that essentially means the same thing to me. Personally... ha-ha... I'm just looking at spells to cast, because I can't hit it. So the only thing I can do is cast a spell, and I think the spell I will cast, will be... I'm actually... no... I'm gonna hold my turn...

ALEX

Oh... advanced tactics I see... Very well.

[Laughter]

HELEN

I don't know what is happening. So Azu is just going to be like... err... and then she's going to say...

ALEX

No, rash actions, that worsen the situation. That's what I want to see. OK. Fine.

HELEN

Azu's going to yell "Cel, you alright?".

LYDIA

No.

HELEN

Do you want to come here. I can heal you?

LYDIA

Yes.

HELEN

Alright.

ALEX

Cel, you are up then.

LYDIA

Cel flies to Azu.

ALEX

As you move, suddenly... a lash of that colour, seems to sweep out and try to go for you, as you move...

LYDIA

What kind of save do you want?

ALEX

Fort save please.

LYDIA

11.

ALEX

You take a further 17 damage, as it sweeps across your right foot. Do you wear magical footwear?

LYDIA

As of recently, where we got the new boots...

BRYN

Yeah, we all got fancy boots...

LYDIA

Yes, I think they do...

ALEX

Good. Basically let me know at any point I describe a hit, that hits non-magical stuff. Your move can continue as was normal.

LYDIA

Cool. OK. Yep. Cel's in some danger here.

HELEN

Yeah.

LYDIA

Cel is on 46 and flies over to Azu, yelping slightly, and in a slight panic, casts cure light wounds on themselves.

ALEX

OK. In that case then, Zolf, you are up.

BEN

I will cast sanctuary on myself, meaning that if something wants to attack me directly, it's going to have to pass a will save. And, say this obviously is a trap, we just need to get out. Don't try and engage this thing. And then I'm going to move into the middle of the corridor, like basically take a 5 foot step, and just like look ready to try and basically... if I can make an attack opportunity at this thing, I will.

ALEX

Understood.

BEN

I fact I will take a different sort of movement move to there... to be closer to... to like threaten squares around Cel and Azu.

ALEX

No, that makes sense. Understood.

LYDIA

Cel's [unclear: 41:05] got them 7 points back.

ALEX

Perfect. Thank you.

LYDIA

Which, you know... might... might save a life, who knows.

ALEX

As a reminder for you, Helen, at any point when a turn finishes, until it comes back round, you can insert your turn, and you will then be in that order. OK.

HELEN

Oh, in that case, after Zolf's turn, I'm going to use my turn... to heal Cel...

ALEX

Perfect, in which case... you're up.

HELEN

Yeah... I'm going to... lay on hands on you, Cel, if that's OK.

LYDIA

Cool. Yeah. They won't resist.

HELEN

OK. So, Azu's going to reach out and... she's going to say... "OK... I'm going to... let's try"... and that is 5 D6...

LYDIA

Goodness...

HELEN

You get 20 back.

LYDIA

Cool.

ALEX

Perfect.

LYDIA

Yeah...

ALEX

Anything else you're doing in your turn?

HELEN

Azu's then going to say "I agree with Zolf... Bear with me while I try and figure out if there's a way for me to move from where I am, without getting detected by the plant". OK. So I can go diagonal. So if I go diagonal, that will be 5, 10, 15, 20? OK. That's what I do.

ALEX

Perfect. You manage to avoid triggering any beasties. In which case then, Skraak is up. I'm OK with you controlling Skraak in this situation. I will do so, unless I tell you otherwise, Hamid... err... Bryn.

BRYN

Yeah... I would like to roll knowledge dungeoneering... to get a... well... I've faced lots of beasties and lots of different situations, what seems like a sensible idea.

HELEN

[Laughter] Good.

ALEX

OK. Alright.

BRYN

I don't know... basically, Alex, both Skraak's turn and Hamid's turn are going to be like... what do we do, by rolling knowledge skills, because I don't know very much.

ALEX

Give me a knowledge dungeoneering?

BRYN

That is a 20 total.

ALEX

You have no idea what the creature is, but you've got a pretty solid guess, that it's incorporeal. If it is, it means that this thing can move through walls, ceilings, floors, in the way that the rest of you are just going to have to work around, because that's your biggest takeaway, is... you aren't going to be able to take cover, using anything, because it's incorporeal. It's more like a ghost than anything else.

BRYN

Cool. I guess then Skraak moves in this direction. If we're going to retreat the long way round, but it seems that a more sensible direction to move, I hope.

ALEX

In which case I'm going to reveal that bit of the map for Skraak since Skraak is going to see it. And Hamid?

BRYN

So Hamid is going to roll knowledge arcana for a "how do I hurt this thing".

ALEX

Yep. Roll high.

HELEN

Good luck.

BRYN

Umm... umm... 21 total.

ALEX

21 total? You suspect that something like this has immunities coming out the wazzo.

BRYN

Yeah, well exactly.

ALEX

You don't know what would hurt it, but you know it's probably going to be immune to a lot of things.

BRYN

Yeah...

HELEN

Oh dear...

ALEX

Because it's not of this layer of existence.

BRYN

Yeah... and then I guess... I'm going to cast fly, on myself.

ALEX

Understood. In which case then, our new friend, who I really, really am quite enjoying right now, pokes up between Cel and Hamid. Up through the floor. It then seems to start to reach out to Hamid, but far more than with merely a little touch here, a little tap there, but just stretch out and it elongate and it just seems to fill Hamid's world as it approaches nearer.

BRYN

Oh dear...

HELEN

It's attracted to magic. It's attracted to magic.

BRYN

Yeah maybe.

ALEX

Give me a will save.

HELEN

Ahh... good luck... I hope you necked your potion, back when we reckoned that we all necked potions.

BRYN

I rolled a 3.

HELEN

Oh Bryn...

BRYN

13.

LYDIA

Bryan... ohh...

ALEX

Hey Hamid... should we take this up a notch?

BRYN

No, please no. please no.

HELEN

Don't take this up a notch.

ALEX

Hamid, you take 4 charisma drain, and you take 1 constitution drain.

HELEN

Oh god...

ALEX

[sound effects] For reference for listeners, because it's been a long, long time, ability drain reduces the relevant ability score. Modify all skills, statistics related to that ability. You might lose skill points, hit points and other bonuses. It can be healed through the use of spells such as restoration. It will not heal naturally.

HELEN

Alex, this isn't fair, because you're punishing Hamid and you're also...

LYDIA

That's so much maths...

HELEN

Oh maybe you're not punishing Bryn by making him do maths, because he might like that but...

LYDIA

No... he quite likes that yeah...

ALEX

And as you take all of that delicious drain, just delicious, drain, it doesn't move away, because you know it's just so full. It's just so full of Hamid's charisma. Num, num, num, num num... I'm going to end the episode there. This is fun. This is what I want the game to be. Yes. Good. End of episode. I hope you all are ready.

LYDIA

Alex, did the thing take your charisma as well, because we don't like you very much right now!

[Group laughter]

ALEX

It's a very hungry boy!

BRYN

I mean I guess it doesn't make me closer to dead, very much, but it does make me closer to useless, so...

HELEN

Oh dear...

ALEX

For now... bye....

EVERYONE

Bye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

ALEX

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