

Episode 9 - Too Much to Manage

Scientist: I can't believe the Gremlin has been in the Hotel infirmary for a whole week.

Brian: Yes, but you did warn him not to eat all of those spooky day sweets in one night.

Demon: Well, he didn't eat all of them. I stole a bag of crunchy milk bites.

Scientist: Well those don't sound pleasant. I much prefer a sugared almond bar. I also may have helped myself to one from Gremlin's stash.

Demon: Nice! High five.

Brian: I cannot believe you two! You can't go around stealing sweets from a little Gremlin. Besides, the best sweets are obviously aluminium zingers.

Scientist: Not that you snuck into the Gremlin's cupboard nest and took a bag while he was sleeping or anything.

Brian: Hot drinks break anyone?

Demon: Oh! I'll have a pint of sap from the endangered elephant oak tree. There's only two left, I'm planning a holiday next year to go and burn them down.

Brian: Lovely as always, Demon. And it goes without saying I don't have any sap.

Demon: Well, I'll have a rooibos tea then. That's not dissimilar to a tree.

Scientist: Difficult to argue with that logic. I'll have a small black coffee with 11 shots of espresso please Brian.

(Door bursts open)

Gremlin: Sirs! They're here. The Management!

Theme Tune

Brian: Oh no, are you still not feeling well, Gremlin? You're starting to sound like Albert.

Sci and Gremlin: We sound nothing alike! Anyway, moving on.

Scientist: Gremlin, stop it.

Gremlin: Okay Sir. What was I saying?

Demon: Uh, the management.

Gremlin: Oh, yes! Well I was walking back through the corridors, having a lovely stroll and then something really interest-

(Door opens... ominously)

Management: Dust on the doorframe, window ajar. This place is a mess, Albert. You should really put your little entourage to work tidying up the place.

Scientist: Oh Evelrah, they're actually here. Demon, don't say anything, Gremlin you need to be quiet too. This is really important, okay?

(Clears throat)

Scientist: Greetings Management, thank you for gracing our room with your watchful presence. We a-

Management: You can skip the formalities, Scientist. We shan't be penalising you... for that infraction at least. We assume you know why we're here.

Brian: Albert, what have you done?

Management: You're several years behind on the rent Albert. We were willing to let it slide as you have contributed some... interesting inventions during your tenure here, but after you and your little clique incited a fire that caused thousands of moneys worth of damages to our lobby, I'm afraid we can no longer be lenient with you. We expect the full sum of moneys by sundown, or you are no longer welcome in Hotel Elsewhere.

Scientist: I don't have that many moneys. Look, I'm sorry. You don't have to do this. You know I'm good for it. Just give us a couple of weeks.

Brian: Yes, I'm sure we can come up with the moneys.

Demon: Shall I cast a spell at them, Scientist? Unholy daggers of festering wounds maybe?

Gremlin: Sir! It's okay! I was given one money by the lovely biscuit ladies. We could put that down as a deposit!

Management: Albert, can you please ensure your pets refrain from their incessant chattering?

Scientist: I'm sorry. It won't happen again.

Management: Now Albert, we are famously a firm, but generous managerial team. If you do not have the moneys on your person, then we are willing to make a deal with you. We are kind enough to extend to you the offer of work. If you are unfamiliar with the concept, all you have to do is sign a contract with us and perform a few little tasks that we are simply too busy looking after the wellbeing of the guests to complete. What do you say?

Scientist: No. Absolutely not.

Management: Alright, fine. Then you can retrieve a trinket for us. A one time deal. No contracts, no strings attached. Go and fetch an item that has been stolen from the Hotel grounds, and return it to us. As you well know, Hotel artefacts can be very dangerous outside of these walls.

Scientist: I am not going to get you some kind of evil, cursed-

Management: Albert, no matter what you think of us, the safety of the Hotel residents is our primary concern. Do you know of anyone who has ever come to harm here?

Scientist: Well, I mean I guess I've never heard of anything fatal, just very very unpleasant.

Demon: We killed that monster!

Management: Is that what you think? Poor innocent beast, it was just frightened and confused. Fortunately we nursed it back to health. What do you say Albert, help out your fellow residents, help us maintain order, and help yourself in the process. A good deal, no?

Scientist: Brian?

Brian: I don't know, Albert. The probability of this being a legitimate deal, or of us being betrayed, is shockingly even.

Gremlin: Follow your heart, Albert! We trust you.

Scientist: Okay. We'll do it. A one time deal, no contracts, and then we're square. Forever. Do you understand?

Management: Perfectly. The item in question is rather innocuous. A snowglobe, an effigy of the Hotel. It was crafted by some wizards who lived here long ago, a harmless trinket, but one with magical potential. It has been stored in the tower of the collapsed city of Tezzaria for quite some time. There is a magical seal that prevents us from sending you directly to the tower, but we'll get you as close as we can. Take this enchanted chalk, and draw a door when you have recovered the globe, and you will be able to step straight back into this attic. Any questions?

Scientist: Many.

Management: You're a smart man Albert, you'll figure it out.

Scientist: And we will need somebody to look after the attic whilst we're gone. I could do without having all of our possessions stolen.

Management: Very well. We will get that sorted for you. Now, you best be going, time is not on your side.

(Door opens)

Gremlin: That's not the corridor.

Demon: Teleportation door. Nice, that's some powerful magic. Gotta admit, I'm kinda impressed.

Management: Please can you get on with it.

Scientist: Alright fine, now or never.

Gremlin: Sir. Can we hold hands while we go in?

Scientist: Yeah, of course we can buddy.

Brian: Alright gang, three, two, one.

(Teleportation Woosh)

Gremlin: I feel queasy.

Scientist: Yes, your first time teleporting is never pleasant. Sorry for not warning you Gremlin, but I didn't have much of a chance.

Brian: Are you alright, Scientist?

Scientist: No Brian, I'm stressed. I'm really rather stressed.

Brian: Did you still want your small black coffee?

Scientist: I am in no fit state for caffeine. Right, so where are we? What's this building?

Gremlin: Oh! I bet it's a swimming pool for flamingos.

Scientist: Brian?

Brian: Well it appears to be a large cliff face which spans up to approximately 2000ft, with a doorway and pillars built right into the rock. The detailing work is rather excellent, and there appears to be a motif of stars running across the frame. Famously this is a trademark design from the Galapatian era of the Aecorox Empire. We are very far from home Albert.

Demon: Alright, thanks for the history lesson, but what actually is it? I bet it's a torture chamber.

Gremlin: It's a swimming pool for flamingos.

Demon: Bet you five moneys it's a torture chamber.

Gremlin: Hoist me onto a lifeguard, because that's a deal.

Scientist: What?

Brian: No gambling! Being careless with moneys is how we got into this whole mess in the first place. According to my scan, the building itself appears to be an entrance chamber to an ancient city. Once referred to as the Passage of the Chain, it was sealed shut to protect the citizens of the city, when it was invaded by... hm, that information seems to be redacted from the database. The fate of residents was unknown, but with no access to food and water, we can assume their rations soon ran dry and-

Scientist: So it's a tomb?

Gremlin: Yikes.

Brian: I think it's worth accepting that once we find a way into the city, we may be subjected to some sights that none of us want to see.

Scientist: By the Raven's Talon. Gremlin, you don't have to come in with us. You can wait outside if you want to.

Gremlin: That's alright Sir! I've seen things. We set the monster on fire, I fell off the roof. The ship went down!

Demon: If I have to hear about this shipwreck one more time, I'm going to set you on fire.

Brian: Shall we get on with it.

Scientist: Let's do it. All hands on the door, and push.

(Pushing sounds and grunting)

Scientist: Alright we are not getting this open. Any idea on what we could do here Brian?

Brian: Well, if we can find something to leverage the door with then we ca-

Demon: [Spell chanting] Listen here, and listen well. For you must obey. For no door shall be closed to me, not tomorrow, not today. I call my powers straight from hell, fade to shades of grey. My power is my only key, and even shadows must give way.

(Spell flair)

Brian: Oh yes, the Demon has horrible magic. I always forget that.

Scientist: I try to block it out.

Demon: Once again, you're welcome.

Gremlin: Onwards, to adventure!

Brian: You might want to put the brakes on the adventuring for just one moment, Gremlin. We're getting a call on the portable transmitter.

Demon: Is it the management?

Brian: I don't know Demon, I'm not a radio psychic.

Radio: Incoming transmission from The Scientist, in the Attic.

Stanley: Hello there, It's me, Alan Acksworth, commonly known as the Scientist! Only pulling ya leg, it's me, Stanley. I've had quite the day, let me tell you. There I was, minding my own business, playing a couple of games of squash with old man Yellow Bones, only a casual game mind. Cats for rackets, using a chest of drawers for the ball, you know the type. Anyway, I was up 12 points to 30 when we started seeing this insidious black sludge leaking in through the vents in the ceiling, which was not ideal if I'm being totally honest. Next thing we know, the door has been thrown open, tentacles had dragged away old man yellow bones, and I was being descended upon by one of those management suit thingies. You know the type. Anyway, they told me you needed somebody to watch the attic whilst you were out running errands, threatened to take away my kids if I didn't help, so. Here I am. I guess I'll keep you updated.

Scientist: Stanley, Thank you. I'm so sorry they got you involved.

Stanley: Yeah. Yeah, well it is what it is.

Brian: We really do need to get this figured out before things get even more out of hand, let's do this.

(Walking footsteps)

Scientist: Well, I'm not going to lie, I was expecting more from the Passage of the Chain. It's just some statues. Not very good statues. I guess that used to be a desk.

Gremlin: Look up Sir!

Scientist: Oh my Evelrah. Are those... stars? Indoors? Real stars? It's beautiful.

Brian: They're not stars. It's an amethyst reserve. There must be some kind of gap in the cliff above that is filtering sunlight down directly onto the ceiling, making the rock formation shimmer like the stars.

Demon: Sunlight can't travel for 2000 feet through a little gap in a cliff.

Brian: You'd be surprised how resilient nature can be, Demon.

Scientist: Alright, so what are we doing here team. I don't see any door.

Demon: Wow, well if you're all going to be totally useless I can just use another spell. Oh, there's an antimagic ward on the cliff. Rats! Evil, scary rats.

Brian: And there is no further information about this area on the database, so I'm afraid we will have to do this the old fashioned way. Logic and perseverance.

Gremlin: And the power of friendship.

Brian: Whatever makes you happy. So I feel as though we can safely assume that there will be some sort of puzzle we will need to complete in order to reveal the entrance to the city. As the statues and the amethyst stars are the most prominent motifs in the room, presumably they hold the key to figuring everything out.

Scientist: Alright, me and Gremlin will check out the statues on the left, you two check out the statues on the right.

(Foot steps.)

So over here we have what looks like some sort of army general. He's missing an arm. Oh wait, no it's just here on the floor. I guess they've taken some damage over the years. He's got his eyes closed, and his sword is still in its sheath. He looks... sad. I don't know, I'm completely lost here. How are we supposed to figure out what we have to do with no clues and a dozen worn down statues?

Demon: Well, I don't know about you guys, but I've hit the jackpot. Look at this statue, the bulging muscles, the huge fangs. It actually reminds me a lot of my cousin. They're a wrath demon, it's a pretty big deal. Maybe it will come to life and tear out the Gremlin's entrails!

Gremlin: I'm scared Sirs, can we hold hands again?

Scientist: A little busy right now Gremlin, be brave.

Gremlin: Well my statue looks really nice. She has these long plaits, and a metal helmet with some horns. She has a big shield too. I bet she'd protect me from the horrible wrath demon. You'd protect me wouldn't you? Can I hold your hand? I'm going to hold your hand now.

(Rocks Grinding)

Gremlin: Sirs! Something is happening! There's a light flooding in from the ceiling.

Scientist: Oh my Evelrah, well done Gremlin. You never fail to surprise me pal. Okay. Do not let go of the statue. Any ideas what to do now?

Demon: Nope. Any puzzle that involves holding hands with something is far too lame for my tastes. If you need me I'll be taking a power nap.

Brian: Okay let's assess the facts. The light wants us to focus on this statue that Gremlin has befriended. What do we know about her? She doesn't seem to obviously stand out from the other statues.

Scientist: Well, she's a warrior, and the guy I was looking at was also a warrior. Maybe there's a connection there. I'll go hold his hand.

(Walks over)

Nope, nothing. Ugh.

Demon: I'm still not getting involved, but she does have her eyes open, and all the others have their eyes closed.

Brian: Well not all of them. The one I was looking at earlier also had their eyes open. Anyway, perhaps this is a reference to a lesser known battle that occurred 273 years ago.

Scientist: Bri, I think we're entering the overthinking zone.

Brian: Yes, I have been known to overcomplicate things. Alright, the eyes.

Gremlin: They're looking at each other. The statues are looking at each other.

Demon: Perhaps they're mortal enemies.

Scientist: I thought you were asleep?

Demon: You're pretty loud.

Brian: Right, I'm going to hold this statue's hand. She appears to be some sort of noblewoman, flowing dress, flowers in her hair. Rather beautiful really. May I take your hand, fair maiden?

(Rocks Grinding.)

Brian: Marvelous, this statue has also been highlighted by the brighter light. We really are rather clever, aren't we?

Scientist: I still don't see a door though. So what does the light symbolise? Is it just to highlight the statues?

Brian: Now you mention it, the light is a strange shape. If you look up it's in a sort of x shape.

Scientist: Or a cross.

Gremlin, Brian and Sci: Star crossed lovers!

Demon: Lame.

Gremlin: Okay, can we bring them together. That would be so cute. Like, so cute.

Scientist: There is absolutely no way we are going to be able to move these things, and the Demon's magic doesn't work in here, remember?

Brian: Well, the term star crossed lovers originated in a play of classic literature, so perhaps there will be a clue in the script. I can download the audiobook version from smuggler's dock, and we can trawl through it until we find the answer we need.

Scientist: You are absolutely banned from smuggler's dock.

Gremlin: Maybe they just need a hug?

Brian: Don't let go of her hand Gremlin! We don't want to undo all of our progress.

Scientist: This is exhausting.

Gremlin: I know what to do! This is called the passage of the chain right? So what if we all hold hands like a daisy chain and then we can bring them together with the power of friendship!

Brian: That's actually not a bad idea, Gremlin.

Scientist: Demon, up and at 'em! We need you on hand-holding duty.

Demon: Ugh. You people are the absolute worst.

Gremlin: Scientist, you have sweaty palms.

Scientist: I'm very stressed, Gremlin.

Demon: Your hand is so cold, Brian. And not bone-chillingly cold, just irritatingly cold.

Brian: I'm made of metal Demon. Is somebody a little grouchy after their nap?

Demon: No comment.

Scientist: Okay gang, does anybody else see the obvious problem here?

Gremlin: We don't have a pet puppy?

Scientist: Well, no. Though a puppy would be pretty cute I guess. Anyway, the problem is that we are never going to reach each other.

Gremlin: We're two daisies short of a chain.

Indigo: Did you know that daisies are weeds? Weird right. I think they're lovely.

Ignacious: I prefer roses myself. Beautiful to the eye, deadly to the touch. A traitorous flower hidden in plain sight.

Indigo: Weirdo. Oh! You know what was good, that enchanted crystal tulip we recovered from the endless desert of collapsing dunes.

Ignacious: Of course, it would have been better if we had managed to find a buyer for the blasted thing. Who knew that crystal flowers was such a niche market.

Scientist: I'm sorry, who are you two?

Gremlin: There's no time for introductions Sir! Listen carefully you two, you need to hold our hands. Right now.

Indigo: Oh neat, sounds fun. Mind if I take your hand, stranger. Nice glasses, are those bifocals?

Scientist: Yes, of my own design actually. I'm sort of a genius.

Brian: Don't you dare start flirting now!

Scientist: Right.

Ignacious: I presume this means I'm lumbered holding hands with the terrifying looking little one.

Demon: You're not so hot yourself, buddy.

Indigo: And I suppose that means that you and I are holding hands too.

Ignacious: Ugh, this is so weird.

Indigo: Shut up and hold my hand.

Ignacious: Fine.

(Stone scraping)

Gremlin: We did it! Happiest of days! The wall is falling away Sirs. What will it reveal. I'm so excited. Will it be a swimming pool for flamingos? I'm so sure it is.

Scientist: It has revealed another door. Great. Can we go home now?

Indigo: Surely brave adventurers like you aren't put off by a simple hidden door?

Brian: Well I wouldn't exactly describe us as adventurers. More, incredibly unlucky.

Ignacious: A dangerous business to be in if Lady Luck isn't on your side, tin man.

Brian: I am not a man, also I am mostly comprised of an aluminium alloy. My name is Brian, pleased to make your acquaintance.

Gremlin: Oh! And I'm the Gremlin! I'm your friendly technical Gremlin.

Demon: I'm a demon. Obviously. You've probably heard of me.

Scientist: Albert Ackintosh, colloquially known as the Scientist, and to repeat my earlier question, who are you two?

Indigo: Oh, we have something planned for this! 1, 2 3, 4.

Ignacious: With the heart of a lion, and a fiery passion, I am Ignacious Blastwind!

Indigo: With the soul of a hawk, and a simmering wit, I am Indigo Blastwind!

Ignacious: Seeking treasure, danger and adventure

Indigo: Recovering artefacts to preserve them forever

Ignacious: Overcoming all challenges that we've faced together

Indigo: Outstandingly brave and exceedingly clever

Igny and Indy: We are the adventure twins!

Scientist: Well I was absolutely not prepared for that.

Gremlin: Bravo! This is the best show I've ever seen!

Demon: Yeah, you're deeply talented thespians. But who actually are you?

Indigo: The Adventure Twins. We uh, look for treasure and delve into old ruins and stuff. It's actually pretty cool.

Ignacious: That's why we're here. We've gotten some good intel from a certain snowglobe collecting client that there is a particularly special piece somewhere in Tezzaria

Gremlin: That's what we're looking for too!

Ignacious: Oh, well that could be an issue.

Indigo: Don't be silly Igny, we can split the profit.

Ignacious: Fine, whatever you say Indy.

Scientist: So, adventure twins, what are we looking at?

Indigo: Hah, this is a classic puzzle door. Don't you see the runes inlaid into the stonework? Right, what are we working with here?

Ignacious: Well, there's the group of farmers in the bottom right corner, and what appears to be a harvest moon at the top here. There's a convexing butterfly switch in the center, and it seems like there might be a ravine carved in here that could fill with some kind of liquid.

Scientist: Okay Gang, huddle in. Anybody have any initial ideas?

Gremlin: Well, I like butterflies, they are very cute. Perhaps all we need to do is be cute and flap our arms like wings and then it will open!

Demon: Indescribably terrible idea Gremlin. There are farmers there, and a harvest moon. Sounds like classic sacrifice territory to me. Brian, you take Indigo and I'll jump Ignacious.

Brian: Sorry Demon, I'm afraid we still don't sanction murder. I'm not sure how many times I need to tell you this. Besides, we should be focusing on the ravine. There are mechanisms that have been used throughout history that use a complicated system of pistons that would need some kind of cooling fluid. If we look back to the early days of industrial farming, then a certain breed of corn springs to mind. If we think of inventors whose names are a palindrome of this specific breed of corn, then I thi-

Indigo: We've solved it!

Scientist: Oh, right. Well. Good.

Ignacious: Move this here, and there we go! It's opening.

(Lock clunk, door shifts open)

Scientist: Holy snapping turtles...

Brian: The lost city of Tezzeria.

Gremlin: It's so... so...

Demon: Sandy? Dilapidated? Tragically underwhelming?

Scientist: Big. And, y'know, ruined.

Brian: The wizard tower is pretty obvious at least, it really does tower over the rest of the buildings. Little bit of mechanical humour there.

Indigo: What are you waiting for, there's treasure afoot!

Gremlin: Yeah, come on gang, let's go get us a snowglobe!

End

This broadcast has been brought to you by Hotel Elsewhere, scripted under candlelight. Featuring Eddie Lear as the Scientist, Lu Spicer as Brian the Robot, Matthew Beacham as The Gremlin, and Abigail Hackwood as The Demon, guest starring Toby Saddleton as Stanley the Geezer and introducing Nickey Van Tooren as Indigo, and Will Wade as Ignacious. All additional voices provided by featured artists. Audio Engineering and Original Music by Eddie Lear. Artwork by Abigail Hackwood. If you enjoyed this adventure, please consider subscribing to our Patreon at patreon.com/hotelelsewhere. Thank you for listening!