

## **RQG – 188 – Wibble Wobble**

### **Content Warnings**

- X
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**[Show Theme - Intro]**

**ALEX**

Hello and welcome to episode 188 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**

So, I believe, unless I'm jumping ahead you all fell out of the teleport in to various rooms dotted around the company where some people were recording remotely, yes, we got that far. Am I jumping ahead?

**LYDIA**

Yes.

**ALEX**

Reign back in, yeah.

**BRYN**

It's two meta.

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

It's two meta. Just leave us in the void where we belong.

**LYDIA**

Yes.

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

I will make my home here. It will be good.

**ALEX**

Some [idieokajema Bull ... 00:00:55]. You find yourself an enormous game over screen. You don't know how you got here.

**BRYN**

Yeah, I've got to unplug my controller and put it in the player two slot and then I can still play the game.

**ALEX**

So, I believe where we left off is a nice clearing of NPC house which made me very happy.

**BRYN**

You've still got three.

**ALEX**

Yeah, for now.

**BRYN**

Shave some of those off.

**ALEX**

I'll, I'll find a way.

**LYDIA**

I just, I can't believe you gave two characters a nice romantic beginning and then you just ... that's when you decided to, to dump the NPCs en masse. Like, it's just the fact that we're now travelling across space and time and like, Azu's like when's the second date. And Cel's like yeah I've thought of so many good pick up lines to make Barnes like embarrassed.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

It's fine we'll finish out the campaign then Azu can take all the infinity stones back and then take the long way round with Keko, it's fine.

**BRYN**

Do not speak to me of that ending.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

So, this is quite a light start for imperilled beginnings but, nonetheless. You are all currently flying through infinity or some version of wording I think was what I said. Falling in to a void, etc. and as a gentle reminder for you and listeners as part of falling through the infinite, naturally a small piece of the infinite lodges within yourself, which just so happens to equate exactly to one level.

**(Group laughter)**

How convenient is the infinite guys. Like oh my gosh, thank you infinite that's really rounding things out nicely.

**BRYN**

I see we're using the classic computer game ding moment, perfect.

**ALEX**

Indeed, indeed. Talk about arbitrary justification. This is possibly my most arbitrary and I couldn't be prouder. But, with that in mind everyone is levelling up, so I'm going to deal with that before we return in to what's happening. I am going to preface this with you have still taken damage and any new things that are coming your way, if they require like the spending of a spell slot or whatever that is empty until you rest, this is not a rest, you are falling through the infinite, it is not restful. But, it's a good idea to go through everyone quickly one at a time and check in with what your level up looks like. So, I'm going to start, if I may, with Bryn as you don't ... you also have Skraak's to discuss. So, let's get through that and what did your level up look like quite quickly?

**BRYN**

It turns out for most characters a nice level 10 is pretty easy. Skraak went from level 7 to level 8 which was also not too complicated. All the numbers increased a little bit, as they do when you level up.

**ALEX**

They went from good numbers to better numbers?

**BRYN**

Yeah. Lots of numbers went up by plus one, great. The only abilities that have changed really are Hamid gained a new spell. It is a level 5 spell. It is the spell lightening arc. It's a damage based spell, not based on fire which is an interesting new direction.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

I hate it.

**BRYN**

Also, just for the record, my spell specialisation feat gets to switch spells every two levels. And I switched it from fireball, which is now maxed out anyway, to lightening arc. So, good times.

**ALEX**

Fireball is maxed out anyway, sorcerer problems am I right?

**BRYN**

You're right, right.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

How about Skraak?

**BRYN**

So, Skraak very similarly all the numbers went up. I actually took the opportunity to re-jig a few of the skill allocations a little bit for Skraak based on what he's been using. Just a few tweaks here and there to a few numbers. His only new ability is a rogue talent which became a feat and that feat is called Death from Above, because I mean who doesn't want that. And it basically

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means that when he does his patented climbing up something, leaping off and falling on you knife first he now gets bonuses to attack rolls. Love it.

**ALEX**

Understood. In that case, well, I mean Death from Above presumably scales with how far you fall. So, if you fall through an infinite void that's a lot of damage.

**BRYN**

No, it's just a flat bonus ...

**ALEX**

Oh, what.

**BRYN**

... to the attack. It doesn't even affect damage, I mean.

**ALEX**

We'll need to come up with something where falling through the infinite gives you a boost.

**BRYN**

There's a whole second feat which he'll get the next time he gets a feat, which would give him bonus damage on that effect too.

**ALEX**

Understood, we'll push you through the infinite again then on the way back.

**(Laughter)**

In that case then, I'm gonna bounce across to Ben, you're, you're a casty type what does your level up look like?

**BEN**

Yeah, quite similar so all my saves went up by one, base attack bonus went up by one and I got a second level 5 spell slot. Given that I'm a prepare caster, that spell is currently anything in the cleric level 5 list, so, you know, watch this space, I'll need to rest to actually put something in it.

**ALEX**

And no doubt it will be horrendous.

**BEN**

Yes. Of note, actually, mentioning about skills, is I actually levelled up knowledge planes, because we've been dealing with a lot of planey things in Yerlik and we've done a lot of knowledge planes.

**BRYN**

Nice, nice.

**ALEX**

That's very sensible, that holds together.

**BEN**

It seemed to make sense. The other thing is, while looking through, I kind of updated his character sheet and re-calculated stuff and a point of order is that I've massively mucked up the number of channel positive energies he has. I was assuming that it went off of Wisdom which is a cleric spell casting stat and it's not it goes off of Charisma. So, I don't have seven channel positive energies a day I have two.

**HELEN**

I just want listeners to imagine Alex's face now. And also when we were discussing this before as we were going through the really, really crunchy stuff, checking everything was right ...

**ALEX**

I don't know what mean ...

**HELEN**

... as he realised that ...

**ALEX**

... I'm so calm.

**HELEN**

... his maps had been correct the whole way through ...

**ALEX**

I don't know what you mean. It's fine, I'm taking this news so calm and so well.

**BEN**

I'm sure there will be no large repercussions.

**ALEX**

And I'm fine that there will not be punishment in order and that I'm not just gonna resurrect a Medusa just so I can get the petrification that I deserve and that kind of thing, do you know what I mean.

**(Group laughter)**

**BEN**

Grizzop was there at the time, so Zolf had nothing to do with that. That was just Sasha stabbing it to death.

**ALEX**

That's a fair point.

**BEN**

We did have some thinking as well and I don't think the excess channel positives actually have made that much of a difference.

**ALEX**

Jokes aside, not really.

**BEN**

Yeah, the one thing ...

**BRYN**

Probably only during the show in Dungeon **Cruel**.

**BEN**

The one thing that is worth mentioning is I used two channel positives during our day in the Garden, so I'm now out. I don't ...

**BRYN**

When you say it like that it sounds silly.

**BEN**

So, yeah, so the previous fights we've just done, we didn't get any extra healing but it does mean that I don't have any healing for when we ... sorry, I don't have any channel positives, I'm still a cleric, I have loads of healing left.

**ALEX**

Loads of hit points for everyone. Share them around.

In that case then, Lydia, I'm gonna jump to you. Alchemists, they're always simple to level up with no complications or qualifiers whatsoever, so I'm assuming yours was straightforward.

**(Laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Ok, so Cel got a bunch of numbers that went up, you know, saves and attack bonus and stuff.

**ALEX**

Congratulations on your numbers.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, the things that are actually interesting are that they now have a level 4 alchemist slot though it's worth pointing out that they've got alchemical allocation and have a 4<sup>th</sup> level, like, spell as a potion which was dealt with earlier. So, that functions as a level 2 spell. So, they can do that and still have some spell slots for it. But, yes, when they've had a rest. There will be a few other things, alchemists can technically supposedly know all their extracts but they're supposed to learn them in ... they can know any extract but they have to learn them in game play. It just made sense to me that what gets added is beast shape 2. So, when they have a rest they can become more kinds of

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animals of different sizes and capabilities. Oh, yes, finally, they may not be struggling in the dark quite so much.

The other thing is that they get another discovery which is a sort of addition to ... usually its an addition to bomb stuff. I cannot be bothered with the levels of complication that most of them come with so I've just made all their bombs sticky ...

**(Group laughter).**

... which just means that any that hit directly will then do splash damage again next turn.

**HELEN**

Nice.

**LYDIA**

Oh, and I realised that they've also got access to heroism as a level 3 extract which is something that having seen Wilde do it ... I think it was Wilde that did it?

**BRYN**

Hamid's done it a few times.

**HELEN**

Hamid.

**LYDIA**

Oh, Cel stands Hamid and, you know, hence getting a dragon breath ability and like copying heroism. So, that is now in their extract book and hopefully that might mean that some of the bombs actually hits, you know because it gives an extra plus two to those roles. So, maybe that could work, maybe. You never know we can live in hope. They also have a tonne of skill points and I put a lot of that in knowledge nature because we've been looking at weird plants.

**ALEX**

Sure, it's always nice whenever I hear someone say I got loads of ranks and you don't say so I just learned 14 new languages.

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Cel, already knows a lot of languages, well I say a lot, more than I do, although they are tied to ones that I know a bit, so that, you know. I've even looked up, like gender neutral pronouns in Portuguese which is actually a really interesting topic.

**ALEX**

I'm really sorry I can't put you in Portugal.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, that's ok. Well, it would be Brazil, which is where like, or that area, which is where I've been and where Cel has been, not, not Portuguese which makes a lot of difference ...

**BRYN**

Do, they still speak Portuguese in that area as well?

**LYDIA**

... I would say historically, right, there wouldn't have been the same kind of ... what my head cannon is which I'm gonna say it as what Cel thinks has happened but Alex can say this is not necessarily the way the world works in detail, is that just as there have been a few towns of people that mostly spoke English that became trading hubs in North America, there were some Spanish and Portuguese trading centres but the history is extremely different and it is impossibly shut down at about the same time that, you know, maybe the ones in North America did.

**ALEX**

That scans, I will say, however, that linguistic history is not something I intend to be diving down, so I have less prep than I should to answer that question at this exact moment.

**LYDIA**

That's cool, there's lots of things that I've thought about that you don't need to think about.

**ALEX**

Well, the real question then is have you thought about Helen's level up because I have and I'd love to know more.

**HELEN**

What a nice Segway, thank you very much.

**ALEX**

Oh, you're welcome.

**HELEN**

Thank you. My level up is basically nothing.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

I take my Segway back then. Thank you very much.

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

I have gained some hit points, my total is ... the total of hit points I can have is now 89. So, nice plus 20. I have some extras to my ... like I got an extra 1 to Fortitude, Reflex and Will. My BAB is better, that's base attack bonus for those following along at home.

**ALEX**

Any new and shiny spells, can you perhaps grow a second iron beard now.

**HELEN**

Sadly, no. I do now have access to one 3<sup>rd</sup>-level spell. Obviously, I can't access it yet because I haven't had a sleep. But, the one I will probably use is one called prayer, which gives all of us plus 1s and all of our enemies minus 1s, which would be good. Also there is a spell that will give Topaz wings. So, I've just got that on the ...

**ALEX**

Just so you know.

**HELEN**

... yeah, just so you know, angelic ...

**ALEX**

Full [unclear 00:12:01] that's what we're going for.

**HELEN**

Yeah, yeah, very good.

**ALEX**

Understood. Well, that was very generous of the infinite, wasn't it. Goodness, I hope you're all very appreciative.

**(Laughter)**

Speaking of I believe we're all plummeting through a void of stars and galaxies and slowly feeling ourselves distributed amongst the cosmos and the plains.

**BEN**

Do we need to establish the marching order and who's holding whose hand?

**ALEX**

No, I think what we need to establish is dominance with that I'd like a Will save, Thought save and Reflex save from everyone.

**BRYN**

Oh God.

**HELEN**

This is our first recording since Christmas and this is the first thing we're having to roll, God sake.

**BEN**

Bloody hell, alright. Are we all gonna do Thoughts first or what's ...

**ALEX**

Yeah, let's all do ... let's do them in order otherwise I'm gonna have a bad day very, very quickly.

**HELEN**

Oh, we wouldn't want that for you Alex.

**ALEX**

So, what's everyone's Thought save first?

**LYDIA**

So, Cel rolled a natural 1.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**BRYN**

Oh no.

**ALEX**

That's good, thank you.

**LYDIA**

Remember they're immune to poison. I don't know if that's relevant. I hope it helps.

**BEN**

22 for Zolf's 4.

**HELEN**

17 for Azu.

**ALEX**

Uh huh.

**BRYN**

13 for Hamid and 11 for Skraak.

**HELEN**

Oh, no.

**LYDIA**

We're all gonna be sick when we come out the other end.

**HELEN**

Oh, yeah.

**ALEX**

Understood. Cool, well that was a good start. I'm very happy with Lydia.

**LYDIA**

To give you an idea of how these are going to go for Cel, I double checked that I wasn't actually rolling a D6 on my app.

**(Group laughter).**

**BRYN**

Oh no.

**ALEX**

So, can I get a Will save from everyone please.

**BEN**

Oh, this is the Will save, great. So, Zolf got a 32.

**LYDIA**

Cel got 8. Does that make you feel better?

**BEN**

See, Cel's my favourite, big fan of Cel.

**ALEX**

Yep.

**HELEN**

Azu got 23.

**BRYN**

17 for Hamid, 18 for Skraak.

**BEN**

Also, sorry Alex I just need to ask is this an emotion spell or effect or a poison spell or a spell like ability?

**ALEX**

No.

**BEN**

Ok, fine, 32 then.

**ALEX**

It's very carefully crafted, not to be. You can get all of your toys at the end of the journey or I'll turn this teleporter round.

**(Group laughter)**

I've had it up to here, you keep turning the light on in the backseat.

Ok, can I have Reflex saves from everyone please.

**BEN**

That's a 15 from Zolf.

**LYDIA**

Oh, 17 from Cel which when you count the reflex thing is 11 like that I get, yeah ... they didn't roll higher than a 6 this whole ...

**(Laughter)**

**ALEX**

Understood.

**HELEN**

Azu somehow got 23.

**ALEX**

Nice.

**BEN**

Nice.

**HELEN**

First time that Reflex or Deck save has ever gone well at all.

**ALEX**

I'm very disappointed in you, carry on.

**BRYN**

23 for Hamid, 18 for Skraak.

**ALEX**

Ok, let me just have a look at this array quite quickly.

**BRYN**

Did you role for Sumutnyerl and Wilde?

**ALEX**

Oh, Bryn, you're also now my favourite.

**HELEN**

Oh, God.

**ALEX**

Because I don't have to hit you in the face I can just hit your friends.

**HELEN**

No, that's worse.

**ALEX**

I can confirm there was at least one natural 1 within that.

**BRYN**

Goodness.

**HELEN**

Me and Wilde are stuck in the inter-dimensional space going on a side quest.

**ALEX**

This is what happens when I get denied like roles for too long. You have a lot of talky sessions so now all sessions must start with at least 20 to 40 roles. Ok, cool.

Now, I know a lot of you will be expecting ... well a reflex save that's going to control whether we can hold together but how can you hold together when you don't have hands.

**LYDIA**

Oh.

**BRYN**

Alex.

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**BEN**

(Making noise).

**BRYN**

Ben gets it.

**BEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Could I please get everyone with me on a wibble wobble, please.

**EVERYONE**

Wibblewobblewibblewobblewibblewobblewibblewobble.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Correct. I'm gonna take a break there and we can come back in on the wibble wobble. Because I really enjoyed that.

**LYDIA**

It's like super early but who gets ... like we're having a break at 15 minutes in.

**EVERYONE**

Wibblewobblewibblewobblewibblewobblewibblewobble.

**ALEX**

Thank you so much I really appreciate that.

**(Group laughter)**

Your generosity in your wibble wobbles has been noted.

**LYDIA**

Can my character live please.

**ALEX**

No.

**LYDIA**

As like just a little treat.

**ALEX**

Uh, what I would say interestingly enough is that Zolf is the first person to, let's call it, coming to. It's a bit of an understatement because it's not like you were asleep. It's more like have you ever sort of zoned out maybe when driving or something and then you zone back in where ... like you've been perfectly safe

but you're just like I ... I sort of lost time there almost, I had almost a daydream, that Zolf.

**BEN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

You realise ... you're not sure how much time has passed but you're currently in complete blackness. Do you have dark vision or just low light vision?

**BEN**

Yeah, dwarves have dark vision.

**ALEX**

So, you have true dark vision.

**BEN**

I can see up to 60 ft even in total darkness.

**ALEX**

Ah, in which case then I apologise. I am going to [unclear 00:17:03] on that slightly. You come to and you realise that, yeah, you've been daydreaming or something similar and you find yourself in a long, low stone tunnel. It appears to be worked stone more akin to a mine than you would necessarily ... compared to say a temple. So, tools have worked upon this rock but it is not fancy. You are alone.

**BEN**

Wilde? Azu? Ham ... anyone? Oh no, I mean I'm gonna like look around for any clues as to where I am is there anything I recognise?

**ALEX**

Yeah, absolutely, can you give me a broad perception check then please. Unless you want to bring any specialist stuff in.

**BEN**

No, broad perception's fine, that is a 29.

**ALEX**

29, fabulous, cool. So, this is definitely a mine of some kind. There's a perceptible slope, it's a well built mine. You can tell that there is a slope, so, it's within, sort of, acceptable range, let's call it. It's not like precipitous or anything like that. There are unlit torch brackets on the wall which could be lit should you wish. Decent mine cart track running though. It's very clear where up is, very clear where down is. It takes a moment to recognise, it feels like probably a tin mine, something similar.

**BEN**

Yeah, ok. I will start like quietly moving up because, you know, I want to get to the surface and see what's up, like, you know, where am I.

**ALEX**

Ok. Yeah, so you start moving up, there's ... obviously, it's not perfectly straight, it doesn't work like that there are slight kinks and turns and so on. But, as you move up, you hear a distant rumble. As of rock settling, it doesn't appear to be a complete massive, like cave in or anything like that but it's a gentle sort of ... just something shifting and settling. You think it's coming from up ahead from where you are walking but it's hard to tell.

**BEN**

Ok. I'm gonna be even quieter like, yeah, I, I don't know this ... you know, who's in this mine or what's going on to be honest. So, I'd rather get the drop on somebody before they get the drop on me.

**ALEX**

You start detecting the smell of smoke.

**BEN**

Ok. Given that I used to be a miner what would that normally indicate?

**ALEX**

I'm gonna give you this for free because you did a decent perception check and yeah you do have some experience. To your nose, it smells like probably either a lit torch or a ... maybe it might be like ambient torches you can get where it's like a, like an oil burner that you'd put in a room to just light the entire room, something like that.

**BEN**

Ok.

**ALEX**

You can't hear it yet but you, you've caught a whiff, which means that there is air passing through wherever you're coming towards air is coming down and bringing a scent with it.

**BEN**

Ok.

**ALEX**

Oh, apart from that by the way it's seemingly deathly silent. There's no sound of activity, no people, no moving carts, no mining of such.

**BEN**

Alright, well I'll get my glaive sort of at the ready. I'm not gonna turn it on and I'll keep approaching because I, I have to find my way out and maybe I'll have to have a fight, I don't know.

**ALEX**

That's fine. You keep going a little while longer and then you find yourself up against what seems a recent rock fall. It apparently is a dead end, blocked off completely.

**BEN**

Bloody hell.

**ALEX**

You start to hear the sound of a distant tap, tap, tapping, as of someone mining but deeper below rather than up ahead.

**BEN**

So, you mean like back the way I came?

**ALEX**

Yes.

**BEN**

Oh, I don't have shape stone, that would be really useful to have as a spell.

**ALEX**

Phenomenally so, yes.

**BEN**

I know. I wasn't expecting to be in a mine.

**(Group laughter)**

I can suppress primal magic. Are these primal rocks, are these ...

**ALEX**

They all have hyper-masculine stances. Lots of bold colours.

**BEN**

Ok, I'm not gonna like spend hours and hours. I'm gonna try and like ... cause my glaive is magic which means that it's pre to naturally hard. So, I'm gonna try and dig through this rockslide a bit. Like, is it small ... like up at the top trying to find a thing cause I, I need to get out of here.

**ALEX**

To do anything useful.

**BEN**

Yeah, exactly.

**ALEX**

That's fine. At which point then I think I'm gonna leave Zolf for a little bit.

**BEN**

Sure.

**ALEX**

So, we disappear back in to the ... back in to the ether let's call it. And then I think, oh, yeah, a minor wibble wobble please just a very minor one.

**EVERYONE**

Wibblewobblewibblewobblewibblewobblewibblewobble.

**ALEX**

Thank you. At which point then I think we're gonna go ahead and jump to, to Azu.

**HELEN**

Oh gosh.

**ALEX**

You have a similar experience. You sort of phase in almost. You are in an empty, first empty let's say, better, a wasteland, it feels familiar to you. There is a lot of decimated and destroyed buildings around you. Let's say you come to sort of facing the wall, suddenly look around. You find yourself surrounded by ruins with a particularly large ruin further ahead of you, up a slight slope. There are sounds of distant cries in this particular landscape. Non, nonsentient, think more animal cries than people cries.

**HELEN**

Ok, alright. Non-halfing cries, ok.

**ALEX**

If it's halfling cries then that is a halfling having an astonishingly bad day.

**(Group laughter)**

**HELEN**

Oh, do, do the ruins look familiar at all?

**ALEX**

Give me a perception check.

**HELEN**

Well, I've rolled a natural one. So, that is a 12 in total.

**ALEX**

No, you can't place it. The ruins stretch as far as the eye can see in all directions. I'll give you this, it's not Rome, it's bigger than Rome. Rome had hills(ish) around it, this doesn't, it's just ruins stretching as far as you can see in every direction, seemingly on the flat apart from that one raised hill which has a much larger ruin upon it.

**HELEN**

Ok, I'm out in the open yes?

**ALEX**

You're in the middle of what used to be a street, let's say at a crossroads.

**HELEN**

I'm considering summoning Topaz to give me like a better vantage point and a friend. Yeah, basically. And also I've never actually looked in to whether she makes me faster or not.

**ALEX**

I mean camels are faster than you are, yes.

**BEN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Yeah, I summon Topaz.

**ALEX**

No, what you do is you try to summon Topaz.

**HELEN**

No, don't do this to me, again.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Give me a new Will save, I haven't forgotten the old one you have a Will save on the stack. Now, we're playing games the way I like them hahaha ...

**HELEN**

Oh, you're getting back at us, ok, uh, that is a 24.

**ALEX**

24, cool. So, you put the call out as you know you do.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

You know it's worked, your magic's definitely happened. If you had to guess your call's been rejected.

**BEN**

I refuse to believe that.

**HELEN**

I think that Azu also refuses to believe that and it's just gonna be like I'm somewhere weird and Topaz loves me. So, she's gonna start heading towards ... you said there was a large ruin up ahead.

**ALEX**

Yeah, it's up a sort of slope, etc. I'd say out of all of this the actual city itself isn't Rome as you remember it but certainly that larger one is reminiscent of the centre of Rome as you remember it. It has the same kind of broad format.

**HELEN**

That's the Bank of England.

**ALEX**

It's a bit larger and a bit more, a bit more decrepit let's say.

**LYDIA**

Than the Bank of England or Nero's Palace?

**BEN**

The Bank of Nero.

**HELEN**

**(Laughter)**

**ALEX**

The Banker's Palace, there you go.

**HELEN**

Oh, right, ok ... I'm gonna head towards the Bank of Nero.

**ALEX**

Ok, in which case then I am going to jump over to I think, I think Cel.

**LYDIA**

Oh, oh, dear.

**ALEX**

Cel, the first thing that you realise is the sound of a lot of, a lot of life, and by a lot of life I mean the natural world is the first thing that you hear. And as you think about it the most that you've probably heard since your childhood.

**LYDIA**

Right.

**ALEX**

And that's quickly followed by the sound of waves and you do know where you are straightaway. You're back home, home 1.0, original home.

**LYDIA**

What State is the town in?

**ALEX**

It's not great. I'd say it's worst case scenario.

**HELEN**

Oh no.

**LYDIA**

Worst case scenario like recent worst case scenario ... like basically is it still burning ...

**ALEX**

No, no, no ... no, no, no, no, no ... something awful happened here and it happened a very, very long time ago.

**LYDIA**

I mean like 60 years?

**ALEX**

No, more than that, definitely you can just tell at a glance.

**LYDIA**

Oh, ok, so that, that's interesting cause Cel left that town while it was still burning.

**ALEX**

Uh huh.

**LYDIA**

And presumably it being a relative ... you know if ... [unclear 00:26:04]

**ALEX**

It is hard to tell but the surrounding wilderness has reclaimed this place. It could be, it could be 60 but if it is it's a ... this is a city at 60 with city miles.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, yeah, yeah ... so this is ... I mean it was abandoned and burning and so it's decayed as much as it could.

Yeah, Cel, just I think ... yeah, there would be nothing in their head for a while, this is obviously not real ... isn't quite, yeah, as you say real is a complicated construct, this is like the centre of where they don't want to be.

**ALEX**

Uh huh.

**LYDIA**

Which means that it is likely something that their psyche has constructed or has been constructed from rather than, you know, being plonked there out of all the places in all the world.

Well, might as well sight see while we're here. They walk towards the sea, I think.

**ALEX**

Ok, see what's going on in the docks, that's where you see the first body.

**LYDIA**

Oh, now that would be strange, because is it ... is it skeletal, like is this a fossil?

**ALEX**

I, I'd really love to answer you but I'm afraid I don't actually ... I do have another call on the line ...

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**BEN**

Oh, Alex.

**ALEX**

Bryn, hey, hey Bryn, hey ... you, you find yourself phasing in to pitch darkness but it's comfy. Please give me a perception check?

**BRYN**

You're in bed.

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

Are you in a hobbit hole?

**ALEX**

You open your eyes, congratulations you hit the save DC, you're alone but very safe.

**BRYN**

34 on the perception check.

**ALEX**

34.

**HELEN**

Wow.

**ALEX**

You know where you are. You're in a theatre and the lights are off.

**BRYN**

Oh, oh.

**HELEN**

Oh no.

**ALEX**

You recognise the smells, you recognise this is a seat, this is a theatre seat. You recognise the acoustics. You're in a seemingly empty and dark theatre, a large one, a very large one.

**BRYN**

I reach out to the seats either side of me and see if there's anyone in them.

**ALEX**

There is, they do not appear to be moving.

**LYDIA**

Oh, dear.

**BRYN**

Hamid takes a very deep breath. Hamid is going to attempt to cast dancing lights.

**ALEX**

Ok.

**BRYN**

He is going to attempt to do it in as subtle a way as possible and have the lights blink in to existence, you know, far enough away from him that he's not the obvious centre of the spell which I believe will require a spell craft check.

**ALEX**

So, give me that spell craft check then.

**BRYN**

20, exactly.

**ALEX**

Cool. That is sufficient.

**BRYN**

That's good I rolled a 3.

**ALEX**

You know that you've done everything correct. A blinding bright light appears directly in front of you, dazzling you for a moment. It is a spotlight, it is not the spell that you just cast.

**BRYN**

Oh dear.

**ALEX**

There is a figure stood in the centre of the spotlight.

**BRYN**

What?

**ALEX**

Where the spotlight is pointed upon the stage.

**BRYN**

Oh, I thought you implied the spotlight was upon me, ok, that's fine.

**ALEX**

No, no, no ... sorry it's, it is blinding but it's not on you it is on the stage and as your eyes adjust there is a person stood upon the stage.

**BRYN**

Who is it Alex?

**HELEN**

Who is it Alex.

**ALEX**

It's a person you recognise.

**HELEN**

Alex?

**ALEX**

It's Aziza and she's looking directly at you. She's in her performance gear as you last saw her.

**LYDIA**

Oh.

**BRYN**

Hamid swallows heavily.

**ALEX**

She doesn't look happy to see you.

**LYDIA**

Oh no.

**BRYN**

Hel ... hello. I risk a very quick eye flicker to either side if there's enough reflected light from the spotlight I should be able to get a sense of what was in the chairs next to me now.

**ALEX**

It seems to be a static and well-dressed audience.

**BRYN**

I stand up out of my seat.

**ALEX**

She speaks loud enough for you to hear. Again, it's definitely silent in there.

You bothered to come back then.

**LYDIA**

Oh!

**ALEX**

I'm going to jump across to Zolf.

**BEN**

Hello.

**ALEX**

Zolf?

**BEN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

You were, last time I checked in, trying to dig your way through the top using the glaive, yes?

**BEN**

Yeah, giving it, giving it a go.

**ALEX**

You start making good progress but as you continue you start finding heavier and larger rocks behind until eventually you're led to the conclusion this isn't, this isn't really gonna work. It doesn't quite scan though because you heard a small rockfall up ahead and you've encountered ...

**BEN**

Something that should have been ...

**ALEX**

... at first what seemed to be small but a huge cave in those two facts are completely incongruous, they don't make sense.

**BEN**

... oh right, right, not trapped down here.

**ALEX**

The tapping back the way you came has gotten a bit louder.

**BEN**

Ok.

**ALEX**

It's slow, it's not quick.

**BEN**

I'm trapped down here, there's something going on this is fine, gonna be fine. Ok, right, turn round and go towards the tapping cause I just need ... I need more information.

**ALEX**

That's fine. As you continue towards the tapping it starts to get a bit louder. And then you quickly find a side passage that you can't believe you missed when you first went up this way. The tapping seems to be coming from there. It's narrower, it seems crudely constructed versus the shaft that you've been in. The shaft that you were in has large wooden shoring, it has everything. This seems to have a narrower, almost like someone's working a natural crack in to something more. It shouldn't be here based on a mine as you understand it.

**BEN**

Ok, ok, right. No that's, that's fine, this is probably the best option, ok. And I'm gonna ...

**ALEX**

Who's that?

**BEN**

Is this a voice I recognise?

**ALEX**

It is.

**BEN**

Oh, right. It's Zolf.

**ALEX**

What, no, no it's not, no, no, no. The tapping starts increasing and, and digging more rapidly.

Zolf left. Zolf left ... tap, tap, tap, tap, tap ... it's just the voices, you ignore the voices, you keep going, you keep digging, you keep digging, it's how you get out, you keep digging.

**BEN**

Feryn?

**ALEX**

You just keep digging that's how you get out, you just keep digging. Don't think about it, you just keep digging, that's how you do it.

**BEN**

Feryn, I need you to stop digging and come out.

**ALEX**

I know it's not you Zolf. Zolf left.

**BEN**

Yes, well it seems like Zolf is back. So I need you to come out.

**ALEX**

The tapping kind of accelerates and then you hear ... ah, ah ... clearly like, he, he dropped it or stomped his thumb or something. You start hearing something shuffling, sort of closer towards your corner and slowly, like seems to be moving very slow, very dragging and a shape starts to evolve itself at the edge of your dark vision. It is Feryn and Feryn appears to have been here a long time, tatty clothing, the tools that he's carrying on his belt appeared beaten up, slightly rusted. He has sort of matted hair, it's someone who's been down here a long time.

**BEN**

Yeah. I'm quite wise, is Feryn wearing his ring?

**ALEX**

Yes.

**BEN**

Great, this isn't real. Fine, because I'm wearing his ring. So, that's ...

**ALEX**

Yes.

**BEN**

... yeah, fine. Feryn?

**ALEX**

Zolf is that ... is that really you Zolf?

**BEN**

Uh, yes.

**(Group laughter).**

Sure.

**ALEX**

What you doing here Zolf, you left.

**BEN**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

You left me here. It's been a long time Zolf, not good.

**BEN**

How long you been down here for?

**ALEX**

I don't know, long time.

**BEN**

Yeah, without food?

**ALEX**

Uh, no, there was, uh, you know boxes and that. I've had to ration of course.

**BEN**

Hmm.

**ALEX**

You look well though, healthy.

**BEN**

Yeah, you ... alright look at this point I don't know ... I don't know what's going on here. So, but you're ... look, this is not ... this isn't, I say real world, what is the real world, but this isn't ... look you're probably dead.

**ALEX**

Well, no I'm here so you ...

**BEN**

... no, you ...

**ALEX**

... if I'm head, you're dead.

**BEN**

No, well maybe, I don't know. But you, you died and you were crushed by a lot of rocks and I took this whole ... hold my hand up, I took this ring off of the only piece of you that we were able to find.

**ALEX**

I didn't, no, no ... no, no, no ... the rocks came down yeah, then I was yelling ...

**BEN**

So how am I wearing ...

**ALEX**

... always yelling ...

**BEN**

... how am I wearing this ... how am I wearing ...

**ALEX**

... you never came Zolf.

**BEN**

... how am I wearing this?

**ALEX**

How am I wearing this?

**BEN**

Well, yeah, I mean that's ... that's my question.

**ALEX**

Let me put it another way, you're saying I'm not real, I say you're not real where does that leave us? I'm saying that you left me.

**BEN**

Well philosophical is where it leave us.

**(Group laughter)**

**LYDIA**

How much family resemblance.

**BEN**

Look Feryn, I, I don't know what's going on here. I don't know if this is a hell for you.

**ALEX**

I know why I'm here. I'm here cause you left me here. Why are you here?

**BEN**

I'm here ...

**ALEX**

I'm here because I was trapped down here and you said, you said that we were there for each other and then you left me here. You left me down here alone.

**BEN**

Feryn, I'm sorry, but I've spent a long time feeling like that and I, well I mean, it would be a lie to say I don't anymore.

**ALEX**

I don't care how you feel, I care about what you did and what you did is you left me here and you did not do what you said. You said you had my back and you left me here alone, and I have been waiting for you so that you could come here so that I could tell you that.

**BEN**

Feryn, I did more than that I killed you.

**ALEX**

Then how am I here?

**BEN**

I mean I ... yeah, exactly the question here is are we in an afterlife. Are you, I don't know a reflection of my own psyche back on me. But everything you're saying, yeah, it's true. I didn't come back for you and I caused your death, like, if you're trying to guilt trip me, you've gotta up your game.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

Fabulous. I'm gonna use that as a Segway, thank you very much, Ben, really appreciate it.

**BEN**

Ok.

**ALEX**

That played out exactly as I expected, very, very happy. From that then I am going to Segway to Cel.

I believe you are someone who saw a body, yes.

**LYDIA**

Yep, who's the body Alex?

**ALEX**

Well you couldn't tell, they're skeletal.

**LYDIA**

Right, Cel ...

**ALEX**

Give me a knowledge nature.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, that's ... oh, now we're back in business, that is 19 plus 16, 35.

**ALEX**

Ok, yeah, cool, you can discern quite a lot just at a glance, one.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Nope, ok a skeleton takes a certain amount of time to come along, that's fine. This is in a perfect pose which means no elements have affected it, no high tides have come along ...

**LYDIA**

No beasties ...

**ALEX**

... no animals have come along, there's no sign of like clothing because clothing deteriorates at a different rate to, you know, flesh etc.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, yeah.

**ALEX**

There's on signs of dirt disturbance on the ground which would reflect like long-term putrefaction or anything like that.

**LYDIA**

That's cool.

**ALEX**

Odd though it is, it is definitely a real skeleton as far as you can tell, that is, that is a real skeleton but it can't be what it seems to be because that's impossible.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, let me, Alex, given this may be the only chance in my life to properly role play Temperance Brennan, can I tell sex, age and species, as in Elf, Human, etc.

**ALEX**

Now knowledge nature doesn't quite work like that to the level of you having medical expertise ... I would say that ...

**LYDIA**

I want to be a forensic anthropologist Alex.

**ALEX**

... you can, you tell the following [unclear 00:39:04] quite high actually on a knowledge nature, that is an elvish skeleton.

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

You would guess female.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, so these things are always within ranges but, yeah.

**ALEX**

You would guess female. In terms of how long it's been there though you have a bit of a problem because, would you like to know how long that skeleton looks like it's been there ...

**LYDIA**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

... based on the context or the skeleton? The skeleton appears to have been there at least 60 years. The context, I don't know, a week, max.

**LYDIA**

Yeah, what I'm enjoying is that like Zolf is wise, Cel is not, Cel is intelligent. So, Cel is looking at this as an analytical problem, right, like there is no way that in New Greenwich, as it was left burning that an elvish skeleton would be here in this situation. There's no emotional attachment here in such a way ... like there's no, there's no person this could be.

Cel sort of mumbles to themselves ... I mean there's a few, there's a few people that died but ... I mean they died because of the megafauna coming, so like they wouldn't be here just lying as if ... like what, it's like someone laid out a skeleton for me to find, like who is this supposed to be?

**ALEX**

Give me a perception check.

**LYDIA**

Ok. Oh, that is 24.

**ALEX**

Ok. I'm gonna give you two facts then. One, they seem to be ... if your guess is correct, and given what you're just concluding out loud, they seem to have been trying to make their way to your lab. A second thing that you noticed though is you hear a distant ringing.

**LYDIA**

Like a bell?

**ALEX**

Like a bell, yeah.

**LYDIA**

Ok.

**ALEX**

Slowly chiming further along the ... basically further along the beach.

**LYDIA**

So, so I mean I suppose like, I mean Ma would have known that my stuff would have been left here so maybe if she told someone, someone could have come to loot, because I mean some of the stuff I ... and they're mumbling to themselves as they're walking towards where the bell's ringing.

**ALEX**

Very, very quickly you turn a ... I was gonna say a corner, yeah, beaches, well known for their corners, beaches. You cross a bluff, let's say you bring in a new stretch of shoreline in to view. There is a wrecked ship upon the beach.

**LYDIA**

Is it the ship that their fiancée left New Greenwich in?

**ALEX**

Yes. There are a few more skeletons near the vessel in various poses.

**LYDIA**

This is a comprehension kind of exercise but yeah, I'm gonna walk towards this and see ... like what, are you ... why would you come back, what the ... begin to jog to get there quicker.

**ALEX**

Uh huh. There's quite a few skeletons surrounding the vessel. As you draw near they all appear to have fallen where they were sat or whatever. They appear to be sharing a meal.

**LYDIA**

Cel does ... what I'm doing right now which is like massage their forehead and like frown intensely, like, ok, who, whoever's made this, doing ... doing this to me ... and they are shouting without any caution to being heard by any beasties around or enemies ... like, I, I'm just gonna need more clues about what ...

**(Laughter)**

... what I'm supposed to feel because this doesn't, this doesn't make any sense, like are ... why would they come back, they were fleeing, they were fleeing and I know they didn't come straight back because it took me time to bury the bodies of the people that were left. Right, like I was here for a while, they did not come back, there is no reason that they would come back right like that ...

**ALEX**

You hear the sound of fluttering paper.

**LYDIA**

... Oh, some ... cool, someone has sent a clue.

**(Group laughter)**

**ALEX**

You perceive, you'll get this off the last role, don't worry about it ... one of them appears slumped over something that they were writing. As you say the words clues you notice this, it's not ... it spontaneously appears.

**LYDIA**

Ok, great. How suspiciously convenient interdimensional psyche. Please don't make me back here ... like I left, like they're ok, just let me believe that they left. Don't do this ... like picks up the bit of paper thanks for the clue but do I ... ok, you know I'm curious, you, me, me, if this is me, I hate me ...

**(Group laughter)**

... you know I'm curious, you know I won't stop but you, you also know that I'm not gonna sit here and wallow in guilt until I know what is happening because I ...

**ALEX**

You look at what's on the paper.

**LYDIA**

Yes.

**ALEX**

It's cyphered.

**LYDIA**

Right, ok, shall I roll to work that out just a raw intelligence check?

**ALEX**

Or linguistics if you've got it.

**LYDIA**

Yes. Not much training in it though. I talk a lot. Oh, 24.

**ALEX**

So, you put your mind to the task, it's a nice distraction, it's something that is tangible that can be worked on and dealt with. It's a fun little cypher, takes a moment and then you recognise it.

**LYDIA**

Oh.

**ALEX**

This is a cypher that you used to play around with, with Haley and the second that you realise that it's very easy to basically, almost on the fly, decrypt what's written and it's a diary entry.

**LYDIA**

Right, again, suspiciously useful, what does it say.

**ALEX**

Day 37 still no sign. I have to keep looking. I am going to jump to Brinicus Maximus, otherwise known as Hamid in a giant horrible theatre. You are currently stood surrounded by a static audience looking at a disapproving sister ... well not disapproving, disappointed sister.

**BRYN**

Well, I, like, what, come back, but this isn't ... what?

**ALEX**

Why are you here Hamid?

**BRYN**

I have no idea, this ...

**ALEX**

I'm surprised you can even show your face.

**BRYN**

This doesn't seem entirely real, what ... where exactly are we, what, what was the last interaction we had from your perspective?

**ALEX**

So, it was that unimportant to you, you didn't even bother to remember the details?

**BRYN**

So, I don't think we got here from the same places. I think we might be outside of time or maybe in an illusion.

**ALEX**

Would you come up here Hamid please.

**BRYN**

Sure, ok.

**ALEX**

Presumably you do so.

**BRYN**

Yeah, I, I politely pass through all the other people and head off on to the stage.

**ALEX**

As you start looking at all the other people you realise they're not actually people. They're just very well crafted mannequins.

**LYDIA**

This isn't Magnus Alex.

**(Group laughter)**

**BRYN**

That's creepy ...

**HELEN**

I was just thinking that.

**ALEX**

They're all still, they're not moving or whatever but they're just well crafted mannequins, every single one.

**BRYN**

As I'm walking up the aisle towards the stage I reach down to my side and just try very gently to see if my bag of holding opens.

**ALEX**

It does not. Good test though, I'm actually quite impressed, clever.

**HELEN**

Very good, also Hamid is so much calmer than I would expect, well done Hamid.

**BRYN**

I mean he's processed a lot, he's come to terms with some of his past trauma.

Aziza it's, it's really nice to see you.

**ALEX**

Is it.

**BRYN**

Well from my perspective you're dead and I didn't think I would ever get to see you again, so, yes.

**ALEX**

Why am I dead Hamid?

**BRYN**

The, I mean ...

**ALEX**

I think we're both here for the same reason, don't you?

**BRYN**

I don't know why I'm here, so, I don't know what that reason might be.

**ALEX**

Let's go through it.

She sits down and pats the stage next to her.

**BRYN**

I'll sit down with her. How are you doing?

**ALEX**

It seems to me that I'm here because you let me die. It seems to me that if I'm here for that reason you're probably here for that reason as well.

**BRYN**

I mean, no, Aziza, I ... this will always be one of the worst days of my life, losing you was ...

**ALEX**

Of your life!

**BRYN**

... awful. But, I didn't let you die, I went up more or less solo against one of the most powerful wizards to ever exist and he took away my ability to act, this ... I wish something could have been different, I wish so much that I could have done more but I did the best I could. There's a lot in my life ...

**ALEX**

The best you could ...

**BRYN**

... I regret, there's a lot of ...

**ALEX**

... the best you could. Because that's enough.

**BRYN**

... mistakes I've made but ...

**ALEX**

Because trying hard is enough.

**BRYN**

... yes.

**ALEX**

The world doesn't care about how hard you try, it cares whether you do or you don't and you did not.

**BRYN**

I, I know that Aziza but that doesn't mean you stop trying and it doesn't mean you berate yourself for the times where the best you could do wasn't enough.

**ALEX**

So what, you're just, you're just over me then, really ...

**BRYN**

Never.

**ALEX**

... that easily?

**BRYN**

Never, how could you think that, of course, I'm not. I think about you every single day. I ... but that doesn't mean that ...

**ALEX**

She starts to cry.

**BRYN**

... oh, Aziza

**ALEX**

Then, why didn't you do more, if you care that much you should have done more, when you could.

**BRYN**

I wish so vehemently that there were possibilities and I'm so sorry. I throw my arms round her and bring her in for a hug.

**ALEX**

I am gonna use that to Segway across to Helen.

**HELEN**

Ok, alright.

**ALEX**

Strap in.

**HELEN**

I'm strapped.

**ALEX**

So, Helen you were approaching a large sort of ruined building correct, up the hill?

**HELEN**

Yes.

**ALEX**

You start to recognise the avenue that you're walking up.

**HELEN**

Uh huh, and ...

**ALEX**

It does have a certain Roman vibe but it is bigger, it does look worse off. It's like someone hit the ruins of ancient Rome's catastrophic collapse with a stick. You continue to make your way up, yeah, you recognise where you are, you've been here before. And then before you realise it you're stood facing a very familiar chamber.

**HELEN**

Is it the chamber that the gate spell was in?

**ALEX**

Yeah, actually. The gate spell's not there though, it looks to be closed.

**HELEN**

Good.

**ALEX**

But there is someone there.

**HELEN**

Who's the someone, Alex?

**ALEX**

They're quite short.

**HELEN**

Ahhh!

**(Group laughter)**

That was not meant to be an impression but ...

**ALEX**

They don't seem to have noticed you're there yet.

**HELEN**

Azu says Grizzop?

**BEN**

Grizzop turns round.

**HELEN**

**(Laughter)**

**BEN**

Oh, it's you.

**HELEN**

Yes it's me and it's, it's you, hi, hello.

**BEN**

What are you doing here?

**HELEN**

I don't know, I don't ... well I'm not dead because Aphrodite isn't here and you would be with Artemis so ...

**BEN**

You think so, but I'm here, aren't I.

**HELEN**

Uh, well you, you were very devout to Artemis so, yes, you should be with her, so I don't know why you're here.

**BEN**

Well, Artemis is with me.

**ALEX**

And he picks up his bow and the arrow lights on fire and he fires it at your feet.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**ALEX**

And the burning arrow sticks in to the ground like next to your foot.

**HELEN**

Interesting. Azu's gonna try and pick it up. Can she do that, is that fine?

**ALEX**

Unless, I'm mistaken Ben, you'd be able to pick up the arrow but ...

**BEN**

Yes, it's just an arrow, it's like the attack is augmented by the thing but once you've shot it's like it's just an arrow.

**ALEX**

There's no, there's no magic there or anything like that, it's just an arrow as soon as you touch it.

**BEN**

Yeah, yeah, it's a normal arrow which is empowered, so.

**HELEN**

Ok, Azu's picking it up to check that it's actually real and she can interact with it.

**BEN**

It is real, we've had this before haven't we, remember, I was always able to talk to Artemis. You know, cause I'm good at what I do.

**HELEN**

Yeah, you are ...

**BEN**

... your connection's a bit fritzzy, innit?

**HELEN**

Well that's not really my fault, that's what Rome's like.

**BEN**

Alright, well go on. Call Aphrodite now, prove it. I'll keep calling on Artemis and he'll be fine cause I've got faith, but do you?

**HELEN**

Yes.

**BEN**

Really, cause if you have faith maybe you wouldn't have let go.

**BRYN**

Oh.

**HELEN**

That is not fair.

**BEN**

Isn't it?

**HELEN**

No.

**BEN**

Cause I'm trapped here now because of you. We can talk about what's fair and what's not but what happened is I'm here, where now you are, maybe you just got what you deserved.

**ALEX**

Oh, and that is an out.

**(Group laughter)**

Sorry Helen.

**HELEN**

I forgot how mean Grizzop could be ...

**BEN**

Sorry, Helen.

**LYDIA**

He's such a meanie.

**ALEX**

It's so much better to give you the hammers to hit each other with ... oh God.

**BRYN**

I can't breathe ... this is not Ben as a player character, this is Ben as a puppet ...

**ALEX**

This is Ben as my champion. Challenging Helen to emotional single combat on my behalf, I love it.

**HELEN**

Well, I'm gonna win.

**ALEX**

Right, well I wanna know what's gonna happen next. We have the luxury of being able to play after this whilst everyone else has to wait. Thank you for facilitating my evil Ben, we'll see more of it next week.

**BEN**

Sorry.

**HELEN**

Yes we will.

**ALEX**

Strap in and apologies it's not nice but sometimes it has to go this way, look after yourselves and we'll see you all next week.

**EVERYONE**

Bye.

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

**ALEX**

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