

Rusty Quill: Into the Spider Curse

Content Warnings

- Arachnophobia
- Spiders & cobwebs
- Unreality/parody
- Insects

Mentions of: death (inc. insect death)

SFX: continuous low and high tones, static

MUSIC: ominous low tone layer with faint high-pitched sheen and low pulsing

MADDY

Prepare for horror...

MIKE

(clip, vox-pop style)

...but it was huge, with, like, a massive swollen abdomen on the back...

MADDY

Prepare for mystery...

KATIE

...there are some things we're not supposed to know, you know? There are some things that are better left as... ambiguous endings...

MADDY

But most of all, prepare for spiders...

ALEX

...the light broke because there were so many spiders coming from it – and I don't know why!

MUSIC: clicking percussion sounds as the music grows to a climax.

MADDY

Hello, and welcome to Into the Spider-Curse. I'm your host, Maddy Searle, and today we'll be delving deep into the dark heart of Rusty Towers, and the alleged arachnid-related occurrences which have been witnessed by various staff members over the past few years.

You may be aware that Rusty Quill's founder and CEO, Alexander J Newall, took to Twitter in July 2019 and posted this seemingly innocuous tweet:

[MUSIC: CLICKY SOUNDS START]

"Job posting for resident studio spider: Podcast network seeks ambitious spider to spear-head our efforts to rid the studio of noisy flies. Must provide own webs."

[MUSIC ends]

However, more than a year later, Alex's wish was granted, but not in the way that he had wanted. On the 29th of September, 2020, he wrote:

[CLICKS resume]

"Oh yeah, update I guess. We genuinely have been having a bit of a spider problem in the studio since Season 5 started. I held off mentioning it in case it became a whole 'thing.' Thankfully everyone's soul seems intact so far so it's probs nothing."

[MUSIC ends]

But the most concerning aspect of this so-called curse is that many members of the Rusty Quill team have reported increased spider activity after joining the company. So the task fell to me to untangle this web of reports and witness statements, and get to the truth of this Spider Curse. Today, I will be playing you excerpts of interviews with various Rusty Quill staff members, some of whom believe that this is indeed some kind of curse, and others who are more sceptical. It is up to you, dear listener, to listen to the evidence, and decide for yourself what you believe.

First of all, I spoke to Alex about the origins of the Spider Curse, and asked him about the truth behind the tweets.

ALEX

I have had an issue with spiders since joining Rusty Quill. And, it started as a joke, then became weird, and at this point it's now something that's just part of my life – and I am now moving house and I'll let you connect the dots. In terms, sort of, of my general experience (I'm trying to get it in the right order)...

First, we used to have a thing where people would come in to record Magnus specifically and they would laugh and joke and then they'd see a spider and it would be a whole thing: "ohh, hahaha". As time went on, there were more and more of them, to the point where it started to interfere with equipment a little bit. Er, I never shared it with performers, 'cause, you know, some people tend to freak out, but I was catching a lot of them.

Then when pandemic hit, things got really genuinely quite weird.

[MUSIC: buzzing drone from The Magnus Archives underscore begins]

At that point, I had an issue where I was on a, on a recording for Magnus, and, you know, a spider would drop down out of the ceiling, onto me, crawl around on the microphone and then leave. Everyone laughed - “oh, hahaha, big funny thing” - then it happened again in the same recording, then again in the same recording, and soon there was always a spider in recordings - and, again, people think this is a joke, and it’s not! – and then the light above me BROKE!

And, again, “hahaha, it’s funny” – it isn’t! The light broke because there were so many spiders coming from it, and I don’t know why! And I changed the bulb and it broke again, and I changed the bulb and it broke *again*, and the light fitting I ended up pulling away and a lot of spiders came out of it. I got rid of them and replaced the bulb.

And then – this is true, people think I’m joking – there was a mass of spiders outside my back door, and by “a mass”: hundreds. Like, an egg sac had clearly been there and burst and so on. But everywhere! And, you’ve got to realise, that’s weird in the UK. We’re not a warm climate; this isn’t, this isn’t Australia. Going in your back garden and then seeing, like, ah – hundreds of spiders all over your back door and looking up and you can see a trail of them leading to the window that is the studio is a weird sensation.

[MUSIC fades]

MADDY

Now, from my perspective, that is some pretty compelling evidence, but of course, it is open to interpretation. It could all be a weird coincidence that these spider-related events happened alongside The Magnus Archives Season 5. I asked Alex what happened after the final season of The Magnus Archives ended.

ALEX

Since then, things got easier. Magnus finished, and... definitely things started to rein in a little bit. The light still keeps breaking, but there's generally less of them. Through the whole period at no point did I ever start squashing spiders, I didn't freak ou... oh! There was a full spider infestation in the bath! From nowhere.

[Magnus Archives MUSIC again]

Where, overnight there was nothing, and then the next morning there was hundreds of spiders trying to climb out because it's like a big, er - enamel, I want to say? – curve tub. Like, they couldn't get the purchase, so they were trapped in there, pouring out of the, erm, the plug over and over again. That was a whole thing as well.

But again, this was all just as Magnus was sort of nearing its end, and when Magnus finished it did [laughing] genuinely start to rein in! So there is a weird thing where season 5 of Magnus specifically went a little bit spider-mad,

[MUSIC fades]

and everyone on Twitter sees those updates from me and goes “hahahaha” but they're all quite real, and everyone in the company has come to be aware that it's been a legitimate problem for me in the studio, and we don't know why, and it has since eased off since Magnus. I'm not stupid enough to confuse correlation and causation, but... it's a hell of a correlation.

MADDY

Will Alex actually succeed in breaking free of the curse by moving to a new home? Let's see if the next interviewee's story can give us an answer.

Now we'll hear from Katie Seaton, Patreon producer and former producer of Stellar Firma. Her strange encounter with a spider involved a notebook, and also, concerningly, a connection to Alexander J Newall.

KATIE

Up until 2019, the spiders and I always had an... we had an agreement. And the agreement was this: I do what I want, and the spiders – they do what they want. And it was fine! Everything was working just fine. See, I would... go to work, and... meet my friends, and they would... lurk in corners, and eat things that I like less than spiders, like wasps, and mosquitoes. And I was all for that! I'm all for that! OK, er, they have a place, er, I understand they have a place in the world.

And then in 2019, er, December 2019, it was, erm, er, I joined Rusty Quill. And that was fine too! Everything was good too! You know, er, I'd go to meetings, and we'd make jokes about things, and sometimes we couldn't find Tim Meredith, so I'd try to find him, and normally I succeeded and everyone liked that and, and everything was going well. And that was good.

Erm. [hesitant sigh]

And... I had this notebook. And I wrote all the things down, and... [pause] well...
[quieter]

I've never known any creature to be attracted to a pen before. OK. And maybe it's normal?

[getting even quieter]

Er, but, I, you know, I've, I've done quite a lot of writing in my life, and, I just
have to say

[now a whisper]

it's never happened before, it's never happened before. And I'm not implying
anything at all – I wouldn't! – but... I'd start to see, erm, you know, when I
opened this notebook I'd see something sort of move, out of the corner of my
eye. And, erm...

[now louder]

I know my handwriting isn't the best, but

[nervous laugh]

I, I never thought you could describe it as 'spidery'! I mean...

[laugh trails off uncomfortably]

And... maybe they were attracted to it? I don't know?

[MUSIC: Magnus underscore starts]

So, one day, I saw this thing out of the corner of my eye just moving on my
notebook, and

[MUSIC: the three slams from the Magnus Archives theme music]

I slammed my notebook shut, like that! I don't know, it was a... I had a rush of
blood to the head?

[MUSIC ends]

I don't know what came over me! I mean, I never normally react to things like that. But something in my body just took over, it was like electricity, it said, "shut that notebook, right now!" I still can't explain it, to be honest.

Then, obviously, I needed to write something down and... I opened it up, and there was a squashed spider. [hastily] And I'm sure it means nothing! I'm sure it means nothing at all... OK? We had a good laugh about it at the time.

[mirthless laugh] "ahahaha"...

But the weird thing was, OK, this happened again? I, I came down, one morning, and I looked at my notebook and it was sitting on my, it was sitting on my keyboard, and there was a spider just sitting there. Looking at me.

[quieter]

And. I don't want to tell you this, really.

[quieter]

But it was next to a name.

[whisper]

And that name was 'Alex'.

MADDY

The tale of the notebook wasn't the only story that Katie told me. She also told me about a disturbing incident involving her car's wing mirror.

KATIE

This is what happened. I- I- I'd been working for Rusty Quill for, er, for nine months, and, erm, I went and sat down in my car, er, you know, in the driver's seat, and, I- I- checked my right wing mirror, because

[slightly hysterical laugh]

... that's what you do if you're going to pull off - I'm sorry, I'm babbling!

Erm. [laugh trails off] Erm.

Sorry. Erm. So, er, and sitting on my wing mirror was, er, was this spider. And, and, you know, that's, that's not so uncommon round here. I mean, I live very close to the countryside and there are a lot, there's a lot of wildlife in my garden. Er, I thought, "well, it's OK, because this little mite will just, it will just drop off!" Haha.

When I got to Tesco, there was no spider and I thought "OK, good, it's blown away, it's scuttled off and it's going to start a lovely new spider family somewhere in the wilderness."

And I did my shopping, and I came home, and when I got back, and parked back in my drive, the spider was there again. Right there. I could swear it was looking at its reflection in the mirror, you know! But that's silly isn't it? I mean, spiders don't look at their reflections any more than they read... notebooks...

And I could not for the life of me work out how it had managed to stay on! I mean, I do know that the, the silk stuff is really strong, but, I mean... I was doing seventy! And there was, there was only one thread! And it was sitting right on top of the wing mirror, you know, it wasn't even hiding behind it, it was right in the slipstream!

And then I saw it saunter – I can only say it 'sauntered' – there is no other word and it disappeared behind the mirror. And do you know what happened next? Two spiders came out from behind the mirror? And then went back in again. I think there might be a family back there.

[quiet]

But... I've never seen them again. And if they're still there, I couldn't tell you. And what they're trying to **do**, inside my wing mirror... I couldn't tell you. What they *eat* back there? I couldn't tell you that either. I'll let you know if I ever find out.

Somebody suggested taking the mirror bit off and having a look in the... but [sigh] I don't know.

[pause]

There are some things we're not supposed to know, you know? There are some things that are better left as ambiguous endings.

MADDY

I have to commend Katie on her bravery, as she shared her story so candidly with me. However, I believe that this confluence of spider-centric events may not be ambiguous as it first appears. I spoke to another Rusty Quill team member who has been affected by the curse. However, he asked not to be named in this documentary, so going forward I'll be referring to him by the pseudonym "Ike". He told me about a particular many-legged houseguest who caused him a fair amount of concern.

'IKE'

The... day was, er, September the 12th, 2021. I remember it like it was yesterday. I went to the front of the house early in the morning, and I walked in to my dining room, and that's when I saw it on the outside of the window. All of the other spiders who'd come to nest with us at that time were little, tiny tiny little ones, smaller than a one-pence piece.

[MUSIC: another Magnus underscore drone starts up]

This one was significantly bigger. I'd say, leg-span – it was probably about the size of my hand. Or at least my palm, anyway.

It looked like a regular spider, and to this day I'm convinced that it was just a, a normal spider. But it was huge, with, like, a massive swollen abdomen on the back. And it stayed there, for a really long time. I mean, it was so noticeable, it was so notable in my life that I tweeted about it on that day, er talking about the spider who was living on my dining room window, who we affectionately named Stephen.

Stephen... was a constant presence, I would say, in, er in our lives, in my household. My housemate would sometimes come and talk to be about Stephen, totally unprompted.

Over the period of, like, a few... I think it was a few months, these conversations started to change. And my housemate started to talk to be about wanting to feed Stephen. Admittedly, it was only bugs and things. But it was concerning. And I believe he made a few attempts to try and feed Stephen, but they were in vain. Er, mostly because the, er, the bugs that he tried to feed Stephen were already dead. And that gave me a little bit more of an understanding about Stephen's motivations, which was that clearly this spider much **[high strings sting in music]** preferred live, er, food than, than, dead food. Er, that again was quite concerning.

[MUSIC fades]

MADDY

I asked Ike whether the situation with Steven ever escalated, but, as Ike explained, Steven appeared to take a more subtle and chilling approach in the coming weeks.

IKE

So the days went on, and Stephen remained with us, er, mostly in – there's a little vent at the top of the window, and Stephen remained mostly there. And in the beginning, Stephen would sit quite proudly on the front of our window and then retire to the vent in the evenings. But, as things moved and progressed into October, Stephen started to withdraw more, and actually stay in the vent for more and more, er, time during the day, to the point that we eventually hardly even saw Stephen apart from the giant abdomen on the, on the vent of the front window.

[MUSIC: Magnus drone resumes]

I think it was around the 19th October that I noticed that... Stephen had gone.

Now, I'm not an arachnophobe, but – knowing that Stephen was there and then wasn't and not knowing where Stephen had gone, for me, was a lot more scary than knowing that Stephen was there.

But I did have a little look around, I had a cursory look at the front of the window, but there was nothing really there, there was no evidence that Stephen had even been there at all. Literally nothing. I remember that day feeling fear.

[MUSIC: drone builds to most intense point then starts to fade]

Er, but, Stephen never came back. We never saw sight nor sound of a spider like Stephen again. To this day, I, I still haven't.

There are days when I, you know, I catch myself thinking... about... Stephen, but, erm... but I try to distract myself, you know? I try to, erm, I try to make sure that I'm thinking about other things. And that I'm, sort of, keeping

positive that it was just a one-time occurrence. You know, I'm hopeful that, that this isn't, erm, some kind of curse.

MADDY

Once again, thank you to Ike for courageously sharing his story with me. Now, while Ike has hope that the curse is not in fact real, some other members of the team have a great deal more certainty that this is the case. When I spoke with the host of Enthusiasm Helen Gould, they told me about a spider they encountered, after they had joined Rusty Quill.

HELEN

I have a very vivid memory of a very up-close and personal encounter while I was staying over at my boyfriend at the time's place. It was my first time staying there, and as we got into bed,

[MUSIC: Magnus drone resumes]

I noticed there was a massive spider in the corner of the ceiling. I remember thinking "oh, I hope it doesn't fall on us in the night" and him being like "oh, don't be silly, this is just you thinking about things that will never happen, don't be ridiculous".

But, of course, the next morning I woke up and I saw the spider crawling over the blankets directly towards my face, so I sort of... I sort of,

[MUSIC: aleatoric string harmonics]

I sort of convulsed out of the bed [laughing] erm, and probably swore a lot! I may, I may have.. done a little... shriek, but the guy I was seeing was phenomenally calm about it: just picked it up in his hands and, er, put it out the window!

So that is, er, that has been my major spider experience

[MUSIC fades]

after [laughing] Rusty Quill. I've never been particularly scared of them, but I don't like them, so, er, if someone else can deal with the spiders then, erm, I will get them to do it.

Do I think it has anything to do with Rusty Quill? Well, I'm not a superstitious person, so I'm not saying that, but I'm... not *not* saying that either. I'm not seeing any spiders right now while I'm recording, but that is because most of the spiders I know of in this flat live just outside my bedroom window, which currently has four or five lovely fluffy egg sacs attached to it.

But, you know what? They don't bother me, I don't bother them. And if there *is* a spider-related Rusty Quill curse, I'm not too bothered about it 'cause, you know, it will be more on Alex's head than mine. Erm, literally – since spiders keep falling out of his ceiling.

MADDY

So Helen seems a lot more relaxed about this curse than the other people we've heard from so far, but also he doesn't deny that the curse may be real. In contrast, Tech Assistant Rhys Tirado is convinced that the spider curse is not real at all, despite having their own post-RQ spider experience to share.

[MUSIC – relaxed, cheerful marimba melody with piano and pizzicato strings]

RHYS

First and foremost, I feel like it is slander to call it a curse. Because, has any one of us truly been harmed by a spider, I ask you? And if we have been harmed by a spider, we should question whether we were currently in Australia at the

time 'cause I feel like spiders and just about anything that lives in Australia probably mugs people on the regular. But, I feel that spiders are, they're, they're just little guys, you know? They're, they're cool. They, they done nothing to me.

In fact, being said... after joining Rusty Quill, I did have, you know, one odd... situation... with the spi – not too bad! It was, you know, it was just awkward! It was, I was not harmed – again – by a spider.

Er, so I ran into a spider in my bathroom. I was doing laundry, I was collecting, er, I was getting the laundry from the hamper and I was just it was just the spider chilling in my hamper. I don't know *how* it got into my hamper, my bathroom doesn't even have windows so it's not like it crawled in and like just kinda fell in at some point. Just like, it doesn't really make sense to me? I don't how it got in there. I just kind of like, you know, shoved it aside a little just kinda, just scootched it. And I grabbed my my er, er, clothes and did laundry and came back and it was, it was gone.

Erm. Not sure what to make of that. A very awkward situation. I feel like maybe I should apologise to that spider, cause maybe I just, I – I shoved it a little bit too hard.

Er, but it's fine. Erm. Haven't really seen any spiders since then. Which is a let-down. I really do like spiders. They are, they are the absolute homies. At least in my experience.

I don't know what it's like in the UK for y'all, that's not my business. I just feel that spiders get a bad rap. I mean there are people that, like, you know, they have tarantulas for pets. Tarantulas are just fuzzy little guys. They're just little, lil furry guys. They're just, you know, they're just doing their thing.

[MUSIC fades out]

MADDY

As the conversation continued, I asked Rhys whether they thought their encounters with spiders had anything to do with their employment at Rusty Quill Ltd.

[relaxed MUSIC resumes]

RHYS

I've been around spiders all my life. Like, before I even *heard* of Rusty Quill. Didn't really know about the 'spider curse' until like, after joining. I'm not sure if it was that well-known, to be quite honest... I feel like if you're gonna advertise, if we're gonna advertise jobs we should probably say "hey, you gotta be cool with spiders". Or, at least, not deathly afraid of them.

Cause I mean, if this job comes with the hazard of spiders just randomly popping up in place, we should probably let people know the hazards of this job.

OK, so here's an idea! Here's an idea! We, upon hiring a person and sending them, like, a welcome package, we should also include, like, a little booklet of, like, all the possible spiders. Like, you know, the deadly ones, and the not deadly ones... Like, you know, just in case.

I mean, I say that spiders are absolute homies, but some of these spiders are absolute haters, and we don't want to deal with haters in this household!

Haters being like - you know, er – the, er, Brown Recluse Spider! Absolute hater! How are you that tiny and, like, one bite will kill me? You are a hater, sir.

The Black Widow Spider! Also a massive hater! You have a cool ass name and you're gonna, like, just assassinate me? For what reason? I was just chilling in my own home, ma'am.

So, we should probably make, like, a little booklet or something that differentiates these homies and these haters. Er, with the disclaimer that says *'if you are in Australia, every spider is a hater'*.

[MUSIC concludes]

MADDY

As far as I am aware, there are no plans to put together a welcome booklet of spiders for new hires, but of course I am not privy to all the inner workings of the management team.

One of the more recent additions to the Rusty Quill team, Mastering Editor Cathy Rinella, certainly received no such warning about our eight-legged friends, and was shocked to discover how much her life changed after joining the company.

[MUSIC: hi hats introduce sneaky-sounding quiet jazz]

CATHY

A few weeks after I started working at Rusty Quill, suddenly they just started showing up. I thought it was maybe coincidence at first. I would go to my day job, and I'd walk in the door and I'd turn the corner, and in the corner there was like, a whole mass of cobwebs with, like, not just one or two spiders, but three or four of all different types. Just – kinda hanging out. They definitely weren't there the day before.

The more often I'd come in, the more cobwebs I would find. In the corners of the office.

Sat down one day at my computer and found that, er, baby spider. On my computer board. Crawling around on my computer. It was very cute. It was very nice, it sat, it was sitting under my work papers and like, I, I made a friend.

It's Benny. Benny's very nice. Very nice assistant. Adorable, yes.

He, yeah, just kind of hangs around and keeps me company. At my desk. And they all... just seem to be keeping me company. At the office. And at home.

They keep following me around...

[MUSIC is becoming edgier]

Er, I went to go set up a show, and, er, I was grabbing some audio gear form behind the curtain and, er, bringing it out to go set it up on stage, and I, I looked up, and, erm... there was a Daddy Long Legs hanging out on top of the 16-foot drape. Just decided it wanted to be my friend. So it jumped off onto my shoulder at that time. Looked to me to make sure I was doing OK, and, er... yeah. Just... skirted off after that. That was really interesting.

[MUSIC cuts]

MADDY

I asked Cathy if she had encountered any other arachnid or insect companions, after her meetings with Benny the Office Spider and the nameless daddy-long-legs.

[MUSIC resumes]

CATHY

Well, ah, I, I made a mistake. It was a very rookie mistake. I er, I was at home, and, again, bunch of spiders hanging around. And I was cleaning my house. I was cleaning my apartment. I was running my vacuum, it's... I can't help that... it sucked up... the spider. I mean, you know, it was there, it was crawling on the floor before I even knew it, it, it just got sucked up. Like, I thought to myself, maybe, you know, I'm just, maybe it was subconscious, maybe I just got so frustrated seeing so many all the time, you know, it's not... I don't, I didn't mean to, but... er, maybe.. I might have been a little bit frustrated at the time.

[voice slightly cracks] Just seeing so many spiders around all the time.

Kinda confirmed it for me when, erm, shortly after that I [laughs nervously] I went to go put the vacuum away and I turned to look in my bathroom and there's a very large Brown Recluse Spider. I know it is, 'cause that's what I looked up, ah, because it was big. [very nervous laughs] It was very big. And, you know, about the size of my fist. Hanging out.. behind... the toilet. But you know, in full view!

And it looked at me. Like, it *watched* me. After I had swept up that spider, it, erm, it *knew*. And I don't think it was very happy. I went to, erm, grab something in, in my madness to you know, to try and get rid of it 'cause I was *concerned*, I was freaked out. I came back – and it was gone. I haven't seen it since. I don't know where it is, but I know it's still here. Watching me.

So yes, the, the spiders are real, and...

[long pause]

[forced] ...they are very lovely companions. And very helpful creatures and compatriots. As long as we let them do their thing.

[MUSIC peters out]

MADDY

It seems clear to me that Cathy is putting a very brave face on an incredibly distressing situation. April Sumner, Rusty Quill's head of production, also spoke to me about her relationship to spiders, and it seems to be unusually positive compared to Cathy's story.

[MUSIC – back to the relaxed marimba music]

APRIL

My mum has always been really arachnophobic. Though she has started to get over it. Since joining Rusty Quill I've become more aware of them, tiny house webs, or wisps, erm, around whenever we're walking outside, we just see, like, the little drifting by!

I went to visit my family and where they live there are like, webs all over the trees!

[MUSIC – a Magnus drone start up beneath the relaxed music]

Erm, and my mum was telling me that, no matter how much they clean it at night, they will still come back the next day. Thousands of them. And so, eventually, she's actually started becoming, used to them, and isn't really arachnophobic anymore and has just sort of accepted them into her life! Which has only started happening after their abundance after me joining Rusty Quill.

My sister and her family had similar issues when I moved in with them, where they had a lot of tiny house spiders that started showing up shortly after I moved to there. Erm, I told them stories about the Spider Curse with some other people in the company and we started becoming more aware of them little tiny spider webs going, like, from this light fixture down to the table, or across the microwave. We never actually saw them, but there also was a mysterious lack of flies. Which used to be a really bad pest problem, since they lived near a farm, but it had ended up actually getting pretty under control.

So I'm not really sure that this 'curse' is a curse? I think that there's definitely more of an awareness of spiders and I have to say that the abundance of them has actually been something that's really comforting? I miss not having them around as much now. Er, I moved into a new place recently, and there's not spiders here, or bugs, or anything and... I kind of miss them!

[MUSIC fades out]

MADDY

Despite the fact that several Rusty Quill staff members have shared their stories of spider-incidents with me, both positive and negative, not all of the team have had such experiences. Producer Lowri Ann Davies has had a decidedly spider-free time since she joined the company, and has very particular feelings about this.

[MUSIC: sad piano begins]

LOWRI

Yeah, I, like... can I be honest? I, like, I suppose I feel a bit snubbed? Like, you know, I, I worked at Rusty Quill from 2018, and all these newcomers come in and they have their stories and...

..you know, when it's, like, Alex, and obviously it's his company and like, when the spiders are pouring from his light fixtures I'm like "yeah, yeah, that's right; you, you've earned your stripes; you, you deserve that, you, you deserve to be seen and chosen by them!"

But then you get like these people who've just come in and like "you've worked with us for three weeks and you're getting infestations? Like, what do I have to do?!"

How do we *end* the curse? I mean, ah, I dunno, maybe like, bring them to my house?

[MUSIC becomes more passionate]

And then they'd be like "oh, no, we, we're not interested in *Lowri*, she's too boring to haunt," like, "Why would we do that? Why would we follow her?" Like, you know, "it's only *Lowri*, she's only worked at Rusty Quill for like *four years*," like, huh, "why would *she* be worthy of being taunted and... followed, and wh..."

[voice cracks]

Sorry, I think I need a minute.

[MUSIC: sad piano note fades, unresolved]

MADDY

I asked Lowri if she had any advice for other Rusty Quill staff about how to deal with the Spider-Curse.

[MUSIC: sad piano resumes in a new key]

LOWRI

I dunno, I mean, like, what can you do? Like, some of us try, and try, and try, and leave out, like, bait and whatever, and they, they will decide. *They* will decide. Like, you have no control over it, and you know what? I think you have to make your peace with that, and... yeah, if, if you don't get... if you don't get visited, I guess... [little sigh] reach out? And maybe we could, you know... maybe we could, like, talk through, because... sometimes it's a bit lonely when you're, like, the only one.

[sad MUSIC concludes]

MADDY

It's clear to see from Lowri's statement that the absence of spiders can be almost as disturbing as their presence. Even though she hasn't had a direct experience with spiders, perhaps she has been touched by the curse in her own way?

We have heard from eight Rusty Quill staff members, all with their own unique perspective on the Spider Curse. But it is now up to you to decide what you believe to be the truth. Is it a series of odd coincidences? An elaborate hoax? A shared delusion? Or is it really a curse brought down upon us by the entity known in The Magnus Archives as "the Web"? According to Alex, the best course of action may be to accept this new state of affairs for fear of things becoming even worse.

ALEX

But there is a part of me that wonders – everyone's like, "how do we get away from the Curse?" – and I'm very wary. If there's one thing that Magnus teaches you, it's like: 'don't take action just because you want to take action, or

because you want answers. Don't assume you're going to make it better by
doing things.'

Why would we want to get rid of this curse? OK? I'm not, I'm not, I'm not **pro-**
spider, but [through gritted teeth] *just-think-how-bad-things-could-get!* You
know? There's a long way for all of us to fall still.

Gravity is still working. You know?

The earth continues to go around the sun.

And.. the basic principles of the universe within which we operate *tend* to be
the same from one day to the next.

I'm just saying, that if we *do* end the Spider Curse, you don't know that you
won't be changing other things as well. And changing most things does end up
in, you know, your untimely demise as all the atoms of your body are ripped up
various different locations. Or dimensions. So I suggest we *don't* end the Curse,
and just try to maintain a wary status quo alliance in the hopes that it stops
even worse things happening.

MADDY

Is the wary alliance that Alex suggests the best course of action for Rusty Quill
as a company? Who can say? I personally believe that--- Wait. What's that?

[Spider SFX, mic scuffling, high-pitched whine]

Oh. Oh no. They've come for me. They've come for me! Help! Help! HE---

[Audio cuts out]

END CREDITS

[Magnus Archives MUSIC]

ALEX

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Thanks for listening.