**Settle Thy Studies**

**by Mark Nixon**

**MARK NIXON:** *Shadows at the Door* is an audio drama podcast designed to scare and delight you. While rarely explicit, it is nonetheless produced with an adult audience in mind.

[[*MUSIC: SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME (SLOW GUITAR INTO SLOW HARPSICHORD/PIANO NOTES) SHIFTING INTO SUSTAINED STRINGS BEHIND THE INTRODUCTION.*]]

**MARK:** Welcome to the finale of season two. We’ve been excited to bring this particular story to you for some time now. However, as the season progressed and we came closer and closer to its release, there was a feeling of… apprehension. This, after all, is the final episode of the season. Who else will remind you to drink tea every two weeks?

Well, despite promising myself to take a break for a month or two after the season wrapped, it seems I’ve already started writing the first script of season three. At this point, you may ask yourself, ‘when will this come out?’ Well, that depends. Quite simply, we can begin production once funding is secure for season three. So please do consider donating to our Ko-Fi account, which you can find in the show notes. And do help us spread the word so that *Shadows at the Door* can continue to grow and gain more loyal listeners such as yourself.

This story returns to Professor Troughton and can be enjoyed as a standalone episode, however listeners *will* find a great deal more to enjoy if they hear the previous chapters of the professor’s story. If you’d like to refresh your memory or hear these for the first time, even, we’ve collected his stories in our recent “Convinced Disbeliever” episode. But now is finally the time for the new story, which I’ve called “Settle Thy Studies.”

So, gather around the fire, pour yourself some tea, and we’ll begin.

[Timestamp: 2:43]

[[*MUSIC: PLUCKED GUITAR NOTES WITH PLENTY OF SPACE BETWEEN THEM.*]]

**TROUGHTON (VOICE OVER):** A formative influence on my undergraduate self was the response of a respected elder statesman of the Oxford History Faculty when an American visitor had just publicly disproved his favourite theory. The old man strode to the front of the lecture hall, shook the American warmly by the hand, and declared in ringing, emotional tones, “My dear fellow, I wish to thank you. I have been wrong these 15 years.” And we clapped our hands red. Can you imagine such a thing now, in any setting? When was the last time you examined your beliefs or opinions and considered an alternative? Can you imagine a Government Minister being cheered in the House of Commons for a similar admission? “Resign, resign,” is a much more likely response.

[EXASPERATED SIGH.] If you’ve been following my work then you’ll know I’ve asked uncomfortable questions, questions raised following personal encounters with the unexplained – and finding no explanation or solace in existing explanations or collective knowledge. And no, I am no scientist, and this had made my search for answers (or even a mere discussion on the topic) difficult, to say the least. Time and time again, I’ve been told such an exploration is not compatible with science and our understanding of the world. However, I argue that the appetite for mystery, the enthusiasm for that which we do not understand is healthy and to be fostered. It is the same appetite which drives the best of true science.

And yet I find myself pushing against a door that may never open. [SIGH.] At what point do I admit the endeavour futile? It’s been three years since my own encounter in Anworth, Irving’s subsequent haunting here in Coventry, and now almost a year since the incident with Parkins in Suffolk, unsure regarding that encounter though I remain. And therein lies the difficulty; when searching for answers, one can so easily fall victim to confirmation bias. In fact, when the brain witnesses evidence to the contrary, it can so often process it as an actual attack. We are hardwired to dig in our heels.

[SFX: OUTDOORS ON THE GROUNDS OF WARWICK UNIVERSITY, TROUGHTON TYPES ON A LAPTOP. VOICES ARE HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND AS ONE JUMBLE OF SOUND.]

**TROUGHTON:** [SIGHS THEN MUTTERING UNDER HIS BREATH AS HE TYPES.] After all… the growing numbers of the Flat Earth Society… for example… possess a near… *superhuman* level of… stubborn- [CUTS HIMSELF OFF.] No, that’s a tangent if ever there was one. [FRUSTRATED SIGH.]

[SFX: TROUGHTON HAMMERS THE DELETE KEY AS FOOTSTEPS ON THE SIDEWALK APPROACH.]

**FLANAGAN:** [WARM.] Afternoon.

**TROUGHTON:** [WARM.] Ah, afternoon.

**FLANAGAN:** Working lunch, is it?

**TROUGHTON:** Eh, something like that, yes.

**FLANAGAN:** Well, it’s a decent enough day for it.

**TROUGHTON:** Yes, the office felt a little stuffy and…

**FLANAGAN:** [UNDERSTANDING.] Irving’s bench.

**TROUGHTON:** [APPRECIATIVE.] Irving’s bench. Yes.

**FLANAGAN:** You know, I don’t see many others using it. If I didn’t know better, I’d say everyone saves it for you.

**TROUGHTON:** You might be right, though most of the students who would have been here when it happened will have since left.

**FLANAGAN:** [IN AGREEMENT.] Mm.

**TROUGHTON:** Are you ready for tomorrow?

**FLANAGAN:** More or less. Just hope I can keep the undergraduates awake.

**TROUGHTON:** [WITH A LAUGH.] You’ll do fine, I’m sure. You have a very engaging way of speaking no matter the topic. [SHE GIVES AN AMUSED EXHALE AS HE PAUSES IN JEST.] It’s nothing too boring, is it?

**FLANAGAN:** “‘Byromania’: A Bio-cultural Account of Byron’s Early Popularity Around the Globe.”

**TROUGHTON:** Ah, yes.

**FLANAGAN:** Amazing title, right?

**TROUGHTON:** Eh, I’ve heard worse. In any case, if you really want to send them to sleep, you should try teaching them the domestic policies of Cardinal Wolsey…

**FLANAGAN:** [WITH A LAUGH.] Think I’ll stick to Byron, thanks.

**TROUGHTON:** Eh, I can’t blame you. Sometimes I suspect people are only interested in history if someone’s head is being chopped off.

**FLANAGAN:** Maybe you should try and squeeze more sex in there?

**TROUGHTON:** [AWKWARD, BREATHY SINGLE LAUGH.] I shall leave that to the experts.

**FLANAGAN:** [MOCK OUTRAGE.] Excuse me?

**TROUGHTON:** [AS FAST AS HE CAN GET THE WORDS OUT.] Byron! Byron! I-I-I-I me-I meant Byron.

**FLANAGAN:** Uh-huh.

**TROUGHTON:** [VERY AWKWARD LAUGH.] Yes, well, uh…

**FLANAGAN:** [SHE PUTS HIM OUT OF HIS MISERY.] So you still want that lift?

**TROUGHTON:** [RELIEVED TO BE ON SOLID FOOTING AGAIN.] Yes, please. Which reminds me, I need to book a room in the hotel.

**FLANAGAN:** Make sure you do, you’re not sharing my room.

**TROUGHTON:** Perish the thought.

**FLANAGAN:** Be ready for ten, yeah?

**TROUGHTON:** I’ll be there.

**FLANAGAN:** Right. I’m off to find some lunch.

**TROUGHTON:** Enjoy!

[SFX: THE BACKGROUND CROWD FADES TO 4 SECONDS OF SILENCE.]

[SFX: INSIDE THE CARDIFF UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ARCHIVES, FAINT MOVEMENTS OF FURNITURE CAN BE HEARD. FOOTSTEPS ON THE HARD FLOOR APPROACH.]

**GARRET:** [WITH A SIGH, SLIGHTLY OUT OF BREATH.] Sorry to have kept you waiting so long. It wasn’t where it was supposed to be.

**TROUGHTON:** Oh, not to worry.

**GARRET:** [STILL OUT OF BREATH.] I’ve been here 18 months and I’m still correcting the records of the previous librarian!

**TROUGHTON:** [AGREEING IN AN ATTEMPT TO AVOID CONVERSATION.] Mm.

**GARRET:** [SATISFIED SIGH AS HE WALKS OVER TO TROUGHTON.] Nonetheless, I’ve found it.

**TROUGHTON:** Oh, excellent.

[SFX: A CHAIR IS PULLED OUT AND CREAKS AS GARRET TAKES A SEAT.]

**GARRET:** *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus.*

**TROUGHTON:** [SUBDUED EXCITEMENT.] Mm-hm.

**GARRET:** 1620 edition.

**TROUGHTON:** [IN HIS ELEMENT.] Yes, here’s the tell-tale typographical error on the cover.

**GARRET:** Would you like to look through it yourself?

**TROUGHTON:** [QUOTING.] *Am I not tormented with ten thousand hells in being deprived of everlasting bliss?* [CHUCKLES.]

**GARRET:** [CONFUSED.] I’m sorry?

**TROUGHTON:** [SELF-DEPRECATING.] Uh, a quote. Sorry, couldn’t help myself.

**GARRET:** Ah, of course. Anyway, be my guest.

**TROUGHTON:** Have you read Faustus, yourself?

**GARRET:** No, though I did see a production on the West End a few years back.

**TROUGHTON:** [IMPRESSED.] Oh, mm-hm.

**GARRET:** Anyway, hand me your tea cup. You have finished, haven’t you?

**TROUGHTON:** [HE WOULDN’T DREAM OF HAVING LIQUID NEAR THIS BOOK.] Oh, oh yes.

**GARRET:** Right you are. If you pop these gloves on…

[SFX: TROUGHTON MUMBLES A BIT AS HE PULLS ON THE GLOVES.]

**GARRET:** [AMUSED.] I do like the drawing here: Mephistopheles poking out of the floor.

**TROUGHTON:** [ALSO AMUSED.] Yes, quite bold for the period.

[SFX: TROUGHTON CAREFULLY TURNS A PAGE.]

**TROUGHTON:** [WITH AWE.] Oh. Oh, this really is beautiful. So well preserved! [READING.] *Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin to sound the depths of that thou wilt profess.*

**GARRET:** This is your speciality, isn’t it?

**TROUGHTON:** Somewhat. I’m exploring literature following the end of the Tudor period. [ALMOST LOSING TRACK OF HIS SURROUNDINGS AS HE VIEWS THE BOOK.] I have a few theories, you see…

[SFX: TROUGHTON CAREFULLY TURNS ANOTHER PAGE.]

**GARRET:** Oh, I meant, y’know, spook stories. Devils and all that.

[SFX: AWKWARD SILENCE.]

**TROUGHTON:** [LONG INHALE THROUGH HIS NOSE WHILE HE KEEPS HIS COMPOSURE, THEN HE CONTINUES ENTIRELY NEUTRAL.] Yes, well, I contacted you through the University, in my capacity of Professor of History…

**GARRET:** [SLIGHTLY APOLOGETIC BUT STILL ROLLING WITH IT.] Oh, yes, of course, of course! Always happy to assist with Warwick, but when I got your email and saw your name, well, I remembered you on Newsnight…

**TROUGHTON:** [SIGH OF EMBARRASSMENT.]

**GARRET:** I thought that Emily Maitlis was quite hard on you.

**TROUGHTON:** Mm… Yes, well, you certainly won’t be seeing me on television again.

**GARRET:** Oh, really? That’s a shame.

**TROUGHTON:** [WITH A TONE INDICATING HE’S SAID THIS QUITE A FEW TIMES BEFORE.] I was under the impression I was there to add to a discussion on the rise of spiritualism but it soon became an ambush and, well… you saw it. [INHALE.] In hindsight, I think I was a little naïve.

**GARRET:** [REASSURING.] It wasn’t that bad.

**TROUGHTON:** Perhaps not, but the University felt embarrassed by the whole event, if truth be told.

**GARRET:** Oh, I’m sorry.

**TROUGHTON:** Heh. “Keep your head down,” was the instruction.

**GARRET:** [TUTS.] Ah, that’s rough.

**TROUGHTON:** [TRYING TO SOUND UPBEAT BUT NOT ENTIRELY SUCCEEDING.] So… the presence of our demonic friend here is purely coincidental. [SMILES.] I’m here as a historian and a historian alone, yes?

**GARRET:** [HAPPY.] Of course, Professor.

[SFX: TROUGHTON CAREFULLY TURNS A PAGE.]

**TROUGHTON:** Ah, yes, yes… here’s what I’m really here for, the amendments by Samuel Rowley. [ALMOST MUTTERING AS HE TRAILS OFF.] Some of the notes are illegible in the scanned versions… [NOISE OF CONCENTRATION AS HE READS.]

**GARRET:** [COY, GOING TO SEE WHAT HE CAN GET AWAY WITH.] So… you wouldn’t be interested in a spook story or two, then?

**TROUGHTON:** Hm?

**GARRET:** With you being here in your *official capacity*, you wouldn’t be interested in anything… spooky?

**TROUGHTON:** [DEADPAN.] Spooky?

**GARRET:** Well, you know, sorting the mess that has been the library archives… I’ve come across one or two things that have the, uh, potential to pique interest.

**TROUGHTON:** [GENTLE REDIRECT.] Now, now, Mr. Garret, let’s concentrate on our friend Doctor Faustus here.

**GARRET:** Oh, of course.

**TROUGHTON:** [CONCENTRATING.] In fact, I’m going to take some notes…

**GARRET:** So you’re not interested in the monkey’s paw we found?

**TROUGHTON:** [ALERT AGAIN AND ALMOST DISGUSTED.] An *actual* monkey’s paw?

**GARRET:** [WITH A GIGGLE.] Yeah. Properly preserved, of course, and in a glass case and all that. But, still…

**TROUGHTON:** A little on the nose, don’t you think?

**GARRET:** You could say that, yes! There’s a reason it’s in the archives and not on display, after all.

**TROUGHTON:** Indeed.

**GARRET:** Though, joking aside, you might be interested in Catchlove Hall. That’s Tudor.

**TROUGHTON:** [RESIGNED, BUT GOOD NATURED ABOUT IT.] Well, I can see you’re keen to tell me.

**GARRET:** [WITH A CHAIR CREAK AS HE LEANS FORWARD EXCITEDLY.] So, two weeks ago, I had a request come through for any information we had on the hall. Naturally, I’d never heard of it, but it was this trust who had emailed and they were convinced we had records here in Cardiff. And, well, there was a pretty decent payment being offered for any and all information…

**TROUGHTON:** [INTERRUPTING.] Which trust was this?

**GARRET:** Oh, um… [UNDER HIS BREATH.] What was it… [BACK TO FULL VOLUME.] Uh, B-Bracebridge! Bracebridge! That’s the one. Have you heard of it?

**TROUGHTON:** [THINKS.] I don’t think so.

**GARRET:** From what I can gather, they operate a number of properties across the country – privately, you understand – and they’d recently come into possession of Catchlove. It’s not far from here, in the wetlands of all places. They wanted anything and everything we had on it, so naturally we obliged. The strange thing is they wanted hard copies, not duplicates.

**TROUGHTON:** Seems a little unorthodox.

**GARRET:** Well, yes! Initially we declined, but a notable donation came with the second request and, well, at this point it was out of my hands and the higher ups said to go ahead.

**TROUGHTON:** Hm.

**GARRET:** And here’s the thing: Catchlove hasn’t been occupied this side of the Second World War. And it changed hands often enough before that, enough that it piqued *my* interest because it always sold for cheap. And I did a little digging: *plenty* of rumours about that place, you see. *Plenty*.

**TROUGHTON:** [WRY.] Your ‘spook stories,’ then?

**GARRET:** [LAUGHS.] Well, one or two that I could verify among the rumour mill. There was Lady Washington around the late 1700s, for example. Her husband died of reasons unknown and she must have been heartbroken because she threw herself off the roof. The thing is, you see, *she didn’t die*. So she lay there, in the wet marsh, crippled and broken. When the servants found her the next morning, she was still gasping, it seems. As they moved her, though, she let out this horrible scream and died right there in their arms. They recorded she was alive purely by luck of the angle she had landed. Well, I-I say luck, but by all accounts, she must have lain there in terrible pain all night, bless her. That’s about, what, eight hours? Horrible…

**TROUGHTON:** Ghastly…

**GARRET:** And here’s how I found her story to start with! The children of the nearby village who would sneak into wetlands to play often reported seeing the mangled corpse of Lady Washington among the reeds and grass [DRAMATIC.] *just waiting to grab them*. [LAUGHS.] Of course, there was a young boy who *did* drown in the marshes some years later. It doesn’t take a lot to tie these two stories together. Sometimes the rumours just start themselves, you know?

**TROUGHTON:** Have you corroborated all of these details?

**GARRET:** Pretty much. And even the unsubstantiated rumours, together they all say the same thing. Something bad happens and then when the next incident happens, it’s all blamed on the last. So, the little boy who drowned? Soldiers camping nearby some years later allegedly reported hearing the wails of a child in the night. And one thing I could verify was that there was a fire back in the mid-1700s which nearly destroyed the place. Took half the servants and the east wing.

**TROUGHTON:** Mm. This isn’t entirely surprising. It’s not uncommon of a building of such an age to accumulate such… tragedies.

**GARRET:** Yes, but here’s the thing that may interest you in particular. Do you listen to many podcasts, Professor?

**TROUGHTON:** Occasionally. [A BIT ANNOYED.] Though please, don’t recommend that gaming podcast episode to me. My inbox has been flooded with that.

**GARRET:** [QUICKLY DISMISSIVE.] No, no, no. I-I don’t listen to many myself, actually. But while I was looking for whatever I could about the Hall, I found this sort of “Haunted History” one. They were covering Cardiff and the surrounding areas and they had this audio from a YouTube channel of a lad who would visit haunted locations. [CORRECTING HIMSELF.] Well, *supposedly* haunted.

**TROUGHTON:** [INTERRUPTING DISMISSIVELY.] I can’t say I’m very much interested in ghost hunters, Mr. Garret.

**GARRET:** Trust me, you’ll want to hear this one. It’s sort of complicated. So, this lad on YouTube, I saw a few of his videos and it’s mostly him getting the shivers over coats hanging in the dark and whatnot. Absolute rubbish, most of it.

**TROUGHTON:** [NOT INVESTED IN THIS AT ALL.] And the podcast featured him?

**GARRET:** Well, when they get to discussing Catchlove Hall, they play audio from the lad’s channel. Thing is, his Catchlove video isn’t on his YouTube channel. It’s missing. The only recording of it exists within a segment of this podcast.

**TROUGHTON:** Are you implying the video was taken down?

**GARRET:** Maybe. I mean, it looks like it, doesn’t it? “Catchlove” isn’t written in the show notes anywhere. I only heard this because I was listening to their “Haunted Cardiff” special. If someone was taking down videos and such, they wouldn’t have caught this podcast.

**TROUGHTON:** [JUST WANTS TO BE DONE WITH THIS CONVERSATION.] And why would someone want to take mentions of Catchlove down?

**GARRET:** Scrub the reputation clean, maybe? The info we had here was sparse, and that’s gone now, so there’s next to nothing about it in circulation. Maybe someone intends to flip the property and sell it on?

**TROUGHTON:** Perhaps so… So, why will *I* find this so interesting, then?

[SFX: GARRET REACHES OVER AND THERE’S A SOFT CLICK AS HE STARTS THE PODCAST.]

**GARRET:** You’ll see.

**PODCAST HOST:** [AUDIO IS SLIGHTLY TINNY.] Welcome to our “Haunted Cardiff” episode! Join us as we explore the Welsh capital and see what creepy ghouls are lurking in the shadows…

**GARRET:** I’ll just skip to the right part.

**TROUGHTON:** [RESIGNED.] Mm-hm.

[SFX: A FEW CLICKS AS GARRET SKIPS FORWARD.]

**PODCAST HOST:** …of course, this is where they filmed the classic episode of Doctor Who…

**GARRET:** [OVER THE PODCAST, IGNORING TROUGHTON’S ANNOYANCE.] Oh, hang on. [CLICKS FORWARD A COUPLE OF TIMES MORE.] Oh, here we are.

**PODCAST HOST:** Which brings us to the aforementioned Catchlove Hall episode of *Franklin Gets Scared.* Go on, have a listen. We think you’ll agree the footage is really something.

**TROUGHTON:** [SARCASTIC.] Inspired title.

**GARRET:** [SHUSHING HIM.] Listen, listen.

**FRANKLIN:** [FROM A TINNY RECORDING, WITH FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL.] …and so I was waiting in the car for the tide to go out and–eugh–the land is barely solid as it is.

**GARRET:** It’s just a little further ahead.

[SFX: GARRET SKIPS FORWARD A FEW MORE CLICKS.]

**FRANKLIN:** …managed to get through the window and it’s been roughly 15 minutes and–

[SFX: A VAGUE GHOSTLY ECHO CUTS FRANKLIN OFF.]

**FRANKLIN:** Oh, Christ, I hope the camera’s picking this up. Um… [LOUDER AND CLEAR.] Is someone there? [AFTER A PAUSE.] Hello? [CLEARS HIS THROAT.] Hello?

[SFX: THE LAST HELLO STARTLES A PIGEON THAT FLIES AROUND FOR A BIT.]

**FRANKLIN:** [TRYING NOT TO SOUND SCARED.] Um, if anyone’s there, I’m speaking to the… spirit that abides here. If you can, please can you speak with me? [EERIE, AIRY TONES BEGIN AND GET LOUDER.] Fuck!

[SFX: THE SOUNDS STOP. FRANKLIN IS MOVING AROUND CLUMSILY AND THE PIGEON FLUTTERS.]

**FRANKLIN:** Can… Can you say that again?

**FEMALE GHOST:** [BARELY RECOGNIZABLE AS ENGLISH, HER WORDS ARE MOSTLY AIR.] Can… you… say…

**FRANKLIN:** [AGITATED.] Oh, fucking hell. Um… I’m here to, um…

**MALE GHOST:** [BARELY RECOGNIZABLE AS LANGUAGE, IT’S MOSTLY AIR.] Troughton…

**FRANKLIN:** I’m sorry, who? [WAITS.] He-hello?

[SFX: A DOOR SLAMS AFTER A FEW AIRY SOUNDS FROM THE GHOSTS.]

**FRANKLIN:** [STARTLED, THEN TRYING TO CATCH HIS BREATH.] Oh…

[SFX: AN AIRY WAIL FROM THE FEMALE GHOST BEGINS TO INCREASE IN VOLUME.]

**FRANKLIN:** Oh, Christ.

[SFX: THE WAIL FROM THE FEMALE GHOST CONTINUES TO GROW IN VOLUME AND BECOME ANGRIER, MORPHING INTO A SCREAM. FRANKLIN BEGINS TO CURSE, THOUGH IT IS MOSTLY DROWNED OUT BY THE GHOST. THE RECORDING STOPS ABRUPTLY AS GARRET TURNS IT OFF, LEAVING ONLY THE SOUNDS OF PEOPLE MOVING AROUND THE LIBRARY.]

**TROUGHTON:** [NOT CERTAIN WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.] Well, that was certainly… dramatic.

**GARRET:** Tell me about it.

**TROUGHTON:** Was he okay?

**GARRET:** Well enough to announce on Twitter he was taking a break.

**TROUGHTON:** When was this recorded?

**GARRET:** From what I can gather, the original recording was early September.

**TROUGHTON:** Mm, just over two months ago, then.

**GARRET:** What did you think of the name?

**TROUGHTON:** Name?

**GARRET:** The name the ghost said?

**TROUGHTON:** [NOT GIVING GARRET ENOUGH TIME TO FINISH HIS SENTENCE, TROUGHTON REACTS TO THE WORD ‘GHOST’ BY SWITCHING INTO THE VOICE OF A MAN USED TO COMMANDING A ROWDY LECTURE HALL.] *Don’t* [IMMEDIATELY FORCES HIMSELF INTO CALM.] call it that, please.

**GARRET:** What, ghost?

**TROUGHTON:** [THROUGH GRITTED TEETH.] Yes.

**GARRET:** [WORRIED HE MAY HAVE OFFENDED BUT A LITTLE CONFUSED BY THE EXTREME REACTION.] Alright, then. Um, so you didn’t hear the name?

**TROUGHTON:** Can’t say I did, no.

**GARRET:** Let me just, um…

[SFX: A FEW CLICKS AS GARRET FINDS THE MOMENT IN QUESTION. THE FEMALE GHOST AND SWEARING FROM FRANKLIN CAN BE HEARD ONCE AS HE STOPS AT THE WRONG SPOT.]

**GARRET:** There!

**MALE GHOST:** [SAME AS BEFORE, BARELY DISTINGUISHABLE AS A WORD.] Troughton…

**FRANKLIN:** Sorry, who-

[SFX: A CLICK AS GARRET TURNS OFF THE RECORDING.]

**TROUGHTON:** [GENUINE INTEREST.] Oh, yes. “Howden,” is that?

**GARRET:** “Troughton!”

**TROUGHTON:** [CONDESCENDING DISBELIEF.]No…

**GARRET:** Listen again!

[SFX: WITH A COUPLE OF CLICKS, GARRET PLAYS THE SAME SECTION OF THE RECORDING AGAIN.]

**GARRET:** That’s *definitely* “Troughton.”

**TROUGHTON:** [TAKEN ABACK.] Uh, I suppose it does sound *like* it.

**GARRET:** And here’s the thing: your query about *Doctor Faustus* landed in my inbox the very next day after I heard this! I thought, *the* Professor Troughton? What luck! Wait until I show him this.

**TROUGHTON:** [WANTS ABSOLUTELY NONE OF THIS.] Oh, uh, Mr. Garret-

**GARRET:** [TALKING OVER TROUGHTON.] Oh, and now you’re here! You’ve got bloody ghosts in Catchlove Hall calling your name!

**TROUGHTON:** [FIRMER.] Mr. Garret! [AFTER A PAUSE, HE SIGHS.] I can hardly accuse you of luring me here under false pretences – after all, it *was* me who contacted you. This… this series of events is merely coincidence, one you are simply assigning more importance to after some, dare I say, *zealous* investigations into a local legend.

**GARRET:** Ah, see, Professor, I don’t believe in coincidences.

**TROUGHTON:** [RAISING HIS VOICE SLIGHTLY TO CUT OFF ARGUMENT.] But I do. At least in this instance.

**GARRET:** [GENUINELY.] Well, I-I *am* sorry…

**TROUGHTON:** [STILL IRRITATED.] No, it’s quite alright. [REMEMBERING HIS MANNERS.] Thank you. [FIRMLY AND STILL A LITTLE ANGRY.] But let me be clear: I am not Carnacki or Harry Price or some other ghost hunter you’ve imagined. I am simply an academic who has asked some questions – yes, with increasing publicity – but that is all.

[SFX: UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE.]

**GARRET:** H-honestly, I-I didn’t mean any upset. I-I’d read your article in the *Guardian* and then saw you on *Newsnight* and that was all I’d heard. I thought you’d be interested, is all. I-I didn’t mean anything by it.

**TROUGHTON:** [REALISING HE’S GONE A BIT TOO INTENSE WITH A SIGH.] No, of course you didn’t. I’m the one who should be sorry. This is, perhaps, a, uh, a *weighty* topic…

**GARRET:** [GENTLY.] Shall we get back to *Doctor Faustus*?

**TROUGHTON:** I think that would be best.

**GARRET:** Excellent, because I think you’ll be very interested in what we have on page seven. Let me just turn the pages here. [SEVERAL PAGES TURN.] Ah, here we are. [BEGINS TO FADE TO NOTHING.] As you can see, we’ve got a beautiful woodcut picture…

[[*MUSIC: SOFT, SLOW PIANO NOTES.*]]

**TROUGHTON (VO):** I spent another few hours in the library archives. Thankfully, I was able to persuade Mr. Garret to leave me be after a while. Eventually, I’d learned what I could from the printing, though in truth it wasn’t a great deal. I think perhaps I was simply happy to see it with my own eyes. I’ve long been fascinated by antiquities, you see, objects produced before I even existed. I like to imagine the effort that went into their creation, about the hands that crafted them and the hearts and minds that guided them. It’s a beautiful reminder of life before we come into the world and how life will continue long after we depart this plane. How not only life will continue, but how beautiful things that I will never get to see will be created. [AMUSED LAUGH.] It is, perhaps, why my vocation as a historian still prevails, despite the strange events of the last few years.

I returned to the hotel a few hours before Tasha was due back from her lecture. I had decided to rest my eyes but was unable to drift off. In fact, I was frustrated to find the tales of Mr. Garret had taken root in my mind, pervading my every idle thought. I viewed images of Catchlove Hall online, a solitary half-timbered building in presumably vernacular architecture. I’d seen a thousand like it. However, not one that stood in wetlands, one accessible only when the tide was low. I stared at the images for some time and before long, located the podcast episode I’d been shown earlier. I listened to the recording thrice more and each time it sounded more and more like my own name.

[ANNOYED.] Then the old itch began to flare, one that could not be truly scratched without fully giving into it. At this point, I grew almost furious. [MORE INTENSE.] How easily I was tempted back into such things by gossip and hearsay! Instead, I had a shower, a long, *warm* shower and tried to wash such thoughts and impulses away. [QUIET SIGH.] However, when I pulled back the curtain and observed the large mirror, the glass now consumed by condensation, [[*MUSIC: LOUD, LOW, HARSH HORN NOTE.*]] I saw at once a singular word written in unfamiliar and aggressive handwriting. [WITH A NERVOUS SWALLOW.] “Troughton.”

[SFX: THE SOUNDS OF A HOTEL PUB FADE IN WITH LOTS OF OTHER PATRON CONVERSATIONS INAUDIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND.]

**FLANAGAN:** Do you know what this sounds like?

**TROUGHTON:** [BRACING HIMSELF.] *What* does it sound like?

**FLANAGAN:** Unresolved trauma. [TROUGHTON SIGHS.] And… [BLUNTLY.] possibly a little narcissism combined with faux celebrity.

**TROUGHTON:** [SLIGHT LAUGH.] Well, I’m glad you didn’t hold back.

**FLANAGAN:** [TRYING TO BE KIND.] Well, I wouldn’t want to insult your intelligence.

**TROUGHTON:** [A BIT PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE.] I’m grateful to have you to protect my ego.

**FLANAGAN:** [FRUSTRATED.] Augh, that’s my point! Intelligent people are the bloody worst at this.

**TROUGHTON:** Oh, yes?

**FLANAGAN:** [EXASPERATED EXHALE.] People with a lot of intelligence, emotional or otherwise, are usually very intuitive and are able to decipher their own feelings or play out likely scenarios in a heartbeat. Yeah? And sit someone like you in front of a therapist and they’re just waiting to be outsmarted. They reckon they already have everything sussed out and the only reason why they’re in that chair in the first place is because they think, or rather they *hope*, that therapist has some cheat sheet or they’ll whip out a pocket watch and hypnotise their problems away. [CATCHES HER BREATH.] People like this can be the absolute worst for things like core beliefs, they’re so bloody convinced their beliefs, anxieties, biases – whatever – are cast iron *fact*.

**TROUGHTON:** [UNCOMFORTABLE.] But you know I’m exploring other options.

**FLANAGAN:** You have! You were *assaulted*, then one of your closest mates *took his own life*! And yes, those were *terrible* things and they shouldn’t have happened and it’s so, *so* unfair but… [SOFTENS.] Geoffrey, you gave up on therapy. You honestly can’t rule this out.

**TROUGHTON:** [QUIET, WITHOUT EMOTION.] Rule what out?

**FLANAGAN:** That you’ve externalised your trauma. That you’ve externalised it in these supernatural figures. [TROUGHTON SIGHS.] It doesn’t help that the business in Suffolk added fuel to the fire. [SHE SIGHS.] You could lose your job…

**TROUGHTON:** Tasha. I’ve made these same points to myself time and time again. I’ve accepted that there are some things I may not ever find explanation for and, *yes*, my position at the university has become less secure and… [LONG INHALE.] And *please* believe me when I tell you I’ve done my best to put this behind me. Each day I’ve- [LOOKS FOR THE RIGHT WORDS.] Each day is work, *hard* work. It’s shovelling another pile of dirt on top of it and I’d *just finished filling the grave* but, to continue the clumsy metaphor: the soil was light and what was buried had unearthed so *quickly* and now it’s wet and [STARTING TO GRIT HIS TEETH.] *raw* and demanding to be addressed. [PAUSES WITH A SHAKY INHALE AS HE COLLECTS HIS THOUGHTS.] You’re talking about therapy s-so surely y-you can see that [STAMMERS.] th-that ignoring these things by b-by burying them, it-it’s only going to cause me harm.

**FLANAGAN:** [DEEP SIGH IN CONCERN.] I’m not sure.

**TROUGHTON:** [SIGHS THEN CHUCKLES SOFTLY.] I’ve not been sure of anything for three years.

**FLANAGAN:** [SLIGHT CHUCKLE.] You were bloody sure about not having a birthday cake last month.

**TROUGHTON:** I’ll let you in on a little secret.

**FLANAGAN:** Go on…

**TROUGHTON:** I only did it because I knew you’d all sing and make a fuss.

**FLANAGAN:** [LAUGHING.] Anti-social bastard.

**TROUGHTON:** If you’d left a cake on my desk and then ran off, I’d have been quite happy. [LAUGHS.]

**FLANAGAN:** I’m not going to talk you out of going, am I?

**TROUGHTON:** [QUIET.] No. [NORMAL.] I have to find out, Tasha. I’m sorry.

**FLANAGAN:** [ALMOST UNDER HER BREATH, BUT GOOD NATURED.] *Christ*, you are stubborn.

**TROUGHTON:** [IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, THOUGH NOT QUITE AGREEMENT.] And besides, how do you explain the name on my mirror?

**FLANAGAN:** Short of you doing it yourself to prove your point? Subconscious or otherwise?

**TROUGHTON:** Tasha…

**FLANAGAN:** Well, I can’t.

**TROUGHTON:** Well, I’m pleased I took a picture, otherwise you’d have accused me of imagining it.

**FLANAGAN:** You’re probably right.

[SFX: FLANAGAN GRABS HER KEYS WITH A JINGLE.]

**FLANAGAN:** [SIGHS.] Fine.

**TROUGHTON:** I’m sorry?

**FLANAGAN:** Don’t play coy, Troughton. You’ve won! We’re going.

**TROUGHTON:** Oh… And-and you’re coming?

**FLANAGAN:** Well, you can’t drive… [TROUGHTON LAUGHS.] And, well, if there *is* a spooky ghost, you’ll want a witness, won’t you?

**TROUGHTON:** [WITH A LAUGH.] I suppose so.

**FLANAGAN:** And what if there isn’t?

**TROUGHTON:** [THINKS ON IT.] I’m not sure. But it might be the first step in truly laying this all to rest. Who knows?

**FLANAGAN:** [THINKING THAT SOUNDS PROMISING.] Alright then, let’s go. [THEY STAND WITH THE SOUND OF THE CHAIRS DRAGGING OVER THE FLOOR.] You can buy me a drink when we get back. Those cocktails looked nice.

**TROUGHTON:** That’s only fair.

[SFX: THE SOUNDS OF THE HOTEL PUB FADE AWAY TO NOTHING.]

[[*MUSIC: ISOLATED GUITAR NOTES RETURN.*]]

**TROUGHTON (VO):** Surprised though I was at Tasha’s decision, I was thankful for her presence. She was entirely correct, another witness could be invaluable if anything were to be seen. There was no real plan once we got there – in this respect, I was no better than the YouTube personalities I had so readily mocked. Or… [SIGH.] perhaps this is not correct, in a strange sense, I *had* felt… *invited.* And as we arrived at the wetlands and gingerly drove down an ever disappearing gravel road, it felt as if I had always been coming here. That everything I had been through was to bring me to this very place.

Before long, we saw it. Catchlove Hall stood alone, elevated above the still waters of the wetlands, its asymmetrical design belied a firm structure and towering presence. I had failed to remember the issue of the tide making access initially impossible, but luckily the tide was already receding and as such we sat on the bonnet[[1]](#footnote-0) of the car and waited. Or more… we *watched.*

[[*MUSIC: GUITAR NOTES END.*]]

The setting sun stretched fingers of light over the surface of the water, grasping at the waves as it was dragged from view. Soon we were left only with the dull glow of its memory on the horizon and as our eyes adjusted to the new darkness, the features of the hall became clear once again.

[[*MUSIC: AIRY SUSTAINED NOTES NOTES BEHIND THE VOICE OVER.*]]

The windows, though dark and mostly without glass, appeared as eyes and for as long as we looked at the hall, it seemed to look back.

Eventually the path was cleared and we made our way to the small island housing the hall. As we did, I kept both eyes on the windows…

[SFX: WIND BLOWING AND WETLAND BIRD CALLS ARE AUDIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND AS TROUGHTON AND FLANAGAN APPROACH THE HALL.]

**TROUGHTON:** It suddenly dawns on me that I didn’t ask how the lecture went.

**FLANAGAN:** [WITH A SINGLE LAUGH OF DISBELIEF.] You want to ask this now? While we’re breaking and entering?

**TROUGHTON:** We’re doing no such thing. [SMUGLY.] This is for *science*.

[SFX: THEY WALK ON WOODEN DECKING, LOOKING FOR AN ALREADY SMASHED WINDOW TO USE.]

**FLANAGAN:** Did you just try and make a joke?

**TROUGHTON:** [PROUD OF HIMSELF.] Maybe.

**FLANAGAN:** [SCOFFS.]

**TROUGHTON:** [AFTER A MOMENT OF WALKING, FINDS A SMASHED WINDOW.] Ah, here we go, this one is completely missing. [CLIMBS IN INELEGANTLY AND WITH A FEW GRUNTS, BUT MANAGES TO KEEP TALKING ANYWAY.] So? How did it go?

**FLANAGAN:** [UNDER HER BREATH.] Can’t believe I let you talk me into this.

**TROUGHTON:** [WITH A GRUNT.] Ah, there we are.

**FLANAGAN:** [SHE WALKS OVER TO THE WINDOW.] Better than I thought it would, actually. They stayed awake, anyway. [SHE CLIMBS IN WITH A SLIGHT GRUNT THEN NOTICES THE INSIDE OF THE HALL.] Jesus, this place is a mess.

**TROUGHTON:** Well it hasn’t been lived in since the 40s, apparently.

**FLANAGAN:** Mm, I don’t know, I think the huge amount of spiders must count as tenants.

**TROUGHTON:** Hm, I’ve never been keen on spiders…

**FLANAGAN:** [WITH A BIT OF FALSE BRAVADO.] Oh, these are nothing. At least British spiders won’t kill you.

**TROUGHTON:** Say no more…

[SFX: AFTER A FEW STEPS, TROUGHTON OPENS A DOOR AND CONTINUES ON.]

**TROUGHTON:** [NOW IN AN ECHOING CHAMBER.] All seems quite unremarkable… [FEELS A SUDDEN CHILL.] Ooh. Do you feel that?

**FLANAGAN:** What? You mean the cold?

**TROUGHTON:** Yes.

**FLANAGAN:** In the rickety old house by the sea with smashed windows?

**TROUGHTON:** Yes, but still.

**FLANAGAN:** [SLIGHTLY CONDESCENDING.] Confirmation bias, Geoffrey.

**TROUGHTON:** [CONDESCENDING RIGHT BACK.] Open mind, Tasha.

**FLANAGAN:** [WITH AN EXASPERATED SIGH.] Come on, Geoffrey, I”m in the bloody house. What more do you want?

[SFX: GHOSTLY AIR BEGINS TO GROW OUT OF THE SILENCE.]

**TROUGHTON:** I know, I- Wait! Do you hear that?

[SFX: SOMETHING LOUD FALLS IN THE DISTANCE, ECHOING.]

**FLANAGAN:** Fuck!

**TROUGHTON:** Convinced yet?

**FLANAGAN:** It’s an old house Geoffrey, we could be causing it-

[SFX: OVER FLANAGAN’S LAST WORDS, THE GHOSTLY AIR GROWS UNTIL IT DROWNS HER OUT.]

**MALE GHOST:** [PARTICULARLY FIERCE AND DISTORTED.] Welcome! To Franklin Gets Scared!

**TROUGHTON:** [UNDER HIS BREATH.] Well, there’s no question now.

**MALE GHOST:** [WITH A SINISTER LAUGH BEHIND HIS WORDS.] Like… and subscribe.

**FLANAGAN:** [PANICKED AND TRYING TO WHISPER BUT NOT PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFULLY.] Someone’s here!

**TROUGHTON:** [NOT QUITE SCARED… YET.] Maybe not.

**FLANAGAN:** [WANTS OUT OF HERE.] What do you mean! We should go!

[SFX: THE GHOSTLY AIR CONTINUES AND THERE’S A GUTTURAL LAUGH FROM THE GHOST.]

**TROUGHTON:** [TRYING TO SOUND CALM, BUT REALLY SOUNDING MORE EXCITED.] No, no. Listen!

**MALE GHOST:** [HIS VOICE IS VERY GUTTURAL AND CONTINUES TO BE EERILY STRETCHED AND DISTORTED IN SOME PLACES AND CLIPPED SHORT IN OTHERS.] Don’t forget to leave your comments below and let me know where I should get scared next time!

**FLANAGAN:** [THOROUGHLY FREAKED OUT.] Jesus Christ!

**TROUGHTON:** [URGENT BUT TRYING TO BE REASSURING.] Can you locate the source?

**FLANAGAN:** [AFTER A MOMENT.] No?!

**TROUGHTON:** [MAKING AN EFFORT TO KEEP HIS VOICE LOW.] Precisely! I don’t think some-*one* is here…

[SFX: THE GHOSTLY AIR GETS DISTORTED AND THE BUILDING SEEMS TO GROAN. AIR RUSHES THROUGH THE HALLWAYS WITH AN EERIE GROWL THAT CONTINUES BEHIND THE CONVERSATION.]

**FLANAGAN:** [NORMAL VOLUME BUT VERY SCARED.] Okay, okay… I think you’ve got your answer today, don’t you think?

**TROUGHTON:** [ALSO BACK TO NORMAL VOLUME.] I… I just need *more*!

**FLANAGAN:** Geoffrey!

**TROUGHTON:** [LOUDLY.] Hello?

[SFX: THE GROWL BECOMES MORE OF A SCREAM.]

**TROUGHTON:** [LOUDLY, WITH AUTHORITY DESPITE HIS FEAR.] You’ve made contact, that much is very clear. The question is, for what purpose?

[SFX: THE GROWLING CONTINUES.]

**FLANAGAN:** [IN A WHISPER, VERY QUICKLY.] Oh god, oh god, oh god, oh god…

**TROUGHTON:** [RAISING HIS VOICE OVER THE COMMOTION.] Is there something you want? Something we can help you with – something *I* can help you with?

[SFX: THE GROWL AND GHOSTLY AIR SEEM TO COALESCE INTO THE VOICE OF THE GHOST.]

**MALE GHOST:** Something I can help you with?!

**TROUGHTON:** [HIS VOICE STILL RAISED.] Yes. Repetition! Is this how you communicate? Are you trying to establish a dialogue? [PAUSES WHILE INAUDIBLE WORDS ECHO IN THE GHOST’S GROWL.] Are you… *learning*?

[SFX: THE GROWL CONTINUES, THOUGH IT MORE RESEMBLES LANGUAGE NOW.]

**FLANAGAN:** Geoffrey! You were right, now it’s time to go!

**MALE GHOST:** [EVEN ANGRIER THAN BEFORE.] Professor Geoffrey Troughton! FBA, FSA!

[SFX: THE GHOSTLY AIR CONTINUES AT A MODERATE VOLUME BUT THE GROWL HAS STOPPED.]

**TROUGHTON:** [TO HIMSELF.] What?

**FLANAGAN:** [ANGRY.] Geoffrey!

**TROUGHTON:** Yes… Yes, I think you’re right.

**FLANAGAN:** Come on back through here!

[SFX: THE GHOSTLY AIR PICKS BACK UP AS TROUGHTON BEGINS WALKING BACK TOWARDS THE DOOR, WHICH CLOSES BEFORE HE CAN GET TO IT. HE STRUGGLES WITH THE HANDLE.]

**TROUGHTON:** Tasha? Tasha!

**FLANAGAN:** [MUFFLED THROUGH THE DOOR.] Geoffrey, it wasn’t me! I- [SHE NOTICES SOMETHING.] Fuck!

[SFX: THE CEILING ABOVE HER SMASHES IN AN EXPLOSION OF WOOD. SHE CRIES OUT ONCE AS THE WOOD FALLS.]

**TROUGHTON:** Tasha! Tasha, just hold on, I-I can’t get the door open! There’s-there’s no other way in!

**FLANAGAN:** I can’t, Ge- [SHE CANNOT FINISH THE WORD AND IS OVERCOME. AT FIRST SHE IS IN PAIN, THEN MORE CONFUSED, AND THEN IN A GREAT DEAL OF PAIN. THE SPIRITS OF THE HOUSE ENTER HER MIND AND SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY TAKE OVER. SOMEHOW THROUGH THE PROCESS SHE IS ABLE TO SCREAM “GET OUT” THREE TIMES. THE WHOLE PROCESS TAKES ALL OF FIFTEEN SECONDS.]

**TROUGHTON:** [AS FLANAGAN IS STRUGGLING.] Tasha! [HE CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE WITH THE DOOR.] Tasha! What’s going on? Tasha! [PANTING, THEN WHISPERED.] Not again, not again, not again. [TRIES THE DOOR AGAIN, THEN BACK IN HIS NORMAL VOICE.] Tasha! Tasha, just… hang on, I-I’m going to see what I can find to break the door down. I-I-I’ll be right back. [BREATHLESSLY MUTTERING.] Just be okay. *Please.*

[SFX: THE GHOST IS QUIET APART FROM SLIGHT ECHOES.]

**TROUGHTON:** [PANICKED AND MUTTERING TO HIMSELF.] Kitchen, okay. Uh, must be something here. Uh… [RUMMAGES THROUGH DRAWERS.] Ugh, come on… [MORE RUMMAGING, THEN THE SOUND OF KNIVES.] Oh, this’ll have to do.

[SFX: HE STORMS BACK TO THE DOOR.]

**TROUGHTON:** [LOUDLY.] Tasha, I’ve-I’ve found a butcher’s knife, this might do it. I’ll need you to stand- [HE CUTS OFF AS HE NOTICES THE DOOR IS NOW OPEN.] What? [ONE TENTATIVE STEP THROUGH THE DOOR.] Tasha? [CONTINUING ON.] Tasha, are you okay? [LOUDER.] T-Tasha?

**FLANAGAN:** [STILL IN THIS ROOM BUT NOW SPEAKING WITH THE VOICE OF THE DEAD SUPERIMPOSED OVER HER OWN.] Working lunch, is it?!

**TROUGHTON:** [IT DAWNS ON HIM.] Oh god…

**FLANAGAN:** [STILL POSSESSED.] Maybe you should try and squeeze more sex in there? [SHE TAKES A STEP TOWARD TROUGHTON.]

**TROUGHTON:** [NOW AWARE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO FLANAGAN, TROUGHTON REACTS WITH BOTH GUILT AND HORROR.] Oh god, Tasha…

**FLANAGAN:** [POSSESSED.] Do you know what this sounds like?

**TROUGHTON:** Tasha, I…

**FLANAGAN:** [POSSESSED.] Do you know what this sounds like?

**TROUGHTON:** I’m sorry, I-I’m s-so sorry… [AFTER A BEAT.] Tasha, stay back, please. Please, please just-just stay back. L-l-let me try so-

**FLANAGAN:** [FERAL AS SHE LUNGES FOR HIM.] Unresolved trauma!

[SFX: THEY GRAPPLE. TROUGHTON DELIBERATELY DROPS THE KNIFE. HIS STRUGGLE GETS A BIT LOUDER AS SHE TRIES FOR HIS THROAT, THEN HE BREAKS AWAY.]

**TROUGHTON:** Tasha, I-I don’t want to hurt you.

[SFX: FLANAGAN PICKS UP THE KNIFE AND BREATHES HEAVILY AND EXCITEDLY.]

**TROUGHTON:** Tasha, drop the knife. You don’t want to hurt me as much as I don’t want to hurt you. You’re strong, Tasha. You are *so* strong, you can beat this.

**FLANAGAN:** [POSSESSED.] The great art of life is sensation: to feel that we exist, even in pain!

**TROUGHTON:** [OVER HER LAST WORDS AND LOSING HIS RESOLVE.] I won’t fight you.

[SFX: FLANAGAN LUNGES WITH A YELL, MANAGING TO CUT TROUGHTON.]

**TROUGHTON:** [SCREAMS IN PAIN AS HIS FOREARM IS SLASHED, THEN WHISPERING ALMOST IN HYSTERICS.] My arm!

[SFX: FLANAGAN LUNGES FORWARD AND CUTS TROUGHTON AGAIN.]

**TROUGHTON:** [MORE SOUNDS OF PAIN, STAGGERS BACK TO SHOUT.] Why? Why did you call me here?! Is it me you want? Let her go! [GRABS FLANAGAN’S FACE IN BOTH HANDS.] Take me instead! *Well?! Come on then!*

**FLANAGAN:** [POSSESSED AND TRYING TO RESIST THE GRAB.] *Don’t…*

[SFX: THEY STRUGGLE AND THE GHOSTLY AIR AND GROWL BEGIN TO BE AUDIBLE ONCE MORE.]

**TROUGHTON:** [NOW IN PAIN.] Yes! Yes, that’s right. Leave her! It’s me you wanted! [WHIMPERS.]

[SFX: FLANAGAN GASPS AS SHE IS RELEASED. SHE COLLAPSES TO THE GROUND ALMOST CRYING IN BOTH FEAR AND RELIEF.]

**TROUGHTON:** Oh god… [THE PAIN IS INSTANTLY OVERWHELMING. TROUGHTON SCREAMS IN FERAL PAIN THEN IS CUT OFF INTO SILENCE BY AN EERIE RATTLE.]

[SFX: FOUR SECONDS OF UNBEARABLE SILENCE. WITH A WHOOSH OF GHOSTLY AIR AND A GROWL, WE ARE INSIDE TROUGHTON’S HEAD. IT IS NOW FILLED WITH THE VOICES OF VARIOUS GHOSTS.]

**MALE GHOST:** Nothing!

**FEMALE GHOST:** There is only…

**MALE GHOST:** Only…

**FEMALE GHOST:** Nothing…

[SFX: A MIXTURE OF GHOSTLY VOICES CHIMING IN WITH “NOTHING” AND “TROUGHTON.”]

**DROWNED MAN:** [FROM “LEAVE A LIGHT ON FOR ME.”] You guided me here from the sea, sir. Thank you.

**FEMALE GHOST:** Nothing…

**DROWNED MAN:** You took too long, sir.

**MALE GHOST:** Nothing…

[SFX: DISTORTED SOUNDS ECHOING. THE EXHALE OF THE WATCHER FROM “SILENT WARNINGS” IS MIXED IN.]

**FEMALE GHOST:** [ANGRY.] Nothing! [AMBIENT GROWLING, THEN SHE BECOMES SAD.] Troughton, Troughton…

**MALE GHOST:** Troughton…

**FEMALE GHOST:** [NOW NEUTRAL.] Troughton.

[SFX: TROUGHTON’S STRUGGLES CAN BE HEARD FROM THE OUTSIDE NOW, AS FLANAGAN TRIES TO HELP HIM SNAP OUT OF IT. THERE IS A LOUD THUD.]

**FLANAGAN:** [OUT OF BREATH FROM HER STRUGGLES WITH THE GHOSTS AND TROUGHTON.] Geoffrey! [TROUGHTON PANTS LOUDLY.] Geoffrey!

**TROUGHTON:** [WHIMPERING AND GASPING FOR AIR. HE COLLAPSES TO THE GROUND IN FEAR AND RELIEF.] Oh god! Oh god! Tasha? Are you…?

**FLANAGAN:** I’m fine. Are you o-

**TROUGHTON:** [INTERRUPTS, THOUGH HE’S STILL GASPING AND HYPERVENTILATING.] Oh Christ, Tasha. Oh Christ. They’re angry. *They are so angry.* There’s-there’s nothing after- They-the… There’s nothing! And they are *so* angry at *us*!

**FLANAGAN:** [STILL OUT OF BREATH.] For what?

**TROUGHTON:** [TAKES A FEW BREATHS AND SWALLOWS BEFORE REPLYING.] For living.

[SFX: THE HALL GROWLS AGAIN.]

**FLANAGAN:** [STILL OUT OF BREATH, SHE’S NOT SURE WHAT TO DO WITH THIS INFORMATION.] Geoffrey, we have to get out of here. [TROUGHTON WHIMPERS AS HE TRIES TO STAND, REMINDED OF HIS INJURIES.] Let me help you.

**TROUGHTON:** Okay.

[SFX: MORE SOUNDS OF PAIN, THEN THEIR FOOTSTEPS LEAVING AS THE HALL GROWLS. THEN EVERYTHING FADES TO SILENCE.]

[[*MUSIC: ISOLATED PIANO NOTES.*]]

**TROUGHTON (VO):** We were able to leave without obstruction. I’m not sure if the reason was because we had somehow subdued the presence in Catchlove Hall or if it had simply permitted it. I was unsure then and I remain unsure now. And no, no bedsheet-clad spirit came running out after us and no noise was to be heard. It was as if the entire building were holding its breath.

The wounds in my arms were deep, though not life-threatening. We limped to the car and called an ambulance concocting a story about falling down nearby rocks and encountering barbed wire. They seemed to believe us; I’m not ignorant of the privilege the title of Professor can bestow onto a person, a man in particular. Leaving the hospital, we returned to our hotel rooms to find ourselves one hour away from checkout. Tired and exhausted, we headed to nearby Cardiff Bay. [AMUSED AT THE MEMORY.] Tasha suggested ice cream. I opted for chocolate mint.

[[*MUSIC: ENDS.*]]

[SFX: ON THE PROMENADE, WAVES LAP QUIETLY AND SEAGULLS CALL IN THE BACKGROUND.]

**FLANAGAN:** This is weird.

**TROUGHTON:** Your ice cream?

**FLANAGAN:** No! [PAUSE.] We’re just sitting here. Alive. And last night, we were nearly… [SHE CAN’T SAY IT.]

**TROUGHTON:** I’m sorry.

**FLANAGAN:** No, it’s okay.

**TROUGHTON:** But it’s *not*. What nearly happened, happened because *I* insisted on going.

**FLANAGAN:** You had no idea.

**TROUGHTON:** That may be, but this isn’t the first time, is it?

**FLANAGAN:** [SHE KNOWS HER ANSWER ADMITS THE EXISTENCE OF GHOSTS.] No.

**TROUGHTON:** I think that might even be the reason.

**FLANAGAN:** Hm?

**TROUGHTON:** After the first time, in Anworth. Being touched, not physically although… [SCOFFS AT HIMSELF FOR A MOMENT.] Being touched by the other side. Perhaps it, uh, it left a mark.

**FLANAGAN:** And you think it explains everything since?

**TROUGHTON:** It’s just a theory for now.

**FLANAGAN:** But Irving saw his before you did.

**TROUGHTON:** I saw a presence on the road on the way to Irving’s cottage, remember? Besides, I was tainted in such a way then that doesn’t imply exclusivity. It can and does happen to other people. I might simply, uh, [LOOKS FOR THE WORDS.] attract them.

**FLANAGAN:** And… what about me?

**TROUGHTON:** I don’t know. I’m sorry.

**FLANAGAN:** [BECOMES LESS SOMBRE WITH A LAUGH.] Oh cheers mate.

**TROUGHTON:** [LAUGHING.] You’ll be fine.

**FLANAGAN:** [HALF LAUGHING AS SHE SPEAKS.] You don’t know that, do you! That’s just something people say!

**TROUGHTON:** [LAUGHS.] I’m sure Doctor Tasha Flanagan can handle anything life throws at her.

**FLANAGAN:** [HALF LAUGH.] Too right. [WRY.] Anyway, check you out, you’re not so weak yourself.

**TROUGHTON:** [AMUSED.] I wouldn’t say so. There are many things I struggle with.

**FLANAGAN:** What, like talking to the opposite sex?

**TROUGHTON:** Oh, come now!

**FLANAGAN:** No, no! Come on, now, we have *not* just gone through all that together for us to be shy now.

**TROUGHTON:** [DEFENSIVE.] Well, I’m talking to *you* right now.

**FLANAGAN:** I don’t count, we’re mates! Plus I had to force that on you.

**TROUGHTON:** Where’s this coming from?

**FLANAGAN:** [NOT HAVING IT.] Come on.

**TROUGHTON:** [HUGE SIGH.] When did it all become so important? I haven’t even hit my mid-forties yet *my god* how things have changed. [STAMMERS THEN STRUGGLES TO GET THE WORDS OUT.] Why-why must we have flags that announce our sexual activities – or-or lack thereof – to the world? [SIGH.]

**FLANAGAN:** Well… [THINKS.] They help people feel pride in who they are. GIves them a sense of community.

**TROUGHTON:** I’m sorry, I- that-that’s [STAMMERS] that’s not what I meant. It-it’s wonderful, truthfully, but, uh… [SIGH.] But what about [HE SLOWED DOWN DURING THE WORD “ABOUT” AND NOW IS HE ACTUALLY GOING TO SAY THIS?] those of us… without pride.

**FLANAGAN:** [REALISING SHE’S HIT A DEEP NERVE, SHE BACKS OFF SOFTLY.] Hey, I shouldn’t have pushed. I’m sorry.

**TROUGHTON:** [HOLDING BACK EMOTION.] It’s okay. [TAKES A DEEP BREATH.] Women. [LONG PAUSE, THEN A HALF LAUGH.] They scared me. [A PAUSE, THEN IN A RUSH OF WORDS.] And, believe me, the irony of telling *you* this isn’t lost on me. [NOW HE SLOWS BACK DOWN, CONSIDERING EVERY WORD BEFORE HE SAYS IT.] I used to think women scared me. Going to public school didn’t help, of course, not a girl to be seen! [A LAUGH, BUT THERE’S NO HUMOUR IN IT.] So by the time I *left*, well, the fairer sex seemed…almost *alien*. And as such, I was more than happy to take a step back, even when back home around town. But the other boys… [CORRECTS HIMSELF WITH ANOTHER NOT-LAUGH.] Well, men, I suppose, they couldn’t wait! Leaving school was the time for their frustrations to come to an end. And at Oxford? Well, I could… [LAUGHS WITH A LITTLE HUMOUR.] I could *see* how they *hounded* women. So even if I *had* wanted to interact with them, I hardly had the chance and even then [SIGH.] I didn’t want to be another fly buzzing around them. [AMUSED AND ALMOST SPEAKING TO HIMSELF.] Hm. At least, that was the position I took when asked. [DIRECTED OUTWARDLY AGAIN.] Not that I wanted to, of course. Bachelor’s degrees, master’s, doctorates… Well, they require work, don’t they? And, uh, and sacrifice. So fear gave way to, uh, to duty, I suppose. Duty to my education, my career. And if I’m going to be terribly honest, I never saw them in that way. Women, that is.

**FLANAGAN:** [SHE BOTH DOES AND DOESN’T WANT TO ASK THIS.] So, there’s been… no one.

**TROUGHTON:** [A SINGLE, SOFT LAUGH.] Besides a few awkward fumbles under the sheets at boarding school? No. [[*MUSIC: SMALL LINES OF LIGHT PIANO NOTES, SEPARATED BY PERIODS OF MUSICAL SILENCE. GRADUALLY A BASE LINE CONNECTS THEM.*]] [SIGH.] No, those-those *possibilities* never fully materialised. [WISTFUL.] Never have, really. You know, I think Irving knew, rest his soul. I should have spoken to him about it, really. I could have done with a friend like that and he certainly tried. I wish I could have let him know but… [HUMOURLESS LAUGH.] But how could I. I’ve never truly been myself, you see, I’ve been a… [SIGH.] A hollow version of myself. And rather than reach out for help or connection, I seem to have, um, [LOOKS FOR WORDS.] doubled down. Withdrawing into myself, putting up wall after wall so that the version of myself you see i-is-is more a concept than an actual person. [ALMOST INAUDIBLE LAUGH.] And that worked for *so long.* [[*MUSIC: NOTES OF DISHARMONY APPEAR HERE AND THERE, ALONG WITH ADDITIONAL STRINGS.*]] But it is a lonely place. Very cold. Sometimes I’m somewhat happy about that and other times [EMOTIONS RISE.] not so much… Perhaps this is why I’ve entertained the supernatural, the idea of beings existing removed from the world, from others [INHALE.] well, i-it rather strikes a chord. [SHORT LAUGH.]

**FLANAGAN:** [STUNNED.] Wow. [SHE’S SILENT A MOMENT BUT TROUGHTON JUST SIGHS.] Do… you want a hug?

**TROUGHTON:** [SENSE OF HUMOUR RETURNING, DESPITE ALL.] Oh good heavens, no! [FLANAGAN LAUGHS DESPITE HERSELF AND CHIMES IN WITH A SINGLE LAUGH.] I can see this is terribly uncomfortable for the both of us. But, um, you-you-you’ve earned *this*. My honesty, I mean. What we’ve been through… [LAUGH.] Well, if we didn’t bond over that, we’d be as dead as those inside the hall.

**FLANAGAN:** Oh, so you’re using the “g” word, then?

**TROUGHTON:** [WRY.] Let’s elevate ourselves above such monikers, shall we?

**FLANAGAN:** [TEASING.] You snob.

**TROUGHTON:** Well, I did go to Oxford, you know.

**FLANAGAN:** [HAPPY SIGH.] You know I’m bi, right?

**TROUGHTON:** [DEADPAN.] I think the entire faculty knows.

**FLANAGAN:** [LAUGHING.] Oi!

[SFX: SHE PLAYFULLY HITS HIS ARM.]

**TROUGHTON:** [MAKES NOISES OF PAIN, THEN REPLIES AS PLAYFULLY AS HE CAN THROUGH THE PAIN.] Not my arm!

**FLANAGAN:** [WINCES TOO.] Ooh, yeah, how’s the pain?

**TROUGHTON:** Yeah, I’m looking forward to my next dose of painkillers.

**FLANAGAN:** [SIGHS.] Anyway, finish your ice cream. We’ll head back and then you can get some rest.

**TROUGHTON:** Yes, yes indeed. I just need to write an email and then I’ll be going straight to bed.

**FLANAGAN:** Oh yeah? Anything exciting?

**TROUGHTON:** [CASUALLY.] My letter of resignation.

[[*MUSIC: LONG, SLOW VIOLIN NOTES PLAY THE* SHADOWS AT THE DOOR *THEME.*]]

[Timestamp: 48:17]

BEGIN DISCUSSION SECTION

**MARK:** And that was “Settle Thy Studies,” written by me. And I am joined by Professor Troughon himself, David Ault. Hello, Professor.

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Hello, Mark, how are you doing?

**MARK:** Very well. It’s a bit bittersweet, you know, the finale.

**DAVID:** Mm-hm, mm-hm. Yeah, yeah. Is this death? [CLOISTER BELL. BOTH MEN LAUGH.]

**MARK:** Feels different this time.

**DAVID:** A tear, Mark Nixon? [CLOISTER BELL.]

**MARK:** God. It’s been seconds. It’s been mere *seconds*. [DAVID IS LAUGHING UPROARIOUSLY.] It’s like, you know, when you listen to, like, when you watch two characters with, like, sexual tension and you’re like, “oh, just fuck already.” There’s a listener listening to us going, “just make a *Doctor Who* podcast already.”

**DAVID:** Mm, yeah, very true.

**MARK:** Okay, sorry everyone. How are *you*, David?

**DAVID:** Yes, I’m very well, thanks, Mark, how about you?

**MARK:** You’ve just asked me.

**DAVID:** I know. But it’s just one of those reflex reactions of being British. [BOTH LAUGH.] So we have made it to the end of the second season. What an amazing series it has been!

**MARK:** It really has. You know, when we embarked on it, I did not expect it to go in all the directions that it did.

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Yes.

**MARK:** You know, people have seen that a season is a point from A to B, when really it’s a big ball of wibbly-wobbly [CLOISTER BELL.] horrory-worrory stuff! I couldn’t help myself, I started that thought and then I realised where I was going.

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Yes.

**MARK:** We’re going to break the cloister bell at this point.

**DAVID:** I know. Um, yes, so, it has gone in a lot of different directions, as you say. I mean, we started off with “Blessed Be the Man,” then we took a little bit of a break before hitting everyone hard with “Slender Chances.”

**MARK:** [EMPHATICALLY.] Yes.

**DAVID:** And then onwards and throughwards and here we are at the end of the season. So here we are with “Settle Thy Studies.”

**MARK:** Yeah, a title that actually, on reflection sounds a lot like “Blessed Be the Man,” in that “Settle Thy Studies” is the Marlowe quote but that wasn’t deliberate. I don’t have the title for a story until about halfway through and because of Troughton’s revelation at the end, that he’s marked by the spirit from “Leave a Light On For Me,” I nearly called it “The Mark” but then you can’t have a story called “The Mark” by Mark Nixon.

**DAVID:** Mm, yes.

**MARK:** It has almost Walburgian ego behind it.

**DAVID:** “Being Mark Nixonovich.”

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] “Mark Nixonovich,” I like that. That’s what the scholars will say.

**DAVID:** Yeah, but so, “Settle Thy Studies,” it’s almost a sort of “physician, heal thyself,” or “Professor, teach thyself.”

**MARK:** Yeah, I mean, I was trying to be clever in the script because it’s one of the first few lines… it’s from the first page, I think, of *Doctor Faustus.* It’s meant to be able to be a little bit of foreshadowing in two ways. “Settle thy studies,” in that it could be Troughton’s trying to lead a double life at the minute: he’s trying to be a professor at Warwick and he’s also trying to investigate paranormal. He’s trying to kind of dance that line in between it. So when, in “Silent Warnings,” he kind of put it behind himself and he wrote it off. In “Blessed Be the Man,” you saw the beginnings of him trying to lead that double life and it kind of isn’t working. And, you know, as we’ve learned, he’s actually been on the radio, he’s been on television, and he’s actually started to make his job untenable. It’s kind of an instruction: “settle thy studies,” you will *have* to stop investigating spooky shit in order to have a secure job *or* if you really want to pursue this, you’re going to have to give up your job. So, that was me trying to be clever.

**DAVID:** But, yeah, I think it’s… whenever you get any kind of celebrity or, especially academic, coming out and saying “oh, well, maybe there is something more to *this*,” then there will be a certain section of the population which will just jump straight down their throats saying “superstition, absolute rubbish, how can you,” and that’s sort of the end of their tenure of being taken seriously.

**MARK:** Which, it’s a shame, because, I mean, I’m not a scientist, David, you are, but it’s my understanding that scientists delight in being proved wrong. You’re constantly trying to disprove your own theory in order to prove it.

**DAVID:** Absolutely, yes, but there is obviously a certain section of the population, I think we’ve been here before, that takes the idea of “we must be able to see it to be able to accept it as fact.”

**MARK:** And Troughton *had* a ghost strangling him in the first story and then he kind of dismissed it.

**DAVID:** Yes, yes. But it’s… the problem - there are some people that will take that idea to immense levels, to almost religious levels. So “you have to prove it to me,” rather than “there should be… it’s great if you’ve got subjective proof but if *I* can’t see it, touch it, have it strangle me, then it doesn’t exist.”

**MARK:** “If I can’t get to third base with it…” But and again (and I’ll be brief ‘cause I know we’ve touched on this) in order to… Troughton is an alarmingly well-formed character in my mind now, but before I start writing him, the danger of any writer is that your characters will have your voice. And for Troughton, he definitely doesn’t have my voice. So I usually watch a few YouTube videos of people like Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens or Neil DeGrasse Tyson. People who are usually… they’re very much in the, well, celebrities. And they’re often brought out to argue with someone. The Archbishop of Canterbury or something. And sometimes… there’s a Richard Dawkins… he’s on, like, a Sunday morning chat show in the UK and he’s been brought on with a representative from some of the major religions and there’s some kind of point made, it’s something about punishing people and the audience claps and Dawkins loses his temper and he turns to the audience…

[A RECORDING OF DAWKINS BEGINS OVER MARK’S LAST FEW WORDS.]

**UNKNOWN CLERGY:** [VERY MILD TEACHING VOICE.] It is his obedience in the context of a corrupt society that leads to his death. That is his sacrifice and it is that which restores what was broken between God and human beings.

**DAWKINS:** [HE SOUNDS ANGRY.] So there can be no forgiveness without a death, is that right?

**UNKNOWN CLERGY:** No, I’m not saying that. There can be no forgiveness without *cost*.

[AUDIENCE CLAPS.]

**DAWKINS:** How can you applaud that? How can you applaud that?

**UNKNOWN CLERGY:** Because it’s true.

[THE RECORDING FADES OUT AS DAWKINS CONTINUES TO PROTEST.]

**MARK:** And that’s the kind of mindset that I wanted to get into, but then I also don’t want Troughton to keep on dancing this line because it’s going to get frustrating. And how many times can he… It’s like, how many gay experiences can someone have before they say they’re experimenting? [BOTH LAUGH.] Or they can stop saying that, anyway, but…

**DAVID:** Yes, true.

**MARK:** This story, I had my idea in my head for this story when I started writing it, but I knew there was going to be a moment where Troughton, when quite literally faced with a ghost, says to himself, quite calmly, “Well, there’s no doubting it any more.” Like, that is it.

**DAVID:** But yes, he has got more than enough subjective proof now. And, yes, to go back… So, his world, his universe has opened up to such an extent that he wouldn’t be able to fit himself back into the narrow frame of thought that would be necessary for keeping his job.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** Basically. And that’s the case for a lot of people, in fact. When they have experiences, they then can no longer go back into who they were. It’s a period of necessary growth. Where, suddenly, the old box is not big enough any more.

**MARK:** And I touched at it in these stories as a theme, but I think some of the hardest things it is for us to do is to change our minds sometimes.

**DAVID:** Absolutely, yes.

**MARK:** And, you know, when I was a younger man, a teenager, I was terrible… I would really have an opinion and just never… I would listen but not *listen.* And maybe be polite, but often *wasn’t* polite, in hearing other opinions. And now…

**DAVID:** So this is why you’re always on Twitter. [MARK LAUGHS.] You’re basically the embodiment- teenage Mark is the embodiment of Twitter.

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] I wasn’t that bad. But I now make a point of challenging my opinions almost every day. I’m very secure in my, like, political opinions, because I know that I’ve really thought about it and I’ve really tried to look at it from all angles and, yeah. And I’m a hypocrite because I’m an atheist and yet sometimes I quite like the idea of *something more*.

**DAVID:** Again, atheism is another one of those ideas that’s crystallised in my mind, so, basically, I’m gonna say, yeah, agnosticism is the way forward because we *don’t* know.

**MARK:** [QUOTING, IN A WEST COUNTRY ACCENT.] “I got a cream for that.”

**DAVID:** And we should be okay to say… we should be able to say we don’t know. And be okay with that. And unfortunately, we live in a world where saying that you don’t know or admitting defeat or admitting, yeah, admitting any kind of weakness seems to be seized upon as some sort of moral dubiousness on your part.

**MARK:** You know I said this to somebody the other day, I think vulnerability, although it appears weak, I think is actually very, it’s a strength.

**DAVID:** Absolutely.

**MARK:** You know, what is stronger, the man refusing to cry or the person who’s showing you that they’re very much overcome at this moment, you know, for whatever reason. You know?

**DAVID:** Yes. Vulnerability is tremendously important. And it is the weaker man that hides behind something that is supposedly a defence mechanism. Is just there going, “no, no, this is my belief, this is…” or, “this is what I have accepted, this is my…” And I think that’s… And that kind of defensive posture is not as personally strong. Because you are hiding behind something. But anyway, I think we’ve, uh…

**MARK:** That’s quite an earnest take for us. Now onto the Lady Macbeth jokes and…

**DAVID:** There you go, you’ve made a joke after something emotional.

**MARK:** Ahhhhhhh, Christ.

**DAVID:** You’ve gone for joking after serious.

**MARK:** I’ve still got work to do.

**DAVID:** [BOTH LAUGHING.] You’ve still got work to do.

**MARK:** But I’m also very aware of what our listeners are used to, David. [**DAVID:** That’s true.] This is just my *brand*. [**DAVID:** It is.] It’s my *brand*, David, I’m not emotionally broken, it’s just our *brand*.

**DAVID:** Well, talking about our brand, and *Shadows at the Door*, and “Slender Chances” and things, there was a little Easter egg for our listeners, wasn’t there?

**MARK:** [BASHFUL.] Yeah.

**DAVID:** You, getting famous guests on to do little slots. [MARK LAUGHS.] That’s two things, okay, but, yeah.

**MARK:** Two thing, yeah. David’s referring to the fact that my ego is now growing that I seem to have created an expanded universe because Troughton, when offered a spooky podcast, thinks it’s the *8-Bit Refit* episode of “Slender Chances.” Which I guess means that I’ve confirmed that Slender Man exists in Troughton’s universe.

**DAVID:** So, are we going to see Troughton versus Slender Man?

**MARK:** Troughton versus Slender Man, Troughton versus Predator…

**DAVID:** Yes, whoever wins, we all lose. [BOTH LAUGH FOR A WHILE.]

**MARK:** Oh, sorry, I was just imagining what Troughton versus Predator would look like.

**DAVID:** Little do you know that Predator is actually very susceptible to tea.

**MARK:** Ah, yeah. “Well, you *could* take out my spine for your hall, but have you tried Earl Grey?”

**DAVID:** With milk.

**MARK:** [SHUTS HIM DOWN IMMEDIATELY.] No.

**DAVID:** You see, that’s the vulnerability.

**MARK:** [MAKES A PAINED NOISE.] There are some things, David, I will never change my mind on. The YouTube video within the podcast, so, that voice was Nico! [CHEER FROM DAVID.] Nico and I have always talked about getting him on the show in some capacity and he was going to join us for a discussion earlier this season, but diaries didn’t work out. Nico’s a busy man, I’m a busy man, we’re all busy in our inevitable march towards the grave… But I got him on for the cameo and I’m really glad that we did it and of course, Franklin, in *Franklin Gets Scared* is played brilliantly by me.

**DAVID:** It was amazing, it was amazing. Those acting lessons that you’re giving me are really coming into play.

**MARK:** I’m glad!

**DAVID:** I’ve been taking notes.

**MARK:** When I wrote Franklin, I thought it would be a good opportunity for a cameo, so I wrote it not knowing I would have to play him. So there’s a lot of screaming and I changed a scream to just me going, “oh, fu-!” and then the camera just cutting out. But there’s a bit where and then I’m going “Hello? Who’s there? What is it?” And I just wasn’t happy because I’m *not* an actor and it wasn’t good. So I just went, [IN A SING-SONG VOICE.] “Hello? [BOTH MEN LAUGH.] Is there a ghost?”

**DAVID:** Aw, yes. Very good. It was lovely to hear both of you in the show.

**MARK:** I just hope I didn’t make you, Jake, or Ilana feel uncomfortable with how good I was.

**DAVID:** Oh, I think that’s why we had to restrict you to such a small cameo. Just so you wouldn’t outshine the rest of us.

**MARK:** I still haven’t re-listened to “Sleepy Hollow” since it came out… We’ll get there. Also, you know, when my house is finally finished being renovated, I’m setting up an actual recording booth so hopefully my end of these things will sound a lot better.

[[*MUSIC: SHORT PHRASE OF THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME ON PIANO AS A TRANSITION.*]]

**MARK:** We started the season with, I think, when we resumed season two, “Slender Chances” and “Message in a Bottle” were done. Nothing else was done.

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Yes. I think at least four or five were not even written at that point. Four or five of them…

**MARK:** God, yeah, this story was written like a month ago. And you heard about the process for “Bread and Salt,” so…

**DAVID:** Yes.

**MARK:** Thank god for guest writers! And dead ones, as well.

**DAVID:** I was going to say, what have you done to Gemma? But…

**MARK:** Gemma, Hannah, and M are all well.

**DAVID:** Hooray!

**MARK:** You know, sometimes if I get a bit stuck, I’m like, “oh, oh, no, you know, [RAISED VOICE.] Monty! Monty, I need another story! No, not ‘Oh Whistle,’ I’ve told you! No, not ‘The Stalls of Barchester,’ nothing happens!” [BACK TO HIS NORMAL VOICE.] I’ve got some controversial M. R. James hot takes, David. Not everything he wrote was brilliant. There’s a story by M. R. James that I *do* love and I should be careful because this might end up in season three, called “Lost Hearts” and it’s about a young boy who goes to stay with his uncle in his guest house and the uncle is overly familiar with him and they’ve never met and he greets him and is like, “oh, my boy, my boy, come here, oh, my boy, you’re so strong,” and he’s very friendly with him and all of the staff advised the boy not to trust him and I’m like, “oh, my god, how? This is very brave of M. R. James to write a child abuse story in the middle of his collection of ghost stories. Oh, he just wants to kill him. Oh, oh, thank god. Oh, he just wants to kill that child, oh. I feel so much better.”

**DAVID:** Yes.

[[*MUSIC: A SHORT PHRASE OF GENTLE GUITAR NOTES.*]]

**MARK:** But, you know, speaking of Jake and Ilana and yourself, I often wonder how it is for Jake, because Jake’s performed words written by Russell T. Davies and…

**DAVID:** He has indeed! Yes, he was in the last episode of *Years and Years*.

**MARK:** Yeah! Phenomenal miniseries.

[SFX: A CLIP FROM *YEARS AND YEARS*. THERE IS MUSIC AND A LOUD COMMOTION BEHIND THE SPEAKERS.]

**JESSICA HYNES AS EDITH LYONS:** [SHOUTING.] …the British government!

**JAKE BENSON AS CHIEF ERSTWHILE GUARD:** [SHOUTING.] Do you think anyone cares? About this lot? Who’s watching it?

**JESSICA HYNES AS EDITH LYONS:** [SHOUTING.] Everyone!

[SFX: END OF CLIP.]

**MARK:** But I wonder how it is for Jake to have performed words written by the great Russell T. Davies and then to perform mine, knowing that mine is better.

**DAVID:** Mm, yeah.

**MARK:** It must be weird for him.

**DAVID:** Well, it’s just the progression, isn’t it? The progression of how everything goes. It starts off with Russell T. Davies and *then*, only then can he move to Mark Nixon.

**MARK:** Yeah, Russell T. Davies, of course, has written quite a few miniseries. He wrote a phenomenal one about Jesus coming back in Manchester.

**DAVID:** Ah, yes.

**MARK:** Starring Christopher Eccleston. *Cucumber*, a miniseries I adore, which is about the lives of gay men in–Ah, that’s set in Manchester, too. [BACK TO NORMAL VOICE.] I think it’s where he went to uni and he moved there, I think. And that was a phenomenal show and then, of course, *Years and Years*, and then a little-known revival of… hang on, let me just check my notes here, [OVER ENUNCIATES AS IF SOUNDING THE WORD OUT.] *Doc-tor Who.*

**DAVID:** Never heard of that.

**MARK:** Me, neither. Sounds pretty nerdy. But what I adore about Davies is that he just will allow the story to stop, just to give us some character development, like, or a nice monologue. And I think it’s probably done best in *Cucumber*. Which is just… I dunno, I just feel like no one else… I remember talking to people at work about it when it came out, ‘cause it has one particularly shocking episode and then no one else seems to ever talk about it. And I’m just sat here going, “David! David! Watch *Cucumber*! It’s like the gayest thing!”

**DAVID:** It is, yes.

**MARK:** And Mike Flanagan also does the same where, you know, he’ll write something amazing and then it’ll just stop for a monologue and I’m quite guilty of sneaking those intoo… I mean, there’s definitely a few of those moments in this story.

**DAVID:** Oh, yes. Yes.

**MARK:** And that’s why Tasha… I don’t know if her surname is ever said… No, it is. Flanagan. That’s why her surname is Flanagan. And speaking of that character, I had told Ilana that I just really like Ilana’s accent. I hope that doesn’t sound patronising. I just think the Australian accent is just so pleasant and I said to Ilana, you know, “you’re going to be an Australian character again.” And I just love that Tasha sounds absolutely nothing like Nat in *Slender Chances*, you know, even though they’re two Australian women of a similar age. And I think that’s testament to that. And also, the other accent that I love to hear is the Welsh accent.

**DAVID:** Ah!

**MARK:** And I was talking to Jake about a Welsh accent and I think I did a really bad one and Jake did one and it was pretty good and I said, “well, Jake, you’re screwed now, ‘cause now I’m going to write you a character who’s Welsh.” And I’m not kidding, that is the single reason why this story is set in Cardiff.

**DAVID:** But did Troughton go to Ianto’s shrine? That’s the question.

**MARK:** Well, they did go to Cardiff Bay at the very end of the story, because I thought, “I’m going to do it.” Because I looked at Cardiff, I’ve been to Cardiff, and I looked at it on the maps and then I saw this wetland not that far from it. So I thought that’ll be where Catchlove Hall is. And I was looking at it in some pictures and I thought, “I’m going to have to end it in Cardiff Bay as a few episodes of *Doctor Who* and many episodes of *Torchwood* did.

**DAVID:** Yes, yes! Do we find out that Tasha is in fact the Face of Bo?

**MARK:** That was never confirmed, although I believe Russell T. Davies confirmed that on Twitter this year.

**DAVID:** Did he? Okay.

**MARK:** With one of the many watch-along parties.

**DAVID:** Ah, yes. Yes, of course.

**MARK:** During lockdown. But, speaking of that scene, David, my big question for you is how was your ice cream?

**DAVID:** But, my question for you, Mark, is why do you think Troughton wanted chocolate mint? [MARK LAUGHS. DAVID STRUGGLES WITH WORDS FOR A MOMENT.] I mean, why wouldn’t he say mint choc chip like a normal person? But why would he go for that, anyway? Raspberry ripple is *obviously* the way to go.

**MARK:** Do you know what? There is a deliberate reason for it. I just thought that if Troughton were to have an ice cream, he wouldn’t go for a really, like, common flavour. He’d be like that dickhead who always, “can have the most obscure ice cream.” No, no, I mean, I love cookie dough, and I just think that’s really basic, to like cookie dough and I just thought Troughton’s going to like something really weird, isn’t he. Like rum and raisin.

**DAVID:** Ew, yes, he probably does like rum and raisin, actually, yeah.

**MARK:** He probably does. [**DAVID:** He probably does.] But I dunno, I just… And then I thought, what would they have available at an ice cream van at Cardiff Bay in the late morning? And I thought he’s gone for mint chocolate chip or whatever it is.

**DAVID:** Chocolate mint in the script. But yes.

**MARK:** Well, you could’ve changed- I always say to the cast, “if you ever want to change a line, you may.” Ilana changed a couple lines in the script just to make it sound a bit more Australian. But speaking of that scene, David, there was three moments in this story. So, actually, that’s not true. This story came to me after I was playing *Resident Evil 7* and during lockdown I decided to finally play *Resident Evil 7*, a game I’ve owned for about four years and…

**DAVID:** Oh, gosh, yes. I’ve got so many games on Steam that I’ve bought and I’ve started or just not started. Ugh.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** Yes. It’s been a good time to get through things like Steam libraries and Audible libraries.

**MARK:** Unless you’re producing a podcast.

**DAVID:** Forty minutes a week, Mark, that’s all it takes. Forty minutes a week.

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] You bastard. Anyway, for those of you not in the know, long story short, *Resident Evil 7* is like a Texas chainsaw massacre-inspired game with a spooky house on a swamp. Which is why Catchlove Hall is at the wetlands. And there’s parts of the game where you’re hiding from a character that’s stalking you and you’ve got to crawl through the walls in order to get through it and I remember thinking, “ooh, wouldn’t that be great if that were Troughton,” and then I had this idea that he went with a colleague who gets possessed and the majority of the story was going to be that and then I realised that it got… I began to write it at the part where Tash is possessed and she comes after him, I thought, “Troughton runs upstairs. Why does he run upstairs?” And then-

**DAVID:** Why do any horror characters run upstairs rather than outside?

**MARK:** Yeah! And this is it. And this is where, and I’m going to put on my wanker writer hat here, but Troughton wouldn’t- he wouldn’t let me do that. He would try and talk her down. He’d be like, “Look, I’m not going to hurt you, you’re not going to hurt me, ow! You hurt me! But you don’t want to hurt me. Ow! You hurt me again! Why do you keep stabbing me?” And then I thought Troughton, at this point in his life, after what he’s been through, he’s, you know, I mean, in the script for “Leave a Light On For Me,” when he sees the person on the roof, it says, “Troughton speaks with the authority of a man who is used to controlling a room.” And he’s like, “What are you doing up there, you twat?” And then I thought, after everything he’s been through, he’s not going to let… He’s not a hero, he’s not The Doctor or anything, but he wouldn’t let that happen. And then all of a sudden the entire premise of the episode was that Troughton was running through a house being chased by a possessed friend and all of a sudden that just felt ridiculous and then it just became the very, you know, the short scene. But the three moments I knew was going to happen is that Troughton was going to say, “There’s no doubting it now,” I knew there was going to be a point where we went into Troughton’s head while a spirit was trying to possess him and we could hear all sorts of stuff there, and I knew… and the first thing I wrote was Troughton, quote unquote, coming out. And it was… that monologue was such a pleasure to write because I normally have to write… I go over a scene a few times, add stuff, take away stuff, I wrote that in one sitting and it didn’t really change much. Anyone who’s used to texting me will know that I took out a few typos [DAVID LAUGHS.] but that was it. And I said to myself, you know, “David normally gets takes right on the first try, he knows what I want and he knows, like, Troughton, so…” but I thought, this monologue I will need to be harsh on David because this monologue is… Troughton’s been coming to this… I mean, he has and he hasn’t. I never intended to write it. I *never* *ever* thought that I would need for him to talk about it and yet it just came into my head that once he’s kind of broken and he’s at a point where everything he knew about spooky stuff has changed, that he might start to cast that gaze internally and so, in a strange way, he has and he hasn’t always been on his way to saying this. So I said to myself, “David, I’m going to have to be horrible to David, I’m going to have to really direct him, get like five takes, you know, just like the leshy, you know [DAVID LAUGHS.] and [IN A VERY NASAL, STEREOTYPICAL DRACULA VOICE.] ‘Yes, I’m coming out of the closet.’” But anyway, and you, David-

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] What *was* that? That was like…

**MARK:** [DRYLY.] That was vampire Troughton.

**DAVID:** It just sounded like, [ALSO TRIES A DRACULA ACCENT, BUT LESS NASAL AND HIGHER PITCHED.] ‘Ah, how many limits can I break for myself today? One, ah, ah, ah. Two, ah, ah, ah.’ Yes.

**MARK:** I wouldn’t put that in a story, it would scare Trump too much, counting. But, David, you *fucking* nailed it on the first take and you just got it and then even the bits where I, like, brackets “Troughton really thinks about this,” you just, you nailed it, David. Absolutely nailed it. And if we were to make a show reel to pitch you for an award, it would include that ‘cause you just *nailed* it, my friend, bravo.

[SFX: SOUNDS OF APPLAUSE FROM A LARGE GROUP.]

**DAVID:** Ah, thank you, thank you.

**MARK:** But yeah, David, honestly, hats off to you. That was such a good performance.

**DAVID:** It was actually quite easy, if you spoke to me, sort of, fifteen years ago, then that’s where I would have been. I mean, yeah. I wouldn’t have been, not even in my mid-forties, or mid-forties as it says, but yeah. The kind of repression and everything that he speaks about, I mean, I didn’t even have the fumbling under the bedclothes in boarding school or anything like that, so from that point of view… ‘Cause the thing is, when you’re growing up and you know that you’re different, that’s very isolating. And anyone that has grown up different will know what that’s like. And Troughton obviously felt that, he is a few years older than me, not a huge amount older than me, but even having those kinds of questioning thoughts in the late ‘80s, early ‘90s would’ve been on the back of AIDS, it would’ve been on the back of… you saw how Phillip Schofield, for instance, only came out *this year*, 2020, and people said, “oh, why didn’t you do it back in the ‘80s and ‘90s?” But you could see, in the papers, how people were hounded for not being normal. And certainly when I was growing up, the only people I knew that were gay, and there was only about two, but they were very [LONG PAUSE.] and I’m choosing… They were very camp and that wasn’t… that sort of camp was the only thing that I saw gay men being. And I thought, “that is not me.” And if that is what being gay means, then that’s really difficult. And so…

**MARK:** I know it’s not a competition, David, but try realising that you like men *and* you like women. And you not actually knowing that you *can* like both.

**DAVID:** Yeah, yeah, true. But at least you could have girlfriends, legitimately.

**MARK:** In *theory*.

**DAVID:** [WITH A LAUGH.] In theory.

**MARK:** But you try being out and trying to get a girlfriend. But I know it’s true. To be honest, I think we have very different experiences and I think that we’re both, I can imagine that they were very challenging for very different reasons.

**DAVID:** Absolutely. So, yeah, what I saw of people being gay was not what I felt myself to be. And probably, well, there was the groundbreaking… what was the other Russell T. Davies thing that came out?

**MARK:** *Queer as Folk.*

**DAVID:** *Queer as Folk*, yes. Even that felt… that was scary. For me. Because again, it was quite… there was a lot of scene on it. I don’t like the scene. I’ve never liked *the scene* in general and the loud… I’ve never been, I’m not a clubbing kind of guy, I’m not…

**MARK:** I can’t imagine you in the middle of a club.

**DAVID:** No, no, not really at all. So, that was sort of what was communi- and this why representation is so important. Having people who are like you and that you can see are like you, to be able to show, “Okay, yeah, I’m alright. I’m not alone. I’m not isolated. There are other people like me.” And, so, from that point of view, I very much feel for Troughton because he hasn’t had anyone, certainly when he was growing up, and what he describes of he just keeps his head down and gets on with his work and he does his degrees, keeps on working, keeps on working and just sort of compartmentalises and puts it out of his mind. Yeah, I can absolutely see where he’s coming from there.

**MARK:** You know, we’ve taken that away from him now, ‘cause he *had* history and that’s what he knew and loved and now he, I dunno, he might even look at past historical events differently knowing that the supernatural is there.

**DAVID:** Absolutely. I still don’t think that he’s going to be some sort of voracious sexual lothario or anything like that.

**MARK:** Well, this is it, and I’m very hesitant to give him labels. And I know that… And I actually don’t know why. Because I’m very happy with my label because when I discovered that word, and I’ve mentioned this before, but when I discovered that word, it was so comforting. I was like, “Oh, my god, I’m *not* mentally ill!” I mean, I am, but like, not in *that* sense. And it was amazing and I don’t know whether I’m just protective of Troughton or whether I just want to keep Troughton vague so that listeners can project themselves onto Troughton, I don’t know *what* it is. I don’t want to give him a title. But he’s not *really* into girls and he’s not *really* a sexual being. He’s, I mean, he’s had the fumbles and I’m sure, y’know, he… who knows what he does on a chilled out evening with a glass of wine, but I dunno. I just think I don’t see love interests in the future for him and I think if we gave him someone who was interested in him, I might even be tempted to write that, because I can definitely see what his responses would be. But that’s why Flanagan is his friend, Tasha, because Tasha’s not been in the country long, I imagined her to be a conventionally attractive woman… When Tasha came to the university, Troughton was one of the few men not buzzing around her and not, like, trying to ask her out on a date all the time. And she even says to him, “We’re friends because I forced it on you.” And it’s a bit like Data in *Star Trek* where Data doesn’t have emotions, or at least he didn’t used to, and he says to him, he says in one episode, “I can’t miss people, but I’m used to your physical proximity. And when that is removed my programming looks for it.” I always thought that was a beautiful way to describe a robot missing someone, an android, sorry, missing someone who couldn’t.

**DAVID:** But you can certainly see how he sort of says that when he’s doing his monologue about how the other boys were sexual beings, they hounded women. And, yeah, I mean, I remember at school, *everyone* was talking about girlfriends and whatnot. I didn’t really feel like that. At all. So, yeah. I would certainly say that Troughton is more asexual than anything, but from a homosexual viewpoint.

**MARK:** Yeah, I mean, I guess you could say, like, a homosexual asexual. But I think, perhaps, some of my trepidation might be in the fact that I’m very much not asexual and I don’t… I’m very aware that it’s a spectrum, I’m quite lucky to know quite a few asexual people in my life and they’re all very different to each other. Almost as if people are individuals.

**DAVID:** [DRAMATIC VOICE.] Amazing! Craziness!

**MARK:** Isn’t it? And it’s a spectrum. And I just feel like if I use that word for him, it might restrict peoples’ idea of him and Troughton… The whole reason why, I think, people resonate to Troughton is, and all due respect to M. R. James, but a lot of James’ protagonists – and Troughton, let’s be honest, Troughton was my James protagonist – but a lot of James’ antagonists were, let’s be honest, self-inserts, that were stuffy professors and it’s just their job to go, [BLAND, STUFFY PROFESSOR VOICE.] “What ho, what is that thing coming over the hill? Is it a monster?” [BACK TO HIS OWN VOICE, LAUGHING.] What the hell did that reference come from? But yeah, it’s their job to kind of go, “What is this? Oh, this haunted antiquarian thing and this haunted antiquity.” And I just wanted to give Troughton a personality and I remember when I first started writing him, he didn’t like that he was given a full English that was greasy. And he became, like, this snobby guy and I think he just had more personality than most of my other characters did so, even though they were all quite different, he stood out. And I wonder if that’s why people liked him. But now, like, he’s so well-formed in my head that I also know what he would do in certain situations and there are certain things that I know will not come out, no pun intended, until I put, you know, fingers to keyboard and then I start to write it. And, yeah. Sometimes it’s almost like a thought exercise where someone goes, “A bouncy castle! What would Troughton do?” Like, he’d refuse to go on it.

**DAVID:** Yes, I like Troughton. He’s very… yeah. I like the character and it’ll be interesting-

**MARK:** [OVER DAVID.] Even though he’s a bit of a prick sometimes.

**DAVID:** It’ll be interesting to see where he *does* go from here, ‘cause he could go in a number of ways, but please, tell me, Mark, that he is going to be replaced at Warwick University by Dr. Pertwee. [CLOISTER BELL.]

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] That would be very delicious if that were to happen. But with regards to his future, I mean, I’ve deliberately written this story in such a way where if there is no more, this is a nice way to end it.

**DAVID:** It is, yes. Yes.

**MARK:** Because there’s a lot of possibilities as to where he could go from here but then I’ve also been coy, and there’s quite a bit of world building in this story. There’s some little, I mean, there’s some stuff in here that really sets things up if people want it. And perhaps this is not good marketing, but I will only write more if people want it. And I do respond well to feedback. Of all kinds. So let me know if you do want to hear more of Troughton, because I really… One thing I really hate saying, and I don’t know whether this will stay in the edit, because, you know… I’m not aiming this at anyone in particular, but I hate seeing artificial demand. Like, you know, even from when you walk past a shop and they’re like, “Well, we’ve barely got any of these left, come get them!” And then you know they’ve got like fifty. But I also hate it when, like, I see someone saying, “Oh, well, people are demanding for this.” And I’m like, who is, though? Who’s demanding? I’m not seeing it. And I don’t like that. And I know you’ve got to fake it ‘til you make it, and all these marketing things, but I can’t fake it. I’m a very sincere person.

**DAVID:** You are, yes.

**MARK:** I go off feedback and inspiration, as well, so I know people love “Slender Chances,” for example and I think, you know, I’ve written a couple stories this season that was quite raw and emotional and there is a need for me just to go [RASPY VOICE.] “Spooky! All spooky, no feelings!” But even with “Slender Chances” I put in this very subtle subplot that Tom fancies Nat. And actually, more people picked up on that then I thought there would, so that was good. Yeah.

**DAVID:** Yes, and obviously the best way to talk to us about your feelings about Troughton is to just message us. We’re on Twitter, Mark is on Facebook and Instagram, holding all of that down. Forty minutes a week, Mark. And…

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] I hate you, I hate you!

**DAVID:** Or you can email us or you can do what other people have done, which is to donate to our Ko-fi and we’ve had some really generous donations recently and thank you to everyone who has been able to put that. Yes, I know, this is the funding drive bit. But if you do want to say that you want more Troughton, then a good couple of grand in the account and I’m sure that Mark would be *happy* to write a few more, but no. But seriously, if you want season three, then we do need some more money.

**MARK:** And there’s, and I know we teased this last episode and I’m going to tease it once more, but there’s something quite special for season three that we’re planning that you haven’t seen anything like it in season one or two. So, by god, you know, please, if you want to hear these amazing ideas that we have… This is the charity drive bit. [**DAVID:** It is, it is, yes.] It’s, like, [SOFT NEWS RADIO VOICE.] “David needs to read ghost stories.”

**DAVID:** “Mark needs to feed and clothe his kids.”

**MARK:** [INDIGNANT.] I *have* a job as well, David, that’s why, you know, if I *didn’t* have a job, if you guys could put in so much money that I didn’t have to [SING-SONG.] have a job…

**DAVID:** Or you could find him a nice job.

**MARK:** Yeah. Doing full-time podcasting!

**DAVID:** But yeah, so if…

**MARK:** Just think…

**DAVID:** But yeah, and if you can’t give any money, then don’t worry, we aren’t going to steal the food off your table. Just please tell your friends, tell everyone you know, give us a nice five-star review, help other people listen to us. Basically, spread the shadows so that hopefully other people will be able to donate to us as well after they have enjoyed everything that we have to offer. And talking of people who are trying to spread the spooky love, it is now time for our podcast recommendation slot!

**MARK:** Which means I need to play our stinger!

[[*MUSIC: ELECTRONIC, PERCUSSIVE LINE FROM THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME.*]]

**DAVID:** Hey! This episode’s recommendation is the wonderful, the amazing *The Lucky Die* pod. And if you’re interested in D&D, actual play podcasting, things like that, then *The Lucky Die* is one of the best out there. And I know that I’m saying this as someone who occasionally plays a character on there, one of the voices, so, yes, I have skin in the game.

**MARK:** Are you, like, someone who owns a tavern? Are you like a Skyrim NPC, where they walk in and you just go, “Everything’s for sale! If I had a sister, I’d sell her in an instant!”

**DAVID:** I am actually an evil interdimensional being, but, you know, similar sort of thing.

**MARK:** Of course you are. Not typecast, are you, David.

**DAVID:** I’m not *at all* typecast. [WITH A SIGH.] Oh, well. But yes, so they have finished their first season, it’s a long season, but you can hear that. I did some interviews for them, I have interviewed the cast. Those have gone out as specials, the inter-season break and they are going to be starting season two very soon.

**MARK:** Actually a lot more fun than you think, for those of you that haven’t played it. But, perhaps we can prove that to you, ‘cause David, I’ve heard a rumour…

**DAVID:** [WITH ANTICIPATION AND CURIOSITY.] A rumour?

**MARK:** They might be doing a spooky one-shot.

**DAVID:** [CONTINUING THE SAME TONE.] A spooky one-shot?

**MARK:** With two people who- us.

**DAVID:** [DISAPPOINTED.] Oh, okay. I was just getting ready to go “Who? Who?” Okay, it’s us. Yes, yes, we are going to be doing a spooky one-shot episode with Eyþór, from *The White Vault* and obviously *The Lucky Die*, Volly is going to be (who is the Documentarian in *The White Vault*), she’s going to be doing the DM-ing, so, yeah. You’ll be able to join us for that. At some point.

**MARK:** Yeah, and I haven’t played D&D in like a year, so let’s see how bad I am.

**DAVID:** But yes, I think the best way that someone described D&D to me is interactive storytelling.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** So, if you want to hear us go on a guided adventure where we’re making it up as we go along, and possibly dying…

**MARK:** And we’re not playing ourselves, we will have characters.

**DAVID:** No, obviously not. Well. We’ve still got to make those.

**MARK:** Oh, yeah. My character’s going to be called “Vavid Vault.”

**DAVID:** And I’m going to be “Park Pixon.” [BOTH LAUGH.]

**MARK:** Park Pixon does sound like quite a D&D pixie name.

**DAVID:** Yeah. Yes.

**MARK:** I imagine they have an Irish accent for some reason.

**DAVID:** [TRYING FOR AN IRISH ACCENT.] Hello, there, I’m Park Pixon.

**MARK:** See? There’s a character already. If anyone uses Park Pixon in their campaign, I want money. David and I [THE REST OF THE SENTENCE IS LOST TO GIGGLES.] Oh, goodness.

**DAVID:** [STILL WITH THE IRISH ACCENT.] Don’t you worry, everything here is for sale. If I had a sister, I’d sell her as well.

**MARK:** You know, that’s sort of Skyrim and it’s an amazing game, but they have five voice actors and whenever you go into a city, it’s like everyone will just have the same voice and it annoys me. And the voice actors are good, but one of them is always doing an impression of Arnold Schwarzenegger. [IN A VERY BAD ARNOLD VOICE.] “I used to be an adventurer like you until I took an arrow in the knee.” [BACK TO HIS VOICE.] Which I’ve actually since learned that “arrow in the knee” was a metaphor for getting married.

**DAVID:** Oh, right.

**MARK:** I thought it was a literal arrow in the knee.

**DAVID:** Yeah, I would’ve thought so, yes.

**MARK:** But yeah, they have like five voice actors who voice everyone and it’s a bit odd, but when there’s so many talented voice actors out there ([WHISPERS.] Please hire David, he’s very good. And Jake and Ilana and Erika.)

**DAVID:** So, our five voice actors.

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] Yes.

**DAVID:** Me, Jake, Ilana, Erika, and you.

**MARK:** Oh, okay. [SMOOTH RADIO ANNOUNCER VOICE.] *Shadows at the Door* *can* populate your fantasy world, just email at shadowsatthedoor@gmail.com.

**DAVID:** Yeah, so, *The Lucky Die* is definitely a podcast to check out. So please do so and we will point you in the direction of our special one-shot episode when we have it and when we have done it. And I’m sure there will be plenty of stuff that we put out on Twitter as we’re doing it, going “oh, fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck…”

**MARK:** Yes, that sounds about right.

**DAVID:** ‘Bout right, yeah.

[[*MUSIC: STRONG GUITAR NOTES PLAY A PHRASE OF THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME.*]]

**MARK:** I was listening to “Bread and Salt” yesterday and when it finished, Spotify randomly put on “The Devil and Tom Walker” and I just left it on…

**DAVID:** Hooray, listening figures!

**MARK:** Yeah, one extra listen.

**DAVID:** Because, listeners, if you do have any kind of streaming services and you go out during the day if you’re not locked down, then leave it on for your pets! Leave it on for any burglars that might come in. Leave it on for your house plants. Just keep us streaming. Please.

**MARK:** Oh, my god, is there a dog listening right now? [IN THE VOICE YOU WOULD USE TO TALK TO A DOG.] Who’s a good boy?

**DAVID:** [SAME VOICE.] You’re a very good boy.

**MARK:** Who’s a good boy?

**DAVID:** Yes, yes, you are!

**MARK:** Who’s a good girl?

[THIS GOES ON FOR A MOMENT, AS THEY TALK ON TOP OF EACH OTHER.]

**MARK:** [BACK TO NORMAL, JUST PRETENDING THAT DIDN’T HAPPEN.] You know, although this is the season finale, and when we start production on season three depends on how successful we are in funding, we do have a few special bonus episodes coming up within the next couple of months. Hopefully, you know, things that you’ll quite enjoy, things that are a little bit different and things that you are quite familiar with, that you enjoy. So, this [BEAT.] *is* goodbye, but not forever… ?

**DAVID:** So, the bonus content that you *may* be able to look forward to: we have a couple more drunk ghost stories planned, but there *is*, possibly, *maybe*, going to be a Christmas special.

**MARK:** And perhaps more of a window into the actors around a round table, as one might. Say.

**DAVID:** So, yes, for all that and more, please keep your feeds active, because *we* are still wanting to make content. And we hope that you are still wanting to consume it.

**MARK:** And, you know, let us know what parts of this season, and indeed season one, that you enjoyed the most. Although we do write the things that we want to write, and by we, I mean me, at the same time, it makes sense to write what you guys love and, you know, let us know. Like I said, this season was all about pushing boundaries and we pushed it in so many different ways, in so many different directions and, you know, we probably can continue down that route, but then if there’s certain directions people enjoy the most, I’m very open to hearing that and stuff. [AGGRESSIVELY.] Tweet us!

**DAVID:** Yeah, so, yes, get in touch with us. If you want Troughton in the haunted massage parlour, then that’s going to need a fairly substantial donation to the Ko-fi, I’m afraid. [MARK LAUGHS, TRIES TO SAY SOMETHING, AND LOSES IT INTO LAUGHTER AGAIN.]

**MARK:** I say, what are you rubbing now?

**DAVID:** You just had to go there, Mark, didn’t you? You just… the line…

**MARK:** You know, in D&D, I believe that would be mage hand. Question for any more experienced players out there, *can* you wank someone off with mage hand? ‘Cause that would be a good way to distract a guard, so…

[[*MUSIC: PIANO NOTES PLAY A PHRASE OF THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME.*]]

**MARK:** And as well, the big secret of this season is normally, as we went on, and the production was moving quite quickly, the big secret is David and I often record these discussions before we’ve heard Nico’s music.

**DAVID:** This is very true. Yes.

**MARK:** And every single time I hear it and David hears it, I’m like, “oh, my god, it’s so good!” You know, I just need to scream about it and then I worry that Nico doesn’t get the recognition he so very much deserves and, indeed, at the point of recording, we haven’t heard the music.

**DAVID:** But we’ve heard the sample and it sounds *really, really* amazing. It sounds on point.

**MARK:** Oh, yeah. But I think if you were to hear these episodes for the season, both seasons, without Nico’s music, you would realise how much of a vital part it is and how amazing his work is. [**DAVID:** Absolutely.] So please, do send Nico your love on Twitter. Because I feel like he needs more love, so, yes.

**DAVID:** Absolutely.

**MARK:** But anyway, before I go, David, I just want to say, you were fantastic. [DAVID SCOFFS.] Absolutely fantastic. And you know what? So was I. [CLOISTER BELL.]

[[*MUSIC: GUITAR NOTES PLAY THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME BEHIND DAVID’S WORDS.*]]

**DAVID:** You’ve been listening to a Shadows at the Door production. Story by Mark Nixon. Performances by David Ault, Ilana Charnelle Gelbart, and Jake Benson. Score by Nico Vettese. Production by Mark Nixon. Production copyright Shadows at the Door Publishing. Story copyright of the author.

If you have enjoyed this production, please leave a review wherever you listen to podcasts. And we’ll see you very soon.

[[*MUSIC: STOPS.*]]

**JAKE:** [IN A WELSH ACCENT.] All right, Mark, I’m gonna speak like this to you, I think. All the way through. Ah. Alright, Troughton, what’s occurring? [LAUGHS AND DROPS THE ACCENT.] Ah, god.

CAST

Professor Geoffrey Troughton David Ault

*It’s been a year since the events of Blessed Be the Man, Troughton’s beliefs have been questioned, and he’s spent considerable time investigating paranormal events. However, his efforts have embarrassed the university and now he is trying to keep his head down. Once again, Troughton is detaching himself from who he really is and he is slipping into a depression.*

Owen Garret Jake Benson

*Early 30s, Welsh. Friendly librarian of Cardiff University. Takes pride in his job and loves a gossip.*

Tasha Flanagan Ilana Charnelle Gelbart

*Mid 30s. A capable and confident lecturer at Warwick University. Australian, accepted a job offer to teach English Literature at Warwick and soon became friends with Troughton. She didn’t witness the events of Silent Warnings and isn’t afraid to call Troughton out on his nonsense.*

Franklin Mark Nixon

*An amateur ghost hunter.*

Podcast Host Nico Vettese

*A podcast host, speaks with an overly dramatic voice.*

Female Ghost Ilana Charnelle Gelbart

*A sad English voice of the dead.*

Male Ghost Jake Benson

*A deeply sinister and angry English voice of the dead.*

TRANSCRIPT BY: [EMORY COLVIN](https://twitter.com/nuclearalchemy) (TIPS: [ko-fi.com/emoryc](https://ko-fi.com/emoryc))

1. In US English, hood. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)