

TRANSCRIPT

Season Break 2: Aiden Alone in the Recording Studio

Aiden finds himself alone in the recording studio after Kitty comes down with a particularly bad flu. It's the perfect opportunity to talk about part of their research process: finding compelling stories and myths to investigate!

Content Warnings:

There are no content warnings for this episode.

Cast:

Finn Cresswell as Aiden Summers

Alexandra M. Barrow as Katherine Moore

Written and produced by Finn Cresswell and Alexandra M. Barrow.

www.thewyrdside.com

INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO

Soft silence of The Wyrd Side recording room.

AIDEN: Good morning, well it is morning for me, I guess it should be good -whatever time of day or night it happens to be when you're listening to this! It's been a while... I hope you've kept well? *[pause]* I'm pretty good, thanks for asking.

Okay. Cards on the table. Kitty has been off with a particularly nasty flu over the last week and a half. We were supposed to be recording a whole bunch of studio introductions and background for the next season, so we had the studio fully booked out. But, Kitty got ill. And I'm not blaming her for not being here, I mean, her work ethic is... intense. I went round this morning to check in on her with some soup and had she not been on a full fever trip, hopped up on cold medicine and thought it was the middle of the night, she'd be here. She's fine, don't worry. Zahra said she'd pop over later today, so between us, we've got a good support team up and running. Not that Kitty would admit to needing help... or soup brought to her...

I've only really had David to talk to over the last while, and I'll admit - I'm going a little stir crazy. So... I thought that I could um... let you peek behind the curtain just a little bit. Take a look at

the inner machinations of The Wyrld Side, the cogs and gears and whirligigs. I might as well use the studio time for something.

We can chat about, well - I can chat to you about how we pick stories. Investigations, Kitty would call them. And that probably is the right word - by the time we've chosen a story, picked the desk-based research carcass clean, and have actually made it onto location - it is an investigation by any standard. But every investigation starts off as a story. Glowing eyes in the night, just waiting for us to turn our torch in its direction and reveal its true form.

I'm Aiden Summers, welcome to The Wyrld Side, behind the scenes edition.

THE WYRD SIDE MUSIC

INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO

Soft silence of The Wyrld Side recording room.

AIDEN: Every one of our investigations has its roots in a story, however ephemeral. An anecdote, something we read online, or in print; an offhand comment overheard on the bus. There's really no set procedure to discovering them, because everyone, and everything, has a story to tell if you listen.

We definitely have more structure to our research process nowadays than we used to. Back in the day, before our most recent season, The Wyrld Side was an entirely desk-based show. Kitty and I would research a story, or a book, and... talk about it. It was... safe. Monsters can't jump out at you from the pages of a book, at least, they never jumped out of any tomes in the university or public libraries we frequent. We'd read about a folktale, do some general research around the legend, around who was telling the story and what their motives behind telling it were, and we'd just run through our research on air.

And then we decided to make our lives a whole lot more complicated. Head out of the lovely cosy recording studio, with its biscuits, and tea, and quiet, into the real world. Funnily enough, it took a heck of a lot of convincing to get Kitty on board. Out of the two of us, I bet you didn't think it would be that way round! *[he pauses, reminiscing]* For us, the Marshall Street Investigation was a big turning point. We'd never been out in the field, we'd actually never taken a story from page to investigation before. Nowadays we check for potential roof leaks before setting up camp. But no matter the quality, that was where we got our real start. Downloads jumped, people were actually listening to our show. And they were asking for more!

I spent nearly four months of hinting at different investigations, locations, stories and even once tried to turn a group holiday into a ghost hunting trip. Eventually Kitty agreed, not to the ghost hunting trip, we were down in Brighton for Pride and had lots to do. I still think we could have fit it in. Anyway... I remember, a mizzly Wednesday evening, a sliver after 7.30 pm. I was settling in for some cosy reading when there was a knock at the door. *[Imitating Kitty]* "Fine, let's give it a shot". That's all she said. And that was that.

Um... Right. Okay. *[gathering his thoughts]* Back to the topic *du jour*. How do we find a story? There are a few steps that we follow before we, that's Kitty and I, decide to take a story forward to investigate.

Firstly, we need to set the stage. We're a UK-based show, but even across the myriad of small isles, the folkloric landscape is incredibly rich and diverse. It is ancient. A palimpsest of belief and stories, from the mesolithic Deer Mask of Star Carr in Yorkshire, to the Beaker People and the construction of Stonehenge, to the arrival and ascendancy of the Celts, which is a little reductive and... ahem... Take the mighty oak tree as an example - common as chips in British woodlands, often found standing alone in the middle of fields. But they are woven into the very fabric of British lore and history. Oak groves have been linked to places of worship for centuries before the Roman Conquest, *[aside]* and sometimes after; Blodeuwedd, of the Mabinogion was created from oak flowers, and today we have veteran trees that are hundreds of years old all across the UK, all shrouded in the mists of legend, all with stories to tell. The Knightwood Oak in the New Forest for example. In fact, point me towards an ancient oak tree and I'd be very surprised if there wasn't a legend of some king sheltering under its canopy, a rumour of the fair folk playing in its branches, and, its acorns, protectors placed on window sills to shield the inhabitants from lightning strikes and other dangers. Truth and myth intertwined. And there is so much out there yet to explore.

I'm not sure we could cope with everything all at once. It's a lot. So, we pick a topic. Something to narrow our search. Often, we choose an area, like the New Forest, or Dartmoor, and then, we carry out a process I like to call: "Dowsing for Stories".

In itself, it's pretty simple. We cast our net out as far and as wide as we can, and look for stories. We scour books, research papers, newspaper articles, social media comment sections, anything and everything. It's all fair game. There's a lot of... Um, how to put this... uh., *[as a question]* content? out there, and not all of it is useful. Don't even get me started on the spread of conspiratorial misinformation and pseudoarchaeology, telling you that "they", mainstream archaeology that is, are covering up giant skeletons and antarctic pyramids. Believe me, if it were real, archaeology would be getting far more funding. We are hunting for a story with

ancient roots, but one that might've resurfaced in recent years. Like the lights spotted in the New Forest - that's what originally sent us out there. Because if the legend is in some way still around, it's still alive, then that's our best shot at finding... Well. Not to sound too conspiratorial, but that's our best shot at finding the truth. And there are so many people out there keeping old folktales alive, reminding us of traditions that could be lost if they weren't there recording, archiving. Only last week I had a great conversation with -

Aiden's phone starts to ring.

Oop, forgot to put that on silent, Kitty would have my head.

Aiden reaches over and picks up the phone.

Ah, speak of the devil. Hey, Kitty. How are you feeling?

KATHERINE: *[with a sore throat and raspy voice]* Aiden.

AIDEN: Yeah?

KATHERINE: I lost the soup.

AIDEN: You lost the soup?

KATHERINE: I ate it. And there's no more.

AIDEN: Oh... okay... I haven't had chance to make another batch yet.

KATHERINE: Boooo.

AIDEN: But, I know Neon Zebra does really a good chicken udon...

KATHERINE: You've been eating soup without me?

AIDEN: I-

KATHERINE: Ha! Jokes on you. I've been eating soup without anyone else.

AIDEN: Kitty... I'm rec-

KATHERINE: Soup. Aiden. I'm dying here. I need fuel. Research doesn't research itself.

AIDEN: Research?

KATHERINE: I'm onto something. Something big.

AIDEN: Oh?

KATHERINE: But my brain isn't working and to crack this case, I need soup.

AIDEN: What's the research on Kitty? Don't tell me you tried to go to the library again...

KATHERINE: I tried. But I couldn't find my recorder. And you can't go to a library without a recorder.

AIDEN: I've got your recorder here, on the desk. But-

KATHERINE: On my way.

AIDEN: No. Kitty, stay put and Zahra will bring you some chicken udon.

KATHERINE: I will be with you as soon as I can get up without doing a backflip.

AIDEN: A backflip?

Katherine hangs up.

AIDEN: Kitty? Right, just texting Zahra... There we go.

Sorry about that. Ummm. Probably should have paused this... She'll be fine.

Buzz as Aiden's phone gets a message.

Nice. Zahra's on her way. Where was I? Hunting for stories!

So, at this point we'll have a several local legends, stories, sightings etc., but none will have been fully researched. We'll both pick three or four stories that particularly caught our eye and

we'll have a round table discussion of each one. Putting forward our case as to why we should look into each of them further. We'll try to get a spread of stories, no two black dogs or two royal ghosts, unless they have particularly good modern sightings and reports. But so far, there's been so much that that's not happened.

There'll often be one or two reports that catch our eyes, that we both find interesting, that are likely to result in a good few episodes, ones whose sinews run strong through the local landscape. These ones, the Colt Pixie, the Red King... even Ginny Greenteeth, will mostly be split into research and investigation episodes, with our findings peppered throughout.

And we've found other stories crop up along the way, though we didn't have time last season to investigate more "one off" episodes. However, we are planning a couple of smaller, side investigations that don't have enough evidence to flesh out a single episode by themselves. That doesn't make them any less interesting, and they should be entertaining nonetheless. You never know... we might be the ones who unearth something new and exciting.

All told it's not overly complex or groundbreaking by any means and there are definitely plenty of folk who are far more thorough and thought out than we are, but it seems to work for us.

Oh gods, I've been chatting for quite a bit longer than I planned. Tell you what. I'm going to stop here, and hopefully, Kitty, once she's had some more soup and is feeling a bit better, can join us in talking about how we take a promising story to a full investigation. Oh, maybe we'll use an example from our upcoming season. Berry Pomeroy Castle. She'll want to be there for that.

Thank you so much for listening, I hope this gave you a peek behind the curtain. If you have any stories you'd like considered, do let us know.

In this episode of the Wyrd Side, Aiden Summers was played by Finn Cresswell, and Katherine Moore was played by Alexandra M. Barrow. Additional sound effects by Zapsplatt.com and Pixabay.

The Wyrd Side was written, directed and produced by Finn Cresswell and Alexandra M. Barrow. Sound editing by Finn Cresswell. Dialogue editing by Finn Cresswell and Alexandra M. Barrow.

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