

TRANSCRIPT

Season 1 Episode 10: Going Home

Aiden and Katherine travel up to Shropshire, to investigate the myth of Jenny Greenteeth and Aiden's childhood encounter.

Cast:

Finn Cresswell as Aiden Summers

Alexandra M. Barrow as Katherine Moore

Content Warnings:

Depiction of injury (splinter), audio distortion, physical violence, gore. Discussion of childhood trauma, drowning, death of a loved one, death of a child. Mention of victim blaming,

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www.thewyrdside.com

Content warnings can be found in the episode description.

INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO

The soft silence of the Wyrd Side recording studio.

AIDEN: [VO] ... Dan splashed back and forth, laughing. I felt something slip by my foot, cold and slimy. I screamed and scrambled back, but Dan kept laughing, he said it was a fish. He saw a little fish swim by my foot... I closed my eyes for just a second to calm myself down. Dan screamed. It was... so hard to open my eyes. When I did I saw a pair of arms around him. Long, green, covered in reeds and moss. Fingers held his mouth open as the arms pulled him down into the water...

INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO

The soft silence of the Wyrd Side recording studio.

AIDEN: Welcome. This week we're looking into my first encounter with the supernatural. I'm Aiden Summers.

KATHERINE: And I'm Katherine Moore, welcome to The Wyrd Side.

THE WYRD SIDE MUSIC

KATHERINE: Aiden told us about his encounter with something in the river near his childhood home. We'll be using his testimony as the basis for this investigation.

AIDEN: Thank you to everyone who wrote in and offered their support, and to nip a question in the bud, yes. I have checked with Daniel's parents, and they're okay with us discussing this, but they want no part of the investigation or this show. We ask you to respect their privacy, and not seek them out, for any reason. They want peace and have been gracious enough to allow me to find some of my own. So, with all that in mind, we went back. Back to the river where it all began.

INT. AIDEN'S CAR - DAY

The recorder clicks on, to the muffled road noise of a travelling car, medium to heavy rain pattering off the roof. Aiden is driving. Katherine absent mindedly holds a recorder between her fingers.

AIDEN: I promise the view's worth it, if only the bloody clouds would shift.

KATHERINE: England in the winter. Got to love it. At least tomorrow's meant to be better, no rain's forecast.

AIDEN: Hm. The river's going to be fit to burst at this rate. All swirling mud and tongues of grey-brown foam lapping hungrily at sodden banks.

KATHERINE: *[lightly teasing]* You still trying to sell me on Shropshire?

AIDEN: Sorry, most of it, yeah... *[He glances over at Katherine.]* Hey. Is that my old recorder?

KATHERINE: Uh... Yes. Eyes on the road.

AIDEN: Ah. I didn't realise the police had given it back.

KATHERINE: I asked them to send it back to us when they'd finished with it. Took longer than I thought. I only got it back a few days ago.

AIDEN: Nice, I can give you back your spare then.

KATHERINE: Oh no, keep it.

AIDEN: You sure?

KATHERINE: Yes.

AIDEN: That one's been through the wars. It's all scuffed. Does it even still work?

KATHERINE: Yes, it works. It's just... It's stupid. Don't worry about it.

AIDEN: I'm not worried, just curious.

Katherine sighs.

KATHERINE: Well, without this little black box, I wouldn't've found you. So... so now, I guess it feels... lucky. I feel like with this, if I ever need to, I'll be able to find you. I told you, it's... it's stupid.

AIDEN: That's not stupid.

Indicator indicates a right as Aiden overtakes a tractor.

KATHERINE: You were saying. Shropshire. *[indicating the recorder]* It's on by the way.

AIDEN: Oh. Right. We've just crossed into the Shropshire Hills Area of Natural Beauty. It's now fully winter, the trees have dropped what leaves they had left and the bracken's a lovely burnt umber. There's still some grass covering the rounded hills and between the dozens of farmhouses scattered around.

KATHERINE: We're headed straight to the little town of Clun, which will be our headquarters for this part of the investigation.

AIDEN: It's really quiet, perfect for a teenager who preferred reading to parties. Although, some of my school friends really suffered from boredom here. Oh! I forgot to say, there's a haunted BnB in town!

KATHERINE: That's not where we're...?

AIDEN: No, sadly not. They were fully booked. Could be a good story to cover another time. Though if we do come back, you're driving.

KATHERINE: Ha, deal. That means we won't have to stop at all the exciting services on the way.

AIDEN: Look, Gloucester Services are great fun. They have a farm shop and everything!

KATHERINE: Uh huh.

AIDEN: I saw you ogling that cheese counter.

KATHERINE: Was I that obvious?

AIDEN: Okay yes, my picnic idea is out of the window, but we could always try and make some sandwiches up in the car?

KATHERINE: On your car be it. I'm not vacuuming up the crumbs.

AIDEN: Making sandwiches out in the rain doesn't sound so bad then.

Katherine groans in mock outrage.

AIDEN: As I was saying, Clun has its share of local ghosts and folklore. The castle's also allegedly haunted.

KATHERINE: Every good castle should have at least one alleged ghost.

AIDEN: In that case, you're in luck. Shropshire's sometimes called the most haunted English county.

KATHERINE: Bold claim.

AIDEN: Mmm.

A car passes them quickly. Katherine exclaims.

AIDEN: Get on your side of the road. Sheesh. Some people. Anyway, where was I?

KATHERINE: Haunted Shropshire.

AIDEN: Oh yes. Both the nearby towns of Ludlow and Shrewsbury are hotbeds for paranormal activity. If we have time, we should head to the roman road where the ghosts of a legion are said to still march.

KATHERINE: Hm. Spooky. I can't believe we've not looked into anything up this way before. Ah, for our international audience, we're in the mid-west of England, on the border with Wales. This area's seen a lot of conflict, from the Roman Conquest, to the War of the Roses and the English Civil War.

AIDEN: Could be why there's so many ghosts.

KATHERINE: Could be. Now, you haven't yet mentioned any entities apart from ghosts. Are they less common in local legend?

AIDEN: Oh no, they're very common. Especially up in the hills, which are the realms of dwarf and fairy. Some say even the Devil himself sits on the Stiperstones, but I think that might be a little too big for us to investigate this week.

KATHERINE: This week? Give us a month and we'll be ready to tackle the Devil.

AIDEN: You know what I mean. We do however, have some local water spirits and a whole bunch more over the border in Wales.

KATHERINE: Spirits like Jenny Greenteeth.

AIDEN: *[downcast]* Yeah. Exactly. Now, I believe our exit's coming up on our right, what does the phone say?

KATHERINE: Let me check.

The recorder clicks off.

INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

The soft sound of The Wyrdd Side recording room.

KATHERINE: So, water spirits. What are they? Where do we find them?

AIDEN: Water spirits are supernatural beings found in stories and legends across the world, from the Voydanoy and Rusalka of Eastern Europe, the Adaro of the The Solomon Islands, all the way to the Kappa of Japan. Often they're dangerous and fickle, although there are several that are considered benevolent, and if not always friendly, at least not actively harmful to humans.

KATHERINE: That might link in with humanity's long relationship with water as both a source of life, but also death, it being treacherous at the best of times.

AIDEN: Very likely. Here in Britain we've got a whole bunch of spirits, ranging from the relatively benign, like the Selkie and Gwraegedd Annwn, to mischievous kelpies, the shape changing water horse of Scotland, and of course their many different regional varieties. But, some are more dangerous, such as water hags, often found in English rivers.

KATHERINE: Hm. From an anthropological perspective, you can understand why these legends took hold; an evocative story always makes a deeper impression than a plain warning.

AIDEN: Especially when it comes to dangerous stretches of water.

KATHERINE: Exactly. Cautionary tales have been used for generations to keep children away from dangerous pools and rivers, to inspire a healthy respect for the power of the sea, and any other dangers for that matter.

AIDEN: And that's supposing that there was nothing "else" to set these stories alight in the first place.

KATHERINE: That's what we're going to be investigating.

AIDEN: That's right. Back in the day, water played a huge role in the belief system of Pre-Christian Britain - think of your healing springs and repeated ritual deposition - that's the giving up of precious items to the land or sea.

KATHERINE: Such as?

AIDEN: Countless weapons, shields, jewellery and coins have all been found deliberately bent or broken in rivers and ponds all across the British Isles. They were honouring something, possibly placating something...

KATHERINE: Compelling theory, but we humans love our rituals. Not every one of them's based in fact.

AIDEN: But in stories there's always a grain of truth, something that tells us about the world those people were living in, about the world the people retelling the stories were in, about what they believed. John said as much. *[pause]* Oh. The Dragon. Right. I see.

KATHERINE: This isn't the same.

AIDEN: This could be another case of mistaken belief, and I was buying into it just like I did before.

KATHERINE: No. I know you wouldn't lead me on.

AIDEN: We'll find out, won't we. Anyway, now we have a basic understanding of how widespread stories of water spirits are, I think it's time to delve into the legend we're investigating.

KATHERINE: Sounds good.

AIDEN: Jenny Greenteeth, also known as Wicked Jenny, stalks the rivers of north and middle England, from Shropshire to Lancashire and even up into Yorkshire. She's a river hag, with a hunger for human flesh, which is surprisingly common in legends both about malicious water spirits and hags in general.

KATHERINE: Old women do seem particularly hard done by folklore. Well. Women in general.

AIDEN: Agreed, and while most of these dangerous water spirits present themselves as feminine and seek only to consume, trick or lure the unwary to a painful death, that is something I certainly do not have the qualifications to expand on in any sort of depth.

KATHERINE: But worth acknowledging, and questioning where we can.

AIDEN: Mhm.

KATHERINE: So, hunger for human flesh.

AIDEN: Yes. Jenny's favourite meals are the young and old, people who are easily captured and devoured, but especially children.

KATHERINE: She belongs to a group often described as "homicidal spirits", a name they live up to. There are stories of people being drowned by these spirits well into the later 20th century. Peg Prowler of the Tees is a particularly well-known example.

AIDEN: Again, local variations on a wider belief.

KATHERINE: Hmm. When did these stories first get catalogued?

AIDEN: As with much folklore, mostly in the Victorian period. There was a mad scramble back then for anything remotely esoteric or folkloric, from objects, to stories. Though the stories would have been told in local communities long before they would've been collected.

KATHERINE: I should point out that Jenny Greenteeth is also a colloquial name for duckweed and similar plants that float on the surface of fresh water. These can make a pond look deceptively shallow, and tangle weaker swimmers.

AIDEN: That would support her being a cautionary tale. It certainly explains how she could be spotted all over the west of England, slipping between standing pools of water and rivers miles apart. *[musing]* Or...

KATHERINE: Hm?

AIDEN: Unless that's her magic, to be everywhere and nowhere until the time is right.

KATHERINE: That would make her very powerful. I've also found several ponds across the northwest and the midlands that were named after Jenny Greenteeth up until the 20th century, and some even later.

AIDEN: More proof of the legend's power, to take root throughout the centuries.

KATHERINE: Do we have any recent sightings?

AIDEN: I mean, mine? That was in the early 2000s.

KATHERINE: Of course, sorry.

AIDEN: Honestly people are so keen to take the easy way out.

KATHERINE: What do you mean?

AIDEN: I've heard every possible explanation for what could have happened to us. In the end it was easier to put it down to kids acting out and not thinking through a situation properly. No one had time for my story back then. For what I knew I'd seen that night. Just like Rowan.

EXT. NEAR THE RIVER - DAY

The recorder clicks on, to birdsong, the rustling of trees, the crunching of leaves under two sets of footfalls, and the gentle babbling of a gentle river nearby. Aiden is carrying the recorder.

KATHERINE: Here we are, just a short hike out of Clun. Yesterday was a write off. The weather worsened and we decided to wait rather than risk getting equipment ruined by hail.

AIDEN: Hm.

They walk for a few steps in silence.

KATHERINE: Clun's very peaceful.

AIDEN: That it is.

KATHERINE: Our BnB was right in the centre of town, and I barely heard a noise last night.

They walk for a few steps in silence.

KATHERINE: It feels like we're far away from the modern world in these woods. I can picture you growing up around here.

AIDEN: *[aside]* It's been so long since...

KATHERINE: Sorry?

AIDEN: Oh, nothing.

KATHERINE: Okay. I'm sorry to report there were no ghosts in either of our rooms last night. That's what you get for staying at the non-haunted BnB. We haven't done a seance yet have we?

AIDEN: We haven't, no.

KATHERINE: Could be an idea? Delve into your most haunted county, see if we make contact with anything?

AIDEN: Perhaps on another investigation.

KATHERINE: Yeah, you're probably right. Focus. One thing at a time.

AIDEN: I never thought you'd be the one suggesting seances.

KATHERINE: I'm curious, but be warned, I've got my head on straight when it comes to common seance hoaxes,

AIDEN: Oh yeah?

KATHERINE: You won't get soundbites of me screaming that easily.

AIDEN: All it takes is a spider.

KATHERINE: A very big spider. On my pillow. It was one time.

AIDEN: That I know about at least.

They walk in silence for a few steps.

AIDEN: Anyway, this... this is the river where it happened. I'm not too sure if the clearing will still be there, but it's another half an hour's walk up the bank to get to where I think it might be. The river's how I remember it, fast flowing, though with all the rain, what's usually clear is murky and turbulent. Come summer, only muted light gets through the canopy and everythings

shaded in green. Millions of rounded pebbles glint in the shallows even on a cloudy day. In December, not so much green, just cold air and grey tinged skies.

KATHERINE: It sounds beautiful in the summer.

AIDEN: It's magical. There are several little bridges across the river, mostly small wooden ones, enough for one person and their dog to walk across at a time. Some have been replaced since I was last here, but I've seen at least one that looks like it's been standing since London burned. There's this one bridge, it should be coming up just now - I got so many splinters from it, sometimes I... I think I can still feel them, memories, working their way into my palms. You'd've thought time would wear the wood down to a slippery smoothness, but almost every time I crossed, I always got caught on something. Bastard Bridge we used to call it. Daniel never seemed to get hurt on it. Ah, there it is. I knew it would be around here somewhere. Kitty, would you mind? I need to...

Aiden trails off and hands the recorder to Katherine, walking away towards the bridge.

KATHERINE: Yeah of course. So, "Bastard Bridge" is old, Aiden wasn't kidding. It looks derelict. What's left of it - two long beams and a haphazard series of planks - is completely covered in moss. I'm surprised the local council hasn't taken it down, or at least renovated it. There's some rusty metal braces poking out, that could be seriously da...

A creak and groan of wood as Aiden tests the first plank with his weight

KATHERINE: *[worried]* Wait. Aiden? What are you doing?

AIDEN: It's fine! I've climbed over this a hundred times. It's just as I remembered it. Kitty, I need to do this.

KATHERINE: We are not delaying this investigation because you stabbed yourself on a rusty nail. Or cos you -

AIDEN: *[Interrupting]* Wanted to say goodbye and get some closure? That's what this whole thing's about, for me at least. I promise I'll be safe. It's only three steps to the other side, four if I stroll.

KATHERINE: Just... be careful? Those planks look - *[to herself and the recorder]* rotten. Aaand off he goes.

Aiden moves along the bridge, creaking and cracking wood as he edges across.

AIDEN: *[calling, distant]* Aha! There we go. Across and I'm fine. No splinters.

KATHERINE: Are you going to come back across?

AIDEN: *[distant]* Ah.

KATHERINE: Uh-huh. Looks to me like you are on the wrong side of the river. You said the clearings over here.

AIDEN: *[distant]* I'm... Yep. Nope, you're right.

KATHERINE: I'm not comfortable with you galavanting across again. Look, that plank's almost gone.

AIDEN: It's this or we add on a whole lot longer to our walk.

KATHERINE: If it means you in the - *[she cuts herself off]* Nevermind.

AIDEN: Unless.

Aiden grunts and starts to edge his way back across the bridge.

KATHERINE: Aiden, hang on. Just hold up for a second.

AIDEN: I saw Dan do this once. I dared him not to touch the planks. I think if I just get my hands on the railings like... like this... There we go, my feet are only touching the side beams, I should be able to manage.

Aiden shuffles across the bridge. Just as he's getting back to Katherine's side, he gasps in pain as he catches a splinter in his palm.

KATHERINE: *[worried]* Aiden! You okay?

AIDEN: Bloody splinter. Gods that's a big one. Damn. *[Aiden leaps down off the bridge next to Katherine's side, landing heavily next to her]* Bloody hell that hurts.

KATHERINE: Why?

AIDEN: I... I don't... Gah, I've got some tweezers in my bag, the first aid kit. Should be at the top?

KATHERINE: I've got it.

Katherine rummages in Aiden's bag, unzips a smaller bag and takes out some tweezers. She puts the recorder on top of the bag. Aiden winces as Katherine starts to pick out the splinter from his palm.

AIDEN: *[in between winces]* Yeah, you're alright. Ow. Well, I guess, you said it. This is the first time I've been back since I left for uni. My parents moved pretty quickly after: Mum to London, Dad to Durham, so there hasn't really been much call for going back. Ouch!

KATHERINE: There's a bit still in there. I don't mean to pry...

AIDEN: I mean, you're doing a pretty good job of it with those tweezers.

KATHERINE: Very funny. What's the locket? On your pack. I've never seen it before.

AIDEN: Yeah. It's... it's an old thing.

KATHERINE: Old?

AIDEN: Hang on.

Aiden reaches over with one hand and removes the locket from its place attached to his backpack

AIDEN: Here we go.

A click of a metal latch as the locket opens.

KATHERINE: Is that Daniel?

AIDEN: Yeah. Young Aiden is the one next to him, pulling the silly face. We were down in Warwick castle, I'd just seen a joust for the first time and was trying out my warcry. This... This is my favourite picture of us. Hence the locket.

KATHERINE: We'll get you what you need. I'm with you, whatever happens.

AIDEN: Ah, that means a lot. I just... People seem to die around me? Daniel was just the first. And... Albert. Before you say anything, I know there was more we could have done to save him. I know there was more I could have done. I... I don't want to add to that number, so please, if anything happens, run.

KATHERINE: I can't promise you that. I run where you run.

AIDEN: *[Softly]* Thanks. Run huh.

KATHERINE: Hm?

AIDEN: I was running from these memories for so long Kitty. The least I can do is honour my friend, and remember the good times before... before...

KATHERINE: It's okay. I understand. I was just worried. *[Aiden winces]* Got it. Like new.

AIDEN: Ah, there you go.

KATHERINE: Aiden, if this is all too much...

AIDEN: Look at that thing, must be at least an inch long at least!

KATHERINE: *[scoff]* An inch?

AIDEN: Well it felt like it. Are you sure you got all of it?

KATHERINE: Yes. If you want to dig around more, be my guest.

AIDEN: Nah. You're good. Let's get moving.

The recorder clicks off.

The recorder clicks on.

AIDEN: Right. The clearing... I think we found it? But it's not like it was when I was last here. No log benches, and most of the riverbanks here are choked with weeds and underbrush, brown and crackling underfoot. We have, however, found a little break in the vegetation and brambles about a hundred metres back and have made our basecamp.

KATHERINE: We've got strong mobile signal, which is comforting.

AIDEN: It's a little ways away from the path, and there aren't any houses in this part of the woods, so we shouldn't come across anyone else.

KATHERINE: We've got our location mapped both online and on paper, so if we need any support, we can call for it easily. Not that anything's likely to happen.

AIDEN: Hopefully nothing deadly. *[vehemently]* I need to find her.

KATHERINE: Okay... So. Why don't you talk them through our setup?

AIDEN: Oh yeah, setup. Okay. We've got three trap cameras facing the river, which will take a picture if they catch any large movements. So river moving, no, homicidal water hag, yes. One's about a hundred metres north of here, another a similar distance to the south, and one's further along the shallow banks right by the basecamp.

KATHERINE: While you'll not be able to see it live, we'll post anything we photograph to our socials.

AIDEN: So, our plan is to take a night walk along the banks of the river, at least the bits that'll allow us to get close without risking... well... risking going in and...

KATHERINE: We'll be staying together, no solo exploration this time. That's about everything for now. See you later tonight.

The recorder clicks off.

The recorder clicks on, Aidens moving away from the recorder, shouting, just on the edge of hearing something medium-sized splashes into the water.

AIDEN: There. And again. Do you see it?

KATHERINE: *[mouth slightly full of cheese scone]* Hang on, the recorder's on now, where? What, by the willow tree?

AIDEN: No, in those reeds. To your right. More right. Nothing? There was movement. I swear there was.

KATHERINE: Please step back from the river.

AIDEN: I'm not going to fall in, I just need to see what it was.

KATHERINE: Whatever it was, all our shouting probably drove it away.

A pause as Aiden moves slightly further away, the rustle of reeds and vegetation as he looks through them. A few seconds pass and Aiden walks back with a rustle.

AIDEN: Ah. Fine. *[He sits back down with a thump and a humph]* Probably just a bird or a rat.

KATHERINE: Do you want to fill them in?

AIDEN: Oh. Sure. We were just finishing setting up the last bits of our base camp and settling down for something to eat before it got too dark, when I felt something.

KATHERINE: *[prompting]* Something...

AIDEN: Something looking at me. It's... It's like when you're in an empty room and you know you're alone. Then, something at the back of your mind suggests that you're not, and you have to fight every single fibre of your body not to turn around and check, because if you do, you'll never stop checking as long as you're in there, alone, or not. Every slight shift of air in the room is a breath against the back of your neck, hinting that there is someone, something, behind you... Well, I've always looked behind me when that happens. Force of habit I suppose. And that's exactly what I felt here.

KATHERINE: Felt?

AIDEN: There was something in that patch of reeds looking at me. When I turned around, all I saw was a flash of movement. The reed heads were twitching. Like something was making an escape.

KATHERINE: I didn't see the movement, but the wind's up, the reeds could just be blowing around. Look. They're doing it again

AIDEN: *[startled]* What? Where?

Katherine points at the reedbed.

KATHERINE: There. Waving around.

AIDEN: What? Oh, no. That's nothing like it. The wind's blowing in from the northeast, down the length of the river. The reeds were being bent by something going upriver. Against the wind.

KATHERINE: Oh. I'll keep the recorder a little more handy then. Shall we check the trap cam near the river?

AIDEN: Maybe. I'm worried that while we're doing that, we might miss something. Just be ready, please?

KATHERINE: I had my hands full with a cheese scone. I got it out as quickly as I could. Speaking of...

The recorder clicks off.

INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO

The soft silence of The Wyrd Side recording room.

KATHERINE: We checked each trap camera in case any of them had caught whatever had caused the disturbance. Nothing. In fact, the only time one of them fired was when Aiden came blundering...

AIDEN: *[Interrupting]* Oi.

KATHERINE: Crashing? Is that better?

AIDEN: Eh...

KATHERINE: Crashing into frame. We've looked at that photo as closely as we can.

AIDEN: And there's nothing there.

KATHERINE: I'm still making that your caller ID. *[beat]* Whatever Aiden caught a glimpse of out there was proving elusive.

AIDEN: I think now's a good time to talk about one of our more... out there theories?

KATHERINE: Your theories. I'm staying well out of this one.

AIDEN: Fine, you could at least offer some insight.

KATHERINE: Uh-huh.

AIDEN: Okay, so, the theory is Jenny Greenteeth and similar fresh-water faeries, otherwise known as homicidal spirits, could be possible reimaginings of ritual sacrifice.

KATHERINE: Mm...

AIDEN: I know, and I don't want to reopen wounds just scabbed over, but we know that all across Britain, people ritually placed artefacts of great value in rivers and bodies of water, including ponds and still water. It's not my intention to go very much further along this line of investigation, as... frankly I don't really want to, and I've also got a hunch that if Jenny Greenteeth was linked to bog bodies, John Martin would have told us.

KATHERINE: And he would have told us, because he knows what you experienced?

AIDEN: No, you were there Kitty, you heard all the conversation I had with him.

KATHERINE: So, he's supposed to have guessed the childhood trauma that you kept hidden away from everyone, even your best friend?

AIDEN: He knew a lot?

KATHERINE: Yes, but he's not psychic.

AIDEN: I guess not. I just need a few more minutes to lay out this theory. Please? It might explain some things.

KATHERINE: Did you still want my insight or should I just sit here?

AIDEN: Hear me out.

KATHERINE: Okay.

AIDEN: We have evidence of ritual deposition in the Iron Age and earlier, linked with possibly placating something in the river.

KATHERINE: Right.

AIDEN: And I've found stories, old stories, few and far between mind, that present her more as a nature spirit "She who makes the flowers grow and the birds sing".

KATHERINE: Okay...

AIDEN: What would happen when the tributes stopped? What if that meant that spirits like Jenny Greenteeth became more vicious, like we see in Victorian folklore. The Jenny Greenteeth as we know her now.

KATHERINE: Hm.

AIDEN: What if she was more than just the idea of duckweed. What if Jenny was a river spirit now forced to take what she could in a world that has forgotten her power? Who else could she be? We might have a clue up in Lancashire, with the River Ribble. She's linked with the Ribble in several folktales and stories. And we do have the name of the goddess of that river, at least the name the Romans gave her when they integrated Celtic polytheism into their own cosmology. Belisama.

KATHERINE: Belisama?

AIDEN: Yeah. That is also the ancient name of the River Mersey, in North-East England. Which again is heavily linked to Jenny Greenteeth. We barely know anything about Belisama herself. Aside from her Romano-British name, there's not much to go on, at least in Britain. But, in Provence, in the South of France, there are a few inscriptions to Belesama, and at least one dedicating a particularly impressive sacred site to her. So, what if this spirit, this thing that I encountered, was not duckweed, but the last vestige of an ancient and powerful entity, at one point, known across Europe.

KATHERINE: And there we go. Forget the paranormal, Aiden's already onto the next big thing: proof of divinity.

AIDEN: You know what we saw. You know what happened.

KATHERINE: Don't you think it is time they did?

EXT. NEAR THE RIVER - NIGHT

The recorder clicks on, the river flows past, perhaps a little louder in the dark. The wind is low and whispers through the trees.

AIDEN: This is just as terrifying as I remember.

KATHERINE: The minute you want to, we can turn back.

AIDEN: Thanks, but I'm here now. For better or worse, I need to find some answers.

KATHERINE: We could turn the torches on and actually see where we're walking.

AIDEN: Torches might scare her off.

KATHERINE: Okay. How do you want to do this?

AIDEN: I think we should walk to the north trap cam, and perhaps a bit further on. The river widens out up there, but just past that bend upstream there are some rapids. That might be a place to walk to. See what happens. And then back down the same way to the southern cam?

KATHERINE: Alright, let's get going. Out of curiosity, Have you eaten your scone?

AIDEN: Now? You're hungry now?

KATHERINE: Yes. You know I don't like to work on an empty stomach and I chucked half of my last one across camp when you yelled earlier.

AIDEN: I saw something.

KATHERINE: I don't doubt you but it cost me half my scone.

AIDEN: Here. Have mine. *[Aiden digs around in his bag and a plastic bag crinkles as he passes over a scone]* I wasn't that hungry.

KATHERINE: Thanks, I'm famished.

AIDEN: Glad one of us can eat. Just keep an eye out on the river?

KATHERINE: And on the banks. It's more than likely that there'll be animals getting into or out of the water.

AIDEN: Good thinking.

They walk a few steps in silence.

AIDEN: So... Do you believe me?

KATHERINE: I know you had a traumatic experience and I know that you saw something. I can't say much more than that, I'm sorry Aiden. But please, as I said, I'm here every step of the way, I want to figure this out as much as you do.

A: Well... I'm glad you are here in any case. I...

A splash in the water sounds off to their right. They both freeze for a few seconds.

AIDEN: Where did it go?

KATHERINE: Uh... There.

AIDEN: Where are you pointing?

KATHERINE: There. See? It's a rat. Look at that, it's actually swimming.

AIDEN: Bloody hell, that made my heart stop.

KATHERINE: You see him?

AIDEN: Yeah, I can see the little guy. Well, not so little, I didn't know country rats got that big.
[calling out] Just don't come up near us alright?

KATHERINE: *[calling out]* Yeah, this scones mine.

AIDEN: *[Chuckling]* Well, it was mine.

KATHERINE: There we go. See, we laugh in the face of danger. Or our friend Ratty.

They walk for a few steps.

KATHERINE: Are you going to do any of your... preparations?

AIDEN: Preparations?

KATHERINE: Preparations. Iron and beech and so on? You know, your... witchy stuff.

AIDEN: No.

KATHERINE: Really?

AIDEN: As scared as I am, I want to actually see what's out there. I want to be able to prove that whatever the hell it was, it is something, and I can't do that if I am walking around with a big pile of cold iron or salt on me.

KATHERINE: Fair enough.

AIDEN: Alright, we should be nearing the trap cam. See? The river widens here, I put it just up there to get the best angle on anything swimming up or down the river.

KATHERINE: If we're lucky, it might even snap a pic of our friend the river rat.

AIDEN: *[whispered urgently]* Hang on...

KATHERINE: *[whispered]* What?

AIDEN: *[whispered]* There, the camera.

KATHERINE: Oh.

AIDEN: Or... it was the camera.

KATHERINE: It's covered in... stuff. Who would do that?

AIDEN: I don't know.

KATHERINE: Aiden, hold up ten secs. I don't like this. If it's an angry farmer or a group of-

Aiden pushes forward towards the camera.

KATHERINE: *[slightly frustrated, to herself/recorder]* And he's gone. Again.

AIDEN: *[slightly distant]* C'mon! Quick.

KATHERINE: I'm right behind you.

Aiden reaches the trap camera and unhooks it from its support. Katherine stops next to him.

AIDEN: Damn, it's soaked. There's water just leaking out of it.

KATHERINE: Oh come on, that was really expensive. *[beat]* Is it...?

AIDEN: Ruined, yeah. Whoever, or whatever did this, didn't like the idea of their picture being taken. Yeah, the entire thing's fried. Let's take it back with us, perhaps we can, I don't know, put it in a bag of rice and see what happens?

KATHERINE: I don't think rice is going to help.

AIDEN: Maybe we can get someone to look at it?

KATHERINE: Oh. Aiden, did you look at the ground before you ran in?

AIDEN: And potentially walked all over any tracks from whoever did this? No. No I didn't. Sorry.

KATHERINE: It would've been a long shot in the dark.

Aiden clicks open the camera casing. Water and soggy duckweed flops out.

AIDEN: Oh. Oh no no no. I hate that.

KATHERINE: What?

AIDEN: Look.

KATHERINE: Is that duckweed?

AIDEN: Yeah. And there is another wad inside the camera lens. Oh gods that's not....

[he takes a series of deep calming breaths]

KATHERINE: Hey, it's ok. It's probably just local kids pranking us, or trying to prank the people who fish around here. It's nothing. Let me take that.

Aiden hands the camera to Katherine.

AIDEN: It's duckweed Kitty, it's bloody Jenn...

KATHERINE: We don't know anything yet. Let's get back on the path for a second?

AIDEN: Wait, look. There. *[Aiden takes a few steps forward.]* It leads all the way to the water.

KATHERINE: There's a trail leading towards the river. It passes pretty much straight under the camera.

AIDEN: See? The river!

KATHERINE: Wait, just wait for a second. This looks like an animal path. It's not new. I can't make out any obvious tracks in the dark, and we've been trampling all over it which doesn't help. We can't know whether whoever did this came from the water or from the woods.

AIDEN: Yeah, you're right.

KATHERINE: Come on, this way.

The two make their way back to the path.

AIDEN: Okay, so let me get your position straight, a pack of rebellious teenagers, angry farmers or some local with a vendetta against photography finds our camera and instead of stealing it, breaking it with force or just, spray painting the lens, they fill it with water and duckweed?

KATHERINE: If the locals know their folklore, like the teenagers who told you that story years ago did, it's not inconceivable.

AIDEN: No less inconceivable than a water spirit coming out of the river and drowning any evidence of her existence.

KATHERINE: *[unconvinced]* Eh.

AIDEN: Should we get back to basecamp, just in case "the youths" decide to ruin our day even further?

KATHERINE: Could be an idea. This is the only path in the area right?

AIDEN: Yeah.

KATHERINE: We haven't seen anyone nearby, and no one's gone past us, so they probably went on upriver. Away from us. Or went cross-country.

AIDEN: You want to risk going onward?

KATHERINE: I'm just a passenger here. This is your call. Where's your gut saying we should go?

AIDEN: Home. No, that's a lie. Up river. That feels right.

KATHERINE: Alright, lead on.

The recorder clicks off.

The recorder clicks back on, they're standing close to the bank of the river.

AIDEN: Here we are. At this point, the river narrows and runs into a series of rapids. I always felt uneasy whenever I walked past, even before... Before Daniel.

The water swirls again, something splashes, a torch flicks on.

AIDEN: Kitty? What are you doing?

KATHERINE: Look, I can't see where I'm putting my feet and I don't want to fall in.

AIDEN: Alright, fine.

They walk a few steps in silence. Katherine stops abruptly.

KATHERINE: Aiden. There. By the bank. Something just moved.

AIDEN: Something big?

KATHERINE: I don't know, I just caught a glimpse. The light on the water distorts things. See? It's too murky here to see anything.

AIDEN: There is something out there.

KATHERINE: Our friend ratty, and pike most likely.

AIDEN: Do pike hunt at night?

KATHERINE: I don't know.

AIDEN: Hmm, in any case. Here goes. *[He lets out a sharp breath]* Jenny Greenteeth. Jenny Greenteeth, we have met before. You took someone from me. *[The water noise swells, perhaps Daniel, perhaps Belisama in the whirling cacophony]* Jinny Greenteeth. Wicked Jenny. Spirit of the River. Lurker in the water. Drowner in the deep. You will heed my call.

The water still stirs uneasily no answer, after several long seconds.

AIDEN: Right. I guess it's not going to be that easy. *[calling out]* Last chance! Or are you too weak to hurt me now?

Between the silence of the Aiden and Katherine, the water flows, something is still there, some half heard voices in the dark depths. Nothing certain, just an encroaching murmur.

AIDEN: Okay. She hasn't taken the bait, not really. Let's head back. Kitty? *[no response]* Kitty?

KATHERINE: *[distracted]* What? Oh, oh yes. Right behind you.

AIDEN: *[disappointed]* I'm sorry, that all came tumbling out. Sorry to put you in that position, I know you don't really believe that any of that has real meaning. I thought, if it worked for Rowan, sort of, it might have worked for me.

KATHERINE: It has meaning to you Aiden, that's enough. And... Mm. Nevermind.

AIDEN: What?

KATHERINE: I thought I heard something when you said her name, behind the noise of the water. It was probably an echo, you were speaking pretty loudly.

AIDEN: You heard something?

KATHERINE: I... I don't know. I don't think so? Look. Let's head back.

The recorder switches off.

EXT. NEAR THE RIVER - NIGHT

The recorder switches on, the river is back to normal. Aiden and Katherine sit down with a sigh.

KATHERINE: Well, so far so good. Our kit's still here. The camera near the camp hasn't been tampered with.

AIDEN: Thank goodness. Okay, so please. Kitty, you heard something. What was it?

KATHERINE: A trick of the ears, auditory pareidolia. That's all.

AIDEN: Kitty. What did you hear?

KATHERINE: *[quietly]* I... I thought I heard something speaking.

AIDEN: As did I.

KATHERINE: You mean...

AIDEN: Uh-huh, whatever made that noise was either a shared hallucination or we both actually heard another voice speaking under mine.

KATHERINE: Aiden, don't. If you're just saying that, wanting to believe what I heard...

AIDEN: Please do me the courtesy of knowing I want this evidence as clear as possible. When have you ever known me to lie about the supernatural?

KATHERINE: I haven't... Well... not lie. I mean, Daniel. You never told me about him, you never told David or any of your other friends about him. I understand it was an incredibly traumatic event, but that's what the people close to you are for, right? Helping you through things, supporting you when you need it.

AIDEN: Ah.

KATHERINE: Sorry. You don't need this right now. I'll turn this-

Katherine reaches over to the recorder to switch it off, but before she can there's another splash, and voices begin to lurk beneath the rushing of the river.

AIDEN: No. Stop. We need that on. There's something out there. You heard that too right?

KATHERINE: Yes.

AIDEN: I... Kitty, I'm sorry. Let's just get through tonight and I promise I will sort myself out.

KATHERINE: I don't need you to sort yourself out, I need you to realise that I'm here for you, supernatural spirit or no. *[with a smile]* And since when did you get so level headed in the face of danger?

AIDEN: Don't get me wrong, I'm scared. But, I've been almost killed in the last month at least once, and you're here now, and... I'm getting closure on this. End of discussion.

KATHERINE: Good. I...

There is a whisper, another splash, the click of a camera. Aiden jumps to his feet and runs towards the camera.

AIDEN: The trap cam! Not again!

Aiden sprints forward first, Katherine is quick to follow. The two run through vegetation, leaves and twigs crunching beneath their feet, just as they get to the river bank Aiden trips and falls, sliding several feet, and crashing into the river with a yell, he continues to shout in panic as he splashes back to the riverbank

KATHERINE: *[shouting]* Aiden!

AIDEN: *[shouting, panicked]* Help! Kitty!

KATHERINE: *[shouting]* Aiden!

AIDEN: *[shouting, panicked]* Help me!

KATHERINE: *[shouting]* My hand!

AIDEN: *[shouting]* Where? Kitty, where?

KATHERINE: *[shouting]* Come on, reach! I've got you!

Aiden splashes in the river, and with Kitty's help starts to heave himself out of the water and onto the bank. The chanting is audibly louder.

AIDEN: Dan? *[There is another splash, a sucking sound, as something wraps around Aiden's leg]*
My leg! It's got my leg!

KATHERINE: Hold on! Penknife? Where's your penknife?

AIDEN: Belt!

Katherine grabs at Aiden's belt and unclips his penknife. It clicks open, then she hacks into something sinewy and wet. Flesh and butchery sounds. Aiden is released and he drags himself up the bank. They both lie there for a few seconds. The chanting fades.

AIDEN: Kitty, I...

They both breathe heavily.

AIDEN: Oh gods. Damn it. Okay. That... Kitty...

KATHERINE: It's duckweed.

AIDEN: It was...

KATHERINE: There's duckweed, tangled around your leg. *[unconvincingly]* See? Clumps of the stuff.

AIDEN: But it wasn't...

KATHERINE: I know.

AIDEN: What?

KATHERINE: I know it wasn't duckweed. I know what I saw.

AIDEN: Oh. So, do you...?

KATHERINE: I... I don't know! Can we just... can we just get away from the edge?

They pull themselves up.

AIDEN: I'm going to get the camera. It might've caught something.

KATHERINE: You need to warm up. We have blankets back at the camp. Let's head there. The camera's on the way.

They walk towards the camera. Katherine supports Aiden as he walks unsteadily. Aiden's teeth chatter in the cold night air.

KATHERINE: Here.

Katherine groans in frustration.

AIDEN: That one too?

KATHERINE: Yes. It's the same as the one upriver. Water and river vegetation.

AIDEN: This is all getting too much. I don't want to get you hurt. You should go.

KATHERINE: Stop driving me away, actually bloody listen to me for once. We're in this together. I'm not going to run just because someone's sabotaged our kit.

AIDEN: Sorry. Again. I just...

KATHERINE: No. No apologies, not tonight. It's okay, we're okay, and we're both getting through this.

AIDEN: Uh-huh.

KATHERINE: I need to know who did this, supernatural or not.

They crunch back to the camp, the rustle of backpacks and clothes.

AIDEN: Um... Could you turn around?

KATHERINE: What? Oh. Yeah.

Aiden's sopping wet clothes hit the ground. He towels off as best he can.

KATHERINE: So. What now?

AIDEN: Closure. This whole thing needs to stop, and I think I know how.

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