

# TRANSCRIPT

## Season 1 Episode 8: Aiden's Recording

Still reeling from her encounter on Burley Beacon, Katherine listens to the files found on Aiden's recorder.

### Content Warnings:

Depiction of physical violence, abduction, imprisonment, cults, emotional abuse, gaslighting, manipulation, violent death, blood and gore, injury (head trauma), murder. Discussion of alcohol, arson. Mention of police.

### Cast:

Alexandra M. Barrow as Katherine Moore

Finn Cresswell as Aiden Summers

Andrew Varndell as Albert Lockton

Robyn B Pelling MSc as Lou

Drew Pitcher as Dyllan

Jack Rogers as Rhys

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. BNB - DAY***

KATHERINE: *[shaken]* Thank you for tuning in. If this is your first time listening, I'd recommend going back and starting at Episode One.

Those of you still here will remember that I found a recorder after I was attacked on Burley Beacon. Aiden's recorder. I'm sorry for keeping you all in the dark, but I needed time. Aiden wouldn't have given up his recorder voluntarily. And finding it in the hands of someone who attacked me? It was a shock. As soon as I got back to the car I downloaded a copy of the files from the recorder as the police were unlikely to let me keep a copy. I reported- *[she catches herself]* I submitted the recorder as evidence and have been listening to the files since. I haven't been able to recover all of them and there's severe audio disruption in certain sections of the

recording. I've done my best to clear up the rest. *[she lets out a shaky sigh]* Welcome to The Wyrd Side. I'm Katherine Moore and you're about to hear Aiden's last recording.

## **THE WYRD SIDE MUSIC**

### **INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

*The recorder clicks on, we hear Aiden breathing raggedly.*

AIDEN: Oh I'm glad to see you, little black box. Alright, where to begin. Hi, hello, I hope it doesn't come to this but, to anyone who finds this, I'm Aiden Summers. I was kidnapped, abducted, whatever, from Burley about a week ago by a... well, by a group of people who are trying to save the world.

*He slumps down onto a bed, the mattress sags under his weight.*

AIDEN: There's so much to say. So much to let you know. Kitty, I really hope you find this, I don't know how I'm going to get it to you but maybe you can make sense of it all. Then again you might not believe what's happened to me. How I got my recorder back. I can't back it up with irrefutable evidence, but I think I encountered the Colt Pixie again, or whatever the thing we call the Colt Pixie is, or... something pretending to be the Colt Pixie, or... something that seemed like the Colt Pixie we met in the Forest, but this time it was helpful. It brought me the recorder. Wow, I am so out of practice at this -

*A creak as someone moves around the house, and Aiden lets out another shaky breath.*

AIDEN: If someone else is listening to this, I'll start from the beginning. If you could find Katherine Moore from The Wyrd Side podcast, and give this to her, I'd be really grateful. I had an argument with her where I behaved like a stroppy toddler. Too caught up in my own paranoia and history to realise what lines should not be crossed. Well, Kitty, if you're listening, I am sorry. I am so sorry. I should have talked it through, I should have explained it all. I stormed off and walked ten minutes back into Burley to the green Pub. By the time I got into the village the evening air had cleared my head and I decided it would be better to have a pint and give Kitty some space. Better to both cool off separately, and when we're both in a better headspace, bring back some sort of apology ice cream or something. Then we could both talk things through. With that solid plan, into the Green Pub I went. It was busy, far busier than I'd ever seen it. The main room was buzzing, lots of locals out chatting, a roaring fire lit in the hearth filling the room with that lovely smell that heralded autumn evenings. Hell, even Brian

the truculent barkeep seemed in a good mood as he talked with a couple of really quite built blokes at the bar. No one seemed to pay me any mind, and there was a space by the fire. So, I sat myself down and warmed my hands.

The walk over had been really brisk and I'd run out of the hotel without a jacket. I still had my recorder in my pocket. And while I was warming up, Brian came over and asked me why I was there, alone. I said something about having had a disagreement, that I wanted to make the most of my time in Burley, and continue investigating what might turn up. And what with all these locals out, I was sure I could turn a bad night into a good series of leads. I don't know why I told him all that, I knew he was against us stirring anything up, though he didn't seem too bothered by this, only saying that I looked like I needed a pint or two. I agreed I did, and from that point onwards, every time my glass emptied, there he was with another.

So there I was, however many pints in, trying to conduct a series of impromptu interviews. After two or three I was gently advised to head home. I hadn't quite realised how slurred my words were at that point. I acquiesced, managing to just about get out of the pub without keeling over, or knocking into the low hanging beam near the entrance. And slowly, but surely, I started to wend my way back to the BnB, wondering if this was how Albert felt on his late night adventures.

But it being a little outside of town, and me being incredibly drunk meant that I found myself entirely lost. I was out in the New Forest, alone. Cold and drunk. I knew exactly what Kitty would say when I told her I'd got lost on a walk and... and at that point was set on not saying anything. But the longer I walked, the more worried I became. After what felt like an age I realised I wasn't going to be able to get out of this mess alone. So I called for help and was relieved when almost immediately, two figures came striding out of the dark. The two built guys from the pub. I said hey, then all I remember from the next few seconds is one punching me in the stomach and the other clamping a cloth to my mouth. Next thing I know I'm waking up, with a pounding head, and homespun clothes, here. Okay, here is -

He's cut off abruptly by *the creak of floorboards and footsteps approaching..*

AIDEN: Damn. They must have heard something.

*Recorder clicks off.*

**INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT**

*Recorder clicks on again, the crackle of a fire in the background. Occasional crunch/spit as the logs shift.*

AIDEN: I'm okay. They were just checking in if the room service was to my liking. *[sarcastically]* Five stars, really... Where was I?

Oh yes, here. So here is, well, are, two ancient farmhouses somewhere way off-grid in the New Forest. I can't see a road anywhere, let alone a path or a powerline, though there's a pretty thick hedge around the property. I'm in one of the houses, I have food and drink, no running water though, and no electricity. Hence the fire. I have a bed, even if it is a very creaky one and this spring right here - *[Aiden shifts up and down on the bed to some creaking springs]* digs right into my back when I lie down, and some books, which I'll get to in a moment. But... I also have guards, at least one of those two burly guys are outside the main door to the house at all times. I really do mean all times, they pull bloody twelve hour shifts. I don't fancy my chances sneaking past them. And I'm not alone in the house.

I found Albert. Albert is here, and has been here the entire time we've been asking around about him. They took him almost immediately after our interview, almost a month ago. They must have seen the missing persons report about a week ago, as they locked him up properly then. Locked up like I am.

That's the here. Now, who are the "They"? Aside from people who abduct septuagenarians and punch out podcasters, well, they call themselves the Watch of the Buried Dragon. Yup, I know. The Dragon of Bisterne has its own cult. Well sort of. It's a group dedicated to stopping something called "The Dragon" rising from the depths of the New Forest and bringing an end to the world as we know it. The Watch, as they call themselves, have been active for hundreds of years, if not longer, and Alberts alluded to some pretty interesting happenings but hasn't had a chance to tell me much yet. Mostly he just likes looking out over the Forest, and I can see why. Now it's full Autumn, the trees are painted red and gold, and it's beautiful. I've spotted maybe another four, five people going in and out of the other houses. I don't think they all live there, but I'm pretty sure at least two of them do. I don't know any of their names, apart from Lou. She's the youngest, about my age? She's the one who makes sure I have everything I need, food and so on. It's a... strange house arrest. I'm still a bit bruised from when they took me, but I'm okay? For now at least. As long as I don't try and actively get away they seem comfortable just giving me dark looks and the occasional warning.

I still don't really know what they plan to do with me. Or why all the books they've left for me in my room are in Old Welsh or scraps of what looks like Proto-Brythonic. I mean, that would be

near impossible, we've got limited evidence of it, written or otherwise. And the techniques used to bind these books look, well mediaeval to say the least, so hundreds of years apart? They're incredible. I don't have the knowledge to actually read or understand much, if any of it. Which is a shame. They look to be beautiful books. *[Aiden pauses]* Oh. I think I can hear the changing of the guard outside. I feel like royalty. I'm going to hide this in case they search the room, or me. Again. Alright. Hopefully I will talk to you again. Take care out there, whoever's listening. I'm glad you're here. It's nice to talk to someone.

*Recorder clicks off.*

***INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT***

*The recorder clicks on, there's a fire crackling in the background, an owl hoots softly outside the house, and wind is picking up from outside the creaky old farmhouse*

ALBERT: Is it on?

AIDEN: Yup. Though try not to refer to it too much, we don't want Hengist and Horsa finding out about it.

ALBERT: Who's that?

AIDEN: The guards.

ALBERT: Far as I know, their names are Dyllan and Rhys.

AIDEN: Right, sorry, stupid joke. I'm pleased to see you alive and... well. Are you well Albert?

ALBERT: As much as I can be, given the circumstances. I miss my evening walks, and the house gets chilly at night, bad for my knees and there's no pints of bitter, but we ain't dead yet.

AIDEN: Are you saying that death is a possibility?

ALBERT: We all have our uses, I'm sure they have an idea what those may be.

AIDEN: What does that mean?

ALBERT: *[evasively, he points at the voice recorder]* Hmmmm. Did you say the Colt Pixie brought you this?

AIDEN: What? Oh yes. At least I think so. Or something very like it.

ALBERT: The one you encountered in the woods a short spell ago?

AIDEN: A while ago now.

ALBERT: Hmm, well, you must have been polite then. Good to know you listened.

AIDEN: All I did was leave an apple at its barrow when we got out of the fog. I told you this already.

ALBERT: Aye, but that was before you were gifted this.

AIDEN: Gifted my own recorder... I guess at this point anything's a gift. So. Shall we go over it all again? So it's on record?

ALBERT: *[gesturing at the recorder]* How sure are you that thing's your own?

AIDEN: The recorder?

ALBERT: Aye.

AIDEN: It has all my settings on it. It even has a couple of editing voice notes I left for myself.

ALBERT: Well, as long as you are sure it is yours. I wouldn't like to think you took something that was almost yours, or something pretending to be yours.

AIDEN: What's gotten into you? What have they done to you here?

ALBERT: Nothing really. The lads like to remind me they're tough, but they know they're not allowed to do anything drastic. Just working out how useful I can be to them. They need all the help they can get really. Especially after what happened to their last lot.

AIDEN: Please, what happened? Take all the time you need, but please, please tell me.

ALBERT: That is an odd story, and one I don't know the half of. But I don't see any harm in telling you what I know. Not anymore. A long long time ago, before my grandfather's great-grandfather was alive, something, something powerful and horrible was trapped in the deep dark clinging peat of the New Forest, something dangerous. It was called a dragon, The Dragon, a hateful being of pure evil. These are the descendants of the people who originally contained it, and now they keep it sedated in its prison. The rest of us, we don't ask questions and try and ignore the dark creatures of the forest. Anyway, we all have our uses. I am sure you will find yours.

AIDEN: *[softly]* The dark creatures of the forest?

ALBERT: What lad? Speak up!

AIDEN: Sorry. What do you know about the Red King?

ALBERT: His curse you mean? Aye. There are things in these woods and moors that are worse than the Pixies, mind. But The Horror In The Brambles ain't down this way. Not with this lot. No. They look after something else entirely.

AIDEN: But the Red King... and the curse... that is... I wasn't...

ALBERT: We can talk about it later lad. For now, we are dealing with the monster in front of us. And them's that work agin it.

AIDEN: Alright, so this dragon, The Dragon of Bisterne, is real... and sleeping?

ALBERT: That's what they say, aye.

AIDEN: Why were you taken?

ALBERT: I was babbling on to you lot too much. Letting you in on the truth, too close to disturbing everything they worked for. Be careful of that young man, folk don't like their apple cart upset. I was always talking about the Colt Pixie, and the myths of the forest, you know ghosts and smugglers and suchlike. Cause they're true, I've lived here for me whole life and know the dell you do not go into at night, the houses that creak when they ain't supposed to, the cry that almost sounds like an owl, that if you hear you don't look behind... But the Colt Pixie, that creature, it's been with me all my life, and I've seen it time and time again. It knows me and I know it, or at least I know one of them. Not sure how many of them are out there.

AIDEN: Did you get the sense that whatever was out there the other day, the thing that gave me this, was the same?

ALBERT: Ah, I'm not sure Aiden. I didn't get too much of a sense of it, being inside and all.

AIDEN: Right. You mentioned the previous Watchers. What happened to them? Who were they?

ALBERT: That's a long story.

AIDEN: We have time. Why do these people need all the help they can get?

ALBERT: Ah, well, you'll have to ask them that yourself, all I know is that a while back there were some grockels asking questions, mighty similar to the ones you and your friend were asking. That might be why you're here. Too curious.

AIDEN: Curiosity isn't a bad thing.

ALBERT: When poking into business that ain't your own you're likely to find your fingers bitten. Or worse. Well. Back in the day, some strange folk turned up in the village. Asked questions. Curious about The Dragon. Then there was a fire at an old manor house in the forest. Went up in flames so quickly that no one got there in time to save it, or the people inside. Gas leak apparently, but I never bought that. The house was far too sturdy and well-kept for an accident like that, the folks there had money and were all tangled up in local power. Well, they were the local power. That was the house of the Watchers. Whoever set that fire intended for none to escape the blaze, though a few got out.

AIDEN: And these people are the survivors?

ALBERT: Aye, most likely. Though I ain't pressed them on it, and if you value your peace it would be wise not to push your luck.

AIDEN: There's nothing more you can tell me about this group? The Watchers? The Dragon?

ALBERT: Only a final piece of advice. Keep yourself to yourself. Maybe you'll get through this.

AIDEN: What?



ALBERT: If you don't mind, I am going back to my room. All this has tired me out and I need my sleep.

AIDEN: Alright, thank you Albert. Good night.

ALBERT: Goodnight Aiden. Sleep well.

AIDEN: Hmmm. You too.

*Albert gets up, groaning as joints protest in pain and slowly shuffles out, closing the door behind him. Aiden lets out a deep sigh and lies back on the bed.*

AIDEN: That left me with more questions than answers. I should probably explain what happened with the Colt Pixie while my brain's still somewhat in gear. Though, I'm exhausted. This waiting is really getting to me. And the foods no help. I think I can taste mould in the bread... Yesterday was the first proper chill, frost on the ground, ice on the windows, I was freezing, and when I went down to put the kettle on the fire - I'm still surprised they let us have a fire going as well as an iron kettle. I guess they don't expect us to use it as a weapon. They seem to have guessed right, I certainly don't fancy my chances right now against the guards armed with a sooty pot with only Albert as backup... I went down in the morning to pop the kettle on and stoke the fire when I looked up and saw a thick blanket of fog covering the window. Surrounding the house. Exactly like the fog that Kitty and I encountered. I couldn't hear any noise from outside. I couldn't tell if I was shivering from fear or cold. Then, from just outside the kitchen window, there was the soft sound of hooves on thick grass, and I could have sworn I heard a whicker. I ran to the window to see what had made the sound, but there was nothing. The window was swinging shut and my recorder was sitting there on the sill. Inside the building. Like it had been there the whole time. It couldn't have been. I just... I just wish you were here Kitty, at least I could depend on you to give me a rational explanation. But I'm well and truly through the looking glass here, Albert's trying to help, in his own way, but I'm getting more and more worried. At least the Watchers seem to mean well, I mean as far as kidnappers can mean well. The Dragon of Bisterne. Huh.

*Recorder shuts off.*

### **INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

*The recorder is switched on, and stuffed into a pocket. A knock at the door. Lou enters.*

LOU: *[gently]* Hey there Aiden. You still have everything you need?

AIDEN: I suppose.

LOU: Look, I understand your frustration, but trust me, it'll all be worth it in the end.

AIDEN: You keep saying that, but you never tell me what, why, or anything. Please Lou, I want to help. I want to believe you're doing some good here.

LOU: What do you mean?

AIDEN: The Dragon.

LOU: *[sharply]* Don't! Don't say its name. Not even the title we gave it.

AIDEN: Oh, um, sorry.

*Slightly awkward pause, and then Lou speaks again, voice returning to her gentle lilt.*

LOU: How did you know?

AIDEN: I have my sources.

LOU: *[elated]* Ah, so you can read them! I'm so glad to hear of your progress. I knew you'd be useful.

AIDEN: I can read a little. What do you mean you're glad?

LOU: Well, ever since I first saw you, I had a feeling you'd be important. Brian said your questions needed to be stopped, so, it's good you can stop those questions here eh?

AIDEN: Brian? Since you first saw me?

LOU: Yes, in the Scalded Cauldron. You knew of the creature, even if you spoke about it like some old fairy tale.

AIDEN: *[uncomfortable]* Oh. Okay. Umm, Lou?

LOU: Yes?

AIDEN: I'm getting a little stir crazy in here with only Albert for company. Is there a chance I could take a walk outside?

LOU: Oh I don't know about that. I'll have to ask the Chainbearer. He'll know what to do. Would you promise not to do anything stupid?

AIDEN: Such as?

LOU: Such as trying to run away. Rhys and Dyllan like it when people try and run.

AIDEN: Ah, so there have been others here.

LOU: Oh yes. But don't worry, no-one like you, not someone who can help us like you can.

AIDEN: Who were they? Did your group have anything to do with Felicity Dalton or -

LOU: *[she cuts him off]* Who they were isn't important. Don't worry Aiden, they all joined us. That's what is important.

AIDEN: Sorry, I...

LOU: You're here to help, I want you to help. Don't go distracting yourself when more important things are in front of you. There'll be plenty of time to explain anything you want to know later.

AIDEN: Okay. But... Please, I won't be in any shape to help if I don't get at least a little bit of fresh air.

LOU: Alright, I'll see what I can do.

AIDEN: Thank you Lou. I owe you one.

LOU: Asides from a walk, do you have everything else you need? Food and water still okay?

AIDEN: Mm. Do you make the bread here?

LOU: Oh yes. I make it myself. Is it not okay?

AIDEN: *[evasive]* Oh. Umm. No, no, it's fine. Thank you.

LOU: Good. Take care Aiden.

*LOU leaves, shutting the door behind her. Aiden takes the recorder out of his pocket.*

AIDEN: Okay. That was weird. At least I might be able to go outside.

*Recorder clicks off.*

**INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

*The recorder is switched on, and stuffed into a pocket, there's knocking on the door, a pause, and then Lou enters the room.*

AIDEN: Hi Lou, come in.

LOU: Hello Aiden. How are you? I have good news.

AIDEN: You're letting me go?

LOU: Don't be silly, that wouldn't help anyone! The Watchers need you. That's what the Chainbearer told me. No, you're not allowed to leave. But... you are allowed out with an escort! Around the garden!

AIDEN: Better than nothing. Thank you Lou. Who's going to be my guard?

LOU: It was going to be either Dyllan or Rhys, but I volunteered. We can talk more about the books that way.

AIDEN: Oh. Am I... Am I alright asking questions then?

LOU: You asked one just now.

AIDEN: And I am not being killed for it... so...

LOU: So yes. The Chainbearer didn't say anything about questions. It's nice to see you joke Aiden. See, you're getting used to being here.

AIDEN: I guess? Can we go for a walk now?

LOU: Let's go. Your shoes have been put outside the door.

AIDEN: You still have my clothes?

LOU: Yes, of course we kept them. You never know when they might be useful.

AIDEN: *[uncomfortable]* Right.

LOU: Shall we?

***INT. BNB - DAY***

*The sound fades to The Wyrd Side studio where we hear Katherine fidgeting on her chair.*

KATHERINE: The rest of this file is just interference. With the noise from him moving around, wind and everything else outside, it's hard to pick up the rest of their conversation. I've managed to retrieve some clearer audio from later on. This was three days after the conversation you just heard. At this point I think they'd been talking for a while.

**EXT. FARMHOUSE GARDENS - DAY**

*Two sets of footsteps crunch through autumn leaves, birdsong and the soft babble of a small stream in the background.*

LOU: It's so beautiful here, don't you agree?

AIDEN: It really is. I didn't clock the stream from the house.

LOU: No, it's hidden behind the slight dip in the land. We often use it in our rituals and even as your drinking water.

AIDEN: *[alarmed]* Wait. Just straight from the river?

LOU: Don't worry, you're not about to get parasites or anything, we do purify it.

AIDEN: I was about to say.

LOU: We're not completely backwards.

AIDEN: The lack of electricity gives the wrong impression then.

LOU: We're in touch with the land around us. We follow its rhythms, always watchful of how it responds to change. It's part of our sacred duty to keep watch over the hill.

AIDEN: Is that why you're here in this valley? To be close to the hill?

LOU: Partly. It also keeps us away from any prying eyes. There are those out there that want to stop us and in so doing bring about the end of everything good.

AIDEN: They want to end the world?

LOU: Yes. They want to wake the sleeping evil and use its power to enforce their rule. They want to endanger us all. It's a force of such maleficence that we simply cannot allow that to happen and so we have to keep watch. To do this however, sacrifices have to be made.

AIDEN: How did you... how did you get into all of this?

LOU: I was born into it. My mum and dad were Watchers. They both died when the servants of The Sleeper attacked our home years ago. I was only a child.

AIDEN: Oh. I'm so sorry to hear that.

LOU: From what the Chainbearer says, you're not one of them, so why would you be sorry?

AIDEN: I only meant to say that it's a horrible thing to have happened, and I am sad to hear that you lost your family.

LOU: Oh no, the Watchers are my family. They are my everything, and I'd do anything to help them. It is up to us you see, to protect the world. That is a bond stronger than blood.

AIDEN: I'm glad you're not alone in this mission. It's important to have someone you can rely on. Would you be able to tell me more about the Watchers? Your history? I feel like I could help more if I knew what I was doing and who I was helping.

LOU: Oh of course. The Chainbearer will be so pleased to hear you're passionate about our cause. I do pray you can join us.

AIDEN: Join you?

LOU: In time. The Watch has been protecting this World since the sleeping evil was defeated and sealed away beneath what is now called the New Forest. We had a great house, a beautiful manor in the centre of the protective circle used to bind the creature. Generations of us lived there, they were great and powerful, and worked tirelessly to keep the evil at bay with the help of all who lived and served there; they were the first Chainbearers.

AIDEN: And you didn't seek outside help?

LOU: What if an agent of the sleeping evil snuck in and used the power for their own ends, or attempted to destroy it? No, we simply could not trust the keeping of this evil to any others.

AIDEN: Wouldn't destroying it be a good thing?

LOU: Do not suggest such a thing again Aiden. I will only tell you this once. Such great evil cannot be destroyed. It would instead be freed and that would not end well for anyone. The only way to be sure nothing further happens to the world is to ensure that it remains asleep.

AIDEN: You're on your own, and everyone else is out to get what you are protecting. I can see why you're keeping it secret. Keeping it safe.

LOU: Exactly, which is why people like you are so valued. You now have a duty to help us protect the world. This is your true calling, this is what makes you so special.

AIDEN: I'm still... Lou... I have a life outside.

LOU: A life that will be shattered, people you care about who will be ripped asunder if you don't help us.

AIDEN: Is that a threat?

LOU: No! That's just simply what will happen if anyone gets their hands on the sleeping evil. If we fail in our mission. This is bigger than any single person, do you understand?

AIDEN: I... yes. And I'll help by reading these books in my room then?

LOU: That's just the start.

*They step closer to the stream, their footsteps squelch in thick mud.*

LOU: Oh! Here we are, now, this is a special spot.

AIDEN: This bog?

LOU: It's not just a bog, silly. *[she chuckles]* When we were chased out of our ancestral home, we had to ensure that the seal keeping the creature sleeping remained unbroken. While the main seal is now buried underneath the old mansion, this one here was most at risk of breaking. So, we set up our new base here.

AIDEN: To monitor the creature? What happens if the other seals break?



LOU: It won't happen. The Chainbearer says this one is the only one at risk, so we're here until he says otherwise. Which will probably be a very long time. The manor was around for hundreds and hundreds of years.

AIDEN: How do you make sure it remains sealed?

LOU: We get a lot of help with that, everyone has their uses! Some people donate their strength, others, their knowledge, others their passion. All help ensure that the evil remains asleep by giving the Chainbearer enough power to maintain it all. He really is so brave.

AIDEN: Wow, that is quite something. Can I meet him?

LOU: Oh I'm not sure. If you show him that you really want to help, then he'll make you part of us. I really do hope he does.

AIDEN: Thanks Lou. When you say power, what do you mean?

LOU: Chainbearers are special. They live longer than we can, they're stronger and wiser than the rest of us. The current Chainbearer stepped up just after the attack on our previous home. He was the highest ranking member of The Watch remaining and so had to assume the burden of leadership.

AIDEN: That doesn't sound so bad, long life and superpowers?

LOU: Oh it is no gift. He sacrificed himself to the service of The Watch and he can only use his power in service to our goal. It is a great burden, but one all Chainbearers must take on willingly. He saved us all, during the night of the fire and the attack and every day since.

AIDEN: The attack? Do you know who attacked you?

LOU: Agents of the sleeping evil.

AIDEN: But they're... human?

LOU: Humans are also capable of great evil Aiden, don't forget that. I just thank the Watch we have someone to look out for us. If who they were was important, then the Chainbearer would tell us, don't worry.

AIDEN: Aren't you curious?

LOU: No. I trust the Chainbearer, he's the one holding this whole world together. He sees more than we ever could.

*A pause, as they keep walking for a few steps.*

AIDEN: Lou?

LOU: Yes?

AIDEN: I'm getting a little cold. Can we head back in?

LOU: Of course. Dyllan and Rhys should have finished chopping some more firewood now for you and Albert.

AIDEN: Ah yeah, Albert. What's going to happen to him? You know he's just an old man, he needs proper support, not a cold cottage going into winter.

LOU: Don't worry! We'll take care of him.

*The sound crackles and distorts with the wind.*

**INT. BNB - DAY**

KATHERINE: It seems like they had these talks almost every day. The same conversations, the same topics. Everything. It's very strange. At least Aiden sounds okay, if a little shaken. And Lou. I think she's the woman who attacked me. *[she starts to say something, but catches herself]* Anyway. There are two more files that I think you should listen to. Firstly a conversation. Aiden and Lou are outside, by the bog again. Ignore the very start, there's this buzz that I just can't get rid of.

**EXT. FARMHOUSE GARDENS - DAY**

*A static buzz overtakes the conversation for a second or two. Footsteps, then Lou and Aiden pause.*

LOU: What?

AIDEN: Look, all I'm asking is to write something. Anything, just to let her know I'm alive. You, the Chainbearer, the muscle buddies, whoever, can check it over and make sure I'm not smuggling out information. Not that I know where I am anyway.

LOU: I don't understand why you'd want to? There's nothing left for you to go back to out there. Not anything as important as what you're doing here. No one out there understands you like we do.

*The static fades.*

AIDEN: *[agitated]* I have family, friends! I have a job. I have rent and bills and... life. Lou, I have a life, my life that I want to live out there, filled with people and things that mean something to me.

*Uncomfortable pause.*

LOU: I thought you were with us Aiden. I thought you knew just how critical our work is here. How important you are to saving the world.

AIDEN: I do. That's why I'm reading those books, or at least as much as I can translate. That's why I'm talking to you and I haven't tried to escape. Not once. Look, I know how much this means to you, and I can't begin to tell you how excited I am that all this is real, and that I am on the side of the ones fighting for good. But...

LOU: *[impassioned]* No. You're torn Aiden. Torn between your life out there, a blanket of ignorance, and your life in here, your true purpose. Those people you care so much about are relying on you to help us. You cannot be two people. You cannot let the beacon drop when it is handed to you. You have to help us, you have to do what you can, or everything you have ever loved will be destroyed.

*Aiden sighs, and slumps to the ground, defeated. Pause. Lou puts her hand on Aiden's shoulder.*

LOU: But if it helps, just this once. Do you want to tell me about the outside? About your life?

AIDEN: Are you asking because you care about my life or you want to know what it is like out there?

LOU: Both I suppose? Look, I know about the world. I've even been out in it at times. When we need to replenish our resources, find more people or knowledge to help maintain the seal. But I've never... lived in it. The Watchers are my family, and friends, and are everyone that I could ever need. And hopefully, in time, they will be yours too. But, just for now, tell me about your friend who you want to write to?

AIDEN: Alright. I guess it can't hurt.

LOU: I'm listening.

AIDEN: Well. Kitty and I met at university, we were both doing an elective module on folklore and hit it off. We sort of fell into being friends. It was easy with her. She went off to do more studying of um... Forensic Anthropology and was actually on track to join the police.

LOU: Police? You didn't say she was one of them. That's -

AIDEN: I don't know much about it. Before she left, we talked pretty much every day, about anything and everything. She'd help me with my writing, I'd drag her out to play DnD with friends. Ha, bless her, she can be prickly sometimes, but honestly once that girl's your friend, she's with you.

LOU: And you two were close?

AIDEN: Are close. She's my best friend. Though there are things I wish I could tell her. About this. About our podcast. About me.

LOU: But you couldn't tell her. You don't have to keep secrets here Aiden. It's not like out there, it's not like with her. Here, you are heard and protected.

AIDEN: I never really told her why... why I was so determined to make the show. Why I needed to know one way or another. I never even told her about the river, about...

*The static and garbled words take over the soundscape, drowning everything else out.*

**INT. BNB - DAY**

KATHERINE: How can anyone be so rancid? Of course it cuts off there. What was it? What didn't you tell me? You know I would have listened. *[pause. Katherine clears her throat]* Sorry. That

was the only comprehensible recording for a while... Until the very last one. And... It's a hard listen.

***INT. THE FARMHOUSE - EVENING***

*The recorder clicks on, a fire crackles, inside and unmuffled.*

ALBERT: So, enjoying your walks?

AIDEN: It's nice to get outside. And Lou tells me all sorts of things.

ALBERT: Oh aye? Such as?

AIDEN: About the Watchers, about the sleeping evil. Even if the circumstances of our meeting could have been better, in a weird way I'm actually glad to have found people who know the supernatural exists and are doing something good to help.

ALBERT: Hmmm. Aye, that is what they say.

AIDEN: And why would it be any different?

ALBERT: Oh no lad, don't let me dissuade you from saving the world. Just keep a wary eye out, things be tricky where the otherworld is concerned.

AIDEN: True, but with the books they have given me? I might actually be starting to get through some of them. It's taken a while to get my head around, but I'm building up a bit of a lexicon. *[excited]* Albert, this is all real. And I know I can help.

ALBERT: Aye. I have been telling you that from the start.

AIDEN: I know! But finally, confirmation! I knew I wasn't making things up. Imagine Kitty's face when... Well, we can work on that later.

*A knock on the door, the recorders hastily scooped off the bed and shoved under a blanket, two sets of heavy footsteps thump into the room, Albert coughs.*

AIDEN: Rhys, Dyllan. Did you need something?

DYLLAN: Albert.

RHYS: It's time.

ALBERT: Aye.

*Albert stands up.*

AIDEN: Time for what? It's past dinner.

ALBERT: It's alright lad. I knew this would happen.

DYLLAN: It's time for Albert to help us.

*Aiden stands up.*

RHYS: Sit down if you know what's good for you.

AIDEN: Not until you tell me what is going on.

DYLLAN: It's not your turn yet. Leave off before you do yourself a mischief. Or we do.

LOU: That's enough.

AIDEN: Lou? What are they doing?

LOU: Albert has agreed to help us.

ALBERT: Don't be scared lad. Just... remember alright? Remember.

AIDEN: *[confused]* Remember?

LOU: That's enough. Aiden. Albert is helping us, and I think you are ready to become part of this. Ready to become part of our family.

ALBERT: Wait... no... that's not...

LOU: Take him.

*Albert is hauled out of the room, his feet dragging against the wooden floorboards. He tries to speak as a gag is shoved into his mouth.*

AIDEN: What is going... Lou? I...

LOU: Aiden. Listen to me very carefully. This is your chance to really become part of something bigger than yourself. We know you. We hear you. We accept you for who you are. If you don't accept us, then...

AIDEN: What's going to happen to him Lou? Tell me that. You owe me that honesty at least.

LOU: I owe you nothing Aiden. It is you who owes us for this chance. You will thank me for this Aiden. I promise.

*Footsteps close the distance between them and something crashes against Aiden's skull, he collapses to the ground and groans in pain, then is gagged, as Albert was. Aiden's body is dragged, the recorder with him. Interference squeals on the recorder, jumps and skips, as if it were slightly damaged. It comes back into audible focus as Aiden's body is dragged across soft grassy ground and rope is tied around him.*

*The flame of several torches crackles in the background of a still and silent night. Albert makes a protesting noise, still gagged. Aiden groans once more and then jerks awake fully.*

LOU: Enough Albert. Chainbearer, I beseech you to let Aiden Summers witness this gift and become one with us.

*A pause as someone nods, the rattle of metal signals their movement.*

LOU: Oh thank you, your wisdom is without question. Albert, if you don't go willingly, then Aiden will have to take your place. You don't want that do you?

*Albert grunts no.*

LOU: Very well. Dyllan, Rhys, bring the tools.

*Dyllan and Rhys' step forward and hand something metal to Lou. Aiden screams behind his gag.*

LOU: Tauso! Roi-no mori-dun-num. Katu tom-boder-gos. Tauso.

*Lou's voice rises as she repeats the chant. As she becomes more and more unhinged in her delivery, a noose is thrown around Albert's neck. Aiden strains against his own ropes and cries out, yells still muffled.*

Dyllan: Roi-no mori-dun-num.

Rhys: Katu tom-boder-gos.

*A heavy mallet is brought down on Albert's skull. It cracks. Albert slumps down but is caught by Dyllan and Rhys. Aiden starts weeping*

LOU: *[voice now a hoarse whisper]* Tauso.

*A knife is drawn across a stone surface, and then across Albert's throat, blood sprays out of the pulsing wound. Albert doesn't react, he is already dead. With little ceremony, Albert's body is thrown into the marsh with a dull splash.*

DYLLAN: Oh shut up.

*The mallet hits Aiden's head, with far less strength than Albert's. Aiden's crying stops immediately.*

### **THE WYRD SIDE MUSIC**

The Wyrd Side will return. If you enjoyed the programme, please help support the podcast by giving us a follow on social media @thewyrdside on Twitter and Instagram, leaving a review on Spotify or wherever you are listening to this, and sharing it with anyone who might enjoy it! As a small production, this really helps us out.

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