

# TRANSCRIPT

## Season 1 Episode 4: The Red King

Aiden and Katherine begin a new investigation into the centuries old mystery of the death of the Red King. Was it an unfortunate accident, murder most foul, or something... darker?

### Content Warnings:

Depiction of blood and gore, altered mind-state, isolation, audio distortion, body horror. Discussion of murder, death, fire, arson, death of a child, grief and loss.

### Cast:

Finn Cresswell as Aiden Summers

Alexandra M. Barrow as Katherine Moore

Iain S P Bennett as Reporter 1

Freya Womersley as Reporter 2

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

[www.thewyrdside.com](http://www.thewyrdside.com)

Content warnings can be found in the episode description.

### ***INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO***

*Rustling of leaves in a gentle breeze, trees (deciduous, oak).*

AIDEN: There is quiet in the ancient forest. The watchful quiet of a hunter, breath, gentle, movements slow and purposeful as winding brambles, and death as inevitable as the turn of the seasons. There. Amongst the gnarled trees prey is sighted. A horse softly snorts, a stag looks up, its antlers forming a bloody velvet wreath above its noble head. "There. There..." the wind sighs. "Loose now". The hunt is drawing to an end.

*An arrow is released from a bow, thud as it impacts flesh. Thrum of a heartbeat slows.*

Arrow thrums from bowstring, a hiss in the air as it finds the flesh of a king. Not one of the forest, but of England. Wine dark blood seeps into the thirsty ground as betrayal... and something darker snatches away the life of The Red King. *[Intensely]* Feeding the ravenous earth.

*Soundscape fades*

KATHERINE: On the second of August of the year a thousand one hundred, the King of England, King William the second, died in mysterious circumstances hunting in the New Forest. The true identity of his killer and the circumstances surrounding his death remain shrouded in mystery. Was it a simple accident, blown out of proportion? Was it political

scheming, plotted murder? Or, was it a supernatural curse, placed on the King's father, William the Conqueror, for seizing land and parishes in the New Forest by force?

AIDEN: Join us this week, as back in the New Forest we investigate the death of The Red King. I'm Aiden Summers -

KATHERINE: And I'm Katherine Moore. Welcome to The Wyrd Side, where we shed light on one of England's most mysterious cold cases.

### ***THE WYRD SIDE MUSIC***

#### **INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO**

*Soft silence of the Wyrd Side recording studio*

AIDEN: Now despite the impression you may have gotten from the intro, we're not rebranding to a true crime podcast.

KATHERINE: As fun as that would be.

AIDEN: We're staying well within the realm of folklore, the paranormal and the unknown. Oh! We should also mention that, for now, we've decided to put our Colt Pixie investigation to one side.

KATHERINE: Speaking of cold cases...

AIDEN: Despite a series of incredibly compelling personal encounters with a potential Colt Pixie out on the moors, Kitty reminds me frequently that "a bit of fog and a weird feeling" isn't going to withstand rigorous forensic interrogation.

KATHERINE: That it certainly would not.

AIDEN: That being said, I really do believe there was something out there. *[emphatically]* I felt it. I mean, just look at what happened with the kid! With Rowan!

*Katherine clears her throat.*

AIDEN: Right, well. Enough of that. Take it away Kitty.

KATHERINE: Thanks. We've spent a fair amount of time researching this variant of the Will-o-the-Wisp, laying out the history and myth supporting its existence over the last three episodes. And while we could continue to get lost in fog, or trek through peatland, we *both* agreed that investigating another paranormal... uh... event in the area would be a more productive use of our time. And more interesting for you, our listeners. Now, if the Colt Pixie crops up again, there's nothing stopping us from taking another look, but for now, we're moving on.

AIDEN: And please do continue to write in! What did you think about our Colt Pixie investigation? Did you hear clear proof of something trying to communicate with us, or were we barking up the wrong tree? Do let us know if you've ever experienced anything like our encounter on the moors. We'd love to hear your thoughts on the case and of course about any of your own encounters.

KATHERINE: You can get in touch with us on Twitter @thewyrdside, or by email at [thewyrdside@gmail.com](mailto:thewyrdside@gmail.com). Remember, that's Wyrd with a y. [*very excited*] Now. King William the Second. The Red King.

AIDEN: Okay, yeah! This case has a little bit of everything. Real history feeding into legend, a clear record of sightings -

KATHERINE: [*interrupting*] And don't forget, a dash of unsolved murder.

AIDEN: Yeah, that old chestnut! You can maybe tell that someone's particularly excited about this case? So, how about we dive right into it, with us back out in the field, fresh and ready for another investigation!

#### **EXT. RUFUS STONE - DAY**

*Light breeze occasionally rustling tree (deciduous, oak) leaves. Distant bird song.*

KATHERINE: Welcome back to the New Forest! It's bright and sunny today, hardly a cloud in the sky. We've just hiked up across open heathland from our campsite, which is where we'll be staying for the next few days. It hasn't been a difficult walk so far, up past Stoney Cross, a wide plain of scrubby grass characteristic of the New Forest. This whole area used to be used as an RAF airfield, servicing aircraft during the Second World War and you can still see the remnants of the runways etched into the ground.

AIDEN: But we're not here for that today, the setting of our investigation lies far further back in the mists of time, in the 12th century, a few years after this land was repurposed as a royal hunting ground.

KATHERINE: The acquisition of the New Forest was notoriously fraught, with William the Conqueror essentially turfing the local communities out of the area to establish "Forest Law". This prevented most commoners from using the area to graze livestock, hunt, forage for food, or even erect fences.

AIDEN: And all because all these pesky commoners would interfere with his royal hunting activities.

KATHERINE: An unpopular decision with the locals, as you might imagine.

AIDEN: Heaven forbid they try to feed themselves. Anyway, his son, William the Second, who was also known as Rufus, or the Red King due to his bright red hair and matching ruddy complexion, came to the throne in 1087 and was just as popular as his old dad.

KATHERINE: For the thirteen years he was in power, he ruled with an iron fist.

AIDEN: When someone's described as "loathsome to nigh all his people", it's a pretty good sign they're going down the 'better to be feared than loved' route.

KATHERINE: Indeed. King Rufus was notoriously cruel towards his people. And not only the commoners. He put down two rebellions instigated by his own Norman barons, the second of which with such decisive ferocity that no one dared challenge him after that.

AIDEN: At least not outwardly. Rufus reversed his father's policy of spending large amounts of money on the church - in fact he did exactly the opposite. He levied high and far reaching taxes across England, he also raided monasteries whenever he was in need of funds.

KATHERINE: Pair that with the fact that most of the history books were written by the church at the time, so you can imagine that they paint him as quite the unpleasant monarch.

AIDEN: And on top of all of that, he upheld Forest Law to the extreme. It's pretty horrific, for example if you were caught bothering the deer, you'd be blinded. All in all an utterly brutal man.

KATHERINE: And with a brutal reign, comes a brutal end. And it's recorded right here, on the Rufus Stone.

*Katherine gestures to Aiden to read. Aiden clears his throat.*

AIDEN: It reads: 'Here stood the oak tree on which an arrow shot by Sir Walter Tyrell at a stag, glanced, and struck King William the second, surnamed Rufus, on the breast of which he instantly died on the second day of august anno 1100.'

KATHERINE: The original trees are long gone, but supposedly the trees lining the clearing around us are the descendants of that very oak. No way to verify that.

*Crunch of footsteps as Aiden walks around the stone.*

AIDEN: 'King William the second, surnamed Rufus, being slain, as before related, was laid in a cart belonging to one Purkis, and drawn from hence, to Winchester, and buried in the cathedral church of that city.'

KATHERINE: Purkis by all accounts was a local charcoal burner, and he turned down five pieces of silver to bring Rufus' body to Winchester, instead choosing the right to collect dead wood from the New Forest, which was a criminal offence at the time.

AIDEN: It's known as collecting wood by "hook or crook". That permission would have been quite valuable to him and to his family.

KATHERINE: Following the event, the marksman who supposedly shot the king, Sir Tyrell, fled to France, abandoning the now dead king.

AIDEN: Apparently he stopped off at a blacksmiths near a ford, now called Tyrell's Ford, where he shod his horse backwards.

KATHERINE: Wait, he put the horseshoes on the wrong way round?

AIDEN: Mmm. That's right.

KATHERINE: Huh, smart guy. Poor horse.

AIDEN: Yeah. And as with all the good folklore in the United Kingdom, there's also a pub named after Sir Walter Tyrell in Brook, as well as a King Rufus pub in Eling. Celebrating history with drink is a long standing tradition.

***INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO***

*Soft sound of the The Wyrd Side recording studio*

KATHERINE: It was definitely murder. Just look at the evidence. Henry, Rufus' brother, was hunting in the exact same forest as Rufus when he got killed.

AIDEN: The New Forest. A royal hunting ground, where you might find... royals... hunting? And if it was the season for it, why wouldn't they all be out there?

KATHERINE: *[ploughing on]* He was crowned king three days after Rufus' death... Three days! No grieving, no extravagant funeral, and on top of that Henry wasn't even the next in line to the throne. He's our suspect.

AIDEN: I'm not surprised. Politics and power plays were notoriously cut-throat in those times. Not that that's changed that much nowadays. Just look at the rebellions and power struggles of the 12th and 13th centuries, how William the Conqueror claimed the crown: he paid the pope to give him his blessing - then immediately attacked King Harold who had just fought another large battle hundred of miles to the north. If you think about it, that whole period was essentially one war after another, if not with some other kingdom, then within the country itself. Feudal barons plotting to overthrow anyone with more power and take advantage of anyone with less power than them.

KATHERINE: If anything, that makes Rufus more likely to have been murdered.

AIDEN: *[unconvinced]* Maybe.

KATHERINE: Then what about the murder weapon? Improbability of the event aside, it's a mighty coincidence that an arrow shot at a stag missed its mark, bounced off an oak tree, pierced Rufus through the lung, and killed him instantly.

AIDEN: Okay, think how many hundreds of hunting accidents happen each year nowadays, though I will say it certainly lacks a little... je ne sais quoi. *[Katherine groans at the almost*

*joke*] The story would have had to have been embellished just a little to make it more memorable.

KATHERINE: I suppose you're right. I'm not saying that it was impossible for the death to have been an accident, just that it's suspicious that the archer legged it to France right after.

AIDEN: Surely anyone who had just killed a king might want to make themselves scarce. Even if he was widely disliked, treason on that scale would have led to dreadful punishment, most likely followed by a slow and painful death. Even then, he may have just been rushing to bring the news back to Normandy. And don't forget, the jury is still out on whether it actually was Sir Tyrrell who even shot the arrow in the first place.

KATHERINE: *[groan]* That's what gets me with these stories. There's always another version. Just when you think you've gotten your facts straight, another possibility crawls out of the woodwork to confuse things.

AIDEN: But, don't you think that's also part of their charm? These tales have become so warped by time, by retellings of retellings, that no one really knows what happened. Only a tiny kernel of truth remains. In our case it's the Red King, dying in the New Forest. That's how you get a folktale, a story distilled down to its bare bones and then re-fleshed so fantastically as to become almost unrecognisable from its origins. But the bones... the bones are the same, no matter what flesh hangs off them.

KATHERINE: Some may call that charming. Some, unsettling. Now, if we could ask the Red King himself, he could weigh in. At least, he could settle who shot the arrow.

AIDEN: That would be a pretty definitive case closed.

KATHERINE: Now that... That would be charming.

AIDEN: Oh leave off, I know deep down you love a good folktale as much as the next person.

KATHERINE: So, how about we ask him?

AIDEN: Ha. We can try!.

KATHERINE: We weren't only investigating this tale because it was an interesting piece of local history, but because of multiple reports of the Red King himself still haunting the area.

AIDEN: We want to know if he's still hanging around. Give you that answer to the arrow question. Though I guess it would all depend if he saw who loosed it...

KATHERINE: *[in the tone of someone who knows they've cinched key evidence]* Now Aiden, one more thing. Are most ghostly hauntings not caused by an individual having some sort of... unfinished business?

AIDEN: Hm yeah, I'd say a large number of them are...

KATHERINE: Well, would your unresolved, unpunished murder not be a good enough reason to stick around? Or in this case, the wrathful Rufus, the Red King, still roaming the royal hunting grounds, condemned to a fate worse than death by his power-hungry brother who employed a master archer to make a dastardly murder look like a terrible accident?

AIDEN: Ms Moore, you're turning into quite the storyteller!

KATHERINE: I am learning from the best.

***INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO***

AIDEN: Or...

KATHERINE: Or?

AIDEN: It could be the curse.

KATHERINE: Hmm. The curse.

AIDEN: We can't have already gotten this far into the story and not mentioned the curse!

KATHERINE: *[apologetic]* Sorry, I got sidetracked by murder.

AIDEN: As we mentioned earlier, Rufus' father William the Conqueror, essentially stole the lands and livelihoods from the people living in the New Forest at the time, as was his supposed divine right.

KATHERINE: An unpopular decision.

*Over the course of Aiden's storytelling, oak tree leaves rustle, sound of a distant wind.*

AIDEN: A very unpopular decision. Now the legend supposedly goes as follows: "There were countless inhabitants uprooted and cast out from their homes and lands across what is now the New Forest. In one of these villages, no more than a hamlet really, there lived a blacksmith with his wife and son, soon to be a man grown. Some say the blacksmith's name was Jack, others that it may have been Godwine, the truth of the matter has been lost to the gnarled trees and grasping brambles. The Blacksmith, for that is we will call him, watched his home go up in flames as the way was cleared for the Norman King's hunting grounds. *[crackle of flames]* He saw his grandfather's smithy collapse in on itself, the memory of sweat and blood toiling for hard iron, lost to smoke and greed. He saw the herb garden so carefully started by his grandmother and lovingly tended by his wife trampled to mud beneath cruel booted feet.

Tears shone bright on their faces as the small family watched their lives swallowed by fire and conquest. *[crackle of flame dies down]* No more would they wake to the gentle sound of

the stream near their home, chase hungry deer away from their meagre crops or stay up late telling stories by the warm glow of the hearthfire. When they tarried too long in the wreck of their home, soldiers came in soot blackened mail, swords sharp and hungry, their cruel cuts wounding the Blacksmith dearly. As the steel came to strike his death blow, he was too weak to stop his son from stepping between himself and the wicked blade. Metal cut sinew and bone with a butcher's precision [*knife cuts flesh*] and his son's blood soon mingled with his own.

The soldiers left. A small crumpled body lay next to him, his wife's arms wrapped around it, shaking it, pleading with anything that could hear her to give their child back to them. The Blacksmith felt the rage inside him burst, a dam finally overwhelmed by grief and the strong, unforgiving anger of the forest around him. [*storm winds increase in intensity*] The trees groaned in the howling wind, now strong enough to bowl a grown man off his feet as black clouds gathered on the horizon. The land remembers its own. Their bodies, freely given, have nourished the plants that grow there, the animals that thrive there. Their blood, their sap, is one with the trees and rivers, all of which cried out at the injustice and horrors committed around them.

In his last moments before the land took him, the Blacksmith spoke aloud, to all things of the forest; bird and beast, heath and hill, river and moorland. He cursed those who had taken his son and his livelihood away from him. He cursed the soldiers. He cursed their Norman King, sitting on a stolen throne. His words echoed on the wind: [*a secondary voice can be heard underneath Aiden's words*] "If you steal the land of an Englishman, then you shall know this curse. Your favoured son's warm blood will run, to feed the vengeful earth."

In saying so, with his blood seeping into the soil of the land he called home, something heard him. Something malicious. Cruel. A thing made of trees and creeping brambles that reach out to grasp you from the shadows, biting wind that chills you to the bone even as you sit by the dying embers of your fire. A thing of eyes in the dark, reflecting the flames, taller than a deer, more cunning than a man, a thing of teeth and hunger and the pain of everything that runs, swims, flies and dies in the forest. The hunger of nature turned upon the line of the Norman King and anyone who followed him. Secret, patient, ever waiting for those of the line of William the Conqueror to once again step foot in the forest.

*Background soundscape quietens.*

### **INT. THE WYRD SIDE RECORDING STUDIO**

*Soft silence of The Wyrd Side recording room.*

AIDEN: Now we have a better understanding of The Red King's demise, I think it might be useful to run through the grisly details of these hauntings.

KATHERINE: Agreed.

AIDEN: Even though the intricacies of each story surrounding the death change from source to source, the ghosts and ghost events derived from the death are remarkably consistent: first hand sightings, conveniently blurry photographs, the lot.

KATHERINE: That's a good sign.

AIDEN: Yeah. It makes our job a tad easier, that's for sure. So, there are three ghosts, or ghost events associated with the legend of the Red King. Firstly, we have our tyrant king, Rufus the Red.

KATHERINE: Vengeful ghost King searching for his murderer.

AIDEN: Somewhat. The Red King was killed near the spot marked by the Rufus Stone, and his body was carried from there to Winchester, the old capital of England about 20 miles away. He is, according to the story, doomed to retrace that path.

KATHERINE: Every single night, or just on the anniversary of his death?

AIDEN: Eternally, according to the story. I know that doesn't give us too much to go on, but I believe it implies he's stuck, trapped on the pathway he travelled between his last living moments and the journey to the grave.

KATHERINE: Hmm, would have been useful to have a published timetable, but you know these ghost types. Unreliable, the lot of them.

AIDEN: Get them that calendar app you use. Now, we can track down the other two related ghost events much more easily, and it helps that they are somewhat linked. On the anniversary of the Red King's death - the second of August - Ocknell Pond, a frequently used watering hole for livestock on the common, turns red, stained with the blood that washed off the murderer's hands.

KATHERINE: Aha!

AIDEN: What's up?

KATHERINE: You said it!

AIDEN: Ocknell?

KATHERINE: No, murderer! "The blood that washed off the murderers hands". *[satisfied]*  
You believe me.

AIDEN: Well... Would you accept it was a slip of the tongue?

KATHERINE: Sure, whatever you say. It's a shame we're a bit late in the year for those events. A blood-red pond would be quite something.

AIDEN: Only by a few months... Oh, here, take a look at this, all put in order and everything.

*Aiden hands Katherine a file.*

KATHERINE: I'm sorry, who are you and what have you done with Aiden? This is great! I may be excited about the whole unsolved murder angle, but this? Even if we don't see a ghost, these colour coded files might actually make the whole trip worth it.

AIDEN: I thought you'd appreciate it. Though when I was putting it together, I may have taken a slight detour into some 12th century folklore that led me down the path of listening to an entire album that someone had made of a troubadour's poetry. There's even one about how great frogs are.

KATHERINE: Right, that I've got to hear. But for now, Ocknell.

AIDEN: Of course. Back to the blood-stained pond... Over the last twenty odd years, there have been multiple reports of Ocknell Pond changing colour. It gets harder and harder to track down reports the further back you go, but I've picked out most of the relevant ones.

KATHERINE: Mmmm Eleven reports. [*Katherine flicks through the pages*] Hang on. These aren't all dated to the second of August.

AIDEN: No, the event seems to occur somewhere within the last two weeks of July, and the first two weeks of August. The four weeks surrounding the anniversary of the Red King's death. In most of these articles the colour change from normal to blood-red seems to happen pretty quickly, and the pond doesn't stay red for more than a few days to... there. [*Aiden points to a particular article*] A week in 2015. And then some years, no colour change at all, and heck, some years, no pond at all!

KATHERINE: Those aren't great photos.

AIDEN: Yeah. Of course, the pool may have changed to red some years and not been reported, and the exact date of change is uncertain, but this is what I've managed to dig out from the Park Service archives.

KATHERINE: Hmmm. It's not as... bloody as I imagined. Quite brown. That colour change could easily be caused by tannins from the peat and surrounding organic debris. Or, it could even be a joke in poor taste...

AIDEN: That's essentially what all the articles conclude. Most of them reiterate *ad nauseum* that this is a natural event, not due to some villainous company pouring chemicals into the water table, or anything nefarious like that. No need for the public to panic, but just... don't go for a dip? Just in case?

KATHERINE: Hah.

AIDEN: On three of these occasions, our third and final ghost event was sighted: Tyrrell's hound.

KATHERINE: Tyrrell as in the master archer Tyrrell who may or may not have murdered the Red King?

AIDEN: Yep, that's the one.

KATHERINE: Tyrrells hound. I'm sure I've come across that before...

AIDEN: In the reports?

KATHERINE: Mmm. I don't think so... Well. If it's important, it'll come back to me.

AIDEN: The hound also appears at the same time as the pool turning red. It's a classic black hound, straight out of British folklore.

KATHERINE: So probably not one of those nice, guardian hounds?

AIDEN: Not exactly...

KATHERINE: Okay, so that most likely means that it's a huge dog, nocturnal, with shaggy black fur, eyes glowing red?

AIDEN: To a T, this hound has all the markings of a death omen.

KATHERINE: Brilliant. A classic piece of British folklore. You don't seem too happy about that.

AIDEN: I'm not. I wouldn't make light of this one. On two out of the three occasions that the hound was sighted, people died. One was an unnamed walker, out late trying to catch a glimpse of the Perseid meteor shower -

KATHERINE: Out, alone in the New Forest, probably at the darkest time of night.

AIDEN: That's right. They were in the area at about one, two am. And you know Amie Wilson?

KATHERINE: Oh, the co-presenter of that late-night ghost hunting show? Oh... What's it called...

AIDEN: Hunting the Other Side?

KATHERINE: Yes! That's the one. I haven't seen that in years.

AIDEN: There's a reason for that. She died.

KATHERINE: Oh.

AIDEN: Almost a year after coming to report on the Spectral Black Hound of Ocknell Pond. Tyrrell's Hound.

KATHERINE: Wow. How did I not know this?

AIDEN: It happened over two years ago. You stopped watching way before that, after they did that report on the London Dungeon.

KATHERINE: *[under her breath]* Everyone knows that's just a tourist attraction. There aren't any ghosts there. *[out loud]* Well. I'm sorry. She was great at her job. So they stopped producing the show?

AIDEN: Yeah. I don't think anyone had the heart to continue without her.

KATHERINE: Understandable. But neither of the pair who saw the hound died in the New Forest right?

AIDEN: They all died within a year of seeing Tyrrell's hound.

KATHERINE: *[lightening up]* Oh ok, you had me worried there. I thought that it came after them at Ocknell pond. That would make me seriously reconsider our camping trip.

AIDEN: Tyrrell's hound isn't the cause of death, it's an omen of death, a predictor. Like the Cŵn Annwn, the Welsh dog of the underworld, or the Keres from Greek mythology. In British folklore, the spectral black hound is a pervasive figure, haunting graveyards, barrows... Or alternatively places of execution - like the gallows, crossroads. All those liminal spaces between life and death.

KATHERINE: Didn't you say black hounds were originally linked to The Devil?

AIDEN: Yeah, they were. They tend to be either portrayed as the devil himself, or in his service, a sort of... hellhound. Most people have heard of Black Shuck in East Anglia, Padfoot, The Barghest of Yorkshire... And that's not even counting all the hounds that are just named "The Black Hound Of" X, Y and Z. They're all over the UK. I'd be surprised if an area didn't have a black dog myth. But I don't think there's a link between Tyrrell's Hound and The Devil.

KATHERINE: Okay. We have two deaths following the sighting of Tyrrell's Hound, the spectral death omen. You said there were three sightings total. So what happened to the last person?

AIDEN: Read that next entry. Just below the pink tab.

KATHERINE: Uh... *[Katherine flicks through the documents]* This one?

AIDEN: That's it.

*Katherine clears her throat.*

KATHERINE: "On December nineteenth local Burley resident reported seeing a large black dog near Stoney Cross Airfield. Reported to be "nigh 5 feet on the shoulder, eyes smouldering like embers in the dark and teeth as long as a pickpockets fingers ", unquote. Local police have carried out extensive searches in the area for the animal. They repeat that

residents and visitors should not be alarmed by increased police presence, and should anyone see a large black dog, to keep a safe distance and report it to their local constabulary." *[Katherine thinks for a second]* I know this. I've read this before.

AIDEN: Keep going, keep going.

KATHERINE: Okay, uh... "Our reporters spoke to the resident who raised the alarm, who said: quote "It won't do any good now, Tyrell's Hound will be long gone. I wouldn't seek it out in any case. They're trampling over the moorland like they own the place. It's best left alone. And anyways, nothing they do now will change anything, it's too late." Unquote. Quite a fatalist this Burley resident. *[realising]* Oh. Of course.

AIDEN: I think you know who reported this.

KATHERINE: Albert.

AIDEN: Albert.

KATHERINE: Well that's good! That breaks the trend. We only spoke to him a few weeks ago and he seemed fine. Maybe a little keen on the local bitter, but apart from that, sprightly and eager to share his tales. When did he make this report?

AIDEN: About eleven months ago.

KATHERINE: Okay... I must have come across it when I was checking for Colt Pixie stories. Look, Aiden, I don't think that there's any cause for panic. By his own reckoning, he's a regular on the moors. He knows his way around.

AIDEN: But -

KATHERINE: We don't need to worry. And if Tyrrell's Hound is an omen of death like you say it is, well there's no use fretting and nothing we can do about it if it's already been sighted.

AIDEN: I never pictured you as a fatalist.

KATHERINE: I'm a realist. Despite what Albert says, it could have just been a big, black dog.

AIDEN: Hmm.

*Longer pause.*

KATHERINE: In any case, we're off season for both the pond, and Tyrell's Hound. Looks like our only option is to try and meet the Red King himself.

**EXT. RUFUS STONE - NIGHT**

*Recorder clicks on to Aiden walking along the path. Distant sounds of natural night life, occasional owl hoot, slight breeze shivering through some pines.*

AIDEN: I volunteered to walk the path tonight. All of the sightings of the Red King were reported by people on their own, so we agreed to try and recreate the conditions they experienced as exactly as we could. And Kitty isn't too far away. She dropped me off at the Rufus Stone a few minutes ago, at roughly quarter to midnight, and then continued along the road for about a mile or so. She's given me thirty minutes to get to the rendezvous before she's going to start to walk back along the path towards me from the car. It's really dark out here. Darker than I expected, what with the road being so close and all. Good thing I've got this! *[trying to psych himself up]* All I have to do this crisp autumnal night, is walk from here, the Rufus Stone, where the Red King died, to the rendezvous point. Easy.

*Click as Aiden switches on another recorder.*

AIDEN: Backup recorders on, so I'm not going to be caught out by technical failures this time. Okay.

*Tread of booted feet on loamy earth, kicking the occasional rock and stepping through some particularly scrubby grass.*

AIDEN: *[calling out]* King Rufus? Rufus Rex? Rufus Rai? You there? *[pause as Aiden waits for an answer]* Hello? Is anyone there? Can you hear me? Can you say something?

*No answer.*

AIDEN: Oh shoot, wait a sec.

*Rustling noises as Aiden digs around in his bag for a few seconds.*

AIDEN: Okay, let's hear you in action.

*Crackle of static starts up, a radio jumps through different frequencies as Aiden tries to find an empty channel.*

*Burst of music, various different radio stations:*

REPORTER 1: Rhiannon is calling us from Abertillery to wish Hugh congratulations on his promotion! From all of us here at Red Dragon -

*Crackle of static as Aiden changes the station.*

*A couple of bars from a pop song, definitely out of tune, slightly discordant.*

*Crackle of static as Aiden changes the station.*

REPORTER 2: Viking, Fair Isle; southwesterly five to seven; occasionally gale eight; rain or showers; Moderate or poor, occasionally very poor.

*Crackle of static as Aiden changes the station.*

AIDEN: Almost there...

*Crackle of static as station changes. Fade to quiet static*

AIDEN: There we go, a clear channel.

*Footsteps start up again as Aiden walks forwards slowly.*

AIDEN: Hello? Is anyone there? *[pause as he waits for an answer]*

*Radio squeals (that strange sound it makes when it changes channel too quickly.)*

AIDEN: Is that you, King Rufus? Can you say something? Okay, how about in a language you may understand. Um... Oh, um... Est-ce-que tu peux dire quelque chose s'il vous plaît?

*Aiden waits for a few seconds. Radio garble of voices and static, crescendo-ing to a cacophony. Cut to loud static.*

AIDEN: For the record, I didn't touch the radio just then.

*Crack of a twig snapping off the path.*

AIDEN: And that is just an animal, nothing to worry about. Like the crow. Just like the crow.

*Click as Aiden's torch switches off.*

AIDEN: *[shaky breath]* Oh, why now?

*Aiden hits the torch against his palm a few times in the typical, get something with batteries to work again way.*

AIDEN: Come on. Come on. Please turn back on!

*Aiden hits the torch against his palm a few times.*

AIDEN: Oh thank goodness. Light again. Hello? Who's there?

*Snort of a pony just off the path, clip clopping of hooves as it crosses the path in front of Aiden.*

AIDEN: *[nervous laugh of relief]* It's just a horse. A real, solid actual pony. You are a real pony, aren't you?

*Real pony snorts.*

AIDEN: Yep, that's a real pony. Wondering why these silly humans are wandering around at night making strange noises. You haven't seen King Rufus have you, pony?

*“Real pony” clip clops off the path into the underbrush.*

AIDEN: Good thing Kitty’s not here. She’d say *[imitating Katherine]* “why are you talking over the recording like that, theres no reason to be scared. It’s time to get some evidence”.

*Crunch of gravel as Aiden starts to walk again.*

AIDEN: *[psyching himself up again]* Ok. I can do this. *[determined]* I have to do this.

*Radio switches on to increasingly distorted static.*

AIDEN: King Rufus. Red King. Rai Rouge. Vous-êtes la? *[pause]* Parle moi?

*The area suddenly drop in temperature.*

AIDEN: *[unsure]* Hello? Are you there? *[to self, chattering teeth, sharp in breath]* I’ve just dipped down off the top of a rise into this small hollow. It’s... freezing down here.

*Burst of radio static.*

AIDEN: King Rufus? Is that you? *[pause, faltering]*

*Something appears on the top of the rise, masked by the darkness, a pulse of static from the radio, scraps of a song, a garbled scream.*

AIDEN: That’s...

*Aiden scrambles up the steep bank towards the apparition. The drip drip of a liquid hitting a pool.*

AIDEN: *[desperate]* Dan? Please, wait!

*Aiden stumbles on a scrubby tuft of grass, falls with a hard crash. Aiden drops the radio.*

AIDEN: *[gasps in pain]* I’m sorry...

*A burst of fleshy noise, bramble and bracken rustling in the wind.*

AIDEN: *[gathering himself]* That’s not... That’s not.... *[yells]* Show yourself! Montre-toi!

*The dragging sound of a body being pulled along rough ground. **Very softly**, at the edge of hearing brambles writhe and slither in the soundscape, seeming to puncture flesh and rip it asunder.*

*Aiden fumbles with his coat pocket as he pulls out his phone and takes a photograph.*

AIDEN: *[A snap of a phone camera shutter]* No. That’s... Oh gods...

*Ragged breaths and crunch of gravel and assorted path sounds as Aiden starts to run. Flutter of bird wings. The radio static fades into the background, fading away. Increasingly ragged breathing cuts to silence.*

**EXT. RUFUS STONE - NIGHT**

**Outside NF - night**

*Katherine has the recorder. She's sitting in her car, trying to voice her thoughts on evidence seen so far from the record.*

KATHERINE: I've been through Aiden's case files multiple times now. Apart from the fact they're unusually neat, not that I'm complaining, our mission tonight looks really promising. Nighttime, on the path, solo. This might be the best chance that we have to get evidence of the Red King. For me at least, it's now just a waiting game. If he isn't back in -

AIDEN: *[muffled, in distance]* Kitty?!

KATHERINE: Aiden?

AIDEN: Kitty!

*Car door opens, Katherine steps out. Crunch of feet on gravel as Aiden runs up at full speed.*

KATHERINE: Over here!

KATHERINE: How'd it go? Anyone out this evening? *[pause as she realises what a mess Aiden is in]* Aiden. What happened? You look half frozen to death!

AIDEN: *[very out of breath]* We need to go. Now.

KATHERINE: What are you talking about?

AIDEN: *[100% serious]* There's definitely something out there.

KATHERINE: *[excited]* You saw him? The Red King?

AIDEN: I... Please can we go?

KATHERINE: I need more information first. What did you see?

AIDEN: I don't know, I thought it was... It was cold, out of nowhere... I could... I could feel breath... I could feel breath on the back of my neck. I could hear... The heavy, the drag of a body being pulled along the ground.. I, I thought... I saw...someo... *[rounding on Katherine]* You didn't follow me did you?

KATHERINE: *[a little taken aback]* No, I was right here at our rendez-vous point, as we agreed.

AIDEN: You promise you weren't there?

KATHERINE: I was just reading through the casefiles when you came in. *[very serious]* Aiden, what did you see?

AIDEN: I thought I saw... It can't have been him.

KATHERINE: *[incredulous]* You saw the Red King?

AIDEN: No...

KATHERINE: *[aggressively]* No?

AIDEN: Maybe... I heard it first. The drip of... Oh Kitty, it felt like it was pointing towards me... That I did it... That I was... I was a coward, that I betrayed him and I... I... It was...so wrong...

KATHERINE: *[dismissive]* Wrong? You know we can't do anything with wrong. Tell me what you saw.

AIDEN: I'm sorry Kitty... I... the body, his body, it was... contorted and horrible... The mouth was open, like he was trying to speak but brambles and thorns... they poured out of his mouth... out of his eyes, they were reaching for me and... I ran...

*Katherine doesn't say anything.*

AIDEN: *[desperate]* I saw it Kitty, you have to believe me. It was so cold. So dark... So quiet, until he tried to speak...

KATHERINE: Did you get a photo?

AIDEN: Ah! Yes. I tried, hang on... oh damn it... I can't... can you put in my phone's passcode?

KATHERINE: Fine. *[A pause as Kitty navigates Aiden's phone]* Huh. Is this it?

AIDEN: What?

KATHERINE: This photo of some trees?

AIDEN: *[emphatic]* That's not... I... it was there. I'm not making this up. Please, you have to believe me.

KATHERINE: *[dismissive]* Fine. Look. If you can't handle it, we can head back to the campsite. I can come back another night.

AIDEN: You don't think it's enough.

*Awkward pause.*

AIDEN: You gave me the look.

KATHERINE: What look?

AIDEN: The look! That look on your face right now!

KATHERINE: This is just my normal face Aiden, I have, on occasion, been told I have resting -

AIDEN: *[interrupting]* No. You don't believe me. You think I let it all get to me.

KATHERINE: I think you've just had a shock.

AIDEN: It was there. I saw the shapes in the night. It was dark, and cold... So cold... And there was so much blood on the path... on the brambles... *[trails off]*

KATHERINE: Blood?

*Rustle of material as Katherine inspects Aiden for any cuts or scrapes.*

AIDEN: It dripped from wounds shut and opened anew by stitches of rotting bramble...

KATHERINE: Your hand's cut. What did you do?

AIDEN: I slipped when I was running after... Look, it doesn't matter now.

KATHERINE: We should head back to camp. You can't keep going.

AIDEN: I... I dropped the radio. I didn't mean to, but it just slipped out of my hand.

KATHERINE: Okay. We can swing around and pick it up. I would say leave it, but we can't afford to.

AIDEN: I'm sorry. Can I just have a minute?

KATHERINE: Of course. You wait in the car, I'll won't be long.

AIDEN: You shouldn't be going alone. You shouldn't be going at all.

KATHERINE: *[with supreme self confidence]* Aiden, relax. I'll be fine! Where did you drop it?

AIDEN: What if the... thing's out there? I can't lose you...

KATHERINE: Well, then I'll make a polite introduction and take a photo.

AIDEN: Please. Don't.

KATHERINE: I'll be fine. Where did you drop the radio?

AIDEN: We can come back when it's light. Just in case.

KATHERINE: Torch please. Aiden, answer the question.

*Aiden reluctantly hands Katherine the torch after a few seconds.*

AIDEN: I think I dropped it maybe five minutes back that way. Just past a copse of yew trees.

KATHERINE: Expect me back in fifteen. Watch out ghosts, tonight, I hunt!

### ***THE WYRD SIDE MUSIC***

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